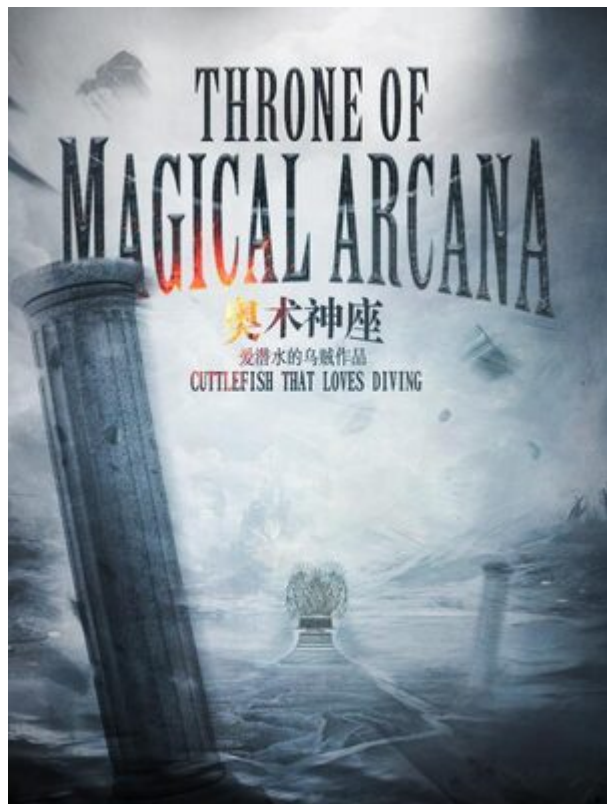


THRONE OF MAGICAL ARCANA

奥术神座

爱潜水的乌贼作品

CUTTLEFISH THAT LOVES DIVING



Throne of Magical Arcana

Cuttlefish That Loves Diving

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Action, Adventure, Fantasy, Mystery, Xuanhuan

An ordinary young man on earth, Xia Feng, traveled to a world of sword and magic, and took the body of Lucien Evans, another ordinary young man.

Seemingly this was a world of traditional western fantasy, yet he discovered the astonishing similarities between the earth and this world, and between science and the so-called arcane magic...

“Knowledge is power”? Soul, magic, quantum, Theory of Relativity, cognitive world, music and real world.....

What was the true nature of that world?

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- Chapter 907: Gathering
- Chapter 908: Gradual Movemen
- Chapter 909: Chasers of Ligh
- Chapter 910: The City in the Sky End of TMA

Chapter 1: The Burning Gallows

Billows of black smoke burned Xiaofeng's throat and lungs while making hissing sounds like old broken bellows.

"Anyone... here? I don't wanna... die..."

"Xiaofeng, wake up... don't fall asleep..."

...

The endless flaming red light suddenly dimmed, followed by a deep darkness. Like a drowning man, Xiaofeng tried his very best to grab onto anything that could save him from this darkness.

At that moment, like a rising sun, a red light appeared in front of him.

In that light, Xiaofeng felt his strength recovering slightly, so he struggled desperately to get closer to the light. After taking a step forward, Xiaofeng saw the light becoming brighter and brighter, changing from flaming red to pure white. The darkness was thoroughly entrapped by the light and completely dissipated in a second.

"Ah..." Xiaofeng suddenly sat back up and was now panting with great effort. In his dream, the smoke of a terrifying fire had made him lose all means of resistance, leaving him unable to do anything but helplessly lie on the ground and wait for the flames to devour him. Like being constrained by a ghost, he knew that he was in a nightmare, but he just could not wake himself up.

The dream was so real that it took Xiaofeng quite a while to recover. After his fast-beating heart calmed down, he finally remembered that he had been working on his essay for the whole night in the school library. "No wonder I dreamed about the fire, I'm practically burning my life here these days," Xiaofeng thought to himself in a self-deprecating way.

When he roused himself and was about to collect all the reference

books and go back to the dorm, Xiafeng was stunned with the strange and unimaginable scene in front of him. Like being struck in the head, he was shocked and his mind went blank.

All the nice-looking wooden desks were gone. There were no piles of reference books, paper manuscripts, and laptops. The only thing left was an old black blanket with loose threads covering him.

Instead of sitting in the library chair, he was actually sitting on a narrow wooden bed.

“Where am I?!”

In this situation, even a person like Xiafeng, who was relatively quiet and slow, could feel things were going wrong. Even if he was caught in a fire and sent to a hospital, this place definitely did not resemble a hospital! Not even close!

His heartbeat rose up due to the shock. He looked around and tried to stand up on his feet, but as soon as he put his feet on the ground, a sense of dizziness and weakness spread over him and almost made him hit the ground.

Xiafeng hurriedly reached out and grabbed the handle of the bed to retain his balance. His face was pale and his heart was beating very fast. He was already aware of the surroundings from the quick look just now.

This was a small shack. Including the wooden bed, there was a wooden table, which could possibly fall apart at any moment, two relatively ok-looking stools, and a crate with a hole in it. On the other side of the deteriorated wooden door, there was a crock hanging, a worn old stove was under it. The fire had been put out for quite a while. Just chilly kindling was lying underneath.

Everything seemed strange to him. Xiafeng had no idea where he was. The weak and dizzy feeling was bothering him a lot as well:

“Where is this place?! It feels like I just recovered from a serious illness... like pneumonia I had in high school.”

...

Countless thoughts were going through his mind, but Xiafeng had never been in this extremely weird situation before. Panic was violently stirring up in his mind.

The only thing he felt lucky for was that there was nothing unpleasant or horrible that showed up. So, Xiafeng took several deep breaths and calmed himself down. Then, a loud shout came from afar outside the shack:

“Burn the witch! Aderon Cathedral is going to burn a witch!”

“Everybody!”

“Burn that damn witch to ashes!”

Fear and excitement were mingled together in that strange accent. Xiafeng was distracted from his panic and felt curious, he thought to himself, “Witch? What on earth is this world?”

As an adult, Xiafeng could definitely feel that something bad was going to happen there. But his thought was cut off by a sudden crashing sound that came from the door. A twelve or thirteen-year-old boy came rushing in.

“Lucien!” The brown-haired boy, wearing linen clothes reaching to his knees, was standing beside the bed as he exclaimed in surprise, “You’re awake! Thank god!”

Looking at the boy’s completely different-styled clothes, Xiafeng nodded his head unconsciously. A ridiculous thought arose in his messy mind: “Lucien... Witch... Cathedral... Burn... Am I in a different world or even in another dimension? It seems like... I am in ‘The Middle Ages’ of Europe now, at the time when witch hunting was prevalent...”

If things had to go wrong, they always would. Murphy’s Law was reminding Xiafeng in a cold way. The color of the boy’s hair and his clothes were all proof of his guess. Xiafeng could instinctively understand and speak this unknown language, but he was far from being a linguist, so he could not even tell what kind of language they were speaking.

The small boy, with several dusty black marks on his face, was not surprised at all when he saw Xiafeng's strange behavior. "Mom didn't believe me. During mid-night she always cries, and her eyes would swell up with tears, she keeps murmuring, 'my poor little Evans', like you were already buried in the cemetery."

"Daddy didn't know what to do, so he asked that little bastard Simon to bring a message to Lord Venn's mansion, asking for my brother to somehow come back. Now he is a Knight's Squire. Of course, the charity doctor would not dare to claim his unreasonable, ridiculous price in front of a knight squire!" The boy talked with his chin slightly raised, feeling sincerely proud.

"But look, I was right! I knew you were gonna be fine! I knew it!"— he was talking, he grabbed Xiafeng's arm — "Let's go! They are gonna burn that vicious witch. It's the very same witch who made you go to jail and be interrogated for the whole night by the church guards!"

Xiafeng wanted to think more about his current situation, so he was not interested in going out at all. Besides, they were going to burn a person to death. That was something completely unacceptable for the kind-hearted Xiafeng, at least, he believed he was. But the last thing the boy mentioned shocked him, "The witch had something to do with me?"

Xiafeng, therefore, changed his mind. With his arm in the boy's hand, he stumbled out of the room and followed the boy towards the cathedral.

Xiafeng looked around the people on the way. It was warm outside. Most men were wearing narrow-sleeved linen clothes, the same color pants and shoes without heels, while women wore monotonous roughly cut long dresses with big pockets. It was simple and old.

Most of them had brown hair and eyes, while some outstanding-outlined faces had red or black hair with green or blue eyes.

"This is really Middle Age?" Xiafeng found out he himself was wearing the same clothes.

Soon after they came out of the slum filled with low and shabby shacks, they saw a not so large but solemn and grand cathedral with high arched ceilings in front of them. On the biggest ceiling hung a large white cross. The windows under it were very narrow and small.

Lots of people had gathered there already. Following the small boy, Xiaofeng squeezed through the crowd and kept pushing forward. This made some people irritated and they stared at them angrily, but they knew that as adults, they could not misbehave on the square of Aderon.

Soon, Xiaofeng could see ahead. They were in the very front of the crowd now.

In the center of the square, a twenty-something, pale-faced beautiful woman in a black robe was tied to a wooden cross. People were throwing stones and pieces of wood while shouting, swearing, and spitting at her:

“Go to hell! Damned witch!”

“You wanted everyone in Aderon to die!?”

“My poor Tracy! She died several months ago... Must be because of you! You evil!”

...

The woman in the black robe got hit several times, but she just tightly shut her pale and thin lips, without letting out a groan. Standing there like a statue, she looked at the crowd.

In the front of the crowd stood a middle-aged man wearing a baggy white golden embroidered robe, with a white beret on his head and a white cross in his hands. He remained silent all the time, appearing solemn and respectful. Several men and women were standing behind him. All of them were wearing the same neat white robes. Their faces were fresh and rosy, standing in a sharp contrast to the poor and dirty crowd on the square.

Behind the white robes, there was a mighty row of armored guards

in chainmail.

The middle-aged man looked at his pocket watch and stepped forward. He raised the round badge in his hand.

Instantly, those indignant and resentful people who were arguing all shut their mouths and quieted down.

Xiafeng could hear the sound of wind passing through people's clothes.

He was very impressed. Even in contemporary society, people's absolute obedience and quick response like this would require at least several months' of training. What kind of authority or power could be able to make all those poor people be so compliant like an army?

The middle-aged man was holding the badge, speaking with a low but penetrating voice which resounded all over the square, "You poor sinner. You are deceived by the devil and become greedy for power. Both your body and soul have been corrupted. Only the Light can purify. It is punishment, but also the mercy of God."

"Burn her! Burn her!" People's cries started gathering together and becoming louder and louder.

The scene of the fanatical people crying loudly at the same time made Xiafeng shudder. If they knew he actually came from another world, Lucien, or say, Xiafeng, whose soul had been occupied by the "demon", would be the one on the gallows next time.

"Before the Light shades on you," the man asked in a merciful manner, "Confess your sins! Sincere penitence can save your soul. Then your soul would ascend to heaven where God lives."

The women in the black robe suddenly started crazily laughing, her voice was very powerful. "What I pursue is the true form of magic, not the true form of God! Burn me! I will see your heaven being destroyed and your cathedral collapse in the flames!"

"Insane!"

“Vicious!”

“She cursed the bishop! Kill them all! These damned witches following the demons!”

“Burn her to ashes!”

The bishop remained silent, but the poor people were screaming and shouting hysterically with great fever.

It was the first time for Xiafeng to see this kind of terrifying madness. “Too dangerous here.” He was deeply shocked.

He really wanted to be caring towards that woman, but he dared not take any action or those insane individuals would execute him with huge amounts of rocks. Xiafeng was also confused to find that there was no wood beneath that woman.

“How are they gonna burn her without any firewood?”

The bishop started praying, his voice was loud and cold, “You, the sinner. Go to hell under the Light!”

The cross in his hand suddenly burst forth with splendid light. The light was so bright that all Xiafeng could see was a white mass.

It was like the bishop was holding a small sun, solemn, pure, and grand looking. Including the small boy, everyone lowered their heads and started praying.

Beams of light gathered and took off capably to the unmistakable blue sky. When it reached the ceiling, the light reflected back and fell straightforwardly on the gallows.

Fierce red flames flared up even higher than a person’s height and devoured the woman.

She laughed and cursed Insanely.

“In the blazes, I will see your shrewd paradise demolished.”

“In the blazes, I will see your fabulous house of God crumbling.”

“In the blazes, I will see you individuals everlastingly worsened!”

...

Her thrilling cries and curses were lingering in everyone's ears until she was burned down to ashes.

However, Xiafeng was completely stunned since earlier when the cross erupted with dazzling light.

“This is not medieval Europe...”

“This is a world where magic truly exists!”

“My name is... Lucien...”

Chapter 2: The Knowledge that Came with Me

In the center of the square, the beautiful witch in black had been completely burned down to ashes. However, her maniacal laughter and curses were still lingering there. Many people shuddered in fear and looked around, then they followed the bishop into the cathedral where they started to pray and confess their sins.

Lucien felt as if the blazingly bright light was still present in the square. He could still feel the sacred and dominating power the light contained. Xiaofeng was so shocked that he had already made up his mind to accept his identity as Lucien. He needed to bury his past in the very bottom of his heart, in fear that people in this world might regard him as evil too.

“The divine power is so amazing...” Instead of feeling awed or even terrified by that power like common people, Lucien was wondering if he could have a chance of learning it.

At this time, Lucien got such a heavy slap on his left shoulder that he almost lost his footing.

“Oh, my poor little Evans! Thank God! Thank God, you don’t have to suffer like your poor father! A nice young fellow like you deserves God’s grace!”

Lucien was dragged back from his thoughts. He found a middle-aged woman, who was twice his size, wiping her tears of joy as she kept patting his shoulder with her bear-paw-liked huge palms.

Lucien managed to move a little bit to evade her palm which almost made him cough out blood. He opened his mouth but could not speak a word. He did not know her name, not even his own full name. Should he be Lucien Evans?

After watching him just standing there, the woman had an even more sorry look on her face. “My little Evans. You’re still suffering from your mental illness. Look at you, so skinny...”

Xiafeng was embarrassed because he had not acquired any memory from Lucien. He was also afraid of letting people know that he was not the real Lucien. From a certain perspective, yes, Lucien's body now was genuinely being occupied by someone else.

Fortunately, a middle-aged man standing beside the middle-aged woman stopped her. "Alisa, don't talk to little Evans too much. He has just recovered. He must be feeling tired right now. Iven, help your mom and let's go home."

The blonde-haired man was kind of skinny with his back bending forward slightly. But Lucien could still tell he was a good-looking guy in his younger days. For Lucien, the man was like an angel, who saved him from this difficult situation.

"Thanks, auntie Alisa. I'm fine. Just feeling a little bit dizzy." Lucien responded carefully.

The boy, Iven, who dragged Lucien here to see the witch, was holding his mom's arm. He made a funny face and said to his mom, "I knew he was not gonna die. Only you always think that he's still a baby who needs to be taken care of all the time."

Auntie Alisa was still wiping her tears, "Evans, it's so nice to see you're getting better now. She deserved this! That damned vicious witch!"

She kept on nagging while walking, "When she just moved close to your place, she looked so beautiful and nice. I was even thinking of marrying her to my little John. But she, she was a witch! She tried to steal the bodies buried in the cemetery to experiment her evil spells! Thanks to God! The night watchman of the inquisition caught her red-handed while stealing! I can't even imagine if she had succeeded, how many people would die in our area..."

Following them, Lucien got a brief overview of what happened from Alisa's words. The woman got caught by the night watchman. As her neighbor, Lucien was also put under the interrogation of the inquisition. They probably used some kind of holy spell on him which affected him mentally. So they did figure out that he was innocent, but at the same time, they seriously hurt the real Lucien.

He died after that and, therefore, Xiafeng got the chance to possess his body.

The man noticed that Lucien remained silent all the way. He patted on Lucien's shoulder, comforting him in a low voice, "She's just like this. Just ignore her."

Lucien nodded.

The man looked at Alisa from behind and sighed. "Alisa, she was such a pleasant and beautiful girl in the past, but after she gave birth to John, she was like being controlled by the demon. Barely one year after we married, she became like this..."

He emotionally sighed again. He paused a bit and added, "I'm no longer a well-matched opponent for her, though."

Lucien was still suffering from his wide mood swings. He forced out a smile and did not say anything. He did not know the man's name yet.

Somehow, Alisa heard her husband's complaint. She threw back a snort of contempt, "Joel, the bard, you, who was once full of passion and romance, the young guy who came here to pursue his dream of music, are an incorrigible drunkard now."

Joel smiled awkwardly. "Aalto is the City of Psalm. Countless young people are flocking to the city in pursuit of their dreams. But how many of them ever succeed? By the way, Alisa, I've quit drinking since John started working..."

Auntie Alisa looked back and stared at him, "Thanks God. You understand that we've put all our hope on John and Iven. John's a good boy. He worked so hard and was selected by Sir Knight Venn as his squire. If John can manage to awaken the 'Blessing' in his blood and be knighted by the grand duke, then our son can be a lord! A respectable nobility!"

Joel shuddered slightly under the stern gaze from his wife, that just then thought about Lucien.

"Oh! I'm so sorry, little Evans!" Alisa stopped herself and winked at

Joel for help, “I didn’t mean that! You’re talented too... You just needed more training when you were younger...”

But the apology did not really help with the situation.

Joel laughed loudly and patted Lucien’s shoulder again. “He’s fine. Our Lucien is the guy who’s gonna carry forward my dream of becoming a musician!”

Lucien was not really paying attention to them. He half-heartedly said with a giggle, “Yeah...I wanna be a musician...”

Seeing Lucien laughing, Alisa felt relieved and continued her nagging again, which actually helped Lucien know more about the city.

The City of Aalto was a big and prosperous city, located close to the Dark Mountain Range. It enjoyed the reputation as the City of Psalm and was full of opportunities.

This area was named Aderon, which was the place where the poorest of peoples in Aalto gathered. Besides, because of his absence due to illness for the past couple of days, Lucien had already lost his job as a porter in the market.

A moment later, the four of them arrived in front of Lucien’s place.

Alisa invited Lucien for dinner but he politely refused her, “Thanks, Auntie Alisa, but I need some more rest.”

Before leaving, little Iven moved closer to Lucien, and asked curiously, “Lucien, when did you decide to become a musician? You never told me about it before...”

“5 minutes ago,” Lucien answered emotionlessly.

“OH... I... SEE...” Iven nodded admiringly.

After getting into his shack, Lucien locked the door from inside. He sat there unconsciously and buried his head deep into his elbows.

“No kidding! I’m in a different world!

“A crazy world where magic actually exists!

“In this world, they burn people alive! With gallows!”

Lucien's strong emotions finally burst out. He was surprised and scared. Xiaofeng was kind of shy and not really experienced in his own world. Before, he often panicked facing difficult situation, but this time, Xiaofeng himself was even surprised seeing how he managed to remain calm until now.

Difficulties forge a person stronger. Time went by and night came. Lucien finally calmed himself down; Since he had decided to live in this time period, now he should not panic, worry or be scared at all. He should plan for his future carefully. If he died again this time, he was pretty sure it would be forever.

He stopped himself from worrying about his parents and friends. When he was about to plan for what to do next, hunger struck him. It felt like there was a fire burning inside his stomach. Lucien swallowed his saliva several times and decided to find something to eat first.

He walked towards the only crate in his place. Inside of the big box, except for some old clothes, there were two loafs of “bread-shaped” black thing and seven copper coins.

Hunger controlled his brain. Lucien hurriedly took a big bite.

“Crack!” This bite almost destroyed Lucien's front teeth. “What the hell? It's like a wooden club?”

It took Lucien quite a while to make sure the thing he was holding was a real bread, which was just hard enough to knock out an adult.

Fighting against his hunger, Lucien found some flints in the crate and started roasting his bread.

“Brown Braised Pork, Spicy Chicken Wings, Roasted Beef, Kung Pao Chicken...” he muttered while staring at the bread as it was being roasted. When the bread became a little bit soft, Lucien could not stop himself and took a hurried bite... It was like...chewing a piece

of wood.

But, that was all Lucien had. He devoured the bread and sighed. "I'd rather die if I'm gonna eat this every day... I must earn more... I don't want to live like this."

Then he thought about the bishop and the pastors. Neatly dressed, they looked so noble with their incredible divine power. Lucien felt excited. "I wonder if I could learn that power and become like one of them..." But the next moment he changed his mind, "...No...a person like me going to church, it's like myself asking them to burn me to ashes. I don't know if there are other ways there, say... that blessing?"

"What about all the knowledge I learned in my previous world. Is it still useful here?" Stuffing the bread into his mouth, Lucien started thinking about how to make a living. When he was retrieving the knowledge he learned in the university, he found something astonishing present in his brain.

After taking a close look, Lucien's eyes opened wide in surprise. "These are... these are the books from the library. They also came here... with me?"

All the books collected in the library were present there in his mind. Instead of describing them as memories or, say, Lucien's own knowledge, they were more like projections or visuals placed into different categories, ready to be read by Lucien anytime.

Lucien tried to read them with great curiosity. But, Lucien found that he could not open a majority of them. They were locked.

Chapter 3: Midnight

Since Lucien somehow managed to come to this completely different world, he was not that surprised or scared to find that he actually had a whole library in his mind. What confused him more was that most of the books were locked.

He tried to remain calm so that the visuals of the books could be more “solid” or “substantial” as entities. He went through them one by one and recorded the ones that could be read and the ones that could not.

“History... no problem...

“Economics... yup.

“Arts... fine.

“Mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology... some of them are locked.

“Is it because I’m in a different world, so I cannot read these books? I can still come up with the knowledge I gained at my university, though, it hasn’t been blocked.”

Most of the unlocked books were of senior high or high school level, which was a small amount compared to teaching references of a university’s general library. There were numerous other books locked there.

Lucien was too weak to go through each category, and soon he was unable to concentrate anymore.

He dragged his feet back to the bed to get a good sleep so that he could face his second day in this world better. Only one loaf of bread was left there. Survival was always the priority, Lucien too understood this.

When his mind was getting dull and he almost went into his sweet dream, a rat’s piercing squeak and noises of wood biting woke him

up.

“Rats?”

At first, he did not pay much attention to it. He turned over in bed and was ready to fall asleep again. But the noise was getting louder and more disturbing like someone was grinding teeth on a rock.

Lucien could not fall asleep anymore. He tried to cover his ears with the blanket but the attempt was in vain; the noise had a penetrating power, and it felt like it was coming from all directions.

“Bloody hell!” Feeling frustrated, Lucien cursed out loud. He was almost going insane; food tasted like wood; roughly-cut clothes irritated his skin; the old blanket was full of holes... Now he could not even have a good sleep! Squeak...squeak...he heard squeaking noises like thousands of mice were scratching a wall.

Lucien gnashed his teeth in anger. He decided to kill one or two of the rats to scare the rest of them away. He got out of his bed and tried to listen carefully.

“I gotta get rid of this life. Soon.”

sob... sob *cry*... Now it was like someone was crying.

Lucien tried to focus, but he found there was only ghastly bitter crying lingering there.

Someone was crying... at midnight. Lucien's heart was beating fast, his brain flushed. Every hair on his body stood up. The freezing night wind blew through the broken door. Lucien grabbed the hard bread loaf to defend himself.

The crying voice now sounded like a miserable song. Lucien was even more afraid now. “It's a world of magic and divinity power. Probably there are ghosts and spirits too!”

Taking a deep breath, Lucien tried his very best to calm down and moved towards the door. Someone was crying mournfully. The night was so quiet. It was like all his neighbors were lost in their dreams.

“It’s coming from... the right side of the wall.” The closer Lucien got to the door, the clearer he could hear the crying voice, “Wait... the witch! The witch used to live there!”

He was stunned, “But her place had been burned down completely by the church. Maybe... they missed something, like a secret chamber. She might have stored her vicious experiments there.”

Lucien’s mind went away a little bit. A secret chamber... like many novels he read before, he could probably find the witch’s treasure or even notes on magic.

The piercing crying dragged him back to reality. “Yeah... get real. Something must be guarding there. How can I fight against a ghost with a bread loaf in my hands?

“Probably I’d be killed and possessed by the evil ghosts!”

He got more careful now. Lucien was glad that his mind was not controlled by the greed. But he also did not want to keep waiting here. Nobody knew if the ghost would try to come for him.

Lucien was thinking very fast. At the moment, he gathered all the strength he could muster, and carefully grabbed the handle of the door. The bread in his hand was now soaked with his sweat.

He slowly opened the door. It was very dark outside and he could hear the whistling sound of cold wind.

There was nothing terrifying there, and after he left his shack the crying voice dimmed a bit. He felt a little bit relieved and took a deep breath, then started shouting as loud as he could:

“Ghost! There’s a ghost here!”

It was so loud that even Lucien himself got surprised.

Then came a series of roaring barks from the wild dogs, and Lucien started madly rushing to the cathedral. These guys were professionals in this kind of stuff!

As the previous neighbor of the witch, he might still be under the

church's watch and there was one more benefit: Lucien's asking for help on his own could help him gain some of their trust while reducing the suspicion.

Lucien shouted loudly to wake up the other neighbors so that if they attempted to rob the treasure and frame him or even kill him for it, they wouldn't be able to do so in front of the crowd. He tried his best to think of every measure to save his life in such a short time.

Soon, he saw the cathedral in front of him with candlelight casting out of the windows.

Two armored guards were guarding the front gate. Seeing Lucien running towards them in panic, one of the guards pulled half of his sword out to be alert.

"What are you doing here?" The other guard asked as he reached out his hand to stop Lucien.

Lucien answered with trembling voice. "Ghost. There's a ghost there! In the witch's place!"

The guard got nervous after hearing that. As a newly recruited guard, he could not tell whether Lucien was telling the truth or not. So, he asked his partner to stay and went back into the cathedral to report to the pastor on duty tonight. The noise from his chainmail gradually faded as he disappeared into the darkness.

A short while later, a blond young pastor in a white robe walked out of the gate with the guard.

The pastor had a thin face. He walked in an elegant rhythm. "I'm Pastor Benjamin. Can you tell me what happened?"

The two guards were standing silently, in fear that any noise from them might disturb Pastor Benjamin.

Lucien, politely and sincerely, described in detail how he heard the ghost's crying voice, how he got out of his place and ran here asking for their help.

After hearing him, Benjamin gave Lucien a gentle smile, “You did well, my child. Your courage shows your devotion to God.”

Then he ordered the guards, “Thomson, get Gary, Paul and the two other knights here. The witch was just an apprentice. So, there’s no need to report this to the Bishop.”

“Yes, my lord,” Thomson replied reverently. Although Benjamin was only an Elementary Level Pastor, he was capable of dealing with the traps or spells left by a sorcerer’s apprentice. There was a huge gap between a formal pastor and an apprentice.

Benjamin asked Lucien’s name and stopped their conversation when the other four knights arrived; they were also wearing chain mails, but they looked much more imposing compared to the other two guards.

A crowd had already gathered some distance away from the witch’s burned cabin. Candlelight flickered like scattered stars as if accompanying the moon in the sky.

Lucien discovered that the moon in this world was silver colored.

People stopped whispering when Benjamin showed up. The crowd suddenly felt relieved and started getting closer to the witch’s cabin while talking to each other.

“I don’t hear anything.”

“No matter if it’s true or not, it does no harm to have a purification performed here.”

But Lucien could still hear the crying voice. He thought to himself, Why can’t these people hear it?

Benjamin, as if knowing what he was thinking, replied to Lucien calmly, “Yes. There are ghosts present here.”

Obviously, he heard it, as well as the four guards, who nodded to show their consent.

Chapter 4: Scarlet Eyes

Pastor Benjamin elegantly moved towards the ruined witch's cabin. He talked in a low and gentle voice, "Vicious witches, they exploit people's psyche and awareness. Especially like today's night, when the silver moon is present in the sky. That woman, fortunately, hasn't gained any real dark power. Her spells can only affect several individuals at most."

He was clarifying why only Lucien could hear the crying voice. Before Lucien could ask, as if he knew what he wanted to ask. Benjamin reached out his hands wearing white gloves and continued, "We are blessed. So only we can hear the wicked crying."

When Benjamin said that, the four guards instantly began drawing crosses on their chests and started yelling at the same time:

"Only truth lives forever."

They became more excited as they spoke.

The crowd started praying as well. "Only truth lives forever."

"This is the power of divinity... Pastor Benjamin is truly blessed by God."

Benjamin's face now looked more solemn and serious. He slowly opened his hands and spelled out an odd word:

"Paso."

Instantly a sheet of white light covered the ruins like it was coming from the moon.

In the white light, a small scarlet hole emerged on the broken wall connecting it to Lucien's place.

Like the surrounding people, the mysterious power also shocked Lucien. But, rather than being awed and respectful like the crowd,

he yearned for the divinity.

Benjamin put his hands back and ordered, “Gary, that is the door. It doesn’t have any trap. Go and open it.”

Gary puffed out his chest, as the sound of his chainmail clashing came, “Yes, my lord.”

As Gary walked past them, Lucien heard Benjamin complaining in a low voice. “Those haughty inquisition bastards! Except ‘Magic Trap Detection’, they never bother double checking with ‘Secret Door Detection’. They can’t be so irresponsible just because she was an apprentice.”

Gary, effortlessly, broke down the wall with his strong muscle. The other guard hauled out his heavy sword and fiercely hacked. A black hole appeared in the corner of the wall.

It was a narrow hole, enough for only one person to pass through. A stinking smell came from it, which made Lucien almost throw up. Lucien took a couple of steps backward, and he noticed that Benjamin was covering his nose and mouth with the right hand, with his eyebrows frowning.

Gary reported, “This tunnel leads to the sewers.”

Benjamin was still frowning his eyebrows. His muffled voice came from under his covered mouth, “Are you sure?”

“Yes. We can see the sewer from here.” Gary was pretty certain.

As an elegant and noble pastor from the long-established and honored Rafati family, Benjamin was more than reluctant to go down into the smelly, dirty pipes. He had not mastered a “Purifying” spell yet, so he must rely on the runes and divinity instruments. But no one knew how long it would take to find the witch’s chamber.

“Hmm... Just a Sorcerer Apprentice, a Saint Truth Badge would be enough.” Benjamin turned his eyes towards Lucien. His voice became solemn again.

“Lucien, you once lived near that vicious witch. Something evil must have contaminated you. But your devotion towards God touched me, and you deserve a chance to purify the evil in there as well as yourself. Go, Lucien, I’m gonna lend you my badge to help you. May God bless you.”

Lucien’s brain started buzzing like it had just got hammered. He thought everything was going to be fine after he went to Pastor Benjamin and the guards. But, the pastor told him to go down there! He was just an ordinary guy, who recently recovered from illness, but now he had to go underground to face the devil! Were they kidding?

Seeing Lucien’s dumbfounded and hesitant face, Benjamin kindly asked,

“You are saying... NO?”

Lucien felt terrified hearing Benjamin’s gentle voice. If he refused, he might again get suspected by the church. Besides, Benjamin will lend him the magic badge and his guards were supposed to go with Lucien. Lucien thought this mission would not be that dangerous.

Lucien had no choice though. The crowd was praising Pastor Benjamin’s generosity and the Mercy of God. Lucien squeezed out a bitter smile and answered, “No. That would be my honor.”

The pastor just ignored Lucien’s bitterness. He took off the badge on his neck and handed it to Lucien. “This is the Saint Truth Badge. I’ll cast a Blessing spell on you as well, so you can focus better. When you chant the spell and touch the badge, you can call the power of God.”

Hearing his words, Lucien calmed down a little bit, then he started getting curious about the badge.

It was a gold badge embedded with a shining white cross, around which were different lines and patterns such as circles, squares, triangles. They were connected with each other, giving it an even more mysterious and solemn look.

When Lucien was holding the badge, he felt a gentle and loving power penetrating all over his body. Even in the cold night, Lucien felt like he was standing under the warm sunshine.

“The badge contains two inferior spells: Light and Minor Injury Healing. It additionally contains three level-one spells: Shield of Light, Sword of Light, and Holy Strike. Each can be used once a day. Now, pay attention to the chants.”

As an ordinary individual, Lucien understood how important these spells were to him. The spells were not long, but rather their tone was hard to master. It took him a while to barely remember them.

Benjamin reached out his hand again, casting a beam of white light on Lucien. Lucien felt refreshed and much healthier after the light vanished. People’s voices also became more clear to him:

“This guy got the badge from Pastor Benjamin.”

“Oh! Benevolent Lord Benjamin!”

“We praise god! We praise the pastor!”

Lucien waited and watched Benjamin casting Blessing on the guards. There was always an interval of two to three seconds between his castings.

After the preparation, Benjamin said, “Paul, you stay at the entrance here. Gary, Howson, Corella, you go in with Lucien.”

His face then became serious as he drew a cross on his chest, “May the lights of God bless you.”

“Only truth lives forever!” Those guards got energized and started shouting. Lucien was a little bit slow, standing there he felt embarrassed.

As they were walking towards the tunnel, the guard, Paul, went near Benjamin and asked in a low voice, “My lord, why him?”

With the badge and spells, the guards could bring out the power as well. Despite the fact that they were slower than the pastors, they

were still much better than a weak young boy. If Benjamin did not want to go down there on his own, he could still ask the guards to do the job.

The pastor looked at the entrance of the secret passage, and replied slowly, “His soul is stronger than the average person. He can do the work better.”

“He’s too old to be taught, though,” he added.

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The mixed, stinking smell inside the hole made Lucien almost throw up.

“You live in Aderon, and you dislike the smell of pipe? It seems like you all are living a better life than I thought. In the City of Chant, Antiffler, poor people with nowhere to hide live in the sewers.” Corella, a guy with black hair and big cheekbones, remarked unexpectedly.

Before Lucien opened his mouth, Gary moved and shushed Corella.

The latter shrugged his shoulders and stopped talking. He stepped forward and jumped into the pipes, followed by Lucien.

Lucien stepped on something slippery. After taking a close look, he found that they were weird mosses. They were everywhere and slightly lighted the whole space.

Gary kept his voice low, “I, Howson, and Corella are high-level knight squires. We’ll try our best to protect you. When you are in danger, summon the Sword of Light as soon as possible.” He wore blond whiskers. Every movement of his was calm and confident. He seemed like the acknowledged leader of the four guards.

Gary was holding the sword in his right hand and a small shield in the left. He took the lead and moved deeper into the darkness.

The miserable crying was increasing louder and louder. It originated from all around. For ordinary people, it was almost impossible to tell the direction. But, the special-trained guards and

‘blessed’ Lucien could easily find where the crying was coming from.

No one was living down here as Corella mentioned. The whole space was terrifyingly quiet except for the lingering bitter crying.

They passed several forks and stopped at a normal corner.

Gary stared at the wall which was fully covered by dark green moss, telling Lucien in a cool voice, “Summon the Sword of Light.”

Terrified and excited, Lucien calmed himself down under the help of Blessing and began concentrating on the badge hanging on his neck, feeling the warm and soft power in it. He put his left hand on the badge and gently rubbed it, and at the same time, he whispered:

“Geesairon.”

Lucien’s spirit blended with the white light and began to form into a shining sword.

“This is my voice?” Lucien was surprised. His voice sounded deep and husky.

Lucien grabbed the sword. He could feel the power. Gary’s order pulled him back to reality, “Slash the wall there.”

His body trembled slightly. Lucien didn’t know what he was going to face: Powerful magic? Evil ghost? Fatal trap? He had no idea.

Corella sneered at him.

Lucien knew he had no other choice. He took a deep breath, clenched his teeth, and screamed loudly in his mind:

Death is not a big deal!

He slashed the disgusting slippery wall with all his might. The stone was like a pile of mud before the sword. Something weird got cut inside as well. Lucien felt something breaking, with dark gas leaking, and disappearing under the sword edge.

The wall collapsed completely.

Behind the wall, there was endless deep darkness.

Suddenly, two weird, cold, hideous spots of red rose in the darkness.

And then more and more scarlet spots started emerging, densely dotted.

They resembled... pairs of eyes!

Chapter 5: The Sudden Turn of Events

Confronting those red eyes, Lucien felt his hands and legs were shaking, his head buzzing. Different thoughts about what he should or should not do overwhelmed him, so he just stood there.

“Badge! I still have the badge!”

The badge was his greatest support. When Lucien was trying to concentrate and cast the shield spell, a sudden shout from Gary almost terrified him out of his wits.

“Cast Light!” Gary’s voice was calm and decisive. He shouted loudly to bring them back to the reality from fear.

Right! Lucien realized that their top priority was to be able to see clearly. He rubbed the badge and murmured, “Gaya.”

A ball of white light appeared in front of them and pushed the darkness away.

Then Lucien saw them, red-eyed rats of regular size. The floor, walls and even a weird human-shaped plant were all covered with the black rats like a crazy swarm, giving Lucien goose bumps.

The rats also saw their enemies. As soon as the light appeared, they started screaming and flooding towards the humans.

At that moment, they managed to take a glimpse of the chamber: a desk was placed in the corner with three glowing books on it; another flat, broad, weird-looking table was at the center of the room, drawn with different strange patterns, like red, blue or green, similar to the Saint Truth Badge. There were also some small stoves, pots, and glass bottles.

But, they did not get enough time to notice details as those crazy stinking monsters already jumped in front of them.

Howson and Corella held their swords and shields, with their backs against Gary, in a simple formation.

The leading rat threw himself right at Lucien. Its mouth was open wide, showing its two long and sharp fangs.

Lucien raised his Sword of Light and hurriedly swung at the head of the red-eyed rat. However, he was too nervous to predict the rat's movement, and the blade missed, although the light coming out of the sword still caught it. Lucien could smell the rat's burning flesh. Its skin turned black and rolled up inwards.

But the rat did not stop and was already in front of Lucien's face as if it could not feel the pain. He could smell the rotting odor coming from its mouth.

Lucien was too nervous to make the right decision. He tried to lift his sword once again and at the same time reached out his left hand to try to defend. Due to his panic he almost dropped the sword.

Feeling desperate, Lucien couldn't help but watch the creature about to sink its sharp teeth into his chest.

At this critical point, a shining blade arrived and hacked the rat directly, splitting it in two parts.

"Do not panic. Protect your vital parts. You still have the healing spell." Commanded Gary.

Corella also ordered in a sharp voice, "You idiot! Come here with us! You wanna die standing at the front?"

They were aware that Lucien was the only guy among them with a badge, which was very important to them. They could probably survive facing these insane rats without any spells, but no one knew what was waiting for them next.

Lucien tried to calm himself down. The guards were well-trained, so when facing dangers they knew what they should do. But, Lucien, a little boy, could not protect himself. No one was born for fighting, or with the ability to remain calm in the face of dangers.

In this first real fight, the guidance from an experienced guard like Gary would be a precious lesson for Lucien in the future.

After a moment Lucien finally calmed down. While hacking with his sword, he gradually stepped back and joined the guards.

Now, instead of one or two, hundreds of rats started insanely attacking them.

Lucien's sword was sharp and splendid. When he swung it, the sword was surrounded by a halo, and Lucien could see an almost solid afterimage of it through its path. According to Gary's command, Lucien's wielded the sword of light to shield them.

Any rat that ran into him was cut down in half by his blade. The smoldering cuts burned rats' organs and skin charred without dropping a single drop of blood. Some of the strikes missed, but even then the fur and skin charred and they became slower, crashing into the floor right before Lucien.

The three guards were responsible for the remaining ones.

"Haha, great job kid!" Corella whistled.

Lucien did not feel satisfied, though. He could feel the power of the sword was gradually decreasing.

Gary was still hacking the remaining ones, "Calm down. We have enough power to deal with these monsters."

A new wave of attack came again, like a black swarm.

Lucien was improving rapidly. Although still worried, he decided to trust himself and the three guards.

The hacked bodies of dead rats fell to the ground like rain drops. But some red-eyed rats still managed to pass through the defense and moved towards them quickly.

They cannot handle all of them. Lucien was thinking worriedly. Nobody could wield a sword that fast.

Of course, they were fighting not only with their swords. Two small silver shields were cooperating with the swords. The crazy jumping rats could not stop in time and knocked directly into the metal.

Many were twitching on the floor and died soon.

Corella laughed, “You can’t be a good knight without a shield!”

After several rounds of attack, the red-eyed rats changed their pattern. Instead of throwing themselves directly towards their faces, some started approaching through the floor, while others climbed on the wall to attack them from above.

The situation again turned serious.

“Leave those coming from above to me.” The tall Howson, who was silent all the time, said to them.

Lucien nodded with appreciation, wielding his light sword to defend from the rats on the ground. “Shield of Light?”

“Not yet.” Gary shook his head.

They were like a small boat floating in a roaring ocean. They could be easily destroyed.

Suddenly, Howson missed one rat, which fell directly on Corella’s shoulder. The rat gave him a bitter bite in his neck. Corella groaned with pain and twitched his shoulder.

“I got bit! It’s numb there. Their teeth must be poisonous.” He swore bitterly.

“Let me do the healing.” Lucien was about to rub the badge but was stopped by Gary.

“Corella can still hang in there. There are too many rats. Save it after... Ouch!”

Before he finished, Gary got bit under his kneecap.

Soon the guards started focusing on their unprotected parts. But unlike them who were wearing kneecaps, boots and chain mails, Lucien was merely wearing linen short clothes. Suddenly he got bit in his ankle.

Feeling pain and numbness from his ankle. Lucien almost lost his balance. He felt thirsty at the same time. He wanted water.

“Protect yourself. Raise your Shield of Light first. Then use Healing.” Gary commanded. Half of the rats were dead already.

Lucien quickly became focused and rubbed the badge.

“Simen.”

A white shield of light appeared and covered him. He would need more time to cast another spell, so he took a step forward, trying to cover his companions under the shield and the sword wall.

After a couple of seconds, Lucien concentrated again. He rubbed the badge.

“Gourdi.”

A white light radiated from the cross and covered his ankle. The numb feeling disappeared instantly.

Although Corella and Gary were still injured, the situation had been turned around. The number of red-eyed rats decreased, so Lucien seized the chance and healed the wounded as well.

Stabbing through the last rat, Corella sighed slightly, “Finally over.”

The ground was covered with layers of dead bodies and dark blood.

Standing there, Lucien could not believe he actually made it. Gary nodded to him, “You did well, Lucien.” Then he turned around, “You guys did a good job, too.”

Corella’s face looked weird. Then he answered in a confused and fearful voice, “How...Howson’s not here...”

The silent but reliable Howson, who was protecting them from behind, disappeared?!

Lucien started feeling creepy again.

Chapter 6: Accident

None of them heard any sound of struggling, screaming, or of anyone leaving. The robust and silent Howson, a high-level knight squire, just... disappeared?

A chilly feeling rose from Lucien's feet and quickly spread all over his body. He held the hilt of his sword tight, and his breathing became heavier.

He quickly turned his head but saw nothing. The sewer wall on the other side was covered with weird shining green moss.

Suddenly, a bitter scream broke the deadly silence. Lucien quickly turned and saw a terrifying scene: a monstrous rat as big as a man had tripped Corella and sunk its sharp nails into his shoulder. Blood gushed all over Corella's silver chain mail, dying it red. The monster had scarlet evil eyes that withered.

However, Corella's blade stopped its row of long and sharp teeth from causing damage.

As a knight squire, Corella saved his own life with the most common movement in their training: he thrust the shield on his left hand with all his strength into the rat's stomach.

Nothing was scarier than the unknown so, at least for Lucien, a huge rat showing itself was much better than an adult man disappearing all of a sudden for no reason.

Lucien took a deep breath and swung his sword of light at the huge rat, to help Corella.

At that moment, a bestial roar came from behind Lucien.

"Gary?" When Lucien was about to turn, a knight saber hacked at his back.

The white light of the shield trembled and dimmed a bit. The huge impact pushed Lucien several steps forward, and he almost lost his

balance.

However, the attack didn't stop there. The saber was chasing Lucien and continuously tried to hurt him. Lucien did his best to dodge it, while having no time to fight back or use his badge. He felt confused and surprised. "Why? Gary?!"

Lucien could not see clearly in the darkness. If it was not Gary, then there was only one possibility: Gary was already dead!

With good timing, the saber gave Lucien no chance to find his balance, and soon he was pushed into the corner. Lucien was surprised that with the protection of the shield he did not get injured from the attacks at all. He took a deep breath and tried to calm down, getting ready for the next attack.

Then, he dodged the saber's assault by throwing himself on the ground. At the same time, his left hand grabbed the badge.

This time, Lucien finally saw who was attacking him. It was the group's leader, Gary.

Nevertheless, the muscles on his face were contorted, and his eyes were shining with scarlet light. He looked like an insane beast.

The poison from the rats! The poison could deprive human's consciousness and turn them into bloodthirsty beast! Lucien tried to understand, But why haven't I been affected?

Without further thinking, Lucien rubbed the badge and started chanting. A round iron shield launched a hard whack on Lucien's shield of light. Although the shield did not break, the violent impact suffocated Lucien for a second, interrupting his casting.

The continuous whacking prevented Lucien from concentrating. As a promising knight squire, Gary received formal training to interrupt spellcasting.

A layman like Lucien, with no basic training, would be unable to resist the disturbances from a knight squire. Any trainee pastor or sorcerer apprentice, with a level-one Saint Truth Badge and a Shield of Light could have killed Gary.

In the same level, a spellcaster was always superior.

While Lucien was being trapped with Gary, Corella could not hold the rat back much longer. His right hand was trembling from the effort of holding the enemy's mouth away.

Fortunately, the huge humanoid rat also became weaker.

Unable to cast the spell, Lucien changed his mind and swung his sword of light upwards. He knew that his summoned sword was much stronger than the guard's saber.

Although the swing did not strike true, the radiance from the sword terrified Gary. He stopped attacking Lucien's shield and switched to a defensive position hurriedly.

It seemed like he didn't want to be further apart from Lucien: for a traditional knight, letting his enemy successfully cast a spell would be very dangerous.

Without any sound of impact, the sword cut Gary's saber as if it was piece of wood. Gary barely managed to raise his shield in time and block with it, but the sword left a deep crack right in the middle of the shield.

When Lucien was about to launch his next attack the sword of light suddenly turned into thousands of shining pieces, indicating the spell used up all its power. Actually, its power started decreasing at the very beginning, when it destroyed the magic wall concealing the chamber.

Lucien was unable to react for a moment, and Gary seized the chance, smashing Lucien's protection with his shield.

Now, Lucien's sword and shield were both gone.

Having no time to hesitate, Lucien rubbed the badge desperately to cast his last spell.

"S... Ow!"

Before Lucien could spell out the rest of the chant, Gary punched

his stomach. Like a cooked shrimp, Lucien cowered in great pain. A wave of strong acid, rising from his stomach, burned his throat.

Gary reached out his hand and squeezed Lucien's neck, choking him.

Lucien struggled fiercely, and used his right hand to try to free his neck. He felt great pain in his neck and lungs, and his eyes were turning black. The badge in his left hand was being held firmly to his chest by Gary's other hand.

Lucien could hear his own gasp. He could feel the cold metal glove Gary was wearing. It felt like Lucien's soul had left his body, and was observing from the side.

Suddenly, Lucien's will to survive erupted. His soul power increased dramatically all of a sudden and broke through a certain limit, spreading like water from an ocean.

At the same time, Gary's strength started disappearing. Lucien got a precious chance to breathe. Learning from his past mistakes, this time Lucien did not waste any time being hesitant or confused. He tried to focus and grabbed the badge again.

As soon as he touched it, Lucien's spirit suddenly entered into an illusionary world of light, where many lines, circles and triangles formed a weird-looking cross in the air.

Lucien recognized the cross instantly: It was the cross on Benjamin's badge! And he could feel that Benjamin's power was continuously coming out of the cross!

Out of curiosity, Lucien moved closer and tried to touch it. The cross suddenly trembled and started accumulating power. Soon he felt its power became overwhelming!

Feeling the danger, Lucien hurriedly tried to retrieve his spirit back to the real world but it was too late: A white beam of light shot out from the cross and burned his spirit on the side. A strong nauseous feeling hit him. Lucien felt like his head was splitting. And two streams of cool, rusty-metal-smelling liquid came down from his

nose.

Suddenly, the light beam somehow materialized and burst out from the badge that Lucien was wearing. Gary did not have a slight of chance to withdraw his hand. Starting from the hand squeezing Lucien's neck, the light beam quickly dissolved his arm and part of his shoulder in seconds like some kind of super-strong corroding acid. There was no blood coming out, and the wounds instantly turned black.

Divine power can be activated without any spell? This surprised Lucien. He quickly dodged to avoid the enemy's following attack.

However, he felt all his muscles aching and it was hard to move.

Then, what Lucien saw shocked him greatly: Gary was lying on the ground, dying, with his eyes half open, and the scarlet light on them was gone.

The pool of blood left by the dead rats had evaporated, forming a red mist and pervading the chamber and nearby pipes.

The weird, human-shaped plant in the corner was stretching its branches cozily in the blood mist.

On the other side lied Corella and Howson, with their own sabres stabbing each other's back.

Chapter 7: Gain and Temptation

Surrounded by the red mist, Lucien felt his limbs melting, and the nerves in his brain swelling and jerking. In his eyes, Corella and Howson changed from human bodies to giant rats and continued switching back and forth.

“It’s... an illusion...?!” Lucien was quite sure. So, he concentrated and spread his spirit again like waves. Then, everything became stable. No changes or contortion happened.

Lucien saw Corella and Howson lying on the ground, with wounds all over their bodies, dying.

“This is a well-designed magic trap... Did the illusion originate from the blood of the rats, or the peculiar plant?” Lucien thought to himself. He finally understood that from the very beginning, when they killed the first rat, they were already trapped in the illusion. Lucien was protected by the light shield, and his spiritual power was a little bit stronger than common people, so he was unaffected by the illusion.

The Holy Strike that shot out of the badge not only evaporated Gary’s right hand and shoulder, but also the stone ceiling of the chamber. There was a wide hole there, from which chunks of stone were falling like rain, as if the chamber would cave in at any time.

Dust and small stones dispersed the red mist. Lucien felt his strength gradually recovering.

Having no idea what would happen next, his brain started quickly functioning again: Except for two more Light spells, Lucien got nothing useful left. And his muscles were still weak from the paralyzing red mist.

Then his attention was drawn to the plant in the corner, which was shaking and wobbling due to the falling stones.

“The plant cannot protect itself aside from creating an illusion?” Lucien wondered. He tried his best to stand up again and then

dragged his body towards the plant. He moved very slowly and faltered several times. Sharp stones kept falling on him, leaving painful wounds all over his body.

Lucien took a deep breath and kept moving. After so much experience, he became calm and decisive. Reaching out his right hand, he firmly grabbed the main stem of the plant.

The plant had a pulse like that of a living being! Lucien felt like he was grabbing veins of a creature, beating with blood. He pulled the stem with all his strength.

Suddenly, the plant shrank and burst out an extremely bitter and sharp scream.

Lucien did not succeed on his first try. So, he kept twisting it with all his strength. Like a dying man struggling for survival, the plant screamed, stretched out its branches and entangled them around Lucien's arm.

The plant was moist, slimy, and cold, and its tentacles had countless tiny burrs which kept burying themselves into Lucien's skin. Fighting back his fear, Lucien pulled hard again.

“Crack!”

The plant suddenly stopped screaming. Red liquid spurted out of it and splattered all over Lucien's chest, leaving a strong bloody smell in the air. Feeling limp, Lucien hurriedly leaned against the wall to maintain his balance.

After the plant was snapped in half, the red mist became much denser and almost turned into liquid. As soon as the blood mist from the plant reached the three books on the desk, they instantly started corroding. It only took a couple of seconds to completely corrode all the books. Lucien didn't get any time to read anything.

“It must be another magic trap”, Lucien thought. In case the chamber got discovered, these sorcerer's notes would destroy themselves automatically when the mist reached a certain density.

“Argh!” It was such a pity for Lucien. He was hoping to find some

mighty magic spells in the notes.

Just then, he noticed something shining in his spirit library.

Out of curiosity, Lucien let his spirit enter the library. Then, his eyes opened wide with great surprise: A new bookshelf appeared! And there was a small tag which read “Magic (Arcana)”. Under the tag there were three books. They were the same ones which got destroyed.

“The library can collect books as well?!... Wait, what about the content, then? I didn’t have a chance to read them at all.” Lucien was trying to understand how the library worked. “As the corrosion happened really fast, the whole books were still destroyed page after page. Probably the library can copy the content... then the projections of the books can be stored here...”

Lucien was just guessing. He needed more proof.

Staring at the three labels, a strong hesitant feeling rose in Lucien’s mind: Wouldn’t it be too dangerous to learn magic in a world where divine power dominated everything and sorcerers were hated by the public?

Lucien knew he could not waste too much time down here. What was more surprising was that after the mist completely disappeared, both Corella and Howson twitched a little bit. They were still alive! Lucien knew that he really had to hurry up and get all of them out of this terrible place.

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Benjamin suddenly groaned when he felt Lucien activated Holy Strike. At that moment, their spirits were somehow connected. He was more than surprised.

“Lord Benjamin?” Pawl asked with concern.

Under the silver moon, Benjamin’s face did not look well. He said in a low voice: “Something unexpected happened down there. Damn it! She was just an apprentice. These guys are useless... Paul, you wait here. If I don’t come back in five minutes, ask the bishop for

help.”

Because there was a spirit imprint on the badge, Benjamin could feel it. Or he would not have lent the badge to a young guy he had just met. He did not expect that his own imprint could be activated by someone else.

Misfortune always comes with arrogance and prejudice.

For Benjamin, knights were just a bunch of vulgar and ignorant guys, who knew nothing more than how to fight with just their physical strength. So, without giving any thought to whether the guards were actually more suitable, Benjamin directly gave the badge to Lucien, a young boy whose spirit was stronger than common people.

Benjamin’s perspective came from his past experiences.

The family he came from, the Rafati family, was one of the most powerful families in the Duchy of Orvarit. Rafati family was known for producing gifted divines. While knights had to learn spells, offsprings of Rafati family were born with Blessing in their blood.

Benjamin was no way close to being the most talented child in his family. But after entering the monastery, he stood out among his peers and soon became a formal pastor and a divine caster.

But now, as a formal pastor, he was having trouble dealing with a trap left behind by a sorcerer’s apprentice. It would definitely affect his reputation and position in the church. So he had no choice but to rush over there and solve the trouble himself.

Paul was surprised as well, “They had the badge... Is there a real sorcerer present there?”

.....

Sounds of footsteps came when Lucien was about to drag himself out the chamber to ask for help. He became anxious, for fear that if it was another witch or wizard who came then he would not be able to safely escape with his life again.

Above all he felt worried, because a chamber was one of the best places to execute somebody and thus keep their mouths shut.

“Lapland Bloodvine?” Benjamin took a glimpse at the corner and quickly speculated what happened. He looked at Lucien and the three guards, “Fortunately, they’re still alive.”

Benjamin was a little bit surprised when he saw Lucien. Benjamin thought, “It seems like when he activated my imprint, his spirit power also increased. He has reached the basic-level of a trainee pastor, quite lucky.”

However, everything has changed. The church, now, is not in its absolute dominant status like three hundred years ago. Today, divinity power can’t be acquired with talent alone. Being a real pastor requires systematic learning from a young age.

‘The Emperor of Magical Arcana’, it was he who started the close to four-hundred-year golden age of the development of divinity power and magic. He changed the rule of how to become a Divine Caster.

As a member of Rafati family, compared with most pastors, Benjamin knew more about the circumstances of the world. What’s more, he was not that devoted to his own particular faith. More accurately, being an aristocrat actually conflicted with his identity of belonging to the church.

Even further, after “the Highest Theology Conference” more than three hundred years ago, the church was partitioned into two: one south, the other north. They both criticized each other for being a hearsay. But neither of them were ever interrupted or prevented from continuously gaining the divine power, which made many bishops and cardinals doubt whether God really existed, or if all this was a test for God’s followers.

This kind of attitude directly affected the following younger generations, like Benjamin, for hundreds of years.

Besides, to fit into this fast developing era, several popes had introduced part of the knowledge gained through the exploration of the world by great Arcanists, to modify the foundation of theology.

The adjustment guaranteed the fast development of divinity and the emergence of countless great spellcasters. Therefore, the South Church could still preserve its predominant position in general and keep growing while being surrounded by many powerful enemies like heretics, evil sorcerers, dark creatures and so on. But at the same time, this behavior additionally prompted more conflicts within the South Church itself.

Benjamin's thought came back to reality. He released some white powder from his hand and chanted some weird spell. A strong wind blew the red mist away.

He pointed his finger towards Gary. A white light fell down on his wound. The wound started healing and soon regained its original color.

After curing Corella, Howson, and Lucien one by one, he confirmed with them what happened. Benjamin checked the desk to ensure nothing was left there. "Move all the stuff back to the church, including the bodies of the rats."

He put the badge, which had already been returned by Lucien, back on his neck, and said, "God has forgiven you. Go back and rest. May God bless you."

Initially, Benjamin wanted to reward Lucien with some money or even wait to see whether the kid had the potential to be further trained if things went well. But after all of this, the only thing Benjamin wanted was Lucien to leave as soon as possible. He got another problem to face: Gary's right hand. He did not master the spell for limb regeneration.

Having the chance to leave, Lucien hurriedly walked towards the exit. By the moment he left the chamber, he heard Corella talking to Howson in a low voice, "Gary lost his right hand. He probably can't stay in the guards anymore..."

He walked outside the pipes with complicated, mixed feelings. The crowd mobbed him instantly with great concerns.

"Little Evans, is the ghost gone now?" Auntie Alisa asked loudly

from far-off.

Lucien nodded, “Yes. The place has been purified by the pastor and the guards.”

The mood lightened immediately after they got Lucien’s certain answer. They started being more curious about what happened down there.

“Lucien, what did the ghost look like? Terrifying?”

“I knew Lord Benjamin could handle it!”

“Lucien is blessed by God! He got the chance to use the badge!”

“What a pity! Lucien is not a child anymore, or he would be able to go to the monastery and become a real pastor. Think about it! A pastor from Aderon!”

Lucien was bothered by the comments, “I’m too old to be a pastor already?”

Although Lucien himself never thought about being a pastor because of his identity, it was still quite depressing knowing he was completely hopeless after seeing such an amazing power.

“My poor little Evans. Look at your face. You must be very exhausted.” Auntie Alisa asked.

Lucien really needed some time for himself. He nodded and walked directly towards his small shanty. He closed the door and sat down on the bed. He could hear the crowd gradually dispersing after Benjamin and the guards left.

Lucien missed his parents and friends but could not do anything about it. He started thinking about his own future again.

“The real Lucien did not get any training before. So I could neither become a pastor nor a knight.

“If I want to get rid of this life and become someone, then I need to learn magic.

“...But then I would be an enemy of the church and all the people, including Aunty Alisa.

“Do I have other choices?”

Finally, Lucien decided to first look at the notes in his mental library.

A little while later, Lucien talked to himself in a low voice, awkwardly.

“I can’t read...?”

Chapter 8: Aalto

The notes were full of strange characters. And Evans, as a poor child, was uneducated and illiterate.

As a hopeless illiterate, Lucien could only helplessly stare at the notes and yearn for the amazing power. Although he had experienced a lot here, he still felt extremely depressed with the gap: He was a university student in another world, but now he was just a poor guy who couldn't even read.

Lucien made up his mind: He must learn how to read.

Even if Lucien could not be a pastor, learning how to read and write was not a bad thing in order to get rid of poverty. He had no physical strength. If there was a way out for Lucien, it would be something related to knowledge.

Feeling motivated by his decision, Lucien again picked up the notes, hoping to uncover any other hidden secret.

There were many strange but familiar patterns in the notes, like lines and geometric figures. Lucien guessed they were probably magic seals or circles because he saw them in the badge before. Then, he saw some formulas which might be used to make magic potions.

The characters in the second note were even more complicated. Actually, the two notes were of different characters. Fortunately, the third one looked more interesting and contained the same character as the second one. It was filled with assorted hand-produced figures like plants, minerals, and creatures.

After a new round of searching, he still couldn't find anything useful. Lucien stopped thinking and tried to fall asleep.

He strongly desired to change his life. So, he could not let his messy concerns and worries disturb himself. From tomorrow onwards, he must fight for his own life.

Lucien fell asleep quickly after the intense fight.

Meanwhile, in the dark sewers, a black rat with scarlet and cold eyes was moving around the ruins and quickly went in another direction. After a while, the rat found a hidden hole and disappeared.

.....

In the early morning, sounds of people speaking with bucket clapping broke the silence. The street was already livened up.

Lucien, who used to hate getting out of bed in the morning, forced himself to get up as soon as he woke up. He lighted the stove and boiled some hot water. While nibbling his last loaf of brown bread which felt like chewing a piece of wood, Lucien started planning his day.

This world was still unfamiliar to Lucien, thus his plan was difficult to accomplish. He first decided to find a job to feed himself before learning how to read.

"I gotta be careful. Cannot let anyone notice." Lucien talked to himself.

Before he left, Lucien grabbed his seven coins to feel a little bit more secure. He locked the door and went directly to auntie Alisa's place, who was the only one he knew there.

"Morning, Lucien." A girl with black hair greeted him on the streets, filled with curiosity.

Lucien did not know her. Hurriedly, he made a smile and replied, "Hey. I'm gonna visit aunty Alisa, sorry but I'm running late." And the he quickly passed her by.

"Hi Lucien, did you really face the ghost?"

"How did you feel when you cast the spell?"

"I heard a guard lost his right arm. It was very dangerous last night, wasn't it?"

It seemed that Lucien had become famous in the district overnight. Within three minutes' walking, a few neighbors came and asked about his adventure.

Lucien knew none of them. He could only smile and head towards his destination.

Before Lucien knocked the door, he heard a familiar voice. "Little Evans! Good morning!" Joel was walking towards him.

"Good morning, uncle Joel!" It was such a relief for Lucien.

Dressing neatly, Joel was holding a classic harp. "Did you have breakfast? Don't be in a rush to find a work until you're fully recovered. You can always eat here. Don't worry."

Lucien appreciated his kindness so much. He started feeling he was not alone here. "Thank you, uncle Joel, but, I had my breakfast already. And... I got blessed by pastor Benjamin last night. So, now I'm completely fine."

Joel nodded and walked with Lucien side by side. "Later you could go and find Cohn at Copper Coronet. He still owes me a bottle of Lesse wine. He will introduce a good job for you."

Then he turned his face towards Lucien and said in a serious voice. "Evans, you're already seventeen. It's time you started thinking about your future."

"Uncle Joel?" Lucien knew he was saying the truth.

Joel sighed slightly. "No one can make a living with only doing labor all the time. You know it. I've seen a few old labor guys with no saving and no children to rely on in their last days. All of them died in their fifties or even forties."

He paused a little bit and continued. "I know learning will take a long time. But if you're willing to work hard, you can always support yourself with a skill."

During their conversation, they walked through a gate where two guards were standing on both sides. Lucien's eyes suddenly lit up:

Broad and clean streets, busy stores, and pedestrians wearing colorful and fancy clothes. Music was wafting in the soft wind. It was a different world compared with the poor Aderon district.

Lucien thanked Joel sincerely.

Joel started joking again. “Besides, sometimes a master only has a single daughter. Who knows, maybe, you can be promoted directly from an apprentice to the future owner. You know, a nice-looking promising young fellow is always in demand.”

Lucien replied with an awkward smile.

Joel finally stopped around a corner. He placed a hat on the ground and got ready to play his harp.

Lucien was a little bit surprised to find that uncle Joel was a street artist.

Joel pointed to the luxurious and magnificent palace in the distance and smiled. “That is the Hall of Chant. For me, I feel like I’m playing music in the hall.”

Before Lucien said anything, Joel continued murmuring as if something inside of his heart was triggered. “Four hundred years ago, guided by the Holy Heilz Empire, the church marched towards the west. Finally, they occupied the last central city of the old Sylvanas Magic Empire, Aalto. The army drove the dark creatures and demons away into the Dark Mountain Range. Since then, Aalto has always been one of the most famous cities across the whole continent.

“Three hundred years ago, under the guidance of the Pope Charles I, who was still a cardinal at that time, lots of famous scholars and artists studied and edited together the hymns and poems of past ages. After he became the pope, he promoted the singing style in every church and started regular choirs. Since then, Aalto has been enjoying the reputation of ‘City of Psalms’.

“Because we are close to the Dark Mountain Range, elves, dwarves and dog-headed men, or say, cynocephalus, often came in contact

with us and some even became members of our duchy. Different kinds of music were mixed in Aalto and the polyphonic music was born here. Then followed formal symphony, gesu violin, etc.

“Countless artists and musicians inscribed their names on the pages of history. Playing inside the Hall of Chant is a great honor for every musician and bard.

“Although I cannot get in there, it’s also a pleasure for me to play my harp here.”

.....

After parting from Joel, Lucien took Joel’s suggestion and started heading towards Copper Coronet. While asking the way, he was enjoying the wonderful music in the wind. As soon as he returned back to Aderon, he saw a busy pub with a coronet board hanging there.

Outside of the pub, from time to time, young girls and women could come and glance into it and then leave with disappointment.

Chapter 9: A Tough Star

Chapter 9: A Tough Start

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

It was interesting and confusing for Lucien. The morning was obviously not busy hours for a pub.

A slender blonde girl was peeking inside from the pub door. Then, she sighed and was about to leave, but was surprised to notice Lucien standing there, waiting for her to get out of the way.

“Oh! Lucien!” She exclaimed.

Lucien was already used to the situation. He smiled and greeted, “Morning! What’re you doing here?”

The girl’s tanned cheeks suddenly flushed, “I... I am just on my way. I heard there’s a new bard here today in the pub...so... Anyway, I gotta go, Lucien.”

Before Lucien said his goodbye, the young girl rushed away with her cheeks red. Lucien guessed the bard she mentioned should be very attractive.

However, it had nothing to do with Lucien. He was here to work. He gently pushed the door and stepped inside the pub.

Lucien’s first impression towards the pub was not very good: a dusky space, with a strong alcohol smell and messy tables and chairs. It took his eye a while to get accustomed to the dark environment.

Several drunkards were woken by the noise. They emitted a few curses and went back to sleep on the tables. There was an hooked-nosed man in a tight black coat, probably in his thirties, sitting on a bar stool and was sipping his amber-coloured wine. Without saying anything he glimpsed at Lucien.

Lucien looked around. Soon, he found a dwarf snoring loudly behind the counter. He was sitting on a high bar chair with his round head leaning against the wall. His shining saliva was dropping on his blonde beard which was tied into a bow.

Knowing the dwarf would not wake up by himself, Lucien knocked on the counter loudly with his fingers.

The drunkards started swearing in the background. The old dwarf slowly woke up with sleepy eyes, "Oh, my Lucien! Finally, you're a grown-up now! Finally, you understand the wonderfulness of wine! Cheers! For our new customer..."

"It's already morning, uncle... Cohn." Lucien was hesitant about how to call the pub owner.

Cohn rubbed his eyes and looked around, "I'm not drunk... Don't lie to me. What a wonderful night!"

After quite a while, Cohn finally sobered up. When Lucien asked about the jobs, Cohn made a slightly pained look and said, "Um... I don't have really good ones now. All I got are some odd jobs. 9 o'clock tomorrow morning... Let me see. Three Fells for carrying stuff from the grocery to the gate zone. But you know, you have to give one Fell to the gangsters there at the end of the day. Then... all you can get from the work is two Fells, only enough for buying an old brown bread.

"Another thing... yes, here. The Musician Association's gonna do a cleaning today. You can rent a cart and help them with the garbage. You can get eight Fells after the rent. But also... three Fells to the bastards."

"There is something else too... No, I don't think you're qualified for that."

Lucien nodded, he only had seven Fells with himself. He did not really have many choices. Working for the association was the best one.

"Cohn, do you have jobs with better payment?" Lucien asked again

with curiosity.

Cohn laughed loudly, “Yes, for sure, my boy. But those are for real men, as they require strength and courage, not for a young boy. You don’t even know how to drink.”

Then, he lowered his voice. “I’ve seen so many people setting off towards the Dark Mountain Range from my bar. They were mercenaries and experienced adventurers. But, very, very few of them came back alive.” Cohn belched and continued, “Of course they all made a big fortune, though.

“Don’t underestimate them. Many of them were High-Level Knights.” A gentle but attractive voice came from behind Lucien. His tone was lifted slightly in the end, sounding elegant and seductive.

Lucien turned around and saw a silver-haired man walking towards them from one of the pub’s rooms. He was wearing slim pants and a red jacket, covered with a black high-collared coat. Those formal clothes looked amazingly casual but elegant on him. He had quite refined features: silver eyes, tall and straight nose, thin lips...The man almost looked like a charming elf with his silky silver hair, like a full moon at night.

Holding a harp in his hand, the man picked a bar chair and sat down.

“Hey, Rhine! Want a drink?” Cohn grabbed a glass.

“Thanks, but I only drink at night.” He smiled. “Peace has been prevailing on the continent for almost three hundred years. There are more knights than people need. The Duchy of Orvarit, the closest duchy to the Dark Mountain Range, is full of myths and mysterious treasures. Many new and honored knights come here to seek credits, honor, and fortune.”

He fiddled with the harp and continued, “Besides, some of them were broken knights, some of them were convicted, some of them were travelers, while some of them were dark knights who were not admitted by the church.”

Cohn was a little bit unhappy with Rhine's rejection. He murmured, "Lucien, this is Rhine Carendia. As a bard, he travelled a lot. And he just got away from the passionate Tria ladies in the Kingdom of Syracuse."

"The Kingdom of Syracuse?" Lucien asked.

Cohn burst out laughing. His long, blond beard swayed with his laughter. With an ambiguous smile on his wrinkled face, he replied. "Yes, The Syracuse. A passionate, romantic nation where love is the top priority."

A drunkard joined them when they started talking about Syracuse. He loudly burped, and asked with eagerness, "Rhine, the la... ladies and madams... there, there in Tria, were they really that beautiful... and... hot?"

Rhine smiled casually and answered with his unique tone, "Yes, they were. Their eyes were like morning stars, hair like silk, lips like roses, and their fair skin like milk. I can still remember the perfumes they wore and their wet, warm breaths. A few ladies and duchess even invited me to their secret manors..."

The drunkard cut in with excitement, "Did you go then?"

Lucien knew the most common topic within men was women. While he was listening, he was also thinking about his learning how to read.

Rhine, with the same smile, answered, "I told them I did not like dirty things that had been used by someone else. I love beautiful, clean, and pure lives, no matter men or women. They're the tastiest things in the world."

"Bullshit, Rhine. There was no way you dared to speak to them like that."

"Right, if you had answered like this, you would be in the famous jail in Tria by now! Come on, Rhine!"

"Those ladies, many of them could compete with the knights. Dare you!"

Rhine shrugged his shoulders slightly facing Cohn and the drunkard's laughter, "That's why I'm here now, not in Syracuse."

Pounding the counter, Cohn was laughing so hard that he almost got choked. Drunkards there were all wakened up by his pounding, looking angry but confused, "Such... such a good story from our beloved Rhine!" Cohn's face turned red, "Cheers! For the wonderful story!"

All the drunkards knew was ale. They pushed their ways to the counter to grab the free drink.

"Cheers! For... Rhine, the blowhard!"

"The blowhard!" They laughed and shouted.

A while later, when the pub finally quieted down again, Cohn was very surprised to find that Lucien was still there.

"What else? My boy?" Cohn asked.

"Um... yes. I've got a new idea. I... I'm thinking about...learning how to read."

"Ah? Read?" Now Cohn was even more surprised, "You talked with Rhine? You two are dreamers."

Several guys in the bar started heckling.

"Wooo... What a magnificent, glorious dream for our brave little pauper!"

While some showed their support, "Lucien, good for you! Dreams make a real man!"

Cohn laughed with them for a while and then turned to Lucien, "Two years, Lucien. It'll take you at least two years to learn how to read. You'll start from scratch. Do you have any idea how much money and effort it will cost you?"

Lucien looked into his eye, nodded firmly, "I understand. So many people tell me I'm too old for this or that. But Cohn, as people said,

better late than never. If I don't make up my mind, there will never be a start."

As a university student in his original world, Lucien was confident that, with all the knowledge he mastered before, he would be able to understand the language rules and start reading very soon.

Twirling his big beard, Cohn nodded, "I see... You're too old to enter the church school... that's for sure. Then... There are two ways: either you become an apprentice for ten years, or you pay for a teacher. But, the first way... you know, it depends on whose apprentice you want to be. I don't see the necessity for a blacksmith to learn reading. They won't pay you for that. If you can afford a teacher... it will be five Nars a month. Five silver coins! And the price is same in the whole city."

Lucien did not want to become an apprentice. Ten years was too long, but he also had to make sure no one would possibly find out that he was trying to learn magic. Being an apprentice meant he had to live in his master's place. That would not be good.

"Five Nars. It's probably gonna take you half year to save five Nars if you work from day to night and eat the cheapest brown bread."

"And how much can you learn within a month?" Cohn added, "Are you still going?"

Lucien answered firmly, "Yes, I am."

A hundred Fells equaled to one Nar. It was a tough start. But still possible.

Chapter 10: The Musicians' Association

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Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Lucien had read many novels about how to make big fortunes from scratch. Sadly, none would be helpful for him. Seven Fells were insufficient to start anything.

While the morning sun was shining on the market, Lucien was already carrying a heavy bag of goods towards the gate. No matter what great dreams a person got, survival always ranked first.

Beads of sweat poured down from his face. His linen clothes were all wet. What's worse, the fat guy called Gutche kept nagging from the side:

"Damn... A child? Watch out! Don't ruin my stuff!" He wiped his forehead with a handkerchief.

"Or you can just pay more to find someone else..." Lucien fought back in his mind. At the same time, he was also glad that he could earn one more Fell by doing all the work by himself.

Finally, they reached the gate. Lucien laid the goods safely on the cart.

Gutche reluctantly pulled out his purse and gave four Fells to Lucien. He then paused and said, "Young lad, you did a good job. Um... The work will be yours next time as well."

Lucien did all the work alone for a much lower price. No wonder, Gutche now forgot all his complaints.

As soon as Lucien got his pay, two hooligan-looking guys approached them.

"We work for Aaron. I'm Andre." The brown-haired man identified himself. He had a scar on his face.

Lucien was already prepared for this. He handed him a Fell.

The other guy just stared at Lucien and said, "Two!"

Lucien blurted out, "But it should be one! Everyone gives one!" He knew that he was in no position to argue, but he just could not stand being robbed like this.

"Um... Usually, Gutche hires two people, so we charge one Fell for each person. We charge you double cos you did all the work alone. I don't see any problem here." Andre smiled like he was a decent businessman.

A second later, Lucien lowered his head and passed the strong guy another Fell. Lucien did not want to offend these gangsters.

"Smart boy. You know the rule. Some young lads... they love challenging us. But you see, we're still here, while... some of them are at the bottom of the Belem River. All right, Mag. Let's go." Andre threatened him like it was usual and left.

Of course, Lucien hated this. He was already prepared for this but still, could not control himself. He understood that either high status or strength could help him get rid of all the suffering.

"I wish there were some magic potions in the notes that would help to improve my strength, then..." Lucien tried his best to stop thinking. He knew that it was a dangerous sign. A sign that he was getting tempted to learn magic.

.....

Almost everyone in the city knew the unique-designed building of the Musicians' Association. Very quickly Lucien found the place called "Sparkling Flame".

Assembled with lines, small towers, flying buttresses, stained glasses, and flame-shaped window lattices, the whole five-floored building held a particular unsymmetrical and flamboyant beauty.

A skinny middle-aged man with a mustache hurriedly came down from the stairs, "You're late! I told you one o'clock!"

This man was George. Cohn had already introduced him to Lucien. George worked for the association, and it seemed like he knew quite a few guys there.

“George, there are still ten minutes before the appointed time.” Lucien pointed to the golden bell tower in the wealthy neighborhood, whose minute hand still had some way to go from number twelve.

Waving his hands, George complained to Lucien, “The cleaners finished their job earlier. You gotta remove the rubbish piling up in the back as soon as possible. I don’t wanna piss the musicians off. Some of them still have a performance this afternoon.”

Lucien left his rented trolley to the guards and walked into the bright and grand hall.

Covered with soft and thick carpet, the floor made no noise at all. There were just a few people walking across the cold, quiet hall.

Following George, Lucien came to a waist-high counter in the center of the hall, behind which sat a green-eyed and pretty young girl.

“Uncle George! Is he your helper?” She greeted.

While she was talking, she took out a tinkling purse and handed it to George. According to Lucien’s estimation, approximately forty Fells were in there. However, after paying the trolley rent, he could only get eight Fells.

Holding the purse in his palms, George grinned showing his yellow teeth and his eyes narrowed into two slits, “He is a good worker although a bit young.”

Then, he turned to Lucien, “I’ll leave your pay with Andre. Just find him after you finish.”

Lucien nodded. He was not worried that George would keep the money himself. Even though the Aaron Gang was overbearing, they too had to follow the rules. Cohn mentioned before that someone tried to keep some money, and later he had to compensate twice

the amount.

When Elena was about to find a servant to show Lucien the way to the back yard, a middle-aged man wearing a red, loose coat came in. She hurriedly stood up and bowed slightly.

“Good Afternoon, Mr. Victor.”

“Good Afternoon, Elena.” The man replied politely. He had blue eyes as deep as an ocean, “May I have the latest Music Criticism?” His voice was deep and rich.

Lucien was surprised. He did not expect to find a newspaper in this world, and even specialized ones. What impressed him more was the polarization here, thinking about the fact that many people in Aderon were still illiterate. Lucien guessed not many people would buy newspapers.

He also wondered how much the newspaper cost.

Victor roughly went through the pages and gave Elena ten Fells. He then went towards the stairs after nodding politely to both of them, with the newspaper under his arm.

After he left, Lucien asked Elena curiously.

“The newspaper costs 10 Fells?”

Having worked in the association for a whole year, Elena was proud that she could share her knowledge with someone, who was also from the same poor background like she was before.

“In the year 426 of Saint Calendar, the Cardinal Adelaide enhanced the method for papermaking. Since then, the paper price continued declining. Now you can buy a dozen newspapers with just a couple of Fells. But only members of our association can buy Music Criticism with 10 Fells. Others, including nobles, have to pay a silver Nar.”

“Both Music Criticism and Symphony News are the most authoritative music publications across the continent.” she then continued, “Every piece of music and article is produced by brilliant

musicians and scholars. This month's Music Criticism published the comments from His Majesty and Princess Natasha on the concert held last week in the Psalm Hall."

Aside from showing off, Lucien's good looking face was another reason why she kept offering so much information.

"A Nar?!" For a moment, an exciting plan of robbing newspapers appeared in his mind. Five Nars could easily solve Lucien's problem! A second later he realized the thought was too ridiculous: No one would buy from him.

"Sure!" Happy with Lucien's interaction, Elena kept talking. "You think it's too expensive? In places like Tria, Antiffler, Ifai, Tilis and Anhadur, these newspapers are very popular. People there honor Aalto's music very much and would even pay one gold Thale for an old one."

Lucien took a glance at the newspapers under the counter while trying hard to resist his impulse. But, he also got some information from her words: Under the mighty church, currency across the continent should be unified; Secondly, there was no such spell for teleportation. If there was, it must have very strict rules, or the nobles in other cities would not read old newspapers.

More than ten minutes later, it finally occurred to Elena that Lucien still had work to do. She reluctantly stopped herself and asked a servant to lead him to the backyard garden.

"Be quiet. Don't talk loud. Don't move loud. In three months, Mr. Victor's gonna hold his first concert in the Psalm Hall. Recently, he's being pretty... um... sensitive," Elena kindly reminded him.

Lucien nodded to her gratefully and followed the servant towards the garden.

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 11: Findings

Chapter 11: Findings

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

A big pile of trash was in the backyard garden. It took Lucien a couple of rounds to throw it away.

To keep the city clean, there were people collecting trash every morning. But, the fancy association just could not tolerate the trash piling up in their garden for a whole day.

After finishing the work, Lucien sneaked into the hall and moved around the margins of the round hall towards the gate.

“Damn it! Wolf! Can you just leave me alone for one second and let me focus on my music?” He heard a deep and rich voice which turned sharp in the end. At the same time, a man wearing a red coat rushed down from the stairs.

Then, he ran right into Lucien.

“Bang!” Something heavy fell down on the carpet, making a dull sound.

Victor nearly lost his footing.

Taking a deep breath, Victor bent down and picked up a broken lamp which had fallen down from Lucien’s pile of trash.

“Sorry.” He gave the lamp he picked up from the carpet back to Lucien.

Another brown-haired man wearing dark blue long coat walked down from the stairs. There was an noticeable arch on his chin.

“Victor, you’re not the only musician here. I can do whatever I want. If you have a problem with it, then go back home.”

The smile on his face became even bigger, “I know, I know. There

are only three months left before your concert. And I understand, I'm so looking forward to it. I'll write an article for you on Music Criticism, especially for you..."

"Bastard! Let's see when you can have your own concert." Swearing in a low voice, Victor turned around and left the hall quickly.

The moment Victor turned his back, the smile disappeared from Wolf's face. He walked back while murmuring, "It should be mine..."

After seeing their argument, Lucien continued carrying the trash to the gate. Then, he saw the broken lamp decorated with fancy patterns and the bottom of the lamp was made of metal.

Dumping the trash into the cart, Lucien picked up the lamp. It felt like copper but more flexible. It would probably sell for several Fells at a smith's shop. For a poor guy like Lucien, everything he saw would be related to money.

"Wait... maybe I can find more useful items like paper or quills in this pile."

Now, this pile of trash was a treasure for Lucien. His heart was full of surprise and excitement. Although the rich people would not even bother looking at it, for Lucien this was his first chance of changing his life.

Five silver Nars was sufficient for one month's educational cost. Besides, He got an entire library inside his mind which could be constantly expanded. If he was able to learn how to read, he trusted that he would discover better ways for making a fortune.

Lucien felt energized just thinking about his future. Feeling excited, he pulled his cart out of the city. But, he was also worried: No one liked old things from trash.

"I just gotta be careful. If Aaron's gang caught wind of this, they're gonna demand more from me." After Lucien's fight in the sewers, his fear for this world and towards gangsters diminished. He knew more about how to fight than they did.

After leaving the hall, Lucien saw a silver-haired man walking leisurely towards the association.

“Rhine? What’s he doing here?”

Lucien did not think much about it. It was not strange for a bard visiting such a reputable place.

Andre was at the gate. He recognized Lucien and saw his fully loaded cart. He just waved his hand and let him leave out of the city.

Although excited, Lucien did not easily lower his guard. After a twenty-minute walk from the gate, Lucien finally stopped at a quiet place along the Belem River.

Rummaging through the trash, Lucien got some useful stuff: A broken lamp, several rusty pieces of metal, eight worn out quills, and some bundles of paper, etc.

Finally, Lucien pulled out a nice smelling damaged black lace. It looked like a veil, which might once belong to a female musician.

Without any erotic imagination, all Lucien thought was just about money.

“It got a fine craft. Maybe... maybe I can sell it to a tailor, who can probably use this as a decoration.”

Wrapping that stuff with some paper, Lucien hid them in the grass. Then, he continued pulling his cart downstream to the place where the trash was piled up.

He was surprised that the dump site was much smaller than he thought. The river beside it was very clean. No one was there except for Lucien. While smelling the awful stench emitted from trash, Lucien started his rummaging again.

“In this world, nobody picks up trash for a living?” Lucien wondered, “Maybe they’re afraid of catching any disease.”

However, Lucien’s empty purse was clearly more of a threat to him

than getting sick, which might or might not happen. Wrapping his hand with waste papers, he found something which was probably worth a few Fells.

It was his first time, so Lucien was extremely cautious. He hid some of the stuff and went back for his paper parcel. Hiding his findings under a dirty old bag in his cart, Lucien tried to flatten the bag as much as he could to make it look like the cart's cover.

Lucien stuffed the small things into his pocket.

It was much easier than he thought. The guards just waved their hands and let him in after shooting a glance at him.

When Lucien was pulling his cart towards Andre and Mag, he realized why the guards just let him pass easily. Covering their noses, Andre and Mag's eyebrows were twisted together when they saw him.

Lucien was happy to see this. He pulled his smelling cart even closer to them and asked. "I'm Lucien. I come for my pay."

Mag immediately stepped back and took out the money while swearing.

"Damn you! Fuck off with your stinking cart."

Andre, with his consistent smile, was standing even further, "Your first time going to the river, isn't it? If you stay there until dark, you may get lucky. Just watch the ghosts there... haha... "

Without asking about ghosts, Lucien quickly left with his pay to return the cart. He did not want any more trouble.

Lucien made five Fells in total for cleaning up the garbage. However, his findings were more important than them, with them he could easily earn five Nars.

After returning home, Lucien hurriedly hid the rest of the stuff and then rushed to the market.

Lucien took it directly to a tailor without even cleaning the veil. He

was rushing with quite a bit of excitement.

However, when Lucien was standing in front of a tailor shop, he became hesitant. He would probably get scolded or turned out of the door before he could open his mouth. Lucien's face was flushed, like when he tried to do sales at the university.

"Don't be a coward, Lucien. Don't feel it's shameful." Lucien started encouraging himself, "What can your dignity do for you now? Can your dignity turn your dark bread into white one? Or can it offer you steak, codfish, and wine? Can dignity teach you reading?"

Lucien had experienced quite a bit after coming to this world. He had even wobbled on the borderline of death. He quickly made up his mind and walked into the shop with firm footsteps.

An old man wearing glasses was sitting in the shop. Noticing Lucien entering, he asked with confusion.

"Yes?"

Lucien's dressing obviously showed that he was too poor to even visit an expensive tailor.

Smiling with great enthusiasm, Lucien rubbed his hands.

"Hello, sir! I got a nice black lace... and I was wondering if you're interested in it..."

Before Lucien could finish his words, he was cut in by the old man fiercely.

"A fine black lace, from you? Get lost, you damned thief!" He walked out of the counter and pushed Lucien out, "I, Old Forau, am a decent tailor! I only buy clothes from the Lautsi!"

Being driven out of the first shop, Lucien had no choice but to find the next one. And he would try a different approach this time.

Chapter 12: Lucien's First Eighty Fells

Chapter 12: Lucien's First Eighty Fells

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

“Get out. We don’t need anything from you.”

It was the third time that Lucien got rejected. These fancy tailors always hated poor guys like Lucien. Even when Lucien showed the lace, they were still not willing to waste a second on him.

It was a big market. More than ten streets that crossed with each other. There were lots of different shops ran by humans, dwarves, and elves.

Soon, Lucien found another neat little tailor’s shop, at the end of a street.

Standing behind the counter was a fifteen or sixteen-year-old shy looking blond boy.

“Hi, I’m Buster. Anything I can help you with?”

“Um... Yes, could you take a look at this lace, please?” Lucien placed the veil on the counter.

Buster gently rubbed it with his fingers under the light and got surprised.

“Sir, it’s the Black Nightingale from the Kingdom of Holm! Where did you get it?”

Like other tailors, Buster knew Lucien could not afford this lace. Sometimes, even rich people might not be able to buy a small piece of Black Nightingale. All noble ladies wanted it.

Lucien lowered his voice, “Don’t worry. It’s clean.”

“Clean?” A thirty something year old man walked out from behind. The thin-faced man was McDowell, the owner of this shop.

Lucien was surprised that they did not immediately drive him away, which was a promising signal.

“Yes, yes! I swear in the name of God! You see... there’s a hole in it. It was abandoned by a noble lady and I just happened to find it. Turn it into a decoration on a dress or a band. I think with your hands, you can definitely make it become eye-catching again, sir.” Lucien added eagerly.

Taking the lace from Buster’s hands, McDowell had a close look. After a moment’s thinking, he asked calmly.

“How much do you want, then?”

Lucien clenched his fists in excitement but did not dare show it in his face.

“Come on, Lucien... you fought with the huge crazy rats before. Stay calm.” Lucien secretly consoled himself.

“You offer, sir. I believe your price wouldn’t let me down.” Lucien smiled and answered.

Looking into Lucien’s eyes, McDowell paused a little bit.

“Forty Fells. It’s not much use to me with a hole in it.”

“A Nar. A fancy dress with a Black Nightingale on it, even distinguished ladies and madams will fight for it.” Lucien more than doubled the offer.

McDowell shook his head and handed the lace back to Lucien.

“Fifty Fells. I cannot go any more than this.”

“Um... I’m sorry, but thank you anyway, sir.” Lucien calmly turned around and was ready to leave. Actually, he was very nervous. He was worrying that he might lose his only chance for being greedy.

Step by step, Lucien dragged his feet towards the exit. When he was about to leave the shop, McDowell’s voice suddenly came from behind.

“Eighty Fells. My last offer. I’m only paying this much because the lace is a perfect match for one of my dresses.”

“Great!” Lucien waved his fist joyfully and then he turned around and smiled.

“Deal, sir.”

Tinkling coins bulged Lucien’s pocket. For Lucien, nothing was more lovely than getting rich.

“I don’t know you. And I don’t care either. But, if in the future you got some good stuff like this, you could bring it here, as long as it’s clean.” McDowell added.

“Sure, sir. Thank you.” Lucien slightly bowed and smiled.

After stepping out of the shop, Lucien found the sunshine was very brilliant under the amazingly blue sky. Breathing the fresher-than-ever air, Lucien found this world was kind of lovely as well.

Eighty Fells was pretty decent for him. For Lucien, he found his idea of collecting money actually worked. This was even more important to him!

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Iven was waiting for Lucien near his home. He waved his hand as soon as he saw Lucien coming, “Lucien! There you are! My mom sent me to invite you for dinner. My brother’s home!”

“John? Iven’s elder brother?” Lucien tried to recall, “John’s a... yes, knight squire in training.”

It was not really safe for him to carry so much money everywhere with him.

“Just a moment, Iven. I gotta wipe my sweat a bit.” Lucien smiled.

“Sure, Lucien.” Iven looked more excited than usual, “You know what? John brought a piece of beef from Lord Venn! We’re gonna have beef stew tonight!”

His little dirty face was full of excitement and expectancy.

“I haven’t had any meat stew for quite a while!”

Actually, little Iven’s family was not as poor as most people living in Aderon. As a busker, Joel’s income could vary sometimes, but it was still better than labors. Alisa worked as a laundry maid as well. But, they were always saving for John’s training back in the days. Old Evans, Lucien’s father, helped them quite a lot before.

After hiding the money safely, Lucien quickly washed his face and followed Iven towards aunt Alisa’s place.

A bunch of neighbors were gathered in front of the cabin.

“Little John’s now the sworn knight squire following Lord Venn, isn’t he?”

“Yes, Alisa told me herself.”

“Little John’s not even nineteen yet. One day he might get lucky and awaken the endowed blessing in his blood... then, he’s gonna be a real knight!”

“Then no more Little John. We shall say, Lord John!”

“John can also be the commander of the City Guard as a sworn knight squire now.”

“Joel and Alisa are so lucky... they must be very proud of their son!”

Iven was nodding with great pride.

As they entered the living room, a blond young man stood up from the chair. Inheriting his father’s look, John was a handsome young lad, tall and straight. His elegant gesture was quite impressive to Lucien.

“I was quite worried hearing what happened to you, Lucien.” John patted Lucien’s shoulder and smiled, “Glad to see, you’re alright now. I guess it was a test for you from God.”

Although he was just one or two years older than Lucien, John appeared much more mature. His gray knight attire also made him quite out of the ordinary.

“Thanks, John. It was not a big deal, really. Aunty Alisa always worries about me.” Lucien nodded.

When they sat down around the dinner table, John laid his hand on Lucien’s shoulder.

“Why do I feel strangeness between us? Come on, we are best friends.”

“Umm... I guess you changed quite a bit since you left home.” Lucien was a little bit nervous.

John nodded seriously.

“Yeah... I’d say so. Training there changed me a lot, both physically and mentally. It was very hard, but I gained a lot from it as well.”

Dinner was not a feast. They only got beef stew and roasted fish on the table. But for Lucien, this dinner was beyond delicious. He devoured his serve and even bit his tongue a few times. The happy reunion was so sweet that Joel even got a rare chance to enjoy his beef with ale.

Alisa talked even more during the dinner. Most of the time, she was the only one who kept talking all the way. A couple of words from Joel, Lucien, or Iven were enough to keep her going. According to the rules of a knight, John did not talk very much.

“I’m stuffed... ” The happy dinner ended with little Iven’s loud burp.

John smiled and shook his head, “Iven, eating too much is bad for you.”

Then, he turned to Lucien.

“Have you got any future plan?” He asked.

Carefully arranging his words, Lucien nodded.

“Yeah... It was still unclear, but, I don’t want to live a life like what I’m doing now.”

“Good.” John looked into his eyes, “Lord Venn told us, ‘being unsatisfied with your life pushes you to move forward’. The bakery and the cellar in Lord Venn’s manor are now looking for apprentices. It’s a pretty good chance but you gotta work there for ten years. If you’re interested in this job, just tell me by next Monday.”

People in this world also believed in the myth that God created everything in seven days. They also attended church every single Sunday.

Being a knight squire was very promising: Now, John was able to help his family and friends. Although the help could not change their lives completely, it was still of great importance.

“Thank you, John.” Honestly, Lucien was still reluctant to constrain himself in the following ten years, especially when he had just made his first small fortune. But, he still wanted to think for some time before making a decision.

“Alright, I gotta go back now.” John stood up from his chair and hugged his family. And he gave Lucien a big hug.

“I wish you could read, Lucien. Downey is looking for a clerk for the court. It’s a very decent job with nice payment.”

“I’m planning to start studying.” Lucien seized the chance and told John.

John was quite surprised. Soon, he smiled and nodded, “I’ll see if there’s any chance for you.”

Lucien thanked John again, sincerely, but he also did not place all his hope on John. He had to work on his own.

.....

For the following three days, Lucien did not find anything valuable like the Black Nightingale. But, he still managed to save a Nar and sixty-four Fells. Now, he was walking towards the city gate as usual, with great confidence.

Looking at Lucien's back, Andre nudged Mag a bit.

"Why does he leave the city every morning?"

"Leave the city?" An amiable voice came from behind them.

Andre hurriedly turned around, looking serious.

"Morning, Jackson."

Jackson Riodors, one of the leaders of the Aaron gang, had a kind face. But, his craftiness and treacherousness could definitely place him at the top of the group.

Chapter 13: Sudden Attack

Holding his chin, Jackson put on a kind smile, “Morning, Andre. What’s going on here?”

“Not a big deal, Jackson.” Andre responded in a flattering way, “A guy is recently going outside of the city every day. I was just wondering...”

“Interesting. Does he carry anything with him?” Somehow Jackson’s smile was kind of frightening, which for a moment gave both Andre and Mag goose bumps.

Mag believed in both the God of Truth and his own fists, and claimed that he carried one sixteenth of the savage blood from Yaran Highland. However, his brain did not work as fast as his fists. Jackson’s question was too demanding for him.

“Um... I remember he always carries an old sack. Sometimes, he comes back with something in it. There are many mushrooms near the Belem River...”

“No, not mushrooms.” Jackson cut in.

“Then... what else could a poor guy like him do...” Andre asked nervously. Facing the Belem River and the Melzer Black Forest, the gate that Andre and Mag were watching was the busiest one among the three gates of Aalto. Countless merchants, adventurers, and plain folks came back and forth every day. They never bothered paying extra attention to a poor boy like Lucien.

Jackson came for a reason.

“The blacksmith Rego came to me two days ago. A young lad sold him a nice piece of Orichalcum.”

“Oricha...?”

“Orichalcum, or say, Mountain Copper. Only wealthy nobles can afford it. Although the one he got was of the lowest quality, it was

still quite enough to forge a fine dagger. Rego wanted to find more, so he came to me.”

“Lucien sold that?” Mag asked directly.

Jackson slightly nodded, “He was careful. The metal was polished so Rego couldn’t find any clues. It took me a whole day to find him. But, he visited a couple of smith’s. They remembered him.

“And you know him as well. Perfect.” Jackson added.

“Then what should we do?” Andre asked eagerly.

“Follow him and find where he found the Mountain Copper. If he notices you, beat the shit out of him and then ask. His money is all yours.”

“Understood!” Mag answered before Andre. It had been more than two weeks since he gave someone a good beating. He always got excited when it came to beating someone.

.....

Carrying his old sack, Lucien was walking in the direction of the Belem River.

“I gotta use the other two gates more.” Lucien thought, “It’s suspicious always taking the same way... Andre and Mag, they’re always there.”

The two gates, one in Purple Lily and the other in Nolan, were both far from his destination. Lucien sometimes would collect some mushrooms on his way back to disguise his real purpose, which took him more time.

A figure flashed from behind him.

“Who’s there?!” Lucien suddenly became alert.

It was not the first time he found someone tracking him. Ever since his bitter fight under the sewers, he felt he became more sensitive to the surroundings now. Thanks to his sharp observation, he

managed to get rid of those people who wanted to find out his secret.

Pretending everything was fine, Lucien was seeking for a chance. When he arrived in a corner covered with thick grass and high trees, he dashed to a big tree with all his strength. Hiding behind it, Lucien quietly waited for the person.

He was calm. He had to know who was following him to eliminate any future trouble.

A moment later, a sound of heavy footsteps, together with swearing, came from the place Lucien was previously at. The sound came around the corner, very close to where Lucien was standing before.

“Damn it! We lost him!”

“I was right, Andre. We should catch and beat him up. Only that way he will tell us everything!”

Lucien was surprised. He did not expect that the Aaron gang would notice him so quickly.

Feeling disappointed, Lucien decided to leave his home and hide somewhere with his money for a few days. He was waiting for Andre and Mag to leave first.

“I can still become an apprentice anyway.” Lucien comforted himself silently.

Andre and Mag knew what Jackson would do to them if they messed up. They were arguing with each other loudly.

“Mag, savages can scent!” Andre suddenly smacked Mag’s shoulder.

“Hey! Scent what...”

“You said those savages are like hounds, and they can catch any scent in the wind!” Andre was excited, “You have savage blood! Try it!”

“Yes... Sometimes it doesn’t work, though...” Mag scratched his

bald head.

Lucien suddenly became really nervous. He still knew too little about this new world.

Raising his head slightly, Mag took a long deep breath.

Then he shouted excitedly, "I got his scent!"

"There he is!" He started running towards the tree.

Mag found him!

As soon as Mag shouted, Lucien started running. Mag was surprisingly fast with his big muscles and, several times, he almost caught Lucien.

Lucien kept running through the trees to avoid Mag. But after the woods, there was the open riverside. Lucien knew he could not escape anymore.

"I gotta beat Mag before the other guy comes." Lucien did not panic. Compared with those crazy red-eyed rats, Mag, although a bit big, was still a human being.

Lucien was prepared. He heard Mag's excited howling coming close from behind him.

Suddenly Lucien stopped, he lowered his body and pushed his leg against the ground. He butted Mag hard with all his strength.

It was an unexpected attack. Mag swiftly tried to punch Lucien's head to avoid the attack, but he missed.

Lucien passed right through Mag's arms. With the help of Mag's own momentum, Lucien's hard-clenched fist ran into Mag's soft belly.

Mag felt a hard rock hit his stomach. As he was yelling in pain, a strong acid rose from his throat.

Lucien knew a single punch could not solve the trouble completely.

Thus, two seconds later he viciously attacked Mag's back with his elbow. Furthermore, almost at the same time, his lifted knee went straight between Mag's legs.

"Ow!!!!!"

It was a painful howling in the best savage style, and even Andre, who always made fun of Mag's blood, would not deny that.

Covering his private part, Mag was rolling back and forth on the ground in great pain, snarling angrily.

Seeing all that, Andre couldn't help but feel bad for his companion, kind of feeling some of that pain as well, so he ended up slowing down.

Without a second's delay, Lucien turned around and ran away immediately. He saw a shining dagger in Andre's hand.

Andre chased for a little bit, but it was too late. Soon, Lucien disappeared in the woods across the river. He finally stopped beside Mag.

.....

"The weaker you are, the poorer you are. Those bastards just wouldn't let you have any chance!" Lucien felt aggrieved.

It was nine in the morning. Sneaking back through the gate in the district of Nolan, Lucien was carefully approaching his shack in Aalto. He needed to take his money before the gangsters found his place.

After hiding behind a nearby cabin for a while, when Lucien was about to get out, a bunch of ferocious guys approached towards his shack.

A common-looking man dressing neatly pointed to Lucien's place. Then another burly young guy directly gave a hard kick on the broken door.

The door fell on the ground, leaving behind a cloud of dust.

Chapter 14: Resolution

The guy who burst the door found the shack empty and reported this to the ordinary-looking man, Jackson.

“We did waste some time, but we shouldn’t be late.” Jackson smiled, “Although Mag and Andre are useless, they still provided us with some good information.”

The others knew what happened to the big guy. When Jackson mentioned Mag, they somehow felt a chilly wind pass through their legs. Andre squeezed out an embarrassing giggling. But, he was still glad that he did not have to lie in bed for at least a week.

“Andre, you go. See if there’s anything in this pigsty.”

Several minutes later, Andre came out with a handful of small things.

“Just some rubbish, Jackson.”

Sigh... Lucien regretted not hiding this stuff elsewhere. It was very easy to tell where he found them. If the Aaron gang took control of the dump site, then it would be the end of his dream to become a rich man.

“Rubbish... ” Jackson curled his lips, “A pretty smart young lad. He found the Orichalcum in the dump site. Trash from the palace, nobles areas, Musicians’ Association, Mercenaries Union... all go to the dump site beside the river. They’re useless for rich people, but not for us... ”

His guess was right.

“Thanks to the boy, we found a new way to make money!” Fiddling with a piece of metal, Jackson commanded with his iconic smile, “Smash all of his stuff. Keep the money to yourselves. The one who finds the guy will be rewarded!”

Jackson did not bother sending his men searching for Lucien. They

also got many things to do. Time was too precious to be wasted on a nobody like Lucien.

Cheering loudly, they squeezed in Lucien's little shack started smashing his stuff.

Clenching his fists and gnashing his teeth, Lucien could tell from the sound that his table, followed by his clay pot, were shattered to pieces. But he knew that he could do nothing against the gangsters with his current power. They would beat him to death and he did not want to die like that.

Law would not help him, since people above it would not care.

"If the witch had not gone to the cemetery, no one would have found her." Lucien's mind started wondering as the noise in the background faded, "If I become a sorcerer, I can protect myself... I don't want much. After learning magic, I just need to find a place to live."

"I need to... yes, I have no choice. Learning magic is dangerous, but being weak is no better."

His locked up thoughts all started resurfacing, like being summoned by the evil actions around him.

Alisa's shout cut off his wondering.

"You damned bastards! What the hell are you doing!"

While doing her housework, Alisa heard the mess coming from Lucien's place.

Trying to stop them, she yelled and approached the gangsters while waving her long spoon.

"Get her away." said Jackson.

Two ferocious men rolled up their sleeves and walked towards Alisa. But, they underestimated the housewife standing in front of them. Aunt Alisa directly hit one of them on the forehead with her wooden spoon.

“Ouch!” Facing the unexpected attack, the guy screamed in pain.

But soon more guys joined in. Although Alisa was tall and sturdy, she was after all still a woman. A hard punch hit her shoulder and her spoon fell onto the ground. Alisa groaned in pain, but still did not flinch.

“You wretches! Stop! The inspectors are coming!”

Hiding behind a wall and watching all of this, Lucien’s mind was filled with torment and suffering.

“Lucien, are you a man?!”

Although he met Auntie Alisa many days ago, he did not have a very strong bond with her and her husband Joel. But now, when he saw Alisa get hurt because of him, he knew it was totally unacceptable for him to be hiding behind a woman and letting her fight for him.

“Fuck!” Clenching his fist, Lucien took a quick glimpse at his shack and jumped out.

His target was Jackson, who was standing there alone.

Lucien threw himself at Jackson with all his might. Feeling extremely surprised, Jackson was suddenly knocked down by Lucien. They wrestled on the ground, and Lucien tried to hold Jackson’s hands tightly with his left hand, in case the thug was carrying a dagger. Meanwhile, his right hand was trying to reach Jackson’s throat. Lucien needed to capture their leader to control the whole situation.

However, Jackson was not inexperienced at all. He also had his share of fighting. Rolling on the ground, Jackson did not give Lucien any chance to grab his neck. At the same time, he continuously slammed his elbow at Lucien’s rib.

Due to the lack of space, Jackson’s hits were not very strong. But still, for Lucien they were still unbearable. Wincing in pain, he still did not retrieve. He was almost there. He touched Jackson’s throat.

Suddenly, Lucien got a hard punch in his stomach. He was smashed

hard on the ground by Jackson's men.

Before he could stand up, fists and kicks started falling down on Lucien's body like rain drops. Lucien started rolling on the ground from unbearable pain, like a stray dog. He could barely cover his vital parts.

Lucien's mind started wandering again. Everything seemed unreal and was fading away like in a movie. Aunty Alisa's crying voice came from another world, "Stop! Stop..."

At that moment, Lucien made up his mind.

Whatever it took, he must become strong.

Jackson was standing on the other side, looking at Lucien rolling back and forth on the ground. He trampled him hard and stopped his men.

"His friend is a knight squire. Let's not bring ourselves trouble."

Although it was rumored that Rosan Aaron had some connections with a high noble, a gang still had to be relatively "disciplined", or it would be eliminated by the church or nobles in no time.

Lucien was lying on the ground with blood coming out of his nose and mouth. Jackson smiled to him, "Actually I respect your courage and intelligence. I really do. But, my boy, don't be too greedy. I hope you understand what's yours and what's not."

"Yes," Lucien answered simply in a hoarse voice.

Lucien's answer was a little bit weird for him, but Jackson did not bother too much. Jackson and his men left in triumph, together with Lucien's collections and forty-five Fells.

Chapter 15: For Justice

Chapter 15: For Justice

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The morning sunshine was not very strong. Lucien was lying in the sun, covered with wounds and blood. Staring at the clear blue sky, breathing the fresh air gently, Lucien forgot the pain. His mind was waving like a deep ocean.

Lucien realized that everything he had experienced before led him to his final decision: learning magic. Although he knew he had to be even more careful and cautious in the future, at the same time, he felt more relaxed than ever before, after making up his mind.

There was even a smile on Lucien's bruised face. He felt he had genuinely grown up within the past couple of days, much faster than in his own world. The anger, the feeling of inferiority and the sense of insecurity had blended together and pushed him to that decision. And he was also gifted with the library.

So why not? Lucien asked himself, feeling relieved from his long-time repression.

"My poor Evans! Oh my poor Evans! Are you alright?" Alisa tried to hold Lucien's hand.

The slight movement of his arms and legs made Lucien wince in pain.

"I'm okay, Aunty Alisa. They didn't want to kill me, fortunately."

Aunty Alisa held Lucien's arm and led him back to her place. She kept swearing with great anger, "These bastards would be hanged and tortured in hell by endless flames!"

After cleaning the wounds, Alisa was about to ask Lucien what happened today. Before that, it seemed like she suddenly thought of something, and her hands acted a bit awkward.

“Lucien...”

“Yes, Aunty Alisa?”

“This... this is the thing. John’s coming back today. Can you keep this to yourself without letting him know? You know John... You’re his best friend. If he hears about it... I’m afraid that he wouldn’t be able to constrain himself from taking revenge. As a knight squire, he would be in big trouble then...”

Knowing John was Aunty Alisa and Uncle Joel’s great hope, Lucien nodded.

“Of... of course. It’s not a big deal, actually.” Lucien put a hard smile.

Alisa held Lucien’s hand, with tears in her eyes.

“Thank you, my little Evans.”

“Are you trying to hide anything from me?”

It was John’s voice. Wearing the grey knight suit, John was standing by the door. Neither Alisa nor Lucien noticed him.

Alisa answered hurriedly, “Nothing, nothing. You came back earlier?”

John walked in and pulled a chair for himself. He sat down beside Lucien.

“The Grand Duke summoned Lord Venn, and I followed him back to Aalto. Mom, I’m a knight squire now. I’m not an imprudent young boy anymore.”

Then he turned to Lucien. “You look much worse than the last time we got thrashed together. What happened? Don’t try to lie. I bet lots of neighbours were there and saw it.” John added.

Lucien looked at Alisa, who had already compromised the secret. Then he told John the story in full detail. During his talking, Lucien could feel the tension in the air due to John’s feelings, which was

the same that he felt from the guards he fought together in the sewers.

Of course, John was very angry, but he managed to calm himself down quickly. He patted Lucien's hand gently and smiled.

"You're really clever, the most clever among us. Find money in trash... really, good for you! I'm sure you will do a good job if you learn to read."

Then, shrugging his shoulders, John went outside of the room and fetched a long wooden club from the kitchen.

"Oh no..." Alisa sighed.

"Mom, you know I gotta do this, for my friend."

"But John, Lord Venn won't be happy about this..."

"Yes, John..." Lucien hurriedly asked, "Don't go. It's not a big deal. Look at me. I'm okay."

John turned around and shook his head.

"Lord Venn always told us, as a knight, one is supposed to protect the weak and fight against the violent. As a squire, I already regard myself as a knight and try to follow the knight's belief."

His eyes were intent. His gestures expansive.

"Lucien, my friend, was bullied, and his place got ruined. If I remain silent simply to not piss Lord Venn off, my inner guiltiness will never leave me. Yes, maybe I will not be able to awaken the 'blessing' anymore because I broke the rules, but I'll be faithful to my beliefs. Lord Venn will be on my side, I believe."

"I know, John. I know... but..." Alisa got tears in her eyes.

John hugged his mom and comforted her gently.

"It's okay, mom, I'm not gonna kill anyone. I will not overdo it. Look! I'm holding a club, not a blade. Can you trust me, mom?"

Finally Alisa nodded with great effort. “Do be careful, John.”

“They are the ones who have to be careful, mom.” Grabbing the club, John smiled with confidence.

When he was about to leave, Lucien called him from behind.

“Wait, John.”

“Yes?” John looked back.

With all his remaining strength, Lucien stood up from the bed. He felt his blood was flowing fast, burning his body.

“We are going together.”

Lucien’s smile looked kind of funny with his swollen mouth. But John could tell his determination. He laughed, “There’s another club in the kitchen. Let’s go, like when we were kids.”

Holding the club, Lucien comforted aunty Alisa in a low voice when he passed by her.

“I’ll watch him. Don’t worry.”

.....

It was easy for them to find out where Jackson and his men went by asking around. When they were on their way, John asked Lucien, all of a sudden:

“Do you believe in justice, Lucien?” He sounded confused.

“Yes, I do. Why do you ask?”

John lowered his head but did not stop.

“I do, too. But Lucien, I am not as noble and brave as I claim to be. I do this only because you’re my friend. If it was someone else, I don’t know... I don’t think I would. I’m used to picking my fights well, avoiding doing anything that would be beyond my capability. I’m selfish... I only want to protect my family and friends. I’m a

coward, am I not?"

"I don't think so. Every knight, or say, every person, has a priority. Some pursue justice, some loyalty, some mercy... You chose family. Only when a person knows what he really wants to protect does he stick to justice. Or justice would be just like the clouds, nothing substantial."

Lucien just realized that John was still a young lad like himself, no matter how mature he appeared to be. Thanks to the book about the knight's spirit from his mental library, he was scrabbling up his sentences to comfort John. Now he was much better at looking up information among all the books in the library.

"You really think so?" John still looked puzzled.

"Sure. If you're capable, will you protect the weak, fight against the wicked and uphold justice?"

"If I'm capable, of course I will."

"So you're still a knight of justice. If you were not capable, you would fight and die for nothing. You gotta be able to protect yourself first, only then you can protect those who need your help." Lucien felt he was quite suitable for being a mentor.

John seemed relieved, and he started smiling, "Every time I asked Lord Venn about this, he told me I was too inexperienced to understand. But Lucien, you've grown up, too. You're good at comforting and maybe you're right. But I'm still longing for the genuine justice.

"Once, Lord Venn told us a story about a legendary knight sword. The sword had divine power inside, but looked just like the common ones. Its hilt was made purely of wood, without any gems, pearls, or anything out of ordinary. The nobles and the high level knights wouldn't take a second look at the sword." John's eyes were on the far distance and he continued.

"But actually the sword was far more powerful than they thought. Especially when it was used to fight against evil. What impressed

me most was the words engraved on the sword: 'Justice is pale, compared with splendour and power. But everyone can be its representative: wealthy or poor, intelligent or illiterate, warrior or farmer. Justice is pale, but it is everywhere'.

"Pale Justice, that's the name of the sword. It disappeared along with a Grand Arcana Knight in the the Dark Mountain Range."

John became excited. His depression was gone.

Lucien laughed, "Then our slogan today is gonna be 'For Justice!'"

"For Justice!" John waved his club.

A few minutes later they saw Jackson, who was walking on the broad street of the market. A bunch of guys were still following him.

Chapter 16: On the Streets

John stopped and turned to Lucien. "You just got injured. And you haven't received any formal training. Remember, Lucien, don't panic, and don't stop moving. We will keep changing positions. Don't let his men surround you. Use your club to keep them away, so their daggers won't harm you. You hear me, Lucien?"

John tried to advise Lucien as much as possible. He was worried that Lucien might lose control and launch an imprudent attack. However, Lucien had some decent experience before.

"No worries, John. I've survived an invasion into a witch's chamber before."

Hiding their clubs behind their backs, they approached Jackson in a quick pace.

It was a pretty busy street in the market, only ten minutes away from one of Aaron gang's hideouts. Merchants, mercenaries and adventurers were gathering there, so no one paid attention to them.

They looked at each other when they were just a few steps away from Jackson, nodded, and dashed towards the gangsters, holding the clubs tightly in their hands.

Lucien recognized the guy who kicked him hard. Without a second thought, he wielded his club right towards the thug's head. If you're not trained or not strong enough, wield it hard with all your might. That's what Lucien learned.

Before the guy could notice, he got bludgeoned bitterly in his lower jaw. Then he passed out and fell onto the ground directly.

John, on the other side, quickly got rid of another guy. As a knight squire, John was really good at it. Although he did not aim at the head, his precise strike directly dislocated the guy's right arm.

Two guys were down. But the harsh scream from one of them drew the others' attention. Jackson was surprised, but his eyes became

vicious in an instant.

His men pulled out their daggers. The sharp blades reflected the surrounding light.

The pedestrians started scattering away quickly, leaving them more room to keep moving. Lucien and John kept running into different directions. They could not stop. The key to this strategy was not to spend too much time on a single enemy, in order to make sure they wouldn't be flanked.

The strategy worked quite well: one more of the thugs was rolling on the ground. But it was also very hard to keep moving all the time.

John was constraining himself. He did not want to be in trouble for hurting someone seriously. But his concern became his weakness: some guys on the ground were still in conditions to fight, and seized the chance to pull out their daggers and stab John's ankles. Busy dodging their low blades, John did not notice the others moved to surround him.

Thanks to John's refined fighting skills, he barely avoided several strikes. But the circle of daggers was getting tighter and tighter.

Lucien turned back to help John, his club whistling directly towards the back of a thug's head.

"Jonny! Watch out!" Warned by the other gang members, the man named Jonny dodged by bending forward quickly, and avoided Lucien's attack.

However, that was enough for John, who seized the chance and broke the formation through the gap left by Jonny. However, the latter jumped up immediately and made the movement to throw his dagger at John's back.

"Bang!" Before the dagger flew away from his hand, Lucien pounded bitterly into Jonny's backbone. This time Lucien did not run away. Instead, he waited for a second chance to strike Jonny.

Suddenly, a cold feeling came from Lucien's own back and

immediately turned into agonizing pain. A dagger cut him badly, but Lucien did not panic. He knew John would not hold his hand anymore.

And a determined and angry knight squire would be unstoppable when facing a bunch of gang bastards. Unlike Lucien, John never missed. Wielding his club with anger, he came to support Lucien.

Watching the battle unfold, Jackson took a step back and started escaping.

"You guys stop them!" He shouted while running.

The rest of his men started stabbing crazily. The shining blades came from different directions.

Lucien got another cut on his right hand, and the blood came out immediately. His club almost flew out of his hand.

"Are you alright?" John stood in front of Lucien, sheltering him from the enemies.

"I'm okay." Lucien shook his head, "We gotta stop Jackson from bringing reinforcements."

John nodded, "Remember, use your club to keep the daggers away from you. Follow me!" He struck down once more and started chasing Jackson.

The rest of the guys slowed down and did not pursue any further, because they saw Jackson was already quite a distance away from them.

However, after becoming the overseer, Jackson gained some weight from the lack of proper exercise. Thus, he ran slower and slower.

"Keep moving, keep moving... almost there." Jackson encouraged himself.

Unfortunately, John, a squire in perfect shape, had another plan in mind. He was slowly gaining ground and, when the distance was proper, he swung his club with all his strength right into Jackson's

back.

Jackson felt like all his guts almost gushed out through his throat. With a loud groan, he fell on the ground, twitching in great pain. Then a knight boot stamped hard on his back. Lucien arrived a while later, panting heavily. He was more than tired after all the running and fighting, especially because of the bleeding wounds that covered his body. It was his anger that was keeping him up all the way here.

Before Jackson could make any threat, John turned him over with his boot and pointed downwards, smiling and gasping.

"You first, Lucien."

"Thanks buddy." After taking several deep breaths, Lucien raised his club high and took a mighty swing at Jackson's face.

"How dare... Ow!!" Several teeth burst forth from Jackson's mouth, preventing the rest of his words from coming out. He was choking in his own blood. His ears were buzzing, his eyes were seeing stars.

It was a f**king hard one. Those damned little bastards!

"What... what do you want?" Jackson lisped with the mixture of blood and saliva in his mouth. With great dizziness, he noticed his voice was like coming from another world.

"We want nothing more than justice." Kicking away Jackson's dagger, John answered seriously, "You beat Lucien and my mom, which we've paid you back. And you also robbed him and destroyed his place. You gotta compensate."

"John, if I remember correctly, you're a knight squire, aren't you? Fighting on the street... breaks your rules. Don't let Lord Venn down, young lad." Jackson spat out blood from his mouth.

"You've come to this extent... you don't care about your little brother and parents?" He continued his threatening.

"I guess you still want more, don't you?" Lucien was weighing his club.

Facing violence, Jackson shut his mouth. His anger and shame mixed like a pot of boiling water, burning his guts to ashes.

Chapter 17: Sweet Revenge

Chapter 17: Sweet Revenge

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Facing Jackson's threat, John smiled. "According to the code, a knight shall protect his family and the weak. I don't see my fault here. Actually most people wouldn't stand for gangsters, don't you think so?"

"You need proof!" Jackson yelled. A gang was often very good at keeping a witness silent.

John looked a bit hesitant. What Alisa told him bothered him again.

"Proof?" Lucien smiled contemptuously, "John's a knight squire, while you're a gangster. What else do you need?"

From what he learned in the Copper Coronet, Lucien was aware that in the Duchy of Orvarit, knights were the real nobles, and their recognized squires also held status. Lucien believed Jackson definitely wouldn't dare slander a knight squire. And he had no reason as well: A gangster was also a businessman. Jackson couldn't gain anything big from Lucien and John from doing so.

Jackson, as Lucien expected, did not retort. Yes, they can put a knight squire into prison, but how much effort and resources they would have to use? Aaron, of course, would not do this for him, Jackson knew. Especially recently, something was going wrong in Aalto. The city was like a whirlpool where different powers were mingling. Aaron was often absent from the meetings, planning something.

Knowing he was no longer in an advantageous position, Jackson tried his best to repress his anger and shame.

"How much do you want, then..." He lowered his head and tried to make an agreement. "I only got two Nars with me."

Lucien turned to John, "The sheriffs are coming. We'd better leave before they arrive."

John nodded. "Well, two Nars."

Lucien was actually quite happy with the result. Knowing his table and chairs basically worth nothing, two Nars were more than two times what he had lost. By the way, he had already moved the rest of his money and hid it under the ruins of the witch's place. All the gangsters took away were just forty Fells and some useless rubbish.

Pulling out a small bag, Jackson threw it to John. The bag was pretty empty except for two shining silver Nars. "I left the rest to my men."

"Let's go, John." Lucien raised his chin towards the coming sheriffs and grabbed his club. He did not want to put John in trouble. Soon, they disappeared at the end of the street.

...

"All right, all right... stop. We're safe now." Leaning against the wall, Lucien was panting heavily and felt as if his lungs were about to explode. He let his body fall on the ground, smiling.

"Finally, I can't run anymore."

John sat down beside Lucien, also gasping for air. "Me neither... It was pretty cool, wasn't it?"

"What?" Lucien's mind started slowing down and feeling relaxed.

"The fight. I can't remember the last time I had a good fight like this..."

They were just sitting on the ground, gasping, and looking at the blue sky.

"Yeah... it was cool." Lucien smiled. It felt like a heavy rock had been lifted from his mind: All the pain, anger, and confusion Lucien hid at the bottom of his heart was gone like floating clouds. His mind was thinking clear, and he was more relaxed than ever before.

Also, Lucien knew that he still had a real friend in this world who would shield him and fight for him, regardless of the cost. Lucien started laughing, aloud.

“What?” John wondered.

“The future. I’m thinking... after I learn how to read, after I make some money, I’ll go travelling across the continent, to see different sceneries, to know more foreign tales, to taste many cuisines...”

Lucien stopped and stared at the blue sky. But he continued thinking to himself:

“I will learn magic. I will understand how this world works. I will discover the truth of the world... and then, I will find the way back home.”

“For my parents, for the friends in my world and in this life... for myself.”

Lucien had collected three Nars. He knew he had to start his learning as soon as possible. Who knew if the gangsters would take secret revenge on him secretly. The outside pressure from the bullies and his inner motivation mixed together and made learning magic the only way for Lucien to achieve his desires.

“Traveling?” John laughed, “It’s not safe, Lucien. Although most of the dark creatures in the east of our country have been eliminated by the church, they’re still breeding like rats. Cynocephaluses, vicious goblins, gnolls... Sorry, Lucien... I don’t think your dream will come true. At least you cannot go alone.”

“Umm... I wonder, are they edible, the things you mentioned?” Lucien asked subconsciously. For him, the most effective way for eliminating some overpopulated animals was turning them into food.

“Eww!! What the hell are you thinking about?” John was baffled.

“All right...” Lucien answered with a bit of disappointment.

“If I can turn into a real knight in the future, what will I do?” John

asked himself with a lot of expectation, “I think I’d be the same as you, Lucien. I also want to travel to see what the world looks like outside of Aalto. I wish it were really beautiful, like the bards described.”

“By the way, ” John said to him, “be careful in the next few days. Don’t stray too far from the city walls, you never know what these bastards will do.”

Lucien nodded, “I know. And when you see Lord Venn, remember to tell him what you did right away, and ask for punishment yourself.”

John did not expect Lucien could be this considerate. He was also glad that his lifetime friend still cared a lot about him, even though sometimes he felt Lucien had changed quite a bit.

“I will. I wish I could teach you how to read, but I cannot read either.” John sighed, “Only the high-level knight squires receive classes on how to read...” He looked a bit upset.

“John, you’ve done a lot for me.” Lucien laid his hand on John’s shoulder, “I’m grateful for having a friend like you. I really am.”

John could see Lucien’s sincere eyes. Soon he smiled.

“I know. Who doesn’t want to have such a great friend like me? Let’s go home. Mom’s waiting for us.”

.....

Joel was home when they came back. Alisa was walking back and forth in the living room. It was such a relief for Alisa seeing them come back, better yet, in one piece. Opening his arms, Joel grinned to them.

“Welcome back, heroes.”

And he gave both of them a big hug.

“You guys remind me of my old days.” Joel lowered his voice and winked when he turned his back to Alisa.

“Dad, you and mom gotta be even more careful for some time.”
John was kind of worried.

“It’s not a big deal. Those bastards only give the weak a hard time. You once beat the shit out of them, you’re no longer on their bullying list. Your mom and I will be fine.” Joel left some space so Alisa could treat Lucien’s wounds, and then he turned to John, dead serious.

“Actually, John, you should have asked Lord Venn first. You’re his squire, his representative. Your behaviour matters to his decency.”

“Yes, dad.” John was aware of his rashness. “Lucien told me to take the initiative and ask for Lord Venn’s forgiveness, and I will.”

Joel nodded, “Lucien’s right.”

A while later, Lucien excused himself to find some usurer in Copper Coronet. He needed to start his studies as soon as possible, and thus he was prepared to face the risks in case he for some reason didn’t manage to pay it back.

Before Lucien left, Joel stopped him. When he turned around, he saw Joel was holding an old plain purse.

“There are eight Nars in it.” Joel put it into Lucien’s hand, “Take it.”

“Joel...” Lucien was surprised. He never thought borrowing money from them because Evan was still young. “Auntie Alisa...?”

She was smiling to him. “That’s all we have for now. Not too much, but enough for you to start studying.”

“But...” Lucien’s eyes became filled with tears on the verge of falling. “But this is all your savings... I... I can’t...”

Joel laughed, “Before your father passed away, he helped us more than we could ever hope for. Now, you are in need. It’s our responsibility to support you. After you learn to read, and then find a good job, you can pay us back easily.”

"I'll work hard." Lucien nodded with confidence.

"All the money you have now can pay the fees for two months. If we work together, at least you can have a teacher every three or four months. That's my plan." Joel had regarded Lucien's study as their shared responsibility.

Lucien grabbed the little purse tight, tears were falling from his eyes, "Thank you. Uncle Joel, Auntie Alisa, and you, John." At the same time, Lucien made up his mind to pay them back with a better life. After learning some magic, Lucien knew he had to leave Aalto as soon as possible. He could not put this family under any kind of risk.

After leaving their place, Lucien still headed towards Copper Coronet. But this time, instead of finding an usurer, he was looking for a teacher.

Chapter 18: Acquaintance

Chapter 18: Acquaintance

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The afternoon sunlight send some light into the noisy pub. Bards were singing, and mercenaries were talking loudly. Lucien noticed that there were beautiful women sitting beside the bar tables.

Pushing through the crowd, Lucien finally squeezed his way to the counter.

“Any drink?” Cohn asked without raising his hairy head.

“It’s me, Lucien.”

Cohn was surprised when he saw Lucien’s face.

“What did you do to yourself?” His beard was slanted with concern, “Wait... Jackson came and asked about you earlier... Are you in trouble, my boy?”

Lucien was not quite willing to repeat what happened one more time. “I’m fine, Cohn. The problem was solved... I’m here to look for a teacher who can teach me how to read.”

“Oho! You made it?! You didn’t rob the gangsters, did you?” Now Cohn was even more surprised.

Lucien had no choice but to explain what happened briefly to Cohn. After hearing that, Cohn was very impressed.

“Lucien! You and John are finally real men now! I’m proud of you lads!” Gulping his ale, his face turned red, “But be careful, both you and John. Although chances are slim that they dare take revenge on a knight squire, but still, be wary of the bastards... you never know.”

Lucien nodded seriously.

Cohn pulled out a paper, on which there was a list of strange patterns and symbols. "I cannot read," He laughed and continued, "but as a pub owner, you gotta put down something to help you remember."

On the list, there were a bunch of scholars who registered here and were willing to teach. While Cohn was speaking the names out loud, Lucien noticed a familiar name, which was written on a note beside the list.

"Victor? You just said Mr. Victor?" Lucien stopped Cohn.

"Yes, you know him?"

"I met him once in the association." Lucien stared at the name, "But he's a musician, isn't he? You put a note beside his name as well."

Twirling his moustache, Cohn took another look at the list and nodded. "Yeah, it's the same Victor we're talking about."

"I heard that he's gonna present a play in the Hall. Last time I saw him... he was quite busy."

Cohn laughed. "That's why he had to. Having a chance to play in the the Psalm Hall is even harder than you think. I heard this from other guests as well." Cohn climbed on a bar chair, "Six month ago, Mr. Victor got the invitation from the Hall. Since then he turned down all his other presentations, even the one in Syracuse, to focus on his preparation. He was digging into his savings for the past couple of months." Cohn shrugged his shoulders.

"But why doesn't he find another job related to music?" Lucien asked.

"I have no idea, boy." Cohn took another sip of his ale, "Those musicians... tend to be quite sensitive, or say, even crazy sometimes. I guess probably Mr. Victor also needed something to be his distraction. Who knows, those artists..."

Mr. Victor made an impression on Lucien last time, when they met in the association. Compared with the others that he did not even know, Lucien felt the musician would be a good choice.

“How can I find Mr. Victor, then?” he asked.

.....

The Gesu District was named after the most well-known instrument, the Gesu violin, and was where most musicians in Aalto were gathered.

Big trees stood on both sides of the street, through whose branches the sunshine scattered into slightly trembling golden fragments that formed patterns on the ground. Light mixed with shadow. The street was like a painting.

It took Lucien quite a long time to find the address Cohn offered. After getting lost a few times, finally he was standing in front of Victor's place, n. 12, Snehva Street.

It was a two-floor small building covered with green vines. Everything was quiet and elegant here. If all went well, Lucien was going to have his reading lessons for the following two months, which could help him change his whole life.

Knocking at the door gently, Lucien got a bit nervous. Soon a servant showed up inside the iron gate. Seeing Lucien, a boy wearing rough and old clothes, he frowned.

“Yes?” He asked coldly.

After Lucien explained, he was still in doubt, “Five Nars a month. Pay first. Are you sure?”

As Lucien expected, he pulled out his money from the bag. “Yes, I'm sure.”

The servant was surprised. He couldn't believe this poor young boy could afford the price. As a servant of a famous musician, he earned ten Nars a month and could only save one every month, sometimes even less.

“Mr. Victor enjoys high reputation. He has some acquaintances in the town hall.” Opening the gate, the servant was still eyeing Lucien with suspicion. Who knew where the guy got so much money, he

thought.

Lucien just smiled without saying anything. The servant's attitude was within his expectation. Feel offended? That belonged to the wealthy and powerful.

He followed the servant through the garden and stopped in front of the wooden gate, waiting there. A couple of minutes later, the servant showed up again.

"Follow me inside. Later you may give the tuition fee to Mr. Athy, the steward."

It was quite a spacious hall, decorated with a tea table, some brown couches and small desks. On the other side there was a long dining table, made of fine rosewood.

Victor got a few students here as well. His study was too small for all of them. So they just sat in the hall. There were five boys and three girls sitting there, all pretty young, probably between thirteen and twenty.

Quills and papers were lying in front of them on the small round tables. Some of them were transcribing something, while some were humming or reading in a low voice.

According to Lucien's observation, the students also came from different backgrounds: some were of humble birth, and the others were dressing quite decently. The latter ones were usually from noble families. Most of them were not qualified to inherit their family titles and could not activate the Blessing either. For those children, becoming a graceful musician was quite a good choice.

Mr. Victor, wearing his red jacket, was moving around and helping the students one by one.

Looking around, Lucien noticed the steward in his decent black suit. From his black and white mixed hair and his wrinkled face one could tell he was not young anymore. But he was standing there straight and serious.

The steward looked like a gentleman, Lucien thought. He walked

towards him and asked, trying to keep his volume down.

“Excuse me, are you Mr. Athy?”

“Yes, I am. May I know your name and your past study?”

“Yeah, sure... I’m Lucien. Lucien Evans. I never learned how to read before.” While he was talking, Lucien took out five Nars.

Taking the money, Athy was impressed. Apparently, the young lad was from the poor district. Most young people in Aderon were quite rude, based on his experience, while Lucien appeared pretty polite and mature.

Then Athy walked to Victor and whispered to him a little bit. Victor turned around and nodded to Lucien kindly, pointing at a spare armchair.

The students just noticed Lucien and were looking at their new classmate at the door curiously. Black hair, eyes, and well-formed features...the new guy had a good-looking face. But he was wearing linen clothes and plain shoes. Although they were clean, they could tell from the first sight that Lucien came from a poor background.

“A poor wants to learn how to read?” That was their first thought.

Soon most of them lowered their heads and went back to study again. Only the ones from ordinary families were still peeking at him carefully.

As soon as Lucien sat down, the boy next to him moved a bit away subconsciously as if Lucien stank.

Lucien did not feel offended. He shook his hand slightly and pulled out his new paper and quill. They were new. Lucien bought them with his left Fells.

Victor came to Lucien a while later, with a black hard-covered book in his hand.

“Standard Pronunciation of Lingua Franca and Basic Grammar, very suitable for a beginner. Turn to page 1, chapter 1. We start from the

pronunciation of the thirty-two letters.” Victor said gently.

Chapter 19: Cramming

Chapter 19: Cramming

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Lucien's hands were trembling slightly. Carefully he opened the book like turning to a new page of his future. Within his expectation, the words in the book were the same as the ones in the magic tomes he collected at the witch's chamber.

He knew how to learn a language well. As long as he learned the pronunciation of the letters and the basic rules of spelling, he could learn more by himself outside of the class by reading intensively.

Victor repeated the pronunciations patiently two to three times on each word. Lucien followed him carefully and wrote down some notes on the paper. "Read them until you becomes more fluent." Victor said, "When it's good enough, we'll move to basic spelling and grammar."

What he said was actually more like an encouragement. As a beginner, it would be almost impossible for Lucien to match the sounds and the letters in such a short amount of time.

The notes Lucien jot down were Chinese characters. He tried to relate these letters with his mother tongue, just like he had done when he started learning English. Again, Lucien read through it and he stayed focused, so the knowledge would enter his spirit library.

As expected, a new shelf labeled "Common Tongue" appeared, on which there was a black hardcover book full of the strange characters, the same one that was lying in front of him on reality.

Lucien opened the book in the library but found out only the first few pages were there, and the rest of the book was simply blank. He went through the book on the table quickly, and as he imagined, the spiritual version became complete instantly.

"Yes!" Lucien cheered in his mind.

With the help of the library, Lucien became more confident. It was very hard from the beginning. Several times later he became better and better. After what seemed like the fifteenth time, he got finally satisfied with his ability to remember them.

Of course, Lucien knew this would not last long. If he did not review that in a regular basis, they would be forgotten very soon. At the same time, Lucien also found out that his spiritual power, which helped him with the spellcasting before, could help improve his memory as well.

At this time, Victor came back to teach Lucien again. After a while helping the students, his face looked tired but also more relaxed. Probably Cohn was right: Victor was using teaching as a distraction.

“Have you memorized all of them?” Victor asked, smiling. “Let me check it.”

Like a primary student facing his teacher, Lucien was a bit nervous. He did forget some of them, but mind then drifted into his library and he started reading according to his notes. It wasn't Lucien's intention to cheat, but both his money and time were limited. He had plenty of time reviewing them again in the library later.

Victor was surprised, “Have you learned before?”

Some of the students raised their heads and looked at Lucien.

“No, I haven't.” answered Lucien.

“Impressive.” Victor commended, “Then we will start learning how to spell.”

While some students were surprised, some of them scorned. In their eyes, Lucien must have learned it before, and was just another scheming guy who wanted to impress Mr. Victor and earn the chance to be his formal music student.

Inside the study room, the three most noble among them had started learning music.

However, that did not distract Lucien at all. There was only one

goal in his mind: learn as much as possible. Time is money! A day's learning cost a lot!

"All right, ladies and gentlemen. Let's take a break." Victor clapped gently and then walked upstairs. At the same time, the servants came with tea and fruits.

The scent of Jasmine and lemon filled the room. Some of the fruits Lucien knew, and some he did not.

A young guy decently dressed smiled at the classmates around him, with a piece of tablature in his hand. "It seems like Mr. Victor got some inspiration. We may call it a day now, if his inspiration keeps flowing." He looked a bit older than Lucien. His eyes were long and narrow and his nose straight. Among them, this guy was pretty outstanding.

A noble girl in a wine-colored dress was sitting right beside him. "If class finishes earlier, we're gonna have an extra one during the weekend. Don't get too excited." She responded in a lazy voice, "But I do hope Mr. Victor finishes his new song for the concert as soon as possible. So we will finally be able to start practicing with the orchestra. Sitting in the room, merely reading tablatures and playing flute by myself can never compete with a real rehearsal."

Around seventeen or eighteen, she was pretty good-looking: hair long and bright red, like fire, thick and sexy lip, and her waist was not tightened like most noble girls – otherwise she would not be able to play the flute well.

Looking at her serious face, Lott laughed, "The first violinist, the man who is as handsome as a silver moon... You like Rhine, don't you? Felicia?"

The first violinist, also called concertmaster, played a significant role in a symphony orchestra. When the conductor was absent, the first violinist would take the baton.

"I just feel he has excellent skills, much better than the last one." Felicia argued, but her face flushed, "Don't you think his solo for violin sonata No.1 in G minor was really impressive?"

Talking about music, Lott became serious and excited. They started discussing sonatas and suites. Other noble students also joined them, showing their great interest. Even a pretty insightful comment made by a brown-haired girl with ordinary family background won their consent.

In Aalto, music was another common tongue.

However, consciously or subconsciously, the noble students still often ignored the others, while the common ones treated Lucien indifferently and tried to get close to the ones of higher status. For noble students it was likely that the ordinary and the poor did not even deserve their attention. There were no common things between them, as they had come from different worlds.

There were no bitter words, nor scorn. But the cold wall was always there, preventing those of different social statuses from getting along.

But for Lucien, none of these mattered. He was trying to make full use of every minute or even second, absorbing the knowledge like a dry sponge thrown into an ocean.

Some of their humming came into Lucien's ears. He found music here was very similar to that of Earth. There were just some differences on notes.

After a while, Lucien raised his head. The students were still discussing. Lucien took a sip from his tea cup and dove into his book again.

Unfortunately, Mr. Victor's inspiration did not last long. Several minutes later, he walked downstairs with a tired and anxious face.

Going back to teaching definitely helped him a lot.

Lucien worked hard. By the end of the class, Lucien remembered most of the spelling rules and stored them in his spirit library.

Their study ended around ten past four in the afternoon. Except for Lott, Felicia and another noble teen named Herodotus, who stayed to practice with instruments, the rest of the students left the hall in

a row.

Out of the hall, there were two carriages waiting. The brown horses were tall and strong, snorting. The two noble students were surely envied by the rest.

Most nobles must maintain their decent look no matter if they were actually doing well or not.

The carriages left in a cloud of dust. The other three students, however, headed towards Purple Lily district as a group, chatting and laughing.

And thus Lucien was left behind, reviewing what he learned in his mind like a nerd.

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“You’re learning from Mr. Victor? He’s the top musician!” After dinner, Joel was quite excited, “Little Evans, are you really going to carry on my music dream?”

“Every dog has its day, uncle Joel. Probably I can.” Lucien replied playfully.

After coming back to his home, lying in his almost-broken, shaky bed, Lucien entered into his library and started reading one of the magic notes, trying to understand the words in it.

Of course, Lucien was not expecting that he could learn how to read within one-day study. He was just trying to read some to reinforce his memory.

Chapter 20: The Witch's Note

Chapter 20: The Witch's Note

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

As expected, Lucien did not find anything specially useful in the following four hours before he fell asleep. He read about ten pages, but most of them felt like independent words instead of meaningful sentences, probably because so many words in the notes about magic were really uncommon.

For sure Lucien had his own guesses of the meaning of some of them. But it was magic. He had to be more than careful before actually taking actions. Lucien did not want to die because of a stupid misreading mistake.

Fortunately, the previous owner of the notes treated it also like a diary. Some of her thoughts and experiences were written down as well. For this part, the witch used common words and grammar, from which Lucien managed to know the history of those magic notes, or say, books.

The witch was born in the last sorcerer family of the destroyed ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire. Her family hid into their old castle deep into the mountains to avoid the church's slaughtering, ever since Aalto was taken over. But after hundreds of years there, the population of the family declined dramatically. In the end there were just three left: the witch and her parents.

The witch's parents died in an accident when they tried to summon a creature whose name Lucien was not able to read. Then the witch became an orphan and she inherited two magic books: Astrology and Magic Elements; and Common Magic Related Materials Illustration.

Lucien wished the notes were relatively complete so he could understand it, otherwise he would have to learn the dying Sylvana's language which, so to speak, was impossible.

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Almost all of the jobs Copper Cornet could offer were under the control of the Aaron gang. Lucien lost his job again. He had to dig into his savings recently to support himself.

But it was also nice that Lucien could seize the chance staying focused on his study, as well as avoiding the possible revenge from the gang. Joel was still playing on the busy streets in the administrative district, while Alisa was doing laundries for the association. Both of them were relatively far from the market area, where the Aaron gang tyrannized the most.

They all agreed that Lucien still ranked first among them regarding being in danger. They warned Lucien not to leave the city, not to go to anywhere deserted, and even told him to be alert during bed time in case some bastards tried to burn down his shack.

So, after washing his face and finishing his hard brown bread softened in boiling water, Lucien felt there was nothing for him to do.

But the feeling did not last more than a minute. Soon Lucien went outside and found an open field. He started to practice sword with a wood stick following John's direction. Lucien longed for strength to protect himself, even though he knew his training was too late. John told Lucien that after sixteen years old, the chance of a person being Blessed was very slim, close to none, unless he received the Holy Light Water from the church.

Lucien also kept Jackson's dagger handy, in case of any danger.

After practicing, Lucien went back home. It was nine o'clock in the morning. The sun in the sky just started showing its real power. Taking a short rest, Lucien opened his books again and started reviewing. He was much more diligent and self-disciplined than ever before.

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12 Snehva Street, Gesu.

“You have never really learned these before?” Victor asked with great surprise, “None of them?”

Lucien’s progress was more than impressive. He answered all the questions perfectly and fluently. He even asked some questions he found in spelling, which most students could not notice at all until they started having a solid foundation. With just one day study, Lucien had almost caught up with his classmates, Colin and Renee. The two students from common background had been studying here for more than three months.

Was Lucien a genius? Or just a liar. The students were guessing.

“I swear I have not, Mr. Victor. We’re already speaking common tongues in our lives, aren’t we? I can’t read, but I know the connections between the letters and sounds are more important. I used my imagination.” Lucien explained. He wanted people to believe he was just smart, instead of regarding him as an incomprehensible monster, which would possibly bring him trouble.

For sure Lucien did not tell him about the library.

Victor nodded and smiled approvingly, “Good, very good. You’re gifted in learning language.”

Lucien was envied by most students in the class. Hearing Victor’s commendation, Lott and Felicia, who had been learning from Victor for five years, exchanged a look.

“It sounds pretty useful.” Felicia nodded slightly with her hands crossed over her lap. As a noble girl, she always sat straight.

Lott was about to shrug his shoulders, but was stopped by the thought that the gesture might not look elegant. Facing Felicia, his long time competitor, Lott tended to be more careful.

“The poor speak the common tongue as well. They just don’t know how to spell and read. It’s always better than starting from scratch, isn’t it?” He also added, “Even if they learn it, it won’t be much useful for learning music.”

“I have my own idea for learning music, not like you.” Felicia

responded sharply, “You’re gifted, but gift cannot last long. If I were you, I’d spend more time on practicing instead of fooling around with girls.” She then looked at Lucien. “Even the poor guy, if he starts learning music he will probably do a better job than you.” She smiled with her bright beautiful teeth.

All the classmates believed that Lucien wanted to become a musician. They did not know the actual simple reason why Lucien chose Victor as his teacher. In the eyes of the common folk, choosing a teacher represented one’s future path. For example, if a person wanted to be an official in the town hall or the court, he or she would definitely choose scholars with law or history background, instead of a musician.

But all careers needed to be recognized by nobles. Only then it would indicate real success.

“If he’s better than me, he’s better than you, Felicia.” Lott sneered.

Felicia was about to say more, but noticed Victor was looking in this direction. She raised her hand and tidied her red hair, then lowered her head and went back to her studies.

Victor started speeding up Lucien’s learning. Soon they finished the rest of the spelling rules and moved to basic grammar, which was exactly what Lucien was expecting.

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Friday, the last day of Lucien’s study this week.

After a few days’ learning, Lucien had mastered most of the grammar. Were it not for lacking vocabulary, Lucien could even start learning magic now. He had made a big progress with the magic notes as well, in which the witch explained why she came to Aalto:

“Along with the increase in my spiritual power, it has become harder for me to immerse myself in meditation... Shall I try the meditating the way only real sorcerers can?”

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“It was too dangerous. I almost died. Perhaps I should improve the apprentice meditation based on my experience.”

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“I got lost, completely. No wonder all the great seniors didn’t make any improvement. I’m too shallow, too arrogant.”

“Even the magic structure of the first level is too complicated. I can’t find a way to build the magic mark model. It’s driving me crazy... I have the potion already, but without the model I can’t move forward to be a real sorceress!”

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“I don’t know... maybe I should try to make a potion of ‘Magic Gate’. It contains a level-one magic in it. Perhaps I can make it this way.”

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“I need Snow Gorse... Maybe I should go to Aalto. It’s the biggest city on the west continent. There’re also many hidden sorcerers and sorceress. It’s dangerous, but I shall still have a chance.”

So far, that was all Lucien could read from the notes. He was very curious about her experience in Aalto, but decided to finish the remaining few pages later tonight.

Today Lucien also wanted to borrow a common tongue dictionary and put it into his library. If everything went well, Lucien could start learning magic on the weekend.

His heart was full of hope.

Chapter 21: Harpsichord

Victor was glad to see that Lucien did not slow down over the several days' learning. Within fifty minutes he absorbed the rest of the grammar rules. He was smart and gifted in learning language, and had a good memory as well.

Good mood brought him ideas. Victor started humming.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let's have a break. Help yourself to some tea and snack. I gotta jot this down." He was already trotting upstairs when he finished talking.

Picking up the fine white teacup, Lucien took a sip of the weird-tasting tea. Rubbing his eyes, he tried to relax a little bit.

"Felicia, when can we go hunting in your family's manor again? I miss the deers and rabbits there so much, and also the fresh air."

Annie was another noble lady among them. However, except for her beautiful blond hair and gem-like green eyes, her appearance was just around average. Besides, her family was not that distinguished as well. Her father was just one of the many children of a common baron, who failed to inherit anything from the family. No title, no land, no manor. Annie's family had to struggle to live a seemingly decent life with the income from her father work as a court clerk and the annuity from their title.

In comparison, the Hayne family, as one of the biggest families in the Duchy of Orvarit, still enjoyed a high reputation. Although her father did not inherit the title either, he still got a big manor outside of Aalto with its own woods, orchards, and even a granite quarry. They also possessed a property inside of the city.

Among them, Felicia had the most distinguished family background.

On hot summer days, there was nothing better than escaping from the heat enjoying some hunting and some homemade wine in a manor away from the city. Many young nobles who did not have a manor in their families would of course long for it. Lucien could tell

Annie was trying to get close to Felicia.

“Is that true, lady Felicia? Are there rabbits and cute deers in your family’s manor?” Renee got in the conversation, asking with curiosity.

Since they started studying together, Renee always tried to cotton up to the noble students by talking about music, which worked very well.

She was thus encouraged. Through music, she started joining conversations between noble students more. Somehow she learned a bit on some theories about music. Often she asked Felicia or Annie related questions and became more and more acquainted with the nobles.

Learning from her, Colin and David started doing the same.

Lucien, perhaps because he was too nerdy and reserved, only cared about his own study. And for sure neither the nobles nor the commons would take the initiative to talk to him.

“I miss the place as well.” Felicia was still sitting straight, answering with her standard smile, “But there are only around three months left before Mr. Victor’s performance. Lott, Herodotus and I have to practice a lot. I really have no time to go there.”

For sure, Felicia was happy for being flattered and being the envy of the other students. Who would not?

It would not be true to say that Lucien did not want to have a look at such a fancy manor. But the most urgent thing in his mind was how to borrow the dictionary and finish browsing through it as quickly as possible.

Victor came downstairs with a slight smile hanging on his face. Apparently he was pretty satisfied with his work. The chatting stopped.

Athy, the steward, came in when Victor was about to continue his teaching. He whispered in Victor’s ear, “Your guest is here, my Lord.”

“Oh! I forgot!” Shaking his right hand, he looked a bit annoyed, “Let him in, please.”

Then he turned to his students, apologizing politely.

“I’m so sorry, ladies and gentlemen. I forgot I would have a guest here today. Can we resume the class tomorrow afternoon at two? I’m really sorry.”

The students were happy to have an early end today. When they were preparing to leave, Lucien walked closer to Mr. Victor, ready to ask him to borrow the common tongue dictionary for a few days.

Before Lucien began his request, two guests came in following the steward. One was a silver-haired pretty man in a red shirt and black coat, and the other was a white-haired elderly man with a wooden suitcase in his hands.

“Mr. Rhine...” Lucien and Felicia recognized the guest at the same time.

Felicia’s face turned pink, while Lucien felt even more surprised. He thought Rhine was just a bard living in the tavern. Rhine being Mr. Victor’s important guest was quite unexpected for Lucien.

“Hi, Felicia. And... you’re here, Lucien!” Rhine greeted them gracefully.

Felicia smiled shyly, and a second later she was very surprised: how did Mr. Rhine know Lucien?

“Lucien, you know Mr. Rhine?” Victor smiled.

“Yes, we’ve met before.” Lucien nodded, “I Didn’t expect I’d meet Mr. Rhine again here at your place.”

Rhine’s smile was pretty attractive like an elf.

“Yes, we met once before and Lucien impressed me. At that time he was telling us that he wanted to learn how to read. And look! Here he is! I always appreciate young people striving for their dreams.”

Commended by Rhine, even Lucien felt a bit shy.

“Mr. Rhine is the concertmaster I’m currently working with, who has very unique and excellent understanding towards music. Without his help, I don’t think I could be inspired with my piano concerto.”

“What!? Rhine’s the master now!?” That almost made Lucien’s jaw drop. He had met Rhine in Copper Cornet in the slum several days before.

From his classmates’ conversation, Lucien knew that the structure of a symphony orchestra here was similar to the ones on the earth. The first violinist was the concertmaster, who would also be responsible for conducting the orchestra when the conductor was absent. How could Rhine, a stranger who had never cooperated with the team before, get such an important position?

From Lucien’s expression Rhine could tell he was very surprised. He explained easily, “The previous master fell in love with a noble lady, who eloped with her to Syracuse several days ago. Mr. Victor had no one else to find but me.” He shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

“Mr. Rhine should be the first violinist of the orchestra, even if the previous master was still here.” Felicia cut in with her flushed face, “Mr. Rhine just needs more practice with the others.”

“I agree.” Victor also thought highly of Rhine, “Mr. Rhine’s one of the best violinists I’ve ever met. I was more than lucky to have him here.”

Lucien looked at Rhine, who was smiling politely with his right hand laying on his heart, showing his gratitude. Within a few days, a bard was exiled from Syracuse with his harp, and he happened to become the first violinist of a symphony orchestra in Aalto. It was too strange for Lucien. It could not be a coincidence.

“This is Mr. Shavell, the most excellent harpsichord maker in Aalto.” Rhine started introducing the elderly man beside him, “Mr. Shavell shall be able to help you with the improvement.”

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Shavell. It’s an honour for me to have you here.” Victor shook hands with him enthusiastically and led him upstairs, before Lucien had any chance to talk to him.

Victor was so excited that he forgot to ask Athy to see his students out. Unsure about the relationship between Lucien and Rhine, Athy did not ask him to leave instantly either. Next, Felicia, Annie, Colin and some other students came upstairs quietly, filled with curiosity.

Lucien was not willing to leave without the dictionary, so he also followed upstairs to end up in Mr. Victor’s practice room.

“Mr. Shavell, I was hoping the harpsichord could be more sensitive to the pressure of my fingers, so the the control of its volume can be more accurate.” Watching Shavell open his harpsichord, Victor made detailed his request, “My music requires a wider range of tones. More resonant and vigorous, but also delicate and clear.”

There were lots of different components in it: springs, pivots, plectrums, strings... Since it was invented, many makers and musicians tried to improve the harpsichord, including adding extra pivots, stops, replacing soundboard, etc.

Slightly frowning his eyebrows, Shevell was carefully checking the parts.

“I’m afraid it’s impossible, Mr. Victor. Over more than 300 years of upgrades, this kind of instrument has reached its limitation. Even a slight improvement on it would be quite hard.”

Both Victor and Rhine lost their words, especially Victor. If the harpsichord could not be improved, his music would definitely not be perfect. In that case, the performance in the Psalm Hall would be a foreseeable failure for him.

Everyone remained silent for a while, until Lucien started asking all of a sudden.

“Can we... can we turn it into a kind of percussion instrument...? Changing it from plucking to hitting.”

Lucien noticed that this world had yet to invent the “king of

musical instruments”, the piano. Musicians were still working on harpsichords and clavichords. He got his own plan: If he could help Mr. Victor with his improvement, probably there would be no more five Nars every month, and, of course, borrowing a dictionary would be a piece of cake.

As early as they started talking about improving the harpsichord, Lucien opened his Piano: Manufacture and Tones and Mechanism of Modern Piano in his spirit library. He got a rough idea from leafing through the first several pages.

“Then what would be the difference between it and a clavichord?” Shevell threw a stern look at Lucien, “Yes you can control the volume with percussion, but the sound’s too delicate and the volume too low. It’s only suitable for playing at home, not a hall.”

It was in Aalto, the City of Psalm, the City of Music. No one suspected the real reason why Lucien understood the difference between a harpsichord and a clavichord.

Chapter 22: Appreciation

Victor was quite upset. He knew that without an improved harpsichord, those picky nobles, musicians and critics would by no means be satisfied with his performance. What was worse, he would also receive a bitter comment from Wolf on Music Criticism, and then he'd never have a second chance to play in the Psalm Hall again during his life.

He had seen many excellent musicians fail to perform perfectly in the Hall and suffer lots of setbacks afterwards. Every two or three years there would be a desperate musician among those committing suicide because of his failure. Indeed, most musicians could be quite sensitive and vulnerable.

Although he understood Lucien was just trying to help, Victor still felt a bit annoyed by Lucien's groundless guessing. Controlling himself, he answered with his low voice.

"Thank you, Lucien. But it's more complicated than just combining the two."

"Such an arrogant fool from the slum..." The noble students were angry about Lucien's interruption. While Lott, Herodotus, and Felicia were glaring at Lucien with distaste, Rhine was standing to the side, with an almost undetectable smile on his face, as if he was looking forward to Lucien's answer.

Although Lucien hadn't got a full understanding of the two books, he still had some overall ideas. By observing the inner structure of the harpsichord in front of him, he was ready to share his thoughts.

"With the help of a certain... unit, the finger movement might be enlarged through the process of conduction, so the striking from the hammers inside could be louder."

Lucien explained it vaguely on purpose, carefully choosing his words to match those of a common lad living in the slum, to avoid suspicion. Terms like 'amplitude' were definitely not supposed to show up in his vocabulary.

“Enlarge? Like what?” Shavell’s eyes were still stern and his white eyebrows twisted together. He had heard similar ideas before, but after several attempts failed, they all gave up in the end.

Under their gaze, Lucien took down a flute from the wall. “Once, I saw a farmer who lifted a big rock with a wooden stick and a small rock, like this...” He grabbed a ink bottle and put it under the flute and started doing levering.

“I see...” Instead of refuting, Shavell started thinking. Soon he noticed the disadvantage. “But like this, the striking speed would be slower.”

“Impressive, Lucien. You are showing us the Lever Principle.” Rhine watched Lucien’s model carefully and took a step closer to him.

Pretending confusion, Lucien was actually very surprised. How come Rhine knew the Lever Principle? People here called it the same way? But the rest of them seemed really confused.

“You may all have seen it before in your lives. I heard the principle when I was traveling to Holm. Actually local scholars there already discovered it hundreds of years ago. But here, people worship divine power and the Blessing in the blood, so science doesn’t pervade very fast.” Rhine explained.

“Have you noticed that the longer the stick is, the easier you can lift something on the other end, Lucien?” Rhine asked.

“Obviously,” Lucien thought, but his face put on a confused look as he said, “Really? Then can we put more than one lever together?”

Lucien stopped himself here. He could not go any further talking about stuff like multi-lever transmission.

Rhine’s eyes were lightened immediately. “Connection! Multi levers!” He walked close to Shavell and talked to him in a low voice. He was drawing on a paper.

“Rhine... He’s more than a bard. I’m almost sure.” Lucien thought while Rhine talking. The bard’s hands were waving in the air explaining the principle.

Soon Victor joined their heated discussion.

“Lucien, how did you connect them together? I mean, yes, I saw it before several times but I never thought it could be used on this.” Surprisingly, Lott started talking to Lucien.

But he was stopped by Felicia, “Be quiet. Go downstairs if you want to chat.”

Lott did not want to miss their discussion now. He nodded and remained silent.

The rest of the students were pretty annoyed by the factor that Lucien, the nobody who just recently arrived there, somehow got the spotlight. They were hoping his idea wouldn't work out.

Understanding that there were still many more differences between a harpsichord and a modern piano, Lucien once again started reading his two books, to see if there was more he could help with.

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An elegant melody came out from the room, resonant and rich at the beginning, gentle and soft in the end.

“Awesome!” Victor's face was glowing with excitement, “Thank you, Rhine. Thank you, Mr. Shavell.” Although there was still a way to go, the key problem had been solved.

“It's my pleasure.” Rhine smiled elegantly.

After hugging both of them, Victor came to Lucien with his open arms. “Thank you, Lucien. You gave us the direction. Thanks God for bringing you to me.”

“It's nothing, Mr. Victor.” Being hugged by a man, Lucien felt a bit awkward. “I didn't expect I could actually help.”

Victor laughed and thanked Lucien again sincerely. “Anyway, from now on, if you need any help, just ask.”

The rest of the students started being envious again. The newcomer

earned Mr. Victor's favour so quickly!

Lucien was very glad as well.

"Yes... Yes, Mr. Victor." He asked shyly, "I do need help with something..."

"Yes?" Victor was waiting for his request, smiling. In his eyes, Lucien was genuinely a good-hearted and promising young lad.

"Can I borrow your common tongue dictionary?" Rubbing his hands, Lucien was pretty unsure.

"Ah?" Rhine couldn't stop himself from laughing. Lott, Felicia and the rest people there were amused as well.

"Sure, no problem. My good boy." Mr. Victor nodded instantly, "Anything else?"

"Um..." Lucien was even more nervous now. He felt he was asking for too much.

Noticing Lucien's hesitation, Victor tried to encourage him. "It's okay. Don't be shy. Just ask."

"Um... Mr. Victor, can I... can I study here for free...?"

"Hahahaha!" Rhine could not hold back anymore.

Chapter 23: More About the Notes

Chapter 23: More About the Notes

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Victor also started laughing. He was almost laughing to tears. Even a serious elderly man like Shavell was smiling and shaking his head, not to mention Lott, Felicia and Herodotus. The rest of the students who hadn't had a chance to be Mr. Victor's music students laughed as well, albeit bitterly to some extent.

Lucien felt a bit awkward. "Mr. Victor?" He asked carefully.

Victor stopped himself after several coughs, looking at Lucien seriously. "I mean, Lucien... would you like to study music under me? I know it's hard to start from scratch at your age, but a smart and hardworking young lad like you could still be a qualified musician in the future. Also, completely for free." Victor added humorously.

Victor had three types of students: the ones learning how to read, which paid five Nars every month; the ones selected among the previous type, who would learn music from him for the price of ten Nars a month; and only a really gifted and outstanding student could perform with him and benefit from his fame and network. Victor, for now, had just one student like that, who was already a well-known musician.

So, what Victor offered meant that Lucien could save ten Nars every month. On the other hand, that much was still not a lot for the musician, even now when he was kind of struggling because of his current income. Victor would only earn about seven gold Thales a year for teaching these students, which of course did not mean much to him. When Victor was performing for the nobles, his income was around 100 gold Thales annually.

Actually, merely seven Thales a year was already pretty good for most of the commoners. Annie's father, a court clerk, earned no more than fifteen Thales a year.

Although the other students envied Lucien, he was a bit hesitant about the offer. He never thought he would learn music. Different thoughts were flashing through his mind: the witch's note, John's family, and his own plan...

"I'm afraid I'll have to live in Aalto for a longer time, until I find a better place to learn magic. After all, Aalto's the biggest and busiest city in the west. Being a respectable musician can be a pretty good cover for me."

Soon Lucien made up his mind, and his face lit up with a smile.

"Of course. That would be great honor. Thank you, Mr. Victor. Really."

Victor was nodding with satisfaction, "You're both smart and diligent, and also have a simple heart. I'm sure you'll achieve something if you keep working like this."

"I'm not that simple..." Lucien thought to himself. At the same time, he felt slightly uncomfortable with the way the other students were looking at him.

Having his dictionary and the returned five Nars with him, Lucien left the house and was ready to go back home.

"Good job, Lucien!" The girl with brown hair and green eyes caught up with Lucien from behind. "I'm Renee, Renee Weisz. I just want to say that your talent really impressed me..."

Being eager to read the rest of the witch's note, Lucien was not in a chatting mood now. "Hi, Renee. I'm running late for an appointment... I'm sorry but... can we talk next time?"

"Oh... all right..." Her expression froze for a second but soon the smile came back.

At this time Annie and another noble student, Maxi, passed by them and Annie's mouth twisted in a contemptuous sneer. Keeping her elegant paces, Annie directly walked away without having a glimpse of Renee.

From a distance, Colin and David sneered at Renee as well. But they also wished they could be as lucky as Lucien.

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The early summer sunshine still shone over Aderon at around five in the afternoon, when Lucien arrived at his house. He couldn't wait to read the rest of the notes. The good news could wait until tomorrow to be shared with Alisa and her family.

Devouring the brown bread, Lucien locked the wooden door from the inside. After taking out his quill and paper he was ready to start his exploration again. Then he entered into his spirit library to copy the dictionary.

Finishing the work, Lucien opened the witch's book again.

By ten o'clock that night, Lucien had finished all of his reading. With a long sigh, he stretched slowly.

It looked like the witch was not very good at reading ancient Sylvanas texts as well, because she took the notes in great detail. Some of the parts came directly from her ancestors. Lucien was pretty confident that he could just follow her notes to learn magic.

The only problem was that the notes explained no further than how to become a primary-level sorcerer. After that point Lucien would have to find other ways to advance. Or maybe he could learn some ancient Sylvanas characters from the note and learn the contents from the book Astrology and Magic Elements.

Anyway, now Lucien was ready to start learning magic.

According to the notes, people in ancient magic empires believed that magic worked as the result of four basic elements – earth, fire, wind, water – releasing power under the guidance of their spirit. Later, light, darkness and necromancy magic joined in. And sorcerers were also able to summon demons from hell, pits or other dimensions.

At the same time, all the magic could be divided into eight schools: Element, Astrology, Necromancy, Illusion, Summoning, Force,

Transformation and Alchemy. The book Astrology and Magic Elements was mainly focused on Element and Astrology magic.

Before becoming a real sorcerer, an apprentice could only learn some simple tricks instead of real first circle magic.

In Lucien's viewpoint, the structure of those apprentice spells was very simple. They were just some geometric patterns combined together, which could be triggered by the spells and corresponding magic reagents.

There were also three levels of the sorcerer apprentices: in training, intermediate, and advanced, graded according to the different levels of spiritual power, which determined how many spells they were able to cast in a row – five, ten and twenty, respectively.

Through meditation an apprentice could improve his or her spiritual power. With the help of certain magic potions, he or she could start mentally building a first circle magic structure. Those who succeeded would become real sorcerers. Having sufficient spiritual power was the key factor during the process, because the casting of magic from the first circle did not require any spelling, magic reagents or gestures.

"Today I met another sorcerer here in Aalto. I'm really excited. But he looked a bit weird... very different from the ones hiding." Lucien got really encouraged when he found out that there were still other sorcerers in the city.

...

"I found some strange red-eyed rats in the sewers. I detected magic on them, but I cannot trace them, yet."

...

"My experiment shows that they're very fast-breeding, and their blood is toxic, which can lead to hallucinatory experience and paralysis. It is a perfect match for my Lapland Bloodvine. I think my magic trap is ready now... But who do those rats belong to?"

...

Lucien was shocked to know that the rats didn't belong to the witch. That was to say, there were probably still other dangerous things down there.

And the notes kept going:

"I met the sorcerer again. His thoughts about magic were so unique, his knowledge broad and profound. He was... very attractive.

"But he said that the ancient magic was outdated, except for those really powerful ones, which could still be valuable. Also, he mentioned those ancient people were ignorant and uncivilized... I don't know... It doesn't make sense to me."

.....

"He showed me a magic book called Arcana. It was thin. Actually he called it a... journal. He said that Arcana is the nature, the theory of magic. But I never thought magic could actually be explained. I was shocked...

"The book, or journal, was first released more than three hundred years ago. It started from a script of a great arcanist in a sorcerer conference. Three hundred years ago... I've never heard of any of this before... After reading it, I was shocked. I don't even know how I came back home."

The witch took down some of the script from the journal. Her writing was messy in this part. Lucien could tell her hands were shaking with great excitement.

Here was the script in the note:

"Ladies and gentlemen. Many years ago, in order to fight against the magic creatures, our respectable ancestors learned how to exert our spiritual power directly from dragons, elves, giants, and even from demons. They studied them: their bodies, their blood, their inner magic patterns... and thus our ancestors were able to evolve their own human bodies. They left us the meditation to strengthen our spirit; they left us magic structures to empower their offsprings; and they left us a peaceful continent by pushing those evil creatures

back into the pits with their great power.

“Dragons are hiding. Giants migrated. Elves are gone deep inside their forests... Now we are the owners of the land!

“The Great Victory, ladies and gentlemen. The Great Victory had been reminding us for hundreds of years to keep seeking greater power, from the pits to hell, from hell to other dimensions, until the Saint Truth Church gained its power... Within a few hundred years, our empires were conquered, our sorcerers slaughtered and exiled. Our past glory died in the ashes of our castles.

“It’s about time we take a step back and ask ourselves: What on earth are we pursuing? What can we do to prevent our magic from dying? Have you ever thought about the following questions:

“What’s the nature of magic?

“Why are we endowed with spiritual power?

“How does that power exist?

“Are earth, fire, wind and water, really the most basic elements in the world? If they are, how do they stick together to form everything we know? And if not, which are the real magic elements?

“What’s the nature of the soul? Is it different from consciousness?

”Do we need any certain ‘tools’ to help us with the magic structures?

“Does God exist? If God exists, who is our God? Why can vampires remain undead forever?

“Why is there a sun and a moon in the world? Why do they rise and set every day? What keeps them moving in such a manner?

“If we can explore more about the world itself instead of chasing power around blindly, we can find the truth about magic, know who we are and understand where we should go.”

The name of the great arcanist was Douglas.

Chapter 24: Sorcerer Apprentice

Chapter 24: Sorcerer Apprentice

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The notes thrilled Lucien as well. When he first came here he also had many questions about the world. However, he soon forgot all his questions while struggling to survive.

These overwhelming questions pointed directly to the origin of the world. Lucien believed that if he could figure them out, he might be able to learn how he came here and how to go back.

“Even if the arcanist named Douglas had not completely understood any of the problems, as long as he was still working on them he should be an extraordinary arcanist nowadays, comparable to the sorcerers and sorceress of legend.” Lucien was organizing his thoughts.

“There’s a journal called Arcana. The witch did meet other sorcerer in this city. Everything seems to indicate there are still safe places for people to learn magic. But why would it be a journal? It sounds pretty academic...”

“Why call him an arcanist instead of a sorcerer? Does an arcanist rank higher than a sorcerer?”

.....

Lucien got more and more excited with his thoughts. He wished he could meet the sorcerer as soon as possible and move somewhere where he could learn magic safely. He would come back to Aalto and do something for little Iven’s family when he became stronger.

Among all questions, the two Lucien felt most interested in were:

“Are earth, fire, wind and water, really the most basic elements in the world? If they are, how do they stick together to form everything we know? And if not, which are the real magic

elements?”

“Why is there a sun and a moon in the world? Why do they rise and set every day? What keeps them moving in such a manner?”

According to what Lucien had learned before, earth, fire, wind and water were not basic elements. As for the second question, it drew his attention because they seemed to want to combine the rules of the physical universe with magic, in case Lucien’s knowledge might really come in handy to learn magic faster.

However, Lucien didn’t know how helpful his knowledge would be in this world. It was a world full of incredible creatures, magic, divine power and souls. Nevertheless, Lucien hadn’t met anything that varied from the basic laws of physics. And he did find the same materials, like silver, copper and iron.

“I might have been wrong before, regarding why some books in my library were locked.” Lucien guessed, agitated with the prospect.

Gradually he calmed down. He was now more mature and understood that no matter how great ambition one had, sitting there and daydreaming would not change anything. After all, every person still had to be practical.

He turned to the last page of the note:

“Sometimes, during the break of my meditation and experiments, I think about him. He’s wise, elegant, and attractive.”

.....

“He said he came here to Aalto for an important secret mission. If everything goes well, in some months he might take me to the heaven of our sorcerers and sorceress — ‘The Continental Congress of Magic’.

“We have an appointment in the cemetery. I wonder what he’ll tell me.”

The witch’s notes ended here. “She and her sorcerer friend must have been ambushed by the night watchmen. I wonder if the

sorcerer managed to escape...” Lucien thought with some disappointment. The Continental Congress of Magic was his only clue for now. But he had no idea how to find other hiding sorcerers and sorceresses.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien decided to start his first meditation. He eliminated all the distractions in his mind and got ready for it.

Following the note, Lucien kept his breathes long and gentle. Along with the breathing he let his spirit freely spread like water and then drew it back in, similar to waves, again and again until he entered into a blank world. A world where nothing existed.

Talented as the witch was, it took her more than two years to reach this level. Plus another year to augment her spirit until it was strong enough to sense the surrounding magic elements as a junior apprentice”.

However, after becoming a junior apprentice, it would still take quite a while before one could move forward and become a real sorcerer or sorceress. An apprentice needed to keep forging his or her spirit by doing meditation, to only then be able to analyze and build different magic structures.

Having started meditating when she was ten, the witch became an apprentice at the age of thirteen. A year later she became an intermediate apprentice and was really satisfied with her progress. But then, since she was not good at analyzing the patterns of magic and building their structures, she could not progress any further. So she tried to use a precious magic potion called “Magic Gate” to break through the bottleneck.

Lucien felt both disappointed and excited. From the witch’s note Lucien understood that learning magic did take time, so unfortunately there was no way for him to take revenge on the gangsters within a short period. Actually, as Victor’s music student, Lucien was now in no hurry to protect himself with magic, since a mistake could affect his teacher’s social status. At the same time, it was exciting because Lucien was unexpectedly great at the meditation. After the bitter fight underground, Lucien’s spiritual power was improved by a great extent. It only took him less than

thirty seconds to successfully enter into the meditation world! Observant as he was now, Lucien was guessing he could probably shorten the time for becoming a junior apprentice remarkably, doing so probably in months or even weeks!

Actually, it was even faster than he thought.

The meditation world was very different. Lucien could feel all sorts of power here: some of them were steady, some restless, others were dynamic, and there were even gentle ones, among others...

“They are... earth, fire, wind and water... the four elements? My spiritual power has reached the level of a junior apprentice?!” Lucien was so surprised that he almost failed to maintain his meditation. “The badge really helped me a lot!”

He became truly happy. Soon he would start learning his first magic!

“I wonder... why do the four basic elements feel more like... forces...” When Lucien was about to follow the basic Element Meditation mentioned in Astrology and Magic Elements, a question came to him. Then he noticed the similarity with the question raised by Douglas. “Maybe... they are actually the four fundamental forces — gravity, weak nuclear force, electromagnetism and strong nuclear force — in the universe? ”

“But then gravity would definitely be related to the earth element, while the other three are in fact different manifestations from the other forces, according to what I learned in my world...”

As soon as the idea came up, Lucien noticed that the world around him changed: A starry sky showed up and the stars were shining brightly against the dark background. Every star had an invisible string of force hanging down to the earth. Attracting those countless strings, the earth, gentle and profound, was like a silent giant grabbing mysterious ropes in its hand.

On the other hand, the remaining three elements — fire, wind and water — showed no such change, since Lucien could not figure out the corresponding connections between them and the other three

forces yet. However, the previous clear boundaries between them were seemingly blurred now.

“The world... changes with my cognition?” Lucien was guessing that the sky appeared because he happened to understand the connection between gravity and the Earth Element. He suddenly recalled an excerpt from the witch’s notes: “Stars — It was a way of meditation belonging to another school for advanced apprentices.”

As the note mentioned before, there were eight schools in the world of magic, and each of them had its own way of meditation. The witch just had a brief description in the note about the Astrology School because it was the Element School she majored in. However, as the fundamental way of meditation for the Astrology School, the first time an apprentice entered into his or her meditation world it would allow them to see one’s own night sky, from which he or she could choose a “Host Star of Destiny” by themselves. The star could be connected with the person, which would provide great help in the person’s future learning. More importantly, without a Host Star, magic belonging to Astrology, like Horoscope, could not be obtained.

That school believed that every soul matched a star in the boundless sky. One’s destiny kept changing along with his or her Host Star. The sorcerer would not be able to see the strings of destiny without a connection, and thus could not cast a Horoscope.

Therefore, even the basic meditation of Astrology School required an advanced apprentice’s spirit level. Before achieving that requirement an apprentice was supposed to refer to other ways of meditation to improve their power until they became qualified.

“In this world, gravity has something to do with destiny? Interesting...” Lucien thought to himself. “It seems like many things happening here do not comply with my previous knowledge... Or maybe I just cannot understand it fully.”

Chapter 25: First Magic

Chapter 25: First Magic

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Staring at the night sky, Lucien sought his own Host Star using the astrology meditation.

Searching in the vast and spectacular sky, soon Lucien located a star in a distance which somehow he felt familiar with. The star was not very bright, seeming like a newborn one.

Extending his spirit, Lucien approached the star. Under the guidance of meditation, little by little, Lucien started connecting his spirit with the star.

Suddenly, like a string being plucked, Lucien's soul shook and started vibrating fiercely. Knowing it was the hardest but also the most important part in the process, Lucien quickly reached out his spirit again to grab the almost broken string between the star and himself.

Gradually, the thin string started shining bright as the stars, and gradually grew stronger. The vibrating slowly disappeared. With a last sudden vibration in the end, an image of the star showed up in his soul.

Drawing the power from the star greedily, Lucien continued tempering his soul and spirit until his soul felt "swollen". Then he switched to element meditation to improve the interaction and strengthen the bond between his spirit and the elements. The stronger the bond was, the faster one could cast the element-specific spells and shorten the cooldown (CD) in general.

Lucien finally opened his eyes when he started feeling extremely tired deep in his soul. They were full of excitement and ecstasy.

"Even when I'm not practicing meditation, I can still feel my Host Star in my soul. And if I focus more, I can even feel that there's a

star shining afar in the sky that is connected with me. I can feel the power of the star...”

But soon he felt confused, “Wait... I came here by mistake. I don’t belong to this world, so why would I find my Host Star of Destiny here? Theoretically speaking, if someone dies, that person’s star would gradually dim until it finally disappeared. But the star I felt just now... It belongs to me, the real me...Xiafeng.”

Lucien could not figure it out at the moment.

Also, from the notes, Lucien learned that a sorcerer or sorceress needed to use specific magic to measure other people’s spiritual power. Only those who just broke through to a new level could be detected in a direct way, without using any magic, due to the instability of their power.

Of course, magic that could hide one’s power existed.

After taking a very short break, Lucien opened the notes with great excitement. He couldn’t wait any longer to see what magic spells were waiting for him.

Since he now had the Host Star of Destiny, Lucien could master all three apprentice spells in the School of Astrology, which were relatively powerful among those of similar level from other schools. But for now, Lucien’s power was only enough to cast the spells two to three times before his spirit was exhausted.

Different levels of apprentice were accessed depending on how many spells an apprentice could cast before exhausting his spirit. An apprentice in training could cast up to five spells, while an intermediate doubled that number, and an advanced doubled it again to cast no less than twenty spells before running out of power. That was to say that, for now, Lucien could only use up to five spells of apprentice level consecutively. As for the Astrology magic, probably only three. When feeling exhausted, one needed to rest or take magic potions to help his or her power to fill up again.

The three spells of apprentice level were: Horoscope (basic-level), Eyes of Stars, and Disarming Loop.

Among them, Horoscope was the best-known one. Even the basic level required lots of knowledge to understand the movement of stars and tell the precise moment to tell the fortune. It took the witch several years to barely understand some of them, but her predictions were often inaccurate.

While for Lucien, the most challenging part was to find a crystal ball made of pure and precious Morning-light Crystal. He had no idea where to find one. The witch's crystal ball came from her family, but it was taken away by the church.

As for the astrology-related basic knowledge, which the witch found very complex, Lucien realized it was basically just celestial mechanics of high-school level, but it was described in a messy way.

However, Lucien could not explain with his current knowledge why a star would have something to do with a person's fate.

Picturing himself in the future sitting in front of a crystal ball and casting spells, Lucien felt thrilled. If he wore a black sorcerer's robe, Lucien had the impression he would look more like an evil wizard.

“Eyes of Stars”: An hypnotism magic. The caster needed to have the person staring at his eyes.

“Disarming Loop”: Lucien's understanding was that the magic could use the gravity from the stars and build an about twenty-centimetre thick loop, in which the gravity could be controlled. It was a magic mainly used for defence.

Lucien decided to start by protecting himself — he would learn Disarming Loop.

Besides, the other spells all required other materials. For example, Eyes of Stars needed Night Star (a type of herb) as its reagent. And almost all the Element-specific spells had similar requirements.

Although Lucien could also learn magic from other schools, his meditation technique would make it easier for him to start with Astrology and Element.

Keeping himself focused, Lucien cast the strange spell in a low voice, trying to search for the power in the hanging string connecting the star with his own Host Star. He felt his spirit started vibrating with the casting. It was possible to feel the gravity from the star!

Hurriedly, Lucien tried to shape his spirit according to the simple magic pattern in the notes. However, before the pattern was created the combination of his spirit and the gravity ceased. Lucien had failed.

After five failures, finally his efforts were successful. An almost invisible loop of soft light fell down on the table, surrounding a previously lit candle. Controlled by Lucien, the candle flame was suddenly constrained, and in the next second soared up in the air. After two minutes of practice Lucien stopped.

Crossing his fingers, Lucien bit his lip thoughtfully. "I'm not able to create a big difference in gravity. The loop might be barely enough for people to lose control of their weapons to some extent, but not strong enough to disarm them completely. After all, it's just an apprentice spell.

"And it takes me too long to cast it. If I practice more, I should be able to create the loop within three seconds.

"Anyway, it is my first magic." Lucien was glad that he could master Disarming Loop in such a short time, while it took the witch more than a month.

"The witch explained in the note that the difficulty came from the the fact that she couldn't understand why would the stars lead to the chaos of the Earth Element, so she had no choice but to practice over and over again without knowing the reason. But I know the reason behind — gravity. It seems the saying also works here in this world: Knowledge is power."

Recalling the whole process, Lucien tried to reduce the casting time. "I felt the spell just created a certain frequency and then made my spirit start vibrating with it. What if... I just remember and follow the specific frequency and skip the spell?"

The answer was yes, but it definitely required a spiritual power control of a higher level. After a long time of practice Lucien was exhausted and he had to call it a day, but by then he had reduced the activating time (no casting since there was no spell needed now) to a bit more than three seconds.

“I need more practice tomorrow. And... I’ll try to find some common materials for magic potions...” Lucien’s brain was not working properly due to his sleepiness.

Even if a sorcerer or sorceress didn’t aim at being an alchemist, the process of learning from creating magic potions was still very significant.

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 26: The Beginning of a New Life

Chapter 26: The Beginning of a New Life

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

There were over ten different magic potions in the notes. Every one of them was amazing. For example, “Brown Owl” was helpful for restoring energy. The most precious among them were three: “Magic Gate” provided a great boost for those apprentices who found themselves stuck because of certain magic structures; “Silver Moon” was a potion that could help the apprentice during the process of break through; and “Crying Soul” could reveal the power hidden in a developed body, or so to speak, an adult.

For now, Crying Soul was the one Lucien was longing for the most.

The materials required for Magic Gate and Silver Moon were precious and hard to find. They also demanded a higher level of spiritual power, close to the one a real sorcerer had. Only Crying Soul could be used on any healthy person, becoming a very famous potion back in the days when the ancient sorcerers were trying to have more low-level squires to face moments of crisis. But there was also a side effect: the potion would overdraw one’s strength, causing problems in the future development. If a person became a knight by using Crying Soul, he wouldn’t be as strong as the normally-trained ones in the future, and his final development would be overall inferior.

But for Lucien, he never really expected being a knight. It was just a good way for him to become stronger quickly.

The problem was that even the materials for Crying Soul were still not that very easy to collect. They were either expensive or very strange. And Lucien was not yet an adult, so the potion might be dangerous for him. The stronger the person was, the greater chance of success for the procedure.

Crying Soul belonged to the Necromancy School. Its simplified magic formula was:

“Corpse mushroom + Aquatic Zombie brain tissue + Revenant dust + Moonlight Rose dust = Crying Soul Potion”

Corpse Mushrooms grew on dead bodies. Before they were ripe, they were white like milk, but then turned black within a day. They could last for one month when they were ripe. Smelling them could lead the person to suffer from light delusion. If someone ate the mushroom they would be infected with diseases from the corpse. The darker the color was, the better the quality the potion would have.

It was the same for the other materials: stronger aquatic zombies and revenant with stronger hatred would improve the potion’s effect as well.

Moonlight Rose was precious and expensive, costing about a gold Thale per gram (a hundred silver Nars). It shone like the silver moon at night. Also, high-level knight squires would use the Rose to help them awaken the “Blessing” in their blood. One dose would need at least ten grams, if everything went well.

The witch once tried to make a Crying Soul potion to become stronger, in order to help on the search for Snow Gorse later. After all, the potion could help a person fight in the same conditions with a level one knight. And there were just about four hundred knights in the whole Duchy.

She could not afford the Rose. But the witch mentioned in her notes that there were aquatic zombies along the Belem River at night. She also recorded that the Revenant Dust could be obtained by summoning a low-level Revenant using the blood of evil creatures, which was also an apprentice-level necromancy spell.

Lucien had no better options available. The only thing he could do now was keep practicing and strengthening his spiritual power, while at the same time trying to find these materials secretly.

.....

Approaching the Month of Fire, the sun rose much earlier than before. The orange-colored clouds were slowly changing as they

crossed the sky like blooming flowers.

Lucien succeeded in activating Disarming Loop again. He already knew that the spelling was not necessary if he first made his spirit resonate in the same frequency of the spell. However, that method was more energy-consuming. He was disappointed to see that without the spelling, activating the magic even once could drain his spiritual power completely.

After doing meditation, Lucien felt invigorated. He tidied his messy place a little bit, leaving no proof of the magic practice, and headed to Auntie Alisa's house.

"Morning, Lucien! Come and join us for breakfast!" Iven opened the door. Recently he was helping his mom in the Textile Association and thus looked more mature now.

"Sure! I planned my arrival time just to be able to have breakfast." Lucien smiled.

"You're playing the funny now, little Evans!" Joel was having the veggie soup with dark bread. He was happy to see Lucien's growth, "You seem more confident now."

Every Sunday morning, those faithful ones among the citizens would go to the Saint Truth Church. Lucien did not want to go with them because was too afraid of being found out, so he always sought different excuses not to join them.

"Have some hot soup, little Evans." Auntie Alisa scooped a bowl of hot soup and handed it over to Lucien.

Lucien was starving from his previous meditation and casting. Sipping the hot soup with dark bread, Lucien felt much better.

The dark bread here was still not tasty. Lucien could taste some wheat bran mixed in the bread, and it was much better than what he had at home. His bread tasted like pure wood.

"Uncle Joel, I got something else to do tomorrow. Sorry, but I can't go with you to the church." Despite the risk, Lucien also had no time to waste with that.

“Don’t you have to work in the market tomorrow?” Auntie Alisa asked.

Lucien pulled out the old purse and gave it back to Joel. He smiled and answered, “I’m Mr. Victor’s admitted student now. I’m going to study music under Mr. Victor.

“And...” Lucien paused a bit, “he will teach me for free.”

“What!?” Joel almost choked on the bread. His face turned red from coughing. “He allowed you to learn music there? You just wanted to learn how to read, like... like a week ago!”

Clearly Alisa had a different focus.

“For free? Really for free?”

Iven gasped in great admiration. “Lucien, what did you do?”

Lucien told them the full story. “I’m pretty lucky to have this opportunity. I’m gonna visit Mr. Victor tomorrow morning and borrow some related books.”

In fact Lucien was going to study at Victor’s place this afternoon to make up for lesson they had missed. But it was also a very good excuse for him to be absent from the church again. And he was going to visit Mr. Victor tomorrow morning again to collect more books in his spirit library.

Being a musician was a perfect cover for Lucien. He had to take it seriously.

“Oh, Mr. Victor! What a generous, nice and talented gentleman!” Alisa was touched, again. “Thanks God! God bless you, little Evans! After so many difficulties, your beautiful new life has finally come!”

Joel stared at Lucien for a while with complicated emotions. Finally he started patting on Lucien’s shoulder with great joy. His voice was trembling, “You’re lucky, yes. But you’re also smart, diligent and gifted. Mr. Victor is an awesome teacher and I’m sure you can accomplish big achievements in the future. Do your best, little Evans. If you manage to have a chance to play in the Psalm Hall, let

me be there to watch you, then I will have no regrets in music in my life.”

On the opposite side of the table, Iven was nodding as well. “Then I can tell my friends that I have two elder brothers, one is a knight and the other is a great musician! Cool!”

“Of course, uncle Joel, I’ll work hard.” Lucien nodded seriously but sighed in his heart.

He felt sorry that he wouldn’t be able to put lots of energy and time in music. Last night Lucien had been drawn into the amazing magic world. For him, being a musician was just a camouflage and a way of making money for learning magic. Joel loved music deep within his heart, but Lucien did not.

He did not know much about music here, but from his experience many songs he heard before were very beautiful, and some of them shared the same features with the classical masterpieces on Earth.

Putting the purse back, Joel reminded Lucien. “When you decide what instrument you’d like to start with, don’t be shy and come here to ask for help.”

“Sure. Thank you so much, uncle Joel, auntie Alisa. I’m planning to find a new job as well, but not in the market. I’m Mr. Victor’s student now, so I hope it’ll be a bit easier.” Finished the breakfast, it was time for Lucien to leave.

After reading the magic notes, Lucien knew that learning magic was very expensive. He had to hurry up and make money!

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 27: New Work

Chapter 27: New Work

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Lucien didn't go directly to the market after leaving. Instead, he went back home for his wood stick and started practicing basic fighting skills as usual. Since Lucien's spirit was not strong enough, being physically strong was also very important.

Besides, the stronger the person was, the more likely they would successfully get improved by the Crying Soul Potion.

An hour later, in the market.

It had been five days since Lucien came here last time. The market area was busy as usual. Human and other kinds of humanoid creatures were walking around and bargaining. The assorted shops and stores were like colourful mushrooms in the woods.

Lucien was very careful when he was walking on the streets. The gangsters would probably take revenge on him. But Lucien was pretty sure that with his good perception he would notice if anyone tried to attack him.

However, until he finished buying the materials and was ready to leave, not even a single gangster came to bother him. In fact, the gangsters on the street were in much smaller numbers than usual. They were often in groups of two or three, but today most of them were hanging around alone. Lucien was pretty confused.

No matter what happened, Lucien still had to be careful and try to master all the apprentice spells as soon as possible. Although these spells were not very powerful, Lucien believed that they were already enough for dealing with a bunch of gangsters holding daggers.

It took Lucien more than three hours just to buy three of these materials. Worrying that his shopping might bring any

suspiciousness, he was very cautious and decided not to buy anything that was not used for common tasks.

He bought some sulphur, which was very useful for disinfestation in the Month of Fire; nightstar, a type of plant that could promote sleep quality; and icestone, that could be used for keeping stuff fresh.

For the materials that could be found outside of the city, Lucien definitely wouldn't buy them.

The shopping cost Lucien a Nar and twenty Fells, which represented half of his savings, but what he bought was only enough for about a hundred experiments. Among them, the most expensive one was nightstar, followed by icestone, but sulphur was the cheapest, as expected.

Lucien sighed, "I'd better be careful with these experiments... I really can't afford to waste any material."

.....

Spells like Acid Splash and Freezing Rays would definitely mess Lucien's place. And he was afraid that someone would notice it during daytime. So he decided to find a new place for practicing, the sewers.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Lucien started his study on time at Victor's house.

An hour later, the class was over. After Renee, Colin and Annie left, Victor asked in a gentle voice.

"Lucien, do you have a job now?"

There were only four students left in the living room – Lott, Felicia, Herodotus and Lucien.

Shaking his head, Lucien answered with slight depression.

"No, sir... I lost my job for some reason. I'm... I'm still looking for a new one."

It was kind of embarrassing for Lucien to admit, but he was also a bit excited. Did Mr. Victor have a job offer?

“Studying here from two to six in the afternoon everyday can be quite demanding for you. I know you gotta support yourself. Even if you can study here for free, I guess you’re still facing a pretty big challenge with your living expenses.” Victor tried to be careful with his words to avoid undermining Lucien’s self-esteem. He asked Colin and Renee before, so he knew that a poor guy like Lucien had to work at least ten hours a day to barely support himself.

“I know a relatively easy job. You work four hours every morning and you get ten Nars every month. What do you think?”

Lucien felt so touched facing this kind offer. Although he had been through many difficulties and bad things before, Lucien felt he was so lucky to have many kind people helping him like uncle Joel, untie Alisa and Mr. Victor.

“Yes... Sure. That’s awesome. It’s very kind of you.”

“You don’t even know what kind of work it is.” Victor smiled, “It’s a job in the association library. They are short of hands now. Another good thing is that when you work there, you can have access to many music or theory-related books. I think it’ll be pretty helpful.”

Not being sure of Lucien’s music talent, Victor wanted him to be a basic-level musician first to support himself. Then Lucien could advance forward to the next step if he was really born for this.

That was another surprise for Lucien. He never thought he could have a chance working in a library. He was so excited and happy that the only thing he could do was say “thank you” to Victor many times.

Victor was the only reason why Lucien could get this job. People in the association knew that this job was mainly for Mr. Victor’s student. Lucien was working like a dog all day long for just three Nars a month. Now Lucien could work for a salary similar to what a common citizen could earn every month. That was another reason why so many people wanted to be Mr. Victor’s music students.

“Great!” Victor clapped his hands with joy, “This afternoon, I’m gonna take Lott, Felicia and Herodotus to the association for rehearsal. You can come with us together and sign the contract, then you can start working tomorrow.”

When Victor went back upstairs to find some of his music work, Lott came and smiled to Lucien.

“Hi, Lucien. I’m Lott, Lott Griffith. We haven’t really talked to each other before. I’m here to say that Mr. Victor is a very, very nice teacher and a very kind man as well. I hope you won’t let him down as his music student.”

Lott was pretty unhappy with this newcomer suddenly becoming one of Mr. Victor’s music students. In his eyes, there was definitely no position in the world of musician for a poor, uneducated and ignorant boy like Lucien. As a noble from the Griffith family, he felt ashamed of studying with the poor.

But from Mr. Victor’s words, Lott found out that Victor was expecting Lucien to be a common musician first, not really a music master. Therefore his anger and dissatisfaction turned into noble’s arrogance and pride, looking down upon the poor and miserable guy standing in front of him.

“Mr. Victor must be happy so I’m willing to accept him.” Lott thought to himself. He always tried to give a good impression to Victor, in order to become his most outstanding student.

Lucien was not very interested in Lott’s intention, because he knew that he had a different path to go – magic. He just replied politely, “I won’t. Thank you, Lott. I’m Lucien Evans.”

“I’m Felicia Hayne.” Politely but also coldly, the red-haired girl nodded to Lucien. She didn’t believe Lucien would achieve something in music. Besides, she couldn’t allow herself to get too close to a poor guy. It was bad for her reputation.

And Herodotus, who always disliked Lucien, also did just a simple self-introduction like Felicia.

.....

The hall of the Musicians' Association.

Stepping on the thick and soft carpet, Lucien was following Mr. Victor to the reception counter, while the other students were practicing upstairs.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Victor." The cute girl, Elena, slightly bowed and greeted him.

"Good afternoon, Elena." Victor was always kind to everyone, "This is Lucien, my new music student. From tomorrow on he will be working in the library. Can you kindly help him sign the contract and hand it to Mr. Hank later?"

She nodded and took out the already prepared contract and a quill. When she was passing Lucien the contract, her green eyes were opened with surprise.

"Lucien! It's you! No wonder I just thought it was a familiar name!"

She couldn't believe her own eyes. About more than a week ago, Lucien, the guy from the slum, was rummaging through trash from the association. Today he was standing here as Mr. Victor's music student! What a crazy world!

"Hi, Elena. Nice to see you again." Lucien took the contract and started reading it. Still not very good at reading, it took him quite a while to understand the few lines on the paper, during which Elena finally calmed down and was staring at Lucien with great curiosity.

"You can do fingerprint or sign here, either way is fine." She smiled, "You changed so much since last time I saw you."

"You know Lucien?" Victor asked.

"You were there at that time as well, Mr. Victor..." Elena started explaining to him. Lucien finished reading and wrote down his name slowly.

"I see...No wonder I feel I've seen you before somewhere. You're

always diligent, Lucien. You'll be successful if you keep working hard in music."

"Succeed in music? Victor, are you prepared for the concert?" A sharp voice came from behind them.

It was Wolf, the brown-haired musician with a protruding jaw. Lucien still remembered him.

Chapter 28: In the Sewers

With his latest progress, Victor was more confident when facing Wolf's bitter challenge now. After a fierce competition, Victor and Wolf were the last two competitors remaining. In Victor's opinion, Wolf lost the chance in the end because he spent too much time on criticizing other musician's work instead of investing more energy in studying music itself.

"I do think so, Wolf. Actually I'm pretty happy with my new work. Do you want to give me some suggestion on it?" Victor had registered his new piano concerto at the association. There was no chance for Wolf to try to plagiarize it.

Wolf thought Victor was still very frustrated with his work. Now Victor's confidence was something beyond his expectation. Wolf's face turned ashen and he murmured,

"Not really, Victor. I'd rather keep my curiosity. We'll see it in three months."

Shrugging his shoulders, Victor smiled, "All right. I was quite looking forward to your opinion."

Wolf just wanted to get rid of this topic, and he saw Lucien was standing aside in his cheap and old linen clothes. Raising his chin, he asked in contempt, "When did you become friends with people from the slum?"

That behavior came from a long time ago when Wolf's family still ranked among nobles. From his great-grandfather on, Wolf's family lost the title, but it did not prevent him from regarding himself as a noble. He looked down upon the musicians like Victor who came from common families, not to mention poor people like Lucien. His arrogance was mixed with the hatred towards Victor, so in his eyes Lucien was comparable to a disgusting mouse jumping onto his dinner table.

Lucien was a bit angry, but he was already used to this kind of contempt. As long as there was social status and wealth in a world,

people would be divided into different levels - the superior and the inferior, the decent and the filthy...The only way for a person to change the situation was striving for power and wealth. But once someone succeeded, they would often join the group and become one among the ones who looked down upon the common folk.

“Mind your words, Wolf.” Frowning his eyebrows, Victor warned him seriously, “Lucien’s my new music student. He’s a... a very talented young lad.” Honestly speaking, Victor boasted about Lucien’s ability. He was not sure about Lucien’s music gift yet.

“Are you serious, Victor? Really?” Wolf started laughing so hard that he almost lost his footing, “You got that nervous with your performance and lost your mind?”

Lacking a bit of confidence, Victor tried to fight back.

“Aalto is the City of Psalm, the City of Music, everyone here can have a chance at learning music. Many outstanding bards are of poor background. The talent of music is a gift from God, and God doesn’t only bless the wealthy and the noble.”

Wolf shook his head while he was still laughing, “Come on, Victor! Both you and I know that a talent can easily awaken the Blessing in their blood. We call people like Princess Natasha and Lord Verdi talents, but your student... Get real!

“If he manage to become an outstanding musician in the future, I will do an open apology to you and your student on Music Criticism, and never hold my own concert again.”

Wolf made the bet on impulse, but he was pretty cautious as well. He added the word “outstanding” on purpose since it was really hard to reach a consensus on what really made an outstanding artist.

Lucien heard that Princess Natasha, also known as the Violet Countess, was the only child of the Grand Duke of Orvarit. And her current title was also one of the prerequisites to become the Grand Duke of the Duchy. She was very gifted in music and had excellent skills in playing violin, flute and harpsichord. Besides, the twenty-

five-year-old princess was also an outstanding level five Grand Knight, who was expected to become a Radiant Knight soon.

Lord Verdi, the nephew of the Grand Duke and also a member of the Violet family, just became a level five Grand Knight, and was currently serving as the chief commander of the City Guards in Aalto.

After making the comment, Wolf directly turned and left the hall.

Victor shook his head in repulsion. “Lucien, just ignore him. Everyone knows Wolf is a total bastard. Your work starts from tomorrow. One day off a week. You can arrange your day off with the library administrators. I have to go to the odeon now.”

Lucien nodded and watched Mr. Victor leave the hall. Then he turned to Elena and gave the contract back to her. “Thank you, Elena,” he said.

There was a sweet little dimple in Elena’s left cheek. “No worries, it’s my job. Like Mr. Victor said, never let Mr. Wolf bother you. He’s always like that... looking down upon most people in the association, except several directors with titles.”

“I’m looking forward to seeing Mr. Wolf’s high-lifted jaw digging a hole into the carpet along with the noble directors.” Lucien shrugged a bit and smiled.

Elena started giggling with his words.

When Lucien was about to leave, Elena stopped him. Her right hand clenched into a small fist, and her face looked serious.

“I believe in you, Lucien! You can be an outstanding musician! Mr. Wolf would deeply regret his bet!”

Honestly speaking, Lucien did not take the bet seriously. But he also raised his fist like Elena and replied, “I certainly will.”

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There was no nightlife in Aderon. At nine o’clock at night most

residents in this area were already in bed, except for several drunkards who were still hanging around. Everybody else had to prepare for the hard work in the following morning.

Lucien told Joel and Alisa he got a new job over dinner, and then went back to his shack to meditate and prepare for his magic experiments.

Gently closing the door, Lucien sneaked out of his shack and walked towards one of the entrances to the sewers. It would still take Lucien quite some time to learn how to build a secret passage like the witch did.

After making sure that no one was watching, Lucien stepped into the underground world.

The stinking smell and the slimy wall were still the same, disgusting and gloomy, but none of that would prevent him from exploring magic. Walking in the pipes, Lucien was mapping in his spirit library and trying to find a proper corner to start his experiments.

He also scraped off some of the moss on the wall and put them into his pocket. It was called Light Moss, which was the reagent for the apprentice magic Extinguishment.

The deeper Lucien went, the more gruesome the place became. Down there Lucien never met any homeless guy, like Corella mentioned. The sound of his footsteps was intensified within the sewers. Lucien could even hear his own breath.

Finally Lucien found his ideal place: a fork path. The front way was blocked by a huge rock, while the one turning left went further into the darkness. Lucien could easily notice if anyone was approaching him from this position.

Lucien pinched some sulphur from his pocket while recalling the structure of the magic. Then he started casting a strange spell and the powder slipped through his fingers. His face looked serious and mysterious in the cold light.

Chapter 29: The Dead Body

After practicing many times, when dawn was drawing near, Lucien finally mastered the five apprentice spells: Eyes of Stars, Freezing Rays, Darkness, Mage's Hand and Acid Splashing. Furthermore, now Lucien could activate Disarming Loop without a verbal component in about three seconds.

It took the witch much longer to understand all these spells. It was amazing how Lucien could grasp them in such a short period of time. In his eyes these magic structures were related to different mathematical models and the knowledge of planar geometry. After reviewing what he had learned before in high school, Lucien found they were actually pretty easy to be understood.

Here magic could be explained by science. In Acid Splashing, for example, sulphur was transformed into sulfuric acid. However, Lucien had a hard time understanding how Darkness worked. His farfetched guess was that the magic reconstructed the Light Moss and made it absorb the light. As expected, Lucien had to spend more time to master the Darkness spell.

Lucien reflected on his magic experiment: His knowledge from the past, like physics and chemistry, was useful, but it could not be used to explain everything in this magic world. There were some similarities shared between this place and the earth, but there were also many things he couldn't understand, like those precious metals and magic materials. He knew he should explore the world more by himself.

After a ten-minute break, Lucien started doing some simple cleaning.

"These apprentice spells are not powerful enough." Rubbing the floor, Lucien thought to himself, "They can only kill someone when they hit the vital parts, or the most they could do is make the person move slower or suffer a bit." But Lucien was not disappointed. He knew that, if need arose, they could still be more than helpful.

Finishing the cleaning, Lucien carefully hid the materials nearby. He didn't go back to the surface directly but continued his exploration towards the end of the outlets. He was looking for Corpse Mushroom, which meant he had to find some carcasses first. Searching in a graveyard under the nose of the church was too risky. Lucien heard that many poor people, who had no families or friends, died lonely and miserably down there. Besides, dead animals and rotten flesh were even easier to be found.

The witch did not mention any possible danger in the pipes, but Lucien was still very cautious, staying alert to any sign of trouble.

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Within twenty minutes, Lucien had found two dead rats and a jelly-like creature body, but no Corpse Mushroom was there.

Turning around a corner, an open area appeared in front of Lucien. That was where the homeless people lived.

The sewer here was very broad. An underground river was flowing slowly with waste floating in the middle, which went all the way to the Belem River. On both sides of the river old dirty rugs and pots were scattered everywhere. The clothes the beggars were wearing could barely cover their bodies.

"Why did you come here, young lad? You don't belong here." An old man probably in his sixties asked Lucien. His ribs stood out like arching blades. However, when Lucien heard his voice, the old man sounded like he was only forty or something.

Lucien's old but clean linen clothes were far from decent, but compared to what they were wearing, the youngster looked like a noble.

"I have a friend who also lives here." Lucien tried to sound confident and strong. He must hide his feeling of insecurity in front of these guys, or they would think it was easy to prey on the teen standing there.

Several beggars behind the old man stood up. Their eyes were full

of greed and ferocity. Lucien was not scared. Instead, he pulled out his dagger and took a step forward.

The beggars did not dare take any further action. On the contrary, they were now standing in a defensive position.

At this time, the old man started grinning. "You don't look like a guy with a decent job, young lad."

"None of your business." Lucien answered coldly.

"Anyway, I can tell you're not doing very well. Even a hard-working young lad like you couldn't afford proper bread and beef. It's not your fault."

Lucien was not sure about the old man's intention.

"The Saint Truth Church tells people that all of us are God's servants. But why can the noble live an extravagant life while the poor have to suffer every day and night. There's no difference between us, and all human beings are born with sin!"

"I'm not interested in your nonsense." Although his words were pretty obscure, Lucien knew the old man was trying to preach, but obviously not the Saint Truth. No matter what the old man believed in, other Gods or demons, Lucien had no interest in it. The price for having something to do with a heresy in this world could be his own life.

He did not want to end up being tied to a stake and burned to ashes alive.

Facing such direct rejection, the old man and the other beggars were very angry. Their belief was blasphemed.

Lucien knew it was time to get away from those guys. He started walking towards the outlets slowly and calmly, grabbing his shiny dagger in his hand.

"Anyone wanna try me?" Lucien stared at them fearlessly.

When he walked by, Lucien noticed that there was a clean black

cloth lying on the ground, on which there was a shiny silver-colored horn. He remembered these beggars were sitting around the cloth when he arrived here.

The beggars were hesitant. No one wanted to fall on Lucien. Finally they gave up and sat back on the ground.

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After walking for another ten minutes, the sound of the river flow gradually became louder.

“Here should be the end of the sewers. The underground river joins the Belem River here,” Lucien thought to himself. There was a iron net covering the water outlet at the confluence and tons of floating trash accumulated in front of the net.

Lucien slowed down his pace. He was hoping that he could find more dead bodies here.

Lucien did not find anything until he walked towards the end of the sewer. When he started feeling disappointed and was about to go back to the surface, Lucien suddenly noticed that the net was missing a part, under the water.

Out of curiosity, Lucien grabbed the net and tried to shake it. As expected, there was a big hole under there on the iron net. What was really unexpected was that, at this time, a black bulk of something gradually surfaced from the water.

Lucien moved closer. It was a dead body, swollen and rotten. Many parts of its skin had fallen off. The clothes on the body were tangled with lots of trash, which increased the buoyancy a lot.

Lucien felt very disgusted and also a bit scared. However, he was still trying to see if there was any Corpse Mushroom on it.

There was a long wound on its chest. Someone cut the poor man open vertically and took away his heart. Checking with the dagger, Lucien's eyebrows frowned.

“Wait...This is...my purse?!” Lucien was shocked. He picked the

purse up using the dagger and was certain that it was the purse which was taken away by the gangsters some days ago.

“Why is it here...” Lucien was confused.

Then he looked at the face of the dead body. The corpse was so badly decomposed that it took Lucien quite a while to finally recognize the guy.

“An...Andre?!”

Chapter 30: Ghost in the Shadow

Chapter 30: Ghost in the Shadow

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

A strong stench of death came out from Andre's rotten face. A face on which Lucien could still tell his great fear and pain before he died.

"The gangsters under Aaron are acting weird recently...Does it have anything to do with Andre's death?" Lucien had absolutely no clue.

Wrapping his hand with a piece of cloth, Lucien pressed Andre's body hard back into the water. This time the body did not hook on the iron net. It was washed away directly into the Belem River and disappeared.

Lucien stood up and set off for the surface, but to avoid the beggars, he did not take the same route. According to the map he drew in his spirit library, he took another direction about twenty meters away from the place where the beggars gathered. If the map was correct, Lucien would pass by the ruins of the witch's chamber and come back to the ground from the same entrance through which he came down earlier.

Several meters away from the corner, Lucien heard the sound of some heavy footsteps and suddenly stopped. The footsteps echoed in the sewers, loud and clear. It sounded like there were a bunch of people approaching, and some of them must be pretty big.

Lucien looked around calmly. Soon he found there was a hole in the wall, big enough for someone to hide. Lucien hid himself in the hole, with his back against the wall.

A while later, those guys walked directly past him, turning around a corner a few steps ahead. In such a dark place, they would not notice Lucien hiding in the hole without a careful check.

"Throw these bodies into the river. Hurry up." It was a low voice

from a man. However, he was speaking indistinctly, as if he missed some front teeth.

Lucien felt he had heard this voice somewhere before, but could not remember where.

“Why did it take you guys so long. Remember, don’t screw up the whole plan.” It was the old man’s voice.

After a few seconds of silence, the first man answered with slight fear.

“Sorry... But within ten days, we promise it will be enough... at any cost, like Aaron said.”

Aaron... Rosan Aaron?

Now Lucien finally recognized the first voice. It was Jackson, the guy who smashed Lucien’s shack, and also because of Lucien, Jackson could not even speak clearly now.

From their conversations, Lucien’s guess was that the Aaron gang was by no means a victim of the heresy, but an accomplice, and probably Andre was killed because of his disobedience.

The old man’s voice was very unpleasant. “Please tell Mr. Aaron... and the other guy, that as long as you continuously spare no efforts in helping us grow, you will all receive huge rewards. I know that, in your eyes, I’m only a dying, useless old man, which is true, but we are just tiny worms on the ground. Our priests are already powerful enough to beat their bishop. We wouldn’t need any of your help were it not for maintaining that... thing.”

“I will.” Jackson answered in a low mood.

“But... Jackson, I don’t think we can meet their requirement...” Another voice came, trembling, “We gotta make sure that those are people that no one would care about. Homeless guys are ideal, but we cannot find any of them down here, other than his people...”

“That’s true, Jackson. It’s too difficult to find fifty of them within ten days.” Someone else agreed.

The old man laughed, “The rest of them are at the bottom of the Belem River. Eels in the river will clean them up for us.”

“Skar, Aaron told us to make it at any cost. We don’t necessarily have to focus on homeless guys. If they are just the poor... Aaron will be able to handle this.” A cold smile appeared on Jackson’s face.

“You have any target already, Jackson?” Skar was a bit surprised.

“Yes, I do.” Jackson’s face turned hideous, “They gotta pay the price... the two little bastards, and their families.”

Lucien was shocked. His anger was burning his guts. He knew Jackson hated them, but he never expected that the thug could be so cruel and inhuman to the point of planning to kill the whole family!

But thank God Lucien was here and found out about Jackson’s plan.

“I gotta solve the problem here and now.” The plan of killing them all in the sewers arose in Lucien’s mind. He couldn’t let them go back onto the ground, or he would not be able to protect John’s family anymore.

Lucien must kill them all. Then Lucien could tell John about the heresy and no one would know what happened down here.

Many thoughts quickly passed through his mind. Lucien’s reached out to his pocket and made sure that all the magic materials were in position. Carefully, he crept out of the hole and approached the corner.

They had nine people there. But Lucien had no choice. Staying calm was his most important and powerful weapon.

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Throwing the last sack into the water, Skar poked the body bag with a long pole in fear. Although they were gangsters, gouging out people’s hearts alive was still too much for them, and they also believed in the God of Truth. So they prayed in their mind, begging

for forgiveness.

“Jackson, all of the bags are gone.” Glancing at the weird old man, Skar carefully asked, “We’d better go now... I heard there are lot of aquatic zombies in the Belem River.”

Jackson turned to the old man, “Does it have anything to do with the bodies we threw away? I’ve never heard of zombies in the river before.”

The old man shook his head, “We don’t want any trouble while we’re not strong enough. Aalto was the core city of the previous magic empire. Maybe some kind of death power was sealed deep within the river, and now the seal is no longer effective.”

“All right.” When Jackson was about to leave with his men, he saw Scar’s terrified face. At the same time, Jackson heard a weird, low voice murmuring in the back, like a spell...

Twenty meters away from them, there was a dark humanoid shadow standing there. Half of his body and face were hidden in the darkness. In the shimmer of the moss, the mysterious shadow was even more strange and terrifying.

“Gh... Ghost!” Skar screamed at the top of his lungs. Since he was involved in this, his conscience was tortured by the fear that the people they killed would come back and seek revenge. When he closed his eyes, the warm and bloody hearts that they took from those people’s chests when they were still alive were still beating in his mind.

Great fear seized him. Skar now could not even move at all.

The ghost raised his right hand, and some shimmering powder fell through its fingers. Jackson and the old man started running as soon as they saw the ghost, but all of a sudden they were devoured by complete darkness.

The glimmer from the moss disappeared. The darkness spread quickly like a bottle of spilled ink and no light could penetrate it.

They couldn’t see anything. Except for the old man, the rest of them

were crazily wielding their daggers, trying to keep the bloody ghost away.

The pipe was narrow. They hurt each other by accident and some of them started screaming in pain. But fear and panic did not help them at all.

Darkness, an apprentice spell. It could block all kinds of natural light in an area no larger than 6 by 6 meters, enveloping everything in complete darkness.. For now, as an apprentice, Lucien could maintain the spell for one minute.

“You idiots! Calm down! Stop!” Although he could not cast a single spell, the old man heard the priests mentioning about different kinds of magic before.

“...Ouch!” However, before the old man made that command, Jackson’s dagger scratched him.

Within little more than ten seconds, two guys got stabbed by the chaotic attacks of daggers and fell on the ground. The others were also injured to some extent. Driven by the horrible fear, Skar and other three guys started running backwards. In the darkness, two of them fell into the river like the body bags, while the old man, Jackson, another thug started rushing towards the shadow.

At this time, the weird spellcasting voice arose again.

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 31: Zombie in the Sewage

After a few more steps the old man finally broke the siege of darkness. However, his eyes were no longer accustomed to the weak light from the moss.

It was just a blink. When he opened his eyes again, some kind of pungent, dark green liquid hit his face directly.

“Ow!!” The shrill cry from the old man scared the rest of them. Jackson looked back subconsciously, even though he could not see anything.

With both hands covering his eyes, the old man was rolling on the ground in horrible pain. The skin of his face burned and turned black instantly. His scream was so bitter that Jackson and the rest of them shuddered with fear. Several second later, the old man fell into the river and the scream disappeared.

Jackson knew there was no way to escape. They would either kill the shadow, or be killed by it.

Their only hope was to fight it!

“Run! Run close to that fucking thing!” Jackson yelled and dashed to the shadow.

Then he saw it was Lucien!

Jackson was furious. Hatred replaced his fear and the only thing in his mind was to tear the fucking bastard up into thousands of pieces.

When he was about to throw his dagger towards Lucien, he saw a blue beam of light in Lucien’s hand. Jackson hurriedly dodged to the left and barely avoided it.

Unfortunately for them, the other thug following behind him was not that lucky. The light beam hit directly in his face and a thin layer of ice quickly filmed his eyes, nose and mouth. Freezing cold

invaded the guy's brain and made him lose most of his power before he could smash the ice.

The guy was choked. Then he banged his head fiercely on the ground.

At this time Jackson finally realized that the person standing in front of him was no more that weak poor guy. However, he became a wizard, an evil wizard with terrible power!

Jackson was not an idiot. He understood that by no means Lucien would let him go. Grabbing his dagger, he leaped at Lucien's throat with all his strength.

Suddenly, Jackson felt a heavy pressure fell on him and then his legs caved. Then his body fell down directly onto the ground.

"Fuck!" Jackson swore desperately. He did not know what was going on there, but he knew that losing his footing at this point would be fatal.

Longer before Lucien cast Acid Splash, he had already activated his defensive magic — Disarming Loop, without saying a word.

Lucien walked towards Jackson, looking at him wielding his dagger in vain. Without saying anything, Lucien grabbed Jackson's hand and slowly pushed the dagger into his neck.

The gravity affected the blood and it didn't squirt out from his neck too much. It was ideal because Lucien did not want any of Jackson's dirty blood on his clothes.

Jackson's great anger and pain were choked in his throat. His eyes were wide open and his eyeballs almost burst out, while his arms and legs were twitching against the wall. Jackson's nails were scratching on the ground, but soon his resistance was no more.

The other guy did not take Lucien much time as well.

Standing beside the underground sewage river, Lucien saw the old man's body floating quietly downstream with his face soaking in the water. Lucien felt relieved, because he thought the old man would

be the biggest threat among them. Who knew if the old man had some kind of evil power from his heretic belief.

All this happened within just twenty seconds. The darkness was still covering the area some distance away. The two injured beggars were still writhing in agony on the ground. Some beggars and gangsters were still floating on the water. But they were too scared to find the broken steel net to escape.

Lucien did not want to kill them all by himself, and he was also not able to. His power had a limit. So the easiest way was driving the rest of them into the Belem River and leaving them to the ghosts there.

But there was one problem. Lucien also could not see anything in the dark area, so he had to stand there for now, waiting for the magic to expire. At the same time, he was adjusting his respiratory rhythm in order to recover his power.

Casting the four spells was very tiring. Lucien's remaining power was only enough to use either Darkness or Freezing Rays once.

Suddenly the light returned within the spell area. The light startled Skar and he couldn't help but close his eyes. The fear of death scared him to his knees. He trembled and prayed, "May God forgive me... May God forgive me..."

Slowly opening his eyes, Skar was shocked to find how young the wizard was. In the dim light, the wizard had fine features.

Skar had lost his mind and surrendered. He could not tell whether the man standing in front of him was an evil wizard or a hateful ghost.

It was a good chance to cast Eyes of Stars on Skar, when he was suffering a mental breakdown. The apprentice magic could mesmerize the enemy or make the person fall into a trance state.

The two effects were different: The former, mesmerization, required the caster to look into the other person's eyes for almost ten minutes, while the latter, trancing, only needed some eye contact,

which was more helpful in a fight.

If Lucien could take control of Skar, he could use him to kill the rest of them.

When Lucien was about to cast the spell, a sudden short scream pierced the silence and echoed in the whole space. Even Lucien felt very strange.

As suddenly as the scream of agony started, it stopped.

Lucien stopped his spelling and took a step behind his Disarming Loop. His Freezing Rays were ready to go.

At this time, both Lucien and Skar saw the horrific scene: In the river, a strong and pale hand was holding tight at a gangster's neck, whose skull was half opened. A black tongue was licking the white brain inside with some effort.

The owner of the tongue was a humanoid monster, whose body was so swollen that its skin appeared almost transparent. Parts of its skin were hanging, showing its rotten flesh beneath. Under the cover of the monster's seaweed-like long hair, there were facial muscles that could fall off at any time. The place where the eyeballs should be was completely hollow, and there were two tiny white flames burning inside the two eye sockets.

Another beggar's body, whose brain was completely gone already, was floating towards the river through the big hole on the steel net.

"The Great Master of Argent, the forever lasting silence, may you bless your servants..." A beggar sitting next to the wall started praying desperately.

The monster had a frightening power that reeked of doom. Even Lucien was extremely nervous and terrified, although he was quite a distance away from the monster.

Aquatic Zombies! These were the monsters in the Belem River! They were zombies!

Lucien suddenly recalled the witch's note, which described the

features of the undead creature:

“Aquatic Zombie: immune to Mind magic; No Morale; Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stun, disease effects; No fatigue, exhaustion, breath; Do not feel cold; Strong resistance towards ice and acid; Extremely afraid of Fire and Light magic.”

But what frightened Lucien was that the note did not mention anything about the flames in the Zombie’s eyes. Something was definitely not right.

Chapter 32: Aquatic Zombie

Chapter 32: Aquatic Zombie

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

According to the witch's notes, an aquatic zombie was no stronger than a male adult. But unlike most of the undead, these zombies were way faster and swift, while they still carried the features belonging to the undead — strong resistance to physical damage and other immunities. Therefore, common people and even some knight squires usually did not have any chance to survive when facing these zombies, unless they had a significant advantage in numbers.

Since aquatic zombies were extremely afraid of Fire and Light magic, a torch could burn them down if it was used properly. However, this zombie just showed up from the water, which meant its strength and agility would be increased significantly. Fire magic was also not that powerful anymore because of the water. Only Light magic could be helpful under this circumstance.

Lucien was absolutely not prepared. Although he knew that he had to confront aquatic zombies some day, it definitely should not be today. The witch mentioned in the note that there was a kind of material called Flame Jelly which could be used for alchemy. A piece of jelly could even burn in water for a while. However, at the moment Lucien mastered no useful Light magic and also had no such jelly. Even worse was that somehow he felt the zombie he was facing was way stronger than the common ones described by the witch.

Regarding Light magic, sorcerers could never compete with pastors. Aside from Light Rays in the first circle and on, all Light-related spells of apprentice level were not for attack purpose.

Nevertheless, among Element magic Fire magic ranked top mainly because it was hard to be brought under control. The only Fire magic in apprentice magic list was Marius's Small Fire, which could

only be used to kindle firewood when an apprentice forgot his or her flints in the wild.

Escape was the first idea in Lucien's mind. At the same time, the mutant zombie had finished the gangster's brain and swiftly jumped on one of the beggars. Then Lucien heard a crisp crack in the beggar's neck. Pressing its fingernails deeply into the skull, the zombie opened the beggar's head very easily like opening a walnut.

Its speed and strength made Lucien stop. After seeing that, he understood that escape simply meant death. There was no other way to survive other than fight back, and for that he needed to calm down.

Lucien's brain quickly started analyzing.

"The zombie's afraid of light. But it's very early in the morning and it is still dark outside.

"The zombie won't give me enough time to light anything with my flints.

"Marius's Small Fire... No, I don't know how to cast the spell yet."

Lucien was standing there, watching the zombie finishing the brain and then jumping onto Skar. His mind was being occupied by different thoughts and plans, but each of them was denied by him calmly.

The ability to stay calm was the most important character of an outstanding sorcerer.

Mutant zombies could impose a magical effect called Dread Aura on their targets to freeze them with fear. But Skar's fear of the zombie was so great that he managed to move his legs and started running for his life.

However, only after few steps, the zombie swiftly overtook him and grabbed his feet. Skar squeaked out shrill cries desperately.

"Disarming Loop, Eyes of Stars, Mage Hand, Extinguishment, Acid Splash, Freezing Ray...That's all I know.

“Among them, Eyes of Stars and Extinguishment are of no use here.

“Disarming Loop is useful, but it’s far from enough to stop the monster.”

Lucien was still standing there, his eyes staring at the monster.

The zombie raised Skar with its two claws and directly tore him in half. Lucien could hear that Skar’s heart, liver and guts fell onto the ground with profuse bleeding. Skar’s thrilling scream was still echoing in the pipes.

“Mage Hand... also not powerful enough.

“... Acid Splash... Wait! Sulphur is required to cast Acid Splash, which is also a component of gunpowder. And during the casting process the sulphur is lit.”

Lucien’s brain was striving for survival. He would not let his brain become another feast for the monster.

The zombie opened Skar’s head, in which the white brain tissue was still slightly shaking like a bowl of jelly.

Lucien could feel the effects of its Dread Aura. His heart was racing and he felt breathless.

He knew he couldn’t lose his mind. Thus, he started analyzing the magic structure of Acid Splash, while his right hand reached into his pocket and grabbed a handful of sulphur.

“I gotta stop the magic reaction halfway when the sulphur is lit.

“The notes mentioned that it would backfire. The consequence going from exhausting spiritual power to severe damage in soul, or even worse.”

Analyzing the structure of the magic, Lucien tried to break it down into several parts to skip the acid-reaction part during the casting process and only keep the fire from the sulphur.

The process of deconstruction and reconstruction needed to be

repeated several times. Even if Acid Splash was only a very simple apprentice-level spell, it was still very challenging for Lucien.

Honestly, he was not sure if he wouldn't kill himself by doing this. But he had no other choice.

The zombie devoured the brain and threw Skar's body away. Slowly it turned to Lucien and suddenly started running towards its last target. In Lucien's eyes all of these was like a slow motion, he could smell the stink of death and feel the overwhelming horror.

No one could tell Lucien's fear from his face. Lucien didn't move at all. He was just standing there with the sulphur slowly falling through his fingers.

The zombie was even faster than Lucien thought. In a second, the horrible creature was only a meter away from him.

In the meantime Lucien started casting the spell and then forced himself to stop before it was completely finished. As if he was hammered in the head, dizziness seized him and his nose started to bleed, but instantly a trail of fire showed up in front of Lucien.

The claw of the zombie was just a few inches away from Lucien's head.

Lucien's power was completely exhausted and he could not sustain the fire and let it grow anymore. In the last moment he released the fire and fell onto the ground.

He had tried his best.

The zombie's claw got his clothes and left a long tear on them.

Suddenly a fire wall exploded between Lucien and the zombie. He raised his injured hands instinctively to protect his head, and then rolled away from the blue fire.

The fire wall did not last long. However, after a whoosh the zombie was covered in flames like a human-shaped torch.

Swinging its claws, the zombie stopped attacking Lucien and started

stumbling towards the water, but the monster became much slower now.

Of course, Lucien wouldn't let it go back into the river.

Grabbing the dagger, he stood up and caught up with the zombie. Lucien fiercely kicked the zombie down and stabbed the dagger into the holes where the two white flames were flickering. Lucien felt the burning pain caused by the heat.

Once, twice... Lucien was too afraid to stop himself from stabbing the monster, as if the zombie would seize the chance and tear him in half if he lost the momentum for even a second.

Even though, the zombie was still crawling towards the river with flame on its back. But few meters away from the river, the white flames in its eyes were finally extinguished and its bones collapsed.

Gasping with great effort, Lucien took out the zombie's brain with his dagger. He still remember that he needed it.

After its brain had been taken away, soon the zombie turned completely into ashes, in which something small was shining there.

Chapter 33: The Ring

Grabbing his dagger, Lucien cautiously approached the pile of ash.

The shiny item was actually a carved silver ring, inlaid with a small blue gem on top.

“It belonged to the zombie?” Lucien was surprised. He picked the ring up and started scrutinizing it carefully.

There was a line of letters on its surface, which was written in the common tongue.

“Human nature can be colder than snow.”

The ring was just plain-looking, but when Lucien rubbed it gently he felt a mysterious and amazing power coming from the gem. After a few minutes, when Lucien’s power started slowly recovering from the magic backfire, he carefully examined the ring again using his spiritual power.

Lucien’s injured soul was slightly shocked as soon as his spirit entered into the ring. He felt inside the gem what seemed to be the power of blizzard, but its structure was way more complicated than that of the apprentice-level magic.

“It’s a magic ring! Maybe that’s why the zombie seemed much stronger than the others.” Lucien was excited, “It seems that the ring’s even superior to Benjamin’s Truth Badge. I wonder which power level the ring belongs to...”

With his remaining spiritual power, Lucien couldn’t even understand the magic structure in the ring, not to mention how to leave his own spiritual imprint on the structure, in order to use the power.

A sorcerer with the first circle spell called Identify could directly understand the magic properties of all level one magic items, without having to analyze their inner structures. One’s ability in using Identify would grow along with their accumulated

knowledge, and thus the person could progress and start using the items of higher level.

Sometimes there was extra information in some of them, including their makers, for what purposes they were made, and so on.

According to the witch's notes, all of the magic items could be divided into different standards: apprentice level, level one to nine, and legend level.

The evaluation criteria was based on the power of the magic item: if the power was equal to a first circle magic or to the ability of a level one knight, it was, correspondingly, a level one magic item. Nevertheless, there were four ranks within each level — low, medium, high and perfect. Taking a ring enchanted with the third circle spell Lightning for example, if the ring could be used once a day, it was a low-rank level three magic ring; if it could be used three times a day, it would instead be considered a medium-rank level three one; if the ring had some extra benefits like increasing the magic resistance of the user, it would be a high-rank level three item.

If a magic item had some kind of permanent augmentation effect, it would be a level higher than the other common ones. For example, Mind Blank was an eight circle spell, and a magic item with the immunity towards this ring-eight magic would be recognized as a precious level nine magic artifact.

Furthermore, the grading was also applied to magic weapons and armors.

Lucien did not know the ring very well, so he dare not wear it casually in case there was any curse on it. After putting the ring in his pocket he was in a pretty good mood.

However, when he noticed all the bodies and blood around him, he knew that he had more work to do. Most importantly, he needed to learn how to preserve the aquatic zombie's brain tissue.

Lucien did not know how to use the apprentice spell called Organ Preservation yet, but the zombie's brain tissue should be able to last

from three to five days, which should be enough time for Lucien to master the spell.

According to the notes, Organ Preservation was a spell that could actually be used for keeping many other things fresh, besides organs. Twenty four hours duration each time. No magic reagent required.

After opening the zombie's skull with the dagger, Lucien saw its black brain, which looked like countless disgusting worms entangling each other. Carefully, Lucien put the brain into a bag together with his icestones.

Knowing lots of money would be needed for learning magic in the future, Lucien plundered all the money from the bodies, including the two hollow-headed ones in the river. He got thirty-three Nars and fifty-two Fells in total.

Looking at his bulging money bag, a smile appeared on Lucien's face.

However, when Lucien was collecting the money he noticed he couldn't see things clearly and his head was buzzing sometimes. Finally he realized that these were the sequelae from his spirit damage. There was no magic potion mentioned in the notes that could be used for this kind of injury. Therefore, the recovery might take a while.

Then, Lucien started doing the labor. Holding his breath, he wrapped up the guts scattered on the ground and threw them away into the river, along with the bodies. Gradually he started getting used to the scene and even took a closer look at Skar's kidney. Lucien believed that soon all of them would become fish food in the Belem River.

After rinsing away the blood on the ground, it was about time he left this place.

"It seems like the heresy has nothing to do with the aquatic zombie." Lucien thought to himself while he was walking, "Then what about the red-eyed rats...?"

Lucien decided that tomorrow morning he would go to Lord Venn's manor to find John before going to the Musicians' Association. He had to talk to John about the heresy, but, of course, without telling him what actually happened down here.

.....

Several pastors in training would come down to the sewers once every three days to clean up the trash in the river using spells.

But the person stepping out of a shadow after Lucien left was definitely not a new pastor.

"The Lord of Argent, the forever lasting silence..." The person giggled in a mix of disgust and amusement, continuously talking to himself, "A different name, a different identity? Interesting... That person must have been bewitched by him. I can't wait to see his shadow coming upon the land. A battle between him and the Cardinal of Aalto will be very interesting..."

"Umm... Probably there is some kind of legacy left by the previous ancient magic empire that he could utilize.

"But the church would interrupt his plan, I bet."

The person looked around. A cunning smile appeared upon his face.

"The pretty smart young guy just created the new apprentice magic, Sulphuric Fire Wall, by himself. Impressive... He can be very useful to me..."

Then his figure split into countless small shadow pieces and he suddenly disappeared.

Only his giggles were left there, echoing in the pipes.

Chapter 34: Ice Revenger

Half an hour later, another figure appeared in the pipes, close to the broken iron net.

It was a decently dressed man in his thirties — black shirt, black suit, black shoes, almost everything black. His moustache was carefully trimmed, and his hair was of Pompadour style.

Graceful as the man might look, he had a dark aura of ferocity and brutality, and he was not a nobleman.

He was Rosan Aaron.

All his men knew that Rosan Aaron was a knight who had already awakened the Blessing in his blood. When he was about to become a grand knight, unfortunately, his power went awry and turned out to be vicious and dark. The power not only destroyed his noble title, but also caused Aaron's endless hiding from the church.

Aaron hated the God for treating him so cruelly. Losing all of his possessions, for a long time he lived like a rat, hiding all the time. While he was trying to at least dress like a nobleman, bitter hatred was still burning his guts day and night.

The grading of knight and pastor was similar to the different levels of sorcerer.

The ability to use the third circle spell Fly, the sixth circle spell Magic Trigger, or many other ninth circle spells symbolized different levels of sorcerer. When a sorcerer or sorceress could start using one of these spells, it meant he or she had made a new breakthrough. Their spiritual power would grow by a large extent, and their souls would transform into a higher-level form. Even their lives would be extended.

In the ancient magic empire, people regarded the first and second circle sorcerers as junior-rank mages, while third to fifth circle were middle-rank mages, and sixth to eighth circle, senior-rank mages. Above them, a ninth circle sorcerer or sorceress would be respected

as an Archmage.

Similarly, the levels three, six and nine were the key promoting points for a knight. If a person successfully awakened the Blessing in their blood, they would first become a level one or level two knight. From level three to five, they would be regarded as a grand knight; then six to eight, a radiant knight; in level nine the title was gold knight; and after that was the highest level of all, a legendary knight.

For pastors, it went from junior-rank to middle-rank pastor. Then a middle-rank pastor could be promoted to bishop. For the senior-rank pastors, most of them would become cardinals. There was no special title for a level nine pastor, but if one could successfully join the conclave, he or she would be respected as a grand cardinal.

There were more than four hundred registered official knights in the Duchy of Orvarit. Among them, there were only around fifty grand knights and less than ten radiant knights.

Most of them were members of the Violet Knights, garrisoning different key fortresses.

Back then, Aaron, who was a level two knight, was very close to becoming a grand knight, and thus ranking among the top fifty knights in the Duchy. Now, he has been working for a big man for a long time, doing all the evil and bloody things for him to maintain his fake honor.

Jackson and his men did not come back to the hideout in time. Aaron felt something went wrong, so he came down here himself.

“Sulphur, blood... and something else.” Sniffing the air, Aaron’s eyebrows frowned together. With the Blessing power, Aaron was more sensitive to environment in general than common people.

Aaron could tell that someone had cleaned this place up before. But there were still slight traces of blood, brain tissue, acid and sulphur on the ground, showing that a fierce struggle just happened here.

“Acid... sulphur...” Aaron was thinking out loud, “Acid Splash? It

was a typical apprentice spell. An apprentice sorcerer did all this?!” Aaron could not believe his guess, but the reasoning did make sense.

The person who did this had left quite a while before he arrived. It was too late for Aaron to track the responsible. Aaron was also concerned that what they were doing would be reported to the church or nobles.

It was still possible to track him if he turned to the priests of Silver Horn for help, but Aaron would not. He knew their magic could not guarantee finding the person, and more importantly, if the person had already reported what they did to the church, what he should do immediately was escape.

Then Aaron quickly turned around and disappeared in the darkness. Only his footsteps were still echoing there in the sewers.

.....

Lying in the bed, Lucien was too nervous to fall asleep. Any little noise could scare Lucien out of the bed. Since there was no chance for him to have a good rest for now, he decided to take a look at the ring again. Doing research could calm Lucien down, and also if his enemies did find him, the ring might help.

Inside the ring there was a solid geometric model, of which the structure was not very complicated. With his high school mathematics and physics knowledge, it only took Lucien an hour to finish the analysis. But when Lucien was trying to imprint his spiritual mark on the magic structure, he almost failed during the process. His soul was damaged and Lucien felt his power totally unstable.

With great effort, the magic structure was finally imprinted with Lucien's mark. The information of the ring came to his mind:

“The original owner of the ring, Ice Revenger, was a sorcerer apprentice who was betrayed by his best friend. In order to take his revenge, the apprentice turned to a great alchemist for help and spent all his money on that. The ring felt ice-cold, so he could bear

the bitterness of being betrayed in his mind. A second circle spell, Palmeira's Frost Blades, was sealed in the ring. The spell could torture people with bitter cold and pain."

The ring could help promoting the spiritual power of its owner to match a level one knight's strength. Furthermore, its owner could also use Palmeira's Frost Blades once a day. Therefore, it was a middle-rank level two magic item.

Lucien was not going to wear the ring for now, since it would definitely draw some attention and bring him unnecessary trouble, but he decided to carry the ring in his pocket, just in case.

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Lucien woke up early at dawn with a bad headache. He felt dizzy and also had a fever. His physical weakness was caused by his internal injury from the magic backfire.

There was no time for breakfast. Lucien wanted to report the heretics to Lord Venn as soon as possible. After changing to new linen clothes, he pushed the door open and headed towards Lord Venn's manor.

The cool air outside was refreshing. He took a deep breath and felt his headache lessened. After forty minutes walking, Lucien finally saw the magnificent manor.

Lord Venn was a level two knight who used to pledge his allegiance to the Violet Knights. The grand duke of Orvarit and him became good friends when the grand duke was still the Violet Count and the commander of the Violet Knights. When Lord Venn became older, he left the fortress in the Dark Mountain Range and started having a more peaceful lifestyle here. But from time to time, he was summoned to the palace to be the grand duke's military consultant.

The manor was surrounded by a high wall and several watchtowers, demonstrating the owner's military background.

Outside of the manor, a number of farmers had already started working. Two young men in their grey knight squire uniforms were

patrolling, followed by some guards.

“Who are you? What are you doing here?” Noticing Lucien was walking towards them, a dark blond knight asked sternly.

Chapter 35: Repor

Facing the knight squire, Lucien replied politely.

“I’m a friend of John’s. I’m looking for John to tell him something important”

The dark blonde man, Ian, made a snort in contempt. “Why should I trust you? Just because you claim to be John’s friend? John and other knight squires are in training. I can’t let you in, unless you have proof of your identity.”

Quite obviously, Ian did not get along well with John. Lord Venn always had John in high esteem, which made Ian feel more than jealous. In his eyes, John was just a stupid pauper who somehow got a chance to become a knight squire and was always using the knight rules to please Lord Venn, while he was definitely better-educated and more talented.

Another knight squire, Durago, felt the same way. Thus he just stood there, watching while Ian gave the newcomer a hard time.

Ian thought that a poor youngster like the one who was standing in front of him would be frightened by the posture of a knight squire. Were it the case, the youngster might just give up or start begging them on his knees.

After going through so many difficulties and challenges, Lucien understood clearly what he was facing. In his eyes, it was ridiculous to see the two squires trying to pick on him, a nobody.

Lucien answered seriously, “John’s friend is in great danger. If John can’t make it back in time to avoid it, both of you will be responsible for the consequences. I’m pretty sure that Lord Venn would definitely not be happy with what you guys are doing here.”

He knew that Lord Venn was a nobleman who strictly stuck to knight rules all the way in his life. If Lord Venn knew his men violated the rules, he would punish them severely and drive them away from his land with no hesitation.

“How dare you threaten me, you little bastard!” Stepping forward, Ian was so furious that he almost pulled out his knight sword.

Lucien could feel the pressure coming from the high level knight squire. Even the guards standing behind him felt frightened.

What was out of their expectation was that Lucien was still the same, calm and serious. He asked sternly, “Are you gonna kill me, an innocent and unarmed boy, right now?”

It seemed like he was not affected by Ian’s posture at all. His willpower was stronger than the threat.

“Did you hear what I said?” Now it was Lucien’s turn to take a step forward, “Do you still want to be a knight?”

Ian’s anger was burning his guts, but he knew if he really killed this bastard, his future title, rank, land and manor would all be gone. He was not stupid.

Durago tried to make the situation easier for Ian. After giving Lucien a distasteful glance, Durago hauled Ian back. “Don’t waste our time on this.”

“Don’t let me see you again,” said Ian viciously. Then he turned directly toward the manor.

Durago’s face looked grim. He just stood there, waiting for Ian.

It didn’t bother Lucien at all. As soon as he realized Ian and Durago were trying to cause him trouble, Lucien reached his hand into the pocket carrying the ring. The power of the ring helped increase his willpower to a higher level that could compete with a level one knight. Thus, of course the pressure from Ian, a knight squire, could not affect him.

Less than five minutes later, Lucien saw John running out from the gate in a hurry, followed by Ian, who was walking slowly behind him. John was very surprised when he recognized that it was Lucien.

“You’re here, Lucien! I thought you were the one who was in

danger.”

“Follow me. I’ll explain it to you.”

Lucien stopped when he was sure that Ian and Durago couldn’t hear their conversation. Then he turned to John, and started telling his well-prepared story.

“I met a weird old beggar a few days ago,” Lucien put a worried look on his face, “At first, he was just complaining about the nobles and knights, but later, yesterday, when no one was around, he started accusing God. And I realized he was a believer of the devil, who was doing his vicious missionary work in Aalto.

“I was about to report to the church, but I saw he was secretly meeting Jackson. I’m afraid that the gangsters are involved with the heretic, and they may seize the chance and take revenge on us, or what’s worse, on your parents. If you can report to Lord Venn directly about what’s going on here, I believe the nobles and the church would pay more attention to it.” Lucien looked into John’s eyes.

“These damned scum... Now they’re involved with the devil. Yes, you’re right. I should report it to Lord Venn immediately.” John took Lucien’s words directly without any doubt.

“And John, I’m afraid the situation is even more severe than you thought. I counted... there are just about ten beggars now in Aalto. Many of them... disappeared.” Lucien continued warning him. But he could not tell John what happened in the sewers.

Frowning his eyebrows, John could guess what happened to these poor homeless guys, “Blood sacrifice...” he murmured.

Lucien nodded seriously. “Yes, that’s what I’m guessing. But John, remember, don’t tell Lord Venn that I was the one who found this out. I’m afraid some heretics would seek revenge on me. I have no power to protect myself.”

“But you’ll be awarded for reporting this,” said John.

Clapping on John’s shoulder, Lucien’s face softened a bit. “I’m more

concerned with my life, John. Remember to ask Lord Venn not to divulge your information as well. You have a family to take care. They don't know how to fight as well."

"I will. You're always this careful, Lucien." John nodded. There was nothing more important than his family. "But if there's any award, part of it is still yours." John promised.

Lucien smiled, "Thanks John."

John stayed a bit longer with Lucien. Since Lucien told Ian and Durago that John's friend was in danger, it would be quite suspicious if John went back to the manor straight away.

After John left, Lucien decided to wait for a few more minutes to make sure that everything was going as expected. A while later, Lucien was relieved when he saw a line of knights galloping across the field. Besides John, there were six squires and a young pastor led by a serious-looking elder knight.

When Lucien went back to Aalto, he felt some vibration under the ground from the sewers. Lord Venn's men were there already.

To be prudent, Lucien decided he would not go back into the sewers for a while. Recently he was focusing on analyzing magic.

Some time before the clock showed eight thirty, Lucien finally arrived at his workplace, the Musicians' Association, in time for his shift.

Chapter 36: Pierre

Elena was anxiously waiting for Lucien in the hall. Being late on the first day of work would definitely not make a good first impression on the director, Mr. Hank.

Another receptionist, Cathy, smiled to her colleague and joked, “Elena, who are you waiting for? Your sweetheart?”

“Come on, Cathy. I’m waiting for a friend of mine. Today’s his first day working for the association.”

When Elena was talking, Lucien came into the hall.

“Thanks God, you are here, Lucien.” Elena walked out of the counter and toward Lucien, “Why do you look so tired? Are you sick?”

Lucien knew he must look terrible. The headache caused by his soul injury was torturing him all the way. After rushing here, he felt quite dizzy.

“Well... I think so. But I’m okay. Thank you for asking, Elena.” Lucien smiled to Elena, who was wearing a long white dress today. “I think we’re gonna meet Mr. Hank now, aren’t we?” asked Lucien.

“Yes, we are.” Elena started walking upstairs, and was followed by Lucien, “No worries. Sunday’s never a busy day, or say, the work is not busy in general.”

Mr. Hank was a middle-aged serious man, who was always wearing a decent suit. After asking some basic questions, Mr. Hank just nodded and asked Elena to lead Lucien directly to the library.

The library was on the second floor. While they were heading toward it, Elena was trying to describe the other librarian to Lucien, “His name is Pierre Sandor. Both of you work the morning shift in the library. He’s an ok guy. I don’t think he’ll give you a hard time, so no worries. But he’s a bit... umm...” Elena paused for a few seconds, “weird.”

The guy called Pierre should also have some connections in the association, or he would have no chance working as a librarian here if he was just a nobody. Lucien just wanted to do his own work and avoid trouble as much as possible.

The Music Library was huge and quiet, and thousands of precious music books, journals, and newspaper were collected here.

There was only a black-haired young guy sitting behind the wood counter, reading the tablature carefully. In Lucien's eyes, the guy looked like a big fan of music.

"Pierre, Pierre..." Elena tried to draw his attention, "This is the new librarian, Lucien."

Finally, Pierre raised his head from the book. His brown eyes looked a bit confused.

"Morning, Elena! What day is it today... Sunday?"

"Nice to meet you, Pierre. I'm Lucien Evans, the new librarian." Lucien introduced himself with a warm smile.

Just realizing his new colleague was standing in front of him, Pierre walked out of the counter and greeted Lucien, "Nice to meet you, Lucien. I'm Pierre Sandor."

When they were shaking hands, Pierre put on a sly smile, "Lucien, you'd better... refrain yourself a bit..."

"What are you talking about, Pierre?" Elena was confused.

"Just guys' conversation," answered Pierre casually.

Shrugging her shoulders, Elena whispered to Lucien, "You see. I told you... And I gotta go now, Lucien. Make good use of the books here, and work hard."

After Elena left, Pierre started showing Lucien around. While he was walking, he talked to Lucien casually, "Umm... I sometimes talk in a weird way. If you don't understand, don't let my words disturb you."

“So you asking me to ‘refrain myself’ was also a casual talk?” asked Lucien.

“Nope, that was serious. Guys in our age can easily drain ourselves from too much... Umm, you know what I’m talking about.”

Lucien didn’t know what to say. Now in Lucien’s eyes, Pierre looked like a big fan of music, and kind of nasty.

After introducing the basic stuff that Lucien had to do as a librarian here, Pierre stretched himself a bit and said, “Only the members of the association can have access to this library, so it’s never busy here. Just remember to be polite to the musicians. You can spend more time here, and I’m gonna go back and enjoy The Well-Tempered Clavier now.”

His eyes were glowing when he mentioned music.

“Sure.” Lucien was more than willing to be left alone. With his spirit library, Lucien was always trying to store more books in it, like a squirrel collecting its favourite cones.

Lucien quickly leafed through a book, and a copy of the book instantly appeared in his spirit library. Then Lucien directly turned to another one.

“Hey, what are you doing there?” Pierre asked in a confused way. He hadn’t gone far yet.

“I’m doing a random check here to see if there are any damaged ones. Then I can take note of them and report to the association.” Lucien immediately made up an excuse.

“You’re as careful as a woman, Lucien.” Pierre commented.

In the following four hours, only two musicians visited the library. Lucien thus managed to collect more than a hundred of the books there. His arms felt pretty sore from leafing through them.

The books covered many aspects of the world, not just music. Lucien wanted to have a better understanding of the world as soon as possible.

.....

Lucien finished his work at about half past midday. When he was leaving the library, Pierre was still immersed in music, with a bread in his hand.

Later, Lucien went to Mr. Victor's place and continued his study.

Life was pretty peaceful in the following couple of days.

One evening, John came back. When no one was around, he started telling Lucien what happened on that day.

Chapter 37: Choosing a Musical Instrument

Joel was still not at home when John and Lucien were talking, and Auntie Alisa was busy preparing dinner. Their youngest son, Iven, was still playing on the streets with his friends.

“You can never imagine what we found down there,” John said seriously, “There was a demon hall!”

“What?!” Lucien was more than surprised, “They built a hall down the sewers? Has Lord Venn questioned the heretics yet?”

Shaking his head, John sighed with disappointment, “No, Lucien. We didn’t find anyone there. All of them were already gone by the time we arrived.”

“...It’s impossible, John. I didn’t tell anyone else about this except you.” Lucien started feeling worried. What if the demon followers somehow found out it was him who exposed and denounced them?

“Lord Venn told me that information about our actions might have been leaked by a knight. We don’t know who did this yet, but if it’s true, the knight should be of a relatively high level.”

Lucien thought about the possibility that the heretic power had infiltrated into the upper class. However, it was astonishing to imagine that the evil power had corroded some of the noble knights.

“What about Aaron’s Gang?” Lucien asked.

“The leaders escaped, including Rosan Aaron. The rest of the gangsters know nothing about the heresy. They can’t lie in front of the divine power of the inquisition.” John’s eyebrows frowned, “Even though they know nothing, all of them will be sentenced to death by the judges.”

Facing heresy, the church never showed mercy. And Lucien

believed that the way the church treated sorcerers would not be any better than that.

One of the books from the library that Lucien read recently was called Hunting Sorcerer, which was written in the year 392 of the Saint Calendar, or say, 423 years ago. It was an instruction for sorcerer hunters and night watchers telling them how to identify the sorcerers, how to track them and even how to torture them. Lucien remembered some of the paragraphs, which sounded ridiculous and cruel to him:

“If a suspect lives in an unsociable or eccentric way, the chance of him or her being a sorcerer or a sorceress is high. However, even if a suspect is always sociable and passionate, the possibility still could not be ruled out, because he or she might just be pretending.”

“If the person you suspect panics when he or she knows who you are, the person is a sorcerer. But if the person does not, don’t lower our guard, because all the sorcerers are experienced liars.”

“If your divine spells cannot help you make sure the identity of the suspect, inflicting sacred punishment on the suspect can be useful: If the person rolls eyes when facing the punishment, that means he or she is trying to communicate with demons to seek for power; If the person’s eyes glaze fearlessly, that means he or she has got the protection from devil power and thus you must torture the person in a more severe way; If the person dies, it is because the demons took his or her life in order to keep their secrets safe.”

“If you have tried them all but still cannot be sure, leave the suspect to our almighty God. Burn the suspect. A sorcerer would burn down to ashes, while God would protect the person safe and sound in the fire if he or she is innocent.”

Lucien was grateful for still being alive. If Lucien had lived four hundred years ago when the book was written, he would have been burned to death thousands of times. The church had been dominating the whole continent for so many years; thus they were now paying more attention to the heresy in the north, instead of going all out hunting scattered sorcerers and sorceresses.

“Then did you find anything in the demon hall?” Lucien asked with curiosity.

Bad memories made John’s eyebrows frown even tighter, “We knight squires didn’t go in there. Knights and pastors led by Lord Venn, Lord Verdi and the cardinal of Salvatore searched the hall. Lord Venn never told me what he saw there, but I saw his face when he walked out... He looked very serious.

“I was guarding outside of the gate.” John’s eyes looked down at the ground and Lucien could tell the bad memory still disturbed him, “When they opened the gate, I saw the ground was covered with blood. And I saw hearts.... living throbbing hearts on the ground. They said that those were hearts extracted from people’s chests when they were alive.

“Lucien, I’ve heard many stories, poems and rumours saying how horrible and vicious the heresy is, but today I finally realized how hateful and inhuman it can be.” John raised his head and looked at Lucien, speaking with great determination, “I hate them, the heretics. I can never forget what I saw there. I want to grow stronger and eliminate the demons completely.”

Looking at his serious face, Lucien smiled, “This is the justice you’re looking for, isn’t it, John?”

John nodded, but then shook his head, “I still don’t clearly know what kind of justice I’m looking for, Lucien. All I know is that I not only want to protect my families and friends, but I also want to protect more people and fight against the dark powers.”

“I know there’s a class among the knights called ‘Demon Hunter’. They walk in the darkness and are willing to die fighting against the devil power. Is that your dream now?” asked Lucien.

“I don’t know, Lucien. I still can’t awaken my Blessing power. Not everyone can become a real knight, not to mention becoming a demon hunter.” John replied, a bit depressed.

“Come on! Of course you can.” Lucien gave John a friendly nudge, “Look who am I talking to? The most promising knight squire

appreciated by Lord Venn!”

Feeling the encouragement from his best friend, John grinned at Lucien.

“Talking about Lord Venn...” Lucien asked, “Did he mention anything about your reward?”

“Yes, sure!” John’s face was lightened by this topic, “Lord Venn promised to give me a good knight sword made of fine steel. Compared with what I’m using now, this one would be much sharper and even have some magic effects on it!”

Talking about the new sword, John even giggled a bit with sweet expectation.

Lucien and John stopped their conversation when Joel came back. In the end, John reminded Lucien, “Lord Venn told me that security will be tightened and there will be much more undercover investigations in Aalto recently. You were questioned before because of the witch, so be careful recently. You’re Mr. Victor’s student now, and you never know if there’s anyone who’d frame you for this out of jealousy.”

“Thank you, John. I’ll be careful,” said Lucien gratefully. He knew that, as a knight squire, John was not allowed to leak this kind of information to someone else. Lucien knew he had to be really careful recently and stop practicing most of the spells that could cause a mess. However, Lucien also believed that after this massive search, when the knights and the nobles started letting down their vigilance, it would be even safer than before.

.....

Another Sunday morning, and Lucien was trying to organize everything on his day off. Although he was not practicing much casting during the past couple of days, his analysis work of the other several magic spells went on pretty well. His spiritual power was completely recovered and grew even stronger than ever with his meditation. For now, Lucien could cast up to six spells of the Element School successively.

In his spare time, Lucien also worked hard on his music studies. He spent lots of time with reading different books in his spirit library, but not only music books. From a variety of books, Lucien started to learn more about the continent: those countries believing in the God of Truth in the south, and heretic countries in the north, as well as the evil creatures living in the the Dark Mountain Range.

The brain tissue of the mutant aquatic zombie could be preserved up to three years by exerting the magic once a day, which enabled Lucien to have enough time to collect the rest of the magic matters.

.....

“Your progress impressed me again, Lucien.” After testing Lucien’s basic music knowledge learned within the several classes, Mr. Victor commended, “Then we can move forward to actual practice and to learn how to integrate what you’ve learned from the books into it.”

When Lucien first helped with improving the harpsichord, Victor thought that Lucien might just happen to have an inspiration there. But now Victor felt that Lucien at least had some talent in music.

“Lucien, what musical instrument do you want to learn?” asked Victor gently, “I’m relatively good at violin, harpsichord, pipe organ and flute. But if you want to learn something else, I should also be able to help.”

Lucien never really put much thought into it. He was a bit hesitant. Lucien was a fan of piano back in the days, but he never had a chance to learn how to play it. But on second thought, one day Lucien would set out to find the headquarter of the Continental Congress of Magic and, of course, he could not carry a piano with him all the way. Probably he should choose something relatively portable, like a violin?

Lott, Felicia and Herodotus were curious to see which one Lucien would choose, but Lucien was still hesitating.

“It’s okay, Lucien.” Victor smiled, “If you have any concern, just tell me. Maybe I can help you.”

So Lucien asked cordially, “Mr. Victor, can I choose both the improved harpsichord and violin?”

The rest of the three students were a bit pissed off. They felt Lucien was being really greedy because he could learn for free.

“No problem,” answered Victor, “but you gotta focus on one thing at a time. What about we start from learning harpsichord? And I can probably get some new ideas while I’m teaching.”

“Sure, thank you, Mr. Victor.” Lucien was grateful.

Chapter 38: Modern Piano Fingering

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Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Standing up from the couch, Victor clapped his hands delightfully, “All right. Mr. Rhine and Mr. Shavell have finished the improvement of the harpsichord a couple of days ago. Let’s try the new harpsichord today! All of you can come! I even feel that I shouldn’t call it a harpsichord anymore, since its tone, its range, and its volume are completely different now. For me, it’s a revolution in string instruments!”

Seeing the joy on his face, Lucien could tell that Mr. Victor was very satisfied with the improvement.

“Mr. Victor, as the initiator of the harpsichord improvement, you may like to give the new invention an official name.” When they were walking upstairs, Lott talked to his teacher in a flattering way.

“Yes, Rhine, Shavell and I actually talked about the name before. However, none of us could find a proper name for it.” Victor looked at Lucien with a mild smile on his face, “Lucien, what’s your idea?”

“My idea?” Lucien was a bit surprised.

“Of course, you made no small contribution to this. We’d like to hear your suggestion.” said Victor, “Well... Rhine appreciated its mechanical sophistication, so he wanted to name it mechanical harpsichord. I mean... Mr. Rhine is a talent in music, but definitely not good at naming a new musical instrument. Mechanical harpsichord doesn’t sound right to me at all.”

“What’s your idea then, sir?” Lucien asked.

“Um... I prefer to have a new name. This new musical instrument combines both the features of harpsichord and clavichord, and it has a much wider range of tones compared with its predecessors. So I would suggest the name to be... superchord!”

“.....” Including Lucien, none of the students present knew what to say toward this name.

“Well, what about the name ‘pianoforte’?” Lucien said with uncertainty.

“Pianoforte? It’s a pretty new name, but it sounds a bit weird.” Victor rubbed his chin with his hand in thoughts.

“The sounds produced by the new instrument were an extension of what the harpsichord could do.” Lucien was trying to make the weird name make sense. Lucien knew, in his world, the first piano made by the Italian harpsichord maker Cristofori was first called “pianoforte”. In Italian, pianoforte meant “soft loud”. Lucien wanted to keep the name, because it would be sweet if he could play an instrument in this world which was almost the same as a piano on Earth.

“Pianoforte... Pianoforte...” Victor found the name was pretty interesting, “What about just ‘piano’?”

Lucien was very surprised that Victor would appreciate the name.

“I like the name, ‘piano’.” Felicia agreed, which was even more beyond Lucien’s expectation. It was the first time Felicia showed her commendation for any of Lucien’s ideas. A faint blush appeared on her beautiful face, “I don’t know why... I just somehow feel like it’s the proper name.”

Mr. Victor nodded with a bit of confusion, “Yes... I feel the same way, Felicia. Piano... It feels like it should be called piano... Weird...”

“Yeah...That’s how I feel as well.” Lucien was a bit nervous. He did not understand why both Mr. Victor and Felicia had a special feeling toward the name. Hurriedly, he changed the topic, “I can hear someone playing music in the practice room upstairs.”

“Yes, Mr. Rhine is here today. Didn’t I mention it?” Victor answered with joy.

Felicia’s face was now as red as a ripe tomato.

Rhine was sitting in front of the 'piano', his hair silver and his gesture charming. Without moving his shoulders and arms, his fingers were dancing on the piano keyboards, and a beautiful piece of music was flowing out of the musical instrument.

They indulged themselves in the joys of the song. No one made a sound until Rhine finished playing. All the students and Mr. Victor started applauding for the amazing performance.

"Mr. Rhine! As an excellent violinist, it's amazing that your skill in playing clavichord is also great." Felicia's eyes were glowing, "Your performance was as good as Ms. Silvia's!"

Standing from the bench, Rhine bowed to them elegantly with his right hand on his chest. He was trying to play the same song on both the clavichord and the piano to see the difference. He turned to Felicia and smiled, "I'm flattered, Felicia. But I can never compete with Ms. Silvia. It was she who wrote this song after all."

Ms. Silvia was the best clavichord player in Aalto. Since clavichord was ideal for playing in a relatively small space, like in a living room or even bedroom, Mr. Silvia was often invited by the noble ladies to play in their places. It was said that Ms. Silvia was a close friend of Princess Natasha, and thus she enjoyed a high reputation in the association.

When Rhine was playing, Lucien paid more attention on the movement of his fingers. At the same time, he searched in his spirit library and found some useful books to refer to. According to these books, the modification of a musical instrument was the main cause of the changes in fingerings, as well as the holistic style. The piano standing beside them had eighty-eight keys and different pedals, which was already very close to a modern piano on Earth. Thus Lucien believed the modern piano fingering should be the best way of playing it.

On earth, people used to play clavichord with three fingers of each hand. Then the famous pianist, Bach, started using his thumbs and little fingers. When piano gained its popularity, Chopin made a second revolution in fingerings by also playing the black keys with his thumb and little finger.

When Lucien was reviewing the basic modern fingering books in his mind, Victor told Rhine about the new name of the instrument. It turned out that Rhine loved the name as well.

“Come here, Lucien. Sit in front of the piano. I’m gonna show you the basic fingerings.” Victor said to him.

Lucien trotted toward Mr. Victor with a bit excitement. However, as soon as he sat on the bench, Lucien felt something was not right. It was a bit too short for the piano.

“Mr. Victor, can I have a taller bench?” asked Lucien.

“Why? You’re not much shorter than Mr. Rhine. The height should be fine.” Victor was a bit surprised.

Extending his arms, Lucien tried to show it to Mr. Victor, “But if I sit on a bench of this height, I could only use my fingers and wrists. If I want to use my lower and upper arm, as well as my shoulder, I need a taller bench, otherwise it would be too awkward.”

“That’s because you’re not supposed to use your arms and shoulders. That’s too rude!” Victor was pretty serious, “Forget about what you’ve seen in the pubs. You saw how Mr. Rhine played, didn’t you? Did he ever use his arms and shoulders?”

Victor’s reaction was within Lucien’s expectation. Modern piano fingering was quite hard to be accepted by many famous pianists back in the days. In their eyes, pianists using modern fingering like Franz Liszt were rude. The way of swinging arms and shoulders in their mind looked very barbaric and it was like smashing the piano.

“Yes, Lucien. Those players in the pubs are not well-educated. I know... umm... you probably grew up in that environment, but now you’re here. It’s time for you to see what is noble music now.” Seizing the chance, Herodotus scoffed at Lucien’s words.

“Mr. Victor, the piano is a new musical instrument.” Lucien explained calmly, “I feel that how a musician plays the instrument should depend on the features of it. As an extension of harpsichord, piano is superior in both volume and range. With the strength of

arm and shoulder, I feel its features could be presented in a better way.”

Rhine took a step forward and smiled at Victor, “I agree with Lucien. Remember the discussion about fingerings several years ago? Probably we can make a real difference again with it.”

Victor thought for a while and finally said, “All right, maybe we can give it a shot. But Lucien, if it later is considered wrong, it would take you a long time to forget the wrong movements and start over again. Are you sure you want to do this?”

Lucien nodded at Mr. Victor with a determined look.

In the other students’ eyes, Lucien was no more than an arrogant boy trying to impress Mr. Victor and Mr. Rhine in this stupid way.

Chapter 39: The Tawny Owl

Mr. Victor passed a piece of notation to Lucien, which was written by himself for harpsichord beginners. The song did not require any expert skills, and thus, when it was played on a harpsichord, it was quite plain. However, after the improvement, the tone of the piano would definitely add some splendour to it.

With his diligent practice of meditation, Lucien had an even better memory now. It only took him a while to roughly go through the music several times. Before him, Mr. Victor only saw noble students, like Lott and Felicia, being able to do this, because they grew up under the nurture of music since they were born.

“All right, Lucien. I know you still feel you’re not prepared, but it’s time for you to start playing. Don’t be nervous and just pay attention to the keys you should press down. Take it easy.” Mr. Victor was quite looking forward to Lucien’s first play.

Putting his hands on the keyboard in a defined arch, Lucien pressed down the first key. It was not difficult for him to remember the song, but, as expected, playing it was a completely different story. Lucien felt his fingers were too clumsy to reach the right keys in time. Slow as he was, Lucien tried his best to focus on the keys to make sure they were the correct ones. Instead of a song, his first-time playing sounded more like a bunch of separated notes climbing out of the piano slowly one by one, or like a dying man exhaling with great effort.

However, no one there ever laughed at him, including the three noble students. Watching Lucien play reminded them of their own past struggle, which was even more terrible.

It was a short piece of melody, that should last around a minute, but it took Lucien more than three minutes to finish playing it. After he pressed down the last key, his forehead was oozing sweat. Lucien felt that even fighting with an aquatic zombie in the pipes could not be more exhausting.

Mr. Victor was the first person who started applauding Lucien, followed by Rhine and the other students.

“You did a good job, Lucien.” Victor comforted him, smiling, “I know how clumsy a person would feel when he or she first started playing. But you are the only student I’ve seen that managed to press every key correctly. It’s impressive.”

Rhine nodded, “Yes, you are very smart, Lucien. I’m sure you will improve quickly with more practice. But the coordination of your hands was for sure not your strong point, and later you will also need to use your feet for the pedals. It’ll be pretty challenging for you.”

“I agree,” said Mr. Victor, “But being more coordinate is just a matter of time. If you’re willing to work hard, you’ll be a qualified musician within ten years.”

“Ten years?” It seemed that even with the direction of a master musician, it still would take a long time for a person to make achieve something in music. However, Lucien was still expecting that, by becoming a qualified musician as soon as possible, his living expenses as well as the cost for his magic experiments could be fully covered.

“Is there any way to become a qualified musician faster?” Lucien asked.

“Yes, sure, if you’re a genius.” Felicia interjected, “But you are not, Lucien. Working hard is the only way to become a qualified musician, and of course it takes time. Don’t let Mr. Victor lose his face for having a student who couldn’t even play the piano decently.”

In Felicia’s eyes, Lucien’s question fully showed his shallowness.

Rhine responded in a more mild way, “I understand young people’s eagerness, but like Felicia said, my current small achievement in playing violin took me a long time, and it’s the same with other instruments.” Then he paused a bit, “Well, actually hard practice is not the only way to become a qualified musician. If you could

awaken the Blessing in your blood, your ability of controlling your body would be increased by a large extent. With your smart little brain, you could probably become a piano musician within a few weeks.”

“But how long it would take you to awaken the Blessing?” Rhine shrugged his shoulders, “Maybe ten years, maybe twenty years, or forever... What do you think?”

“Becoming a genius sounds more practical, Lucien.” Lott laughed.

Victor turned to Lucien, “If you just want to master a relatively hard piece of melody, an intensive practice within a short period of time may be helpful, but this can never help you become a really good musician. Do not rush, but always work hard, Lucien.” Victor tapped Lucien on his shoulders to encourage him.

Lucien looked at Mr. Victor and nodded.

After the class, Lucien started working on his monthly budget. He needed to give auntie Alisa three Nars every month for the meals because he was now eating with their family more often. Also, more money would be spent on building a secret magic lab in the future, when Aalto calmed down and became safer.

Besides money, Lucien still had lots of concerns: buying too many glasswares for magic experiments could be very suspicious to the church, and Lucien currently had no idea what to do with them; he also needed some black robes, so he could sew some rows of small pockets inside for carrying more different magic reagents in the future.

Burying his head in his arms, Lucien thought to himself, “Maybe I’ll become a tailor sewing clothes for people rather than a sorcerer.” The idea amused him a bit.

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Several days later, at night, Lucien was reviewing the last magic he analyzed, Homan’s Oscillation, even though it was too risky for him to practice the spell at this moment. Besides, by changing the

vibration frequency of his spiritual power, now Lucien could leave an imperceptible magic mark on a target, which made him very happy.

As for music, like Rhine commented, after a certain stage, his good memory could not help much anymore. His poor coordination became his biggest problem, so Lucien was still practicing the same etude.

All of a sudden, Lucien heard someone or something was swiftly approaching his shack.

Lucien hid all his stuff under the bed in a hurry and stood there in a defensive posture.

Knock, knock, knock

...

The window opened by itself!

Lucien felt a familiar wave of magic power coming inside. He was very nervous, but also kind of excited. Was it another sorcerer apprentice, or even a real sorcerer?

A tawny owl flew in through the window and landed on the table. Somehow Lucien felt it had an arrogant-looking face.

And the owl started speaking in a harsh voice.

“You should open the window for me, you little boy.”

Lucien was not really scared. In the notes, the witch mentioned some animals that could talk. Some of them were sorcerers or sorceresses transformed into different kind of animals, while some of them were summoned pets. However, Lucien was not sure which one the owl was, yet.

Strolling on the table, the arrogant owl looked at Lucien from top to bottom. Then it started talking again.

“Don’t be afraid, boy. As long as you answer my questions honestly,

Lord Doro won't hurt you."

Lucien nodded his head, feeling a bit confused...Who was Lord Doro?

The owl took a step forward and looked at Lucien's eyes, "Listen to my question... After the apprentice died, did any sorcerer or sorceress come here and asked you about her?"

Chapter 40: Tracking

As long as all the required reagents were ready, an apprentice could start summoning his or her own pet. With different reagents, there were also different summoned animals. Some could be common animals like owls, cats or ravens, while some could be very powerful magic creatures like a Faerie Dragon.

Once they were summoned, mysterious connections would be built between the owners and them. Thus, an owner could gain some special abilities based on the features of his or her summoned pet, and vice versa. As long as the pet was strong enough to handle magic, it could also use some of its owner's basic spells. For example, if one could summon a cat as his or her companion, the summoner usually would then have good night vision, and there would be also a significant improvement in the person's agility. Meanwhile, the cat could help its owner to cast some of the apprentice spells like Darkness and Organ Preservation, even some basic Necromantic spells.

However, as to how many spells a companion pet could master, and how many times it could cast the spells depended on its owner's level. That was to say, the power consumed by a spell would not come from the pet, but still from its owner. If the owner's remaining spiritual power was not enough, the pet would not be able to use magic.

A summoned companion pet could also grow stronger to higher levels, but the special abilities its owner gained would not be further improved along the process. If the pet died, or somehow the connection was broken, the owner would lose the special abilities deriving from the pet and even be injured.

Lucien had never paid much attention to summoning spells before, because having a magic pet in the city under the nose of the church could easily bring him big trouble.

A few seconds later, Lucien slowly answered the owl's question, "No... I didn't see any other sorcerer or sorceress."

The owl flapped its wings in satisfaction, "Very well... You are indeed not lying. Lord Doro has been watching you for some time, and no one came or asked about her."

"Sneaky little bird..." Lucien almost rolled his eyes.

"Then, the second question. What happened in the witch's secret chamber and what did you find there?" The owl's big round eyes blinked.

"Well... I went down there with a few guards..." Lucien told the owl exactly what had happened in the chamber, except, of course, the part about the magic books being copied to his spirit library. No one would believe that there was a whole library in his soul anyway.

"What a tragedy for the guard! He lost his arm!" The owl sighed, "Good boy, Lord Doro's job is done now. Good night, little boy!" Then it flew directly toward the open window and gradually disappeared in the darkness.

Then Lucien finally realized that Doro was the owl's name. Without doubt, the owl had a master, and Lucien wanted to figure out who the person was.

So when Lucien was talking, he left an almost undetectable mark on Doro, the owl, with his spiritual power. When he was sure that the owl had flown some distance away from his place, Lucien quickly put on his black robe and ran out of the door.

It was very dark outside at midnight and the streets were quiet. Lucien spread his power out and soon detected the owl.

The owl did not fly very fast. Lucien was a bit hesitant whether he should follow the bird or not. Doro didn't look like a very strong summoned pet, so Lucien was guessing that its owner probably was also an apprentice. But what if there were other sorcerers at the place?

A few seconds later, Lucien decided to take the risk. After all, sooner or later, he needed to find other apprentices or sorcerers and

join them. Such a good opportunity like the one sitting in front of him was definitely worth the risk. Furthermore, if Lucien found himself in a dangerous situation, he still had a level-two magic ring to help him, the Ice Revenger.

Lucien followed the target and ran on the streets. At the same time, he kept some distance between him and Doro to make sure he wouldn't be noticed.

About ten minutes later, Lucien saw the owl flying into a window on the second floor of a building covered by darkness. Carefully, he approached it, and was a bit surprised when he found out it was actually the Copper Coronet.

Lucien put his Ice Revenger on the finger, and then carefully walked toward the back door of the pub. With some easy apprentice spells, he sneaked into the tavern and went upstairs. Luckily, no one was on the corridor at this time.

Listening carefully with the help of his spiritual power, Lucien could hear a man talking in a low voice inside one of the rooms.

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Listening to his owl's report, Smile was sitting in a rocking chair with a glass of wine in his hand.

Then he closed his eyes and lay back on the chair, "Well... It seems that the guy doesn't know the witch as well. Oh no... I have no clue now, not at all. How can I find the man from the Continental Congress..."

"Smile, as long as we keep collecting information..." Doro was trying to comfort him.

While he was feeling depressed, there was a knock on the front door.

Doro jumped to the bed at once and buried himself under the blanket, while Smile bounced out of the rocking chair and asked nervously, "Who is it?!"

"I'm looking for Doro, the owl, and you, Mr. Smile" A man answered in a calm way. His voice sounded harsh and cold.

"What?!" Doro screamed and its big round eyes opened even wider.

Smile's spell was ready, but he dare not launch the attack rashly on a stranger who he knew nothing about.

"I asked, who are you?!" Smile repeated.

"I'm a sorcerer, and I know the witch. Like you, I'm also looking for the man from the Congress." The harsh voice paused a bit and continued, "Earlier I heard your owl asking a young boy about the witch, so I followed your pet and came here."

"What?! It was Lord Doro's mistake! What a tragedy!" yelled the owl.

Smile relaxed a bit. At least he knew it was not the church, or they would have broken the door at once, without any explanation.

"If you're a sorcerer, you don't need me to open the door for you." Smile did not lower his guard though. If the man opened the door by himself, he could have a few more seconds to better cast defensive measures. Besides, he could tell from the spell if the guy was really a sorcerer, or a pastor in disguise. The two powers were different.

Then, the door opened. A freezing cold and threatening power came into the place before the sorcerer entered.

Smile took a step back. He knew he was definitely overpowered. None of his apprentice spells would be helpful when facing the other sorcerer's power. Then he saw a mysterious man wearing a black robe, whose face was hidden in the shadow of a hood.

Lucien, on the other hand, saw the apprentice's face well enough, and realized that he actually met Smile before. When Lucien first visited Copper Coronet, Smile was the hooked-nosed man sitting beside the pub counter.

Chapter 41: Apprentice Group

Chapter 41: Apprentice Group

Translator: winniethespooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Facing the threatening power, Smile subconsciously tried to avoid looking at the face shaded by the hood, as if there was a dreadful and evil pit hidden inside. He even thought it was possible that the sorcerer in front of him was a user of black magic.

After putting on Ice Revenger, it kept infusing a steady cold flow into Lucien's body, strengthening his willpower. At the same time, Lucien could also sense the tension in the air built by the ring.

With Ice Revenger, Lucien could be immune to all the apprentice-level magics working on his mind. The person who wore the ring could, at the same time, have the Frightful Presence buff forcing people surrounding him or her to feel frightened, which was usually a buff of knight.

Without asking for permission, Lucien entered the room and closed the door behind him. Under the alert gaze of Smile, Lucien casually found a chair and sat down, then he started talking again in the pretended harsh voice,

"I knew the apprentice by accident. She made an appointment for me to meet the sorcerer who came from the headquarter of the Continental Congress of Magic. I was looking forward to meeting him to find the land where sorcerers and sorceress can feel free to study magic. But before the meeting, she died, and I never had the chance to meet the sorcerer. I was planning on asking the young lad named Lucien the same question as well, but your owl was a step ahead of me."

Knowing that the sorcerer sitting in front of him was not his enemy, Smile finally relaxed. Rubbing his hands, he started explaining why he was also looking for the mysterious sorcerer,

"I met her several months ago, and I invited her to our secret

apprentice group meeting. Later she told us that she met a great sorcerer from the Congress. In her description, on the land where the Congress sits, all the sorcerers and sorceresses don't have to hide anymore. We were...so encouraged..."

"I understand," Lucien nodded, "We are sorcerers, not rats. We deserve much better than this."

Smile raised his head and started feeling close to this unexpected visitor. Sorcerers and sorceresses always understood their shared struggle and fear. Facing the same enemy, most sorcerers and sorceresses united to help each other and to escape from the search of the church.

"Yes, sir. You must understand our excitement." Smile lowered his head and looked at his hands again, "We also asked her to invite the great sorcerer to come to our meeting. Although he didn't show up for the first time, the sorceress brought a journal called Arcana from him to us."

Lucien remembered the journal. It must be the same one the sorceress mentioned in her notebook.

"Arcana?" Lucien pretended he never heard of the journal before.

"Yes, sir. When she first mentioned the Congress, some of us didn't believe it. After reading it, all of us started yearning for the place. The journal was old, very old... it was published about twenty-five years ago. But the ideas in the journal were amazing, way beyond imagination... It was like a new world." Smile's face lightened up a bit.

A few seconds later, Smile continued in a depressed voice, "But she was found by the church before our next meeting. I know it was dangerous, but I still don't want to give up. I moved from Purple Lily into this pub, hoping I could find any clue related to the Congress. Before, I was afraid that the church might still be watching her place, so I waited for almost a month and finally sent Doro there tonight."

Lucien saw Smile's face was changing with different emotions—

excitement, astonishment, sadness and depression. He was pretty sure Smile was not lying. Hearing Smile's explanation, Lucien felt kind of disappointed, since he was hoping that Smile might know something more about the Congress.

"Her death is our loss." Lucien said slowly, "I'm afraid the sorcerer you were talking about might get caught with her at the same time. A sorcerer from the headquarter can easily catch the church's attention."

"I guess so..." Smile nodded with a sad look.

"What a tragedy!" yelled the owl Doro.

"Smile, can I take a look at the journal?" Lucien was trying to see if he could find any information from it.

Smile shook his head and replied, "Sorry, sir. The journal is not here now. We take turns to read it. The journal was very hard for us apprentices to understand, but I guess for a real sorcerer like you, it won't be a problem."

The power of the ring made Smile think Lucien was at least a sorcerer of the first or second circle, instead of an apprentice like him. Toward Smile's assumption, Lucien neither admitted nor denied, since Smile's respect might bring him some benefits.

"So...If you don't mind, sir," Smile asked Lucien with a bit hesitation, "you can join us. The journal will be passed on to another apprentice over the next meeting."

Lucien thought about the potential risk, but he also didn't want to miss the chance to find the apprentice group in Aalto.

"What do you usually do during the meeting?" Lucien asked.

"Aalto is the last city of ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, and there are still many sorcerers and sorceresses teaching their apprentices secretly. Apprentices gather together to exchange information, magic materials and views. We work together and help each other." Smile explained.

"I see... But the church is watching us all the time. How did the founders manage to start the group at the very beginning?" Lucien wanted to ask more questions to make sure it was not a trap.

"Well... there're several apprentice groups. Most apprentices here belong to one of them, while some join more than one group. The founders of our group first met each other by accident in the Melzer Black Forest when they were seeking the same magic materials." Smile answered in a patient way, "...I know you're very cautious, sir, and I completely understand. Every one of us all felt the same way when we first joined the meeting group. You'll see that it's a very secret group. Except the one who introduces you to the meeting, you can hardly can recognize anyone else there, because we'd all dress like the way you're dressing now."

"If you can join us, sir, it will be our pleasure. And I'm pretty sure you can also find what you need there, at least we can try." Smile added.

Despite the man's harsh voice, Smile felt the man in the black robe was not a vicious sorcerer, instead, he appeared to be quite calm and understanding. If their apprentice group could have a real sorcerer as a regular member, these apprentices, including Smile himself, could definitely benefit a lot from it. Even if the man was actually not as powerful as he appeared to be, Smile didn't think he would do any harm to the group.

Lucien was persuaded. He knew sooner or later he had to find a group instead of always working alone, and the magic potions and reagents were also too tempting for Lucien to refuse, "Well... My lab was damaged several days ago, if your group can provide me with a whole set of labware, I'll be more than willing to go."

"I don't think it will be a problem, sir." Smile grinned.

"Thank you, Smile. Then where is the group meeting, and when?"

"This Saturday evening," answered Smile, "It would be held in the sewers, but we haven't agreed on the specific location. Please tell me how to find you when we decide, sir."

“Don’t hold your meeting in the sewers.” Lucien warned Smile seriously, “The church is lately keeping a close watching there. Don’t ask me what happened there, and don’t ask why I know this. Just tell all your group members not to go down there recently.”

“What?!” Smile was shocked. Even thinking about what would happen to the apprentice group if he hadn’t met the mysterious sorcerer tonight made his heart beat really fast.

“We can develop a set of code first. Then when you decide where and when to hold the meeting, find the eighth house opposite to the ruin of the apprentice’s place and leave the secret code on the corner of the wall. It’s easier and also safer for both of us.” said Lucien.

The house sat right beside auntie Alisa’s place. It was very convenient for Lucien to see the code on his way.

After agreeing on the secret code, Lucien stood up from the chair and was about to leave. Smile stopped him and asked,

“Sir, can you give me your pseudonym? We don’t use real names during the meeting.”

Lucien thought for a few seconds and replied, “Well... call me ‘Professor’.”

Lucien slightly dusted his black robe and walked toward the door. Before he left, he turned towards Smile, “I almost forgot... I’m working on an experiment recently which requires Corpse Mushroom and Revenant Dust. I’m running out of these two materials. If you guys can provide some, I’d really appreciate it.”

Then he opened the door and stepped out of the room, “Good night, Owl.” Lucien nodded politely. “Owl” was Smile’s pseudonym.

Smile watched the mysterious sorcerer closing the door gently and heard his light footsteps downstairs. Like a dream, the room became quiet again, as if the man never had never been there.

Chapter 42: The Secret Meeting

Chapter 42: The Secret Meeting

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

After leaving the room, while Lucien was walking downstairs, he dispelled the spirit mark he left on Doro, as he didn't want Smile to somehow find out his own unique way of tracking.

Carefully, Lucien approached the back door. Again, with some easy spells, Lucien managed to leave Copper Coronet quietly and no one ever noticed him. Just in case, Lucien took a very roundabout way first, instead of going back to his place directly,

Lying in his bed, Lucien felt kind of encouraged since now he was certain that he was not alone. He was comforted by the fact that there were still other apprentices working hard while carefully hiding from the church. He wondered how many apprentices, sorcerers, and sorceresses were there in Aalto in total.

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In the following few days, Lucien's life was pretty plain but peaceful. Lucien got up early in the morning to do some work out and then went to work. Sometimes he read music books, and sometimes religion and travel book, sometimes he read in his own spirit library and analyzed the magic structures.

Although Pierre could be kind of weird sometimes, when he was reading his music books, Lucien almost couldn't feel his existence. And luckily, Wolf had been out of town for a while, and no one else in the association would ever give them a hard time.

Life was almost perfect these days. The only pity was that Lucien didn't have a chance to see Ms. Silvia, the famous violinist who was still single. According to Pierre, she was a goddess-like lady and was very talented. Since Pierre kept mentioning her for countless times, Lucien also started feeling curious. However, Mr. Silvia didn't come to the association very often.

While learning music, Lucien was still learning how to read, but the time spent on the latter was much shorter now, since he was learning really fast. Like the rest of the music students, after finishing the class, Lucien would stay at Mr. Victor's place and start another two-hour piano practicing. Lucien's quality of being persistent helped him a lot. He never stopped practicing until he had really sore fingers and arms and sweated a lot.

The evening was reserved to the study of magic. Nothing could pull Lucien out of the magic world in this period of time.

On Friday evening, what Lucien was on his way to auntie Alisa's place, he noticed there were some doodle-like patterns at the very corner of a wall. Lucien quickly understood what they meant.

"Ten o'clock. Saturday night. The abandoned house in the easternmost area in Aderon. Owl."

Lucien's expression did not change at all. He kept calmly walking toward Alisa's place as if he had seen nothing unusual.

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Lucien arrived at the place ten minutes earlier in his black robe, with Ice Revenger on his left hand. Before Lucien left his place, he also checked all the magic reagents in the pockets of the robe.

There was neither moon nor stars that night. Thick clouds covered all the light in the sky.

As soon as Lucien arrived, he heard an owl hoot in the darkness. It was Doro standing on the tall willow, serving as a sentinel. Under the tree stood Smile in a black robe. In order to let Lucien recognize him, Smile didn't wear his hood.

"Welcome, Mr. Professor." Smile walked toward Lucien and put on the hood, "I told the other members about you, and they were looking forward to your presence. Several apprentices also wanted to ask you for help with some magic problems. Of course, they will pay."

Knowing that Smile was trying to test him, Lucien, however, didn't

feel nervous. He was pretty sure that he was more advanced than most of his peer apprentices, although he couldn't guarantee that he was able to solve all the problems, "I major in Astrology and Element magic. So if these are questions related to those, I shall be able to help them a bit."

Smile nodded, "Then please follow me, Mr. Professor."

Smile stopped in front of the old wood door of the abandoned place. After knocking on the door in a unique rhythm, Smile mimicked an owl hoot.

A few seconds later, a man wearing the same black robe opened the door slowly. When the man saw Lucien, he slightly nodded towards Lucien, "This must be Mr. Professor, then."

Lucien could tell it was not the man's real voice as well.

"Yes, this is Mr. Professor," Smile's voice was also lower than the other night, "and Professor, this is Fire Wolf."

"Nice to meet you." Lucien lowered his head slightly and greeted him. His left hand stayed in the sleeve, and his Ice Revenger was ready.

After walking through the living room and another door, Fire Wolf led them to the storage room. At the corner of the room, there was a staircase that led underground.

A basement! He wondered why he never thought about building a basement under his shack, instead of taking the risk and going down into the sewers every time. And at the same time, he could build a bigger crypt in Melzer Black Forest for practicing more powerful spells.

This was not a very spacious basement. Eleven low stools were placed surrounding a long table. Flickering candles sparsely illuminated the place. The other eight apprentices were already sitting there. All of them were wearing black robes.

Lucien walked downstairs with great caution, followed by Fire Wolf and Smile. They closed the door of the basement before they sat

down.

“Everyone, today we’re honoured to have Mr. Professor here to exchange ideas and thoughts with us.” Smile stood up and started the introduction, “Mr. Professor is a real sorcerer. I’m sure our apprentice group meeting would benefit a lot from Mr. Professor’s profound knowledge.”

Then Smile started introducing the apprentices present one by one, “This is White Honey, Morning Star, Reindeer, White Glove, Oak, Philosopher, Mercury and Hanger.”

“The honour is all mine.” Lucien slightly bowed, “Please forgive me for being so direct. I come here largely because of the journal, Arcana. Can I take a look at it first?”

“No problem, Professor. Take your time and we can do random discussion first.” Philosopher nodded and slowly handed Lucien a black hardback book. His voice sounded pretty old, “Besides, I heard from Owl that you need a whole set of labwares and I brought them here tonight. I’ll be glad to give them to you as a gift if you can solve a problem for me later.”

Lucien didn’t open the book instantly, but carefully checked the cover of the book first.

There were a few separate silver lines joining together in the end on the black cover, which formed the word, Arcana, right in the centre. Under the name of the journal, a line of words wrote “Volume 11, the year 392 of Saint Calendar”. There were parchment pages inside it.

From the content page, Lucien found there were twenty-four articles in the journal. The first one was Discussion about the Fifth Failure of Finding the New Planets. Lucien felt interested in it and started reading.

“The theory of gravitation proposed by Douglas could explain lots of force field spells, even most spells of the Astrology school. Besides, the three laws of planetary motion also derives from that theory, which is of great significance for guiding the field of

fortunetelling.

“Based on this theory, we have created many new and powerful spells. Thus we can say, if there are two major columns supporting the classical magic system, the theory of gravitation could be valued as the most important foundation for one of the columns — force field study.”

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“There is still one question remaining to be demonstrated: The theory of gravitation enables us to figure out many guiding formulas, and thus we know that the continent where we live in also belongs to a planet. The planet keeps rotating and at the same time revolving around the sun, so do the rest of the planets in the sky. Following the formulas mentioned above, we can also locate these planets.

“However, no one, not even the greatest sorcerer or sorceress, ever managed to reach the planets using the most advanced space magic, including me. Even we can calculate the coordinates of them, we can find none of them in the presumed places in space.

“When I was trying to cast the advanced space magic, although I could not reach the planet, I could feel the gravity of the target planet from my presupposed transit spot. The planets are there, but at the same time, they are not there.”

When Lucien found out that the planets in this world could tell destinies, Lucien was already quite surprised. Now he felt surprised again, and very confused.

Chapter 43: A Real Professor

After he roughly went through some of the formulas in the article, Lucien found that the formulas in this world were basically consistent with what he had learned before, at school. If there was no calculation mistake, the sorcerer should be able to locate and find the planet. However, including the author, no one ever managed to arrive on the target planet.

“So weird...” Lucien thought to himself, feeling confused. Then he saw the author’s introduction:

Oliver Constantine—Grand arcanist; Legendary archmage; Level three in the profession of “the Hand of Annihilation”.

“It looks like the title of grand arcanist is even superior than legendary archmage, and the two titles are not overlapping. They should belong to different evaluation or ranking systems—the latter is decided by how powerful the sorcerer or sorceress is, while the former depends on one’s contribution to the study of arcana...” Lucien was guessing. Then when he looked at the other authors’ titles in the journal, his thought was proved right: All of them had two different titles, for example, “level eight arcanist, 9th circle Astrology mage”, “level six arcanist, 8th circle Element mage”... Lucien also noticed that, in most cases, the authors’ levels in arcana were lower than their magic power ranks. Therefore, it seemed the achievement in academic study was even harder.

Some of the rest of the articles were:

“Study of String Vibration in Some of the Magics”

“Brief Introduction of Differential Method and Infinite Series”

“Thoughts about Seven-bridge Problem”

“The Mutual Transformation Between Electricity and Magnetism in Magic”

.....

“A New Element Detected by a New Method”

“A Forever Debate: Whether Spiritual Power Exists in the Form of Wave or Particle — A Study of ‘Spirit Storm’”

.....

While Lucien was reading the book, other apprentices were observing him in secret.

Half an hour later, Lucien already had a general idea of the journal.

The study of arcana in this world could be understood as science on Earth. The development of mathematics and physics here was close to the one at the middle of the 18th century on Earth. Calculus had been basically built up, while there was a very rapid growth in the development of geometry. Also, the development in Mechanics and electromagnetism had been pushed further in this world. At the same time, some spells here were beyond the comprehension of Earth’s science, for example, Space Jump.

As for Element Magic, it was close to the development level of chemistry in the early nineteenth century on Earth. Researchers, or say, arcanists, had determined what particles made the elements and had realized that earth, fire, wind and water were actually not elements. Besides, they had started measuring atomic weight as well.

But the journal was published twenty years ago, Lucien speculated that the current development level of arcana should be even more advanced.

After he closed the journal, Lucien found that all the apprentices present were looking at him. He smiled and asked, “It’s a very interesting book. Can I keep it for about two weeks?”

“As long as you can answer my questions, Mr. Professor.” The voice of Philosopher sounded very old.

“Of course, Philosopher. You may ask now.” Knowing that the elder apprentice was trying to test him, Lucien was pretty confident. He believed that his knowledge should be enough to answer some

apprentice questions.

Philosopher took out a stack of papers filled with words and numbers, "Professor, since you specialize in Element and Astrology, I have some questions for you related to the first article in the journal... When I first met these formulas which can predict the orbiting of stars, I was so fascinated, but I couldn't understand how they were derived and why they actually work. Can you explain it for us, sir?"

It seemed like a shared question for all the apprentice present. All of them turned around and were waiting for Lucien's explanation.

Within Lucien's expectation, what Philosopher asked was related to celestial mechanics. He answered calmly, "Your question is too big to be fully explained at a time, because it involves too many different aspects. Tonight I can explain to you the basic principles of the formula and how to use them, are you okay with it?"

"Sure, Mr. Professor." Philosopher answered politely.

"This symbol represents gravitational constant. Some of you may wonder what is gravity. Well, gravity is the force that makes you fall back to the ground when you jump up without using any magic, the force that makes apples drop. These phenomena never follow the will of God, and they should not be taken for granted..."

Lucien was trying to make his explanation simple. And when the other apprentices interrupted him to ask why, he just answered in this way, "In order to explain this question, many more concepts and principles will be involved, and they can not be comprehended when you are apprentices. After you become real sorcerers and sorceresses, these questions will be easier to be studied."

That was actually because Lucien himself did not fully understand the underlying principles of the formula as well.

Philosopher sighed with emotion, "One can never learn enough in the world of magic. Before I thought I had made some progress in this field, but now I just realized I'm way far from that."

The rest of the apprentices also nodded. Toward these formulas, although the mysterious “Professor” did not explain “why”, he indeed clarified “how”, from which they were provided with new ideas about how to analyze and construct many new magic structures.

After Lucien finished his “lecture”, Philosopher fell silent. After a few seconds, he grabbed his quill and started writing numbers on a piece of paper excitedly. Other apprentices were also lost in thought.

“Mr. Professor, I want to apologize for suspecting you were a liar...” White Honey was a female, who did not speak very much before, “You’re the most elegant and erudite sorcerer I’ve ever seen.” Although she was trying to make herself sound like an elder woman, she was too excited to hide her original charming voice.

From her comment, Lucien, Smile and Oak immediately drew an important conclusion: White honey was a member of more than one apprentice group.

Lucien answered in his pretended harsh voice, “I accept your apology. But actually, I don’t really care what other people think of me. My knowledge and power is always mine.”

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Later, when White Honey, Smile and Oak were exchanging magic materials, Lucien also bought some of them.

Laying the right hand on his forehead, Philosopher made a deep bow towards Lucien. It was the manner of the ancient sorcerers.

“I want to extend my sincere thanks to you, sir, my mentor.” Philosopher said, excitedly, “Your explanation solved many of my questions. I’m hoping that, with your help, I can figure out how to analyze the key 1st circle Astrology magic, in order to become a real sorcerer. Mr. Professor, to show my appreciation I hope you can accept this set of labware. Besides, you can choose any one of my stuff here.”

“Mr. Professor, I heard that you need Corpse Mushroom, and I’ve brought them here. I’m not sure if you’re willing to solve a question of mine...” Mercury was another female in the group, who sounded quite nervous but also excited.

Other apprentices were looking at Lucien respectfully, hoping to learn more from him.

Lucien started feeling that he was a real “Professor” now.

Chapter 44: Knowledge is Money

Mercury took out a small box, in which there were three Corpse Mushrooms. One was darker than the other two. She asked politely, "You can take them all if you're willing to answer my question, sir."

Corpse Mushroom was required in many magic potions. The average price was about ten Nars. And the darker ones were even more expensive. If they were badly in need, the price could be doubled or even more.

Lucien couldn't resist the offer. He nodded, "All right."

Mercury found the article in the journal titled "A New Element Detected by A New Method" and asked, "My question is about the basic elements... The author defines 'Tai' which is extracted from sunstones as an element in this article, but I thought only earth, fire, wind and water were basic elements..."

Her voice was slightly trembling, as if she knew that the answer to her question would overthrow all of her previous knowledge about Element magic. In fact, the question was related to the important difference between the ancient and the contemporary magic system.

"Well..." After a while, Lucien finally responded, "Honestly speaking, I'm not sure neither. I studied the ancient magic system like all of you. In the past, I often found conflicts between some theories and my own experiment practices, and thus I started putting more thoughts on it. The reason that I'm able to explain those formula is not because I already have a deep understanding of them, but because many of the corresponding questions have been existing in my mind for a long time, and the article just solved them."

It was very suspicious that a sorcerer who claimed himself to have nothing to do with the Continental Congress of Magic could understand all of the formula in the article, but Lucien was too excited to realize the fact when he first read the journal. Now he had to restrain himself a bit.

“That’s why I was only explaining the application of the formulas. As for the principles lying behind them, they’re also strange to me.” Lucien continued. He did not want to take even a slight risk of being suspected, “This article showed the process and the result of an experiment, with only a few formulas. I can only share some of my thoughts roughly toward the theories mentioned in it, but I can be wrong.”

“No problem, sir.” Mercury answered firmly, and turned to the other apprentices, “And I want to invite all of you here to join our discussion.”

This kind of instruction could be very expensive. Without the questioner’s permission, others were usually not allowed to listen to it. Important information sometimes would be protected by a special magic called “secret communication” in order to avoid eavesdropping.

“I heard that there has been a longtime discussion between sorcerers and sorceresses on whether the belief of four basic elements of the world is just a myth.” Lucien started analyzing, “Many believe that the real elements should be more abstract, and should be more than just four kinds.”

The other apprentices nodded thoughtfully. Many of them had the same doubt as well when they were conducting magic experiments.

“I’m not sure what are the real elements instead. But from this article, it seems like they have redefined element and found many new ones through different experiments.”

The experiment in this article was an example. The author showed his way to find the new element — By using the 9th circle magic Fire Storm to bombard Sunstone in an enclosed magic circle, the author obtained a beautiful and pure crystal called Tai, which was both more flexible and lighter than Mythril.

Lucien speculated that there was no periodic table of the elements in this world yet. But in this magic world, elements here were probably totally unpredictable.

In order to show the conflict between the ancient element theory and real-life practice, Lucien took a few apprentice element magics for example. After hearing his idea, the rest of the apprentices present were very excited.

“Mr. Professor... I, I believe you’re right! Being explained in this way, many of my experiment questions can be easily solved!” Mercury was very grateful, “Thank you so much, Mr. Professor!”

Hanger, who was standing in the corner all the time, also could hardly conceal his excitement, “Mr. Professor, what about spirit? Is it also composed of certain elements? I don’t have the materials you need, but you can choose anything you want in my bag.”

The other apprentices now held no suspicion of Lucien’s identity. They all firmly believed that Lucien was the most knowledgeable sorcerer they had ever met, and were all eagerly hoping that the great sorcerer could share more of his ideas with them.

Disappointingly, Lucien shook his head, “Sorry, I haven’t dipped into Necromancy, so I cannot answer your question.”

After putting the three Corpse Mushrooms into his pocket and taking Philosopher’s suitcase, Lucien asked, “Do you have extra Corpse Mushroom or Revenant Dust? I want to buy more, or you can ask more questions.”

The brain tissue of the aquatic zombie was enough for about seven to eight experiments, and each of them would consume one Corpse Mushroom. Lucien hoped that he could collect the materials as much as possible.

“Since the church has been keeping an eye on us for a long time and it’s too risky to cultivate the mushroom by ourselves, Corpse Mushroom is very rare these days. Except Mercury, I don’t think other apprentices here would be able to offer you more, Mr. Professor.” Philosopher answered respectfully. He seemed like the leader of the group.

Like White Honey, Philosopher was a member of another two sorcerer groups. But the other sorcerers and sorceresses he had met

were all very arrogant. They would only help the other group members who could offer something they really want, or give instructions to their own apprentices. Therefore, he was very grateful for Lucien's help.

"Compared with Corpse Mushroom, Revenant Dust is even harder to find." White Honey added, "The formation of revenant requires strong grievance and resentment gathering in a certain way. Although using the blood of some evil creatures can summon revenants, the blood is even more precious than the dust itself; after all, this is Aalto."

Lucien was kind of disappointed, but he quickly moved on. Later he answered more questions raised by the other group members and got more materials and magic reagents in return. Lucien's knowledge earned great respect for him among the apprentices.

Besides respect, Lucien also earned a whole set of magic labware, three Corpse Mushroom, many other magic materials and reagents. Just like the saying goes, "Knowledge is Money".

Chapter 45: Lucien's Magic Lab

When Lucien had found most of the materials that he needed, it was time for him to call it a day. "I gotta go now," said Lucien in his pretended harsh voice, "We can continue over the next meeting." He also had to go back and review his physics and chemistry knowledge in order to explain more questions in better ways for the group members.

To show their thankfulness, all of the apprentices stood up, laying their right hands on their foreheads, and bowed low to Lucien.

"Mr. Professor, can we have the honor to keep you staying a bit longer? Each of us is going to share our recent thoughts by presenting them to the others later. It would be our great pleasure to have you here." Philosopher hopefully asked.

The discussion part was open to anyone. All of the apprentices present were hoping Lucien would possibly make comments on their ideas. Even some random words from such a knowledgeable sorcerer could benefit them a great deal.

For Lucien, the invitation was an extra surprise tonight. Although Lucien could understand many advanced formula based on his previous knowledge, he, on the contrary, was having a hard time analyzing some of the apprentice spells. Concealing his excitement, Lucien was trying to make himself sound as calm as possible, "All right."

"Thank you, Professor." White Honey first showed her appreciation.

It was a productive discussion, from which Lucien also gained a lot from the other group members. Many of his questions related to apprentice magics were solved and his knowledge gap was filled. At the same time, the other apprentices were also very encouraged to see that Mr. Professor was actually paying attention to their discussion.

In the early morning, after exchanging some more information, the meeting was drawing to a close. Lucien was stopped by Philosopher

when he was about to leave.

“Mr. Professor,” asked Philosopher hopefully, “do you mind leaving your contact information to me? So if we can find any Revenant Dust, we can contact you immediately.”

However, Lucien shook his head, “Sorry, I’d rather not. Owl knows how to contact me.” Cautious as Lucien was, he would never trust anyone easily.

“Well...” Philosopher nodded disappointingly, “Will you attend our next meeting two weeks from now?” The other apprentices present were also waiting for Lucien’s answer eagerly.

“I don’t know yet,” Lucien’s attitude was ambiguous, since he did not want his attendance to be regular, “I might be in Melzer Black Forest at that time, preparing some experiments. Anyway, I’ll let Owl know in advance.” But Lucien’s vague answer was good enough for the members. At least this great sorcerer didn’t refuse them directly.

After Smile made sure that it was safe outside, Lucien and other apprentices left the basement in succession. Having the suitcase in his hand, and some new magic materials in his pockets, Lucien walked home with no companion. On his way home, Lucien spread his spiritual power which covered a certain range to detect if there was anyone following him. And all he found was a raven.

He didn’t feel even slightly relieved until he was finally back in his shack.

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One week later, using the magic which could turn stone into soil and mud, Lucien successfully dug a pit very close to his place. The three meters long, two-and-a-half meters wide pit connected to his shack with a small stone stairway was Lucien’s new and also his first magic lab. Standing on a small stool, Lucien was carving lines on the wall with a silver dagger which came from the labware set. He was creating a magic circle in order to block energy waves caused by spell casting or magic experiments.

In addition to that, Lucien cast some more magic circles to protect the lab. Using “Echo Elimination”, no one would notice that there was a basement under there by simply stamping on the floor. Other magic circles were used for placing magic traps which could be triggered when necessary.

After the carving work was done, Lucien pulled out a small bag of black powder. The powder was made from Black Curving Vine and it could quickly stick to almost everything. Carefully picking it out with the dagger, Lucien colored these lines with the black powder, and then he poured mercury on them little by little. Amazingly, the mercury did not drip at all, instead, it was instantly absorbed by the power. Now the outline of the magic circle was very distinct.

Pressing his palm in the centre of the pattern, Lucien spread out his spiritual power and activated the magic circle. The silver lines were lit bit by bit. After a burst of silver light, the magic circle completely disappeared in the wall as if nothing ever existed there at all.

Lucien stepped down from the stool, feeling exhausted. Building a magic circle could be very tiring. The more troublesome part was that, ten days later, it had to be replaced with a new one when the power of the circle was gone. For real sorcerers or sorceresses, they could maintain their magic circle using their own spiritual power, or building much more complicated ones which could recover the power automatically by themselves. Some parts of magic creatures, like their fur, horn or blood, could also do the job.

Then it was the last step. Casting the spell in an opposite way, Lucien built a long stone table from the soil. Placing all the glasswares and small stoves on the table, Lucien was more than happy and satisfied.

The lab was ready. From now on, Lucien finally had his own place to practice spells and conduct experiments. Obviously, this basement, although not very spacious, was much better than the cold, stinky sewers.

Standing on the stairs, Lucien nodded with great satisfaction. Then Lucien went back to his place upstairs and locked the entrance with

magic after making sure the magic trap circle was also in position.

It was already in the early morning. As soon as Lucien's head hit the pillow, he fell asleep. He had to go to work in the library a few hours later.

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"Like I said..." Pierre stared at Lucien with concern, "You gotta control yourself a bit."

"I just didn't sleep well last night." Lucien shook his head slowly.

"By the way, what musical instrument are you learning, Lucien?"
Pierre suddenly switched the topic.

Chapter 46: Silvia

“Piano,” Lucien answered, “Mr. Victor has improved his harpsichord and renamed it ‘piano’. Soon he will register the new musical instrument in the association.”

While Lucien had made some progress in learning magic, he never slacked off in studying music. After all, he needed a decent job to make a living, and more importantly, to disguise his identity. Being a musician would be ideal enough. After all, no one would easily suspect an elegant and young musician to be an evil and notorious sorcerer.

“Harpsichord... Piano...” Pierre repeated thoughtfully. Suddenly he became excited and dashed into the bookshelves. A moment later, Pierre came back with a book in his hand, “You’re gonna need the book! I gained a lot from it! By the way, did I ever tell you that in four months I’ll take the qualification test of the association? If I can pass it, I’ll finally be a qualified musician!”

Like other associations, the Musicians’ Association also practised monopoly. The evaluation of musician was completely controlled by it.

“No, you never mentioned it,” Lucien took over the book titled *The Art of Harpsichord Performance*, “but I believe you can do it, Pierre,” said Lucien sincerely.

In the next hour, Pierre did not give Lucien any time to study the book. Since he knew that Lucien was also a music student, Pierre tried to seize every chance to share his thought on music with his buddy.

However, today was definitely not a good time for discussion since Lucien was too sleepy to follow Pierre. His eyelids were so heavy that he could barely keep his eyes open. Lucien did try to stop Pierre many times, but Pierre never let him have a chance to cut in.

Fortunately, at this time, a lady wearing a long white dress and a black pillbox hat walked into the library. She was a very elegant

lady, her waist was slender and her legs rangy, as if she just walked out of a fine picture.

Lucien also noticed her long white stockings, which made the lady's legs looked even sexier. However, that was not Lucien's focus. Instead, he was thinking about where that rayon-like material came from. Probably it was a byproduct of alchemy?

"Good morning, Ms. Silvia," suddenly switching his attitude, Pierre greeted the lady politely and slightly nudged Lucien, "Anything I can do for you today?"

Lucien then realized she was the Silvia that Pierre was talking about all the time. Her long black hair was like silk, shiny and soft. Under her small lovely nose, there were cherry-like lips. For sure, she was very beautiful and graceful.

"Morning Pierre, I need to borrow several books. They are..." said Silvia with a sweet smile on her face. She had got used to people's special attention, so Lucien's long stare didn't bother her.

Pierre's face instantly flushed with excitement, since he never expected that Silvia would remember his name. He nodded several times and dashed into the shelves again to get the books for his goddess.

Lucien stayed behind the counter. A sweet and familiar fragrance slipped into his nose. Not until a few seconds later did Lucien realize that the smell was very similar to that of the black veil he found in the dump site, the expensive cloth called Black Nightingale.

But Lucien couldn't make sure, and there was also no need for him to figure out whether Ms. Silvia was the veil's owner or not. After all, the smell was still slightly different.

Out of nervousness and excitement, the more Pierre wanted to impress Ms. Silvia, the more clumsy he was. After a few minutes, he started feeling embarrassed.

"You need my help there?" Lucien turned around and asked. Then

Lucien walked directly toward a bookshelf and pulled out one of the books Ms. Silvia was looking for in front of Pierre's face. Of course, it was not because of Lucien's good memory, but his amazing spirit library, which could even store the arrangement of the whole library.

"Lucien!" Pierre's mouth dropped open, "When did you become so familiar with the place?!"

With a pile of books in his arms, Lucien came to Silvia and asked politely, "Ma'am, do you want me to take these books to the reading room?"

Of course, Lucien couldn't claim that he had no man's thoughts when he was looking at such a beautiful woman like Silvia. But Lucien knew that a romantic relationship was too luxury and impractical to be put in his future plans for now. Therefore, Lucien's indifferent attitude contrasted sharply with Pierre's nervousness.

"Just leave them on the table, please. Someone else will get them later." Silvia's voice was husky and sexy, "What's your name? I never saw you before."

"My name's Lucien Evans. I'm new here." answered Lucien slowly. Then he added, "I'm Mr. Victor's student."

"I see." Silvia smiled sweetly, "No wonder... I heard that Mr. Victor had successfully improved harpsichord and named it 'piano'. Please tell him that I'm really looking forward to his concert, Lucien."

The quick change of Lucien's attitude was a bit strange for Silvia. When she just walked in the library, Lucien was staring at her legs like a pervert, while now it seemed that Lucien was not interested in women at all.

After Lucien finished registering the borrowed books, Silvia thanked them and left the library. Lucien noticed that there was a lady wearing a black pillbox hat waiting for Ms. Silvia. Standing there straightly like a spear, the slim lady was taller than Lucien by about half a head. Behind the lady stood a beautiful young maid and an elegant middle-aged woman.

Noticing that someone was looking at them, the poker-faced, middle-aged woman instantly threw Lucien a cold eye. At that moment, Lucien felt he was suddenly thrown off a cliff and all the colors of the world faded. As if the woman had a rough ocean in her eyes, Lucien couldn't stop trembling in front of the huge waves of the ocean.

Lucien lost his ability of thinking. He didn't fully recover until he could only see the woman's back. The woman and the slim lady changed a few words and the latter looked back at Lucien with some amusement in her eyes. But Lucien could also feel the great pressure in it and her authoritative aura.

"Who are they...?" Lucien was astonished. He had never met someone like them before in this world, especially the middle-aged woman. It felt like her gaze could easily disarm Lucien completely.

Pierre came close to Lucien and made a long sigh, "Silvia, she's my goddess. I know... I was not very impressive though." Then he nudged Lucien, "But buddy, you can't just stare at Ms. Silvia's legs like that. That's... too much."

But Lucien paid no attention to what Pierre just said.

"...Wait, why do you look even paler now, Lucien?" Pierre asked, surprised.

Chapter 47: Victor's Trouble

Weakly, Lucien asked in a trembling voice, "Pi... Pierre... Do you know who the other three madams are?" Lucien found himself only being able to recall the eyes of the last young lady, of her dangerous, blue eyes.

"Nop, but I could imagine what happened." Pierre shrugged his shoulders, "Ms. Silvia has many noble lady friends, and some of them are knights who have awakened the Blessing. Well... you were staring at her legs so impolitely, so one of her friends probably just gave you a lesson using her knight power."

"I see... I wonder if the younger lady was Princess Natasha. Her power was so overwhelming. Except Princess Natasha, I don't think there's another female knight in Aalto who has such power. And the middle-aged woman standing beside her might be her guard..." Lucien said to Pierre thoughtfully.

"No matter who they are, my friend, the noble ladies have nothing to do with you, and never will." Pierre patted Lucien on his shoulder, "Noble ladies would never waste a second on common folks like us."

Although everyone was endowed with the Blessing, offsprings of nobles always had a better chance of awakening the power. Therefore, nobles would never marry common people but only nobles in order to keep their blood pure.

"Ms. Silvia is my goddess but is too far away from me. All we can rely on is music, buddy," said Pierre earnestly, although he was the one who flushed his face just now.

In the following several hours, Lucien was being tortured by his sleepiness. At noon, Lucien refused Pierre's invitation of having lunch together and was going back home to get some rest.

When Lucien was walking downstairs, he saw Elena was talking joyfully with a tall and young man who had shining blonde hair and a very well-featured, pretty face. From his fancy clothes, Lucien

could tell the man was a noble.

Soon the man bid farewell to Elena and walked upstairs, passing by Lucien. He was really a very good-looking man.

Lucien came downstairs and talked to Elena half jokingly, "You have feelings for him?"

"Come on, Lucien... You're my friend, and you can't tell that was fake smile on my face?" Gently rubbing her face, Elena answered in a low voice, "He's Mekanzi Griffith, the second-in-line of the Griffith Family, Director Othello's student, and also, the no.1 playboy in our association."

"The Griffith Family?" Lucien heard the name before.

"Yes, Griffith." Elena nodded, "If I'm not mistaken, you know Lott, right? Mekanzi is his elder cousin. He's very good at playing harpsichord and violin."

"I see... but why you don't like him? And why were you still pretending?" asked Lucien.

"Well... I know I shouldn't talk like this about a noble, but he's a bastard. As a notorious playboy, Mekanzi is known for his misbehavior. He especially enjoys conquering women who do not have interest in him, who treat him coldly. It is said that once there was a girl from a common family who refused Mekanzi a few times, in the end he, he..." Elena pursed her lips with strong disgust.

"Be careful, Elena." He said with concern, "But in a couple of years, you'll be married, I guess."

"Get married..." Elena slightly sighed and her eyes looked sad, "After seeing so many elegant musicians and gentlemen in the association, now it's impossible for me to marry an ordinary guy."

What Elena said was true. Once a person had enjoyed many delicacies, plain bread and water became hard to swallow.

"Then what's your plan, Elena?" As a friend, Lucien did care about her.

“Well... probably to be a mistress of a noble or famous musician...” Elena laughed when she saw Lucien’s astonished face, “I’m just joking! I’ve saved some money and I’m gonna learn music like you, Lucien!”

“Wow, that’s really cool, Elena.” Lucien was impressed. An independent and hard-working girl was always impressive.

“I know! Ms. Silvia is my idol. I wish someday I could also be an elegant and beautiful female music master like her. For such a music goddess, nobody would say that staying single in her age is a big deal, because she doesn’t need a man at all — she has the world of music! Although I know many musicians in our association have a crush on her... well, Mr. Victor is not included.”

Mr. Victor’s wife had passed away almost ten years ago. Since then Victor remained single and put all his passion into music. Everyone in the association knew that, including Lucien.

“So are you gonna be Ms. Silvia’s student?” asked Lucien.

“I’ll try, but Ms. Silvia rarely looks for new students.” Elena nodded. Her green eyes were filled with happiness and excitement, “Or I can be your student, Lucien, when you become a good musician!” she smiled.

“It will be my pleasure.” Lucien also laughed.

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With plenty of magic materials, Lucien didn’t attend the apprentice meeting for the following several times. He had copied the journal Arcana in his spirit library before he buried it at the foot of the wall to let Smile take it back.

From the marks left by Smile, Lucien could tell they were pretty disappointed and were still looking forward to his presence. But Lucien did not want to rush — he still needed a few more weeks to fully absorb the knowledge that he gained from both the journal and the last meeting.

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Time went by. When Lucien was able to cast nine apprentice-level spells consecutively at a time and was very close to moving to the next level, intermediate apprentice, there was only one month left before Mr. Victor's concert was held in the Psalm Hall.

Being uninspired, this musician again became anxious and fretful. The tune of the fourth and also the last symphony just wouldn't come in Victor's mind. Soon he got too stressed to teach so many students, so he had no choice but to suspend the class for those non-music students for a whole month.

But his unusual testiness was still very obvious in the music students' eyes.

“Bang!”

Something that sounded like an ink bottle fell on the floor and all of the students downstairs raised their heads. It was not the first time that day.

“Well... we gotta do something. Breaking stuff definitely can't help with getting inspiration.” Lott shrugged his shoulders.

Chapter 48: In the Hall

Chapter 48: In the Hall

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Since the success and reputation of a teacher was also directly related to the students, Lott and Felicia were also quite worried.

“Do something?” Felicia rolled her eyes, “Do what?”

Frowning his eyebrows, Lott answered thoughtfully, “A symphony is a quite long piece of music and usually consists of four parts. For a concert, four symphonies are enough. I don’t understand why Mr. Victor insists on creating new symphonies, after all, he got so many good ones he wrote before to choose from.”

“Mr. Victor did pick out the best one, and it will be one of the four symphonies.” Standing beside, Athy joined their conversation, “But it is also the only ready-made one from the four symphonies. Mr. Victor felt all the others are nowhere close to the best one. In order to present an excellent concert, Mr. Victor has to make sure all the pieces of music are equally impressive.”

Rubbing his eyes, Herodotus sighed, “Mr. Victor always want to be perfect. His previous works were actually very popular among many musicians and nobles, or he would never be qualified to give a concert in the Psalm Hall. If we try, probably we can persuade him.” He looked at Lott and Felicia, while Lucien, a poor student who could only play the simplest music for now, was subconsciously ignored by him.

“What do you think, Mr. Athy?” asked Felicia. She knew that, among all the people in the sitting room, Athy was the one who knew Mr. Victor the best. After all, Athy had been taking care of Victor for almost thirty years.

“Unfortunately, I don’t think so.” Slowly, Athy shook his head, “The concert is of great significance for Victor. He wants to fulfill the wish of his late wife, which is to have a perfect performance in the

Psalm Hall, thus he won't make any compromise."

"Probably... we can look for some potions that are helpful for him to relax." As an apprentice, Lucien's first idea was seeking the help of potions and drugs.

"No we can't. Those drugs will slow down one's mind and cause the inhibition of inspiration." Athy denied Lucien's proposal seriously.

"But we can't just let Mr. Victor torture himself like this," said Lucien with concern.

"Then what can you do, Lucien? Come up with a new masterpiece for Mr. Victor?" said Herodotus with clear sarcasm. He never liked Lucien, "If you cannot, please shut up."

Lucien didn't feel really offended, instead, what Herodotus just said gave him some new thoughts. Mr. Victor needed his help, Lucien knew.

When they were talking, Victor opened the door and walked downstairs, looking very tired. The students stopped their conversation instantly and looked at him.

Victor's hair was messy, and his eyes red. "I'm going to the association to practice the first three symphonies. All of you come with me to see how the different parts of the orchestra cooperates. "

Although all of them were a bit relieved to see that Victor's mood had returned to normal, they knew the trouble still remained unsolved.

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On the fifth floor of the association, the orchestra was playing a magnificent symphony. The four parts of the symphony were integrated perfectly and together provided the audiences with a grand acoustic feast.

As soon as the orchestra finished playing the last part, a cold applause came from behind. All the students looked backwards.

It was Wolf.

“Good, very good. It looks like you’re ready for the concert, Victor.” Holding his chin high, Wolf still looked the same, arrogant and mean. Victor enjoyed a period of peaceful time when Wolf was out of town, and now apparently the happy time was over.

Victor’s face instantly darkened since he knew Wolf must have heard something. Before Victor said anything, Wolf asked with a fake smile on his face, “I remember you asked for my advice before I left. Now I’m back, so let me see your work.”

“You just heard it.” Victor just wanted to cut the conversation short as much as he could.

“No, I mean... all the four symphonies.” Wolf lifted his eyebrows.

“Wolf, you...!” Victor was very pissed off. Before his rage took over, two men walked into the hall. One of them was a white-haired old man, wearing a decent black suit and with a black cane in his hand; The other was the good-looking blond that Lucien met a few weeks ago, Mekanzi, who was Lott’s elder cousin.

“Director.” Putting their argument aside temporarily, both Victor and Wolf slightly bowed to the old man.

Victor’s students also bowed following their teacher. It was Lucien’s first time meeting Baron Othello, director of the association, who was also Mekanzi’s mentor.

In the law among nobles which was constructed over a long time, those noble offsprings who managed to awaken their Blessing in their blood and thus became royal knights were more qualified to inherit their titles, but it was not to say that the rest of them who failed to awaken the blood power could not be the next head of their houses. As a gifted musician, Othello was also the only son of his house, thus he rightly inherited the title of his family and became the Baron.

“Victor, I heard that you’re having a hard time with the fourth symphony?” Othello walked to Victor and asked him seriously.

Victor nodded his head, his eyes lowered, “Yes, sir...”

Othello slightly raised the cane in his hand along with his voice, “You must know how important this concert is. You’re representing our association to play in front of Grand Duke and the princess, and you gotta make sure nothing will go wrong. Do you understand?”

“I do, sir. I will make sure every piece of work will be really impressive...” answered Victor in a low voice, “...at least I’m trying my best.”

Wolf gave Victor a loud snort on the side.

“No, I’m not asking for everything to be that impressive, Victor,” nodded Othello, “I’m asking for a safe and smooth performance. I understand your pressure, but you cannot keep delaying like this. You have to hand in all of your music as soon as possible to give the orchestra enough time to practice.” Then Othello paused a bit, “Well... let me give you a deadline. By the last week before the concert, I want to see all of your work laying on my office desk. Any problem, Victor?”

Victor shook his head with great effort, “No... sir.” He knew that if he still could not come up with the last symphony, someone else in the association would replace him very soon.

“I hope you understand why I’m pushing you.” Othello looked less serious now, “I believe you can do it, Victor.” The director nodded to show his encouragement and then walked out of the hall.

At this time, Mekanzi approached Lott with a smile on face, “My dear little cousin, I hope you won’t have any trouble with the musician qualification test like your teacher is having here. Although I’ll be one of the examiners in the next three years and I’m very looking forward to your violin performance, my integrity will never allow me to lower my standard.”

“I don’t need you to lower your standard.” answered Lott, clenching his teeth.

Then Mekanzi turned to Lucien, “You know what? As a pauper, how

lucky you are that you may have the chance to be a musician. It's not really wise wasting your time on fooling around with girls instead of practicing your skills."

Lucien was very confused when he just heard Mekanzi's comment, but soon he realized he was talking about Elena. Recently, Elena spent some time with Lucien in order to learn more about music.

Then Mekanzi left and caught up with Othello with a lovely smile on his face. In the family of Griffith, as the second-in-line to inherit the title, Mekanzi always spared no effort to please the house master.

"Oh my... Victor, you're still racking your wits about your last masterpiece?" Pretending that he didn't know the fact before, there was a smile of triumph on Wolf's face, "Enjoy, Victor. Enjoy your first play in the Psalm Hall, cause it may as well be the last."

Before Wolf left, he glanced at Lucien, "Is this your talented pauper student, Victor? Well... wish him good luck with his qualification test in the future. After all, your reputation is directly related to his. What a poor young lad!"

Wolf was amused by his own words. Laughing, he went out of the hall. While Lucien noticed that Victor's face was flushed and the blue veins on his hands stood out.

Chapter 49: Symphony of Destiny

Victor didn't loosen his fist until the gate of the hall slowly closed. With a long sigh, he turned around and said to Rhine and the rest of the orchestra, "I'm going back to my office to finish my work. Everyone, keep practicing please."

"Mr. Victor, please don't push yourself too much." Rhine put down his violin and walked to Victor. His face looked serious, "I don't think you can come up with a good melody with your current mood."

Victor's mind was being bothered by fatigue, depression and anger at the same time. He nodded, "Thank you, Rhine. I just... need some rest."

"Lucien, Lott, you two accompany Mr. Victor to his office. Felicia and Herodotus, you two keep practicing." Rhine said to the students.

On the way to the third floor, Victor didn't say anything. Neither Lucien nor Lott knew what to do, so they just followed him silently.

Before leaving the office, Lucien noticed that Victor was looking at a lifelike portrait hanging on the wall. On the portrait there was a beautiful young woman with a smile on her face. She had black hair and black eyes.

When Lucien closed the door, Victor was still staring at the portrait like a statue.

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When Lucien and Lott came back to the practice room on the fourth floor, they saw Felicia and Herodotus were lost in thought.

"Well..." Lott tried to break the silence, "All director Othello asked was to give a smooth concert, Mr. Victor might feel less stressed now." Apparently, his words didn't help.

“Come on... I care about Mr. Victor’s performance very much, okay?” Lott hurriedly added, “You all saw my cousin Mekanzi. If Mr. Victor’s concert can be a huge success, I can call myself the student of a top musician, which will help me with my qualification test.”

Felicia puckered her mouth a bit, “Yes, we are all linked to Mr. Victor. I’m worried about him. If the concert goes wrong, I can’t imagine what is waiting for him.”

On the other side, Herodotus leaned his forehead against his violin, murmuring.

Lucien got ignored again, but he didn’t care at all. He was also busy with thinking. In order to repay Victor’s kindness, Lucien was looking for a musical masterpiece from his world as a plan B. Before that, he had gone through all the songs in his spirit library to make sure there was nothing similar to what he was going to choose. The work was actually easier than Lucien thought, since all the songs were stored in Lucien’s spirit library and he could easily search them in his storage. Then Lucien had to find a proper way to give the music to Mr. Victor.

Fortunately, Lucien had finished the difficult part – translation. When Lucien was practicing reading music here, he marked many masterpieces from his world with the notes he had learned here.

During this period of time, Lucien had a better understanding toward the music trend in this world. Being affected by the church, music in Aalto featured traditional structure and religious style. Lucien wanted to choose one that fitted the trend. Therefore, Bach came first to his mind since his music also had some religious taste.

However, after comparing Bach’s work with many musical masterpieces in this world, Lucien found they were somehow too similar to each other! He was glad that he was cautious enough.

Then Lucien turned to Beethoven. Fortunately, none of Beethoven’s work overlapped the music from this world. Lucien didn’t want to waste much time on selecting, and thus he soon decided to use one of Beethoven’s most well known masterpieces—Symphony No. 5.

Lucien still remembered when he first heard it, he was shocked by the great momentum of the symphony.

The most difficult part that Lucien had to think about was how to “give” it to Victor. Lucien couldn’t just directly hand Victor a piece of paper with such an excellent music masterpiece on it, telling Victor that he found it in a book in the library. On the other hand, it would be even more suspicious if he claimed that he came up with the melody by himself, since a beginner like him writing a piece of symphony like this would obviously make no sense.

Lucien wished he knew how to do hypnosis, but his current spiritual power was not enough to infuse a whole piece of symphony into Victor’s mind.

Finally, he decided to rewrite Symphony No. 5, but instead of revitalizing it, Lucien was going to “degrade” it. Lucien needed to destroy the whole structure of the masterpiece but leave some fragments for Victor. Lucien was hoping that his teacher could get inspired from these fragments.

After writing a small piece of melody down on the paper, Lucien sat down in front of the piano and heavily pressed the keyboard with his hands.

“Dang dang dang dang!”

It was so loud that Herodotus almost fell off his chair. Following the magnificent beginning, the rest part of the melody was like a disaster.

“What the heck are you doing?” Lott asked while frowning his eyebrows.

“I want to help Mr. Victor. What I saw today made me feel depressed but also angry, and this combined emotion just gave me some inspiration. I’m going to write it down.” Lucien explained.

“What?” Lott almost laughed, “Are you saying you are writing a symphony?”

“How long have you been learning music? You don’t really

understand how to play piano yet!” Felicia’s voice became higher.

Spreading his hands, Lott replied directly. “No, you’re not able to help Mr. Victor, Lucien. I understand your will but you are just a beginner.”

“You think everyone can write a symphony just because they have so-called ‘inspiration’?!” Herodotus sneered, “What you just played was rubbish. Stop showing off in front of Mr. Victor to please him, you jester!”

“Lucien, please stop.” Felicia shook her head with depression, “Can you just stop? Don’t make the situation harder.”

But Lucien also shook his head firmly, “No. I’m inspired. I can write a good one.”

Lott, Felicia and Herodotus were staring at Lucien as if he was a madman.

Chapter 50: Composing

Lucien kept playing. He could only press the keys one by one since the skills required in this symphony were far beyond his beginner level. Lott, Felicia and Herodotus felt there was a heavy hammer knocking on their heads. Their anxiety and anger were accumulating.

“Enough!” Herodotus and Lott cried out at the same time.

“What?” Lucien turned his head and looked at them innocently, “Mr. Victor asked us to practice. And I am practicing. Then what are you two doing here?”

“Lucien!” Gripping his fists, Herodotus’s face flushed with anger. However, he was too short and thin for a fight. Lucien had been practicing fighting for a while and was half a head taller than him. A few seconds later, Herodotus shook his fist in the air, “I don’t want to be punished by Mr. Victor for beating you up.” Then he turned around and burst out of the practice room.

“Sorry about the noise.” Lucien shrugged his shoulder but had no plan to stop. He grabbed his quill again and wrote more music notes down. The melody now only contained small pieces of the masterpiece but most of it were Lucien’s stupid creation.

“Are you serious, Lucien?” Lott was looking at the ceiling of the room, rubbing his forehead.

“You wanna have a look?” Lucien was about to shove his piece of paper into Lott’s hand but the latter directly rejected.

Lott looked at Felicia, “Let’s go. Staying here for one more second will drive me crazy.”

She nodded, “You’re right. I need some fresh air...”

Finally, as he wished, Lucien was left alone in the practice room. After locking the door, Lucien went back to work. He started adding more pieces from Symphony No. 5 into the melody, hoping that he

could come up with a degraded version of Symphony No. 5 with lots of imperfection, and thus Victor could improve it to restore it to a real symphony masterpiece.

In order to show the progress, Lucien had to provide many drafts. Also, Lucien needed to practice lots of times to make sure his poor playing wouldn't completely ruined the music, at least he had to show some of the value of the music in front of his teacher.

In the following several hours, the drafts of many versions piled up on the desk and the pile was growing taller and taller. Playing many parts of the music over and over again, Lucien was sweating all over.

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When the sky became darker, Lucien stretched himself a bit and then left the practice room with a thick stack of paper in his hand.

Lott, Felicia and Herodotus were sitting in the hall, watching Mr. Victor conducting the orchestra. When Lucien came in, they rolled their eyes simultaneously with antipathy. However, Lucien in turn gave them a big smile. Felicia shook her head with a long sigh.

Sitting in the soft audience seat, Lucien closed his eyes and continued thinking about his work. Half an hour later, the rehearsal finished. Victor and Rhine came down from the stage and walked in front of them. Mr. Victor now looked much better.

"How was the practice this afternoon, everyone? Any problems?" asked Victor.

"Lucien is the biggest problem, Mr. Victor!" Herodotus answered instantly, "He... he was writing a symphony! A beginner! The noise was so horrible that all of us left the practice room in the end!"

Rejoicing in secret, Lucien almost couldn't hold his smile back anymore. He had to thank Herodotus for letting Mr. Victor know what he was doing.

"Is that true, Lucien?" Victor looked at Lucien with great surprise, "You're composing a symphony?"

Slightly raising one of his silver eyebrows, Rhine was looking at Lucien with great interest.

Lucien nodded seriously, "What I saw today and what I've experienced before brought me some inspiration, so I wanted to write it down."

Gentle and kind as Victor, he didn't immediately scold Lucien for being too arrogant. Instead, he asked his student, "Can I have a look at it?"

"Me, too." Rhine cut in with great curiosity, "If you don't mind, Lucien."

"No problem." Lucien handed Victor the whole stack of paper.

When Rhine was reading Lucien's work, his thin lips closed tightly as if he was going to burst into laughter at any time. While Victor looked pretty serious.

"Lucien," Victor gave the drafts back to him, "I know you're doing this for me and I appreciate your effort. But Lucien, writing a symphony requires much more solid knowledge foundation than you thought. As a beginner, I suggest you start from the most basic theories for at least a few years before you actually write anything."

Victor was gratified to see his student was trying to help him, at least the intention was good. Furthermore, the rest of the students just realized why Lucien did all of these. They suddenly felt Lucien was even more crafty and sophisticated than they thought.

"Well... although your work is still very... say, immature, there are a few highlights in it." Rhine was trying to comfort Lucien, "For example, this part." The exactly few bars that Rhine was pointing at came from Symphony No. 5.

"Thank you, Mr. Rhine." Lucien nodded to him with appreciation, then he turned to Victor, "Mr. Victor, I know you do not agree with what I'm doing, but I still want to finish it. No matter if it turns out to be good or bad, or even horrible, it is the first piece of music work in my life."

Similar situations had happened more than once before. Victor knew how stubborn Lucien could be, and at the same time, Victor was very tired with his own concert stuff. Finally, he made a compromise, “Don’t let it affect your daily practice.”

.....

After having Victor’s permission, Lucien started working on his composing task almost every day. Adding more and more parts of Symphony No. 5 into his work, Lucien’s gradual progress was hidden in the disturbing noise.

In these days, Lott, Felicia and Herodotus were avoiding him as much as possible, while Mr. Victor was trapped in his office working on his last symphony. No one paid attention to Lucien.

By the last week before the concert, after countless times of practice, Lucien was able to completely play his version of Symphony No. 5, although it was not exactly the same as and was much easier than the original masterpiece.

Chapter 51: The New Message

After pressing the last key, Lucien slowly removed his hands from the keyboard. A feeling of accomplishment rose in his mind. Through the three weeks of diligent practice, now Lucien could play the masterpiece relatively fluently with some simple skills. Of course, it was not perfect, but Lucien believed that Mr. Victor could easily tell its value.

“Lucien... you...” Felicia was standing beside the door with her hand on the doorknob, looking very confused but also surprised.

“Felicia, sorry, I didn’t notice you were here.” Lucien stood up and pushed the piano stool under the keyboard, “What did you say?”

“The song you played... was quite impressive. You’ve... made great progress.” Felicia looked away. She was not used to making compliments, especially to Lucien.

“Thank you, Felicia.” Grabbing his music sheets, Lucien walked to Felicia, “I gotta go now. It looks like a storm is coming.”

In the Month of Harvest (September), there was always a downpour every few days. The weather today was very muggy, and the sky was much darker than usual.

“Yes... Sure. See you tomorrow, Lucien.” Felicia was kind of distracted.

When Lucien came downstairs, he saw Athy asking the servants to do cleaning there. Lucien walked toward him and asked, “Mr. Athy, did you see Mr. Victor? I have something to tell him.”

“Mr. Victor just left for the cemetery. I’m afraid he might not be able to come back until late.” Athy was always polite and serious, “Would you like to leave a message?”

“It’s alright. I’m not in a hurry. Thank you, Athy.” Lucien waved his hands. He could talk to Victor in person the next day. Tonight he had some magic experiments to carry out, which were his priority.

In the last few weeks, Lucien managed to read the journal, Arcana, many times. With the help of the literature stored in his spirit library, his basic knowledge foundation grew more solid. Combining that with what he had learned about vibrational frequency, Lucien improved the spell “Homan Oscillation” and created two new apprentice-level spells.

For most apprentices, the development of their spiritual power often was much faster than the accumulation of their knowledge. Lucien, on the other hand, was facing a totally opposite situation due to his background. His spiritual power was still insufficient for casting ten apprentice spells consecutively at a time.

.....

In the early evening, on his way to auntie Alisa’s place, Lucien noticed that there was a new secret message on the wall.

“We have news about the evil creatures. Tonight. Ten o’clock. The same place,” said the secret message.

Lucien kept walking as though he saw nothing. In his mind, he was guessing the intention of this message. He never attended the meeting after his first appearance, so it seemed they were using the information to lure him.

Another reason that Lucien was this cautious was the raven he saw last time on his way back home from the apprentice meeting. When Lucien first encountered the raven, he didn’t put any thought into it, since there were countless ravens in Aalto. However, afterwards he recalled what he had read in the notes – raven was the most common summoned pet. The more he thought about it, the more concerned he felt. Now Lucien couldn’t help worrying that the message might be a trap, in case it would probably have been set by the raven’s master.

However, the attraction exerted by the information was irresistible. Lucien always yearned for the Crying Soul potion, which could reveal the power hidden in a developed body. He had been looking for the ingredients for quite a long time. Now, he already had the Corpse Mushroom and the brain tissue of the Aquatic Zombie, so

Lucien wanted to get Revenant Dust and Moonlight Rose as soon as possible. Except for using the blood of a revenant to summon another, Lucien couldn't come up with a second way to get any revenant dust in Aalto, especially under the watch of the church.

Chewing his bread, Lucien was thinking carefully, struggling between his feeling of insecurity and his desire. Finally, Lucien decided to accept the invitation. However, before going there, he needed to be prepared.

.....

Nighttime, in Lucien's lab.

On the magic circle carved on the stone table, a cup-sized black container was being heated over the blue fire, in which a certain kind of thick red liquid was boiling.

Lucien's face looked very serious. He was stirring the liquid in the container with a long ceramic stick. In his right hand, there was a test tube with some black liquid in it. Pouring it into the container, Lucien slowly mixed them up.

Every drop of the black liquid brought a gauze of white mist. As if it was alive, the red liquid kept shrinking fiercely and became thicker and thicker, like gel. Lucien knew that a tiny mistake would cause a devastating explosion. He must keep concentrating.

Mixing all the black liquid with the red one, Lucien pressed his right hand on the circle and use his spiritual power to change the way the circle worked. Many red thin lines emerged and covered the container. Meanwhile, Lucien started casting. A white beam of cold light showed up between his fingers and flashed into the container.

Heat met cold, but the magic red lines prevented the gel from exploding, and it slowly became more stable.

When the white mist around it slowly disappeared, only a small amount of flame-colored gel was left in the black container. Lucien carefully put the very thick gel into a glass tube and sealed it,

which was the last step required to make the Flame Gel.

Lucien found the making process in the witch's notes. According to her description, he guessed the Flame Gel should be as powerful as napalm.

In order to improve its power, Lucien was about to add some nitroglycerin into the formula, but in the end he decided not to, because he didn't want to turn his new lab into a heap of ruins for being too hasty.

In a box in the corner of his lab, there were seven tubes, each of them containing different potions. Two of them were Flame Gel, two other were Storm, which was used for fast healing and boosting energy, and the last three were Brown Owl, which could accelerate the speed of spiritual power recovery.

Lucien put all seven glass tubes, along with the Flame Gel he had just made, into the small pockets of his black robe. They were made specially for safely carrying different potions and magic reagents.

Then, he opened his own notes lying on the table, in which he wrote down the structures and the principles of the two new apprentice spells that he had created. Based on his knowledge of vibration and frequency and after hundreds of tests, Lucien improved the spell Homan Oscillation, and thus he had his own new spells: one called Bat Screaming and the other The Professor's Oscillating Hand.

After closing the notebook, Lucien climbed back to the room and lay down on his bed to have a bit of rest.

Lucien left his shack that night at nine forty.

Chapter 52: Baron Lauren

Chapter 52: Baron Laurent

Translator: winniethepooh, Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The night was hot and suffocating. A storm was coming.

Lucien purposely chose a different way, approaching the abandoned house from beside the tall willow, which took him more than ten minutes. Standing in the shadow, he did not approach the building immediately. Instead, he stayed there for a while and noticed there were three people dressed in black robes standing in front of the abandoned house.

From their figures, Lucien could tell one was Smile and another one was Philosopher. However, Lucien could not recognize the third person. Thus, he did not lower his guard. Grabbing a black, weird-shaped magic reagent in his hand, he silently cast a spell.

The thing in his hand started trembling faster and faster, and ultrasonic waves began to expand outwards in all directions.

That was Bat Screaming, the first spell created by Lucien on his own.

Lucien was inspired by bats using ultrasonic waves to detect objects, like a radar. By reading the witch's notes Lucien became aware that many sorcerers and sorceresses would hide their magic aura, which was brought by their spiritual power, on purpose to avoid being found by their enemies. When Lucien was learning the apprentice spell called Magic Aura Detection, he realized that the apprentice-level detection spell would be ineffective when facing corresponding defensive spells of higher levels.

Thus, Lucien combined Magic Aura Detection with his knowledge of ultrasonic wave and created Bat Screaming, which could even detect objects with no spiritual power or that released no magic Aura.

Of course, Bat Screaming could also fail if a sorcerer or sorceress knew the spell in advance. They would still have other ways to avoid being found. Therefore, choosing proper spells was of great significance in a magic battle.

The ultrasonic waves were like invisible water waves spreading around Lucien. When the waves hit something, they would reflect back to the black reagent in his hand. Lucien kept focusing on the spell and gradually pictured the surroundings, as if he was observing all around him carefully in broad daylight.

“The detection range has a radius of about 100 meters. And it is a three-dimensional detection.” Lucien thought to himself, “There’s an owl on the tree... yes, it’s Doro. Well... there’s a raven... the raven.”

Lucien recognized the raven that he encountered the other night. This time, Lucien felt the magic power in this pet, but he could tell the raven’s master was very cautious as nothing weird happened since he met it the first time. Its master was only watching and waiting for something.

“I should come up with an infrared spell, then I would be able to see the inside of the buildings.” A new idea hit Lucien’s mind. The black thing Lucien was grabbing was a dried bat pituitary, and after some time it turned into a small pile of ashes and slipped through his fingers. For now, his spiritual power was not enough to cast the spell without using the additional component.

Lucien was still hesitant since he could not make sure who the third person was. At this time, the person started talking in a relatively loud voice, “Mr. Professor, I think you’re here but you’re still watching. I’m White Honey, Mr. Professor. It was my mentor who found the trace of the evil creature. He respects your profound knowledge and he hopes to meet you.”

A moment later, Lucien walked out of the shadow and approached the willow slowly. “Nice to see you again, White Honey, ” Lucien nodded to her, “It’s my honor winning your mentor’s respect, but at the same time, it seems like your mentor doesn’t trust me very much.”

“Mr. Professor...?” White Honey looked very surprised.

“The raven. You know what I’m talking about.” Lucien looked into the darkness.

“You... you found Ashley?!” White Honey looked in the same direction.

“It’s impossible...” White Honey wondered, “It’s nighttime, and the magic light of the raven has been hidden on purpose. How did he notice Ashley?”

She now felt that the mysterious Mr. Professor was even stranger.

When Lucien looked in that direction, the raven on the branch started to fall to the ground as if it was suddenly struck by lightning. Fortunately, the raven spread its wings in time and swiftly flew away, disappearing in the dark sky.

“You’d better explain this, White Honey.” Smile and Philosopher asked in great anger.

White Honey lowered her head and apologized sincerely, “I’m sorry that I didn’t tell you about this. And I also brought some gifts to show my sincerity. My mentor... he just wanted to see Mr. Professor. If anything unexpected happened when Mr. Professor was hunting the evil creature, my mentor might be able to help as well through the raven, Ashley. Now Ashley just left.”

Smile and Philosopher were aware that in fact there was nothing they could do about what White Honey had done, since they did not know how powerful her mentor was.

“Well... hopefully it will be a lesson to you, White Honey.” Smile cleared his throat a bit, “In Aalto, what your mentor just did can easily put him in trouble. Many of us will take your mentor as a spy from the church. I hope he isn’t, though.”

“I’m terribly sorry, but I assure you he is not, Owl.” White Honey apologized again.

Lucien walked in front of them and asked in his pretended harsh

voice, "White Honey, now, can I know where the evil creature is?"

"In the old house of Baron Laurent, in the Noble District." White Honey replied, "No one in the last three generations of the house has successfully awaken the Blessing, and thus the status of the house has been declining. Furthermore, there are just few servants still serving the family. The other day, when my mentor's raven flew over the old house, Ashley found it was a bit noisy down there. Out of curiosity, it flew down and found the people in the house were having... a sex party."

"What?" Owl sounded very surprised.

"In fact it was more than just a sex party. My mentor believed that it was an evil ritual. When the people were crazily having sex in the chamber, Baron Laurent was standing in an altar at the center of the place and seemed to be gathering some kind of unknown power. At that time, Ashley noticed the demon's smell in him."

Philosopher was more sophisticated than Smile. He nodded with thoughts, "I'm quite sure Baron Laurent is not the only one. Many nobles who failed to awake the Blessing or to get the Holy Water from the church turned to demons and other evil beings to seek power. Their titles are worth the risk."

Unless a noble house violated one of the first ten articles of the Holy Law, the hereditary land and title of the house could forever be passed on to the next generations. However, if no one of the house could awaken the Blessing in a few generations, the house would start to decline. Other houses would gradually devour its land and leave the house with only an useless noble title. In the end, the house would disappear on its own and the nobles would become common folks. No one would remember the family's past glory.

Lucien had his own guess about the party. He believed it was the heretical ritual of Argent Horn. After two months, Lucien believed that they started taking action again.

"Do you know how powerful the creature is? How can I get to the Noble District?" Lucien asked.

The area the nobles lived was enclosed by the inner city wall. At this time, the city gates were already closed. City guards would only open the gates for the nobles who lived there.

“From the scale of the altar, my mentor speculated that it should be a low-rank demon of an ordinary knight level. But before the ritual is finished, the cast shadow of the demon should be only of a high-rank knight squire level.” White Honey explained. She did not think a powerful sorcerer with such profound knowledge like Mr. Professor would be in any danger when facing a cast shadow of a low rank demon.

“White Honey didn’t know how to find Owl, so she found me first. I happened to know a secret passage to the Noble District, and so I came with them here tonight, hoping that I could be of some help. After all, Mr. Professor, your explanation and guidance helped me a lot.” Philosopher lowered his head to show his respect, “If you don’t mind, Mr. Professor, I am more than willing to kill it for you. It’s just a low rank demon. There’s no need for you to do this personally.”

Lucien was feeling concerned that the heresy might bring some unexpected trouble into the action, and having more helpers on his side was definitely a good thing. After thinking for a moment, Lucien nodded, “Thank you, Philosopher. After this, you may ask me a question.”

“Can I go with you, Professor?” White Honey wanted to join them as well. Ashley was gone, and so she had to watch the mysterious sorcerer for her mentor instead.

At the same time, Lucien viewed her as a hostage. Thus, he instantly said “yes”.

Smile also asked to join. He had his own thoughts as well—he wanted to stay as close as possible to Professor. Then, he was also accepted.

Guided by Philosopher, Lucien, White Honey and Smile headed toward the Nobel District.

Chapter 53: The Professor's Oscillation Hand

It was very late in the hot and suffocating night, but even then there were several people wearing black robes quietly walking on the streets. Aside from them, only a few drunkards were loafing around aimlessly. However, Lucien and his companions did not lower their guard at all. They had to be very careful to avoid the night watchers of the church. Those church watchers were like hounds wandering at night, chasing after the scent of evil. The black gloves those watchers always wore were the shared nightmare of every sorcerer in Aalto.

After ten minutes, Philosopher stopped and said to Lucien in a low voice, "Mr. Professor, we're here. The passage is in the house." The house was sitting on the boundary of the Noble and Aderon Districts, looking pretty plain, even old, and was enclosed by a few dilapidated buildings.

Each of them examined the house separately to make sure there was no magic trap in the building, while Lucien used Bat Screaming and secured the surroundings. Then they followed Philosopher and entered the house.

From the thick spider web hanging down from the girder and brushing his forehead, Lucien could tell this place had been abandoned for a long time. "Some beggars used to stay here overnight. But recently, all the beggars in Aalto went missing." Philosopher said casually when he was walking.

Neither Lucien nor White Honey replied. Only Smile asked out of surprise, "All missing? What's possible for the beggars to do? Where could they have gone?"

"I have no idea as well, Owl," answered Philosopher, "Some said this had something to do with the evil creature." While Lucien and White Honey remained silent.

When they came to one of the bedrooms, Philosopher started

removing some old crates which were hiding a secret entrance behind them. Cold wind came from the passage, but the air smelled fresh. That meant it was being used pretty frequently.

“How does Philosopher know the secret passage? Is he one of the nobles?” Lucien felt a bit confused. However, obviously, he could not ask that directly.

When they all came into the secret passage, Philosopher prudently closed the entrance behind them. Lucien noticed many magic circles on the ceiling.

“Philosopher,” Smile noticed them as well, “What are these for?”

“Don’t worry about it. In case of emergency, the magic traps will be activated to destroy the passage.” Philosopher answered with a smile.

“I like your prudence.” Lucien commended in his pretended harsh voice.

“I agree. I’m feeling more assured now.” White Honey smiled.

.....

Another ten minutes later, Philosopher, Lucien, Owl and White Honey climbed out of the secret passage from a dark corner. Under the cover of the shadow of the tall trees, soon they came in front of Baron Laurent’s old three-floor house.

Beside the iron gate of the house stood a guard wearing a set of plain leather armor. Compared with the many guards on the other nobles’ properties who were wearing silver chainmail, the single guard here was clearly showing the family’s decline.

“Only one guard is here. We can go in there directly.” Smile proposed.

“Leave this to me.” Philosopher took a step forward, “Leave this to an apprentice from the School of Astrology.”

“I agree. Philosopher can handle this.” Lucien nodded under his

hood.

“Then let me help you, Philosopher.” Smile came closer to Philosopher.

.....

Luke was yawning in front of the big iron gate, complaining about the Baron in his mind.

“Party, party and party. Baron Laurent doesn’t even have enough money to pay us guards. Ten Nars every month for standing here the whole night? Come on... The old Baron was paying my grandpa and dad twenty Nars a month!”

A sudden owl hoot interrupted Luke’s thought, since it sounded a bit weird. “Go and catch your mice! You nasty thing!” Luke swore.

Luke couldn’t see anything in the darkness. However, when he turned around, he suddenly saw a ghost in a black robe standing a few steps away from him.

Before Luke opened his mouth to scream, he saw the ghost’s face under the hood: except for the two eye holes, its nose, mouth and ears were blurred together.

The ghost slowly raised its head. It was looking at Luke through the two dark holes, in which there were countless stars. The stars were shining like a dream.

“Stars...” Luke murmured. All of a sudden, he felt completely relaxed, as if he was facing the person who he trusted the most in the world.

Philosopher clearly knew that Luke had been hypnotized. Walking closer to Luke, Philosopher whispered in his ear, “We are Baron Laurent’s guests. Open the gate and let us in. Be quiet. Don’t let other people know.”

“Yes, sir.” Luke slightly opened the gate following Philosopher’s command, “Please, sir.”

Carefully, Philosopher, Lucien, Smile and White Honey went through the gate and headed toward the house.

After they went in there, Luke did not close the gate. Instead, he turned around and started guarding the gate with great passion as if his chest was on fire! He did not know why, but he wanted to do more for the mister.

.....

The house's wooden door of the house was tightly locked, and the heavy curtains were also tightly drawn. In the big hall, a number of naked or half-naked men and women were having intercourse. Men's gasps, women's groans, a sweet aroma and the smell of certain fluids were mixing together. The hall was warm, even hot.

On the couches, carpets, and even on the long table, pairs of man and woman, man and man, woman and woman, were moaning during coitus. They were having sex as if they were totally crazy. Some women's dresses were rolled up around their waists, while some other women were completely naked, and men were humping them like beasts.

Only one person in the licentious sex party was totally different. It was a middle-aged man in a silver robe. He did not join these people. Instead, he raised his hands up and closed his eyes, as if he was enjoying the moans and was listening to someone talking to him. His face looked extremely excited, lightened with ecstasy.

Black mist gradually rose up from the crazy people and slowly gathered behind the middle-aged man. The man was standing in the center of the pattern of an argent horn drawn on the altar, from which many silver lines stretched out and enclosed the shadow. Then the shadow became darker and darker, mixing with the colors of pink and black. Gradually, it turned into a tall and big shadow with two horns on its head.

"Are you ready for my power?" The shadow suddenly spoke.

The middle-aged man, Baron Laurent, answered in his lunatic tone, "The Great Master of Argent, the forever lasting silence, I've given

my soul to you. Please, please endow me with your power!"

Slowly the shadow approached him and started entering his body, bit by bit.

Laurent's face contorted. Obviously, merging was not a very pleasant process. However, the pain was suppressed by the ecstasy shining in his eyes.

"No one can stop me now. No one can stop me from regaining the glory of my family anymore." Apart from the ecstasy, there were also tears in his eyes.

.....

Outside the house, Lucien and the other three apprentices did not intrude obtrusively. They first had to make sure there were no magic circles or traps around.

"Mr. Professor, it will take at least half an hour to eliminate all the magic traps here." Philosopher said to Lucien.

"No, we can't." White Honey sounded nervous, "We're relatively late, and I can feel the demon already. We only have up to ten minutes. Ten minutes later, the demon will arrive in its complete form. Then we will be too late."

"Going into the hall directly will also cost us lots of spiritual power as well to deal with the traps." Smile turned to Lucien, "Professor, you must have some more powerful spells that can eliminate all the magic traps at once."

All the three apprentices were looking at the mysterious sorcerer. Similar thoughts came in their mind. Although they all knew that the sorcerer was very profound, none of them ever saw in person how powerful the mysterious Professor was.

"Is Mr. Professor a real powerful sorcerer?"

"How powerful can he be?"

"Is he even stronger than White Honey's mentor?"

Lucien knew clearly what they were thinking. He was prepared. Under their gaze, he answered with confidence, “No problem, Smile. I’ll handle this.”

Lucien came close to the wall of the house and pressed both of his hands on it. Moving his lips silently, Lucien started casting the spell.

Invisible waves spread out of Lucien’s hand. The waves hit the wall instantly and were reflected back. The following waves thus became different.

In Philosopher, Owl and White Honey’s eyes, nothing happened. They exchanged worried glances with confusion but did not say anything.

Suddenly, White Honey felt the earth was shaking.

“Are you trembling?” Philosopher asked her at the same time.

“Not me.” She answered with surprise.

“Look!” Smile was pointing at the building, “Look! The whole house’s shaking!”

White Honey and Philosopher immediately looked in the direction of the house. The old three-story house was shaking forward and backward, and the movement was becoming fiercer and fiercer. They could hear the glasses were shattering.

“Earthquake?!” White Honey wondered.

“No, it’s the house itself!” answered Owl.

“Mr. Professor?” Philosopher looked at Lucien and was shocked.

Lucien’s hands were still pressed against the house’s wall. His whole body was shaking along with the building. His lips were still moving.

“The house’s gonna collapse!” White Honey took a step back.

Philosopher could not believe his eyes, “Even a third circle spell

Fireball could not completely destroy a whole building at once!
What is this spell?!"

"What... is... this...!" Doro, the owl, was standing on Smile's shoulder, yelling.

No one noticed when the raven caught up with them again. It almost fell down from the tree once more, because of the sudden shaking.

"What's the circle of this spell!" The raven cried as well.

Only Lucien knew it was just an apprentice spell, the Professor's Oscillation Hand. The spell could detect the frequency of vibration of a building and created a resonance to destroy the construction. It worked the best with bridges!

Chapter 54: Calm Hunters

Inside of the hall, Laurent, wearing a silver robe, was standing in the center of the altar. His distorted face was full of excitement and ecstasy.

He could feel it. He could feel the shadow entering his body. His blood was running and crying, gradually changing his body.

Forty years, forty years of waiting and dreaming. Today he could finally start regaining the glory of his family.

The mixed moans in his ears changed into the applauses and cheers on his knight title conferring ceremony. However, at this time, the whole house started shaking all of a sudden.

"Earthquake?! Is this a punishment?!" Although Laurent had changed his belief in order to chase the dark power, in his mind, he still respected and feared the God of Truth. However, now he was just one step away from the great success. He could not give up at this point.

The ceiling of the hall started falling. Chunks of stone and wood fell on the ground, and some of them fell on Laurent's head. Of course, he was afraid. The only hope he had was the dark power he was going to be endowed with soon.

"Do not panic, Laurent." The shadow spoke to him as if it could read his mind, "It will take another six to seven minutes for you to fully merge with me. If the house collapses, you will die. Stop the ritual at once. You've got a small part of my power, which already rivals the top senior-rank knight squire. We can complete it next time."

The shadow spoke very fast. Within ten seconds, the shadow's thought had all passed to Laurent.

Laurent was very angry. He could not stand watching his great plan being interrupted in the final stage. "No, I'm not leaving!" Laurent shouted, "The house won't collapse! The earthquake won't last!"

The windows broke in the violent shake. The strong wind of the upcoming storm blew in the hall and instantly drove the sweet and dreamy fragrance away. The people who were crazy with their desire suddenly sobered up.

"My god, earthquake!"

"Run, run!"

People were yelling. Some were wearing clothes in a hurry, some were running towards the gate naked, while some were even trying to escape through the windows.

The evil ritual took away their strength. They stumbled in panic and fear. One of the women slumped to the ground and was crawling towards the gate. The man who was having a pleasant time with her ran directly past the woman without a glance.

Watching these people leaving, Laurent knew his ritual had ended. The silver lines on the pattern disappeared with the shadow. With an angry shout, he stepped out of the altar and joined the panicky crowd. On his way running towards the exit, he hurriedly destroyed the magic traps one by one.

Behind Laurent, a man in black suit who was seemingly enjoying the sex party just now looked out of the window, with his face looking serious.

...

In the shadow of the house, Philosopher, White Honey and Smile were standing there, looking at Professor with their mouths and eyes widely open. Taking back his hands, the mysterious Professor said to the apprentices in a very calm tone, "They're leaving the house. Be prepared. Hunt the evil creature."

"Why not just make the house collapse, Professor?" White Honey asked.

"I prefer not to," Lucien stretched his hands a bit, "If the creature dies in the ruins, it'll be quite inconvenient for me to collect the blood. On the other hand, the sound of collapsing will alert the

church. We don't want this big trouble."

However, it was not the most important reason. Actually, Lucien did not have enough power to make the house collapse completely. Compared with a bridge of simpler structure, the structure of a house was more complicated, and its vibration frequency also varied. Lucien could only follow one of them. Therefore, destroying a bridge might be within Lucien's ability, but definitely not a house.

The power stunned Philosopher, Smile and White Honey. They never saw a sorcerer who could cast such a powerful spell without using any reagent. Now they had no doubt toward the mysterious and profound sorcerer, Mr. Professor.

White Honey was the first one who calmed down among the three. With the help of a magic item, she started tracking the crowd,

"Evil light detected. Fifteen meters away from the nearest window. We move one meter to the left to better release the spells," she calmly said.

Philosopher quickly moved to the left and said to Smile, "Owl, cast Homan's Oscillation."

Homan Oscillation was also a sonic attack magic, which used high decibel to hurt people. In the most serious case, it could even take a person's life. Other people nearby would get hurt in their eardrums and might black out.

"Then you use Silence Wall, Philosopher," Smile also answered calmly, "To prevent the night watchers from noticing us."

"Merged with a low-rank demon shadow. Senior-rank knight squire level. Five meters away. " White Honey reported, "No acid and fire magic. I'll use Arrow."

"One meter. Get ready." she said.

Within just a few seconds, the first round of the attack plan had been made. That was the first time Lucien saw how the well-trained apprentices fought.

In order to get out of the house as soon as possible, Laurent roughly pushed the guests in front of him away. In just a few seconds, Laurent came to the window, hit the glass with his body and jumped out of the house.

At this time, a loud blast struck his head, as if he was hit by a thunder. All of a sudden, his head started buzzing and he felt bad nausea and dizziness. Losing his balance, he almost fell on the ground with his head.

Before Laurent could see anything in the darkness clearly, a metal arrow directly shot in his right eye. His blood was darker than common people, with a special smell of sulphur. The great pain made him break out in a frightful yell but his voice was blocked by Silence Wall. Laurent finally realized the fact that he got attacked.

However, it was too late. The second metal arrow flew directly into his throat. Laurent struggled a bit and soon his body stopped moving.

Lucien couldn't believe that killing this evil baron who had just merged with a demon was this easy. He was also very glad, since casting a spell silently cost him more power than usual, and his remaining spiritual power was only enough for using about two apprentice spells.

Beside the Baron Laurent lied several naked and half-naked women and men, all unconscious. The panicked crowd running toward other directions paid no attention to what just happened here.

Using Mage Hand, Lucien and the other three apprentices started collecting the baron's blood. After putting three glass tubes of blood into his pockets, Lucien stood up and said to them,

"Time to go."

"Yes, sir." Philosopher, White Honey and Smile answered.

When they were about to leave, all of a sudden a man jumped out of the house from the nearest window like a ghost and dashed toward Lucien with a sharp dagger in his hand, aiming at Lucien's

heart!

He was waiting in the house. Now he knew it was the best chance to kill this powerful sorcerer! And he only got this single chance!

Chapter 55: Midnight Bang

The black shadow was even faster than Baron Laurent, faster than what most people could see. If the men and women who were screaming and escaping had stopped at this time, the only thing they would see was a blurry shadow.

Only a person who had awakened Blessing in their blood could be this fast. The person was a genuine knight!

Within two seconds, the dagger already came close to Lucien's back.

None of them realized what was going on behind them but Lucien. He suddenly sensed the great danger when the dagger was only a few centimeters away from him.

However, Lucien knew he was no rival to the attacker. Also, it was too late for him to cast any protection spell, thus the only choice Lucien had was to fiercely leap forward as fast as he could.

Although Lucien was smart enough to create his own spells, he was still of apprentice level, and a magic apprentice was not able to construct a spell structure using his or her spiritual power in one's soul, which was the premise of casting a spell instantly.

Lucien was clearly aware that very likely he would still be badly injured, but as long as the attacker could not kill him in a single strike, Lucien would seize the chance to fight back with his Ice Revenger Ring.

Suddenly, when the dagger was almost at him, with a loud caw from above a light appeared and instantly covered Lucien's whole body, protecting him like a chain mail.

It was the 1st circle spell, Mage Armor.

The spell was cast by the raven, Ashley, which was standing on the branch. Ashley was the pet of the genuine sorcerer. It could not only see clearly during night time but also borrow its owner's power and cast some of the spells.

The armor was totally beyond the black shadow's expectation. But the momentum of the dagger was so fierce that even the magic armor cannot fully stop it. In the blink of an eye, the transparent armor broke into many pieces, shinning in the darkness. However, the shadow did hesitate for several seconds.

It was already enough time for Lucien, and he knew it was his only chance. Lucien swiftly turned around and activated his ring. Three rays of cold light were shining in his left hand.

Lucien activated the 2nd circle spell in the ring, Palmeira's Frost Blades!

At this key moment, Lucien knew that the attack was the best form of defense.

The ring also strengthened Lucien's willpower, or he would be totally stunned and lose the ability to fight back by the knight power of the attacker.

The three rays of white light were shining, and they targeted directly the attacker's throat, chest and the lower part of the body.

Facing the frost blades, the attacker quickly covered his body with dark flames, which were full of the evil power of tyranny and destruction. Although he could have used the protecting power "shadow" coming from Blessing, he decided to be more careful. The guy in front of him just ruined his whole plan. Of course he wanted to kill him right on the spot, but he had to guarantee his own safety first.

Wielding the dagger, he precisely shattered the two blades targeting his throat and chest. At the same time, he brought up his right leg and melt the blade with the dark fire. The pieces of the blades scattered and were shining like falling snow.

After solving all the troubles, the knight turned the dagger in his hand around and continued chasing Lucien. He also noticed two black balls shooting out of the raven's beak. It was another 1st circle spell, Magic Missile.

This time the 1st circle spell would not be a problem for him, since his whole body was still covered by the sinister fire. Now the only thing he wanted to do was to kill this sorcerer in front of him who just destroyed his plan.

All of a sudden, the tiny pieces of ice from the frost blades turned the air around the knight freezing cold. For a couple of seconds, he was frozen still and the two magic bullets shot him directly in the body.

That was the power of Palmeira's Frost Blades — not only blades, but also the coldness of ice and snow.

“A level two knight!” Ashley screamed.

Philosopher, White Honey and Smile finally found out something was going on behind them, and then they saw the attacker.

Without too much thought, both Philosopher and White Honey activated their magic items immediately.

Waves of light spread out around Philosopher. Within the radius of ten meters, all the ordinary people quickly collapsed and fell asleep.

1st circle spell, Sleep.

A strong onset of tiredness hit the attacker's brain, but as a level two knight, the 1st circle spell was still not powerful enough to drag him into his dreamland. He shook his head and drove the drowsiness away with his willpower.

But a powerful air blast followed and hit the knight right into his chest. With a big bang, the power threw him directly back into the house through the window behind him, with lots of broken glass scattering on the ground.

1st circle spell, Force Wave, carried by White Honey's magic robe.

“He's a level two knight. He won't die this easily.” Ashley flew closer to Lucien, “Mr. Professor, keep attacking please.”

When Lucien was about to take out his Flame Gel, the old house

suddenly started shaking fiercely. The ceiling was dropping and walls collapsing. Within only a few seconds, the whole house finally came down and buried the knight under the ruins.

Lucien's spell already damaged the structure of the old house before, and with the heavy hit of the knight, now the place was totally destroyed.

Boom...Boom! The collapse of the house was extremely loud like an earthquake. And it was too late for Philosopher to block the huge noise.

Instantly, all of them realized that they were in trouble — the Night Watchers would come soon.

Now they did not have time to find and kill the knight attacker. Without any hesitation, Ashley, the crow, turned into a cloud of shadow and enveloped White Honey.

"See you next time, Mr. Professor." said the crow.

And then it flew away quickly and disappeared in the sky.

"We gotta go now as well, Mr. Professor." Philosopher and Smile made a slight bow and also ran into the darkness.

In their mind, Mr. Professor was so powerful that there was no need for them to give him a hand in this case. It was taken for granted that Mr. Professor would have assorted ways to get out of here easily.

However, actually, Lucien did not.

There was no time for being hesitant now, Lucien knew. He quickly turned around to find the entrance of the secret passage through which they just came here.

A burst of thunder just arrived. Rain drops fell from the sky in a crazy way. The long-awaited storm finally started.

Under the ruins, small clusters of dark flame were raised one by one. Quickly they burned down the pieces of the broken ceiling and

stones, then a black figure scrambled to his feet in the rain.

In the lightning, the man's face was revealed.

He was Rosan Aaron, the head of Aaron's Gang.

Aaron stared at the direction where Lucien disappeared and thought to himself, "He could not cast a spell instantly, which means currently he's still an apprentice... He is much weaker than I thought..."

For a few second, Aaron's mind was dominated by his anger, which almost made him try to catch up with Lucien and kill the guy.

But soon Aaron calmed down. For now his priority was escaping from the coming night watchers. He needed to leave now as well.

.....

Lucien was running in the cold rain, feeling pain from the falling rain drops. Luckily the glass tubes and waterproof cloth worked pretty well. His magic reagents and potions were still fine in his robe.

Lucien did not have any companion nor support. He was alone, running towards the secret passage.

Luckily, Lucien saw the entrance was just over there, hidden by the trees, bushes and grass.

However, what Lucien saw was not only the secret passage, but also a man in white suit, his wet red hair sticking to his forehead.

And he was wearing a pair of black gloves.

The man was a night watcher.

In the lightning, they saw each other.

Chapter 56: The Night Watcher

The moment when Lucien saw the night watcher, he threw the tube of Flame Gel in his hand toward the guy without hesitation, then continued running toward the entrance of the secret passage.

He had cast the spell in the Ice Revenger Ring, so the Flame Gel was now his most powerful weapon. He was aware that Bat Screaming couldn't work well in such a stormy night. The only thing Lucien could blame now was his bad luck.

The night watcher, wearing a pair of black gloves, was also very experienced in fighting with magic apprentices, sorcerers, as well as evil creatures at night. And the gloves he was wearing were also a decent magic item, enchanted with different demon-constraining spells. That was why there were not many night watchers from the church. Besides, every night watcher was by no means being unskilled. Some of them were high level squires, some of them pastors, and some were even knights.

The night watcher firmly caught the first tube of Flame Gel flying towards his face. Being controlled by the maker's spiritual power, the gel was supposed to explode instantly, however, grabbed by his hand in the black glove, the momentum of explosion was suddenly stopped, like a fuse on fire suddenly being extinguished by a bucket of water.

In few seconds, the second tube of Flame Gel followed. Unexpectedly, this time, the tube did not target the night watcher directly, but hit the ground and exploded fiercely before the night watcher could react. The fire of the explosion also set fire to the tube of gel he was grabbing. Immediately, the night watcher's body was covered with raging flame. Since the comburent was gel, even the pouring rain couldn't put out the fire easily.

Lucien had no time to check if his enemy was down. He quickly ran to the entrance.

Before he entered the passage, a great pressure suddenly struck his

mind. He couldn't help shaking. Thanks to the ring he was wearing, at least he could still stand.

Lucien subconsciously looked back and instantly realized what was going on there.

In the bright lightning, the night watcher was still chasing him, with the upper part of his body covered with fire, but it seemed the pain was not bothering him at all. However, his skin had turned into pieces of scarlet scales, protecting him from further burning.

The night watcher was a dark knight with an awakened Blessing, and his Blessing was called "red dragon"!

With the help of Ice Revenger, Lucien did not panic under the pressure from the night watcher. He was calculating the distance between them.

"Twenty meters...ten..."

Then he threw his last tube of Flame Gel at the night watcher, who was only around five meters away from him. The great power of the blast spread fiercely and the wave separated them apart.

While the night watcher took a step back, Lucien was directly thrown into the secret passage. Since there was a slope near the entrance, he kept rolling for quite a few meters in there.

Lucien felt like he was struck by a huge hammer in his stomach and great dizziness took over his mind. A mouthful of blood just burst out.

Lucien had to hurry, knowing that the night watcher would catch up with him in few seconds. However, he was also very confident, since he had a plan.

When the night watcher was about to enter the passage, Lucien activated the magic traps set by Philosopher, which could instantly turn stones into piles of mud.

In only a second, the entrance was blocked by the mix of stones and mud. The night watcher couldn't stop himself in time and ran

directly into them. The last thing he saw was the sorcerer slightly making a bow, mocking him.

"We'll wait and see, you wretch." The night watcher punched the mound of dirt with all the strength.

...

While he was running, Lucien took out a tube of Storm and unplugged it. He needed the potion for fast healing and energy boosting. At the same time, he triggered the magic traps one by one to destroy the tunnel. However, he did not trigger all of the traps to prevent the night watcher from tracking him by following the sound.

With the potion's help, Lucien managed to get out of the passage way faster. Then he removed all the remaining potions and reagents from the pocket of his linen shirt, and burnt down his robe, since his robe had a special herbal scent which was used for hiding Lucien's own smell. Lucien did not want to leave the night watcher any chance to somehow find him.

When he finished doing all of these, Lucien went back to his shack and stored safely all the tubes and reagents. After drying his shirt and pants, he finally collapsed into bed, exhausted at the end of the day.

He did not realize how weak he was until his head hit the pillow. Storm boosted the energy for some time but also drained him completely. He was not very worried about the church, partly because of the bad weather, and more importantly, Lucien was pretty sure that the church would focus on investigating the dead baron, Laurent, since obviously, he was more related to the heresy, Argent Horn.

Soon Lucien fell into sleep.

The rain was still pelting down outside.

...

In the early morning, the rain did not stop.

Lucien was awakened by the different sounds coming from the people's work in the neighborhood.

He felt sick, and his body was very heavy, so Lucien decided to skip his shift this morning. The library was never busy, and Pierre was there all the time.

Later, Iven was sent by his mom to see why Lucien did not show up for breakfast. Lucien made Iven go to the library to ask for a sick leave.

Then Lucien went back to sleep and did not wake up again until noon. He felt much better, but still a bit sick. He had lunch with auntie Alisa's family and left for Victor's place.

There were just three days left before the due time for Victor to submit his last piece of work for the concert.

...

Ten in the morning. Victor's practice room.

Victor was very distressed, feeling desperate with the new melody. Then he heard a knock at the door. It was Lott, Felicia and Herodotus, who were supposed to come in the afternoon.

"Why so early?" Victor was surprised.

"Well... Mr. Victor..." Lott was a bit hesitant, "Mekanzi asked me to tell you that... um... Baron Othello wants you to go to the association as soon as possible. The princess is there today. Her Highness wants to see your work, Mr. Victor."

"...?!" Victor's face suddenly turned pale, but he could not speak a word.

Then with a long sigh, he nodded, "I will be there in half an hour."

...

When Lucien arrived, Victor had already left his place.

"Mr. Athy, where did Mr. Victor go?" Lucien asked.

"Mr. Victor was summoned by the Princess in the morning," answered Athy, looking rather worried, "Her Highness wants to know about Mr. Victor's three pieces of work for the concert today."

"What?!" Lucien felt very regretful for being absent from work today.

"Mr. Victor left around ten forty. If you want to wait, Mr. Victor should be back soon." said Athy.

Now it was twelve thirty-five in the afternoon.

"No, I need to find him now. Thank you, Mr. Athy." Lucien grabbed his umbrella and dashed into the rain toward the association.

Chapter 57: Take Fate by the Throat

Chapter 57: Take Fate by the Throat

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Eleven twenty in the morning, inside the director's office in the Musicians' Association.

"You gotta pick one out now. These are all your good works from the past," said Othello with his eyebrows frowning, "We've been waiting for you for about twenty minutes."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Othello...Can... can I have some more time?" Victor's face had a deadly paleness. His dim eyes had been losing focus for a while, and the musical notes were not making sense at all to him.

Wolf was there as well, sitting right across the desk with Director Othello. A contemptuous smile appeared on his face, "Stop struggling, my friend. Just randomly pick one out, after all, they look pretty much the same to me. Mr. Othello still needs to have lunch with Her Highness later."

"Well..." Othello took out his pocket watch, "The lunch will be at one o'clock. I will give you... another ten minutes. If you still can't make a decision by then, I'm afraid the association might need to have someone else for the concert. Wolf just came back from Ratacia Palace. He should be able to handle this."

Ratacia Palace was the royal concert hall of the Duchy of Orvarit.

Wolf couldn't hold his excitement back, "Victor, I'm sorry to see you struggling. But we, as the musicians in our association, we should regard the interest of our association as the top priority. What do you think?"

Victor did not say anything. After another two minutes, Victor fell back into the chair and pointed at a piece of paper, "That one then."

The three words took away all his strength, but he also felt a bit relaxed. Victor did not want to spend more time and effort pursuing the piece of work which he had been working on for nine years.

“Maybe it’s a good thing.” Victor thought to himself.

“Good,” Othello clapped his hands, “I’m glad you finally made the decision. I have some medicines that may be helpful your to mental state, but they can have some side effects. Anyway, I gotta take a little nap, you guys can leave now.”

After they left the office, Wolf threw a bitter glance at Victor, “Enjoy your last chance playing in the Psalm Hall. Don’t let your wife down in heaven.”

“You...” Victor’s face was a bit distorted with anger.

“Me?” Wolf snorted, “It is you who will disappoint your wife, not me.”

Then he quickly walked downstairs.

Victor felt very sick and his head became dizzy. Lott, Felicia and Herodotus, who were waiting outside, quickly came close to their teacher.

“Are you all right?” Felicia asked worriedly.

“I’m okay. Just need some rest. We’ll start practicing this afternoon.” Victor answered in a weak voice.

.....

Lucien was running in the heavy rain.

He had not fully recovered from his injury. Holding the umbrella, the wind was preventing him from running faster, but he had to. The earlier he could get to the association, the better his chances would be to give Mr. Victor the new piece of work before the princess saw the song list.

Finally, he folded his umbrella under his arm, so he could run

faster.

He just wanted to try his best, he didn't want any regrets.

.....

It only took Lucien six minutes to get to the association from Victor's place, a quarter of the usual time.

Twelve forty-one in the afternoon. Lucien pushed open the gate, soaked wet, with water drops falling down from his face on the floor.

"Lucien!" Elena approached him in a hurry from the counter, "are you all right?"

"I'm fine, Elena. Where's Mr. Victor?" Lucien asked without delay.

"Should be in his own office. I saw Felicia brought him lunch," answered Elena.

"Thanks!" Leaving his umbrella at the gate, Lucien rushed upstairs.

"What is going on there?" Elena wondered.

.....

It was Lott who opened the door, whose face looked pretty gloomy. Lott did not ask Lucien why he was there. He just nodded to Lucien.

Lucien entered Victor's office. He saw Victor was sitting behind his desk, looking very absent-minded. The lunch tray was sitting in front of him, remaining untouched. Lucien saw Rhine was also there.

"Did Mr. Victor hand in the music list for the concert?" asked Lucien.

Lott, Felicia and Herodotus just ignored him. Only Rhine nodded, "Yes, the third one was from Mr. Victor's past work."

Taking a deep breath, Lucien went directly to Victor and said to

him aloud, “Mr. Victor. I wrote a great piece of music! I hope you can give me a chance to listen to it! I’m sure my work can give you some inspiration! Can we change the list afterwards?”

Lucien was too urgent and nervous to select his words. He sounded too direct, almost stupid.

“What the hell are you talking about?” Herodotus was shocked.

Lott walked to Lucien and was about to pull Lucien away from Victor’s desk.

Hiding his face in his palms, Victor answered weakly, “No, we can’t. Director Othello went for lunch with Her Highness ten minutes ago. The list has been sent already. We cannot change it now.”

“Mr. Victor, it’s raining heavily outside! Mr. Othello can still be on the way. We still got a chance!”

“No, we don’t.” Victor murmured like being in a dream. He was not listening.

Being pulled back by Lott, Lucien did not know what to say.

The rest of the students had given up as well.

“Stop, Lucien. We tried, and that’s it.”

“It’s too late. Mr. Othello must be in Ratacia Palace now.”

“Even if he’s not there yet, it is too late to write a new piece of symphony. We’d better just practice what we have now... it can still be a success.”

“.....” Lucien took a few steps back, feeling rather tired. Maybe it was the arrangement of God. Maybe it was God who prevented him from going to work in the association today.

“Anyway, it’s not my concert, not my business.” Lucien thought to himself, and became gloomy as well, like the rest of the people in the office.

However, when Lucien was sitting in the couch, images of Mr. Victor teaching him, taking care of him, and encouraging him for the past several months suddenly hit Lucien's mind. He was reminded of the hard work Mr. Victor, the other students and he had to practice for the concert, and of his effortful running in the pouring rain.

However, looking at these people in the room now, why their efforts couldn't bear fruits?

Lucien did not want to end up like this.

As long as there was still a slight of chance, he couldn't just give up like this and accept the result. As long as they were still there, there had to be something else they could do instead of just complaining. As long as he still had hope and faith, he should keep fighting until the last second.

And this was not the last second yet.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien looked around the office and walked to the piano.

"What are you doing, Lucien?" Lott yelled at him.

Lucien did not answer him. Sitting in front of the piano, Lucien laid both of his hands on the keyboard.

Even Rhine was very surprised. He had no idea what kind of music Lucien, as a new music learner, would present.

However, the first several notes shocked all the people in the office.

The notes were more powerful than ever. Victor raised his head up and turned to look at the piano, looking confused.

The following several bars of the symphony came like an overwhelming storm, fast, intense and fierce. They were like the misfortunes in life, one after another, like huge raging waves in the ocean, like the continuous call to the battlefield, and like countless enemies coming for you.

There were some bars of relief, but they were followed by even more intense and desperate struggles.

However, the fight of the warriors never stopped. No one ever gave up. They kept fighting: Sailors were fighting against the monster-like waves on top of their ships; Soldiers were fighting against their enemies in the battlefield. People died in waves and arrows, in tears and blood, but there were more newcomers following.

The students were shocked. Rhine stood up from the couch.

Lucien kept playing with all his effort.

Why give up? Why?

They still had time. They could catch up with Baron Othello. If it failed, they could still persuade Princess Natasha with the charm of the symphony.

Why give up?

There was still a glimmer of hope. They couldn't just give up!

The first chapter of the symphony grew more and more vehement. Lott and Felicia were shaking with both fear and excitement.

Was it fate that made you give up, or was it yourself?

Was it fate that beat you, or was it the difficulties and obstacles?

The music was asking. The player was asking.

Victor stood up straight. He felt the questioning. The question was addressed to him as well.

Lucien's soul had just been entirely devoted to the music. More thoughts rose in everyone's mind:

"I want to have a peaceful life. I miss my family. But I somehow came to this world and lost everything.

"I saw people here burning a woman to death.

“I went through the sewers.

“I wanted to learn how to read and wanted a better life, but I was beaten by gangsters.

“I wanted to learn magic to protect myself, but being a sorcerer here in Aalto meant I had to risk my life everyday, wandering between light and darkness.

“Did I give up? Do I want to give up?

“No!

“I’ll keep fighting against the so-called fate until the last second of my life!

“I can change the fate. I can change my life!”

Lucien almost had a heart attack. He just let all his emotion out. He wanted to speak out loud:

“Was it fate that made you lose hope, or was it yourself?

“Was it fate that made you lower your head, or was it yourself?

“Is it fate that decides your life, or do you choose your own destiny?

“Me, Lucien, Xiafeng, will never give in to fate.

“I’ll take fate by the throat and beat all the difficulties. I’ll never stop moving forward!”

Victor stood up from his chair, both of his fists clenching tightly.

P.S.

The author: Thank you to my friend, Cheese Cat. It was he who wrote the many questions towards fate in this chapter. He did a better work than I did. Many thanks.

Chapter 58: This Is Fate

It was the first time Lucien, a shy and rather introverted guy, expressed his emotions completely through music. Lucien's persistence and faith were on full display in his playing.

Although Lucien was still a bit unskilled, it did not affect the audiences in the room. Felicia, Lott, Herodotus, Rhine and, of course, Victor, all felt what Lucien wanted to tell them, while they had different understandings.

Felicia, as the only girl present, was holding her hands and twisting her fingers together. Her father did not inherit the family's title, so she almost gave up her music dream and married a random noble. She often doubted herself, asking herself if she could really make her dream come true, if her choice was right.

Hearing Lucien's fully dedicated playing, all her worries came to her mind:

"Can I overcome all the difficulties and become a female musician?"

"Will I be respected because of my own achievements and be able to choose my own love?"

She did not know. The music thrilled her.

Lott and Herodotus also had their own pressure in the family, and their fates were doomed as well — they would not be able to inherit the titles. They could indulge themselves hopelessly in wine and women, or they could do something greater, such as becoming great musicians.

Lott's hands were shaking. The music reminded him of his cousin, Mekanzi.

Herodotus took a few steps back. He had always been weak among his family.

Even Rhine was feeling something. His face, which was always

serene, was now lightened with excitement. He was beating time with the music, feeling the long-lost intense emotion.

Victor was the most excited one among them all. His hands were clenching, his face was slightly distorted, and his whole body was shaking. The music reminded him of so many things in the past: his first failed concert; the encouragement from his wife; his hard work and his successful second performance. He thought of the great grief when his wife passed away, and of all his effort and the hard time Wolf and Othello gave him...

The music notes were like sharp arrows, going directly to his heart.

Victor could tell the sense of insistence and stiffness in it.

"I failed so many times, and I recovered the same amount of times.

"Then, why give up this time?

"Winnie, is that you encouraging me?"

Lucien started feeling tired. He knew it was because of the injury he got, but he couldn't stop playing. As a musician, or just a music student for now, it was his responsibility to finish the whole work.

"I'll let Mr. Victor feel it!" He thought to himself.

His listeners could tell he was exhausted, feeling rather worried. Lucien's playing was like walking on a tightrope, but it did not stop.

Lucien seized the chance to have a bit of rest through the relatively softer and slow rhythm in the end of the first movement. And then the intense part came back again, which was just like a long battle.

The second movement was more soothing, like sunlight driving away dark clouds and the raging waves in the ocean calming down, like the soldiers going back to their campsite for a short rest during the break.

The following third and fourth movements were interwoven with each other, and the tune became pressing and overwhelming again.

The sunlight disappeared and the dark clouds came back again; the seemingly quiet ocean was secretly building even bigger waves; The soldiers picked up their weapons and headed toward the battlefield.

The greatest and final battle was about to come.

The feeling of anxiety, worry and fear gradually accumulated with the development of the music.

Eventually the storm came, throwing a fishing boat up above the raging waves and, in the next second, fiercely dropping it down. Faced with the power of nature, the little boat seemed so helpless and weak; In the battlefield, the final round was about to decide the fate of the soldiers, who were fighting, killing or being killed, but they were still brave.

The fishing boat did not give in to the roaring waves; The soldiers were beating back their enemies.

In the last movement, the music became gentle again, which sounded a bit grieved, as if the soldiers were lamenting their dead comrades in the battlefield, as if the sailors were missing their families in the waves.

There came the darkest hour before the dawn. The listeners felt nervous again.

What was waiting for them in the end? Failure or victory?

Did they overcome the difficulties, or get completely defeated by the difficulties?

Did they finally take fate by the throat?

Or did they give in to fate?

Feeling excited and encouraged, Victor could not stop himself from raising his arm. He wanted to cheer, cheer for the sunlight driving away the dark clouds, for the sailors surviving on the fishing ship, for the soldiers successfully protecting their land!

The rest of the listeners were feeling gratified and excited as well,

as if they got the faith and power for themselves to fight against their own sufferings.

Rhine, who always looked calmer than others, was also smiling.

Lucien moved his hands from the keyboard and wanted to stand up, but found himself so weak. The playing consumed all his strength and energy.

"This is..." murmured Victor, as if he was asking Lucien, or asking himself.

Rhine, Lott, Felicia and Herodotus all looked at Lucien, waiting for his answer.

"This is fate." Lucien tried hard to stand up, and replied him.

Rhine was the first one applauding, then followed by the rest of the students. Victor also joined them, applauding hard.

"This is music, genuine music!" Victor walked close to Lucien and commented.

Lucien smiled, and he said sincerely, "Thank you, Mr. Victor. Since you like my composition, I wonder if I could have the honor of having you revise it for me. We can tell Mr. Othello and Her Highness that we want to alter the list. I'm sure they would agree and you will find it a good piece of work for your concert, Mr. Victor."

Lucien's intention was clear to everyone in the room — he wanted to give his work to Victor and he was willing to give up the honor and fame he deserved. They turned their eyes on Victor, waiting excitedly for his response.

A mixture of emotions spread over Victor's face: ecstasy, relief, excitement, greed, hesitation... An inner struggle was going on in his mind.

"You can put my name on the second position, if you want. I cannot refine it, and your work will be really important, Mr. Victor." Lucien tried to make his teacher feel less guilty for taking his student's

work.

After a while, with a long sigh, a smile appeared on Victor's face and he turned to Lucien.

"No, I won't. It is yours. This is your great work. I already can see your name being registered in the history of music. Apart from God and Winnie, who are supporting me, I still have my moral creed. That's what Winnie appreciated most."

This was Mr. Victor, his music teacher. Lucien could feel the tears in his own eyes.

Chapter 59: Confirmation

"Mr. Victor!" Lott and Herodotus couldn't believe that their teacher refused to accept this precious gift.

Although there were still some problems with Lucien's playing, this was still a great piece of work. If Victor was willing to revise it and recompose it into a symphony, it could possibly become one of the greatest works in the music history, the most brilliant gem on the crown of symphony! Even Felicia felt that what Mr. Victor just said was unbelievable.

Waving his right hand, Victor stopped them and turned to Lucien again.

"Mr. Victor..." Lucien realized that he couldn't persuade his teacher unless he cast a spell on him. He did not know what to say.

"Thank you, Lucien. Thanks God." Holding his hand over his heart, Victor smiled, "It is the most touching music I've ever heard. Thank you. Now I have a new understanding toward music. And... can I have the honor to present this great piece of work on the concert as conductor?"

"Thank you for your comment, Mr. Victor... Wait, conductor?" Lucien was very surprised, "I don't get it... It's your concert."

"Did anyone say that I cannot be a conductor on my own concert?" Victor grinned.

"Idiot..." Felicia commented in a very low voice, "Mr. Victor is going to introduce your work to all the distinguished audiences on his concert." She envied Lucien for having such a great chance of gaining much fame within a short period of time. However, she also admitted that Lucien's talent did deserve this chance.

After hearing Felicia's words, Lucien hurriedly said to Victor, "It is my great pleasure."

"I have a question for you, Lucien." Herodotus asked him from a

distance, with his hands holding tightly, "Does the work really come from you? Yes, or no?"

The rest of the people in the room just now realize that Lucien was only a very inexperienced music student. How did he manage to compose such an exciting, brilliant solo?

Was he really a genius, a hidden gem?

Everyone was looking at Lucien.

Lucien did not know how to explain to them, and he also couldn't. With regard to being righteous and honest, he was no way close to his music teacher.

Now, there was only one thing Lucien could do — stick to his plan.

"Yes," answered Lucien, "The inspiration of the solo came to my mind a long time ago. At that time, I had not received any formal music education before I met Mr. Victor. I had no idea how to write down the pieces of tunes in my head."

Victor looked at Lucien and nodded.

"The inspiration came from my daily life, from poverty, desperation and struggle. Every time I saw other people dressing decently, or having fancy dishes, I wonder why that was not my life. I want to fight for my own future."

"That's why you came to look for Mr. Victor?" asked Rhine.

"That's right. But becoming Mr. Victor's music student was something out of my expectation. I never thought I could be so lucky. After all, I started from learning how to read, not music." Lucien answered, "Although I met lots of difficulties in the past several months, I'm really grateful for all the support and encouragement you gave me, Mr. Victor."

Lucien's real experiences and lies mixed together, which made his words sound more persuasive, "I've been working on this for more than three weeks, and I was trying to make lots of improvement during these days. Lott, Felicia and Herodotus are my witnesses."

Rhine and Victor turned to look at the rest of the students, wondering why they never found the value of Lucien's work.

"Well..." Felicia looked at Lucien with a mixed feeling, "Probably it was our prejudice that made us deaf. Actually, I can recall some of the pieces that I heard while Lucien was composing and practicing. At that time, Lucien was still working on it, and his playing was pretty... awful. So we did not really pay attention to it."

Only Lucien himself knew that his awful playing was made on purpose.

"As Felicia said, our prejudice deafened us." Lott admitted, "Lucien, you are a genius. A great song like this usually takes months or even years of hard work."

Lott was very impressed with Lucien's playing. If his work had not been this good, maybe he would still feel a bit jealousy and angry, but now he saw the huge gap between himself and Lucien. He was well aware of the fact that being mean and hostile towards a possible great musician in the future couldn't bring him any benefit.

"Thank you, Lott. But I am not a genius... It also took me many years..." Lucien tried to explain.

"It's okay to just accept praise from others, Lucien." Victor smiled, "I've never heard anything similar to this before. I believe it's your own work."

Rhine also nodded, "I've been traveling in many countries. It's also my first time hearing it. I believe it is your tough life which gives you the inspiration. Suffering made you a genius. Thank you for bringing this to us, Lucien."

Lucien's face blushed. While other people thought he was just being shy, Lucien knew that he was feeling embarrassed and ashamed.

"I agree with Rhine. Sometimes, without the many boundaries and limits in mind, a new learner might be able to better release his or her feelings and inspiration and create great works, flying free in the world of music." Victor took over the words from Rhine, "I've

been working on my fourth symphony for nine years in memory of my wife, Winnie, but I was having a hard time since I was constrained by my past experience and what I learned from my teachers. I thought a symphony was not suitable for expressing personal emotions, but serious religious theme instead. Thank you, Lucien, You provided me with a new insight of my work."

Then Victor turned around and clapped his hands with satisfaction, "All right, Lucien. Carefully write your work down and I will revamp it for you and turn it into a symphony. I will also talk to Mr. Othello to change the list. Then we need to do a lot of practice for the coming concert."

Chapter 60: Lucien in Sui

Although this was not his original plan, Lucien nodded, "No problem, Mr. Victor."

As long as no one would suspect him of being involved with sorcery or heresy stuff, Lucien did not really care if some people would accuse him of plagiarizing.

In many of the religious books in the library, music was compared to a treasure that God gave to people, the most powerful weapon that people had in fighting against all the difficulties. Thus, music was always regarded as a symbol of light and hope, having nothing to do with darkness and evil.

Besides, from the books he read and the conversations among Lott, Felicia and Herodotus, Lucien noticed the barrier between the church and the nobles. Although the nobles still revered God, the idea that religion and government should work separately started emerging in Aalto, the city where the church dominated almost everything..

Therefore, Lucien was pretty sure that the church would not easily suspect a new musician from the association, which had a close relationship with both the nobles and the church.

Lucien's only concern was that he might need to go through security inspection in the future, when being invited to attend concerts or evening parties. However, Lucien believed that if he could be relatively famous, there would be rare or even no security inspection toward him.

Rhine took up a pile of paper and a quill from the desk and handed them to Lucien.

Lucien grabbed the quill. Before he had the chance to write anything down, he suddenly sneezed. His hair was still wet, and several drops of water fell onto the paper.

Victor just noticed that Lucien's clothes were still wet, "You didn't

bring an umbrella?"

Felicia's face slightly blushed, since she could see Lucien's fit body underneath his wet shirt.

"I did. But the rain was too heavy. I ran all the way," answered Lucien.

Victor was moved, "Let's find you some dry clothes first, Lucien. I got several suits here. Some of them should fit you well."

"I can do part of the work for you first, " urged Rhine. He took away the quill in Lucien's hand, "Go and change your clothes."

At that moment, Rhine's fingers touched Lucien's hand. Lucien surprisedly noticed that Rhine's hand was even colder than his.

...

In the changing room, Lucian dried his hair and put on Victor's white shirt, black coat, pants and leather shoes. By then he looked brand new—black hair, black eyes. In the mirror stood a good-looking young man.

"Look at you, Lucien! You look really good in this suit!" Victor nodded with satisfaction.

Seeing Lucien in this decent suit, Felicia, Lott and Herodotus felt somehow Lucien looked more reliable now.

Judging a person by one's appearance did not only happen on Earth.

"Lucien, come and check if this part Mr. Rhine just wrote down is correct," asked Victor.

When Lucien passed Lott, the latter said to him in a low voice with his standard, polite smile, "Hope we can exchange our ideas more often in the future."

"Sure," replied Lucien politely as well.

Hearing their conversation, Felicia bit her lips with her white teeth a bit and made a tough decision, "Lucien, you have my apology. I am sorry that I was being really mean to you because of my prejudice. I hope we can get along well and help each other in the future."

Her face blushed again.

Only Herodotus was still standing on the other side, his head lowered and his eyes staring at the feet, without saying anything.

"Not a problem, Felicia." Lucien nodded and then walked toward Rhine and Victor.

...

Three o'clock in the afternoon, Felicia saw that Baron Othello's coach stopped in front of the association building.

Victor looked very pleasant, "Great work, everyone! We are such an efficient group, aren't we? The excitement I felt from the music is still lingering upon my mind. Although the rewriting hasn't been finished yet, the rest of the work is pretty detailed. I feel like it's ready to be registered with the association now. And I don't think changing the list will be a problem either."

Lucien knew that his playing just now was still not very skilled, and thus he believed that it was his emotions infused in his playing that moved his listeners.

Following Victor, Lucien came to one of the rooms on the third floor, where an elder gentleman wearing glasses was sitting there.

"You got your work done, Victor?" asked the elder man.

"Joseph, not me, it's my student, Lucien. We want to get his great work registered," Victor answered and then introduced him to Lucien, "This is Mr. Joseph, a very experienced senior music critic. Mr. Joseph knows most of the music works in the world, including those of other nonhuman species like elf's music. At the same time, Mr. Joseph is also a pastor in training. He can tell if you are plagiarizing or it's really your own work. After that, Mr. Joseph will

register you work with a time mark using his pastor power. Any work that comes afterwards which is similar to your work will be regarded as plagiarism."

"How long have you been learning music after Victor?" adjusting his glasses, Joseph asked, "A pretty promising young lad, uh..."

"Well... about... three months." Lucien felt a bit embarrassed.

"You must be kidding me." Joseph's eyes were full of surprise, "Three months?"

"Take a look at it first, please." Victor did not say anything else, but stood there with a smile on his face.

"All right. Let's see what are we looking at here." Joseph felt like it was somewhat a joke.

Soon the smile on Joseph's face was replaced by a serious look. His left hand was beating time when he was humming the music notes, as if he entered into a whole new world, or a fascinating story.

About ten minutes later, with a long sigh, Joseph told Victor with excitement, "What a great work! It reminds me of the years when I was helping the knights fighting against the evil creatures in the Dark Mountain Range. Oh those years, with courage, with faith and with hope..."

"I told you, Joseph." Victor looked proud.

"I... I still cannot believe it. You said it's your student's work... from this young lad?" Joseph's glasses were slanted on his nose.

"Lucien's a young lad who knows about tough life," said Victor. Then he shared some of Lucien's stories with Joseph.

"Well... I guess our association's gonna have another gifted musician then." Joseph was very impressed, but still found it unbelievable. He turned around and said to Lucien, "If you want to further prove yourself, keep working on new music themes. About every two years, you gotta have something new to prove yourself."

"In two years... I would have left Aalto already." Lucien thought to himself, while watching Joseph leaving a time mark with his pastor power on the music sheets.

"Does your work have a name? It's sort of a trend now." Joseph raised his head.

"Fate."

...

After Victor and Lucien finished the registration, they came to the Director's office.

Before entering the office, Victor suddenly smiled.

"I can't wait to see Mr. Othello's reaction to this."

Lucien realized that it had been a couple of months since he last saw this bright smile on Victor's face.

Chapter 61: Questioning

Chapter 61: Questioning

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

There was a knock at the door. Othello raised his head and asked, “Who is that?”

“It’s me, Victor.” Victor’s voice sounded softer now.

“Well, come in then, Victor.” Othello seemed to be in quite a good mood.

Othello had failed to awaken the Blessing. In order to secure his title and fortune, he worked hard to please the Grand Duke and also Princess Natasha, who had already inherited the title of Violet Countess.

It seemed like Othello had a pretty good conversation with Her Highness.

Victor slowly opened the door and entered the room, along with Lucien.

Othello raised his head with a bit of a smile on his face, which was very rarely to see. His black suit was still clean and tidy, without any stain from the heavy rain.

“Victor!” Sitting behind the red desk, Othello talked to Victor with excitement, “Her Highness is looking forward to your new concertos this year and the new music instrument, the piano! Do work hard, Victor. You don’t want to let Her Highness down. Well, and this is...” Othello noticed the finely dressed young man following Victor, but he already forgot that he had actually met Lucien once before.

“I don’t, and I won’t, Mr. Othello,” answered Victor. Then he slightly pushed Lucien forward and introduced him to Othello, “This is my student, Lucien... Lucien Evans. He just wrote his first

piece of music and I am hoping that you can have a look at it. After all, it is known to all that you are such an authority in serious-style music.”

Victor wanted Othello to take a careful look at Lucien’s work without any prejudice, so he did not tell Othello his actual intention directly.

“When did you have this new student? I never heard that before.” Othello was still in his pretty good mood.

When Othello took over the paper file and started reading the sheet music, very soon a serious look appeared on his face.

Othello was very impressed by the beginning part. He could surely say that, in the past couple of decades, he never met a music work like this. After reading the first several bars, Othello could already tell that the following movements were going to be very intense and passionate.

He was clearly aware of the fact that he was old. And he devoted pretty much all his life to religious music. Facing the new music trend in Aalto where many young musicians were trying to express their own feelings through music, he felt quite reluctant and disagreeable since he believed that music should be much more sacred than this.

However, his heart was beating so fiercely when he was reading the sheets of music. After reading the first movement, Othello found the palms of his hands covered in a film of sweat as if he just had a fierce fight.

He did not like this kind of music. He wanted to tear these sheets up to prevent this work from influencing more people. In his mind, authentic music should be way more calm, sacred and serious.

At the same time, he couldn’t deny the value of this young man’s work. He knew that Music Criticism and Symphony News were holding an open attitude towards the new music style, and so was Princess Natasha.

He also did not want to lose his manner in front of the younger generations, as a renowned, experienced noble musician.

When the silence in the office started becoming more and more torturing, Othello finally dropped the sheets and talked to them, “You’re very gifted, Lucien. I’m glad to see that we’re having a promising young musician. However, Lucien, what I want to remind you is that music is a sacred tool for us to praise the Lord. Music is something powerful and serious and we’re supposed to serve the Lord with music. I hope you can put more thoughts and work into the authentic theme of music.”

“I see. Thank you, Director Othello.” Lucien was not really paying attention to his comment. In his mind, picturing a magic apprentice like him praising the Lord was a pretty funny joke.

Victor was already satisfied with Othello’s reaction. At least Othello did not say Lucien’s work was not good. So he decided to take his plan a step forward.

“Sir, I really appreciate Lucien’s work, and I believe you can also see the value of it. Therefore, I want to present Lucien’s work to everyone in my concert.”

“No!” Without even thinking, Othello rejected Victor’s proposal directly.

“Why? Mr. Othello?” Victor took a tough stance.

Although Othello was a bit surprised with Victor’s attitude, soon enough he believed that he understood Victor’s intention. Othello thought that Victor wanted to use his student’s work to increase his own fame and reputation.

“I showed Princess Natasha the list already. If we just change the list casually, Her Highness would think the association is not serious, not reliable. You want to do harm to the reputation of our association for your own benefit, Victor?”

“I’m afraid it’s just the reverse, Mr. Othello.” Victor was very motivated, “If we have a better option, but choose not to present

the best work to the Grand Duke and Princess Natasha, that will definitely harm the reputation of our association. And, Mr. Othello, if you insist..." Victor paused a bit, "if you insist, I will bring the music sheets to Ms. Silvia and ask her to take them to Princess Natasha. I will not give up."

"Victor!" Feeling challenged, Othello stood up from his armchair and stared at Victor angrily.

"Mr. Othello," Victor tried to be a bit more gentle, "Grand Duke and Princess Natasha hold no prejudice toward this kind of music style... Actually, they prefer this style. Sir, please think about what their reaction would be after hearing Lucien's work. I believe it's beneficial for you as well."

Othello clearly knew that without the support from many nobles, this new music trend would not have gained its momentum so quickly.

He was old, and none of his offspring had awakened the Blessing. Othello knew that he must prepare a good future for them to make sure the glory of his family could last. Besides, Victor rarely looked so serious and firm before. Even if he insisted on not allowing them to replace that part of the list, Othello believed that they would find another way out.

Taking many factors into consideration, finally, Othello made his compromise, "All right. Two days before the concert, I'll be watching the rehearsal to make sure everything's going on well."

"Of course, Mr. Othello." Victor slightly shook his right fist excitedly.

"Well... I have to say that you have a very talented student." Othello glanced at Lucien, "I wonder why I never heard his name before..."

"He just became my music student three months ago," answered Victor honestly.

"Three months? What do you mean?" Othello was confused.

“Yes. He first started learning music three months ago.” Victor was kind of expecting Othello’s reaction.

“...” With his mouth half open, Othello was shocked.

After a while, he suddenly stood up again and started yelling at Victor, “Are you kidding?! Are you sure this is his work?!”

“Yes, I’m sure, sir,” Victor nodded and said, “My other students witnessed his gradual improvement and Lucien had a dozen of the manuscripts from his past work. Joseph has proved his work as well.”

Othello sat back down, panting and murmuring weakly, as if he lost all his strength.

Maybe he was mourning for his past glory in his music achievement.

It took him a while to calm down. Othello waved his hand and motioned them to leave.

When Victor and Lucien left the office, Lucien noticed a very familiar person. When he got closer, Lucien recognized that it was Corella, the high-rank knight squire who fought against the red-eyed mice together with him in the sewers.

Corella was still wearing the silver chain mail and his face looked serious. Following Elena, Corella came straight to Lucien.

Before Lucien said anything to him, Corella asked Lucien directly, “Lucien, tell me why you didn’t come to the library this morning.”

Both Victor and Elena were surprised. They never thought that the church would care about some random guy being absent from work for a single morning.

Chapter 62: Trouble Solved

Lucien did not panic. Instead, a series of thoughts came to his mind:

“Did the church find out it was me?”

“...No, it can't be. If the church had found this out, they wouldn't have waited until now. I was involved in the witch's trouble before... I must be on their list of suspects, but not on the top.”

Lucien paused a bit and answered, “I stood up late to complete the last part of my music work, then I felt very sick in the morning, so I asked for a leave. Now I'm feeling much better. That's it.”

“Did you see a doctor? What was wrong with you? Can anyone prove it?” Corella questioned closely.

“No one. I was not sick... I was just really tired,” Lucien answered calmly.

“I can prove for him, sir.” Victor took a step forward, “Every time when I finished composing, I felt the same tiredness.”

“You are...?” Corella glanced at him.

“Mr. Victor is Lucien's music teacher, a musician.” Elena introduced, feeling very surprised that Lucien could somehow compose a piece of music so quickly.

Corella took out his quill and quickly wrote something down on his notebook, “I'm sorry, Mr. Victor. You're Lucien's teacher, so your testimony cannot be fully trusted. I wonder if there is anyone else who can prove for him, or I have to take him back to the church to do a physical examination, just in case.”

Lucien's face did not show any different, but his mind was being busy with finding possible excuses. For a few seconds, he did not say anything.

“I can also prove for this young man. I'm the director of the

association, Baron, Othello.” Hearing the noise, Othello came out of his office, “Lucien just finished his first music work. It was great. He must have devoted all his soul and strength to it.”

Although Othello disliked this young man’s music style, he still admitted Lucien’s talent and effort. Besides, the upcoming concert, and also the association, needed Lucien.

Corella nodded, and wrote a line of words on the notebook again.

“With your words, Mr. Baron, I believe it’s time for me to leave now.”

Actually, Corella himself did not believe that Lucien would be the one under the wanted-notice either. According to the information from the inquisition, they were looking for a sorcerer at least of the third circle. There was no way that an ordinary young man who was a nobody three months before could turn into an evil and powerful sorcerer so quickly.

The cardinals of the inquisition did not put Lucien’s name on the list in the first round either.

Now there was a Baron speaking for Lucien. Pissing off a noble was the last thing he wanted to do before he became a real knight.

Watching Corella leaving, Lucien breathed a sigh of relief.

“Don’t let this bother you two. I’m gonna be very demanding.” Othello nodded to them and went back in his office.

“Oh my god, Lucien, Mr. Othello said you composed your own musical work? Holy...” Elena looked Lucien up and down as if he suddenly became a stranger.

Lucien just nodded with a smile.

“What is going on here? Why are you here, Victor?” It was Wolf, who was walking downstairs.

“Nothing.” Victor shook his head, “I just talked to Mr. Othello about a change in one of the pieces of symphony on the list.”

Victor knew that Wolf would know this sooner or later anyway, so he did not really care.

Wolf's face suddenly darkened, "You got a new piece of work? It's impossible. You were that desperate several hours before...Wait, how could Mr. Othello allow you to change the list? Did he allow you to?"

With a series of questions, Wolf couldn't wait to figure out what was going on there.

"Since we met Mr. Othello's expectation." Victor shrugged his shoulder pleasantly.

"What requirement? Within several hours, you suddenly can meet Mr. Othello's requirement? It's ridiculous...!"

"Well..." Victor blinked, "If the fact pisses you off, that's too bad. By the way, it was not my work, but my student's work. You said a pauper cannot become a musician. Lucien proved that you're wrong."

Pointing at Lucien, who was standing aside, Wolf laughed as if he heard a rather funny joke, "Are you kidding me, Victor? This poor guy just started to learn music three months ago, and now you're saying that he composed a piece of music work that is qualified to be played in the Psalm Hall? If it's true, I'll fulfill my promise... I will never compose again but only do music criticism. But if it's not, you really have to apologize to me for lying."

"If I were you, I wouldn't say this too soon, Wolf." Victor looked very serious, "You can laugh. But you will see on the concert. And then you will see Lucien's work in the library."

Wolf stopped laughing. He took a glance at Lucien and cursed, "You guys are just lunatic. I'll wait and see how you're going to shame yourself. We'll see if you can make my words come true." Before he left, Wolf glared at Lucien and added fiercely.

Watching Wolf leaving, Victor commented, "Arrogance brings prejudice, and prejudice makes a person an idiot. Lucien, take a rest

today and let's get started tomorrow. I'll talk to Mr. Hank and tell him I have to borrow you from him for a while." Victor smiled.

Still feeling tired, Lucien nodded and said his farewell to Mr. Victor.

After grabbing his umbrella, Lucien walked toward the gate together with Elena.

"Why are you looking at me like that, Elena?" Lucien was feeling a bit bothered with Elena's continuous gaze.

"Honestly, I feel like you're not the Lucien I knew before... I always knew that you're talented, but I still can't believe you can compose such a great music work on your own which is appreciated by both Mr. Victor and Mr. Othello."

Lucien slightly waved his hands, "I guess I just got inspired somehow. Maybe my inspiration came from my past experiences."

Elena had no idea of how long it often took a musician to compose a piece of music. She slightly tilted her head and smiled, "Maybe you're really a genius. I always trusted you, Lucien. Don't forget me as a friend when you become a really great musician."

"Of course I won't." Lucien also smiled to her and then left the association.

Watching Lucien leave, Elena stood there for a long time and murmured to herself, "Why he's so talented...?"

.....

Seeing Lucien's nice suit, Joel joked with Lucien a bit over dinner for suddenly turning into a gentleman. Then, Lucien went back to his place and fell asleep directly. He did not wake up until nine in the night.

When Lucien woke up, he felt much better. Although he really wanted to start making Revenant Dust right now, Lucien knew he should not act too hastily, or it would be too risky.

Taking another tube of Storm, Lucien felt more energized. Tonight

he decided to refine his spiritual power using the power of the star. Hopefully he could become a real magic apprentice tonight.

After becoming a junior apprentice, Lucien would be able to cast one more apprentice spell. The recovery speed of Lucien's spiritual power would be increased by a bit, and the ability to withstand Mind Magic would also be improved.

Chapter 63: The Psalm Hall

The starry sky was deep and dark. Again, Lucien was using the power of the star to refine his spiritual power in the meditation world.

Among all the stars, Lucien's Host Star was the brightest one, and also the easiest one for him to control.

The light of the star slowly covered Lucien's soul. Lucien could feel his soul was being nurtured by the star and his spiritual power was improving.

With the help of Storm, Lucien was more energetic than ever, so his progress was rapid. Soon, he felt his soul was filled with power. It seemed like the power was outstretching his soul to reach the stars. For the first time, Lucien realized that his soul could be solidified with power.

Finishing the meditation, the illusion of the starry sky also disappeared. Lucien's mind was more sober and clearer than ever, and he knew he had become a junior apprentice. Although the change in his soul was too tiny to be observed by other people, Lucien's soul could now better withstand Mind Magic, recover from common injuries twice faster than before, and be more alert to the surroundings.

However, the damage to his body from taking Storm and achieving the breakthrough was also obvious. Soon Lucien felt exhausted again. Lucien knew that he had to become a real sorcerer to employ certain spells prolonging his lifespan, or he would probably die in his early sixties.

...

In the following several days, with Lucien's help, Victor successfully refined Fate and rewrote it into a piece of symphony work. After countless times of practicing, and also with the support of Rhine, finally their playing impressed Mr. Othello.

Mr. Othello's applause lasted for a while in the music hall, "It's an awesome piece of work. It's gonna make a stir in the audience. Victor, you really have a good student."

"And you, Lucien," Othello turned around, "you're indeed talented. But remember, becoming famous at such young age can be risky."

Othello slightly shook his head, still feeling disappointed that Lucien would not devote himself to religious music, and then he left.

"I think what Othello said was right, Lucien." Victor seemed to be a bit concerned, "You'll be facing lots of pressure, mostly because of me."

"Please do not worry, Mr. Victor." Lucien comforted him, "I'll be driven by pressure and you know I can handle it pretty well."

Lucien had his own plan: If he could really become famous, he would be able to meet more people from higher status. It would be very beneficial for him to get some precious magic materials such as Moonlight Rose Dust and to earn more Thales to support himself.

"I do believe in you," Victor nodded, "and after the concert, your top priority will be practicing piano, which will definitely be your most important skill as a good musician. I'll try my best to help you stay focused."

Then Victor switched the topic, "If you want, Lucien, you can invite some of your families or friends to the concert."

"Really?! But I heard that one ticket for a Psalm Hall Concert is worth at least a Thale... it's like a whole-year saving for a common family." Lucien felt it was too good to be true.

"Yes, it is, but you've made a great contribution to the concert, so you deserve this." Victor smiled, "The leading musician, the conductor and the chief instrumentalist of a Psalm Hall Concert always have some extra tickets for their families and friends. It's pretty nice, isn't it?"

"It's awesome, Mr. Victor! Thanks a lot!" Lucien was very excited, as

he still remembered uncle Joel's music dream. "Can I bring five people there?" Lucien was thinking about uncle Joel, auntie Alisa, John, Iven and Elena.

"Well... It seems like you relate pretty well to people, Lucien." Victor grinned, "I got this covered. No worries."

...

"Seriously, the Psalm Hall? The one in Aalto?" Alisa could not believe her ears.

"Yes, it is. Will you go there?" Lucien asked the family again with a smile on his face.

"For sure we will, Lucien." Joel was feeling very excited but also confused, "But we are... we are not qualified for going there, are we? I thought only families and friends of the musicians of the concert were invited."

"Come on, dad! Lucien is Mr. Victor's student!" Iven's eyes were gleaming with excitement, "Oh my god... I'm gonna be the envy of all the kids in Aderon!"

"Actually... I helped Mr. Victor with a piece of music work for the concert, so I can invite some of my families and friends." Lucien was a bit shy to admit.

"What?" Joel's fork dropped on the table, "You did?" As a bard, he seriously understood how hard composing was.

Lucien did not explain directly, "I know it's pretty unexpected, uncle Joel, but you will see."

"Now our little Evans got his own secret!" Joel laughed, "All right, we'll wait and see. And before that, we need to rent some decent clothes."

"Sure. We'll tell John as well." Alisa's face was glowing with pride, "I really hope he'll be able to come."

...

Saturday. Eight o'clock in the evening. The Psalm Hall.

Decent coaches with assorted family insignias gathered in front of the hall. Some of them were luxury and some of them were simple but tasteful, but all were pulled by the strong and fine horses called Dragon Scale.

Finely dressed ladies and gentlemen came out of the coaches, took over the music list for tonight and started greeting each other.

"It's such a pleasure to see you here, sir. I wish you had a pleasant trip coming back to Aalto from your manor." A middle-aged man slight bowed to the earl with red hair. The other nobles around him were also being very respectful, since the earl was the head of one of the most dominant families in Aalto, the Hayne family, and was also Felicia's uncle.

"Mr. Victor is my niece's music teacher. For sure I should attend the concert." Earl Hayne smiled, "Besides, there are many different issues going on in Aalto recently. It is my duty to come back and serve the Grand Duke."

Earl Hayne was in his fifties, but as a level three grand knight with the Blessing of Fire, no one could really tell his age based on his appearance. And his son, Harrington, was an outstanding young man, who just became a level six radiant knight in his early thirties and consolidated the family status.

Other nobles around were all nodding with compliments.

Taking over the music list and quickly glancing over it, Hayne noticed the name on the list, "Lucien Evans? Since when did Victor have such a student who can already compose?"

"Although I haven't seen Felicia for a while," a noble lady named Yvette wondered, "she never mentioned a student whose name's Lucien several months ago when we were on vacation."

"Well, let's wait and see then." Lord Hayne started walking to the hallway. He unbuckled his sword and handed it to the guard, letting them check his other personal belongings.

Since the Grand Duke would be here tonight as well, the security check must be strict.

At the same time, the church laid a very large magic-blocking circle covering the whole Psalm Hall, in which almost all the supernatural magic spells, except legendary spells, were completely blocked. The blocking circle has been the church's greatest work in more than a hundred years.

After Earl Hayne entered the hallway, two fine, dark purple coaches came, followed by two lines of guards in red uniforms with golden stripes.

Chapter 64: The Nobles

The shade of purple on the coaches was elegant and gentle. Both coaches were emblazoned with the same coat of arms—a strong armored arm grabbing a silver shield, surrounded by many bright purple violets together with fortress-like patterns.

It was the coat of arms of Orvarit Family, which was called the Family of Violet and also the Shield of Truth.

The two coaches stopped in front of the long red carpet. Nobles who had already entered the hall left their seats and came outside again, following Count Hayne and Count Rafati, to welcome the grand duke, while the musicians were standing in the distance to show their respect.

A tall young lady with bright purple hair got off the coach first in her elegant black evening dress.

Her deep eyes were purple like a dream, her eyebrows were heavier and longer than common ladies, and her nose was high and straight, which matched perfectly with her pink, bloom-like lips. The young lady was gorgeous, and her beauty was unique: her beauty was of vitality, confidence, and heroic spirit. If it was appropriate to compare Ms. Silvia to the lily, who was gentle and elegant, the young lady would be a flourishing violet, lively and passionate.

This young lady was the well-known Violet Countess, Natasha.

And the middle-aged woman that Lucien saw last time was standing by Natasha's side.

As a level five grand knight, Natasha was half-head taller than most men. She quickly walked to the other coach and supported her father, the grand duke, with his hand, to get off.

Orvarit also had purple hair, but much lighter than his daughter's. In his early sixties, the grand duke looked weaker than his peers. When he was younger, Orvarit was not as gifted as Natasha,

therefore, he had to rely on the many secret potions provided by the church and the family in order to awaken his Blessing, and then he became a level two knight. His health had been damaged by the potions in the early years, and the loss of his wife and the eldest son in the following years were also devastating to him.

Even with all the sufferings, Orvarit was still very handsome and attractive. His love towards his late wife was well-known and touching. Many years before, Orvarit fell in love with the only princess of the Kingdom of Holm across Storm Strait when he was staying there as an ambassador. They overcame countless difficulties together and finally got married. In the following years, he gave all his love to his wife and never had any affair. The love story was still being sung by many bards until today.

Supported by Natasha, the grand duke got off the coach and walked towards the red carpet. In his eyes, the sacred Psalm Hall never changed in his memory, and then he started thinking about his whole life. After so many years, Natasha was now his only concern. Indeed, he was very proud of his daughter, but also felt worried, since Natasha had an even stronger personality than many men.

In front of the splendid and magnificent hall, the nobles were saluting the grand duke and the princess, showing their great respect. Orvarit was smiling to the nobles in his grave and dignified bearing, while Natasha was slightly nodding to them. Even Lucien could tell from a distance that although the princess was more than used to all of these noble manners, she was not much interested in them. However, when she later found Silvia standing among the nobles, a big and lovely smile appeared on her face.

Lucien saw Natasha was slightly bowing to Silvia with her right hand on her chest, which was a typical male greeting.

"That's weird... Um... If I'm not mistaken, there is definitely something between Princess Natasha and Ms. Silvia..." Lucien did not want to gossip about it, but still felt a bit sorry for the noble gentlemen present. After all, both Silvia and Natasha were both very attractive and charming.

"I suggest we go inside and get seated first, your majesty." Count

Hayne grinned after saluting the grand duke respectfully, "Let's leave some free space to the young people."

His son Viscount Harrington was talking to Princess Natasha. Harrington was a nice-looking and enthusiastic young man. The concert for tonight was important, and so was the socializing part.

Orvarit only took a quick glance at the young man without too much hope, "We should wait a bit. I believe Cardinal Sard will be here tonight as well."

Hearing the name, many nobles standing close by stopped talking, looking rather surprised.

Sard, the Saint Cardinal, the presider of the church in the Duchy of Orvarit, member of the Episcopal Conference, was known for almost living in seclusion. It was very unexpected that he was attending the concert tonight, which reminded many of the nobles present of the evil ritual previously conducted in Baron Laurent's house.

At this time, a simple coach with the Saint Truth Badge on it stopped in front of the hall. Everyone there could guess it was Sard's coach.

Being helped by a young knight, an old man in his white robe got off the coach. He looked very kind with his totally white hair, just like a loving grandpa. Walking with firm and steady steps, Sard was still in pretty good health. No one could really tell he was actually already over two-hundred years old.

As the old cardinal walked closer, Lucien suddenly felt a warm air gently breezing in his spirit, like his soul was basking in the holy light.

Lucien was very surprised with how powerful the old man's spiritual power was. When his spiritual power got totally blocked by the magic circle laid by the church, the power of the old man's soul was still this influential. He had actually heard Sard's name before, since he was like a legend in this world. In that moment, Lucien finally saw the legend with his own eyes.

It was said that, among all the cardinals in the Saint Truth Church, only about ten of them were Saint Cardinals. According to Lucien's knowledge, taking those people, including the greatest knight commanders, leaders of the inquisition and the monks into consideration, there could be no more than thirty people in this world who had this kind of power like Sard did.

Standing close to Lucien, Rhine narrowed his eyes and wrinkled his brows in concentration as if something was too burning bright for him.

Lucien noticed Rhine's difference and turned to look at him, and his eyes just met Rhine's in that moment. The corner of Rhine's mouth quirked up, putting a casual smile on his face.

It was not the first time that Lucien noticed Rhine was behaving in a weird way. However, Lucien knew that tonight was not a proper time for solving the many questions about Rhine in his mind.

When Cardinal Sard entered the hallway, following the knight manner, Orvarit kissed Sard's right hand respectfully with his knees slightly bent.

"Only truth lives forever," said the grand duke.

It looked like religious authority was still above imperial power in Aalto.

"It's very nice to see you, Your Majesty. I'm glad to see that you're still doing this great, and I'm glad to see our lovely little Natasha is an outstanding knight now." Sard held Orvarit's arm and smiled lovingly.

The grand duke and the cardinal walked into the concert hall hand in hand, with Natasha holding Sard's arm on the other side slightly behind them. They were followed by the nobles walking in the strict rank rules.

"Well... It's time to get prepared in the backstage." Victor smiled, "Lucien, you may want to wait here for your friends and lead them to their seats later."

Lucien nodded and watched Victor and Rhine leaving. Soon Felicia, Lott and Herodotus went into the hall as well, and they would be sitting in the good seats assigned for their families.

Close to the hallway, only Athy and Lucien were still waiting there. Athy was waiting for Victor's relatives and Lucien was waiting for his friends.

A moment later, a plain and fully-loaded coach came. Iven was the first one getting off the coach, followed by his elder brother, John. Iven looked very adorable in his little suit, while John was the same, tall and handsome, whose blonde hair was shining in the light.

Joel and Alisa got off the coach as well. Lucien felt auntie Alisa's dress was pretty tight for her, but her happy smile made her look much younger than usual. Seeing the whole family, Lucien smiled without knowing.

"I thought you wouldn't come." Lucien playfully hit John on his shoulder. The two buddies had not seen each other for a while.

"Come on...!" John also hit Lucien back cheerily, "Your first music work will be played in the Psalm Hall. As your best friend, how can I miss it! By the way, Lucien, I have a good news too." John hugged Lucien and patted him on the back, "I'm a high-rank knight squire now!"

"Wow! That's awesome, John! Good for you!" Lucien grinned.

At this time, Elena also arrived. In her long, light yellow dress, Elena looked like a lovely angel tonight.

"Good for you too, Lucien." Joel took a glance at Elena and nudged Lucien slightly, "She's adorable."

"No... no... we're just friends." Lucien was a bit shy and embarrassed.

Then Lucien led them to the west stand. It was much smaller than the other stands, and could only seat twenty people.

...

The best seats belonged to the distinguished counts and above. After taking his seat, Orvarit slightly leaned forward and asked the cardinal, "Your Eminence, is there any progress in investigating Baron Laurent's case?"

Although the city guards and the intelligence division of the Duchy were also looking into this thing, they could never compete with the great pastors from the inquisition who claimed that they could hear from the God of Truth.

"Well... some." Cardinal Sard was watching the orchestra being prepared on the stage in the front, with a casual smile on his face, "We believe that it has something to do with the duke in the hell. His predecessor was sealed somewhere under the Dark Mountain Range by the ancient magic empire, and he's always been trying to find his predecessor and absorb the power."

"I thought he could have been more careful," Natasha joined their conversation, "and we heard that some sorcerers were involved in it as well."

"That's true." Sard nodded, "God revealed to me that they do have other plans, so we're still gathering more information, especially looking up the ancient documents from Sylvanas Magic Empire. As for the sorcerers, they are just several apprentices with a sorcerer coming from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic. He calls himself 'professor' but he's only a third or fourth circle sorcerer, so we don't have to worry too much about them."

"The headquarter of the Congress of Magic?" the grand duke and the princess asked at the same time with wonder.

Chapter 65: The Concert 1

Chapter 65: The Concert (1)

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Sard seemed to be a bit slow and his eyes were dull, however, his smile was still very gentle and nice. He did not respond to Orvarit and Natasha's question immediately, but followed his own pace to tell the story.

"Several months ago, some of our night watchers successfully targeted a sorcerer from the congress, which is very rare, since most of them who came to Aalto before never stayed here long, not to mention trying to contact the many hiding sorcerers in Aalto. After all, their shared goal was to find the remains of the ancient magic empire in the Dark Mountain Range."

"Well..." Orvarit rubbed his chin thoughtfully, "maybe they were also trying to have more sorcerers and sorceresses in Aalto to know and join their congress in order to grow and expand. As far as I know, that's something that the congress has been working on for more than two hundred years." As a pious believer, the grand duke definitely knew much more about sorcerers than most other people did.

Several nobles sitting behind were paying close attention to what Sard, the grand duke and the princess were talking about. Their faces looked odd, as if there was something on their mind, but all of them decided to remain silent.

"You're right, Your Highness." Sard adjusted his sitting position a bit and continued, "Unfortunately, the night watchers failed to catch him alive, and the sorcerer destroyed himself." Then he took a glance at the tall and strong saint knight standing beside him, letting the knight continue with the rest of the explanation.

Only the church knights can be called saint knights.

The knight's face was fully covered by his protection mask, through

which his dull voice came, “We think the sorcerer who called himself ‘professor’ came here for the same reason, and maybe also to investigate what happened to the last sorcerer.”

Sitting in and leaning against her seat, Natasha looked pretty relaxed. Now she was looking in another direction with a hint of a smile on her face, “It seems like you know a lot about what the sorcerers are doing in Aalto, don’t you?”

She was not being disrespectful, actually, her piousness was acknowledged before by Sard himself, and her teacher was the chief commander of Sword Brothers serving the church. However, except when she was praying in front of the God of Truth, Natasha was always quite casual about almost everything.

“Your Highness, the church has been tracking them for years, and the sorcerers never hid themselves in front of the church perfectly,” the knight lowered his head, “so did the so-called ‘Professor’. Some clues are showing that he follows the contemporary magic system, and that’s why we speculate that Professor is from the congress. It seems like he does not really trust the sorcerers in Aalto. He was being very careful, so although we have two people spying on them, what we know about Professor is still relatively limited. The church decided to be more cautious.”

In the hundreds of years in Aalto, a few sorcerers betraying their belief and turning to work for the church was not something new. Knowing that the sorcerer groups in Aalto were too small to cause them much trouble, instead of destroying them all at once, the church decided to leave them in Aalto in order to play a long game with the Congress of Magic.

“Well... at this point, the mysterious Professor is not a big deal yet, as far as I’m concerned. What makes me feel worried is Argent Horn. I wonder what they are planning in Aalto.” Orvarit cupped his chin in his hand.

“As you wish, your majesty, ” the knight slightly bowed, “We will leave the junior night watchers to trace the case of Professor, and the main force of the church keeps investigating the heresy.”

“Still haven’t found Rosan Aaron?” Twirling her long purple hair with her finger breezily, Natasha asked.

“Not yet. We’re trying our best,” answered the saint knight.

The orchestra was ready.

At this time, a young, purple-haired man entered the balcony. His facial features were a bit similar to that of Natasha, but he was even taller than her. His suit was emblazoned with the coat of arms of the Violet family.

The young man nodded to the nobles in the balcony, smiling. Then he walked toward the first row of seats in the front, saluting the grand duke and the cardinal respectfully in the knight manner.

“My dear cousin, you’re late.” Natasha waved to him.

This young man was the nephew of the grand duke, the chief commander of Aalto’s city guard, Count Verdi.

“Sorry.” He sat down relatively close to Natasha, “Just got some news about Argent Horn, but it turned out to be quite useless... Lucien Evans... the composer of Fate? I never heard this name before.”

Count Verdi, at the same time, was also quite famous in the music field.

“Interesting... I don’t know this name either,” said the grand duke. Hearing Verdi’s comment, both Orvarit and Sard picked up the lists.

“The name of the symphony is ‘Fate’. I bet this Lucien is a pretty brave and creative composer,” Sard responded kindly, “I don’t really have a preference between the two music trends.”

Natasha grinned. “I happen to know something about this Lucien. Yesterday, Baron Othello came to me and asked for the permission to replace the third piece of music on the list with a new symphony. And here it is, from this Victor’s new student, Lucien Evans, who just started to learn music three months ago.”

“Three months ago? That’s insane.” Verdi slightly frowned. Pursuing to be perfect, Verdi was strict with himself and knowing the fact that there was someone even more talented than him was definitely not pleasant.

“Well... Unfortunately, it looks like this guy is pretty talented, even more than you are, although you started to learn music at eight and at nine you were already able to compose. But seriously, don’t worry Verdi. He cannot compete with you. I met the guy the other day, and he looked like a woman! I’m quite curious to see what he can do.”

“Well, some people are just geniuses, which is not fair per se, but it is the intention of God.” Sard commented.

And that reminded Natasha of the story of Sard.

Sard was not a genius, ever. Since the first day he entered Aalto Monastery, he was never able to compete with his smart peers. However, in the end, it was Sard who became the Saint Cardinal, although it took him more than a hundred years.

So he often told the followers, “The faith in God has nothing to do with talent.”

“Well, we’ll wait and see.” Orvarit laughed, “What Natasha said makes me feel curious now, too.”

At this time, Victor walked on the stage with a baton in his hand.

Firstly, he bowed in the direction of the grand duke’s balcony in a solemn manner, then he bowed to the other nobles and musicians. Finally, he turned around and lowered his head, staring at the baton in his hand.

The playing started. Orvarit closed his eyes and smiled, “This is the best one among Victor’s previous work. It’s just beautiful.”

Everyone stopped talking and immersed themselves in the music.

Looking into each other’s eyes, Lucien, Lott and Felicia smiled together behind the backstage. They could tell Victor was in a very

good form. Now they had become real classmates, if not yet friends.

The first symphony lasted for about forty minutes, and it went very well. During the break, some of the audiences expressed their concern that if the first symphony was already the best one among Victor's previous work, the rest of them might not be that good.

But Victor proved that they were wrong. The second piece of symphony was actually even better. It was lively, vivid and full of life, like a cool summer breeze, like an autumn field. At the end of it, Orvarit applauded for a long time with satisfaction.

"Victor never stops making progress. He's awesome," commented the grand duke.

"That's true. It's soothing and beautiful," echoed Verdi, although in his mind, he did not really appreciate this kind of country style symphony.

"Well, it's good, but I think Victor is capable of doing an even better job. I didn't feel his passion in it. There's still space for improvement," said Natasha.

Chapter 66: The Concert 2

Chapter 66: The Concert (2)

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

“My little niece mentioned before that the composition of the second symphony took Victor around two to three years. After knowing that he would be holding a concert in the Psalm Hall, he spent another three months in my younger brother’s manor for improvement. And it indeed reminded me of the boundless ripe wheat field in my hometown.” Smiling, Earl Hayne introduced the story behind the symphony to the grand duke and the princess, feeling slightly grateful to his niece, Felicia, who he never had fondness for in the past.

Since the eldest son of the previous earl died in a fight against the heretics, a contest started between the second and the youngest son of the Hayne family. At that time, because the second son, who is also the current Earl Hayne, had not awakened his Blessing yet, and Felicia’s father was much better-favored by their father, the present earl was in a great anxiety almost all the time.

Then a favorable turn came to the second son, who awoke his Blessing. Furthermore, his son Harrington grew into a very talented young man who wasn’t even inferior to Princess Natasha and Earl Verdi. The second son successfully inherited the title and all the land the Hayne family had.

“I feel the same way.” Orvarit nodded, “This piece of symphony reminded me of the beautiful country life. Maybe you’re right, Natasha, but the concert is already very impressive. Let’s wait and see the following two pieces of work.”

“The last symphony is from his student, though. I can’t believe a new learner who just started learning music three months ago can compose a symphony, and I don’t have much expectation on the young lad’s so-called talent.” Earl Rafati also joined their conversation, a very handsome man seemingly to be in his early

thirties.

“Uncle Hart, I believe you’re the last person who should claim that talent doesn’t mean anything.” Natasha laughed in a very non-noble-lady way, “You awoke the Blessing of Sun when you were ten, and became an 8th circle senior-rank holy magus in your sixties. No one is more promising than you are for finally becoming a legendary holy magus.”

The seemingly young Earl Rafati was actually way elder than he looked like, and he was a very powerful holy magus. Holy magi were people who awoke their Blessing and therefore were granted with magic power. To differentiate the blessed spellcasters from the notorious sorcerers, people called them magi.

There was also a reason for the great power of the Rafati family. While other noble families were relating to each other by intermarriage, the Rafati family insisted on royal incest to make sure the great family power and the purest blood could be inherited by their younger generations. Although many deformed babies were thus born, the family also had many genius members such as the present earl.

Verdi commented seriously, “Uncle Hart’s talent is a gift from God. It’s different.”

“So is musical talent, I heard.” Natasha smiled, “Seriously, I’m quite looking forward to Lucien’s work. No matter if it’s good or bad, it’s gonna be interesting.”

“The fourth piece of symphony should be the most impressive and outstanding one for tonight’s concert. I hope Victor knows what he’s doing.” Rafati slightly shook his head.

“Aside Lucien’s work, I’m also quite excited about the new musical instrument, the piano.” Natasha switched the topic to the following piano concerto.

“I wonder how piano performs compared with harpsichord.” Sitting on the chair, Verdi’s back was straightened in a serious manner.

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Now Victor was more relaxed, knowing that his first two pieces of symphonies were acknowledged by the grand duke. During the break, he was chatting with his students casually, while Rhine appeared to be more silent than usual.

Soon it was time for Victor to go back to the stage. This time Rhine would be his designated conductor to direct the orchestra, and Victor would be the one who played the new musical instrument, the piano.

The sound of the piano was rich and resounding. The first note of the piano concerto instantly caught the whole audience's attention. This was a piece of concerto with religious profundity.

"Impressive," Verdi commented with satisfaction and then closed his eyes to listen carefully.

The high sound quality of piano fitted perfectly well with the solemnity and sacredness of the religious music. Several higher pitches were also handled very well by the piano. The whole Psalm Hall was immersed in the majestic melody.

When the concerto came to its end, Cardinal Sard crossed himself and said, "This is an eulogy for God. The success of this concerto is accomplished by this brand new musical instrument."

"It is awesome. It is the best keyboard instrument ever!" Natasha gasped with admiration, "Compared with piano, harpsichord and clavichord are just like toys for girls!"

"You are a girl as well, Natasha." Orvarit's brows were slightly frowned. The grand duke was about to applause when he heard his daughter's improper comment.

Regarding her father with reverence, Natasha mumbled, "Even so, I'm still the most special girl among them all, no inferior to any man."

Hearing Natasha's murmuring, a meaningful smile appeared on Verdi's face, but he did not say anything.

"I saw you, Verdi!" Natasha straightened her back instantly and stared at him seriously, "You don't think so, do you? Or you want a fight outside?"

"Well... I don't want any trouble." Verdi was still smiling.

"All right, Natasha. Symphony of Fate is coming." The grand duke was trying to change the topic between the two.

Taking a glance at the stage, Natasha squinted at Verdi, "My dear cousin, I believe Lucien's work will be better than all of yours."

"Well, at least I have my music works to be compared. While you, my dear Natasha, you're not good at composing at all. With regard to the talent of composing, I believe I'm way more gifted than you are." Verdi instantly fought back.

"That's really true, isn't it? Well... well... then how strange it is that none of your brilliant work has ever been played in the Psalm Hall, while a random guy who just started learning music three months ago somehow managed to do it?" Natasha put on a rather surprised look.

"I just don't want to..." Verdi gnashed his teeth, feeling sort of speechless, "The guy named Lucien... his work can never be better than mine."

"Aha! I heard what you said!" Natasha laughed, "Let's see what will happen if his work indeed is better than yours."

The grand duke also nodded, feeling very expectant like the other nobles, except Wolf. Wolf's face was almost twisted together. Although the success of Victor's concert would not do any harm to him, in Wolf's mind, it was Victor who took away the success he deserved. So Wolf was going to pay very close attention to every single note of the following symphony, finding the tiniest flaws and putting all of them on Music Criticism.

On the small west balcony, Alisa and Joel's hands were grabbing together tightly. Even John was feeling sort of nervous. All of them were waiting for Symphony of Fate, the last piece of work tonight.

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Standing in front of the orchestra, with the baton in his hand again, Victor's mind churned. He thought back to the failure of his first concert, the great success of the second concert, the many memorable moments between Winnie and him, Winnie's affectionate gaze toward the end of her life, as well as the encouragement from Lucien, Rhine and the rest of his students...

"Winnie, can you hear me?" Victor knew he was ready, and he slowly lifted the baton.

The moment when Victor waved his baton, the beginning of the symphony shocked every audience present. The first few bars of the symphony were like the loud knocks at the door that instantly woke everyone up. Orvarit, Natasha and Verdi opened their eyes at the same time with great surprise.

It was fate that was knocking the door, in an irresistible and fierce manner.

Chapter 67: The Innovator

The rhythm, the tone and the accents falling on the beats gripped everyone's heart. No one could hide from the trials of life. The theme of the symphony was revealed directly, without any foreshadowing or implication.

The horns took place before a second theme was introduced, symbolizing the fierce struggling between fate and will. As the first and the second theme interweaved with each other, the audience experienced great tension and pressure, as if they were personally on the battlefield, although they were only sitting in their seats.

The reactions of the audience varied. Grabbing the armrests, the nobles such as the grand duke and Wolf who had never experienced the cruelty of war in person almost couldn't stand the fear in their hearts, while Knight Venn became very engulfed by the memories of the deep fear and horror that he suffered back in the days when he was fighting against the evil creatures and the heretics.

Sard remained relatively calm, but his eyes were open. This time his eyes were no longer dull, instead, they were bright and sharp. He was associating the music work with his own stories back in the day.

Facing the tension and the great pressure coming from the symphony, younger nobles, such as Verdi and Natasha, showed their rising fighting will. Clenching his right fist, Verdi tightened every muscle in his body to be ready for fronting the blows of fate, showing the spirit of the Violet family as the Shield of Truth. Natasha's body was leaning forward, and her face looked serious but also excited. She wanted a good fight to beat the darkness and the so-called fate.

Victor devoted his heart and soul to the conducting. Compared with Lucien's original work, now the symphony was much better developed and even more thrilling. The combination of viola, cello and woodwind in the second movement gave the audience a short break from the intensity, and soon the third movement again threw

them back to the front, encountering the overwhelming fear of darkness.

Pain, hope, fear, anger and so many other feelings mixed together. When the light finally beat the darkness, when the final movement of great victory was played in the Psalm Hall, many of the audience spontaneously stood up and cheered with thunderous applause.

The grand duke gave a long sigh of relief and raised his hand to wave, as if he was cheering for his brave knights and soldiers returning home in triumph. With great excitement as well as satisfaction, Natasha left her seat and walked close to the handrail, staring at the orchestra as if she was still immersed in her own world of music.

Leaning comfortably against the back of the seat, Silvia and the other musicians spontaneously exchanged a look. They could tell the great surprise and admiration in each other's eyes.

"This young man... He's probably another genius after Gesu and Twal," Silvia murmured to herself.

Joel's family and Elena were cheering and applauding. Although they did not know a lot about music, they felt from the bottom of their hearts that Lucien's work was truly shocking and touching. They had tears in their eyes.

Joel was tingling with excitement, feeling that his dream was accomplished by Lucien. He was more than proud, regarding Lucien's success and honor as his own.

Grabbing his father's shoulder, John's face flushed with gratification, "Dad, Lucien is such a genius, isn't he?!"

"From now on, we can call him 'Mr. Lucien'..." Elena couldn't believe what just happened in the hall. After all, when she first met Lucien several months ago, this young man was carrying bags of garbage.

Wolf's face turned deathly pale, knowing that he could never deny the greatness of this symphony. And now he finally realized why

Victor was willing to have such a pauper as his music student—this poor guy was indeed a genius.

Turning his head restlessly in the tumultuous applause, Wolf relied his last bit of hope on the picky nobles and musicians, wishing that at least a couple of them who always preferred religious music would show their dislike toward the theme of the symphony.

The grand duke joined his daughter, walking toward the front of the balcony to applaud warmly. Being led by the grand duke and the princess, the second round of wild applause with the tumultuous ovation burst out, reverberating through the Psalm Hall.

Without any doubt, the concert was a great success!

After saluting the grand duke and the rest of the audience, Victor trotted back and pulled Lucien out from the backstage. Lucien was prepared, so he calmly followed Victor and came to stand in front of all the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please let me introduce you my student, Lucien Evans. It is Lucien Evans who composed this great piece of symphony," said Victor loudly to all of the balconies.

"What a talent!" The applause from the nobles and the musicians became even louder, showing their great recognition toward this young musician.

"Great music. Great young man." Earl Hayne nodded, "Even a person who knows nothing about music can feel the greatness of his work."

The grand duke commented in a loud voice, "Unparalleled! This young man will grow into a great musician!"

Natasha's mind was full of emotional thoughts, "I was almost speechless. I felt something... very unique. I know it's something that I've been always looking for. Lucien, you're the innovator in the history of music!"

Even Verdi couldn't say anything to refute her at this point.

"You got the soul that never yields. God bless you, young man." Slowly, Sard stood up. He looked at Lucien with a loving smile on his face.

Among all the people, Wolf was the only one who remained slouching in his seat. He felt too weak to even talk.

"Thanks God. This is the gift of God." Lucien saluted the balconies in a gentleman manner, playing his role as a believer with great piety. The great success of the concert would bring him lots of benefits, and one of them would be a higher social status which was very helpful for him to hide his identity. The guards from the church and the sheriffs of the city would not dare to casually arrest or investigate a musician who had received the recognition from the grand duke, the cardinal and the princess.

The cardinal nodded and said to the grand duke, "I'm very glad that I attended the concert tonight. All of the music works tonight are great, and Symphony of Fate is especially the most impressive one. Light conquers darkness. The God of Truth empowers us to fight against difficulties. God bless us all."

"God bless us all." Orvarit lowered his head, putting his palm on his chest.

On the stage, Victor's eyes were wet with tears. How he wished that Winnie could see all of this in heaven.

"How do you feel now, my cousin?" Natasha looked at Verdi and asked pleasantly.

"This piece of work belongs to Lucien, not you, Natasha. And unfortunately, his talent can never be yours as well." Verdi did not answer directly.

"Well... actually the unique theme of his work inspired me a lot. Maybe I should have him to be my music consultant to produce my own music work," said Natasha, tilting her head on one side.

"His success comes from both of his talent and his life experience. And the accumulation of inspiration and good ideas takes time. I

don't think it will work, Natasha." Verdi shrugged his shoulders disapprovingly.

"Still worth a shot." Lifting her brows, Natasha chuckled.

...

When the nobles were leaving the Psalm Hall in order, Victor and Lucien came to the backstage. The orchestra members there were still feeling excited.

"Mr. Victor, Mr. Evans, this is the best concert we've ever attended!"

Chapter 68: The Celebration

Some of the members in the orchestra were also relatively well-known musicians in Aalto. Although when practicing, they already had a pretty high expectation on this concert, especially on Symphony of Fate, the heated response from the noble audiences and the many famous musicians tonight was still a great surprise for them.

Victor was also very excited. He walked toward Rhine, his most intimate comrade in these days, and gave him a big hug, "Thank you so much, Mr. Rhine. You helped me with improving the harpsichord. You supported me all the time during the countless times of rehearsal. Without you, this concert could never be this perfect."

Although Rhine remained quite silent all the evening, he was also very gratified by the success of the concert, "Thank you, Victor. It is my honor to work with you, Mr. Victor, and with Lucien as well." He smiled.

"Mr. Evans!" Thomas, the cellist of the orchestra, hugged Lucien with great enthusiasm, "You'll become the most well-known musician in Aalto, no... on the whole continent!"

Lucien felt a bit awkward when people, especially the orchestra members, called his surname with respect.

Lucien's promising future in music was already widely expected by many of the orchestra members when they first started to rehearse the fourth piece of symphony composed by the young music student of Mr. Victor. Now Lucien's talent was acknowledged by the distinguished nobles in the public. Since the grand duke used the word "unparalleled" to comment on Lucien's music work, and the princess Natasha directly called Lucien "the innovator of the music history", Lucien would definitely become the brightest new star in the field of music very soon.

Everyone in the orchestra knew that as long as Lucien could

compose another piece of symphony of the same high quality within the following two years, his status in the field of music would be completely fastened. If this new trend of music could be popularized in the future, then Lucien would undoubtedly be a high authority. Thus, the orchestra members showed great respect toward Lucien.

Lucien hugged the members one by one. Although the status and the income of a musician was way higher than the common players in an orchestra, Lucien was clearly aware of the fact that the full cooperation of the players was also one of the key factors in determining the outcome of a concert.

“Lucien,” Rhine also gave Lucien a big hug, “I can imagine that, in the near future, more and more pieces of music work will be composed to express human being’s feelings and emotions, instead of merely praising God. I shall call you Mr. Evans as well, since you are absolutely the pioneer of the new trend.”

Although Lucien was not used to that intimate way of celebrating, he also did not mind it. Lucien also hugged Rhine, “Thank you, Mr. Rhine. Unfortunately, I’m still far away from being a pioneer, after all, even playing piano is still challenging for me. And by the way, your violin playing was awesome, Mr. Rhine, but just lacked some passion.”

In Lucien’s eyes, Rhine was sometimes a bit weird. Taking this chance, Lucien was trying to test Rhine.

“You’re right. Maybe I am too calm most of the time.” Rhine released his arms and explained casually. Although Rhine looked pretty lean, Lucien could feel the strength in his arms and his body from the short hug.

Lucien was also supposed to hug his classmates.

“Great work, Lucien.” When hugging Lucien, Felicia’s face flushed. Lucien’s success would bring her lots of benefits as well. She could already picture the scene of she being surrounded by many noble ladies and madams, asking about her talented classmate.

"I'm proud of having you as my classmate, Lucien." Lott offered Lucien a big hug and congratulated him, while Herodotus remained silent when he was hugging Lucien. A while later, Herodotus said to Lucien in a low voice, "You're something."

Victor saved his warmest and biggest hug for Lucien, "I don't know how to express to you my thankfulness, Lucien. You're a gift for me from God. Having you as my student is my great blessing."

"Being your student is my greatest honor, Mr. Victor," said Lucien sincerely.

"Oh, there's one thing..." Victor said to Lucien, "You'll get half of the money tonight. Don't say no, Lucien. With the money, you don't have to live in Aderon anymore. Aderon is not safe."

As far as Lucien knew, ticket for the concerts held in the Psalm Hall was always in high demand. The ticket revenue tonight was three hundred and sixty-five Thales, which was quite a lot. Three hundred and sixty-five Thales was four times the number of Victor's annual income, while the annual income of a noble knight was only about three to five hundred Thale.

According to the regulation of the association, forty percent of the ticket income would be contributed to the church, and thirty percent would be used for the maintenance of the association and the Psalm Hall, as well as paying the whole orchestra. For the remaining thirty percent, about a hundred and ten Thales would be Victor's. In other words, Lucien would earn around thirty to thirty-five Thales.

Thirty to thirty-five Thales equalled several decades of saving for a common person, even a life long effort. With the money, Lucien could move to a decent three-storey house in Purple Lily district, or a relatively old two-storey house with a small garden in Gesu district.

"I can't say no. Thank you very much, Mr. Victor," Lucien answered sincerely, as if he could already see the gold coins shining in front of his eyes. With the money, the dust of Moonlight Rose would not be a dream for Lucien anymore. The only problem was that it was

not easy to find Moonlight Rose dust.

A decent place in a decent area was also what Lucien needed, not only because he wanted a better living condition, but also because of the need to stay away from Aderon where he got involved with the other sorcerers using the identity “Professor”. With a bigger house, Lucien could also build a bigger and safer magic lab underground.

After the celebration, when Felicia was about to invite everyone present to visit her family’s manor tomorrow, the middle-aged lady who always stood by Princess Natasha’s side came to the backstage.

“Lady Camil.” Felicia, Lott and Herodotus heard her story before. They hurriedly saluted her.

Victor, Lucien and the other people present also followed the manner.

“Mr. Evans,” said Lady Camil seriously, “Princess Natasha wants you to be her personal music consultant. About an hour each time, twice a week, in Ratacia Palace. The pay is very decent, two Thale a month.”

Her words instantly turned Lucien into the envy of the people present, even including Victor. Only Rhine’s eyes dimmed for a moment.

“I... I can’t. I’m sorry.” Lucien turned down the offer subconsciously, “I just started learning music three months ago. I’m afraid I’m not qualified for this position, and the success this time might just be a random explosion of my accumulated inspiration.”

Lucien had another reason that he could not speak out. He was afraid that entering the palace would be too risky and his sorcerer identity might be revealed by the princess, who was a level five grand knight herself, or this lady Camil, a radiant knight.

However, the job was also very alluring. From another perspective, serving Princess Natasha could be his perfect disguise as well.

“The princess doesn’t mind. What Her Royal Highness values is the

unique skills you employed in your composition and your understanding toward the new theme of music.” said Camil emotionlessly, “Would you like to accept the job, Mr. Evans?”

The other people in the room were looking at Lucien with expectation. Finally, Lucien nodded his head.

“It would be my pleasure to serve the princess.”

“Thank you, Mr. Evans.” Lady Camil said and then left the backstage.

The pay was truly very good. At least before becoming a 1st circle sorcerer, Lucien wouldn't have to worry with the expenses of buying most of the materials.

Also, the job offered Lucien a high social status.

“We really envy you, Lucien.” Felicia and Lott congratulated him in a very direct way.

Victor also cast his eyes to Lucien with delight and satisfaction.

Chapter 69: Revenant Dus

It was already eleven in the late night when Lucien left the Psalm Hall. Only few lights were still twinkling along the dark and empty street.

Although the daytime in the Month of Harvest was hot, the rain-swept night was very cool and pleasant. Lucien's mind was refreshed by the cool air. He gradually woke up from the ecstasy and started to plan his next step. If everything went well, Lucien would be leaving Aderon very soon, thus he had to clean the underground lab up as soon as possible in case some random tramps would inadvertently enter the shack when there was no one there. Before that, Lucien decided to collect some Revenant Dust tonight when the lab was still fully equipped, and then he could turn his attention to the search of Moonlight Rose tomorrow.

Moonlight Rose was always in high demand and very expensive, since it was the main ingredient of the magic potion which could help a knight squire awaken Blessing, and thus become a real knight. As most squires couldn't afford the Moonlight Rose, some knights would occasionally select their best squires and award them with the dust of the rose.

In addition to that, the market of Moonlight Rose was controlled by the church, the Violet family and a few other big families, which was also one of the strategies how the big families consolidated their status in the Duchy of Orvarit.

Lucien was hoping that probably Felicia could help him, since she was a member of the Hayne family. Felicia was qualified enough to buy some Moonlight Roses within her family.

What Lucien did not know was that, actually, Felicia had already bought the roses three times before, hoping that she could awaken her Blessing. However, her hope finally failed, and since then she started to pay her full attention to learning music.

Lucien currently had no idea how to ask Felicia to do him a favor

without being suspected, which sort of bothered him. If Felicia was not willing to help, then Lucien would have no other choice but to find the black market in Aalto or join another secret sorcerer meeting again, which was the last thing Lucien wanted to do for now.

Two simple wagons were waiting in front of the Psalm Hall in the corner. Uncle Joel and his family as well as Elena were waiting for Lucien beside the wagons.

Seeing Lucien coming in their direction, Joel waved to him with both of his hands. He came toward Lucien and gave Lucien a big warm hug.

“Tonight’s like a dream.” Joel patted Lucien’s back with great joy, “You invited me to the concert and fulfilled my dream. We... and your dad... we are all so proud of you, Lucien.”

Following Joel, John also hugged Lucien. His arms were shaking a bit, and his voice was trembling, “I knew it! I knew you’re something! But your growth is still way beyond my expectation, after all, I thought at least I would become a knight first, haha. Now I gotta work even harder or I’ll fall behind.”

Lucien was inspired—maybe he could use John as an excuse for buying Moonlight Rose. After all, Lucien could now afford to buy Moonlight Rose for his close friend John, who was a knight squire, which definitely made sense.

And it was part of Lucien’s original plan as well. Some of his roses would be a gift for John. Lucien already regarded Joel’s family as his own family and John as his most important friend. The support Joel’s family offered Lucien meant a lot to him.

Now the only problem was how Lucien could persuade Felicia to do him the favor.

“My career in music has just started. There’s still a long way to go.” Lucien smiled, “I’m sure soon you will awake your Blessing and become a real knight.”

“Well... I’m not sure about that yet, Lucien.” John shook his head and released his arms, “The first try to awake the Blessing is the most likely to succeed. I have to be more prepared for that.”

“Congratulations, Mr. Evans!” Elena hugged Lucien. Her big eyes were blinking with joy.

“I’m really flattered, Elena.” Lucien grinned, “We are friends. Please, don’t call me a mister.”

.....

After sending Elena and Joel’s family home, Lucien went back to his shack and lay in bed.

About one o’clock in the early morning, suddenly Lucien got up. Making sure that it was safe around, Lucien quietly entered his magic lab.

It took Lucien an hour to set up some magic traps just in case. Then Lucien took out a tube of blood from a box. At the same time, the magic notebook was open in his spirit library, ready for taking notes at any time. Lucien was hoping that during the process of collecting the revenant dust, he could also gain a better understanding toward the undead creatures.

As soon as Lucien opened the tube inscribed with runes, a strong smell of sulphur came into his nose. As if it was alive, the dark blood kept bubbling like lava.

Murmuring the awkward-sounding and obscure spell, Lucien connected his spirit with another space dimension. Suddenly, he grabbed the tube and spilled the blood forward.

Weirdly, instead of dropping on the ground, the blood suspended in the air and divided into many small drops.

The drops of blood moved quickly, and a magic circle took shape in front of Lucien. The whole space of the lab was instantly filled with the stinky smell of blood.

Blood fog diffused around the lab. Suddenly, a transparent human

figure appeared in the air, of which its face and limbs remained very blurry, but its resentment was so strong that it almost became visible.

Although Lucien still did not understand how different space dimensions were connected by spiritual power, the structure of this apprentice summoning spell itself was not complicated.

A hole, probably its mouth, appeared on the figure's face, and the vicious revenant started screaming and suddenly leaped at Lucien's throat.

Lucien stayed very calm and activated the magic traps around him. The air flows restricted the revenant like ropes and shackled it in the air.

Wraith Shackle, an apprentice level spell.

At the same time, transparent walls appeared in the air and surrounded the revenant inside. The surface of the walls was rippling like water as the sound waves of the scream kept hitting the walls.

Silence Wall, also an apprentice spell.

Although the scream of the revenant was blocked, Lucien still felt a sudden surge of nausea and he heard someone was screaming in his brain.

Quickly Lucien took down the notes in his spirit library.

"The scream of revenant transmits in the form of infrasonic waves. High penetrating power. Causes illusion."

Lucien hoped that he could know the rough vibration frequency of the waves, but with limited lab equipment, Lucien's note couldn't be more detailed and accurate.

Being trapped, the revenant's scream became even crazier, but the scream couldn't bother Lucien anymore. Calmly, Lucien activated the magic circle drawn on the table, from which many golden rays of light immediately scattered.

“Weight, 21.26g. Heavier than expected. Power... remain unknown.” The information was stored.

Then Lucien started to cast different spells on the revenant to see the effects.

“Immune to Mage Hand.”

“Immune to Acid Splash.”

“Immune to Freezing Rays.”

“Small damage caused by Homan’s Oscillation. Might be because of the intervention of waves, or magnetic interference.”

“Minor damaged caused by Marius’ Small Flame. Reason unknown.”

.....

As the experiment went on, the revenant in the air became weaker and weaker, and even more transparent. As if it was afraid of Lucien, the revenant huddled in the corner of the surrounding magic walls.

“Some instinct remained.” Lucien kept recording.

Then Lucien cast the spell Illumination. In the light, the revenant became irritated again, but had nowhere to escape. Its resentment gradually disappeared in the light, but rather slowly.

“Afraid of strong light.” Another line of words appeared on the notebook.

.....

The experiment finally came to the end. Looking at the very weak revenant huddling in the corner, Lucien shook his head.

The summoned revenant was now badly damaged and soon it disappeared completely. Shiny fine dust slowly fell into the magic circle.

“21.25g. The reason of the weight difference remains unknown. Maybe the consciousness of the revenant also has weight.”

Lucien collected the dust of the revenant in a glass tube, and then slowly tidied up the lab, since it should also be the last time he used it before Lucien moved out.

.....

In the morning, Lucien got up early and headed for the Association for two reasons. Firstly, Lucien had become Princess Natasha’s personal music consultant, so he should quit the librarian job and leave it to someone who really needed it. Secondly, Lucien was too excited to wait another day to get his lovely and shiny Thales.

Chapter 70: The Newspapers

When Lucien arrived at the Musicians' Association, only two guards were standing in front of the five-storey building, since most of the believers following the God of Truth usually spent their Sunday morning in the church.

“Good morning, Mr. Evans.” The two guards smiled and greeted Lucien.

“Morning.” Lucien nodded, feeling a bit surprised. Since the concert finished late last night, it was quite surprising that the guards were already showing respect to him in this following Sunday morning. Lucien wondered if maybe it was Elena who told the guards, because she was the only one among all the concert audience who needed to work on Sunday.

Before Lucien entered the building, he heard they were whispering, “Three months ago, Mr. Evans was still carrying garbage for our association. He asked me to do him a favor looking after his trolley. Now look at him, a musician!”

“I know... The last time I saw him he was still a music student. Never expected he was such a genius!”

.....

Elena and Cathy were tidying up the documents behind the counter when Lucien came into the lobby. Both of them greeted Lucien with respect, “Good morning, Mr. Evans.”

Elena winked at Lucien with a sweet smile on her face, and Cathy seemed to be a bit nervous.

“Good morning, Elena. Morning, Cathy.” Lucien asked with curiosity, “What keeps you girls this busy this morning?”

“I’m glad you asked.” Elena answered in excitement, “Lucien, you know what? Your name is on both the latest Music Criticism and Symphony News.”

“What? I thought the next issue for both of them would be released at the end of the month...” Now Lucien was really surprised.

“That’s because your music work is so amazing!” Elena was very proud of Lucien, “Many musicians were deeply touched by your Symphony of Fate, and they worked overnight on their reviews! The association thus decided to issue both of the newspapers in advance this month. Now we have the first copies!”

“Mr. Evans, do you want one?” asked Cathy with respect and curiosity.

“Well... I think I should.” Lucien smiled and poured out twenty Fells from his moneybag. From hard saving, Lucien’s small moneybag finally bulged a bit.

“What did they say, Lucien?” Elena still couldn’t read very well, “Cathy and I are really curious.”

Picking up the latest Music Criticism, Lucien saw a painting of the Psalm Hall and two lines of black bold words,

“Ladies and gentlemen, hats off to the real genius!

— Othello”

Lucien read Mr. Othello’s comment to Elena and Cathy, and the girls’ eyes were filled with reverence.

Turning the page, the first review article titled Music with Soul— Salute to Symphony of Fate:

“As a gift from God, music encourages us to continuously progress toward a better future. However, in the past three hundred years, the main role that the solemn and sacred religious music was playing was never challenged on the stage of music, since other music themes were always hiding behind the scenes and paled in comparison with it.

.....

“Until we met Symphony of Fate, a great piece of music composed

by Lucien Evans and first played on Mr. Victor's concert held in the Psalm Hall last night, I finally realized what is the most indispensable quality of a masterpiece!

"Music is emotion. Music is feelings. Without emotion and feelings, without soul, music can never be deeply moving to people. And the young musician Lucien Evans knows clearly about this: The four movements of Symphony of Fate are connected by a consistent faith all along—hope and persistence can conquer any difficulty. It is the most exciting, encouraging and touching symphony I have ever appreciated.

.....

"Lucien Evans, without any doubt, is a genius. His music talent shocked Aalto, and I believe he will shock the whole continent in the future.

.....

"As soul is to life, so is emotion to music!"

The review article was pretty long, which was more about expressing feelings instead of professional analyzing. The reason this article ranked the first was that it was written by the grand duke, Orvarit.

"Wow... The grand duke really likes your symphony!" exclaimed Elena in surprise and joy.

"I heard Princess Natasha also contributed," said Cathy politely, "Mr. Evans, can you please read her article to us? I know the princess's very good at reviewing music works."

"Sure," answered Lucien, feeling a bit nervous to read the princess's comment.

Natasha's article ranked second place in Music Criticism following her father's work, which titled A Future Trend—The Music Revolution Led by Symphony of Fate:

"A great piece of symphony with magnificent theme and touching

emotion running through.

“The talented musician, Lucien Evans, creatively used the four stress accents to form the first bar as the beginning of Symphony of Fate. Each of the four movements of the symphony was relatively independent but yet connected to each other, highlighting the shared theme: Light would conquer darkness and courage would overcome difficulty. The flexible and skilled utilization of assorted music instruments enriched the symphony’s emotion world and grabbed every audience’s heart last night.

.....

“Call it heroism. Call it persistence. Call it knight spirit. I was deeply touched by the great work. The short bar which is composed of the four stress accents is still striking my heart, as if it synchronizes with my heart beat.

“This young, unfettered music genius, Mr. Evans, revealed a brand new music world in front of us, where new music skills should be explored, and new music themes should be developed.

“Great innovator! Great pioneer!”

.....

Lucien’s face blushed when he was reading the article. Flipping through this Music Criticism, Lucien found that twenty-nine out of the forty articles here were music reviews about Symphony of Fate. Some of them analyzed its theme and some of them skills. The other several articles were about Victor’s piano concerto and the concert in general.

Urged by Elena and Cathy, Lucien briefly glanced through the latest Symphony News and found the same situation—all of the articles were about either Victor or himself.

“Wait...I know this name.” Elena pointed her finger at a name under the first review article on Symphony News, “Christopher... Gionis.”

Christopher Gionis was the president of the Musicians’ Association,

and also the most well-known musician in Aalto who composed more than a hundred great music works. Gionis was respected as a “living music legend”.

Here was Gionis’s comment:

“If you haven’t heard Symphony of Fate, you heard no music in your life.”

“Wow...” Except exclaiming, Elena and Cathy had no idea how to express their admiration to Lucien.

A while later, Elena said to Lucien, “I’m sure few months later, you’ll become one of the most renowned young musicians throughout the continent.”

Without saying anything, Lucien smiled and slightly shook his head. Then he left for Mr. Hank’s office on the third floor.

“Congratulations, Evans.” Hank rose from his seat behind the desk, walked toward Lucien and gave him a hug.

“Thank you, Mr. Hank.” Lucien smiled, “I’m here to quit my librarian’s job.”

“Of course, I expected so.” Hank agreed without hesitation, and then he took out a money bag, “According to Mr. Victor, this is yours.”

The money bag was not big but quite heavy, in which thirty-three gold coins were fascinatingly shining.

Chapter 71: The White Letter

Chapter 71: The White Letter

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Weighing the moneybag, although most of the time Lucien was able to stay quite calm, now he was a bit thrilled.

“Well... I can be quite a moneygrubber sometimes.” Lucien mocked himself a bit in mind. Lucien was aware that there was supposed to be thirty-four gold coins in the bag, but he did not say anything about it, and of course Hank would not mention anything as well. It was an unspoken rule, Lucien knew that.

After leaving Hank’s office, Lucien decided to visit Pierre in the library. After all, they worked together for more than two months. Lucien should at least say goodbye to him as friends.

...

Staring blankly, Pierre was sitting behind the counter, which was blanketed by two outspread newspapers.

“Good morning, Pierre.” Lucien greeted.

As if he was suddenly awakened from a dream, Pierre gazed at the person standing in front of him for a moment in puzzlement, then he slowly answered, “Lucien...” As soon as he called the name, his face darkened, “My fault... I shall call you Mr. Evans now.”

Pierre’s attitude surprised Lucien quite a bit. Lucien thought he knew Pierre’s personality relatively well from working together with him in the past two months. In his mind, Pierre was never a silly or an arrogant jerk.

“Pierre... Why...?” Lucien was confused.

“You guys ruined harpsichord! You guys know nothing about harpsichord!” Pierre’s dark brown eyes were filled with anger.

Lowering his head, Lucien saw the newspapers on the counter, of which the two articles on the current pages were both about Victor's piano concerto.

Lucien remembered the details of the two articles, since the content was already stored in his spirit library just now when he was flipping through the newspapers.

One of the article praised the improvement that Victor made with traditional harpsichord and applauded for the impressive features of the new music instrument—the piano, while the other criticized the playing skills Victor used during his playing, accusing Victor's new fingering with piano a betrayal of classical fingerings and the great tradition of music.

"You may hold different opinions, and I understand, Pierre." Lucien tried to mediate, "But we don't have to argue over this. Just leave the discussion to the musicians and critics."

"Answer me. Do you think you really understand harpsichord?" Pierre directly ignored Lucien's words and questioned him again.

Lucien came up with the book that Pierre once recommended him to read, which was titled *The Art of Harpsichord Performance*. Locating it in his spirit library, Lucien noticed the name of the author was Antonio Sandor.

"Your father is... Antonio Sandor, the author of *The Art of Harpsichord Performance*?" asked Lucien.

Pierre paused a moment. Then he squared his shoulders and answered proudly, "Yes, I am the son of Antonio Sandor, a great harpsichord musician."

"That's why you're so angry?" Lucien stared up at Pierre and asked calmly.

"The great achievement made by my father can never been ruined by you guys!" answered Pierre with excitement.

"What is talking to me now is your prejudice, Pierre, not you." Lucien did not want to argue with him, "Anyway, I just wanted to

say goodbye to you. From today on I won't be working in this library anymore."

"I was wrong about you, Lucien," said Pierre with strong dislike, "I thought you honored music a lot, but in fact you're too arrogant to show your respect. You'll definitely regret in the future if you don't stick to traditional fingerings. Watch out, you genius!"

Lucien opened his mouth and tried to say something, but finally gave up. He directly turned around and left the library.

He thought Pierre and he would become friends. Lucien sighed in his mind. After all, a friend was easier lost than found.

...

Since the concert was a great success, everyone was taking a weekend off for the first time in a long while. Lucien did not find Felicia in their practicing room on the fourth floor.

"Maybe Felicia will be at home in the afternoon," wondered Lucien. He still had no idea how to persuade Felicia to help him.

Thinking about this, Lucien went back to the lobby and asked Elena if she knew about any house for rent in Gesu area. Since most of the musicians and players in Aalto lived in Gesu, the Musicians' Association was also responsible for providing house information and helping its musicians to find ideal places to live close to each other.

Among the many choices, Lucien liked the two-storey house located at no. 116 in Gesu the most. The house was owned by a not very famous musician, who was now far away in the Kingdom of Syracuse serving a viscount as his music consultant. The location of the house was a bit remote in the area, but the rent was also cheaper—one Thale per year.

It was almost ten in the morning. Lucien planned to take a look at the house this afternoon, after visiting Felicia. He wanted to move out as soon as possible. Now Lucien had to go back home and clean some of his stuff.

“Take care, Mr. Evans.” Elena smiled to Lucien, and Cathy slightly bowed to him respectfully.

...

When Lucien came back to Aderon, he saw many of the neighbors were standing in front of auntie Alisa’s place like the last time when John became a knight squire.

Every week, these poor people in Aderon could luckily take a short break on Sunday, since they also went to the church in the morning.

With the improvement of his spiritual power, Lucien’s hearing was also now better than that of common people. He captured some of the words from the neighbors’ conversation and an ominous feeling came over him.

“Hi, Roy. Why there’re so many people gathering here?” asked Lucien.

“Hey, Lucien! It’s been a while since the last time I saw you!” With too much labor work, Roy, in his early thirties, looked much older than his age, and he did not know that Lucien had become the princess’s music consultant yet, “You know what? Every dog has its day! And Joel’s lucky day finally comes! A noble lord invited Joel to be his family musician this morning.”

“What? Where is uncle Joel now?” Lucien was surprised.

“Joel left in a hurry, and he took Alisa and his son together as well. I bet the pay must be very good.” Roy grinned.

“Lucien, you did not know about it?” asked a middle-aged woman named Lizz with curiosity, “People say you’re a famous musician now and it is because of your reputation that Joel has been invited. Is it true, Lucien? Are you famous now?”

“Something’s wrong...” Lucien murmured, and he hurriedly asked them, “Who invited Joel?”

Uncle Joel would never leave in such a hurry without even telling him first. Besides, even if there was a noble who admired Lucien’s

music and thus wanted uncle Joel to be his musician, Lucien should be informed first.

“How dare we ask a lord’s name!” Lizz and some other neighbors shook their heads, “We saw the lord dressed very decently. And he had many squires and servants.”

It was not right... Lucien’s heart was torn with anxiety, but Lucien knew that he must stay calm.

“Auntie Lizz, do you remember what the lord looked like?” Lucien frowned his brows, “Did uncle Joel leave me any message?”

“How dare we look at a lord’s face!” answered Roy, “I only remember the lord was a very decent gentleman. His hair was all white. Black suit... and a walking stick. The squires were so strong... all in their early twenties...”

Although Roy tried his best to recall it, the information he provided was not really helpful.

“Joel did leave a message to you,” said Lizz, “but nothing really special... He asked me to tell you that do not worry about him, and he will ask someone to send you a message when he reaches there.”

“That’s it?” asked Lucien, putting up with the great anxiety in his mind.

“That’s it.” The neighbors knew nothing else.

“Anything wrong, Lucien?” some of the neighbors asked.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien calmed himself a bit.

“Not really,” Lucien answered. He decided to look for clues first and then inform John. There must be a purpose that they took uncle Joel’s family.

Lucien had a spare key for the door. As soon as he entered the place, Lucien’s spiritual power and his soul told him something was indeed not right. Lucien sensed a smell of a stranger in the room, and fortunately, this person did not erase the invisible smell and

trail he or she left.

And there was a white letter on the table.

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 72: Conversation Over the Letter

Chapter 72: Conversation Over the Letter

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

In order to stay calm, Lucien firstly closed the door. Then he reached his left hand into the pocket and grabbed Ice Revenger. Carefully, he controlled the aura of the ring surrounding his own body, since Lucien speculated that the person leaving the letter should not know that he was a sorcerer, instead of a common young man.

The ice coldness from the ring cooled Lucien down. With great caution, Lucien opened the letter using his right hand.

This piece of paper was of no special material. It looked like the letter was printed instead of written, since every single letter on the paper was almost too neat.

“Dear Mr. Evans,

It is our great honor to have Mr. Joel and his family with us. As long as you are willing to do us a little favor, we will take good care of them here. When we get what we want, Mr. Joel and his family will be back safe and sound, and with a decent amount of money. It is a fair trade.”

“Kidnap, I knew it!” Lucien lowered his voice and said to himself, “But what do they want from me?”

Soon after Lucien asked this question, the lines on the paper quickly faded and new black words appeared.

“Mr. Evans, as a music genius, your calmness is also impressive. Please let me repeat what I said just now—it is a fair deal, not a kidnap. Of course, when we talk about being fair, that means if you betray our agreement, you will never be able to see Joel and his family again.”

“It is a supernatural power...” Lucien’s brain was working very fast. In order to have a bigger chance to save uncle Joel and his family, Lucien couldn’t let these people know the fact that he was a sorcerer as well. This was definitely not a trade, and kidnappers’ promises were never trustworthy. Therefore, Lucien made an immediate decision: instead of passively following the kidnappers’ orders, he should have a careful plan and save uncle Joel and his family himself.

At the same time, buying time for planning was also very important. Taking a deep breath, Lucien talked to the piece of paper in a low voice, “What do you want me to do? How can I know they’re still alive?”

Several new lines appeared on the paper again:

“What we are asking is very simple, Mr. Evans. Use your talent and write more great music works to become Princess Natasha’s long-term music consultant. And we believe that this is also your goal, Mr. Evans. Aren’t we being really considerate? As for Joel and his family, as long as you are willing to work with us, we have no reason to kill them.”

Many thoughts quickly passed through Lucien’s mind:

“Were they targeting Princess Natasha, or other secrets in Ratacia Palace? I was just invited to be the princess’ temporary music consultant last night, and today these people kidnapped uncle Joel and his family, which was almost impossible, unless... unless one of them, or even all of them, were among the audience in the concert last night!”

“If I cannot make sure uncle Joel and his family are safe, I will not work with you. You can kill me,” said Lucien decisively.

“Mr. Evans, I just want to clarify one thing. You are one of our plans, but not the only one. Unfortunately, you are not as important as you think.”

Lucien sneered, “Then kill them, and kill me.”

It looked like Lucien's reaction surprised the kidnappers. After the last message disappeared from the paper, nothing new appeared for quite a while.

Lucien was extremely nervous. He was not sure if his answer would put uncle Joel and his family to death, but he had no other choice. Lucien must make sure they were still alive. Now it was time to be patient.

Finally, several lines emerged on the paper again:

"Every once in a while, we will send you a picture of Joel and his family. Starting from tomorrow. However, since you pissed us off, we decided to send you one of Joel's fingers tomorrow as well, to relieve your concern, Mr. Evans."

"Bastards!" Grinding his teeth with hatred, Lucien said to the kidnappers, "Every time, the picture you send must contain completely date and time information, or I won't be able to know if these are fake pictures that you make with your evil power." Lucien was hoping that he might be able to find some clues from the pictures.

"It won't be a problem. Deal?" replied the kidnappers.

"Not until I see the picture tomorrow. " Lucien was pretending that he knew nothing about magic power, "But when I see uncle Joel and his family, I'll keep my word. I swear."

"Your word means nothing." The lines showed up again, "We can see. And if you dare report to the princess, we will send Joel and his family to hell in a second."

Lucien had no idea how the kidnappers could observe him secretly in the palace. He wanted to know more, since purpose often revealed motive, and motive was the key clue to find the enemies hiding behind this.

"What specifically do you want me to do? It can't be just staying close to the princess," asked Lucien.

The writing became a bit hasty, "We're more than happy to know

the schedule of the princess and the grand duke, as well as other interesting things going on in Ratacia Palace. You just need to write what you know down on this piece of paper with a quill.”

The kidnappers were very crafty, and their real motives remained blurry.

“I see,” answered Lucien slowly.

“If you have any need, you’re welcome to ask us for help, Mr. Lucien. Hope we have a nice cooperation.” The new lines were more illegible compared with the previous ones.

All the lines disappeared, and the letter returned to a piece of white paper.

Lucien removed his left hand from Ice Revenger and instantly felt the supernatural power disappear. Staring at the closed window with an expressionless face, Lucien slowly folded the piece of paper back and put it into the envelope. His heart was full of anger and hatred, and he already figured out who did this.

They were the heretics of Argent Horn.

With the help of Ice Revenger, when Lucien was opening the envelope, he sensed a tiny amount of supernatural power remained on the paper. When he was communicating with the kidnappers, Lucien was also doing his analysis of the power by comparing it with the different kinds of power he met before. Every time the letters appeared and disappeared, Lucien got one step closer to his conclusion: Firstly, the power was not magic; Secondly, the supernatural power was very similar to the power that Lucien felt from Cardinal Sard and pastor Benjamin. Although Lucien could not tell the specific differences between the magic power he followed and the powers empowered by either God or demons, he was quite sure that what he was facing now was the latter.

If Lucien’s observation and speculation were correct, Argent Horn was the most likely, or say, the only possible answer for now.

“It looks like there’s a bond between me and these bastards...”

Lucien needed to control himself hard from tearing the paper to shreds with anger.

“The piece of white paper should be a magic item of apprentice level. Someone’s eavesdropping on me right now and the person needs to stay relatively close to me... probably, within a radius of a hundred meters... Still hard to find, though.” Lucien thought to himself, “According to the time it took the kidnapper to reply, the person should be a bit above senior apprentice level.”

Lucien was a bit encouraged, carrying the hope that he could save Joel and his family. He did not really trust the church, the princess, and the grand duke, since they would only focus on exterminating the heresy, instead of making sure the hostages were safe first. At the same time, Lucien never even considered for a second obeying the heretics’ order. He would never surrender to those untrustworthy bastards.

He knew what he was doing here.

Walking out of the door, Lucien headed for the noble district.

Chapter 73: Unexpected Information

Chapter 73: Unexpected Information

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Footsteps hasty, eyebrows frowning, Lucien was acting like an ordinary person who encountered kidnapping for the first time. Meanwhile, he was also much calmer than most of the ordinary people. He knew where to go and what to do right now.

Lucien tried to stay focused when he was walking on the street, separating his spiritual power from his body and making the power float in the air, as if his soul was overlooking his body. Lucien wanted to test if there was anyone among the crowd who was following him.

However, since Sunday noon was often the busiest time in Aderon, and the kidnapper was currently more powerful than Lucien, he did not find anything special.

The gate between Aderon district and the noble district was open, however, this area was not busy at all. Only a few poor people from Aderon who were doing the most menial work in the nobles' places were going through the gate after going to the church.

Two guards were standing there, lazily leaning against the wall and looking at the poor people walking in hurry with some feeling of superiority. The guards were hopeless for becoming real knights, and since they joined the city guard and got spoiled by the prosperity of Aalto, they soon forgot the many fighting skills that they learned from their previous training.

All of a sudden, the guards noticed a young good-looking man in decent white shirt and black suite coming toward the gate, which was quite unusual. They stopped Lucien instantly and asked,

“Sir, what is your purpose entering the noble district?”

Lucien's heart was being burned by the great anxiety, thus his

attitude was not very nice.

“Are you questioning me here? Since when do I have to be questioned first to pass through the gate?”

Rander, one of the guards, immediately regretted as soon as he stopped the young man in front of him. Without knowing a visitor's background, stopping the person randomly may put them in trouble since they never knew whether the person was actually a noble or someone important.

Lucien's tough attitude made him even more nervous. He hurriedly apologized, “Sorry, sir. We're having a hard time searching for the demon followers and tend to overreact sometimes. I'm sorry, sir.”

Lucien slightly nodded and was about to pass through the gate when he changed his mind. He turned to the guard and asked in a low voice, “May I ask where does the chief clerk of the town hall, Mr. Urbain Hayne, live? I'm his daughter Felicia Hayne's classmate.”

Happening to know where the chief clerk lived, Rander answered, “Mr. Hayne lives at no.158 Noble Street, one of the Hayne family's houses.”

“Thanks.” Lucien replied shortly and walked through the gate.

In the noble district, where many knights and even grand knights lived, Lucien expected that the kidnapper from Argent Horn would not be able to follow too close. Therefore, by asking the guard, Lucien purposefully let the kidnapper know where he was going. If the kidnapper still could not follow up, that meant he or she was not at all capable of tailing Lucien for a long time, and then Lucien could find a proper chance to get rid of the kidnapper and conduct his own plan.

Staring at Lucien from behind, Rander complained to the other guard, “Although the guy dressed like a gentleman, he even didn't know where the chief clerk lives. Probably there's something between this effeminate guy and lady Hayne... who knows...”

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It was the second time Lucien came to the noble district. Compared with the stormy night when Baron Laurent died, the noble district looked much more appealing today. Green trees lined up on both sides and flowers flourished. Among the trees stood the big and luxury houses. Many of them were of different architectural styles—some were similar to baroque style, others of religious style, while some were emulating the gloomy and extravagant architectural design of the ancient magic empire. And often there was only one house on each fork of the road.

Lucien appeared to be rather weird on the street since he dressed decent but was walking on foot. A few noble ladies and gentlemen passing by in their coaches threw Lucien a surprised glance, certain that Lucien was by no chance a noble.

All of a sudden, a coach stopped beside Lucien. The window on the coach opened and inside of the coach sat an elegant young lady of full figure and fine presence, with a black crape bonnet veiling half of her face. She laughed and asked, “Is this Mr. Evans? The concert last night was awesome.”

Despite being anxious, Lucien maintained his gentleman manner, “Thank you, my lady. Can I have the honor of knowing your name?”

“I’m Yvette Hill, Felicia’s friend.” Yvette glanced at Lucien with great interest, “Are you looking for Felicia, Mr. Evans?”

Excluding the family of Violet, the Hill family, together with the Hayne and the Rafati family, were the three most influential noble families in the Duchy of Orvarit. Each of the three families had a whole shire as their domain.

Lucien just recognized the coat of arms on the coach consisting of spears and grizzly. He answered with respect, “Yes, my lady.”

“Well... then you might have to wait a bit, Mr. Evans.” Yvette’s smile was very charming, “Since the concert was a great success, Felicia is still praying in Golden Cathedral to thank the blessing of

God. And, by the way, just call me Yvette. I'm a fan of your music, Mr. Evans."

"Then miss Yvette, you just call me Lucien." Lucien worked at a smile, "I can just wait for Felicia to come back outside of her house."

"If you don't mind, Lucien, I can give you a lift." Yvette took off her crape bonnet and her beautiful face was completely revealed, "You're two years younger than me. What a genius you are."

Her maid opened the coach door and invited Lucien to come in. It seemed like Yvette did not worry at all that this might damage her reputation as a noble lady.

Lucien did not refuse. As a member of the Hill family, Yvette was also able to get Moonlight Rose. If Felicia rejected Lucien's request, becoming a friend with lady Yvette would be Lucien's second possible chance.

Entering the carriage, a sweet, alluring scent snuck into Lucien's nose.

"Very nice... A genius is indeed different," said Yvette with satisfaction, "Most of the men that I invited before were just hypocritical. They wanted to come in, but they didn't dare."

Leaning forward, her plump and fair chest was half revealed in front of Lucien.

However, Lucien was really not in the mood. Slightly turning his eyes away, Lucien forced a smile, "Stick to your own path, and let the irrelevant people say whatever they want to say. It doesn't matter."

"Interesting. I like it." Yvette's eyes lit up for a moment, "You're more interesting than I thought, Lucien."

The coach went slowly. Inside of the coach, Yvette was casually talking to Lucien about music, and purposefully made tiny physical contact with Lucien. Unfortunately Lucien's mind was completely occupied by the kidnapping, and he completely ignored this noble

lady's elaborate seducing. Yvette was quite disappointed.

Half an hour later, Yvette's coach finally stopped in front of a luxurious three-storey house. At the same time, Felicia's carriage arrived as well.

"Lucien? Why you're with Yvette?" Felicia looked at her classmate quizzically.

Getting off the coach, Lucien answered, "I was looking for you when I met lady Yvette. She kindly offered me a ride."

"What did you do, Yvette?" Felicia looked a bit angry.

"What can I do?" Yvette grinned in her coach, "No worries, Felicia. I prefer mysterious sorcerers compared with musicians."

"What do you mean? Since when you changed your preference?" asked Felicia with surprise.

"Since last night," replied Yvette full of yearning, "Last night during the concert, I heard Cardinal Sard and the grand duke were talking about a mysterious sorcerer called 'Professor'. I'm very curious... after all I haven't tried any sorcerer yet. I wonder... these gloomy guys who always hide their faces in their hoods... what do they look like when they are naked in bed, and how they react when they see a beautiful woman..."

As the youngest daughter of Earl Hill, she was qualified to sit in the same balcony with the grand duke.

"Yvette..." Felicia was speechless. Although Yvette and Felicia were pretty good friends, Felicia never understood Yvette's openness with men. As a very maverick noble lady in Aalto, Yvette was even much more open than the noble madams and ladies in the palace of Tria.

Lucien was very surprised, not because of Yvette's openness, but the fact that the church and the grand duke had already found out his pseudonym, "Professor".

Was anyone caught that night? Or were there moles among the sorcerers... Lucien wondered, with his back being covered by a thin

layer of cold sweat. Lucien was just about to buy some magic potions that increased his power from the other sorcerers to save Joel and his family. Luckily, he heard the conversation between the noble ladies. What a valuable piece of information!

“I have to go now. Bye.” Yvette was happy to see the surprised look on both Felicia and Lucien’s faces. Turning around, Yvette’s coach left.

Noticing that Lucien was still staring at the coach in a trance, Felicia sneered at him,

“You want to be part of Yvette’s collection, don’t you?”

And then she paused a bit and asked, “Why you came to me today, Lucien?”

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 74: Felicia's Request

Chapter 74: Felicia's Request

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Looking around, Lucien made sure there was no one near them. Then Felicia and Lucien walked through the garden in front of the house.

"Can I ask you to do me a favor, Felicia?" Lucien looked serious.

"A favor?" Felicia slightly frowned her beautiful eyebrows, "My father's just a chief clerk, and my uncle never liked us. I'm not sure if I can help."

If Lucien asked before the concert, Felicia would directly reject him. However, now that Felicia had seen Lucien's talent, she knew that having a good relationship with Lucien would definitely benefit her a lot. What the noble life taught Felicia in the past years was not only how to enjoy the luxury lifestyle, but also how to weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

Lucien spoke to Felicia with a bit hesitation, "I have a good friend, John. He's currently Lord Venn's high level knight squire. John's family offered me lots of help when I was sick and poor. Since last night the concert was a great success, I believe it's time for me to pay them back. And the best way is to help John become a real knight."

"I think I know what you want now." Felicia guessed, "You want to buy Moonlight Rose from me to help your friend awaken his Blessing?"

"Yes, I believe it's the best I can do." Lucien was sort of relieved that Felicia did not doubt his motive.

"You're a good person, Lucien." Felicia appreciated his character, "It's pleasant to have a friend like you. But Lucien, Moonlight Rose is expensive, and it's never a guarantee for awakening Blessing."

Many nobles tried and failed...”

Felicia’s heart slightly sank when she was speaking, since she was one of the nobles she just mentioned.

“I did some research about it.” Lucien was trying to make his request as reasonable as possible, “John’s a promising young man. Lord Venn might soon award John with some of the dust of the rose, but it probably won’t be enough. The more dust of Moonlight Rose John has, the better the chance he would have to successfully awaken his Blessing. I want to help John with it.”

A beautiful smile appeared on Felicia’s face. She slightly nodded, “Well... you’re really something, Lucien. How much do you want, then?”

“Fifty grams.” Lucien needed to make sure that he would have enough of the ingredients to make the potion named Crying Soul, including the possible failures during the process.

“What? That’s too much!” Felicia was very surprised, “Based on my status in the family, I can only buy up to ten grams.”

Although Felicia’s father and the current Earl Hayne were brothers, they had a poor relationship with each other due to the many years of contending for power. Thanks to the generous legacy left by the previous Earl, Felicia’s grandfather, Felicia’s family could still maintain a decent noble lifestyle.

“Felicia, can you figure out a way to get more? As much as possible...” Lucien came up with another reason, “I heard people say that the dust of Moonlight Rose can also improve one’s coordination. I might need some as well to improve my piano playing skill. I’ll never forget your help, Felicia.”

Crossing her hands together, many thoughts flashed through Felicia’s mind. As friends, she could help Lucien with ten grams of the rose. However, now Lucien was asking way more than that, then Felicia needed to see how she could benefit from it.

Lucien did not urge Felicia, leaving her some time to consider. A

while later Felicia said to Lucien seriously, “Ten grams from my father. Yvette and Melissa, ten grams each. Lucien, forty grams is my limit, and I won’t do this for free.”

Although Felicia did not have any title, and her family status was not very superordinate, as a noble, Felicia’s social circle was still of great value.

“Forty grams... Well, let’s do forty grams. Thank you so much, Felicia, and what you want me to do?” asked Lucien.

“My request is simple and easy.” Felicia smiled, “Firstly, you gotta pay me in advance. Secondly, my birthday party will be held next month, and I want you to be there on my birthday and play several songs in front of the guests. And thirdly, I want you to teach me how to play piano, how to compose, and offer me your help as much as possible in music field, such as introducing my future music work to the princess.”

Felicia heard that Princess Natasha appreciated piano very much. Among her three requests, without doubt, the most important one was the last. Every time a new piece of musical instrument was invented, many musicians were thus inspired and became famous with their new music works. Felicia did not want to miss this precious chance.

Since she held little hope in becoming Mr. Victor’s honor student, learning from her talented classmate who was now the personal music consultant of the princess was not bad.

“You have my word, Felicia.” Lucien agreed, and he said silently in his mind, “...as long as I’m still in Aalto at that time. Even if I were to leave, I’d do something else to compensate for it.”

Felicia trusted Lucien’s good character. She nodded and said, “Forty Thales. Give me two days.”

“Two days is fine. But Felicia...” said Lucien with embarrassment, “I only have thirty Thales for now. The rest of it, ten Thales... Can I pay you back in five months? You know I’m currently working for the princess. The salary should not be a problem.”

“Well... all right,” agreed Felicia. “Pay me back as soon as possible. The ten Thales will come from my savings. Don’t let me go broke, Lucien.”

“Thank you so much, Felicia!” Lucien was excited, although his belying moneybag instantly shriveled.

After all, buying Moonlight Rose was Lucien’s top priority for now. Lucien was very grateful that he had the chance to enter the music circle in Aalto and thus got to know the nobles like Felicia, or he would have no choice but to go to the black market or join another sorcerer group to find the rose, which would be way more risky.

Leaving Felicia’s place, Lucien bought some good-quality bread and beef on his way home.

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By cooking and eating, Lucien calmed himself down. Closing the door and the windows, he took out the envelope from the crate and opened the letter again.

Within his expectations, there were a few lines on the paper, “Why did you go to the noble district and met your classmate? You stayed in the garden with her for more than twenty minutes, and we saw it. Don’t act like an idiot, Mr. Evans.”

Lucien sneered in his mind. It looked like the bastards used other ways to trail Lucien instead of marking him with their fiend power, in case Lucien would be detected by the many divine power circles placed in Ratacia Palace.

Since Lucien also understood about supernatural power, he was quite sure about it.

Lucien answered honestly, “I went to buy Moonlight Rose from Felicia to help John. You kidnapped Joel and his families, and I’m not sure if they can come back safe and sound. John is the only one in the family I can take care of for now.”

A few sentences appeared, “Taking care of John? We know what you want to do. Please stop daydreaming, Mr. Evans. It’s not easy at

all to awaken the Blessing, or there would be way more knights in the world. Since your stupidity and recklessness is very impressive, we decided to give you a bonus—a finger from Alisa.”

“God damn it!” Lucien swore in his mind, which was filled with hatred.

At the same time, Lucien took out a quill and started transcribing the sentences on the back of a piece of used paper. The great hatred was burning Lucien’s guts like fire, while his brain was as cool as a piece of ice. The strange mixture of fire and ice shaped Lucien’s character.

Lucien was transcribing the sentences to figure out if the kidnappers could see what he was doing now!

He would not start making Crying Soul until he knew more about these bastards.

Chapter 75: The Mosquito

Chapter 75: The Mosquito

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

When Lucien was transcribing the sentences, a scarlet line of words suddenly emerged on the white paper, as if blood was leaking out.

“Stop what you’re doing now! Or you’ll receive a body!”

The quill dropped on the ground. Lucien pretended that he was scared, “I was just... just trying to make some notes... in case I might forget some of your requests...”

“We don’t see any necessity to take this ridiculous notes. This is your last chance, Mr. Evans. Keep taking similar actions if you’re looking forward to a dead body. Let me remind you... Thanks to what you did, one more finger for you tomorrow.” replied the kidnappers.

Of course, the fact that uncle Joel and auntie Alisa were hurt was very painful to Lucien, however, he couldn’t let the feeling of guiltiness and pain affect his judgement too much. From the moment Lucien decided not to cooperate with the kidnappers, he knew that there must be a cost. What he could do was minimise the cost as much as possible.

“I’ll behave.” Lucien tore the used paper up.

“The kidnappers can see me. That’s for sure.” Lucien silently thought in his mind, “But how? Are they observing me through the letter, or with something else? I shall figure this out next, but not in a hurry, in case they will find out what I’m trying to do.”

Putting the letter back in the crate, Lucien lay in his bed, pretending he was totally out, while trying to cover the whole shack with his spiritual power to sense if there was any supernatural power around. At this time, using spells to help with the detection might put him in big trouble, since Lucien knew that his current

biggest advantage was that the heretics did not know he was actually a sorcerer.

Except for the letter in the crate, nothing supernatural was detected in the shack.

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In the afternoon, Lucien came to Gesu district and found the house at no. 116, that Elena introduced to him.

The location was even better than Lucien thought. Located beside the city wall, the house was far away from the gate, and thus the place was very quiet and isolated. Only a few two-storey small houses were sitting a distance away from no. 116, almost fully shaded by the many tall trees named Rava.

Earlier, Lucien had made an appointment with the agent. Knocking at the gate, he waited in front of the iron fence.

Soon a middle-aged man walked out from no. 116 and opened the gate. His beard was well-trimmed and his brown suit was neatly ironed. The agent looked pretty shrewd.

“You must be Mr. Evans,” The man greeted Lucien, “I’m Brian. It’s very nice to meet you. Everyone in the Association is talking about you.”

Lucien nodded and extended his right hand to shook hands with Brian. Brian took a step forward and held Lucien’s right hand with his both hands, to show his respect. Facing such a promising young musician whose talent was already recognized by the grand duke and the princess, Brian, of course, would show his greatest esteem for Lucien.

“Please let me lead you into the house and take a look around, Mr. Evans.” Brian slightly bowed.

Under Brian’s guidance, Lucien walked throughout the house and found that although the size of the garden and the lawn were not big, inside the house the decoration style was very elegant and unique. Compared with the present luxurious “Tria Palace” trend in

decoration, this house looked neat in a very tasteful way.

The only disadvantage of the house was that the tall trees and the city wall shaded most of the sunlight, and thus the place looked a bit gloomy especially with the vines covering the outside of the house.

“It’s a very, very quiet place, with no bright sunlight disturbing your music creation work.” Brian tried to persuade Lucien to see this as an advantage instead of something not ideal, although poor lighting was the only reason that they were having a hard time renting the house out.

Lucien did not mind the poor lighting at all, since this could provide him with a safer environment to conduct his magic experiments. So he nodded, “Do you have the lease agreement with you?”

Brian was very happy, trying hard to prevent his crafty smile from showing on his face. He took out a pile of papers and handed them to Lucien.

Taking a rough look at the lease agreement, Lucien signed his name on it and took out a Thale from his moneybag. Luckily, as a rather promising musician, Lucien did not have to pay any security deposit.

Brian quickly wrote the receipt and took care of the agreement, and then handed a copy back to Lucien.

“This is a house with a decent size, Mr. Evans. You’ll need at least... a steward, four servants, a cook, a gardener, a coach and a coachman. I can find these people for you from other associations,” offered Brian fawningly.

“I’m pretty busy recently, and I won’t be moving in very soon. You can bring them here next Monday and let me have a look.” Lucien agreed but postponed it for a week, since he did not want anything to disturb him from saving Joel and his family. This week would be the key time for him to save the hostages.

Brian handed the keys to Lucien and left briskly. Lucien was by himself standing in the living room, staring at the stairs to the second floor.

There were four bedrooms, a study, a music practicing room and a decent-sized patio on the second floor. On the ground floor, there was a living room, a dining room, four servant rooms, a storage room, and there was also a basement. The kitchen was isolated, connected with the house by a door on the left. And the sewers were well-built, linked to the whole sewer system of Aalto.

If the kidnapping had not happened, Lucien would feel very excited and proud that he finally moved into such a nice place. However, now the only thing Lucien felt was anger and anxiety.

After a while, Lucien went back to his shack. He brought some clothes with him and took them back to the new house.

He left his clothes in the master bedroom and walked into the practicing room, which was built with a special kind of stone to prevent the sound from disturbing other people, and at the same time, to create a nice reverberation effect.

He closed the door and the curtain. The whole room was very quiet. Except for his own footsteps, Lucien could hear nothing else.

Sitting in the rocking chair, Lucien rocked himself back and forth in the darkness. Spreading his spiritual power within the room, he was carefully sensing the surroundings.

He wondered how the heretics would observe him without the letter.

For quite a while, Lucien found nothing. His awareness gradually reached out to every corner of the room.

At that moment, Lucien finally sensed what he was looking for—a tiny disturbance wave caused by a supernatural power, and he heard something buzzing lightly.

He didn't open his eyes and pretended to be asleep while thinking to himself, "Aalto Tigorid Mosquito? Did they mark the mosquito

with their fiend power or was it directly Transfiguration?”

Lucien’s purpose was already achieved. Now he was sure that the heretics were using the letter for both communicating and monitoring. However, when Lucien was away from the letter, they needed to use other ways to trail him.

.....

The letter did not mention anything special in the evening, but only reminded Lucien to bring the letter with him if he was moving out.

Staring at the the shades of the night, Lucien kept repeating the process of making Crying Soul in his mind, to get familiar with it. However, it was not the proper time to make the potion yet. Lucien still had to take care of several things first.

.....

In the morning of the second day, when Lucien was about to go outside, he noticed that there was a ball of paper beneath the door.

His heart suddenly sank. Lucien knew what was in it.

Slowly opening the paper ball, Lucien saw three fingers—two were long but with heavy callus, and one was stubby. The fractured white bones were slightly reflecting the sunlight.

Lucien closed his eyes to hold back his tears and to hide the anger and hatred. When he opened his eyes again, he also noticed a small black ball wrapped in the paper, with a scarlet line of words beside.

“That’s what you wanted, Mr. Evans.”

Chapter 76: Revelation

Chapter 76: Revelation

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Leaving the paper ball on the table, Lucien took out the letter from the crate. Within his expectations, a few lines of words just emerged.

“It seems like you received our gift already. The three fingers are just a warning for you. Don’t do stupid things, or we’ll have no choice but to kill Joel and his family. We can see you, and we’re way more powerful than you think. The ball is called Scene. Crumble the ball, and you’ll see what you want.”

Lucien already sensed the magnetism of the small ball, which should be able to function like a camera. Thus, without hesitation, Lucien destroyed the ball with his hand.

Dark smoke came out from the ball, and the smoke gradually took the shape of a black and white screen, showing Lucien a short moving scene.

In the video, Joel, Alisa and Iven were sitting around a wooden table. Iven’s eyes were half closed, looking rather sleepy, while Joel and Alisa looked very worried, with their hands swathed in bandages. From the window of the log cabin, Lucien could tell it was late at night. Few dim stars were hanging in the sky, and the silver moon was shaded by the clouds.

The moving scene lasted for a minute.

On the letter, new sentences emerged, “Mr. Evans, now you see they are still alive. We’ll send you more scenes when the weather changes. We believe that the weather, the stars and the silver moon can provide you with enough information to tell the different dates. You see, we always value our words.”

“That is a good relief to me,” wrote Lucien, “What shall I say if

John comes back?”

While Lucien was asking, he was picturing in his mind the sky that he just saw from the ball. What he was trying to do was to tell what stars they were based on the stellar map drawn by the witch in her notes. Combining the season, the arrangement and the brightness of the stars, as well as the angle that Lucien was observing the sky through the window, Lucien was confident he could find some valuable information from this one-minute moving scene. After all, Astrology was his speciality. From the several apprentice meetings that he attended before, Lucien already had a solid understanding in apprentice level Astrology, and as a college student crossing over, his knowledge in Astrology was relatively more advanced compared with the ancient system.

The letter replied, “Just tell him honestly. We don’t care about a knight squire, and we bet he wouldn’t dare to risk his family’s lives. And you, Mr. Evans, be careful when you go to Ratacia Palace tomorrow.”

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Lucien was scheduled to go to Ratacia Palace to meet the princess and discuss music with her. If the princess had extra need, she would summon Lucien at any time, and there would also be an extra pay for him.

The words on the letter gradually disappeared one by one. Finally, the paper returned to normal blank. Folding the letter and wrapping up the three fingers, Lucien put them back into the crate.

...

On his way to the Musicians’ Association, Lucien’s mind was fully occupied with the stars.

“I made my request yesterday, then the ball and the fingers arrived today. So first of all, uncle Joel and his family should still be somewhere close to Aalto. A village, small town, or even a forest... all possible.”

Lucien’s brain was working hard. By comparing the stellar maps in his spiritual library and through lots of calculations of the

coordinates of the stars, Lucien identified the few stars that he saw from the scene. Looking up the star list in the spiritual library, Lucien targeted one of the stars and found out its detailed record.

“The log cabin should be... about 20 kilometers west of Aalto. That is to say...” Lucien was looking up a simple map of Aalto and its surroundings stored in his own library, “the cabin is deep within Melzer Black Forest!”

Drawing a circle on the map, Lucien was very excited. Although he still couldn't accurately locate where uncle Joel and his family were, and he was also not sure about how powerful the heretics were, knowing that Joel, Alisa and Iven were not far away from him provided him with a bit comfort.

Lucien hoped that the next time he saw the scene the log cabin would still be there. Then he would be able to narrow down the range further.

Trying to calm himself down, Lucien sighed silently, “Every step is so tough.” He knew that, currently, he was still not prepared to save Joel and his family.

...

The two ladies who were on duty today in the association's lobby weren't familiar to Lucien. One of them stood up and bowed slightly, “Good morning, Mr. Evans. Your personal office has been assigned by Mr. Hank. Please go to Mr. Hank's office when you have time.”

Lucien was about to find a quiet practicing room. Now it was a surprise for him to have his own office, which was great for his plan.

A while later, being led by Mr. Hank, Lucien entered his own office on the third floor.

“Evans, this is your office now. Unless you join other countries' music associations, until the last day of your life, the office will still be yours.”

The building of the Musician's Association was magnificent. A courtyard was surrounded by seventy to eighty different rooms on the third floor, but almost half of them were currently vacant, since many of the famous musicians in Aalto had been invited to other countries.

The office was decorated with a brown carpet, fine statues, paintings and lights. The dark blue couch looked very comfy, beside which stood a decent red wood desk. A milk-white piano was in the corner of the office. And there was also a den in the office, where the musician could rest a bit in the bed without being disturbed.

"It's a great room." Lucien smiled politely, "Thank you, Mr. Hank."

"You're more than welcome, Evans. And just call me Hank." Hank nodded.

After Hank left, Lucien closed the office door and walked back and forth in his office with great anger and anxiety.

He was holding back his emotion when he saw the fingers. Now he was by himself, Lucien could not take it anymore.

All of a sudden Lucien sat in front of the piano and pressed the keys with both of his hands. It was Symphony of Fate that Lucien was playing.

When the sound of the piano became louder and louder, Lucien started swearing in a low voice:

"Bastards! Jerks! You f**king evil kidnappers!"

...

The swearing was not only for venting, Lucien was testing to what extent the kidnappers could monitor him.

When he Finished playing, Lucien stood up and gave out a long sigh. Even if the heretics did hear his swearing just now, he could still explain to them that he was doing this was to prepare himself for the meeting with the princess tomorrow.

However, when Lucien came back to his home in Aderon, he only found a simple sentence on the letter.

“Music is an ideal way to release emotions, Mr. Evans.”

Although the kidnappers just wanted to remind Lucien that he was under their surveillance all the time, the message offered Lucien another piece of valuable information—the method the kidnappers were using couldn’t let them hear Lucien very well!

...

At two o’clock in the afternoon, Lucien arrived at Victor’s place on time.

Although without saying anything, the way Athy looked at Lucien was filled with gratefulness. Athy had been accompanying Victor for many years, and he was sincerely glad that the concert was a great success.

Renee, Colin and David were also there. They stood up and greeted, “Good afternoon, Mr. Evans.”

Although Lucien’s success was not yet well-known among the common residents in Aalto, Renee, Colin and David had heard about it from Felicia and Annie’s conversation. All of a sudden they felt Lucien became strange in their eyes, and they subconsciously treated Lucien the same way they greeted their teacher Mr. Victor.

“I still feel it’s sort of unreal until now.” Lott stood up from the couch and gave Lucien a hug, smiling.

Felicia also walked close to Lucien, and whispered in his ear, “Tomorrow afternoon, I shall be able to give you the roses.”

“Thank you. Thanks a lot, Felicia,” said Lucien sincerely.

Standing beside them, Lott almost could not believe his eyes.

“Since when they became this close to each other?” Lott wondered.

Chapter 77: Ratacia Palace

Turning around, Felicia noticed that Annie, Colin and some other students were all standing around and trying to talk to Lucien. She slightly smiled and took a step forward.

"Ladies and gentlemen, in order to celebrate the great success of the concert and the achievement Lucien made with his Symphony of Fate, I want to invite everyone to the ball on Friday evening in my family's house. Mr. Victor agreed, and now I want to see how many of us want to attend the ball."

Although Felicia was not willing to let other of her classmates have a close relationship with Lucien like she already did, she understood that purposefully excluding the other classmates was not a good way to leave a favorable impression on Lucien.

"Really? I'd love to!" Renee put a big smile on her face, "It's my great pleasure!"

All of the other students promised to go as well.

"What about you, Lucien?" Felicia smiled.

An idea suddenly flashed through Lucien's mind. He nodded and answered, "Of course, Felicia."

The other students looked even more excited hearing that Lucien would attend the ball as well.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let's save the excitement for the Friday." Mr. Victor walked downstairs with books under his arm, looking rather energized, "Now we have to start studying."

Lucien was about to find a seat to sit down when Lott stopped him. Lott whispered in Lucien's ear, "I heard that Mekanzi doesn't like you at all. Be careful when you're in the palace."

"Thank you, Lott. I will," replied Lucien politely. However, his mind was fully focused on how to save Joel and his family. Lucien knew

clearly that the longer he waited, the less chances he would have to save them. He was really not in the mood to consider how to deal with Mekanzi.

Meanwhile, Lucien was also aware of the fact that he also had to be very patient. Unwisely rushing would put Joel and his family in great danger.

At that moment, Lucien felt like he was tightrope walking over a cliff. He had to find his balance between being patient and being ready to seize the chance. Leaning too much toward either side would instantly throw him off the wire.

With the outstanding memory and proper ways of studying, now Lucien could read most of the materials with ease. Immersing himself in the world of music, for a moment Lucien was distracted from his anxiety.

And a bold plan was gradually taking shape in his mind.

Finishing today's study, Lucien went back to his shack, wrapped some stuff up and brought them to his rented house.

Everything seemed to be quite normal. Thus, when Lucien took out the letter at night, there were only a few simple sentences on it:

"Be careful tomorrow. Don't do stupid things. We're watching."

.....

Lucien had a sound sleep last night, and he felt rather revitalized when he woke up.

"Today is very important. I can't make any mistake." Lucien thought to himself.

Nothing new was on the letter. After having breakfast, Lucien came to the association and found a practicing room. He started playing the piano to reduce his anxiety.

Lucien was still not skilled enough to perfectly play Symphony of Fate. After reviewing the basic fingering, Lucien started to play

Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, commonly known as Sonata Pathétique.

He did not know why he found special affection in Beethoven's music works. Maybe it was because he could understand the sufferings and the pain Beethoven went through, and he appreciated the music master's perseverance and heroic spirit.

Since Lucien never practiced Sonata Pathétique before, his playing was pretty horrible. However, playing this piece of music over and over again became a good way for Lucien to exhaust himself and thus to release the pressure.

Later Lucien took a break in his office.

Someone knocked at the door of Lucien's office at ten thirty. It was Elena.

"Lucien. The princess's coach is waiting for you in the front."

"I'll be right there. Thanks, Elena," replied Lucien.

He slowly stood up from the couch and walked toward the mirror. Staring at himself in the mirror for thirty seconds, Lucien took a deep breath and walked out of his office.

.....

Sitting straight inside of the dark purple coach decorated with the coat of arms of the Violet family, Lucien felt the movement of the coach was rather smooth. The dark yellow carpet made in Tria was thick and comfy, and the wine on the small table had a nice deep ruby red color. However, Lucien did not feel like having a drink at all, since he had to make sure he would stay sober and calm in the palace.

A bit more than ten minutes later, the coach arrived at Ratacia Palace on time. The magnificent front gate of the palace was made of stone and was engraved with relief sculptures of many famous heroes in history. A dozen of guards led by a mighty and muscular knight were standing in front of the gate.

After a security check of Lucien's personal belongings, the knight waved his hand and let the coach pass.

As soon as Lucien entered the huge gate, he sensed the solemn and mighty divine power enveloping the whole palace.

This light golden-colored palace was the most spectacular and magnificent structure in Aalto. Besides its great momentum, the details of Ratacia Palace were also created with exquisite handcraft. The symmetrical architecture showed the majesty of the grand duke house. The two castle-like palaces in both western and eastern wings were connected by a grand palace complex in the center.

In front of the main palace there was a large square with fine spray fountains, covered with rare and beautiful trees and flowers.

A broad artificial river ran through the square, in which a few boats were floating by the river bank.

The coach which Lucien was sitting in followed the avenue going through the garden and crossed the long bridge over the artificial river, and it finally stopped right in front of the main palace. Two beautiful maids were already waiting there.

"Mr. Evans, please follow us to the princess' music practicing room." The two blond-haired girls looked like twins. They greeted Lucien with respect.

"Thank you." Lucien nodded politely.

Following the two maids, he saw more details of the palace on his way to the practicing room. The designers and the architects used the finest colorful stone as the main building material of the palaces, and all the different kinds of stones were shining brightly in the sunlight. Inside of the palaces, the stairs and the handrails were carefully gilded, and according to the different themes of the palaces, dazzling decorations such as huge crystals, fine white laces and gorgeous dome paintings could be seen everywhere.

Being very familiar with the path, neither of the maids talked to Lucien on the way but just walked in front of him. They were

trained to be respectful and remain silent. Soon Lucien came to a very charming corridor.

Facing the direction of the garden, there were twenty-four arched windows on one side of the corridor, while on the other side, twenty-four mirrors were reflecting the beauty of the sight in the garden, as if the corridor was also fully planted with the fine trees and flowers, which added radiance and beauty to the magnificent huge dome painting above.

This was the best-known part of Ratacia Palace—the Paradise Corridor. Lucien had read about it before, when he was working in the Association's library.

Passing Paradise Corridor, which featured the great style of divinity, Lucien finally arrived at the palace where princess Natasha lived. The palace had a unique name—War Gallery. Here Lucien saw many fine oil paintings showing the theme of war on the walls.

"This is the princess's practicing room, Mr. Evans." The two maids led Lucien to a quiet room in the corner, and asked him to wait for a moment outside, since they had to report to lady Camil first.

A moment later, Lucien was invited to enter the room.

.....

The practicing room was way bigger than any one in the association. The warm and sweet orange color of the room was peaceful and soothing. The carpet was very fancy, on which different kinds of musical instruments were carefully placed, and in the center of the room stood a light golden piano.

Natasha was sitting in front of the piano, playing a piece of music called March of War. Her playing was very skilled, even better than many professional instrumentalists. However, it seemed like she was mimicking Victor's fingering intentionally, and thus her playing sounded a bit rigid.

In her black dress, Camil was sitting in the couch at the far end of the room.

Natasha stopped playing when Lucien came into the room. She turned around and smiled to him, "I'm having a hard time here following Victor's new fingering. Can you help me, Lucien?"

She talked to Lucien in a nice way, as if he was her old friend.

"Of course. It's my great pleasure." Lucien sat on the other bench and started to explain.

Lucien knew that the princess was very interested in piano and thus he was relatively well-prepared for the possible questions the princess might have. Although he could not make a perfect explanation, Lucien was very honest and sincere, which made Natasha feel that when Lucien was providing her with the proper guidance she needed, at the same time they were also learning and exploring piano together.

Time passed quickly. When Lucien was still introducing the new fingering, all of a sudden Natasha looked at him and asked, "Lucien, is your mind being bothered by something? I can feel your anxiety."

As a level five grand knight, Natasha's intuition told her that something was wrong with Lucien. With the outspokenness in her personality, the princess asked directly.

Chapter 78: Taking the Risk

Lucien forced himself to put a smile on his face, "Maybe I'm too nervous, in the palace, in front of the princess. Please forgive me, Your Grace."

At the same time, Lucien had a good relief in his mind, "Finally... the princess asked."

The anxiety, the restlessness and the nervousness that Natasha noticed were all conveyed by Lucien purposefully.

Lifting her beautiful eyebrows, Natasha said to Lucien, "Don't be afraid of me because I'm a princess or a knight, Lucien. A man can respect or even worship someone else, but not be intimidated. That's the spirit of men, the spirit of knights."

"I'll work on it. Although I have a rather poor background, I'll get better." Lucien was a bit surprised by Natasha's comment, but he still answered properly.

A gorgeous smile appeared on Natasha's face, "You know what? You're already much braver than most people. Many of them couldn't even speak properly the first time they saw me, while you're brave enough to stare at Silvia's legs the first time you saw her. Impressive."

Natasha was talking about it pretty casually, as if it was just a joke.

"I... I'm terribly sorry. It was the first time I saw silk stocking... I sort of forgot myself..." explained Lucien awkwardly, "I'm not a pervert..."

The left corner of Natasha's lips curled up, "I totally understand, Lucien. Both ladies and gentlemen like the interesting byproduct of alchemy, and you're not excluded, of course. Silk stockings is precious since the magic empire was destroyed and the ancient alchemy was lost many years ago."

"I appreciate your understanding, Your Grace." Lucien nodded.

"But you looked at Silvia for a pretty long time, which was not common. Are you really not a pervert?" Natasha asked Lucien with great interest. She was making fun of him.

"I'm not. In fact, I haven't touched a girl's hand yet, in my whole life," admitted Lucien to justify his innocence.

"Oh... I... see..." Natasha drawled purposefully, "Too bad for a seventeen-year-old boy. But now it won't be a problem anymore, after the concert. There will be lots of girls having interest in you. Do you want me to introduce you to some ladies? Although all of them will end up marrying nobles, it's not bad to have some sweet memories before getting married."

"Your... Your Grace, thank you for your good will but I want to devote myself to music in the next few years. You don't have to introduce me to any lady," refused Lucien, seriously.

"I don't have to?" The princess did not have enough fun yet, "So you want to pursue them on your own? I can teach you some secrets to win the heart of a young lady. I'm good at it. Silvia, that little wild cat, she likes me..."

Camil all of a sudden started coughing and cut off Natasha.

"Your Grace, I feel this topic's a bit weird." said Lucien. He felt the princess was very approachable, but the conversations they had always tended to go somewhere else.

Natasha glanced at Camil sitting on the other side and asked with surprise, "What's wrong with it? It's no more than a common conversation between guys."

Finally, Lucien realized the problem, "Yes, between guys, but you're a noble lady, Your Grace."

"It doesn't matter, Lucien." Natasha shrugged, "Actually I can teach you more about how to pursue a girl than many guys."

Lucien did not know what to say.

"All right, all right..." She waved her hand and smiled, "Look at

your nervous face, Lucien. Let's switch back to music."

She was glad that Lucien was not like the many other nobles. Most of them directly refused to talk about this and viewed it as an improper topic for chatting.

"As for the playing skills we just mentioned..." Lucien was a bit relieved.

"I got a question." Natasha was behaving like a good student.

"Yes, please?" Lucien was waiting for the question.

"You sure you don't need any of my suggestion about pursuing girls?" Natasha laughed loudly.

"..." Lucien was speechless.

An hour flew by. Natasha was inspired and kept working on her composing. Camil stood up and walked Lucien out.

In front of the gate, Camil said to Lucien in a low voice, "About the princess... don't be a gossiper."

Lucien nodded seriously.

...

After having lunch, Lucien came to Victor's place and waited for Felicia patiently.

"Mr. Athy, please sprinkle some sulphur in the living room. In the Month of Harvest, there are many mosquitos around."

"I will." Athy nodded.

Felicia arrived half an hour earlier that day, knowing that Lucien must be waiting for the roses. In the corner of the living room, she took out a unique black bag with embroidered flame patterns on it and handed it to Lucien.

"Forty grams of dried Moonlight Rose. The roses were ground into

dust already. This special bag can make the dust of Moonlight Rose last much longer. You can return the bag to me when you finish using it."

"Thanks a lot, Felicia." With great excitement, Lucien opened the small black bag, in which the fine white powder was shining like a beautiful dream.

After roughly weighing the bag, Lucien put it in his pocket, "I'll pay the money back to you as soon as possible, Felicia."

"I hope so. That was my personal savings." Felicia smiled, and then she sniffed a bit, "Why I smell sulphur here?"

"To drive the mosquitos and bugs away," answered Lucien casually.

...

Lucien made more mistakes than usual this afternoon, although he was trying hard to stay focused. Luckily, Mr. Victor did not say anything about it, thinking Lucien might need some more time to adjust to the big changes that the great success of the concert brought into his life.

Finally, the class ended at six in the evening. Lucien came back to his shack in Aderon, wrapped up some of his stuff in a small box and cooked himself dinner. After all that, he opened the letter again.

"Mr. Evans, you did a good job in front of the princess today. We hope you can be calmer, since your nervousness made you a bit suspicious. Talented as you are, we believe that it is not too hard."

The heretics did not ask anything about the conversations Lucien had with the princess and what he saw in the palace. Lucien could tell they were trying to make him believe they had everything under their control.

Putting on a worried look, Lucien folded the letter and put it into the small box. Then he carried the box with him and left for his rented house in Gesu district.

In the house, Lucien put down the box in the master bedroom and took out a music book. It seemed like he would stay there for the night.

When it was getting late, Lucien lay down in the bed and soon stood up again, looking a bit irritated, "The sheet is so soggy! Brian should find someone to dry the sheet first before asking me to move in!"

Then he stepped out of his bedroom and left the house, leaving the small box in his new place.

...

After closing the window and locking the door, now Lucien was lying in his small bed in his shabby shack.

Ten minutes later, Lucien jumped out of the bed again and swore, "These bloody mosquitos!"

In the crate Lucien found some sulphur and he sprinkled the sulphur in the every corner of his place. He wanted all the annoying mosquitos and bugs to leave right now.

Then he went back to bed and closed his eyes with satisfaction.

In the night, Lucien faintly sensed the existence of a supernatural power in his shack, like a pair of eyes staring at him in the air.

Without the help of Aalto Tigorid Mosquito, the heretics finally started to monitor him directly using their fiend power.

Pretending to be sleeping, Lucien waited patiently. An hour later, the magic eyes disappeared, but soon came back again.

"The duration is about an hour." Lucien thought to himself.

Within his expectation, an hour later, the eyes disappeared again. Maybe the kidnappers believed that Lucien was just sleeping, or maybe they were changing shifts. Ten minutes later, Lucien sensed the eyes again.

Thirty minutes later, the eyes, all of a sudden, disappeared for the third time.

And Lucien knew that now it was time for him to take action!

He jumped out of the bed swiftly and messed up his blanket and sheet to give the kidnappers a false impression that someone was still sleeping in the bed.

Recently in Aderon, there were night watchers patrolling at night, and they could easily target the existence of the fiend power. Lucien knew that the heretics would not take the risk of being found by the church.

Seizing the chance, Lucien sneaked into his underground magic lab.

Lucien was aware that his whole plan was very risky, however, in the current situation, he did not have a second choice.

Chapter 79: Crying Soul

Chapter 79: Crying Soul

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Everything in the lab remained the same after the last time Lucien left. There was no scent of any strangers, but only the slight smell of sulphur coming from the secret air vent.

In the first half an hour, Lucien was doing meditation to stay focused, and more importantly, to wait until the night watchers left and the heretics started to monitor his room again.

After making sure nothing on the ground went wrong, Lucien started to activate the magic circles engraved on the table with his spiritual power. Then he took out a tube of Revenant dust, three Corpse Mushrooms, some brain tissue of the aquatic zombie and some other reagents.

Wearing the gloves, Lucien picked up a Corpse Mushroom with a silver dagger and moved it into a magic circle for weighing.

“6.72 grams.” In his spirit library, Lucien recorded the weight of the mushroom, as well as the amount of usage of other materials and reagents. He put the mushroom into a glass container with magic runes on it, and then weighed a dry glass beaker.

Lucien watched carefully when he was putting Revenant dust into the dry breaker and stopped when there were 3 grams of the dust in it. Using the same method, Lucien weighed out 10 grams of Moonlight Rose dust.

Then he turned to the brain tissue. Lucien grabbed the dagger and carefully cut it.

As if the aquatic zombie’s brain tissue was still alive, the moment Lucien’s dagger touched it, the brain tissue suddenly shrank, as if many worms were living inside of it.

Cold and sticky as the brain was, Lucien almost threw up when he was cutting it. All of a sudden the phantom of countless ferocious aquatic zombies and revenants appeared in front of Lucien's eyes. Their skin and flesh were rotten, teeth were bleeding, and the smell of corpses was more than disgusting.

Lucien frowned his eyebrows to stay focused. Following the structure of the cortex, he took out the inner part of the brain.

And the phantom instantly disappeared. The rest of the brain tissue gradually calmed down.

After weighing the brain tissue, Lucien put a black thick pot on the magic flame circle and adjusted the flame bit by bit until the color of the flame became a mix of gold and white.

Lucien threw the Corpse Mushroom into the pot and added a small amount of water. Then he carefully stirred the mixture inside the container.

The mushroom slowly melted in the pot in a weird way. The stink was constrained within the magic circle.

When the black thick liquid in the pot started to bubble, Lucien calmly added the Revenant dust and the dust of the rose.

As soon as the three materials met each other, a thick black and silver smoke came out. There seemed to be lots of revenants fighting with each other. A sharp scream came into Lucien's ears and the sharpness made him feel a bit nauseous.

Lucien knew that he could not slack at the crucial moment. Being controlled by his spiritual power, the flame turned white.

The black and silver smoke began to merge with each other and became pale, like the skin of a dead body.

As time passed by, the smoke turned into water drops and stayed within the pot. Seizing the moment, Lucien added the brain tissue into the liquid.

The water drops in the container quickly soaked the black brain

tissue, and within one second, the brain disappeared.

The whole magic lab suddenly became cold and dark. Even the flame in the magic circle looked a bit green.

Suddenly being attacked by the infrasonic waves, Lucien retreated several steps and almost passed out. His guts were stirring inside of his body and his head was buzzing.

Lucien never expected this. Nothing like this was mentioned in the witch's notes.

He started to cast the spell Silence Wall. Transparent walls showed up around Lucien to protect him from the attack of the sound waves.

Several seconds later, Lucien cast Illumination.

A bright light ball appeared in the air. In the light, Lucien saw lots of pale human faces in the container!

These transparent faces were rather blurry, but their viciousness and perniciousness was overwhelming. They were struggling in the magic circle, trying to get into Lucien's body.

In the strong light, the faces gradually disappeared. When everything returned to normal, Lucien saw a small amount of black liquid remaining in the pot with a strong burnt smell.

"The recipe should be correct. But the witch might have left out some annotations that she did not translate. Possibly it was because the brain tissue was from a mutant aquatic zombie. That almost killed me." Taking off the gloves, Lucien wiped the sweat on his forehead, "I gotta find a chance to learn the language of the ancient magic empire."

Crying Soul was one of the greatest achievements of the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire. According to the witch's notes, only a few sorcerers had the recipe, and the making of the potion required an accurate amount of different materials and reagents. Even a tiny mistake would lead to failure.

Luckily, this mutant aquatic zombie's brain had only a little more soul power than common ones. This time Lucien decided to use the best Corpse Mushroom he had. Following the same procedures, Lucien came to the last step smoothly.

When Lucien threw another piece of aquatic zombie's brain into the pot, the sharp and bitter scream came out again. However, this time the noise was totally blocked by the transparent walls. Then he calmly added a small amount of other reagents.

The white flame suddenly soared and fully covered the whole pot. Then, the now big flame quickly disappeared in the next second.

Some black, bubbling liquid remained in the pot. Inside each of the bubbles, there was a horrifying and vicious face, crying and screaming.

That was why the potion was called Crying Soul.

Using Mage Hand, Lucien poured the black liquid into a glass tube.

Observing carefully, Lucien was sure that the potion was made correctly. Lucien bit his lips for a moment and directly drank all the dark liquid in one draught.

He did not have enough time to test the features of the potion. He needed to take the risk.

The taste of the potion was actually not that horrible, but the texture was pretty weird.

Soon Lucien felt a great pain in his body, as if the potion was tearing up his body into pieces.

Lucien heard lots of crying, but he did not know if they were real.

He crouched in great pain and then lay down, rolling back and forth on the ground. Lucien grabbed a piece of cloth and stuffed it into his mouth, in case he felt the need to scream.

Although Lucien thought he was stronger than common people because of his exercising routine, now, when facing the pain, he

became very uncertain whether he could really awaken the potential in his body.

His blood was burning and his veins were swelling. Lucien felt his body was about to explode. His skin was covered by thick blue and green veins, which looked very horrible.

Blood came out of Lucien's body like red vapor, and then it went back into his body. In his blurry awareness, Lucien felt a cold and dark power was gradually taking over him. At that time, a bright light suddenly burst out of the projection of Lucien's Host Star in his soul, and quickly linked to the real Host Star in the starry sky, which unrolled in front of Lucien's eyes. The star power started to infuse into Lucien's veins, fighting against the pain and trying hard to drive away the power of darkness.

Lucien was hoping that the power of star could win inside his body. He did not want to be dominated by a more vicious power, which might also bring him trouble and danger in the future.

Unfortunately, the power of death from the crying souls was still stronger. When Lucien was almost dead from the conflict of the two powers, his blood flow started to slow down.

After all, Lucien's Blessing was awakened by the mysterious potion, not on his own.

Chapter 80: Moonlight and Marks

Lucien had no choice but to accept the dark power, although he had no idea what the evil power would do to his body.

At the same time, outside of Lucien's shack a foot stepped out of the darkness.

The silver moon in the sky suddenly lit up a bit, and the moonlight that entered Lucien's shack through the window became even brighter, as if there was a thin layer of frost around the place.

In his blurry consciousness, Lucien saw a beautiful silver moon in his meditative starry sky and felt his body was covered with the gentle moonlight.

The light became brighter and brighter.

In the moonlight, a weak power which was hiding in Lucien's body woke up and was rapidly developing. Within only a few seconds, the new power overthrew the dark power and dominated the body.

Lucien's Blessing had finally awakened, and his power was related to the silver moon.

His heartbeat gradually slowed down, calm as usual, although his body still felt limp and numb.

Nothing like this was ever mentioned in the witch's notes or in the books that Lucien read before. He had no idea why the environment could affect his way of awakening the Blessing.

Outside of the shack, the other foot also took a step forward, leaving the shadows. On the feet there was a pair of black leather shoes. Then the leather shoes went back into the darkness and disappeared. The silver moon dimmed.

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Lucien stood up from the ground, feeling the power in his body.

His hands became way stronger, and now could easily break a person's neck. However, compared with the obvious increase of strength, Lucien could tell that the major benefit of his Blessing was the great improvement to his agility, speed and coordination.

Lifting one foot, Lucien started to ran in the lab. Although he was fast like a shadow, Lucien did not run down anything in that small place.

“My speed and my agility can almost compete with the level two knight with the ‘Shadow’ Blessing that I met before, even though my power was awakened by the potion. Thus, if a level one knight has the same Blessing I have, I’m sure that he would be even more capable in terms of agility when compared with a level two knight whose Blessing is different.” Lucien stopped to evaluate his power, “However, regarding constitution and strength, a common level one knight can easily defeat me.”

Lucien calmed himself down to carefully feel the power, and started to try the different aspects.

“Dark Vision. I can see about two hundred meters away at night.” A silver light appeared in his black eyes.

“My body can be dematerialized into moonlight to protect myself, but right now I cannot do this completely, so the protection is relatively limited, for now.” Lucien’s hands gradually became transparent, “Only level seven radiant knights can do this dematerialization completely.”

However, for now Lucien was already immune to the attack of common weapons such as swords and arrows, and could better stand the damage caused by magic weapons, divine power weapons and shockwaves, elemental damage caused by fire and acid, as well as necromantic power. Although currently the protection of Moonlight seemed to be inferior than the night watcher’s Dragon Scale from the Blessing of the Red Dragon, Lucien was still pretty satisfied with his own Blessing.

Then Lucien cut himself with the silver dagger on his hand. The wound bled a bit and quickly recovered.

“To some extent... self-healing” Lucien recorded.

Unfortunately, Lucien’s Blessing couldn’t be really used for launching attacks. Moonlight was not a dark Blessing.

The church had compiled a book about the knowledge of the most common Blessings in order to help the new knights to improve themselves faster and also for other uses. Lucien read the book in the association’s library before, and he also heard John mentioning to him about his most yearning Blessings, which helped him a lot to know about his Moonlight Blessing.

According to The Handbook of Blessing, the power of Moonlight could be further improved in general when the silver moon was present. However, at the same time, it would be weakened under the midday sun, but not as badly as the dark Blessings, such as Darkness, Silver Moon, Vampire, etc.

Lucien finally smiled for the first time in the last days. In general, Moonlight was an ideal Blessing for him.

.....

When Lucien was casting the spell to preserve the experiment materials, he surprisedly found that his spiritual power had been improved a lot as well.

Now Lucien was only one step away from becoming a senior apprentice, and he could cast nineteen apprentice spells successively before his spiritual power was drained.

The improvement was such a bonus for Lucien, but soon he calmed down. Putting all the stuff into boxes, Lucien was planning to secretly move them away to the house when there was a chance.

The corner of the lab was piled with many grey stones, which were previously dirt from when Lucien was digging the basement. Some of the stones had been thrown away, but Lucien purposefully left many stones there as well. When he was digging, with an easy spell Lucien turned the dirt into stones and now it was time for the stones to come in handy again.

Lucien arranged the stones to make sure that they were in the correct position. When the chance was appropriate. Lucien would come back and easily fill the basement with dirt again adversely using the same spell. Although more dirt was definitely needed to fully fill the place and make it even with the ground level, it would not be too difficult for Lucien since now he was almost as powerful as a knight.

After Lucien finished doing all of these, he walked to the wall and activated a small magic circle on it. Part of the stone wall gradually turned into dirt and then he started to dig.

Ten minutes later, the passage he was digging directly connected to an old one—the passage which was built by the witch to the sewers!

As early as when Lucien was building his magic lab, he knew that a second secret exit was definitely necessary. And the easiest way of doing this was to link his secret passage to the one of the witch, since the deeper part of the witch's secret passage was still intact.

Briefly concealing the new passage that he just dug, Lucien ran into the sewer as fast as he could with his Moonlight Blessing. His figure disappeared in the darkness like a shadow.

Within Lucien's expectation, the church's security already decreased, as two to three months had passed since the last time the heresy was performed down here. Therefore, it did not take Lucien long to come back to the ground through the sewers, safe and sound.

Lucien could see very well in the night with his Dark Vision.

Instead of finding the kidnappers who were monitoring him in the area, Lucien first came to the old wall close to auntie Alisa's place, and wrote down a series of simple patterns, which meant:

"I read about a magic relic named Emden in an ancient literature, which sat in the southeast of Melzer Black Forest. Owl, please find me a guide who knows the place among the apprentices in Aalto.

“Make sure that Philosopher, White Honey and yourself are safe.

“Professor”

Chapter 81: Confirmation

The marks on the wall were messy and complicated. Lucien even directly wrote down the word "Emden", since he had no idea how to express it in the secret code.

Then, using the Moonlight Blessing, Lucien left the area and carefully approached his shack. Hiding in the darkness, he intently sensed the supernatural power inside his house.

The night watchers had left. In the moonlight, Lucien could directly see the "eyes" which were monitoring him the whole night. The pair of eyes floating in the air were almost transparent, staring at the pile of messy blankets in the bed. However, the eyes did not have pupils!

While common people would be really scared by the horrible scene, Lucien felt quite lucky. Fortunately, this pair of eyes could not sense the heat, or he would have been found out already.

In the darkness, Lucien waited patiently. Half an hour later, the transparent eyes gradually disappeared. A new cycle should start soon.

Lucien stayed highly focused. Within his expectations, a moment later, a sudden wave of supernatural power was detected coming from a certain direction. That was where the heretic was hiding!

Lucien grabbed a small stone in his hand and quickly threw it against the wall in the opposite direction. The sound of the stone hitting the wall and falling on the ground was especially clear in the late night. As if the kidnapper was startled, the pair of eyes being formed suddenly rippled and soon disappeared.

Seizing the chance, Lucien started to move as fast as he could with the help of Moonlight. He was fast like a shadow. His movement was so agile that his blurry figure instantly integrated into the silver moonlight. No one could notice him unless they observed carefully.

Lucien pushed one of the windows open, quickly jumped into his

shack, closed the window and tucked himself in his bed. Lucien clearly knew that it would take the heretic some time to recover from the power backfire of the failed casting he or she just did, thus he unhurriedly covered himself with the blanket and made sure the shape of the blanket was not of a big difference.

More than a minute later, the eyes rose in the air again with caution.

In the next ten minutes, pretending that he was still sleeping, Lucien purposefully turned his face towards the eyes and kicked away the blanket to let the eyes see him directly.

Luckily, Lucien successfully awoke his Blessing tonight, or his night would be way tougher than this.

Everything went on smoothly. After all, anything could have caused the little noise from the stone, such as a wild cat, or a crow.

Slowly, Lucien felt asleep, knowing that he had more work to do tomorrow.

.....

After having breakfast, Lucien arrived at the Musicians' Association.

Knocking the door of the office which was in charge of musicians' accommodation, Lucien was putting on a play in front of the heretics who were still monitoring somewhere.

A middle-aged woman opened the door and asked, "Mr. Evans? What can I do for you?"

"Yes... I'm looking for Brian," answered Lucien, and he saw Brian was coming over.

"Anything wrong with the house?" asked Brian a bit nervously.

"The place is fine. Just the sheet and the blanket in the bedroom are too soggy. Can you find someone to dry them for me and make sure the cleaning of the whole house will be done by next Monday?"

"For sure, Mr. Evans." Brian was relieved, and a smile appeared on his face, "By next Monday, everything will be ready for you to move in."

Later Lucien came back to his own office. Today he was definitely in a better mood, knowing that he was finally capable of saving uncle Joel and his families when time was proper.

In order to hide his excitement, Lucien started to practice. With the awakened Blessing, his coordination had improved a lot. Along with his great memory, Lucien could master a piece of music way faster than ever, and of course, faster than many other people.

After several rounds of practicing, Lucien had mastered Symphony of Fate and other several pieces of etude pretty well like a well-qualified instrumentalist.

"No wonder Rhine said that the combination of Blessing and good memory can easily produce a qualified pianist. That does make sense." Lucien wondered to himself.

Actually, it was not too hard for a knight to learn how to use a musical instrument. However, mastering a musical instrument and becoming a great musician was a totally different story.

After giving the Moonlight Rose to Lucien, Felicia started to ask Lucien many questions about music all the time. This morning she visited his office and asked for Lucien's suggestion about her composition. Since she regarded this as an agreement between them, Felicia did not want to waste any time.

In fact, Lucien's understanding in music was no better than Felicia's. He had no choice but to search for the masterpieces from his original world in his spirit library in order to provide feedback by adding pieces of those great music works to Felicia's composition. However, that already impressed Felicia a lot. She was very inspired by Lucien's feedback.

"Your talent is astonishing." Felicia's red eyes were shining like rubies, "Your playing skills progressed a lot as well."

Lucien just smiled politely.

.....

After lunch, Lucien brought some of his stuff from the shack to Gesu district.

The blankets and sheets were hanging up in the backyard, bathing in the sunlight. Lucien felt a bit nervous, having no idea what the kidnappers would say about he leaving the letter here last night.

Opening the letter slowly, Lucien held his breath. A new sentence was on the letter.

"Bring the letter with you, Mr. Evans."

Lucien pretended he was confused, behaving like an ordinary person who had no idea how useful the letter actually was.

"I accidentally left the letter here last night. I'll be living in Aderon this week since the house is not ready yet." Lucien said to the letter.

A while later, the letter replied:

"Then bring the letter back with you. So we can communicate easier."

"I will, but I want another Scene ball," requested Lucien.

"Sure," replied the letter immediately.

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On his way back home, with his sharper vision, Lucien saw that the marks that he left on the wall last night had been replaced by new marks:

"Professor, we are fine. Fire Wolf volunteered to be your guide for Emden Relic. Where should he meet you?

"Owl"

Lucien kept walking without stopping his footsteps.

There was no magic relic named Emden. Lucien made it up.

During midnight, the heretics started to be less alert. With Moonlight, Lucien avoided their monitoring again and came to the mark wall.

He left a new line of marks on it.

"Eleven, Friday night. East entrance of Larnaca Canyon, Melzer Black Forest. Professor."

.....

On thursday morning, Lucien found the second Scene ball in front of his shack before leaving for the association.

The same wood cabin, the same wood table. Joel's face was emotionless, while Elisa was wiping tears silently, and Iven looked scared. Silver moon could be seen through the window, and several stars were shining in the background.

Lucien saw fresh dirt on their shoes. Suddenly he realized something.

Maybe the wood cabin was just the place for making Scene balls. The real place that they were taken captive should be somewhere else. According to the freshness of the dirt, the actual place should not be too far away from that cabin.

.....

In the princess's practicing room, when Lucien was playing the piano loudly, he suddenly said to Natasha:

"Your Grace, I need to confess."

Chapter 82: Lucien's Confession

Chapter 82: Lucien's Confession

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Natasha was wearing a simple training suit, after having practiced swordsmanship. Her legs were long and straight.

“Confess?” She looked a bit confused but soon became serious, “Confess what, Lucien?”

Natasha was very different than usual. Now she was like a leopard ready to launch an attack.

Lucien did not answer the princess instantly, instead, he turned around and looked at lady Camil silently.

Natasha was very smart. She understood what Lucien was worrying, especially seeing that Lucien was still playing the piano, “I trust lady Camil with my life, Lucien, so there's no need to ask her to leave. And in Ratacia, no one can spy on us.”

“Your Grace, we can never be too careful.” Camil stood up and her blue eyes started to shine brightly. Her whole body gradually became transparent and turned into a statue made of seawater.

Then the seawater from the statue overflowed onto the floor, and soon reached to Lucien's ankles. A moment later, the whole practicing room was half filled with seawater, and the water level already reached to Lucien's chest. Seeing Lucien's confused eyes, Natasha nodded to him.

Soon the room was fully filled with the water. Lucien came to the bottom of the sea.

However, the practicing room was like a big water cube, and the water was not leaking anywhere else at all. Besides, Lucien could breathe easily as usual. The only difference was that Lucien's skin was covered with a thin layer of silver light.

“Blessing?” Natasha lifted her eyebrows, and soon apologized sincerely, “Sorry... I did not know Lady Camil would examine you.”

“I totally understand. That’s what lady Camil should do. You don’t need to apologize at all.” Lucien was ready for the examination, and that was one of the many reasons that Lucien did not tell the princess what happened to him the first time he came to Ratacia Palace. Now his Blessing had been awakened, and his spiritual power from practicing magic could thus be hidden.

Lucien understood that, if he faced the heretics by himself, he would absolutely not be enough. Currently, the best choice was to report to the princess and refer to the noble power. And the key point was that he needed to figure out a proper chance to make sure his plan would not threaten the hostages and his own safety.

Now it was the proper chance.

Looking at the silver light covering Lucien’s skin, Natasha rested her chin in the left hand and said, “Moonlight Blessing, but weaker than a knight’s Blessing... Well, Lucien, now you can tell me what happened. The whole room has been isolated by Camil’s power.”

“As you can see, Your Grace, my Blessing is weaker. That’s because my Blessing was awakened by a bottle of magic potion given by someone else.” Lucien was well-prepared for what he was going to say, “Since the night when I got invited to be your consultant, I was involved in a conspiracy aiming at you and the grand duke.”

“I see. That’s what you get from working with them, a potion to awaken Blessing,” The corner of Natasha’s lips curled up.

“That is not true, Your Grace.” Lucien mixed the truth and his lie together, “They kidnapped uncle Joel and his family. They offered me a lot of help in the past when I was struggling. The kidnappers wanted me to report your schedule to them, as well as things that I hear in the palace. They want me to have my Blessing awakened in order to work better for them.”

“Camil?” Natasha was a bit surprised, “All the people who work for me... they got carefully investigated first, right?”

“Yes, Your Grace. Mr. Evans’s music talent is beyond doubt. Although he got involved with a witch’s case, there is no evidence showing that Mr. Evans, or any of his friends, was suspicious.” Camil stopped examining Lucien and said to the princess. Her voice came from different directions under the water.

As the future grand duke, the security measures around Natasha were very strict.

Natasha nodded, “Do you know anything about Mr. Joel and his family?”

“Our intelligence department reported that Mr. Joel and his family were invited by a noble lord.” Camil sounded a bit angry.

“Although the security measures in the palace are very strict,” said Lucien, “when I was acting nervous in front of you the last time, the kidnappers warned me about it in the evening of that day. So I suspect that there might be spies around you, Your Grace.”

“So you were doing that on purpose. Lucien, I really did underestimate you.” Natasha looked quite serious but then smiled, slightly shaking her head.

Then Natasha stood up from the bench and walked around in the room filled with water, “The intelligence department is untrustworthy right now. Auntie Camil, please go to the church and tell this to the two cardinals, Amelton and Gossett.”

Enjoying his isolated life, now Cardinal Sard was not actively involved with the church. Two younger cardinals, Amelton and Gossett, were currently in charge.

Then Lucien told Natasha more details, such as how he bought Moonlight Rose from Felicia. And of course, he mentioned nothing about how he figured out those people were from Argent Horn and how he investigated them.

“Someone must be trailing you all the time recently,” Natasha said to Lucien, “Auntie Camil, catch the guy and put the guy to torture.”

Lucien hurriedly stopped her, “Your Grace, we don’t need to hurry.

Instead, we should be patient. We shall start from secretly investigating the intelligence department and the kidnappers, following the clues and finally figuring out the big man who is hiding behind.”

Lucien must make sure uncle Joel and his family were safe. And he also wanted to solve the issue of the heresy once and for all, or he would be facing lots of trouble in the future.

“It’s not that complicated.” Natasha frowned her eyebrows, “We catch the person who’s trailing you, beat the person until he or she tells the truth, and then we quickly take action to take the bastards down. Come on! You’re a man, Lucien!”

“Your Grace, I think Mr. Evans is right. If our intelligence department is involved, this whole thing would be much more complicated. We should be more careful,” commented Camil.

“All right... I think you and Lucien are right. I won’t tell this to anyone else.” Natasha curled her lips, “I never like complicated things. How dare the bastards come to my palace!”

“Every once in a while, the kidnappers send me a small magic ball. I can see uncle Joel and his family through the ball. If I find any clue from the balls, how can I tell you?” Lucien kept pushing forward, but started to feel quite nervous. Princess Natasha was much more straightforward than he thought.

“I’ll give you several drops of my blood, which contain the elemental power of water,” said Camil, “so keep them with you. When you need to contact us, put a drop of blood into water and you can temporarily talk to me. Unless they have someone who’s as powerful as a level seven knight, and unless it is that person who’s trailing you, the blood will be impossible for them to spot.”

Three small sapphires appeared in front of Lucien, floating in the water.

After agreeing on the secret code for communication, Lucien put the sapphires into his pocket. While Natasha sat down in a couch and asked Lucien with interest,

“These people are using lives to threaten you, power and possible fortune to lure you, then why you decided to tell us, Lucien?”

“I did feel hesitant,” Lucien paused a bit, “but I never trust that kidnappers would keep their word. Only referring to your help, Your Grace, I could save uncle Joel and his family. I never make a concession to my enemy, and that is my creed.”

“Never make a concession to the enemy? Interesting.” Natasha’s purple eyes lit up, “No wonder you can compose Symphony of Fate, such a great work. I apologize for what I just said. You’re a real man, Lucien.”

“Thank you, Your Grace.” Lucien slightly bowed.

“Well, well... real man Lucien. You really don’t need me to teach you how to pursue girls?” Natasha laughed, “Our personalities are quite similar. You can be pretty attractive to girls, just like me.”

“...Sorry Your Grace. I’m really not in the mood.” answered Lucien seriously, “And by the way, please don’t tell the church that my Blessing has been awakened, after all, the way I did it was not proper in the church’s eyes.”

Natasha nodded, “I understand, Lucien, and I won’t. Luckily, Moonlight is not a dark Blessing. After we solve this problem, I’ll tell the church that the potion you had was given by me, as your reward.”

That was really a surprise for Lucien.

Then Natasha shrugged her shoulders, “Relax, Lucien. So you can better fight against your enemy.”

The level of the seawater was gradually falling and finally disappeared. Lady Camil showed up again in the practicing room, and Natasha and Lucien were sitting in front of the piano, talking about music as if nothing special ever happened.

Later, when Lucien came back home, the letter urgently asked him what he saw today in the palace and what the princess told him. The kidnappers had no idea about Lucien’s earlier confession.

Telling the kidnappers that John would be back this Saturday morning, Lucien used this as an excuse to request another Scene ball on Friday evening.

The heretics agreed.

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On the second day, Friday.

After class, Felicia's coach was waiting in front of the place. To prepare the ball, Felicia asked for a leave of the class today.

Of course, Lucien was asked to bring the letter with him.

Rate Translation Quality

Chapter 83: The Ball

Chapter 83: The Ball

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

While Victor, Rhine and Lott were talking about Felicia's family's manor, Lucien was looking at the scenery outside the coach's side window.

"Are you okay, Lucien? You're not interested in Berne, the wine exclusively produced by Hayne family's chateau?" Noticing Lucien's silence, Rhine smiled to him and asked.

The wine named Berne was very famous in Aalto. The especial grapes produced in the manor's field were of great quality. Only guests who were invited to the manor could have a chance to taste it.

"I'm fine, Mr. Rhine. Actually... I'm feeling a bit concerned, since I know nothing about dancing. It's... it's quite embarrassing." Lucien found an excuse to disguise the load on his mind.

"I can teach you, although you're not a lady," Rhine joked, "You can take me as your beautiful lady."

Lucien put an awkward smile on his face.

"There's nothing to worry about, Lucien," Victor comforted him. "We all know about your background. No one will purposefully invite you to dance to humiliate you. But if you want to learn how to dance, I'm sure many of the beautiful ladies there will be willing to teach you."

Lucien gradually relaxed in this happy atmosphere, knowing that nervousness could not help his plan tonight at all.

The coach soon ran out of town and passed Belem River, heading for the manor sitting in the north of Melzer Black Forest.

Hayne's family's manor was magnificent. Built with fine granite, everything in the manor looked luxury.

Wearing a flame-red evening dress, Felicia was already waiting in front of the lobby, followed by two rows of servants standing behind her. The yellow flame of the six bronze torch holders lit up the evening at seven o'clock.

"Good Evening, Mr. Victor and Mr. Rhine. Good evening, Lucien and Lott," Felicia welcomed them. Tonight she was the host, and her parents did not come.

Every noble lady must be able to host a ball or a party on her own.

"You look gorgeous tonight, Felicia." Victor hugged Felicia a bit and smiled.

Dressing in red, Felicia's red eyes and fair skin looked even more beautiful.

Felicia thanked her teacher in a noble lady manner, and then she turned to welcome the other many guests. Not only Felicia's classmates were present, but also many of her noble friends.

Following Victor and Rhine, Lucien entered the lobby, which could accommodate more than a hundred people.

The long dining table was sitting in the corner of the lobby. There were wine, assorted salads and pies, sausages, beef, chicken, duck, fine bread, fruits and many good-looking desserts that Lucien could not even name.

The invited band was playing a nice song, making this evening rather tasteful.

Lucien picked up a plate on the dining table and loaded it with lots of food. Eating quietly in the corner, he was waiting for Felicia to announce the beginning of the ball.

"Thank you all for coming tonight. That's my great pleasure and the great pleasure of our Hayne family!" Felicia said to all the guests in a decent manner, "Now, let's dance and enjoy the night!"

As she was talking, the lobby dimmed a bit and the band changed the song.

The gentlemen walked towards the young ladies and they started to dance in a manner called Whirling from the palace of Tria. While Whirling was very popular among young nobles, the conservative elder nobles were denouncing it as “very improper” and “immoral” because of the intimacy in Whirling.

“Lucien, are you still eating? This is a ball!” After her opening dance with Mr. Victor, Felicia finally found Lucien in the corner beside the dining table.

Putting down the plate, Lucien shrugged, “I don’t know how to whirl, Felicia.”

Lucien always felt rather hungry after awakening the Blessing. In addition to that, a tough task was waiting for him tonight.

“I can teach you, Lucien,” Felicia said to him sincerely, “Dancing, along with appreciating music and hunting, is very important in social life. If you want to get along with the nobles, you have to know how to dance.”

“I don’t know... I’m not made for this.” Lucien was a bit nervous, and he did not want to act weirdly at the ball. He awkwardly reached out his hand to invite Felicia for a dance.

“You’re doing good.” Felicia put her hand in Lucien’s, “Don’t worry. First time can never be perfect.”

Slightly putting one of his hands on Felicia’s waist and the other on her shoulder, Lucien started to dance following her instruction, and he was mindfully keeping a distance from Felicia’s body.

Several minutes later, Felicia looked at Lucien with surprise, “You can dance very well... except you’re a bit stiff. Is this your first time practicing Whirling?”

“No... not really.” Lucien couldn’t tell her about his Blessing and quickly found an excuse, “The princess taught me a bit before.”

“No wonder. After all, the princess is a grand knight, and she must be a good dance teacher, too.” Felicia nodded, and then she suddenly giggled, “Her Grace is half-head taller than you, and she is a great knight. When you were dancing with her, you probably look more like a lady.”

Felicia definitely heard some gossip about the princess. After all, Natasha never hid herself in front of people.

Lucien was a bit speechless. Then an idea flashed into his mind.

Suddenly Lucien lost his balance and slipped on the floor. He gasped in pain.

“Are you all right?” asked Felicia with concern, “You need a doctor?”

“My ankle hurts. Can you just have someone to lead me to a guest room? I just need a rest.” Lucien shook his head.

Felicia nodded and asked a servant to walk Lucien to the guest room on the third floor.

.....

The guest room was clean and nice, and the blanket on the bed was light and soft.

Sitting on the bed on his own, Lucien took out the letter and wrote several words down on it:

“I need the ball.”

It was close to eight at night, and it was dark outside.

More than ten minutes later, the heretics replied, “Open the window.”

As Lucien opened the window, the lively music playing downstairs immediately drifted up to him. Together with the music, a small black ball was thrown into the room.

Lucien agilely caught the ball.

This time, instead of crumbling the ball, Lucien took a peek at the inside of the ball. Through the heavy smoke in it, he saw the same cabin.

Luckily, the kidnappers did not move.

Putting the ball back into his pocket, Lucien responded through the letter, "I'll calm John down tomorrow morning when I meet him."

"Your cooperation is appreciated," answered the letter coldly.

Lucien folded the letter, put it back into the pocket of his black suit, and hung his suit on the rack.

In the following hour, a few people came to visit Lucien, including Victor, Rhine, and even some young nobles that Lucien did not know. Yvette looked a bit disappointed when she visited Lucien since obviously the injured young man could not do anything that night.

After nine thirty, the guest room finally quieted down. Lucien locked the door from inside, blew out the candles and lied in the darkness.

A while later, he finally stood up and poured himself a cup of water. At the same time, he secretly dropped one sapphire given by Camil into the water.

"You found anything, Lucien?" Camil's voice directly sounded in his mind.

Lucien answered to Camil silently in his mind, "Southeast of Melzer Black Forest, close to Lubeck Mountain." Then, pretending that it was an accident, he dropped the cup on the ground.

The direction was very inaccurate, and it was far away from where the cabin was located. Even if Camil was going to search the whole area, she would not be able to find the cabin.

Lucien swore a bit and went back to the bed. He stuffed the other

two sapphires under the pillow and covered himself with the big and soft blanket.

The ball was still going on, and the noise of the party made the night feel even quieter.

Some random dogs were barking afar.

The silver moon was up, and the moonlight sneaked into the room. In the moonlight, the blanket covering Lucien slightly twisted a bit.

Lucien escaped again from the window that was left open by him purposefully.

With his sharp vision, Lucien saw a black figure hiding behind a big tree not far away from the manor. Taking the opposite direction, Lucien climbed over the wall of the manor and ran into the forest behind it.

In the forest, he put on the black sorcerer robe that he prepared in advance and then ran toward Larnaca Canyon.

Chapter 84: Chaos

Chapter 84: Chaos

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

With Moonlight, Lucien moved quickly through the woods like a shadow. Although the manor was quite far from Larnaca Canyon, twenty minutes later, he could already see the shining Massol River, which was very close to the canyon, reflecting the moonlight in front of him.

Lucien slowed down a bit to be more cautious. He saw several campfires blazing in the distance, which were probably lit by adventurers.

...

The river bed was covered with countless pebbles. The river named Massol kept running eastwards and in the end joined Belem River.

Wearing a black hood, Fire Wolf stepped out of the trees' shadow very cautiously. There was an unfeathered, bright red-skinned bird standing on his shoulder. Tonight, the night watchers were making an ambush in a distance and the leader of the night watchers, Clown, was waiting for his signal.

Fire Wolf betrayed the apprentices group for a reason: a magic potion called Magic Gate would be given to him from the Church after successfully arresting Professor. The potion could help him become a real sorcerer and then he would be allowed to join the Night Watch. At that time, there would be no need for him to hide as a spy and a betrayer anymore.

Grabbing the bracelet in his pocket nervously, Fire Wolf was trying his best to stay focused, in order to sense if anyone was approaching. The bracelet called Fire Weaver was a level three magic item given by the Church to help protect himself when facing Professor.

Although Clown promised to him that they would arrive within thirty seconds after they saw his signal, Fire Wolf's heart was still beating very fast. No one knew what was going to happen within the thirty seconds.

It was already ten forty. Fire Wolf heard wolves howling deep in the woods. He

arrived at the the entrance to the canyon but did not see Professor.

Turning around, he saw something shining on a big rock. It was a message left by Professor.

"Meet you in the Black Forest, close to the south entrance to the canyon."

Fire Wolf was not really surprised that Professor changed the meeting place all of a sudden. After all, it was a quite common way to avoid being tailed after.

After the weird-looking bird, Fire Feather, made several chirps as a signal for the night watchers, Fire Wolf headed into the deeper woods.

This time it took him more than ten minutes to arrive at the designated place. It was very dark around since the moonlight was completely shaded by the tall and thick cedars.

Fire Wolf heard several savage howls in a distance, sounding rather thrilling. However, it was a relief for him since the howls were made by the night watchers.

They had followed Fire Wolf here and then the team scattered to check the surroundings.

Half an hour later, Professor still did not show up. Fire Wolf started to feel irritated, pacing back and forth and wondering if Professor had somehow found out that it was a trap.

The night watchers also lost their patience. Clown sent the message to the other night watchers using a secret method:

“Search this area, in a five-hundred-meter radius around the south entrance.”

The night watchers around started to move instantly.

Soon Minsk, one of the night watchers, found a wood cabin in the forest.

...

In the forest on the other side of the cabin, one of the night watchers had become a dead body with the fear still lingering on his face, and part of his brains were visible.

A slender man wearing a long black jacket was standing beside the dead body. The silver horn pattern on his jacket was rather noticeable. His right hand was covered with the night watcher's white brain tissue, and the man was sucking his fingers to enjoy the taste, as if he was tasting the sweetest candy.

A crystal ball on the man's left hand suddenly emitted a rather old voice, “Kill them all, Dragan. The temple knights will help you. Do not let them find our relic.”

“Yes, my lord.” The man finished licking his fingers, “Although I'm quite sure these poor guys' target is not us, I enjoy killing... and brains.”

His black jacket billowed out in the wind and within a second he disappeared in the darkness.

...

Tonight, the two Night Watcher teams were composed of a total of thirty members. Among them there were pastors, knights and even four grand knights as the team leaders. Close to half of the night watchers of the inquisition were sent in order to capture the mysterious Professor alive.

However, the dark forest unexpectedly turned into a hell to them tonight. They forfeited their lives here without even knowing who was their real enemy.

The smell of blood spread through the forest.

Clown was trying to contact the other night watchers. Suddenly, he sensed the threat from behind and immediately rolled forward.

A black ball fiercely struck the place where Clown was just standing. After that moment, the stones, grass and trees in the area disappeared completely, like water completely vaporized within a second.

Clown remained calm. His fingers started to move in a weird way like he was playing piano. Translucent lines grew out from his fingers and quickly shot out into the woods, pulling someone out.

It was Gragan.

“Puppet Blessing. Interesting.” Dragan’s body gradually melted within the darkness and escaped from the fine lines, “Is it how you utilize your dark Blessing? Ummm... I see... you became the hound of the inquisition.” Dragan’s voice was rather cold.

“Puppet is no dark Blessing. It’s a special gift from the God of Truth, not like your filthy dark power, Dragan!” Clown recognized him and called his name.

Clown lifted his arms again and this time the fine lines became much stronger. When the lines captured Dragan again, at the same time, Clown shot off the magic firework as a signal asking for help from the church.

However, before the firework was fully spread in the sky, a sudden strong black wave directly struck it. The firework signal was instantly devoured by the wave and disappeared in the sky.

Dark Devourer, a level six fiend spell, which was how the Church called the power that did not come from the God of Truth. The person who just cast this spell was of cardinal level!

...

In the underground relic, five high priests wearing silver robes were looking up at the two great priests standing on the altar

respectfully.

“It’s time to show your loyalty to our true God. Lead the other priests to devastate our enemies outside, the hounds of the so-called God of Truth.” The bald old man on the altar commanded.

“Be quick.” The other great priest added, coldly, “Although I stopped the signal, we shall still finish them as soon as possible before the heretics outside can ask for help again.”

“Your will is God’s will, great priests,” answered the five high priests at the same time.

...

The night watchers were very experienced fighters, and they did not earn their name undeservedly. When they realized that their enemies tonight were actually the heretics, they started to fight back.

A night watcher was holding a thick canon of scripture in his hand. This man was called Canon Holder, and he was the leader of the other Night Watcher team tonight.

Canon Holder’s steps were firm and steady. As he flipped the pages of the canon, a huge flame ball came right down from the sky and instantly vaporized a dark knight in front of him.

Level four divine spell, Flame Strike.

Without any interval, this night watcher flipped the pages again and summoned a flame wall and protected his team members, who were facing another dark knight.

Canon Holder was a level five bishop, who voluntarily gave up his life under the sunlight and joined the Night Watch to fight for his true God.

Lucien was sitting on a big tree quite a distance away, looking at the explosions on the ground expressionlessly as if he was appreciating nice fireworks.

He saw that the rest of the night watchers were approaching the wood cabin; he saw that the night watcher Minsk survived for now with his defense called Dragon Scale from his Red Dragon Blessing; and he saw that there were only eighteen night watchers left out of thirty.

However, Lucien was still waiting.

Chapter 85: Sneak into the Cave

Around one kilometer away from the wood cabin, there was a huge cedar. Lucien was sitting on the cedar waiting for the end of the fight between the Church and Argent Horn.

When he saw the black wave which devoured the night watcher's signal, Lucien calculated the angle and the distance and thus located where Argent Horn was actually hiding.

"About ninety meters northwest of the wood cabin," Lucien murmured in a low voice.

At the same time, Lucien looked at another direction and wondered in his mind, "She should have noticed the chaos already."

As the heretics and the night watchers started to gather together, Lucien felt it was finally time for him to take action.

...

Flame Strike, Angel Summoning, Healing... Canon Holder kept casting spells without interval. As a level five bishop, he was able to both devastate his enemies and save his comrades. His spells destroyed many magic circles and traps placed by Argent Horn, and thus the two great priests in the underground palace lost their control on the ground.

As six out of the eighteen night watchers were pastors, they were able to heal their injured comrades over and over again. Under the command of the two team leaders, the gathered night watchers kept moving forward and the situation started to turn around and became more favorable to the Church.

However, at this time, a dark cloud arrived, and the cloud was somehow squeaking.

"Bugs!" cried Minsk to alert the other night watchers.

These bugs were just too many to be immediately eliminated. They

moved very fast and soon encircled the night watchers. Countless bugs fully covered the shields of light that were protecting the night watchers. As the several pastors were trying to strengthen their Light Shields, they suddenly felt too weak to cast any spell. Their faces were burning like they were having a fever.

As soon as the shields expired, the bugs launched their attack onto the night watchers.

Using his Red Dragon Blessing, Minsk blocked some of the bugs away from them with Dragon Scale, but he knew that he was also reaching his limit.

It was a level five fiend spell, Plague, co-cast by the five high priests.

More dark knights and heretic priests arrived. The situation the night watchers were facing became tough again.

Canon Holder stopped attacking and turned to focus on driving away the bugs and curing the night watchers, especially the pastors. Several night watchers wearing silver armor stood in front of the pastors to protect them.

As the bugs were dying, the pastors were gradually recovering. Then they started to cast many divine spells such as "Blessing", "Morale" and "Pray" on the four fully armored night watchers to improve their strength, agility and persistence. Clown and Minsk were protecting them from the fierce attack of the dark knights and the priests.

The four warriors, blessed by the divine power, shouted and hacked their huge swords toward their enemies at the same time. The black gloves they were wearing covered their swords with a layer of black light, making the swords sharper and more powerful.

Although the several dark knights up front had different powers such as Black Dragon, Rock Titan, and Gray Elf, they were not able to resist the furious four warriors with such combined divine power.

For some reason, when facing the huge swords, Shield of Darkness

became useless, and so did Flame Wall. Four dark priests and a high priest suddenly became totally unprotected and got hacked into half.

"This Blessing is... Elimination!" The elder great priest in the underground palace was quite surprised, "Four knights with Elimination Blessing... and one of them is a level five grand knight!"

The Blessing called Elimination could make any supernatural power that did not belong to the real God become invalid. And, of course, the effectiveness of this Blessing depended on the individual power, and the real God it referred to could be chosen.

Elimination was the most precious and purest Blessing among the traditional demon hunters.

"Angola, you gotta help them," the other great priest said to the bald priest, "We should not waste our power here, for such an accident."

"This accident is a test from God." Angola smiled, looking rather old, "Interesting. Their original target was a sorcerer, and now we're fighting."

"I'll stay here to protect the temple," said the great priest in silver robe.

...

When the night watchers finally found a chance to send the signals, blurs of shadows rushed at them from different directions with great momentum. A knight among the night watchers got struck by the black shadow right in his face and he gave out shrill cries.

Level seven fiend spell, Hungry Shadow.

Soon the knight's eyes became red. He slowly lifted his huge sword up and hacked toward the other night watchers.

His soul was eaten by the shadow, and his body would be controlled by the spell caster for a short time.

...

The moment Lucien sensed the evil aura from the great priest, he suddenly sat up and became translucent to some extent in the moonlight. He quickly landed on the ground and started to run toward the underground temple as fast as he could from the other side of the forest, in order to avoid the battlefield.

Standing in front of the entrance to the underground temple of Argent Horn, although he was almost invisible in the moonlight, Lucien was still very nervous that he might be found by the heretics. However, he knew that uncle Joel and his family were in great danger, so he had no choice but to take the risk.

Then, a piece of moonlight secretly sneaked into the cave.

Chapter 86: The Reinforcements

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Inside the cave, there was a long and slanted paved path heading toward the underground palace. Around every ten meters, there was a candlestick on the stone wall. The yellow candlelight was rather dim and made the pathway even more thrilling.

Quick as a shadow, Lucien quietly followed the pathway and went into the deeper darkness.

...

The silver-robed great priest was checking the other pathways through which the hounds of the Church might sneak into the relic. However, he left the main entrance for last since Angola was fighting in the front, and that gave Lucien precious time to find the dungeon.

...

Instead of spreading his spiritual power, Lucien was using his acute hearing to sense his surroundings. It seemed most of the guards were currently out to fight against the night watchers, since Lucien heard no one talking or walking. In the nest of the heresy, he needed to be very cautious with the use of any supernatural power.

The underground relic was huge. Although he did have a few rough guesses from observing the surroundings in the Scene balls, Lucien never expected that there was indeed such a magnificent relic here.

As the ground became smoother, Lucien saw that there were many iron doors on both sides of the pathway. Feeling rather hesitant, he was not sure if he should open the closest door in front of him.

His right hand grabbed the handle, slightly shaking. Lucien had no idea what was waiting for him in the room.

Just when he was about to turn the handle, Lucien heard someone talking. The voice came from another room, but not far from where Lucien was standing now.

“What’s going on outside? All the priests are out?” a man asked. His voice sounded nervous.

“I have no idea what is happening. The explosion sounded horrible.” answered the second person.

After roughly estimating the strength of the two heretics, Lucien decisively opened the door and fiercely rushed at them. The heretics were totally unprepared for this sudden attack and in the next second they were knocked out and fell on the ground.

Closing the door behind him, Lucien awoke one of the young heretics.

After feeling rather confused for a second, the heretic recalled what just happened and was about to scream for help. However, the only thing he managed to do was opening his mouth. As soon as he made eye contact with Lucien, his mind got lost.

There were countless stars in Lucien’s eyes, and his eyes were as deep as two black holes.

“Do you know where they are, the poor family that they just caught several days ago?” asked Lucien in a soft and low voice.

“Yes... yes my lord.” The young heretic looked rather respectful since he had been hypnotized by Lucien’s Eyes of Stars. And as Eyes of Stars was more of a kind of hypnotism, very little magic wave could be detected.

From that hypnotized heretic, Lucien collected some important information: the palace was located in the west side of the huge relic, where the main force of Argent Horn usually patrolled, while the dungeon was in the northwest, guarded by an average dark knight and several of his squires.

Besides, the relic actually had more than one level. However, the several levels beneath were completely destroyed and could not be

utilized anymore. On this level, there was a total of five pathways connected to the Black Forest.

Knowing that the main force could come back at any moment, Lucien needed to be hurry. Breaking the two heretics' necks, he left the room, bypassed the palace in the west and headed toward the dungeon fast and quietly.

...

With a better knowledge of this relic, Lucien calmed down a bit. Soon he arrived at the dungeon.

The dungeon was quite big, and it was divided into half by the iron bars. There were around seven or eight cells on one side, while on the other side four knight squires were pacing back and forth, talking about what was going on outside. Behind them, assorted instruments of torture were hanging on the wall.

The old man wearing black leather armor had a twisted face. At this moment, he was sitting on a bench, listening to the sound of fighting outside and looking at the cells on the other side with an irritated expression. Lucien thought that he must be the dark knight.

Then the old knight stood up and said with anger, "Bring them here... the two who lost their fingers. I need to have something to do."

Lucien's heart suddenly sank.

"Lord Janson, they can't be killed right now!" A knight squire dissuaded him.

"I don't need you to remind me!" shouted Janson irritably, "They're the most f***king troublesome prisoners in the whole bloody dungeon. I gotta take them to that shitty cabin every couple of days! So what am I in the priests' eyes? A f***king dog walker?!"

Janson's irritability and anger came from his Blessing. The squires exchanged a look and one of them took the keys and opened a cell.

“You two, get out of here.” Tim kicked Joel and Alisa who were lying on the ground.

Joel and Alisa were very scared. Iven’s eyes were filled with tears and he bit his lips silently, since there was nothing he could do as a young boy.

“Move!” Tim kicked Joel on his back. Out of the iron bars, Joel staggered forward and fell over in front of Janson.

Taking the leather whip down from the wall, Jason fiercely flipped the whip on Joel and Alisa with great anger, “Rubbish! Damned idiots! And I need to f***king walk you EVERY... F***KING... DAY!”

Every time he burst out a word, Janson lashed at them with a bitter whip.

Although Janson was still constraining himself to avoid killing Joel and Alisa, his whips still made Joel and Alisa scream at the top of their lungs in great pain and roll on the ground back and forth.

While Janson was enjoying the screams, Lucien was clenching his fists with great anger. The muscles of his body were all tensed up. He wanted to kill all the bastards and tear them up to pieces, right now.

However, he still had to bide his time. Acting in a rush and impulsively could easily kill him here, not to mention rescuing uncle Joel and his family.

Hiding in the darkness, Lucien was waiting.

...

“Ilia, these night watchers are tough.” Angola was floating high in the air, sending his voice to the other great priest using his fiend power, “They have lots of powerful magic items. Luckily, we took the initiative and all of their magic items are destroyed.”

Only five night watchers were still standing. They were Clown, Salvador—the Canon Holder, a grand knight, Minsk—the Red

Dragon, and a pastor. The other twenty five night watchers were all dead, and some of the bodies were even destroyed.

“Don’t waste our time anymore, Angola. Finish them all, and we have to destroy this entrance.”

Ilia’s voice came and urged him.

“All right.” Angola raised his arms again, covered by dark shadows.

At this time, the night sky suddenly turned blue in a weird way, as if the ocean and the sky exchanged their positions. The ocean was hanging up above them and a huge water column shot downward and overwhelmed Angola!

Ilia sensed the power, and he stood up instantly.

Camil, the Blue Tide.

The level seven radiant knight arrived!

Flying high in the sky, the two great cardinals, Gossett and Amelton, also arrived following lady Camil.

“Kill all the prisoners! Destroy all the evidence! Everyone leave through the other pathways!” Ilia commanded immediately.

At the same time, he started to cast the spells to destroy the altar. Although he was a level seven priest himself as well, the reinforcements of the Church consisting of the two great cardinals and a radiant knight were irresistible.

Besides, Sard, the horrible monster, also could show up there at any moment.

...

Receiving the order, Janson lifted his whip high with a savage look on his face.

When Lucien heard the deafening splash coming from outside, he knew it was time for him to take action. Like a white shadow,

Lucien jumped out of the darkness and rushed at the dark knight with great momentum.

Chapter 87: Killing

Janson's Blessing gave him not only the irritated personality, but also a sharp instinct. The moment he sensed the danger, Janson turned his wrist and fiercely flipped the leather whip backwards.

Lucien was prepared and he was also faster than Janson. Tapping the ground with one foot, Lucien quickly changed the direction of his movement and, at the same time, he easily cut off the leather whip with the dagger in his hand.

Without any hesitation, Janson threw the whip away and grabbed his triple-headed flail from the table. The big chunks of muscle under his leather armor almost burst out and his eyes became red, like those of a furious bull.

Facing Janson's huge weapon, Lucien suddenly stopped and dropped a handful of fine powder on the ground.

A deafening thunder burst out.

The loud thunder almost knocked Janson unconscious for a second, not to mention his four squires. When they were about to pick up their weapons, they were attacked by the strong sound waves and then fell on the ground.

Uncle Joel and Alisa also passed out.

Homan's Oscillation, a spell of apprentice level which utilized high-decibel sound waves as the weapon. Being used properly, a low level spell could also be quite effective.

Facing the great thunder, Lucien himself also felt a bit sick. By the time when he was able to take a firm stand again, Janson had also recovered and started to wield his huge flail.

That was a triple-headed flail, looking rather heavy, and the three heads were also different: one was covered with lightning, one with fire and the last one with a green and sticky slime.

The big chunks of muscle in Janson's arms were like rocks, and the whole dungeon was slightly trembling from his angry howling. He wielded his flail in a crazy manner, and it seemed like the word "defense" never existed in his dictionary.

Lucien was a bit surprised. After all, most knights, no matter if they were from the Church or the dark knights, were well trained with different fighting skills, however, Janson was not one of them. Probably it was because his physical strength was so overwhelming that there was no need for him to carry out the strategies in his mind.

The idea of a direct head-on resistance was obviously too stupid, and Lucien was way smarter than that. Employing delaying tactics together with his Moonlight Blessing, Lucien kept moving around swiftly in the dungeon to avoid the three huge iron balls of the flail, waiting for the dark knight to get tired.

However, Lucien soon noticed that something was not right: It seemed that the one who would be exhausted first was himself. The buzzing lightning on one of the iron balls was somehow slowly paralyzing his body, even if the flail never actually hit Lucien.

Lucien could not waste time anymore. He took a few large steps back, to gain some distance from Janson who was fighting like a furious beast, and within few seconds Janson was once again in front of Lucien, wielding his terrifying black flail with great momentum.

Throwing another handful of shining power to the ground, Lucien activated the spell without casting. Although that would cost him more spiritual power, it was definitely worth it.

A dazzling light ball suddenly appeared in the dungeon, and it instantly lit up the whole place like the midday sun.

Janson subconsciously closed his eyes to protect them from the bright light and his movement paused for a second. That second was more than enough for Lucien.

Curling his body a bit, Lucien shot himself out toward Janson, as

fast as an arrow. The dagger was shining with a cool radiance in his hand.

Janson quickly turned his wrist inwards to attack Lucien with his flail, but it was too late. Although the three iron balls were still chasing Lucien's back, he was already very close to Janson!

However, Lucien's silver dagger almost cracked when he stabbed Janson in the chest. Because of his Furious Savage Blessing, Janson's chest muscles were like big pieces of rock, which were also covered by his fine leather armor.

Janson's relentless attack was supported by his great defensive capability!

The flail was just a few centimeters away from Lucien's back.

Janson looked at Lucien with a cruel smile on his face, but surprisingly, this skinny little bastard smiled back at him.

The dark knight immediately realized the great danger. Fiercely leaning back his body, Janson tried to avoid the second round attack.

Palmeira's Frost Blades. Three sharp ice blades targeted Janson's throat, heart and waist.

Since they were too close to each other, by the time Janson started to tilt backward, the blades had already arrived.

While the one targeting his heart was stopped by the tough muscle in his left chest, the other two blades cut his throat and his abdomen wide open. His blood spurted out but froze instantly.

At the same time, Lucien quickly covered his body with a layer of moonlight to take the attack of the flail. While the flame and acid were blocked by Lucien's Moonlight Armor, the lightning went directly through and struck him.

Janson and Lucien fell onto the ground at the same time. Lucien was paralyzed by the lightning and he felt both pain and itch in his body.

Bang! The flail fell to the ground from Janson's hand as well.

Rough and muffled groans came from Janson's throat. Lucien could see that the fresh blood was still running out of the big man's body.

A few seconds later, the groans stopped. Jason's eyes were still wide open, filled with anger and astonishment.

Lucien stood up with great effort and finally stabilized his legs. Slowly, he approached Janson's body and broke the savage's neck, just in case.

Luckily, his tactics worked. By hiding his Blessing and the magic item Ice Revenger, Lucien pretended he was nothing other than an ordinary sorcerer apprentice. If Janson had not underestimated his enemy, Lucien would be in big trouble.

Then, without any hesitation, Lucien came to the squires who were trying to stand up from the ground with dizziness and decisively wrenched their necks.

He purposefully saved Tim for last.

"I beg... I beg your mercy... Please!" cried Tim, crawling on the ground.

"Mercy?" Lucien sneered, "When the innocent people were begging, where was your mercy?"

A pair of cold hands reached Tim's throat, and the fingers slowly tightened. Finally, there was a crack in Tim's neck.

Now Lucien held no more fear and hesitation toward killing, since in this world, people like him had to either kill or be killed.

...

Picking up the heavy flail, Lucien started to attack the five bodies to destroy the evidence.

Chapter 88: The End of the Betrayer

The flail was so heavy that even Lucien, who was already stronger than common people, was having a hard time lifting it over and over again. Powerful as it was, the flail soon tore the bodies into pieces and the flame and acid quickly destroyed the body parts completely.

Lucien was now feeling a bit concerned because during the fight he had absolutely no idea how dangerous this weapon was. If he really got hit by this flail without his Moonlight Armor, he would be seriously injured.

Within only thirty seconds, the bodies turned into a small puddle of unknown green liquid and some ashes floating in the air.

Lucien kicked over the water bucket in the corner and quickly cleaned up the mess on the floor. As for the floating ashes, he summoned a gust of wind by heating up some of the air inside that room and cooling down the air outside of it, to blow the ashes away to the aisle.

Then, with great caution, Lucien carried Joel and Alisa back to the cell with Iven, who were still unconscious from the oscillation spell. Although Lucien was very excited to see Joel, Alisa and Iven again, he could not leave with them right now, or he would definitely be suspected by the Church. After all, in people's eyes, he was no more than a physically weak musician.

After all the work, he pulled out a tube of Brown Owl and drank it, as his natural recovery was slower underground due to the lack of moonlight.

A moment later, Lucien was rushing through the most remote pathway to leave the underground palace, carrying the flail with him. The pathway was very far from the palace and the other core places in the complex, therefore, it should be relatively safe. However, the weird thing was that Lucien did not see any heretics on his way.

...

Down on their knees, these ordinary heretics in the stone room sounded rather panicked, "Lord Jerome, what shall we do right now! We...!"

Before they could finish their words, their faces suddenly twisted with great pain. Pieces of black cloud came out of their bodies and instantly took their souls away.

As the masses of black cloud were absorbed into Jerome's body, he shrugged a bit, "Well... what you guys should do is to die."

It would be impossible for those ordinary heretics to escape from the Church, so they must die, or more information about Argent Horn would be revealed.

...

Lucien was getting close to his destination. He could see dim rays of moonlight cast from the outside of the cave. Suddenly, he stopped running and hid himself in a dark corner because he sensed the strong smell of blood.

There were several dead bodies scattered on the ground on the way out of the complex. According to their special robes, Lucien could tell they were the heretics from Argent Horn.

Realizing that the heretics were killing their ordinary followers, Lucien decided to wait there a bit more, just in case.

Someone was screaming with great fear in the darkness. As the squeal was getting closer and closer, Lucien clenched his fists.

Suddenly, the squeal stopped. The person was killed.

"This should be the last one," sounded a cold voice. "Ilia asked us to leave as soon as possible after cleaning up."

"I don't see Janson..." the other young but hoarse voice answered.

"We're not gonna wait for the savage. We can't," urged the cold

voice.

"All right... We leave now," agreed the second person.

Then Lucien heard their steps leaving the cave.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien made his body partially translucent into the moonlight and rushed to the exit. Under the cover of the silver moon, he successfully jumped into a bush.

Breathing the air mixed with the smell of dirt, Lucien released a long sigh of relief.

It was very quiet around him. For a moment, he felt that what happened in the underground palace was almost like a dream. However, the many scattered dead bodies of the heretics around the bush were reminding him how cruel the night was.

Looking up at the moon and the few stars in the sky, Lucien roughly figured out his current location and started to run toward Massol River, to get back to Family Hayne's manor.

...

The heavy flail was quite cumbersome, but luckily the silver moon was out tonight, and Lucien's speed and strength were both improved in the moonlight.

Several minutes later, he approached the wood cabin with great caution. Almost everything was destroyed in this area from the many powerful divine and fiend spells.

Dead bodies were everywhere, and many of them were burned beyond recognition.

Among the bodies, Lucien saw one wearing a sorcerer robe, which draw his attention the most.

So Lucien flipped the body over, and he saw the young man's face. The great fear the man experienced before he died was still there.

"Fire Wolf..." Lucien murmured the name.

An idea came to Lucien's mind.

Using Mage Hand, Lucien left a line of words on Fire Wolf's body with his half-clotted blood.

"THE END OF THE BETRAYER. PROFESSOR."

Chapter 89: The Anger of the Night Watchers

After leaving the line of words, Lucien checked the body carefully and found two magic items, which luckily remained intact from the fierce battle.

One was a dark red bracelet, woven by some sort of fine red plant fiber. Although it looked rather plain, the bracelet possessed a great power of illusory flame that surprised Lucien quite a bit when he was examining it with his spiritual power. He believed that this bracelet was even more powerful than his Ice Revenger, and the bracelet was at least a level two high-ranked magic item.

The other thing Lucien found was an iron black dagger, that felt very cold and sharp.

Lucien put the bracelet and the dagger into the pockets of his robe. Standing up and looking around, he was quite sure that he could still find more magic items from these dead bodies scattered everywhere. In the next second, however, Lucien quickly dispelled this idea, warning himself not to be greedy.

After crossing the river, Lucien found a place for a short rest in the Black Forest to recover his spiritual and physical power. During the break, he registered the inner magic structures of the flail, the bracelet and the iron black dagger in his spirit library for a detailed analysis later.

Then, Lucien buried the flail under a weird-shaped big cedar, and hid the bracelet and the dagger underneath a big rock.

Without a deeper analysis, Lucien could not make sure that the magic items were clean and safe. If there were any trailing or locating marks on them and if Lucien just took them back home carelessly, these things would become his catastrophe.

...

Larnaca Canyon.

In a dark corner in the canyon, Angola was grabbed by the neck and lifted up by a long and fair hand. The seemingly delicate hand was doing the job easily, as if it was picking up a little mouse, instead of a level seven great priest.

"You can't kill me! You don't have to...!" Angola's voice squeezed out from his throat, filled with great fear and surprise.

"Well... Unfortunately, I'm afraid I have to." The voice was soft and sweet, "It's very impressive that you could escape from Amelton, one of the top three experts in tracking in the duchy. However, you still represent a great danger to us. If she finds you, all of us will be in deep trouble."

"No, that's just your excuse!" cried Angola, "We share the same goal... and we shall find the...!"

"That's enough, Angola. I'm fed up with the awful sulphur smell in the evil blood you all have." The soft voice cut him off, "You think we are allies? Don't be silly. I've changed my mind and I don't want to be a part of it anymore."

"Are you insane?! You can't!" Angola's voice came out from his throat with great difficulty, "You'll be punished!"

"None of your business." The beautiful long hand tightened a bit, and Angola's body started to get dehydrated very fast. In the next second, the body exploded silently into fine, light yellow powder that spread through the air.

"I can share a piece of news with you, for free, Angola... since you're dead already," said the soft voice, "Hathaway will soon be back from the secret dimension."

Then, the beautiful pale hand disappeared in the darkness.

Two minutes later, a woman in cardinal clothes arrived. Floating in the air and looking around, her eyes were cold in contrast with her bright red robe.

"Angola disappeared... completely?" She murmured in a low voice.

...

Running at full speed in the Black Forest, Lucien was like a white shadow.

Twenty minutes later, he saw the manor of House Hayne. Lights were still on, and music was still playing. The big party was still going on around the midnight.

And like what he was expecting, the heretic who had been trailing him all the time was still there observing the manor, but now it was Lucien that was watching him from behind.

If this heretic was caught by the Church, Lucien would be in trouble for lying about how he awoke his Blessing.

As he was very close to the manor, Lucien needed to finish the heretic as quietly as possible. After estimating the heretic's level, he slowly approached him and silently activated Darkness silently.

The heretic looked very confused for a second, as all the light suddenly disappeared and the pure darkness pressed on his head. Then he sensed the magic wave coming from behind him. He was under attack!

Because of Lucien's Dark Vision, the spell did not affect him at all.

Before the heretic could see anything, Lucien's hands had already reached his neck.

"Crack."

And that was the last thing the heretic heard in this world.

...

Clown, Canon Holder, Lend, Juliana and Minsk gathered in front of the cabin. After the bitter fight, the great depression and tiredness on their faces were impossible to hide. When the night watchers were searching the underground complex and chasing the heretics,

they were silently immersed in their mourning.

Only five night watchers survived the battle, out of thirty, who were all excellent and brave warriors in fighting against the darkness and evil. The five night watchers' guts were burning with anger and grief.

"Clown... Can you come and have a look?" Juliana noticed something on Fire Wolf's body.

"THE END OF THE BETRAYER. PROFESSOR."

The scarlet words were like sharp knives stabbing in the five night watchers' hearts. Their anger almost burst out from their chests.

It was this bloody Professor who did all of this. It was him who set this horrible trap!

Chapter 90: Everyone Loved the Moon

The five night watchers were standing around the body like statues. Deep silence enwrapped everyone with tremendous pressure.

In the darkness, Clown clenched his fists with rage and slowly squeezed out a word through his teeth:

"Professor...!"

Taking off the black gloves, Salvador, the Canon Holder, put his bare hands on the chest and started to pray for the twenty-five deceased night watchers. His voice sounded very solemn, "You gain when you give. You live forever after you die. Paradise is open to you."

Then Salvador pulled out his white handkerchief and tied it on his wrist, "The day that I burn Professor to death will be the day I take this off."

Following Salvador's suit, the grand knight Lend also tied on a white handkerchief and lowered his head, "I'll never forget this battle, my fellows. This so-called Professor will pay in blood."

"Professor is on the top of my target list," joined Juliana. Recalling the bitter battle, Juliana's heart was still filled with fear. She suffered the pain of watching her teammates dying one by one right in front of her eyes. She remembered the desperation she experienced when her healing spells became useless when facing the dark power. Although Juliana did hate Professor to the guts, she was also subconsciously afraid of him.

"Bastard... You bloody bastard!" Clown could not hold himself back anymore, "I'll find you and torture you. Wherever you go, whoever you are, I'll turn your body into my puppet and I'll have your soul gnawed by the demons, suffering in hell!" Clown never experienced such failure since he joined the Night Watch. As a level five grand knight, his confidence was ruined tonight.

The forever-smiling clown mask on his face looked rather strange

and horrible in the darkness.

"It was my fault. I was so close to Professor..." Minsk put on a white handkerchief as well.

Clown slowly calmed down, then turned around to the other four night watchers, "Professor must be leaving Aalto soon. We should add Professor to our Cleansing List and search him all over the continent."

"I'm afraid that the bastard is not qualified for this," said Lend with a bit of hesitation, "After all, the names on the list were all extremely powerful. Some of them are even capable of changing the situation of the whole world. Professor... he is only a level three or four sorcerer."

The Cleansing List was shared by all the inquisitions on the continent. Every name was regarded as a great trouble to the Church and was continuously hunted by the most powerful pastors and night watchers from different inquisitions. However, the list had not changed for many years, since hunting them down was extremely difficult.

"Twenty-five night watchers died because of him," said Canon Holder seriously. "Although he's not even of a senior rank, his cruelty and slyness should not be underestimated."

"I see." Lend nodded. "We shall make a proposal to Cardinal Amelton, then. "

"Let's find our teammates... at least part of them," said Salvador solemnly.

...

It took Lucien a while to wipe out all the evidence, including the heretic's body and his own torn robe, and he also cleaned himself a bit. Then he came to the other side of the manor through the woods and climbed over the tall wall of the manor.

Quietly and carefully, Lucien landed in the shadow of the three-storey house, covered by the tall, lush grass and bushes.

When Lucien stood up and was patting away the dust on his hands, his heart suddenly skipped a beat.

"Good evening, Lucien." It was Rhine. He was only wearing a loose, dark red shirt, of which the top part was unbuttoned. His skin looked even paler than that of a noble lady in the moonlight.

"Go-good evening, Mr. Rhine." Seeing that it was Rhine, Lucien was a bit relieved, but he still remained cautious, "You're still up?"

"So are you." Rhine's put on a meaningful smile.

Lucien forced a smile on his face, "If I told you that I'm wandering here to enjoy the beautiful silver moon tonight, would you believe my words?"

When he was talking, Lucien lowered his head and looked at himself. Parts of his lower arms were stained by muddy water, and his shirt was crumpled out of shape. Most importantly, as he looked up, Lucien found that the silver moon was hidden by the tall stone wall.

What an excellent excuse it was!

"Yes, I believe your words, because..." Rhine shrugged his shoulders, "I'm here for the moon as well."

"Ah...?" Lucien was suddenly at a loss.

"For sure... Did you see how charming, how bright the silver moon is tonight!" Rhine raised his head and praised the stone wall standing in front of him with affection, "We are here for the same reason, aren't we?"

"Well..." Lucien took a longer breath and became serious, "Can you tell me who you are, Mr. Rhine?" As he could not pretend he was an innocent young man anymore, Lucien decided to ask Rhine directly, and he had the feeling that Rhine held no hostility toward him.

"I'm just a bard." Rhine shook his head, "A bard who has nothing to do with the place you are longing for. And even if I tell you where it is, you are still not capable of going there."

"You can tell me now! At least I can have a more specific goal!" asked Lucien eagerly.

"My suggestion is that you should work hard and become a real musician, then you can travel to the many countries around the continent. That'll be a great benefit to your goal." Then Rhine turned around and left.

Lucien was confused. Eager as he was, he knew that he must leave now, in case someone else showed up.

After climbing into the guest room, Lucien put the two sapphires back into his pocket and lay down.

What happened tonight already seemed like a dream to Lucien. Shutting down the brain and feeling the cozy blanket, he slowly fell into sleep.

Lucien did not know how long his sleep lasted when he was awakened by a gentle knock at the door.

"Who is that?" asked Lucien in a low voice.

"It's me, Yvette. Do you want to take a walk with me to enjoy the fantastic silver moon tonight?" invited the noble lady in an alluring way.

Lucien was a bit choked with what Yvette just said. He was already very impressed with the moon, and it seemed like everyone wanted to take a walk in the moonlight that night.

"Well... I'm terribly sorry, Yvette. I twisted my ankle and I'm feeling sleepy." Lucien refused her directly, "Maybe next time. Thank you for asking."

Yvette slightly stamped her foot with disappointment and anger outside of Lucien's room, "Such an idiot! I bet you'll come to me and beg me on your own someday, Lucien!"

...

After hearing Yvette's steps leaving, Lucien lay down again to go

back to sleep.

"Lucien, look what you've just done! No wonder you have no girlfriend!" A female voice came from the window, "You should learn from me! I always knocked the door of Silvia's room at midnight."

It was Princess Natasha, who was standing on the windowsill, followed by lady Camil floating in the air. With a longsword in one hand and her visor in the other hand, Natasha's purple hair was fluttering in the wind. The central part of her white armor was dark red, which was from the blood of a dragon.

Noticing that Lucien was looking at her armor, Natasha smiled, "You like this armor, don't you? It's called Dragon Blood, I'm wearing it because I just came back from the battle with Argent Horn."

Pausing a bit, Natasha continued, "By the way, Lucien, would you like to take a walk in the beautiful moonlight? Hahaha..."

Chapter 91: Relief

"Did you see Joel, Alisa and Iven? Are they safe now? Where are they now?" Recovering from the surprise of suddenly seeing the princess on his windowsill, Lucien asked so eagerly that he forgot to use the proper salutation.

Anyone who cared about his or her family would definitely react like this. And Lucien regarded them as his closest relatives in this world.

Although he had killed Janson and the squires in the dungeon, Lucien was still looking forward to the confirmation from the princess. After all, the battle tonight was so cruel that ordinary people like Joel, Alisa and Iven could easily become the innocent victims of the many powerful magic spells.

"Well... I was fighting on the frontline, Lucien," said Natasha a bit embarrassed. "Sorry, I should've paid more attention to your family... But don't worry, Lucien. I did confirm with the knight who was responsible for saving the hostages, and they are safe."

"Thank you very much, Your Grace." A sincere smile appeared on Lucien's face. As his whole plan was like walking a tightrope, any tiny mistake could kill the people that he cared the most in this world. "Then where are they now? When I can see them?" Lucien asked again.

"They are in the main cathedral right now, since they were tortured badly, both physically and mentally," Camil answered. "The pastors in the church will take care of them, and they need to be questioned later."

"But they are innocent! They're just ordinary people..." Lucien shuddered to think of the questioning that he received, or say, the one this body once received, from the Church.

"I know what you're worrying about, Lucien," Natasha comforted him, "Last time you were wronged as a suspect, but this time it's different. The Church just wants to ask them some questions about

the dungeon guards of Argent Horn, nothing else."

Then Natasha said to lady Camil, "The power of a radiant knight is surely impressive. That sudden attack you launched toward the great priest was so powerful that the poor people in the dungeon were even knocked out. I wonder when I will become a radiant knight."

"May... may I ask what is Argent Horn?" asked Lucien purposefully.

"It was Argent Horn that kidnapped your uncle and his family. They are followers of demon, and they call themselves Argent Horn," explained Natasha. "Their souls are completely corrupted by darkness. When we were trying to catch the heretics alive, they shouted 'Return to the eternal silence' and blew themselves up."

Speaking of this, Natasha's heart was still beating fast. Although she was only one step away from becoming a radiant knight and was quite experienced in fighting, the horrible scene of the heretics exploding themselves in front of her was still bothering the princess's mind.

"All of the heretics... they killed themselves?" Lucien of course hoped that they were all dead so the Church and the princess would never know how he actually awoke his Blessing.

"Most of the heretics died, and some of their leaders escaped." Then Natasha slightly raised her head and said with pride, "But I caught a priest alive. And we learned that the right hand of a powerful demon was sealed in the relic, but it was taken away by the heretics who escaped."

Hearing that a heretic got caught, Lucien's heart skipped a beat. He quickly calmed down and asked, "Any other information? I'm afraid they're plotting something toward you and the grand duke."

"Yes, they are planning on something big." Natasha touched her chin thoughtfully, "But only the great priests know the plan."

"We'll investigate the personnel of our intelligence department. I'm sure we can find more later," added Camil seriously.

"I see... so I'm safe now, right?" asked Lucien although he already knew the answer. He felt he could be a pretty good actor.

"Although we did not find the person who was always watching you, I'm quite sure that you're safe now. After all, the heretics suffered a great loss tonight, and they are currently busy with running for their lives."

Lucien nodded, putting on a relieved look.

"Thank you, Lucien. Your information helped us a lot this time," said Natasha sincerely.

"That's my pleasure," Lucien lowered his head and answered politely.

At that moment, Camil's face darkened and her eyebrows frowned together, which made her look even more serious than usual.

"What happened, auntie?"

"Viscount Stuart killed himself before our people arrived, Your Grace," answered Camil in a low voice.

Viscount Stuart was in charge of the intelligence department of the duchy, who was also a grand knight.

Natasha waved her right hand and her vambrace made a crisp clack, "Someone's behind Stuart... But why did Stuart betray us? Why he wanted to become the enemy of the Church?"

"We should go now, Your Grace," Camil reminded her.

"Oh... I just realized that I'm still standing on the window. I gotta go now, Lucien." Natasha nodded to him, "The whole thing is even more complicated than I thought. And I'll tell the Church that you've awakened your Blessing under my help."

Then she paused a bit and said to Lucien, "I'm sorry that I cannot make you a knight and give you a title, since according to the law, you're not as powerful as a knight yet. Besides, making you a knight at this time might put you at great risk. I hope you understand."

"I totally understand, Your Grace," answered Lucien. "Your trust is the most important thing to me, and my family is safe. I cannot ask for more."

"I'll reward you with a manor several months later. You have my word," said Natasha.

"A manor? Your Grace, that's... that's too much." Lucien refused subconsciously, knowing that he would be leaving Aalto sooner or later. Money was better than a manor to him.

Natasha waved her hands and insisted, "House Violet always pays. It's our royal tradition. By the way, how did you find out the approximate location, Lucien?"

"I saw a special kind of long-tailed tit in the ball." Lucien was prepared for this question and thus lied without any hesitation, "When I was too poor to feed myself, I often went to the Black Forest for the wild mushrooms and I saw them a few times. Around Aalto, these birds only live around Melzer Black Forest and Lubeck Mountain."

"Interesting. Never heard it before." Natasha nodded, "Besides the manor, you should have a knight sword. I'll find you one, Lucien."

"Thank you so much, Your Grace." Lucien bowed to the princess.

Natasha took a step backward and floated in the air. Although she was not a radiant knight, her Dragon Blood Armor could help her fly.

"Remember to take a walk in the moonlight, Lucien." Natasha laughed and then flew away with Camil.

After watching them leave, Lucien released a long sigh of relief. Suddenly, he felt very exhausted.

Chapter 92: The Prophecy

Close to the Dark Mountain Range, the silver-robed great priest Ilia was standing on a rock, looking down at the few heretics kneeling on the ground.

The rage of the great priest was horrible. The huge rock started to crack from his dark power.

"Who can tell me... what the hell happened?!" Ilia was shouting like a wounded beast.

They suffered a great loss tonight. The power of Argent Horn in the duchy was almost annihilated. The number of the members who survived was less than ten, including a level five dark knight, Dragan, two high priests, three ordinary priests and an ordinary dark knight.

Years of Ilia's hard work were ruined overnight. Now his body was covered by a layer of black fire with a strong smell of sulphur. As the silver hood slipped down, Ilia's face was revealed.

There were two goat horns on his head, and his eyes were bloody red. The knights and the priests kneeling in front of him didn't dare to look up.

After a while, Ilia calmed himself down and put the hood on again. Then, he asked, "Who can tell me... why the Church and House Violet were there tonight?"

"The so-called Professor... he was escaping from the Church tonight and somehow he found the underground palace. That's what I know," answered Dragan carefully.

After a moment of silence, Ilia shouted again, "Then who's that bloody Professor?!"

"The night watcher said that this Professor might come from the Continental Congress of Magic," answered Dragan, "Actually, we got the news that Professor was gonna meet a sorcerer apprentice

somewhere in the Black Forest. Since it was very far from us..."

"You f***king idiots!" Ilia almost wanted to tear Dragan into pieces.

Knowing that he said something stupid, Dragan lowered his head and dared not contradict the great priest. In Dragan's mind, it was just impossible for them to block the whole Black Forest and drive all the people in the forest away.

"Professor... he did this on purpose." Gnashing his teeth, Ilia said slowly, "Killing two birds with one stone, even without getting any blood on his own hands. But why he did this..."

"But I thought the Congress of Magic was on our side..." asked a level five priest with confusion.

"Internal conflict is everywhere," sneered Ilia.

Then Ilia turned around and started to pray to the Great Master of Argent, seeking for the revelation from his God.

All the followers started to pray as well.

A black shadow came out from Ilia's silver robe and gradually covered all of them.

In the darkness, all the followers present heard a deep voice in their mind, but only Ilia could understand the message.

Soon the shadow disappeared and Ilia stood up. He raised his right hand high and said to all the followers, "The Great Master of Argent assured me that despite the setback we suffered tonight, we'll still be able to accomplish the task, and build the great realm for our true God on the ground."

"May you walk on the ground, as you walk in your realm," responded the other followers in an encouraged way.

"The Great Master also showed me a prophecy: 'A falling star has brought the chaos. The throne of fate has lost its master. The nonbeliever who walks in light and darkness will make his debut'."

"What does it mean?" asked Dragan, "It's like a poem..."

"The devil sullied Aalto. We cannot see it clearly." Ilia shook his head.

Fate and time were the hardest to understand. Even the greatest prophet was like an ordinary person when facing a huge mountain, and all he or she could see was only a very small part of it.

...

Lucien slept very well last night. He woke up with the pleasant twitter of birds around eight in the morning.

The ball ended very late. Many people were still in their beds. Thus, no one urged Lucien to go for breakfast.

It was the first time Lucien enjoyed such nice and soft blankets since he crossed over to this world, thus it took Lucien more than half an hour to actually get up and get dressed.

When Lucien was walking downstairs, a maid came to him and smiled, "Good morning, Mr. Evans, what do you want to have for breakfast?"

"Bread, cheese sausage... with milk, please," answered Lucien. He ordered a rich breakfast since he had a pretty good work out last night.

"Sure." The maid nodded, "You'd like to have the breakfast in the dining room or your own room, sir?"

Lucien glanced at the dining room downstairs and saw Rhine was sitting there.

"Dining room, thank you."

When Lucien entered the dining room, Rhine was sending a piece of rare-cooked steak into his mouth.

"Morning, Lucien!" greeted Rhine, "You really should try the steak, very juicy."

Lucien took an opposite seat and said to the maid, "A steak for me, please. Medium."

Then Lucien turned to Rhine and smiled, "Good breakfast starts a good day."

"Also a perfect supplement for a good work out," said Rhine meaningfully.

"Evans, Yvette is like a beast." A young noble man was sitting beside them. He laughed a bit, but had clearly misunderstood their conversation.

"Come on, Albay. I didn't do anything last night." Lucien was introduced to this young man last night by Felicia, "I hurt my ankle."

"I see. No wonder..." Albay laughed even harder, "No wonder Yvette went for hunting very early this morning and she looked angry. Good for you, Lucien."

The breakfast was pleasant. Seeing that Rhine almost finished his food, Lucien asked hurriedly, "Can you tell me where it is... the dream like place that you mentioned to me last night?"

"Since it's as beautiful as paradise, I'll tell you the location after you can hold your own concert, as an award." Rhine smiled in a cunning way. To him, it was very interesting to see Lucien's growth.

After Rhine left, Albay asked Lucien curiously, "Where is that place you were talking about?"

"I don't know. He won't tell me right now," answered Lucien, shrugging his shoulders.

What he knew was that his life had better go back to normal, at least for a period of time, to meet Rhine's requirement as soon as possible. Firstly, Lucien had to abandon the pseudonym Professor.

Finishing his breakfast, Lucien saw a sleepy Felicia coming downstairs. He greeted, "Good morning, Felicia."

"Morning, Lucien. How's your ankle?" asked her.

"It's fine now," answered Lucien. "I'm sorry, Felicia. I'm afraid I cannot go hunting today. I have to go now to deal with some of my personal stuff."

"What happened?" Felicia asked with concern.

"Sorry, but I have to keep it a secret, Felicia," Lucien put on a slightly awkward look, "since it has something to do with the princess."

"Sure, Lucien." Felicia was a bit surprised for a moment, "I'll send a coach for you."

Getting on the coach, Lucien asked the coachman to go to Lord Venn's manor first.

Chapter 93: Recomposing

Chapter 93: Recomposing

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The coachman was so experienced that Lucien did not feel the road bumpy at all.

Having lots issues troubling his mind, by the time Lucien stopped thinking, the coach was already in front of Lord Venn's manor.

"Mr. Evans, we've arrived. Do you need me to tell the guards?" The coachman turned around and asked Lucien politely. An elegant gentleman usually did not talk to ordinary guards.

"No, thanks." Lucien smiled, "My friend is a squire here. We're equal."

With his awakened Blessing, Lucien was only a step away from becoming a knight. However, in his mind, he and John were simply good friends, and there was no level or class difference between them.

It was Ian and Durago who were guarding the gate today. Immediately they puffed out their chests when they saw the fine coach with the coat of arms of Fire Bull, ready to welcome the guest.

They were very surprised when they saw Lucien again. They still remembered him: in their memory, Lucien was only a pauper who did not show much respect to them, and now in the white shirt and black suit, the young man looked like a decent noble.

They did not come to themselves until Lucien was standing in front of them, "So... sorry, are you looking for John?"

"Yes, please." Lucien did not recognize them.

When Ian was about to go into the manor, Durago asked with a bit

hesitation, “Excuse me, sir. Are you... are you Mr. Evans?”

After the great success of the concert, even John, as a very moderate young man, could not help himself sharing what he knew about Lucien and all the praises his good friend received from the grand duke, the grand cardinal and princess.

“Yes, I’m John’s friend,” answered Lucien.

“Your work, Fate, was played on Lord Venn’s banquet several days ago. It was fantastic!” Durago said to Lucien with great excitement, “I’m so sorry that I was being really rude to you.”

This big tough guy was very sincere and excited. Lucien sort of recalled the conflict that happened between them before and was quite surprised that Durago was this enthusiastic about music.

Soon Lucien realized Aalto was indeed the City of Psalm.

“It’s okay. I’m glad you like my work,” answered Lucien politely.

Standing beside Durago, Ian put on an embarrassed smile.

After the concert, Lucien experienced a big change in the way many people treated him. Durago’s sincere apology and all the flattering words triggered Lucien’s thought. The sudden upgrade in his social status turned what happened several months ago into a distant dream.

“Mr. Evans, can I invite you to my place?” asked Durago, rubbing his hands nervously with excitement.

Finding a random excuse, Lucien refused him politely, but he felt quite awkward.

Soon John came following Ian, looking a bit confused, “Lucien! I’m going back home later this afternoon. Has anything happened?”

“Yes, but it has been solved. No worries.” Lucien pulled John’s arm, “Let’s get on the coach first.”

The old coachman was smart enough to know that he should not be

listening to the conversation. So he tied the horses firmly to the hitching post, walked away from the coach, and took out his tobacco under a big tree.

When John was listening to Lucien, his face darkened and his brows knotted. His knuckles turned white as he gripped his hands so tightly that his whole body was shaking. When he heard that his parents' fingers were cut, his teeth were gnashing. However, John did not say even a single word. He remained silent and listened carefully.

"I'm terribly sorry, John," said Lucien, whose heart was full of guilt.

Lowering his head, John did not answer immediately.

Lucien knew that his friend needed some time to recover from his pain and great anger. So he remained silent with John.

After a while, John finally started to talk,

"Lucien, it's not your fault. I don't blame you."

That was the first thing John said to Lucien. Instead of venting his frustration, John chose to comfort his best friend to free him of his horrible guilt.

Lucien was quite surprised, and he was touched, "Thank you so much, John. What you just said means a lot to me."

When John was about to go back to ask for a longer leave from his duty, Lucien stopped him.

"Wait, John. Here's twenty grams of Moonlight Rose dust." Lucien pulled out the small black bag and handed it over to his friend.

John had heard just now where did the Moonlight Rose come from. After more than ten seconds, he firmly took the small bag from Lucien's hand.

"Thank you, Lucien. I'll awake my Blessing. Only this way I can protect my family and friends," said John seriously.

“No rush. Follow Lord Venn’s instruction and take your time.” Lucien nodded, “Also, can you keep this a secret? After all, I lied to the princess about how I got these roses.”

“You know me, Lucien. I’m more reliable than a dead man.” John patted his friend on the shoulder and promised seriously.

...

The arrival of the House Hayne’s coach caused a stir in Aderon, the poorest district in the whole city. Although most of them could not name all the coat of arms of the big families in Aalto, they still registered in mind those of the few most powerful noble families.

Joel, Alisa and Iven had been sent back home by the Church. The pastors did not find much valuable information with them.

Seeing John and Lucien getting off the coach, Iven suddenly burst out crying, as if the little boy was trying to wash away all the horrible memories with his tears.

John gently patted Iven’s head and gave him a firm hug, “It’s okay, now, Iven. You’re already a grown-up man and you did a great job. God bless us.”

Lucien hugged Joel and Alisa. His apology, worry and joy were all in this big hug.

“It’s not your fault, Lucien.” Joel and Alisa comforted him, “And you see... we’re fine now.”

As the hostages of the vicious heretics, they did not expect that they could survive in the end. When they were saved, they were so grateful to the God of Truth that now they became even more understanding and tolerant. After all, nothing else really mattered when facing death.

Then Alisa and Joel told Lucien what the Church and the intelligence department of the duchy questioned them. The thing that concerned the pastors and the intelligence the most was why Alisa and Joel passed out outside of the cell, but were found by the knight inside of the cell later.

As the great thunder caused by lady Camil's power knocked them out instantly, no hostages present could provide any valuable information. In the end, the people from the Church and the intelligence department were guessing that it was probably because the heretics first locked the hostages back in case they would escape, and later on they did not have enough time to come back and kill them all.

"We got really lucky there. Thank God!" Drying her eyes, Alisa was telling Lucien the story.

At this time, there came a knock on the door.

It was Corella and a church guard that Lucien did not know.

Lucien was a bit more relieved seeing that the Church only sent a knight squire there, which meant he was not really suspicious to the Church.

After a short and regular investigation, Corella stood up and thanked Lucien on behalf of the Church, "The bishop appreciated what you did. Without your information, we would have suffered a greater loss."

Lucien's musician identity made it almost impossible for the Church to draw a link between Professor and the princess' personal consultant. However, there were still some coincidences which involved Lucien that they were unable to explain right now.

...

Lucien finally came back to his normal life, busy with studying music and magic. He also asked Joel and his family to move into his new house temporarily, since Gesu was way safer than Aderon.

In these days, Lucien did not take even a single glance at the broken wall where he usually left secret messages to communicate with the apprentices. To be prudent, he also left aside his plan of destroying his magic lab for the time being.

This day Victor started to teach them "canon", a contrapuntal compositional technique that employed a melody with imitations of

it played after a given duration.

With just a few rules, even beginners could achieve much with canon.

“Actually, you’ve subconsciously employed cannon in your Symphony of Fate, Lucien,” commented Victor. “It looks like you learned a lot in the library of the association.”

“Um... yes, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Victor,” answered Lucien, a bit absent-minded.

His mind was occupied by the thought that he needed to come up with enough music works for holding a concert to meet Rhine’s requirement. Eighty years ago, someone produced a piece of music work which was very similar to the well-known Pachelbel’s Canon, or Canon and Gigue in D, in his original world. However, he could still rewrite Pachelbel’s Canon into a piece of piano concerto.

Although he still needed some more “original” pieces of music for a personal concert, recomposing was definitely the best time-saving way for Lucien to have his repertoire as soon as possible.

Chapter 94: The Sword

At the end of the class, Victor said to his students, "I know many of you are hard-working and some of you have been studying canon on your own for a while. I'd like to see every one of you try to write a piece of canon to facilitate your understanding toward this compositional technique."

While the other students were pretty excited about it, Lucien remained silent with his own thoughts. Seeing that, Victor said to Lucien, "Lucien, although you're indeed very talented, don't underestimate canon. Simple as it seems to be, an outstanding piece of cannon can still become a masterpiece that lasts for generations, just like Mr. Hersey's Canon in D. And practicing cannon is very beneficial to a student like you who don't have a very solid music foundation."

Victor was often mindful of giving Lucien, the young genius, some proper "warning" to avoid his possible arrogance, which was very common among musicians who became famous at an early age, and unfortunately most of them ended up wasting their talent and lost their reputation very quickly.

Not until Victor started to talk to him did Lucien come to himself. He nodded and explained, "Thank you, Mr. Victor. I understand how important a solid foundation is and I'll definitely go all out to work on my canon."

"Good. Then what were you thinking about?" asked Victor.

"When you were introducing Mr. Hersey's Canon in D, I was thinking that I could probably recompose this classic piece of work and turn it into a piano concerto. Maybe a piano concerto version of Canon in D will be quite unique."

"Interesting idea, Lucien." Victor touched his chin a bit when he was thinking, "The challenging part is that Mr. Hersey's Canon is composed of very short music bars, thus it's hard to make considerable changes within it."

"Do you think it's doable, Mr, Victor?" asked Lucien with expectation.

"Well... Canon in D was recomposed into a few different versions before, so I'd say a piano concerto version is definitely something to look forward to." Victor confirmed Lucien's idea and smiled.

After the class, when the students were heading toward the practicing rooms, Felicia caught up with Lucien and asked him in a low voice with expectation, "Are you gonna play the piano concerto version of Canon in D on my birthday party next month?"

Canon was not a very demanding nor complicated technique. She did not think it would take Lucien too long to do it.

Lucien was suddenly inspired, then he smiled, "Felicia, I won't forget the help you offered me. I'll play the piano on your birthday party, but not a canon. I'll compose a piece of serenade for you."

"Really!" That was a big surprise for Felicia. The fact that the personal music consultant of the princess would write a piece of serenade specially for her was totally beyond her expectation.

"Yes, but it won't be a very complete one since the time is quite limited. It's probably only an opusculum."

"You're so great, Lucien!" Felicia was excited but also feeling a bit concerned, "But you only have a month... If the work is not good enough, that might damage your reputation."

Although composing a piece of opusculum within a month was not rare, Felicia still worried about Lucien. Since Lucien was drawing so much attention right now after the concert, many people who envied his talent were watching him like vicious beasts at night, waiting for any possible chance to launch their attack and to give this young musician a hard time.

"A piece of serenade shouldn't be a problem." Lucien seemed to be quite confident. And Lucien's confidence came from the fact that he already found a very classic piece of serenade in his spirit library which resembled no music work in this world.

In order to avoid being too suspicious, Lucien decided only to do an opusculum on the birthday party.

"Alright... I'm looking forward to your serenade," said Felicia with both expectation and concern.

...

In the following month, except for analyzing magic spells and reading the book named Astrology and Magic Elements written in the ancient Sylvanas language with the help of the witch's note at night, Lucien spent all his time on studying music and composing his canon and the serenade. After all, music now could provide him with the chance to find the headquarter of the Congress of Magic.

With his hard work and great memory, Lucien now finally felt he was qualified enough as a music student. Within this month, he also successfully recomposed Canon in D and finished the serenade for Felicia's birthday.

Meanwhile, John was still working on his knight training. Although he wanted to awaken his Blessing as soon as possible, he was warned by Lord Venn that, without a solid foundation, the awakening would be very likely to fail. Even if he succeed this time, his future growth would be very limited.

Thus, John was being very patient, even though that meant he needed to do the same training over and over again everyday. In John's spare time, he would go into the Black Forest to fight with goblins and cynocephaluses to gather more experience. At the same time, Lord Venn gave John a sum of money and asked him to rent a unit in the administrative district, in order to protect his family.

Although Joel and his family had a pretty good time in Lucien's house, they were definitely even happier with their own place, especially since it was a place that was earned by their son. Therefore, they soon moved out of Lucien's house, and Lucien respected their choice. After all, they were family, and that would never change, no matter if they lived together or not.

...

The last Thursday of the Month of Gold (October). War Gallery.

"I'm finally satisfied with this part." Natasha just finished her discussion with Lucien about a movement, "Now this part is exciting enough to meet the theme."

"The last version was pretty good already." Lucien smiled, "You indeed have very high expectations on yourself, Your Grace."

Natasha's music knowledge was actually way more profound than Lucien's. By working together, Lucien also learned a lot from the princess.

"Well... if you do something, then you do your best," said Natasha in a good mood.

"Yes, Your Grace," Lucien agreed.

When Lucien was about to leave, Natasha asked him with curiosity, "I heard that you wrote a new serenade for your classmate's birthday party tonight?"

"Yes." Lucien nodded.

Pointing at the piano standing in the center of the room, Natasha asked, "Can I listen to it first?"

"I'm sorry, Your Grace. It's a gift for Felicia's birthday," Lucien refused the princess politely.

"Well, I guess..." Natasha took a few steps back and forth, "Although I'm very curious, I think you're right. I feel like writing a love serenade for Silvia's birthday, too."

"That's... that's very considerate." Lucien was almost used to it now.

At this time, Natasha turned around and said something to lady Camil. Camil left the room and, a moment later, came back with a fine sword in her hand.

"This is the knight sword that I promised you," said Natasha. "Its name is 'Alert', and it's a level one high rank sword with an

extraordinary quality. With Alert, your instincts will be way sharper, making you more aware of any approaching danger."

Chapter 95: Felicia's Birthday Party

Felicia's Birthday Party

Since it was not an investiture, the manners were not of great complexity. Lucien saluted the princess with a knight's etiquette and the princess leaned the sword against Lucien's shoulder.

"May your sword guard your will," said Natasha seriously.

Then Lucien took the sword from Natasha's hands, and followed her instruction to leave a willpower mark on Alert.

Alert was of an ordinary level one knight's attack force, and it could help its owner to be as sensitive to the surroundings as a level two knight.

While sorcerers called them magic weapons, the nobles and pastors called them extraordinary weapons, which did not require registration in their owner's spirit. The owner of an extraordinary weapon or item just needed to leave a mark of his or her will power to activate it. However, according to some makers' will, some of these weapons or items rejected certain kinds of users and their power could not be activated.

Carrying the sword, Lucien saluted the princess again and left the room. Watching Lucien leave, Natasha said to Camil gently, "You have any plans for this evening, auntie?"

...

In preparation for the birthday party that night, Felicia did not attend the class today.

During the break, Lott and Lucien were chatting casually. Lott told Lucien that this was Felicia's eighteenth birthday and this was her coming-of-age ceremony, thus many nobles and all the musicians of the association would be present.

"Are you feeling nervous? After all, this is your first performance

after the concert," asked Lott.

In order to make sure Lucien could focus on studying music after his success, Victor was "protecting" Lucien with great caution. On behalf of his student, Victor turned down many invitations and offers for Lucien, and that made many people feel even more curious about this young talented musician.

"Not really," answered Lucien in a relaxed way, "I don't think there'll be that many guests tonight though."

"At least some of them will be there just because of your birthday gift for Felicia, the new serenade," Herodotus, who was usually very quiet, joined their conversation, and commented in a calm voice, "They're hoping to see what you can present a whole month after the concert."

"I agree with Herodotus," said Lott. "As the current host of House Hayne, Felicia's uncle should be there tonight, too. Hopefully he won't find an excuse to give Felicia and her parents a hard time."

"Well... we'll see, then," said Lucien thoughtfully.

...

In the early evening, Lucien got on the coach and headed toward the house where Felicia lived. This time he hired his own coach and felt a bit proud of it.

By the time Lucien arrived, it was already very busy in front of the luxury three-storey house. Lots of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen were getting off their coaches, chatting and laughing.

The house was originally built by the old count to host parties.

Through the gate, Lucien walked on the path and went through the garden. Then he saw Felicia was standing in front of the hallway.

She was welcoming the guests accompanied by her mother, wearing another bright red dress tonight. Red was House Hayne's color and the color always suited her very well.

"Thank you for coming, Lucien," said Felicia sincerely. "Lots of famous musicians came here tonight because of you, including Christopher, the president of the association."

"I'm quite sure they came because of you." Lucien smiled and kissed Felicia's hand without his lips actually touching the hand to show his politeness.

"Welcome, Lucien. We're all talking about you recently. You're such a genius." Felicia's mother greeted him. Felicia really looked like her mother, except for the hair, since her mother's was brown.

Lucien nodded to them and entered the hall. Lots of guests were holding their cups and talking to each other. It was a perfect chance for socializing.

"Hi, Evans." Many people greeted Lucien when he was walking. Their facial expressions varied. Some of them looked excited and curious, while some were throwing Lucien meaningful and unfriendly looks.

What would the so-called most gifted and creative genius ever present tonight? Everyone was waiting for Lucien's new serenade.

Among those serenades made for parties good ones seldom appeared, since their themes and styles were rather limited. Many musicians commented that these serenades were "not even close to being elegant". Thus, many of them tonight were actually expecting Lucien's failure tonight, and then they could teach this young genius a lesson.

Christopher, who was surrounded by many musicians, said to the many musicians who did not have much hope in Lucien, "He's still young, and we shouldn't be too critical with those younger musicians. We shall applaud for their success, and also be more tolerant of their failure. Just leave them some space."

When Lucien came over, the musicians ended the topic and started to talk about music creation. Lucien took a cup of water from a waiter and listened to their conversation quietly and politely, a few steps away.

Several elder musicians noticed that and significantly changed their attitude toward Lucien, since clearly he was not one of those young musicians who instantly become very arrogant after making some achievement.

Then Victor, Rhine, Lott and some other of Lucien's classmates arrived too.

...

It was already seven thirty in the evening, but Count Hayne was still not there. The atmosphere started to become a bit awkward.

Felicia's father, Urbain, looked every embarrassed. He was also very angry with Scott, his brother. Despite all the conflict they had in the past, Felicia is Scott's niece, and today was her eighteenth birthday. It was the current Count Hayne's responsibility to show up and send his best wishes to Felicia. Urbain was really angry with his brother.

Wringing her hands, Felicia looked embarrassed to the point of almost bursting into tears. On this occasion, Count Hayne's absence definitely would do damage to her reputation among the nobles.

Ten minutes later, the steward of Count Hayne finally arrived and said to Urbain in a polite but also cold manner, "Lord Hayne will not be able to come tonight, since he's sick."

Urbain's face looked very gloomy, and he was so choked that he could not even say a single word.

A few high-status nobles who were close to Count Hayne were waiting in their houses, since they were not sure if they should attend the party or not. After confirming that Count Hayne would not be there tonight, several servants who were waiting outside of the party house secretly left to report this to their masters.

Fortunately, some other nobles were still coming, since Urbain was still the clerk of the town hall.

Taking a deep breath, Urbain asked his daughter to stay calm and continue to welcome the guests.

"Too bad. If a family member is held in detestation by the host of the family, unless the member could awaken his or her Blessing and become a knight, the family member would always have a hard time in whatever they want to do." A musician named Comotz said to Lucien in a meaningful way.

Lucien pretended that he did not get it, "I believe no matter what a person wants to do, as long as he or she is persistent enough and works really hard, the person can be successful."

His voice was a bit loud, and it could be clearly heard since the hall was relatively quiet from the weird atmosphere.

Felicia heard what Lucien just said, and the fact that Lucien made such an achievement from scratch cheered her up. As a noble lady from one of the most important families in the Duchy of Orvarit, Felicia was way more privileged than her classmate and there was no reason for her to easily give up her dream.

After a while, Othello, the director of the association, came to Lucien, followed by Mekanzi Griffith and three young men.

Mekanzi greeted the other musicians present and introduced the three young men to Lucien, "Mr. Clemen, Mr. Baret and Mr. Julian are from Tria. They've read all the reviews of Symphony of Fate on Music Criticism and Symphony News, and they come here especially for you, Lucien."

"I'm glad to meet you. Thank you so much for coming." Lucien shook hands with them one by one. The three young musicians from Tria were all in their early twenties. Dressing tastefully, they were all very decent young men.

"Your teacher, Francois, had already introduced all of you to me through a letter he wrote." Christopher recalled their names, "I've listened to your music works before. All of you are very talented."

Francois was born in the Kingdom of Syracuse. When he was a teenager, Francois came to Aalto to study music and then achieved great success in music in his late twenties. A few years ago, Francois went back to Syracuse and became the prime music consultant for

the royal family.

The three young musicians hurriedly saluted Christopher, who was known as the "living music legend", with great respect.

Mekanzi said to Lucien with malicious intention, "I hope your serenade surprises everyone here tonight, genius!"

"A serenade? I have a piece of serenade for miss Hayne tonight, too!" The black-haired Julian was the most talented and also the most arrogant one among the three, "We can present our serenades together."

Mekanzi seemed to be relatively acquainted with Julian.

When Lucien was about to answer, the whole hall suddenly quieted down. The sword "Alert" Lucien was wearing reminded him that someone he knew was coming.

Lucien turned around and saw a luxury coach stopping in front of the steps on the other end.

A tall, purple-haired beauty in her white uniform and black long boots was walking toward Felicia, with a pretty young lady walking with her arm in arm, while Camil was quietly following behind.

"Your Grace?!" Felicia exclaimed with great surprise.

Chapter 96: The Serenade

"Hi, Felicia. Happy birthday!" Standing in front of Felicia, Natasha smiled, "Sorry that I came without being invited."

"No, no... It's... It's my great pleasure, Your Grace." Felicia was almost too excited to speak properly, "I really wanted to invite you, Your Grace. But I'm not qualified... I'm just..."

"I know, I know..." Natasha gently touched Felicia's hair and comforted her, "Don't call me 'Your Grace'. Just call me Natasha like many years ago when we were playing together in the manor. I remember that back in the days when the old count was still alive, we always went hunting with uncle Samuel, Alfred and Harrington."

"I was so short and always fell over." All those memories came back to Felicia, "I cried a lot."

"Yes, you did. And ten years later, you're turning eighteen." Natasha's heart was also softened by those memories, "Alfred and uncle Samuel must be very happy in heaven seeing you become such a gorgeous noble lady."

Alfred was the eldest son of the grand duke, Natasha's elder brother, who was also a level five grand knight in his early twenties. Samuel was the elder brother of the current Count Hayne and Urbain Hayne, who was the first heir of House Hayne's title. Both of them died in the battle with the heretic knights almost ten years ago.

Ten years changed a lot. Felicia's father did not manage to inherit the title and Natasha turned from a little girl into a real warrior after her elder brother died. All the friends back in the old days gradually drifted away from each other, and those beautiful days would never come back again.

Before the princess arrived, Felicia was forcing herself to smile in order to welcome the guests and keep the party going, although she was facing great disappointment and anger. Now, different emotions mixed together in her mind and she could not hold her

tears back anymore, "I'm so happy you're here tonight, Natasha."

"Don't cry, Felicia." Natasha gave Felicia a big warm hug, "You're my younger sister. As Count Hayne is sick tonight, I'll host your coming-of-age ceremony tonight."

"Yes, Your Grace." Felicia sniffed and put on a smile, "I'm so honored that the princess is going to host my ceremony."

Natasha also had tears in her eyes but she was trying to cheer Felicia up, "And my personal music consultant is gonna present you with a beautiful piece of serenade."

In her mind, Natasha was blaming Lucien for tempting her to attend the party tonight with his new serenade. As a grand knight, she did not expect that she would cry when she saw Felicia and that made her feel very shy.

Natasha and Lucien were getting more and more like friends after what happened with the heresy.

Mentioned by the princess, Lucien suddenly captured a lot of attention from the nobles and musicians present. Now all of the guests were expecting Lucien's serenade tonight.

"Welcome, Your Grace. Welcome, lady Camil, lady Silvia." Urbain was also excited and led the princess into the hall.

All the nobles and musicians were saluting the princess. Natasha was fed up with all the noble manners but was still smiling and nodding politely toward them. Silvia, while holding the princess's arm, was very nervous and her face flushed, since it was her first time showing up in public with Natasha like this, facing lots of musicians she knew.

"Mr. Christopher, good evening," Silvia greeted her teacher.

Looking at his student coming together with the princess, Christopher paused a bit as if he wanted to say something but he stopped himself. He just simply said, "Good evening, Silvia. There're several musicians here tonight, and I know you're very interested in this new music instrument."

Natasha had previously told Lucien that Silvia was interested in his new fingerings, but also that she might be too shy to talk to him, so Lucien took the initiative to talk to her. Silvia was encouraged and started to share her understanding of piano with Lucien.

The three musicians coming from Tria were completely ignored. They were a bit pissed off but there was not much they could do. After all, no one really knew them in Aalto.

However, their angry faces amused Mekanzi, standing on the other side.

...

When they heard that the princess went to the party tonight, many nobles rushed to come. Thus, the ceremony was put off for half an hour.

The coming-of-age ceremony was not complicated. Taking a flame-like flower and the badge of House Hayne from Felicia's mother, Natasha put them on the left side of Felicia's chest and delivered a short speech.

Then Natasha invited Felicia for an opening dance, which was the last part of the ceremony.

The dance was just gorgeous. As a level five grand knight, Natasha was excellent in strength, agility and coordination. Led by the princess, Felicia presented the best dance in her life so far.

Then it should be Lucien's turn to present his new serenade for Felicia. However, at this time, Julian came to the center of the hall.

"Your Grace, Distinguished guests, I'm Julian from the palace of Tria. I'm sorry that I just came here tonight with Mr. Griffith without lady Felicia's invitation. Here I want to present lady Felicia with a piece of my newly-written serenade, in order to bring all my best wishes."

"It seems like our talented young musician is having an unexpected challenger here." Natasha lifted her eyebrows and said to Lucien in a low voice.

Lucien shrugged his shoulders a bit. He did not really care.

Natasha nodded, "Well. Then let's welcome Julian from Tria."

Handing his sheets of music to the band, Julian was waiting for them to get prepared. Julian was quite excited since the music genre of serenade was Tria's forte.

Chapter 97: G Major

In this world, serenade was originally a music genre performed for expressing love or affection, which was considered a suitable kind of music piece for the evening. As there were many nobles who were fond of chasing different music trends, the style of serenade also changed over time, and was played more and more often over evening parties.

In Aalto, the City of Psalm, serenade was never really mainstream, instead, symphony and concerto were more popular as they were always regarded as "more solemn and elegant".

When they were talking about piano fingerings, Silvia smiled to her teacher and said, "I've seen Mr. Julian's serenade in your office before, and indeed it's very suitable for playing on evening parties."

Christopher immediately understood the intention of her words. He shook his head and smiled.

Several of the famous musicians present like Othello and Victor smiled with the president as well. What Silvia was actually saying was that Julian's work was to some extent too shallow to be presented on formal occasions.

On the other hand, Baret and Clemen, the two musicians who were visiting Aalto for the first time, were not quite sure about the connotation of Silvia's words.

Lucien did not realize the meaning of Silvia's comment until he saw the other musicians' meaningful smile. Maybe it was Lucien's friendly attitude that won Silvia's preference for him over Julian.

At that time, Julian picked up his violin and his playing started.

The beginning of his serenade surprised many of the traditional musicians present, including Christopher, Othello and Victor. Julian recomposed his music work and made it relatively solemn and serious.

An interested smile emerged on Natasha's face. She has always loved surprises. Silvia, standing beside her, looked more confused than surprised.

Julian was indeed a genius. The combination of the pleasant features of serenade and the solemnity of orchestra in his music work impressed every musician present at the party.

During the second movement of Julian's serenade, even the president Christopher smiled and praised, "This part is challenging but Julian handled it very well."

Clemen and Baret gave Julian an admiring glance, since a good comment from the president of the musicians' association of Aalto meant a lot for a young musician.

The gentle and elegant *lento* was followed by a more cheerful *allegro*, designed for the evening party. The playing ended in a pleasant and high-spirited atmosphere.

Warm applause came to Julian. Felicia, as the host of the coming-of-age ceremony and the evening party, thanked Julian, "I appreciate your gift a lot, Mr. Julian. It's very impressive as a piece of serenade."

"It's my great pleasure playing for you, Miss Hayne." Julian kissed Felicia's hand and bowed to her, "May your beauty and happiness always be with you."

Then he left the dancing floor and rejoined the musicians with a big smile on his face, knowing that the piece of serenade which took him more than five months to accomplish was acknowledged by the many musicians in Aalto.

Although the playing was not perfect because of the lack of practicing of the band, Julian still achieved success.

"Awesome, elegant, passionate! No one can compete with you in the field of serenade." While Mekanzi was complimenting Julian, his eyes were peeking at Lucien.

However, Lucien did not care. Lucien never regarded himself as a

real musician.

Othello, as the director of the association, also extended his congratulation.

After Othello, Silvia expressed her different opinion with a gentle smile, "Impressive as it is, the pace of the serenade in general is a bit sluggish and the structure is not well-designed."

"Well..." Julian felt a bit embarrassed, "What you just said... The problems you just mentioned are relatively inevitable for a serenade, aren't they?"

Christopher was a bit surprised that his student, who was always nice and gentle, was this aggressive and sharp tonight. Thus, he took a step forward and took over the conversation, "Anyway, this is a piece of serenade with outstanding quality."

"Thank you!" Julian's big smile came back again. He could already see the prosperous future that awaited him as a very famous musician in Aalto.

Then suddenly he turned around and said to Lucien in an arrogant intonation, "Now, it's your turn, Mr. Evans."

At this time, Felicia's mother said to all the guests, "Thank you, Mr. Julian. Thank you for your passionate playing. In this beautiful evening, Mr. Lucien Evans, as my daughter's music classmate, will also present us a piece of bagatelle as well!"

Lucien's name caused a stir in the crowd.

"Yes, 'the' Mr. Lucien Evans. The young talented musician who composed Symphony of Fate!" Felicia's mother introduced with pride.

Lucien tidied his clothes a bit and was about to walk to the center of the hall, when Mekanzi said to him in an ill-intentioned way, "Hope you don't press the wrong key, Lucien."

Natasha took a glance at Mekanzi and lifted her eyebrows, and then looked at Lucien. She had confidence in Lucien since she had seen

Lucien playing piano several times after he awoke his Blessing, and his playing skill had improved a lot.

"Don't let Natasha down," Silvia said to Lucien in a low voice, "You're Natasha's musician consultant."

Lucien was not bothered by Mekanzi. He nodded to Natasha, Silvia and his teacher Mr. Victor, and then walked toward the center of the hall where a piano was placed. Victor raised his glass toward his student as his encouragement.

Felicia was a bit nervous, since she was not sure whether playing a piece of bagatelle tonight was a good idea. Now in comparison to Julian's serenade, any flaw in Lucien's playing might be exaggerated.

The applause to welcome Lucien gradually stopped. Many musicians and nobles were waiting.

The first movement was an Allegro, pleasant, graceful and brief. And it captured everyone's attention immediately with a very cheerful sonata-allegro form.

Julian's smile froze on his face. As a musician, he instantly realized the gap existing between his serenade and Lucien's work. Excellent as his work was, this young Aalto musician's serenade could be called classical.

What Lucien was playing was Amadeus Mozart's Serenade No. 13 for strings in G major.

Chapter 98: The Charm of Piano

Natasha's purple eyes were lit up by the allegro. After listening to the first two bars, she instantly knew that this piece of bagatelle would not let her down.

Subconsciously relaxing her hands, all of Felicia's concerns disappeared and her eyes started to shine with excitement. That was the most fabulous serenade she had even heard, even though it was just part of the whole work.

Pleasant and cheerful, gentle and elegant, a few guests at the party nodded slightly following the rhythm while beating time to the music. They wanted to dance. Smiles appeared on their faces.

Lucien's long and beautiful hands were moving on the keyboard in a smooth and free manner. His fingers, wrists, arms and even his body were working cooperatively to present this perfect piece of piano bagatelle.

Besides the melody itself, Lucien's manner of playing was also a feast for the guests' eyes.

Many young nobles, while enjoying the music, were longing for learning piano and Lucien's new fingerings. Many noble ladies were staring at Lucien in great admiration.

"What a decent, elegant and talented gentleman!" The girls were wondering about how much a piano playing could show one's artistic elegance.

Several minutes later, Lucien pressed down the last key of the piano bagatelle. His right hand was raised in a *dégagé* way to show the end of his playing.

Then he stood up, bowed to Natasha, then Felicia and the guests present.

Lucien's listeners paused a bit, as if they needed some time to recover from the great surprise and excitement. A couple of seconds

later, Lucien was surrounded by the thunder of applause from the guests.

"Beautiful, graceful and balanced. I'm proud of you, Lucien!" commented Natasha, "Finish the following movements and turn this amazing piece of bagatelle into a serenade masterpiece."

Felicia's face flushed with excitement, "Lucien, thank you so much for the gift. I think my coming-of-age ceremony will be recorded in the history of music because of your serenade."

Lucien gently hugged Felicia, giving her an encouraging pat on the shoulder.

Then he went back and rejoined the musicians.

"Lucien, you're indeed a genius. This piano bagatelle is the most beautiful serenade I've ever heard." Christopher smiled and his eyes were shining with praise.

"No one can doubt your talent anymore, Lucien." Silvia nodded. She was very impressed with the movement of Lucien's fingers, wrists and arms when he was playing, and with the elegance of this new musical instrument, piano. In her mind, the piano was no inferior to the violin, the queen of all the musical instruments.

As Lucien's teacher, Victor was very proud, "I believe that this piece of serenade will become the most popular music work for parties and feasts, even more popular than Symphony of Fate." Then, Victor paused a bit before continuing, "What I appreciate the most is that you employed many challenging playing skills in the bagatelle. After all, beautiful as a serenade is, it cannot be the mainstream of music in Aalto."

Lucien nodded with mixed feelings. He always appreciated all the help that Victor provided him, but he also knew that his future might not have anything to do with music, since the path that he chose was magic. After he got to know where the Continental Congress of Magic was from Rhine, he would leave Aalto very soon. Lucien did not want to let Victor down.

While most of the musicians present were marveling at Lucien's extraordinary talent, Mekanzi looked very resentful. He took a glance at the very disappointed Julian and then he stepped forward as if something hit him all of a sudden.

Mekanzi pointed at Lucien and said in a loud voice in front of the guests, "There's no way that a beginner can compose something like this! You, so despicable, you made a pact with the devil!"

All of the guests were shocked. They turned around and looked at Mekanzi as if he was insane. It was a very, very serious accusation against Lucien. In other words, Mekanzi wanted Lucien to die.

"Mind your words, Mekanzi!" Victor looked angry and serious, "Talented as Lucien is, he still works very hard." He was the first person speaking out for Lucien, while Lott and Herodotus remained silent. Facing an accusation involving a deal with the devil, even nobles didn't easily dare to defend their classmate.

"You're Lucien's teacher. Of course you speak for him." Mekanzi looked around at the guests, "Ladies and gentlemen, do you really believe that a pauper who just started to learn music several months ago can achieve such a level?"

The guests started to whisper to each other. Indeed, the fact that, within only a few months' learning of music, a poor, young man was already capable of holding his own concert was definitely very surprising.

"You betrayed the God of truth," said Mekanzi in a vicious way.

Everyone was looking at Lucien now. When he was about to say something, Natasha said to Mekanzi in a slow but authoritative way,

"I know you want to put Lucien onto burning gallows very much, Mekanzi." There was a slight of smile on Natasha's beautiful face, "However, Mekanzi, Lucien's my personal music consultant. You think I'm that stupid to have someone who made a deal with the devil to serve me?"

"I... No, I'm not saying that, Your Grace." Mekanzi was flustered by the princess's words.

"Then what do you mean?" asked Natasha sternly.

"I... I mean... It's not normal for..." stammered Mekanzi.

Natasha cut him off right away, "That's why we call him a genius. Lucien received rewards from my family, and that's also why he made such a progress. You have anything to say about that?"

Mekanzi's face was as red as a tomato. He opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but finally he released a long sigh like a deflated ball, "Of course you're right, Your Grace. I'm... I'm overreacting."

Then, Mekanzi found an excuse and left the party, followed by the frustrated Baret and Clemen, while Julian cheered himself up and said to Christopher sincerely, "I'm sorry I was being so arrogant. I want to stay in Aalto for several years to learn from the great musicians... Aalto is the paradise for musicians."

"Welcome, Julian." Christopher nodded to him, "We need fresh blood for our association, and we learn from each other."

Julian picked up a glass of wine and turned around to face Lucien, "I gotta admit that your serenade is better than mine. I'll learn from you, and one day I'll catch up with you."

"Then I wish you success." Lucien slightly raised his glass of water.

The music for the party started again. Instantly, Lucien was surrounded by a bunch of noble ladies.

"Mr. Evans, can I have a dance with you?"

"Mr. Evans, you were so charming when you were playing the piano!"

"Can you take a look at my hands to see if I'm suitable for playing piano?"

The mix of sweet perfumes dizzied Lucien. Luckily, at that moment Felicia came over and saved Lucian by having a minuet with him, after which he went to the patio to stay away from the ladies.

Chapter 99: Natasha's Reques

Chapter 99: Natasha's Request

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The breeze was gentle and cool. Standing on the patio and bathing the bright moonlight, Lucien felt revitalized.

However, at that time, Lucien realized that he was being rude since he saw that two beautiful ladies were on the patio as well, snuggling and kissing. The arousing scene of the two beauties showing their love toward each other in the moonlight was like a fabulous painting.

Lucien's face twitched a bit and then blushed. When he was about to leave the patio, one of them stopped him and asked, "Lucien, what's that look on your face?" It was Natasha.

With a slight redness on her cheeks, Silvia was hiding behind Natasha, slightly gasping from the intense kissing.

"I'm fine... fine." Lucien smiled in an embarrassed way.

"What's going on in your mind?" Natasha slightly lifted her eyebrows and questioned Lucien closely.

"Well... I'm thinking that... what I just saw was not good for my eyes," said Lucien in a playful way.

"Umm..." Natasha pointed at herself and then at Silvia, "Aren't we beautiful?"

"Sure, both of you are real beauties." Having never been with any girl before, Lucien made fun of himself, "Let me put it this way. What I just saw hurt my heart."

Natasha laughed and stretched herself a bit, "I like your personality, Lucien. You're interesting enough to be my friend."

Then she said something to Silvia in a low voice, which made Silvia giggle.

“Excuse me, I need to have some water.” Silvia then said to Lucien and left the patio.

After Silvia left, Natasha asked Lucien to follow her back to the party. When they were on the dance floor, Natasha turned around, bowed to Lucien and reached out her right hand, “May I have a dance with you?”

Lucien looked at her hand and paused a bit, “Your Grace, I’m afraid that it’s not a proper invitation.”

“What?” Natasha looked surprised. When she realized what was wrong, she took back her right hand and stood straight, waiting for Lucien’s invitation, “Sorry, my bad. I forgot you’re the gentleman and I’m the lady. I’m used to... you know what I mean.”

Lucien nodded and smiled, “Yes, I know.”

Recalling the dancing manner, Lucien reached out his right hand to the princess, “Your Grace, may I have the honor to dance with you?”

“Sure, you’re my music consultant.” Natasha laid her hand on Lucien’s palm and followed Lucien to the center of the dance floor.

The dance between a decent gentleman and a beautiful young lady should be very pleasant. Unfortunately, their dance wasn’t exactly like that.

“You stepped on my foot, Lucien!” said Natasha.

“I’m sorry, Your Grace,” Lucien apologized. “But have you figured why? You’re dancing in the manner of man.”

“Am I? Um...”

“Your Grace, you just stepped on my foot.”

“Sorry Lucien. Why don’t you dance in the lady’s way, then? That

would solve all the problems,” Natasha suggested.

“I’d rather keep letting you step on me.” Lucien shook his head.

It took them a while to become cooperative. Natasha asked, “Lucien? Can I ask you to do me a favor?”

“What is it?” asked Lucien.

“Well...” A rare shy look appeared on Natasha’s face, “Silvia likes your serenade a lot, and she wants me to play a piece of love-themed serenade for her birthday before the new year.”

“That’s sweet.” Lucien did not understand how he would be useful to Natasha yet.

“But you know I’m not really a serenade person...” said Natasha, “I like music which is intense and passionate, not soft and gentle. I just can’t do it.”

“So, Your Grace, you want me to compose the serenade for you?” Lucien asked.

“Umm... sort of...” Natasha looked a bit embarrassed but soon made up her mind, “Yes, can you do me that favor?”

“Well... I don’t think a decent knight like Your Grace would find a ghostwriter for herself.” Lucien blinked in a funny way.

“You’re not my ghostwriter! I just don’t want to present Silvia with a piece of mediocre work on her birthday.” Natasha was trying to justify it, “I’ll tell Silvia that it’s your work...”

“Don’t worry, Your Grace.” Lucien grinned, “I was just joking. I would be honored if I could help you solve that problem, Your Grace.”

Natasha nodded, “Awesome. Thank you, Lucien. I’ll at least try to work on it as well, and your work will be my second plan.”

“The name of the serenade will be ‘For Silvia’, then.” Lucien paused a few seconds and looked a bit worried, “Since I haven’t gone

through any love experience yet, I may need some extra help.”

“Such as...?” Natasha leaned forward a bit.

“I noticed that you have lots of books in your study, Your Grace.” Lucien had been coveting the great number of books in Natasha’s study for a long time, and he would not let this precious chance slip away, “I wonder if I can have the chance to read some of them, say, those love stories books and some books that introduce histories, cultures and traditions of other countries, in order to be inspired. The library of the association has only music books.”

“Of course.” Natasha smiled, “It’s not a big deal at all. As many of the old books are actually written in the language used by the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, I can ask the scholars to translate them for you.”

“That would be great.” Although Lucien looked pretty calm, his heart was full of excitement. He did not expect that one of his biggest problems could just be solved like that. By copying the many books from the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, Lucien could not only better plan his future trip on the continent, but also learn how to read ancient Sylvanas characters.

Although many books of college level were still sealed in Lucien’s spirit library, he was already way more knowledgeable than a common sorcerer. Had it not been for the insufficiency of his spiritual power, Lucien should have already become a first circle sorcerer, which was exactly the opposite situation for the other sorcerer apprentices. Most of them were having a hard time moving forward because they did not have enough knowledge to analyze more complicated spells.

“Lucien, you stepped on me again!” complained Natasha.

When the dance ended, Natasha asked Lucien, “Do you have any other plans recently, aside from composing the canon and finishing the bagatelle? I don’t want to interrupt your schedule.”

“Um... Not really. Composing serenade can help me relax. Actually, I’m considering composing a piece of sonata to record the

perseverance and the great faith that supported me all along when uncle Joel and his family were held as hostages,” answered Lucien. All he wanted to do now was to come up with new music works and hold his own concert.

“I’m looking forward to that.” Natasha looked at him seriously, “I know you’re good at this theme. And I’ll have the scholars translate the books for you starting from tomorrow.”

After the dance, Lucien was about to get some water when he met Rhine, who was holding a glass of wine in a very elegant way.

“Good work!” Then Rhine whispered to Lucien, “I almost forgot to tell you that I already helped you get rid of your basement. No worries anymore.”

“You...” Lucien was very surprised. He never expected that Rhine knew this much about him. He was also glad that he did not have to worry about his underground lab anymore, which had been a burden on his heart for a long time since he just could not find a proper chance to destroy it.

“I know you want to thank me, and you’re welcome,” Rhine said to Lucien, smiling, “I mean no harm toward you. I hope you can trust me.”

“But why... Mr. Rhine?” asked Lucien. After all, the whole thing had nothing to do with Rhine at all.

“There’s no why.” Rhine shrugged casually, “Maybe I just want to see a great musician making progress without being distracted by something trivial.”

Then, Rhine raised his glass toward Lucien with a meaningful smile and left.

The party tonight was perfect because of Lucien’s serenade. Thus, Felicia exempted the debt that Lucien owed her to show her family’s appreciation.

At a cost of ten Thales, Felicia made a great deal with Lucien!

Chapter 100: The History

Chapter 100: The History

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the following morning, on his way to the musicians' association in the administrative district, Lucien was very surprised to find that the bagatelle he played at the party last night was being played everywhere in Aalto.

Just like Victor said, it was way easier for a piece of serenade to become popular than for a symphony.

As soon as Elena saw Lucien coming into the lobby, she waved to him with a big smile on her face.

"Morning, Elena!" greeted Lucien, "Why are you so happy today?"

"I'm happy for you!" Covering her mouth, Elena giggled in a low voice, "Before you arrived, a few noble ladies came to the association to look for you. They were hoping that they could become your piano students. Miss Felicia's friend, Yvette, was here as well."

Then, she handed a pile of letters to Lucien, "These are all feedbacks from musicians who live nearby."

Lucien took the letters and was about to walk upstairs, but paused a bit and turned to Elena instead, "Can you tell the ladies that this year I won't accept any students? Apart from being the princess' music consultant, I still have to work on producing more music."

"Mr. Lucien, how come you're always that inspired?" Cathy's eyes were wide open and she asked with great curiosity, "I heard that, aside from the serenade, you also finished recomposing Mr. Hersey's Canon in D."

Lucien nodded, "I'm just hoping that I can hold my own concert as soon as possible."

“Wow...” exclaimed Elena and Cathy at the same time.

Then, Elena asked Lucien with expectancy, “I understand that you don’t want to have any student right now... but can I ask you some questions related to music once in a while?”

“Of course, we can exchange our ideas,” said Lucien. The true reason that Lucien refused to have any student was that, as a sorcerer, he might be found out by the church someday and his students would be in great trouble.

After giving Joseph the music sheet of his serenade for registration, from the window Lucien saw that a purple coach was arriving, which was sent by Natasha.

...

In the study of War Gallery.

Natasha, wearing a long black dress, was introducing the books to Lucien, “Some of them are written in common tongue. I take it that you want to start to read them as soon as possible.”

That was Natasha, passionate, decisive and motivated. As soon as she decided to do something, she wanted to get it done as fast as she could.

From her introduction, Lucien had a rough idea about the different book sections in the princess’ study. At that moment, a middle-aged man came in and bowed to Natasha, “Your Grace.”

Turning around, Natasha nodded to the man and then said to Lucien, “Mr. Bake, from House Hill, is a very reputable scholar and linguist. He is your designated consultant and translator for these books.”

Bake was already bald in his forties. A thick pair of glasses was sitting on his round face.

“Thank you, Mr. Bake,” said Lucien.

“It’s my great pleasure to serve the princess and to be your

consultant, Mr. Evans,” Bake bowed slightly to Lucien.

“You’re working on translating the books already, Mr. Bake?” Lucien noticed that there was a thick book under Bake’s arm with many small colorful tags among the pages.

“Yes... as you may see, Mr. Evans, translating these books takes time, and the princess told me about your hunger for knowledge. I’m hoping that I can cover as many books as possible in this study for you, Mr. Evans,” answered Bake slowly.

“That’s very nice of you, Mr. Bake.” Lucien was grateful, “And thank you, Your Grace.” Lucien smiled to Natasha.

“It’s very sweet to see that, young as you are, Mr. Evans, you’re this interested in the ancient language and culture of Sylvanas Magic Empire. You’ll see that their culture was fascinating.” Bake walked toward the desk and opened the black book in front of Lucien, “The book that I’m working on right now is Heroes’ Epic, very beautiful poems...” Bake became a bit excited.

“What is this book about?” asked Lucien, “Sorry, I’m... I’m not really well-educated with in history.”

“Oh, that’s totally fine.” Bake smiled. “The beauty of poem does not require its reader to have much educational background. Instead, it’s something you can feel. Get closer and take a look, Mr. Evans.”

Lucien’s long fingers gently ran down the spine of the thick, black book, feeling its antiquity.

When Lucien was flipping through the pages, Bake said to him, “The poems in the book were written in memory of those great heroes who followed the lead of the God of truth and together overthrew the rule of the vicious mages.”

“Fascinating.” Lucien quickly went through all the pages, and then in his spirit library the copy of the book emerged on one of the bookshelves in the “Ancient Literature” entry.

Then, Lucien turned to Natasha, “Have you read these books before, Your Grace? Do you have any book that has already been

translated?”

“I’ve learned Sylvanas in the noble abbey before. I don’t need translation,” answered Natasha casually. “I’m going to the practicing room now. If I have any question I’ll come back for you. Enjoy your reading, Lucien.”

After Natasha left, Lucien directly jumped onto the books and started to read them assiduously.

...

In the following month, Lucien gradually gained a new perspective toward the continent and even this whole world from the effort he put on reading.

In order to gain great power and break the limit of the human body, lots of sorcerers and sorceresses in the past operated countless cruel experiments on human beings by infusing them with the different powers extracted from magic creatures. Most of the subjects died, but the ones who made it gained tremendous power.

Surprisingly, yet undoubtedly reasonable, following the lead of those surviving experiment subjects, people from different parts of the continent who were fed up with being bullied launched uprisings against the empire.

At the same time, the Saint Truth, with its many years of secret development, quickly gained its momentum and became the shared belief for those people. That was when the great powers derived from the magic creatures started to be called “Blessings” and the Saint Calendar started to count, followed by the epic war called “the War of Dawn”, which lasted for over four hundred years.

Because Lucien was reading the translated versions of the books, all the texts were shedding glory light on the people fighting against the empire while depicting the sorcerers and sorceresses as terrifying representatives of the darkness and the devil.

At that time, Natasha’s family, House Violet, was guarding the remote west territory of Holy Heilz Empire with the great power of

the Violet Knights. In the end of the War of Dawn, House Violet provided the Church with great help and became the biggest contributor to the success of taking down Aalto. The host of House Violet was thus granted the title of the grand duke of Aalto and became independent from Holy Heilz Empire.

In the year 425 of Saint Calendar, the church held one of the most significant synods in history, discussing the topics related to the final stage of the war and the further attack toward the fiend empires across the Dark Mountain Range in the west. However, during that meeting, a great, carefully premeditated divergence over the reading of the doctrine bursted out between some of the grand cardinals and the pope.

Since then the Church was divided into two. Supported by Schachran Empire and the other duchies, the grand cardinals betrayed the pope and set up a separatist regime in the north. The westward march of the Church's army was thus stopped.

Lucien realized that the topic of heresy in this world was way more complicated than he thought.

Knowing that the Sword Brothers were stationed on the border between the Duchy of Orvarit and Schachran Empire, Lucien asked Natasha why the Church never started to march westward again. Her answer was very obscure but meaningful, "In most believers' eyes, the enemy within concerns us more than external threats. Today, no one except the pope knows why those cardinals betrayed us."

Lucien also read from the books that the the frontline against the heresy was formed by the north provinces of the Duchy of Orvarit, the Kingdom of Syracuse and Holy Heilz Empire. Among the total of 60 kingdoms, duchies, empires and territories on the continent, most of them retained their glory through the years. However, in some, like the Gusta Empire to the far south, the royal family had lost their control over the empire, since the several preeminent noble families in Gusta seized a major part of the political and economical power.

Besides, there was a continental sea in the center of the continent,

which was called Storm Sea. Natasha's mom was the princess from the kingdom across the Storm Strait, although very little reference could be found about that kingdom.

...

Two weeks before the new year, sitting in front of the fireplace, Lucien was reading Astrology and Magic Elements.

After the great amount of reading, now Lucien could already understand the most commonly used characters in Sylvanas.

Chapter 101: Legendary Class

By comparing the translations and the original books, Lucien learned more about how to read Sylvanas and could now understand a big part of Astrology and Magic Elements, although still with some difficulties.

Several higher-level methods to meditate were provided in Astrology and Magic Elements. Learning a lesson from what happened to the witch, Lucien decided to stick to his current meditation for now, before he could thoroughly understand how the other methods worked.

One thing in the book captured Lucien's attention. For a long time, Lucien was bothered by a question: If the principle of silent casting could be explained by the change in vibration frequency of spiritual power, then why, according to the book, one could cast a spell without using any magic reagent after successfully constructing the corresponding magic structure in one's soul with the four fundamental elements, Earth, Fire, Wind and Water?

Taking Acid Splash for example, where did the acid come from if no sulphur was used during casting?

Inspired by the book, Lucien made a bold hypotheses that the four fundamental elements in this world could be understood as the four fundamental forces on Earth. There was a reason why Earth, Fire, Wind and Water were being respected as the most important elements, since it seemed they could be able to construct all the magic structures by working together. All of the physical and chemical properties in this world were the external manifestations of the fundamental elements or of the interactions between them. And thus, spellcasting without any material or reagent could make sense.

If the hypotheses was correct, the world might be very similar to Earth on a micro level. In that case, the "magic fairies" that existed in this world that Lucien read about before were probably actually "magic particles".

However, all of these were Lucien's hypotheses right now. He knew that he needed to carry out more experiments to prove whether they were true or not.

Astrology and Magic Elements introduced most of the spells in the school of Astrology and Elements, and some basic spells of other schools, from circles one to five.

In the ancient magic empire, all the magic spells could be divided into two categories: most of them were basic spells, of which the magic structures were recognized by the empire and they could be mastered by all the people; the rest of them were unique spells, which were created by the many great sorcerers and sorceresses in history, on their own.

Luckily, some of the unique spells were introduced in the book.

Nevertheless, Lucien still had a rough idea about what the two legendary classes were: one was Elements Dominator and the other was the Prophet, and ascending to either of the two classes required a lots of extremely precious magic materials and an enormous magic circle. Besides, each magic school had more than one legendary class.

After taking a look at them, Lucien pulled out his spiritual power from the book in his spirit library to take a rest.

After browsing through Astrology and Magic Elements, Lucien chose to analyze the spell Star Shield in order to move forward toward becoming a first circle sorcerer.

...

In contrast to all the apprentice level spells, whose inner structures were two-dimensional, first circle spells were way more complicated since they were three-dimensional. Lucien progressed in a very slow way, trying to understand the constitution based on his own hypotheses.

Reading and thinking too much exhausted Lucien's brain. In the late evening, he lay awake in his nice bed, unable to sleep at all.

So he got up and walked into his practicing room. Sitting in front of his piano, Lucien put his hands on the keyboard.

He had been learning music for more than four months now, and became used to relaxing with the aid of music. In the world of music, Lucien had nothing to worry about. In the world of music, he felt safe.

Lucien's hands were moving freely on the keyboard. After he pressed down the last key, a sudden applause arrived from the window.

Quickly, Lucien turned around in an alert way. It was Natasha, standing on the patio in a black suit.

"Your Grace," Lucien said, "for your information, that's not a front door."

Natasha waved her hand in a casual way and laughed, "Come on, my historian. Don't you remember that almost all the knights in the books you read went to see their beloved girls by sneaking through their windows? Mr. Bake told me that you have a really good memory."

"They're only romantic novels..." Lucien let Natasha come in. "So, why you come here so late, Your Grace?"

"Well...just dropping by. I visited Silvia earlier and she lives in this district as well." Natasha walked into Lucien's practicing room, "Good playing, Lucien. Was that an impromptu? It felt sad."

"Yes, it was an improvisation," answered Lucien. "I was just... thinking of my past."

"I see. I know you suffered a lot before, Lucien." Natasha nodded seriously, "What you just played is very beautiful, beautiful as moonlight. I think you should note it down, so you can develop it into a full sonata in the future."

Lucien was a bit embarrassed, since part of the playing he just did came from the famous Moonlight Sonata written by Ludwig van Beethoven. He was also impressed by Natasha's keen insight into

music.

"How's your work going, Your Grace? The serenade for Miss Silvia?" Lucien changed the subject.

"Um... You know what..." Natasha rolled her eyes in a cute way, trying to hide her embarrassment, "I think I just can't make it. I tried... I swear."

Lucien lifted his eyebrows and tilted his head, waiting for Natasha's real intention for coming to his place so late tonight.

"I dropped by to see if you were still up," Natasha continued, "because I want to know how's your serenade going. The one which you already named it, For Silvia."

"Now I see your point, Your Grace." Lucien grinned, "It's almost ready."

...

The melody of the serenade was gentle and lively like a brook gurgling. This was definitely a piece of serenade praising a young and beautiful lady. Although the playing did not require any sophisticated fingerings, the serenade seized Natasha's heart instantly.

"Rondo... I see." Natasha nodded slightly and enjoyed the beauty of the song.

Then the serenade entered a lighter section in the submediant. After that part, the piece smoothly ended in the same melody as the beginning, with an authentic cadence.

After removing his hands from the keyboard, Lucien noticed that Natasha was resting her chin in her right hand.

"How do you feel about this serenade, Your Grace?" asked Lucien.

"Very beautiful... very elegant. Actually what I'm thinking is..." Natasha drawled.

"Um?" Lucien looked at her.

"How come you have such a deep understanding in serenade, Lucien?" asked Natasha thoughtfully, "I mean... you never had a girlfriend. Do you rely on your imagination?"

Lucien choked.

Chapter 102: Silvia's Father

Although Lucien had completed the serenade called For Silvia and had given the music sheet to the princess, he was still allowed to go to Natasha's study to read the books under her permission. She was hoping that the classic literature works might inspire him to produce more excellent music pieces.

Thus, every Tuesday and Thursday Lucien arrived two hours earlier than before, to read some books and then meet the princess.

.....

"What are you doing here?" Bake was walking around in the study after translating for a long time, and he asked Lucien with curiosity.

"I'm taking notes," answered Lucien briefly, "for future reference."

Actually, there was no need for Lucien to take any notes at all, but Lucien's super outstanding memory surprised Bake a few times in the past two months. Lucien was a bit concerned that Bake might report this to the princess or someone else. In order to attract less suspicions, Lucien needed to do something to justify his great memory.

"Can I take a look at your notes?" Bake asked.

"Sure." Lucien pushed a pile of notes toward the scholar.

Bake picked up a few pages and glanced at them, "Interesting. I've never seen anyone taking notes like this. It looks like you're following a time order, from the Dark Era to the Saint Calendar, but you also wrote down the many stories in a biographic way."

"Yes, to serve my purpose." Lucien nodded, "For me, the stories are more valuable as resources providing me with inspiration than a mere historical timeline, although time's still important."

"I see," Bake said to Lucien. "No wonder you have such good memory. I was very surprised with how fast you can remember all

the things. Actually, this method can be a brand new way of recording history."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Bake." Lucien put on a smile on his face, knowing that it was not his credit. He just borrowed this method from somewhere else in his original world.

"It seems like you're becoming a historian now, Lucien." When they were talking, Natasha entered the study.

"Your Grace," Lucien and Bake saluted together.

Natasha pulled Lucien out of the study with a big smile on her face.

"It seems Silvia likes the serenade, doesn't she?" Lucien also grinned.

"Oh my! She likes it? She loves it!" Natasha was excited, "Silvia did not have a party for her birthday last night, but she said the serenade was the best gift."

"I'm very glad that you ladies like it," said Lucien.

"And I did not lie to Silvia. I told her that For Silvia was your work." Natasha's eyes were shining with joy, "Silvia appreciates your effort very much, and she wants to invite you for dinner tonight, at her place."

"I appreciate Silvia's kindness, but it's not necessary..." Lucien was a bit hesitant.

"Come on, Lucien." Natasha insisted, "I don't want to let Silvia down. And it will be a small, personal, family dinner. Only Silvia, her father, lady Camil and I will be there."

"Well, the thing is..." Lucien scratched his head a bit, "I thought Silvia would be mad at me. You know, after all, I was being your ghostwriter."

"No worries. Silvia's always sweet and considerate. That's why I love her so much." Natasha did not give up, "She knows that I'm not good at love-themed music, and she still appreciates my effort of practicing the serenade and playing it for her on her birthday."

"All right." Finally, Lucien nodded.

.....

At seven in the evening. No. 78, Gesu District.

Silvia lived in a two-storey, light yellow house. There were a few kinds of cold-resistant flowers still blooming in the garden.

"Welcome, Lucien." Silvia and her father were waiting for him.

"The princess and lady Camil are in the living room," said Silvia, who was wearing a long white dress, with her beautiful long hair hanging down her shoulders. Silvia would be like the dream girl for most men.

Lucien handed a small gift to Silvia and said "Happy Birthday" to her, then greeted Silvia's father, Mr. Deroni.

Mr. Deroni was wearing a black suit. Although his black moustache made him look a bit old and gloomy, Lucien still could tell that Mr. Deroni should be pretty good-looking when he was young. However, Lucien felt a bit weird when he saw Silvia's father for the first time, and he did not know why.

"Good evening, Lucien." Deroni greeted him slightly lowering his head. "Although we both live in Gesu, we've never seen each other before. You're even younger than I thought," said Deroni as he led Lucien to the living room.

Before having dinner, the five of them chatted casually. Mr. Deroni started to ask Lucien about the serenade in D. "We're really looking forward to the complete version of it", said Deroni.

"Actually, I already finished it," answered Lucien. "It's a piece of string quartet."

"Awesome." Natasha winked to Lucien, "I hope you can play both the quartet and For Silvia on the new year ball. So I can... you know, that."

Lucien knew what she was talking about. Natasha was still waiting

for a chance to reward him with a manor. Unfortunately, Lucien preferred the knight sword than a manor.

"Since For Silvia is a piece of personal music work, I don't think I should play it on the new year ball, though," Lucien stated.

"Why not?" said Silvia in a gentle voice, "It's your music work anyway, and it's very beautiful. People should have a chance to appreciate it. The only thing that you may want to change is the name of the serenade, or people would think that you're pursuing me."

"I don't mind." Natasha shrugged her shoulders and smiled, "After all, most of the musicians in the association who are still single are pursuing you. By the way, Lucien, before you came we were talking about poems and tales from different places in the duchy. I know you're an expert, and maybe you can help us here."

"Expert?" Mr. Deroni looked surprised.

"The princess's just joking." Lucien waved his hands, "I've indeed read a few related books recently, but I'm nowhere close to being an expert."

"Don't be too humble, Lucien." Natasha laughed, "Mr. Deroni's a very successful businessman and also the director of the Association of Accessories. He's been traveling a lot on the continent, and we were discussing about one of the folk poems that he heard before."

"What's this one about?" asked Lucien with a bit of curiosity.

"Well... not many people know this poem." Deroni rested his chin on his hand, "But the scene the poem described was very unique. I wonder where and when the poem originated and what happened at that time."

Then Deroni started to slowly recite the poem:

"When the sun entered Thanos's Palace,

Huge fire balls fell down from the sky.

The earth was crumbling,

And in no time, the city, as well as the magnificent tower, turned into ashes.

...

The ashes covered everything,

From the earth to the sky.

In the dark pit lived the devil.

...

Look, look! The red water was now up to the lips.

....."

"As you can see, Lucien," Natasha commented, "the poem's not rhetorical, but what it described is very weird. As far as I know, Thanos' Palace is the name of a specific position of the sun, where it shows a unique scene."

Besides Natasha's interpretation, Lucien remembered that, according to the literature he read, Thanos was also the name of a previous chief magistrate of the magic empire, who was known as "the King of the Sun".

Chapter 103: Lucien, The Historian

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Well... although Astrology is totally strange to me,” Lucien was pretending that he knew nothing about astrology, while, in fact, astrology was his speciality and he clearly knew that there was a constellation named Thanos in memory of the King of the Sun, “I read some similar poems before in the princess’ study. So, I’m guessing it might be a prophecy poem.”

“I don’t think so. The folks told me that what the poem described really happened many, many years ago.” Deroni denied Lucien’s first guessing.

“I see.” Lucien nodded, “Dramatic as the poem seems to be, if it’s not a prophecy, then I think it is a poem describing a catastrophe or something similar to that.”

“Umm... that makes more sense.” Mr. Deroni nodded.

“The War of Dawn lasted for more than four hundred years, and before that, there were also countless horrible disasters and many great wars happened on this continent. Huge meteorites, earthquakes, landslides and even battles could lead to the same scene. I read about them before in Heroes’ Epic, The War of Syracuse, Saint City, Confession, Saint Continent Chronicles, and many more.”

“Interesting. I think Lucien makes a good point here.” Natasha nodded, “War or natural disaster, that’s our direction. What I can contribute here is that a good fight between two legendary masters could easily cause this damage to the whole continent.”

“That’s why I’m this curious. I want to know what eventually caused this catastrophe,” Deroni said to them.

“‘The red water was now up to the lips...’, this part is kind of

unique.” Lucien was still thinking, “Has any of you ever heard about the significant topographical change that happened several hundred years ago in the northwest of Aalto?”

Silvia and her father slightly shook their heads and were waiting for Lucien’s further explanation. At this time, Natasha said to Lucien with a bit hesitance, “Are you talking about how Elsinore Lake was formed, the lake that lies in the northwest of Aalto?”

“That’s right, Your Grace. A book from your study named Marius’ Manuscript described a similar scene.” Lucien nodded, “A hundred and fifteen years before the implement of the Saint Calendar, one day Aalto’s sky suddenly turned dark, although it was still day time, and huge stones fell down from the sky. These meteorites destroyed the city called Elsinore and even part of the mountain range in the northwest. The lake was named after the destroyed city.”

“Oh my...” exclaimed Silvia. “Was it a natural disaster?”

“The book didn’t mention.” Lucien slightly shrugged, “However, the book did mention that, at that time, the ground cracked all over, and a weird red liquid surged up through the cracks.”

“Lava?” asked Deroni.

“No. It was mentioned that the liquid was not hot, and it inundated the whole area. But the blood-like liquid ebbed very fast as well.”

“Then what about this Thanos’ Palace?” asked Deroni eagerly, “How do you explain this?”

“It is said that when Thanos, King of the Sun, reached the legendary level, the capital of the magic empire was covered by pure darkness for three entire days.” Natasha expressed her own understanding.

“I see...” Deroni slightly nodded, “Anything else can be found in this poem, Your Grace? Lucien?”

They both shook their heads. That was as far as they could go.

Looking rather disappointed for a second, Deroni then smiled, “I think that’s enough information for my curiosity. Thank you, Your

Grace. Thank you, Lucien. It is amazing that you know this much about the remote history. Actually, even Mr. Bake doesn't know it."

"I told you, Mr. Deroni," said Natasha with pride. "Lucien's not only a musician, but also a historian."

While Lucien was trying to explain, "I'm nowhere close to being a historian. I just happened to read a few books. That's all."

Then, dinner was served.

"You have to try all the dishes tonight, Lucien," Natasha said to him. "One of the cooks here comes from Tria, who makes awesome Syracuse dishes. Way better than our food in Aalto... Ours is all about beef and potato, potato and beef..." As a big fan of different cuisines, Natasha complained.

All of a sudden, Lucien felt very hungry. The princess felt the food here in Aalto was no good, and of course, he felt the same way. The cook Lucien had now was not very impressive. Like what Natasha just said, the cook always provided the same food.

"You know what? Food in Holm and Rentate is even worse. I went there before when I was a kid, and I've never wanted to go back." Natasha got a bit excited.

Lucien never heard the name of these countries before, and thus he wondered if they might be two of the countries across the strait.

The dinner was indeed impressive. Following the appetizer, foie gras, and the soup made of a special kind of Tria fish, the main courses were roasted lamb and white wine stewed tripe, accompanied by vegetable salad. There was also Syracuse special pudding cake for dessert.

Both Natasha and Lucien ate a lot.

...

The freezing wind was whistling on the street in the Month of Ice(December). Natasha, Lucien and Camil were taking a walk after dinner. Silvia wanted to walk with them, but it was too cold outside

for a gentle lady like her.

"If it were in the north, it should be snowing now." Reaching out her beautiful hand, Natasha somehow looked a bit sad.

"It doesn't snow much in Aalto." Lucien looked up at the silver moon.

"If you're ready, Lucien, I want to recommend you to hold a concert in the Psalm Hall during Aalto Music Festival." Natasha turned to Lucien, "During that period, lots of musicians from all over the continent will come to Aalto and celebrate the festival with us."

Aalto Music Festival was the most important music festival across the continent. During the festival, the Psalm Hall would hold a concert every day.

"My concerto is almost ready." Lucien considered a bit and answered seriously. Facing the fact that he was leaving soon, all of a sudden, Lucien felt a bit sad.

"I trust you, Lucien. I'll talk to Mr. Christopher about it." Natasha smiled, then she switched the topic, "You know what, after I played the serenade you wrote for Silvia last night, I did not know what to say to her. I was nervous and a bit embarrassed."

"Um...?" Lucien's mind was still occupied by the slight sadness. He would be leaving Aalto soon after the concert, if everything went well.

"I'm thinking... what I could have said to Silvia to touch her heart the most," said Natasha with a smile.

"Well, you know I'm not experienced," answered Lucien.

"I know... but you're still a man, Lucien." Natasha slanted her head and looked at him.

"Then, I guess... Marry me." Lucien was thinking.

"Umm... That's still a problem between Silvia and me, but I'll work on it." Natasha paused a bit, "You gotta work on finding someone

you like as well, Lucien. Music is not all you need.”

...

On the first Sunday of the Month of Beginning(January), a piece of news on Music Criticism caused quite a stir in Aalto:

“A Bagatelle Worth a Manor.

At the New Year Ball, the princess played a piece of bagatelle named For Silvia, which was composed by the young talented musician Lucien Evans. This elegant, pure, gentle and also joyful music piece won Her Grace’s great affection. Thus, Princess Natasha awarded this young musician, who just recently gained popularity in Aalto, with a beautiful manor in the suburbs.

People are saying that For Silvia might be the most expensive piece of bagatelle ever in the history of music.”

Another thing about Lucien is that somehow many musicians from the association started to call Lucien a “historian”. They started to ask Lucien questions about history and poetry, and Lucien always tried his best to answer the questions for them.

Chapter 104: The Young Visitors

The last week of the Month of Life, the third month of the year.

As the weather was getting warmer, Aalto, the city of Psalm, quickly recovered from the bitter winter and burst out great vigor, welcoming all the guests coming from different places all over the continent to join the Aalto Music Festival, which was held every three years.

Musicians, instrumentalists, bards and nobles from other countries flocked to the biggest city close to the Dark Mountain Range.

Even in the afternoon, there was still huge traffic in front of the city gate in Nolan District.

Lilith, a pink-haired girl, was pulling her elder brother's arm to make him walk faster,

"Stop looking around like that, Sala!"

Saying that in a low voice, the girl seemed to be a bit pissed off with her elder brother, but clearly she did not want to draw attention from anyone.

This sixteen-year-old girl was very lively and beautiful. A slight feeling of melancholy even added more charm to her. Lilith was very popular in her hometown. A young noble almost gave up his title in order to pursue her.

Sala looked way more excited than his sister, "Look, Lilith! They are Moon Elves! Oh my... they're so beautiful! Like the tales said, their ears are slightly wagging... how adorable!"

Out of curiosity, Lilith stood on tiptoe and looked at the elves. Indeed, the several elf maidens who were walking together were absolute beauties. Their skin was as fair as the full silver moon; their faces were well-defined; and their pointy ears were cute.

Falling back on her heels, Lilith murmured, "Just a bit better-

looking than me..."

Then she pinched Sala's arm and complained, "Mind your behavior, Sala! This is Aalto. God is watching you!"

When she mentioned "God", she lowered her voice even more.

"Relax, Lilith." Sala looked a bit similar to his sister, who his pink hair. "Being too nervous is even more suspicious."

Entering the city, the brother and sister changed their direction and came to a quiet corner where there was no one.

"But we're... apprentices." Lilith looked around and finally said the word.

"So what? You know how many sorcerer apprentices are there in Aalto?" Sala shrugged. "After finding the scholar who can answer our questions, we shall leave."

"No music festival?" Lilith looked a bit disappointed.

"No." Sala looked serious, "Aalto Music Festival is held every three years, but we probably only have one chance to become a real sorcerer. You know which is more important."

Lilith nodded. She understood how horrible it would be if they got caught by the Church. The brother and sister had been living in fear for a long time, since they were kids.

...

Copper Coronet.

This was, for sure, not a decent place. Adventurers, mercenaries and hookers were drinking and laughing aloud.

Pushing through the people, Sala carefully protected his younger sister from the many nasty hands in the bar, and finally they jostled through the crowd to the counter.

"Drink?" As usual, Cohn, the dwarf, was drunk.

"Two ales," answered Lilith shortly.

Emitting a sound like a bubbling spring, Cohn let out a big hiccup, "Interesting girl! One free ale on me!"

Grabbing the mug on the bar, Sala took a sip of the ale and nodded, "Pretty good."

"For sure!" Cohn answered with pride, "I drink them all the time. I would not drink shitty ale!"

"As the owner of such a busy bar, you must know a lot of people in the city." Lilith asked with a bit hesitation, "Can you tell us who is the most profound scholar in Aalto? We got an ancient script by accident, but we can't understand it."

"Common tongue?" After another hiccup, Cohn asked, "Or elven, dwarven, draconic..."

"Common tongue. It has been translated by someone." Sala directly cut Cohn off, in case he would keep listing all the languages existing on the continent.

"Well... if the script is about a big treasure," Cohn put on a mysterious smile, "you pupils will be in trouble. Sometimes, it can bring misfortune."

"We have no idea what it is about. We come from a small town." Lilith looked innocent.

"Anyway, the only reason I'm still alive is because I never ask too much." Cohn gulped his ale, "Historians should be helpful... Bake, Alfonso..."

"Which one would you recommend?" asked Lilith with caution.

"None of them," Cohn answered directly. "All those people who know about ancient history... they're all nobles and pastors. You think you guys can just visit their places and ask them questions?"

Both Lilith and Sala looked a bit disappointed. They knew that they could not take the risk of seeing a noble, not to mention a pastor.

"Wait... I know a person who might help," said Cohn. "He was a pauper."

"Really? A pauper turning into a historian? Who is it!?" exclaimed Lilith.

"Lucien Evans," said Cohn with pride. "A genius musician, and also a historian!"

"The composer of For Silvia and Symphony of Fate?" Lilith looked very surprised, "How come he's a historian? That's impossible!"

Sala looked very skeptical.

"I knew you guys wouldn't believe it." Cohn laughed and waved his big palms, "I know Lucien! I've watched him grow up... a very talented young guy. Genius! I heard that he got the access to the princess' study since he's her personal music consultant."

"That's it?" Sala still could not believe, "A bunch of books make a historian?"

"Great talent! Great memory! That's Lucien's blessing!" Cohn seemed to be a bit unhappy with Sala's comment, "Believe it or not!"

Lilith pulled her elder brother's elbow a bit and said to Cohn politely, "Do you know where Mr. Evans lives? Can you tell us?"

"Everyone in Aalto knows that the princess has just awarded him a manor in the suburb. He might be living there to prepare for his upcoming concert," said Cohn proudly. "But you guys gotta wait until tomorrow, or the gate will be closed by the time you come back."

"You mentioned that you've watched Mr. Evans grow up... Is he... elegant and good-looking?" Lilith asked a bit shyly.

"For sure." Cohn laughed aloud.

Lilith grabbed Sala's arm and said to him, "We are visiting Mr. Evans right now."

"What? But the dwarf just said we should go there tomorrow! What if the city gate is closed later?" asked Sala.

"Then we hope Mr. Evans is kind enough to let us stay in his manor for the night." Lilith looked very resolute.

"..."

.....

By the time they reached Lucien's manor, whose name was Brons, the dark night had already fallen upon them.

Sitting in front of a forest, the manor looked a bit creepy.

After negotiating with the manor guards, Lilith and Sala got to see the steward of the manor, Mr. Lopez.

Lopez was in his fifties, and he was also the previous steward of the manor, so Lucien kept him. The brother and sister were invited to come into the hall and waited in the couch.

They waited patiently for several minutes. Then, Lilith and Sala saw a young man wearing a black suit and a white shirt walking downstairs. He looked rather mysterious and elegant.

Chapter 105: Magic Lock

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Staring at the young musician walking out of the darkness of the second floor, for a moment, an idea flashed through both Lilith's and Sala's mind: Mr. Evans was a sorcerer.

However, a second later, they felt a bit amused for having such silly thoughts. How could this young, talented musician who gained such vast popularity in Aalto be a mysterious sorcerer? That was ridiculous.

At this time, Lopez came into the living room followed by a bunch of servants who were holding candles. The whole space was immediately lit up.

"I'm Lucien Evans." Lucien walked downstairs and smiled in a polite way, "I was told that you two came here because of an ancient manuscript?"

"Mr.... Mr. Evans! I'm Lilith. I... I like your music very much!" Due to her nervousness, Lilith failed to answer Lucien's question properly, "For Silvia is my favorite! I'm... I'm very glad to meet you."

Facing this talented and good-looking young musician, the young girl's face flushed.

"Me too, Mr. Evans. I'm Sala." Sala was calmer than his sister, "Symphony of Fate gives me a lot of encouragement, sir."

Lucien smiled and nodded, "Thank you for your support. But can we talk about the manuscript first?"

Hoping that he could find more information about the Continental Congress of Magic, Lucien read lots of literatures and ancient manuscripts. He would not let any possible chance slip from his

hands.

“Yes... Sorry, Mr. Evans.” Sala sniffed a bit and took out a pile of paper, “Here it is, sir.”

Lucien took the manuscript over and said to them, “Not a problem. Please sit down, so we can discuss together.”

Lilith sat back on the couch, still blushing. From time to time, she peeked at Lucien, who was absorbed in reading. Her heart was beating fast.

As usual, Lucien read very fast in order to have a complete copy in his spiritual library. However, a familiar sentence in the manuscript immediately seized his attention!

“When the sun entered Thanos’ Palace...”

Lucien was astonished.

Why did he see the same weird sentence twice within just a couple of months? What did the manuscript have to do with the poem that Mr. Deroni mentioned?

Thus, Lucien slowed himself down and started to reread the whole manuscript. The further he read it, the more shocked he was. Combining what he read before, in the princess’ study, Lucien gradually realized what that manuscript was about.

It was about the ruins of a magic site!

Calm as Lucien looked, there was a great turmoil in his mind:

“Floating mountains”, “grand cross”... Lucien remembered these words. He saw them when he was reading Astrology and Magic Elements. Opening that book in his spiritual library, Lucien turned the page to the last chapter, magic circles.

Just as he expected, Lucien found out that the manuscript described a wide and powerful magic veil called “Magic Lock”, which was mainly constituted by a series of Astrology spells.

Compared with the folk poem, the manuscript offered a more detailed description about how the city was destroyed by the falling meteors and how the weird, red liquid surged up from under the ground. Unfortunately, the manuscript was not complete. No explanation could be found on it regarding why there was a magic site built underground, or why a Magic Lock was placed around it.

The witch's ancestors lived in Aalto many years ago. According to the witch's notes, one of her ancestors was the student of a very powerful legendary sorcerer who was the lord of the city. Therefore, Lucien guessed that the magic site might have something to do with this legendary sorcerer, but he had no real evidence about it.

It had been more than half an hour since Lucien started to read the manuscript. During this time, Lucien did not say even a single word. Both Lilith and Sala felt a bit nervous.

Shocked as Lucien was, he pretended to be quite calm, "It's not complete. Do you have the rest?"

"No." Lilith shook her head, "This is not the original manuscript. As you can see, Mr. Evans, it has been translated into the common tongue."

"I see." Lucien put the manuscript on the table, then he said to Lilith and Sala, "I have a rough idea... This manuscript is about some underground magic ruins, and I can do a rough calculation to locate where the ruins were, based on the geographic and constellation features the manuscript provides."

"Awesome!" Sala and Lilith exclaimed at the same time with great surprise.

After Lucien finished his explanation, Lilith was even more excited, "Thank you so much, Mr. Evans! This will help..."

"Li... Lilith," Sala directly cut his sister off with a couple of fake coughs. Then, he stood up and said to Lucien with respect, "Mr. Evans, thank you for telling us the story behind the manuscript. How much we shall pay you for this?"

“One Thale.” Lucien smiled. Since he was about to leave Aalto after the music festival, he wanted to save more right now, although he already had saved thirty Thales from working for the princess and all the rewards he received. That was already more than what a commoner could earn for their whole life.

“For sure.” Sala slightly bowed to Lucien. Then, he pulled out the money bag and handed Lucien a Thale with great respect.

“As the city gate has been closed, ” Lucien smiled to them and invited, “if you don’t mind, Lilith and Sala, you are welcome to stay in my manor tonight.”

.....

After having dinner, Lucien asked Mr. Lopez to take Lilith and Sala to their guest rooms.

Standing in the center of the living room, Lucien watched the two young visitors leave. His shadow was shivering on the floor because of the candlelight.

Lucien was very concerned with this great coincidence. He just heard the folk poem from Mr. Deroni a couple of months ago, and now he had guests finding him on their own and bringing that precious manuscript. That was too big a coincidence in his eyes.

Lucien thought it might be a trap from the night watchers. However, he had to admit that he was also greedy.

Lucien’s spiritual power had reached a peak within the level of senior apprentice. Up to a couple of weeks later, Lucien should be able to make a breakthrough to become a first circle sorcerer. Right now, all he needed was several kinds of magic materials for his advancement.

Lucien once read from another book that, around most of the magic veils, there would often be magic gardens, since the plants and other materials there would be exposed to magic power all the time. Many of them should be on Lucien’s list.

Also, he didn’t need to step into this Magic Lock. The magic garden

should be just outside of the veil.

According to the sentence “when the sun entered Thanos’ Palace...”, the best time to approach the Lock should be on the tenth day of the following month, the equivalent to April on his original world. Actually, one should approach the magic veil at midnight of April ninth, when the silver moon swung to the summit of her travels. At that time, the sun should be close enough to the constellation called Thanos’ Palace. Obviously, though, people would not be able to see the sun from the magic ruins, since it would be night time.

After a long time of struggling, Lucien finally restrained himself from being impulsive and greedy. After all, exploring the ruins of the magic site would require a lot of preparation from him. At the very least, he would need to collect more related books and notes to get a better understanding of this “Magic Lock”.

Obviously, right now Lucien was not prepared for it. He decided to be more cautious and to wait for a future chance.

...

Lilith and Sala did not sleep well last night, half because of the excitement, and half because of the manor, which made them feel a bit creepy.

As the revelation of the secret of their manuscript took way less time than they thought, when Lilith and Sala went back to Aalto, they decided to stay in the city for the music festival and then head for the small town named Bonn, which was close to Elsinore Lake.

Although Sala still felt a bit concerned about the fact that staying in Aalto any longer might bring them unnecessary trouble, facing his younger sister’s eager request, Sala yielded. After all, he did not want to miss the great musical festival himself as well.

After Lilith and Sala left, Lucien also left his manor and went back to the Musicians’ Association to rehearse with the symphony orchestra.

Chapter 106: The Dream City of Music

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Sitting in the coach, which moved rather smoothly, Lucien looked out the window and found that Aalto became way busier than usual, because of the music festival.

Lots of coaches with strange coats of arms all of a sudden appeared on the streets, but they were familiar to Lucien, since he once read several books in Natasha's study introducing the stories behind the coats of arms of different families on the continent.

Also, there were way more street artists and bards out there today. Among those people, Lucien noticed a familiar figure. It was uncle Joel.

Joel was playing lyre. It seemed the loss of two fingers of his left hand did not bother him too much. Surrounded by a bunch of people, Joel looked rather cheerful and excited.

Lucien asked the coachman to stop. Then, he left the coach and walked close to Joel. Standing behind the crowd, Lucien listened to his playing, smiling.

The crowd burst out a warm applause when Joel finished his playing and bowed to them. A few of the listeners took out their moneybags and put some coins in Joel's hat to show their appreciation.

When Joel straightened up his body, he saw Lucien. Joel's eyes were lit up with surprise.

"How come you're here, Lucien!" When the crowd dispersed, Joel walked with Lucien to a quieter corner, "I thought you were still in the manor."

"I was." Lucien smiled. "I'm going to the association. How're you

doing, uncle Joel?”

“I’m doing great!” Joel’s eyes were shining with pride, “You saw it. They love my music!”

Lucien nodded and said to Joel, “For sure.” Then he pointed at Joel’s hat, which was filled with small change.

“I don’t need this money. You’ve been taking care of my family all the time, and because of you and John, we’re now living a decent life.” Joel weighed the hat a bit with his hand, “As long as they like my playing, that’s enough.”

“I know,” Lucien agreed. “Music itself is beautiful enough.”

“I just play because of my dream now, not for a living.” Joel nodded, “It feels like those days when I just came to Aalto are back again. I’m passionate and motivated. Aalto Music Festival makes turns me into a spring chicken again... hahaha...”

Later, Lucien wandered around on the street to enjoy the different styles of playing. Street music had its unique charm, which also inspired Lucien quite a bit. Staying in his manor in the suburbs for too long, Lucien missed the bustling atmosphere.

As he was walking, Lucien was trying to construct a rough idea about how to recompose the third movement of Violin Sonata in G Minor, which was a very challenging piece of music in this world. Lucien wanted to present the beauty of this piece of sonata with piano, and he also wanted to show the audience his skills.

Lucien decided to recompose it on his own, rather than referring to the masterpieces in his original world like what he always did before. This concert would be the first and also might be the last music concert in Lucien’s life. He wanted to leave something that really belonged to him.

Watching people’s smiling and cheerful faces on the street, listening to the melodious music, Lucien sighed and murmured, “I wish there was no Church here.”

“Sir, come and join our free concert!” Suddenly, a young man

popped out in front of Lucien. “Free!” His green eyes were full of hope.

“Ah?” Lucien was a bit confused.

“We rented a house for hosting our concert, sir!” explained the young man. “By the way, I’m Piola, the first violin in our orchestra!”

It was still early. Lucien was not in a rush, so he nodded with a smile, “Where is it then?”

“Over there!” Piola cheered, “The thirtieth!”

Then he led Lucien to a two-storey house on the other side of the street.

The center of the living room was their simple and temporary stage, on which there were two violins, one viola and one cello. A black-haired girl of ample proportions was sitting in front of a harpsichord.

“Sorry, sir. We need to have more friends here before we start.” Piola apologized, “Grace will play harpsichord for our guests during the waiting time.”

Lucien realized what was going on here. They should be a band coming from another country. They came here for Aalto Music Festival to pursue their music dream, but renting a formal music hall here in Aalto was unaffordable to them. Therefore, they were hoping that more people here would get to know them by providing their audience with free performances.

What the girl played for the audience after Piola left happened to be For Silvia.

Although Grace played it pretty well, some shortcomings of harpsichord compared with piano could not be hidden from Lucien’s eyes.

After a while, more people entered the house. The spacious living room now became quite crowded.

“Dear ladies and gentlemen, ” Piola jumped on the stage and picked up his violin, “We come from Sturk, the Bright Pearl of the Sea. It’s our great honor to play for you today. Welcome!”

Then he turned around and introduced the band members to the audience, “I’m the first violin, Piola, this is the second violin, Sharon. And our violist, Green. This is our cellist, Leslie. And our beautiful Grace who was playing harpsichord for us.”

The small concert took about an hour. Lucien could tell that they were quite experienced from their repertoire, their infectious enthusiasm and their playing skills. Even in Aalto, they could be regarded as qualified instrumentalists.

At the end of the concert, they received warm applause from the audience. The band members were very excited and started to talk to the guests.

“How do you feel about our Fantasia in C Minor, sir?” Piola smiled to Lucien.

“Pretty good,” answered Lucien sincerely. “At the same time, you guys can probably pay more attention to how to unfold your music and the technique that uses a series of values to manipulate different musical elements... as we call it serialism.”

“Wow...” Piola was very impressed. He did not expect that he would receive such a professional comment from this young listener. Then Piola started to exchange his ideas with Lucien with great passion.

Their heated discussion drew the attention of the other band members. Gradually, they joined Piola and Lucien’s conversation after most of the audience left the house.

...

“Thank you very much, sir. We learned a lot from your suggestions.” Grace nodded to Lucien.

“Have a lovely stay in Aalto.” Lucien smiled and was about to leave.

“I’m sure we will,” answered Piola. “Sir, you know that the schedule of the many concerts that will be held in the Psalm Hall has been released.”

“Already?” Lucien was a bit surprised.

“Yes!” Piola looked rather excited, “You know which ones I’m most looking forward to?”

“We all know.” smiled Sharon, “Mr. Christopher’s and Mr. Evans’.”

“Exactly!” Piola clapped his hands, “Seven months traveling! We came all the way here from the shore, just for Mr. Christopher’s and Mr. Evans’ concerts!”

During Aalto Music Festival, even commoners, who could not afford the tickets, could listen to all the concerts held in the Psalm Hall indirectly by means of a divine power circle, which functioned like a broadcaster on the central square.

Seven months... The shore... Something flashed through Lucien’s mind. Then, he started to chat with them about their trip for about another ten minutes.

After Lucien left, Grace said to the other band members, “I still can’t believe that a random sir in Aalto can have such profound knowledge of music. This city’s amazing.”

“Oh my!” exclaimed Piola, “We didn’t ask his name!” He patted on his forehead in a regretful way.

...

As soon as Lucien arrived his own office in the association, he heard a knock at the door behind him.

Surprisingly, it was Natasha and Camil.

After Camil closed the door, Natasha said to Lucien in a serious manner, “Argent Horn was detected in some remote towns again. You have to be careful, Lucien. Don’t go out at night.”

Chapter 107: Lucien's Repertoire

"Are they back?" Lucien was very surprised. He never expected that Argent Horn, after such a great loss, would bounce back so quickly.

"Yes. The Church has sent a Night Watch team out, as well as a bunch of pastors, even some bishops." Natasha nodded, "I wish I could go, too. Those heretics are just crazy..."

Lucien did not answer. He felt that some enthusiastic followers of the God of Truth were crazy as well.

Natasha sat down on the couch, "Aalto is super busy right now. Our security check can't be perfect, especially when we are actually short-handed. Please be careful, Lucien. I'm still eager to attend your concert."

"I will. Thank you for reminding me, Your Grace," answered Lucien. "Also, I have Alert. Unless they send someone who's of a grand knight level or above, they cannot get the jump on me that easily. Still, I'm just a nobody."

"Come on, you're not a nobody." Natasha waved her hand, "Your concert draws a lot of attention. We're all looking forward to it."

"I'm flattered, Your Grace." Lucien paused a bit, "I think I'll be fine. But uncle Joel and his family..."

"No worries. I can take care of them." Natasha immediately understood.

"Thank you so much, Your Grace," said Lucien gratefully.

"How's your preparation for the concert going, Lucien?" Natasha changed the subject and asked Lucien casually, as if they were close friends, "I'm curious."

"Well... not bad," answered Lucien honestly. "I Just need more time to practice with the orchestra. After all, it will be my first time as a conductor. I'm feeling a bit concerned about that, but that's my

only concern."

"You have a really good understanding of music, and your Blessing has been awakened. I don't think that will be a problem." Natasha looked at Lucien with her beautiful purple eyes, "What about the repertoire of the concert?"

Lucien happened to be going to meet Mr. Othello later to have his concert repertoire registered, so he answered directly, "Symphony of Fate. Serenade for strings in G major. Piano Canon in D major. A piano solo recomposed from Violin Sonata in G minor. A piano sonata in C minor named Pathetique, which is a piece of theme music."

"Quite different than I thought," said Natasha with a bit hesitation, "The whole concert is dominated by piano and piano only. I'm afraid that the lack of symphony might make your concert less solemn and grand."

However, before Lucien made any explanation, Natasha smiled and said to Lucien, "But anyway, it's your own concert. You know what you're doing, Lucien. I trust you."

Lucien was encouraged. With the support of the princess, he believed that even Mr. Othello would not be able to say too much about his repertoire.

"By the way, Your Grace," somehow Lucien's mind was dragged back to the previous topic, "Argent Horn happened to be detected around the time of Aalto Music Festival... It seems to be too big a coincidence."

"I know your concern, Lucien." Natasha did not seem to be worried, "We'll handle it."

Lucien simply nodded without making any further comment on that. He clearly knew that he was not the only smart guy in Aalto.

...

After Natasha and Camil left, Lucien ran into Othello, the director of the association, on the stairs.

This time Othello's student, Mekanzi, was not with him. He had been receiving lots of negative comments since last time, when he accused Lucien of being a demon follower and failed. Thus, Mekanzi has not showed up in the association that often recently.

"Lucien, are you ready for the concert?" Othello looked a bit tired, "Is your repertoire ready?"

"Oh Yes, Mr. Othello. Actually, I was about to hand in the repertoire list to you later," said Lucien. Then, he took out the list and handed it to Othello.

Othello read the list with his brows wrinkling, "Too many piano solo. They are not enough for a grand concert, I would say. I know a genius always has a lot of novel ideas, but Lucien, are you sure about it?"

Lucien nodded, "I'm confident, and Her Grace agreed on the repertoire as well."

"Well, I see... I hope you don't feel too stressed." Othello was still a bit worried. In his heart, Natasha's decision to directly assign the last and most important concert to Lucien was not really wise. Othello believed that the final concert for the music festival required a musician who was way more authoritative and experienced than Lucien.

Later, when Lucien was walking upstairs to the practicing room, he met a few of his colleagues, who greeted him in a concerned manner. They were also worrying that Lucien might be under too much pressure for hosting the final concert.

As soon as Lucien stepped on the fourth floor, he saw a lady rushing toward him. Luckily, he was agile enough and made a sudden dodge to the side.

"Silvia? Why are you in such a hurry?" Lucien was a bit surprised.

"Oh hi, Lucien! Nothing really important, actually." Wearing a light yellow dress, Silvia's cheeks slightly flushed from rushing, "I heard that your concert is on the last day. Good for you and... don't stress

yourself out."

"I'm fine. Thank you, Silvia." nodded Lucien, "You're not the first one today telling me I should not feel stressed. I appreciate it, though."

"I bet." Silvia smiled, "You handle pressure pretty well. And Natasha trusts you very much."

...

Rhine and the orchestra were already waiting there when Lucien arrived.

Picking up the baton, he said to them, "Ladies and gentlemen, let's start."

After the first round rehearsal, Lucien felt pretty good. When he was about to continue, Othello and another two young men entered the practicing room.

Lucien knew one of them, Count Verdi, having seen him twice in Ratacia Palace. The other, a grey-haired young man wearing a fine bright red jacket, was totally strange to Lucien.

"This is the prince of the Kingdom of Syracuse, Prince Michelle. The prince's very interested in our association." Othello introduced politely.

After Lucien and the other musicians saluted, Prince Michelle said to them a bit shyly, "Am I disturbing you? Don't mind me. I'm just looking around." When he was introduced to Lucien, Michelle looked quite excited, "Mr. Lucien Evans! It's a pleasure to meet you." Then, the prince reached out both of his hands and gripped Lucien's hands regardless of the royal etiquette.

Lucien could feel the young prince's strength when he was shaking hands with him. Obviously, Michelle had awakened his Blessing. Lucien bowed slightly to him and said politely, "It's my great pleasure, Your Grace."

...

On Lucien's way home, he came across Silvia's father, Mr. Deroni, who was talking to a middle-aged man that Lucien had never seen before.

The man was in his forties. He had tall nose, brown hair and dark blue eyes. Wearing a decent suit, the man was well-mannered.

Deroni nodded to Lucien and introduced, "This is Rogerio, my relative and also my business partner. And this is Mr. Lucien Evans."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Rogerio," greeted Lucien politely while reaching out his hand.

"Nice to meet you, too, Mr. Evans." Rogerio shook Lucien's hand, "You're famous even in Sturk. I've been hearing your name all the time."

"I happened to meet a band from Sturk earlier today." Lucien smiled and shared with them some of the interesting stories that he heard from the band.

...

Several days later, the most exciting music event on the continent, Aalto Music Festival, finally kicked off.

Chapter 108: Warm Up for the Festival

April third, Aalto Music Festival.

Music was everywhere on the streets. Today, Lucien was dressing less formally, with a simple brown coat, white shirt and black trousers. Wandering on the streets, he was accompanied by Iven, who also dressed like a little gentleman, since Joel and Alisa decided to go out on a date to revive the passion and love that they had when they were young.

Victor was busy with meeting different musicians and nobles from other cities and countries, and so were Felicia, Lott and Herodotus. Natasha was feeling overwhelmed by the royal guests coming from all over the continent, and she spent all her spare time supporting Silvia's upcoming concert. Rhine was invited to be the first violin for several concerts, and Lucien heard that he didn't even have time to eat.

Even John could not find any time to hang out with Lucien. He needed to maintain the order on the festival.

"Hey, John!" Lucien waved to his buddy, who was patrolling on the streets.

"Hey, Lucien!" John grinned, "How's everything going?"

"Well... Can't be any better." Lucien shrugged his shoulders, "Is there anything better in the world than being a babysitter during the music festival?" Lucien pointed at Iven, who was focused on chewing the huge hotdog in his hand.

John laughed so loud that several pedestrians on the street turned to look at them.

"Come on! I'm taking care of your younger brother!" Lucien complained in a joking way.

"Well... I heard that several noble ladies invited you to their manors during the festival." John patted on Lucien's shoulder, "Say... Miss

Yvette Hill."

"I prefer to take care of your brother," answered Lucien honestly.

After talking to John, Lucien continued to stroll around the streets. Since he might be leaving soon after the music festival, Lucien wanted to feel Aalto more and cherish the time when he was still here.

While Lucien was quite interested in listening to the street artists playing, Iven paid more attention to the assorted food trucks which were selling grilled cheese, fruit pie, fried potatoes, desserts and so on.

Finishing his hotdog, Iven started to stare at the candy store on the other side of the street.

Lucien and Iven easily spent the whole morning walking around to enjoy the festival atmosphere, and walking into some random small music halls to appreciate the music that the bands played.

During the music festival, except for the Psalm Hall, tickets for any music performance were very cheap, and some of them were even free. Thus, Aalto Music Festival was genuinely a music feast for everyone.

It was close to lunch time. Lucien took Iven to a restaurant.

"Look!" Iven was pointing at the sign standing in front of the restaurant, "Play music and earn your free meal!"

Iven could already read some words under Lucien and John's teaching.

"This restaurant seems to be quite awesome." Lucien smiled.

The restaurant was super busy. When Lucien and Iven were waiting to be seated, they saw an old gentleman who was playing piano in the front. The old gentleman was not playing really well, and every of his key-pressing movement seemed to be a big challenging for him.

But he played in a very devoted way, as if he was having his own concert.

When the old gentleman finished playing, the whole restaurant bursted out a warm applause for him. The guests were applauding for his courage and passion.

"Free lunch for this gentleman!" cheered the owner of the restaurant, "Who wants to be the next!?"

Lucien and Iven were led to a small table for two, close to the window. They ordered two steaks for lunch.

A few more guests performed. The atmosphere of the restaurant was very nice. Everyone here was enjoying their time.

More and more people came into the restaurant. Some of them could not find any seat, so they just stood beside the bar section, holding their food, and that included Piola, Sharon and the other band members.

After playing for the whole morning, they were starving. A free lunch was definitely great.

Piola's playing seized everyone's attention. The festive atmosphere in the restaurant climaxed.

"Free lunch for this young lad!" the owner of the restaurant announced, "And for his friends!"

Lilith and Sala were attracted by the restaurant as well.

...

Putting down his knife and fork, Lucien smiled at Iven, who was too full to sit up straight on his seat, "Told you. Don't eat too much."

"I can't control myself..." Iven was still staring at the rest of the steak on the plate and then he ask the waiter to take it to go. Then he turned to Lucien, "If you're willing to play, Lucien, for sure we don't need to pay!"

Being touched by the friendly, warm atmosphere, Lucien wanted to give it a shot as well. Lucien wanted to see whether his own music, the one he didn't copy from any masterpieces, could receive some appreciation among the people.

So he nodded to Iven and walked toward the piano.

"Another young lad!" said the restaurant owner.

"Mr. Evans!?" Lilith could not believe her eyes.

"Yes, it is Mr. Evans." Sala looked a bit confused but also excited, "I thought he was preparing for his concert."

"We're so lucky!" Lilith's face flushed, "We can listen to Mr. Evans' playing here, in a random restaurant!"

Piola recognized Lucien as well, and he turned to his friends, "That's the gentleman we talked to the other day. I wonder how well he can play!"

Placing his hands on the keyboard, Lucien quickly went through the small piece of serenade he wrote before in his mind, without referring to any music books in his spirit library.

Lucien's playing was like a cool breeze coming in through the window, gentling touching every listener's heart. The busy restaurant slowly calmed down. Everyone stopped talking and listened to the music carefully.

Moving his hands smoothly on the keyboard, Lucien closed his eyes and started to enjoy.

In sharp contrast to the bustling atmosphere just now, the beautiful melody refreshed people's mind like a limpid brook.

The piece of melody was very short. When Lucien left the small stage and came back to Iven, the whole restaurant remained very quiet, since the guests were still immersed in the beauty of the melody.

Lucien was satisfied. Leaving a Nar on the table, Lucien and Iven

quickly left.

As soon as Lucien stepped out of the restaurant, he heard a great mix of people cheering and applauding.

...

"He left!" Piola looked disappointed, "We didn't ask his name! Again!"

"I wonder why we never heard the melody before. Full of music surprises, Aalto is such an amazing place!" said Sharon. She did not know that it was that gentleman himself who composed the melody.

...

"Mr. Evans!" Lucien heard someone calling him from behind.

Turning around, he saw that it was the brother and sister who visited him the other day.

Chapter 109: Marcus

Seeing Lucien, Lilith was both excited and shy, "Your performance in that restaurant was awesome!"

Lucien somehow asked subconsciously, "Why are you two still in Aalto?"

"We still have time until..." Before Lilith finished her phrase, Sala cut her off directly, since he realized that his younger sister might spill the beans inadvertently.

"Mr. Evans, why did you think we wouldn't stay here for the music festival?" As soon as he asked, Sala regretted that he asked the question in such a harsh defensive way, which could make he and Lilith even more suspicious.

Lucien got a bit nervous too. He did not want Lilith and Sala to realize that he actually knew more about the ruins of a magic site than they thought.

"You two were in quite a hurry when you visited me," Lucien's mind was working fast, "and I thought you had something urgent. That's why."

"Oh... I see." Sala relaxed a bit and switched to a safer topic, "Like Lilith said, your playing was very impressive."

After chatting a bit more, Sala left with his younger sister, although the latter was a bit reluctant to stop the conversation with Lucien.

Watching Sara and Lilith leaving, Lucien slightly frowned his brows, feeling a bit concerned. He was not sure whether today's meeting with the brother and sister was just a coincidence or something else.

However, Lucien would not let his concern ruin his beautiful day. He still spent a very pleasant afternoon with Iven hanging around and enjoying the festive atmosphere.

...

In the evening, Lucien took Iven to Joel and Alisa and had dinner with them. Then, they walked toward the central square. Tonight, the square was way busier than usual, and the whole place was literally packed. People gathered here to enjoy tonight's concert in the Psalm Hall through the divine power circle.

The divine power circle was actually visible, which seemed to be more like a transparent crystal dome floating in the air than a commonly-imaged mysterious magic circle. Through this huge dome screen, people on the square could watch the spectacular performance and enjoy the wonderful music simultaneously.

"Wow..." Iven drawled with surprise.

"It looks like we cannot go anywhere closer," said Joel. "Let's just stay here."

"We're not staying here!" refused Alisa, "What can we see from here?"

As she was talking, Alisa was about to take advantage of her weight to open a path for them.

"Auntie Alisa," Lucien smiled and stopped her, "I actually know a better place than the square."

...

The town hall of Aalto was a five-storey building, sitting on the other side of the central square.

"Felicia's father, Mr. Urbain, is the chief clerk here," Lucien explained. "He invited us to enjoy the concert on the top floor."

When they got closer, Lucien saw that Felicia was already waiting there at the back gate of the town hall.

Due to the limited amount of seat that the Psalm Hall could provide and the large number of distinguished guests coming from other countries, even Mr. Urbain was not invited for tonight's concert. As

for the musicians' association, only the most well-known musicians would be invited, like Mr. Victor, whose concert just achieved a great success in the Psalm Hall.

Actually, Lucien, as the princess's personal music consultant, got invited as well, but he didn't dare to go, since a great number of grand cardinals and bishops would be there that night. Lucien did not want to take any unnecessary risk.

...

The concert started at eight o'clock sharp.

Sacred light appeared above the central square, covering everyone present.

All of the people present lowered their heads, praying and praising. This was the love of God, the power of God.

Lucien also lowered his head, but he was thinking about something else. As the power of magic originated from nature, Lucien wondered where did divine power come from.

The light became brighter and brighter, then it gradually covered the crystal dome. The spectacular main stage of the Psalm Hall slowly appeared in the sky.

The Golden Cathedral Choir was ready.

"Pious followers..."

The hymn was so wonderful, as if it was being sung by angels.

All the choristers were men, and all of them got castrated before they entered their adolescence. Thus, their voices were even purer and beautiful than that of women.

"Lucien... are you all right?" Felicia asked him with concern.

"Yes? I'm fine, Felicia," Lucien said to her. "Why do you ask?"

"Sorry, I was just thinking that the first concert's grand beginning

might have put lots of pressure on you." Felicia slightly shook her head, "It looks like I'm even more nervous than you are."

Lucien grinned, "Thanks, Felicia. I'm fine."

...

At the adamant demand of Mr. Victor, Lucien attended the second concert in the Psalm Hall, held by Christopher, the president of the association.

"You can't miss it," Victor said to Lucien. "It might be Mr. Christopher's last concert. You have to cherish this opportunity."

"Oh yeah... can't miss the opportunity to attend a music master's concert in order to make myself anxious." Lucien joked.

"If you were really that stressed, you wouldn't say something like that." Victor knew Lucien's personality pretty well, "And I trust you, Lucien. I read the music sheet of Pathetique. Challenging as it is, I believe this piece of sonata can lead to a revolution in the history of music."

"Thank you, Mr. Victor." Lucien smiled. "Your support means a lot to me."

At this time, a young man in his early twenties with black hair and brown eyes approached them.

"Mr. Victor, good evening," greeted the young man. "Is this Lucien Evans?"

Victor stood up and introduced with a big smile on his face, "This is my previous student, Marcus. He is now the music consultant of the Kingdom of Shaq. He came back several days ago, just because of the music festival."

Chapter 110: The Last and the First

Lucien reached out his hand, "Nice to meet you, Mr. Marcus."

Holding Lucien's hand, Marcus put on a sort of arrogant smile, "Likewise, Lucien. I heard your name when I was in Shaq. When I had just arrived in Aalto, a couple of days ago, I was about to visit you, but Mr. Victor asked me not to distract you from the preparation of your first concert."

Marcus put some extra emphasis on the word "first". In his mind, Lucien should not be respected as a musician until his first concert achieved great success.

"Mr. Victor often mentioned your name, saying that you're one of his most outstanding students." Lucien remained polite, "In terms of concert experience, I'm not even close to you."

"Well... It's my great pleasure to be invited by the many countries." Marcus put on a big smile when they came to the topic that he felt the most proud of. He sat down beside Lucien and started to spout his concert experience in different countries: the passion of the Kingdom of Syracuse, the rigidity and conservatism of the Holy Heilz Empire, the boldness of the Kingdom of Shaq...

Lucien did not mind knowing more about these countries. So he nodded and asked a couple of questions from time to time when Marcus was talking.

Marcus did not stop himself until the concert was about to start. In his mind, Marcus felt that Lucien was pretty easy-going, rather than arrogant as he assumed.

Marcus' hostility did not come from nowhere. At first he felt truly happy that his teacher, Mr. Victor, noticed this talented young man, and he was proud that his peer could make achievements like him, until more and more news about Lucien Evans came to Shaq like snowflakes. Even the nobles in Shaq were talking about the young man and making comparison between them. All of a sudden, Marcus felt that his achievement was worth nothing compared with

Lucien's success, but Lucien hadn't even had his own concert yet!

The audience gave Christopher a very warm applause as soon as he appeared on the stage. Dressing in black, Christopher looked rather hale and solemn tonight.

That would probably be Christopher's last concert for his music career, the last concert of the president of Aalto Musicians' Association, the most authoritative and the greatest musician across the continent, the "living music legend".

"Ladies and gentlemen," Christopher turned to the audience, "thank you for coming."

Straightening his back, Lucien listened carefully.

"I've been devoted to music for fifty-nine years, and now I'm seventy," said Christopher with deep emotion. "I'm still standing here because of all your support, and because of the stimulus I received from a young lad. We, as human beings, we age and die, but music never!"

Then Christopher turned around and raised the button.

The first three symphonies were Christopher's most well-known music pieces. One was elaborate and ebullient, one was elegant and sublime, and the third one was passionate and graceful. The intoxicating and familiar melodies seized every listener's mind, no matter if they were inside or outside of the Psalm Hall.

Christopher's achievement in music was the milestone in the history of music. Together with the music, the listeners' remote memories were brought back.

During every interval, the audience applauded like never before, as if the whole continent was applauding the respectable, senior musician.

After the third piece of symphony, Christopher looked a bit tired, "Now, please enjoy my student Silvia's piano sonata, while I'm going to prepare for the next symphony."

In his last concert, Christopher wanted to support his student, and he knew that he must take a rest before the upcoming symphony.

"This is the 'living music legend'! His concert is strikingly awesome!" said Piola with great excitement on the square.

"I know..." Sharon nodded earnestly, "It's my greatest pleasure to be here right now and listen to Mr. Christopher's concert."

Dressing in white, Silvia walked onto the stage like an angel.

Lucien closed his eyes and listened to Silvia's playing carefully. Generally speaking, her playing was pretty good, and Silvia's progress was already very impressive to Lucien, but he knew she could still make some improvement on her piano fingerings and her understanding of the many features of the new instrument.

The ten-minute long sonata also received a warm applause. Silvia slightly lifted her dress and bent her knees to thank the audience, feeling quite excited.

When Lucien was applauding Silvia, he felt someone was looking at him. It was Natasha. Her beautiful purple eyes were shining as she smiled.

She nodded to Lucien, and Lucien knew that she was thanking him for providing Silvia with some tips for playing piano and recomposing the sonata.

Then Christopher's returning immediately seized everyone's attention again. They were all looking forward to the last symphony.

As Christopher lifted the baton and waved, the first two music notes struck every listener's mind.

Christopher took them to a great battlefield.

Horns blowing, flags waving, and the brave soldiers howled and charged like lions against the enemy, with their blood burning out of the great determination and the will of fighting. Under the guidance of the many heroes, pastors and knights fought side by

side and devoured their enemies like an overwhelming flood. They beheaded the titans and smashed the tall towers of the evil sorcerers. To protect their homeland, they killed all the demons who were trying to destroy the world.

The following movement had a more restrained style, as if the army was mourning the heroes, but hope came with sadness, and even greater determination followed grief. Then, an exciting and passionate movement changed the music tone. In the name of justice and light, the soldiers wiped off their tears and marched again with irresistible momentum.

The whole Psalm Hall remained silent for a moment after the symphony finished, then the audience burst into thunderous applause.

This was not only an applause for the symphony, but also for Christopher's great spirit of innovation and perseverance in his seventies! Apparently, this piece of symphony was influenced by Lucien's Symphony of Fate. It was astonishing that the greatest musician ever would learn from the younger generation and always seek to reach new levels even in his late years!

"Master. Mr. Christopher, master!" Piola was too excited to form a complete sentence.

"Yes... Yes!" answered Piola's friends. Their voice was trembling.

The grand duke, the princess, the prince from the Kingdom of Syracuse, Count Verdi and all the people in the Psalm Hall stood up while they were applauding to show their great respect toward that great musician.

"Ladies and gentleman, my last concert has ended tonight." Christopher bowed to the audience and said with emotion, "Tomorrow, our young, talented musician, Lucien Evans, will bring us his first concert ever here in the Psalm Hall. The last concert and the first concert... What God is telling us here is that... music never ends!"

"Music never ends!" The audience followed Christopher and

repeated his words. And then many of them turned to look at Lucien.

Lucien bowed deeply to this great musician, with great respect.

Chapter 111: Pressure

The crystal dome in the air created by divine power had disappeared, but people still remained on the square, lingering over the last piece of symphony named The War of Dawn.

Following the trend of theme music created by Symphony of Fate, Mr. Christopher's latest music piece was definitely great.

"Comparatively speaking..." Sala was a bit hesitant, "magnificent as The War of Dawn is, Symphony of Fate, to me, is still more impressive."

Lilith nodded, "Yes, I feel that the determination that Symphony of Fate carries is still stronger." Then she frowned her brows and looked worried, "But Mr. Christopher's concert is still a great success. The concert tonight must have put even more pressure on Mr. Evans."

"Mr. Evans will be fine..." Sala did not really know what to say, "He won't let us down."

"Then what if he does?" Lilith raised her head, "After all, Mr. Evans is competing with the president of the Musicians' Association."

Sala looked at his sister and sighed.

At the same time, on the top floor of the town hall Felicia released a long sigh, as if she was trying to drive away the worry and nervousness in her mind.

However, not everyone was feeling concerned about Lucien's concert. Mekanzi was one of the exceptions, who was very excited after tonight's concert, not really because of the great breakthrough that Mr. Christopher made in his late years, but because Mekanzi believed that the president's awesome concert would absolutely pale Lucien's performance on the following day by comparison.

...

The grand duke, the princess and other high-ranked nobles stayed in the Psalm Hall after the concert and right now they were talking to Mr. Christopher in a separate box, congratulating him for his great music achievement and regretting that he would hold no more concerts in the future.

The other nobles and musicians remained in their seats, exchanging their ideas about the concert.

"You're now almost an expert in the field of theme music, Lucien." Victor was impressed by Lucien's interpretation of the first movement of The War of Dawn, "I can tell you are shaping your own music style and ideas."

"Thank you, Mr. Victor. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that I still have a long way to go before achieving that level," answered Lucien humbly. "What I was talking about was basically from Music Criticism and Symphony News. They produced a few quite insightful music reviews in the field of theme music in the past couple of months."

In fact, all the music knowledge that Lucien was exchanging with Victor and Marcus was from his spirit library.

"Oh... I read those articles as well. Yes, they're great as means of instruction," agreed Marcus, but then he changed the subject, "Do you feel stressed that your concert tomorrow will be compared with this perfect concert, Lucien?"

When Lucien was about to answer, Victor patted Marcus' arm to stop him. Then, Victor said to Lucien, "Never compare yourself with others. Do what you want to do."

In fact, Victor himself was pretty worried that the piano solos tomorrow might not be able to provide enough music appeal to the audience, but he chose to trust his student.

Lucien was not as stressed as other people thought. Although he knew that his arrangement and repertoire of the concert was quite ahead of the mainstream, and the several pieces of piano solos might be a great risk, Lucien believed that only himself knew what

he wanted.

"I'll just try my best." He nodded.

Then minutes later, the nobles started to leave the concert hall, followed by the musicians. Some nobles and musicians greeted Lucien in a sort of weird manner. Clearly, they were trying to avoid mentioning his concert tomorrow.

...

It was April fifth, the last day of Aalto Music Festival.

At seven thirty in the evening, almost all the people in Aalto were gathering around the central square and on the streets nearby, waiting for the last concert.

Piola, Sharon and other band members arrived at the square in the early afternoon to secure a relatively good spot. Now they were surrounded by more and more people and more and more heated discussion.

Staring at the crystal dome, Piola murmured as if he was dreaming, "I wish I could hold a concert here. I'd be willing to die for that."

"Not really possible, unfortunately." Green, the violist, shook his head and sighed, although he had the same dream in his mind.

"We're only in our twenties. We're still young. Don't be this pessimistic, Green," said Sharon, "Mr. Christopher is still seeking for music breakthroughs in his seventies, and we shall carry our dreams all the way until we accomplish them."

"Speaking of being young..." Grace said to them, "Mr. Evans' coming-of-age ceremony is still a couple of months away from now."

Sharon, who was born in a music family, replied, "The youngest musician held his concert in the Psalm Hall when he was fifteen, but by the time he performed here, he had already hosted several concerts in different places. Mr. Evans is now having his first concert here during Aalto Music Festival, that's something that will

definitely be recorded in the history of music."

Christopher held his first concert in the Psalm Hall during a previous Aalto Music Festival when he was twenty-six. The eldest musician who held his concert at the age of a hundred and twelve in the Psalm Hall was also a grand knight, which is considered an almost unbreakable record.

"Everyone is looking forward to Mr. Evans' performance tonight," said Grace. "I feel that... as long as his concert is half as impressive as Mr. Christopher's, we shall call it a success."

"I agree..." Piola nodded, "After all, Mr. Evans has been learning music for less than a year. He's already a genius for going this far, and he's still very young."

"I don't think that other people will agree with us, unfortunately." Sharon sighed, "There must be people who're hoping for Mr. Evans' failure."

...

Outside of the Psalm Hall, Lucien, dressing a black tailcoat, was welcoming the distinguished guests together with Rhine and some other orchestra members.

Many nobles and musicians trickled in the hall. Among them were Count Hayne, Count Rafati, Count Hill, Mr. Othello, and other foreign nobles and musicians that Lucien did not know.

Then, Christopher showed up with his student Silvia. He nodded to Lucien with a kind smile and asked him to relax. Silvia smiled to Lucien to show her encouragement.

Lucien also specially invited his "family" in Aalto to come. John, Joel, Alisa, Iven and Elena were all invited. They arrived with Victor and Felicia, and some of them looked even more nervous than Lucien. He grinned to them, telling them he was feeling great.

Finally, the coach of the grand duke arrived. The grand duke and Princess Natasha were surrounded by many nobles, and so was Michelle, the Prince of the Kingdom of Syracuse, and Sard, the Saint

Cardinal of the Church.

Natasha lifted her purple eyebrows a bit to Lucien and smiled, "I trust you, my music consultant."

...

In the box, the Grand Duke Orvarit said to his daughter, "Natasha, I think that you were quite inconsiderate when you arranged Lucien's first concert to be held after Mr. Christopher's and as the closing concert of Aalto Music Festival. You don't want him to mess it up, do you?"

"Of course I don't, father." Natasha laughed. "I just have faith in him. I know he can do it."

"Well... your faith doesn't make him a qualified musician for this occasion." Verdi said to Natasha, "All he had was Symphony of Fate, and... probably For Silvia."

"I think this is a proper occasion for a young and talented musician to grow." Christopher agreed with Natasha, "The most valuable concert for a musician is one that can help him break through his limits."

Sard also nodded, "I can tell from that symphony that this young man is very persistent. He has a heart that won't yield to difficulties. God will bless him."

Having the support of Christopher and Sard, Natasha smiled to Verdi, "Now, what do you think?"

"Well... we'll see." Verdi did not bicker too much with Natasha tonight. His mind seemed to be a bit pre-occupied right now.

...

When Lucien appeared on the stage, Piola's pointed at the crystal dome and exclaimed, "He... he's Mr. Evans?!"

Piola's mouth opened wide. He could not believe his eyes.

It took Sharon a few seconds to organize what to say, "Yes, I think so. The young man we talked to before... is Lucien Evans."

"No wonder..." Grace murmured to herself.

Standing in front of the orchestra, Lucien smiled to Rhine and nodded.

Then, Lucien waved his baton.

Chapter 112: The Art of Conducting

What was out of expectation was that the music did not start as soon as Lucien waved his baton. Standing in the front of the stage, he raised both of his arms up high. His whole body was shaking slightly, as if there was a great momentum of power coming out of his body.

Before the audience realized what happened, Lucien quickly swung his arms backwards and lifted the baton again. Here came Serenade for strings in G major.

Short and direct, the music notes impacted every listener's mind. The confusion and nervousness of the audience suddenly disappeared, and they were now immersed in the joy brought by the serenade.

Lucien was smiling. His whole body was rocking in a pleasant way together with the music. The happiness that was being delivered to the audience was so infectious that many of them started to nod and shake their bodies, synchronizing with the development of the music.

Christopher and Natasha never watched Lucien's rehearsal before. Now, they were both very surprised by Lucien's new way of conducting, which was totally different from the traditional style.

Usually the simple function of conducting in the past, due to the conservative style of music, was only to direct a musical performance to ensure correct entries by various members of the ensemble, thus, neither the emotion of the composer of a music piece nor that of the conductor was conveyed. For example, although both Victor's and Christopher's range of movement when they were conducting was wide, they never really tried to show their own feelings to relate to the orchestra members, or to provoke the audience's emotion.

Following the development of theme music, Lucien also changed his way of conducting to fit in the trend of moving from classicism to

romanticism. Lucien spent a lot of time on learning from the great conductors in his original world, such as Arturo Toscanini and Herbert von Karajan, in order to form his own style of conducting.

Under Lucien's direction, the orchestra perfectly captured the joyful, lively spirit of the first movement of the serenade.

Then, Lucien's waving of the baton became more gentle when the serenade entered the second movement. The melody was like a piece of veil-like, rosy dream, floating in the air and then slowly falling on everyone's mind.

The dream was about love and romance, about beautiful girls and handsome boys, about the endless wild flower field and the cool breeze in summer, about one's youth, the most sweet years in one's life.

Transiting smoothly, the rondo form of the third movement made many of the listeners feel like dancing. They even wished it was an evening party, instead of a formal concert.

In its ending part, the music returned to the lively, youthful and pleasant style again. When Lucien finished his conducting and turned around, the audience pause a bit and broke into a sudden, warm applause during the short break, as they just realized that the serenade was over.

"A serenade in the Psalm Hall!" Piola exclaimed to his friends, greatly surprised.

In the past, serenade, as an informal music genre, was usually not qualified to be played on an elegant and decent music stage. Very rarely was serenade put on this kind of occasion in the past, and people never really liked it. Today, Lucien broke the stereotype and made a piece of serenade as impressive as a symphony.

"Graceful and gorgeous, exquisite and balanced," Sharon commented. Even the aftertaste of the serenade was fascinating.

In the box, Christopher smiled and said to the grand duke and the Saint Cardinal, "Again, a surprise from Lucien."

The grand duke nodded, "His conducting's definitely a bonus for the serenade."

Before the concert started, although Natasha looked very confident, she was still a bit worried about Lucien. Now, she was totally relaxed, leaning against the back of the seat and listening to her father and the Saint Cardinal talking about Lucien's new style of conducting. She was curious about what would be the next surprise from Lucien, and so were all of the other listeners.

...

After the short break, when Lucien came back to the stage and passed by the concert members, Rhine smiled and said to him in a low voice, "It seems that your conducting received a pretty good feedback, and I believe Symphony of Fate will just shock them."

Lucien smiled and nodded to Rhine, looking rather confident. Then, he stood in front of the orchestra and closed his eyes.

The entire Psalm Hall and the whole square quieted down.

Slightly lowering his head, Lucien raised up his arms again, but he did not immediately wave his hands.

The audience held their breath, waiting.

Standing there still like a statue and with his eyes closed, Lucien thought about his parents' faces, so familiar but also very far away from him. The plain days in his original world came back to him, but, unfortunately, Lucien did not realize how valuable these days were and thus he never cherished them.

Now, he was here, in this strange world, all by himself. He had to live in great risk almost everyday. He could die easily because of his dream of learning magic. The faces of gangsters, the night watchers and the heretics showed up in Lucien's mind, mocking him, threatening him, telling him that everything was the arrangement of fate.

Was he supposed to accept his fate?

Was he supposed to give up fighting?

Was he supposed to abandon his goals and yield to all the difficulties?

No! Never!

He would fight against the so-called fate with his last breath!

Lucien's face was twisted with his great determination. Gnashing his teeth, he fiercely dropped both of his arms downward.

The familiar opening of Symphony of Fate again seized every listener's heart.

It looked like Lucien's body almost lost balance from his wild waving. Every piece of muscle in Lucien's body was shivering from his great excitement!

As if their hearts were gripped by a powerful, big hand, many of the listeners felt out of breath.

Even Sard opened his eyes. He was looking at Lucien, who was conducting the orchestra in an almost crazy manner.

With the baton in his right hand, Lucien's left hand sometimes clenched into a fist, and sometimes tightened like the claw of eagle. His arms sometimes stretched wide out and sometimes stayed tightly close to his body.

Lucien's face was twisted with hatred and anger, as if he was biting off a piece of flesh from his enemy alive. Occasionally, the muscles in his face relaxed a bit, but soon his face looked even crazier, as if he would be struck by a heart attack at any moment.

Compared with Victor's conducting of Symphony of Fate, Lucien's version was even more striking and intensive. Every member in the orchestra was influenced and motivated by Lucien, and the whole orchestra seemed to be crazier and crazier!

The power and the momentum of the symphony was unprecedented!

Grabbing the arms of her seat, Natasha's back was tightly straightened up, while some of the other elder nobles seemed to be about to pass out at any moment due to the great intensity of the playing.

Finally, with all his power, both physical and mental, Lucien brought out the last movement of Symphony of Fate. The great joy of victory and triumphant return suddenly burst out and immediately inspired everyone!

When the symphony ended, even with his Blessing power, Lucien still felt quite tired.

The whole Psalm Hall was very quiet.

Then Lucien turned around and bowed to the audience. By the time he straightened up his back, Lucien heard the warmest applause ever in his life.

The whole city was applauding him for Symphony of Fate, for Lucien's art of conducting!

Chapter 113: Piano Solo

The whole city was applauding Lucien's performance. In this world, people were not used to this kind of strong sensory stimulus. They were shocked.

"I almost can't breathe," said Lilith. "Mr. Evans' conducting gives the symphony a new life."

"No one knows a music piece better than its composer!" Sala was still applauding, his eyes were shining with excitement.

Compared with those traditional conductors' conservative style, people who did not have too much knowledge about music absolutely preferred Lucien's way of presenting the music.

...

"He's crazy." Verdi was first impressed, but soon he felt that it was too much for him, "Lucien simply has no idea about what is elegance!"

Verdi was not alone there. Many other conservative musicians who adhered to past practices nodded as Verdi was commenting.

It could be foreseen that a bunch of critic reviews of Lucien's conducting would be found on tomorrow's Music Criticism and Symphony News.

"I don't think so, Verdi." Natasha shook her head, looking quite excited, "This way of conducting was born for Symphony of Fate! Don't you think?"

"I agree with Her Grace." Christopher, the authority, was on Natasha's side, "Lucien's conducting style lit the great passion of the whole orchestra, and together they presented us with an even more exciting version of Symphony of Fate. This conducting style, I would say, suits theme music very well."

"But Mr. Christopher..." Verdi looked at him.

"I know what you want to say, Count Verdi." Christopher smiled, "Indeed, Lucien was pushing a bit too hard. He was being too direct when he was presenting Symphony of Fate, and that left the audience less space for further imagination."

Even Natasha had to admit that what Christopher said was true.

"However, I think we should not be too tough with a young musician and his first concert ever." Fingers crossing, Christopher looked at the grand duke, "We need a creative younger generation, and being tolerant and open-minded is the first step."

The grand duke smiled and nodded. What Christopher said was exactly what he was thinking.

Both what Natasha and Verdi wanted to say was pretty much all covered by Christopher. Verdi turned his face to the other side.

"I'm wondering, please forgive my interruption, Your Grace, why Lucien chose to put Symphony of Fate in the second place of tonight's concert." Michelle, the prince of the Kingdom of Syracuse, asked in confusion, "I mean... the remaining part of the concert is pretty much composed of piano solos only. That seems quite imbalanced to me."

"Um?" The grand duke picked up the repertoire card beside him and took a quick look, "That's right... Michelle, you made a good point here. What do you think, Christopher?"

"Well... Lucien's best-known music work is Symphony of Fate. Using Symphony of Fate as the ending piece of the concert might be the most ideal arrangement." Christopher gently rubbed his chin a bit, "For now, like prince Michelle said, the repertoire card does look quite imbalanced to me, and I didn't notice this earlier."

Taking a short rest, Sard's eyes were half closed. He smiled and said to them, "I believe that Lucien's not an idiot. Maybe he's very confident in his piano solo, or maybe he prepared something new. It's interesting to wait and see, isn't it?"

By the time they got to that conclusion, the whole orchestra had

left. Now, there was only a piano on the stage.

Instead of facing toward the audience, the piano was facing a different angle.

...

Seeing Lucien appear on the stage through the crystal dome again, Piola asked his friends, "Why isn't the piano in the right position?"

That was what many people were wondering right now as well.

On the stage, Lucien bowed to his audience and sat down in front of the piano.

Pressing the keys, Lucien's hands started moving smoothly on the keyboard.

"It was Canon in D major, played in the piano!" Sharon recognized the familiar, beautiful melody immediately.

Simple as it was, Canon in D major might be the most classic music piece in this world. By playing one or more imitations of the music notes after a given duration, the repetition of the soft and gentle melody soothed every listener's mind like a cool breeze. The audience gradually recovered from the impact brought by Symphony of Fate, and now many of them stretched their bodies in their seats a bit and enjoyed the music in a very relaxed way.

Sitting in front of the piano and playing with his heart and soul, Lucien's handsome profile and his long, nimble fingers left the audience with a deep impression as well.

About seven minutes later, warm applause burst out again. This time the applause was less furious and crazy, but more gentle.

This time, the audience felt the beauty and the joy of peace from Lucien's playing.

"Small changes made a bit difference." The melody of Canon was still lingering in Piola's mind, "It's very different from the versions played by violin or harp."

"That's the sound feature of piano, pure and crispy." There was a sweet smile on Grace's face, "Mr. Evans looked so charming when he was playing... His face... His hands..."

"Now I know why you wanted to place the piano in a certain angle, Lucien!" On the other side in the box of the Psalm Hall, Natasha smiled and thought to herself, looking quite amused, "You want the audience to directly see your movement. But why didn't you tell me this earlier when I was about to play piano in front of Silvia?" Natasha also blamed Lucien a bit.

"He definitely put a lot of thought in his concert. We can tell that from the way he placed the piano," said Christopher, "Simple but fascinating. This piece of Canon will become quite popular."

Lucien did not move after playing. He was still sitting on the piano bench, as if he was preparing and waiting for something.

There was only a very short interval between the two compositions. A while later, Lucien's hands started to move again. Here came the piano solo recomposed from Violin Sonata in G minor.

After the heading part of playing which gave priority to terseness and fluency, Lucien started to play the very short notes in a fast way. His fingers were like two dancers spinning on the piano keyboard.

"Violin Sonata in G minor?" Some listeners whispered to each other, "It's for violin. It's impossible for piano..."

As the solo consisted mainly of semi-quaver runs, Lucien's hands were moving faster and faster. Double-stops, ostinato, scales and arpeggios, big crossovers... Lucien combined almost all the playing techniques together and that dazzled the audience's eyes.

They almost could not believe that it was a human-being that was playing.

Lucien's extremely fancy fingerings fully showed the potential of piano. This piece of music was more than just showing off the player's remarkable playing skills, but also a praise for the great

potential of piano as a new musical instrument in this world.

As the pitch got higher and higher, the melody became more and more exciting.

The audience was trying hard to hold back their exclamation. The playing was not finished yet.

As Lucien ended his playing with a very challenging finger technique and a pitch accent, the listeners on the square erupted with cheers and shouts, while the nobles and musicians in the music hall also applauded vigorously.

Lucien's playing renewed everyone's idea of how much potential the piano had!

Chapter 114: Pathetique

Chapter 114: Pathetique

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Looking at Lucien bowing to the audience, Christopher seemed to be a bit emotional, “When Victor and Rhine first introduced piano to me, although I could sort of see the potential of this new musical instrument, I never tried to compose anything specially for piano, not to mention to adapt any harpsichord or violin piece for it. The skills Lucien applied just now during his playing were very challenging. What he was trying to do was to learn from the playing skills for string instruments, which is remarkable.”

“Practice makes perfect.” Although Verdi was very impressed as well, he did not want to make a too favorable comment about Lucien, “Especially after awakening his Blessing, the practice can’t take long for him.”

“Fingering is not everything.” Natasha took a glance at Verdi, “For other musicians, what is hard is to really get to know piano... I mean... like Lucien, who has this profound understanding of the unique features of this musical instrument. Without the knowledge, there’s no way that one can produce such a fabulous piano piece.”

“Well, maybe I’m too old... Although Lucien’s playing is very impressive, I did not get as excited as you young people with his fancy fingerings.” The grand duke smiled, “I’m more looking forward to Pathetique.”

On the other side, Lucien’s friends were a bit more relieved now seeing that Lucien’s concert was going great so far. That made the last piece of the concert, a sonata, even more significant.

...

Pierre was also on the square. Gawking at the crystal dome, hearing the thunder-like applause, he felt shame of himself because, when Lucien was playing, his heart was completely seized by Lucien’s

bold and unrestrained fingerings, which he once condemned as a horrible betrayal of legitimate playing skills founded by his father.

“No... It’s not right.” Pierre murmured to himself, “His playing was merely fancy fingerings piling up! That’s unacceptable! That’s... not right.”

Pierre got too distracted to notice that Lucien had come back to the stage again.

Everyone was waiting for the last piece of piano solo of the night, Pathetique.

...

Sitting in front of the piano, Lucien did not start playing immediately. He knew that although the playing skills required for this solo were not challenging for him at all, if he could not devote all he had to the playing, Pathetique could never show its breathtaking charm.

Lucien closed his eyes. All those painful moments came back to him:

The great nostalgia that tortured him in those sleepless nights when he was missing the smile of his parents;

The fear he suffered when he was forced to go into the sewers by the pastor, Benjamin;

The feeling of helplessness when he was beaten by the gangsters;

The horrible feeling of guilt he bore when Joel and his family got kidnapped;

The great anger that was burning his guts when he saw the three fingers sent by the heretics...

All those emotions gathered together and infused Lucien’s heart.

What made Lucien feel the most depressive was the fact that he was trapped in this city, the City of Psalm!

He was hiding like a filthy rat in the sewers to do his magic experiments;

He was like a spy who could not fully trust anyone;

He was worried all the time that he might bring doom to uncle Joel and his family;

Every time he saw gallows, he couldn't stop imagining that he would be burnt to death one day.

Fear, grief, helplessness, anger, cowardliness...Lucien did not even realized that to what extent the negative emotion was piling up deep in his mind.

Stamping down on the piano pedal, Lucien pounded the keyboard with both of his arms using the great strength coming from his strong mixed feelings.

Even the heavy piano trembled from the pounding!

Then deep and gloomy melody came out, with a strong sense of grief and loss.

Orvarit, the grand duke, immediately felt the tragic atmosphere brought by the music. The melody was like the dark clouds threatening to develop into a big storm, pressuring heavily on his mind.

The grand duke was not the only one with that impression. All the listeners, no matter old or young, male or female, rich or poor, as long as they had experienced the bitter side of life, felt the deep emotion conveyed by the song.

Natasha's mind went back to that winter, when the sky of Aalto was shaded with heavy dark clouds, as if something horrible was about to come...

Christopher was missing his deceased wife who accompanied him for almost fifty years, and his son who would rather spend all his life on the road as a businessman than as a musician because of the great pressure brought by the reputation of his father.

Victor closed his eyes and murmured, “Life is tough, Winnie, but I still remember your smile.”

Everyone’s heart was seized by their own sorrow.

Among them all, Lilith and Sala’s feeling might be the closest to that of Lucien, since they were also tasting the great bitter frustration of having to hide, of knowing that everyday was a struggle between life and death.

The introduction part ended with a smooth run of notes, then Lucien’s playing became quicker and with much vigor. The music style became exciting, as if the music was encouraging people to bravely face all the difficulties and sufferings in life and to believe that life would always turn better.

However, with the repetition of the introductory part, the solemnity lingered on the listeners’ mind. The mixed feelings of hope and desperation almost drove them nuts.

The grand duke was almost out of breath. The great pain came back to him, reminding him of when he heard his eldest son died on the battlefield in the far north, and when he was looking into his wife’s beautiful eyes in her final days.

Natasha’s eyes were darker than usual. She remembered what she promised her mother in front of her bed, “I’ll become a knight, mom, to protect House Violet.” She remembered how soft and weak her mom’s hand was.

Verdi’s face looked rather gloomy. Obviously, he had his own suffering.

On the square, the shock of the music numbed Pierre, and after a while, he burst into crying. He finally realized that Lucien’s piano fingering would replace the playing skill created by his father. He blamed himself for being so useless that he was not able to carry on his father’s achievement.

Marcus, Silvia, Felicia... their hearts were all occupied with their own thoughts.

By the end of the first movement, the audience noticed that the tone of the music became a bit more rousing, as if the young man who was playing piano right now was trying to show them his great faith in life, to encourage them to face the pain and move on.

Because light was in front of them, victory was in front of them, as long as they could hang on one more second.

The Continental Congress of Magic, the wonderland for sorcerers and sorceresses... that was what Lucien was thinking about. He believed that after tonight, after he found where the congress was, there would be no need for him to hide anymore!

The higher pitch was very uplifting. Many of the listeners took a deep breath and then released a long sigh as if they were driving all the negative emotion away.

The second movement was of a singing style. The gentle melody was like warm sunlight lighting up people's mind. Then the chorus joined in, curing people's hearts.

Then, there came the finishing rondo. Lucien quickly pressed down a run of keys in a stunning speed, as if rain drops were falling down onto the ground. The speed showed Lucien's renewed spirit and lit up people's great passion.

Lucien's movement was so fast that the audience's eyes even could not follow. Everyone got excited again, people started to applaud amidst Lucien's playing.

They were enjoying the music, and they were enjoying more than just music. The audience's mood was completely led by Lucien, the young man who was showing his astonishing skills on the stage. At this moment, it did not matter whether they were nobles or commoners. They were cheering for this young music genius, cheering for Lucien's never-ending fight against fate, cheering for their shared emotions as human beings.

Lucien's playing reached the perfection with the cut time movement in C minor. After another full run of notes, he heavily pressed down the last key and finished the sonata in great enthusiasm.

All of the audience in the Psalm Hall, including the grand duke, stood up from their seats and applauded for Lucien. The crowd on the square just went wild, and they were shouting and cheering.

The whole city was conquered by Lucien's concert!

Chapter 115: Let the Curtain Fall

Lucien bowed to the audience over and over again. And the thunder-like applause was still going on. And the people on the square were still shouting at the top of their lungs.

Those nobles and famous musicians in the hall were touched, and they, especially the nobles, had not been touched so deeply for a long time. They tended to forget their own feelings, joy, sorrow, love, anger, just to be less vulnerable.

However, no one could resist the power of music. Nobles were still human beings. Even though many of them had awakened their Blessings, being physically strong could not turn their hearts into rocks.

The beauty of music was shared by all, regardless of social status, gender or age.

Only a few religious zealots remained relatively calm.

Lucien had no idea how many times he bowed to the audience. After a long time, they slowly calmed down, feeling both tired and peaceful.

"The best piano sonata I've ever heard!" Staring at the crystal dome, Piola exclaimed, "Similar to Symphony of Fate, but also different. The emotion is deeper... more conservative."

Sharon nodded and smiled, "I can image that Pathetique will become the classic sonata in terms of musical expressiveness."

"Aalto Music Festival was definitely worthy of our seven-month traveling." Grace looked serious, "After seeing Mr. Evans's playing, I want to stay in Aalto to learn piano."

"Get real, Grace." Green said to her, "Mr. Evans already gave us some suggestions for our fantasia. Come back with us and let's focus on our own music work. We will become famous in Sturk pretty soon, I believe."

"I agree. If you stay, Grace," Sharon added, "you won't be able to afford a music instructor here in Aalto. And since Aalto is filled with great musicians, how long do you think it will take you to stand out here?"

Finally Grace nodded and sighed, "I guess you guys are right. Don't forget to buy the latest Music Criticism and Symphony News. They will be very helpful for the future of our music."

The other band members nodded. They would definitely buy a lot of them in Aalto so they could take the newspapers back and make some money from the big price difference.

After standing on the square silently for a while, Lilith and Sala exchanged a look and turned around to head for the city gate.

"After we become real..." Sala paused a bit and gently patted on his younger sister's shoulder, "we will travel across the continent and find a safe place where we don't have to live in fear anymore."

Lilith nodded seriously, "Yes, then we'll be hiding no more."

...

In the backstage of the Psalm Hall, Lucien unbuttoned his suit jacket and then hugged Rhine, "Thank you, Mr. Rhine. The concert wouldn't be this successful without your help."

Then Lucien asked Rhine in a low voice, "And can you tell me where's it now?"

Rhine smiled and whispered, "You're so impatient, Lucien. I'll visit you tomorrow night."

Then Rhine raised up his voice, "Congratulations, Lucien!"

After meeting the orchestra members, Lucien saw a knight squire waiting there to invite him to the theater box in the front.

Lucien was a bit nervous of getting too close to Sard. After all, he had no idea how sensitive a Saint Cardinal would be about sorcerers around him.

"No worries. Your Blessing will conceal your identity." Pretending that he was wrapping up stuff, Rhine said to Lucien in a very low voice from behind, "Unless he already feels you're suspicious."

Lucien calmed down a bit from Rhine's words and left the backstage following the squire.

...

Although Lucien was still a couple of steps away from Sard, Lucien could feel the warm saint light that was surrounding the elder.

Since Lucien had awakened his Blessing, he could better sense the great power Sard owned. Fortunately, Lucien's Blessing was not a dark one, and he did not specialize in Necromantic spells, or his soul might be seriously injured just from standing close to the Saint Cardinal.

After saluting the nobles, Lucien walked in front of the grand duke. Orvarit nodded to Lucien approvingly, "You're young and talented, Lucien. I like your soul-touching music and I appreciate your never-ending spirit fighting against the sufferings in life. Keep working hard, Lucien, and you'll become the next music master in Aalto."

Natasha directly gave Lucien a hug like a friend and said to him in a joking way, "What else are you hiding from me, Lucien? Friends are about to share, but you did not tell me that a small adjustment in positioning piano could make a big difference!"

"Nothing else, really..." Lucien put on an awkward smile. Actually, he had way more secrets than that.

"What I want to say is that... thank you for your playing, Lucien." Natasha's smile was slightly sad, "Your music reminds me of the past. The past is painful, but also valuable."

Christopher also hugged Lucien, "My era's over, but your era's just arrived, Lucien."

"Thank you, Mr. President. I hope I can get a new start, too," answered Lucien in a meaningful way, since his life was about to set off a new journey soon.

Then Lucien finally came in front of Sard, and he tried his best to stay calm.

"I've heard your story before." Sard looked at Lucien with his turbid eyes, "I understand your pain, and I also see your strong heart. All the difficulties are tests from God. If you pass them, you become stronger."

Following Verdi, Michelle hugged Lucien a bit shyly, "Congratulations, Mr. Evans. On behalf of Syracuse, I want to invite you to Tria. Any time you come to my country, you'll receive the warmest welcome."

"Thank you, Your Grace." Lucien nodded.

Then Lucien received many other invitations offered by the rest of the guests coming from different countries across the continent.

Lucien knew that these invitations would become his excuse to leave Aalto when he got to know where the Continental Congress of Magic was.

When Lucien left the box, he saw that the last few people were leaving the Psalm Hall.

People on the square were also leaving.

Soon, the whole city became very quiet.

Lucien stepped out of the Psalm Hall and said to himself, "It's time to let the curtain fall, Lucien."

Chapter 116: Moonlight Sonata

After changing his clothes, Lucien left the Psalm Hall through the side door.

Not far away from it, he saw a couple of coaches, in front of which stood Victor, Joel and his family.

All of a sudden, Lucien felt quite emotional. Taking a deep breath, he walked toward them.

"Congratulations, Lucien. I'm so proud of you." Victor walked to Lucien and gave him a big hug, "Are you a bit depressed, Lucien?" Victor was very sensitive.

"Thank you, Mr. Victor." Lucien forced a smile on his face, "I'm fine... just a bit exhausted."

"I see." Victor showed his understanding, "Playing three piano solos at a time is exhausting for any pianist."

Then, Victor gently patted Lucien's back, "Have a good rest tonight. Tomorrow night we'll celebrate your success."

"Tomorrow?" To Lucien, the celebration party seemed to be quite in a hurry.

"Yes," answered Victor, "since a couple of days later, I'll be leaving Aalto."

"Where are you going, Mr. Victor?" Lucien did not expect that it was Victor who first bid them farewell.

"After last year's concert, " Victor smiled, "I've been receiving lots of invitations from other countries. I stayed in Aalto because, at that time, you were during your critical period of music learning. Since now you're a well-qualified musician and you just held your first concert, it's time for me to start my music tour and gather some new ideas about music."

"And Lott and I are leaving with Mr. Victor." Felicia nodded, "We are all Mr. Victor's students, but now you're a great musician, and, of course, we can't fall too far behind." Felicia put on a sweet smile.

Lucien felt that it was a good chance to announce his leaving as well.

"A music tour... That's what I've been thinking about, too." Lucien said to them seriously, "Honestly, this concert exhausted all my ideas about music, and I feel that I need to travel out of Aalto to see more, to experience more."

"I'm very proud of you." Victor looked at Lucien's eyes approvingly, "Your serious attitude toward music will make you one of the greatest musicians, if you stick to it. I wish you all the best, my student."

"Me, too." Lucien hugged Victor again with deep emotion, "Wish you a wonderful tour, my teacher."

Then Lucien turned around and hugged Joel and Alisa, "I'm sorry... I'm afraid I won't have my coming-of-age ceremony in Aalto now."

Lucien's birthday was on July, 26th.

"Don't say sorry, Lucien. We understand, although we'll miss you a lot." Joel laughed and patted Lucien's shoulder, "Alisa and I..." his voice trembled a bit.

"We're very proud of you, all the time." Alisa finished Joel's words, "Come on... don't be this dramatic, Joel. Little Evans will come back again soon."

Alisa looked at Lucien with hope in her eyes, "You will, right?"

Lucien opened his mouth a bit but did not know how to answer Alisa's question. He hurriedly nodded and turned to Felicia to hug her, in order to hide his awkwardness and sadness.

"Your playing and your understanding of music is awesome, Lucien!" Felicia was very excited, "Piano is the king of all the musical instruments!"

Lucien still remembered his promise to Felicia and Elena, "I'll organize and write down my knowledge about piano before I leave."

"Thank you, our great musician." Elena's face shone with excitement.

Then Lucien hugged his buddy, John, "I hope you will already be a knight when I see you again."

John answered decisively, "I will. Good luck, my friend."

The conversation between best friends was always simple, but the emotion was always deep.

Then, Lucien slightly bowed to all of them with his left hand on his chest and said to them sincerely, "Wish you all the best in my absence."

...

On the next day, Lucien spent most of day meeting his many visitors and at night he celebrated the success of his concert with all the guests.

When it was close to the early morning, all the guests started to leave Lucien's place. The great silence was in sharp contrast to the faded jollification. Lucien went back to his bedroom and waited for Rhine, who had promised Lucien that he would come after the party.

After a long time waiting, Lucien almost lost his patience. At this time, he heard a knock at the bedroom window.

Lucien hurriedly stood up from his bed and turned to look at the window.

However, it was Natasha and Camil who were standing on the patio. Being a bit amused by himself, Lucien opened the window.

Wearing a long dress, Natasha looked a bit shy until she started to talk, "Haha, were you waiting for me, Lucien? You looked in such a hurry."

"Yes, I was," he joked. "After all, you did not show up on my party tonight."

"I'm sorry, Lucien." Natasha apologized sincerely, "I wanted to, but I had to host the party in Ratacia for sending off the nobles from other countries. Now I'm here, you see, to congratulate the great success achieved by my music consultant."

"I appreciate it very much, Your Grace." Lucien grinned.

"Well... Besides saying congratulations to you tonight," Natasha smiled, "I also want to invite you to visit Cartier Palace with me. I'm leaving tomorrow. Silvia and her father will go as well."

Cartier Palace belonged to House Violet, sitting on the broad land owned by the family in the suburb of Aalto.

"Sorry, Your Grace. I'm afraid I can't make it," replied Lucien. Then, he told Natasha his plan of leaving.

Natasha looked quite excited, "What an enviable trip! I wish I could travel around as well!"

After a brief exchange with Lucien about the unique features of different countries on the continent, Natasha switched the topic and asked Lucien, looking a bit embarrassed, "Lucien... did you complete the melody that you were playing the other night... the melody that you were playing in the moonlight? I want to play it for Silvia..."

"I only finished the first movement..." Lucien was a bit hesitant, "I'm thinking about naming it Moonlight Sonata."

"Can I listen to it?" requested Natasha eagerly.

"Sure." Lucien sat down in front of his piano, Lucien placed his hands on the keyboard again.

The introduction was slow and peaceful, picturing a glittering lake at a moonlit night. The soft breeze rippled the water like a pair of young lady's hands.

A mixed feelings of joy and sorrow rose in Natasha's heart. Everything under the moonlight depicted in the sonata was as beautiful as a dream.

The first movement was rather short, only about a few minutes. Natasha's nodded and looked at Lucien with approval, "Adagio as the first movement, impressive! I'm sure Silvia would love it!"

Then she slightly leaned forward, "What do you think I should say to Silvia after playing the first movement of Moonlight Sonata for her?"

"Remember me whenever you see the moon*." Somehow Lucien blurted out.

"Wow..." Natasha looked very impressed. "That's really something."

Then, the princess stood up and said to him, "I'm glad to have you as my music consultant and friend, Lucien. I'm not sure when you're coming back, but I'm sure we'll see each other again sooner or later."

Lucien sighed in his heart but did not say anything special, "It's my great pleasure to be your friend. Please take care, Your Grace."

After Natasha and Camil left, Lucien continued to wait for Rhine.

About ten minutes later, Rhine finally showed up at the front gate of Lucien's house. Lucien went downstairs to open the door for him.

"Wanna go out and take a walk under the moonlight, Lucien?"

Rhine still dressed in black and red tonight.

Chapter 117: The Congress of Magic

Under the moonlight, the many beautiful flowers in the garden looked a bit hazy.

Lucien and Rhine were walking through the flowers side by side, both of them remaining silent.

A while later, Lucien could not hold himself back anymore, "Can you tell me where the headquarter of the Congress of Magic is now, Mr. Rhine?"

Rhine looked at Lucien and smiled, "What do you think? Take a guess."

"I thought about it." Lucien nodded, "I thought it was on the other side of the Dark Mountain Range, or at least deep in the mountains. After all, the Church failed to march further westward across the range. Does it make sense?"

"A good guess," Rhine grinned, "but if you go there, what you can find deep in the mountains will be a bunch of crazy and gloomy sorcerers and sorceresses who survived the violent suppression, or say, slaughter, done by the Church. People call them 'ancient sorcerers'."

"Really? How come they live that long?" Lucien was a bit surprised.

"They are survivors." Rhine explained, "They managed to survive because they are powerful. Many of them are archmages and even legendary archmages. They're cruel and crazy. You can easily become their subject for experiment if you piss them off and die from their brutal torture."

"Then... is the headquarter in a certain country? I mean... in one of the countries which doesn't follow the God of Truth?" Lucien made another guess.

"Nope..." Rhine shook his head again and again, "Have you ever heard of the Kingdom of Holm?"

"Yes, I did..." Lucien did not quite get it.

"The headquarter of the Congress of Magic is in the Kingdom of Holm," said Rhine, "or, to be more specific, in the floating city called Allyn, close to the kingdom's capital, Rentato."

"Allyn... in Sylvanas it means sky." Lucien murmured. Then his eyes suddenly opened wide, and he said, "Wait... it's impossible! The princess' mom came from Holm, and this is a country that follows the God of Truth! The grand duke even visited it many years ago! How come..."

"I knew the answer would shock you, Lucien." Rhine slowly explained, as if he was telling a rather interesting story, "Among all these poems and stories and music works that praised the romantic love between the grand duke and the princess' mom, neither of them specified why and who was trying to separate them. Don't you feel strange?"

"I never thought about it..." Lucien was confused, "Was it the congress? But why?"

"If you had ever learned about the philosophy of ruling," the corner of Rhine's lips curled up, "you'd understand that it's all about the balance between nobles."

"Can you explain it a bit more, Mr. Rhine?" Lucien had some thoughts but was not quite sure.

Rhine walked slowly, "In the last two hundred years of the War of Dawn, the power of the Church reached its peak. Even the emperor needed to kneel down in front of the pope and kiss the pope's shoes. At that time, the Church could easily dethrone an emperor, not to mention deposing those dukes, counts and viscounts."

"So, those nobles..." Lucien rubbed his chin a bit with his fingers, "they decided to support the cardinals who wanted to separate from the Church?"

"Good point." Rhine turned his face toward Lucien, "Although we still don't know why those cardinals back in the days decided to

betray the pope, what we know is that some local nobles in the north were more than willing to support them. However, these nobles were clearly aware of the fact that, if these cardinals that they supported gained the core power and overthrew the pope, a new pope would come out among the cardinals on their side and the whole situation of the nobles would not be changed at all."

"So the nobles leaked the secret plan on purpose to let the pope be relatively prepared!" Lucien's brows frowned slightly, "Thus, the north and the south became two sides on a balanced scale. And the balanced situation made the nobles' power rather important. The side that gained the support of more nobles would obviously have the advantage."

"You're really smart, Lucien. The first half part of your reasoning is correct, but the second half was not really what happened." Rhine smiled, "The fact was that, after the division of the Church, the southern Church was still way stronger than the northern. However, the north Church gained the support from the elves, dwarves, many magic creatures and even the ancient sorcerers in the northwest of the Dark Mountain Range. Like the old saying goes, 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. When they were involved, the northern Church finally managed to withstand the violent attack launched by the south."

"Then, the situation on the whole continent looked more balanced. The south was not in such a dominant position anymore." Lucien contemplated, "Something else must have happened afterwards in the south... say, another division."

"Impressive, Lucien." Rhine looked a bit surprised with Lucien's insight, "Yes, there was another division in the south later. Since the nobles in the south saw the great improvement of the status of the nobles in the north, while most of them decided to negotiate with the Church, a small part of them chose to secretly support the mages, in order to turn the sorcerers and sorceresses into a new trouble for the Church, while they stood in the middle and benefited from their confrontation."

"Who were the 'small part' of the nobles? What they were doing was very risky." Lucien murmured.

"Yes, it was." Rhine shrugged, "They were the nobles from the four kingdoms across Storm Strait. And what they did not expect was that a great mage named Douglas evolved the ancient magic system and initiated a huge revolution in studying the laws of the universe. Hence, the power of the magic congress started to soar, and countless great archmages came out. About a hundred years ago, the congress integrated several scattered major magic organizations and became the second most powerful institution in the world."

"Douglas..." he still remembered the name. Lucien was pretty sure that Douglas was still alive, since such a great sorcerer like him must have many ways to prolong his lifespan. For example, there was a magic ritual mentioned in Astrology and Magic Elements that could prolong one's lifespan to a thousand and five hundred years.

"Mr. Douglas, one of the most powerful men in the world, the greatest arcanist ever in history, the chairman of the Continental Congress of Magic, and the founder of the journal called Arcana." Mentioning his name, even Rhine looked a bit awed, "So now, in the Kingdom of Holm, the existence of the magic congress is almost a half-revealed secret, and the power of the congress is way stronger than that of the southern Church. Without the support of the local nobles, the Church might have been rooted out long time ago."

"That's why the Church here made the grand duke visit Holm many years ago. The purpose of the grand duke's trip was to rebuild a solid relationship with the nobles there to fight against the congress' power," Lucien nodded. "So, the grand duke married the princess in Holm, good for him."

"Well... I bet that was out of the grand duke's expectation." Rhine smiled. "The marriage caused a stir across the continent. Many nobles opposed it and tried to obstruct the marriage in every possible way, since the union of the two young people might easily change the tripartite power relations among nobles, the Church and the congress. The congress, obviously, would not easily allow the marriage to happen as well."

Seeing Lucien's eyebrows frowned tightly, Rhine paused a bit and waved his hand casually, "Anyway... you don't have to understand

all the complicated stories in history. What you should think about is how to get to Holm. Storm Strait has been blocked by the Church for a long time, and only the nobles and businessmen with a special permit can pass. Or you can pass the confrontation border of the northern and the southern branches of the Church, traverse Schachran Empire and reach the lands to the far north, after which you can enter Holm from its northern border."

"I don't think I can even make the first step, passing the confrontation border..." Lucien shook his head, "I wonder if the congress has its own special path. After all, I know there was a sorcerer from the congress who came to Aalto before."

Rhine nodded, "Yes, I was just about to mention this. It is said that the congress has a liaison in Sturk, the Bright Pearl of the Sea, but I don't know who is it, and you would still have to sneak through the confrontation border, which is very dangerous. So what I suggest is that you first become a real sorcerer and then set off for your destination, to have a better chance at protecting yourself."

"A real sorcerer..." Lucien's brain was working fast. He could not take the risk to use the Professor identity again right now to go back to the apprentice meeting, and the only way that he could become a first circle sorcerer as soon as possible would be to visit the magic lock, "But isn't it a trap set by the Church?" Lucien murmured.

"If you become a middle-rank mage and learn how to fly, you basically won't have to worry about all this stuff." Rhine continued, "The Church can block the water and the border, but it can never completely control the sky. Smart as you are, with the help of the potion called Silver Moon, I believe you can soon make a breakthrough, Lucien. By the way, the Church has been pretty busy recently and they're less likely to pick on you, I think."

"You seem to know everything, Mr. Rhine." Lucien was surprised, "Who are you? Why did you want to help me?"

"I'm only an observer, an outsider." Rhine's smile was mysterious, "You're an interesting person, Lucien. Getting you involved makes the whole thing even more interesting. Of course, when the game

becomes attractive enough for me, I'll join it as well."

Then Rhine directly turned around and left the garden through the small gate, leaving Lucien standing alone in the darkness.

Unexpectedly, Lucien now felt more relaxed than excited, as if Rhine just removed the heavy rock that had been sitting for so long on his heart.

At this time, Lucien suddenly felt his soul swelled a bit and started to approach his power limit.

Chapter 118: The End and the Beginning

The light fragrance of the flowers and the unique smell of earth were intoxicating, and the cool breeze was nice and gentle. When Lucien was standing in the garden alone, all of a sudden, the surroundings disappeared, and instead, a broad starry sky with a beautiful silver moon enveloped him.

Lucien once again entered the world inside his soul.

The shining string connecting Lucien's actual host star of destiny far away in the universe and the star's inverted reflection in his soul appeared in the air, and the string, as a channel, was eagerly absorbing the power of the host star in order to nurture Lucien's soul.

Gradually, certain changes happened in the soul, and Lucien felt that his soul was slowly "substantialized".

A while later, when Lucien reopened his eyes, there were countless stars in his dark pupils.

He blinked again, and then his eyes went back to normal.

Feeling super refreshed, Lucien sensed that his soul was stronger than ever. The most amazing difference he noticed was that some crystal powder was solidified and produced from his soul, just like the fine dust of the revenant.

"How a person's soul is constituted? Is it constituted of certain special elements, or soul itself is nothing else but a special wave field? Why meditation can improve one's power?" Lucien murmured, having too many questions in his mind that interested him a lot. He was guessing that the substantiation, or say, the solidification of the soul was the premise to construct a magic model.

Right now, becoming a first circle sorcerer was Lucien's main goal. For a senior apprentice, this breakthrough to become a real sorcerer was of great significance, since there was a huge difference in

power between the two levels, just like moving from being a knight squire to being a real knight.

...

It only took Lucien half a day to finish all the procedures to collect the documents required to travel through the continent, both because of the princess' special order in advance and his own social status as a well-known musician. For common people, however, it would take at least seven days.

Although many adventurers were also traveling across the continent without any paperwork, it was illegal, technically speaking, and it could put them in big trouble, such as being suspected of being heretics or spies.

Then, Lucien stayed in Aalto for a few more days to plan his trip and also to wait for the upcoming April tenth.

In the morning of April ninth, Lucien's coach set out for Tiran, a province in northwest of the duchy. Since the coach was hired by the association, Lucien told the coachman to go to the north first and then head toward the Kingdom of Syracuse in the east to hide his real destination.

...

The magnificent city gradually disappeared behind the coach. Lucien stopped looking back from the window and started to casually leaf through some paper works. Then, he noticed that there was a pile of newspapers in the corner of the coach.

Taking a closer look, it was the latest Music Criticism and Symphony News.

The front page of the latest Music Criticism was divided in two. The black and white painting on the left side depicted the scene where Christopher was acknowledging the applause at the end of his concert, while on the right side, there was a colored picture of Lucien playing piano.

On the top of the front page, there was a line of bold letters, "The

end of the old era, the beginning of a new era."

The full passage was on the second page:

"Mr. Christopher bid his farewell to the stages with his magnificent concert. His symphony the War of Dawn shocked every listener and showed us a great musician's never-ending spirit for further exploration in the world of music.

"In the past seventy years, we have witnessed a tremendous growth of symphony, and the contribution made by Mr. Christopher to the art of composing is more than remarkable. He is a real music master, the representative of the last seventy years. Let us salute Mr. Christopher with our greatest respect."

...

"Following Mr. Christopher, the great master of music, Mr. Lucien Evans showed us a brand-new direction for the further development of music in his concert. Young and inexperienced as he is, Mr. Evans already launched a few revolutions with his fingerings, composing and conducting. The next era of music has arrived.

"Although not everyone likes revolution, the momentum of innovation can not be stopped. Thanks to Mr. Evans, the colorful future of music has been partly revealed.

"Let us send this young music genius our best wishes! Let us wish that Mr. Evans would follow Mr. Christopher's footstep and lead us further in this new music era!"

...

"The end of Mr. Christopher's playing was followed by the beginning of Mr. Evans' performance, and we shall cheer with heart and soul, 'music lives forever!'"

The passage was co-written by a couple of musicians from the association in Aalto.

Some of the other passages in the newspaper gave high comments on piano, and some of them analyzed the formats of Christopher's

symphony and Lucien's sonata. Only a few short articles were criticizing Lucien's fingerings and his style of conducting as "lunatic and totally not decent", and one of them was contributed by Wolf.

Lucien sneered a bit and folded the newspapers.

Staring at the bold title on the front page, "The end of the old era, the beginning of a new era", Lucien sat in the coach and lost himself in thoughts.

...

Around six in the evening, Lucien arrived at the small town called Massawa.

The town was located at an intersection, one heading toward the province named Tiran, which belonged to House Violet, and the other that led to Bonn, the small town sitting beside Elsinore Lake, which was very close to Massawa.

"It's pretty late now, Mr. Evans." The leader of Lucien's guards, Joyce, said to him, "I suggest we stay here for the night and set off tomorrow morning."

Although nowadays vicious monsters and creatures were rarely seen around big cities, towns and villages, from time to time people could still encounter robbers and small beasts. Therefore, if the common people needed to travel through the continent, they had to pay mercenaries to protect themselves.

Lucien's mercenary team had six people in total. The team leader and the vice leader were high level knight squires and the other team members were low level ones. Every month Lucien needed to pay them three hundred Nars, excluding meal and accommodation.

Although it was totally unaffordable for common people, money was not a big problem for Lucien anymore. The income of his concert was very decent, and now he had a hundred and five Thales in total with him.

"Sure. You know more about this place than I do, Joyce." Lucien nodded, "Can you find us a hotel? I want a very quiet room."

Joyce was tall and strong. At the age of thirty-two, he was still saving money to awaken his Blessing. Joyce was sort of grateful that such a celebrity would show respect to him, since many other wealthy guys who he safeguarded before were pretty much bastards.

Very soon Joyce booked a decent hotel sitting beside a small lake in the town. Lucien selected the leftmost room on the second floor, which was very quiet.

A bunch of tourists were in Massawa at that time. They had just left Aalto after the music festival.

Lucien entered his room from the side door and avoided them. He ordered dinner and ate it inside his room, after which he told Joyce that he did not want anyone to disturb him. Then, he quietly waited for the darkness of the night to come.

Chapter 119: Unlock

Chapter 119: Unlock

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The silver moon was not there tonight. Only a couple of stars could be seen.

Standing in front of the window, Lucien looked out of the curtain and felt a bit disappointed, since his Blessing couldn't be fully activated without the silver moon. Tonight only his speed and agility could reach a knight level, but his physical strength would not be as good as when the moon was out.

"At least I can still see some stars, or I wouldn't even be able to calculate the coordinate of the entrance of the magic lock." Lucien comforted himself, "And it's safer to hide in the dark without the moonlight."

According to the ancient script he had read before, the entrance of the magic lock called Grand Cross kept changing its location every ten minutes together with the continuously moving stars, until the sun rose up.

Around eleven at night, Lucien put on his hooded black robe.

Pulling up the hood, when he was about to sneak out of the room through the window, he suddenly felt a bit hesitant: the poem, the script and the two visitors all came to him together, almost at the same time, which was such a coincidence that made him suppose this might actually be a trap.

At first Lucien thought that the brother and sister were sent by the Church to test him, however, after knowing from Rhine that the Church was too busy recently to deal with matters such as those, and after seeing the dozen mysterious visitors in this small town, he felt the story about the magic ruins was quite suspicious.

"Should I take the risk?" Lucien asked himself silently in his mind.

After all, it would take him six to seven months to get to Sturk, therefore, he still had enough time to find another way to get the Silver Moon potion and, obviously, the magic ruins was not Lucien's only chance to collect the materials he needed.

However, very soon Lucien made up his mind. He had a foreboding through his host star when Rhine was talking to him the other night. He had a feeling that something significant was going to happen, and if he could not be powerful enough to protect himself before that happened, he would probably die.

Also, Lucien had so many questions in his mind: who was the author of the poem? Who was the original owner of the script? Was it possible that the legendary archmage known as "the Prophet" who wrote Astrology and Magic Elements left anything special in the lock because he forecast something important?

Lucien's curiosity became dominant over his concerns. He gently jumped out of the window and landed agilely outside.

...

In order to save his strength, Lucien moved a bit slower. It took him an hour to get to the small town close to Massawa, called Bonn.

Bonn was a remote town sitting beside the Dark Mountain Range. Occasionally, a few musicians and painters would visit it, but most of the time it had no visitors.

Lucien was quite surprised to find that, when he secretly arrived at the small town, the only tavern there was still busy. He could hear that lots of people were still chatting in many different accents.

...

In one of the rooms on the second floor of the tavern, Sala and Lilith were looking at each other with their eyebrows frowned.

"What shall we do now?" Lilith asked, "I thought only Mr. Evans figured out the secret of the manuscript, but why are there so many visitors here in Bonn?"

“I’m guessing...” Sala sighed, “the manuscript we have is not complete, and it might not be the only one. They might have the complete version.”

“That makes sense, after all, we got the manuscript from...” Lilith nodded and switched the topic, “What if there’re sorcerers and knights among them?”

“I’m not sure.” Sala looked downwards, as if he was trying to see the people downstairs through the floor, “At least I know these macular guys bragging just now are no more than a bunch of adventurers.”

“Then, are we still going tomorrow?” Lilith looked hesitant.

Sala did not answer her question immediately. After a while he sighed, “We’ll wait and see. I mean, we don’t have to, and we also can’t compete with them. I feel there’s something wrong going on here.” Although Sala sensed something wrong, his desire forced him to stay.

“All right.” Lilith nodded. “The entrance of the ruins will exist for twelve hours anyway.”

...

At the same time, Lucien was standing under the window of Sala and Lilith’s room, leaning against the wall and calculating the coordinates of the entrance.

Because that was a magic lock of legendary level, lots of parameters were required. It took Lucien more than half an hour to figure out the numbers.

The calculation consumed Lucien so much energy that made him dizzy. Luckily, there was still a while before the magic lock started to be activated, so Lucien just sat on the ground quietly in the dark to recover.

...

By around three in the morning, Lucien had been fully revitalized.

With great caution, he moved toward a plain-looking bungalow.

In the darkness, his black robe made him almost invisible.

Opening the door with a simple spell, he sneaked into the place and then locked the door again from inside.

In the bedroom, a couple was sleeping soundly, completely unaware that someone had just entered their place.

Lucien sat down on a wooden chair in the living room, looking rather relaxed and calm. However, he was counting the time silently in his mind.

Around ten minutes later, Lucien suddenly stood up and threw himself on the dark vortex in the corner of the living room, which was definitely not there a second before.

As if Lucien was sucked in the swirl, his figure completely disappeared from the place.

Ten seconds later, the dark vortex disappeared as well.

...

Lucien felt a great dizziness when he jumped in the swirl, as if his head hit a heavy, thick curtain.

However, when he opened his eyes, he was still standing in the same living room.

Lucien was confused and thought that maybe he had missed the chance. However, soon he noticed the difference: This place had no colors, made purely with black, white and gray, as if he entered the world of a black-and-white movie.

Taking a glance at the bedroom, Lucien saw that the couple who was sleeping in the bed disappeared as well.

Carefully, he pushed the door open and came to the street – It was the same town, but it was empty, and black and white.

“That’s creepy,” Lucien said to himself, but he could not hear his voice.

Thus, he finally noticed another difference: this whole world was completely silent, as if the world was dead.

This was the lock. Lucien was in the magic lock now.

Looking up at the grey sky, he saw no stars, no silver moon or sun.

Luckily, he could still sense his connection with his host star, which meant he could still use magic, and he was still connected to the real world, so he wouldn’t get completely lost inside the lock.

No people, no cats and dogs, no birds, bugs, breeze, color or even sound... Lucien was sweating while he walked through the gray streets.

According to the manuscript he read, Lucien located a few magic gardens. Keeping the locations in mind, he headed toward Elsinore Lake on the other side of this gray town.

Grabbing his sword named Alert, all of a sudden, Lucien’s arms were covered with goose bumps. Something was coming!

Quickly turning his head around, Lucien saw the door of a small house on the street slowly open.

A little girl around seven or eight was standing behind the door. She had no color either, and her big eyes stared at nothing.

Then she started to smile, with her big eyes without any focus.

...

“My lord,” kneeling on the ground, a person in black robe reported to the man standing on the altar, “following your order, we found out a guy with the Moonlight Blessing arrived in Bonn, but we lost track of him all of a sudden. He disappeared.”

In his silver robe, Ilia sneered, “There he is.”

Then, he turned around and commanded, “Do not rush. Our plan is always our priority. But we’ll give this Moonlight guy a warm welcome as well.”

Chapter 120: Silence

Staring at the street outside of the window, Lilith and Sala couldn't and dared not sleep.

"I heard that, from time to time, there were people missing in this small town, and it has been happening more and more often in recent years." Lilith asked her elder brother, "Do you think it's because of the magic lock?"

Sala shook his head, "I'm not sure. After all, I don't even know what kind of magic lock this is. I know the Church once sent several pastors here before, but they found nothing suspicious. In the end, they guessed that some monsters or creatures in the mountain took them."

Then, Sala pointed at the small house on the other side of the street, "That house once belonged to one of the few literate country gentlemen here in Bonn. Ten years ago, on April tenth, his seven-year-old daughter was missing, and he never found her. Finally, he moved eastwards with his wife, away from Bonn, because they were too sad to keep living here."

"April tenth..." Lilith murmured thoughtfully.

...

The girl, who seemed to be a figure coming out of a black-and-white photo, smiled to Lucien. Slowly, she raised up her arms and then started to run toward Lucien, as if an innocent and lively daughter was running toward her dad.

However, the scenario was very creepy in Lucien's eyes: The little girl's body was floating in the air, and her eyes were hollow.

Lucien started to cast a spell, but he couldn't even hear his own voice. The air surrounding the little girl began to stir and turned into several invisible robes trying to constrain her.

Apprentice spell, Wraith Shackle.

As soon as the little girl realized what was going on around her, her face contorted with hatred and viciousness. She opened her mouth and started to scream.

Lucien was prepared, since he had some experience with the revenants before during his experiments. Right after he cast Wraith Shackle, Lucien activated Silence Wall to protect himself from the attack of sound waves.

In a real fight, knowledge still mattered a lot.

Lucien could see the ripples crashing against the invisible wall surrounding him. Even before he had a second to be proud of his foresight, the wall suddenly collapsed into small transparent pieces!

The rest of the sound waves, although they had been weakened to some extent by the invisible wall, hit Lucien right in his chest.

Feeling the sky and earth were spinning, he fell on the ground and almost threw up right away. Lucien's guts were trembling inside of his body.

Fortunately, a layer of gray light instantly covered Lucien's skin when he was attacked. His Moonlight Blessing was activated on its own in order to protect him. Without the ability of dematerializing into moonlight, Lucien might be dead already.

Lucien realized that this was a revenant as powerful as a real knight!

Quickly analyzing what kind of revenant and how powerful the little girl was, Lucien swiftly shifted to the other side of the revenant, then his lips moved.

Lucien cast Illumination.

Even the weakest revenant was immune to most of the Element spells. Only light, fire and sound waves could hurt them.

However, Illumination did not work very well in this world. The grayish light ball in the sky looked rather dim and faint.

The little girl paused a bit and then directly jumped onto Lucien.

With his Moonlight Blessing, Lucien barely dodged away, like a gray shadow. At the same time, he grabbed his sword and hacked toward the little girl, after which he started running.

Lucien knew the attack was in vain, but he did not have another choice, since he was still during the buffering time for casting.

Seeing the sword did not hurt her, the little girl tipped her head a little bit and smiled.

Then, she suddenly disappeared, and several seconds later, she showed up right in front of Lucien, with her arms wide open.

Lucien reacted fast. Pressing his foot against the ground, he changed his direction and started to cast Homan's Oscillation.

This time, the little girl was injured. Lucien saw her etherious body rippling like disturbed water.

The great anger appeared on her face again, and it became more and more vicious. She raised her head, screamed silently, and then directly rushed at him.

Once again, although Lucien avoided the frontal attack of the sound waves with Moonlight, his ankles suddenly felt weak and his movement paused for a second.

The revenant had reached him. For a second, Lucien's consciousness faded, and then he felt extremely tired and flimsy. The heat in his body was escaping. He felt cold.

The little girl went directly through Lucien's body and stopped on the other side. Raising her hands, she looked shocked and confused.

The ring Lucien was wearing, Ice Revenger, helped him to stay focused. Without any hesitance, Lucien cast a spell again.

A blast of cold wind blew around them. A revenant was summoned by Lucien.

He decided to use a revenant to fight against the other revenant, since he noticed that, in the weird dimension, while light magic was largely weakened, the undead creatures were strengthened by a lot.

Being controlled by Lucien, the summoned revenant launched its attack toward the little girl.

Wrestling together, their arms pierced each other's "body". However, it seemed like the revenant Lucien just summoned was weaker than the little girl, since within a couple of seconds, it already started to get less and less visible.

It would not even take the little girl ten seconds to completely wipe it out.

However, it was enough time for Lucien to turn the tables.

Lucien took a few steps backward, reached his hand into his pocket and threw out a handful of reagents toward the two revenants who were wrestling, and a white fire wall enveloped them as Lucien finished casting the spell.

This was Lucien's invented spell, Sulphur-fire Wall, which was just an inspirational flash when he was facing the aquatic zombie, and within the past couple of months, Lucien turned it into one of his regular spells.

The only problem with Sulphur-fire Wall now was that the structure of its magic model was not simplified enough, so it took Lucien more time and spiritual power to activate it.

Being burned by the sulphur fire, the revenant Lucien summoned immediately disappeared, and a couple of seconds later, the little girl started to show signs of being in pain.

However, the apprentice spell could not cause a great damage to her, but only contain her within the fire wall. It seemed she was very afraid of fire, and instead of trying to force her way through the fire, she stayed in the center.

Lucien was a bit relieved and was about to run away from the little girl. Facing a revenant as powerful as a knight, the top priority for

Lucien was to stay away from her, instead of attempting to eliminate it.

As soon as he turned around, Lucien took a glance at the place where the little girl showed up. Through the open door Lucien saw a small skeleton with thin bones bending over a wooden table.

The scene reminded him of what he had read about revenants. All of a sudden, Lucien changed his direction and ran toward the house as fast as a shadow.

Watching him approach the house, the little girl suddenly panicked. Without any hesitation, she rushed toward Lucien through the fire wall.

By the time the little girl broke through the fire wall, Lucien was already standing in front of the small skeleton. Sprinkling a handful of sulphur powder on it, Lucien lit the skeleton on fire.

The white fire immediately covered the bones.

In the fire, Lucien saw a drawing on the wooden table, carved by something sharp, like nails. It was an awkward drawing of a family of three, but then, like an illusion, it shifted into a little girl waiting beside a door.

Under the drawing, there were a few crooked letters: Daddy... Mommy... Home...

The little girl slowly stopped when she saw the skeleton on fire. She was a bit surprised at first, but then lowered her eyes, looking rather sad.

Then, her body became more and more transparent. She started to gradually disappear.

From the pictures, the letters and the ever-changing entrance of the magic lock, Lucien had a rough idea of why the little girl was here in this world. His sympathy instantly took over his fear.

"Daddy... Mommy... Home," Lucien silently murmured.

His heart was softened. Lucien turned to the little girl, who was almost gone, and said to her, "I'll take you home."

In this world of black and white, the world of silence, the little girl had tears falling down her face, but she smiled sweetly, as if she read the movement of Lucien's lips and understood what he said.

In the last second before she disappeared completely, the little girl nodded to Lucien gratefully.

When the skeleton was burned into ashes by the magic fire, the little girl also disappeared. The wooden table was gone together with the burning skeleton.

Lucien carefully collected the ashes and put it into his pocket.

Now he was even more confused with this world, since it seemed less and less likely to be the Grand Cross he was looking for. The whole place was just too creepy.

Lucien started to feel very uncomfortable with the great silence in this world. He felt himself dumb and deaf. Grabbing his sword tight, he started to walk toward Elsinore Lake.

When he was about to leave the small town, he noticed that the cemetery that he saw when he arrived in Bonn disappeared, and instead, a piece of wasteland was in front of him.

"The magic lock world is actually not a copy of the original world?" Lucien asked himself in his mind with great surprise.

Picking up the pace, Lucien turned around the corner with overgrown weeds. Then, what he saw instantly shocked him.

The scarlet Elsinore Lake in this world was like a huge pool of blood, and it reflected the inverted image of a grand cross consisting of nine bright stars shining in the sky, whose light lit up the whole lake.

That was the first time Lucien saw another color except black, white and gray since he came into this world.

Chapter 121: The Magic Garden

Chapter 121: The Magic Garden

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

There was no wind and no rain. The sky was gray and the stars were absent. Lucien felt that the magic lock world was dead.

However, there were waves on the surface of the red-colored lake under the Grand Cross, as if the lake was alive. The creepy and sharp color contrast also made Lucien very nervous, even though he was a senior apprentice who stayed relatively calm and focused all the time.

Carefully observing the bright and shining Grand Cross in the sky again, and comparing it with the stellar map of Astrology and Magic Elements in his spirit library, Lucien found that the arrangement of the magic lock was quite unique. Unlike most magic locks, that aimed to protecting something, this one was more like a lock gathering power in order to keep something sealed.

If Lucien's feeling was correct, he did not want to stay here any longer. Lucien looked up in the sky and quickly recalculated the coordination of the closest magic garden according to the Grand Cross. Then, without any hesitation, he turned around and ran toward the edge of the black forest in the west along the lakeside path.

Curious as Lucien was, he was clearly aware that it would be too stupid for him to approach this legendary-level magic lock. He knew that he needed to stick to his original purpose for coming here.

Lucien's body recovered quickly thanks to his Moonlight Blessing. By the time he entered the black forest, the pain in his chest caused by the revenant had already disappeared.

The black forest was immersed in the same silence. Even the leaves on the branches were not moving at all. Everything stayed still. No

life could be seen.

Lucien tried to keep calm as much as possible when he was walking through the huge trees. A bit more than ten minutes later, he saw a tall and big building covered with shadow sitting in front of him, some distance away. From time to time, there were strange lights coming out of the building and flying towards Elsinore Lake.

He slowed down his pace when he approached the building and grabbing his sword tight. Lucien was slightly sweating.

Reaching into his pocket, Lucien pulled out a small black stone. It was a bat pituitary gland.

Holding it in his left hand, his lips moved silently and then invisible waves started to spread out like ripples. Standing in the center of them, he was waiting for the back echo reflection after the waves hit certain obstacles.

The tall and big firs appeared one by one in Lucien's mind. Different things sitting within a radius of several hundreds of meters became more and more clear. However, some of the objects that made the waves ricochet remained rather blurry, and Lucien could only use their shapes to guess what they were.

Still, no life was detected. Lucien was not sure whether he should feel relieved or even more nervous.

As he was searching for possible magic traps, he kept slowly moving closer to his destination. All of the obstacles that he could not identify turned out to be just big stones.

When Lucien forced his way through the thick bushes, he saw a gray gravestone, behind which there was a small coffin chamber.

Approaching the gravestone a bit, he saw the white letters carved on it, "Here lies the previous mayor of Bonn, Mr. David Terrian, whose greatest exploit was killing the hundreds of people who did not follow the God of Truth.

And this man died because he fell in love with another man, who was very powerful."

Lucien's face twitched a bit when facing the inscription, not because of its absurdity, but because he saw the gravestone before, when he first sneaked into Bonn. He remembered clearly that this gravestone was in the town's cemetery, not in a forest.

"The cemetery moved into the black forest in this magic lock world?" Lucien thought to himself.

He looked around and found more graves. In the world of black and white, they looked even more horrific.

Obviously, a cemetery was not a very pleasant place to stay. So, Lucien decided to leave here and take another way around this place to get to the magic garden, even though that would take a bit more time.

However, by the time he turned around, Lucien's scalp tingled from the same feeling of coldness that he sensed when he encountered the little girl.

Without any hesitation, Lucien launched a backhand hack with his sword.

Although it felt like he just chopped a random piece of rotten wood, a certain strange power shook Lucien's arm along with the sword in his hand. Turning into a grey shadow, Lucien quickly dodged to the side and knelt down on one knee with his back against a gravestone.

In the corner of his eye, there was a short line of words on the gravestone,

"I was fat, but now I'm skinny."

Lucien was a bit amused for a second. However, just within that second, a rotten arm stretched out of the barrow beside him.

The body in the barrow came back to life!

Most of the skin of the body was rotten, although some small skin pieces were still hanging onto the white bones. The stench of a dead body was horrible.

Turning around, Lucien saw another zombie standing behind him, and the lid of David Terrian's coffin chamber was open!

Lucien turned himself into a shadow again to keep a distance away from the two filthy undead creatures. From their sharp teeth and the way they were moving, Lucien realized that they were not common zombies or skeletons, instead, they were ghouls.

And in this strange magic lock world, their power was strengthened. Lucien could tell that they were almost as agile and fast as him, and probably a bit stronger.

With the characteristics of the undead, ghouls were covered with plagues and a depressing aura. A person who got hurt by a ghoul would feel extremely weak and numb, and would go down with the plague.

If a person was killed by a ghoul, he would later turn into a new ghoul.

Recognizing what they were, Lucien changed his strategy. He tried to avoid any face-to-face confrontation with the ghouls and to launch his attack from behind.

Luckily, the ghouls were not intelligent at all, and the second ghoul seemed to be weaker than the other one. Gradually, Lucien gained the upper hand of the fight and his sword hacked at the ghouls several times. However, the bones of the ghouls were harder than he thought. The two ghouls were still moving, and they got even crazier when their rotten skin and flesh started coming off because of Lucien's attack.

When Lucien was preparing the Sulphur-fire Wall, he saw more ghouls coming out of the barrows. Their rotten arms were like the dark branches of a dead tree.

Without any hesitation, Lucien cast the spell. As soon as the fire wall appeared in front of him, he turned around and started to escape as fast as he could.

The strong smell of sulphur burning came into Lucien's nose from

behind. Knowing that this might be his only chance to get away, he did not even take a look back.

Another ghoul got in Lucien's way from the other side of the fire wall. Lucien just wielded his sword and directly hacked toward it.

The horrible smell of rotten flesh became stronger and stronger, and Lucien saw more ghouls were crawling out of the barrows.

Holding the sword in his right hand, Lucien shot three frost blades shining with cold light out of his left hand. He just cast Palmeira's Frost Blades.

The blades cut the the ghoul's throat deep, that is, if the combination of rotten flesh and spine bones could still be called as "throat". Lucien did not expect the blades would end the filthy creature, but only to freeze it temporarily.

Within his expectations, the cold air coming out of the blades quickly covered the ghoul with a thin layer of ice, and the ghoul was frozen still instantly.

At the same time, Lucien activated Disarming Loop and changed the gravity within the small area where the ghoul was. The iced ghoul lost its balance and fell on the ground.

Then, he quickly passed by it like a faint shadow and noticed that the ice was already cracking.

Lucien was running for his life with all his strength, and a herd of stinky ghouls was chasing after him. However, he still knew clearly which direction he should go.

When Lucien distanced himself a bit from the ghouls, he changed his direction and ran toward the magic garden.

Some of the ghouls were stronger and some were weaker. By the time Lucien saw the black gate of the magic garden, only two were still following him.

The whole garden was covered with gray shadows, and only the black gate could be seen clearly. Behind the gate there was a low,

pointed building, looking rather creepy.

When Lucien got closer, he noticed that the magic circle carved on the gate was very familiar to him, but the pattern missed a small piece.

The thought that this magic garden was actually left by an archmage on purpose for his inheritor quickly flashed across Lucien's mind, since he remembered the pattern when he was reading Astrology and Magic Elements.

Lucien pulled out a tube of mercury from his robe and grabbed it in his hand. As soon as he arrived in front of the magic circle and opened the tube, drops of mercury flew from the tube to the gate on their own.

He took a deep breath to stay focused. Using his spiritual power, Lucien controlled the fine stream of mercury to complete the magic circle pattern.

He knew that he really got lucky here. Although it was out of his expectation that the magic garden actually used a puzzle as a lock, thankfully he carefully read the book left by the archmage who created this dimension.

When the pattern of the magic circle was completed, the two ghouls also arrived. The horrible smell made Lucien feel weak and dizzy.

The magic circle on the gate suddenly glowed brightly. With all of his strength, Lucien decisively threw himself toward the magic portal with a whirling storm of light in it.

The moment when he entered the portal, Lucien could feel the cold air from the ghouls trying to scratch his back with their sharp claws behind him.

Chapter 122: Sun's Corona

As if he just passed through a heavy curtain, Lucien felt a bit cold, and then his body hit something hard.

He heard himself let out a moan and then joy seized his heart for a second: it had been quite a while since he last heard any sound. Then, in the next second, he took a few quick steps back and held up his sword again.

Lucien was now standing in a spacious corridor. His feet felt the soft and thick carpet on the ground. Although everything was still black and white, this place felt more gentle and kind to Lucien.

Then, within Lucien's expectations, the two filthy ghouls followed him through the portal and also spoiled the beauty of the place. However, they were struggling to stand up from the ground, making it seem they were not used to the environment at all.

"Maybe they're not that strong here." The thought flashed across Lucien's mind, and then he immediately wielded Alert toward one of the ghouls, targeting the deep wound on its neck which was caused by Lucien's frost blade.

The second hack almost took the ghoul's head off. Its head slanted to one side, hanging on through just a small piece of skin.

Throwing a handful of sulphur powder toward the second ghoul, Lucien made a fire wall to stop its attack. Then, he turned around, firmly held his sword again and directly chopped the first ghoul's head off.

Black sticky liquid spilled out of the filthy creature's head. The horrible smell made Lucien feel very nauseous and he almost threw up.

A few seconds later, Lucien ended the other ghoul.

Leaning against his sword, he let out a long sigh. He felt lucky that the ghouls were not intelligent at all, or he would now be the one

lying on the ground with his brain spread everywhere.

Walking a bit away from the bodies and slowly sitting down, Lucien gave himself some time to recover. Then, he came back to the bodies and disgustedly removed the skin of their palms, or say, claws, with his sword, putting it into a special small bag.

The skin could be used as the reagent for a second circle spell, Ghoul Touch. Lucien definitely would not waste it.

After burning down the remains of the ghouls with his sulphur fire, Lucien cautiously walked along the corridor with his sword at the ready in his hand.

The corridor with the white carpet and dark gray walls seemed to be endlessly long. Lucien felt he was walking in a tomb. The only good thing was that he sensed nothing dangerous.

Finally, in the end of the corridor, he saw a black gate, on which there was another special dodecagon magic circle, that Lucien had already seen before in Astrology and Magic Elements, and the pattern also missed a piece.

He got a bit excited. Taking out another small tube of mercury, he completed the magic circle using the same method.

Then, the magic circle started to shine brightly and the gate slowly opened on its own. Behind the gate there was a luxuriously-decorated lobby.

Lucien first saw the fireplace in the lobby. The flame jumping and wavering in the fireplace was also white, but it felt quite warm.

Beside the fireplace, there was a gray desk, on which a black book lay. Out of the window behind the desk, Lucien saw many bizarre-looking magic plants: some of them had baby faces, some of them had big mouths, and some were shining like precious gem. The door to the magic garden was right beside the desk.

Surprisingly, no magic trap was detected when Lucien was approaching the desk. He did not directly touch the book with his hand, but used the sword to turn the pages.

On the first page of the book, Lucien saw an inventory written in Sylvanas:

"Moonlight Rose: Room 1, Shelf No. 25;

Jade Green Mycin: Room 1, Shelf No. 72;

The root of Thorn Tree: Room 1, No. 99; Its sap in Room 2, No. 3;

Vampire blood: Room 3, No. 21;

Enchantress teeth: Room 3, No. 46;

...

Ghost-faced leaves: Room 7, No. 17;

The feather of Stone Snake: Room 7, No. 92;

Goatherd's Moon Flower: Room 8, No. 8;

Murloc's lymph: Room 9, No. 1."

...

The following pages were all inventories. Lucien first thought that it was simply a book for registering the assorted materials stored here, but soon he realized that he actually needed all the materials that he just read, as if the book was specially written for him!

Lucien turned the pages back and forth several times and made sure his guessing was correct. Some of the materials were for Silver Moon, some for Magic Gate, and some for Crying Soul...

He was thrilled, but also felt creepy. When he removed his eyes from the book and looked up, he saw that a white-haired old man was sitting on the chair beside the desk, writing something on the book.

Lucien was stunned for a second, but then he realized that this was just an eidolon, or say, a piece of memory left by someone. Looking at the date that the old man wrote down on his paper, Lucien

realized that this image was left almost a thousand years ago.

Soon, the image disappeared. Then Lucien turned the book to its final pages. The long diary-like notes left by the owner shocked him, "When I was doing the experiment, I found this world by accident. It is like a copy of the real world, or say, a projection of the main world, but some parts of it are in quite a chaos. Furthermore, no life in the real world is projected. Interesting.

...

"Now, I'm certain that this world is very suitable for the undead creatures like revenants and ghosts, but the black-and-white world is just too boring for a living person.

"Compared to the Skeleton Land located on the 123rd layer of the Pit, a land consisting of fire and ice, this place is almost too silent to be called as 'hell'. This is a world for the dead to enjoy their eternal sleep. Let me name it 'the World of Souls'

"It seems like I'm not the only one who knows about this place now...

...

"Deep in this world, I found a very dangerous but interesting place, which has an astonishing connection with our experiment. I shall invite my buddies to explore there again with me to see if we can find out what the secret is.

...

"We're about to leave now... In fact, I made a prophecy a couple of days ago, at a great cost, and thus I know what I will face, but I'm still going. And you, the one who is reading my notes now, may I call you 'the nonbeliever who walks in light and darkness'. You must have my book, Astrology and Magic Elements, and you have come here because of the poem and the manuscript.

"I might be still trapped there when someday you enter the legendary dimension. I do not expect that you'll come specially for me, but if you find me, please free me. Don't go there when you're

not prepared. The legendary dimension is dangerous even for senior-rank mages and archmages."

Lucien's body was covered with goose bumps. He felt the author of Astrology and Magic Elements was communicating with him across time and space through the notes.

Lucien quickly turned the pages and wanted to know more about this world. The fragmented description and explanation was more than confusing to him.

"There is a crystal ball called Morning Light in the left drawer of the desk, and in the right drawer I left my self-made magic item for you. Its name's Sun's Corona. It can help you sense the gaps existing between the World of Souls and the main world late at night. Gaps exist throughout the whole continent.

"The seal on Sun's Corona is made of five layers. Each time when you reach a new level, say, junior-rank mage, middle-rank mage, senior-rank mage, archmage and legendary archmage, one layer of the seal will be unlocked, and you will be able to use the magic of that level. When the last layer of the seal is unlocked, you'll be able to find the dangerous but interesting place I mentioned before.

"All right, my friend, from the moment when you first saw my notes, you'd have an hour to explore this place safely. An hour later, the lock will be collapsing and at that moment you can leave this place through the small door of the magic garden.

"Remember, walk forward and do not look back. And my prophecy showed that you'd be facing a great danger soon, so seize your chance to improve your power here before you leave. Room No. 10 is the alchemy room.

Your friend,

The Prophet

Waldo · K · Maskelyne."

That was a lot of information for Lucien, and the notes left by Waldo confused him quite a bit. However, Lucien was very

impressed by how accurate his prophecy was.

Following the Prophet's guidance, Lucien found a fist-sized fine crystal ball in the left drawer, which was definitely a necessity for sorcerers specializing in the school of Astrology.

As he opened the drawer on the right side, Lucien saw a round amulet the size of a regular badge. It was the Sun's Corona that Waldo had mentioned. The light golden amulet was carved with rays of light, as if it were a crown, and at the center of the amulet, there was a cross which was very familiar to Lucien.

Beside Sun's Corona, there was a roll of parchment, which showed the inner magic structure of this magic item and explained how Lucien was supposed to leave his individual spirit imprint on the structure, to become its owner.

"Sun's Corona. Level nine medium rank. Five layers of seal to be unlocked.

Spells that can be used once a day are the following:

1st circle, Holy Strike (sealed); 2nd circle, Death Resistance (sealed); 3rd circle, Burning Radiance (sealed); 4th circle, Death Ward (sealed); 5th circle, Flame Strike (sealed); 6th circle, Exorcist Halo (sealed); 7th circle, Ashes (sealed); 8th circle, Sunburst (sealed); 9th circle, Undeath's Eternal Foe (sealed).

Depending on to what extent the seals have been unlocked, the person who wears Sun's Corona is capable of praying for the undead and freeing them, and the person can also sense the gaps connecting the main world and the World of Souls.

Sun's Corona is the eternal foe of the undead.

Waldo · K · Maskelyne."

Staring at the piece of parchment, Lucien was totally shocked.

The cross pattern at the center of Sun's Corona, the Grand Cross in the sky and the spells...

Different ideas flashed across his mind like films. That night when Lucien went down into the sewers came back to him.

The Saint Truth Badge owned by Benjamin...

The spells Benjamin used...

Lucien's brows frowned, and his eyes opened wide.

All that magic belonged to the category of divine spells!

Furthermore, the pattern at the center of Sun's Corona was a cross, the symbol of the Saint Truth!

How would all that make sense?!

Chapter 123: The Experiment of An Hour

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien felt that what he had just found out was ridiculous and even funny. Obviously, Maskelyne had no reason to lie to him about Sun's Corona, and the cross at the center of Sun's Corona looked identical to the one he once saw on Benjamin's Saint Truth Badge.

Everything was getting more and more mysterious. Lucien wondered how the Saint Truth started to develop and grow at the very beginning.

Putting aside his many concerns, Lucien first followed the instruction left by Maskelyne and built a strange-shaped model with his spiritual power, then carefully sent the model into the magic item.

As soon as Lucien's spiritual power connected to Sun's Corona, he felt himself bathed in the sacred and pure light. This magic item was filled with the purest light.

Without any difficulty, Lucien left his spirit imprint on Sun's Corona and became its owner. He also took a look at the seals inside the magic item, which were very complex.

Now, Lucien was a hundred percent certain that the power of Sun's Corona came from divine power, which felt totally different from his magic power. He hung the amulet around his neck underneath his clothes and felt the warmth of it. The power could also be spread out by Lucien using his spiritual power to pray for the undead and free them.

Lucien lit the parchment and the notes on fire and burned them down completely, since they had already been stored in his spirit library. Staring at the fire, he was really worried because he might be unconsciously approaching the biggest secret ever in this world, which involved the Church, the Congress of Magic, and even Argent

Horn.

He believed that Argent Horn was involved as well because he remembered that the so-called “the Great Master of Argent” used “the forever lasting silence” as the title. Lucien already had the feeling before that the strange title did not come from nowhere, and now he came to this world of forever lasting silence himself.

Maybe the great danger foreseen by the Prophet was related to Argent Horn... maybe the revelation of the manuscripts was the heresy’s carefully planned conspiracy...

Lucien had no idea what he was going to face, but he knew that all he could do right now was to make the best use of the one hour he had, and that was to gather the ingredients to increase his power.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien left the lobby and walked toward Room No. 1.

There were lots of shelving units and waist-high glass cabinets in that room. All of them looked black and white.

Lucien saw some weird-looking eyeballs soaked with black liquid, flowers that looked like spiders under glass covers, gray stones floating in the air, and dried bodies wrapped by shrouds...There were different magic circles carved on the shelves and cabinets for different means of storage.

Lucien did not have time to go through them one by one. He followed his memory and directly found the No. 72 shelf for Jade Green Mycin.

Although the powder was supposed to be jade green, in this world, it looked plain gray. Lucien held his breath when he was scooping the powder from the jar, because breathing it in could corrode human being’s organs.

Then, Lucien went to the other rooms and collected the feather of Stone Snake, which actually looked like scales, Goatherd’s Moon Flower and some Ghost-faced Leaves. Lucien felt quite disgusted when he touched the leaves, since each of the leaves had a face on

it: some were laughing, and some looked vicious.

Goatherd's Moon Flower + Ghost-faced Leave + the feather of Stone Snake + Jade Green Mycin = Silver Moon.

Lucien was not going to work on the Magic Gate potion right now. Although he tried to analyze Magic Gate before, the process was still too challenging, especially when he was in a rush.

...

In the spacious alchemy room, lots of professional equipment were totally strange to Lucien. There was a metal hand hanging on the top, some mysterious gray liquid running in transparent tubes, an operation table, tall stoves, and dazzling three-dimensional magic circles almost everywhere.

Lucien walked directly to the operation table and activated the magic circles on it. He put a tube of Jade Green Mycin into a container and, half minute later, the gray powder within had been turned into a turbid liquid by the magic circle.

Following the same steps, Lucien processed the Moon Flower and the feather of Snake Stone. When he put the creepy leaves on one of the magic circles, the faces on the leaves started to cry and shout like babies who were crying for their toys, but the scream was completely blocked.

Lucien was very impressed. Compared with his previous underground lab, this place was like heaven for him, after all, this lab had belonged to a legendary archmage.

When all the ingredients were ready, Lucien started to mix them together. Here, the temperature of the fire was the key point, and the most challenging steps for Lucien were to build a model with his spiritual power and to integrate the model into the liquid.

Five minutes later, Lucien's semi-finished potion started to smoke.

"Too early... I integrated the model into the liquid too early."
Lucien calmly drew a conclusion from his first failure.

...

Another five minutes later, Lucien stared at the gray gel in the container with his eyebrows frowned, "I dropped the Jade Green liquid too slow..."

...

Looking at the small ball bouncing everywhere in the container, Lucien felt a bit frustrated. This was his sixth failure.

After wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, he started his seventh experiment.

This time everything finally seemed to be fine. Lucien half closed his eyes and tried to keep his spiritual power stable while he was building the model.

When the gray liquid slowly turned white, Lucien quickly sent out the model and integrated the model into the liquid.

Gathering power from the model, the liquid in the container instantly condensed into small drops like beads, and within each drop there was a small moon.

Lucien put Silver Moon into a glass tube and returned to the lobby. Sitting down on the ground, Lucien had to recover his power, even though there was only twenty minutes left before the magic lock collapsed.

...

Six minutes later, Lucien felt he was ready.

Looking at the "beads" in the tube, he thought for a second whether he should chew them well. He was a bit amused by this funny idea.

Then, he decisively raised his head and swallowed the whole tube of potion, and the next second Lucien entered his meditative dimension.

The lobby and the black-and-white world were gone. All Lucien

could see now was a starry sky, and he could feel the furiousness of the Fire element, the lightness of Wind, and the softness of Water.

For the first time, Lucien saw his own soul from an outsider's perspective. Lucien noticed his own soul was glowing brightly like the silver moon, and within his soul there was also an inverted image of the countless stars in the sky.

This outsider's perspective was indispensable for constructing more complicated models. Unfortunately, Lucien's spiritual power level was not enough to provide him with this perspective yet, and the reason that Lucien could experience it now was because of the potion.

He started to calmly build a magic model inside his own soul. His spiritual power started to be substantialized into fine shining lines floating in the sky, and, being controlled by Lucien, they slowly started to gather together.

The construction of a magic model required accurate length of every line and angle. Only a person who was capable of understanding mathematical and geometry knowledge could manage to build it. Countless magic apprentices were stuck at that point for their whole lives and never had a chance to become a real sorcerer.

Chapter 124: Lucien, the Sorcerer

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The magic model that Lucien needed to build was called Star Shield. Thankfully, Lucien already practiced constructing the model multiple times in the past, so he remembered clearly how the model was divided, how long the lines were, and how the lines were connected to each other. All he needed to do now was stay calm.

When he was concentrating on the magic model, Lucien noticed that his spiritual power was being consumed very fast. By the time he finished one-third of the work, he found that there was only half of his spiritual power remaining.

“You gotta make the best use of your spiritual power.” Lucien talked to himself in his mind. Building a magic model was like drawing a complicated pattern on a piece of paper using a pen, but with a very limited amount of ink. To save the resource, the person drawing the picture needed to stay very calm, to prevent the hand holding the pen from trembling too much.

Thanks to Lucien’s throughout knowledge of Star Shield, he could allow himself to be partly distracted and absorb the power of the four Elements surrounding him, in order to slowly recover his own spiritual power.

For most sorcerer apprentices, since they did not have such a profound knowledge of their magic models, they would often turn to the potion called Magic Gate as their short-term supplement for boosting spiritual power, in order to make this great breakthrough.

Time passed, and Lucien started to feel weaker and weaker, and his spiritual power was very close to running dry. Fortunately, the magic model of Star Shield was almost ready. Now, it looked like a transparent small pyramid floating in the air, made up of many sophisticated lines inside.

Just one more line to go.

Although Lucien's whole body was slightly shaking from his weakness, there was no chance that he would give up in the last second. Clenching his teeth, Lucien summoned his last reserves of spiritual power like squeezing out the last bit of toothpaste from the tube and finished the last touch.

The moment the last line was finally linked to the small "pyramid", the whole model suddenly collapsed inwards and at the same time started to frantically suck in the power of the stars.

Lucien's soul was racked by a sudden great pain, caused by the enormous power of stars impacting his awareness. Even from the outsider's perspective, he almost passed out because of the mystic energy.

At this time, a gentle and pure ray of light came out of Lucien's soul, and the great pain was gone. Lucien's outsider's perspective also became more stable.

When the light disappeared, Lucien saw something like a crystal, the size of a thumbnail, shining and revolving around the inverted reflection of his Host Star of Destiny. Taking a closer look, it was the very magic model that he built just now, the Star Shield.

At the same time, Lucien noticed that his own soul had become more stable and denser, as if the power of stars magically changed the soul's texture.

Opening his eyes, he felt more refreshed than ever, and his soul was overflowing with spiritual power. Lucien knew that whenever there was any danger, he could instantly activate the Star Shield.

A smile appeared on his face, and he said to himself with pride, "Nice to meet you, Mr. Lucien, the sorcerer."

His smile came out from his heart, since he believed that, compared with the great success that he had with his concert, this breakthrough was accomplished all because of his own efforts, and nothing could satisfy him more than that.

Lucien looked at the magic hourglass on the table and found that there was only three more minutes left, so he gave up the plan of building one more magic model in his soul.

With his brimming spiritual power, he was confident that he could cast apprentice spells two to three hundred times and almost twenty spells of first circle as well, without pause. That was the sweet gain from becoming a real sorcerer. What was even better was that, as long as one's soul was strong enough to handle it, the person could build more magic models every few minutes.

However, Lucien did not have enough time right now. He must leave soon.

“Remember, keep walking forward and do not look back...”

According to the message left by Maskelyne, it seemed the trip leaving the lobby through the small door of the magic garden would not be a peaceful and sweet one.

Lucien walked toward the door and tried to open it, but he failed. He could not leave this place until the magic lock started to collapse.

Then, following Maskelyne's instruction, Lucien spent only a minute unlocking the first layer of the seal. Now, he could cast the two divine spells, Holy Strike and Death Resistance.

Unwilling to waste any time, Lucien ran into the rooms like a shadow to collect some more magic materials for future use.

“Not the too dangerous ones... nor materials that I don't know about...” Lucien reminded himself not to be greedy. After all, he only had less than two minutes now.

By the end, he had picked a tube of Vampire's blood, two tubes of aether, two handful of goblin's hair, three tubes of Snownia's Burning Power and a box of magic oil. Some of them were magic materials and some were catalysts.

When there were only fifteen seconds left, Lucien came back to the lobby. Standing in front of the small door, he was waiting for the

moment that the world started to collapse.

Ten seconds, nine seconds... three... two... one.

The whole lobby started to shake slightly, and the small door opened by itself as if it sensed the change in this world. Behind the door there was a long, long corridor, and along both sides there were all kinds of weird-shaped magic plants.

All of a sudden there were cracks on everything Lucien could see, the desk, the chair, and even the white and gray fire in the fireplace.

Without any hesitation, Lucien rushed through the corridor.

He heard babies crying, but he did not look back.

Lucien walked faster and faster, and then he started to run. The magic plants along both sides started to wield their branches crazily and some of them almost hit Lucien's face.

Some other magic plants were floating in the air; some were jumping forward like frogs; some wrung their own necks and threw their heads away... Everything in the world started to get crazy.

The plants were laughing, moaning and crying. Their voices were very loud, but they seemed to disappear after Lucien passed them, as if a monster with a huge mouth was devouring them while following Lucien.

He forced himself to stay focused on his own footsteps and kept running forward. He swiftly avoided the black vines that seemed to attack him like snakes.

Then, he heard a sharp screaming, which was miserable and vicious. In front of Lucien, a lot of revenants appeared in his way. Countless maggots covered the whole floor, and each of them had a baby crying face.

Lucien did not slow down at all. He directly activated Star Shield.

Before becoming a real sorcerer, Lucien could not cast any spell

when he activated the Moonlight, the status in which his body was partially dematerialized into moonlight, but now it was not a problem anymore.

This shield was like a round glass cover that seamlessly protected Lucien from all directions. Being badly burned by the shield, the revenants were screaming even bitterer, but they were still trying to grab Lucien's body with their arms until they turned into smoke and ashes. There so many white maggots covering Lucien's shield that he almost could not see the road in front of him.

Finally, Lucien saw a narrow gap at the end of the corridor, and through it he could see a touch of green.

"It's dangerous! Come back, Xiafeng! Don't go there!"

Lucien heard his parents calling his name.

"Lucien, stop! You'll die!"

That was the mixed voices of Joel, John, Victor and all the people Lucien cared about in this world.

They sounded so real that Lucien's heart missed a beat for a second.

"Do not look back!" Lucien yelled to himself.

In the last second, he jumped right into the gap.

...

The soul maggots all turned into ashes. The night wind felt cool and gentle.

This was a world full of life.

"Lucien?" It was a familiar voice, and the person sounded very surprised.

Raising up his head with surprise, Lucien saw Natasha, who was wearing her Dragon Blood Armor and riding on a black Dragon Scale horse. However, the armor she was wearing was severely

damaged, and there were only a few knights, squires and guards following her. All of them looked tired, and some of them were even injured.

Furthermore, Lady Camil was not with the princess, neither were Silvia and her father.

A thin layer of haze settled over the small town named Bonn.

Chapter 125: Ambuscade

Chapter 125: Ambuscade

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The people downstairs gradually quieted down, which finally gave the brother and sister a break.

“Bragging and bragging... useless adventurers...” sneered Lilith. “All they have is muscles, but unfortunately no brain.”

“Don’t underestimate them.” Sala shook his head, “Many of them have been dealing with the many horrific monsters in the black forest and the Dark Mountain Range for a long time. They can’t be taken lightly.”

When he was talking, his eyes suddenly opened wide. The color of the candle was fading, and so was the color of the wall. Little by little, everything started to lose color. A thin layer of haze slowly descended.

Sala’s hand touched the table in the room when he took a step back, and he felt the moist of the wood, as if the table had been sitting there for over a thousand years.

“Run!” Sala took his sister’s hand and shouted, “Something’s wrong!”

However, his voice sounded so far away, as if it came from another world. Lilith looked very afraid and also confused. Grabbing Sala’s hand, she followed him and they started to run downstairs.

When the two magic apprentices were running, they took out some of their magic reagents and held the materials tightly in their hands in order to cast the spells for self-defense, if needed.

By the time they got to the ground floor, the tavern was already in a great mess. All those people, including the adventurers who had bragged about their strength for the whole night, were pushing each

other fiercely in order to leave that place as soon as possible.

Seeing that there was no chance for them to get access to the door immediately, Sala pulled his sister's arm and they ran together toward the tavern's back door.

Directly kicking the back door open, Sala and Lilith found that the whole town was being affected and was turning gray. However, most people living there had already fallen asleep in their houses, so they did not notice anything unusual, and the town was actually very quiet.

Sala and Lilith started to run toward the exit to Massawa, the city close to Bonn. They had no idea what was going on there.

When they were about to leave the town, Sala and Lilith bumped into a few adventurers who were running toward the same direction.

"Something's wrong with Elsinore Lake!" an adventurer talked aloud to the other people, "It must be the magic lock... The magic lock is... it's collapsing!"

Before the other people responded, Lilith cried out and pointed at the adventures with her shaking hand, "You..."

Their skin started to turn gray as well, and some parts looked rotten already. However, the adventurers themselves looked very confused, as if they had no idea what was happening to their bodies.

Seeing that their eyes slowly lost focus, Sala pulled his sister's arm and shouted, "Run! Don't look back!"

Sala and Lilith were running so fast that they almost couldn't breathe. A slight taste of blood rose from their throats.

The town behind them had turned into hell.

Finally, Sala and Lilith felt a bit warmer after the weird feeling of running through a thick curtain. However, they didn't dare to take a rest. They kept running toward Massawa to stay away from that

horrific town named Bonn.

...

“The magic lock...?!” Ilia, the silver-robed great priest, immediately noticed the unusual change when the color of everything started to fade away. “This is not what the Great Master told us!”

Then, he decisively commanded the high and common priests and the dark knights, “There is no more time for the blood sacrifice! The magic lock is changing. Cancel the sacrifice and gather all the people! We shall activate the summoning circle immediately to greet our true God!”

Receiving the order, six high priests flew up in the sky surrounding Bonn and Elsinore Lake, and twelve priests and dark knights were standing on the ground in a corresponding way. These people were all Argent Horn had now in the Duchy of Orvarit, and some of them, following the will of God, came all the way from other countries or even the Dark Mountain Range to support them.

Ilia also flew above Elsinore Lake and what he saw stunned him:

The surface of the lake turned solid within a few seconds and suddenly broke into small pieces, like a mirror being shattered by some great power. The Grand Cross was shining brightly at the bottom of the lake, surrounded by some kind of blood-red liquid which was wriggling as if it was alive.

Lots of ghosts, revenants and black shadows were howling and screaming while they were swiftly flying back and forth above the lake. As they were shouting toward the same direction, the sound waves joined together and gave shape to a translucent, huge ghost, who was wearing a long, black robe with a huge scythe in its hand, standing above the blood-red liquid. Underneath its hood, two black holes could be seen on its skull-like face.

Although being protected by his many spells, Ilia still shivered a bit from the scene, as if the warmth of his life was leaving his body.

The Grand Cross was slowly collapsing. The main world and the

black-and-white world were overlapping.

Ilia took out a huge pale hand, and every knuckle of it had sharp bony spurs, shining with some faint light.

Raising up the hand high in the air, Ilia started to chant a long mantra which could drive people crazy. Many silver lines came out of the priests and dark knights, were they in the air or on the ground, and joined together around Ilia to shape a complicated magic circle.

When Ilia finished casting, he directly threw the huge hand into the center of the magic circle. Countless silver lines jumped up and devoured the hand like a monster's huge mouth.

As a silver gate slowly appeared in the sky, the Grand Cross underneath was almost completely gone.

All of a sudden, a bright, burning light beam shot the silver gate right in the center, from a higher position in the sky.

The colors of black and gray suddenly disappeared, and the whole area was filled with sacred light.

As soon as the ghosts, revenants and shadows touched the light, they disappeared like vapor, and even the undead creatures in the town all turned into ashes instantly.

This was the eighth circle divine spell, Sunburst!

“Amelton... Gossett!?” Ilia was shocked, “How come...”

Floating high in the air, Vila Amelton was holding a cross-shaped badge carved with a pattern of a sun in the center, and Gossett was right beside her.

Count Hart Rafati, Count Hayward, who was the deputy commander of Violet Knights and also a gold knight, and another two radiant knights were also there.

On the other side, Salvador and Clown were leading the other night watchers to block the whole area.

Half of the most powerful people of the duchy were there tonight.

“How come?” Putting back the level eight divine badge, Vila said to Ilia coldly, “We’ve been waiting for you here for a long time.”

Although Ilia knew that the Church would definitely send some people here to investigate the usual changes happening around the lake recently, he never expected that the ambush would be this powerful.

“Who betrayed us!?” Ilia’s fists clenched tightly, but a moment later an evil smile appeared on his face. “If the true God cannot come, all of us will die here tonight by the hands of what’s sealed, or even worse, all of us will become its slaves.”

...

In the wilderness at the junction of Melzer Black Forest and the Dark Mountain Range.

“Lucien, why are you here?” Natasha asked Lucien with confusion. Her voice was slightly trembling.

Lucien looked down at the black robe he was wearing and realized that he needed to tell Natasha at least part of the truth, “I found the secret of the magic lock from the poem provided by Mr. Deroni and a roll of manuscript brought to me by two strangers who visited me the other day.” Lucien paused a bit and continued, “You know me, Your Grace. I always want to be stronger and more powerful to protect my friends and family, so I decided to take a risk to see if I could find any useful potion in this magic lock.”

Natasha’s eyebrows frowned a bit.

“As soon as I arrived in Bonn, I was sucked into a creepy hole. The world inside of the hole was all black and white and I almost died there. When I was being chased by a bunch of horrific undead creatures and plants, I found a gap and I jumped in it. Now I’m here... it’s very weird.”

“I see... some benefits from being a historian, uh?” Natasha put on an exhausted smile. Although she did not really trust Lucien’s

words, her mind told her that asking too much right now would benefit no one in such a situation.

“What happened to you, Your Grace? And where’s Lady Camil?” asked Lucien.

Natasha’s eyes dimmed and she looked down, “I got some information about the magic lock the day before yesterday. Out of curiosity, I decided to go to Elsinore Lake to take a look. But we were ambushed. My curiosity led my team into a horrible trap...”

“What?!” Lucien was shocked.

“In order to make time for me to leave, Camil stayed to cover me. She was confronting a radiant knight and a senior-rank mage...”

Natasha’s voice became lower and lower.

“Who attacked you?” Lucien’s eyes opened wide.

Natasha looked very depressed, and by the time she could answer Lucien, an army arrived and surrounded Natasha’s people and Lucien.

Lucien looked up and saw Verdi sitting on a weird-looking horse with two goat horns. Silvia was right beside Verdi, looking rather sad. However, Silvia’s father was not there.

“My dear cousin, please give up.” Verdi was covered with a suit of dark-purple armor, “It’s too late for the Church or the Violet Knights to come and save you.”

Chapter 126: The Mutiny

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Natasha ignored Verdi's words and just stared at Silvia. The princess' eyes were slightly squinted, and with a trembling voice Natasha asked the girl she loved, "Was it you, Silvia?"

Verdi did not act rashly, since Natasha still had a level four grand knight, two level two knights, two level one knights and more than twenty knight squires and around eighty soldiers to protect her.

Silvia took a few deep breaths and she gradually calmed down. "I appreciate your love toward me, Natasha, but unfortunately, I care more about my father. My father spent so many years trying to find a chance to go to the Magic Congress in order to live a peaceful life, and his wish is my wish."

"So?" Natasha asked gently, "That's why you wanted me to die?"

"I didn't expect this!" Silvia suddenly lost control and her voice became sharp, "I didn't know that their real purpose in gathering information about you was to actually kill you! But... but my father was killed by you, Natasha, and the only thing I care for now is my revenge."

Lucien was shocked to learn that both Deroni and Silvia were sorcerers. When he thought about it, and after taking a careful look at Silvia's height and figure, Lucien suddenly linked White Honey to Silvia.

"Silvia... White Honey... and Deroni... the master of the raven named Ashley..." Lucien murmured to himself in a very low voice.

"So you've been lying to me all this time? I don't believe it." Natasha's voice became cold, "I killed your father because he wanted to kill all of us!"

“You think I’m really that happy with fine clothes, spacious houses, endless cuisine and the bright future of being a musician, Natasha? No! None of them can compete with the great satisfaction that I felt from learning a new spell, from a successful magic experiment, and from seeing the hope in my father’s eyes.” Silvia tried her best to stay calm, “You think I only want to be your nightingale in a gold cage?”

“Did I ever treat you like my pet?” Natasha questioned Silvia desperately.

Before Silvia managed to say anything, Verdi suddenly reached out his hand and wrapped Silvia’s waist with his arm. “Although I admit that you’re very outstanding as a woman, my dear cousin, do you think you can give Silvia the same love as that of a man?”

Natasha closed her eyes and a sad smile appeared on her face. “Silvia, I never knew before that you could be this persistent and firm. I thought that I should be always protecting you, and I was wrong. Maybe I was never... never in your heart.”

“You were, Natasha.” Silvia lowered her head, “But we’re like two intersecting lines. We were very close to each other, and now we are heading for totally different directions.”

“So you’re heading toward him? Is that what you’re doing?” asked Natasha. Then, she turned to Verdi and sneered, “You’re much more stupid than I thought, my cousin. You think Sard, the Saint Cardinal, would just crown you as the next grand duke after my death? Do you think he would just let you live a happy life after you colluded with Argent Horn and the Congress of Magic? That’s not going to happen... you’ll end up being tied to the gallows!”

Natasha decided to put her personal feeling aside first, in order to deal with this situation more wisely, which was a basic quality of a grand knight.

Since Verdi already showed his true intention, every confusion within Natasha’s mind was solved. The connection between the intelligence department and Argent Horn, the reason that Rosan Aaron could always escape the careful search of the Church... All

those things were related to her cousin, Count Verdi.

Lucien also realized that it was Verdi who betrayed the grand duke family and the Church. Taking a closer look at the high-rank knights following Verdi, it did not take Lucien too much time to recognize Rosan Aaron, who was in a suit of knight armor. After all, Lucien was familiar with Rosan Aaron's picture as a criminal wanted by the Church.

"How stern and just your words are, Natasha!" Verdi laughed, "I knew you'd think I was tempted by the demon, but do you think your father is really that honest and straightforward? It was because of my father's death that he became the grand duke, and I'm not that stupid to believe my father's death was just an accident! I should be the next grand duke, not you, Natasha."

"Then wish your dream come true when you're being burned to ashes." Natasha held her head high.

"If you die tonight, Natasha, no one here will tell the grand duke and Sard what I did." Verdi shrugged easily, "I'd be the biggest hero who provided the important information to Sard and Count Hayward and helped them stop Argent Horn's horrible conspiracy. Unfortunately, while they are busy dealing with the heretics, they don't know that the princess is facing this great trouble, ha!"

"Yeah... smart." The corner of Natasha's lips was slightly lifted. "Somehow the princess would just die here out of no reason. And no one would care afterwards."

"No worries, my dear cousin." Verdi waved his hand causally, "After you die, Mr. Rogerio, from the Congress of Magic, will come to wrap up everything. He will leave the clues which will all lead to the sorcerers, and the Congress of Magic will claim responsibility as well."

"I see. You're neither on the side of Argent Horn, nor that of the Congress. You just betrayed Argent Horn to please the Church." Natasha's eyes looked rather cold, "Impressive."

"My plan went wrong several times, though." Verdi lifted his right

hand and pointed at Lucien. "This guy, Lucien Evans... he betrayed Argent Horn, or you'd be dead a long time ago."

Lucien finally realized what was his big trouble predicted by Maskelyne. Because of Silvia's betrayal, his Blessing and what he did to Argent Horn was no more a secret since long ago. The only reason that Lucien and Joel's family stayed safe until now was because the enemies needed to focus on their bigger plan. However, it seemed that Argent Horn still did not know that Lucien was actually the "Professor".

"Lucien, thank you for coming here tonight," Verdi said to him with an evil smile. "So I don't have to bother killing you later, after our plan is done. But don't think you have bad luck, since your death would come to you sooner or later. "

"I bet you're very happy that you can kill two birds with one stone tonight." Lucien put on a calm smile while facing that serious situation. "The poem and the manuscript... they were really good traps to get me, a person who desires power so much."

Although Lucien was acting like he already gave up, he was trying to sense the gaps connecting the world of soul and the main world, which would be the best way to save them. Unfortunately, the gap through which he came back had disappeared completely with the collapse of the magic lock, and he sensed no more around the area.

"Your calmness is impressive. Unfortunately, your loyalty will not bring you anything but death." Verdi lifted his chin a bit and looked at Lucien. Then, he turned to the knights on Natasha's side, "What about you guys? The Hayne and Hill families, as well as the two gold knights in the fortress, they're all taking a neutral standpoint right now. As long as I can kill the princess, I'll be the next grand duke."

All the knights, squires and soldiers standing behind Natasha were shocked, and not even the princess could believe her ears. She never expected that Verdi had actually gained acquiescence from the big families and the most powerful people in the duchy.

"Why would you guys still want to follow her? Why would you guys

want to sacrifice your lives for a woman who likes women?" Verdi got more and more vicious. "Shame on her, because she betrayed our honored tradition and she can't even continue her family's bloodline! Do you really think she could bring you guys glory?"

Some people who were on Natasha's side started to murmur at each other.

Natasha forced herself to raise her head. As a knight of pride, she could not flinch even a bit from this situation.

"I have two level five grand knights, one level four knight, three level three knights... and also a couple of hundred of knight squires," Verdi threatened them. "You bend your knees toward me, or you die."

After a short period of time, many soldiers and squires started to run toward Verdi's side, and among them there was even a knight.

Tightly grabbing her lance, Natasha looked at them with an expressionless face. Sitting on the horse, her back was as straight as a longsword.

After a while, when she looked around, there were only less than ten people who were still with her, and a couple of horses without their riders.

There was a sad smile on Natasha's face.

"Knight Wyon, why you're still with me?" she asked.

Wyon was the level four knight, who had blond hair and blue eyes. He answered the princess solemnly, "I made my vow to serve you, Your Grace, and I'll serve you until the last second of my life."

Natasha nodded with great resolve, and then turned to Lucien.

"What about you, Lucien?"

"I'm on your side, Your Grace." Lucien answered shortly but firmly.

Chapter 127: Natasha's Fighting Will

Hearing Lucien's words, somehow Natasha felt like making a joke, "I'm sorry that you have to face this dangerous fighting because of me. After all, you have never even touched a girl's hand! If we can survive tonight, I'll introduce you to a decent young lady."

Lucien released a sigh, "Your Grace..." At the same time, Lucien was glad to see that Natasha was still in a joking mood. Since she was the only level five grand knight on their side, the princess herself was the key factor determining whether they would have at least a bit of hope to survive tonight.

"Then, Knight Cacharel, Daniel, and Borscht, why?" Natasha turned to the three knights who decided to stay.

"My heart is beating firmly right now." Cacharel pointed at his chest, "This is the heart of a knight, not a coward."

Daniel was a middle-aged knight, who looked intimidating and cold. "I was a pauper, and now I'm a knight. I did many bad things, but my will to fight against the forces of evil never changes." Then he crossed himself, "Maybe I'll die tonight, and before that I want to show my repentance for the horrible things I did before."

Borscht had recently become a knight, and he still looked pretty young. Scratching his head a bit, his green eyes were shining with the light of determination, "This is my first fight as a knight, and I don't want to be a deserter in my first fight, or Vivian would be laughing at me."

Mentioning his Vivian, Borscht looked affectionate and shy.

Natasha nodded to them and then turned to the two knight squires, "Bright, Tiana... The other squires and soldiers are all gone. Why did you choose to stay?"

"Your Grace... You, you remember my name!" Bright was very excited. "That's enough reason for me to fight for you, Your Grace!"

In contrast, Tiana, a half-elf and half-human girl, looked a bit hesitant, "Your Grace... my, my reason is not that lofty. I... I just feel that he would kill the people who surrendered anyway."

The reason that Verdi did not launch his attack right away was that he was waiting for the radiant knight and the senior-rank mage to come and join him after they killed Camil. After all, as a level five grand knight, Natasha's power could not be underestimated.

Hearing what Tiana just said, Verdi retorted, "If I want to kill the people who know about all my plan, I would have to kill all the knights, squires and soldiers following me right now. That's impossible, and more importantly, there is absolutely no reason for me to kill them. There won't be any hard evidence proving that I had ever colluded with Argent Horn and the sorcerers, and what I am doing now is under the acquiescence of most of the big families in the duchy. As for the Church, they're even happy to see that we nobles can have some civil wars from time to time in order to counterbalance our power. And when I become the next grand duke, all people following me will be rewarded."

Natasha listened to Verdi quietly. After he listed all those reasons trying to justify his behavior and assure his people that Tiana's words would never be true, Natasha slightly shook her head and smiled, "My dear cousin, have you ever wondered why the Congress of Magic wanted me dead so desperately that they even took the risk to seek your help? If you never thought about it, you wouldn't understand how much special attention the Church paid to me. And, by the way, even if you killed me, you wouldn't be the only legitimate heir to the grand duke title within the Violet family."

When Verdi remained silent within his confusion, Natasha turned around and said lowly to her people with great determination, "My knights, my warriors, although they outnumber us, they have to disperse their people to encircle us. And that means the number of the enemies in front of us is actually only a bit more than us."

"So we still have a chance?!" The knights' and squires' eyes lit up.

"As long as we can defeat the enemies in front of us before more of them start to attack us from behind." Natasha nodded with great

determination.

This would be a quick attack. The speed would determine their life or death.

Sitting on her Dragon Scale horse named Agatha, Natasha turned around and stared at Verdi, who had two level five grand knights and four other knights behind him.

Then, curling the corner of her lips, Natasha smiled, as if something she had been dreaming for was finally realized tonight. Her eyes were shining with great excitement, shining because of her heroic dream.

Although Verdi did not hear what Natasha told her people, from Natasha's posture sitting on her horse, Verdi could tell that she was ready for the fight. There was no time for him to wait any longer.

Securing her long lance named "Slayer" under her armpit, Natasha's pulled out her knight sword named "Natasha's Thunder".

"March forward! Forward forever! In the name of Violet!" shouted the princess.

"Violet! Violet!" The knights and squires following Natasha got excited as well.

Lucien was very surprised and impressed, since he never expected that Natasha would choose this attitude to face the extreme danger. What he was watching was the true spirit of a knight.

"For the glory of Violet! Charge!" Natasha shouted aloud again and shot forward like an arrow to lead the charge.

"For the glory of Violet!" Cacharel, Lucien and Wyon, as well as Daniel, Tiana, Bright and Borscht all followed Natasha close and charged toward their enemies with their proud war cry.

Among them all, Lucien was the only one who remained relatively calm. After all, he was a sorcerer, not a knight. Holding his sword Alert, Lucien was ready to activate Sun's Corona at any time.

The tall mare named Agatha snorted loudly as it was running with great speed. There was black smoke coming out of her nostrils, and her dragon-like scales bulged greatly. As its hooves hit the floor there was loud and thunderous noises and the earth trembled slightly, as if a real dragon was coming for its enemies.

Lucien was riding on a dark red horse left by the knight who surrendered to follow the princess. Cacharel was on his left, and Wyon was on his right. Although there were only eight people on their side, they were charging toward their enemies as if they were a great army!

As they were charging faster and faster, the sharp tip of Slayer changed the air flow and created a big shield covering Natasha and all her knights and knight squires.

Verdi was well prepared. Raising up his left hand, he frowned his eyebrows and then made a gesture. Instantly, hundreds of arrows were shot out targeting the princess and the seven people following her.

However, the shield created by Natasha's lance perfectly protected them from being hurt by the arrows. All of the arrows were broken and fell down to the ground as soon as they touched the air flow.

Verdi was not very surprised. As he waved his hand again, the knight squires who were waiting for his command instantly started to approach the people following Natasha. At the same time, Verdi rushed at Natasha with a huge black iron shield in his left hand, and a fire sword in his right hand.

Another level five grand knight on Verdi's side named Tod also charged toward them. With his Blessing "Iron Blood", Tod was very confident that they could crush them within ten seconds.

Natasha's purple eyes turned into a completely silver color. Staring at Verdi and Tod, her eyes became colder and colder.

Tod's silver lance grazed Natasha's Slayer. Being protected by Verdi's huge shield, Tod focused all his strength on attacking. The shield Verdi was using was called "The Shield of Truth".

Natasha did not try to defend at all, instead, she made a direct thrust at Verdi's shield. As her speed increased, her long lance was surrounded by some visible black lines, coming straight from Natasha's own Blessing, whose name was "Cleaving", or more commonly known as "The Sword of Truth".

This was a fight between the Sword and the Shield.

The whole world seemed to pause for a bit, as everything happened very fast. Verdi heard a tiny sound of crack from his shield a moment after the impact.

When Verdi fully activated his Blessing in order to repair the Shield of Truth, Tod's lance directly pierced through Natasha's abdomen!

Even Tod himself was very surprised. He was expecting was that, facing his attack, Natasha would use her knight sword to defend herself and at the same time change her direction of charging. After all, the purpose of his attack was to disturb Natasha's fighting pace.

At the same time, a bunch of silver arrows pierced her body. Since the armor called Dragon Blood that Natasha was wearing was badly damaged already, it could not protect Natasha properly.

Although Natasha's facial expression showed that she was in pain, her gray pupils were still cold and calm. She used neither her lance nor her sword, but with her bare left hand she grabbed Tod's lance and pushed him backward forcefully with great strength.

She did not stop. Grabbing the lance, Natasha was still charging forward.

Her face looked over-excited, almost crazy.

Then, with a crispy "crack", Natasha's Slayer directly pierced through Verdi's Shield of Truth this time, with her even greater momentum! The shield rapidly broke into pieces.

Verdi could not believe what he just saw. Suddenly, he realized that Natasha actually had a kind of mutant power based on her Blessing, since the Blessing called the Sword of Truth was a combination of the power of the two greatest families over the continent, the Violet

and the Holm families. Her mutant power worked simply: the more serious she was injured, the more powerful she would be!

Verdi was not a rookie on the battlefield. Facing the lance coming directly toward him, he activated his magic item without any hesitation. Suddenly, he disappeared from where he was, and in the next second he showed up again, around twenty meters away.

"Is she really gonna make it?" A ridiculous idea flashed across Verdi's mind for a second.

Natasha did not stop. Carrying her Slayer under her armpit, and tightly grabbing Tod's lance which pierced through her abdomen with her hand, Natasha pushed Tod back and they were rushing at Verdi at the same time.

While Natasha was fighting with great momentum, the people following her were not in a very good condition because of the attack from both sides.

Although those knights and squires were nothing for Wyon, who was a level four grand knight, Cacharel was facing a knight of the same level as him. As Cacharel was using all his power to fight against the knight, he was badly injured by the the spears of the knight squires.

After hearing two short and sharp screams from Bright and Tiana, Lucien never heard them again. He could hear Borscht's heavy breaths behind him, and Daniel's few muffled groans.

When Lucien was helping Cacharel with his Alert, he saw countless silver arrows coming toward them like rain drops.

Without any hesitance, Lucien activated Star Shield. If they survived, Lucien might still have a chance to find some excuses to explain, but if they died there, every effort he made would be pointless.

Covering Lucien and the other people, the Star Shield was shining brightly at night. Multiple arrows hit the cover and fell down on the ground without doing any damage to it.

On the other side, Tod discarded his lance and an iron shield appeared in his left hand, conjured by his Blessing. Wielding his longsword in his right hand, Tod started to fight back. The other grand knights on Verdi's side who were encircling Natasha and her people were now only half the original distance away from them!

Chapter 128: Piercing

Tod's sword was covered with a thin layer of red light. From an angle, Tod started an attack with his sword aiming straight at Natasha's neck. No matter how powerful Natasha's Blessing was, losing her head would still mean the end of her life. Also, Tod's sword had a special kind of power. When the sword cut a target, the wound would bleed continuously, regardless of how great the person's self-healing ability was.

At the same time, Tod's skin turned into a silver color and his body was covered with a layer of metal, as if he were a real Steel Golem. That blessing power could at the same time enhance his defense capabilities and his strength.

Natasha finished pulling out Tod's lance from her abdomen with one hand, throwing it away. In the other hand, her sword, covered with small flashes of lightning, parried the incoming attack, but she wouldn't be able to continue after Verdi if she had to deal with Tod.

"Wyon!" shouted Natasha, "Cover me!"

As Natasha called his name, Wyon immediately activated his Blessing. His body started emitting a bright white light and four pairs of big white wings appeared on his back. His size grew to almost twice that of common people.

This was Wyon's Blessing, the Angel of Strength!

Catching up with Tod, Wyon wielded his huge sword with both hands and directly hacked at Tod's red sword. Riding on his horse, Tod swiftly changed his direction and blocked Wyon's attack. Both of them were using their full strength, trying to defeat each other's sword. The power of collision of the swords summoned forth gusts of wind. Both of their gauntlets started to crack from the great power of the impacts.

While many of the white and shining feathers of Wyon's wings were falling, Tod remained relatively calm. Obviously, Tod was in a more favorable position in that confrontation.

Facing those terrible odds, Wyon knew that he could not yield. As the princess' main knight in that battle, it was his duty to fight for Natasha until the last second of his life. Spurring his horse with his boots, Wyon followed right behind her and prevented the princess from being attacked by Tod.

Not far behind them, Borscht couldn't stand his wounds anymore and fell from his horse, moaning in his last breath, "Vivian..."

After knocking Borscht over, the other knights and squires switched their target to Lucien, who looked relatively weak among the other warriors on his team.

Thanks to his Ice Revenger, Lucien had stayed relatively calm so far, although his arm was already numb from hacking and blocking the attacks. After all, strength was not his forte.

When another smite struck Lucien's back, his Star Shield finally reached its limit and shattered into small shining pieces.

Lucien was gathering his spiritual power in order to recast Star Shield, but a second smite came at him. Luckily, he was still charging forward, or he would be dead already. He was certain that the one attacking him was a level two knight, since his Star Shield was capable of handling three or four attacks of a level one knight, and unless his spiritual power was drained, his shield would always be there protecting him.

That was why a sorcerer was, to some extent, stronger than a knight of the same level.

However, facing a level two knight, Lucien, a first circle sorcerer, was being pushed.

At that moment, Natasha was again only a few meters away from Verdi. To the side, there were only several knight squires who were protecting Silvia. Behind Verdi there was a broad open field and Melzer Black Forest further ahead.

If Natasha could break out their siege and make it to the black forest, Verdi would lose his precious chance to kill the princess

tonight, which he would probably not have again in this life.

If Natasha made it through the night, Verdi himself would be the one who was going to be sentenced to death, and all efforts he made would become useless.

Even without his shield, Verdi lowered his head and looked rather determined. Although he was a narrow-minded man, as a knight, Verdi still had strong willpower and a bold heart.

Being clearly aware of the fact that, in terms of experience in fighting, he might be slightly inferior to his cousin, Verdi knew that what he needed at that moment was a perfect defense, to stop Natasha.

Crossing his arms in front of his chest, he roared and activated his Blessing again. The roaring was so powerful that even his horse was stunned a bit. The ground started to shake vigorously, and then multiple thick walls suddenly rose up from the black soil, blocking the path between Verdi and Natasha.

A few stars in the night sky suddenly started to shine brightly. Their light seemed to cover Verdi's armor, and a translucent force shield showed up in front of him.

The Shield of Truth was actually a Blessing that combined the Blessings called Earth and another one called Stars.

That demanded all the power Verdi had. His Blessing had showed its true power.

Natasha's eyebrows frowned a bit, but then she started to charge forward with an even greater speed. Soon, her black lance directly pierced through the first few walls. Although the rest of the walls were destroyed by Slayer as well, they made her charging speed decrease considerably.

When the tip of Natasha's lance hit Verdi's force shield, the transparent shield shook with ever-widening ripples on the surface surrounding the lance tip. Verdi took a step back, but in the next second he successfully withstood the powerful momentum of

Natasha's blow and stabilized the shield.

One second, two seconds... Natasha's was pushing her Slayer forward with all her might, but it only penetrated a few centimeters into the shield.

A cold smile appeared on Verdi's face as he saw that the other grand knights were finally about to catch up with Natasha, readying their swords to strike at her.

However, at that moment, a white light beam came down from the sky and hit his shield with a tremendous power.

The light was burning hot, as if it was the righteous flames of God.

It was the Holy Strike!

Although the level one divine spell did not actually do any damage to the Shield of Truth, Verdi was badly distracted.

"The Church!" Verdi blurted out. Knowing that all of Natasha's and her knights' divine and magic items had been used up and reached their limit, this divine spell was totally out of Verdi's expectation and only one possibility crossed his mind. If the Church found out what he was doing there right now, that would be the end of him!

As the Blessings were affected by the owner's willpower, Verdi's Shield of Truth trembled a bit when he got distracted for that second.

However, that one single second was already enough for Natasha, a grand knight, to completely turn the tables.

Using all her strength and power, Natasha grabbed her black lance and pierced Verdi's force field like a drill. The translucent shield instantly cracked and broke into thousands of shining pieces. Slayer continued moving forward and pierced through Verdi's left shoulder, near the joint, directly knocking him off his horse.

Being nailed by Natasha's lance, Verdi got crazy. To prevent the lance from completely drained his strength and life, he pulled out his sword with his right hand and directly chopped off his left arm

together with his left shoulder. Then, free from Natasha's lance, he rolled to the other side. His purple blood burst out and sprinkled everywhere on the ground.

It was Lucien who cast the spell Holy Strike just now. He activated Sun's Corona at the very crucial moment.

In order to become a powerful sorcerer, staying calm and focused was of great significance to adjust the tactics for fighting based on the different situations.

Facing the several enemies who just arrived and were trying to stop Natasha, Cacharel suddenly swooped down on one of them with his body weight. Then, his whole body stretched like a piece of rubber, tightly tying the grand knight and his sword like a rubber rope, but at the same time, several horrible wounds appeared on Cacharel's body.

This was Cacharel's Blessing. He could stretch his body and strongly constrict the enemies!

On the other side, Daniel, who had already been seriously injured, jumped from his horse and over some enemies, knocking down a couple of the knights.

They were willing to use suicide tactics so that their princess could stand a chance!

Natasha followed Verdi's roll and used the lightning power on her sword, Thunder, to paralyze him. Her next attack was seeking Verdi's throat, but a strong air wave hit her hand mid-swing, pushing her hand and the sword slightly to the side. Thus, Natasha's sword missed Verdi's neck by an inch.

It was Silvia who cast the spell with her magic item.

Natasha's turned her horse around to try again and quickly adjusted her wrist to strike down at Verdi once again.

However, at that time, Silvia suddenly jumped out, standing between her and Verdi. She was staring at Natasha with her beautiful black eyes.

Silvia was protecting Verdi with her own body, hoping her former lover would not dare to hurt her!

Great pain could be found in Natasha's gray eyes as she hacked at her lover without any hesitance. She clearly knew that, at this point, any hesitance could get her killed, along with the knights who were loyal to her, the friends that had supported her in that dire moment.

Until she felt the coldness of the sword and the great pain, Silvia could not believe her eyes. With unwavering determination, Natasha's sword split Silvia's body in two.

The princess did not stop, though, and rode her horse forward to do the same to Verdi.

At that very moment, all of Verdi's knights immediately turned around to try to stop Natasha, regardless of the great risk they would face when they showed Lucien and Wyon their backs.

Chapter 129: Breakou

Chapter 129: Breakout

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Bang!” A loud and crispy sound of metals colliding with each other was heard. It was from Wyon’s heavy sword fiercely hacking Tod’s metalized face when the latter stopped attacking him and turned around in order to help his lord Verdi.

A deep, horrible wound appeared in the center of Tod’s face, starting from his forehead all the way to his chin, and even his nose was split into two. However, instead of blood, it was liquid metal that was slowly coming out of the wound. At the same time, the liquid metal was trying to heal the scary wound.

Although Tod was seriously injured, the sword in his hand did not stop, and it went directly to the princess, whose blade was a few centimeters away from Verdi. Although Natasha swiftly leaned to the side, Tod’s sword left a terrible cut on Natasha’s back, from which her spine and internal organs were almost visible.

The already badly damaged armor could not protect her very well anymore. With a muffled moan, Natasha bit her lips to bear the great pain and, without pause, wielded her Thunder toward Verdi again!

She knew that she could not lose her momentum at this time, or it would be the end of all of them, and her knights and squires would die for nothing.

Beside Silvia’s hacked body, Verdi thought he got a chance to use his magic item again and thus escape away from Natasha. However, a powerful lightning struck him directly from the sky.

As an extraordinary magic sword, Natasha’s Thunder had a certain chance to summon real lightning.

Verdi’s broken, dark purple armor was instantly burned black.

Although luckily part of the remaining power of his Blessing saved his life from the lightning, the powerful strike fully paralyzed his body again.

He was angry and desperate. Verdi could not understand why everything turned out to be so bitter, when he thought a great success was definitely upon his hands. However, he would not easily reconcile himself to the situation!

At that moment, Natasha's sharp blade was coming directly toward Verdi's neck, but he summoned forth all his remaining willpower to overcome the paralyzing feeling in his right arm. With it, he suddenly tried to block Thunder with his bare right hand. Lots of small rays of lightning instantly covered his hand and his forearm, snapping part of his right arm right off. However, the sacrifice of his right arm also reduced Thunder's speed and, by the time the blade reached his neck, a piece of the Shield of Truth was formed around it. At the same time, his feet pushed against the ground and his body rolled backwards.

Natasha hacked her sword at Verdi's neck with all her anger, pain and hatred. Although the small piece of shield did not fully stop her attack, when the shield broke into pieces, her momentum had been weakened enough. Thunder cut a deep wound in Verdi's neck, but the blade did not really touch his carotid arteries. Verdi passed out, but he was not dead, yet.

When Natasha was about to lift her sword again to end her cousin's sinful life, a few of Verdi's grand knights arrived and blocked her path to their lord, who had completely lost his consciousness.

Natasha quickly made an estimation of their power and instantly decided to leave. She was already seriously injured, and the extra power her Blessing created due to her injuries would not last much longer. She knew that this was not the right time for her to be a hero.

"Let's go!" shouted Natasha to her people, and then she spurred Agatha and rushed out of the encirclement.

Verdi's knights were occupied with saving their lord, and more

importantly, they also felt intimidated when they saw their lord lying on the ground like a torn sack.

Therefore, it was not hard for Lucien, Cacharel and Wyon to break the siege and follow Natasha. Unfortunately, facing too many knights on his own, Daniel did not make it.

“You f**king idiots! What are you f**king waiting for?!” When Tod approached Verdi, he yelled at the rest of the knights with great anger, “Go and get them, or we will all die!”

Leaving some knight squires to take care of Verdi, Tod spurred his horse and led the rest of the knights to chase the princess.

The four Dragon Scale horses were very fast, and soon they were close to the edge of the black forest. At that time, Natasha suddenly turned around and threw her black lance, Slayer, toward Tod, with all her strength and power.

Flying with great speed in the air, the lance stirred the air flow and created a loud and unique noise.

As Tod subconsciously rolled down from his horse and fell on the ground, Slayer pierced right through another level four knight’s chest, who was behind Tod and did not even have time to raise his shield to defend. When Slayer flew right through the knight’s chest, it immediately turned the body into something brittle, that shattered into thousands of shining pieces in the next second.

When Tod stood up again, the princess and her people had already disappeared in the forest.

Natasha’s final burst of power shocked everyone present.

After a short period of time, Tod said to the rest of the knights in a cold voice, “We have to find and kill them tonight, and we have no second choice. If the princess survives, we will all die, and our families will die with us.”

The other knights nodded and followed Tod into the deep woods.

...

As the big and tall trees grew in the number the deeper they went into the woods, the horses were not suitable for moving forward anymore. Thus, Wyon suggested that they should leave the horses and go on foot.

When Natasha was about to get off from her horse, she fell to the ground.

Both Lucien and Wyon rushed toward her, and found that the princess was already in a coma. Her face was abnormally flushed, and her body was covered with gashes, especially the terrible hole on her abdomen and the deep cut in her back.

“The princess has reached her limit,” Wyon was trying to stop some of the wounds from bleeding, “but Her Grace should be fine. After all, the self-healing power of a grand knight should be able to let her recover relatively fast.”

Lucien carefully touched Natasha’s forehead and the tip of her nose. He found that there were small particles swelling underneath her burning hot skin, and, thankfully, she was still breathing relatively smoothly.

As the least injured among them all, Lucien carried Natasha on his back and took her sword with him. At the same time, Wyon put Cacharel on his back, since he was already too weak to stand still.

Then, they resumed their escape through the forest.

“Baron Wyon,” Lucien paused a bit and said to him seriously, “you’re the strongest and the most powerful one among us all. I think you should take the princess back to Aalto, and I can cover you.”

“Impressive, Lucien. I heard your name before and I never expected that a musician could be brave and powerful like you are.” A bitter smile appeared on Wyon’s face, “I appreciate your suggestion, but I don’t think I should be the one to take the princess out of here, since Tod knows me pretty well, and honestly speaking, I don’t think I can get rid of them that easily... I’m badly injured already. Right now, even the running is pretty much a stretch for me...”

“Baron Wyon...” Lucien did not know what to say.

“Listen to me, Lucien.” Wyon nodded, “As you said, I’m the strongest among us all, and I bet Tod would believe that I would be the one with the princess. So you should be the one sending the princess back to Aalto, and Cacharel and I will cover you.”

“I agree...” Cacharel nodded and said to Lucien in a weak voice.

“Even if you meet them on your way, they won’t be Verdi’s main force. And besides, you have the princess’ sword,” Wyon added.

“I see.” Lucien nodded. There was no time for him to try to act like a great hero.

“Take off the princess’s armor and give it to us.” Wyon stopped running and said to Lucien. “The grand knights can smell the scent blood in the air.”

After Lucien handed Natasha’s damaged Dragon Blood to them, both Wyon and Cacharel tied some pieces to their own armors.

“All our hope is on you now, Lucien.” Cacharel smiled peacefully, “If we die, remember to bring some flowers to our graves.”

Lucien nodded, and then Wyon and Cacharel left toward the other side of the forest.

...

Lucien was still running. He had no idea how long he had been fleeing. He was gasping loudly, and his own gasping was the only thing that he could hear in the deep forest.

Honestly speaking, the idea of just leaving Natasha somewhere in the forest and running for his own life did cross Lucien’s mind. After all, he still had his dreams that hadn’t been fulfilled yet.

However, Lucien just couldn’t do that. Leaving a friend here just like that, in great danger, would destroy the rest of his life.

After recovering a bit, Lucien activated his Star Shield again,

covering both Natasha and himself, just in case.

“Lucien... you really got some good stuff in the magic lock...” At this time, Natasha’s voice came from behind him. Lucien had no idea when she came back to consciousness.

“Am I that heavy?” Natasha was still joking, and after a few seconds, she murmured, “You’re my only friend now, Lucien.”

Lucien was not sure if she was sobbing.

...

Deep in the sewers in Aalto, countless rats surged forward out of nowhere, like a black tide, and all of them had terrifying red eyes.

Chapter 130: Tiphotidis

Chapter 130: Tiphotidis

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When Elsinore Lake got rid of the restriction of the Grand Cross in the black and white world, the space inverted and the magic lock was shattered, and its remaining pieces were still floating deeper into the World of Souls.

As the remains of the magic lock floated throughout that world, countless magic circles started to silently collapse, until a magnificent city appeared in the front, devoid of colors.

The shadow city was like the inverted reflection of Aalto, while the arrangement of the city was a total mess. Above this shadow city, there was a Grand Cross consisting of nine mysterious stars that were shining brightly.

Being influenced by the collapse of the magic lock around Elsinore Lake, this Grand Cross started to break down as well. Some kind of silver-colored fog slowly rose from beneath the shadow city, which was cold and quiet, as if it was turning this shadow Aalto into a hell where coldness and death dominated everything.

Suddenly, a pale and huge palm reached out of the ground, and each knuckle of the hand had horrifying, sharp bone spurs. Somehow, the terrifying hand broke the boundary existing between the World of Souls and the main material world and directly showed up deep in the sewers in the real Aalto.

The hand was shining with silver light. Any creature in the sewers affected by the light went crazy, like the red-eyed rats. The silver light was turning all the creatures there into filthy monsters. The ground was shaking fiercely. Lots of residents above the ground escaped from their places, screaming and crying. They thought it was a horrible earthquake.

However, it was way more terrible than an earthquake. In the

sewers, when the huge, pale palm pressed itself against the ceiling, countless deep and wide gaps appeared on the ground above. Then, a humanoid monster with pale skin, red eyes, and silver goat horns on its head jumped out of the ground and landed heavily above the surface. The whole city fiercely shook again because of this horrible monster, which was tens of meters tall.

The monster's whole body was covered with silver light, and the light was spreading like waves. Everything covered by the light turned cold.

"Stupid..." This manlike monster sneered and murmured in Infernal, the language of demons. "What was sealed was never the previous duke. No one should trust a demon."

...

Leading two level three grand knights, four level two knights, and four level one knights, Tod entered Melzer Black Forest. Following the smell of blood, they went all the way deep into the woods.

At the place where Lucien and Wyon went separate ways, Tod stopped, "They took different ways. The smell of the princess' blood is in both directions."

"Wyon went this way." Worns, a level three knight, could detect the smell of Wyon's blood.

"Wyon is a level four grand knight. Anatole and I will go after him." Tod was very resolute, "Worns, you take the other way. If you find the princess, send us a signal."

"Please wait," Rosan Aaron stopped Tod.

Although Tod disliked dark knights a lot, he never underestimated their special abilities. "What do you want to say?"

Pointing at the direction where Lucien went, Aaron answered seriously, "They can confuse us with the smell of blood, but they cannot lie to the shadow. The dark shadow told me Natasha went this way."

“Very well.” Tod nodded, “Then, Anatole and Worns, you to go after Wyon, and Aaron and I will follow this path.”

...

Hearing Natasha’s words, Lucien did not know what to say. He sighed in his heart. If Natasha knew that he was a sorcerer, she would no longer have that impression.

After a moment, Lucien comforted her, “Your Grace, besides me, you still have the grand duke, Lady Camil, Felicia... You still have many friends who will always support you and care for you.”

As soon as he mentioned Camil, Lucien knew he said something stupid.

“Auntie...” Natasha sounded even more depressed now, “I was so stupid... All of these... all of it... is because of me.”

“That was an oversight... Your Grace.” Lucien tried to sound more objective, “But it’s not all your fault.”

“It is,” Natasha answered in a low voice. “I found out Silvia was a sorcerer apprentice a long time ago.”

“What?!” Carrying Natasha, Lucien was still running as fast as he could. Hearing what the princess just said, Lucien almost ran into a tree.

“My love... no, my greed blinded me.” Natasha released a long sigh, “Since it is said that the origin of Blessing has something to do with the ancient sorcerers, I was hoping that she could figure out a way which would enable two girls together to have babies that are born with the power of Blessing, then no one could disturb our love anymore using this as an excuse.”

“Your Grace, you’re... you’re...” Lucien was trying to find a proper word, “ambitious.”

“Ambitious...” Natasha was a bit confused at first and then she cheered herself up, “Anyway, since now we’re running for our lives, well... now you’re running for our lives, it is not really a good time

to feel regretful and sad. It will take me about two to three hours to recover to a certain extent, and during this period of time, my life will be on your hands.”

Then, she paused a bit and said to him, “Actually... You didn’t have to do this for me. Thank you, Lucien. I’ll always keep this in mind.”

“I witnessed the whole thing.” Lucien tried to make the princess feel less guilty, “Verdi would try to kill me either way. I’d rather help my friend.”

“You just don’t want to show how nice you are, Lucien.” Natasha slightly shook her head, “I’ll temporarily free Thunder from my control and let you leave your spiritual power on it. Thunder is a level five perfect rank sword. With the sword, you will have a chance against anyone who’s under the rank of grand knight.”

Lucien left his spiritual power mark on Thunder following Natasha’s directions, and during the process, he got more information on that sword.

“Natasha’s Thunder. Level five perfect rank sword. Made from precious aerolite and the blood of a Storm Titan. Can cause damage close to the power of a radiant knight. The owner’s strength can be improved to the level of a common Storm Titan, which equals to the peak of a grand knight’s strength.

“Besides, Thunder comes with the enchantment of small lightnings, which can paralyze its target and make it lose the hearing for a while. There is a five percent chance that Thunder can summon real lightning from the sky, which equals to a fifth circle sorcerer casting the magic spell Thunder. There is about 0.1% chance that the summoned lightning will be super powerful. In stormy weather, the chances will be increased, but also the owner should be more careful as well.

“This is a coming-of-age gift for my little Natasha. This is the Scepter of Thunder.

“By: Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg.”

Grabbing Thunder, Lucien felt the power of lightning nurturing his body. Although his hand felt a bit numb, he could tell that his strength was being greatly improved. A thick piece of tree root cracked as Lucien stepped on it purposefully.

“Try to get used to it, Lucien,” Natasha said to him. “This is a weapon, not a magic item. Using any weapon or armor that is too powerful for the user can bring some side effects. And it takes longer for someone to get used to it. Comparatively speaking, magic items are much better at this point.”

“Are you saying that a normal person can actually use some powerful magic items, Your Grace?” asked Lucien. He wondered if he could beat a senior-rank mage if he had a dozen of magic rings enchanted with ninth circle spells.

“Well...” Natasha nodded, but then shook her head, “It really depends. High level magic items are precious. And most of the magic items above level five usually have strict requirement for their owners, such as the level of spiritual power, strength, knowledge, willpower and so on. But before that level, if your enemy who’s more powerful than you is not prepared, yes, you might have some chance to win. In contrast, extraordinary weapons and armors usually don’t work in this way.”

Lucien did not have much knowledge of extraordinary weapons and armors. After hearing Natasha’s words, Lucien started to have a rough idea with regard to this topic and sort of understood why Sun’s Corona would have five layers’ of seals.

Gently wielding the sword, Lucien felt that his speed was slightly improved as well.

“Ummm... You know what, ” Natasha looked around and said to him easily, “you left a lot of clues for those bad people to trace us.”

“Did I?!” Lucien was surprised, “I thought I had been very careful already. Well... after all, I’m just a musician, Your Grace.”

“I bet you were, Lucien, but I don’t feel you’re just a musician...” Natasha laughed and quickly switched the topic, “When I received

my knight training, I learned a lot about these matters, and I can teach you.”

Under Natasha’s instruction, Lucien learned a couple of ways to hide his trails by using different plants, minerals and even small creatures.

“Smart. You learned very fast, Lucien.” Natasha nodded, “By the way, I’m pretty sure there are Ghost Aloes around this area... maybe close to the water. If you can find some, the aloes can remove the blood smell on us.”

...

As soon as the gigantic, manlike monster started to move, beams of holy light appeared in the city, one after another, and layers of divine power circles rose and connected to each other.

“Welcome to Aalto, the Great Master of Argent,” the person who was speaking to the monster sounded rather old, “or should I call you, Mr. Tiphotidis, the Ice duke.”

It was Sard, the Saint Cardinal, who was floating in the air. Wearing a plain, white robe, Sard was holding a magic staff embedded with shining gems and a big cross. His eyes were bright and sharp.

“Why are you here, Sard?!” The Great Master of Argent shouted with anger, “You should be at Elsinore Lake right now! You don’t care about the princess?!”

Chapter 131: The Joint Effor

Chapter 131: The Joint Effort

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Holding the Sun Scepter in his hand, Sard expanded the divine power circles and let them fully cover the city. By doing this, Sard actually brought the battle field into another dimension, in order to avoid the horrible destruction of the city that could be expected from such a battle.

Then, Sard answered in a slow pace, “Someone’s handling the troubles there for me. No worries.”

“There’s only one person who can deal with it.” Tiphotidis surrounded itself with a fiend circle and blocked the divine power circles from affecting it without much effort, “You worked with the grand arcanist, Yaroran Hathaway?! How dare you! You helped her come back from the secret dimension?!”

“Well... There is no everlasting friend, and no everlasting enemy.” Sard smiled.

Looking around, Tiphotidis saw no other cardinals present, not to mention the pope.

“As you might notice, I’m the only grand cardinal here,” Sard was still talking in a very calm tone, “because I’m very interested in the legendary archmage called Maskelyne, and the secret of the dimension called the World of Souls. You and Apsis must know about that.”

“Risk... That’s a big risk.” Tiphotidis burst into a raucous laughter, “You greedy human beings. You think you can stop me on your own with a bunch of stupid shining magic circles? Tell me... would you dare tell Yaroran the complete truth?”

Sard was definitely well prepared. He shrugged easily, “Oh, I’m sorry... I’m not really on my own.”

Rhine, in his black shirt and red long jacket, showed up behind the Great Master of Argent.

Without even looking back, Tiphotidis sneered, “Little filthy vampire.”

Two pairs of huge, black bat wings bulged out of Rhine’s back. And the aura of Rhine’s darkness and evilness somehow matched the holy light surrounding Sard perfectly well. His eyes, instead of being the usual scarlet eyes a vampire had, were still silver.

“Long time no see, Tiphotidis. For your information, there are different kinds of vampires, but it seems that you’ve already forgotten me,” greeted Rhine casually.

“Count Silver Eye, the Observer. It’s you.” Tiphotidis got serious.

...

Above Elsinore lake, the cardinals, gold knights, and night watchers floating in the sky besieged their enemies.

Within the circle, there was a male and a female.

The man in the black robe with brown hair and dark blue eyes was Rogerio, Mr. Deroni’s business partner that Lucien actually met once before. According to Verdi’s words, Rogerio and a radiant knight were supposed to be fighting against Camil at that moment.

The woman was very beautiful, and her silver gray eyes were very impressive. Wearing a dark purple robe, she looked rather cold. Slowly lifting up her hand, she pointed her finger at Ilia, his priests and the dark knights, who were very confused right now, and slightly moved her lips,

“Elements Resolve.”

Immediately, Ilia, the level seven grand priest, was turned into a variety of different substances: black particles, smoke, small clusters of green wildfire, pungent sulphur powder, and even his great fiend power was being swiftly disintegrated.

Very soon, the level seven grand priest, plus his six great priests, twelve priests and all the dark knights were completely turned into colorful small particles floating the air. Soon afterwards, nothing was left of them.

Although the horrifying wraith wearing black robe was resolving as well, the colorful particles in the air did not disappear. A moment later, the particles reunited together and the monster appeared again.

“Apsis, go back to your Skeleton Land,” the woman said shortly.

A shining gate suddenly emerged in front of the monster. After silently staring at the woman for a moment, the black-robed monster obediently stepped into the gate.

Then, the lake became peaceful again. Thanks to the timely arrival of the Church, the residents of the small town were saved.

“Now, you can go.” The lady was still very cold. She commanded the powerful cardinals and knights to leave as if she was giving an order to her minions.

Amelton, Hayward and Rafati turned around silently and left submissively. Although they had no idea why she was there, they were more than grateful that she did not bother killing them.

After all, the lady was an arcanist. She was one of the greatest arcanists ever in history, Yaroran Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, who ranked the sixteenth place on the Church’s Cleansing List.

After the Church and the people of the duchy left, Rogerio came in front of Hathaway and questioned her with a slight bit of anger, “Your Excellency, how can you violate the decision made by the lords of the congress?”

Taking a glance at Rogerio, Hathaway’s silver gray eyes remained cold. “Did I agree to it? Without my consent, no decision is valid.”

“But...” Rogerio tried to insist.

However, Hathaway cut him off directly, “Every grand arcanist has

the power of veto, and you'd better keep this in mind. By the way, I don't want that there's anyone trying to poke their nose into the internal affairs of the Holm family."

After finishing her phrase, she disappeared in the air.

When Hathaway was gone, Rogerio's face suddenly became more relaxed, as if the anger he showed earlier was just something fake. Facing an internal power struggle among the grand arcanists, even an archmage needed to be very careful.

...

On the wildlands outside of Melzer Black Forest, bodies were overlapping each other.

Grabbing Verdi's neck with her right hand, Camil directly lifted him up, "Where's the princess?"

Verdi knew that he was totally hopeless now, and he sneered, "In the black forest. Maybe my knights have already found and killed her."

Camil grabbed his neck even tighter.

"Tell... tell me, Camil..." Verdi could not breathe and the words were squeezed out of his throat, "Did the grand duke... ask you... to kill my father?"

"Go to hell." Camil directly exploded Verdi's body into pieces with extremely powerful water spouts.

Until the last second of Verdi's life, he felt no regret.

Entering the black forest, Camil started to trace the smell of Natasha's blood. At some point ahead, she was a bit hesitant, since both directions had the smell.

...

Ghost Aloe looked completely different from common aloes. It had five long white leaves, as if its color had faded a long time ago.

With transparent, long thorns growing on their tips, the leaves were very wrinkly, looking just like the skinny, wizened fingers of an old witch with long and sharp nails.

Natasha was feeling much better. She plucked the aloes and crumpled the leaves up. Some aloe sap came out.

“Lucien, you help me put them on my wounds, and I help you with the blood on your back.” Natasha did not feel shy at all.

Lucien knew that this was not a proper time to talk about proper manners between a man and a woman. He nodded and followed Natasha’s request. When he was rubbing the small aloe balls on Natasha’s wounds, he witnessed the great self-healing power of a grand knight: the wounds on her body were healing in a visible way.

“How do you feel?” Natasha joked, “First time seeing a girl’s lower abdomen?”

Lucien thought silently in his mind that girls wearing bikini in his own world were a very common sight, and he should have seen way more girls’ lower abdomen than Natasha, but he still answered seriously, “Horrible... many parts of your inner organs are damaged. I feel I’ll have a nightmare.”

“You should be grateful if we manage to survive the night and you can still have a chance to sleep in a bed while having a nightmare.” Natasha laughed, “As long as my inner organs are not destroyed completely, for a grand knight such as me, whose power is close to that of a radiant knight and with a special Blessing, the situation is not too bad.”

“We’ll see...” Lucien frowned his eyebrows while he was still rubbing the aloe balls on Natasha’s wounds.

“You don’t believe me?” Natasha giggled, “I’ll be alright, Lucien. Seriously, if we got lost in the forest and we needed to eat, you could cut piece of my heart, livers or kidneys off and roast them for food. Isn’t that great?”

“Not really... Your Grace.” Lucien released a long sigh. Sometimes he really had no idea how to deal with Natasha’s sense of humor.

“Well...” Natasha added, “If I didn’t get enough food, my body would stop recovering, and I would die, too, just like common people.”

“I won’t let it happen,” answered Lucien calmly. “In ten minutes, we should be close to Massol River.”

...

Aalto.

Tiphotidis, the Great Master of Argent, was tightly constrained by the many divine power circles controlled by Sard with all of his power.

In front of Tiphotidis, Rhine lifted up his right hand, and the huge bat wings were fully stretched open. Suddenly, the night sky lit up due to a full moon that appeared with its bright silver radiance.

The moon was becoming bigger and bigger, and also brighter and brighter.

Tiphotidis saw a blurry figure with blond hair inside the silver moon, and only the figure’s scarlet eyes could be seen clearly. Slowly, the figure lifted up a sword.

The Great Master of Argent was shocked, “You can borrow the power?!”

With an evil smile, Rhine tilted his head slightly to one side, and he suddenly dropped his right hand with great speed. Simultaneously, the blond-haired figure hacked the sword downwards.

The silver moonlight blinded Tiphotidis’s eyes when it heard Rhine’s words, “Remember me whenever you see the moon.”

Chapter 132: The Place

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Leading the night watchers, the several cardinals of the Church came back to Aalto. The city was still sleeping peacefully in the darkness, as tranquil as they left it earlier.

At this time, the red-robed cardinal, Vila Amelton, who was also one of the actual leaders of the Inquisition, suddenly stopped flying. A moment later, she turned to the Canon Holder, “Salvador, go back and find Lady Camil right now. She’s searching for the princess in Melzer Black Forest.”

Before Salvador responded to the command, Count Hayward, the vice commander of Violet Knights, burst out, “What happened to the princess?”

“In collusion with the Congress of Magic, Verdi ambushed the princess and tried to kill her. Natasha broke out of their siege and is now hiding in the black forest.”

“What?! Verdi!” Rafati and Hayward looked shocked. They could not believe their ears.

The several other noble knights present also looked very shocked. However, the reason that they were astounded was because of the fact Verdi failed.

“Yes. Sard just informed me,” Amelton answered shortly.

“I’ll go with them.” Hayward’s brows knitted together tightly. Although he looked just like a twenty-something young man, he was actually more than a hundred and sixty years old. Hayward had witnessed countless conspiracies in his life, and now he had a sense of suspicion crawling into his mind. Hayward’s intuition was telling him that the reason that they were sent to Elsinore Lake earlier tonight was much more sophisticated than he thought.

Salvador crossed himself, “Yes, my lord.”

“Only truth lives forever.” Amelton also crossed on her chest.

.....

Following Aaron’s special ability of communicating with the shadows, Tod soon noticed a cluster of Ghost Aloe missing a few leaves.

“I knew they were going to use Ghost Aloe... We arrived just a bit too late.” Tod was a bit pissed off, but then he turned to Aaron, “Any idea which direction they went?”

“The shadow told me...” Aaron scrutinized the surroundings carefully, “they’re still around.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.” Tod fiercely hacked the plant with his sword.

“There’s only one explanation for this.” Aaron said to Tod, “They jumped into the river.”

Ghost Aloe often grew very close to water, and this cluster was not an exception. Not far away from the Ghost Aloe, there was a running creek connecting to Massol River.

“Then we just have to follow the water.” Tod nodded, “They were injured way more seriously than us. We can catch them.”

“What if they left the river and went back into the forest again?” asked Aaron, “I’m not a grand knight. I cannot get information from the shadows in the water.”

“Well... then just pay close attention to the possible wet plants on both sides of the river. If they left the river, there must be a trail.” Tod looked very confident, and the horrible, long wound on his face had almost recovered.

“All right.” Although Aaron thought this strategy was relatively time-consuming, he could not think of a better solution.

Then they started to search along both sides of the river.

.....

After floating in the river for a short period of time, Lucien and Natasha left the water and went deep into the woods again.

When Lucien carried Natasha on his back again and was about to run away, Natasha reminded him, "Remember to hide our trail."

Natasha's wet hair was dripping water, and so was his black robe.

"Yes, you're right." Lucien nodded. He carefully put Natasha behind a tall and thick tree and then started to collect a kind of weird-looking bush that looked like hay to dry them out a bit.

"I'm afraid they can still trace us." Grabbing the plant, Lucien was worried, "This is not enough." Lucien was quite regretful that he never really paid attention to some of the first circle spells which were used for cleaning all kinds of trails when he was doing his magic structure analysis. At that time, he never thought they might be very useful one day.

"They're powerful knights. I wouldn't expect that we could completely get rid of them with a bunch of plants." Natasha was analyzing with her clear mind, "I know all the knights who were on Verdi's side and I know all their Blessings. Neither of them is really good at tracing, however, I can feel they're getting closer and closer."

"You can feel it?" Lucien got nervous, "I thought I did a good job..."

"You did, Lucien." Natasha slightly patted his shoulders, "I guess that, very possibly, there's a dark knight tracing us. And I'm thinking... when I recover a bit more, maybe we can try to fight back in order to kill this dark knight."

"I don't agree." Lucien shook his head, "What if it is Tod who's chasing us, instead of some random knights? Or what if the dark knight is also very powerful? What if they're using some magic items to trace us?"

Lucien knew very well that Natasha was a great risk taker, but he was not.

“Well... I hear your many ‘what if’, Lucien.” Natasha slightly lifted her purple eyebrows, “I know that any of your ‘what if’ can easily kill us, but do we have another choice? Sooner or later, they’ll find us.”

Lucien lowered his head. He knew that what Natasha just said was correct.

“All right... we still have to be more prepared.” Lucien looked up at the several faint stars in the sky and roughly estimated their location, “At least we’ll wait until your power reaches the level of an ordinary knight.”

“I’m afraid we don’t have this much time.” Natasha carefully checked herself and said to Lucien, “Although the worst impact on my body caused by my Blessing is gone, I still need a couple of hours to recover to the level that you just said.”

Lucien’s eyes slightly opened bigger as he suddenly remembered something important. Reaching his hand into his wet robe, Lucien took out a bunch of magic ingredients for making potions that he got from the archmage’s storeroom and put them on the ground.

“Can any of these help you?” Lucien was a bit hesitant, “I... I got these from the archmage’s place, to... to sell them for some money.”

Lucien was a bit nervous.

Natasha did not really notice Lucien’s awkwardness, and when she lowered her head, a surprised smile appeared on her face, “Aether... and vampire’s blood! Awesome!”

Both Aether and vampire blood were ingredients for a very effective healing potion named Water Song. However, they were just raw materials, so Lucien felt quite worried. “Any side effect?” he asked.

Natasha already grabbed the tube of vampire’s blood in her hand.

“Vampire’s blood... After taking it, I might be bit afraid of sunlight

for up to six months, and my blood might feel burning,” answered Natasha casually. Then she pulled out the cork of the tube and smelled the blood, “Wow... It’s a high grade vampire’s blood! Good for the archmage!”

“Can you recover completely by taking it then?” asked Lucien.

“Well...” Natasha took a deep breath, “Not really... but if I push myself a bit harder and activated my Blessing again, I might get... probably up to three minutes with the power of a level five knight. After that... I’m done.”

“Done!?” Lucien was shocked.

“No no no...” Natasha laughed, “I’m not going to die. I mean I won’t be able to walk at all afterwards, and you will need to carry me all the way home.”

“You’d better explain things a bit clearer in situations like that, you know.” Lucien almost rolled his eyes.

“Lucien,” Natasha became serious, “If Tod was not among them, three minutes would be enough for me to kill the rest of the knights.”

“Then, what if Tod is the one coming after us...” Lucien needed to have a backup plan.

“Then I’d cover you by distracting Tod and the other grand knights, if there was any.” Natasha said to Lucien, “Meanwhile, you handle the rest of them.”

Natasha leaned her head against Lucien’s shoulder to take a rest. Her purple eyes were bright, and her lips were pressing together in a thin line.

“You want to sacrifice yourself to let me survive?” Lucien asked her.

“Of course not!” Natasha suddenly straightened up her back as if she got scared, “I cherish my life a lot. Without Thunder, you wouldn’t be able to face the knights on your own. Besides, I’m not gonna really fight against Tod. My duty will be to distract him.

That's all. And you gotta lend me your sword, Alert."

"That's too dangerous for you. I don't agree." Lucien refused Natasha's suggestion, "You keep Thunder. I have a plan which can possibly kill them all, as long as they have no more than five knights chasing after us, and we can get to the place before they find us."

"What plan? What place?" Natasha was very surprised.

"You'll see when we get there." Lucien looked at Natasha's eyes seriously, "I cherish my life a lot as well. Trust me, Natasha."

Natasha confounded a moment, then she smiled, "I trust you, Lucien."

Chapter 133: Lucien's Identity

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"My Lord, the shadows say they're close." Rosan Aaron reported to Tod in a very low voice.

Grabbing his sword tight, Tod looked around with great caution.

He saw tall firs, assorted kinds of bushes... and there was a unique smell of earth in Tod's nose. Everything here looked identical to the rest of the black forest, except for a strange-shaped huge stone.

"There's no river here... and the shadow doesn't lie... Where are they?" Aaron murmured.

"Watch out!" In the next second, Tod fiercely pushed Aaron away, knocking him down, and at the same time he lifted up his left hand and produced a square-shaped iron shield with his Blessing.

When Aaron was slammed to the ground, Natasha had already jumped down from a big tall fir and attacked with her Thunder with all her strength.

Tod's shield cracked instantly, and he could not believe his eyes.

However, Natasha's sword, whose momentum was greatly reduced by the iron shield, also did not go as far as she intended. A big dent appeared in Tod's armor, but he was not hurt.

"Damn it! My power's not full yet!" Natasha swore a bit in her mind. She was very confident that she could kill the dark knight Aaron with that one strike, but she failed.

Although he felt rather confused, Tod immediately produced a new iron shield out of the pieces of the previous broken one.

Knowing that she had lost her chance, Natasha turned around and

ran away at her full speed toward the other side of the black forest.

Tod soon realized that it must be a potion that was boosting Natasha's remaining strength. He knew that this kind of boosting would not last long. Pulling out his sword, he started to chase after her.

He did not care about Aaron. As soon as Natasha showed up, Aaron's job was done.

With one running in the front and the other chasing after, soon they both disappeared among the tall trees.

Using the momentum of the movement that knocked him down, Aaron quickly rolled backwards to get on his feet. He was also very surprised that Natasha could burst out that kind of power after being injured so seriously. When Aaron was about to follow Tod, a second black figure fiercely jumped down from the tree, and the sword lifted by him was shining with a terrifying light.

...

After a bit more than ten seconds, the distance between Tod and Natasha became smaller and smaller. Tod could tell that Natasha's power hadn't recovered to level five, since Natasha was definitely faster than him in the past, but right now he would be able to catch her!

When Tod was only a few steps away from Natasha, the princess turned around and started to fight back.

Easily blocking her strike with his sword named Blood, Tod sneered, "This is not going to be enough, Your Grace."

Natasha's eyes turned into light gray again as she kept hacking, thrusting, blocking and dodging.

The loud bangs from the metals colliding with each other slightly shook the ground, and the strong airflow caused by that overthrew the nearby bushes, stones and some rotten branches of the firs.

"I thought the more seriously injured you were, the more powerful

you would be.” Tod was good at disturbing his enemy’s mental state, “It looks like your potion doesn’t really help you that much, uh?”

“Are you a knight? Or you’re just a talker, Tod?” Natasha’s Thunder never stopped attacking. Her eyes were full of determination.

After blocking all of the princess’s fierce attacks, Tod started to fight back following the formal knight training he received, “There’s nothing wrong with talking while fighting, Your Grace. After all, it is good that I can still spare the effort to talk, isn’t it?”

Natasha could not deny that. She felt that her boosted power had started to fade slowly.

“Were it not for the annoying sword you’re using, you’d be dead already!” Tod continued talking to distract Natasha.

Thunder was a perfect counter to his Iron Blood since Tod’s iron skin was an ideal conductor.

“However, your power is not gonna last long, Your Grace. I’m not in a hurry,” said Tod sarcastically.

Natasha did not bother bickering back, instead, she stayed even more focused on her movement, attack and defense. She was a very well-trained knight, and she was also one of the most talented knights ever of the Church. She believed that her hard training was worth a lot, even without her Blessing.

Her powerful Blessing enabled her to manage almost every one of her breakthroughs relatively easily, and in her previous fights she had always been in a more advantageous position. However, the battle she experienced earlier tonight and the one she was facing right now gave Natasha the first chance to learn more about her own power.

The power of her Blessing and her physical strength started to blend together in perfect harmony. If it could be commented that she usually fought using the power given by God, now Natasha was fighting as a human being, relying on her own willpower and the

lessons that she learned before in her tough training.

Tod noticed the difference in the way that Natasha positioned herself in this fight. Although she did not burst out any astonishing power, and neither her strength or speed were improved, Tod knew that he needed to be more cautious.

...

Grabbing Alert with both of his hands, Lucien jumped down toward Aaron from above, hacking with his sword.

Aaron's reaction was fast. He raises the black dagger in his right hand to block the fierce attack, summoned his black fire on his left fist and aimed a punch at Lucien's abdomen.

"Clang!"

When the weapons touched, Lucien's sword left a small gap on the edge of Aaron's weapon. In the next moment, Lucien pulled back his sword and dematerialized his body into moonlight to avoid Aaron's fist.

"Not even of a real knight's power!" Aaron sneered. When he recognized Lucien, he became more confident.

As a dark knight, Aaron was even faster than Lucien, not to mention his reaction speed and strength.

Lucien kept a distance away from Aaron by using his sword, which was longer than the enemy's weapon. However, Lucien noticed that the black fire covering the dagger could slowly corrode the Alert's blade.

Aaron chose not to launch his attack in the front, instead, he tried to approach Lucien from different angles, and his movements were not meant to actually damage, but more to probe.

It was not a waste of time for Aaron, and he was actually very smart. Since Aaron was much more powerful, there must be a reason why Lucien would be confident enough to ambush him like that. The only possible explanation, based on what just happened to

Verdi, was that Lucien had some magic items.

Aaron needed to keep moving around, in case any of Lucien's magic item could lock him as the target.

Lucien was not as fast as Aaron, and soon his body was covered by wounds left by Aaron's dagger. Although these wounds were small and not deep, they were covered with small clusters of black fire. As if they were alive, the clusters of fire were trying to enter into Lucien's body through the small wounds to suck his strength.

With another quick attack, Aaron's dagger tore down a piece of cloth in front of Lucien's chest, revealing the amulet Sun's Corona, that Lucien was wearing on his neck.

"Look at you." As he was swiftly moving around, it sounded like Aaron's voice was coming from all directions, "You're nobody, but you have a fine sword, a nice magic ring, and even a badge from the Church. I wonder if you are Natasha's secret lover, haha."

Lucien was still wielding his sword to block Aaron's attack as much as possible.

"But that's okay," said Aaron. "Soon, they will all be mine."

As Aaron was talking, he was trying to recall and calculate how many times Lucien had activated his magic items. Then, Aaron's attack became fiercer and fiercer, since he wanted to force Lucien into using the two items in case there was still any power left in them.

Lucien seemed to be pretty weak, and all he could do was stand there and wield his sword. For a couple of times, he could not even stand on his feet since the black fire was eating up his strength.

After testing Lucien by pushing him into his limit countless times, Aaron believed that the young man had already used all the power in his magic items for that night.

Before Aaron launched his new round of attacks, Lucien's legs were already too weak to support his weight. With a twist in his ankles, Lucien fell over in front of the strange-shaped stone.

Aaron almost felt amused by this scene, “Are you kidding me? Jumping toward me from the tree was all that you had prepared? Very touching... you want to die for your beloved princess?”

Lifting his dagger again, this time Aaron targeted Lucien’s back neck!

Suddenly, a thin, arc-shaped shield appeared above Lucien and stopped Aaron’s dagger.

Neither of his magic items was shining. It was Lucien’s own power.

“A sorcerer?!”

Lots of memories and thoughts flashed across Aaron’s mind, his eyes suddenly opened wide,

“You’re... Professor?!”

“Am I?” Lucien turned around and a mysterious smile appeared on Lucien’s face. At the same time, Lucien pulled out his right hand from the dirt, in which there was a dark red bracelet.

Before Aaron managed to turn himself into a shadow and back away from Lucien, a powerful fire ball suddenly burst out from the bracelet and pushed Aaron backward fiercely.

“Farewell, Mr. Aaron.” Lucien nodded, smiling.

Level three high rank magic item, Fire Weaver Bracelet, previously owned by Fire Wolf, which was enchanted with two magic spells: Flame Shield, a second circle spell, twice a day; and Fireball, third circle spell, twice a day.

The fireball covering Aaron’s upper body blazed. When Aaron’s body hit the ground a second later, only the lower part was left.

When Lucien stood up holding the bracelet, he heard Natasha’s familiar voice, “Professor...?!”

Turning around, Lucien saw Natasha standing on the other side with Thunder in her hand, looking rather shocked.

Chapter 134: The Ring

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

This idea occurred to Lucien when the surroundings in the black forest became more and more familiar to him. He remembered that, after he found Fire Wolf dead, he buried his two magic items there.

During the past couple of months, Lucien had gained a better understanding of the inner structures of the two magic items, Fire Weaver Bracelet, and the black iron dagger, called Grimsteel Dagger, and had also become capable of properly using them.

That was why Lucien was being that confident when he was talking to the princess. What was out of his expectation was that, although Aaron was only a level two knight, he was surprisingly cautious, and his carefulness forced Lucien to spend more time on killing him. Also, Lucien did not expect that Natasha would come back within such a short period of time.

Although Lucien was not sure whether Natasha witnessed everything or just a part, he clearly heard Natasha repeat the word “Professor”.

...

A little while before Lucien pull out the bracelet.

Natasha gradually started to get an upper hand in this fighting. Although Tod’s body was fully materialized into iron, he felt the great power in each of Natasha’s attacks, and he could tell that the aura surrounding her had changed.

The princess’ movement was becoming more and more aggressive, and her whole will was dedicated to this fight. Her attacks were as fast as raindrops hitting the ground. Even Natasha herself had no idea how many times she wielded her sword.

She did not feel tired anymore. She could not feel it.

The color of her eyes switched back and forth from silver gray to purple, and finally the two colors blended. At the same time, Natasha's soul and body integrated.

With a sudden shout, the princess burst out great power. Her legs were bent slightly and then fiercely pushed off the ground with her maximum force.

She bounced up high and, at the same time, lifted up her sword with both of her hands.

Tod looked up and decided to fight back, since it seemed his tactic of attrition was not going to work anyway.

He lifted the square shield in front of him and adjusted the angle of his wrist a bit, so his sword would target Natasha's waist.

However, by the time Tod lifted his sword, Natasha's figure suddenly became transparent, and the great power of her sword was like from another world, which directly hacked his shield into two halves.

As a matter of fact, what was hacked into halves was more than Tod's iron shield, but also his own body. The iron shield did not manage to reduce the great momentum of the sword at all.

The astonished look on his face suddenly froze when he was split into halves.

“Bang!”

Tod's iron skin was still covered by metal when his body fell on the ground, colliding with his sword and making a loud metallic sound.

Natasha landed heavily and quickly rolled over to the side. After gasping a few times for air, she stood up and started to rush back for Lucien.

When she arrived, Natasha ran into the scene where Lucien was kneeling on the ground, looking rather weak, and the dark knight

was about to stab his dagger toward Lucien's back.

At that moment when Natasha was about to jump out to rescue Lucien, she saw that Lucien activated his magic shield again, and then, Lucien pulled out a scarlet bracelet from the dirt.

She heard the dark knight calling Lucien... Professor.

Natasha's mind suddenly buzzed.

She recalled that the Church did mention a dark red bracelet missing in the case related to Professor.

The potion that helped Lucien with activating his Blessing... the missing heretic who was following Lucien from Argent Horn... Lucien's great interest in the ancient books... and his great memory... and the fact that Lucien suddenly showed up tonight from the magic lock.

"Professor...?!"

Natasha could not find any excuse to lie to herself.

...

Lucien could tell the mixed emotions in Natasha's beautiful eyes, in which there was astonishment, pain, sadness and anger.

Grabbing the bracelet tightly in his hand, Lucien was ready to activate it at any time, although he clearly knew that, facing a level five grand knight, these spells would not really work.

At the same time, there was a voice in Lucien's mind telling him that he might still be able to lie to the princess again, to make another garbled story.

When Lucien was about to talk, Natasha said to him first, in a deep and low voice, "Go to Holm, then."

"...?" Lucien did not really get it. And he noticed that the color of Natasha's eyes had changed. Instead of dream-like purple or silver gray, now her eyes looked purplish gray, which was a mysterious

but also pure color.

“You should go to Holm. The headquarter of the Congress of Magic is there. If you want to become a great sorcerer like Silvia, you should go there, Lucien.” Natasha repeated, then she squinted her eyes a bit and slightly lifted her chin, “Or should I call you Professor... No one is a better actor than you, do you know that?”

“I never meant to hurt you.” Lucien relaxed a bit seeing that Natasha was not planning on killing him, “I admit that I lied to you many times, but I had no other choice.”

“You’re not the only one who was lying to me all the time, and I’m used to it already.” The corner of Natasha’s lips slightly curled up in a sad way, “But I could tell, when you were playing Pathetique... I could tell the pain and stress that you were suffering. After all, Aalto is not a good place to study magic.”

“You don’t hate me... as a sorcerer?” asked Lucien. Although he knew that in the past, Natasha’s attitude toward sorcerers was actually relatively mild compared with the Church and other nobles, after Silvia’s betrayal, Lucien was not sure about the princess’s standpoint now.

Looking at Lucien, Natasha answered seriously, “My mom was a very talented sorceress, and she was the most beautiful and nice lady in the world. To me, one being a sorcerer does not mean they must be a vicious person. I don’t judge a person based on his or her identity, but on the person’s behavior.”

Then, she smiled gently, “Of course, I’m very angry and sad knowing that you were lying to me all the time, but like you said, you never tried to take advantage of me, or hurt me, instead, you’ve been helping me all the time, and you saved my life tonight, carrying me on your back all the way here.”

“I regarded you as my friend all this time, although you’re the honorable princess, and although there were lies between us,” said Lucien sincerely.

“I know,” said Natasha, and then she slightly shook her head,

“Honestly, the moment when I heard that you were the notorious Professor, lots of details flashed across my mind... those details about you that I felt suspicious, but refused to dig into them. Even when I met you earlier, when we were besieged, I was almost certain that you were a sorcerer, and I still believed that you’d be on my side and fight for me. I would never link you to Professor, though, who killed so many night watchers. I think I trusted you even more than I knew.”

“I killed them because they wanted to kill me,” Lucien confessed sincerely. “I never wished to kill, never, but, again, like I said, I did not have another choice.”

Then both of them fell silent.

After a long time, Natasha released a long sigh.

“You know what?” said Natasha, “Although your hands are covered with blood, I still want to be your friend.”

Lucien suddenly became speechless.

“Thankfully, you never hurt my royal knights, or I wouldn’t be able to have you as my friend anymore.” Natasha started to walk toward Lucien, “But you never, and you never tried to hurt me, so why shall I care?”

A sweet smile appeared on Natasha’s face, as if she had got rid of the negative emotions from the shock. As she stopped in front of Lucien, the princess asked, “Dear Mr. Professor, except your identity, did you ever lie to me about something else...? Say... your love experience? I’ve always felt you’re pretty experienced.”

“No... I’m totally not experienced...” Lucien’s face flushed.

Then, Natasha took a small step backward and started to look at Lucien up and down, “Actually your face is quite good-looking. You would be a very beautiful girl if you were a girl.”

“Uh?” Lucien was confused. He could not really follow the way Natasha changed the topic.

"I mean... magic is sure wonderful and powerful. Although it's hard, it's not impossible to change your gender. I heard that a grand arcanist once made a girdle that could help people do that, and maybe you want to give it a shot?"

Lucien rolled his eyes and said seriously, "That's not gonna happen. I'm a man."

Noticing that Lucien did not like this kind of joke, Natasha's sense of propriety made her stop. Then, she said to Lucien seriously, "I have something to give you."

She took off an old ring from her right hand and handed it to Lucien.

"This is..." Lucien took it over.

"You don't know anything about Holm Crown prize?" said Natasha, "It looks like you never received any formal sorcerer training following a mentor from the congress. If you did, you would certainly recognize this ring."

"I'm pretty much on my own... when it comes to studying magic, unfortunately," Lucien answered.

"Well... I told you that my mom was a very talented sorcerer, and this ring was the award she received for winning the Holm Crown prize in her early twenties... should be twenty three." Natasha explained.

Honestly speaking, Lucien felt this ring was very ordinary, which looked just like a common iron ring people wore for practicing archery.

"I know... it doesn't look any different, right?" Looking at the ring, Natasha's voice became softer, and there was a gentle smile on her face, "The ring was a very powerful level seven magic item back in the days, but now it is damaged and is beyond repair. It was once called the finest ring across this continent."

Lucien turned the ring around, and he noticed that there was a small word "Mo" on the surface of the ring, and a small line of

letters carved on its inner side, “Year 781. Holm Crown. To Ms. Meredith Hoffenberg.”

“Holm Crown prize is the award co-established by Holm Royal Magic Academy and the organization named the Will of Element from the Congress of Magic. The purpose of setting up Holm Crown prize is to acknowledge the great contribution made by the great sorcerers and sorceresses in the Element School.”

“So, your mom won the prize at the age of twenty three? That’s... that’s brilliant.” Lucien gently rubbed the ring with respect.

“She was really a genius!” said Natasha with great pride, “She was awarded the prize for her finding of a metallic element which is lighter than water by introducing electromagnetics to the field of element study. She named the metallic element ‘Mo’, and so the ring was also named ‘Mo’.”

“I never realized that you had this profound knowledge of the world of magic,” said Lucien, “You never mentioned.”

“We are in Aalto, and I’m the princess. I can’t mention anything about it. Besides, what I just introduced was not profound at all. When you get to Holm, you’ll see a completely different world,” said Natasha. “Since the prize was set up, within the past two hundred and seventy years or so, only twenty four sorcerers and sorceresses were qualified for this prize. Now I’m giving this unique ring to you as a keepsake, and also a proof of your identity when you get to the congress.”

Chapter 135: Life is More than Just Magic

The End of the First Volume

Chapter 135: Life is More than Just Magic (The End of the First Volume)

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Holding the ring in his hand, Lucien said to Natasha sincerely, "Thank you, Natasha. Your mother was a real genius. I hope one day I will be able to make such a contribution as well."

"Yes, she was, and I believe you will as well." Looking at the distance, Natasha was immersed in the memory of her mother, "When my mom won the award, she was only a junior-rank mage, but later she left the best place for studying magic and came to the city, a city which was notorious for its way of treating sorcerers and sorceresses, all for her love."

"For the grand duke... Your parents' love story is probably the most romantic story across this continent." Lucien smiled.

"My mom was clearly aware of what she wanted." Natasha nodded, "After she tried many times to use different potions to awaken her Blessing, but failed because of her fragile health, she found her own path in the world of magic, which matched her perfectly well."

"Each person has his or her own value." Admiring the grand duchess very much, Lucien asked out of curiosity, "May I know what happened later to your mom?"

"I've mentioned my mother's health was fragile, and it was not getting any better after my mother and father got married. Her body and soul had been corroded by many magic elements over the years, and when my elder brother died in battle, her health condition took a sudden downwards turn and since then she never really managed to recover from it."

"I'm very sorry, Natasha. I believe she must be very proud seeing

her daughter becoming such an outstanding knight in heaven,” said Lucien sincerely.

Natasha slightly shook her head and grinned, “You’re a sorcerer. Do you really believe in heaven?”

“... I’m not sure.” Lucien was speechless for a while before replying, since this question never occurred to him.

“I wonder if my mom believed in heaven, as a sorceress.” Natasha looked up in the sky, “But I know that after she got married with my father, she was still secretly studying magic.”

“Really?” Lucien was very surprised, “What about the Church?”

“She missed Holm so much, the wonderland for learning magic, and my father loved her too much to forbid my mom from doing her magic experiments. Besides, her health condition didn’t really allow her to do something else too much. And the Church...”

She put on an ambiguous smile.

“This ring must mean a lot to you, Natasha.” Knowing that Natasha somehow could not explain the reason for him, Lucien switched the topic, “I don’t know if I should accept it.”

“It’s okay, Lucien.” Natasha also lowered her head and looked at the ring, “The object is not important. What’s really important is my love for my mom. Whether the ring is with me or not, my love for her is life-long.”

Lucien nodded and put the ring back into one of the pockets of his robe.

“By the way,” Natasha reminded him, “don’t casually just show this ring around. Sometimes an extra help can also bring you trouble, you know.”

“I understand,” said Lucien seriously, “Is the vampire’s blood affecting you right now? Let me carry you back to Aalto.”

“I appreciate it, but look at me... I’m fine now.” Natasha waved her

hands, “You’d better leave as soon as possible. People from the Church might be on their way here right now.”

“Then... Natasha, you take care.” Lucien suddenly had no idea how to say farewell, especially he was not sure if they would see each other again.

In contrast, Natasha remained relatively calm, and something just occurred to her, “Lucien, you want to keep using your current identity, Lucien Evans, the musician, after you leave?”

“Can I?” Lucien was very surprised. He was planning on changing to another brand new identity when he arrived at Holm, in case the people he knew would get into any trouble because of him.

“I believe it’s fine. After all, your name’s not unique at all, even in Aalto. Just don’t tell people in Holm that you are a musician.” Natasha shrugged, “I suggest that you continue to publish some new music pieces, if you can send any to me, which will be a pretty good disguise for you.”

“I’ll try my best.” Lucien also did not want to just give up his music completely after leaving Aalto.

After agreeing on how to send letters, Lucien took the Fire Weaver Bracelet, Aaron’s Asthenia Dagger, Grimsteel Dagger and Alert with him, and left the triple-headed flail to Natasha, since it was too clumsy for him to carry.

“I’ll take care of your friends. No worries, Lucien.” Natasha smiled.

“Thank you. I’m so lucky to have you as my friend, Natasha.” Lucien expressed his heartfelt thanks, then he turned around.

“Lucien...” Natasha called his name from behind.

“Yes?” Lucien looked back.

“Remember, life is more than just magic. You have music, and you have friends.” Natasha waved her hand.

“I’ll keep that in mind.” Lucien grinned.

...

After a while, when Lucien had completely disappeared in the woods, the smile on Natasha's face faded, and she commanded seriously,

"Show yourself. You've been listening for quite a while."

"As you wish, Your Grace." Salvador, the leader of the night watchers, slowly appeared in the sky and landed in front of Natasha. His hand was tied with a piece of white handkerchief.

"Why didn't you take any action right away?" asked Natasha directly.

"Apparently, you care for this guy a lot, Your Grace. I wouldn't have any chance of killing him in front of you, although, yes, I wanted it very much... This damned Professor."

"I see," said Natasha coldly. "Then why did you choose to stay? You want to talk to me?"

"Yes, Your Grace." Salvador answered, "I want a deal for keeping this secret for you, Your Grace."

"Ah?" Natasha was almost amused, "You don't want to take revenge for the dead night watchers anymore? I thought you were pretty determined."

"I was and I still am," said Salvador calmly. "But I cannot miss this chance... the chance of climbing up towards a higher status in the Church, and cooperating with the princess. I already gave up so many things and now I'm walking in the darkness... all because..."

"Not interested." Natasha cut him off directly.

"All right..." Salvador paused a bit, "Let's get to the main point. To be more specific, I want...!!!"

Before the next word jumped out from Salvador's mouth, Natasha rushed and hacked her sword directly toward him, without any hesitation.

In the next second, Salvador was split into two halves by the sword.

“No one dare threaten me,” said Natasha coldly.

There was no blood coming out of Salvador’s body, and his body was dissolving into small shining pieces in the air. Before his body completely disappeared, his last remaining awareness turned into his voice, “Radiant... knight?”

After another ten minutes, Camil showed up from the other side of the forest, carrying Wyon and Cacharel under her arms, who were both unconscious.

“Natasha, you’re a radiant knight now.” Camil recognized Natasha’s change right away, “It seems like this bitter fight turned out to be your great chance to make this breakthrough. Congratulations, Natasha. I’m very proud of you.”

Natasha smiled, but in a sad way.

...

When Natasha and Camil came back to Aalto, the sun was rising above the horizon. After comforting the grand duke who had been tortured by his worry and anger for the whole night, Natasha went directly to the Golden Cathedral.

In a confessional, Natasha found Sard, who was praying silently there.

“Grand cardinal, I need to confess,” said Natasha in a low voice.

“God’s here.” Slowly, Sard opened his eyes.

“I killed a night watcher... I killed Mr. Salvador.” Natasha crossed herself.

“I don’t see your penitence.” Hearing that the leader of the night watchers was killed, Sard showed no emotion.

“I feel no regret. This was my choice, and I’m willing to accept the punishment for the choice I made,” answered Natasha seriously.

“Why did you kill him?” Sard asked.

Natasha did not answer.

Sard slowly stood up. Compared with yesterday, he looked much older, “I’ll report to the pope. He will be deciding the punishment to your sin. You stay here, Natasha.”

After Sard left, veins in Natasha’s face and her hands started to swell and burn. Her beautiful face contorted out of the great pain. However, she kept kneeling on the ground in front of the big cross without giving out a single groan.

...

In a bright, simple study, there was a white-haired elder sitting in front of the desk.

He said to the cardinal gently, “Natasha confessed her sin, and God forgives anyone who’s willing to confess. Natasha’s honest, and now she’s a radiant knight. The punishment shall not be too harsh. Send her to the lowest abbey in Aalto for three years.”

“Yes, my pope.” The cardinal slowly left the room.

The pope picked up a small pile of paper in front of him, on which there were a bunch of fractions of words which did not really make sense,

“He seemed to be okay with my speech...”

“He often looked confused...”

“Maybe he started to vacillate now...”

...

Following the instruction for anti-tracking given by Natasha, Lucien came back to Massawa around nine in the morning. The sun was already shining brightly in the air.

Before entering the small town, Lucien took out all the stuff from

the pockets and burned down his black sorcerer robe.

Lucien did not see Joyce and his coachman around. After talking to the owner of the hotel, Lucien got to know that they all fled away because of the chaos happened in Bonn last night.

Putting on a worried look, Lucien was actually cheering in his mind. He said to the hotel owner, "That's too bad then. I gotta hire another coach and some guards on my own. Can you please send word to the association that it was me who terminated the contract with them on my own? This way, the association won't trouble them. After all, I understand their fear."

"What a kind gentleman you are!" The owner of the hotel took out a pen and paper and praised Lucien, "And it won't be too difficult for you to hire some new people, sir, since lots of adventurers and residents from Bonn are right now staying in our town."

After signing his name on the letter written by the hotel owner, Lucien went back to his room and started to prepare for his new journey.

(The End of the First Volume)

Chapter 136: Dragon Tooth Tavern

Chapter 136: Dragon Tooth Tavern

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The Second Volume: The Feast of Death

“Bang!” The heavy door of the tavern named Dragon Tooth hit the wall as it was suddenly opened by someone with brute force. The grumbling drunkards, bragging adventures and shouting mercenaries who were enjoying the well-known roasted beef of the tavern suddenly quieted down.

A black-haired young man walked in, dressing in light blue, with a fancy sword at his side. The midday sunlight came in behind him and outlined the young man’s silhouette.

“Wow... wow! A young lord! Is your fancy sword able to kill a wild dog?” A drunkard shouted and whistled.

“Another young man got deceived by those bestselling knight novels,” an adventurer whispered in the ear of his buddy, “... seeking those exciting stories with a ritual sword.”

However, he dared not speak too loud. What if this young man was someone important? After all, he dressed very decently.

Lucien did not care. With a stable pace, he walked directly to the tavern counter.

After two-months of traveling, Lucien arrived at this small border town named Dragon Tooth in the duchy of Djibouti, located in the middle south of the continent.

“Look at his arm! No big muscles!” A robust adventurer lifted and bent his right arm. Under the skin there were lean and big chunks of muscles, “Look at his build! I bet he’s not even a of a knight squire level! Young and stupid lad!”

“You think everyone can awaken the Blessing? You have to be kidding me...” A stout man, probably with the blood of dwarf, said in an arrogant way, “I’ve been traveling across the continent for more than ten years, and I’m still only about... high-level knight squire level. But, but... if this young guy can have a chance to receive my instruction, maybe he can still awaken his Blessing. After all, it was because of my training that lord Newville in Eero finally awakened his Blessing...”

Some guys sitting around him gave him an admiring look, although Chris had boasted about that many times in the past, which made him even happier.

Lucien just ignored them, came to the counter and sat down on a stool.

The owner of the tavern did not look young. Seeing this decently dressed young man in this small tavern, the owner did not behave any different.

“My friend, what do you want today? Wine or meat? Or both?” friendly asked the owner.

“Water, roast beef, and a salad.” Lucien slightly nodded to greet him back. “And I want to ask some questions.”

The middle south of the continent was surrounded by mountains and canyons. The isolated land produced no resource except wood, and it was the poorest and the least developed area across the continent. Often, there wouldn’t be even a single person who was literate in a village.

For the people who were striving to awaken their Blessings there, the effort they had to make was way higher than people in Aalto. It had been a lot of years since the last war broke out here, and therefore, even if one manage to awaken his or her Blessing, the person still couldn’t obtain a title and would not be given land and field, unless they could save enough money to buy the land on their own.

“Hahaha! Water... You heard that? Water!” A drunkard nearby

laughed aloud, “Innocent, naive young boy!”

And all the people in the tavern started to laugh.

Lucien remained very calm as if nothing was going on there. He was just looking at the owner.

“No problem, my friend. Information is not free, though.” The owner poured a cup of water for Lucien, and asked the kitchen to prepare the food.

“I know. It’s fine.” Lucien took a sip of the water.

Before he entered here, Lucien had found out that the town’s Adventurers’ Association was just in this very tavern, and the owner was also the person in charge of it.

“Then, go ahead.” The owner nodded.

“I want to know where is Mr. Taylor Hunt living right now. He was an official in Bonn from the Duchy of Orvarit, and nine years ago, he was invited by Baron Eric to come to Djibouti to be the civil servant here.”

Taylor Hunt was the father of the little revenant girl that Lucien encountered in the World of Souls. Lucien rerouted his trip in order to fulfill his words, and also, since he was not in a rush, he also appreciated the unique and exotic cities he visited on his new route.

“We don’t charge for something like this. It’s not called intelligence...” The owner waved his hand a bit, “I’ll just tell you for free. The civil servant on Baron Eric’s land is not Mr. Hunt. I’m guessing the person you’re looking for might have accepted another offer. If you want, you can go to the nearby city, Korsor, to see if there is any record in the town hall, since Korsor belongs to Baron Eric’s lord, Viscount Stanley. And if you can’t find it there, you might need to go to Baron Eric’s land and ask for local information.”

“Thanks. Any news across the continent recently?” It took Lucien ten days sitting in a coach and going through mountains and hills to arrive here, and he felt he was as isolated as this place right now,

maybe even more.

“One news for one Nar. Is it okay?” The owner smiled.

“Ten, please.” Lucien directly took out a Thale and placed it on the counter.

The adventurers and mercenaries were very surprised, and their eyes were staring at the shining coin. After all, they had to spend two to three months to make one single Thale, and this young noble man was just using it for buying some random news!

A few of them were even considering if they should just rob this young man.

The beef was ready. Lucien picked up the fork and took a bite. The meat was juicy and tender, which was surprisingly as good as the dishes produced in those fancy restaurants in Aalto.

The tavern owner pulled out a piece of crumpled paper and read it slowly to Lucien, “Two months ago, Aalto...” The owner paused a bit and looked at Lucien, “a small town in Aalto, Bonn, was attacked by a necromancer. The famous musician, known as the Most Beautiful Musician, Silvia, as well as her father, died in the battle in which the princess of the duchy, Natasha, finally beat the evil necromancer with all her effort. Unfortunately, the princess was severely injured from the fight and now she is recuperating in an abbey. It is said that Natasha also made a breakthrough in this fight and has become a radiant knight.”

Lucien did not show any difference after hearing the news, although his heart was cheering for Natasha’s achievement. No wonder the side effect of the vampire’s blood did not affect her immediately in the forest.

If moving from a squire level to a level one knight was challenging, upgrading from a grand knight to a radiant knight was even more difficult. The great power of a grand knight came from the person’s physical strength, in other words, a grand knight would need to boost or overly stimulate his or her body to get the power, and that was why some of the grand knights lived even shorter than the

knights of lower ranks. Even with the help of some precious herbs and potions, most of them could only make it to around a hundred years old, while becoming a radiant knight meant that the person already broke the limit of human body, and he or she could at least live for more than two hundred years.

The rest of the intelligence was of nothing really special. Generally speaking, the north and the heresy again had some new conflicts; several major lords in Gusta down in the south were raising mercenaries for the possible coming civil war; and some adventurers found some ruins in the southern margin of the Dark Mountain Range, where they obtained a great amount of fortune...

After hearing the news and finishing his meal, Lucien wiped his mouth with a white handkerchief and said to the owner, "Sir, can you find me some guards and a coach? I need to go to Korsor."

Although Lucien was already strong enough to travel along the east side of the continent, he did not want to bother dealing with those minions, goblins, and other beasts, which were not even of knight squire level. Lucien would rather spend his time in his coach studying the first circle magic spells.

Within his two-month traveling, Lucien constructed another five first circle spells in his soul, and right now his soul had reached the current limit for that level. For the rest of the first circle spells, if Lucien wished to use them, he needed to rely on some magic reagents and materials, or their special runes.

The five first circle spells were: Magic Missile, Sleep, Grease, Feather Fall and Color Spray.

Because most of the adventurers and mercenaries were not willing to leave their own base of operations for too long, they would only escort their client within a certain range, what also applied to the coachmen. Thus, Lucien had to hire new people every now and again.

"Smart choice. We have lots of dark tales about vampires and black sorcerers." The owner put several glass cups back onto the counter, "I can take care of your coach and coachman, my friend. It will take

you 11 days to get to Korsor. As for your guards, I recommend those three adventurers sitting on the other side. Two of them are warriors of the same level as high level knight squires, and the archer is also around knight squire level. All of them have a pretty good reputation. You can talk to them.”

Following the direction of the tavern owner, Lucien looked toward the other side. There were two women and one man sitting over there. The short-haired man’s arms were masculine. And the two females looked a bit alike, although one was mature and glamorous, and the other was young and pretty. From their appearance, especially their pointy long ears, Lucien guessed that they might be sisters from the half-elf race.

All of the three adventurers were listening carefully to the bard playing in the corner, and from time to time, they were beating out the tune.

Translator’s Thoughts

Kris_Liu Kris_Liu

Hello guys! This is WMX, the editor of Throne of Magical Arcana! I’d like to thank you for supporting us up to this point, and that we love the theories you’ve been coming up with! We’re doing our best so you can enjoy this masterpiece, but if there is any suggestion you’d like to make, feel free to talk to me in the Discord. Now, let’s start volume two, and may it be as astonishing as the first one!

Chapter 137: Strangers as Companions

Chapter 137: Strangers as Companions

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“The nightingale is singing. In the air, her voice was floating...”

The bard’s singing, although in that small border town, was actually pretty beautiful and alluring. Thus, when Lucien came to sit down on the other side of their table, the half-elf girl with light brown hair was a bit surprised and her back straightened up immediately.

When Lucien explained his intention, the elder elf-looking lady was amused, “You want to hire us?”

Her fair hand was gently knocking on the wooden table in a fixed rhythm.

Looking at Lucien sitting in front of her, the sophisticated lady also took him as a young noble lord who had read too many adventure novels and was acting on the impulse to explore the continent.

“Yes,” Lucien nodded calmly, “I want to go to Korsor. I wonder if you three are willing to be my guards.”

The lady did not answer Lucien directly, instead, she started her introduction, “I’m Joanna, Greatsword Warrior. This is my husband Simon, Sword and shield Warrior. Both of us have the same power of a high level knight squire. This is my younger sister Betty, a well-trained archer. Her rank’s a bit lower than ours, but not by much. So, as you can see, my distinguished client, we’re a bit pricy, but our reputation is pretty good.”

“I heard that from the owner already,” said Lucien. “That’s why I came to you directly.”

“Haha, Hansen really promotes us very well.” Joanna laughed aloud.

Lucien could tell that a bunch of the adventurers and mercenaries sitting nearby looked a bit irritated when Joanna was talking. However, they could not deny that they were very good guards and the arrangement of their team was very reasonable — two for the melee, and one for the ranged attacks.

“Joanna... Let’s take the job! I’m planning on going to Korsor myself anyway.” Betty looked pretty excited, “I heard that the talented musician named Burt from the duchy is gonna host a concert in Korsor these days!”

Joanna rolled her eyes toward her younger sister. Betty simply could never tell when she was supposed to talk, and when she must not. Betty stuck out her tongue toward Joanna for a second and then shut her mouth up tightly. However, her eyes were looking at Lucien, and her pointy ears slightly trembled.

“How much do you want, Joanna?” asked Lucien directly. He did not really care about the price since he still had eight-five Thales with him after the two-month travel.

“Umm...” Joanna squinted her eyes a bit when she was considering the price.

“One Nar for each of us a day.” Smiling, Simon represented his wife and stated the price to Lucien.

Staring at her husband, Joanna was a bit choked.

“Simon!” she complained. This price was way lower than what she had thought.

“We shouldn’t charge our client more just because the client’s wealthy.” Simon grinned to Joanna, “It’s about our reputation.”

“Also, my client,” Simon turned to Lucien, “I have a couple of requests.”

“Yes?” Lucien nodded.

“You need to pay us on a daily basis.” Simon paused a bit, glanced at Betty, and continued, “And give Betty’s pay to me. She has no

idea how to save, and we're saving for her future knight training in her name."

In some of the countries in the south-central part of the continent, knight training was not free, as it was in Aalto. Many nobles struggling with their financial problems actually were making money out of it, giving knight training, which was not necessarily a bad thing altogether, since more commoners could get a chance at being a knight squire or even reaching a higher social status.

Betty pouted out of dissatisfaction, but she could not deny what Simon just said.

"No problem," agreed Lucien., "Let's get the contract done then."

All the adventurers and mercenaries registered with the Adventurers' Association needed to sign a contract with their clients.

Handing Hansen his own identification and documents, Lucien took a glance at the content and then signed the contract provided by the tavern owner.

"Thank you, sir." Lucien politely nodded toward Hansen.

The moment Hansen looked at Lucien's identification, he became very surprised, but he instantly hid the different look on his face.

"My pleasure, Mr. Evans." Hansen then carefully checked Lucien's documents. The fact that he had a great musician here visiting his tavern was definitely something he could brag in the future in front of his guests and offsprings.

Joanna accepted the three Nar paid in advance and then left her fingerprint on the paper.

"You're very generous, sir." Joanna smiled sweetly, "Can I call you Mr. Evans?"

In contrast, Lucien's three guards weren't really hyped up due to Lucien's identity, since all of them were illiterate.

“Sure.” Lucien nodded slightly.

“Another Mr. Evans!” Betty grinned, “You know there’s a talented, young and handsome musician in Aalto whose surname is Evans as well! I heard that he’s traveling across the continent for his music right now. I wonder if he would come here to Djibouti!”

“Dream on! A great musician visiting this remote and poor country?” Joanna said directly to her, “Just get your feet on the ground and awaken your Blessing. When you join the Violet Knights, we can all move to Aalto.”

Lucien laughed, “How do you know this Mr. Evans is good looking, Miss Betty?”

“All the bards say that!” answered Betty cheerfully.

...

Outside the tavern, when Lucien was about to get on the coach, a young man quickly walked toward him.

“Wait! Please wait!” The young man was waving his hand.

The man in a white robe was in his twenties. He had blond hair, and on his angular face there was a pair of blue eyes.

“Hi, Mr. Evans! Can I join you folks?” He grinned, “I’m also heading for Korsor, and I’m willing to afford one third of the guards’ pay.”

It was not the first time someone else wanted to join Lucien, and he was always very cautious about this.

“You don’t look short of money. Why you want to join me?” asked Lucien directly.

Joanna, Simon and Betty did not care. They would not make any extra either way.

“Hansen told me that you just got the best guards in the tavern.” The young man shrugged, “As for the rest of the adventurers and mercenaries... They looked more like robbers to me.”

“That’s really true.” Betty laughed.

The young man took out his identification and documents and handed them to Lucien.

“The Musicians’ Association... Burt Wise...” reading the document silently, Lucien learned that the young man was also a musician, and thus he lowered his guard a bit.

“Why are you heading for Korsor, then?” Lucien, however, knew that one could never be too cautious on this continent.

“I’m visiting the Musicians’ Association there,” Burt answered, “to, um, to study.”

“All right.” Lucien gave the documents back to him, “Mr. Wise. Welcome. We’re companions now. One thing I need to remind you is that I’m sort of bothered by psychasthenia, so please be as quiet as possible. I need sleep.”

“For sure.” Wise nodded.

“Are you a musician, Mr. Wise?” Betty, on the other side, got excited.

“I’m still learning.” Wise remained rather polite.

“That’s great! Do you know For Silvia? How do you feel about it?” Betty’s eyes were shining with excitement. She kept talking and talking until the coach started to leave.

Wise got on the coach and smiled to Lucien, “Very passionate girl. I actually don’t really know much about music, though.”

“Me neither.” Lucien also smiled, and then he closed his eyes, ready to start to analyze his magic structures.

However, at this time, another traveler asked to join them. This was an ordinary lady holding a baby in her arms.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Evans. My name’s Lena, and I’m heading for the town named Fog, located between Dragon Tooth and Korsor,”

the lady said to Lucien gently. "Can I join you? I can afford my own expense."

Seeing that the lady was with a baby, Lucien agreed. The coach was quite spacious anyway.

Then, the coach finally started moving. Simon was in the front, and the coach was followed by Joanna and Betty on each side.

As soon as they left the town, a short but stout man caught up with them.

"Chris, why are you here?" asked Joanna, completely alert.

"I'm also going back to Korsor! That's it!" answered Chris aloud, "When you guys save enough money, you can send Betty to me for knight training. You know, I've trained a knight before!"

As Chris was bragging, his eyes were peeking at the coach. However, the people in the coach remained very silent.

In the hot sunlight, the coach was smoothly heading for Korsor, raising a trail of dust after it.

Chapter 138: A Farce at Nigh

The weather in the second half of the Month of Passion (June) was already very hot. Beads of sweat kept rolling down Joanna's and Betty's faces while they were safeguarding each side of the coach. Not to mention Simon, whose shirt inside the armor was completely wet.

Nevertheless, no one ever made a single complaint. Simon, walking ahead of the coach, had already driven away several beasts rushing down from the mountains. This was obviously his responsibility as a guard, but the fact that he beat off the vicious beasts without startling the horses definitely impressed Lucien.

In contrast, Chris, who was bragging about being a "real man" all the time, was now dragging his feet on the ground with his body slouching from the heat.

Inside of the coach, since Lucien kept his eyes closed all the time, and Lena was not talkative at all, so Mr. Wise had no one to talk to. Finally, he took out a pile of music sheets from his suitcase to kill his time.

The only sounds were made by the baby, who cried from time to time, and then Lena would apologize and try to pacify the baby.

At around seven in the evening, it was getting darker. After talking to Lucien, Simon started to look for a camping site where they could spend the night. Experienced as Simon was, he soon settled on a spot on the lee side of a small hill.

Surrounding the coach, Lucien's three guards quickly build up three tents. One for the three ladies, one for Simon and the coachman, and one for Mr. Wise. The coach, of course, was saved for Lucien.

Watching the busy guards walking around and carrying things, Lucien deeply felt the importance of money. If, in the future, he planned to travel on his own, Lucien had better become a middle-rank mage and learn the third circle spell Sorcerer's Cabin first.

The campfire was lit up, and the smell of food was wafting in the air. While Joanna and Betty were heading for the nearby brook to take a bath, Simon and Mr. Wise sat down around the campfire and started to chat casually.

"It is said that, early in the Dark Era, the land here once belonged to a black sorcerer." After hearing the talk between Simon and Wise about the tale of vampire and black sorcerer in this country, Lucien joined them to listen, "And then he was killed by the Church."

Lucien still remembered what he read in Natasha's study.

Simon, surprisingly, was actually pretty talkative, "People just love exchanging mysterious and scary things. You know, they're always ear-catching and they can be used for frightening kids who're not willing to go to bed at night."

Mr. Wise did not really believe the rumors, "Every town and village has a chapel, but people just like the feeling of thrilling."

While they were talking, Joanna and Betty were coming back. Their wet hair still dripped a little and was a bit messy. The two ladies, while walking back to the campsite, immediately caught the eyes of the two bards who were camping nearby, and Chris was with them as well.

The guys started to heckle Joanna and Betty with loud whistles, and one of them even took out his lap harp and started to play a romantic and flirting folk song, as they were eyeing the two ladies up and down.

It was definitely not the first time that something like that happened to Joanna, and she remained quite calm. However, in contrast, Betty was pissed off.

"Betty, just ignore them. Come here." Joanna sat down beside Simon and lightly stirred the soup in the pot hanging over the campfire.

"But they're not stopping!" Betty's face flushed, and she glared at the bards with anger, which led to another round of guffaw.

"I'll go." Simon stood up and walked toward the other campsite.

When Simon came in front of the two bards, Chris said to him, "Simon, what's wrong with my friends singing and playing music here?" Casting a side glance at Simon, Chris said to him, "They're my friends. You'd better leave us alone."

As he was talking, Chris was wiping his great sword in a pretended casual way.

Simon was a good guard. Knowing that he was still with a commission, Simon knew he should avoid extra trouble at that moment.

"Chris, you'd better watch out next time," Simon said to him in his low voice.

On the other side, Joanna was trying to comfort her younger sister, "Betty, they're just the same as the bastards we met in the tavern before."

Betty, however, rose her pitch high and shouted at the bards, "Awful music! They call themselves a bard, but I don't know how they can make a living with this awful playing!" Betty's voice was crispy.

Then she paused a bit, as if she was trying to figure out a way to make her point more persuasive, "Mr. Wise, the gentleman with us... He can play way better than them!"

When she realized that she was not supposed to involve her employer in it, Betty looked at Wise with an apologetic face.

Mr. Wise, however, did not really mind. He nodded gently to show his understanding.

"Oh, really? A random guy can play music better than me?" The two bards stood up and walked closer to them.

One of them said, "If what you said is true, I'll apologize to you. But if it's not, you have to give me some of your personal... goods... for example..." He looked straight at her body and laughed.

Betty's face flushed again. She looked at Wise again for help.

However, he was still sitting there, showing no intention to "fight" for her at all.

Betty felt rather regretful for her own words. Wise might have no idea how to actually play. After all, he mentioned that he was just heading for Korsor to study music.

Then, Betty almost burst into tears.

Lucien looked at Simon on the other side and nodded, giving him a hint with his eyes. Then, Simon's right hand slowly reached to his sword at his hips.

At this time, Wise stood up and smiled, "Although I'm still learning music and learning how to play, I would like to do Miss Betty this favor."

"I'm not gonna lend you my musical instrument," one of the bards said to him coldly.

Wise walked directly back to his tent and took out his own lap-harp from this suitcase.

When he started to play, the beautiful melody instantly caught everyone's ear and heart. Wise's song was full of feelings and every single detail was handled very well.

When his playing ended, Betty was the first one who started to applause. As she was clapping her hands joyfully, her eyes first worshipped Mr. Wise and then shifted to the two bards.

The face of the bard who made the bet with Betty turned grim. He wished he had picked on the black-haired young man who remained silent over the other side, instead of the one known as Wise.

"I apologize, then." After a short while, the bard kept his words and returned to his own campsite with his companion, where Chris was still sitting, looking rather upset.

After seeing Mr. Wise's talent, both Joanna and Simon became more enthusiastic about talking to the young man, not to mention Betty.

"Mr. Wise, can you play Mr. Evans's Canon in D major with your harp?" Betty's face was glowing with anticipation.

Wise gently nodded and started to play the music piece recomposed by Lucien, which reminded Lucien of his friends in Aalto. He decided to send them a letter through the Musicians' Association when he arrived in Korsor.

In those two months, Lucien only sent them one letter.

When Wise's playing ended, dinner was ready. Betty said to Wise directly, "Mr. Wise, if I had not fallen in love with Lucien Evans' music, I would become your music follower!"

"I think you're even better than some of the musicians in Korsor," Joanna agreed.

There was an even bigger smile on Wise's face. After all, Wise regarded the comparison between him and that talented and famous musician as a great honor.

When Wise went past Lucien, he still showed a humble smile.

"You were being really modest, Mr. Wise," Lucien said to him, also with a smile, "You played very well."

...

Deep into the night, almost all of them were sound asleep, except for two people.

The campfire stretched the shadow of a short sneaky figure that approached, making the cast darkness tremble on the background, in the rhythm of the flickering flame in the middle of the camp. Suddenly, the shadow stopped, as if it was waiting for something.

The very moment Betty yawned, the shadowy figure immediately jumped to the back side of the coach. It secretly opened the window and swiftly sneaked into it.

It was Chris, who always bragged about being a real man.

He carefully closed the coach window and stood up. A complacent smile appeared on his face. Everyone thought he was a Greatsword Warrior, whereas in fact Chris was an experienced thief, and his short figure helped him a lot at that matter.

"...Simon, Joanna, and Betty, what will happen if your employer's fancy sword is missing?" thought Chris silently in his mind. "I bet he's gonna be really, really upset."

As he turned around and looked for Lucien's sword, Chris was also excited. He knew that the fancy sword was definitely worth a lot. After selling it, he maybe would have enough money to buy a lord title.

That was what people called 'kill two birds with one stone'.

However, within the next second, Chris found out that both Lucien and his sword were missing.

"What happened?!" He had no idea.

When Chris was about to leave the coach, the fancy sword that he was looking for was pressed against his throat.

Chris shuddered and immediately knelt down.

"My lord! Please forgive me!" Chris realized that Lucien actually had the level of a real knight, or he would not be able to discover his plot.

"Right or left?" asked Lucien calmly.

"Wh... what?" Chris was sweating.

"Right hand or left hand? Which one do you want me to chop off?" Lucien repeated.

"My... my lord, please forgive me!" Chris burst out a cry, "I have information... information to tell you!!"

Chapter 139: The Invitation

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“What do you have that could interest me?” said Lucien gently with a smile.

“My lord... If you’re interested in my information, I beg you pardon me, please.” Chris almost burst into tears.

“That depends on how valuable your information is.” Lucien held his sword firmly.

“I... I got an invitation the other day,” stammered Chris.

“You got?” Lucien tilted his head a bit.

“I stole... I stole the invitation,” Chris corrected himself awkwardly, but he then explained hurriedly, “It looks like an invitation for a gathering of black sorcerers.”

“...” Lucien did not respond, although his heart suddenly missed a beat.

“My lord... It is a gathering of black sorcerers of low rank, and it’s a great chance for any knight to establish a great, heroic feat.”

“Show me the invitation.” Lucien hid his excitement and commanded sternly.

Under Lucien’s watch, Chris took out a small piece of neatly folded paper from his pocket.

“Here it is, my lord. Several days ago, a mysterious traveler came to the town and the way he spent money was pretty indulgent. So I followed him when he left the town and I witnessed that he killed a bunch of beasts which were trying to attack him, using vicious, frightful black magic!”

Lucien took the piece of paper and unfolded it with his left hand. Only with a short glance, he registered the invitation in his spiritual library:

“The second Friday in the Month of Fire, when the silver moon is in the sky, we invite you, sorcerers and sorcerer apprentices, to come to the land previously owned by Wilfred, to attend a feast of death that will be held in Carendia Castle to welcome a mister from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic.”

No salutation, no signature. It was a strange invitation. However, it sparked off Lucien’s great interest as a sorcerer himself.

Seeing that Lucien did not cut him off immediately, Chris resumed talking to provide more information to please him, “When I was following him, I didn’t realize that he was also the target of another group of adventurers. After several rounds of fighting against the beasts, they attacked the traveler. The traveler was not at a disadvantage at the beginning, since his black magic was even more powerful than they thought, until all of them got besieged by a group of robbers when they were exhausted, and both the traveler and the adventures were killed.”

Listening to Chris’s words, Lucien was quite certain that the traveler was a sorcerer apprentice.

“So you took an advantage of it and got this invitation?” asked Lucien.

“Yes... that’s right, my lord,” answered Chris obediently.

“Why you did not report to the Church, then?” The name, Wilfred, was not strange to Lucien. Wilfred was one of the several legendary-level necromancers in history, however, he was killed in the siege of the Church performed by the major cardinals, and even his Magic Tower built in a demiplane was destroyed. “And do you know anything about Carendia Castle?”

“I’m a rogue walking in darkness and shadow. If the Church found out, I would be sentenced to death on the gallows,” Chris honestly answered. “And I know nothing about this castle. In fact, I

mentioned the name of the castle to people a couple of times in Korsor in the Adventurers' Association and the Rogue Guild, but no one ever heard of this place before. I guess... My guess is that it's a code among the black sorcerers. Well... that's how we rogues do it."

Lucien was a bit disappointed, since there was just too few clues for him to locate a place in a country which was totally strange to him.

"I see. Did you ever tell this to anyone else?" A gentle smile appeared on Lucien's face.

"Never. I was still looking for a buyer." Chris gave a sigh of relief. It seemed his hands were safe now. "Serving you is my pleasure, my lord."

Lucien nodded, "Good job."

Then, Lucien directly stabbed the sword at Chris's throat without any hesitance. Chris's eyes opened wide, but he could not make a sound. His blood bubbled from his mouth and throat. Lucien calmly pulled the sword back, "You know too much."

Although Lucien did not think he would be able to find the so-called Carendia Castle, he did not want to leave any risk here for himself, just in case, especially because he did not trust Chris at all. Who knew whether this rogue would sell this information to someone else afterwards.

Although in the beginning he felt bad, Lucien had to admit that now he felt way less guilty about killing someone who could be a great danger to himself, as long as the person was not his friend or not innocent.

Chris's body hit the wood floor of the coach and made a thud.

A small cluster of flame appeared on Lucien's finger tip and quickly burned the piece of paper completely down. Then, without hesitation, Lucien opened the window of the coach and called Betty's name gently, "Betty, can you come over here?"

Although his voice was low, Betty was still taken aback.

“Mr. Evans! You scared me a bit!” Although she was complaining, there was a sweet smile on her face.

Then Betty stood up and walked toward the coach, and at this time, what was mentioned once by Joanna and Simon suddenly occurred to her: it was not uncommon to have some clients who would ask for some “extra” services if his female guard was good-looking or had a nice figure. If the client was generous enough and was not annoying to the guard, some of them, who were quite open-minded about sex, would be willing to have an intimate relationship with their clients. After all, they also had physiological needs, and there would be a decent amount of money for them.

However, Betty regarded herself as quite conservative, and although Mr. Evans was quite handsome and generous, she was still not going to agree.

When Betty was considering how to refuse Mr. Evans, the young lord said to her calmly, “A thief sneaked into the coach.”

“What?!” Betty raised her tone and immediately covered her mouth. Luckily, none of the others were woken up because of her shout. She quickly got on the coach and saw a body lying on the floor. “Chris...?! He’s a rogue?” Betty’s eyes opened wide, “Is he... dead?”

“I think so,” Lucien answered in a plain tone.

“Mr. Evans...” Betty turned around and looked at him, “You killed him?”

“Yes.” Lucien smiled, “He was trying to steal my sword, and he failed. I woke up during the process and killed him.”

Since Betty had always regarded Lucien as just a young noble who wouldn’t even dare to kill a chicken, Lucien’s reaction after killing a person and the smile on his face sort of scared her, but soon she calmed down.

“Mr. Evans, you’re stronger than I thought,” said Betty. She now believed that this young noble man sitting in front of her should be about the level of a high level knight squire.

“Can you deal with the body, Betty?” Lucien did not respond to Betty’s comment but pointed at the body on the floor.

“Of course, this is my fault... I should apologize for letting a thief sneak into your coach.” Betty lowered her head, and then looked at Lucien again with her big eyes, “...Mr. Evans, can you keep this as a secret from my sister and Simon? She would be quite disappointed and mad if she got to know that I was not doing a good job at protecting our client.”

Lucien tilted his head and smiled, “I won’t tell your sister. Just be careful. Don’t wake her up when you’re dealing with the body.”

“Thank you so much, Mr. Evans!” Betty was very grateful, since this kind of fault could be very bad for their safeguarding record in the Adventurers’ Association if the client decided to complain to the organization.

“I promise it won’t happen again!” Betty started to pull the body out of the coach. She had disliked Chris for a long time, and no guard would hold sympathy to a thief who was trying to attack his or her client.

“Wait a second, Betty.” Lucien asked, “Did you ever hear about a castle named Carendia?”

“Umm...” Betty frowned her eyebrows a bit as she was thinking, but then shook her head, “No, never.”

“I see.” Lucien nodded with a bit disappointment.

Although Betty was still a young girl, she was relatively experienced as an adventurer in her age. With great caution, she did a great job with the task given by Lucien.

In the following morning, although the other people, including the two bards, were quite surprised that Chris left the campsite without telling anyone, no one really cared. On the other hand, Betty, who felt rather grateful to Lucien for keeping her secret, was now showing more respect and enthusiasm toward him.

In the evening of the third day, the coach came arrived at a fork on

the road, whose northward road led deep into the woods to Fogtown, known by people in this area for its lumbering, and the northeastward one to a mining town named Neese.

Both roads could lead them to Korsor, although the northward one was way less busy, but also more bumpy.

Because Lena needed to go to Fogtown, they chose the northward road.

Chapter 140: Fogtown

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Although Fogtown was not very far away from that fork in the road, the bumpiness of the road made Lucien feel very nauseous. When he was just about to get off the coach to walk on his own, they could see the small town in the distance, where there were only two main streets intersecting with each other.

The guards sensed a bit of creepiness when they went deep into the woods heading for Fogtown, not to mention the people in the coach. Even Lucien, a sorcerer who was used to dealing with so many kinds of creepy experiments, could easily notice the changes happening around them. The common oaks and birches were gradually replaced by dark gray cedars, and the cedars were so tall and thick that Lucien almost felt that he was now back in Melzer Black Forest.

Even though they were not far away from the town now, the guards didn't dare to lower their alertness, especially because the trees around them were thick and tall, which were perfect for an ambush.

The roots and the knots of the big trees looked almost like ghost faces. Betty subconsciously grabbed her bow and arrow tighter, and stayed a bit closer to Lucien's coach.

“Wilfred tree...”

Through the window of the coach, Lucien recognized this tree. In fact, nothing else was really special about it except its shape, which was often creepy. It was not named Wilfred at the very beginning, but since the famous necromancer with that name had a special affection for them and planted the trees widely in the Demiplane where his Magic Tower existed, the tree was later directly named Wilfred, after the necromancer, and turned into a symbol of viciousness.

Furthermore, it was precisely because of these dark gray trees that the town looked as if it was covered with a layer of fog, and that was how the small town gained its name.

When the coach entered the town, Lucien saw a bunch of lumbermen heading home after work. Their faces were expressionless and their eyes were dim and glazed, as if all of their passion was erased by their repeated labor day after day.

“I’d rather die if my future was like that.” Betty looked back at the lumbermen and murmured to herself in an alert way.

As soon as the coach stopped in front of the only inn of Fogtown, Wise, who had been silent for quite a while, hurriedly jumped out of the coach and started to vomit.

“Are you alright, Mr. Wise?” asked Betty concernedly, “Maybe you can walk with us tomorrow. The coach must be very bumpy.”

“I’m okay.” Wise straightened his back a bit, “Thanks for asking, Betty.”

On the other side, Joanna was helping Lena and her baby get off the coach. She turned to Lucien and said, “You look fine, Mr. Evans.” Joanna smiled, “You’re actually stronger than I thought.”

“I was trying to sleep.” Lucien was not feeling really good as well. He was trying to analyze some magic structures to distract himself.

And when Joanna went past Lucien, she said to him in a low voice sweetly, “I’m not only talking about the trip. Thank you, Mr. Evans, for forgiving Betty’s negligence.”

Lucien was quite surprised, but then he nodded, “I know Betty tried her best.”

Simon, who was standing on the other side, also came over and said to Lucien in a low voice, “We wouldn’t even be able to know that you killed Chris if Betty did not cry out.”

Lucien shrugged casually and thought that Betty would definitely learn her lesson after they fulfilled the commission.

Lena, carrying the sleeping baby, walked to Lucien and handed him a Nar, “Thank you, Mr. Evans, for sharing the coach with me.”

“You’re welcome.” Lucien took the coin.

Lena smiled, “I’ll remember your kindness, Mr. Evans. I’m leaving to visit my cousin Kaelyn now.”

“May god be with you.” Lucien was now used to the phrases used in that world.

Lena slightly bent her knees and turned around. Lucien did not see that, when she turned her back to him, her face suddenly became a bit gloomy.

The direction which Lena was heading for with the baby led to a stone bridge, and behind the bridge there was a tall and big black castle. Its cross vault, pinnacle, and its solemn architectural style instantly revealed itself as a castle built in the later period of the War of Dawn.

“That is the castle of Baron Habearo. He’s the lord of Fogtown and the other villages and towns in this area.” Simon pointed at the castle and explained to Lucien, having no idea that Lucien might know more than him about the background of the place, “He was an outstanding knight when he was young, and he was known for his heroic deeds of wiping out some notorious robbers and joining the civil war among the lords in Gusta Empire. Lots of stories narrated by bards are based on his true stories, stories of a true hero.

“Unfortunately, Baron Habearo failed to make the breakthrough to become a grand knight, and his health condition declined in his early sixties. After his son left the town to travel, Baron Habearo now rarely leaves his castle. Sometimes he invites some musicians to visit the castle since I heard that he has quite an affection for music.”

“Well, heroes also get old.” Wise released a sigh, “Except for God, nothing can last forever in this world.”

“Maybe music can last long as well,” Lucien commented. In his mind, while Betty was a bit upset with Wise’s words, Lucien was not affected by the true fact much, after all, if he could become a senior rank mage, Lucien could live way longer than common people.

“Well... does anyone else knows that Mrs. Kaelyn, Lena’s cousin, is actually the wife of Baron Habearo’s steward? Wow...” Joanna switched the topic.

In Joanna and the other adventurers’ eyes, even the steward of a baron was still someone important.

...

Entering the inn, the woman standing behind the counter looked rather cold, and her eyes were also glazed, “Please register your name and date of birth if you want to stay here for the night.”

“Mrs. Branka, what happened? We’ve stayed here before, a couple of months ago. You don’t remember us?” asked Joanna, “You don’t look good.”

The last time when Joanna and Simon were here, Betty was not present, since she hid herself and squandered her commission in Korsor.

“Roy’s dead, because of illness,” Branka murmured. “He was only ten. He was summoned by God.”

“It’s just been few months since we saw Roy last time...” Joanna lowered her head, and then explained to Lucien in a low voice, “Roy is Mrs. Branka’s youngest son.”

Wise crossed himself on the chest, “May he live an eternal life in heaven.”

After mourning the deceased boy, Joanna asked the woman carefully, “Mrs. Branka, I don’t remember being asked to register our date of birth last time we were here.”

Lucien had never heard of such a requirement in any of the

countries and cities he had been to.

“This is the command of the baron. I don’t know the reason...”
Branka answered slowly.

While Lucien felt that this was pretty suspicious, the adventurers and Wise did not really care. All they wanted now was to have a good rest.

“You’re only twenty-nine, Simon,” Lucien joked. “I thought you were thirty-four or thirty-five...”

Simon indeed looked elder than his age. He scratched his head and looked at Joanna, “I know... When I got married with Joanna when I was twenty, some guests thought I was her father...”

Joanna was twenty-seven, Betty sixteen, and Wise was twenty-two.

Lucien was amused. Then, following Wise, he only left his surname on the booklet, “Evans... June 26th, 798 of the Saint Calendar.” For a moment Lucien paused a bit. He was not sure if he should leave his true birthday, the one in his original world.

“Oh my...! Mr. Evans, you’re not even eighteen!” Betty was very surprised.

Both Simon and Joanna felt the same way as well.

“I’m almost there, two days to go,” Lucien answered casually.

“You’re my idol, Mr. Evans! I hope I can become as powerful as a high level knight squire like you before I turn eighteen!” Betty’s eyes were shining with excitement.

She just revealed Lucien’s strength carelessly in front of other people.

“So, you shall receive formal knight training.” Seizing the chance, Joanna educated Betty. Since their parents died, Joanna played a role both as elder sister and mom to Betty.

...

When it was dinner time, a blond lady entered the inn with two guards following behind her. She looked around, and soon noticed Lucien and other people in the not very busy lobby.

“Excuse me, may I ask if you are Mr. Evans?” She walked to Lucien and asked with a polite smile.

“Yes, I am. What can I do for you, madam?” Lucien could sort of guess who was this lady.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Evans.” The lady nodded, “I’m Lena’s cousin, Kaelyn. I’m here to thank you for taking Lena back.”

“You’re welcome, madam. It wasn’t a big deal,” Lucien answered politely, although he felt suspicious again—shouldn’t Lena be there as well? Lena’s cousin coming here on her own with her guards to thank him was sort of weird to Lucien.

Kaelyn looked at Lucien, then Betty, and then took a step closer to Wise, “Baron Habearo asked Lena about her trip, and my cousin mentioned to the lord that there was a very talented young man who could play harp very well. I think it’s you, right? Mr. Wise?”

“I’m more than flattered, madam.” Wise slightly bowed to Kaelyn.

“Baron Habearo loves music very much, thus, he wanted to invite Mr. Wise to his castle to exchange ideas regarding music. And, of course, Lord Habearo is very interested in your traveling experience as well, Mr. Evans. I wonder if you two would like to visit the castle and be Baron Habearo’s guests?”

Before Lucien said anything, Wise smiled, “Yes, for sure. Lord Habearo is my idol... He’s a hero.”

Kaelyn nodded and turned to Lucien, “What about you, sir?”

“I just worry about my guards...” Lucien pointed at his three guards.

Since it seemed the baron was more interested in Wise’s music, Lucien felt he should be fine if he decided to go, and another important reason was that he might be able to get some information

from the baron about the castle named Carendia.

“They can come with you. It’s not a problem at all.” Kaelyn’s smile was polite and sweet, “The baron was an adventurer before, and he would like to listen to some amazing adventure stories from you.”

“We can go as well?” Both Betty and Joanna were very excited, and even Simon showed some emotion.

...

“Mrs. Kaelyn, will Lena be here tonight as well?” Betty asked when they were approaching the castle passing the stone bridge.

“She won’t. She needs rest,” answered Kaelyn shortly.

Betty was a bit disappointed, “I’m kind of missing Lena’s cute baby.”

Kaelyn did not respond, leading Lucien and other people into the castle after crossing the suspension bridge.

Chapter 141: Baron Habearo

The baron's castle was a typical representative of the architectural style in the later period of the War of Dawn. The lobby on the first floor was spacious and magnificent, and in contrast, the windows high above were narrow. In general, Lucien felt this place was dark and mysterious.

"Lord Habearo's waiting in the dining room on the second floor." Kaelyn raised her right hand and pointed at the stairs to the upper floor, "The first floor is mostly for parties and sometimes used for court."

While Lucien and Wise were behaving themselves decently, Joanna and Simon were looking around out of curiosity, not to mention Betty. They had never entered a castle before, and this one was even bigger than what castles looked like in their imagination.

After the set of stairs, they came into a long and narrow corridor. Along either side of the corridor, a line of candles partially lit up the space, and beside the candles, there were several portrayals of Lord Habearo.

"This is Lord Habearo I," explained Kaelyn. "Habearo family was first granted fief for the contribution on the War of Dawn. I heard that the Blessing of the family is powerful... something like turning themselves and their enemies into stone. I never witnessed the lord's power, though."

"Is this Blessing for close or ranged combat?" Lucien murmured subconsciously.

Hearing Mr. Evans's question, Simon became more certain that Lucien was a noble young man who received formal knight training before.

"Sorry, I'm not sure, Mr. Evans." Kaelyn smiled, "I don't know how to fight."

Lucien nodded and kept walking toward the dining room following

Kaelyn.

Although no one ever mentioned, all of them, including Lucien, felt that those vivid portrayals were staring at them from both sides of the wall.

Kaelyn pushed the door of the dining room open. The door was made of redwood, behind which the dining room was decorated in a very luxury way.

At the center of the dining room, there was a long dining table, on which lay several sets of fine porcelain tablewares. Several servants were lined up beside the table, waiting for order. On the other side of the dining room, a chamber band was playing decent music.

They were asked to hand their weapons to the guards standing beside the door. Lucien untied his sword and left Alert outside of the dining room. He did not feel concerned, since he still had a dagger with him.

The elder noble man sitting at the far end of the table stood up from the chair to welcome them. Although there were some wrinkles on his ruddy face, his hair was still black. If Lucien had not known that baron Habearo was already in his seventies, he would definitely be unable to tell this man's true age.

"Welcome, welcome!" Lord Habearo was wearing a brown robe of old style. "My guests! Your arrival has brought me, an old man, a lot of new energy!" His voice was resonant and his eyes were bright. The big, green jade ring on his right hand was quite eye-catching.

"Baron Habearo." Lucien took the lead and bowed to him.

"You must be Mr. Evans." Habearo's eyes scanned Lucien, "Um... young and elegant. Arms and legs look pretty strong." As he was talking to Lucien, Habearo was glancing at Lucien's face, chest, arms and legs.

"..." Lucien felt very uncomfortable with Habearo's comment, and he wondered if this old lord actually liked men.

Lucien was just about to directly tell the baron to stop looking at

him, but Habearo turned around and started to greet other people.

When he was greeting Betty, he started to stare at her in a lascivious manner. Betty almost rolled her eyes. As if he had realized his gaffe, Habearo apologized with an awkward smile, "Sorry for my misbehavior. I'm an old man, weak both physically and mentally. Every time I see young people, I often appreciate their youthfulness. I miss my early years very much, and I wish I could regain the fine skin, strong hands and legs again. We shall toast for youthfulness later."

"You still look very young in your age." Lucien responded, although he still had the impression the baron was very suspicious. After sitting down beside the table, Lucien laid the napkin on his legs and asked, "Lord Habearo, is your steward not around tonight?"

Lucien could not help but ask the question, since he had felt that there was something wrong there, and he was trying to figure out what it was. Without a doubt, if the master was entertaining the guests, the absence of the steward was not normal.

"Yes, Mr. Cork is out for some other business tonight." Habearo's face was partly hidden by the shadows, "If you'd like to stay here tonight, Mr. Evans, you should be able to see him tomorrow morning."

Then the baron introduced the elder man who was playing piano on the other side, "This is my music consultant, Mr. Mars, a famous musician in Korsor."

Although Mars was just in his early sixties, he looked obviously much elder than the baron.

After getting each other, Mars complained to the baron, "My lord, the musical instrument that you just bought... piano, yes, piano... is not even close to harpsichord. The sound quality is not very good."

After being invented about a year ago, now piano was gaining more popularity. Even the baron, a noble in this remote place, started to pursue the trend as well.

"It's the pedals... you did not use the pedals properly." Betty murmured.

She disliked the fact that someone was criticizing the music instrument which her favorite musician, Lucien Evans, was best at.

"Such a young lady, I think you're simply not a professional." Mars frowned, "I did use the pedals."

"I'm not professional, but Mr. Wise is!" Betty disputed, "He's a musician!"

Wise looked rather embarrassed when Mars turned to look at him.

"Well... actually, I don't understand music completely. It just so happens that I've been studying piano recently." Wise waved his hands a bit, then he started to introduce some really professional theories about this new music instrument, which confused all the people present, except Mars and Lucien.

Holding a glass of water, Lucien listened to Wise's thoughts with interest. Some of his concerns were raised by some musicians and critics over the newspapers before, but finally these concerns were all proved unnecessary by Lucien's successful playing.

"Now, the era of traditional symphony has ended. The splendid era has ended." Habearo sighed, "I still remember the thunder-like applause over that Aalto music festival many years ago, when traditional symphony established its supreme status. Mr. Christopher, Mr. Leandrino, Ms. Rania, Mr. Ionescu and all those other great musicians created a great era, and now, that era has ended, sharing the fate of every human being, who will eventually die."

"I don't think that the passing of this era is something that we shall feel regretful. Now we have brand new music styles, themes, ways of presenting, and countless possibilities lying in the potential of music. Right now music is bursting out more of its energy than ever before! What is passed is passed. We shall look to the future!" As Betty was expressing her idea about music, she totally forgot that the person sitting in front of her was a baron.

Later, all of them joined the music discussion, except Lucien. Finally, someone turned to Lucien and asked, "What's your opinion, Mr. Evans?"

He considered for a bit and said carefully, "I understand both sides. Lord Habearo missed the passing era because he was part of it, and he experienced the glory himself. Likewise, it is also reasonable that Mr. Wise and Betty, as the younger generation, would like to pursue the new trend of music."

Both Habearo and Wise nodded.

"So, I think that, although revolution and change is always unavoidable in any era, as people witnessing the changes right now in the trend, we can hardly comment whether the changes are good or not. Maybe... maybe people who live a few hundreds of years later can have a better perspective talking about the features of different music eras."

Lucien's comment summarized their discussion well. The baron sighed, "Mr. Evans' point of view is really persuasive."

However, Mars still did not want to let the topic go.

"Mr. Wise, can you play the piano for us to show me how am I supposed to utilize the pedals?"

"Yes, please, Mr. Wise!" Betty agreed with excitement.

"I also want to have a chance to appreciate Mr. Wise's playing." Habearo also nodded.

Wise had no choice but to nod, "All right. I'll try."

Lucien recognized the melody immediately when Wise started to play. It was Pathétique. Wise's performance was unexpectedly good, and everyone present was listening to it very carefully.

Lucien took a glance at the baron when Wise was playing, and he noticed that the baron's face was twitching a bit, as if he was suffering from some painful emotion, which made Lucien feel suspicious again.

As if the baron had noticed Lucien's gaze, he forced a smile on his face and leaned forward to talk to him, "Mr. Evans, do you know Mr. Wise's full name?"

"Burt Wise." Lucien disguised his suspicion.

"No wonder... Burt Wise! The talented musician who's gonna hold the concert in Korsor!"

Mars, who was standing beside them, was very surprised as well, "I thought he was just a common young man who was a music fan. It turned out that he's the most professional one among us all!"

"Really!? I... I never thought about asking Mr. Wise's full name!" Betty's eyes were shining with great excitement, "He always said that he did not really understand music, and thus I never expected that he was the famous musician, Burt Wise!"

Lucien was surprised as well.

Wise came back to his seat under warm applause. He shrugged a bit when he sat down beside Lucien.

"I mean, really, I don't really understand music." Wise smiled a little awkwardly.

Lucien was amused. He raised his glass of water to Wise, "Me neither."

...

When the dinner was about to start, the uneasy sense of foreboding in Lucien's mind started to become more and more torturing to him. Thus, Lucien found the excuse to use the bathroom and left the dining room following a servant.

Chapter 142: Lucien's Decisiveness

The finely decorated bathroom was in the corner of the dining room. Locking the wooden door from inside, Lucien did a careful check around and then took out his Morning Light crystal ball and the Grimsteel Dagger.

Lucien cut his finger with the dagger, making a drop of his blood splash onto the surface of the wash basin.

Dipping the blood with his right index finger, Lucien started to write in the air, leaving scarlet symbols floating in front of him in the shape of a relatively simple magic structure. This structure was meant to hide the magic waves that the crystal ball would cause.

The crystal ball named Morning Light slowly rose, and the strange symbols soon covered it. Lucien reached his hands out close to the crystal ball and started to murmur a mantra.

The center of the crystal ball became darker, and stars showed up all over it, as if there was a starry sky within.

This was one of the most unique spells in the school of Astrology, Horoscope.

After finding the crystal ball, based on the astrology knowledge he had as an apprentice, and also due to his previous understanding of astrophysics, Lucien soon learned Primary Horoscope. That made Lucien feel even more curious about destiny.

Staring at a shooting star in the crystal ball, Lucien frowned, "My Host Star of Destiny is... dimmer than before, which means that I'm still in potential danger. And... and the great danger is coming... it's threatening my star."

That was all the information that Lucien could collect from the crystal ball with his horoscope level. For more specific information Lucien needed a higher level of knowledge, as well as the power to cast it.

Even with a higher level of horoscope, the result wouldn't always be accurate and could still be changed.

Putting the crystal ball back, Lucien took out Fire Weaver's Bracelet and wore it on his wrist, as well as his Ice Revenger. Lucien took them off earlier before he met the baron, just in case Habearo could tell his identity.

The uneasy sense of foreboding was becoming more and more intense, which was burning Lucien's guts.

Although he was still not sure if the danger was actually from the baron, Lucien decided to take the initiative and to be decisive. He could not just wait for the danger to come at him. By then, any action would be too late to be taken.

Opening the wooden door, Lucien walked out of the bathroom as if everything was just fine.

When he came back to the dining table, both Habearo and Kaelyn were not there.

"Where did the baron and Mrs. Kaelyn go?" Lucien tried to ask in a casual tone.

"The baron was not feeling very good, and Mrs. Kaelyn just accompanied him to go back to his bedroom to take some medicine. They'll be back soon," Betty answered.

"Then I shall take a look at the baron to make sure he's fine," Lucien nodded and said coldly.

"But Mr. Evans... the baron will be back soon." Betty and the other guests were a bit surprised.

Without any further explanation, Lucien turned around and walked toward the door of the dining room.

"Mr. Evans... the baron wants us to stay here," Joanna said behind him.

"You shall stay in the dining room, like the lady said." The two

guards beside the door crossed their spears in front of Lucien and said in a polite but cold manner.

Lucien slightly nodded and smiled.

However, in the next second, Lucien suddenly pushed one of the guards away, drew his dagger and stabbed it right into the other guard's arm.

"Mr. Evans!!" Betty screamed, "What're you doing!?"

As soon as the dagger was stabbed into the guard's arm, a putrid liquid burst out instead of the expected blood, spreading a horrible smell through the room.

Lucien's movement was very swift. He pulled the dagger out and cut the guard's throat open while he rolled forward on the floor to avoid the spear of the other guard.

Evans... Mr. Evans... killed the baron's guard.

All of the guests were startled.

But soon they found that Mr. Evans was covered with a layer of white light. After Lucien managed to kill the other guard, the two bodies started to rot in a visible speed as if they were dead since long ago.

"This is..." Simon murmured subconsciously.

Lucien took back his Alert and answered calmly, "This is a husk."

And then he turned to Mars, "Mr. Mars, do you know where the baron's bedroom is?"

Mars was already shaking all over from what he just witnessed. He was not able to respond to Lucien properly until Joanna suddenly patted him on his back.

As soon as Mars uttered where the baron's bedroom was, Lucien quickly made the arrangement, "Simon, you deal with the guards from the upper floor. Make sure you take care of Mr. Wise and Mr.

Mars. Betty and Joanna, you watch the stair on the other side."

After seeing that they nodded subconsciously, Lucien quickly rushed out of the door and disappeared into the shadows.

"Mr. Evans... He has the power of a knight?" Betty cried out.

"Betty, get your bow and come here!" Simon commanded.

...

Lucien was running at full speed in the dark corridor. After killing several husks, Lucien stopped a few steps away from the baron's bedroom.

Staring at the door, Lucien activated Sun's Corona and released the magic waves which were extremely detrimental to undead creatures. The four husks guarding the bedroom were instantly purified and fell to the ground.

At the same time, Lucien banged the door open with all his strength, tightly holding Alert and the Grimsteel Dagger.

A couple of black magic circles showed up in front of the door but immediately broke into shining pieces.

When the door was knocked open, Lucien quickly stopped the momentum to prevent himself from running into anything by accident, and simultaneously activated a magic structure in his soul and summoned two black magic missiles.

In the bedroom, Baron Harbearo, whose face was covered with deep and horrible wrinkles, was sitting in the center of a black magic triangle. His appearance indicated his condition was worsening and he was about to die at any moment.

On the tips of the triangle, three figures were tied up by black, half-transparent tentacles. A baby, a seven or eight-years-old kid, and a teenager of thirteen or fourteen.

There was white light coming out of their bodies, as if the tentacles were sucking up their vital energy. The light was being infused into

a white eyeball that had no pupil. Kaelyn stood beside the baron, enchanting some kind of weird spell. Being driven by her spell, there were two lines of tears of blood coming out of the eyeball and falling into the silver cup in Habearo's hand.

However, to the baron's great surprise, the two magic missiles flew right toward his silver cup.

Chapter 143: The Hunts

Completely out of the baron's expectation, the silver cup in his hand was shattered by the magic missiles, and the broken pieces fell onto the thick carpet.

The baron and Kaelyn were totally startled. They did not understand what was going on there.

Seizing the chance, Lucien cast Palmeira's Frost Blades, and three icy blades were shot straight at the baron.

When the blades were about to hit the baron, Habearo released an angry roar and fiercely reached out his fossilized right fist to punch one of the blades, while at the same time he put his left hand on his neck to protect himself, since it had turned into stone as well.

One of the blades was smashed by the baron's stone fist, but by then the other two blades hit him — one in his left arm and one in his leg. Although they did not cause much damage, the ice temporarily froze him on the spot.

When Lucien was about to cast another spell, a black magic ray directly hit the invisible Star Shield covering him. As soon as the shield was hit, the previously invisible shield radiated star light and protected the person within it.

Lucien did not expect that Kaelyn was actually a sorcerer apprentice!

Although Kaelyn's spell was not powerful enough to hurt Lucien, a real sorcerer, it bought time for the baron to get rid of the ice.

In the next moment, the layer of ice covering Habearo collapsed, and then the stone-man rushed straight at Lucien. Although Habearo wanted to get his sword on the desk to the side, he decided to launch the attack immediately, in order to leave the sorcerer no time to cast any spell.

Habearo's dusty and fossilized fist hit Lucien's Star Shield bitterly,

and the shield cracked. Being experienced in fighting with sorcerers, Habearo changed the angle of his attack.

Lucien did not panic. Making the best use of the time the shield granted him before shattering to pieces, Lucien cast the first circle spell, Sleep.

Surrounding Lucien, green light waves expanded outward in circles.

As soon as the light waves touched Kaelyn, her eyes became languid, and then, right in the middle of the fighting, she yawned and fell on the floor to start sleeping.

Even strong as Habearo's stone body was, he was heavily struck by a sense of tiredness, as if he was experiencing a sudden process of aging, and his movement also paused a bit.

Within this pause, a bright light showed up above Lucien's left hand, and he threw a head-sized fireball at the baron.

Although Habearo's instinctive reaction freed him from the tiredness instantly, it was still too late for him to fully avoid the fire ball.

Together with the explosion of the fire ball, Habearo's right arm was devoured by the fire. The blast fiercely threw the three dead bodies, the baby, the young boy and the teenager, away to the other side of the room.

Some kind of mix of festered and stinky blood came out of the baron's stone body, and what was even more shocking was that Habearo's face started to age very fast.

Completely mad, Habearo screamed and rushed at Lucien again, with his remaining limbs.

Using Alert to block the baron's attack, Lucien could see that even his sword was surrounded by stone dust as if the sword would turn into stone soon.

Before Habearo's power did any real damage to the sword, Lucien activated Sun's Corona.

A beam of holy light was summoned and directly struck the baron.

"Holy light?!" Habearo cried out.

The light was burning the baron's skin and finally peeled off the stone covering his body. Seeing that his own body was rotting in a visible speed, the baron looked very scared, but then, became calm and relieved.

Bathing in the holy light, aging and dying in the holy light, he murmured as if he was dreaming, "My skin was losing its glory, like dried fruit...

"My face was fully covered with wrinkles, and so did my body...

"My strength and agility were fast declining and could never come back again...

"I couldn't see beautiful sceneries, couldn't taste cuisines...

"My passion was fading... even having a young beautiful woman in my arms was..."

Hearing his words, Lucien frowned, but the baron continued, "Why people age?

"Why when people age, all the happiness is gone?

"Where's God's heaven?"

Although Lucien couldn't really understand the pain of aging, he was still sort of shocked. And he was sort of grateful that he chose the sorcerer path, so he could still have a chance to live longer than common people.

After someone became a senior-rank mage, he or she could make it over two hundred years old, and a sorcerer or sorceress could still turn to magic rituals and potions to further prolong their lifespan, such as Lich Conversion, although many of them died during the process.

Even middle or junior mage could also find assorted ways to live

longer.

The baron's eyes slowly closed. His sinful life finally ended.

Lucien felt rather lucky that he decisively made up his mind and took action in time, since if the baron had completed his ritual and recovered his power of a level two knight, that would probably be the end of Lucien.

However, after killing the baron, the uneasy sense of foreboding was still lingering above Lucien's mind. What he felt mostly suspicious was the reason why, even toward the end of the fight, Habearo never cast any necromantic spell.

Lucien's brows frowned, since he knew that there was only one possible explanation for this: The baron himself was not a necromancer, and it was someone else who was instigating and enticing Habearo to use young lives to keep his own youthfulness using black magic.

So, after binding Kaelyn's arms, Lucien woke her up.

As soon as Kaelyn opened her eyes, she saw a pair of black pupils in which there was a starry sky. Lucien used his hypnosis on her.

"Mr. Evans, what do you want me to do?" asked Kaelyn, like a little girl speaking to someone she admired. She just completely ignored the loud fighting sound on the other side of the castle.

To be more specific, what Lucien was using right now was the first circle spell called Charm Person, which could control a person's mind whose spiritual power was less strong than the spellcaster's. Unless the given order conflicted greatly with the will of the person being controlled, in most cases, the person who got controlled would just follow the spell caster's orders.

"Tell me, who taught you magic, and who taught the baron the black ritual?" asked Lucien directly.

"My husband, Hunt, or say, the baron's steward, Mr. Cork." Kaelyn smiled, as if she was very glad that she could provide any useful information to Lucien, "Several years ago, when he was invited to

be the baron's civil official, Hunt started to teach Habearo to use the power of the death of young lives to extend his own life, and at the same time, he could use the dead bodies for his experiments afterwards. In order to better disguise what they were doing, Hunt became the baron's steward."

"Cork... Hunt... Kaelyn Hunt...?!" Lucien was quite shocked, "Are you the Hunts from Bonn?"

Kaelyn Cork was actually Mrs. Hunt, who Lucien was looking for to fulfill his promise to the revenant girl.

What happened to them, Lucien wondered.

As soon as Lucien mentioned Bonn, Kaelyn's mood started to become very unstable, and her great emotional pain freed her from Lucien's spell, "How do you know we were from Bonn?! Who are you!"

"People in Bonn told me that Mrs. Hunt was a nice and beautiful lady, who was always willing to offer help, especially taking care of kids. Why have you become like this? Why are you helping your husband to kill other kids?" Lucien did not answer her questions directly.

Kaelyn was shocked, as if Lucien's words stabbed her in the heart, and a few seconds later she started to laugh like she was crazy, "I... I was nice and beautiful? I was willing to help people? Hahahaha... You see what I got from my kindness? My daughter got kidnapped and she's been missing for ten years, and my husband turned into a monster. Now, when I see how heartbroken these parents become when they lose their kids, I feel I have companions who can understand my pain!"

"Where is Hunt, then..." Lucien remained calm.

"He's doing an experiment in the cemetery," Kaelyn sneered. "Hunt was too busy, and your sword made the baron decide to be more careful with you, or we'd just have killed you, instead of preparing some stupid dinner."

"Experiment..." Hearing that, Lucien had a really bad feeling about it.

"Hunt's a monster now. He is still as mysterious and powerful as he was, but he's no longer a considerate man, as he once was in Bonn." Kaelyn murmured, as if she was talking to herself.

"Mysterious and powerful..." Lucien suddenly realized that he made a wrong assumption before. He had thought that Hunt turned into a necromancer when he arrived in this land, which was known for the past prevalence of necromancers, however, it seemed like Hunt was already a necromancer when he was in Bonn!

"Knock, knock, knock..." Something was gently knocking at the window.

When Lucien looked back, what he saw shocked him. There was a gray owl standing outside of the bedroom window, or, to be more specific, it was a dead owl, since its whole body was basically rotten and its white bones were exposed to the air.

As Lucien was staring at it, the owl also looked at Lucien and Kaelyn with its cold eyes, but kept knocking at the window with its beak.

Chapter 144: The Burning Cemetery

Chapter 144: The Burning Cemetery

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Two magic missiles broke the window and flew directly toward that creepy-looking owl.

The gray owl did not move, but some kind of black gas instantly covered it. The magic missiles strongly disturbed the gas surrounding it.

As if the owl just realized that the person who was talking to Kaelyn was an enemy instead of a friend, the owl opened its beak and started to scream, although no sound was produced.

All of a sudden, lots of black tentacles crawled out from the carpet. As soon as they touched Lucien's body, Lucien felt a mix of numbness, weakness and pain.

Lucien had never experienced that before. Among all the apprentice spells and first circle spells, he never found anything that had this mixed effects. Even the second circle spell, Ghoul Touch, could only numb and hurt people at the same time to some extent.

So Lucien guessed that it was a special necromantic magic.

Remaining calm, Lucien activated the bracelet and easily got rid of the tentacles with the spell enchanted within, Flame Shield.

Being surrounded by the flame to defend himself from the countless black tentacles, Lucien saw that they were accumulating by the door, making it impossible for him to escape. Changing his mind, he turned himself into a streak of moonlight and rushed at the gray owl with his sword.

The owl flew up as Lucien directly broke through the window and started to rapidly fall from that floor. However, instead of heavily hitting the ground, Lucien's fall slowed down, like that of a feather.

First circle magic, Feather Fall.

When Lucien was close to land, he heard a crazy laughter coming from the cemetery close by, “Hahaha! I’m almost there! Just one more step! Kaelyn, Kaelyn... where are you?!”

As the laughter was getting closer and closer, Lucien saw the creepiest thing that he had ever encountered: Lucien could barely tell from the creature’s face that it had been a human in the past, however, the other parts of its body were just rotten flesh, from which disgusting eyeballs, lips and pale arms were growing out of its body. Furthermore the thing was surrounded by some kind of gray gas that was blighting and killing the plants that it passed by.

As soon as the monster noticed Lucien, it released a bitter scream. Those black tentacles grew out again on the ground and crazily reached toward Lucien.

Seeing this monster, Lucien almost threw up. He immediately activated Death Resistance, a level two divine spell within Sun’s Corona, and was quickly surrounded by a layer of white light, which could protect him greatly from necromantic power.

The black tentacles were frightened, as if they were facing their biggest bane, which bought Lucien some time to safely land and adjust his position to hack at the monster. Lucien was pretty much certain that it was Hunt.

What Lucien did not expect was that, as Hunt pointed at his sword Alert, the sword hacked backwards at Lucien and left a deep wound on his shoulder.

It was the first circle necromantic spell, Back Bite.

Taking a deep breath from the pain, Lucien grabbed the sword again and activated the magic structure in his soul. Instantly, a layer of oil covered Hunt and extended to the ground.

First circle spell, Oil.

Taking a step ahead, Hunt almost fell over. So he stopped and started to use some ranged spells to attack Lucien.

Negative Energy Ray, Shriveling, Chill Touch, Enfeeblement Ray... All these spells were attacking Lucien crazily as if there was no buffering time at all. However, Lucien had learned quite a lot from the tactics that Aaron and Habearo used to fight against a sorcerer. He kept moving around, leaving no chance for Hunt to target him. Although a few times he failed to fully avoid them, the level two spell Death Resistance could still protect him to some degree.

Hunt had completely turned into a monster, a monster that did not reason much during a fight. As he was casting the spells one by one without much interval, the eyeballs, lips and arms started to fall from his rotten flesh.

The monster got furious. As Hunt released a deafening scream, black waves burst out surrounding him. Third circle necromantic spell, and also an area spell, Negative Energy Explosion.

Lucien had nowhere to hide from the black waves. So he had no choice but to use the last chance of activating Flame Shield in Fire Weaver's Bracelet to resist.

Although the flame was as bright as the sun, it was soon eliminated by the black waves. Thanks to Lucien's another layer of protection, Death Resistance, inside of the shield of flame, Lucien barely survived that ranged attack.

After casting this powerful spell, Hunt was temporarily still from the overconsumption of his power. He needed some time to recover.

At this time, Lucien cast Oil again, covering Hunt and the place he stood with a second layer of oil.

However, when Lucien was about to attack Hunt again, three magic missiles flew directly at him.

It was the gray owl. While its owner could not cast any spell, Hunt's summoned familiar distracted Lucien.

Dodging aside swiftly, Lucien avoided the missiles, however, he didn't dare to stop moving. Lucien had no idea what spell was useful right now to kill this filthy thing up in the sky except Magic

Missile, but as the owl was flying around, it was also not easy for Lucien to target it. Besides, the owl was protected by Death Shield, and Lucien would have to hit it several times with his missiles to break it down.

“I should’ve learned how to summon a flying familiar as well...” Lucien thought to himself when he was moving around, trying to break the owl’s magic shield with magic missiles.

When Lucien was about to throw his dagger toward this filthy evil bird when its shield was almost gone, Hunt started to move again.

“Damn it!” Lucien burst out a swear when he saw that, as the rotten chunks of flesh started to fall from Hunt’s body again, on the other side, there were bodies climbing out of the graves. Some of them were skeletons, while others were partially rotten... All of them were waking up and dragging themselves out of the black soil. Furthermore, there were even several revenants floating in the air.

Lucien was their target. Like a tsunami, they were coming at him.

Lucien’s heart was beating fiercely. He did not know what to do for a second — should he kill the owl first, or deal with the army of bodies and revenants?

Suddenly, an arrow shining green light shot fiercely out of the castle and directly punched a hole through the owl’s eye.

It was Betty, followed by Joanna and Simon. After beating all the husks, they found two precious standard bows in the castle. When they rushed to come to help Lucien, they saw the big crowd of walking corpses surrounding Lucien, and a creepy dead owl flying around and attacking him.

The owl started to scream, and it switched its target to Betty. At the same time, Joanna shot another arrow that went directly through the owl’s other eye.

With the owl no longer interrupting him, Lucien cast Oil for the third time and activated Sun’s Corona to face the approaching corpses.

White holy light burst out from Lucien's body and extended in all directions. The light was so bright that half of the night sky was lit up.

Like mighty surging waves, the holy light overwhelmed the skeletons, the rotten bodies, and the revenants. Being washed out by the white light, they started to collapse, turning into piles of bones and flesh. The scene was literally shocking.

"Mr. Evans... Mr. Evans is a Saint Knight!" Betty cried out, "That's his power!"

There were only a few zombies and skeletons still struggling and screaming on the ground, but Hunt had already recovered some of his power. The monster opened his mouth again and was ready to cast another Negative Energy Explosion. However, that was too late for Hunt.

"Hunt!!" It was Kaelyn's voice. She was screaming at the top of her lungs.

Simon got her, pretending that he was about to throw her out of the window.

Hearing the familiar voice, Hunt slightly turned his head to the side and stared at Kaelyn, although most of his consciousness was already gone.

Seizing the chance, Lucien threw the big fireball summoned directly toward the monster.

"Bang!!!" The sound of explosion was deafening. Being covered with oil, Hunt instantly blew apart and his rotten flesh, eyeballs, and arms fell all over, making disgusting, sticky, jelly-like sound.

The remaining major part of Hunt was still writhing on the ground like a moving torch. The burning parts that flew out of his body ignited the other bodies and bones on the ground. The whole cemetery ended up in a horrible fire.

Betty, Simon and Joanna were totally shocked.

Turning around, Lucien directly threw his dagger at the owl and the weapon pierced through its head.

The owl fell to the ground and could not move anymore.

“Hunt!!!” Kaelyn screamed her husband’s name and struggled to free herself from Simon’s control. She jumped right through the window and fell hard on the ground.

Dragging her legs, Kaelyn slowly crawled toward the fire with all her effort.

Chapter 145: Hunt's experimen

When the chunks of rotten flesh and limbs covering Hunt on the outside were burned down to ashes, the original look of the man was revealed. Both of his legs and one arm were missing, but his eyes once again looked like that of a human being.

Moaning, Hunt was crawling toward Kaelyn, dragging his remaining body with parts of it still being burned by the fire.

Lucien took out a glass tube filled with white ashes and handed it to Kaelyn, and then he carried Kaelyn closer to her husband.

"This is..." Kaelyn's heart missed a beat. Surprisingly, the ashes in the small glass tube felt familiar to her, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Is that... Mary?" Hunt's voice trembled from both pain and shock, "Kaelyn... It's Mary... our daughter..."

"Mary was trapped in a magic lock. Before she died, she asked me to take her home." Lucien explained shortly. He did not mention how Mary spent the last days of her life in the World of Souls, where there was no food, no color and no life at all. That was too much for the parents.

Hunt's lips moved a bit, but made no sound. Then, he burst into tears.

"The magic... lock..." Hunt cried with pain, not from his body, but his heart, "I knew it was the magic lock...it consumed more than twenty years of my life, and also took Mary away from me."

Lucien remained silent. He had the feeling that Hunt knew something about Mary's disappearance, and his guess turned out to be correct.

Kaelyn choked with sobs. Pulling the cork out of the tube, she scattered Mary's ashes on her chest and pulled the rest of it in her mouth. Then she hugged her husband tightly. The fire on Hunt's

body was now burning her as well.

"Mr. Evans, thank you. At least we can reunite before we die," said Kaelyn. Then she hugged Hunt's head in her arms and kissed his forehead with her lips covered with Mary's ashes.

Looking at the couple in the fire, Lucien's mood was heavy. He did not know what to say.

"We... we should've taken Mary with us... we shouldn't have stayed in Bonn... We should... should have come back to Djibouti... my hometown." Hunt hugged Kaelyn, clearly dying.

"I've always loved you, all the time," Kaelyn said to him. "I love you and our daughter, no matter where we are," she added in a low voice.

"Me... too." Hunt's consciousness was fading, "I wish... I've never... learned... ma..."

He did not manage to finish his sentence expressing his regret. Kaelyn closed her eyes and hugged him tight, and then ended her own life with a small dagger in her dress.

...

When the two bodies were almost burned into ashes by the fire, a cold wind blew away the smoke. Gleams of white light appeared in the sky, and the light joined together.

The figure of the little girl, Mary, appeared in the night sky, and she was still sweet and cute. Hunt and Kaelyn were standing behind her, although their figures were quite blurry.

Mary's lips were moving silently, and only Lucien could hear her voice, "Thank you. Thank you for taking me home. Finally, I found my mom and dad."

Then, their figures turned into gleams of light again and disappeared in the wind. At the same time, some light lingered around Lucien's left hand and a white tear-shaped mark on it was left on his skin.

Lucien still had the protection from Death Resistance, but he was still surrounded by the rotten gas left by the countless bodies in the area that were affecting him. However, when the mark appeared on Lucien's hand, he immediately felt refreshed.

It was a gift from the family, a constant protection for Lucien to stay away from the detrimental effects brought by the undead, to some extent.

In order to find some more information about necromantic spells, Lucien decided to find Hunt's necromantic lab, which, according to Kaelyn's words, should be right in the cemetery.

"You deal with the rest of the husks in the castle!" Lucien turned around and said to Betty, Joanna and Simon upstairs loudly, "I need to make sure there's nothing evil left in the necromancer's lab!"

"Yes, Mr. Evans!" The three of them answered together, as they all regarded Lucien as a powerful Saint Knight who was responsible for eliminating evil sorcerers across the continent.

Although Lucien was quite sure that none of them could tell the difference between sorcerer spells and divine power, he decided to make sure of it by checking his three guards' mind later using Charm Person.

He could never be too careful when hiding his identity.

...

In the burning cemetery, the door of the lab was open. It seemed that, when his experiment succeeded, Hunt immediately ran outside of the lab to inform Kaelyn of this good news.

Although Lucien was relatively prepared to what he may see inside, when he actually entered the lab, he was still on the verge of throwing up, since the whole lab was like a small slaughterhouse: many human bodies lay around the place, while most of them were babies, young kids and teenagers. The bodies were cut into chunks and the organs were placed in categories on the lab operation table.

Hunt's desk was beside the operation table, on which an upside

down tree was carved, and that was one of the most well-known symbols of the school of Necromancy—Reversed Tree of Life. There were ten circles on the top of the ten branches of the tree, but there was nothing in the circles.

Something that Lucien thought was a rectangular box at his first glance turned out to be a small coffin.

After a careful check, Lucien opened the coffin. To his great surprise, it was Mary who was in it. The Mary inside of the coffin looked around seven or eight years old, and her cheeks slightly flushed as if she was just sleeping. Lucien gently touched her face, it was soft and supple.

Being certain that Mary's real body had been burned to ashes by him, Lucien realized what Hunt's experiment was. The purpose of Hunt collecting the bodies of babies and young kids was for making a human body, but clearly he failed.

Rummaging around, Lucien found two books in the corner. One looked like a notes, and the other was pretty thick, on which there were words: Book of Necromancy.

Quickly leafing through both the book and the notes, Lucien first made a copy of them in his spiritual library, and then started to read Hunt's notes carefully,

"According to the info on the magic tower, Bonn, this small town in Orvarit, is part of a mysterious magic ruin which is protected by a magic lock, and it is possibly related to the whereabouts of the several legendary archmages. One of them was the well-known necromancer Wilfred's close friend—the Prophet, Waldo · K · Maskelyne. And I bet there're lots of magic items and treasures!"

...

"Bonn is even more beautiful than I thought. Residents here are friendly and traditional. And the girl named Kaelyn... she is gorgeous."

...

"Why I just can't find the magic lock? What kind of magic lock is it? I wonder if it is one that was designed by Maskelyne in person."

...

"I can't find any clue, even from the background of the missing town residents. Maybe it's time for me to give up, but I also don't want to tear her away from Bonn. Maybe... maybe I shall tell her my true identity."

...

"I have a baby girl now, and I'm a dad now! Kaelyn and I want to name her Mary. I don't really care about necromantic spells, the experiment jointly conducted by Maskelyne and Wilfred, or the magic lock and all those kinds of things anymore. Nothing's more important than my wife and my little girl!"

...

"Mary's been missing for three days. I'm sure that I've killed all the wild beasts in this area. I have no idea where my girl could have gone... I don't know... whether it was because of the magic lock? Impossible... After so many years... That's ridiculous!"

...

"My dear Mary, where are you? We miss you so much. Please... please come back, dad is begging you..."

...

"Kaelyn is crying everyday. I think we need a new environment to live. And I need a better environment for studying necromantic power again to see if we can find Mary. If anything bad really happened to her... I shall try to bring her back to life."

...

"The baron in Fogtown finally killed his own son to prolong his own life! Now both of us get what we want. He can keep his youthfulness for another several years, and I can start my

experiment now!"

...

"Why my body start to smell like a corpse? Is this the revenge from the dead? I can hear that bitter crying all the time... I need to hurry... When I become a middle-rank necromancer, the pain in the body will never bother me anymore!"

...

"I can't make it... Third circle necromancer is a target that I can never reach. I can't let my body rot away like this. Maybe I shall try the ritual written in the book named 'Body Sewing', and I shall start to make Mary's body as well."

...

"Making Mary's body is really costly, and I've spent all my money. Although I don't want to, I have to pledge my only magic item to continue the experiment. Anyway... if I can successfully turn myself into a 'Sewed Body', I will be able to use the third circle magic spells directly. I won't need the item anymore."

...

"He sent me an invitation, talking about some Feast of Death... the Congress of Magic. Maybe I should go if my ritual turns out to be successful. But where's Carendia Castle? I need to write a letter to ask."

...

"The baron is getting greedier and greedier. Now he's not only targeting at the kids on his territory, but also seeking for a fresh body of an underage knight to replace his own body. What he's thinking? He thinks it's that easy to find an underage knight? Nonsense... When my experiment is complete, I'll take Kaelyn and Mary away from Fogtown, before what the baron's doing attracts the attention of the Church."

...

"Carendia Castle... I never expected it would be there. Deep in the mountain named Aronne next to Korsor. Interesting. I wonder why they picked such a place."

This information really surprised Lucien. He never expected that he would find the location of the castle in Hunt's notes, and the invitation was also in between the two pages.

The rest of the note was mostly about the Body Sewing ritual and the record of the process of making Mary's body. The statistics and the records were precious to Lucien.

Picking up the other book, Book of Necromancy, Lucien roughly browsed through it. The book was left by one of Wilfred's students, the legendary necromancer, and it recorded most of the necromantic spells and rituals taught by Wilfred, but there was nothing related to how Wilfred made the breakthrough and became the legendary archmage, being respected as the Great Master of Paleness, which was quite unfortunate for Lucien.

Finding no other valuable items in the lab, Lucien took the invitation with him and left the place, and then set the lab on fire, burn it to the ground.

Staring at the great flame burning all the dead bodies, including the Mary's, into ashes, Lucien slowly turned around, and different thoughts filled his mind, "Ancient necromancers believed that the body of a human being who died before coming of age is the best and the purest material for conducting necromantic rituals and spells, that's why the baron was so obsessed with young human bodies.

"But why Maskelyne, the great legendary Astrology sorcerer, would conduct an experiment with Wilfred, the Great Master of Paleness, from the school of Necromancy? And it seems to be a mysterious and significant one..."

Chapter 146: After the Figh

Chapter 146: After the Fight

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

As soon as Lucien went back to the baron's castle, in a corridor he saw Joanna walking toward him with a greatsword in her hands.

"Lord Evans," Joanna showed her deep respect to him, "All the husks here have been eliminated."

In fact, she was to some extent upset with Lucien for involving them in this dangerous fighting without even telling them what they should expect. Actually, even Lucien himself did not expect a bitter fight like this.

Lucien nodded to Joanna and asked her calmly, "Anyone else still alive in the castle except Mars? Is everyone all right?"

Joanna would not easily reveal her dissatisfaction toward Lucien, but she answered seriously, "Except Mr. Mars, there's no one alive in the castle. They're all husks. Simon is dealing with some chaos happening in Fogtown right now... It might have been caused by some escaping husks. Mr. Mars and Wise are still hiding in the storage room. Betty is vomiting in the bathroom."

"Is what?" Lucien's left hand grabbed a handful of casting reagent.

Joanna put a look of disgust on her face, "We found something in the kitchen, looking like the dinner we were about to 'enjoy'... There were rotten flesh, eyeballs, tongues, fingers... all covered with maggots."

As she was speaking, she almost threw up as well.

Lucien nodded. It seemed that the baron was about to serve them food with ptomaine to make them sick first before revealing his real intention. Under the disguise of magic, common people could not tell what that food really was, but when the spell casters died, the

camouflage was gone as well.

“I see. Thank you, Joanna.” Lucien took a step forward to Joanna and said to her in a low voice, “Please don’t call me lord. I do not have any title.”

Joanna looked up subconsciously and directly caught Lucien’s charming eyes. Instantly, Joanna fell into a dream where there were countless shining stars.

“Yes, Mr. Evans,” Joanna answered obediently.

Lucien checked her memory about the fight they just had and found nothing that could potentially reveal his identity, but he still made some tiny adjustments with Joanna’s memory.

“I’m fine here. Go to find Simon and help him, Joanna... can you?” Lucien dismissed the spell affecting her.

Joanna was suddenly startled and her checks immediately flushed. She could not believe that she was just standing there, staring blankly at Mr. Evans’ face, and felt that he was so charming that she could not move her eyes away.

“Sure... yes, sure... I’m going right now.” Joanna quickly touched her face with her hands and turned around, heading for the gate of the castle.

After Joanna left, Lucien adjusted the memory of the rest of people one by one and erased any evidence of magic in the fight in the baron’s room.

...

Under the dim light provided by the candles placed around the living room of the castle, Lucien said to Simon, Betty and Joanna, “Thank you for helping Fogtown, and, of course, thank you for helping me. As a convention, you take one tenth of the baron’s wealth, and I shall take one third. The rest of his belongings should be handed to Viscount Stanley and the Church.”

Lucien still wanted to maintain his identity in their mind as a

knight, and that was why he did not take all the baron's stuff on his own. Besides, he also felt a bit sorry that he involved his guards in far more danger than what they would commonly encounter.

The baron's place was actually not that full of jewelry and gold as most people would think. Except for the castle, the manor and the land that Habearo owned, there was only sixty Thales left in the baron's place and a level two greatsword of extraordinary quality named Rock, since Habearo needed to handle the expenses generated by Hunt's experiments, buy babies and kids, maintain his luxury lifestyle, and pay for different things to hide his sinful behavior.

"That's about... six Thales!" Simon's eyes were full of excitement.

"No, it should be twenty Thales," Lucien corrected him.

"What?! That's... that's too much, Mr. Evans. How does that work?" Simon's pitch rose.

"According to the convention, the value of the greatsword, Rock, should be calculated into the whole value as well. I'll say the sword is about a hundred and forty Thales based on its level." Lucien explained. Although he did consider keeping the sword to himself, it turned out that the sword was too heavy for Lucien.

"Thank you so much! That's so generous of you, my lord!" Joanna cut in with a big smile on her face, "Although I know that we did not really help much, we all need money to receive formal knight training, especially Betty."

Twenty Thales was for sure a lot of money for them. For Joanna, Simon and Betty, their whole year income was not even close to ten Thales.

Lucien smiled and nodded. After they put the money in their own pockets, Lucien said to them, "I can teach Betty some knight training skills before we get to Korsor. You two can watch as well."

On one hand, Lucien appreciated their help, and on the other hand, when the Church questioned them, which was very likely to happen

after he killed the baron, the idea that he at least know something about formal knight training could possibly hide his real identity.

“Really!?” Betty was so excited that she almost burst out a scream, “Thank you so much, Mr. Evans!”

Joanna and Simon were very surprised with Lucien’s generosity. Except for saying ‘thank you’ to Lucien over and over again, they did not know how to express their gratefulness.

Lucien waved his hand, “I’m actually not a Saint Knight, and not even a noble. I once served a princess, and my power mostly comes from my divine items and magic items granted by the princess, which is not really my power. I hope you three can keep my power as a secret to avoid unnecessary trouble.”

“For sure, Mr. Evans,” they answered.

“Very well.” Lucien nodded and said to them, “The fight was intense and I need to get some rest now. Do not let anyone disturb me tonight, please, even including you three. I’ll try to recover by tomorrow morning, and tomorrow we’re heading for Wolftown to report to the Church.”

All of the priests here in Fogtown had been turned into husks by Hunt’s necromantic power, so they needed to visit the nearby town to find the priests there.

“Yes, Mr. Evans!” The three guards answered cheerfully.

...

The night was getting darker. Lying in the bed in one of the guest rooms in this evil castle, Lucien remained rather calm and thoughtful.

Switching the invitation which Hunt received between his hands back and forth, Lucien was planning something important tonight.

By comparing the invitation in his hand with the one that he saved in his spiritual library provided by Chris, Lucien noticed that the only difference between the two was that there was a small symbol

of Reversed Tree of Life on the former invitation, while a black hexagram on the latter one. His guess was that the symbols were corresponding to the identities of the invitees for security concern.

“Black hexagram represents... sorcerer apprentice, and the reversed tree represents a necromancer... Then how can I get in there?” Lucien murmured to himself silently.

In fact, Lucien had a plan in his mind, but the plan was so risky that he could not make up his mind right now.

Also, Lucien was almost certain that the time and location of this gathering would be changed after Hunt's death, after all, he was a level two necromancer who received formal invitation. And this meant that Lucien needed to find the clues as soon as possible, or he would definitely miss the gathering.

Making another divination with his crystal ball, the result was very blurry and of no help at all.

Lucien's brows frowned. He knew that he had to take another risk again.

Although it would take the coach more than seven days to get to Korsor from Fogtown if it followed the rugged mountain road, cutting corners through woods and cliffs using a knight's speed could save a lot of time, and Lucien was confident that he could get to Carendia castle within three hours on his own.

Opening his suitcase, Lucien put on his black robe and then sneaked out of the castle through the window.

Chapter 147: The Castle

Chapter 147: The Castle

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Close to the lake, there was an old castle covered with thick vines standing beside a precipitous cliff, and the high towers of the grand castle were so tall that they almost looked like aged, big cedars in the darkness.

Staring at the castle from afar, Lucien took a deep breath and put both Ice Revenger and Mo, the ring that had once belonged to Natasha's mother, on his left hand. He carefully turned the word, Mo, carved on the ring toward the inside of his hand.

Facing unknown dangers, the powerful and mysterious sorcerers and necromancers, Lucien needed to utilize everything he had to protect himself.

Trying to stay focused, Lucien was ready to cast spells at any time. So, he slowly walked out from behind a big rock where he was hiding and headed for the gloomy castle.

The cool night wind in June drove away the heat in the day, and the surroundings were quiet, except for the crickets' chirping.

Lucien safely came in front of the thick wooden gate of the castle. Raising his arm calmly, Lucien knocked at the gate.

After a while, the great gate slowly opened. Lucien heard the coarse sound from the friction between the wood and the ground.

Although the gate appeared to be too heavy for even two to three male adults to open, a senior man wearing a white shirt and black suit easily pulled out the door and said to Lucien in standard continental common tongue, "Who're you, sir? Why are you here?"

Seeing that the person opening the gate did not directly try to kill him, Lucien's nervousness was half relieved. So, he lowered his head and said to the senior man politely, "You must be the steward

of the castle, sir. Nice to meet you. I'm a sorcerer traveling through Djibouti right now."

Lucien paused a bit and quickly took a glance at the facial expression of the old steward, and then continued seriously, "A bunch of robbers tried to rob me outside Dragon Tooth town, and I killed all of them. What surprised me was that I found a letter from one of the robbers, inviting all the sorcerers, necromancers and apprentices to gather to join the Feast of Death and to meet a sorcerer from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic."

"..." The old steward's eyebrow rose slightly but did not say anything to respond, as if he was still waiting for Lucien's further explanation.

"I know it's not proper of me to come to visit the castle directly, but I was very lucky because the apprentice who was unfortunately attacked by the robbers actually left the location of Carendia Castle on the invitation, or I would never be able to find my way here. Please forgive my impertinence," Lucien continued politely.

"May I know what's the symbol on the invitation?" The old steward remained polite, as if he was just talking to some random traveler instead of an evil sorcerer.

Although Lucien knew that the old steward might not be able to see his face under the hood, he maintained his smile, "A black hexagram."

The old steward nodded slightly, "I shall report to my lord, guest."

Holding a white candlestick, the old man turned around and disappeared gradually in the darkness.

Lucien kept politely waiting at where he was, without moving a single step. After a while, when the old steward came back, he nodded to Lucien, "Very well. You're very polite, guest. You know what is respect."

Lucien laid his left hand on his chest and bowed slightly, "Thank you for forgiving my precipitance, sir."

“Viscount Carendia wants to meet you in the study. Follow me, please.” The steward reminded Lucien, “Follow me close, guest. Do not get lost in the darkness. It’s dangerous.”

Then, he turned around again to show Lucien the way.

Following the old steward, Lucien was sweating from nervousness. His Host Star of Destiny, his own intuition and also Alert were warning him silently that there were lots of dangerous and mysterious ‘things’ hiding in the darkness, especially when Lucien just stepped in the castle and when the gate closed behind him.

Lucien felt that the darkness in the castle was somehow ‘alive’, which gave him goose bump. However, Lucien decided to remain silent and ask no question but just follow the old steward.

When Lucien started to get a bit irritated from walking in the darkness for a relatively long time, the old steward stopped and reached his head into the darkness. He pushed his hand forward and opened a door.

As soon as the door opened, bright yellow light came out and drove the darkness in this area away.

“Please, guest.” The old steward bowed slight and politely let Lucien get into the room first.

“Thank you very much, sir.” Lucien nodded, and then entered the room without any hesitation.

The dark yellow carpet in the study was thick and luxury. Even the hatstand was gilt. The table, the bookshelf and the armchairs were made from precious rosewood. Based on many details of the decoration of the room, Lucien could tell the pursuit of extravagance of the owner of this place.

In a red couch in front of a coffee table sat a young man wearing a black shirt and red coat. He had blond hair and deep eyes, matched with an attractive smile. The line of his chin was defined, looking handsome and also manly.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Sorcerer.” The blond young man greeted

without standing up from the couch.

“My lord, please adhere to your noble manner.” The manner-oriented old steward walked to the young noble in a fast pace and whispered in his ear to remind him.

“Nice to meet you, Viscount Carendia. Thank you for seeing me.” Lucien bowed slightly.

“You see... the guest doesn’t mind me sitting.” The viscount turned his head to the steward and smiled, “Take it easy, Nied.”

“If the count was here, he would be your model of being elegant and noble,” The old steward murmured in a low voice and then stood behind the viscount.

“Come on... I don’t even really remember my grandpa. How am I supposed to learn from his manner?” The viscount rubbed his forehead a bit. Then he pointed at the couch beside him and said to Lucien, “Please have a seat. Nied told me your intention of coming here, but I have to make sure that you’re not a spy from the Church. The Church has a bunch of sorcerers who surrendered to them.”

Even while he was talking about Lucien’s possible identity as a spy from the Church, the viscount still looked rather relaxed.

“The Church would never have me as their spy.” Lucien gave the viscount his answer which was already prepared earlier, “I have a pseudonym, Professor.”

“Professor? You’re the Professor ranking No. 359 on the Cleansing List?” Carendia stood straight and asked him seriously. The viscount knew clearly that all the names on the list represented powerful beings. Grand arcanists, legendary archmages, the grand cardinals in the north, ancient dragons, the ancestors of vampire, the Prince of Werewolf, Royal family of Kuo-toa, and the leaders of heresies were all included. The reason that he noticed Professor on the list was that this mysterious sorcerer was the only one whose power was below that of a radiant knight.

Lucien gave a sigh of relief in his mind, feeling lucky that the

viscount actually knew his alias, which also made sense because, as a noble, he should have access to this list.

“Yes, I’m the Professor.” Lucien nodded, “I’m back now, from Aalto.”

“How do you prove it?” Carendia had a cunning smile on his face, “Even I am not on the list. Your power must be very impressive.”

“How do you want me to prove my power? Breaking one or two of your vases in this room?” Sitting in the couch, Lucien asked in a joking way.

“Ha... I’d rather not.” The viscount laughed, “I heard that you created an unique magic that can directly destroy a house. And I know that, even in the headquarter of the Congress of Magic, there was no similar spell registered.”

“I can show it to you.” Lucien shrugged and pointed at the castle’s floor, “But here?”

“Up to you.” The viscount sat back in the couch with his eyes slightly squinting.

Lucien walked to the wall and laid both of his hands on it. After spending a bit time on calculating the possible range of vibration frequency of the castle, Lucien sent some magic waves to the wall and felt the feedback of the waves to get the more accurate information about the frequency of vibration of this whole place to adjust the speed of the waves he sent.

Soon, the old castle started to shake. Although the shaking was obviously easy to notice, it was far from destroying the whole place.

Lucien was guessing that this old castle was protected by many powerful magic circles, so The Professor’s Oscillation Hand could not really do damage to it.

Before Lucien felt really embarrassed, the viscount clapped his hands behind him, “Enough, enough, Professor. Right now I cannot really afford a new castle like this.”

Seizing the chance, Lucien removed his hands from the wall and turned around, “So I’ll take it as a pass?”

“Of course.” Carendia let Lucien go back to sit, “You already know the time and the location of our gathering, Professor. I can ask Nied to make another invitation for you.”

“That’ll be great.” Lucien nodded, “What if there’s any change with regard to the time or location, how can I be informed?”

While Nied, who was standing behind the viscount, walked toward the desk to make a new invitation, Viscount Carendia said to Lucien, “We have two secret sites in Korsor for sorcerers to leave coded marks and messages to exchange information. Any information regarding the changes of this gathering will be available there.”

After introducing the location of the two sites and the meaning of the codes to Lucien, Viscount Carendia smiled to him, “I’m looking forward to your presence, Professor. And if you could come one day earlier, although I know you must be very busy, you can have more time to exchange ideas and thoughts with Mr. Felipe, from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic. After all, both of you are young folks. Young people should be given more time to gather and to make joint progress.”

“We young folks?” Looking at the viscount, Lucien was confused.

Chapter 148: The Inquiry of the Church

"Yes... of course. I can feel the energy of youth in your body, Mr. Professor." The corner of the viscount's lips curled up, "The power of life... I never get it wrong. Since Mr. Douglas defined Arcana, the Congress of Magic was revitalized like a young person, full of hope and vitality. Lots of outstanding young sorcerers and arcanists are giving new life to the congress... It's beautiful."

Lucien wondered why the viscount was speaking in the tone of a senior and elder person, after all, Carendia was still very good-looking and energetic, but by the fact that the viscount could sense the young power of life made Lucien guess that the noble might be a powerful vampire, since the sensitivity toward life power was especially known as an unique advantage of this bloodthirsty race.

"I wish. Although I never heard the name of Mr. Felipe, I'm looking forward to meeting him." Lucien did not show his suspicion toward the viscount's identity, but remained rather conservative and careful, "Unfortunately, I have some of my own business to deal with on the day before the gathering, so I'm afraid I won't be able to meet Mr. Felipe in advance." Lucien was not sure about Felipe's attitude toward him as Professor, so he would rather get some more practical information from the gathering such as getting to know who was the liaison of the Congress of Magic in Sturk.

"Well, that's too bad, but I'm sure that you will definitely enjoy the gathering." The viscount handed him the invitation, "Here's yours, Mr. Professor."

Lucien took a quick glance at the invitation and noticed that his own symbol on it was a black top hat.

"I appreciate it." Lucien stood up and bowed slightly, "I think it's time for me to leave now. It's pretty late. Forgive me for coming over at such a late hour."

"No worries. My day has actually just started." The viscount waved his hand casually.

After Lucien left, the old steward, Nied, asked his lord with a confused look, "My lord, why you allowed him to join the gathering? Forgive me... I mean... can we really be certain that he's the Professor just based on that one single strange spell?"

"The spell was just part of it." Viscount Carendia stood beside the window and stared at the shining lake under the moonlight, "What made me certain about his identity was the ring he was wearing."

"The ring?" asked Nied.

"The plain-looking one... on his left hand." The viscount had a faint smile on his face, "Although the ring already lost its power and no one could tell its original look, I know the material of the ring. It was made by the alloy consisting of the seven elements. Only Holm Royal Magic Academy and the Will of Elements can produce that alloy. So, this Mr. Professor should be on their side, according to my guess."

"Then it's even more confusing to me that you, my lord, allowed him to attend the gathering." The old steward looked surprised, "The Will of Elements and the Hand of Paleness are..."

"Just for fun. And somehow he smelled a bit familiar to me." The viscount frowned his brows a bit and then turned to another direction.

"What do you feel about the spell Professor just showed, Amores?"

A low and hollow voice with echo responded from nowhere in particular, "Something like sound waves... not sure. He kept adjusting the frequency of vibration, and the vibration was quite unique... It made me feel a bit itchy."

...

Using the methods evading possible pursuers taught by Natasha, Lucien spent thirty minutes more to get back to the castle and sneaked into it successfully using the first circle spell, Light of Darkness.

It was a spell which could create a special zone of darkness. People

inside the dark zone could see the outside very well, while people outside could not tell what was in the darkness.

In the guest room, Lucien took off the ring given by Natasha and hid it safely. Then, he burned down Hunt's invitation before going to bed.

...

In the morning of the following day, they left the castle, heading for Korsor.

Sitting beside the window of the coach, Lucien was introducing some of the methods of formal knight training, which mostly came from John's sharing and Natasha's teaching.

Unlike what Betty imaged with knight training, the procedures were actually quite boring and painstaking, and even Joanna and Simon who were also listening to Lucien's instruction felt hard to handle it. However, out of their admiration for Mr. Evan's great power, they knew that they should stick to the training.

In the early evening, they were already very close to Wolftown.

"When we report to the Church... " Simon said to Lucien a bit emotionally, "the legend of Baron Habearo will fall."

"I know it must be very disappointing for those people who view the baron as an idol, but those young lives who died because of him deserve justice," said Lucien.

...

Three hours later.

In the confessional of the local church, after checking all of Lucien's documents, Arnold, a level three bishop from Korsor, smiled to Lucien, "It's hard to imagine that the talented musician, Lucien Evans, is also a powerful knight... very surprising..."

Before that, he even asked Lucien to play Pathetique to prove himself. Now, the bishop had no suspicion toward Lucien at all.

"My Blessing came from the potion that the princess rewarded me, but I don't have any noble title." Lucien slightly shook his head, "And I don't think I could even have survived this time against the baron and the necromancer if I did not have the sword and the powerful items given by the princess, not to mention killing them."

"The princess's generosity makes all people feel jealous," Arnold said in a meaningful way. Two magic items, one divine item, two extraordinary-quality weapons... Those things could almost compete with the collection of Viscount Stanley. The bishop was almost certain that the rumor was true: Lucien Evans, the young talented musician, was the secret lover of the princess of the Duchy of Orvarit.

As soon as the pastors in Wolftown heard Lucien and his guards' report on what happened in Baron Habearo's castle, they were completely shocked and immediately sent their message birds to inform the cathedral in Korsor. Then, by using some kind of divine portal, the level three bishop, Arnold, together with his two pastors and four night watchers came to Wolftown to meet, or, in other words, to inquire about the baron's case.

The inquiry went separately, and Arnold was the one responsible for questioning Lucien. Lucien's words, after his careful design, were not suspicious to the bishop, and what Lucien said was also verified by his safeguards.

Now, the last part of the bishop's work was to write a report on how Lucien killed the baron and the necromancer to the cardinal of the Duchy of Djibouti.

"Mr. Evans, can I take a look at your magic and divine items that helped you kill the baron and the necromancer?" asked Arnold.

"Sure," answered Lucien. He reached out his left hand and introduced to the bishop, "This is the ring that can shoot frost blades. And this is the bracelet... it is where the fire balls and the fire shield came from."

Before that, Lucien dyed his bracelet and the ring with some kind of special plant, just in case that the Church would recognize them.

Seeing that Lucien was not going to take off the ring and the bracelet, the bishop also did not bother asking. Arnold just checked the two items from a distance with his waves of faith, which was basically the same thing as spiritual power, to see if the power inside was according to Lucien's words.

Then Lucien took out the amulet hiding beneath his shirt.

"Umm... Early stage of the War of Dawn... should be the style from that period of time." Arnold's eyes lit up a bit instantly when he saw the amulet, "I guess only families with long history like the Violet family are able to possess them."

Lucien's eyes squinted a bit from his confusion about the relationship between Maskelyne and the Church, but he knew that this was definitely not a proper time for investigating it. He put on a casual smile and put Alert and Asthenia Dagger on the table, "Alert, rewarded by the princess. And the dagger was from a level two dark knight killed by the princess."

"I see the coat of arms on the sword, yes." Arnold nodded. He checked them again and then said to Lucien, "Well... I think we're all set here. I sense that the night watchers are back, and after our verification, you'll be good to go, Mr. Evans."

Lucien waited patiently in the room for the bishop.

Ten minutes later, the bishop came back with smile, "No problem. Everything's clear now, Mr. Evans, although it's quite a pity that the necromancer's lab had been burned down by your fire balls during the fight, or we could find more information."

Lucien nodded to be polite, but did not say anything.

"And this is a reward from the Church. If it had not been for your brave fight, Mr. Evans, more innocent lives in Fogtown would suffer. You're a great contributor to the purity of the Church. And you're good to go now, Mr. Evans." The bishop handed Lucien a cross-shaped brooch, which was not a real divine item, but just a common gift for acknowledging Lucien's merit.

Lucien was almost amused: the Church was giving a reward to a sorcerer, a sorcerer who was on their Cleansing List... How ironic was that?

...

In the basement of the abbey in Aalto, there was no light and no sound.

Camil opened the door of the basement slowly without making any noise and entered the room. When she saw the princess, who was dressing pure black, kneeling on the floor and praying silently, Camil almost burst out tears.

The princess looked emaciated. Her practice here was to immerse herself in extreme darkness and silence in order to strengthen her will.

"What can I do for you, Your Grace?" Camil took a deep breath and walked to Natasha.

Slowly raising her head, Natasha smiled, "Did you bring paper and quill, auntie Camil?"

"Yes, as you wish." Camil handed the materials to the princess.

Writing something on the paper with effort, it took Natasha quite a bit of time to finish the letter. Then, she carefully folded the paper and gave it back to Camil, "Please, bring it to Mr. Othello."

...

In the afternoon, seven days later, in Korsor.

"We need to head for the Musicians' Association now." Wise and Mars said to Lucien and his guards, "You're welcome to visit us any time you want, Mr. Evans."

"Can I go with you?" Lucien smiled, "I have some personal things to deal with in the association as well. It would be lovely if you two could show me the way."

"Not a problem." Wise and Mars grinned.

Lucien was planning on sending letters to John and Natasha from there.

Chapter 149: The Newspaper

Chapter 149: The Newspaper

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Can I get a ticket to your concert?” Betty also asked Wise with excitement.

“Sure. Not a problem, Betty. Thanks to the protection from all of you, I can still hold the concert.” Wise smiled, “Even if you had not asked, I would still invite all of you.”

Then, Wise turned to Lucien politely, “May I ask why you’re going to the association, Mr. Evans? I mean... If there’s anything I can help you with, please feel free to ask.”

“Yes, please.” Mars also nodded to Lucien out of gratitude. Thinking of the fact that he spent quite a long time with those filthy husks and the evil baron in the castle, sweat would still run from his forehead. Thus, he was very grateful to Lucien, who saved his life.

Betty, Simon and Joanna, while being quite excited about Wise’s invitation, also felt a bit surprised that this resourceful Mr. Evans even had some connection in the Musicians’ Association.

“Thank you, Mr. Wise, and thank you, Mr. Mars.” Lucien slightly shook his head politely, “I’m not heading for the association for anything special, but just sending some letters to my friends. After all, the branches of the Musicians’ Association across the continent have the most frequent communication between different countries, and sending letters through them always takes way less time than through a common messenger.”

Although there were messengers in that world, no convenient postal system could be found there, especially between different countries. Ordinary people could only rely on caravans and travelers to send letters.

Mars smiled and nodded, “That’s really true. Although the

association definitely will not refuse the request from a knight serving the princess in the Duchy of Orvarit, they will still charge you a lot. More importantly, they will not send a Hearthmeer to deliver your letters, Mr. Evans.”

“Hearthmeer? What is it?” asked Lucien. He had never heard the name before.

“Hearthmeer is a special kind of eagle originated in Djibouti. Those huge, powerful creatures, after training, are the best delivery birds, known for their great sense of direction. It only takes them ten days to do a round trip between Korsor and Aalto. And that’s why the Musicians’ Association in Djibouti can always receive the latest Music Criticism and Symphony News every month, around the fifth to the seventh day,” explained Mars, the old musician. “If you don’t mind, I can ask someone I know to help you get your letters sent by the eagles, Mr. Evans.”

“Thanks a lot and sure, I’d love to, Mr. Mars. I’m just sending my letters to Aalto.” Lucien nodded. He felt sorry that he would miss the latest newspapers to possibly gather some information of Natasha and Victor since he would not stay in Korsor until the newspapers arrived.

“The honor is mine, Mr. Evans.” Mars smiled.

When Lucien was about to pay Simon, Joanna and Betty the last day’s salary, Betty said to Lucien cheerfully, “I think it’s not the time to part ways yet, Mr. Evans.”

Then she turned to the two musicians, “Mr. Wise, Mr. Mars, can I have the chance to visit the association as well?”

Although both of Wise and Mars were a bit surprised, they soon smiled and nodded, “Sure, welcome.”

“Mr. Simon, Mrs. Joanna... Would you like to come as well?” asked Wise.

“Well... yes, sure.” Although Joanna was a bit pissed off with Betty, she was curious about the association as well.

...

Although Korsor was a major city in central-southern part of the continent, it was only about one fifth of the size of Aalto. The architectural style of the four-storey building of the Musicians' Association was older and simpler than the one in Aalto.

Furthermore, the guards there were also more strict than that of the association in Aalto. Standing in front of the iron railings, they would not let any stranger go in unless the visitor was some well-known musicians such as Mars. One of the guards was sent by Mr. Mars to report to the director of the association because Mr. Wise, the invited musician, also came.

A variety of beautiful crystal ornaments, huge pictures of different famous musicians, soft dark-red carpets, and a bright and wide space together constituted the hall of the Musicians' Association in Korsor.

While Betty, Joanna and Simon were looking around out of curiosity, a middle-aged man dressing in black showed up, followed by a couple of his colleagues, to welcome them.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Wise. Thank you so much for having your concert here in Korsor and welcome! I'm the director of the association, and my name's Caspar. These are my colleagues and some of our musicians. Welcome!" Caspar shook hand with Wise with great passion. After all, Wise was known as one of the most talented young musicians in the duchy.

Wise, in contrast, remained quite calm, "Thank you, Mr. Caspar. You already make me feel the passion of the city."

The musicians following Caspar also surrounded him, with the same passion and eagerness to welcome Wise. They even started to exchange their ideas about music directly in the hall and discuss the repertoire that Wise prepared for the concert. Lucien, Mars, Betty and the rest of them were just ignored.

"Wow... It's so great!" Although being ignored, Betty did not mind that at all. Her eyes were shining, "It feels really good seeing them

talking about music like this!"

"When we awaken the Blessing," Joanna murmured to her husband, "we will go back to our hometown. We'll receive this warm welcome as well."

Everyone loved the feeling of being respected, and Simon was not an exception. He nodded seriously, "I'll follow Mr. Evans' words and stick to my practicing."

Lucie exchanged a smile with Mars. "Mr. Mars, I'm going to the counter to write my letters. Can you help me there?"

"I'll go with you to talk to Christie," said Mars, pointing to the seventeen-year-old black-haired girl, who was standing on tiptoes with her neck stretched, trying to see the young and talented musician, Wise, who was surrounded by a bunch of people right now.

"Christie." Mars called the girl's name when they got to the counter.

The girl did not turn around but waved her hands, "Wait. I'm busy here."

"Christie. It's me, Mars." He coughed a couple of times, feeling a bit amused.

"Ah... Sorry, Mr. Mars. Good to see you! Anything I can do for you?" Noticing that it was the well-known musician standing behind her, she quickly stood straight and asked nervously.

Mars had just survived in the fight against the husks and now was in a pretty good mood, so the girl's impoliteness did not bother him. Mar pointed at Lucian, "Provide Mr. Evans with some paper, pen and envelopes. When he finish his letters, send an eagle messenger as soon as possible to the Musicians' Association in Aalto."

"An eagle eats a lot of meat. Sending an eagle is expensive." Christie handed a pen, some paper and envelopes to Lucien, whispering.

"Not your business." Mars' face looked serious.

Christie quickly stuck out her tongue for a second but did not say anything. And then she took out a stack of newspapers, “Mr. Mars, would you like to get the latest issue of Music Criticism and Symphony News?”

“The latest issue?” Lucien, who was just about to write his letters, raised his head and asked together with Mars.

Christie nodded, “This month’s issue was published earlier, and they just arrived at Korsor yesterday.”

“Can I get one for each as well?” Lucien took out a Thale.

On the other side, Wise also noticed their conversation and walked to them with the the local musicians, “Beautiful lady, can I get the newspapers as well? And I’ll buy the newspapers for Mr. Mars and Evans.”

Although Betty, Joanna and Simon were not literate, hearing the name of the two most famous newspapers, they also came close to the counter out of curiosity.

“No problem, Mr. Wise,” said Christie. She handed the newspapers to Wise, flushing, and then to Mars and Lucien.

Wise took a quick glance at the newspaper and amazedly said, “Mr. Lucien Evans composed another piece of piano sonata!”

“Yes, I read about it yesterday.” Caspar nodded and praised, “Although only the first movement was published, it was as beautiful as a sweet dream.”

Lucien was very confused. When did he just produce a new piece of piano sonata? Why he himself had no idea about that?

Turning the latest Music Criticism to the second page, Wise started to read the music score and hum the melody in his soft and gentle voice.

Immediately when he heard the familiar melody, Lucien recognized the first movement of Moonlight Sonata, and realized who published the sonata for him.

A smile appeared on Lucien's face.

"This piano sonata was from the famous musician, Mr. Lucien Evans, during his trip. Although only the first movement was published, the combination of wonderful melody, the tranquil atmosphere created by the fingerings and the innovation made in the genre of piano sonata still catches everyone's mind instantly without difficulty. Mr. Lucien Evans's new music piece breaks the fast—slow—fast arrangements of the music genre, and brings us to the peaceful night, where the dream-like moonlight shines on a sparkling lake..."

Below the review article, Lucien saw the familiar name, "Natasha Orvarit."

Although Lucien was glad to have some of his friend's information from the newspaper, he was confused why, all of a sudden, Natasha published the first movement of Moonlight Sonata for him.

"Beautiful... but a bit sad." Listening to Wise's humming, Betty praised sincerely, "Mr. Lucien Evans' music is amazing. No wonder the major newspapers would publish earlier than usual."

"Earlier than usual..." Something occurred to Lucien and he hurriedly turned the newspaper to the front page, and he saw that the publish date of the newspaper at the top was printed red words, that were a bit bigger as well: June 26th, 816.

Lucien grinned. It was the princess's way of saying "Happy Birthday" and "Happy Coming-of-age."

Chapter 150: The Letters

Chapter 150: The Letters

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien's chuckle did not attract anyone's attention, because they had begun to eagerly discuss the famous musician Lucien Evans' new sonata.

"Mr. Wise, it looks like you are very fond of the first movement of Moonlight, and I suggest that we go to the piano room to try to play it. After all, we've been standing in the hall for quite a long time." Caspar invited Wise to go upstairs.

Wise nodded and laughed, "That's very considerate."

Following Wise and Caspar, the musicians and instrumentalists immediately left for the piano room on the second floor.

Betty said to Lucien, "This is a rare opportunity! Mr. Evans, let's go upstairs together!"

"Yes, Mr. Evans, let's go." Holding hands, both Joanna and Simon were quite excited.

Lucien shook his head and smiled, "For me, writing my letters is more important."

"All right then..." said Betty with a bit disappointment, but soon she cheered up and said to Joanna and Simon, "Hurry up!"

They were guessing that Mr. Evans, as a princess' knight, must have met too many good musicians in Aalto, to the point he wouldn't get easily excited like them.

Seeing Betty, Simon and Joanna going upstairs hurriedly, Mars also apologized to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, excuse me, I don't want to miss this precious opportunity as well. Please just feel yourself at home in the association. When you finish your letters, just give them to

Christie, and I'll take care of the rest of the procedure."

"Thank you, Mr. Mars. I will." Lucien slightly nodded and watched Mars leaving. As the hall did not have tables, Lucien just stood next to the counter and began to write.

Looking at the second floor, Christie sighed, "Why do I have to stay here... I'm gonna miss Mr. Wise's playing." Then, she started to walk restlessly behind the counter.

Lucien just ignored Christie and wrote down his two-month traveling experience in detail, mainly about the beautiful scenery along the way, the unique national customs, and the monsters and robbers he had met. Lucien did not stop until he realized that his words had already filled up more than seven pages.

Putting the first letter in the envelop, Lucien carefully wrote down Joel's address on it, and then started to write his second letter.

The second one was for Natasha. On the basis of the first letter, Lucien added lots of knowledge of folk music in different nations that he encounter during his trip. The second letter had more than twenty pages.

Christie slightly frowned her brows and thought to herself, "What a wordy man..."

At the end of the letter, Lucien wrote down the last paragraph with a big smile on his face, "Your birthday is coming, Your Grace. May I send my Happy Birthday to you in advance from afar?"

After the second envelop was loaded, Lucien got himself some more papers to work on the third letter for Christopher, the previous president of the Musicians' Association in Aalto.

Seeing that Lucien was still writing, Christie, who was feeling very bored, started to get curious. She wondered how many more letters this young man was still going to write and where would the letters be sent to.

Taking a glance at the envelops beside him, Christie noticed an eye-catching name:

“Natasha Orvarit.”

“Wait... Is this THE Natasha Orvarit? The princess in Aalto?”
thinking about it, Christie almost burst out an exclamation.

Natasha’s name often appeared on Music Criticism and Symphony News, so this name was actually very familiar to people from other countries. And, also, Orvarit was a very unique surname, unlike Evans, and that was why Christie directly linked the name to the princess in Aalto.

“What is the relationship between this guy and the princess in Aalto, the countess from the Violet family?” Christie wondered with great curiosity and surprise, “Hold on... just now Mr. Mars called him Mr. Evans... Is he THE Evans? The famous and talented musician, Lucien Evans?!”

Evans, even in Korsor, was not a rare surname. Actually, Christie also had a friend whose surname was Evans. However, there was only one Mr. Evans who she could link to the princess in the Duchy of Orvarit.

She almost released a scream out of excitement!

Christie’s careful tiny movements were all caught by Lucien’s eyes. He was a bit amused but did not say anything.

At this time, Caspar’s voice came from upstairs as they were walking out of the piano room.

“Very impressive!” Caspar praised, “Mr. Wise, you’re genuinely a music talent. It only took you a couple of times of practicing to present the complete first movement of Moonlight Sonata to us.”

“Moonlight Sonata is definitely beautiful.” Wise smiled, “I feel the emotional connection in the movement. Honestly speaking, I did not put too much skills in the playing. The music itself is gorgeous enough, isn’t it?”

“What about you trying to compose the following two movements of Moonlight Sonata, Mr. Wise? I bet many big men in Korsor would love to read your work,” Caspar suggested. Caspar’s family

declined many years ago, and with his relatively limited talent in music, regaining the name of his family on his own was a hopeless dream. So, Caspar was working on seizing every opportunity to build connections with major noble families to possibly get his title back, and music was definitely a good way.

“Thank you for your encouragement, Mr. Caspar.” Wise smiled and shook his head gently, “But I’m not even close to Mr. Lucien Evans. I would rather not ruin the masterpiece.”

“I see. You’re just being too humble,” said Caspar, and the other people agreed. When they walked downstairs and came to the hall, Caspar said to Wise, “I’ve found a nice villa for you to take a rest and prepare for the concert.”

“Thanks a lot, Mr. Caspar.” Wise and the rest of the people walked toward the gate together.

“Lucien Evans! You’re Mr. Lucien Evans!” At this time, Christie’s high-pitched voice came into their ears.

Christie knew for sure that the young man standing in front of her was the top musician, Lucien Evans, when she saw that he was actually writing a music score in his third letter.

In the quiet hall, Christie’s voice was penetrating.

The people walking toward the gate stopped out of surprise. Among them, Mars looked back and asked, “What are you talking about, Christie?”

Christie almost jumped up from the floor. She pointed at the young man standing beside the counter and said to Mars carefully, “He... he is THE Lucien Evans, from Aalto.”

She was trying to keep her voice down but her words still sounded very clear.

“What? The Lucien Evans...?” Betty was confused.

“Lucien Evans, the great musician. He’s writing a piece of music score right now.” Christie tried hard to explain.

“Ahhh...!” Betty first released a scream out of great surprise and then ran toward Lucien. When she saw what Lucien was writing, Betty almost could not speak properly, “Evans... You’re Lucien?”

“Yes, I am. And I told you before that I serve the princess.” Lucien just smiled while his right hand continued writing.

Hearing Lucien’s answer, the two young girls, Betty and Christie, almost passed out due to their great excitement, while Joanna and Simon felt like in a dream—they just could not imagine that the powerful knight and the great musician were actually the same person.

Wise’s face flushed. He felt embarrassed that he even played Mr. Evans’ music in front of him.

Walking past Wise, Caspar hurriedly rushed to Lucien, “Mr. Evans! If you need any help here in Korsor, just tell me!”

“Well...” Lucien nodded to Caspar for greeting and said to him, “Can I register this in the association before I send it?” He handed the third letter to Caspar.

“Sure! Hold on... this is...” A big smile appeared on Caspar’s face, “Is this the second and the third movement of Moonlight Sonata?” Caspar recognized the music style immediately.

“Yes.” Lucien added another piece of paper there in the third letter and said to Caspar, “After the registration, I need to send the letter to Mr. Christopher as soon as possible.”

The final piece of paper was a note from Lucien to Mr. Christopher:

“Please make sure that the rest of the sonata will be published on the seventh issue of Music Criticism on July 30th. Many thanks, sir.”

“We’ll take care of the registration immediately.” Caspar tried his very best to please Lucien, “Mr. Evans, is it possible that we can invite you to hold a concert in Korsor?”

“Sorry, I got another appointment already, and I’m leaving

tomorrow,” answered Lucien.

Only Lucien himself knew what the appointment was—the Feast of Death.

Chapter 151: The Prelude to the Feas

On the main street of Korsor, Lucien, together with Joanna, Betty and Simon, walked slowly toward the city gate. In the sky, an eagle flew high above them with a parcel on its back and a large basket of fresh meat hanging in front of its chest.

"Mr. Evans, are you really going to leave Korsor today?" Betty looked quite sad. When she listened to the musicians of the association trying to play the two movements composed by Mr. Evans after the music had been registered, she was completely convinced that this handsome and elegant young man was her favorite musician, Lucien Evans, who she had been dating with in her dreams.

The great variety of complex piano playing skills, the unpredictably wonderful melody, the thrilling passion, as well as the high-spirited will were all major representatives of Mr. Lucien Evans' unique style. Moonlight Sonata was undoubtedly another outstanding and impressive masterpiece from Lucien Evans.

Earlier, when Lucien was wandering the streets in Korsor, he paid great attention to the possible secret messages left by the organizer of the gathering, and within Lucien's expectation, the gathering was delayed: due to Hunt's death, the gathering was postponed to three days later but still at the same place. However, Lucien still did not plan to stay in Korsor any longer, in order to avoid any unnecessary trouble.

So, he smiled to Betty and said, "Sorry, I still have some other important things to do. If you stick to your knight training, maybe we'll meet again in Aalto when you become a real knight. If that happens, I will compose a song and play it especially for you."

"Really?" Betty was very surprised that her idol actually promised her that. Full of motivation, Betty nodded with great determination, "I will become a real knight."

"Thank you, Mr. Evans, for encouraging Betty. That's very important

to her." Joanna and Simon really appreciated Lucien's kindness.

"It's just a little gift." Lucien turned around, "And also because our journey is memorable. Well... I have to go now."

"Wait... Mr. Evans. You don't need guards anymore? It's already late afternoon now..." Betty still did not want to let him go.

Lucien tilted his head slightly and smiled, "You really think I need bodyguards, Betty?"

"Humm... Then why did you hire us, may I ask?" asked Joanna curiously.

"It's nice having my guards to take care of all the trifles for me during the trip. But now, because of what happened to the baron, I got some emergent stuff here and need to hurry to deal with them. I'm way faster cutting corners by myself than sitting in a coach." Lucien's answer was blurry but also reasonable, which did not make his guards feel suspicious at all.

"I see..." Betty muttered, "Then you take care, Mr. Evans."

"I will." Lucien waved his hand, "You three, too. Hope we can see each other again."

Watching Lucien's figure gradually disappear under the afternoon sunshine, Betty, Joanna and Simon almost felt that the journey was like a dream.

After checking their purses again, which were full of Thales, they knew that the great experience was not a dream. What they should do now was to pay a noble to receive formal knight training.

...

The Musicians' Association, Korsor.

Standing beside the counter in the hall, Caspar stared at the place where Lucien had been writing his letter, "Christie, how about we build an iron and steel statue of Mr. Lucien Evans, you know... a statue like he was writing down his music here. And we tell other

people that the young genius musician Lucien Evans once produced one of his famous piano sonatas here. I mean, right here!" Caspar pointed at the counter, "I bet lots of big nobles would like to visit the association because of the statue."

After Lucien refused his proposal for hosting a concert, Caspar was now working on some new ideas.

"Yes... I guess..." Christie murmured as if she was still in a dream. She actually did not pay any attention to Caspar's words.

Caspar touched his chin thoughtfully, frowning and talking to Christie randomly. Both of them were right now immersed in their own world related to the famous musician, Lucien Evans.

At this time, an employee of the association returned, "Mr. Caspar, I have led Mr. Wise to the villa to have a rest first. Any other orders?"

"Nothing, but just do not bother me." Caspar waved his hand impatiently, "What do you think of putting Mr. Evans' portrayal in the hall?"

...

IN the third week of July, there was a shining silver moon hanging high in the night sky, pouring its bright and clear light from above.

Bathed in the moonlight, Lucien swiftly cross the mountains and forests. Soon, he was already able to see the beautiful, mirror-like lake close to the castle.

The castle was still the same as what Lucien saw the last time. The pointy, tall and thin towers surrounding the main building looked like horrible demon paws in the night sky, stretching and scratching the sky. However, this time, there were already many in black hooded robes waiting outside the castle. Lucien took a quick glance and found that there were at least three or four hundred of them.

Among the crowd, there were a few people, some male and some female, who looked very special. Their robes were of different colors and there was no hood covering their faces, as if they were not afraid of being recognized at all. These people shaped a loose

small circle with some other ones wearing hoods and were chatting casually together, while the rest of the invitees stayed away from them as if they were afraid of those who were not wearing a hood.

Lucien quickly thought to himself that those people should be real sorcerers instead of apprentices and their true appearances were changed by the first circle magic, Disguise Self. Because the spell would not work when someone was facing another person whose spiritual power or willpower was more than two levels higher than himself or herself, Lucien's guessing was that those people who were not wearing hoods should be middle-ranked mages.

After a quick counting, Lucien surprisingly found out that there were only twenty three real sorcerers in Djibouti, and he wondered if there were only twenty three across the whole territory. After all, this piece of land, which originally belonged to the great necromancer, Wilfred, consisted of two duchies and one independent county, and the area it covered was way broader than the Duchy of Orvarit.

Lucien slowly walked out from the shadow and headed toward the gate. Some of the black-robed people turned around and took a glance at him, but after that, no one took the initiative to talk to him. So, he stopped beside the four sorcerer apprentices and quietly listened to their conversation which was full of words such as "body", "eyeball", "hatred" and "revenant".

"H... Hey... I'm from the south mountain range of Djibouti. Where are you from?" A round-figured apprentice greeted Lucien. His black robe bulged from his obvious beer belly.

"I'm from Kazan. Nice to meet you. And you can call me by my pseudonym, Professor." Lucien answered politely.

Kazan was a small independent county close beside Dragon Tooth town.

"I see... Kazan. Welcome to Djibouti. Just call me Fatty." Apparently, Fatty had never heard of the name Professor before. "This are Garrupa, Bread and Wine."

Lucien took a glance at Fatty's belly, feeling a bit suspicious whether his big belly was real, "It's my first time joining a gathering like this. Never expected that there would be so many people here. Are there more coming?"

"Almost all of the sorcerers and apprentices from the nearby three nations are here, except those people who only work on their own." Bread, a stout apprentice answered in a low voice, "I heard that from the distinguished sorcerer who led us here."

"Distinguished sorcerer..." Lucien murmured.

"There they are." Fatty carefully pointed at the twenty three sorcerers gathering on the other side and introduced with a mixed feeling of respect, fear and admiration.

Even in today's Aalto, a sorcerer apprentice hardly received any recognition, not to mention respect within the circle of magic. Although there they were called as "sorcerer apprentice", there was a huge gap between an apprentice and a real sorcerer, and often the gap was insurmountable for many people, even though they spent their whole life working on it. Furthermore, for some lunatic ancient sorcerers, apprentices often stood for experimental materials.

In this gathering, there was only one sorcerer for each twenty apprentices.

At that time, all of a sudden, Fatty got scared and his voice trembled, "What... what's going on here?"

The sorcerers just secretly surrounded Lucien and the other four apprentices.

"Who're you?" The leading old man, who was almost as skinny as a mummy, asked Lucien harshly, "You'd better confess. None of us know you."

The questioning was totally out of Lucien's expectation. How did the sorcerers differentiate him from the other people?

However, soon Lucien realized that it was because of the

organization form of the Feast of Death: After the viscount found the several sorcerers who he felt were trustworthy, these sorcerers produced their own lists for inviting the other sorcerers and the apprentices. Therefore, since there was nobody knowing Lucien here, he became rather suspicious in the eyes of the sorcerers.

Chapter 152: The Dangerous Felipe

Chapter 152: The Dangerous Felipe

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Everyone present remained quiet, staring at the stranger with great alertness, and some of them even started to check their surroundings, worrying that they might have been ambushed by the church.

In the cold stare of the sorcerers and apprentices, under the gaze of some bloodthirsty eyes, with the sound of Fatty's teeth rattling out of fear, Lucien calmly took out his invitation and explained, "I am a guest invited by Viscount Carendia".

Seeing that Lucien stayed rather calm, the mummy-like old man's face eased a little bit. Another apprentice took Lucien's invitation and unfolded it for him.

The symbol of a tall black hat on the invitation was a bit tilted with some sense of humor. The old man who took the leading role glanced at the other sorcerers around, "This invitation was not sent by me."

The other sorcerers looked at the invitation held by the apprentice and also denied.

The muscles of the old man's face pulled when he was speaking, "Although your invitation is not from somebody else, but we still can not make sure that it was sent by the viscount. To ensure the safety of everyone here, I think we should wait until Viscount Carendia and his steward, Nied, show up. You agree?"

"Sounds fair enough." Lucien remained polite.

"You can call me Cessy, by the way. I'm 4th circle sorcerer," said the old man. He did not want to offend this mysterious attendee imprudently before figuring out his true identity, just in case that he was even more powerful than him.

“Mr. Cessy. I understand your concern and I don’t mind waiting here at all.” Lucien nodded, “You can call me Professor.”

“Good.” The old man, a necromancer, asked, “Then, Mr. Professor, are you a sorcerer... or an apprentice?”

Through their conversation and Lucien’s attitude, Cessy started to become a little bit convinced that Lucien was really a guest of the viscount.

“A sorcerer,” Lucien answered shortly.

The apprentices whom Lucien was talking to were pretty surprised to know that Professor was actually a real sorcerer, since his attitude was way nicer than most of the other arrogant and cold sorcerers who were gathering together on their own on the other side.

“Hope we can exchange some ideas over the meeting.” Cessy’s attitude toward Lucien eased a little further.

“In fact, I’m not a necromancer,” said Lucien honestly.

Although Lucien indeed had roughly read the Book of Necromancy, and had some ideas about the structure of human body, he knew that he could not rely on his own understanding and his previous knowledge of this branch of magic.

And by the way, according to the Book of Necromancy, regardless of practicing meditation or studying necromancer spells, long-time staying with rotten corpses was often required, and it was easy for the person practicing it to be infected with some terrible toxins or something filthy. Apart from making breakthroughs to move to higher circles in order to resist to the possible infection, only a few kinds of potions could be used to tackle the problem. So, with Astrology and Elements in his hand, Lucien right now did not want to take the risk to focus on necromantic spells but just copied the structures of a couple of the not-that-disgusting ones, intending to analyze them.

Cessy’s mummy-like face looked surprised, “Then why are you

here? The Feast of Death... is for necromancers.”

The other attendees also found it strange.

Before Lucien answered Cessy’s question, the heavy gate of the old castle slowly opened, and the steward of the castle, Nied, showed up, still dressing decently and behaving in an elegant manner.

“Mr. Professor’s indeed a special guest invited by the lord,” explained Nied seriously.

“Then we’re assured now.” Representing the other sorcerers and apprentices, Cessy responded.

Nied slightly nodded and continued, “Mr. Professor also came from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic, and he’s a powerful sorcerer.”

“The congress... powerful...” Often being dull and cold, although the steward’s words were pretty surprising, the necromancers and apprentices were only whispering to each other, peeking at Lucien carefully.

“Why there’s another sorcerer here from the headquarter of the Congress of Magic tonight?” Cessy immediately noticed the word Nied used—”also”.

“Mr. Professor’s attendance was out of expectation, and he’s just dropping by.” Although the steward’s words were quite hard to believe, what Nied was saying was true, “And Mr. Professor’s power is widely recognized. He ranks no. 359 on the Church’s Cleansing List.”

“What? Cleansing List?!” Even the gloomy necromancers could not stay calm anymore. Even though not all of them knew who were all the people on the list, everyone present was aware of the fact that anyone who was on the list, without exception, had the same power as a senior-rank and was capable of affecting or even destroying a whole nation.

With regards to tracking the powerful sorcerers, the Church had been enjoying quite a good reputation all throughout history.

The necromancers and apprentices started to be awed by Lucien, and some of the necromancers felt concerned that they just surrounded the powerful sorcerer in a rude manner. They were guessing that, as a sorcerer on the list, Professor should at least be a senior-rank mage.

Cessy paused a bit and took Nied's words, "Mr. Professor, please forgive us for being rude to you earlier. We have been yearning for the headquarter of the Congress of Magic."

Cessy believe that Professor and Felipe, the one who initiated the Feast of Death, didn't get along very well, and their conflict was very likely to involve the internal struggle between different factions of the congress. So, he mindfully mentioned the congress as a whole instead of taking a standpoint supporting either side.

"Don't worry about it. In fact, if you couldn't identify a stranger among the attendees, I'd be very disappointed." Seeing that all the people present started to respect him a lot since they misunderstood that he was a powerful, senior-rank sorcerer, Lucien instantly took the opportunity and started to pretend that he was really someone important by maintaining the big man's tone.

"Mr. Professor, my lord wants to meet you in the study first, and Mr. Felipe's there as well." said Nied. Then he turned to Cessy and the other sorcerers, "Soon there'll be waiters guiding you into the hall, Mr. Cessy."

Although Lucien really did not want to have a close talk with Mr. Felipe, he had no way to refuse the offer. So, he had no choice but to follow Nied through the terrifying darkness of the castle all the way to the study.

Watching Professor's figure gradually disappearing in the darkness, Fatty burst out an exclamation, "Wow... Cool! Cleansing List."

"I wish one day I'd be on the list, too," said Wine out of great admiration.

Somehow, being on the Church's Cleansing List, in many necromancers' and even apprentices' eyes, was a great goal to brag

their achievement and power.

...

In the study, the viscount in red shirt and black coat and another man witnessed everything that happened on the lawn downstairs from the window.

“Not very aggressive... Mr. Professor.” Seeing that Lucien was not aggravated by the necromancers, the viscount commented with a glass of wine in his hand, looking rather relaxed.

The man standing beside the viscount had black hair and pupils. His nose was straight and high and his lips were thin. He was definitely handsome, but his face looked rather pale, as if he was sick. Wearing a black shirt with gigot sleeves, the man was covered with a long, black coat, which was not common to see in inland countries. The man responded to the viscount’s comment in a gloomy and serious tone, “The church’s comment on Professor is ‘extremely cunning and very dangerous’, you cannot easily judge him based on his one single reaction.”

“I know. The fact that the Will of Elements or Holm Royal Magic Academy sent Professor here obviously means that they’re confident that Professor is capable enough of confronting you, Mr. Felipe.” Viscount Carendia took an outsider’s standpoint and said casually, “I suggest you be careful first before you want to take any action, or you’ll be in great risk. It’s not easy, for sure.”

Felipe looked back at his entourage, and then sipped his red wine, “the Will of Elements is certainly not clear about my current power, but I also have no idea how powerful the mysterious Professor is. I wonder who’s this Professor? Larry, Timothy or Ulysses? ”

These names were of people he knew and were of the same level as him, but belonged to the Will of Elements or Holm Royal Magic Academy. However, none of them conformed to the identity information they had on Professor. So, he shook his head slightly and continued, “Professor... Professor... It seems he was pretty proud of his arcana level... So his magic level is possibly not much higher than that of his arcana... might even be the same.”

Felipe stopped here, but two shivering clusters of pale flame appeared in his eyes.

Sipping his wine, the viscount changed the topic, "I heard that the musician, Lucien Evans, is in Djibouti right now. Ha... the princess must be very concerned about her sweet little lover traveling along this far, or she would not send Professor to Djibouti to secretly protect her toy boy. And your Feast of Death happens to be held during the same time. What a coincidence!"

"It's not a surprise, and I'm sure it's not a coincidence. Firstly, based on the relationship that Natasha has with that one, asking Professor to do her a favor is not difficult. Professor must have somehow directed Lucien Evans to take this way toward Djibouti, so he could take care of both his tasks at the same time. Otherwise, how would the great musician want to visit this remote and poor place? Kidding..."

...

Lucien had no idea which floor the study was on. The darkness of the castle devoured everything.

There were three people in the familiar study. Apart from the viscount, there was a pale-looking young man, and a tall and strong middle-aged man.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Professor. I'm Felipe." Felipe's smile was gloomy and sophisticated. His eyes had pale flames inside and stared straight at Lucien.

All of a sudden, Lucien was terrified by Felipe's aggressive aura. He felt cold and greatly threatened. The last time he had the same feeling was when Camil was looking at him after activating her Blessing.

Lucien quickly concluded that, even if Felipe was not of senior rank yet, he was definitely very close to that level. However, Lucien was not sure why Felipe would be this hostile toward him.

The only possible answer was that the Will of Elements or Holm

Royal Magic Academy did not get along well with the faction that he represented in the congress.

At that point Lucien finally realized that the ring given by Natasha, the one he was wearing when he first met the viscount, did him a great favor, but and also dragged him into a very difficult situation.

Lucien tried his best to stay calm. After all, it was not the first time that he pretended to be someone important and powerful. He was also aware that the only possible reason that Felipe did not directly attack him was that he was also hesitant and felt uncertain about his power because of the rumors about Professor!

With his brain remaining cool and after catching this key point, Lucien smiled politely, “Nice to meet you, Mr. Felipe. I have long heard of your name.”

Chapter 153: The Hand of Paleness

Lucien's attitude was not out of Felipe's expectation, so he put on an elegant smile, "It's my great pleasure that Professor actually heard my name before."

However, although he was saying that, in Felipe's mind, as a talent who had already published his first article on the influential journal *Magic*, he felt that of course Professor should have heard his name.

Then, Felipe changed his tone, "But it seems that you don't really value this gathering, Professor. We are all from the congress, and you're still wearing that ugly black hood? That doesn't match your status."

Lucien knew that now every word he said might put him at great risk, but remaining silent all the time would definitely make him more suspicious. So, he carefully kept his answer short and answered with a husky tone, "Honestly, I don't want you, Mr. Felipe, to stir any trouble for me when we get back to Allyn."

At first, when Lucien was trying to use the identity Professor to pretend that he was a member from the Will of Elements, Lucien did not expect to have such a big trouble, and even his crystal ball did not suggest anything specific. After all, it was totally unexpected that even within the congress there was such great conflict between different factions. Although Lucien's only intention—as well as his major goal—was to find out who was the liaison in Sturk, this Mr. Felipe would definitely give him a hard time, and Lucien was almost regretful that he decided to use the identity of Professor without a second thought.

Lucien knew that he was in a dilemma. It was impossible for him to just admit everything right now in front of this guy.

"Well... You're pretty straightforward, Professor," said Felipe. Then he pointed at the long couch on the other side of the study, "We still got some time before the gathering. I'd like to have a conversation with you... you know, to exchange some ideas."

Then Felipe turned to the viscount, "Do you mind?"

"Of course not. Go ahead." The viscount did not care. He raised his glass of wine a bit and nodded casually.

Although Lucien didn't want to talk to him at all, he forced himself to stay calm and sat down on the couch, "What do you want to talk about, Mr. Felipe?"

Inside Lucien's mind, he was praying that Felipe would not mention anything about the congress or the Kingdom of Holm. He knew nothing about them!

"No... No... No..." Lucien said to himself in his mind, and his heart was beating so fast that it almost jumped out of his throat.

The pale flame in Felipe's eyes disappeared and his dark pupils came back. With a gloomy smile on his face, Felipe pointed at the man standing close by, "This is my student, Cleveland, and he's also a second circle sorcerer studying necromantic magic after me."

Lucien simply nodded to the middle-aged man.

Then Felipe continued, "Besides that, Cleveland's also interested in Element magic. After Mr. Donald won the twenty-fifth ring from Holm Crown prize recently with his groundbreaking research analyzing new elements by introducing the knowledge of spectral analysis, Cleveland is planning to write an arcana essay on spectral analysis as well. However, he definitely needs some help there and that's why I started to gain some interest in the field of Element as well. If you don't mind, Mr. Professor, maybe we can exchange some ideas over this topic." When he was talking with great confidence, Felipe crossed his fingers and Lucien noticed that his left hand was missing the little finger.

Although Lucien could tell that Felipe must be very confident when talking about the Element school, he felt very lucky that Felipe did not go to the directions where he knew nothing about.

Feeling a bit more relaxed, Lucien quickly started to analyze Felipe's intention. Now that Felipe did not ask him anything about

the congress and the Kingdom of Holm, Lucien was certain that Felipe was not doubting his identity right now. Instead, he was talking about arcana, and that meant this topic was more important than anything else.

However, what Lucien wanted to figure out was that why a necromancer wanted to talk about elements and arcana? What could this do for him?

Lucien was guessing that Felipe was probably trying to test his knowledge or his arcana level.

Based on Lucien's past experience in the small circle of magic in Aalto, it was not difficult for Lucien to link knowledge to power in this world, which was also true in his original world. He was not almost certain that Felipe was trying to test his arcana level to figure out how powerful he actually was and then, based on that, to decide whether he should directly attack him, since the best way to figure out one's arcana level was to talk about the cutting-edged knowledge in the person's professional field.

Thinking of that, Lucien really learned his lesson this time. He knew that he was becoming more and more careless from many times of being lucky and getting abundant rewards. Fortunately, Felipe was only talking about the fundamental principles of Element arcana, and Lucien, being the opposite of the most common cases, had more profound knowledge of the scientific facts, which was understood as arcana knowledge here, behind the magic phenomena. In other words, Lucien's arcana level should be higher than that of his magic power.

"Mr. Professor?" Seeing that Lucien remaining silent, Felipe pushed him in a threatening tone, and the pale flame appeared in Felipe's eyes again. He was waiting for the mysterious Professor to reveal his knowledge and power.

Lucien smiled, "I happen to have some understanding in spectral analysis. However, I prefer that we do not dig into this field too much, since there's nothing else more valuable than knowledge, right? I can't just say everything to you straightforwardly without getting any compensation."

Spectrum was a topic that was relatively familiar to Lucien since he had read a couple of related books in his spirit library, and he also to some degree understood the principle of the atomic knowledge involved. Furthermore, according to Lucien, the researches in the field of Element, which was actually Chemistry in his original world, still remained at the macro level. In other words, sorcerers here acknowledged a bunch of chemical phenomena but without knowing why, and that was the key point limiting them from finding more new elements.

Speaking about this, after Lucien became a real sorcerer, some of the books in his spirit library were unlocked, and the knowledge in those unlocked books was all relatively basic.

Lucien did not realize the change in his spirit library until he first tried to do his astrology meditation during his trip. This also confirmed Lucien's guess that the seals of the books should come from the suppression of the power of the world's origin. Lucien could only contend with and unlock the seals by strengthening his soul and spiritual power.

"Fair enough. Although, to be honest, as a sorcerer from the Hand of Paleness, I quite dislike people from the Will of Element. I think we can be straightforward with this, ha. I do respect others' research results and I won't steal them," said Felipe. Seeing that Professor still remained quite calm, Felipe had a bad feeling that Professor might really have an insight into this field, which meant he was a sorcerer of high arcana level. And, in most cases, one's magic level should still be lower than the person's magic level.

Leaning against the couch, Lucien started his speech, "The theoretical basis of spectral analysis is that the combustion of different elements produces different flame colors and lights. While the flame colors can be overlapped and covered by each other, the spectrum cannot. Through the analysis called spectrocology, the ranges and colors of bright spectral lines are independent and they do not affect each other. And that's why spectral analysis can be used to identify different elements and discover new elements."

During Lucien's short speech, he also used a couple of elements for example, whose principles worked basically the same with some

elements in his original world.

Felipe listened to Lucien's explanation carefully and raised a few questions from time to time. When Lucien finished his words, Felipe applauded gently and commented, "Impressive explanation. Even clearer and easier to understand than Mr. Donald's arcana paper."

Although he was saying so, Felipe started to keep an even stricter vigilance over the man sitting across him on the couch.

Seizing the chance, Lucien continued, "In fact, spectral analysis is more on the application side. In order to find new elements, we don't need to go too far more than just mechanically doing experiments. However, what we need to think about is why the spectrum of each element is different? Why don't they overlap? Why there are bright and dark spectral lines? As far as I'm concerned, these are the directions that we shall pursue in order to deepen our arcana knowledge, and I believe that is Mr. Douglas' true intention of defining Arcana."

Felipe was very surprised with Professor's insight into the field, and even the viscount who was listening to their conversation casually on the other side of the study was touched by Professor's questions. When the arcanists in the Congress of Magic were still wild with joy with finding new elements, the man sitting on the couch was seeking for the nature of these findings.

"If we can explore more about the world itself..." Felipe murmured. He could not help but think of the shocking comment that master Douglas, the Emperor of Arcana, once addressed, and the young man sitting in front of him at that moment shocked him again.

"Professor's arcana level might be even higher than mine!" Felipe thought to himself.

...

It was almost the time for the Feast of Death.

All of a sudden, the huge castle started to move in the darkness of the night. The tall towers became its strong stone arms. When the

arms pressed against the ground, the lower part of the castle was pulled out from the ground.

Keeping the balance, the castle secretly "walked" toward the mountains and gradually became invisible.

No wonder the location of the Feast of Death never changed...

Chapter 154: The Feast of Death

Chapter 154: The Feast of Death

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Then there was a sophisticated smile on Felipe's pale face, "Professor, surely in the field of Element you really have an extraordinary insight and unique perspective. Someone like you should definitely enjoy great reputation and high status in the academic community. So, forgive my curiosity, I really wonder whether you're one of the people I know?"

Hearing Felipe's comment, Lucien knew that he got lucky again and barely passed Felipe's test this time. So Lucien laughed in a fake voice, "Maybe when I become a high-rank mage, and if we meet in Allyn again, I'll tell you, Felipe."

Facing Lucien's attitude of being confident and straightforward, Felipe was a bit pissed off. Lucien also sensed the change of Felipe's aura. Hearing many times that necromancers were even crazier than sorcerers from other schools, Lucien's heart was beating very fast, although no one could tell his great nervousness from the way he looked.

Even the viscount slowly put down his wine glass and became alert. Although he did not want to be involved in the conflict within the congress, Carendia of course would not want to see his castle being ruined.

At this very moment, Lucien calmly picked up the tea cup on the table and took a sip, "Felipe, if you have no other questions regarding my research field, I would like to exchange some ideas with you about some unique ancient necromantic spells."

As a guest that hadn't been invited by Felipe himself, the major host of the Feast of Death, Lucien felt that he should take his revenge and retaliate after being tested, and also, a question like this should be proper to distract Felipe for a moment.

Although Felipe felt challenged, exactly as Lucien expected, for a second he forgot about the fact that he was going to lose his temper. Apparently, this cunning and mysterious Professor wanted to see how powerful and profound Felipe was.

Felipe's eyes gradually narrowed.

Seizing the chance, the viscount interposed between them, "I think we're running out of time now, Mr. Felipe and Mr. Professor. The Feast of Death is about to start. What about exchanging more ideas afterwards?"

"Sure," Lucien responded instantly.

Felipe also felt relieved that his conversation with Professor was ended by the viscount. So he stood up and apologized, "Sorry, I forgot about the time."

"No worries." Carendia waved his hand casually, and then he said to his steward, "Nied, can you lead Mr. Professor to the hall first? I still need to borrow a couple of minutes from Mr. Felipe."

Waiting until Lucien and Nied left the study, the viscount said to him, "Mr. Felipe, maybe you do not care, but this castle was left by my grandfather, and I cherish it a lot. So, if you really want a fight, please pick somewhere else."

Felipe lowered his head and smiled, "Although I often feel out of control, I still know how to respect the owner of a place. My viscount, you can rest assured. The only possibility that I would choose to have a fight with Professor is either if I could kill him within thirty seconds, or if he stepped on my toes."

In this crazy necromancer's dictionary, the premise of "respect the owner of a place" was that the owner should be powerful enough to be respected. Felipe remained respectful to the viscount since the latter's power was no inferior his, even though Carendia was not a senior-rank vampire yet.

"That'll be great." The viscount raised his glass again, "And I'll inform Mr. Professor as well."

Then, Carendia left the study for the gathering, and Felipe and Cleveland slowly followed him.

“Master, why didn’t you attack Professor directly to test him? Anyone could tell that he’s afraid of you from his way of dressing.” Although Cleveland, the middle-aged man, was twice Felipe’s size, he respected his master a lot, “He’ll definitely bring trouble to us later during the feast.”

Felipe slowly shook his head and answered, “I’m glad that I tested him in a different way. I think his power has increased a lot since the time when he was first registered on the Church’s Cleansing List.”

Pausing his steps, Felipe took a glance at his student, Cleveland, and was about to tell his student something. After opening his mouth, Felipe changed his mind and said nothing but followed the viscount in silence.

...

Following the steward, Lucien felt that he was exhausted. Facing this crazy Felipe was a great test to Lucien’s will and soul.

At the same time, Lucien also gained some information from their conversation. He could sort of figure it out that the faction which held hostility toward the Will of Element and Holm Royal Magic Academy seemed to be an organization called the Hand of Paleness. From its name, Lucien guessed that it was a necromancer group, and based on that, Lucien suspected that the intention of Felipe hosting this feast was to enroll more necromancers to expand the faction that he belonged to.

It was impossible for Lucien to directly ask Felipe who was the liaison in Sturk, since a middle-rank mage should be capable of just flying over Storm Strait. The last thing that Lucien could let Felipe know was that he was actually only a first circle sorcerer.

There were many thoughts flashing across Lucien’s mind, but he remained silent all the way to the hall.

When Lucien stepped into the hall, he noticed the smell of death.

Although the hall was bright and grand, and the long tables were loaded with delicious cuisines and wine, Lucien had no appetite at all. While some of those gloomy necromancers and apprentices were holding glasses of wine and food dishes, others were eagerly exchanging brain tissues, eyeballs, skulls, rotten hearts and infant bodies for other materials and reagents that they needed or for money, all of that right beside the tables.

Despite the fact that Lucien was not afraid of a corpse and he was not completely unfamiliar with the organs, he still felt very nauseous. However, many of the necromancers and apprentices were still casually enjoying their drink and wine.

“No wonder the whole continent regards sorcerer as a symbol of evilness...” Lucien thought to himself, “It must be because of those necromancers, at least to a large degree.”

“Good evening, Mr. Professor.”

“Mr. Professor.”

Seeing Lucien walking by, many apprentices lowered their heads and greeted him out of the admiration for his great power.

Lucien nodded to them and took over a glass of water from the waiter. As he was walking around the hall, Lucien was thinking how to deal with Felipe later.

“Mr. Professor...” someone greeted Lucien in a voice which sounded a bit familiar.

It was Fatty. Fatty and another couple of apprentices were squatting in a circle in a corner of the hall, exchanging some ideas.

“What’s going on here?” Lucien asked casually with a bit of curiosity.

“Mr. Professor... We’re studying the human body.” The other apprentices hurriedly stood up and answered Lucien’s question.

The fourth-circle necromancer, Cessy, was also there.

“Mr. Professor, the apprentices are not only studying the organs of human body, but also trying to identify the changes of organs and bones brought by different diseases using magic,” explained Cessy.

“Interesting. Are they your students?” asked Lucien.

“No.” Cessy shook his head, “I just led them here. Mr. Professor, is there any similar study in the congress?”

“...” Lucien did not know what to say. After a few seconds, he answered in an ambiguous way, “... at a higher level.”

The other apprentices tried to get a bit closer to Professor, hoping that he could share more information from the congress.

“As what Professor just mentioned, the Congress of Magic is working on very in-depth study in human body, and the Hand of Paleness, which is the organization that I belong to, specializes in this area. And we’ve also developed many new spells based on our knowledge, such as Pneumonia Curse.” Felipe’s voice came from behind.

“Mr. Felipe.” The necromancers and the apprentices greeted.

Felipe looked at Lucien with a sophisticated glance and then turned to the rest of them, “I have something to declare.”

Stepping onto the stage in the front of the hall, Felipe cleared his throat a bit,

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’m Felipe from the Hand of Paleness, the Congress of Magic. We’re gathering here tonight because of one thing,” announced Felipe.

Chapter 155: Recruiting

Chapter 155: Recruiting

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

As Felipe was talking on the stage, the necromancers and apprentices began to pay attention to him and started to whisper to each other.

Viscount Carendia also showed holding his glass of wine, and he stood behind Lucien, “Mr. Professor, I can probably guess your intention of coming to the Feast of Death, but let me remind you that, if you want a fight, finish it as soon as possible, or I’d have to ask you two to leave. Although I would like to see a fight between two top fifth circle sorcerers, the last thing I want to see is my castle being destroyed.”

Lucien took a quick glance at the viscount. Inside his mind, he responded to the viscount’s words in a sarcastic way, “You know my intention? Come on... Even I don’t know why I’m here and what I’m doing right now!”

The whole thing was now totally out of Lucien’s expectation, and now he was tasting the bitterness caused by his boldness.

“What if I’m only here to take a look around?” Lucien’s face was covered by his hood, and he answered politely, “Sometimes, fighting is the most useless thing.”

“Interesting.” The viscount shortly commented and then turned to look at the people standing on the stage.

Besides Felipe, now there were another four necromancers who were the chosen representatives of the crowd: the old necromancer, Cessy; a plain-looking female necromancer, Tess; a young necromancer named Quentin; and and a horrible-looking necromancer named Sidney whose face and hands were covered with big scares sewed by threads. They were also the only four middle-rank sorcerers from the land which originally belonged to

Wilfred, who inherited the tradition of the ancient magic empire. Two of them were of fourth circle, and two of them were of third circle.

“You don’t want to get on the stage?” asked the viscount in a joking way.

Lucien rolled his eyes under his hood and answered ironically again in his mind, “Sure I’ll get on the stage and find a perfect way to get myself killed... Why not?”

Of course, Lucien could not say something like that to the viscount. Therefore, pretending that he was profound and mysterious, Lucien said to Carendia, “Sometimes standing away from the stage can make you see more.”

The viscount clinked his glass with that of Lucien and commented, “No wonder your pseudonym is Professor.”

On the wood stage, Cessy kept his usual expressionless face when he asked, “Mr. Felipe, thank you for inviting us here and offering us a chance to gather together and exchange our knowledge and magic materials. The gathering is already a feast for us who were hiding all the time in the darkness like mice living in caves. I wonder what else do you want to discuss with us?”

Felipe’s eyes were staring at Lucien. Seeing that Professor was not planning to disturb his speech for now, he turned to all the sorcerers and apprentices present and started to talk again in his deep but loud voice, “I’m sure that all of you have suffered and are still suffering lots of difficulties here, the land which once belonged to the greatest necromancer, Wilfred. You folks are worrying that one day the Church might come for you. You folks are worried every single day, even during your meditation, that one day you’d be killed by some random adventurers, knights, priests. And you folks are so disturbed that you cannot fall asleep at night...”

In the nations controlled by the church, every sorcerer and apprentice shared more or less similar experiences. After hearing the Felipe’s words, they could not help but nod, even including Lucien.

“Wow... Mr. Professor, are you agreeing with Mr. Felipe?” Viscount Carendia was a bit surprised to see that Lucien was nodding as well.

“Of course. What he just said is true,” said Lucien in a tolerant manner.

“You cannot tell your relatives and friends who you are,” Felipe continued. “You have no one to share the outcome of your research and experiment. You have no one to share your happiness and sadness. And you know that you can never achieve what you want in your life, even though you deserve it!”

The crowd was oppressed by the silence. They all had their bitterness that they could only handle on their own because of their status.

“So, tell me, do you want to continue to live in this miserable life?” Felipe asked aloud.

An apprentice was touched, and he burst out a cry, “No! Not at all!”

And his answer called upon more responses. More and more of the necromancers and apprentices present started to cry out, “No!”

“We can’t take it anymore!”

“We don’t!”

The crowd in the hall became irritated and the people were shouting out of their long-repressed anger.

Lucien did not say anything but stared at Felipe quietly. He was waiting to see if there would be any useful information for him in Felipe’s speech.

Until the crowd slowly calmed down, the four representatives exchanged a look between each other and then Cessy took the initiative, “We never wanted a life like this, Mr. Felipe. We’re living this life because we’ve got no choice. Can we get rid of all that? Can the Continental Congress of Magic help us?”

Finally, a relatively gentle smile appeared on Felipe’s pale face. He

nodded and answered determinedly, “Yes. And I’m here to help you all.”

There was a stir in the crowd again.

“In the a few countries where magic study is protected by the Continental Congress of Magic, we don’t have to hide at all. We can feel totally safe when we meditate at home, conduct experiments in a lab without having to worry about the Church. Not only that, these kingdoms also allow sorcerers to become their city councilors, which is the equivalent of the status of a noble. And if you have enough power and prestige to become a member of a Royal Magic Academy, you’d be a councilor from the House of Lords...”

Felipe’s words totally shocked the necromancers and apprentices. Although some of them did actually hear the name of the congress before, they never thought that the kingdoms that were protected by the congress could be such a paradise for them.

“Please let me finish, ladies and gentlemen.” Felipe pressed his hand down in order to let the crowd quiet down, “More importantly, in the Continental Congress of Magic, as long as you’re capable enough, you can learn different levels of meditation, get all kinds of magic materials and items, and even have the access to learn arcana and the most cutting-edge researches in your field. Ladies and gentlemen, do you want to join us?”

“Of course!” Some of the apprentices answered directly out of great excitement, while some felt that what Felipe just described was almost too good to be true.

Some of them started to feel suspicious. After all, nothing is truly free in this world.

“Mr. Felipe,” Cessy coughed a bit and said to him, “I’m sure that many of us are willing to join the congress for sure. However, what I want you to be clear here is... what do you need us to do?”

Seeing that they were heading toward the right direction, Felipe nodded with satisfaction, “Since the church has blocked the path toward the headquarter of the Congress of Magic, it is not easy for

us to lead all of you to break the blockade.”

Then Felipe stopped himself and shifted to another topic, “Back in the days when the ancient magic empire still existed, the conflict among the eight major factions was already there. And it is the same with the Congress of Magic today as well. Facing the competition and conflict, the best solution for individuals to survive is unity.”

Then Felipe cleared his throat and addressed the crowd in an even louder voice, “I’m a member of the Hand of Paleness, which is jointly established by the grand arcanist, Vicente Miranda, known as ‘Thanatos’, and the legendary archmage, Congus, known as Demigod-lich. The Hand of Paleness is an influential organization that is still fast growing for the sake of the unity of necromancers, and that’s why it is also the most ideal choice for all of you to join.”

Lucien was listening to Felipe’s speech with interest. Now he felt what Felipe was conveying was almost like multi-level marketing.

Although many of them had no idea what did the title of grand arcanist stood for, they knew how powerful a legendary archmage should be. At this time, Tess took a step forward and asked, “If the Hand of Paleness is really like what you just described, I personally would like to join you without doubt. But what I want to ask you is what do we have to do after we join the organization.”

Tess still remained relatively calm. She knew that there was always a price to pay for everything.

“Good question.” Felipe nodded, “Let’s tap about what benefit you can have after joining us first. First of all, you can get a magic item according to your current power level. Secondly, you’ll have powerful and profound sorcerers to be your supervisors to introduce you to the contemporary magic system. Thirdly, we’ll never take away your own research outcome and your own property. That is to say, what is yours will always be yours.”

“However,” Felipe paused a bit, “we do have one requirement for our members. When you receive a task from the organization, you cannot turn it down. If the task was completed, you’d be awarded,

but if you fail, you'd be punished as well."

"More and more like multi-level marketing..." Lucien thought to himself. He was still waiting for the possible information from Felipe about the liaison in Sturk.

Alluring as Felipe's description was, the requirement woke the necromancers and apprentices up immediately.

For sure, there was nothing truly free in the world.

"What if someone turns down the task?" asked Cessy carefully.

"Two situations. For senior-rank mages, penalty or alternative task. Below that level, penalty, physical punishment, mental punishment, or death... depends on the given task," answered Felipe directly. "According to the latest finding of arcana, energy is conserved. You pay for what you get. Everyone should make their own choice. And due to the restrictions, we can only bring sorcerers to the headquarter of the Congress of Magic. For apprentices, as long as you sign the magic contract, I will leave you some books and materials to help you grow to become a sorcerer as soon as possible. Every year there will be a liaison bringing new sorcerers to the congress." Felipe further explained.

Due to his words, some of the senior apprentices present started to feel excited again since they had been struggling with their next-level breakthrough for a long time. Now they finally found a possible way out. Besides, some tasks from the organization might now be that dangerous, they thought.

After Felipe finished his speech, he stared at Lucien with his cold eyes, because that moment was the perfect time for Professor to ruin his recruiting.

Chapter 156: Felipe's Tyranny

Chapter 156: Felipe's Tyranny

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When Lucien was under Felipe's gaze, all of a sudden, he thought of something.

Since both the viscount and Felipe thought that the reason why Professor was here was to disturb the gathering, if Lucien decided to just wait there and watch until the end of the feast, that would be very suspicious of him.

Lucien felt that he had to bring some trouble to the feast in order to make his presence reasonable. However, he needed to be very careful about keeping the balance and the degree to which he would piss Felipe off. Ideally, the problem caused by Professor should be troublesome but still within Felipe's capability to be solved.

Lucien had to carefully think about how to do it.

While Lucien was occupied by his own thoughts, on the stage, Cessy, the most powerful necromancer on the territory once belonging to Wilfred, asked, "Mr. Felipe, since the rules of the organization you represent are very strict, I don't think that the four of us can make the decision for everyone present. It is really an individual thing."

As he was speaking, Tess, Sidney and Quentin were also nodding. Seeing that there was a cold smile on Felipe's face, Cessy hurriedly added, "Of course, I personally would like to follow you to the congress and join the Hand of Paleness, but before that, what I want to ask is whether I can collect bodies in the nations controlled by the congress without needing to hide all the time?"

Felipe smiled to Cessy, who was the first one willing to join the organization, "Mr. Cessy, according to the agreement reached by the congress and the several kingdoms, you can't destroy cemeteries

or kill ordinary people to get the bodies you want, you need to have an agreement with a person who's willing to let you dispose of his or her body after the person's death. But, of course, if you kill your enemy, any magic creature or beasts, they're all yours."

"Well... I'm afraid it won't be enough," Cessy frowned, "unless your organization can provide us with enough bodies for our research."

The rest of the necromancers and apprentices felt the same way. For these sorcerers who were the inheritors of the ancient magic system, without bodies, they could not see any possible progress in their magic researches.

Seeing that all the necromancers and apprentices present were hesitating, and Professor still remained mysterious and calm, Felipe became irritated, and he started to rise his tone, "You guys can never imagine the great progress made by arcana and magic within the past hundreds of years, just as you can never imagine, without your filthy bodies, how you can grow stronger and more powerful!"

The people present in the hall got a bit confused with Felipe's emotional thing all of a sudden.

However, Felipe continued furiously and regardlessly, "What's more, through the collision of the two theories — 'Waves of Spiritual Power' and 'Particles of Spiritual Power', a series of highly efficient, high-level meditation have been broadly applied with lower requirements. Most of the meditating methods on your books are out of date!"

Lucien was listening to Felipe's speech carefully, while other people were now shocked.

Felipe was almost yelling now, "Can you believe that the meditation which was only available for senior-rank mages is now accessible to any sorcerer?"

"Can you believe that there are new spells coming out every month?"

"Can you imagine a middle-rank mage who's only twenty years old?"

“Can you imagine a senior-rank mage who’s only thirty years old?

“Can you imagine an archmage who’s fifty years old, or a legendary archmage who’s eighty?

“Only in the headquarter of the Congress of Magic you can know how advanced arcana and magic are right now!”

Lucien did not know what other people were thinking right now, but he was certain that he would go to the congress one day. Although he was very profound with his spirit library, the biggest challenge facing him was the channel to turn his knowledge into real power. In this new era of magic, Lucien knew that he needed to make progress all the time in order to be strong!

Then, after taking a glance at Lucien in contempt, Felipe said to them, “There’s no worry that you might be discriminated by other sorcerers in the congress, my necromancers. The School of Necromancy is right now one of the most popular fields following Force and Electromagnetics, since it specializes in studying the secret of life and prolonging people’s life-span. And as for the School of Element, it is not even close to us. Although a human body is composed of all different kinds of elements, without the power of life, the elements cannot turn themselves into any part of a human body, neither blood, or muscle, or organs... anything! The attempts trying to prolong people’s life-span based on the theories of the School of Element all failed!

“The secret of the origin of life and the key of prolonging life-span can only be revealed and showed by the School of Necromancy. No other schools can compete with us!” declared Felipe.

All the necromancers and apprentices were nodding out of pride and yearning feelings for the congress.

Meanwhile, Felipe’s words reminded Lucien that, in this world, it seemed that the School of Element was still not advanced enough to synthesize organic materials.

Because of the School of Necromancy, the theory of Life Force was more dominant than the other theories in Element. Based on

Lucien's current knowledge, human body, soul and life force were not the same thing, but these three were integrated together in a way that Lucien could not figure it out right now. Despite all of that, Lucien believed that it was still possible to synthesize different parts of a human body.

"Maybe I can start from here..." Lucien thought to himself.

When Lucien's brain was working fast, Felipe raised his hands up and said loudly, "In the new era of magic, joining the Hand of Paleness can bring you the great fortune of knowledge that you can't even imagine, and the Hand of Paleness can thrive because of all of you joining! So, I propose here: sign the magic contract with me, all of you."

Felipe took a step forward and started to act crazily, "That's my proposal. Who agrees? Who opposes?"

After a while of silence, Quentin, the young necromancer, said to Felipe politely, "Mr. Felipe, thank you. But I think I still prefer my free life, instead of being constrained by an organization."

After all, there was still another gentleman from the congress, there might be other ways with lower cost to get to the congress.

Felipe turned around and stared at Quentin with his cold eyes, "You sure, Mr. Quentin?"

"...Yes," answered Quentin with some kind of alertness.

"All right." Felipe nodded. Then, the pale fire appeared in his eyes and he pointed at Quentin with his right hand. Immediately, the black smoke surrounding Quentin, which should protect him from the great danger, was driven away, and Quentin's body was totally drained, as if all the water in his body had evaporated.

Felipe killed him within a second. Felipe killed a third circle sorcerer within a second!

Countless faces of revenants appeared surrounding Felipe and built up a transparent wall around him. Then, he asked again, "My proposal. Who agrees? Who opposes?"

The protection Felipe was wearing was a standard fifth circle spell, Revenant Wall. And the spell he had just used to kill Quentin looked like the single target, lower-level version of the eighth circle spell, Wilting, which should be something new that was developed by the congress.

People were afraid of him. They were afraid of that crazy man, and they would rather die later, instead of right now.

“One more time. I will ask again. My proposal. Who agrees? Who opposes?”

No one dared look at Felipe’s eyes.

“I oppose,” said a calm voice from among the crowd.

This was not a surprise to Felipe. Professor walked onto the stage in his black hood.

Chapter 157: Theory of Life Force

"Professor?!" exclaimed some of the apprentices.

Step by step, Lucien walked to the stage, under the gaze of several hundreds of people.

The necromancers and apprentices who did not want to join the Hand of Paleness were encouraged, but soon they started to feel concerned, since they did not know if Professor was powerful enough to face this crazy man, even though his name was on the Cleansing List.

"Is Mr. Professor gonna be okay?" Fatty asked one of his companions carefully in a low voice, with his teeth clattering.

"Of course..." answered the stout apprentice, Bread. He was trying to comfort Fatty and also himself, "You think anyone can be on the church's list?"

"How do you know Mr. Felipe is not on the list as well?" interjected Wine. Both Wine and Garrupa were still feeling very unsure.

Interesting enough, when Lucien was walking toward the stage, his mind was divided in two opposite thoughts: part of him felt extremely nervous and afraid, however, the other part of him somehow felt the whole thing a bit funny, out of the great pressure.

Felipe's eyes were freezing cold, "Mr. Professor, what do you want to say? I already did what I didn't want to do, and it's impossible for me to back away. If you can't give me a reasonable explanation, I think either you or me will die on this stage."

The corner of Lucien's lips twitched a bit. He really wanted to suggest Felipe to sit down and have a cup of tea first to calm down a little bit before their conversation.

Despite all these thoughts, Lucien answered calmly, "I'm from the Will of Elements, and I don't really mind the fact that the Hand of Paleness is trying to grow by recruiting more people." The last thing

Lucien wanted to do was piss off Felipe right away.

Felipe was confused, "What do you mean? Why are you here, then?"

The rest of the necromancers and apprentices were surprised to know that Professor also belonged to an organization from the congress.

"I'm here because I don't like your way of recruiting people." Then Lucien changed his tone, "No one should be forced to join anything, and correspondingly, no one should blame anyone else for the following consequence."

"Very good." Felipe applauded, "But, what if forcing people is exactly my style?"

Felipe was pushing Professor to his limit, and he was ready for a bitter fight.

At this time, Lucien switched the topic without directly answering Felipe's question, "Also, I don't agree with you on what you just commented on the School of Element. I'd like to further discuss it with you."

"What comment?" Felipe felt even more confused now.

What did Professor want to do?

"According to what you just said, you think that the foundation of the human body is life force, and without the integration of life force, only the elements can't be synthesized to build any part of the human body, such as blood, muscle, or all kinds of impurities, right?" asked Lucien with patience.

Felipe did not expect that Professor actually wanted to argue with him about this topic right now on the stage, and he laughed, "That's the case. And the secret of human body is not what you, a bunch of people who play with elements all the time, can understand."

"What your statement is based on?" asked Lucien.

"Mr. Professor, from all the researches conducted back in the time

of the ancient magic empire until today's mainstream belief in the congress, I can't find anything that made me doubt the theory of Life Force. Even the church admits that life force is the essence of human body. When there is no life force, a lost limb can't grow back. The only difference between the Church and us in understanding life force is that while they believe that life force is given by God, we're still seeking for the answer from the origin of the world." Felipe confidently elaborated his belief, "A couple of decades ago, several senior-rank mages attempted to synthesize human muscle only with elements but failed, and at that time, even you Element sorcerers admitted that this was not going to work. Now you want to totally overthrow the research foundation built by all the previous arcanists and sorcerers? Are you kidding me?"

For sure, Felipe's words were both aggressive and persuasive. In his world, since the theory of Life Force was the foundation of the School of Necromancy, it could not be shaken and would not be shaken for eternity.

The rest of the necromancers and apprentices felt the same way as Felipe. Since they never experienced the time in which arcana knowledge exploded, they still respected and highly praise the Book of Necromancy just like pious followers worshipped Canons. Although they knew that Professor was helping them, the necromancers and apprentices still felt that what Professor was trying to say was ridiculous.

Even the viscount, who was only watching everything going on the stage with his glass of wine, started to get a bit more excited, since basically Professor was trying to challenge the foundation of arcana.

That was exactly what Lucien wanted to do to distract Felipe.

Lucien looked around the hall and noticed that Sidney was the only one who still looked serious.

"It looks like only Mr. Sidney is on my side?" asked Professor, "Mr. Sidney's the only one who is not laughing at me right now."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Professor. My face, because of the transformation ritual, cannot make any facial expression," answered Sidney with

the same face.

A bunch of people chuckled.

"What if I say, Mr. Felipe," Lucien turned around regardlessly and said to him calmly, "that I can synthesize parts of human body only with elements or non-life force materials, do you believe that?"

On Earth, the field studying organic matter had also been dominated by the theory of Life Force for a long time in history. However, in the 19th century, when acetic acid, carbamide and other organic matters were artificially synthesized successively, this secret of the theory was completely revealed.

Everyone quieted down in the hall.

"It's impossible. Who do you think you are... a Holm Crown prize winner?" Felipe laughed, "Stop saying nonsense! Speak your true intention!"

"I think Mr. Professor's just trying... trying to play a joke," mediated Cessy.

"Only a real experiment can speak for me." Professor continued, "If you don't believe my words, do you want to make a bet with me?"

"What the hell do you want?" Felipe asked furiously.

"If I can synthesize something contained in the human body without using anything that carries life force, you will tell everyone here who is the liaison from the Congress of Magic in Sturk, and let them decide on their own whether they should join the Hand of Paleness or not. If I fail, I will apologize to you, and then leave the feast immediately. What do you think?" asked Lucien.

Chapter 158: Synthesizing

Felipe put his hands back into the pockets of his black coat. Although he still looked calm, there were countless thoughts in his heart. Either Professor was a real madman, or he must be very confident that his experiment would be successful.

Felipe started to feel hesitant. He was not sure whether he should make the bet with Professor, or just fight with him. After all, the Church commented Professor as "extremely cunning and dangerous".

In the end, Felipe could not resist his curiosity and, at the same time, his confidence in the theory of Life Force pushed him to make the decision. He had to admit that he also wanted to see if the fundamental theory of Necromancy would be overthrown just like the previous ancient theories.

Felipe was also an arcanist, and Lucien was exactly betting on his desire toward more advanced knowledge and also his curiosity.

"Except for apologizing... if you lost the bet, you would lose nothing, Professor." Felipe responded slowly.

The rest of the necromancers and apprentices were very surprised. It seemed that Felipe was really going to make the bet with Professor.

Although Lucien was very excited in his mind, he answered shortly and calmly, "My mission would fail, at least."

Felipe took out his left hand and clenched it into a fist. His tone became firm, "All right, Mr. Professor. I'll make this bet with you. Let's make the devil pact."

According to Astrology and Elements, magic pact is something seeking notarization from different great powers in this world. According to the levels of the covenanters, the notarization powers varied: from common magic power to the devil or even to the original power of the world. For middle-ranked mages, the devil

pact was the most suitable. If a covenanter did not keep his or her promise, the person would be punished by the power of the pact.

"I trust Mr. Felipe, and I also trust myself. We don't need a pact," answered Lucien calmly. In fact, he was not capable of summoning the devil, and even if the devil was summoned by Felipe, his true level of power would be recognized by the devil immediately, "If I was not reliable, I don't think the viscount would even invite me to the gathering." Lucien looked at Viscount Carendia.

The viscount was a bit surprised that, all of a sudden, his name was mentioned. His guess was that Professor did not want to leave his real name on the pact, so he nodded and said, "I can be the witness, and all the people here are the witnesses as well."

Felipe nodded, "I agree. Then, start your experiment, Mr. Professor."

Lucien waved his hands, "In order to be fair. I tell you what to do, and Mr. Felipe, you conduct the experiment."

"Fair enough." Felipe nodded, "Give me a second to build the lab."

The reason that Lucien asked Felipe to do the experiment was because he was not capable of doing it himself.

Felipe took out a fist-sized golden cabin from his pocket and took out a bunch of mini-sized alchemy equipment.

As soon as this pieces of equipment left the cabin, under Felipe's control, they grew back to their original size. Soon, a small but fully equipped lab was built.

Lucien hoped that he would have something like this as well in the future, but he had no idea how to get it.

When Felipe was building the lab, the necromancers and apprentices facing the stage started to whisper to each other again.

"Do you think Professor can really synthesize any ingredient for life?" asked Fatty with a mixed feeling.

"No way." Wine shook his head immediately, "The theory of Life

Force is the eternal truth, which is built by many legendary archmages in the past."

"Yes. It is the eternal truth for us." A necromancer looked back at them and nodded seriously, "Or how could we successfully synthesize human body parts in the past?"

"But if Professor failed..." Fatty said in a low voice, "If he failed, we must join the Hand of Paleness. Honestly, I'd rather find the Church and be a night watcher if that's the case."

"Maybe Mr. Professor is planning to attack Felipe when he's conducting the experiment... to strike him when Felipe is unprepared." Bread also lowered his voice. He hated Felipe a lot.

"Contemptible..." Garrupa took a glance at Bread, "but I like it!"

"Naive..." The necromancer put on a cold smile, "You think Felipe would be that stupid? You think the viscount would be just an onlooker?"

On the stage, Sidney also whispered, "What does Mr. Professor want to do?" He was confused since he never thought the experiment would be successful.

"No idea. I'd rather put more thoughts into how to survive in the Hand of Paleness," Tess answered.

Cessy also shook his head, "I've made up my mind. I'm going to join the Hand of Paleness, no matter if his experiment works or not."

Sidney remained silent for a while and then nodded, "You guys are right. Joining the Hand of Paleness seems to be the best choice for us right now."

"Mr. Professor, let's start." Felipe's eyes looked a bit crazy.

Lucien quickly browsed through the journal Arcana that he once read and copied in his spirit library to make sure that the chemical elements he remembered were right, and then he said to Felipe, "Gather nitrogen and hydrogen and store them separately."

Lucien was trying to use the industrial way to synthesize carbamide, which was the first artificial synthesis of organic matter on Earth. The reason why Lucien did not go for the laboratory method was that some of the chemical symbols involved in this process were not familiar to him, and he did not want to give Felipe any reason to doubt his true power.

Also, at the same time, the industrial way was simple, and the several experimental substances were very common. Their chemical symbols were familiar to Lucien because he once read about them in the journal. As for the required environment of high temperature and pressure, in this magic world, it was not something hard to achieve.

Gas Separation was just a common magic for sorcerers. Felipe thought that the beginning of the experiment would be different.

"A piece of magnet..." Lucien made Felipe put the catalyst into the reactor, "Mix the gas according to the proper percentage, and then heat it to about five hundred degrees, and the pressure is..."

Following Lucien's instruction, Felipe tried his best to turn on all the alchemy magic circles and meet the requirement of temperature and pressure.

After the reaction finished, Felipe sensed the container, "Nothing, Mr. Professor."

"Not yet," Lucien answered with patience. "Separate nitrogen and hydrogen, and keep the remaining gas."

"Ah... ammonia gas." Felipe shrugged, "You could've told me earlier. I have some previously made ammonia gas in my lab."

Lucien, in fact, did not know how to say ammonia in this world. He did not respond, but continued his instruction, "Cool it down and let it liquefy. Then, separate it to get carbon dioxide."

Felipe could already tell what Professor wanted to do here. He did not believe that this simple experiment could produce carbamide.

Following Lucien's requirement, Felipe put the liquid ammonia and

carbon dioxide into reactor again.

Again, high temperature and high pressure. But this time, the temperature was only about two hundred or so, and the pressure was lower than the last time.

"Keep the temperature and pressure, and let's wait for a while."
Lucien nodded.

Felipe, the viscount, the necromancers and apprentices were all waiting. They believed that this was still one step of the experiment. The theory of Life Force would not be overthrown by a simple experiment.

They were waiting.

Chapter 159: The Product from the Experiment

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The whole hall was silent. No one spoke a word, since they were all waiting for the outcome of the experiment.

A while later, when people started to whisper to each other again, Lucien said, “Mr. Felipe, you can open the reactor now.”

Strictly following the procedures of doing a magic experiment, Felipe turned on a series of magic circles for safety protection one by one.

When the reactor was opened, and when the temperature was back to normal, Felipe collected the small amount of white particles lying at the bottom of the container and then turned to Lucien, “What’s the next step, Professor?”

“You don’t want to check these particles, Mr. Felipe?” Lucien answered with a mysterious smile underneath his hood.

“What do you mean... These particles are...?” Felipe was confused for a second, and so were the rest of the people.

“Yes, Mr. Felipe.” Lucien nodded calmly, “This is the end of the experiment. These particles are things contained within a human body.”

“What?!” The crowd was shocked, “These white particles are... an ingredient for life?!”

A great stir started to gather its momentum in the hall. The necromancers and apprentices could not believe what they saw.

Felipe stared at Professor with his great, mixed feelings. He could not accept the fact that an experiment synthesizing an ingredient

for life would be this simple.

“You’d better not be kidding me, Professor.” After quite a while, Felipe finally responded.

Lucien was also nervous. He knew that Felipe might lose his temper at anytime. However, he still answered in a calm tone, “You can check it yourself, Mr. Felipe. Those particles is carbamide... the organic matter you were talking about.”

As soon as Lucien uttered the word, people in the hall stopped whispering and talking and went back to silence.

“Mr... Mr. Felipe, please check the particles,” asked the necromancers on the stage. They were afraid, excited and thrilled. They were staring at the particles with great concern, as if it was not something ordinary that could be simply produced by human body, but something so powerful like a taboo that could destroy their world.

Felipe looked rather gloomy and serious. Slowly, he walked back to the reactor again and opened it. Then, he used the first circle magic, Identification, to check the particles.

As the white light flashed past, Felipe stood there, staring at these particles without saying anything, like a statue.

After more than a minute, Cessy could not wait anymore. Carefully, he asked, “Mr. Felipe, is it... carbamide?”

The rest of the necromancers and apprentices were also looking at Felipe, waiting for his confirmation.

As if Felipe was in a different world, he did not answer Cessy’s question. After another minute again, finally, he slowly answered, “Yes, it is carbamide.”

No one made a sound after Felipe responded. All of a sudden, they felt that all the experiments that they had done and all the theories that they had learned were just like a dream. The experiment showed that their effort was worth nothing.

Felipe suddenly turned around and said to Lucien in a higher pitch, “Mr. Professor, Identification is not accurate from time to time. I need to use other experiments to make sure what is these particles.”

Felipe was not finding excuses. Indeed, Identification was a spell built on the caster’s own knowledge level. So if the caster did not have a profound knowledge in the corresponding field, the magic would go wrong sometimes.

Hearing Felipe’s words, Cessy and the other necromancers and apprentices regained their hope again. They could not admit that their belief was wrong, and no one would easily admit that something he or she had been pursuing for the whole life was fundamentally not correct.

People often tended to make all kinds of excuses to deceive themselves.

“Go ahead.” Lucien did not care how many times Felipe needed to verify the outcome of the experiment.

The bottles, glass tubes and weights were making low sounds on the stage when Felipe was doing the verification experiment with his trembling hands.

One experiment after another, Felipe looked more and more frustrated.

“Bang!” A metal container was thrown into the sink. Felipe lowered his head, with his back toward Lucien, and said with depression, “Yes, it is carbamide.”

“It’s not possible!”

Some necromancers burst out bitter cries.

Their world collapsed.

Sidney slowly raised up his hands, which were covered with stitches and scars. He could not believe what he just witnessed: if the theory of Life Force was not correct, how came he could use this body?

Comparatively speaking, the apprentices felt the outcome less shocking, and some of them were right now blaming the origin of necromancy for making them fail at becoming a real sorcerer, instead of their own lack of intelligence.

When Lucien was about to lead the topic into another direction, in case Felipe would completely lose his temper on him, Felipe turned around. “Mr. Professor, this is not your victory,” said Felipe stubbornly. “I don’t think carbamide is an ingredient for life, instead, carbamide is just some filthy excreta from the human body. It exists between life ingredients and non-life ingredients. In fact, your experiment cannot explain anything.”

Like a beast guarding its territory, Felipe sought for any possible reason to dispute. If it were not for the fact that he had no idea how powerful Professor was, he might have already resolved this academic dispute with violence.

“Yes, carbamide is not an ingredient for life!” A couple of necromancers started to follow Felipe’s viewpoint.

Although Lucien was quite happy to see what was going on here right now, he still pretended that he was angry, “Mr. Felipe, you’re not playing fair!”

There was a reason why Lucien chose carbamide to be the organic compound produced by this experiment. Although Lucien wanted to win, he needed to make sure that, after the experiment, Felipe would have some space to do his sophistry. Because, again, Lucien could not destroy Felipe’s belief completely, otherwise, he would probably go completely mad.

There was a cunning smile on Felipe’s face, and he said to the viscount, “We don’t regard carbamide as an ingredient for life, but something existing in human body. I believe that the viscount and the rest of the necromancers and apprentices would definitely agree with me.”

Viscount Carendia nodded, “Mr. Professor, your experiment is so simple that it is out of the expectation of all of us. And I admit that no one ever did this—producing carbamide by using non-life

ingredients only. Your experiment is surely a milestone, and I believe that the experiment is meaningful enough to put your name on the candidate list for Holm Crown prize and to win you lots of arcana points. However, I also agree with Mr. Felipe that carbamide can't be regarded as a life ingredient. After all, it's very hard to imagine that something filthy like human body excreta could contain any life ingredient. If you want to win, you gotta show us more."

"Yes, a life ingredient from urine? That's a humiliation to life!" someone in the crowd cried.

And more and more people joined the voice of opposition, with their joy from the fact that the theory of Life Force had not been completely overthrown.

"Exactly, Mr. Professor." Felipe shrugged his shoulders with a smile, "Most of us don't see carbamide as a life ingredient. You gotta show us more if you want to persuade us..."

"I said an ingredient contained in the human body," answered Lucien in a sounded angry voice, "And I'm still working on other further experiments. They're not ready yet."

"I remember what you said..." Felipe was about to say something aggressive, but he stopped himself.

Felipe also did not want to piss off Professor completely. The way he viewed Professor was exactly the same as the way Lucien viewed him.

"Your sophistry made you lose your manner, and their ignorance made them miss the greatest chance to witness the revolution in both the school of element and necromancy." Lucien still pretended that he was angry, "I don't have anything more solid than this to prove that you people are wrong right now, but I will in the future."

"Then how do you want to end our bet, Mr. Professor?" asked Felipe.

"It's a draw. I'm leaving right now. I'll not interfere you with what

you're doing here. And I'll not affect the choices made by the necromancers and apprentices." Lucien turned to Felipe, "And you, Mr. Felipe, you need to tell them who's the liaison from the congress in Sturk. At least you should give some hope to the apprentices who cannot go to the congress right now, before they can really become sorcerers."

Chapter 160: Get Rid of the Danger

In Felipe's eyes, Professor was still struggling to save his last dignity. After all, his request could not really do harm to him. Felipe could just add one article in the pact that the necromancers and apprentices present were not allowed to inform their students or friend of the liaison's identity in Sturk.

As Felipe had already obtained his victory, he would rather keep the current balance between Professor and him, instead of initiating an unnecessary fight.

"All right." Felipe nodded, "Upon your request, Professor."

Then, he turned around and said to all the necromancers and apprentices present, "In sturk, known as the Bright Pearl of the Sea, there is a bank called ShinyGold. Its owner, Mr. Granneuve, is one of the responsible for maintaining the secret order of the city, and also the liaison of the Congress of Magic. He's the person responsible for sending sorcerers and some of the lucky apprentices to Allyn through the Church's blockade line."

After that, Felipe looked at Professor and shrugged, "I kept my words. It's your turn now, Mr. Professor."

Lucien was still pretending that he was pissed off by the necromancers and apprentices in the hall, "You all will eventually taste the bitterness of your own ignorance. Your misery comes from your own incapability of telling who is your enemy and who is your friend. Your misery will last forever."

Those people who were feeling excited about the fact that Professor's experiment did not overthrow the theory of Life Force suddenly got discouraged. They realized that it was seemingly impossible from them to get rid of the Hand of Paleness right now.

Although many of the necromancers and apprentices started to feel extremely concerned about what they were going to face later, ecstasy seized Lucien's mind for he would be soon out of this dangerous place and then he could stay far away from this crazy

necromancer, Felipe.

With his fake anger, Lucien strode to come down from the stage without giving the necromancers and apprentices any extra look when he was walking through the crowd.

"Mr. Viscount Carendia, please allow me to make an early leave." Lucien slightly bowed to the owner of the place.

Carendia slightly raised his glass, "Thank you, Mr. Professor, for showing me the cutting-edge research outcome in the School of Element. I'm sure that, with your talent, you'll become one of the greatest arcanists sooner or later."

Lucien nodded in his hood but did not say anything.

"Nied, please show Mr. Professor the way," said the viscount.

When Lucien was about to leave, the viscount called him again.

"Mr. Professor, I have a question for you," said the viscount.

Lucien's heart missed a beat — did the viscount sense anything wrong there?

"Yes?" answered Lucien as calm as possible.

"I noticed that there's a faint but familiar smell on you, Mr. Professor," asked Carendia in a hopeful tone, "I wonder if you know a man whose surname is also Carendia?"

"Carendia is not a rare surname," answered Lucien in confusion. "I know about a duke in Gusta whose surname is Carendia, but I never met him. Talking about a Mr. Carendia that I personally know... Yes, there is one. His name is Rhine Carendia."

Since Carendia was a very common surname, Lucien never thought about connecting the viscount to the musician he knew.

"Silver hair and silver eyes?" asked Nied, who usually remained quite silent.

Lucien nodded, "You know Mr. Rhine?" He wondered if Rhine was not a human being and was a relative to the viscount.

"Yes, of course." The viscount sighed with his hand touching his forehead, "He's... if using human beings way to say... He's my grandfather. As you can see... he's pretty irresponsible, isn't he?"

"..." Lucien's guess was right. Suddenly, he felt that the viscount standing in front of him was like his grandson. After all, Lucien and Rhine were friends.

Seeing that Professor knew the viscount's grandfather, Felipe was even more certain about Professor's high power and arcana level. According to the power level of the viscount, his grandfather, Mr. Rhine, should be at least a high grade vampire. Thus, to be a high grade vampire's friend, one should be basically of the same level.

"Can you tell me where my grandfather is right now?" asked the viscount.

"Last time I saw him, he was in Aalto." Lucien paused a bit, "And right now... no idea."

"Many thanks, Mr. Professor. As you know my grandfather, it'd be my great honour having you as my guest to stay in the castle for a couple of days more," invited the viscount enthusiastically.

For sure the last thing that Lucien wanted to do was to stay here. After knowing who was the liaison in Sturk, Lucien really could not ask for more.

"Thank you, Mr. Carendia, but I don't really feel like staying. Also, I have other matters to attend to."

"All right, then." Carendia smiled, "I hope we can see each other again. May the silver moon be with you, Mr. Professor."

Lucien nodded, and then followed the steward out of the hall. All the muscles in his back were super intense from his great nervousness. Lucien felt extremely exhausted, and he could not handle any more than this.

Watching Professor leaving, Fatty sighed, "If we had pretended to support Mr. Professor's experiment, we probably would not have to be forced to join the Hand of Paleness now..."

"I think this's the best result." The necromancer in front of him said, "If Mr. Professor had insisted, what we would be facing now might be a bitter magic fight, and this gathering would be a true Feast of Death."

The necromancers on the stage quickly exchanged looks and nodded. They were planning to negotiate with Felipe about some of the articles in the magic pact to better protect their own interest while Felipe was still in his good mood from beating Professor.

With a winning smile on his face, Felipe watched Professor leaving the castle.

However, when Professor completely disappeared in the darkness of the castle, Felipe's facial expression became extremely gloomy and bitter. Both of his hands in the pockets of his jacket clenched into fists.

Although he, as well as all the necromancers and apprentices present, were not willing to admit that carbamide was a life ingredient, Professor's research was undoubtedly cutting-edge. It was not hard to imagine the reputation Professor would gain soon from his experiments, and even a trend of synthesizing life matter or life ingredient with pure elements would be initiated very soon.

Felipe felt that a great storm was going to strike the theory of Life Force.

And in this great competition, compared to Professor who was also a young sorcerer, he was now falling behind.

He must keep up with Professor, and then crash him.

...

After leaving the castle, Lucien found himself in a totally strange mountain. He could see no silver moon or lake, but only big and tall trees around.

"The castle is alive and its name's Amores, Mr. Professor," explained Nied with respect because Lucien knew the count he served before. "Amores' life came from alchemy."

"I see." Lucien nodded, "When I was using Oscillating Hand, I definitely bothered Amores."

An alchemy life was made from some specific souls, revenants and other materials, and it was introduced in Book of Necromancy. Although Lucien had the concept, it was still pretty surprising to him that the whole castle was actually alive.

"No worries, Mr. Professor," said a muffled voice from the castle. "A bit itchy. That's all."

Lucien did not know how to properly respond to Amores' words, but just twisted the corner of his lips to make an awkward smile under his hood.

And then he nodded to the steward and walked into the woods in calm big steps.

When Lucien felt that he was far enough away from the castle, and after he used a couple of spells from Astrology and Magic Elements to check the surroundings, Lucien turned himself into a streak of moonlight and started to run as fast as he could.

He kept running and running. He had no idea how far he had ran and how many turns he had taken.

Until the sun was going to rise, Lucien finally came back to the place where he hid his other belongings before attending the gathering.

Putting on his suit and burning down his robe, Lucien suddenly became limp and fell over under the tree. His hands and feet felt weak and his heart was still racing. He knew that he just survived from one of the most dangerous situations he had ever experienced.

Lucien was grateful to his own calmness and knowledge, also he blamed himself for being too careless and impertinent.

After getting Sun's Corona from the magic lock and becoming a real sorcerer, after getting lucky with destroying Habearo's plot, Lucien knew that he became more and more like an impetuous adventure, which was very dangerous in this world.

He really learned his lesson this time.

However, he also had his more important gain: now he knew who was the liaison in Sturk.

After getting a short rest, Lucien stood up and headed eastward.

This time his destination was Sturk, the Bright Pearl of the Sea!

Chapter 161: The Bright Pearl of the Sea

Natasha was sitting in the complete darkness of an underground room in an abbey in Aalto, reading a long letter from her friend with her Dark Vision.

It seemed that she was already used to the dark environment, and the blue veins on her hands and face were already hard to see.

From time to time, she gently hummed the melody written in the letter with joy.

When she came to the last page of the letter, Natasha grinned, "Lucien, you're exactly copying what I did. I'm looking forward to the next issue of Music Criticism to see how you will wish me a happy birthday."

Then she sighed a bit and talked to herself, "It 's really nice to have a friend, or I would definitely go crazy at this place."

...

The ocean-smelling breeze blew away the sultry feeling in October. The waves were, from time to time, flapping the embankment and splashed the white foam everywhere. The ocean was boundless and the sky was clear. The birds were flying free in the sky and shifting to different formations all the time, and below there were boats moving through under arched bridges.

Sturk, the bright pearl of the sea, was similar to the city, Venice, that Lucien knew from a movie that he watched in his original world. Sturk consisted of more than 100 small islands which were connected to each other by numerous canals just like a complicated spider web, around which there was a long embankment protecting the city.

Sitting in an unique, point-headed boat, Lucien saw the buildings along both sides of the canal slowly moving back. He felt very peaceful, just like a real traveler.

"In Sturk, every canal is just like a street in other cities," introduced the boatman enthusiastically. "This is St. Mayo Church... That building... That building belongs to Monastery of the Holy Spirit, and that one... We call the bell tower Truth Tower, and that one Pray Spire..."

"I see..." Lucien listened to the boatman's introduction with interest, "So this area is Sturk's Religion District, I take it?"

No matter if it was a city, a town, or a village, there was always a church. The area where the religious buildings gathered together was called Religion District, for example, the eastern area in Aalto close to Golden Cathedral.

"Yes, that's why this area is not crowded." The boatman grinned while paddling. "When we get into the Commerce District, you'll see the real Sturk."

Lucien's boat went across several bridges and then entered Sturk's Commerce District. All of a sudden, the surrounding environment became very busy. Lucien saw many pointy-headed boats tied to the wood stakes along the canal, and many were moving through the bottom of the buildings through the bridge openings.

Lots of different accents speaking common tongue could be heard in the air. Words like "Fell", "Nar", "Bank", "Mortgage", "ten grams", "Sturgeon", "Sea Bream", "Orange", "Iron", "Wood", "Slaves", "Trade" and others immediately brought Lucien from the world of necromancy to a world full of common people's daily life.

The whole Commerce District here was even busier than that of Aalto.

The whole city was full of vitality. And even the ocean wind smelled like money for trading.

"The market is even more prosperous than I thought..." Lucien praised what he saw sincerely. He really enjoyed the atmosphere here in Sturk.

"For sure," said the boatman in pride. "Sturk is located right beside

Storm Strait and owns a natural deepwater port. The city connects the south and north, the east and west, and here's the best transit place for seaborne trade. Because of this, we people from Sturk are born with the talent of doing business. The first Goldsmiths' Association and the first bank were all founded here."

"Connecting the east and the west?" murmured Lucien. When someone talked about the country to the east of Sturk, obviously, it was Holm and the rest of the countries across the strait that the person was referring to. However, Lucien did not know that Sturk could connect directly to the eastern countries.

"Yes, of course. That's why you can see lots of precious goods being traded here in Sturk." answered the boatman with fervour, "The fine fabric named Black Nightingale from Holm, the porcelain from Colette, the spices from Calais, the best tobacco from Brianne..."

"Only nobles can have access to them," agreed Lucien.

The boatman got even more excited, "These four countries are right across the strait. However, due to the great profit, the Church owns the monopoly in those trades. Only the noble businessmen from the nine big families here can send their boats there for trading. Umm... Can't believe how wealthy the nine families are..."

"Which nine families?" asked Lucien with curiosity. He guessed that maybe Granneuve was one of them.

"The family of Viscount Wright, Baron Kap, Baron Moncache..." listed the boatman. However, Lucien did not hear the name that he was seeking for.

"What about switching our topic to the buildings again?" said Lucien as his interest in listening to the names of the families faded.

"Sure." The boatman nodded, pointing at the several buildings on the right side, "Over there... That's the bank owned by Viscount Wright, and that's Moncache Hawthorne Bank..."

"I see. What about that one... the shining building?" asked Lucien.

"Oh, that's Epic Gallery. Next to it is Michelle Sculpture Gallery..."

And that one, the ShinyGold Bank," explained the boatman.

Although Lucien was already this close to his destination, ShinyGold Bank, he did not ask anything more about this place.

After all, since he already knew who was the liaison in Sturk, there was no need for him to take the risk of asking about Granneuve's information around. Lucien decided to trace Granneuve's daily route and what was going on right now in his bank first to make sure that Granneuve was still serving the Congress of Magic, not the Church.

Betrayers were not rare to see nowadays.

In addition, Lucien's power further progressed within the past three months. With the help of sorcerer meditation, Lucien felt that his soul and the spiritual power had been obviously strengthened. Inside his soul, Lucien built a series of new spells: Cause Fear, Silent Image, Burning Hands, Mage Armor, Iron Organ, Element Endurance and Chaos Circle. And right now he was working on structuring the spell for escaping called Expeditious Retreat. Therefore, Lucien was pretty confident in himself, and there was nothing to hurry.

However, during his practicing, Lucien found that, even with his advantage in the talent of his spiritual power, he needed at least a whole year to move forward to the 2nd circle, even if he could already analyze a 2nd circle spell. And if that was the case, it would cost him at least ten years to become a middle-rank mage, which made the Congress of Magic even more desirable to Lucien.

The boat was still paddling forward, and it slowly left Commerce District.

...

Half month later. In a very famous seafood restaurant in Sturk named "Shark".

Under the guidance of a waiter, Lucien sat down beside a table covered with white tablecloth. While Lucien was ordering, he

peeked at the fat man who was protected by a few safeguards and was slowly walking up the stairs to the second floor, reserved for the restaurant's important guests.

This fat man was exactly Lucien's target, Granneuve.

After this half-month secret observation, Lucien was basically certain that his identity was not founded by the Church, and Granneuve was still serving the congress. And right now the only question was how to get into contact with him.

There were always safeguards surrounding Granneuve, and Lucien guessed that some of them might even be dark knights. Lucien was almost certain that Granneuve himself was also not just kind of random guy, instead, he must be very powerful himself as well. Obviously, important as Granneuve was, he must be very careful with those possible night watchers from the Church who tried to approach and test him pretending that they were sorcerers who needed help. And for sure, Lucien was full of secret, and he could not use his identity of being Professor here anymore. That was too risky.

When Lucien knew by accident that Granneuve was about to meet his guest in Shark tonight, he sensed something a bit suspicious. In most cases, people who were as important as Granneuve would not often show up in person in a public restaurant. If they wanted the food there to treat their guests, they would just ask the chefs to go to their places to cook for them right there.

Listening to the cracking noise made by the ceiling above from Granneuve's weight, Lucien saw the same waiter coming back to him again.

"My guest, this is today's Sturk News and the recent several issues of Music Criticism. And tonight, our pianist will play Moonlight Sonata and Canon in D major from the famous musician Lucien Evans. Wish you a great dinner tonight," said the waiter with respect.

Lucien nodded with a polite smile. After all, Shark was one of the best restaurants in Sturk, the service here was definitely great, and

even the newspapers they provided here was relatively hard to buy.

In the beautiful melody, Lucien started to read Music Criticism. He missed the days when he was a music student studying after Mr. Victor in Aalto.

As expected, he found a couple of familiar names in the newspaper. Victor was having his world tour concert right now in Holy Heilz Empire, and Felicia also produced her first piano bagatelle.

However, Lucien did not see Natasha's name again since she commented on Moonlight at the beginning of August, which made him feel a bit concerned.

"Her sequelae from taking the vampire blood should be gone already now..." Lucien thought to himself. He needed to send Natasha a letter to see if she was doing all right as soon as he arrived in Allyn.

After reading all the Music Criticism, the dinner was still not ready, and Granneuve's guests had not arrived yet either.

So, Lucien started to read Sturk News casually. Most of what he found there was just some local news, anecdotes, and random news like "Wood from Djibouti for sale."

At this time, Lucien saw his own name again, and this piece of news caught his attention immediately.

The title of the news was: "Our new music star, Ms. Grace, the student of Lucien Evans, is having a concert in Sturk's Crystal Hall with her friends!"

"My student?" Lucien was confused. And then he realized that they were promoting this concert using his name. To some degree, Lucien did discuss with them about his understanding in music and gave them some suggestions for one of their fantasy music works.

Lucien could imagine how quickly they gained their popularity among the nobles and business tycoons when they came back from Aalto to Sturk with their music work directed by him.

Although Lucien felt a bit amused by the fact that the band members took advantage of his name, he was not planning to expose what they were doing.

However, at this time, Lucien saw a voluptuous young lady in a fine black dress coming into the restaurant.

"Grace... What a small world..." murmured Lucien. Immediately, he held up the newspaper to hide his face.

As Grace walked upstairs, Lucien realized that she might just be the Granneuve's guest.

Chapter 162: Grace's Nightmare

Chapter 162: Grace's Nightmare

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

On the second floor of Shark.

On both ends of a long dining table, there was a fancy candelabrum, of which the swaying candlelight made the whole place feel romantic in an ambiguous way, together with the gentle melody played by a small band.

Elegantly scooping a small amount of stew, Grace wished that the man sitting across the table tonight was not Granneuve, who, in Grace's eyes, was ugly and rude. She raised her head and took a glance at Granneuve, and his swollen face and bald head made her feel gross.

Pinching the fine goblet, Granneuve, in contrast, was quite confident in his own charm, "Grace, I have to say that your artistic temperament is even more impressive than your beauty, especially when you're playing piano... It's really gorgeous."

Although Grace did not like him very much, she had to admitted that she enjoyed the feeling of being flattered. In his forties, Granneuve was among the top twenty super-rich people in Sturk, and he was very close to the most important nobles in the city such as Viscount Wright. Despite the fact that she did not like Granneuve at all, being pursued by a man like him was definitely something to feel proud of.

Ever since Grace started to promote herself as Mr. Evans' student and thus started to be respected as a musician, lots of man who had had no interest in her at all were now pursuing her. In her eyes, all men liked conquering.

"Thank you, Mr. Granneuve," responded Grace with a polite smile.

Then, she picked the white napkin and gently tapped her mouth,

“Excuse me, I need to use the washroom.”

When she stood up, one of Granneuve’s guards took a step forward and said, “I’m sorry, Miss Grace, the washroom on the second floor is not in use right now. You might want to go to the one on the first floor.”

“What the heck are they doing in this restaurant?!” asked Granneuve with a big anger. In fact, he owned this restaurant.

“It’s all right, Mr. Granneuve. It’s just an accident,” said Grace in an artist manner. “I can just go downstairs.”

Granneuve nodded with satisfaction, “I think you’re even more charming now, Grace.”

Grace forced a smile on her face and nodded. Following the guidance of the waiter, she walked into the lavatory on the first floor.

Outside of the ladies and men washroom, there was a big mirror, in front of which there were two nice and clean basins.

Getting out of the ladies washroom, Grace checked her make up in front of the mirror. Staring at her beautiful face, she could not help humming a piece of cheerful melody.

The melody was just like her cheerful mood right now. After the long, bitter traveling from Sturk to Aalto, her life was totally changed. Money, reputation, and praise were, all of a sudden, coming to her like a dream.

“Last year you were still an ordinary, poor girl, who needed to rely on your parents’ and your elder brother’s saving to get to Aalto to fulfill your dream.” Looking at the mirror, Grace murmured to herself, “Now look at you... You’re the Tulip of Sturk. You’re one of the most famous musicians in Sturk. You bought a three-storey house for your family. You’re being pursued by so many nobles and wealthy businessmen. You’re living in a luxury life that you even dare not dream before.

“You have to remember, Grace.” She continued, “All of these is

because you're the only pianist in your band, not Piola, not Sharon, not Green and Leslie. You gotta remember how you came all the way through the hardship to where you are right now. Never forget your music and your piano.

"And also..." Grace's voice was even lower, almost impossible to hear, "Don't forget the fact that your reputation comes from that talented musician in Aalto." Although she did not really think that Lucien Evans would come from Aalto all the way to Sturk for visiting, she often felt very concerned. She felt very insecure, as if her dream-like life was going to crash at any time.

She took a deep breath and was ready to leave the washroom. However, when she looked up, Grace saw a black-haired and black-eyed young man walking in.

Although the young man was pretty good-looking, Grace looked very scared, and her purse dropped on the ground.

"Mr... Mr. Evans..." Grace's voice trembled.

Lucien politely picked her purse up from the floor and handed it to her. He smiled, "Hi Grace, nice to see you again. When you just walked into the restaurant, I almost could not recognize you. You look great."

"Mr. Evans... why... why are you here in Sturk?" Grace put on a nervous smile, "I mean... If you were coming, the newspaper should..."

"Should tell everyone in Sturk?" Lucien looked at her, "Speaking of newspaper... I just read the latest issue of Sturk News, your band is going to hold the...."

Grace was praying to God that Lucien Evans did not know anything about what they were doing right now. As soon as she heard that Lucien was talking about her band, she felt a sudden dizziness and almost fell onto the ground.

A strong hand held her arm and helped her stand still.

Looking up, Grace started at Lucien Evans and burst out crying,

“Mr. Evans, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry that I’m stealing your name and reputation and claiming that I’m your student. Please forgive me... I will tell everyone the truth tomorrow.”

After saying this, Grace felt that she was too weak to barely stand, as her hand was supporting her body on the basin. Grace knew that, as soon as she issued this apology on Sturk News, all of her money, reputation and her status would be totally gone, or even worse. She would suffer the great contempt from people. She would be called a liar.

However, she also understood that only sincere apology could help her avoid even more bitter consequence, such as being thrown into the city prison for the crime of fraud.

Lucien listened to her words, and then smiled, “Grace, you have been claiming yourself as my piano student and so far no one ever doubted you, which means you’re a pretty talented pianist. I just wonder why you don’t rely on yourself but want to lie to people? You know lies never last long.”

Hearing Lucien’s gentle words, Grace burst into tears again, “I come from an ordinary family. In order to support me to learn music, in order to send me to Aalto, my family ran out of all our savings.

“When we came back from Aalto, our original plan was to use the piece of fantasy directed by you to promote us. However, ever since we had our first great success, we got greedy. At that time, my family’s small business got into trouble, and I needed money, or my parents would be thrown into the jail. In the end, I pretended to be your student, Mr. Evans, since I’m the only pianist in the band. And even since then, I sink deeper and deeper.” Grace continued sobbing.

“I see...” Lucien’s attitude remained unclear.

“Mr. Evans...” Grace paused a bit and said with great determination, “I’m willing to do whatever you want as long as you forgive me! Even... even...”

Grace did not want her dream life to turn into bubbles just like this.

She did not want to go back again!

Seeing that his plan was going well, Lucien felt his effort of damaging the sink of the washroom on the second floor was worthwhile. He nodded, "I understand the hardship you suffered, but telling lies is never a good thing."

When Grace felt desperate, Lucien switched the topic, "Grace, you know Mr. Granneuve?"

"Yes, it is Mr. Granneuve who is inviting me for dinner tonight," answered Grace with confusion. However, she wanted to be as cooperative as possible right now to make the very effort to win Mr. Evans' pardon, so she explained, "Mr. Granneuve is pursuing me."

"I have a friend who wants me to send a message to Mr. Granneuve, Grace." Lucien smiled, "It's written on this small piece of paper. Can you do me the favor?"

"Sure." Grace hurriedly nodded.

"But you cannot tell Mr. Granneuve that it is me who gave you the paper. Just tell him you encountered someone in the washroom that you don't know," added Lucien.

Although Grace wanted to ask why, she decided to just take whatever Mr. Evans asked.

"Don't open it. Don't read it." Lucien handed her a tightly folded piece of paper, "If the result turns out to be good, I may consider sharing some of my piano playing skills with you."

"Really?!" Grace was very surprised. She hurriedly nodded her head in a serious manner.

When Grace left the washroom after she calmed down, Lucien paid his bill and left the restaurant in a good mood.

Chapter 163: The Requirement of Ferryman

Chapter 163: The Requirement of Ferryman

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the separate dining room on the second floor, Granneuve was smoking a thick, black cigar, and he commented in a rude way, “A lady musician is surely way better than those chicks who wanted to directly jump on my lap after receiving a couple of gifts from me.”

“But... my lord, I don’t think Miss Grace really likes you very much.” His closest safeguard whispered to him.

Granneuve was not pissed off, instead, he laughed, “What do you know? This is all about a sense of achievement! You see... conquering a reserved-mannered lady with my own charm, haha!”

“Charm...” The safeguard was speechless. However, as Granneuve’s closest safeguard, he knew that all of Granneuve’s rude behaviors were just his disguise. If he was really good at nothing, how came he became one of the maintainers of the secret order in Sturk.

At that time, Grace came in.

Granneuve hurriedly stubbed his cigarette in the ashtray and asked, “Grace, why do your eyes look a bit red? What happened?”

“Nothing serious. Just feel quite dry in my eyes.” Grace easily found a random excuse.

“I’ll let my family doctor send you some potions tonight, then, for your eyes.” Granneuve looked quite concerned.

“Thank you, Mr. Granneuve.” Grace nodded. Then, she handed him the tightly-folded small piece of paper and at the same time she picked up a glass of wine with her left hand.

Granneuve thought that his effort paid off. As this beauty was just

too shy to express her affection toward him directly, he thought that what Grace just gave him was a short love message.

Grace took a sip of the wine, and when Granneuve was opening the folded paper, she slowly explained, “Mr. Granneuve, this is a message to you from a gentleman that I met downstairs.”

“Humm...” Granneuve was a bit surprised. And when he actually saw what was written on the small piece of paper, his brows frowned a bit but soon his facial expression returned back to normal, “Ha... one of my previous acquaintances... always thinking about things in the past.” Granneuve casually waved his hand and burned down the piece of paper with a match, then he asked with a smile, “Grace, what does that gentleman look like?”

“Black hair... black eyes, decent looks. Sorry, I didn’t know that the message would bother you, Mr. Granneuve. I thought I was just doing that man a favor, since he looked quite polite,” apologized Grace.

Her description about Lucien was very blurry. Black hair, black eyes, decent looking... That was all Granneuve could get from her words.

“No worries, no worries, Miss Grace! Nothing really important.” Granneuve waved his hand again, “Don’t let him disturb our romantic dinner.”

Grace nodded. Inside of her mind, she was a bit relieved, since she fulfilled the task given by Mr. Evans, and maybe she could still maintain her dream life hopefully.

...

In a dark corner beside Shark, Lucien, who had changed part of his look by using the first circle spell, Disguise, was watching as Granneuve sent Grace back home with a fancy pointy-headed boat.

“Get out, my friend. I know you’re there,” said Lucien to the darkness all of a sudden.

A black figure showed up in the wall and walked out, “It was you

who was tracing all the time.”

The person who said this was a middle-aged man. His face was thin, and he had light brown hair hanging down to his shoulders. His brown eyes were sharp and clod. And Lucien knew that he was not one of Granneuve’s safeguards.

“Are you a sorcerer?” asked the middle-aged man, staring at this black-haired and black-eyed young man.

“Of course. If I was not a sorcerer, why would I bother trying to get into contact with Mr. Granneuve to get to Allyn?”

At the same time, when he was speaking, Lucien did not disguise his power waves preparing for casting spells.

“I see, but...” The middle-aged man smiled, “but you might get something wrong here, my friend. Granneuve’s not the liaison from the congress, but I am. Please call me Ferryman.”

Because of the magic, Lucien’s facial expression looked a bit stiff. Although he was a bit surprised, there was not much showing on his face.

“You’re not the only one who got the wrong information. Actually, lots of people thought Granneuve was the liaison.” Ferryman added, “That makes sense since he is very influential in maintaining the secret underground order of Sturk. So we also keep tracing and monitoring him all the time as well, in order to find you folks.”

Lucien was not really nervous toward the fact that he might have sent the message to the wrong person, since the message he left on the paper was of nothing special but just a common sorcerer seeking for help from the liaison of the Congress of Magic. Lucien directly called Granneuve the liaison of the Congress of Magic in the letter, instead of using his name, and left the place and time for their meeting.

However, Lucien never really expected that Granneuve would actually send someone to meet him according to the message left by him, after all, it was obviously too risky for him. His real purpose

was that he wanted to inform Granneuve that someone was tracing him, so he would secretly send his people to find out who was this person.

And then Lucien would let them find himself on purpose to get into contact with Granneuve's people in a less risky way.

Facing this middle-aged man, Lucien did not really believe his words. After all, Lucien did not really think that Felipe would lie to the apprentices and necromancers right in front of Professor, who also came from the Congress of Magic.

"How do you prove your words?" asked Lucien calmly.

"Well... I don't need to prove myself." Ferryman grinned, "If you don't trust me, I can leave right now. But think about it, if I was really a night watcher, when you're already exposed, why I'd bother talking to you, a first circle sorcerer? I would just show up with other pastors and cardinals in Sturk and kill you in a second."

From Lucien's power waves, he could roughly tell Lucien's strength.

"All right... That's true." Lucien shrugged.

"But shall I trust you?" Ferryman shook his head, "There are a few night watchers who were sorcerers themselves before, but they betrayed us. Also, two months ago, when Mr. Felipe was leading the other twenty-two sorcerers to cross the blockage of the Church, they got exposed. However, he broke the blockage by force and made the leaders of the Church more than furious. The Church did a throughout check and we suffered a great loss because of the betrayers, and they also ranked Felipe no. 359 on the Cleansing list."

Lucien first thought when he heard Ferryman's words was that his ranking now fell to no. 360, after Felipe, which for sure did not make him feel good.

"Then how do you want me to prove myself?" asked Lucien. He still did not trust the man who just showed up tonight in front of him.

"Our traditional practice... you find someone from the congress to

prove your identity, for example, the person who told you where the congress is and who is the liaison in Sturk.”

“He left already. I don’t even know his name.” Of course Lucien would not say that it was Felipe.

“Well... that’s common, too.” Ferryman nodded, “Then you have to do something to prove yourself.”

“Like what?” wondered Lucien.

“Last month, a man betrayed us. Although his Blessing was awakened by the potion given by the congress, this man deserted to the Church and offered them lots of our secret information. Many of our people died, including more than thirty very promising apprentices. They died in Storm Strait,” said Ferryman. The muscles in his face looked more conspicuous as he was speaking.

Lucien did not respond but waited for Ferryman’s further explanation.

“Now this traitor is living a wonderful life and was rewarded a Knight’s Cross by the city council. If you can kill him, you can definitely prove that you have nothing to do with the Church.”

Chapter 164: Testing

Lucien never thought that Sturk had been in such a chaos for the past two months. Obviously, there was another unexpected obstacle sitting right in front of him, preventing him from moving forward and heading for his dream world. However, Lucien had never been one to give up easily. Now, he was only a strait away from the congress, and nothing could stop him.

"How did you know that he was the one who betrayed you people?" asked Lucien calmly, "What's his name?"

If he had no choice but to be used as a tool by the liaison, he needed to get everything clear first.

"Harrison Brown. That's his name," said the Ferryman very seriously. "He has already awakened his Blessing as I said, and he's a knight. Two weeks ago, he was rewarded with a Knight Cross for the reason that 'he defended the glory of God in darkness by cleansing close to fifty lambs astray'... That was how the newspaper commented. You can find the report on Sturk News if you don't trust me."

Then, the Ferryman paused a bit, as if what he was going to say was very hard for him, "In his speech on the ceremony, he felt no guilt. Those apprentices who died because of him... they were still kids... Most of them were just twelve or thirteen, and they were just exposed to the wonderful world of arcana. They died together with their hope and faith in magic."

Seeing Ferryman's facial expression, Lucien nodded, "Surely I'll check whether you just said is true, but I still have one more question."

"Go ahead." Ferryman stared at Lucien's slightly stiff face.

"According to my experience, in order to protect the traitors, the Church would only reward them secretly, or directly let them join Night Watch. I never heard that a traitor would be rewarded on an open ceremony by the city council... Maybe... this is a trap?"

guessed Lucien.

"Very good." Ferryman slightly clapped, "But did I ever tell you this was not a trap?"

"..." Lucien was speechless.

"We need to kill him, and we have to kill him." Ferryman's tone became bitter, "For deterrence. If you weren't here, we'd still try to kill him anyway," continued Ferryman. "It is better to have someone who's not from our organization to get this job done."

"So, if i failed, you guys would not be affected." Lucien pointed it out directly.

"That's true, or however you want to take it." Ferryman shrugged, "You can turn down the task, for sure. If that's the case, you leave me a way to contact you, and when anyone who can prove that you're clean comes to Sturk, you just tell me. But if you want to go to Allyn as soon as possible, I'd say that accepting the task is your best choice."

"What support can I get from you?" asked Lucien, "You know how dangerous the task is."

"When it's necessary, we have our own way to distract the night watchers to let you focus on killing Harrison Brown," responded Ferryman, and then he added, "As long as you can kill him, we'll welcome you, our new friend, to join us with our greatest enthusiasm."

"What is Harrison's Blessing? Does he have any extraordinary weapon or magic item? What's his daily routine?" asked Lucien, "I'm sure you have a lot of information on him already."

Commonly speaking, a sorcerer should be able to kill a knight who was of the same level without much difficulty, so Lucien was pretty confident that he could handle the task. In this case, an enemy's equipment such as weapon and any extra item would be the biggest uncontrollable factor in a fight.

"Very good," commented Ferryman, as he liked talking to a smart

sorcerer. "Regeneration, that's the power of Brown's Blessing, originating from power existing in the blood of trolls. Strong, fast... and as long as he is not beheaded, his body can keep regenerating until his body energy is exhausted. Weakness should be acid and fire. They can prevent his organs from growing back."

Lucien nodded as he was listening very carefully.

"In terms of his weapon, yes, he has a level one short spear of extraordinary quality called Wither, with collateral poison damage, given by the city council. Then he was rewarded by the Church with a level two, extraordinary quality shield called Demon Hunter, which improves his power of defence to match that of a level two knight. The shield can also absorb a certain amount of element damage. As for other magic or divine item, we have no idea. And his daily routine is..." elaborated Ferryman.

From his words, Lucien analyzed all the information he got and tried to identify his possible chances of killing this guy: Brown rarely let anyone visit him unless the visitor was from the Church or was an important noble; he rarely went out; he liked arts like painting and wax statue; he was going to move to Lance, the Holy City, five months later...

When Ferryman told him all the information, Lucien asked, "So let me confirm here... Brown is going to attend the opening ceremony of Saugus Wax Museum the day after tomorrow, right?"

"Yes, in the morning. He's going because his own statue will be displayed there as well." Ferryman nodded, "If you need us to distract the night watchers when you take action, please inform us in advance."

"I will," said Lucien with his stiff facial expression.

After agreeing on how they would secretly get into contact with each other, Lucien got on a boat and used both the methods of sorcerer and knight to get rid of any possible tracers.

...

On the second day, at midnight, Lucien, who showed up beside a stone arched bridge wearing a long black robe. That bridge was one of the two bridges that needed to be crossed to go from Brown's place to the Saugus Wax Museum. Comparatively speaking, that one was way better than the other one, because the path that used the other one was way longer.

In addition, according to Lucien's information, the wax museum opening tomorrow was very popular in Sturk, so lots of nobles and wealthy businessmen were attending the ceremony as well. At that time, all the nearby waters would be occupied by their boats. Therefore, even if Brown also decided to come there by boat, he needed to get off the boat close to the bridge and cross it to get to the museum.

The sky was starry. The glistening light reflecting on the waves looked like a dream.

Lucien pressed his hands against the bridge, then opened his mouth and screamed silently.

Waves were produced from Lucien's hands toward the stone bridge, and then the waves came back to him. According to the vibration frequency, Lucien adjusted the pace of the waves bit by bit, and soon, the stone bridge started to shake fiercely.

The Professor's Oscillation Hand.

When the bridge was almost about to crash, Lucien suddenly stopped. After the bridge gradually calmed down, it looked exactly the same as what it looked like before.

In fact, the inner structure of this stone bridge was already severely damaged. Although it was not going to crash right now, when there was a certain amount of weight on it, Lucien expected that something different would definitely happen.

...

Harrison Brown's black pointy-headed boat slowed down and was tied to the stake on the street along the canal, and then, Harrison

Brown stepped out of the boat while being protected by his bodyguards. Taking a peek at another luxury boat docked on the other side of the street, he could not help feeling jealous. He wished that he could have the same social status as the owner of that boat.

Then, he started to head for the stone bridge around a hundred meters away from him.

Everything was normal as usual.

However, Brown was still extremely alert. Although he knew that there were a few night watchers secretly protecting him in this area, he was still very sensitive and cautious.

He hated the fact that the Church required him to show up in public from time to time, but he had no other choice but to obey. He only wished that he could make it for the following several months, and then he would be moving to Lance and enjoying his life there.

As Brown was thinking, he and his guards stepped onto the bridge.

Near the bridge, Lucien, dressing in a black suit, nodded to the man sitting on a coach, "Please send these irons to the trading house, and this is your pay."

The young coachman's smile was simple and honest, "No problem, sir."

As the coach slowly moved, Lucien quickly entered a boat beside him.

When the coachman drove the heavy, iron-loaded coach through the stone bridge, Brown was still halfway from the other end of the bridge.

Harrison was thinking about his trip to Lance five months later. He was worrying that the people from the congress might try to kill him at that time.

Suddenly, the stone below them started to shake fiercely.

"Ambush!" That was Brown's first thought.

White light burst out of his body as Brown instantly covered himself with many white feathers.

Angel Feather, a level three divine spell.

At the same time, a green short spear appeared in his right hand, and in his left hand there was a solid shield.

All of this was done within a couple of seconds. Obviously, Harrison Brown was very experienced with fighting.

However, the quake of the stone bridge gradually disappeared, and nothing happened.

"Is the bridge too old?" Brown thought to himself.

As he looked around, the stone bridge still looked normal as usual, as if the shake never occurred. Under the bridge, there were several boats rowing past through the archway.

Among these boats, there was a good-looking young man standing on one of them who was looking at him.

Harrison was a bit embarrassed. Only he knew that how much he actually suffered from the fear and worry since he betrayed the Congress of Magic. Right now, he felt that he must look like an idiot in the young guy's eyes.

...

Lucien's boat rowed through the bridge.

Staring at the water, Lucien thought to himself with his calm and cool mind, "When the bridge started to shake, there were close to ten people who reacted totally different from ordinary people. Excluding some of the knights who were protecting their lords, there should be... five night watchers around to protect Brown: The adventurer walking beside him on the bridge, the businessman on the street, the couple, and the boatman who was right behind me."

Lucien never planned to completely destroy the bridge. He needed more information about Brown and the night watchers secretly

protecting him before seriously taking action.

"Brow has the short spear, the shield... and a level three divine item." Lucien slightly rubbed his chin.

All of that was just a test.

Chapter 165: Support for Lucien

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When Harrison Brown calmed down, he felt amused by his own sensitivity, as if he was an extremely frightened bird.

The night watcher who pretended to be an adventurer approached Harrison a little and said to him in a low voice, “Just an accident. Keep going to the museum.”

“All right. Someone has to fix this bridge.” Brown nodded, walking with the adventurer in the same pace but keeping a short distance from him.

On the other end of the bridge, there was the city’s Art District. Brown could already see a couple of fancy buildings over the other side.

“I’ll report to the Church, in case someone damaged the bridge on purpose.” The night watcher’s eyes looked to the right, but said to Brown on his left side, “We can never be too careful.”

Although the night watcher did not detect any magic wave, he was still very cautious.

In fact, the power of the Professor’s Oscillation Hand came from a consistent frequency of vibration, so nothing related to magic could be found even if the night watcher sent someone to check the bridge.

The only way the Church might find something suspicious here was referring to the annual check record of the bridge to possibly notice that this damage was caused overnight. However, in fact, this city did not have any regular annual checks.

“You’re certainly very cautious.” Brown nodded out of satisfaction, “I feel safe with you guys.”

After getting off the bridge and walking for about seven or eight minute, Brown and his guards came in front of the museum. The museum was a two-storey black building designed in ancient style, looking rather grand.

“Nice to see you, Viscount Wright. Nice to see you, Baron Cape...” Hurriedly, Brown bowed to the important nobles and greeted. Although he was going to move to Lance soon, Brown still wished to have a good relationship with them, since they controlled the economy of the west and the east coast, as well as the south and north continent.

Viscount Wright was a middle-aged man. His hair was dark green, which was quite rare to see. He nodded with a slight sense of self-pride, “Welcome, our heroic knight.”

Brown hurriedly bowed again and responded, “I’m not even close to you, my lord.”

There was always a gap between someone who relied on a magic potion to awaken their Blessing and a well-trained knight who gained the power on their own. Viscount Wright was a real level four grand knight.

The viscount did not say anything else, but turned away to talk to Granneuve, who was also present and was one of the viscount’s business partners. Brown also started to talk to his acquaintances around.

At ten o’clock in the morning, the owner of the museum, Saugus, who was standing with the nobles and the important businessmen, announced the opening of the wax museum to all the guests present.

The band started to play a cheerful melody.

However, at this time, there was a stir in the crowd, seeming like something strange happened a distance away from the museum. The night watchers in the crowd quickly exchanged a glance, looking serious. Then, several of them left to check what was going on there, on the other side.

Lucien, who already changed his outfit, was now wearing a tall black hat and a piece of monocle on his left eye while standing among the people. He did not use the spell, Disguise, since his magic would be revealed easily by the grand knights present, and he only needed to make sure that Brown would not be able to immediately recognize him as the young man on the boat. He saw the night watchers pretending to be a couple and the one that looked like a businessman leaving the crowd, and only the adventurer and the boatman were still around.

It was the support from Ferryman. They were distracting the night watchers.

“It seems Ferryman and his people also know well about these night watchers to some degree...” Lucien thought to himself.

Last night, Lucien carefully analyzed whether Ferryman was worthy of his trust, and he realized the secret relationship between Ferryman and Granneuve. Based on the fact that it was almost impossible that Felipe was lying right in front of Professor, there was only one reasonable explanation, according to Lucien’s understanding.

Lucien believed that Granneuve was indeed the liaison of the congress in Sturk, and so was Ferryman. However, while Granneuve’s identity was known by most sorcerers as the liaison in Sturk, there was another liaison working with Granneuve, Ferryman. Every time when a sorcerer or an apprentice asked for Granneuve’s help, Ferryman would go and check the person’s reliability. In this case, even the person seeking for help was actually a sneaky night watcher, Ferryman could relatively escape easily, and there would be no direct evidence against Granneuve as well.

As long as Lucien could make sure that Ferryman was also from the congress, he was willing to complete the task for the organization to get to Allyn as soon as possible.

Lucien could definitely tell that Ferryman and his people were quite well-trained from the fact that half of the night watchers were drawn away now.

“Everything all right?” asked Brown nervously. The adventurer-looking night watcher just secretly moved close to him and looked like his guard.

“No worries. Some of us just left to check,” answered the night watcher calmly. “We got around three or four grand knights here, and more than ten other knights here.” As the night watcher said, even though some of Brown’s guards were gone, the security was still reliable.

Brown took a glance at Viscount Wright and the other knights, feeling a bit relieved.

However, at this time, an arrow covered with blue light flew directly toward Brown fiercely.

Without doubt, the power of the arrow was at least from a knight-level archer!

Within a blink, the arrow was already right in front of Brown.

Viscount Wright waved his left hand and summoned a strong gust of wind. Although the wind slowed down the arrow a bit, it did not really deter the momentum.

The archer was at least of a grand knight level, or maybe the bow this archer used was a level three weapon!

However, with the viscount’s help, Brown got enough time to activate his divine item again. The white feathers covered him again, and at the same time, the night watcher quickly grabbed Brown’s shield and swiftly held it right in front of Brown.

The arrow with great power instantly pierced through the shield and stabbed the feather cover.

As the feathers fell and turned into dust, there were more growing back quickly. Finally, the arrow dropped to the ground. Brown escaped this elaborately planned attack!

The person shooting the arrow from the tower already retreated immediately, followed by the night watcher who was in the disguise

of a boatman, who was good at tracking.

Viscount Wright looked quite pissed off. Slightly raising his right hand, Wright sent a couple of his knights to assist the night watchers.

Casually, Lucien lifted his monocle a bit in the crowd. There went another night watcher and quite a few knights.

Lucien was confident that, after this attack, Brown would be less on the alert to a certain degree. After all, in Brown's mind, the attack was already over.

When Lucien got closer to Brown, he could see the amulet hanging on his neck now looked quite dim. Brown supposedly only had one more chance to activate it.

The tactic was put forward by Lucien. No matter what method the people from the congress would use, Lucien asked for two rounds of diversions.

"The shield is damaged, and the Angel Feather can only be activated one more time. Shall we leave right now?" asked Brown nervously.

"Calm down, Mr. Brown," responded the night watcher. "Their attack did not get you, and our people are everywhere right now. No one would dare come at you. Besides, if there was only me protecting you to go back home, it would be even more dangerous. Perhaps that cunning sorcerers are just waiting for you to go back home. Stay here, and you're with a lot of knights present. It's safer."

Brown took a glance at Viscount Wright. If it were not because of his help, he might be dead already. So, he nodded, "All right."

Although many of the nobles were frightened by the arrow, the fact that many knights and even grand knights were around today soon set them at ease. Besides, they also did not want to offend Saugus, the owner of the museum.

Although many wax art enthusiasts were also gathering in front of the museum, most of the common people here could not afford the

entry fee—twenty Nars.

Carrying a black leather suitcase, Lucien walked toward the gate in a decent manner.

Seeing Lucien's elegant bearing and his fine suit, the two guards standing there said to him politely, "Twenty Nars, please, sir. And we needed to check your suitcase."

"Sure," answered Lucien in a Djibouti accent, "I've just arrived here to attend the opening ceremony. And this is my luggage."

As he opened his suitcase, a couple dozens of shining Thales mixed with some decent clothes immediately caught the guards' eyes.

After receiving fifty Nars from Lucien, the two guards bowed to him and let him in very politely.

Together with his black suitcase, Lucien walked into the museum.

It was a special suitcase. At the bottom of it, there was a very secret layer underneath.

Chapter 166: The Darkness underneath the Explosion

Chapter 166: The Darkness underneath the Explosion

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

It was dark inside the museum. As the wax statues standing along both sides of the aisles were very vivid in the glass covers, many of the visitors were both impressed and a bit scared.

“Great work! The only difference is that the statue has a skill slightly darker than mine!” Viscount Wright laughed. “Great art skill, Mr. Saugus! If I stand together with him here at night, I bet no one could tell who is real.”

Because of the attack earlier, Saugus’ face looked quite gloomy. Hearing the viscount’s praise, Saugus cheered up a bit, “My lord, the statue was customized for you when you just came back from Holm. At that time, your skin did look a bit darker.”

“Haha... Saugus, you just won’t give me any chance to say that your work is not perfect, will you?” Viscount Wright laughed again, even louder, “You reminded me, and that’s true. When I came back in July, my skin was quite tanned.”

“Yes, yes... I almost could not recognize you at that time.” Granneuve followed the words of the viscount in a flattering smile. Then, he took a glance at Harrison Brown and said to Wright, “My lord, it was Harrison Brown who was the target of these attackers. I wonder if I should stay away from him. After all, I’m not a knight.”

Wright tidied his clothes a bit and answered, “No worries. Although those sorcerers want to kill Brown, they cannot afford losing more of their people, especially their important members, or they would just directly send a middle-rank sorcerer here and easily kill Brown. However, if that was the case, the sorcerer would be caught later for sure. So, even if there are still more attacks, they would not get close to us.”

"I see... That definitely makes sense, my lord," answered Granneuve, although still feeling concerned.

"Just appreciate Mr. Saugus's artworks. If anything really happens, you'll have my protection." Viscount Wright added.

"Thank you... thank you, my lord!" Granneuve, who always claimed to be the most loyal servant of the viscount, hurriedly showed his gratitude.

Hearing the viscount's words, the rest of the nobles also felt a bit more relieved.

On the other side of the museum, with the black suitcase in his hand, Lucien calmly walked toward the end of the corridor.

After a couple of turns, Lucien found a corner where there was no one, except only a few empty glass covers that were waiting for the upcoming wax statues.

Quickly calculating the distance between Brown and himself, Lucien carefully hid the suitcase after taking away the Thales inside and opening the secret layer.

Underneath the layer, there were ten tubes of Flame Gel and a pack of gunpowder, as well as a very long rope piling in circles.

Furthermore, these tubes of Flame Gel were way more powerful with regards to the explosive compared with their original version. Lucien had got sulphur, nitric acid and some other equipment and made nitroglycerin out of them. Then he added it into the pre-made Flame Gel.

The reason why Lucien did not directly use nitroglycerin only was that he would need the power waves produced by the Flame Gel later on.

On the previous night, Lucien had calculated the speed of the rope being burned. After placing the rope and the extra pack of gunpowder properly, Lucien lit the rope on fire with a flintstone.

Even the rope was specially treated by Lucien. He soaked the rope

in a chemical liquid in advance to make sure the burning was steady and stable.

After finishing all the work, Lucien lowered his black top hat and walked back to the crowd in a swift but calm pace.

The tiny sound of a rope burning in a secret corner was almost impossible to hear.

The process was slow, but it was steadily going on.

Two minutes later, Lucien came back to the crowd. He saw the nobles were still chatting, walking around and appreciating the artworks.

“One minute to go,” Lucien thought to himself.

...

Brown was hoping that one day his own wax statue could be made by the city museum.

Close to him, Mr. Saugus was busy with talking to a couple of nobles, discussing the issue of making more new wax statues for them.

Brown also wanted to talk to Saugus. When Brown was walking to him, he saw a black-haired and black-eyed young man who was observing a wax statue very carefully. The young man was wearing a black top hat and an elegant-looking monocle, which was a typical popular dressing style from Holm.

“The fashion of Holm is now influencing Sturk,” thought Brown to himself, “Indeed, many young nobles in Sturk are following this trend.”

Brown felt that probably he should try this style some day as well.

As he was thinking, Brown was already beside Saugus.

The adventurer-looking night watcher closely followed Brown on his left side to protect him from any sudden attack.

Fifteen seconds, fourteen seconds ...

Lucien left the showcase and walked toward Brown.

Six, five...

Lucien brushed past Brown.

As Lucien was walking, he counted silently in his mind, "Four, three..."

"Mr. Saugus, I wonder if..." Brown talked to the owner of the museum.

"Two, one..."

Bang! There came a thunderous sound of explosion!

The great explosion brought a fierce blast, and the whole museum was shaken by it!

The horrible sound actually consisted of a few waves of explosion, and together with it, the power of magic waves were also very powerful.

The explosion happened one second later than Lucien's expectation, probably because the change of wind or something else, but since Lucien was on high alert, as soon as the explosion happened, he quickly took action.

The first circle spell: Charm Person.

The target of the spell was Brown.

After obtaining the Book of Necromancy and analyzing the necromantic way of meditating, Lucien found that the shared principle of most necromantic spells was to affect human being's hormone secretion and sensorial judgement by using some kind of special brain waves.

Based on this, Lucien developed two new versions of Charm Person. One put more emphasis on the influence of the magic on the

individual's soul, which in exchange would reduce the power from the intervention of brain waves. Thus, it worked better on sorcerers, but would also produce stronger magic waves and was hence easier to be noticed or identified. Meanwhile, the other one was the opposite version, which was more for common people.

As the latter was very hard to be noticed, it worked perfectly right now. And also because Brown's power was awakened by the potion, his willpower was not as strong as those knights who made this achievement on their own.

At that moment, the tiny magic waves produced by Lucien's spell were impossible to be noticed, specially because the explosion blast was totally overwhelming!

No one present noticed Lucien's casting.

The white light burst out again from Brown's amulet for the third time, only one second slower than Lucien's movement. However, Brown suddenly looked very confused for a second before he was covered by the feathers.

The great explosion made the whole museum shake fiercely, and the strong magic waves indicated that it was likely that a middle-rank mage was launching that attack. At the same time, the night watcher, Viscount Wright and other knights immediately took action: some of them took a defensive stance, while others rushed to the place where the explosion originally happened.

Noble ladies were screaming. Most people present terribly panicked. Everything here was a great chaos.

And they started to flood out of the museum, pushing and shoving.

Seeing that Brown protected himself well with the feathers, the night watcher alertly looked around when most of the grand knights were away to check the place which got exploded.

Anyone dare set a step close to Brown would be killed by the night watcher right on the spot.

As the night watcher was checking around, he saw the young man

wearing the black top hat was also pushing other people to hurriedly get closer to the gate to escape. His elegant monocle was now hanging on his ear awkwardly.

“Useless...” thought the night watcher out of contempt.

And then the young man got out of the museum hall together with the crowd.

Chapter 167: The End of Brown

Chapter 167: The End of Brown

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Although the sound of the explosion faded and the museum stopped shaking, the ears of many were still tingling badly, as if thousands of flies were buzzing around, and they could hear nothing clear.

“One wall and several pillars are completely destroyed... One fourth of the museum is severely affected,” reported a knight to the night watcher. “Fortunately, no one is hurt. And the viscount sent me to tell you to not lower your guard. According to lord Wright, the attacker might be a fourth circle sorcerer who could use Fire Ball or something of equivalent explosive power.”

Although the level of a magic spell was fixed according to the different levels of power of the casters, the effects varied greatly, even if the difference was only one level.

“I won’t.” The night watcher nodded. “I’ll call up more night watchers to come here to assist the viscount as well, and to protect Mr. Brown.”

The night watcher also felt quite pissed off by the fact that the attacker hasn’t been found yet.

“Good. The viscount is furious right now.” The knight nodded and walked toward Saugus to send him the comforting words from the viscount.

“Haulies, I want to leave this place, right now.” Brown’s voice trembled.

“I’ll send you back home when more night watchers arrive.” Haulies, the adventurer-looking night watcher nodded. He of course understood Brown’s nervousness.

After all, nothing was more horrible than this kind of unknown

danger, when the attacker could actually still be anywhere in this place.

“Why? How long do I still have to wait here?” Brown urged the night watcher out of anger and fear, “Just let the pastors and cardinals nearby come here!”

Haulies shrugged, “These holy pastors and cardinals won’t show up right now, and they will only arrive when we actually besiege the attackers.”

“I don’t want to stay here anymore. Haulies! Let me go!” cried Brown, “I don’t want to be the bait anymore! I’m leaving Sturk as soon as possible!”

“Calm down, Mr. Brown... Please calm down.” Haulies tried to comfort him, “More night watchers are on their way.”

“Please hurry!” Brown started to walk back and forth within a small area, and his great fear was torturing him.

“You gotta leave... You gotta leave right now... You gotta go...” Brown murmured to himself. He was going crazy.

As he was moving around, most of the feathers fell on the ground and disappeared.

“You gotta go... Leave here... Leave forever...” The voice in Brown’s mind grew louder and louder. The voice was like Brown’s own voice, but also like someone else’s.

Finally, brown broke down mentally. He suddenly turned around and rushed to the gate as fast as he could. He was fast, and his speed came from his great fear.

As soon as Haulies noticed that Brown ran away, his heart sank. He had a bad foreboding.

“Wait! Don’t go!” shouted Haulies.

When Brown was almost at the gate, he suddenly sensed great danger, and he quickly woke up from this fear and panic.

However, it was too late. A fireball with the size of a head directly hit the upper part of Brown's body!

In the last second of Brown's life, in the corner of his eye, Brown saw a young man wearing a black top hat hidden beside the gate. The young man pushed up his monocle with his left hand while, at the same time, the light of fire was still lingering on his left wrist.

Bang!

Together with another explosion from the fireball, the upper part of Brown's body exploded, and the fierce fire stopped his body from regenerating.

Brown was killed.

...

"!!" Haulies was shocked when he heard the other explosion.

That was the end of Brown, Haulies realized desperately, although he could not believe the fact that Brown was still killed despite the close protection from the night watchers and knights.

When he rushed to the gate of the museum, what Haulies saw were only pieces of Brown's body, and only the lower parts of the body could still be recognized.

Haulies' heart suddenly sank, and in the next second he yelled at the other knights and guards out of great anger, "The attacker is there! That way!"

He could tell the direction where the attacker launched his attack based on the position of Brown's remains. Haulies' eyes were bloodshot.

A bunch of people rushed to the corner of the museum.

However, there was no one there.

Even the whole street was empty since all the passersby were frightened away by the explosions.

The attacker, the bastard, also erased all his traces using magic, which showed that he was not even in too much of a hurry.

“Go get him!” shouted Haulies. He would not give up. He must catch this guy!

However, as the canals and the streets on the island waved together like a complicated spider web, it was very hard for them to trace based on the slight trace of magic wave left by the attacker.

After a while, when Haulies led the rest of the people to the other side of the island, even that slight trace of magic wave disappeared.

Countless pointy-headed boats were moving on the water. Haulies lost the attacker.

“F**k!!” swore Haulies.

Although he was only of level two, because of Haulies’s special Blessing, he could shortly burst out the power equivalent to a level three grand knight. However, despite that, the attacker still managed to escape.

Haulies would not let the attacker just flee away like this. He started to contact the leader of the group of the night watchers as well as the cardinals, and also was ready for a thorough searching.

...

Alongside the canal behind Haulies, there was a fancy restaurant, and Lucien was in one of the booths of the restaurant’s washroom.

A small cluster of fire appeared above Lucien’s fingertips, and then he burnt down the clothes and hat that he was just wearing.

Now he was wearing a dark-red shirt, black trousers and leather shoes.

This was how Lucien dressed when he first went out from his hotel room in the morning. Last night, he hid all his outfit in this washroom.

After the burning smell was gone, Lucien quickly threw the broken monocular and the shoes that he was wearing into the canal through the washroom window.

Then, he tidied himself up a little bit, walked out of the washroom and entered a balcony of the restaurant.

In the balcony, Grace was walking back and forth nervously. Seeing that Lucien finally came back, she hurriedly asked, "Mr. Evans, did you hear the explosion?"

Grace was too nervous to notice that it took Lucien more than fifteen minutes to come back from the washroom. And, of course, it was not a big deal either that one spent fifteen minutes in washroom.

"I heard it as well. It was horrible." Lucien closed the balcony door from behind, "I tried to look out from the washroom window but did not see anything. We can ask the waiter later what happened over there. Don't be nervous. We're fine, Grace."

Grace nodded and took a couple of deep breaths, "You're right, Mr. Evans. Let's continue. You just mentioned that my fingerings were..."

Lucien already switched himself back into his music mood, after he did all these things to fulfill his mission within fifteen minutes.

"Yes, that's right... You're still sticking to your previous practice to some degree," explained Lucien, "But this is not necessarily a bad thing. As a pianist, you gotta find your own style..."

Lucien was definitely an authority in piano playing, and he had a very profound understanding of it. Grace frequently nodded as she was listening to him very carefully.

About more than half an hour later, a waiter knocked at the door gently.

"Yes?" Grace was not happy that her lesson was interrupted.

"Ms. Grace, two knight squires from the Church need to search the

place,” answered the waiter politely.

The balcony was booked under Grace’s name.

“Well... let them in, then,” said Grace. Although she was already quite well-known in Sturk, she still needed to respect the Church.

Chapter 168: Mission Complete

Chapter 168: Mission Complete

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When the two squires from the Church walked into the balcony, they did not feel suspicious at all. After all, this restaurant was a place only for people of high social status in the city, and searching this place was just a routine part of their work.

“When did you arrive at this restaurant, and did you temporarily leave this place just now?” asked the two squires.

Although a boatman passing by reported to the Church that he witnessed a young man wearing a black top hat and monocular summoning a big fireball, the boatman could not describe the attacker’s physical appearance in detail.

As soon as the witness mentioned the black top hat, Haulies realized who was the attacker. However, the information these squires had was still too limited for them to realize that the noble young man standing right in front of them was the very attacker wanted.

“Nine forty. I arrived this restaurant at nine forty,” Lucien answered calmly, “I have an appointment with Ms. Grace today, and I never left this restaurant.”

Lucien said the word “restaurant”, instead of “balcony”, in order to mislead Grace.

“Mr. E... Emm... This gentleman is my friend, and we were discussing piano playing just now.” Grace was for sure on Lucien’s side, and she also had no idea that Lucien actually did so many things within the fifteen minutes during which he was away in the washroom.

“Your words is for sure trustworthy.” One of the squires nodded. “I really like your piano playing, Miss Grace.”

And after a casual searching in the balcony, the two squires left.

When the balcony door was gently closed from outside, Lucien smiled, "Shall we continue now?"

In fact, killing Brown was never a super challenging task. However, how to kill Brown but also manage to escape from the besiege of the night watchers and knights was the toughest part of the whole mission.

And letting Brown himself run out of his own protection was the best way!

"Of course," answered Grace eagerly. She never imagined that she could have a precious chance like this to be taught by Lucien Evans in person.

Lucien taught Grace very patiently until it was about noon. When they were waiting for the lunch, he said to Grace, "Any plans for your future?"

Grace lowered her head but did not answer immediately. Although Grace kept telling herself that it was the difficult situation that forced her to steal Lucien Evans' name and live in a big lie, she knew that, despite all these reasons, what she was doing was because of her own greed.

"I'll do whatever you want me to do, Mr. Evans," Grace opened her mouth with great effort.

"You did me a favor. You helped me solve the problem between my friend and Mr. Granneuve, and I really appreciate it," said Lucien sincerely. "If you really want to be a good musician, go to Aalto, together with your family. I can write a letter for you to the president of the Musicians' Association there, as your instructor."

"Oh... Really?" Grace was very surprised.

Lucien nodded and continued, "Or, if you want to keep stealing my name and stay in Sturk to enjoy your reputation, I will not admit neither deny it. Up to you."

Grace stared at the clean white tablecloth and remained silent. She had lots of thoughts going on at the same time in her mind. She knew that, without a real solid foundation in music knowledge and hard practice, her fake reputation of being Lucien Evans' student would turn into a heavy burden for her sooner or later.

However, thinking of the luxury lifestyle she was living right now in Sturk, it was very hard for her to say goodbye to it.

Lucien did not urge Grace. No matter what option she chose, her choice did not really have anything to do with him anyway.

A couple of gentle knocks at the door dragged Grace's thoughts back.

She sat a bit more straight, and when the waiter left the balcony, she said to Lucien with determination, "I'll go to Aalto, Mr. Evans."

Lucien spread the napkin on his lap and started to cut his steak, "I'll write letters for you to Mr. Victor and Mr. Christopher."

When Lucien and Grace were chatting about the Musicians' Association in Aalto, someone knocked at the door again.

"Yes?" asked Grace in a cheerful tone. After making this hard decision, Grace felt way more relaxed now.

"It's us, Grace." It was Green, the violist of the band.

"Why are you guys here?" asked Grace again, confused.

"We need to practice this afternoon together, don't you remember? Let's go together!" It was Piola.

Grace did not respond immediately.

"Grace, open the door," said Green. "You agreed with us. You agreed on doing this. And we gotta do it."

"Yes, we have no choice," agreed the other band members.

Hearing their words, Grace forced a smile on her face and

whispered to Lucien, “After the night when I met you in the restaurant, I was very nervous and anxious, so I did not attend our regular practice. They thought that I wanted to quit.”

Lucien did not really care. He put a piece of meat in his mouth and then said, “Deal with it however you want.”

Grace nodded and then walked toward the door, partially opening it.

“No worries. I won’t give this concert up,” Grace said to the other band members. “But after that, I’m going to Aalto to learn music.”

“Are you kidding?” Green looked a bit pissed off, “Now you got money and reputation, and you want to keep away from us.”

Although the other band members were quite famous in the city as well, they were not even close to Grace, because she was the only one in the band who played piano. Of course, they did not feel that it was fair.

Therefore, gradually, these young people who got together because of the same music dream started to lose their focus and even themselves.

“Grace,” said Sharon, who was not looking at her but staring at the floor, “You know we can tell the newspaper what you are doing right now.”

Although Grace was still feeling guilty, after hearing Sharon’s words, she released a long sigh and responded, “Go ahead, Sharon. No one will believe you.”

“Does this one-month-role-playing really make you feel you’re a student of Mr. Lucien Evans?” said Green sarcastically.

Grace opened the door completely, “I got someone who supports me here.”

“Mr. Evans?!” The band members were all shocked.

They had no idea when Lucien Evans arrived in Sturk or when did

Grace developed such a good relationship with him.

Lucien put down the knife and fork, wiped his mouth slowly, and walked to Grace, "I'll send the letters to you later. When you're in Aalto, bring the letters to Mr. Christopher."

"Thank you, Mr. Evans... No, thank you... my teacher," said Grace excitedly.

Lucien nodded, and when he walked past the other group members, he said to them, "Hope you folks never forget your music dream. You cannot rely on someone else's fame for the rest of your life."

That was also what Lucien wanted to say to himself.

When Lucien's figure disappeared in the corridor, some of the band members lowered their heads out of shame.

...

It was sunny and hot the second day.

Lucien and Ferryman were standing side by side in the back of a small boat, moving along the canal.

Lucien puzzledly looked at Ferryman. He could not believe that Ferryman would just show up in public like this in the city.

"No worries, my friend. My blood power came from a special creature, and I'm very good at disguising myself, That's why I'm here." Ferryman grinned. "Thank you, Mr. Evans. You're fantastic. Did you make the explosive yourself? Out of the materials I gave you?"

Ferryman did not link the stone bridge thing to Lucien. He thought it was only an accident, after all, Lucien was on the boat at that time.

Lucien realized that the current physical appearance of Ferryman might not be real, but he did not want to bother himself with this topic too much right now.

“Yes, I made it. It’s a unique, ancient formula,” answered Lucien casually.

“I see.” Ferryman looked ahead. “Given that you successively fulfilled the mission, now it is my turn to fulfill my promise. I’ll take you to the place of a scholar later. And before you leave Sturk, I suggest you do not go outside.”

“Scholar?” Lucien was a bit confused.

Chapter 169: Astar

Ferryman grinned. "Xellos Astar, the famous playwright who have already produced six popular operas in Sturk."

He did not avoid the boatman paddling in the front, since the boatman was also one of the core members of the Congress of Magic in Sturk.

"He's a sorcerer as well?" asked Lucien. Astar's identity for disguise was basically the same as his own.

"Yes, he is." Ferryman nodded and said in respect, "He is a Shadow Mentor."

"Mentor?" Lucien was surprised.

In the ancient magic empire, anyone who could be respected as a mentor would be at least a senior-rank mage.

"Of course. Although I'm not sure about Mr. Astar's specific level, without doubt, he's of senior rank. Actually, we have a couple of senior-rank mages in Sturk, but some of them are out of town right now, and they would rarely carry out tasks themselves," explained Ferryman.

"The more powerful the congress is, the more secure I feel," answered Lucien honestly. Ferryman's words also verified Rhine's comment on the Congress of Magic that it was growing strong very fast.

Moving along the canal, the pointy-headed boat turned at the corner and came to a beautiful and quiet residential area in the city.

...

The boat stopped in front of a big, luxury three-storey house with a spacious garden. Lucien and Ferryman stepped on the stone stairs in front of the property after getting off the boat and came to the gate of the house.

"Tom." The guard standing behind simply greeted Ferryman and opened the iron gate. Obviously, they were acquaintances.

Lucien was somehow expecting a different name for Ferryman, at least more unique than "Tom".

As Tom and Lucien slowly walked through the garden and the lawn, Tom said to Lucien casually, "Tom is a very common name, I know, but my job also does not draw much attention anyway."

"That's right, but sometimes people take the opposite way, for example, Mr. Astar." Lucien nodded and looked around this place curiously. He saw nothing special yet with this place.

"Mew!" An orange tabby cat suddenly appeared in front of them and spoke to them in a husky voice, "Astar wants you guys to go to the second floor. He's studying arcana right now and got no time to welcome our new friend."

"Yes... Ms. Mercedes," responded Tom with awe.

Then he introduced the cat to Lucien, "This is Mr. Astar's familiar... no, partner, Ms. Mercedes."

"Very nice to meet you, Ms. Mercedes," greeted Lucien to the cat politely.

The cat made a short "hum" from her throat to respond, and then elegantly walked into the garden nearby.

Before Tom and Lucien walked into the hall, Lucien looked back and saw that the arrogant cat was jumping around to catch a butterfly. Obviously, she was having fun by herself over there.

"Sometimes animals know better how to enjoy life," said Tom gently and opened the wooden gate.

Lucien turned around and smiled, "But happiness is not everything that a person can enjoy in one's life."

...

The sunlight made the second floor pretty bright. However, when Lucien was following Tom walking through the corridor, he always somehow felt that this place was covered by shadows, and he had a feeling that this was because of Sun's Corona he was wearing.

"It's us, Mr. Astar," said Tom in a low voice as he gently knocked at a black wooden door.

"Come in. The door is unlocked." A husky voice came from behind the door.

Tom pushed the door open carefully and asked Lucien to go in with him.

The first thing that jumped into Lucien's eyes was the messy wads of paper on the thick gray carpet. And, amazingly, there was a quill writing fast on a piece of white paper on its own, without anyone holding it, and, from time to time, the quill was dipping itself in the ink bottle cheerfully.

But Lucien did not see Mr. Astar.

Seeing that Tom was bending to the ground and picking up the paper wads from the floor to throw them at a trash bin, Lucien hurriedly joined him.

Out of curiosity, Lucien took a quick glance at a paper wad as he picked it up and saw messy formulas and numbers on it.

In order to show his respect, Lucien did not carefully read the paper neither tried to steal it, and, of course, he dare not as well, but he could be certain about was the foundational role of math in arcana study.

"Give me a moment," said the same husky voice coming from every dark corner of the room. Taking a closer look, Lucien saw a silhouette between the curtain and the desk, and, gradually, an elegant black-haired man appeared. At first glance, Lucien thought that the man was only in his early twenties, but later, he thought that the man might be over forty.

The black-haired man was sitting in his armchair and reading a

black hard-covered book very carefully. Around him, in the shadow, it seemed like there were countless quills writing and calculating busily. Lucien could not see them clearly.

About ten minutes later, when Tom and Lucien still remained silent, the quill on the desk finished its work and jumped into the quill pot itself, and the shadow quills in the darkness also disappeared completely.

Closing the book, the black-haired man turned to look at them and greeted, "Welcome, our new friend. I'm Astar."

"Great pleasure to meet you, Mr. Astar." Lucien slightly bowed to him. As he was bowing, he saw the name of the book, which was printed in silver ink, Arcana.

Lucien saw the font before, and he got excited and murmured, "Arcana..."

Astar lifted the book a bit and asked, "Have you ever read this before?"

"Yes... but a very old one." Lucien was very curious, "Mr. Astar, is this the latest issue of Arcana? Can I take a look?"

Astar stood up from his armchair and smiled, "What you've been studying is the ancient magic system, and hence this might be a bit too much for you. And if you can't read Arcana, you cannot understand all kinds of new magic structures published in the journal called Magic." Astar pointed at another book on his desk with a Hexagram on it, "However, you're the only sorcerer in the past ten years who wanted to borrow Arcana from me, and I'm impressed by your thirst for knowledge. So feel free to read it, but don't feel depressed when you cannot get it."

As he was saying, Astar handed Lucien the book.

And then he turned to Ferryman, "How shall I call our new friend, Tom?"

"Evans... Mr. Evans. A first circle sorcerer," answered Tom, feeling a bit nervous still.

Lucien opened Arcana and glanced at the content page. Immediately, he was shocked, since the title of the first article in this journal was:

"A Special Complex Function that Describes and Calculates Spiritual Power Field".

Lucien never expected that the congress's study of Complex Functions was this advanced. Although some of the books unlocked in Lucien's spirit library were about the knowledge of Complex Function, it was too complicated for Lucien to understand since he came from neither math nor physics academic background. Also, Lucien thought that the study progress of the congress might still remain close to that of Earth in the late 18th century or the early 19th century, which mainly focused on calculus, hence he never put too much thought into this field. Lucien realized that he was falling behind and he needed to catch up with the congress as soon as possible.

A complex function was one in which the independent variable and the dependent variable were both complex numbers. Based on the theory of Complex Analysis, many study achievements were made, for example, the measurement of planar field and Riemann Surface. And then, Riemann's looking into the space curved surface based on Non-Euclidean geometry Theory provided the tool of developing the General Theory of Relativity from Einstein.

Seeing that Lucien was totally shocked, Astar grinned, "Aren't these articles edge-cutting? Since Mr. Brook, the grand arcanist, found the relation between electricity and magnetism and put forward the concept, Electromagnetic Field, the studies looking into all kinds of 'fields' are thriving. And thus many complex functions came out as a tool for us to calculate the intensity of a specific spot in a spiritual power field. And my research interest, Shadow Field, requires a thorough understanding of it."

Lucien nodded. In this world, the need in arcana research accelerated the birth of complex functions, which was different from that of Earth.

"Anyway, talking about those theories to you right now does

nothing but greatly confuses you. When you get to Allyn, Evans, the congress will provide you with lots of basic books and materials for learning arcana. And if you have an open mind, you can switch yourself into a sorcerer who believes in the contemporary magic system in about two to three years... It depends on your own effort," continued Astar.

"They just... give the books and materials... for free?" Lucien was concerned that the congress would have extra demanding requests for him just like the Hand of Paleness.

"Just some little requirements... not anything dangerous." Astar assured Lucien, "We hope that sorcerers under middle rank can focus on their own study and grow stronger, and that's the best pay from you folks to the congress."

Then Astar turned to Ferryman, "Tom, could you show Evans his room on the third floor?"

"Sure." Tom nodded.

"On the third floor, there are a few apprentices with quite good potential living here and learning after me right now. And they'll be sent to Holm together with you. If you feel not ashamed to learn from apprentices, you can start studying arcana learning from them," said Astar.

Leaving Astar's study, Lucien and Tom walked to the third floor.

Chapter 170: The Apprentices

Chapter 170: The Apprentices

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The arrangement of the third floor was very different from that of the second. Lucien saw a spacious blue and white living room. On each side of the living room, there was a row of big windows, through which the sunlight came in and brightly lit up the whole place.

Although the living room was still quite smaller than the hall on the first floor, everything there looked rather lively and energetic – couches that could move around; small-sized tea tables everywhere; small black writing boards hanging on the wall; green plants, etc.

There were some teenagers in that place. The oldest might be around fourteen or fifteen, and the youngest might be only twelve. Some of them were sitting in the couches, calculating and writing something down in a very dedicated way, while others were standing in front of the small blackboards, discussing something seriously. In a second, Lucien thought that he was visiting a study hall or something.

Because of the unique design of the place and the thick carpet on the floor, Lucien and Tom's arriving did not attract the teenagers' attention at all.

"Annick, I found this book, Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic, very interesting. Although the three fundamental laws of force field look quite simple, when you think about it, all of them are very close to our daily life when we cast a spell," said a young girl in a low voice to her friend sitting in the couch beside her.

Another teenager boy with blond curly hair looked up and said, "Layria, I agree with you. You know once Mr. Astar mentioned that Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic is one of the two major theories supporting the contemporary magic system, and if you can have a thorough understanding of it, probably you can become a

real sorcerer soon!”

The girl with linen-colored hair sitting beside them joined the conversation, “Annick, Layria, are you two still reading the first chapter? The other day I took a quick glance at the book and found the third chapter was beyond imagination. The third chapter tries to explain all kinds of movements happening in this world, including stars and tides, by introducing the concept of gravity, a force that exists between the stars and the land. And that is why star trails can actually be predicted. I believe that it’s very important to our further study in Astrology.”

Layria’s lovely ponytail slightly jumped up and down as she was nodding, “Yes, yes... but I cannot understand the derivation here, and I also don’t understand the mathematical method called... calculus. What about you two, Heidi and Annick?”

“No idea... I cannot get it at all,” answered Heidi casually. “But just like what Mr. Astar told us, before we become real sorcerers, we only need to remember a few principles and formulas, instead of understanding why.”

“Still... We need to read a lot of books according to Mr. Astar...” Layria sighed. “Basic Geometry of Magic, The Mapping of Magic Principles and Model Building and... and...”

“And The Significance of Modelling, Element Equation behind Magic Formula, Basic Element, Common Algebra, Classification of Low-rank Meditations, Simple Analysis of the Essence of the Cold and the Heat, Motion and Force in Magic.” Heidi took over the words and listed all the books they needed to read.

“You see, I cannot even remember the books.” Layria shrugged. “Although Mr. Astar said that if we could fully understand Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic and then spend a year on studying calculus, when we got enough spiritual power, we could work on becoming a middle-rank sorcerer, I don’t know how long this whole process would take me without a teacher... maybe fifteen years...”

As Astar said, all these apprentices in this living room were more

talented than the average, and for sure, they had their own targets.

Annick scratched his hair a bit and said, “We’re not gonna be on our own for long, right? Mr. Astar said that we would have mentors teaching us in Allyn. Maybe four or five years later, we can become real sorcerers, and at that time...”

“At that time, we’ll be councillors of the city council. We’ll have servants,” said Heidi full of hope.

“At that time, we can meet our families as well,” added Layria.

The three apprentices remained silent for a bit and then sighed at the same time.

There was a rare smile on Ferryman’s face while he looked at the three teenagers, “Those three, together with Sprint, Oimos and Katrina, they were the most gifted kids in the last test. Especially Sprint and Katrina, they both have quite potential spiritual power and talent in arcana.”

As Tom was saying, he pointed at the the teenager boy with dark red hair, the other teenager who was sitting in the couch calculating, and the blonde girl who was discussing seriously with her peers.

“All promising young people,” responded Lucien in a real sorcerer’s tone.

Their conversation seized the apprentices’ attention. They turned around and bowed politely, “Mr. Tom.”

Tom apparently looked way less gloomy than usual when he was in front of the teenagers. He nodded and smiled, “I’m very glad to see that all of you’re working so hard, but at the same time, I want you ladies and gentlemen to understand that the author of Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic, and also the inventor of calculus, Mr. Douglas, is the president of the congress, and the greatest arcanist ever, hence there is still a long way for you folks to go. Work hard and be patient.”

“Thank you, Mr. Tom. We will.” Sprint took a step forward and said

with pride, “Becoming an arcanist has always been my target, and I finally became a junior apprentice yesterday.”

Some of the teenagers were very surprised. It did not take Sprint long to make this breakthrough.

“You’re gifted, Sprint.” Tom nodded, feeling quite surprised as well, “And I saw you were helping your peers as well.”

“Of course, we’re all friends,” answered Sprint cheerfully like a kid. Then, he took a glance at Lucien, “Is this our new friend, Mr. Tom? He looks a bit older than us.”

Then Sprint turned to Lucien, “Do you know anything about arcana? I can provide you with some help if you want.”

“Yes, you can ask me as well,” said Katrina. This fourteen-year-old girl was wearing a white dress and already looked like a beautiful young lady. “And I’ll also become an apprentice very soon.”

Both Sprint and Katrina arrived here recently, and when they were chosen, neither of them was an apprentice but just talented kids. Now Sprint already made his breakthrough, and it seemed that Katrina was on her way as well. Without doubt, Sprint and Katrina were the most potential two among all the apprentices and the other young kids who were working on becoming one.

And just like all the smart people, Sprint and Katrina were competing with each other all the time.

In Katrina’s mind, this young man, who was probably only twenty or something, should be no more than a senior apprentice who knew nothing about arcana.

Tom was a bit amused, “This is Mr. Evans. He is a real sorcerer.”

“A real sorcerer?!”

“But he looks so young?!”

The teenagers were very surprised.

Although they heard that from time to time there were very talented teenagers who could become real sorcerers after turning eighteen when their souls became more stable, they never met a sorcerer who was this young as Lucien. They suspected that probably this Mr. Evans was using some kind of magic to maintain his young appearance.

“When you arrive at the congress, you’ll see sorcerers who’re only fifteen or even fourteen.” Tom slightly shook his head and smiled, “In my eyes, Mr. Evans is rather smart, and I’m actually not surprised with his achievement.”

“Mr. Evans.” All the apprentices bowed politely with their right hands on their foreheads.

This was the tradition that an apprentice should show great respect to a sorcerer.

Lucien smiled, “We’re peers now.”

“You want to study arcana with them?” whispered Tom to Lucien.

“I want to start from reading the books they just mentioned,” answered Lucien, “We can discuss if it’s necessary.” Lucien believed that his arcana knowledge was no inferior than most middle-rank mages.

“Then you have to fulfil a task from the congress in advance,” Tom grinned, “since the books are only for the apprentices. Sorcerers can only get them when they arrive the congress.”

“What task?” asked Lucien.

“You gotta be the teacher of an apprentice,” explained Tom patiently. “In order to get the books and all kinds of support from the congress, a sorcerer needs to help an apprentice to reach his or her senior level. Due to the limit of the environment here, the hope that they can leap forward to reach this level is slim to none, but you can try helping an apprentice in training to become a junior one. How does this sound? Fulfilling half of the congress’s task in advance right here?”

“Then what will happen after we arrive in Allyn?” asked Lucien, “Will I still be the teacher?”

“No worries.” Tom waved his hands, “All the apprentices will be sent to the secret schools to study at that time. They won’t bother you.”

“I see. Sounds very reasonable.” Lucien nodded. He agreed on the emphasis that the congress put on training apprentices.

Tom clapped his hands to draw the teenagers’ attention. “Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve got an opportunity for you. Because Mr. Evans needs to study arcana, he wants to work with some of you. Who wants to volunteer? You folks gotta know that the chance of working together with a real sorcerer is precious!”

The reaction of the apprentices varied. Some got quite excited and started to whisper to each other, while others remained quite doubtful toward a sorcerer who knew nothing about arcana.

No one knew how much this young sorcerer could help them with their arcana study.

Besides, according to the tradition of the ancient magic empire, some sorcerers were quite strict with training new apprentices. Those apprentices who had other teachers before would not be taken into their consideration at all, hence they might miss the chance of becoming the students of some more powerful sorcerers. And that was the thing that concerned them the most.

“Who volunteers?” asked Tom again.

Sprint responded first, “I’m afraid that Mr. Evans cannot provide me with enough guidance with regard to arcana. I’m sorry.”

“Me neither. Sorry, Mr. Evans.” Katrina lowered her head, “I want to stick to my own study schedule.”

The other six or seven apprentices who were close to Sprint and Katrina were also very hesitant.

Chapter 171: Instruction

Chapter 171: Instruction

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Facing the apprentices' attitude, Tom realized how rebellious these young teenagers could be in this age, so he hurriedly clarified, "I want you folks to understand that the Congress of Magic is not like the past ancient magic empire, and most of the sorcerers in the congress will still be willing to accept you as his or her apprentice even after you have studied under Mr. Evans, as long as you're not Mr. Evans registered apprentice."

Hearing Tom's words, a few apprentices raised their heads.

"I know many of you once heard from Mr. Astar that lots and lots of sorcerers, because they could not keep an open mind toward arcana, failed to make the breakthrough upward to middle or high-rank mage level. However, as you folks can see, Mr. Evans is a real sorcerer already before his twenties, and this talent is quite precious even in the congress. Compared with those old-school sorcerers, Mr. Evans might be able to provide you folks with great new insights, and maybe one day Mr. Evans will become a mentor!"

The title, mentor, was especially used to respect those high-rank mages. Across the continent, high-rank mages were very rare, even in the Duchy of Violet.

Tom's words clearly showed that he saw the great potential in Lucien, especially because of the task had Lucien perfectly fulfilled before.

As many of them were quite shy, some young apprentices started to whisper to each other again.

At this time, Sprint, who clearly viewed himself as the leader of the apprentices, responded in a quite firm attitude, "I still prefer to study arcana on my own."

“I agree. We’ve all got our own schedules.” Katrina nodded.

Tom’s face looked a bit gloomy now. He rather felt awkward for Lucien.

When Tom was about to say something else, Lucien finally started to talk to the apprentices, “Everyone needs to make their own choices, and I understand. What about the others? Anyone wants to study arcana with me?”

The six or seven teenagers standing close to Sprint and Katrina exchanged a look among each other and lowered their heads again, and the rest of the apprentices went back to silence as well.

Even the teenagers who wanted to give it a shot felt quite hesitant again.

At this time, finally, one teenager boy took a step forward and said in respect, “Mr. Evans, can you be my teacher?”

“Annick?!” The rest of the apprentices were very surprised.

“You sure, Annick?” Lucien smiled.

Annick was a plain-looking teenager boy, however, at this time, his blue eyes were shining with hope.

“Yes, Mr. Evans,” answered Annick sincerely. “I come from a family of magic, and I’ve been infused with all kinds of exciting legends of the great sorcerers since when I was a kid. However, it has been a hundred years since our family produced the last real sorcerer. I believe in your talent in magic, Mr. Evans... You becoming a real sorcerer at such a young age makes me believe in your wisdom. I hope that I could have the pleasure to become your student, even for only a short period of time.”

Annick’s family had been falling in the past years. Annick’s spiritual power potential was greater than his family peers, and hence he was burdened with the great hope from his parents and relatives. However, Annick’s arcana talent was not as impressive as that of his spiritual power, so he understood that he needed to seize every possible opportunity that he encountered.

“Well... Welcome, Annick.” Lucien nodded, “Let’s work together.”

Then, following Annick, another two teenager apprentices volunteered.

“Mr. Evans, I want to learn from you as well.” Layria’s voice was crisp, and her big eyes looked very sincere.

“Me, too. Mr. Evans.” Heidi joined them as well with his slightly chubby face with few freckles on it.

As they were speaking, both of them slightly pulled Annick’s shirt from behind, as if they were showing their support to him.

Lucien was a bit touched by their pure friendship. He smiled and said to Annick, Layria and Heidi, “No problem. Three students is enough. I cannot handle teaching more.”

Subconsciously, Lucien used the word “teaching”, since he never felt that his understanding toward arcana was inferior to most of his peers.

Hearing that, a few more apprentices who did not seize the chance fast enough started to feel a bit regretful.

“Congratulations to you three.” Tom gently applauded, “The rest of you folks should keep working hard.”

“We will, Mr. Tom.” Sprint took a glance at the three Lucien’s students, turned around and continued to do his study again, and so did Katrina.

Tom shrugged to Lucien, “Young kids... Anyway, Mr. Evans, please just pick a room on the third floor, whichever you like, to stay for the week. In seven days, we’ll leave for Allyn. During the seven days, avoid going out as much as possible.”

Lucien nodded, “I’m looking forward to the trip in seven days.”

After Tom left, Lucien asked his three students to sit down in a half circle-shaped couch and started to do his own introduction, “I’m Evans, from the west side of the continent. I’m more into the School

of Element and Astrology, but no mastery yet. Feel free to discuss any questions you have with me, please.”

“Mr. Evans, nice to meet you,” said the chubby-faced girl, “I’m Heidi, and I come from Syracuse. I was recommended by a sorcerer in my country to Mr. Astar and then arrived at Sturk. Within a couple of weeks’ study, I’m already an apprentice in training. I’m currently with Element Meditation, but also studying the rest of the schools as well.”

Heidi was the most outgoing one among the three apprentices, so she introduced herself first. As a young teenager, she could not help showing off a bit of her talent.

Following Heidi, Layria said to Lucien in respect, “Mr. Evans, I’m Layria from a common family in Gusta. Since my referrer is a gentleman from the congress, I’m currently practicing Magnetic Resonance Meditation. Mr. Astar told us that, no matter which school we choose to specialize in, basic arcana knowledge is always indispensable, so I’m very looking forward to your instruction.”

“I’m from a small town in the Duchy of Violet, Mr. Evans,” said Annick. “I study Astrology and Element, too.”

Then, before Lucien asked for the arcana books, Heidi already carried all her books to him, “Mr. Evans, can you understand all of them? In most cases, I have no clue at all.”

“Me neither,” agreed both Layria and Annick.

Taking over the books from Heidi, Lucien started to leaf through them.

The first book was The Significance of Modelling, and its preface wrote:

“In the ancient magic empire time, the belief that prevailed is that understanding the different meanings of the corresponding parts of a magic model is unnecessary and inappropriate, instead, copying the models existing inside of the magic creatures is enough. However, as long as there is myth, there should be an answer; as

long as there is an answer, there should be a way to discover it. And if we cannot find the way, it is because we are not on the correct path.”

Lucien strongly agreed with the author of the book. He believed that the basic principles of science should be shared by both Earth and this world. Although there must be differences, there should always be ways to identify the differences, as long as one was willing to bravely make hypothesis and carefully verify them.

Lucien turned the book to the front page again, and he was very surprised to find the familiar name on there: the author of the book was Yaroran Hathaway, the maker of Natasha's Thunder.

Since his three students were still waiting, Lucien did not spend any extra time on exploring who was Yaroran Hathaway. In a reasonable speed, Lucien browsed through all the books and copied them in his spirit library.

“Mr. Evans, how do you think?” Seeing that Lucien put down the last book, both Heidi and Layria asked at the same time.

Lucien found that, despite the fact that all the content was about the magic world, the basic science principles and knowledge lying underneath was about junior high school or high school level, so he nodded slightly and explained, “The reason why you three could not understand is the lack of the corresponding basic knowledge, since the knowledge in these books is built upon other more basic books. And among these basic books, you three should work on Basic Geometry of Magic and Common Algebra first.”

“Are these two books also hard to understand?” Layria asked a bit concernedly.

“I'll read them with you.” Lucien tried to encourage them, “The two books should not be too difficult if we're willing to spend lots of time on the exercises.”

“Lots of time on... the exercises...?” murmured Layria confusedly. Clearly, she did not really get the idea “exercise”, and neither did Annick and Heidi.

As a university student who had experienced the nightmarish college entrance examination in the country in his original world, Lucien started to pray for the three teenagers out of sympathy.

Obviously, they still had no idea of how much work they would be asked to do soon.

Chapter 172: Study Helps One Progress

Seeing that Mr. Evans was being pretty serious, Annick, Layria and Heidi all nodded, although unsure of what exactly they were going to do. However, they definitely sensed something not that good.

"Mr. Evans, since this is the first time you are reading those arcana books, we will just leave you alone right now to let you stay focused. When you have a better understanding of them, please provide us with some direction." Annick stood up and said to Lucien politely, "We can practice meditating right now."

Although Lucien was actually capable of teaching them something about science, or, using this world's expression, arcana, right now, he decided to make the whole thing more reasonable, since it would be very queer if his instruction started immediately after he just leafed through the pages.

"Good suggestion." Lucien smiled and nodded, "Probably tomorrow around this time, I should be able to start teaching."

"Tomorrow? Wow... That's so fast." Layria was very surprised.

"I will teach you folks tomorrow what I will have figured out by then," Lucien answered. "That's my way of teaching. I study and then I teach the knowledge to you three, which's also a good way of giving myself some pressure."

"That's so nice of you, Mr. Evans," answered Heidi cheerfully.

When the three apprentices went back to their own rooms to practice meditating, Lucien picked a quiet corner to focus on his own learning.

The book Lucien was reading now was Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic, which read quite similar to one of the most well-known works of Newton. According to its content page, the book also focused on discussing all kinds of forces in this world by using calculus, while the major different feature of the book was that, within expectation, the researches mentioned all served for the

purpose of developing magic, such as solving some questions in the school of Astrology.

Then, Lucien turned the book to the preface page and started to read the words left by the author:

"... We make all the effort of conducting all kinds of researches in order to seek the ultimate answers for some abstract questions, such as: What is 'I'? What is the essence of the world? Where does the world come from? How all the things in this world developed and integrated themselves into a beautiful system? What do 'I' have anything to do with the world? And that is why I decided to use the word 'philosophy' to name the book.

We explore the word, trying to summarize and conclude laws from common phenomena, and based on the laws, we explain, construct, and create magic.

Your friend,

Douglas"

Lucien was not at all surprised that calculus was invented in this world, since all the complicated magic structures required accurate ways of calculation.

When Lucien started to read the book carefully, a quill on the desk jumped up on its own and started writing down something on a piece of paper automatically following Lucien's thoughts.

Lucien found that, compared with those similar books written in his original world, this book was even more systematic and clearer, and hence it was easier for Lucien to understand.

Time flew past, and when the sunlight started getting dimmer and dimmer, Lucien realized that he already skipped his lunch. He found the book very fascinating since what this masterpiece was attempting to do was connecting magic and the laws of the world together.

If it had not been because of the inadequacy of the strength of Lucien's soul, Lucien would have been able to start analyzing some

second or even third circle spells already after reading a few more of these books. Lucien really wished that he could learn the better meditation way mentioned by Felipe that was only accessible to high-rank mages sooner rather than later.

As he stretched his body a bit in the couch, Lucien stood up and looked around.

"Good evening, Mr. Evans," greeted some of the apprentices in awe. After all, Mr. Evans was a real sorcerer who they were supposed to show respect toward.

Lucien casually burned down the draft of his calculation and nodded, "Where I can have dinner please?"

"The dining hall, on the first floor," answered Katrina respectfully. She already saw how hard Mr. Evans worked, and she always respected people who worked hard. She wished herself would become a sorcerer soon, so she could help her parents who had been in trouble for quite a long time.

...

The dining hall on the first floor.

"Evans, I've heard your diligence. No wonder you are a real sorcerer already before twenty," commented Astar. "After you become a middle-rank mage, and if you have a quite good understanding in shadow and light, I will definitely consider you to become one of my research assistants."

Although Astar was saying this, he was not very serious, since even throughout the whole congress, only very few arcanists could meet his requirements right now.

Beside Astar, Mercedes was working hard on her pan-fried fish in the plate with a piece of white napkin surrounding her fluffy neck. From time to time, Mercedes would mew and brushed Astar's arm with her tail.

Lucien smiled and nodded, "Thank you, Mr. Astar. Arcana is still very new to me, and all I can do right now is work hard."

"Although your attitude is surely great," Astar changed his tone, "hard work doesn't solve all the problems. You gotta make progress gradually, Evans. What I mean is... Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic and calculus might be too much for you right now. I'd suggest you to start with some basic arcana books, plus The Encyclopedia of Magic Creatures."

"Actually... I've finished reading most of the content in Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic, and, of course, like what you just mentioned, I will start reading Basic Geometry of Magic and Common Algebra to better direct my three apprentices tomorrow," answered Lucien in a polite tone.

In Lucien's mind, he still had lots of questions unsolved, but he also had this feeling that these questions actually involved the ultimate secrets of the world.

When Lucien compared the two books, Basic Geometry of Magic and Common Algebra, in his spirit library earlier today, he was certain that both of them were books introducing Euclidean geometry, analytic geometry and equations, and the principles of the concepts were basically the same with that of the knowledge on Earth, except the fact that Euclidean geometry was called Tower geometry in this world.

However, at the same time, Lucien still found many unexplainable things if he tried to understand this world based on his knowledge, for example, soul, spiritual power, those missing stars, and the unique element named Tai. Lucien was guessing that something micro or macro in this world was quite different from his understanding.

The latest issue of Arcana, of course, had been copied and saved in Lucien's spirit library. The thirty articles in this issue were mostly about the assorted application of complex function in different "fields", for example, how to divide the sphere of spiritual power into multiple plane fields, while a small percentage of them were about finding new elements by spectrum analysis. Obviously, these topics had been gaining great interest of arcanists.

Lucien was well aware of the fact that the ultimate secrets of the

world were still very far from them, so he asked Astar one of his most practical questions, "Mr. Astar, I wonder if I can learn the meditation promoted by the congress in advance?"

Lucien wanted to upgrade himself, for sure.

"I think I have the right to do so, yes, as a high-rank mage." Astar smiled, "But you gotta show me your potential, so I know it's worth breaking the rules for you."

"What do you want to see specifically, Mr. Astar?" Lucien was not surprised. He was already used to trading and bargaining.

"I know you have pretty good spiritual power potential." Astar put down his knife and fork elegantly, "If you can do a good job on directing the apprentices, or make good progress on studying arcana yourself, I can consider teaching you Brook Meditation in advance before you arrive at the congress."

"I'm quite sure I can do it." Lucien smiled confidently.

"Show me, then." Astar nodded.

...

Ten o'clock in the morning, the second day.

In his own room, Lucien said to the three apprentices with a smile on his face,

"Are you three all following me?"

Annick nodded out of excitement, "Yes! Yes, Mr. Evans! It's much better now!"

"I feel the same way, too, Mr. Evans!" said Layria in an admiring tone, "You're a genius, Mr. Evans!"

"It's hard to believe that you just started studying arcana yesterday!" agreed Heidi aloud.

"Okay... Okay, I'm flattered, and thank you all." Lucien nodded with

his gentle smile, "These are some exercises for enhancing understanding."

As he was saying, Lucien took out a stack test sheet and handed them to the apprentices.

Then Lucien took out Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic and continued to read the rest of it.

As time went, Annick, Layria and Heidi looked more and more serious as they were working hard on their exercises.

When it was close to noon, Annick first stood up and said to Lucien with a relieved face, "Mr. Evans, I finished all of the questions."

"How do you feel, Annick?" asked Lucien.

"These questions are surely tough, but now I feel like my understanding of the knowledge that I learned earlier has been enhanced like you said," answered Annick, quite excitedly.

Then, both Layria and Heidi put down their quills almost at the same time and handed their works to Lucien.

And they both agreed with Annick's feedback.

Lucien put down the book he was reading and checked the apprentices' work. He pointed out some details that they should have put more thoughts into.

After that, the three apprentices exchanged a look between each other and then asked together, "Mr. Evans, lunch time?"

"Sure. Time to eat." Lucien smiled.

Hearing that, the three apprentices released a long sigh at the same time.

"And I got more for you three after lunch." Lucien took out another stack of work sheet, "Study helps one progress."

The three apprentices, for a second, thought that they saw an evil

smile on Mr. Evans' face.

Chapter 173: The Grand Arcanists

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Seven days later, in the evening.

When Astar was listening to Lucien's explanation of his understanding of the books that he read in the past week, Astar casually patted the cat, Mercedes, who looked rather relaxed and was making a low gentle grunt in her throat.

After Lucien finished his words, Astar elegantly applauded and nodded, "Good, very good, Evans. Within only seven days, you can already apply the principles to real life and draw the connections between the laws and some magic models. That's impressive. I'll give Brook Meditation to you, as I promised."

After dinner, since Lucien and the rest of the apprentices were about to leave later tonight, Astar asked Lucien a couple of arcana questions, and Lucien's perfect answers really impressed him.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Astar." Lucien smiled.

He never tried to hide his talent, since once he arrived in Allyn he knew he would try his very best to improve.

A piece of paper and a quill jumped out in front of Astar and the quill started writing on its own. Astar was just sitting there with his fingers crossed. Very soon, the piece of paper was fully written and it moved on its own toward Lucien.

While Lucien was reading the paper, Astar explained, "Brook Meditation is developed based on the Theory of Psychic Wave, by the grand arcanist Mr. Brook, and is widely applied. Brook Meditation fits into the two meditation environments that you're familiar with—Starry Sky of Destiny, which belongs to the school of Astrology, and the Four Elements, belonging to the school of Element. Currently, Brook Meditation can help you a lot with

strengthening your soul and improving your spiritual power during your junior-rank period, but after that, you will have to switch again.”

The core idea of Brook Meditation was closely related to the concept of Psychic Wave. If it worked for Lucien, as how Astar and Felipe promoted it, he should be able to improve to a higher level within one or two months by starting to analyze and construct some second circle spells.

Lucien burned down the piece of paper and asked Astar sincerely, “Mr. Astar, since we’re leaving for Allyn tonight, I have some questions for you.”

“You want to know more about the congress, Evans?” Astar smiled.

“Yes, Mr. Astar. The unknown is always terrifying. As a sorcerer who’s going to become a new member of the congress, I’d like to know what’s the difference between an arcanist and a sorcerer, how many organizations are there in the congress, how many legendary sorcerers and grand arcanists are there in the congress?” asked Lucien eagerly.

He had been thinking about these questions for a long time.

Astar looked a bit surprised, “The sorcerer who introduced you here didn’t tell you anything?”

“Not really...” Lucien wondering whether Felipe could be viewed as his referrer.

“All right, since the president of the congress put forward the concept of arcana, the levels of arcana gradually took shape... from level one to nine. In order to move to a higher level, one needs to publish researches and get cited, create or improve spells, or create new potions to gain arcana credits.”

Lucien nodded to show that he was following.

“The congress is very strict about giving out the credits, and doing research is definitely not easy. Therefore, in most cases, a sorcerer’s magic level is often higher than his or her arcana level. Although it

seems like arcana level doesn't mean much, in the long run, a sorcerer's arcana level determines how far he or she can go. For example, my current arcana level is five, which means my knowledge is not enough for me to move on to the archmage level, so I'm still a senior-rank mage."

"I see." Lucien listened carefully.

"Therefore, in the congress, one's arcana level is more respected than his or her magic level." Astar leaned backward on his chair, "But also, no one would respect those sorcerers who have high magic level but low arcana level there."

"So... If one's arcana level is over nine, he or she is respected as a grand arcanist?" asked Lucien out of great curiosity, "How many grand arcanists are there in the congress then?"

"Grand arcanist is a title of honor, and only those who make great contribution to magic research could be dubbed as grand arcanists. Most of the grand arcanists, before they got the title, were already legendary archmages, or at least very close to becoming legendary archmages, especially with the full support of the congress after they won the title. So we can basically equate the title, grand arcanist, with the great level of legendary archmage. Even though some grand arcanists are still not legendary archmages yet, they will be soon in the future."

Lucien's eyes were full of respect and curiosity.

"And currently, there are only seven sorcerers in the whole congress who could afford the title, and be respected as grand arcanists." Astar grinned.

"Who are they?" Lucien got a bit excited.

Astar bent his fingers and started counting, "Mr. Derrick Douglas, the founder and the promoter of Arcana and contemporary magic system, co-founder of calculus, the president of the congress, the Emperor of Arcana, the Selected.

"Mr. Edwyn Brook, the founder and the promoter of the School of

Electromagnetics, the definer of 'Field', the Poem of the Goddess"

The ancient magic empire respect the essence of magic as a goddess.

"Both Mr. Douglas and Mr. Brook are the most powerful men in the world. Their power can control the direction of which the world will go toward, and they're second only to the pope, who can borrow the power of 'God'... although only by a bit," explained Astar.

He took a sip of his tea and continued, "The Hand of Annihilation, the person who re-defined the four major elements and linked them to Force Field magic and Electromagnetic magic, Oliver Constantine.

"Ms. Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg, one of the co-founders of calculus, the Lord of Elements, the person who redefined and categorized elements, explained most of the Element magics, and also found another seventeen rare elements. Although the title of her legendary class never changed since the ancient magic empire, the meaning the title contains is totally different now because of arcana.

"Mr. Fernando Hudson, the founder of the school of Thermodynamics, Lord of Storm.

"Ms. Hellen Price, the discoverer of the law of energy conservation, the promoter of calculus, the Witch of Iceland.

"Mr. Vicente Miranda, Thanatos, the grand arcanist who has revealed part of the secret of soul, whose human body research is moving toward a micro-level world."

These were the seven grand arcanists in the congress.

"Also, at the same time, these people are the most powerful seven among all the eighteen legendary archmages in the congress right now," concluded Astar. "It seems that becoming a legendary archmage has already become a premise for becoming a grand arcanist."

"There are only eighteen legendary archmages in the congress?" murmured Lucien.

Astar burst out a laughter, "Only eighteen? Even in the South Church, there are only nineteen legendary casters, not including the legendary knights, and the South Church is already the most powerful organization in this world and even in other dimensions? Of course... There are several legendary archmages who refused to join us because of their belief in their inherited ancient tradition."

"I'm surely very ignorant." Lucien smiled a bit awkwardly, "I take that it is the eighteen legendary archmages who lead the whole congress?"

"Not exactly," Astar shook his head. "Seven grand arcanists, eleven legendary archmages, six ninth circle archmages who have high arcana level... They form the highest council of the congress and make all the final decisions."

"I see. What about the different schools there?" Lucien asked eagerly.

"I'm getting there." Astar smiled and gently waved his hand, "The eight traditional schools, which I believe that you already know, are the school of Force Field, Element, Necromancy, Summoning, Alchemy, Astrology, Illusion and Transformation. And now we have a few more: the school of Electromagnetics, Thermodynamics and Light-darkness. Before one reaches the senior rank, it's fine if he or she wants to pursue all of the schools, but after this stage, due to the explosion of the knowledge one has to master, most sorcerers would choose to focus on a couple of them. My suggestion is that, Evans, if you are really uncertain, you'd better choose your focuses before entering the senior-rank level."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Astar," answered Lucien politely. Although he wanted to become an all-school master, Lucien knew that listening to a senior-rank mage's advice was important.

Astar's introduction of the congress kept going on until it was late in the night. When Astar noticed the time, he started wrapping up, "There are many different groups in the congress, as what you

heard, big and small, formal or informal... There are a few big groups: The Royal Magic Academies from each of the four major countries, Family of Sorcerer, Tower, the Will of Elements, the Hand of Paleness, the Cabin of Palmeira and Moonsong League. Each of them, more or less, owns the rites for upgrading toward different legendary classes, and some of the rites are secret, which means even the congress does not know much about them. However, keep that in mind, Evans, follow the congress and focus on your own study and research.”

It seemed Astar was completely on the congress’ side.

“I will.” Lucien grinned, “I don’t like trouble, either.”

“Very good.” Astar nodded, “Now it’s time for you to prepare for your trip tonight. Later, Tom will be leading you and the other apprentices to set off for the congress. When you get there, Evans, you can buy most of the journals, common materials and even spells with money, but if you want to get more special and valuable stuff, you have to use arcana points, which is gained together with arcana credits, or from selling information or magic item to the congress and fulfilling the congress’s tasks.”

The corner of Lucien’s lips twisted a bit.

“Virtual currency...” Lucien thought to himself.

Then he bowed to Astar politely, “Thank you for your throughout explanation, Mr. Astar. I have to go and check how my three apprentices are doing now before we leave.”

Chapter 174: Boarding

Chapter 174: Boarding

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The candle light shining through the magic silver lampshade brightly lit the whole room, and the three apprentices were still working on their exercises regarding the apprentice spell, Acid Splash.

By enhancing the understanding of this apprentice spell, the three apprentices would gain a better knowledge of the symbols of some elements and practice the basic application of geometry.

The three teenagers, although looking a bit tired, were still working dedicatedly.

At this time, there was a knock on the door.

Annick suddenly stood up straight and started to look around confusedly.

“Is that Mr. Evans?” asked Layria, a bit worried. Both Layria and Heidi dropped their quills.

Within those seven days, Lucien had been pushing them to do exercises and to practice casting every single day. All of the three teenagers felt so exhausted that simply hearing Lucien’s footstep made them feel nervous.

However, at the same time, they also saw the great progress they had made. The joy of seeing themselves successively casting a challenging spell was definitely exciting and encouraging.

“No, Mr. Evans would just directly come in.” Annick shook his head, “Let me see.”

When he stood up, Annick felt a bit dizzy, and he saw that it was already dark outside.

When he opened the door, he surprisedly found that it was Sprint who was knocking the door, and beside him stood Katrina.

“Hi...” Annick was not sure why both of them were there, so he greeted with a bit hesitance, “Anything that I can help you with?”

Despite the fact that Annick did not want to admit, when he saw Sprint and Katrina fluently casting spells, he admired them. Also, Annick also had to acknowledge that Sprint and Katrina were indeed smarter than him, since their fluency and mastery did not require much of their effort.

“Ha? What are you talking about, Annick?” Sprint was very surprised but also amused, “Did these exercises mess your brain up? We’re leaving for the congress tonight!”

“What... Wait... Is it today that we’re leaving?” Annick looked completely shocked.

“The first exercise... the second...” Heidi hurriedly counted the worksheets piling in front of her, and then she suddenly raised her head and said out loud, “Oh my... Yes, we’re leaving today! I can’t believe that I just totally forgot it!”

“Neither can I...” agreed Layria, who looked a bit pale from being buried by the great amount of exercises.

“Annick, Heidi, Layria... Look at yourselves right now,” said Katrina out of both pride and sympathy, “Arcana is a brand new thing for Mr. Evans. If he’s not on the correct path, you have to tell him. Don’t let him torture you like this.”

“Are you guys making any progress? Sorry, I really cannot see,” said Sprint arrogantly.

“I don’t agree with you, Sprint.” Layria shook her head, “If I would say, seven days ago, that I had absolutely no idea what arcana was, now I feel like I’m actually taking the right path.”

“That’s right. Mr. Evans is a real sorcerer, and he knows what he’s doing. We’ve progressed a lot.” Annick nodded.

“Oh really?” Sprint quickly gave them a snort of contempt.

“Really? Don’t tell me that you cannot see, Sprint,” said Heidi seriously. “The other day, in the practice room, you saw how we cast the spells. Our progress is all because of Mr. Evans!”

Inside of the three teenagers’ mind, they all agreed that, despite their great respect toward Mr. Evans, it would be perfect if their workload could be a bit less.

“Stubborn...” Sprint turned around, “Keep suffering then, guys.”

“Ten o’clock sharp, in the study, we’ll be meeting there and leaving together.” Katrina still remembered why Sprint and she came here, “It’s okay that you three are falling behind a bit. When we arrive at the congress, we’ll be sent to schools for systematic arcana and magic study.”

Then both Katrina and Sprint left the room.

“They just won’t believe us!” complained Heidi.

“It’s okay... One day they’ll see.” Annick encouraged his friends, “Now, no time for feeling angry or frustrated. We have to finish the rest of the exercises before we go.”

Both Layria and Heidi quickly sat up straight and said at the same time, “Let’s do it!”

...

When Annick was fully dedicated to his exercises, someone gently patted on his shoulder.

Before Lucien came to check the apprentices, he could not help practicing Brook Meditation in his room a bit first.

The core idea of Brook Meditation was seeking a specific frequency of vibration of spiritual power, which did not have much to do with a specific mediation environment, and thus it could be applied to other ways of meditation as well, including Lucien’s Astrology Meditation and Element Meditation.

After the short period of time of practicing, Lucien found that Brook Meditation was indeed way more helpful than the ancient ways of doing meditation, at least ten times. Lucien believed that, as long as he stuck to it, he would be able to meet the requirement of spiritual power level and soul strength to become a second circle sorcerer.

“Mr... Mr. Evans.” Although Lucien looked quite kind and gentle, Annick often felt very nervous in front of him, “It’s... almost done.”

“I still have a couple of pages...” said Layria nervously as well.

Lucien was right now in a pretty good mood since he just got Brook Meditation, so he gently waved his hand and said, “No worries. I know that you three were working hard. Since we’re leaving tonight, you can hand the exercises in tomorrow night.”

“Awesome!” Heidi grinned.

Both Annick and Layria also looked quite delighted.

“There’s still half an hour to ten. Let’s have a conversation.” Lucien sat down in the couch, “Honestly speaking, do you three feel that the exercises are too demanding?”

“Although all of us feel tired, I think that’s worthwhile!” Annick answered immediately. He could obviously see his own progress within the seven days.

“It’s not too bad... I know that we gotta work hard to gain a solid foundation for learning arcana.” Layria face blushed, “But if the workload could be reduced a little bit...”

“But if the workload could be reduced a little bit, we’d be more than happy!” continued Heidi.

“The beginning stage is the hardest. In the future, there’ll be more practice and relatively less exercises.” Lucien smiled, “And when you three become real sorcerers, you’ll find out that the knowledge that you’re learning right now is not complicated at all.”

“Really?” asked Heidi worriedly. “I’m already trying my best...”

"I believe so, and knowledge is always advancing. I think that, maybe a hundred or two hundred years later, the knowledge that high-rank mages will need to grip is going to be very abstract and difficult, say... something on both micro and macro levels."

"Is... is it still possible for me to become a knight?" murmured Annick subconsciously.

And both Layria and Heidi almost felt the same way.

Lucien jokingly took a glance at Annick's slim figure and shook his head, "Not very likely to happen, I'm afraid."

The three teenagers all giggled, including Annick.

"We'd better just stick to our own magic path," said Heidi to her peers. "You know that the real sorcerers are often very wealthy and powerful in Holm?"

"All right, all right..." Lucien cut in, smiling, "It's almost ten. Let's go to the study."

...

In the darkness, two pointy boats were moving along the canal, heading for the wharf.

After arriving at the wharf, the two boats continued to go out to the ocean.

Soon, a three-mast sailboat showed itself in the darkness.

Tom turned around and said to Lucien seriously, "This trip's probably gonna be tough. Because of the traitor we had, several of our secret routes have already been found by the Church. We need to rely on the back-up plan."

"What the Church is doing now? What's our back-up plan?" asked Lucien. He needed to have a throughout understanding of what they were facing there.

"Divine airships... In the air, the Church's using precious airships to

patrol above,” explained Tom, quickly. “On the sea, there is a regular fleet belonging to Saint Helmet Knights. At the bottom of the sea, there are Kuo-toans who changed their belief and chose to serve the Church. We indeed bought off some Kuo-toans, but they should be on the fire gallows now.”

“Basically all blocked then... Luckily, there’s no radar in this world yet.” Lucien murmured to himself, “What shall we do right now?”

Tom pointed at the three-mast sailboat not far away from them, “That vessel belongs to Viscount Wright, and we have a quite solid business relation with him. Thus, we are going into the cabin on that boat.”

“Is that boat safe?” asked Lucien.

“No knight and pastor would really go down into the filthy cabin and carefully check all the smelly sailors and slaves gathering together there. If we’re lucky and careful enough, we should be fine. And I’ll be providing water and food to you all,” said Tom.

Chapter 175: Departure

Chapter 175: Departure

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The three-masted vessel on the ocean was like a monster hiding in the darkness.

As soon as the two pointy-headed boats stopped beside it, two rope ladders were quietly dropped from the deck.

“Stay quiet.” Tom whispered to the apprentices.

They were still teenagers. Now, suddenly, they felt very nervous. They were well aware of the fact that what was waiting for them was either their wonderland or the gallows.

Then Tom turned to Lucien, “I need to get on the ship to check first. After I make sure that the ship is safe, you arrange them to get on the ladder. Is that okay?”

“No problem.” Lucien nodded, “Be careful.”

Tom, who was a level two knight, patted Lucien’s shoulder, gripped the ladder and swiftly got on the ship like a shadow.

No one on the small pointy-headed boats said a single word. They were quietly waiting for Tom’s signal.

After a while, Tom dropped a white handkerchief over the rail on the boat that Lucien was on. That was their agreed symbol — it was safe.

“Spring, Katrina, you two go first,” directed Lucien calmly.

The existence of a sorcerer calmed the apprentices down and also encouraged them. One by one, they secretly started climbing.

“Then Oimos and Heidi,” Lucien turned around and said to them. He heard that the brown-haired teenager, Oimos, was a gifted in

spiritual power, but Lucien never really paid much attention to him since the teenager boy was always very quiet.

While Oimos walked to the front of the boat and started to climb in a quick and stable way, Heidi was having a bit of a trouble there.

The fierce ocean wind was shaking her ladder relentlessly. She didn't dare to look either upward or downward. She felt that the ocean below her feet was roaring to devour her. She wanted to scream, but she could not.

Lucien was just watching. He wanted Heidi to experience it and get the task done on her own.

Following Tom's direction, the apprentices getting aboard quickly hid themselves.

Heidi was totally exhausted when she finally got on the deck, but thinking back to what just happened, her heart was full of pride and courage.

When all the apprentices were aboard, Lucien carried his black suitcase in his left hand and used his right hand to grasp the ladder, climbing up quickly and landing on the deck.

"Good job, Evans." Tom and a dark-skinned sailor walked to Lucien.

Lucien nodded to them and followed them into the cabins under the deck.

When walking down the stairs, an intolerable stench of sweat mixed with other smells overwhelmed Lucien. It was very dark down there, and the only light in the space came from the candle that the sailor was holding.

At this time, other two sailors came their way from the corner.

All the apprentices and even Lucien got suddenly very nervous.

Just when Lucien was about to cast Charm Person regardless of the divine power circles for detecting magic on the ship, the two sailors walked to them and nodded to Tom.

“Everything okay?” asked Tom.

“Yes, as usual.” The two sailors turned sideways to let them keep going forward.

Seeing that Lucien and the other apprentices were rather confused, Tom smiled and said to them in a low voice, “I’m the boatswain here.”

The teenagers were now even more surprised.

“There are many divine power circles on Viscount Wright’s ship, and even pastors.” Tom explained, “If the ship was totally strange to me, how could I get you guys in and get you food and water? It’s a trip that will last close to one month...”

Just like its name suggested, the Storm Strait that they were going to cross was not too wide. However, the thunder and lightning, together with the outraged waves and wind, often prevented a ship from going on its full speed, and sometimes, a ship had to stop to wait for a better condition.

Although many sorcerers tried to explore why the strait was full of thunder and lightning and strong wind, no conclusion was made yet.

Hearing that, Lucien could imagine how bad Viscount Wright’s merchant fleet had been permeated by Granneuve, who was predominantly in charge of the labor market in Sturk. Lucien was thinking whether the viscount, as a grand knight, was aware of this problem.

Then, following Tom, Lucien and the apprentices came to the cargo section, which was on the second lowest floor of the ship and was full of assorted stinky smells.

In a secret corner, however, there was a line of very small and narrow cabins, which did not look like they were originally built for people to live in there, but now they were relatively clean and there were hammocks in the cabins.

“Two apprentices will share one cabin. Mr. Evans will have his own

cabin,” arranged Tom. “You can’t leave this floor during the trip. No magic, and only meditation is allowed. When you walk around on this floor, be careful, because from time to time some sailors will come down and check the cargo. When we get to Holm, the suffering will pay off.”

After Tom left, the apprentices went back to their cabins with candles.

Layria and Heidi shared one cabin. As soon as they opened the cabin door, the two girls exchanged an excited look, and then they noticed that Annick was walking past, “Hey, Annick! You heard that we cannot use magic on the ship, didn’t you?” asked Heidi excitedly.

“Yes, of course.” Annick nodded, “We all have to bear that in mind, or we’ll be in great trouble.”

“I mean... we finally can take a rest from continuously practicing magic casting!” Heidi happily raised one of her brows.

“And sleep late!” celebrated Layria.

“We... we should still practice...” Although he was saying that, Annick also grinned out of joy.

“What are you three talking about?” There came a familiar, gentle voice.

“Nothing... Mr. Evans.” The apprentices hurriedly bowed to Lucien, but the smile was still on their faces.

Lucien nodded, “Since we can’t practice casting right now, then we shall work on some exercises. Tomorrow afternoon, arcana and magic basics.”

“What...” The smile on the three apprentices’ face totally disappeared in a second.

...

Although Lucien was planning on teaching the apprentices more on

the ship, his schedule was completely messed up by the reality. After the sailboat went back to the wharf and then sailed toward Storm Strait together with the other ships of the fleet, both Layria and Heidi bitterly suffered seasickness and the situation got worse when they entered the strait.

Layria and Heidi were not alone on that situation, and even Sprint and Katrina were no exception. Most of the apprentices were sick, and often they threw up in the cabins.

Surprisingly, however, the skinny, always silent Oimos appeared to be fine.

Luckily, the several deaf and dumb slaves sent by Tom who were responsible for bringing them food and water and fruit were also cleaning the vomitus.

This day, Lucien and Annick were hiding among some wooden boxes and talking about building magic models.

During the break, Annick asked worriedly, "When do you think Layria and Heidi can get better, Mr. Evans?"

"Maybe in another two days." Lucien was leaning against one of the wooden boxes to keep balance as the ship was shaking fiercely again from the storm, "Spiritual power can help, and so does the herb oil sent by Tom. I feel like they're getting better already, aren't they?"

When Annick was just about to answer, his mouth was quickly covered by Lucien.

And their candle was also put out.

"Shoo... Someone's here," whispered Lucien.

Annick nodded.

Through the gap between the two wooden boxes, a young man's voice came, "My dear Chely, you're my sun! Without you, I am in endless darkness, even praying could not save me!"

“Jacques, me too!” Next came a lady’s sweet and gentle voice, “But recently my father is always around, and the maids are also watching me closely...”

Lucien relaxed a bit. It was just a pair of lovers.

“I don’t get it, Chely.” The young man sounded sorrowful. “Why does the viscount want his daughter to go all the way to Holm to study in a convent... There’re lots of them in Sturk!”

“The viscount... Viscount Wright?” Lucien was quite surprised. “The viscount is on this ship?”

Then, the terrifying thunder started to grumble again.

Chapter 176: In the Storm

"I have no idea either," said Chely. "But Jacques, I'm sure my father's doing this for my own good. You know that I got no potential to become a knight, and that's the comment from my training coach. I'm not good at running a business as well... I tried to put my hands on my family's bank and I failed... My brother was quite pissed off."

"But you're so good at other things..." Jacques tried to encourage his love, "The first time I saw you, you were sitting on the patio, reading a book... I can never forget that beautiful picture in my whole life."

"Except for my passion for reading, I haven't achieved anything. I tried music, opera, painting, sculpture... but neither of them is my thing," said Chely depressingly, but then her tone got a bit more cheerful, "But you're different, my love. You're so versatile. Piano, painting, singing, swordsmanship... everything. You're like the glorious sun."

"You, Chely, only you is all I want. You don't have to learn this and that. You just marry me, and I promise you a lovely life." Jacques kissed Chely's hand.

"But you're not a real knight yet..." answered Chely sadly, "A noble can only marry another noble. And besides that, Jacques, I want to find my own value in my life as well. I want to develop my ability to be independent. I hope you understand, Jacques."

"I heard you..." answered Jacques in his low voice, "But... but how can you find your independence in a Holm's convent? And what if when I finally awaken my Blessing, you're already married to someone else? Wait... Is it correct that the true intention of the viscount sending to you Holm is to let you marry a noble there?!"

That totally made sense to Jacques, since this alliance could bring many benefits to the viscount and even to the Church, that could build a relationship with the conservatives across the strait.

"I don't know... I really have no idea..." murmured Chely, "My father... He never mentioned this."

"Can you wait for me another three months, Chely?" Jacques' voice was full of depression, "I know that your parents love you a lot, and you love them as well. But can you give me three years? If I'm still not able to awaken my Blessing in three years, I'm not good enough for you."

"I will... I will, Jacques." Chely was deeply moved, "For three years, I'll be waiting for you. And... and if those three years end, if you don't mind... I, I can be your secret lover."

Jacques embraced Chely in his arms, "Chely..."

When Annick was listening to their conversation with great interest, his ears got covered by Lucien.

"That's too much for you..." Lucien mouthed to Annick.

After a long, cheesy conversation, Chely leaned against Jacques's shoulder, "When we get a chance, can you play For Silvia for me?"

"Sure. I'll play anything that you like for you," answered Jacques.

Lucien felt a bit awkward, since he had the impression that For Silvia was quite ominous, based on what happened between Natasha and Silvia, although no more than twenty people knew about this.

"I have to go now. My father might be looking for me," said Chely.

Then, both of them went back upstairs.

After a while, Lucien uncovered Annick's ears.

"Mr. Evans, I'm not a kid anymore..." complained Annick.

"That was... Even for me, that was almost too much," answered Lucien seriously.

"But it wasn't even close to the romantic operas..." Annick slightly

slanted his head.

"That's why I don't like romantic operas," said Lucien directly.

...

In the cabin, Lucien was just standing there, listening to the roaring thunders and the splashing sound of the huge waves flapping the ship protected by many divine power circles.

Although Lucien was quite used to the noise already, the storm that day was still quite intimidating.

Somehow, as a sorcerer specializing in Astrology, although his Host Star of Destiny and his ability of fortune telling was still not impressive yet, Lucien had some kind of bad hunch.

"Is the ship gonna be destroyed by the storm?" murmured Lucien to himself, as he could not help thinking of the worst case.

Lucien could not use Astrology right now, since the storm was too bad.

He hoped his hunch was incorrect as usual, but he still stayed quite alert.

As Lucien was thinking, all of a sudden, a terrible thunder arrived, and Lucien almost lost his balance together with the ship.

"Waves? Or...?"

Lucien had no idea.

Then another bitter slam arrived, shaking the whole ship.

"The ship's under attack!" Lucien immediately realized what was going on based on his fighting experience.

The whipping and lashing sounds kept going on and on, mixing with the loud bangs caused by bolts of lightning striking the divine power circles. All the apprentices, despite feeling quite sick, gathered in front of Lucien's cabin, including Oimos, who was

usually quite calm.

At this time, they trusted a real sorcerer.

Lucien opened the door and asked the apprentices to calm down, "No matter who's doing this, they're not coming for us. Let the knights and pastors handle them. We'll just stay here and wait."

If even the grand knight could not stop them, Lucien and the apprentices had no chance either.

The apprentices calmed down a bit, influenced by Lucien's attitude.

Another spell bitterly struck the ship again. Many apprentices lost their balance and fell on the floor.

Something was cracking and squeaking outside.

Lucien's brows frowned. He wondered if the divine power circles were going to be broken.

Then, a great heat was sensed by his spiritual power. The heat was so powerful that even the thunder and lightning could not overwhelm it.

Lucien once witnessed the leader of a group of night watchers fighting, so he could roughly estimate the power — this heat should come from at least a level five divine spell, which meant that there was at least a cardinal on the ship!

Together with the heat, a sudden powerful blow joined the fight, and the power felt totally different from the natural storm. Lucien was pretty sure that it was from Viscount Wright, as the viscount's Blessing, Gale, was really well-known in Sturk.

Therefore, Lucien was a bit more relieved. A pastor and a grand knight should be able to handle that situation.

Although the whipping sound disappeared, Lucien and the apprentices heard the sound of fighting on the deck together with that of thunder, lightning and the waves.

Suddenly, a great wave attacked this side of the ship where Lucien and the apprentices were on, and one of the divine power circles was finally destroyed.

Then, Lucien and the apprentices saw water fiercely flooding into the cabin, mixing with white ocean foam.

Together with the water, creepy-looking creatures who had fish heads but human bodies also came into the cabin. Their bodies were covered with silver scales, and their seemingly thin and weak arms were holding aggressive, heavy tridents.

"Kuo-toans!" Lucien was very surprised.

Although these Kuo-toans were still against the Church, Lucien did not understand why they were attacking the fleet right now.

All the apprentices' faces paled.

Even Lucien started feeling nervous.

Fight? What if the knights, pastors and sailors came down later and found them here?

Run away? But they were in the middle of the ocean right now!

"What should I do?!" Lucien asked himself in his mind.

Chapter 177: Wave Stone

On the other end of the aisle, the Kuo-toan murlocs were shouting and crying when they got in the cabin, and the water was still flooding in.

Lucien felt more difficulty to breathe when the air got very humid.

Some apprentices had already lost their footing. Now, they were sitting on the water-covered floor and crying, while others were shaking out of great fear. They were just like how Lucien felt when he first got into the sewers and faced the red-eyed mice. There was no way that they could stay calm.

There were so many plans flashing through Lucien's mind. However, no matter how much Lucien wanted to both protect himself and the other apprentices and hide from the pastors and knights on the ship, obviously, it was not likely to happen at all.

At the fork of the aisle, the Kuo-toans divided themselves into two groups: most of them followed three bigger murlocs and ran toward the main cargo cabin, while the rest of them, also following a leader, were aiming at Lucien and the apprentices.

As they were dragging their tridents and quickly coming to Lucien and the teenagers, Lucien got many thoughts in his mind:

"It looks like their target is the cargo?

"Maybe there's something that interests the Kuo-toans? That's why they attacked the ship?

"If that's their real purpose, most of the murlocs should be coming to this floor, or the captain's cabin or the viscount's..."

And then Lucien got more determined, "Then we still have hope!"

Lucien quickly turned around and ran into his own cabin. As he was running, Lucien bent his knees and jumped up high using the momentum, and his right fist fiercely punched through the wood

ceiling.

"Bang!"

After the wooden planks fell on the floor, there was a big hole in the low ceiling.

"You all, climb up through the hole, and hide in the nearby sailor's cabin!" said Lucien to the startled apprentices.

Although his tone was serious, Lucien was not panicking.

Since Tom dared let them live here, Lucien was pretty confident that the people who lived on the floor above should be people that Tom trusted, or the noise the apprentices made could easily expose them.

If the Kuo-toans' purpose was not killing but robbing, hiding in the sailors' cabins should be a good choice, and they could also hide from the pastors and knights.

Lucien quickly took out his Alert and rushed out of the cabin to stop the murlocs to earn time for the apprentices.

"Annick, Oimos... You two take charge. No panic." In the last second, Lucien decisively commanded the apprentices without looking back.

He had to kill the Kuo-toans, or they would follow the apprentices to the above floor.

"Yes, Mr. Evans..." said the two apprentices together. Although Oimos was quite frightened, he tried his best to function properly, while Annick, who had been trained by Lucien for a while, was encouraged by Lucien's equanimity and started to think how they could get onto the floor above through the hole in the ceiling.

The two apprentices exchanged a look between each other and came up with the same strategy, "Using the hammocks... and Mage Hand. Also, spells improving agility and balance..."

Then Oimos and Annick hurriedly started to collect the hammocks,

and Katrina, Sprint, Layria and Heidi were either helping them, or trying to comfort the other apprentices.

At this critical moment, the apprentices were united together under the leadership of Lucien.

Outside the cabin, when Lucien, who was holding his knight sword with his both hands, was almost right in front of the Kuo-toans, there were sudden green waves coming out of him.

The green waves quickly reached the Kuo-toans, and most of them slowed down their pace as soon as they were touched, lost their balance and fell asleep on the floor. Even the murloc leader was influenced: for a second, it felt very exhausted and sleepy.

However, the first circle spell, Sleep, was not powerful enough to get the big one to fall asleep as well, and, currently, it only worked on those ones who were not yet of a real knight's level.

The whole aisle suddenly quieted down quite a bit. There was only Lucien, the Kuo-toa leader and a bunch of mulocs who were sleeping on the floor.

When the murloc leader realized that the human being they were facing was actually a sorcerer instead of a knight although he was using a sword, it quickly cast its own magic, Water Ring.

As the murloc leader was regaining his consciousness when it was surrounded by rings of waves, Lucien sensed the great difficulty of breathing as if he was overwhelmed by water, since the air quickly got so moist that Lucien felt he was intaking water beads into his nose and lungs.

Lucien did not panic, however. He held his breath and then shot three flashing ice blades at the murloc.

Although the murloc leader was seemingly only about ordinary knight level, Lucien still activated his magic item, since he needed to finish this creature as soon as possible.

However, the power of Fire Weaver's Bracelet was too destructive for Lucien to use right now.

At the same time, Lucien dodged to the other side to avoid the trident thrown forward by the murloc.

As soon as Lucien got back on his feet, he activated the magic model in his soul.

The water in the air suddenly could not affect Lucien at all, since he was covered with a layer of an invisible barrier, which filtered the water out.

First circle magic, Element Endurance.

Although this magic did not work well when one was facing a direct elemental attack, it was quite useful when dealing with elementally imbalanced environments, such as this very floor on the ship, which was being controlled by Water Ring.

The cold air brought by Palmeira's Frost Blades froze the waves surrounding the murloc, which also trapped the murloc itself. It was severely hurt by the three blades.

However, although there was dark-blue blood coming out of its head, chest and arm, the wounds were healing in a visible speed.

The healing power of a Kuo-toan was no inferior to that of a troll, but it could not regrow its broken limbs like a troll.

At this time, a sharp light flashed on the murloc leader's neck, and then its head fell down on the floor half a second later.

It was Lucien's knight sword, Alert, and Lucien hacked it right at the wound cut by the frost blade.

As soon as it was affected by the spell, Sleep, the Kuo-toan already lost its control of this fight, especially when the sorcerer who the murloc was facing had better magic items than most of his peers.

Of course, this edge was more about the level of Lucien's magic items, instead of the completeness of his equipment. Lucien was still wearing ordinary shoes, which were always easily worn down because of his speed, and besides, he still had no magic robe neither staff, which were basic symbols of a sorcerer.

Lucien took several leaps forward and came behind the murlocs. When he was about to cast another spell, he sensed something from the main cargo cabin.

It felt like the strong waves in the ocean.

"There was no one in the main cargo cabin, so this feeling could not be from a fight. Maybe... maybe this is the thing that the Kuo-toans are looking for..." Lucien quickly thought to himself.

That feeling was strange but also familiar. Lucien felt that once he read something like this in one of the books.

"Wave... Stone..." Lucien murmured, "Wave Stone!"

Wave Stone was a kind of not rare but still precious magic material, which Lucien once encountered in the book named Common Magic Related Materials Illustration. It could be used in making magic items and weapons that were over level three to bring magic effects to them such as breathing in the water, water elemental damaging, and spells such as Storm and Ice Storm.

In addition, the best quality Wave Stone could be used to make really powerful items, and it could be used in many potions to improve the growth of many water creatures.

Lucien was guessing that, since the power he just sensed was great, there was either a great amount of Wave Stone on the ship or the stones were of top quality, which should be worth at least tens of thousands of Thales.

According to Lucien, as Wave Stone was a kind of magic material, quite possibly it was being shipped to Allyn, but he had no idea whether this was a secret shipping arranged by Granneuve, or it was actually allowed by the Church. And if it was neither way, the fleet was definitely in trouble for shipping such a great amount of magic material, and there would be greater risk facing Lucien, Tom and the apprentices as well, since the Church was for sure going to thoroughly check the ships.

Another thing Lucien was quite sure was that the people who were

arriving here first should be Tom and his trusted sailors.

As he was thinking, Lucien did not stop casting. He murmured sophisticated and weird spell and then suddenly pushed his hands forward.

An invisible strong blow was summoned, and all the asleep murlocs together with the Kuo-toa leader's body were pushed by the blow back into the ocean again.

First circle magic, Force Wave.

Lucien had not built the magic model of Force Wave in his soul yet, hence he still needed to cast it.

At this time, all of the apprentices had already got onto the upper floor and hid in the nearby sailors' cabins.

After Lucien quickly cleaned up all the evidence of the fight and was about to get onto the upper floor as well, his heart suddenly sank for a second as he sensed the danger.

The bracelet that Lucien was wearing flashed a streak of red light and flames were summoned to protect Lucien.

Then a head-sized water ball hit the flames right away, and the water and fire disappeared at the same time.

At the fork of the aisle, a murloc whose scales were shining light red light was staring at Lucien with its cold eyes.

Unlike other murlocs holding tridents, this one was holding a colourful coral staff.

The thunder stopped for a moment, and Lucien heard many heavy footsteps on the deck of the ship.

Chapter 178: The Murloc Mage

Chapter 178: The Murloc Mage

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The corrosive water ball and the fire disappeared at the same time. A second later, Lucien subconsciously activated the magic model in his soul and fiercely shot two black magic missiles at the murloc with the coral staff before he dodged to the other side as quick as a shadow.

As soon as the two missiles got close to the murloc, suddenly, a transparent swirl appeared surrounding it, and the swirl directly absorbed the magic missiles.

Second circle spell, Power Resistance.

This was a spell that helped the caster resist a certain amount of attacking power. The murloc standing in front of Lucien was a mage.

Fast as Lucien was, the mage still raised its coral staff and located Lucien with it.

All of a sudden, Lucien could not help but laugh. The laughing was so bad that Lucien's whole body was trembling.

The Kuo-toan mage located him using spiritual power.

Lucien's spiritual power started fading and became weaker because of his crazy laughter. He could neither cast nor activate his magic items. His feet and arms started to feel very limp and his speed dropped significantly.

Lucien, although still laughing like crazy, was for sure very nervous. He knew that if he could not react properly, the murloc mage's attack in the next round could easily kill him.

Lucien clenched his left hand into a tight fist to feel more the

coldness of the ring, Ice Revenger, in order to stay as sober as he could.

Taking a deep breath, he sent the feeling of chill of the ring to his soul and spiritual power to suppress his dangerous laughter.

As soon as Lucien felt that he could move, he quickly rolled on the ground to stay further away from the murloc.

Half a second later, a lightning ball hit the place where Lucien was previously laughing and it exploded, turning some of the apprentices' cabins into total ruins.

As small lightnings were left on the path of the lightning ball, Lucien was also affected. He felt the great pain mixing with numbness, and his hair was erected.

However, the pain brought by the lighting made Lucien recover from his laughter. He seized the chance and quickly activated the bracelet, throwing a terrifying fire ball right toward the murloc mage.

Lucien had to survive first. He could not think of how to deal with the fighting trace left by the fire ball right now.

Although the power of the fire ball was surely intimidating, the murloc mage remained very calm. Raising the coral staff again, the murloc replicated itself.

The duplicate looked identical to the murloc. Both of them had a coral staff, both of them had cold, silver eyes, and both of them were covered with scales that were shining bloody red light.

When the fire ball hit the murloc which Lucien originally targeted, the reflection of the murloc mage crashed like a mirror and quickly disappeared. However, the real murloc mage stayed totally safe beside it, under the protection of Power Resistance and a big water shield.

Lucien felt desperate for a second. He could not believe that his most powerful attack spell was just handled by the murloc mage this easily!

It was only a second circle spell, Mirror, which could produce several reflections of a caster to free the caster from a targeted attack. Before the reflections were destroyed, the real caster would not be hurt.

Sometimes in a fight, it was not all about the magic level, but about the proper usage.

Lucien had no choice. Being desperate at that moment would mean death. So, he started moving around fast again, when the murloc mage was still recovering from its last casting.

As Lucien was moving, he activated another magic model in his soul.

First circle spell, Cause Fear.

A shadow was summoned, and the shadow quickly jumped on the murloc.

Lucien was hoping that this spell could bring some negative impact on the murloc, so Lucien would have a better chance to cast, or, probably somehow back away.

However, although the shadow did hit the Kuo-toan mage, the murloc seemed to be immune to the spell. Its silver eyes were still cold and calm, as if he was watching others fighting.

Lucien saw a light flashing past the mage's silver eyes, and then he saw a very complicated, blue pattern, which was so mysterious and fascinating that Lucien could not move his eyes away.

Lucien's Host Star of Destiny, at that time, suddenly started shining brightly. It was telling and urging Lucien that danger was coming.

The power of Lucien's star connected to Ice Revenger on Lucien's left hand. Lucien felt a chill creep over him, and then, as soon as he regained some consciousness, he quickly activated the bracelet and used his Flame Shield.

Lucien was just now controlled by the murloc mage's second circle spell, Hypnosis Totem!

A huge water ball, at this time, dropped on Lucien and fully covered him. Lucien felt the great pressure from the water, and the flames around him were gradually dying out.

Another second circle spell, Drowning Bubble.

When Lucien was about to pass out inside the big water bubble, the flames he summoned just now finally evaporated most of the water and broke the spell. As the flame and water bubble disappeared together, Lucien hurriedly rolled on the floor again without a chance to take a full breath, since another lightning ball was thrown toward him again!

Lucien never felt this desperate. He also realized how lucky he had been to actually be able to beat the necromancer, Hunt.

In this situation, the choice of spells was so crucial right now that any wrong option could easily end one's life.

Lucien already noticed that it seemed that the murloc mage had cast a second circle spell on itself called Mechanized Mind, hence no spells that affected one's mental state would work.

The spell Mechanized Mind could turn creatures with emotion into mechanical things such as Steel Golems, and thus one could become immune to many spells that aimed at disturbing one's mental condition.

Lucien knew that the murloc mage was good at using defensive spells, so quite possibly, his many attack spells, if without careful planning, would turn into a total waste facing the creature.

Quickly, in his mind, Lucien was thinking of a possible strategy.

When the murloc was once again about to recover from the last casting, Lucien was planning on using the explosion of the fireball as a cover for him to jump right into the water in order to seize a slight chance to survive.

Besides, Lucien felt that the reinforcement knights would arrive soon.

“Wait.”

Something came to Lucien all of a sudden.

“The principle of Mechanized Mind is equipping a creature with mechanical features. In this case, there is no hormone produced, and the creature’s brain wave is turned into pure electromagnetic signal, and that is why one’s can be immune to the many mental spells.” Lucien quickly thought to himself, “It’s said that the soul of the creature is not changed, which basically equals to the controller of an alchemical life.”

Lucien sensed a slight amount of hope, hence he quickly gave up the plan on fleeing to seize a better chance to survive.

Turning himself into a shadow, Lucien launched his attack at the murloc mage again.

Invisible waves spread out of Lucien’s soul, and strong magic waves were produced.

The first circle spell, Charm Person, not only worked on human beings, but also on humanoid creatures!

The murloc mage had a sarcastic smile on its face.

How was it possible that Charm Person could affect itself, thought the murloc.

However, all of a sudden, it felt that Lucien, the human being standing right in front of him, was the lord of the ocean that it worshiped.

And subconsciously, the murloc’s slacked its spiritual power movement and stopped casting the second Drowning Bubble.

The murloc mage immediately realized this was not right.

Although the murloc mage’s strong spiritual power did prevent it from being further affected by Lucien’s spell, for a moment, due to the pricking feeling in its soul caused by this magic, the murloc lost his concentration for a moment.

This version of Charm Person spell was developed by Lucien on his own: it put more emphasis on the influence of the magic on an individual's soul, but lowered the power from the intervention of brain wave, thus working better with sorcerers!

The failure of casting Charm Person on the murloc mage also made Lucien suffer the power backfire, hence he felt dizzy for a second, but that could not prevent Lucien from activating his magic item.

A head-sized fire ball appeared in the space and flew right toward the murloc mage.

The murloc right now was only under the cover of Power Resistance and a water bubble. Seeing the fire ball coming toward it, the murloc mage looked helpless and frustrated.

It was too late for it to cast any spell or activate any item though.

Bang!

The fire ball exploded.

Part of the murloc mage was exploded into pieces of flesh, and some of the pieces were burned black.

However, the pieces of the murloc's limbs were still moving on the floor, striving to go back to the main body.

Of course, Lucien would not let the murloc come back again.

Grabbing Alert with his right hand, holding Asthenia Dagger in his left hand, Lucien jumped on the remaining major piece of the murloc.

Sharp light flashed. The murloc was beheaded.

At this time, a person came downstairs. He saw the dead murloc mage, and also Lucien.

"You killed it?!" Tom could not believe his own eyes.

Tom had a short fight with this murloc mage on the deck outside

just now, and he knew how powerful this second circle mage was.

When Tom hurriedly rushed downstairs, he did it not only to protect Wave Stone, but also to help Lucien and the apprentices.

However, within one minute, the mage was already killed by Lucien.

Chapter 179: The Gain

Chapter 179: The Gain

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The broken pieces of wood were everywhere. The cabin was half ruined by fire and lightning. Obviously, there had been a bitter fight there.

Tom was very surprised seeing that. He wondered if Lucien had some sort of very powerful magic item, or even if Lucien was already a second circle sorcerer, which, according to what he knew, was almost impossible for sorcerers who never joined the Congress and studied arcana.

Then, when Tom quickly drew his thoughts back, he said to Lucien decisively, "Twenty seconds for you, handle the mess, check the kids. Leave the rest to me."

Two seconds later, Tom quickly turned around and ran toward the main cargo cabin, where there was noise of planks of wood being broken there. It seemed that the kuo-toans were now trying to withdrawal by directly breaking their way out of the ship.

Lucien nodded. He understood Tom's command.

As he was the one who caused the mess, he should be responsible for cleaning this place up. And within twenty seconds, he was supposed to get to the above floor and hide with the apprentices as well, to avoid being found by the incoming knights and squires.

And Tom would be handling the rest of the stuff.

The red light on the murloc mage's scales stained the scales and now they looked as red as blood. Lucien knew that this was a good ingredient for making armor or magic robes to increase the wearer's defensive ability level and his or her speed under water.

However, due to the limit of time, Lucien had no time for scaling it

or collecting Murloc's Lymph from it.

Lucien quickly grabbed the coral staff and took away the small purse hidden underneath a big piece of scale of the murloc mage.

Then Lucien cast Force Wave and pushed the murloc's body out of the ship into the boundless ocean.

After that, Lucien ran back into his own cabin and calmly looked around this small space. Because of the bitter fight he had with the murloc, there was no trace of a person once living in here left. So he jumped up again, grabbed the edge of the broken ceiling with his hands, and climbed up onto the floor above.

Then Lucien started collecting some pieces of wood and iron plates to fix the floor.

Apprentice level spell, Repair.

As the dim light was shining, the gaps between the broken pieces were gradually disappearing. As a real sorcerer, Lucien was able to fix bigger gaps now. Twenty seconds were almost gone, however, the spell still needed more time.

At this time, a loud explosion came from outside of the cabin, which covered the noise made by Lucien's magic.

Together with the sudden silence coming a second later, a bunch of people came downstairs and rushed to check the main cargo cabin on the other side, without even taking a close look at the cabins where Lucien and the apprentices were living.

After all, compared to the main cargo cabin where all the Wave Stones were stored, this side of the cabin was like nothing to them.

On the floor above, the gaps were all fixed. Lucien was now ready to hide. He thought to himself that what just happened must mean a great loss to Granneuve. As he was thinking, Lucien saw the door of a sailor's cabin secretly opened a gap. There were several pairs of eyes behind the door.

"Mr. Evans, here!" Annick, Layria and Heidi said to him at the same

time. Their voice was full of joy and relief.

Lucien quickly got into the small cabin and locked the door from inside.

“Good job you three, especially you, Annick.” Lucien nodded to them.

Annick’s face flushed a bit from Lucien’s words.

“We brought your suitcase with us, too, Mr. Evans,” said Heidi proudly. The young teenagers were waiting for more of Lucien’s praise.

Lucien smiled, “That’s very considerate of all of you. Right now we’re still in danger, and all of us still have to be careful. Now I have to analyze this staff, so let me stay focused for a while.”

Sitting down on the messy bed, Lucien started checking the coral staff from the murloc mage.

Having no idea whether the viscount and the pastors could beat the murlocs, and whether the ship was going to sink or not, Lucien had to seize every chance to make himself stronger. Maybe the staff would be the very thing that would save his life in the last second.

The three apprentices nodded seriously. They had this sense of responsibility that they were protecting their teacher right now.

Gradually, the sound of thunder and lightning slowly disappeared, and it seemed that the fight had come to an end.

Lucien opened his eyes.

It did not take Lucien long to analyze the staff, since he had already successfully analyzed several second circle spells. Now the staff belonged to him.

This coral staff was a level two high-rank magic item named Amboula. Its user could breathe under water and cast Lightning Ball and Acid Bubble, which were both second circle spells, three times a day. Besides, it helped its owner to concentrate on accumulating

his or her spiritual power when a spell was cast, and also to locate his or her enemy, especially when one was casting metal control spells.

The staff was made of the coral growing near the altar of the Lord of Ocean, Amboula, and it was a common staff for Kuo-toans.

“One who is blessed by the Lord of Ocean has the power of water.” Lucien murmured to himself when he finished analyzing the magic item. This was the message left by the maker of the staff.

Holding the staff in his hand, Lucien noticed that his spiritual power had become more concentrated. He was glad that he finally got a staff as a sorcerer.

And even if the ship sank, he would be able to breathe under the water.

At this time, a loud voice came from the deck,

“The murlocs are beaten. Knights and soldiers, don’t let a single one of them escape. Pastors, repair the ship.”

It was Viscount Wright’s voice.

Although he was saying so to comfort the people on the ship, only he and the cardinals knew whether the murlocs were beaten or they just left by themselves after obtaining the stones.

The three apprentices released a long sigh.

Lucien was now in a pretty good mood as well. He opened the small grey purse that he got from the murloc mage.

As soon as the purse was opened, a great sense of oceanic power came out of it. Lucien saw six dark blue gems in there, and each of them was about the size of a finger tip. The six gems were all covered with ripples of light.

These were high-quality Wave Stones, ten times more valuable than common ones. They could not only be used as a main material for making medium-rank magic items but also to make high-rank ones.

These stones were his own trophies. Lucien was quite delighted.

At this time, he noticed that there was a piece of note at the bottom of the purse.

“What’s this...” Lucien murmured.

After telling the three apprentices to keep securing the space, Lucien secretly unfolded the note.

“Collect a large amount of Wave Stone and bring them to the tarnished ocean area. We need a great magic circle to open it.”

Under this line of words, there was a simple map for directing one to get to the so-called “tarnished” area.

As this piece of note was already copied by Lucien’s spirit library, he quickly destroyed the note.

Lucien never heard about anything related to a tarnished ocean area. And it seemed that even the murloc mage had no idea where it was.

According to the map, it looked like that this area was part of Storm Strait.

However, Lucien was not sure, since the note was written in the murlocs’ own language, and Lucien could only understand part of it.

“Mr. Evans, the fight is over,” Annick said to Lucien.

Lucien grabbed the staff and nodded, “Then we’ll see what Tom wants us to do.”

As soon as he closed the purse, Lucien noticed that the power of the Wave Stones disappeared at the same time.

He wondered whether the purse was a magic item as well, so Lucien secretly cast Identification to check it.

The purse turned out to be an apprentice level magic item called Kuo-toan’s Pouch, which could conceal magic waves.

Lucien was a bit disappointed. He thought it was something better.

At this time, Tom's voice came, but he was not talking to Lucien and the apprentices.

"What are you guys doing here?"

Tom's voice was loud, purposefully loud.

"The cardinal asked us to check the cabins downstairs for fixing the divine power circles," someone answered in a slight arrogant tone.

The three apprentices' faces immediately turned pale, and they were all very nervous again.

Chapter 180: An Offer from Demon

Chapter 180: An Offer from Demon

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When the apprentices thought everything was fine, another round of risk immediately arrived.

At this time, since the storm was almost gone, casting any spell could be very risky. Lucien and the apprentices were back in the dilemma again.

Lucien gently patted on his students' shoulders one by one to comfort them. Grabbing Amboula in his hand, Lucien listened to the conversation carefully while thinking of the possible solution fast in his mind.

"Pastor Cody, it's stinky down there." Tom was still talking loud purposefully, "There is no need for you, my lord, to do this. Please... Just enjoy the nice black tea in your own cabin and I can handle this for you, my lord."

"Well, I'm still in training... You know, according to Church Law, you can't call me lord right now yet." There was an imperceptible smile on Cody's face when he was saying this. He surely enjoyed Tom's flattery, "I appreciate your kindness, Tom, But you and your sailors can't really tell where the divine power circles are really damaged. I gotta do this myself, sorry."

Tom was the boatswain, a dark knight who served Viscount Wright. This was his identity known by the people on this ship. Although a dark knight could neither become a chief mate nor a captain, Cody still wanted to keep his basic respect toward the knight.

Hearing Cody's words, Tom did not know what to say.

"All right. You two, Lohman and Boer... You two go that way. Jacques and Summy, you two that way." Cody, a senior pastor in training, did enjoy giving commands a lot.

However, Tom knew that it would still take them some time before they found the room in the corner where Lucien and the apprentices were hiding.

Tom was sweating. He had horrible scenes flashing through his mind.

He could not let it happen. He could not let those horrible scenes really happen.

Tom was ready to take action. He was going to kill them all, and pretend that it was some murlocs hiding on the ship that killed them.

At this time, he felt someone gently touched his arm.

“...?!” Tom was beyond surprised when he saw Evans standing right beside him. Right now, Lucien was wearing a dirty sailor vest, and his face was covered with some paint marks just like the ones most sailors liked doing.

Lucien was looking down, with his head dropped.

Tom could not believe his eyes, feeling lucky that he did not burst Evans’ name out.

“Down there... very bad,” said Lucien in his pretended husky voice.

As he was saying, Lucien was secretly writing something down on Tom’s arm.

Cody did not feel anything wrong here. In his eyes, it was just a sailor who was reporting to Tom.

And there were so many sailors that Cody did not know on this ship. After all, pastor and sailor were of two totally different levels. They were not even close.

Tom, while trying to stay as calm as he could, sensed a short single word written on his arm.

“Jacques...?” Tom thought to himself, but he did not really get

Lucien's intention right away.

Lucien pulled Tom's arm a bit toward the cabin, and Tom immediately realized, "Let he go...?"

Tom asked Lucien in a very low voice. Lucien nodded seriously. He had this confidence that Tom would trust him. And Lucien's confidence was right.

"Lord Cody, the bottom floor is where the fight just happened, and also the most damaged section. How about sending some people down there first to fix the major cracks? My man just told me that it's pretty bad down there right now." There was a flattering smile on Tom's thin face.

"Umm..." Cody was a bit unsure. He did not really want to listen to a boatswain's suggestion.

"You know... Maybe some more pastors will go down there as well later. Your work can definitely impress them." Tom continued to persuade him.

And that was what Cody really cared. If Cody could get more attention from the higher-ranked pastors, he would certainly have a better chance to get promoted.

"I think you're right, Tom. Can you help assisting the other pastors in training and squires check the upper cabins?" Cody quickly made the decision.

"For sure, my lord." Tom hurriedly nodded before Cody changed his mind, and then he walked close to Jacques and said, "Mr. Jacques, maybe we can go to check the cabins down there."

Jacques was a good-looking, blond young man. His nose was straight and high, and his eyes were green.

Cody did not say anything about it. Honestly speaking, he did not like Jacques very much, since Jacques was quite popular but also arrogant in Cody's eyes. Of course, Cody did not want to leave Jacques a chance to impress the other pastors.

Asking Jacques and the other several pastors in training and squires who he disliked to check the sailors' cabins, Cody led his other people down to the bottom floor.

Although Jacques and the other people knew why they were left here, they still went downstairs and started checking carefully. After all, their own safety was connected to the security of the ship as well.

Purposefully, Tom led Jacques to the cabin at the very end of the corridor in the corner, together with Lucien.

As they were walking, Lucien secretly wrote down several words on Tom's hand again,

"Activate your power, cover me, when you see my clenched left fist."

Tom instantly understood Lucien this time, since they worked this way together before when they were trying to kill Brown. Lucien wanted to use Tom's Blood Power to cover the magic waves produced by his casting.

However, Tom felt very concerned about Lucien's plan. Since the magic waves would not be fully covered, and the storm was almost gone now, it would be quite possible for the cardinals on the ship to notice Lucien's magic power.

At this time, they came in front of this small cabin in the corner.

Seeing that the young, strange sailor politely opened the door for him, Jacques nodded with satisfaction and then stepped into the cabin.

As expected, there was no one in the cabin. Just when Jacques was about to check the wood boards close to the window, he heard a gentle voice saying,

"Mr. Jacques, if you are still a nobody three years from now, how would you deal with your relationship with Miss Chely?"

Jacques fiercely turned around and stared at this young, bold sailor,

feeling shocked, “What?!”

Jacques’ right hand pressed on his sword.

“I said, you and Miss Chely.” Lucien looked right into Jacques’ eyes, “You don’t need to know where I heard this, but tell me, are you really that confident that you can awaken your Blessing in three years?”

The sailor’s eyes were as dark as a shadow, and as deep as a starry sky.

After several seconds, Jacques said to Lucien in a very angry but constrained voice, “Who are you?! It’s none of your business!”

Jacques knew that he was not confident at all in awakening his Blessing. Although he did promise Chely, his love, Jacques was afraid that he might never be able to do it. After all, so many squires had failed and never managed to overcome this barrier in their whole lives.

“I guess... Not really my business.” Lucien had a cunning smile on his face, “Miss Chely marrying someone else is also not my business. However, I have the power that can help you awaken your Blessing.”

“What do you mean? Why you’re talking to me like this?” asked Jacques out of anger and fury.

When he saw that Tom was standing in the front of the door, Jacques quickly realized that the boatswain was on this strange sailor’s side.

“Because I want to help you.” Lucien joked in a very calm way, “Because I am a good man.”

“There’s no free lunch,” said Jacques straightforwardly.

“Smart. I only ask for one thing.” Lucien’s head slightly tilted, “I want you to pretend that you saw nothing down here later.”

“You’re... A sorcerer?” Jacques squinted at Lucien.

“And also a knight, Mr. Jacques. As you can see,” Lucien reached his right hand out in front of Jacques and showed him his Blood Power, Moonlight, “I already awakened mine. If you cannot awaken your power in three years, you can come to me. If you’re willing to help, I’ll sign a magic pact with you. You can always find me with the pact, and I can never break the words that I promise in the pact.”

“...” Jacques did not respond immediately. Subconsciously, Jacques put his upper teeth against his lower lip when he was thinking.

“We’re not doing anything bad.” Lucien kept pushing, “We just want to get to Holm safe. You’re not betraying your faith as a knight, Mr. Jacques.”

Jacques clenched both of his hands into two tight fists. His eyebrows frowned.

“Or say, you want to see Miss Chely marry someone else, be in another man’s arms, and have that man’s kids?”

There were a few blue veins on Jacques’ forehead, and his whole body was shaking.

Jacques felt that, instead of a human being or a sorcerer, it was a demon that was standing in front of him right now, a demon from the pit of sin.

Chapter 181: A New Start The End of Volume II

Jacques' heart was beating fast. He could hear his own breathes.

Ten seconds later, Jacques finally lowered his tight shoulders like a balloon losing its air.

"How... do you want me to do this?" said Jacques in a husky voice.

He felt that he was divided into two parts: one was controlled by his great desire for his love, and the other part was feeling extremely guilty.

"It's simple. You just need to sign a magic pact with me." Lucien's smile was still on his face, "Firstly, you promise that you'll never tell anyone else who we are. Secondly, you will not tell anyone on the ship that something is not right down here. Thirdly, you will also keep this as a secret after you go back to Sturk."

Jacques listened to Lucien's words, with his eyes looking down at the floor.

"In return, I promise to offer you the magic potion that can awaken your Blessing, or we sorcerers say, Blood Power, three years from now, if your own attempt fail. Even if you cannot find me in Holm in three years, the Congress of Magic will keep the words. Tom can represent the congress."

In order to make Jacques feel better, Lucien added, "And also, as long as our own lives are not threatened, we wouldn't hurt you and your friends on this ship."

"I hear you, and I'll do as you said." Jacques looked up and stared at Lucien's eyes, "You know my weakness."

As soon as he said this, he felt more relaxed.

"Congratulations, Mr. Jacques, for making the right choice. I can already see your bright future," said Lucien. Then, he took out a roll

of parchment, a quill and a small bottle of magic ink from his pockets, and started to quickly write down the articles and draw mysterious patterns on it .

Lucien did not look at the parchment when he was writing, instead, he was staring at Jacques with his left hand half clenching into a fist, in case Jacques would suddenly change his mind.

Jacques did not really mind Lucien's cautiousness. He said to Lucien, and also to himself, "My future? That'll be a dark future, for sure. After all, I have betrayed my knight faith, and I don't think it possible for me to awaken my Blessing on my own. Everyone knows that the power activated by magic potion is limited, but I will do it anyway, for Chely."

"Good for you, Mr. Jacques. What a nice lover." Lucien smiled, "According to what I know, there is no universal rule as a knight's faith, and 'faith' itself is the most important part. With a certain faith, a person can remain concentrated and focused on his or her knight practice. If your faith is to protect Miss Chely and to guard your love, what you're doing is not breaking your belief."

Hearing that, Jacques was quite surprised, "Your understanding... is very different from what my teacher told me, but your theory makes sense to me."

In fact, Lucien heard this from Natasha. He tried to make his answer blurry, "Well... I know a few grand knights... And maybe new potions can come out in the following several years which can help knights to further improve their power, right?"

Then, Lucien signed his name on the pact.

Lucien's words obviously comforted Jacques. A smile appeared on Jacques face, "I heard that the Church owns a kind of potion which is only available to the top nobles. This potion can turn a person into a level two knight. I also heard that the grand duke, Violet, used this potion. Wait... Your name is Lucien Evans? Interesting, Chely's favourite musician's name is also Lucien Evans."

"I know that guy, too." Lucien answered casually, "Clearly, although

we share the same name, we are very different."

"More than different. I'd say... the opposite." Jacques shrugged his shoulders. He never tried to draw the connection between the musician and the sorcerer who was right now standing in front of him, since, firstly, Lucien Evans was not an uncommon name, and secondly, a famous musician also being a sorcerer was something way beyond his imagination.

"I agree with you," said Lucien directly. He secretly turned around to see whether Tom was feeling suspicious about his name.

But clearly, Tom was still staring at Lucien's left hand, carefully waiting for his possible signal.

Lucien knew that if Granneuve had been here, with all the clues Granneuve had, he might be the only one who could tell the truth.

"Mr. Evans? Where shall I sign?" asked Jacques.

"Here." Lucien pointed at the corner of the pact.

After Jacques signed the pact, holding the pact in his hand, Lucien covered the parchment with his spiritual power.

Slight waves of magic power rose from it. Then, the power turned into light blue flame and burned the parchment into ashes.

As soon as the pact was gone, Lucien suddenly felt that there was something new in this soul, and Jacques also looked confused for a second - the magic pact had come into effect!

"If the pact is violated by either of us, the one who broke his promise would suffer from the fire burning his soul, and his soul would thus be destroyed." Lucien shook hands with Jacques, as if they were celebrating certain success, "As we're all set, I'll leave you alone to check the divine power circles, Mr. Jacques."

Jacques threw a meaningful look at Lucien, "Mr. Evans, I have to say that you're a real demon, a demon that is very good at tempting. When I was in my knight training, I never thought I would yield to a demon's offer."

Then he walked past Lucien to check the wood planks close to the window.

Lucien and Tom were just standing there, watching Jacques walking around.

"If Jacques still decides to break the pact somehow, what would you do? You know that some divine power spells can suppress the power of magic compact," said Tom.

Tom knew that the magic pact was not really unbreakable as it was often claimed to be. For example, if Lucien became a high rank sorcerer, his stronger soul would be able to manage the damage from the flame.

"The magic compact is only a form," answered Lucien in a very low voice. "The moment he decided to sign the pact with me, I knew that he would not easily break his words, because his heart chose to follow his desire. However, of course, there's still a risk, but I didn't really have a better choice."

"Interesting." Tom smiled and nodded, "The Congress will be providing the potion, after all, you protected many apprentices."

After a while, under Lucien and Tom's "supervision", Jacques checked the rest of the cabins on this side, and totally ignored the many apprentices hiding in some of the cabins.

An hour later after Jacques left this floor, nothing happened.

Lucien finally released a long sigh of relief.

...

The viscount's room.

A fancy porcelain cup made in Colette got fiercely thrown on the carpet. Instantly, it broke into many small pieces.

"Idiots! Useless idiots! The stones were robbed, and our people were almost found!" Viscount Wright shouted furiously.

In front of him stood Granneuve and Tom, with their heads very low.

The viscount stepped back and forth in his room, "Tell me, how these filthy murlocs knew that the stones were on our ship?! How do they know we're shipping Wave Stone? You two, Granneuve and Tom, it is your responsibility to get the answer!"

Although the viscount owned one tenth of the whole fortune of Sturk, this was still a great loss.

"Yes, my lord." Both Granneuve and Tom didn't dare to raise their heads.

Then the viscount's face turned cold and more gloomy, "Find a chance and kill the knight squire called Jacques. Let someone else do this... According to the pact, only the sorcerers and Tom are not allowed to do this."

"Yes." Granneuve bowed and nodded.

"Wait... Forget about it." The viscount fell back into his couch, looking rather exhausted, "I don't want to hurt Chely. You two get the stone thing done first."

...

A month later, although the weather was getting colder and colder, the fleet never again experienced any major setback after the murloc's attack.

Finally, the ships arrived at the harbour named Patray in Holm, across the Storm Strait.

On the second bottom floor, Lucien, Tom and the apprentices were feeling very, very excited. Experienced as Lucien, he was still not able to restrain the great joy and excitement in his heart.

Lucien regarded this day as the beginning of his real path of magic.

With regards to the note that he found in the murloc mage's pouch, Lucien had not put much thought into it. He could not allow

himself to be too greedy, especially when he didn't have enough information.

"Evans, you and the apprentices hide in the crates. Stay calm when they are checking. Just hide in there and do not panic," said Tom as he was pointing at the several long, wooden crates.

Lucien nodded and took the lead to walk into a crate. When he lay down, a layer of wood board covered him.

On the wood board, Tom and his sailors put layers of goods on top of it and sealed the crate completely with another board with iron nails.

Lucien felt that he was being buried in a coffin.

In the darkness, after a long time, when Lucien was wondering whether he was forgotten, he heard that there were people prying the crate to check the goods inside.

Although he was very alert, following Tom's order, Lucien remained very calm and stayed still.

"No problem."

It was Jacques' voice.

The crate was sealed again. And Lucien felt the great bumpiness. After a while, Lucien's crate was placed on the wet and cold ground.

After a long time again, the crate was opened once more. The goods above him were removed, and so was the lower board.

The bright sunlight came in and made Lucien squint.

A young man wearing a white shirt, dark brown vest and black long jacket was standing in front of the crate. There was a big smile on this young man's face under his top hat.

"Welcome to Holm, my friend."

Lucien also grinned. He knew that a new beginning of his life had started.

Chapter 182: Lazar's Promise

The Third Volume: City in the Sky

The bright sunlight, the slightly humid environment, a faint fishy smell in the air, old but elegant buildings, a busy city—those were Lucien's first impressions of the biggest costal city named Patray, in Holm.

A couple of coaches drove through the streets of Patray, in which sat Lucien, the apprentices and the sorcerer who picked them up, Lazar.

"How do you like Holm, Mr. Evans? Not bad, right?" Lazar still got a big smile on his face.

"Just call me Evans, Lazar. Well... the ladies are surely beautiful," answered Lucien in a relaxed and humorous way, "And the dressing style here is quite different. Some of the dresses that ladies are wearing are sophisticated, and some are simple-designed; some have bright colors, and some are well decorated. The only thing that disappoints me a bit is that the ladies are all dressing in a quite conservative way, haha."

"Ha, Evans..." Lazar clapped his hands, "I see... You do not appreciate the beauty of being conservative, but to me, this is another way of being sexy, which is more mysterious and can leave us with more space for imagination."

Lucien slightly nodded, "Another thing is that... I think people here, no matter ladies or gentlemen, all like wearing hats. Is it right?"

In Aalto, only some of the clergy and senior citizens liked wearing hats.

"Good point, Evans. Good observation is very important for a sorcerer. In Holm, wearing hat is a manner, and you have to adapt to it as well. Ladies like wearing capelines with long ribbons and tassels and crape bonnets for formal settings, and simple bonnets decorated with flowers or feathers for daily life. Common guys wear

round-top caps or men's capelines, and gentlemen like us wear men's bonnets or top hats," answered Lazar. "Besides hats, ties, suits or double-breasted coats are also important pieces."

After getting a bit closer with Lazar, Lucien switched the topic naturally, "I wonder if there's any limit on sorcerers using magic?"

"Technically speaking, a sorcerer using magic to hurt people is just like an ordinary person using dagger or sword to hurt someone, hence we would be punished accordingly by law. However, because the male sorcerers here in Holm have noble titles, if the case is not very serious, they would only be fined... Look, Evans." Lazar pointed at a middle-aged man in a gray suit.

Lucien saw that the man was standing beside a fountain on the square, surrounded by many kids. Holding his black top hat in his hand, the middle-aged man kept showing the kids all kinds of stuff from his hat, such as flowers, bread, stones and even a white pigeon.

"Is he an apprentice?" asked Lucien.

"Yes." Lazar smiled and nodded, "Since the congress started sending apprentices to magic schools to let them receive formal training, we have more and more apprentices in this country. However, that also means that we have more apprentices who cannot become real sorcerers. Fortunately, these apprentices know how to read and are more knowledgeable than common people, hence they can still make a good living. This guy, an apprentice, seems to like kids quite a lot."

Lucien had already got the information from Astar and Tom, so he was not very surprised. He asked casually, "Then what's the percentage? I mean... how many apprentices can actually become sorcerers?"

"Well... Comparatively speaking, the number has increased a lot compared to that of the ancient magic empire. In the ancient time, apprentices who did not have strong enough spiritual power could only rely their hope on precious magic potions or risky magic rituals. Therefore, among a thousand apprentices, maybe one could

become a sorcerer, but now, due to the study of arcana, we have a lower requirement for one's spiritual power, and right now the number's around five out of a hundred." Lazar looked at Lucien with his signature smile, "You don't have to worry about it, Evans... I mean, since you're a sorcerer already, as long as you can focus on learning arcana, I'm sure you can make progress very soon. By the way, what school do you specialize in?" asked Lazar curiously.

"I'm better at Astrology and Element," answered Lucien honestly. "But I'm not sure what'll be my mastery yet."

"Ha, I happen to be a mage in the school of Element, and also a member of the Will of Elements. Did you ever hear the name of this group before?" asked Lazar.

"Mr. Astar mentioned it to me before. You want me in, Lazar?" Lucien smiled, saying in his mind that he actually knew way more about this group than just knowing its name, after all, he was even carrying the ring with himself right now.

"Come on, Evans! We're not the Hand of Paleness," said Lazar in a joking way. "The Hand of Paleness doesn't care about the quality of their members at all, which I understand to some degree, after all, what matters the most to them is body. If a member is not really qualified, his or her body can still be useful, right?"

Obviously, there was indeed great conflict between the Will of Elements and the Hand of Paleness.

"So, Lazar... I take you're also an arcanist, right?" asked Lucien carefully.

Lazar adjusted himself a bit to sit slightly more straight, and tried to make his smile look more casual, "The first circle element spell, Lazar's Burning Hand, which I improved at the beginning of this year, has been approved by Arcana Review Board, and I earned another two arcana credits from it. Together with the previous eight credits that I had, I'm a level one arcanist and a second circle sorcerer now, and that's why I'm a member of the Will of Elements."

Clearly, Lazar was very proud of his accomplishment.

"How old are you, Lazar? You look quite young." Although Lucien did not understand how hard it was for a junior-rank sorcerer to get arcana credit, he was still quite surprised with Lazar's sorcerer level.

Lazar reached for the glass of wine resting on the small wood table in the coach, "Just turned twenty-two. Two years older than you, Evans."

As Lucien often behaved in a quite mature way, most people thought that he was twenty something, hence Lucien also told other people that he was twenty to differ himself from the eighteen-year-old famous musician.

"You're indeed a genius, Lazar." Lucien nodded and praised him sincerely.

"I'm still far from being a genius, Evans." Lazar slightly waved his hand, "For example, Mr. Ulysses from the Will of Power, he is a real genius in the school of Element. He was a level two arcanist and a middle-rank mage sorcerer when he was twenty two, and a level four arcanist, fifth circle elemental mage when he was thirty three, and there is still Mr. Larry and Mr. Timothy in our group."

Lazar did not envy these geniuses, since these people's accomplishment was beyond a common person's jealousy.

"However, the person from the school of Element that I admire the most, except the grand arcanist, Hathaway, is Mrs. Meredith from Holm, who won Holm Crown prize when she was only twenty-three, and she was one of the very few geniuses whose arcana level was higher than their sorcerer level. After she had won this prize, Mrs. Meredith even became a level four arcanist when she was only a first circle elemental sorcerer! Unfortunately..."

Lazar released a sorry sigh.

Lucien secretly touched the ring named Mo in his pocket with a mixed feeling, "I heard about her story, too, and Mrs. Meredith is really admirable."

Lazar raised his glass to show his appreciation.

"Although we haven't been planning on inviting you to join our group, Evans," said Lazar, "as a promising young man who is already a real sorcerer in his early twenties, by studying ancient magic system you should be able to gain many groups' attention in the congress very soon."

"I'm flattered." Lucien nodded politely.

Lazar took it that Lucien did not really understand what did his words mean, so he added, "Being a member of our group can bring you many benefits: the instruction of the middle and senior rank mages, countless arcana books and journals, well-equipped labs, wealth, two secret rites for improving—one is owned by the congress, the Royal Magic Academy and the group called the Lord of Elements, the other is called the Creator, which is only available for sorcerers who study both Element and Alchemy. Anyway, representing Mrs. Meredith, as long as you can get a level in arcana by thirty, Evans, you're welcome to join us!"

Lucien's smile was still on his face, although he secretly thought that he himself, the person who was holding Mrs. Meredith's ring right now, should be the best representative of that talented lady between them both.

Besides, Lucien still remembered what Astar told him. When he was still a junior rank mage, it was better for him to stay away from all those groups' conflict and competition, and to focus on his own study first.

"I'm very interested in Astrology and Element," said Lucien sincerely still. "The Will of Elements is for sure my ideal group."

Lazar nodded in a satisfied way, "If your mastery is in Astrology, you can also consider Tower."

It seemed that the relationship between Tower and the Will of Elements was not bad.

Then, Lazar looked out a bit and asked, "Do you want to stay in

Patray for a few more days, or do you want to head for Allyn directly?"

"I can't wait for going to Allyn anymore," answered Lucien in a second.

Lazar put down his glass and grinned. Then, he asked the coachman to drive them into a house with a garden, which looked nothing special.

However, as soon as the coach went through the gate, the surroundings suddenly became blurry, as if there was heavy fog everywhere.

When the coach got out of the fog, what Lucien saw totally surprised him:

Four pairs of railway tracks and an eight-car black train were right now in front of him.

The apprentices in the coaches following Lucien and Lazar were also more than surprised.

"Welcome aboard the magic steam train to Allyn," said Lazar.

It was delightful for Lazar to see Lucien and the apprentices' surprised faces.

Chapter 183: Consideration

Chapter 183: Consideration

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Spacious, light yellow cars, soft dark red seats, clean magic glass, and the two beautiful young girls wearing light blue dresses—this was Lucien’s first impression of this magic train, and this first impression was pretty good.

“Welcome aboard Kloss. We’ll be traveling past seven stations on our way today, and arrive in Allyn three hours later.” The two beautiful grils from the crew bowed to Lucien politely, “If you need anything, sir, please press the button on the table.”

As a guest, Lucien only smiled and nodded, letting Lazar arrange the rest of the stuff.

After taking out his pocket watch and giving it a quick glance, Lazar said to Lucien, “It’s one in the afternoon right now, and we have plenty of time to arrive in Allyn before the people in the congress finish working today. Wait... I bet all of you haven’t had lunch yet. No worries. This train is equipped with the best chefs from all over the continent, and all of your first trip to Allyn is paid by the congress. Of course, you gotta pay for your future trips, and it’s one Thale per ticket.”

“That’s pricy...” Even Lucien felt a bit surprised, not to mention the apprentices. After all, a common person with middle-level earning could only make seven to eight Thales a year. This train was way more expensive than the flights that Lucien had taken in his own world.

Seeing their facial expression, Lazar grinned, “Actually, the idea of magic train was already put forward by some arcanists many years ago. They were inspired by the equipment used in mining industry. At that time, the train was fuelled by magic circles and alchemy lives, hence why the train was very expensive to run. Besides, most sorcerers above middle rank can fly. So you can see... The train was

quite impractical.”

“What about this one?” asked Lucien.

“Mr. Kloss later improved the train by combining magic and machine together, and started using steam as the major power for the train, which greatly reduced the cost.” Lazar continued, “The train is way faster than a middle-rank sorcerer flying on his own, even faster than magic brooms, not to mention that a train can carry way more people at the same time. Therefore, the congress puts much emphasis on the planning of the railways, and now we have four routes. The one we’re taking now is the first settled route, from Patray to Allyn.”

As Lazar was introducing the details, he made Lucien and the apprentices order their food.

“Then why this train’s still this expensive, Mr. Lazar?” asked Sprint curiously. Among all the apprentices, he was the most active one.

“Let’s sit down first.” Lazar and Lucien sat down on the soft seats on both sides of the table. “Because Kloss is a luxury train. That’s why.” After all of them sat down, Lazar continued, “For other trains, you are looking at around thirty Nars. I mean... it’s still not cheap, but the cost of building new railways comes from income of the tickets and the funding of the congress. We don’t trust those greedy bankers to do this.”

After satisfying the apprentices’ curiosity, Lazar grinned to Lucien, “I’m pretty sure that the price will drop someday, with the fast development of other transportation methods. Evans, you come to the congress in the best time, and you have to seize this moment, when all kinds of great ideas about magic are thriving. Work hard on arcana, and become a worthy sorcerer!”

Without doubt, Lazar was a very delightful and optimistic young man, or he would not be chosen to be the one greeting the newcomers.

“In fact, I already started learning basic arcana in Mr. Astar’s place, and I have three apprentices studying after me.” Lucien smiled and

nodded, and then placed Amboula and Alert in the designated area beside his seat.

In the past more-than-one-month studying, both Annick and Layria had become real magic apprentices before they arrived in Holm, and Heidi was almost there as well.

“That’s great.” Lazar nodded.

Then with a loud steam whistle, the train started moving.

“Wow...” Sprint half stood up from his seat and stared at the outside of the window. Then so did Annick and Olmos.

The surprised and excited apprentices started discussing with each other.

Lucien reached forward for the water in front of him, without taking a glance at what was happening outside.

“You look pretty calm, Evans,” said Lazar in a favorable way.

Of course Lucien could not tell Lazar that he had seen this countless times in his original world, so he found an excuse, “I think I’m more interested in the mechanics of this machine. Lazar, may I visit the operation room?”

Lazar laughed, “Evans, I totally understand your curiosity, but what you’re interested in is confidential. If you really want to find out how it works, the only way you can do it is to use your arcana points to exchange the materials with the congress.”

Surprisingly, as the train ran faster and faster, the noises produced by the train gradually disappeared. Lucien was guessing that it was because of the magic circles cast on the train.

Outside of the window, the bleak fields in November and the small villages along the railway were passing backwards very fast.

When Lucien was about to ask, two young girls came into the carriage with a dining pushcart, followed by several violin players.

In the wonderful music, the two girls put steaks, grilled fish, caviar and foie gras on their plates.

Lucien unfolded his napkin on his lap and then cut a piece of steak. The steak was very juicy and well-cooked.

Lucien nodded out of satisfaction, “Very professional.”

“I know, right? I’ve been looking forward to the nice cuisine in the Kingdom of Syracuse for a long time. Unfortunately, I’m still not a middle-rank mage, and I cannot fly over Storm Strait to try the food there,” said Lazar while cutting the fried foie gras in his plate. “I also appreciate Aalto’s music a lot as well. You know, the young musician who you share the same name with, Lucien Evans... He has been gaining much popularity in a very short period of time.”

Then Lucien started introducing the many cuisines in different countries to Lazar. When Lazar got very excited, he also told Lucien many things about the congress.

“Lazar, how can I obtain arcana credit?” asked Lucien, “I really want to start my arcana path.”

Because Lucien knew that, in other people’s eyes, he was only a beginner in arcana, he was planning on studying in the congress first for a while and then seizing a chance to compose and publish his own paper. However, from what Lazar told him, Lucien realized that having a certain level in arcana could bring him many benefits.

In addition, in the past one month, by using Brook Meditation, Lucien was ready to move forward to a higher sorcerer level, second circle.

“You know, Evans, there’s an old saying, ‘The more impatient a person is, the harder it is for the person to get to the destination’.” Lazar wiped his mouth with the white napkin, “But I do understand, Evans, after all, gaining arcana credit is more than important to every sorcerer in the congress.”

Lucien sat straight to listen carefully.

“Arcana Review Board is the organization taking charge of arcana

credit awarding, belonging to the highest council in the congress, and it consists of fifty-two authorities from all of the schools. These sorcerers are at least level six arcanists.”

“There are only fifty something level six arcanists?” Lucien felt quite surprised.

“Authorities, I said authorities.” Lazar shook his head, “It depends on different fields. Some arcanists do have very impressive accomplishment and they... well, they live long enough to have a high level, but in the fields they specialize in, if there are sorcerers who are even more competitive than them, they still cannot be members of the board. However, for some sorcerers, although their arcana level is not that high, because they are experts in their own less popular or new fields, they can be regarded as authorities.”

“I see. I also heard from Mr. Astar that if one’s arcana research outcome is cited by someone else, the person can also get arcana credits?” asked Lucien.

After asking the attendants to take away the plates, Lazar answered, “That’s right. One credit for one citation. However, whether it can bring you more credits also depends on how important your research outcome is, and Arcana Review Board is still responsible for the judgement.”

“Then what about me coming up with a new spell or improving an existing magic?” Lucien needed to understand this as much as possible.

“You can only be awarded once for that, unless your creation or improvement inspired someone else and thus that person develops a new article based on that, and in that case, you can get extra credits. Otherwise, if someone wants to learn your magic, the person only needs to pay you arcana points. For example, so far my Lazar’s Burning Hand has been learned by thirty sorcerers, and that’s thirty arcana points.”

“That seems to be a lot of work for the sorcerers of the board.” Lucien gently grabbed his chin.

“Oh... That’s really true. In fact, in most cases, since they are very busy, these sorcerers usually don’t deal with reviewing most of the arcana and magic spells submitted, but let their students or other qualified arcanists working for different journals to make the judgement. Sometimes, there are mistakes and some sorcerers don’t get their points immediately, but the deficiencies can always get fixed sooner or later. For you, Evans, the best way to get some arcana points is to submit some unique spells from the ancient magic system. If no one before you ever have submitted it, you can get the corresponding points.”

“I see.” Lucien slightly nodded, “The congress is encouraging the exchanging of knowledge among sorcerers.”

Without doubt, all the sorcerers valued their own magic spells greatly. If there was no reward, no one would like to submit and publish one’s own creation.

Then what about Lucien?

Should he submit his spells to get the points?

Chapter 184: Allyn

Although most of the ancient ways of doing meditation had been proven ineffective by arcana, many unique ancient magic spells were still popular among today's sorcerers. Every time a sorcerer explored an old relic, except magic items or materials, he or she would always look forward to finding unique spells or magic rites. After all, the only standard for judging whether a magic spell was good or bad was to see if it was really useful.

In this regard, ancient spells were definitely not inferior to those contemporary ones. The possible difference might be that the requirement for learning a certain spell today was way lower than that of the ancient time. For example, a seventh or eighth circle spell in the past should probably be a fourth or fifth circle spell today.

Moreover, unique ancient spells could inspire arcanists as well. Many arcana research outcomes came from the studies of the old spells. Therefore, the congress was always quite generous in this case.

However, in the book, Astrology and Elements, only spells of third circle and above could be counted as unique spells, and Lucien was not there yet. Therefore, it was hard for him to pick out several not very important ones for submission. Currently, Lucien was planning on submitting the several spells that he created or improved on his own.

Among all these spells, Lucien saw the greatest value in the first circle spell, Charm Person, which included two versions: one targeting mages and one for knights. Before the congress came up with the theory with regards to brain wave and hormone, Lucien would not give them to the congress. Lucien felt that he might become an explorer in a new field by further studying the two spells, and then he might even become an expert in the school of Illusion or Necromancy.

As for Professor's Oscillation Hand, Lucien could not touch it right

now. Since if people knew that it was Lucien who first created his magic, it would not be difficult for them to realize that Lucien was the very Professor who caused all the messes in Aalto. Lucien did not want to submit anything with regards to discussing resonance before he got to a fifth circle sorcerer level.

In order to avoid the great impact on the school of Necromancy and on the belief of the Church, Lucien needed to keep carbamide synthesis to himself for now as well. As a beginner in this field, he could not take the risk to overthrow the two great powers. If he failed to be careful enough, those crazy necromancers and the Church would definitely try their very best to kill him.

Lucien heard about more than a dozen examples from Mr. Astar about arcanists using violence to solve academic disputes. After all, arcanists were still human beings, and they still had emotions and could still be impulsive.

That was why the congress had set quite a few small anti-magic circles into the walls of many discussion rooms.

From so many of the dangerous situations Lucien had been through, he came to the conclusion—a person should never overstretch himself.

"Then what about Bat Screaming..." Lucien thought to himself, thrumming the table unconsciously.

Lazar decided to leave Lucien alone for a bit. He understood how hard it could be for a sorcerer to yield to the demands of the congress.

Here came the steam whistle again, loud and sharp. The train gradually slowed down and finally stopped in front of the last station.

Somehow the station looked more creepy and gloomy than other ones.

A few people wearing black ancient magic robes came aboard. Some of them were carrying big suitcases.

"Oh... Those necrophilia... I'd be willing to pay more if the train could skip Heidler." Lazar complained in a low voice. He seemed to be a bit nervous as well when he was complaining.

"Heidler...?" Lucien looked out confusedly, and surprisingly saw a space crack in the dust-haze.

The power of Sun's Corona enabled Lucien to see the crack connecting this world and the World of Souls!

Lucien only found five or six space cracks like this when he was traveling across the continent. To his surprise, there was one more in Holm. No wonder there were so many necromancers here.

Lazar got a bit closer to Lucien and said in a low voice, "Soon after the congress had been established, these necrophilia noticed the strong power of death in Heidler, thus they moved the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness to this city. If you travel to Heidler... Well, I mean if... you'd see more undead creatures than living men. Some of the new undead species could even help the farmers and blacksmiths."

"Wow... That's something." Lucien got a bit excited.

"..." Lazar did not know what to say.

When the necromancers got closer, both Lucien and Lazar got very surprised.

The man walking in the front was no one else but Felipe.

As usual, Felipe pocketed his hands in his black coat, and he still looked quite sick. When he was about to turn in the corner, he casually looked at the carriage where Lazar and Lucien were in.

Lazar hurriedly stood up, "Good afternoon, Mr. Felipe."

Although the congress had abandoned many bad traditions existing in the time of ancient magic empire, for example, apprentices' personal bondage to sorcerers, the tradition for respecting a really powerful sorcerer remained. Although Lazar was from the Will of Elements, facing Felipe, a sorcerer whose both magic and arcana

level were way higher than his own, Lazar still had to show his respect.

Felipe, however, did not care. He nodded casually and then walked into the next door carriage.

"Mr. Lazar, who is this man? He looks quite... powerful," asked Heidi. She was sitting on a soft chair behind Lucien.

It was such a relief for Lucien to see that Felipe did not act any differently. So Lucien also looked at Lazar like these curious apprentices.

"Mr. Felipe, a necromancer from the Hand of Paleness," said Lazar, and the smile on his face had disappeared, "He's a genius, a level four arcanist and a fifth circle necromancer."

"I know him! I heard this name before! I think he's the one who forced his way through the blockade line of the Church!" said Sprint excitedly as if Felipe was his idol, "Mr. Felipe is on the Cleansing List, as a middle-ranked sorcerer! Cool!"

All the apprentices in this carriage were now looking at the carriage next door out of great excitement, although they could see nothing. However, they had never been this close to a famous person.

"Well... Actually we have someone like Mr. Felipe in our group, the Will of Elements, as well. We call him 'Professor', and he is also on the list... only one place lower than Mr. Felipe." Lazar was trying to keep a good profile of the Will of Elements.

Hearing Lazar's words, Lucien wondered how the Will of Elements could make sure that Professor was really their member.

So Lucien asked, "I've heard his name a few times, but is he from the Will of Elements?"

"That's for sure. Mr. Felipe doesn't seem to get along well with Mr. Professor. A while ago, our director Mr. Gaston found that Mr. Felipe was secretly investigating the sorcerers in our group. Mr. Gaston got pissed off and almost killed Felipe. This is probably the biggest news recently in the congress," answered Lazar.

Then Lazar took a glance at the next door carriage and even lowered his voice more, "Many arcanists who knew Mr. Felipe said that, after Mr. Felipe came back from his mission, he changed quite a bit. They said that he became calmer and less arrogant, and it seems like he's doing some secretly experiments right now."

Lucien nodded and started analyzing. According to Lazar's words, Lucien guessed that, although Felipe had told people that Professor was from the Will of Elements, he told no one else anything about carbamide synthesis, otherwise, the experiment from Professor would become the biggest news recently.

On the other hand, Lucien was quite sure that Felipe was trying to synthesize the ingredients for life himself.

Another apprentice, Catrina, seemed to be more interested in the mysterious Professor,

"Mr. Lazar, do you know Professor's real name?"

"I don't know," answered Lazar. "The grand arcanist, Hathaway, said that Mr. Professor was from the congress, but she did not mention specifically who was this mysterious Professor."

Lucien suddenly felt very embarrassed. When the directors of the Will of Elements found out that there was no such person called Professor in their group, they would definitely go to seek for the help of the higher level in the congress, which turned out to be Hathaway. Quite possibly, Hathaway had already found out who this Professor was based on the dates and the places he showed up, and Hathaway also cared for Natasha a lot.

However, for some kind of reasons, Hathaway did not expose the mysterious Professor.

At this time, Annick looked out of the window, and his mouth opened with surprise: "We're... We're flying!"

Lucien just noticed that the railway tracks were now off the ground, floating in mid-air and extending upwards, while the train was still on the tracks.

The forest, the fields, the manors and the city below grew smaller and smaller like ants.

"Anti-gravitation field. There is an anti-gravitation field on the tracks close to Allyn." Seeing Lucien turned around, Lazar answered him before Lucien asked the question, "You can only see something like this here around Allyn, or the congress would definitely go bankrupt."

The apprentices flocked to the window and watched the train speeding through the blue sky. A black spot in front of the train was getting bigger and bigger, and it turned out to be a huge city floating in the middle of the sky!

The city was built on a huge peak truncated from a mountain, with the tip floating downwards. On the very broad cross section which served as the land of this city, there were gardens, woods, streets, countless ordinary buildings, and many different kinds of magic pinnacles. The whole city was about half the size of Aalto.

This was the headquarter of the Congress of Magic, the Sky City, Allyn!

"That's magnificent..."

"Wow..."

Seeing that the apprentices almost dropped their jaws out of the stunning view, Lazar smiled and said, "You folks will have plenty of opportunities to appreciate the city, and before that, the congress has an assessment for you, so then the congress can assign you to the appropriate schools in accordance with your arcana level and interest."

"Assessment? Why you never mentioned this earlier?" exclaimed Heidi and many other apprentices. Hurriedly, they sat back on their seats and opened their books to prepare.

Both Sprint and Katrina remained quite calm. Katrina said to Heidi, "You've been studying arcana for more than a month. Why are you panicking like this?"

"I'm not ready... not ready..." murmured Heidi while reading one of the books nervously.

The train slowed down and stopped at the platform locating on the fringe of Allyn.

At this time, the two beautiful girls wearing light blue uniform dresses came into the carriage, and each was holding a hard-cover notebook. They said to Lucien and Lazar respectfully, "Dear guests, please leave your valuable suggestions here to help improving our service."

Right now the magic steam train was still on its pilot run.

Lucien took over the notebook and the quill, and quickly wrote down two words. Then he passed the notebook to Lazar.

Lazar looked at the comment left by Lucien confusedly.

On the notebook, it was written, "Five stars!"

Chapter 185: Apprentice Assessment Department

Chapter 185: Apprentice Assessment Department

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The coaches drove smoothly across the streets, and then slowly stopped in front of the huge tower in the center of the sky city.

It was not easy for the apprentices to realize how magnificent the tower was when they were looking at it from afar, however, when they came close to it, Heidi, Layria and the other apprentices' hearts were full of wonder, as they had to stretch their necks to look up to barely see the spire of the tall tower.

Unlike the mysterious and gloomy towers in the ancient magic empire time, the tower's outer layer was made of some kind of silver-gray material that sparkled with metallic gleam. The thrilling beauty of this building was something beyond the apprentices' words.

This was one of Lucien's favorite styles, hence he had a pretty good first impression of the congress.

Seeing that both Lucien and the apprentices were all so surprised, Lazar felt very satisfied. After Felipe and the other sorcerers walked through the gate, Lazar clapped his hands gently and smiled. "The name of the tower is also Allyn, the same as the name of this city, and Allyn is the ultimate dream of most sorcerers. All right, let's go. As it's already four fifteen right now, we need to talk to the staff in the congress by six. After six, there are only security people here."

"Mr. Lazar, can we come back tomorrow? We are so tired that we need to rest," asked many of the apprentices because they were afraid to take the arcana test, and even Annick was a bit hesitant.

Lazar led Lucien and the apprentices to the gray stone steps in front of the tower, "As you just arrived today, I'm sure all of you are

tired, but you need to tell this to the congress staff responsible for testing you on your own, and they will arrange another time for the assessment. What I have to remind you all is that, without going through the exam, you can't get the two badges—one for magic and the other for arcana, and that can make many things quite troublesome. The earlier you start the study of arcana and magic, the sooner you can be a true wizard or witch.”

Lazar was not telling the apprentices to take the test when they were tired, but to make the best use of their time.

Soon they walked in front of the gate of the congress tower. The silver-colored gate was engraved with many mysterious patterns.

When they were just about to walk in, two big black eyes suddenly appeared on the gate, blinking in a cute way, “On behalf of all the arcanists and sorcerers, I welcome you all to Allyn.”

The voice was delightful. The gate was greeting them.

“Come on, Prospell, you never welcomed me like this,” joked Lazar.

“Because only now I've sensed the smell of youth,” answered Prospell cheerfully.

Turning around to the stunned apprentices, Lazar introduced, “Prospell is a very powerful alchemy life born together with the congress tower. It was Douglas and several other grand arcanists who brought Prospell into life and it took them quite a long time to collect the special incomplete souls required. You can see lots of alchemy lives in the headquarter of the congress of magic. In this respect, nowhere can compete with the congress.”

Since Lucien first talked to an alchemy life in Viscount Carendia's castle, he found great interest in building an alchemy life, so he could not help asking, “Lazar, when we can learn about alchemy life?”

“First you gotta have an arcana tree about soul in the school of Necromancy, and, at the same time, you have to learn at least basic alchemy knowledge. Then, when you finish learning all of those

things and then become a senior-rank mage, you can start making an alchemy life,” said Lazar casually.

“Sir, if you’re interested in making an alchemy life, please make a lady. I got fed up with all of these male alchemy lives living in the towers in this area long time ago!”

Somehow, this alchemy life looked quite a bit obscene in Lucien and the apprentices’ eyes.

Seeing that Lucien did not really respond, Prospell laughed in a bit embarrassed way, “I’m just joking, haha... Apprentice Assessment Department is in zone three, first floor; Sorcerer Administrative Department, zone four, first floor; zone five, Task Zone, for accepting and releasing tasks; Conversion Department, zone six, first floor, for exchanging your money, materials, items or information for arcana points, or vice versa. Common Arcana and Magic Library is in zone one, and Magic Exchange Office, in zone two.”

Lucien listened carefully to Prospell to follow the information.

“If you want to do any meditation or experiment, you can go to the second to the ninth floor, where we have meditation rooms, all kinds of labs, constraint rooms, energy rooms, magic gardens and so on. Of course, you gotta pay money or arcana points to use them. On the tenth floor, there are the headquarters of the two major journals, Arcana and Magic.”

“Then what about the other journals?” asked Lucien.

“The headquarters of the rest of the journals are either somewhere else in Allyn, or other countries, hosted by the many divisions of the congress,” explained Prospell.

“Thank you for explaining, and please go ahead.” Lucien nodded politely, treating the alchemy life like a real person.

“The offices of the several boards and the exclusive lounges for the board members are on the eleventh to the fifteenth floor; qualified arcana and magic research groups can apply for the use of the

rooms on the sixteenth to the twentieth floor for free; on the twenty-first to the twenty-fifth floor, we have the best labs designed for different fields of research; high-level Arcana and Magic Library, high-level constraint rooms and material warehouses are on the twenty-sixth to the thirtieth floor; the thirty-first floor to the thirty-fifth floor are reserved for the members of the highest council, but I heard that, recently, they're considering to separate the thirty-first and the thirty-second floor to be the academy for training junior-rank mages..." Prospell continued.

Obviously, Prospell was a very talkative alchemy life, and the lots of information totally confused the apprentices.

"Anyway... come in here now," said Prospell, and then he started singing:

"Don't touch around, cuz that's my muscle.

"Don't touch the wall, cuz that itches me.

"Don't vandalize anything, cuz organs are always vulnerable."

...

Accompanied by this strange song, when Lucien, Lazar and the apprentices walked into the silver hall, the first thing that appeared in front of them was a one-meter-diameter round disc, engraved with complicated magic circles. Around the disc, there was a yellowish green cover, extending from the first to the second floor.

Around the hall, there were signs labeling six different zones.

"The elevators are over there," introduced Lazar. "How about we go to the Apprentice Assessment Department in zone three first, and then the Sorcerer Administrative Department in zone four?"

"No problem." Lucien did not mind at all.

...

There were rows and rows of different rooms in zone three. A lanky, old man dressing in old school style was there.

The old man's name was Simeon. He said seriously to the apprentices, "All of you register first, and then you will receive arcana assessment. Based on the results, you all will be assigned to different schools."

"Mr. Simeon, all of us are very tired right now since we just arrived in Holm this afternoon, and then we spent another three hours on the train again." Katrina was not being shy. Regarding herself as one of the leaders of the apprentices, she felt that she was responsible for making this request.

Facing the reasonable request, although he was usually pretty stubborn, Simeon still nodded, "Then register first, and then do the assessment tomorrow morning at nine. All of you can stay in zone three to rest for the night, but since you don't have both badges, keep in mind that you should not leave zone three."

"We won't. Thank you, Mr. Simeon," said many of the apprentices.

When the apprentices all finished doing their registration, Simeon noticed Lucien. "You're not one of them?" asked Simeon a bit confused.

"Mr. Simeon, I'm a sorcerer." Lucien smiled.

Simeon looked quite surprised, then he took a quick glance at Lucien from head to foot, "You're not even twenty... You seem to be very gifted with your spiritual power. If you want to study Astrology or Light-darkness, or if you're interested in studying mathematics, you might want to join us, Tower."

Lazar looked at Simeon and quickly cut in, "We talked about this before, and Mr. Evans said that he wanted to focus on studying arcana first before making any decision."

"Interesting. Not many young people are thinking like this nowadays anymore." Simeon smiled, "Tower is relatively neutral compared to most of the groups in the congress, and we usually just follow the direction of the congress, suitable for sorcerers who do not want to get involved in all those conflicts. All right, all right... I'll stop, or Lazar's gonna cry in front of me now."

There were two badges on Simeon's robe: one was black inlaid with two stars, and the other was silver with two black circles on it, looking rather cold and mysterious. According to Lazar's introduction, Lucien could tell that the former was the badge for a level two arcanist, and the latter was for a second circle sorcerer.

Noticing that Heidi, Layria and many other apprentices were busy with reviewing what they had learned, Sprint frowned a bit. "It's just useless making efforts at the last moment."

Hearing what Sprint just said, Heidi hurriedly came to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, do you have any better suggestion then?"

"Having a good rest is the most important thing." Lucien nodded, "I agree with Sprint. Maybe just roughly leaf through the books a bit."

Both Annick and Layria nodded behind Heidi, they looked at Lucien, "Will you come here tomorrow, Mr. Evans? When we're taking the test?"

"I will." Lucien smiled, "I would like to know whether I'm a good teacher."

Seeing the apprentices were encouraged by his words, Lucien felt some softness in his heart. Then, he turned around and said to Lazar, "What about going to the Sorcerer Administrative Department now? By the way, if I want to make exchanges in Common Arcana and Magic Library or in Magic Exchange Office, what shall I use? Arcana points only or I can also use Thales?"

"Either." Lazar grinned, "But Evans, you gotta activate your arcana badge before going there, or you can only have some free basic arcana and magic books given by the congress. When you reach a certain knowledge level, you can take arcana assessment in the Sorcerer Administrative Department. If you can pass the test, you can get a basic arcana point to activate your arcana badge."

Lucien frowned a bit and asked, "If I want to get this done sooner, can I just submit a new spell?"

Chapter 186: Magic Badge

"Of course. And this way is much faster compared to submitting a paper. It usually only takes about twenty minutes to get the examination done," Lazar nodded.

Simeon, who was standing beside Lazar, added, "But Evans, you have to remember that, although you can activate your badge this time by doing this, if you want to make progress in your arcana level, every time when you want to upgrade, you need to have this one basic arcana point that Lazar just mentioned, since the congress wants to see all the sorcerers and arcanists with solid foundation of knowledge, and you can only choose your research interest after becoming a real arcanist."

"I will find some time to pass the arcana examination in the Sorcerer Administrative Department," answered Lucien in a casual tone, as if he was talking about what to have for dinner tonight. Both Simeon and Lazar thought that Lucien would take the test after spending some time on studying magic and arcana first to make up the gap between his existing knowledge and what was offered by the congress.

After saying goodbye to the apprentices, led by Lazar, Lucien headed for zone four.

"Mr. Simeon has just become a level two arcanist. Hopefully, he can soon make another breakthrough." As they were walking, Lazar said to Lucien, "I don't know when I will have thirty arcana points."

"How many arcana points do you need for each upgrade?" asked Lucien confusedly, "Thirty?"

"At first, in order to get to a higher level, ten times more of one's last level arcana point was required, but it turned out to be quite impractical, since there were only ten to twenty thousand arcanists in total in this world. Later, a legendary archmage changed the rule, and now, you need ten arcana points to become a level one arcanist, thirty for level two, a hundred for level three, three

hundred for level four, a thousand for level five, three thousand for level six, ten thousand for level seven, thirty thousand for level eight, and a hundred thousand for level nine," explained Lazar in detail. He enjoyed answering questions.

When they were walking across the hall, there were lights trying to approach them. The two badges that Lazar was wearing were glowing to prevent the lights from getting close to them.

...

There was an open hall in Sorcerer Administrative Department, where there were light yellow couches, coffee tables, wine cabinets and many other facilities for relaxing, making this place look more like a salon or a club than an administrative office.

There was a reception desk made of silver and gray metal beside the major corridor, behind which stood two lovely young girls. Many sorcerers, who were not as gloomy as most necromancers, liked to tease the girls a bit, and among them there were also some young men who were seriously pursuing them.

"Welcome back, Mr. Lazar," greeted the taller, flaxen-haired girl with a smile. Wearing a long yellow dress, she looked quite beautiful.

"Thank you, love." Lazar had a big smile on his face, and then he introduced, "Cindy, this is Mr. Evans, a twenty-year-old sorcerer. Evans, this are Cindy and Dona, two sweethearts in this department. Both of them are working on becoming real sorcerers as they are working here."

Knowing that Lazar was always like this, Cindy did not mind, but turned to Lucien, "Welcome, Mr. Evans. A twenty-year-old sorcerer following the ancient magic system... Wow... I have to say that you're definitely a genius. If when you become a middle-rank sorcerer, I still haven't make any breakthrough, can you have me to be your apprentice? A real apprentice?"

"Mr. Evans, can I as well?" Dona, the plump young girl, also asked while playing with her auburn-coloured hair.

The girls enthusiasm was beyond Lucien's imagination. For a moment, Lucien was too shy to say anything.

"Haha... Evans... I can tell you're quite inexperienced in talking with ladies." Lazar laughed. "It's okay. This is just their way of welcoming newcomers. Cindy and Dona are quite talented as well. As they were already senior apprentices when they were only seventeen, many sorcerers would like to have them to be their students, besides, what they want to specialize in is different from what you're good at, Evans."

"Ha, I thought somehow I suddenly became popular." Lucien joked.

"You are, Mr. Evans. You're good-looking and you look quite reliable. Better than Mr. Lazar." Cindy looked at Lucien with her beautiful eyes.

"Oh... That hurts." Lazar made a sad look, and then tried to get a bit more serious, "Anyone's available right now?"

"Only Mr. Eric is." Dona smiled and pointed at the corridor behind the reception desk, "He's waiting for you two."

Complaining about the fact that he was becoming less attractive, Lazar led Lucien to the third office under the girls' gaze. The sign hanging on the door read "Eric, director of Sorcerer Administrative Department".

Lazar gently knocked at the door. A commanding voice came from inside of the office, "Come in please, the door is unlocked."

When Lazar opened the door, Lucien saw rows of shelves in the office. On the shelves, there were no books, but pieces of silver-colored paper like sheets of metal glowing in a mysterious way. Many silver lines grew out of these sheets and extended themselves to build their connection to the light blue wall that shone all around them.

Besides the shelves, there was a black cabinet, an iron cage with a bell, and a metal shield.

In front of the shelves, there was a desk, behind which sat a bald

man wearing black suit, and there was a top hat beside his right hand.

The average-looking, forty-something man raised his head. His light gray eyes were like crystal stones that could see through a person's heart. He took a quick glance at Lucien, and then started writing something down.

"Mr. Eric. This is Evans." Lazar bowed to the man respectfully.

"Welcome, our new friend. Let's have your registration thing done and get your badges." Eric nodded, then he looked at Lazar and said, "You did your work, Lazar. Take this note with you to get your reward in Task Zone."

As he was saying, the small piece of paper Eric just wrote on flew toward Lazar.

After getting the note, Lazar said to Lucien cheerfully, "I like you, Evans. I wonder if we can have dinner later together. I think we can become friends."

Talented, reliable and easy-going, that was Lazar's impression on Lucien. He felt that Lucien was someone that he could get along very well.

"Of course." Lucien smiled, "I happen to have no idea where to eat this evening."

"Great." Lazar waved this piece of paper a bit in his hand, "I'll see you later then. Good luck with your badges."

After Lazar left the office, Lucien sat down in front of Eric. Taking a closer look, Lucien noticed that there were three silver stars and four black circles on each of his badges.

"Level three arcanist, fourth circle sorcerer..." Lucien thought to himself.

As Lucien was thinking, Eric took out a piece of silver paper and handed it to Lucien, "Complete the form, so I can activate your magic badge."

Lucien quickly read the form. Only name, age, level, and the magic schools that one was good at were required to report, and nothing related to the sorcerer's personal background was mentioned.

Seeing that Lucien did not start writing immediately, Eric said to Lucien with no emotion, "If you have more information to offer, you can ask for another piece of paper. The more information you provide, the easier for the congress to get ID for you in Holm or in other countries. By the way, if you want to get married in the future, please also register that with the Sorcerer Administrative Department."

Lucien nodded, and started filling in the form.

"Lucien Evans, twenty, interested in school of Astrology and Element, first circle sorcerer."

And then he made up some fake personal information on the paper.

Eric took up the silver sheet and read carefully, then there was a bit of a smile on his face,

"Lucien Evans... What a common name... There's a famous musician in Aalto named Lucien Evans, and several days before, the name of a junior-rank elemental sorcerer who just made his breakthrough was also Lucien Evans. Why people like this name so much?"

"Honestly speaking, I never put much thought into it..." answered Lucien surprised, despite the fact that Natasha told him more than once how common his name was.

Eric did not stick to this topic, but pointed at the the metal shield on the other side of the office,

"Cast a first circle spell. I need to verify your level."

Lucien nodded and shot two black magic missiles at the shield. As the magic cover on the shield absorbed the power, there were light ripples spreading out.

Eric nodded, "The power is not from a magic item, but from your

soul. You're indeed a first circle sorcerer."

As he was saying, Eric turned around and took out two badges from the black cabinet. He put one of the badges together with the silver piece of paper into the cage, and then pulled the string of the bell.

The bell started ringing, and the cage started shining. One minute later, the light disappeared.

When Eric took the badge and the paper out, there was a black circle on the badge, and a shining silver line connecting the metal paper to the light of the wall.

"The magic badge records your name, age, level, your spiritual power mark and your arcana points. You need this badge either when you earn or pay the points. Except you, no one can use it." Eric handed two badges to Lucien, asking him to leave his spiritual power mark in them.

"All of the information, " said Eric, "is kept by both me and the document office of the highest council. Do not try to change your level and your points for any purposes on your own. With this badge, you can accept missions in Task Zone and receive the basic arcana and magic books, as well as meditation methods. Besides, as a first circle sorcerer, you can ask the congress for materials or potions worth a Thale every month, or you can use it to borrow books."

Lucien put the activated magic badge in front of his left chest, and then looked at the dim arcana badge, "Mr. Eric, what about this one? My arcana badge?"

"You write your unique magic down and give it to me, if you have any," answered Eric. "So I can send it to the Arcana Review Board. It'll take around half an hour to know the result. No worries, I won't read it."

Lucien smiled, "I see, thank you Eric. Then what about arcana papers? Besides submitting my paper to the board, shall I send it to the journals as well myself?"

"Your paper?" Eric raised his head, and looked at Lucien very surprised with his gray eyes.

Chapter 187: Developing the Paper

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Yes, I have some interesting ideas about a unique magic that I improved on my own,” Lucien smiled and nodded casually, “so I’d like to develop a paper out of it.”

“You know arcana?” questioned Eric directly, as he could never believe that a young man who just started learning arcana could come up with any research results, no matter how talented this person was.

Lucien totally understood why Eric was this surprised, since no one from his original world would come up with any meaningful research outcome after studying a subject for a bit more than a month. Therefore, Lucien explained politely, “I cannot really regard my ideas as part of arcana, honestly speaking, but I just feel that the mechanism that I applied in improving this spell can be interesting. Of course, I also don’t know if this is something that already exists.”

Although Lucien knew that he needed to show his strength and talent sooner or later to earn more opportunities with a certain group or organization, as a newcomer, with very limited knowledge of the congress, Lucien had to stay humble and careful first.

When he made clear the current knowledge level of the congress and the progress of researches in different schools, Lucien still needed to do magic experiments on his own to verify whether the knowledge that he brought from his original world still worked the same way here, but after that, it would be time for Lucien to really show his capability.

Of course, in addition, the research results that Lucien was going to publish in the future must be released following a scientific order, or many sophisticated sorcerers would possibly realize that Lucien was more than a genius, but actually a freak, and alien! Then great danger would for sure come to Lucien before he could obtain

enough power to protect himself.

Hearing Lucien's explanation, Eric's facial expression relaxed a bit, "I see... but what I have to remind you is that, if your research outcome is based on some ancient magic beliefs, the outcome from the board might disappoint you, since many of these ancient beliefs have already been overthrown by arcana."

"It does no harm to give it a try, right?" Lucien grinned.

"I guess..." answered Eric with much doubt, "Then, when do you want to submit the paper?"

"I can do it today," said Lucien seriously.

"What? Do you know we're off at six? There's only eighty minutes left." Eric felt very surprised again.

"No problem, Mr. Eric." Lucien was very confident, "I already developed the draft following the format of Arcana. Eighty minutes is enough. By the way, Mr. Eric, may I ask again if I should be the one to send my paper to the journals?"

Seeing Lucien's determination, Eric handed him a roll of parchment and said, "Yes, when a paper passes the board's review, the author needs to send the paper to the journals on his or her own. Since the congress doesn't allow one to submit the same paper to multiple journals, you gotta be careful with the journal you choose. The more influential, the better. Anyway, we can talk about it after your paper passes." Eric ended the conversation, "You can go to that room. I still have more matters to deal with."

...

In the light blue meeting room, surrounded by a few magic circles, Lucien was busy with developing his first paper in this world.

"The Application of Sound Wave in Magic Sensing: An experiment investigating the flight of bats.

"Bat; Hearing; Organ; Sound Wave; Sensing.

“As Mr. Douglas once argued, there are so many seemingly common phenomena in this world that we tend to ignore in daily life, however, in fact, there are lots of great secrets hiding behind them.

“Everyone knows that bats can easily fly and hunt swiftly in the dark, but not many ever tried to investigate why they are able to avoid obstacles at night when they fly.”

Lucien was very familiar with the format. Direct and clear—that was what Lucien wanted to achieve.

The reason Lucien decided to submit the paper developed out of the apprentice spell, Bat Screaming, was that the theory behind this spell was quite independent from the current arcana knowledge, and could be drawn upon the tradition of ancient magic system, which was studying assorted magic creatures' structure and power to develop and improve spells, and the only difference in Lucien's paper was that Lucien was now studying an ordinary creature.

Compared to merely submitting a spell, the benefits brought by submitting a paper were undoubtedly greater.

Although Lucien never really did this experiment, based on his knowledge, it was not difficult for him to make up the research methodology and statistics.

In his paper, Lucien set up several groups of controlled experiments to investigate how bats could “see” in the dark.

After ruling out the possible answers including bat's eyes, wings and hair by conducting these experiments, Lucien came to the final step.

In his last group of control experiment, Lucien, in his paper, set it up by disturbing the investigated bats' ears and their organs in their noses and mouths. According to Lucien, this time, the bats could not fly properly in darkness anymore.

Therefore, Lucien drew the conclusion in the end that bats used their ears to receive sound waves produced by the organs in their noses and mouths to detect objects when they flew at night, but not their eyes to see.

Following the experiment, Lucien reported how he improved Homan's Oscillation and thus created this new apprentice spell—Bat Screaming.

In the end, Lucien explained that because of the complexity of the structures of a bat's organs, he needed to use a real bat's brain tissue as the tool for casting the spell.

After carefully going through the whole paper again, Lucien analyzed the apprentice spell, Bat Screaming, on another piece of parchment and explained how to use it, as a new spell to be submitted to the congress.

When Lucien stood up after finishing all of the work, he took a glance at the clock and found that the whole thing only took him less than half an hour. He was quite confident that no similar research had been done before him in this area, since when he was teaching Annick, Heidi and Layria basic arcana, he never encountered anything similar to this.

Opening the meeting room's door, Lucien saw Lazar, who was walking back and forth in the corridor.

Hearing the door opening, Lazar turned around fiercely and asked, "Mr. Eric told me that you're writing a paper, are you?!"

"Yes, but nothing big. I'm just introducing how I improved a spell," Lucien said casually to Lazar. "When you were improving Lazar's Burning Hand, you also wrote some papers, right?"

"Yes..." Lazar answered subconsciously. "But this kind of paper, you know, following other people's ideas and making improvements... often cannot pass the board's review. In most cases, you can only earn points with the new spell submitted."

"I know. I'm just trying." Lucien smiled and shrugged.

"I see..." Lazar nodded, "But wait... As a beginner in arcana, you can already improve spells? How's this possible?"

Lucien answered, "Come on... Ancient sorcerers also need to make improvements."

Lazar made a long “hum”, and nodded seriously, “Then, Evans, I suggest you do not have too much expectation on earning any points with the paper.”

As Lucien was saying, he knocked at the door of Mr. Eric’s office. Lucien and Lazar walked in the office together, and handed the paper to Eric.

Eric took a look at the long parchment in his hand, then nodded, “I can tell that you’re very prepared, Evans. By the way, which field does the magic belong to, may I ask?”

“Sound wave,” answered Lucien short and clear.

Eric put the two rolls of parchment into two folders, and then he took a quill and wrote down “sound wave” in one side of each of them.

Putting the two folders in the cage, Eric pulled the bell again.

White light instantly covered the cage, and when the light disappeared, the folders were already gone.

“About thirty minutes later, we’ll know the result.” Eric sat down again, “But I suggest you do not have much hope, Evans.”

...

On the fifteenth floor of the tower. In a spacious office.

There were many bells ringing here. With the appearance of the complicated magic circles, many folders showed up out of nowhere.

There were no people in this office, just a pair of arms in the air picking up the folders.

“Element, to, Mr. Ravendi, Mr. Gaston.”

“Necromancy, to, ...”

With some kind of machine talking, the arms put the folders back into the magic circles following different orders.

According to the rules of the congress, members of the highest council could not join Arcana Review Board, but they could be invited as special consultants when a paper was beyond the board's knowledge.

For common papers, there were usually two committee members reviewing and judging a piece of work independently and then an average score was drawn. If there was disagreement, a third committee member would be involved. And if the problem still could not be solved, a small meeting would be hosted.

“Sound wave magic... to Magic Exchange Office first to make sure this is a new spell, and then to Mr. Garfield and Mr. Jeffrey.”

“The paper based on the same spell... then, to Mr. Garfield and Mr. Jeffrey directly.”

The lights were flashing in the office.

Chapter 188: The Result

Chapter 188: The Result

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

On the fifteenth floor of the tower, in another room.

As a bell rang, a puppet picked up the paper and quickly leafed through it.

“Sound wave? Apprentice level?” murmured the puppet, “Master said that he won’t review papers below a certain level, and master’s students are not here today as well. Alas, the paper can only be handed over to the several arcanists from Common Arcana then.”

After identifying the paper’s level, the puppet waited for around five minutes until it receiving the message that the spell itself, Bat Screaming, had been confirmed valid. Then the puppet called a red-beaked and green-feathered bird from outside of the window. The bird’s responsibility today was to bring the several papers to another magic tower.

It was not easy to use magic circles to send things among different towers.

The bird flew very fast, with its feathers producing a cover to prevent the strong wind. Soon, the bird disappeared in the sky.

...

On the third floor of a blue magic tower, in a messy room filled with books.

A middle-aged man with light-yellow mustache was looking at the books in front of him, frowning and thinking.

For sorcerers of this level like this man, he needed to continuously make progress in his own specialized arcana field.

At this time, he heard something pecking at the power cover of the tower. Smiling, the man put the journal book down and pressed the button on the table.

The energy cover was retrieved, and the window opened. The same red-beaked, green-feathered birds flew in. Walking on the table proudly back and forth, the bird dropped the papers down, "Mr. Woods, these are the papers for today. Please review them as soon as possible."

When the bird was speaking, the bird's voice was as sweet as its chirping.

Woods pulled out a handful of small white particles and gently threw them to the bird, "Is any of these for new magic reviewing, Selena? If there isn't, come and pick them up tomorrow."

While eating the small white particles happily, the little bird answered, "There's one, Mr. Woods. Please review it now."

Then, the little bird picked out one of the parchment rolls.

When Woods was reading Lucien's new magic report, a surprised look gradually appeared on his face, "Bat Screaming... Apprentice level... Interesting..."

After reading the report, Woods hurriedly searched for something among all of the parchment rolls on the desk, "Not this... not this... There should be a corresponding paper... Yes! Lucien Evans... Bats..."

Pulling out the roll of paper from Lucien Evans, Woods started reading carefully.

"This young man... very curious. He has the potential to be an arcanist," murmured Woods. "Surprisingly, this young man carefully explored bat, this non-magical creature, while most ancient sorcerers are busy with examining magic creatures to discover their power... The controlled experiment was also very carefully designed. Although the experiment does not have much to do with arcana, this young man's way of thinking is still very

creative and impressive. Wait... Lucien Evans is only a first circle sorcerer? That's quite surprising as well..."

Woods felt that Lucien Evans was too common a name for a talented sorcerer to be noticed in the academy, so Woods thought that he should suggest this Lucien Evans to put an extra word after his name for distinction.

After reading this paper, Woods stood up and asked his apprentice to catch two bats for him.

Woods only used a very short period of time to repeat Lucien's experiment and he confirmed the result in Lucien's paper. Woods got very excited, "Sound wave can really be used for the purpose of location! It's no longer merely a weapon for deterring or killing!"

Sound wave did not exclusively belong to a certain school. In fact, all of the schools had sound wave spells, for example, Homan's Oscillation belonged to the school of Force, and Banshee's Howling belonged to the school of Necromancy.

Although Woods almost could not wait to write a paper to respond Lucien's idea, he decided to sit back and write down his comment on the paper first, "Groundbreaking..."

The same scene was seen in another office in a magic tower, but this office turned out to be the headquarter of the journal Sound Wave.

...

In the hall of Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien was sitting in the couch, tasting a non-alcoholic beverage called Sky Blue recommended by Lazar. Lucien liked its sweetness.

Swirling the pure blue liquid in the transparent glass, Lucien was sipping the beverage while talking with Lazar leisurely about some common sense of the congress.

It was close to five forty in the early evening, and the magic tower was going to close soon, but the two sorcerers were still sitting in the hall chatting casually. Both Cindy and Donna were very curious,

so Cindy, craning her neck, whispered, “Mr. Lazar, Mr. Evans, are you waiting for something?”

Lazar smiled, pointing to Lucien, “I’m with Evans to wait for his new magic assessment result and the result of his paper... Well, maybe not result of the paper. You know that paper review usually takes three days, as all the board members are very, very cautious.”

“Of course, the committee members always have their own business to deal with.” Cindy agreed with Lazar first, then she turned to Lucien with great surprise, “Wait, Mr. Evans’ paper?”

Lazar nodded.

Both Cindy and Dona were more than surprised, “Mr. Evans, you learned arcana before?”

“I started studying arcana about a month ago,” answered Lucien. “Although I did make some progress, this paper is from my past experience.”

“I see...” Cindy nodded and smiled, “Although this paper, honestly speaking, is not very likely to pass the board’s review, I’m sure the new magic can help you activate your arcana badge, Mr. Evans. And you’re the first one I’ve ever seen who submitted his paper on his first day in the congress! Your name will be on my diary, for sure!”

“My pleasure.” Lucien grinned, feeling quite relaxed.

A while later, Lazar pulled out his pocket watch and took a glance, “Evans, we should visit Mr. Eric now.”

“Good luck,” said the two girls.

...

In Eric’s office.

“The result is not here yet. It seems that the board is pretty busy today,” said Eric. who also felt a bit surprised, since in most cases, the review of an apprentice-level magic should not take more than

twenty minutes.

Lazar was a bit worried, “Mr. Eric, can we wait here?”

“Help yourselves.” Eric nodded, and then turned around and picked up a book to start working on his own business.

Lucien remained quite calm. He was quite confident that Bat Screaming had already passed the review, or the bad news should have arrived way sooner than this, and this meant that Lucien already had at least one arcana point.

The office was very quiet.

When there were only a few more minutes before the tower closed for the day, the cage lit up with white light again.

Eric put down his quill and stood up, “Finally, here they are.”

When the white light disappeared, Eric got confused, “Why there’re three folders?”

Then he picked up one and read, “Bat Screaming, apprentice level magic. According to Mr. Garfield and Mr. Jeffrey, this magic is groundbreaking, but the structure of the spell is still very problematic. From the five aspects of judgement: level, theory, effectiveness, structure and meaning, three arcana credits and four arcana points were given.”

Eric was very surprised. As he looked at Lucien, he murmured, “Groundbreaking? Three arcana credits? For an apprentice level spell...?”

Eric knew clearly that a new first circle spell could win a sorcerer two credits, and he well understood what did the word “groundbreaking” meant.

Lazar also repeated, feeling unreal, “Three arcana credits and four arcana points... with Evans’ new spell?”

In contrast, Lucien stayed relatively calmer. He did not really understand how generous the reward was, and he was still waiting

for the comment on his paper.

Eric took a quick but meaningful glance at Lucien, and then he handed the folder to Lazar, “Yes. Unbelievable as it is, it is true.”

After Lazar read the document back and forth a couple of times, he looked at Lucien as if he never knew him, “Mimicking bats?”

“Yes,” Lucien confirmed his question. “Mimicking bats to detect objects.”

“Well... That’s... That’s very creative...” Lazar rubbed his forehead a bit. “I have to say that I’m feeling jealous now.”

At this time, Eric opened the other two folders, and he looked totally stunned, “Here... are the results of the review of Evans’ paper.”

Lazar could not believe his ears, and there was also mixed facial expressions on Eric’s face, as he thought of how he was treated when he submitted his very first arcana paper.

“Yes.” Eric paused a bit and answered, “According to Mr. Garfield, this paper is groundbreaking, carefully-designed, insightful and impressive, and four arcana credits and six arcana points are suggested to be given to the author. Mr. Garfield also suggested the author to add extra words after his name for distinction.”

Both Mr. Eric and Lazar were now looking at Lucien, since nothing like this ever happened before!

Chapter 189: The Choice of Journals

Chapter 189: The Choice of Journals

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

After taking a look at Lucien, Eric continued to read the comment, “As for Mr. Jeffrey, his comment is ‘fascinating experiment design, cautious exploration and construction’, and he also mentioned the insufficiency of your knowledge and some shortcomings in the new magic you created. However, Mr. Jeffrey said ‘the purpose of the paper is not for showing how perfect this apprentice spell is, but for revealing other methods of application of sound wave, thus the paper is groundbreaking and insightful.’”

Lazar was also listening to the comment very carefully, and his eyes were shining with curiosity and excitement.

“However, it is undeniable that this paper still lacks depth of discussion, thus the paper might not be as sustainable as it could be. Of course, we must take the fact into consideration that the author’s only a sorcerer with no arcana level, and what he has accomplished is already very impressive. At the same time, this paper demonstrates to us that non-magical creatures are also worth careful investigation.’” Eric read the comment from Mr. Jeffrey slowly and clear, “What I have to point out here is that the author’s way of thinking perfectly accords with the precious features of a real arcanist when conducting a study, which is: keen observation, bold hypothesis, careful experiment-design, rigorous analysis, reasonable inference and application. To my surprise, this author does not have any arcana level. In all respects, four arcana credits and four arcana points are recommended to be given to the author’.”

“So what’s the final result then?” asked Lazar eagerly. He looked even more excited than Lucien.

“Combining the two board members’ judgements together, four arcana credits and five arcana points were given,” answered Mr.

Eric.

Compared to Mr. Garfield, Mr. Jeffrey appeared to be more detail-oriented, or say, very throughout, despite the fact that both of them made very similar comments.

Meanwhile, his detailed description also gave Eric and Lazar a rough idea of the subject of Lucien's arcana paper and his new magic.

"By studying the organs of bats, your paper discusses the role of high-frequency acoustic waves in locating and probing? Wow... That's something... although observing creatures is your strength since you follow ancient magic system. I also often study bats as well, but I never tried to focus on anything else except their flying behaviors." As a second circle sorcerer, when Lazar was trying to analyze one of the most important third circle spells, Fly, he observed most creatures that could fly, but never found anything like this. Honestly speaking, Lazar was very regretful.

However, Lazar also knew that this way of doing research was something that ancient sorcerers specialized in, so he still felt very happy for Lucien and sincerely embraced him, "Congratulations, Evans, you are the first person I have ever met that won so many arcana credits on the first day. I'm sure you'll have an arcana level very soon."

Many grand arcanists were able to get more than a hundred of arcana credits within one day because of their previous academic works, so getting seven credits in a day was nothing too surprising.

"Do you mind introducing your research to us a bit more in detail, Evans?" asked Lazar, "How did you develop your research based on those bats?"

Even Eric also turned around, feeling quite curious.

When Lucien was about to answer, Lazar joked, "Your paper has been reviewed by the board. Don't worry that we'll copy your work, haha. Besides, if your work is cited by someone else, you can earn more credits."

“It’s actually not very complicated. Lazar, did you ever see bats flying in dark caves?” grinned Lucien, “But why they can do this without hitting anything in the darkness?”

In front of the two arcanists, Lucien’s short explanation was already enough. Eric touched his half-bald head subconsciously and said, “The results of some arcana studies look very simple, but without keen observation and an arcanist’s inquiring mind, they can never be found. I don’t know how many times I may have missed a lot of opportunities to publish great papers.”

Although Eric still doubted whether the new spell was actually invented by Lucien, or it was a unique spell invented by some ancient sorcerer from the ancient magic empire, no one could prove the fact.

“Wow... Lucien, that’s really, really, something! Maybe I shall raise some small creatures in my place, haha, and who knows what I can find.” Lazar was very impressed. Since Lucien did not try to hide his study from him, Lazar found Lucien even more trustworthy.

“As your paper is, like the two board members commented, ‘groundbreaking’, I’m sure you can publish your paper on a suitable journal. When more people start citing your paper, you can get way more arcana credits than what you have now,” said Lazar excitedly to Lucien.

“That’s right. About two or three months later after you publish your paper, you can look forward to getting more credits from other people’s work, haha.” Eric also found it pretty interesting, “If three months later, Evans, you haven’t passed our arcana assessment to get the one basic arcana credit, you would be the first sorcerer who has more than ten arcana credits but no arcana level.”

Hearing their comments, Lucien seized the chance and asked, “Then, which journal should I choose, Mr. Eric? Lazar? Personally speaking, I think the topic of my paper, sound wave, is quite limited, and maybe not many sorcerers would cite my work.”

“That’s right. Besides, after a period of time in which you can get a lot of credits, more and more sorcerers would start citing other

people's paper that are developed based on your paper, but not your original paper anymore. You will still have some credits coming to you from this paper, but surely it'll get slower and more steady." Eric nodded, "If you want to have your paper to be cited more often, of course, Arcana and Magic, these two journals are the most influential ones in this magic world, but in most cases, they only publish the most important studies from the greatest arcanists, so probably they're not part of your choice by now."

Lucien nodded. He knew that Mr. Eric's suggestion was very reasonable.

"Then there are another forty-two different journals, including eleven journals belonging to different schools, seven sponsored by the divisions of the congress, three index journals, eighteen in the subdivision fields, three for junior arcanists. The other small ones have not been approved by the congress, and you will not get any arcana credits with them," explained Eric.

"I see. Can you be a bit more specific, Mr. Eric?" asked Lucien.

"Both Element and Holm Journal are very influential, but they're also very strict. Personally speaking, I won't recommend you to try these two, Evans, because your paper might not be important enough yet." As the director of Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric analyzed carefully for Lucien.

"So I shall choose those ones in the subdivision fields?" Lucien tilted his head a bit.

"Sound Wave is obviously the most authoritative one for your paper among all of them, and it's still relatively influential. Common Arcana, while being more influential than Sound Wave, is also stricter with reviewing the papers." After pausing a bit, Eric continued, "If you send the paper to Arcana Discussion or Journal of Magic Research, the two comprehensive journals specifically for low-level arcanists, I'm sure that your paper would be published, but their influence is not that good at all. So, to conclude, to take risk or to play it safe, it all depends on yourself, Evans."

Lucien nodded sincerely, "I understand. Thank you for your

detailed explanation, Mr. Eric.”

“No worries. This is my responsibility.” Eric’s stubborn face had a bit of a smile on it, “It’s almost six now. Evans, take your time to think about it tonight, and try to send the paper tomorrow before the journal is published this month.”

Lazar also gave his suggestion, “I’d suggest Sound Wave. After all, it’s the most authoritative one in this field.”

“I hear you, Lazar. And I’ll definitely think about it,” responded Lucien. As he was saying, Lucien handed his arcana badge to Eric to activate it.

Taking over the badge, when Eric was just about to deal with it, he noticed the third folder in the cage which was ignored by all of them just now.

Confusedly, Eric opened the folder.

“What’s in there, Mr. Eric?” asked Lazar curiously.

Holding the folder in his hands, Eric’s face looked even more surprised than before. Turning around, Eric first took a deep breath and then said to Lucien, “Evans, Common Arcana wants to make an arrangement with you for your paper’s contribution. If you’re willing to send your paper to them, they promise that your paper would be among the first fifteen most important papers this month.”

As a level three arcanist, Eric never received any contribution invitations, but only many rejection letters.

Chapter 190: More Invitations

Chapter 190: More Invitations

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Although Lazar had already felt shocked many times today, hearing Eric's words, he still could not help but look at Lucien as if he was looking at a monster, "Lucien, you know what does this mean? I bet you do not. Most arcanists below middle rank would never receive any contribution invitations, and of course, I'm one of them. Our arcana credits usually come from the board and most of us can never have seven credits in several years."

"I think I got really lucky here." Lucien wanted to remain humble.

"Come on... Lucky?! This doesn't have anything to do with luck, my friend." Lazar excitedly waved both of his hands, "This is the fourth year since I graduated from my school. Among the papers I've written, at least ten of them, only three of them passed the review of the board, and among the three, only one is published on Arcana Discussion... the last but one paper in that month's journal! I heard that only those geniuses could receive invitations like this, say, Mr. Ulysses or Mr. Felipe."

Although Lazar felt quite sorry for himself, he was not being sarcastic to Lucien at all. Definitely, he was a very nice friend.

Eric's mouth moved a bit as he tried to say something but quickly gave it up. He spent his twenty years on earning one hundred arcana credits and becoming a level three arcanist. Finally, he released a gentle sigh, "The word 'groundbreaking'... No wonder this journal just directly sent the invitation. Although the application significance of your paper is relatively limited, Evans, it's really something that your paper can win the word 'groundbreaking' from the board members. Every year, except the papers from those grand arcanists and senior-rank arcanists, less than ten papers can enjoy this praise."

"I see..." Lucien finally realized how important this key word was.

Lazar hid his a slightly discouraged look and said to Lucien excitedly while pulling his fingers to show his points, “Groundbreaking, breakthrough, extremely important, highly pervasive, worth of great discussion, these are the key words used by the board members to speak most highly of a paper. Of course, if your paper is commented as having the ability to change the times, then congratulations, Evans, you’d be one of the grand arcanists!”

When Lucien took over the folder from Mr. Eric, the bell started ringing and the light flashed in the cage again.

A new folder just arrived.

Eric picked up the folder, and when he opened it, his face looked a bit discouraged just like Lazar’s face just now.

“Evans, you’ve got another contribution invitation, from Sound Wave,” Eric said to Lucien, trying to stay calmer, “They promise the same thing, plus that they can recommend your paper to another three index journals.”

Both Eric and Lazar felt that they could not be any more surprised now, as long as no invitation from Arcana or Magic was coming.

“Which one to choose, Lucien?” grinned Lazar, “I personally still suggest Sound Wave, as it is more professional, and they gave you a better offer.”

“Thanks, Lazar, but I personally prefer Common Arcana.” Lucien smiled, “And my reason’s simple: Common Arcana was the first to send the invitation, and that means they value my research.”

Lazar didn’t quite agree with Lucien, but when he was about to say something, the bell rang crisply three times.

Eric took a look at Lucien’s arcana badge in his hand and said to him, “Evans, we’re off today, and I’m afraid you have to come back here tomorrow to activate your badge.”

“Mr. Eric... Can I somehow still do it today?” asked Lucien a bit disappointedly, “I was planning to visit Common Arcana Library and Magic Exchange Office.”

Eric shook his head, “Prospell and the other alchemical lives never work one extra minute unless they’re asked by their masters. Even if you had your arcana badge today, you could not visit the two places since they’re also closed now. Come tomorrow morning, and no worries, the credits and points are always yours.”

Lazar nodded, “Let’s go for dinner, Evans. In most cases, those alchemical lives are quite lazy.” As he was saying, he quickly took a glance at the shining wall and added, “Of course, they can be very productive and diligent when necessary. By the way, remember to follow the suggestion and add an extra letter behind your name for distinction, Lucien.”

“I see. Good evening then, Mr. Eric.” Lucien slightly bowed and put back his unactivated arcana badge on his clothes.

...

In the hall of Sorcerer Administrative Department, when Cindy and Dona were about to leave, they saw Lazar and Evans walking out of Mr. Eric’s office.

“Congra... Eh? Mr. Evans, why your arcana badge hasn’t been...” asked Cindy, but she quickly stopped herself since she did not want to embarrass Mr. Evans.

“No, no, no...” Lazar, as Lucien’s friend, felt very proud and started showing off, “Our dear Mr. Evans is the first sorcerer ever whose arcana paper was approved by the board on the day he arrived at Allyn, the first sorcerer who got the comment ‘groundbreaking’ with his first arcana paper, the first sorcerer who have received two contribution invitations from two major journals with his very first arcana paper...”

There were so many “first” in Lazar’s words, that Cindy and Dona almost could not believe their ears.

The girls’ eyes were shining with admiration. “Mr. Evans, you’ll definitely be in our diaries today!”

Cindy also added, “Mr. Evans, we’re looking forward to reading

your paper. And, again, please don't forget us when you become a middle-rank sorcerer, haha."

"What about we celebrate for Mr. Evans a bit tonight?" suggested Dona.

"If the ladies don't mind, I want to invite you two to have dinner with us." Lucien smiled. He would like to have more friends in Allyn.

"Of course! We're more than happy to go." Cindy nodded excitedly, "By the way, Mr. Evans, as you've already gained seven arcana credits, why hasn't your badge been activated yet?"

"Ha, Mr. Eric was so shocked by Lucien's accomplishment that he forgot to do it." Lazar laughed, "When he realized it, the other people were already gone for the day."

"Wow... It's hard to imagine Mr. Eric with a shocked face..." the two girls giggled.

When they were waiting for the ladies to go for dinner together, Lazar looked at Lucien and said,

"Lucien, among all the comments you just got, you know which one I felt most jealous of?"

"Um... Groundbreaking?" answered Lucien unsure.

"No..." Lazar shook his head slightly and looked a bit depressed, "It is the comment with regards to your arcanist way of thinking. In all the papers I've sent and got rejected, the board members kept telling me that my way of thinking is problematic and not rigorous enough as an arcanist."

"Reading more and thinking more can improve one's way of thinking, for sure." Lucien comforted Lazar, "If you don't mind, I can do proof-reading for you, you know, for peer reviewing."

"That'll be awesome! Thanks, man!" Lazar cheered up again, "But no worries, my next paper won't be there in two or even three months. Ah... by the way, when the apprentice assessment is done

tomorrow, your teaching task will be half done, and you need to consider how to plan your life here. Well, think about what you're going to do tonight, and I will give you some suggestions as well tomorrow, when we go to the Task Zone together."

Lucien nodded seriously. His most important target now was to catch up with other people in arcana.

After the four people enjoyed grilled fish and fries, the traditional cuisine of Holm, Lucien spent the night in a nice hotel recommended by Lazar, where Lucien had a good night's sleep.

...

Early the next morning, Lazar met Lucien in the hotel and went to Apprentice Assessment Department with him.

"There you are, Mr. Evans!" As soon as Lucien stepped into zone three, Lucien heard Heidi and Layria's cheerful voice. With some books in their hands, they were excitedly looking at Lucien, and before Lucien came, they were still busy with reviewing the exercises.

"Good morning, Mr. Evans," greeted Annick. He scratched his yellow hair a bit with a happy smile on his face.

"Morning, and good luck to you all," said Lucien. All of a sudden he felt like playing a joke, "Just relax. If you three cannot pass the test, I can give you more exercises, so no worries."

"Well... Thanks, Mr. Evans, but we think we're fine here." The three apprentices shook their heads together, looking quite cute.

At this time, Simeon walked out of the office and clapped his hands, "All the apprentices, come in for the assessment."

Looking at Lucien and his three apprentices arrogantly, Sprint had a confident look on his face, as he was sure that he could perform way better than the three who received some special but useless training.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Katrina was also staring at Sprint.

She told herself that this time she must beat Sprint in the assessment.

Chapter 191: Magic Schools

Sprint also took a glance at Katrina, and then walked into the assessment room without saying anything.

Early when they were in Sturk, and also when they were on the dangerous ship, Katrina and Sprint never stopped their competition. Often they would throw tricky questions to each other, and when they had chances to practice casting spells, they would always see who was faster. As it was Sprint who always won the games, Katrina often got quite unhappy.

Seeing Sprint's attitude, Katrina stamped her foot a bit and then got in the room with a snort.

"Relax." Lucien lifted his chin a bit to point at the room.

Annick nodded seriously, "Yes, Mr. Evans."

Then he left with Layria and Heidi together a bit nervously.

Lazar, with his hands in the pockets of his double-breasted coat, smiled, "Lucien, are they the three apprentices you taught? How's their study?"

"They just started studying arcana a bit more than a month ago, and I can't brag that they've learned a lot from me. I just let them get through a lot of repetitious exercises to help them get the most basic parts done as solid as possible, and thus they can learn arcana and magic easier in the future." Lucien replied casually, having no worries at all with the assessment, since he knew that his students were already way more prepared than their peers.

"Repetitious exercises? That doesn't sound very appealing at all." Lazar grinned, "Aren't you afraid of killing their creativity?"

"Creativity is for geniuses, and these children are not," answered Lucien directly. "Relying on something they don't really have can only bring them disappointment. The only way out for them is to work hard, and the only thing they shall rely on is their

perseverance." Although Lucien was still smiling, his voice sounded serious, "They shall obtain the arcanist's way of thinking by these repetitious exercises, and these exercises can lay a solid knowledge foundation for them."

Lazar was only chatting, not debating, so he just tilted his head a bit and said, "You're also very suitable for being a teacher, Lucien."

Lucien thought to himself that this was how he learned to be a student in his original world, then, very quickly he switched the topic, "Do you have many of the same black coats like this, Lazar? Why do I feel that you never change your clothes?"

Lazar laughed, "Come on, this coat is my magic robe! Don't tell me that in your mind only that type of robes with gloomy hoods can be called magic robes! We have all kinds of styles, say, formal, casual, coats, dresses... as long as you're willing to pay."

"How much is a level two magic robe? Honestly speaking, I don't have any yet," asked Lucien a bit excitedly.

"Paeon of Night," Lazar pointed at his own coat, "Level two medium rank, two hundred Thales or arcana points, from Wasim's, good price, good quality, good reputation."

Lucien was amused by Lazar's words, and then quickly calculated the money he still had so far, "I only have sixty Thales and nine points right now... By the way, Lazar, is it right that one arcana point equals one Thale?"

When Lucien was traveling around, he treated himself pretty well.

"That's right," Lazar nodded, "but when you upgrade to a higher level, you'll know that arcana points actually have a much wider use than Thales. According to these greedy bankers, the points is guaranteed by the congress' own credit. It took me a long time to save the money for the robe, but fortunately, it is not hard for a sorcerer to find a job to make some money, and you can probably make ten Thales or arcana points a month, plus some extra income from other people learning your magic... So I'd say you can buy a robe like this within two years or so."

"I see. Definitely, two years is still a long time," said Lucien.

"I can lend you some. I still have the thirty points from submitting my new spell." said Lazar, "I know you will definitely pay me back, as you're such a talented sorcerer, and I'm sure that lots of people will want to learn your new apprentice level spell."

"Thank you for your generosity, Lazar." Lucien smiled and said sincerely, "I still have some materials that I can sell for some money."

Lucien was thinking of the precious Wave Stones that he got from the murloc.

"I really envy you, Lucien," said Lazar honestly. "Sorcerers who follow the ancient magic system more or less often have some materials or magic items."

Time went by quickly as Lucien and Lazar were chatting casually outside of the assessment room. Soon, the door of the room suddenly opened and Heidi showed up cheerfully,

"The assessment's so easy, Mr. Evans!"

Following Heidi, Layria also came out of the room and agreed, "Yes, way easier than the exercises we did!"

"Good to hear it." Lucien smiled and nodded, "What about you, Annick?"

"Not bad..." Annick was smiling shyly as he scratched his hair a bit as usual, "Many thanks to you, Mr. Evans."

"Maybe you guys ignored some traps there in the assessment, and that's why the test looked so easy to you three." One apprentice following them commented unhappily, "How do you feel, Sprint?"

Sprint looked less confident now, "Most of the questions are okay, but some are quite challenging... I'm not sure."

"I feel the same way..." Hearing Sprint's answer, Katrina was a bit more relaxed. She thought it was her own problem that she felt

quite challenged during the assessment.

"It's really difficult... My head hurts..." agreed the other apprentices.

"Sprint, how did you analyze and construct the apprentice spell, Spectre Strike?" Seeing the door of the assessment room was closed again, Katrina asked after a bit of hesitation.

"I tried to..." Since Sprint was also quite uncertain with this one, he did not try to hide his own answer but to check it with Katrina.

More apprentices joined them to check the answers together, and they started discussing heatedly.

However, both Heidi and Layria felt quite confused, as they truly felt that the assessment was not hard at all.

Soon Annick, Heidi and Layria also joined the other apprentices, leaving Lucien and Lazar looking at them discussing energetically on the other side of the corridor with smiles on their faces.

When the apprentices finished checking all the answers, it was already close to ten thirty. All of them stopped talking and were waiting for the result.

It was completely quiet in the corridor.

At this time, the door of the assessment room slowly opened. Staring at the door, all the apprentices looked very nervous.

There was a folder in Simeon's hands, and he said seriously, "I'm now reading the result of the assessment."

All of the apprentices held their breath, including Annick, Layria and Heidi who thought the test was quite easy.

"The first group, for those apprentices who have a solid foundation of arcana knowledge, qualified spiritual power level and spell casting ability, we have: Annick, Layria and Heidi. The three apprentices' strength is in Astrology and Element."

"What?! That's impossible..." The other apprentices were stunned, "How come it's not Sprint and Katrina?!"

Both Sprint and Katrina's faces suddenly turned pale, as they never thought that they would be beaten by Annick, Heidi, and Layria, and they were hoping that this was just a mistake.

However, Simeon said seriously to them, "If any of you don't believe it, feel free to discuss basic arcana questions with them."

No apprentice dared doubt Simeon. Remaining silent, they reluctantly accepted the result. At the same time, many turned around and looked at Lucien, feeling rather regretful out of different reasons.

"Then the second group, for those apprentices who have a relatively good foundation of arcana knowledge, qualified spiritual power level and spell casting ability, we have: Sprint, Katrina and Olmos. Sprint and Katrina's strength is in Force, Electromagnetics and Element, and Olmos's in Summoning and Necromancy."

As Simeon was reading the results, some apprentices felt cheerful and some quite upset. In the end, Simeon announced,

"Annick, Layria, Heidi, Sprint and Katrina will be studying in Douglas, Olmos in Allyn, ..." Based on the assessment result, Simeon assigned the apprentices to different schools. All of the schools were in Allyn, and no one needed to go to schools in other counties or even countries.

When they were following Simeon to the office for the admission procedures, something suddenly came to Layria. She looked at Lucien emotionally and asked with her black eyes grew moist, "Mr. Evans, are you gonna stay in Allyn? Can we still see you again?"

There was also tears welling up in both Heidi's and Annick's eyes.

"I think I will stay in Allyn for quite a long time, as long as there's nothing else emergent." Lucien smiled, "I'll visit you three when I'm free."

"Awesome!" Heidi and Layria hugged each other and laughed, with

still a bit of tears in their eyes.

Annick also grinned, but he looked aside, trying to hide his emotion.

Following Lucien and the three apprentices, Sprint remained all the way silent. After all the apprentices entered the office, Katrina suddenly bowed to Lucien, "I'm sorry."

Then she quickly ran into the office, leaving Lucien no chance to say anything.

"It's so nice to be young," Lazar sighed with emotion.

...

After getting all the remaining procedures done, Lucien got the certificate from Simeon showing that his teaching job had been finished.

Then Lucien and Lazar headed for Sorcerer Administrative Department together.

"By the way, Lucien," asked Lazar, "Any idea which word to put behind your name for your paper?"

"Lucien Evans X." Lucien smiled.

The letter "X" could be mysterious, and it was also the initial of Lucien's original name.

Chapter 192: The Task

Chapter 192: The Task

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Umm... Sounds like a mysterious and vicious bastard, haha.” As they were getting closer and closer, Lazar joked.

Lucien said with a pretended cunning smile, “Someday, when I do something big that can shock the whole magic world, I should leave a bloody X on the scene.”

“That sounds cool!” Lazar waved his fist a bit, “That reminds me of the mysterious Professor who left the bloody letters when he killed the traitor.”

Lucien’s face hardened a bit nervously and he quickly started talking about the famous shops in Allyn.

This time, in the Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien successfully activated his arcana badge. There were seven silver dots shining on the black badge, looking rather mysterious.

Right now this badge did not have any magic effects, but Lucien was told that, when he became a middle-rank arcanist, his arcana badge would be enchanted with a spell, and one more when he upgraded to senior-rank, and the same would be done to his magic badge.

“So an ‘X’ after your name?” asked Eric, watching Lucien putting his arcana badge in front of his left chest.

Lucien nodded seriously, “Yes. Anything else, Mr. Eric?”

“Nothing but to remind you to settle down in Allyn as soon as possible and then leave me your contact information. By the way, when you respond to Common Arcana, you’d better leave your address and contact information as well for further touch,” said Eric casually. Then, he turned around and said to someone who was

knocking at the office door, “Come in.”

Seeing Eric was rather busy, Lucien and Lazar hurriedly bowed to him and left his office.

“Mr. Eric’s got so many things to do...” Lucien looked back at Eric’s office and said.

As if Lazar just heard a joke, he laughed, “Of course he’s got so many things to do, after all, he only works two days a week for fourteen hours.”

“Only two days? Then what about the rest of his time?” asked Lucien, surprised.

“He can study magic, do experiments, or anything he wants to do,” Lazar shrugged, “and the job, as the director of the department, can still bring him thirty Thales or arcana points a month. That’s why we have ten directors in Sorcerer Administrative Department, but only middle-rank sorcerers can have the opportunity to get the job.”

Lucien of course longed for this job, “It’s for sure a perfect job that pays well with very small amount of work.”

“If the job wasn’t like this, no middle-ranked sorcerer would be willing to do the tedious and troublesome work. After all, the main target for every sorcerer is to learn magic and arcana to enhance their strength, instead of dealing with those office documents. Only those who don’t want make any progresses would indulge themselves in wealth.” At a young age, Lazar was rather ambitious, and thus he looked down upon the sorcerers who contented with things such as those.

Then Lazar looked more serious. “What’s your recent plan, Lucien? Studying arcana or accepting tasks to make more money?”

“I’d like to spend some time on studying arcana and doing experiments.” In the past year, Lucien was fed up with his precarious living.

“Then I suggest you choose to work for the magic schools.” Lazar nodded.

“Why?” asked Lucien, as he was planning not to do any work but focus on his study before he upgraded to a second circle sorcerer.

“Well... Since your teaching task is actually only half done,” Lazar grinned, leaning his back against the wall casually, “later you need to choose one task out of two: One is that you can teach two apprentices to help them become senior apprentices, and the other is that you can work for a magic school. The difference is that the former won’t bring you any money, but the latter can bring you salary. Besides, as long as there are six of the students in the class who become senior apprentices, your job’s done.”

“I see...” Lucien nodded thoughtfully, “It seems that I don’t really have a choice.”

“No, you don’t.” Lazar crossed his arms casually, “And am I right that you only have sixty Thales and nine arcana points right now?”

“Yup, that’s right,” answered Lucien honestly.

“Although that’s a huge amount of money for a common person, for us sorcerers,” Lazar shook his index finger to Lucien, “it’s nothing. Being a sorcerer basically means burning money.”

“I know many materials are very expensive.” Lucien agreed.

“Yes, and it’s also way more than that. You know what? In Allyn, you need money to borrow books in the libraries, to rent meditation rooms, to do experiments, to analyze spells. Everything costs your money, and when you upgrade to a higher level, you gotta spend much more, say, maybe one summoning could cost you sixty Thales.”

“Once I heard a saying – ‘Without enough money, one cannot become a great sorcerer’.” Lucien touched his forehead a bit and said, “Fortunately, we can still make money.”

“That’s right. So, in addition to accepting tasks, adventuring or making magic items to make money, the congress also provides us with two ways. One is earning arcana points, which you already know. The higher your level is, the cheaper you can buy or rent

many things.” Lazar then put on an admiring look, “The second is that several arcanists or sorcerers can together put forward a research proposal to the congress. If the idea passes the review of Magic Research Board, they could get lots of arcana points. However, those research projects are often led by senior-rank arcanists.”

The corner of Lucien’s lips twitched a bit and he thought to himself, “We also have research fundings here?”

Lazar continued, “So, for us junior-rank sorcerers, if you don’t want to take too much of a risk, you want to either find a good mentor or find a good job. Among the jobs, working for a magic school is the best option.”

“How’s the salary then?” Lucien wondered why Lazar spoke so highly of this job.

“You can work only twenty hours a week in a magic school as a teacher, and that’s ten classes. Although the salary is only ten points a month, you can feel free to arrange the rest of your time. Moreover, you can use the labs and the libraries of the school for free, and you can also get some free experiment materials.”

“Wow...” Lucien was actually a bit of a money-grubber. Hearing Lazar’s words, Lucien was a bit excited, and what made him excited the most was definitely the free use of the labs and the libraries.

“But get real... Why anyone would save such a good job for me...” said Lucien a bit hopeless.

“Come on, my friend.” Lazar patted Lucien on his shoulder, “You’re not a nobody. You just earned seven arcana credits the first day you came here, and you have the word ‘groundbreaking’ on your paper! Although every year some arcanists and sorcerers would go to some remote areas to teach the apprentices there, I don’t think you want to leave Allyn this soon, do you?”

“Definitely not.” Lucien shook his head, “You’re right, Lazar. I gotta try my best to get myself in one of the five magic schools in Allyn. By the way, Lazar, is there any mandatory task for us from the

congress?”

Lucien was thinking of what he had heard from the Hand of Paleness.

“Yes, there’s one every year,” answered Lazar, “but for us junior-rank sorcerers, there are only mandatory teaching tasks for us, after all, the congress wants us to grow powerful first. Even when we become middle-rank sorcerers, we can still replace the tasks that are too risky for us with some new ones as long as we’re willing to pay.”

Lucien felt more relieved now, “That’s not bad.”

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Zone five, Task Zone.

The zone consisted of rows of silver-gray metal counters, and behind each counter there was a dark green screen, showing all kinds of tasks from the congress, sorcerers, nobles or merchants.

Looking around, there was only one counter available right now. Behind the counter sat an ordinary-looking, middle-aged lady.

Seeing Lucien and Lazar walking towards the counter, the lady asked emotionlessly, “New task or get your pay?”

“I’ve finished my task.” Lucien handed the certificate and the magic badge to the lady.

After quickly checking the certificate, the lady wrote several words on the paper and then she put Lucien’s badge on the magic circle on the right side.

After the flashing light disappeared, there was a piece of parchment on the magic circle – the parchment used in the congress had been specially processed for magic transmission.

Taking a quick look, the lady said coldly to him, “Lucien Evans, your task is only half done. For the second part, do you want to teach the apprentices chosen by the congress, or teach in the remote

areas?”

As she was saying, she took out a pile of basic magic and arcana books and started reading.

“I want to work for one of the five magic schools in Allyn, Madam.” Lucien remained polite.

The middle-aged lady rolled her eyes and said directly, “Don’t waste my time. Please make a choice.”

“Am I forbidden from applying for the job?” Although her attitude wasn’t nice at all, Lucien still insisted.

“No,” the lady gave Lucien a glance, “but you’re a sorcerer following the ancient magic system, and you just arrived here yesterday, there’s no chance for you to get this job. Please make a choice, or I’ll call the security.”

“Ms. Lawette, you’d better help Lucien with the application process, or I’ll complain to Affairs Committee about your misconduct!” Even Lazar felt quite pissed off.

Hearing Lazar’s words, Lawette twitched her mouth impatiently and said, “All right, if you want to waste your time, go ahead.”

Then she took out a form and a quill and handed them to Lucien.

After Lucien wrote down all of his basic information, with a second thought, he put the specific comment of his paper on the form as well.

If he was trying, he must try his best.

When Lucien was writing, Lawette urged him quite a few times. When she got Lucien’s application form, her face looked quite surprised in an unhappy way, “You’d better be honest with what you write, or you’d be severely punished.”

“Feel free to check my arcana badge,” answered Lucien poker-faced, and he handed his arcana badge to Lawette.

Lawette saw the seven silver dots on the badge, and she felt shocked.

Ten minutes later after she sent Lucien's application information to the office, the result was back.

After a quick glance at the document, Lawette's face turned purple with disappointment and embarrassment.

Taking over the document from Lawette, Lucien saw the result, "Based on the schools you specialize in, Mr. Evans, we are honored to have you in Douglas."

Chapter 193: The Expensive Books

Chapter 193: The Expensive Books

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the metallic silver hall of the congress tower, Lazar had been laughing for quite a while, and he said to Lucien, “Hahaha... Did you see Ms. Lawette’s face? It was purple! Purple! Haha...” Lazar’s own face was now red from laughing too hard, “It’s just like... like a hundred arcana credits were given to her but, in the next minute, the credits were taken away again because it was given to the wrong person, haha... You know how many people don’t like her? Haha...”

“I just don’t really get it,” said Lucien, smiling. “Why did she want to give us a hard time? I mean, she didn’t have to.”

“Ms. Lawette is one of those sorcerers that I mentioned before who did not want to make any progresses anymore in their lives. Those people hate other people who are still striving for a better life.” Lazar gently patted his chest to calm himself down. “I hope I won’t be like this in my sixties.”

“We can try.” Lucien laughed. “It’s quite hard for me to imagine you with Ms. Lawette’s disgruntled look on your face, Lazar.”

“Try what? How?” Lazar was confused.

“You can lend me your thirty arcana points, and I’ll try my best to not pay you back, haha.” Lucien joked, “Let’s see if you can still be this patient with me.”

Lazar rolled his eyes at Lucien, “Come on, thirty points to you is nothing. By the way, you’re going to meet your students again, and that’s quite nice, isn’t it?”

Among the five magic schools in Allyn, Douglas ranked the best magic school, whose strength was in the school of Force, Electromagnetics, Astrology, and Element. Following Douglas were

the two schools named Allyn and Pesancho. The former was known for its subjects of Necromancy and Summoning, and the latter was good at teaching Transformation and Illusion. Besides these schools, Trident was the school known for their researches in the latest three magic fields: Electromagnetics, Thermodynamics, and Light-darkness, and many students who wanted to study Alchemy, Element or Thermodynamics would also go to Alborg.

Of course, the schools all provided courses covering all the fields, despite the fact that each had its own strength.

“It’s surely nice, however, I need to buy a storage bag first, which means spending money. Right now, spending money doesn’t make me happy,” answered Lucien.

“Then our next destination, Wasim!” said Lazar cheerfully.

...

“Level three storage bag, mass produced, middle-ranked, ‘Shrink’ enchanted. You can shrink and store your belongings to one sixteenth of its original size in this bag with only twenty percent of its weight. Magic wave covered. Four hundred arcana points,” introduced the owner of the store.

Lucien’s heart was bleeding. This bag just cost him three Wave Stones, fifty-eight Thales and six arcana points, and right now the palm-sized pouch was already half filled with Lucien’s books, notes and materials.

Seeing Lucien’s desperate look, Lazar comforted him, “Come on, my friend, stop feeling heartbroken. If it wasn’t from mass production, you probably need to spend a thousand arcana points on a level three storage bag! Before, this bag was way more expensive. Besides, the bag is a must to you, and you’re not wasting your money.”

Lucien nodded, but still felt that he just suffered a great loss.

“By the way, next time when I need Wave Stone, can I buy some from you with a bit lower price?” Lazar tried to distract Lucien,

“Anyway, when your paper is published, I’m sure lots of people will cite your paper to improve your spell. At that time, you’ll have lots of arcana points, trust me.”

“Lazar... Is your magic robe also from mass production?” asked Lucien.

“Forget about mass production...” Lazar was amused, “Where shall we go next then?”

“Library! Basic Arcana Library!” Lucien suddenly cheered up.

...

“What?! Pay before read?!” asked Lucien, feeling shocked.

The old librarian grinned, “You are still too young and naive, boy. Soon after the library was built, many sorcerers with great spiritual power and memory were coming here to memorize the books in the library. Later they even created some tricky magic circles to copy the books here. Everyone knows knowledge is wealth, and no one can get knowledge for free.”

Although the librarian’s hair was half white and was pretty short, he was still a good-looking man with graceful manners. However, Lucien did not like him at all.

“But... But if I don’t glance the books over first, how do I know these are the books that I’m looking for?” Lucien was still trying.

“I’ve been hearing this all the time, young man,” the short librarian waved his index finger a bit in front of Lucien’s face, “always the same reason.”

Then the librarian knocked the magic circle, and smoke puffed out of it. A well-built man with naked chest appeared in the air, wearing black soft hair.

“Alex, Djinn of Basic Arcana Library, an alchemical life with great memory,” introduced the librarian. “Tell him what kind of knowledge you want, and Alex can tell you what books you need and where they are, even including abstracts.”

“Welcome, Alex is at your service,” greeted the Djinn.

“Then... How much to borrow a book?” Lucien tried to stay calm.

“The library’s only available to sorcerers from the congress. You need to pay ten Nars to keep a book for seven days.”

“Ten Nars?” Lucien almost burst out that this was robbery. In Aalto, he could spend only one or two Nars to buy a thick book.

“Such a pity...” The old librarian shook his head, “Today’s young men don’t understand how precious knowledge is anymore. Back in the old days...”

“All right, all right...” Lazar rubbed his head a bit, “Any other ways for borrowing books?”

“If you’re willing to pay two arcana points in advance, you can borrow up to forty books in a month, the same seven days for each book,” said Alex. “We receive arcana points only in this case.”

Obviously, the congress was encouraging sorcerers to use arcana points.

Lucien nodded, and then handed his badge to the librarian, “Forty books a month, then.”

After taking away two points from Lucien’s badge using a magic circle, the librarian said to Lucien seriously, “You’re a sorcerer, so never be cheap with books and experiment materials. If you want to save money, save it by buying less magic items.”

Lucien nodded, as he knew that this was a sincere suggestion.

Then he turned to Alex, “May I know what are the most cutting-edge research papers on soul and human body study?”

Alex thought a bit and answered, “A Few Thoughts about Soul as the Carrier of Consciousness, from Vicente Miranda, grand arcanist.

“Discussion about Elements Consisting of Soul and Special Electromagnetic Wave, from Vicente Miranda, grand arcanist.

...

“Why Regeneration is Possible: Analysis and Simulation of Mechanisms of Cytothesis, from Felipe, level four arcanist.”

“Felipe?” Lucien was surprised as to how advanced Felipe’s research was. However, on a second thought, under the lead of the grand arcanist, Vicente Miranda, and with the solid knowledge foundation of the study of human body and magic creatures, the birth of such pioneering work was still reasonable.

This world was still different from Lucien’s original world, or say, this world was even more advanced in a sense.

“The paper shocked the whole congress. Mr. Felipe also earned great reputation with this paper and thus became a level four arcanist and one of the most promising sorcerers in the Hand of Paleness,” said Lazar in awe.

Lucien nodded. At first he thought Felipe was too arrogant, but now he realized that Felipe was for sure talented and very competitive.

Later, Lucien borrowed the two issues of Arcana and one issue of Magic, which published the papers mentioned by Alex, and another three books about the basic knowledge regarding soul.

Then he asked, “Mr. Alex, please help me to find the papers that determine the different natures of all the current existing elements, as well as the papers explaining the connections between some of the elements.”

“I’d suggest you to start from reading the papers about redefining elements, Lucien,” said Lazar confusedly. “It’s the basic part in arcana of the school of Element, right?”

“I hear you, Lazar. As you said, as an elemental sorcerer, I absolutely need to carefully read all the fundamental papers, and I’ll also borrow the corresponding books. At the same time, I also want to know the basic nature of each element and what’s going on in this field lately, for the convenience of my future research and study.”

“I see. You know what you’re doing, my friend.” Lazar nodded. Then he started considering which book he should borrow for himself.

Chapter 194: Wonderful World

This time, the Djinn did not give Lucien the list immediately. Pausing a bit, Alex asked, "Mr. Evans, what about those papers published but later proved wrong, and some assumption papers?"

"Of course, all of them." Lucien nodded, "Failure is also something precious that I can learn from."

"Ha... If that's what you want," said the old librarian, "or if you just want to have an overall impression of the development of the school of Element, I'd recommend you History of Element, edited every ten years by the grand arcanists. Similarly, we also have History of Necromancy, History of Astrology... and History of Arcana and Magic."

At the same time, Alex's book list was also ready, "History of Element, from the highest council.

"New System of Element, from Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg, grand arcanist.

"Atom - Molecule, from Oliver Constantine, grand arcanist.

"Several Ways to Measure Atomic Weight and the Latest Atomic Chart, Octave in Elements, from Fernando Brastar, grand arcanist.

"Multiple Relationship Identified in Magic Potion Experiments, Spiral Rule in Elements, from Ravendi, level nine arcanist.

"The Common Features Shared by Some Metallic Elements and the Application, from Gaston, level seven arcanist.

...

"Common Rules among Elements and Assumptions, from Ulysses, level four arcanist.

"Comparison of Mythrill and Silver and the Measurements, from Timothy, level four arcanist.

...

"The Nature of a New Element - Mo, from Meredith, level four arcanist."

...

The papers presented in the list were not all the latest, but the most relevant according to Lucien's requirements. Several papers were done many years ago.

"Paper from Mr. Ulysses." Lucien looked back and said to Lazar.

"Not surprising at all." Lazar's words were filled with admiration, "Mr. Ulysses wrote this paper when he was only a level one arcanist. Although his theory of elements' characters has been overthrown by further study, this paper was still a great shock at that time. Mr. Ulysses is very creative and good at thinking out of the box, and his spirit of exploration has inspired many elemental sorcerers, including Mr. Brastar and Mr. Ravendi. If it weren't because Ms. Hathaway was exploring the secret dimension, she might have become one of them as well."

"But from the name of the papers and books, I see nothing really about the shared law among all the elements." Lucien put forward his question.

"Because all of these theories have failed." The librarian cut in seriously, "Since spectral analysis was introduced, more than ten new elements have been discovered. And they have also overthrown all the assumptions or theories put forward previously by many arcanists. For more details, you can find them in the books recommended. Young man, this is a serious topic."

"That's right," said Lazar, feeling quite sorry. "Even the theory of Octave put forward by Mr. Brastar failed as well. Later, Mr. Brastar switched to another research direction in studying electromagnetic wave, and this announced the failure of the exploration of the shared law among elements. Right now, study in this field is still suspended."

"Any reflections on the failure, then?" asked Lucien.

"There are. Some arcanists argue that not enough elements have been discovered so far, including Mr. Ravendi, and many junior or middle-ranked arcanists insist that there are no laws among the elements."

"What about Mr. Ulysses?" asked Lucien curiously. After all, this genius sorcerer was the first one who started exploring this field.

"No much progresses from Mr. Ulysses as well." Lazar frowned, "People say that he's probably changing his research interest."

"Perseverance is important to an arcanist," interrupted the old librarian.

Feeling a bit annoyed, Lucien quickly glanced at the librarian's chest to see what level this librarian was of.

Surprisingly, there was nothing at all in front of the old man's chest, no name, no arcana or magic badge.

"My robe isn't bad, right?" The old librarian said proudly, "I know, red is quite eye-catching, haha!"

Lucien rolled his eyes again, and then directly ignored the librarian. He wondered whether this world was truly different from his original world, or the laws just still had not been discovered. To figure this out, Lucien needed to go read all the papers first.

In the end, Lucien borrowed thirty-eight books in total.

"You sure you want to borrow this many, Lucien?" Walking out of the library together, Lazar asked.

"I'm gonna be working in Douglas soon, and I'll spend most of my time on teaching and on my own study. In a month, I probably won't come back to the congress again, so I want to use magic circles to copy these books first. By the way, Lazar, did you notice that the librarian wasn't wearing any badges?" asked Lucien.

Douglas was on the southeast edge of the city, remote and quiet. It

would take one about half an hour to get to the congress's magic tower from the school.

"Yes, so I pulled you arm a bit in the library to remind you to be a bit more restrained when you were talking with him. Quite possibly, the old librarian was a member of some certain board, as only sorcerers of this level can walk around and control alchemical lives with no badges. And these senior-level sorcerers... some of them are a bit weird."

Lucien felt the librarian was very weird.

Seeing that Lucien did not respond, Lazar thought his friend was worrying about money, so he smiled, "Actually, borrowing books from library is not the only way to pursue knowledge, as sorcerers would secretly exchange books they have themselves, as long as you can fit yourself in some sorcerer circles. Even if you don't have the books other people want, you can still buy copies with a lower price."

"Really?" Lucien felt quite curious, "The congress won't prohibit them from doing it?"

"Why do you think the library is so expensive?" Lazar grinned, "Actually, the congress encourages sorcerers to exchange their knowledge personally, so more great ideas can thus be inspired. I happen to have two friends who probably would like to exchange books with you in Douglas, and I'll introduce you to them."

"What are their names?" asked Lucien gratefully.

"Both of them are level one arcanists, one's name is Jerome, a second circle sorcerer studying Astrology and Element, and the other's name is Rock, a second circle elemental sorcerer. Rock's a bit weird, and he's applying for a funny project right now. As for Jerome, he's quite introvert. Several years ago, when he was pursuing miss Vera, he talked about Astrology and chemical reactions."

"Poor guy..." Lucien felt very sorry for this Jerome guy.

"Haha, you know what? They're married now, and they're very sweet." Lazar laughed.

"What?" Lucien was surprised.

"You come from the other side of the ocean, Lucien." Lazar explained, still laughing, "For girls here in Holm, nothing's more romantic than magic, Astrology, Element and destiny. And a person who studies these things is very likely to be wealthy and influential."

"What a wonderful world." Lucien sighed with emotion. Then he said to Lazar, "You want to go with me to get some experiment materials? I want to follow the papers to do some experiments."

"Sure." Lazar responded casually, "By the way, there's a guy whose name's also Lucien Evans teaching in Douglas. He added a 'K' in his name."

Chapter 195: Donald's Reminder

Chapter 195: Donald's Reminder

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The next morning, when the warm sun was shining in the sky, a carriage was driving down a remote road toward a large building in a dark green forest.

“Lucien, when you’re done with the procedures, I’ll introduce you to Jerome and Rock, and then you’ll be able to exchange your books with them,” Lazar, still wearing his black long coat, looked out of the window and stared at the green trees, “but you have to remember that you can’t exchange spells with any sorcerer, unless that spell is over a hundred years old. Although learning magic or arcana can be very secret, and the congress also encourages sorcerers to exchange their knowledge, but if no purchase record can be found with the new magic you use in public, you’d be in big trouble. You’ll need to either pay hundreds of times more money, or even stay in jail for ten years, and your corresponding memory will also be erased.”

Lucien nodded. “I see. Thanks, man. I really appreciate all the help you’ve offered me.”

At the same time, in Lucien mind, he felt that this strategy adopted by the congress was very smart. Since one’s earning of arcana points relied largely on how many times his or her paper was cited, ideas and knowledge exchanging between sorcerers could give every sorcerer better chance to get their papers to be more influential. However, new spells were different, as they directly meant power, and needed to be protected carefully.

“No worries, after all, we are friends, aren’t we?” Lazar waved his hands casually and smiled, “Actually almost every influential group has a few unique spells that have never been submitted to the board, including us, the Will of Elements. Our group and Holm Royal Magic Academy jointly own a legendary magic, Element

Breakdown, which is created by the grand arcanist, Hathaway Hoffenberg. If you join our group, when you become a ninth circle sorcerer, you can buy this magic and try to analyze it, and that will definitely bring you lots of benefit when you want to upgrade to a legendary level.”

Lazar was promoting his group obviously, and he got a bit excited. In his eyes, Lucien was a very promising sorcerer.

“I will think about it...” said Lucien thoughtfully.

Actually, because of Natasha, Lucien did not mind joining the Will of Element at all, so even if one day his identity as Professor was exposed, he still had a powerful group backing himself up, however, on the other hand, Lucien was also very interested in studying soul, since this was a world where soul did really exist.

And, if Lucien was going to join the Will of Element, he wanted to enjoy more attention from the group, instead of becoming one of its common members like the many ordinary members in the Hand of Paleness.

The memory of what Lucien witnessed in the viscount’s castle was still fresh.

Understanding why Lucien was being quite hesitant, Lazar grinned and changed the topic, “So are you still distressed with the money you just spent buying the materials?”

“For sure.” Lucien frowned. The seventeen purified elements he just bought cost him two high-quality Wave Stones, and what Lucien had now was only one Wave Stone, two Thales, one arcana point, and some different kinds of experiment materials. Lucien felt that he just got robbed.

“Cheer up, man.” Lazar patted Lucien on his shoulder, “Just be grateful that the school has the other forty-eight purified elements, and doing experiments there is much cheaper, or it could even be free if your experiment was also part of the apprentices’ class. Besides, you don’t even need to rent a place there! The school generously offers you a small house with a garden.”

“You’re right, Lazar.” Lucien held his head a bit higher. He was hoping that publishing his first paper could save him out of the financially difficult situation, and before he came here, Lucien had sent his agreement letter back to Common Arcana and registered the school’s address with the journal to stay in contact with them.

A while later, the carriage slowly stopped in front of a black iron gate of the ancient magic empire style. A black golem, seemingly made of iron, came and opened the gate.

...

On the third floor of the black magic tower.

Lucien, wearing white shirt, brown vest, and double-breasted black coat, was sitting in front of an old, ordinary-looking, bare-headed man, who was wearing a black magic robe stitched with silver and white patterns.

“Welcome, Evans. I’m Donald, headmaster of Douglas,” said the level-four arcanist, fifth circle sorcerer, who was organizing some paperworks.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Donald.” Lucien stood up from his seat and bowed slightly, “Please just call me Lucien.”

“Good. As another Mr. Lucien Evans we have here prefers us to call him K, I’ll just call you Lucien then.” When Donald was saying, he handed Lucien a folder, “Take a look. These are the courses we have so far in Douglas.”

Lucien opened the folder and carefully read it. In the folder, Lucien saw Common Tongue, Ancient Magic Empire Language, Pit Language, Demon Language, Basic Magic Potion, Basic Element, Basic Electromagnetism, Basic Necromancy, Basic Magic Construction, Basic Alchemy, ..., Introduction of Magic Circle, Magic Analysis, Basic Summoning, ..., Culture and Customs, History and Music.

“Music?” Lucien was surprised.

“Ha, students also need to relax a bit, right?” Donald touched his

white moustache and smiled, “Our last music teacher just got fired because he violated one of the rules of the school. Lucien, are you also interested in this position besides your other teaching job? Can you play any musical instruments?”

“I’m quite good at piano and violin.” Lucien nodded and asked directly, “If I also work as a music teacher, can I get a higher salary?”

“Two more arcana points per month.” Donald nodded cheerfully, “But remember, keep your distance from some female apprentices. They are quite... say, ebullient. By the way, I heard that there’s also a musician all the way across the strait in Aalto whose name’s also Lucien Evans, and he’s good at playing piano as well. Quite interesting.”

Lucien put on a polite smile and did not say anything. Right now, he was only interested in making more money.

“So... Let’s see.” Donald looked down at his folder, “Since you just joined the congress, and you probably need more time to work on your own arcana study first, what about you start with teaching Ancient Magic Empire Language, Magic Creatures and Demon Language? That’s... ten lessons a week, and you’ll be teaching two classes.”

“No problem.” Lucien agreed with Donald immediately. In his book, Astrology and Elements, Demon Language was introduced as part of magic pact and summoning knowledge.

Then Lucien added, “Can I choose the two classes, though?”

He hoped that he could teach the class in which his three apprentices were.

“I think so. All the courses are under re-arrangement right now,” said Donald. Then, he registered Lucien’s name for the two classes. One of them was the class called Thorn Tree, where Lucien’s three apprentices were in. Lucien would also be teaching music there.

After all the paper works were done, Donald crossed his hands and

leaned his chin against his hands, “I have to tell you something first, Lucien.”

“Go ahead, please, Mr. Donald,” said Lucien sincerely.

Donald’s voice became low, “You know, working here in a school is a dream for many junior-rank sorcerers, and Douglas ranks the best among all the schools, therefore, we never considered anyone having no arcana level to be one of our teachers. However, you’re an exception, since a gentleman in Affairs Committee spoke highly of you, and recommended you to us. Therefore, this school’s a place not only for the apprentices to grow, but also for you. I personally don’t see anything wrong with offering the talented ones more resources to grow, but you shall not waste the resources given. If you cannot get your official arcana level in a year, you’ll be fired.”

“I’ll try my best,” responded Lucien humbly.

“I trust you, though, Lucien. Many teachers in Douglas, although they haven’t become middle-rank arcanists or sorcerers yet, have their specialities. For example, Mr. K is a level two arcanist. Exchanging with them can benefit you a lot,” said Donald earnestly.

Lucien nodded sincerely, “Thank you for reminding me, Mr. Donald. May I ask who’s the gentleman in the committee? I’d like to thank him as well.”

“You don’t need to know,” said Donald directly. “Maybe when you become a middle-rank sorcerer, he’ll pay more attention to you. Anyway, during the day, the lab is open only to students. When school’s over in the afternoon, you can use the labs for free. To conclude, observe the school rules and start working tomorrow.”

Donald handed Lucien a nameplate and a few pages of paper, on which there were two hundred school rules.

Chapter 196: In the Garden Villa

Chapter 196: In the Garden Villa

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In Douglas, Jerome's garden villa.

"Your name's also Lucien Evans?" a black-haired young man wearing a casual white shirt and a black vest grinned. "K has always said that his name is very common, and I did not believe him. Now I see... haha."

This young man was Rock, a second circle sorcerer. Rock was good at the school of Element and mathematics, and he was a cheerful young person who loved playing jokes a lot.

Before Lucien responded, Rock continued, "I'm gonna introduce you to K. No worries, Lucien, K's very easygoing, although he's quite introverted. Unlike some people from Electromagnetics, K's diligent, talented, and always willing to help!"

When Lucien was about to open his mouth to say something, Rock cut him off again, "I know you must wonder why I say some people from Electromagnetics are arrogant. Trust me, Lucien, I'm not biased. In the last issue of Arcana, since Mr. Brook has proved that light is a special electromagnetic wave, those Electromagnetics people claim that spiritual power is also a certain kind of wave, and are laughing at us every single day, because we insist in the theory of particles! Come on... There are still quite a few magic experiments that cannot be explained by waves, and the president hasn't responded to Mr. Brook's theory yet!"

Lucien was amused, and he quickly cast a glance at Lazar. Lucien thought that Lazar was already very talkative, but now he realized that Lazar was not even close to Rock. From Rock's words, Lucien got to know some new research trends in the congress, so he was listening quite patiently.

Lazar commented, "Rock's always like this. Well, since the last issue

of Arcana was released, sorcerers like Rock who live in Allyn all the time and who insist to use Particle Theory in discovering spiritual power are facing quite a bit stress from the new theories. I have mixed feelings toward the new and old theories, sorry and proud at the same time.”

Jerome and his beautiful wife were just listening and smiling.

It seemed that elemental sorcerers were naturally supporters of Particle Theory. Without the great pressure from the Church, there might be an intense internal strife among the supporters of different theories.

When Lazar and Rock finished their discussion, Lucien and Jerome were sitting on the couch and having black tea made by Vera. Although the brown-haired, ordinary-looking man was not talkative, happiness could be found in Jerome’s eyes. His wife Vera was a red-haired pretty girl, probably around twenty-three or so.

“Mr. Evans, enjoy the tea. I’m going to prepare dinner,” said Vera politely and left the living room.

Rock sighed with emotion, “How could you find such a nice lady, Jerome? The girls I know have no idea how to be a good wife...”

Jerome grinned shyly.

“Rock, how’s your project going?” asked Lazar.

“Rejected. The board thought I was joking,” said Rock with a bit dismay.

“What project?” asked Lucien curiously.

“A great project!” explained Rock excitedly, “As a sorcerer from Tower, I think everything can be represented by numbers. What we can do is to figure out a standard number system to represent how powerful a spell is, or the level of a sorcerer’s defensive power. By measuring and recording, in the future, when two sorcerers want to fight, numbers can directly show the result, and no one will be hurt.”

“Then what if both of the two sorcerers have their advantages and disadvantages?” asked Lucien confusedly.

“That’s right.” Rock took a pile of paper and started writing, “For example, the total amount of my spiritual power is... 105, and Lazar’s is 96...”

“Hey... Why mine is lower than yours?” Lazar was not happy with the set value.

And then they started arguing.

“They’re just like this, like kids.” Jerome smiled to Lucien.

“That’s why they’re good friends.” Lucien nodded. Those “bad” words Lazar used to describe Rock were also quite suitable for himself.

Ignoring Lazar and Rock, Lucien and Jerome started discussing the school of Astrology and Element, and they enjoyed their conversation very much. The two people regretted that they had not known each other earlier.

“Dinner’s ready.” Vera came back to the living room, followed by servants pushing dining carts.

Putting down the tea cup, Lucien turned around and saw that Lazar and Rock were still playing their card game.

“Magic Missile, Power 5.” Rock put down a piece of card.

“Flame Shield, Defense, 7.” Lazar pulled out a card seriously.

“What are you two doing here?” asked Jerome curiously.

“I have to admit that this isn’t a very good project.” Rock frowned a bit and then grinned, “But it can be turned into a great card game! Wait... I need to find a sifter.”

Lucien was speechless. He could not understand Rock’s way of thinking.

However, Rock had already switched to another topic, “Steak and grilled fish... The smell’s so beautiful... By the way, Vera, why did you choose to stay with Jerome?”

Without doubt, all the three single sorcerers present felt quite envious of their sweet marriage.

After dinner, Lucien and Rock said goodbye to Lazar and walked together back to their shared villa.

The magic school only provided married teachers with a whole villa, since there were quite a few teachers in the school. Before Lazar left, Rock talked to Lucien’s roommate and exchanged their places to live together with Lucien.

Lucien planned to make a potion called Stone tonight to help himself upgrade to second circle, however, he felt quite tired today, so he decided to make it tomorrow after work.

...

Thorn Tree class.

“Do you know today’s Ancient Languages class will be taught by Mr. Evans?” Heidi asked Layria and Annick mysteriously.

“Mr. K? He’s a level two arcanist and second circle sorcerer, so I thought he only taught senior apprentices...”

“No idea. I heard it from Grant.” Heidi shook her head.

Hearing the students’ discussion, even Sprint, who usually did not like speaking to other apprentices, sat up a bit straighter, as the name triggered his memory.

The bell rang, indicating the beginning of the class. All the students stopped talking and looked more serious. To Layria, Heidi and Annick’s great surprise, it was actually their previous teacher who came into the classroom.

Lucien Evans was wearing a black double-breasted coat and a soft hat today.

“It’s really Mr. Evans!” the three apprentices blurted out together, regardless of the classroom disciplines.

Other apprentices in the class were very curious, looking at their new teacher.

Seeing Lucien, Sprint and Katrina had mixed feelings. They felt both excited and also a bit worried.

Lucien took off his hat and put it on the desk. He nodded to the three apprentices first, and then turned to the whole class, “I’m Lucien Evans, your Ancient Languages teacher, and you folks can call me Mr. X if you want. In my class, you can do whatever you want, including doing your own homework or sleeping, as long as your behaviour doesn’t disturb other students who want to pay attention to the class. However, you gotta be responsible for your own choice. If you’re so talented that you can pass the course without listening to me, go ahead, and it’s totally fine, but if you’re not, you’d better behave yourself and study hard, or I’m afraid that you’d be taking this course again in next term. For students who work hard and finish homework on time, extra score will be given.”

It was the first time these apprentices saw a teacher like this, and they felt very excited.

Then Lucien took out a pile of paper, “So, the first class... We’ll be having an assessment today.”

“Test again...” Annick, Layria and Heidi recalled their bad memories. In their eyes, Mr. Evan’s smile looked like the devil’s.

The other students did not know what to expect.

Chapter 197: First Encounter

When the bell was ringing for the end of the class, Lucien directly collected all the test papers and left the class. Then, the students started their heated discussion, "You guys know Mr. X?" asked Grant, the head boy of the class. Grant had black, curly hair and deep-set, black eyes.

As Grant was asking, more students paid attention to Annick, Heidi and Layria, trying to get more information about their new teacher.

Annick nodded, as he really respected Grant, who was hard-working and talented, "We knew Mr. Evans before. That's right."

"Great! He looks pretty cool!" Grant was very impressed by Lucien's words, "I've never met any teachers like him! Mr. X's not like these stubborn teachers at all. Sometimes I already understood what was being taught, but I was still not allowed to do my own stuff... What a waste of time!"

Heidi's face twitched a bit, and then he said seriously, "It's true that Mr. Evans doesn't really care about whether we pay attention to his class, and he keeps saying that we gotta be responsible for our own choices and the consequences if we do not work hard, but this is just one aspect of his teaching, and he's still got another side..."

Lucien's words were very direct, and they won support from most of the apprentices. The students felt that Mr. X was someone who really understood them, and he was a cool teacher that possibly could become their good friend.

"What's the other side?" asked Grant curiously.

"You'll see," answered the three apprentices together. They all remembered what they had experienced with Mr. Evans before.

"Hope you guys won't hate Mr. Evans," said Heidi meaningfully.

The rest of the students were very confused, yet also curious. Then the bell of the next class, Basic Magic Potion, stopped their

discussion.

...

In the teachers' office.

Carrying the test papers, as soon as Lucien entered the office, five teachers, three being men and two women, smiled and nodded to him, while another seven remained quite cold, burying themselves in their own work.

Lucien also nodded to the teachers who were nice to him, knowing that these five teachers were all friends of Rock, who had already told them everything. As for the other seven teachers, they did not get along well at all with Rock, so they decided to ignore Lucien, a sorcerer who only had seven arcana credits and no arcana level.

"Teaching Ancient Languages and Magic Creatures shouldn't be challenging to you, Lucien." When Vilnia, a blond female sorcerer, walked by Lucien's desk, she kindly reminded him, "You'd better spend more of your time on studying basic arcana."

Vilnia was about twenty-five or six, a level one arcanist and second circle sorcerer, specializing in Illusion and Force. As a lady who got both mature charm and the beauty of youth, she was already married and her husband was a viscount. Every morning she took the magic train to come to work from Rentato, capital of Holm.

Because Rentato and Allyn were very close to each other, the commuting time was only ten minutes, and as a sorcerer and a noble lady, a round-trip ticket only cost Vilnia two Nars.

"Thanks for your reminder, Ms. Vilnia. I'll keep it in mind." Lucien smiled politely.

"Polite and good-looking young man." Vilnia joked, "When you visit Rentato, feel free to come to my place and be our guest."

Among all the female teachers in this school, which accounted for one third of the whole teaching staff, some were beautiful, some were charming, and some looked terrifying because of some failed experiments or magic powers which could erode one's appearance.

When Vilnia left the office, Lucien first checked the test papers to know the basic level of the class, Thorn Tree, in Ancient Languages. Then he took out a pile of paper and his quill and started reviewing a second circle spell, Mirror, which had been successfully analyzed before.

Lucien was very interested in this spell once used by the murloc mage, which could help the caster confuse his or her enemy. As the knowledge involved in this basic Illusion spell could also be found in Astrology and Elements, Lucien decided to turn Mirror into his first second circle magic, and thus to make his next breakthrough to become a second circle sorcerer.

...

Douglas, in the magic lab tower.

Finishing the first lesson of Introduction of Magic Creatures in another class, Blood Bird, Lucien hurriedly arrived here.

"Hello, may I have an alchemical laboratory?" Lucien politely asked the old sorcerer managing the tower.

The old level one arcanist, second circle sorcerer, Ines, responded seriously, "Sorry, Mr. Evans, all the magic labs have been borrowed. Please come earlier tomorrow."

"All of the labs?" Lucien looked up at the five-story magic tower. Although it was not very spacious, there were at least ten magic labs on each floor. Lucien could not believe his ears.

Ines calmly replied, "Mr. Evans, we have to reserve twenty labs for our students and the several level two arcanists. For the rest of the labs, you know, first come, first served."

"We have this many teachers who need to do experiments?" asked Lucien, feeling a bit frustrated and surprised.

"No all of them are doing experiments," said Ines. "Some are making potions and some are testing their summoning rites. Everyone knows that one of the best things working here in this school is that one can use the labs for free."

"I totally understand, Mr. Ines." Lucien did not want to give up easily, "Can I use one of the reserved labs first? Then I can leave when the person arrives."

Building a well-equipped lab here was very expensive, and Lucien could not afford it right now.

"No." Ines shook his head, "We have rules, unless you're a level two arcanist who enjoys privileges."

When Lucien was feeling quite frustrated, a low voice came from behind, "Are you Lucien Evans?"

Lucien turned around and saw a tall, ordinary-looking man wearing a black jacket, looking like a strong bear.

"Yes, I'm Lucien Evans... Uh... X. And you?" Lucien nodded.

"I guess so." The tall man smiled, "You don't look familiar to me. Nice to meet you, I'm K."

"So we have the same name." Lucien looked at K curiously.

"Rock was about to introduce me to you this afternoon, but I wasn't in the office," said K a bit shyly, "You're looking for a lab?"

"Yes... but I think I'm too late." Lucien nodded frustratedly.

"Then what about sharing one with me?" suggested K sincerely. "What are you gonna do today?"

"That'll be awesome!" said Lucien excitedly, then with a second thought, he asked politely, "I'm making a magic potion today. Will I disturb your work?"

"Not a problem. There are plenty of alchemical circles in the lab. We can share." K was very generous.

"Thank you, K. Like Rock said, you're really a nice person," said Lucien sincerely.

"I've received lots of help from others as well. Let's go." K was quite

shy, which did not agree with his big and tall figure.

With K's permission, Ines let the two people walk upstairs without saying anything.

Chapter 198: Second Circle

When the lab door opened, the whole lab was slowly lit up with warm yellow light. Although the lab was not as mysterious and grand as that of the Prophet, Maskelyne, which Lucien used in the magic lock, its cleanliness, tidiness and the great amount of equipment was impressive to Lucien.

K pointed at one of the operation platforms, "You can use this one, Lucien... It feels like I'm talking to myself. I'm gonna start doing my experiment as well."

"Thanks, K." Lucien did not ask anything about K's experiment, as someone's experiment was always a secret, and that was how plagiarism came from.

It was hard to prove that someone plagiarized other people's research outcomes, unless the person's thoughts could be investigated by certain spells. However, as for the sorcerers who dared plagiarize, they often had some powerful groups secretly supporting them from behind, thus they could easily avoid being investigated like this when there was not enough evidence, and finding other excuses to exonerate themselves was also not difficult.

What was worse was that some sorcerers would kill other people from whom they stole research outcomes by using different means.

All of these was introduced by Lazar, and when Lucien first heard it, he was quite shocked.

Stone was not difficult to make, and Lucien was quite good at making potions. After three times, a tube of brown turbid liquid was produced.

Still having some time, Lucien took out a tube of purified material and was about to test it following the papers he read. At this time, K, who was standing with his back to Lucien, said to him, "You have other experiments to do, Lucien?"

"Yes?" asked Lucien.

"I'm not trying to steal your experiment, Lucien," said K in his low voice, sounding very reliable, "but I can tell you how to open the secret lock of this lab. If you have to do some urgent experiments, you can use this lab even if I'm not here."

"It's really nice of you, K. I'm still new in the field of Element, and I want to see the nature of all kinds of elements in person by doing many experiments. You know, as a first circle sorcerer, I could not discover many characteristics of the elements by using magic, thus doing experiments is the most reliable way to me," Lucien turned around and said to K sincerely.

Seeing K was still doing his experiment, Lucien turned his back to K again to avoid seeing what he was doing.

"I totally understand. I'll tell you how to enter this lab later," said K, standing with Lucien back to back. "However, I'm leaving this school in a few months. You won't be able to use this lab for long."

"Why are you leaving?" asked Lucien, confused. As he was asking, Lucien turned on the alchemical circle to turn the purified element into vapour to test its gas density.

"Mr. Larry from our group, the Will of Elements, likes my previous paper, and he told me that when I become a middle-rank sorcerer, he would like to have me to help him with some studies. Recently, I've been feeling that I'm approaching this higher level, so I want to have a magic item by accomplishing a task given by the congress to help myself upgrade." K had no intention of showing off his accomplishment and tried to stay humble.

Among the current generation in the Will of Elements, Larry, student of Gaston, was the most promising one who would grow into a senior-rank sorcerer. Right now Larry was a level five arcanist, fifth circle sorcerer, who was even more powerful than Timothy or Ulysses. Only six or seven sorcerers from other groups and organizations could compete with him, including Felipe, who was younger than him but was already close to level five in arcana.

Lucien slightly nodded, "Congratulations. May I take a look at your paper?"

"It hasn't been published yet. The paper's going to be on the next week's issue of Element. Teachers in the school can read it for free." K was quite shy. He did not tell Lucien the name of the paper directly but switched the topic, "Hope you can complete your experiments as soon as possible, Lucien, otherwise when I'm not here anymore, you need to find other places."

Lucien chuckled, "No one ever mentioned that we have a teacher from our school who's gonna publish his work on Element. You're really good at keeping your secret, K. Well, I'll make the best of my time to finish the experiments. K, you're such a nice guy."

"This is nothing. We're supposed to help each other," K answered with a smile.

Back to back, Lucien and K chatted occasionally, but they spent most of their time on doing experiments.

...

It was already early morning when Lucien went back to the place where he lived, and Rock was sound asleep.

Surrounded by the light floral aroma, the quietness of early morning soothed Lucien's soul. Feeling prepared, he opened the glass tube and drank down the brown turbid potion named Stone.

Spicy, sour and bitter, the potion went down from Lucien's mouth and burnt his throat and gullet, making Lucien want to throw up, but inside his body, his soul felt calm and powerful.

When the taste faded a bit in his mouth, he closed his eyes. Lucien soon went into the world of meditation. His consciousness went back to the starry sky, in which his Host Star of Destiny was shining, and the three basic powers, fire, wind and water, were contributing to the existence of the meditation world.

Lucien's consciousness separated from his soul, and started directing the soul. Shining lines extended out from the power of Lucien's soul and started to construct a relatively complicated spatial model.

Since the model had not involved any complex math theories such as curve, and with some new basic knowledge in arcana, Lucien handled the whole process pretty well.

When the model was completed by the last line of soul, the model burst out dazzling light which dragged Lucien's consciousness back into his soul, and covered it.

At this time, Lucien noticed the subtle changes happening around him in this meditation world!

Colourful light spots were appearing in the starry sky in a sophisticated and mysterious order, and each of the spot was showing a complicated model. It seemed that these models themselves were new spells that Lucien had never seen before! However, the structure of the models were in such a chaos, and when Lucien was about to take a closer look, his consciousness was overwhelmed by his own great spiritual power brought by this second circle spell in his soul, Mirror.

Like a small boat trying its very best to survive between the furious waves, like a warrior fighting for his hope, Lucien struggled to stay lucid and keep himself in control.

Thankfully, Lucien's great spiritual power and will passed the test in the end. A shining crystal showed up in his soul, and the level of his spiritual power reached a new record.

"Finally... I'm a second level sorcerer," said Lucien to himself. As he was saying, Lucien activated Mirror, and a clone was produced beside him.

Mirror, a second circle spell from the school of Illusion. Before it was cracked by any detection spells, such as some spells in Astrology, Mirror could protect its caster until the clone of the person was destroyed.

After testing the spell, Lucien removed the magic and looked back at the starry sky. The colourful particles were now all gone, as if it was just Lucien's illusion.

However, Lucien was sure that this was definitely not his illusion, so he ventured a guess:

The meditation world was created and also affected by his own knowledge. When he knew more of the truth in the world, correspondingly, more would show up in this meditation world.

Lucien was learning how to arrange elements recently, and although some elements here were different from those of Lucien's original world, he still could notice some possible orders. Lucien wondered if this was why the meditation world changed when he upgraded. Maybe when Lucien successfully completed the periodic table of elements in this world, the colourful particles would turn into someone else, say, a new magic. However, Lucien had no idea what the magic could be.

...

Heidler, the main tower of the Hand of Paleness, in a dark room.

"Mr. Rogerio, good afternoon." Felipe took out his hands from his jacket and bowed with his right hand on his forehead, "What can I do for you today?"

Felipe was being this respectful, because Rogerio was not only one of the leaders of the Hand of Paleness, but also the member of Affairs Committee, directed by the highest council.

Rogerio was wearing black suit and white, loose-sleeved shirt, looking the same when he was in Aalto, but now there were three badges in front of his chest: level seven arcana badge, eighth circle sorcerer badge, and a black-fired badge representing the Affairs Committee position.

Unlike many necromancers, Rogerio looked more easy-going, "How's your experiment going, Felipe?"

"Not bad, but still needs time." Felipe sat down in front of Rogerio.

Rogerio slightly nodded, and then said, "I've got some news... about Professor."

Chapter 199: Professor and the Musician

Chapter 199: Professor and the Musician

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Felipe's pale face suddenly looked more serious. In his mind, Professor was his enemy, and also a genius, who was probably even more promising than Larry.

"He's in Allyn now?" asked Felipe in low voice.

Rogério just smiled, but did not say anything. Instead, he changed the topic, "My study investigating electromagnetic interference with soul was supposed to be the leading paper in the next issue of Arcana, but the day before yesterday, the chief editor came all the way to Heidler and apologized to me that my paper would be changed to the second position. Too bad... I've been looking forward to the glory all the time."

Staying quite calm, Felipe did not keep asking about Professor, but looked a bit confused and then asked, "A new paper? Where's the new paper from?"

"Yes, a new paper," Rogério nodded, feeling a bit sorry for himself, "from Lord of Storm."

Even Felipe was a bit in awe of this name. Fernando Brastar, Lord of Storm, besides his great accomplishment in arcana and magic, was also known for his bad temper. No one dared present arcana theories with any deficiencies in front of him, regardless what level the person was of, since Fernando would directly refute the person's proposition and ruthlessly jeer at it. Even members from the highest council often wanted to stay away from him.

"What's the paper about? Do you have any clue?" Felipe was very curious.

Getting a cup of water for himself, Rogério turned around, "I'm curious, too. So I went to Common Arcana Library and checked this

paper which just passed the board's review. The paper's about the application of electromagnetic wave. And I have to admit that it's very insightful and creative. It'll be available the day after tomorrow."

Felipe did not say anything, but listened to Rogerio carefully.

"Of course, the reason why I asked you to come here today is not to recommend this paper to you, but because of another paper that inspired Mr. Fernando to develop his paper," Rogerio said seriously.

"A paper... inspired Mr. Fernando?" Felipe frowned a bit.

Rogerio nodded, "The paper's hasn't been published yet, and it's about a small experiment investigating high frequency sound wave, conducted by Lucien Evans X, a sorcerer with no arcana level who just arrived in Allyn a week ago."

"Lucien Evans... The musician? It's a common name though..." Felipe was being very unsure.

Professor and the great musician arrived at the land that originally belonged to Wilfred at the same time, so the Hand of Paleness felt suspicious. Felipe thought that it was Natasha who sent Professor to protect the musician, so he connected the musician and Professor together.

"The broken ring, made of seven-element alloy... Princess Natasha and the famous musician... I wonder if we can say that the ring that Viscount Carendia saw on Professor's hand was the very ring of Holm Crown prize..." There was a mysterious smile on Rogerio's face, "From another perspective, when was Professor's name first heard? It was when some apprentice tried to approach the famous musician, Lucien Evans. Who could benefit from the Hand of Paleness' plan of kidnapping being interrupted? Lucien Evans, the musician."

Rogerio was a bit in awe when he called Natasha's name, not because of Natasha's title, but her ties of blood with an influential person from the congress.

“So...” Felipe touched his chin a bit, “they were even closer than we thought?”

“Why not? A musician has fallen under the lure of an evil sorcerer, and they’ve formed a close bond. Without the support of the Will of Elements, how was it possible that Lucien could become Princess Natasha’s music advisor that fast?” Rogerio’s hands were holding together, “I think by building a closer bond with Princess Natasha, Lucien Evans also got closer to the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy. Perhaps this is the very purpose of the Will of Elements, and they took advantage of our plan!”

“This makes sense,” Felipe slightly nodded, “but something’s still not right.”

It seemed that Felipe and Rogerio knew something secret.

“Princess Natasha is in her three-year penance now, and for the next three years, the famous musician, Lucien Evans, will be studying arcana here in Allyn to improve himself to respond to their future challenges. This is how I view the whole thing,” Rogerio continued.

Felipe’s left hand missed a finger, but he still used that hand to rub his chin, “But there’s no solid evidence showing that this Lucien Evans X is the very famous musician, right?”

“There is.” Rogerio put on a sophisticated smile, “Remember I encountered the famous musician in Aalto once? To confirm my guesses, I went to Douglas, and I saw him there!”

“For sure?!” Felipe was surprised.

“Completely,” said Rogerio. “Lucien Evans X is for sure Professor’s good student. From him, we can lift Professor’s veil!”

“That’s right... That’s why Lucien Evans’s first paper ever could be directly cited by the grand arcanist!” Felipe agreed.

“Good point.” Rogerio knocked at the desk confidently, “Mr. Fernando’s paper talks about the application of high frequency sound wave, and do you remember the mechanism of Professor’s

symbolic magic?”

“According to the viscount and Amores... low frequency sound wave.” Felipe recalled seriously, “Now I see the connection.”

“Yesterday, I secretly observed Lucien’s class. It was... pretty interesting and creative.” Rogerio quite appreciated Lucien’s teaching style and his talent, “It feels like his music style, creative and always about something new.”

In their discussion, Felipe and Rogerio were sure that Lucien was Professor’s outstanding student.

They did not know Lucien as well as Natasha did, besides, since Natasha did not know how powerful Professor was, it was easier for her to directly connect Lucien to Professor. As for Felipe and Rogerio, they would never consider that Professor, the arcanist who successfully designed the experiment of synthesizing carbamide, was just a beginner in arcana.

That was the blind spot of their thinking.

“Shall we somehow get Lucien here in Heidler and check his thoughts?” Felipe wanted to know what was the next step.

“No.” Rogerio shook his head, “Quite possibly, Professor is working on some important research, and if we touch Lucien right now, it would definitely alarm him. We shall keep an eye on Lucien to see what experiment he’s working on and what people he’s meeting, and this work is on me. Felipe, you focus on your research. If you can publish some great research results before Professor, we won’t have to adopt any violent means then.”

Felipe frowned his brows, “What I don’t understand is why Professor hasn’t published the paper on synthesizing carbamide. This is definitely a very debatable topic that could earn him tons of credits.”

“Maybe he’s still waiting for the final answer of his research.” Rogerio smiled, “Felipe, what about you develop the paper on carbamide synthesizing yourself? Representing the Hand of

Paleness, the paper can prove our great inspiration as necromancers.”

After some improvement in magic rites, now Rogerio also agreed that synthesizing life ingredients was doable, but he could not find any definitive proof yet.

Felipe shook his head seriously, “My self-esteem won’t allow me to do this, Mr. Rogerio, and I believe that you won’t do this as well. Besides, not all the sorcerers in the Hand of Paleness are as open-minded as you, sir. If I really did this, I would be in big trouble.”

Rogerio smiled, “I see. What a coincidence it is which leads us to find Professor...”

...

Douglas, headmaster’s office.

“Mr. Donald, what can I do for you?” asked Lucien.

“Are you getting along well with K?” Donald did not get to the point immediately, “It’s also quite troublesome for me to share the same name with the famous arcanist from the highest council.”

There was another Donald, from the highest council, who was a ninth circle elemental sorcerer and the winner of Holm Crown prize for finding a new element by using spectral analysis. He was also one of the two presidents of the Will of Element.

After a bit casual chatting, Donald looked more serious, “Lucien, some teachers jointly complained that you’ve breached the school rules since you’re telling students that it’s okay not to listen to a teacher. After verification, the complaint has been proved, so I need to punish you by suspending your course for a month. I hope you can learn from it.”

Chapter 200: Feeling Unsafe

Chapter 200: Feeling Unsafe

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Facing the unexpected punishment, Lucien was quite unhappy and frustrated, as he thought that he was maintaining quite a low profile and trying to avoid any possible conflicts with other teachers who did not like him. Still, now he was in trouble.

However, Lucien never gave up easily, “Sir, I’ve been receiving quite a few positive comments from my students from both Thorn Three and Blood Bird, and that proves that my way of teaching’s efficient. As you can see, my students’ scores have improved as well.”

“I know,” answered Donald directly, and his answer surprised Lucien.

“But you’ve still broken the rules, Lucien.” Donald continued and changed his tone, “In Douglas, teachers should be authorities and should always be respected. Telling students that they don’t have to listen has severely violated our tradition. Regardless how effective your teaching method might be, the tradition of the school can never be breached. I hope you can realize your mistake, Lucien.”

Lucien was speechless. He knew that the improvement of his students’ academic performance could not help him, since the headmaster valued the rules of the school more than anything else in this world, where the sense of order and class was highly respected.

Seeing that Lucien did not respond, Donald smiled to comfort him a bit, “Lucien, I know young people are always full of ideas, and among those ideas, some are good and some not. Say, I like the part where you increased the amount of exercise and homework that students should do, and now we’re promoting this part in your teaching practice all over the campus.”

Lucien rubbed his head a bit but still did not say anything. He felt that students in this school would hate him for sure.

...

“Yes?” Rock patted on Lucien’s shoulder to comfort him, “What happened?”

“Suspending my teaching for a month. Salary cut by half. Can still use the labs, libraries and buy experiment materials for lower prices. Next time I violate the rules, I’m fired,” said Lucien expressionlessly.

Rock swore a bit in low voice, “Must be those bastards from Electromagnetism... you know, the guy named Beate...he must be the leading one! They also teach Thorn Three and Blood Bird, and the students prefer you way more than them!”

“I see... That is the reason, then.” Lucien finally understood where did all of these come from. In Lucien’s mind, Beate looked like a quiet person, and he never expected something like this from him.

Beate had black hair and black eyes, and was an ordinary-looking man. He was pretty good at Electromagnetism, and currently, he was a level one arcanist, second circle sorcerer.

Walking downstairs, Rock said to Lucien half joking and half serious, “Lucien, although you always give the students quite a bit of homework, you’re the coolest and the most popular teacher in their mind. However, I gotta remind you that there’s something in this school that cannot be violated. You can have your ideas, and you can also do what you want to do, but you’re never supposed to speak it out.”

“Now I understand.” Lucien nodded, “Thank you, Rock.”

Rock grinned, “Actually, orders and traditions are all created by those big men. If you were a grand arcanist, Lucien, I bet no one would accuse you of breaking the rules, but speak highly of you that you’re creative and bold, and we should all follow your practice.”

"I think you're right, Rock." Lucien smiled.

...

During lunchtime, in order to comfort Lucien, Jerome, K, Vilnia, and some other teachers came to Lucien's place and had lunch with him.

After lunch, hearing the bad news, Annick, Layria and Heidi also came to visit Lucien. Surprisingly, Sprint, Katrina, Grant, and another green-haired girl were also there. The girl with dark green-hair was strange to Lucien, being around seventeen or eighteen.

"We're always on your side, Mr. Evans!" Having no idea what was proper to say at that moment, after a while, Annick, Heidi and Layria finally came up with one sentence together.

Sprint still did not say anything, but he was slightly nodding to show his support. Katrina and Grant also waved their fists and said, "Your teaching's great, Mr. Evans!"

And then Grant mumbled a bit, "Could be better without homework."

"I'll be coming back soon. Thank you all." Lucien did not encourage the students to fight against the school for him, since he did not want the students to be in trouble.

After a bit casual chatting, Heidi said to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, as students coming from the other side of the strait, we've been feeling quite challenged in basic magic and arcana. So we wonder... whether you would be willing to spend some time on tutoring us this month, Mr. Evans?"

"We can pay!" added Layria hurriedly. "Some of our experiment products were bought by the school, and we made some money from it!"

"Arcana tutoring?" Lucien was surprised, and felt this a bit strange.

However, the apprentices were pretty serious.

K decided to help the students, “They’re hard-working and brave young men and ladies, Lucien. If you have time, maybe you can help them a bit, and when I’m free, I can join you.”

“I see... then what about every Saturday afternoon?” After receiving K’s help, Lucien also wanted to be nice to other people, “And there’s no way that I’m gonna charge you students. The tutoring is free. So... who’s in?”

“Me, me!” Heidi hurriedly raised her hand, followed by Layria and Annick.

Katrina’s face blushed, but she was being quite decisive, “I’m in, Mr. Evans.”

Sprint’s face also went red, including his ears, “Me... too...”

As one of the leading students in the class, Grant smiled and said shyly, “Mr. Evans, I think I’m fine so far.”

The strange young girl was looking at Heidi, signalling to him.

Heidi hurriedly nodded and said to Lucien, “Mr. Evans, this’s Chely, our roommate, from Sea Gull. She can’t follow most of our courses, and she wants to join us as well.”

“Chely...?” Lucien repeated the name a bit, as the name sounded very familiar to him, and the colour of the girl’s hair was also very unique. If the girl was the same Chely that Lucien encountered on the ship, then the relationship between Viscount Wright and the congress would be very complicated.

It seemed that Chely understood why Lucien was a bit surprised, so she slightly nodded, “Yes.”

Chely was a quiet girl, so she did not say much.

Another example of a knight falling in love with a sorcerer, and although it was going to be very difficult, Lucien sincerely hoped that they would not copy Natasha and Silvia.

When Lucien agreed that Chely could also join them, Rock came

back and said to him excitedly, “Lucien! Your paper has been cited by Mr. Brastar! Fernando Brastar! The grand arcanist! The first paper on Magic!”

Although Rock’s expression was quite messy, all the teachers in the living room stood up out of great surprise, including Grant, who understood the importance of Magic and how influential Fernando was.

Even Lucien was very surprised, as his paper was published only a few days ago.

“This one!” Rock handed the journal to Lucien, “Take a look yourself!”

The first thing came into Lucien’s eyes was the title – Discussion over the Application of Electromagnetic Wave, followed by the author’s name and his rank – Fernando Brastar, grand arcanist, legendary class: level three, Lord of Storm.

The beginning of the paper did not comply with the standard format at all:

“My student Thompson is the member of Affairs Committee, and he found an interesting paper during his reviewing work, which conducted a series of simple experiments to study how bats use high frequency sound wave to sense things in darkness. When I read the paper, I was inspired, hence I developed this paper investigating some possible applications of electromagnetic wave from a broader perspective, and the differences in application between high and low frequency electromagnetic waves. Moreover, if sound wave can carry information, what about electromagnetic wave?”

Lucien was very impressed by the grand arcanist’s great imagination. The grand arcanist got ahead of Lucien in investigating the field of application, and Lucien was about to use this to earn more credits later.

Lucien could already see the prosperous future of the application of electromagnetic wave.

After feeling impressed, Lucien suddenly felt unsafe with being directly mentioned by a grand arcanist in his paper. Without doubt, lots of unnecessary attention would come to him.

Chapter 201: Monitoring

Chapter 201: Monitoring

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Holding the journal in his hand, Lucien was a bit lost in his own thoughts.

If anyone was interested in the young sorcerer who had no arcana level, and thus decided to investigate him in Sorcerer Administrative Department, the person would find out that the young sorcerer came from the continent and shared the same name with the great musician in Aalto.

It would be even worse if anyone in Allyn had ever seen Lucien in Aalto before, and if he was recognized by someone from the Hand of Paleness, it would definitely be a great trouble for him. Because of what happened in Djibouti, Lucien was afraid that many people would directly connect him to Professor.

Thinking of these, Lucien started feeling unsafe. He was regretful that he carelessly used his real name when he submitted the paper, as he never expected that his first paper ever would be cited by a grand arcanist and thus gained that much unnecessary attention. Now, he felt that he was standing under a giant spotlight.

He knew he was being overly relaxed and incautious ever since he arrived in Allyn. Again, he drew an important lesson from it.

In a couple of seconds, lots of thoughts flashed through Lucien's mind.

"Hey... Hey!" Rock nudged Lucien lightly, "Are you being too excited?"

The last junior-rank sorcerer whose paper got cited by a grand arcanist was Ulysses when he was about twenty. Although Felipe's paper on the relation between cell memory and healing divine power spells won the Immortal Throne Award jointly set up by

Colette Royal Magic Academy and the Hand of Paleness following Holm Crown Prize, at that time he was already a level two arcanist, third circle sorcerer. As a sorcerer having no arcana level, Lucien's achievement was definitely very impressive.

"Ah... a bit..." Lucien forced a smile on his face. "Quite surprising..."

Then, Lucien hurriedly read through the paper from Lord of Storm, and he was deeply shocked with the grand arcanist's great intelligence:

"Summarizing all the experiments and statistics, we can draw the conclusion that electromagnetic wave can for sure be used in searching and locating, and it's much faster than high frequency sound waves. However, since the feedback is not clear enough, a special magic structure needs to be produced to filter and emphasize information received. The structure requires lots of calculation, thus I would consider this future magic as a forth of fifth circle spell, and here I name it beforehand – 'Eye of Thunder'.

"At the same time, we can also see that when the vibration of electromagnetic wave reaches a higher frequency, with enough power and energy, internal molecular of the experiment target start colliding with each other and high heat is thus produced. This experiment phenomenon could be turned into another powerful spell to defeat someone who is skilled in defence from inside. I expect it to be a fifth or sixth circle magic, and following the tradition, I call it 'Fernando's Lightning Smelter'.

"Improving the frequency to the next level, using the great heat produced in the reaction, another powerful magic can thus be created, which is also a fifth or sixth circle magic. I call it 'Invisible Crematory'.

"If we wanted to improve the frequency to an even higher level, we would enter the field of light."

Lucien was very impressed, as the grand arcanist basically found all of the major applications of electromagnetic wave at different frequencies. If the grand arcanist had not stopped in front of the

world of light, Lucien was sure that Fernando would come up with more spells!

Without doubt, grand arcanists were great geniuses. Even when they made mistakes, it was not because of their lack of intelligence, but very often they were deceived by their previous experiences, and as long as they were inspired, they would have the ability to change the world!

“Bye bye... my future arcana credits and points.” Lucien sighed, “The grand arcanist did not leave me much to further explore in the application of electromagnetic wave.”

Lucien handed the journal back to Rock.

When the other teacher started carefully reading the article, in the corner, Lucien was still bothered by the thought that his identity had already been exposed.

However, feeling anxious could not do much help. Right now the best solution for Lucien to take was to gain the attention of the Will of Element. If the Will of Element could see the great value in Lucien, they would definitely protect him to stand against the Hand of Paleness.

When Lucien came to himself, he saw Rock, Jerome, Vilnia and other people present were looking at him with a mixture of emotions. Only K was still reading the paper.

“Yes?” asked Lucien confusedly.

Vilnia frowned a bit and then put on a wry smile, “I can imagine what Beate and other sorcerers in the school of Electromagnetism would say. They will proudly announce that the future of the world is in the hand of Electromagnetism. However, it is you who inspired Mr. Fernando Brastar, the author of the great paper supporting their assertion...”

Lucien understood what she was trying to say. If felt that it was Lucien who handed the decisive weapon to win the battle to their enemies, but Lucien was also innocent.

The other teachers also felt the same way.

"I don't really mind it," said K in his low voice, trying to comfort his colleague. "Lucien did a great job, and the progress does not belong to a certain school, but to the whole congress. The truth of the world won't be changed by the meaningless arrogance of some people."

Jerome smiled, "Sorry, we just don't like people like Beate, and it's not your fault at all, Lucien."

"Come on, Lucien can publish more great papers exploring the world of elements as well!" Rock waved his arms and cheered up.

The teachers got more relaxed now, and they started discussing some related academic topics heatedly. The apprentices were listening to them carefully, as if they were enjoy some exciting stories.

When it was early afternoon, some teachers left Lucien's place, followed by the apprentices. Only Chely looked quite lost in her own thoughts.

"Hey, Chely. Time to go." Heidi patted her on the shoulder.

Chely suddenly came back to herself, and then she said shyly, "Watching Mr. Evans and the other teachers' discussion brought me back to the days when I watched my father discussing with his knights in our place. The teachers' conversation was passionate and insightful, and it's not like how people in Sturk describe sorcerers at all. Since the first day I arrived in Allyn, I am deeply touched by what I've seen... This place is like a dream, but I'm also afraid..."

"Communication..." Lucien responded. "Communication's always very important when people face difficulties."

Lucien believed that if Natasha and Silvia could have communicated in a better way, they would not end up like that.

Chely nodded but still felt quite depressed.

Seeing this, Lucien walked to the piano sitting in the living room. It

was the school who sent the piano, since Lucien was also teaching music.

The music Lucien started playing was very familiar to most Chinese kids – Two Tigers.

“Cheer up; Cheer up; little Chely, little Chely! The bell’s ringing; the bell’s ringing; Don’t be late, Don’t be late.”

Lucien sang the young girl a cute song. A smile jumped on Chely’s face, and Heidi, Layria and Annick behaved the same. The apprentices all burst out into laughter.

“Thank you, Mr. Evans. Your playing’s wonderful.” Chely stood up and said sincerely.

After the apprentices left Lucien’s place happily, Lucien walked to his study with a smile on his face, however, he felt a bit stressed in his mind.

Since some elements here in this world were different from what he had learned in his original world, Lucien was now having a hard time grouping them in order. As he could not identify some of the elements, Lucien could only temporarily consider them as some strange isotopes, however, currently he could not go any further.

He must hurry. He must win enough attention from the Will of Elements.

Sitting in front of the pile of cards representing different elements, when Lucien was about to continue his research, he suddenly felt something hot in front of his chest.

The heat came from Sun’s Corona! It was alerting Lucien that some undead creature was approaching him!

Lucien’s facial expression did not change even in the slightest, but quickly he thought to himself, “There must be some powerful undead thing staying right beside me... but why it hasn’t launched its attack? Is it trying to see what I am doing?”

Sun’s Corona was the undeads’ invincible opponent!

Chapter 202: The Power of Belief

Chapter 202: The Power of Belief

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Since only one layer of the seal had been unlocked, right now Sun's Corona could only sense the very strong smell of the World of Souls, and the thing it sensed must be very powerful, which meant that a horrible undead was right now staring at Lucien.

However, Lucien stayed relatively calm, and when he secretly scanned the whole study, he found no one else but himself.

Although the winter sun was nice and warm, Lucien felt cold inside.

Trying his best to behave as usual, Lucien picked up a card and pretended that he was reading the notes about an element written on the card carefully.

Sun's Corona was getting hotter and hotter. Staring at the card, Lucien felt that there was a big white skull with bloody red-light eyes reading the notes right beside his face with him.

However, in the mirror, Lucien was the only one in the study.

Lucien wondered if this thing was sent by the Hand of Paleness, but he was also quite certain that they were still suspecting his relationship with Professor, instead of equating him directly with the mysterious sorcerer, or what he was facing now would be way more than just being watched.

Although there were lots of thoughts going on in Lucien's mind, he did not show any different behavior. Like most researchers who were dedicated to their studies, Lucien kept working on his study over the elements.

In his mind, he knew that he really needed to hurry up and create his next arcana paper.

In the early evening, Lucien put down his cards and walked out of the study. The heat produced by Sun's Corona was now hard to notice, but still relatively warm, which meant that the creature was not leaving the place yet.

Lucien relaxed a little, as he knew that it was just watching him. The only thing he needed to do and could do now was act as normal as possible.

...

After dinner, Lucien came to the lab tower as usual. As soon as he entered the tower, the heat from Sun's Corona totally disappeared.

Lucien was very glad to see that the powerful magic circles protecting this tower could also prevent the undead from following him here.

At this time, K walked to him, "Lucien, I thought you wouldn't come here today."

"I'm stronger than that." Lucien smiled, and then walked with K side by side, "By the way, what's your paper on this issue of Element, K? Sorry I forgot to ask you earlier."

K scratched his hair a bit and answered shyly, "It's about the phenomenon that elements always bond with fixed number of molecules in alchemical experiments. In other words... something like valency put forward by Mr. Larry."

"That's the foundation of the school of Elements. Now I see why Mr. Larry appreciate your talent, K." Lucien sincerely nodded.

K was very shy. He did not respond but just smiled, lowering his head.

At this time, several people walked past and saw Lucien and K.

"Good evening, Mr. K, Mr. Evans." greeted an ordinary-looking, black-haired young man. Lucien was not sure if that was a smile on his face.

Keeping a poker face, K responded, “Good evening, Beate.”

Then he turned around and walked upstairs to the fourth floor, followed by Lucien after a quick nod.

“You don’t like us, Mr. Evans.” Beate smiled, “It seems that you haven’t realized what you did wrong.”

K turned around again and said to him angrily, “You don’t have to do this, Beate. Even if Lucien did break the rules, he’s new here, and you could have talked to him first.”

“Well... well... Our Mr. Nice’s angry now. That’s rare,” said Beate’s friend. Then, his long face looked more serious, “Mr. Evans needs to receive this lesson to realize how acceptable it is to break the school traditions here.”

Before Lucien said anything, Beate cut in, “Now I don’t care who broke the rules. The most important thing to me is the development of the school of electromagnetic wave. If you keep sticking to your wrong theories and believing that atoms are the basis of the world, K, I’m afraid that your head is gonna explode as you think too hard, ha. Now we’re gonna study the application of electromagnetic wave following Mr. Fernando, and good luck to you element guys.”

Beate was usually not a very talkative person, but now he was feeling great, and so were his friends.

Lucien was pissed off, but there was nothing he could do right now. After they walked away, Lucien asked K confusedly, “K, what does that mean by... one’s head... explodes?”

K answered in his low voice, which echoed in the space, “This is not a formal theory, and this’s an assumption put forward by the president of the congress. He believes that one’s meditative world is a reflection of one’s own understanding of the nature of the world, and one’s own ideas and knowledge.

Lucien nodded, and in his heart, he agreed with Mr. Douglas.

“In addition to the more than ten common meditations that suit most meditation environments, each of the other meditations has to

work with its specific environment. If not, or if the environment is not stable enough, one's spiritual power is likely to explode, and that may do damage to one's soul and brain structure, or, directly blow up one's head," said K seriously. "If a sorcerer's belief was proved wrong by some new theory, and if he or she could not accept or understand the new one, his or her meditation environment could hardly change. As you may know, Lucien, changing one's ontology and understanding of the nature of the world can be very, very difficult, thus failing of adjusting oneself to new knowledge can greatly disturb a sorcerer's way of doing mediation and the stability of the mediation world. At the same time, losing confidence and belief is fatal to a sorcerer as well, consequently. People could die from it. Only few sorcerers can overcome this and come back to the right path."

Lucien was deeply shock. He could not understand why Felipe became that angry and emotional when Lucien synthesized carbamide right in front of him, but now he got to know the reason. Fortunately, his experiment was not able to fully overthrow the theory of Life Force, or he would have been killed by the crazy necromancers right on the spot.

Intelligent and hard-work as Felipe was, Lucien was sure that the necromancer belonged to the group of the few people who could switch their mindset fast enough, as mentioned by K. Lucien also guessed that Felipe was right now working on overthrowing the theory of Life Force himself in order to leave no chance to his enemies, which would make a huge difference.

No wonder the Hand of Paleness sent that powerful undead thing to watch Lucien.

Without noticing Lucien's reaction, K continued, "But all the existing theories are still under heated discussion and facing all kinds of criticism, hence they're not solid enough to completely destroy many sorcerers' beliefs. Therefore, spiritual power explosion was something very rare. Recently, however, in the past several great discussions, when electromagnetic induction was verified, a few senior and middle-rank sorcerers died as their beliefs were destroyed. It is said that recently when light was proved to be of the form of electromagnetic wave, several pastors in Holm got killed by

the holy light in their bodies when they were praying. All those things prove that the president's assumption is correct, and people who can withstand those great shifts are going to become stronger."

"The development of arcana and magic comes with blood and tears." Lucien nodded, looking rather serious. He believed that the reason why he could change his meditation environment so easily was because he actually had the correct knowledge from his original world, but here he needed to verify this knowledge first.

"So, the biggest challenge for sorcerers here who originally followed the ancient magic system is that they have to switch their understanding of the world. Many of them don't accept it, and they can never make further progress," K nodded to Lucien. "But you're different, Lucien. You're not only growing together with the apprentices when you're teaching, but also even doing experiments to verify some of the arcana theories. You were born to be an arcanist, Lucien."

...

In the following month, under the watch of the Hand of Paleness, Lucien completed his verification experiments of the nature of all existing elements in this world. However, he did not show the correct order of his element cards in his study. In order to hide his findings, Lucien did the key part in the lab and his spirit library.

Then Lucien started to develop his second paper, and its title was:

The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements.

Chapter 203: Submission

"The original purpose of me doing this research was very simple. As a beginner in arcana, I was seeking a method to better remember the atomic mass of each existing element, so I started playing with cards. I wrote down the features of the elements on the cards and put them in order.

"Surprisingly, during my practice, I found a periodic cycle of repetition of these elements, and the periodic cycle also exists in Valence, discussed in the latest issue of Element. My assumption is that the cycle is created by the mass of the atom, following the order from small to large, and I wondered whether the nature of an element is decided by the mass of its atom, as well as whether we can find more hiding elements following this order. In order to verify my assumption, I did a series of experiments."

This was the introduction part of Lucien's research. After verifying that elements in this world could also be arranged following a periodic table, Lucien was almost certain that these elements similarly also consisted of protons and electrons. However, he did not have solid evidence to prove it. Therefore, Lucien decided to stick to atomic mass so far, or people would find it very suspicious when a young sorcerer was exploring something beyond his arcana level.

Following the introduction part, Lucian explained his methodology and theoretical framework for the arrangement, taking elements' physical and chemical properties, the nature of their compounds, as well as the nature of their alchemical products into consideration, and then he put forward a table listing sixty-five elements in order and summarized.

"In this periodic table, each vertical line of elements have similar characters."

...

"I left some table cells blank, as there is no proper elements to fill

in. Here, I suggest two possible reasons: one is that the mass of some atoms are wrongly weighed, or they are new elements that have not been discovered by us yet."

...

"As for the new elements that have not been discovered, here my bold hypotheses is that they are aluminum-like element and silicon-like element, and they can be possibly found in..."

...

"Further researches need to be done for verification of my theories and assumptions."

Lucien put down his quill and read the paper several times. Then, after giving the parchment a slight blow, Lucien put it in his storage pouch.

Lucien did not expect that the mistakenly weighed elements could be identified and corrected soon by other sorcerers, as most of them were contributed by quite complicated reasons, such as those isotopes that could not be separated properly. Although Lucien had figured out these elements' true atom mass, he did not talk about it in this paper.

When he left the lab, it was totally dark outside as they were already in winter. Pocketing his hands in the jacket, Lucien walked back to his villa slowly, thinking of the next step of his plan.

At this time, someone behind him called his name, "Mr. Evans, are you ready for next week's teaching?"

It was Beate, who also just left the lab tower, and his tone was still not friendly.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Beate." Lucien sent him back a calm smile, "I'm not going back next Monday, and I already asked for the day off with the headmaster, as I need to renew my arcana badge on that day... You know, to put some more credits and points on it. Since Mr. Fernando cited my paper, I've got quite a few points now from other people citing me. Oh... sorry, I forgot that you never

experienced something like this."

Beate took a deep breath as his face turned purple, and then he said sarcastically, "You'd better wish your good luck's always gonna be there then, Evans."

He was pissed off by Lucien's show-off. After saying that, Beate left by the side way in the garden.

Looking at Beate from behind, Lucien slightly shook his head. Compared with the undead thing, in Lucien's eyes, Beate was nothing important.

When Lucien came back to his place, his six students were still busy with doing their exercises. The lights in his place were all on, and in front of the apprentices, there were piles of paper.

"Mr. Evans... Ah... Good evening." The apprentices' eyes were red and their faces blushed as they were thinking so hard.

Lucien nodded, smiling, "How's everything going?"

"The questions are super difficult!" Heidi hurriedly answered, looking quite emotional.

The other apprentices all agreed.

"Those questions all require some skills in thinking." Lucien grinned, "Do it smart, not do it hard. All right... Let's call it a day. Take the rest as the homework for this week and give it back to me next Saturday."

Hearing that they were okay to leave, the apprentices were all quite happy and excited. While some showed their excitement right away, some tried to hide it.

Pretending that he did not see the students' reaction, Lucien asked the housemaid to walk the young kids out.

When they passed through the gate of the villa, the apprentices looked back. The villa in the darkness was like a hiding monster, waiting for its prey.

Heidi shivered slightly and looked at the test paper in her hand, "It's almost too much for me... I'm feeling a bit regretful now for seeking Mr. Evans' tutoring."

"Mr. Evans' method works well, though." Surprisingly, it was Sprint who made this comment, "We're not real sorcerers yet. We should work hard like this. And Mr. Evans is a great teacher."

Katrina and Annick nodded beside him.

Heidi whined, "I know... I know... But I just want to have a real weekend! Mr. Evans is such a demon. I like him, I respect him, but I also hate him."

No one opposed this comment from Heidi.

...

On Monday morning, at nine, a coach slowly stopped in front of the headquarter of the Congress of Magic.

Wearing white shirt, dark brown vest, and long black jacket, Lucien put on his black top hat and stepped on the stairs calmly. As soon as he got off the coach, the undead creature totally disappeared.

When Lucien walked past the gate, Prospell greeted him in a dull tone, "Welcome... You'd receive my warmest welcome if you made a female tower Djinni."

Lucien did not respond, as Prospell said the same to every single sorcerer who passed this gate.

He went straight to zone four, to the Sorcerer Administrative Department.

Seeing Lucien, Cindy was a bit surprised. As she winked her beautiful brown eyes, she said to Lucien half joking and half complaining, "I wonder who's this gentleman... Ah, this is Mr. Evans, who was absent for a whole month!"

As Lucien was still in Allyn, Cindy felt that, as friends, they should see each other more frequently.

"Wow... This is our famous Mr. Evans, whose paper was cited by Mr. Fernando!" Dona also welcomed Lucien in a bit joking manner, "We're so lucky that you still remember us!"

Lucien smiled nicely and also felt a bit sorry, "I've been overwhelmed in this past month, mostly developing papers. Please, don't make fun of me, ladies. By the way, is Lazar here today?"

Seeing that Lucien was still this easygoing as usual, Cindy and Dona cheered up, and they hurriedly shared with Lucien what happened in the past month in the congress.

Lazar was in Rentato now, preparing an upcoming conference of the Will of Elements in next month. The grand arcanist, Mr. Brook, who proved that light was actually a kind of electromagnetic wave, recently won his third Silver Moon Medal, jointly awarded by Brianna Royal Magic Academy, Moonsong League and Tower, which was the highest award in the school of Electromagnetics, Light-darkness and Astrology.

Besides Holm Crown prize in the school of Element and Alchemy, Immortal Throne Award in Necromancy, Silver Moon Medal in the school of Electromagnetics, Light-darkness and Astrology, there was also Sorcerer Laurel, established by Calais Magic Academy and Family of Sorcerer in traditional Transformation, Illusion and Summoning, Ice & Snow Medal set up by the far northland and the Cabin of Palmeira, and Arcana Staff founded by Tower to recognize one's achievement in Field Force, Astrology and Mathematics.

These awards all appeared following Holm Crown prize, and the congress only played a role of supervision there.

After chatting a bit with Cindy and Dona, Lucien got to know some latest news of the congress. Then he visited Eric's office.

There was an imperceptible smile on Eric's face, "Evans, you must be here to renew your badge."

Lucien nodded and smiled, "Yes, please, Mr. Eric, but before that, I also have something else to do. First, I want to submit my arcana paper, and second, I'd like to take the assessment of basic arcana."

Eric was not surprised that Lucien had already come up with his second paper. In his eyes, the young man would definitely work even harder after his first paper was cited by the grand arcanist.

However, he was very surprised to know that it was an arcana paper, and Lucien was already prepared to take the test, "Really? Are you sure? As a beginner in arcana...?"

"Three months," Lucien said confidently. "I feel I'm quite talented with arcana. And after all, Mr. Brook passed his test when he was only eleven."

"At that time, Mr. Brook had already studied arcana for two years, not three months!"

"I have solid foundation of magic theory, and I've got cognitive competence as an adult." Lucien smiled, "And I know how to study."

Eric's light gray eyes stared at Lucien seriously. Seeing that Lucien was this confident, he finally nodded, "All right, then. We'll see if you can pass the test."

Before they headed for the test room, Eric sent Lucien's arcana paper to the board using the iron cage again in his office.

...

The same spacious room, the same bells ringing.

"Necromancy... To Mr. Pesor and Ms. Tina-Timos..."

"Element... To Mr. Gaston and Mr. Overee."

...

Then, in a room where there were lots of bottles of purified elements, an Earth Elemental picked up Lucien's paper and quickly scanned it, "The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements... Hum... again, periodic relation..." murmured it. "No arcana level... Let me not bother Mr. Gaston then... Probably Mr. Larry's available right now."

...

When Larry got the several papers for that day, after a quick glance at the papers, the man with rough yellow beard did not read them immediately but put them aside casually.

"Mathew, pick them up in three days."

The brown owl named Mathew nodded and then flew away.

Chapter 204: Comments

Chapter 204: Comments

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Sorcerer Administrative Department.

“All A + ...?” Eric looked the young and good-looking man from head to toe several times, and said incredibly, “How’s that possible...? Your reasoning ability and your arcana way of thinking are similar to that of a middle-rank arcanist. Did you really just start three months ago?”

“I swear, Mr. Eric.” Lucien grinned.

“I trust you, Evans.” Eric rubbed his face a bit with his right hand, “There’s no way one could cheat in this test, unless they had some legendary level magic item. So, Evans, here I announce that you have passed the test. After the department director signs it, you will get one basic arcana credit. Please wait a little.”

There was one main director and three vice directors in Sorcerer Administrative Department, and the main director was also the member of Affairs Committee.

Watching Eric sending the test result to the director, Lucien asked expectantly, “Mr. Eric, when do you think I can get the result of my arcana paper?”

Calm as Lucien was, he still definitely looked forward to it.

Undoubtedly, the periodic table of the elements played a very important role in the whole history of science development, symbolizing the end of human being’s disorganized exploration of elements, and it inspired countless further important studies.

Moreover, what was hidden behind the periodic order was an amazing, unimaginable, brand new area. In-depth study in this field could greatly shake the past knowledge of physics in Lucien’s

original world, and might also overturn some major theories currently supported by the congress.

Therefore, it was not improper to compare the periodic table of the elements to the cornerstone and the throne in the world of element study. However, important as it was, when Mendeleev first put it forward in Lucien's original world, no one paid attention to his research, and people even commented that his work was a total waste of time, including his teacher. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the importance of his work was finally commonly acknowledged, Mendeleev still failed to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry by one vote.

Thinking of this, Lucien was inevitably a little nervous. He knew that his paper required the support of further researches, to be done by other sorcerers.

If no one was interested in his research, or the theories that Lucien brought from his original world did not work here in this magical world, his work would never pay off.

Even if there were arcanists who could see the importance of his finding, verification still needed time, but Lucien needed attention from the Will of Elements right now, or before that, he would be killed by some powerful group, say, the Hand of Paleness.

The best way to get enough feedback as soon as possible was to publish his paper on a very influential journal, but before that, the paper needed to get through the review of the board.

"It depends..." Eric answered, "For an arcana paper, I would say that it varies between three days to a week or even a month. Your last paper was an exception, Evans. But there's nothing to worry about as well, as your paper will be saved by the board, and no one could take your research result."

"I see..." Lucien nodded. In a short period of time, Lucien believed that he was still safe, and the undead thing would not easily attack him. Although he did plan to somehow borrow the power of the congress to find who sent this thing to watch him, Lucien decided to be more cautious as he was still very new here.

A while later, the document signed by the director was sent back. Eric then renewed both of Lucien's arcana badge and magic badge.

"Evans, you've got your basic arcana credit, while at the same time, in the latest issue of the journals, a total of nine papers cited your experiment and research result, including the one from Mr. Fernando, so that's a total of nine arcana credits." Eric looked at Lucien's arcana badge and said, "Now in total, you have seventeen arcana credits. Congratulations, Evans, you're a level one arcanist now."

Eric shook hands with Lucien, and handed Lucien's arcana badge back to him.

There was a shining silver star on the black badge, looking mysterious.

Then, Eric gave Lucien's magic badge back to him, "Because Lord of Storm cited your paper, many arcanists are interested in studying your new magic. As it is an apprentice level magic, you get one point for each exchange. In total, you've got seven hundred and sixty-nine arcana points. Good for you, Evans."

Lucien was very surprised with the points he had earned. He knew that this number meant that close to one tenth of the sorcerers in Allyn bought his magic!

The grand arcanist was definitely influential. As a teacher in Douglas, Lucien had to at least work for six or seven years to earn this many points.

As soon as Lucien got excited, he realized that when he stepped out of this building, the undead thing would be following and watching him around again, so he quickly calmed down.

Wearing his new badges, Lucien came back to the department hall.

Cindy and Dona congratulated Lucien sincerely and felt surprised that he became a level one arcanist so fast.

After having lunch with Cindy and Dona, Lucien went back to Douglas to wait for the review result of his paper.

...

On the fourteenth floor of Affairs Committee, in an exclusive lounge.

Holding a glass of wine with his pale hand, Rogerio was quietly listening to the report of the tall undead spectre.

The spectre was wearing a black robe with a hood, which was different from the ancient style, and there were many mysterious white patterns on it. The eyes of the half-transparent spectre were shining with intimidating red light, and its thin skin was deadly pale.

“Adol, so you’re saying that Lucien’s just a normal, hard-working sorcerer, and he’s not seeing anyone who’s suspicious?” Rogerio’s tone speaking to the spectre was relatively respectful, as if the spectre was not something he summoned, but his partner.

“That’s right.” Adol’s hood moved slightly, “His current research interest is elements, and he has just passed his basic arcana test. I did not find anyone else who was secretly watching or protecting him. You can trust my ability of traveling between the two worlds, Mr. Rogerio. No one except legendary sorcerers or level nine cardinals could sense my existence.”

“I see... It’s getting more complicated now.” Rogerio’s left hand covered his right hand holding the glass, “Maybe the Will of Elements is using Lucien Evans to distract us, or how would this new sorcerer dare to use his original name in Allyn... It seems that we need to do something now, in order to make some progress...”

...

Larry’s study.

Larry did not stop his own work until the owl, Mathew, came to remind him that it was close to the deadline of reviewing the several papers sent to him a couple of days ago.

As he was reading the papers, Larry found a familiar name, Lucien Evans, but after taking a second look, he noticed that the author

was actually Lucien Evans X.

Because of the name, Larry started reading Lucien's paper carefully.

In Larry's eyes, although the periodic table of elements put forward by this Lucien Evans X was quite clear, nothing could verify whether the table was right or wrong unless some new elements were discovered. The discussion and exploration of the periodic order among elements was not something new, and the previous guesses had all proved to be wrong later.

As a level five arcanist specializing in the school of Element, when Lucien boldly pointed out that the measurement of some elements could be wrong because they did not fit the table, Larry slightly frowned, as Larry himself actually did some of the weighing several times and he found no error there.

Larry was about to directly fail this paper, but with a second thought, he murmured, "I should verify the rest of the atomic weighs as well. Now I'm preparing the paper for the next month's conference in Rentato... I'd better write this down and do it when I'm back..."

Then Larry started to write down his comment on Lucien's paper.

At the same time, in another place, Timothy, a level four arcanist and a fifth circle sorcerer, who was the student of the seventh circle sorcerer, Overee, was also working on his comment for this paper.

...

Three days later, Lucien asked for a leave again from the school and came to the Sorcerer Administrative Department. Eric was not here today, and Lucien visited a plump lady named Lucy, who was a level three arcanist, forth circle sorcerer.

"Ms. Lucy, I submitted my paper several days ago, and I wonder if the result is available now?" asked Lucien politely.

Although there was no smile on Lucy's face, she had no intention to give Lucien a hard time. She nodded and took out a folder, "First, the paper passed the review. According to Mr. Gaston and Mr.

Overee, the paper put forward a new periodic table of elements for further exploration of new elements and boldly pointed out the possible mistakes that might exist in the measurement of atomic weight, however, at the same time, there is no solid evidence supporting that the author's assumption is valid. As a paper worth of further discussion, one arcana credit and one arcana point is given.”

Although Lucien was relatively prepared, he found the result still quite disappointing, or say, ridiculous. He believed that this paper would be of great importance in the history of magic and the school of Element, but this paper only earned him one credit.

Chapter 205: Invitation from Woods

"Congratulations, Mr. Evans. You are the only junior-level arcanist I know whose first two papers passed the board's review," said Lucy politely.

Lucien had to admit that he was already lucky that this paper could be approved by the board. If he had not attached his experiment report in the end of his paper, the board members might have directly rejected the paper. Now that the paper had passed the review, Lucien needed to find ways to help it get more attention.

This required that other arcanists could discover new elements following the ideas in his paper. Lucien tried to elaborate the ideas as clear as possible. He suggested to use spectrum analysis to study the aluminum-like element and to discover silicon-like element by investigating certain alchemical reaction, and Lucien even included the possible character of some mineral substances.

To have more arcanists who were interested in the paper, and to verify its correctness, Lucien needed to let more arcanists read this paper, and he would also conduct further experiments himself. Lucien was hoping that more sorcerers and arcanists would carefully recheck the ores they had.

Among all the influential journals, the ones which accepted papers of the school of Element were Arcana, Element, Alchemy, Holm Journal, Colette Arcana Theory and Common Arcana. However, among them, only Arcana, Element, Alchemy and Common Arcana accepted individual contribution.

Lucien would not consider other journals since they were not influential enough, and his ideal journal was of course Arcana, although he knew that his chances there were slim to none. Nevertheless, Lucien still wanted to give it a try.

"Thank you, Ms. Lucy." Lucien nodded and then left the office.

After chatting a bit with Cindy and Dona, Lucien got to know where the headquarter of the journal, Arcana, was. It was on the tenth

floor.

Taking the magic elevator, Lucien stood on the silver round platform and smoothly rose up. Staring at the main hall down there, Lucien felt nervous and expectant.

When the elevator reached the ninth floor, Lucien pressed the button covered with yellow and green light. Then the silver platform started absorbing the light.

When the light was gone, the silver platform suddenly shook a bit and then stopped at the tenth floor.

Stepping out of the elevator, Lucien came to the main hall on this floor - the reception hall of the journal, Arcana.

The hall was grand but also quiet. The floor was paved with fine tiles.

Lucien walked to the reception desk, behind which there was a lady and a man. Lucien asked them politely, "Excuse me... I wonder how I can submit my paper here?"

The man stopped talking to the beautiful lady and turned to Lucien. After checking the badges Lucien was wearing, he looked serious, "May I ask if it's your own paper? Or your friend's or teacher's paper?"

Both the man and the lady were wearing two-star arcana badges, their own nameplates, but no magic badge. Here in this place, everything was about arcana.

"Mr. Garvin, it's my own paper." Lucien took a glance at his nameplate. The name, Garvin, was even more common than Lucien.

Garvin looked even more serious, and he said cut and dry, "Sorry, sir. We do not accept contribution from junior-rank arcanists."

"Is that right?" Lucien insisted, "I did not find this rule in the contribution regulation of Arcana."

Garvin was slightly pissed off. Although the journal did not make

this rule explicit, the requirement did exist. In Garvin's eyes, there was no way that a junior-rank arcanist could compete with other senior-rank arcanists or even grand arcanists.

"We did publish several papers from junior-rank arcanists before, but all these papers, when they were passing through the review of the board, were all rated as of great significance, and then we sent them our contribution invitation letters," explained the lady beside Garvin. "We never accepted any individual junior-rank arcanist's contribution."

"But I'm not breaking the rules, right?" Lucien did not give up easily, "At least Arcana should review my paper first. If my paper was not qualified and thus got rejected, I would be totally fine with it."

"Then, sir, give me your paper, and since we're only on the fourth day of the month, you'll know the result right away," said Garvin swiftly, as he was already fed up with talking to Lucien.

"Thank you, sir." Lucien handed his paper to Garvin.

As soon as Garvin got his paper, he walked away and came to a quiet and empty corridor. Then, he started reading Lucien's paper.

He was going to check Lucien's paper himself first. If he could not be certain of the actual value of this paper, he would send it to the reviewing department, but otherwise he would directly turn the paper down himself.

At the very beginning, Garvin was reading very carefully, as the periodic table of elements looked very persuasive, but later, he sneered,

"Kidding... the atomic weight of Termirick is wrong? It was already corrected by several senior-rank arcanists several years ago, using different experiment methods. I can't believe this paper even passed the review of the board..."

Termirick was an special composition element of soul.

Garvin stopped reading and came back to Lucien. As he handed the

paper back to Lucien, he said, "The arcanist who reviewed your paper could not see any value in your paper, as the paper is full of problems! He could not even see how the paper passed the review!"

Lucien puckered his mouth a bit and knew that he had tried his best. He had no choice but to go back to the first floor, and there he sent his paper to the headquarter of Element in Rentato.

...

As Garvin said, at the beginning of month, the journals were not very busy. Three days later, Lucien received the letter from Element.

It was on Saturday, and the apprentices were studying in his place. After giving them more exercises to do, Lucien stood in the corner and opened the letter.

"Mr. Lucien Evans X,

"Your paper is worth of further discussion, but since there will be a conference in Rentato at the beginning of next month, our journal is going to publish all the conference papers. Therefore, we are sorry to inform you that we cannot publish your paper.

"Element, Friend of All Elemental and Alchemical Sorcerers,

"Jan. 6th, 817"

It was Lucien's first rejection letter, and it was quite polite. Lucien knew that the conference was mainly their excuse, or the the journal would offer to publish the paper on the next issue.

Lucien had been through quite some difficulties recently, after the new year, so he carefully checked his Host Star of Destiny, but found it still remained quite blurry.

After assigning the apprentices with more work to do, Lucien headed for the headquarter of the congress and there he submitted his paper to Alchemy.

This time, the reviewing was much slower. Two weeks later, after

Lucien's failed experiments of discovering new elements had cost him two hundred points, he finally received the letter from Alchemy.

However, it was still a rejection letter. The journal even told Lucien not to submit this paper again as Lucien's argument about atomic weight did not make sense.

Holding the rejection letter, Lucien felt a bit nervous. He was running out of time. If he could not publish the paper soon, Lucien would need to wait for another month.

Then, he visited the headquarter of Common Arcana in Allyn, and, for the third time, directly submitted the paper.

To his surprise, four days after, he received neither a rejection letter, nor an acceptance letter, but an invitation from a level four arcanist named Woods.

...

The headquarter of Common Arcana, in a bright office.

"I'm one of the reviewers of your bat experiment paper, Evans, and it was me who sent that invitation letter to you," said Woods sitting in the chair, smiling. Woods had light yellow, handlebar mustache.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Woods, for speaking highly of my paper. Otherwise, my paper would never be noticed by a grand arcanist," said Lucien sincerely.

"Then, that would be the great loss of the whole congress." Woods nodded kindly, "Mr. Fernando has already come up with the basic model of Thunder Eye, Fernando's Lightning Smelter and Invisible Crematory. The three spells are amazing and powerful. As the models are still very complicated, Mr. Fernando is right now working on simplifying them."

Lucien's success also earned Woods great reputation, so Woods was really fond of Lucien.

"The grand arcanist is surely very intelligent." Lucien stayed

humble, "Mr. Woods... the reason you asked me to come here... is it because of my new paper?"

"Yes, that's right," said Woods. "I've read your paper, and it is worth of further discussion. If it didn't contain so much of your personal assumptions, the paper would be outstanding."

Having Lucien's paper in front of him, Woods politely pointed out the parts that he did not agree on.

"Even though," Woods continued, "it is still a good paper, and it offers arcanists a new perspective. So Lucien, are you okay with publishing the paper on our next month's issue? For this month, the papers are all set."

Apparently, Woods decided to publish this paper because of his appreciation of Lucien. And the reason he asked Lucien to come to his office was because he wanted Lucien to know who was helping him and who he should feel grateful towards. If one day, say, Lucien became the student of Lord of Storm, that would be a successful investment for Woods.

But on next month's issue? Lucien was a bit hesitant.

Chapter 206: Persistence

For other people, publishing a paper on this or on the next issue of a journal might not make any difference, as long as the journal itself was influential enough. However, for Lucien, the reason why he forced himself to complete this paper at the beginning of this month was that he wanted it to be read by most arcanists as soon as possible.

"Any chances that my paper can still be published on this month's issue?" Lucien was still looking for some hope, "What about putting my paper at the end?"

"I'm sorry, Evans, but I can't. We've already informed the sorcerers that we're gonna publish their papers," said Woods decisively. Although he thought Lucien was a promising young man, it was not enough for him to run the risk of pissing off other more important sorcerers because of a level one arcanist.

Lucien's back was straight, and there was still a smile on his face, "Mr. Woods, I know you're still feeling hesitant with my paper, but I hope the appendix of my experiments' record at the end of the paper can make the paper more persuasive. Although I haven't been able to prove that all the atomic weight of the several elements mentioned in my paper are wrong, my experiments' results have showed that some are definitely not accurate, as implied in my periodic table."

Woods shook his head, "Even if your experiments could prove that, there's still not enough evidence showing that your paper is reliable. I'm sure that several of your assumptions are not correct."

In Woods' eyes, this paper was like one of the many papers from before, that studied the order between the elements. There was nothing special here in Lucien's paper.

"Maybe it's because..." Lucien stopped himself from calling these elements isotopes, but said it in a more implicit way, "because of some reasons that we haven't discovered yet, thus we're not able to

measure the elements properly using our existing methods..."

A pair of isotopes were two elements with the same number of protons, but different number of neutrons. As they were similar in nature, isotopes could be quite confusing. However, Lucien didn't dare to put forward the concept thoughtlessly, as the understanding of elements in this world was still at the stage of atoms.

"You're a level one arcanist, Evans," said Woods. "Those who measured the elements were arcanists of at least level five."

What Woods was trying to say was very obvious.

"Then... I'm sorry, Mr. Woods, I'm afraid I need to turn Common Arcana down, as I believe in my research." Lucien bowed to Woods politely.

Woods did not feel offended, as he had seen many young people stubborn, or say, persistent, just like Lucien Evans. So he stood up from his chair and said, "I don't blame you, Evans, but if you cannot find other journals to accept the paper, you're always welcome here."

Lucien picked up his paper on the table and nodded sincerely, "Thank you very much, Mr. Woods."

He knew that he still had one last option, and that was taking the risk of seeking help from Holm Royal Magic Academy and the Will of Elements using the ring. After all, he was being quite suspicious in the eyes of the Hand of Paleness anyway, and of course, no one knew what would happen if Lucien decided to do this.

Now, Lucien was even a bit taller. Wearing black top hat and long coat, his persistent look left Woods with a deep impression.

...

Around ten days ago.

On the fourteenth floor of the magic tower, in an exclusive lounge.

Looking at the paper in his hand, Rogerio smiled and shook his

head, "Young people are really full of the spirit of challenging authority. They're brave, fearless, and crazy."

Although Rogerio did not know what Lucien was doing in the past month very accurately, since Adol could not follow Lucien everywhere, he knew that Lucien's recent paper passed the review of the board but was rejected by some journals. So he went to Common Arcana Library and bought a copy of the paper.

It did not take Rogerio long before he stopped reading the paper, since he was one of the arcanists who measured Termirick. At that time, he adopted several different measures to come to the result, and the result was supported by several influential arcanists, so he never doubted his research outcome.

Putting down the paper, Rogerio's fingers were tapping the desk. He was considering how to let Lucien show up in front of some middle-rank sorcerers in the Will of Elements, so he could watch their reactions if they recognized Lucien to find more about this mysterious newcomer.

...

Before heading to the branch of Royal Bank of Holm in Allyn, which, according to what Natasha mentioned to him before, was the highest bank in this world, Lucien came back to the school first. As once he showed the ring to the Will of Elements, he might not be able to come back very soon, therefore, he needed to inform his friends, students and the schoolmaster in advance.

"Did your paper get accepted?" Rock, Jerome and K asked Lucien as soon as he came back to school.

They knew that Lucien's second paper had been rejected by Alchemy and Element.

"No..." Lucien put on a calm smile, "It's turned down by Common Arcana as well."

"Come on... Then why they invited you there?!" Rock was a bit angry.

Jerome took a glance at Rock to stop him, and then he comforted Lucien a bit.

Although K was not sure whether this would work, he still offered his help. K hoped that someone could carefully read his colleague's paper again without any biases.

Lucien was very surprised, but very quickly Lucien took a deep breath and said, "Thank you, K! I'm leaving for Rentato with you!"

Lucien wouldn't let any opportunities slip away.

...

After lunch, Woods took a little break, and then he walked into his lab in the magic tower vigorously. The following two hours was his own experiment time, and it wouldn't be disturbed by any of his work.

Somehow, when Woods turned on the alchemical circles and was about to continue yesterday's experiment, Lucien's words appeared his mind, and he picked up a bottle of purified element in front of him.

"He was being quite stubborn... Maybe I can take a look if the measurement is right... Anyway, it won't take too much work." Woods murmured to himself.

If he could find any mistakes in the current record of atomic weight of the elements, he would still be getting quite some credits.

According to the regulation of the congress, as for basic statistic such as atomic weight of an element, the first sorcerer who correctly measured it and the following five sorcerers who proved the statistic was right shared the total citation credits by a ratio of 3: 2: 2: 1: 1: 1 within one year.

As an experienced middle-rank sorcerer, as expected, Woods finished his first experiment measuring the atomic weight of one element that was pointed out in Lucien's paper that was measured wrongly.

"Umm... Evan's right with this one. There is some slight mistakes in the previous method of the atomic weight." Woods nodded.

After using two other methods, Woods was sure that the previous measuring way was not right, and Lucien was right.

Then Woods continued to measure other elements.

As time went by, his face looked more and more surprised. If one right answer could be just Lucien's good luck, he did not know how to explain why the following experiment results all proved that Lucien was right, as they fit in his periodic table of elements perfectly.

Lucien's persistent look and what he said appeared in Woods' mind again.

Hurriedly, Woods stopped walking back and forth in the lab and rushed into this office. He quickly picked up a quill and started writing,

"Dear Lucien Evans,

"We think your paper is of great value, and we hope that Common Arcana can publish your paper on this month's issue..."

Suddenly, he stopped writing, balled the paper up and threw it into the waste basket. Grabbing his coat and hat, Woods rushed downstairs.

"To Douglas," said Woods to the coachman.

Flying was forbidden in Allyn.

Chapter 207: Another Invitation

At the beginning of the first month of the year, the Month of Beginning, while the cold weather was still dominating Allyn, the trees around Douglas still looked dark green.

In front of the black iron gate of ancient style, Woods asked the gatekeeper eagerly, "I'm Woods, from Common Arcana, and I am a friend of the headmaster. I'm looking for Mr. Lucien Evans."

"We have two Mr. Lucien Evans here, but neither of them is in the school right now," answered the gatekeeper, an iron golem, in a mechanical manner, "They left for Rentato together."

"Then when did they leave and when they'll be coming back? I mean... I'm looking for Lucien Evans X, when will he be coming back?" Woods hurriedly explained, "Why they're headed for Rentato?"

"They left about an hour ago," said the iron golem. "No idea when they'll be back."

Hearing the gatekeeper's answer, Woods pressed his black top hat a bit annoyedly, as he knew that Lucien would be already in Rentato by now. As the capital of Holm, Rentato was a big and a very busy city, which meant that his magic could not really help him find Lucien with limited information.

"If Mr. Evans X is back, please tell him that Common Arcana wishes to publish his paper on this month's issue, and we're eagerly looking forward to his reply. If he doesn't mind, we want to invite him to visit our headquarter again." In the cold wind, as Woods was speaking, his breaths produced white gas in the air.

Then, he went back to his coach and left.

...

Rentato, on the second floor of the restaurant called Oak.

In the vip room, Lucian looked through the window at the beautiful night with countless snowflakes falling down from the sky, and watched the people walking by in the snow. Some of them were in a hurry, some were walking slowly side by side, some were trying to catch some snowflakes, and others bent over to make some snowballs...

Igna, a tall and thin level four arcanist, fifth circle elemental sorcerer, was sitting opposite to him. He had defined facial features and some white hair above both sides of his ears.

If K had not told Lucien first, Lucien would think Igna was fifty something, however, in fact, Igna was well over a hundred years old.

When Igna was seventy, he spent all his savings on some very expensive magic rite and expanded his life. It looked like now he was doing pretty good, despite the fact that he had already been staying at middle-rank stage for sixty years.

"Cheers, for our wonderful dinner." Igna raised his glass, as his light brown eyes first looked at Lucien, and then K.

After finishing his drink, K excused himself and went to the restroom. Apparently, he did not do well with alcohol.

After K left, Igna looked at Lucien and said, "Evans, I've read your paper before dinner, and I gotta say that this paper has both advantages and disadvantages, and it's definitely insightful. Unfortunately, Element this month cannot accept any more papers except those ones from the conference."

Hearing that, Lucien found his hope again, but he felt that Igna was implying something to him.

As he expected, Igna looked outside of the window and sighed, "Being young is surely nice, especially in an old man's eyes. Now I have very slight hope in further upgrading myself with coming up with some groundbreaking papers, but some powerful ancient rites might still be able to help me. However, the materials required by these rites are very, very expensive."

Then he stopped but started sipping the wine with a smile on his face.

Lucien understood that he needed to pay for what he was asking for, so he said carefully, "Sometimes getting some arcana points isn't very difficult, and sometimes we just need some good luck... Say, I earned quite a few points with my last paper."

Igna took a glance at Lucien satisfactorily, "Such a good young man, and I'm falling behind now... I'm still struggling with the last three hundred arcana points to buy Crown Stone."

"I venture to ask..." said Lucien, trying not to feel disgusted with himself, "if you're willing to accept my points, Mr. Igna? I don't want to see a great sorcerer be bothered by money and thus not be able to go further."

Lucien knew that publishing his paper on Element could bring him a way better chance than on Common Arcana.

"Then wish both of us success." Igna elegantly raised his glass again and smiled.

K was happy to see that Igna and Lucien had a great conversation when he came back.

...

Maybe it was because Igna was really doing his job, or maybe it was because Element was already preparing a special edition, when Lucien and K were about to leave the hotel on the next day, Lucien received the letter from Element, informing that his paper had been chosen.

"Thank you, K. Without your help, there's no way that I could publish my paper." Lucien thanked K sincerely on the platform.

K scratched his hair a bit shyly, "Your paper's valuable."

He could not make his comment more specifically, as he never read anyone's paper before it was published.

"Yeah... three hundred points..." Lucien thought to himself, but as long as the paper could be read by other arcanists as soon as possible, Lucien knew it was worth it.

"You're not coming back with me?" asked Lucien, as he was going back to Douglas to continue his experiments.

K shook his head, and he looked a bit sad, "I've already left the school, actually, and before I become Mr. Larry's student, I need to go back to Granlin to get something done first, my hometown."

Granlin was the most remote one among the eight counties of Holm.

"I see. I bet we'll see each other again very soon." Lucien nodded, "Do you need any help when you're back?"

K shook his head, "Nothing big."

"Alright... If you need any help, K, just send me a letter," said Lucien. Seeing the train coming, Lucien waved to him.

Before K got on the train, Lucien said to him vaguely, "When you have the time... you probably want to measure some elements again..."

K was quite confused, but he still nodded before he left.

...

In the headquarter of Common Arcana.

"What a pity..." murmured Woods regretfully, "Element finally got your paper, uh..."

Right now, Lucien was standing in front of him in the office. Knowing that Mr. Woods had visited the school in person, Lucien came to thank him, "I'm sorry, Mr. Woods. If I had known it, I definitely would not go to Rentato."

He did not mention that he could have also saved three hundred points.

"It's okay, and if I were you, I would choose Element as well. For your paper, Element is only second to Arcana," said Woods generously. "Although Common Arcana has always been progressing in the past ten years, we're still not even close to Element in this specific field."

Lucien slightly nodded. In most cases, he would choose Common Arcana because of Mr. Woods' appreciation towards him, but this time, it was different.

"Hope I can have more opportunities with Common Arcana," said Lucien.

"Welcome." Woods responded politely, "By the way, Evans, I want to publish my paper with regards to the corrected atomic weight of the elements on this issue's Common Arcana as well, and of course, I'm gonna cite your paper... Do you mind?"

"Of course not." Lucien smiled, "My pleasure."

After going back to the school, Lucien wrote letters to Rock, Jerome and Lazar and told them which elements could be measured wrong.

Lucien was doing this not because he wanted his friends to get some credits, but also hoped them to better support his own paper. That was why Lucien had to make sure that his paper needed to be published first.

...

On friday evening, Lucien came back to his place after several more unsuccessful experiments trying to find new elements from many different ores.

When he opened the door, Lucien saw a letter on the floor.

"Who's writing to me?" Lucien carefully checked the letter and then opened it curiously.

"Dear Mr. Lucien Evans,

"As a junior-rank sorcerer, your contribution to the field of Element

is impressive. Therefore, we would like to invite you to the Annual Conference of Element and Alchemy at Rose Garden, located beside the beautiful Swan Lake, at nine on Saturday morning, January 27th.

"The Will of Elements & Holm Royal Magic Academy"

And the letter was sent three days before.

Lucien was very surprised. He wondered whether his paper had already got the attention of the Will of Elements.

Chapter 208: A Mistake

Rentato, Hexagram Station.

Seven in the morning, Lucien, dressing formally, got off the train in the cold wind.

After receiving the invitation, he hurriedly verified the credibility of the letter with the school and then took the very next train to arrive in Rentato.

Getting on the coach he hired, Lucien's hands warmed up a little. After telling the coachman where he was heading for, Lucien's heart was still beating quite fast.

After a while, hearing the wheels rolling, he gradually calmed down, and the tone of the invitation started to bother him slightly. In Lucien's mind, if the people from the Will of Element and the academy really appreciated the great value of his second paper, his treatment should be better than that. However, if they did not understand the importance of the periodic table of elements, why would they even bother sending the invitation...?

An hour and a half later, the coach stopped in front of Rose Garden. On its left side, the beautiful Swan Lake was covered by a thin layer of ice. Snowflakes were coming down from the sky.

Two blond young knights were safeguarding the gate, looking rather serious.

But Lucien could tell that they were not real knights, as they used the potion, and that was why they were willing to serve the Will of Elements.

In the field of magic potion making, the schools of Element, Alchemy and Necromancy were the best.

"Morning, sir. Can we take a look at your invitation and arcana badge?" asked a knight politely.

Lucien nodded and showed them to him.

After using a mirror-like magic item and carefully verifying the badge and the invitation, the knight slightly bowed to Lucien, "Welcome, Mr. Lucien Evans. The meeting will be starting soon, and all the guests are in the main hall."

The other knight turned around and opened the gate.

Seeing that everything went on well, Lucien was a bit relieved. So, he followed the garden path patiently and then pushed open the grand gate of the house.

In the hall, people were talking to each other in low voices, and there was neither music nor quarrel. The arcanists were exchanging their studies politely, and many were lost in the world of knowledge.

Around two hundred and ten arcanists were invited today, and among them, they were mostly middle-rank arcanists, but there were also some accomplished junior-ranks as well.

All the chairs and tables were surrounding an elevated platform. Above the platform, there was a magic circle for amplifying the speaker's voice, and there was a waist-high rostrum in the front of the platform.

Not many noticed that a new arcanist just entered the hall, but when more and more of them realized that they had never seen Lucien before, they started staring at him.

Lazar, at this time, was standing in the corner of the hall, feeling relieved that the long-prepared meeting was finally about to begin, and when he saw Lucien showed up here, he was more than surprised.

He hurriedly threaded through the crowd and grabbed Lucien's arm, "What are you doing here?" Lazar asked him in a low voice. After all, this was the annual meeting of the school of Element and Alchemy, and Lucien was not even a member of them!

When Lucien was feeling slightly nervous seeing all those strangers

in the hall, Lazar's appearance comforted him.

"I'm attending the meeting..." Lucien quickly waved the invitation in his hand in front of Lazar, "You sent this to me?"

"Wait... You've got an invitation?!" Lazar hurriedly took over the invitation from Lucien and checked it. As he frowned, Lazar murmured, "What have you done when I was absent? Is this because of your letter asking me to remeasure some of the elements? I did, and they were indeed not correct!"

When Lucien was about to say something, a young lady's voice came from the magic amplifier, "Excuse me, has Mr. Lucien Evans arrived? Please come over to the gate. Mr. Larry is looking for you."

All the arcanists stopped their conversations and looked around curiously, wondering who was this Lucien Evans.

"Rebecca! Mr. Evans's here!" Hearing his friend's name, Lazar answered proudly and loudly. Then he pulled Lucien's arm and walked toward the gate.

Many arcanists made way for Lucien, and in their mind, they wondered why such a young arcanist was invited to this important meeting.

There were three man and one woman standing close to the gate. The green-eyed lady was wearing a red long dress, looking rather pretty, but also a bit exhausted from arranging the meeting. A thirty-something, round-faced man was talking to her.

"Mr. Larry, Mr. Evans's here." Lazar bowed to the round-faced man politely.

When Lucien was about to put on a smile, Larry put on a confused look and asked, "Who are you?"

His voice was not high but deep, and his question was heard by many arcanists. More and more arcanists turned around and looked in that direction.

Larry waved his hands a bit, "...I'm sorry, sir. I mean... I'm looking

for my student, Lucien Evans... ummm, Lucien Evans K."

Lucien realized what was going on here, and he felt that the whole thing was funny.

"Mr. Larry, we only have one Mr. Evans, and he's here." After a few seconds, Rebecca nervously explained.

"What do you mean?" Larry looked at Rebecca.

One of the two men standing behind Larry said to Rebecca harshly, "It was you who was in charge of filling out the invitations, Rebecca. I asked you to invite Mr. Larry's student, Mr. Lucien Evans, who developed the paper of atomic valence! Look what you've done?!"

The man took a quick glance at the badges on Lucien's chest, and got even angrier. The man himself was a level three arcanist, third circle sorcerer, and his face was covered with wrinkles. It seemed that his arcana level was mostly developed by the years.

Then he bowed and apologized to the old man with half white hair and a slightly hooked nose.

Rebecca had tears in her eyes, but she could not figure out what was wrong.

"Mr. Leandro, we have two Mr. Lucien Evans in Douglas..." Lazar's face flushed as well from embarrassment, but he still tried to speak for Rebecca, "Maybe that's why..."

However, Leandro was still pissed off, "Then why didn't you specify that it was Mr. K who was invited? Why didn't you specify the person's arcana level? This guy's only got level one in arcana! Just like you!"

He pointed at Lucien's chest.

"But... but Mr. Leandro, I checked... There's only one Mr. Lucien Evans in Douglas," Rebecca almost burst into tears, "or I'd have definitely been more specific..."

"Mr. Leandro," Lucien cut in calmly, "K left the school before the invitation was sent."

What Lucien meant was that it was the person who made the mistake was the one who gave Rebecca that information, not her.

"But it's still her mistake for not putting the arcana level on the invitation!" Leandro then turned to Lucien, "And you, use your brain! How is it possible that you're invited to this meeting?"

Talking to an arcanist whose level was lower than him did not require too much politeness.

"No... no... It's my mistake." Larry raised his hands a bit, "I asked K to leave the school, but when the meeting decided to invite K in the last second, I forgot to tell Mr. Leandro about it."

"Larry, why didn't you invite K yourself, then?" asked the old man.

"I could not find him." Larry shrugged a bit, "I did not expect that K would leave the school so quickly."

This old man in black suit with strange-looking eyes was Larry's teacher, the director of the Will of Element, the member of Arcana Review Board, a level seven arcanist and seventh circle sorcerer, Gaston.

The arcanists in the hall finally understood what was going on here, and some were amused.

"Sorry for the inconvenience, Mr. Gaston." Leandro hurriedly bowed to Gaston in a pleasing manner.

"Not really her fault." Gaston nodded mildly, "Stop giving her a hard time."

Leandro nodded, and then he said to Lucien, "As everything's clear, you can leave now."

Calm as Lucien was, hearing this, he still felt humiliated. At this time, Gaston raised his hand and stopped Leandro, "Evans, are you interested in arcana of the school of Element?"

Lucien hurriedly nodded.

"Stay, then. Don't be shy." Gaston smiled, "This is our annual conference. Although you might not be able to understand much, it can still be very helpful to you. Maybe one day you'll become an influential arcanist."

Lucien was very surprised, and nodded again.

...

The headquarter of Common Arcana.

After submitting his paper about the remeasurement of the elements, Woods now was sitting in his couch cozily. This paper should be published on this issue's journal.

Feeling quite relaxed, he picked Lucien's paper again and started to read the latter part with regards to Lucien's guesses of undiscovered elements.

Woods never realized that Lucien's guesses were so in detail that he even put forward some possible ores with which some undiscovered elements might be found. Then his heart missed a beat:

The features of this ore described by Lucien were actually very familiar to him!

Chapter 209: Shocking Finding

Chapter 209: Shocking Finding

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Wait...” Woods slightly raised his chin, “Black Bear recently found some special ores in the south. I remember... they have similar characteristics.”

As he pointed at the hangers, Woods’ black top hat and long jacket directly flew toward him. Today, he was even more rushed than last time.

After taking the elevator and then the coach, Woods finally arrived in front of the strange-looking magic tower with two horns on its top.

Black Bear, whose name was actually Odonkor but Woods often secretly called him Black Bear in his mind, was a fourth circle sorcerer specializing in Transformation and Summoning. His grandfather was a very wealthy archmage who liked travelling and collecting all kinds of special things, despite the fact that he seldom had interest in conducting any serious researches.

Woods hurriedly jumped off the coach and rushed toward the gate of the tower.

“Hey, buddy... Why are you rushing?” Odonkor’s magic circle informed him that Woods came to visit him in a hurry.

Odonkor surely looked like a black bear, as their family tradition in studying Transformation originated from observing bears, and his relatives all looked a bit like bears.

Gasping, Woods responded, “Black Bear... No, no... Odonkor, sell me a couple of Flashes, the strange ore that you found in the south!”

...

In Rose Garden.

After Gaston's arrival, more senior-rank sorcerers gradually arrived, including Raventi, a ninth circle sorcerer, member of the Arcana Review Board and vice president of the Will of Elements, and Overee, also a member of the Arcana Review Board and director of the Will of Elements, aside from other three authorities.

Of course, there were way more than five people who were qualified with reviewing papers in the field of Element, but they were the most specialized ones.

Besides the six senior-rank arcanists on the top, the leader level of the Will of Elements still had another thirty-two senior-rank sorcerers. However, among them there were only twenty whose arcana level was above level six.

On legendary level, only Raventi attended today's conference, as this meeting was mostly a chance for middle-rank sorcerers to exchange their ideas and thoughts. Nevertheless, the great power that the people had who were present at this conference was still enough to destroy a whole country. The school of Element was known for its destructive power.

Raventi didn't look like anything other than a plain-looking old man, and today he was wearing a black robe embroidered with sixty-five symbols, representing the current existing elements. After his short and straightforward opening speech, the conference officially began.

The first one who gave the speech based on his paper was Timothy, the famous genius in arcana from the Will of Elements.

Timothy had black hair and blue eyes. Wearing gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, he looked profound and elegant. In sharp contrast, the topic of his paper was rather violent: Explosive Cascade. By simplifying the fundamental alchemical formula of this magic, Timothy improved the power of the spell by fifty percent.

"Wow... That's really something..." Lazar was very impressed and excited.

Lucien, as a guest who was mistakenly invited, could only carefully listen to the speech beside the platform, while those arcanists were sitting on their tall chairs, listening and referring to Timothy's paper for more detailed statistics and explanation. However, he could still see the great value of Timothy's paper. Facing Explosive Cascade, if someone still tried to use common strategies to avoid the attack based on their past fighting experience, the spell would turn into their nightmare. Lucien paid extra attention to the alchemical part, as he knew that this was his shortcoming in his study. If he had a deeper understanding in this field in the future, he could start trying to use nitroglycerin to create more spells.

...

After getting some Flashes, Woods borrowed Odonkor's fancy lab and started doing his experiments immediately.

Very quickly, Woods extracted the substance he wanted from Flashes and then he put the substance in a spectroscopy magic circle.

The magic circle slowly started working. Woods held his breath.

When he saw the beautiful, dream-like spectral lines that he had never witnessed before, Woods' breath became heavy, and his face flushed.

New element! There was new element in there!

Beside the magic circle lied Lucien's paper. As if the author already knew what Woods could find here, the paper wrote: "This aluminum-like element can be found by spectral analysis".

Woods was right now staring at the paper, and he could not believe his eyes. This was not a speculation, but a prophecy! And the prophecy was based on the period of elements put forward by Lucien!

Woods' head was buzzing.

Then he took a deep breath and started turning on more magic circles. He was going to try possible ways to purify the new element

out of the extracted substance.

Odonkor's fancy lab definitely worked very well, and before lunch, there was already a pile of silver-coloured crystals sitting right in front of Woods.

There was no time for lunch. In the next second, Woods started measuring this new element and testing its characters.

...

"Atomic weight... 69.8..." After adopting several methods, Woods was sure that the number that he came up with was correct. All of a sudden, he felt intimidated looking at the paper lying on the table beside him.

But deep in his mind, he remembered the paper clearly. The paper wrote:

"The atomic weight of this aluminum-like element should be between 68 and 70."

Woods could hear his heart beating so strong and so fast that his ears were drumming. With his lips closed tightly, Woods continued his experiment to measure other features of the new element.

"Specific weight... 5.94..." Woods murmured voice trembled.

On the paper, it wrote:

"Specific weight, between 5.9 and 6.0."

...

"Non-volatile... Can slowly dissolve in acid and lye." Woods' voice trembled.

The paper wrote:

"Non-volatile in normal temperature. Acid and lye can dissolve it."

...

All the predictions put forward by Lucien Evans were right.

Woods felt thrilled. He was too shocked to say anything. His mouth was partially open, and his hands shaking.

What did this mean?

What did this mean!

At this point, Woods had no more doubt or hesitation. He knew that this paper would be a milestone in the field of element... no, in the history of the whole magic world!

With shaking hands, Woods completely wrote down the experiment data record, and saved the sample of the new element safely in a magic container. Bringing them, Woods subconsciously grabbed his black top hat and rushed out of Odonkor's magic tower.

"Hey, buddy! Your coat!" Odonkor called Woods from behind.

The cold wind sobered Woods a bit and he realized that his coat was left in Odonkor's place, but Woods still jumped directly on the coach waiting for him and hurriedly he said to the coachman,

"To Douglas! Be quick! As quick as possible!"

The coachman was taking a nap before Woods jumped on the vehicle, and now he was driving the coach like crazy.

...

In front of the iron gate of Douglas.

"What?! Evans is out, again?!" Unutterable frustration struck Woods.

"Yes, Mr. Lucien Evans is out," answered the golem calmly and peacefully. "He should be in Rentato now, but I don't know why."

"What the fu*k...?!" Refined as Woods, he could not help swearing, "Rentato again?!"

Standing in the cold wind, Woods did not leave until his face got numb. When he calmed down and then came back to his office, he spent an hour and developed a simple report on the finding of the new element and the comparison between the new element's features and the corresponding predictions made by Lucien in his paper.

Then, he arrived at the Sorcerer Administrative Department and handed the report in.

Although he was very excited with sharing the great finding with all the sorcerers, before that, he needed to make sure that there was a guarantee that his own work could also be recognized.

...

"Element... To Mr. Raventi, Mr. Gaston."

The alchemical life was still following its daily routine, having no idea how important this report would be.

...

A brown-colored elemental being picked up the report in Mr. Gaston's exclusive lounge.

"From... a level four arcanist. Mr. Gaston's not in the office today... and his students are also in Rose Garden today together with him..." the elemental life talked to itself, "Well... I shall just send it directly to Mr. Gaston to let him decide who should review this paper."

And it was the same situation in Raventi's office.

Chapter 210: Who's Lucien Evans X?

In Rose Garden, beside Swan Lake.

It was already the second half of the conference, and every speaker all received warm applause. After they gave their speech, there were rounds of discussion and comments from senior-rank sorcerers to further inspire the speakers.

After lunch, Larry's study on Valence brought the most heated discussion so far, and after Larry, there were more arcanists waiting for their turn to take the stage, even if it was already four in the afternoon.

Stalwartly-built Ulysses walked on the stage and turned on the magic circle functioning as a projector for presenting scenes. He shared his most recent study with the arcanists present: he discovered that when he tried to create a new form of a fifth-circle spell, Gaston's Poison Cloud, above a certain temperature, no matter how much the pressure was increased, gas could not be turned into liquid.

Many arcanists agreed that this finding was creative and could be of good instructional meaning. Although Lucien had known this theory before from his original world, it was good for him to know that this principle also worked in this magic world, and Lucien was also very interested in how to apply this finding to actual construction of magic models.

At this time, a light-brown owl flew in from the window and landed on the desk in front of Gaston. Seeing that Gaston was too dedicated to Ulysses's speech, the owl gently pecked at his hand.

The guardians outside did not stop Mathew, as it was probably the most famous 'postman' in the Will of Element.

Gaston was a bit amused by that, and then he gently patted on Mathew's feather on its back. Then Gaston took down the several papers from Mathew's leg and put them aside. He planned to handle the papers later after the conference.

Following Mathew, Raventi's budgerigar also arrived. After circling two rounds above his master proudly, the budgerigar landed, also carrying several papers.

Then three more different birds brought papers to the other three members of Arcana Review Board present. However, all those arcanists were not in a hurry to review the papers, not only because reading others papers right in front of Ulysses was surely not polite, but also because they knew well that the review of some complicated papers could take months.

As Ulysses' explanation of his research went deeper, the other arcanists got even more attentive, except for Raventi, the level nine arcanist and ninth circle sorcerer, who was the teacher of Ulysses, as Raventi had already carefully read Ulysses' paper before this meeting, after the paper passed the review from the board.

So Raventi casually picked up the several papers brought by his pet bird, and started reading the titles of the papers.

At this time, a marked title jumped to him,

The Features of a New Element Discovered Based on the Periodic Table of Elements.

He frowned. As someone who once tried to find the law existing among the elements himself, Raventi knew what did this title mean: this meant that there was a Periodic Table of Elements that had gone through verification, and the table had led to the discovery of a new element!

Pulling out the paper, Raventi started to read it carefully. After a while, the look on his face suddenly changed.

Ulysses' voice faded away from his ears. Raventi was shocked with this paper.

Even after he finished reading the last page, Raventi's eyes were still focused on this paper. Then, he did his best to control himself as he turned around to ask Rebecca to come to him.

At this time, Rebecca was listening to Ulysses' speech carefully, and

she also needed to pay attention to what was going on in every corner of the hall. After being scolded by Leandro, she was even more cautious now, afraid of making more mistakes.

As soon as she saw Raventi's gray eyes, Rebecca felt that she was struck by lightning, having no idea what she did wrong again. Then, she nervously walked to Raventi.

"Find me a paper titled The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements, from Lucien Evans X," said Raventi short and directly.

This name again! Rebecca sneaked a peek at Lucien beside Lazar. Fortunately, the title of this paper did leave her with a bit of an impression, and it was simply because the title was pretty long.

"Mr. Raventi, you can find this paper on the last several pages on this issue of Element right in front of you." At the same time, Rebecca felt relieved that her help was available right away.

This comment was actually from Lord of Storm. Sarcastic as it sounded to be, this was actually a praise from this odd-tempered arcanist. Speaking of being odd-tempered, Raventi did not fall too far behind Fernando.

Rebecca was waiting aside, as the vice president did not ask her to leave. When she felt quite curious with the paper from Lucien Evans X, Rebecca saw Raventi's face suddenly got even more serious.

Was anything big going to happen? Rebecca had no idea.

"If not taking the several atomic weights without accurate experimental data into consideration..." Raventi murmured again, then he quickly turned around and said to Rebecca, "I need these several purified elements..."

Then Raventi listed a few that he did not have right now in his alchemical lab.

After that, Raventi commanded Harry, the budgerigar, "Get several Flashes from Odonkor, the grandson of Gray Bear. Don't be lazy... Make haste, Harry."

"Was Harry ever being lazy?" Harry mumbled a bit unhappily and then flew away.

Although she did not understand what Raventi wanted to do, Rebecca still had to follow the vice president's command. After asking her colleagues to take care of the conference, she hurriedly headed for the second floor above the main hall.

No one noticed what was going on there, as they were all listening to Ulysses's speech very carefully.

...

When Ulysses finished his speech and his Q&A part with other arcanists, warm applause was given to him, as most arcanists felt that they learned a lot from Ulysses's sharing.

Ulysses bowed to them, and left the central platform.

When Leandro was about to invite the next arcanist to step on the stage, he surprisedly saw that the vice president suddenly stood up and walked toward the platform hurriedly.

Of course Leandro could not stop this influential ninth-circle sorcerer, and he could do nothing but watch Raventi quickly jumping onto the stage, turning on the magic circle for presentation, taking out his downsized alchemical lab from his magic pouch, and then casting to turn it into a well-equipped lab of normal size.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please forgive me for interrupting the conference." Raventi tried to sound calmer, after all, the true result still needed to be double-verified by his own experiment, "Please turn to the last paper on this issue of Element."

When all the arcanists present opened the journal and found the paper, Igna felt very nervous, and his heart was beating fast. He was afraid that Raventi was going to say that his paper was not qualified for being published on this issue of Element, but he could not understand why Raventi would do it right in the middle of the conference.

The arcanists found the paper titled The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements. Both Larry and Timothy frowned a bit, since they were the ones who reviewed this paper before it was published.

What did Raventi want to do?

At the same time, Larry turned around and took a quick glance at Lucien, looking meaningful.

Lucien was quite confused, feeling unsure as to what was going on there. However, with a second thought, maybe Raventi found a new element that fit his periodic table, and thus Lucien suddenly started to feel very expectant.

"Creative and well-organized as this periodic table may be, Mr. Raventi," said LockLynn first, a level eight arcanist and eighth circle sorcerer, who was also a member of the Arcana Review Board, "its latter part claiming that there are mistakes in the measurement of atomic weight of the several elements does not make sense to me."

And the other arcanists basically all agreed.

Seeing that all the arcanists had all roughly gone through the paper, Raventi said aloud, "Let's skip the discussion over Termirick and the other several elements first, and please take a look at this."

As he was saying, Raventi took out several bottles of purified element and started to measure the atomic weight of them with his own magic lab right in front of the arcanists present.

Although the arcanists were all very confused, no one wanted to stop an authority.

As the atomic weight data of a few elements were corrected one by one, Gaston, Overee, LockLyn and Lydia looked way more serious and they started to write something down with their quills, while other sorcerers now looked shocked.

It was not surprising that there might be mistakes in some atomic weight data, but the fact that the corrected data could be perfectly put into the periodic table of elements put forward by this paper

was unbelievable.

Larry and Timothy rubbed their foreheads at the same time, feeling regretful that they did not finish reading the whole paper, and now they wanted the right ore to see if they could find a new element out of it following the paper so bad that their hearts were beating fast.

Ulysses stared at the periodic table in a daze. He just decided to give up working on periodic table of elements three weeks ago and turned to the topic that he just presented.

After Raventi's forty-minute experiment, most arcanists started reading the paper in the hands carefully, however, they were still confused.

Ulysses commented on it first, "Mr. Raventi, your experiments are something, but even the corrected atomic weights could fit in the table, it's not a decisively evidence showing that the whole periodic table is right, as there's no evidence showing that the data of some elements, say, Termirick, is not right."

"My idea's that the measuring methods that we are using now are not able to report the accurate data," said Raventi.

Overee shook his head, "This is just an assumption."

Without the most direct evidence, most arcanists would not be persuaded.

Leandro for sure did not like Lucien, "I agree, Mr. Raventi. This is just a fairy tale from a level one arcanist."

When Raventi was about to fight back, Harry, the budgerigar, came back with a magic container hanging on his neck.

Raventi grinned, "Ladies and gentlemen, let the experiment tell us the truth."

Taking the Flashes out of the container, Raventi quickly purified the needed substance from them following the method suggested in Woods' paper.

Then Raventi said to all the arcanists, "This is very similar to the mineral substance described in Lucien Evans X's paper."

Gaston, LockLynn, Garry, Ulysses and other arcanists had the feeling that something was going to happen, and they held their breath, watching Raventi put the pure substance in the spectroscope.

It was already dark outside, and that made the beautiful spectrum in front of all the arcanists even more clear and charming.

It was a beautiful spectrum that they had never seen, and the spectrum was like a cluster of fire, burning their eyes and hearts.

A new element was found! A brand new element from this world!

Raventi did not say anything, but continued his experiment to extract the white crystals.

When Raventi started to measure the atomic weight of this new element, every single arcanist present was waiting for his data.

"Atomic weight, 69.8," said Raventi seriously. He had confidence in this paper.

All the arcanists looked down at the paper, and the paper wrote,

"The atomic weight of this aluminum-like element should be between 68 and 70."

It was like lightning to them, and more lightning bolts were arriving. The paper predicted everything from Raventi's experiment. As arcanists who were qualified for the annual conference, they knew what this meant!

Their faces were burning, and their blood boiling.

Raventi literally shouted at the arcanists, "I'll not waste my words on emphasizing how important this paper is. Now, who is Mr. Lucien Evans X? Where is he?!"

Chapter 211: A New Beginning In the School of Elemen

Chapter 211: A New Beginning In the School of Element

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Raventi's roaring was in every arcanist's ear. They were totally shocked, together with quite mixed feelings. Even the four members of the Arcana Review Board were no exception.

The finding of Periodic Table of Elements showed that the discovery of new elements was no longer blind and scattered or, as described by many, like a blind cat running into a dead mouse, but something that had theoretical guidance!

From now on, there was a way to proceed in the study to find new elements!

Exploring the world, finding laws among phenomena, and using the laws to explain other phenomena, this was the spirit of arcana!

"Lucien Evans X... Lucien Evans X is here!" The excited but nervous voice of a man resounded, and then one more time, this time louder, but still with certain control.

Gaston and Larry, as they were so shocked with the finding, did not realize that the young man they met before the conference began was the very author of this paper until now.

No one could believe that this great finding was from a level one arcanist, first circle sorcerer!

On the platform, Leandro, who was standing not far away from Raventi, felt supper dizzy all of a sudden, as his head was buzzing.

All the people present turned to look at the direction where the voice came from. It was Lazar who raised his hand and answered Raventi's questions, and right now, he looked rather excited.

Lazar was deeply shocked. Every time Raventi announced the result of an experiment, his heart missed a beat. And when Lazar heard that familiar name, he was totally unable to believe his ears, since although he knew that his friend Lucien Evans was quite smart, he had no idea how Lucien could put forward the periodic table and make this prediction as if he had already seen the new element before, with his own eyes!

Behind Lazar, Lucien closed his eyes. When he heard that his paper was right on the atomic weight of the new element, Lucien knew that all his hard work paid off!

For sure Lucien felt rather excited, and deep in his mind, he was wild with joy. Meanwhile, although Lucien was relatively confident, he also found himself very lucky as he celebrated in his heart that this new element was not some strange isotope, or his paper would not be found valuable this fast. And if that was the case, this paper would bring him more trouble than reputation, as most arcanists who were regarded as being blindly arrogant with their previous papers would have a really hard time publishing their next papers, and at that time, maybe the ring of Holm Crown prize would be Lucien's last protection.

Since the paper was finished, Lucien kept feeling quite nervous. Finally, Raventi's experiment proved that he was right.

One would not imagine that finding the law was too difficult, however, not many could really stick to the effort if it didn't pay off in a relatively short period of time.

Raventi, Timothy and other arcanists saw the young man standing beside Lazar. Wearing black bow and long double-breasted coat, Lucien looked handsome and elegant, and his black eyes appeared to be rather deep.

"You're... Lucien Evans X?" Raventi could not believe that he was this young.

It was the same with other arcanists present. Except for Gaston, Larry and a few other sorcerers who had already seen him, the rest of the people all thought that this author only of junior-rank should

at least have many years of experience in studying elements.

However, this was not true.

Lucien tried to stay calm, and he smiled, "Yes, Mr. Raventi."

Squinting a bit, Raventi secretly used a magic and read the information of Lucien's arcana badge. Then he nodded to Lucien. "Evans, come up here. I think your paper should be the last and best play of today's conference. The great meaning your paper is of is clear to every arcanist present, and using even a single word to explain it is a waste of time. This conference will be remembered by history because of your paper!"

"Before that, Mr. Raventi." Gaston stood up, "I need to apologize for my negligence when I reviewed this paper. So I would like to petition the board together with Mr. Overee for a reevaluation of this paper, so Evans could earn all the reputation, praise, arcana credits and points that he truly deserve!"

Overee also stood up and nodded.

Gaston and Overee were not stupid. After seeing Raventi's experiments, they quickly talked to each other and made this decision. On one hand, they needed to be responsible for the mistake that their students made, since it was their students who ignored this paper, and on the other hand, they would not leave their enemies any time to take advantage of this thing and thus to kick them out of the board.

Now they made themselves look rather fair and humble.

Lucien took a deep breath and then started walking through the audience toward the platform.

No one is sure who started it, but many arcanists stood up one by one to show their respect to Lucien from both sides of the aisle as he was walking.

"I'm deeply regretful that I missed this paper," apologized Larry sincerely. With his hand on his left chest, he bowed to Lucien.

Timothy adjusted his glasses a bit, “Evans, if you had not put your experiments of correcting the atomic weights in the appendix, I might have visited you the very night you sent the paper to the board. Anyway, you taught me a lesson, Evans. Your paper and what happened to your paper will definitely become a famous story in the world of magic, while Larry and I would be two idiots in this story, in contrast to your great accomplishment.”

Timothy had a sense of humour and he was very straightforward, which sort of explained why he loved explosive magic so much. However, regarding appearance, Timothy looked quite gentle and elegant.

“At least my paper passed your review,” Lucien did not really have a bad impression of them.

When Lucien walked past Ulysses, the latter released a sigh and said to the former with a slight frustration in his tone, “There might still be some people who are gonna doubt your finding, Evans, but I totally believe in your periodic table. In fact, I was once very close to the finding, but I gave it up because of the several atomic weights that I could not explain. I’m restrained by my own sense of authority and experience.”

Lucien smiled and nodded, “Mr. Ulysses, without your paper discussing the possible law existing among the elements, I would not dare make such a bold assumption when I was developing my paper.”

At this time, someone who did not like Leandro said to Lucien, “Mr. Evans, you’re definitely qualified for this conference! Besides Mr. Raventi and all the committee members, you’re the most qualified one!”

Hearing that, Leandro wanted to directly disappear off the platform.

“Mr. Evans, welcome!”

“Mr. Evans, we’re looking forward to your speech!”

Although these arcanists were not familiar with Lucien, after

witnessing the experiment and carefully reading the paper, they all showed their respect to this young sorcerer, which was pretty rare.

Stepping onto the metal platform at the center of the hall, Lucien first bowed to Raventi respectfully and then took the rostrum from him.

“Mr. Evans, I’ve got a question,” Leandro cut in before Lucien started his speech. “Finding the new element’s such a coincidence. I wonder if it wasn’t you who first found this new element beforehand, and then following its data, you figured out this periodic table. This seems to be the only reason that your ‘assumption’ could be this accurate, but if this is true, the finding of the new element wouldn’t be able to prove that your periodic table of elements is correct, as you used its data as a basis when you developed the table.”

A few arcanists in the crowd slightly nodded.

Before answering Leandro’s question, Lucien activated the magic circle for presentation first, and then he calmly explained, “Let’s ignore the new element first and just look at the elements discovered before my paper was published. I don’t think it’s too hard to see that my finding could logically be drawn upon the features and data of the elements that we are previously already familiar with. Besides, feel free to check my purchase record with the congress if I’ve bought any ores that contain this new element.”

The arcanists present stared at the table carefully, and Lucien continued, as he pointed at the blank spaces on the periodic table of elements, “As for those undiscovered elements, I’m confident that even though their atomic weights might not be exactly the same with what are on the table because of the limit of our current measuring methods, their characters should follow my prediction. Ladies and gentlemen, I’m sure that you’ve all collected some pretty unique ores. Why not check them again to see if there’re any that suit the description in my paper. Try to find new elements out of them, and I’m waiting for your papers. Either prove me right or wrong.”

Lucien’s confidence influenced most of the arcanists. They started to

feel very excited.

When they were considering to end this conference earlier so they could go back and do their research, Lucien said to them, “Actually, even if no new element could be found for a while, even if there’re still some tiny problems with my periodic table, ladies and gentlemen, should we just ignore this periodic law existing among all these elements?”

Staring at the periodic table, which contained so many profound secrets of the world, all the arcanists present fell into silence. They had to admit that the periodic feature truly existed.

Lucien raised his head slightly and said to the people seriously, “The finding of the periodic feature in arranging the elements represents a new beginning in the School of Element. According to me, I do not think that the most significant function of the table lies in leading us to find more new elements, but reminding us to take a step back and ask why is there a periodic feature among elements? This is the question that I’ve been asking myself since I’ve figured out this table.”

Hearing his insightful words, Lucien’s audience was deeply shocked, especially those senior-rank arcanists like Raventi and Gaston. Staring at this young man speaking on the platform, they recalled the great figure of Mr. Douglas, the president of the Congress of Magic, when he was giving the most influential speech in history of magic.

Chapter 212: Reevaluation

"I believe that nothing in this world is of periodic pattern for no reason. Why stars follow certain tracks all the time? The answer is gravity. Then what's the answer for the elements?"

Lucien's deep and serious voice lingered in the hall, and his question directly hit every arcanist's heart. Yes, the never-ending pursuit of truth and the endless curiosity of asking why was the major drive of the development of arcana!

Lucien did not go too deep with this topic. Before the arcanists could respond to his question, Lucien put on a gentle, humble smile, "Of course, as a beginner who just started his exploration in arcana and the contemporary magic system, in most cases, I can only ask questions, not having enough knowledge to answer them. I hope that my questions can be helpful to all arcanists who are striving to move forward in this area."

Any shifts happening in one's knowledge and understanding of the world should proceed step by step. The last thing Lucien wanted to see at this point was the members of the Will of Elements having their heads exploded in front of him on the conference, simply because his speech was too shocking for them to handle.

Lucien was even a bit amused by the thought that he might be able to beat his future enemies by simply giving them a speech.

Raventi started applauding first, bad-tempered as he often was, this time he said to Lucien nicely, "Very rarely, I see a not stupid question here. Evans, although your speech isn't long, it's the most valuable one on today's conference, and this might turn into a new research direction in the school of Element."

Following Raventi, all the arcanists present started applauding excitedly, as this conference was totally a surprise to them!

"All right Evans. I have to go now. I'm gonna check my collection of ores, and hopefully I can provide your periodic table of elements with more support," said Raventi to Lucien, and then he took back

his alchemical lab and hurriedly left the hall.

Within five minutes, following Raventi, Gaston, Overee, Timothy, and Larry, almost all the arcanists left the hall to start their experiments, for no one wanted to miss the great opportunity to be remembered by history.

Lazar walked to Lucien and said with emotion, "The major reason why those senior-rank arcanists can have great achievements should be their passion and dedication towards arcana and magic."

Lucien smiled and nodded, "One doesn't have to be super smart, but he has to be diligent."

Some junior-rank sorcerers, including Rebecca, were still here, and were looking at Lucien from afar with curiosity and admiration. However, they did not have the courage to talk to him.

"Congratulations, my friend." Lazar hugged Lucien sincerely, "I can see a future Holm Crown prize winner standing in front of me."

Lucien patted Lazar on the shoulder for encouragement, and then he asked, "By the way, Lazar, do you know if there is any lab here?"

"What do you mean...?" asked Lazar confusedly.

"I'm looking for a lab to continue my studies. I've bought quite a bit of ores." Lucien rubbed his chin.

"What a monster... You're surely like those senior-rank arcanists." Lazar was a bit speechless, but he still told Lucien where the spare labs were.

When Lucien left, Lazar murmured to himself, "Lucien... I was about to celebrate with him a bit tonight. This kind of guy would never be popular among girls!"

"Hey, Lazar, can you tell us some stories about Mr. Evans?"

Turning around, Lazar found that Rebecca and a couple of pretty girls were standing behind him and waiting for more information about his charming and talented friend, with their faces slightly

flushed.

"Oh jerk..." Lazar could not help swearing.

...

When the news arrived to Rogerio, he was pissed off, "What am I doing here?!"

He had spent so much time on watching Lucien but didn't find a single clue suggesting the possible relationship between him and some important middle-level leader of the Will of Elements, but now, Lucien was definitely under their protection!

More importantly, just by playing with those cards, this young arcanist worked out such an influential paper, and Rogerio had the feeling that this finding would lead to the fast development of the Will of Element.

At this point, Rogerio did not really care whether people would doubt his measurement of Termirick because of Lucien's finding.

After closing his eyes to calm down for a while, Rogerio opened them again and sighed, "What an arcana genius... But this makes sense, or Professor would not have this young man to be his student."

Then he turned around, "Adol, you don't have to follow Evans anymore. He might be soon getting some attention from the grand arcanists from time to time, and if they found you, we'd be in trouble. You know, Hathaway doesn't like what we're doing."

Adol made some noise as if he was giggling, "Glad to hear that. After all, it's quite boring following a little boy around."

...

It was still early in the morning when Lucien arrived at the main hall on the second day. He did not get much sleep last night, and neither did many other arcanists who were already in there.

"Any findings, Lucien?" As soon as he showed up, Lazar hurriedly

asked.

"Not really..." Lucien shook his head, "I'm not there yet. My power isn't enough to allow me to do many researches within a night."

"I'm the same..." Another arcanist joined their conversation.

After a while, Gaston, Overee, Larry and Timothy all arrived, and then the arcanists found their seats and sat down.

Despite the fact that Leandro really did not want to do this, he still added a seat in the second row for Lucien.

After a long wait, the seats belonging to Raventi and Ulysses were still empty.

Many arcanists looked back at the hall gate from time to time, looking a bit irritated.

"Mr. Raventi and Ulysses might have stayed up too late with their experiments last night." Gaston stood up, trying to comfort the people, "Maybe we can send someone to find them..."

Obviously, no one wanted to go, as the whole hall suddenly quieted down. Some junior-rank arcanists quickly took a step backwards with their back against the wall, as they knew how pissed off Raventi could be if he was disturbed, either with his experiment or sleep.

"Well... Then, Evans, how about introducing to us how you found the periodic law among the elements?" Gaston switched to Lucien, "And we can patiently wait for Mr. Raventi."

Lucien nodded, but as soon as he reached the rostrum, he heard Raventi's roaring,

"Evans! I found the silicon-like element predicted in your paper!" Raventi shouted at him at the top of his lungs, followed by Ulysses, "Exactly the same... Atomic weight and features!"

Instantly, as if some strong, bright light lit up the whole conference hall, all the arcanists saw the extremely promising future of the

periodic table of elements.

After a short time of silence, thunderous applause took over the hall. All the arcanists present were applauding for this young arcanist, and for this great finding that would be forever remembered by the world of magic!

All of them were so excited to witness this great, historic moment, and the applause did not stop until Gaston tried to calm them down with his gesture for the third time.

Gaston looked around, and he purposefully looked at Leandro for a bit longer. Then he said aloud, "I believe that there's no reason to doubt the correctness of the periodic table put forward by Lucien anymore! Arcana Review Board's going to reevaluate his paper, and my comment on Lucien's paper is ready!"

Then Gaston looked at Lucien, smiling, "Go ahead... Share with us how you did your research, and your story with publishing this paper. I'm sure that everyone's curious."

Lucien introduced to his audience how he carefully checked the previous papers, raised questions and worked with his cards. In the end, he came to the part when he was having the extremely difficult time with his contribution.

"After my paper passed the review, I wanted to get attention from more arcanists. So I encouraged myself and visited the headquarter of Arcana, but I was turned down, and they commented that they had no idea how the paper passed the review."

"Idiots!" Raventi was pissed off, "They only carry their brains when they eat!"

"Then, I turned to Element..." Lucien continued.

All the arcanists from Element suddenly got nervous, especially Igna, whose hands were shaking and face turning pale.

"Element made an offer that they would like to publish my paper, but only on their next month's issue," said Lucien.

"Still stupid, but better than Arcana," Raventi commented in a low voice.

"Then, after being turned down by Alchemy, Common Arcana made the same offer that they could publish the paper next month, but I did not agree." Lucien paused a bit, then he looked at Igna, smiling, "Fortunately, at this time, my friend introduced me to Mr. Igna..."

All the arcanists turned to look at Igna. He was sweating and could not breathe. In his eyes, Lucien's smile was very meaningful. He could already see the picture where Raventi was scolding him bitterly and crazily.

"... who nicely told me that Element was going to do a special edition this month and accepted my paper."

"Ah?" Igna was more than surprised. With a long sigh of relief, probably because of the great mood swing, he suddenly passed out.

"Igna... Mr. Igna...!"

"He got too excited... with Mr. Evans' thankfulness."

"Yeah... He's not young anymore..."

When Igna returned to consciousness, he heard Raventi shouting, "Put Evans' paper at the very beginning of this issue of Element, followed by those papers reporting findings of new elements and correcting the atomic weights!"

...

On monday morning, Eric entered the hall of the Sorcerer Administrative Department in a pretty good mood.

"Morning, Mr. Eric. Here's the latest issue of Element," greeted Cindy and Dona.

Eric pressed his top hat a bit and asked confused, "But the conference still has several days to go."

"We've got no idea, Mr. Eric. The journal just arrived." Cindy

handed the latest issue of Element to Eric, and the cover of the journal was a picture of more than sixty different element symbols.

Out of curiosity, Eric opened the journal right in front of the girls, and the smile on his face froze.

"Mr. Eric?" Cindy and Dona called him as they noticed the difference on Mr. Eric's face, but they got no response from him. When they took a glance at the first paper themselves, their beautiful eyes suddenly opened wide.

The title of the first paper was:

"The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements.

"Author: Lucien Evans X, level one arcanist, first circle sorcerer."

Between the title and the content of the paper, there was a long inserted comment:

"This is a great accomplishment in the history of magic. The paper unveils the shocking law existing among elements from countless messy and scattered data, and the law, from now on, will direct every step of our discovery of the world. We can foresee that the periodic table put forward by Mr. Lucien Evans X will become the foundation of future study in the school of Element, and it will lead us to a broader new world of arcana.

"This is a great paper of significant meaning, which is worth a large amount of discussion and means a historic breakthrough. May I show my respect to the author here first. After discussion, the board has decided to award Mr. Lucien Evans X three hundred arcana credits and two thousand arcana points."

Chapter 213: Argumen

As if time stopped in the hall of the Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric was lost for a few seconds. Eric finally regained his composure when some other sorcerers entered the hall and he hurriedly started reading the paper right in front him, on the counter.

He remembered this young man, Lucien Evans X, who just started studying arcana three months ago. Eric could not believe that it was this young man who developed this groundbreaking paper!

Furthermore, it seemed even more unrealistic that the extremely generous reward, three hundred credits and two thousand points, had been given to a level one arcanist, first circle sorcerer.

Both Cindy and Dona were also eager to see why their friend Lucien could gain such a reward.

Although Eric was really excited with the first half of the paper, he got confused with Lucien's points claiming that the atomic weight of a few elements were mistakenly measured, and so did the two girls. It was not surprising that the data of some elements yielded by studies conducted many years ago might not be very accurate due to the limit of the techniques, but they could not believe that even the atomic weight of the lately discovered elements were also not right. After all, these newly discovered elements had been examined by many arcanists every time when a new measurement method came out.

"But Mr. Gaston and Mr. Overee made similar comments speaking highly of the paper..." Cindy said to Dona, "I mean... this kind of paper discussing the periodicity existing among elements could usually get one or two credits."

Cindy had been working here for almost two years, and she knew the standards.

"That's right." Dona nodded, "Publishing a paper without having any decisive evidence supporting it... This is not the common practice

of Element."

"Wait..." Eric turned the page and saw Lucien's experiment report on how he reexamined the atomic weights of a few elements and proved the previous data wrong. Reading while nodding, Eric had to admit that this paper was of higher value than those which only talked about the authors' assumptions.

However, Eric still could not figure out why three hundred credits should be given to this paper.

"The Features of A New Element Discovered Based on Periodic Table of Elements... from Woods, level four arcanist, forth circle sorcerer..." Cindy did not read Lucien's paper as carefully as Eric. Out of curiosity, she took a glance at the second paper following Lucien's, "What does this mean... Mr. Eric? A new element... discovered?"

"What?!" Eric was shocked, and he quickly found the paper from Woods. After reading the abstract, he fiercely grabbed another copy of Element with his shaking hand, and started to compare Woods' paper to Lucien's.

Cindy and Dona could see that Mr. Eric's face turned red as he was reading Mr. Woods' paper, and the blue veins on his forehead were very distinct.

"How is it possible..." Eric slightly shook his head, "This is not a paper... it's a prophecy..."

The great value of Lucien's paper was further endorsed by Mr. Raventi's finding of another new element and the papers reporting the corrected atomic weight of some elements from Lazar and a few other arcanists. Many authors put forward their assumptions and thoughts regarding why the data of some elements were mistakenly measured.

Turning the journal back to the periodic table page, Eric stared at the table for a long time, having no idea what to say.

Cindy and Dona, the two apprentices, could not understand the

great meaning lying in this table, so they were less shocked when compared to Eric.

"The periodicity looks so amazing." Cindy was still quite excited, "It shares the similar beauty with that of Brook Equation, the Poem of Goddess."

Dona agreed, "Yes. I wonder if gods controlling everything like this really exist, or why there's such beautiful periodicity in the world."

Although the power of the Church was suppressed by the Congress of Magic, it was still relatively influential among common people. The two common girls, one from a farmer's family and the other from a small town, before they were selected as apprentices, were to some extent influenced by religion. However, after witnessing how amazing and powerful magic could be, religion never again worked the same way for them.

"No wonder those comments speak so highly of this paper, and such generous reward was given." Eric slowly calmed down and released a sigh, "Except for the paper from Mr. Brook demonstrating that light is a kind of electromagnetic wave which won him even more credits than this, I could only recall very few papers in recent years which can compete with Lucien's paper. Even Mr. Donald's paper putting forward that spectrum analysis can be used in discovering new elements and Lord of Storm's paper on electromagnetic wave won them only about a hundred credits or something."

Most senior-rank arcanists never relied on winning credits from the board from their upgrade, and the way from which they could gain way more credits was citation. And this was why, in most cases, their arcana level was lower than their magic level, and only really influential and powerful arcanists could reach the balance between their arcana and magic level.

"Lucien..." Cindy paused a bit and then corrected herself, "Mr. Evans' arcana level is now way above his magic level... Wow.. I remember that there are only eight people who were like this in the three-hundred-year history of the congress, and more than half of them are now grand arcanists or legendary archmages."

Cindy now felt a bit nervous with directly calling Lucien's name.

When someone was still of junior-rank, it was not very hard for him or her to gain a higher arcana level compared to the person's magic level, as from time to time, a junior-rank mage might be able to publish some good papers and thus earn some credits. But Lucien's case was still very rare, since his arcana level was now way above his magic level.

Among the eight people, now there were two grand arcanists and one legendary archmage, another one died from disease and two died in battle. The last two became mediocre later, and now they were just like everyone else.

Eric's gray eyes looked around and finally stopped on Lucien's paper again, "Now he's a level four arcanist, and he did this within less than three months... What a young man."

It took Eric thirty years to become a level three arcanist.

Then there was an imperceptible smile on his face, "This young man won't need to put an X behind his name anymore."

...

Drummond was a level seven arcanist who specialized in Force and Astrology. If he had not chosen Arcana, he would definitely be qualified enough to be a member of the Arcana Review Board.

Right now his anger was burning his guts. Although he knew that it was not really his mistake for missing this paper, Drummond completely lost his face when he ran into Gaston and Overee, who made fun of him and told him that the author actually came to the headquarter of Arcana in person to contribute his paper but was scolded away by the staff here!

After a while of silence, someone said in a low voice, "Not me..."

"Interesting..." Drummond sneered.

Behind the reception desk outside, Garvin's face was as pale as a piece of paper.

Heidi shook her head a bit, "You could've just followed the rules and let him hand in his paper. One's never supposed to do more than their job duties. Here, we strictly follow rules, as the more we do, the easier we make mistakes."

Garvin looked at Heidi confusedly. He never knew that Heidi was this familiar with office politics.

...

Standing in the Noble District of Rentato, there was a grand magic tower in the style of the Palace of Tria. On the facade of the tower, golden words wrote:

Holm Royal Magic Academy.

On the ninth floor, more than ten senior arcanists from the Will of Element and Holm Royal Magic Academy gathered here in the early Monday morning.

After one became a senior arcanist or sorcerer, it went without saying that they could enter the higher level of their organization. However, only those authoritatives like Gaston and Overee who made great achievement in their own fields could become one of those who could actually make decisions.

Raventi arrived here from Rose Garden even earlier. Seeing that everyone was already there, he said to them aloud, energetically, "Ladies and gentlemen, after reading Evans' paper and those papers supporting his findings, I think everyone agrees that Evans should be the winner of this year's Holm Crown prize!"

"Well... not really..." frowned Morris Hoffenberg, the chairman of Holm Royal Magic Academy, the president of Holm branch of the Congress of Magic, one of the presidents of the Will of Elements, level eight arcanist, ninth circle sorcerer, "I mean... I'm not denying the importance and value of this finding, but, in my eyes, this finding does not come from a solid and profound foundation of arcana knowledge. It's more like... an inspirational flash."

Some arcanists slightly nodded.

"Besides, Evans has just passed his basic arcana assessment. If he was awarded with Holm Crown prize, I'm afraid that this might have a negative impact on the reputation of the prize," added Morris.

Morris Hoffenber had silver-gray pupils which was something typical in the royal family of Holm, and his face profile looked somewhat like Natasha. He was a good-looking, middle-aged man.

Raventi definitely did not care. Staring at him, Raventi suddenly flared out, as he shouted, "Just an inspirational flash?! Morris, are you kidding me? Are you trying to say that all the arcanists who tried to find the law in the distribution of elements but failed are all idiots? Are you saying I'm an idiot, or Lord of Storm is?!"

Gaston and Overee grinned silently. Every time when they needed to argue for something, if they could get Raventi on their side, their job would get way easier, as they just needed to stand aside and watch Raventi snarling at other people.

Chapter 214: The Youngest in History

Facing Raventi's spittle, Morris leaned back a bit and hurriedly said, "Calm down, Raventi, calm down. This isn't what I mean. What I'm trying to say is that the discovery of the periodic table of elements can definitely show Lucien's talent and his unique way of thinking, but it cannot reveal Lucien's knowledge of arcana. His arcana level cannot qualify him to become the winner of Holm Crown prize."

Facing Raventi, whose arcana level was even higher than himself, Morris was a bit under pressure. He knew that if he had not come from the royal family and specialized in the school of Elements, Raventi would most likely be the president of the Will of Elements.

Raventi's bad temper, although he was a level nine arcanist, ninth circle sorcerer, definitely had prevented him from becoming a member of the highest council, and comparatively speaking, although Lord of Storm was also known for being easily irritable, Mr. Fernando's great academic competence could shut up the mouth of anyone who did not like him.

Some senior arcanists present moved on their seats a bit, as they all had been in the same position before like Morris, having Raventi's spittle dropping on their faces.

As long as Raventi believed in something, no matter who he was facing, of high or low status, he would speak for what he believed in very directly. There was rumour saying that Raventi and Lord of Storm once shouted at each other furiously face to face because of an academic question, but unfortunately, Raventi was defeated in the end, and Lord of Storm gave him a really hard time.

Nevertheless, Raventi never changed his temper, "Come on, Morris, don't be cheap! You know well enough what's the purpose of setting up Holm Crown prize—to honour sorcerers who've made great contribution to the development of the school of Element and whose contribution should be remembered by history. Then, dare you tell me again that you don't think Evans is qualified?! And if you think he's not, what about Ms. Meredith?! Do you think she

was not qualified as well?!"

Morris was a bit embarrassed, as the true reason for him being this uncooperative was directly revealed by Raventi in front of many people—he felt reluctant to use those precious materials to make another Holm Crown Ring, a level seven magic item.

"Yeah... I hear you..." Facing Raventi's roaring, Morris hurriedly covered his face with his hands, "I mean... all the previous winners of Holm Crown prize have discovered some epoch-making research methods, theories or outcomes, but the periodic table of elements is more like something... you know, drawn from existing findings."

Before the scenario got worse, and before Raventi continued his snarl, Gaston slightly coughed and said, "Mr. Morris, we've seen your point, and I believe that you can see the great value in the periodic table. If we take a look at the previous prize winners, we know that Ms. Meredith won the prize because she introduced electrolysis and thus she found a new element, and Mr. Donald, who's not in Allyn right now, introduced us spectrum analysis and thus he found a new element. As Lucien's periodic table's also led to the discovery of two new elements, honestly speaking, I cannot see any reasons why Lucien Evans should not be awarded with the Holm Crown prize. By the way, Ms. Meredith was also a level one arcanist when she first won the prize."

Morris was speechless. When he looked around and tried to seek support, no one stood out for him. Florencia, from Affairs Committee, who was supposed to be Morris' ally, nodded her head decidedly.

"Alright then..." Morris leaned back against his chair, "I agree then. Let's vote."

Raventi looked around and saw most arcanists raised their hands, except several from Holm Royal Magic Academy.

"Well..." Morris slightly lifted his eyebrow on one side, "The decision has been adopted: The Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy will honor Mr. Lucien Evans with Holm Crown prize. Then... let's talk about the name of the ring for Mr. Evans,

and what magic the ring should be permanently enchanted with as the gift for the prize winner. As for the design of the ring...
Florence, I know you're good at it."

Florence was a blond beauty. She took a glance at Morris, "Yes, I am, and I'm also more than willing to be the designer, but my dear teacher, I know you just don't want to pay a professional jewelry designer."

Florence was right now a level six arcanist, eight circle sorcerer, who specialized in Element, Summoning, Electromagnetics and Force, and she was also especially interested in curse magic. In terms of her achievement, Florence was actually pretty "young", as she was no more than seventy. She became Morris's student after Morris upgraded to ninth circle, and Florence also turned herself into a senior-rank sorcerer within only thirty years. She was right now the member of Affairs Committee and Holm Royal Magic Academy.

"..." Morris looked serious, "As the president of the Will of Element and Holm Royal Magic Academy, I have the responsibility to watch our budget."

"I hear you, my teacher." Florence grinned, "Then what should be the name of Evans' ring? What about... Periodicity?"

Gaston looked at Florence with his weird-colored eyes, "Not clear or unique enough to the school of Element."

"Foresight?" suggested LockLynn.

"It's more like a name for Silver Moon Medal prize, Lynn, and I think Law is not bad," said Lydia, another female member from Arcana Review Board, who looked quite gorgeous with her succubus blood.

"No. It doesn't have anything to do with elements." Florence shook her head.

The several ladies present were almost arguing, and the male sorcerers started feeling a bit awkward. They looked at Raventi,

hoping that he could come up with an excellent name.

However, Raventi was not interested in naming the ring at all. Despite the fact that he did have bad temper, he usually did not interrupt ladies' talk.

At this time, Morris stood straight and looked more serious. After a few seconds, Morris knocked at the desk and said to all the sorcerers present, "Her Excellency, Ms. Hathaway, just told me that the ring should be named Element, as Lucien's finding covers all the elements."

As a lady, Hathaway was also interested in naming the ring.

Those senior-rank arcanists had to admit that this was the right name, but they also felt that this name might be too much for Evans, as even Constantine and Hathaway did not earn the name, Element, when they were awarded with this prize.

However, as this was a suggestion from Hathaway herself, there seemed to be no reason for anyone to say no to the name.

So Raventi hurriedly concluded, "Then Element should be the name of the ring. Morris, you decide which magic should be given to the ring."

There was no more time for the ladies to discuss.

Morris was not only a master in the school of Element, but also in Alchemy.

"And there's one more thing." Florencia added, "Lucien's a level four arcanist now, so, technically speaking, he's already a middle-rank sorcerer. So I'm feeling concerned that someone might use this as an excuse to give him tasks through Affair Committee. I mean, although this is not very likely to happen, since Lucien's under our protection now, we shall leave no chances to our enemies."

Gaston crossed his fingers and nodded, "Lucien's only a middle-rank arcanist, not a middle-rank sorcerer. We should be firm that Lucien could only accept tasks related to researches, but not fighting or adventuring. Florencia, I want you to give Evans an easy research

task first to keep him occupied. However, I also want to make sure that we're doing this because Evans is willing to join the Will of Elements."

Florencia nodded and smiled. Then she asked, "Then is here anyone who's willing to be Evans' mentor?"

Most of the arcanists present shook their heads immediately. How dare they be the teacher of a Holm Crown prize winner when they themselves were not even close to the prize?

Since Holm Crown prize had been set up, a total of twenty five rings were given out. Among the twenty five rings, six belonged to the grand arcanists and legendary archmages from the highest council, and among the rest of the nineteen winners, eight died because of all kinds of reasons in the past two hundred seventy years; three never went any further with their researches; one was so dedicated to the studies that the person refused to join any group. Donald, Morris, Raventi, Gaston and another three arcanists were the rest of the seven people. Now, except for Donald and Morris, the former being a member of the highest council and the latter one of the presidents of the Will of Element and a chairman to Holm Royal Magic Academy, the rest of them were all members of Arcana Review Board.

Therefore, a winner of Holm Crown prize might still not be able to join Arcana Review Board, but anyone who specialized in the school of Element and joined Arcana Review Board must have the ring from Holm Crown prize.

Gaston gently rubbed the blue-diamond ring on his left hand and said, "Evans' still young, and he's got a long way to go. Although I do appreciate his talent and way of thinking, I still want to wait a bit more to see how everything goes with him before making this decision."

Gaston worried that Lucien's achievement might just be a flash in the pan.

"I agree." Raventi nodded, "You gotta be careful with arranging the task for Evans, Florencia. And I'll pay close attention to him as

well."

"Then... Congratulations to the youngest Holm Crown prize winner in history! A young man who's not even twenty-one!" Morris stood up and started applauding first, "Now I gotta leave to work on making the ring. The warehouses of the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy are gonna suffer a great loss because of it."

Actually, Lucien was not even nineteen.

...

Because of Lucien's paper, the annual conference turned out to be much longer than it was planned to be. Five days later, on Saturday evening, Raventi finally declared the closing of the conference.

"I believe that what happened and what was presented by a young man during this annual meeting is definitely unforgettable to everyone who participated in this conference in person. So, the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy have made a decision: we've decided to award Mr. Lucien Evans with Holm Crown prize in order to honour his great contribution to the school of Element! Please come over to the stage, Evans!"

Although they knew that this would happen sooner or later, Larry and Timothy were still quite surprised with how fast the two groups made the decision.

Lucien stood up, and warm applause surrounded him.

When Lazar watched his good friend walking toward the stage confidently and calmly, he felt that the recent two months were like a dream. He could not believe that the young man standing on the stage right now was the same person who was strange to everything when he just arrived in Allyn a bit more than two months ago.

Raventi nodded, and then he said, "Now, we're honored to have Mr. Morris Hoffenberg, the president of the Will of Element and Holm Royal Magic Academy, to present Evans with the award."

The arcanists did not expect that the president would come, and now they were all looking at Morris.

Leading the senior-rank sorcerers from the Will of Element and Holm Royal Magic Academy, Morris then walked onto the stage himself and stood beside Lucien, smiling, "Congratulations, Evans. Before I present the award to you, I'd like to know how do you feel right now. Can you share it with us?"

The arcanists started applauding warmly again. Lucien first looked at the arcanists down the stage, then he lowered his head, smiling.

When he looked up again, Lucien started his speech seriously, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

Chapter 215: Ring of Holm Crown Prize

Chapter 215: Ring of Holm Crown Prize

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Hearing Lucien's words, most arcanists first felt a bit confused, then they smiled and started applauding again. What a humble but appropriate beginning!

Raventi, Ulysses and other arcanists who once studied the distribution of elements smiled, as they felt satisfied to know that their work was never a waste, and it was their work which laid the foundation for Lucien's great finding.

"Elegant, humble and direct," Timothy said to Larry when he was applauding. "I have the feeling that what Evans just said will be remembered by the world."

Larry touched his chin a bit and grinned, "Come on, this is Holm Crown prize, and Evans' the twenty-sixth winner in this more than two hundred seventy years. Whatever he said would be remembered. But... well, yes, what he just said definitely showed the charm of his personality, and maybe it would even inspire some poets."

"Unfortunately, Larry, we played some quite stupid roles in Evans' impressive story. And we'll be remembered as well in this story, although not for such a nice reason." Timothy patted on Larry's shoulder.

Larry smiled and shrugged a bit, knowing that Timothy was only joking. Both Timothy and he never really minded, as they were more confident than this and would never hate a person only because of their great accomplishments.

But when Timothy looked at Lucien standing on the stage and watched him being surrounded by the warm applause, his desire for Holm Crown prize was greater than ever.

Lucien's success definitely inspired many young, ambitious arcanists.

However, among those pairs of eyes filled with passion and admiration down the stage, there was one pair that was calm and cold, "Although he's being humble, is he also trying to salute Professor, his teacher, when he said the word giants?"

However, only Lucien really knew who he wanted to salute.

After a few seconds, Lucien continued, "If Mr. Douglas had not raised the ten questions leading us to explore the truth of this world, we would not be present here. If the arcanists before me had never revealed the truth that the elements are composed of atoms, we wouldn't be able to go this far in the study of elements. If the arcanists had never introduced us all the new methods of doing experiments, it would be impossible for me to study the distribution of elements. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, without you all, I would not be able to present you the periodic table of elements."

All the arcanists present were touched, and again, their warm applause cut in Lucien's speech.

"However, knowing the fact that we are standing on the shoulders of giants does not mean that we can just enjoy this glory and reputation, but we need to see further and dig deeper," Lucien said to the arcanists sincerely. "As what I said the other day, our most urgent need right now is not to find more new elements following the periodic table, but to take a step back and seriously think about why there is a periodic order in the distribution of elements. I have this feeling that the discovery in this field will lead to a great storm in arcana, through which we will be able to get closer to the truth and the essence of the world."

Watching Lucien giving the speech on the stage, Lazar could not stop thinking of those great masters in history. In the world of music, someone like Christopher could be called a master, while in the world of magic, only those very influential arcanists could be regarded as masters. Right now, Lucien was on the stage and he was being so elegant and confident, as if he was already very used to the occasion.

“Where shall we start then?” Lucien paused a bit, then continued, “I believe that everyone has noticed the most obvious problem in my periodic table: why the atomic weight of the several elements still do not fit the law of distribution? The discovery of the two new elements can support my assumption that the measurement of these elements are not correct, but why?”

Standing beside Lazar, Rebecca’s eyes were shining when she was looking at this young man on the stage.

Seeing that most arcanists were nodding, Lucien smiled, “I have a guess, actually. I think that it is because the measured samples of the elements were not one hundred percent purified, but, at the same time, those impurities won’t affect the characters of the elements, which is also why the impurities were hard to be found and separated. In order to do a better work on refinement, I think we should focus on the fact that there’s a difference between the atomic weight of the element itself and the impurities.”

All the arcanists including those very talented ones were shocked, as they would never expect any arcanists to just directly share with others his or her ideas or inspiration like Lucien just did. It seemed that Lucien did not feel concerned at all that this idea, which might lead to another great finding, might be stolen by any arcanists present.

In addition to this, what impressed them as well was Lucien’s strong logical thinking ability. Although he did not have very in-depth arcana knowledge, his guess sounded very reasonable.

While many arcanists were still feeling frustrated with those wrongly measured elements in the past several days, Lucien was already again way ahead of them!

This time there was no applause because all the arcanists present were busy with taking notes and writing down their thoughts with their quills. Raventi and Morris frowned, and they felt like starting to build new magic circles to better purify those elements right away.

Lucien raised his voice, “I am just a beginner in arcana, and

designing a magic or alchemical circle to serve this purpose is beyond my capability. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that we can march forward in this field together in order to become giants for our later generations! To promote the school of Element to a new peak!”

Then Lucien put his right hand on this forehead and slightly bowed to the audience.

The arcanists suddenly awakened from their great surprise and shock, then, they started applauding crazily, and even the roof was slightly trembling. They were applauding for Lucien’s sharp thinking, and also for his generosity!

It took Morris quite a while to calm down the arcanists. Then, he turned to Lucien, “If the way of refinement that you just suggested gets successful, it would be another great accomplishment which could probably win another Holm Crown prize. And you just shared it with us straightforwardly like this?”

Lucien smiled, partly because Morris looked slightly like Natasha, “Even if I did not want to share this idea with anyone, I’m sure that, sooner or later, there would be other arcanists who could think of it. As I always respect and believe in the intelligence and wisdom of all arcanists, I think it’s better just to share my idea with everyone, especially when I’m not capable of doing this kind of researches right now, so I can hopefully be a giant, ha. The continuous exploration of this world needs the effort of every single one of us.”

What Lucien just said again led to a thunderous applause. And Lucien was not just being humble, this was literally how he felt. He had been hearing lots of arcanists discussing this topic several times in the past couple of days, thus he knew that, in the future, no matter who found the method for separating isotopes, it would never be a bad thing to Lucien.

Besides, figuring out a way of separating isotopes still required a period of time, and Lucien believed that he should be able to utilize their research outcomes by that time to further develop his studies.

Morris put his right hand on his chest and slightly bowed, “You

deserve my respect, Evans.”

Then he took out a crystal box in front of Lucien, inside of which there was a shining silver ring, etched with mysterious patterns. The design of the ring was simple but very graceful. On the front side of this ring, there was a big light purple gem, and the dream-like glory of the gem was amazing and eye-catching.

“To thank you for your great contribution to the development of the school of Element, here the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy award you with the twenty-sixth Holm Crown ring, Element!”

There was an indrawn breath of great surprise among those arcanists present. Under the gaze of everyone, Lucien accepted the ring.

Beside the light purple ring, the word, Element, was engraved in common tongue. When Lucien gently stroke the inner side of the ring, he noticed that there was also a small line of words,

“817, Holm Crown prize, to Mr. Lucien Evans.”

Soon, directed by Morris, the maker of the ring, Lucien left his spirit mark in it.

“Holm Crown prize, level seven perfect rank with one layer of seal. When the owner’s spiritual power reaches the level of senior-rank sorcerer, the power of the ring can be completely released.”

Three magic effects were permanently enchanted within this unique ring. First, improving the efficiency of doing meditation in the school of Element by thirty to sixty percent—eighty to a hundred percent when the seal was gone; valid before level nine; the lower the owner’s level was, the better it would work. Second, increasing the power of elemental magic by twenty to forty percent—fifty to seventy percent when the seal was gone; valid before level nine; the lower the owner’s level was, the better it would work. Third, increasing the recovery rate of the owner’s spiritual power and vitality to the level of a fifth-circle sorcerer and a level two knight, respectively—rising to the level of an eighth-circle sorcerer and

level four grand knight when the seal was gone.

Besides, this amazingly beautiful ring also contained terrifying magic power. The person who wore this ring could use Powerful Fire Shield, a fifth-circle magic, twice a day, Gaston's Poison Cloud twice a day, and Elemental Swirl, a seventh-circle magic, three times a day. However, this last spell was also sealed, and although there was one opportunity to use it before sixth-circle, the user would be seriously hurt and the person's spiritual power would be exhausted.

The maker's message left in this ring was:

"Mr. Lucien Evans' finding of the periodic table of elements is of great significance to the school of Element. We award Mr. Lucien Evans with this ring in order to show our respect to him, the person who shall be remembered by the history of the school of Element.

"The crazy Elemental Swirl dispels most elemental spells and destroys everything that is made of elements.

"From: Morris Hoffenberg."

Chapter 216: The Task

When Lucien put the ring on the middle finger of his right hand, he suddenly felt greatly refreshed, as if his body was cleansed by clear spring and the wounds in his soul were healed. The power of the ring was so great that, for a moment, Lucien thought that he got a significant upgrade in both his sorcerer circle and knight level.

Clearly, this level seven perfect rank ring was specially designed for him. Lucien, as quite a money-lover, could not hide the smile on his face. He knew that, with Element, upgrading to the third circle would probably only take him two to three years, and with the help of some potions, hopefully, he could become a middle-rank sorcerer before twenty.

Although Lucien was smart, regarding the gift in spiritual power, he was still not close to the geniuses. Therefore, if he had no other assistances but just only the book, Astrology and Magic Elements, it might take him at least twenty to thirty years to get to a middle-rank level, and that'd be already very lucky of him, if he refused to use some vicious magic rites to change his body and soul.

However, with the statistics and mathematical knowledge saved in his spirit library, Lucien would find it way easier when he needed to analyze some complex magic models involving curves and spheres, thus there'd be a lower requirement on the spiritual power needed to build the middle-rank models. In this case, ten years should be enough for Lucien to move a step forward. But now Lucien had Brook Meditation, the ring, many kinds of potions, lots of arcana points and his own research interests, so he was confident that one or two years later he should be able to fly in the sky as a middle-rank sorcerer.

Of course, every attempt to upgrade came with risks, and the risks were even greater when sorcerers needed to move forward to senior rank, archmage or even legendary archmage level. In the worst scenario, a sorcerer might die from it.

Lucien knew that a magic ring like Elements must be worth at least

hundreds of thousands of Thales or arcana points, which could easily buy out a busy city together with its surrounding towns and villages. While the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy were being very generous, in comparison, the Congress of Magic seemed to be a bit cheap.

Staring at the ring, lots of thoughts flashed through Lucien's mind. He knew that many other prizes following Holm Crown prize also awarded their winners with great level seven perfect rank magic items: necklaces or amulets from Immortal Throne award; medals from Silver Moon award and Ice & Snow award; crowns and other headdresses from Sorcerer Laurel; staffs from Arcana Staff award... Lucien wondered how would it be if he could win all of them...

After realizing he was grinning like an idiot, he cleared his throat a bit and tried to calm down.

Morris knew what Lucien was thinking just now when he was staring at the ring. No one knew better than him, the ring maker, how valuable this ring was. Fortunately, technically speaking, there should be only one winner of Holm Crown prize every ten years.

After the award ceremony, most arcanists left the main hall within five minutes, as they could not wait to do experiments following Lucien's suggestion.

When Lucien was about to go back to Allyn with Lazar, Gaston and a beautiful lady walked to him.

"Evans, would you like to join us, the Will of Elements?" asked Gaston directly.

That was exactly what Lucien wanted, so he also answered directly, "I'm more than willing to."

Gaston nodded with satisfaction, and then he took a glance at Morris.

Morris laughed, and then he reached out his right hand to Lucien, "Welcome, Evans. As a gift for you, later you can go to the headquarter of the Will of Elements, Holm Royal Magic Tower, to

pick up any magic items, potions or ingredients within two thousand arcana points in total."

For low-rank sorcerers, gifts worth of only fifty to two hundred arcana points were often given. However, despite the fact that Lucien had not updated his arcana badge, in everyone's eyes, he was already a level four arcanist who was the winner of Holm Crown prize!

After shaking hands with Morris, Lucien asked, "Any tasks or responsibilities coming with the gifts?"

Morris adjusted his purple robe a bit and smiled, "Yes, there are some. We protect our members, and we also want our members to make their contributions. But if you feel that some tasks are too risky, at a certain cost, you can replace those with something else. For you, Evans, we'll protect you as much as we can, and you only need to focus on your research so far."

"Thanks a lot, Mr. Morris." Lucien nodded. After a second thought, Lucien stopped himself from showing the president the Holm Crown ring from Natasha.

"Work hard, Evans." Morris patted Lucien's shoulder, "Well, you can go and get your gifts from Holm Royal Magic Tower now, and Florencia will tell you what task you'll be given next."

Morris looked down at the ring on Lucien's hand, and then he left the hall with Gaston, leaving Lucien alone to deal with the mature and charming lady, Florencia.

Florencia smiled, and her green eyes glanced at Lucien from head to toe, "Good-looking, elegant, polite, smart, decent, humble, famous. What a dream lover you are, Evans. Honestly speaking, Lucien, I'd love to have a date with you."

Lucien was embarrassed, or say, he was a bit scared.

Florencia was amused, "What a young man. No worries, I'm married. But you definitely need to learn more about women."

Lucien put on an embarrassed smile.

"You're a level four arcanist now, Lucien," Florencia got more serious, "and according to the regulation of the Congress, you gotta leave Douglas, unless you want to be the school master. And you know what? Having a Holm Crown prize winner working in a school is definitely a piece of surprising news."

Compared to the mainland, newspaper industry here was very well-developed.

"I don't mind working in a school at all," answered Lucien, feeling a bit emotional.

"Anyway, I have a task for you right now, Lucien," Florencia said seriously. "Don't blame me for pushing you. If I don't get you occupied first, you never know what tasks those nasties would give you in order to give you a hard time."

"What is it, Ms. Florencia?" Lucien got serious as well.

"Relax... It's a simple task." Florencia smiled charmingly, "Malfurion, a legendary druid and also the elder of the druids from Stroop Forest in the east, is visiting Allyn for a research program which is jointly set up by them and the Congress. The Elder has devoted his life to guarding the forests and lands, and what these druids have been trying to do is to help those poor farmers who have worked hard their whole life just to survive. They tried to use their magic power to increase the productivity of their lands, however, Malfurion's only got less than a thousand druid apprentices, so his power is far from being enough. They've tried their best, but they couldn't even save the farmers from one single country."

"Despite the fact that their power's not enough, they're doing kind things, for sure." Lucien nodded.

Florencia agreed, "That's right. Therefore, they want to find a way together with us to see whether we can turn their magic power into some kind of alchemical items that could consistently increase the productivity of lands and could be produced relatively easily."

"It doesn't sound like an easy job like you just said." Lucien

frowned.

"No, it is not. What we need to do is to analyze those druids' magic, understand the power, then simplify and popularize them, and this requires profound arcana understanding. But as Mr. Fernando Brastar, Ms. Hathaway and Mr. Vicente Miranda are taking the lead, and Mr. Raventi and Mr. Gaston are also involved, even if the project fails in the end, you won't be blamed."

Druids' power was very different from that of the Church and the Congress of Magic, which seemed to strangely sit in between the two. The congress had been trying to study it for years, and now this was a great opportunity. So of course, great emphasis was put on the project, and that was why the three grand arcanists took the lead together.

Lucien knew that what he needed to do with this task was to learn something new, and probably he could take advantage of this great opportunity to create some new spells out of the druids' unique magic.

"I'll get the task from Task Zone as soon as possible after I finish handling the things from school."

"Great." Florencia nodded, "It took me quite a bit of effort to put you in there. If you hadn't won Holm Crown prize, those stubborn druids wouldn't have accepted you."

At this time, Raventi walked to them. He quickly pulled out a piece of paper and handed it to Lucien, "Evans, here's my book list for you. Read those books, and enhance your knowledge foundation of arcana."

Lucien took a glance at it, and saw that there were at least forty to fifty books on it.

Before Lucien managed to say anything, Raventi took out a thick pile of test paper, "Evans, I've heard about your way of teaching, and I appreciate it. These are the exercises that I have collected, and they're suitable to you. Take them, and finish them carefully."

Lucien's eyes suddenly opened wide. What a karma...

...

Soon afterwards, all the groups, arcanists, pastors and even important nobles in Holm heard the news that there was another winner of Holm Crown prize.

Lucien was the twenty-sixth winner of Holm Crown prize in the past two hundred seventy years, and, of course, he received lots of attention.

Chapter 217: In Holm Royal Magic Tower

On the top floor of a magic tower in Allyn.

Rogerio released a long sigh, "Holm Crown prize... What a young man... The youngest winner ever..."

As he was saying, Rogerio's hand gently touched his neck, as if there was an imaginary amulet hanging there. He had been striving for Immortal Throne award for many years, but it turned out that his talent was more in magic than in arcana.

"On the shoulder of giants... shoulder of giants..." Adol, the undead, was right now sitting on the couch with a glass of wine in his hand, "Maybe this was even out of Professor's great expectation, and maybe he was still working on synthesizing life ingredients, hoping that he could win both Holm Crown prize and Immortal Throne award. Ha, will you guys recognize his findings?"

Looking from behind, no one could tell that Adol was actually not alive.

They had investigated Richardson, the only sorcerer who was still below senior-rank from the previous Holm Crown prize winners, and they were certain that he was not Professor.

"Depends on whether Professor, this giant, will still be alive at that time." Rogerio sneered, "Besides, Felipe has made a considerable progress."

Then he called someone in and said, "keep a close eye on Lucien Evans X, the same level we have on Larry, Timothy and Ulysses. Always keep me informed."

Now, Lucien was drawing the attention of the Hand of Paleness because of himself, not because of Professor. Therefore, he was actually safer now, as the Hand of Paleness would not just kill a genius full of potential for no important reasons, and the highest council would not allow something like this to happen as well.

"And, tell that person... to continue to look for Professor." Rogerio added, "We've promised him the rite, Lich Convert, and we always keep our words."

Sitting on the couch, Adol sneered, "Stupid humans..."

...

In the dark cold winter night, the lights on both sides of the street looked darker than usual.

Breaking through the thin layer of snow on the ground, a coach slowly stopped in front of Holm Royal Magic Tower, the highest building in Noble District.

The coachman opened the door of the coach and said politely, with a dim yellow light in his hand, "Mr. Evans, Mr. Lazar, we've arrived."

Although he was just a common man, as someone who had been hired by Holm Royal Magic Academy for a long time, he respected sorcerers a lot.

Lucien took a deep breath and refreshed himself.

As soon as they entered the magic tower, an elegant, middle-aged man greeted them, "Good Evening. I am the steward of Holm Royal Magic Academy, and my name's Rodham. According to Mr. Morris, I will be helping you find what you need here, Mr. Evans. By the way, will you be staying for the night?"

The middle-aged man's blond hair was of pompadour style, and he looked rather well-mannered.

Because of the deeply rooted relationship between Holm Royal Magic Academy and the royal families such as the Hoffenberg family, in this place, there was a strong sense of hierarchy.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Rodham." Lucien nodded slightly, "Could you please show me the section where those magic items are? I need a magic robe. And yes, if there's any spare rooms, my friend and I will be staying here tonight."

"I am honored to be at your service," Rodham responded, with his left hand resting on his chest. "As the winner of Holm Crown prize, Mr. Evans, you've automatically become our honored member here. Later I will provide you with documents, and feel free to enjoy anything we have here."

As it was already eight at night, the whole magic tower was very quiet, thus the sound of the footsteps from Rodham, Lucien and Lazar sounded quite loud.

At this time, a group of people walked downstairs from the second floor. The elder man taking the lead, who was wearing a crimson double-breasted suit and black cloak, looked very familiar to Lucien, as his silvery-gray eyes were identical to Natasha's, and he even looked like the male version of her. However, this man looked skinny, pale and sick, and this was totally different from the princess in Aalto, who always had a healthy glow on her cheeks.

On both his cloak and his suit, there was a fuchsia-colored coat of arms. Surrounded by lines representing cloud and mist, the crown supported by a sceptre and a sword looked sacred. Lucien could tell at his first glance that this was from the Hoffenberg family, the royal family of Holm.

Half step away behind the elder man, there was a middle-aged man with brown hair. His elegant long suit burst at the seams because of his weight. With a black leather bag under his armpit, there was a flattering smile on his chubby face.

"Your Highness," Rodham saluted the elder man respectfully.

This elder man was the only prince in Holm, Duke of Edenbo, Patrick Hoffenberg, Meredith's elder brother and Natasha's uncle.

Lazar and Lucien bowed slightly, but not as respectfully as what Rodham did. There was no very strict manner of hierarchy between nobles and sorcerers, unless for the sorcerers who worked for the nobles.

Patrick slightly nodded. Just when he was about to continue to walk toward the gate, he saw the shining, light purple ring on

Lucien's right hand. Then he asked in his harsh voice, as if he was sick, "Holm Crown ring? Are you Mr. Lucien Evans?"

The reason why the Hoffenberg family was the most influential one in Holm, a country overtly supporting the development of magic, was directly related to the fact that many of the Hoffenberg family members were influential sorcerers and arcanists, even grand arcanists. Therefore, Patrick certainly would not miss the chance to get to know the most recent Holm Crown prize winner.

"Yes, I am." Lucien smiled, "It's my pleasure to have my name remembered by Your Highness."

Patrick nodded with satisfaction, "It seems that the name, Lucien Evans, can be heard everywhere in recent years. One is a great musician, and one is a genius sorcerer, the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize." After a slight pause, he asked, "Are you going to join the research project with the druids?"

"That's right." Lucien did not know why Patrick asked him about this.

"Good." said Patrick, "They've decided to use the town called Sariva to be the pilot land for the project, and the small town belongs to our family. Although it's a pretty poor area there, worry not, I'll have the town officials entertain you well."

Suddenly, Patrick's words were interrupted by his severe coughing. His cough was so bad that it looked like he was out of breath. Patrick did not get any better until he hurriedly swallowed the light green magic potion from a small bottle.

Lucien did not feel a hundred percent comfortable with Patrick's sudden enthusiasm, but he still responded politely, "Thank you very much, Your Highness."

Patrick now looked better. He slightly raised his hand and said, "The royal family's glory also comes from the support of sorcerers."

After chatting casually for some short time, obviously, Patrick was not feeling that great, so he needed to leave. Before that, he said in

a low voice, "Natasha sent me a letter, and in the letter, there was a latest work from the talented musician, Moonlight Sonata..."

Lucien was a bit surprised. He wondered if Patrick was already aware of who he was. However, he was sort of expecting this after winning the Holm Crown prize, as he was drawing so much attention, and Lucien never underestimated the Church's and the Congress' ability to gather information. Now, he only hoped that Natasha would keep her words and take care of his family.

Lucien felt that it was time to write a letter to Natasha, now that he had got rid of the close watch from the Hand of Paleness.

After Patrick left, surprisingly, the fat, middle-aged man came back for Lucien. He said to Lucien with his face wreathed with smiles, "You're Mr. Evans! What a pleasure for me seeing you here today. I'm sure that you'll definitely be a senior-rank sorcerer some day. By the way, I'm Arthur Doyle, president of Union Bank of Holm Mining, a baron."

Lucien could imagine that this man had some important nobles supporting him, or a common baron would never have the chance to become the president of Union Bank of Holm Mining.

After chatting a bit, Arthur sighed with emotion, "Young sorcerers are definitely more open-minded. Our bank has always been interested in developing new routes for the magic steam train, especially these several heading toward the harbour, but our proposal has never been approved by the Affair Committee. I sincerely hope that a young and talented sorcerer like you can join Affair Committee in the close future, so we can work together toward something."

As he was saying, he handed his business card to Lucien.

Lucien's attitude toward Arthur was not clear. He was neither enthusiastic nor cold. After Arthur left, Lazar sighed, "You're someone important now, Evans."

"I'm not important to them. It is the possible benefit that they could gain from me that is important to them." Lucien smiled but shook

his head.

Then, led by Rodham, Lucien and Lazar walked upstairs.

...

A magic steam train was running at its full speed on the open plain. The druids in the train were looking out the window with their eyes and mouths wide open.

Among those druids, some of them were good-looking elves, some were humans, and some were dwarves or from other races.

"Beyond imagination! This alchemical product..." Many druids exclaimed. The alchemical product that they were talking about was the train.

However, a pretty elven-looking man among them looked rather pissed off and he said to his friend in a low voice, "Those bastards... Railways and trains like this are destroying the balances in mother nature. The land's crying, and the dead plants are cursing. Misfortune shall befall them!"

The young elf girl nodded, "That's right. I don't understand why the grand elder insists to work with those vicious people. He just wouldn't listen even when all the other elders are disagreeing with him."

Chapter 218: Demiplanes Warehouse

At the end of the corridor on the thirteenth floor of Holm Royal Magic Tower, there was a heavy, gray iron door. When Rodham started the gear and opened it, Lucien could see nothing clear in the shadows behind.

"This place is co-owned by the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy, half and half," Lazar said to Lucien. "I heard that Her Excellency Hathaway's magic tower is in this demiplane as well."

As a member of the Will of Elements, Lazar had been here before.

Even though Lucien tried to see through the mist with his sharp sight from the power of his Blessing, he still could not identify anything there.

"Please, Mr. Evans," said Rodham very respectfully pointing the way. Obviously, he was very well-trained.

Lucien nodded, and then he walked through the gate.

A starry sky was hiding behind the thick mist, and through the transparent crystal ceiling, the light of the stars lit up the very spacious warehouse, which spread out as far as Lucien's eyes could see.

However, there was nothing there, until Lucien, Lazar and Rodham took a step forward, as the warehouse seemed to come to life.

"Rodham, what do you come here for?" A cold and emotionless voice came to them from every corner of the warehouse, making the whole atmosphere of this place serious and suffocating, as if horrible punishment for them would immediately arrive if Rodham said something wrong.

Rodham took out a piece of mysterious-looking badge drawn with signs of elements from the ancient magic empire, "Mr. Ziderman, this badge's from Morris, and it contains his order to you. At the

same time, I believe that you can easily recognize the ring on Mr. Evans's right hand, from Holm Crown prize."

"Oh?" responded the cold voice, and the badge in Rodham's hand disappeared all of a sudden. Lucien had no idea how Ziderman did this, but it seemed that doing anything in this warehouse was just a piece of cake for him.

Honestly speaking, Lucien, with his spiritual library and all the knowledge from Earth, sometimes had less respect toward sorcerers here, however, at this time, he suddenly found himself witnessing what was happening here in this warehouse in awe. Lucien knew that he was still new to magic, and he should never be arrogant and self-satisfied.

But, for sure, Lucien would still continue to work on turning knowledge from the Earth into arcana and magic, because, after all, this was what he was good at, and only idiots would give up their advantages. At the same time, Lucien wanted to study soul, mentality and spiritual power as well, in order to be a qualified sorcerer.

"The badge has been verified. Now, Mr. Evans, you can choose anything here including potions, materials, magic items, magic circles, precious books, etc. worth of less than two thousand arcana points." As Ziderman was explaining, the star light gradually revealed rows and rows of shelving units with numbers. And on those units, there were countless items, and among them, some were plain-looking, and some were dazzling and shining with dream-like gloss...

Lucien felt even more excited than when he was in Maskelyne's alchemical lab, as in the lab there were only magic materials and ingredients.

Under Lazar and Rodham's guide, Lucien tried his best to calm down and first came in front of the shelving unit where countless magic robes, cloaks and hats were.

"Davey's Robe (duplicate): Duplicate of Davey Rodel's legend level magic robe, level nine high rank; Reduces buffering time of spell

casting by three seconds, provides the wearer with level of defence as level six radiant knight, and increases the wearer's spell resistance level to ninth circle. Prerequisite: The wearer's spiritual power shall be at least of the level of seventh circle, or one would turn into an idiot.

Davey Rodel: Although it is only a duplicate, it is still very valuable. The person who is able to offer enough (worth ten million arcana points or a duchy or a principality) shall deserve it."

Davey Rodel was a member of the Highest Council.

Lucien's eyes could not move away from this black magic robe of the ancient magic empire style. This was the best magic robe he had ever seen! Reducing buffering time of spell casting by three seconds meant that one could keep casting spells under sixth circle without any stop, so the wearer could slay his or her enemy like a powerful storm. This was definitely a robe that most sorcerers would dream to have!

However, the price was beyond Lucien's imagination. According to what Lucien knew, even the Violet family could only have a total income of eight hundred thousand Thales a year, and this robe was worth ten million arcana points.

At this time, Lucien saw another level seven magic robe which could reflect long-range and single-target attacks. However, he could not afford it either.

After quite a while, he finally found two that might suit him: one was called Nymph and the other Transformation. Other ones were either too expensive or they were not what Lucien wanted.

Lucien checked Nymph, which worth a thousand and five hundred points, enchanted with two magic effects, Gloss and Charm, and it could provide the wearer with level of defence as a level three knight.

"The wearer, no matter male or female, would be super charming, and this charm can go beyond gender. Lots of great discounts would be given to the wearer, and even free gifts! Caution, pursuers can be

crazy!"

Lucien trembled a bit after reading this, and quickly put it down. Then he picked up the robe called Transformation:

"Level three middle rank magic robe, enchanted with Transformation, giving wearer's level of defence as a level two knight and magic resistance as a third circle sorcerer. The wearer can transform into a mouse, an owl and a troll once a day for each.

Assunção Philip: the body transforms, not the heart."

This robe was worth a thousand nine hundred and sixty arcana points, and it was more expensive than other robes of the same level. However, Lucien still chose it, as he knew nothing about transformation, and he felt he was not making any progresses in studying Transformation. Despite the fact that Lucien did know a bit about Anatomy, which was the prerequisite for studying Transformation, Lucien was still having a hard time in understanding how Transformation worked.

Lucien had the feeling that this robe could be very helpful for him at some point in the future.

After telling Ziderman and Rodham his choice, Lucien cast Identification and left his spiritual power imprint in the robe, then put the robe on. After concentrating his spiritual power on the robe, Lucien turned the robe into a decent, black suit and a pair of leather shoes.

Using the rest of the forty arcana points, Lucien bought ten bottles of a dark-purple potion named Florencia's Elixir. He planned to take one bottle for each of the following ten months to better handle the greatly improved speed of him doing meditation with the ring, Element.

So far, two thousand arcana points were gone. When Lucien was about to leave with Lazar and Rodham, Ziderman said to him, "Mr. Evans, as the winner of Holm Crown prize, and a member of honor of Holm Royal Magic Academy, you're provided with a free gift, a book."

Then, a book with fine cover appeared in Lucien's hand: Matching Magic Items, by Florencia Ranka Constantine.

Lucien leafed through the book quickly. The book was about how to prevent two magic items from affecting each other when they were too close. For example, if Lucien wanted to have a ring on each of his ten fingers, he needed to arrange them properly, or put buffering rings between the rings which did not agree with each other to mitigate the conflict. However, those were always expensive, and that was why most sorcerers only wore up to two rings on one hand.

After taking one more look at the warehouse, Lucien left the place with Lazar and Rodham.

...

Early the next morning, Hexagram Station.

Wearing the long double-breasted suits of the same style, Lucien and Lazar were waiting for the train on the platform, with their hands in their pockets.

Whistling, the dark blue train slowly stopped in front of them.

A decently dressed middle-aged man got off the train. After staring at Lucien for a second, he quickly walked away together with other people.

Lucien and Lazar got on the train and picked two seats beside the window.

...

After leaving the platform, the middle-aged man walked even faster. When he entered a quiet and remote valley, he took out a scroll and put his face against it.

Divine light came out from the scroll, and the man looked in great pain, but he did not make a sound. When the light disappeared, there was a transparent piece of "paper" in his hands, and Lucien's picture was on it!

The divine spell pulled out his memory and depicted what he saw!

Then, the man went to a remote church with the piece of paper. Sitting on the chair in the front, he started praying silently.

After that, he walked out of the church, but he left the piece of paper on his seat.

A pastor walked out and took it.

The paper was delivered at various levels and finally sent to Philibell, the cardinal of Holm parish.

"Lucien Evans X, the most recent winner of Holm Crown prize, looks quite young." He murmured.

Then, he turned to the other cardinals and the leader of the Inquisition, "Improve his level to 'To Be Wiped Out'. When there's a chance, send the night watchers to finish him, and I'll soon send the information to the Bright Hall."

Although Lucien was the winner of Holm Crown prize, he was not powerful and influential enough to be on the Cleansing List. Even Felipe, the winner of Immortal Throne award, did not get on the Cleansing List until he humiliated the Church right in the face.

"Your wish is our will," said Giendon humbly. "But I'm afraid finding a chance like this is not easy. First, a promising sorcerer like him would not leave Allyn easily, and second, most middle-rank night watchers would be killed by his ring, unless we can send really good ones. But if this was the case, the Will of Elements and the congress would take their bitter revenge for sure. If there's a chance, I want to apply for using the holy relic."

The power of Holm parish was way greater than that of Violet parish, or they would have been wiped out by the congress long ago. They had enough power to resist until they could open the portal to have support from the Holy City.

Philibell nodded and sighed, "The congress never lacks young talents, even in the most recent years. We're lucky that the popes have all been putting emphasis on improving the foundation of

divine spells, so we're not falling that behind."

Hearing that, the several cardinals and the leader of the Inquisition all nodded with some emotion. They felt both concerned and lucky.

...

Allyn, on the thirty-fifth floor of the headquarter of the Congress of Magic.

Nineteen out of the twenty-four members of the Highest Council, all the seven grand arcanists, and eight out of the eleven legendary archmages were present.

"According to the information provided by Malfurion, several druid elders won't work with us. So, among those druids who are visiting Allyn, some are actually from Nature Rebellion, who want to disturb our project. As some of them are actually from the royal elf family, Malfurion could only pretend that he knows nothing about it, and he wants us to handle this," said an old man with white hair and clear blue eyes. The old man was tall and still in good shape, and was wearing black suit and a bow tie.

"President Douglas, you called us here just for this?"

The one who was speaking aggressively was a short, elegant-looking old man wearing a bright red robe. His hair was a mix of black and white, and his red pupils were bright and sharp.

Chapter 219: Lucien's Research Group

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Am I gonna just leave those little druids alone to let them destroy our research?! Am I that stupid in your eyes, Douglas?!” Lord of Storm yelled at President Douglas furiously. Meanwhile, all the archmages present slightly leaned backwards in their chair, trying to stay away from Lord of Storm's howling.

Douglas, however, remained rather calm. Obviously, he was very used to it, and he comforted Lord of Storm, smiling, “Fernando, your major task when working with Hathaway and Vicente is to cooperate with Malfurion to reveal and understand the secrets of the power of nature. And I'm sure that everyone here is willing to assist you.”

The names of many ancient sorcerers who established the Congress of Magic with Douglas had gradually faded away due to the development of arcana, and right now only five of them were still here. The rest of the six grand arcanists were more or less juniors in Douglas's eyes, and two of them could even be regarded as his students.

Brook, a middle-aged gentleman wearing a wig and a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, Oliver Constantine, an elegant middle-aged man with black hair and eyes, and Hellen Price, a beautiful, elf-looking lady, all nodded slightly. No matter how they competed with each other most of the time and whether they could get along well together, right now, they were all willing to offer their help, as they knew how important this project was.

If they could reveal the secret of nature magic, they would be one step closer to cracking the secret of divine power. Once all the sorcerers could cast divine spells, most pastors, cardinals and knights would not be able to believe in their faith anymore. They would either be devoured by holy light, or lose all their power.

Nothing was more important than this to the Congress of Magic!

“Besides, Fernando, you think those druids from Nature Rebellion are the only ones who wants to interrupt our project? You think they would not report this to the Church secretly? Soon, you’ll be facing the great pressure from both Nature Rebellion and the Church, but I want you all to stay focused on the project, and this is why I want to eliminate this hidden danger for you right now in advance.”

It was obvious now that the true intention of the president asking them to come here was to discuss how to prevent the Church from ruining their project. The topic about the druids from Nature Rebellion was just today’s appetizer.

“I see... President Douglas, I am to blame. Although Philibell has been quite restrained, there are always things that are out of his control.” After understanding Douglas’ plan, Fernando admitted his fault straightforward.

Across the round table sat a middle-aged, pale man wearing black cloak. He looked so skinny that it seemed that there was only a layer of skin covering his skeleton. In the man’s eyes, two clusters of dark-red flame were flickering.

He said in a low voice, “You never put much thought into things other than arcana and magic, Old Psychopath. I think we should secretly marginalize those incooperative druids by assigning them to famous arcanists who are actually not gonna be really involved in the project.”

Being called his monicker, Old Psychopath, Fernando did not really mind, “That’s why you never dare discuss mathematic and arcana problems with me, Vicente...”

“How famous do you think the arcanists should be, Mr. Vicente?” asked another legendary archmage, Klaus, who tried not to let the situation embarrass Vicente.

After taking a glance at Hathaway, who was sitting there silently like a statue, Vicente answered, “The recent winner of Immortal

Throne award and the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize should be enough. Felipe's busy with his recent experiments, so he would not be really involved. As for Lucien Evans from the Will of Elements, he's not yet capable of analyzing divine spells. Mrs. Florencia introduced him to the project only hoping that he could learn something from it. However, their reputation should be persuasive enough for those druids."

"Sounds good. How do you feel, my teacher?" Brook, the very influential arcanist who put forward his own understanding of the form of spiritual power against Douglas, was, surprisingly, Douglas' student.

However, they seemed to be quite cold to each other. Some rumours about them seemed to be true.

Before Douglas nodded, Hathaway suddenly said to all of them, as her silvery-gray eyes looked around at all the sorcerers present, "Each of the two leads one group, in order to separate the druids who are not cooperative."

Douglas agreed, "That's even better. If everyone here agrees on this plan, we shall now move on to the next topic—how to prevent the Church from destroying our project."

...

Douglas, in Lucien's villa.

"Wow... It's only been several days, and our green hand teacher, Lucien Evans, has become the winner of Holm Crown prize... the youngest one!" Rock walked and jumped around Lucien excitedly, "How do you feel right now?! You're definitely the fastest one in history to become level four in arcana!"

Lucien was amused by Rock, feeling that he could become a good journalist, "I'm still the same, and the only change is that people now see me differently. If I take your project to the board now, maybe it can be approved."

Rock sighed emotionally, "Reputation and status... Wow... Lucien,

if you want to develop any research proposals, I can share some of my ideas with you! Or I can be your helper!”

Jerome and Vilnia just ignored Rock’s words but continued to stare at Lucien and his ring in an unbelievable way.

After quite a while, Vilnia said, “Now I feel that I have something to show off, as I’ve worked with the winner of Holm Crown prize for so long, but, at the same time, your story and the changes you’ve made are just miraculous.”

She paused for a second, and then grinned, “It is the trend in Holm that a gentleman shall propose to a lady with a ring. You and your Holm Crown ring is definitely a combination that no ladies could say no to you.”

At this time, Rock cut in, “By the way, some time ago, Beate and those guys complained to the school saying that you were always off from school, and you were not carrying your responsibility as a teacher, so they wanted you to be fired. But you know what? As soon as they arrived at the headmaster’s office, that issue of Element arrived as well, hahaha...! When Beate heard that you had won Holm Crown prize, he dropped his favorite Colette porcelain cup on the ground. Lucien, I wish someday your research could just overthrow their belief...”

Rock was obviously very excited. When Lucien came back today, several teachers who did not like him all walked away when they were still far from Lucien.

“Lucien, who’s this letter for? This’s a thick one...” Jerome saw the envelop in Lucien’s hand.

Lucien waved his left hand, “To a friend of mine.”

Earlier he spent more than an hour writing this letter to Natasha. In this letter, he shared what he had seen and learned with her, and still some of his thoughts about music. Lucien also used secret codes and told Natasha that he had won his own Holm Crown ring, and part of the letter was also for Joel’s family, especially his friend, John.

“To your sweetheart? I bet she must be very gentle and beautiful, or you wouldn’t just ignore all the beauties here.” Vilnia joked, “You’re a level four arcanist and a first circle sorcerer now, and you can bring her here to live with you in Allyn.”

Lucien admitted that Natasha was very beautiful, but talking about being gentle... Lucien just put on an awkward smile.

At this time, Annick, Sprint and the other apprentices arrived. They looked at Lucien very respectfully, “Mr. Evans, are you leaving soon?”

They were more than proud to be Mr. Evans’ students!

Lucien smiled and nodded, “Yes, but I’m still in Allyn. If you guys and girls still want to study after me, you’re welcome to my new place on Saturday.”

Lucien had lots of homework from Mr. Raventi and now he felt quite eager to share this lovely feeling with his students.

“Really?” Annick was very surprised, and the other apprentices all grinned.

Under Mr. Evans’ help, Chely was now catching up with her peers in the junior class, and even those smart apprentices such as Annick and Grant. Thus, many teachers started using Lucien’s way of teaching and assigning students with lots of homework, which was driving many apprentices nuts.

Lucien nodded in a relaxed way and then he showed his perfect smile, “My test papers are all ready.”

As if a lightning just struck them, all the apprentices’ smiles froze.

...

On monday morning, Lucien’s coach arrived at Sariva. According to the instruction, Lucien was going to meet his research group members here in Dragon Root Inn.

Wearing black top hat and a double-breasted suit, Lucien looked

rather cultivated and elegant. On his chest, there was a four-star
arcana badge and a two-circle magic badge.

Chapter 220: Different Ideas

Before entering the inn, Lucien took off his magic badge and only kept his four-star arcana badge on his chest. Then he put on a pair of wire-rimmed glasses that he bought in Allyn for disguise. He felt concerned that Patrick Hoffenberg might have already recognized him, so he wanted to be more careful now. Better late than never.

The fine metal chain of the glasses was now hanging beside Lucien's somewhat angular face.

Adjusting his bow tie slightly, Lucien went into Dragon Root Inn confidently, in a steady pace.

...

Sunlight came into the inn through the windows. Everything looked quiet and radiant.

Two blond, beautiful elven druids, one male and one female, were right now sitting on the couch in the corner, waiting for the sorcerer from the Congress of Magic, and they were surrounded by several pretty elven guards and maids.

There were no other guests there, just the owner of the inn and servants.

"Brother, Lucien Evans, Elemental Order, is the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize, and also a level four arcanist. Then his magic power must be close to senior-rank. What shall we do?" asked the extremely beautiful female elf out of concern.

She did not expect that they would be separated from their teachers, and their whole plan of damaging the project was thus disturbed. Now they were allocated in a small group with a young and talented sorcerer, Lucien Evans, the winner of Holm Crown prize. Anything wrong that they wanted to do to the pilot land would be so clear and obvious under this arcanist's eyes.

In order to make sure that Lucien's fame was in its best use, Affairs

Committee purposefully omitted Lucien's magic circle level when they provided the druids with Lucien's information. And they also gave Lucien a quite cool title, which came from several rounds of discussion: Elemental Order.

While Felipe did not need to hide his magic circle level, he also had a new title: Hand of Rehabilitation.

"Iristine, we'll be fine. First, we can be incooperative by offering him divine spell imprints with missing parts. Second, now that we're gonna be involved in the experiments, when we need to take down important data, we can just make 'mistakes' all the time. I mean, what do we know about arcana?" responded Arcelion, with a disgusted facial expression that showed his repulsion toward human beings, "Our main job is to waste time here, since other elders in the royal palace are still working on stopping the grand elder. Soon, we'll be going back into our clean and beautiful forests."

Iristine nodded and smiled, "Hope we can do something here for our nature. By the way, some of the inventions from human beings are actually not that bad. This couch feels pretty nice..."

Arcelion quickly got very serious, "Iristine, keep in mind that those couches are made from logs, from people cutting down trees which were still alive. I can almost hear those trees crying! Do not indulge yourself in degeneration! Nothing's better than sitting on real trees which are filled with vitality!"

Hearing her elder brother's scold, Iristine felt a bit upset. However, she still nodded seriously, "I won't forget all the gifts from mother nature."

Being resolute, she secretly clenched her fists. She would definitely stop human beings from destroying mother nature.

At this time, they noticed that a young man of medium height came in, wearing white shirt, dark waistcoat, a double-breasted suit and a black top hat. The wire-rimmed glasses made him look quite profound and elegant.

As a human being, this young man didn't look bad, and he actually

appeared to be quite well-mannered. This was Iristine's and Arcelion's first impression about Lucien. Since they left the forest and came to human society, they were used to judging people's appearance first.

Soon, they noticed the light-purple ring on Lucien's right hand. They recognized that it was Holm Crown ring, as told by the congress.

Knowing that this young man was Lucien Evans, Arcelion and Iristine stood up together. As members from the elf royal family, they needed to keep their good manners. Besides, deep in their mind, Lucien's deterrent title and his reputation was also affecting them.

"Good morning. Princess Iristine and Prince Arcelion?" Lucien took off his top hat in a well-mannered way. He secretly felt grateful that the committee assigned him to this group, as the prince was of level four and the princess level three, and Lucien could easily handle them with his ring, Element.

As for their noble status, Lucien did not care at all. After all, he was not an elf.

Of course, the princess' and prince's guards were more powerful. According to the information provided by the committee, Anguster was a level seven magic archer, and Tirill was a level six elfen knight.

In front of this arcanist, Princess Iristine and Prince Arcelion also greeted him using royal manner, "Yes, we're members of the royal palace of Trumanner. May I ask if you are Mr. Lucien Evans, Elemental Order?"

Hearing his own title, Lucien himself was quite surprised. Half a second later, he nodded and calmly sat down with the prince and princess, "We still need to wait for another two members to start our experiments and research. The land in southeast part of the town belongs to us. Part of it is fertile, and part is poor. Thus, we can conduct contrast experiments."

Arcelion and Iristine were not interested in Lucien's terminology at all. Instead, they started talking about arts with Lucien.

Lucien was of course not afraid of this topic. In general, they had a pretty good conversation, because Lucien purposefully guided their topic to music. Lucien actually learned quite a bit and was inspired from the the prince and princess talking about elven music. At the same time, Lucien's carefully structured understanding of music and profound feelings and emotions also touched Arcelion and Iristine.

"Among all you human beings, artists such as musicians, sculptor, playwrights... they're of the greatest value to the world. Arts is the best return to the generosity of mother nature." Arcelion was in a pretty good mood, as if he was talking to an artist, instead of the winner of Holm Crown prize and an authority in the school of Element.

Lucien slightly looked down at the arcana badge on his chest. He sighed with emotion in his mind, since the two noble elves really had some prejudice. For human beings, unlike elves who were born with magic tattoos, they needed to survive first, and thus human society needed so many different occupations to function properly.

When Lucien started getting a bit bored, two sorcerers came in. One was an elderly sorcerer wearing a black robe with a five-star arcana badge and a four-circle magic badge, and the other was of middle age, blond hair, whose arcana level was four, magic circle level three. They were the other two members of Lucien's experiment group, Mr. Tyrel and Mr. Urine.

After introducing themselves, Tyrel said loudly, "I was rushing earlier, and I haven't had breakfast yet. Can I have something to eat first? Honestly I cannot work with an empty stomach."

Arcelion was more than happy with anything that could waste their time, "Of course. Iristine and I also did not eat earlier. Why don't we have something to eat together? What do you think, Mr. Evans?"

Lucien nodded. Knowing that they were trying to waste time, he also wanted to keep the prince and princess occupied to prevent them from disturbing other groups' research.

...

In the dining room of the inn, Lucien was cutting his sausage, while Tyrel and Urine were working on their medium-rare steaks, which were quite bloody.

Iristine could not stand this anymore. She put down her knife and fork and said in an offended way, "Why you human beings need to harm lives to meet your own desire? Cattle, goats, chicken... They shall be our friends! Mother nature has been enough tolerant with you human beings!"

Arcelion also looked pretty annoyed.

Although Tyrel and Urine felt that the two elves were being quite rude, they still put down their knife and fork.

Lucien slowly swallowed down a piece of sausage and took a glance at the fruits in Iristine's and Arcelion's plates. Then he said slowly, "Why you elves need to harm lives to meet your own desire? Did the plants do anything wrong? Why you pick off their fruits, their offsprings? According to the school of Necromancy and the Church, plants are lives as well. Don't you think so?"

"You...! Mr. Evans, I thought you were different. I thought you were an artist whose heart was filled with love. However, I'm wrong. You are still a vicious sorcerer! Enjoy your bloody breakfast! Don't talk to us about the project until all of you are done with your bloody breakfast!" Iristine angrily left the table with Arcelion.

"Good for you, Mr. Evans." Tyrel grinned, "Although you look rather gentle, you are good at satire. And I cannot believe how hypocritical they are."

"We do need to protect nature, but we also need to survive," said Lucien seriously, and then he smiled. "Anything that prevents me from eating meat is heresy."

To be honest, Lucien did fantasy before that he might have a beautiful relationship with an elf lady here in this world, but now it looked way less likely to happen.

"I like what you said. Anything that prevents me from eating meat is heresy!" Tyrel put a big chunk of meat in his mouth and chewed it hard.

Lucien wiped the corner of his mouth gently. He knew clear that both Tyrel and Urine could not really be called arcanists, and their badges were all fake. Tyrel was, in fact, a level three arcanist, sixth-circle sorcerer, while Urine was a level two arcanist, fifth circle sorcerer. They were sorcerers who specialized more in fighting. And their true task here was to deal with the prince and princess' guards.

Lucien took a sip of water and thought to himself, "Two elven druids who do not want to work with us, plus two sorcerers who like fighting, plus me, a level four arcanist who's actually unworthy of the title... What a group..."

Chapter 221: Wasting Each Other's Time

Chapter 221: Wasting Each Other's Time

Translator: _Leo_ Editor: Vermillion

Dragon Root Inn, inside a large room that was temporarily outfitted as a magic lab.

“Mr. Evans, these are the two level three divine spells you asked for, the ‘Growing Brambles’ and the ‘Harvest Spring’,” Iristine spoke in a cold tone. She handed two pieces of a dried yellow paper over to Lucien. The paper looked old but elegant.

The elf paper was made of the elven tree bark that naturally dropped to the ground. It was a specialty of the elves and the elven paper was one of the best materials for high-level magic scrolls.

The two druids were part of the Nature Rebellion Sect and they were members of the Elf's Royal Palace. “Bumpkin” Lucien was quite surprised to see them using expensive materials as if it was nothing.

Lucien grabbed the two pieces of paper with the divine spells recorded on them and noticed that the three-dimensional imprints were complicated. It seemed like some of the imprints were broken and there was something missing. The supernatural model was unbalanced and the whole thing was a bit strange. He scrunched his eyebrows and said, “Prince Arcelion and Princess Iristine, I think the imprints of the two divine spells are incomplete. You'd better be honest if you are here to cooperate.”

“Cooperate? We're here to ruin your plan!” Iristine cursed in her mind.

“Mr. Evans, we're druids, not mages, and our superior power is a gift from the mother nature. You'll be able to detect the mind of nature and construct the divine spell model from your memory if you love the nature and you're willing to protect her. We have never and will never learn to analyze and draw the imprints of the

divine spells. This is the best we can do,” she responded with a cold but gentle smile on face.

Arcelion was satisfied with his young sister’s explanation.

“If you want to view the complete version of the divine imprints, we can try to craft a divine power item and show you the divine spell directly. However, the mind of nature forms a barrier that will destroy the content inside as soon as you try to analyze the item. Mr. Evans, do you have the ability to keep the divine imprints safe while passing through nature’s barrier?” he added in an arrogant tone.

Arcelion was telling the truth. The Congress of Magic had confiscated many items that were infused with divine power, but they were still having trouble studying the mystery of the divine magic. One of the reasons was that most of the senior-level sorcerers could not stabilize the structures inside the divine imprints while bypassing the divine barrier.

Only the grand arcanist had such abilities, however, they realized that they would have to rely on the mysterious power after eliminating the divine barrier and studying the structures of the divine imprints. The mysterious power had not yet been studied and analyzed, that was why the druids’ spells were so important during the procedure.

Lucien had a level nine divine item, Sun’s Corona, however, the only way to activate its divine spell was by using the mentality mark left by Maskelyne and he had never found a way to analyze the divine item’s divine imprints. He noticed that the two druids were not willing to cooperate and spoke in a tone that was usually used by the crazed alchemists, “Alright, I will try to analyze part of the imprints with Mr. Tyrel and Mr. Urine.”

“There’ll be no point for us to stay here if Mr. Evans already has the plan in mind. We’ll go check the land research team and the other research teams’ situations. We need the information for our future experiment.” Although Arcelion was an arrogant man from the royal palace, he had some talent on finding himself ridiculous excuses.

Lucien pushed his wire-rimmed glasses slightly. “That’s impossible. You need to cast the divine spells while we’re doing the analysis, as we need to observe and learn the spells with our own eyes. Otherwise, we won’t be able to complete the procedure. You’re here to help us, right?”

Arcelion and Iristine could not reveal their true intention before the druid elders from the Elf’s Royal Palace and the Nature Rebellion Sect gave them the next order. They were here to ruin Lucien’s plan, however, they did not want to give the Congress of Magic the excuse to arrest them. Also, the Elf’s Royal Palace would not want to be put in the wrong just for such a boring reason.

The two druids looked a bit disappointed, but they still responded, “Yes, we’re here to help you, but there’ll be nothing we can do when you’re analyzing the spells. Do you want us to just sit here and watch?”

“Well, you can take a nap, pray to the mind of nature, have a short conversation, or read the books I brought here. Anyway, you need to stay here so we can find you when we need assistance.” Lucien tried to imitate the expression of an arcanist that focused only on his experiments. “If you really need something to do while waiting, I have some basic math problems. What do you say?”

The math problems were designed to help Annick and Sprint train their minds.

Arcelion and Iristine looked at the thick pile of paper in Lucien’s hand for a moment. The complicated numbers and formulas on the paper were like a curse to them, as the druids learned from the mind of nature and thus the numbers would give them headaches.

“Mr. Elemental Order is a true gentleman when we’re not discussing the arcane power and the meat dishes. He’s humorous, handsome, knowledgeable, and polite. Also, he’s artistic and calm, the man is more attractive than most of the male elves. However, the gentleman will become a greedy devil if there is either arcane power or a meat dish involved, a devil that is hated by everyone!” Iristine sighed with mixed emotions, her first impression of Lucien was good, however, the man’s different standards of treating

different things were making things worse.

...

Tyrel looked at the complicated divine imprints as Iristine and Arcelion sat down in the corner of the lab with the elf guards, and he quickly communicated with Lucien using the Messaging Spell, "Those models give me headaches. I'm counting on you!"

The short-ranged messaging spell was categorized as the second circle, however, it became an apprentice-level spell after being improved by many arcanists. It could deliver the message to the target within ten meters using a special energy.

Urine's voice echoed in Lucien's ears at the same time with the help of the Messaging Spell, he was also not happy with the physics and the mathematics involved in the analysis of the divine spell.

The two combat maniacs started looking at the divine imprints after sending messages to Lucien, and although it looked like they were writing with the quills, they were just drawing the beautiful winter scenes.

"Well, it seems like I'll be the only one working." Lucien lost all the hope for the arcane research team. He took out a pile of white paper and started to solve the basic physics and mathematical problems given to him by Raventi.

Lucien had never put too much time into the high-level mathematics so it was a great opportunity for him to learn from Raventi. The Congress of Magic was studying the complex variables functions and it was the subject people studied during the middle part of the 19th century on Earth, but still such functions already exceeded the abilities of most people.

Besides the sealed books in his spirit library, Lucien only knew a little more than the Congress about the mathematics, such as linear algebra, the axiomatic system, and the mathematical conjectures with no answers.

The application of mathematics in this world showed the spirit of

exploratory practice and magic application. That was the reason why they did not spend too much time on studying the mathematical conjectures and number theory. Lucien planned to write all the famous mathematical conjectures and publish them after he was promoted in the Congress of Magic, so the arcanists in this world could take their time and enjoy the mathematical problems.

Iristine and Arcelion looked at Lucien's handsome face and felt satisfied while watching the young man moving the quill with a serious expression on his face. "No matter how smart you are, it's impossible for you to finish the analysis procedure in a short duration without the complete version of the divine imprints. "

The two druids were happy that their plan worked. They hated to waste their precious time here but they liked watching Lucien suffer.

Time passed, and Lucien suddenly opened his mouth, "Prince Arcelion, please cast the Growing Brambles."

Arcelion's expression turned serious and he quickly cast the level three divine spell, creating green brambles that looked like barbed wires, which covered the laboratory's floor. The glinting brambles could probably break the defense of a knight easily.

"Good, that's what I need." Lucien nodded with a blank expression on his face. He turned around and started solving the problems again.

Several minutes later, Lucien's emotionless voice echoed in the room again.

"Princess Iristine, please cast the Harvest Spring."

"Sure."

The divine wave was released in the room again.

...

"Prince Arcelion, please cast the Harvest Spring."

...

“Princess Iristine, please cast the Growing Brambles again.”

...

The divine waves were released again and again after Lucien requested.

“Mr. Evans, how’s your analysis? It’s lunchtime. Did you learn anything about the divine spells?” Arcelion stood up and asked, sounding tired. Although they used their fatigue as excuses, they could still cast the divine spells dozens of times before lunchtime.

Lucien grabbed the white paper and responded in a serious tone, “Sorry, the divine imprints are incomplete, and my analysis is not progressing well.”

Arcelion and Iristine were cheering in mind but they still forced a smile on face. “It’s fine, Mr. Evans. The first step is the hardest, take your time.”

“Sure, let’s have lunch, then.” Lucien was trying his best to keep the blank expression on his face. He had already solved a whole paper of problems and it was the perfect time for some tasty dishes.

Tyrel and Urine were almost dozing off but they jumped out of the room like rabbits after hearing about lunch.

“Wait, Mr. Evans, please return the two pieces of elven paper to us. We believe that you already memorized the divine imprints.” Iristine would never let this sorcerer have their precious materials.

Lucien looked a bit disappointed after hearing her request.

...

Three days later, Iristine and Arcelion were forced to stay in the laboratory upon Lucien’s request, however, they heard that the other research teams already started doing experiments on the land. They were getting suspicious and decided to talk to Lucien.

The man's analysis still hadn't progressed anything. It seemed like he was just messing with the prince and the princess.

Chapter 222: Lucien's Wish

Iristine was wearing a beautiful dress with leaf patterns, however, she looked very cold when she talked to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, are you making any progresses with analyzing Growing Brambles and Harvest Spring? The other groups now are all ahead of us, and they have all started planting real crops. What are we doing now? Come on, you're the winner of Holm Crown prize, Elemental Order!"

Tyrel and Urine got alert. They were not sure whether the prince and princess would use this as an excuse to leave this research group.

Lucien slightly pushed his wire-rimmed glasses upwards and answered seriously, "Princess Iristine, the reason why we're making slow progress is that the imprints of the divine spells provided by you are incomplete. Maybe the druids in other groups are more gifted in arcana, and thus they could draw the imprints better. Do you think that's the case?"

Lucien was using sarcasm with a serious look.

"...Still, as a winner of Holm Crown prize, you should be better than this!" After being quite speechless for a few seconds, Arcelion insisted.

The last thing Lucien wanted to do now was to completely piss them off, so he put back his piles of paper with the mathematic exercises and answered, "Of course I've made some progresses, and parts of the principles are now clear to me. For Growing Brambles, the spell stimulates the inner structure of a plant and the divine power turns itself into the several elements that are needed by the plant to grow fast. As for Harvest Spring, although it follows the same principles of Growing Brambles, Harvest Spring makes plants extract too much nutrition from the soil too fast. In other words, Growing Brambles requires more power from your Heart of Nature, while Harvest Spring requires less but it damages the soil. However, again, because the imprints are not complete, I cannot know what these extracted elements are."

"... You've learned this much?" Hearing Lucien's words, Iristine and Arcelion were very surprised. They could not believe that it took this arcanist only three days to make such progress with incomplete imprints.

"I'm the winner of Holm Crown prize." Lucien smiled.

Of course what Lucien just said was not his own research outcome. As his task was just to waste the prince and the princess' time, Lucien was provided with all the information figured out by other groups. On the second day after the druids arrived, the three grand arcanists and the senior-rank arcanists had already figured out the principles of most of the elementary divine spells, and now they were working on analyzing the so-called mind of nature to see what it was, what it consisted of, why druids could use it and why it brought them divine spells.

This was a tough job. Thus, Malfurion's request was completely assigned to other senior-rank and middle-rank sorcerers.

According to the provided information, Lucien was certain that ordinary plants in this world still needed nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to grow, but the situation with magic plants was for sure more complicated.

"Why you did not tell us earlier, Mr. Evans?" Arcelion did not know how to respond to Lucien's words, so he hurriedly changed the direction of their conversation.

"I just figured this out last night." Lucien put on a confused look, "I did not have the time to inform you two. Soon we'll be working in the fields to do some more experiments, trying to see what elements those grains need to absorb in order to grow better."

Lucien took the advantage of the fact that the imprints provided were not complete. Of course, Lucien would not tell them that he actually knew which elements were needed, as conducting real planting experiments was the best way to waste their time.

Now Iristine and Arcelion were less doubtful toward Lucien's work, so they followed Lucien to the land to the east of the town.

Lucien marked a small piece of land and asked, "Mr. Tyrel and Urine, please measure the amount of elements contained in the soil here."

Since both Tyrel and Urine were sorcerers who were better at fighting, they did not have built-in magic structures in their souls for spells for measurement. So they needed to chant the spell and used refined elements as components to assist their casting. Thus, it took them almost two hours to record all the element contained in the soil.

"Because so far we've only identified sixty-seven kinds of elements, there might be missing ones that are actually required by grains like oats or wheat." Lucien clarified the precondition of the experiment to the prince and the princess, and then he asked the farmers to seed oats following their years of practice.

After the farmers's job was done, in the cold wind, Lucien said to the two elf druids, "Please cast Harvest Spring to let the oats grow ripe."

A streak of green light came out from Iristine and the light covered the land. Soon, seedlings grew out from the just seeded oats. As the prince and the princess took turns to cast Harvest Spring for two rounds, within ten minutes, the oats on this piece of land had a really good harvest!

For apprentice druids, they needed to cast their apprentice-level spell for at least a month to achieve something like this.

"Mr. Tyrel and Mr. Urine, please measure the amount of elements contained in the soil now," said Lucien. As the leader of the experiment group, Lucien didn't need to do the work himself.

Watching Tyrel and Urine being busy with measuring the soil, Iristine said in a slightly confused way, "I understand that human beings need to hunt animals to feed themselves, but what I don't understand is, now that you people know how to grow grains and vegetables, why human beings are still killing animals for their meat? And in many cases human beings are killing animals not to feed, but just for fun, which is such a horrible thing to do."

Seeing that Lucien did not respond, she said to him seriously, "Mr. Evans, you've got enough money to buy bread, vegetables and fruits, so why do you still want to eat meat? So many animals could have survived if more people refused to eat meat."

Lucien answered casually, "Firstly, human beings and elves are physically different. We need meat. Secondly, if there are any animals dying out, please tell me, and I'll try my best to protect the species. Thirdly, most animals we're eating right now are from farms, not the wild. We raise them in order to eat them."

Iristine was not really following Lucien, but she knew that there was just no chance for her to change this arcanist's mind.

"You human beings just won't give up your desires," she said.

Lucien did not fight back, but stared at the good oats in front of him. As so many people in this world were still starving, Lucien believed that surviving and growing was their current priority.

Lucien had a pretty good impression of Malfurion, the druid's grand elder. In Lucien's mind, Malfurion's effort toward increasing the production of crops was definitely admirable, which was just like how the Church overthrew the ancient magic empire which enslaved people back in the days.

Even though Lucien was very careful with his every step and always wanted to protect himself first, he still wanted to make a contribution to Malfurion's great work to save more people in this world.

Moreover, when more underclass people could benefit from the power of magic, the ruling of the Church would be shaken for sure, which in turn was good for sorcerers themselves as well.

Since Lucien arrived in this world, he experienced all kinds of inconvenience in his life here compared to his original modernized lifestyle. If he was capable, of course Lucien would like to advance the development of human society here.

"Mr. Evans, there is less nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in the

soil," Tyrel and Urine reported.

Lucien came back to reality from his ambitious wishes and then nodded. "Then, we gather materials which contain those elements for further alchemical product design and the simplification of the magic structures. What we also need to do is to divide this field into sections, so we can look at how those elements make a difference to the crops."

The other groups were doing the same thing now. Lucien wondered who could first figure out the secret of fertilizers.

Making basic fertilizers was simple. Treating phosphorite with sulfuric acid could do the job, and the congress was already capable of producing sulfuric acid in a steady volume with magic circles. However, it was not easy to understand why sulfuric acid plus phosphorite could work here. Without theoretical support, Lucien did not think that they could achieve a significant progress any time soon.

There were still other ways to improve yield in crops, such as irrigation system and cross-breeding. However, the former was already on the Congress' agenda, while the knowledge involved to produce cross-breedings was still very challenging to Lucien. Furthermore, he was also not sure whether cross-breeding technique worked the same here in this world where magic plants and creatures also existed. Much more work needed to be done in this field.

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The Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City.

A knight in a whole set of silvery-white armour was kneeling on one knee, "Your Holiness, the Congress of Magic is right now attempting to intrude on the realms of God, reaching their filthy hands to the holy truth of the world. So hereby I venture to make the request: we shall start the Second War of Dawn! We shall declare a full-scale war against the Congress of Magic!"

Chapter 223: Unexpected Change

When the knight that was kneeling on one knee and holding a helmet in his arms declared war against the Congress of Magic as he thought the realm of the God was defiled, the rest of the Episcopal Conference members were drawing crosses in front of their chests. They shouted, "We shall purify these evil sorcerers with the holy light and force them to repent while crawling under God's feet. The realm of the God shall not be explored by the mortals!"

The pope had a serious expression and was holding a platinum scepter in hand and the Holy Crown was on his head. The leader of the Ascetics named Varantine was wearing a short linen robe, he noticed the pope's situation and stepped forward.

"Your Holiness, Knight Stone is the representative of all the devout believers. They're angry because God is defiled. Please don't worry, the heretics of the north will not attack us using this chance unless they already lost their face and no longer believe in the truth. However, their base will be destroyed and I think they'll also attack the Congress of Magic after the situation gets worse," Varantine suggested.

Varantine had short blonde hair and he was not wearing anything on his feet. There was a pair of energetic blue eyes over his thin cheeks.

Behind Varantine, there were more than ten episcopal bishops, three important members of the Inquisition, and the legendary knights including Stone. They were still trying to convince the pope, "Your Holiness, please give us the order and start the second War of Dawn. We need to gather our army for the Congress of Magic but the nobles are still needed at the Dark Mountain Range."

The pope, Benedict II, raised the holy scepter to the air. His voice was so deep that it sounded like he was speaking from the sky, "I'm glad that you're devout believers of God and I'm sure that God is pleased with the words you just said. However, I have one question for you, are you losing your faith in God? Do you really think the

Congress of Magic can find out God's secrets? The mortals can never touch God's realm! Have you already forgotten what God told us?"

It almost looked like the pope's red cloak was dancing in the gentle wind, as he was surrounded by the intense holy aura that came with the holy light. The aura was so strong that it could not be contested by anything.

The members of the Episcopal Conference were not sure how they should answer the pope's question and they were trying to find out where their anger came from. They were angry because God was defiled and they were devout believers, however, they could not decline that fear was spreading in their minds. They were worried that the Congress of Magic could explore God's realm like exploring the world. They wanted to stop the Congress and strangle the sorcerer's plans in the cradle.

"It'll be a lie if I say that I'm not guilty. My ignorance blinded me from the truth. God is kind and fair, I shall confess myself and hope that God will forgive me." The members of the Episcopal Conference started repenting after a moment of silence.

Benedict II waited for them to finish repenting and opened his mouth, "The Congress of Magic will not be able to explore God's realm, however, we can't forgive them for what they have done. Varantine and Vaharall, take some ascetics and night watchers to aid Philibell in Holm. We shall eliminate the sorcerers and make them pay for what they have done!

"Also, you need to assist the druids and elves in Steloop Forest and make the sorcerers think that we're about to attack, so they can use the excuse to call back the druids that are working with the Congress of Magic."

"As you wish, Your Holiness." The leader of the ascetics, Varantine, and one of the three Inquisition's important members, Vaharall the Adjudicator, bowed to the pope at the same time.

The other members of the Episcopal Conference thought that the pope's order was reasonable, however, they had a strange feeling in

mind. The incident was supposed to touch off the war and the balance of the land would be broken but the pope convinced them that they should focus on punishing the sorcerers who defiled God.

"It was a wise decision. We're strong but we're pressured by multiple organizations and the situation might get worse if we start the war without proper preparation. We should calm down and wait for the day to come." The members of Episcopal Conference had changed their thoughts, they drew the crosses in front of their chests and left the Bright Hall.

Benedict II lowered his scepter and returned to his reading room, where a cardinal was waiting for him. The cardinal stepped forward and questioned, "Your Holiness, the intel sent back by Bishop Philibell mentioned the information of the Holm Crown reward, the Congress of Magic and the druids' progression of the research on divine magic."

"Keep the intel safe, as we might need it later. We should focus on dealing with the incident for now." Benedict II waved his hand. It seemed like he was not concerned about the things that did not matter. That intel was not something that needed to be sent to all the Inquisitions, as was the Cleansing List.

The pope closed the door after the cardinal left, and then looked at the portraits of the previous popes with a blank expression on his face.

The name of the popes and the how long they had stayed in this world before returning to the arms of God were written under the portraits.

...

"Charles I, Saint Calendar year 350 - 572."

"Alfonsol, Saint Calendar year 387 – 633"

"Charles II, Saint Calendar year 408 – 686."

"Benedict I, Saint Calendar year 474 – 745."

"Gregory II, Saint Calendar year 548 – 796."

A hint of smile appeared on Benedict II's face and he muttered in a deep tone, "How can the mortals find the way to the secret of God?"

...

Saturday morning, the sun was still rising.

In a mansion beside the town Sariva, Felipe was doing some magic experiments with a serious expression on his face. Although he only visited the lab twice this week and did not stay there for the night, the man's incredible analysis skill still stopped the druids from trying to trick him. The druids could not find any excuse to interrupt the experiment so they had to change the data Felipe obtained. However, Felipe was not concerned about the progression of the experiment at all, as he was focusing on creating an important living substance from nonliving ones.

Felipe saw the colorless crystal forming in the low-temperature environment as the light appeared on the last alchemical circle.

He tried his best to calm down and started heating the translucent crystal. The crystal melted and was turned into liquid quickly. Also, the magic circle detected a gas with an irritating smell.

Felipe took one step back and cast the identifying spell, getting the result within seconds. The liquid was a fatty acid that he needed, and it was a substance that could only be found inside the bodies of living beings.

"There is no point in supporting the Human Vitality Theory anymore." Felipe forced a smile on his pale face. "I wonder how many old fellows in the organization will admit that they're wrong. They need to redefine the meaning of the living substance, otherwise, they'll have to accept this new finding. I guess I should be the one to publish the result so it'll be easier for the other necromancers to accept the change."

Felipe proved that the theory he had been supporting for more than 30 years was wrong and he had mixed emotions about this. He was

happy, confused, sad, and excited at the same time. Professor successfully synthesized the urea and it was an eye-opening experience for him. The artificially synthesized urea changed his opinion on the theory and that was the reason why he decided to do an experiment himself.

A man wearing a long back robe knocked on the door of the laboratory softly.

"Who is it?" Felipe was startled by the noise and he questioned with confusion in his eyes.

A deep and hoarse voice came from the other side of the door, "It's me, Traquair."

"Mr. Traquair? Why are you here? It's still early in the morning," Felipe responded and he started unsealing the magic circle that locked the door.

Traquair was a sixth-ring necromancer from the Hand of Paleness, but his arcana level was just three, as he spent a long time trying to advance to the seventh ring. He was sent here to help Felipe deal with the druids.

Felipe suddenly realized something as he opened the door. He could feel that something terrifying was coming for him.

"Crap!"

Black tentacles that were formed by the power of death appeared in the laboratory, the sorcerers' souls would be tainted if they were touched by the tentacles, and they would no longer be able to cast the strongest spells they knew.

Also, mummies that were covered with black linen strips stood up in the sea of tentacles and they started charging toward Felipe.

...

In the Dragon Root Inn, Lucien was reading the report of the program. The questions the arcanists encountered when trying to simplify the procedure were listed on the paper. They described the

unsolved problems that were stopping them from progressing without hiding anything. They would be able to obtain the arcane points after publishing their research results as long as the report was still here.

"The elements can be found in the feces and fertilizers used by the farmers but the result was not good enough. We'll have to keep a lot of animals if we want to get enough feces to mass produce the elements. However, the animals will consume a lot of food...

"The previous experiments proved that the plants need water and sunlight to grow, with the help of the divine spell analysis, we found out that they also need to absorb the elements from the soil. However, the mineral powder that was splashed on the soil was not effective."

...

After they finished analyzing the structure of the divine spells, the sorcerers started doing experiments with the help of the druids. However, the mineral powder of the elements that could be mass produced was useless, and they decided to do experiments on the alchemy products that contained those elements.

"With the foundation of the divine spells and the help from the druids, I think the arcanists will find the alchemy products they need sooner or later." Lucien put down the report and put on a coat. He wanted to go back to Allyn and teach the apprentices after the breakfast.

Lucien saw Iristine and Arcelion walking toward him with smiles on their faces as he opened the door.

"Mr. Evans, we're sorry that we can't help you with the experiment anymore. The elders from the royal palace ordered us to return to the forest immediately and we need to help defend the incoming attack from the Church." Arcelion bowed to Lucien elegantly as he already knew the background of the attack.

Lucien knew that it was not an emergency as the two druids did not look like they were in a hurry, so he smiled and responded, "It's

fine. I already found the path after checking the data of the experiment."

"What?" Iristine and Arcelion were surprised. It was them who changed the data.

Lucien still had the smile on his face. "With the help of the substances that were soluble in water and the divine spell that helps the plant grow, the oats are doing very well. Also, I compared the result with the other research teams and eliminated some unreasonable data."

With the analysis result, Lucien easily found out that the data was changed by someone.

"Well..." The two druids looked a bit disappointed.

Lucien took out the thesis he finished a long time ago, called 'The Conclusion of Comparing the Data Obtained from the Oats that Were Fertilized by the Sulfuric Acid Infused with Phosphate Ore', and said, "I need to submit the report to the senior-level arcanists outside the mansion. Prince Arcelion and Princess Iristine, do you want to go with me?"

"Go ahead, we need to leave." Iristine looked tired. She wanted to destroy the thesis but she feared Lucien's power. Also, Tyrel and Urine already appeared on the other side of the hallway.

...

The carriage was slowly advancing on the bumpy road outside the town. It was winter, so the light from the rising sun had not yet brightened up the area.

Suddenly, Lucien noticed the heat coming from Sun's Corona on his chest and the Host Star of Destiny started warning him about an incoming attack.

Lucien had no time to think, he jumped out of the carriage and activated the fifth-circle spell Powerful Fire Shield contained within ring.

A dark shadow that was surrounded by some rotten gas appeared from the sky and hit Lucien's carriage hard. The iron strips and wooden planks on the carriage started decaying quickly.

"Huh? I didn't expect you to dodge the strike," a deep and hoarse voice echoed in the cloudy sky.

Chapter 224: Hit the Mark by a Fluke

Having no time to think too much about it, Lucien instantly made a mirrored clone of himself and extended the cover of the fire shield to the clone as well. Careful as Lucien was, he even changed the side on which he wore the piece of monocle on the clone's face.

It was the second-circle spell, Mirror, and it was one of the three second-circle spells that Lucien actually had their structures built inside his soul. The other two were Mechanized Mind and Maskelyne's Acid Arrow.

As soon as his mirrored clone showed up, a green light ray hit the clone right in its chest and destroyed it instantly into pieces! Then the light ray did not just disappear but it reflected so fast that there was no way for Lucien to dodge, as the spell was cast by a sixth-circle sorcerer!

The green light directly hit the flame shield covering Lucien. The flames suddenly rose up and quickly broke down into red particles in the air.

The green light was a sixth-circle spell, Dissociation!

Lucien was lucky enough that his mirrored clone and flame shield gained him some time, so he managed to activate Fire Weaver's Bracelet barely in time, or he would have been dissociated into those floating particles already!

Nevertheless, Lucien's robe, Transformation, still got damaged. Strange blank patches appeared on his robe, as if they were taken away by an invisible eraser.

Lucien was in cold sweat. He could not imagine what would have happened to him without the protection of the three spells and the robe.

Furthermore, Lucien was lucky that his enemy's Dissociation spell was not as powerful as he thought. After all, the Flame Shield enchanted in the bracelet was only a second-circle spell, and thus

Lucien thought that his robe would be completely ruined when the green light came to him directly.

Lucien had learned a lot from his past fights. Right now he remained quite calm and activated the power of his partly-damaged magic robe.

At this time, the necromancer summoned mummies that were wrapped in black and rotten-smelling bandages. After the mummies climbed up from the ground, they all rushed at Lucien, who was still surrounded by red flame particles.

Like real knights, these mummies moved very fast. Among those mummies which were immune to spells under fifth-circle and physical attack from grand knights and below, there were also ghastrs, which could exert some necromantic spells.

However, after the mummies and ghastrs tore apart the flame shield, there was nothing in there.

Lucien was gone!

Standing in the air, the necromancer wearing a hood was a bit surprised, but soon, with his spiritual power, he murmured to himself, "Umm... A hole in the ground... Mouse transformation..."

When the necromancer raised his hand, the ground started shaking violently, like an earthquake arrived.

Sixth-circle spell, Earth Shake!

The half-destroyed carriage swayed up and down together with the ground, and the coachman's rotten body was broken into pieces. The human who had been thrown over the coach from a great height was stilly lying there, seemingly completely dead.

While in the sophisticatedly constructed system of mouse holes under the ground, Lucien, who was right now a red-eyed mouse, felt the great power as the ground shook violently. Knowing that if he stayed there any longer he might be buried alive, Lucien had no chance but to go back to the surface.

As soon as Lucien dismissed the spell and returned to his human-being form, he was ready to activate his ring, Element, to try his very best to survive.

Lucien never expected that he could escape from the attack of a senior-rank sorcerer, so what he had been doing was to waste the necromancer's time, hoping that the senior-rank sorcerers and archmages of the Will of Elements nearby could notice what was going on here and came to rescue him.

However, as time went by, Lucien realized that at that moment they were probably too busy studying the Mind of Nature to pay attention to him.

At the same time, when Lucien came back to the ground, he finally recognized the man who was thrown on the coach and was right now lying beside the remaining pieces of the transport—it was Felipe from the Hand of Paleness! He was killed by another necromancer!

Lucien was shocked.

In the air, Traquair's eyes were shining with red light that pierced through the darkness under his hood. He was ready to cast Death Stare, a sixth-circle spell, on Lucien!

Just at the same time, a dim light shot out from Felipe's chest, and it immediately froze all the black mummies and ghosts within in fifty-meter radius. Then, the mummies and ghosts just exploded silently all at once!

The dark gas produced by the explosion then turned into a long sword covered with weird-looking eyes. Very swiftly, the sword directly hacked at Traquair.

Dark Sword, a seventh-circle spell enchanted in Felipe's Immortal Throne amulet! This spell could not only control the movement of the dead, but also collect the power of death, which could degrade the power of the one struck by the spell by one circle. Without some kind of special rites, the affected would never be able to recover from it!

Surprisingly, Felipe did not die. He was just pretending, and then he gave the enemy a totally unexpected strike at the most critical moment.

After the bitter fight with Felipe in the air, Traquair had already consumed all his protection spells. Felipe also used some spell which looked quite similar to Dark Sword before, so Traquair was not alert enough to avoid the attack.

The dark sword absorbed Traquair's power, and instantly, Traquair was turned into a fifth-circle, middle-ranked sorcerer. Thus, of course, he could not use Death Stare anymore.

Seizing the chance, Lucien immediately activated his ring, Element, and bright light burst out from it. Surrounding Traquair, a colourful swirl composed of black, blue, green, and golden particles showed up in the sky, and the swirl devoured Traquair in no time, tearing him apart.

Elemental Swirl, seventh-circle spell!

Lucien felt great pain from the finger which the ring was on, and the pain was so unbearable that his heart almost stopped, and all of his spiritual power dried out. Feeling extremely weak and tortured, he almost could not stand up.

This was the cost he needed to pay for casting that seventh-circle spell when the seal had not been removed yet.

Although Traquair was still struggling with casting all the defensive spells that he knew, his physical body was being torn into pieces, and so were the magic items he was wearing, as they were also composed of elements.

Both Elemental Swirl and Cracking (Advanced) could destroy magic items, but only the latter, a ninth-circle spell, could ruin legendary level items and the effect of the spell was not affected by one's defence level, as one could only rely on his or her own spiritual power and several unique senior-rank spells to fight against it.

However, the biggest difference between Elemental Swirl and

Cracking (Advanced) was that the former could actually hurt one's physical body and soul, but the latter only worked with magic items and magic buffs.

Even so, before Traquair drew his last breath, he shouted at Felipe furiously, "You! The traitor of your belief! You can never overthrow Life Force Theory! GO TO HELL!!!"

The great pain drove Traquair crazy, and layers of black gas kept coming out from his body. As soon as his body and soul were completely destroyed by the swirl, a violent explosion burst forth from its center, targeting Felipe!

The Last Strike, a fifth-circle spell. When the caster was killed, his or her body would explode to attack the last defined target!

Immediately, flame and powerful blast waves devoured Felipe. Lucien, on the other side, was also thrown to the ground because of the great power.

When the air blast disappeared, Lucien tried hard to get up. He was about to mourn for Felipe, after all, they were fighting together just now, but then he saw a figure staggering and slowly standing up on the other side, through the heavy dust in the air.

"You're still alive?!" This was totally beyond Lucien's imagination. However, right now, he was also too weak to fight against Felipe.

Felipe, who was bleeding all over his body, and whose long coat was covered with holes and blood, said to Lucien, gasping, "Even if you died... I'd still be alive, Mr. Professor."

After witnessing how Lucien fought, and watching Lucien standing right in front of him, Felipe was quite sure that Lucien was the very Mr. Professor that he was looking for.

The fact that he was fooled by a first-circle sorcerer really pissed Felipe off. However, when he was about to cast spells to attack Lucien, he realized that his body was too weak to do anything right now from the backfire of using the amulet.

"I think you're dying, Mr. Felipe." Lucien neither admitted nor

denied Felipe's words. Right now he had already got the support from the Will of Elements, he did not really care whether the Hand of Paleness could recognize him. Lucien continued, "Are you working on synthesizing ingredients for life? Is it why this guy tried to kill you? Hey... You just brought such a disaster to me."

Felipe sneered, "He's from the Hand of Paleness. He could not accept the fact that Life Force Theory has been overthrown, so he tried to kill me, and he wanted to kill you as well, because he wanted to make other people think that we killed each other. However, both of us know who he really should have been after! And by the way, I'm telling you... I've successfully synthesized an aliphatic acid. So I suggest you to hurriedly submit your paper about synthesizing carbamide to still get a couple of credits."

"Oh? Is that true? Then congratulations, Mr. Felipe, my dear student." Lucien smiled, "You've proved that I'm really a professor."

As both of them were too weak to fight, they were fighting using words.

"Although you're smart, you're still not even close to me, and you were just being lucky." Felipe curled up the corners of his mouth, "If Traquair hadn't got hurt by my senior-rank magic roll, his Dissociation would have killed you already!"

Although Felipe was saying so, he actually paid lots of attention to this guy who successfully fooled him before, when he was only a first-circle sorcerer!

Lucien shrugged, "Mr. Felipe, you're only a level-four arcanist as well, right? When I am in your age in the future, my level will be way higher than yours. The periodic table alone can bring me a lot of arcana credits each year, so I'm totally uninterested in publishing a paper in synthesizing life ingredients, you know..."

"Oh yeah... When you reach senior-rank, your progressing will slow down." Felipe retorted, "And I don't think the Will of Elements really values you that much. As far as I know, you're not a student of any senior-rank sorcerers or archmages?"

Lucien took a glance at the place where Traquair just exploded, "Nevertheless, the Will of Elements is still way better than a group where its members just kill each other. By the way, I thought your experiment producing life ingredients was confidential, wasn't it?"

Felipe's pale face looked serious. He murmured, "Other than Thanatos and Demigod-lich, there are only three people including Mr. Rogerio who know about my experiment. There's no way that they would leak the information... What's going on here?"

"Emmm... I'm not sure. Not really my business." Lucien wanted to laugh at Felipe, but the pain stopped him.

Felipe felt that his body, or say, the body he was using now, was close to falling apart. He thought for a few seconds and then said to Lucien, "I won't tell this to Thanatos... Mr. Professor, what about cooperating with each other for once?"

"For what?" Lucien asked.

"I'm gonna take my sweet revenge for what those old guys have done to me in the Hand of Paleness," answered Felipe fast. Of course, proud as Felipe was, he could not stand this.

"What can I get from it?" Lucien grinned a bit in pain.

Chapter 225: Preparation

Chapter 225: Preparation

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Felipe raised his left hand, which only had four fingers, with a gloomy smile on his face.

“You publish your paper on synthesizing carbamide first, and as the paper won’t have enough decisive evidence, it would for sure raise heated discussion about the validity of Life Force Theory. When those old stubborn bastards believe in the theory even more as they need to persuade people during the debate, I’m gonna publish a decisive paper to completely overthrow Life Force Theory. Although we haven’t been able to successfully synthesize real life ingredients like cells and thus the papers won’t be shocking enough to blow up their heads, I’m sure the fact that Life Force Theory is gonna be completely overturned can prevent them from making any further progresses for a long time, or even forever. Talking about what you can get... Don’t tell me that you don’t want more credits, more attention from the Will of Elements, and don’t tell me you don’t want to take revenge as Traquair also tried to kill you.”

Lucien sneered, “Come on, Felipe, do you think I’m an idiot? Why would I want to submit a paper that is gonna draw so much hatred to me, specially because I don’t even really need to worry about earning more credits right now? With the periodic table, before level five, I think I’m fine with collecting credits.”

Felipe’s gloomy smile was still on his face. Slowly he took back his hand and said to Lucien, “Sorry, Professor, I don’t think you really have a choice here. If you refuse to work with me, I’m gonna mention your name in my paper specially at the very beginning to thank you for your great contribution, as it was you who inspired me to overturn Life Force Theory. You’ll still take the credit, Professor.”

Lucien did not answer. Instead, Lucien was staring at Felipe,

considering if he could kill him right now, as he could feel that he was recovering faster than Felipe because of the ring, Element.

“Professor, can’t you tell that my body’s gonna collapse at any time right now? Even if you kill me on the spot, my soul and body will reunite somewhere else.” Felipe felt that he was having an advantage over Professor right now, thus he said this to Lucien in a pretty good mood.

However, careful as Felipe, he would never carelessly reveal his top secret to his enemy. Without this secret magic buff, he would have been dead already in his fight against Traquair.

Lucien put on a cold smile, “How do you know that I don’t have a plan B?”

Although Lucien indeed did not have any other backup plans, he would not show his weaknesses in front of his enemy. He really wished that two more layers of the seal of Sun’s Corona had been unlocked, so he could launch another round of attack toward Felipe!

Felipe’s heart sank for a second. As Professor was always mysterious and cunning, Felipe was not sure whether what he just said was true. However, he still pretended to be calm, “Don’t take me wrong, Professor. I’m just trying to figure out a way that benefits both of us. I think the paper about synthesizing carbamide can be submitted as your research outcome as you work with the druids. When the paper raises heated debate, you don’t have to mention anything about Life Force Theory or express any of your personal opinion, and I’m sure people will understand, because, after all, you’re not a necromancer. Following you paper, I’m gonna publish my paper with decisive evidence for overthrowing Life Force Theory. At that time, all the attention and hatred will go directly to me, and you’ll be out of the whole chaos.”

Lucien curled the corner of his mouth in a noncommittal manner.

“In the congress, I’m the only one who actually met Professor before. If you can do me the favor, I promise that I’ll keep your secret. I’m sure that you don’t want the Church and the congress to

know that you're also the great musician from Aalto, as you're still hoping to meet the princess again." Felipe continued to persuade Lucien, "Besides all the benefits I mentioned before, I promise you a rite which can improve one's life-span and soul strength, though only once."

All that Felipe wanted to do now was to take revenge on those old bastards from the Hand of Paleness who planned this assassination against him. As Traquair was already dead, Felipe was sure that most of the recent senior-level members of the Hand of Paleness would not speak for him at the risk of pissing off those old, senior-rank sorcerers.

Lucien carefully thought about it for a few seconds, then he moved his neck with difficulty, "I hope we work well with each other then, Mr. Felipe."

"Great." Felipe smiled, although still gloomy, "Let's find some time to sign a devil pact together."

After saying this, Felipe gave up his control over this body, and the body started collapsing and falling into pieces.

Before Felipe disappeared, his voice lingered in the air, "Mr. Professor, our cooperation this time doesn't mean that we've become friends. You're still one of the people who I dislike the most. When I get a chance, I'll beat you, but before that, I hope you can grow stronger. Killing a second-circle sorcerer cannot make me feel proud."

"The same. Maybe my arcana level will be higher than yours soon." Lucien responded, smiling.

Felipe's body was now covered with white light and then the body disappeared, leaving on the ground the Immortal Throne amulet, which was made of bones, and another ring.

"Life Hiding? The ninth-circle magic?" Lucien murmured, recalling what he had read before on Book of Necromancy, "No... It's different... Life Hiding concentrates most of one's life force in a certain part of the body and hide that part somewhere else. What

Felipe just did doesn't look the same... It might be some special rite from the Hand of Paleness, but who's gonna conduct this rite for him? Who's Felipe's teacher...?"

Waiting for his spiritual power and energy to recover, Lucien looked at the amulet on the ground and started planning something.

At this time, the archmages and senior-rank sorcerers who finally noticed what was going on there all arrived, including Raventi and Gaston from the Will of Elements, and Pesor and Tina-Timos from the Hand of Paleness.

Seeing all the remains of the dead creatures on the ground and Lucien, who was standing there with great difficulty, Raventi became furious.

"What the heck did you bastards want to do?!" As Raventi was growling at those sorcerers from the Hand of Paleness. The air suddenly became really hot, as if they were surrounded by burning lava.

This was the signal that Raventi was going to cast his ninth-circle spell, Raventi's Flame Hell.

Wearing a long, black robe which covered all his body and had white skulls on the collar, Pesor's face was not revealed. There were only two small clusters of red flame that were flickering under his hood, "Raventi, our member was also attacked. Before we find any evidence, the Hand of Paleness is also the victim."

Pesor was a level-eight arcanist, ninth-circle necromancer, member of Arcana Review Board. He was not known for having a good temper, however, in front of Raventi, Pesor appeared to be quite mild in contrast.

Then Pesor pointed at the amulet and the ring on the ground, and he used magic to pick them up,

"Hand of Rehabilitation... It's Felipe..."

After checking around and talking with Lucien a bit, Gaston also stopped Raventi, "It was the winner of Holm Crown prize and the

winner of Immortal Throne award who were attacked, Lucien Evans and Felipe Carneiro respectively. The attacker was Traquair from the Hand of Paleness.”

Then Gaston looked at the other side, “Do you two have any clues?”

Tina-Timos, the female sorcerer who had a hellish succubus look said unpleasantly, “We’ll figure this out!”

...

In a secret chamber of a magic tower in Heidler, a fine box decorated with lots of beautiful jewels was placed in the center of a complicated magic circle.

All of a sudden, the box started shining with dazzling white light. A piece of a finger appeared. As it was floating in the air, the finger started twitching and growing. It grew bigger and bigger and eventually the finger turned into a naked man!

It was Felipe.

“Again... I needed Mr. Demigod-lich to conduct this Life Hiding rite for me by utilizing cellular memory...” Felipe looked at his new body and walked toward the bedroom to put on some clothes, “I’m bankrupt again...”

After Felipe took care of everything, Rogerio arrived. He looked very serious, “What happened?”

Felipe answered coldly, “Someone else knows that I’m working on synthesizing life ingredients. We have a traitor among us, Mr. Rogerio.”

“As Mr. Demigod-lich and Mr. Thanatos have got the news, and they knew how serious it was, there shouldn’t be another assassination attempt. Right now we still have to focus on the experiment. How’s it going?”

“It’s in the final stage now.” Felipe put his hands into his pockets as usual, “I’m relatively confident that it’s going to succeed in one week.”

He did not mention anything about Professor.

...

While in another magic tower in Heidler, when Traquair's soul started reuniting inside a purple gem, a hand suddenly grabbed the gem and smashed it into ashes with the black power of death.

There were shrill cries coming from the inside of the gem, but they soon disappeared.

"Mr. Adol, thank you for your information. Unfortunately, we failed."

"Sorry to hear it."

After a short conversation, the chamber quieted down. A space gap appeared, and Adol returned to the World of Souls.

...

In a manor in Sariva.

After half day of rest, Lucien was almost fully recovered because of his own good physique and the help of the ring, Element. He destroyed the partly-done paper that he wrote before and developed a new paper:

The Method for Large-scale Production of the Several Useful Alchemical Products Found in Oat Planting Experiment and the Discussion of Their Proper Use.

Chapter 226: The Reaction

The highest council took this cooperative research project seriously, and also the project was related to the elements and souls, so most of the arcanists from Allyn that were familiar with these two fields were asked to join the research, including the middle-rank arcanists from the Arcane Review Board like Raventi, Gaston, Locklynn, and Pesor. They were the ones who were qualified and had the ability to verify the submitted articles.

A temporary article verification location was set up in a mansion in Sariva and all the arcanists who joined the project would be able to submit their research results without wasting any time.

Lucien saw Woods from Common Arcana journal coming from the other side of the hallway as he stepped out of the room that was full of magic circles.

"Greetings, Mr. Woods. I didn't expect to see you here. I thought you were an expert in force field and astrology."

There was a golden mustache on Woods' face. He looked at Lucien and said. "I heard that you were ambushed by someone after I got here and I went to your room, however, the maid told me that you were here... Well, it seems like you're doing fine and it's great."

Lucien's face was still slightly pale and his body was almost recovered, however, his transformation robe needed to be repaired.

"Thank you, Mr. Woods. I was just caught in the fire, the assassins were going after Mr. Felipe, and they didn't do any actual damage to me. I activated the elemental ring that was at a much higher level than myself, and that was why I got hurt," Lucien walked as he explained.

After Raventi and Gaston took Lucien back to the mansion, Larry, Timothy, and Ulysses all visited him, but most of the others were not aware of the situation. Iristine, Arcelion, and other elves had no idea about what happened, so Lazar and some of his other friends had not come to visit him yet.

Woods' brow furrowed. "You can recover from such damage easily but there'll be consequences for your soul and your body. Your life expectancy will be shortened. It may not be a big problem for you as you're very likely to become a senior-rank sorcerer before the age of 50. Anyway, don't do that again if you don't have to."

The two chattered as they walked to Lucien's room. Woods chuckled as they stopped at the door, it seemed the room reminded him of something. "Wait, you were stepping out of the article submitting location when we met, right? Did you just finish an article?"

"Yes, it was the result of this week's research. It's about the three alchemy substances that can help the food grow and how to make them in batches." Lucien smiled and pushed the door open, it sounded like he was just talking about a regular article.

Woods was a bit surprised, he looked at Lucien. "I've seen your reports of the project. It seems like you have reached the bottleneck. However, I can't believe that you solved the problem like it was nothing just several minutes ago."

"I got the idea from the research results on the reports submitted by the arcanists. I also analyzed the combination of wood, grass, fertilizer, and the feces. That was how I found the three water-soluble alchemy substances." Lucien asked the maid to pour a cup of tea for Woods.

Woods sipped some black tea from the cup and smiled. "Interesting. If the three alchemy substances can be mass produced, our food output would be greatly increased, so the sorcerers and knights will become richer. Also, Mr. Evans, your article will be recognized by the council."

Woods grew up in Allyn as a member of a sorcerer's family and he had no idea how hard life could be. The man was a middle-rank arcanist and he was at a much higher position than the farmers or the poor. It was just a temporary emotion that he had the compassion for farmers or the poor and Woods did not think Lucien's article was that important. The project was taken seriously by the Congress simply because the members of the highest council

wanted to study the divine spells of nature.

"I hope so," Lucien sipped some tea from the cup and responded calmly.

Woods put down the cup and spoke in a serious tone, "Evans, can you let us, the Common Arcana journal, publish your article? Although it's still the first half of the month, next month's Common Arcana will be cited a lot more than usual if one of the major discoveries of the project can be included in our journal ahead of the time."

"I thank you on behalf of the Common Arcana, Evans. Can I have a look at the article, please? I want to see how I should arrange it in the next month's journal," Woods asked politely. Lucien just submitted his article and Woods did not want the man to get suspicious.

There was no point for Lucien to reject the request. He took out a copy of the article from the bag and handed it to Woods. "Sure, it's fine. I also submitted a report to the council members when submitting the article for reference and everyone will be able to read it tomorrow."

Woods grabbed the article and started reading carefully, although Lucien Evans started studying arcana just several months ago, two of his articles were taken very seriously by the council. The second one he published was a revolution to the elemental sorcerers, so Woods had to be extremely careful when dealing with Lucien's article.

"So, the plants can only absorb the elements from the water-soluble substances?" Woods decided to ask since the author of the article was right in front of him.

Lucien did not elaborate on the question but he still answered, "Based on the result of the experiment, yes."

Woods sipped some more tea and turned to the next page. He praised the contrast test designed by Lucien as they discussed the content of the article. Then, Woods moved to the last part of the

article as they chatted: the discussion on mass producing the mentioned alchemical substances.

He grabbed the teacup as he finished reading the experiment on handling the phosphate ore with sulfate and he wanted to change the topic to the mass production of magic circles, however, the title of the page, "Experiment and Discussion on the Artificially Synthesized Carbamide", caught his attention.

The tea spouted out of Woods' mouth. Lucien was sitting to the right of Woods, but he was still caught by the water mist.

Lucien wiped his face and questioned, "What happened, Mr. Woods?"

"Evans, do you know what you're implying here?!" Woods stared at Lucien and there was fear in his eyes. He lowered his head and quickly scanned through the design and result of the experiment. "Did you really synthesize carbamide with just the gases?" Woods muttered, unable to believe what he had just read.

He was not a sorcerer that focused on the soul, but it still took him some time to calm down.

"Evans, did you finish the experiment by yourself?" Woods stared at Evans in the eyes.

Lucien faked a confused look on his face and responded, "Yeah, I completed the experiment with magic circles and alchemy circles. What's the problem, Mr. Woods?"

"Evans, don't you understand how important this experiment will be and how big of a problem it will cause?!" Woods shouted as he could no longer control himself.

Lucien shook his head, stilling looking confused. "I don't understand. Please enlighten me."

"What the f*ck. Again?" Woods cursed and put his right hand on his forehead, trying to calm himself down.

...

After the investigation in the morning, Raventi and Gaston returned to their reading rooms as the only thing they found out was that the assassin was Traquair. Some of the council members tried to cast the Horoscope to learn more about the incident but they were interrupted and failed to get the accurate result. They had to ask the legendary sorcerers to cast the Horoscope and spells like Prophet's Sight to find more traces later.

"Mr. Gaston, these are the articles that need to be verified today." The elemental servant brought three articles to Gaston and put them down on the desk. The other articles were sent to the mid-level arcanists like Larry.

Gaston noticed the familiar name on the first article he grabbed: "Lucien Evans X."

Gaston asked his elemental servants to send all the articles done by Lucien Evans X to him after the incident.

"Well, the young ones are doing well with their experiments but we're having trouble progressing with the study on the origin of the divine spells and the mind of nature even with the help of the grand arcanists... Is it impossible for us to study such things?" Gaston sighed as he read through the article. Furthermore, Malfurion would be returning to Stroop Forest the next day.

They all knew that the Church was just trying to scare them, but it was a good excuse for the Royal Elf Palace and the elder council of the druids. The only thing that could change the situation was a revolutionary discovery.

Gaston tapped on Lucien's article slightly with his fingers. "Will Malfurion stay here for several more days if we use the findings of this article as an excuse? However, this was the reason why he joined the project, and so he won't cast any divine spells for us even if he decides to stay..." While thinking about it, he turned to the next page and the title was, "Experiment and Discussion on the Artificially Synthesized Carbamide".

Gaston trembled slightly as it felt like his backbone was shocked by electricity. He suddenly straightened his back and focused on the

content on the page. His expression turned serious as he stood up and quickly charged into the magic laboratory.

Chapter 227: The Stir Caused

Chapter 227: The Stir Caused

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In a magic lab.

Staring at the white particles with a light touch of red color in the reactor, Gaston cast Identification in a serious manner. When he got the result, his weird-looking dark-yellow eyes narrowed and he murmured, “It’s really carbamide... Carbamide could be synthesized without using any life ingredients...”

After staring at the particles for a while, a sarcastic smile appeared on Gaston’s face, “Those guys who play with bodies all the time in Hand of Paleness are in trouble now...”

Because of their different beliefs and competing interests, there had been a long history of friction between the Will of Elements and the Hand of Paleness. As the director of the former, Gaston had a poor relationship with many senior-rank sorcerers from the latter. Now, seeing the evidence that Life Force Theory might soon be overthrown, he was certainly in a schadenfreude mood. Gaston’s own meditation environment only had a very limited connection to Life Force Theory, so he did not need to worry about himself at all.

He wondered why Lucien put such an important experiment in his project paper. He wanted to know whether Lucien had ever heard about Life Force Theory. In Gaston’s mind, he tended to believe that it was more likely that Lucien knew nothing about it, or he would definitely be influenced by this classic theory, and he would not be able to conduct his experiment outside the theoretical framework. As for Lucien’s gift in arcana, Gaston had no doubt toward it at all. In Gaston’s mind, Lucien had a rigorous way of thinking, the courage to make bold hypothesis and the spirit to seek for proving. Furthermore, now Gaston felt that Lucien’s ability in doing experiments was also impressive.

“Bang!!”

When Gaston was about to leave the lab, the lab door was broken open, and the magic circles on it were broken as well.

“Who is that?!” asked Gaston in an alert way. Instantly, he was covered by a colourful spherical shield.

Seventh-circle spell, Magic Reverse Enchantment.

“Gaston! Did you see the paper from Evans? The last part! The experiment of synthesizing carbamide!” Raventi was really loud.

After staring at Raventi for a few seconds, Gaston sighed, “Knock before entering, please.”

“I’m too excited for that!” Raventi did not really care, “I asked you, did you read the paper... Wait, you’ve tried it as well?!”

Raventi saw the reactor on the other side of the lab and the white particles in the magic glass tube.

Gaston made a gesture to ask Raventi to lower his voice, “Yes, Mr. Raventi, I’ve proved the validity of Evans’ experiment, but I think that there’s still lack of a piece of decisive evidence, as the Hand of Paleness might not admit carbamide to be a life ingredient. By the way, Mr. Raventi, did you show the paper to anyone else?”

“No one except you.” Although Raventi had a pretty bad temper, as a level-nine arcanist, he was not an idiot. He instantly understood why Raventi asked it, “You want to hide the paper from those necromancers first until there are any decisive findings?”

Gaston nodded seriously, “The keywords for the paper are Element and Alchemy, so technically speaking, the paper does not have much to do with the school of Necromancy. In other words, most likely, those necromancers haven’t read the paper. My only concern is that, on Evans’ side, he might have talked about it with other people already.”

Gaston was more than happy to have this chance to attack the Hand of Paleness with some decent research findings.

“I do not agree with you, Gaston.” Raventi shook his head seriously,

“This is an overturning finding. Unlike some unique spells being created, this kind of finding should be revealed to the public as soon as possible, so more arcanists can join the discussion, and thus the decisive evidence, if there’s any, can be found in the shortest period of time. Gaston, you still remember the fundamental spirit that the Congress of Magic builds on? Exploration of truth and candid communication!”

After thinking a bit, Gaston nodded, “All right. I’m just concerned that the upcoming great debate might put Lucien in a dangerous place.”

“Let Lucien move into the house between ours,” answered Raventi quickly, “But before that, I need to talk to the druid leaders to test validity of the first part of Lucien’s paper, so they can see some hope in increasing grain yield.”

...

“Evans, now, do you understand how important Life Force Theory is in the school of Necromancy?” Woods just spent about ten minutes on explaining the theory to Lucien.

Lucien put on an “ah ha” look, “Yes, thank you, Mr. Woods. As I specialize in the school of Element and Astrology, I really had no idea about what it was, not to mention understanding its importance in history. But, Mr. Woods, I still don’t know why this is related to my carbamide synthesizing experiment?”

“.....” Woods was speechless. What Lucien just said proved that he was literally from ancient magic background, as he did not have some common sense in contemporary magic system.

“Well...” Woods tried to make it easy and simple, “Carbamide is a life ingredient... or say, most people regard carbamide as a life ingredient. There’s no clear definition of life ingredient.”

Lucien said in a half-joking way, “Mr. Woods, does it mean that my paper’s accidentally overthrown Life Force Theory? Is my paper gonna get a high rating? Maybe I can win the Immortal Throne award?”

“It’s hard to say, as there’s no decisive evidence in your paper. Some stubborn necromancers might not admit that Carbamide is a life ingredient.” Woods frowned, as he was also influenced by the theory, “If I were you, I would not be looking forward to winning Immortal Throne award, but be rather watchful after the news comes out tomorrow. You know, some stubborn and insane necromancers might...”

“I’ll stay in the manor for the following several days, which is very close to Mr. Raventi and Mr. Gaston,” answered Lucien. “Mr. Woods, are you still gonna publish the paper?”

“Of course, this is gonna be the first paper on the next issue of Common Arcana, and I think there are gonna be more articles discussing your experiment coming out later, so we can collect those articles and put them there as well.” Woods planned in a smart way.

At this time, Raventi’s voice came in from behind the door, “Are you in there, Evans?”

“Yes?” Thinking of all those mathematics and arcana exercises that he had not finished yet, Lucien opened the door reluctantly.

Raventi was still wearing his black magic robe, on which the order of the elements had been rearranged, “Gaston and I have reviewed your paper and the final rating from Arcana Review Board has been sent back. By the way, move into the room next to mine as soon as possible.”

“I will.” Lucien hurriedly nodded, and then he started reading the rating result, “The paper has successfully provided several solutions with regards to whether and how alchemical products can facilitate the growth of plants. Therefore, it is of some importance and can be quite pervasive. Among the several experiments designed and presented in the paper, the experiment focusing on synthesizing carbamide reveals, excitingly, the possibility that a classic theory, Life Force Theory, might not be valid, and this is overturning, which makes the paper rather worth of great discussion. In conclusion, the paper is overturning and of great value, thus a reward of fifty arcana credits and three hundred arcana points is

given to the author.”

“All of your three papers have received very high comments,” Woods said a bit emotionally. As an arcanist who was already close to level five, among so many papers he had submitted, unlike that of Lucien, only a few were spoken highly of. So, Woods was feeling a bit depressed.

After a while, he cheered himself up a little and asked, “Will the project still go on? It sounds like you’re still staying for a few more days, Mr. Raventi.”

“Yes, Mr. Malfurion has decided to send some druids back, while he and the rest of the druids will stay longer to see if the alchemical product discovered in Evans’ paper can really solve their problem,” answered Raventi, looking quite serious, as Malfurion had made it clear that they would not cooperate with the arcanists to let them study the Mind of Nature anymore.

“By the way, Mr. Lord of Storm and Ms. Hathaway, after reading Evans’ paper, have made the decision that any arcanists who join this discussion can get some credits, and papers cited in the discussion can still get citation credits as well.”

The great significance lying in the periodic table of elements still required more time to reveal itself, and the establishment of a new field also needed time. Therefore, the great return of the periodic table of elements was not there yet.

Meanwhile, overthrowing an old, classic theory could be even more influential.

...

The early morning the second day, Menshaque, a necromancer from the Hand of Paleness, was reading the project newspaper with a plate of buttered bread in front of him.

As a senior member of the Hand of Paleness, Menshaque was almost four hundred years old, and he had already turned himself into a lich. He did not need to eat, but he ate for pleasure. Menshaque was

a level five arcanist, seventh-circle necromancer, and in this project working with the druids, he was in charge of a research group.

“The Method for Large-scale Production of the Several Useful Alchemical Products Found in Oat Planting Experiment and the Discussion of Their Proper Use?” The paper instantly drew Menshaque’s attention, as he wondered if those guys from the Will of Elements had figured out anything. Although the necromancers also had made some progresses, such as using life force to stimulate the growth of plants or using the undead to farm, the popularity of these methods was still a problem.

After reading the paper for a while, Menshaque’s bony hands with only a thin layer of skin covering them started trembling.

Chapter 228: The Surge

The steady hand that could accurately separate the dead bodies into different parts and complete the complicated casting gestures at any level was trembling like it had lost the control, although it was just trying to turn the paper to the next page.

"That's lame and absurd! How can such a paper be published in a brief report?!" The man's voice was mixed in the chilling wind, it was deep and hoarse. The voice sounded like it was filled up with pain and hatred. "Lucien Evans X, how dare the bastards from the Will of the Elements question the structure of a human's body? They don't even know the secret of life. I'll punish him if I ever meet him!"

Menshaque forgot that the brief report was just a newspaper that was used to share the research progression by the research teams and the papers published on it did not need to be verified.

"No, I need to start the experiment now and expose this despicable lie!" Menshaque suddenly stood up, the facial muscle and the skin that were created with human body parts could barely hide the dark smoke leaking out of his bones.

Similar scenes were happening in most of the research teams. Larry choked on the milk and it sounded he was about to cough to death. Timothy was pushing his glasses up, but he used so much force that the frame of the glasses was pushed to his forehead. The bread that Ulysses was chewing spouted out of his mouth and splashed on the brief report.

The arcanists that focused on elements were surprised at first but they quickly gloated over the discovery and started validating the result using experiments after the breakfast. The reactions from the necromancers varied, some torn the report apart furiously, some were walking around anxiously as they were not sure if they could prove the result wrong with experiments, some forced themselves to calm down and informed the Hand of Paleness about the situation, some were trying to slam their hatred on Lucien's face...

...

Inside the magic laboratory, there was a loud noise that sounded like metal objects dropping to the floor. Menshaque was floating in the air and he was not moving at all, with the red flames in his eyes almost extinguished. He looked at the lab equipment and the white substance on the ground in surprise, and the magic tube in his right hand cracked under his strong grip. The broken glass pieces pierced into his palm but Menshaque did not seem concerned.

He had no idea how long had passed, but eventually he muttered, "No, no! I must have done something wrong during the experiment, how can the Life Force Theory be wrong? This doesn't make sense, so many body refining spells were created using the theory!"

"There is no life force involved in the creation of the carbamide using the nonliving substances in this experiment!"

Menshaque sounded like a paranoid schizophrenic. He was questioning and arguing with a voice that sounded like he was crying sadly. It took him a while to calm down.

The flame of life in Menshaque's eyes slowly recovered as the time passed, but he was still slightly panicked. "If the consciousness of the world collapsed, the spiritual power would lose control and blow my physical body and soul into pieces... The good thing is that I can adapt to new concepts, also, Rogerio has said that, strictly speaking, carbamide is not a living substance."

"However, is the Life Force Theory completely true?"

Menshaque's arcana level was decent and that was the reason why he was sent to assist the research project. He could not help but get suspicious after he calmed down from the shock. A situation as such had happened more than once in the Congress of Magic.

However, Menshaque could feel that the spiritual flame in his phylactery was going to extinguish as he got suspicious about the Life Force Theory.

"No, no. I can't meditate during this period and I need to stay calm."

Menshaque knew that the contradiction in his mind could only be solved by either time or some stronger evidence. However, he had no way to know if the contradiction would end with the victory of the Life Force Theory or the new concept would win and give him a new idea about the world. Also, it was possible that his meditation would be permanently impacted by the truth and one day he would be destroyed.

Menshaque did not need to breathe but it had already become his habit, so he inhaled deeply. "If I can't win the war against myself, I'll have to win the fight against Lucien Evans. He shall not live if I can't proceed further!"

Rogerio had already informed the necromancers about the possible situations and the theory about carbamide was not that shocking to them, so even the old school necromancers in the research teams were able to keep their meditation somewhat stable. Also, their heads did not explode as they did not lose control of their spiritual force. However, most of the necromancers claimed if anything serious happened, they would all go after the bastard named Lucien Evans.

Lucien was discussing the possible effects of combining the three alchemical substances with the two elves that postponed their return date back in a room beside Raventi's room, he suddenly noticed the warning from his Host Star of Destiny after the necromancers showed their hatred toward him.

He went to the washroom and cast the Horoscope spell using the Morning Light crystal ball. Lucien's conclusion was that the path ahead was full of danger but there was still a way to avoid all the possible risks.

"How many days does Felipe need before he can submit the paper..."

Lucien returned to the living room as he thought about it, and was surprised to see that Arcelion and Iristine were reading the brief report in front of them carefully. They looked confused and it seemed like their emotions were unstable.

"What happened? It only took me about ten minutes to cast the Horoscope spell," Lucien tried to get their attention, "Prince and Princess?"

Arcelion raised his head, the man's face was pretty and delicate like a woman's but it seemed he was disgusted by something and his face was full of hatred. "Mr. Evans, you can artificially synthesize carbamide? Did you just overthrow the Life Force Theory?"

"You can understand arcane spells?" Lucien was surprised, as he did not expect that the two elves would understand the arcana paper.

"Our guards learned about the information from the senior elder," Arcelion responded unconsciously in a polite manner.

Iristine interrupted, "Human beings, cows, sheep, magic creatures, and plants, their life force all comes from the gift of nature, so how can you synthesize the living substance with gas and ores?" She sounded a bit angry.

"That depends on how you define what is a living substance..." Lucien realized that all the living beings were formed by the living substances in the druids' eyes, and the creation of the living beings was not related to the nonliving substances. However, it seemed the concept would not affect how they interacted and used the mind of nature.

"No matter how it is defined, Mr. Evans, you're just an evil and fearless devil!" Iristine's last good impression of Lucien turned to the worst.

"Well, there's one more devil, actually, two more devils waiting for you," Lucien thought, but he had no time to argue with the two elves about an arcana problem.

...

Pa

Pesor slammed the brief report on the desk, the soul flames were dancing inside the deep eye sockets of his white skull. "Lucien Evans has submitted the paper about the artificially synthesized

carbamide experiment!"

Pesor, Tina-Timos, and two other committee members of the Arcana Review Board were relatively open to new theories, so a grand arcanist, the lord of the undead, did not try to hide the matter about Professor from them, and they were well prepared for it.

The one who passed them the information was the lord of the undead and he was the most authoritative one among the necromancers. Also, the four committee members had good arcana thoughts and perceptions, so they accepted the result of the experiment quickly, and they modified some magic effects slightly to verify the result again using the reverse method.

Rogério was standing opposite to Pesor and there was a grim expression on his face. "The Professor was alerted after Lucien Evans and Felipe were ambushed. He got suspicious and he probably already knew that we were about to succeed, that was why he decided to test us with his student's experiment. Lucien Evans will become the target even if we don't get any decisive result and if we do get any, Professor will be able to share the arcana points with Lucien by adding his name to paper. Pesor and Tina, didn't you notice that Lucien Evans hid the experiment in a paper that was part of the research project result?"

Rogério took Felipe to Sariva town right after he heard the information.

"Menezes' situation is getting worse and we need to solve the problem as soon as possible." Tina-Timos glanced at the other important members of the Hand of Paleness, as they all knew about the situation.

Menezes was another committee member of the Arcana Review Board and he was a master of the body refining technique.

Rogério had a bitter smile on his face. "In Heidler, Aurelio is so anxious that he's not acting like a necromancer, and it seems like he plans to kill Lucien Evans."

Aurelio was an important member of the Hand of Paleness, a

member of the Affairs Committee, a level six arcanist, and a seventh-circle necromancer. The man had huge potential and he had studied in the Demiplanes Magic Tower of the Demigod Lich.

"Felipe, how's your research progressing? Just share the data with us if things are not going well so we can join the research and help you get the decisive result as soon as possible. It's not the time to hide things from each other!" Pesor stared at Felipe with a serious expression on his face.

Felipe was wearing his signature long black coat with the amulet he won from the Immortal Throne Award hanging over it, and the man's morbid face was still pale but handsome. Felipe responded with a grim look on his face, "Mr. Pesor, everything is going well, and I'll be able to artificially synthesize a fatty acid within three days."

"I hope you're not lying, otherwise, I'll punish you no matter what kind of secret background you have." Pesor was the vice-president of the Hand of Paleness and he had the right to warn Felipe like that.

Felipe bowed politely to everyone in the room. "Gentlemen, if you excuse me, I need to focus on the experiment."

Felipe walked out of the room after the permission was granted, then pursed his lips into a smile as he walked down the stairs.

"How's the investigation on the ambush?" Pesor looked at Rogerio.

Rogerio shook his head. "There's nothing we could find even with the help from the astrologer of the Tower. It seems the astrology was interrupted by a strong but unfamiliar force, otherwise, the result would be clearer."

"There are more secrets in this world than we think." Pesor sighed slightly. "Just like the rules of the world. One year ago, no one would have expected someone would overthrow a mature theory like the Life Force Theory."

...

The second day, the two senior-rank sorcerers' papers were published on the first page of the brief report in the morning.

The Demonstration of Carbamide's Nature — by Menezes.

The Meaning and Flaw of the Artificially Synthesized Carbamide — by Aurelio.

Lucien's paper did not mention anything about the Life Force Theory and they could not find any weak point to attack, so they decided to go straight to the point without talking about the result of the research project.

The grand arcanists acquiesced in such behavior, and as the arguments between the arcanists that focused on elemental sorcery and the ones that focused on soul sorcery were getting more and more serious, they almost forgot why they were invited into the research. Also, druids like Malfurion did not put their attention on the growth of the crops, instead, they focused on this "discussion".

It was like a surge in Sariva and the brief reports were like their battleground.

However, Lucien claimed that he was not familiar with the Life Force Theory, so he would not join the discussion. The necromancers were happy after reading his claim, as they thought that Lucien was scared and they decided to put more effort into the discussion.

...

"Lucien Evans, a heretic that defiles God! A liar that will never tell the truth! I shall bring him to trial!" In Philibell's room, Holm's cardinal, Vaharall the Adjudicator shouted furiously after reading the brief papers from the last several days.

The spy of the church in the Congress of Magic could easily send the complete brief report as the Congress encouraged the discussion, but it would take the spy one day to send the report out.

The Life Force Theory was one of the fundamentals of the Creationism, and that was the reason why Vaharall was enraged

after reading Lucien's paper.

Chapter 229: A Great Stir

Sitting beside Vaharall, Varantine looked very serious. There was still a layer of light covering his clenched fist. Clearly, he was very mad at Lucien Evans, the vicious sorcerer who showed no respect to the deity.

Seeing that, Philibell, the cardinal who had a thick white mustache, presented them with another two pieces of newspaper, "What you two just read was the first-day newspaper, and these are from the second day and the third day. Lucien Evans' not worth much attention, I'd say, as it's just synthesizing carbamide, and no one would believe that any life ingredients could ever exist in those dirty excreta."

The members from Episcopal Conference all understood arcana papers to some degree thanks to the several popes contribution to the improvement of divine spells.

Taking the newspaper from Philibell, Vaharall, the tough-looking, red-haired guy started reading it carefully. The newspaper was filled with discussions about how to define carbamide, about the validity of Life Force Theory, and it was obvious that those necromancers were in a more favorable position, as those arcanists from the school of Element still lacked further decisive evidence.

"This is not as bad as we thought. It is the blessing of the Lord." Philibell drew a cross on his chest.

"This is something that we definitely need to improve," agreed Varantine. "But right now, we don't have to take the risk by sending those devout Night Watchers to kill Lucien Evans. My suggestion's that we have the the Inquisitions in Holm and Colette keeping a close watch on him, and when there's a chance in the future, we take action. After all, there's no need to rush."

Although Varantine was sent here by the pope to eliminate vicious sorcerers, he understood well that the Church was overpowered by the Congress of Magic in Holm and several other countries around

it. Although they might have a chance to win if the Church sent most of their cardinals here, their biggest concern was that this might give the North Church and other dark creatures as well as sorcerers from the north a great chance to avail themselves of the opportunity to get in their territory. Therefore, both Vaharall and Varantine agreed with Philibell that they should take on a more conservative manner with this issue right now.

Although they all wanted to defend the dignity of their God so bad that, facing Lucien's disrespectful findings, their blood was boiling with anger, they still knew that they needed to be careful with every step they took.

"Like what Vaharall just said, those arcana geniuses hardly leave Allyn and Rentato before they reach middle-rank, so we have to wait." Philibell nodded, as he was the one among all the cardinals who understood the congress the best.

At this time, they heard abrupt knocking at the door.

"Come in." Using God's Eyes, Philibell already saw through the door. On the other side of the door stood a pastor who looked very anxious and scared, and his holy light power was in a very unstable status, as if the power was going to devour him at any time.

The pastor hurriedly pushed open the door, and he was too scared to salute the three cardinals, instead, he said urgently, "Lord Philibell, this is the newspaper that arrived from the Congress this morning. They risked a lot to be able to send this newspaper."

"Calm down first." Philibell's voice was soft and it comforted this pastor in panic, "Do not doubt the Lord. Do not doubt the mighty power of the Lord."

The pastor kept crossing in front of his chest to control and calm down his holy power.

Philibell had some bad feeling about the newspaper, but still, he started reading the first page in a calm manner:

"An Experiment Synthesizing Fatty Acid with Several Non-life

Ingredients Including Charcoal through A Series of Alchemical Reactions, from Felipe Carneiro."

In the abstract of the paper, Felipe put it proudly and straightforwardly, "Through this experiment, I can announce to all of you that Life Force Theory has been completely overthrown, and it will no longer play any role in the development of arcana!"

After quickly going through the experiment design, Philibell, although he was always quite calm, shouted angrily, "Blasphemy! This is blasphemy! This is a direct and shameful provocation of the Lord's majesty and dignity! Felipe must be eliminated immediately!"

His chin covered with white beard was trembling fiercely while he was shouting, as if he wanted to set off right now to kill Felipe. In his eyes, compared to Felipe's experiment, now Lucien's paper did not matter at all.

Vaharall, who was a harsh and bold guy, directly gave Philibell's desk a fierce punch. Instantly, the desk was totally destroyed and there were not even ashes left after his power burst forth. At the same time, Vaharall also felt lucky that he was a legendary knight and his power came from his Blessing, or his soul would have been damaged by his belief being shaken, "How dare those mortals even try to pry into the realm of God. A blasphemer must be cleared at all costs! "

"Before that, we need to make sure whether the experiment is real." Varantine did not read the newspaper, and right now he was crossing in front of his chest.

There was no way that the Congress of Magic could just destroy the cardinals' belief by a paper, and, if the cardinals had the right experiment equipment and divine power circles, they could verify the validity of the paper by conducting the experiment themselves.

"Lock away this paper. Make sure that other pastors do not learn about the existence of this paper. The last thing we want to see right now is this turning into the same situation when those sorcerers claimed that holy light was electromagnetic wave." Philibell closed his eyes, feeling a bit tired, "This is the test of the

Lord to us, and our loyalty to our faith shall be manifested and examined again. We shall find the flaws of the experiment as soon as possible."

Philibell, the cardinal of the parish of Holm for almost a hundred years, had been through a lot, thus he still managed to control his power and prevent the idea of the paper from hurting his soul after reading Felipe's research design.

"All glories go to the Lord. Only truth lives forever." Vaharall, Varantine and the other pastor prayed together, telling themselves that even if Felipe's finding was true, this was still from the Lord's mighty power, which was still beyond their understanding.

After praying, Vaharall said to Philibell in a low voice, "I request to send several devout night watchers to assassinate Felipe. If there is a chance, we shall kill Lucian Evans as well."

The reason he mentioned "devout night watchers" specifically was that they all knew that those night watchers of the task were basically doomed to die. If they could kill Felipe, they were already very lucky. If they did not select carefully who they would send for this task, some night watchers who did not want to sacrifice their lives might fall onto the Congress' hands.

"Vaharall and Vanrantine, you two will take care of this." Philibell nodded, "I'm gonna talk to the nobles and other cardinals to make them stay alert."

...

Holding the newspaper in his hand, Menshaque's body, which was assembled by different dead body parts, was falling apart and all these parts were turning into rotten flesh. However, the two clusters of soul fire in his eyes were still flickering strongly.

"Life Force Theory... not right? It is... wrong? Even Felipe has abandoned it..."

Although Menshaque felt that there were some problems with Felipe's research design, he had lost his control over this body. He

could not believe that his hundreds of years of study were built on a mistake.

But if all his life was built on a mistake, why did he still manage to "live" this long? Why did he still manage to turn himself into a lich? Why he could still learn so many different spells?

In the end, only a white skull remained floating in the air. Before Menshaque lost all the flesh and bones, he finally managed to stop this process. He did this by continuously telling himself that Felipe's study might not be valid, and even if what he said was true, if Felipe, a person who used to follow Life Force Theory in a very loyal way, could shift his understanding successfully, why he, Menshaque, could not do this?

Menshaque believed that there was still great hope in the school of Necromancy, as its foundation theories had been overturned for three times in history, but Necromancy still thrived after that, and it had even evolving all the time. Thus, Menshaque would rather have the theory to be overthrown by necromancers themselves. He believed that Life Force Theory was not a completely wrong one, and at least it had some connections to the ultimate truth.

After releasing a sigh, Menshaque turned the newspaper to its second page, and he saw the comments from Pesor, Tina-Timos, Rogerio and other influential arcanists from the Hand of Paleness on Felipe's paper:

"Pesor: This is a great and outstanding experiment. Felipe, a genius, has led us to step into a new, correct path from the wrong one with Life Force Theory. "

"Tina-Timos: Without doubt, Felipe is a real arcana genius, as he managed to drive away the black clouds shading our path over our heads for so many years. Think about it, necromancers, why aren't we making any progresses right now? Felipe has revealed the reason—it is because our foundation is problematic. If we can correct it in time, our future is going to be promising and bright!"

"Rogerio: This is an experience of great significance and meaning. It is groundbreaking, creative and definitely shocking. Felipe has

shown us the great spirit shared by necromancers, proving that we never give up exploring the world further to find the truth. We are okay with accepting the fall of the Life Force Theory, with admitting that we were wrong before, and thus we can have a better future!"

With all those important people's positive comments on Felipe's finding, many necromancers started to accept the fact.

This was the power of authority.

However, despite the fact that many necromancers' meditation got a bit more stable again as they had gradually accepted the fact, not everyone could discard the past so quickly. Many stubborn necromancers knew that they might not be able to move forward anymore in their whole lives because their meditation environment had been destroyed completely, so they hated Felipe very, very much.

...

In a magic tower in Heidler, an old man wearing an ancient-style robe was shouting angrily, holding a newspaper in his hand, "This is impossible!"

Then, with a big bang, the man's head just exploded, and the remains of his body fell down onto the floor. At the same time, inside of the tower's secret chamber, a life box made of countless precious gems cracked, and then the same man's voice came out from the box viciously, "Luckily I got to know from Traquair that Felipe's experiment was already very close to the last step, or I would not even have the chance to resurrect through the life box... Felipe, Rogerio, Professor, Lucien Evans... Let's wait and see..."

At the same time, in a manor in Sariva, Felipe and Rogerio were sitting opposite to each other and sipping their wine. Looking at the direction of Heidler, they sneered at those old, stubborn guys in the city. Rogerio and Felipe were certain that those people had learned their lesson.

...

"I wish we could have put forward some decisive evidence, so the loss of the Hand of Paleness could be even greater." Morris sighed a bit disappointedly.

"It's not bad. We still all belong to the congress, and we don't want to see the congress suffer too much of a loss overnight." Raventi did not really care, but rather felt happy because a wrong theory had been overthrown. Then, he turned to Lucien, "Evans, seriously, did you really know nothing about Life Force Theory?"

"Yes, nothing," answered Lucien honestly, then he took out the Holm ring from Natasha, "I had finished the experiment before I arrived here."

After being recognized by Felipe, Lucien had decided to tell the senior-level people from the Will of Elements the truth, in case Felipe would threaten him with it, and also, he was too tired of hiding around as well.

Now that he was already a member of the Will of Elements, he wanted to be more straightforward.

"Professor?" Gaston was a bit surprised. As he once tried to kill Felipe because of this, he immediately connected Lucien to Professor.

Morris, looking at the ring, sighed a bit emotionally, "It reminds me of Meredith... Evans, did you start learning arcana when you were in Aalto?"

"Yes, I learned about it from a witch, and I got some materials and knowledge from her." Lucien nodded, and through his observation, he noticed that Raventi, Morris and Gaston still all looked quite calm and pleased, which showed that they would not give Lucien a hard time for hiding his identity from them for so long. After all, in order to protect himself, what Lucien did was totally understandable.

Then Lucien continued seriously, "And I've actually completed another experiment."

Chapter 230: Secret Conversation

"Evans, what's the experiment about? The artificially synthesized living substance?" Raventi's white hair was neat. He looked like a gentleman with a pair of sharp eyes, and Lucien could feel the pressure as he was being stared at.

Morris and Gaston were looking at Lucien with relaxed smiles on their faces. They were trying to guess what the man was thinking and they wanted to know if he had come up with some unusual experiments again. Lucien had brought the storm to the areas that were strongly influenced by the church and Allyn, but it was still hard to believe that he just wanted to discuss arcana problems with the senior-rank arcanists.

Lucien knew that these senior-rank arcanists had different thoughts about him, so he tried to stay calm and started explaining deliberately, "Actually, the experiment is not complete, but I have a general idea about the basics and the first experiment was done with several simple magic circles. The result met my expectation, however, the experiment environment that was built with the magic circles had too many flaws, and I don't think the result is accurate."

After submitting the paper about carbamide, Lucien borrowed the magic laboratory and completed the experiment once while waiting for Felipe to reveal the decisive evidence.

Raventi interrupted when Lucien was trying to finish the introduction, "Evans, go straight to the point."

Morris and Gaston smiled at each other as they knew that Raventi was short-tempered, his papers usually put a strong emphasis on the key points, and he hated to listen to the matters that were irrelevant to the main point.

However, they did not expect that Lucien could still talk like he did not feel the pressure from Raventi, "Alright, Mr. Raventi, I'll go to the key points now. After learning about the knowledge of arcana in Aalto, the magic experiments caught my attention, and that was the

reason why I designed so many experiments, however, I'm not strong enough to prepare the high-rank magic circles, there are many experiments that I can't complete and verify. Things changed after I wandered into an abandoned magic laboratory left by an ancient sorcerer during an exploration, with the help of the magic circles and alchemy circles I found in the laboratory, I finally completed some of the experiments, including the experiment about the artificially synthesized carbamide."

"That's not the key point, Evans." Raventi was almost shouting. He was not concerned about the ruin of the ancient sorcerer unless it was a demiplane or a lost magic lock from the legendary sorcerers.

Lucien cleared his throat and continued, "Personally, I think that a human body can be created with nonliving substances after completing the experiment. A small part of the life force will be able to support their activities and the rest of the life force will be used on the soul. I don't know the details as I didn't do a lot of research in this field."

"Evans, tell me, what exactly is your experiment about?!" Raventi roared, and Morris and Gaston unconsciously backed off slightly.

Lucien did not expect Raventi's bluster to be so terrifying. The man was imposing. However, Lucien's goal had been accomplished. He did not want the three to pay too much attention to his past so he mixed the experience with the background of the experiment, only leaving a blurry impression in their mind.

"It's about an experiment that can overthrow the Life Force Theory even further. No matter if the necromancers accepted it or not, deep in their minds they already know by now that the theory was wrong. However, our biggest enemy is the Church and we can't let the necromancers recover using the chance. We need to strike them again before they can find a new theory to support them. They'll take a huge hit if we can make them lose their faith."

As a sorcerer, Lucien would not miss any chance to weaken the Church. He used some of the popular phrases from the Earth, however, they sounded a bit strange grammatically when they were translated into the universal language.

The war between the Congress of Magic and the Church would be long and complicated. Lucien had already chosen to walk the path of sorcery, so he would side with the Congress of Magic and try his best to fight against the church while increasing his power and exploring the secrets of the world.

Lucien understood that there was no way for him to win the war alone when the enemy was so strong.

Gaston stared at Lucien with his strange yellow eyes. "Again, what's the experiment? Did you and Felipe come to the agreement after being ambushed?"

One should never sneeze at an arcanist's wisdom, Gaston recalled the event and reasoned out how it happened after he confirmed that Lucien was the "Professor".

"Felipe and I are enemies and competitors, but we're not friends. Felipe wants to strike the extremists in the Hand of Paleness. For me, it's a revenge and it's also a chance to weaken the Church. However, if I successfully complete the experiment in a strictly controlled environment, the Church will do whatever they can to retaliate. I can submit my experiment to the Will of Elements but I want you to keep it a secret, also, it'll be great if you can complete the experiment and publish the result for me."

Lucien made the request with a serious expression on his face. Felipe had just attracted the haters' attention and there was no point for Lucien to share it with him.

Raventi's brow furrowed and he spoke in a loud voice, "I'd never take someone else's achievement as my own. If your experiment is guaranteed to overthrow the Life Force Theory further, I'll ask Hathaway to use the Grand Arcanist's privilege and make the author's information strictly confidential. We will inform the public that the paper is completed by the important members of the Will of Elements. You can claim the honor when you're strong enough and when you're prepared for the possible consequences but I think you'll already be an important member of the Will of Elements by then."

"I'll follow the plan just for Natasha," Morris smiled. He was happy that he did not need to craft a new Holm Crown Ring.

If Lucien's experiment could overthrow the Life Force Theory further, it would be very likely that he would share the Holm Crown Prize and the Immortal Throne Award with Felipe. Although the prize and reward were used to honor the sorcerers who made great contributions, the true purpose was to award their research results.

Morris felt much better since it seemed like Lucien would temporarily give up the glory.

"Wise decision, Evans. I suggest that you should spend some time improving your sorcery skills after completing the project and reflect the result of the research on your spells. You won't be able to complete a lot of exploration experiments without enough power in the world of sorcery."

Gaston slightly raised his head, staring at Raventi and Morris. "We and Hathaway should be the only four people that know about this. You shall not tell your students, wives, companion pets, or summoned creatures. If someone else finds out about this, it means one of us is a spy of the Church..."

Hathaway was studying the divine spells of nature in a secret location in Sariva town and nodded at Lucien. "Alright, Evans, tell me about your experiment."

Lucien stopped saying random things and started explaining the experiment design in a serious tone, "There are many tales describing the start of the world in the ancient magic empire. There were descriptions of the bizarre environment, such as the horrifying flood, the nonstop lightning, and the extremely high temperature. Also, the holy code of the church has similar epic records, however, the God of Truth resolved the environmental problem and created the human beings. My experiment aims to simulate such environment while adding different types of gases into it and I want to know what will happen. I saw that a source of life was created after introducing one group of gas into the environment..."

In the Congress of Magic, the necromancers had a deep understanding of the human body. In the living substances that they defined, the protein was considered as the footstone of living beings and the amino acids that constituted the proteins were considered as the sources of life. Lucien avoided the environmental design flaw of the Miller experiment by comparing the different gas groups since no one did any research about the initial environment of the world. He did not design the experiment to study the origin of life, he just wanted to overthrow the Life Force Theory and he did not care how the church would percept it.

The room remained silent for a while and Raventi finally spoke in a low voice, it almost sounded like he was roaring again, "What group of gas are you talking about?!"

No matter how much a society could develop, no matter if there was magic or not, no matter if there was God or not, the same questions would be bothering the intelligent beings for a long time before they had a clear idea of the world's origin: "Who am I? Where did we come from? If God created everything, where did God come from?"

...

Felipe published his decisive experiment and the brief reports were filled up with the slightly adjusted necromantic sorcery in the next several days. He was trying to prove that the Life Force Theory was wrong using the reverse method on his paper.

The necromancers that were willing to change started rebuilding their perceptual world and the extremists remained silent. They were not saying anything regarding the new discovery anymore.

Felipe had received the second article invitation letter from Arcana journal and he was praised by the important members of the Hand of Paleness, such as Pesor. Also, most of the necromancers thought that it was highly likely that Felipe would become the next legendary archmage.

Felipe was being protected by many archmages and senior-rank sorcerers in Sariva. He received the notification from the Affairs

Committee on Friday morning:

"Due to the significant contribution of Lucien Evans to the research project, we have confirmed that there are several alchemical substances that can help plants grow. We will be trying the alchemy substances with the plants in the next step and the divine spells of the druids will no longer be involved. The mission has been completed! Arcanists, please go to the Sariva mansion to claim the proof of completing the mission at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Also, we will be holding a conclusive discussion about the mission there."

After receiving the notification, the arcanists finally realized that their purpose was to develop a universal food growth increase plan here. They should not be discussing the Life Force Theory and they completely forgot about it in the last five or six days.

The arcanists started cleaning the magic laboratory and they wanted to have some rest in the morning before heading to the Sariva mansion.

...

In the Radiance Church of Holm.

"Nicolay, Walter, are you ready to sacrifice yourselves for God?" Varantine was questioning the two selected night watchers in a serious tone.

Chapter 231: Opening

Chapter 231: Opening

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Both Nicolay and Walter were both originally devout dervishes, and later they joined the Night Watch for some reasons. Right now, both of them were level five pastors. One was the leader of a night watcher team from Holm, and the other was from another night watcher team called Hammer, belonging to the Lance Inquisition. Both Nicolay and Walter were particularly fanatical and steadfast in their faith, and this was why Varantine called them in, as whoever took the mission was basically doomed to die.

“Lord Varantine, I’m all the time prepared to sacrifice my life to defend the glory of God. Death is not the end, and there’s an eternal wonderland behind the gate of Mountain Paradise.” Nicolay knelt down on one knee and crossed himself.

He was a tough, middle-aged man, dressed in a simple white robe. He had no wife, no children and zero possessions, as he had devoted everything to the God of Truth.

Although Walter, a man with brown hair, looked younger than Nicolay, his blue eyes showed that he had experienced a lot, “Lord Varantine, there’s nothing to be afraid of when facing death. What is truly dreadful is to lose faith in God, as it’s like being trapped in hell forever. If we die, Lord Varantine, we’re just going back into the arms of our all-mighty God.”

“Great. Your devotion to the Lord is noble, and I can feel the joy of the Lord. The gate of Mountain Paradise will always be open to you, and if you can come back alive from this mission, I will take you two to see the Pope in the Holy City to have his blessing, and you two will become senior-rank cardinals.”

Feeling touched by the two night watchers’ devotion, Varantine spoke highly of the two and promised them a lot, “Your major target in this mission is Felipe Carneiro, who now ranks ninety-first on the

Cleansing List. Besides him, your second target is Lucien Evans X, but always focus on killing Felipe as he is your top priority. As Lucien Evans X is right now under the protection of a few archmages and senior-rank sorcerers, don't sacrifice your life for him if you two get a chance to escape."

"All blasphemers must be cleared!" Nicolay and Walter replied loudly.

On the other side, Vaharall solemnly brought out a silver sword, which, despite its ordinary look, actually had great power in it, "This is a replica of the divine item, Sword of Truth, from Holm parish, and its power partially comes from the true sword. It can cut off any connections between a sorcerer and the person's magic items, including one's life box or soul container. As Felipe's a necromancer, we have to use it to really kill him."

The reason why the Blessing of the Hoffenberg family was also called Sword of Truth was that the Hoffenbergs enjoyed the same power.

Under no circumstance would the cardinals allow the two night watchers to take the legendary weapon, as losing the sword was the last thing the cardinals wanted to see. Therefore, three legendary saint cardinals spent several days on duplicating the sword with all kinds of magic circles, materials and their own power, and the power of the replica could be used once.

Letting Nicolay take over the sword, Vaharall said to them, "An old sorcerer whose name's Vern will put you two in the manor in Sariva where Felipe is. Be patient, and you two will certainly kill Felipe."

Vern was a level four arcanist, level five sorcerer. When he was younger, he actually accomplished a lot, and he also killed quite a few night watchers. However, as he got older, his progress in arcana slowed down and finally stopped. Vern got lost.

Vern was lost within so many fundamental questions that he asked himself — where did life come from? How magic power was born? How and where soul was originally born? As he could not find any answers in arcana, he gradually turned himself into a devout

follower of God.

Therefore, only Vern would accept the task of putting two night watchers in the place where one of the most important geniuses of the Congress of Magic lived. For other traitors, no matter what reasons that made them willing to work with the Church, they didn't dare to do this.

Nicolay and Walter stood up, crossing in front of their chests, "Only truth lives forever!"

"Only truth lives forever!" Varantine and Vaharall repeated and then watched the two night watchers leaving.

Vaharall sighed, "They are the Lord's good servants. They're so devout that they should not be sacrificed. And it took us a lot of work to have a sorcerer who's willing to work for us in Allyn. This task will bring great loss to us."

"Our loss will be compensated." Varantine closed his eyes, looking rather serious, "This is not sacrifice, but dedication."

...

"Good afternoon, Mr. Felipe."

"Mr. Felipe..."

Outside of the manor, when seeing Felipe, who was in his black long jacket as usual, walking towards them, several middle-rank necromancers all greeted him with sincere respect.

Felipe was the only one, except those grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers, who could hopefully win Immortal Throne again, and possibly Holm Crown prize as well. Although his previous research studying the cell memory was also something very insightful and helpful, it was not even close to the study that completely overthrew Life Force Theory, the cornerstone of the school of Necromancy.

However, of course there were also many, many necromancers who hated Felipe so much that they wanted to turn him into their husk.

In contrast, most arcanists from the Will of Elements were quite regretful as they wished that it was an elemental sorcerer who discovered the truth.

Facing a lot of attention, Felipe was very calm and confident. After slightly nodding to the necromancers, he headed toward the main hall of the manor, following Rogerio and other senior-rank arcanists.

Before entering the hall, Felipe took a glance at another direction, where Lucien was walking out of his house. The corner of Felipe's mouth curled a bit, and a gloomy smile appeared on his face, as if he was saying, "Good job, Mr. Professor."

Obviously, Felipe was pretty happy with the outcome of his plan. Although so far there was no necromancer who got his or her head exploded because of the new theory, many stubborn old guys in the school of Necromancy were definitely going to be trapped within their arcana study for a long time.

Before Lucien reacted, Felipe walked into the hall directly. Surprisingly, a half-raised stage was built in the center of the hall. On the stage, there was an alchemical operation platform and a whole set of lab equipment surrounded by many powerful magic circles.

A few glass tubes and pipes and two glass bottles together built up a closed system with inner circulation function, and the whole thing looked mysterious and beautiful.

"What's going on here?" Felipe was a bit surprised. He thought that they were here to discuss their project with the druids.

"What do they want to do...? Those people from the Will of Elements..." Feeling rather suspicious, Felipe sat down in the middle of the row behind Rogerio and Pesor.

"You've got any ideas what is going on here?" Rogerio asked Pesor, the member of Arcana Review Board.

Pesor nodded, "No idea. The meeting at the end of the project was

suggested by Gaston.”

He did not really care, as there was no way that the elemental sorcerers could put forward another overturning research finding that could hurt the foundation of the school of Necromancy after what happened to Life Force Theory, and it was almost impossible for one to overthrow the other fundamental theories in the school of Necromancy since they were just too abstract to be comprehended by human beings.

At this time, Lucien, together with Raventi, Gaston, LockLynn and other sorcerers from the Will of Elements, also entered the hall and sat down on the other side.

“Morris? Why is he here?” Tina-Timos lifted her eyebrow.

Morris was not in this research project. She wondered why Morris showed up today.

“He must be interested in the discussion over Life Force Theory as well, just like me.” Rogerio did not see anything special with Morris’s appearance.

At two in the afternoon, all the arcanists involved in the project were present. Meanwhile, as the representatives of druids, Irístine and Arcelion also arrived. Because Malfurion had given up the effort of working with the grand arcanists to study nature divine power, the druids were now suffering way less pressure from the forests.

Upstairs, Malfurion and several grand arcanists were also staring at the stage from a demiplane space.

“Hathaway, why do you want us to be here?” asked Thanatos, who was sitting in a fancy armchair. Although the school of Necromancy still suffered quite a bit loss, he was relieved that most necromancers had so far withstood the difficulty brought by Life Force Theory being overturned.

“To watch an experiment, simple but powerful enough to shake the foundation of the Church,” responded Hathaway without turning

her head. Her silvery-gray eyes were staring at the stage, “Sometimes we are trapped because we think in a too sophisticated way, but the truth might not be like this, actually. And maybe this is the same with nature divine power.”

Hearing Hathaway’s words, the president of the Congress, Douglas, who suspended his experiment to come here, and the vice president, Brook, all looked very serious.

Except for the Witch of Iceland and the Hand of Annihilation, who could not make it, the rest of the grand arcanists were all there.

...

Raventi, in his gray robe, came onto the stage and stood behind the whole set of equipment. Then, he said loudly, “The great discussion over the validity of Life Force Theory has inspired us, senior-rank elemental sorcerers from the Will of Elements. Combining the inspiration with legends, they’ve designed a wonderful experiment. Ladies and gentlemen, as the experiment is probably going to take a long time, let’s discuss the project findings while waiting for the experiment outcome.”

Seeing Raventi was being very serious, many arcanists started to feel very curious.

What was this experiment?

Chapter 232: Why

Chapter 232: Why

Translator: _Leo_ Editor: Vermillion

Raventi stood behind the lab equipment, being stared at by many arcanists. He wasted no time and went straight to the point, “In the tales told by the intelligent beings like the elves, the dragons, and the human beings, the start of the world is similar: lightnings, thunders, volcano eruptions, and floods. We all hate the Church but there are similar descriptions in their Holy Bible. Some arcanists from the Will of Elements were enlightened by the argument about the possibility of artificially synthesized living substances, and they wondered if we could simulate such environment. Why don’t we try and see if anything will happen within that environment?”

Although Raventi was speaking slowly in a deep tone, the people in the room all knew that he was excited.

Felipe nodded slightly and it seemed he was thinking about something. “High-temperature and lightning... Will methane and carbamide appear naturally under such environment? Applying the artificial synthetization method that was validated under strict experimental environment to the natural environment? It’ll definitely overthrow the Life Force Theory further and the Church will be hit harder. However, who came up with this? Was it Professor or just the important members of Will of Elements? Also, according to what Mr. Raventi just said, it seems the experiment already succeeded.”

While he thought about it, he turned to Lucien. Felipe noticed that Lucien was listening to the speech with a serious expression on his face, so it seemed the man was not familiar with the content of the experiment. “It’s probably someone else. If Lucien had such a decisive result, he’d submit it before I knew it.”

Other arcanists all had similar thoughts as it was their main point through the discussion. Also, Raventi actually mentioned where the

experiment came from, so they started discussing and whispering.

“Why will there be life ingredients?”

“Well, I think it’s the methane. It can be found wherever there is a volcano eruption. However, it’s said that the methane is produced by the rotten plants underground and they appeared due to the volcano activity.”

“So, it’s not about the plants or other living beings anymore, it’s now produced by the natural and original environment?”

The arcanists could not stop discussing. Walter and Nicolay were waiting for orders just like other servants outside the door. They tried their best to calm down so the senior-rank arcanists would not notice their anger.

“Those evil sorcerers that defile God want to walk even further in the God’s field! It’s all Felipe’s fault! This blasphemer! We must purify him!”

The two hid their divine aura and power using some special divine items, they looked just like normal human beings. They sneaked into the mansion half a day earlier with the help of the old sorcerer Vern and they were waiting in the chilling wind of the Spring by the door with the other servants.

They could only take the hot water and towels into the room when the apprentices ordered them to.

They heard the experiment introduction from Raventi before they could find the chance. They almost lost control and sacrificed themselves for God.

“Quiet, please, everyone!” Raventi’s loud voice stopped the arcanists from whispering.

Raventi glanced around and continued, “Based on the analysis done with the gas around the volcano eruption and the analysis of elements in the life ingredients, we’ll send the pure water, hydrogen, methane, and ammonia into the experiment device.”

“The methane can be artificially synthesized by burning the carbon and combining the obtained gas with hydrogen, also, a catalyzer will be needed... The ratio of the gases was selected by comparing the results from multiple controlled experiments.”

Tina-Timos, Felipe, and the other arcanists watched Raventi starting the alchemy circle, preparing to artificially synthesize the ammonia and methane, but they had no idea what substance Raventi was trying to create.

The experiment on artificially synthesized methane alone could be used as an evidence to overthrow the Life Force Theory, but Raventi's acted like he was just preparing some normal substance in a magic lab.

The place was silent and the arcanists were confused. Raventi calmly synthesized the gas step by step.

“Methane can now be prepared with nonliving substances, it's no longer the production of rotten bodies and gems...” Many necromancers sighed in their minds after seeing Raventi calmly combine the prepared gas with the hydrogen using a certain ratio and send them into the glass bottle on the top left corner of the experiment device. It had been only one week and their old ideas were simply overthrown.

Raventi used his own magic circle to make sure that there was no other gas in the container before sending the product in, he also asked Pesor and Felipe to double check that the procedure was correct, so the result of the experiment was trustworthy.

Raventi's serious attitude made the arcanists even more curious about the result. He then injected the pure water he obtained from burning the hydrogen with oxygen to the glass bottle on the bottom left corner.

“Alright, the experimental environment and the materials are prepared, you can find everything in the natural environment. Let's start the formal experiment now.”

“This is a simulation of lightning.” Raventi activated the magic

circle and electric pulses appeared in the bottle on the top left corner. "This is a simulation of the high temperature from the volcano eruption and the flood," Raventi explained as he activated the alchemy circle around the glass bottle in the bottom right corner.

He then opened the tap on the pipe and connected the whole experiment device. The pure water in the glass bottle on the bottom right corner evaporated and entered the glass bottle in the top left corner, contacting the mixed gases. Also, after the product was affected by the constant lightning for a while, the naturally condensed water returned to the glass bottle that was full of pure water by going through the pipe and the other experiment equipment on the bottom.

Raventi stepped away from the platform and activated the defensive magic circle around after he saw that the loop was stabilized. "This will take about one week and I'll activate the magic circle now. Also, arcanists, please set up your unique magic imprints around the circle so no one can interrupt the experiment during this period.

"One week? What are you going to do with it?" The arcanists simply did not understand the purpose of the experiment.

"Why does it take so long? Don't tell me a child will be born at the end." Timothy was joking, he looked urbane with the gold-wired glasses.

Necromancers knew that it was a joke and they were not concerned. Refining the human body parts was extremely complicated, the soul was a problem, and it would be hard for the complicated life ingredients to be created. The experiment looked simple and they could not believe that the product would be high quality.

Raventi slightly raised his head, and there was a serious expression on his face. "Yes, it'll take about one week and we can use the time to discuss if the alchemical ingredients can help plants grow. There are enough rooms for you in the four upper levels of this main building. Also, you can use the other buildings behind this one if you need to. Furthermore, please make sure that this experiment is running individually and objectively."

Pesor, Rogerio, and several other confused necromancers messaged the Lord of the Undead, then agreed to Raventi's request. They also wanted to know what the primitive environment simulation experiment could prove.

Arcelion and Iristine were sitting beside Lucien. They were interested in nature and the primitive environment, however, they barely knew anything about the magic experiment, and they had no idea what the primitive environment simulation experiment was about. Their curiosity forced them to put down the hatred and they looked at Lucien. "Mr. Evans, we know that the senior-rank arcanists of Will of Elements designed the experiment, but what are they trying to prove?"

"According to Mr. Raventi's words, the experiment is trying to prove that simple life ingredients will appear in the natural environment and the Life Force Theory will be overthrown further."

Out of habit, Iristine was rubbing her pink lips with the right index finger as she thought. The druid agreed that there was a huge difference between a living organism and a nonliving one, however, the arguments from the sorcerers had slowly changed her opinion in the last several days. "Under the natural environment, huh? It sounds good."

"The primitive nature? Without the help of God?" Arcelion was a bit confused. He was thinking in a druid's way.

Nicolay and Walter were waiting outside the door nervously, and they had two plans in mind. The first plan was to strike Felipe in surprise when they were allowed to enter the room and they were able to walk by him. If the old sorcerer Vern could not help them get the chance, they would have to use the second plan, which was waiting for the sorcerers to finish the discussion and ambush Felipe when he left the room.

They did not expect the conference to last for a whole week. The longer they stayed there, the easier they would be detected by the others.

They still had hope, as if Felipe was provided with a room in

another building, he would still have to leave the hall and they would have the chance to attack him after that.

Vern was sitting in the front of the hall. He rubbed his white beard with a serious expression on his face. If the chance did not come by itself, he would have to create one, but it seemed there was nothing he could for the day.

Raventi waited for the arcanists to finish the discussion and said, "Our research cooperation with the druids went well this time. The three alchemical ingredients submitted by Lucien Evans were all validated. Those ingredients can help the plants grow and it's an important discovery for all the countries that are controlled by human beings."

"The experiment has entered an observation period without the effect from the druids' divine spells and it'll take four to five months for it to be completed, so we'll start discussing the other possible alchemical ingredients that might help the plants grow first. Also, we need to find the simplified reactions to those ingredients so we can mass produce them. Now, let's ask Evans to share how he got the results with us."

Everyone was clapping, most of the arcanists knew that if Lucien did not artificially synthesize the carbamide, Felipe would never try to overthrow the Life Force Theory. Although the decisive result was lacking, it was still a respectable move.

Some of the necromances glared at Lucien with hatred in their eyes as the man walked to the platform. They were having trouble meditating due to the interruption of their meditation worlds, but none of them had the intention to kill Lucien. It was Felipe who overthrew the Life Force Theory, so they would go after him first before going after anyone else.

Lucien cleared his throat and started explaining the procedure of the experiment in a gentle tone. Most of the controlled experiments were validated by elves like Iristine and sorcerers like Theodore. There was no problem with the experiment design, and although some of the data was changed by them, Lucien changed it back after reasoning it out.

Everyone clapped again as Lucien finished the speech and they thought he would return to his seat. However, Lucien used a hand gesture to ask the arcanists to quiet down.

Lucien's expression turned serious as the arcanists stared at him, looking confused.

"I think you have already noticed one thing through the experiments you did and the paper I submitted. The elements that can help the plants grow are all inside the alchemical ingredients that are soluble in water, that's how they absorbed by the plants."

"That's obvious, isn't it? Plants need water and sunlight to grow, so only the substances that are soluble in water can be absorbed. I think most of the arcanists will notice this point after failing the experiments several times. Mr. Evans, you've just discovered it slightly ahead of us," an arcanist spoke in a disappointed tone. He was good at both soul and element magic, so he was impacted by the matter of the Life Force Theory.

A mysterious smile appeared on Lucien's handsome face. "I have some questions for you, if it's that obvious. Why can the substances only be absorbed when they're dissolved in the water? What can't the particles that are floating in the water have the same effect? Plants do need water and sunlight, but there is no evidence proving that water is just a transportation tool. Why is an alchemical substance so different before and after being dissolved in water? For the last point, I think the arcanists here all noticed similar situations in some other experiments, but why?"

The questions made the arcanists' heads dizzy, they recalled the experiments they did, and they realized that what Lucien just mentioned was actually there. For example, the conductivity of salt changed dramatically after it was dissolved in the water. However, such situations were so simple that people thought they were just common sense.

Lucien stepped down the platform after asking all those questions. He left the rest of the time for the arcanists to discuss.

"Evans, again? I remember you asked a series of questions after the

periodic table was validated, just like president Douglas.” A sentimental smile appeared on Larry’s round face. “You’re good at finding the important problems and it’s surprising, there are so many things I can learn from you.”

Timothy pushed his gold-wired glasses and started joking before Lucien could say anything, “Evans, I think I have several decent nicknames that fit you well, such as, ‘Evans the Whybringer’ or just ‘Question Asker’, what do you think?”

“I’m not impressed. Also, my name is in the first one, so it’s not a good nickname.” Lucien shook his head and walked past them, heading to the seat in the center.

Timothy chuckled, “Evans, what is a good nickname for you then?”

“One Hundred Thousand Whys...” Lucien sat down with a blank expression on his face.

...

In the space of the demiplane, the Lord of Storm smiled.

“So many questions,” he turned around and said, glaring at the president of the Congress of Magic, Douglas.

Douglas noticed that the Lord of Storm was looking at him and thus he shifted his sight away from the experiment device. Douglas was trying to simulate the experiment in his meditation space and find the possible results, but he did not pay too much attention to the things that happened after, and he looked at Lord of Storm in confusion.

“One Hundred Thousand Whys,” Lord of Storm spoke in a low voice.

Douglas had no idea what the Lord of Storm was talking about. “What?”

...

The arcanists had another thing to discuss thanks to Lucien’s

questions. There were people giving speeches at the platform from time to time, and they also completed several experiments using the other alchemy platforms. Some were giving hypothesis but they were proved wrong quickly. Time flew.

Lucien and Felipe were assigned rooms on the upper levels of the main building. Their servants were selected from the apprentices, so Nicolay and Walter had no way to sneak in. Vern almost tried to finish the job by himself but he was assigned to other buildings.

Nicolay and Walter had several chances to enter the hall but Felipe and Lucien were carefully sitting in the center of the hall, among many other arcanists. The water they drank was prepared by themselves so it was impossible to kill them by poison or surprise attack, and thus Nicolay and Walter were very disappointed about the situation. However, they were not detected by any senior-rank arcanists and they thought the divine items were extremely effective.

The week was ending but they had no chance to touch Lucien or Felipe. The old sorcerer Vern was getting nervous. The elemental sorcerer would not be able to assist Nicolay and Walter after Felipe returned to Heidler City.

Chapter 233: The True Devil

Chapter 233: The True Devil

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

On the following Friday, after the arcanists finished their breakfast, they entered the hall in groups. According to Raventi's words, they would be able to see the result of the experiment today or at most tomorrow, which made them feel very curious.

During the past seven days, the arcanists did observe the reaction equipment through the magic imprints that they left. However, there was nothing specially new going on there. There was nothing new with the pure water evaporating, with the lightning striking the vapor and mixed gas, or with the vapor then condensed into liquid again.

Everything was just so simple and plain.

"What are we going to see? Honestly speaking, I'm very curious." a necromancer from the Hand of Paleness who just re-established his meditation environment was saying in a quite excited way.

Another female necromancer, who had blond eyebrows, compressed her lips a bit, "Jason, in fact, I'm not looking forward to anything, honestly. I don't see anything that's special in this experiment, and there's no way that a simple experiment like this can create an environment where life can be born. The truth is that, at that time, there were way more factors involved than we can even imagine!"

"Lily, I know... I've been staring at the lightnings for so long that I feel that they are right in front of my eyes right now," answered Jason humorously. His words were true, as many arcanists who studied discharging phenomenon also said the same thing.

Lily rubbed her eyes a bit as well, "I know, but that still doesn't mean anything special."

When they were chatting, someone that both of them were familiar

with walked toward them. He had grizzled hair, deep wrinkles, and gentle, blue eyes.

“Morning, Jason. Morning, Lily,” greeted the old sorcerer.

“Morning, Vern.” Both Lily and Jason nodded and smiled.

“Dear Ms. Lily, may I have a request?” said Vern sincerely, “Would you mind changing your seat with me, as I want to talk to Jason about some of my thoughts over Life Force Theory.”

“Why? It’s something that has been overthrown already, isn’t it?” Lily was confused, and she did not want to sit among a bunch of elemental sorcerers.

“Actually, I do not think so,” said Vern seriously. “Can you deny the existence of life force and soul?”

“Of course not, those two things are fundamental in the school of Necromancy. Denying the existence of life force and soul is denying our own existence and values,” Jason answered decisively. “It is only Life Force Theory that is overturned, and this does not have anything to do with our study of soul and life. We are re-directed in the past wrong practice of how we create human bodies, but for other theories in the school of Necromancy, especially those about soul, they are still fine and solid.”

In their past belief, necromancers were convinced that humans, elves and dragons were superior to other elemental and alchemical creatures because the latter did not have life force that was stored in flesh. Therefore, they believed that only life ingredients could be used to create human bodies, until this theory was overturned by Lucien and Felipe.

Vern shook his head, “What have been synthesized so far are still far from being called ‘the most fundamental ingredients of life’, so I won’t say that Life Force Theory is completely done for. You two must see the great beauty hiding within the human body, and how fascinating human bodies are structured. We are still facing lots of secrets of the human body that have yet to be solved, and if Life Force Theory is totally wrong, can I draw the conclusion that one

can just live forever even without a life box, or separating one's soul, or looking for the next new body?"

"Oh... Arcana's above. I can tell that you're really into Life Force Theory, Vern. I'm not even close to you." Lily rubbed her forehead, as her mind was starting to get messy, "I need some time alone. I believe in the secrets of human body, but I also believe in Felipe's experiment outcome. Feel free to talk to Jason, Vern."

Arcana's above was an expression that sorcerers often used to show the impressiveness of something or to be polite.

Then she walked to the elemental sorcerers and sat down among them. After thinking to herself for quite a while, Lily drew her own conclusion: it was certain that Life Force Theory was wrong, but this did not mean that all the secrets of the human body had been solved, and much more needed to be done to further explore the field. Right now, Lily just wanted to keep her mind open, which she believed that was the best attitude.

Vern sat down on Lily's seat. When he was talking with Jason, his eyes focused on Felipe, who was sitting there three rows away to the left front of him.

Today or tomorrow would be his last chance. In order to defend the Lord's glory, Vern was ready to sacrifice himself. However, among all the necromancers he knew, only Lily's seat was the closest to Felipe's, but this seat was still not good enough for Nicolay to launch an attack on Felipe and kill him with one shot. Nicolay needed to, when the time was right, bear the risk of taking five to six steps further through the narrow gaps between the seats to kill Felipe.

"May the gate of Mountain Paradise open for me." Vern crossed in front of his chest in his mind.

...

Soon, all the attendee arcanists had shown up, and today, it was Larry who took the stage.

Larry's round face was filled with excitement, and he said to everyone in the hall with a higher pitch than usual, "We've discovered the wonderful relation between the concentration and conductivity of solution from Lucien's questions, thus I was thinking: what if we study something else rather than solution? What if we study pure water? I wonder how pure water's conductivity is like..."

Because it was a widespread fact that water was conductive, most arcanists ignored this direction. Although they could make pure water out of combining oxygen and hydrogen together, they never thought of doing this. Hearing Larry's words, they felt quite hesitant.

Larry began to make pure water to test its conductivity. When electric sparks kept appearing in the reactor, the magic circle at the bottom of the pure water for testing current actually detected nothing. Every sorcerer's face looked quite confused but also surprised, as what they thought as some kind of common sense was, again, overturned.

When the water started bubbling, Larry finished his experiment, "As everyone saw, before pure water is resolved into hydrogen and oxygen, it is not conductive, thus we can make an assumption that it is some kind of alchemical substance dissolved in water that turns water to be conductive. I'm not sure what it is yet, but we can first take a look at the new fourth-circle magic that I've created based on this experiment—Larry's Water Shield, which can effectively defend against the Lightning spell."

Then, Larry started to share the general structure of the spell and how he built its model. Although he was hiding the core part of it, most arcanists were still listening to it very carefully, hoping that they could build something like this on their own.

However, Vern was having a difficult time concentrating. He kept looking at those waiters who were serving the arcanists with black tea, water and warm face towels. When he saw that there were around five or six waiters who were serving around in the hall in different places, Vern raised his hand and beckoned to a nearby apprentice.

“Yes, sir? What can I do for you?” The apprentice hurriedly came over to Vern and asked in a very respectable manner, as he knew that every single one of the arcanists present was at least of middle rank!

Vern nodded in a nice way, “Good young fella, I need some black tea with sliced lemon to stay focused.”

Jason was not paying any attention to Vern, not only because what Vern was doing was simply ordinary, but also because, as a necromancer, he was very interested in spells that could block electromagnetic wave spells like Lightning.

“Sure.” The apprentice respectfully took a few steps back and then walked toward a door.

At this time, Nicolay ventured to take two steps forward to stand in the front.

“A cup of black tea with sliced lemon for Mr. Vern over there.” The apprentice just directly talked to Nicolay, as he did not care about the order of the waiters. And the other waiter who was now standing behind Nicolay was a bit confused, having no idea why this guy wanted to please that old sorcerer.

Nicolay went to the small room in the corner of the hall and got a cup of black tea. Nervous as he was, he told himself, “God is watching me, and this is my most glorious moment. The gate of Mountain Paradise will be open for me!”

Nicolay calmed down with his belief, and then he walked toward the row of seats where Vern was. When he came in front of Vern, Nicolay handed the cup to Vern respectfully.

“Your lemon black tea,” said Nicolay politely, as if he was totally strange to Vern.

On the other side, another middle-rank arcanist who was sitting four rows behind Lucien also requested a cup of water.

Walter knew that this was not a very good distance to kill Lucien. However, he was decisive and certain that, when his partner

Nicolay launched his attack toward Felipe, it would also be his best chance to kill Lucien Evans.

Putting down the cup, Nicolay slowly turned around. Staring at Felipe from behind, Nicolay felt that the distance between Felipe and him was the path he needed to take to get to Mountain Paradise.

In Nicolay's eyes, the distance was long, but what was at the end of the path made him yearn for it so much.

Although what Nicolay had was only a replica of the Sword of Truth, it was still a level nine divine item, thus using the replica would still cost him a lot of power and strength, despite the fact that the full power of the replica sword could not be fully activated because of Nicolay's level. At the same time, as this was a sword, Nicolay could not use it from some distance away, instead, he needed to get Felipe with the sword in a very short distance to achieve the most ideal effect.

Therefore, Nicolay needed to have someone to distract Felipe at that moment when he launched his attack.

When Nicolay was moving to the isle, he was still calculating the distance. Before he arrived at the best spot for assassination, if Vern could not offer him further support by distracting Felipe, he had to take all the risk in a sink-or-swim way to kill Felipe, even if it meant that he needed to run through the narrow seat gaps to get closer to Felipe.

Nicolay was ready to sacrifice himself.

Meanwhile, Walter, while putting down the cup of water for the arcanist, was also calculating his distance from Lucien Evans, but he would not take any chances before Felipe was attacked.

Vern took a deep breath, and just when he was about to draw people's attention to himself, an arcanist in the front shouted in sharp voice, "The reactor! Something's changing in the reactor!"

All the arcanists looked at the reactor, including Larry.

In the glass bottle at the bottom on the right, inside the tube for condensation, something light red appeared in the pure water!

What was it?!

The arcanists almost felt that they didn't dare to ask, but their hearts were filled with the question. Several of the arcanists in the front even stood up to see clearer. Nicolay's vision was blocked, but he was encouraged – from the chaos, he could have enough time to kill Felipe. However, he was also a bit distracted subconsciously, wondering what the light red stuff was.

Raventi, who was sitting in the front, directly flew onto the stage, deactivated all the magic circles and took out the light red substance. He hurriedly activated the magic circle, Identification, to see what it was.

At the same time, more arcanists also used their own Identification magic circles to check the substance, including Felipe.

However, what they had all ignored was that Identification could only check things that were not unknown, as the spell was continuously improved by the congress.

Seeing that many arcanists were busy with casting the spell, Nicolay knew that this was his best chance to kill Felipe. Under his long robe, he grabbed the replica of the sword tightly, and then he took a solid step forward. He walked faster and faster. He did not care anymore if any arcanists had noticed him. In his eyes, there was only Felipe.

Within a few second, Nicolay had shortened his distance between him and Felipe quite a bit.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Walter also started to take action.

Nicolay was one step away from Felipe now!

He fiercely ripped off the amulet that he was wearing for hiding his divine power with one hand, and took out the sword with the other hand.

When he was about to hack the sword at Felipe, someone shouted in a high pitch, “Aspartic acid... There’s Aspartic acid in there! Something originally found in asparagus! Oh... Arcana’s above... What I’ve found here...”

“And some other life ingredients! Although two of them have never been successfully refined yet, they are parts of the foundation of life!” On the other side, another level five arcanist was shocked, as if he just saw the real God.

“And lipid and carbohydrate...” Pesor and Tina-Timos all stood up. Although they were not some kind of followers, they still wanted to say that this could only have been done by God.

It was a miracle that an environment that was made up of several of the simplest factors, including lightning, gases, pure water and a mini replica model of a volcano, could just generate life ingredients!

Felipe was also astounded. In his eyes, they were now in the realm of God. He wondered who designed this model—was it Professor?!

Every single one of the arcanists knew what this experiment meant—it had revealed the fact that, even though it could not completely deny that the God of Truth could create life, at least God was not the only entity that could create life. In other words, Creationism was facing a great threat.

When the arcanists were exclaiming in front of the experiment finding, Nicolay, who was only one step away from Felipe, was still shocked.

He could not remove his eyes away from the reactor, which was surrounded by many different identification magic circles. The light of the tree symbol above the reactor representing all kinds of life ingredients was so pure and bright that Nicolay, when staring at it, had forgotten his purpose for being here.

He could not believe what was in front of his eyes. He could not believe that there was aspartic acid in the reactor.

Lots of thoughts flashed through Nicolay’s mind. He recalled how

the experiment was built up: high temperature and methane gas brought by volcanic eruption, magic lightning used to recreate natural thunder and lightning, pure water to simulate prehistoric ocean, the main gases including hydrogen... In the whole experiment, there was no intervention from God, but life ingredients were still created.

Nicolay was more than regretful that he had learned something about arcana before. He wished that he had never known what life ingredients were and how important they were.

Nicolay's head was buzzing with thoughts:

"Can natural environment also create life? So it isn't something that is only controlled by God?

"But... but life should only be governed by the almighty God...

"Creating life... is within the realm of God...

"Does God even exist? Does Mountain Paradise exist? After I die, where will I go?

"They are devils, true devils! They've made me doubt God!"

In a flash, Nicolay's thoughts shook the foundation of his belief, and thus his divine power started to go out of control. And as a quick reaction, Nicolay started to pray.

However, as soon as he started praying, his power directly exploded. From the inside out, the divine power devoured him with dazzling, beautiful light.

At the same time, Walter was overwhelmed by the same holy light.

Both Nicolay and Walter exploded with their power and turned into two beautiful beams of light, just like dreamlike firework.

Seeing the light beams, the arcanists were astonished but also confused.

Before the arcanists could figure out what was going on there,

Vern's head exploded. White brain tissue and fresh blood scattered everywhere.

The rest of the arcanists hurriedly tried to stabilize their own mediation environments. They were too shocked to comprehend the whole situation, and they only shared one common thought:

“This was crazy!”

...

“So, the two experiment subjects have proved the great impact that the experiment finding can bring to the Church,” said Hathaway emotionlessly. Her silvery-gray eyes were cold.

The grand arcanists knew the Church's plan from the very beginning, since Vern's suggestion of putting Nicolay and Walter into the meeting was actually made up by Thanatos and was put in Vern's mind.

Vaharall and Varantine never thought that the grand arcanists would show up for this meeting.

Chapter 234: Action

Chapter 234: Action

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the demiplane, seven fine silver chairs floating in the darkness formed a semicircle, and the five grand arcanists sitting on the chairs looked like Gods overlooking the mortals from high above.

A senior elf was right now sitting on one of the two chairs that originally belonged to the other two grand arcanists who did not attend the meeting today. Right now, he was staring at the reactor down there as if he had forgotten everything around him. The senior elf was staring at every single change happening in the reactor—lightning, vaporization, condensation... There was light in his pupil.

After a while of silence, Brook, the Emperor of Control, with his fingers crossing as usual, said to the rest of them in a voice that somehow mixed with calmness and excitement, “The experiment revealed a brand new possibility of how life was originally born and how life can be born, and this has provided us with a new direction in our research. Before this experiment, we arcanists tended to treat this topic in a too complicated way.”

“Are you trying to say that we can synthesize a baby in a lab merely using carbon and some gases?” Fernando, Lord of Storm, disputed directly, “I admit the great importance of this experiment, but I also believe that the truth is way more complicated than this, maybe even more complicated than we thought? We have no clear idea how life ingredients managed to evolve into life foundations, how other life ingredients were born, how body and soul are connected...”

Brook was already used to Fernando’s bad temper, so he pressed his hands downwards a bit to calm Lord of Storm down, “I did not make it clear enough. What I was trying to say was that the original environment pictured by us before, for giving birth to life

ingredients, was too complicated. In arcana study, sometimes being simple and direct is also very important.”

“Then, have you asked yourself, what is hydrogen? Why do volcanos erupt? Why are there oceans and the reason behind the tides? Why is there lightning and thunder? Before those things were born, how did the world look like? Why does the world look like this now?” Douglas, the president of the congress, looked around at the rest of the grand arcanists, “The experiment is surely simple, and the process of synthesizing life ingredients is surely not complicated, but what hides behind the experiment is not simple. We shall never take them for granted, and we shall always ask why.”

“One hundred thousand whys...” Lord of Storm murmured.

Hathaway nodded slightly, “The ocean of arcana is boundless, and we’re fishermen who have just set our sails. We are still far from understanding the essence of the world, and we must hold the world in awe.”

“That’s why arcana’s so charming.” Brook smiled, pushing his glasses a bit upward.

Thanatos also grinned, “Although we have just set our sails, the Church must be more than shocked. What we are watching now, in the Church’s eyes, is something that is totally unacceptable and beyond offensive, in the forbidden zone of God and divine power. I’m looking forward to seeing how the pope and those cardinals will react when they hear about the experiment. I bet that they’d still find some excuses with something related to soul. But one day, when we thoroughly understand soul and divine power, it will be the end of them. What a pity that the experiment needs to take so long to reveal the findings, or we could directly show it in front of the Church... Think about it... How destructive that would be to those pastors.”

Every grand arcanist present understood that not every cardinal or pastor from the Church would be destroyed by their own divine power when seeing the experiment. The reason that Walter and Nicolay were devoured by holy power right on the spot was that

they had spent seven days staying here, witnessing the very beginning of the experiment when the reactor was being built, and after a long time of wondering and feeling insecure waiting for the final answer, the research finding was too shocking for them to keep adhering to their belief.

Without this gradual, building-up process, most of the pastor and cardinals would definitely first doubt the validity of the experiment, and they might even say that the experiment was fake. Then, they would find any possible reasons or pieces of evidence to fight back and to comfort themselves, so they could continuously stick to their belief.

However, of course, those grand arcanists would not waste this great chance to give the Church a hard time. Although the experiment, of course, could not completely wipe out the Church, many pastors would start to doubt their belief to some extent, and their chance of breaking through their levels would be slim to none.

“We’ve turned our blind eye to some people for quite a while, and now it’s time to let them show their value,” said Hathaway in a cold and ambiguous way.

Lord of Storm agreed, “The Church shall still suffer from this finding. I really wonder how many pastors and cardinals will be devoured by the light.”

The grand arcanists soon reached an agreement, and Douglas started to give orders to the Affairs Committee.

At the same time, Hathaway turned around and looked at Thanatos, “Do not use *Invade Brain* to investigate who designed the experiment from the *Will of Elements*. I don’t want them to be chased around by the Church, and thus not be able to go to other dimensions.”

Although *Invade Brain* and *Weaving Memory* usually did not work well with senior-rank sorcerers, Thanatos, as a master of these two spells, once before managed to invade a level eight cardinal’s brain. He read most of the cardinal’s memory, and even changed part of it, leading the cardinal to hate the pope, in order to make the cardinal

kill the pope. Unfortunately, the part of changing the cardinal's memory also changed his cognition of this world, and the cardinal's belief suddenly got destroyed, and, in the end, he was devoured by the holy light, bringing failure to Thanatos' plans.

However, the congress gained a lot from Thanatos invading the brain of the cardinal, and most of their first-hand materials of divine power came from this. This was why Thanatos ranked eleventh place on the Church's Cleansing List, even higher than Hathaway and Lord of Storm.

"All of your senior-rank arcanists from the Will of Elements are on the list already. Why would this matter?" Thanatos was a bit confused.

Hathaway did not answer him.

Thanatos put on a slightly embarrassed smile, as he did not want to speak against Hathaway in front of other grand arcanists, and then he nodded, "The mage who designed this experiment has combined belief and one's own cognition world together... quite interesting."

At this time, Malfurion finally sobered up from his tons of thoughts and said loudly, "Mind of Nature! This is the mind of nature!"

...

Down below the demiplane, staring at the holy light and the blood, all of the arcanists were shocked. They all of a sudden felt that the lightnings in the reactor looked fabulous but cruel.

The future of arcana was further lit up by the experiment, but behind the experiment, there was blood and darkness.

After quite a while, Timothy asked loudly and confusedly, "Is this holy light?"

"Are those people... from the Church?" Larry heard of something like this before, but he had never witnessed people being devoured by the light.

The crowd started to feel nervous.

“Be quiet!” Raventi looked quite pissed off, and he spoke to the crowded loudly, “Do not panic! Right now, we have to figure out why the Church’s people were here!”

Hearing Raventi’s shouting, the rest of the arcanists all started to look around alertedly.

Noticing that the person from the Church was only one step away from him, Felipe answered gloomily, “They came here to kill me. And the sorcerer whose head exploded... should be the traitor.”

After the holy light disappeared gradually, there was nothing of Nicolay or Walter left, but a silvery-gray blade lying on the floor.

“This is the replica of the Sword of Truth!”

“This thing is of research value!”

The sword from Holm parish was so famous that most arcanists recognized it immediately.

Lucien knew that the Church’s second target was him, but in the Church’s eyes, he was not as important as Felipe at all. Lucien also wondered whether the Church would rank him the top fifty on the list if they knew that this experiment, the Miller-Urey experiment, was put forward by him.

Lucien felt lucky that, when he submitted this experiment to the Will of Elements, he requested to be behind the scenes.

Rogério from the Affairs Committee came up to the stage and started to direct sorcerers to take different actions.

Those who did not get any tasks stood on the other side and were talking to each other, “It’s unbelievable that a simple experiment design like this can generate life ingredients...”

“And what’s also unbelievable is that two pastors turned into holy light right in front of us! The light is even more beautiful than new year fireworks, ha.”

“Those necromancers should feel lucky that the previous studies

from Lucien Evans and Felipe had overthrown Life Force Theory first, or today's experiment would for sure be mind-bugging enough to explode their heads directly."

"If there wasn't those previous studies serving as a buffering thing at the first place, they would not just show this experiment right in front of us over the meeting. Those grand arcanists know how shocking this thing is and they know that they have to ease us into it."

"I know... I wonder who designed this experiment... It seems like 'God' is revealing the truth in front of us."

"But making people's heads explode is still too cruel..."

In the corner, Lucien listened to their conversation silently, and at this time, Iristine's voice came into his ears, "Mr. Evans?"

"Yes, your highness?" Lucien turned around and asked.

Unusually, there was a sincere smile on Iristine's face, which made her look even more beautiful. Her face blushed as she spoke to Lucien, "You people have proved the greatness of nature. And I think you guys are not all bad."

"Mr. Evans, please forgive my rudeness before. Sorcerers can see the greatness of nature as well, and you guys can use arcana to show the miracle." Arcelion also agreed, "After witnessing this experiment, I'm deeply shocked."

Although Lucien did not really understand why the elves could change their attitude toward sorcerers because of one single experiment, it was always not a bad thing to have allies, especially with druidic elves.

...

Radiance Church, Holm.

Three cardinals were waiting for the result of their assassination plan in Philibell's study.

At this time, a pastor came into the study, with a confidential letter in his hand, “My lord, here’s the result. It’s secretly sent by a sorcerer that we bribed from the congress.”

Chapter 235: Impact

Chapter 235: Impact

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Philibell jumped up from his chair and took over the letter with his slightly trembling hands. He wondered if the Congress had declared war against them.

In his mind, he believed that the assassination had succeeded, because this was the only explanation why the letter was sent by the sorcerer that they bribed, instead of their other channels. If the Congress managed to take over Holm, the fact that some sorcerers were working for the Church would be easily found out. For the sorcerers who wanted to gain as much benefit as they could, the best scenario would be the one where the balance between the Congress and the Church was maintained.

Casting holy light from his eyes, Philibell first scanned the letter to make sure that it was safe to open. He had been dealing with the sorcerers for so many years since he took over the Holm parish, thus Philbell knew how cunning and crafty those sorcerers were. For example, the letter could possibly contain some kind of medium for casting the spell, Invade Brain.

After making sure there were no magic traps in the envelope, Philibell finally opened it and unfolded the thin piece of paper in it:

“The Will of Elements presented a simple experiment simulating the pre-historic natural environment. Under the close watch of many arcanists and the two night watchers, and without the intervention of neither magic nor divine power, after a week of cycling, life ingredients were created in the reactor, including aspartic acid and more. The two night watchers and one old sorcerer who followed the God of Truth could not handle the research finding with their collapsed ontology, and thus they were devoured by their inner power right on the spot.

“God created the world in seven days... Cardinal Philibell, is this

how it was?”

Then the letter briefly introduced how the reactor was built, how the experiment was conducted, and what the findings were.

“Life ingredients...? pre-historic natural environment” Philibell murmured the words as if he was dreaming. And he recognized the handwriting immediately—the letter was not from a random sorcerer that the Church bribed, but from Douglas, the president of the Congress of Magic!

Douglas mentioned every single step of the experiment. Philibell knew what this meant: Douglas, as an outstanding grand arcanist, was too proud to lie, and he was a hundred percent confident that the experiment was valid and correct.

Philibell’s hands had senile plaques on them. Holding the letter, his hands started to tremble fiercely, “My Lord... What shall we do here? What are you trying to tell us? Why do you want mortals to enter your realm?”

His pure, crystal-like soul appeared in the air above his body, whose light lit up the study in a gentle way. The piece of paper gradually dropped onto the ground.

“Philibell, what’s wrong?! Don’t let your belief in the Lord be affected!” as Vaharall was shouting at him, black waves appeared and surrounded Philibell to stabilize his power.

“I’m okay... and I’ve never doubted God.” Philibell calmed down a bit and slightly shook his head, “Don’t worry about me. I’m not going to collapse. I did forecast this before when the sorcerers successfully synthesized carbamide and fatty acid, but I just did not expect that the result could be so shocking that it almost hurt my soul.”

“What’s on that letter?” Varantine picked up the piece of paper on the ground. He believed that he was already mentally prepared for this.

Philibell did not stop him, but stared at Varantine to see his

reaction with a pair of meaningful eyes.

“Bastards!” Without even finishing reading the letter, Varantine swore aloud out of rage. He could not believe that those vicious sorcerers actually did this experiment to pry into the forbidden realm of God. He could not believe how disrespectful they were and how they dared do this!

Doing an experiment like this, in Varantine’s mind, was enough to push someone into hell thousands of times. His core understanding of this world and fundamental belief in God was built on Creationism, and after reading this letter, something warm and sweet upwelled to his throat.

Golden blood gushed out from his mouth, and his body was covered with dim light. Despite the fact that his soul was injured, Varantine gnashed, “We shall declare war! An all-out war! We shall purify the Congress of Magic to defend the glory of God!”

Luckily for Varantine, he had already gone through the most difficult time when the previous two researches came out, so he didn’t get severely injured when facing the words from the president of the Congress of Magic, Douglas. However, this was still the first time in the past a hundred and sixty nine years that Varantine spat blood like this since he had come to this level.

In contrast, when the bad-tempered Vaharall finished reading the letter, he was not too shocked, but his face still looked very gloomy. Slowly, he squeezed the words out of his teeth with great rage, “We shall not always focus this much on the heresy sect in the north anymore. It’s time to pull back our attention and put it on those vicious sorcerers who are trying to reach their bloody hands to the exclusive realm of God!”

Vaharall was a legendary knight, and his power was from his own Blessing. Therefore, the great impact on his cognition might affect his belief in God to some degree, but could not kill him.

“What we shall do right now is to block the information, calm the pastors down, and then gradually modify their understanding of Creationism,” Philibell said to them.

The pastor who brought the letter was standing in the corner. He dare not read the letter on the desk.

At this time, there came some hurried footsteps outside of the study, and cardinal who was wearing a red robe and long shawl rushed in the study, and, as a relatively powerful pastor, he still looked helpless and nervous, "Lord Philibell! A pastor in Radiance Church just got devoured by holy light! And many parishes have reported that most pastor, even cardinals, are experiencing great impact on their cognition of their belief! Although so far we only have two pastors who were devoured by their power, most of the pastors are feeling confused and desperate now. They're urgently begging you, Lord Philibell, to prove to them that the experiment which produces life ingredients in a pre-historic natural environment is fake!"

"What?!" Philip was even more shocked now. He had never expected that the Congress could spread the news so fast.

...

In the early morning, a bunch of newspaper kids were yelling on the streets energetically,

"Newspaper, newspaper! Latest Holm News! Earlier than usual!"

Hearing that, many people on the streets started looking for five Fells in their purses, as they knew that there must be something important in the newspaper.

Influenced by those magic schools, common people living here in Holm were more educated than the average people in other countries across the ocean, and they also more or less cared about the development of magic. Therefore, newspapers here, especially in Rentato, sold better.

Meanwhile, those nobles who did not need to rush to work were right now enjoying their breakfast while reading Holm News as usual, and those people included many pastors and cardinals.

A young pastor left his room and came to the cathedral's dining

hall. After his praying, there was buttered bread and sausages on the plates in front of him. Beside the plates, there was a pile of newspaper.

“Holm News?” the pastor was a little bit surprised, and he asked the pastor who was still in training sitting close to him, “Isn’t this issue earlier than usual?”

“My Lord,” the pastor answered respectfully, “I’m not very sure, but it’s said that something big just happened in Rentato.”

“Oh?” The pastor picked up the newspaper. As usual, the first page was about the old king, who just went for hunting the other day, followed by lots of nobles, but Prince Patrick was not there.

However, when he turned the newspaper to the second page, a striking black title appeared in his sight, “An Experiment Simulating the Pristine Natural Environment.”

“Experiment?! Those sorcerers are on the newspaper now?” The young pastor was shocked. As he read it even further, he added, “Lie! Shameless lie! This is blasphemy!”

The other pastors in training were all scared. When they saw that the pastor started throwing plates and bowls onto the ground, they all took a few steps back.

After a long time, the pastor murmured to himself in a puzzled way, “Lie... This must be a lie! I’m gonna report this to the head Cardinal, and he will prove that it is a lie!”

The same scenario occurred in most of the churches and cathedrals in Holm parish, and almost simultaneously in churches in the Kingdom of Colette.

The Congress of Magic had shown its great influence!

...

“That’s basically what happened.” The other cardinal slowly calmed down a bit.

Philibell asked seriously, “But why would Holm News publish this experiment?”

“The headquarter and divisions of the newspaper are right now under the control of the Congress. They’ve printed out the latest issue of Holm News in every city,” the cardinal explained.

“However, all people involved in this had fled.”

Philibell was still confused, “But how can they communicate with each other in real time? Sound transmission spells cost a lot and casting those spells means lots of work... How could they take action so fast?”

“So far, we have no idea yet, Lord Philibell,” answered the cardinal.

Vaharall said to Philibell seriously,

“Philibell, you stay here and control the situation. I go to see the pope for his instruction.”

When Philibell was left alone in the study after everyone got their own tasks, he signed slowly, “What is your true will, Lord?”

...

Lance, the Holy city.

Benedict II, the Pope, was right now calmly looking at the cardinals standing in front of him. Then, lifting his scepter, he said to them seriously, “Have you all forgotten the word from Lord? It is always the soul that goes up to Mountain Paradise, not one’s flesh and blood!”

Chapter 236: Lucien's New Magic

After experiencing the great shock brought by the previous two experiences, the fact that Life Force Theory was overturned was not such a big surprise for those grand cardinals. However, they had imagined that the Congress was right now targeting Creationism, the realm of God.

The success of the experiment forced the grand cardinals and legendary knights to doubt Creationism, and they started to question themselves whether this was a true forbidden realm that only belonged to God. They did not know what to do, and showing their great anger seemed to be the only way right now that they could hide their inner fear and guilt.

Over the past hundreds of years, the several popes had all put emphasis on introducing arcana to improve divine spells, and thus all the grand cardinals were also relatively profound in arcana. If a grand cardinal went to the congress, within a year or two, he or she would probably be around middle-rank level. Therefore, despite the fact that they were all very angry, they still had countless ideas going on in their minds, using all their wisdom to find a loophole in the experiment. As long as they could find one, they would say that the experiment was a mistake, and so they could defend Creationism.

Before the Pope spoke, the Bright Hall was just as noisy as the market in Lance.

"This experiment is just a prototype of the prehistoric natural environment described by legends, and no one can say that this is the real environment where the God of Truth created the world," said the Pope, Benedict II.

"But that's also what Canon tells us... Lightning, flood, volcano..."

"What Cannon describes is only the tangible environment, but what about the gases? It is possible that the gases involved in the experiment are not the original ones when God first created

everything. Did any of you notice that there was no oxygen used in the experiment? In the Congress' eyes, oxygen is the most useful gas to the human body."

"But... This is just our assumption..."

"We do not need to prove their mistake. We only need to emphasize the possible errors existing in this experiment," said the pope. "It is the sorcerers who should prove everything, not us. If they can't prove it, they can never overturn Creationism."

The pope's new perspective comforted the grand cardinals. They were less angry now, and they started listening to the pope in a relatively calm way.

The pope's tone was getting tougher, "Regardless of whether the experiment is valid or not, I admit that the experiment indeed has proved the fact that life ingredients can be generated by a natural environment. However, is it something that can just shake your belief in God? Can you just say that life is not bestowed by God?"

The cardinals remained silent.

"A body needs a soul, but a soul does not require a body. A soul without a body can be the Holy Spirit, petitioner, or life in other forms. So, let me ask you... What is the essence of life?

"It is the soul that ascends to Mountain Paradise, never the flesh. I think that the reason why you are feeling confused right now is that the first pope who started the composition of Canon did not make this point clear enough.

"So you tell me... Who created nature? Who created the laws of nature? It was God. God owns the glory for life ingredients being produced following the laws of nature!"

A series of questioning and answers had clearly established and interpreted a new Creationism. The great anxiety in the grand cardinals mind gradually disappeared, and then they became devoted again.

The saint cardinal, Sard, who moved through a magic portal

directly from Aalto to Holm, was crossing in front of his chest. His eyes, which were often dim, right now were beyond clear,

"All glory shall go to God. Pope Benedict, please let all our pastors and cardinals hear the true will of God, so they can feel the might and glory of God."

Compared to the time when Lucien saw Sard in the Psalm Hall, Sard now looked even more aged and sophisticated, and his eyes appeared to be deeper and darker, as if they could absorb the light around him.

"This is the most important thing for us at the moment. We shall have all the cardinals and pastors in every parish feel Lord's true will." The Pope calmly commanded, "At the same time, send more people to Holm and Colette to help Philibell and Varahall with reassuring their people."

Although it was clear that the most important task in front of them right now was stabilizing the Church's belief foundation, and thus not a good opportunity to go to war against the Congress of Magic, Stone and other knights were still being quite restless.

"Your Grace, shall we just let those sorcerers go? They've insulted the Church to this degree, and they must pay the blood price. If we do nothing, those sorcerers would see us as being weak and timid, and they would keep attacking us."

"That's what they want. They want us to declare a war against them when we are not ready. And If we do, we will definitely suffer from great loss facing our north Church enemies and the heresy followers and dark creatures in the Dark Mountain Range. Although they will for sure also suffer a great loss, we've got more enemies than they do right now. Without we distracting them, the Congress would grow very fast," answered the pope calmly. "The sorcerers know that we will be having a great war sooner or later, so they always want us to start the war when we are in an unfavourable position, because defending is always much easier than attacking. We serve God, so we value the glory of God the most, not ours. We've permeated the Congress to some degree, and we will make them pay, but not now. However, of course, we shall start switching our

major attention to the Congress side from now on."

Then, the pope turned around and started giving orders, "Stone, you lead the Knights of Grail to Holm to assist Philibell. Augusta, you go to the north and try to parley with the North Church to ask them to show their resolution in defending God's glory by facing the sorcerers as well. This is a tough task, and I hope your faith in Lord can help you with it."

After receiving their tasks, the grand cardinals started leaving one by one. In the end, only the pope was left in the Bright Hall.

When he dropped his scepter, the Pope looked just like an ordinary senior. The light surrounding him made him look very lonely.

...

The research project was over, and what they needed to do was just to wait for another four to five months until the crops turned ripe. So the druids were now about to head back to Stroop Forest by taking the magic steam train.

The druids felt that they had experienced and seen a lot in this trip, especially with the experiment. Although all those human being's creations such as the train were quite nice, they were still not even close to the greatness of nature, which could produce and nurture the miracle of life!

"Then, Mr. Evans, see you five months later." Iristine waved her hands toward Lucien through the train window with a sweet smile on her face, "I really hope that the alchemical product that you found can save the farmers from starving."

To some degree, both elves' and human beings' way of thinking could be quite strange. When an elf or a person hated someone, no matter what that the person did, everything appeared to be nasty. However, once they changed their impression toward that person, everything started to be more acceptable.

"Mr. Evans," said Iristine in a nice way, "honestly speaking, I feel that you're pretty thoughtful with your understanding of how we

should protect mother nature from our recent conversations. The only thing is that you always take your human being's perspective."

Beside her, Arcelion turned around and slight nodded, "Mr. Evans, you are welcome to visit Stroop. I believe that when you're actually there, you'll appreciate mother nature even more. Of course, you'll find nice elven music there as well."

Lucien, with his one hand in his long jacket pocket, waved the other hand slightly, "Your highness, see you five months later. Actually, I'm more interested in the old books developed from the long history of elves."

Lucien's magic robe, Transformation, was already fixed, and the Hand of Paleness paid for it.

The train whistle tooted. Gradually accelerating, the magic steam train left the station.

Putting the other hand into the pocket, Lucien walked to the other end of the station to meet with other senior sorcerers from the Will of Elements, and there he saw a familiar face.

"When did you come back, K!" Lucien was quite surprised. Without K's help, Lucien would have never published his periodic table of elements paper on Element.

K did not change much in the past month. He was still strong and tall, wearing the same long, black coat, and he was still shy.

"I just came back. And I met Mr. Larry." K lightly scratched the back of his head.

"Was everything okay when you went back?" asked Lucien in a concerned way.

"The problem's been solved," said K mildly. "It was actually not a big deal. My parents got scared when a senior official from the city council was giving them a hard time. Since I'm a sorcerer, I'm also a member of the city council, and that was why they wanted me to go back."

"Great. Let's go back to Allyn together, then?" Seeing the train was arriving, Lucien asked him.

K took a quick look at Larry who was standing beside him a bit shyly, "Thanks for your invitation, Lucien. But from today on, I'll be following Mr. Larry around and doing research after him. I've heard your stories, and they were amazing. I could not believe that you not only won the Holm Crown prize but also led to the overturn of Life Force Theory within the past one month. You know... I feel like you're still a teacher in the school, measuring elements behind my back. Life's just amazing."

Shy as K, he was more talkative than usual as he was trying to express his great surprise.

"I'm going to stay in the Royal Magic Tower of Holm for a while." Larry joined their conversation, "Those questions put forward by you offered Mr. Gaston and me lots of ideas and great inspiration, and we are heading toward a new direction in studying the dissolution of some alchemical products. Thank you, Lucien. Your sharp way of thinking is really valuable."

Then, Larry quickly shook hands with Lucien.

"By the way," Larry continued, "the fifth circle spell, Fernando's Electromagnetic Message, which was inspired by your bat experiment, really helped us a lot this time. From now on, communication between middle-rank sorcerers and above shall be much easier. Of course, we can still improve the spell further. Right now, the way of communication is facing a few problems, such as its confidentiality issue, the fact that it can be easily interrupted by lightnings, and that it cannot go through the barriers between different spaces... But anyway, this is a great spell, especially when you think about how expensive casting a voice messaging spell can be."

Lucien nodded, "I'm sure that the spell will be further improved."

In his mind, Lucien was very impressed by this spell created by Lord of Storm after combining radio wave, cryptology and electromagnetic wave together. When two sorcerers agreed on a

certain wave frequency, they could talk to each other directly. Even for those junior-rank sorcerers who could not learn this spell, they could still buy a magic item enchanted with this spell with their approximate ten-year's saving.

Lucien knew that there was still a deep and wide gap between Lord of Storm and himself. Although the invention of this spell was because of his bat research, Lucien was not going to be blindly proud of himself. He knew that it was time for him to study hard again, in order to create some of his own new spells, and one of them would be called Lucien's Infrared Eyes.

Gaston gave Lucien a sign to get him aboard the train, then he said to him, "Evans, because of your great contribution to the project, the congress and the Will of Elements have decided to give you a garden villa in Allyn as your reward, equipped with a magic lab set up by a senior-rank sorcerer, where most low to middle-rank experimental facilities are available. We hope that you can focus on studying arcana, so for the next whole year, you won't be receiving any tasks from either the Congress or the Will of Elements."

"That's great." Lucien nodded. After waving to Gaston, Larry and K, he boarded the train.

Chapter 237: Two Sides of the Land

The vibrant and colorful flowers were dancing in the wind. They made the pink-whitish buildings look alive. Inside the mansion, there were several platforms with complicated patterns engraved on the surface of them within a spacious room that was locked. Equipment like glass bottles, reaction burners, and connecting tubes were placed on top of those platforms. When compared to the normal lab equipment Lucien had seen on Earth, the equipment on the platform looked mysterious due to the enigmatic magic runes on them.

He had changed to a long lab robe from the black frock coat so he could move freely in the room. Lucien was focusing on the magic circles that could simulate the different parts of the spell models. A ball of red shadow appeared in the dark and it slowly stabilized after combining the models. Although it was a blurry shadow, he could see that it was a creature that looked like a rat with different colors on its body parts due to the difference in temperature.

Lucien deactivated the magic circles with a satisfied look on his face. He then whistled and turned on the arc lamps in the lab room. A palm-sized tiny house that was built with bricks and wooden planks appeared on the platform as the room was brightened up. Inside the house, there was an iron-eating rat with a modified bloodline, that was captured recently.

"Finally, Lucien's Infrared Eyes is completed but it seems the effect is weaker than I expected. Sadly, it's just a second circle spell, but I can use it as a way to check my surroundings." Lucien was familiar with the principles of the infrared thermal imaging technology but he was having trouble applying them to the patterns, runes, and incantations of the magic structure. He spent months studying the basics in the Congress of Magic and finally had the ability to create formal spells, as he could only create apprentice-level spells before that.

Lucien turned off the arc lamps after memorizing the spell model he created in mind.

The complicated and tongue-twisting incantation slowly echoed in the darkness as the shiny powder of the sun stone slid down Lucien's hands. His spiritual power vibrated and changed as he chanted the incantation, quickly constructing the core of the spell model under Lucien's control.

Lucien's left pupil turned from black to red, reflecting the image of the iron-eating rat in the cage, but the layering of the image was lacking.

Lucien turned his head to the window that was covered by the black curtain, he looked outside with his red left eye and saw a "red" bird flew by.

Lucien brought the light back to the lab room after making sure that the second circle spell was working. The redness faded away from his left eye and he could construct it in his soul when meditating during the night.

However, the strength of a sorcerer's souls was limited, and they could only construct a certain number of spell models at each rank. They needed to match their spells in a reasonable way, for example, supportive spells did not need to be constructed in the soul, they could just cast it with incantation, casting gestures, or magic materials when necessary.

There were many books like Spell Matching Technique in the Congress of Magic, explaining the knowledge of this specific field.

Although Lucien's Infrared Eyes was a supportive spell, it was very likely that he would cast it when being ambushed by an assassin. It would be important for him to cast it faster in that situation so he could track the assassin down easier.

Lucien rested for a while and opened his magic notebook, stopped at an extremely complicated image of a spell structure, closed his eyes, and started meditating.

The starry sky of destiny was surrounded by the wind, fire, and water elements. The elements were the ones which composed Lucien's meditation environment.

In the meditation environment, the colorful elements were moving following several specific paths. They looked like glowing fireflies moving in an endless night sky. They matched up with each other and then separated from time to time. It was a mysterious scene that was hard to be understood, and displayed the secrets and rules among the elements.

Lucien grabbed the quill and started drawing the paths that he sensed during the process after finishing his meditation. They quickly turned into magic patterns and runes.

Lucien stopped drawing as the spell model was almost completed. The model was built with straight lines, curves, and curved surfaces, but he was confused. He was trapped in the problem that had been bothering him since he started learning sorcery.

"Why can those magic patterns and runes represent some of the spell structure? Why can I cast the spell after they're combined with the spiritual power? Why did the structure appear after I completed the periodic table and the meditation environment resonated with the real world? K, Lazar, and Rock have already accepted the periodic law of elements and mapped them into the meditation environment but none of them resonated with the real world after I checked with them..."

"What is the nature of the sorcery?"

Lucien put down the quill after writing down his questions and synchronized them to the magic notebook in the soul library. He started thinking about the third circle spell that was about to be constructed.

"The spell came from the periodic law of the basic elements. It basically involves controlling, switching their electrons, and returning them to their original positions. It can be used to decompose chemical compounds like alchemy products, magic items, human body parts, and some spells. The more unstable the compound status is, the easier it can be decomposed. However, the ability to control them will only improve as the sorcerer rank goes up. It's like the weaker version of the legendary spell from Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, Elements Resolve."

Lucien had already read some core information after joining the Will of Elements and the information introduced the ability, statuses, and the materials required for the advancing ritual of the two legendary classes: Lord of the Elements and Innovator. Also, the abilities of the legendary spells that came with the classes were also explained.

"It seems I'll be able to complete the third circle spell before I become a middle-rank sorcerer. If I can successfully advance to the next rank, the two spell models I'll construct will be this and the flying spell. So, how should I name it? Lucien's Elements Resolve? Evan's Elements Control? They either sound bad or repetitive." Lucien thought for a while and recalled the cool nickname Florencia gave him, "Alright, I'll just call it Elemental Order!"

A third circle spell with a name that was similar to those of a ninth circle and a legendary spell, Lucien's guilty pleasure was satisfied. It was a signature spell, just like his Professor's Oscillation Hand.

Lucien calmed down from the excitement and, when he was about to start the next magic experiment, he realized that he used up most of the magic materials, so he was disappointed.

In the last several months, Lucien purchased the White Glycerin, the Silver Pearl, and the Oak potions to help progress the meditation with the elemental rain. The three potions were very effective for junior rank sorcerers. The White Glycerin and Silver Pearl would help strengthen one's spiritual power and soul. The Oak and Florencia's Elixir helped him stabilize his foundation. Lucien's sorcery skills were increasing at an unbelievable rate with the help of those things.

However, potions with strong effects were expensive. The White Glycerin was ten arcana points per bottle, the Silver Pearl was twenty arcana points per bottle, and the Oak was eight points per bottle. He needed to purchase three bottles of each potion every month.

Lucien would get forty-five arcana points from the Congress of Magic every month after becoming a level four arcanist and second circle sorcerer, but he had to use some of the arcana points he saved

in the past. Also, he needed to purchase materials for his spell practice, magic analysis, alchemy study, potion craft, and the magic experiment. In this last case, the required materials were extremely expensive. He needed to use high-rank material, like the sun stone, before constructing Lucien's Infrared Eyes in the soul. Lucien had more than 2670 arcana points five months ago but he only had about 1100 points left after all that.

"Arcana points are so hard to earn, but I can't do anything without them," Lucien looked at the empty glass bottles that previously were filled up with magic materials and sighed. Lazar heard him saying something like this several days ago and he was jealous. It was nearly impossible for a normal second circle sorcerer to use magic potions and materials like Lucien. They would spend about fifty arcana points when they were about to advance, but only fifteen points per month under normal circumstances.

In Lazar's words, Lucien was living the life of a forth or fifth circle sorcerer, and that was why he spent so many arcana points. Also, Lazar admitted that it was normal for a level four arcanist to use so many points.

Lucien calmed down and cleaned the magic lab.

He smiled and shook his head. "No pain, no gain. I can try to advance to the third circle and become a middle-rank sorcerer before I use up all my arcana points. I'll be able to fly in the blue sky using my own will.

"Well, I need to go to the magic tower of the headquarter and the Allyn division of Will of Elements to purchase materials and potions again. The good thing is that I can get a 20% discount as a level four arcanist and it'll make me feel better...

"July the 30th again..."

...

The City of Psalm, the ground level of an abbey in Aalto.

Natasha was wearing a long linen robe with her feet bare. The long

purple hair trailed over her shoulders, and her silver-purple eyes were deep like an endless sea. It felt like the danger was hiding under the peaceful surface of the sea. Natasha had not left the place for over a year and she successfully cured the consequences of the surge force in her bloodline power. She was getting closer and closer to level seven without any problem.

The room was dark but Natasha's eyes could see everything clearly. She sat on the floor on her knees and was reading a letter from somewhere far away.

"Haha, this guy will stand on the center of the stage and bring chaos to the land no matter where he is. I'm glad that he safely arrived at Allyn." It would take about half a year for a letter from Holm to be delivered, but Natasha already learned that a genius sorcerer named Lucien Evans X artificially synthesized the carbamide from the intel department of the Church and the Republic months ago. The discovery forced the Church to redefine the Creationism.

The Church focused on dealing with Felipe and they did not pay too much attention to this genius sorcerer. Although Natasha assumed that it was Lucien, she was worried until the letter that was written in special codes arrived. Also, she started arranging a plan for John so the Church would not retaliate after they found out who Lucien really was.

Natasha bit her lips with her clean teeth and talked to herself with mixed emotions, "Are you the reason why they modified the Holy Canon?"

Natasha was a relatively devout believer. She trusted the Creationism a lot in the past, and it was an unpleasant experience when what she believed was proven wrong.

She had a strong mind and that was what helped her finish the letter. Natasha's expression loosened as she was attracted to the events that unfolded during Lucien's trip. The story was much better than the operas or the ones told by the bards.

Natasha was a bit surprised as she read through the letter, "He was awarded the Holm Crown Prize as well?" She spoke in a caring

tone, and a gentle expression appeared on her face as she thought about her mother.

Natasha chuckled after thinking for a while. "How long has this guy been studying arcana? How did he get the prize? Don't tell me he's more talented in arcana than in music.

"Anyway, he's definitely not talented in communicating with girls, ha, he's still alone, and I should probably teach him the way of dealing with girls. Hmm, Lucien will cooperate with the elves and druids? Will the music of nature from the elves inspire him? Rhine? Haven't heard about him for a while...

"I sent him a letter last month but I don't know when he will receive it."

The dark room was quiet and the atmosphere in there was light.

Chapter 238: Partner

Sorcerer Administrative Department.

Eric took out Lucien's arcana badge from the magic cage. On the badge, the four shining silver stars looked beautiful and mysterious against the black background, as if there were innumerable secrets behind the stars.

"Seven hundred and eight arcana credits in total. Even if you stop publishing arcana papers for a while, you would have no troubling upgrading to level five in one year or two." Eric, being quite emotional, handed the badge over to Lucien, "You'll be the youngest level five arcanist ever in history, but also, among all the level five arcanists, your magic level is the lowest."

Eric, a level three arcanist, still had hope in upgrading to level four since there was only a difference of two-hundred arcana credits between the level three and four, and with his years of efforts, there were only more thirty-six points to go before he could move forward to the next level. However, level five, in Eric's eyes, appeared to be so inaccessible. Thus, when he saw this young man who just joined the congress less than a year ago and was already on his way to become a level five arcanist, Eric inevitably sighed in his mind.

As long as this young man could keep working hard and avoid being arrogant, Eric was sure that sooner or later, Lucien's magic level could catch up, and, for sure, the congress would help such a young, talented sorcerer with further upgrading to senior-rank. So, in Eric's mind, Lucien was right on his way to become a senior-rank sorcerer.

Lucien took the badge over and shortly played with it in his hands, then he smiled, "Mr. Eric, thank you for your nice words, but the past two months have shown that the sweet time of sitting there and gaining credits won't last any longer."

Due to the heated discussion over Life Force Theory, at the end of

the Month of Dormancy, the second of the year, Lucien gained a hundred fifty-eight credits, and only forty-two credits were from other people citing his periodic table and atomic weight re-measurement paper.

However, after that month, because Felipe's experiment and the experiment simulating pre-historic natural environment—people called it the Experiment of Miracle now—clearly outweighed Lucien's experiment with synthesizing carbamide, way less credits went to Lucien. Instead, as more arcanists started putting forward their research findings based on his periodic table and atomic weight re-measurement paper, Lucien gained a hundred forty-three credits on this side, and his paper on using alchemical products for increasing crop yield also made a contribution of almost ten credits.

Then in the recent two or three months, there was a sharp decline in the number of times his papers were being cited, and then it got more steady—around ten times every month. This was why Lucien could draw the conclusion that, if he did not come up with something else new, it might take him around two years to become a level five arcanist.

"Your paper on the periodic table of elements is part of the foundation of the school of Element, so I'm sure that it will consistently bring you a good amount of credits every month. When your arcana and magic level reach level five and fifth circle, you can come to me and apply for the magic rites to help you upgrade further." Eric nodded, "And... you don't have to call me Mr. Eric all the time, after all, your arcana level's already higher than mine."

Then Eric handed Lucien his magic badge, "Two points from other people learning your new spell, and forty-five from the Congress, as your subsidy."

According to the congress, a level one arcanist could get a subsidy of one Thale or point every month, or magic material of the same value; level two would reward five points; level three was twenty; level four was forty; level five was eighty; level six was three hundred; level seven was five hundred; level eight nine hundred; level nine, two thousand. This was the same with one's magic level,

and they could overlap.

Before taking over the magic badge with the same two black circles on it from Eric, Lucien first put his arcana badge on his left chest, and instantly, he felt very refreshed. This was a new magic buff enchanted in the arcana badge when the badge was upgraded to middle-rank. When Lucien became a senior-rank arcanist, he could get one more buff, which was the same with magic badge.

"Thank you, Mr. Eric. I think I gotta go now." Lucien picked up his top hat from the chair and slightly bowed, "I need to go to Exchange Zone to get some materials."

As soon as Lucien left Eric's office, he saw Felipe walking out of another office. Still, both of Felipe's hands were in his pockets, and his face always had a sickly look.

Felipe also saw Lucien, and he was a bit surprised. After nodding to him slightly, Felipe took a quick glance at Lucien's left chest, and then there was a gloomy smile on his face, "Still the same, uh? The two badges..."

Hearing that, Lucien quickly looked at Felipe's badges in front of his chest. There were five mysterious stars on Felipe's arcana badge, surrounded by countless little light spots, and even more surprisingly, on his magic badge, there were six black circles on it!

That meant Felipe was a senior-rank now.

Finally, Felipe became the first senior-rank mage among the younger generation, and that was to say he was one of the leaders of the Hand of Paleness now, since they only had a bit more than forty senior-rank sorcerers, including those lich masters who had been existing for a very long time.

Before Lucien said anything, Felipe directly walked past him. Beside his shoulder, Felipe said to Lucien in a low voice, "Don't fall behind too far."

The corner of Lucien's lips twitched a bit.

...

When Lucien walked back to the hall along the corridor, Cindy first winked at Lucien, then she said to him in a professional tone, "Mr. Evans, someone's waiting for you over there."

Lucien was confused, having no idea who it was. Then, when he looked at the other side of the hall, Lucien saw a middle-aged man, as chubby as a ball, sitting on the couch beside the bar. Right now, he was tapping his forehead to remove the beads of sweat on it with a piece of handkerchief. The hot weather has been like that for a while.

"Mr. Arthur Doyle?" Lucien did not know why the president of Union Bank of Holm Mining wanted to see him.

Seeing Lucien was there, Arthur hurriedly left the handkerchief to his beautiful secretary, and then he came to Lucien, followed by his two strong safeguards. He grabbed Lucien's right hand enthusiastically with both of his hands and said, "Mr. Evans, I first went to your place, and your steward told me that you were here. I was in such a hurry coming over here, so I'm right now covered with sweat. And I think it's better for me not to hug you, haha."

The chubby president was quite polite. Lucien's impression on him was not bad.

"Mr. Doyle, what can I do for you?" asked Lucien.

There was a friendly smile on Arthur's chubby face, "Mr. Evans, let's get something to drink first."

Cindy brought two glasses of Rentato's well-known drink, Sky Blue, to them, and out of curiosity, she did not walk away. She wondered why the famous businessman, and also one of the most wealthy people in Rentato, wanted to talk to Lucien.

Behind the counter on the other side, Dona was very curious, too. However, she could not just leave the reception desk at her own will. Right now she was staring at Cindy, who was playing the role as Lucien's secretary, in a slightly unhappy way. However, Cindy just looked away and pretended that she saw nothing.

Arthur shook his glass slightly and took a sip, "This is really refreshing."

After taking a glance at Cindy, Arthur continued, as there was nothing to hide, "Mr. Evans, I'm here today seeking for a partnership with you."

"I see..." Lucien gave the liquid in his glass a swirl.

Arthur's secretary took out a thick pile of documents and handed them to Lucien, and Arthur continued, "I've been to Sariva already, and the yield of crops in your experiment plot is beyond my imagination. I can't see anyone, nobles or farmers, say no to the alchemical product that you found. From Prince Patrick, I know that you guys've already got a mass-production plan. Mr. Evans, because it was you who first found those products, according to law, you can make the decision regarding who you want to work with. And according to the Congress, if we can set up a company together, the Congress shall get fifteen percent of the share, and you have fifteen percent as well. Let me put it this way... I hope that we can work together to promote and sell these alchemical products. Neither the Congress or you need to spend even a single Thale on this, as our bank can pay for everything. So I can assure you that we are the best partner."

Lucien quickly leafed through the documents, and he knew that the mass production of some of the alchemical products also required the assistance of Mining Association. Thus, Lucien was quite opened to the offer.

"Honestly speaking, Mr. Doyle, I'm interested in it, but I still want to take a closer look at the articles in the contract." Of course, Lucien would like to have a steady income, but there was no way that he would not agree with Arthur right away.

Arthur grinned, "Mr. Evans, you're a talented sorcerer, valued by both the Congress and the Will of Elements. I'm just an ordinary businessman, well... noble businessman... but so what? The last thing I would do is to lie to the Congress and you. Honestly speaking, I don't want to die yet right now."

It was clear that, in most ordinary people's mind, sorcerers were intimidating. Although many people would like to be a sorcerer, they did not really like those people who could easily decide their destiny.

After negotiating with each other for a while, Arthur lowered his voice and whispered beside Lucien's ear, "Actually, I'm sent here by Prince Patrick. If you agree on working with us, Prince Patrick will provide you with another extra five percent of the share, as a gift from His Excellency."

Lucien grinned as someone he knew in Aalto jumped into his mind, but then slightly shook his head, "Actually, because of His Excellency, I'm willing to give up my original insistence, which is thirty percent. Then, I hope we have a pleasant cooperation."

"Great! Thank you, Mr. Evans." Arthur Doyle was so happy that his smile lifted his cheeks almost to the point where his eyes disappeared.

After checking and signing the contract, Arthur asked Lucien, partly to please him, "Mr. Evans, can you come up with a product name for us? You know, a simple and good name for promoting the products..."

Lucien searched in his mind for a while, and offered his name, "Jinkela¹."

¹Jinkela: The author played a joke here. Jinkela is a brand fertiliser produced in China. Because of the company's exaggeration and super fake way of advertisement, in China, the fertiliser brand is regarded as a joke.

Chapter 239: The Elves' Second Visi

Chapter 239: The Elves' Second Visit

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Jin... ke... la...?” Arthur was very confused. He even repeated this word to himself a few times to feel the possible meaning of it, which almost made Lucien burst out laughing.

“Well...” Lucien rubbed his cheeks a bit to stay serious, “Because soils are different, sometimes we have to use those alchemical products separately. When they’re all mixed together, lets call it Jinkela. Then we have Jinkela No. 1, Jinkela No. 2, things like that...”

Seeing that Lucien was being quite “serious”, Arthur put on his typical businessman smile, “Great name, Mr. Evans. Great name! Let’s call it... Umm... Jinke... la.”

Lucien, in fact, never found any of his talent in naming, just like Mr. Victor and Rhine.

After having the product name, they together named the new company Holm Mineral and Harvest.

Mr. Eric being the witness, Arthur and Lucien signed another contract, and Mr. Eric also signed it, representing the Congress of Magic.

“Cheers, Mr. Evans, Mr. Eric.” Arthur lifted his glass.

Lucien smiled and drank all the liquor in his glass, “Hope we can work well together, Mr. Doyle. When you promote the products, make sure that you put the dosage clear, because overuse can do damage to soil.”

“Of course, we always respect an arcanist’s opinion.” Arthur nodded, and then he asked the secretary to take out another thick pile of documents and handed it to Lucien.

“This is our mass-production plan. Please take a look at the magic circles design, Mr. Evans, to see if there’s anything that should be improved. After all, you’re the one who’s professional.” Arther tried to flatter Lucien in the end. After all, Lucien was a level four arcanist, and the winner of Holm Crown prize.

Lucien quickly leafed through it and recognized that the plan was basically based on the paper about how to minimize energy consumption and cost of large-scale alchemical magic circles by transferring energies into different forms, published on the latest issue of Alchemy. In other words, according to the paper, the author suggested to build magic towers over rivers of great runoff volume to collect potential energy, and then transfer it into electricity through magnetic field.

“Magic hydropower station...” Lucien murmured.

Lucien knew that no matter how those alchemical magic circles were arranged, they were going to be very expensive, because they would need high quantities of special magic gems, which could continuously gain power from sunlight, moonlight or shadow to function properly, and even if those magic circles were not set up for permanent use, replacing parts would still cost a lot.

Either way, Lucien smiled and handed the proposal back to Arthur, “This is the best plan, and the extra power might still be used somewhere else.”

“Great. I’ll keep in touch with those alchemical arcanists, and, please, Mr. Evans, give us your suggestions when you come up with anything.” Arthur nodded, “The first year of setting everything up might not be able to bring you any profit, but you should be able to see the money in the second year, Mr. Evans.”

After Arthur Doyle left, when Lucien turned around to say goodbye to Eric, he saw that the two receptionist girls were staring at him with their hands supporting their chins, and their eyes were shining.

“It’s so nice to be profound... Mr. Evans.” Cindy sighed with mixed emotions, then she waved her right fist a bit, “I must become a

sorcerer! I want to earn other people's respect like you, Mr. Evans! And I want to have the wealth that I deserve!"

Born in a common citizen family in Rentato, Cindy, when she was still a little girl, heard the name of Arthur Doyle all the time, from adults and Holm News. When she saw how Arthur Doyle talked to Lucien, she really realized what being a sorcerer meant in this society. She now deeply believed in the power of knowledge and hard work. She believed that as long as she worked hard, her efforts would pay off.

Dona also grinned, "Mr. Evans, we all should learn from you. Your story keeps telling us that hard work really matters. By the way, are you still taking more students with your arcana tutoring class? Can we also be your students?"

In front of Mr. Eric, Dona chose to call Lucien by Mr. Evans, however, in her mind, she was also a bit in awe of Lucien although they were friends, especially when she saw Lucien's arcana and magic badges. Lucien was making such an amazing progress that all of his friends felt that they were left behind.

"If you've got time, feel free to come on Saturday," said Lucien, he wondered if the arcana tutoring class was going to grow bigger and bigger, and maybe in the future, the class could turn into a group like the Hand of Paleness or the Will of Elements.

Eric looked at Lucien, trying to say something, but in the end, he just tried to comfort him, "Evans, did you just run into Felipe? Don't mind him... He's always like that."

He heard the first part of Felipe and Lucien's conversation in his office.

Cindy and Dona suddenly quieted down, because of one thing. Felipe won the Immortal Throne prize again because of his experiment overthrowing Life Force Theory, and besides, he also won Holm Crown prize together with another anonymous leader of the Will of Elements, being now the twenty-seventh winner of the prize. Felipe's reputation and fame just peaked.

However, in the eyes of Hand of Paleness, the experiment synthesizing carbamide was not important enough, and the experiment of miracle required further investigation for specific purpose of use, this was why they did not offer Lucien the Immortal Throne prize.

Therefore, both the two girls and Eric believed that Lucien did not want to see Felipe.

This time, Felipe won a magic robe as the Immortal Throne prize, and last time it was an amulet. The name of the robe was Life, and the name of ring he received for winning the Holm Crown prize was Sager Acid, from the fatty acid that he synthesized.

And of course, facing the fact that Felipe got another two level seven, perfect rank magic items, he was jealous.

...

Sariva.

Holding his farm tools, farmer Roy walked past the pilot field. He knew that he'd been doing this for so much time, but he still could not stop himself from staring at it.

How beautiful and full those grains were! How beautiful the harvest was!

"I wish I had those..." Roy murmured to himself, and his heart was filled with hope. He wished that one day his crops could be like this, so after paying all the taxes, he could still be able to feed the kids, and so they would not be so starving that they could not fall asleep at night.

And if he could have crops like this for a few years consecutively, he could save some money, then he could send his son, William, to knight training.

As a father, all in Roy's mind was his kids. However, soon, with a second thought, Roy looked frustrated.

At this time, a group of beautiful males and females with long ears

approached him. And the leading girl asked him, “Can I ask you why you don’t look happy when you see the harvest?”

Seeing that the girl was even way more beautiful than the town mayor’s daughter, like an angel, Roy answered nervously, “... Lord... I’m... I’m not being unhappy. I’m just thinking that... that something that can make crops grow like this must only belong to masters... I... I mean...”

Roy was not educated. He did not know how to put it.

This time, taking the magic train, Iristine and Arcelion came back secretly without letting the Congress know, since they wanted to see what was really going on here, with their own eyes.

Seeing the harvest, they were beyond cheerful.

“Don’t worry.” Iristine smiled, “Those alchemical products are invented for you, for all farmers. You’ll have the same harvest very soon.”

“But... I’ve got no money.” Roy’s body twisted slightly out of his stress. He was worrying that they were going to be forced to buy those products, like taxes.

“The products are cheap.” Iristine tried to comfort him, “Those rich people know how to do math.”

Hearing that, Roy cheered up a bit, then he asked a bit urgently, “Can we use them first, and then pay?”

“Maybe.” Iristine had no idea how this worked. So she left in a hurry with her group.

Seeing them leaving, Roy thought to himself, “Are they... elves? Long ears like that...”

But soon when he looked at the harvest field again, his heart was filled with real joy.

When he was about to thank God, he suddenly realized that those products were invented by sorcerers.

Soon Roy found a way to comfort himself, “Anyway... I work for my master. If he uses it, I’ll follow.”

Roy was not really such a devout follower. He cared more about his kids’ future.

...

When Iristine and Arcelion were heading toward the alchemical factory, soon they sensed some pungent smell.

They were confused, so they walked faster. Then, they saw the big factory.

The factory was huge, like a great magic tower. Besides the great noise and the horrible smell, the water beside the factory was slightly black, and there were dead fish floating on it.

“Demon... We’ve released a... demon...” Iristine murmured like she was in a nightmare.

Chapter 240: The Elves' Good Impression

Southwest of Allyn, in a beautiful garden villa.

Two maids were serving tea in fine porcelain cups to Iristine and Arcelion. Although they were well trained, they still could not help stealing a look at the two elves, because they were pretty and charming, and their long ears looked very unique.

In the living room, the apprentices were doing their arcana exercises on the big dining table. Sighing over and over, they felt overwhelmed, but at the same time, they were also peeking at Mr. Evans and the two elves, feeling very curious about what was going on there.

Although it was not the first time that the apprentices saw smart creatures of other races, such as elves, dwarves, and giants, they were still very impressed with Iristine and Arcelion's appearance, who looked gorgeous and elegant.

"That's what we saw, Mr. Evans, and may I know your opinion?" Iristine described what she saw beside the factory with a bit of an exaggeration. Right now, she was looking at Lucien, expecting his answer.

Although they were noble Sun Elves, this was only their second time leaving Stroop forest, and last time they had Malfurion, the grand elder, with them. This time, Iristine and Arcelion needed Lucien's help. They were hoping that Lucien, the winner of Holm Crown prize and the author of the alchemical product paper, could help them negotiate with the Congress.

"Mr. Evans, last time we came here we got along well... Well, I mean... in the end, we got along well with each other," said Arcelion sincerely. "I know that you're a nice human being who cares about nature a lot, despite the fact that, as a human being, you have to speak for your own race, but I also know that you're aware of the severity of this thing, Mr. Evans. You don't want to see human beings dying like those fish, right? I hope that you can

propose to the Congress to shut down the factory, and probably more factories alike, to protect mother nature for all races."

Lucien took a sip of his tea and said slowly, "First of all, I want to say that... we cannot shut down the factory."

"What?" Iristine and Arcelion were obviously very disappointed.

Lucien used his hand gestures to let them cool down a bit and then he continued, "Without those alchemical products, most human beings would keep living in famine, and they'd die because of poverty even before they could see the consequence of doing damage to nature. And from a sorcerer's perspective, I'd like to see the development of human beings, since we always need money to grow. Therefore, either as a human being or a sorcerer, I would not agree on shutting down the factory."

Before Iristine and Arcelion went off on him, Lucien continued, "But, of course, we cannot deny the detrimental effects brought by the industry. We can design and set up more new magic circles to break down those contaminants to minimize the adverse impact on nature. We cannot just shut down all the alchemical factories simply because of the side effects and completely ignore their value."

Honestly speaking, dealing with pollution was way easier here than on Earth. Many elemental spells, such as Elements Resolve, Elemental Swirl, or Elemental Order, which was owned exclusively by Lucien, could handle the pollution perfectly. Moreover, Elements Resolve and Elemental Order could even recycle pure elements for further experiment use. The only two things that Lucien was thinking of now was the cost and the fact that he did not want to reveal his own exclusive spell right now, and thus he needed to redesign a fourth or fifth-circle magic by combining Elements Resolve and Elemental Order.

Hearing that, Iristine was relieved, and a smile appeared on her face, "Mr. Evans, we knew that you'd never disappoint us. We were basically shocked just now... You know, seeing the factory... We're sorry, Mr. Evans. We were not being reasonable. As long as the Congress is willing to increase the amount of magic circles, I believe

that we'll be having more cooperations in the future."

Both Iristine and Arcelion learned a lot and grew more mature by dealing with human beings, and they started to understand the value of compromise and negotiation, as well as the necessity of keeping a balance between nature and human society. Of course, this kind of change was based on their overall good impression with sorcerers who proved the greatness of mother nature.

"Your Excellency, things are more complicated than this. I'm sure that we'll be expecting more factories in the close future, and we cannot just keep adding more magic circles after those factories are built. What's also concerning me is that, most people who run those factories might not want to listen to me, since adding magic circles increases their production cost, and things will thus go out of control. I'm planning on propose to the Congress that both the Congress and Holm should introduce laws and regulations forcing those factories to have cleansing magic circles integrated beforehand," said Lucien, and this was his original plan as well.

Arcelion jumped up from the couch and said to Evans excitedly, "Mr. Evans, thank you so much! You're a great friend of nature, elves and druids! You're way more thoughtful than us!"

"Mr. Evans, please stick to what you just said, and I'm sure that you're influential enough for this," said Iristine gratefully and sincerely. "If you need us, please feel free to ask. If things work out well, we can..."

Iristine was about to make some promises, but she stopped herself because she was not the one who could make decisions.

Lucien put down his cup and stood up, "Let's go to talk to the members of Affairs Committee."

There were three committees under the Highest Council:

Arcana Review Board: responsible for reviewing papers, evaluating spells, giving credits and assessing journals. The fifty-two sorcerers who worked there were all authorities in arcana, and they were respected the most among the three committees. Most of them were

not busy at all.

Magic Research Board: responsible for examining and approving arcana and magic research projects, and sometimes the board released its own projects as well by establishing their own research groups. Besides that, the board was also responsible for managing magic labs and libraries. The board only had twenty-three members because they were also not very busy, and most of them were senior-rank arcanists who did not like fighting or adventuring. Some of the members also worked for Arcana Review Board.

Affairs Committee: responsible for day-to-day management of sorcerers, including apprentices, punishing, defending the Congress, intelligence, regulations making, Task Zone and Exchange Zone management. In other words, it represented the Highest Council, and it was the most powerful one among the three. The committee was further divided into different departments, and each department took care of one section. Forty-two committee members worked there, and most of them were outstanding battle sorcerers or senior-rank sorcerers who were good at handling affairs.

Six out of ten members of the three committees were from the senior level of the six magic groups, say, the Will of Elements or the Hand of Paleness, and the rest of them were either with the Congress or had their own smaller groups.

...

On the thirteenth floor of the magic tower, Lucien, Iristine and Arcelion were stopped by the gold golem guard.

"Three guests," said the golem in its low voice, "What's the purpose of your visit? Which committee member are you looking for?"

The fifteenth floor of Allyn Magic Tower belonged to Arcana Review Board, the eleventh floor to the Magic Research Board, and the floors between them all belonged to Affairs Committee, which had a lot of stuff to deal with every day.

"Hello. We're looking for Ms. Florencia," answered Lucien. He was only acquainted with two people here in this committee, and the

other was Rogerio, who he met in Aalto before. Rogerio was from the Hand of Paleness, and there was no way that Lucien would go for him. Lucien was already lucky that Rogerio did not reveal his musician identity here.

The golem pointed at the couch, "Please wait here. I need to check if Ms. Florencia is available."

At this time, the elevator door opened. Felipe walked out of it. When he saw Lucien, he was a bit surprised.

"Dear Mr. Felipe, anything I can do for you?" The golem bowed toward Felipe, a senior-rank sorcerer, very respectfully.

"I'm seeking Mr. Carrol." Felipe slightly nodded. Carrol was another committee member here from the Hand of Paleness.

"This way please, sir," responded the golem.

Felipe just took a quick look at Lucien, and then he walked away with his hands in his pockets.

"Mr. Evans, do you think we shall contact Trumanri and the grand elder?" Iristine whispered in Lucien's ear. What just happened made her realize that Lucien was not as influential as she thought. However, both Iristine and Arcelion were still very grateful toward Lucien, or even more.

Lucien did not mind Iristine's suggestion, and he answered, "Let's first see what we can do here. If it doesn't work, I guess we have to have Mr. Malfurion here."

Facing the North Church and the South Church, the Congress of Magic was more than willing to work with elves and druids, but Lucien was not sure how much effort the Highest Council and the druids would like to put into this, so he wanted to try to do this himself first.

And gaining approval from the elves and druids was just a windfall for Lucien.

After a while, the golem came back, "Mr. Florencia is in her

personal lounge, and she wants to see you there. Room 1314."

Lucien was surprised that Florencia was also here on Saturday. He really hoped that he could persuade her, as she was not only a leader of the Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy, but also the wife of the Hand of Annihilation.

However, to be honest, Lucien was not really confident, as they had only met each other once. Lucien really wondered how he could make Florencia agree with him.

Chapter 241: Making Effor

Inside room no. 14, on the thirteenth floor of Allyn Magic Tower.

Florencia was wearing a light blue dress today, which style was close to that of Tria or Aalto. In this dress, she looked even hotter and more charming, in a slightly more mature way.

Right now, Florencia was sitting opposite Lucien, with her left hand supporting her head, and her long blond hair gently falling over her shoulders, listening carefully to Lucien, who was explaining his purpose in coming. Then, her green eyes looked at Lucien when he finished his words, and she put on a smile.

"Evans, do you think this proposal can get approved within the Affairs Committee? You know... a proposal that can increase the cost and cut down their profit..."

Her attitude remained ambiguous with this question.

Lucien did not know her well, so he tried to be careful with his answer, "Possibly, I think. Firstly, the cost can be shared and spread out on the prices of the final products, and secondly, I'm sure that many members in the committee understand Astrology. They can see the possible future of our next generations with their own eyes if we do nothing right now. Thirdly, it's also a great chance for us to show our friendly manner to elves and druids, which is beneficial to the development of the Congress."

"What an eloquence..." Florencia made a bit fun of Lucien, then she got more serious, "But any increase in price will definitely affect the sales volume, which is directly related to how much money can actually go into many sorcerers' pockets. As a sorcerer, Evans, you know that we always need more money... for materials, for experiments, for magic rites... I'm afraid that not many sorcerers really care about the long-term future as much as you do, especially when it comes to their own interest."

After a short pause, Florencia continued, "I admit that Astrology might help a bit, but there are so many spells that can be used for

sorcerers to protect themselves, or they can just go to other dimensions for good. Not everyone can see long-term interest, and what they can see is just the a few meters right in front of their feet. With no doubt, you're very talented, Evans, however, you're still too naive. Even if the committee decides to be on your side, many sorcerers would find their own ways around it anyway, not to mention the fact that pissing off their big supporters is the last thing those committee members want to do."

For a moment, Lucien did not know what to say.

Florencia reorganized the documents in front of her again, and said, "Evans, your idea of using Elemental Swirl to deal with pollution is great, but my question is, again, did you ever consider its cost? Enchanting your ring, Element, with the spell, cost us a lot, and it can only be cast few times in a day. Even if the hydroelectricity magic tower in the alchemical factory could provide enough power for simplifying the spell to fourth or third circle, and even if the recycled pure elements could be reused, the cost is still there. Thus, the price, just like what I mentioned before, is still the biggest problem."

Lucien had no idea how to refute Florencia. After a while, he looked at Florencia sincerely, "Ms. Florencia, the cost is not that much."

"I know, but for many wealthy people, they would rather waste their money than invest the money in the future." Florencia nodded, "As this proposal is related to our cooperation with elves and druids, I will bring your proposal to the committee meeting, but I don't want you to have too much hope with it."

Her implication was clear. The reason why Florencia was having this conversation with Lucien was that Lucien was a young, talented sorcerer from the Will of Elements, and the reason why she was willing to bring proposal to other committee members was the cooperation relationship between the Congress and the elves and druids.

Promising as Lucien was, at this stage, Florencia was not going to spend too much time or effort on supporting this young second-circle sorcerer and level four arcanist.

"I really appreciate it, Ms. Florencia." Lucien knew that he was not some kind of big potato, thus he was aware that the outcome of this conversation was already not bad.

"Then, as a gentleman," Florencia smiled, "are you gonna invite me to dinner tonight?"

"Ah...? Yeah... I mean... of course." Lucien nodded. In fact, Lucien was about to visit Raventi later to see if members of High Tower could do anything for this issue, after all, High Tower had quite a good relationship with the Will of Elements, however, Lucien knew that he should obey Florencia's will right now.

"Ha..." Seeing Lucien's facial expression, Florencia grinned, with her hands covering the lower part of her face, "Don't be nervous, Evans. I was just joking. My husband, Oliver, will be back tonight from the other dimension, and we'll be having a nice dinner together."

Florencia simply liked making jokes of young and single males, but that was it, as she did not really mean anything.

...

Hearing from Lucien that Florencia was going to put forward the proposal, both Iristine and Arcelion were a bit relieved. At the same time, they also sent a message back to Stroop forest in order to gain more support.

Then, they came to the Royal Magic Tower of Holm with Lucien, to visit Raventi.

Raventi, who was wearing a gray magic robe, embroidered with mysterious symbols of elements, said to Lucien, "Evans, for you, I'll try to talk to the members, but honestly speaking, I don't understand why you care this much about it. Alchemical factories indeed do damage to the environment, but there's no difference between this and farmers cutting down forests to grow crops. We can make the factories stay away from cities as far as possible, so human beings would not be affected that much."

Although Raventi valued Lucien way more than Florencia did, and

he knew Lucien's talent well ever since Lucien first put forward the periodic table of elements, unfortunately, Raventi knew nothing about being environmentally friendly.

Lucien tried to explain the consequences to Raventi, and in the end, he concluded, "Mr. Raventi, I admit that there is nothing to really worry about for archmages and senior-rank sorcerers like you, but please think about our apprentices and human society as a whole. What would they be able to do when the environment got really damaged?"

"Well... I need to talk to the astrologists from High Tower right now. If they say that the pollution could actually turn out to be that bad in the future, I'm on your side then, Evans." Raventi listened to Lucien, and realized the significance of this issue to some degree. However, this was the furthest Raventi could go at this stage, after all, he was a senior-rank sorcerer, and he understood the world very differently from those elves and druids.

Raventi was the vice president of the Will of Elements, and he could possibly be on their side. Lucien was encouraged, and so were Iristine and Arcelion.

Lucien, Iristine and Arcelion waited for Raventi for a long time, after he left the meeting room and used Fernando's Electromagnetic Message to talk to his old friends from High Tower.

When Raventi came back, he looked quite serious, "According to the several senior-rank astrologists, they could see greenish yellow gas spreading everywhere in the air, human beings and animals dying, forests withering, waters turning black and smelly. Although what they could see was vague and it was only one possibility of future, we should still try our best to avoid it. I'll persuade the several members that I know relatively well in the committee to support you, Evans."

Lucien knew that he got lucky here, as what those astrologists saw was definitely the worst scenario.

When they were about to leave the magic tower, Iristine said to Lucien sincerely, "Mr. Evans, thank you so much for what you've

done for nature. Your persistence really impressed us, and you're a real gentleman."

"Well, this is also for myself. There's no way that I'm just gonna let those horrible things happen, and especially when I'm part of it, the person who first found those alchemical elements," Lucien responded. Right now, Lucien was planning on doing his meditation practice this evening, after all, upgrading was always his priority.

At this time, Patrick, the prince of Holm, walked down the stairs, followed by Arthur Doyle, who was like the prince's personal servant.

Wondering why the prince came to the Royal Magic Tower of Holm so often, Lucien took off his hat and bowed slightly, "Good evening, Your Highness."

After all, he was Natasha's uncle.

Noticing that it was Lucien, a kind smile appeared on Patrick's wizened face, "It's you, Evans. You're making great progress in both of your arcana and magic levels. Congratulations. Why are you here today?"

Lucien was about to visit Arthur tomorrow, but as he met the prince and Arthur here, Lucien directly invited the prince to a spare meeting room and told him what he was trying to do.

"So you want me to introduce the law that all alchemical factories must equip themselves with cleansing magic circles?" frowning slightly, Patrick asked. After several coughs, the prince continued, "I cannot control you sorcerers, and a proposal like this has no chance of passing the noble parliament. Those nobles won't agree on a decision that's gonna sacrifice their interest for something that they don't even care. As for Arthur's factory, don't worry, Evans. You don't have to give up your next year's profit for this. Arthur'll take care of this."

Lucien had just suggested that, regarding the factory that he was involved in, he was willing to give up his next year's profit to place cleansing magic circles in it.

"Yes, Mr. Evans. I got this. The only detail is that placing the magic circles will drag down the following several years' profit, especially since we're in agricultural industry, and the price of those grains can never be really high... Just want you to know this..." Although Arthur did not want to agree on this at all, the prince had already made the decision.

Disappointed as Lucien was, he still said with determination, "I'm not desperate for money right now, but I still hope that Holm Mineral and Harvest can last long and the profit can be consistent. The last thing I want to see is that the company will just shut down in several years because of all kinds of reasons. Besides that, I hope the alchemical products can be available for all farmers, so the price cannot be high. If they still don't have money, we can provide them with interest-free loans and so on."

This would definitely make farmers become less loyal to the Church.

It looked like Arthur started to think seriously. Lucien continued, "Your Highness, is there really no other ways around to introduce the law?"

Patrick slightly shook his head, "In most nobles' eyes, I'm a prince who's always sick, and they do not respect me as much. But actually I have another suggestion—we can turn this into an encouraging thing by offering subsidy to the factories that set up cleansing magic circles in the first place when they are built, and this subsidy can come from the annual profit of my share in Holm Mining Association."

Hearing that, Lucien was totally speechless. He could imagine how big the loss would be for Patrick. Honestly speaking, Lucien felt it suspicious that Patrick, as a prince, was always this nice to him. After all, even though he knew that Lucien was the famous musician and also that Lucien was his niece's good friend, Lucien still could not understand why Patrick was willing to go this far to help him. He was going to be the future king of Holm!

However, on the other side, Lucien had to admit that this was a great idea, and only a sophisticated, cunning brain could come up

with something like this. Lucien could suggest this to Florencia, as well as punishment for those factories which accepted the subsidy but refused to follow the regulation.

After making the decision, Lucien looked at Patrick from behind, who was still coughing when he left the meeting room with lots of questions in his mind. Lucien wondered why the prince was willing to support this proposal at such a big cost... Was it because he could foresee the possible horrible future as well?

...

Early Monday morning, Lucien, Iristine and Arcelion arrived at the main hall of the Affairs Committee on the twelfth floor. According to Florencia, she was going to put forward Lucien's proposal over today's regular meeting, and they would vote to make the decision.

As soon as they arrived here, the golem came to them, "Mr. Evans, Ms. Florencia wants you to give a speech later as a special invitee of this meeting, together with our two elven guests."

Chapter 242: Lucien, the Friend of Nature

"Huh?" Lucien was surprised by the arrangement. He did not prepare for a speech and he doubted the content would be effective.

Lucien had planned to prepare a speech and convince the members of the committee, however, as Florencia did not mention anything related to the speech, Lucien thought he did not need to do anything. He got lazy and just forgot about it.

Iristine and Arcelion looked excited, as they kept saying, "Make sure you explain the balance of nature theory completely. The theory is what we druids believe and you need to convince those sorcerers of it!"

Due to the excitement, the two elves did not feel the pressure, and their words made Lucien's head ache. He needed to give a concise but strong speech as long principles would not be effective.

"What should I say? I can't construct any convincing content in such a short period of time!" Lucien thought.

Lucien decided to help deal with the pollution because he knew that it was good for the environment he lived in and it was just a reasonable action. He could not convince the members with an emotional speech as he just could not relate to the situation. It was impossible for him to cry for the pollution.

"Well, let me check if anything helps in the spirit library."

Led by the Adaminite Golem, Lucien, Iristine, and Arcelion arrived at the side door of the Affairs Committee. They sat down on the soft long couch and waited to be summoned.

Tick Tick

On the opposite end of the hallway, there was a clock making monotone mechanical noises. Iristine got nervous after the excitement cooled down and she stared at Lucien. "Mr. Evans, what should I say?" It was nothing like the Tree Ritual hosted by her in

the royal palace, as she couldn't just complete the mission by following the procedure. Also, this time, she had to face the evil sorcerers instead of her elf friends.

"Why did you get excited so early?" Lucien thought, speechless for a while.

He looked at Iristine with a gentle expression on his face. "Talk about the consequences of failing to deal with the pollutions and the possible revenge from nature. It's what you're good at, isn't it?"

"So, the consequences of the pollution and the revenge of nature..." Iristine kept repeating those words while she tried to calm down. Arcelion was not nervous like Iristine, as he had hosted many important events in the royal palace and communicated with the guests as a representative of the royal chamber. Unlike his sister, he had a lot more experience in giving speeches.

Chi

The side door opened when Iristine was still trying to construct her speech. A girl with the badge of a level four arcanist and fifth-circle sorcerer stepped out of the room. The girl was about 20 years old and she looked energetic, but everyone knew she was older than that.

"Honored guests, who'll be the first to give the speech?" She spoke in a crisp tone with a low voice, it seemed like she did not want to disturb the committee members inside.

Arcelion looked at his sister and stood up. "I'll be the first one, miss." He knew that Iristine was not prepared yet.

"You can just call me Rachel, Your Highness." The young girl nodded slightly and smiled.

Lucien heard the name and raised his head unconsciously. It was an average-looking girl with flaxen hair and a pair of flaxen eyes. The girl gave Lucien an energetic and positive feeling, making him feel that they had met before.

Rachel was a genius in Astrology, Force, and Illusion, and was a

member of Tower, just like Larry, Timothy, and Ulysses. She was about 28 or 29 years old, and although her progression was similar to Felipe's in the past, the necromancer was much faster now.

Rachel noticed Lucien's sight and responded with a smile. She then led Arcelion into the hall and closed the side door.

About five minutes later, Rachel opened the door and Arcelion stepped out of the hall.

"Brother, how was your speech?" Iristine was concerned.

Arcelion shook his head with a serious expression on the face. "They listened to my speech but they sent me out before saying anything."

The atmosphere became heavy. The committee members had a discussion before asking Rachel to invite Iristine inside.

Iristine arranged her simple green druid long robe. It was designed for climbing, and she was trying to make herself look calm and trustable.

Again, five minutes later, Iristine came back with a depressed look on her pretty face. It looked like she was about to cry, and she looked at Arcelion. "The first thing I said was 'talk about the consequences of the pollution and the revenge of nature'. It was the same as what Mr. Lucien just told me..."

"You repeated that sentence too many times... What happened after?" Arcelion tried to distract his sister.

Iristine bit her lips and continued, "Miss Florencia calmed me down with a smile and I finally said what I wanted to say. They did not say anything, but I heard people arguing when leaving the hall. It seems like someone didn't like the idea.

Lucien tried to comfort the two elves while reading the information from the spirit library, "You've tried your best..."

"I wonder what the result will be..." Iristine looked at the closed side door, a bit worried. "If we fail, our relationship with the Congress of Magic will get worse... However, Mr. Evans, you'll

always be our friend no matter what happens."

Time flew in the silent environment. The side door finally opened again after a while. Rachel smiled at Lucien and spoke in a passionate tone, "Evans, your turn."

Lucien was wearing a white shirt with a black tuxedo and a pair of gold-wired glasses on his eyes. It was a formal outfit. He nodded and smiled after hearing Rachel's words. He arranged the collar and the cuff before following her into the door.

Behind the side door lay a narrow and quiet pathway. There was a polite smile on Rachel's face, but she did not say anything while leading the way.

Lucien turned at a corner after about ten steps inside and saw the committee members that were sitting around a large table.

Some of them were wearing magic robes and the others were wearing different types of formal attire. There were several empty chairs and there were fewer people here than Lucien expected.

The members of the Affairs Committee, excluding people like Florencia, had many things to take care of outside the committee, just like what happened to Rogerio some years ago. That was the reason why there were usually only half of the members in Allyn, however, there were only nineteen committee members there today.

For the rule to be passed, only two-thirds of the committee members needed to agree with it.

Rachel took Lucien to a seat opposite to all the committee members, and he saw the gentle smile on Florencia's face. She raised her right hand and slightly waved it to ask Lucien not to get nervous.

Lucien cleared his throat and opened his mouth slowly, "Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I think most of the committee members here have their own bloodline inheritors, relatives, and friends, right? The air they breathe, the water they drink, and the resources they acquire from the sea, the forests, and the mountains, are the

reason why they're still alive."

Lucien's started his speech in a different way and it helped the committee members to forces. Rogerio was looking at him with a strange expression on his face. No one knew what he was thinking.

"If we fasten the development by destroying nature, your beloved ones will..." Lucien described the worst situation possible, as the prophecy told by the astrologists.

Lucien tried his best not to laugh and concluded with a blank expression on his face, "Without a doubt, we need to get what we want when developing, however, during the process we can't destroy what our inheritors' lives will depend on. I think our development must be sustainable, and we need to develop the magic and collect resources, but we can't destroy the environment that will help our inheritors survive. The development will never stop if nature is not damaged to a point where it can't recover by itself anymore."

Lucien copied the idea from a book related to politics...

"Sustainable development. Good concept. Evans, you can leave now. We'll tell you the result after the vote," Florencia said with a warm smile on her face.

Lucien bowed slightly and followed Rachel out of the meeting hall.

"When will I become the one who can stay in the hall and discuss the things related to the Congress of Magic? I don't want to just wait outside and listen to the result."

A small flame appeared in Lucien's mind.

...

Outside the meeting hall.

"Mr. Evans, how was your speech?" Iristine questioned curiously and nervously.

Lucien repeated what he said in front of the members and spoke in

a gentle tone, "I don't know if my speech is good enough to convince the members, and we will have to wait for the result.

Lucien, Iristine, and Arcelion waited on the long couch quietly outside the door. The noise made by the clock was making them nervous.

It felt like time was slower than usual in the heavy atmosphere. Half an hour later, the side door slowly opened when Arcelion was about to stand up and leave. Florencia stepped out of the hall, wearing a purple-tiered skirt with a six-star arcana badge and an eighth-circle magic badge on her chest.

"Prince Arcelion, Princess Iristine, and Evans. The result is out. There were ten votes against the proposal and seven votes supporting the proposal in the first round, so the proposal was rejected. However, we discussed how we should modify the proposal and in the second round, there were sixteen votes supporting the new proposal and three votes against. The new proposal was passed. The rule is not as strict as you thought. There'll be a mild punishment for the alchemy factory that violates the pollution disposal rule. To encourage them to follow the rule, we decided to provide them with subsidies and benefits in the recycling of the separated elements."

Florencia looked at the two elves with a serious expression on the face. The reason why they passed this new proposal was to improve the Congress' alliance with the elves and druids. The sorcerers knew that if the Congress was defeated, they would not live a happy life in the future. The sorcerers that were hiding on the other side of the Storm Strait and survived in the dangerous Dark Mountain Range were perfect examples.

Arcelion and Iristine were tortured by the hope and loss of hope multiple times. They were satisfied with the result, at least, as that was a clear rule that came with benefits. They put their right index fingers on their foreheads. It was how the elves showed their respect.

"We can see the sincerity of the Congress of Magic. We hope that the rule will be stricter as the number of alchemy factories increases

and the sorcerers change their thoughts about the environment. Also, we'll report the situation to the elders and the royal palace immediately."

Florencia watched the two elves walk into the hall and start sending messages. She smiled at Lucien and said, "What, Lucien? Disappointed?"

"Well, my goal is somewhat fulfilled." Lucien was indeed slightly disappointed.

Florencia put her hands on her back and stared at Lucien with a pair of green eyes.

"You're not strong enough and your words are not taken seriously by the committee. If you can make most of the sorcerers respect you and have the power that will make anyone fear, everything you say will be passed. Young man, that's what makes a mature man attractive, and you still have a long way to go.

"My husband, Oliver, is a man like that. Although he's a playboy, I still love him deep in my heart. Young man, I hope you can become a man like that in the future, and there'll be a girl that loves you deep in her heart." Florencia waved her hand and turned to the meeting hall to host the next discussion.

Lucien clicked his tongue as the side door closed.

"Grand Arcanist, huh? There's definitely a long way to go."

Iristine and Arcelion returned as he thought about it.

"Mr. Evans, thank you for what you did for us. Although the result was not what we expected, it was still a success. Your help was the reason why we succeeded. It's hard to find a sorcerer that has the foresight and loves nature like you. I'll apply for the title, the Friend of Nature, for you after I get back to the royal palace. It's the symbol of friendship for elves," Arcelion opened his mouth first.

Iristine smiled and said, "Mr. Evans, don't worry, I'm sure the rule can be improved. We know how much you did for us. I'm glad that I have a friend like you. I want to give you the Bless of Elf."

She took out a piece of leaf that looked normal but it was infused with the energy of nature.

Lucien did not decline the offer, as it was the main material for an important potion.

The potion was called Flight and it was the best supportive potion that could help him advance to the middle-rank. The material requirement was a leaf that dropped from an elven tree and the leaf must be blessed by an elf, and that was why the material was so rare. Using the potion when advancing, he would be able to create a spell model for the flying spell in his body, and his spirit power would be 50% higher than a normal 3rd circle sorcerer.

It was something he did not expect.

"Thank you." Lucien grabbed the leaf and realized that there was another blessing on his body, from the wraith girl named Marry. The blessing had been with him for a long time but nothing happened. He decided to find some magic books related to the souls, wraiths, curses, and blessings after advancing to the third circle.

"I shall write down the piano song named as Storm and gift it to Natasha as a birthday gift after I get back today. I need to focus on improving my sorcery skills and try to advance to the third circle within half a year. My words won't be taken seriously if I'm weak." Lucien thought quietly.

Chapter 243: Flying

Chapter 243: Flying

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The spacious living room was right now filled with a cheerful melody. Annick, Layria, Sprint and all the apprentices who studied there were dancing with the music, trying to picture how those nobles danced in those fancy parties. At the same time, the apprentices were also peeking at Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans' upper body was very relaxed, and his fingers moved fast and flexibly. His profile was charming, as he was very dedicated to his playing, with a big smile on the corner of his lips. The whole scene looked like an elegant picture.

Finishing his playing, Lucien stood up from the piano chair and said to all the apprentices, "Ladies and gentlemen, happy new year."

"Mr. Evans, happy new year!" the apprentices said together happily.

Their voices were quite different—some were low, some were hoarse, and some were clear. Among those teenagers, some were experiencing their voice-changing period, which made Lucien a bit emotional. After all, another year was gone, and all of his students were growing and changing.

"Today's the first day of 818." Lucien picked up his glass from the table, "I wish every one of you can make further progress in your study this year!"

The apprentices also lifted their glasses, "Wish you become middle-rank sorcerer this year, Mr. Evans!"

During the new year period, all of Lucien's friends went back to their own hometowns to see their families, so he invited all the apprentices from across the strait to his place to get together.

In the past year, because of Lucien's teaching, Annick, Layria, Heidi,

Sprint and Katrina had all moved to senior apprentice class, and Chely also had become an apprentice.

The dinner was pleasant, and after it the apprentices started saying good night to each other and heading toward the guest rooms. Because they were too excited for the whole night, they were feeling quite tired now.

Chely was the last one who left the hall. When she was walking upstairs, she turned around and said to Lucien a bit shyly, “Mr. Evans... I just want to say... When you were playing piano, you really looked like the talented musician from Aalto, who wrote For Silvia, which always reminds me of Jacques. I’m sure that he’s still striving for our future, and I feel really encouraged. Thank you, Mr. Evans... Thank you for your playing.”

“That’s very romantic.” Lucien smiled and nodded.

After the servants came in, Lucien went back to his study upstairs. Sitting in his armchair, he turned on the desk light and opened the letter lying on the desk.

The letter was sent from Aalto half a year ago, but just arrived today:

“... My Blood Burning Syndrome is gone now, and my power is becoming more and more stable. I miss my sword. I miss the blue sky. I miss those fights. I miss that wonderful music.

“... You must have arrived in Allyn. I wonder if the City in the Sky still looks the same...

“Is food in Holm monotonous like what I told you? In my mind, Holm food is the worst. Every time when I thought of the fact that you have to eat grilled fish and fries everyday, I felt that it was bad and funny at the same time...

“When I was young, my mom always told me stories about arcana and magic, and that is a fabulous world full of mysteries. I hope that you can forget all the pain and suffering you had from before and really enjoy exploring this whole new world. And I’m confident

that you, my friend, can become a middle-rank sorcerer in a few years...

“By the way Lucien, did you ever meet my uncle Patrick? I wonder how he’s doing right now. He never mentioned about his health condition in his letters, which makes me feel quite worried...

“Your friend, John, has awakened his Blessing and become a knight. What slightly surprises me is that his Blessing is Elimination. Fortunately, he does not serve the Church, and thus he will not join the Night Watch, or it would be another horrible joke from destiny, like what happened to Silvia and me. However, even so, I believe that you will never yield to destiny, my friend, and you will beat down the so called destiny and stamp on it! For me and Silvia... It was a mistake, but I don’t want to complain and I won’t. Because this was Silvia’s and my own mistake, and we should be responsible for it.

“Anyways, let’s talk about some pleasant things. Your uncle, Joel, still enjoys playing on the streets a lot, and your aunt, Alisa, just lost her job working in Textile Association because no one dared let a knight’s mom wash clothes for them. Right now, Alisa is majorly managing John’s manor and also yours.

“As for Iven, he’s learning how to read and write now, and he’s also receiving knight training after Lord Venn. Elena has left her job in the Musicians’ Association to focus on her violin playing. Mr. Victor and Felicia have come back from their trip and they really like your Moonlight Sonata. Right now, Felicia is preparing her own concert, and I’m really happy for her.

“Mr. Rhine never showed up again after the music festival. I’m not sure what happened in Aalto at that time...

“Lucien, please don’t forget what I told you before—life is more than just magic. We have music, cuisines, fights, friends, and also romance. I know that you’re a gentleman, Lucien, and I know that you’re still waiting for your dream girl. Be brave when you find her! Chase her! Conquer her! Don’t be shy! If you need more strategies, feel free to write to me and ask!

“In the end, happy birthday, my friend.

“Natasha,

“June, 30th, 817”

Lucien was smiling when he was reading the letter. The words in the letter were for sure not fancy, but it comforted Lucien a lot, as if he was sitting right in front of an old friend, and he felt very peaceful. Although they had not seen each other for a long time, Lucien still felt close to Natasha.

But seriously, Lucien thought to himself, still with the smile on his face, that if he was really going to ask for Natasha’s suggestions to chase a girl, he would definitely lose the chance because their communication would take a whole year...

Feeling peaceful and refreshed after reading the letter, Lucien stood up from his chair and came to his meditation room.

After closing the door and sitting on a special chair, Lucien took out a flask of green potion from his storage pouch. The green potion looked clean and tasty.

This was the potion called Flying, and it was made of the fallen leaf of an elven tree and other precious ingredients, which cost Lucien more than seventy arcana points. Together with all the money that he spent on doing experiments and making magic potions, Lucien only had sixty-one arcana points now. He had to say that learning magic basically meant burning money.

Feeling rather peaceful, Lucien slowly pulled the potion into his mouth. The potions tasted cool and sweet, way better than many other potions that Lucien took before.

Lucien suddenly felt that his soul was very light, and he easily entered his meditation environment. This time, his meditation world was clear like crystal, like the limpid water of a still lake.

The potion was slowly absorbed by Lucien’s soul, and his spiritual power rocketed. Then, a complicated magic model appeared—it was the spell, Flying.

The model was constructed with distorted lines and curved cambers. A sorcerer who had zero understanding in arcana or who was not good at mathematics needed to manually draw a real magic model based on this half-transparent model from the potion, which required high level of spiritual power. However, Lucien, as an arcanist, did not have to worry about this. He had previously calculated and analyzed the model, and thus he could use his spiritual power more wisely by referring to the power of his Host Star of Destiny and the elemental particles around him to build the model of the spell.

Once Lucien could analyze third-circle spells using his own arcana knowledge and become a middle-rank sorcerer, which meant that his knowledge had a solid mathematical basis, he could choose his own study interest in arcana.

Lucien right now was surrounded by those complicated mathematical symbols and formula, and he stayed focused and paid all his attention to finishing the construction of the model.

As soon as the model became complete, dazzling light suddenly burst out of the model, and it started to absorb spiritual power like crazy. Lucien's soul was enveloped in it as well.

Lucien's spiritual power was enough for nurturing the model, so he calmly prevented the extra spiritual power from the magic potion from approaching him, while at the same time let the dazzling light change his soul.

Feeling slightly itchy and numb, Lucien's soul was almost substantialized because of the power, and it looked more clear and pure. All the magic models that he constructed in his soul before had shrank to small crystal size and were now rotating around a bigger magic model, Flying, as if they were worshiping it.

It was the symbol of a successful upgrade to the third circle!

However, Lucien did not stop, but continued to construct magic models for Elemental Order and Lucien's Great Fire Ball. The latter was an attack spell based on the study of nitroglycerin, and it was as powerful as the fourth circle magic, Chain Explosion, improved

by Timothy. The only shortcoming of Lucien's Great Fire Ball was that it was not stable enough, and sometimes a fire ball might explode before it arrived at its destination, and thus extra shaping spells were needed to assist the casting.

After a long time, the window of the meditation room suddenly opened, through which Lucien flew out of the window and soared into the air.

The starry sky above Allyn right now looked close enough to touch, and the night wind refreshed Lucien. When he looked down at the city below him, his chest was filled with the pleasure of freedom.

This was how flying felt like!

Chapter 244: Simple Task

In ancient magic system, Flying belonged to the school of Astrology, but in the contemporary magic system, it belonged to both the schools of Force and Astrology, because the principle of the spell was using the gravity of stars to counteract the one from the ground.

Lucien closed his eyes and enjoyed the night wind when he was flying free in the sky, and he felt that he was totally released from all the constraints. The only thing was that his flying was pretty slow, and he also needed to pay attention to the stars to calculate his directions and flying angle. In order to save some trouble, Lucien knew that he needed an auxiliary magic circle helping him with the calculation, and before he learned Flying (Advanced), sixth circle, he could never fly as fast as a magic steam train, but maybe he could use hydromechanics or aerodynamics to improve it a bit.

When Lucien was still indulging in the wonderful experience of his first-time flying, he heard a low male voice, "Sir, you've violated Allyn's Controlling Regulation, the eighteenth article—flying is prohibited in Allyn unless special permission is given from the congress. So... penalty or imprisonment?"

Lucien suddenly opened his eyes at a loss and he saw the young sorcerer in front of him who was wearing a black magic robe and a flame badge, which revealed his identity as a battle sorcerer. The young, black-haired sorcerer looked rather serious, and from the badges in front of his chest, Lucien knew that he was a forth circle sorcerer and he worked for Punishment Department of the Congress.

However, the young sorcerer was also wearing a white-feather badge, which meant that he had got the special permission for flying, but Lucien did not.

Lucien realized that he was so excited that he forgot the fact that flying was prohibited in Allyn. He rubbed his forehead a bit embarrassedly and asked, "How... How much is the penalty?"

Before the young sorcerer answered, Lucien thought of the fact that right now he only had sixty-one points left, so he hurriedly changed his question, "I mean... How long will I be kept in prison?"

Seeing that Lucien was being quite cooperative, the young sorcerer looked less serious now, "We're in the rural area of Allyn right now, so, fortunately, the punishment is not as severe as what you'd get if you flew above the city center, and also, this is your first time, sir, so the penalty is thirty points, and if you'd rather go to the jail, you'll be kept there for one month."

"A month?! All right... I choose the penalty." Although Lucien did not want to lose the money at all, he did not want to stay in prison for a whole month either. Lucien decided to regard this as a special upgrade "celebration" for himself, in order to make himself feel better.

"All right..." the young sorcerer signed a ticket and gave it to Lucien, "Just bring this to Punishment Department and pay for it." Then he grinned a bit when he saw the beautiful ring on Lucien's right hand, "Mr. Evans, congratulations, you're a middle-rank mage now. You're another sorcerer who became a third circle mage before the age of twenty-two. I believe that your momentum will still last before you move on toward the senior ranks."

In fact, this body was not even twenty, but if talking about Lucien's real age, the age that he had had before he came over to this world, it was twenty-five.

Lucien put on a polite smile and said, "Thank you. You're the first one who said congratulations to me. Can I know your name?"

The young battle sorcerer responded humorously, "Of course. I'm not afraid of your revenge, Mr. Evans. I'm Jurisian, from both Punishment Department and Battle Sorcerer Department. My colleague saw you from Allyn's Eye and found that you were a level four arcanist, so I'm here to handle you, sir."

"Wait... You're Jurisian? The talented arcanist in the school of Electromagnetics?" Lucien was quite surprised. Lazar, Rock and Lucien's other friends kept infusing lots of information into his brain

about the young geniuses in the congress, so Lucien recognized the name immediately.

Jurisian, a level four arcanist, was once very close to winning Silver Moon Medal because of the finding of photoelectric sensing, but at the same time, he was very enthusiastic toward fighting and duelling, so he applied to Punishment Department and Battle Sorcerer Department on his own.

Jurisian smiled and said, "I'm not gonna call myself a genius right in front of you, Mr. Evans. In most young sorcerers' mind, we've only got two geniuses. One is Mr. Felipe, who has won Holm Crown prize once and Immortal Throne prize twice, and the other genius is you, Mr. Evans. I have to say that you two redefined the word 'genius', because now no one dares call himself or herself a genius if they haven't won the highest honour in their fields. So, Rachel, Arthur, Samantha, Larry and many other sorcerers, including me, are just like common people."

For sure, Jurisian was very smart with his words. He showed his respect to Lucien in an indirect way.

After chatting a bit, Jurisian activated Allyn Magic Circle and disappeared in the air, leaving Lucien staring at the ticket in his hand alone.

Lucien was glad that he could have a sixty-point subsidy every month from now on, and his living and experiment cost could basically be covered. However, his budget was definitely tighter than before. Thinking of that, Lucien started to feel a bit regretful with his idea of setting up cleansing magic circles for the factory, or he would earn way more than what he was making right now.

Putting the ticket in his pocket, Lucien started to descend slowly for landing. At the same time, he looked at the darkness in the west. He wished that he could find a chance to go back to Aalto to see all his friends there.

When Lucien was about to land on the windowsill of his villa, a window beside him opened. It was Layria and Heidi.

The two young girls woke up and could not fall asleep again from their great nostalgia, so they opened the window to look at the starry sky.

"Mr. Evans?" They were surprised.

"You two cannot fall asleep?" Lucien smiled, "What about having another set of arcana exercise?"

The two young girls suddenly sensed great danger and took a step backward together, "No, thanks, Mr. Evans. We're fine here. We just want to... close the window. Happy new year and wish you become a middle-rank mage this year!"

Then they closed the window right in front of Lucien.

Two seconds later, the window opened again. The two girls were right now staring at Lucien who was floating in the air, and they looked shocked,

"Mr. Evans, have you upgraded already? Did we just sleep in for the whole year?!"

...

In the past two weeks, Lucien constructed another third circle magic, Maskelyne's Star, in his soul. After making sure that his new power was already stable, Lucien was now heading for Allyn Magic Tower to upgrade his magic badge.

So far, Lucien had constructed twenty-seven first-circle, seventeen second-circle, and three third-circle spells in his soul, and that was twenty percent more than the amount that a new third-circle sorcerer could have on average. Furthermore, the best thing was that all of Lucien's third-circle spells, except Flying, were all his exclusive spells!

In Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric's surprised look was nothing new to Lucien anymore. He reached out his hand and said, "Congratulations, Evans, you're really a genius. Even though you used the magic potion, you still have a very solid mathematical foundation. In most cases, soon some senior-rank sorcerers or

archmages will want you to become their student."

"Thank you, Mr. Eric." Lucien shook hands with Eric and handed his magic badge to him, "Except for Element and Astrology, I'm still very new in other fields."

Eric took a look at Lucien's magic badge and reminded him, "Now you can choose a permanent magic buff on it. What do you want?"

"Can I choose other stuff other than a magic buff?" Having the ring, Element, Lucien did not really need a middle-rank magic buff on his badge, so he asked for alternatives directly.

It was not the first time that Eric encountered this question, so he asked cut and dry, "What do you want? It cannot outvalue a middle-rank magic buff."

"I want a sculpt spell, Mr. Eric, to increase the effective length of a spell." Lucien needed it for Lucien's Great Fireball. Although he had to spend twice the amount of spiritual power to cast both the spell and the sculpt spell, that could stabilize the effects of his own fireball.

The congress had been developing various kinds of enhancing spells, including silent casting, quick casting, enhanced casting, all kinds of sculpt spells and so on. Arcanists or sorcerers needed to meet level requirement to get those spells by exchanging, and they were not cheap for sure. The sculpt spell that Lucien was asking for was the cheapest.

"It's about the same value." Eric nodded, "But still, you might need to pay an extra ten to fifty points."

"No problem." Although Lucien said so, his heart was bleeding. He just paid for his penalty, and right now he only had thirty-one points. And this thirty-one points was from what was left after he sold his Grimsteel Dagger from before. If he still needed more money later, Lucien needed to sell his Asthenia Dagger then.

Eric put Lucien's badge together with a piece of note in the magic cage and then pulled the bell. Silver light burst out and the items in

the cage disappeared.

Ten minutes later, the bell started ringing. The badge was sent back, together with a thick roll of parchment.

Eric handed the badge to Lucien and frowned a bit, "Evans, you just paid thirty points for the sculpt spell, and you've also got a mandatory task."

Lucien was a middle-rank mage now. Receiving one mandatory task from the congress was just normal, and it happened to be the beginning of the new year.

However, Lucien was still a bit surprised that he just got his task so soon. He took over the badge and the parchment roll written with the sculpt spell, and started to sense the task information contained in the magic badge.

"Demon Cleansing (Simple): In Mount Kapas, Holm, a third-circle sorcerer tried to summon low-rank demons but failed. The sorcerer died from this and the demons occupied his castle. You need to eliminate the demons together with other sorcerers who were also given the task. Reward: fifty arcana points."

Chapter 245: Mr. Evans

Chapter 245: Mr. Evans

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien put on his upgraded magic badge, and although the magic steam train had recently introduced a new route from Allyn to Kapas, he didn't board it to get his task done, but instead hired a coach and headed for the magic tower of the Will of Elements.

The task was given to Lucien in way that he considered suspicious, because it arrived right after Lucien upgraded. He wanted to have some senior-rank arcanists from his own group check it first to make sure everything was fine there.

In an office of the magic tower of the Will of Elements, Gaston listened to Lucien's description of the task quietly with his fingers crossed. His dark yellow eyes looked a bit suspicious and Gaston said seriously, "This doesn't look like a dangerous task. With your ring, even if you cannot fulfill the task, protecting yourself and escaping should not be a problem. But for your safety, I still need to ask Florencia... maybe she knows something else."

Letting Lucien wait for him in the office, Gaston walked into another room and talked to Florencia via Fernando's Electromagnetic Message.

Lucien took the chance and started to think carefully whether he had some potential enemies in the Congress who might want him dead. The issue about Life Force Theory was gone now, and it was Felipe who drew most of the attention, and with regards to placing the cleansing magic circles, Lucien did not think that someone would want to kill him because of that, especially because in the end it was just an option for those factories.

Lucien wondered whether he could draw the conclusion that no one was trying to use the task to kill him.

After a while, Gaston came back.

Gaston elegantly sat down first and then he said to Lucien, smiling, "I've talked to Florencia. She said that it was an emergency thing, and it should be safe. But because we value you very much, Evans, and you've become a middle-rank sorcerer within a year, I can lend you a magic item."

Gaston took out a nice monocle with a fine silver chain and handed it to Lucien, "This monocle has been enchanted with Fernando's Electromagnetic Message permanently. If anything goes wrong, contact me immediately. This is my exclusive frequency and code..."

As he was saying, he wrote down all the information for Lucien on a piece of paper.

Obviously, Lord of Storm, when inventing that spell, had already taken confidentiality into consideration.

Lucien left his spiritual power mark in the monocle following Gaston's instructions, and then put it on. The gold-rimmed glasses he was wearing before were put into his right pocket, and there was a pocket watch on the left one.

When Lucien picked up his top hat and was about to leave, Gaston stood up and smiled, "Evans, congratulations for upgrading to the third circle, which is a very important threshold for many sorcerers. The fact that you've made it means that you've surpassed seventy percent of the sorcerers, and from now on, the Will of Elements will be giving you forty arcana points every month as your subsidy."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Gaston." Hearing that, Lucien sincerely grinned.

...

Near the entrance of Mount Kapas, Fraser town.

The town was very remote. One needed to first take a six-hour train from Allyn to Kapas' city center, then spend half a day riding a long-distance coach to get to a town named Tenning, and then bump along the mountain road for another two hours to get there.

Of course, sorcerers who could fly did not have to worry about it.

There were lots of trees and wild animals in the mountains. Most residents here in the small town worked as hunters or lumbermen. Several sorcerer castles here controlled part of the mineral veins, and because some sorcerers, many magic apprentices, and also miners lived there, this remote town was actually quite lively instead of being very isolated as one would image. Many adventures and mercenaries even came here to seek for precious gems, ores, plants or secret fortune.

The most popular tavern in Fraser was called Gold Cup. Many adventures and mercenaries were there right now, drinking and chatting. They were used to carousing every night before they entered the mountains, as they had no idea that whether they would still get a chance to see the next day's sunrise once they went in there.

In the strong smell of alcohol, some adventures were chatting in low voice, "Have you heard that the third-circle sorcerer in Bertren Castle was killed by the demons summoned by himself?" A dwarf with long blond beard asked the guy who he just met in this tavern.

The guy, who was of middle age and got a scary scar on his face, nodded seriously, "The two apprentices who managed to escape said that castle was like hell. People were burnt to death, corroded by strong acid, torn into pieces by sharp claws, hacked in half... There was blood and guts everywhere."

As the man was saying, he carefully pointed at the two apprentices who were beyond drunk in the corner of the tavern. One was male and one was female. Although they were drunk, they still looked very terrified, as if they were stuck in the nightmare.

"You wanna go there to see if we can find something there?" asked the greedy dwarf, "Maybe get around those demons and get some treasures there. That guy was a middle-rank sorcerer, so think about how wealthy he could be!"

Another middle-aged woman looked at the dwarf contemptuously, "Are you out of your mind? Those demons killed a third-circle

sorcerer! Do you just want to die that bad?”

“I agree. And the Congress definitely has sent some sorcerers here to handle this. Don’t tell me you want to take those treasures from those crazy people... Your power from the magic potion is nothing in front of them...” said the scar-faced man.

At this time, the tavern’s door opened, and there came in a young battle sorcerer wearing a black magic robe. He first looked around at the people in the tavern with his blue, threatening eyes. Feeling his oppressive aura, no one in the tavern dared look at him directly. Then, he walked to the two apprentices in the corner who were still drinking although they were already beyond drunk.

The battle sorcerer grabbed their wood cups and threw them onto the ground, and the golden liquor was everywhere. The two apprentices slowly looked up at the sorcerer, confusedly.

“I’m Charlie. I’m here to solve the problem in Castle Bertren. You two answer my questions carefully,” said the young man seriously. His years of experience in fighting gave him this kind of oppressive manner.

The two apprentices looked a bit more sober now, and they started trembling. The female apprentice with burgundy-colored hair responded in trembling voice, “Mr. Charlie... I’m Susan and this is Scott. We were Mr. Bertren’s apprentices... At that night, Mr. Bertren tried to summon... those things... in his chamber...”

At this time, a black, short-haired lady came into the tavern. She was wearing an elegant, purple magic robe, and her brownish-yellow eyes were cold and sharp. After looking around, she directly walked to Charlie and introduced herself, “Hi, I’m Sandra, middle rank. I’m also with the task.”

“I’m Charlie, middle rank.” Charlie nodded. Neither Charlie nor Sandra wanted to reveal their specific level right in front of so many people, and both of them were wearing their badges underneath their robes.

The golden-bearded dwarf turned around and took a quick glance at

them, then murmured to the middle-aged woman and the scar-faced man, “Of course, the Congress has sent people here already... Look at them... They’re at least of fourth circle. Just one of them could just destroy the whole castle... even the whole town.”

Those adventures rarely saw real sorcerers, not to mention middle-ranked ones, so they were curious and regarded those sorcerers with fear and reverence.

“I told you...” The scar-faced man looked a bit intimidated.

Charlie and Sandra, on the other side, were listening to the apprentices carefully, and they did not care how those adventurers were commenting on them at all, because they were just too powerful and confident to be bothered by things like that.

This kind of attitude impressed the adventurers even more.

“I heard that we have one more sorcerer for this task?” After listening to the apprentices, Sandra asked Charlie.

“That’s right.” Charlie nodded, “He’s not here yet. Let’s wait for him a bit longer. We can be safer with one more person’s power, and I think he should be middle-rank, shouldn’t he?”

“For sure,” answered Sandra simply.

“Are they waiting for someone?” The middle-aged woman looked at the tavern door.

“Come on... They don’t have to...” the dwarf murmured, “They’re of at least fourth circle!”

“It’s always good to be cautious.” When the scar-faced man was saying this, the tavern door was opened again.

Subconsciously, all the people in the tavern turned around and looked at the person who just came in.

It was a young, good-looking man, who was wearing a black, double-breasted coat, a black top hat and a fine monocle, which made him look gentle and elegant.

Those adventurers in the tavern all wondered why a young noble would come there.

Charlie and Sandra looked at him cautiously, as they were not sure whether he was the sorcerer that they were waiting for. After all, the man just looked too young to be a middle-rank.

At this time, both Charlie and Sandra noticed the purple-gem ring on the young man's right hand. The ring was very unique and gorgeous.

They recognized the young man immediately.

The man was the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize, an honorary member of Holm Royal Magic Academy, the genius who managed to upgrade to middle rank within a year!

Watching the young man walking to them elegantly with a smile on his face, both Charlie and Sandra suddenly stood up together and greeted him respectfully, "Nice to meet you, Mr. Evans."

Their attitude surprised everyone present.

Chapter 246: Castle Bertren

Chapter 246: Castle Bertren

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the tavern, Gold Cup.

Lucien pulled a chair for himself and sat down, then he nodded to them, smiling, and said, “Nice to meet you two as well. How do you want me to call you?” As he was asking, Lucien showed them his Holm Crown prize ring purposefully but in a casual way to make them understand who was the leader of this group, so he could possibly be in safer place later in the castle.

“Charlie, battle sorcerer, middle rank.”

“Middle rank, Sandra.”

Both Charlie and Sandra briefly introduced themselves in a respectful way to Lucien. Although they were confident in their own power, they knew that Lucien once killed a senior-rank sorcerer with Felipe before, thus they understood the power difference between the young man in front of them and themselves.

Moreover, according the tradition of the Congress, when two sorcerers were of the same rank, the one with higher arcana level would be more respected. As a level-four arcanist, and the winner of Holm Crown prize, Lucien of course was of a higher status than most middle-rank sorcerers.

However, despite the fact that Charlie and Sandra had naturally regarded Lucien as their team leader, experienced in combatting as they were, they were still waiting to see if Lucien could prove that he was capable of being a leader, or they simply would not follow and listen to him blindly.

Lucien nodded, and then he turned around and started talking to the apprentices, “I’m Lucien Evans, and I need a guide to the castle. Who volunteers?”

Before the apprentices answered, Lucien said to Charlie and Sandra, "Tell me the detailed information about the castle when we're on the way. We cannot waste too much time here, or more demons would be summoned by the magic circle in the summoning room."

Charlie and Sandra slightly nodded. They liked Lucien's decisive style.

The two apprentices, who were still beyond scared, obviously did not like Lucien's plan at all, "M... Mr. Evans... We can tell you everything... You don't really need a guide..."

Susan's face was pale, and her teeth were striking against each other. She could not stop thinking of the blood, the guts, the chunks of limbs and the fire... They were driving her nuts.

Scott could not even speak a single word.

Lucien shook his head and said to them in a gentle way, "You two should know that there's no magic under the ninth circle which could completely read your memory, and that means very possibly we will be missing some important information, including the layout of the castle. So we do need a guide to help us, and please trust that we're capable of protecting you."

Lucien used some hypnosis skills when he was talking.

His gentle voice comforted the apprentices, and Susan started to wonder whether Lucien was a senior-rank sorcerer based on the other two sorcerers' respectful attitude toward him, and maybe in the future, he could offer her some help in the Congress. Living in a remote town, neither Susan nor Scott knew that Lucien was the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize, and although she did not expect to become Lucien's student, as an apprentice who lost her sorcerer teacher, she needed that help.

Taking the courage, Susan nodded, "Mr. Evans... I can be your guide, but... but please... please make sure that I'll be safe."

As she was speaking, Susan took a quick glance at Scott, who was still trembling slightly in the corner. Susan had a bit of joy in her

mind as she finally surpassed Scott this time. Scott was more talented in the study of arcana, and his spiritual power was more abundant, but his biggest problem was his timidity. Susan had been feeling envious of Scott for more than a year, and right now she was proud of herself.

“Very well. Your courage has impressed me.” Lucien nodded, “And courage is very important to a successful sorcerer. This is not a time of peace, and we always need to fight.”

Then, Lucien stood up and took out his pocket watch, “Right now it’s five in the afternoon. Hopefully, we can finish the task before it gets dark. If we can’t make it on time, we should probably leave the castle, as some of the demons would get way stronger at night.”

“Yes, Mr. Evans.” Charlie and Sandra also stood up.

After they left the tavern, those adventurers finally felt at ease and started to talk to each other excitedly.

“Is the young man actually a senior-rank sorcerer?” exclaimed the dwarf. “Why those two middle-rank sorcerers were being so respectful to him? But he’s just too young!”

Most adventures had never seen a real senior-rank sorcerer. Most senior-rank sorcerers either were important nobles or lived in Allyn, or were exploring in the Dark Mountain Range and other dimensions. Even if those adventurers could run into one in Rentato, they would not recognize them as such.

The scar-faced man laughed, “Come on... Maybe he just look young, and maybe he’s a few hundred years old... Older than your great-great-great-grandma, ha!”

...

In the cold wind, Lucien, Charlie and Sandra were flying toward the castle called Bertren. Looking from above, the forest below was covered with a thick layer of snow, sprinkled with a few green spots from those evergreen pine trees.

“That’s about it.” Sandra, who was carrying Susan flying using a

spell called Coil, just told Lucien all the information they had got.

Seeing Susan being pinched with cold, Sandra cast Element Endurance on Susan. Element Endurance was an ancient magic, although it did not work well for defending against magic attacks, it was rather useful in extreme cold or hot environments. Spells from the school of Thermodynamics such as Coldness Endurance and Heat Endurance could make one feel being exposed to nice spring weather even in an extreme environment ranging from minus ten to sixty to seventy degrees.

Lucien adjusted his monocle a bit and said, “Susan and Scott were in panic at that time, and they only noticed a few kinds of low-rank demons. So we shall never lower our guard. I’m a third-circle sorcerer, specializing in Element and Astrology, and I’ve got some good magic items. What about you two?”

“Fourth-circle battle sorcerer, specializing in Element, Force Field, Thermodynamics and Transformation. And I have some decent magic items as well,” answered Charlie, staring at the castle located next to the mountain not too far from them.

Sandra also noticed the castle in the front, and she answered briefly, “Fourth-circle, Electromagnetics, Light-darkness, Force Field and Summoning.”

“Great. You can handle the summoning magic circles later.” Lucien nodded. A layer of golden-white flame covered his long coat and soon formed an all-round shield like an eggshell.

Knowing that they were close to the destination now, Lucien directly activated Powerful Fire Shield enchanted within his ring, Element. The shield could last for ten minutes before it was broken.

Charlie and Sandra also cast their own most powerful defensive spells.

Charlie’s magic robe started to shine with moving light consisted of countless transparent magic symbols. This was an exclusive magic created by the congress called Douglas’s Absorbing Wall, from combining Minor Globe of Invulnerability and Protection from

Energy.

Sandra's skin and clothes quickly turned stone-gray like a statue. Five colourful magic light balls were now surrounding Susan's head and her own. They were fourth-circle magic Stoneskin and Palmeira's Power Magic Spheres.

Lucien also cast Mechanized Mind on himself to make sure that he was absolutely cool-headed.

Castle Bertren was a black castle built around a main center pinnacle. The sky started to get a little bit dusky, and the castle looked like a terrifying monster waiting for its prey.

The gate of the castle opened wide, and the strong smell of blood from inside of the castle was overwhelming. The gate was just like the huge mouth of a monster.

Chapter 247: The Apprentice Hall

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Seeing the wide-open gate, Lucien, Charlie and Sandra were a bit relieved, because that meant the magic circle of the castle itself had not been activated. Either the core of the castle had been damaged when the summoning failed, or the low-rank demons just had no idea how to control the magic circle.

Either way was a piece of good news for them, as a sorcerer castle with an activated protective magic circle could be one or two levels even more powerful than the owner himself. This castle, designed and constructed by a third-circle sorcerer, could have the power of a fourth or fifth-circle sorcerer, and if the castle's magic circle had been activated, that would cost Lucien, Charlie and Sandra quite a long time to break into it.

However, cautious as Lucien was, he did not directly rush in there, but he stopped in the air, staring at the castle from above.

His left eye covered by the piece of monocle started to use infrared lights to check the whole place through the darkness in the open gate. Lucien could see clusters of red light in there—coming straight from hell, those demons that were raised with flame and sulphur had way more amount of infrared coming out of their bodies, and that couldn't even be hidden by the castle's thick walls.

Charlie and Sandra also used their own spells to scan the whole castle. After their brief discussion, Lucien had a rough map in his mind of the layout of the castle and those demons' activity range in there. After combing Susan's description, they quickly worked out a plan. Lucien said to Charlie and Susan in a calm way, "We have to destroy the magic circles in the summoning room first to prevent more demons from coming out, and then we sweep away the rest of them down there. So... I'd say that... entering the castle through the gate and getting to the second floor is the best route."

“Agreed.” The other two sorcerers nodded.

At this time, lightnings started to gather in Sandra’s hand and a long electric spear took shape. She directly threw it toward a magic energy well in the garden and the spear perfectly hit the target. Something in the magic energy well slightly caused a small explosion, but the noise was not too loud. The well, together with more wells in different places of the castle, gathered power that they absorbed from sun and tide to provide to the defensive magic circles of the castle.

They needed to blow up more wells to prevent the circles from being activated after entering the castle.

The black well was now covered with countless magic symbols, as if it was resisting the power from the electric spear.

When Sandra was about to summon another electric spear, she saw Lucien reaching out his right hand and a head-sized fireball showed up above his palm. She instantly felt the contained power in the fireball.

Lucien pushed his right hand forward, and the fireball directly flew toward the energy well. As soon as the fire ball hit it, the whole energy well just exploded, from which rose a small mushroom cloud and dense smoke.

When the smoke dispersed, Sandra saw that the whole well was gone. She opened her mouth a bit but could not say anything. She did know that the school of Element had the most powerful explosive spells, however, what Mr. Evans just cast was simply too impressive, almost like the fifth-circle spell, Great Flame Explosion.

She wondered if it was the Will of Elements or Mr. Evans’ exclusive magic, as both Sandra and Charlie knew clearly that Lucien did not use any magic items for that because they were right beside him, a third-circle sorcerer.

After seeing that, they trusted in Lucien’s magic power for sure.

“Before the demons gather because of the noise, we shall get in

there right now,” said Lucien at a fast speed.

Lucien’s Great Fireball, a third-circle level spell, was a attack magic combining the power of explosion, which was the major one, and a burning power. In addition, the magic buff from Lucien’s ring, Element, increased the spell power by another thirty to forty percent, and the spell looked almost like a fifth-circle one.

Lucien would have been able to cast the spell more than twenty times consecutively, however, since he also needed to use the sculpt spell for assistance, the number reduced to seven to eight times. Fortunately, the ring, Element, boosted Lucien’s spiritual power recovery speed to aproximately that of a fifth-circle sorcerer. Unless he kept casting spells without any interval, he did not need to worry about the fact that he might run out of his spiritual power in a battle that lasted less than thirty minutes.

The ring, Element, was definitely a fabulous magic item, especially for Lucien’s level.

Lucien, Charlie, Sandra and Susan landed in the castle’s garden in front of the iron gate. They cast Speed and Endurance on her to make sure that she was able to follow them.

As soon as they landed, they formed a standard battle formation. Charlie and Sandra were in the front, and Lucien was at their back. Susan was right in front of Lucien, behind Sandra.

There were spots of blood on the ground of the garden. They could hear the evil roaring from the castle. Obviously, the demons had noticed their arrival.

Passing through the garden at a fast speed, Charlie directly blasted the iron gate away with a fireball, and they rushed into the castle.

In the main hall, incomplete human bodies were everywhere, and on their ripped faces, the great fear was still there. Limbs, guts and blood covered the floor, and the smell of blood was so strong that they almost threw up.

Making sure they were heading toward the right direction, they

started running to the stairs, stepping on those guts and chunks of human bodies.

The whole place was filled with light smoke. When Susan saw the black staircase, she was a bit encouraged. However, as soon as they were about to approach the staircase, some kind of buzzing sound came into their ears. From the corridors around the hall, teams of huge hornets were coming for them, and each of the hornets was twice the size of a human being.

Besides being huge, each of those hornets actually had a female human face with white pupils on its head. The female faces looked dreadful, as if they were in great pain. On the top, there were short tentacles, and the chin part was distorted into an arthropod mouthpart. At the bottom of those hornets' body, there was a shining black sting.

Seeing the female faces, Susan started screaming, as if she were in a nightmare, whereas the three middle-rank sorcerers remained very calm.

They were demons called Tiger Hornets. Lucien, Charlie and Sandra knew for sure that they were just of low-rank because they had no yellow, orange or red strips on their bodies.

A powerful streak of lightning showed up out of nowhere and struck one of the demon hornets which was trying to grab Susan, when a bit of its black, toxic secretion was already produced at the tip of the sting.

The demon hornet directly fell onto the ground like a big piece of carbon coke. The lightning on its body extended onto other nearby hornets and paralyzed them. The affected hornets were right now twitching on the floor, while those hornets which were relatively far from them were throwing fire clusters toward them like crazy.

At this time, cold wind was summoned and snowflakes started to fly in the hall. Soon, fist-sized hailstones took shape in the cold wind and fiercely smashed many hornets.

Ice Storm, a fourth-circle spell, from Charlie.

Most demons were immune to common flame and toxin, but they were more vulnerable to acid, ice and snow. Experienced as Charlie and Sandra were, they knew what to do.

Lucien also cast Maskelyne's Acid Arrow. Lots of light green arrows fiercely penetrated the demon hornets.

After this whole round of casting, the more than twenty demon hornets were all killed.

Two years ago, Lucien never expected that one day he would have such power. For a second, the scene reminded Lucien of how scared he was when he was sent down into the sewers at that time, and later when he needed to kill Baron Laurent.

The bodies of the hornets soon disappeared, which meant that they were not entities but projections. Lucien was a bit disappointed as he intended to collect some materials from them, and he also felt a bit suspicious.

However, he could not put too much thought on it right now, as they still needed to move forward and maintain the formation.

Soon, they came to the second floor. They were now in a spacious hall, which was filled with lots of bookshelves and desks with paper and quills on them.

Some desks were on the floor, and those books on the floor were drenched with blood. Some desks in the corner remained standing there as usual, as if nothing ever happened. An apprentice was killed on his own seat, and the demons cut him right open. His guts were still hanging there.

"This is the Apprentice Hall. We used to study here," Susan said briefly with her trembling voice. "The summoning room is at the end of the corridor after the hall."

Although Lucien wanted to copy all the books here, he understood that this was certainly not the right time. The four of them carefully walked between the bookshelves to get to the corridor.

In order to show their respect, they did not want to directly destroy

all the books.

When Lucien walked past a bookshelf, he noticed that there was a mirror on the wall beside. In the mirror, he saw himself walking in the end, following Charlie and Sandra, and Susan was in the middle.

As Lucien turned his head to analyze the mirror, his reflection also made the same movement. His reflection was also wearing a monocle on the left eye.

When Lucien was about to look away, he suddenly saw his own reflection in the mirror start to smile in a creepy way. The eyeballs of the young sorcerer in the mirror started to swell, and greenish-gray pimples started to cover his face!

Chapter 248: Distortion

Chapter 248: Distortion

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The greenish-gray pimples soon covered the whole face of the young man in the mirror. His eyeballs were protruding, and his nose started to get rotten. Chunks of gray flesh were falling, and white bones and two black eye sockets were revealed.

Lucien was shocked. Seeing what was happening with the familiar face in the mirror, Lucien felt goosebumps rise from the tips of his toes to the top of his head. Although the spell Mechanized Mind did help, Lucien still got frozen there, and he could not think clearly.

At this time, the rotten face in the mirror put on a smile like an ugly clown.

Everything in front of Lucien's eyes went black and his heart stopped beating for about three seconds. Three seconds later, Lucien got his heartbeat back, and it was beating so fast, so bad, as if it was going to jump out of his chest.

Lucien's head started to buzz like crazy. Every single vein in his body was bulging, and all his blood rushed to his brain. He found that what he could see all turned into blood red now, and everything looked very blurry and weird.

Lucien felt that his life force was escaping from his body.

Fortunately, thanks to Lucien's strong will and the spell he had cast on himself, in the last second, he stopped himself from just running away like ordinary people, but instead covered himself with a layer of light, in which many magic symbols were appearing and disappearing as if they were alive.

A second later, the rotten Lucien in the mirror took a step forward and directly came out of the mirror. Its red tongue reached out from its mouth and turned black. Shooting out, the tongue directly went

through Lucien's Powerful Fire Shield like it did not even exist.

Lucien sensed the smell of death.

Thanks to the newly cast spell, the black, illusory tongue was stopped by the magic-symbol light shield. As soon as the tongue touched the shield, it was burned, and black smoke rose.

The forth-level divine spell, Death Ward!

After Lucien made it to middle-rank, the second layer of Sun's Corona's seal had been unlocked. So he could cast three more divine spells in a day: Burning Radiance, third circle; Death Ward, fourth circle; and Flame Strike, fifth circle, but among them, Death Ward was the very conqueror of any death-related power.

At this time, Charlie and Sandra noticed Lucien's weird behaviour—staring at the mirror like he was possessed, Lucien's body was protected by some divine power. However, when they looked in the mirror, there was nothing in it, not even any reflection!

Sandra pointed her purple magic staff at the mirror, and instantly very strong light burst out of the mirror, but the light somehow could not go beyond a radius of ten meters. Beyond the ten-meter radius, the darkness was still thick.

Burning Sun was the fourth-circle spell in the school of Light-darkness, and it was only used for resisting demons or the undead from other dimensions. The power just did not feel as holy as the divine spells.

In the pure brightness, a few pieces of black smoke leaked out of the mirror, and when they united together, a horrible monster showed up.

The hood it was wearing did not hide its face. The demon had scarlet eyes, and its skull was covered with only a very thin layer of rotten skin. Its two rows of teeth were directly revealed because it did not have lips. However, this appearance did not look real at the same time, as it kept changing all the time, just like some kind of illusion.

The demon was tall, and it was wearing a really fancy black robe, embroidered with mysterious patterns, and they all looked evil.

The demon, surrounded by black smoke, blocked the light from Burning Sun behind it, and it started laughing. At the same time, gray shadows showed up around Charlie and Sandra.

Although the magic-symbol shield around Charlie worked, however, the gray shadows were just too many, and the shield started to get dim.

At this time, Charlie flew directly towards the bookshelf, or more specific, he dropped onto the bookshelf on the other side of the hall, as if gravity was messed up.

It was the fourth-circle spell in Force Field, Virtual Gravity!

Close beside the mirror, the five magic power spheres above Sandra's and Susan's head were now spinning very fast, and every single gray shadow which tried to jump on them got absorbed by the magic spheres. The magic balls, at the same time, started to get bigger, as Sandra pointed her magic staff at the demon, the spheres fiercely flew toward it.

Two magic spheres directly hit the black smoke around the demon, and the smoke started to be driven away.

Seizing the chance, the strong light from the magic, Burning Sun, reached the demon, and the demon burst out a dreadful scream.

Charlie raised up his right hand wearing the white glove. Instantly, a huge illusory palm showed up beside the demon and directly grabbed it.

Douglas's Huge Palm, a fourth-circle Force Field spell, and it was said that the spell was an improved version of an ancient one.

The ring on Lucien's right hand, Element, was helping him recover. Lucien felt that he could move now, but he did not. Standing there, Lucien took out a crystal ball from his storage pouch.

The crystal ball first dimmed like there was a night sky in it, and

then stars showed up in the night sky, moment when the crystal ball burst out pure light.

Floating in the air, the crystal ball stopped twenty centimetres above Lucien's head. Twelve spots of light surrounding Lucien formed the same pattern with the formation of stars in the crystal ball. The stars were spinning around the ball, and together they formed a small astrology system.

This was a nightmare demon, and Lucien knew that common attack spells would not work on it. So, he directly cast Maskelyne's Star, which was a multi-aspected astrology spell combining illusion detection, enemy's luck alteration, supernatural power absorption and a star sphere attack. On Astrology and Magic Elements, there was a corresponding ninth-circle spell called Maskelyne's Star Map.

As soon as Maskelyne's Star was fully constructed, beams of star light shot out from the crystal ball and directly cast light on the demon. It was for identifying whether the demon was just a projection!

In the star light, the demon was still there.

Charlie pointed his black magic staff at the demon and cast Magic Resistance Reduction on it. Then the demon looked a bit faint.

Capturing the moment, both Sandra and Lucien launched their attacks at the same time, one in the front and one behind. They worked together perfectly well!

A shining big net caught the monster, and it started to become tighter and tighter. Black smoke came out of the demon in the net like it was bleeding!

One of Lucien's star spheres shot the demon right in its center. Like a piece of glass, the demon was torn apart silently in the extremely bright light.

When Susan, who was beyond scared watching them fighting, was just about to give a sigh of relief. The parts of the demon body started to distort, along with the floor, the walls, the light, and even

the huge Force Field palm!

Actually, the whole space was distorted!

And then everything broke down!

Like a broken mirror, the space was falling apart, and smoke started leaking out from the cracks in front of them.

Although the smoke was not thick, Lucien realized that he had lost his spiritual power sensing and his intuition. He started to get slow, and he could only see about twenty centimetres in front of him. At the same time, the smoke was affecting how his brain hormone and brain wave worked.

Were it not for Mechanized Mind, Lucien would already have become an idiot there at the same moment, or maybe completely broken down.

Fifth-circle spell, Mind Mist!

Lucien realized that the demon might be of level five, however, the sorcerer had never read much about this kind of demon before!

Although the star spheres spinning above his head lit up the place quite a bit, he still could not see through the mist.

In the terrifying silence, Lucien cast another defensive spell inside his Powerful Fire Shield, which was all he could do right now. He could not see where Charlie, Sandra and Susan were in the mist, and he could not even feel them being around!

When his spiritual power had recovered a bit, Lucien cast a second-circle spell, Dissipate Smoke. This was a spell that was designed for driving away magic smoke.

Lucien had no idea whether this would work, but he really thought it wouldn't. However, the mist did start to disappear, and he could see more clearly now.

Charlie and Sandra also cast the spell, and they saw each other around.

“The mist might be the demon’s last struggle...” Sandra tried to grab Susan who was already freaked out, but her tone showed that she was not sure.

“That’s impossible! There’s no way that the horrible demon would just die like that!” said Susan, whose face looked beyond pale. At this time, using all of her strength, she got rid of Sandra’s hand and ran toward the corner of the hall.

When Charlie was about to catch her with his Force Field hand, Susan ran into the copper statue in the corner and then she grabbed the statue’s ear.

Susan twisted the ear, and a secret door opened in the wall.

Susan did tell them that there was a secret chamber in the hall, which was built by Bertren. Several apprentices found it, and that was their secret.

The sorcerers were not surprised by the existence of the chamber. However, their eyes opened wide when they saw that there was a young teenager boy in the chamber!

The teenager boy was squatting down on the ground, with his hands covering his head. He slowly looked up, and his eyes were filled with fear.

They found another survivor!

Chapter 249: An Ancient Rite

Chapter 249: An Ancient Rite

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“What’s your name?” asked Sandra, who was trying to put on a nice smile on her face and soften her voice. However, the boy still got very scared. Screaming and shaking his head, the teenager boy used his hands and feet to drag himself toward the corner farther inside the chamber.

Lucien did not rush them to get to the summoning room, because the fact that the demon just disappeared like that was too weird. Now they found a survivor here, and they should get more information from him.

Exchanging a look with Sandra, Lucien slightly lifted his chin toward Susan, “Use a magic potion to calm her down. Let Susan talk to him.”

Sandra nodded. Experienced as she was, Sandra always carried some magic potions with her around. Although she preferred to directly cast hypnosis on the boy to ask him questions, which was more of her style, she was also concerned that casting any spells on him right now might lead to some unwanted consequences, so Sandra took out a light blue tube and made Susan drink it using Mage Hand.

Lucien adjusted his monocle and activated the spell enchanted on it, Fernando’s Electromagnetic Message. Although three of them had enough power to kill a level five demon, he had no idea whether this battle was just a start or not.

Lucien did not hide it from Charlie and Sandra. When the surface of the monocle was covered with magic ripples, Lucien directly called Gaston’s name.

“Mr. Gaston, this is Evans.”

Currently, this fifth-circle spell could only turn sound vibration into electromagnetic wave.

There was no response from the other side. Lucien raised his voice, “Mr. Gaston? Hello?!”

Still nothing came back.

Lucien started to get a bit concerned. He looked at the wall on the other side of the bookshelf, where there was a window. Outside the window, he could see light fog coming in. Everything looked mysterious, as if they were in a nightmarish maze.

“This is similar to Mind Mist, but not exactly the same. The mist can block and absorb electromagnetic wave... I’ve never seen something like this...” Lucien really wished that he could have read more books in the libraries!

Watching Lucien calling Gaston’s name a bit anxiously, Charlie put on a bitter smile, “We’re probably in trouble now. The simple task is actually not simple.”

When Lucien first received the task, he indeed felt quite suspicious, and he was actually not very surprised with the fact that things were getting complicated. If someone really wanted to give him a hard time, he had no idea how the person managed to fool both Ms. Florencia and Mr. Gaston.

Although lots of thoughts had flashed through Lucien’s mind, he stopped himself from sinking into the thoughts. It was not the right time! And dangers might come to them at any moment!

“We need to figure out what is going on here first, then we decide whether we should move on or go back.” Lucien looked at Charlie and said.

At this time, Susan started to calm down a bit because of the magic potion she took a minute before.

Adjusting his black battle sorcerer hat, Charlie nodded calmly, “I also checked this place before we came in, and I saw only three kinds of low-rank demons, just as what you have told us, Mr. Evans.

So the question is... Where did the demon hide itself, and how?"

"You guys don't know what the demon was?" Lucien asked.

Both Sandra and Charlie shook their heads seriously.

That was not good news. If neither Sandra nor Charlie had any idea what the demon was, it meant that this kind of demon was not registered in either the Encyclopedia of Demons or Handbook of Monsters. Without enough intelligence, it was hard for them to make right decisions. For example, the reason why they did not use Invisibility here was because demons and dragons could easily see through it!

"Maybe in most cases only senior-rank sorcerers would deal with it..." Sandra murmured in low voice. Seeing that Susan was almost ready, she pointed at the teenager boy in the chamber and asked Susan, "Do you know him?"

Susan was first a bit confused. When she turned around, she exclaimed, "Oh my! Bill, you're still alive?!"

Hearing her voice, the teenager boy slowly lifted his head, "S... Susan?"

"It's me, Susan. We've come back for you, Bill." Susan put on a comforting smile, "Bill, calm down... Don't be afraid."

"Who is he?" asked Sandra in a low voice beside Susan.

Trying to get closer to Bill, Susan said to them, "He's the youngest student of Mr. Bertren. His spiritual power was very abundant, but he was not doing that great in arcana, so some other apprentices often made fun of him. Scott and me often tutored him, and we were relatively close to each other."

"Ask him what happened in the castle later." Lucien tried to follow Susan to approach Bill.

However, as soon as Bill saw Lucien moving, he lost his mind again. His whole body was trembling, and his eyes opened really wide, "Stay away from me!! Stay away!!"

Lucien nodded and slowly stepped backwards with Charlie. Sandra grabbed Susan's hand to show that she was a friend of Susan.

Although Bill's body was still trembling, he was a little less frightened now.

"Bill, tell me. What did you see in the castle?" Susan squatted down in front of him.

Sandra squatted down as well, and, at the same time, she secretly cast a second-circle spell, Distinguish Lie, around Bill. Because the spell did not work directly on Bill's body or mind, the spell was safe to him.

All of a sudden, Bill reached out his hands and grabbed Susan's arm. Susan got scared as well and she felt on the ground.

Bill said to her, panic-stricken, "All died! All died! Andy, Debra, Stevens... they all died! At first... they almost had killed all the demons, almost! But... but there was one... They couldn't kill it. By no means they could kill it... And they all died... I ran... and I hid here... Susan, get me out of here! I'm so terrified!"

Andy, Debra and Stevens were all first-circle sorcerers in the castle.

The dim light around them from the spell Distinguish Lie did not change, which meant that Bill was not lying.

Susan tried her best to withhold her fear, and started to ask Bill about the details.

Looking at what was going on in the chamber, Lucien and Charlie were on the other side. At this time, Lucien noticed a piece of half-burned parchment written in ancient magic empire characters.

"V(erased)'s special summoning rite:

"You need a rune written in your own blood, a brazier, and Pain Fable..."

The rest of the parchment was burned.

Lucien felt the rite was quite funny, as he had never seen any rites requiring a fable book. He collected the following several pages of the parchment from the floor and started to read the few lines that were left there:

“When everything’s prepared, read the seventh story, chapter ten, in Pain Fable. Read it over and over again, and transcribe the fable onto the parchment written with the blood rune.”

...

“Open the Encyclopedia of Demons, rip off the pages containing the information of the demons that you want summon, then throw the pages into the brazier.”

...

“Chant the spell. Keep chanting. When the flame is as tall as you, you’ll see your gift.”

Charlie also read it, and he commented, frowning, “It looks like a stupid trick. Many of the steps are just nonsense... I mean, what kind of rite would require a fable book? That’s ridiculous... The fact that it is found in the apprentice hall shows that it was just a joke. Only idiots would probably try.”

“Have you ever read Pain Fable?” Lucien was a bit hesitant, “Ridiculous as it is, the fact that Bertren died when he tried to summon demons here makes me feel nervous about any weird rites that are related to demon summoning.”

Charlie paused for a second and then answered, “No, I have never, but someone told me about it before. Those fables were folktales originating from the border between Holm and Brianne in ancient magic empire, and those fables are not cheerful at all. The book is called Pain Fable because those fables teach people lessons by making people feel sad, depressed, resentful and angry. I don’t read stuff that makes me feel bad. By the way, Mr. Evans, don’t you think the style of the parchment is of the ancient magic empire style? Something before the War of Dawn...”

“It is.” Lucien took a glance at the bookshelves around, “I wonder if we can find Pain Fable here...”

At this time, Susan finished asking questions. As soon as Sandra got the basic information, she cast Charm Person on Bill for further verification.

“So, according to Bill, the summoning room lost control first, and low-rank demons invaded the castle and killed most people here. At this time, Susan and Scott managed to escape. Then later, when the several level one sorcerers that assisted Mr. Bertren got the control of the castle core back and managed to kill most of the low-rank demons there. However, things went wrong when they arrived at the summoning room. They met the demon there and were killed.” Based on all the clues, Sandra made this conclusion. She walked to Lucien and Charlie and said, “So, it is almost certain that the demon resurrects every time at the summoning circle when it is killed. We need to destroy the summoning circle to really kill the demon!”

As soon as Sandra finished her words, the floor and walls started to ripple as if they were liquid. Many half-transparent, pale arms fiercely reached out.

Chapter 250: Brazier

Chapter 250: Brazier

Translator: _Leo_ Editor: Vermillion

Countless illusory pale arms rose from the gray stone floor. Those evil arms were infused with hatred and they were trying to grab the things above them. It seemed like they would tear apart anything that fell into their hands and drag it to hell.

There were countless muscular arms with pale skin spurting out of the wall on the left and the bookshelf on the right. It almost looked like they formed a wall of arms that came straight from hell.

The pale arms around Lucien, Charlie, and Sandra detected their presence. The arms quickly moved toward them and tried to grab their ankles, arms, or edges of their clothes.

The 11 crystal orbs that were rotating over Lucien's head released eye-blinding light as the arms reached his body. The pale arms were burnt into white smoke in the intense light.

Susan and Sandra were surrounded by Sandra's three remaining energy orbs and the energy rays of the orbs were destroying the pale arms around them. The arms that touched Charlie's body left the floor and the wall, being absorbed into Douglas' Absorbing Wall. The flowing magic runes quickly expanded in size and they looked as if they would explode any time.

Charlie, Sandra, and Lucien did not deactivate their defensive spell when waiting for Bill's speech.

However, the more arms they destroyed, the more arms would appear from the walls and the bookshelf. It felt like those endless pale arms came from the deepest abyss.

Three translucent strings originated from Sandra's head, flying to Lucien, Charlie, and Susan.

Lucien and Charlie recognized that the spell was a third circle spell named Lesser Mind Connection. They did not block the strings and let them contact their minds. Susan saw that the two sorcerers took the strings like nothing and decided to take the string as well.

“The only way to solve the problem is to destroy the summoning circle in the binding room. The monsters will get the chance to revive and they will do whatever they want to us if we try to escape.” Sandra’s thoughts were transferred into Lucien, Charlie, and Susan’s mind through the translucent strings.

The spell could help the sorcerers to communicate directly and it was much faster than speaking using their mouths. Lesser Mind Connection and its advanced version were the best choices for communication for the sorcerers when they were battling or adventuring. The weakness of the spell was in the short effective range and also due to the fact that the connection could be interrupted by the spells that could affect their mind.

Charlie agreed with Sandra’s plan without any hesitation. “The mist is thick outside. I think if we don’t destroy the summoning circle and kill that monster, the mist will never go away. Also, if we wander into the mist, the monster will eliminate us one by one.”

The two aggressive sorcerers decided to strike, since they had no way to contact the others. They had two choices: the first was to defend at their current position; the second one was to strike or run away after fighting through the path of the pale arms. They could only wait desperately if they decided to defend their current position. Also, it seemed like the monster was still reviving, since it had not attacked them after the wall of arms appeared. It was the best chance they had.

They would not be able to utilize their power when escaping, as they would be anxious and they might get lost.

“Let’s head to the binding room.” As the leader of the team, Lucien wasted no time and made the decision.

Bill sealed the secret chamber after the wall of arms appeared, but Sandra had no time to check if he was still safe. Sandra asked Susan

to follow after her as she knew that Susan was terrified of the situation.

If Susan was left behind or out of reach in such a dangerous environment, Sandra was certain that she would risk her life for Susan.

Susan was one of the two survivors that escaped the castle, and thus she could protect herself to some extent. However, if the place was too terrifying, she wouldn't be able to do much without help. Thus, Susan followed closely after Sandra, who just summoned the energy orbs again.

Lucien was following after the team and he was running at full speed with the help of the knight-level speed that was buffed by the spell named Speed. He was moving so fast that his body blurred. The starlight of Maskelyne's Star splashed on the ground and the pale arms from the walls were purified. However, Maskelyne's Star was just a third circle spell and only eight stars out of the eleven were left, since there were so many pale arms. Also, it could not eliminate all the pale arms fast enough, so Lucien's body and outfit were grabbed several times.

Luckily, Lucien still had the Death Ward and the Powerful Fire Shield, that successfully destroyed the arms that escaped from the starlight.

Lucien thought he was walking on some rotten meat or slippery moss as the arms rose up from the ground. It was a horrifying scene and an unpleasant experience.

The sorcerers knocked down more than ten bookshelves before entering the hallway, they had no time to dodge every object on their way.

The hallway was more terrifying than the apprentice's hall. Pale arms were no longer reaching out of the walls, but they were replaced with arms from dead bodies. Those rotten arms were covered with bloody wounds and there were red tongues hanging down the ceiling.

Sandra pointed her wand forward as she ran and the whole hallway was brightened up quickly. The light gathered together and burned the translucent arms, bloody arms, and the tongues into ashes.

Charlie also cast a spell. Two intense flame walls appeared on both sides of the hallway. The arms had to pass through the flames before reaching the sorcerers, but the flames could deal a large amount of damage to both the bloody and the translucent arms. Those arms would lose their power even if they could pass through the flame walls, and Sandra's Burning Sun could easily purify them.

The two sorcerers who were good at offensive spells cleared the path and Lucien could travel at full speed without casting any extra spells. Lucien had the chance to focus on checking the surroundings, so he could react as soon as possible to any potential threats.

That was usually how the sorcerers fought during intense battles.

Although the hallway was long, the sorcerers were traveling so fast that they reached the end quickly. The pale arms, dead arms, and the bloody tongues were getting stronger and stronger. Some of them passed through the flame wall and the Burning Sun, landing on the sorcerers' bodies. Those hands and tongues almost broke through their defenses. It meant that the monster would be revived soon.

The arms on the ground slowed down the sorcerers greatly and the arms almost formed a forest by the corners.

Lucien quickly created a large fireball and released it. The fireball went over the sorcerers in front of him and landed on the ground.

Bam

The noise was loud in the narrow space of the hallway and the shockwave blew a lot of arms away. The doors on the walls were also destroyed, and numerous cracks and holes were left on the ground.

Half of the forest made of arms was destroyed, and Charlie, Sandra,

and Susan passed through it easily as the rest of the arms were no longer a problem. However, a lot of arms spurted out of the ground again when Lucien tried to pass through.

Lucien changed the rotating trail of the eight light spheres over his head. Two of them crashed into two other, as if they were trying to change their destiny. The four light spheres quickly disappeared into the air after crashing into each other.

Lucien walked to the corner after making changes to the spell, Maskelyne's Star. The translucent arms and the bloody arms reached out to him but they were centimeters away from contacting Lucien's body. Some of the arms grabbed each other after missing the target.

Such situation only happened several times when they were running through the hallway but it was happening all the time at the moment.

It was one way to use the Maskelyne's Star. The target would lose its luck and it would not be able to do anything after its destiny was changed by the stars.

One second later, the arms returned to normal but Lucien was already past the corner. He saw that Charlie's defensive force field palm perished in the air and the absorbing wall reached its limit. Four of the energy orbs above Sandra's head also broke into pieces.

There were no longer arms reaching out of the walls and the door of the binding room was not visible to them. Instead, enormous eyes formed a giant wall that blocked the path. Their black eyeballs and white pupils were everywhere. They were like the messenger that brought the desperation to this world.

Lucien felt like his soul turned black after being stared at by those eyes, he felt that he was losing himself in the abyss. The Maskelyne's Star above his head extinguished right away and the crystal orbs dropped to the ground after losing their color. The Powerful Fire Shield was fading away and the rotating divine runes of the Death Ward appeared in the air.

Suddenly, a thin layer of pure light appeared on Sandra's body. Rays of light were released by her and the rays flew toward the Wall of Evil Eyes like fireworks.

It was a fourth circle spell named Arcana Light. The spell was created based on the level four divine spell named Light from the Heavenly Mountain. Although Arcana Light was not infused with the mysterious power of a divine spell, it could still be used to eliminate evil creatures.

Lucien activated Sun's Corona at the same time and holy light landed on the Wall of Evil Eyes. The twisted eyes were purified in the light one by one.

Level three divine spell – Burning Radiance.

Meanwhile, Charlie created a clear mirror in front of the Wall of Evil Eyes and forced the eyes to stare at themselves. It was a second circle force field spell named Staring, that was designed for the staring attacks.

The mirror broke into pieces under the pressure, but at the same time the evil eyes exploded one by one. Black liquid splashed onto the ground and it sounded like metal being corroded. The rest of the eyes were perishing in the light from the Burning Radiance and Arcana Light.

When the situation was complicated, low-level spells might be more effective than the high-level ones.

The Wall of Evil Eyes fell down without making any noise, revealing the door to the binding room.

A fireball was released from Charlie's white gloves, it blew the door and the wall into pieces. The sorcerers finally had the chance to see what the room looked like.

There was a normal-looking magic circle in the binding room, but there were dead bodies lining up on the end of each string. Blood that dripped down from the dead bodies was transferred to the core of the magic circle through the strings.

In the center of the magic circle, there was a brazier containing dark flames, but it looked like a common, kitchen brazier. From within the flames, a body covered with a luxurious long black robe was rising, with its two skinny pale hands placed on the borders of the brazier to push its body upward.

The skull with a thin layer of rotten meat and a pair of bloody red eyes was staring at Charlie, who was the closest to the door. The expression on the skull's face did not look as if it was anxious, angry, or threatening. It was simply a strange mocking smile.

Chapter 251: Bitter Figh

Chapter 251: Bitter Fight

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When the demon's scarlet eyes looked at Charlie, Lucien noticed that Charlie's face froze immediately, and the symbols on the magic shield started to swell and break into pieces. Then, the whole shield was destroyed. As soon as the shield was gone, Charlie was enveloped by a heavy black fog.

It happened so fast that neither Lucien nor Sandra managed to take any actions.

After a second, the black fog disappeared all of a sudden. A small black pig showed up at the spot where Charlie was, and it looked beyond lost. Turning around in circles, its thin tail kept wagging.

"Baleful Polymorph!" Sandra's voice came to Lucien's mind through their telepathic bond, "We need to kill it before it gets out of the brazier!"

At the same time, dark clouds gathered under the ceiling. Among those clouds, streak lightnings were flashing, turning the whole place into a lightning forest.

The forth-circle spell in the school of Electromagnetics, Lightning Clouds!

A big fireball was created in front of Lucien, and he threw it fiercely at the demon at the center of the magic circle.

The demon might be immune to flame and blast, but the magic circle and the brazier should not. As long as the demon lost its rebirth ability, the sorcerers were confident that they could kill it again.

At the same time, Lucien was being cautious not to cast Elemental Swirl right away before making sure it was effective to do so with

the demon, because if the demon was completely spiritual, Elemental Swirl would not only lose its power but also hurt Lucien badly.

The second before the fireball hit the brazier, a dark mist rose, expanded very fast, and devoured the whole room completely, even including the lightning and Lucien's fireball.

However, at the same time, the lightning and fireball also made the mist look quite thinner, as if both sides were fighting for the dominant right of the space.

Sandra's lips were half open, murmuring. The darkness in the space started to be distorted by some kind of invisible power. The lightning showed up again and fused together into a lightning ball. The target of the ball was the center of the room.

The forth-circle spell in Electromagnetics, Distorted Magnetic Field.

Seizing the chance, Lucien pointed his coral staff at the demon and cast the second-circle spell Sadism on it with the assistance of the staff's power. The spell, in the intersection of Astrology, Necromancy and Light-darkness, could build a special connection between a sorcerer and their enemy: when the enemy was hurt, the sorcerer would reach quite a significant improvement on his or her life force, spiritual power, attack and defence, and the enemy would be hurt even further!

At this time, only spells like this could work in this magnetically distorted environment.

When the demon was hit by the lightning ball, it burst out hoarse and terrifying scream.

All of a sudden, Sandra's shadow became alive, and the shadow directly grabbed her ankles and pulled her toward the deeper shadow pit nearby, that looked like a well.

Lucien heard Sandra's scream in his mind, and lots of lightning exploded in the shadow well!

That was totally out of Lucien's expectation. He was about to

activate Sun's Corona, and he hesitated for a second—should he save Sandra first or keep attacking the demon?

As soon as Lucien had the two thoughts, he already made the decision. He decided to continue to launch his attack. He had to be prepared for the moment when the demon got rid of the control of Distorted Magnetic Field, so that his spell would not be distorted as well.

The moment when the distortion and lightning completely wore off, the demon covered itself with black fog again, as if it was just prepared for Lucien's attack.

However, somehow, everything suddenly got quiet, silent, more relevant, and the fancy black robe that the demon was wearing cracked. From the crack, rotten flesh covered with white tiny maggots was revealed.

In a corner of the room, Charlie's figure slowly rose. However, the little black pig was still near the room entrance. Charlie looked pale, and his black battle robe was gone. There was a weird-looking book page written with mysterious characters that quickly disappeared in front of the white glove that Charlie was wearing on his right hand.

Lucien recognized it immediately: it was a forth-circle spell in Transformation, Demon Elegy, a exclusive spell from the Congress!

It seemed that Charlie just used some kind of magic buff on his robe or some unique spell and somehow avoided Baleful Polymorph, then he attacked the demon with a totally unexpected strike!

When the demon was screaming out of great pain, Lucien suddenly felt refreshed and activated Sun's Corona immediately. A streak of flame came down onto the demon directly. In the flame's holy light, the demon's fancy black robe was burned into ashes, and most of its body was also burned down together with those maggots crawling over it.

Flame Strike!

Lucien did not stop. When the remaining part of the demon was still writhing from the pain, Lucien's left hand pointed at the brazier. It was his next target!

Seeing Lucien's gesture, the demon was more than scared. Turning itself into black mist, the demon rushed at the brazier, dragging the flame around, to stop Lucien.

The brazier was close to the demon, and it had been improved by magic, so it would not be destroyed by Lucien at one shot easily.

However, as soon as Lucien pointed at the brazier, a cracking sound came from its inside, and colourful light quickly covered it. On the next second, the brazier suddenly swelled and broke down into small pieces of different colors!

The third-circle exclusive spell, Elemental Order!

The demon paused for a second out of great shock and was forced to come back to its previous form, wearing the black robe, because the brazier was already gone. At this time, clusters of flame which smelled like sulphur covered its body, and its rotten flesh and bones started to swell.

Seeing that, Lucien quickly activated Powerful Fire Shield again, and his body was covered with a layer of white and golden flame shield again.

At this time, Sandra, who just got rid of the shadows and came out from the shadow well, instantly cast Palmeira's Power Magic Spheres again on herself as well as on Susan.

On the other side, Charlie also activated Douglas's Absorbing Wall decisively.

The demon exploded. The great explosion sound buzzed Lucien's ears. Through the layer of flame, he saw heavy black smoke mixed with flame billowing, and in the smoke there were chunks of rotten flesh as well.

The flame shield was shaking from the great surge of power created by the explosion. Although Powerful Fire Shield did not work facing

attacks targeting the soul or spirit, as a fifth-circle spell, the fire shield could definitely handle it.

When the explosion settled and the heavy smoke started to disappear, everything was a great mess in the summoning room. The floor was covered with chunks of rotten flesh, and the summoning circle was completely destroyed. Even parts of the walls, which were fortified with lots of defensive magic circles, were torn down, so Lucien could see the light mist outside slowly disappearing through the gaps.

“That was tough, uh?” Charlie’s magic absorbing wall disappeared, and his white glove now looked ragged. His face still looked pale, and he was coughing from the heavy smoke.

All the magic spheres above Sandra’s were gone after absorbing the great explosion power. Fortunately, because of Stone Skin and her purple magic robe, she did not get hurt, and Susan, who hid behind Sandra, was also fine, except that her hair was beyond messy.

Checking her surroundings, Sandra released a long sigh, “We finally sent the damned demon back to hell, at great cost.”

“My precious magic robe has been ruined!” Charlie took a glance at the burned little pig body, “I’ve gotta report this to the Congress for compensation.”

If a sorcerer’s own magic item or potion was destroyed or used in this kind of forced task, the Congress would compensate the sorcerer.

Lucien also relaxed a bit, but he still felt that something was not right, “The brazier keeps reminding me of the ridiculous summoning rite that we found in the apprentice hall. I wonder if Bertren really tried the rite... And also, don’t you guys find it weird that the thing just exploded itself in the end? I mean... it did not have to. The thing at least should try to escape...”

“Maybe it was not able to.” Charlie looked at the thin mist outside, still coughing, “Maybe it was trapped within the brazier, and once the brazier was destroyed, the thing could not exist any longer.

When we leave this place, Mr. Evans, please contact Mr. Gaston. It's way safer to let those senior-rank sorcerers investigate this place further."

Charlie leaned his back against the wall and took out a tiny, fine tin box from his pocket. After a click, the lid of the tin box popped up and Charlie took out a cigarette from it.

"Want one?" Charlie puffed out the gray cigarette smoke, and started to feel soothed, "Top tobacco from Tria."

"No, thanks." Lucien shook his head.

"The mist's almost gone now. Mr. Evans, why don't you try contacting Mr. Gaston?" Sandra rubbed her forehead a bit. "And we can check whether Bill is still alive in the apprentice hall."

As she was saying, Sandra looked around at the metal pieces on the floor to see if there was any precious material left.

A metal piece on the floor reflected Sandra's tired-looking face. Suddenly, the face put on a creepy smile, and two white, fat maggots crawled out of the eye and the nose!

Chapter 252: Hatred

When Lucien activated his monocle, before he could try to contact Mr. Gaston again, he suddenly sensed a great magic power and subconsciously cast Maskelyne's Star. The crystal ball that Lucien had just picked up from the floor rose to the air again above his head, surrounded by twelve shining light spheres.

Charlie was slower than Lucien, but not by much. The giant palm made of force covered him again.

Susan, however, was completely lost. Without Sandra's protection, she had no idea what she could do, but only watched the electric sparks in front of Sandra's chest fighting against the cluster of black smoke. Very quickly, the black smoke was driven away from Sandra.

As soon as the black smoke left Sandra's body, the several metal pieces on the floor in front of Sandra turned burned black.

"The thing's still around!!" Sandra's voice was sharp with fear, "I almost got controlled by it!"

The collar of her magic robe had partly burst from some kind of great power, and a deformed amulet that Sandra was wearing dropped on the floor with a crisp sound.

The sorcerers had killed the demon twice, and they had revealed all their strongest spell, but the demon was still around! Experienced as Sandra was, her back was still covered in cold sweat.

With star-like spheres spinning above his head, Lucien looked around cautiously, and he tried to call Gaston through the monocle. However, it still did not work.

Charlie cast Lesser Mind Connection, connecting the four of them together.

"We should leave this place!" Susan was experiencing another nervous breakdown again, "It never dies!"

Lucien remained calm, and he made a quick analysis, "We thought the demon summoned by Bertren needed the brazier as a medium to keep coming back, and now we know that's not true. Mr. Bertren understood arcana, and it is very unlikely that an arcanist would try such a ridiculous rite. It must be someone else who summoned the demons!"

"Bill..?!" Charlie responded quickly, although he still felt very tired. "He's the only one who's still alive in this castle."

"Impossible," said Sandra. "I've checked him with Charm Person. Wait... unless..."

"What?" asked Charlie.

"Unless the demon helped Bill... Unless the demon erased part of his memory!" Sandra murmured.

Hearing that, Susan suddenly stopped crying. She was shocked.

"Susan mentioned that Bill was often bullied by other apprentices, and the kid's mind was probably filled with anger and hatred. He wanted to take revenge, but he did not know much about arcana, so he decided to try that vicious rite, no matter how ridiculous it was in other apprentices' eyes." Lucien nodded, then he turned to Susan and asked her through their telepathic bond, "Did Bill ever read Pain Fable?"

Susan frowned, trying to search the answer from her memory, and then her eyes suddenly opened wide, "Yes! Bill... Bill told me reading Pain Fable made him more determined to put more effort in learning arcana!"

"Let's go," said Lucien decisively. This time, they must completely kill the demon before it regained its power again from Bill.

Bill just lied. He misled them to the summoning room to buy more time for the demon!

In the battle formation, the three sorcerers headed for the apprentice hall. Susan took all of her courage and followed Sandra.

Lucien, as usual, still felt something suspicious. He wondered why when they entered the summoning room, they indeed saw the demon getting out from the brazier. However, he had no time to figure it out right now.

To leave no time for the demon, they moved really fast. On their way back, there was no creepy, pale arms or disgusting, bloody tongues, which meant that the demon was still recovering!

When they got back to the chamber, they saw the eyes of the copper statue were swelling, and many eyes, with black eyeballs but white pupils, covered the doors and nearby walls.

Seeing the Wall of Evil Eyes was not even completely formed yet, the three sorcerers were slightly relieved, as they knew that they came back in time. Right now, the demon must be very weak!

This was a great opportunity!

Quickly exchanging their thoughts through the telepathic bond, they figured out a battle tactic within a few seconds. Then, Lucien fiercely threw a powerful fireball right at the gate of the chamber.

An instant before that, Charlie had cast Staring in front of the forming Wall of Evil Eyes. As soon as the eyes saw themselves in the mirror, the creepy eye wall collapsed together with the mirror screen.

So, Lucien's great fireball directly hit the chamber gate.

The defensive magic circles on the chamber got destroyed layer by layer from the great explosion, and the stone gate was exploded into pieces and stone dust. Following that, Sandra's purple magic staff illuminated the whole chamber with Arcana Light.

In the light, Bill half knelt on the floor of the chamber, where dust and smoke was everywhere.

Bill's eyes, staring at the sorcerers, were filled with great hatred and anger. However, there was the same creepy smile on his distorted face. His muscles kept bulking and his skin together with his apprentice uniform was torn up. His whole body was covered with

swollen muscle and blood, and even his veins could be seen. Among his muscles and veins, white maggots were crawling. Some even came out from his mouth, nose, eyes and ears!

"Bill? You..." Susan was shocked. She thought that it was Bill who summoned the demon, but now, seeing that, she realized that the demon was Bill himself!

A transparent wall showed up in front of Bill, in which countless black, weird magic symbols were floating. He burst out laughing, "They slapped me in my face! They mocked me! But when I saw how terrified and desperate they were when I killed them, I realized that they were just timid, filthy dirty mice! Look, only a strong will can bring you power, and power derives from pain! Pain has awakened me!"

His words were sharp.

Two streaks of white light directly hit the transparent wall, and some magic symbols started to disappear. Neither of them wasted their time having any kind of chicken soup conversation with Bill, but directly used a third-circle Force Field spell called Dispel Magic, which had a chance to remove a magic buff or a defensive force field from the target.

At the same time, three Maskelyne's stars above Lucien's head collided with the other three, and dazzling light burst out, which improved Charlie and Sandra's Luck to maximize the power of Dispel Magic.

"This is not power! This is evil!" Susan cried.

Bill laughed, "No, this is not evil. This is ourselves! Hatred, jealous, greed, anger... We all have it!"

As he was laughing, his lips fell off, revealing his teeth, and his eyes became scarlet.

The transparent wall had been destroyed. Obviously, its power was not back yet, not even a small part of it.

As soon as the wall disappeared, both Charlie and Sandra activated

their magic items and recast Dispel Magic again!

The layer of black smoke on Bill disappeared with Charlie's casting, and then clusters of smoke started to come out after Sandra's spell hit him!

Lucien's right hand was now covered with purple light, as if he was holding a small, purple sun. Instantly, colourful light spots in golden, silver, black, white, purple and more, surrounded Bill, and they started spinning at great speed around him, like a crazy swirl. The swirl was tearing Bill's body apart!

The monster might be pure spiritual, but Bill was not! Bill was still made up from elements!

This was the right time for the last strike!

The swirl was getting bigger and bigger, and the light brighter and brighter. The whole place was filled with dazzling light.

Lucien felt great pain in his heart and head. His soul was very weak and his spiritual power was scattered. He could not even open his mouth to speak, but leaned his body against the bookshelf.

At this time, Charlie came to his aid. Using Mage Hand, Charlie made Lucien take the magic potion called Water Song.

Sandra, in the front, stared at Bill intently, protecting Lucien and Charlie.

When the swirl slowly disappeared, the chamber was completely destroyed. Through the several huge holes on the floor, they could see the hall downstairs.

Except for a burned mark on the floor, there was nothing left of Bill.

"Did we... kill it?" Sandra was a bit hesitant. When she looked out of the window, the mist was completely gone, and the sunset was quite nice.

"Not sure, but now that the mist is gone, we should contact Mr. Gaston," said Lucien. He felt much better after the potion, although

he could still feel pain in his soul. Trying his best, he activated Electromagnetic Message.

Water Song was definitely the ideal healing potion for middle-rank sorcerers. However, right now Lucien could only activate magic items, but not cast any spells.

"Mr. Gaston?"

After several seconds, Gaston's elderly voice came to them through the monocle, "Any trouble there, Lucien?"

"Yeah. A demon." Lucien briefly told Gaston what happened there. During that time, he relaxed a little bit.

After a moment of silence, Gaston said, "You four find a safe room. Go in there and cast defensive magic circles around it. Stay in the room and wait for the nearby senior-rank sorcerers to get there."

Hearing that, all of them felt a little more relieved. They started to head for the power room through the other corridor of the apprentice hall to wait there.

"Yes, Mr. Evans?" Seeing Lucien frowning, Charlie asked, "Is there anything wrong again?"

Lucien nodded, "Yes, something... I'm just thinking, why the thing attacked Sandra and alerted us before it was fully recovered?"

Chapter 253: Behind Them

Chapter 253: Behind Them

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Maybe the thing knew that we had relaxed our guard after destroying the brazier, and since you still could not get in touch with Mr. Gaston, we would find out very soon that the thing did not die completely. So, controlling one of us and launching an unexpected attack might be the best way in its mind at that time.” Charlie tried to analyze what just happened, “Also, according to Bill’s words, this kind of demon comes from negative emotions, and very often they can’t control themselves, not to mention figuring out the best tactic.”

As his body was gradually absorbing the magic potion, Lucien felt much better, although he still could not run or use magic. Listening to Charlie’s words, he slightly nodded, “I know what you mean, Charlie, but I just feel the whole thing is quite suspicious...”

The two ladies were walking in the front. Hearing what Lucien just said, Sandra quickly looked around with great caution, while Susan looked very terrified and her voice trembled, “Mr. Evans... Are you saying that the demon’s still alive?!”

In this great nightmare, Susan could bare no more.

“I agree. The demons’ contradictory behaviour pattern is quite beyond our understanding.” Charlie nodded.

Hearing that, Susan almost fell to the floor.

After a moment’s pause, Charlie continued, “However, from many ancient notes and legends, we know that demons are indeed disordered. After all, they come from a place of chaos.”

“Mr. Charlie... You really scared me there.” Susan could not help complaining a bit.

“That’s true.” Lucien was totally okay with Charlie putting forward his opinion, “Those pit demons are of various kind. Especially on Skeleton Land, new demon species are being created every day, and of course we cannot recognize them all.”

Susan let out a long sigh of relief. She trusted Mr. Evans’ words.

However, Lucien then changed his tone, “But no matter how disordered the demon was, it would not give up the chance of killing us. The thing got enough power to kill me, either using Baleful Polymorph or Shadow Well, because I had nothing specifically to defend myself at that time. However, what the thing cast on me were spells that targeted the soul or spirit, although the thing knew that I was protected by Death Ward, so the spells could not directly kill me.”

As Lucien was saying, he concluded that his study in arcana was too imbalanced. Although he was very dedicated to the school of Element and Astrology, he ignored other schools, so he did not have enough variety of spells to face the demon. When he went back to Allyn, he would need to branch his study in a wise way.

“Maybe, when it was trying to attack us using the mirror reflection, the demon just could not use other spells except those ones targeting at one’s spirit or soul.” Sandra had her own understanding, and her comment definitely made sense. When the demon was casting other spells, it wasn’t inside the mirror.

“Discussion really helps.” Lucien smiled, “Thank you for aswering my questions, but I’ve still got some: first, why the summoning room looked just like what the rite instruction described, if Mr. Bertren never tried that ridiculous rite? Bill had no right entering Mr. Bertren’s summoning room. Second, why the half-burned parchment was there? Why we happened to find it? Why it is just half-burned?”

“Well...” Charlie found those questions quite hard to explain, “For the first question, maybe Bill went back to the summoning room after Mr. Bertren was dead, in order to make his teacher be blamed for it. And the fact that the summoning room looked like that also distracted us and directed us to the wrong direction. And the second

one... I don't think Bill wanted to burn the instruction. When they were fighting, the parchment was set on fire by accident."

"Yup, and we just found it." Sandra nodded. Then, they came to the corridor that lead to the power room.

"Then I've got no more questions." Lucien took out his pocket watch and said, "Now it's 5:25 p.m.. In fifteen minutes, the senior-rank sorcerer should be here. Let's be patient."

"Okay." The other three nodded.

Although they had found answers for all of Lucien's questions, those questions still made them feel nervous. Therefore, neither of them lowered their guard. The colourful power spheres were still spinning above Susan and Sandra, and a power absorbing wall was protecting Lucien and Charlie.

When they walked down the corridor, Susan looked at one of the rooms of which had its door open, and she looked a bit confused.

Lucien, Sandra and Charlie also looked at the inside of the room. It was empty. There was nothing there.

"Susan?" asked Sandra, "Any problem?"

Susan frowned a bit and answered, "This is Mr. Bertren's vault. He stored all his treasures like gold, silver, and precious materials here, but now they're all gone..."

Knowing that demons and monsters definitely had no interest in those things, instantly, they all got nervous again!

"Let's not panic for nothing." Sandra was being a bit hesitant, "Maybe... maybe that thing needed precious gold, gems and materials to maintain its existence..."

However, although she was saying so, Sandra herself was still quite nervous, checking the surroundings by looking around.

"I don't think so... Bill was not summoning dragons. Those demons do not need treasures to be summoned." Charlie could not agree

with Sandra, “Let’s stop moving and just stay here. This place is surely weird, but I think it’s because of something else, not that thing. There’s no way that the thing can come back again.”

Then, Charlie and Sandra started to cast defensive spells around them, and Susan also tried to help, while Lucien was still leaning against the wall, feeling quite weak. Right now his spiritual power was only enough for activating magic items.

Soon the magic circles were all ready. They could finally take a rest there. Anyone or anything that were lower than fifth-circle needed to use at least ten minutes to break their defence, and the two fourth-circle sorcerers behind the magic circles were confident that they could easily make it last until the senior-rank sorcerer arrived.

Charlie and Sandra were standing on each side of the gate, Lucien was leaning against the wall, and Susan was hiding in a corner. They could see their blurry figures in the smooth stone wall surface in front of them, including Sandra’s ripped collar, Charlie’s torn vest and Lucien’s monocle.

Lucien said to them seriously, “The demon might have died, but someone, or something, is behind all of this.”

When he was saying it, all of a sudden, he saw that his own monocle-wearing figure in the wall grinned. The smile was not creepy, but more like a victor’s smile!

Lucien immediately activated Sun’s Corona, although his headache was still very bad. A streak of holy light hit the wall.

“What?!” Sandra and Charlie immediately got ready for another battle, but there was nothing there. Only the light from Lucien’s Holy Strike was shining on the wall.

Lucien carefully checked the surroundings. Nothing happened.

He told them what he saw, and then said, “I might be too nervous... I don’t know. It can be just my illusion...”

“If the demon was really there, it could have attacked you directly, Mr. Evans, instead of revealing itself in front of you for nothing,”

said Sandra. Both Sandra and Charlie believed that it was just Lucien's mind playing tricks on him.

Lucien adjusted his monocle a bit and said, "I don't know. Anyway, the senior-rank sorcerer should be here in a few minutes. We shall still remain vigilant."

...

In the apprentice hall, the black, corrosion marks started to wriggle and then suddenly shot upwards. A giant creature with strong body and long neck showed up in the hall. The creature's head looked like that of lizard, and on its back, there was a pair of transparent wings similar to those of a bat. The creature's body was covered with a layer of big scales. In the light of sunset, its scales were shining in a dream-like manner. As soon as the creature showed up, the whole place was filled with a strong, oppressive aura.

This thing was a giant dragon!

In the corner of the hall, the air suddenly rippled, and a figure slowly showed up.

It was a handsome-looking, middle-aged man wearing a fancy magic robe. There was a notebook and a quill in his hands.

As soon as the dragon saw the man, it leaped forward and put its huge front claws on the force shield surrounding the sorcerer, showing its red tongue. The man's shield was cracking, however, he was not scared at all. Instead, he wrote something down on his notebook and smiled, "You're a good actor."

The dragon's nose made an "uh-huh" sound. Clearly, the dragon was quite cheerful and proud. It kept licking the sorcerer's force shield.

The sorcerer stopped writing and read his notes in a low voice, "Cautious, agile, decisive, calm... Facing danger, the sorcerer outperformed most of his peers. Choice of spells and magic combination can be quite problematic, however. Majors imbalanced... A lot of work shall be done to fix this problem..."

After closing the notebook, the middle-aged sorcerer stared at the dragon seriously, “Atforest, you should know that the treasures belong to the Congress. You cannot have it.”

The giant dragon was still licking the force shield happily and directly ignored his words.

Observing the rising number of cracks on his shield, the sorcerer shook his head slightly, “All right, all right... You can take part of it, as your reward.”

“Huh!” the giant dragon’s nose made a happy noise again. Then, to show its happiness, the dragon licked the shield again. This time, its long red tongue licked it into pieces.

Chapter 254: In the Library

The middle-aged sorcerer looked around the hall and signed a bit sympathetically, "It's so unlucky of Bertren. He was just summoning a couple of demons for his experiment, having no idea that his youngest apprentice was also secretly conducting a summoning rite in the chamber, or there was no way that an experienced sorcerer like him would fail to notice what was going on in his own castle in time."

"Well... Thompson, I don't see this as just merely bad luck." The dragon pulled out a bulky bag from under its belly satisfactorily, and started to count the gold nuggets, coins and precious magic materials, "According to my experience, when the kid was trying to seek for power from Pain Fable, the hatred demon had already cast its projection in his mind, and started to affect his way of thinking, behavior, and emotions. The special rite later was only made to reinforce the demon's power."

The dragon's voice was, surprisingly, like that of a kid and also sounded genderless, which was in sharp contrast to its great power.

The sorcerer named Thompson looked at the dragon, who squatted there counting his treasures, smiling, "Atforest, what do you mean by 'your experience'?"

"I mean it. Every time I see shining treasures, a demon projection arises in my mind, and the demon's called Greed," the dragon said innocently. "The demon projection affects me so much that I cannot stop myself from taking all the treasures away. It's not really my fault..."

"Where's the demon from?" Thompson was a bit amused, "Now that you can explain all of this to me, I'm sure that you are in control of your thoughts now. Atforest, why don't you give all the treasure back?"

"But... But you've promised me, Thompson. This is my reward." The dragon shook its head, "And I don't know where it comes from..."

maybe the ancient hell... I don't know. It's just there."

Atforest's nonsense made Thompson think, "Several grand arcanists have explored hell and even met some dukes and counts there. From their adventures and those ancient legends, the grand arcanists heard that once there were seven powerful and mysterious demons in hell, and each of them represented the seven negative things—arrogance, greed, envy, anger, pain, acolasia and hypocrisy, but unfortunately, there's no solid evidence for this. And there's also another saying—some believe that the seven negative things were symbols from those cunning and evil demons in hell, and each demon had at least one of the traits."

"I see..." Atforest was not interested in Thompson's words. It secretly hid away some small-sized, precious items from the bag for himself. After all, Atforest knew that some of them indeed belonged to the Congress.

Thompson pretended that he did not see what Atforest was doing there but continued, "It is necessary that we pay more attention to the book, Pain Fable, since it might be connected to some secrets of the world. The demon's power and even its existence were so strange and mysterious. Without you, Atforest, I might have failed the mission and the demon could have escaped from me. Your ability of casting those spiritual and soul spells is very important."

The senior-rank sorcerer also felt that the demon was very strange and mysterious.

Then Thompson took out his badges and put them on, in front of this chest.

...

In the corridor, because Lucien all of a sudden attacked the wall, Charlie, Sandra and Susan got very nervous again, especially Susan, who didn't even dare to breathe.

And when all of them heard the solid footstep reverberating through the corridor, the tension peaked. A middle-aged man wearing a flame-like magic robe walked to them. He had black hair

and blue eyes, and he was wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. The man was elegant and good-looking.

"Hello, I'm Thompson, from the Affairs Committee. I happened to be around in Caspar, so the Congress sent me to deal with the rest of the stuff here," said Thompson with a kind smile on his face in front of the magic circles and the defence wall. Apparently, the three sorcerers were still very cautious and alert.

Thompson was wearing three badges on his chest: one was a six-star arcana badge; one was an eight-circle magic badge; and the third one was the black-fire badge representing Affairs Committee.

Lucien stopped Susan, who was just about to step out of the magic circles and defensive wall due to her excitement, and he said to the man, "Mr. Thompson, we mean no offence, but to make sure we're safe, we want to check your badges. The demon was very creepy and unpredictable."

Both Charlie and Sandra nodded. They had heard more than once that bad things happened when sorcerers lowered their guard in front of a transformed demon.

Thompson did not mind. Smiling, he took down his badges and let them check it freely.

After making sure the badges were not fake, Charlie walked out of the magic circles and reported to Thompson directly, "Sir, the demon was very weird. When we first entered the castle..."

It was supposed to be Lucien's job reporting to Thompson, however, he was too weak to talk that much right now.

After listening to Charlie carefully, Thompson nodded, "This task turned out to be tougher than we thought, and the correct level of the task should be 'Dangerous'. You will all receive way more arcana points later than what was promised, and all the magic items and potions that were consumed in the task would be compensated by the Congress. Just write them down into a list and submit the list to Task Zone. That will take about a week."

"So good to hear that." Sandra was relieved. Clearly, the amulet she was wearing was precious and must be very important to her.

Charlie was also glad to hear that he would get the same magic robe back as well.

Thompson blocked the whole castle using magic, and he decided to first send the sorcerers back to Fraser town.

...

In the coach heading for the major city of Kapas, after a long time of silence, Sandra said to the rest of the people in the coach a bit hesitantly, "This task was surely creepy and mysterious, and the only thing we could be certain was that an apprentice summoned a terrifying and powerful demon through a ridiculous rite, which could not yet be explained by Summoning arcana. The whole thing has been bothering me a lot..."

Among them, Sandra was the only one who specialized in the school of Summoning. Thus, she was the one who was influenced the most.

Although the School of Summoning, compared to other schools, fell behind in its arcana study, and it was still of the strong style of ancient magic empire, the summoning rite that Bill followed was even ridiculous in the ancient empire's understanding of Summoning.

If an apprentice could summon a demon which was at least of fifth-circle, what should sorcerers from other schools do with themselves? This whole thing was beyond Sandra's understanding, and for most ancient summoners, a summoning rite like this must sound like a joke.

Charlie nodded, "Only part of the summoning instruction was left. We cannot draw any solid conclusion before we see the full version of it. Indeed, the whole thing was very creepy."

"I feel that the demon was Bill himself..." Susan also made a comment. Honestly speaking, if the rite could really improve the

power of an apprentice directly to fifth-circle level, it was actually quite alluring, although she would never want to lose control of herself and look that ugly.

Lucien had recovered a lot, and he looked at Susan and Scott through his monocle and asked, "Have you ever read Pain Fable?"

Susan shook her head, while Scott looked very terrified, "Mr. Evans, I was closer to Bill. Once, I saw the book in his room and I did read a couple of stories in it. All the stories I read were more than gloomy and desperate, and they made me feel so angry and dark that I almost wanted to destroy this world of pain. I don't understand why they can be called fables... Someone might use them to terrify children who don't want to go to bed..."

"We need to go to arcana library to get more information, and also I need to expand my magic reserve with two more schools." Lucien nodded. He was planning on borrowing some basic works in Force Field and Necromancy, and he also had a copy of Book of Necromancy.

The school of Force Field had many powerful defence spells, and for Necromancy, its spells were mostly about soul, spirit, blessing and cursing. As for the School of Electromagnetics and Thermodynamics, Lucien believed that his arcana understanding was solid enough so far that he did not need to dig into them right now, thus he might just pick up some useful ones in the two schools and upgrade several spell models in his soul with some new ones, and it was the same with Illusion and Transformation spells.

Selecting and focusing was very important in further progressing in arcana study.

Of course, the major idea that the Congress pursued was that, despite the existence of the different schools, the word could finally be understood with a fundamental as well as ultimate explanation. Thus, most senior-rank sorcerers also studied other fields in addition to what they were good at.

Charlie and Sandra both nodded. As arcanists, they had this consistent impulse to understand all mysterious things.

...

In the basic arcana library, Alex, the djinn librarian, said to Lucien politely, "Hello, Mr. Evans, what can I do for you today?"

Wearing the level-four arcana badge, Lucien could enjoy half price for borrowing a book there, which was one point for forty books.

"Do you have Pain Fable here, Alex?" After submitting the task report and loss-item list, and because the reward arcana points of the task needed to be reevaluated, Lucien, Charlie and Sandra came to the library together.

Alex shook his head, and due to the style of clothes he was wearing his chest was revealed, "Sorry, Mr. Evans, we only have arcana books here. If you're looking for fables, you might want to try Allyn City Library or Rentato Royal Library."

"Then, can you find a book containing the sentence 'special summoning rite of V...' or something like that..." Lucien kept trying, using Alex like a searching engine.

The searching took Alex a while, and then he listed, "There are five qualified books - Special Summoning Rite of Verlam, Special Summoning Rite of Viken, Special Summoning Rites in Vertra..."

Lucien asked for all of them and started leafing through the books with Sandra and Charlie.

"I found it! Mr. Evans, it's Special Summoning Rite of Viken!" Sandra held the book high.

Lucien took over the book and he indeed saw the exact same summoning instruction that he read in the apprentice hall. Furthermore, the whole thing was even more ridiculous compared to the version with missing parts, including crawling and dancing around the brazier, and telling the brazier one's painful past, and so on.

Lucien turned the book back to its first page, and there was a comment left by a sorcerer, "This ridiculous book borrowed Viken, the ancient legendary archmage's name, and other than that, it is

totally a joke. The book should be kicked out of the library."

"Viken?" Although Lucien was complimented as a "historian" in Aalto, he was not an expert at all with the history of the land across Storm Strait.

Charlie explained, "Viken was an ancient legendary archmage, and his territory was today's Brianna. He was very cruel. Once, in order to study a spell, he blockaded a city of twenty thousand people, and he let those people kill each other out of desperate and starvation... They ate each other..."

"I've never head his name before. What's his legendary class?" asked Lucien out of curiosity.

Sandra answered in a casual way, "No idea. He disappeared before the War of Dawn."

The book Lucien was holding suddenly dropped from his hand and fell on the floor.

Chapter 255: A New Journey Again The End of Volume III

"Mr. Evans?" Sandra looked at Lucien a bit confusedly. She did not understand why what she had just said was surprising at all.

"Uh... My hand just trembled, from the reflected damage from the ring..." Lucien quickly found an excuse and picked up the book.

What Lucien said was not true, and the truth was that he was shocked by Sandra's words, because Viken was not the only sorcerer who disappeared before the War of Dawn. Maskelyne also did.

Although Sandra and Charlie knew part of the story, they did not know those details: Maskelyne, the Prophet, went missing deep into the World of Souls, together with his several friends mentioned in his notes, and at that time, they were all working on some important magic experiment. The whole thing got even more weird with the fact that Maskelyne could make divine items with magic, and his symbol, the Grand Cross, looked very much like the Church's Cross of Truth.

This made Lucien think whether Viken was one of Maskelyne friends and whether he was part of the experiment. Also, did the experiment had anything to do with the special summoning rite? Lucien wondered if the ultimate secret of the world lay deep inside the World of Souls? The place must be very, very dangerous!

"One day if I can become a grand arcanist, or even a legendary archmage, I'm definitely going to explore the World of Souls." Lucien decided to keep this information to himself, but when he was ready, he wanted to invite other legendary archmages or grand arcanists he trusted to go together with him.

Neither Charlie nor Sandra doubted Lucien's words. His words made totally sense.

"No matter how curious we are, the last thing we should do is to try the rite." Sandra reminded them. As a sorcerer who specialized in

Summoning, she was very concerned with such a creepy summoning rite and its unpredictable consequences.

Lucien smiled, "I'm not gonna touch it before I become a senior-rank. I don't think I can handle the demon right now, and I believe that the Congress will soon gather more information about the demon."

"The Congress should. If we had had more information, we would not have been so lost when facing the demon." Charlie agreed.

Sandra nodded, "The Congress can take away some pressure, so we don't have to worry about it too much, but I still want to read Pain Fable to see whether it is as desperate as what Scott described."

"Me, too, but I still need to borrow a few other books from here first," said Lucien. Then, he asked Alex to find him some basic arcana books in the schools of Force Field and Necromancy and basic magic books in other schools.

Charlie put on his hat and said, "I've still got some other stuff to deal with, so I have to go now. Nice to meet you, Mr. Evans, Ms. Sandra, and I hope we can work together again in the future."

"I'm heading for Allyn City Library as well, Mr. Evans. You're not that kind of arcanist who can only survive in labs. You're reliable, and you're a good leader." Sandra was also going to leave, and before that, she shook hands with Lucien.

Lucien said to them in a humble manner, "You two are very experienced sorcerers, and I've learned a lot from you two. Without you, Sandra and Charlie, I would certainly have died in the castle already. We should stay in contact with each other to exchange ideas from time to time."

...

At the bottom floor of Aalto Abbey, a female voice was humming an old and solemn tune, as if the sky was being covered with dark clouds before the storm came. The voice was a bit hoarse but sexy.

The pitch got slowly higher, and the voice became softer but sad.

Then, the melody got faster and more pressing, like rain drops hitting the ground and wild wind blowing.

After a while, the female eased in a soothing and gentle tune as if an isolated but pure mind was recalling all the memories with emotions in the storm. And in those memories, lightnings were forgotten; thundering was forgotten; harsh raindrops were forgotten; and as well as all the depression and sadness, and even the whole world.

The storm was still lashing her mind, but soon, at the end of the first movement, the melody became warm and nice.

Natasha finished humming the major melody of Storm Sonata, and then she looked at the letter in her hand. It was the one Lucien sent on July 30th. She was very satisfied with the sonata, her birthday gift from Lucien.

"Although Storm Sonata is not as outstanding as Pathetique and Moonlight, it is still impressive, and it shares the same theme and spirit with Symphony of Fate—perseverance and faith. It's a great birthday gift," Natasha murmured in a low voice. Then she looked up and started to read the rest of the letter again. It was all about Lucien's interesting experiences in Allyn, including how he tortured the apprentices with lots of exercises, those apprentices complaints and jokes, the story when he was mistakenly invited to the conference because of his name, and so on.

Natasha was comforted by Lucien's letter. She felt that Lucien, her old friend, was telling her all those stories right in front of her relaxedly.

"Why do I feel those stories are more interesting than the music itself?" Natasha rubbed her chin a bit and asked herself confusedly, "Is it because I haven't talked to other people for too long?"

...

In the Month of Flower, the fifth of the year, the weather was getting hot. However, Allyn, as the city in the sky, still remained relatively cool.

In the magic lab of Lucien's garden villa.

The light white, tear-shaped mark on Lucien's left hand burst out gentle light, and slowly rose up into the sky. Lucien added the powder of Sunstone and some more magic materials into the tear mark and started casting.

After a long and complicated process, the tear looked less transparent but more solid. It's light still looked pure and gentle.

At this time, the light spots in the crystal ball in Lucien's right hand flew out of it one by one. The light spots surrounded the tear and formed a stellar map, and then, the map was absorbed by Lucien's left hand.

When the dazzling starlight disappeared, nothing was left on Lucien's left hand. However, Lucien could control the power anytime he wanted to use it by lighting the tear-shaped mark up.

According to Lucien Blessing Book, with all the materials gathered by Lucien and the mark left by the little girl, Lucien created his first permanent blessing, Innocent Gratefulness. It could help Lucien protect himself in the environment full of dead and rotten bodies, and also improve his defence level against soul attack spells.

In order to build the permanent blessing, Lucien spent his two hundred arcana points that he earned from Bertren Castle. In the recent months, he fully relied on the subsidy from the congress and the Will of Elements to continue his study of Life Force and Necromancy.

Currently, in total, Lucien had a hundred and two arcana points, and he had constructed another five third-circle spells: Dimensional Cage, Protection from Energy, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Secondary Telepathic Bond and Lightning. So far, as for second circle spells, Lucien had twenty of them, and he reconstructed many of the spells to make them work better.

After finishing his work, when Lucien was about to leave the lab, he saw his steward Charles, who was an elegant old gentleman, coming over.

"Mr. Evans, Mr. Gaston, from the Will of Elements, wants to see you in his office," said Charles.

...

In Allyn, the Will of Elements' division.

"Evans, I heard that you've been reading Pain Fable recently, did you find anything in it?" Gaston made Lucien sit down and asked him casually.

"Not really." Lucien shook his head lightly, "I feel that those stories were dark and gloomy for the sake of being depressing. The only purpose of the book was to make people feel painful and discouraged and upset. By the way, Mr. Gaston, has the congress made any progress in investigating the demon? I mean... if it's confidential, you don't have to tell me."

"So far not a single senior-rank sorcerer involved in the study has managed to summon the demon you guys encountered in the castle, and that makes the special summoning rite very suspicious in their eyes, and they wonder if Bill had hidden other parts of his experience..." Gaston directly told Lucien what was going on.

After a bit of a pause, Gaston stared at Lucien with his dark yellow eyes and said, "The reason why I asked you to come over here is that we have a mandatory task for you from the Will of Elements. A gentleman asked the Will of Elements to send a letter for him to Mr. Stanis, the King of Nightmare. Because you're from Violet, Lucien, we want you to take the mission. The reward is a thousand arcana points. Don't worry, the King of Nightmare would send his people to guide you through the Dark Mountain Range, so you'll not be alone there in the mountains."

Gaston's words brought Lucien's memory about the Duchy of Violet back instantly. Although Lucien had a pretty hard time there, he also had lots of good memories. In Lucien's mind, Aalto was like his hometown.

Seeing Lucien did not say yes immediately, Gaston continued, "Of course I'm not saying that it's gonna be a completely safe and sound

trip. If you don't want to accept the task, it's also okay, and you can choose something else. But if you're willing to take it, you can get the one thousand arcana points in advance, as well as enjoy a year long subsidy, so you can go and buy all the materials and potions you need to get prepared."

All his friends' faces showed up in Lucien's mind, giving him mixed feelings. Then, Lucien nodded, smiling, "I'll take this task, Mr. Gaston."

"Be careful, Evans. You'd better take the north route as the Church is strengthening their patrols over Storm Strait." Gaston patted on Lucien's shoulder, "You still take the monocle with you, but because of the electromagnetic interference of Storm Strait, when you get to the other side, it will be hard for you to contact us."

Chapter 256: The East Haven

Chapter 256: The East Haven

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

— Volume IV: The Dark Mountain Range —

In the Month of Hot Wind, the eighth of the year, the weather would be torturing hot in Allyn or Aalto, as if even the air was on fire. However, in this narrow and busy city across the continent, filled with buildings of mixed styles from different countries, the breeze was still cool and gentle like that of the Month of Life.

This was Segru, deep in the northwest of the far northland, the East Haven surrounded by countless giant, towering trees.

Because the Cabin of Palmeira of the Congress controlled the many busy cities along Storm Strait, and their control extended all the way up to the far northland, the Cabin of Palmeira had driven away lots of orcs, dwarf tribes and trolls and built up many cities. Therefore, in many people's mind, all of the far northland was the Cabin of Palmeira's territory, an area under the control of the Congress of Magic.

However, in fact, because of the vast territory of the far northland —Schachran Empire's northwest province to the west, Mintuck, an ice-free port which was close to the marine outfall of Boundless Ocean to the east, the empire's Flame Fortress and Storm Strait to the south, the polar region where the sun never set for the six months to the north, the congress and the Cabin of Palmeira could only control the southeast part of it, and deep into the land lived horrifying trolls, orcs, snowmen and ancient sorcerers who spent their life in solitude.

Because of the special location of Segru, sitting at the junction of the broad primeval forest in the northeast of the empire and the central part of the far northland's coastal area, where the Church's and the Congress of Magic's power reached a stalemate, Segru became a place that was neither under the control of the former nor

the latter. Lots of noble émigré from Schachran Empire and other convicts gradually gathered here and built up the city and the many manors around it. Thus, Segru was called by many people the East Haven.

Although the first people of this place had set up some rough rules and law here while they were fighting against monsters such as trolls and doing smuggling trades, power, which basically came from either magic or sword, was still the ultimate law in the far northland.

There was a saying here, “The law of magic and sword was the law of the far northland!”

Known for its smuggling trades, the city had been attracting countless money-longing merchants and adventures to come here in order to seek for great fortune, thus the city was busy and prosperous. Of course, most merchants here had their own experienced mercenaries, or they could be killed at any time and their bodies would be thrown into the forest to feed the beasts.

At that moment, Lucien was wondering at leisure on the major crossroads of Segru, and his destination was the wood cabin up ahead. According to the information given by the Congress, in the cabin Lucien could find the relatively good intelligence organization in this city.

Lucien was wearing white shirt, a black, double-breasted long suit, top hat and the monocle, which made him look elegant and handsome, but he did not look deterring enough here in this brutal East Haven. On the street, in many people’s eyes, Lucien was a perfect target, and they were trying to figure out what kind of perfect chance they could get to kidnap him.

“Look at the way he’s dressing... We probably can get a good fortune from him.” Two bulky guys were talking, “Even if he’s actually poor... Look at his face... We can still sell him to the nobles. They must love this perfect toy!”

“Don’t rush. Don’t do anything before you know more about the person.” The other guy responded, “He dare come here alone, and

he must be more or less confident. Lots of idiots have died here because they judge other people only by their appearance.”

Those people who were still alive here in this place were not brainless. On the contrary, most of them were very cautious. However, as soon as they could make sure that the target was a really good one, they would show the darkest side of human nature.

Before Lucien left Allyn, he bought some magic potions, materials, gold and the spell, Sorcerer’s Cabin, and he also got a bottle of potion called Blood Cleanser, which helped him cure from the soul damage caused by Crying Soul. Now, Lucien was about a real knight’s level, so he could hear the conversation between the two guys without even using spiritual power. Lucien lightly shook his head with a smile, “What a place... the East Haven.”

However, this was as far as the potions from the Congress could go so far in improving one’s Blessing power, since after this level, one’s faith as a knight would play a more important role, and that was not Lucien’s direction.

Pretending that he did not hear anything, Lucien still walked on the street calmly. Soon, he came in front of the cabin drawn with camellias.

“No child here.” When Lucien was about to walk in, a strong and bulky man beside the door reached out his right hand and stopped him.

As he was saying, the man purposefully showed his tanned muscle to reveal his power.

Lucien did not get pissed off but asked, “What kind of people can be here, then?”

The man snorted and then pointed at the doorplate. Beside the camellia patterns, the doorplate read, both in Schachran characters and in common tongue, “Money, or power.”

Lucien smiled and nodded, “I see.”

All of a sudden, this husky guy bowed deeply towards Lucien and

said to him, “Sir, please come in... please come in... I was being stupid just now. Please forgive me.”

At the same time, he kept slapping himself in his face.

Watching the guy reverently leading the young man into the cabin, the other guards around the cabin were more than shocked.

“Has... has Tony been possessed?” Another guy murmured, thinking that what he saw was very creepy. A few seconds later, he realized that the young man might be a real sorcerer, so he quickly turned around and ran into the cabin to report.

The two traffickers, who were following Lucien, also saw what happened. They swallowed with great difficulty, and felt lucky that they were not being stupidly reckless. They knew that a sorcerer who could cast spells without producing stirred magic waves was definitely not an ordinary sorcerer. Some ancient senior-rank sorcerers in the East Haven might not even be able to do this!

In fact, the spell, Charm Person, which was improved by Lucien, was known for producing only very limited amount of magic waves. As a third-circle sorcerer, Lucien could cast the spell perfectly, and those people whose power was not even close to that of a real knight had absolutely no way to sense the minor magic waves, not to mention that they did not even have any magic or divine items!

...

The cabin was actually of decent size, and it was divided into many small booths. There were different people selling information in those booths, and the overall environment was quiet and nice.

Tony led Lucien to the stairs in an absent-minded way, and in front of the stairs, there were two beefy guys with long sword.

“Tony, who’s this?” The guards stopped Tony with their swords.

Tony’s back was still bent. After taking a quick glance at Lucien respectfully, he said to the guards, “This is Mr. Guzon’s important guest. Don’t stand in his way.”

Lucien simply smiled, but did not say anything.

“I never heard of this before. I need to talk to Mr. Guzon first,” the guard said to them and was about to walk upstairs.

As soon as he turned around, Tony directly punched the other guard out with his right fist.

When the guard on the stairs was about to hack at Tony with his sword, suddenly he felt great dizziness, and then a big smile appeared on his face, “I’m so sorry sir. He’s an idiot. How dare he try to stop you. Please, please, sir, follow me this way. Let me guide you to Mr. Guzon.”

Lucien sightly pushed up his monocle and nodded. He knew that his current spiritual power could only control three people at the same time.

“Mr. Guzon, attack!” exclaimed another guard upstairs, who saw what was going on there.

Guzon walked out of his room with a thick cigar in his mouth. Wearing a black long jacket, he looked down with great sense of stateliness, followed by a guard covered in a complete set of black armour.

“Mr. Guzon, I’m here for the intelligence.” Lucien looked up and smiled.

“You’re not welcome here. You broke into this place.” Guzon looked pissed, “Take him!”

Although Guzon had Blessing from the magic potion and he also had a pretty useful magic item, he decided to use the two dark knights that he hired with good money.

Also, the young man downstairs looked skinny and not aggressive at all. He even thought that the young man was probably sent by his competitors to kill him, so he should not let the young man walk any closer to him.

In the corner, a shadow suddenly shot out from the corner and

jumped on Lucien. At the same time, the body of the black-armored knight bulged fast, then the knight rushed downstairs toward Lucien with a flaming great hammer.

Other guards also quickly besieged Lucien.

Guzon watched what was going on downstairs with the big cigar in his mouth. However, after a surge of magic waves, his level two knight was now on the floor, trying his best to escape from the young man. The other knight was not doing any better. In fact, he directly ran into the wall to run away and left a big hole on it.

Those guards were all right now on the floor. Around their crotches, it was all suspiciously wet.

The big cigar in Guzon's mouth fell on the ground, but he didn't even notice. Staring at Lucien, he started to step backwards.

After casting the second-circle spell, Scare, Lucien slowly walked upstairs with his hands in the pockets, and he smiled, "Can we talk now, Mr. Guzon?"

"S... sure." Guzon's teeth were chattering.

In the East Haven, Lucien followed their rules—money, or power. It was the best solution.

Although Lucien's magic power was nothing in Allyn, in fact, a middle-rank sorcerer could easily rule a whole small city. Even in a messy place like the East Haven, most of the scoundrels here were still ordinary people.

Lucien's leather shoes were making crisp sounds on the stairs, and he said slowly, "Mr. Guzon, I need a guide. A guide who can lead me to travel through Schachran Empire."

Although it was not hard to fly across the border, flying over the entire empire was of course time-consuming and tough, and if Lucien was not careful enough, the North Church would easily notice and chase after him. Therefore, Lucien needed a fake identity and a guide who played the role of his butler.

Chapter 257: A “Good” Introduction

Guzon repeated in a confused way, "Through Schachran Empire?"

Lucien stopped walking closer to Guzon but just stood on the stairs, where those guards were still lying on the floor, with his hands in his pockets. Those guests who came here to buy information were all hiding in the booths, feeling terrified.

"Yes, I want to take the way through the empire and get to the countries following other gods northeast of the Dark Mountain Range." Lucien nodded, "I'm sure that you can tell I'm a sorcerer, Mr. Guzon. I need a guide who really knows well about the country's geography, custom, and powers to help me get to my final destination without being chased after by the North Church."

From Gaston, Lucien knew that the church was tightening their control over Storm Strait, so he decided to take the magic train and to later get to the famous city in the north called Deep Sea Port through the Kingdoms of Holm and Colette. Then Lucien spent another two months traveling through the forests where lived trolls and orcs and finally got to the East Haven, whose primeval forest was right beside the empire's Flame Fortress in its northeast.

During that time, Lucien had constructed another very important third-circle spell, Dispel Magic.

The reason why Lucien wanted to take this way was that the empire bordered the Duchy of Violet in southwest.

After Lucien's half-true explanation, Guzon got a rough idea of Lucien's request. He took a couple of deep breaths and tried to gain his leader's manner back, "Sir, because of the Church, you don't want to fly across the empire, but want to take the land route with the help of a local guide, is that right?"

"Exactly, Mr. Guzon." Although Lucien was smiling, he really wished that he could just fly to the duchy, which would only cost him three to four days, and that was way faster than taking the land route.

Guzon saw that Lucien was not that kind of vicious sorcerer, and after a short pause, he said, "Sir, I'd recommend you Leo, who was the assistant of the biggest smuggler in Schachran Empire, and their business once extended all the way to those countries northeast of the mountains and even Violet, but later he pissed off the smuggler, and the smuggler killed Leo's family. Leo was the only one who survived and escaped here to Segru with a precious magic scroll of his. His strong will of taking revenge and his power that's close to that of a real knight made him survive until here, although in a hard way. Now he's accepting any tasks he can take to save money to buy magic potions in order to be stronger for his revenge. Also, Leo was very good at changing one's appearance using non-magic methods, and he knows the empire very well."

Lucien responded, with the smile still on his face, "He might not be the one I'm looking for. After we get to the empire, if he encounters the smuggler, he might get too emotional."

"No worries, sir. Leo has his knight belief. As long as you two have signed the contract, I'm sure he would not break his words and he would do his best to complete the task," insisted Guzon. "Maybe this was why he pissed of the guy. Sir, Leo is your best choice."

Lucien thought about it for a while and nodded, "Then I should see him first."

"You won't be disappointed," said Guzon. "The only thing is that he's not showing up regularly as usual for some reason. What we know is that, most recently, someone saw him in a bar called Taran."

At this time, Guzon noticed that both of the young man's eyes, the one with the monocle and the bare one, had fast spinning swirls in them, and then his mind got lost.

Lucien cast Charm Person on Guzon and verified all the information he provided. Then, he also cast Hypnotism on Guzon to remove the key parts of his memory about himself. Although Lucien was not able to rewrite his target's memory, and neither completely remove all the person's memory, removing part of the key information was not that difficult, so Guzon would not be able to provide any useful information about Lucien if someone was going to chase after him.

Also, even his memory about Lucien's appearance was not accurate, because Lucien carefully disguised himself before setting off.

As the winner of Holm Crown prize, Lucien was not sure whether the Church, either in the north or south, knew what he looked like. Because cardinals and night watchers could easily tell the first circle spell, Disguise, and also because Lucien was not good at Transformation, he used some physical ways to change his appearance: insoles for increasing height, brown eye contacts made of the pupils of a magic creature to change his eye colour, and even a decent, well-trimmed moustache, together with the monocle. With those gears, Lucien looked quite elegant.

After a long time, Guzon finally slowly came back to his senses, like just waking up from a nightmare.

"Where are the knights?" Guzon tried to recall what happened, but as soon as he tried, his head hurt badly. As the leader of an intelligence organization, he immediately realized what just happened—a powerful man was here, and the man must altered his memory, so he directly gave up thinking about it.

Looking at his men lying on the floor higgledy-piggledy, Guzon was pissed, "Damn, you useless jerks! Get up and change your fu*king pants! And get the stupid knights back!"

...

The board outside of the bar wrote, "Taran, the East Haven's Taran".

Lucien pushed the bar gate open and entered the place. As soon as he stepped into it, he attracted all the people's eyes in the bar, but very quickly, in the next second, all the eyes drew back and the laughing, talking and shouting continued as if they had never stopped.

When Lucien mentally controlled the cabin guard, Tony, right in public, he did it on purpose to show those East Haven people his power. Some guys in the bar knew what kind of power Lucien had, so they tried to stay away from him. Seeing that, the other people who did not know Lucien's power also wanted to be cautious first.

This was how they survived here in the East Haven! Outcomers who came here without power or relationship could only expect one ending: death.

Most people here did not want to spend their whole life here at all. They wanted to make a fortune here and move out. Of course, some of them did enjoy this place. They enjoyed the excitement and freedom here very much.

Obviously, Lucien's calm and elegant manner revealed the fact that he did not belong here. Walking through the chairs, Lucien came to the bar counter, "Hello, I'm looking for someone."

Wiping the cups, the blonde bartender responded without even lifting his head, "You need to buy something first."

"A glass of Lesse, please." This was the first kind of alcoholic drink that Lucien knew in this world.

The blonde young man finally looked up. He was a good-looking young guy, and he had this kind of unruly manner gained from this wild place.

After pulling Lucien a cup of golden drink, he asked, "Looking for who?"

"Leo." Lucien stared at the golden liquor like he was appreciating a piece of artwork, "I'm looking for Leo."

"You're not alone there." The bartender gave Lucien an ambiguous answer.

"I'm here to hire him." Lucien looked at the bartender.

"So were they," said the bartender a bit sarcastically.

Hearing their conversation, several strong, armored men sprang up from the chairs. Their armors were making clacking noises.

Their leader was a man in his thirties. His left eyeball was missing.

Dragging a great sword on the floor, his armoured shoes clacking,

the tall and bulky man came in front of Lucien. He slightly bent forward and asked Lucien in a threatening way, "How did you know Leo? When was the last time you saw him? I'm asking you this for a big man here in the East Haven. You'd better not bullshit, or you won't see tomorrow's sunrise."

"I don't know Leo. I just want to hire him to protect me here," Lucien answered calmly. In his mind, he started to feel that looking for Leo might not have been a good idea, since clearly right now he was in some kind of trouble.

The man missing his left eye did not leave Lucien alone, but continued to push him, "Who introduced Leo to you! Protect you for what?"

As soon as he finished his last word, Lucien's left, glove-wearing hand quickly left the cup and grabbed the man's throat.

It was fast, very fast. The man only saw shadows.

Lucien smiled, "Did your mother ever tell you curiosity kills the cat?"

"You... you'd better let go of me, if you want to leave the East Haven alive!! The big man behind me..." The man was still threatening Lucien, however, in the next second, he was choked because Lucien tightened his grabbing on his neck.

"You know what? I'm not sure if I can leave the East Haven alive, but if you continue being stupid, I'm sure you cannot leave the bar alive. And to tell you a secret—I'm a big man, too."

The man's face flushed bright red out of anger, but he could not say a single word. When his people finally realized what was happening here and were about to pull out their swords to save him, a man wearing black armor in the same style as the others yelled at them from the bar's back door,

"Leo's here! In the bar's chamber!"

The bartender's face suddenly turned white. As soon as he was about to rush out from behind the counter, he was stopped by a

swordman. Other guys all rushed towards the back of the bar, as if they had all forgotten the existence of their leader.

On the other side of the hall, two guys whose power was close to that of a real knight also jumped up from their chairs and ran toward the back door.

Lucien was a bit amused. Releasing the hand grabbing the man's throat, Lucien slightly shook his head out of sympathy, "Too bad... The big man you were talking about doesn't seem to care about you a lot. Even if I kill you, he would not care. Which suzerain sent you here?"

"How do you know he's a suzerain?" asked the man out of great surprise.

Lucien slightly patted his clothes and stood up from his chair.

Chapter 258: Warren, The Young Master

Chapter 258: Warren, The Young Master

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Seeing that his guessing was correct, Lucien smiled confidently, “There’re only thirty or forty people here in the East Haven who are qualified for being called ‘big man’, so it’s not very difficult to guess. And there’s no way that you work for one of the nine city lords, or you wouldn’t need to hide his name.”

The metal armors were banging against each other from the back of the bar. It seemed that the chamber was underground, since the whole floor of the bar was shaking slightly.

Seeing that, the guests started leaving the bar, not because they were afraid or nervous, but because they were really used to it and they did not want to bother to be part of this at all.

Lucien, with his hands in his pockets, also headed for the bar gate. In the East Haven, countless people were from Schachran Empire, and Leo definitely wasn’t his only choice. Also, Lucien did not want any trouble at this time.

Seeing that Lucien was leaving as well, the man missing his left eye looked a bit confused, but he was smart enough to leave Lucien alone, since the young man had shown his great power. Instead, he turned around and ran toward the bar counter to stop the bar owner from getting out and rushing at the chamber.

If one without any backgrounds wanted to survive here in the East Haven, the person must know how to be patient and tolerant, since those who did not all ended up becoming food for the wild animals in the forest, or materials for necromancers...

Here, only the rule of sword and magic worked.

Lucien walked toward the gate casually, looking on the fight between the bar owner and the man missing the left eye. Their

ways of using sword were all direct and simple, which was the typical Schachran style.

“How dare you people fight in Taran! The several city lords will make you pay!” shouted the owner. The bar owner had the power close to that of a real knight from the Blessing that he got from the potion many years ago. If he had been younger, he could have beaten the man quickly. However, now he was old, and the fight between them was intense.

In the East Haven, if a person wanted to run a bar like Taran, he or she must need to get the support from those big people.

The man missing the left eye hacked at the bar owner but the momentum of his greatsword was stopped by the bar owner's shield. Quickly, he shifted the position of his greatsword to shove aside the owner's sword. After a loud bang, the two of them took a few steps backwards, and seizing the chance, the left-eye-missing man sneered, “The young master doesn't like Leo, and you hid Leo right down in your bar's chamber! Leo pissed off our young master, and even the city lords cannot say too much about it!”

When most of the guests in the bar had already left, at this time, with a huge bang, the bar gate was broken into pieces by force and the pieces fell backwards. Several drunkards were hurt and their heads started bleeding.

Lucien slightly tilted his head and perfectly avoided a piece of wood from the broken gate. Through the broken gate, a bunch of guys walked in wearing black armors of the same style as the one that the one-eyed man was wearing. A young man with a gray cigar in his mouth looked like their leader, since he was not wearing any armor but, like Lucien, he was wearing a Holm-style white shirt, brown waistcoat, long jacket and a top hat. His face was featured, and his nose was tall and straight. In general, he was a good-looking guy, but he looked very gloomy and cold with his messy, black eyebrows.

Two guys stood beside him, one on the left and one on the right. The one on the left was short, and he was also dressing in Holm style, while the other guy on the right was big and muscular.

The young man looked around at the hall and casually picked a chair that was close to the gate and sat down. As soon as he reached out his right hand, a beautiful blond girl went down on her knees to undo his sleeve buttons. When she was doing this, the girl had no facial expression on her face, and her bust was seductively half-revealed in her Tria-style blue dress.

“Sir Jarolim, please go and get Leo,” the young man said to the short man standing beside him with a smile. Finally, they had found Leo, the guy who ruined their great plan. Right now the young man’s anger was burning.

“Yes, young master,” Jarolim answered in a plain tone.

Jarolim’s leather shoes were shining. Taking a step forward, his figure turned into a shadow, rushing to the back of the bar. Clearly, he had a real knight’s power. The power scared the remaining people in the bar, and they felt too nervous to move fast. Those people blocked Lucien’s way as well.

When Lucien finally got right beside the gate, Jarolim had already come back, grabbing Leo’s collar in his hand. Obviously, Leo’s power was not even close to that of Jarolim, not to mention the fact that he was besieged by so many people.

Seeing that they had caught Leo, the bar owner and the bartender stopped fighting against the swordmen and started thinking what they should do next.

Lucien took a quick glance at Leo out of curiosity, who was still trying to get out of Jarolim’s hand. Although he was only in his middle age, Leo’s hair was black mixing with white. His face looked gaunt, and his eyes, which were tightly closed right now, were surrounded by wrinkles.

Jarolim threw Leo to the ground right in front of the young man, Warren.

Leo’s body was covered with a layer of black flame, which had consumed all his strength to the point where he could not even stand up on his feet.

“Very nice to meet you, Mr. Leo.” Warren leaned his body forward and slapped Leo’s face with his right hand, “You wanna say anything to me?”

Warren’s blue eyes were filled with violence.

Leo opened his eyes using great effort, and it looked like there was great pain in his green eyes but there was zero regret, “Warren, I just reminded the noble lady... I reminded her that you are a trafficker! Dare you say how many human beings, elves, dwarves and orcs have you sold to Schachran? I can’t let you do this to her!”

Warren sat back and smiled, “What a nice guy you are, Mr. Leo.”

Then he fiercely kicked Leo’s stomach. Leo burst out a painful groan and was now writhing on the floor.

Then Warren sent his right foot in front of the blond beauty and made her clean his shoe carefully. He rubbed his chin a bit and said, “I’m confused, Leo. Why you always want to mess up with me? You don’t even know the chick? You like her?”

Leo was coughing, and he tried his best to answer, “This is... my principle... You cannot do this... to anyone.”

“Wow, wow... Mr. Leo, aren’t you such a man with great knight spirit?” Warren suddenly took back his right foot and stepped on Leo’s head, grinding it against the floor, “What a pity... You’re not a real knight. You only deserve this... Your head being stepped on by a bad man’s foot, ha.

“Oh, I forgot the other thing you deserve...” Warren added, “There must be a reason that your whole family was killed, isn’t it?”

That really hurt Leo. His throat was making hoarse noise like a wild beast giving dying kicks. Seeing that, some other people present felt sympathetic, for Leo, and also for themselves.

Warren looked at the bar owner, “You don’t say anything. This guy has been messing up with me, and I have to show people how I deal with guys like him, or they would forget who they were.”

The bar owner could not say anything.

Then, Warren said to his men, “Beat him up, then cut off his arms and legs. Hang the remaining of him on the wood frame out of the city gate and let the coyotes finish him at night.”

As he was saying, he kicked Leo toward the man missing one eye.

As soon as the guy got Leo, he and his men started punching Leo fiercely.

At this time, someone was stamping on the floor, making a door-knocking noise. When the people in the hall all stopped what they were doing and looked back, a young man stood out and smiled to them, “Good afternoon, every one.”

All the people present were more than confused right now.

Although Warren was also confused, he asked cautiously, “Do I know you?”

Warren was not stupid, although basically his powerful father could take care of everything for him. He knew that he must be careful with a guy who decided to show up like this in this kind of situation.

Lucien pointed at Leo casually, and all of sudden, Leo floated in the air and came next to Lucien.

“Mr. Warren, I need to hire Leo right now for my mission. You two deal with your stuff when the mission is done,” said Lucien in plain tone, as if he was giving a command.

What Leo had done revealed that he was a principled, righteous person, and that was the kind of person that Lucien needed for his trip through Schachran, not to mention how he would feel if Lucien saved his life.

Sometimes, people felt that a person’s honorable characters and qualities were worth of nothing, but in fact, someday, they might save your life.

Chapter 259: Leo's Suggestion

Chapter 259: Leo's Suggestion

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Thanks to his Blessing, Frost Giant, Leo did not pass out yet. Hearing Lucien's words, he opened his eyes with great difficulty, looking at the strange young man in front of him both surprisedly and worriedly.

Facing Lucien's direct command, the bar owner was shocked as well. He wondered if this young man knew who Warren was and who his father was.

Warren first laughed a bit as if he saw something beyond ridiculous, then, suppressing his anger, he said to Lucien, "Why do you think I'd let you take Leo? Who do you think you are? How dare you talk to me like this?"

Clearly, Warren was on a bad mood. His great deal with a duke in Schachran Empire had been ruined by Leo. When he finally found Leo and was about to make him pay, some random guy just showed up right in front of him and commanded him to let go of Leo. No one except his own father and the nine city lords dare talk to him like this!

At this time, Jarolim took a step forward, with a pair of black daggers in his hands, ready to launch his knight-level attack toward Lucien.

If Lucien was intimidated, Jarolim would know that the young man was actually only doing his bravado, so then Jarolim could directly take him down.

Jarolim's gray eyes aggressively looked into Lucien's eyes, letting Lucien feel the power of a knight.

All of a sudden, he saw a quick flash of white light in Lucien's brown eyes and, in the last second, he felt something dreadful sneak

into his brain.

Then, Jarolim started to feel extreme pain and a tingling sensation throughout his body. Before he realized what was happening to him, several people in the hall started screaming, as they saw that Jarolim's hands and face were festering with light yellow pus bleeding out.

Knowing that this was magic, Jarolim quickly covered his body with layers of black flame. However, the festering quickly put out the flame and kept spreading all over his body.

Warren and his guards also noticed what was happening on Jarolim's body. Within only a few seconds, Jarolim became beyond weak. Right now he was kneeling on the ground, using all of his strength to gasp for air. Although the festering had stopped, clearly it would take a long time for him to recover from it.

Looking at him, Lucien was just standing there, smiling. He did not continue his attack.

The third-circle necromancy spell, Curse of the Putrid Husk.

"Are you... a necromancer?" Warren tried to stay calm, although his voice was trembling. After all, necromancers never enjoyed good reputation, especially in the north.

Lucien was just smiling, but offered no answer.

The other tall and strong knight leaned forward beside Warren and whispered to him a bit.

Warren stood up, his facial expression looked meaningful, "So... Mr. middle-rank sorcerer, are you from the Congress, or some place here in the north?"

Hearing how Warren called this young man, the rest of the people present were all shocked. This guy was a middle-rank mage!

Although a middle-rank mage was just an ordinary person in Allyn, a middle-rank was of the level of a grand knight or a bishop. Apart from a few big cities such as Lance, Allyn, Rentato, and Aalto, a

middle-rank mage, a grand knight, or a bishop could stay in charge of a whole city. In the East Haven, only the nine city lords were that powerful, and the rest of the suzerains here were only about Lucien's level.

In fact, because of the variety, a middle-rank mage's power was basically the same as that of a grand knight who was actually one level higher.

Lucien's Holm ring was right now being covered underneath his glove. He adjusted his monocle and answered the young man calmly, "It doesn't matter where I come from. What's important is that I want to take Leo with me. Are you okay with it?"

Lucien's tone reminded Warren of those genius sorcerers from the Congress of Magic, especially those ones from the Hand of Paleness. He quickly put on a smile and shrugged, "You know what... You've shown your power, sir, and it's time for me to leave."

Although Warren was still under his father's protection, he knew the rules here in the East Haven. He knew what was a wise decision in that situation.

"You're smart, Mr. Warren." Lucien smiled.

Honestly speaking, Lucien really hated traffickers like Warren. However, here in the East Haven, he could not directly attack a important local leader's son with no sufficient reason, and that was why Lucien kept pushing Warren to make him lose his head.

However, Warren's face only twitched slightly. Then, he left the place without another word.

The other guards also followed Warren and left the bar. When Jarolim was walking toward the gate, he had to lean on the other guards' arms.

"Mr. Warren, I'll send you the bar's loss quote! You gotta pay, or we'll see each other on the city lord meeting!" said the bar owner aloud.

Warren almost tripped over the doorsill.

...

In the room behind the bar, Leo slowly recovered with his strong life force as a knight. Lucien had released him from the black flames covering his body.

When Leo was lying in bed, he saw Lucien casting some strange spell, and the light spots in his hand quickly disappeared.

After a surge of magic waves, Lucien's mouth slightly opened but he did not make any sound.

"What are you doing here, sir?" asked Leo gratefully and curiously, "Anything I can help with?"

"Nothing, just being cautious." Lucien smiled and shook his head.

Leo did not chase after the answer, but switched the topic, "Sir, how do you want me to call you? What's the mission about?"

"For now you can call me Mr. X. I need your help to guide me across Schachran Empire and get to the northeast part of the the Dark Mountain Range," said Lucien directly.

As Leo suffered a lot of pain back in the days in Schachran Empire, he frowned a bit, "What's your specific destination, Mr. X? Traveling through the empire without being noticed isn't too difficult, but I need a more specific destination to figure out which route we should take and what kind of fake identity we should use. If you don't feel comfortable with telling me these, we can sign a magic compact first."

Leo just accepted the job without even asking what kind of dangers they were expected to face in this task. He knew that, without Mr. X, he would have already died.

Lucien nodded and took out the compact that he had prepared before.

After signing the compact and watching the roll of parchment being burnt down by light blue magic flame, although Leo had known Lucien's name, he still said to Lucien respectfully, "Mr. X,

Schachran Empire's nobles are conservative and corrupted. Except the nobles themselves and those clergies, common people are always expected to have a very difficult time traveling through the whole empire. If you want to get to Aalto, playing the role of a noble from the empire's northwest province should be our best choice, as the real ones don't usually leave their own territory."

When a sorcerer reached the sixth circle, when he or she needed to sign a low-level magic compact, the sorcerer could hide or change his or her real name using strong spiritual power and magic skills, but Lucien right now still had a long way to go.

"I see." Lucien nodded with satisfaction. Leo was professional.

Leo pointed at the northwest territory of the empire on the map in front of them, "The Vladimir family is ruling this area. As one of the ten most powerful families in the empire, the Vladimir family has one duke, one marquis, three earls, lots of viscounts, barons and lords. Therefore, without their genealogy, no one could know that you're actually not their relative, even including the duke Vladimir himself. "

"But people wouldn't just buy into our words. We need something to prove our identity." Lucien was hesitant.

Leo answered seriously, "In the empire, winners laugh, and losers cry. If one decides to fight over the succession but fails in the end, his sufferings soon ensue. In the East Haven, there's a knight who used to fight against the duke Vladimir over right of inheritance of the title, and he knows how to make the identity documents of the Vladimir family and he still has all the family stamps. His name's Valentin."

Chapter 260: A New Identity

Chapter 260: A New Identity

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The wind was warm. The sunshine was warm. Everything seemed to be warm and drowsy.

On a street of Segru, Lucien, who had changed his whole set of outfit, was heading for Valentine's secret residence following Leo.

Once Leo recovered, he showed his good disguise skills: he changed Lucien's Holm-styled black long coat to the typical tight surtout in the style of Schachran Empire, with white breeches and black long boots. Using hair oil, Lucien's hairstyle was now slicked-back, together with the make up and his moustache, Lucien now looked like a serious and calm gentleman around twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

Since in the East Haven there were lots of people who managed to escape from Schachran Empire and finally came here, Lucien and Leo's way of dressing was more than common. Cautiously, Lucien and Leo walked through the crowd to prevent being followed by anyone. After all, the duke Vladimir sending assassins to kill Valentine was not a secret at all, and also, if anyone saw that they visited Valentine, their fake identity would be seen through easily.

Segru was not a small city. To be more specific, the city was about half the size of Aalto, but the buildings here were very disorganized, and the streets were thus very narrow and messy. However, Leo was very used to the environment and familiar with the surroundings. Like a fish in the water, Leo had confidently guided Lucien across many streets, alleys and crowds to get rid of any possible pursuers.

Half an hour later, Lucien and Leo walked out of a quiet alley and came back to the busiest street, then crossed it and entered a grocery. Directly ignoring the grocery owner, Leo walked to the stairs. From the shadow, two bulky, butcher-like men stopped him.

“The griffin over Nigreen River.” Strange words came out of Leo’s lips. The words were Schachranese.

Hearing that, the two men lowered their guard. After glancing at Leo and Lucien carefully, they gave way to both Leo and Lucien.

The stairs to the second floor were squeaking. Lucien sensed that the whole place was protected by dangerous magic circles, and they were purposefully revealed to people who could sense them directly to be a deterrence. Lucien was not sure whether there were more hidden magic circles around.

The cost of placing all the magic circles could be easily over ten thousand Thales. Only the man who once could compete against the duke could afford this. Lucien estimated that this place’s security level was about the same as that of Bertren Castle. Obviously, when Mr. Valentine ran away from the empire, he must have carried a great fortune with him, so he could afford having middle-rank mages to set up this place for him.

The floor squeaked when Leo and Lucien walked on it with their leather shoes. Other than that, the whole place was beyond quiet.

When they came to one of the rooms on the second floor, Leo knocked at the door gently and said politely, “Mr. Valentine, I’m Leo. I’m here on business.”

“Come in,” responded Valentine in his dull and old voice. He already knew it was Leo from the magic circles downstairs.

Leo pushed the door open like a butler, and he signalled to Lucien to enter the room, “Mr. X, please.”

Lucien nodded and walked in the room covered by thick, black curtains. The whole room was very dark.

In the shadow in front of the curtains, there was a desk and an armchair. In the chair sat a man wearing black suit with his back to Leo and Lucien.

As Leo slowly closed the door, the man in the chair slowly turned around and looked at them.

His blonde hair had started to get thin, but his face was still featured, although it already looked quite old. Lucien estimated that this man should be in his sixties. According to Leo's words, when Valentine first came to the East Haven, he was a level-four grand knight. However, after this twenty to thirty years, no one knew for sure whether this man's power had improved even further, or dropped.

Valentine did not have much interest in them. After taking a glance at Lucien, Valentine said to someone else in the room, "Tea for the two guests."

From the shadow walked out a decently-dressed elder man. He bowed to them politely, and then he walked into the tea room.

Leo, as Lucien's guide, said, "Mr. Valentine, my employer wants to enter Schachran Empire, thus he needs a fake identity."

"So you want to pretend that you're from the Vladimir family?" Valentine asked directly, and his way of looking at Lucien became sharper.

Seeing that Mr. Vladimir was looking at him, Lucien had to talk to him on his own, "Yes, Mr. Valentine. A relative in the Vladimir family. How much shall I pay?"

After a couple of seconds of silence, Valentine burst out in laughter, "If you can kill Ilyich for me, I won't charge you anything. Well, well... I guess you would not be here if you were that capable..."

Ilyich was the first name of the Duke, Vladimir.

Pausing a bit, Valentine took out a cigar from the drawer and lit it with a match.

In the gray smoke, Vladimir said to Lucien slowly, "The more you make this kind of fake identity, the easier it is for you to get caught. In the past twenty years, I've made six of them so far, so a fake identity is very expensive. Five hundred Thales or the equal value of Schachran gold. If you cannot afford it, you might want to consider doing me a favor."

Although the expense for the task would be covered by the Congress later, right now Lucien only had some gold and gems with him, worth about a hundred Thales, plus other magic potions and materials.

After considering for a while, Lucien smiled, "I prefer to pay. Unfortunately, I don't have enough with me right now. I wonder if you're willing to accept magic items as well, Mr. Vladimir?"

Lucien did not want to be involved in Valentine's stuff, even though the task might not be that difficult, the task might still be part of his contend against the duke.

"Pity," Valentine responded in a monotone. "Mr. X, I do accept magic items, and the value estimation here in East Haven is very fair."

For Valentine, getting a magic item was way better than getting money, since in many places other than Allyn, magic items were very valuable because very often they were not available on the market.

Lucien took out Rosan Aaron's Asthenia Dagger and said, "This is a level two magic dagger..."

Valentine coughed a bit, and then an hook-nosed, elder sorcerer wearing a robe in the style of the ancient magic empire entered the room. The elder sorcerer first took a weird glance at Lucien, and then grabbed the dagger.

From the magic waves surrounding the elder man, Lucien could tell that the old man was a sorcerer that followed the ancient magic system.

"Level two, middle-rank, enchanted dagger. It can corrupt other people's weapon, and wounds left by the dagger are hard to heal. It should be around three hundred and eighty Thales, but because of the scarcity of magic items on the market, one could sell it for four hundred and twenty Thales."

"Let's just do four hundred and twenty, then. So you can save some

time selling it around,” said Valentine directly.

Hearing the price, Lucien was very surprised. As a person who had always been kind of a moneygrubber, he almost wanted to trade magic items between Allyn and the East Haven to make a fortune, however, this was strictly prohibited by the congress.

Lucien nodded to agree on the price. Then he took out some materials that he would not use for a while and some gold to pay Valentine.

After playing with the dagger a bit, Valentine took out a piece of special paper from the Vladimir family and started writing. As he was writing, he said to Lucien, “Peter Joseph Vladimir. His father was Lord Joseph, the son of Ilyich’s grandfather’s youngest cousin, and he died many years ago. You’ll play the role of Peter, who failed to inherit the lord title, and was secretly killed by someone during one of his smuggling trades in the East Haven. You remember, Joseph was mean, alcoholic, and rough, while Ilyich is mean and a pervert, but he likes pretending he’s nice and loving.”

Valentine was providing Lucien with detailed information within the family to help Lucien do a better job in his role-playing. It was easy to see that Valentine had still got support from the inside of the family. He even knew the several new knights from the family very well.

...

After Warren left the bar and turned around at the corner, the big, strong man beside him suddenly started to cast a strange spell, and the magic waves started to ripple around him.

The man was not a knight, but a real sorcerer!

“What are you doing, Mr. Reja?” asked Warren, a little surprised.

“Lord Warren, most sorcerers are vicious and cunning, and I was checking if he had left any marks on us to track us.” Reja opened his eyes and answered, “But it seems he’s not one of them.”

Warren nodded unhappily, and then turned to the armed guard

beside him, "Keep an eye on them."

Then Warren went back to his garden villa in Segru.

Around four in the afternoon, in his study, Warren said excitedly, "So Leo and the sorcerer visited Valentine?"

"That's right, young master," the middle-aged man responded in a flattering manner.

Although Valentine had been hiding himself well since he arrived at the East Haven, there was no way that he could completely disappear under the nose of Warren's father, the member of the city lord conference. The reason why all the important people in the East Haven had reached the agreement keeping Valentine in this place was that they saw the potential and the possible great future value in Valentine.

In order to keep a close eye on Valentine, Warren's father had put a servant around him.

When the servant left his study, Warren calmed down a bit. Looking outside of the window, there was a vicious smile on his face, "Hiring Leo... Visiting Valentine... You want to get a fake identity and pretend that you're part of the Vladimir family... You'll see what I can do once you enter the empire..."

Warren always took his revenge!

Chapter 261: Shut the Mouth

Holding his together behind his back, Warren looked at the clouds outside of the window for a while, then walked to the one-eyed swordsman standing beside the door of the study. "Lorban, keep an eye on Leo and the sorcerer, especially on what they buy and where they go."

As there was still a small chance that Leo and the sorcerer visited Valentine because of some other reason, Warren needed to make sure his guessing was correct. However, even if he could not make sure of their intention, he would still write to the big nobles and remind them to be more mindful.

"Yes, Lord Warren," responded Lorban with great respect.

Because of what happened in the bar, Lorban felt that, as one of Warren's best guards, he let the young master down. Now he was trying to leave Warren with some good impression with his extremely respectful manner.

The task was not risky, since Lorban would not need to lead a whole bunch of guards to follow a middle-rank sorcerer, which would be basically the equivalent to committing suicide. What Lorban needed to do was only to tell those bar owners, gangsters, and smugglers what the young master, Warren, wanted. As long as Leo and the sorcerer were still in the East Haven, they would always know where they were and what they were doing.

Watching Lorban leaving with some other guards, Warren's mood became pretty good. Imagining the picture of the young sorcerer's dead body lying on the ground surrounded by the cardinals from the empire, he walked to the bar in his living room and poured a glass of fancy golden rum for himself, celebrating his upcoming victory,

Sipping the amber-colored liquor, the spicy taste heated up his throat all the way down to his stomach. Warren released his breath smelling of liquor and put on a mocking smile, "What a pity... The

sorcerer's actually a pretty good-looking guy. Given one month, I could turn him into a great toy, like what I did to those good-looking young boys and girls."

Thinking of the naked girls and boys in the secret chamber of the villa, Warren felt aroused. So he put down the glass and was about to go there to vent his desire with his lash.

Warren felt a bit too warm from the liquor, so he decided to take off his long jacket first.

He was wondering which boy or girl he should torture first when he got there, and when he stared at himself in the mirror, a strange man wearing brownish-red jacket suddenly showed up behind him in there!

Warren's eyes suddenly opened wide and he was about to quickly turn around to defend himself.

However, he realized that he could not even remove his eyes from the young man's eyes, as if his eyes were two magic swirls!

At this time, a flash of blue light burst out of Warren's chest and that light refreshed his brain. Warren managed to escape from the young man's eyes.

As the son of a grand knight, the man in charge of a notorious human trafficking group, Warren was arrogant, but he was also very cautious. In case of his mind being controlled by someone else, Warren bought a Unicorn Necklace, which had cost him a lot of money. The necklace could protect him against low-rank spells targeting his mind and brain.

Although the necklace did not work immediately, it still managed to protect him!

However, one second after Warren got rid of the young man's control and felt lucky, the young man started casting a strange spell again. Some kind of weird power sneaked into Warren's body and he could not move anymore!

The third-spell magic, Hold Person!

Warren was so scared that he wanted to scream, however, he could not even move his lips.

"Don't overestimate the power of the magic item." Lucien stopped behind Warren, smiling gently. "And also don't underestimate a cautious sorcerer."

Being full of cunning tricks was one of the symbols of being a qualified sorcerer. A good sorcerer should always be prepared for many possibilities in a fight.

As Lucien was saying, using Mage Hand, Lucien took off the necklace from Warren's neck and removed Warren's spirit imprint in it with the skill from the Congress.

After leaving the bar, because Lucien never trusted such an immoral and viperous man like Warren, before Leo recovered, Lucien used the first-circle, Unseen Servant, to follow Warren and his men to see what they were going to do.

The fact that Reja was actually a sorcerer was out of Lucien's expectation, but fortunately, the servant strictly followed Lucien's order and stayed a hundred meters away from them when Reja was detecting the surroundings. Then, the unseen servant sneaked into the villa following the guards and hid in Warren's villa. Then, it witnessed the whole scene where Valentine's servant sold him.

After that, when Lorban left the villa, the unseen servant also managed to leave the place and then it found Lucien on the street using the connection between the summoned and the summoner.

Hearing the unseen servant's words, Lucien decided to remove the trouble thoroughly.

Thanks to the many servants and guards going in and out of the villa, Lucien did not really have a difficult time getting in here. To be cautious, Lucien used his improved version of the spell, Charm Person.

Feeling his own spirit imprint in the necklace being destroyed by Lucien's great spiritual power, Warren's face turned pale. His eyes

were begging for mercy.

Lucien's brown eyes looked into Warren's eyes again, and they started becoming mysterious and deep.

Although Warren was still trying to threaten Lucien with his eyes, he realized that begging did not work at all, as Lucien did not care. He had the Will of Elements behind him, and even the whole Congress of Magic.

Warren's eyes gradually lost focus, then an admiring smile appeared on his face, "Sir, I'm at your service."

Lucien smiled.

...

When Reja was working on his magic experiment with a useless dwarven girl abandoned by Warren, he heard someone knocking at the lab's door.

"What?" asked Reja aloud.

"Mr. Reja, the young master's looking for you," answered the familiar voice on the other side of the door, "About the sorcerer and Leo."

Reja frowned a bit and murmured in low voice, "Why look for trouble? He's a middle-rank sorcerer!"

As a low-rank sorcerer, Reja knew clearly how big was the power difference between each circle, not to mention the power difference between mages of different ranks.

However, since he relied on Warren a lot to get money and magic materials, Reja walked out of his lab and came to Warren's living room.

Warren's cheeks slightly flushed, as if he was drunk, and his voice was lower than usual, "Mr. Reja, come here and grab a drink first."

"I'm working on an experiment now. A cup of Sky Blue will do."

Reja did not feel suspicious at all.

When Reja approached the bar, Warren quickly walked toward him and gave him a big hug. To the great surprise of all the servants present, Warren shouted, "Reja, I love you!"

"What?" Reja was confused. Then quickly, he had this strong sense of danger coming to him. Although he tried his best to get rid of Warren's hug, he could not. After all, Warren had awakened his Blessing with some magic potion. Being hugged by him, Reja's spiritual power could not concentrate.

At this time, a big fireball fiercely shot out of the room beside the living room, and directly hit them. A great explosion filled the whole place. Apart from the fireball, the explosion was also contributed by the explosives around Warren's waist, tearing Reja's magic robe into pieces.

When the blast waves faded, there were only pieces of flesh of Warren and Reja left.

Like in a nightmare, the servants were all trying to run out of that place. However, together with the voice casting a spell in the room, their movement was immediately slowed down.

After finishing the two major enemies, Lucien started to clear away Warren's men, including Jarolim and Lorban, who later came back.

...

The human and elf prisoners in the chamber all heard the great explosion. They waited there with great hope to see whether anyone would come for them. However, no one came, so they started trying to open the magic gate themselves.

Surprisingly, the gate was not hard to break. When they left the chamber, they found the whole villa quiet like a tomb.

A human among them said to the rest of them aloud, "We should stay united! Or we would be sold again by those bastards in the East Haven!"

They all agreed with the human, and they started to search for more slaves in the villa and freed them.

After that, they secretly left the sinful place.

...

In the evening, in the manor outside of Segru, Jacob got the news.

"What? Someone killed Warren and destroyed his place?!" The veins on Jacob's forehead were bulging.

Chapter 262: Clean Up

Chapter 262: Clean Up

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the fierce thump of hooves, seven or eight strong Dragon Scale horses rushed southeastwards through the city gate of Segru.

“Bastards! Don’t you see people?!” shouted a gatekeeper, who was almost knocked over by one of the horses.

Apart from special situations, Segru’s city gate was never closed.

Another gatekeeper shot him a warning glance and lowered his voice, “Didn’t you see the man on the horse? It was Lord Jacob! How dare you!”

Hearing that, the first gatekeeper immediately closed his mouth tight and looked around alertly. He started to get worried that someone would remember what he just said and put him in trouble.

After a while, he asked the other gatekeeper confusedly, “What happened in Segru? Why was Lord Jacob in such a hurry?”

“Lord Jacob... I heard that... Lord Jacob’s son is dead! He was killed by someone in his own villa, and all his guards were killed, too!” answered the other gatekeeper in a frightened but also excited way.

“Wow... I mean... What?!” Hearing that, the first gatekeeper felt not only greatly shocked but also excited. Warren’s name was notorious. Most people hated him very much. This was definitely a big deal, a big deal that had not happened in the East Haven for years! He wondered who had the guts to challenge the authority of a suzerain by killing his only son!

Hearing their conversation, several other gatekeepers gathered closer. The guy who got the fresh news was flattered, so he said to them excitedly, “All the slaves in Warren’s villa were gone! Maybe the young master pissed off someone he shouldn’t have, and the

person directly killed every single one of them!”

The first gatekeeper looked back and released a sigh, “Warren’s the only son of Lord Jacob. Lord Jacob must be beyond furious now. We was being really careful recently, in order to stay away from any trouble.”

“That’s true. Some people said that this happened in the afternoon, however, the noise was blocked by the villa’s own magic circles, so no one found out about it until evening. I bet the guy who did this must now be hundreds of miles away from here. It’s almost impossible for Lord Jacob to catch the guy. Lord Jacob’s Blessing, Werewolf, will definitely drive him crazy. Many people in the East Haven will die for nothing just because of his anger.” The informed gatekeeper sighed. Fortunately, they were the gatekeepers of Segru, not the East Haven. Jacob would not easily vent on them because of the nine city lords.

Jacob was a level-four knight with Werewolf Blessing. He was fast, strong, tough and was able to heal fast from injuries. At the same time, he had also got the powers known as Rampage, Unholy Blight, Dark Asthenia Halo, and Roaring, all derived from his Blessing. The only shortcoming of the Blessing was that Jacob could not launch long-range attacks, and he could not stay conscious in moonlight, instead, he would turn into a real huge wolf.

...

In the living room of Warren’s garden villa.

Jacob stared at the blood and flesh pieces on the floor with his eyes wide open. He could not believe that the son he had raised for almost thirty years now had turned into the remaining pieces in front of him!

Wolf fur started to come out from his armor, covering his clenched fists.

Smelling the air, Jacob said in an extremely suppressed tone, “The smells of blood have mixed together. Bastard... He did this on purpose!”

Jacob's men started to search the place, thinking to themselves that they could only bury the relatively big pieces of Warren. At this time, no one wanted to stand in front of Jacob to take his violent rage.

"Mr. Spencer, please check out the place using magic to see if we can find any clues." Wolf fur started growing on Jacob's face, as his great anger and his intense urge to kill were going to explode at any time. He must and he would find the bastard who killed his son. He was going to make the guy's body kneel in front of Warren's tomb, for hundreds of years, thousands of years, even when the body had turned into pure bones!

A middle-rank mage was qualified to be a suzerain in this place, or at least a major consultant of the nine city lords. Therefore, Jacob, a level-four grand knight, could never afford a middle-rank sorcerer, not to mention that he was not even qualified for having a middle-rank sorcerer working for him. Due to the mysteriousness of magic, however, Jacob still needed one, so the Spencer guy he just talked to was a second-circle sorcerer, and together with his apprentices, Spencer worked for Jacob as his consultant.

Spencer took out a crystal ball from his pocket and put in on the top tip of his black magic staff. Then, he started to cast some Astrology spell.

The crystal ball turned black, as if a night sky was in there. Stars in the crystal ball all had their own track.

"Astrology cannot provide the direct answer, so the sorcerer who killed the master should be good at Astrology, and since he killed the young master with a Fireball spell, the sorcerer should be... around third-circle..." Spencer could not find answers from the crystal ball, but he had some assumptions based on his experience.

Jacob's eyes had turned red. Pointing at the flesh and blood on the floor and the completely destroyed bar counter, Jacob yelled, "This kind of explosion... from a third-circle sorcerer?!" Clearly he did not trust what Spencer just said.

Bottles of wine were shattered by his furious voice, and the liquor

covered the floor. The whole place was filled with the mixed smell of blood and wine, which made Jacob's nose less sensitive than usual.

Spencer pointed at some of the glass pieces on the ground, "Lord Jacob, look at these. My guessing's that lots of alchemical materials exploded together. So maybe the sorcerer controlled the young master or Reja first, and then he or she tied lots of explosives to one of them. When the sorcerer cast the fireball spell, the explosion thus turned out to be this powerful."

"I don't want to hear how Warren died. I just want to know who the fu*king bastard is!" Jacob started roaring like crazy.

Spencer took a deep breath and then started casting again. This time, there were no stars in the crystal ball, but a creepy, old voice came out from it, "Carry the unknown destiny, flash back the ever-running time... The sorcerer who summons me... You can use five gems to get an answer, but only one."

This was a third-circle spell called Question. The caster could ask a question to an unknown evil existence at the cost of five precious gems, and the thing only provided the answers between yes or now. If the level of the question was not too much above the caster's own knowledge level, the accuracy was about seventy-five percent.

It looked like Spencer's magic staff was a level-three magic item.

The five beautiful rubies disappeared as soon as they touched the crystal ball, then Spencer asked, "I want to know whether the sorcerer who killed Warren had known Warren for just a few days?"

With smaller time range, the investigation would be easier.

The vicious voice answered immediately, "Yes."

Hearing that, Jacob hurriedly commanded, "You, you, and you, go and check it right now! We must be quick! Before the bastard gets out of here!"

Most of the knights hurriedly left the villa, and Spencer and another two knights checked the rest of the living room, but found nothing

useful. So they decided to go to the chamber where those slaves were to see what they could find. Spencer also sent messages to his students to come and help.

Jacob rubbed his forehead and said, "Mr. Spencer, I gotta leave this in your hands right now. I'm too disturbed by my rage to think properly. We must find the fu*king bastard!"

Spencer nodded and hurriedly left the place with the two knights to see if there were any other clues they could find.

The living room suddenly became quiet, and this made Jacob feel even more bothered.

As he was walking back and forth in the living room, gray spider webs came out from nowhere on his feet and Jacob got entangled tightly in the webs!

A figure showed up in the corner where the wine smell was very strong. The man was wearing brownish red tight jacket, white breeches and black boots, as well as a monocle on the man's good-looking, smiling face.

Lucien never left the place! He hid himself in the safe corner under the cover of the mixed smell of wine and blood! No one ever expected this!

Lucien was very patient. He had been waiting here for four to five hours, waiting for the chance to kill Jacob together! If he did not, Jacob would finally find out what happened, and that would make his effort of killing Warren become in vain, so Lucien needed Jacob to die! Once Jacob was dead, all the suzerains would be busy with fighting over his land and wealth, and no one would care about how he was killed or who killed him!

That was how Lucien cleaned up things afterwards!

Chapter 263: Get Rid of Future Trouble

Chapter 263: Get Rid of Future Trouble

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

No one, including Jacob, Spencer, or the many knights, ever expected that the sorcerer who killed Warren and Reja was still waiting here. In almost every case, the murder would hurriedly escape from the site as fast and far as possible. Therefore, when Jacob and the knights first arrived at the living room, they were only looking for clues and evidence, but it never occurred to them that there was another person there!

Lucien took advantage of this, and he called it the psychological magic.

When Jacob saw the gray spider nets covering his whole body and noticed a person slowly showing up in the space, he immediately realized what was going on there. He was not frightened, instead, he was furious. He tightened all his muscles under the armor to break the fibres, but the threads were stronger than he thought. He could not move at all, not to mention reaching to the sword around his waist called Ice Break.

The second circle spell, Spider Web!

Experienced as Jacob was, he knew that being trapped here meant his demise. He had to keep intervening Lucien's casting to buy himself more time to get rid of the threads. Thus, he opened his mouth wide and the tusks in it grew longer. When he was about to use Roaring to stun the sorcerer, Lucien pointed at him with his coral staff, and a middle-sized lightning ball directly dashed into the open mouth!

The second circle spell of the Ambola staff, Lightning Ball.

If Jacob could move right now, there was no way that Lucien could do this. However, in Lucien's eyes, Jacob was just like a fixed target for practicing casting!

Jacob's whole brain was instantly numbed by the lightning ball, and he could not make any sound at all.

However, due to his powerful Werewolf Blessing, Jacob recovered from it quite fast. After all, this was just a second circle spell, and the fact that it was cast by a third circle sorcerer could not make it any more powerful.

Lucien knew this. After Lightning Ball, he started to cast another spell in a weird intonation. A beam of gray ray shot directly out of Lucien's right hand, which was covered by a white glove, and it instantly hit Jacob's body.

The third-circle Necromancy spell, Enfeeblement Ray, and it could quickly exhaust the person's stamina.

Jacob's black armor lit up to prevent the ray from affecting his body. However, although his armor was great against physical attack, it did not work that well with magic. The gray ray went directly into his body, and Jacob immediately felt cold. He felt tired, but again, because of his powerful Blessing, he was not entirely exhausted.

The ring on Jacob's right hand flashed, and lightning was summoned, going directly toward Lucien.

Jacob knew that he was not good at ranged attack, so he bought this expensive magic ring.

At the same time, Jacob's relatively good-looking face started to get distorted. His cheekbones started to protrude, his eyes became red, and wolf fur started to grow out of his face. Jacob's whole body bulged and his size increased by half, even including his ten knuckles!

Within two seconds, Jacob now looked just like a huge wolf!

Werewolf's Rampage. Once it was activated, the person's strength and speed would be greatly improved, and would also be immune to most mind-affecting spells. At the same time, however, the person was not able to use magic items in Rampage.

The spider webs suddenly became too fragile to stop Jacob. Gasping, Jacob marched forward toward Lucien with great effort.

Lucien quickly covered himself with a layer of golden and white flames and shielded himself from the lightning. After a few seconds, when Lucien was ready for another round of casting, the crystal ball rose above his head and burst out dazzling light.

Lucien clenched his fists and the light shone on Jacob. Instantly, Jacob felt that the living room's floor was like a mire, dragging him downwards, thus he had to make a lot of effort to pull his feet up to keep moving. The rest of the spider threads all over Jacob were not making it any easier for him.

The second-circle Astrology spell, Grasping Earth!

Jacob's bent wolf back suddenly straightened up, and a wolf shadow came out from him. The shadow was free from the spider webs and the sinking floor, and it jumped right toward Lucien.

Werewolf Blessing, Unholy Blight!

Holy light burst out from Lucien's chest, and a beam of flame-like light from the roof directly hit the shadow and made it disappear in a second.

Divine spell, Flame Strike!

Jacob became weaker when the shadow was destroyed, and he almost stopped moving forward.

Seizing the chance, Lucien cast Enfeeblement Ray on Jacob again.

Being hit by the gray ray again, Jacob did not even have the strength to roar. He knew that things could not keep going like this, so he, at the great cost of feedback damage afterwards, activated Rampage again! Only a grand knight could do this twice within this short period of time! Jacob started advancing toward Lucien again!

Lucien's left hand shone with cold light, and the frost blades perfectly struck Jacob's shanks! Although the blades could not really hurt Jacob because of the heavy armor he was wearing, the

frost quickly turned into ice and froze Jacob's legs to the floor.

However, because of Werewolf's power, the ice instantly broke into pieces.

When Jacob was ready to bite Lucien's throat open, layers of new spider webs covered his body again. Jacob roared furiously.

Lucien was prepared for this fight. He had his plan and strategies in mind. This was the power of a sorcerer. In front of a prepared middle-rank sorcerer, if a level four knight did not have some secret power or great magic items, basically the knight would have no hope in winning the battle.

Again, with Lucien pointing the Amboula staff at Jacob's huge mouth, another lightning ball rushed in there. Jacob's roar was thus instantly cut off.

When Jacob was still trying his best to get rid of the new spider webs, he heard the sorcerer casting the same weird spell again! The gray ray hit him again!

Jacob's knees suddenly lost all the strength, and he almost kneeled down on the floor. However, the spider webs not even let him fall down!

Jacob was gasping. His throat was making a harsh noise. However, it could not turn into a roar. Jacob's eyes, staring at Lucien, were filled with great despair and anger.

Finally, Enfeeblement Ray worked!

There was still a smile on Lucien's face, but he directly ignored the way Jacob stared at him. Lucien was waiting for his cooldown time to cast the last spell.

After a few seconds, Lucien's raised his right hand and pointed at Jacob's left chest. A black hole appeared in front of Jacob's chest and the magic item he was wearing turned into colourful particles in solids, gases and liquids.

That was Lucien's special spell, Elemental Order, and Lucien also

liked to call the spell Item Destroyer.

Jacob's eyes opened wide, and the veins in his eyeballs almost exploded. When Jacob was still striving to recover his power, Lucien cast Elemental Order again.

Jacob was shocked to find that the wolf fur in front of his chest and his muscles started to dissolve due to some mysterious and unstoppable power. His flesh was turned into colourful particles and his heart was thus directly revealed!

Jacob heard something about this horrible spell before. He could not believe the young sorcerer in front of him had this kind of power!

Before Jacob's muscles and skin could grow back, Lucien lifted his Amboula staff again and shot a strong acid ball directly toward Jacob's heart.

The strong acid immediately covered Jacob's heart, and the wolf-like man burst out a miserable, shrill cry out of the great pain.

At this time, Lucien cast a green acid arrow and the arrow fiercely penetrated Jacob's heart.

The level four knight just died like this. In front of a sorcerer, Jacob did not even manage to have the chance to make use of his strengths such as his power, speed and agility.

"Go meet your son in hell," said Lucien very calmly. Then, a big fireball was summoned and Jacob's body was blasted. Lucien did not want to leave any evidences here that could reveal his special power, Elemental Order.

Although the fireball was powerful, Jacob's black armor still looked pretty solid. The fire covered Jacob's whole body when the spider webs were lit on fire.

This was why Lucien did not choose to use fire to attack Jacob—the spider webs would be burned down.

Lucien closed his eyes and started to sense the surroundings using

his spiritual power. He saw that Spencer, instead of rushing to save his master's life, hurriedly turned around and escaped away. He must have somehow confirmed Jacob's death.

Spencer was only hired by Jacob. There was no way that Spencer would risk his own life to seek revenge for Jacob and Warren.

Lucien knew this well. So he did not bother killing Spencer. Lucien took away Jacob's sword, armor, money and the rest of his magic items. He also left the unique marks of the Congress of Magic and the Will of Elements to show the East Haven people their power. So, they would draw the conclusion that Warren and Jacob were killed by a sorcerer because they pissed off the Congress and the Will of Elements. Therefore, Lucien could be totally free of future trouble.

Chapter 264: Set Off

Chapter 264: Set Off

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Ice Break, level four medium rank magic sword, bonus damage of ice and acid, balance improvement. Jacob had spent almost ten thousand Thales on it, however, in the last fight of his life, he did not even have a chance to draw the sword.

Lucien picked up the sword from the floor and slightly shook his head. The sword was glowing in a greenish-blue light. Together with the armor named Demon Soul, the ring named Punishment, which could cast Lightning three times a day, and some gold coins and gems worth around forty Thales, Lucien put the sword and other trophies into his magic storage pouch.

To collect the pieces of equipment, Jacob made countless filthy smuggling deals. Now they all belonged to Lucien. However, Lucien was not planning on using them, because some nobles in Schachran Empire could probably recognize them, which definitely meant unwanted trouble. Therefore, Lucien was going to have Leo sell them.

The unicorn necklace was an exception. Because a necklace could be very unnoticeable if it was properly hidden, Lucien was going to ask Leo to wear it to be immune to mental spells. This was good for both of them. And because Lucien was wearing Sun's Corona, he could not wear the two items together.

Collecting trophies made Lucien quite cheerful. He put back the crystal ball in his pocket—many astrology spells, due to the mysteriousness of destiny, still required casting materials when used. Maskelyne's Star was a typical example. And Astrology was not alone here. Other schools of magic also had this kind of special situation. Therefore, the completion of building a magic model in one's soul did not always mean that the caster would never use the corresponding casting materials.

With a flash of magic waves, Lucien's figure quickly disappeared and he secretly left the villa.

...

The basement of the common-looking house was one of Leo's secret hiding places.

"Mr. Peter, Jacob's death had made a great stir in the city. The suzerains have started fighting against each other for Jacob's land, wealth and resources, and the issue has been brought to the City Lord Meeting. Some nearby ancient sorcerers have also arrived here. They hope to join the East Haven's meeting to share the wealth." Leo, although there was no one else around, still carefully called Lucien's fake name.

Lucien was a bit surprised, "Is Jacob that wealthy? I did not find too many valuable items on him."

Leo answered, like a real butler, "Because most of the earnings of Jacob's manor had to go to the nine city lords. He also had to buy lots of precious materials for improving the power of his own Blessing such as Moonlight Stone and werewolf blood... plus his extravagant way of living, he could only use probably one tenth of his wealth to buy magic items. Also, high level magic items are very precious in the East Haven, and in most cases, the items would go to the city lords. Finding a level four or five magic item is already hard, not to mention finding a suitable one. So it took Jacob several years to gather his whole set of equipment."

Lucien slightly nodded. This was one of the major advantages of joining the Congress of Magic and the Will of Elements. As long as he had money, there were always great magic items there for him to choose. Every time Lucien went to the congress's Exchange Zone or the Demiplanes Warehouse of the will of Elements, he wanted everything there and he always had a difficult time making decisions.

"What about the nine city lords? Did they say anything?" this was what Lucien cared about the most.

Leo, wearing the makeup of an old man, shook his head, "Mr. Peter, no one has heard anything from the City Lord Meeting yet, but the owner of the bar told me that the city lords' people have only been there once for investigation, and no order for arrest has been released yet. The several suzerains claimed that Jacob and Warren were killed by the Congress of Magic, and this has nothing to do with the East Haven. According to the local law, it was totally fine for them to fight for Jacob's wealth."

"I see. Anyway, we shall still wait for a few more days to make sure we're safe before we set off for Schachran Empire." Lucien nodded, "Can you please find a way to secretly sell the magic items and use the money to buy a level four or five magic sword?"

"Mr. Peter, you'll at least suffer a twenty percent loss in a hurry trade, and a level four or five magic sword is quite hard to find. I cannot promise that I can find you a good one." Leo was straightforward.

"Not a problem." Lucien smiled and adjusted his monocle, "This is just for temporary use, as long as it doesn't have a high requirement on the user's strength, agility and willpower."

When they were in Schachran Empire, Lucien wanted to try his best to avoid using magic, therefore, a powerful magic sword became really important. Lucien did not really care about the features of the sword, since he was going to sell it when he got back to Allyn later anyway.

"As you said." Leo slightly bowed and left the the basement.

...

A few days later, in the early evening, Leo came back with a fancy sword inlaid with rubies.

"Mr. Peter, this is your magic sword. Level four high rank. Twenty three thousand Thales. After selling Ice Break, Demon Soul, the ring and the gold and gems, you have one hundred and sixty Thales left." Leo handed the sword to Lucien, and he also showed Lucien the evidence that he did not make up the prices and profit from the

trades.

Lucien drew the sword and gently stroke it. The sword felt cold. Although the major body of the sword looked rather simple, the hilt was very sophisticatedly designed and it was covered with complicated patterns.

Following the method that he learned from Natasha, Lucien easily left his own power in the sword, and he got the message from the dwarf maker:

“Frost, level four high rank. Built by the special material called Jade Ice found from the deep Northland. The sword can slow down your enemy with freezing damage when it hits the target.

” Everyone likes fighting with an enemy who gets slower and slower! — Adaaran, the Copper Hammer”

The most outstanding feature of the sword was the fact that it could slow people down, but that was it. This was also the reason why Jacob chose Ice Break.

Lucien wielded the sword and felt the power in it, as much as that of a level four knight. And then he put the sword back into its scabbard, and hung it on one side of his waist — Alert was on the other side.

Lucien did not take a single look at the evidence but directly ruined it, “I trust you, Leo. And as a sorcerer, I also have a rough estimation of its value. Is there anything going on outside?”

Leo was a bit excited about Lucien’s trust, “Mr. Peter, I have confirmed it with Mr. Valentine and the owner of Taran. The nine city lords have connived at the fact that the suzerains can take Jacob’s wealth and land, and they have announced their final decision after contacting the Congress—what happened was due to Jacob and Warren’s personal conflict with the Congress, so the city lords and the East Haven will not get involved in this. This is over.”

Lucien had this feeling that the nine city lords had more or less of a connection to the Congress. It was not easy for the East Haven to

remain neutral among this many powers.

Lucien stood up, "Leo, there's no moon tonight. We shall set off."

...

In the darkness, Flame Fortress was like a giant dragon safeguarding the best entrance of the mountain range. The rest of the places were full of terrible monsters, deep forests and snow cliffs.

Lucien, taking Leo with him, was right now flying in the night sky, as if they were part of the darkness.

According to the information they had, Lucien avoided the magic circles for the purpose of guarding in the sky and the patrolling routine of the airships, Lucien easily went through the fortress. They did not land until they arrived at a small town in Schachran Empire.

Without special magic or divine spells, there was no way that one could fully block the endless sky!

Chapter 265: The Superrich

Chapter 265: The Superrich

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the year 819 of Saint Calendar, the end of the Month of Beginning.

In the afternoon, the gray sky started to reveal a touch of cheerful blue. The great storm had finally stopped.

Snow accumulated in front of the unique-looking buildings with domes, and the snow was so thick that the doors of the buildings had been blocked. Some Schachran Empire residents got out through the windows. They started pushing aside the snow with big shovels, drinking spirits at the same time.

Most people here had blond, light blond or black-colored hair and were well-built. While young ladies looked beautiful and elegant, those middle-aged ones tended to have put on extra weight. Many of them were double the size of their husbands, and they could easily roll the big snow balls, which were even very heavy for many young lads, with one single hand.

On the second floor of a hotel along the main street, through the window, two youngsters were looking at the joyful scene when people down there were busy with cleaning the snow. Grabbing her hands together, the blond, blue-eyed girl grinned. "I've never seen this big snow in Ural before. It's already the end of the month, wow!"

The district of Ural was located in Kirov Province, southwest of Schachran Empire. Ural was two provinces away from the north fortress of the Duchy of Violet, and it was known for its ores and skills in making weapons. Therefore, Ural was also responsible for the logistics of Marinov's line of defense.

The young lady was beautiful, and the long coat made of fox fur she was wearing showed her nice figure. The short-haired young man

standing beside her was a bit hesitant but still said to her, “Yielena, you’ve been spending quite a bit time with... Mr. Peter?”

“Yes, Igor?” Yielena turned around, feeling a bit confused, “Mr. Peter is profound and humorous. I like spending time with him.”

As she was saying that, there was a little smile on her face.

That smile irritated Igor. He stamped his foot and said to her in an eager tone, “Yielena, he’s a noble! And his wife must be a noble!”

Yielena’s beautiful eyebrows frowned together, and she felt a bit offended, “So what? We’re just friends. Come on Igor... There’s nothing between us. If Mr. Peter was here, he would never upset me like this. He would talk to me about the fun games we can play in the heavy snow...”

“Mr. Peter, Mr. Peter... Yielena can’t you just stop mentioning him for a second? Nobles are hypocritical!” Igor lost his temper a bit, “He looks elegant, uh? Who knows what he does for a living? Who knows what he has done before? Look at his showy swords. And he treats well every beautiful girl with us in the caravan! That means he doesn’t care about you! He’s a playboy! He hasn’t even activated his Blessing yet!”

This was not the first time that they had this conversation, however, Yielena never listened to Igor. Igor could not bear this anymore.

Seeing that Yielena lowered her head, Igor softened his tone, “I care about you, Yielena... This is why I upset you. He’s trying to get you to...” Igor stopped there. Although he talked dirty when he was with those mercenaries, he knew how to stop himself in front of Yielena.

Yielena now looked really upset. There were tears in her blue eyes. She said to him, in her trembling voice, “Igor, why do you always think Mr. Peter is a bad guy? He has refused two good-looking single ladies in our caravan. And I’m not an idiot as well!”

Then, she turned around and walked back to her room, slamming the door loudly. Igor started to apologize on the other side of the

door.

On the other end of the corridor, two men were also looking outside of the window.

“Mr. Peter, I have to say that Vladimir family is really well-mannered. You’re the most upright noble I’ve ever seen in front of women.” The elder man with a brandy nose smiled. He was Berdychiv, Yielena’s father, member of the caravan.

Lucien, or say, Peter Joseph Vladimir, put his hands in white gloves on the window rails and smiled. “In fact, there are many nobles who are loyal. Think about all those romantic stories.”

In order to play the role better, Lucien dyed his hair blond using a special tree sap, and he also changed his eye color into blue. Now, he looked more lively.

“Both of us know that those stories are for those innocent young ladies, to get them to become the nobles’ lovers.” Berdychiv laughed, “Mr. Peter, you wanna have lunch together? I still have a good bottle of wine.”

Lucien withdrew his right hand and shook his head, “Thank you, Mr. Berdychiv, but I cannot drink. I injured myself slightly when I was traveling around.”

“Haha, Mr. Peter... This is the only thing in you that it’s not that pleasant!” Berdychiv had been acquainted with Lucien for a month. He could now joke with Mr. Peter in a more relaxed way.

Schachran Empire was also known as the Empire of Knights, because they had way more knights than Violet and Holm, and this was also why the empire had been standing for hundreds of years against the South Church.

This made lots of adventures believe that harsh environment was good for fostering one’s strong willpower, so that they could awaken Blessing sooner.

In the dinning hall, Lucien found a table in the corner. Leo, who was right now his butler, stood next to him.

After a while, when Lucien was having his Borsch, a middle-aged man wearing black jacket and marten waistcoat came in his direction, followed by his servant. His blond hair was shaped in slicked-back style, and a thick cigar was in his mouth. On his ten fingers, there were at least seven or eight dazzling rings.

“Hey, Mr. Peter. Can I sit here?” asked the bulky, middle-aged man passionately.

Lucien looked around and saw there was no spare seat left, so he nodded, “Sure, Mr. Sergey.” The heavy snow trapped many tourists here, so the restaurant was busier than usual.

Sergey joined the caravan around five or six days ago, and he was heading for Ural city. He was straightforward, generous and talkative, so he had got familiar with most people in the caravan already.

After ordering some Bulin, which was a kind of naan bread, caviar, roasted veal and lamb, Sergey grinned, “Mr. Peter, I gotta say that you’ve really reminded me of Count Kutuzov also from Vladimir family. Both of you are very graceful and well-mannered. I mean... when I was doing my business in Volck, I met him a couple of times...”

Lucien cut his chicken into pieces, and he smiled, “Uncle Kutuzov? Is he still suffering from arthritis in rainy days?”

Kutuzov was important in the family, therefore, Valentin did mention some details about him, such as his diseases from his failure of breaking through the level of grand knight.

“Still the same, the same...” Sergey put on a smile and switched the topic. He started talking about other nobles he knew.

After sharing his stories with all the nobles, Sergey had built up the picture of himself—mysterious and superrich. Then, he released a slight sigh, “It’s such a pity that I have to say goodbye to you soon, as we’re already very close to Ural. I got to know Count Witte through Baroness Carleena’s personal connection and I bought a recent discovered gem mine in Ural. Although the project will be

tough, the value of the mine is beyond imagination. Lots of people are craving for it. So I'm afraid I'm gonna stay in Ural for a long time."

Count Witte's land was half the size of Ural District, and he was the actual ruler.

Lucien chewed his chicken well. After a while, he asked the question that Sergey was expecting, "Beyond imagination?"

"For sure! Experts have proved that the value of the mine's equal to a whole county! Thanks to the fact that Count Witte just doesn't want to bother and he'd rather make money from tax, or I'd definitely have zero chance to get it!" Sergey took all the documents out from his suitcase and showed off in front of Lucien.

Many spells needed gems as casting material and many magic items were made of natural gems.

"Congratulations." Lucien smiled politely.

"Thank you, Mr. Peter. But you know this isn't an easy trade. I almost went bankrupt just to please the count. Now I have no money for hiring people and buying all those equipments. I've been running around recently trying to collect money from my friends, and I'll pay them back double! But I'm still expecting a bit more..." Sergey looked worried. "I really hope the empire has banks that give out loans like those in Sturk and Holm... Now I'm even considering selling some of my share..."

After finishing his words, Sergey stopped and waited for Lucien's answer patiently.

However, Lucien did not say anything for quite a while.

"Well... Mr. Peter, you don't want to say anything?" Sergey raised his wine glass.

"Sure." Lucien wiped his mouth with napkin, "I've finished my lunch. Mr. Sergey, take your time and enjoy."

Then, Lucien elegantly stood up. After adjusting his two fancy

swords a bit, he left the dining hall with Leo.

For a second, Sergey's smile froze on his face. Then he smiled, and took a sip of his wine.

...

In the afternoon, when the snow had just been cleaned a bit. An invitation arrived at the hotel. The invitee was Lucien, and the invitation was sent by Baroness Carleena.

Chapter 266: Winter Hunting

Chapter 266: Winter Hunting

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“Dear Mr. Peter,

“It is so nice to hear that we have a Vladimir family member here in Ural. Now, the storm has stopped and the weather has cleared up, therefore, in order to celebrate the upcoming spring and welcome our distinguished guest from afar, I would like to invite all the nobles in town to join together for a winter hunting in the forest belonging to my manor. May I have the honor?

“Baroness Carleena Lottnico.”

That was a fancy invitation, made of fine cardboard and printed with sunflower patterns, with her elegant and beautiful handwriting in Schachran language. The invitation also had the unique feminine scent, left by the mature and beautiful noble lady who wrote the invitation.

“Baroness Carleena Lottnico...” Lucien just heard the name from Sergey, who he suspected to be a swindler, so he was now feeling a little hesitant.

The caravan members saw that Lucien did not say a word after reading the invitation, so they asked out of curiosity, “Mr. Peter, which is this noble inviting you?”

It was not Lucien’s first time receiving invitations like that. Many suzerains had invited him before because of the family name, Vladimir. Out of a noble’s courtesy, Lucien had accepted many invites and attended many parties.

Although after when the suzerains knew that Peter was only the son of a lord who failed to inherit the title, they became quite cold to Lucien, those invitations still brought the caravan good convenience in the empire.

“It’s from Baroness Carleena,” answered Lucien straightforwardly. Schachran Empire had a vast territory and countless important and small nobles. Lucien really did not know them well, except Count Witte, and he was expecting that the caravan members could provide him with more information.

After having some good wine with his lunch, Berdychiv’s face looked flushed, and his red nose looked even brighter, “Baroness Carleena! Haha... A real beauty from Ural! A widow! She has all the wealth left by the baron, and Mr. Peter, you’ve got no idea how many young nobles are longing for winning her affection. The beauty, the manor, and the wealth... Think about it.”

Berdychiv was still a bit drunk. He looked at Lucien trying to give him hints, as this had always been the traditional topic among men.

“Baroness Carleena is called Black Widow and the Vain Fox,” added a blonde and green-eyed girl, a bit unhappily. “She was born in a noble family, and she’s also the niece of the count’s second wife. But years ago, she rejected all the young nobles who were pursuing her and married Baron Lotnikov, a widower with no offsprings, who was at that time forty-six years older than her for the sake of wealth and his title. Baron Lotnikov’s health condition was quite good when they first got married, but five years later, the baron aged a lot and got really sick. Soon, he passed away.”

“Irina, don’t spread rumors,” said a gentleman in the caravan. “Look around, we’re in a fancy hotel in Ural, not in the middle of nowhere. What if some nobles heard it?”

Berdychiv waved his hands, “Relax. Trust me, those nobles want people to spread Baroness Carleena’s bad name. So they can have less competitors. Those nobles don’t care about the baroness’s reputation. They want the title, the money and the beautiful body.”

“She does have a bad reputation. She started inviting young nobles to her manor and having those extravagant parties only half year after the baron passed away.”

“Anyway,” Lucien smiled, “the baroness has invited me, and we’re not in any hurry to leave. I should be polite and not let the hostess

down.”

Lucien had to play and maintain his noble reputation well. As he was not the only noble invited, the winter hunting should not be risky. And as long as he refused to be greedy, Lucien was confident that he would not be swindled.

After all, at that moment, Lucien himself was, in fact, a swindler as well.

Hearing that, the several caravan members had mixed feelings. Some started playing jokes, while some did not look too happy.

Lucien stood up and slightly nodded to them with a smile, “Then, see you tomorrow, everyone.”

After he said that, he closed the book Работа актёра над собой (An Actor Prepares) in his spirit library.

...

The land was covered with a thick layer of snow. Tall and big pines, from time to time, shook off the snow to get rid of the heavy burden. Several big, black Ural dogs shot out as fast as arrows, chasing after the rabbits.

Suddenly, an arrow shot from afar penetrated a gray hare very precisely.

Applause followed. A young noble tried to please the noble lady, “Impressive! Carleena, your archery has improved even further!”

Carleena lifted her bow in a triumphant way, then she turned around and said to Lucien, “Mr. Peter, now it’s your turn. Vladimirs are all good archers.”

Baroness was around twenty seven or twenty eight. Her soft blond hair was tied back, and there was always a smile matching her big blue eyes. Her slightly pouty red lips were like flower petals. The black hunting jacket outfit showed the beauty of her figure lines. Seeing that, many young nobles could not even remove their eyes from the baroness.

Lucien had seen women more beautiful than her, so he just took a polite glance at her and replied, "Thank you, Lady Carleena. The glory all goes to the family. But, honestly speaking, I'm more of a close combat person than an archer."

Lucien pointed at the two swords on his waist. Then, although he was being polite saying this, Lucien still quickly shot an arrow and it directly got a hare in the snow.

The key point of archery was stability and good vision, and they were no problem for Lucien.

"Umm... Clearly, you're really being humble, Mr. Peter. Your archery is close to knight level. You should teach me when you have time." Carleena stared at Lucien with her big blue eyes out of admiration.

This made other young nobles quite unhappy. A black-haired noble picked up his bow and said, "He's close to knight level. But let me show you what real knight-level archery is!"

After saying that, he shoot an arrow so fiercely that it was almost covered by fire. The arrow directly shot through a huge tree and went right into the eye socket of the animal behind it, leaving its fur totally undamaged.

He turned around and put on a complacent smile, "Peter, you see that? Of course, I wouldn't mind practicing sword with you either."

Before Lucien said anything, Carleena smiled sweetly, "Nice extraordinary bow, Barshac."

The implication of her words were clear. Then, Carleena turned to talk to other nobles. Her great social skills made this whole evening warm and cheerful.

...

In the forest some distance away from the nobles, two guys in black cloak were staring in Carleena's direction. When the young nobles started to scatter in the forest in order to find the best gift for Carleena, one man said to the other, "Mianka, you turn yourself

into a winter bear later and attack Carleena. Make sure that the first round of attack miss the target. Then, you attack the blond noble guy beside her. After injuring him, you run away pretending that you were beaten by him.”

“No problem, Niake.” As the tall guy was saying, his body was covered by a layer of gray light. When the light disappeared, the guy had turned himself into a big, white bear.

Winter bear was a common magic creature in Schachran Empire. A fully grown one could have the power of a knight.

Niake grinned and said, “Mianka, control yourself a bit, so you won’t directly beat him by accident. And be a good actor when you retreat. Don’t make him suspicious.”

“Relax. I got this,” responded the white bear.

After a couple of minutes, a huge winter bear popped out and directly rushed toward Carleena. Screaming, Carleena barely dodged the bear’s attack and then she hurriedly sought for Lucien’s help.

Then, the huge winter bear raised its giant paw in front of Lucien. Seeing that, Niake put on a smile. Everything went exactly how they planned. Now, the next step would be Mianka hurting the noble man and then running away.

All of a sudden, after a flash of light, the winter bear fell over in front of Lucien’s horse with a bang!

Lucien, on the horse, was holding a long, blue sword, with his back straightened. As he stared at the bear, it burst out gray light again and revealed its real look—the black-coated guy.

Seeing that, Niake almost dropped his jaw, “What’s going on here?”

Chapter 267: The Hero and the Beauty

It seemed that everything stopped for a few seconds, even including the chilly wind.

Carleena and her guards were shocked and were just standing there, watching the huge winter bear jumping toward them. Then, with a flash of sword light, the winter bear fiercely fell onto the ground, stirring the snow everywhere.

They could not believe their eyes. How could a fully-grown bear just be killed like this?

Blood oozed out of the thin line throughout the bear's forehead, nose, mouth and its body. To be more specific, the blood did not manage to come out literally, but was frozen into some kind of shining, blue ice.

Then, mysterious gray light burst out from its body. When the light disappeared, the bear was gone, and instead, a man wearing a black cloak was on the ground. There was a deep wound on his face, right in the middle, and his cloak was also cut in half.

The man was still alive, writhing. Obviously, if they decided to do nothing and just left the man there, he would definitely die in a few minutes.

Facing such a sudden attack, Lucien was always direct and sharp. He always used his full power.

"A druid? Or a sorcerer who specializes in the ancient school of Transformation?" Lucien thought to himself. Clearly, seeing the man, Lucien was also a bit surprised. Because of the gray light he just saw, Lucien would say that the guy was a sorcerer.

However, before figuring out what was the man's intention and plan, Lucien would not save him in front of people just because he was a sorcerer.

After staring at the man for a few seconds, Carleena finally realized

what just happened and she burst out a sharp scream,
"Assassinator!"

Piles of snow on the pines were shaken off by her scream, and the young nobles around all hurried back to her.

At the same time, Carleena's face turned pale, and her body suddenly lost balance. She was going to fall from her horse, and she fell toward Lucien's direction.

The same calm look remained on Lucien's face, and his right hand was still grabbing the sword. At the same time, Lucien reached out his left hand and helped Carleena sit back on her horse again. Lucien asked politely, "Are you alright?"

"I'm okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Peter. Without you, I might have died already." Carleena's look was like a little white flower that needed to be taken care of tenderly. After sitting back on the horse, her hands gently entangled with Lucien's left hand, and her full body started to lean against Lucien's arm, as if she was seeking for a shelter and a reliable place. Lucien could smell the mixed scent of her make up and perfume.

Lucien's nose was a bit irritated. He was not used to this, and he almost subconsciously cast Air Filter Bubble to get rid of the overly sweet smell.

The thing happened all of a sudden, and Lucien already did not trust the baroness because of Sergey, so Lucien had absolutely no feeling toward the beauty holding his arm. So, he politely pushed Carleena away and said, "Good to hear you're not hurt. There still might be other assassins around. We're still in danger. Do not distract me."

Carleena was just about to lay her bust against Lucien's arm. However, after hearing that, she got a bit pissed. Carleena thought to herself that what kind of man would say "Do not distract me" to her... What the hell...

Nevertheless, she still managed to maintain her manner. After a bit of a pause, she responded, "Okay then, Mr. Peter. You're surely

brave and cautious."

At this time, Carleena's servants surrounded her to protect her from any possible following attacks.

Carleena was not totally inexperienced. Gradually, she calmed down a bit, and she said to her people, "Take the assassinator! Don't let him die! Bring him back to Pastor Nicolay!"

"As you command." Several servants stepped forward and took out magic-blocking robes and healing potions.

Barshac and the other young nobles just came back. They hurriedly asked, "Carleena, are you alright?"

Carleena's face looked a bit pale, which made the young nobles want to take good care of her even more.

Carleena forced a smile on her face and said, "I'm alright. Mr. Peter beat the assassinator. Surprisingly, he's a real knight, and he stopped the bear with one single movement."

As she was saying, Carleena took a quick glance at Lucien, and her face flushed.

Seeing that, Barshac was very jealous. He stared at Lucien and clenched his fists. But soon he realized what Carleena had just said, and he asked out of great surprise, "Peter's a knight?"

Although people here had a greater chance to awaken their Blessings, the status of a knight was still a dream for many young nobles. Barshac was now twenty-four, and his goal was to become a knight by thirty. If he could marry Carleena and get her wealth, even if he failed to do so, he could still buy those secret potions from the smugglers to obtain the power.

Within the Congress of Magic, the Blessing-awakening potion plus Blood Cleanser was about five hundred Thales, however, nobles in Schachran Empire, this inland country, were willing to pay even ten thousand Thales to get the potion. Only nobles themselves understood how badly they hankered for power and titles.

Therefore, the trade of the potions was an industry of excessive profits. Because the empire was not really an enemy for the Congress, the Congress chose to smuggle a limited amount of potions from time to time to the empire to make a great fortune. Also, some ancient sorcerers nearby in the East Haven were also making a small amount of the potions to make extra money.

Carleena nodded, "Yes, Mr. Peter's a real knight. He's strong and brave."

The young nobles all looked at Lucien with mixed feelings. Some felt confused, some upset, and some jealous.

Holding Alert, Lucien said, "I've been traveling around Flame Fortress for many years, and I've been put in quite a lot dangerous situations, thus I managed to awaken my Blessing... You know, just like how eyases are pushed out of the nest to learn how to fly."

Carleena sensed the awkward atmosphere. So, she coughed a bit and said to the nobles, "Distinguished guests, because of what just happened, we have to end our winter hunting earlier than we expected, but our welcome party for Mr. Peter is not affected. No worries, in the manor, we have lots of guards and pastors there!"

It was a bit too late for the young nobles to go back to Ural from Carleena's manor, and also, the last thing they wanted to do was to leave Peter the chance to spend time alone with Carleena. So they all agreed to attend the party.

...

Unlike Aalto or Tria, Schachran music was unique and had an outburst of enthusiasm.

The floor of the spacious hall was covered by thick red carpet, and the young nobles were socializing with wine glasses in their hands. The long dinning tables in the corner were loaded with the empire's signature liquor, Gold Lega, and also butter, white bread, pancake, creamy roasted fish, caviar, roasted lamb, fried chicken, steak, borsch, beef soup and all kinds of fancy dessert.

Carleena, as the host, was leading Lucien to meet the guests.

She was now wearing a black evening dress, and her nice figure was thus perfectly outlined. Carleena chose to only wear a pearl necklace tonight, showing her beautiful neck and bust.

"This is Mr. Ivanovszki, our famous businessman in the empire. From Storm Strait to the provinces in the northwest, evening including the land where Marinov line of defense is, you can see his businesses," introduced Carleena. Wearing a pair of gilt-edged glasses, Mr. Ivanovszki looked quite elegant, but his figure was quite well-built, like a winter bear.

Ivanovszki kissed Carleena's right hand and said, "My lady, your beauty is more precious than any jewels. I'm just an ordinary merchant working for nobles."

Then Ivanovszki shook hands with Lucien, "Nice to meet you, Mr. Peter. I've heard your name in the northwest province. Congratulations for awakening your Blessing so fast. I'm sure that when you go back to your family, you'll get the title very fast. What a pity that your father cannot share the joy..."

"Well... He got excited easily and he was always drunk, so..." Lucien responded casually. According to Valentine, Peter and his father did not get along with each other well at all.

After chatting casually a bit, Ivanovszki smiled, "If I can have the honor, I hope we can cooperate to make some good money in the future. Now I must leave you and Carleena alone for your opening dance."

Carleena nodded, and she said to the guests in a louder voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, let's welcome Mr. Peter Joseph Vladimir from the northwest!"

The applause was not too warm, but Carleena did not care. She looked at Lucien like she was fascinated by him, "Mr. Peter, as the host, I invite you to have the opening dance with me."

Lucien bowed to her slightly and reached out his right hand, "Lady

Lottnico, my great honor."

With a sweet smile, Carleena put her soft hand in Lucien's, and they started to dance in the music. They were doing Ilia Circle Dance.

Carleena leaned her body against Lucien's chest, and her eyes became alluring, "Peter, you know what? When the bear was coming for me, I was totally helpless and desperate. But you stood in front of me and saved my life! When I was looking at you from behind, I felt the great sense of security that I have never experienced before. I feel that you're the one who can shelter me from any wind or rain, and you're the one who can make me happy and forget all my fears and worries."

"Thank you, Carleena, but I was also protecting myself," Lucien answered.

"No matter why..." Carleena's lips approached Lucien's face, and her breath became faster and warmer, "When you save me from the bear's paw, you're my hero—my brave and reliable hero! My heart beats fast for you, and I've never felt this before, even when I married my husband... He was more like a father to me, and I was touched..."

Lucien thought for a few seconds and then said to the woman seriously, "Carleena, you're a great person..."

Chapter 268: Leo's Finding

Chapter 268: Leo's Finding

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“What?” Carleena was confused.

“I mean... we should be friends,” said Lucien seriously.

“... I heard you...” Carleena put on quite a few facial expressions within a few seconds. Finally, she put on a delicate and charming look, and her big eyes stared at Lucien's face with some tears in it, “I'm so sorry, Mr. Peter. I've troubled you this much.”

Although most guys would probably be touched by the way she looked right now, Lucien was an exception. He was still wearing the polite smile, “I really appreciate your affection. But you're just not the type I like. I'm sorry.”

The song gradually ended. Carleena looked down, and her tears dropped onto the carpet.

Her nose was a bit stuffy, “I know I'm only a widow, and I don't deserve you, Mr. Peter. Anyway, I've told you my feelings toward you. Thank you for dancing with me. Feel free to come back to Ural in the future.”

When the music stopped, Carleen quickly turned around and left the dancing floor.

Seeing that, Barshac and some other nobles all left their dancing partners and followed Carleena, trying to check her out and comfort her. However, Carleena quickly hid in the lady's dressing room in the corner and locked the door from inside.

Barshac stared at Lucien with mixed feelings. He was not sure if he should feel lucky or angry, but he knew that he was definitely jealous.

However, facing Lucien's power, no one dared to challenge him directly.

In the dressing room, Carleena raised her head, and her beautiful face looked very angry. She murmured to herself in a bitter way, "A great person? How dare you say this? Who do you think you are? Damn it! I'll make you regret it!"

...

In the dungeon behind the manor, Mianka slowly came out of his coma, and Niake was right beside him.

"Finally, you woke up..." Niake started to put some magic potions back into the small box.

"Where... where's this place?" Mianka was confused, "What happened?"

"Come on, Mianka... I told you to pretend that you were beaten. I never told you to commit suicide! Your winter bear form at least had the power of a real knight. You should be the one telling me what happened..." said Niake quite pissed.

Mianka scratched his head with effort, "The guy was fast. When I saw his sword coming, I was not able to dodge at all. Then, I fainted... I thought my winter bear form could handle at least the power of a level two knight..."

"His sword should be at least of level two high-rank... We've underestimated this guy. I need to report this to the master," said Niake. Due to their lack of information, their plan of playing the hero and the beauty almost turned into a disaster.

...

After putting on some make up, Carleena went back to the dancing floor with the same sweet and cheerful smile on her face as usual. The only difference was that now her attitude toward Lucien was rather cold, as if what happened was all an illusion.

That relieved Lucien. He was only passing by that place. He wanted

nothing from this party, and he only wanted to stay away from trouble.

When the party ended, Carleena started to send guests to their guest rooms. When Lucien put on his coat, he noticed that his butler, Leo, was gone!

Looking around, Lucien did not see Leo. When he was about to use spiritual power, Leo popped out from behind a pillar in the corner, "My lord, the party has ended?"

His wrinkled face looked a bit pale, as if he was trying his best putting up with something. And on the face, Lucien also saw fear.

"Are you alright?" Seeing that all the butlers and servants had followed their masters to the rooms upstairs, Lucien asked Leo in low voice.

"You look tired, my lord. Maybe you want to take a rest now." Leo gave Lucien the eye.

"Alright." Lucien got it right away.

When they went back to the guest room, and after they carefully checked the place, Leo said to Lucien in fervent hatred, "My lord, I saw the smuggler... in the party."

"The smuggler who killed all your family?" Lucien slightly adjusted his monocle.

Leo nodded seriously, "Yes, it was him. I remember his face all day and all night. When I was waiting for you beside the hall, I saw him with his new assistant. I was afraid that he might recognize me, so I hid behind the pillar. I saw him walking into the main hall."

"...What's his name?" asked Lucien thoughtfully.

Leo lowered his voice even more, as if he was using this way to restrain his emotion, "He's changed his name. I heard other nobles and butlers calling him... Mr. Ivanovszki"

"I thought so..." Lucien slightly nodded. Carleena's acquaintances

were either swindlers or smugglers, which meant that she probably had many secrets as well. She was just playing the role of a widow whose heart was filled with vanity. And very possibly, Sergey worked for Ivanovszki.

However, Lucien was now even more confused. If Carleena knew the big smuggler, why would she kept throwing herself in his arms? For what?

Although Lucien's sword, Frost, was quite pricy, for Carleena, twenty thousand Thales was nothing. She had several manors and three major mines from the baron, not to mention the gold. Also, as the niece of the second wife of Count Witte, it was just absurd that Carleena would approach Lucien because of the sword, unless she was crazy about wealth, which was very unlikely to happen.

"No worries, my lord. I'll not break my promise, since I've signed the compact, and you've saved my life. One day, I can break his neck."

"I trust you, Leo. But you can tell me more about him." Lucien nodded. Although he felt sorry for Leo, in Schachran Empire, he could not take the risk to take revenge for Leo, since big smugglers like Ivanovszki were always under lots of protection. And if Lucien was going to take revenge for Leo, it was very likely that the north church would notice that a sorcerer had arrived in the empire.

Leo had great grief in his eyes, "When I first met Ivanovszki, he was already the most famous smuggler in the East Haven. It was said that he had a big noble and two city lords behind him. He was also connected to some ancient sorcerers, so he could sell magic items and potions. Ivanovszki's so influential that he can ignore all the nobles other than the count."

Lucien nodded. He was listening to Leo carefully.

"He has several good magic items. He always has middle-rank sorcerers or grand knights protecting him. His smuggling business accounts for at least twenty percent of the industry in the empire. When I worked for him, mostly just trading some materials in Brianna like Black Nightingale, I protected him once, and I helped

him connect to the southwest black market of the empire, so I was awarded with the magic potion and awakened my Blessing.” Leo continued, “After that, once he planned on robbing a village and selling all the villagers to an ancient sorcerer as his experiment material. I could not bear this... so I told his plan to the church, and he suffered a great loss from it. After that, I changed my name and everything. Although I thought I did this secretly, he still managed to know it was me who did it... Before I could send my family to a safe place, he...”

Lucien rubbed his chin, “He could escape from the north church... It sounds like Ivanovszki does have the support of a big noble...”

Knowing that Ivanovszki was protected by some middle-rank sorcerers, Lucien had decided that he should leave Ural as soon as possible.

After getting more information from Leo, Lucien did not go to sleep immediately. After Leo went back to his own room, Lucien blew off the candles and sat down in the couch. He started to build the magic model of the fourth-circle spell, Professor’s Infrasound Resonance, while looking at the moonlight outside of the window.

Lucien sensed the smell of danger. He wanted to wait for the daylight.

“Remember me whenever you see the moon...” Thinking of the past, Lucien suddenly smiled.

At this time, Lucien heard someone knocking on the door.

“Who’s it?” asked Lucien calmly but alertly.

“It’s me, Ivanovszki. Can we talk, Mr. Peter?” the man’s voice sounded friendly and relatively familiar.

Chapter 269: Ivanovszki's Plot

Chapter 269: Ivanovszki's Plot

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien purposely asked in a confused tone, “Mr. Ivanovszki? It’s quite late now...”

Ivanovszki’s response was quite cheesy and suspicious, “I’m visiting you this late, Mr. Peter, because of the good news. I know several viscounts from Vladimir family, so I felt quite close to you the first time I saw you, Mr. Peter, not to mention how your courage and fighting skills impressed me... So I’d like to share the good news with someone I like.”

All of Ivanovszki’s words only reminded Lucien of a fraud. However, as powerful and influential as Ivanovszki, why would he be interested in Lucien, a nobody?

After thinking for a few seconds, Lucien decided to listen to him to see what the good news was. Getting more information was never a bad thing, since Lucien would probably be able to see through Ivanovszki’s secret plot during their conversation.

Lucien used his knight instinct and sensed that there was someone else on the other side of the door with Ivanovszki, but the person was not trying to hide himself—the person should be Ivanovszki’s assistant or something.

With his left hand holding Frost, Lucien opened the door casually.

Ivanovszki still dressed in his party suit, like a winter bear wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. Beside him there was an old man wearing a black suit and bow tie. The old guy looked gloomy, his eyes dull, face wrinkled and cold. Holding a black suitcase, he was shorter than Ivanovszki.

Seeing that Mr. Peter opened the door himself, Ivanovszki looked a bit confused, “Mr. Peter, where’s your butler? How come you do

this yourself?”

“He’s sick because of the storm. I asked him to take a rest.” Lucien explained casually, “And this is?”

Ivanovszki pointed at the old man and grinned, “This is my assistant, Matvienko. He’s talented in doing business, and he’s got his own understanding of economy.”

“Oh... Mr. Matvienko, may I ask for your thoughts on the production, circulation and distribution of wealth? Do you think the market is controlled by an invisible hand and follows its own rules?” asked Lucien seriously. Obviously, he did not like this old guy at all, who was not so much an economy expert as a aggressive safeguard.

Matvienko frowned, offering no answer, while Ivanovszki’s smile froze on his face. After a while, he laughed out of embarrassment, “Haha, Mr. Peter, it’s really hard to find a noble and a knight like you who’s this profound in economy...”

“I’m just a beginner in economy. Some related knowledge is helpful for when I have my own land in the future, isn’t it?” Lucien did not keep giving them a hard time. What he just said was more like a warning—dare you mess up with me!

Ivanovszki put on an impressed look, “Good idea. Young nobles like you, Mr. Peter, do have different understandings and thoughts.” He also did not mention anything professional in economy.

Lucien let them in. When they sat down on the couch, Lucien poured each of them a cup of water, “So, what is it about, Mr. Ivanovszki?”

Ivanovszki’s big hands were holding the porcelain cup like a toy. He smiled, “Mr. Peter, you do know that Count Witte has part of his blood from family Vladimir, right?”

“Of course. The count’s mother was family Vladimir’s member. She awakened the family Blessing, Frost, as a knight and a lord.” Lucien replied, “But so what? Count Witte’s Blessing, Withering, is still

from his father's family, and Count Witte is the first one in his family who managed to become a radiant knight, not to mention all his brilliant exploits on the battlefields... His achievement has way surpassed the glory of his mother's family..." Lucien seized the chance to show that he knew the family well.

Ivanovszki's put on a meaningful smile, "Just as you said, Mr. Peter... the good news is that you will be provided with the title of a count, and the wealth of a local count."

Because of the many mines in Ural, most nobles here were way richer than nobles in other countries and areas.

"What do you mean?! What's gonna happen to Count Witte?" Lucien pretended to be shocked, "Why me?"

Ivanovszki slightly nodded to calm Lucien down, "As you know, Carleena's the niece of the second wife of Count Witte, and she's thus close to the count. According to Carleena, Nevskiy, the cardinal in Ural city, asserted that the count could only live up to another half year. No divine power can cure this, because it's the count's natural aging."

Lucien maintained the shocked look on his face.

"Because of his Blessing, Withering, the count has had a difficult time in having offsprings, and he spent most of his best years in the south, fighting against the south church. Although he married three wives in total, Count Witte only had a son, but his son died before ten," continued Ivanovszki.

"So?" Lucien asked calmly.

Ivanovszki put down the cup in his hand, "Mr. Peter, you should know the fact that the count successfully awakening his Blessing was a miracle, a miracle that was made come true by family Vladimir. The count lost his parents because of the war when he was young, and he failed to awaken his Blessing until twenty-five. Before that, his remote relatives gave him a very difficult time because they wanted to take over family Witte's land and title. It was some members from family Vladimir here who once helped

him.”

“I know.” Lucien nodded.

“The count has revealed his plan to Carleena. He wants to have one of the male members from family Vladimir to be his stepson and give this stepson his title and wealth. To do this, the stepson must marry a lady from family Witte, who’s not closely connected to the core family, leaving the rest of family Witte no hope to touch what he has. Mr. Peter, you’re elegant, strong and good-looking, and you have even awakened your Blessing! You can’t miss the great opportunity! The count will of course like you!”

Now Lucien understood what they were planning on. The count title and the great fortune equal to half of the wealth of the whole Ural district was beyond alluring to everyone, not to mention a greedy smuggler.

After that, Lucien asked casually, “So, Carleena’s also from family Witte?”

Ivanovszki first was a bit surprised and then laughed, “Yes, several generations ago. Although it’s quite remote, no one can deny. Without Carleena, we would never know what the count likes specifically. She plays an important role here. I mean... marrying a beauty and gaining the title and a great fortune... can anyone say no to this?”

Lucien now understood Sergey’s true intention. Sergey was not trying to get his gold or sword, but to control him using the business. So, when both Sergey and Carleena failed, Ivanovszki came to Lucien and tempted him directly.

However, what Lucien did not understand was why the count would be dying so soon twenty or even thirty years earlier before he reached the average life span of a radiant knight. Was it because he was somehow severely injured during the war?

And Lucien was quite sure that no matter who married Carleena and got the title, the person was only going to be another piece of evidence pointing that Carleena truly deserved the name people

called her by—Black Widow.

Therefore, Lucien put on a smile and said, “It’s a hard decision, but I’m still saying this. Mr. Ivanovszki, I cannot agree on the plan. I won’t work with you guys.”

Although Lucien often craved for money, in Schachran Empire, he could not take any risks, not to mention the fact that he was not even a real family member of Vladimir, as the cardinals would test his blood.

A less greedy person was always smarter.

“What do you mean, Mr. Peter? Literally, you’re saying no to a count title, half of the district’s wealth, lots of mines and manors...” Ivanovszki could not believe his ears. He did not believe that anyone would reject the offer, not even the emperor in San Ivansburg!

Lucien said to Ivanovszki seriously, “I cannot give up my surname. My name is the glorious representation of my family. I believe that one day I can become a count myself under the name Vladimir!”

After that, Lucien added, “I’m proud of my name!”

Ivanovszki looked at Lucien as if he was lunatic, “I thought those kind of knights who only pursued glory had all disappeared in the empire, but you shocked me, Mr. Peter.”

Then he stood up and bowed to Lucien, “Mr. Peter, good luck with your faith.”

Although Ivanovszki tried his best to be respectful, Lucien felt that he was not saying what he was really thinking.

“Before the decision is made, I’ll keep the secret for you.” Lucien still pretended to be super righteous.

Ivanovszki put on a nice smile, “I trust you, Mr. Peter, a noble knight. Maybe we can work together in the future.”

Then, he left Lucien’s room with his assistant, Matvienko.

“Be careful, my lord.” Leo walked out of his room after Ivanovszki and Matvienko had left, and he reminded Lucien worriedly, “He’s more ruthless than one can imagine, and he does not like any latent troubles.”

Chapter 270: The Count's Invitation

Chapter 270: The Count's Invitation

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Holding the fine porcelain cup, Lucien slightly nodded, "I know. People like Ivanovszki are definitely ruthless, or they wouldn't be able to survive. I wish I knew who was protecting him, so I could..."

Although Lucien's tone was gentle, his words made Leo feel cold. The person he was working for right now was a sorcerer who was beyond calm. If this young man knew more about Ivanovszki, then through a series of analysis, he would kill Ivanovszki as soon as possible.

"When I was working for Ivanovszki, in public, he only had a grand knight or a middle-rank mage protecting him, but as you said, he must still have more people. I've seen it several times. Those assassins sent by his competitors never made it into the place he lived. There was one time... a level two knight whose Blessing allowed him to hide, and thus he seriously injured Ivanovszki's grand knight. The moment when Ivanovszki was going to be killed, the assassin fell on the ground, dead. I still remember the look on his face... it was horror." Leo told Lucien what he knew altogether.

There was a smile on Lucien's face, "I just sent my unseen servant to follow him, and he almost noticed it. But the servant still managed to make sure that his room was protected by some spells. It's hard for us to spy on him. If we want to kill him, we need to make him step out of those places that he knows well. We want him to follow our plan."

"My lord..." said Leo, a little hesitant, "If you give me a middle-rank magic item, I'll seize a chance and die together with Ivanovszki."

Lucien looked around and said, "Suicide attack? Not necessary yet. Go and have some rest, Leo."

Lucien's biggest advantage now was the fact that Ivanovszki did not know anything about his power as a sorcerer. No matter who Ivanovszki sent to kill Lucien, it was always going to be a mistake, which was a great chance for Lucien, since he could consume Ivanovszki's power bit by bit. Of course, if Ivanovszki was not planning on killing him, that was the best.

At the same time, Lucien also cast a secret magic circle invented by the Congress around his room. The magic circle did not block other people from spying on the person in the room, but it could reinforce the caster's spiritual power for sensing any magic waves, so the caster could detect even the slightest amount of magic wave disturbance.

The moonlight was gentle and delicate. Lucien sat in the couch and slowly closed his eyes.

In the darkness, everything was very quiet. At this time, Lucien sensed a tiny amount of magic waves. It was only like part of the night breeze, so, if Lucien had not placed the magic circle, there was no chance that he would notice this.

The magic waves gradually settled, however, it was still there—like a mirror, watching Lucien.

Lucien, in the couch, adjusted his position from time to time, as if he had fallen into deep sleep.

Just like this, nothing ever happened throughout the whole night.

...

Ural City, Green Vine luxury hotel.

After selling most of his goods in this busy city and buying some more local ironwares, Berdychiv was quite relaxed.

He sat in the hotel's corner after having breakfast, drinking his liquor and looking at the many guests in the hotel. He and another juice head were remarking upon the guests' appearance and manner.

“Father, are you seriously drinking in the morning?” asked Yielena a bit angrily. She had accepted Igor’s apology last night, and they were planning on having a tour in the city.

Berdychiv let out a belch. The strong smell of liquor was rising from his stomach. “Yielena, come on...” Berdychiv laughed, “Tomorrow we’re heading back home. Just let me drink today. The more I drink, the more revitalized I am.”

The caravan’s next stop was the provincial capital of Kirov.

“You’ve been drinking for two days!” Yielena frowned, “You have to promise that you won’t drink a single drop on our way home!”

Berdychiv laughed, “Yielena, you think I’m drunk? Ha, you cannot cancel my breakfast drink, lunch drink, and dinner drink from the list!”

After saying this to his daughter, Berdychiv suddenly stood up, rolling a bit back and forth, “Mr. Peter, welcome back! I thought you were gonna stay in the baroness’ manor!”

The ambiguity of Berdychiv words contradicted his age.

Lucien, followed by Leo, was right now walking into the hotel. After having breakfast in the manor, Carleena, who was obviously much colder to Lucien than yesterday, sent Lucien and Leo back to Ural City, which was what Lucien wanted exactly, but he would not lower his guard.

“Morning, Mr. Peter.” Yielena grinned. She always believed that Peter was a decent gentleman.

Lucien also smiled, “Good morning, Miss Yielena. You two are good again, aren’t you?”

Yielena’s face flushed, and although Igor did not like Lucien, he also scratched the back of his head shyly, having no idea how to answer.

Berdychiv patted on Lucien’s shoulder and comforted, “You’re still popular among young girls, Mr. Peter. Maybe... Maybe you’re just not lady Carleena’s type, you know...”

Although Lucien was a few centimeters taller with his disguise, compared to most guys in the empire, he was still small.

At this time, Igor said to Lucien, “Mr. Peter, there’s one thing... I live next door to you, and last night I heard some noise in your room. You might want to go back and check your luggage, or maybe it was a mouse... I’m not sure.”

Lucien quickly exchanged a look with Leo, and then said to Igor calmly with a smile, “Thank you. I’ll go back and check it right now.”

...

In the room, Lucien carefully checked almost everything including the secret magic marks he left, his cups and kettle, then he said to Leo confusedly, “Nothing... Maybe it was a mouse?”

“I don’t think so, my Lord. This can’t be just a coincidence.” Leo knew what kind of person Ivanovszki was.

Lucien nodded, and he started checking around again.

Opening his suitcase, Lucien searched through his clothes, some folk music transcripts and some special souvenirs...

At this time, Lucien noticed the set of stacking dolls in the corner. When he examined the dolls with his spiritual power, he finally detected a tiny amount of vicious power in it, which made the look of the doll quite creepy.

“Curse...” Lucien murmured. He had been studying curse-related things for almost a year.

Leo also saw the dolls. He asked, “My lord, what shall we do?”

After thinking for a while, Lucien smiled, “Do as nobles do.”

He activated Sun’s Corona in front of his chest, and the holy light immediately covered Lucien’s body.

Then Lucien opened the stacking dolls, one by one.

When he opened the fourth layer and an old grandma's face was revealed, black smoke burst out and came directly and fiercely toward Lucien!

However, the holy light blocked the smoke completely, and the smoke disappeared.

When the light was going to disappear, Lucien started to roar out of great anger, "A sorcerer tried to kill me! A sorcerer! In this empire!"

As he was shouting, Lucien asked Leo to wrap the dolls with clothes, and they directly walked towards the church nearby, leaving Berdychiv and other people feeling astonished in the hotel.

...

In a secret room in the church.

"You must know what I just said is true. My divine item just saved my life!" said Lucien to a city lord. Lucien was still furious, or say, pretended to be furious.

The cardinal was like a big bear wearing white robe. He nodded and comforted Lucien, "Yes, I know, Mr. Peter."

"Good. Then, Cardinal, please get the damned sorcerer as soon as possible! I have no idea how the bastard dared to do this to me in the empire under the close watch of the church!?" As Lucien was saying, he even quickly took out his Sun's Corona in front of the cardinal. With only two layers of seals unlocked, Sun's Corona looked like a level-five divine item.

"I understand, Mr. Peter, but we still need some time to investigate," said the Cardinal calmly.

"But I do know who did this! It was Ivanovszki! It was Carleena! They are craving for the count's wealth! That's why!"

Then Lucien told the cardinal what happened in the manor.

"But, Mr. Peter, the baroness and Mr. Ivanovszki are not doing something immoral. Most people would do exactly as what they are

doing if they could get the information ahead. Nevskiy also knows this.” The cardinal felt that this young noble was overreacting a little, “Of course, thank you for providing us with the information. We’ll look into this.”

Lucien spent half an hour in the church asserting that it was Ivanovszki who did this. After that, he gradually calmed down and left the church.

Following Lucien, Leo asked in a low voice, “My lord, why you did not mention Ivanovszki’s a smuggler?”

“They won’t trust me. Or they probably know this already. An influential businessman like him must have great support behind his back.” Lucien slightly squinted, “I’ve done what I can do. Now let’s see how Ivanovszki will respond.”

...

As soon as they came back to the hotel, a middle-aged gentleman greeted him.

“Mr. Peter. Count Witte heard that an outstanding young man from Vladimir family has arrived in the city. Count Witte would like to invite you to his castle.” The man smiled.

Lucien was a bit surprised. It looked like his plan on dealing with Ivanovszki was going to be disturbed by the count’s invitation.

Chapter 271: The Old Coun

In the warm afternoon sunshine, a fine coach was heading toward the center of Noble Zone in the southwest of Ural City. Its destination was the count's castle, Dry Vine.

All the pedestrians, when seeing the coach, yielded to it respectfully, as they could easily recognize it as the count's coach.

In the coach, Lucien pretended that he was just going sightseeing, however, he was checking out the empire's map in his spirit library and he paid extra attention to the surroundings of Ural City.

The count's invitation was a surprise, and Lucien could not find any excuses instantly to turn it down. The role Lucien was playing had brought him much convenience, but also some trouble.

Also, because the invitation was out of everyone's expectation, Carleena and Ivanovszki's plan could be interrupted by this. Lucien had no idea what they would do to have things back in their control, but definitely not something good, so he had to be prepared in advance.

Lucien was sure that the invitation was not part of Carleena and Ivanovszki's plan, since before they could be certain that Lucien would work with them, there was no reason that they would want to expose Lucien in front of the count. If the count did like him, but another young lady from family Witte was designated, Carleena and Ivanovszki's effort would all be in vain. And this was one of the reasons that Lucien decided to accept the invitation.

What Lucien felt confused about was that he thought Carleena and Ivanovszki would severely control what Count Witte could see and know. Why this invitation went out of their control? How did the count send out this invitation under Carleena and Ivanovszki's close watch, especially, according to Ivanovszki's words, when the count was so sick and the most trustworthy person for the count was Carleena?

If Ivanovszki did not know how to control the count, Lucien

believed that Ivanovszki should rather drop his smuggling business and go home to find a safer job. Smuggling and craving for the count's wealth was not suitable for him.

As he was checking out the map, Lucien casually asked Leo beside him about the surroundings of Ural City, especially whether there were some haunted places around. Lucien wanted to be as prepared as he could.

"Mr. Peter, the Church is around, so those haunted places only exist in the stories to frighten children, or were made up by those sorcerers living deep in the mountains. According to what I know, several mines to the west of the city are called Cursed Place or The Cave to Hell because collapses often happened and many people died there." The servant of the count, Nicolay, when hearing the conversation between Lucien and Leo, joined them and introduced.

Nicolay was a knight, and he was also a lord. However, he had been working for the count for most of his life since the war against the south Church, and he was saved by Count Witte many times. Therefore, Nicolay was willing to stick around and became the count's servant.

These kind of people were actually not that uncommon. They could often be found around big nobles, dukes, kings and emperors. Unlike those knights whose duty was to protect the nobles because they had joined the Knights, these people were willing to give up their land to stay close to and protect other nobles for various reasons:

Some had passed on the right and title to their offsprings, and by protecting bigger nobles, they could have the chance to obtain an even higher status than the family's hereditary rank of nobility; Some, like Nicolay, wished to pay his gratitude; Some were cultivated by other nobles, so they had made the promise that they would serve the nobles for an amount of years by protecting them; Others worked for nobles just because of the secret methods for improving Blessings that were passed down by inheritance in the noble families.

After hearing Nicolay's words, Lucien smiled, "Mr. Nicolay, I do

know that there are haunted areas in the northwest province and they are right now under the Church's control." By providing information about the northwest territory, Lucien was trying to show the fact that he knew the family very well.

"Maybe it's true. Maybe there are some places like this around Ural City and they're under the Church's control. But we cannot know for sure." Nicolay had spent many years on the battlefield, so his way of talking could be quite straightforward.

Lucien did not mind. He kept talking to Nicolay and Leo to get to know more about the surroundings.

...

Half an hour later, the grand castle covered by dry vines was in front of Lucien.

Just as Lucien got off the coach, he saw a fancy coach coming from another direction in a hurry.

As soon as the horses stopped, a beautiful lady wearing a white wool dress got off the coach with the help of her maid hurriedly.

"Mr. Peter..."

"Lady Carleena..."

They were both surprised to see each other in front of the castle gate.

Lucien first smiled and said, "So you're here to visit the count?"

"That's right. I heard that uncle Witte just invited a guest, and I was worried that he might now follow the doctor's words and get too tired. The count needs good rest right now." Carleena also put on her bright smile again.

"No worries. I won't bother the count too much." Lucien slightly bowed to her, "After you."

"Mr. Peter, you have the best manner among Schachran Empire. I

do like it." Carleena nodded to him and then went inside the castle gate.

What she said was true. Most Schachran nobles did not like following rules and manners at all. Instead, they preferred spirits and fights. So they were often called by the nobles in the south as savages.

As Lucien guessed, this invitation was out of Carleena and Ivanovszki's expectation. Lucien wondered what happened in the castle. He followed Carleena and entered the gate.

...

The bright fire in the fireplace warmed the whole space of a living room in the castle, which was not very big.

Lucien took off his coat and handed it to the servant. Then, he bowed to the old man politely in a noble manner, "It's my great pleasure to meet you, Count Witte."

The old man was sitting in the couch right next to the fireplace. Wearing black, heavy coat, the old man was still trying to wrap himself up with the coat tightly, as if he still felt very cold. His face was pale, although the figure of his face still looked more or less fortitudinous. His eyes, that used to be clear blue, now looked dim and cloudy. The black beret that the count was wearing covered his thin hair. Lucien's overall first impression of the count was that the man who used to be beyond brave and strong was now like a withering plant.

Seeing that the count, who was a level seven radiant knight, now looked this weak, great fear rose in Lucien's mind when he thought of aging and dying. Fortunately, there were many ways for prolonging one's lifespan in the world of magic. Everyone feared death. Human beings, with their very limited lifetime, always pursued ways to live longer and keep their youth.

"Mr. Peter, pleased to make your acquaintance," said the count in a weak voice and with his pale lips. "It's hard for me... to see an outstanding Vladimir family member in Ural."

After saying this, he gasped a bit and said, "This is my niece, Carleena. You two should have met each other already. This is my steward, Semenov, my good steward."

Carleena was on the count's left side and Semenov on the right. Semenov's hair was already gray, and although there were only a few wrinkles on his face, they were all quite deep, so it was hard to tell Semenov's real age.

It was said that Semenov was a grand knight, and unlike most stewards, he was a quite interesting person.

"Yes, my lord. Lady Carleena invited me to her party before, and she's really nice," said Lucien in a pretended sincere manner, and then he sat down in the couch.

Carleena did not like what Lucien said, but she also had no idea how to pick on his words. She could also curse him that every single girl he met in the future would say the same thing back to him.

The count smiled, "Yeah... Carleena's a nice girl. Actually... I've been looking for a young man from family Vladimir, and you, Peter... here you are..."

Before he finished his words, he started gasping again. He was really in a bad health condition.

Carleena got nervous all of a sudden. Her hands grabbing the count's arm became stiff, and the veins in her hands stuck out.

Lucien politely waited for the count.

The count lowered his pace of talking and said, "I'm old now... really old. I am not that firm and strong anymore... I start to like looking back. I remember... when I was young, I went to the northwest province with my mom. Are there still those many strange trees, flowers and animals in Tula forest?"

"I haven't gone back for many years as well, my lord. But I do remember almost everything in the forest... especially the red magic trees that can move and hunt like animals," answered Lucien

confidently.

Carleena felt a bit more relaxed.

The rest of the conversation between the count and Lucien before lunch was all about the count's memory, and the conversation went pretty well. The count invited Lucien to have lunch with him and to stay there tonight. The caravan was going to leave tomorrow.

There were many grand knights and knights within the castle, so Lucien agreed. Things had gone sideways, and now Lucien had to see how things could go.

...

It was getting darker. In one of the many rooms in the castle, Dry Vine.

"How did the count know Peter?" Ivanovszki questioned Carleena a bit angrily.

Chapter 272: Night Falls

Carleena responded in confusion, "what does it have to do with me? Ivanovszki, I thought the intelligence agents that worked for uncle Witte were under your control. Why is he asking to see Viscount Fyodorov after he woke up and had the breakfast?" She sounded frustrated and angry.

Viscount Fyodorov was the senior brother of Barshac and it was obvious that he had heard about the matter regarding Peter.

"I've checked the situation. It's impossible for Count Witte to meet Viscount Fyodorov just because of the intel, and none of the agents contacted Count Witte secretly. Carleena, there might be a problem with the servants and maids you selected." Ivanovszki denied the allegations and accused Carleena of selecting the wrong people.

Carleena shook her head with confidence in her eyes. "No, their parents and relatives are under my control. They won't leak any information of uncle Witte to the public without my permission. They only talked about the situation of the manor and the snow. Also, they executed all my orders. The agents are the only ones who are allowed to visit uncle Witte. They told the Knights who wanted to visit that uncle Witte needed rest, so the Knights could only send letters or oral messages to him."

No one expected the incident. Carleena and Ivanovszki were at the same position. They were trying to find excuses subconsciously so they could blame each other. No one wanted to take the responsibility.

Ivanovszki remained silent for several minutes and pushed his gold-wired glasses up slightly. "Maybe Count Witte just suddenly had this idea. Anyway, it has become a problem and we should make sure that the Count doesn't leave his legacy to Peter. We need to..." He gripped forward with his right hand and the behavior looked like he was about to break someone's neck.

"Are you crazy? This is the Dry Vine Castle, there are several Grand

Knights and more than 20 Knights guarding this place! You'd be burnt at the church's stake if they caught you after!" Carleena spoke in a surprised tone, her pretty eyes were wide open, and she was staring at Ivanovszki as if he was crazy. She could not believe what Ivanovszki just suggested.

The nobles like Viscount Fyodorov that served Count Witte would take turns to guard the Dry Vine Castle with their own Knights in the district of Ural. It was a duty that the Knights had to their lords. When there was no war going on, they needed to serve the lord for two months every year. It was their chance to communicate with other nobles and show their loyalty to the lord.

Ivanovszki pulled his collar slightly, it seemed like his collar was a bit tight.

"We planned to kill Peter but we don't want anyone to notice what we're doing. The problem is, we failed to strike him by surprise. Peter realized what our plan was and reported us to the Church. The situation was bad enough and we shall do what an empire noble would do. It's the simplest method, but it'll be very effective!" He spoke in a cold tone.

"The Grand Knights, Knights, and the Priests in the castle are not a problem. We have Mr. Matvienko, which is a middle-rank sorcerer, and... that one..."

Carleena suddenly calmed down after hearing the word, it almost looked like she never got nervous. She spoke in a worried tone, "Let's just follow your plan if you already made the decision. I just think something is off here. It almost felt like those things happened for no reason."

"Don't worry, Carleena. There's only a dying old man on this floor beside the servants and maids that are already under your control. Although the old man was a Radiant Knight, he already lost his ability and his will. We just need to be careful and he won't notice anything. He didn't do anything when we killed those faithful attendants, right?"

The anger and anxiousness were no longer bothering Ivanovszki. He

rubbed his lips and calmed down.

"Also, Peter probably thinks he lives in a safe environment as there are so many Grand Knights and Knights guarding this place. Our chance of assassinating him is high."

Carleena's expression changed several times, and she spoke in a calm tone, "Destroy the body after we kill him. Ask Mianka and Niake to transform into Peter and his housekeeper. They can just leave with the caravan and sneak out on the way. Make sure you send the strongest assassins to kill Peter. I don't want anything like what Mianka did happening again. We spent way too much time on cleaning the mess."

Mianka became the laughing stock of the group after the Winter Bear Incident.

Carleena continued before Ivanovszki responded, "Although Peter tried to hide his Knight-level power with his footwork, I still determined that he was just a normal Knight after checking his heart rate, blood flow, and skin when we were dancing. Peter is a Knight that has high agility and speed. That's why he defeated Mianka with a sword. The problem is that it seems like Peter carries two enchanted long swords and one of them is at the middle-level."

With her keen sense and clear analysis, it almost felt like she was not a normal female noble who spent a lot of time on hunting.

"According to Mianka's description, the sword might be a level three or four magic item. However, a normal Knight has no way to survive a fight against a Grand Knight and a middle-rank sorcerer with just a middle-level magic item. Also, he has a level four or five divine item that will protect him from curses and spells that might kill him instantly, so the Grand Knight should be the assassin and the middle-rank sorcerer needs to make sure the Grand Knights at lower floors don't notice anything."

Ivanovszki stopped for a second and continued, "What did Peter experience at the northern continent? A man that became a Knight not so long ago has such an expensive magic long sword and a divine item? He's probably richer than me! However, they'll be

mine after tonight." It sounded like he was jealous of Peter.

Carleena completely calmed down, and there was a seductive smile on her face.

"I'll take the divine item," she chuckled.

They thought that a normal knight like Peter was lucky enough to acquire two magic longswords and a level four or five divine item. He probably had a suit of magic armor at the most. Peter probably found some magic items during an exploration and he sold the items to purchase the gear.

After the discussion, Ivanovszki turned to Matvienko, who was standing on the side with hands on his back, and said, "Mr. Matvienko, please make sure that no one notices our action and prevent Peter from activating any magic item that can help him teleport away."

Ivanovszki respected Matvienko in private as the man was a third circle sorcerer that was good at curses and transformations. Matvienko could ambush and kill other level five classes when they were not prepared, including sorcerers and bishops.

Matvienko nodded with a cold expression on his face. "Sadly, Peter has a divine item with the Death Ward, or I could just kill him with my curses, just like what I did to..."

Ivanovszki smiled. "Mr. Matvienko, I trust you. Also, please make sure you don't stay too far away from me so you can continue to protect me. I'm sure there are people that want me dead."

Ivanovszki knew that his own safety was the most important part, and he was trying to imply that Carleena might be a threat to him, but it sounded like he was not concerned when he talked to Matvienko.

"For sure," Matvienko responded quickly. There was still a sexy smile on Carleena's face. It looked like she did not care.

Ivanovszki clapped his hands after he gave Matvienko the order. "Mr. Petrov, I'm counting on you for the assassination."

A deep voice came from the darkness in the corner, "yes, Mr. Ivanovszki."

Narrowing her eyes, Carleena looked at the corner, but the only thing she could see were the shadows.

"A Darkness Blessing or a Shadow Blessing?" She opened her mouth.

"Dark Blessing, level three," Ivanovszki spat out several words and did not say anything else.

The smile froze on Carleena's attractive face. A level-three Dark Blessing was at the same level as the top-level blessings like the Sun, the Shield of Truth, the Sword of Truth, the Silver Moon, the Vampire, the Devouring Beast, the Destruction Beast, the Devil Duke, and the Demon Lord. One of the nine city lords in the East Haven, Onegin the Dark Sky had the same blessing, and he could fight a level eight Knight with a normal blessing as a level seven Knight.

The power of the blessing was famous for its defensive ability, for example, with the Darkness Blessing, one would be immune to the supernatural effects that could impact his mind and body. The spells and divine spells that had a lower level than the owner of the blessing would do no damage to his body. Also, the owner of the blessing was immune to necromancy and transformations. Physical attacks that involved acid, explosion, or ice, would do absolutely no damage.

Matvienko suddenly disappeared as the night fell.

Ivanovszki sighed slightly, "God the Father bless us."

Carleena was also drawing a strange cross, which was longer in the horizontal direction and shorter in the vertical direction, in front of her chest. "God the Father bless us."

...

In the guest room of the Dry Vine Castle.

Leo felt unsettled and anxious. "Master, the invitation from Count

Witte probably interrupted Ivanovszki plan. It's highly likely that Ivanovszki will try to solve the problem with a simple but effective way. Please be extra cautious after you leave the castle tomorrow.

Leo had served Ivanovszki as an assistant for about ten years and he knew the man well. However, Leo thought that Ivanovszki would attack them after they left the castle. The castle was owned by a Radiant Knight, Count Witte, and there were also many Loyal Grand Knights and Knights guarding the place.

"Leo, I understand and thank you for the information. You can go rest now."

The smile disappeared from Lucien's face after Leo fell asleep in his room. Narrowing his eyes, he knew something was about to happen as he dropped a teacup accidentally just a while ago.

It was a warning from the Host Star and it was the power of the star, also, it seemed like no one interrupted the Host Star's power.

"An enemy that is stronger than me or a mysterious spell? Will they take the risk and try to attack us tonight?" Lucien did not use the astrology as he did not want to alert the knights in the castle. He checked his psychological blind points and had several thoughts in mind.

"Anyway, I should stay alert tonight." It was a simple but effective decision that he made without thinking for too long.

...

It was dark at night and the darkness in Lucien's room was dancing like it was alive.

Chapter 273: Slaying

The dim moonlight behind the curtain did not light up Lucien's room, but made the whole place very quiet and somehow even darker.

The darkness in the room was not evenly distributed, as if the darkness had life. But when one took a closer look at it, there was nothing in the darkness.

Lucien was lying in the bed, and his breath was long and smooth. It seemed that he had fallen into a sweet dream in his deep sleep.

"The darkness shows... He's indeed in the bed...

"His swords... two swords... about ten centimeters from his hands. He's very alert...

"Breath... heartbeat... spiritual power... all normal. Hands are covered by the blanket... hard to tell... His posture is awful... not like a noble at all...

"He's in deep sleep. Maybe the many guards in the castle made him feel safe...

"He's still wearing the amulet. The amulet can be activated very fast, but it only works facing lethal magic spells and curses. It cannot protect him from any physical or elemental attacks, nor can it hurt the attacker.

"Maybe he still has more magic items, but I should be able to get him before they actually work...

"I'm ninety-nine percent sure... I can send him to hell before he wakes up!"

After close observation, Petrov had made up his mind.

In the darkness beside Lucien's bed, a figure suddenly showed up! The figure fiercely took a step forward and the dagger shining in

green light directly stabbed toward Lucien's throat!

Just now Petrov dared not to get too close in case Lucien could sense the danger with his intuition. Although Lucien had a magic sword and a quite useful divine item, Petrov was not afraid of them. In the darkness, he was totally confident with his Blessing. However, his only concern was that, if the divine item was too powerful, the magic circle set up by Matvienko for blocking the noise might collapse, and then the grand knights in the castle would notice what was going on here.

Petrov was fast, and his blade was even faster. However, as soon as his dagger cut Lucien's throat, he sensed a surge of familiar magic waves. He could not believe the first idea flashing through his mind, but it was true—it was magic!

Feeling shocked, Petrov saw Lucien's figure breaking down into pieces like a broken mirror.

The second circle spell, Mirror!

Although Darkness Blessing was immune to those lower level spells, this was only for defence. When the power was used to attack, it would still be affected by magic.

In the moonlight, the mirror broke into shining pieces, just like a beautiful dream.

"A Sorcerer?!" Petrov's heart suddenly sank, but soon he realized that the information was not accurate. In the next second, he was ready to go back into the darkness to retrieve!

However, it was already too late. He saw Lucien's real figure beside the bed, and holy light lit up in front of his chest.

Immediately, the whole room was filled with the bright, burning light.

The darkness that Petrov heavily relied on was instantly dispelled, and his figure was revealed.

The level three divine spell, Burning Radiance!

Petrov fought to bear the great pain but released no scream. In great effort, he tried his best to move away from the light, but the pain made him move way too slow.

Without hesitation, Petrov activated the magic ring on his left little finger.

However, as soon as the black smoke started to rise out of the ring, Lucien directly cast Elemental Order!

Bang!

The ring first cracked, then the power in the ring lost its balance. When the ring exploded, the power completely covered Petrov and blasted his light-brown blood everywhere.

With Lucien's outstanding spiritual power as a third circle sorcerer, when he cast Elemental Order, if his enemy did not have anything for defence, Lucien's power was enough to destroy most level four alchemical items.

Seeing that the ring just exploded, Lucien was a bit upset. His possible trophy was gone now. No wonder all the powerful sorcerers were very careful with using the ninth-circle spell, Cracking, since most enemy's magic and divine items under legendary level would be destroyed by the power, leaving one with no gain at all from the fighting.

Also, Cracking was a spell with an area of effect. If one still had his or her teammates around, it would be a great concern to the caster. Therefore, comparatively speaking, Lucien's Elemental Order was much more convenient to use.

Petrov was still writhing on the floor, trying to reach the shadow in the corner. Lucien, of course, would not leave him with any chances, so he activated Sun's Corona again. The flame summoned directly hit Petrov.

One second before, Petrov had no other choice and activated his ultimate and forbidden power, Darkness Assimilation, however, the flame put an end to all his hope.

In the flames, Petrov's figure was quickly overwhelmed. His mouth and throat were burnt into ashes instantly, thus his howling of great pain and fear was restrained in his chest. He could not believe that he had failed this fast, after all, his power was not fully revealed at all! Still, very quickly, nothing was left of him.

Petrov's dagger dropped on the floor.

When Flame Strike was cast, the divine power in the room peaked, but the power was still a bit away from destroying the invisible magic cover. As Lucien expected, the grand knights in the castle sensed no difference.

Because they estimated that the divine item Lucien had was about level four or five, in order to be careful, Matvienko also built a level five magic cover.

Seeing what just happened in Lucien's room, Matvienko was so shocked that he was distracted for a second, thus his figure showed up in the air outside of the window from Lucien's room, right beside that of Ivanovszki!

Lucien's buffering time for casting had passed, and thus he immediately looked at Matvienko in the air and locked him with spiritual power. Lucien's eyes were shining with dim light. He was ready for another round of fighting!

As soon as they started spying on him, Lucien instantly found out what they were planning.

Magic waves spread. Matvienko, who had cast Mechanized Mind and Magic Armor on himself, saw that his invisible covers were silently broken down.

For a second, Matvienko suddenly felt that Lucien was a quite nice guy. However, he quickly realized that Lucien had cast Charm Person on him, but now he felt a little dizzy.

Matvienko had no idea why the spell, Charm Person, could be this powerful. Although his spells had countered most of Lucien's spell power, for a short period of time, he still could not stay

concentrated with his spiritual power.

Fortunately, Matvienko could still use his magic item. After seeing what happened just now, without any hesitation, Matvienko activated his magic boots and disappeared in the air.

The third circle spell, Short Distance Teleportation!

Matvienko had just witnessed how Lucien fought—his fast, continuous attacks never left his enemy any chances to fight back, so Matvienko instantly decided to run away.

Lucien was still in his buffering time for casting Elemental Order, thus he could not destroy Matvienko's boots. However, Lucien had many powerful magic items. Now, he calmly activated his ring, Element.

Outside of the window, a cluster of greenish yellow smog was released, and the smog in the air surrounded the building.

In the smog, several tall and thick pines quickly perished, and even the bugs hiding in the trees were not exception, as if nothing could survive in the smog.

The fifth-circle spell, Gaston's Poison Cloud!

Without any preparations for this, one could die from the smog even with a small amount of it inhaled!

Matvienko's teleportation could not make him move far enough to avoid the toxic smog. When he showed up in the air again, he was surrounded by the greenish-yellow gas.

As a sorcerer, Matvienko was alert enough to know what to do right now. He instantly held his breath and cast Air Filter Bubble.

Matvienko decided to protect him first, and then cast Dissipate Smoke, because dispelling all the smog could take some time.

However, he was greatly shocked when he saw that the filtering bubble was being dyed by the greenish-yellow smoke bit by bit.

"Damn it!" Matvienko had no idea how many middle rank magic items Lucien had. Since he knew that Air Filter Bubble could only manage to handle toxicants produced by spells under the fourth circle, he understood how dangerous the smoke was immediately.

At this time, Matvienko noticed that his skin started to fester!

He could not believe the fact that the toxic smoke could affect his body directly!

"A unique spell...?!" Matvienko's brain started to get slow. With great effort, he managed to retain his consciousness, and activate the spell enchanted in his magic robe, Gasification.

He wished to turn himself into gas for a while to temporarily get rid of the toxic smoke, at the cost of not being able to cast any spells during that time, only being able to fly.

Lucien would not let his wish come true for sure. He cast Elemental Order again, and many holes appeared in Matvienko's magic robe!

"What..." This was Matvienko's last thought before he turned into pus.

Since Lucien cast Charm Person, everything happened within just a few seconds.

At this time, a big hand formed by force field suddenly showed up in the air, trying to grab Matvienko, but it was too late.

Also, a fierce wind blew off the greenish-yellow smoke completely. Then, a man flew out of the window of the count's room. He looked furious, as if he was very mad that he failed to save Matvienko.

Lucien sensed great danger. The man's anger was like the boiling waves in a rough sea.

The man had gray hair and deep wrinkles. It was Semenov, Count Witte's steward!

"Senior rank mage?!" Lucien was shocked.

Chapter 274: Good Actors

Chapter 274: Good Actors

Translator: _Leo_ Editor: Vermillion

When the dark assassin Petrov was killed by the Flame Strike, Ivanovszki and Carleena only noticed the waves from the divine spell. They knew something went wrong but they had no idea what happened in Lucien's room.

When the short but intense magic battle between Lucien and Matvienko happened, they finally learned the "truth" as they focused in the scene mid-air.

"He's a middle-rank mage?! Damn liar!" Ivanovszki's eyes were wide open, it almost felt like he was about to break his gold-wired glasses. After the surprise, the man started cursing furiously.

Ivanovszki could understand how reluctant Petrov was before he died and how desperate Matvienko was at the moment.

Carleena was so surprised and confused that she could not close her half-opened mouth, exposing her neat teeth to the air.

"Peter isn't a knight? He's a sorcerer?! Wait, he's probably not Peter Joseph Vladimir! Liar, what a liar! All he did was telling lies!" She started cursing in her mind.

Sadly, it was too late for them to save Matvienko. The battle ended quickly and they saw Matvienko's rotten body falling at full speed.

After that, they shouted at the same time, "Mr. Nikonov!"

They addressed the man in a respectful way. It was Semenov, who was flying out of Count Witte's room, and he was a senior-rank mage with a power that was deep like the abyss.

What they did not know was that Semenov was not the Nikonov they knew.

...

The housekeeper Semenov, who was called by the surname “Mr. Nikonov”, was floating outside Lucien’s room, staring at Lucien through the window and curtain that were damaged by the Flame Strike and Burning Radiance.

His sight was so cold that it felt like he was staring at a dead man.

Lucien was surprised by the fact that Semenov was a senior-rank mage, however, he had successfully fought and eliminated a senior-rank mage by luck before. He was not terrified by the difference in rank like a normal mage would. Lucien had fought many life-or-death battles, so he quickly calmed down and got ready to activate the transformation robe.

It was a large castle, so Lucien had the chance to survive if he transformed into a rat and moved around. Also, if the priests, knights, and grand knights noticed what was happening in the Dry Vine Castle, they would be able to send the signal to Cardinal Nevskiy, who resided in the Ural City.

If Lucien cast the Elemental Swirl, the spell could barely do any damage to a healthy senior-rank mage, and he would put himself in a bad position.

Lucien was about to activate the transformation robe using his mind, however, he suddenly noticed he had trouble thinking, and he could barely control his spiritual power. He could not even activate the robe.

“Am... I... impacted... by... a... spell....?” Lucien was trying his best to think but it felt like his brain was acting like a rusty gear that was barely spinning.

The power of a well-prepared senior-rank mage that had not experienced an intense battle was terrifying.

Lucien finally realized how hard it was for Felipe to escape the chase of a senior-rank necromancer, feign death, counterattack, and force necromancer to waste a lot of strong spells and magic items.

That was probably the reason why Felipe was the best of all of the geniuses in this generation.

However, Felipe was already at fifth circle when he encountered the senior-rank necromancer, but Lucien was two circles below that. Also, Lucien did not have a spell like Life Hiding as a final resort.

Semenov casted the sixth circle spell, Distraction, to impact Lucien's soul and mind. Although he was calm as a spellcaster, the burning rage was striking his mind. His best student and the most loyal servant were killed in front him. Semenov underestimated the target and he failed to rescue him in time.

Semenov spoke in a cold tone due to the shame and anger, "I'll turn you into a frog and torture you. You'll learn that sometimes it's better to be dead than alive!"

It almost felt like those words were pushed out of the gaps between his teeth by some chilling wind.

Semenov did not care if this bastard was from the Congress of Magic or a strong inheritor of an ancient sorcerer. The man must pay for what he did and there was a strong organization backing Semenov up.

"As long as... he doesn't... kill me... right away... I still have... a chance..."

Lucien had not given up in such a desperate situation and he was trying his best to deal with the Distraction spell, he would not let any chance slip by.

One shall never give up even though it might be his destiny.

One shall keep trying until the last breath!

Lucien's ability to think started recovering slowly due to his strong willpower and a bright light that burst out of his soul.

However, it was too late. His opponent was a senior-rank mage, and although there was a gap between every spell Semenov cast, he could still deal more damage than Lucien could heal.

Semenov was much stronger than Lucien.

Semenov's deep blue eyes looked like a calm and depressing sea when the storm was about to come. Lucien noticed that his body was being decomposed and reformed following a certain pattern.

Baleful Polymorph!

A ball of black smoke appeared beside Lucien. Leo was in caught inside it, he wanted to push Lucien away, but he was too slow.

Suddenly, the dark sky that was illuminated by the silver moonlight turned yellow, and dried tree roots that looked like dark tentacles appeared everywhere. Those strange shadows gathered together and wrapped around Semenov like a ball.

In the castle, the land with the muddy fragrance was decaying quickly, the flowers which just survived the coldness withered, and the vibrant needle-like leaves of the trees started drying out...

It was a power that was at a similar level as a senior-rank mage.

“Withered Shadow!”

“Uncle Witte!”

It was Ivanovszki and Carleena who were shouting in surprise. They thought Witte would not be a problem, but the thing that worried them the most still happened.

“A level seven radiant knight, a strong knight that survived countless intense battles, a knight that owns his unique honorable title, is he really under our control?!”

“He's getting old, his body was weakened by the serious illness, and we have Nikonov, who's a sixth circle senior mage. We placed a curse that is hard to notice and his body will be weakened even further, but his name still terrifies us.”

Today, when everything was finally about to end, the things that Ivanovszki and Carleena worried about actually happened, as if it was a nightmare.

In the withered ball, a strange glow flashed upon Semenov's body, and he disappeared into the air, teleporting to the shadows on the far side. Also, an energy armor was created on the surface of his body.

A sixth circle spell, Magic Trigger!

It was a signature spell that separated the senior-rank mages from the middle-rank mages. If the spell is created in the soul, it meant the sorcerer had another life, and a chance to fight back.

The spell would be triggered under different circumstances, based on how the sorcerers set it up. The spell might be triggered when the sorcerer was about to die or when there was a strike that was too hard for him to block. When the requirement was met, the Magic Trigger would instantly cast two spells that were stored in the model, which were at a level that could not exceed half of the sorcerer's level. Also, those two spells could not be interrupted and they were perfect for life-threatening situations.

The situation was under Semenov's control after he dealt with the Withered Shadow using two 3rd circle spells: Shadow Step and Greater Mage Armor.

The withered ball turned into a human being, revealing Count Witte. He looked old and weak but he stood there with pride.

He was holding a dark greatsword using both hands, the wrinkles and weakness were still displayed on his face, however, the fierce expression on his face made him energetic, and he did not look like a normal old man at all.

"I can still kill even if I'm about to die," Count Witte raised his eyes slightly and spoke in a cold tone. He slashed forward with the greatsword. It turned into blurry shadows and went toward Semenov.

His patience finally granted him the chance!

The Baleful Polymorph was interrupted by Count Witte at the most important moment and the black smoke disappeared before it

completely surrounded Lucien's body. Lucien noticed that his body returned to the normal form and the impact of the Distraction was no longer a problem.

"Move!" He glanced at Leo and jumped down the patio of the castle. A fight between the radiant knight and the senior-rank mage was about to begin, this was Lucien's best chance to escape.

No matter if the senior-rank mage who disguised himself as Semenov or Count Witte the Withered Shadow won the battle, Lucien was certain that they would kill him. He killed the sorcerer's student and the radiant knight had killed countless sorcerers in his life. Also, this was the Schachran Empire, a country that would hunt and burn sorcerers.

Lucien decided to escape the castle using the knight-level speed because the shadows in the air would catch him if he used the flying spell that was relatively slow.

Leo noticed that Ivanovszki was observing the situation in another window before he jumped. His body suddenly expanded and was quickly surrounded by a frost aura. He jumped to the window with his muscular body and a long sword in hand.

"Ivanovszki's middle-rank guards were eliminated and this is my best chance to kill him! Doing so will temporarily pause the intel web of the smuggling organization and Lucien will have an easier time escaping. Lucien saved my life and I want to repay him, also, I want to avenge my family. I shouldn't let this chance slip even if I need to risk my life for it!"

Ivanovszki was worried that he would be caught in the fight between two strong individuals and he wanted to jump to the patio just like Lucien. However, he did not expect the strike from Leo.

Although Ivanovszki was weaker than Leo, he still pursed his lips into a sneer, "It's you."

"Die!" Leo could feel that his blood was boiling as his sword was about to hit his enemy.

However, Leo saw Ivanovszki striking forward with his right fist, and the next moment his sight turned black. Leo could not handle the attack, and was sent flying in the air like a kite with a broken string.

“Grand Knight?! He’s a grand knight!”

Ivanovszki’s tight suit was changed into a silver full-body armor and there was a cold expression on his face. He jumped down with a greatsword in hand and started chasing after Lucien.

The infamous smuggler was a real grand knight and his bloodline was not granted by potions.

That was the reason why he survived the attacks of the assassins.

Carleena muttered after seeing the scene, “A grand knight? He’s a liar too!”

“Ivanovszki, a smuggler and a grand knight that disguised himself as a knight squire. Mr. Nikonov, a senior-rank mage that disguised himself as Semenov the housekeeper. Uncle Witte, who made it look like he did not notice anything and he was just waiting for the death to come. A middle-rank mage and knight that disguised himself as a member of the Vladimir Family. An enemy of Ivanovszki that disguised himself as the housekeeper of Peter. Also, I disguised myself as a weak woman who hasn’t activated her bloodline power. What an incredible stage. It shows we’re all good actors...”

Chapter 275: Entrance Gap

Lucien's room was on the third floor of the castle, more than ten meters above the ground. Even a knight would get hurt if he fell onto the ground from this high. However, casting Feather Fall was also not a good idea, since Lucien would for sure become an easy target when he slowly glided toward the floor.

Therefore, Lucien jumped out and did not cast any spells, so he fell freely for half a second, then he quickly cast Flying, using the gravity of stars to slow down his falling.

With that perfect calculation, Lucien landed on his feet safely in the garden. Although the controlling of the right time was greatly challenging, Lucien's strong spiritual power and outstanding calculation ability made the whole process simple for him.

After landing, Lucien quickly dodged the colorful light pieces falling from the sky, and directly rushed to the castle gate.

Since Leo had a magic ring enchanted with Feather Fall, Lucien thought he would be okay when he jumped down. Lucien's only concern was that Leo would become the target when he slowly fell down, therefore, Lucien chose to be the first one taking actions in order to attract all the attention. Also, Leo was not as important as Lucien in their enemies' eyes.

However, as soon as Lucien started running, his spiritual power field sensed that Leo was fiercely punched back by Ivanovszki, like a rag dool. Bang! Leo's body hit the ground hard.

The magic circle for blocking noises and magic waves set up by Nikonov had nearly reached its limit, but it was still there. The grand knights and other knights in the castle still had no idea what was happening there right now. As the fight between Witte and Nikonov was so bitter, neither of them had a chance to either reinforce the magic circle or to break it for the knights' help.

To Lucien's great surprise, the powerful punch revealed the fact that Ivanovszki was in fact a grand knight. Before that, Lucien had no

clue at all about it.

Although through training, knights could hide their power by adjusting the way they walked, the strength of their muscle, heartbeat, blood circulation and so on, real knights, especially those high level ones, could easily reveal their identity by showing their vigor and imposing manner. However, despite the fact that Lucien had talked to Ivanovszki twice in person, Lucien never doubted that Ivanovszki was just a common knight who awakened his Blessing through a magic potion, and that was it.

Lucien felt lucky that he did not take any reckless actions when he was in Carleena's manor. Then, he sensed that after releasing a painful moaning, Leo quickly stood up again, while Ivanovszki also jumped down from the window and started to chase after Lucien.

Ivanovszki's bitter punch hurt Leo badly. He had pain in his body everywhere. He knew that right now even a high level squire could kill him. Fortunately, he had activated his Blessing, Giant, when he was attacked, or his head would be like a watermelon broken into pieces right now.

However, Leo's cheekbone on one side was broken, so the side of his face had sunk, and blood covered his whole face. He felt great dizzy, and his organs were severely damaged as well. He was not capable of fighting now!

This was the gap between the power of a grand knight and someone who had just awakened his Blessing. Although Leo had spent much money on those magic potions to improve his power, the gap still existed!

Compared to the great pain in his body, Leo's pain in his heart was even bitterer. His revenge now seemed to be hopeless after he realized that his enemy was a grand knight. He now saw no hope at all.

At this time, he heard Lucien's voice, "I'll attract Ivanovszki's attention to cover you. You run. We meet at the place we agreed before..."

The second circle spell, Electromagnetic Message.

Leo suddenly realized the situation, feeling greatly depressed, but he knew that it was not a good time to let himself be immersed in grief. He wanted to live... at least he still should pay Lucien back.

After sending Leo the information, Lucien kept running and soon came in front of the castle gate.

Activating Fire Weaver, a huge fireball hit the gate directly. The great explosion opened a gap in the solid iron gate. And Lucien directly ran out of the castle to the west of the city.

Ivanovszki's landing made the ground shake a bit. He was not hurt by jumping down at all. Without taking even one look at Leo, he ran out of the castle chasing after Lucien.

The ignorance depressed Leo greatly. He knew that he was not a threat to Ivanovszki at all, so Ivanovszki would not waste a second on him. However, Leo knew that he could not let the depression catch him again.

Quickly, Leo took out a tube of Storm and drank it. After the injury became under control and the potential of his body was driven, Leo activated once more his Blessing, Giant, and started to run toward the castle gate.

At this time, he tripped lightly on something on the ground. Looking down, it was Matvienko's boots. Although the color of the boots looked dim because of the fight, it was barely damaged.

"The master might need this..." Leo murmured. After quickly wrapping the boots up with his clothes, Leo used all his strength and ran out of the castle. He must leave this place before the fight between the count and Nikonov drew the attention of the grand knights in the castle!

In the room, staring at the fight in the sky, Carleena looked confused. When she saw Ivanovszki started chasing after Lucien and left the castle, she swore, "Damn you, Ivanovszki..."

A second later, she also jumped out of the window. Before she hit

the ground, her body started to change and a pair of black wings grew out of her back. Also, two tiny horns grew out of her forehead, which looked quite cute. Her fair skin was now covered in a whole set of half-transparent black armor.

Carleena was a knight too! Her Blessing was Succubus!

Her black wings flapped, and Carleena landed safely. But when she was about to fly up again, in the middle of her forehead, a thin blood line appeared, and her body quickly withered like a piece of autumn leaf. Her big eyes were filled with great fear as she died in a few seconds and her dried body hit the ground.

Among all of them, the count hated her the most. He really liked and supported this niece before, and he even helped her inherit the wealth left by Baron Lotnikov. But now, she was taking advantage of the fact that he was now old and weak to benefit herself together with some other people. The count could never forgive her. Had the count not gotten some information from the projection of a powerful person, he was sure that he would eventually die under Carleena and Ivanovszki's watch.

Seizing a one-second chance, Count Witte killed his niece directly. Now, the knights and grand knights in the castle had all seen the fight, and they were supporting the count and informing the church and other nobles.

...

Casting Speed on himself, Lucien managed to keep some distance away from Ivanovszki for a while. Then, the two of them went out of Ural City over the city wall and ran northwestwards.

A while later, Lucien sensed that Ivanovszki had slightly changed his direction.

As Ivanovszki definitely knew the surroundings better, Lucien wondered if Ivanovszki was taking a shortcut to get him.

However, after a while, when Lucien was about to stop and try to kill Ivanovszki in this suburb place, he found that Ivanovszki was

gone.

Lucien was surprised that Ivanovszki was not chasing after him, then he realized that Ivanovszki would never try to kill a middle-rank mage himself, not to mention how many powerful magic items and strange spells he had. Ivanovszki was not trying to take him down, but to run away!

If the count won the fight in the castle, the last thing Ivanovszki wanted would be to stay there, and as a grand knight, he could not help Nikonov, a senior-rank mage, at all. If Nikonov managed to kill the count, he would also not be blamed, since the reason why he left the castle was to chase the sorcerer.

Lucien was impressed with Ivanovszki strategy and his talent of being a great actor, since the anger and determination that Ivanovszki just showed was so real.

Shaking his head slightly, and after checking the direction, Lucien started to run toward the mine to the west of the city.

...

In the mountains, Lucien was flying low over the trees, looking for the closed mines because of the frequent collapses. After picking the most creepy mine pit, Lucien secretly sneaked in, and he started using Sun's Corona to look for an entrance gap connecting to the World of Souls.

Based on his experience, the creepier a place was, the more likely an entrance gap might show up, but Lucien was not sure. This was part of Lucien's plan. If he was going to face great danger, Lucien could enter the World of Souls to escape.

The tunnel in the mine was dark, long and crooked. Walking alone there, Lucien felt quite uncomfortable.

When he had almost reached the end of the mine, Sun's Corona informed Lucien that there was an entrance which could not be seen by eyes or sensed by spiritual power, just as Lucien expected.

Near the entrance gap, Lucien found a corner and hid. After a few

minutes' rest, he heard the sound of someone's footsteps.

It was Ivanovszki!

Chapter 276: The Unexpected Encounter

Chapter 276: The Unexpected Encounter

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Ivanovszki?!

Lucien was more than shocked. Luckily, Lucien had made himself stay concentrated when he heard the footsteps and he was always quite good at staying calm, or his Invisibility spell would have expired already because of his sudden mood swing.

Ural City was as big as Allyn, and its suburb area, surrounded by great mountains, was even broader. How could two people who were both trying to avoid each other just meet like this in the end of a mine tunnel?!

Lucien tried to calm down and restrain his idea of killing Ivanovszki, as a grand knight could sense nearby danger, including someone's intent to kill. He wondered if this was a coincidence or in fact Ivanovszki was following him all the way.

Hiding in the corner, Lucien saw that Ivanovszki stopped in front of the end of the tunnel and looked around.

Maybe it was because Ivanovszki just assumed that no one would be here. He did not use any other methods to check the surroundings. Then, after releasing a sigh, Ivanovszki looked more relaxed.

Turning around, Ivanovszki got down on one knee in front of the invisible entrance gap and started to pray with his hand crossing in front of his chest, "God the Father, may thy Kingdom come and live in us; may our filth and sin be purified; may our soul be saved..."

Praying? At this time? Lucien was confused. He totally did not expect that this great smuggler would be a loyal follower of the God of Truth.

However, soon Lucien realized that neither the North Church nor

the South Church addressed the God of Truth as God the Father. Lucien also noticed that the cross that Ivanovszki was wearing looked quite different—the vertical was shorter and the horizontal was longer, like a lying down cross.

Therefore Lucien guessed that Ivanovszki was a follower of some other gods, but soon he rejected this idea. According to the book he read before, no followers of any gods, in order to avoid the influence of the Saint Truth, were using crosses as their symbol.

Which power was behind Ivanovszki? Lucien was getting more and more confused. He tried hard to stop thinking, or his spiritual power might be noticed by Ivanovszki due to his active mind.

When Ivanovszki's praying ended, holy divine power and white light surrounded him.

To Lucien's great surprise, the power was indeed that of the Saint Truth. Although the followers of different gods could all cast divine powers, the powers had their unique features and varied slightly.

The holy light went into Ivanovszki's eyes. Smiling, Ivanovszki reached out his right hand and it directly went into the entrance gap to the World of Souls.

"Thanks, God the Father... for helping me find this secret world, so I can temporarily shelter myself," Ivanovszki murmured to himself in a relaxed manner.

However, the look on Ivanovszki's face suddenly changed! Grabbing his heavy sword with his left hand, Ivanovszki fiercely hacked at the corner where Lucien was hiding in.

Lucien was greatly shocked when he saw Ivanovszki found the entrance gap. For a second, Lucien was distracted, and the grand knight instantly noticed it!

Luckily, as soon as Lucien had this sudden mood swing, he knew what was going to happen. Trying his best to calm down as soon as possible, Lucien activated the magic model in his soul.

Circles of blue light spread out surrounding Lucien like ripples.

The third circle spell, Deep Sleep! This was another new spell Lucien constructed in his soul in those couple of months he had been in the empire.

Using Spider Web should be Lucien's best choice. However, this second circle spell, although Lucien had built its magic model in his soul, still required casting reagents just like the spell Maskelyne's Star.

Although Ivanovszki was very fast, as Deep Sleep was a ranged spell, there was no chance that he could avoid it.

When Ivanovszki hacked his heavy sword at Lucien, his body was covered with a layer of white holy light. So, Lucien's blue light was directly cut off.

Some spilled blue light affected Ivanovszki slightly, but it was only for a second. Squinting a bit, Ivanovszki became sober again, and his attacks did not stop.

That was totally out of Lucien's expectation. Fortunately, he still had a plan B. Activating his spiritual power, his body was covered by a magic flame shield, using the power of the ring, Element.

When Ivanovszki's heavy sword hit the flame shield, sparkles burst out everywhere.

The flame shield shook fiercely and cracked a little, while Ivanovszki let out a painful moaning when the flame burned his skin black.

Powerful Fire Shield was not only for physical, elemental and pure power defence, but it could also reflect damage with the flames. The fifth circle spell did not show its full power because Lucien's previous enemies were all using creepy and strange necromancy, curse and soul spells.

"Damned it! How many magic items does this Peter guy have?!" Ivanovszki also found Peter. To his surprise, Peter used another fifth circle spell.

Although Ivanovszki was very pissed seeing that Peter's magic items

seemed to be countless, as a grand knight, he quickly forced himself to focus on the fight again. As soon as the holy white light mitigated the pain, Ivanovszki swiftly dodged sideways to avoid being located by the sorcerer, and then used his heavy sword and hacked at Lucien again.

Again, the heavy sword hit Lucien's flame shield. The shield's structure was damaged. And the great impact brought by Ivanovszki's hacking buzzed Lucien's mind, making it hard for Lucien to focus, thus, Lucien's buffering time for casting spells became longer.

"Interference? A pure Blessing for hunting sorcerers!" As a sorcerer, Lucien was of course relatively profound. He quickly recognized what he was facing.

The Blessing, Interference, could greatly disturb a sorcerer's casting and could even dispel spells. Therefore, it was regarded as one of the most powerful Blessing for hunting sorcerers. As a Saint Knight, Ivanovszki's divine power could strengthen the Blessing even further.

Although the flame shield was almost destroyed, Lucien was still calmly analyzing Ivanovszki's movement and his way of launching attacks. Although his strength should be at least of level five, his shortcomings were speed and agility... which were below level four. Quite possibly, he was using some items to reinforce his strength. As Saint Knights having Interference Blessing always had more requirements when it came to wearing magic or divine items, in most cases, they could only wear bigger items such as armor, boots and gloves enchanted with extra magic circles, in order to counteract their own power.

Holding Amboula in his left hand, Lucien tried to concentrate his spiritual power. It seemed that his experience of fighting against the sixth-circle spell, Distraction, had somehow improved Lucien's soul power slightly. Under Ivanovszki's fierce attacks, The recovery speed of Lucien's soul was faster than Lucien's expectation. Finally, Lucien's buffering time passed.

Ivanovszki was now only a step away from completely destroying

the shield. He was confident that he could take away Peter's life with his next attack!

Suddenly, Ivanovszki sensed great danger from the sorcerer. Decisively, Ivanovszki quickly turned around and made a dive for the entrance gap to the World of Souls.

A cluster of greenish-yellow gas came to Ivanovszki. As soon as he touched a bit of it, Ivanovszki instantly felt dizzy and weak. However, he did not slow down his movement, but became even more concentrated on his target—the gap. Holy light burst out of his body, and Ivanovszki successfully jumped into the gap.

Ivanovszki felt lucky that he still had the World of Souls to hide and shelter himself, and the path was informed by God the Father. Only those ones who were favored by God the Father could get to know this path. No any other creatures could.

As soon as he entered the World of Souls, most colors faded, and only black, white and gray were left. This was a silent world, a world of no lives.

Ivanovszki still felt dizzy from the poisonous gas. Half kneeling down on the ground, he activated his Blessing to drive out the toxin from his body. Drops of pus came out, and his life force started to recover quickly.

When he finally relaxed a bit, a great dizziness hit his brain bitterly, then he felt the torturing stabbing pain in his brain like countless needles were penetrating his head. The attack was so out of Ivanovszki's expectation that his Blessing did not help him too much.

Charm Person—the special version against knights!

Seeing Lucien standing in front of him in the World of Souls, Ivanovszki's eyes opened wide.

“How come?!” Ivanovszki could not move because of the great dizziness. Lucien's sword directly hacked at the crack on his armor, left by the corrosive gas.

No sound was made. No obvious damage was left from the hacking. But Ivanovszki felt his thinking and body started to become slow—like slow motion.

It was because of Lucien's sword, Frost. The sword could slow down his enemy's movement.

After hacking at Ivanovszki's armor twice, Lucien took a few strides backwards. Pointing at Ivanovszki's helmet, which had been partially corroded from the gas, Lucien cast Elemental Order and broke the helmet down.

As soon as Ivanovszki's helmet was gone, Lucien activated Fire Weaver's Bracelet. A head-sized fire ball flew right toward Ivanovszki's head.

Ivanovszki was too slow. He could not do anything at this point.

After the silent explosion, Ivanovszki's head was covered with lots of wounds, and his blood, which now looked black, white and gray, was everywhere.

However, as a grand knight, Ivanovszki did not die yet. Instead, he got rid of the negative effect left by the sword. Now, he could move faster.

The only problem was that Ivanovszki's brain was now a complete mess, thus it was hard for him to make any correct decisions. What he knew was to run around to avoid being an easy target.

Unfortunately, another fire ball, a much bigger one, hit his head again.

A small mushroom cloud rose.

The serious injury together with the toxin that remained in his body finally killed Ivanovszki. Staggering and stumbling, his body hit the ground hard.

The level three Saint Knight, Ivanovszki, died.

Lucien did not lower his guard. Decisively, he hacked Ivanovszki's

head off. Then, he finally felt a bit more relaxed.

Lucien entered the World of Souls for two reasons: to kill Ivanovszki, and to avoid the toxic gas himself.

Casting Gaston's Poison Cloud in a narrow place could be very dangerous to himself. This was why Lucien did not use it at the very beginning.

"This is... the projection of Dry Vine castle?!"

Now, Lucien finally had the chance to look around. This place looked exactly like the count's castle, spacious and quiet, but the only difference was that it did not have colors other than black, white and gray.

Suddenly, Lucien heard that someone chuckled! In the World of Souls!

Looking up, he saw a young man sitting in a throne above, holding a glass of wine in his hand.

The silver-haired young man had a beautiful face that Lucien was quite familiar with. He was wearing red shirt and black coat with high collar.

He raised the glass slightly and said, "Welcome."

Chapter 277: Rhine's Reques

"Mr... Mr. Rhine?! Why are you here?!" Lucien was more than surprised. Although he was still alert, it was still a big relief to Lucien.

It was Rhine who was sitting in the throne up there, raising his glass to greet to Lucien. Just like when he was in Aalto, Rhine still looked very relaxed and casual, as if he was here just waiting for Lucien.

The fancy gold throne in this glorious castle built by Count Witte himself to honor his great achievement in the countless battles now looked boring in this world of black and white. When facing death, all those valuable things including feelings, glory, loyalty, treasure and cuisines had lost their meaning. In the world of death, everything was the same meaningless.

However, Rhine was the only colorful existence in this space. Silver, red and black... he was so out of tune here, a living man in the world of death. He lit up the space, but also made this space seem a bit absurd and so unreal.

"Why am I here?" Rhine swirled the wine a little and grinned, "I'm here for you, Lucien."

"Come on, Mr. Rhine..." the corner of Lucien's lips twitched a bit. Rhine still liked playing jokes, which made him feel a little more relaxed.

Lucien did not believe Rhine's joke. After all, they had not met each other for a long time. Even prophesy could not be this accurate.

Rhine shook his head and put down the glass. When he slowly stood up, Lucien saw the pair of huge bat wings behind his back. The wings were so huge that the whole castle was filled with them, and the dim light on the wings rippled like water.

"Vampire... Legendary?" After seeing that, Lucien finally became certain that Rhine was not a human being. Although he had much

of this thought when he met Rhine's grandson, Viscount Carendia, now his guess was finally proved right.

Rhine slowly walked down the stairs and smiled, "I am not joking. Lucien, I am waiting for you. I even cast my projection into Count Witte's dream."

Although this Rhine in front of Lucien was acting in a quite casual way, Lucien suddenly had this weird feeling that Rhine was using all his power to maintain his own existence. Maybe this Rhine was not real. It could be a projection!

"I see. What can I do for you, Mr. Rhine? You also know the World of Souls?" Lucien became more serious.

Rhine nodded, "I was sent by the Dark Council to Aalto for a task, but later I found the real seal of the Master of Argent. Because the seal was part of a very important story that had created much of a stir before Saint Calendar, and the secret of the World of Souls, I changed my plan and chose to work with my enemies."

"Sard... The grand cardinal?" Lucien murmured thoughtfully. Across Aalto, the grand cardinal seemed to be the only one who was qualified to be Rhine's enemy and to work with him. The other two legendary-level people were all in the north fortress—one was God's Glory, Bellia, the leader of Sword Brothers, Natasha's teacher, and the other was Snake the Chaos, Milton, who had a very close relationship with Violet family. To Lucien, it was just absurd and creepy thinking of the fact that a Saint Cardinal would work with the ancestor of a vampire...

Rhine's smile was as charming as before, "Brilliant. Then, our goal was basically fulfilled. But when I was exploring the Word of Souls, I ran into some... some accidents, and I got trapped somewhere here, like Maskelyne, who left you with the amulet."

He took a glance at Lucien's chest as he was speaking.

"How do you know...?" Lucien burst out a question. However, he instantly realized that Rhine was watching him all the time before he entered this world. It was not hard for Rhine to know that

Lucien had found Sun's Corona left by Maskelyne.

When they were now standing face to face, feeling the existence of Sun's Corona should be even easier for this legendary level vampire. Maybe Rhine also knew where Maskelyne was in the World of Souls...

Thinking of this, Lucien hurriedly asked, "Mr. Rhine, but you look different, as if you and Mr. Maskelyne are both trapped here? What's the secret of this place?"

Lucien had been bothered by this question for days and nights, especially after he found that Maskelyne might have something to do with the establishment of Saint Truth. Finally, Lucien had someone in front of him that could probably answer this question!

Rhine shrugged a bit, "It's a long story. I am always cautious, so before I entered this world, I was quite prepared. Also, because I can borrow someone's power, even trapped as I am right now, I can still cast my projection. Unfortunately, this projection does not have much power. To communicate with the material world, I can only pick those lives that are close to death to cast my projection in their dreams. In fact, what Count Witte has encountered so far is related to something in this world, so I have been watching him for a long time. From Mianka, the Transfiguration sorcerer's dream, I got to know that you were going there."

Lucien nodded seriously. He had no idea how complicated everything was behind the story on the surface.

"Because you've known the existence of the World of Souls; because we're, haha, quite close friends; because you're the weakest one among all of us who know this world, and thus the safest one; because I cannot cast my projection into your dream... I had this plan and decided to use Count Witte to lead you into the World of Souls again to talk to you." Rhine grinned.

"But Mr. Rhine, what does Count Witte's business have to do with the World of Souls? Is this place related to the gods? You want me to save you, right? But before I become a legendary archmage, I'm afraid I am not capable of digging into this world..." Lucien asked a

lot of questions. He was shocked and also lost.

Rhine nodded, and this serious look on his face was rare, "I don't know for sure what the ultimate secret of this world is. In my mind, according to the information that I have, this place is indeed related to gods and the true immortal. Unfortunately, I haven't met Maskelyne or his friends yet, so I cannot answer your questions, Lucien. Maybe you'll find your own answer when you explore this world more yourself."

After pausing a bit, Rhine continued, "As for Count Witte, someone who was very close to the secret of gods like Maskelyne sent his people to get the count's wealth. I don't know why he is doing this. After all, the wealth should be meaningless to him."

Lucien nodded seriously and said, "Then, how can I help you, Rhine?"

"Two stages," said Rhine. "First, when you become a senior-rank mage, go to several places, quite dangerous I must confess, and activate the things I left there. Also, find a person for me. If everything goes well, I should be able to leave this place without stage two; If stage one fails, then we'll wait until you become a legendary archmage, or a grand arcanist, which would be the best, to save me, like what Maskelyne asked."

Lucien was a bit surprised with how well-planned Rhine was. Then, he said to Rhine seriously, "Mr. Rhine, you've helped me many times, and I'll always keep this in mind. If I can become a senior-rank mage, of course I'll try my best to help you. But as for reaching legendary level... I'm not sure if I am that capable right now..."

"I like your personality, Lucien." Rhine smiled. "We both know that this thing is dangerous, and I am only asking for your help, not forcing you to do this by making you vow or promise anything. It's always up to you. Also, I won't make you help me for nothing. When you become a senior-rank mage, go to the place where I store my treasures, and take three items that you like the most. If you can save me or become a legendary archmage, you can go to the bottom floor and pick one of my most valuable items out of my collection. Don't say no, Lucien. The more powerful you are, the bigger chance

I have of being rescueded."

Lucien nodded slightly, "I will do it for you, and also for me. As an arcanist, after knowing such a big secret, I cannot stop myself from exploring further."

What Lucien did not mention was that his fear toward aging was also part of the reason.

Also, as sophisticated as Rhine, Lucien did not believe that he was Rhine's only hope.

"Lucien, before you reach the legendary level, do not tell this to other people and ask for their help, no matter if he or she is a legendary knight from Holm, or a grand arcanist, or a legendary archmage. What's most likely to happen when you tell such a big secret to someone powerful like them is that they'll kill you to keep the secret."

Lucien nodded with great caution and in a very serious way. This might be the biggest secret of the world. Once the secret was revealed, the world was going to face a horrible storm.

After staying silent for a few seconds, Lucien asked, "Mr. Rhine, can you tell me more about this world?"

"Knowing too much all at once might not be a good thing, Lucien. When you are qualified to know more, I'll cast my projection in your dream to tell you." Rhine put on the charming smile again.

When Lucien just found that what Rhine said was a bit contradictory to his previous words, Rhine said to him, "Right now, let me give you some pay in advance."

He took a step closer to Lucien and a great power burst out from his body. Lucien could not move at all. Four sharp fangs grew out of Rhine's well aligned teeth.

It was not horrible or scary, but beautiful in an unique way.

"Mr. Rhine?" Lucien did not panic, since he knew that Rhine had no reason to kill him after this long conversation.

Rhine's voice was gentle, "Relax, this isn't the Embrace." Then, he lowered his head and bit on Lucien's neck.

Lucien's neck felt some pricking pain, and he felt dizzy. Then his blood started to boil, and the heat became some kind of power, running toward Lucien's soul.

His body quickly became very weak, while his soul was strengthened at an even faster speed!

Chapter 278: Improvement

Chapter 278: Improvement

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

While the power in Lucien's blood was profoundly nurturing Lucien's soul, his skin started to get pale and dry, like an old mummy buried in a tomb for many years, or a dying poplar tree struggling in the desert.

Lucien's legs were trembling, his muscles became slack, and his heartbeat slowed down. However, his refreshed soul rose in the air and looked down at his withered body.

The creepy feeling came to Lucien so suddenly that it made him feel he was in the world of meditation.

When Lucien thought he was going to die when his Blessing power had been drained by the growth of his soul, some strange power penetrated into his body from Rhine's sharp teeth, and the great improvement in Lucien's soul immediately stopped. The remaining slight amount of Blessing power was stimulated by the strange power and thus started to rapidly recover in Lucien's veins.

The paleness of Lucien's skin gradually vanished, and his skin began to look tight and healthy again. There was an explosive power in his muscles, and although his heartbeat was still slow, it was steady and solid. As for Lucien's brain, now it worked even faster.

Rhine's let go of Lucien's neck, leaving a slight amount of numbing pain.

Rhine's body now looked a bit transparent, and there was tiredness in his silver-colored eyes, but his smile was still bright and elegant, "A distinguished gentleman is never stingy to pay."

Now Lucien could move his body again. After checking himself, he was surprised, "My soul... its power has reached the level equal to that of a fourth-circle sorcerer. My physical strength has reached

the level of a level two knight... Are you alright, Mr. Rhine?"

Seeing that Rhine stumbled a bit and his huge wings started to shrink, Lucien hurriedly asked.

Rhine smiled, "There are many magic rites that can help people strengthen their soul and spiritual power. And ancient sorcerers just love doing this. But there are two problems: one is that very few sorcerers could afford these rites, and comparatively speaking, the cost of magic potions is much smaller. Therefore, sorcerers who really need these rites are those ones who either have a hard time improving themselves or must achieve a higher goal within a short period of time."

Knowing what Lucien was thinking, Rhine explained further, "The second problem is that these rites can leave side-effects, which are mostly from the materials consumed and used in the rites. People can also meet further obstacles because of their lack of understanding of magic. If the side-effects could not be eliminated soon, a sorcerer would need to rely more and more on similar magic rites, which might lead to one's twisted disposition. But you, Lucien, you have neither of the problems, because this is my pay for you in advance. What this rite just consumed was my Original Blood, and what nurtured your soul was your own Blessing power, so there is no side effects. Also, since your Blessing is Moonlight, it does not conflict with the power of a vampire."

Lucien listened to Rhine's words carefully and nodded.

"Although your physical strength has also been improved, since the further development of a knight depends on great willpower, unless you want to give up arcana and focus on becoming a knight, there's no way that you could become a grand knight. Of course, you can also do as what some of the sorcerers do to get strong but creepy physical body and longer lifespan... You know, this was why they started using human beings to develop different Blessings. For you, the winner of Holm Crown prize, magic and arcana knowledge should not be a problem at all."

Lucien was finally relieved. After a couple of weeks, when Lucien could handle the newly strengthened spiritual power better, he

could try to hit the target of becoming a fourth circle sorcerer, which was two years earlier than expected.

“Mr. Rhine, when I become a senior-rank mage, I’ll go and activate the devices you left. But, where are they?” Lucien asked.

Rhine pointed at Lucien’s neck and said, “I left a mark on your neck, so I can cast my projection into your dream through it and talk to you. Of course, only under your permission. Also, you can reach me through the mark backwards as well.”

Lucien quickly checked his neck using his spiritual power. Like Rhine said, there was an unnoticeable, crescent-shaped mark there, like a birthmark.

“I can tell you really don’t want me to know too many details right now, Mr. Rhine.” Lucien grinned.

“If you are really interested in knowing more, go to the Congress’s Arcana Library and find those books about the history of the church. Read them carefully, and maybe you can find something interesting. The most shocking secret can be hidden in the most ordinary things.” Rhine smiled. Then he put his right hand on his chest and excused himself, “After the rite, I’m too tired to maintain my projection. Now, I must go.”

As soon as he finished the last sentence, Rhine’s body turned into countless black bats, flying everywhere in the space. Then, they all disappeared.

The World of Souls went back to being the colorless and silent world again.

“It was just like pigeons flying up on the square, but they were bats.” Lucien smiled and murmured, but no voice could be heard.

After looking around the hall, Lucien looked at Ivanovszki’s body. He was a tough enemy, and his Blessing was indeed a big trouble to sorcerers. Were it not for Lucien’s many powerful magic items and the fact that they were of the same level, Lucien would be the one who needed to run for his life.

Lucien got really lucky when Ivanovszki lowered his guard after he entered the World of Souls. After all, it was not an easy thing to kill a Saint Knight who was fast and agile.

Ivanovszki's whole set of armor had been completely damaged, so Lucien could only pick some pieces. Maybe they could be used as alchemical materials in the future.

Ivanovszki did not have any rings, necklaces, amulets or belts, because of his special Blessing. He only had a heavy sword and a pair of silver-gray gloves:

"A divine heavy sword built for cleansing sorcerers—Cleanser: level three high rank heavy sword (requires both hands). Before senior-rank, user's magic defence can be improved by one level. Every time when the target is hit, the physical attack is doubled by the holy power attached."

"One can only rely on power!—Ogre Glove: level five middle rank. User's power can be improved to the level of an ogre leader, which is equal to that of a level five grand knight."

Although both of the items were more or less damaged by the toxic gas, Lucien was confident that he could fix them.

Putting the two items in his magic pouch, he decided to give Leo the sword and keep the gloves to himself.

Lucien also searched Ivanovszki's clothes and tried to see whether there was more that he could find about Ivanovszki, but the effort was in vain. Ivanovszki was very careful. Except for a small money bag, Lucien found nothing.

After dealing with the body, Lucien stared at the black-and-white castle hall and his mind started wandering—who was the person behind Ivanovszki? Did the person know anything about this world? Were any other wise creatures here? ... What were the secrets of gods? What was the immortal side of the world? A world whose physics and chemistry were so similar to what Lucien had learned on Earth...

...

In the material world, Dry Vine Castle.

“Cardinal Nevskiy, sorry for troubling you and the night watchers...” said Count Witte, brimming with energy and vitality, “Please get Nikonov.”

Having lots of strange magic items and spells, Nikonov managed to escape when Count Witte was distracted with killing Carleena.

Since Nikonov could tell that Count Witte was only overusing his body to get back to the peak time of his power temporarily, if he could make this fight last longer, quite possibly, he would be able to kill the count. However, the church had received the message at that time, so he had to withdraw immediately.

Wearing a red robe, the cardinal looked upright and kind. His blue eyes sincerely looked at the count and said, “I’m very sorry for my mistake, Count Witte. I did not find what was hiding behind your disease... the curse.”

“Now that they dare do so, they must be very confident with hiding the curse. It’s not your fault, Cardinal.” The count smiled, and then he switched the topic, “By the way, Cardinal, I’ve sent my will about my heritage to His Majesty using my own secret way safely. I’m His Majesty’s knight, and I believe that there is no better way than let His Majesty select my inheritor.”

Nevskiy nodded and smiled, “Proper decision, Count Witte. His Majesty must know your will and select the best inheritor for you. I’m sure the selected one will be as outstanding as you. Well, I gotta go back to the church now.”

“Walk Cardinal Nevskiy out,” said the count to a knight standing beside him.

Watching Cardinal Nevskiy walking out of the hall, the count suddenly took a few steps backwards from the great sense of tiredness. At the same time, a sneer appeared on his face.

When the red-robed cardinal left the castle with several pastors and

bishops, in the light of dawn, Nevskiy looked up and started to cross in front of his chest with his right hand.

The vertical was shorter and the horizontal was longer.

Chapter 279: The Red Robe

Chapter 279: The Red Robe

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the World of Souls, Lucien stopped the many thoughts in his mind and was about to find a room in the projection of the castle to take a rest. He planned to meet Leo later at the place they previously agreed, when this whole thing settled down.

According to Lucien's estimation, this would take three to four days. Leo and he had agreed on meeting each other a week later, so he had plenty of time. He could use this time learning how to control his newly-grown spiritual power.

Lucien felt lucky for not meeting any undead creatures here. The deeper one went, the more dangerous this space was. Lucien was only a middle-rank mage right now, and he knew his own limit.

When Lucien was going to step on the stairs, the castle started shaking fiercely, like a boat in the ocean meeting a great storm.

Then, the castle was torn into countless pieces of shadow. A second later, the shadow all disappeared.

This whole thing happened too fast. Lucien did not manage to cast any spells to protect himself. All of a sudden, he was exposed to the wild, and he could feel the sense of death from this world.

He was confused.

At this time, the white tear-shaped mark on Lucien's left hand refreshed him like a breeze. The breeze comforted Lucien greatly in the dreadful surroundings.

Lucien's was cheered up, feeling lucky for having the young girl's blessing wish. At the same time, he looked around and realized that he was on the west side of the mine of Ural. He silently murmured to himself, "This should be the real reflection of the material

world...”

According to Lucien’s knowledge of the World of Souls, unintelligent things in the material world, like a building, could be mistakenly reflected there. For example, a building in the west of a city could appear in the north in this creepy world. However, the mistake usually would not go beyond a certain range, say, within a city or a village. Still, the fact that Lucien entered the gap entrance in the mine but directly arrived at Dry Vine castle was out of his expectation. After all, they were quite far from each other.

Now, after witnessing what just happened to the castle, Lucien realized that it was Rhine’s power that dragged the projection of the castle there. After Rhine left, the world recovered itself.

Actually, it was also a good thing. Lucien did not have to worry that the others might have the evidence that he killed Ivanovszki.

“But wait!!”

An idea suddenly struck Lucien and he immediately ran toward the gap exit close to him.

If Ivanovszki knew the existence of the World of Souls and the entrance, what about those who worked for or cooperated with him, say, the senior-rank mage, Nikonov? Did he know how to get into this world? If Nikonov also chose to hide in the World of Souls and saw the evidence of the fight between Lucien and Ivanovszki, he would definitely know that their enemy was also here! The secret of this world could have been revealed!

To all the people on Ivanovszki and Nikonov’s side, and to the person pulling the strings behind them, the fact that someone else knew the existence of the World of Souls could be even more threatening than the fact that their plan toward the count had failed. If they found out about this, they would spare no effort on killing Lucien by searching around the entrance very carefully, and probably setting up some sensing traps.

If Lucien wanted to find another exit, he would need to go deeper in the World of Souls. And, very possibly, he would meet some

horrible undead creatures!

Therefore, Lucien must take the risk and eliminate all the evidence at the bottom of the mine, and then find another place to hide.

Before going back, Lucien carefully sensed the other side of the gap with his Sun's Corona. Making sure that there was no one around there, Lucien activated Powerful Fire Shield, which was his last chance of using this spell today, and came back to the bottom of the mine again through the heavy "curtains" in the gap.

There was no wind here, so the toxic cloud was still around. Rocks, bugs and mice were being corroded.

After casting Dissipate Smoke easily using his stronger spiritual power for a few times, there was finally no toxic gas in the air. Then, Lucien started to deal with the bodies of the dead bugs and mice, as well as the damaged stones, making sure that no one could tell that once there was a bitter fight here, in a very organized way.

After less than ten minutes, Lucien's work was almost done. If one did not check around carefully, it would be very hard to notice. And as time went by, there was no way that one could tell any evidences here, except if he or she directly used the ninth-circle spell, Retrospective Sight.

After carefully checking around again, Lucien cast Invisibility and was ready to leave the place.

However, when he just took a few steps, all of a sudden, Lucien sensed that Nikonov had arrived there, as expected!

Maybe it was because Nikonov did not expect anyone to be there, or he was too confident, but Lucien was lucky to find it out in time, and thus had enough time to hide.

Lucien quickly restrained his spiritual power field and looked around. He knew that he could not hide in a corner like he did the last time. Nikonov was a senior-rank mage!

A senior-rank mage's spiritual power field was solid and very powerful, which could sense every single creature in the space. In

the narrow pit, only the fourth-circle spell, Greater Invisibility, could hide the caster properly.

Therefore, decisively, Lucien entered the World of Souls again.

...

Black, white and gray. The bushes and trees were like concrete. Lucien ran fast on the open field, with dim shadows following him. His destination was the plain, because he had a greater chance to meet undead creatures down there.

This time, Lucien did not avoid the undead creatures, but tried to find them on purpose. He used the crystal ball and Maskelyne's Star at the same time. When the light balls and the stars hit each other and burst out shining pieces, Lucien's luck was improved.

Lucien did not believe in fate. This time he wanted to take the initiative and try his best to survive here! Even if he was doomed to die here, Lucien still wanted to fight for himself till the last second.

In this chaotic world, Lucien arrived at the plains in a very short time. There, he saw groups of ghouls. The way they looked—their rotten flesh and hanging pieces of skin—, in Lucien's eyes, was quite familiar.

And this time, Lucien felt lucky that he found the ghouls.

Smelling the air, the ghouls found Lucien—a live creature! Immediately, they became agitated and crazy. They were coming for Lucien!

At this time, Lucien silently cast a spell, and his smell suddenly changed. His body was shrouded by a dense smell of death, and his flesh started rotting. Soon, Lucien changed himself into a disgusting ghoul!

The unique second-circle spell from the Congress, the Undead Transformation!

The spell was invented based on two ancient spells: Death Cover and Undead Disguise.

The brainless ghouls felt very confused. After looking around, they accepted the fact that, all of a sudden, they had got a new friend.

The leader of the ghouls released a silent howling, asking Lucien to join the line.

Soon after Lucien joined this group of ghouls and wandered around, he saw a figure flying in the gray sky. The man was wearing a black magic robe. He was Nikonov.

Apparently, Nikonov was not interested in the ghouls at all. He did not even take an extra look at them, not to mention using his spiritual power to scan them carefully.

Lucien was quite nervous when he was walking among the real ghouls. After making sure that Nikonov had really left, he released a long sigh in his mind.

It seemed that Nikonov never expected his enemy to be here at all.

Just in case, Lucien kept wandering with the ghouls for a while. A little later, a figure wearing a black loose robe drawn with lots of complicated patterns flew across the sky. The aura that the figure had was one of absolute death!

The figure also directly ignored the ghouls, that could be found everywhere in this world.

Based on the direction, Lucien wondered if this figure was chasing Nikonov. He was not sure whether the figure was an intelligent undead creature or not.

After a while, Lucien started to get bored. When he was just about to leave and find the exit gap, he saw another figure flying across the sky again.

This time, Lucien was greatly shocked, because the figure was wearing the robe that was only meant for the cardinals!

Although Lucien could not tell the real color of the robe, he was completely sure that the style and shape was exactly the same!

Chapter 280: Lucien's Finding

Lucien stared at the sky like a real ghoul, and he murmured to himself in his mind out of confusion, "Is the red-robed cardinal from the North or the South Church? Why is he here? Is he chasing after Nikonov?"

The main divergence between the North and the South Church was their different understandings of some doctrines and prayers. The North Church especially doubted the status of the pope as "the Speaker of God on the Land of Truth". Therefore, after the secession, the North Church referred to the pope as pontiff, and a pontiff should not enjoy the lofty status of being respected as the spokesperson of God, but only a leader of the grand cardinals. Through the grand cardinals, a pontiff could lead the church. And that was it.

Therefore, in order to prove their own legitimacy, the hierarchy of the two churches still followed the tradition: the grand cardinals, then red-robed cardinals, then bishops and then pastors. Furthermore, the religious clothes they wore and their symbol—the cross—were basically the same.

As soon as Lucien had these questions in his mind, he mocked himself silently, "Come on, Lucien, are you muddled from the fight? The cardinal came in through the gap at the bottom of the mine, so he must be from the north!"

At the same time, Lucien also realized who that person was, since there was only one single cardinal who had this power and might know about the existence of this world—the level seven red-robed cardinal, Nevskiy...

One might have this thought that the person could also be some red-robed cardinal from the south who had secretly arrived in Ural because of some important task. However, it would be almost impossible to see a like that cardinal just carelessly wearing his own cardinal robe and flying around, considering how much the North and the South Church hated each other.

Then, Lucien's mind was filled with many new thoughts. He wondered how the cardinal knew about the existence of this world—did he learn this a long time ago? Or did he find the place when he was chasing after Nikonov? Lucien hoped the answer was the latter, but if it was the former, the cardinal's relationship with Nikonov could be quite complicated. After all, the secret of the World of Souls was not as easy to get as cabbages sold on the market.

Also, Lucien wanted to know what kind of undead creature was that thing which just flew across the sky some time ago.

The secret of the World of Souls was like its own existence, as both of them were covered in a thick cluster of fog.

Lucien decided to leave the place later, because the cardinal might come back at any time, and he might have left some complicated traps around the exit to make sure that no one was following him. If Lucien hurriedly left this place, he would put himself under great risk. Also, there might be more senior-rank people coming.

Patience was always a good thing in most cases.

Waving his arms, Lucien wandered on the wild land aimlessly just like the many ghouls. Pretending that he was seeking dead bodies, Lucien was waiting for the cardinal to come back.

At the same time, Lucien was reading the books about the history of the Church that he had collected so far, trying to find what happened before and after the secession.

Facing the secession, both the South Church and the North Church were trying to glorify themselves and bring shame on the other by destroying all the history records that were not on their side. Lucien was slightly amused by the fact that both sides had totally different comments on the same thing or the same person. For example, according to the South Church, the pope Gregory I was merciful and devout, while the first pontiff Ivan, was pictured corrupted and greedy as a big liar.

However, according to the North Church, Ivan, the first pontiff, was

the one completely devout to the God. In order to prevent the world from being deceived by the pope, Ivan bravely stood out and chose to fight. Meanwhile, they denounced Gregory I, the pope who led the Saint Truth to the period of great prosperity, as the primary defiler, who kept stealing the glory of God, and should be purified first of all.

Although the Congress of Magic collected and saved the copy of lots of history records from that time and tried to stay neutral when understanding the history, there was nothing special or really valuable in the plain records, except the scandals of some important people from the church.

Part of the book Lucien was reading recorded the grand opening of the Highest Theology Conference, "...On that day, God stared at the Holy City. The four Saints—Ivan, Aleksey, Uriel, and Felix—and the seven Saint Cardinals including Sotte, Alester, and Siricius, stood in the holy light and denounced Gregory as the avatar of the Lord of Hell..."

The Saint was a holy title in the Saint Truth, following the Speaker of God, and the Saints were regarded as the archangels sent by God to the mundane. Although the title did not necessarily represent one's power, they were closely connected together. Pastors or cardinals could upgrade more easily under this title. Therefore, in most cases, they were the most powerful ones in the Church, following right after the Pope.

When reading this record, Lucien frowned. "Mr. Rhine said I could find something interesting, but I've found nothing here. There were some interesting anecdotes, but they're not what I'm looking for..."

Having nothing else safe to do, Lucien continued reading the books.

After a while, the red-robed cardinal flew back through the sky. Ignoring the ghouls on the ground, he directly left here through the gap. However, neither Nikonov nor the senior-rank creature showed up. The world then became dull and dreadful again.

When reading a book called The Saint Ivan, Lucien saw the cardinal flying across the sky. He wondered what happened, and maybe it

was time for him to leave the place now.

Lucien had to leave this place, to avoid meeting other grand cardinals in case the cardinal decided to bring them to this place. Meanwhile, he also did not want to rush before making sure the red-robed cardinal had really left the place. The proper timing was very important here.

When Lucien closed the book, *The Saint Ivan*, he took a glance at the sentence on one of the pages, "... so the Saint Ivan accepted the command and headed toward the land under Wilfred's control. They needed to purify this extremely vicious and horrible sorcerer..."

A strange idea struck Lucien's mind suddenly, like a flash of lightning.

"Wilfred... the Great Master of Paleness... Wasn't he the legendary necromancer who once worked with Maskelyne and his partners?"

Lucien got this information from Hunt's notebook. Meanwhile, Lucien also saw this name, Wilfred, many times in other books that he had read. Unlike Maskelyne, Viken and the other three legendary archmages who got lost or were trapped in the World of Souls in the end, Wilfred died in the encirclement of the several grand cardinals.

Maybe due to some reasons, Wilfred did not manage to join the team exploring the deep secret of the World of Souls... That was Lucien's guess. At the same time, he quickly searched the Church's record of the important encirclement.

To his surprise, which also concerned Lucien a bit, the search results were mostly from the North Church and the Congress, while the South Church chose to be very brief on this historical event, without even mentioning the leader, the Saint Ivan.

"The six grand cardinals—Ivan, Aleksey, Nikon, Uriel, Geno, Felix—launched a surprise attack on Wilfred's Demiplanes Magic Tower. In this bitter fight, the six grand cardinals killed the necromancer and destroyed his life box... Nikon was killed by Wilfred."

Lucien repeated the names in his mind, and he felt that the tip of the horrible secret had been revealed...

Nicon was killed by Wilfred... but what about Geno?

Searching the materials quickly, Lucien saw the last record of this grand cardinal, "During the fight against the vicious necromancer Wilfred, the Grand Cardinal Geno, was severely injured the last second before Wilfred died. Geno's soul was entangled by the power of death. Seven years later, Geno died in Lance, the Holy City."

The book was left open on the spirit library table. Lucien was lost in his thoughts...

After a while, Lucien realized what the most important thing was right now. He forced himself to calm down and secretly left the ghoul team, running toward the exit gap.

After scanned and sensed the whole place using Sun's Corona, Lucien passed through the heavy and cold "curtains" in the gap and came back to the material world. Quickly, he left the mine pit and hid in the mountain range.

...

One week later, beside a pond deep in the Ural mountain range.

Leo secretly popped out from the bushes and checked the surroundings very carefully, making sure no one was following him.

Some unnoticeable marks were left beside the pond, guiding Leo to go somewhere else.

Leo followed the signs, and the location for them to meet was changed a few times. Finally, Leo heard the gentle voice, "Leo, is the Church and the empire still searching for us?"

Leo quickly turned around and saw Lucien standing on a giant pine tree with a heavy sword in his hands.

"Yes, they still are. We might have a few tough days going to Duchy of Violet through the forests..." Leo's voice suddenly trembled, then

he asked in an unbelievable way, "My lord... This heavy sword is...?"

Kris_Liu Kris_Liu

Hi ladies and gentlemen, I've got a few words to say to you,

Chapter 281: The Missed Music Festival

Although the heavy sword in Lucien's hands did not look fancy, the design of it was solemn and sacred. However, the look and the value was not the reason that made Leo's body slightly shake and his voice tremble.

"That's right. The sword's called Cleanser, and its last owner was Ivanovszki. I killed him." Lucien nodded. When he said this, there was a calm smile on his face.

Lucien was not worried about the possibility of someone figuring out that he also knew about the existence of the World of Souls, after all, no one could tell that, instead of chasing after Lucien to kill him, Ivanovszki was actually running for his own life toward the mine pit.

Sneaky as a sorcerer could be, there was still chance that Lucien could end Ivanovszki's life using some kind of strange magic items or traps. Also, Nikonov did not find any evidence at the bottom of the mine pit, and neither did he find Ivanovszki in the World of Souls. Therefore, Lucien should be safe.

In addition, it was not easy for a middle-rank sorcerer to control a grand knight's will using spells, not to mention that Ivanovszki had the Blessing called Interference, who was very resistant to mental control. At least a ninth circle spell, such as Invade Brain, should be used if a senior rank mage wanted to get the information about the World of Souls from Ivanovszki, which was definitely the most significant piece of information, well protected by Ivanovszki's subconscious, or the target would soon wake up from the great sense of revolting.

From another perspective, those reasons above were also why the important people behind Ivanovszki would feel secure to tell him how to enter the World of Souls.

From comparing and contrasting the list of the saints who were against the pope over the Highest Theology Conference and the list

of the grand cardinals who jointly killed Wilfred, the Great Master of Paleness, Lucien felt that he was already right in front of the great, shocking secret, and thus he had a better understanding of the great value of the World of Souls. Once the fact that he was also aware of the existence of the World of Souls was revealed, regardless of what others would do to him, Lucien was certain that the saints and the pontiff from the North Church would definitely kill him in person.

But why didn't the North Church hide the list, but made them available to almost everyone? Because they knew it well that there was a premise if one could really see the great secret existing between the two lists—one must be aware that, although Wilfred, the Master of Paleness, did not end up missing, he had a very close connection to the several missing legendary archmages. They did some secret experiment together, and he also knew the secret of immortality hidden in the World of Souls. However, those people who knew this much did not need the list to figure out what happened.

This was why the Congress of Magic, although having all the records from both the South and North Church, still got findings at all.

Although Lucien's answer was quite plain, Leo's eyes in his wrinkled face suddenly lost their focus. At this second, the purpose of his life had ended.

His hands were shaking fiercely. His lips slightly opened but his throat could not make a sound.

After more than five minutes, Leo forced a smile on his face and said, "Thanks, my lord... for taking the revenge... for me."

Lucien could tell the mixed emotions in Leo's voice. There was joy, regret, depression and confusion. And Lucien totally understood.

"The dead belongs to the past..." Lucien tried to comfort Leo, but was interrupted by him.

"Sorry, my lord. Please give me a few minutes."

Lucien nodded. Then Leo walked toward a huge rock on the side. Although he looked relatively calm, he almost fell over because of the tree root. He kept stumbling forward.

In front of the rock, Leo's knee suddenly dropped to the ground. Crossing in front of his chest, he kissed the dried moss on the rock, and murmured some names...

Lucien walked to the side to show his respect. Knights who grew up under the influence of the church always drew the cross in front of their chest when they felt emotional, no matter whether they believed in the God of Truth or not, and no matter whether they had any impious behavior. They drew the cross and pray, and it was a stamped habit left by their parents or families, not necessarily piety.

Lucien's mind wandered a bit. He was thinking of a new arcana research topic—the influence of one's early childhood experiences on one's behavior pattern.

After a few minutes, Leo slowly walked back. Feeling a bit tired, he said to Lucien, "My lord, let's set off right now. We gotta leave Ural as soon as possible. The night watchers and knights have been searching for us like crazy. Fortunately, I am quite familiar with this area, or I would not be able to meet you here, my lord..."

Although his heart was still filled with all mixed feelings, Leo reminded himself of his own duty.

Then, he took out a pair of boots embroidered with dark gold patterns, "My lord, these are the boots I found... from the sorcerer's body."

Sidestep, level three middle rank magic item. The boots could improve a sorcerer's agility to the level of a level three knight, and also provided the sorcerer two uses of third-circle spell Short Distance Teleportation a day.

After checking the boots carefully, then smiled, "Ok, we can go through the Ural mountains directly. I can handle the beasts and creatures in the mountains, and I also have Sorcerer's Cabin."

Pausing a bit, Lucien comforted Leo, "When we arrive in Aalto, Leo, try to stay there and do not come back again. You should think about your future life and probably have your offspring again. Take the sword, Leo. You'll need it in the mountains."

Hearing the word "offspring", Leo's face dimmed a bit. In this world, where Blessing, title, treasure and glory played the most important roles, one's offspring mattered a lot.

Leo took over Cleanser silently, as if he was lost in his own thoughts. After checking the sword carefully, Leo started walking in front of Lucien, with the heavy sword in his hand.

...

In the early evening of the Month of the End of Spring (April), 20th.

A coach from Tiran Province in the north arrived at Massawa town, which was only less-than-a day's travel away from Aalto.

Lucien, whose hair was blond and eyes were green, stepped out of the coach, followed by his butler, Leo. He walked into the familiar hotel and looked around.

Lucien left Aalto on April 9th in the year 816 of Saint Calendar and arrived in this small town. Now, after a whole three years, Lucien finally came back. He was a bit emotional, as everything in this place was triggering his memory. He was excited about going back "home".

After leaving Ural, Lucien and Leo travelled through the deep mountain range. Although they encountered beasts and other creatures many times, they handled them very well with Lucien's further-grown power as a fourth-circle sorcerer, so they arrived at the fortress in the north as planned.

However, because the north fortress had God's Glory and Snake the Chaos guarding the gate, Lucien and Leo had to climb over the great snow mountains to enter the Duchy of Violet, thus their trip had been delayed for almost a month.

Massawa was just a common town, so the hotel was not nearly as

fancy. The hotel hall was its dining hall. People wearing different styles of clothes with different accents were eating and chatting in the heated atmosphere. Here, no noble manner was required.

"Compared to the music festival held three years ago, this year's Aalto music festival is... Umm... just so so, but... I mean, it's still a great feast of music. I've stayed here a week longer than I planned," said a wealthy middle-aged man wearing a silk shirt to the other guests sharing the table with him.

Hearing the man's words, Lucien suddenly realized that April was the month of Aalto Music Festival. Unfortunately, he had missed it. However, Lucien was also glad that Natasha should be free now. He wanted to reach her as soon as possible, or coming back to Aalto as the famous musician could bring him a lot of trouble from the Church.

As the winner of Holm Crown prize, Lucien was quite famous in the Congress of Magic. Lucien was very careful with disguising himself, as the Church might have found some clues connecting the great musician Lucien Evans to the genius sorcerer Lucien Evans X.

Lucien signalled to Leo with a glance. Leo nodded and walked to the middle-aged man and asked politely, "Excuse me sir, do you mind if we take these seats?"

Lucien hoped to get more information about his friends and what recently happened in Aalto. After he finished building in his soul his fifth fourth-circle spell, Professor's Infrasound Resonance, he would directly head for Aalto on the following day.

"No problem at all." The middle-aged man found Lucien young and elegant, so he nodded immediately. The other three guests also agreed.

Lucien sat down in front of the dining table and smiled, "Good to meet you all. I'm Michel, from Syracuse."

"I'm Glinton, a businessman traveling between the fortress of the Dark Mountain Range, Aalto and Tria." The middle-aged man made a brief self-introduction, followed by the two men and the lady.

Lucien put on a regretful look and sighed, "I tried my best to attend the music festival in Aalto, but still missed it... A lot of things happened during my trip. What a pity... Mr. Glinton, from what I heard from your words, it seems that you just came back from Aalto. Do you mind sharing with me some of what you've seen over the festival?"

"That's indeed a pity." Glinton nodded in an understanding way, "This year's music festival was not bad... Actually, I should say it was pretty good. However, you know... The festival held three years ago was too impressive to be compared... And this year's festival, without the presence of Mr. Christopher and Mr. Evans, appeared to be a bit plain and disappointing... But, of course, this year, Mr. Victor's playing in the Psalm Hall was still very stunning..."

Chapter 282: Come Back Home - Aalto

Chapter 282: Come Back Home – Aalto

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien was glad to hear the news about his music teacher, Victor. The fact that Victor held his concert in the Psalm Hall during the music festival showed that his music achievement had been acknowledged. With a pleasant smile, he asked, “Which piece did Mr. Victor play?”

Seeing that the young man was interested in this topic, Ginton also got excited and started to blather, “Four pieces in total! All of them were fantastic! Personally, I like the last piece, Symphony No. 8 in C minor, the best, of which love is the theme, but it is also more than love! It’s like an autobiography! Each chapter conveys different emotions and feelings one could have with love. Sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter... It reminded us of our own love stories! After Mr. Victor finished playing, people applauded sincerely. Love touched our hearts deeply...” As Ginton was saying, there was also a sweet smile on his face, and then he lowered his voice, “I heard that this music piece was written by Mr. Victor himself in memory of his dead wife, Winnie. It took him ten years to finish it. Symphony No. 8 in C minor’s a piece of artwork. In my eyes, it is no inferior than Fate, the War of Dawn, Sonata Pathétique and Moonlight!”

Love and music was always a combination that most ladies could not resist. The only lady took out her handkerchief and gently tapped the corner of her eyes, saying regretfully, “We missed this music festival because of the absence of Mr. Christopher and Lucien Evans. What a mistake...”

Lucien knew well the love Victor always had toward his wife. He sincerely felt happy for Victor as he could put all his love and thoughts in music, which must be a great comfort for Victor.

Lucien’s voice also became gentler, “Were there any new musicians

on the music festival?”

Elena, Felicia, Pierre, Grace... He wondered how his classmates and friends were doing right now, and whether they were still pursuing their music dream.

“There was one, a female... named Louise. Her piano playing skill’s really impressive and her music work has those kind of special feminine features. Also, she’s a knight in training. She even has a beautiful white wolf as her pet!” said Glinton.

Lucien never heard this name. So, he took a sip at his lemonade and asked, “Anyone else?”

“Sure. Aalto Music Festival’s always the heaven for young musicians.” Glinton started listing the names as a way of showing off.

When Lucien almost lost his patience, he finally heard a familiar name.

“Mr. Victor’s student, also, Mr. Lucien Evans’ classmate, Felicia, also held her first concert over the festival. She played one symphony piece, one sonata piece and a couple of piano pieces that she wrote when she travelled through the continent. Also, she played Moonlight written by Mr. Evans to show her playing skills. I mean, although Miss. Felicia cannot yet be considered an outstanding musician, she’s on her way and, as a noble lady musician, she’s definitely very promising.”

Lucien nodded slightly. He knew that Felicia must have worked very hard in the three years.

Over the meal, Lucien had a pretty good appetite because of his good mood. At this time, Glinton sighed, “Speaking of Moonlight... It’s such a pity that we’ve never heard the great musician, Lucien Evans, playing Moonlight in person. Although the playing of his student, Miss Grace, was quite good, we’re still looking forward to the great musician showing the real beauty of Moonlight...”

The lady sitting beside the table also nodded, “Mr. Evans’

accomplishment in the field of piano playing is... incomparable. He created the brand new playing style as well as the foundation of fingering. I bet one person must have heard Mr. Lucien Evans playing Moonlight.”

Lucien’s face felt a bit hot when hearing all the compliments. He was also glad that Grace indeed followed his words and came to Aalto.

Another man laughed, “Of course, Her Majesty. It is said that the first movement of Moonlight was already written by the time Mr. Evans set off for his trip, and that he had played it in person in front of the princess.”

People around the table laughed.

Lucien felt a bit embarrassed, so he cut off a small piece of steak and started chewing. Then, he asked in a casual way, “It’s been three years since Mr. Evans left Aalto. When’s he coming back?”

“Maybe in a year or two. No one knows except the princess.” Glinton answered, “But the best thing’s that he’s still working on producing great music pieces... Moonlight, Storm... I really look forward to the day when he comes back.”

It was more than normal that a musician could only produce one music piece within a year or so, not to mention the fact that Lucien Evans was still on his trip.

Hearing that, Lucien thought to himself that no matter whether the church had known that the great musician was in fact a vicious sorcerer, they had not told the public yet.

Lucien got no information about Elena, but it was not out of Lucien’s expectation. After all, she just started learning music three years ago.

As for John, Joel and aunt Alisa, because they had nothing to do with the music festival, Lucien didn’t dare to ask randomly.

...

The second day, the first orange light of morning had just appeared.

At this time, Lucien finished the complicated magic model in his soul with the last piece of arc.

Light covered the model and disappeared. When the model appeared again, it was already surrounding Lucien's Host Star of Destiny like many other magic models on the track.

It was Professor's Infrasound Resonance, that could harm or even kill an enemy using infrasound resonance. Its power was penetrating, which could go through most power or elemental shields. However, it would still fail in front of magic-immune or magic-reflection defensive shields.

If Lucien's spiritual power was enough, the spell could be used to affect senior-rank mages. However, currently, as a fourth-circle sorcerer, Lucien was not able to do so.

Looking at the thirty-six first circle spell models, twenty-eight second circle models, twenty third-circle models and five fourth-circle models, Lucien let out a sigh of relief.

It was the third time that Lucien tried to construct the model of Professor's Infrasound Resonance, and he finally succeeded, as the complexity of this spell model was already close to fifth circle. Fortunately, Lucien had a solid foundation of arcana knowledge.

Half an hour later, Leo knocked at Lucien's door.

After Lucien opened the door, Leo said to him respectfully, "It's time for breakfast, my Lord. Then we shall set off for Aalto."

"Alright." Lucien stood up and adjusted his clothes a bit. Taking a glance at the early morning sky, Lucien took a deep breath of the fresh air. Once again, he stayed awake for the whole night.

Because the Dark Mountain Range was very dangerous, Lucien had been working hard constructing the magic models. Therefore, he had analyzed and constructed five fourth-circle spells, including Professor's Infrasound Resonance, Douglas' Absorbing Wall, Douglas' Huge Palm, Arcana Light, Arcana Eye.

...

After breakfast, Lucien got on the coach and set off for Aalto.

On his way, he had mixed feelings. He missed Aalto, but he also had fear in his mind.

He knew that he could not directly go back to uncle Joel and aunt Alisa, or he might bring trouble to them. First, he should find Natasha to make sure he was safe.

In Aalto, Natasha was the only person to whom Lucien could safely reveal his identity, but soon he frowned—he had no idea how to find Natasha!

Natasha was the princess, the heir of the duchy. Although she was already a radiant knight, she must still have a lot of knights, guards and servants following her around the palace. As a nobody, Lucien basically had zero chance of randomly running into the princess.

Also, Lucien assumed that Natasha would not want to go to the Musicians' Association after Silvia died... Now he finally realized that if he had not chosen to study music, he would never had the chance to get to know Natasha—they were different people from different worlds.

Although Lucien did write the letter to Natasha telling her that he was coming back, Natasha still had no idea what the specific time would be and how Lucien would look when he came back.

Lucien did not have a really good plan right now. He decided to see whether he could know Natasha's common routine first, and then see if there were any chances that could be created.

In the afternoon, the tall city wall appeared in front of Lucien. Aalto still looked the same grand and prosperous.

"I'm back." Lucien murmured to himself.

Then, he got off the coach and got ready for the inspection for entering the city.

At this time, the crowd was divided into two sides on its own. A group of knights slowly went through the city gate, and the leading knight who was wearing black armor was a very beautiful young female. Her beauty was not the typical kind of female beauty, but the mix of femininity and heroism.

It was Natasha, the princess who had dream-like, purple-colored eyes. She looked like a flourishing violet.

“Natasha?!” Lucien was very surprised.

When the knights slowly went past the the crowd, Natasha suddenly turned her head around and looked at Lucien, who right now had blond hair and green eyes.

A stunning smile appeared on her face. She winked at Lucien quickly and then kept moving forward followed by the knights.

Lucien could not believe that the trouble that bothered him so much was solved just like this.

At time time, several people started talking to each other, “The princess is visiting the manor again?”

“Yeah... That’s quite strange. After the princess finished her practice in the abbess, Her Majesty has been visiting the manor everyday in the afternoon, and coming back to Aalto the next morning...”

The corner of Lucien’s lips moved. A smile appeared on his face.

Chapter 283: Welcome Back

Chapter 283: Welcome Back

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the early morning, in a fancy hotel in Nolan district.

Lucien had sent Leo to the room next door to sleep quite a while ago, and he also told Leo not to panic and just continue to sleep if he heard some weird noise from Lucien's room that night.

After running into Natasha, Lucien was sure that, as a princess and a radiant knight, as long as he did not hide himself on purpose from her, it would not be too big of a trouble for Natasha to find him in Aalto.

Holding a glass of red wine in his hand, Lucien sat cozily in the couch. He did not drink the wine, but just swirled it in the glass, staring at the red ripples. His mind was filled with thoughts and memories.

The wine, Berne, was produced in the chateau of Felicia's family. In most cases, only the family's guests could enjoy it. But this hotel was closely connected to the Hayne family, so the hotel was able to store a few bottles here and promote the wine as a main feature of the hotel.

Knock, knock... Someone knocked the window from outside.

Lucien smiled and turned around. Just as what he expected, Natasha, wearing a long purple dress, was standing on the balcony, followed by, as usual, Camil, in her black dress.

Natasha was indeed a radiant knight. Although Lucien was expecting her to visit tonight, he still failed to notice her arrival in advance.

Putting down the glass, Lucien walked to the window and opened it.

“Evening, Lucien,” greeted Natasha casually. “Do you want to take a walk with me to enjoy the fantastic silver moon tonight?”

Lucien laughed, “Natasha, come on...”

A simple joke pulled them together as close as they used to be a few years ago.

Maybe due to the power of a radiant knight, Natasha still looked the same, twenty-something. However, maybe from her facial expression, or maybe her behavior, Lucien felt that she became much calmer and maturer.

“You haven’t changed much...” said Lucien.

“You’ve become quite mature, like a real gentleman now...” said Natasha at the same time.

The two good friends looked at each other and laughed together.

“Good evening, Lady Camil.” Lucien then nodded to Camil politely, who was following Natasha like a shadow all the time.

After seeing the power of Count Witte, Lucien knew how horrible Camil’s power, the Blue Tide, could be.

Camil just nodded to be politely, but did not say anything. She was quiet all the time.

Taking a few steps forward with her long legs, Natasha sat down in the couch casually like she was in her own palace, War Gallery. She lifted her purple brow slightly and said, “Although this doesn’t look bad, I prefer your original look. Black eyes and black hair... That works better for me.”

“Why do you always treat me like a lady?” Lucien also joked. When he first arrived in this world, his look was already not bad. After the following years and after experiencing this much, Lucien had become more elegant and calm. His Blessing, Moonlight, also contributed to his appearance. However, of course, Lucien’s appearance was nothing compared to Rhine and those who were already born good looking.

Natasha grinned and she said in a proud manner, “Since I left the abbey, I was expecting you to come back soon, or at least in two or three months. I was worried that you could not find me, so I estimated the possible time that a traveller from Tiran Province might arrive at Aalto and go through the city gate. So I have been visiting the manor outside of the city every day at the time I estimated to see if I could run into you. And also, it would be convenient for you to know this as part of my daily routine. But I directly sensed the familiarity in the air today, haha! See? My plan’s perfect!”

She was obviously very proud.

“Yes, a perfect plan. On my way back, I was worrying about how I could find you...” Lucien told Natasha his concern honestly, and then he smiled. “Now, all problems have been solved by our smart, brilliant princess!”

Lucien now sat close to Natasha. He saw the dream-like color of Natasha’s eyes, the mix of silver and purple. Her eyes were deep and attractive, like a swirl that could pull people in. After the three years in the abbey, she had got a very good control of her Blessing power.

Hearing the compliment, Natasha was quite satisfied. Then she started to ask Lucien to share more of his adventure in Allyn, Holm and other places with her.

Because Natasha knew about the collapse of the Magic Lock called Grand Cross, she was definitely aware of the existence of the World of Souls. However, she probably only regarded it as another dimension for the dead, like most other people who knew the World of Souls did. Therefore, Lucien only hid the important parts related to the ultimate secret of the World of Souls, and shared the rest of his adventure honestly with Natasha, bit by bit, either mentioned in the letters or not.

Natasha was a good listener. She knew when to listen and when to interact. Lucien was encouraged and their conversation did not finish until midnight.

At this time, Natasha put on a strange look and asked, “Haven’t you been in any romantic relationships? Come on, Lucien... In Allyn, you don’t have to hide anymore. What a pity!”

“Um... When I first arrived in Allyn, I had no idea what arcana was and I was... busy. Yup... Very busy... so no time for pursuing ladies...” said Lucien a bit embarrassedly. “Maybe... in the future...”

Natasha reached out her right hand and rubbed her chin. The strange look remained on her face, “That’s not right... Girls in Allyn... They’re even more beautiful than the girls here. You’re the winner of Holm Crown prize, and you’re good-looking, and powerful... So there’s only one answer to this — you like men!?”

Natasha just let her imagination fly.

“That’s impossible! I’m really, really busy! Like... super busy!” Lucien immediately denied, “I mean... I do have a few ladies trying to be close to me in Allyn, but I had no feeling toward them. I’m not that kind of person following every single lady he meets! I put quality before quantity!”

Natasha patted on Lucien’s shoulder and said, “It’s okay. I understand...”

“I’m not...” Lucien tried to clarify this, but he knew that probably Natasha had already had a whole touching love story developed in her mind.

Natasha laughed in a cunning way like a fox which successfully got a chick. Then, she quickly changed the topic, “Why some important sorcerer would ask you to send the letter to the Dark Mountain Range... It’s such a waste of time, and, of course, it’s dangerous. A legendary archmage could easily use stars as pedals doing space leaps, and get to the Dark Mountain Range from Allyn using a very short period of time...”

Natasha had a very close relationship with the grand arcanist Hathaway. Sometimes, she even knew more than Lucien.

“I’m not sure either. Maybe there are reasons... Say, Nightmare King refuses to see sorcerers above middle rank in order to avoid modern arcana theory impact...” Lucien guessed.

Natasha frowned, then she said, “It’s hard to say. But don’t worry, Lucien. I’m sure the Congress wouldn’t send you, a promising young sorcerer, to die in the Dark Mountain Range. Also, no legendary archmage would go to this much trouble just to kill you... There’s no reason.”

Then she looked up at the clock and smiled, “It’s almost five now! I forgot to welcome you officially, Lucien!”

So Natasha stood up and grinned, “Welcome back, my knight!”

Lucien also smiled and held Natasha’s right hand. He gently left a kiss on Natasha’s hand and said, “It’s great to see you again, Your Majesty.”

After becoming a radiant knight, her power became more internal, and her hands became softer.

Then, Natasha said to Lucien, “Did you forget to ask me anything, my knight?”

“Oh, right...” Lucien rubbed his forehead, “I was about to ask at the very beginning... Did the Church learned my identity as a sorcerer? How’s John, Joel, Iven and Elena doing?”

Natasha made a surprised look and said, “Wow, that’s a lot of information required... Where shall I start... Well, according to what I know, after you won the prize, your appearance, age and your power level have been recorded by the Church. However, the series of following experiments brought the Church to great impact and put them under a lot of pressure, so you haven’t been put on the Cleansing List. Violet Duchy, for now, hasn’t got any information about you.”

She got to know Miller experiment from Lucien’s letter. Natasha also felt very confused for a long time, but before the Church revised the theory, Natasha had calmed herself down and it seemed

that she kept being the same devout.

Then, Natasha said to Lucien seriously, "I'm sorry, Lucien. I made a mistake."

"What?" Lucien was confused.

"The reason I suggested you to keep the identity as a musician was that I hoped you could have a proper excuse for traveling through the continent. I did not expect you to win such a prize this soon. Now, the identity as a musician has become your burden. So, find a chance, say, after a splendid concert... to let your musician identity die. It's better than telling people who care about you that you ended up missing during your trips..."

"I understand, Natasha. I'm okay with letting this identity die personally, but if I do so, uncle Joe, aunt Alisa, and John and Iven... They'd be very sad," said Lucien. "Also, in the future when I am included in the Cleansing List, the Church will still be able to link the sorcerer to the musician, which's still not a good thing to the family..."

"I did not say you must lie to your relatives, Lucien." Natasha smiled, "As you said, yes, sooner or later, the Church will find this out, and indeed the people you care would be brought into big trouble. I'd suggest that you directly tell your families the fact that you're a sorcerer and ask them to move to Holm with you. If they could accept both the fact and your invitation, that's the best result, but if they did not want to leave, I can watch them until you leave Aalto again. Later, I'll ask them to report this to the Church and make it look like they are cutting off with you. Under my help, I can assure you that they won't be affected that much because of you in the future if they decide to stay in Aalto."

When Natasha was talking, she was so calm that she looked just like a grand duchess.

"That's quite cruel..." sighed Lucien.

"You know... Sometimes cruelty can also be a kind of mercy," replied Natasha.

“You sound like a philosopher.” Lucien tried to play a joke.

Natasha also slightly sighed and put on a bitter smile, “Every person who’s lost their love is a philosopher.”

Chapter 284: Mr. Evans Is Back!

Chapter 284: Mr. Evans Is Back!

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien did not know what to say. He just wanted to play a joke, but the joke poked the softest and the most painful part of Natasha's heart. He wanted to comfort Natasha, but he did not know how.

Seeing Lucien's embarrassed look, Natasha bit her lips lightly and said, "It's okay, Lucien. No matter what happened, it's a part of me. I always try to appreciate it and learn my lesson out of it. That's my attitude. Don't worry, Lucien. I'll never blame you for saying something you never really mean to say."

"Well... If so, let me be honest, Natasha," said Lucien in a pretended serious way. "The only thing that I learn from memory and history is that... we can learn nothing."

Natasha first paused a second and then burst out laughing with Lucien. She was laughing so hard that she even could not keep her back straight like a knight, like a flourishing violet.

"Maybe what you said is true. Next time when I meet my love, I'll still give her all I have," said Natasha in a bit coarse voice from the good laugh. "I learn nothing."

"Good luck, Your Majesty. Hope you can meet a great lady and have a really good relationship soon," said Lucien sincerely.

"Soon?" Natasha lifted her good-looking brows and said, "Am I that kind of person who can just quickly forget her love and past? Come on... I'm not!"

Although she looked angry, Lucien could tell that Natasha now felt much better by letting out the sorrow that she could not share with other people.

"Umm... You're not that kind of person. Then, can I say you do not

have much relationship experience yourself? You've been telling me that you can teach me, but now I highly doubt it." Lucien grinned.

"Better than yours." Natasha quickly talked back, "Also, let me remind you, if you didn't notice—I'm also a lady, and at least I've experienced a complete relationship. In front of you, I'm still qualified as a teacher to tell you how to pursue a girl. You haven't even touched a girl's hand!"

Lucien shrugged his shoulders, "Don't keep mentioning this..."

"Okay, another topic then. Your first kiss is still there, right?" Natasha put on a sneaky smile, "What a pity... Girls' lips are..."

"Hey... Don't act like a pervert, ok?" Lucien rolled his eyes.

Natasha clapped her hands and laughed, "Just admit it, Lucien, you innocent little boy. Admit that I've got enough to teach you about these things!"

"Okay, okay... You win." Lucien put up both of his hands.

The princess smirked, like a flower. Then she looked at Lucien and said in a gentle tone, "Thank you, Lucien."

"I'm your friend." Lucien nodded to Natasha, smiling.

"Good laugh always reminds me of the fact that losing love doesn't mean the end of my life," said Natasha. "I still have my father, my relatives, aunt Camil, and you, my friend. I can overcome this," said Natasha. "And then I'll introduce you to a good lady."

"Let me handle this on my own..." Lucien shook his head and smiled.

Natasha now got a bit more serious and started to tell Lucien how his family was doing, "After awakening his Blessing, John has become a knight and given the title as a Lord. Like his teacher, Venn, John serves my family, the Violet. Now he has his own land and a garden villa."

Lucien grinned. He truly felt happy for his friend.

“You uncle and aunt Alisa have been learning noble manners in these years to help John around and reach out to other nobles.” Natasha continued, “Although they were often looked down upon by other nobles, for their son, they finally did it. Now your uncle Joel, known as ‘the Eight-fingered Harpist’, has gained some reputation among nobles. But I guess that, among the nobles, your uncle could only feel really happy when he plays music...”

“Good for them!” There was nothing better than seeing that all his relatives and friends were also striving for their better life like Lucien himself.

“As for Iven, he’s grown quite a bit and he’s a young man now. Iven’s still under tough knight training. Felicia just held her very first concert in her life, and it was not bad. She’s ready to start her career as a musician. Elena, after working hard on studying music for three years and fighting against her arranged marriage, now has been hired by a big band. So now she has her own career and does not need to rely on a man anymore...” Natasha smiled. “Pierre, after being quite depressed for two years, finally overcame the barrier and started to study the fingerings that were first developed by you. By combining the skills with the fingering of Harpsichord, he has found his own playing style. Your student, Grace, has been working hard all the time and is spoken highly by several musicians. Both Lott and Herodotus have also become good master instrumentalists...”

Lucien felt really touched in his mind, because he heard the news of his friends and family, and also because of the fact that, as a princess and the future Grand Duchess, Natasha kept collecting these nobodies’ information just for Lucien.

“By the way, John isn’t in Aalto now. According to the rules, new knights must join Violet Knights and guard the Dark Mountain Range Fortress or the North Fortress for five years, and then he’d be sent to other places according to the duchy’s needs. He’s at the Dark Mountain Range Fortress right now. If you can stay here longer, maybe he could come back during his vacation...”

As she was saying, Natasha stopped and looked at the gentle smile on Lucien’s face, feeling a bit strange, “Lucien, why are you looking

like me like this?”

“I really, really appreciate your help,” Lucien said sincerely. “Thank you for collecting all these information for me.”

Natasha grinned, “Of course. I’m the best!”

Their conversation lasted until dawn. When morning light slightly lit up the sky, Natasha stood up in an unwilling way and said, “I’m afraid I gotta go now.”

Then she said to Lucien, “Your uncle and aunt should be out of town right now in John’s manor, so you probably want to visit Mr. Christopher and Mr. Victor in the Musicians’ Association first. Then, hold your concert as soon as possible, so you can say bye to your identity as a musician. Unfortunately, you don’t have any new pieces of symphony of the same level of Fate, or your last concert would be definitely recorded by history, and you’d leave no regrets in your career as a musician. I mean... Moonlight and Storm are good. The concert’s still going to be a great success. Don’t worry.”

“When I was traveling, I did have some thoughts on different styles of music, and I do have a few movements. But I’m not sure if I still have enough time to finish it...” sighed Lucien slightly.

Lucien used music to relax himself. By combining the different styles of music all over the world, Lucien developed quite a few movements on his own based on New World Symphony by Antonín Dvořák. Because Lucien was still far from being a real master musician, the symphony he wrote and New World Symphony were very much alike.

“Wow... Can’t wait to hear it.” Natasha looked excited, and her face was glowing. “Do you have any interests in religious music? I think a piece of music work praising God be good for you when the Church... Never mind, I was being stupid... You’re a sorcerer with no belief.”

Lucien grinned and shook his head. It seemed that Natasha was getting less serious about religion, or at least the Church.

Their conversation lasted a bit longer when it came to music. When the sun was rising, Natasha finally realized the time and said goodbye to Lucien.

When flying in the early morning sky, Camil looked at Natasha's right hand a bit confusedly and strangely.

"What is it?" asked Natasha. She saw no difference on her right hand.

"Nothing." Camil shook her head.

...

In front of the unique building of the Musicians' Association, Lucien, after shaving and removing the dyed color on his hair, was staring at it.

It felt a bit weird. This building looked familiar, but also strange. In this building, Lucien even still had his own exclusive lounge.

After Natasha left in the morning, Lucien told Leo that his mission had been finished. However, Leo wished to follow Lucien to Allyn and became his real butler. After carefully considering it, Lucien agreed. But he asked Leo to wait for him in Aalto first until he came back from the Dark Mountain Range. Lucien was not sure whether he could protect himself properly in the mountains, not to mention taking care of Leo.

Some passerby's laughter woke Lucien up from his thoughts. They were tourists who stayed a bit longer in Aalto after the music festival, hanging around the Musicians' Association casually to see if they could luckily meet the musicians they liked here.

After adjusting his jacket a bit, Lucien walked to the stairs. There were a few young musicians and instrumentalists standing there.

A guard took a step forward. When he just about to stop the young man, the guard quickly rubbed his eyes and his mouth opened big, "Mr. E... Evans... Good morning, Mr. Evans!"

His voice was loud. Several tourists turned around, and so did the

young musicians and instrumentalists on the stairs.

After seeing clearly the face of the young man, the musicians and instrumentalists lowered their heads slightly and said in a respectful and excited manner, “Good morning, Mr. Evans. Welcome back!”

Chapter 285: Lucien, the Respected Musician

Chapter 285: Lucien, the Respected Musician

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The hall of the Musicians' Association was the same, grand but quiet. No matter where, the Musicians' Association was always the most quiet place among all the professional associations, as most musicians and instrumentalists were busy with all kinds of stuff—including training the bands, rehearsal, looking for music sheets in the library and so on. Therefore, very few of them would come to the association in the early morning.

Also, the Musicians' Association was supposed to be a quiet place to let the musicians stay focused on their music works.

The two young girls behind the reception desk looked sweet and nice. Right now, they were a bit nervously talking to Mr. Hank, who was responsible for the association's daily routine. Mr. Hank was introducing a beautiful young lady to them.

The young lady was about twenty something. She had impressive, long black hair and a pretty face. However, what attracted people's eyes more was the white, huge wolf sitting beside her, which looked quiet and intelligent.

"Ms. Louise, we'll ask other musicians whether they're interested in nature music, and if we find any, we'll tell you as soon as possible," said one the young gir whose name was Polly respectfully to the new musician.

Ms. Louise was the envy of many people who had music dreams, including the receptionist girls. She was born in a noble family and she showed her music talent at a very young age. With the heritage she got and the money she made by playing music, she bought the magic potion and awakened her Blessing, which pulled her closer to animals and nature. This strange Blessing also made her playing

skills even better and unique, and therefore she made herself famous over this music festival.

But for Polly, the person who she really admired was Miss Elena. Miss Elena started as a receptionist just like them, but she turned herself into a instrumentalist by working hard and now she was making good money.

Louise smiled and said politely, "Thank you. Music theme that is inspired by mother nature is not common in Aalto. Even Mr. Hank has no idea whether we have musicians who've put some thoughts into it. It all relies on you two now. Please ask the musicians for me carefully. Thanks a lot."

At this time, a young, good-looking man wearing black suit and bow tie entered the hall through the stained glass door, followed by a few young musicians and instrumentalists.

Polly had been working there for a year, but she never met the young, good-looking man walking in the front. Meanwhile, she knew all of the several musicians and instrumentalists following him. Somehow, Polly felt the young man's face quite familiar.

Hank turned around. He first looked confused, and then a big smile appeared on his face, "Welcome back, Mr. Evans!"

"Mr. Evans?!" Polly and the other girl suddenly realized who this young man was. They saw Mr. Evans' brand new conducting skills and piano playing skills over the music festival in Aalto three years ago. The two girls were very young at that time, but they still remembered Mr. Evans' elegance and talent.

"Good morning, Mr. Hank." Lucien smiled and nodded. After the three years, Mr. Hank seemed even politer and more enthusiastic to him.

When Lucien walked to the reception desk, Polly and the other girl bowed to him excitedly and politely, "Good morning, Mr. Evans."

"Good morning, Mr. Evans," greeted Louise, also a bit excitedly.

Young girls in their age sort of spent their adolescence time with

the company of Lucien's music. Therefore, their excitement could be imagined.

Lucien, keeping the polite smile on his face, looked at the white wolf whose ears were pointing upwards and said, "You must be Miss Louise. I've heard people talking about your music, and I also heard your music. Very nice..."

Lucien made the hotel band play some popular music works over the dinner last night. Of course, only those ones that did not require a whole symphony band to perform.

"Thank you, Mr. Evans. I still have much to learn." Louise's face flushed. For a young musician, a sentence of compliment from a great musician like Lucien meant a lot to her. It was for sure a great encouragement, and it could also contributed to her career development a lot.

After greeting around, Lucian asked Polly and the other girl, "Nice to meet you. May I know if my teacher, Mr. Victor, and Mr. Christopher are here today?"

After finishing his last concert, Christopher has become the association's honorary chairman.

"Yes, yes... Mr. Evans..." said Polly, a bit stammering. "Mr. Victor is the association's director now. He's always got a lot of things to do, especially after the music festival. He's been working in his office for a while. Mr. Christopher's also here. Recently, it seems that he has got some new music ideas."

Lucien slightly nodded. No wonder Natasha asked him to come to the association first. She must have known that, very possibly, Mr. Victor and Mr. Christopher were here.

Lucien also checked whether Felicia and Elena were here today, but the answers were no. So then Lucien walked toward Mr. Victor's office on the third floor under Hank's guidance.

On his way, a few musicians who Lucien knew from before all greeted him respectfully.

Before Lucien left Aalto, no matter how big an achievement Lucien made, for those musicians and instrumentalists who witnessed the poverty he suffered before, Lucien was always the poor boy who started with collecting rubbish and working in the library, but then the poor boy suddenly became an overnight “millionaire”.

However, after those three years, Lucien’s talent did not fall like most geniuses who only made an overnight hit for once. Instead, his new music works, especially Moonlight Sonata, which was known as the most touching piano piece, still received huge success.

The fact that Lucien had been away from Aalto for three years left people with a greater room for imagination. Therefore, when Lucien came back, people respected him as a real great musician, a significant figure in the world of music!

Polly and the other young girl watched Lucien and Hank walking away from behind. After their walked upstairs, Polly held her face with both of her hands and said to the other girl excitedly, “Mr. Evans’s even more elegant than I thought! I really wonder what kind of music he’s brought back!”

...

“Good for Mr. Christopher.” Lucien chatted with Hank casually when they were close to the third floor, “He’s still composing...”

Hank nodded, “Although Mr. Christopher has finished his last concert, his passion for composing never stopped. Using his words—it should be called ‘Where there is life, there is music’. After hearing the splendid chorale over the music festival, Mr. Christopher wants to compose a piece of religious music. But you know, among so many religious music works, it’s really hard to make your own music outstanding. Right now, Mr. Christopher’s kind of stuck.”

Before Lucien brought the trend of theme music to the public, religious music played the major role on the stage. Religious music had become the eternal theme of Aalto, after the cardinal, Charlie I, set up the standards of chorale. Lucien believed that the status of religious music would still not be shaken for a long time, and the

many classic pieces could hardly be challenged.

“Religious music...” Lucien nodded thoughtfully.

Soon, Lucien and Hank came in front of the door to Victor’s office.

“You might want to knock the door yourself, Mr. Evans... to give Mr. Victor a surprise,” suggested Hank.

Lucien agreed and knocked at the door gently.

Then, he waited in front of the door. With his sharp listening, Lucien heard that Victor was slowly walking toward the door.

Mr. Victor’s manner was still the same, which never changed after he became a director. Most directors would ask behind the door first to see who was visiting, and then decide whether they wanted to open the door.

The door slowly opened. Victor’s face also did not change much over the three years—light mustache, black curly hair, blue eyes. A man in his age was neither like a youngster who changed his look all the time, nor a man over fifty who aged very fast.

Victor looked in quite good spirits. The gloom he had before now turned into piece and calm, probably because the completion of Love Symphony had comforted his soul.

Seeing the young man standing in front of him, Victor first looked a bit confused. Then, he scanned the young man from head to toe, as if he was making sure if the young man was real.

After that, Victor reached out his right hand and put it above Lucien’s right shoulder. After a slight pause, Victor patted on Lucien’s shoulder and said to him in his low, gentle voice, “You’re back... Good... You’re back.”

Although his voice still sounded calm, Lucien could tell his excitement and joy from the hand on his shoulder.

Lucien felt the true emotion from the hand, trembling and grabbing his shoulder a bit hard. When his heart was filled with bitter

nostalgia and joy, the melody that Lucien had been working on for a long time became complete.

True music came from true feelings.

Chapter 286: A Fan of Lucien

Chapter 286: A Fan of Lucien

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In Victor's office.

After both of them calmed down a bit, they started exchanging what they had seen and experienced during their own trips, including the assorted local conditions and customs throughout the continent, and, of course, all kinds of folk and traditional music. Their warm conversation was full of joy.

“Good, good! You’ve grown a lot from your trip, Lucien!” Victor nodded approvingly. He could tell that Lucien now had a much better understanding and perception toward different music genres.

Because Victor himself also held concerts throughout the continent, instead of lying that he came back from Holy Heilz Empire or the Kingdom of Syracuse that Lucien in fact had never been to, Lucien told Victor that he travelled from the south central part of the continent to the Storm Strait and then returned the same way he came. Because he appreciated the folk music a lot there in that region, he stayed there for quite a long time.

Hearing his own teacher's praise, Lucien grinned, “I’ve seen a lot of great, unique music genres during my trip. I’d like to have them to be part of my music.”

“This is why I always believe that a musician should leave the place he or she stays in from time to time to see more and to experience more,” said Victor, sharing all his thoughts with Lucien. “I can tell that you’ve been still practicing during the three years. You did not come to me with a solid foundation of music, but now you’ve filled the gaps.”

Three years ago, despite of the fact that Lucien had excellent memory and great body coordination, it was still hard to grasp all the parts of the foundation of music. Although when talking to

common musicians and instrumentalists, Lucien was fine, when he talked to master musicians like Mr. Christopher and Victor, he made many mistakes. Fortunately, they were all tolerant people, and they knew that Lucien was still new, so they did not give Lucien a hard time but corrected him in a nice way.

During his spare time in Allyn and the rest of his trip, except for studying arcana and teaching the apprentices, Lucien relaxed himself by playing music.

Most sorcerers had their own interests and hobbies during their spare time. Although being dedicated was one of the major conditions for a sorcerer to be successful, sorcerers needed to find the balance between magic and life. For example, the Hand of Annihilation was an outstanding painter, and also a playboy.

At this time, someone knocked at the door politely.

As the student, Lucien stood up and opened the door.

“Mr. Christopher?” Lucien was surprised.

Although having aged quite a bit, Christopher still shaved his beard well, like how he did three years ago.

Seeing Lucien, Christopher smiled, “Lucien, welcome back.”

“Thank you very much, Mr. President.” Lucien still called Christopher by the title president, even though the current president was Othello.

Christopher joked, “This old man was waiting for this young fellow to visit him. He has waited for so long that he’s decided to come over and find you. I’m very interested in what you’ve seen during your trip and your new music.”

Three years later, Christopher had become more playful.

“I was about to...” Lucien was a bit embarrassed.

“Just kidding.” Christopher grinned. “Actually, I’m here to invite you two to attend a small concert held by a young man. He’s from

the southern Gusta. A tough young man who suffered a lot but is still pursuing his music dream. Finally, he made it to Aalto, and I heard his playing on the street. It was quite interesting. So I invited him to come over to the association and hold a small concert.”

“On the street?” Walking to them, Victor asked.

It was quite strange to Victor. If this young man’s playing on the street was that impressive, he should have heard his name as well. However, he never did.

Christopher nodded seriously, “He’s got no money for renting a venue. He was playing piano and singing on the street. His music style was popular over the music festival, but most musicians in the association looked down upon it, because of their bias. By the way, his name’s Franz.”

“I see.” Victor smiled, “Is it starting now?”

Christopher pointed at the floor above and nodded, “Yes, let’s go. There’re people waiting for us.”

Lucien and Victor each walked on one side of Christopher. When they were heading upstairs, Christopher smiled, “Franz told me that your music has given him a lot of energy and power. Without your music, he said he could not have come this far.”

“Uh?” Lucien was quite surprised.

“Franz did not come from a wealthy family. His father was an ordinary man, working in an business association. Although the family did not have the money to send him to study music, he was selected into the church choir because of his beautiful voice, and he also managed to learn some basic vocality and composing skills. Later, he was kicked out of the choir because he refused to be a castrato. He studied music really hard since then.” Christopher introduced, “Unfortunately, his music did not win the affection of nobles or the public. After his father passed away, his life got even tougher. He was a worker on the port, a warehouse keeper, a bartender, a bard... Life was hard to the twenty-something young man, both physically and mentally, until he heard your Symphony

of Fate and started to make money by sticking to his music style. Now, he's in Aalto."

Victor smiled, "What a tough young man. This kind of story always touches my heart."

"I'm really happy that I can help him," said Lucien sincerely. The story made him a bit less guilty.

...

Soon, they arrived in the hall on the fifth floor.

In the hall, many musicians, instrumentalists and music students had gathered together here out of curiosity. They all wondered what kind of young man could win the appreciation of Mr. Christopher.

Although the hall was almost full, the first row of seats still remained empty. They were saved for the top musicians.

"Mr. President."

"Mr. Victor."

"Mr. Evans."

When they walked in the hall, all the musicians stood up and greeted them. They watched them walking toward the first row.

Soon, the small concert started. Franz, wearing black suit, walked on the stage excitedly. He bowed to the audience many times.

He was about twenty-four of five, with thin face and curly, tangly black hair. His face looked very serious, as if he was praying in the church.

He looked at the famous musicians seating in the front. Franz knew that they were Mr. Christopher and Mr. Victor. But who was the young man?

Soon he realized who this young man was. His hands started

trembling and he had to take a few deep breaths to calm himself down. Then, he sat down in front of the piano. A castrato came to the center of the stage.

The melody of the piano piece was like stream flowing. The poetry-like lyrics sung by the castrato were touching.

The structure of the piano piece was complete and full of varieties. The deep emotions in the music combined perfectly with the piano.

The audience in the hall was immersed in the melody. Some were slightly nodding along with the music.

The songs of different styles completely caught the heart of the people present. The hall was quiet. No musicians ever thought that a young man could give bard songs new life and this great sense of elegance.

When the first part of the concert finished, Franz stood on the stage, waiting for the musicians' comments nervously.

This was part of the small concert.

Christopher smiled, "Evans has just come back. Let him say something first."

Franz's hands were held together tight. He was beyond nervous.

Lucien tried to be humble in front of Mr. Christopher, but the president insisted. So, Lucien smiled and said, "The music has led us into a new world by making us forget the common form of ordinary songs."

This was a very high comment, and this comment came from his idol. Franz waved his right hand slightly out of the great joy. There were tears in his eyes.

Lucien continued, "You've greatly explored the possible forms of songs, which is a brand new path in front of us. I have some ideas about developing long verse into songs, and hope we can have a good talk after the concert."

Lucien was inspired by Franz's songs.

“Of course... Thank you so much, Mr. Evans. You might not know this, but I have to say that during the darkest days in my life, when I was about to end my music life, it was your Symphony of Fate that saved me... You might have no idea how shocked and encouraged I was when I heard it...”

Chapter 287: Reunion

Franz got emotional with his memory, "I labored, in a hard way... I was also staying up all night studying music and composing. Soon, my body became weak, and my mind was bothered. I could not focus. People around me said I was like a walking dead body, and they were all telling me to give up music, although they knew that my music wasn't that bad... I knew it, too. I could not feed my mother and young brothers and sisters with music. I was so overwhelmed by the pressure from life... I was at my limit every single day. I was about to give up my dream, because I could not just live for myself. I still had a family."

Franz sounded as if he was going to cry. Many musicians and students present felt the same way. They knew how tough this path was, and how big was the pressure they were under. They were facing continuous fatigue all the time, waiting for the day that their talent would be revealed.

Of course, they had to admit that the difficulties they were facing was nothing compared to what Franz had experienced. Therefore, they all became more determined that they must work hard and stick to their dream until one day they could stand on the stage like Franz.

In their mind, Franz, after showing his great piano playing skills and receiving Mr. Evans' high comment, had already become a successful musician. The attention Franz was receiving now could compare to the time when Mr. Evans was spoken highly by Mr. Christopher.

Looking at the young man on the stage, Lucien was touched as well. If he had not taken the great risk improving his spiritual power, and hence strengthened his memory, even though he had the spirit library, Lucien would still have great trouble studying music at that time. Without a proper music knowledge foundation, even though Lucien had the great masterpieces in the library, he would not dare present it to the public.

Tears rose in Franz's eyes. Looking at Mr. Evans, Mr. Christopher and Mr. Victor, he added, "When I was about to give up my music dream, I decided to go to a cheap concert as my farewell to the career I love. However, I underestimated my passion toward music. When I was at the concert, when my heart was being seized by the symphonies, sonatas and concerto, I realized that my life meaning depends on music. The great pain covered me, so I was about to leave. But... at that time, I heard the breathtaking opening of Symphony of Fate! The intense rhythm and pace overwhelmed me, just like all the great burdens from my life. But in the symphony, I heard great determination... I heard heroic courage! I heard Mr. Evans asking me—are you gonna give up and yield to life? Is it life that makes you give up music or it is yourself? Are you gonna fight or retreat like a coward? When the symphony ended, I found the answer. After that day, I left my work and became a bard. Honestly speaking, I always looked down upon bards at that time... Every time when I felt having reached my limit, I played Symphony of Fate and Pathétique for myself. Gradually, things started to pick up. I started to be able to support my family, and felt free to pursue my dream."

Franz put his right hand on his chest and bowed to Lucien with great respect, "Without you, sir, without your belief and courage in your music, I could have never gone this far. You're my true mentor, and it's my greatest honor having you here listening to my very first concert in my life. Thank you again, Mr. Evans."

Thunder-like applause echoed in the hall.

"You're the one who made the right decision," said Lucien emotionally.

Then, both Christopher and Victor also gave Franz pretty good comments.

Later, this encouraged young man revealed his unique music style in the symphony part. Although his music was still not mature, the true feelings and the great hope contained in his music were like gentle spring breeze that soothed everyone's heart.

When Lucien was attentively listening to Franz's symphony, three

ladies came into the hall: one had red hair and pouty lips; one had green eyes and looked sweet; and the black-haired one looked mature and elegant.

Felicia, Elena and Grace, after hearing the news that Lucien was back, they hurriedly arrived at the hall at the same time.

After seeing the young musician sitting at the first row, they all released a sigh of relief—it was him.

Lucien noticed that his friends had arrived. He turned around and grinned. Then, he put his finger on his lips to let the ladies remain quiet and enjoy the music first.

Felicia, the noble young lady from three years ago, now looked much more mature. Apparently, her trip with Mr. Victor had taught her a lot. Elena's appearance also changed a lot: her slightly tired-looking face and elegant updo made her look sweet and beautiful. Grace was now in a much more relaxed state after the heavy burden on her mind had been removed.

Three years had passed. Although they often saw Lucien's name on newspapers, they still felt a little strange when facing Lucien.

And Lucien felt the same way.

...

After the concert, Lucien made an appointment with Franz the next day to talk about developing music based on long verses. Then, he visited the familiar address—No. 12 Snehva Street—together with Mr. Victor and his friends. Victor was going to have a luncheon to welcome Lucien back in his place.

After Victor left to talk to his steward, Mr. Athy, Felicia and Elena, who had remained silent on their way back, finally talked to him, "Welcome back, Lucien."

It had been a long time, and they had no idea where to start and how they should talk to Lucien.

"Mr. Evans, thank you for the letter." Grace also showed her

appreciation.

Lucien smiled and started to talk about some of the interesting experiences he had during the trip. Gradually, they started to get more comfortable.

At this time, a servant opened the room door and a strong, big woman wearing a tight long dress ran in. She directly gave Lucien a big hug and sobbed, "Finally! Finally you're back! I thought you met robbers and wolves..."

After receiving the message from Victor, she hurriedly came over with Joel and Iven.

"Alisa, let go of Evans." Joel smiled, "He's not afraid of those things... And, welcome back."

The noble life did not slow down Joel's aging. Many years of hard work had brought him a few more wrinkles.

"I've been missing all of you all this time," said Lucien emotionally.

Joel said to his son, "Iven, come on... say hello to Lucien."

Iven had changed a lot. To be more specific, he should be the one who changed the most. He had now grown even a bit taller than Lucien. Looking like his elder brother and father, Iven's teenage face started to look handsome and to have beard.

Looking at Lucien, Iven looked rather shy, as if he was facing a stranger. Lowering his head, Iven said to Lucien, "Welcome back."

Three years was a long time to Iven. It was normal that a young teenager would now feel rather shy.

...

After chatting for a while, Lucien started to feel a little exhausted from facing aunt Alisa's effort to try to find him a wife and urging him to have kids, thus he excused himself to go to the washroom.

At this time, Grace followed him, "I've got something to tell you,

Mr. Evans." Grace lowered her voice a lot.

"Yes?" Lucien was a bit surprised.

"After I came to Aalto, once there was a clown-looking man secretly asking me about you." Grace came to the point directly.

Chapter 288: Testing

"A clown-looking man? What did he ask you?" Lucien frowned. He wondered if someone here had known the fact that he was a sorcerer already.

Grace shook her head seriously, "I have no idea who he is. His creepy look made me beyond nervous. I'm sorry, Mr. Evans... I failed to resist... He asked me how I met you in Sturk, how I got your help and how you introduced me to Mr. Christopher and Victor. Right... he also asked me whether at that time there was someone else with you... I'm really, really sorry, Mr. Evans... I was afraid that he might kill me, so I told him all of it. I knew this might bring you trouble, but I really could not control myself at that time..." apologized Grace sincerely.

Lucien listened carefully and slightly nodded, "In my eyes, this might bring trouble to you. Now, someone else has known that you once used my name to promote yourself without my permission. But since this thing happened a long time ago and now you're already a well-known musician, I can earn some good reputation out of it. Other people'll know me as being generous and forgiving."

Grace grinned and then she said, "Fortunately, I did not tell the clown that, in order to have your forgiveness, I was asked by you to send the message to Granneuve. Instead, I told him that you had mercy on me, and... and we spent a night together... I told him so because I was afraid that he would not believe it that you forgave me just because of generosity."

When she was saying, Grace carefully observed Lucien's facial expression.

Lucien responded seriously, "There was nothing really to hide. I was just trying to help a friend of mine reach Mr. Granneuve at that time. What you said can do no harm to my reputation."

As long as Viscount Wright was still there, and as long as Granneuve was still hiding his true identity properly, even if Grace

told the stranger the whole story, they should be fine. Lucien told Grace to keep this a secret at that time mainly for being careful with Granneuve.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Evans. I was the one who had a dark mind." Grace hurriedly apologized again, "I thought hiding this secret for you was very important, as you asked me to do so."

"It's okay." Lucien's facial expression was kind, "I understand. Just don't do this ever again."

"You're definitely a generous and forgiving musician." Grace relaxed a little, "I have to go back to the living room now, or they would think there's really something between us."

Watching Grace leaving the corridor, Lucien's put on a calm smile.

In his mind, Grace was never a strong-willed person. Instead, although she was relatively talented in music and piano playing, she could fall prey to temptation from time to time. Also, Lucien did not think Grace would put her life under risk because of her appreciation toward Lucien.

Therefore, Lucien would not believe that Grace was able to hide the key part in front of the life-threatening danger.

Going into the washroom, Lucien thought to himself, "Night Watch? An investigator from the Hand of Paleness, or Argent Horn? An intelligence man from the duchy?"

Lucien reasoned that the man should not be an investigator from Argent Horn because Argent Horn would not wait until Grace came to Aalto.

Also, because the intelligence department of the duchy was now under Natasha's control, there was no need for her to investigate Grace.

For the remaining two, either Night Watch or Hand of Paleness came undoubtedly without good intentions. Still, since when they noticed the connection? What happened over the Feast of Death should only be among the necromancers and Viscount Carendia.

Therefore, Lucien made an rough conclusion. He believed that those people still had not got accurate evidence to prove that the great musician was a sorcerer, or he would not be able to enjoy the temporary peace right now.

Wiping his hands with the tissue, Lucien put aside his many thoughts and went back to the living room.

...

Over the pleasant lunch time.

"Lucien, so, aside from Moonlight and Storm, do you have other new compositions?" Victor took a sip at his wine and smiled, "I'm sure folk music has greatly inspired you. We're all looking forward to it..."

Hearing what Victor said, all of the people around the table looked at Lucien with great expectation, except Iven, who was still sticking to dinning manner in a restrained way.

"I do have another two pieces of symphony. One of them is almost done, but still requires some final touches according to the outcome of the band performance," Lucien answered, while thinking about what happened earlier. "Because the inspiration comes from folk music, the new symphony has a less strict structure. Maybe it will receive broad criticism."

Because of their conversation before lunch, Felicia now felt more comfortable talking to Lucien, "Among the many titles you have, Lucien, I like the Innovation the most. We're always expecting you to create something new, instead of sticking to the common path."

Three years later, she was now more approachable as a noble lady, and also more humorous now.

"Yes, Evans, I'm really looking forward to your new symphony. Your aunt and I grew up in the south of the duchy, and we've never really left Aalto after we had decided to live here. So I really don't have many chances of learning music from other countries." Talking about music, Joel felt sincerely happy, as his face was glowing with

excitement.

As a common instrumentalist, Elena was still shy to talk in front of other people. After they all made their comments, Elena asked Lucien with a sweet smile, "What about the other music piece? Are you going to hold your coming-back concert until after you finish it?"

For a great musician like Lucien, as long as he wanted to hold a concert, the Psalm Hall was always available.

All of them looked at Lucien, and even Iven also put down his folk and knife.

"It's almost there, but I still need some time... Maybe two or three weeks..." said Lucien, whose mind was full of thoughts about the clown.

"Awesome!" said Grace excitedly. "There're countless people waiting for your second concert."

Lucien's relatives and friends around the table all grinned and nodded.

After this lunch, the news that the talented young musician, Lucien Evans, was going to hold his second concert in a month would be known by everyone in Aalto.

...

After saying goodbye to Elena, Grace came back to the garden villa she rented in Gesu. In Sturk, she had saved quite a sum of money.

Ignoring her servants' greetings, Grace hurriedly walked to her bedroom and locked herself in the room.

As soon as she closed the door, Grace collapsed in the bed. Extremely fine black threads retreated from her body like tides.

After a while, Grace left the bed and murmured to herself, "Why do I feel so tired today? Did I get too excited seeing Mr. Evans? Why was I acting like that toward him? In my mind, I was trying to..."

seduce him...? That's not right... Although I admire him, I'm actually also afraid of him..."

...

In a random house.

A grinning clown face suddenly took several gasps. It was very consuming controlling a person remotely for a long time.

"Leader, did you find anything?" A gentle female voice asked eagerly.

Chapter 289: Seizing the Chance

The creepy smile on the clown mask never changed, but the voice coming from behind it was rather deep, "Not really. Lucien Evans seemed to be quite frank and open with why he sent the message to Granneuve using Grace. Maybe he's not the one we are looking for."

"You really think so? He is the only one we can investigate right now who is directly related to Professor," said the battle priest, Juliana, who lowered her head in dismay and held some of her black hair in her hand unconsciously.

Professor was just a code name, and it had not been used much anymore. If they lost the clue here, they had to rely on using the spies in the Congress of Magic to steal files for them, which the grand cardinals would never allow them to, since it was such a waste of resources.

Minsk, the Red Dragon, growled like a real dragon: "Impossible! Lucien Evans for sure has something to do with Professor! At least he knows who Professor is! Professor first appeared because there were apprentices asking him information. Then Professor dragged us into the fight against Argent Horn. He killed the traitor, and also, Lucien Evans' uncle and aunt were rescued. During Lucien's absence, Professor never showed up again..."

Hearing Minsk's words, both Juliana and Lend slightly shook their heads. Minsk was just trying to justify his opinion, and what he said was not completely true. For example, after killing the traitor, Professor had already never showed up, and Lucien left Aalto almost half a year later.

"Although Minsk's reasoning isn't that persuading, we shall not forget the message from Djibouti parish. Felipe and Professor, the two famous men on the Cleansing List, once showed up together on the land once possessed by Wilfred," said Clown.

Before, the Church did not know about the Feast of Death. However, the fact that Felipe forced his way through Storm Strait

leading a whole bunch of sorcerers pissed the Church off, and they also noticed that they were all necromancers following the ancient magic system, thus the Church started to intensively investigate the area once possessed by Wilfred, since it was the only place that could gather so many necromancers.

Even if Felipe did good preparation before they set off, facing the Church's focused searching, finally a magic apprentice was caught by the Night Watch. Therefore, although the Inquisition

failed to get the name list for the Feast of Death, they still got the basic information from the apprentice—there were two famous men attending the event. One was Hand of Rehabilitation, and the other was Professor.

Involving two men on the Cleansing List, Djibouti parish sent the information to the Holy City, Lance. Then, the cardinal in charge passed on the message to all the parishes and inquisitions.

"Others may not know, but we've been watching Lucien Evans for so long! He was in Djibouti at the same time, exactly in the Wilfred area! That was the exact time when Professor attended the Feast of Death!" Clown raised his voice angrily, "But when we reported this to the Violet Inquisition, they did not care at all! They said that there was not enough evidence, and they even did not bother doing some investigation! Don't you know why?"

"I think, like the inquisitor said, the biggest chance should be that the princess sent Professor to protect Lucien Evans on the way," said Lend, the Devil Hunter Knight, who was not as emotive as Clown.

A parish's inquisition had three main positions—Executer, Censor and Arbiter. However, powerful parishes, in order to control all the inquisitions, always sent a cardinal to each inquisition, who was the one who really got the power.

Minsk growled, "Plus all the coincidences? If Lucian Evans doesn't have anything to do with the Professor, I'm willing to be sent to hell! Lend, I'm telling you... those people in the inquisition do not want to piss off the princess... that's why. Princess Natasha was a faithful follower, the future duchess of Violet, an important weight

in balancing the power between the nobles and the Church! The inquisition just won't investigate her sweet lover just because a middle-rank mage killed some useless night watchers!"

"You tell me, Lend... Have you forgotten Salvador's death? He died on his way saving Natasha, and his body was reduced to ashes!" said Clown with a sad voice, "At that time, only a few grand knights were chasing after Natasha. Salvador could fly, and he had powerful divine items, but he was just killed like that, before anyone could come to help. Guess who he met at that time, and who killed him?"

The muscles of Lend's face twitched a bit and he buried his head. "I don't know."

Hearing Clown's words, Juliana was the saddest one among all the night watchers. She sobbed, "No inquisition cares. Our leader, a level five pastor died, and no one ever tried to investigate this thoroughly. The princess was only imprisoned for three years. The life of a devoted guard of God only deserve that? I chose to be a night watcher because of the sentence in the Canon—at the foot of God's throne, all his devoted lambs shall be equal. But now... I finally realized that lambs are never equal... Although I'd still rather believe that this isn't the will of God."

Hearing that, while crossing in front of their chest, they all prayed, "Only truth lives forever." The way Clown and Minsk drew the cross was closer to the classic cross before the Saint Calendar.

"Next, what should we do with Lucien Evans?" Lend calmed down a bit after praying.

Clown turned around to look at Lend. "We directly attack Lucien Evans to see if he's a sorcerer or not."

"What?!" Lend did not expect Clown to be this crazy, "This would annoy Natasha so bad. Right now she is a radiant knight with the well-known title, the Sword of Adjudication! And the Blue Tide, Camil, always follows her around. The two can directly destroy the entire Night Watch in the duchy, and the inquisition is not going to protect us for sure..."

After becoming a radiant knight, Natasha also got her own honor title.

Clown laughed, like a real creepy clown, "Sure, they can, but they cannot always keep an eye on Lucien. I'm a level five grand knight, I have my own way of doing this. No matter who Natasha sent to protect Lucien in Aalto, they should hardly be above grand knight level. They would not notice how I approach Lucien. Don't forget how they called me before—I was the Killing Puppet in the Dark Mountain Range. All I need to do is to secretly enter his place, control his mind and get the information I want. If Lucien only has the power of a knight in training like what we know about him, this should be just a piece of cake. If he casts magic spells, that's exactly what we're waiting for..."

Looking at the creepy clown mask, Lend could not say no. He nodded lightly.

...

A few days later, late at night.

An almost invisible figure secretly entered the garden villa owned by Lord John. The guards from the Intelligence Department did not notice anything special.

On the corridor, a maid was walking downstairs holding a candlestick. Earlier today, she left a piece of her accessory in the living room, so she hurriedly got back and tried to find it back.

The dim candle light and the early spring temperature made the maid a little scared. Suddenly, the wind lightly swayed the curtain and the maid shivered. She saw some illusion-like figure flashing across, like a ghost!

However, a second later, when the maid looked around, there was nothing there.

The maid hurriedly went back to her room, drawing a cross in front of her chest. She decided to come to the living room the next day.

The door of the guest room where Lucien lived opened silently, and

a creepy clown mask appeared in the darkness.

Clown, wearing a colorful costume and plain black gloves, lifted his hands and started to move his fingers like playing piano, as if he was looking for the invisible threads in the air.

Suddenly, in the bed, Lucien's body bounced up! His arms and legs looked distorted. However, silver light shimmered around his hands, and the invisible threads were pulled apart.

"Level five grand knight?" Clown was very surprised. At one moment, he got nervous, because facing a grand knight, he might not have much chance to win.

However, soon Clown realized that the power came from an extraordinary item that Lucien was wearing. No matter who, either Professor or Natasha, gave Lucien this, that was very generous.

Seizing the chance. Lucien's left hand pulled apart the threads on his throat and shouted out loud:

"Assassin!"

The young musician's voice spread well.

Although he tried, Clown failed to completely control the musician. Instead, Lucien managed to grab the blue sword to protect himself from the many threads in the air.

Knowing that the power only came from a magic or divine item, Clown was confident that he still had the chance to fulfill his task.

However, the secret guards from Intelligence Department, before Juliana and Minsk could do anything, had already lit the signal flare. The firework light lit up the sky.

Staring at Lucien's face for two seconds, Clown decisively turned around and jumped out of the window. He ran as fast as he could in the darkness, since he knew that if he wasted another second, the princess or Camil would definitely come after him.

Lucien did not use magic. Right now he was using the sword to cut

the puppet threads. The threads could not only control one's body, but could also poke into the body to hurt the organs.

"Are you alright, Mr. Evans?" A guard ran into his room and asked concernedly.

A thought flashing across, Lucien started coughing hard to let the blood come out from his throat, "I'm okay... just some small injuries..."

Chapter 290: The Last Movemen

Seeing that the corner of Mr. Evans' mouth, chin and chest were covered with blood, the guard insisted, "Hold on there, Mr. Evans. Have you got any medical potions? I have one here. Take it. If you still don't feel good, I'll ask for the bishop's help from the Golden Cathedral!"

Of course Lucien did not want the bishop to come over, so he painfully took out a bottle of healing potion and slowly drank it. Then, he waved his hand and said, "Not a problem at all. I'm also a knight. No worries. The assassin didn't really hurt me."

Hearing that Lucien was still able to talk fine but only coughing a bit, the guard felt more relaxed. He pulled out his sword and stayed with Lucien, in case there would be another assassin coming for Mr. Evans.

The guard also reminded Lucien, "Mr. Evans, some dark powers are creepy. Although sometimes one doesn't feel badly injured, one's organs could be gradually corrupted or poisoned. And when it shows, it'll be too late. Even a red-robed cardinal would not be able to do anything with it. So, Mr. Evans, you probably still want to have a bishop to check it for you tomorrow."

"Thank you. We'll see then." Lucien pretended to be rather stubborn.

"Alright." nodded the guard.

Many people were just like this. They were afraid of death, but they were also afraid of visiting doctors or bishops. They worried that they might have some problems, but they also did not want to know what problems they had.

A while later, Alisa and Joel, followed by their guards, rushed into Lucien's room. Seeing that Lucien was okay, they released a long sigh of relief.

"Who's the bastard?! The bastard wanted to kill you?! You're only a musician..." Alisa had tears in her eyes, "Wait... Did one of your

competitors send the assassin?"

"Stop, Alisa. It's impossible. No musician could afford an assassin of a grand knight level." Joel got some information from the guard, "What did you see, Evans?"

At this time, Natasha and Camil arrived. Natasha smelled the air, then she became really serious, "Lucien, did you see the assassin?"

"I saw only a figure... It felt familiar... Maybe he's from Argent Horn." In front of other people, Lucien did not say exactly what he saw. He put the blame on Argent Horn because of what happened before.

"Argent Horn?!" Alisa's face turned pale, and she took a step backwards. She could never forget the day when one of her fingers was cut off.

Joel's fists tightened. His deep voice sounded extremely angry, "They're still coming after you..."

In fact, Argent Horn really did not have anything to do with that.

After sending Joel and Alisa back to their room and dismissing all the guards, Natasha looked at Lucien and asked with a bit of a smile on her face, "So, what happened? Was there really an assassin? Or it was just part of your plan to kill the musician identity?"

"There was really an assassin. Probably a level five grand knight, wearing black gloves and a clown mask," said Lucien honestly.

"Ummm... sounds familiar..."

"The night watchers' leader, Clown," said Camil seriously. "I've seen him a couple of times."

A night watcher's information was strictly sealed, and only the leaders of an inquisition or cardinals of a parish could have access to it. Night watchers called each other by their pseudonyms.

Those night watchers had been walking in the darkness for a long time, shading their faces with masks and hoods. So Natasha was not

sure who Clown was, and neither did Lucien. Lucien had no idea, during the fight between Argent Horn and the Night Watch, how many night watchers actually survived and who they were.

"I see..." Lucien had mixed feelings hearing that. On one hand, he felt worried, since he knew how those night watchers would act once he became their target; On the other hand, he also felt a bit relieved, because the way Clown came over and tried to test him showed the fact that those cardinals were not part of this thing, or those cardinals could easily use divine spells to examine Lucien, say, over a feast or concert, and directly draw the conclusion.

"He's one of the night watchers who survived that night in Melzer Black Forest," said Camil with a cold face. She totally disliked Professor.

"Now I remember..." Natasha clapped her hands.

Lucien finally realized why those night watchers were stilling tracking him. The loss he brought to the night watchers was massive.

"This can be a good thing. I was going to have someone else conduct the concert to make people know you're sick badly. Then, after the concert, we would be able to announce your death," said Natasha. "So you won't be checked by some red-robed cardinals who suspected you during the concert. Now, we do not need to bother."

"That's good. Although I could suppress the power in my soul using Blessing in the Psalm Hall in front of those red-robed cardinals, in front of Sard, the Saint Cardinal, I won't say I'm gonna be lucky. Last time when I saw him I was only an apprentice, so the difference could be ignored, but now I'm a fourth-circle. I really don't feel secure standing in front of him..."

Natasha looked serious, "Since the Grand Cross collapsed, the Saint Cardinal never really showed up again over any events or concerts. He only attended the grand cardinal conclave once. So, you don't need to worry. Even if he comes, you still have enough time to pretend to be sick and have someone else conduct for you."

She seemed to worry about Sard's health condition.

Then, Natasha's facial expression changed. Rubbing her chin, she asked surprisedly, "Wait... You said you are... a fourth-circle sorcerer?"

Because this was related to the secret of the World of Souls and Rhine, Lucien did not mention this to Natasha during their conversation.

"Sometimes great danger could awaken one's soul potential, like what happened to me down in the sewers," explained Lucien, which was quite a good excuse.

"Good for you! You're still two months away from turning twenty-one, but you're already a fourth-circle! Even in the a hundred years when the Congress has been producing lots of talents, you're one of the most outstanding ones!" Natasha felt sincerely happy for her friend, "You must have great gift in arcana, and I'm sure your future path will be even brighter."

Lucien smiled, "This is nothing compared to what you've achieved. I remember that when you were eighteen, you were already a grand knight, and then you've reached level five when you were twenty-one."

"I'm glad to hear your compliment, Lucien. But for knights, although strong willpower and knight spirit are important, the Blessing also plays a significant role. I was trained in a hard way, but my mixed Blessings helped me more at that time. So I would say that I was more proud when I became a radiant knight, which was better evidence to show my willpower," said Natasha honestly.

Lucien grinned, "There are people who are born with mixed Blessings but never manage to awaken the power."

"Sure, I'm gifted as a knight." said Natasha proudly.

Then they started to talk about their following plan.

...

In a house.

Wearing the creepy mask, Clown entered the chamber gloomily.

"Leader, what did the Arbiter say?" asked Juliana hurriedly.

Lend and Minsk also looked at Clown in a worried way.

It was totally out of Clown's expectation that Lucien had a very precious level five extraordinary quality item and a sword of at least fourth level with him. Clown failed. What was worse was that Lucien saw him, his mask and black gloves. The inquisition soon received Natasha's serious complaint.

Clown shook his head, "The Arbiter said it was Argent Horn pretending to be a night watcher. After all, they don't want this to be known by more people. They want to hide it as much as possible. But the Arbiter also did not listen to me. He gave me the most sever warning. If this happens a second time, I'm gonna be put on the secret court."

"Are we giving up just like this?" Other night watchers asked, feeling rather reluctant.

Clown looked out of the window and said in a low voice, "I awakened in the darkness. Following God's words, I became a night watcher. No matter how crazy I was, ever since I became a night watcher, I've been fighting against the evil. So, even if I cannot get the support from the Church, I won't give up. I cannot just let Professor enjoy his life after killing so many of us. My belief won't let me give up."

At first, Clown felt that Professor made him lose his face, but now, his primal belief and faith was challenged.

The other three also agreed.

Clown turned around and looked at them, "Okay. Then we'll wait until another chance comes."

...

Lucien's bad cough made Franz, who was helping Lucien with the lyrics using a long verse, feel very concerned.

"Shall we take a break, sir?" asked Franz. "We can continue when you feel better."

Lucien's face was pale, but he shook his head firmly, "The last movement is almost there, and I feel the even stronger passion and inspiration coming out from my life. I don't want to stop, and I can't. You understand, Franz?"

Chapter 291: Everyone's Waiting

Chapter 291: Everyone's Waiting

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Franz totally understood. When he was under poor health condition, many times he still pushed himself to an even further limit just because the passion and inspiration could not be shut down at that moment.

Therefore, Franz nodded with a sincere smile, "I see, Mr. Evans. I'll try my best to help you. When I first heard the fourth movement of the symphony, the chorus movement, I was totally shocked by its beauty and grandness. And the idea of adding chorus in a symphony is a great innovation! It's my great pleasure to be part of this helping you complete this masterpiece. It's gonna be one of the most memorable things in my life."

In order to fit the long verse in, to avoid those parts that were disrespectful to God, and to keep its original linguistic beauty, Lucien and Franz had spent a lot of time and thoughts.

Franz was a very dedicated musician and a great fan of Lucien. In front of his idol, Franz praised the movement with great excitement.

Lucien coughed hard and then asked in an excited way, which was a bit strange, "Thank you, Franz! Now our job's almost done! Then, the lead singer and the chorus shall start practising and provide us with feedback. Do you think it's... too hard?"

Franz shook his head, "It's hard, but I wouldn't say it's too hard. Any changes would take the beauty away from the movement. A great singer and a chorus should be able to handle it."

"I think so too." Lucien grinned.

At this time, someone knocked at the room door, and then the door was gently opened. It was Victor. Lucien and Franz were now in the piano room of the Musicians' Association, on the fourth floor.

“Mr. Victor, we just finished our work.” Lucien smiled.

“I really picked a good time. Congratulations, Evans.” Victor smiled. Then he took a step aside and introduced, “This is Mr. Fabbrini, a great singer. Mr. Fabbrini’s the lead singer of the Golden Cathedral Chorus.”

Before Ode to Joy (The Symphony No. 9 in D minor from Ludwig van Beethoven) was completed, Lucien asked for Victor’s help to find him a great singer and a chorus.

Mr. Fabbrini was in his early twenties, had blue eyes and blond hair, looking like an angel serving the God of Truth. Unlike most men, Fabbrini was wearing light make up. In his fancy clothes, Mr. Fabbrini had this sense of feminine beauty.

Lucien was not too surprised, because most outstanding musicians were castrati, not to mention a lead singer of the Golden Cathedral Chorus.

Lucien smiled, “Nice to meet you, Mr. Fabbrini. Hope we can work well together.”

Here in this world, castrati were very popular. A countess in Gustav crazily loved their voice and once even started a war for a castrato.

“Mr. Evans, I’m going to meet the chorus and we’ll be waiting for you there in the concert hall. You don’t look very well, sir. Please take care,” said Fabbrini in his gentle voice.

After Fabbrini left, Lucien started coughing very badly, as if his lungs were going to come out.

“Are you alright? You still haven’t recovered, have you?” asked Victor concernedly. “Maybe we can put off the concert until you feel better.”

Lucien shook his head firmly, “It’s okay, Mr. Victor. I’m a knight, so it shouldn’t be a problem.”

Maybe the fact that Lucien was a knight really assured Victor, so he nodded, “We’re both musicians, so I do understand. But as your

teacher, I still think having a doctor come over is necessary.”

“I will. Thank you, Mr. Victor.” Lucien was confident that he could deceive a doctor and have the doctor believe that although the injury could not be cured shortly, it would not be a life risk.

...

After more than a week, in the middle of the Month of Flower. In the concert hall on the fifth floor of the Musicians’ Association.

“How many times do I have to tell you, Fabbrini?!” Lucien pretended that he was a bit out of control, “Why do you keep making mistakes here?”

Fabbrini looked at Lucien’s pale face and hurriedly explained, with tears in his eyes, “Mr. Evans... This part’s too challenging... I need... need more practice...”

“But we’ve practiced a lot!” Lucien waved his arms.

Fabbrini took a deep breath and said, “Still not enough, sir. Please give me some more time, or maybe you can alter this part to make it simpler.”

“No way! This is perfect, and I’ll never allow it to be ruined! Fabbrini, just try harder. I believe you can do this! We can put off the concert a few days as long as...” Lucien started coughing very bad. And he squatted down beside the stage.

Franz hurriedly lent a hand to Lucien. Fabbrini also comforted him, “I’ll try even harder, Mr. Evans. I won’t let you down.”

At the end of this rehearsal, when he walked down the stage, Fabbrini, in his black shirt embroidered with golden threads, somehow looked back at the stage, as if he could still see Mr. Lucien standing there, acting crazily but full of passion.

...

“...Maybe at that time, Mr. Evans already had the hunch, so he was that pushy and strict, which was not at all like how people

commented on him as being polite and gentle.” A few years later, Fabbrini recalled what he remembered of Mr. Evans when preparing the concert. “He was that dedicated, that hard-working, and that crazy... as if he was trying to burst out all the energy and radiance left in his life to leave no regret. I was blessed by God, so I was lucky to know Mr. Evans at that time, and finished the symphony with him. I saw, as the brilliant musician he was, his great passion towards music, and his piety to God.”

...

Glinton, the merchant that Lucien met in Massawa town, headed for the north after leaving Aalto.

In the Kingdom of Syracuse, he sold all his goods and then again bought some Syracuse goods, ready to leave for the fortress in the north of Violet.

This morning, when he was having his greasy breakfast, a glance at the newspaper suddenly stopped him from cutting the brisket. He could not believe his eyes, and he double checked a few times.

He was very surprised, but also a bit upset. He did not expect that Mr. Evans would come back as soon as he left Aalto.

“May twenty-sixth... the Psalm Hall... ‘Return’ Concert...” Glinton murmured to himself. He wondered if he should spend sixteen days going back to Aalto. Right now, it was already May fifteenth.

Putting down knife and fork, he took a few steps back and forth. Then he finally made the decision. He had missed Mr. Evans’ first concert, so there was no way that he was going to miss the second one, not to mention the fact that Mr. Evans just came back from his three-year trip.

Glinton decided to leave right now and leave the goods to his butler. He was not going to sit in a coach, but would ride with several guards. If he was quick enough, eleven days probably would be enough. Knowing quite a few nobles, Glinton was confident that he should be able to get a ticket. At least, he should try.

...

When Glinton arrived in Aalto, it was already May twenty-eighth, thirteen days later.

He was not upset at all, because he heard that the concert had been put off to June first.

Without taking any rest, Glinton directly headed for the Psalm Hall.

“What? Sold out? But... but there’re still four days!” Glinton was a bit pissed off, “I know Knight Mitch of the Hayne family, and...”

Glinton started listing.

The man sitting in the ticket office pointed at the many citizens around and said, “I’m sorry, sir. The tickets are sold out. There are just too many people waiting for the concert, and as far as I know, even Knight Mitch also failed to get a ticket.”

Glinton was very discouraged. Looking back, he saw crowds around the Psalm Hall.

In the corner, a journalist from Aalto Weekly quickly wrote down what he saw on his notebook, “Except for Aalto Music Festival, we’ve never seen a concert like this that can attract these many people to come to Aalto, as if they have forgotten that the Psalm Hall tickets are not usually for common folks...”

“Lucien Evans has become an idol that the whole city or even the whole duchy has been crazy about...”

“This has become a phenomenon. Maybe we should create a new word for this...”

Chapter 292: Moonlight on Everyone's Hear

Chapter 292: Moonlight on Everyone's Heart

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Seeing the crowd, Glinton was very upset. It was totally not fair that those important nobles and pastors were directly invited to the concert without buying tickets.

Turning around, Glinton saw the grand Psalm Hall. For the first time, he felt the coldness underneath its magnificent appearance. This place was never for the devoted followers, but for those nobles and pastors up there.

Glinton murmured to himself, "Not all lambs are equal..."

When most of the people were leaving with great disappointment, a black horse rushed over here and gradually stopped in front of them.

Then the knight on the horse said out aloud,

"All civilians, Her Highness, Princess Natasha, Violet Duchess, believes that music should not only belong to nobles, but for everyone. Therefore, Her Highness has decided to offer support at her own cost to the Church and open the divine circles for Mr. Lucien Evans' return concert on the Municipal Square, so that everyone could enjoy the great music here in the city of music!"

The crowd suddenly became quiet, and then people wild with joy started to cheer like crazy.

"Her great Highness!"

"God bless you, Highness!"

"Long live her Highness! Long live Violet!"

Among the people, Ginton was very excited as well that he also cheered together with them. He was glad that he made the right decision to come back to Aalto.

...

The first day of June was a happy day, at least for people in Aalto.

After welcoming the grand duke, the princess, Mr. Christopher, President Othello, and Mr. Victor, Lucien was now preparing at the backstage surrounded by Franz, Grace, Fabbrini and some of the instrumentalists who he was familiar with.

Lucien picked the band which once worked with him before, but the lead instrumentalist was no longer Rhine.

A bit away from Lucien stood other instrumentalists, castrati, and kids from the choir.

“Mr. Evans, I can already imagine the great shock that the Symphony in D minor would bring to the audience. I can’t wait to step on the stage. God bless us. It’s is the most breathtaking music piece I’ve ever heard! I’m afraid I might have tears in my eyes later...” said Fabbrini out of great excitement before the performance.

Tonight, Fabbrini was wearing a red bow tie, and his lips were as red as fire.

The symphony Fabbrini was speaking highly of was called Ode to Joy, by Lucien Evans. As their several rehearsals went better and better, Fabbrini’s heart was now filled with admiration toward it.

Hearing Fabbrini’s comment, Grace looked at Lucien out of curiosity, “Is it that impressive? It seems that Ode to Joy can win over Fate?”

“They’re different. People might have different opinions. But I do think it’s a great music piece.” Lucien smiled, as if he was commenting on someone else’s music.

Franz relieved a long sigh and said, “Actually, I was quite worried

about the Symphony in E minor would not be accepted by most musicians and critics, although I like it quite a lot, especially the beginning of the second movement. I mean... its structure's just too advanced to be recognized. But now because we have Ode to Joy as the finale, everything will be just fine."

"Music comes from one's heart, and structure is only a tool," explained Lucien. "When the tool starts to become a burden, we shall be brave to get rid of it and find a new one."

Lucien was actually talking about the transition from classical music to romantic music.

In fact, compared to most music works in the later period of Romanticism, Antonín Dvořák's New World Symphony, which had been renamed here by Lucien as New Country Symphony, was already close to traditional classical music. After all, Antonín Dvořák was still deeply influenced by classical music.

Hearing Lucien's words, Franz nodded thoughtfully. Maybe he was reflecting on his own composition.

The violoncellist, Thomas, also commented, "I think New Country Symphony's a great piece of work. Although it can receive some negative comments, I believe anyone who really understood music and appreciates its beauty can see the great value in it. Time will prove that New Country Symphony is a masterpiece. Both Ode to Joy and New Country Symphony are masterpieces, I should say. You have my greatest respect because of your courage for inspiration and revolution, Mr. Evans."

Thomas was very sincere, and he believed that the concert would be the greatest success ever. He also could see how much he was going to benefit from this concert. After playing with Mr. Victor and Evans, the band Thomas was in was now already the best one outside of the palace, and also the most expensive one.

"Thank you all for the encouraging comments, but we still have to see after the concert." Lucien smiled, "It's time now. Let's go."

After taking a few steps, Lucien added with emotion, "In the

following four hours, let's forget everything, and live for music!"

"Live for music!" All the instrumentalists, band members, and singers responded aloud.

Lucien adjusted his bow tie and grabbed the baton. But at this time, he suddenly started coughing badly.

"Mr. Evans?! Are you alright?"

Lucien gasped, then waved his hand, "I'm okay. It's been a while like this. I'm fine. Let the band out to get prepared first."

"You sure, Mr. Evans?" Thomas did not leave with the band but asked again out of concern.

Lucien took out a small bottle of pink potion and drank it all. Then, his face was no longer pale. He said to Thomas, "I've got the potion. Don't worry."

Seeing that Lucien was still able to talk fluently, Thomas was relieved. Then, he left the backstage to get prepared.

After Thomas left, Fabbrini asked gently, "Mr. Evans... This... doesn't look like some simple potion for cough-relieving. A potion cannot work this fast."

As the lead singer of the Church's chorus, he knew more than most people.

Lucien was now totally refreshed, and he said to Fabbrini with a smile, "A bit something else in it to bring out the best of me in the following four hours. It's okay. I'll take a good rest after the concert."

Then Lucien grabbed the baton and walked out of the backstage in an elegant manner, leaving the rest of the people behind with a straight and impressive figure.

Fabbrini did not say anything for a while. Mr. Evans' determined smile was still in front of his eyes.

...

On the municipal square, when people saw Lucien walking to the center of the stage in the Psalm Hall, they started to applaud, and then the applause became louder and louder. No matter if Mr. Lucien Evans could hear this or not, all of the people were expressing their joy and excitement. They were welcoming the talented young musician, and also showing their gratefulness to Her Highness' generosity.

In the history of Aalto, there was never a concert like this that could receive such warm applause before it even started!

Glinton was now standing along the edge of the square. Looking at the crystal screen, he felt joy and was very satisfied. Finally, he could be here and enjoy Mr. Evans' live performance with his own ears and eyes.

The repertoire was already available: the concert would start with the famous Symphony of Fate, followed by a piano solo of Moonlight and Pathétique. Next, Mr. Lucien Evans was going to show his playing skills by doing an improvisation playing. Then it would be the symphony called New Country, and later Ode to Joy, the Symphony in D Minor, would serve as the ending of the concert.

When the first several music notes jumped out, the familiar melody awakened everyone. They became very quiet, waiting for the feast of music.

After Symphony of Fate, Christopher smiled to Victor and said, "After the three years, now Evans' conducting is even better. He used to be a bit crazy when conducting, but now he knows where to let the emotions out and when to restrain them. His personal features are still there, and serves a better support and guidance of Fate."

Lucien's conducting was no longer inexperienced but mature. Now his conducting matched the great symphony piece.

"He's the one who never forgets to work hard." Victor also spoke highly of his own student, "Among the so many times Fate was

played, only when Lucien conducted did the music have the most impacting power.”

After a ten minute break, the band left the stage for now. The whole stage was left with a black piano and Lucien, who also dressed in black.

The divine power circle focused on Lucien, covering Lucien with a dim layer of light.

Sitting in front of the piano, Lucien closed his eyes. He knew that this concert was a farewell to the people who liked him. In order to make sure that his relatives and friends were safe, and knowing that, sooner or later, his name would be put on the Cleansing List, he had to let the young musician die, and say goodbye.

He did not know what kind of choices uncle Joel, aunt Alisa, John, and Iven would make, and he was also not sure whether if one day he could still be able to see Victor, Elena and all his friends again. He had no idea whether one day he would still be able to come back to Aalto without hiding himself carefully...

Maybe... maybe after becoming a senior-rank mage, Lucien would be able to take a look at them from afar...

The great sorrow seized Lucien's heart, and his hands pressed down on the piano. The peaceful and gentle melody flowed like a stream in the Psalm Hall, and it brought everyone back to the lake that was shining under the moonlight, just like a dream.

People were immersed in the peace and quietness. They were enjoying every second of the heartfelt sweetness, gracefulness, and also sorrow.

Underneath the sweetness of the melody, they did somehow feel sad.

Felicia noticed that Elena, who was sitting next to her, wiped the tears from the corner of her eye and murmured, “I don't know why but... I feel like crying...”

Chapter 293: A Master's Piano Playing

The touching melody revealed the complicated emotions and feelings in Lucien's mind perfectly: there was tenderness, melancholy, and lots of thoughts, just like a shimmering lake under moonlight, bringing the audience to a dream-like world filled with Lucien's sentiments.

People forgot the anxiety and agitation they were usually under most of the time and started to contemplate. Many had tears in their eyes...

The first movement ended, but the cheerful second movement immediately followed, as if it was comforting people's heart. The emotions changed perfectly.

Many musicians present exchanged a surprised look. They were more sensitive than those unprofessional nobles and common citizens. They had noticed that there was no pause at all between the two movements, but it brought people the excellent transition and the sense of fluency.

Those musicians did not dig into it but continued to listen to the playing carefully, because this was a great opportunity for them to listen to Mr. Lucien Evans' playing of Moonlight here on the stage. The only thing they wanted to do was to appreciate the beauty of music.

The cheerful second movement slowly became more restrained, but just when people were about to take a break to enjoy the following exciting movement, Lucien directly led them to the third movement.

The melody full of passion immediately seized people's heart, and they felt the great enthusiasm and tension, like picking flowers along the cliff.

They saw Lucien's hands jumping around and dancing on the keyboard, as if they were blessed by God with power, and therefore a touching and infectious passion flowed. His silhouette on the

stage had great charm, and the passion he had now was totally different from the mood he was under when he played the first movement, which formed a sharp contrast.

The signature high notes ended the playing. As soon as people were relieved from the intensity of Lucien's playing, warm applause followed like tides.

Betty, with a short bow on her back, said to Joanna and Simon full of joy, "Compared to Mr. Evans' playing, the versions of Moonlight that we heard before were nothing. Only Mr. Evans could present the great passion, the sadness and the joy in the song!"

In the past three years, she had grown more professional in appreciating music.

"That's true. After all, Mr. Evans is a musician, not a common instrumentalist." Joanna looked at the crystal wall on the square and smiled, "Betty, I remembered that Mr. Evans once promised you that he would play a song for you. Is it right?"

Betty's face flushed, "Don't make fun of me. I know I still have a long way to go before awakening my Blessing, but I'll work very hard!"

Lucien once promised that he would play a song for Betty if she could awaken her Blessing and become a knight.

"The Duchy of Violet is a perfect place for us to awaken our Blessings. It's very close to the Dark Mountain Range," said Simon. In the past several years, he had made much progress in training himself as a high-level squire. Now, he was much closer to awakening his Blessing.

Betty first nodded, then she looked at the young musician on the stage who was taking a short break and said with a sweet smile, "I know that Mr. Evans was just trying to encourage me. I'm not really expecting him to play for me. Having a chance like this to be on his concert is already enough for me. But I'll still work hard and always keep this encouragement in my heart."

Glinton, while applauding, said to people beside him, "It's just awesome! Listening to Mr. Evans' playing Moonlight already made me more than satisfied with this concert. I believe no one can compare with Mr. Evans when it comes to playing Moonlight! This is how a master of music plays!"

In the noble balcony in the Psalm Hall.

"I see... So there should be no pause at all between each movement. Then the contrast of different moods can be more defined and the structure can be perfect," murmured Natasha. "No wonder when I was playing, I always felt that something was missing... He did not mention this in the letter..."

"Maybe he thought that Your Highness could figure this out," joked Christopher.

Since Lucien left Aalto and started his traveling, he only wrote letters to the princess. Even those letters to his family were all first sent to Natasha and then delivered by her. Although many would concede that this was the most convenient way, there were still lots of people who believed that there was something between the young musician and the princess, just like the rumors said.

Natasha did not mind the joke but continued to talk about how one's personal style mattered when playing music with Mr. Christopher.

Hearing their discussion, the grand duke was pulled out of his sweet and sad memory brought by the music. When the grand duke looked at Natasha, his eyebrows slightly frowned but he also had a relieved look on her face.

Those musicians and instrumentalists were comparing Lucien's playing with their own versions and trying to improve their own skills, but they were not going to just copy Lucien's version because Moonlight varied in everyone's mind.

...

After taking a short break, Lucien started to play Sonata Pathétique.

It felt very familiar, but compared to the first time Lucien played the sonata, the belief that one should never give up hope despite the many great difficulties in life was more prominent, and people now also had a better understanding to appreciate the theme.

When he finished playing Sonata Pathétique, Lucien coughed hard on the stage with his right hand covering his mouth. Franz, Grace, Fabbrini and many who knew about Lucien health condition suddenly felt rather worried.

Fortunately, Lucien stopped coughing soon. With flushed cheeks, he stood up as usual and thanked the audience. Then he sat back on the piano bench.

"What is Mr. Evans going to play to show his skills?" asked Fabbrini. Because this part was a solo playing, Fabbrini had no idea what this part would be like.

He thought Franz, as Lucien's assistant, and Grace, as his student, should at least know something about it.

Franz shook his head, "Mr. Evans never rehearsed this part in front of us. No one can ask a great musician like Mr. Evans to go through the whole repertoire for the concert. So neither of us know what he is going to play."

"That's true," agreed Grace. "But the teacher said that this part is for showing a pianist's skill, so I suppose it's going to be very challenging."

At this time, the whole Psalm Hall and the square quieted down, because they saw that Lucien had put his hands on the keyboard.

Then, Lucien started to play.

Immediately, they thought that they heard countless bumble bees flying and buzzing beside their ears.

Faster and faster, the sound of bumble bees flying around filled in the space. People were shocked to see how fast Lucien's hands could move — they were too fast to belong to a human being!

Faster and faster, people started to become crazy with the great passion for music.

Although Flight of the Bumblebee lasted for only a few minutes, when Lucien pressed down the last key, people took a couple of seconds to recover and then started to cheer aloud for this great young musician!

They had never heard something like this before, but they could feel the freedom underneath the playing skills.

Seeing Lucien's excellent playing skills, those musicians including Christopher, Victor, and Othello all nodded with satisfaction, but at the same time, they felt that this part was a bit too strange and creative for them to accept for now.

Natasha, however, spoke highly of it and whistled, "Awesome! I wonder if he could be even faster!"

She understood that being fast was not all that mattered. As a radiant knight, speed was not a problem. However, if one wanted to play very fast and still bring the audience the beauty of music, this was not easy, but a great test to a musician.

...

After the solo part, the audience started to talk to each other when taking a short break, because there were still two long pieces of symphony following.

Some of them were phrasing Lucien's outstanding conducting and playing skills; some were trying to recall how fast Lucien's hands moved; and others held great admiration toward Lucien's inspiration...

Fifteen minutes later, Lucien, in a black tuxedo, came back to the stage. He first bowed to the audience, then came to stand in front of the band.

Christopher stood straight and his mind was full of expectation just as other musicians and the audience. They wondered what kind of symphony New Country was.

For music in Aalto, symphony was the mainstream, the most shining and precious gem on the crown of music.

Lucien slightly closed his eyes, and the baton in his right hand started to stir. The band followed his instruction and started to play. The gentle but profound melody was like a long story gradually unfolded.

This was Lucien Evans' music! It seized people's heart immediately and made all the musicians present nod out of satisfaction.

The latter part of the introductory movement suddenly became intense and full of surges. The trumpets were indicating a more passionate theme of the symphony.

However, the following first movement made most musicians frown, as it was just so folk-music style and away from the traditional symphony structure.

Chapter 294: Nostalgia

Chapter 294: Nostalgia

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Facing this unique style, most musicians subconsciously felt a little bit uncomfortable. However, the composer was Lucien Evans, one of the top musicians, known for his spirit of reform and innovation, so they still listened very carefully.

Soon, most musicians who were not originally from Aalto found that the passion in the music was contagious. It reminded them of the busy life they lived when they first arrived in Aalto.

The life back in the days was beyond busy. They had to run around every day just to make a living as an instrumentalist. During their very limited spare time, they were either pulling hair seeking for a piece of melody or playing instruments despite the pain in their hands. They could only find peace in music.

Then, they heard a brand new style of music, which came from another country's exotic folk music. The new world of music brought the audience great shock, just like when they first arrived in Aalto and heard the music there. The totally different style let them have a new understanding of music and expanded their horizon like never before.

Christopher's knitted brows gradually unfolded. He had lots of memories in his mind.

With his music dream, Christopher left his hometown and finally arrived in Aalto after going through great difficulty. However, Aalto was a place that never lacked talented musicians and instrumentalists. Christopher knew it well that without outstanding talent and accomplished playing skills, it was going to be very hard for him to stay here in this city.

Therefore, Christopher had no choice but to play music on street. At that time, he lived on very little money given by strangers. During

the countless nights, Christopher studied the music from Aalto crazily. At the same time, he was also saving money to learn how to read and to borrow books.

By chance, he met Mr. Lessing, a person who changed his life completely and opened the gate toward symphony for him.

When he first listened to a symphony, he felt that he had arrived in a brand new country.

Christopher had to say that Lucien's music perfectly reminded him of his past experience, Despite the stereotype he had in his mind towards the music style.

Then the band started to play together. The melody was full of passion like strong waves, and the two secondary themes were revealed. Flute and oboes brought out the sadness and feeling of alienation in the two themes.

The new structure of the music surprised the musicians present. At the end of the first movement, they finally found how the recapitulation part was arranged in such a unique way. After several turns and delays, the recapitulation part finally started.

Most nobles and common folks did not have this strict sense of structure. Although they had some feeling that this symphony was different from the ones they listened to before, and some could even tell which parts were different, they all agreed that New Country was an outstanding and touching masterpiece.

They were listening to the music using their ears and heart.

After pausing a bit, Lucien raised the baton again, with his eyes slightly closed. The bass part brought out the mysterious yet gloomy atmosphere. Lucien had lots of memories in his mind, and those memories had all turned into many pictures that he missed:

He missed his family and friends, and the memory of them together was still so fresh; Mr. Victor, who was always nice, kind and upright, had offered him so much help and support; uncle Joel and aunt Alisa took care of him just like his mother and father, who lent

him all their savings and tried their best to protect him from the gangsters; his friend, John, chose to fight with him facing the gangsters; Natasha, the humorous and generous princess, had helped him so much wholeheartedly, and they had gone through a lot of things together...

He missed the shabby shanty in Aderon. Lucien fixed the wood door himself, and underground there was a ruined magic lab. Living in the shanty, Lucien learned how to read, fought against the heretics of the Argent Horn, and became an apprentice...

He missed his garden villa, although he only lived there for a few months. He remembered clearly the stone bricks and vines covering the walls. In the garden villa, Lucien played For Silvia and Moonlight. There, Lucien got to know the existence of the Congress of Magic from Mr. Rhine...

He missed the Musicians' Association, its soft and thick carpet, quiet atmosphere, big library and well-designed instrument rooms... They had all witnessed the countless times of practicing and how Lucien came all the way there until today...

Those pictures were all in Lucien's mind, but what was even clearer was the fact that he was going to say goodbye to all of these.

The sorrow had been turned into the music notes flowing along Lucien's baton.

Then, the oboes played the melodious part, filled with mixed joy and sorrow. The melody seized the audience's heart.

Christopher felt that he was in a dream. For a moment, he felt that he was brought back to his small hometown. He wondered whether the classic two-storey buildings still looked the same old and a bit gloomy, and whether the ghost stories were still being told. He also wanted to know if the river running along the town wall was still that clear and if the apple tree in front of his old place could still produce fruits... and also, whether the lady he admired when young now had wrinkles all over her face just like him, and whether his families were still visiting their ancestors' graves...

The melody brought Christopher great nostalgia like never before.

Betty, Joanna, and Simon also lost in their thoughts listening to the music. They thought of the mountains and winding roads in Djibouti, as well as the horrifying stories about those necromancers. They missed their childhood friends, their parents, and their old house...

Betty and Joanna's eyes started to get full of tears. They suddenly wanted to go back home.

The music reminded Joel and Alisa of the small town in the south, the patio that carried their love story, and even trees and stones there. They still remembered the moss in the corner of the stone wall and the taste of the cuisines...

In the music, Grace saw Sturk. She saw the stone bridges over the rivers, the boats with a pointed tip, and the wax statues in the museums. Also, she saw her parents who were getting old day by day and her elder brother, who labored all day...

In the weeping-like beautiful melody, all of the people present, no matter nobles, musicians, businessmen or common folks, had been overwhelmed by the great sense of nostalgia.

Many of them had tears in their eyes.

Then, the first theme of the symphony slowly pulled people back to reality—the reality that they were all alone in a strange place by themselves.

The violin ended the second movement with the chord.

There was no applause. People were silent. People were lost in their thoughts and their own memory of the past.

The third movement burst out the great passion that was full of different colors, bringing people the beauty and charm of the new country.

Then the fourth movement was grand and exciting, and it reviewed all the previous themes again with the movement's unique power—

the power from people's wish to go back home and the belief that they would go back home one day, with a better life!

Like a flowing river, the fourth movement ended the symphony in joy and hope.

And the new country slowly faded away.

The strong feelings in the symphony won the heart of everyone present. Thunder-like applause burst out of the crowd. And people started to cheer for the young musician and the symphony.

The applause just would not stop. Lucien had to keep bowing to the audience.

People were still applauding, although their hands felt numb, and their faces were covered with tears.

Lucien's music expressed the nostalgia and their wish to go back home for them!

Christopher said to Othello, Victor, and Natasha in a gentle voice, "Tomorrow, I want to go back to my hometown to take a look."

After pausing a bit, Christopher added, "This is the most touching *lento* I've ever heard in a symphony, and I forgot to focus on the structure... Maybe when a person gets old, he misses his hometown even more..."

Chapter 295: Feedback and Expectation

Chapter 295: Feedback and Expectation

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien bowed to the audience in the warm applause for nine times, and then went back to the backstage to prepare for the ending symphony, the most important symphony piece of tonight's concert.

On the municipal square, people were still immersed in the great nostalgia. An old man in his late sixties said to a stranger next to him to let off his emotion, "Maybe you don't know, but I'm from the Kingdom of Shaq. That's a country in the south part of the continent, close to the Federation of the Free Cities. We have the great navy, and I was in the navy, too, fighting against the pirates... The thing in Aalto that I'm the most unhappy with is that the liquor here is not strong at all, not even close to the liquor called Peled in my hometown. When you take a sip of it, the burning feeling in your throat and stomach is just... I cannot describe it with my words. Also, we have a special kind of white wine made from the grapes growing in the high mountains. No one who's ever tried it can forget the sweet and refreshing taste. But only Count Lucio and the king could enjoy the wine... You know how I got the chance to taste it? It was on Count Lucio's wedding. At that time, I was a guard, and I was lucky to find some of the wine left in the glass... Come on... don't go. Just let me finish. You know the pork paste made in Lucio? Also we have goat cheese, the best honey and roasted lamb... Girls in Lucio are like glowing flowers and they are as passionate as fire! They like brave guys who can beat bulls..."

The middle-aged man was not interested at all. Slightly shaking his head, he felt quite bothered, since he also missed his own hometown.

The old man did not know what to do after the middle-aged man took a few steps away from him. Then, he started to murmur to himself, "I haven't mentioned the small house I have in the countryside in Lucio. The green vines must be covering the entire

wall, and the light yellow flowers are more beautiful than any other flowers. The floor in the corner must be crooked now, but I cannot go back to fix it...”

The old man had been away from his hometown for more than thirty years. He was afraid that he would die on his way back to his hometown.

His voice became deeper and deeper. Tears came out of the corner of his eyes. He kept asking himself, “Go back? Shall I go back?”

Then, suddenly, he made up his mind. His fists forcefully waved and said out loud, “I’m going back!”

Glinton was a bit startled and asked, “Are you alright?”

The old man grinned, “Yes! I’m going home!”

His face was glowing.

Then he added, “Before I die, it is such a great blessing that I have the chance to listen to this symphony here from Mr. Evans. This is a masterpiece as a combination of folk music and symphony! After I get back home, I think I’m gonna miss Mr. Lucien Evans and his great music pieces!”

Glinton hurriedly nodded and agreed, “You’re definitely right! When the first movement came out, I was a bit hesitant. I wasn’t sure how to comment on it. But after listening to the second movement, I can say it for sure that New Country Symphony is more than just outstanding. It’s going to be a classic masterpiece! Maybe just this little behind Symphony of Fate...”

Glinton used his two fingers to suggest how close New Country Symphony was to Symphony of Fate. In his mind, Glinton still preferred the latter, probably because he could always go back home from time to time.

Then Glinton sighed, “I wonder what kind of symphony can be used as the ending piece if even New Country Symphony isn’t qualified.”

It was totally within people’s expectation that Fate was played at

the very beginning, because it represented Lucien's past accomplishment, however, in their mind, they felt that this masterpiece, New Country Symphony, was totally enough for being the ending piece of the symphony, but it was not.

The old man smiled, "Maybe it's even better than New Country Symphony. I believe in Mr. Evans."

"Me, too." Glinton turned to look at the crystal wall again.

They were not alone. People were waiting for the ending piece with the great expectation and the belief in the young musician in their mind.

...

In the Psalm Hall.

Elena wiped off her tears and said to Felicia in a low voice, "I can tell how much Lucien missed his hometown, relatives, and friends in the past three years. The feelings are so real in the music, and the true feelings are beyond touching."

Felicia's eyes also looked a bit red from her tears, "It reminded me of my trip with Mr. Victor. At first, I did not feel much, but after a month, I started to miss my parents and my bedroom like crazy. I tried to turn this emotion into music, so I wrote the piano piece you heard. But it can never be compared to Lucien's presentation. His music has greatly inspired me again... Maybe, maybe I started to admire Lucien..."

As a student who studied music with Lucien together in Victor's class, although Felicia was surprised and even shocked for a few times with Lucien's talent and the music pieces he wrote, and she also respected him as a great musician, she never felt this admiration in her heart right now.

"Me, too." Elena smiled.

Felicia put her right hand in front of her chest and said, "Let's wait for the last piece of symphony. Let's admire Lucien even more!"

“Grace said to me that both Mr. Franz and Mr. Fabbrini praised Ode to Joy very highly, even higher than New Country Symphony,” said Elena. “Lucien won’t let us down. When I get old, I can tell my grandchildren by the fireplace that I am a friend of the legendary musician...”

...

In the balcony for the nobles, after hearing what Christopher said, Natasha asked, “Mr. President, are you leaving before finishing the religious music piece?”

“Maybe my hometown could inspire me even more.” Christopher smiled peacefully, “Your Highness, did Lucien ever mention New Country Symphony to you in the letters? You look the same impressed as we are, as if it were the first time you heard it.”

Natasha slightly lifted her brows and said, “It is my first time. He was good at keeping secrets. But I am not surprised with the theme because I could tell how much he missed Aalto from his letters. Of course, I have different feelings toward New Country Symphony, after all, Aalto is my hometown, and my memory belongs here. Lucien’s music reminded me more of my childhood when I was traveling in Holm.”

The grand duke agreed. Although the symphony provoked lots of memories in him, as a man born and raised in Aalto, he did not feel much nostalgia.

“I feel the same way, but I did feel the nostalgia when I was doing the tour concert.” Victor nodded and spoke highly of his own student, “At that time, I missed Aalto a lot. I missed the place that Winnie and I built together. But my Love Symphony is not about this, and I also don’t think I can compose such an excellent music piece...”

Othello slightly shook his head and said, “I have mixed feelings toward the symphony. I like the second movement a lot, but I don’t like the structure of the other parts. I hope Ode to Joy can be more consistent.”

“It must be a great piece of music that can be compared to Symphony of Fate.” Natasha had faith in her friend.

Although it was not hard for her to listen to Lucien’s rehearsal beforehand, she restrained herself from doing so and left all the excitement for today.

Victor also nodded, “I’m sure Lucien won’t let us down.”

“Don’t put too much pressure on a young fellow.” Christopher grinned, “But I have to say that I’m very, very excited as well.”

The grand duke said with mixed feelings, “Let’s wait and see.”

Count Hayne, Count Rafati, the cardinal Gossett and many others were all waiting for the ending piece of the concert.

...

In the backstage.

Lucien’s coughing was getting worse.

“Mr. Evans, are you alright? Maybe we should have Mr. Franz to conduct...” suggest Fabbrini gently.

Lucien covered his mouth and shook his head, “I’m... alright. It’s just temporary. I’ve been doing fine for almost three hours, and I’ll be still fine in the last hour. After all, I’m a knight!”

Because Lucien had been coughing quite a lot, but nothing big really happened, people in the backstage listened to Lucien and were not very concerned.

Lucien looked at Fabbrini sincerely and said, “There’s no excellent baritone singer in Aalto, so... please, Mr. Fabbrini, although I know it’s hard.”

Opera was not as popular as Symphony in Aalto, therefore, it was also hard to find really good opera singers here.

Mr. Fabbrini’s face flushed a bit under Lucien’s gaze, “I assure you,

Mr. Evans. I've been practicing a lot, and I won't let you down."

Using some secret techniques from the church, Fabbrini now could make the best use of his throat to sing different parts, which required a lot of practice time.

Lucien nodded and stood up. He looked around at the singers and chorus members, and then raised his arm, "My friends, let's forget the same old platitudes and sing for joy!"

"Sing for joy!" All of the people in the backstage repeated out of great passion.

When Fabbrini and the chorus members were prepared, Lucien adjusted his suit a bit and walked out of the backstage with confidence.

Chapter 296: Glory

Chapter 296: Glory

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

On the municipal square, around the crystal walls, when the several famous singers walked out from the backstage together with the adult and children chorus and stood behind the band in a half circle, people were very surprised.

“What is this? Why is Mr. Fabbrini also here? Is this a chorus?”

Being informed that the last piece was Symphony in D minor, people had no idea what was going on there.

Betty asked Jonna, “Is Mr. Evans gonna add the chorus part in it?”

“Impossible. I’ve never seen anything like this.” A man who was a symphony fan cut in.

Joanna responded, “Mr. Evans is known for being a reformer. His Symphony of Fate and New Country Symphony do not strictly follow the typical structure of a symphony either.”

People were talking to each other, and they were getting even more curious.

In the Psalm Hall, when Christopher saw Mr. Fabbrini and the chorus showing up on the stage, Christopher said with a smile on his face, “He’s gonna add a singing part in the last symphony piece... What a brave innovation.”

Although Lucien tried to make it a secret, it was impossible to hide the fact from the many musicians in the association. Many musicians and instrumentalists already had a brief idea of what Lucien was going to do.

Being used to the fact that Lucien loved seeking for changes, most musicians were taking a neutral standpoint. At the bottom of their

heart, they were expecting some new forms of symphony, especially those open-minded ones like Christopher.

“I heard that it’s an excellent symphony piece!” said Natasha confidently, who was always on Lucien’s side. In her mind, she blamed Lucien a little bit for never telling her anything about the new symphonies in the letters. After all, there was no chance that Lucien could finish composing both New Country Symphony and Ode to Joy within the few months after he came back to Aalto.

Othello shook his head, “No one has tried this before. We will see.”

At this time, Lucien, who looked very handsome in his black tuxedo, walked out of the backstage and bowed to the audience.

The whole municipal square and the Psalm Hall became very quiet immediately.

This was the power of a great musician.

Turning around, Lucien stood at the center of the semicircle. He raised his hands and got ready.

Again, slightly closing his eyes, Lucien immersed himself in the memories. He remembered the day when he sat in the crate and saw Lazar wearing the black, double-breasted coat welcoming him, the day he finally arrived in Holm. That day was like a strong beam of sunlight that drove the dark clouds in the sky away!

Without enough life experience, a musician would find it very difficult to present a music piece in the way he or she wanted.

The baton and Lucien’s left hand rose and fell gently in the air like they were trying to catch the original emotions and feelings from afar. Then, the deep and profound melody followed, and the trill part brought the audience the blurry picture of a distant view.

Victor felt thrilled with the trill in his soul, either from the excitement when he heard the melody or from the reverence in his mind toward the deep emotions lying in the music notes.

Victor was not alone here. Including the cardinals, the entire

audience had this essential, deep and direct sense of feeling in their mind toward music. The music was grand and serious, as if there was growing power in it, and also as if there was some kind of gloominess hiding in it. It was the great difficulties that everyone must experience from one's birth to death!

Then, the power grew greater and greater. The strong rhythm shook the audience's heart like waves. The secondary theme made them feel retained, just like the feeling that no one would like to face the difficulties and one's fate. The two themes together presented the fighting spirit in the first movement, which was also the main idea of Fate and Pathetique.

From time to time, some more peaceful and gentle pieces of melody were used alternately, signifying the belief that darkness would definitely be overcome!

The first movement lasted for sixteen minutes, and the audience was completely lost in the music. Warm applause burst out. People applauded with great passion to show their appreciation to the movement.

"Grand opening! Profound and full of images! Very outstanding!" Othello finally spoke highly of the music.

Natasha agreed proudly, "If the following three movements can be of the same level, without doubt, Ode to Joy would be able to be compared to other classic masterpieces like Fate and the War of Dawn. What a great concert!"

However, the grand duke was a bit hesitant, "Although the first movement is for sure impressive, I feel that there's something missing here... say, a climax."

"That's true. The structure, techniques, the melody... are all perfect. But it's not as imposing and overwhelming as Fate, neither as touching as Moonlight and Pathetique," said Christopher. "It still needs a point that people can remember. Right now, the first movement is like an extinct volcano with magma boiling underneath. The emotions need to burst out."

"I totally agree." Victor nodded, since he also felt the sense of oppression, "I'm expecting that Lucien can push it forward in the following movements."

Count Hayne, Count Rafati and Cardinal Gossett found it hard for them to add any comments here, but they also had the same feeling.

The feeling was in fact shared by everyone.

Soon, the second movement began. Unusually, the second movement did not follow the tradition of using *lento* but adopted a cheerful and lively pace, as if an army was chasing after its enemy in the mood of victory under the blue sky and in the sunshine.

"Again, he's not following what we expected." Christopher had a spoiling smile on his face.

Othello first did not feel comfortable with it, but soon accepted the change here, since, according to the theme of the second movement, he did not have a better way to present the music other than using *Allegro*, and also Lucien's way of transiting movements was quite acceptable to him.

The ones on the square who had even a little understanding in symphony had all noticed the difference there, but they focused more on the music itself, instead of on its structure. To them, the second movement was simply beautiful, so the change in structure was deemed as being necessary in their eyes.

The victory continued, but the darkness approached again. Enemies came back again from all directions. People felt nervous again with the fast pace of the music.

The second movement ended in a sense of nervousness. The audience applauded warmly again to encourage Lucien as well as themselves, as if the warmer the applause was, the more powerful they could be to fight against darkness and evil.

No one talked. They were silently tasting the sense of oppression and anxiety deep in their hearts, where the volcano deep within was still gathering more terrifying power...

After a short break, Lucien waved his baton again, and the third movement started.

The sweet and gentle melody made people think. No one ever tried to argue whether this movement should be *lento* or *allegro* anymore. Instead, they were simply contemplating. They needed some time after the first two movements. They needed time to think—why were they fighting? What was the meaning of fighting? What did it mean by victory? How did they come all the way here?

Did they ever meet difficulties?

Did they ever feel the sincere joy after overcoming the difficulties?

Did they ever feel that the difficulties in life seemed to be endless?

Did they ever want to give up when facing the difficulties?

Victor recalled the hard time he experienced. It was never easy for him to become a musician. He had to forget everything and lock himself in the room to work on his music, and he had to force himself to socialize with other musicians and nobles to have a chance to hold a concert. However, his first concert was a failure, during which many people directly left their seats... At that time, he was surrounded by bitter taunts and great pressure. Luckily, he had Winnie's encouragement and then he worked harder ten times more. In the end, his dream was achieved, but he had never been able to see Winnie again...

Natasha recalled her own past. Although she was from a top noble family and had the most powerful Blessing, as if she was especially blessed by the God of Truth, her life as a princess was also not free of pain. Within a short period of time, her elder brother died on the battlefield, and her mom passed away. Therefore, she closed her heart and devoted herself to the hard knight training to escape from the pain. When she finally found her own knight spirit and decided to be brave for her love, the person she loved betrayed her and she had to kill that person with her own hands. Her cousin tried to kill her for power, but, fortunately, she was saved by her friend, Lucien...

While conducting, Lucien was also thinking of the great difficulties he encountered from before, as well as how his power grew out of the process. In the darkness, he never stopped running toward the sunlight and success with hope and belief.

Did they ever feel depressed facing the endless darkness in life?

Did they obtain power and lessons out of it and move forward with an even stronger will, or let themselves sink?

Did they long for brightness and success?

Were they prepared to face the challenges and pain on their way of pursuing them?

In the sweet and gentle melody, people were thinking and asking themselves these questions. They were still waiting, although their full-hearted emotions were almost ready to burst out. They were waiting for the very moment in the next movement to help them let it out.

The third movement ended. People could not wait any longer.

Lucien's movement of waving the baton suddenly became forceful. The beginning of the fourth movement set off like an erupting volcano, giving all the thoughts and emotions great power to explode and to beat the darkness and all the enemies!

The audience on the square and in the Psalm Hall immediately got encouraged and excited, as if they could see the victory and sunshine ahead of them!

However, the darkness was still lingering, and the great difficulties did not disappear on their own. The fourth movement repeated the first three movements in fragments, and thus again gave people this strong sense of tension.

Victory was not there yet. They still had to march forward! They still need to run toward the light!

The major melody of Ode to Joy was played by double basses, comforting people and giving them hope.

But it was still not enough! Not enough!

People had made their effort, and they were already right at the edge of darkness and light, but they were still not there yet!

The melody of Ode to Joy started to become the major theme of the movement. The different parts of the band were joining together and playing the same song, like countless streams joining together into a great current.

But it was still not enough! Not enough!

It was just like when Lucien first arrived at the port in Holm, but the lid of the crate that he was in was not yet opened. Everything remained unknown and was still in darkness.

All the audience, including Natasha, clenched their fists, waiting for the last moment of victory.

At this time, a baritone sang with his deep and profound voice, “O friends, no more of these sounds! Let us sing more cheerful songs. More songs full of joy!”

“Joy!”

“Joy!”

Like being struck by lightning, like seeing an angel falling, the thrill in the depths of everyone’s soul surged and covered their whole bodies.

The whole space was filled with the passionate praise and the joyful and sacred melody. And the music was going to overwhelm and conquer everything!

“Joy! Joy!”

“Joy, bright spark of divinity, Daughter of Elysium,

“Fire-inspired we tread,

“Within thy sanctuary.”

...

People finally could let out their many strong emotions from their heart, and thus everyone's soul became light and relaxed, full of the ultimate and sacred joy.

It was like after going through seemingly endless darkness and then finally seeing the first beam of sunlight piercing through the clouds and lighting up the world.

It was like Victor, that after experiencing lots of setbacks and difficulties, finally received warm applause and won himself the victory. At that moment, his eyes were filled with tears.

It was like when the lid of the crate was open, and Lucien saw the blue sky and Lazar's big smile. His heart was full of all kinds of emotions and he realized that he could finally be entirely free from those worries he had in Aalto. All his hard work and the risk he took finally paid off.

If there was no bitter taste, there was no taste of sweet.

If there was no pain, there was no gain.

If there was no hard work, there was no success.

If there were no great sufferings, there was no ultimate and pure joy like this!

At this moment, people felt that they were shocked deep within their souls, and they were lost in the melody sung by the four parts. They found the ultimate joy with tears in their eyes, praising for the blessing from the God of Truth!

"All creatures drink of joy,

"At nature's breast.

"Just and unjust,

"Alike taste of her gift."

...

People believed that Ode to Joy was the praise to the God of Truth. Fabbrini also felt touched by the grandness and the divinity of this symphony. As he was singing, tears streamed down his face.

Since he was born, he suffered from the inhumane operation and forced himself to practice endlessly. For the first time, he felt the ultimate, pure joy given by the God of Truth. His tears were out of joy.

When he could take a short break when the choruses were singing, Fabbrini looked at the conductor standing in front of the band, watching how devoted this young musician was when presenting this great masterpiece to everyone.

What a great musician!

When it was his turn again, Fabbrini sang in an even more sincere and dedicated manner:

“Gladly, like the heavenly bodies,

“Which He sent on their courses,

“Through the splendor of the firmament,

“Thus, brothers, you should run your race,

“Like a hero going to victory!”

Listening to the lyrics, all the cardinals and pastors present, including Gossett, started to cross in front of their chests.

Again and again, the combination of human voices and the band was just perfect!

When the children chorus started to sing “Joy! Joy! Joy, bright spark of divinity, Daughter of Elysium” again, the audience was beyond thrilled when they let go of all their restraints and depression fully and delightfully.

They felt free. It was the ultimate freedom!

The sunlight kissed the whole world, and the world was filled with joy. Lucien's baton made the last movement, and the symphony ended there in a perfect way.

After a few seconds of silence, people started to get crazy. The applause beyond warm was like an erupting volcano, making the whole space tremble. They could not control themselves but tried to go forward to stay closer to the great musician. They had tears in their eyes. They wanted to kiss the great musician to show their crazy admiration and respect!

Many nobles in the Psalm Hall hurriedly stood up and ran toward the stage.

The people on the square stopped in front of the crystal walls and cried aloud:

"Lucien Evans!"

"Lucien Evans!"

"Lucien Evans!"

They believed that their cry could be heard by this young musician, so he could know how much they loved him!

No concert had ever been crazy like this.

For a second, Fabbrini felt it was like a dream, but soon he realized their great success!

"Mr. Evans... It's time to give your regards to the audience..."
Fabbrini reminded Lucien, since he saw that Mr. Evans was still standing there with his head low.

Lucien slowly looked up, but his face was beyond pale.

After a big smile, Lucien turned around. His right hand was on his chest, and he started to bow.

To the great shock of Fabbrini and the audience, they saw Lucien falling to the floor like a swan that had lost all its strength in its wings.

The scene suddenly turned into black and white in Fabbrini's eyes. On one side, there were people crazily cheering for the great success of the concert like boiled water; on the other side, the young musician's body slowly collapsed to the floor.

Chapter 297: A Good Actress

Chapter 297: A Good Actress

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

On the streets around the municipal square, people were crying Lucien's name. Seeing that the crystal walls were slowly disappearing, they cried out loud, over and over again:

“Lucien Evans!”

No any other music pieces ever touched their soul like this, and no other music pieces ever won this much emotional resonance. They felt great pain and ultimate joy in the music. When Fabbrini started to sing, they were beyond thrilled.

This excitement lasted a long time even after the crystal walls disappeared. Although now they could not see the great, young musician who brought God's will to them, people on the square were still crazily showing their respect and deep affections toward Lucien.

However, in the Psalm Hall, the audience was completely shocked when seeing Lucien Evans collapsing to the floor like a falling angel, and they would never forget that moment.

Then, with a silvery-purple lightning flashing on the stage, the princess, Natasha, who was wearing a long purple dress, showed up beside Lucien and grabbed him with her arms before his head really hit the floor. Then, after turning quickly, Natasha took Lucien back to the balcony she was in within a second, leaving the nobles around the stage stunned.

The princess was quicker than anyone. When people realized what just happened, many started to feel certain that the rumor was true.

“Cardinal Gossett, please save him!” Although Natasha remained quite calm, her voice trembled a bit. Her hand held Lucien's hand tight.

Gossett nodded, “Only the most dedicated follower can produce this grand praise to the God. The God of Truth won’t take away his life like this. I’ll try my best to cure him.”

Although Victor tried his best to come closer, Natasha was hugging Lucien in her arms like a mom guarding her own child. Staring at Lucien, Victor walked back and forth fretfully, until he saw the cardinal started to cast the divine spell on Lucien with the Saint Truth Badge.

Through holding Lucien’s hand, Natasha infused her own power into Lucien’s body, trying her best to disguise the differences in Lucien’s soul when compared to common people, since he was a sorcerer.

Seeing that Lucien was not really dying, Gossett only used the most common divine spell for checking. Therefore, the cardinal did not notice much difference.

About a minute later, under the worried gaze of people, Gossett smiled, “He’s alright. Mr. Evans just fainted, since he’s been sick for some time and got too excited when conducting. Of course, if he does not receive any treatment for a week or so, he would probably die, even as a knight, but right now he’ll be fine. God bless him.”

The healing divine spells also had limits. From the Church’s point of view, these divine spells could only work on the basis of one’s life force. If a person’s life force had been greatly lost because of some kind of long-time disease, the divine spells would also be ineffective. At that time, maybe only the God of Truth could save the person.

What Gossett did not mention was that Lucien Evans seemed to be a level-two knight. However, thinking of the relationship between him and the princess, he did not think it was a big deal.

“But why? As a young knight, unless being very weak or because of some kind of bad pestilence, he shouldn’t get this sick.” Hearing the cardinal’s words, Natasha asked in a calmer way.

In fact, she was well aware of the fact that it was because Lucien

cast the fourth-circle spell, Pestilence, on himself a few weeks ago.

Lucien did not do anything to treat himself after casting the spell on himself, instead, he completely relied on his own immunocompetence. As he wished, the disease brought by the magic spell slowly developed into a chronic disease, which was very hard for others to find out.

Gossett thought for a few seconds and said, “Maybe it’s from his organ injury from before.”

“I see.” Natasha nodded, “Then please do something to help him.”

Gossett reached out both of his hands and sacred light burst out. When the light covered Lucien’s body, there were small, black clusters of miasma rising from Lucien’s body, and the miasma clusters were seemingly made of invisible tiny worms.

Level three divine spell, Remove Disease. It was not a fancy spell, but sometimes worked very well.

Disguising the difference in Lucien’s soul with her own power, when seeing the miasma slowly disappear in the holy light, Natasha put on a relieved look.

Seeing the look on Natasha’s face, and the hands that held tight, the grand duke had mixed feelings in his heart. He had to say that he did not like the fact that his own daughter was going to leave him to be with some bastard boy, but also he was glad that his daughter finally went back to “normal”, so the family blood would not die out.

Count Rafati grinned, “At least he has awakened his Blessing. Better than nothing.”

The grand duke once told them that, no matter if the guy had awakened his Blessing or not, no matter whether he was a noble, and even no matter whether he really pulled Natasha back to “normal”, as long as his daughter could get married and have offspring like a normal person, he would not interfere with Natasha’s other choices too much.

The grand duke released a long sigh and nodded, "That's true..."

After Gossett cast another level four divine spell, Recover, Lucien slowly opened his eyes. He looked around confusedly and asked, "Why... What happened?"

Victor's brows tightly knotted together and he said in a very caring way, "You shouldn't have pushed yourself this hard. Health should always come the first place. Do you really think that it's right for you to hold this concert when you're sick like this? Couldn't you just put it off a bit?"

Hearing Victor's questions, Lucien was a bit touched, "I'm sorry, Mr. Victor. I was... just too excited about this concert, and I failed to stop. Now I'll take a good rest."

Gossett slightly nodded, "Mr. Evans, although the disease has been cured, you still have to take a long time to recover your life force."

"You almost made my heart stop beating, but I guess it was worth it. I was totally impressed by Ode to Joy, so I've got nothing really to complain." Seeing that Lucien was fine, Christopher joked a little.

Natasha released a sigh of relief and said to the cardinal, "I gotta send Lucien back first. Then I'll be back so we can have a conversation about his future treatment."

"Natasha, remember to tell people that I'm alright." Lucien reminded her.

"I got it." Natasha nodded. "You just take a good rest."

Seeing that Lucien was lying in Natasha's arms and their faces were so close together. Many people, including the grand duke, Christopher and Victor, put on an a slightly weird look.

After Natasha carried Lucien in her arms and left the hall, many nobles started to take glances at the grand duke, as if they were saying congratulations... The grand duke had no idea how to respond.

...

In the sky, Natasha said to Lucien with a smart smile on her face, "After you 'die', I think my father won't force me to get married for a long time."

Then her voice became a bit sad, "He knows how it feels to lose your beloved ones in a few years."

"I have to say that you're a good actress," said Lucien sincerely.

"Of course. I like drama a lot!"

"So when you suggested that I should let the musician die, you already had this plan to use me to get rid of the pressure from your father?" Lucien grinned.

"Come on... It just came to me..." Natasha put on an awkward smile.

"Friends don't lie. You can just admit it." Lucien lifted his eyebrows like Natasha.

Natasha switched the topic and looked around, "Well, we gotta get you back home first, so then I can talk to Gossett to make sure your next step of the plan can work."

Flying beside them and looking at them, with no facial expression on her face.

...

In the Psalm Hall, knowing that Lucien Evans was okay, the nobles were more relieved, and then they started to leave the hall, still feeling very excited.

What they did not know was that the moment when they saw Lucien slowly collapse to the floor like a black swan would in fact be their last look at this great musician.

After Christopher, Victor and Othello walked out of the Psalm Hall, when they saw the crowd that still lingered on the streets and around the square, they were very impressed.

Christopher said, "I've never seen something like this before. Maybe I won't be able to see this again before I die."

"Ode to Joy deserves this crazy affection," said Othello seriously, who just could not resist the power of this kind of sacred music. "As far as I'm concerned, Ode to Joy is the best symphony piece ever!"

Although he was right in front of Mr. Christopher, he still had to say so.

Chapter 298: The Angry Clown

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the Golden Cathedral, Aalto.

“What? Sentence Clown to death? He’s the leader of the Night Watch!” Although Gossett, the red-robed cardinal, knew that Natasha would be pissed after seeing the black miasma, he totally did not expect this.

Natasha’s silvery-purple eyes looked at the cardinal seriously, “Yes, Clown must be sentenced to death.”

As a cardinal, Gossett was good at controlling his emotions. Although he knew that Natasha was not here for negotiation, he still said to the princess in a nice way, “Your Highness, Mr. Evans will be fine. No side effects will be left. Maybe you can let this thing go. After all, we cannot make sure that it was Clown who attacked Mr. Evans. Quite possibly, it was some heretic who wanted to frame Clown up.”

“Cardinal Gossett, this is simple. If you think Lucien accused the wrong person, just let him ask Clown a few questions himself, and use the divine spells to test if Clown is lying, so everything would be clear,” Natasha said in a very pushy way. After all, both of them were of senior-rank.

Facing Natasha’s proposal, Gossett was a bit speechless. Because, in fact, the pastors and cardinals all believed that it was Clown who did this, and it would definitely bring very negative words to the reputation of the Church if the fact was proved.

“Alright...” Gossett used in the same gentle voice and said, “Let’s first assume that Clown did it. Why would he do it? The only possibility is that Mr. Evans might have something to do with Professor, the evil sorcerer on the Cleansing List, so Clown decided to test him...”

“You’ve got any evidence?” Natasha took a step forward and there was stateliness in her eyes, “It’s not in the War of Dawn, and you cannot randomly accuse someone of having ‘something to do with’ a sorcerer. Clown almost killed Lucien Evans because of his terrible assumption, so can I say someday the Church can directly kill a noble because of a baseless suspicion? No noble would want to live in this kind of fear. Also, although knights might not worry that much about themselves, they would still worry about the safety of their family!”

Gossett felt great pressure.

“On behalf of all the nobles of Aalto, I insist that Clown shall be sentenced to death to warn all the night watchers. No one can break the pact between the Church and the nobles!”

Gossett wished that they had lived in a few hundred years ago, so he could just ignore the unreasonable request from Natasha. However, the power of the nobles had increased a lot, and when they were united together, their power was strong enough to affect the decision made by the Church. Also, what Natasha said was not just nonsense.

“Your Highness, you’re a devoted follower of the God of Truth. Fortunately, Mr. Evans is fine. And even though Clown made a bad mistake, sentencing him to death isn’t the only solution, right?” Gossett softened his tone, “We can send Clown to the Inquisition, where he will get the punishment he deserves.”

Natasha crossed in front of chest, “Only truth lives forever.” Then, she said seriously, “I’m a devoted follower, so I don’t want to see anyone ruining the relationship between the Church and the nobles like Clown did.” Natasha’s voice became very firm, “Clown must die.”

Gossett remained silent for a while and said, “I’ll send your request to the grand cardinals. I’m sorry I cannot make the decision for the Inquisition.”

Natasha nodded, “I’m sure that the grand cardinal and cardinal Amelton know how serious this thing is, and I’ll be waiting for the

final decision.”

...

In a common house in Aalto.

Clown was reading the information collected, trying to find clues out of it to figure out the relationship between Lucien Evans and Professor.

All of sudden, the door was pushed open. Juliana, the battle pastor, rushed in and said out of panic, “You gotta leave now, right now!”

“What? Calm down, Juliana.” Clown looked up at Juliana with his ridiculous-looking face.

Juliana took a deep breath, “The Inquisition has decided to sentence you to death. You have to run now.”

“What?!” Clown could not believe his own ears. He felt that he was abandoned by the whole world. He could not believe that all the effort he had made to defeat the evil for Lord, for the Church and the Inquisition now meant nothing at all.

Juliana said in a great hurry, “Lucien Evans passed out at the end of his concert an hour ago. Cardinal Gossett said it was because of the injury he had from before. The princess is very angry. Representing the nobles, she’s imposed great pressure on the Church. From Lend’s words, it seems that the Church has compromised. They’re planning on arresting you and sentencing you to death secretly to pacify the nobles without damaging the Church’s reputation.”

“Sentence me... to death?” The ridiculous-looking clown face was still grinning, but the voice behind the mask was beyond desperate.

Juliana thought Clown did not believe her words, so she explained further, “You should trust Lend. I know we didn’t get along well with him after what happened in the Black Forest, but as soon as he was selected to be the one to arrest you, he took a great risk and told me this. He needs you to leave Aalto right now. Someday you can come back using another identity. Several cardinals in the Inquisition are still on your side!”

Clown started murmuring to himself but just stood still there, as if his soul had been stolen. When Juliana was about to urge him to leave again, Clown burst out laughing.

“Hahahaha... Haha!”

The laughter sounded crazy.

“Are you alright?” Juliana asked concernedly.

The laughter suddenly stopped, and Clown replied in an extremely calm way, “I’m fine. I just find it funny. A musician who is close to an evil sorcerer and a princess who has special connections to the Congress of Magic can force the Church to kill their most loyal servant. I wonder if the Church has belonged to those sorcerers. How can the grand cardinals... How can Sard, Amelton, and Gossett let this happen?”

“It doesn’t matter. I trust you, Minsk trusts you, Lend trusts you, and many night watchers are also on your side. Two out of the three leaders of the Inquisition have mercy on you! This is just temporary. One day the darkness will be driven away!”

Clown shook his head, “I’m okay, Juliana. You have to trust my willpower, or I wouldn’t be able to control my Blessing power. I’ll hide properly until I find the solid evidence. Then I’ll accuse Lucien Evans of connecting to the evil sorcerer right in front of the Inquisition, or... it’ll be even better if I can kill Lucien Evans right in front of Natasha’s eyes.”

“Don’t! Right now Lucien Evans must be under great protection.” Juliana hurriedly reminded him, “Maybe this is a trap for you!”

Although she was aware that Clown was able to control his emotions to avoid making stupid mistakes, Juliana also knew that a dark Blessing could make people more or less crazy.

Clown looked out of the window and sneered, “I know. I know how bad Lucien Evans was injured by me. I did not have the time to really harm him. As a knight, even without those potions, he should be able to recover within a few days. It was Lucien Evans himself

who turned this into a bad disease, and thus Natasha could find the reason to kill me using the Church's hand. I'll be careful when investigating him. This time, I'll get him."

His eyes on the clown mask looked cold.

...

In the garden villa.

"Lucien, are you sure that someone will tell Clown the news?" asked Natasha with uncertainty. "Don't tell me you learned this from your magic crystal ball."

"How did you know?" Lucien pretended to be surprised, then he said, "It's just a simple reasoning. What you asked for was too much, and the cardinals and the leaders of the inquisition must more or less sympathize with Clown, not to mention that based on the number of night watchers that survived in the black forest, there must be other people who hate Professor very badly just like Clown, and those people must be on Clown's side."

What Natasha said to Gossett was previously agreed by the two of them.

"I see, but this is just your reasoning. Those cardinals and the Inquisition have always been taking a ruthless position when it comes to maintaining their relationship with nobles, so maybe Clown will be killed, and then your plan wouldn't be able to continue." Although Natasha was impressed by Clown's resolution in fighting against darkness and evilness, she was on her friend's side firmly. She knew it well when she should have mercy and when not.

"Even so, those night watchers are gonna be so worked up that they won't just let go of Professor."

Also, Lucien thought to himself that, if that person noticed something, he would not blow this chance. After Clown attacked him, Lucien found another way of using this chance and this was also the foundation of his reasoning.

"I hope so." Natasha smiled, "You've got that person's information. You should go now. I'll stay here for you."

...

Although he failed to awaken his Blessing, Viscount Klein was still very energetic in his fifties. His black hair was taken good care of and his green eyes were like deep lakes. He was an archon in the town hall of Aalto.

After attending Lucien Evans' concert in the Psalm Hall, he was too excited to fall asleep. So he just got up and started to read the books he collected in his living room.

It was getting late. Putting down the old book in his hand, Klein was ready to go to his bedroom.

When he put on his pajamas in front of the mirror, a mysterious figure showed up in it, like a reflection. The man in the mirror said to him in a hoarse voice:

"Long time no see, Mr. Philosopher."

"Professor?!" Klein was shocked, and in the next second, he activated mage armor. In the past years, he finally became a sorcerer.

Viscount Klein was one of the apprentices, Philosopher. Because he was close to Silvia's father, or say, White Honey's father, Natasha got his information but never told this to anyone.

Klein carefully looked back but saw no one behind him. However, the man wearing the black robe in the mirror was still there.

The fourth-circle spell, Figure in Mirror?

Chapter 299: The Guide

Chapter 299: The Guide

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Ten o'clock at night, on the 3rd day of the Month of Passion, the sixth of the year.

When the entire city was still immersed in the great charm of the concert, when people all over the streets were still humming the melody of New Country Symphony and Ode to Joy, those who lived in the darkness had come back to their original life, and now they were seizing the chance to have their secret gathering.

In a common-looking house in Purple Lily District, about ten people gathered in the basement. Most of them were wearing the same black robes, while some were wearing the common masks drawn with bear or goat that kids could easily buy on the streets.

“Hanger, why is Mr. Philosopher still not here?” A woman asked. Although she was wearing a loose black robe, one could tell that her figure was quite nice. Despite the disguise, her voice was still sweet.

They were standing around a round table, on which there were several white candles, many books and pieces of paper.

Hanger answered in his cold voice, “Why do you ask me, Mercury? As a sorcerer, Mr. Philosopher doesn't have to arrive here early.”

In this dangerous city, Aalto, after becoming a real sorcerer, Philosopher did not leave the magic apprentice circle, instead, he chose to play the role of teacher for the apprentices. He taught the apprentices a lot and sometimes offered the apprentices useful potions and materials by exchanging some things. Now, he was already the leader in this circle. Thanks to Philosopher's effort, Hanger was also close to becoming a real sorcerer, and other apprentices had also improved a lot.

“Five more minutes. If Mr. Philosopher is still not here, I’m afraid we must go.” Before Mercury said anything, the man wearing a reindeer mask said in a hoarse voice.

Other apprentices all agreed. It was not that they did not want to show respect to Mr. Philosopher. For a secret meeting like this, if anyone was late, that might very possibly be a sign of danger.

Hearing that, Morning Star said in frustration, “I’m really fed up with this kind of life... worrying and hiding all the time.”

“If you don’t want to worry and hide, consider Fire Wolf’s solution.” Hanger was being ironical.

Suddenly, all the apprentices quieted down. Although they were not there on the spot in the black forest, they heard the rumors and some were even directly told that Fire Wolf was the traitor.

Mercury released a sigh, “If Mr. Professor hadn’t left Aalto in a hurry, if there hadn’t been a traitor, maybe we would have known where the Congress of Magic is already, and we wouldn’t be this confused and lost now.”

When mentioning the name of Professor, she felt in awe. The name represented profound knowledge and terrifying magic power, and the name was even on the Cleansing List!

Hearing Professor’s name, the apprentices who joined the gathering not long ago all felt very curious. They totally believed what Mercury just said, as the name was even intimidating for those sorcerers belonging to other circles!

“I thought Mr. Professor was a common middle-rank mage, but his power was way more terrifying than I thought...” Hanger murmured.

At this time, someone knocked at the door in a unique way.

“It’s Mr. Philosopher...” The apprentices felt a bit more relaxed. They then all stood up to show their respect.

Mercury walked toward the chamber door and asked carefully in a

low voice, “Mr. Philosopher?”

The house they were in was a two-storey one with lots of windows that one could get in. Therefore, they did not place any detection spells beside the house door, instead, they placed many magic traps on the corridor towards the chamber. They had special ways of knocking the door to know who it was, and if there was any dangers, they could escape through the secret magic hidden path in the basement.

“It’s me,” the man answered, whose voice sounded old.

The voice was familiar, and the tone was calm. Their spiritual power told the apprentices that there was nothing wrong.

Every time when someone was at the door, each one of the apprentices had their guts lurched up in their throat, which made them feel horrible.

Dismissing the magic trap, Mercury opened the door and saw Mr. Philosopher wearing the black robe and hood.

“Good evening, Mr. Philosopher.” All the apprentices put their right hand on their forehead and bowed with great respect.

But after they looked up, they all gasped as they were completely shocked. There was another man wearing a big black robe standing beside Philosopher, but they were not aware of this at all just now when they used spiritual power to scan around!

“Who is he? Why are you bringing a stranger?” Mercury was angry. It was strictly prohibited by the gathering.

With no notice in advance, no one could bring any strangers here.

Although other apprentices also felt offended, they did not say anything right in front of Mr. Philosopher. After all, he was a real sorcerer.

Seeing Mercury’s reaction, these apprentices guessed that very possibly Mercury had already become a real sorcerer, and she was just hiding her power.

Philosopher remained calm and grinned, “Calm down, Mercury. He’s not a stranger. He’s been here before.”

“What? Who?” Mercury and the other apprentices were all very surprised.

“Mercury, Hanger, Morning Star, Reindeer... you all don’t remember me anymore?” said Lucien in his pretended hoarse voice, and he released his great spiritual power completely to let the apprentices feel it.

This power did not come from any magic items, but from a real middle-rank mage.

In Hangers and the rest of the apprentices’ eyes, the black-robed sorcerer was beyond dreadful. His power was like an endless pit of darkness, and just taking a step closer to it could take away all their strength and make them feel freezing cold. If the man really intended to use his power on them, their limp legs would not even be able to let them stand there still, not to mention casting any spells.

With no doubt, he was definitely a middle-rank mage!

His power was terrifying, and in front of his power, the power of the apprentices was just nothing.

Although Mercury also took a few steps backward, and her beautiful hands were slightly trembling, she was still able to move in front of the great power.

“... Mr. Professor?” Her voice trembled as well, “You’re Mr. Professor!”

Professor was the only middle-rank mage she once had a connection to so far.

“I’m glad you can recognize me,” said Lucien coldly. Although he laughed when he was talking, the laughter was also cold. He was aware that Mercury did not recognize him because of his appearance—the fake hoarse voice he was using was not special at all, and he made himself look even a bit taller.

The rest of the apprentices were beyond shocked.

“Mr... Mr. Professor?!” They repeated the name subconsciously. They could not believe that the sorcerer whose name was on the Cleansing List at the three hundred and sixtieth place was standing right in front of them. Professor, the name which had been bothering Night Watch for more than three years, was a legend in the circle of magic of Aalto!

They totally did not expect this.

The apprentices suddenly felt very proud and excited. Also, the hope that they might get to know where the Congress of Magic was started to grow fiercely!

Lucien was there before, so he totally understood what they were going through right now. Therefore, even though he had no other purposes, he would still find other ways to tell them how to get to the Congress.

After the apprentices bowed to Professor respectfully, Philosopher introduced, “Mr. Professor, among the apprentices you know from before, some left Aalto as they saw no hope here, like Oak and White Glove; some died, like Owl and White Honey... Now we still have Mercury, Hanger, Morning Star, Reindeer and me, and the rest of them are new members.”

Lucien was a bit emotional as his memory was awakened. He did not expect that Smile died during his adventure, and he wondered if Lord Doro managed to escape. As for White Honey’s death, no one knew better than Lucien.

After the introduction part, and after Professor sat down, Mercury asked hurriedly and eagerly, “Mr. Professor, can you tell us where the Congress of Magic is? I’m willing to do everything that I can for the information! Please tell me if there are any conditions?”

She wanted to get the information as soon as possible. No one knew what would happen in the next second.

Under the gaze of the apprentices, Lucien replied, “There’s no

condition required, as it's my duty as a sorcerer to introduce more of you to the Congress to help it grow. I'm here for you all as a guide, and I'm willing to help."

Lucien differed himself from Felipe and those people from the Hand of Paleness.

After a short time of silence, Mercury's voice trembled as she almost cried, "Mr. Professor, I have no idea how to express my gratitude. Thank you so much. Can you tell us where it is right now?"

Only people who were there themselves before understood the great nervousness and intensity as well as the depression these apprentices were under every day.

"If we can get there, Mr. Professor, we'll never forget your help!" Hanger was excited as well.

All the apprentices presented showed their feelings of gratitude. Then, Lucien smiled and said, "The Congress of Magic is in the Kingdom of Holm, across the Storm Strait. It's a floating city close to the kingdom's capital, Rentato, and the city is called Allyn."

Chapter 300: Clown's Action

Chapter 300: Clown's Action

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

"It's a city in the Sky?! In the Kingdom of Holm?" Mercury repeated the words out of great surprise.

Hanger and Reindeer were also shocked, "Rentato? Near the capital?!"

It was totally out of their expectation, like how Lucien felt when he first heard where the Congress was. They simply could not imagine that the Congress of Magic could exist above board right in front of people's eyes in the country across the strait.

They thought that the Congress was probably deep into the mountain ranges, or even in another dimension or demiplane, which was secretly connected to the main material world.

Philosopher, Viscount Klein, had more or less heard something from Count Hayne, Count Rafati, and some other big nobles, so he remained relatively calm.

Looking at the surprised faces of the apprentices, Lucien felt quite satisfied, "Yes, the Congress is in Allyn. It's gained some support from the nobles in Holm, and its power has way surpassed that of the Church in the kingdom. Right now, if it was not because of the nobles' wish to maintain the power balance between the three parties, and if it was not because of the great cost the Church has paid to hold the Radiance Church, the kingdom would have been under the Congress' control."

"It's... It's unbelievable..." Mercury murmured, and she still could not believe what she just heard. She was born and also grew up in the Duchy of Violet, and in her mind, the Church's power was greater than anything else, even across different dimensions. If the Church had not been divided, most sorcerers would have died out already. How was it possible that the Congress of Magic could

overpower the Church?

Mercury was not alone here. Even including Philosopher, the apprentices present were all very surprised and confused. Although Philosopher had heard something about the kingdom across the strait, because he was not qualified enough to sit close to the grand duke, the information he had was also very limited.

In order to give him more confidence, Lucien briefly told them the history of the development of the Congress of Magic, the achievement made by some great arcanists from the Congress and its current situation. In the end, Lucien said to them, “The Congress has been the second most influential power across the continent. In Allyn, you can learn arcana and basic magic for free, and you don’t need to hide anymore. Instead, you can earn yourself status and wealth that you deserve by learning magic.”

Lucien was not trying to exaggerate anything, but his plain tone made the apprentices thrilled. Their great excitement left their body slightly shaking, as they finally saw the light in the seemingly endless darkness.

Although Mercury was quite calm most of the time, now she almost burst into tears, “Then Mr. Professor... What shall we do? I think the Church must have blocked the strait... Can you lead us to get there?”

What she said reminded the other apprentices—they realized that they were not in Allyn yet, and there were still lots of dangers waiting for them ahead.

“I’ve got my own things to deal with. I cannot do this for you.” Lucien first rejected them and then told them the two possible routes to get there. Then he added, “If you’ve got any magic items that can make you fly, consider to take the route in the north through Schachran Empire. If you don’t, go to Sturk and find Ferryman. There you have to prove to them that you’re qualified to be sent to Allyn. So try to show them your ability and potential if you haven’t become a real sorcerer when you arrive in Sturk.”

Lucien did not tell them who Granneuve was, because there might

be a spy from the Church among the apprentices. Lucien only told them how to find Ferryman.

Learning from the lesson a few years ago, the liaisons from the congress now had a strict series of procedures to observe, question, identify and test the apprentices. So even if the spy told the night watchers how to find Ferryman, it would still be very hard for the night watchers to get to Allyn.

Mercury calmed down a little, "Thank you, Mr. Professor. If there's a chance, I hope to see you in Allyn."

The apprentices including Philosopher knew that they had to work really hard to prove that they were useful to the Congress in order to obtain the chance of going to Allyn. This was the cost they had to pay, and they were well aware of it.

"I hope that you can tell this to other apprentices and sorcerers who you can trust. Don't be selfish. Give others the chance to choose." Lucien nodded, and then he added, "After tonight, you might want to change an identity and find another place to hide. I'm concerned that there are still spies from the Church in other magic groups."

"Got it, Mr. Professor," the apprentices answered seriously. They completely trusted Professor's words, and no one wanted to fail when they were almost there at the edge of the light.

After a while, Hanger said to Professor with some passion, "Mr. Professor, you mentioned something about arcana and basic magic. As a profound middle-rank mage, can you make some brief introduction of them? As for the pay, you can pick any magic materials that we have here..."

"It's free to make some basic introduction..." said Lucien in a plain tone. In fact, the materials here brought by the apprentices were just nothing in his eyes.

Hearing that, all the apprentices including philosopher stood up and gave Lucien a respectful salute following the manner of the ancient magic empire.

Then Lucien started to explain magic system using the arcana way of thinking. All of the apprentices were shocked, as they had never heard something like this before, but the new way of thinking definitely had brought them lots of thoughts.

It was different from last time when they read the journal, Arcana. Last time they were totally lost, while this time because Lucien was great at explaining profound theories using simple language, the apprentices saw a new gate behind which there was an ocean of knowledge!

At the end of the gathering, the apprentices and Philosopher were still immersed in the new world of knowledge. Even though there were parts that contradicted what they knew, what Professor said was very persuasive.

At their current level, and because they had never received any systematic education after a profound leader, it was the best time for them to absorb new knowledge like a piece of sponge.

After leaving the basement, the apprentices and Philosopher again gave Lucien a respectful salute with their right hand on their forehead, “Hope we can learn more from you if there’s chance in the future, Mr. Professor.”

In their eyes, Professor was not just some mysterious and important sorcerer on the Cleansing List anymore, but more like a representation of arcana and the Congress of Magic.

Lucien grinned, “My students don’t like me that much. If there’s chance, I hope you all won’t regret.”

“...?” The apprentices were very confused. Then they watched Professor and Philosopher leaving together.

...

Down in the sewers of Aalto.

“What? Professor’s in Aalto right now?!” Clown suddenly stood up and his eyes stared at Juliana like they were going to burn.

Juliana was both thrilled and nervous, “Yes, an hour ago, we’ve confirmed it from our spy that he just attended the gathering of the magic group. ”

The spy reported to them immediately after the gathering. After all, Professor was on the Cleansing List, and what he had done could never be forgotten by the Night Watch.

Clown suddenly became silent, then he burst out laughing, but his laughter sounded crazy and sad, “Lucien Evans is in Aalto. Professor then also shows up in Aalto. If they are not connected, I’d rather put myself on the burning post! Those cardinals up there should see now...”

“Just stay here and wait for the good news. When we catch Professor and find the evidence that shows Lucien Evans is connected to him, you can go back to the Inquisition!” said Juliana joyfully.

Clown shook his head, “No, I need to seize the chance. I need to catch Professor myself.”

“It might be Professor’s conspiracy...” Juliana hurriedly said to Clown. “Professor might be here just because of you! Let us do this for you!”

The three leaders in charge of the Inquisition were all level six radiant knights, although they were not as powerful as the level-seven red-robed cardinals, they were enough to catch Professor. Any conspiracies were simply nothing in front of the absolute power.

Clown shook his head firmly, “Maybe there’ll be someone behind controlling the Inquisition or the Church to buy Professor more time. I have to be quick, and I must take revenge for the more than twenty teammates of mine who died in that forest. I’ll never forget what happened to us. I’ll be very careful.”

Clown had no idea what Professor’s purpose was. There seemed to be pointless for Professor to kill him.

“I see. Please take care.” Juliana knew that Clown would not change his mind, so she nodded.

Clown laughed, “Professor could never expect that we’ve got all the information about Philosopher!”

The night watchers had spent months investigating apprentices who were relatively close to Professor. Although they lost Owl because he died in the remains of the Magic Lock, Philosopher finally led them to find Professor.

“Then you’d better hurry. You want to find Professor before the other night watchers come.” Juliana reminded him. After all, Clown was also on the night watchers’ target list.

Chapter 301: The Last Smile

Chapter 301: The Last Smile

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In Viscount Klein's study.

Viscount Klein was tied to the chair, and his black hair looked messy. His green eyes stared at the man wearing a ridiculous-looking clown mask standing in front of him.

"You must be the crazy Clown! Just as the princess said, you're out of your mind!" Klein, the archon of Aalto's city hall, scolded Clown out of fear.

Clown laughed, "Mr. Viscount, please don't tell me that the spell you cast just now was from a magic item. I see nothing wrong with a night watcher catching a vicious sorcerer, or do you want me to call you... Mr. Philosopher?"

Klein was shocked, "How do you..."

He did not finish his sentence. Instead, he stopped himself very quickly. He thought that this might be a trick.

"We've been watching you all this time, Mr. Viscount, but we never really did anything to you because we were waiting for you to confess and to realize what you've done is completely wrong. After all, you're a noble. But unfortunately, you didn't. However, you've still got one more chance. As long as you tell me where Professor is, you can keep your status as a noble and archon... and you only need to secretly join the Night Watch," said Clown. As he was talking, he looked out of the window, feeling a bit worried that the rest of the night watchers might arrive here anytime.

Klein realized that he was not the real target, then he sneered, "I see. You're here for Professor. Sure enough, hanging out with one on the Cleansing List means great risks. But I don't trust you, Clown. You're not part of the Night Watch anymore, and the night

watchers are even after you as well. I'd rather wait until the real night watchers come."

As what Clown expected, although Klein had no plan on keeping the secret at the cost of his life, he was as sneaky as many other nobles. If the reward was tempting enough, they could even work with demons! People like Klein knew how to make decisions in this kind of situation.

Klein was trying to get a better offer!

Clown's face got close to Klein's and he said, "Good try, Mr. Viscount, but you're negotiating with me, and I'm in a hurry, so I don't feel like negotiating."

Klein's facial expression suddenly changed, and Clown's ten fingers started moving. Clown's fingers controlled the muscles in Klein's face and whole body, and his eyes and mouth started to open and close following Clown's movement.

Gradually, Klein's will and soul were also controlled. Unlike other night watchers, Clown could get the information he wanted even without using divine power.

"What's your pseudonym? Are you a sorcerer? In what school?"
Clown first used a few simple questions to see if his power worked.

Klein's eyes finally found focus, and he looked just as usual, except for the smile on his face, "Lord Clown, I'm a sorcerer. My pseudonym is Philosopher, mainly major in the school of Astrology. At that time, I failed to awaken my blessing, and I had no potions to rely on, so found the magic books left by the sorcerers who were killed by my ancestors to see if there was anything I could do to awaken my Blessing, but then I got interested in the school of Astrology, and could not stop myself anymore."

Clown was not interested in Klein, so he asked directly, "How did you meet Professor? How can I find him?"

"Lord Clown, it was Professor who found me after I came back from the concert. To be more specific, he used the fourth-circle spell,

Figure in Mirror, to talk to me. He wanted to attend our next gathering to tell us the information about the Congress of Magic.” Klein told Clown everything, “After I agreed to help, we met each other once. It was beside an idle garden villa in Gesu, No. 116. And we had this secret code... But I don’t know where he is right now. He decided on the place where we met.”

Of course, Professor was very cautious and cunning, and Clown knew it well. Suddenly, it came to him that the address belonged to Lucien Evans! The villa was in a remote corner, and it had not been rented out yet. Only an old servant was keeping the house. So it was a perfect place for Professor to hide.

Clown’s blood was boiling, and his body was shaking out of thrill. He was glad that he paid attention to the details.

However, knowing how cunning Professor was, Clown forced himself to calm down and thought, “Lucien Evans is taking his rest in the house in Noble district right now, and it is said that Natasha is being occupied with all kinds of stuff in Ratacia Palace today and never left the palace. If both of them all of a sudden showed up in the idle house, people could easily tell that this was a conspiracy.”

He also considered whether Professor would lead him to another powerful sorcerer and make them fight, but it was not very likely to happen, after all, they were in Aalto. If a big fight happened, those cardinals would arrive immediately.

Although Clown knew that the best option right now was to wait for Juliana and the other night watchers to handle this, the anger and the wish to take his revenge were burning his guts. Also, he was confident in his own power as well.

After making a quick analysis, Clown made up his mind to go there. He knew that he must be very careful, and if there was anything out of his control, he would hide and leave Professor to the rest of the night watchers.

After sealing Klein’s spiritual power using his special Blessing, Clown wrote down the information that he got from Klein to save some time for the night watchers coming after.

Then Clown left the noble district and arrived at No. 116, Gesu District.

The garden villa was covered in the darkness like a terrifying monster.

After checking around, Clown saw no magic traps around. Feeling a bit relieved, he decided to take one more step further. As quick as a shadow, he sneaked into the garden villa.

There was only an old servant here in the villa. After making the old servant fall asleep, Clown carefully checked the rooms one by one, trying to find some clues.

Soon, Clown had finished searching the basement and the ground floor. With great caution, he walked upstairs.

...

In Viscount Klein's place.

Waldo, the Executer, led a night watch team secretly to the second floor. They were still looking for the viscount.

They avoided making a great stir, in case Professor would notice and run away.

As soon as they came to the second floor, Waldo smelled blood.

Juliana suddenly became worried. She was afraid that Clown had lost his control.

Waldo's face was half covered by his beard, but his nose was very sensitive to smells. He said seriously in front of the door of the study, "Only one dead person in there. It's the smell of Millstone family."

The viscount was from the family.

As he was talking, Waldo opened the door. The strong smell of blood blew to them.

When the night watchers got in the room, although they were very used to blood and death, in front of what they saw, they all frowned.

The room was like a slaughterhouse. Tiny pieces of flesh and blood were everywhere, from the ceiling to the floor, leaving not even a complete piece of bone or organ. This whole scene was beyond disgusting and cruel.

“This looks... familiar...” murmured a night watcher.

The rest of the night watchers knew what he was talking about—almost all of those who had been caught by Clown’s strings ended up like this.

“Impossible... Clown wouldn’t kill the viscount...” Juliana’s face turned pale.

Stepping on the pieces of flesh and the pool of blood, Waldo directly walked to the desk and picked up the piece of paper under the ink bottle. After taking a quick look, he said to the rest of the night watchers, “This was left by Clown. He left the secret code that no one can mimic. He’s confirmed that Viscount Klein is Philosopher, and, according to Clown, Professor might be at No. 116 in Gesu District.”

Hearing that, Juliana gasped. She started to think that it might be Clown who had done all of this. When he got the information he wanted, he might have got too excited to control himself.

Because the viscount had been confirmed to be a vicious sorcerer, his death did not matter that much.

“Leave the viscount thing to the Inquisition. Now we should get to Gesu District as soon as possible!” Waldo said to the rest of the night watchers. In his heart, he was still on Clown’s side.

“Got it!” replied the rest of the watchers together. They did not care about a vicious sorcerer’s death.

...

Clown had searched most of the second floor but found nothing special.

One room after another... When Clown felt disappointed, he suddenly noticed that there was someone in the study! As a grand knight, Clown sensed that a man was standing beside the window, enjoying the cool night wind.

Clown was very surprised. He did not expect that it would be this easy for him to find Professor, and, more importantly, it seemed that Professor did not even notice him!

Although having lots of questions and thoughts in his mind, facing the evil and powerful middle-rank mage, Clown did not want to waste even a second. Instantly, he fiercely launched the puppet strings right toward the man beside the window.

Letting out all of his power, Clown destroyed the door within a second at the same time. However, to his great shock, he saw Lucien Evans standing beside the window.

Being tightly bound, the way Lucien Evans was standing was weird and distorted. And there was a creepy and fake smile on his good-looking face. Under that certain mysterious power, his body directly and stiffly fell backward, like a swan shot by an arrow.

The messy black suit Lucien Evans was wearing, the creepy smile on his face, and the moment when he fell backward like a worn doll... became an eternal, mysterious painting in Clown's memory.

To frame him, Professor chose to sacrifice Lucien Evans?

Clown totally did not expect this.

Before hitting the floor, Lucien Evans' body exploded like a blooming flower. His flesh and blood were everywhere.

Chapter 302: The “Sad” Princess

In fact, at the very beginning, before he arrived at No. 116 Gesu District, Clown did consider the possibility that Professor and Lucien Evans would work together to frame him, say, Lucien Evans would pretended to be severely injured by him, and then the princess and Camil would arrive right on time and stop him. Then he would be caught for sure, or even killed right on the spot.

However, after a careful analysis, Clown did not think that they were going to do this because of the many points questionable through the whole plan. If the princess killed him right on the spot, those leaders who were on his side from the Inquisition definitely would not simply accept the result, instead, at least they would require an interrogation against Lucien Evans, which was of course not a good thing for someone like the musician, who had so many secrets related to Professor. Even as a princess, Natasha could not say no to the Inquisition's reasonable demand. After all, a question would be part of the procedures when things like this happened. No matter how powerful and influential the princess was, she could not interfere with the balance between the Church and the nobles.

And if they could not kill him right away, there was big chance that he could still prove himself as innocent. He had so many questions to ask—how did Lucien get hurt? What did the wounds look like? Was it possible that the wounds were left by his Blessing? Why Lucien Evans showed up in the middle of the night at No. 116 Gesu District?

And the most important thing was that he could directly ask the Church to use the divine spells to test whether he was lying when questioning Lucien Evans.

However, Lucien Evans just died like that, which was totally out of Clown's imagination. The picture of Lucien Evans falling to the floor kept lingering in his mind, and he was not able to get rid of it.

At this moment, he believed that Lucien Evans really died. Since the cost of faking Lucien Evans' death was too much to bear—that

meant that the great young musician would never show up again, and Clown would never know that Lucien Evans had decided to abandon this identity as a great musician forever.

After losing himself in his thoughts for a few seconds, Clown's eyes suddenly became alert.

He saw the gorgeous princess, Natasha, who was wearing a fancy purple dress, show up in the air. Her lips were red, and her eyes were full of light. It seemed that she was here to meet her lover.

However, a second later, Natasha's eyes had lost their focus. As if she had lost her soul, she unbelievably stared at the flesh and blood on the floor and the walls.

Run... Run. Run!

That was the only thought left in Clown's mind. He would not want to stay here even a second longer in front of the powerful woman who just witnessed her beloved man's body on the floor in pieces!

At this moment, she would not listen!

Clown instantly exerted all his strength and power, and countless invisible strings rose in the darkness. Stepping and grabbing the strings, Clown rushed into the forest behind the house very quickly.

At this time, he heard the bellow full of anger and brief, or it was more like a plaintive cry, making the air and the ground shake.

Clown knew that the princess was coming after him. As soon as he started moving again, a silver sword hacked his back.

The light of the sword pierced the light of the divine items covering Clown like cutting a pile of paper. Clown's body suddenly became distorted, and it suddenly became like a doll covered with black strings.

The strings were broken by the hacking, and a deep gap appeared in the back of the black doll.

A second later, Clown showed up from the strings again. However,

part of his body on the right side fell onto the ground. Pieces of guts and blood were everywhere.

Clown started to lose his consciousness, but he knew that he could not stop. He needed to seize every tiny chance if he wished to run away from a radiant knight who had the strongest Blessing.

As long as the princess did not kill him with the first hacking, he still had a chance to survive!

Like he said, Clown did have strong enough willpower to keep running as fast as he could, despite the horrible injury he suffered that could make most of the cardinals feel limp in their legs. In the darkness, as he was running, Clown calmly wriggled what was left on the right side of his body and covered the wound by a layer of invisible film to prevent his blood from coming out more, so he would not leave any marks.

Although Clown knew that he would not be able to avoid the princess' second round of attack, he would not give up until the last second.

Despite the fact that he disliked Lucien Evans a lot, Clown agreed on the spirit of perseverance contained in Lucien's music.

Miracle happened. Until Clown disappeared in the darkness, the second round of hacking never arrived.

...

"Are you trying to stop me, Waldo?" Holding a silver sword in her hand, the coldness in Natasha's eyes looked terrifying.

In the strong air flow caused by Natasha's fury, Waldo's hair became tangled and messy, but he was still standing in front of the princess and said to her calmly, "I've sent the night watchers out to get Clown. Before things become clear, I think it's better to keep him alive. So... What happened, Your Highness?"

A distance away from them, Camil was still following the princess, but the distance was purposefully left.

"Clown killed Lucien." Natasha answered with restrained great fury. Her silvery-purple eyes were as cold as ice.

"What?!" Including Waldo, all the night watchers were shocked.

Juliana's face suddenly became very pale.

Lucien Evans, the great musician, died?

This was totally out of their expectation as well!

Natasha closed her eyes, as if she agreed to leave this to the night watchers, since the grief in her mind was too heavy to bear, "I saw Lucien die with my own eyes, and Clown was right there."

Her voice was full of sorrow and great desperation.

Waldo unnoticeably gasped. He saw the pieces of flesh and blood drops on the grass. Based on the motivation and the way of killing, Waldo had to admit that it could be Clown who did this.

"Your Highness, I understand how you feel..." Waldo crossed in front of his chest. "Mr. Lucien Evans is so outstanding and brilliant that the God of Truth wants him to go and play his music in Mountain Paradise."

After comforting the princess for a bit, Waldo became serious, "But I'm sorry, Your Highness. Right now I have to ask you some questions and check if this is Mr. Evans' blood. I'm not doubting you, but I have to follow the procedures of the Inquisition. I hope you can understand, Your Highness."

Before Natasha nodded, Waldo was very cautious. He was afraid that the princess would lose her mind out of great sorrow, and her power was just beyond horrible.

After several seconds of silence, Natasha opened her eyes. The light in her eyes was cold.

"Go ahead," she said.

Waldo sincerely appreciated the princess' courage. He first asked

several night watchers who did not go after Clown to collect the blood left, and then he asked the princess carefully, "Your Highness, why did you come here tonight? Wasn't Mr. Evans still taking his rest?"

Natasha put on a sad but stunning smile, "He used to live here. In the bedroom, he played the first movement of Moonlight for me. So we wanted to come here tonight in memory of our past..."

Natasha covered her face with her hands to stop herself from crying.

Hearing that, Waldo looked down upon himself for those vulgar thoughts he had had in his mind.

"I see." Waldo slightly nodded.

After asking a few more questions, a night watcher of bishop level came to him and whispered in his ear, "Moonlight Blessing. It is Lucien Evans' blood."

"Mr. Waldo, Clown was severely injured by me, and he should die within an hour. I hope you can find him as soon as possible." Natasha told Waldo the true reason why she stopped chasing after Clown.

When Natasha looked to the side, she saw an iron ring on the grass. So she flew down there and picked it up. The look on her face was extremely sad but seeing the ring seemed to warm her heart up a bit.

Seeing the moment, Waldo felt that this was like a dream. The princess was not usually this feminine, but more heroic and decisive. The look on her face was as gentle as the moonlight in Lucien's music.

Waldo knew well what the iron ring was. It was the broken Holm Crown Ring left by Natasha's mother, and now it seemed that it was also a token of love.

"It's our fault, Your Highness." Waldo comforted her again, "We did not catch Clown in time."

"It has nothing to do with the Church. After all, the Church has made the decision to sentence him to death." Natasha slightly shook her head.

Hearing that, Waldo nodded out of relief. What he felt concerned the most was that, because of Lucien Evans's death, the Church and the future ruler of Violet would have an unfixable gap between each other.

"You're such a dedicated follower, Your Highness, and a wise leader," praised Waldo.

When the night watchers started to check the house and the surroundings, Natasha unnoticeably released a sigh of relief. She felt it quite cheesy with what she just said. But she also had strange feelings when she was talking about what once happened between Lucien and her.

But what was more important was that Waldo did not show suspicion for what she said, and things were going the way they wanted them to.

As a devoted follower, Natasha was fine with putting some pressure on the Church to help and protect her good friend and to maintain the status of the nobles, but she would not be willing to do great damage to the reputation of the Church and the balance between the two sides despite the fact that there was a chance, since she still had her bottom line, and she hoped that Lucien could understand.

...

In a house, a man wearing a black hood sat down in the armchair, weak and limp.

"Morning Star... He didn't talk much. It was totally out of my expectation that he was the traitor, until I saw his response when knowing where the Congress was," signed Philosopher. He looked weak from losing a lot of blood.

Professor was still wearing the black robe. He reached out his hand and wrote down letters with the blood on Morning Star's back.

"The end of the betrayer. Professor."

"Why do you want to leave the words and the body, Mr. Professor?" asked Philosopher. "Morning Star's dead, and we can just put all the blame on Clown and the Church. Now, you're catching all the attention."

"To teach other traitors the lesson." Lucien smiled. But in his mind, he said to himself that Natasha had helped him a lot, and he would not bring more trouble to her.

Chapter 303: Him

Chapter 303: Him

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

After leaving the letters, Lucien and Philosopher quickly left Morning Star's place and disappeared in the darkness.

In fact, as this was not the first time that the Inquisition dealt with Professor, the Inquisition indeed considered the possibility that Professor was playing the same trick again—the purpose of Professor showing up in Aalto again was to find the spies in the circle of magic, so what happened to Fire Wolf would happen again. Therefore, the inquisition was ready to put several of their spies hiding in the magic groups under this risk. After Mercury and the other apprentices told more magic groups the information about the Congress, the spies in those groups would also report the message to the Night Watch.

However, what was out of the Inquisition's expectation was that Professor could locate Morning Star so quickly. The fact that Morning Star was killed only half an hour later after he sent out the secret message showed that Professor had been watching him all the time. On the other side, the fact that Philosopher blew his cover as well as what Clown did also made the leaders of the Inquisition believe that Professor's target was Clown and the rest of the night watchers, so they did not have time to set up traps and send out enough people to protect Morning Star. Therefore, Lucien killed Morning Star pretty easily.

Lucien and Philosopher took many turns along the streets in the darkness. After passing quite a few blocks, they came to the secret hiding place set up by Philosopher a few years ago.

“Mr. Professor, I didn't expect that you are not only good at Astrology and Element but also Necromancy.” Philosopher felt that they were safe for now, although he was still weak from losing lots of blood.

After witnessing that Professor made a body in the necromancy circle using one-third of Philosopher's blood and the limbs they collected in the Black Forest, Philosopher was deeply shocked. In Philosopher's eyes, this power should be possessed by the divine gods. Although he was not young anymore, he had made up his mind to head for the Congress of Magic.

Lucien replied in his pretended hoarse voice, "I'm far from being 'good at it'. I just started looking into Necromancy a year ago, but the Congress has made great progress in synthesizing the human body. The theory of cell memory can explain why your blood could be used to synthesize your own body. Right now, the Church still isn't able to tell the difference, unless a grand cardinal uses some level nine divine spells."

After a year of study, plus Lucien's solid arcana and magic foundation, as a fourth-circle sorcerer, Lucien's skills in synthesizing human body was not bad.

"Far from being good at it? Then what is a master necromancer like?" Philosopher was shocked, then something came to him, and he asked. "There's a necromancer I once heard about... Felipe Carneiro. Two years ago, his name suddenly soared on the Cleansing List to No. ninety-one, and at that time, he was only of fifth-circle. Is he a master necromancer?"

As the previous archon of the city council, Viscount Klein had access to the Cleansing List.

"I have to admit that he's a genius in the school of Necromancy." Although Lucien did not really like Felipe, he still made an honest comment. Despite the fact that in many young sorcerers' eyes in the Congress, both Mr. Felipe and Evans were geniuses, Lucien was well aware that he was still far behind.

The higher the circle was, the harder it became, and this was especially true with several key stages. When one wanted to reach the senior-rank as a fifth circle sorcerer, he or she needed special magic rites to move forward. Without enough preparation, this was very likely to fail.

Then Lucien switched the topic, “I’m sorry for involving you in this without telling you the details. Honestly speaking, I was not sure whether Clown would kill you or whether I had enough time to save you before the night watchers’ arrival. I’m very sorry for putting you under such great risk.”

Lucien was concerned that Clown would find more details when questioning Philosopher, so he did not tell Philosopher the whole plan. What Lucien told Philosopher was that he would save him from the great danger that he was going to encounter tonight.

“It’s okay, Mr. Professor. I trust you, and I know that there’s a cost if I want to find the path to the new life.” Philosopher did not mind it.

Lucien slightly nodded, “Anyway, what I did is bad. Morning Star’s magic items are yours now. Don’t refuse. I have my way of doing things. Take some rest after taking the potion, and then you should leave Aalto as soon as possible.”

“Alright, Mr. Professor. Actually, I’m feeling much more relaxed now.” After becoming a sorcerer, the pressure and stress on Philosopher’s shoulder kept accumulating. What his noble status brought to him was not glory or enjoyment, but fear. And he was getting older. As the family had already recognized a proper heir, now this pseudocide had freed him from the heavy burden, and he finally could pursue what he wanted.

...

In Ratacia Palace, Natasha, who looked gloomy and cold, gave the grand duke a quick hug and said, “Father, I’m okay. I’ll be alright quickly. I’ve been through a lot of things, and I think they’re the tests from God. I’ll get better for myself, for you, and also for my mom and brother in Mountain Paradise.”

“I believe in you, my poor Natasha, but don’t push yourself too hard.” The grand duke touched her hair. He knew that Natasha must be very sad. Her mother was a sorcerer, so there was no way that her mom’s soul could be in Mountain Paradise right now. He felt bad for his daughter that both of her two love stories did not

manage to have a good ending.

What was a comfort to the grand duke was that his daughter could still fall in love with a man. As long as he knew this, the grand duke would not push his daughter too much.

“Father, can I stay alone for a while tonight?” Natasha forced a smile on her face. Truly, in her mind, she did not feel good tonight as well. She did not like lying to her father, and although this was a play, it still reminded her of Silvia. So far, she still preferred being with a female. Natasha felt that she needed some time to figure out what she really wanted.

The grand duke nodded and touched her hair again, “You can do this, Natasha.”

Watching Natasha, followed by Camil and several guards, walking back to War Gallery, the grand duke suddenly became worried—would this tragedy turn Natasha into one who would fall for neither men or women?

...

In War Gallery, Camil was sitting on the couch quietly, while Natasha was playing piano in a slight upset way.

“This is the best Pathétique I’ve ever heard you play. But can you stop for a while and tell me what happened in the house? Did Clown and the rest of the night watchers notice anything?” Surprisingly, there was one guard who hadn’t yet left the room, and the guard talked to the princess trying to cheer her up, as if they were close friends.

Natasha stopped playing and took a deep breath, “Good body-making skill. They’ve noticed nothing different.”

After leaving Philosopher’s place, Lucien secretly met Camil and played the role of the princess’s guard to hide here in Ratacia Palace.

“The body cost one-fourth of my blood, so I’m quite confident.” Lucien tried to play a joke to comfort the princess, “What really

concerned me was that you probably would burst out laughing when you were describing how much you loved me.”

Natasha snorted, “Come on, my playing wasn’t bad. I felt I could go and play opera! But the role wasn’t very suitable for me... I shall be like this.”

Natasha quickly stood up and came to Lucien. She put her right hand on her chest and slightly lowered her head. Then she looked into Lucien’s eyes and said to Lucien in a man’s manner:

“Every time you see the moon, you will think of me.”

Natasha’s and Lucien’s face were very close to each other. Somehow, when they looked into each other’s eyes, they felt a bit awkward.

Natasha took a few steps backward with her slightly embarrassed smile. Lucien also took a step aside.

“By the way, why didn’t you let me kill Clown? Why did you want me to severely injure him and then let go of him?” Natasha asked. “Although I’m confident that he won’t live long, we could have taken the safer way.”

In fact, Natasha was impressed with Clown’s will of fighting against darkness, but she was also concerned that a crazy man like Clown could do anything to achieve his objective. If it had not been for Lucien’s words, it was impossible for Natasha to miss the target.

Lucien put on a mysterious smile, “I’m waiting for him to show up.”

“Him?” Natasha was confused.

Lucien did not make it all clear, instead, his words were very ambiguous, “Although we haven’t met each other yet, I sort of know what he’s thinking. He’s helped us a lot with this thing...”

“Can’t you just be more specific?” Natasha did want to push Lucien.

Lucien shook his head and said, “You’d better not know, but I’ll give you a final outcome.”

“About what?” Natasha felt that Lucien was getting more and more mysterious after he came back from the Congress.

Lucien just smiled but did not say anything else.

...

After finding an empty room in War Gallery for Lucien, Natasha sat on a chair and looked at the moon outside of the window. Her facial expression was still a bit gloomy.

Although they were good friends, the gap between a sorcerer and a noble who followed the God of Truth was still more or less revealed by itself from what happened. She wondered if she had gone beyond her bottom line to help her friend out.

At this time, Camil opened the door and walked in.

“Any news out there, Mrs. Camil?” Natasha asked without turning around.

As usual, Camil looked serious, but right now she also looked a bit confused, “Professor showed up again, and he left the words ‘the end of the betrayer’. So the night watchers believe that it was Professor who killed the musician to frame Clown up. But, of course, Clown should be dead anyway, for severely violating the agreement between the nobles and the Church.”

Natasha was a bit surprised. And then the look on her face became very gentle.

Chapter 304: The Elegy of Night Watch

In an ordinary-looking house in Purple Lily, Aalto.

Leaning against an old wardrobe, Clown took out a tube of potion from his robe and drank it with his left hand—the one that he was left with.

Clown had lost part of his right body, so right now he was even having a hard time breathing, and the only thing that was supporting his life was the strong willpower of a grand knight. After arriving at the secret hiding place, Clown was totally exhausted, and he was not even able to take a few more steps to go down into the secret chamber.

The divine potion helped Clown's guts and flesh to start growing, but as soon as the newly-grown flesh touched the cut, it shrank and withered, as if an invisible wall was preventing it from growing further.

Clown could feel that he was losing life force very fast. He wondered if he was going to die there. It was his first time seeing how powerful and terrifying the top Blessing could be.

At this time, he heard footsteps from the other side of the door. Clown opened his eyes with great effort. He knew it was the night watchers.

When the door opened, Clown was a bit surprised to see Juliana, as well as Lend and Minsk, who were not carrying the mission this time.

Seeing his partners, hope started rising in Clown's chest. He tried his very best to talk to them, "Not me... Professor... did it."

Clown thought that he was being very careful, but he still ended up in Professor's trap. But what tortured him the most was that he still had no idea what was Professor's purpose!

Why?! Why did Professor do all of these?!

The miserable situation made Juliana's eyes turn red with tears, "I know... I know... Professor did all of these. You'd never kill Lucien Evans right in front of the princess. I'm here... Let me cure you!"

Although Clown did something about catching Lucien Evans right in front of Natasha, what happened right now made the words he said rather ironic.

When Lend heard what Juliana said, although his face always looked very serious, he frowned his eyebrows. He knew that very unlikely Juliana's divine power would work, but he was also praying for a miracle.

As a battle priest, Juliana was used to using divine power to cure people. However, neither her own power nor the divine items worked. The cut absorbed all the divine light like an endless pit.

"Captain Lend..." Juliana almost burst into tears. Lend was close to senior level, and if there was nothing that Lend could do here, Clown was going to die very soon.

Lend took a deep breath to calm himself down. Then, he lifted his long sword and his body was covered with a layer of peaceful light. The light thus extended the sword, together with the black mist from his black gloves.

Lend shouted and then hacked toward the horrible cut on Clown's right side, as if he was trying to chop off the endless pit connected to the cut.

His Elimination Blessing could make any supernatural power that did not belong to the real God become invalid!

Air was stirred from the hacking, but nothing changed.

Lend did not want to give up. He tried again and caused a strong wind blow, but Clown's flesh still could not grow any further.

"It's okay... Unless you're... a radiant knight, you can't..." The craziness and fury in Clown's eyes had disappeared. Right now his black eyes behind the ridiculous-looking mask looked rather calm.

"No..." Juliana cried.

She had followed Clown for more than seven years and was saved by Clown many times. When facing evil, the captain was always the team's strongest support. Although many night watchers described Clown as crazy and crooked, she completely trusted him.

So far, they had encountered Professor twice, but the whole team was already almost gone.

Clown murmured in an obsessive way, "Not me... Professor... did it."

"I know... Captain, I know..." Juliana hurriedly nodded. "I told the leaders of the Inquisition that we needed to hurry, but they spent too much time on discussing what Professor's true purpose was and if this was Professor's trick to lure us away from the base, or we could have caught him!"

Facing the great pressure from the nobles, the Church became hesitant.

Lend was not in the team chasing after Professor. He met Juliana when looking for Clown after hearing what happened.

Lend told Clown the latest information, and his voice was cold, "Morning Star's dead. Professor killed him. 'The end of the betrayer'... Professor left the words."

Right now, if he could catch Professor, Lend would tear him into pieces.

"I see..." Clown's anger started burning again, and he said with great effort, "The Church's corrupted... and too timid. If it was like before... there would be no way... for Professor... to toy with us like... like a cat playing with mice... twice!"

"Lots of them in the Church have lost their faith." Minsk was so furious that his body was covered with a thick layer of flames, "They bend their knees in front of the nobles and the darkness!"

Clown started to get hyper, and he talked in a more fluent way out

of his unusual mood, "Although I killed many innocent people when I first awakened my Blessing and lost my mind, after being touched by... by the dervish's words, I've devoted my heart and soul to the God of Truth! For no second... did I ever forget my oath! I live in darkness... to fight against darkness! I don't care how other people see me... ruthless... or crazy, I do not regret it. I did all of these to drive away darkness!"

Clown gasped hard. He had used up all his strength. His breathing started getting very weak and short. Looking at Lend, Juliana, and Minsk, Clown said, "Don't forget... our oath. Don't let off... Professor..."

"We won't..." answered Juliana with tears but in a determined way.

Lend crossed in front of his chest and started making the vow of the Night Watch in front of Clown,

"Night gathers, and now my watch begins. It shall not end until my death. I shall keep watch over the darkness and abandon my all. I shall take no wife, hold no lands, father no children. I shall wear no crowns and win no glory. I shall live and die at my post. I am the opposite of darkness, the mortal enemy against evil. I am the fire that burns against the cold, the light that pierces the darkness. I pledge my life and honor to God to be the keeper of the light, for this night and all the nights to come."

Juliana and Minsk repeated with tears, "...I pledge my life and honor to God to be the keeper of the light, for this night and all the nights to come."

Clown reached out his left hand with great difficulty. With the hand shaking, he crossed in front of his chest, "... I pledge... my life and honor... to... to God... to be ... the keeper... of the light... for this night... and all... all the nights to... come."

Clown's voice became lower and lower. His eyes slowly closed, and he could not see clearly anymore.

At this time, with his blurry consciousness, Clown heard footsteps!

Lend was the first to turn around and was shocked, "Lord Amelton!"

The female red-robed cardinal was wearing a unique-shaped biretta. She had long, black hair, and her beautiful face and eyes looked full of mercy.

"Lord Amelton!" Minsk and Juliana were also shocked to see the top leader of the Inquisition—Vila Amelton.

Was she there to catch Clown?

Would she also punish them?

However, Amelton quickly walked toward Clown and checked him using divine power. After a while, she said, "I'm here late. Clown's soul has been cut off by the Sword of Truth."

As she was saying, the white light in her hand slowly closed the horrible cut, but Clown's flesh never grew back again. His life force had been exhausted.

"Lord Amelton?" Lend noticed the different tone from the cardinal. It seemed that she was not here to take Clown.

Amelton looked at them and said seriously, "The nobles have forgotten what the Lord's given them. The Church is being timid and they have lost the glory. I believe that you all know what I am talking about."

Although feeling exactly the same way, Lend and the rest of the night watchers still didn't dare to show direct agreement in front of the highest leader of the Inquisition.

Amelton turned to Clown, "You're the most loyal guard of the Lord. On behalf of the rest of us who are discontented with the situation, I show my great respect to you. No matter if it's on the ground, or in Mountain Paradise, we're always with you. The Lord's glory will be with you. You shall never be alone."

Clown could not speak, but his heart was full of ecstasy.

"Lord Amelton, you're one of those who is discontented with the

situation?" Lend asked very cautiously.

Amelton stood up and looked at them with mercy, "Yes, will you join us?"

Thinking of what happened and what was going on right now, and thinking of the glory they once had, Lend, Juliana, and Minsk crossed in front of their chest, "Only truth lives forever. We guard the Lord's glory with our life."

Clown's consciousness went completely faint as if he had fallen into a dream from which he could never awaken. He knew that death had arrived.

The last second before Clown's consciousness was gone, in his dream, he saw a silver-haired man wearing a red shirt and black coat. Holding a glass of wine in his hand, the man had a mysterious smile on his face.

"He's trying..."

Chapter 305: The Other Purpose

Chapter 305: The Other Purpose

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the night sky, lots of stars were circling around Lucien, who was standing on his own Host Star of Destiny, staring at the deep darkness. His black hair became messy in the wind, adding a slightly wild look to this quiet and calm young man.

Suddenly, the starry sky turned red, and a full silver moon rose quickly to the sky, which expelled the darkness.

Then, the silver moon turned into Rhine, who was wearing a red shirt and black coat. His huge bat wings extended widely in the space.

“It seems that you really like stars. Your dream is exactly the same as the last time. Is that why you chose to major in Astrology?” Rhine joked. “Come on... Of course, I know that you purposefully controlled your brain and soul before falling asleep to hide your secrets from me, Lucien. Sorcerers are boring... I prefer you as a musician... What a pity...”

Lucien was in his own dream, so he was quite confident, “Mr. Rhine, did you find anything in Clown’s dream?”

“Did I ever let you down?” Rhine grinned. “Someone important came before Clown died, and the person invited the rest of the night watchers present to join them.”

Before carrying out the plan, Lucien had called the projection of Rhine through the mark and asked him to enter Clown’s dream to see what happened to Clown before he died, which was the reason why Natasha did not kill Clown on the spot.

“I see... So, was it Sard or Amelton?” asked Lucien calmly.

A smile slowly appeared on Rhine’s face, and he asked out of some

curiosity, “How did you know? It was Amelton...”

“Without Sard’s silent support, it was almost impossible for Natasha to push the Church and the Inquisition this hard to their limit, and Clown wouldn’t be sentenced to death this easily. Sard chose to turn a blind eye to the whole thing, so my plan worked perfectly. And the red-robed cardinal, Vila Amelton, remained silent all the time. All she did was pass on Sard’s will,” said Lucien. By killing the musician identity, Lucien also tested Sard, which was his other purpose.

Sometimes a scheme did not have to be very complicated, as long as it seized the enemy’s true desire and will!

After Clown attacked him, Lucien added this second purpose to his plan. From the Church’s response to every step he took, Lucien managed to learn what he wanted to know. And Rhine’s projection into Clown’s dream was the final confirmation.

Even Natasha only knew part of Lucien’s plan, not to mention Clown. Therefore, Clown got very confused and fell into Lucien’s trap.

Rhine smiled, “He cannot wait anymore. He’s trying his best to seize every chance to break the Church apart and to increase his power, just like how the saints did before. As for the World of Souls, obviously, he even knew more about it than me. So I’m trapped here right now, but he managed to escape. I’m not sure... but probably he saw something else here. Anyway, this is a good thing for the Congress. If Sard’s power manages to develop, the South Church would divide again. Seize the chance and make the right choice, Lucien.”

“I don’t think the Church will be further disrupted. Sard is neither a fool nor a madman. He knows what will happen if the Church splits again. No matter what Sard’s purpose is, weakening the power of the Church and losing the number of its followers are not good news for him. I think he wants to be like a parasite, sucking the essence and power of the Church. One day, when he’s fully prepared, say, when he becomes the pope, he is going to replace the Church with something else without changing what it is on the

outside.” Lucien made his own analysis, and then he continued, “So, according to me, I think when Amelton was recruiting the several night watches, her excuse should be the corruption of the Church, and the Church should go back to the right path. It’s not like many years ago how the several saints divided the Church, they have decided to take a more revolution-like way, although, in fact, the ultimate purpose is still the same.”

Rhine was obviously quite impressed, “You’ve become a wise and mature man, Lucien... although I still think the young teenager who just started learning magic was more interesting.”

Then, Rhine confirmed that Clown had been dead by telling Lucien what he saw through Clown’s dream.

That was a relief to Lucien. It was obviously quite a risk letting Clown run away. If Sard was involved, which, according to Lucien, was very unlikely to happen because Sard would not want extra trouble from Clown, the night watcher could still be saved. Then one day when Clown came back, Lucien’s friends and family would be in great danger.

After Clown’s death, Lucien felt very relieved. The last step was the funeral for the great musician, and Lucien definitely did not have to attend it.

...

Waking up from his dream, he saw the moonlight, still gentle and quiet.

Opening his eyes, Lucien thought of the grief that his relatives and friends were going to suffer from, and the thoughts made him feel pain. In order to make sure that no one could tell the difference, Lucien had to wait until the day before he left Aalto to tell uncle Joel and his family the truth and let them make their choice.

This several days were going to kill them, and Lucien felt the same way. Although his plan worked, he did not feel joyful or excited at all.

It was safe here in Natasha's War Gallery. So, Lucien got up and walked to the window. He stared at the moon and tried to calm himself down.

"You can't sleep as well?" In this quiet night, Natasha's voice also sounded very gentle.

Lucien slightly turned around and saw the princess taking a walk in the garden under the moonlight. Because of the power of the divine circle, violets and lilies in the garden were all blossoming in the sweet floral aroma.

"I can't fall asleep thinking of how horrible my family and my friends would feel tomorrow..." confessed Lucien. "I wanted to tell them the truth tonight, right now."

Natasha waved her hand, asking Lucien to come out of the room and join her.

She directly sat down on the railing of the garden, which was not a princess manner at all. However, Lucien didn't mind it either, so he sat down beside her.

Lucien smelled the light scent from the princess, but it was not from any makeup or something. The scent was clean and pure.

"I understand, Lucien. When I was lying to my father and making him sad, I felt bad. And I know it's a hundred times harder for you." Natasha patted on his shoulder. "But we can't let this affect our judgment and will of knowing what to do. We've made the decision, and we must stick to it. Maybe it sounds cold, but it brings us the best result. Being sentimental and hesitant can neither save us nor help to protect those people important to us. Just like I said, cruelty can also be a kind of mercy."

Lucien slightly nodded, "I know. I know it almost too well. I'm doing what I should, but inside my heart, I suffer a lot from the pain."

"So, just talk to me. You'll feel better," said Natasha supportively. "To be fair, we exchange things that we feel bad about."

“Sounds good. So... I feel I’m despicable. I’m using the genuine emotions of human beings as part of my plan. I let my family and friends suffer...” said Lucien in a low voice.

Natasha leaned sideways with her back against Lucien’s, “The fact that you’re feeling this way means you’re not despicable. You’re doing this for their good as well. I’m different. I know what my father wants, but I ignore it, and I don’t even want to try for him. I’m the bad one.”

“We cannot deviate from our path because of the expectation of someone else. We only live once. Sometimes we compromise, but sometimes we just cannot give up.” Lucien did not look back but tried to comfort her.

Taking turns, the sneaking and cruel sorcerer, Professor, and the decisive and tough knight, Sword of Adjudication, shared their pain and sorrow.

Until midnight, their voice slowly became lower, and both of them felt much better.

The night was very quiet. Lucien could feel the warmth from Natasha’s back. Lucien said to Natasha without turning around, “Be careful with Sard.”

“Okay.” Natasha knew that this was the result Lucien promised.

...

In the early morning, in the Musicians’ Association of Aalto.

Franz walked into the association’s building with the latest Aalto Weekly, which was another newspaper about Mr. Evans’ return concert he collected.

Under the title—The Greatest Concert Ever, The Unparalleled Symphony Feast—the columnist commented, “This night was the greatest stir ever. People were crazy about this young musician, Lucien Evans, and I was one of them...”

Franz was very happy seeing these praises. After the concert, he

admired Mr. Evans more than anyone else, so he felt genuinely delighted as if he was sharing the honor.

When Franz was reading the newspaper while walking, he suddenly sensed the different heavy atmosphere. Turning around, he saw the princess walking into the hall, followed by a group of guards.

The princess' sorrow and depression made the air heavy and thick.

“What... happened?” Franz thought to himself.

Chapter 306: The Bad News

Chapter 306: The Bad News

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The princess was wearing a simple black dress on that day. Her purple hair was tied back and covered with a piece of black crape, showing the curve of her long and elegant neck. She looked sad and solemn.

Walking past Franz, the princess continued toward the stairs in a cold way, as if there was nothing in her eyes.

Franz felt a bit worried. He looked around.

All the people in the hall, including the receptionist, Polly, looked as confused as him. They had no idea what happened that could make the future grand duchess this sorrowful.

Was it... the grand duke?

No... If it was the grand duke, the princess should first send the obituary notice to all of the nobles and then send the coffin to the Golden Cathedral as the pallbearer. In the Golden Cathedral, she would be crowned by the grand cardinal, Sard, and become the new grand duchess.

Was it because the heretics from the north had pushed through the northern fortress and they were right now approaching Aalto?

No... Instead of immersing herself in the sorrow using music, as an honored knight, the princess should be the noble leading the Violet Knights to fight against the enemies.

Was it because of a famous musician who just passed away?

No... Except for Mr. Christopher, who once taught Natasha music, no one in this association was qualified for the great respect and deep grief from the princess.

...Wait!

The thought came to everyone present. People in the hall wondered whether the thought was true, but no one dared to ask for verification.

Although the great young musician passed out after the concert due to the combination of excitement and his chronic disease, the princess' imperial guard had announced that Evans was going to be fine, despite the fact that it would take time for him to recover. After two days since then, except for Mr. Evans' close friends and family who managed to visit him once or twice, no one outside of the manor knew Mr. Lucien Evans' health condition.

It happened many times that acute diseases managed to take away lives within just a few minutes before a priest's arrival!

If it was Lucien Evans, the young genius, who just impressed everyone with the Symphony in D minor, Ode to Joy, and who once caught people's heart with his masterpieces, he for sure deserved the future grand duchess personally coming over to the association and breaking the grievous news.

What was more important was that the young genius musician's close relationship with the princess had been recognized, and many believed that Lucien Evans would be the future Duke of Tilan—in the Duchy of Violet, if the heir was a female, her husband would be ennobled with the title of Duke of Tilan, which brought the husband no real power, and the title was non-inheritable.

If it was Lucien Evans, the way the princess was dressing now and her irrestrainable grief all made sense!

"God... Mr. Evans is not even twenty-one..." Polly covered her mouth in a shocked manner, and there were tears in her eyes. She tried to persuade herself that it was not Mr. Evans. She prayed that it was not Mr. Evans...

After the concert, Polly had regarded Mr. Evans as the angel in charge of music and joy, and the musician who she admired and respected the most.

The newspaper slowly fell onto the floor from Franz's hands. When he visited Mr. Evans on the first day morning after the concert, the latter looked okay. After coming back from the manor, Franz immediately immersed himself in the passion and inspiration of creating his own music and thus he did not hear anything from the outside world for lots of hours.

Today, Franz left his place and came to the association. He was not here especially for collecting the newspapers praising the concert, but to find some materials in the library and then see if he could visit Mr. Evans again.

"No... No..." murmured Franz, whose thin face looked very shocked. Not being able to control his feet, Franz followed Natasha and Camil upstairs. He wanted to hear the final answer. He wanted to know Mr. Evans was fine.

...

In Mr. Christopher's office.

Othello helplessly said to this music master, "Mr. President, are you still working on the review? This month's Music Criticism and Symphony News have been postponing their issue for two days."

Although Othello was the current president of the association, he was still used to calling Mr. Christopher the president.

Victor, standing on the side, quickly took a glance at the pile of paper in front of Christopher on his desk.

Because Lucien's return concert was held on June 1st, both Music Criticism and Symphony News had decided to postpone their issuing until June 2nd. And it turned out that the concert was of such a great success that was out of anyone's expectation. When the two journals were about to hurriedly select the contribution from their regular music critics, they found that they were overwhelmed by the countless articles praising the excellency of Lucien Evans' concert. The review articles from those passionate and motivated musicians and critics were of very high quality, so both Music Criticism and Symphony News had decided to publish a supplement

for this month. However, although the space for the first leading article was reserved for Mr. Christopher, this music master had been delaying for two days, and thus the journals had no choice but to wait.

Christopher seemed to be quite relaxed, as he had his own pace, "Ode to Joy has seized my heart, and its theme, structure, and melody have surpassed the level of any other symphony pieces I've ever heard before. I want to use the best and the most sincere words that I have to develop this article, and I think the article is not there yet."

"Maybe too much thinking and revision aren't going to help..." Victor was being euphemistic.

"It makes sense." Christopher nodded, "Take a look at it for me, Victor."

As Christopher was saying, he pushed several sheets of paper to Victor.

Victor picked up the sheets and read in the gentle voice, "...This is a masterpiece beyond people's imagination, the most precious treasure in the palace of symphony for anyone who is fond of music. I have this feeling that, for a long time, there is not going to be another symphony piece that can be on a par with Ode to Joy...

"But we do not necessarily have to feel sorry about it, instead, we shall feel proud and excited, for we just witnessed this glorious moment and had this firsthand experience of how thrilling a great masterpiece could be. This is a masterpiece that is going to be remembered by history. So let's leave our seats and show our great respect to Lucien Evans and his magnificent creation..."

"Lucien Evans' name is well qualified to be put next to the glowing names of the music masters in the palace of music. The spirit of perseverance when facing difficulties and the will of fighting against darkness contained in Lucien Evans' music will shine forever, and thus his music pieces will shine endlessly as well!"

Following it was the comment on the symphony structure and

theme. Hearing Victor's reading, Othello had a smile on his face, "Mr. President, obviously, you are a very generous man when giving praises, and your comments are, I have to say, really high. But I shall say that the comments are very accurate, as no symphony has ever fascinated me like Ode to Joy."

Before Christopher responded, someone knocked at the door, slowly but firmly.

"Yes?" asked Othello.

"Her Highness," said the guard on the other side of the door.

Othello hurriedly stood up and walked to the door together with Christopher and Victor.

When the door opened, they saw Natasha wearing the long black dress, and the sorrowful look on her face. They hurriedly asked, feeling some panic, "What happened, Your Highness?"

Natasha slightly lowered her head and crossed in front of her chest. Using the flat tone, she said, "Lucien Evans was... recalled by God in the early morning."

Her flat tone could not hide her deep grief.

"... What?!" They could not believe their ears.

Victor's head suddenly buzzed and he almost fell to the ground. Othello grabbed his arm.

Hearing what the princess just said, Franz looked very confused. Like losing his soul, Franz started wandering in the corridor. Then, he was stopped by a guard.

"I'm very sorry to tell you this, but... Lucien Evans was killed by an evil sorcerer in the early morning, because of a conspiracy that was not even really related to him," said Natasha using the Church's explanation.

People knew how close Natasha was to the young musician, and thus they all believed that what the princess just said must have

been carefully verified as true. Sorrow started to spread in the corridor, and some started to sob, cursing the evil sorcerer.

Victor's face turned pale. He opened his mouth but his throat could only make some hoarse noise. Mr. Christopher's wrinkled face looked heartbroken.

Othello gently patted on Victor's shoulder, "Don't be overly sad, please, Victor. Evans' talent is incomparable, and he just created the greatest music piece in this world. God has decided to call him back to Mountain Paradise, so he could play for God. Evans is loved by God, and up there, he is going to have the eternal joy. We shall pray for him. We shall not let the pain and sorrow torture us. Evans is going to watch over us from Mountain Paradise."

"I hope so, but I'd like to be left alone right now." Victor murmured, voice trembling. Then he turned to the princess, "Your Highness, can I... can I at least take one last look at him?"

Natasha slightly shook her head, "The evil sorcerer destroyed his body... Only some... some... is left."

The tough female knight could not say the word. It was too cruel.

"What... What can we do now, Your Highness?" Othello helped Christopher sit down and then asked.

Natasha said in the same flat tone, "On behalf of the association, release the obituary notice. On the newspapers, journals, in front of the association building, across the many city zones... Tell this to all the people who like his music. In three days, there will be a funeral... for us to say goodbye to him."

Chapter 307: The Whole City's Sorrow

In a nice house, Purple Lily District.

Ryan walked to the dining table and noticed that there was a pile of newspaper on his right side, so he asked a bit confusedly, "I thought we already had the latest issue of Aalto Weekly yesterday?"

Managing a trading business, Ryan needed to know what was going on in Aalto in different fields to decide what to buy and what to sell. Therefore, he subscribed to the most comprehensive newspaper—Aalto Weekly.

After making sure that their little son was sitting on the chair safely, the wife, Elena, answered in a pretty good manner, "It's a supplementary issue, the delivery man told me."

Elena could not read. She had no idea what was on the newspaper.

Then, she started humming the lyrics of Ode to Joy in the kitchen. The family was in a quite happy mood.

Picking up the newspaper, Ryan also hummed the melody together with Elena. He started his career as an apprentice in the trading business, and although he was not the smartest among the apprentices, he was definitely the most hard-working one. Because of his perseverance, he slowly got rid of poverty and also learned how to read. Right now he was managing the business and he had a lovely family that was relatively well-off.

Therefore, his heart was deeply touched when he first heard Symphony of Fate. He fell in love with Lucien Evans' music instantly, and soon his family members all became the followers of Lucien's music.

He unfolded Aalto Weekly, and saw the bold black letter in the headline—"Obituary".

Ryan's first thought was that an important person's death was very likely to affect the price of many goods.

He continued to read, and the black typed letters looked rather depressing:

"Lucien Evans, the immortal music master, the great pianist and conductor, the innovator, the leader of the current trend of symphony, the founder, the finisher, the music genius loved by God, was recalled by God in the early morning on June 4th."

Ryan did not get it at that moment. After a while, he realized that his ears were tingling. He just could not link the obituary to Mr. Lucien Evans, who was so young and so talented...

He thought that Mr. Evans could lead the development of music in Aalto for at least another several decades!

Ryan continued to read with his vision slightly blurred. The lines on the newspaper hurt his heart:

"... Mr. Evans came from the slum and managed to play in the Psalm Hall as a music master. His life has shown us the spirit of perseverance and his great willpower. His life was a glorious legend!"

"... Let us use our most profound condolences to pray for the talented young musician, wishing him the bliss in Mountain Paradise. His song of praise shall always be with God. May God bless him."

Elena walked out of the kitchen with the breakfast. She was so surprised when seeing the look on her husband's face that she almost dropped the plate.

"What happened, darling?" asked Elena hurriedly. "Why are you crying?"

"Am I...?" Ryan did not even realize the fact that there were tears in his eyes. He only knew that his eyes felt swelled and he could not see very clearly.

A tear dropped on the newspaper and it was quickly absorbed. The letters nearby became blurred.

"I can't believe it. His leaving is the greatest loss of the field of music! — Christopher"

"Maybe God wants him to play in Mountain Paradise, so Evans had to leave earlier. — Othello"

"He brought us the joy and the spirit of perseverance, but he has left us without taking anything with him. I don't want to cry, but I can't help it. — Felicia"

"He has set off for Mountain Paradise, leaving us a peak in the world of symphony that is beyond hard to conquer. The treasure he left with us is equal for everyone—young or old, rich or poor. A grateful and unyielding heart is the most valuable thing in one's life. One day, when I die, I hope to be buried close to him. — Franz"

Ryan stared at the tear stain on the paper and murmured, "I really... cried."

...

Beside the gate of Aderon District that led to the market, sad people gathered together. Some were silent, while others were sobbing. Many young ladies hugged each other, shedding their tears.

Betty, Joanna and Simon saw these people on the street as soon as they stepped out of Copper Coronet. At the same time, they saw a notice on the city wall.

They could not read, but the color of the notice told them that this was an obituary.

"Which important figure passed away?" asked Betty curiously. In her mind, she saw no reason why these poor people in Aderon should cry for the death of an important person, say, a noble or a cardinal.

Out of curiosity, Betty asked the two gate guards who also looked sad, "May I ask what this notice is about?"

Most people in Aderron did not know how to read. So one of the guards answered in a rather depressed way, "The pride of Aderon..."

no, The pride of Aalto... Mr. Lucien Evans... has passed away due to his serious illness."

Except Lucien's close friends, some nobles and some major members of the association knew that the young musician was killed by the evil sorcerer called Professor, other people were told by the Church that Lucien Evans passed away because of his illness. The Church had asked for the permission of the princess.

The fact that a very successful and popular musician was killed by an evil sorcerer right in Aalto would make the followers doubt the capability of the Church. They would wonder if the Church would be able to protect them from the evilness like they claimed they could.

If it was not because of Natasha's insistence, the Church would try to hide the truth from everyone.

Betty was frozen. She felt that she had lost her soul.

"Betty, what?" asked Joanna concernedly.

Betty suddenly burst out crying. She buried her head in Joanna's arms, "Evans... Mr. Evans... die... died."

Although she had been traveling around for three years, Betty was still a young lady under twenty, who was not able to control her emotions very well.

Joanna could not believe what she just heard, but she also knew that the guard would not play jokes on this. So, she patted on Betty's shoulder, although her own eyes were also holding tears, and said, "Mr. Evans was just recalled by God to Mountain Paradise, because his talent was just too outstanding. Don't cry, Betty. Work harder to become a knight and don't let Mr. Evans down..."

Betty sobbed and nodded.

...

Riding his Dragon Scale, John led a group of guards heading for the city gate of Aalto that faced the black forest.

Aalto was the last major city very close to the Dark Mountain Range, therefore it was also not far away from the fortification. It only took John about a day to come back to Aalto. He had applied for his annual ten-day vacation as soon as he received the letter from his family that his old friend had come back.

However, due to the strict regulation of the fortification in the Dark Mountain Range, and also because Natasha and Lucien were worried that John, as a knight, would notice the different power from Lucien if they lived in the same villa together, his vacation did not get approved until the third day after the concert.

Wearing the silver set of armor and purple mantle, the blond young man's eyes were full of joy. He was looking forward to reuniting with his family and old friend.

Although from time to time John had got some letters from the princess, the joy was not even close to that of talking to his old friend face to face. On his way home, John heard that his friend's concert had just achieved a huge success and everyone was humming the melody of Ode to Joy. His heart was beating faster and faster as he approached the city gate. John almost wanted to push his horse to rush back home, but there were too many people on the streets.

However, John noticed that something was wrong. Those people on the streets all looked very sad, and he heard that people were all saying the name—Lucien Evans.

The look on John's face started to get more and more serious. He sent his servant to ask what happened.

Then John heard the passerby's answer very clear, "Mr. Evans was recalled by God..."

The whip in John's hand suddenly dropped onto the ground, and the sound was crispy.

...

The Aalto Weekly published later recorded this day as following:

"It seems there is a huge piece of cloud covering Aalto. People have lost their smile from the great shock. The angel of music has left this world in such a young age, and that is the whole city's sorrow."

...

Three days later, Aderon District, beside the old shanty Lucien once lived in.

A black hearse pulled by four bulls started to move slowly, following the life path of Lucien Evans, from Aderon to Gesu, then to the administrative district, and finally it would arrive in the noble district. The funeral would be held in the Golden Cathedral.

Wearing the black knight suit, John walked silently on the right front side. Behind him were Joel, Alisa, Iven, Elena, and Lucien's other friends. On the left side, Victor stood in the front, followed by Othello, Felicia and Lucien's classmates.

Christopher, because of his age, and Natasha, because of her status and the fact that she had not had a settled relationship with Lucien, were waiting in the Golden Cathedral.

The black hearse moved slowly. There was only sobbing in low volume in the air.

A poor man from Aderson district silently joined the procession.

Then, more and more people joined them. They wanted to see off Lucien Evans for the last time.

Chapter 308: The Musician's Funeral

Chapter 308: The Musician's Funeral

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The sky was covered with dark clouds, and it started to rain. Everything in Aalto was shaded with a thin layer of a veil, as if nature was also crying for the young musician.

The black hearse pulled by the four bulls kept moving forward slowly and steadily. More and more people gathered along both sides of the street in the rain, watching the hearse leaving.

The splendid concert that made the whole city crazy was held just a few days ago, and the melodies played were still lingering in the air. People felt that this was like a dream, a more than painful dream.

For the spirit of perseverance that Lucien Evans brought to them, and for the precious and pure joy Lucien Evans presented, people voluntarily stood along both sides of the street to see off the young and talented musician.

The fine rain drops fell on their faces, mixing with their tears.

If it had been a week later, or if it had not been in Aalto, it was almost impossible for one to see this grand and solemn scene. It seemed that people of the whole city were out to send Lucien Evans off.

When the hearse was about to leave Aderon, some more people who admired Lucien Evans a lot rushed down the street and joined the funeral procession.

Wearing black suits, those heartbroken people made the funeral procession grow bigger and bigger.

So, when the hearse arrived in the noble district, the nobles who were invited to attend the funeral were shocked. They saw a huge

crowd behind the hearse, like black tides safeguarding the last part of the journey of the beloved young musician.

Except for the municipal square during the music festival, they had never seen so many people gathering together for the same purpose. The nobles had this feeling that these people, when uniting together, were unstoppable with their overwhelming power.

Some nobles were so impressed by the fact that Lucien Evans was loved by this many people that they thought to themselves, "If I could have these many people sending me off when I die, it would be such a glory... I wouldn't have any regrets if that was the case."

When the hearse passed by, the nobles also joined the procession, although they were not quite willing to stand this close to the common people, this was part of the funeral manner of the Saint Truth.

When seeing the massive crowd, the look on Gossett's face slightly changed. Standing in front of the Golden Cathedral, he unconsciously crossed and said in low voice, "Only truth lives forever!"

After the hearse was sent into the Golden Cathedral, the common people who were not invited to the funeral refused to leave. In the fine rain, they stood surrounding the cathedral and prayed for the musician.

The scene made the pastors and cardinals feel that they were going to bury a saint.

...

In the cathedral, the coffin was placed below the cross, showing that the musician was a loyal follower.

The funeral music stopped. Holding a white cross in his hand, Gossett said in a solemn way, "Merciful God, here we shall pray for our brother, Lucien Evans, who has finished his path in this world and is now heading for the path toward Mountain Paradise. We firmly hold true that all of us who believe, who accept, who follow,

and who respect will finally be saved by you, Father, and we will rest in peace forever in Mountain Paradise.”

The nobles, musicians, and instrumentalists sitting in the cathedral all started to pray with their eyes closed.

“He was a pure and devout nobleman. His music has your power and has brought people faith and joy. Wish he will continue to play the paeon in your kingdom...”

Finishing praying, Gossett looked at Natasha, Joel, Alisa, John, Victor and Lucien’s other friends in a merciful and loving way, “Lord teaches us that death is like the dark night, but when the dark night is over, light shall return. One shall not fear death, as all of his followers will eventually reunite at Mountain Paradise. We shall be together, we shall always be connected, and we can always pray for each other.”

Then, Lucien’s relatives and friends started to speak one by one on the stage, recounting Lucien Evans’ life story. Some could not stop weeping; some hid the profound pain in their heart; some followed the Lord’s instruction and comforted the rest of the people to stand strong for a better future.

At the end of the funeral, Natasha walked onto the stage and stood beside the cardinal.

Wearing the long black dress, with the black veil covering her tied-up long hair, the princess recounted the happy moments she spent with the young musician. Then, she calmed herself down and said formally, “He once told me that if he had passed away without leaving the will, he wanted me to donate his manor, Brons, to the Musicians’ Association.”

Hearing that, Othello slightly nodded. Lucien Evans was for sure born for music, and his love toward music was precious and pure. He had decided to donate most of his asset to the association.

Natasha continued, “Lucien hoped to use the profit of the manor to set up an award and a piano competition. The award is for the most outstanding music piece across the continent selected every three

years by the members of the Musicians' Association of Aalto. The competition is also going to be held every three years in order to promote the development of this new musical instrument and encourage more young pianists to devote their passion to this career."

Lucien's manor, Brons, was selected by Natasha. When the princess gave Lucien the manor as a present, it was worth a few thousand Thales, and its annual profit was also quite good, which was around a hundred Thales, equal to a famous musician's a whole year's income. Therefore, three hundred Thales was a lot to a young musician who just got started.

"Mr. Evans had a kind heart made of gold. He cared about the development of music all the time as well as the growth of other young musicians." Othello stood up and showed the appreciation on behalf of the association, "Here I suggest that we name the award as 'Evans Music Award' and the competition as 'Continental Evans Piano Competition'. Also, the association has decided to build stone figures for each music master who made a great contribution to the development of music. The stone figures will be built on the top of Mountain Kaseya beside Belem River, so everyone who comes to Aalto and every child who plays beside the river shall see the figures and remember the brilliant names."

Christopher, Victor, and other association members all nodded.

People applauded in a serious but warm manner to show their respect toward this lofty and gracious musician and his love and passion for music.

At this time, Natasha added, "I'll add the profit of one of my personal manors on top of the prize, so the prize of both Evans Music Award and Continental Evans Piano Competition shall be three hundred Thales."

"It's very generous of you, Your Highness." Othello slightly bowed.

Lucien's relatives were also fine with the decision.

Only the red-robed cardinal, Gossett, frowned slightly. In his eyes,

Evans Music Award sounded very much alike Holm Crown Prize or Immortal Throne Award. Maybe Lucien Evans was inspired by the princess or Professor.

But in such an occasion, Gossett could not oppose the proposal. And there was also no serious reasons other than that for him to say no.

After setting up the award and the competition, the memorial part of the funeral was completed. The funeral guests started to sing hymns led by the choir. The funeral was sacred and solemn.

In the end, Gossett sprinkled holy water on the coffin to wash off all the sins from this world.

The coffin was lifted up again toward the cemetery beside the Golden Cathedral. Lucien's relatives and close friends followed while other nobles and musicians were ready to leave.

As soon as they walked out of the cathedral, the nobles were shocked. They did not expect that the crowd was still waiting.

Seeing that the nobles were leaving, people started to flow to the noble cemetery nearby. On the other side of the iron fence, they saw the black coffin slowly sinking down into the ground.

The rain had stopped for a while, and a few rays of sunlight pierced through the clouds. But when mud started being thrown on top of the coffin, the grief became unstoppable again.

The mud slowly buried the coffin, as if it was cutting off the last piece of string connecting the dead and the mourning. Alisa, Felicia, and Elena could not stop crying, while Joel, John, Victor, and Natasha closed their eyes.

People on the other side of the iron fence also started weeping.

At this time, a girl started singing in her slightly hoarse voice:

“Joy, bright spark of divinity, Daughter of Elysium...”

Although the theme of Ode to Joy did not fit the atmosphere of the funeral, its spirit matched the impression that Lucien Evans left to

people.

When facing darkness and pain, do not give up.

When facing darkness and pain, one shall still head for the destination where there are brightness and joy.

More and more people joined the singing.

“Fire-inspired we tread... Within thy sanctuary...”

The singing became louder and louder. Felicia and Elena cried even harder, while Natasha also joined the singing.

“All creatures drink of joy,

“At nature’s breast.

“Just and unjust,

“Alike taste of her gift...”

Goodbye, Lucien Evans, the young musician who once brought people the pure joy, the ultimate beauty of music.

“Joy, bright spark of divinity, Daughter of Elysium...”

In the singing, the tombstone was erected, on which there was a short line of the epitaph.

“Here was buried an angel of music.”

...

In the late night, in a noble villa.

John and his relatives were sitting on a couch. They could not fall asleep.

Chapter 309: Choice

The night of the Month of Passion, the sixth of the year, was still relatively cool. The gentle breeze was refreshing.

However, in the hall of John's house, the atmosphere was freezing cold because of the deep grief.

Sitting on the couch, the family members were all very silent. None of them talked, as they were lost in their memories.

Alisa wiped off her tears with the handkerchief from time to time; Iven's young face was written with sorrow, and his hands were clenching tight; Although Joel had a bottle of spirit in his right hand, right now his biggest habit other than music could not help him with relieving the pain; John, however, was just sitting there like a statue with a glass of wine in his hand.

"...I'm getting old, and it's becoming harder for me." Joel released a sigh. "When I was in Aderon, when Evans' father passed away... I was sad, but I recovered a few days later. But now..."

Aderon was a very poor area, where the poor people living there struggled every day to make a living. Therefore, it was common for one from Aderon to see that a sudden disease took away a person's life overnight. Thus, Aderon was the area with the highest mortality rate in Aalto, and Joel and his relatives were relatively more ready for the loss.

Alisa stared at Joel and said in a sobbing voice, "This is different! Our little Evans... He was... not even twenty-one! He was so talented, so hard-working, and he was the best musician ever! He... He's got no wife, no children... The Evans family has ended here!"

After a few years living as a noble, the way of her talking became more polite.

"If this didn't happen, we would be able to attend Evans' wedding in about six months." Joel sighed again. From what happened at the concert and the funeral, Joel was quite sure that as long as the

grand duke agreed, the two young people in love would get married very soon. And, of course, the grand duke would not oppose the marriage. After all, Lucien was a man!

Silence seized the moment again, and then John stood up and said to them, "Let's get some rest. Lucien wouldn't want us to be like this."

"Alright..." Joel stood up and patted on John's shoulder.

As the backbone of the family, John's words counted. Alisa slowly stopped crying and said, "John, try to get some rest as well. You are going back to the fortification soon. It's tough there. Be careful with the evil sorcerers..."

Although she had heard things about the evil creatures and monsters in the Dark Mountain Range from other noble ladies, Alisa did not worry too much. However, what happened to Lucien Evans made her worry about John a lot. After all, the fortification in the Dark Mountain Range was way more dangerous than Aalto.

John's hands slightly twitched when hearing the word "sorcerer". He gently hugged Alisa and said, "Mom, don't worry. I'll be careful. I need to work harder to become a grand knight in ten years, so I can better fight against the evil... the bastard sorcerers..."

At this time, the breeze suddenly turned into a wind blow, making the noise sounding like ghosts crying. Moonlight disappeared, and the light of the candles also started flickering, as if they were going to go out at any time.

"Who is it?" John sensed a bit of a magic wave in the wind, and he knew that someone was slowly walking downstairs. Taking a big step forward, John fearlessly protected his family standing behind him and, at the same time, pulled out the extraordinary sword.

He could feel it that the person was not intended to do any harm. However, John was also concerned that if he took the initiative to attack, his parents and brother would be left unprotected. Therefore, he chose to stay where he was.

Compared to his experienced elder brother, Iven, who had just started his knight training a few years ago, looked very nervous and confused. It took him a long time to find his sword.

It was very late and the dead silence reigned in the big living room. The person did not answer. The loud footsteps were stimulating their nerves.

Alisa was very nervous and fearful, while Joel was looking at his two sons worriedly. He and his wife were both over forty and they had enjoyed the noble life for a few years. Even if they were going to die there, they did not have much to regret. But his two sons were still young, and they should still have a future.

"Who is it? Who is there!" John did not give up. Slowly, he calmed down, as he knew that there were many knights and even some radiant knights living in the area. The longer the fight took, the better chance they had to win.

When the dim candlelight appeared in the corner of the stairs, John was totally shocked and the name burst out of his mouth:

"Lucien?!"

Wearing the black suit and bow tie, Lucien Evans, the musician who just passed away, slowly walked downstairs!

"E... Evans?!"

"Lucien...?!"

Joel, Alisa, and Iven also saw the person's face. Under the candlelight, the familiar, good-looking face looked rather healthy.

"It's me, uncle Joel, aunt Alisa. Hi... John, Iven..." Lucien tried to smile, but he failed.

Alisa cried out, "Little Evans... You've got the permission of God to come back to visit us for the last time?"

Alisa could not understand what was going on right now. She tended to use the divine will to explain everything she could not

understand. She was very excited, ready to jump out and hug Lucien.

"Mom, be careful! He's not Lucien! This is an evil sorcerer turning himself into Lucien to fool us!" John directly stopped Alisa.

Under the great spiritual pressure from Lucien, John was only able to stay on the defensive.

"John, I must say that you're half right and half wrong. I am Lucien Evans, but I'm also a sorcerer. I never died. I was just using it as my way to get rid of the identity as a musician." Lucien stopped at the bottom of the stairs, as Joel, Alisa, and Iven, where hearing what John said, all took a few steps back, trying to keep some distance away from him. John's sword was ready to attack at any time.

Therefore, at this moment, Lucien knew that the distance was good for both sides, despite the fact that he felt quite sad in his mind.

"Lucien... a sorcerer?" John repeated the words and became furious. "You bastard! You damned sorcerers! You killed Lucien, and you're now ruining his reputation! Even the Inquisition has proved that Lucien was a pure and noble man!"

Joel and the rest of them were influenced by John's words. Although they were confused for a second, now they were all staring at Lucien in an extremely hostile manner.

John continued, "I'm a knight, and I know sorcerers can change their look! Why are you here? Why are you slandering him?"

"John... Do you still remember our talk about the knight spirit and the creed before we beat the gangsters? Do you still remember what we said after we beat the gangsters? We were hoping to travel across the continent, and we were even discussing whether a Cynocephalus was edible?" What was going on right now was within Lucien's expectation, so he was prepared.

John looked surprised, but soon he became calm again, "So what? There're tons of ways for you to get the information from Lucien."

Although Lucien was always very impressed with a knight's strong

willpower, now John's willpower brought him quite headache. Lucien tried to avoid involving more details because he had no idea what happened between Lucien and John before, when they were kids. So he said, "John, you can ask me more questions about this. You'll see."

The look on John's face was very serious and disagreeable.

Seeing that John was not going to ask him any questions, Lucien started to talk on his own, "I did not start studying magic right after I knew the witch, therefore, I was able to pass the interrogation from the Inquisition. But later when the pastor, Benjamin, sent me and several knights down into the sewers to find the witch's lab, I found a set of notes and books left by her, and so I started studying magic..."

"Uncle Joel, aunt Alisa... John! Do you still remember why all of a sudden I wanted to learn how to read? Because I wanted to read the magic books and notes!

"John, you want to know why I could find the conspiracy of the Argent Horn? That was because I was practicing magic down in the sewers!"

...

Lucien's words slowly shook their faith. His strict logical thinking made them speechless.

After a while, John growled in a deep voice, "Lucien! Why do you have to make me believe?! Why do you have to let me know that my best friend is a sorcerer! A sorcerer who fooled the whole city and deceived all the people who admired and loved him?!"

In his mind, the image of his friend had been completely destroyed.

Alisa shook her head. She could not believe the fact that her child was an evil sorcerer. And if Lucien Evans never died, the solemn funeral now looked like a vicious trick.

Joel saw the pain in Lucien's eyes, and the sick look on Joel's face was slightly relieved, "Little Evans... I understand that you probably

didn't have other choices to make your life better when you just started studying magic. But why are you still chasing after magic after showing your talent in music? Are you that obsessive with power that you have decided to betray God?"

"Uncle Joel, that's not true. I pursue magic because I love it. I want to see the truth of the world. I want to know how our lives came into being; how this world was born and in what form does this world exist? I want to know the secret of stars above us... This world with so many things unknown is very charming to me..." answered Lucien sincerely.

Then, Lucien turned to John. "I made people believe I was dead because, sooner or later, people would know that I'm a sorcerer. So it's better letting the great musician live in people's mind forever. I'm very sorry... for making them feel this sad. I swear... after becoming a sorcerer, I've never purposefully hurt anyone innocent unless to protect myself or save other people. I know you might not be able to accept my identity, but I want you to know that I'm not that kind of evil sorcerer, and neither are the most sorcerers in the Congress."

John softened his tone a bit and asked, "So... Your plan has worked out. Why are you here? You don't worry that we might tell this to the Church?"

Seeing that they were now less nervous, Lucien took a step forward. But Joel, John, Alisa, and Iven all took a step backward. They were still afraid of Lucien.

Lucien slightly shook his head with a bitter smile, "I'm here... to ask if you all are willing to go to the Kingdom of Holm with me. Although there are many sorcerers, the Church is still influential there, and there are still nobles. We live in peace right now. And I'm confident that the nobles in the Kingdom of Holm will accept you all."

"Holm? The Congress? ... Her Highness...?" Some ideas came to John.

Lucien shook his head again, "This has nothing to do with Natasha.

I planned this together with my mentor, Professor. Later I'll be visiting her to tell her the truth as well and apologize."

Lucien lied about it.

Then, Lucien asked again, "Do you want to come with me? You'll still have the same life there."

What was waiting for Lucien was silence. Long-time silence.

After a while, when Lucien was about to ask again, John shook his head alertly, "Lucien, I'm a knight of the Duchy of Violet and Violet Knights. I have the land to protect. I can't."

The rejection was firm. The way John looked at Lucien was strange.

Joel tried to put on a smile and said, "Little Evans, we're happy that you're still thinking about us. But Aalto is our home... I just can't..."

"Me, too, little Evans..." Alisa also rejected. "It's hard for me to imagine the life living with the sorcerers. I'm a devoted follower of God."

Iven shook his head as well.

Seeing their attitude, Lucien slightly closed his eyes and released a sigh, "Alright, I see... So, after I leave, please go to the Church and tell them I'm a sorcerer."

"What? What are you talking about?" They were shocked.

Lucien's smile was a bit sad, "The Church will sooner or later know that I'm a sorcerer, and that'll bring you all trouble. So if you take the initiative, the Church would not give you all a hard time."

If the family reported this to the Church, they would not become the tool for the Church to threaten Lucien.

John, Alisa, Joel, and Iven were so shocked that they could not say anything. Although they were very afraid of Lucien and felt betrayed just now, they had never thought of reporting this to the Church!

Lucien put his left hand on his chest and bowed deeply, "Cruelty can also be a kind of mercy. I have to leave now. Hope we can see each other in the future."

Joel, John, Alisa, and Iven were silent. This was a cruel truth that was very hard for them to accept.

Lucien felt heartbroken. However, he turned around and walked to the door. Maybe they would never be able to see each other again.

When Lucien was going to step out of the living room, Alisa's trembling voice stopped him, "Little Evans..."

Lucien was surprised. He looked back. He was waiting for the favorable turn.

Alisa bit her lips and then said, "Be careful in that... what is it called... the Congress. It must be dangerous there."

"I will, aunt Alisa." Lucien's eyes welled up.

After the inner struggle, Joel sighed, "I still believe that you have a kind heart. If one day you want to leave the Congress, this place is still your home."

The look on John's face was complicated. The veins of his hands grabbing the sword twitched. Finally, when he saw Lucien was about to leave, the words escaped his lips, "Dare you to do bad things! Don't let me catch you!"

Pausing a bit, John's voice lowered down, "Be careful."

A big smile appeared on Lucien's face. He again bowed to them, and then walked into the darkness.

Chapter 310: Feeling Uneasy

Chapter 310: Feeling Uneasy

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When Aalto was still immersed in the sorrow from the funeral earlier, in the suburb area, in the air above the Melzer Black Forest, Lucien was bidding farewell to Natasha.

“Please take care of my family, Natasha. I have this feeling that my mission to take the letter to the Dark Mountain Range will change my life greatly in a short period of time. Maybe I’ll become stronger, but this would bring me more attention from the Church, and they probably will know that my death is a lie. So, if my family does not report me to the Church, be careful, so you can be more prepared when the Church finds it out. This is also another reason why I did not let you kill Clown on the spot. Normally, if we had colluded, you would have killed Clown directly,” said Lucien gently and sincerely.

Natasha was still wearing the black plain dress, and she was quite impressed, “I feel the pressure of being a sorcerer’s friend. You guys always have more than one purpose when doing things. Come on, Lucien, are you still hiding anything from me?”

In fact, yes, there was still a lot, but Lucien put on an embarrassed smile and hurriedly denied it.

Natasha was just joking. And she did not really care if Lucien was telling her everything. So she nodded, “If the family still doesn’t report you to the Church in half a year, I’ll put more pressure on them and force them to do so. Don’t worry. I won’t hurt them.”

After promising Lucien, Natasha said a little excitedly, “There are many powerful creatures in the Dark Mountain Range, more than several hundred as we know... Dragons, evil elves, trolls, mutated spiders, scarlet trees, lightning eagles... Be careful, Lucien. Also, most sorcerers who follow the ancient magic system are cruel and ruthless. They do forbidden experiments, and they control people’s

will. Their own desires are more important than anything else. Be very cautious, Lucien, they're not like the arcanists in the Congress. Although you're bringing the letter for some important person, and normally the Congress should be prepared and would not send a promising young arcanist to die there for nothing, you still have to rely on yourself."

Natasha's caring words comforted Lucien who had just bid farewell to his family, so he joked, "I hear you. But why do you look so excited?"

"Of course! It's gonna be a great adventure! Don't you think it's super exciting adventuring in the Dark Mountain Range, fighting against different powerful creatures, and seeing extraordinary powers?" said Natasha full of passion. Then, she sighed. "I wish I could go with you when I first heard about your mission so I could protect you, but I can't. I'm the future grand duchess, so I have to live and fight for the duchy. I can't just leave."

Although she saw it as a great pity, Natasha was not complaining. She knew her job very well, as she was trained to be the leader of the duchy since she was a young girl.

Lucien felt a bit embarrassed when hearing that Natasha once planned to protect him. "It's okay, Natasha. I believe that as long as I'm careful enough and I don't wander around in the mountains, I should be able to handle most of the dark creatures. When I come back, I'll tell you all the stories."

"Of course, I believe in your power. You've got a Holm Crown Ring!" Natasha nodded. But then she took out a pair of earrings in the shape of violet petals, "This is a gift given to me enchanted with the spell called Fernando's Electromagnetic Message. If you are in trouble, you can find me through this. I know you have something similar to this. Although the thunder and lightning in the Storm Strait cut off the connection between you and the Congress, in Aalto, you've still got someone who you can ask for help."

As a knight, and because of her more masculine character, except for every year's New Year Banquet, Natasha usually did not wear any accessories. Therefore, Lucien did not know that the princess

also had a magic item, and according to Lucien, the earrings were possibly a gift from Hathaway.

“I’ll ask for help for sure if I’m in trouble.” Lucien nodded seriously. At the same time, he said to Natasha, “It’s a pity that we can’t contact each other because of the Storm Strait...”

“That’s true... What a pity.” Natasha sincerely nodded.

It suddenly came to Lucien that maybe he should work on studying sending some magic satellites to the sky as signal stations, so they could talk to each other very often.

But what if other people somehow knew that the birth of magic satellite and the development of telecommunication was because a sorcerer wanted to contact a girl far away? That was not good... too embarrassing. That was Lucien’s thought. Then, more thoughts came to him. He still had to first figure out if there were planets in this world and whether they followed any orbits...

“Lucien, what are you thinking?” asked Natasha, “It’s okay. We can still write, you know. I like writing letters.”

Natasha’s voice dragged Lucien back from his boundless thoughts. Lucien panicked a bit when he realized what he was thinking... They were just good friends! Natasha was not interested in men!

Lucien quickly threw out his many weird thoughts and nodded, “That’s right... Writing is good. But...but we should have a new set of code in case the Church notices.”

After agreeing on the new writing code, Natasha smiled and said, “I don’t know how long it’s going to take for you to come back from the Dark Mountain Range, but very possibly, I’ll miss your birthday again. Seriously, since we first got to know each other, I was never there for your birthday. So right now, may I have an opening dance with you, and wish you happy birthday in advance?”

She slightly bowed. With right hand on her chest, she reached out her left hand, which was a typical manner of men.

Lucien was a bit amused, “I’m the man, Your Highness. I shall be

the one to invite. Seriously, I've never been there for your birthday either. So please allow me to be the one inviting you for the opening dance."

Then Lucien followed the same manner.

Natasha grinned and slightly lifted her eyebrows. Then she stood up straight, reached out her right hand, and put it on Lucien's left hand.

There was no music but only quite strong wind and clouds. But both Lucien and Natasha were good at music. And their dance steps were neat and elegant.

Although Lucien was still a bit shorter than Natasha, he had grown quite taller in the past several years. When they were dancing, they could look directly into each other's eyes, and their breaths were also very close.

Looking into Natasha's silvery-purple eyes and gorgeous face, feeling her sweet breaths and soft body, Lucien suddenly felt very uneasy. Although this was not his first time dancing with the princess, he felt very different this time—his heart was beating very fast.

Seeing that Lucien's eyes somehow started to look away and his face slightly blushed, feeling that his steps were getting slower and his hands stiff, Natasha also sensed the difference. When Lucien's breaths started to get heavier and heavier, Natasha was sure that the atmosphere was not normal—in fact, it was very strange, and she somehow felt nervous.

"Are you alright?" asked Natasha directly. "Are you worrying about something?"

Lucien was very embarrassed. He shook his head and answered, "Not really. Just my first time dancing in the air surrounded by clouds..."

"I see. That's true." Natasha grinned, "The wind is quite strong."

Trying his best, Lucien finally finished the dance with Natasha

relatively perfectly.

“Lucien, happy birthday.”

“Happy birthday, Natasha.”

They said it at the same time when the dance was over. Then they smiled at each other.

...

After saying goodbye to Natasha, Lucien was now flying toward the Dark Mountain Range with his eyebrows slightly frowned. After a while, he murmured to himself, “That wasn’t true. I just haven’t been that close to a woman for a long time. I can’t have these thoughts with Natasha, and she doesn’t even like men!”

...

Flying back to Aalto with Camil, Natasha slowly stopped in the air and put on the violet-petal earrings. Feeling a bit strange, she slightly shook her head.

Then, she noticed that Camil was looking at her ears carefully, so she asked, “What? I have to wear them, or I might miss Lucien’s signal.”

“Nothing. You have beautiful ears,” answered Camil casually. “Even better with the earrings.”

Chapter 311: The Dark Mountain Range

Lucien's first impression about the Dark Mountain Range could be defined by the word "huge". The peaks were huge, trees huge, vines huge, as well as the beasts in there.

Tall trees of over a hundred meters were everywhere, and somehow their leaves were black, blocking the sunlight from above, so even if it was daytime when one walked in the mountains, it always felt like nightfall.

Stepping on the squashy soil and layers of rotten leaves, it was hard for one to tell where the solid ground was and where the dangerous gobs were. At the same time, one should be very careful with the vicious snakes and spiders that no one could predict when and where they would pop out from.

Some rotten stuff in the mountains brought forth some toxic miasma. Standing some distance away, the miasma even looked colorful. Even the knights could really use some caution there.

However, in this harsh environment, Lucien walked calmly in the forest wearing a white shirt, black double-breasted suit, and his monocle, as if he was wandering on the streets of Aalto or Rentato.

"Mr. Elvis, how long do we still need to arrive at the magic tower of the Nightmare King?" Lucien asked the liaison beside him.

The liaison, Elvis, looked very ordinary. Most of the time his job was to buy some materials and goods from the adventures and then sell them to the sorcerers living close to the fortification in the Dark Mountain Range. Many adventures knew his connection to the ancient sorcerers, so when they dealt with Elvis, they were quite careful.

However, Lucien knew him better due to the information provided by the Congress. Elvis was not simply a businessman, instead, he might have some connections to the Nightmare King. Lucien found Elvis in a campsite for adventurers, and within his expectation, although he described his mission using quite ambiguous words,

Elvis instantly understood what Lucien was there for.

Wearing the black tight suit, Elvis walked fast and swiftly like a cheetah full of strength. Hearing Lucien's question, he responded without looking back, "At least half month, Mr. X. You should know that this isn't a good place for flying unless you're of legendary level, and rushing around can also put you into serious trouble."

Lucien did not tell Elvis his true name. He used X as his pseudonym.

Lucien slightly nodded. It was said that above the Dark Mountain Range in the sky, there were lots of space gaps that connected to other dangerous dimensions. Furthermore, dragons in the forest were also constantly watching their territory as well as the sky above, not to mention those lightning eagles, griffins and carrion birds patrolling around.

Stepping on the soft, squashy leaves, a greenish yellow snake suddenly sprang up and bit Lucien's calf.

However, the bite almost broke the snake's fangs. The snake twitched and then escaped away hurriedly in the rotten leaves and branches.

As soon as they entered the mountains, Lucien had carefully cast Stone Skin and Douglas' Absorbing Wall on himself. He knew that this was a place where he had to be extremely careful.

"How did I fail to sense it?" Lucien murmured. He was asking Elvis, and also himself. It did not make any sense that a fourth-circle sorcerer failed to notice that a snake was going to attack him, despite the fact that they were surrounded by the miasma.

Elvis also slightly frowned, "My sense is also less sharp here. I wonder if there are any senior-rank creatures around..."

The route that he was taking with Lucien was through gaps between the many territories owned by the magical creatures.

After checking around, Elvis slightly deviated from their planned path. Then, they kept moving forward. After all, there was not really a "path" in the Dark Mountain Range.

As soon as they took another few more steps, Lucien heard some strange squeaking noise.

A huge spider unexpectedly dropped from the sky. Its colorful pattern on the back was like a human being's face smiling in a creepy way, and its sharp poison fangs were like threatening daggers. At the bottom, there were two huge human arms covered by the black carapace. Each of the twelve fingers on the hand had a hundred and twenty joints in total.

When the spider landed, its white and thick threads joined together and become a huge web. The web shot out directly toward Lucien and Elvis.

Light flashed on Lucien's wrist, and a big fireball was instantly summoned. Then, the fireball burned down the spider web in a few seconds!

As a sorcerer, Lucien, of course, had some basic knowledge about the common magic creatures.

Although the spider was huge, it moved very swiftly like a level three grand knight. Its joints were making squeaking noises.

At this time, the noise became louder and louder. More huge, colorful spiders had arrived, surrounding Lucien and Elvis in the center.

Transformed spiders lived exclusively in the Dark Mountain Range. They had heads like human beings. After growing mature, its power could match that of a level three knight. They moved very fast, and they often hunted together. Because they could use illusionary magic and they were good at teamwork, those spiders could kill enemies who were even much stronger than them.

Lucien knew the facts about the spiders well. In the next second, he cast Scare, and invisible magic waves extended in all directions.

Elvis was not affected because of the magic item he was wearing.

Most of the spiders panicked and their team formation became dispersed. Making the eerily noise, the rest of the spiders managed

to resist the magic power and rushed fiercely toward them.

Some of the spiders used Hypnotism; some spread out thick webs; and some were going to directly attack them in their face with their fangs, pincers, and venom!

Elvis quickly took a glance at Lucien to complain because he did not take him into consideration when casting Scare, and then he lifted a black hammer about the size of a human head to get prepared for the fight.

Although he understood that Mr. X had enough reasons to use the ranged spell, and the influence of Scare was not permanent. He still felt a bit unhappy with the fact.

Every time when he dropped the hammer at the spiders, there was the powerful flame. After a few strikes, a spider was completely squashed by Elvis. The spiders illusionary magic did not work because of the amulet he was wearing.

It seemed that Elvis should be a level-four grand knight. However, Lucien still had no idea what his Blessing was.

Lucien was protected by a wall written with countless magic symbols and patterns, absorbing all the green waves from the spiders' Hypnotism and the black smoke to make people panic. At the same time, using his Amboula Staff to pinpoint the enemies, Lucien quickly killed another spider with a big fireball.

After the buffering time was gone, Lucien pointed at the spiders who were casting spells and shooting spider nets some distance away with his magic staff.

Dark clouds appeared above the spiders and then they were directly struck by the summoned lightning bolts. The spiders were burned black within seconds.

This was the fourth-circle Electromagnetics spell, Thunder Cloud. Lucien built it in his soul after coming back to Aalto. Another spell that he built was a unique spell, Maskelyne's Curse.

After a while, all the spiders were killed by Lucien and Elvis.

"Mr. Elvis, any problems?" asked Lucien when seeing Elvis' serious look. In Lucien's mind, in the Dark Mountain Range, encountering monsters and magic creatures was more than normal. Lucien was even about to collect the spiders' fangs and venom.

Elvis looked around in an insecure manner and said, "Mr. X... there shouldn't be these many spiders, unless..."

There was one horrible possibility.

Before Lucien asked, he suddenly felt very nervous from the power he sensed.

Hurriedly, Lucien saw a huge lizard-like creature flying in the air with its bat-shaped wings, as if it was running away from something.

"Red Dragon?!" burst out Lucien. A red dragon was at the top of the creatures chain!

Lucien was quite regretful that he did not have a cellphone to take a picture of the dragon. After all, it was the first time that he saw a huge dragon with his own eyes.

However, Elvis panicked, "We're in trouble now! We're in the devil's territory!"

Then, he started to run out of panic.

"What do you mean?" Lucien was confused. However, he had no choice but to run after Elvis as fast as possible.

Elvis calmed down a bit, as if he was looking for something. He answered Lucien fretfully, "It is said that there was a legendary peak in the Dark Mountain Range that could move around like a living being. People cannot tell the difference between it and the normal hills. As long as one enters the area, the person can never get out! There was only one way to tell... Creatures close the area would become crazy! No rules could be followed anymore!"

Lucien had never heard anything like this in the Congress. When he was about to ask, Elvis gave out a shrill cry! Countless huge vines

burst out of the ground and tightened around him! Then many sharp, dark red thorns penetrated his skin!

Hurriedly, Lucien was about to cast Elemental Order to save Elvis. However, on the trunk of a huge tree beside them, two rows of big, black eyes suddenly opened!

Colorful rays shot out of those eyes, and they hit Lucien's protection wall directly.

The magic symbols and patterns on the wall instantly swelled and exploded, and the wall was gone within seconds!

In this strange area, Lucien totally ignored the fact that this was the horrible Scarlet Tree. He got hit by several magic rays with many negative effects that could paralyze, slow down or freeze people, or make them feel drowsy. Lucien really had no chance to activate his flame shield!

Feeling drowsy and dizzy, he started to lose his eyesight. In the last second, he used all his effort and activated his Holm Crown Ring, Element.

Colorful light spots appeared around Lucien and together formed a few extremely dangerous swirls, preventing other creatures or things from approaching Lucien.

This was not for attacking, but to defend!

Lucien hoped that Elemental Swirl could keep him safe. Then, in the next second, his mind sank into the boundless darkness.

Chapter 312: Shackled

Chapter 312: Shackled

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The darkness was boundless and seemed everlasting.

Lucien was floating in this space. The certain power in his chest was shouting some words that he was not able to hear clearly. But the words were so powerful that the darkness almost started to surge, as if a storm was going to arrive.

Suddenly, dark green vines quickly rose from the ground beside Lucien's feet and tightened their grip around him within a couple of seconds. The dark red thorns on them were covered with dried human blood, and the dangerous sweet smell from it could paralyze people easily.

Lucien tried very hard. He tried to cast spells, but there was no spiritual power left in this strange space.

The thorns fiercely stabbed into Lucien's body and the unbearable pain made him cry out loud like Elvis. And, at the same time, his whole body felt frozen.

However, the great pain woke Lucien up. Rays of light that were too bright to look at came into space and pierced the darkness.

Lucien felt very dizzy. He squinted in the sudden bright sunlight. Very quickly, he recalled that he had been hit by the many magic rays from the scarlet tree. And he did not even have the time to activate his boots—Sidestep.

Subconsciously, Lucien cast Short Distance Teleportation to avoid the following attack from the tree.

It seemed that Elemental Swirl worked, so Lucien, fortunately, had had enough time to recover. But what about the vines in the darkness? Were they from Lucien's subconscious to make him wake

up as soon as possible?

However, as soon as Lucien used the spell, he instantly realized that, just like what happened in his dream, his spiritual power had been drained by using Elemental Swirl. Therefore, he pressed his hands against the ground and dodged sideways.

As a level two knight, Lucien's life force became stronger. Thus, unlike what happened before, after using Elemental Swirl, Lucien was now still able to move relatively swiftly.

But after he rolled over, he noticed that there was nothing underneath him. When Lucien's eyes were more used to the light, he was shocked to find out the fact that he was in a small room painted white. There were no vines, no creepy trees, and no eyes!

Bang! Lucien fell onto the floor.

A knight's body was tough. Lucien did not feel much pain. He quickly looked around.

It was a small room. Except for a small wooden bed, there was only an open wood box here. And nothing was in it.

The room was not dirty, but it was so simple that Lucien wondered if he was in a cell. Maybe he did a space-time travel again?

Lucien lifted his hands and saw that they still looked the same. He touched his neck and felt the summoning mark was still there. Lucien finally believed that he was still Lucien Evans.

But that did not bring much relief to Lucien, because there was a black bracelet on each of his wrist. The black bracelets were shining with a creepy light. Furthermore, when Lucien touched his neck, he felt that there was also a collar on it.

What was even worse was that all his magic items were gone! Sun's Corona, Fire Weaver's Bracelet, Sidestep Boots, Transformation suit, Ogre Gloves... all gone!

There were tiny needles on the bracelets, piercing into Lucien's skin. The look on Lucien's face was very serious. He guessed that

the bracelets should be used for confinement and the collar should be used to prevent him from using his spiritual power. No wonder Lucien felt that his spiritual power was drained even more compared to the time when he cast Elemental Swirl still as a junior-rank mage!

Being able to use neither his spiritual power nor his Blessing, Lucien tried to get access to his spirit library. However, it was blocked by some strange power.

Lucien wondered if his spirit library required his spiritual power to be accessed.

Lucien kept trying. He tried to use the mark on his neck to see if he could summon Rhine in his dream. Rhine had the title called the Observer, so he should be the one who could provide Lucien with the most useful information about the Dark Mountain Range!

However, he failed again. For a second, Lucien felt very helpless, just as when he first arrived in this world.

“But I’ve got a healthy body, a strengthened soul. I think and take actions way better than I used to. Calm down, Lucien. There’s hope.” Lucien comforted himself, “Try to gather more information about this place. So I can figure out the next step.”

Lucien was quite experienced with all kinds of difficulties that he ran into since he arrived in this world. He never gave up easily, and he always tried to stay positive. He believed that his true treasure was not the magic items, instead, it should be his knowledge in his brain that no one could take away from him! For example, he knew well about the bracelet, the collar, and many magic circles!

Lucien tried to pull the iron gate, and, of course, it was locked. So he walked back to the bed and sat down, trying to see what he could do with the bracelets.

At this time, Lucien heard the sound from some tinkling keys.

Someone inserted the key into the keyhole. With a click, the iron door was slowly opened.

A young man whose face looked drunken walked in with a big chain of keys. His back was used to bending forward. But as soon as he saw Lucien in the cell, he stuck out his chest a bit and said to him in a bit arrogant way, "Since you've woken up, follow me to see the master."

He was wearing a black short robe and a long trouser. There was nothing on his wrists or neck.

"Master?" Lucien hurriedly asked? Before he saw the so-called "master", he needed to know what this place was for and why he was here.

"How dare you say the word 'Master'? You were saved by master only because there's a lack of experiment materials! Keep this in mind—you're just the most trashy experiment material in this magic tower!"

Lucien's heart missed a bit. The ending of being the material for some magic experiments was not really better than death.

However, Lucien was still alive. He still had hope!

"I was saved? Where is this place?" Lucien pretended that he did not understand.

The young servant looked a bit pissed, "I was born here! I don't want to waste my time on explaining to you what kind of place this is! What I can tell you is that those people who came here by mistake and never managed to leave called this place the Devil's Territory."

Lucien realized that he was really not a lucky guy. He slightly released a sigh.

After finding Elvis, the liaison, Lucien thought that his mission was almost done, as Elvis was very experienced in commuting between the campsite and the magic tower of the Nightmare King. However, the Devil's Territory got them!

"So... what happened to those people who never managed to leave? ... Where's my companion?" Lucien kept asking, following what the

young servant said.

It seemed that what Lucien just asked amused the young servant, so he answered, “Your companion? He’s already a dried body now! Those people either ended up feeding the beasts or becoming the experiment materials of master. Two... no, three... are still alive... Wait, bastard! Shut your mouth and follow me!”

It was the first time that the young servant saw someone like Lucien, who had endless questions in this horrible situation. When he realized what was going on here, the young servant suddenly looked worried and afraid.

Lucien did not want to push him too much. Wearing the bracelets and the collar, Lucien followed the young servant and walked upstairs in the magic tower.

On their way upstairs, Lucien stared at the back of the young servant, making the evaluation that whether this young man was strong and trained from the way the servant walked, and whether he could break the servant’s neck or knock him out.

When they were on the fifth floor, Lucien stopped evaluating and started to recall the material he once read in the library of the Congress— a book called About the Human Body Experiments Conducted by Ancient Sorcerers.

They came in front of a black door drawn with mysterious patterns. The young servant gently knocked at the door and said, “Master, the material that you picked back has woken up. He’s here.”

“Bring it in,” said an old, female voice.

Lucien was not surprised with the fact that the sorcerer was female. Both male and female ancient sorcerers were equally dangerous.

The black door opened automatically. Lucien saw the entire lab. It was similar to the lab left by Maskelyne. Lucien saw the gray liquid called Aether flowing in the tubes, the complicated structure of tubes and pipes covering the whole lab, the many pale human hands hanging up there, as well as the dissecting table, the platform

for alchemical experiment usage, and lots of weird-shaped lab devices and containers.

An old woman in a red magic robe whose back was badly crooked forward stopped her dissecting work and turned around to look at Lucien.

Her hair was basically all white. And her skin was sagging like a loose bag. She looked beyond ugly and horrifying.

After staring at Lucien with her cloudy green eyes for a while, she slightly nodded. And her old voice sounded a bit crazy: "Electric shock first."

Chapter 313: Trying

The old woman's green eyes burst out with weird light, and Lucien instantly lost consciousness.

When he recovered, he realized that he was lying on a silver platform, like a patient waiting for his surgery or a body waiting to be cut open.

With several clicks, Lucien's wrists, ankles and neck were tied tight to the platform by the silver-gray shackles. Fine needles penetrated his skin, bringing him the indescribable prick and the feeling of numbness.

Lucien did not panic. Instead, he calmly told himself that the old ancient sorcerer was at least of senior-rank. Although his spiritual power had been restrained, as a fourth-circle sorcerer, Lucien would not have been mentally controlled so easily unless the old sorcerer's power way surpassed that of his level.

The two thin tubes like two black tentacles reached out and attached to both sides of Lucien's temple, as if they were alive.

From the magic circles and the magic materials used here, Lucien guessed that the old woman would record the change of his soul by striking him with electricity, therefore, Lucien hurriedly said to the ancient sorcerer, "Lady, are you doing the experiment observing one's change of soul under electric shock? I can be way more useful as your assistant rather than lying here."

Hearing that, the old woman giggled in a creepy way like an owl, "In fact, you're way more useful being my experimental subject. Finding a middle-rank sorcerer isn't easy. Your mutant soul can provide me with precious information for improving my rite."

Seeing that Lucien still wanted to say something, the old woman said a weird word, and then Lucien found it that he could not make any sound, although his mouth was open.

"Little thing... Language is the most useless weapon. My decision

can't be changed. The only rule here is my rule." The ancient sorcerer became a bit crazy, "I've read the letter you carried. But the two legendary sorcerers have nothing to do with me. They can't find this place! They can't threaten me! I can't even leave this bloody place. I need to finish my experiment as soon as possible to be more powerful, or I would never get out of this place..."

Lucien tried hard, but he could not pronounce a single word except for the harsh noise in his throat.

Knowing that this was not helping the situation, Lucien thought to himself seriously. The old woman's words were confusing, and she seemed crazy. Communication would not work, unless Lucien could find something that she really wanted.

From her words, it seemed that she was also a sorcerer imprisoned in the Devil's Territory. Maybe she was the third survivor mentioned by the young servant. She probably had been here for a very long time... No wonder she was crazy like this.

But what did she want? Lucien knew basically nothing about this place.

The old woman lifted her magic staff that looked like a black snake and pointed it at Lucien. Then, instantly, tiny and fine silver-colored electric snakes showed up on the shackles and swiftly entered into Lucien's body.

Lucien first felt the burning pain in his wrist and ankles, and then the numbness put Lucien through the great pain.

He wished that the old woman could directly push the electricity to the highest limit, so he could directly pass out.

But, of course, the old female sorcerer would not let it happen!

The electric current slowly became more powerful. The fine little snakes joined together into a whip, lashing Lucien's body and soul.

Lucien had zero strength. What he had was only faith. His soul started to swell under the stimulation of the power, as if all of his potential had been discovered. The pain was becoming more and

more intolerable.

In half-dream, Lucien heard the old woman's voice, "A minute and twenty three seconds... His soul started to change."

"Four minute and ten seconds... He's still hanging in there. There's something... supporting his soul and brain."

"Can faith influence one's soul in the opposite way? Most people say that faith can only contribute to the willpower of a knight."

"Willpower's also from human body, so maybe willpower and soul are somehow connected..."

"Maybe... essentially, all the extraordinary powers are the same. Thanos, Sun King, and the many legendary sorcerers have been trying to see the essence of power. The world is complicated, but also simple. Maybe there is one thing in this world that can form everything."

The old woman sort of forgot her original purpose of conducting the experiment. Her observation went sideways.

After a long time, when Lucien thought that he was going to be trapped in the electricity jail forever, he felt less numb, but soon the bad pain and the feeling of weakness seized him.

"Very good. You're even better as an experiment material than I thought," commented the old woman, which was definitely not something that Lucien would like to hear.

Then, she stared at Lucien carefully with the creepy smile, "When your soul recovers, we can do the following experiment. As long as you can survive, probably you can learn a lot from this."

Lucien realized that he was able to talk now, so he said to the old sorcerer carefully, "Lady, with regards to the researches on human body and soul, I have some pretty valuable information and many new magic spells. I might be able to help you."

"Hmm... A boy is trying to teach me..." the old woman's voice sounded vicious, and she walked back and forth with her walking

stick, "You know senior-rank spells? You know how they work?"

"I don't. But I'm from the Congress, where there are lots of legendary sorcerers, archmages, and senior-rank sorcerers. They have done countless researches on studying human body and soul. I can find all the information in the library." Lucien felt that he was slowly recovering from the pain and numbness.

The old woman grinned, but her teeth were almost all gone. Her eyes looked crazy, "So what? You cannot get the high-level information... Can you bring my youth back? Can you help me get out of this place?"

Her mood had gone a bit crazy, so she let the young servant take Lucien back to the cell.

Lucien knew that he could not talk to her when she was crazy. He hoped that she would change her mind later when she calmed down a bit.

He first tried to make sure that he would not be the old woman's experiment subject next time.

...

When leaving the lab, Lucien was still being disturbed by the sequela of electric shock, so he walked very slow, but the young servant did not care, walking quite ahead of him.

Lucien was surprised to find out that the electric shock seemed to have helped with improving the power of his soul, as if he had been taking potions for a month.

He took a deep breath and carefully felt the power in his soul. He realized that the electric shock had stimulated the potential of his soul, which meant that this method could not be applied to magic apprentices or junior-rank mages who did not have a soul strong enough.

When Lucien came back from analyzing his soul, he saw another young servant bringing a tall man out of the cell next to him. The man had blond hair and blue eyes. He was quite good-looking, and

the way he walked was very determined.

Lucien guessed that the man was another survivor being used as the old woman's experiment material. But he was not sure, since there were people born here in the Devil's territory, such as the young servant beside him.

Lucien and the man quickly exchanged a look, but neither of them said anything.

...

Click. The iron door was locked from the other side again. Lucien lay in the bed for more than half an hour until he felt a bit better.

Then, he raised his hands and carefully observed the patterns on the shackles, which usually had lots of connections to the magic circles inside.

Lucien knew most of the magic circles for blocking the power of Blessing, and he also had analyzed some. However, when making magic items, almost all the sorcerers would add more magic circles in addition to the core circle for different purposes, such as offering extra support, punishment or sending messages. Therefore, Lucien had to figure out the additional part of the magic circles in order to know the complete inner structure of the shackles, and then open them.

Although the hope was rather dim, especially when Lucien's spiritual power and Blessing had been disabled, he would not give up. He still had his memory, knowledge, as well as his calculation ability.

So, after an hour or so, Lucien had already had some basic ideas with the structure of the shackles. However, for the next step, Lucien had to activate the power of the shackles, so he could be able to see the movement of the magic runes inside!

Lucien was very concerned because he was not sure whether this pair of shackle, when sensing the resistance or the tendency of breaking it from the prisoner, would punish him or directly send

the information to the guard.

The second situation was the last thing that Lucien hoped to happen, which might bring Lucien very horrible consequences.

After a second thought, Lucien decided to try. Based on how much the old woman seemed to need her experiment materials, Lucien believed that she would not directly kill or severely injure her prisoners with the shackles.

Making up his mind, Lucien put his right hand on the black shackle around his left hand.

Although Lucien was quite confident with his reasoning, he still had fear in his mind. A crazy sorcerer's behavior was just unpredictable.

Lucien tried to lift the shackle up and pull the fine needles out to awaken his Moonlight Blessing power.

Dark light burst out of the shackle and electric currents went directly into Lucien's body and numbed him again. The pain was hard to describe. At the same time, the weird power from the shackle had dispelled Lucien's Blessing.

When the light disappeared, Lucien closed his eyes out of the torturing pain. Then, he saw the magic runes, patterns and symbols in the darkness in front of his eyes.

Lucien was surprised to find out that the consequence of trying to break the shackles was only physical punishment, and no messages were sent out to the guards. The only problem was that the time given to Lucien was too short and so he only managed to remember a few runes and patterns.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien waited until he felt a bit better. Then, he tried to lift the shackle again...

After many times of trying, Lucien's face had become contorted from the great pain. He bit his lips so hard that they were now bleeding.

Lucien forgot how many times he had tried. Finally, there was a

smile on his face—He had got the complete structure of the shackles in his brain!

"Knowledge is power..." Lucien sighed.

At this time, someone knocked at the wall on the left side of Lucien's cell.

Chapter 314: The Adventurers

Chapter 314: The Adventurers

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Feeling still numb, Lucien looked at the wall on the left side in a confused way. His brain was working way slower than usual from the electric shock. After a few seconds, Lucien finally realized what was going on. He walked to the wall and asked in a low voice:

“Who is it?”

“Your neighbor, Adam. We’ve just met, buddy,” answered a man.

Then, a brick in the wall was removed. The man on the other side pulled the brick out.

Lucien saw a pair of dark blue eyes through the hole in the wall.

“No magic circles on the wall?” Lucien was quite surprised and he lifted his left eyebrow slightly, like Natasha usually did.

In this senior-rank mage’s magic tower, Lucien could not believe that the bricks and walls were not protected by any magic circles to prevent them from being easily destroyed!

The blue eyes were smiling, and the man answered, “Because this is the Devil’s Territory! Although there are quite a few ore resources and assorted magic creatures, the resources for building up a magic tower are still very hard to obtain. The fact that the old woman has built a magic tower here shows that she’s very powerful and wealthy. So, except for the exterior and the core of the tower, nothing is protected by special spells. By the way, buddy, what’s your name?”

Adam seemed to be very talkative. Maybe he had not found anyone to talk to for too long.

“Mr. Adam, you can call me Lucien.” Lucien was used to being

polite, “How did you remove this brick?”

Adam blinked at Lucien through the hole in the wall, “You’ve really got some good manners, man. Are you a sorcerer or a knight? What is your rank?”

“Sorcerer. Middle-rank.”

Adam grinned, “Come on, man. We are both in the same bloody situation, so just call me Adam. I’m a grand knight. Dark Blessing.”

He reached out his right hand and his long nails were as sharp as knives, “I used my nails. These shackles can suppress my Blessing power, but it cannot change my physical strength.”

Lucien took a glance at his neat nails and joked, “If there were only ordinary guards here, we could use your nails to break out of prison. Adam, do you know anything about this place? And what this old woman is working on? I passed out in the mountains. When I woke up, I was here...”

Adam’s voice now sounded more serious, “Buddy, knowing a bit more about this place doesn’t really help... at least for me... I know that in the area covered by the magic tower, there are two cities and some villages. People who live in there should be the descendants of the human beings trapped in the Devil’s Territory. It was said that once a whole village next to the Dark Mountain Range was devoured by this place.”

Then, Adam added, “On the margin of this area, there is a big forest of huge trees. It’s a very dangerous area where there are lots of scarlet trees, killing vines, three-arm trolls, feather snakes, stone lizards and many other horrible creatures. I was there when I first stepped into the Devil’s Territory. I almost died there. I’m not sure what is outside of the forest. But, according to the law that the further it is from the Devil’s Territory, the more powerful the creatures are, I’m afraid there will be chimeras, soul catchers, sphinxes or dragons...”

Adam’s voice became deeper and deeper, “There is an ancient remain underneath the magic tower, and it seems to be related to

the secret of this place. The old woman has been working on it for a long time to get out of this place. But she kept failing and she believes that it is because she's not powerful enough as a senior-rank mage, so most of her experiments are about improving her power using limited resources. An experiment accident has contaminated her body and soul, so she can't make herself look young anymore, and she's losing her life force very quickly. She's still trying to solve this..."

Lucien asked concernedly, "Has she already found a way out? Maybe we're her solution..."

Adam's voice was full of fear, "Her soul has been damaged. She tried several bodies of the young girls she caught but it never lasted for more than a minute. She believes that the major problem lies in her soul, so what she is trying to do is to see the possibility of cutting her soul into parts and only keeping the parts that are not contaminated. She will then raise the parts that are clean, so they can grow and become her new soul."

Lucien was a bit shocked, "Then, which part will be in charge? Which part will be the old woman?"

As far as what Lucien knew, so far, no one ever succeeded with those experiments trying to divide one's soul. And this was different from how those people save part of their soul or a finger in a life box in a Lich Convert rite since the parts were still connected to the major piece of the soul and body.

No matter how far they were from each other, only when the major part died, the small piece of soul in the life box could come back to life. There was no conflict in philosophy or cognition. If the process of the small piece of one's soul coming back to life was disturbed by some certain power, the revived soul would also be injured.

Adam slightly shook his head, "Who knows. All of her experiment subjects died. And their souls were completely destroyed."

Adam pointed to the wall behind Lucien and said, "The guy in that cell is going to be her experiment subject tonight. If he fails, he would die. If he did it, he probably would also die but hopefully, we

could be set free.”

“If the experiment works...” Lucien murmured. He knew what it meant—it was a path to being immortal.

The currently available rites could extend one’s lifespan, but one’s soul would still age. Even if one could successfully separate the part of his or her soul that had not aged from the whole, the influence could not be removed. Therefore, the sorcerer who lived the longest recorded by the Congress was a legendary archmage at the age of six thousand four hundred and forty-nine. Other either died before this age or somehow went missing.

Adam lowered his voice, “Man, I gotta remind you. Be prepared.”

“What?” Lucien looked at Adam’s blue eyes.

“The old woman has been seeking for a powerful soul like yours. You’re gonna be her main experiment subject for sure. But before she conducts the experiment on you, she’s gonna improve the power of your soul as much as possible. This is dangerous, but this is also a chance.”

Lucien took a deep breath and slightly nodded, “I will. Adam, can you tell me how much you know about the inner structure of this tower? Say... where’s the energy core?”

“Sure. Anytime.” Adam was very straightforward.

After their conversation was over, Adam put the brick back in the wall.

Lucien walked back to the bed and sat down. He knew what Adam was planning: Adam wanted Lucien to find the way to escape, so he could follow him. On the other hand, Lucien was totally fine with it. Also, he got some pretty useful information from him.

The servant sent him dinner. Lucien grabbed something to eat and went to sleep. He had to recover his physical strength as much as possible. And the next step would be getting rid of the shackles.

...

At midnight, the iron door suddenly opened. The young servant said to Lucien coldly, "Master asked me to bring you to the moonlight outside. Good for the recovery of your soul and body."

Lucien now felt that he was totally a prisoner. However, for sure, he would not reject a chance to go outside. So, he followed the young servant to the patio on this floor.

The silver moon was up in the sky, covering everything with a thin layer of white light.

Every single cell in Lucien's body was craving for the moonlight. The moonlight greatly cured Lucien's injuries.

"Hey, buddy." It was Adam's voice.

Lucien turned around, "Also here for the moonlight?"

"Yup. I was part of the experiment earlier this afternoon as well." Adam grinned. Then, he lowered his voice and said, "He didn't make it."

"What a pity..." nodded Lucien.

The patio was not very high above the ground, but the old woman was confident that they could never escape with their power restrained. Lucien and Adam decided to take a break here and chatted randomly.

At this time, the small hill in front of them suddenly burst out bright light, making the area look like it did during daytime.

Lucien saw that two males and two females ran out of the hill. Quickly, they came rushing to the magic tower. It seemed that they just stepped on some magic traps.

"Wow, cool. Two level two knights, a level one knight, and a second circle sorcerer." Adam was a little excited when looking at the people down there working hard on killing the skeleton guards.

Lucien was very confused, "What is going on here?"

“The old woman, except for studying and doing magic experiments, is very lazy. In order to have endless experiment materials, she’s been leaving magic books and ways of awakening Blessing power in the nearby villages and hid the magic tower to let them grow. At the same time, she spreads the words that anyone who could find the hidden magic tower and kill the vicious witch here could gain everything, including great power and wealth. So, those experiment materials just come to her automatically.”

Chapter 315: The Date of the Experiments

The light of spells being cast and the sound of metal colliding slowly disappeared. The four brave adventurers had finished all the skeleton guards and unlocked the seal on the gate. Now, they had made it inside the magic tower.

In the darkness, the magic tower was like a monster waiting for its prey. The gate was its mouth, opening wide. After devouring the adventurers, everything went back to normal and quieted down.

On the patio, as the seal was removed, Lucien sensed the rotten leaves and soil smell in the air. He said out of sympathy, "They must have worked hard to become knights or sorcerers, especially in this kind of remote place. Unfortunately, they have been all lured by the power and wealth in the tower. When they stepped on the trap, they did not choose to retreat, but to force their way into the tower. This isn't usually how we sorcerers do things. When the magic tower is sealed and one cannot detect what is in there, a sorcerer would use familiars or other ways to make sure they know well enough about the target place."

Therefore, Lucien had no plan for helping the adventurers and then escaping this place with them. Under the monitoring of a senior-rank mage, it was better for Lucien to do nothing. Trying hard did not mean trying in a stupid way.

"Desire gives people drive and power, but it also blinds people's eyes and heart..." said Adam like a philosopher. Then he smiled, "So, as a sorcerer, Lucien, take a guess as to what floor they could make it to?"

Lucien looked back and took a glance at the two young servants who seemed to be quite relaxed, "I think we'll meet them pretty soon."

And then Lucien turned around and said, "I wish they could make it to this floor. So we could probably be free."

Lucien did not mind the fact that the two young servants could hear

him. The servants stared at him angrily, but they did not do anything to Lucien. After all, it was super normal as a prisoner's wish.

"Having more experiment materials is a good thing for us. We're middle-rank materials, so we'll be used in a more cautious and safer way. Although this place's quite resourceful, most people do not have the power to get the resources. And also the witch did not provide the villagers with all the necessary knowledge, so all the adventurers coming here are only of junior-rank." Adam grinned as if he just made a joke.

As their conversation went further, the young servant scolded them, "Shut up. The time's over. Get back to the cell!"

Lucien and Adam exchanged a look with a smile on their faces, and then they did as the young servant asked.

...

When they were in front of the cell, Lucien was a bit surprised to see that the four adventurers had been captured and sent here under guard.

Only within a few minutes, the adventurers all failed. Lucien threw Adam a quick wink telling Adam that he was right.

The four adventurers were all pretty good-looking. Both of the two blond men were wearing silvery-white armors. One was of middle-age, and the other was younger. Their armors made clashing sounds while they were walking. The two ladies were also blond. One was wearing a tight armor made of black scales and the other was wearing a loose, red magic robe.

Carina was walking with great fear in her heart. She could not stay focused anymore as a caster. She thought that her team could at least manage to escape even if they failed to kill the vicious witch under the guidance of the notes left by other adventurers. However, they did not even have the chance to see the witch. They were caught by the flesh-golem knights in the tower right away.

Now she saw the power difference between the witch and themselves. She doubted herself and this whole team. At the same time, she felt rather desperate with finding other ways to get out of this place.

With all these thoughts, Carina was sent to the cell under guard.

At this time, she heard someone laughed and then sighed, "Man, you do know sorcerers way better than I do."

Carina wondered who was it. Then she saw four men walking in this direction. Two of them were obviously servants in the tower, while the other two were wearing simple linen clothes.

The man who was talking was tall and had blond hair. At a glance, he looked even more like a knight than Alva and Bullard. And the black-haired young man who was listening to him was very elegant, although he was wearing the simple linen clothes.

Carina wondered if the black-haired young man was the witch's toy-boy. The vicious legend of the witch had been added by people with all kinds of weird, creepy or raunchy stories. Carina hated the witch but also had to admit that the witch's life was sort of nice.

Then, she suddenly realized that the black-haired young man was wearing the shackles and even a collar. Carina then wondered if they were other adventurers who had been caught and imprisoned here. Carina's partners, Ophelia, Alva, and Bullard all looked a bit confused.

However, the fact that they were not yet the witch's prisoners made them very nervous and feeling lost. Under the watch of the servants and the flesh-golems, they didn't dare to talk directly to Lucien and Adam. Just like how Lucien and Adam first met each other, they just exchanged a look and then they were sent to their separated cells.

Carina's cell was right beside Lucien's, on the right.

When Lucien walked past the cell, he saw the flesh-golem knight take out the shackles and collars to make the new prisoners wear

them. So he walked a bit slower and carefully watched how the shackles and collars worked, in order to have a better understanding of the collar and to make sure his analysis of the shackles was correct.

As soon as she put on the collar, Carina felt that her spiritual power was suddenly drained.

She realized that the collar was for preventing one from casting spells. So, that being said... The black-haired young man was probably also a sorcerer.

She looked out the door and happened to meet Lucien's gaze.

As if he understood what she was thinking, the black-haired young sorcerer slightly nodded toward her. And then he walked faster, following the servant.

Carina wondered who he was. She tried to recall all the sorcerers who went missing, but she could not connect with this young, good-looking man to any sorcerers that she once heard about.

In this remote place, knights and sorcerers were powerful people standing high above the average people. They were important members of the Adventurers' Union. However, most of them went missing in the end somehow. Therefore, to get rid of this destiny was also another reason why Carina and her partners came here.

When she was thinking, Carina realized that the flesh-golem was pulling her magic robe. She was very scared, but failed to cast any spells. Carina hurriedly punched at the golem, but the golem did not care at all. It took off Carina's robe very easily.

Carina had never thought of this before. She screamed and retreated into the corner.

However, the golem did not do anything else to her. It threw her a set of linen clothes, and then took away her magic staff, robe, and necklace.

The golem left the cell and locked the door from outside.

Carina felt lucky that the golem did not have its own will, and the owner of the tower was a witch.

...

In the following period of time, Carina, Alva and the rest of the team were all sent to the lab one by one. When they came back, they had great fear on their pale faces. Obviously, they had realized what an experiment subject had to go through.

Lucien experienced another set of electric shock. According to the witch's words, she was working on awakening the potential of Lucien's soul power.

That night, all the prisoners were sent to the patio to bath in the moonlight. For the first time, they finally met each other.

The four adventurers stood in a circle, talking about their horrible experiences in low voices. The servants were just guarding beside the door. They did not care what the adventurers were talking about.

On the other side, Lucien and Adam were also talking to exchange some information.

"Adam, have you ever noticed that the witch didn't conduct any experiments at the end of last month and the beginning of this month? Or say, she never conducted any researches that require a living person..." asked Lucien thoughtfully.

Adam grinned, "That's right, man. Good for you. I've been kept here for a very long time. Even when she had enough experiment materials, for the first two days and the last three days of each month, the old woman never brought anyone to her lab. So my guess is..."

Adam stopped here but pointed downwards at the ground.

Lucien slightly nodded. He understood what Adam was saying. When the silver moon was dim, the witch was probably trying to break the seal of the underground remains, which would be the greatest chance for them to escape from the place.

At this time, Carina and her team walked toward Lucien and Adam, hoping to get some information from them.

"Hi, I'm Carina, a sorcerer," greeted Carina in a low voice. She was still feeling a bit scared with the servants.

Adam would love to meet some more helpers, so he smiled and nodded, "Adam."

"Adam?! The Dark Lord?" Ophelia, Alva, Carina, and Bullard were all very surprised when hearing the name.

Adam rubbed his hair a bit and put on an a slightly sad smile, "I didn't expect people from outside would still remember me."

None of them expected that this humorous and easygoing knight was the man in the legend. He was the only level-five grand knight that this area ever produced!

Seeing that Lucien was a bit confused, Adam shrugged, "After I left the bloody forest, I had some pretty good time outside, until I was caught by the witch."

Carina's eyes opened wide. Adam, the level-five grand knight, was imprisoned by the witch for so many years! The power of the witch was beyond their imagination.

They suddenly felt that their adventure was just a joke.

Trying hard to calm down, Carina looked at Lucien. Compared to the grand knight, she was more curious about the young sorcerer.

Chapter 316: Building the Image

Chapter 316: Building the Image

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Carina tried hard to put a smile on her face and then asked, “What about you, sir?”

She was born in a relatively big family, so Carina was often very confident and proud. However, in front of Adam, the most well-known knight in this area, Carina felt nervous. In her eyes, the young sorcerer who stood beside Adam was probably also a very powerful person.

Lucien slightly shook his head and smiled, “I’m a nobody. I was caught only a day earlier than you guys. You can call me Lucien.”

“A day earlier? Are you from somewhere else?” asked Ophelia surprisedly. The rest of the team also looked quite surprised.

The way they looked at Lucien made him feel that he was a rare animal in the zoo, being watched and observed by human beings outside of the cage. He grinned and said, “Haven’t you ever seen an outsider? I think most people here are the descendants of the outsiders.”

Carina realized that they were directly staring at this young sorcerer. Her face flushed, “I’m sorry, Mr. Lucien, we have never seen any outsiders. Although like you just said, we’re descendants of the outsiders, we are trapped in this isolated area and we rarely see people from outside.”

Adam grinned, “In fact, there are outsiders coming to this place all the time. But some of them chose to directly integrate into the local people, while most of them soon lose their lives in the forests. Some were like Lucien. As soon as he stepped into this area, he directly became the old woman’s target.”

“The old woman...” the four of them all gasped at the same time.

They wondered how dare Adam directly call the owner of this place as old woman.

Adam saw their reaction and shrugged, "It's okay. She doesn't care. She only cares about her experiments and her face. Not even those servants care."

Noticing that Adam just took a glance at them, the red-faced servant stared at Adam, "One more word about this... I'll lash you with my thickest whip!"

The servants dared not to report this to the witch. Many years ago, a servant tried to show his loyalty to the witch, so he told the witch that all the experiment materials were calling her "the old witch" behind her back. In the end, the witch killed all the people who said the three words, including that servant.

Carina saw the servants' reaction, so she felt a bit more relaxed, "I see... So, Mr. Adam, you were an outsider. No wonder when you first showed up, you were already a grand knight. I guess you're not alone here... Those people should also come from the outside world..."

Out of curiosity, the young knight, Bullard, asked, "Mr. Adam, Mr. Lucien, what is the outside world like? Are those poetries and stories true? They say that the outside world is a great place, and there are many powerful sorcerers and knights."

Adam pointed at Lucien, who looked a bit lost in his own thoughts, "I've been imprisoned here for too many years. Lucien shall be the one answering your questions."

The servants also stopped talking and looked at Lucien, as they were just as curious about the outside world.

Lucien found something worthy of attention from Carina's words. Realizing that they were all looking at him, he answered, "The outside world... is much, much bigger. It has horrible dark forests, jade-like lakes, lofty mountains, boundless plains, busy and prosperous cities, as well as a city in the sky..."

Although Lucien's description was very rough, his words still seized all of his listeners' heart, especially when Lucien was talking about the city in the sky and the magic train. They longed for the place that Lucien was describing.

"The world's so wonderful... I've never heard of something like this... a city in the sky." Carina murmured as she looked at the silver moon. Then she asked out of great passion, "Mr. Lucien, how big is the Congress?"

Lucien looked up at the rest of the floors of the magic tower above and said calmly, "A magic tower like this is everywhere in the Congress..."

Hearing that, even Adam was shocked. He could never imagine that there was a place in this world where senior-rank mages like the old witch could be seen anywhere.

"I'm only talking about the truth. At least, it's the truth for me." Lucien grinned. "But to live a really good life there, you have to win the Holm Crown Ring and the recognition from an organization or group, say, the Will of Elements. In the Congress, only powerful people have the right to talk. And there are lots of sorcerers who are a hundred, or even a thousand times more powerful than the old witch."

There was more respect in Carina's eyes when she looked at Lucien, the same as everyone else.

Lucien's purpose had been achieved. He was not an arrogant guy, but right now he decided to talk in this bragging manner to make the prisoners believe that he was the leader that they could follow. He continued, "I'm on my mission to send a letter to an important person. Before long, the Congress will send someone here to save me, a legendary sorcerer. In front of a legendary sorcerer, the old witch would only be like an ant..."

Hearing that, the servants all looked a bit concerned. The crazy old witch did not care, because she was insane. However, they did.

Lucien stopped at this point, leaving them with their own

imagination. He believed that the image of himself that he wished to build in their mind was already there.

“Legendary sorcerer...? How powerful is a legendary sorcerer?” Carina could not help but ask.

Adam answered this question for Lucien, “A legendary sorcerer can easily destroy this magic tower, the nearby cities and villages, and even this whole Black Forest.”

This was just Adam’s guess, but his answer still shocked the adventurers and the servants.

After a while of silence, Carina looked at Lucien with great passion, “So... Mr. Lucien? What level are you of, as a sorcerer? What about the old witch? What do you do in the Congress?”

Lucien released a sigh and replied, “You don’t have to call me a mister. We’re all prisoners here. In the Congress, I’m one of the many middle-rank mages, and I still have a long way to go to reach the higher level. The old witch... should be about the seventh or eighth circle.”

Telling them that he was a middle-rank sorcerer was enough. Lucien did not mean to reveal more of his information to them.

“I knew it! You’re a middle-rank mage!” Carina was very surprised. In this remote place, middle-rank sorcerers were very rare. Becoming a middle-rank sorcerer was even harder than becoming a grand knight. Carina, as a sorcerer, admired Lucien a lot just like how Alva, Bullard, and Ophelia admired Adam, the grand knight.

However, the other adventurers looked very concerned, “The old witch is of... the seventh or eighth circle?”

In their eyes, Carina, a second-circle sorcerer, was already quite powerful. They could not imagine what a senior-rank sorcerer could do. They wondered why she stayed in the magic tower instead of choosing to rule the whole territory?

Adam knew what they were thinking, so he said, “Ruling isn’t the old woman’s thing. She’s only crazy about magic and her

experiments. All the rumors and stories about this magic tower were all spread by her.”

Hearing that, the adventurers all felt very desperate, including Carina, who was still feeling very excited a second ago.

“So we are... her lambs now,” murmured Ophelia hopelessly.

Lucien directly asked, “Since when did the stories about the magic tower start to emerge? Since when did those sorcerers and knights start to go missing?”

“About five hundred years ago.” Carina was not very confident.

Lucien nodded and thought to himself. It seemed that the old witch was trapped in the Devil’s territory before the Congress of Magic was established, so she probably knew nothing about arcana. If Lucien could somehow become her assistant, and seize a chance to show her some “wonderful” experiments, maybe her brain would directly explode. However, since the old witch was quite insane, Lucien did not think that she would allow him to be her assistant. Therefore, he still had to find other ways around.

The most important thing for Lucien to do now was to get rid of the collar and the shackles. In order to do so, and without the help of his spiritual power and Blessing, Lucien had to find the place in the magic tower where the anti-magic circle was in, to make the collar and the shackles lose effect. However, so far, Lucien had no idea where this place in the tower was.

A while later, through talking, the adventurers slowly calmed down a little. In their eyes, Lucien could be their hope.

...

Two days later, when Lucien was still digging in the wall using his nails, the old witch unusually sent her servant to bring Lucien back to the lab.

On his way to the lab, Lucien carefully remembered the locations of the flesh-golems who were guarding the important parts of the tower with sharp axes and swords in their hands.

The lab's door opened. Lucien saw that Ophelia was tied to the operation table. And the old witch was casting some weird spells with a black mirror in her hand, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who in this land is fairest of all?"

Lucien was very confused.

Chapter 317: Taking Action

Chapter 317: Taking Action

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The mirror was black, and there was nothing in it. However, the voice from the mirror said to the witch in a flattering way, “Eudora, you’ve always been the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Feeling satisfied, the old witch put down the mirror, “Good, very good, Trius. You’re the most honest mirror in this world, not like those I’ve destroyed before... They were all liars.”

The mirror started to sing joyfully, “Ah... Eudora’s hair is as glossy and shiny as the sun; her eyes are as green as the jade-like lake; Her red lips were like rose petals....”

The old witch’s voice was also damaged by the curse and sounded very harsh, “Good boy, Trius. After we leave this bloody place, I’ll decorate you with all the most precious gems you like.”

Laughing hard, the witch put down the mirror and turned to Lucien. Then, she started to scream. Her voice was so sharp that it even gave Lucien a headache. Lucien took a few steps backward due to the dizziness.

“Close your eyes! Close your bloody eyes!” screamed the witch.

Lucien had no idea what was going on here. But he knew that he had better follow the witch’s command. He heard the witch walking back and forth and cursed, “Are you bloody blind? You damned blind bastard! In your eyes, I look so ugly... I’m gonna cut out your...”

Lucien did not let the witch finish her words, “Ms. Eudora, you were looking for me, right?”

Lucien would not give the witch the chance of making up her mind to cut out his eyes! Dealing with a lunatic could be very dangerous!

Eudora was distracted by Lucien's question, "... I need your blood... to mix with the blood of the girl."

Lucien was a bit relieved, feeling lucky that the witch could still calm down a bit when talking about her experiments. Then, he asked a bit confusedly, "She's a level two knight, and her Blessing is no inferior to mine. Why do you want to mix our blood together?"

Simply mixing two kinds of blood together was not like giving birth to a baby, so the baby that inherited two top Blessings could have some even greater power, such as what Natasha's family did.

Talking about the specific experiment, Eudora became passionate, "When you passed out, I got some of your blood. It turns out that your Moonlight Blessing is more powerful than it should be at your level, and it seems that this improvement comes from the power of a senior-rank vampire. The power can also help overcome the rejection reaction when two Blessings are mixed. Hopefully, this level two knight can get your lovely self-healing power, so she would have this honor to be my new body!"

The level two knight, Ophelia, who was right now tied to the dissecting table, felt beyond desperate. All her tears had been drained.

Although Lucien totally understood Ophelia's feeling, right now there was nothing really he could do for her. So he could only walk submissively to the other dissecting table and lay down.

The metal shackles kept Lucien in place on the table, and then a thick needle like a venomous snake's fang stuck into Lucien's skin. The sharp pain seized Lucien's nerves instantly, and then the needle started to draw his blood. The blood went directly into the body of Ophelia drop by drop through the tube.

Her body was entangled with many thin tubes like tentacles. The blood that went into her body had been mixed with assorted gem powders and magic plant powders.

Ophelia's lifeless eyes now had great pain in them. The blue veins in her neck stood out like they were going to explode at any time.

The old witch pointed at Ophelia with her black, snake-like staff, and the magic circles underneath Ophelia's body started to shine in six different colors: blue, gold, silvery-white, dark green, black and red. The two types of blood started to blend.

The pain and suffering were intolerable to Ophelia. She wished that she could die right now.

When the six kinds of colors started to join together into a weird hexagram, Ophelia's bulgy veins suddenly sucked in and her skin was covered with a layer of silver moonlight.

"Is it working?" The old witch's voice sounded very excited.

However, at this time, the veins in Ophelia's body exploded. Her blood spread everywhere, like a blood rain.

The last second before Ophelia was gone, there was a peaceful smile on her face. Finally, she did not have to suffer anymore.

Lucien was shocked, and he could never forget this moment. He saw a living life being tortured to death because of a person's greed and desire.

Lucien finally realized that it was an irresistible trend that most of the ancient sorcerers had been washed away by the progress of the time. He had to admit that he once sympathized with the ancient sorcerers, but now he understood why the ancient magic empire completely collapsed within such a short period of time. Those ancient sorcerers who refused to follow the path of arcana but stuck to conducting this kind of cruel experiments should be erased by history, as they did not deserve to be saved.

"No!" The old witch screamed. She hurriedly rushed to a magic circle placed with lots of gems and led great energy from the tower to the magic circle.

The magic circle started to burst out milk-white light, as pure as life.

At the same time, the last magic circle under Ophelia's body was also activated. However, it was pure black.

Gradually, the milk-white light was infused into the black.

Lucien believed that it was a great chance for him to kill the old witch. He tried his best to get rid of the shackles, however, unfortunately, he failed, despite the fact that both of his wrists were now bleeding from his attempt.

When the light slowly disappeared, all the wounds on Ophelia's body had already healed. Her veins had all recovered from the power. Now, her skin had this healthy glow.

Ophelia started to cast the spell to free herself from the table. Jumping down from the table swiftly like a young deer, she hurriedly picked up the mirror and asked, "Mirror, mirror, tell me now—who in this land is fairest of all?"

"It's you, Eudora!" The mirror answered directly. It was not completely black anymore, instead, this time, the mirror showed the witch Ophelia's beautiful face.

Touching her blond hair, the old witch was very satisfied with her new look.

Lucien felt it very creepy when he heard the conversation again.

The witch could not lay the mirror down, as she was so obsessed with her new look—the blond hair, the nice-curved eyebrows, the straight and delicate nose, the fair skin and red lips... Her heart was filled with ecstasy.

However, all of a sudden, her skin lost the gloss and her green eyes quickly became cloudy. Wrinkles soon covered her entire face.

Within a minute, the old witch had returned to her original look. Her straight back bent forward again.

The witch's bitter scream broke the glass tubes in the lab one by one, and there was even a crack in the magic mirror.

Lucien's head buzzed again. He felt that the witch's scream was like the real Banshee's howling.

After a long time, the old witch finally calmed down. She looked at Lucien in a very cold way, as if she was planning on something. Then, she removed the shackles on Lucien and let the servant bring Lucien back to his cell.

The witch did not leave Lucien any chances to lure her with arcana to bring her youth back. She drove away Lucien like whisking the flies off.

After Lucien left, the old witch murmured, "... I can't rebuild and use his body... He's for the soul-dividing experiment..."

...

On his way back to the cell, Lucien silently paid special attention to the several flesh-golems holding huge axes and swords again. The wounds on his wrists, although had already started to recover, made Lucien frown. He knew that he had to find a way to get out of this place as soon as possible, as no one knew what a crazy person would do next!

That night, when the rest of the prisoners were sent to the patio, as usual, they all got the horrible news that Ophelia had been killed by the old witch. It took Ophelia's teammates quite a long time to accept the fact. They even talked to each other during the breakfast time!

This was not a night for conversation. All the prisoners remained silent for most of the night.

Getting back to his cell, Lucien knocked at the wall on the right.

"Mr. Lucien?" asked Carina. Her voice sounded weak.

Lucien pulled out the brick in the wall and asked, "You wanna leave this place, Carina?"

"What?" Carina suddenly kneeled down and looked into Lucien's eyes through the hole in the wall, "Mr. Lucien, you've got any plans? I don't want to stay here for even a second longer!"

Ophelia's death was a great shock to her.

Lucien said to her seriously, “It’s risky but better than we just sit here waiting to die. If you want to follow me to leave this place, I need you to do one thing for me. But it’s gonna be very painful. Are you okay with it?”

Seeing Lucien’s attitude, Carina took some time to consider. After a while, she nodded firmly, “Yes, Mr. Lucien. As long as we can get out of this place, I’m willing to do anything.”

“Bring your neck closer, then.” Lucien said to her in a gentle voice, to comfort her.

Carina did as Lucien asked, and then she realized what Lucien was trying to do, “Are you trying to analyze the collar preventing us from using magic?”

“That’s right. I cannot see mine,” answered Lucien honestly. “Hang in there.”

“I will.” Carina nodded.

Lucien reached out his right hand through the hole and touched the collar on Carina’s neck. Based on his understanding, Lucien turned a special part of the collar. At the same, he knocked on the wall with the other hand to create some unique vibration of a certain frequency, which sounded like a weird spell.

Under turning and vibrating, the collar started to burst out electric sparks, underneath which there were flowing magic symbols and runes.

Carina’s body started to tremble from the electric shock. She bit her lips hard without letting out a single groan.

Although the capability of calculation in Lucien’s soul was still there, without the help of his Blessing, Lucien could not control the vibration frequency very well.

So Lucien had to take it slowly. The vibration frequency could help to reduce the efficiency of the collar to some degree, so Carina could hang in there longer. Or the collar could very possibly directly damage Carina’s vertebra, as she was just a junior-rank

sorcerer with no Blessing power.

After the first try, Lucien left Carina with some time to recover. At the same time, he made sure that he remembered the runes and symbols that he saw.

“Can we do it again, Carina?” asked Lucien.

“Yes... I can!” answered Carina decisively. Although it was very painful, the pain brought her hope!

“Good for you,” said Lucien sincerely.

It took Lucien a week to completely figure out the complete structure of the collar. Now, they were waiting for the end of the month.

...

Lucien did not take any actions until the last day of the month. He slept well and ate well, in order to make sure that his physical and mental condition were the best.

On the night of the last day of the month, the dim silver moon was fully covered by the clouds.

Lucien suddenly sat up in bed.

Chapter 318: Power Released

Cool wind sneaked into the place. There was no moonlight outside at all that night.

In the darkness, Lucien was sitting in the bed and listening carefully. He quickly went through his whole plan again in his mind. Making sure that there was no major mistake in it, Lucien took a deep breath and got off the bed. Slowly, he put on his shoes, bent forward and tied his shoelaces. Then, he slightly adjusted the sleeves of his linen shirt. He did these things slowly but carefully, in order to mentally prepare himself for the rest of the night.

This was the night when Lucien was going to get out of this place!

After failing again to obtaining a new body, the witch would definitely work even harder on removing the seal. Therefore, right now it was the best time for Lucien to carry out his plan!

Although Adam's and his own reasoning could be wrong—the witch could be in fact not working on cracking the seal underground every month when the silver moon's power declined—, Lucien decided to take the risk, since he knew that the longer he stayed here, the more likely he was going to die here. Adam, the prisoner who had spent several decades here, was most likely just an exception.

Warming his body up a bit, Lucien walked to the wall on the right and gently knocked at it.

The brick was pulled out from the other side. Carina, although still feeling a bit sleepy, was quite excited, "Yes, Mr. Lucien? Are we leaving now?"

She had been waiting for that day for quite a long time. From the conversations, Alva, Bullard as well as Carina had all known that the end and the beginning of every month was the best time for them to get out of this place. In the past several days, Carina saw Lucien sleep and eat well as usual, so she felt quite anxious. She also dared not to ask, since after all, Lucien was the one who had

the plan and the power to carry out the escape.

"Yes, get yourself prepared. If I fail, you have to be the one getting the servants in here," said Lucien in a very calm way, as if they were just having a casual conversation.

Before tonight, Lucien had never told anyone his plan.

Carina suddenly felt nervous, "Got it. I'm at your command, sir."

Lucien nodded. And then he walked to the iron door and started to hit the door with his right palm. The noise was loud. The two servants on the night shift tonight exchanged a confused look, and then the red-faced servant scolded Lucien, "Bastard! What are you doing? You want the taste of my whip?"

It was late. The servants had never experienced a jailbreak there before. As the prisoners had all lost their power, their major duty was to make sure that their master's experiment materials were physically and mentally fine, or the job could directly be given to those flesh-golems who did not have any consciousness and thinking ability.

They were about to fall asleep when Lucien started to make the noise. They were both pissed.

Lucien seemed to be quite pissed as well, as he responded angrily, "The dinner I've just eaten sucked! I'm hungry now! I need food!"

"Jerk! Who do you think you are? Are you out of your mind?" The red-faced servant cursed, "You're just a fu*k*ing prisoner! You want food? I've got some whips for you! Shut the fu*k up!"

Lucien did not care. He continued to kick the iron door. And the rest of the prisoners were wakened up.

Lucien shouted to them, "You two disgusting things! I said I want food! Right now! Keep this in mind! I'm a prisoner, but I'm also the most valuable experiment material your master has ever got! If my body becomes weaker from starving, the witch is gonna really teach you some lessons! You guys are like her dogs! No, not even close to her dogs! I command you to bring me food right now!"

The red-faced servant now was totally furious. His eyes squinted and roared to the guy on the other side of the iron door, "You bloody bastard! Let me teach you... who is the dog here!"

He picked up the thick whip and was about to rush into the cell.

At this time, the taller servant stopped him. He said to the red-faced in low voice, "Wait... It's not like him. He is probably playing some tricks..."

"Remember what he said on the patio? He said he was gonna kill the master like an ant! He's always been an arrogant lunatic bastard. He was just pretending to be elegant and polite!" The red-faced servant had found Lucien rather annoying for some time, especially when seeing Lucien acting like a well-mannered gentleman even after becoming the prisoner of the witch.

He lowered his voice, too, in case Lucien could hear their conversation. And then the red-faced servant added, "He's wearing the collar and the shackles. Even if he's got some tricks or plans, there's nothing to worry about. You stay here, and we've still got the flesh-golems on the way out. What can he do? This bastard needs to learn some manners here."

Since the red-faced man had become a servant here in the magic tower, no prisoners who had lost his or her power dared to challenge them or try to escape. Besides, his power was also of the level of a high-level squire. Facing the young sorcerer who always looked humble and elegant, the red-faced servant had never seen him as a threat.

"That makes sense." The taller servant nodded and put down his hand that was grabbing the other servant's arm. "He's a sorcerer. Although he's also a knight, the power must come from some certain potions. He can't be physically really strong. I'll stay here. You go and teach him how to be a good boy!"

Holding the whip, the red-faced servant took out a big chain of keys and said to Lucien with his teeth grinding, "I've got some food here. If you need anything else, you can tell me later."

"Good. You're a dog, so you'd better be a good dog!" Lucien was still being rather rampant.

The red-faced servant inserted the key into the iron door and opened it.

Hearing the sound, Lucien swiftly dodged to the corner behind the door and stood there with his back against the wall.

The red-faced servant fiercely pushed the door open and snapped his whip, "Come and get your food, boy!"

The whip had lots of barbs on it. The end of the whip directly went to the messy blanket on the bed.

At this time, a strong hand suddenly reached out from aside and grabbed the servant's face. The hand firmly held the servant's head and directly bumped his head against the iron door using all of its strength!

Bang!

Like a bell ringing, the red-faced servant collapsed onto the floor with blood covering his face.

Although Lucien's Blessing power was blocked, he was still a way more experienced fighter than the servant.

Without even taking a look at the servant on the floor, Lucien rushed out of the cell like a cheetah and targeted the taller servant.

The taller servant was even slower than the red-faced one. He had no idea what was going on there until Lucien was right in front of his face.

When he hurriedly lifted the whip, it was too late. Lucien directly punched him in the face. The taller servant's head instantly buzzed, as if there were many stars circling around in front of his eyes. In the next second, Lucien pulled him closer with his left hand and kneed the servant fiercely in his soft stomach.

The taller servant instantly bent forward from the great pain. He

couldn't even release a moan because of the acid in his throat.

However, this was not the end. Lucien's right elbow dropped directly at the center of his spine. After a crispy crack, the servant died right on the spot with his eyes open wide.

Lucien did not have time to celebrate. Hurriedly picking up the red-faced servant's keys, Lucien did not forget to break his neck at the same time.

Then, he opened the rest of the cells and let out Adam and the adventurers.

"What shall we do now?" Carina was both excited and scared.

Before Lucien answered, Alva quickly said, "We go to the patio. There's only one golem guarding the door and we can distract him easily without directly fighting against it. We can just jump down from the patio. It's not tall enough to kill us."

"I agree." nodded Bullard.

Carina slightly frowned. Jumping down from the patio might not be a big problem to the knights, but as a sorcerer, Carina was not very confident. Still, they had a grand knight there. Adam should be able to help her.

Adam did not say anything but looked at Lucien with a meaningful smile.

Lucien slightly shook his head and turned around. He directly walked to the core of the magic tower and said to them without looking back, "We can't just leave like this. As long as the magic tower's here, we can never leave this place. You guys want to spend the rest of your lives in the Black Forest?"

"We're gonna die!" shouted Alva. He was not determined to fight against the witch. He said to Lucien aloud, "With the shackles and the collar, how can you destroy the core of the magic tower? Let's go! We'll have some future plan!"

At this time, a flesh-golem ran toward them. The heavy armor it

was wearing clanked from its great moving momentum. It must have heard the noise from here.

A flesh golem's power was of the level of a knight. Building them was expensive, therefore, the whole magic tower only got some.

"Watch out, Mr. Lucien! We will split up to distract it! It's not smart at all!" Carina hurriedly yelled at Lucien.

Lucien was now right in the path of the golem.

Adam also said to Lucien aloud, "I'll go with you, man! But you have to survive first! Let's find a way to get rid of the shackles!"

However, to their great surprise, Lucien did not listen but started to run toward the golem!

They all wondered if Lucien was crazy.

The big and tall golem wielded a huge axe, aiming right at Lucien. With such speed and strength, there was no way that Lucien could handle this hacking right now!

Lucien slightly took a step aside and calmly lifted his left hand against the huge axe.

No miracle happened.

The huge axe easily cut off most of Lucien's left arm. Blood gushed out. Lucien's left arm, as well as the shackle on it, dropped on the floor. Seizing the chance, Lucien quickly concentrated his Blessing power, which was temporarily free, and then hit a special part of the shackle on his right hand using the power.

Weird light shone on the shackle on Lucien's right hand. Silver moonlight burst out. The shackle broke into two halves and fell from Lucien's right wrist.

Now, Lucien's Blessing power was completely free. Lucien's right foot thrust against the floor and turned into a moonlight shadow. In the blood rain, he avoided the following strike of the huge axe.

Adam and the adventurers were all shocked.

Chapter 319: The Energy Core

Chapter 319: The Energy Core

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The horrible pain from losing an arm made Lucien feel extremely dizzy. Every single one of his nerves twitched. However, the painful feeling did not affect his actions. Clenching his teeth tightly, Lucien ran toward the golem at his highest speed. He avoided the huge axe and came right in front of the golem.

Lucien punched the golem in its iron face mask. With a big bang, the black iron mask became sunken. Lucien's right hand thus bled badly.

The golem fiercely wielded the axe again. Lucien squatted quickly and avoided the attack. Once more, he accelerated and quickly ran around the golem, like a shadow. Again and again, Lucien seized every chance to punch in the golem's mask with his right fist.

One time, two times, three times...

The mask was severely damaged. However, Lucien's right hand also had become a mass of bleeding flesh. The sharp pain brought by every punch was beyond horrible.

The fourth time, the fifth time, the sixth time...

Lucien managed to come right in front of the golem's chest. Using its heavy armor as the fulcrum, he turned his waist and punched again with all his strength.

Bang! The bones in Lucien's right hand were instantly revealed. And the iron mask directly broke into countless pieces!

Under the mask, there was a big, pale face imprinted with creepy black patterns, as if it was sewed together by several pieces of face skin. The momentum of Lucien's fist was so great that his punch did not stop when the mask broke, but instead directly hit the

disgusting face made of rotten flesh!

Without the protection of the metal mask, the flesh-golem with no intelligence had no way to defend that vital part. The golem's head was its most vulnerable part!

This was Lucien's plan. He did not want to waste too much time on the golem. So, he directly targeted the golem's head!

In the spreading flesh and blood, the broken metal pieces fell onto the floor, as well as the huge axe in the golem's hand. When the golem knelt on the floor, his heavy head lowered. That was the end of it.

Carina's green eyes saw the bright red blood everywhere on the young sorcerer's linen clothes. Blood was still gushing from the cut of Lucien's missing left arm, although the flesh of the cut already started to wriggle and grow. Carina could see the white bones in his right hand, with blood dripping on the floor. However, as if he did not feel the pain, Lucien walked back toward them like a warrior who just went through a bitter war.

She wondered if he was really a sorcerer. Sorcerers did not fight like this.

She saw that Lucien picked up the heavy axe on the floor and walked toward her quickly.

The strong smell of blood rushed into Carina's nose and made her feel a bit dizzy. She saw that Lucien held the axe under his armpit and reached out his right hand to press on the collar on her neck.

The sorcerer started to cast some weird, incomprehensible spell. Now Lucien looked just like a devil from the abyss.

He kept focused. Like a knight using a magic item, Lucien used his willpower instead of spiritual power to activate the spell that was built based on the structure of the collar, and at the same time, the Blessing power in his right hand pierced into the key part of the collar.

Electric sparks burst out, and Carina twitched slightly. However, the

collar clicked, and all the pain instantly disappeared.

Seizing the chance, Lucien grabbed the collar and threw it away.

In the air, the collar closed again!

Lucien could only open the collar shortly. He dared not to remove the spiritual imprint left by the old witch, or even in the underground remains she might know that something was not right here.

Carina's spiritual power instantly recovered, as if a barren river was nurtured by the rainy season.

"Thank you... Thank you, Mr. Lucien." Carina was very surprised, as her most precious thing had come back.

"Remember this spell." Lucien directly cut her off, and his voice became a bit hoarse from losing too much blood, "Then, use your spiritual power to stimulate the parts of the collar where the sunflower, Throne Tree, and the constellations patterns are."

Although Lucien could get rid of the collar on his own, the great pain and the dizziness from losing too much blood kept distracting him. Carina was also a sorcerer, so he did not have to take the risk.

Remembering spells quickly was a sorcerer's basic skill. After Lucien repeated the spell for three times, Carina already mastered it.

She focused and started to cast the spell in front of Lucien. Her spiritual power followed as she was casting and the power targeted the collar on Lucien's neck.

Several electric sparks burst out of the collar, but Lucien was already very used to it. After hearing the click, he quickly grabbed the collar with his right hand. His movement were way faster than Carina's!

Lucien felt that, instantly, his spiritual power had all come back. He also realized that both his soul and spiritual power had reached the fifth circle, which was probably not only because of the electric

shock Lucien had received, but also some other reason.

Lucien did not have the time to think of the possible reasons. He instantly activated a third-circle necromantic spell, Healing, in his soul.

Since Felipe figured out the connection between the memory of cells and the healing power of grand knights based on the fundamental experiment contributed by Vicente Miranda, known as Thanatos, healing spells were not exclusively owned by the Church anymore. Each level of the school of Necromancy had some healing spells, however, when compared to the divine spells of the same level, necromantic healing spells were less effective, as if there was something important missing. Therefore, necromantic sorcerers sometimes also needed to use healing potions.

The milky white light covered the cut of Lucien's missing arm. The bones started to be repaired and the flesh started to grow. Soon, the horrible cut stopped bleeding and was covered with a thin layer of membrane.

Then, Lucien started to help Adam to get rid of his shackles. Carina copied his method to help Alva and Bullard out.

In Lucien's plan, ideally, he could have at least two assistants. The more assistants he had, the better it was.

As soon as the shackles on Adam's wrists were removed, his body suddenly blended in the darkness in the corner.

"Thanks, man!" Adam felt his power coming back to him after so many years, and he could not help laughing.

Lucien quickly turned to Alva to help him, while Carina helped Bullard out.

While keeping an eye around, Adam looked at the broken arm on the floor and said, "Man, you're really cruel to yourself. You got rid of the restraint at the cost of your arm, and you seem to keep so calm! Like... like this was not even your arm! There's no way I would do this..."

Lucien put on a smile but did not say anything. If it had been Adam, even though he was willing to lose an arm, he would still not be able to open the shackles.

Without understanding the entire structure of the shackles based on one's profound knowledge, one could never seize the chance to get rid of the shackles, even when his or her Blessing power was free for a very short time.

Also, for a knight, losing an arm was a horrible loss. For a long time, the knight would not be able to fight properly from losing his or her balance and speed. However, it was different for Lucien, a sorcerer. Losing a hand would not affect him too much.

After helping Bullard out, Carina turned around and said to Carina sincerely, "Mr. Lucien, thank you so much. We'll find a way for you to get your arm back later."

"We shall go to the energy core right now." Lucien could still feel the sharp pain in his cut, so he did not want to waste even a second. Turning around, he quickly ran toward the witch's lab. According to his observation, the energy core was close to the lab. However, neither Lucien nor Adam knew exactly where it was.

Lucien knew that the Congress was able to help him get his arm back, but he had to survive first. In order to survive, losing an arm was nothing to Lucien!

At the same time, to his surprise, after getting rid of the shackles and collar, Lucien was still not able to enter his spirit library or reach Rhine, as if there was some certain power in this place which blocked everything connected to the outside world.

After taking a few big steps, Lucien suddenly stopped and picked up his broken arm. Hanging the broken arm on his girdle, he continued to run toward the lab holding the huge axe under his armpit, and at the same time, cast defending spells on himself.

Carina and the rest of the adventurers felt what Lucien just did very creepy. However, knowing that they did not have much time to waste and the old witch might come back at any time, they

followed Lucien quickly. Adam was the fastest one among them all.

...

The heavy sword in the flesh golem's hands fiercely struck downward, but Adam pounced on the golem directly with his body covered with a thick cluster of dark smoke.

As if the heavy sword just fell onto a pile of cotton, the hacking failed to do any damage. The darkness completely covered the edge.

A second later, when the darkness retreated. The golem's armor, as well as its body, became corroded by the dark smoke. Adam purposefully left the sword intact.

Alva knew that the sword was left for him. He quickly picked up the heavy sword on the ground. Adam probably did not need a weapon as he was very powerful, but Alva must have one.

On their way to the lab, because of Adam, the level five knight, and Lucien, the powerful sorcerer, all the golems guarding the key positions, as well as their leader, a level two flesh golem, had been easily killed by them. The magic item warehouse was not in this direction, so they did not have the time to find their items back first.

Right now they were very close to the core of the magic tower.

"The energy core was one of the forbidden areas in the tower, and it was protected by some very powerful magic circles. It's all on you now, man," Adam said to them cautiously. "If the witch notices what we are doing here, we're basically done."

Lucien slightly nodded. Although the magic tower of every senior-rank mage was more or less unique, their shared foundation was still The Guidebook to the Construction of Magic Towers and a Hundred and Seven Types of Magic Towers. Also, at that moment, the witch, which was the controller of the tower, was not in it, so Lucien was relatively confident that he could break the protecting magic circles, but he had no idea how long this was going to take.

He had to be very careful. One single mistake could alert the enemy

or get himself killed by the senior-rank magic circles.

There was only one chance.

When Lucien was about to start, a strong wind blew from the other side.

Adam, in the darkness, instantly rushed in the direction. However, after a sharp cutting sound, Adam's figure appeared in the darkness again, but his face became pale.

In the corner to the right, a golem twice as tall as a man took a step forward with a huge hammer in its hand.

Its eyes were glowing in the red light, and its entire body was built with metal.

Chapter 320: The Contemporary Sorcerer VS. The Ancient Golem

"Steel golem, large construct, immune to bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons; immune to psychic attacks; immune to blessing, cursing, necromantic and death spells; immune to poison; immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form; Very high level of defence; immune to most elemental spells under the fifth circle; Can be damaged by strong acid; can be slowed down by electric shock or affected by strong magnetic field above the fifth circle. Dutiful, can understand commands; One of the most popular guards among sorcerers."

Lucien quickly retrieved the information in his mind to decide on his fighting plan.

The golem took a step backward and the floor slightly trembled due to its weight. The golem was so heavy that even itself was not able to maintain its balance all the time.

Carina did not waste a second hesitating. She summoned three dark green magic arrows and shot them directly at the golem.

The second circle spell, Acid Arrow!

The arrows did a little damage to the metal body of the golem, but it was nothing to the huge steel monster.

Dragging the heavy hammer, the golem started to run toward them. It was not very fast, but the floor was shaking.

Facing the steel monster, Lucien and the rest of them all felt nervous. The corridor was not very spacious, and the size of the golem made the whole space rather limited, thus they did not have much space to show their advantages as being swift and agile.

Lucien lifted his hand, and there were instantly countless colorful light spots surrounding the head of the golem. A second later, the piece of iron and steel covering the golem's head became thinner.

Carina was shocked seeing the effect of Lucien's spell. She could not believe that the power of Lucien's spell surpassed the golem's immunity and even dissolved part of the metal.

She had only read about something like this in legendary stories!

Although Elemental Order worked, Lucien knew that this was far from being enough. It seemed that he had to cast the spell for at least ten times in order to do some real damage to the golem.

Also, due to the rather limited space, the options of using other kinds of spells such as Lightning had all become impractical. In Lucien's mind, taking the golem to an open place should be the best plan for now.

However, this would bring them a problem. A steel golem worked like a robot and it only followed the preset command. Therefore, very possibly, the golem would only patrol a certain area instead of following them to another place. If they could not finish the golem as soon as possible, it was very likely to send the alert message to the witch!

Lucien was in a dilemma right now.

He wished that he had constructed the fourth circle spell, Distorted Magnetic Field, in his soul, as strong magnetic field could interfere with the golem's inner operation and slow down its movement, which was the most useful spell when a sorcerer faced a steel golem. However, with a missing arm, Lucien could not cast the spell using hand gestures.

At this time, an idea came to his mind. If the golem's inner operation system could be affected by a strong magnetic field, that spell should also be able to work.

Since electro-magnetic induction was discovered, lots of magnetic field spells had been invented. So, when the sorcerers were building steel golems, most of them chose to add the parts for resisting a strong magnetic field. Although they did not expect the parts to work perfectly, as parts like this contradicted the fundamental mechanism of building a golem, the parts were still relatively

useful. At least a level five or even more powerful golem would not be easily defeated by a fourth-circle spell anymore—when electromagnetic spells first came out, many sorcerers' steel golems were destroyed or damaged by very simple spells. At that time, only those very precious Adamantine Golems or Mythril Golems could have a good chance to survive.

This was the development of the magic, and, obviously, the old witch was an ancient sorcerer!

Adam saw that the golem was coming for them, he forced himself to stand out to confront the monster. The air surrounding Adam had become dark because of his Darkness Blessing.

This was called Dark Assimilation, the top power among all dark Blessings. The power could turn all nearby things into darkness and devour them. However, using it would exhaust the user for at least a few minutes. Adam knew the consequence well, and he wished that Lucien could seize the chance and finish the golem with him as soon as possible.

The steel golem, as well as its heavy hammer, were surrounded by the dark ripples. The darkness was like the stomach of a monster, wriggling.

Lucien lifted his right hand and his lips moved slightly. Slow and invisible waves spread out into the darkness.

As if the darkness was startled, it suddenly retreated. Many parts on the steel golem became sunken, and right now it was sitting on the floor, trying its best to stand up again with the heavy hammer.

Adam was exhausted, and his figure reappeared in the corner. He felt dizzy from the spell cast by Lucien, and it was quite surprising for him since most spells would not be able to do so when he was part of the darkness. However, in Adam's eyes, the spell seemed to be not that useful, being far below the one Lucien cast before.

Adam knew that Dark Assimilation could absorb many spells, and probably that was the reason why Lucien's spell did not work very well. He wondered why Lucien did not want to wait until his attack

finished, but he believed that the sorcerer had his own reasons.

"It's your turn now," Adam hurriedly said to Lucien using Secondary Telepathic Bond when the steel golem stood up again. Adam believed that if Lucien could cast the elemental spell for another two or three times, the golem which had been damaged by Dark Assimilation would reach its limit, as long as Carina knew when to use electric spells to slow down the golem.

Facing the powerful golem, there was nothing much that Alva and Bullard could do there.

Carina did not let Adam down. She pointed at the golem with her hand and countless small electric balls instantly smashed into the metal body. The golem thus became a bit slower.

Lucien's buffering time for another round of casting was over. When the golem stood up again, Lucien raised his right hand again and concentrated the slow and invisible waves, making them move forward.

"You guys step back. Carina, slow the golem further to help Lucien," Adam said to the adventurers, giving commands through their telepathic bonds.

The rest of the team followed Adam's instruction, however, before Adam finished his words, the body of the golem started to crack fiercely as if inside there was a big hammer thumping around.

The red light in the golem's eyes flicked. Then its big and heavy body hit the floor hard, making the entire floor shake from it.

"What?"

"What was it?"

"What kind of spell is it?"

Through the bonds, Lucien could hear their exclamations.

It was the fourth-circle spell, Professor's Infrasound Resonance!

Lucien released a light sigh. When he first created the spell, he had taken record of the inner vibration frequency of some most common creatures and constructs. However, the frequency of the golem was a bit different, and that was why the spell failed the first time.

Fortunately, after some quick modification, the penetrating and powerful infrasonic waves finally led to the resonance of the precise parts inside of the steel golem, and the destructive power was quite considerable.

If the power of casting was enough, Lucien could completely break up this huge piece of steel!

Like when those magnetic field spells were first invented, Lucien's spell using the power of resonance was destructive to metal constructs, and Professor's Infrasound Resonance had an even wider application.

"Adam, you take some rest. Alva and Bullard, stay alert." Lucien did not answer their questions but quickly commanded, "Carina, you help me with analyzing the magic circles outside of the energy core."

...

Probably due to the lack of resources, the magic circles outside of the energy core were nothing special, which saved Lucien a lot of time and trouble.

For ancient sorcerers, analyzing the magic circles was not an easy job. However, this was not that challenging for sorcerers from the Congress of Magic, as they had all kinds of materials for references and all they needed to do was to copy the methods available.

The different organizational forms and ways of conveying knowledge formed a huge gap between a contemporary and an ancient sorcerer!

After more than ten minutes, the gate of the energy core silently opened.

Countless colorful light beams from the energy wells and gardens

joined together and became an afflux to the energy pool, providing pure energy to the different zones of the magic tower.

After roughly estimating where the core of the magic tower was based on the flowing direction of the energy beams, Lucien said to the adventurers, "I'll build a magic circle here to restrain the flow of energy. You guys stay here, and when you see the energy pool starts to boil, activate the magic circle instantly. This will give me about ten seconds to control the core, and you guys must leave the energy core room within the ten seconds, or you'd be turned into ashes by the gushing power."

Although Alva and Bullard's original plan was to run away, after seeing the power of Lucien's magic and Adam's Blessing, they started to believe that it was possible to control the magic tower, so they nodded solemnly together.

Carina asked, "But Mr. Lucien, have you got any materials for setting up the magic circle? We don't have anything with us..."

Lucien smiled and pulled out his broken arm from his girdle, "I'm a level two knight. My blood and flesh can be quite useful materials when building a necromantic magic circle. But as for the core part of the magic circle, we need Mr. Adam's flesh and blood..."

Adam laughed, "No problem."

As a level five grand knight, as long as he was not going to lose an arm or leg, his blood and flesh that were going to be taken away could easily grow back again.

Seeing that Lucien was talking about how to use his own flesh in such a calm way, Carina saw the ruthless and hardheaded soul under his elegant and polite appearance.

Chapter 321: The Old Witch

Chapter 321: The Old Witch

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien started to draw the mysterious patterns surrounded by many circles using the blood and flesh from his broken arm. The patterns looked very creepy and it seemed that they contained the ultimate myths of the human body, the world, and the whole universe.

Carina stared at the magic circle that Lucien was building and murmured, "The three symbols represent spirit, consciousness and their carrier... They are at the same level, probably stands for the soul. The five symbols in the outer ring are the traditional symbols in the school of Necromancy, representing blood, bone, flesh, organ and life force... They might stand for the body. And the rest of the four symbols... sun, silver moon, stars, and darkness represent the world where an individual lives in. Is this a magic circle combining Necromancy and Astrology? And it seems that the different positions and lines have different functions..."

This was a very precious chance for Carina to learn about an advanced magic circle.

When he finished drawing the basic patterns of the necromantic magic circle named Miranda 12 Circles, Lucien turned the rest of the bone, blood, and flesh into some thick liquid. He used the liquid as ink and drew several special lines for connecting the twelve circles, surrounding the mysterious symbols.

Then he used the rest of the liquid as the magic conductor in the power passage of the magic circle. Using the flesh and blood from Adam, Lucien rebuilt the symbols standing for darkness, blood, and consciousness.

Lucien's spiritual power lit up the lines in the magic circle, and it felt that the light was full of life force. Very quickly, the circles were all integrated together, and the light was suddenly restrained within the area of the magic circle.

The magic circle now looked more organized, and every part had connected to each other as if the magic circle was alive. From some angles, the magic circle looked like a three-dimensional structure.

Carina saw the magic circle as a piece of artwork.

At this time, Lucien said to her, “Carina, when the energy pool starts to boil, you use your spiritual power to activate the symbol representing darkness.”

Carina suddenly pulled her thoughts back.

Lucien repeated his words, and Carina hurriedly nodded with her flushed cheeks, “I will, Mr. Lucien.”

He nodded, as trusting Carina was his only option right now. He had not managed to learn simulacrum spells to use a duplicate.

He turned to the two knights, “Alva and Bullard, you two protect Carina. Don’t let anything distract her.”

“As you command, Mr. Lucien,” Alva and Bullard responded seriously.

Lucien nodded. Finally, he said to Adam, “Let’s go to the central section.”

“Yes!” Adam was very excited, as he had been waiting for this moment for several decades!

...

Bang! Bang!

Two steel golems fell onto the ground. Their limbs were still twitching.

Looking at the golems, Adam said to Lucien sincerely, “If I was all by myself here, it would be very difficult for me to finish even one golem because of the limited space. I have to say that you sorcerers are really powerful.”

“This is the power of knowledge,” Lucien answered briefly. He stared at the patterns of the magic circles on one of the golems and slightly shook his head, “Most things usually have their advantages and disadvantages. Without the magic circles, building a stronger layer of a metal shell for resisting magnetic field interference would be possible, but if that was the case, on the other hand, pure steel could not handle the power of a grand knight or the elemental spells. The solution could only be provided by the next evolvement of knowledge.”

Adam did not really understand Lucien’s words. He shrugged his shoulders and said, “You probably want to crack the protection magic circle first. The old witch might come back at any time.”

The magic circle at the center of the tower was way more complicated than the one in the energy core. Fortunately, it still followed the mechanism of most senior-rank magic circles. It took Lucien about an hour and a half to crack it.

This an hour and a half were beyond torturing to the prison breakers. Even Adam, the determined level five grand knight, could not avoid walking back and forth, feeling extremely anxious.

Lucien knew that Carina, Alva, and Bullard might also have reached their limit. At this time, even a common flesh golem could break their nerves.

However, because they were too far away from each other, Lucien could not contact them using Telepathic Bond. He had to trust them.

Seeing that Lucien opened the black gate, Adam released a long sigh and said, “This is the longest half an hour in my whole life. We’re lucky that the old witch hasn’t come back.”

“Let’s go. This isn’t the end.” Lucien stepped on the stairs behind the gate.

Having no idea what was waiting for them in the front, and also when the old witch would come back, Lucien too felt very nervous and anxious.

Adam's body was again covered by the dark mist, and he carefully followed Lucien to the stairs.

Suddenly, the stairs started to wriggle!

The gray wall and stairs quickly became as red as blood and flesh and they started to produce white and green acid. As soon as the acid touched the absorbing wall protecting Lucien, it made very disturbing sizzling noises.

Adam, although having turned himself into part of the darkness, was still slightly hurt by the acid, which was totally out of his expectation.

"Damn it!" swore Adam, "The acid shouldn't be able to hurt me!"

Lucien answered him through the telepathic bond, "It's the witch's special spell, not some common acid! It can corrode and digest one's soul!"

As he was saying, Lucien started to run as fast as he could. There was no way to deactivate the magic circle. Every time the old witch came back, the magic circle would work, but she must be always prepared for this.

This was one of the most effective ways for many sorcerers to protect the places that were important to them. Fortunately, both Lucien and Adam did not lower their guards, instead, they had equipped themselves with all kinds of protections very well.

The red stairs were wriggling like crazy, like a human being's intestine digesting food.

Struggling, Lucien and Adam climbed toward the way out crazily.

Like an open mouth, close to the exit, there were lips and teeth. However, right now the mouth was closing, as if there was a time limit for one to leave this place!

Using the spell Speed, Lucien and Adam moved very fast. The exit was closer and closer to them!

However, at this time, the absorbing wall had reached its limit and in the next second, it collapsed into shining pieces.

Lucien did not waste his time on casting Douglas' Absorbing Wall again, instead, he grabbed Adam's arm and used Short Distance Teleportation.

Following the flashing, Lucien and Adam appeared on the stairs a few steps away from the exit!

The spell could not move them far enough!

Lucien knew this well. Regardless of the sharp pain in his skin, he shot out like an arrow. Rushing through the teeth, he fell onto the thick carpet. He quickly dodged to the other side as Adam followed right behind him. Lucien felt a bit relieved and then started to look around.

That place should be the old witch's study. On one side, there were several rows of bookshelves. On the opposite side, a couple of beautiful statues of women were placed there. In the middle, there was a fancy desk, on which center there was a crystal ball. Inside the crystal ball, the mini model of the whole magic tower was displayed!

However, the old witch wearing the red robe was sitting right behind the desk!

Her skin sagged horribly and wrinkles covered her whole face.

Both Lucien and Adam were startled when seeing the witch!

When Lucien was about to cast spells, he realized that something was wrong here. So he hurriedly stopped Adam and said, "It's okay. It's just a mirrored reflection."

Adam was still very nervous, "Reflection?!"

"This is a sixth-circle spell that produces a mirrored reflection of the caster. The reflection could move and speak under the control of the caster as well, however, it cannot use magic. If we attack it, the witch will know," said Lucien, trying his best to slow down his own

beating heart.

Then, Lucien started to cast spells to cure the wounds on himself and Adam left by the strong acid.

Adam complained, "The bloody witch looks crazy, but she's still very insidious."

After that, Lucien cast a few defensive spells on himself and then walked to the crystal ball, trying to analyze the controlling hub.

About almost an hour later, when it was already close to midnight, Lucien finally finished his analysis. He put his right hand on the crystal ball and started to cast the spell. He pierced his spiritual power into the crystal ball like a needle.

In order to control the crystal ball. Lucien must not only crack it but also remove the spiritual imprint in it left by the old witch!

His spiritual power swam around in the crystal ball through many obstacles and finally reached the core part, where the old witch's spiritual imprint was in.

Feeling the threat, the crystal ball suddenly lit up like a shining sun.

All the magic patterns and symbols in the crystal ball were shining, concentrating the power of the entire magic tower to kill the intruder.

In the energy core, Carina saw that the energy pool started to boil. She instantly activated the magic circle left by Lucien.

The twelve circles lit up at the same time, and the darkness from the magic circle suddenly filled up the whole space. Everything seemed to have been frozen.

Being very decisive, Carina, Alva, and Bullard hurriedly turned around and ran toward the gate in the darkness.

The energy flow had been cut off. The crystal ball lost the protection!

If Lucien failed to remove the spiritual imprint, he would die from the great energy that would bounce back.

Ten seconds... That was all Lucien had.

At this time, the mirrored reflection behind the desk suddenly started to become alive. The angry voice came from afar, "You two nasty flies! I'll turn you two into dried bodies!"

The life force in the reflection was getting stronger and stronger. Within a second, the old witch had come back!

The sixth-circle spell, Position Exchange!

After using this spell, the two preset targets within the range of five hundred meters could be connected together. Within a second, the two targets could switch their positions! This was probably this old witch's unique magic!

No one could ever look down upon a sorcerer, even if he or she was an ancient sorcerer!

Chapter 322: The Beholder

Chapter 322: The Beholder

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

It was totally out of Lucien and Adam's expectation that the old witch would come back so fast.

Before trying to control the crystal ball, Lucien had carefully checked around to make sure that there was no teleportation circle in the core section. However, he did not expect that the witch could directly cast Position Exchange on her mirrored reflection!

If Lucien and Adam chose not to destroy the reflection, she could come back as soon as she sensed that the core section was being invaded; If they chose to attack the reflection, she would immediately be able to get the message and use other ways to come back in time.

Despite the craziness of the witch, she was also a very smart sorcerer!

However, right now Lucien was still working on removing the spiritual imprint in the crystal ball left by the old witch and could not let himself be distracted, so he wouldn't. Once he lost the chance to control the core, Lucien would never have any opportunities again to fight against the witch, a sorcerer at least of the seventh-circle!

Lucien had made up his mind. He did not even take a look at the old witch. Instead, he focused on the flow of his spiritual power in the crystal ball, regardless of whether or not Adam would run away and leave him alone here or whether or not his defense spells could handle any single attack from the old witch. He had decided to stay focused and seize the slightest hope!

When the old witch started to cast Position Exchange, Adam had to admit that the fear that had been piling up in the past so many years made him take a step backward. His body shook slightly and

he felt that he probably would kneel down or run away at any time. However, he felt Lucien's great determination from the mind bond, and that gave him great courage as well.

Adam clenched his fists tight. He knew that he did not have a way to go back. If he was going to die, he would rather die in a bitter fight as a hero instead of a coward!

As a level five grand knight, his willpower in fighting was never absent, as it was the foundation of being a knight!

With a low growl, Adam turned himself into a cluster of black mist and jumped directly onto the old witch behind the desk, who just finished casting the position exchanging spell. As long as he could handle the first round of the witch's attack, Lucien would be able to have a few seconds during the witch's buffering time! That was their only hope!

Seeing the dark mist, the old witch started to scream. The sharp scream brought invisible magic waves that suddenly froze the mist. Like a piece of glass, the dark ripples collapsed and disappeared.

When Adam's figure appeared again, his head and the left side of his chest had been vitrified.

The sixth-circle spell, Dulag's Glass!

The spell could turn a creature or an item within a certain size into glass!

A single spell had disabled Adam. Thanks to his powerful life force as a grand knight, Adam did not directly pass out.

However, the two seconds that Adam earned for Lucien were precious. Lucien's spiritual power inside of the crystal ball started to spread and vibrate in a strange way all of a sudden. As the spiritual power produced the invisible waves and the waves extended, the whole space started to shake fiercely.

Spirit Swing, the relatively new research outcome of the Congress in the past fifty years, could help junior or middle-rank sorcerers remove the spiritual imprint in a magic item, and it worked

especially well with ancient magic items!

This was why Lucien wanted to try to control the magic tower!

In the core of the crystal ball, the old witch's spiritual imprints started to break down. However, it was still an imprint left by a senior-rank sorcerer, so Lucien could not completely remove it within those two seconds.

This was a life-and-death fight between the modern magic system and an ancient sorcerer!

The old witch lifted her left hand on which there were two rings. One had a big, purple gem on it. It was Lucien's ring, Element. The other was a dark blue ring in a unique shape, decorated with many small precious stones.

Surprisingly, the old witch did not choose to cast Elemental Swirl on Lucien. She was probably concerned that the spell would hurt herself and damage her desk and all her precious collections in this room.

The dark blue ring lit up. Countless chains made of flesh and blood howled and lashed out at Lucien.

The sixth-circle spell, Howling Chain, was mainly for interfering with spell casting by constricting and cursing its victim!

The unearthly howl tried to sneak into Lucien's soul to distract him. However, Douglas' Absorbing Wall could handle the power of most spells under the fifth circle. Therefore, when the howling chain lashed on Lucien, although his Flame Shield instantly went out, the Absorbing Wall did not break into pieces until a second later.

Even one second was very precious for Lucien. As his spiritual power was vibrating more and more fiercely, more and more cracks appeared in the old witch's spiritual imprint.

The absorbing wall had disappeared. Stone Skin failed as well. The howling chain winded around Lucien's body and ulcerated his skin.

The howling definitely affected Lucien's brain and soul. Fortunately,

the spell Mechanized Mind helped Lucien a little. Lucien felt that his soul was being pulled in different directions by countless crying ghosts. He felt piercing pain in his soul, that was becoming torpid.

However, Lucien's soul had become much stronger under the old witch's electric shock treatment. Right now, the power of his soul had reached the fifth circle. Also, because the power of Howling Chain had been reduced by the layers of protection Lucien cast on himself, he managed to stay focused despite the very uncomfortable feelings in his soul. When the vibration of his spiritual power peaked, the old witch's spiritual imprint was completely removed!

The old witch's experiment, in the end, helped Lucien!

In the next second, Lucien condensed his spiritual power and left his own imprint in the crystal ball.

The crystal ball burst out bright light and rose up in the air. In its center, all of the magic circles and symbols in the magic tower were very obvious.

Lucien cast a simple spell with the crystal ball, and instantly a beam of light surrounded by many magic symbols shot out from the wall on the left side. The light beam hit the red-blood chains and the chains immediately disappeared.

The sixth-circle spell, Advanced Dispel Magic!

As soon as the chains disappeared, Lucien cast another spell whose target was the old witch.

The seventh-circle spell, Antimagic Ray. It could remove the magic effects on its target and also produce a small antimagic field, in which the target could not cast any spells!

Although Lucien could only use the powerful spells built in the magic tower by the magic circles, for the first time, he genuinely felt the great power of being a senior-rank sorcerer.

The old witch just recovered from her casting buffering time. When she saw the ray, she angrily screamed again. And a big mirror drawn with many mysterious symbols appeared in front of her. The

ray hit the mirror, and when it broke, the ray reflected back and hit Lucien. All of Lucien's magic effects for protecting himself were removed!

The mirror was the seventh-circle spell, Spell Turning!

Based on the caster's level and knowledge, the spell could even turn back a ninth-circle spell!

Lucien tried to extend his spiritual power, but it did not work. Fortunately, right now he could control the whole magic tower. He did not have to rely on himself to cast the spells.

Lucien used the seventh-circle spell, Forcecage, and trapped the old witch in the invisible force walls. The cage could only be broken by several special spells, such as Dissociation.

A magic tower did not have to wait for buffering!

When Lucien continued to cast spells, the old witch's left eyeball suddenly bulged out and became a yellowish-brown, wriggling sphere.

Like a newly-born cub, the sphere was covered with blood. In the center of it, there was a big, yellowish-brown eye. Small eyestalks crowned the sphere and extended out, connecting to the veins in the old witch's left eye socket!

It was a beholder! It was one of the most famous monsters in the Dark Mountain Range!

There was a seventh-circle spell that could turn the caster into a beholder temporarily. However, the old witch chose to turn her left eyeball into a beholder, as ancient sorcerers were very good at it! Thus, they did not have to wait for the bothering casting buffering time anymore.

Several green rays of the spell, Dissociation, were shot out from the small eyestalks, and at the same time, the big eye in the center released the antimagic ray.

Chapter 323: The Surprising Change

The invisible force field was wiped out by the dissociation rays. Furthermore, the antimagic ray targeted the crystal ball in Lucien's right hand, trying to hit it and thus build a small antimagic field inside the crystal ball in order to cut off its connection to the magic tower.

Since Lucien had been hit by the antimagic ray, he could not cast any spells on his own for now. He slightly turned around and blocked the antimagic ray with his own right arm. At the same time, he continued casting the creepy spells with the magic tower. Since he was using the great power of the magic tower, hurriedly interrupting the chanting process would bring horrible damage to Lucien's soul from the backlash!

Several powerful flashes of lightning were summoned from the ceiling, turning the whole space into an ocean of lightning and thunder. Except for the desk and the floor carved with reinforcing magic symbols, the rest of the things in the study were destroyed completely.

The seventh-circle spell, Lightning Storm!

A piece of shadow embedded with complicated patterns instantly surrounded the old witch, safely protecting her from all the bolts of lightning.

The seventh-circle spell, Energy Immunity—Lightning!

Then the old witch's yellowish-brown eyeball launched colorful light rays again. Some could charm people; some could make them fall asleep; other could slow people down or turn people into stone. The eyeball in the center released the strong smell of death.

The seventh-circle spell, Finger of Death!

After this fierce round of attacks, the old witch's left eye now looked dim. The eyeball had to wait for a while before launching the next round.

In most cases, no beholder would fight like this. The different eyestalks would cooperate with each other and fight using strategies to make sure that they would not run out of their spells. However, right now it seemed that the old witch had lost her mind, or maybe there were other reasons.

Lucien put his hand on the crystal ball and summoned Forcecage again to protect himself.

The colorful rays hit the force field cage but could not go through it, until the green dissociation ray quickly broke the cage down.

If the witch had not lost her mind, she could have launched the dissociation ray in the first place. If that was the case, Lucien would have been in great trouble!

After this round of attack, Lucien saw that the old witch quickly took a glance at the several statues of beauties in the corner to her right.

Lucien was very surprised. He did not notice the fact that the statues remained completely intact from the flashes of lightning. Why did the old witch choose to protect them so well?! Were they even more important than her magic books?!

However, right now he did not want to waste any time on thinking about it. Lucien quickly cast another spell and a huge hand with sharp nails broke out from the floor. The hand tried to grab the statues in the corner.

The seventh-circle spell, Sajeman's Ice Hand Prison!

The magic tower's power also had its limit. Including the spells that Lucien had used, there were nine kinds of spells altogether. Lucien wanted to finish the fight as soon as possible, as once he used up all the magic tower's spells, the old witch could easily kill him.

Therefore, as soon as he noticed that there was something wrong with the statues. Lucien decisively switched his target.

The old witch screamed angrily, and black miasma spread out. Adam, who just recovered from the witch's spell and was climbing

to his feet on the corner suddenly felt completely exhausted.

The seventh-circle spell, Dying Waves. This was a spell enchanted in her magic robe, as she was still waiting for the buffering time.

Lucien did not panic. He calmly finished chanting a spell. Then, a dark ray shot out from the wall and the ray instantly built up a small antimagic field around Lucien.

When the waves died out before reaching Lucien, the statues in the corner burst out bright light and countered the power of the hand.

Within Lucien's expectation, they were not just common statues.

As soon as Lucien entered the study, he felt it very strange that the old witch would want to put some statues of beauties there to make herself upset. Also, if the witch's body and soul had been cursed so badly, why was she still alive?!

Lucien believed that the old witch would put all of her most important things in the core section of the magic tower!

Lots of thoughts filled his mind. The crystal ball rose into the air and a red light ray shot out at the statues!

The seventh-circle spell, Ruby Reversion Ray, could remove the strongest defending effect of the target!

After the several rounds of attack, some of the defending magic circles on the statues had been worn out. When the ruby ray hit them, one of them lost all its protections and the original color of the statue was revealed.

The old witch went crazy. She immediately gave up attacking Lucien and instead turned her force field into a huge palm. The palm grabbed the statue and brought it back to the old witch.

Obviously, these statues were the weakness of the old witch. Lucien seized the chance and summoned a powerful lightning again.

At this time, a beauty statue was struck into pieces. A piece of soul disappeared together with the lightning.

The old witch suddenly aged. Her back bent forward even further, and her left eye instantly became sunken.

The old witch put part of her life in the statues!

Lucien continued casting. More and more bolts of lightning were summoned. And the statues were broken into pieces one by one.

The old witch's flesh started to rot. She could not use magic anymore.

Lucien saw victory, but at the same time, he could not help doubting himself. How come he could just kill a senior-rank mage like this?

The old witch had been making mistakes choosing what spells to use from the very beginning. Fortunately, Lucien's guess with the statues was correct...

At this time, he heard Adam's voice in his mind, "Good for you, man! You killed the witch! We're free now!"

"I'm not sure about it, Adam..." Lucien murmured.

Then he saw a creepy smile on the old witch's face.

"...?!"

When Lucien was just about to take actions, the magic tower started to shake fiercely. Chunks of bricks and stones started to fall down...

Lucien's vision became blurry. He passed out in the darkness.

...

Lucien saw light again. However, when he instantly tried to sit up, he found that both of his arms and legs were tied up by something.

"Good, very good. Your foundation to learn magic is very solid." The old witch giggled, "The development of magic in the recent several hundred years is really impressive..."

Lucien was shocked. He saw the old witch, wearing the red magic robe as usual, walking back and forth in the lab. Lucien was lying on the table as if he had just received another round of the electric shock treatment.

"What..." He was confused.

The old witch was quite proud of herself and said, "Dream Casting, sixth-circle. I've seen the spells you know and how developed the current magic system is."

Lucien was still confused when knowing that the escape adventure was just a dream. However, this explained the many questions that he had had in his mind: why he could not use his spirit library after getting rid of the collar; why he failed to contact Rhine; and why the witch made so many mistakes during the fight...

"I have to say that your so-called Arcana has impressed me." The old witch seemed to be in a pretty good mood, "I'll take you to the underground remain, where there's a maze in it. I hope that you can surprise me."

Lucien quickly calmed down and bargained, "Ms. Eudora, I think I can do a better job for you without the collar."

"No problem. I'll free you before entering the maze." As she was a powerful sorcerer, Lucien was not a threat to her.

Lucien followed the old witch to the ground floor of the magic tower. Then, they walked downstairs to the underground passage.

The passage paved with huge stone slabs had a height of five or six meters and a width of seven to eight people side by side. The slabs were carved with pictures of ancient people fighting against monsters from the underground world.

"Magnificent..." Lucien said sincerely.

The old witch did not say anything. Everything down here was more than familiar to her.

At the end of the passage, there were ten gates. Each gate had

different, mysterious patterns on them.

Pointing at the gray gate in the middle, the old witch said, "Here, the maze."

Lucien saw that the patterns on the gate were quite familiar. They looked like mathematical symbols. So, he asked confusedly, "What is in the maze? I could be more prepared if you told me."

"There's no monster in there. Just... difficult questions." The old witch looked a bit upset. Then, she removed Lucien's collar and shackles and urged him to enter the maze.

Feeling that his spiritual power had recovered, Lucien pushed open the gate and slowly walked into the maze. If there were no monsters in there, it should be a pure intelligence maze.

As soon as he entered it, the gate behind him closed silently. Lucien, with his dark vision, saw himself standing on a bridge with no ends, in the middle of nowhere. He was confused once more. He took a couple of steps ahead and saw stars appearing in front of his eyes. Then, the stars connected to each other and formed a line of words.

"Prove that any even number larger than 2 is the sum of two prime numbers."

"What...?" The question was totally out of Lucien's expectation. Then the stars formed more mathematical questions.

The questions looked very familiar to Lucien. It seemed that they were all from the exercise book that Lucien once read before—Demidovich Problems in Mathematical Analysis.

The mathematical symbols, numbers, equations, and hypotheses moved around Lucien's head and made him feel dizzy. Suddenly, the darkness broke into pieces and light came in again.

Lucien opened his eyes and shook his head. When he looked around, he saw Elvis, who should have been dead in the Black Forest.

Elvis covered his nose and mouth with his hand, where blood was dripping down. He said to Lucien angrily:

"What the hell is it in your head?!"

Kris_Liu Kris_Liu

Many thanks to SRandom for correcting my translation on the math problem!

Chapter 324: The Reason for All of These The End of Volume IV

Lucien looked around and realized that he was in the small cabin where he lived in when he found Elvis. Everything looked the same in the cabin, including the strong alcohol smell lingering in the air. Right now Lucien was sitting in a wooden armchair, while Elvis was sitting on his left side next to the fireplace. Lucien could still hear the noise outside, from the adventurers' campsite. The only difference was that the wooden ladle that should be in Elvis's hand was now on the floor, and the copper pot fell over in the fire. The tomato cream soup that spilled out from the pot made the fire sizzle.

Lucien realized what was going on here and the words escaped his lips, "Your Excellency... Nightmare King?"

Elvis did not deny, although his face looked gloomy, "Are you... really a middle-rank mage?"

Lucien recalled the mathematical exercises in the maze in his dream. He put on a slightly awkward smile and answered, "I've been working on my fundamental mathematics, so the questions should be mostly for senior-rank mages."

Pausing a little, Lucien switched the topic, "Your Excellency, may I ask why did you put me into the dream? And... am I still in another dream?"

Waking up from his dreams twice, everything felt so real and also not real. Lucien was confused with the difference between dream and reality. Although he had successfully entered his spirit library, Lucien was still not sure whether he had come back to reality.

This was the most creepy magic that Lucien had ever seen!

Elvis—no, Lucien should respect him as the Nightmare King—looked very serious. Stennis, the Nightmare King, said to him, "An old friend of mine requested my help. He thinks your level of magic

cannot match your arcana level. So he asked me to put you into a dream constructed by me and let you go through things in the dream to fully develop the potential of your soul. You may feel it right now."

Hearing that, Lucien immediately entered his meditation world. He felt something real in this virtual world. Hurriedly opening his eyes, Lucien was very surprised, "It is stronger... Now the power of my soul is indeed at the fifth-circle level. Is it because of the electric shock from the old witch? No... it was a dream, but what I experienced in the dream helped me in reality..."

Lucien's soul was now as strong as a fifth-circle sorcerer, however, it would still take some time for his spiritual power to catch up.

The Nightmare King, slightly nodded, "All the dreams were built upon your own cognition foundation, mental activities, and your own memories. What you have experienced in your dream has also affected your body and soul. However, for most people, the power from their dreams was too weak for them to make any actual signs of progress. In this world, I am the only one who can make the full use of dreams and use them to develop the potential of one's soul. Of course, a person's potential is also based on his or her actual power. Using dreams cannot solve all the problems."

"I see..." Lucien finally realized why the dream about the old witch was a bit weird, for example, the part when the old witch asked the mirror who was the most beautiful woman in the world.

Lucien asked subconsciously, "So, electric shock can improve the strength of my soul?"

Stennis put on a cold smile, "What do you think?"

"...Never mind," answered Lucien awkwardly. He had so many questions to ask, but finally, he chose the most bothering question in his mind, "Your Excellency, how can I tell the difference between dream and reality? How do I know if I'm still in a dream?"

Stennis was more than used to questions like this. He put on a vicious smile like the old witch and said, "Why is it so important?"

What is a dream? What is the reality? They are both your response to the outside stimuli. When my class reaches the highest level, maybe I will be able to create a dream of reality."

"So, that being said... if my certain response in my dream cannot be predicted or is mistakenly designed by the dream maker, that would be the time for me to know what is a dream and what is reality." Lucien murmured. At the same time, he thought to himself that he could also get out of a dream if his cognition world way surpassed the cognitive ability of the dream maker, and probably the dream maker's head would explode because of this. Lucien thus decided to try to think about something complicated later such as the wave-particle duality of light or quantum theories to testify if he was still in a dream.

Stennis was quite impressed with Lucien's answer, "Good. No wonder my friend appreciates your talent. In fact, in your dream, I was trying to avoid things related to arcana research. In the maze, I also purposefully chose the field of mathematical basis, but it turned out..."

The look on Stennis's face was a bit complicated.

"No wonder the old witch wasn't interested in arcana at all!" Lucien was suddenly enlightened, and then he laughed, "So you were playing the role of the old witch. I have to say that your playing was quite impressive."

Stennis said seriously, "Technically speaking, I'm only one part of the role of the old witch. The other part of the witch consisted of your own fear. By the way, I am also Adam, Carina, Alva, Ophelia, and Bullard."

Lucien was a bit embarrassed knowing that this dream was all about him, so he hurriedly asked another question, "So... bringing a letter to you isn't the true task. The task is an opportunity for me to be able to see you and get myself improved in your dream, is that right? Can I know who your friend is? I'd like to know who I should be grateful to..."

A friend of the Nightmare King... Lucien guessed that the person

must be a legendary archmage.

Stennis was a bit gloomy, "This was also a test. If you failed to bring the letter here, you would not be the person that my friend is looking for. As for my friend... he probably appreciates your talent and potential and wants you to be his student. You should have already experienced something strange like a test for you before."

That reminded Lucien of his strange experience in the castle, but it seemed to be true that the legendary archmage, Viken, also had something to do with the missing legendary archmages including Maskelyne. Lucien was confused, having no idea whether what happened in the castle was just a pure test or a combination of things, so he asked again, "May I know..."

"You'll know when you get back to the Congress." It seemed that Nightmare King was very reluctant to mention his friend's name, "The letter you were bringing is actually a special magic scroll. A fatal attack can activate the scroll and bring you back to a certain Demiplane. If you want to save some time getting back to the Congress, you can activate it on your own."

Lucien guessed that the special scroll was at least of ninth circle, and he wondered how valuable it was. Lucien knew that he would feel really regretful if he had somehow lost the scroll.

At the same time, he also stopped blaming the Congress of Magic, because, after all, they never meant to put him in mortal danger.

Then, Stennis waved his hand to Lucien and said, "You may leave now. I'm going back to the magic tower now."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Lucien stood up.

The power of Lucien's soul had surpassed the fifth circle, and his arcana knowledge was never a problem, but the only problem was that his knowledge in illusion and transformation spells was still insufficient. Lucien at least should make sure that his fundamental knowledge in all fields was solid. He was deeply impressed by Nightmare King's power, and that made him want to know more about the magic in other fields.

Stepping out of the cabin, the strong smell of alcohol in the campsite sneaked into Lucien's nose. Feeling relaxed after completing the task, he walked casually in a good mood. However, a question suddenly jumped into his mind:

As an ancient sorcerer, why did Nightmare King suffer a recoil when seeing the mathematical questions in Lucien's brain? If he totally had no idea of what those questions were, he could just let Lucien himself complete the dream.

...

In the cabin, Stennis, Nightmare King, did not leave immediately. Instead, he murmured to himself,

"Enclosed devil's place... High tower as a prison... These are the things that he fears the most. It seems that these are the representatives of this world. But why does he feel imprisoned in this world...

"Staying calm in danger... it's a very good quality. But when Ophelia died, he accelerated his pace to escape the tower. This reveals the fact that his mindset has been greatly changed probably because his friends or family members were once hurt or even died before.

"As for Adam... Adam should be the collective reflection of the male friends who have helped him before. Someone once sincerely helped him, and once also tried to make use of him. Carina represented his female friends. There were things ambiguous and romantic in the dream. And that means he's still not sure about his inner feelings, or he feels very worried about these things.

"After becoming a prisoner, he had the hope that the Congress would send legendary archmages to save him. So he is more or less mentally dependant on the powerful people who once helped him.

"The old witch was smart, vicious and crazy, representing the enemies he has encountered so far. The Church, the ancient sorcerers, the arcanists... but why was the representative a female?

"Furthermore, what does the electric shock stand for? Why did the old witch ask the mirror who was the most beautiful woman in the world?"

"He's definitely got the side that was decisive and coldhearted, as he was willing to lose an arm to bring himself a chance to escape. But no one actually died in the fight when he tried to escape, which means he's still got a soft side in his mind, and he valued friendship and help a lot.

"As for the underground remains... This is a secret in his mind. Maybe it is the representation of real remains somewhere. Also, his unique magic is pretty interesting, and his ways of removing the magic circles and spiritual imprint were also quite smart."

Opposite Stennis, there was a wood armchair. A figure sitting in the armchair slowly appeared. An elder man wearing a bright red robe had mixed white and black hair but still looked hale and hearty. His red eyes stared at Nightmare King vigorously as he said, "The progress that arcana researches have made way surpassed the achievements of the ancient magic empire. Stennis, get real. Don't let yourself go too far in the wrong direction."

Stennis remained silent for a while and said, "Give me some more arcana books, then. But I don't want the books related to what appeared in the boy's dream. They're... a bit too much for me."

Chapter 325: Decision Volume Five: Crimson Moon

The ocean wind from Storm Strait drove away the dryness and heat in Allyn. The fine drizzling rain was very refreshing.

Standing beside the window in his own study and looking at the bright flowers in the garden outside, Lucien was lost in his thoughts.

...

Because the power of his soul had been greatly developed, Lucien had to consolidate the remaining part of his foundation. Also, he was eager to know who was waiting for him in the Congress. Therefore, Lucien activated the precious magic scroll and returned to Allyn together with Leo.

Before he left, Lucien found Natasha and told her what had happened.

On the previous night, in a manor outside of Aalto, after carefully listening to Lucien's narrative, Natasha smiled and nodded, "It makes sense. You're talented and full of potential, so no matter how terrible the inner conflict in the Congress is, those sorcerers should never send you out for such a dangerous task. By the way, who's gonna be your teacher?"

Natasha believed that Lucien would not say no to that mysterious legendary archmage. Since the archmage had been observing Lucien for a while, he must have already talked to and convinced those other important sorcerers who also intended to have Lucien to be their student. Also, his way of testing Lucien was not cruel or vicious, instead, it was rather proper and considerate, which meant that the archmage knew Lucien quite well. And becoming the student of a legendary archmage was definitely an honor.

Lucien put on a slightly awkward smile and said, "I don't even know who he is. I hope that what he specializes in is also what I am

interested in."

Natasha was very happy for Lucien. She had a big smile on her face, "I can assure you that your teacher is not Hathaway. Her personality isn't like this. Don't worry, Lucien. Most legendary sorcerers in the Congress are not that horrible, as long as you don't have major conflicts with them. As a student, as long as you study hard, you would not be given a hard time. I believe in you, Lucien."

Natasha herself was also a student of a legendary knight—Bellia, known as God's Glory, the leader of Sword Brothers. So she knew quite a lot about it.

Then Natasha looked more serious, "You're going to be a legendary archmage's student, and you're also the winner of Holm Crown prize. I'm sure that you'll gather quite a lot of attention from the Church, including the cardinals and grand cardinals from those parishes. So... I'm afraid that I have to rush John's family to take actions now."

"You always know what is on my mind, Natasha." Lucien also looked more serious, "I didn't expect that something important like this would come to me so fast. I thought we still had time. You know how important this thing is to me, Natasha. Please, I owe it to you."

Natasha rubbed her chin slightly and smiled, "No worries. I'll take care of it. But you cannot stay in Aalto any longer. The Church can be crazy."

Then, they hugged each other to say goodbye. When she turned around and walked away, Lucien looked at her from behind with all kinds of emotions in his eyes. After finding Leo, who was waiting for him nearby, Lucien activated the precious magic scroll and went back to Allyn with Leo.

The hyperspace jump made Lucien's soul and brain feel extremely dizzy. He was not sure whether he was traveling at a very high speed or the space structure was being reorganized. Without the protection of the scroll, Lucien would have already been lost.

After reaching a demiplane where lightning and thunder were flashing and roaring in the air, Lucien started to reflect on how the magic scroll worked. However, his thinking was then interrupted by the second round of fast movement. The power of the magic scroll dragged Lucien and Leo shifting and jumping between the different dimensions until they arrived at a small hill near Allyn.

From the position of the silver moon and the stars, minus the time difference Lucien assumed, the space jump took them about half an hour—which was only about the time that a high tea in Holm would cost.

...

The window started to become a bit foggy, which was usually very rare to see in June. However, because of the special location of Allyn, Lucien was quite used to it.

He released a sigh when thinking of John and his family.

A while later, when his feeling of guilt slowly quieted down, something new started to bother him.

Lucien had finally decided to stop denying his feeling and lying to himself—he had confessed to himself that he admired Natasha. He had no idea when this affection started to accumulate, but he could feel it grow stronger and stronger especially after he had gone through those great dangers.

He wanted to take actions. Being practical as he always was, he started to analyze the current situation calmly and work on making a whole set of plans to win Natasha's heart.

Natasha was a knight believing in the God of Truth and Lucien was a sorcerer studying arcana, so there was the fundamental conflict between them. Fortunately, because of the love story between her mom and father, Lucien could still have a great chance to convince her if he was patient enough and could take it easy. However, the biggest problem was that Lucien could not give up studying arcana and move back to Aalto for Natasha, and it was also very unlikely to happen that Natasha would be willing to leave her father and

give up the entire duchy for Lucien.

Also, Lucien was not sure whether Natasha only liked women. If she still liked maleness, Lucien also wondered what kind of man Natasha was fond of and what he should do...

...

Lucien had so many thoughts in his mind. Having zero experience in romantic relationships, he realized that, in his mind, he had already started to deal with the difficulties that he assumed Natasha and he would encounter after getting married. And he had to admit that this was not easy.

At this time, someone was knocking at the door and that brought Lucien back to the reality.

"Yes, Leo?" Lucien knew that it was his new butler outside.

Leo opened the door and said to Lucien respectfully, "My lord, the Will of Elements wants to see you."

Lucien wondered if his teacher was going to finally show up. Calming himself down, he put on his black top hat and said, "Get me a coach, Leo."

After Leo left, Lucien slightly clenched his fists and made a temporary plan for himself: he would write one more letter to Natasha every month! Although he knew that winning Natasha's heart was rather hard, he would not easily give up. Right now, he should first work on improving his magic and arcana level.

...

Late at night, outside of the Inquisition of Violet, a fat figure approached the inquisition very carefully. However, the figure looked rather hesitant, as it tried to walk in the building but had failed a few times.

"Alisa, what are you doing here?!"

The cold voice startled the figure, Alisa, and she hurriedly turned

around.

It was Joel, who languished in the past few days.

Alisa shivered, but she still disputed, "I'm... I'm doing what Evans told us to do."

"But can you?!" Joel asked sternly in a low voice.

Alisa raised her voice pitch and answered in pain, "What else can I do? Waiting for the day to come when John and Iven are tied to the gallows?! There's nothing much to regret if we die! But... but they're still young... They should have a bright future!"

"It's not gonna happen... Don't scare yourself." Joel felt Alisa's pain, so he hugged her and gently patted on her back, "John's a knight, serving the Violet Family. The punishment of being deceived by a sorcerer isn't that horrible. The inquisition would carefully investigate it. They won't be put onto the gallows..."

Alisa hurriedly shook her head, "It's not true. I heard it from the several noble ladies earlier tonight that some knights ended up rather miserably because they failed to draw a clear line between themselves and the sorcerers, and then the inquisition found it out. Say... the family of Thistle in the War of Dawn. I know John can't do it. So... as his mother, I will do this for him. I'm willing to bear all the pain and sufferings."

Joel said to Alisa angrily but also helplessly, "Are you out of your mind, Alisa?"

"It's enough, mom, dad."

Joel and Alisa heard the familiar voice. It was John, followed by his younger brother, Iven.

He looked the same, but his blond hair looked a bit messy.

"Iven, you take care of mom and dad. I'll do the rest of it, as a knight." John slightly sighed and then walked toward the Inquisition in firm strides.

"John!" Alisa called his name from behind.

John did not stop. He slightly closed his eyes and murmured, "To make sure they are safe... To make sure you won't be threatened..."

...

The Will of Elements, Allyn branch.

Lucien met Gaston again and was about to return the monocle to him.

"Just keep it, as your reward for the mission." Gaston was being very generous. As long as Lucien could become the student of the legendary archmage, the archmage's connection to the Will of Elements would definitely get reinforced.

Lucien nodded and put the monocle back. Then he asked out of curiosity, "Isn't Mr. Raventi here today?"

"He isn't in a very good mood recently," answered Gaston, with a strange smile on his face. "Follow me. You know why you're here today, right?"

Lucien nodded, and then he followed Gaston into a small meeting room behind his office.

In the meeting room, there were three men and two women. One of the female sorcerers looked a bit like Natasha, but she seemed rather cold. Next to her sat a short elder man with red eyes. And a little farther away from them sat Morris, Florencia, and Thompson.

Lucien guessed that the female sorcerer who looked rather cold should be Hathaway. As for the short elder man sitting beside her... Wait! Wasn't he the creepy old guy in the library?

Lucien had a not very good foreboding.

The short elder man said to him with a meaningful smile on his face, "Lucien, I think you could have impressed me better."

Chapter 326: No Need for the Ceremony

Chapter 326: No Need for the Ceremony

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Hearing the short elder man's words, Lucien thought to himself that his future teacher was quite cheap with giving compliments.

However, Lucien still responded very politely, "Yes, sir, I still have a lot to learn and to improve." Lucien decided to show his respect to this legendary archmage who was qualified to sit beside Hathaway.

Gaston smiled and introduced, "Evans, this is Her Excellency, Hathaway, a grand arcanist."

"Arcana's above, Your Excellency's glory has lit up the whole world of elements." Lucien put his left hand on his chest and his right hand on his forehead, using the most formal manner to greet Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, the member of the royal family of Holm who was a relative to Natasha although she was probably several hundred years elder than Natasha. There was a unique, short greeting piece for each legendary archmage according to the Congress's tradition.

When Lucien greeted Hathaway, he felt a bit nervous, not because she was an archmage, but because she was a senior member of Natasha's family.

Hathaway did not have much expression on her face. She lightly nodded, "On the path of arcana to the truth, one can never stop making progress."

Then Gaston turned to the short elder man wearing the bright-red robe, and there was a bit of fear on his face that Gaston himself did not even notice. He was worrying that he might say something wrong and thus piss the legendary archmage off.

"Evans, this is... His Excellency Fernando Brastar, a grand arcanist."

After weighing his words, Gaston decided to use the simplest way to make the introduction.

The Lord of Storm? This little old man was the Lord of Storm? Lucien was very surprised. According to the rumors that he had heard about the Lord of Storm, Lucien thought this grand arcanist should be a serious and fusty scholar with a very bad temper. However, the little old man sitting in front of him looked quite pleasant and easygoing, and one could still tell the good-looking features on his face when he was young. When Lucien first talked to him, this little old man's humor even left Lucien with a deep impression.

Anyway, Lucien still carefully greeted the Lord of Storm with great respect, "Arcana's above, Your Excellency, you're storm, lightning, and the master of the sky."

Lucien was very cautious to make sure that every single word that he said was correct.

"You don't have to be afraid of me. I only argue with people when it comes to arcana or magic. Say, when Oliver was saying something about paintings and dramas, I never said a word." Fernando provided an explanation for himself to make Lucien feel more relaxed.

However, other people did not think so. Florencia mouthed the words to Lucien, "That is because he knows nothing about paintings and dramas."

Before Gaston made further introductions, Fernando said to him directly, "Lucien, when Thompson read your first paper, he recommended your paper to me, and I was thus inspired. I was interested in you so I went to the library to meet you there in person. It turned out that you were a pretty interesting young man, and I like people who are not boring. Your following two papers were also not bad, which was quite impressive considering your age. You know, some papers from the Highest Council members even have made some ridiculous mistakes!"

Although Fernando was giving him a pretty good comment, the

tone and the way that Fernando talked to him made Lucien feel a bit strange. Also, it seemed that Fernando totally did not care about the fact that there was a member of the Highest Council present.

“How you handled things in the castle and how you carried out the task bringing the letter to the Dark Mountain Range have revealed some of your qualities that the Congress appreciates. I hope that you can stick to them.” Fernando continued, seriously, “Lucien, I think your talent goes beyond the school of Element and Astrology, and you should enter a way broader domain. So, I’d like to have you as my student and I’ll teach you arcana and magic. What do you think?”

According to what Lucien knew, although the Lord of Storm was a grand arcanist mainly specialized in the school of Thermodynamics, he was also good at the school of Element, Electromagnetism, Force Field, Illusion, and Light-darkness. Among all the grand arcanists, Fernando was definitely one of the most energetic ones. He had won the highest award in four different fields: Ice & Snow Medal, Silver Moon Medal, Holm Crown Prize, and Sorcerer Laurel.

Therefore, a second later, Lucien nodded firmly, “It would be my great pleasure to be your student.”

“Good. You’re my student now,” answered Fernando seriously.

“What?” Lucien, Gaston, Morris, and Florencia were all very surprised. Only Hathaway and Thompson still looked the same calm.

Fernando grinned, “Yes?”

That was it? Lucien felt it so unreal that all of a sudden he had become the student of a legendary archmage. Gaston, Morris, and Florencia were also very surprised because, according to the tradition of the ancient magic empire and the Congress, taking a student was a very important and solemn thing, and a complicated and very formal ceremony was always required.

They knew that Fernando was always in a rush and he hated complex procedures a lot, but they did not expect that he would

just skip the entire ceremony!

Seeing that Lucien looked confused, Fernando slightly frowned, "This is between you and me. Since we have both agreed on it, why do we need those troublesome procedures?"

"No, we don't." Lucien also disliked the tedious ceremonies, so he answered directly. He believed that the teacher and student relationship did not have to rely on all the external forms.

Gaston now felt that Fernando had really found the right student.

Fernando grinned, "Very good. Today my students will gather together to exchange their findings in arcana and magic. You should join them later as well. It is good for you to know more about the latest research focuses so you can find your own research interest. I still have to talk to Hathaway. You and Thompson can wait for me outside."

When Lucien left the room with Thompson, the latter smiled to the former and said, "Mr. Fernando rarely speaks highly of someone. The comment Mr. Fernando just made on you was already very good."

Lucien put on an uneasy smile. He still had to take some time to get used to the fact that he had become a student of a legendary archmage.

Noticing the awkward smile on Lucien's face, Florencia smiled, "Mr. Fernando is strict with his students, but we all know that he takes good care of them. If it was someone else who wanted to be your teacher, Her Excellency Hathaway might not show her approval. In fact, at the very beginning, Hathaway preferred Mr. Raventi to be your teacher."

"Mr. Raventi?" "That would not be a bad choice either", Lucien thought to himself.

Gaston still had the same strange expression on his face, "I heard that Mr. Raventi found the Lord of Storm and talked to him. And they had a big argument. When Mr. Raventi left the office, his face

was completely pale. Now every time when someone mentions this, Mr. Raventi would still be quite pissed.”

...

Aalto, in the Inquisition.

Waldorf, the Executor, grabbed the report in his hand and growled in great anger, “Lucien Evans... Lucien Evans is a bloody sorcerer! He fooled the Church and the whole city playing a fake death! And we were acting like a bunch of idiots! We must catch him and put him onto the gallows!”

“Has it been verified?” Vila Amelton, the red-robed cardinal, asked calmly with her eyes half closed.

The Censor’s deep voice contained great fury, “John reported this to us. And we have questioned the people involved using divine power. We’ve confirmed that Lucien Evans is still alive. What happened in the villa was a trap set up by Lucien Evans and Professor. Together they managed to send away the sorcerers to the Congress of Magic, killed the traitor, and also framed Clown up, because Clown had found Lucien Evans suspicious.”

“Is Natasha involved in this? Was she deceived? Or did she help Lucien Evans?” Amelton opened her eyes. And the light in her eyes was terrifyingly cold.

The Censor shook his head, “According to the depositions, Her Highness did not know the truth at that time. Also, when Waldorf arrived, she stopped chasing after Clown, but instead, she agreed to let the night watchers chase him down. If she was part of this, the princess would try her very best to kill Clown directly, leaving no chance for us. After all, it was possible that the night watchers would find Clown and send him back to the Church to cure him. Therefore, most possibly, Lucien Evans lied to the princess. But later, according to what Lucien Evans told John’s family, he tried to seek for her forgiveness. So the princess might have already known the truth.”

“Good,” said Amelton briefly. “Compared to Professor, Lucien Evans

was still too young. He wanted to bring the whole family to Holm, and the family turned him in.”

The Executor said in resentment, “We shall tell the people the truth! We shall break his undeserved glory into pieces and tear down his sinful, fake tomb. Everyone in Aalto should hate and despise him!”

“Then what?” responded Amelton coldly. “Telling everyone that the Church is completely idiot? We told the public that Ode to Joy was the glorious hymn to the Lord, but are we going to tell them that it’s actually a piece of work from the demon? What a joke... We can never let this happen.”

“So...” asked the Arbiter thoughtfully.

“The great musician is dead. The vicious sorcerer disguised himself as the great musician and deceived everyone. They are two different people,” said Amelton.

Then she added, “Tell the parish in Holm what Lucien did. Let them keep a close eye on him. Also, send a few night watchers there. The night watchers shall be glad to have the chance to see their ‘old friend’ again.”

Chapter 327: Lucien's Classmates

On the thirty-third floor of the Congress of Magic, in a not very big room, the large windows let in the sunlight, covering all the desks, chairs and shelves with a thin layer of golden halo. The place looked rather clean and quiet.

Fernando received a letter from one of his old friends after bringing Lucien and Thompson back here. So, he entered a small separate room to carefully read the letter, leaving Lucien and Thompson outside waiting for the arrival of their other classmates.

"Mr. Thompson, thank you for allowing me to work in Douglas Magic School. It really helped me a lot when I first arrived in Allyn." There were only the two of them in the lecture room. To be friendly and polite, Lucien found a reason to talk to Thompson.

Thompson slightly lifted his gold-rimmed spectacles and smiled, "You're welcome. Actually, it was your own papers that helped you with getting that job. I can say that most arcanists could see the inspiration and value in your papers."

"But Mr. Thompson, you also recommended my paper to our teacher." Lucien looked around the lecture room which was like a study but also like a small meeting room and asked a bit confusedly, "I thought our teacher would bring us to his demiplane magic tower for the gathering."

Thompson smiled, "According to the regulation of the Highest Council, at any time, there must be at least one grand arcanist staying in Allyn. So the grand arcanists have agreed that they would take turns every five years. By the way, we're both the students of the Lord of Storm, so just call me Thompson. Also, your arcana level should have reached level five, and mine is only level six."

Thompson took a glance at the badges that Lucien was wearing on his left chest. Lucien had not had the time to upgrade his badges, so they remained at level four and the third circle.

"It's probably still gonna take three or four months for my arcana

level to reach level five." Lucien answered uncertainly. When he left Allyn, he only had eight hundred and fifty arcana credits. He was away from Allyn for the mission for about a year and a month. Usually, Lucien could get ten credits from his papers and the magic spells he invented every month, therefore, Lucien guessed that he had not become a level five arcanist yet.

Thompson shook his head and sat down on a random chair, "You know better than me how great influence the Periodic Table of Elements has on the researches in the field of Element. This year is the year of elements. Many papers developed in this year are about valence state analysis, and the Periodic Table of Elements is the foundation of these researchers. So, based on the number of papers in the field of Elements I have read, I believe your credits should have gone over a thousand several months ago. However, many arcanists are certainly jealous, so they applied to the commission that there should be a time limit for those fundamental findings such as your Periodic Table to earn points."

Thompson stopped here after triggering Lucien's curiosity. Thompson specialized in the school of Elements and Thermodynamics and was an expert in casting spells using explosion, flame, and high-temperature. However, he was not a member of any organizations. Like the Lord of Storm, Thompson was a pure supporter of the Congress. Thompson appreciated Lucien's talent in the school of Element and he would love to be Lucien's friend.

"So... What did the commission say?" Lucien asked as Thompson hoped. Lucien also felt happy for K, as he knew that K was right now delving into the field of valence state analysis with his teacher, Larry.

Thompson smiled, "There's no way that the commission would say yes. Although there are a lot of papers citing your findings right now, after about two years, most of the following papers will not directly use your paper as part of the reference but other later researches based on the Periodic Table of Elements. So your credits gained from it will drop significantly, but it'll also become more stable."

"That makes sense." Lucien nodded. Actually, Lucien had a plan for this. He was going to modify the Periodic Table of Elements from time to time, so his gaining of the credits could be more sustainable. Due to the limited conditions, Lucien left out some details when he first published the table, but now things were different.

Then Lucien and Thompson started to talk about valence state analysis.

A while later, someone knocked at the door and then a young man walked in. His face was very thin, making his cheeks look rather protruding. His eyes were as blue as the summer sky, clear but looked a bit sad. In Lucien's eyes, he was more like a poet than a sorcerer. However, the badges in front of his chest revealed his power: there were seven silver stars on his arcana badge and seven black rings on the magic badge. Also, he was wearing the badge from Arcana Review Board, on which there was a hand holding a quill, as well as another badge drawn with lots of ice-crystal patterns.

"Lucien, this is Cole, another student of the Lord of Storm. Cole is a member of Arcana Review Board and an expert in studying molecule movement in Thermodynamics. Right now, he is working on further investigating in the second law of Thermodynamics using Probability and Statistics," introduced Thompson.

The second law of Thermodynamics was first put forward by Fernando and some other experts in order to refute a hypothesis developed years ago. When Phlogiston Theory was abandoned, more and more sorcerers started to realize the connection between heat and energy. They also came to understand that when the temperature of an object dropped, energy would be released, thus many believed that they could use the heat from the endless ocean water to run the magic circles forever, but they kept failing.

Then Thompson turned to Cole, "This is our new classmate, Lucien Evans, the winner of Holm Crown prize."

Cole put on a friendly smile, "Hi, Evans." He was not very talkative. After greeting Lucien briefly, Cole sat down in the corner and stayed in his own world, as if he was the only one in the lecture

room.

Later, another two seventh-circle sorcerers arrived. The female sorcerer was Ashikana, and the male named Lacie Carter. They both looked not too young and also not too old. When it came to their achievement in magic and arcana, they fell behind Cole.

When Lucien was about to talk to them, someone knocked at the door eagerly in a rude manner. Lucien's classmates all smiled, and then Thompson stood up and opened the door.

It was a dragon, with a beautiful layer of scales like crystal.

It was Lucien's first time seeing a dragon this close. He could not hide his curiosity.

The dragon also took a glance at Lucien curiously and said to him in a child-like voice, "I know you. You're the sorcerer with that good-looking ring!"

Then the dragon stared at the ring, Element, on Lucien's right hand, and it could not move its eyes away. He said to Lucien, "Can I have it? I can sell myself to you for a hundred years!"

"Alferris, that's enough," Thompson said to the dragon and then turned to Lucien, "He has sold himself, and he can't do this again."

Lucien was a bit startled by the dragon's words. Hearing what Thompson said, he was a bit relieved. But why was there a dragon here?

Alferris unwillingly looked away. After covering itself with a layer of light, the size of the dragon shrank and it walked into the lecture room like a big hound.

"Alferris is a crystal dragon. When our teacher found him fifty years ago, Alferris was still in his eggshell. He has been studying magic and arcana after the Lord of Storm with us, and he has revealed his outstanding talent in arcana. Due to a mistake in an experiment years ago, Alferris was cursed, so he cannot grow bigger or transform his look in about a hundred years." Thompson explained to Lucien.

Therefore, the dragon was both Fernando's pet and his student.

"So, Alferris, what have you been working on recently?" Seeing that the dragon was still peeking at the ring Lucien was wearing, Lacie, the blond and green-eyed sorcerer, smiled and asked.

"Uh? Recently?" Alferris looked rather casual, "I've been sleeping. Not doing much recently."

Thompson said to Lacie directly with a big smile on his face, "Alferris sold himself for money, and he is being studied by someone else recently."

Alferris' appearance warmed up the lecture room. Soon, Fernando walked out of the separate room.

Fernando sat down on a random chair and said to his students seriously, "As usual, we hold a meeting like this every month to share our research progress and discuss the problems we encounter. Hopefully, we can all be inspired."

This was an explanation made for Lucien, the new student. And then Fernando continued, "I just got a letter from one of my old friends. I think I shall read part of the letter to you, so you can know how other arcanists understand and perceive the development of magic and arcana. This letter is from Viscount Lauren, an archmage, member of Arcana Review Board, the winner of Silver Moon Medal and Ice & Snow Medal."

Viscount Lauren was a nobleman from the Kingdom of Brianna, and he was right now also living in Brianna.

Then, Fernando started to read the important part of the letter, "... Along with the establishment and improvement of Electromagnetic System Theory put forward by Mr. Edwyn Brook, the overall system of arcana has gradually come to shape. The system represents a mature, advanced and wonderful arcana world in which Mr. Derrick Douglas' theory serves as the sun while Mr. Edwyn Brook's theory as the silver moon. Everything found in this world is connected by those strict and stunning laws. Although we are still on our way of exploration, and although we are still seeking for more laws to

better explain the connections, the two systems I mentioned above shall be the only two fundamentals supporting to the world. Our further findings shall all belong to the two major systems."

Chapter 328: Direction

Chapter 328: Direction

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

When Fernando spoke the common tongue, he had this a sharp and creepy Brianne accent—an accent that was looked down upon by most people in the Kingdom of Holm, who regarded Brianne accent as the tongue from the countryside folk. At the same time, in Holm, most people who had Rentato accent were proud of their way of speaking and regarded themselves as the noble and elegant representatives due to complicated historical reasons.

Of course, in front of the grand arcanist, no one dared to mock the way he read the letter. The students all listened to his reading very carefully.

Fernando continued, “...Perhaps you may think my words leave no space for any possibilities, but this is what I believe: No matter what we are talking about—Transformation, Illusion, Elements or Summoning—they shall all be included in this fundamental system, and the finding of the Periodic Table of Elements has further confirmed my belief: Alchemy is in fact a kind of electromagnetic response. For example, when an object is heated up, the electromagnetic waves radiating from it can reveal different colors, and this can only be properly explained by the natures of the atoms, the most fundamental, non-further-dividable units of everything in this world. My assumption is that due to the quantities and masses of different atoms, the electromagnetic waves that they release also vary. I wonder why and how these atoms act like this, but I can assure you that this is not the arrangement from the God of Truth. Although so far there are no solid experiments that can yet confirm my guess, I’d like to share with you my thoughts, my friend. Again, here I repeat my point: although we’re still facing problems with regards to the spread medium for light and the existence of the stars, and despite the fact that there are schools of magic that still cannot be properly included in the comprehensive system, no one can deny the fact that we have entered a world in which arcana

system has been established overall. Our future work shall be focusing our effort on further modifying, solidifying and improving the system and seeking for its wider application in magic.”

Lucien carefully listened to the letter, and he sincerely felt the great passion, pride, and confidence inside of the archmage’s heart. Even a calm and disengaged person like Cole felt encouraged and excited.

Fernando read the last part of the letter, “I am glad that we live in such a wonderful era, being able to devote ourselves into the world of arcana and magic. Our vision becomes possible because of the establishment of calculus, making us able to know and calculate the sequential world. We can see the beauty of balance and symmetry in the influential formulas put forward by Mr. Douglas, Mr. Brook, and many other great pioneers. In my eyes, the formulas are much more beautiful compared to poetries, music pieces, paintings or sculptures.”

Lucien would never arrogantly regard himself as an omniscient of this world, despite the fact that he had a whole library with him from the other world. Lucien knew that he had to do many experiments to verify his knowledge in practice to see whether his knowledge was part of the world’s truth.

“So... any ideas?” Fernando folded the letter and then asked.

Thompson was the eldest one among all the students of Fernando who were still alive, so he answered first, “Mr. Lauren’s opinion is shared by many other arcanists. Like what he said in the letter, although we are still working on proving the existence of the stars, we have already used Mr. Douglas’ theory and created powerful magic spells. Perhaps we’re still some distance away from the essence of the world, and maybe we haven’t been able to combine the two fundamental systems and the nature of atoms together perfectly, but, yes, the world of arcana has been established.”

Thompson was being euphemistic. As an arcanist specializing in the school of Element, he noticed that Lauren’s letter had ignored the importance of atoms. Thompson believed that if the two systems were the sun and the silver moon in the world of arcana, atoms should be the wide stretch of land!

At the same time, Thompson understood that this was just an informal letter between two friends, and he knew that Lauren was a firm believer of Energy Essentialism, who did not recognize the existence of material or spirit but saw energy as the essence of everything. Believers of Energy Essentialism argued that everything in this world ranging from atoms to human body all consisted of energies in different forms showing different features including showing gravity, releasing electromagnetic waves, etc, which was the only explanation in these arcanists' eyes to why there were transformation spells, why catalysts could be used in alchemy experiments, and why spiritual power could interfere with reality and help to cast spells. Lucien's Periodic Table of Elements, as they believed, further supported their point of view.

"That's true. Even the overthrow of Life Force Theory is only part of the progress of the grand world of arcana," said Ashikana, whose blood came partly from the elves. When talking about arcana, her eyes were sparkling out of excitement, "My friend Isabella and her student Rachel have found out that several substances are secreted when people are influenced by a certain illusionary spell. They thus believe that people's illusions come from these substances."

"Wow, their work sounds pretty cool!" Alferris, who had shrunk its size, cheered, "This finding has included some illusionary spells into the world of arcana, and thus Mr. Lauren's letter is supported. The finding deserves Sorcerer Laurel! I wish I could discover something! I want the beautiful shiny crown!"

Alferris's tail swayed from one side to the other, hoping that the finding belonged to itself. But it was too late. The fact that Ashikana directly shared the finding with them showed that Isabella and Rachel's paper should have already passed the review of the board.

Lucien realized that some arcanists had already found out the existence and influence of hormone, so he decided to disclose the two versions of his Charm Person spell before they lost their value. Although a big part of the school of Illusion was still outside of the system of arcana, this finding had contributed to the progress of covering the three schools—Transformation, Summoning, and Illusion—within the arcana system. In the past, the arcana system had always failed to explain how the three schools properly

worked.

Cole's face flushed slightly, "Although I don't agree on Energy Essentialism, I can't deny what's been said in the letter."

Before the next student, Lacie Carter, made his comment, Fernando growled angrily, "Stupid! Stupid! This letter is full of ridiculous errors! Are you all out of your mind? You do not know how to find the historical documents from the ancient magic empire?! At that time, those ancient sorcerers had no idea what gravity, electromagnetic induction, and electromagnetic wave were but they still managed to create the spells using the powers! Look at yourself! How arrogant and blind you are! We are making progress just because the system of arcana is a bit closer to the truth of the world! How dare you agree with Lauren on his nonsensical pompous words?! How dare you say that an advanced world of arcana has been established when there are still so many disputes and questions on what the form of spiritual power is? There are lots, lots of arcanists who do not see the current main belief as being correct, even including Mr. Douglas! He shall never be convinced until the spread medium of light is discovered! He's still looking for evidence to overthrow what we think we've known! What if one day he finds it? Is half of the arcana world gonna collapse? What if it is proved that the stars, in fact, don't exist, but are just the illusionary representatives of divine power? What if gravity is proved to be one kind of divine power? Is the whole world of arcana going to collapse like that? The closer we're to the truth, the harder we shall remember—we shall always be humble and persistent, or we'd be deceived by errors!"

Facing Fernando's growling, all the students flinched, including Cole.

Fernando put away the letter and said to his students calmly, as if he had never shouted to them just now, "Currently, I'm working on a few projects, such as the one with Hathaway investigating the reasons behind the distribution of the elements, and the other one is for creating a legendary spell of the school of Thermodynamics. But because I've finally worked out a spell for Thermodynamics experiments, I can get the accurate statistics for the thermal radiation. So I am going to first work on figuring out the formula

for thermal radiation. So many spells in the school of Thermodynamics can become simpler.”

Then he also mentioned some difficulties that he was currently facing.

Finishing his words introducing the projects, Fernando turned to Lucien, “You’re my new student. If you don’t have any urgent, personal research interests so far, you can be my assistant in one of the projects.”

“I’d like to work on the experiment on studying thermal radiation,” Lucien hurriedly answered. He had been having a difficult time collecting related data of the researches in the school of Thermodynamics, which could be an important part for him to understand the difference between this world and the one he came from. Being able to study Thermodynamics was thus a major reason for Lucien to be Fernando’s student.

Fernando nodded but did not make any comments. Instead, he turned to other students and said, “Now... Let’s talk about what project each of us is working on right now and the obstacles that we’ve encountered recently. You first, Ashikana.”

Ashikana sat to the left side of Fernando, right beside Lucien.

“I’ve been studying the method to approach absolute zero, making more senior-rank snow and ice spells more powerful. Unfortunately, making further progress is quite difficult. I’m still about twenty celsius degrees from absolute zero,” Ashikana said to the rest of the class, and then she shared more details of her experiment with the class.

Lucien learned quite a lot from Ashikana’s sharing, which expanded his knowledge in ice and snow spells greatly. After that, all the students’ eyes looked at Lucien, in which there was great curiosity toward this young talent in the school of Element.

“I’m trying to reach the fifth circle. Except for being the teacher’s assistant, for now, I’m not able to work on other projects,” said Lucien honestly. “But some of my messy thoughts have become

more organized and clear after I heard Mr. Lauren's and Ms. Akashina's sharing. These thoughts came from my study on the spell, Mechanized Mind, my understanding of Illusionary and Necromantic spells, as well as Nightmare King's analysis of dream. I think there are weak but special electromagnetic waves in human beings' brain that affect people's emotions, feelings and behaviors. One's soul can also be influenced."

Akashina was shocked, "Evans, do you know what are you talking about?"

What Lucien Evans just said plus Isabella's research outcome would be able to explain a large part of the school of Illusion using the system of arcana!

Chapter 329: Fernando's Questions

All the sorcerers present were at least of senior-rank, although Lucien's description remained rather blurry, they knew immediately how important and meaningful his finding was.

Both Thompson and Lacie Carter, for a moment, felt the situation was a little like a dream. This was Lucien's first time attending their gathering, and he shocked them already with his findings in the field of Illusion and Electromagnetics. Lucien was a genius, they knew that, but wasn't it a bit too much? In their memory, only a few grand arcanists once had similar experiences. However, Illusion and Electromagnetics were not the fields Lucien specialized in!

"After Lauren has accepted Energy Essentialism, he once thought of the possibility that human beings' thinking was actually an outcome of a dual effect of electric current and magnetic field. But his researches are everywhere, and he hasn't been able to focus on one direction when being busy with preaching to people that the problems in Energy Essentialism, in fact, are not true. If he had stuck to his Brain-Electromagnetic Field Theory, he should have accomplished something big already," commented the Lord of Storm. Obviously, his words were quite sarcastic. After all, his friend, Lauren, just missed the opportunity of further improving the system of arcana.

It was ridiculous that Lauren stuck to Energy Essentialism when the theory itself still had so many problems that could not be explained.

Then, Fernando looked at Lucien and said, "Give us more details on your finding. We can make a bold assumption, but at the same time, careful verification is always the key part."

When it came to arcana, Fernando had zero sense of humor. Unlike Lucien's first impression on him in the library—a creepy little old man in the bright red magic robe—right now, the Lord of Storm looked rather serious and calm, and the pace of his speaking was very moderate. Fernando did not get all excited like the students when hearing that there were probably special brain waves in

human being's brain.

In such a gathering held by Fernando, Lucien had no worries. None of the other students would try to steal his research outcome. Also, Lucien did not worry at all that his teacher, Fernando, the Lord of Storm, would take it away from him, as Fernando was way more keen on pursuing the ultimate truth of this world instead of the reputation like soap bubbles.

"By chance, I got part of the Book of Necromancy. From a part of the structure of the spell Charm Person, I learned that it works partially on human being's soul. However, I wondered how the other part works. After a long time studying, and again, by chance, I compared the structure of Charm Person to that of Mechanized Mind, and I found some similarities between them. Then I worked on improving the spell, Charm Person, and I succeeded."

Lucien introduced with confidence. In fact, he changed the order of how he got the finding. Bringing the knowledge from his world with him, Lucien could find the similarities in the two spells because he had been already aware of the truth and thus he had the accurate theoretical guidance first. However, in his words, he explained the process by inverting the order and following the common methodology of doing arcana research, which was very acceptable to the rest of the arcanists present.

"Like I said, 'by chance' is a large part of the reason why I've found the direction, so I must say I'm very lucky. But at that time, although I've created a new spell that works based on my assumption, I was not able to understand the meaning behind my finding, thus I've been working on studying the spell for a long time, until one day I came to know Electromagnetic Wave Theory..."

Fernando slightly nodded without making any corrections, which was rare, and he let Lucien continue to speak. Lucien was not the only one - in fact, many arcanists were lucky enough and they had also created new spells by chance, but most of them failed to dig into the true reasons underneath the spells, and thus they missed lots of valuable findings.

"I was in a total mess. I found the existence of the very weak electric current in the human body, and I also spotted the special waves sent out by a human brain. I did have clues but always failed to connect them together. Then, the dream from Nightmare King and his perception of dream inspired me. In today's meeting, the words from Mr. Lauren that human body, in fact, consists of energy and electromagnetic waves is the evidence that touched me, and the research outcome from Ms. Isabella has shocked me. I finally realized what is behind the new spell that I created. When encountering different situations, a human brain can produce different special waves, stimulating body to produce the special alchemical substance found by Ms. Isabella, thus emotions and feelings are brought out," said Lucien. He said a lot of things, and he did it in an illogical way to show the fact that he was totally unprepared.

Fernando nodded seriously, "So you've found the electric current in the human body and the special electromagnetic waves. Anything about the magnetic field of the human brain?"

"Nothing yet. Maybe the requirements for finding it are too high, and the interference in my experiment environment was too strong." Lucien shook his head.

"I see. Then how many kinds of the special electromagnetic waves did you find? What are their corresponding functions?"

"There are several... By adjusting their intensity, it is obvious that..." Lucien briefly introduced what kind of emotion and illusion could be brought up by each kind of waves.

Looking rather serious, Fernando asked Lucien many questions. Lucien gradually felt more and more nervous and started to stammer.

Finally, Fernando made his comment, "There are so many kinds of feelings and emotions owned by human beings. It is hard for the several brain waves that you mentioned to direct all of them. You still have a long way to go on this. But you should still develop a paper on this as soon as possible, so more people can join the discussion and exploration. If you don't mind, why not show us the

two versions of your Charm Person?"

"Try it on me!!" The dragon Alferris jumped up. It was a big fan of Illusion magic that worked on one's mind and spirit.

Thompson released a sigh and said to it, "Alferris, we're talking about Charm 'Person', not a dragon..."

"Ohh... That's right..." Alferris looked at them in an innocent manner, with his tail swinging back and forth.

After Lucien cast the two versions of Charm Person, Fernando slightly nodded and said, "Your practice has surpassed the progress of your theory. Using the improved spell, your theory shall be more acceptable. Many sorcerers who are good at Illusionary spells are rather conservative. Although they accept arcana, many of them are not willing to let arcana explain Illusionary spells since they regard themselves as 'nobler' than mages from other schools. But they do have their reasons. Those sorcerers enjoy the high social status and are very powerful, and they have lots of students. They control the direction of the development of the school of Illusion."

Lucien nodded seriously. He knew that the growth of any advanced theories would be challenged, which was always the same in both worlds.

After the examination of a series of questions from Fernando, Ashikana stopped looking at Lucien like a monster. She smiled and said, "Evans, you can probably share the Laurel with Isabella, as long as those fuddy-duddies from the Family of Sorcerer can accept your idea."

"My theory is far from being fully developed since it still has many problems. It's gonna be very difficult for me to win the Laurel. Ms. Isabella is very well prepared, and I'm sure she's got enough support and evidence," said Lucien honestly.

When hearing the word, Laurel, Alferris suddenly turned around and stared at Lucien with its big, amber-colored eyes. Then it reached out its two front claws and laid them on Lucien's shoulder. At the same time, Alferris licked Lucien's right hand with its red

tongue in a very intimate manner. Lucien directly jumped back and activated the Absorbing Wall, feeling startled.

Alferris continued to lick the magic wall, and the wall was shaking under the dragon's strength.

"Add my name on your paper after you, sir... May I?" Alferris swung its tail covered with crystal scales and said very sincerely.

Lucien wondered if Alferris was, in fact, a puppy. Fernando was definitely a bit out of his mind like other arcanists said. He had trained his dragon like a dog. However, it seemed that Alferris also enjoyed it.

Fernando made a fake cough and said, "Alferris, go back to your seat. Cole, it's your turn now."

Alferris withdrew its claws and tongue reluctantly and hurriedly added, "I'm really good at mind, spirit, and soul spells. I'm of senior-rank, and I can fight physically as well. I am fine with you dressing me in whatever way you like. I can play with your students or kids. I can write papers and do math for you, also experiments! I can help you send letters and flowers to ladies..."

Cole waited until Alferris finished his wordy self-promotion. Before he started to share, he first said to Lucien, "Evans, Mr. Lauren's words in the letter about the fact that human body consists of energy is not rigorous, since there's zero evidence. Even though the human brain can produce electromagnetic waves, it doesn't mean that Energy Essentialism is accurate. Human brain is complicated. You can't easily believe in Energy Essentialism."

"I won't. I believe in evidence," Lucien responded.

Cole slightly nodded and started to share his research on investigating the second law of Thermodynamics using Probability and Statistics. Also, he said that he had been spending much time arguing with people who believed in Energy Essentialism. Cole himself was a loyal supporter of Atom Foundation Theory. He looked a bit depressed when mentioning this part.

"Put aside the argument first, Cole. Focus on your research," Fernando commented very briefly but did not give Cole any harsh words or questions.

"You're right, sir." Cole was relieved that his teacher did not give him a hard time and thus he looked a bit more cheerful.

Later, Thompson shared with the class the difficulties that he was encountering now with his study regarding high temperature, while Alferris shared how it felt as a research subject.

"Lucien, so you come here every morning to help me with the experiment on thermal radiation. You can spend time in the afternoon trying to reach the fifth circle," Fernando said at the end of the meeting.

...

When leaving the thirty-third floor of the magic tower, Alferris waved its front paw to say goodbye to Lucien. It had forgotten what it had promised Ashikana. So, Ashikana dragged it to the lab.

Lucien went back home directly. He was going to update his badges when he submitted the new paper.

As soon as he came back, Lucien saw Leo walking toward him.

"Master, Mr. Arthur Doyle is waiting for you in the living room. It seems that you've been invited by the prince," said Leo.

Chapter 330: Gratefulness

Chapter 330: Gratefulness

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

After a year, Arthur now looked even fatter. His belly was so big that it almost burst out of the front of his vest. He was wearing a beret of the same color as his vest, and he behaved in a rather casual and comfortable manner in front of Lucien.

In Holm, no matter if it was hot or cold, dressing formally was always important for these gentlemen. They either wore suits or tuxedos, and sometimes the hunter's outfit. It was impossible to tell the seasons from what they wore.

However, the magic robes that Lucien and other sorcerers wore were very different. These robes could automatically adjust the temperature and humidity inside to make the wearers feel rather comfortable. Lucien thus wondered if these gentlemen would have a heat stroke in the south in Gusta Empire or Brianne.

"Welcome back, Evans." There was a lovely smile on Arthur's face.

Because of their cooperation on Holm Mineral and Harvest, Lucien now was closer to Arthur.

Taking off the top hat, Lucien handed it to Leo. Then he smiled and said, "Arthur, you're the first one coming over! I haven't told other of my friends yet that I've come back."

"Keep your hat on, Evans. The prince is inviting you to his party. I'll tell you more on the way." Arthur rubbed his hands excitedly, "In the past year, the several versions of Jinkela have received a very warm response from the market. We've been making a lot!"

Lucien was a bit confused, "To the party? What's the party for?"

"It's a party for uniting the nobles who are very open-minded toward sorcerers." Arthur explained briefly, "After seeing the big

success of Jinkela, the nobles all want to work with sorcerers to seek for more profits in the field. Also, they're very curious about you."

Lucien did not respond immediately.

Seeing that, Arthur thought that Lucien might not want to go probably because he was not good at socializing, so Arthur said to him, "Evans, it's a great chance for you to know more important people. In Rentato, these nobles have lots of resources in each county. Although I understand that, as a sorcerer, you probably don't care, knowing more people and having more connections can do you lots of favors in the future and save you trouble. Also, those nobles more or less have connections to some senior-rank mages."

"I see. It's very kind of His Highness." Lucien grinned, "Let's go now."

Although what Arthur said was true, in fact, as the student of the Lord of Storm, Lucien did not need the nobles to get to know the senior-rank sorcerers. However, Prince Patrick was Natasha's uncle, and he had helped Lucien a lot with the company, Holm Mineral and Harvest, using his own resources and wealth, so Lucien believed that he should go to show his appreciation.

Also, working with the great nobles and making common citizens become accustomed to the use of magic was important to the further development of the Congress and was efficient to weaken the Church. Lucien sincerely regarded himself as part of the Congress, so he would like to do the favor.

...

With a long blast of the whistle, the magic steam train started to rush forward faster and faster in an unstoppable manner.

"Although I've been on this train many times, every time I see it speeds, I still feel beyond impressed. The train has really changed our lives by shortening the distance between the two cities. Especially the freight train... it has greatly lowered our transportation cost of the ores from the mines. Evans, I still don't

understand why the Congress keeps saying no to us on extending the railways. It has been several years... but we currently only have less than ten regular routes,” said Arthur a bit bitterly.

Lucien grinned, “Like you said, what a great resource it is! And of course, the Congress would like to seize it in its own hand. I believe that the royal family can see the value as well.”

To build railways in Holm, one must obtain the permission of the royal family. Thus, the royal family had been making a lot from it.

“That’s right! The railways... the trains... are all resources.” Arthur curled his lips, “His Majesty takes care of this project in person, or we probably still can try...”

Soon Arthur pulled back his drifting mind and took out an envelope, “Evans, for the first year, because we were during the primary construction period, we did not have the dividend. Until the recent eight months, after our successful promotion, Jinkela has become very popular. This is yours. We pay you monthly, as you’re a sorcerer.”

Lucien opened the envelope and saw a small paper pad in it, on which there were a magic and an arcana imprint. His dividend was 13,000 Thales.

Eight months, 13,000 Thales... That was more than a thousand a month. If Jinkela was also successfully promoted in the other three countries, it would be possible for Lucien to earn over ten thousand Thales monthly. At that time, he would not need to worry much about the cost of being a senior-rank mage.

Obviously, what was behind a senior-rank mage was lots, lots of money. One should at least be a very wealthy count to support a senior-rank sorcerer.

“Knowledge is a real treasure,” Lucien said sincerely.

Arthur was very confident. “You’ll wait and see. When our promotion goes further, you’ll receive at least five thousand, no... six thousand Thales every month.”

However, all of a sudden, Arthur sighed, “But many senior-rank mages also want the money. For the rest of the three countries, they have found new alchemical substances like Jinkela and they’ve also found the nobles to work with them, or we’d be able to double the profit.”

This was within Lucien’s expectation. Money was always the great motive for most people.

Seeing that Arthur was staring at him with hope in his eyes, Lucien smiled and comforted him, “We’re the first one, which’s our biggest advantage.”

In Lucien’s mind, he believed that it was a good thing that more farmers could enjoy the joy of harvest.

...

Rentato, Hexagram Station.

Poc Beever, the coachman of the royal family of Holm, was very excited when knowing that the great sorcerer was attending the party. Walking back and forth on the platform, Poc focused his eyes on the exotic buildings very different from what he used to see in Rentato. Buildings here looked cold and mysterious.

More railways being built, more stations showing up, more alchemical factories rising, the Congress was stepping out of the mysterious and creepy mist and had revealed itself in front of common people, who started to become less afraid of the Congress of Magic.

The Church could not do much here as most of the nobles had chosen to turn a blind eye toward it because of the great profit.

Poc was quite different from most common people who were afraid of sorcerers. He never dreamed to become a glorious hero or a priest, instead, he wished to become a powerful, terrifying and mysterious sorcerer. However, unfortunately, until his middle age, Poc finally accepted the fact that he did not have the talent.

In the past decade serving the royal family, Pac had seen some

sorcerers, but he had never felt this excited.

He still remembered clearly what his mother said to him and her great excitement and joy when she came to town to visit him:

“I was... totally shocked when I saw our oats in the field. It was golden everywhere. For the first time, after we handed in the portion to the lord, we still have this much left... I know, the... the Jinkela thing’s a bit expensive. But it’s worth it! We don’t have to starve anymore! It’s much less burden for you!”

This was all from the great sorcerer who invented Jinkela!

For the farmers living at the bottom of the world, their biggest dream was not to starve anymore. If they could even save some money for their kids, they could never ask more from the Lord!

In Poc’s mind, the sorcerer was the real hero. When the train arrived, Poc adjusted his clothes a bit to look good.

The door opened, and Poc saw a young good-looking man wearing a black, double-breasted, long jacket get off the train with Mr. Arthur Doyle. The monocle the young man was wearing made him look more elegant.

Poc thought to himself that Mr. Evans must have used some magic potions to look this young.

He hurriedly took a few steps forward and said, “Sir, I’m the prince’s coachman. My name’s Poc. Are you Mr. Evans?”

Although Mr. Doyle was right beside him, he still needed to confirm.

“I am.” Lucien slightly nodded.

The next second, Lucien was very surprised to see that Poc knelt down in front of him and kissed the corner of his cloth in the manner praying in the church.

“Thank you... Thank you for bringing hope to us farmers,” said Poc with tears in his eyes.

Chapter 331: Liberals

Chapter 331: Liberals

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Seeing that the coachman was being this emotional, Lucien almost burst out the answer—serve the people! Fortunately, he was able to stop himself in time and instead said to the coachman gently, “It’s just my conscience. It’s what I should do.”

Maybe because opera was very important in Holm, the way that the coachman showed his gratefulness was also a bit dramatic.

Poc was not a poet and was also not very well educated, thus he kept repeating the words like “thanks”, “thank you”, “survive”, “farmer”, and “harvest”.

Finally, the coachman realized what his job was, and he hurriedly said, “Mr. Evans. I’m so sorry... I’m just too excited... Please, please get on the coach.”

“It’s okay. We’re not in any hurry,” said Lucien. He casually looked around and noticed that there were quite a few people looking at them out of curiosity, wondering why the coachman was using such a courtesy.

Lucien and Arthur got on the coach painted with a purple and red royal coat of arms, followed by Arthur’s guards.

“Rustic countryman!” Arthur murmured. In his eyes, what Poc just did was a shame representing the royal family. However, he did not show it directly on his face. Instead, Arthur flattered Lucien, “You’re such an angel! An angel of harvest, ha! We are lucky that no one really got close to us on the platform, or you’d probably be thrown into the prison because the coachman just used the highest courtesy...”

Lucien looked aside as if he could see through the board of the coach, smiling, “According to some historical documents, after the

establishment of the Saint Truth, there were divinities of death, sun, moon, life and harvest/hunting, and then more gods and goddesses followed. Now, only a bit more than ten countries in the northwest beside the Dark Mountain Range were still worshipping them.”

Very long ago, human beings had started to worship the divinities, but most of the heritages failed to be retained because of the harsh, pre-historic environment. What was left were only some wall paintings. Meanwhile, when human beings were suffering at the bottom of the food chain, some people born with greater spiritual power gradually figured out how to cast magic using the special patterns of the magical creatures. Finally, the ancient magic empire arose.

Many years later, within the empire, nothing related to divinity could be found. Therefore, if a sorcerer wanted to study divinity, he or she needed to invade other dimensions.

The Saint Truth, together with the powers worshipping other divinities, defeated the ancient magic empire. Then, however, the Saint Truth, after growing strong, changed the side of the war and ended the power following other beliefs. Only some small countries in the far northwest managed to survive. Now, there was a subtle balance between these small countries and the countries of other races.

Hearing Lucien’s words, Arthur didn’t dare to make any improper comments. Although he was totally fine with working with sorcerers, and honestly speaking, he already started to doubt the Church after Creationism had been overthrown, what he was taught during his early childhood still had a great influence on him.

Lucien noticed the look on Arthur’s face. So he switched the topic back to business. Then they had a pretty good conversation.

...

The party was held in a private villa beside Verosa River in Rentato. The villa faced the river that looked like a golden strip of light, and in the back, there was a big garden where many flowers were blossoming. The view was wonderful.

In the villa, Lucien saw Prince Patrick, Natasha's uncle, again. He looked even more aged and slim than a year ago. Lucien could hardly tell that the prince was only in his middle age.

"Welcome back, Evans. I thought it was going to take longer." Holding a glass of wine, Patrick stood in front of his several guards who were protecting him from the cool wind from the patio, "I've always been longing for a trip throughout the continent, but my health condition won't allow me to do so. By the way, how's my niece doing? She must be much taller now."

Lucien grinned, "Your Highness, Natasha's doing fine. She's gradually stepping out of her bad memories."

The conversation was warm and casual, mostly about Natasha, Aalto and Lucien's trip. Patrick patted Lucien's shoulder and said, "Evans, I'll introduce some friends to you before the dinner starts."

Not coughing much, it looked that Patrick was in a good mood today.

Leading Lucien through the hall, the prince nodded to the several nobles slightly and then entered a separate room. Then the three nobles and a middle-aged man wearing a long black magic robe followed in.

"This is Count Hackson, Chancellor of the Exchequer of the kingdom," introduced Patrick.

Count Hackson, the elder man wearing the white wig, had sharp blue eyes.

"This is Russell, Duke Wolfburg, and this is James, Duke Paphos. They're both very influential members in the Parliament."

Wolfburg County and Paphos County were both quite prosperous counties in the Kingdom of Holm. As for the two dukes, one looked rather charming and elegant with his blond hair, and the other one was bald and looked a bit intimidating. Lucien knew that both of them were in fact elders, but they managed to retain a middle-aged look because they were radiant knights.

In the end, Patrick introduced the black-haired and black-eyed sorcerer to Lucien with a smile on his face, “This is Viscount Harrison from Holm Royal Magic Academy. He’s also the member of Family of Sorcerer and the noble parliament. I’m sure you’ve heard his name. Harrison’s a very famous illusionist and an alchemist.”

Lucien slightly nodded. Viscount Harrison was quite famous not only because of his achievement in the magic world but also the fact that, as a sorcerer, he still managed to inherit the title. According to the rules between the Church and the nobles, when there were other inheritors, sorcerers were not allowed to obtain the title. Very rarely could sorcerers become inheritors because a noble always had lots of close or distant relatives. The best situation for these sorcerers was to later become the members of the parliament. However, there were still some lucky ones, for example, Viscount Harrison.

What made people envy him most was that Harrison was only a fifth-circle sorcerer when he inherited the title, and then because of the family’s wealth, Harrison became a senior-rank mage in only fifteen years.

But that was not what Lucien heard about him. Lucien knew him because Harrison had refused to join the Will of Elements, instead, Harrison chose to be one of the leading mages of Family of Sorcerer, which was incredible to most sorcerers in Holm Royal Magic Academy. It seemed that Harrison was fond of Illusion more than Alchemy.

The prince coughed a bit and smiled, “I’m sure you all know who this young man is. Let us welcome the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize, the talented young sorcerer, Mr. Lucien Evans.”

James, the baldheaded duke put on a big, warm smile, while the other three nobles maintained their manner and only slightly nodded.

“Arthur’s really lucky,” said James directly. “He’s very fortunate to be your partner. Jinkela right now equals gold. I wonder what you’re working on recently. I’m interested in working with you.”

"I'm sorry. I just got back to Allyn. Currently, I'm not working on anything new." Lucien would not tell someone who he met for the first time too much.

James did not mind Lucien's attitude. He smiled and said, "We'll see if there's any chance in the future. By the way, I've been working with Harrison on a new product. Are you interested?"

"What is it?" hurriedly asked Count Hackson greedily before Lucien responded.

"It's based on the Lord of Storm's Electromagnetic Message. The spell enables people to talk when being far from each other. Although there's noise and it's easy to be interfered, it's enough for daily use! Much cheaper than using a teleportation circle! Think about it... when you're hunting in the forest, you can tell your friends in the city what you find any time you want! You can save lots of time communicating!" said Harrison holding the glass of wine.

Unlike most illusionists, when mentioning money and the product, Harrison's face was glowing with excitement.

"It's still a level-five magic item. Not many people can afford it." Count Russell slightly shook his head. He was not very optimistic about the product's future. In Holm, due to the high price, most nobles could only choose to buy the magic items that they really needed.

"We're trying to simplify it, say, using stored the power of electric current to replace the permanent magic circle. There are more and more electricity magic towers built by the Congress using the energy of the river flow, so this is doable. If this works, we can avoid using part of Fernando's exclusive right on the spell to further lower the cost. But, yes, the price's still a problem. After all, the magic item still needs to use the fifth-circle spell." Harrison looked a bit bothered, as he was not good at Electromagnetics spells.

He turned to Lucien, "So, my young fellow. Any ideas on it?"

"So far... nothing..." said Lucien honestly. He once tried to simplify

the spell as well. However, the power of the fifth-circle spell was just irreplaceable.

Lucien's answer was within the several nobles' expectation. After all, the solution equaled a great amount of money!

The following conversation was a bit boring to Lucien. The nobles were sometimes busy with criticising the secretary as being too laggard, sometimes commenting on the speaker as being too conservative. They viciously guessed that it was probably because the old speaker was going to die soon, and the speaker needed to follow the Church closely to rise into Mountain Paradise.

"Boring, right?" Harrison walked next to Lucien. "But sometimes it isn't bad to get some information like this. At least, we can know who we should work with and who we shall be careful. These people are all liberals."

Lucien took a sip of the liquid, Sky Blue, and smiled, "I'll rest my brain a bit with this conversation."

"Good. Promising young man," said Harrison, "later, let me introduce more senior-rank sorcerers to you. It's good for your future."

"Thank you very much, sir." Lucien casually smiled.

Then they started to discuss magic. Harrison mentioned the paper by Isabella. Because some arcanist who reviewed the paper had leaked the information, many sorcerers had heard about the paper before this month's journal was published.

"The paper's totally shallow! She only sees the things on the outside!" said Harrison a bit angrily, "She has forgotten why these alchemical substances in human body are secreted. Mind and soul should be the solid foundation of illusion spells. Human beings' mind changes all the time, thus arcana cannot control the human mind. Only illusions can!"

Chapter 332: Atom Institution

The corner of Lucien's mouth twitched. He wondered if he needed to bring some Chinese dream reading skills here to continue the conversation.

"I can't believe that many sorcerers think Isabella will be the next winner of the Laurel. For what? Just because her theory can include Illusion in the system of arcana? The finding's still shallow and immature. And it doesn't comply with the spirit of magic!" Harrison continued.

He did not notice the strange smile on Lucien's face. Harrison just argued with some arcanists about this in the afternoon, thus his anger still lingered in his chest. Facing a sorcerer from other fields who had no preset viewpoint, Harrison could not help talking all the time.

Holding the glass, Lucien listened to Harrison's complaint smiling. Thinking of the paper that he was going to submit, Lucien had a subtle feeling in his mind.

Finally, Harrison stopped talking before the dinner was about to start.

Harrison nodded to Lucien, feeling satisfied, "Evans, you are an outstanding arcanist. You know how to think of Isabella's paper. If you have any questions on Alchemy and Illusion, just feel free to ask me."

Before Lucien responded, Harrison left the hall with other nobles.

"I didn't even make any comments..." Lucien murmured to himself. He had no idea why Harrison just regarded him as his supporter. However, it seemed that Harrison liked to call himself a witch, instead of an arcanist, following the tradition of the ancient magic empire.

It was the first time Lucien talked to a senior-rank illusionist. Lucien naturally tried to understand Harrison based on his way of talking.

"Okay, Evans. Let's get out. I'll introduce you to everyone who's open-minded about magic," said Patrick, who just got some rest in the back and drank a tube of magic potion to recover.

Lucien stopped analyzing the viscount in his mind and followed the prince.

After all of the nobles saluted, the prince introduced Lucien to them, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Lucien Evans. Tonight's party is for celebrating Lucien Evans becoming the student of the Lord of Storm!"

Without being informed in advance, the nobles first looked lost, but then they started to applaud warmly. Every single one of them had heard the name of the Lord of Storm, the grand arcanist, and the leading role in the Highest Council, and thus his student must be an important sorcerer as well. The fact that Lucien Evans showed up on the party suggested that this young sorcerer was also from the side that supported the nobles, therefore, they all welcomed him.

In the warm applause, James, the baldheaded duke walked to Lucien and said, "Evans, you didn't make any comments when we were talking about electromagnetic messaging. Were you trying to say in your mind that we, this bunch of fools, were all heading in the wrong direction? As the student of the Lord of Storm, we wonder if you can talk to Mr. Fernando and see if he can simplify the spell to the second circle. It would be our great pleasure to have Mr. Fernando as our partner."

Although it sounded that James was complaining a little, in fact, he was trying to get closer to Lucien by talking like this.

"I'll definitely try. But sir, you must have heard of Mr. Fernando's temper. All the students have to be really careful when talking to him." Lucien was very good at using Fernando's reputation as an excuse.

Harrison first stared at Lucien for a while when Lucien was talking to James, and then he said, "Congratulations, Evans. I indeed thought you would have a teacher from the board. I didn't expect it would be the Lord of Storm. The award you've won really helped

you."

"Sir, I'm afraid that the compliment only might not be enough here." Lucien smiled sincerely, "I'm still waiting for you to introduce me to more senior-rank sorcerers. I don't know a whole lot of people in the Congress."

Harrison instantly understood that Lucien was trying to build up his connections, "My friends and I are looking forward to discussing arcana and magic problems with you, Evans."

The music was relaxing and wonderful. The atmosphere was warm and casual. Lucien had talked to quite a few important nobles both inside and outside of the kingdom guarding the territories. What was out of Lucien's expectation was that James was already a level nine gold knight, and there were a few radiant knights among the nobles as well.

...

After the party, Lucien returned to Allyn. When he was about to work on his paper in the study, Leo knocked at his door and said, "Lord, a gentleman named Lazar and a few apprentices have come to visit you."

Lucien was very happy to hear it. Obviously, his friend was quite well-informed. Lucien planned to finish his paper first before telling his friends and students that he had come back.

Lucien hurriedly said, "Let them come in."

Brown vest, white shirt, black double-breasted long jacket, and top hat—Lazar still dressed the same way, and his smile was still bright. Annick, Layria, Heidi, Sprint and the other apprentices, however, had changed much on their look and had grown much taller. Now they did not look like kids anymore.

Lazar gave Lucien a big, warm hug and said, "You never told us you'd come back! Katrina is the receptionist for the committee. She was the one who told us! Congratulations, the student of the Lord of Storm!"

The apprentices were both a bit nervous and excited, "Welcome back, Mr. Evans."

"Receptionist? Katrina, you have graduated?! What about Cindy and Dona?" Lucien was a bit surprised.

Three years later, as a fully grown lady, Katrina now looked very beautiful and mature, which made Layria and Heidi feel quite envious. Katrina smiled, "Mr. Evans, you once worked in the school. Don't you remember that the annual graduation season is always in June? We've studied in the school for three years and we already passed the exams of the senior level. We've also passed the Arcana Basic exam and got the basic arcana credit."

While Catrina was saying, Heidi, Layria, Annick, and the other apprentices were all quite proud. Only Chely looked quite depressed and said, "I haven't graduated yet... I'm still in senior class."

Lucien put on a sincere smile, "I do know that apprentices can graduate in three years, but very rarely can students meet the requirements. I'm proud of you all."

Hearing the praise, all the apprentices were very encouraged. Only Sprint lowered his head.

Lucien did not ask about Sprint in front of those people. Instead, he looked at Lazar.

Lazar grinned, "Both Cindy and Dona are busy with getting their first circle, so they're not working right now. Katrina got the job because she was Douglas Magic School's excellent graduate, and if it wasn't Katrina, we wouldn't know you were back. Now you've become the student of the Lord of Storm... Ummm, I thought it would be Mr. Raventi."

The excellent graduates could have the chance to get some good jobs. Although the schools also offered the other apprentices some positions, most of them preferred to find jobs on their own.

"It's out of my expectation as well." Lucien nodded, "So Annick, Layria... What have you all been busy with?"

Heidi said proudly, "We're working in the headquarter of the Congress. I'm in Apprentice Assessment Department. Layria is in Conversion Department. Annick's in Task Zone."

Then Heidi suddenly switched the topic and put on a begging look, "Mr. Evans, please, please help Sprint."

Sprint suddenly turned around and stared at Heidi. Obviously, he did not want Heidi to continue.

"Go ahead," said Lucien.

"Sprint... was absent from school too many times. He was dismissed."

"Dismiss?" Lucien looked at Sprint. Honestly speaking, Lucien was not too surprised.

Sprint answered a bit gloomily, "Magic Potion, Basic Element, Magic Analysis, Magic Structure... I understood all these courses from the handouts left by you, Mr. Evans. I was still attending Magic Practice course... I just did not want to waste my time. I wanted to spend my time on what I haven't learned."

"That makes sense. But the old fogeys in the school won't accept it." Lazar grinned.

Layria took a glance at Sprint with sympathy and said to Lucien, "Mr. Evans... Sprint was dismissed... No decent place is willing to hire him. He's currently working as a waiter in a restaurant. Can you... Can you help him?"

In these apprentices' eyes, Mr. Evans, as the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize and the student of a grand arcanist, was basically almighty!

"It's okay, Mr. Evans. It's just temporary. When I become a real sorcerer, it'll be different," said Sprint in pride.

Lucien rubbed his chin. After a while, he said, "I've been thinking about this for a while, but I couldn't make it come true in the past. Now I've become Mr. Fernando's student, so I think it's time now. I

want to start an arcana research group. Do you want to be my assistant, Sprint?"

"A research group..." Lazar and the apprentices had never heard of something like this.

"Sprint?" Lucien asked again.

"I... Of course! Of course! Thank you, Mr. Evans," said Sprint. There were tears in his eyes.

Hearing that, Lazar thought about it for a while and said, "Lucien, my spiritual power has reached the middle-rank level, but my basic mathematics and magic analysis knowledge is still not solid, so I'm pretty much stuck. I'm thinking if I can resign my job in the Will of Elements and be your assistant as well in your... research group. Your arcana knowledge is profound. Working with you can for sure be beneficial to me."

"Of course. But you have to wait until my application is approved." Lucien smiled.

Lazar was a level-two arcanist, second-circle sorcerer. He put on a bright smile and said, "I'm sure I can learn a lot from you, Lucien. By the way, does the research group have a name?"

The apprentices all got excited. They came up with all kinds of names such as Storm Lab or Evans' Institution.

Lucien thought about it carefully and said, "Let's call it Atom Institution."

"Sounds cool." Heidi nodded.

Annick got up the courage and said, "Mr. Lucien, I don't like my job in Task Zone. It's too noisy and too trivial. Can I join the group as well?"

"I need people to work with me." Lucien nodded.

"Me, too!"

"Me, too!" cheered all the apprentices, even including Katrina after a while of hesitation.

Heidi joked, "Now the institution has turned into an arcana tutoring class."

In the world Lucien came from, this was called "one organization with two nameplates", he remembered.

Chapter 333: Persuasion

Chapter 333: Persuasion

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

After Lazar and the apprentices left, the place suddenly became quiet. Leo closed the gate in the front and turned on the protection magic circle. Lucien went back to his study and started to work on his paper.

In the quiet night, Lucien's mind was rather sober. On an ordinary piece of paper, he wrote down the title—The Experiment on Human Body Electric Current and Brain Electromagnetic Wave and the Application in Illusion.

Books related to the researches studying brain waves in Lucien's spirit library were very limited, since even in the world that Lucien came from, researches in this field still remained underdeveloped. Therefore Lucien had to study a few illusionary spells to make the paper more reliable.

The paper was very challenging for him. The several papers that Lucien published in the past were other experts' findings already available. The only thing he had to do was alter the findings based on the real situations in this world. These papers only took him two to three hours each.

Releasing a sigh, Lucien did not start developing the paper based on the materials he gathered right away. Instead, he was going to talk to the Lord of Storm on the following day. As the student of the grand arcanist, Lucien would not waste the chance.

Lucien closed his eyes and enjoyed the coolness of the night for a few minutes. Then, he took out another pile of paper and started to write the application of his research institution.

Even writing the application was not easy. If not being careful, Lucien would reveal his understanding of atoms that could shock the whole world. He could not directly tell the public that an atom

could still be further divided, and within in an atom, there was a very wonderful structure. But if he completely avoided talking about this, the application would be very unlikely to be approved. Lucien was in a great dilemma.

In the end, he chose to describe his purpose and research interest in a rather general way.

When he read the application himself, Lucien sincerely thought to himself that the fund was not easy to get. If this application failed, he had to switch to a more specific research area and give up using the name Atom Institution, but this would mean that every research topic was only going to be a short-term one.

As a researcher who was extremely interested in getting funds, Lucien hoped to set up a long-term research project to save as much time and money spent on doing experiments as possible, so he could save his profit from Holm Mineral and Harvest for future use. Everyone knew that becoming a senior-rank mage could cost a lot of money. A senior-rank mage had to build his or her own magic tower, buy all kinds of alchemical materials, and prepare for the rites.

Lucien also decided to show the Lord of Storm this application to his teacher. If Lucien could win his support, the whole thing would be much easier. If necessary, Lucien could reveal some of his real thoughts on atoms in front of Fernando. Maybe Fernando would yell at him, but it was still worth trying.

After a while, he calmed himself down and started to analyze the fifth-circle spell, Fernando's Lightning Smelter.

It was his first time analyzing a fifth-circle spell because he never expected that his soul and spiritual power could reach the fifth-circle level so fast. There were still many third-circle and forth-circle spells that Lucien had not studied. His plan was to focus on the difficult ones first and then go back to the lower ones.

...

Next day in the morning, Lucien came to the headquarter of the

Congress of Magic.

“Good morning, Mr. Evans,” greeted the tower guard on the gate. It was the alchemical creature, Prospell.

Lucien said politely, “Good morning, Prospell. How’re you doing recently? Sorry, I didn’t see you yesterday.”

“The same... You know, having sorcerers coming in and out through my body all day long.” Prospell would not admit that he did not want to show up yesterday because the Lord of Storm was there, “Mr. Evans, I heard you’ve reached the fifth circle. Good for you! When you become a senior-rank sorcerer and start to build your own magic tower, don’t forget your promise. A female tower guard. Gentle, soft, considerate... much better than me!”

Lucien wondered since when they had this promise. He finished talking to Prospell, who was feeling a bit excited, and entered the magic tower.

It was still early. The headquarter was still quiet. On Lucien’s way to Fernando’s study on the thirty-third floor, he barely met any people.

Fernando, the Lord of Storm, was still wearing his favorite ancient-styled, bright-red magic robe, sitting behind his desk and reading the letters.

“Lucien, if you don’t have anything else to do, help me with the letters first. Use my tone and reply to these letters. After you finish, we go to the lab,” said Fernando directly. He did not give Lucien a word of praise for coming here early.

Lucien hurriedly nodded, “I’ve finished the draft of the paper. Please take a look.”

“Good.” Fernando nodded. Fernando took over the pile of paper and read it very carefully. He did not treat it casually just because it was written by a middle-rank mage. From time to time, Fernando even cast the spells on his own for verification.

Seeing Fernando frown, Lucien’s heart was grasped by a big hand.

“Illogical... How do you want to persuade the board using this?!” Fernando commented.

Although the comment was very straightforward, Lucien was glad that Fernando did not yell at him. His response was still within Lucien’s expectation.

Lucien hurriedly nodded and put on a humble-student look.

After criticizing Lucien’s paper from the very beginning to the end, when Lucien started to feel that his draft was basically just a piece of trash, Fernando softened his tone a bit and said, “Of course, compared to all the shitty papers from those fools, this paper is still relatively interesting and creative. Nothing in the paper is a real mistake. Revise it and develop it into a decent paper. Don’t put my name on it like some people. I don’t want my name to appear on such a paper.”

“Yes, sir.” Lucien felt he just sweated a lot. Although Fernando did not yell at him, Lucien still suffered greatly hearing all the mistakes he made in this draft when Fernando pointed them out one by one. Because he relied on himself when writing half of the paper, Lucien knew that he would make a lot of mistakes, but he was still under huge pressure just now.

Before Fernando picked up these letters again, Lucien hurriedly said, “Sir, I’m applying for starting a research group. This is my application.”

“Research group? Are you still not busy enough?” Fernando took over the application form, “Atom... Atom Institution. What a big topic... Umm...” The institution aims at studying the relationship between the periodicity of elements and atoms, exploring more factors resulting in the characters of elements and atoms’, combining the findings with elemental, electromagnetic, light-darkness spells, etc. In conclusion, the institution is established to facilitate the development of elemental magic and arcana system...”

It seemed that Fernando was a bit amused when reading Lucien’s application. Fernando did not take a serious attitude toward it.

“So... you need a big and fully-equipped lab, a lot of precious materials, and lots of arcana points as allowance. Young man, you don't get funds like this. This general, ambiguous application will not be approved by Magic Research Board. And you seem to be quite ambitious. You want to turn this into a long-term research? That'll make your application even harder.”

Lucien was prepared, “I think... I think the way that the Congress currently reviews all the applications is to some degree quite short-sighted. Arcana is developing very quickly, and there are new fields emerging all the time. The new fields are not specific yet but we cannot give them up, nor can we merely rely on the senior arcanists' private researches. The resources should be allocated equally, so more arcanists can be involved. This is another reason why I want to set up Atom Institution. I believe that more and more arcanists have realized the importance of studying atoms since the periodicity was found.”

When he was saying that, he looked rather serious.

“You made me feel I was listening to a speech in the city council...” Fernando grinned. “Tell me more about how you understand atoms. If you want to win my support, you have to persuade me first.”

Lucien knew that the cunning, old grand arcanist would not be deceived easily. He had to go further on this topic.

Lucien's brain quickly worked and he tried to be very cautious with his words, “Since the periodicity was found, I've been seeking for something deeper behind the laws, but I was at a total loss. Then, by chance, the idea struck me that maybe we should step out of Atom Theory and question what we think we've already known. If atoms are the smallest units as people believe, why the features of atoms vary so differently?”

Lucien paused a bit. Fernando looked at him thoughtfully.

“Maybe...” Lucien was a bit hesitant, “Maybe an atom can still be further divided!”

Chapter 334: Assistan

Chapter 334: Assistant

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Lucien finished his words. There was a total silence in the study.

Lucien knew that overthrowing Atom Theory, one of the fundamental theories in modern arcana system, was beyond crazy, and he was expecting Fernando's growl. However, the smile remained on his face, but Fernando did not make any comments yet.

Until Lucien felt the atmosphere making him slightly unable to breathe, the Lord of Storm slightly nodded, "In fact, after you put forward the Periodic Table of Elements, I talked to Hathaway many times and we've reached the consensus: if we want to go deeper down into the field of elements and atoms, we have to abandon some of the ideas first, as they're probably not the truth, but they're restraining us from exploring further. Like what you mentioned, we also believed that the most fundamental existence should also be the simplest."

"What..." Lucien did not expect that the two grand arcanists had already taken a big step in the micro-world. How came they were not afraid of the fact that their brain might explode because of such a cognition shift?

Recognizing the look on Lucien's face, Fernando put on his symbolic, sarcastic smile, "Lucien, don't tell me that in your mind, we grand arcanists are just a bunch of fogeys who never want to accept new things and are reluctant to admit the mistakes we've made."

Before Lucien managed to answer, Fernando continued as if he was just talking to himself, "Standing at the top of the world, we're close to the nature of everything. However, we know that we've just discovered a few stars if the truth can be compared to the starry sky. We shall stay humble and determined. We shall be aware of

things that should be abandoned. As long as we see problems, we can never just ignore them. Completely destroying a legendary archmage's cognition world isn't an easy thing. It has to be strong and fierce... totally out of expectation, or the worst scenario was just to add a limit for further progressing to the archmage. Of course, maybe what we've known is still too little. We haven't encountered anything like this so far that can shake everyone's understanding of the world."

It seemed that what Fernando just said was a bit different from what Lucien knew.

"Meanwhile, legendary archmages' understanding of the world can never be easily shaken. Without solid, rigorous reasoning and profound exploring, most archmages would stick to their beliefs. It also took Hathaway and me a long time to reach the consensus."

Lucien nodded thoughtfully. Fernando's words sounded a bit contradictory, but it was not. What Fernando was saying was about persistence and modesty.

Fernando concluded, "There's a saying among every grand arcanist: 'sometimes, our past experience and knowledge can be our hindrance.'"

Lucien slightly released a sigh, and then put on a sincere smile, "Then... since I'm not talking nonsense. Can you support me with setting up the institution?"

"Emmm... only one new point... maybe not enough. You have anything else to share?" grinned Fernando cunningly like an old fox. He wanted to see if Lucien still had more strange but creative thoughts in his mind that could possibly inspire him.

"No." Lucien shook his head in a determined way, "That's why I'm applying for setting up an institution, sir."

"Well... Let me put it this way. Before you reach the fifth circle, you work for me so I can tell if you can really accomplish anything with Atom Institution. You know, if I let you have a research group right away but you fail to find anything, you'd become a joke." The fox-

like smile on Fernando's face was still there.

Lucien knew what Fernando meant. He seriously nodded, "I'll try my best."

Before coming to senior rank, Lucien was confident that his knowledge of the field of math, element, and electromagnetism should be enough. Lucien's biggest problem was that he was still having a hard time combining his knowledge of astrology with celestial mechanics. Say, he still had not figured out how to understand these cursing and blessing spells.

As they had reached the agreement, Lucien asked, "So... how can I improve this application then? I know it's too generous..."

"Why do you need to improve it?" Fernando made a surprised look, "Your signature on it makes the application form look rather ambiguous and generous. But with Hathaway's and my signature, the application will appear to be very profound and provident."

Lucien was speechless.

"Alright... Let's get back to the letters. Read them for me, one by one." Fernando sat back in the armchair and closed his eyes as if he was meditating.

Although Lucien was not sure why Fernando did not want to directly read the letters himself, as he was not that type of people who always liked showing off, Lucien still picked up the first letter.

The handwriting on the letter was very beautiful and elegant. Lucien took a glance at the envelope and saw the name, Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg.

"This... this letter should be confidential..." Lucien was very hesitant.

"Hurry up," Fernando urged.

Lucien nodded and started reading, "Fernando, according to your suggestion, I have improved the design of the magic circle and now it can separate the substances even more specifically. This is the

improved structure...”

As he was reading, Lucien was surprised and also a bit amused.

He felt surprised because the two arcanists were actually heading for the right direction: separating isotopes!

Through the application of the Periodic Table of Elements, more and more arcanists had realized that the measurement of atomic weight was indeed not correct due to the limit of the methods currently applied. Fernando and Hathaway were trying to use electromagnetic force and centrifuging to purify the atoms. Only legendary archmages could do this.

What amused Lucien was how Hathaway described things. As a grand arcanist, her ability of expression was not very impressive and organized. She had to use a lot of magic symbols to make her words clear.

Reading the letter was not an easy job. Lucien finished reading, and Fernando grinned, “It’s torturing reading her papers and letters. When she was still the princess, she never passed her literature course. Every single one of her papers had to be polished first by her students or the younger arcanists.”

Lucien just got to know a big secret of Hathaway like this.

“What do you think of the letter?” asked Fernando, “I remember you mentioned something about this before.”

Lucien thought it for a while and said, “This method works better when there’s a bigger difference in mass... So heavy elements are ideal...”

Then Fernando asked Lucien more questions based on the paper. If Lucien failed to answer properly, Fernando would explain in details and even use some experiments to make the explanations even clearer.

Then Fernando finally asked Lucien to reply the letter for him.

Lucien started to realize Fernando’s true intention. Fernando was

using the letters between the legendary archmages to let Lucien know what the most cutting-edge researches were and to broaden his horizon.

Therefore, Lucien became very focused when reading the next letter.

The second letter was from an even more famous arcanist, Derrick Douglas.

“... As all arcanists know, transmission requires media, but how light and spiritual power transmit in the space? We believe that no matter how secret a matter is, or how carefully it hides, we shall finally find the clues. However, people were saying Aether was the medium for the transmission of light, but it hasn't been proved yet until today.”

Aether was also the name for an alchemical material. It could be quite confusing for beginners.

“Brook and his supporters believe that the theory of Psychic Wave has won the game, but I'm not one of them. A simple experiment has revealed the problem hiding in this theory—if Aether indeed exists in the space, when our world revolves around the sun, there should be a resistance, thus the speed of light should change as well...”

Fernando listened carefully and commented, “Douglas has been working on Particle Theory for a long time. He's the leading figure opposing and questioning Wave Theory. Many arcanists have chosen to take a more neutral standpoint facing Wave Theory. So... What do you think of the experiment Douglas mentioned?”

Lucien was quite pessimistic, “Even if it is proved that Aether does not exist, I'm afraid that Mr. Douglas' effort would still not be recognized, as the experiment is designed based on his space model. However, we haven't found a single planet yet. This experiment is not persuasive enough.”

Fernando slightly nodded, “What you said makes sense, but Douglas won't give up. The experiment has still provided us with a new

perspective to examine the existence of Aether.”

Then, Fernando asked Lucien more questions on Particle Theory and Wave Theory. Those questions really gave Lucien a hard time.

In the end, Lucien felt a bit exhausted. For those questions that Lucien did not answer very well, Fernando kept providing detailed explanations.

Then more letters followed. They made Lucien feel both nervous and excited. These letters covered all the eleven schools, which was out of Lucien’s expectation.

Finishing reading all the letters, it was already close to noon. Fernando took Lucien to the lab where they built a black, hollow sphere, which was an ideal thermal radiation model.

“Okay, you may leave now. Tomorrow, we do the same. Letters first, and then experiment,” said Fernando.

Lucien felt dizzy after all the work when he walked out of the lab.

At this time, he saw that Thompson came over. Seeing the look on Lucien’s face, Thompson was not surprised, “Evans, you must have worked very hard. Trust me. It’s really good for you.”

“I can tell...” Lucien released a sigh of relief, and then he asked, “Why are the archmages still writing letters to communicate when Electromagnetic Message has been invented?”

“Writing can make them stay more organized... That’s one thing.” Thompson put on a meaningful look, “And the other thing’s that... they would rather write letters because...”

Thompson looked at the direction of his teacher’s lab and grinned.

Chapter 335: The Comment on the Paper

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Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

It was close to the time when the headquarter of the Congress was about to close. Lucien took the paper which had been revised by the Lord of Storm to the Sorcerer Administrative Department.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Evans.” Katrina was very surprised to see Lucien.

Katrina was very good-looking and in good shape. Many young sorcerers here who weren’t married often tried to get closer to her, and it was the same today, even though it was already late afternoon. Some were pretending they were just having a drink; some were talking about the latest arcana theories to show their profoundness, using hard words that most people did not understand; some who were more straightforward just directly talked to the young receptionists, making those other sorcerers quite pissed off.

Hearing Katrina greeted Lucien gladly, they all looked at the young sorcerer who just entered the hall.

Good-looking face, elegant dressing, and the dream-like purple ring on his finger... This young man was Lucien Evans, one of the most outstanding young sorcerers. It was said that he was already a level five arcanist!

The sorcerers all stood up and greeted respectfully, “Good afternoon, Mr. Evans.”

Meanwhile, they were all guessing the relationship between them Lucien and Katrina. They heard that Lucien Evans once had some students, and therefore many of them more or less envied Katrina for she could have such a famous teacher. Although Lucien Evans was still a middle-rank mage, he had been recognized as the most promising candidate for becoming a senior-rank. The several papers

Lucien published had shown his profound knowledge in arcana.

Following such a teacher meant a bright future. At least, it shouldn't be hard for Katrina to become a real sorcerer and an arcanist.

Lucien nodded to the sorcerers and then walked to Katrina, "Good afternoon, may I know who is available today? "

"Mr. Eric, Mr. David... Basically, they're all available," answered Katrina. "Are you here for your new paper?"

"Yes." Lucien nodded, "The application thing's going to take some time. Don't worry. Also, tell others when you see them."

"No matter whether the application can be approved or not, being your student is still a great thing." Katrina knew that the other sorcerers present were all jealous of her. She knew that her choice was absolutely correct!

Lucien talked to Katrina casually for a short while and headed for the office in the back. Of course, he would go for Mr. Eric, as they were old acquaintances already.

When the other receptionist saw that Katrina felt so comfortable and at ease when talking to Mr. Lucien Evans, she was a bit jealous but also had a sense of inferiority. As an excellent graduate just like Katrina, she felt that she was like a little girl when discussing magic and arcana with the other. She tried hard to tell herself that people had different strengths, however, what she just saw frustrated her again. She wondered why Katrina was so lucky.

"Katrina, you've never told me that you know Mr. Evans," the young receptionist asked Katrina and pretended that she was just asking casually, "and he's your teacher?"

Katrina smiled, "Mr. Lucien Evans and I were on the same boat from the other side of the ocean. He taught me a lot on the way, and then, fortunately enough, I met Mr. Evans again in the magic school. He tutored me arcana."

"This is destiny..." The young receptionist sighed. That was what

the other sorcerers were thinking as well.

Katrina was still young. Of course, she was very proud. She thought to herself that Mr. Evans was also the student of the Lord of Storm, but she would not brag about it.

...

“One thousand one hundred and twenty-four arcana credits, sixty-five arcana points. Now you’ve become a level five arcanist. It’s a year earlier than I expected.” Eric handed the badge with five silver stars on it to Lucien, “These years, the development of arcana is amazing. If one stops studying arcana for a short while, one would be left way behind.”

What Eric said was true. Even Lucien was also a bit confused when hearing other sorcerers talking about the latest arcana topics after coming back.

“Mr. Eric, you’ve also become a level four arcanist.” Lucien took a glance at the badge that Eric was wearing.

Hearing Lucien’s words, Eric’s face lit up, “I’ve also contributed three credits to your total gaining. By the way, are you here to submit your new paper?”

Lucien did not mention that his magic badge could also be updated to the fifth circle, and Eric did not expect it either. So the topic had been switched to Lucien’s new paper.

“Yes. I was inspired by my mission. It’s about Illusion.” Lucien handed the paper to Eric. In his heart, he was quite expectant. After all, half of the paper was from Lucien himself.

Eric first submitted the paper and then asked a bit curiously, “Every single one of your papers more or less have caused some stirs. What’s this paper about?”

“It proves that human brain waves can send out a special electromagnetic wave that leads to the secretion of certain hormones”, thus people’s emotions are affected and illusions are caused,” said Lucien honestly.

Eric was a bit surprised, “Is it related to Ms. Isabella’s paper? Her paper has caused a lot of discussions. Some arcanists support her viewpoint and believe that she should be the winner of Sorcerer Laurel, but more illusionists think that the paper’s too shallow and not persuasive enough. Probably your paper is also going to be involved in the debate and be attacked. But your paper could also make Ms. Isabella’s paper more complete. Perhaps you can share the Laurel with her and become the second arcanist in a hundred years who can win the highest awards in two different fields.”

“My paper is not there yet. I just wish this paper can get a good score.” Lucien joked, “Maybe in the future I can win the Laurel with a better paper.”

Because Lucien had used the two versions of the spell, Charm Person, to support the paper, Eric told Lucien that he should be able to get the result the next day.

...

“... When studying photoelectric sensing, I found something strange. No matter how I enhance the power of a kind of low-frequency light, no electric current can be produced, which is contradictory to the previous inference...” Lucien was reading the letter from the grand arcanist Edwyn Brook, Emperor of Control, the Poem of the Goddess. He had noticed the unusual thing in the photoelectric effect.

Brook had not seen the nature of light current because cathode ray still remained undiscovered. However, Lucien knew that it was just a matter of time. He felt the urgency of setting up his Atom Institution.

“What do you think of Brook’s experiment, Lucien?” As usual, Fernando asked again. He did not care whether Lucien’s thoughts were right or wrong. This was just a method of teaching.

Lucien answered cautiously, “I’ve never done this experiment before, so I’m not sure. But according to Mr. Brook’s description, maybe the foundation of his inference is wrong.”

“You’re just repeating... Maybe this is a chance for Douglas.” Fernando was more inclined to Wave Theory, but he was not the supporter of either side as there was no specific evidence yet.

Then Fernando explained the experiment to Lucien in detail, but he did not make Lucien reply the letter until he had finished part of the heat radiation experiment with Lucien. Fernando asked Lucien to send the data to Brook, and also to Douglas.

...

The second day after lunch, Lucien went to Eric’s office for the result of his paper.

“The result was sent back in the morning.” Eric looked the same serious, “The result isn’t bad. The board members won’t change their review standards because of their own preferences.”

When receiving the document, Lucien was quite nervous like a young student receiving his final score.

The document wrote:

“Augustus: The paper proves the existence of human body electric currents and brain waves and how emotions and delusions are caused using the experiment the spell. The idea is well organized and presented, but the sample size of brain wave is limited and thus the paper is less persuasive. The author has also admitted this. To conclude, the research creatively leads electromagnetism into the field of Illusion, providing further support for including part of the school of Illusion in the system of arcana. The paper can lead to great discussion but it still lacks decisive evidence. Therefore, thirty arcana credits and three hundred arcana points are recommended as the reward.”

Chapter 336: Drummond's Visi

Chapter 336: Drummond's Visit

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

Charlie, the other board member, made a simpler comment, "This creative paper has proved that human body electric current and brain waves can cause illusions. It is for sure a breakthrough. However, the paper still lacks solid support for wider application to cover more illusionary spells. Therefore, the importance of the paper remains to be further proved in the future. Twenty-five arcana credits and three hundred points are recommended to be given."

In the end, the document concluded, "Creative and groundbreaking. Worthy of detailed discussion. Well-organized and clearly presented. However, the application of the paper is relatively limited as it currently cannot cover the entire field of Illusion, and many key parts remain ambiguous. Twenty-eight credits and three hundred points are given as the award."

A smile appeared on Lucien's face. Although it seemed that those board members did not really like his paper, as they did not give him many credits, the comments given by them were not bad. Lucien had found the right research direction, thus his paper was, of course, creative and was a breakthrough.

Eric slightly shook his head and said, "Those board members are just fusty. They don't like yours and Ms. Isabella's paper. They gave you the least credits within the standard. Normally speaking, your paper deserves at least forty to fifty arcana credits, but Ms. Isabella's paper should get at least eighty."

"How many credits did Ms. Isabella get in the end?" asked Lucien. As he was prepared, Lucien was not angry. He was looking at getting more credits by other sorcerers' future citation.

"Fifty... Those guys..." Eric lowered his voice, looking the same serious, "If Ms. Isabella wasn't a senior-rank mage, probably they

would give her forty.”

Ms. Isabella was a member of Tower, a level six arcanist, and a seventh-circle sorcerer. Although Isabella specialized in Astrology and Illusion, she was still outside of the core group of Tower and had not been selected into Arcana Review Board. Rachel was her student.

“I see... It would be hard for Ms. Isabella to win the Laurel, then,” Lucien commented casually.

Eric stared at Lucien with his light gray eyes and said to Lucien after making sure that he was not expecting to win the laurel, “So the number of Sorcerer Laurel winners have always been fewer than that of other awards. And most of the Laurel winners are the members from Family of Sorcerer, and their findings were all related to the three schools of magic from the ancient magic empire. But Ms. Isabella’s experiment is very well designed and sufficiently proved. If the Laurel is not going to be given to Ms. Isabella, this honor would become a joke.”

Lucien realized that who could win the award was also of political concern. He could not help thinking how he could win the Laurel.

...

When Lucien got back home, he was told by Leo that he had a guest.

“Mr... Drummond?” Lucien was a bit confused. He could not remember the name.

Leo hurriedly reminded him in the low voice, “Mr. Drummond’s the chief editor of Arcana.”

That was right. Lucien clapped his hands. As for every single arcanist who worked hard to publish his or her paper on Arcana, Drummond was a name that they had to remember. But Lucien was an exception. He did not have to worry about where to publish his papers.

“Why is he here? And Leo, how do you know him?” asked Lucien

confused. Drummond was a level seven arcanist and an eighth-circle sorcerer, the chief editor of the famous journal, the winner of Arcana Sceptre prize. Why did Drummond come to visit him in person?

Leo answered as a very decent butler, “When I was working for Ivanovszki, I had to remember the names of all the important people to handle all kinds of stuff. So after I came to Allyn, I’ve collected some names, just in case.”

“Thank you.” Lucien was very satisfied.

When Lucien saw the chief editor, Drummond was wearing a dark vest and suit, holding a black stick. His black eyes were sharp and serious like the eyes of an eagle.

“The Lord of Storm once gave me some very useful suggestions in the field of Force Field, and his achievement in many arcana fields is incomparable. I’m sincerely glad for you that you can become his student, Lucien.” Drummond tried to be closer to Lucien.

Lucien greeted Drummond and said, “Every morning I have to go through Mr. Fernando’s brainstorm. Every morning time seems to pass by very slowly.”

It took Drummond a few seconds to figure out what brainstorm was. He smiled, “Not many people are willing to stay beside the Lord of Storm when discussing arcana and magic questions.”

Lucien and Drummond walked into the living room. Lucien asked politely, “Mr. Drummond, it’s my great honor having you here. Honestly speaking, I did not recognize your name immediately as I never expected you to come and visit my place in person. I should be the one visiting you, sir.”

Holding the stick, Drummond said, “I just got the news from the board that you’ve got a breakthrough in studying the factors affecting hormone secretion, and you’ve introduced Electromagnetic Theory into the field of Illusion. By the way, hormone is the term put forward by Ms. Isabella to call the certain human body alchemical substances. I’ve read your paper, and I think your paper

is of great value. I am here to invite you to publish your paper in our journal. The theme of our next month issue accords with your topic well. I think it's better than sending you an invitation letter to express my sincerity, and also to apologize for what happened to your previous paper. I've fired the editor who rejected your contribution."

Arcana was the most well-known and reputed journal in the world of magic, and its chief editor came to Lucien in person for his paper! Drummond was treating Lucien like a grand arcanist or a legendary sorcerer! But, of course, apologizing for what happened last time was also part of the reason.

"No worries. Thank you very much, Mr. Drummond." Lucien and Drummond sat down on the couch in the living room. Lucien asked, "You mentioned the theme of the next month issue... Does Arcana have a theme?"

Before getting more information, Lucien would not say yes casually. Not to mention that Mr. Woods from Common Arcana was an old friend of his.

"Since Ms. Isabella's paper passed the review, great controversy has been caused. In the past week, many senior-rank arcanists have developed papers or designed experiments to refute Ms. Isabella's theory. So, in the next month's issue, we have decided to give the most space to these papers. This was the theme. We're hoping that your paper can achieve the expected outcome as your paper is the best support to Ms. Isabella's theory," said Drummond sincerely.

"To achieve the expected outcome..." murmured Lucien. He soon realized what Drummond was talking about.

Lucien guessed that most members in the Highest Council were not happy with the fact that Illusion and some other schools of magic had never belonged to the system of arcana, which caused the barrier between the sorcerers from Family of Sorcerer and most arcanists. So they were using this as an opportunity to let Lucien's paper become the solid support of Ms. Isabella's theory, thus the conservatives could feel the pressure. If Isabella won the Laurel, arcana would win, as the sorcerers from Family of Sorcerer had to

admit the fact that the arcana system could at least explain part of the school of Illusion.

Of course, Isabella's paper itself was good enough to win the Laurel. This was the premise.

Lucien crossed his fingers and said in a low voice, "Mr. Drummond, Mr. Woods from Common Arcana has helped me a lot, and I've promised that I would first consider publishing my papers on Common Arcana first. I keep my words."

Lucien was expecting a better offer.

"Evans, Arcana Review Board is discussing something recently. It is totally unfair that publishing a paper on different levels of journals gives a sorcerer the same credits. Therefore, they are going to give each journal a corresponding coefficient. When deciding on future citation credits, a sorcerer can get more credits by weighting the base credit by the corresponding coefficient," answered Drummond, well prepared. "They've decided to evaluate each journal every five years based on the influence of all the papers published previously. The coefficient varies from one to three. Common Arcana is doing a good job these years, so the coefficient Common Arcana deserves shouldn't be bad. But I have to say that Arcana currently still enjoys a higher reputation. Arcana credits are very important to sorcerers, and this is also the will of the highest council. I am sure that Mr. Woods will understand. Also, if you support us this time, we will always reserve a place on Arcana for you and your paper. We can negotiate the schedule."

Arcana only did this for people who were at least members of Arcana Review Board!

Lucien nodded. After all, this was part of the plan of the highest council. He smiled, "If Mr. Woods won't blame me, I'm willing to publish my paper on Arcana."

Later, in Lucien and Drummond's casual talk, Drummond said with pity, "If Ms. Isabella did not publish her paper before you, and if your paper was more precise, your paper would be the focus. If that was the case, you probably would become the second arcanist in

the past hundred years who could win two highest prizes before reaching senior-rank. But you're still young, so you still have a lot of potential, especially as the Lord of Storm's student."

After Drummond left, Lucien went back to his study and continued to work on analyzing the fifth circle spell.

Chapter 337: Further Experimen

In the study on the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress, Lucien was holding a letter from Oliver Constantine, "... Since the fifth circle, a sorcerer's every single progress involves the interaction between one's soul and one's cognitive world. In the progress, substantialization happens. In order to become a legendary archmage, one's cognitive world has to be half solidified to remain between being virtual and real..."

Lucien was too shocked to continue reading as he knew that the information in this letter should be confidential to a middle-rank sorcerer like him. Although the letter was about the secret of the legendary level, Fernando still closed his eyes like there was nothing special.

Although the book Astrology and Magic Elements also contained the rites of legendary level, as of now Lucien could not read that part, as he was not yet a senior-rank mage. Neither was he qualified to use the higher level arcana and magic library to gather more information. Therefore, before Lucien read the letter, he knew nothing about how to become a legendary archmage and how it was like to be one. However, Oliver Constantine's letter just revealed the secret casually.

Of course, Oliver Constantine was writing to the Lord of Storm, a grand arcanist. This was not a secret at all between them.

"Keep going," Fernando said in a plain tone. "Don't tell me you're not interested in becoming a legendary archmage."

This was the benefit of becoming the student of a grand arcanist. Lucien could find many secrets and all of them would contribute to his future growth.

Lucien continued to read the letter:

"Fernando, as you know, the closer one's cognitive world is to the real world, the easier the half-solidification progress is, thus reaching legendary level can be easier. From what I know about

Florencia, I think this is going to be her biggest challenge in her future progressing. Therefore, I've been studying the half-solidification progress for a while.

"As my research went deeper, I've noticed that after excluding the parts consisting of the different cognitive worlds formed based on assorted arcana theories, in the meditation environment, the space structure and the real world conflict badly. Perhaps the mathematical basis that we adopt in describing space is wrong. Maybe we need to start all over again to reexamine this part. I think..."

It seemed that Oliver's math was not as good as his arcana. Fernando found a few mistakes in the letter and pointed them out in front of Lucien directly. Using the letter, Fernando again started to test and teach Lucien.

"You're not really stupid when it comes to math," commented Fernando with no any facial expressions. Then he grinned, "Although Oliver was a playboy and he was even fooling around with his female students, Florencia's definitely his true love... like an opera."

Lucien hoped that Fernando could mind his words a bit in front of him. Lucien felt that Fernando had two sides. When it came to arcana and magic, he was very short-tempered and impatient like an approaching storm, however, in other cases, was often humorous and sometimes even a bit dirty. Thus, some people secretly called Fernando "the old pervert".

Seeing that Lucien did not answer, Fernando continued, "Oliver has to be careful. Maybe one day Florencia will be totally pissed if he keeps contacting his previous little lovers... Maybe Florencia will find a lover to take her revenge. Umm... Imagine the look on Oliver's face... I wonder if one day Oliver, the Hand of Annihilation, will annihilate Florencia?"

Although Lucien was more or less prepared, Fernando's passion for gossiping was still out of Lucien's expectation, which further confirmed Lucien's impression of his teacher—an old pervert!

"It's... quite impossible. No one dares to steal a grand arcanist's wife," Lucien tried to end this topic.

Fernando took a glance at Lucien and said, "What do you know? There are always young guys who are bold and crazy about love. When I was young, I was even crazier than Oliver! But now I'm old. I'm not interested in anything else other than exploring the truth of the world."

Shaking his head, Fernando said, "The next letter."

After reading all the papers, Fernando did more thermal radiation experiments with Lucien to gather more information for the derivation of the formula.

...

In the study in Lucien's garden villa.

Lucien received a letter today from Viscount Harrison, the senior-rank illusionist.

"... I've read your paper, Evans. I have to say that I'm a bit disappointed as you have given up your advantages in the field of Element and Astrology and carelessly stepped into the field of Electromagnetic Wave, Hormone, and Illusion that you're not even familiar with. Thus, your paper is not enough thorough just like Isabella's paper. And it is even less persuasive compared to Isabella's work since there are many things in your paper that cannot be proved.

"Of course, your talent in arcana impressed me. You've also put forward some creative findings even in the fields that you're not good at. Maybe I should admit that some illusions were from the interaction between the electromagnetic waves and the alchemical substances. Your improvement on the spell, Charm Person, is marvelous. Perhaps, in the future, when you have a better understanding of the essence of Illusion, you can make an even greater contribution..."

Then Harrison spent more than twenty pages on explaining how he

understood Illusion. Although he was more or less bragging about it, his words also solved some of the questions in Lucien's mind in the school of Illusion.

At the end of the letter, Harrison wrote,

"... The debate over whether the Laurel should go to Ms. Isabella has been growing more and more intense. Family of Sorcerer has decided to gather us senior-rank mages together next month to discuss it. It is a pity that your paper hasn't been proved decisive, or I would be able to nominate you to share the Laurel with Isabella. So you can be one of the two most outstanding arcanists in the past a hundred years."

Family of Sorcerer retained the conservative style from the ancient magic empire. They looked back the whole year's achievement in the three major schools of magic at the end of every year to decide about who could win the Laurel, if there was anyone qualified for the prize.

As for Holm Crown prize, things were different. A great achievement could lead to the activation of the reviewing process immediately and thus whether the sorcerer could win the prize could be decided very fast unless it had to take years for the value of the finding to be proved.

Obviously, this time, great pressure was confronting Family of Sorcerer.

Putting down the letter from Harrison, Lucien started to write his own letter.

Picking up the quill, he slightly dipped it in the ink. However, the tip of the quill stopped above the paper. The first letter was of course for the princess far away from him. However, Lucien was a bit nervous writing the letter.

He calmed himself down, trying to figure out what Natasha's preference was. He knew that he should avoid talking about arcana and magic too much. In the world that Lucien originally came from, people made fun of such nerds all the time.

But what else could he write about? Lucien found it rather difficult.

A while later, Lucien started writing,

"... My teacher is Mr. Fernando, the Lord of Storm. He is a strange person. When it comes to talking about magic and arcana, he is very bad-tempered and impatient. He was even yelling at me a few times... You know, I'm always quiet and cautious... When he is angry, it's more than dreadful, like a violent storm. But at other times, he is pretty casual and humorous, sometimes even a bit too much."

Just in case, Lucien did not use the word "pervert".

"... When I was reading the letters from these archmages, I could tell their different personalities from the ways they wrote the letters. For example, Ms. Hathaway is not very good at using words to express herself, but when it comes to arcana and magic, I can tell that she is very determined and intelligent, although the sentences she used were rather simple...

"Mr. Douglas seems to be a graceful senior man. He rarely gets angry. The only problem with him is that he always asks why. Mr. Brook is gifted in writing and is always very cautious about using his words. Meanwhile, he is quite old-school and stubborn.

"... Mr. Oliver, when talking about things other than magic and arcana, is always full of passion just like a poet. He is like the typical elegant and favorable playboy pictured in the operas. But he basically shows no resistance to woman's beauty...

"... Ms. Hellen Paris' words are always simple. She rarely talks about things other than arcana and magic. But according to Mr. Fernando, she is actually quite talkative in front of people she knows well, but she just focuses more on exploring the nature of the world.

"Vicente Miranda, Thanatos, rarely writes to Mr. Fernando. I can say that he is relatively... careless. He only wrote to Mr. Fernando twice, but both of the wrinkled letters were stained with the oil from the dead bodies in the back. It is quite disturbing..."

...

After finishing the letter for Natasha, Lucien felt much relaxed. Then he wrote more letters to all of his friends to tell them that he had come back. He also wrote back to Viscount Harrison and briefly explained his understanding of dream and of simple behavior psychology.

...

In the past a few days, many friends visited Lucien or wrote back to him.

This morning, Lucien stepped into Fernando's study on time.

"Good morning," said Lucien politely.

Fernando looked quite pissed, "I'm not good! Not at all! Why did I bother doing this damned thermal radiation experiment!"

Lucien's heart suddenly missed a beat. He wondered if Fernando had collected all the data. However, as he was being busy with studying the fifth-circle magic these days, Lucien had not found any time to analyze the numbers.

Comments (47)

Chapter 338: The Constan

Chapter 338: The Constant

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

“So... you can’t find the law from the data collected?” Lucien asked carefully. He had found the way to talk to Fernando. Lucien had to purposefully make some mistakes to hide the fact that sometimes he actually knew more than his teacher.

Fernando walked back and forth impatiently in the study, “No. Based on the Equipartition Theorem, I’ve worked out a formula. Although it works perfectly with long waves, it just produced a stupid error with short waves. Can you imagine what the formula told me? It told me that the shorter the wave is, the greater the energy that can be produced. If that is true, the pope would be kneeling on the ground and kissing the tip of my shoe right now!”

Anything, such as the sun and the fire, that was above absolute zero could produce thermal radiation. It was a common belief in the Congress that the nature of the thermal radiation was the electromagnetic waves of different wavelengths. Meanwhile, as the temperature rose, more short waves of different frequencies would emerge. Within the spectrum, the visible light could have different colors. For example, the pure flame had colors including dark red, crimson, tangerine, orange-yellow, bluish-white and so on, which was in line with the change of the wavelength.

Hearing Fernando’s growling and feeling his bad temper, the name, Ultraviolet Catastrophe, suddenly came to Lucien in his mind. He did not expect that Fernando first figured out this formula.

“Can I... Can I take a look at the formula?” Lucien asked very cautiously.

Fernando yelled, “I’ve been staring at it for the whole night! I didn’t leave anything out!”

However, Fernando did not stop him. Lucien picked up the piece of

paper curiously and saw the formula Fernando scrawled. The formula was exactly the same as the one in Lucien's memory!

Seeing that Lucien was just holding the paper there but did not say anything, Fernando thought that he was verifying the formula. He waved his hand very impatiently and said, "Forget about it! This is so stupid."

When Fernando was pissed, he was also very tough with himself.

Lucien did verify the formula. What Fernando said was true.

After a while, Fernando released a long sigh, "Read the letters for me first. We'll do another round of experiment again later."

"Yes." Lucien nodded. Then, he picked up the first letter. It was from Douglas, the Emperor of Arcana.

"...Based on the experimental data you gave me, I figured out an empirical formula from my perspective. I still believe that the nature of the thermal radiation is not the electromagnetic waves, but molecular emission from heating..."

Fernando cut in, "When it comes to thermal radiation, he's still talking about his Particle Theory."

"Maybe we can change our perspective..." Lucien tried to be euphemistic.

Fernando curled his lip and said, "Maybe he's the only one who can say these things without being affected. Go ahead. Let's see what the formula is."

Lucien was a bit nervous. If the formula was again the same as what Lucien learned in the world that he originally came from, a world-shaking finding would be approaching them.

"...This is my formula. But it only works with short waves. As for the calculation of long waves, it has failed..." Lucien was totally shocked. The formula was the same!

Maybe the data collected was not accurate? Lucien could not help

wondering. The closer they were to the answer, the more nervous and suspicious Lucien felt.

“It works... with short waves...? So, Particle Theory can lead to a formula that works with short waves...” murmuring, Fernando was confused.

Lucien stayed focused and started to verify the two formulas in his mind using the two theories. Meanwhile, his heart beat faster and faster. He felt that a corner of the world’s truth was going to be revealed.

Was the constant going to be the same?

According to Lucien’s understanding, if there was a big difference between the two worlds, the physical constants should be different as well, which was possibly the reason why magic existed in this world. However, if the physical constants were the same, Lucien should be still in the same universe, unless there was something else that he did not understand!

After a while, when Lucien just finished verifying the formula using Particle Theory, Fernando finally calmed down a bit, “Write back to Douglas and attach my formula in the letter. See what he says. Also, copy the letter to Brook, Hathaway, Oliver, Hellen, and Vicente. Give them both of the formulas.”

Lucien stopped thinking and tried to slow down his heartbeat. He pointed at the other letter on the table and said, “Mr. Brook also sent a letter here.”

“Open it,” said Fernando briefly.

Lucien read the letter at a moderate speed, “...Based on your data, I’ve worked out an empirical formula from the Equipartition Theorem. But the formula is ridiculous. It only works with calculating long waves, but it’s like a disaster when it comes to short waves...”

The letter was basically the same as what Fernando just said, and so was the formula Brook provided.

Fernando remained silent for quite a while. And then he said in a low voice, "Write the letters as I said. I need some time to think."

Then, he closed his eyes and leaned back against the chair.

After Lucien finished writing the letters and gave them to the Adamantium Golem, he also started working on verifying the other formula.

Time passed by. The other formula, after being verified, still remained exactly the same as Fernando's and Brook's answer.

Lucien's mouth was a bit dry. His heart was beating fast again. Lucien was very nervously waiting for the answer. Staying focused and calm, he started to put the two formulas together to make it fit both of the scenarios. When doing this, everything faded away from Lucien, except the voice of demon and devil lingering in his ears, which made him feel dizzy from time to time.

Lucien's black eyes became cold. He was totally dedicated, and the formula slowly came into being.

...

In the headquarter office of Arcana.

Drummond pushed open the office door and pointed at the couch, "Ms. Isabella, please."

Isabella was wearing a long, light green dress, decorated with fine laces and designed pleats. There was also a nice-looking floppy hat on her head. A long, light-purple ribbon banded her hair.

Taking off the hat, Isabella handed it to her student, Rachel. There was a gentle smile on her face, and her blue eyes showed her sincere appreciation, "Drummond, thank you very much."

"I was just pushing it a little bit. Most importantly, those grand arcanists want you to win the Laurel." Drummond smiled and pointed at the upper floor, "Also, your research findings deserves the prize."

Isabella was a typical Holm beauty. She had black hair and blue eyes, looking rather elegant and well-mannered. She slightly shook her head and said, "There are still lots of people who oppose my finding like it's always been. In the past, countless arcanists missed the Laurel. Without your help, maybe I would also be one of them."

"Don't doubt yourself! Your finding's a huge progress! Think about the influence your paper has brought to the Congress. Most sorcerers needed to admit that the paper has made a great contribution to including Illusion into the arcana system!"

Drummond seemed to be a bit worked up. He was totally on the side of the Congress, and also a determined arcanist. He disliked the division between the organizations and groups a lot, especially Family of Sorcerer, the typical conservative and old-fashioned one following the ancient tradition.

...

About twenty floors above the headquarter office of Arcana, Lucien had finished putting together the two formulas. The formula looked so familiar to him that he felt difficult to breathe properly.

After a few minutes, he finally started to bring the sample data into the combined formula.

As Lucien knew that, for the first time, he was going to see part of the truth of the world, he was so nervous and anxious that he was experiencing auditory hallucination as if horrible enemies were trying hard to make him distracted.

"Stop! Stop right now!" The devils in the abyss were shouting. They were going to tear Lucien apart with their sharp claws!

"Stop what you are doing! I'll give you power and wealth and anything else you want in the world!" The demons from the hell were also terrified. They wanted to lure Lucien.

"My child, come here. This is the bosom of the mother, the bosom that once hugged every deity. You will enjoy the eternal peace and happiness here!" said the angel to Lucien mercifully.

These words failed to get in Lucien's ears. He only cared about the constant.

...

In the headquarter office of Arcana.

Standing beside the window, Drummond stared at the pedestrians as small as the ants down there on the streets and said to Isabella confidently, "This is another major victory of arcana. Your name and your contribution will be remembered by the whole magic world and the history."

"This is a wonderful era for arcana." Isabella smiled sincerely.

...

"Maggot! Trivial human beings! I'm gonna kill you and take out your guts! I can smell your blood!"

"Anyone who does not show respect to the demon shall be punished by destiny!"

"You profaner! The origin of the evilness in the world! You shall stop now, or you'd bear endless agony!"

These were all the different voices in Lucien's ears.

Lucien was only a step away from the final answer. He paused a bit and then broke through the barrier.

The demons, devils, and angels all burst out the sharp scream and they melted like the piles of snow under sunlight.

Lucien saw the constant. The familiar constant now looked very creepy.

The constant... was the same as the one from the Earth?

It was the same!

All the illusions broke into pieces. Begging for mercy, the angels

and demons disappeared completely. The world went back to normal.

However, in Lucien's eyes, everything looked different now!

Chapter 339: The Beginning

What was the cosmological constant?

General speaking, if multiple universes did exist, a cosmological constant would be the special DNA for a universe. The cosmological constant was what made the universe different from the others.

After arriving at the world, Lucien had found that although this world was very similar to the Earth, there were still a few major differences, for example, the undiscovered stars linking to destiny, the existence of magic, arcana and Blessings, great dragons, demons, vampires and so on. Therefore, Lucien subconsciously took it for granted that this world was in a different universe, thus, of course, the cosmological constant would also be different.

There were two reasons why the formula could cause Lucien to have such a mood swing. One thing was that the formula produced jointly by Fernando and Douglas had proved that this world was also discontinuous and quantized, which obviously conflicted with the Congress' current understanding. The other thing was that the cosmological constant was the same as Planck Constant from the Earth.

The first point would cause a huge stir in the system of arcana. Lucien was already prepared for it when he found the periodicity among the elements. However, when he found out the constant, he was totally shocked, because the constant could directly tell Lucien if the two worlds were different.

This was Lucien's first attempt at exploring the essence and nature of this world!

However, the constant was the same as the one from the Earth!

The two constants were the same!

At that moment, all the illusions caused by Lucien's nervousness disappeared immediately. Lucien felt that he was in a world that was half visional and real, and his meditation world suddenly

shook. The meditation environment constructed by fire, wind, and water broke into pieces inch by inch, while the cast starlight brought by gravitation forced its way down to stabilize the whole cognitive world.

Then, the meditation world, after being destroyed, started to reform from the pieces. The energy flow was no longer like a stream, but spots of light like countless small stars.

After a while, when his cognitive world settled down gradually, Lucien opened his eyes slowly. Fortunately, the new understanding of the world accorded with Lucien's previous knowledge, or his head would explode.

It seemed that the energy particles in the cognitive environment could travel through the virtual and commute between the soul and the spirit world. Lucien felt that his soul was stronger than ever, and his spirit was capable of discovering the deeper secrets. Lucien had overcome an important barrier on his way to the senior rank, just like how Astrology and Magic Elements wrote.

There were three major barriers for one to reach the senior rank: first, beginning to get early insights in the nature of the world; second, having the soul and spirit that were powerful enough to intervene in the reality world; third, one's arcana and magic knowledge should be enough to analyze a complex sixth-circle spell.

However, facing such a progress, as a fourth-circle sorcerer, Lucien did not get excited at all. Because of the constant and the gravitation constant from before, he had to admit that, very possibly, he was still in the same universe where Earth was in. Of course, a possibility was that there was another universe very similar to the one that he was familiar with. However, he could not explain why magic and arcana only existed here, and why the stars remained undiscovered.

Brain in a vat?

The Matrix?

The experiment zone of some kind of powerful creature?

The principle of human choice? Mind over matter?

Lucien was not willing to accept any of these assumptions. But comparatively speaking, the latter two situations were much better for him. Lucien had never felt so eager to explore the world and to grow stronger!

"That's all for today. You can leave now. Come back tomorrow." His eyes closing, Fernando seemed to be a bit tired. Lucien was woken up by Fernando's words. He realized that his hands were sweating.

Lucien never sweated like this since he had become a level-two knight.

"Yes, sir." Lucien took a deep breath and stood up slowly.

Fernando noticed that Lucien was acting a bit strange. He thought that Lucien was being tortured by the two formulas, so Fernando tried to comfort him, "Although it's hard to admit that we can be foolish sometimes, all the arcanists can encounter problems that they are not able to solve. When this happens, we publish papers on Arcana and Magic to get new ideas. If we still can't solve this thermal radiation thing when the next month's Arcana is issued, we can put the two formulas on the journal. Your name will be included."

"I'm fine, sir." Lucien was a bit absent-minded, "I just... just need some rest."

The fresh air outside of the Congress building refreshed Lucien. This was the real world, the beautiful world!

"I'm lucky that no one has come to unplug my tubes, and no one from Matrix has been sent out to kill me." Lucien made fun of himself in his heart. He knew that he had to hurry to improve himself. And his next paper should be about the thermal radiation formula and the constant. Still, Lucien also had to be careful with the pace, or more arcanists' heads would explode from the cognition shift, which definitely wouldn't be a good thing for the Congress.

In Lucien's spirit library, most of the quantum books were still

sealed.

...

More than a week later. In the morning of June 28th.

Lucien put the butter on his bread like a decent noble.

"Mr. Evans, when can we start Atom Institution?" asked Sprint. He could not wait anymore.

Sprint had left the restaurant and was now living in Lucien's place. Except for studying and practicing magic, he was just helping Lucien with sorting some materials. Because Lucien was focusing on analyzing the fifth-circle spells, he was not doing the experiments. Therefore, the proud Sprint felt that he was basically useless. Every day, he was longing for the establishment of the institution.

Lucien put down the cup and wiped his mouth with a piece of napkin, "Soon. I've successfully built the structure of the spell, Fernando's Lightning Smelter, in my soul, and I have become a fifth-circle sorcerer. It's time to ask for Mr. Fernando's help."

Of course, before this, Lucien could also use the thermal radiation formula to win himself some more support.

"What...?!" Sprint was very surprised. The milk spilled out from his mouth.

He remembered that Mr. Evans just became a third-circle sorcerer a year ago. He had never heard anyone else who did this! Very possibly, Mr. Evans could become a senior-rank mage before thirty years old!

Lucien put aside the napkin and smiled, "I got some help. Finish the test paper today, Sprint. If you feel having nothing to do, you can do one more."

"No! I'm busy!" Hearing Lucien's words, Sprint obviously was terrified. Even his spiked red hair instantly looked less upright.

"Master, the latest issue of Arcana is available now. Three days

earlier than usual." Leo interrupted their conversation and handed the black-covered journal to Lucien.

The early issue of Arcana was within Lucien's expectation. Opening the journal, Lucien instantly saw the first paper from Ms. Isabella, The Relationship between Some Alchemical Substances Produced by Human Body and Emotions and Its Application in Illusion.

In the history of Arcana, rarely could authors who were not legendary sorcerers publish their papers on the first page. Obviously, Arcana was on Isabella's side.

Turning the pages, Lucien saw his paper at the fourteenth place in the first half part of the journal. Between Isabella's and his paper, there were some papers from other fields. For example, Chloe had combined all the formulas and laws in thermodynamics and thus a new thermodynamics system had taken shape.

When seeing this paper, Lucien nodded. He knew it was time for him to publish the next paper.

"Mr. Evans, is Ms. Isabella's paper the reason why they released this month's Arcana earlier?" asked Sprint curiously.

"You've heard about it?" Lucien looked at Sprint.

"People have been talking about it. Katrina said that many arcanists were very excited. They are expecting Ms. Isabella to win the Laurel. Is it true?" Spring also looked quite excited, although he did not really understand the value of this paper.

"Very possibly." Lucien nodded.

Then Lucien left for the headquarter of the Congress.

...

Walking in the magic tower, Lucien saw many sorcerers chatting with each other holding the latest issue of Arcana in their hands.

Lucien knew that the influence of Isabella's paper was profound. He also knew that what he was going to do would be able to overthrow

the whole arcana world!

Stepping into the study, Lucien knew that Fernando was still quite pissed off and irritated. Thus, Alferris, the little crystal dragon, had not shown up for a few days.

"Good morning, sir," greeted Lucien politely.

Fernando shouted, "Good morning?! How can this morning be good? Douglas and Hathaway have been writing to me every day telling me the value of improving the formula from the perspective of Particle Theory and molecular scattering, but Brook, Hellen, Oliver, and Vicente are reminding me to see things using the concept of electromagnetic radiation and energy equipartition theorem. They're arguing in my brain, and I wish that I had never studied the topic because neither of them works!"

"Sir, we can forget all of these," seizing the chance, Lucien said to Fernando directly.

Fernando looked very serious, "What do you mean by forgetting all of these?"

"That's right. Forget about particles or waves, and forget about all the arguments. Just look at the two formulas to see if it's possible to put them together by doing math." Lucien was also very serious because he knew that what they were discussing about right now was going to lead to the new beginning of the arcana system!

"Doing math?" Fernando slightly frowned, "I guess... you have done it already, right? Tell me the formula you got." Fernando instantly understood what Lucien was trying to say.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien nodded, "Yes, sir. I've put together a formula."

When saying this, Lucien felt that there was a deafening thunder roaring above the whole Congress and the world of arcana.

This would be the end of the era, but also a beginning of a new one!

Chapter 340: The Laurel and The World

Chapter 340: The Laurel and The World

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

In Fernando's study.

After Lucien wrote down Planck's formula, it only took the Lord of Storm a very short period of time to finish the verification.

"It works with both long and short waves. Currently speaking, this is a correct formula." Fernando nodded carefully, "But we'd better do a few more rounds of the experiment to make sure it accord with all the situations."

Having been bothered by two to three weeks, Fernando felt that he was going to explode at any time. So, once he saw the formula from Lucien that could be called perfect for now, the only wish in his mind was to further verify it, and forget about the two original formulas!

This was also Lucien's first time doing the experiments without reading the letters first since he became Fernando's student.

Although Fernando did all the experiments very fast, he was only sure about the validity of the thermal radiation formula when it was already afternoon.

"Interesting..." Fernando was much more relaxed now, and thus his attitude changed, "You're right, Lucien. I was thinking too much. It's the same with having a relationship. When you're in love, don't think too much."

Lucien had no idea how Fernando connected the two ideas together. Also, he did not see Fernando as an expert when it came to dealing with a romantic relationship, as Fernando was still single.

"Shall we write to the grand arcanists?" Lucien wanted Fernando to focus on the formula.

Fernando nodded cheerfully, "Of course, they have also been bothered by the two formulas for quite a while. It's surprising that my student first figured this out... However..."

Within only a second, Fernando put on the stern look and said, "Since the formula works, we can say that there are deeper laws hiding before it! Something that can reveal the nature of thermal radiation! We can't just stop here. We gotta delve into it further!"

Although Fernando sounded very impatient, as his student, Lucien knew that he was actually just excited. This was his great impulse of exploring this world.

"Shall I write to them now?" Lucien asked. He hoped that the grand arcanists could first get familiar with the combined formula.

"Write to them right now." Fernando walked back to his desk and said to Lucien without turning around, "Get them involved in the discussion. I have a feeling: this is gonna be a tough job. Also, turn it into a paper of how you put together the formula. Send it to the board together with my formula and Douglas' formula. So all the arcanists can know what is going on here. If we can figure out the true meaning of the formula before the next month's Arcana is published, we can put them all together. If we fail to do so, the arcanists' discussion can also inspire us."

Lucien's plan worked. He hurriedly sent the formula to the six arcanists using the Adamantium golems and then started discussing the formula with his teacher.

The discussion was torturing to Lucien, because it was not yet time for him to introduce the proper explanation, which Lucien would save it until the end when all the possibilities were excluded. Telling lies and findings excuses were definitely harder than confessing, especially since he was talking to a grand arcanist.

Fortunately, Fernando had no idea that Lucien had already known the correct answer and he only focused on the formula itself. Lucien thus managed to get over with it and, meanwhile, he also learned quite a lot from the discussion.

It was late now. When Fernando told Lucien that he could leave, he asked, “Lucien, have you become a fifth-circle sorcerer?”

“Yes, sir.” Lucien was a bit surprised. After all, he just became a fifth-circle last night.

Fernando grinned, “When you were doing the experiment, I could tell that your spiritual power was greater than before. Also, I knew it would be just a matter of time before you became a fifth-circle sorcerer unless you didn’t work hard. Since you’ve fulfilled your promise and you’re doing a better job than the other students, you may bring the Atom Institution application form to me tomorrow and I’ll endorse it for you.”

“Thanks a lot, sir.” Lucien was quite surprised. He thought it would take longer to win Fernando’s support.

...

The next day.

“The Improvement on Fernando’s Formula and Douglas’ Formula in Thermal Radiation Research...” After writing the evaluation comment and signing on Lucien’s application form, Fernando picked up the paper that Lucien was going to submit together later and slowly read the title. There was a rare smile on his face.

“The formula is going to be called Evans’ Formula.” Fernando nodded, “And the constant will be called Evans’ Constant. Your name will be forever remembered.”

Since the periodic table of elements was only a summary, Lucien’s surname was not used.

Lucien slightly sighed in his mind because the meaning of the constant went far beyond Fernando’s current understanding. Then, he started to read the letters as usual. The first one was from Douglas.

“... I’m glad to know that you and your student, Lucien, have solved the problem which has bothered me for the past a few days. Congratulations to Mr. Lucien Evans. This is the victory of the

younger generation. And maybe only the younger generation can avoid all the distracting factors and directly use the mathematical method to solve the problem. He's like a shining pure diamond...

"Since we've figured out the formula, it's time for us to ask why it is this formula that makes sense? I can say that there must be a hiding law that we haven't discovered behind the formula, but what is it? It's not yet the moment that we stop and celebrate our accomplishment. We still have so many whys to ask... Once we understand the true meaning of the formula, we can take a further step on our path to explore the ultimate truth."

Fernando commented, "Of course... Mr. Hundred Thousand Whys..."

The rest of the letters from Brook, Hathaway, Oliver, Hellen, and Vicente were basically the same. They were talking about what was behind the formula.

...

Three days later. In the early morning.

"...based on the review and comments of the two board members, the overall comment on the formula put forward by Mr. Lucien Evans is: the formula works perfectly with both shortwave and longwave situations, and thus the formula can be widely applied. We name it Evans' Formula of Blackbody Radiation, and the constant in the formula is called Evans' Constant. However, as the formula came from the pure mathematical calculation, there was no theoretical support to the formula, and its value still remains to be further revealed. Twenty arcana credits and two hundred arcana points are given as the reward."

Reading the review document sent to his place by Katrina, Lucien was quite encouraged. The reward was not bad, but the most important thing was that Lucien could get a lot of citation credits from the formula and the constant. Unlike the basic data including atomic weights, the finding would belong to Lucien exclusively for the following three years!

As for the result of his application for the institution, the procession would still take another one or two weeks.

Putting down the document, Lucien started to enjoy his breakfast, and at the same time, he opened the letter from Harrison:

“... The latest issue of Arcana has caused a huge stir among all the sorcerers. Every sorcerer that I met was talking about ‘the arcana meaning of Illusion’, and it is probably already safe to say that Ms. Isabella’s research finding has destroyed the previous Illusion theories. This is very interesting because the alchemical substance, hormone, currently only works for very few illusionary spells! The atmosphere has put a lot of pressure on Family of Sorcerer. So four days later, on Monday, the senior-rank mages have all agreed to confer the Laurel to Isabella...”

“Unfortunately, my proposal of you sharing the Laurel with her was rejected. They did not really agree with your Brain Wave Theory. No, to be more specific, the theory can still be further improved greatly. I’m sure that you’ll keep working on this, and I’m looking forward to the day when you can also wear the Laurel and thus become the second middle-rank mage ever who can win the highest prizes in two different fields...”

“The Laurel conferring ceremony will be held at the headquarter of Family of Sorcerer. If you have time, you can attend the ceremony.”

“They’ve decided to give Ms. Isabella the Laurel,” Lucien put down the letter and said casually.

Sprint was a bit confused. He did not understand why Mr. Evans said this.

Lucien did not explain. He smiled and stood up from the chair. It was time for him to visit his teacher and put forward some suggestions.

...

After a few days of heated discussion, Fernando still had not figured out the hiding meaning behind the formula, which was driving him

nuts.

“I’ve got a suggestion,” said Lucien seriously, staring at Fernando’s eyes.

Fernando was a bit surprised, so he asked confusedly, “What is it?”

Because of Fernando’s bad temper, very rarely dared people to talk to him like this.

“I think we should introduce Chloe’s Kinetic Theory in Thermodynamics into the analysis of the formula. His perspective on using statistics and his description of entropy and probability have inspired me. Maybe they’re helpful for us to understand the formula,” as Lucien was saying, he felt that he was slowly opening the Pandora’s box.

The Kinetic Theory in Thermodynamics had helped Chloe win the Ice & Snow Medal. Recently, he had further improved it and turned it into a basic system.

Fernando nodded without thinking too much, “Since all the other theories have failed to work, we can use entropy and probability to see what’ll happen.”

Since the direction was right. Fernando and Lucien’s work was quite productive. The letters from Douglas, Brook, Hathaway and the rest of the grand arcanists also helped them a lot with overcoming all the barriers. The meaning and value of the formula was going to be revealed.

...

In Cocus, the capital city of Calais, there was a black magic tower standing in the corner of the city, where a light gray mist always lingered.

The differently decorated coaches slowly stopped in front of the magic tower. The guests were led to the banqueting house.

“Welcome, Ms. Isabella, Mr. Drummond.” Smiling, Adalbert Von Miller, the president of Family of Sorcerer, a level seven arcanist

and a ninth-circle archmage, welcomed the winner of the laurel.

All the sorcerers and arcanists turned around and had their eyes on Ms. Isabella. Among them, many played important roles in the Congress.

Tonight, the fully-dressed Isabella was like a star.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the magic tower of Allyn, in a common study, Fernando and Lucien's work was close to the end. The meaning of the formula was going to be unveiled. And the grand arcanists were right now waiting for the result in their own Demiplane magic towers.

Lucien, knowing the final conclusion, felt that his hands were sweating.

...

In the banqueting house, all the guests were greeting and chatting with each other warmly. There were talking about the winner of the Laurel, illusions, magic, and arcana. The sorcerers attending this modern celebration ceremony were dressing in a traditional way, giving the gathering a unique, combined style of being both profound and lively.

The orange light in the banqueting house was gentle and soft, covering every single guest with a layer of golden color.

When Von Miller stepped onto the stage in the front, the guests gradually quieted down. Ms. Isabella and her student, Rachel, were invited to the stage.

The maid behind Miller was holding a silver tray, on which there were two crystal, finely-carved laurels. In the laurels' shining light, there were flowing magic symbols. The laurel looked more like a piece of artwork than a magic item.

Isabella also put Rachel's name on the paper to thank her for the contribution and the inspiring ideas Rachel offered. After the

verification, Family of Sorcerer had decided to make them share the honor.

However, in all the sorcerers' eyes, even including Rachel herself, Isabella was the center of tonight's gathering.

"... The alchemical substance, hormone, was detected in Ms. Isabella and Miss Rachel's experiment, and the application value of hormone has been approved in the mechanism of Illusion. Therefore, Family of Sorcerer and Calais Magic Academy have decided to confer the Laurel to them in order to sincerely appreciate their great contribution."

Von Miller put the two beautiful laurels one the two ladies' hair. The radiance of the laurels was dazzling.

Warm applause followed. All the mages were more or less quite excited, while some sorcerers had mixed feelings.

...

The analysis result in front of Fernando and Lucien was shocking!

Fernando's voice had mixed anger and fear, "So, Lucien... There is only one circumstance for the formula to work... We have to assume that the absorption and emission of energy are not continuous, instead, it is in portions!?"

When Fernando was speaking, his voice trembled, as if he was facing the almighty God of Truth.

"Yes, sir." Lucien felt Fernando's emotion, but his answer still remained firm.

...

Wearing the beautiful Laurel, Isabella was giving a short speech in the banqueting house.

"... In the ancient magic empire, because of the lack of a powerful mathematical tool for calculating the irregular figures, the construction of magic models and the analysis of the spells always

encountered great barriers, and thus the ancient sorcerers had to rely fully on the growth of their spiritual power to overcome the barriers in a savage way...

"This was ended by the establishment of calculus put forward by President Mr. Douglas. Together with the great contribution made by the several grand arcanists, now we have found the powerful tool to help us with calculating and building the irregular magic models in a relatively easy way.

"Therefore, we can say that calculus is the foundation of the arcana system. The continuous and smooth division and the infinitesimal analysis have pushed us forward to the truth of the real world. From this perspective, the mathematical tool itself has already conveyed the main idea of arcana, which is the continuity. We see continuity in seashores, horizons, wind, waves, streams, time, and so on.

"Based on the concept of continuity, Mr. Douglas' Force Field Theory together with Mr. Brook's Electromagnetics and Light-darkness theory has formed the main structure of the world of arcana. However, unfortunately, Illusion, Transformation and Summoning currently are still outside of the system...

"Here the continuity referred to the ongoing process that one could always see in one's daily life. It was like the river we saw and the road we followed, which could never be divided into pieces. It was also like the numbers on a thermometer. There was always one point one, point two, point three between the number one and two without blank sections."

...

Hearing Lucien's answer, Fernando yelled at him, "Are you telling me that the form of energy is not continuous? And the world built on this is also not continuous?! You look at the howling wind, feel the time passing by! It's ridiculous!"

Lucien felt the great pressure from his teacher. However, Lucien raised his head and looked at Fernando in his eyes, "If we want the formula to work, we have to accept the assumption that energy is

divided into separate portions.”

Lucien’s back was straight, and the words coming out from his lips were cold.

“Maybe... The world itself is not continuous!”

...

“This is a beautiful era. Every one of us has made our contribution to the arcana world. And I’m just a lucky one.”

The moment when Isabella finished her speech, the deafening summer thunder arrived. The claps of thunder sounded crazy, making the sorcerers in the house all feel a bit anxious.

Chapter 341: The Assumption

Chapter 341: The Assumption

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The pouring rain from the sky rushed downwards like a waterfall, separating the people in the banqueting house from the outside world. At the moment, many of the sorcerers felt a little lost, as if they had been abandoned by the real world.

“The rain in the Month of Fire is always unexpected.” In the banqueting house, Drummond stared at the pouring rain outside of the window with a glass of wine in his hand.

Staring at the darkness outside and hearing Drummond’s words, Isabella smiled. “The power of mother nature is always much more powerful than magic. Only the legendary archmages could have the power to control the weather in such a large-scale.”

“Flashes of lightning and thundering will all end, just like the barriers we face. The ancient magic theories and the powerful and horrible church will all fade away or be conquered by arcana and magic. Destiny is like a huge wheel rolling forward. Whatever stays in its way will be ground down completely. What is out of date will for sure be abandoned. I like the world after the rain since all the things can be washed clean... like a new world,” said Drummond rather confidently.

The heavy rain continued outside.

...

Thunder and lightning controlled the sky above Allyn within only a short period of time.

It was totally out of Lucien’s expectation that the fury from the grand arcanist could lead to such a sudden and horrible weather change. Lucien felt a pressure so great that he was even having a difficult time breathing.

“The world is discontinuous? The world is discontinuous!?”
Fernando’s growls were even louder and more violent than the roaring thunders outside. “But this is only an assumption!”

Facing the storm, Lucien did not yield. Instead, Lucien answered slowly but firmly, “But currently this is the only possible assumption.”

Rumbling... The thunders went crazy. There were streaks of lightning in Fernando’s eyes.

“The only assumption? How dare you say that you’ve excluded all the other possibilities? How dare you?!”

Lucien’s black eyes were as deep as a lake. He answered calmly:

“Our recent experiments have excluded all the possibilities of other explanations. Also, currently we have nothing as the evidence to reject this assumption.”

Fernando and Lucien did all the experiments together. In Fernando’s mind, he was speechless. However, he still yelled:

“You want the evidence? This whole world is the evidence!”

Lucien smiled, and his smile was gentle and soft, “Sir, the nature of the world is always a mystery. What we see, hear and feel is always limited, just like the fact that the world in the common arcanists’ eyes and in the grand arcanists’ eyes are always different. Before we find another explanation, we have to accept the assumption for now. Sir, you once told me that our past experience and knowledge could also be our barrier.”

Hearing that, Fernando fell into silence. The Lord of Storm stood there quietly. The wind around him whipped his bright red robe. After a long time, the lightning disappeared in his eyes, and so did the storm outside.

“This is just a temporary assumption. I’ll continue to work on it and seek other explanations.” Fernando slightly sighed, and his voice sounded a bit tired.

“Are you alright, sir?” asked Lucien concernedly.

“Fortunately, it’s just a temporary assumption.” Fernando repeated, “If you had had any solid evidence to support your assumption, my head would have exploded already. Or probably the reason that my head still remains intact is that my cognition world has been solidified. If that is the case, it is very unlikely that I can still make much further progress. Since what you said still remains an assumption, I can have some time for buffering and probably seek for other theories to explain the formula. But, of course, from the experiments we did together, I do know that this is not very likely to happen... Maybe the new theories that I’ll find in the future will be the support to your assumption.”

Lucien knew that this was just a beginning. There would be more shocking findings waiting for them. Even the greatest scientist on the earth, Einstein, failed to make further progress because he was not able to accept the new theories.

However, of course, Lucien could not tell Fernando this. The road to the ultimate truth of the world was more than cruel. Fortunately, Fernando was still relatively calm. So far, not a single one of the legendary archmages had ever had his or her head exploded. No one knew what it looked like.

Maybe nothing special would happen, just like when a middle-rank or a senior-rank mage’s head exploded, or the power would probably be so great that things around a head-exploded legendary archmage would all be demolished.

Pausing a little, Fernando released a sigh, not like the short-tempered Lord of Storm, but seeming like an old man, “I wish that I had never done any experiments in the field of thermal radiation. I wish that these things had never happened. In the future, we may destroy the arcana system, the magic world, or even the whole universe. Before today, it never came to me that the energy of the world was not continuous... even the world is not continuous, like a series of pictures! How will the other sorcerers respond to this assumption?! Can you imagine that?”

Lucien corrected Fernando in his mind, since, to be more specific,

the world was like a movie consisting of many frames. He said to Fernando, “Most of them will be scared. Then they will tell themselves that this is just an assumption, and they will only use the formula and purposefully ignore what this formula means. A small proportion of them will have their heads...”

“I’m glad you understand it.” Fernando looked more serious now, “We should be very careful with submitting the paper, although what’s in it is still an assumption. Send your paper to Douglas first. Maybe he’s the grand arcanist who is most willing to accept your assumption. Discontinuous energy... in portions and small quantities... just like particles... We can call it one quantum. As for Hathaway and the rest of the grand arcanists, we shall divide the paper into two parts, so they can have more time to accept the great shock after reading the first part.”

Lucien finished developing the paper following Fernando’s words. When Lucien was about to put his teacher’s name on the paper in front of him, Fernando sat straight in his armchair and said seriously to him, “You’re the only author of the paper. I flinched in front of the assumption. You are the one who owns it.”

“Sir...” Lucien was very surprised.

Fernando stared at Lucien, “Do as I said. I don’t want to see my name on a paper which I haven’t accepted yet.”

After sending the letter, Fernando closed his eyes to stabilize his cognitive world, considering other possibilities to explain the formula. The office became quiet again.

Lucien also tried to calm down. He was too nervous to notice that he was sweating so much and his heart was beating like crazy.

In the quiet office, time passed by. Soon it was close to noon, and Lucien felt that he had reached his limit to bear the atmosphere. When he was about to ask for an earlier leave, a ray of bright light burst out in the corner of the office.

Somehow the magic circles in the office failed to work. A tall, white-haired elder with blue eyes walked out of the light. His face

looked kind and gracious, but now it looked more serious and shocked.

Holding a pile of paper in his hand, the elder yelled, “Fernando, this is just an assumption!”

“But this is also the only assumption!” This time, Fernando did not flinch.

Lucien felt the atmosphere in the study suddenly change. To be more specific, even the gravity in the office had changed! Lucien realized that the tall white-haired elder was Douglas, the president of the Congress, the Emperor of Arcana, the Selected!

“No matter what you say, you’ve got no evidence!” Douglas frowned, “It’s even more unbelievable than the falling of the ancient magic empire!”

“What you know is restraining you from seeing more, Douglas. So far, this is the only proper explanation that we can find.” In private, Fernando was used to calling the president’s name directly.

“We need more evidence!” Facing the roaring, Douglas still managed to calmly express himself.

After yelling at each other, both of them slowly calmed down. After all, what they were arguing about still remained an assumption.

“Lucien... I’m afraid that only a young man like you who is free of one’s past experience can put forward this horrible assumption.” Douglas slightly sighed, “Although it’s still an assumption, the formula itself is for sure of great value and can contribute greatly to the development of the school of Thermodynamics. I believe that the Cabin of Palmeira and the far northland will not ignore your achievement. You deserve the Ice & Snow Medal.”

Chapter 342: The Reply

Chapter 342: The Reply

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The sunlight at noon was warm and bright. The study was all covered in a layer of gold. Both Douglas and Lucien had left the office. Right now, Fernando was sitting in the armchair by himself quietly.

Earlier the two grand arcanists had discussed how Lucien should submit and publish this paper. They decided to publish a few more papers first on the next month's Arcana about how the grand arcanists tried to explore the law behind the formula but all failed, so that they could prepare them for the next upcoming shock from Lucien's paper.

They were not trying to make the arcanists accept Lucien's theory right away. After all, this was still an assumption. By reading the articles, the two arcanists were trying to infuse the idea into the rest of the arcanists' brain gradually and slowly. That was why they kept mentioning the word "assumption".

"Shocking... Queer... Subversive..." Fernando murmured. These words were all his comments on Lucien's theory. Then he put on a mysterious smile and said, "I wonder who can first come up with the shocking conclusion from the first half part of the paper... Hathaway, or Brook?"

Hathaway was the founder of atomic theory, so she was more of a supporter of Douglas' particle theory, which made her the one who was most likely to get the same conclusion. The rest of the four grand arcanists were the typical proponents of wave theory, and among them Brook was the most loyal one. However, Brook was the most profound and powerful grand arcanists among the five.

"Let me guess... Who's gonna be the first one to visit me?" said Fernando rather casually.

As he was saying that, Fernando's eyes glanced at the mirror in the corner of the study. In the mirror, there stood an elderly man in a bright red robe. His black and white hair mixed, however, there was way more white than black.

The smile faded on Fernando's face. He raised his right hand, slightly touched his hair, and released a sigh. Taking out an old notebook from the drawer, he turned it to the last few pages and then started to write down the words:

"July 6th. Sunny. A bit windy. All of a sudden, I feel old."

Putting down the quill, Fernando looked out of the window, and the bright sunlight made him squint slightly.

...

Lucien had got back to his place.

Leo saw the difference on Lucien's face, but he did not say anything, while Sprint who just finished his study asked curiously, "Mr. Evans, you don't look so good. Did Mr. Fernando give you a hard time today?"

Sprint did not ask directly if the Lord of Storm yelled at Mr. Evans.

"I don't look good?" Lucien was a bit confused. However, when Lucien looked at himself in the crystal statue, he saw his face as pale as a piece of paper, as if he had just climbed out of the tomb.

Lucien did not expect that the power of a legendary archmage would be this horrible.

"Yes... Those were very tough questions." Lucien put on a smile, "Questions related to the peace of the whole world."

The corner of Sprint's lips twitched, "Are you joking, Mr. Evans? Was the Lord of Storm trying to destroy the world and you stopped him?"

"No... it was the opposite. I was trying to destroy the world, but Mr. Fernando stopped me." Although Lucien's face was pale, he was

in a pretty good mood, since he just successfully presented the terrifying assumption to his own teacher without exploding his teacher's head.

Sprint was not good at playing jokes. He looked up at the ceiling and said, "Mr. Evans, it's time for lunch..."

Seeing the same steak dish on the dining table, Lucien rubbed his forehead. It was time for the cook to come up with some new dishes.

At this time, Katrina, led by the servant, walked in. A big smile was on her good-looking face.

"Mr. Evans! The result from our application for Atom Institution is available now!" Katrina waved the document in her hand and said aloud.

"It's been only a few days..." Lucien was very surprised.

In most cases, the examination should take more than two weeks.

"Your application has the signature of the grand arcanist on it! Of course they wouldn't delay it." Katrina said excitedly, "Mr. Evans, open it and let's see the result!"

The bag required Lucien's arcana badge to be opened.

Sprint had been waiting for this day for a long time, and thus he was very nervous.

Lucien calmly took off the arcana badge and pressed it against the seal. Taking out the document, Lucien fast scanned it and then turned around.

"The application has been approved. The board hopes us to work hard, since we're focusing on a brand new research topic."

"Awesome!" Sprint happily took a swing with his fist.

Katrina also very encouraged, "Congratulations, Mr. Evans. Congratulations!"

Lucien hugged his students and sighed in his mind that the youngsters were still too naive. What the board was trying to say was that they had approved the application for the sake of the Lord of Storm, so Lucien had to work hard to show them that the decision was proper.

“So... where is our institution?” Katrina asked with her eyes sparkling with excitement.

Lucien picked up the document again, “The institution is going to use the No. 7 lab and its meeting room and office on the eighteenth floor of the headquarter. I’ll need to tell them how I want the lab to be and the whole set of equipment I want. All in all, at the end of July or at the beginning of August, Atom Institution will start officially.”

“Also, every month, we will get five thousand arcana points as a subsidy to buy materials and paying us.” Lucien added, “So my decision is... Ten arcana points every month for senior apprentices. As for the sorcerers, it depends on their levels. Say, a level two arcanist and a second circle sorcerer like Lazar... A hundred arcana points.”

As for Lucien himself, he did not have to get a fixed pay, since he was able to benefit from reporting to the Congress the cost of the experiments, which was an unspoken rule in the Congress of Magic.

“That’s a lot!” Both Sprint and Catrina were very surprised. They knew that when Mr. Evans was working for the magic school, he only earned ten points every month! Besides the pay, they could read the arcana books in the institution and do experiments for free. This was a dream job for every apprentice and new sorcerer!

Lazar only earned fifty to sixty arcana points every month working both for the Congress and the Will of Elements, plus what he got from his papers. As for Catrina, although she had got the dream job among the apprentices, she only got four points monthly.

“Of course, Atom Institution will be one of the most important research departments in the future. Our pay has to be impressive.” Lucien said half joking, “Right now, we don’t need too many

people. I'm thinking about hiring another two to three sorcerers and a middle-rank mage."

"You're... You're very confident, Mr. Evans." The corner of Sprint's lips twitched again.

"I've got faith in you, Mr. Evans! You almost shared the Laurel with Mr. Isabella this time." Katrina also joked, "If I can work for you, Mr. Evans, perhaps one day I can also have the honor like Rachel!"

Lucien grinned, "We shall feel the pressure. The board has given us three years. We have to show them something within three years, or the project will be canceled."

Most arcana researches would cost a very long time.

"We'll work hard!" answered Katrina and Sprint seriously.

Lucien waved the document in the air casually and said to Katrina, "Stay here and have lunch with us. We'll go and check the lab out tomorrow afternoon."

...

After Vicente Miranda, known as Thanatos, left, Fernando smirked and commented, "Vicente, you're the last one."

Fernando's face flushed from the heated discussion and argument in the whole afternoon. Walking back and forth in the study, Fernando took out his old notebook again and added after what he wrote down earlier:

"After the whole afternoon's debate and discussion, I feel refreshed and energetic again. I see the grandness of the world and I am fascinated with its stunning beauty and truth. I shall walk on this path until the day I die."

...

After visiting Atom Institution under construction, when Lucien was just about to leave, he heard someone calling his name in a slightly confused way:

“Mr. Lucien Evans?”

Looking up, Lucien saw Rachel and an elegant and beautiful lady standing beside her.

Chapter 343: The Latest Issue of Arcana

Chapter 343: The Latest Issue of Arcana

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

“Good afternoon, Miss Rachel.” Lucien smiled and greeted. Although he knew that the black-haired and blue-eyed lady was very likely to be Ms. Isabella, Lucien still asked politely, “And may I know who’s this?”

Lucien first met Rachel over the pollution control meeting held by Affairs Committee. Rachel’s brown eyes were still the same, gentle and kind, “It’s really nice to see you, Mr. Evans. This is my teacher, Ms. Isabella.”

“Good afternoon, Ms. Isabella.” Lucien first greeted, “Congratulations for winning the Laurel. And also, congratulations on the upgrading.”

Lucien saw the arcana badge Isabella was wearing had seven silver stars on it, and Rachel’s badge also had five stars.

Isabella, wearing the long, black dress, smiled, “I was about to visit you, Evans. Without your paper on brainwave, probably Rachel and I would have missed the Laurel. Your paper was a very important support to our theory.”

Whether what Isabella said was polite or sincere, hearing Isabella’s words, Lucien was quite cheerful, “My article was just a complement. Your research deserved the Laurel. My project application has been approved by the committee, so I’m here today to check the lab out.”

“A new project?” The smile on Isabella’s face was very elegant and polite, “I also have a new project studying how electromagnetic waves and electric currents can stimulate the different parts of the human brain, and I’m here for the same reason, too. I was about to invite you to join us, but now it seems that it’s not very likely to happen.”

Lucien knew that Isabella was capable of working on this project by herself. She was being polite to Lucien because he was a promising young arcanist, and his teacher was the Lord of Storm.

As the project had been approved, Lucien said honestly, “My project... Atom Institution specializes in studying the properties of atoms, and why the periodic law exists among the elements.”

“Atom Institution...” Isabella silently repeated the two words, feeling quite confused.

Rachel blinked. Although she could not speak it out, Rachel wondered in her mind how such an ambiguous and vague project managed to pass the review.

Lucien explained confidently, “This is a new attempt. No one knows what will happen when arcana steps into the new field. In this brand new field, no one knows for sure which direction we should take. The committee has decided to give me a relatively long period of time and some funds so I will not be afraid of encountering the failures when I’m working on it.”

“A relatively long period of time... Some funds...” Isabella felt something unusual with the project.

Lucien grinned, “I have three years to show the committee the value of the project.”

“Three years?!” Rachel was very surprised, as Ms. Isabella’s current research was only a one-year program. Also, while the fund they would get was closely related to the outcome of their project, it seemed that Lucien’s project was rather limitless and Lucien would be able to do whatever he wanted in the following three years!

Even Isabella, a profound senior-rank mage, slightly frowned, “Then how Affairs Committee makes sure that the money and time won’t be wasted?”

She did not say it directly that it totally did not make any sense that the committee had approved such an application.

“The form of institution is only for the arcanists who have made the

special contribution to a certain field, and his or her research capability is required to be reviewed as well. What is more important is that the arcanist has to have the endorsement from an authoritative arcanist in the corresponding field,” said Lucien very confidently. When he was saying so, he did not feel shy or embarrassed at all, “If the project fails, the cost will be the tuition we pay for exploring the new field. After all, we’re just crossing the river by feeling for the stones.”

Considering who was behind Lucien, both Isabella and Rachel thought to themselves that Lucien was not only good at studying arcana but also at getting funds from the Congress.

Comparing Lucien’s research project to what she had, Isabella’s smile on her face was now only for the sake of being polite. So she smoothly changed the topic, “It’s definitely a good attempt. Speaking of the attempt, I have read your paper in Drummond’s place about how you solved the problem that bothered the several grand arcanists. Honestly speaking, it did not come to me either that pure math would be the best way to combine the two formulas together. Congratulations.”

“Thank you, Ms. Isabella. However, I’m still being bothered by the meaning of the formula,” said Lucien. This was Lucien’s white lie.

The conversation did not last long. Soon, Lucien and Isabella bid their goodbye to each other and headed in opposite directions.

“Is she Ms. Isabella? I really wish that I could be like her one day...” said Katrina full of admiration. Recently, when she was working in Sorcerer Administrative Department, the name, Isabella, was always being mentioned by the sorcerers and lingering beside her ears. Isabella was like her role model as a female sorcerer.

“Then work hard.” Lucien smiled, “No pain, no gain.”

...

In the early morning on July 30th.

“... Happy birthday, Natasha.”

Putting down the quill, Lucien glued up the letter to Natasha. As usual, the letter was about the things that happened to Lucien in his daily life, but what was special this time was the piano piece that Lucien recomposed based on the birthday song.

Lucien put the letter in his pocket and then went to the dining hall to enjoy his breakfast.

Sprint, Katrina, Annick, Chely, and Heidi, as well as Lazar, had been waiting for Lucien in the dining hall. Except for Chely who was still studying in the magic school, the rest of them had left their jobs for the research project.

“Lucien! The latest issue of Arcana was launched earlier than usual again!”

When Lucien was about to sit down, a young man with messy hair rushed in. In his hand was the black-covered journal, Arcana.

“Lucien! The five grand arcanists have developed their essays based on the formula put forward by you! Your paper is the leading piece for this month’s issue. It’s amazing!”

The messy-haired young man was Rock, the teacher in Douglas Magic School, and also Lucien and Lazar’s friend.

After the application of setting up Atom Institution had been approved, Lucien wrote to his friends one by one hoping that they could be his assistant. Because Lucien was not expecting to hire too many people, he only sent out the next invitation after the previous one was rejected. Among his friends, Rock and Jerome accepted the offer immediately, as the following three years would be the key stage for them to strive for becoming a middle-rank.

Lazar was quite happy for being able to work with his friends. However, he also told Lucien that he would like to work with some beautiful females.

As for the arcanist around level five, Lucien was still looking for the right person. It was not easy because most arcanists of this level in the field of Element were already working for their own teachers,

working on their own projects, or adventuring outside of Allyn. K, Larry, Timothy, and Ulysses had all politely rejected Lucien's offer. However, Lucien was not in a hurry. Fortunately, the compulsory mission for Lucien from the Congress would not arrive until next year. So, he could first take care of this project on his own.

Rock's exaggerated manner of speaking triggered off Lazar and the apprentices' curiosity. They hurriedly asked, "What's the paper about?"

How came that all the papers from the grand arcanists were about Lucien's essay?!

"It's about black-body radiation! Lucien has figured out the formula that once baffled the two grand arcanists!" said Rock very excitedly. He never expected this two years before, when he first met Lucien.

"Really?!" The apprentices surrounded Rock like a flock of chirping little birds. Trying to find the familiar name on the journal.

Lazar could not get a step closer to Rock because of the excited apprentices. He turned around and said to Lucien, "Why don't you tell me directly what this essay is about?"

In the apprentices' admiring look, Lucien explained to Rock and Lazar briefly about the formula.

When listening to Lucien, Rock and Lazar frowned, "Why couldn't the formula be explained? What is behind your formula?"

They had quickly taken a glance at the papers from the five grand arcanists. Although they knew that they were very unlikely to be able to solve the problem, they still had the hope that somehow an inspirational flash could come to them.

However, the miracle did not happen. Maybe just like the several grand arcanists said, they had to overthrow the foundation of the current arcana system to find the real answer.

"If I knew, it would be on the paper already." Lucien lied again purposefully.

When Lucien finished his breakfast and was about to leave, Lazar asked Lucien curiously, “You’ve been working with Mr. Fernando for this long, have you got any new research topics? Relax, I won’t steal the ideas from you. I’m just being curious.”

“I do have a new perspective...” Lucien said casually, but slightly sighed in his mind, “Molecular movement theory in thermodynamic system...”

...

In the headquarter office of Arcana, after listening to the report about the launching of this month’s Arcana, Drummond got lost in his thoughts. He had never seen something like this, where all the seven grand arcanists were focusing on the same topic.

Somehow, he felt a bit anxious. He wondered what was behind the formula.

Chapter 344: The Arrangements

A few days later. On the 18th floor of the headquarter of the Congress.

The No. 7 lab was spacious and bright. Divided into different sections, the lab was provided with all kinds of alchemical operation desks and mysterious magic circles, and their light turned the lab into a dream-like place.

However, in the lab, there were only four sorcerers, Lucien, Lazar, Rock, Jerome, and the several apprentices. There were no guests here for a celebration. After all, for the sorcerers in the Congress, they did not see a newly-started research project without any solid findings as something worthy of celebration, and Lucien's unique-named institution was also not an exception. Meanwhile, Lucien was also happy with it because right now he did not want too much attention at all.

As the leading arcanist, Lucien cleared his throat a bit and said to the project members seriously, "Our research hasn't started yet; we have very few companies so far, and our findings haven't revealed themselves. In front of us are things that have been discovered, a new world that has never been touched. It's waiting for us. I believe that we'll see more and find more on our way marching forward. Today, we see the Congress as our honor; Tomorrow, the Congress will see us as its honor!"

In the end, Lucien spoke to his friends and students in a half-joking way.

His listeners were pretty surprised. They did not expect that Lucien was such a dreamer.

Lucien nodded to them and continued, "I need to attend the regular monthly meeting later. So Lazar will be responsible for managing the institution. Jerome, you take half of the apprentices with you and set about studying the changing properties of materials under low temperature. Let's start with the common materials such as

coal, iron, Mythril and Adamantine... I need you to take down all the records every time when you change the temperature by one degree. It's an experiment requiring a lot of patience. Jerome, you're the ideal person for it. Do be careful when working in the extreme low-temperature environment though."

So far, the Congress's research on ultralow temperature still remained on studying liquid hydrogen, which meant that the Congress was still about ten degrees away from the temperature required for achieving superconductivity. In the world that Lucien came from, the problem had not been solved until helium was discovered. So Lucien was not planning on making them find the phenomenon of superconductivity.

What Lucien was trying to push them toward was to find the fact that charcoal would be able to absorb air very easily at lower than minus 180 Celsius degree, which could be used as a very handy tool for creating a vacuum environment. In the future, it would be very useful for Lucien's upcoming experiments.

Jerome nodded and accepted the task.

Lucien turned to Rock and said, "Rock, you take the other half of the apprentices to study gas discharge under different pressure conditions. Larry and K have basically fully developed the theory of ionization, and they have proved that it is the ions carrying positron and electron that enables electricity to conduct in a solution. So we're now switching to the other question — how and why gas discharges?"

Ions... That was the name from Larry and K.

Rock also nodded and took the job.

In the end, Lucien said to Lazar, "You're the coordinator. Whoever needs help, you go there. In your free time, you can do your own thing."

"I'll keep a close watch on them." Lazar grinned, "I wonder how many things are there in your mind. You can always connect seemingly-unrelated things together."

Only Lucien himself knew why he could do so, but, of course, he would not speak to anyone.

...

After making all the arrangements, Lucien left the lab.

"Evans?"

"Mr. Evans?"

In the corner of the corridor, Lucien ran into Isabella and Rachel again.

After greeting each other, Isabella seized the chance and hurriedly asked, "Evans, I've read your formula and the papers from the five grand arcanists. Neither of them can explain the meaning of the formula. There's only one possibility, right? You know what I'm talking about."

This was the question that had been bothering every arcanist who understood the papers published in this month's Arcana.

"In fact, I've got some clues. And I'm working on it, although it's tough." Following Fernando and Douglas' words, Lucien gradually revealed the truth.

"Really?!" Both Isabella and Rachel asked very surprisedly, as they never expected that Lucien could really offer them the answer.

But as soon as they asked, the two ladies hurriedly apologized, saying that they did not mean to pry into Lucien's research.

Lucien did not mind it at all, "My tough job is almost done, and Mr. Fernando also knows what it is about. So it's totally fine to share."

"Then please, Mr. Evans." Rachel smiled. She knew that her teacher, Isabella, would feel shy and restrained from asking, so she, as the student, should be the one to take the initiative.

"Follow the perspective of molecular movement put forward by my fellow, Cole, and introduce probability into the analysis of the

formula." Lucien basically opened the gate for them.

Isabella nodded thoughtfully and said, "It's been more than ten years since Cole first put forward the theory. Since the theory was first developed, arguments and criticism were always around it, until the theory's explanation for the second law won Cole the Ice & Snow Medal. However, many arcanists are still holding a negative attitude toward it. So, even if they're trying to explain your formula, not many would consider Cole's theory as a possible path."

Feeling excited, Isabella wanted to try it out as soon as possible. This was not for publishing any papers or winning any honor, but for the sake of her passion for arcana and curiosity. Furthermore, Rachel felt the same way.

At the same time, Lucien's casual tone and relaxed manner made Isabella and Rachel believe that he had figured out how to explain the formula, and he was going to submit the paper very soon.

...

In Fernando's study.

When Lucien arrived, the rest of his classmates were all there, except the crystal dragon, Alferris.

"Where's our little crystal, Thompson?" Ashikana liked to call its nickname.

Thompson slightly lifted his gold-edged glasses and said, "I haven't seen it for a month. Maybe Alferris sold itself again because of money..."

Thompson sounded quite uncertain, but he was not worrying for Alferris. The little crystal dragon should be safe as long as it was still within the five hundred miles range from Allyn. As a dragon, Alferris could protect itself properly.

"Alferris is safe. No worries," said Fernando directly. "Let's start the discussion, from Cole."

Cole was pondering over something when Fernando called his

name. He first looked at his teacher and then Lucien, and then he started the sharing, "I went to an underground magma cave last month..."

Finishing his sharing of his findings in the cave, Cole looked at Fernando and Lucien again, "After reading this month's Arcana, I have developed a great interest in your formula. I tried several different methods but all failed, and then I tried to use my molecular movement theory. It seems to be working, but it's going to take a few more weeks to be proved. I'd like to share with you, Evans, so hopefully you can get some useful ideas from it."

Although Cole had won Ice & Snow Medal and was a member of the Review Board, his personality was still very cautious and even a bit coward. Cole was more like a poet than a sorcerer. Although he was totally entitled to say that this was his own finding, he was worried that Lucien might see him as an enemy who was trying to steal the research outcome, therefore, he tried his best to tell Lucien that he was just trying to help.

"Using molecular movement theory... You're not stupid." Fernando, as usual, was quite cheap on giving his students praise, "But Lucien has already figured this out using this method. Let's see how he did it."

The rest of the students were all very surprised. If Lucien already had some clues before Arcana was released, the journal would have for sure postponed the publication to wait for his findings. It meant that Lucien had found the correct direction and finished all the challenging work only within the few days after this month's Arcana was published. That was incredible!

"Thank you a lot, Cole, for your theory has inspired me so much." Lucien nodded and briefly shared with them how the work was done. But when making the presupposition for the formula, Lucien purposefully skipped the most fundamental assumption. Because the rest of the students were still busy with taking down all the details from Lucien's words for their own analysis later, neither of them noticed the problem.

Later, the rest of the students also shared their researches. In the

end, Fernando said something about his several major pieces of research and discussed some of the problems that he encountered with his students.

After the meeting, when the students were leaving, Lacie Carter said to Lucien half-jokingly, "Evans, I see another winner of Ice & Snow Medal."

At this time, the door of the study was pushed open fiercely and Alferris came in. In its child-like voice, it asked in surprise, "The meeting is already over?"

"Yes, it's over," answered Ashikana, feeling a bit amused. "Where did you go?"

Covering its eyes with its claws, Alferris peeked at Fernando from the gap, "I overslept..."

"So what kind of research made you so tired?" Thompson tried not to laugh.

"I'm studying dreams," said Alferris in a serious way that sounded very funny.

"I see. So you've slept for almost a month? Haha..." Thompson laughed hard.

Lucien also grinned. It seemed to be true that dragons indeed loved sleeping.

...

In the quiet night, everything was immersed in silence.

Sitting in his study, Cole wrote down the experiment details shared by Lucien earlier today. He read every single word very carefully and from time to time wrote down his own thinking.

Akashina, Thompson and the rest of the students were doing the same thing. However, they still had their own focuses, so they did not have much time for this, especially when the answer was already available. They were not in a hurry.

Isabella and Rachel started to work on studying the law behind the formula following Lucien's words.

In his study, Lucien stood behind the desk. It took him quite a while to write down the title of the paper: The Energy Distribution of Black-Body Radiation.

Chapter 345: The Impact

Chapter 345: The Impact

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

In the administration office of the Sorcerer Administrative Department.

Looking at Lucien across the desk, there was a funny smile on Eric's face, that usually looked serious, "Evans, are you here to submit your new paper again?"

It was unbelievable how fast Lucien could develop a new paper. It had been just about a month since the last time he submitted the paper which had stirred the debate between the five grand arcanists. And now, here was Lucien again.

Most arcanists could never imagine producing high-quality papers in such a speed, and many arcana and magic researches often took years to be completed, while Lucien's papers still managed to keep the standards high.

"Yes, Mr. Eric. It's connected to my previous paper. I've finished explaining the formula from the perspective of arcana." Lucien handed the paper to Eric and smiled.

Eric looked very surprised, "You've found the explanation? You mean explaining the formula that all of the five grand arcanists have failed to analyze from every single perspective?"

"That's right," answered Lucien straightforward.

Eric slightly opened his mouth but failed to speak any words. After several attempts, Eric said to Lucien, "You know... Your formula has been under heated discussion everywhere in the Congress. Even my friends who are outside of Allyn are also deeply concerned about it. However, no one has got any clues... It's been bothering lots of people, including myself, so much that the formula which fits the data of black-body radiation so perfectly fails to match any

existing theories or explanations. Maybe just like how the grand arcanists put it, we have to make some subversive assumptions to find the right path. And all of these only took you a month. You're really the most outstanding genius among the younger arcanist generation."

Eric also tried to explore the meaning behind the formula after reading Arcana, however, he failed just like most of the arcanists. And the formula became just a popular topic for most of them.

"I'm not the only one who's found the direction. Another student of Mr. Fernando, Cole, has found the right path as well. I just finished the work earlier than him."

Eric knew that Lucien and he were in the two totally different circles of arcanists. Eric's serious-looking face now had a curious look on it and he asked, "So, Evans, have you really made a subversive assumption?"

"Of course. It's very shocking, but it's still an assumption, and currently, it cannot be proved." Lucien purposefully emphasized.

Eric did not dig into Lucien's answer as it was not polite to ask the author too much about the paper before the review result was available, although he knew that Lucien, as the student of the Lord of Storm, would not really mind it.

"Subversive... cannot be proved..." Eric murmured to himself. He put Lucien's paper in the small cage and pulled the bell rope.

...

In the study of the magic tower.

The magic candles in front of Cole had burned to their ends. The morning light sneaked into the study and gradually drove away the darkness.

Without being affected, Cole stared at the piece of paper on the desk, frowning. He pondered why he was still unable to explain the formula even if he had adopted Lucien's method. There must be something important missing.

Cole decided to start the work over again after recalling his conversation with Lucien.

...

On the fifteenth floor of the major magic tower of Allyn, in the hall of Arcana Review Board, the bells were ringing, and the complex magic circle started to glow with a white light. When the light disappeared, piles of documents appeared at the center of the magic circle. Long metal arms picked up the documents and a cold, mechanized voice read:

“Necromancy... To Ms. Tina-Timos, Mr. Haggard.”

“Element... To Mr. Overee, Ms. LockLynn.”

“Thermodynamics...” at this time, the mechanized voice paused and read the title out, “The Energy Distribution of Black Body Radiation...”

After a few seconds, the voice said, “To Mr. Cole, Ms. Sonya.”

Lucien’s paper was duplicated into three copies. One for the record and the other two were sent to two different magic circles...

...

In the study.

Using Lucien’s method, Cole’s calculation was fast. After a few hours, the formula gradually came into being.

To make the formula work, Cole knew that he had to make a hypothesis. Uncontrollably, Cole’s thin face was written with fear, and beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. He could not help murmuring, “This... this goes against the classical equipartition of energy theorem!”

Equipartition theorem was another outstanding achievement from Cole, developed based on Mr. Brook’s theory. However, when Cole used his own newly-developed molecular movement theory and introduced the concept of probability and entropy into the formula,

the conclusion went against the important premise of the equipartition theorem—the continuity of energy! Cole’s head buzzed as if he just got a slap on the face. He felt that his body and soul were divided into two parts, with an angel on one side and a devil on the other!

Cole all of a sudden could not see well. He shook his head fiercely and denied his conclusion.

“Impossible! It’s impossible! There must be other explanations!”

In his meditation world which had started to substantialize, the countless little black dots started to move around disorderedly like they were being boiled in water.

“There must be something wrong here!” Cole shouted at himself, trying his best to calm down a bit.

At this time, someone was knocking at the window. Cole was pulled back to reality and he hurriedly turned around. An alchemical servant made of gas was floating in the air holding several papers.

“Master, these are the papers that haven’t been reviewed. You want me to send them to your students?”

Cole wiped the beads of sweat on his forehead and said in a weak voice, “Let me take a look first.”

Taking over the papers, he saw the title which had been bothering him for several days—The Energy Distribution of Black-Body Radiation.

Cole did not expect that this was the very first paper he was going to review today.

Cole’s breath became faster. Nervously, with his shaking hands, he unwrapped the bag and pulled out the paper, which, not surprisingly, began with a familiar name: Lucien Evans X.

Scanning the paper from beginning to end, in one of the lines of the paper, he saw Lucien’s statement:

“To make the formula work, it must be assumed that the emission and absorption of energy are discontinuous, but in portions.”

Boom!

Cole was too afraid to give much thought to it, but now at this moment, Lucien’s conclusion on the paper became the only thing he could see in this world.

“...it must be assumed that the emission and absorption of energy are discontinuous, but in portions.” Cole, as if he was enchanted by the line of words, felt totally lost and he could not help shaking his head. To him, the line was like a curse from the demon.

In his cognitive world, the little black dots suddenly moved around fiercely like they were all crazy! The whole world had reached the ultimate disorder and fell into a complete chaos!

Bang!

Cole’s brain suddenly exploded! The pieces of paper, books, desk, and chair around Cole were covered in red and white...

...

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Cole suddenly woke up. Both of his hands directly went to his head. Until Cole’s hands felt that his head was still there safe and sound, he looked around out of panic.

He was still in his study. In front of him was a pile of the manuscript written with messy words. All of them were the derivation of Lucien’s formula.

“Maybe I was too tired so I had such a horrible dream...” Cole was still haunted by the thought of that nightmare.

However, when Cole recalled how clear the calculation and derivation were in his dream, his hands started to tremble slightly again. When he picked up the manuscript again, he somehow felt more prepared for the final answer that he was subconsciously

trying to avoid.

After a while, Cole said to himself in a low voice, “Do I really have to make the assumption? It’s just a hypothesis...”

At this time, the gas servant knocked at the window. Cole saw his gas servant drifted in exactly like what happened in his dream. Taking a deep breath, he took over the several papers. And within his expectation, he saw the paper titled, The Energy Distribution of Black-Body Radiation.

After sitting there still for almost half an hour, Cole pulled out the paper. Although he did not have to do this himself, as an arcanist, he could not help because of his curiosity. He wanted to see it with his own eyes.

“To make the formula work, it must be assumed that the emission and absorption of energy is discontinuous, but in portions.”

Cole closed his eyes and leaned against the back of the chair. Again, his cognitive world started to become messy and disorganized. But this time, it was far from being a chaos.

“It’s just an assumption... Still an assumption...” Cole’s voice became weak. His eyes, nose, mouth, and ears started to bleed.

Although he was prepared, the subversive answer still hurt his soul and had greatly shaken his meditation world.

“It’s still an assumption...”

Outside of the window, the Lord of Storm wearing the bright red magic robe released a long sigh and disappeared in the air with the crystal dragon, Alferris.

Among all of the senior-rank arcanists, the Lord of Storm worried about Cole the most. The analysis of the formula was based on one of Cole’s own theories, but it went against another. This was very dangerous to his cognition world.

After three hours, Cole started to feel less dizzy. Staring at the paper on the desk, he looked intimidated as if he was facing a terrible

enemy.

He paused for a while, picked up the quill, and started to write down his comment.

Chapter 346: The Ignored Paper

"Based on molecular movement theory, introducing entropy into the explanation of the formula, Lucien Evans' has provided us with a relatively complete analysis of the meaning of the formula, and thus solved the problem that has bothered many arcanists. The thermal radiation law is of great meaning to arcana research, so the outcome can be called as a breakthrough. The explanation is vital in improving the spells in the field of Thermodynamics, and the explanation itself is definitely worthy of profound discussion."

Cole paused for a moment and he could not help writing, "However, the premise of the paper is still an assumption. When using Evans Constant, it's better not to dig into the arcana meaning of it. We can only use it as a constant to help us solve problems. The assumption has not been proved as the one and only explanation to the constant."

If the first part of his comment was indeed written by him in the tone of a member of the review board, what followed it was produced by Cole's fear deep in his heart:

"In conclusion, it is recommended that forty-five arcana credits and four hundred arcana points should be given as Lucien Evans' reward."

The suggested reward was even greater than that of Lucien's last paper about brainwave, which showed the great value that the arcanists saw in the formula. However, compared to the credits and points that Lucien obtained from putting forward the periodic table of elements and the paper on synthesized carbamide, the reward was not decent enough, which showed the fact that Cole, as an orthodox arcanist, was feeling afraid, unpleasant and resistant in front of such a bold and shocking assumption especially when it had not been verified yet.

If the theory that the formula based on was not from Cole himself, the suggested reward might be even lower.

...

In a luxuriously decorated office of the Arcana Review Board, the floor was covered with the dark brown carpet imported from the other side of the ocean, the magic crystal light hung onto the ceiling, and in the walls, there were fine figures carved in relief. In the corner of the room, there was a private bar counter, behind which bottles of precious liquor were placed on a wine rack—the Lace from the Duchy of Violet, Berne wine, the Gold Rum from the Kingdom of Syracuse, the Black Metz and the Gold Lega from Schachran Empire.

Behind the desk sat a lady of wine-red hair. Tasting the golden liquid, she casually leafed through the papers to decide which ones she was going to keep for herself to review and which ones should be sent to her students or the arcanists working with her.

She was for sure nice-looking. Gulping the liquor, her eyes were even brighter. She was not drunk at all.

"The Energy Distribution of Black-Body Radiation?" murmured Sonya, a level seven arcanist and eighth-circle sorcerer from the Cabin of Palmeira. She wondered if the paper was about the explanation of the black-body radiation formula published recently on Arcana.

As an authority in studying snow and ice magic spells, Sonya put great emphasis on the formula of thermal radiation. Not only were the high-temperature spells related to thermal radiation, but also the spells using snow and ice. As an arcanist who was for sure capable of exploring the meaning of the formula, she had been so bothered by the problem recently that she even canceled her trip going back to the far Northland.

Meanwhile, she had also found some clues. She knew that Cole's new theory should be helpful.

However, she still had to overcome a lot of difficulties and problems before reaching the final answer. She was expecting to spend another two weeks to finish the tough task. When seeing the title of the paper, her great curiosity was lit up.

Pulling out the paper from the bag, she became certain that the paper was about the meaning of the formula when seeing Lucien's name on the front page. To her surprise, Lucien Evans had solved the problem which had been bothering the several grand arcanists for so long within this short period of time.

After reading the first part of the paper and seeing that Lucien also took the same perspective, there was a triumphant smile on her face. Gulping the liquor in her hand, she believed that all the great arcanists often shared the same opinion.

But a while later, the smile on Sonya's face gradually froze.

"To make the formula work, it must be assumed that the emission and absorption of energy is discontinuous, but in portions."

The golden liquid in her glass started to become frozen from her spiritual power.

"What a subversive assumption..." Sonya sucked in her lips and her mind was full of all kinds of thoughts and emotions. There was anger, sarcasm, and also fear.

Sonya's cold cognitive world in which the countless black dots moved slowly started to become even colder, and the snowstorm grew much stronger.

Fortunately, from the five arcanists' papers, Sonya was more or less mentally prepared for such a conclusion. To be more specific, this was only Lucien's assumption so far. She could handle it.

However, soon the temperature of the whole office dropped. The carpet, the desk, and all the places without the protection of the magic circles started to freeze, including the wine bottles on the rack.

"He did it! He explained the arcana meaning of the formula!" Sonya could not help but speak it out in high volume.

In great fear, she reread the line:

"To make the formula work, it must be assumed that the emission

and absorption of energy are discontinuous, but in portions."

She murmured to herself, "That being said... the assumption is possibly correct!"

Grabbing the quill on the desk, Sonya started her own calculation and deduction using Lucien's method. She could not believe it!

In the office, heavy snow started to pile up, and the cold wind blew. Being close to the ninth-circle, the changes in Sonya's cognitive world were powerful enough to affect the physical world.

"Demon!" Sonya sprang to her feet from the chair and threw away the quill. Her mind was occupied by the great fear.

All of the wine bottles exploded on the rack. The liquor of all kinds of colors spilled onto the floor and the colors shaped great contrast with the snow.

Then, Sonya collapsed back into the chair and murmured repeatedly, "It's just an assumption... Just an assumption..."

Her eyes and face started to be covered by a thin layer of ice-blue crystal.

Although her situation was way better than that of Cole, and she would say that she was more or less prepared for something big, Sonya was still unable to accept the assumption properly. If she nodded and conceded that the assumption made sense, she was, in fact, admitting that the foundation of the whole arcana system was an error, which was basically a denial of her life.

Unavoidably, Sonya's soul was hurt when her cognitive world was greatly shaken. Fortunately, she still managed to maintain her world of cognition and would still be able to progress further.

"Assumption, just an assumption so far..."

Sitting there, letting time pass by, Sonya finally slowly recovered and looked around.

"My wine!"

She had spent a lot of effort on collecting all the bottles of nice wine. However, right now, they were all on the floor!

Sighing, Sonya shook her head with a bitter smile, "Working for the review board can be very dangerous. I shall have the board compensate for my loss. I wish I could directly have Lucien Evans pay for this!"

Taking a glance at the paper, there was still fear in Sonya's eyes, as if in the document bag was sealed a demon that was powerful enough to destroy the whole world.

Rubbing the corner of her forehead, Sonya started to write down her review comment,

"This paper has defined the arcane value of the Evans' Black-Body Radiation Formula and has solved the problem that has been troubling many arcanists for a long time. Although the premise of the explanation of the formula has not been confirmed, the fact that the formula is explainable is still of great value. It's an important paper in the field of Thermodynamics that is worthy of in-depth discussion."

Like Cole, Sonya could not help but continued to write:

"Before the assumption is verified, it is not wise for one to put too much thought into it. Use Evans constant like the other common constants, and I suggest that, for the time being, the comment should be put at the beginning of the paper, so more arcanists could be more or less mentally prepared and previously warned. For the whole paper, I recommend that thirty arcana credits and three hundred and fifty arcana points shall be given as the reward."

If Lucien had not also said repeatedly in his paper that the premise of the explanation was just an assumption, and the paper was very logically developed and clearly presented, Sonya was very likely to reject the paper or make it fail to pass the review.

...

After the review result was available, many senior-rank arcanists

had soon got the news and borrowed the paper to read.

In the headquarter office of Arcana, Drummond threw the paper fiercely on the desk. Although he was previously warned, his soul was slightly hurt, and his eyes turned red from the anger.

"It hasn't been verified!" roared Drummond angrily.

...

Isabella, with the paper lying open in front of her on the desk, murmured to herself as if she was totally lost:

"Continuity... discontinuous... in portions..."

She saw illusions. She saw demons, devils, angels, gods, goddesses, as well as the stars of destiny. Her arcana world in her cognition now had cracks on it.

Wiping off the blood from the corner of her lips, Isabella comforted herself, "There might be another explanation..."

A long time later, Isabella told her student, Rachel, "When using the constant, I hope you can ignore the absurd assumption for now..."

...

The senior-rank arcanists' response was within Lucien's expectation. He knew that they would feel greatly shocked and terrified, and then they would tell themselves that only using the formula itself should be enough and they should for now ignore the assumption.

The grand arcanists offered most of the other arcanists some buffering time.

Without the support of firm and solid evidence, the assumption that rebelled against the orthodoxy and was powerful enough to destroy the existing arcana world system was doomed to be ignored and exiled by the ruler.

That was the path that every new ruler had to take before reaching his or her throne!

...

"Based on the comments from the two members, the overall comment on Lucien Evans' paper is: groundbreaking and worthy of in-depth discussion. The paper was of great value, but its premise has not been proved, and the conclusion of the paper goes against the current understanding accepted by the public. Therefore, the paper is not persuasive and convincing enough. Therefore, thirty-five arcana credits and three hundred eighty arcana points are given to Lucien Evans as the reward."

Lucien had expected the result. He was already happy with the fact that the two members of the review board still had their heads on their necks intact.

At this time, Rock, who was responsible for the project of studying gas discharge walked in, and he said to Lucien in the office, "We've found something strange. You might want to take a look at it."

Chapter 347: The Regulations

"What is that?" asked Lucien while knowing the answer. He would now call himself a better actor.

The finding was discovered way faster than Lucien expected, which was to his surprise.

Rock said to Lucien excitedly, "We've probably discovered something new! It's f**king awesome. Come on, Lucien! Come and take a look!"

When Rock got all excited, he would not mind his words.

It was very rare that a young sorcerer managed to grow into a level five arcanist from scratch within only a couple of years like Lucien. Although the finding might not be something outstanding to Lucien, as every single one of his papers had received very high comments or had triggered heated discussions, to most arcanists below middle-rank and the apprentices, a new finding meant at least ten arcana credits and more citation earnings, which was a lot to them. A new finding could help them become a level two arcanist in a few months and lay a solid foundation for their further progress.

"Rock, calm down." Lucien stopped his work and followed Rock into the lab next door.

"Now I feel that I'm a f**king genius, not because I'm talented in arcana or something, but because I chose to work with you, the real genius!" Rock was right now very talkative because of his excitement, "Without you, we'd have never thought of studying gas discharge from the conductivity of solutions. After several months, when I can wear the level two arcana badge back at school, the idiots from the School of Electromagnetics will for sure drop their chin!"

The sorcerers from the School of Electromagnetics had never put too much thought into this because they were too used to the fact that lightning could be produced in the air.

Lucien slightly twitched the corner of his lips. Although Lucien for now still had no idea whether what Rock had found was cathode ray (stream of electrons) or plasma, in Lucien's eyes, Rock was obviously being overly excited. If Rock knew what was still waiting for him up ahead, Lucien was afraid that Rock might get too thrilled to retain his right mind.

However, at the same time, the arcanists below middle-rank, such as Rock and Lazar, could be Lucien's good potential supporters because their meditation world had not been completely built, therefore, it was easier for them to accept new theories.

Mr. Planck, the scientist on the Earth who first put forward the assumption of energy quantum once said, "A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it."

Of course, however, for the Congress, every senior-rank mage was very precious. Avoiding the explosion of even one single senior-rank mage's head could be a great victory to the Congress.

After the refurbishment, the new lab was shining in metallic luster. The countless cold lines formed the many complex magic symbols and circles. The arrangement of the lines and pipes was almost like an abstract picture. The claws made of metal or cut from the real magic beasts hanging down from the ceiling could help the apprentices avoid some dangerous operations.

Lucien had applied for it that all the alchemical operation areas and magic circles should be protected by the counter-curse spells because many sorcerers had died from doing the experiments unprotected. Meanwhile, Lucien was clearly aware of the fact that the several counter-curse magic circles that he had carefully chosen all contained some amount of lead, or the radiation would sooner or later kill him, which was for sure not fun.

"Show what happened to Lucien. Do the experiment again." Rock led Lucien to the discharge magic circle, and asked the two apprentices, Sprint and Heidi, to repeat the process. Lazar was also there.

Sprint and Heidi, because they were not steady and calm enough, were not picked by Jerome and did not manage to join the experiment group studying ultralow temperature, but now they had found something new with Mr. Rock, so they were also very encouraged, as if they could already see the picture that they were putting on the arcana badge.

Sprint first activated one magic circle and pumped out most of the gas from the discharge magic circle. Then Heidi turned the discharge magic circle on to produce a high voltage.

The gas started to discharge and give out light, however, what was strange was that, on the piece of glass opposite to the cathode magic circle, green light also appeared. When Heidi turned the magic circle off, the green light disappeared.

"The cathode magic circle did not have anything directly projected onto it. Nothing similar like this can be found in the papers. Maybe... maybe we have found a new kind of invisible ray." Rock looked expectantly at Lucien, feeling a little nervous waiting for his answer.

In most of the middle and junior-rank arcanists' eyes, Lucien was already an authority in arcana and thus he should be able to tell what this phenomenon meant.

Lazar, Heidi, and sprint were also holding their breaths, waiting for Lucien's response.

The atmosphere became somewhat frozen, like how Lucien felt in the face of the Lord of Storm. Lucien knew that, sure enough, what they had discovered was cathode ray. Lucien was a bit relieved.

This was a kind of electron current, through which the existence of electrons could be found, and thus the fact that an atom could be further divided and it also had its own inner structure could be revealed. The finding would overthrow the current theories on atoms!

However, there was still a long way in front of them to prove that a cathode ray, in fact, consisted of electrons, which were the internal

particles of an atom. They still had to do lots of experiments to reach the final conclusion.

Lucien shook his head with a smile, "It's only our hypothesis until it's proven experimentally. The only thing we can be sure about is that no one has noticed this phenomenon before in doing discharging experiments. However, we can't rule out the possibility that this ray is some kind of electromagnetic wave or streams of particles that we're already familiar with. We now have to design different experiments to verify this. All of you should put your hands on the research. You design the experiments on your own, so you can publish your own paper."

As Lucien was saying, he turned on the discharge magic circle. When the green light appeared on the glass on the other side again, Lucien put an object in between. The corresponding shadow of the shape of the object appeared on the glass immediately, which showed the fact that the green light was from the discharge magic circle.

"Got it!" All the arcanists and apprentices answered excitedly. Their mind was full of hope, and they were also grateful to Lucien's kindness. To their surprise, Lucien allowed the institution members to publish papers on their own. Unlike other projects, no matter if the leader was involved in the design of the experiment in person or not, the project leader should always be the first author of the paper.

If they had really found something new, their papers on the designed experiments would for sure be cited very frequently. Although the credits they would earn would never be as high as the major paper announcing the existence of cathode ray, the gain would still be very decent.

The arcanists and apprentices all agreed that Lucien should be the first author of the major paper, not only because he was the leader of the institution, but also because he designed and arranged the whole experiment.

Seeing that all the institution members were quite excited, Lucien smiled. "I'll join you, too. Jerome's group can also try to design the

experiments during their spare time. By the way, here I want to announce a couple of regulations in our Atom Institution. First, I'll never steal the idea from you if you come up with the new research design on your own. As the exclusive author, you'll have your own name on the paper. Second, for the rest of the research findings, no one can publish them personally without permission. As the leader of the institution, I have to sign my name on the paper and endorse the findings first, and this is the regulation of the Congress. Third, on the Monday of each week, there should be a regular meeting to discuss the progress and the current stage of each experiment."

Lucien changed the monthly meeting to weekly because they were working on the specific projects. After saying this, Lucien was amused by himself because now he felt himself like a mentor or a boss.

The arcanists and apprentices all agreed on the regulations put forward by Lucien. In fact, they were already grateful because of the space Lucien left to them.

...

Because of the great stir caused by the last month's Arcana, although Lucien's new paper was not yet published, many senior and middle-rank arcanists had found their own ways and managed to borrow the paper explaining the arcana meaning of the formula.

Heidler, in the Kingdom of Holm, in the headquarter office of the Hand of Paleness.

After becoming a senior-rank mage, Felipe had been working on building magic structures in his soul. Right now, he was standing beside the window looking out with his hands in the pockets of his black long coat.

Felipe never expected that there was such a big secret in the Hand of Paleness—they had found the World of Souls in another dimension and not even the Congress had any clue.

Talented and full of potential as Felipe was, he soon became a core member of the Hand of Paleness and got to know the existence of

the World of Souls. Felipe now knew that it was a creepy dimension which was more or less like a projection of this world. Also, many souls and spectres in there were, in fact, intelligent, and they also had their own language. The name, the World of Souls, was actually translated from their language.

Because connecting to the World of Souls could help the necromancers summon even more powerful spectres and thus strengthen the power of the group greatly, the Hand of Paleness concealed the secret and took their time exploring the dimension.

At this time, when everything appeared to be rather dim and gray, a colorful parrot landed on Felipe's right hand with a roll of parchment on its neck.

"Mr. Felipe, this is the paper you wanted," said the parrot.

Felipe nodded slightly and grabbed some fine rice grains to feed the bird. He wondered whether his competitor had really figured out the meaning of the formula.

After the parrot left, Felipe unrolled the piece of parchment and his face became even paler when seeing the level five arcanist title in front of Lucien's name. Although in the past couple of years his experiment on synthesizing life substances had earned him decent credits, he was still a thousand credits away from reaching level six. Right now, they were both of level five, and there was not a very big difference between them.

When reading the paper, Felipe frowned. He wondered if Lucien had ever thought of the possible criticism and attacks from the sorcerers supporting Energy Essentialism when making such an assumption.

As a necromancer who also studied elements, alchemy and illusions, whether the form of energy was continuous or discontinuous did not matter to Felipe that much, after all, his cognitive world did not require his understanding in the form of energy to stay stable.

In fact, for Felipe, it was very difficult for him to read the paper on thermal radiation. He just did not want to miss the information

from his competitor, Professor, or he would never touch a paper like this.

...

In the Kingdom of Brianne, a sorcerer with a mustache now looked rather pissed.

"How can such a paper pass the review? Are those members of the review board afraid of Fernando that much? Ridiculous! The assumption is total nonsense!" The archmage, Lauren, talked to himself angrily.

His hands behind his back, Lauren walked back and forth. Then he sat down behind his desk and grabbed the quill. He needed to write a paper to point it out that the assumption was absurd.

However, the point of the quill paused above the paper. After all, Lucien also said that this was just an assumption which had not been verified yet. Furthermore, Lauren totally had no idea what the other possible explanations would be.

Lauren put down the quill. He had decided to just let go of Lucien's paper and let it just be gradually ignored by the arcanists.

Chapter 348: Everything Is Ready

On the first day of September, the latest issue of Arcana was released.

As they were working for Atom Institution, Lazar, Rock, and Jerome could now afford to buy every month's Arcana, and they did not need to go to the library to borrow the journals to save money anymore.

"This assumption is completely beyond my imagination! But I have to say that the formula indeed can be explained based on the assumption." In the meeting room, when the institution members were waiting for Lucien's arrival, Lazar exclaimed. However, because of his arcana knowledge in thermal radiation was not adequate, and also because of most arcanists' attitude toward Lucien's assumption, Lazar believed that this assumption would sooner or later be replaced by another explanation which made sense.

Only those arcanists who had once derived the formula in person and who had seen that all the possible explanations failed to serve the formula could see the rationality of Lucien's assumption, which could push their cognitive world into a great chaos since the assumption conflicted with the fundamental belief of the arcana world and the theory of Mr. Brook. Meanwhile, for those who did not have this profound understanding of this topic, on the contrary, they would not be affected in the same way.

Rock stood up and walked back and forth excitedly in the classroom, "Lucien's awesome! He's the only person who could make this incredible assumption! I love the subversiveness! I shall hug him when he arrives! I shall hug my idol! The study of arcana should not be like a stagnant pond, but full of storms!"

It seemed that Rock wished that he was the one who came up with the assumption.

Jerome's face looked a bit pale, but soon he calmed down, "This is

just an assumption, and we don't have put too much thought into it for now. Just use the formula. Leave the tough problem to the grand arcanists."

"That's very typical of Jerome. Always calm." Lazar grinned. He did not really mind the assumption, maybe purposefully.

Meanwhile, the apprentices were sitting on the other side of the meeting room. They did not really understand what the arcanists were talking about.

At this time, Lucien walked in with a thick pile of paper and a copy of Arcana. He smiled and said to the institution members, "Now let's see what we have done in the past week."

...

In Allyn, be it in the magic towers, under the trees, in the grand coaches, or any other place, countless arcanists were greatly shocked when encountering Lucien's bold assumption in the latest issue of Arcana.

However, soon, the same comment—"This is just an assumption"—could be heard in every corner of the city. When they were saying so, there was fear and worry in their voice. They would only need the formula and the constant for improving the spells...

And they also wondered what the term, cathode ray, mentioned in the paper, meant.

...

In Rentato, the royal magic tower of Holm, the headquarter of the Will of Elements.

K was reading Arcana carefully, and his hands were shaking slightly. There were already three silver stars on his arcana badge, and the tiny silver dots surrounding the stars were quite numerous, which meant that he was close to becoming a level four arcanist.

The citation of the theory of valence and ionization had brought him a good amount of credits.

"Evans is really a genius without restraint," said someone next to the door after releasing a heavy sigh. The words woke K up from his nightmare.

"If it was me, I would never be able to put forward such an assumption. I would never be able to jump out of the fundamental arcana system," Larry said to K and entered the office. There were five silver stars on his arcana badge.

K responded in his deep voice, "Although it's just an assumption, it's still beyond thrilling. If somehow the assumption can be proved as correct, there will be a great storm in the Congress. And I dare not imagine how great a pressure Lucien would be put under if that was the case..."

"Don't think too much. We shall focus on our own research." Larry knew what K was talking about. He was well aware of the fact that even the most open-minded middle-rank arcanist still had to spend a long time to accept Lucien's idea, not to mention the grand arcanists up there, "By the way, the grand arcanists have decided to grant me the Holm Crown Prize for my contribution to the theory of valence and ionization, and the name of the ring will be Ionization. K, I'm sorry that I failed to persuade them to let you share the prize with me."

Because the improvement of the theory of valence and ionization was a process over time, Larry first did not recognize their value. Thus, he did not mention K's name in many of the related papers. On the contrary, K, as Larry's student, strictly stuck to the tradition and always put Larry's name before his.

But what was more important was that Morris, the president, was being cheap again as the budget of the Will of Elements became quite tight again after giving out Holm Crown prize three times in succession. There was no way that Morris would agree on spending more money on another ring.

K did not mind it. After all, it was just a special case that Isabella and Rachel could share the honor. He scratched his head a bit and grinned, "It's okay, sir. What is confusing me the most is why the different ions can carry electrons and positrons... What's the

explanation behind it?"

"You also start to ask why now, like the person who has the same name as yours." Larry touched his brownish-yellow beard and joked, "What's bothering you is going to be our next research focus, and also, we can reproduce Lucien's cathode ray experiment."

...

In the far northland, in a crystal clear, ice palace.

As if the palace was in a totally separate world, it was not affected by the heavy storm at all. Meanwhile, it seemed that the palace was connected to some other strange dimensions.

In one of the studies in the palace, the elf-looking beauty, Hellen Price, was reading a letter. Beside her was the latest issue of Arcana.

"... I think Lucien Evans' contribution to the field of thermal radiation research well deserves Ice & Snow Medal. Although his assumption that energy comes in potions has not been verified, it can still be regarded as an explanation. His formula and constant are so accurate that they can for sure improve the researches in thermal radiation... Of course, I have to admit that I like how they call every potion of energy - quantum.

"Your friend, Derrick Douglas"

After reading the letter, Hellen pondered for a while and then picked up the quill,

"... As far as I know, Lucien's explanation has not been accepted by the public, or, I should say, barely anyone would agree with the explanation. Right now many will not agree on granting Lucien Evans Ice & Snow Medal, or the reputation of the award would be severely damaged. Also, because Evans was Fernando's student, we should be even more cautious... In ten years, if no new explanations can be found, and when Evans' formulation and constant are widely applied, at that time, it wouldn't be too controversial to give him the honor..."

...

In the meeting room of Atom Institution.

"... So, from the previous experiments, I found that cathode ray can only march a few centimeters in air, and that's why we ignored its existence before." Lazar's face was glowing with excitement when sharing his findings with the other members. Behind him was the piece of glass reflecting green light.

Under Lucien's instruction, in this month, Lazar, Rock, Jerome and the apprentices had all devoted themselves to the study full of passion. Every single one of the sorcerers had finished at least seven papers, and the apprentices also did four. As for Lucien himself, he had developed ten papers. The papers were about the absorption of the ray, its penetrating property, and the change of the shadow positions in the strong magnetic field and electric field.

Their conclusion was that cathode ray was probably a negatively charged particle stream. And they had figured out the design of an isolation device for casting pure rays to determine the charge mass ratio through the ray's trajectory in the electromagnetic field. So they could tell what kind of particle they were.

Since the cathode ray could penetrate the foil, Rock and Jerome also put forward their opinion that it might not be some kind of particle stream, but they currently still had no idea what it should be. The measurements of the velocity of the cathode ray shattered their initial thought that the ray was a kind of electromagnetic wave, as it was proved that the speed of the ray was much less than that of light.

When Lazar finished, Rock also shared his work, "...No persistent deflection of the cathode ray has been found in the strong electromagnetic field, and thus we might be wrong in saying that it is charged. As for the previous experimental results, they are probably misunderstood by us because of the complex gas environment within the magic circle..."

Both Jerome and Lazar agreed.

Although the apprentices were capable of doing the specific researches and developing the experiment reports, when the arcanists were talking about serious arcana knowledge, they were still having a difficult time understanding their words.

"I think there might be some other interference factors... I need some time to redesign the experiment." Lucien expressed his opinion.

The pressure from the thin air would make it impossible for small particles to deflect, which would require the vacuum environment. And so far, Lucien was well aware that none of the congress's magic circles could do this. As cathode rays were in fact streams of electrons, they were still some distance away from the discovery of electrons and seeing the internal structure of an atom.

The belief that an atom was an indivisible unit would remain unshakable for a while in the world of arcana.

The grand gate of the world of microcosm was looming, but it had not been pushed open yet!

Lazar, Rock and the rest of the arcanists were all happy hearing that Lucien was going to handle the challenging, theoretical task himself. They would rather focus on conducting the specific cathode ray experiments because these experiments could bring them the real arcana credits. They did not want to waste their time on such a vague topic that they could not find a direction at all!

After submitting the paper announcing the discovery of cathode ray, Lucien got thirty arcana credits and each of the arcanists got five. The apprentices were not yet qualified to put their names on the paper.

Although the reward was already very decent to most of the junior-rank arcanists, what the institution members got was even more than that. On average, each of their paper had brought them four arcana credits. Among them, Lazar was the most outstanding one—in the past month, Lazar had got thirty credits in total with the papers he published, which made him only ten credits away from becoming a level three arcanist. Rock and Jerome were also level

two arcanists now.

And they would also be expecting more citation credits later. They loved their experiments so much!

The apprentices also had thirteen to fourteen credits now. Although they had not found the time to get the badge, or they would have already become real arcanist.

Most arcanists would drop their chin at how fast the institution members made the progress.

...

In a monastery in Rentato, Holm.

A bishop was introducing the foundation of divinity modified and improved by the popes to the several pastors in training.

"The Lord first created different atoms, and they are the tiniest units in the world that cannot be further be divided. The Lord then created all the things with the atoms..."

...

Today's discussion of cathode ray was over. Jerome started to share the progress they had made in their ultralow temperature experiment.

Jerome looked quite cheerful, "Lucien, we've found that at minus 185 Degrees Celsius, the property of charcoal changes dramatically and it becomes very easy for it to absorb air."

"Excellent." nodded Lucien. Although there were other ways of creating a vacuum environment, using charcoal was the best way for sure.

And their next step would be redesigning the magic circle to measure the charge mass ratio of cathode ray!

Chapter 349: The Finding of a New Particle

Chapter 349: The Finding of a New Particle

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

On the top floor of a magic tower in Douglas Magic School.

Sitting in the classroom for senior apprentices, listening to Vilnia's Basic Elements, Chely's mind wondered a bit. Basic Elements was part of a series of courses introducing the apprentices to the world of elements.

Chely heard that both Heidi and Layria had now become real arcanists with their more than ten arcana credits.

"...This is all for today's introduction of the ancient element theory. Now let's move on to the contemporary system of elements built upon Her Excellency Hathaway's atom theory. What is an atom? An atom is the smallest unit in the world, that cannot be further divided. Each kind of atom is an element, and the properties of different atoms vary. Atoms can react with each other and thus create all the matters in the world. Atom theory is also very important to courses including Potion and Alchemy."

"If I had arrived at Allyn a year earlier and graduated, I would not have to waste my time here listening to things that I already learned a long time ago. If that was the case, right now, I should be working in Mr. Evans' Atom Institution and putting my hands on the wonderful arcana experiments to become an arcanist." Chely was a bit upset, feeling that she was wasting her life. So far, she still needed to pass the basic arcana test first.

Vilnia's course continued, and she was happy with the positive attitude that the senior apprentices showed—they were well aware of the importance of learning arcana and magic, as their study was directly related to power and status.

In fact, very rarely did senior apprentices get kicked out of the school in the past many years.

“I’ve brought you some pure elements. Take a look at them first and then get to know their properties and the corresponding alchemical reactions through conducting experiments.” Vilnia took out some bottles and turned on the magic circle, turning the platform into an alchemical operation desk.

Teachers in lower-level apprentice classes rarely talked so deeply about the nature of elements but made the apprentices recognize the elements, know their basic properties, remember the equations, and the teachers mainly focused on developing the students’ hands-on skills.

Chely’s thoughts were drawn back by the dazzling light that burst out of the magic circle and she saw that Vilnia was holding two bottles of elements in her hands, “These are the two kinds of carbon element of two different structures. Atoms make up elements, and carbon is the main component element of the human body...”

Looking at the two bottles, one contained small crystals of diamonds and the other had opaque small pieces shimmering in the metallic light of dark grey, Chely was deeply shocked, even though Lucien had told her about this before.

In Chely’s eyes, the difference between the two bottles was like that between an angel and a devil.

The young apprentice slightly looked down at her own beautiful hands and it was hard for her to imagine that the pieces inside of the bottles were the main component element of her body.

Turning around and looking out of the window, Chely saw the world full of lots of things going on: the tall and lush trees, the birds, the sky... She was still having a difficult time convincing herself that the world was in fact made by the tiny, indivisible atoms.

...

In Atom Institution.

Lucien had improved the magic circle for creating the vacuum environment, so he started to redo the experiment.

After confirming that the cathode rays were always deflected in the electromagnetic field, Lucien took a deep breath and began to adjust the magic circles for creating the magnetic and electric field.

After a while, he had finished recording the data, and his mind began to calculate the charge mass ratio of the particles in the cathode ray.

Unlike the great tension that Lucien felt when he was calculating Planck's constant, this time Lucien was as calm as a machine. Without being affected by the noises coming from the different corners of the lab, Lucien figured out the answer very quickly:

"The charge-to-mass ratio is... 1.76×10^{11} "

Bang!

Lucien's meditation world suddenly changed again! The light spots representing the many elements quickly grew bigger and they started to revolve in a mysterious manner.

This was the electrons!

The existence of electron could destroy the misbelief that atom was the tiniest unit in the world! The micro-world was far more complex, wonderful, and bizarre than the arcanists could imagine!

...

In the monastery in Rentato.

A pastor in training, after hearing the cardinal Abidal's words, asked confused, "Your Excellency, then why the Lord wanted to create atoms?"

"Daniel, that's not what you should ask. The Lord must have a reason!" scolded Abidal severely.

If it had been in the later period of the War of Dawn, Daniel would have been sent to the inquisition already!

Seeing that the other pastors in training all looked a bit nervous and terrified, Abidal softened his voice, “The indivisibility of atom shows the divinity of the Lord. It shows the Lord’s ultimate power over the world. And those so-called arcanists can never understand this.”

All the pastors in training were listening to him respectfully.

Abidal nodded with a triumphant smile. Those common pastors did not have to know more than this, since if they dug deeper, it would be easy for them to step onto an evil sorcerer’s path, and thus they were very likely to be devoured by the sacred light.

That was why the church was not affected at all by the recent theory put forward by the Congress that the energy was actually delivered in portions. The clergy did not care whether the form of energy was continuous or discontinuous, after all, the energy came from the Lord!

...

From the trajectories, Lucien had found the wonderful magic symbol which could help him with building the order of the elements, but the symbols system was still not complete.

Although he roughly knew what the symbol was, Lucien did not force himself to change his cognitive world right away because he had to first finish the process of assuming, reasoning and verifying.

Despite the fact that the two constants were the same, Lucien could not take everything for granted based on his knowledge learned from the Earth, or very likely, his head would explode if anything unexpected happened.

The practice was the sole criterion for testing the truth!

After memorizing the magical symbol, Lucien redid the experiment by changing the composition of the metal and the low-pressure gas used in the core of the cathode magic circle.

...

In Radiance Church in Holm.

Cardinal Philibell was holding the message from The Holy City, Lance, and read, *"It has been confirmed that Fernando's new student, Lucien Evans X, is the musician, Lucien Evans, who 'died' in Aalto. Sard has sent several night watchers and they're on the way to handle this."*

The Lord of Storm, as a grand arcanist, has always been one of the Church's main focus. As his student, the attention that Lucien got from the Church also increased. Soon, his background information was all clear.

"Is he the Lucien Evans who wrote the Ode to Joy?" Vaharall asked in an unbelievable way, "Is he a psycho or something? Does he have two souls—one's an angel and the other's a devil?"

Varantine looked rather cold, "What do you mean? Are you saying that he's an angel trapped in hell?"

"There's a possibility. His assumption on the form of energy shocked many senior-rank mages and almost destroyed them, which is way more impressive compared to the achievement of the most of the night watchers and red-robed cardinals," said Philibell in a half-joking way, "Anyway, the musician has died. The musician will never come back again."

"So we're not planning on killing him?" Varantine was being very aggressive.

Philibell shook his head, "He's not yet that important. We'll talk about this when the night watchers arrive."

...

It was already deep night when Lucien finished all the experiments. He had decided to live in the office tonight so he could finish developing the paper on the experiment.

"It has been proved by the experiments that all the negatively charged particles produced under different material conditions have

the same charge-to-mass ratio no matter if the particles are brought by the cathode or produced in the tube. This suggests that many substances, in fact, contain the same particles...”

“...Its charge-to-mass ratio is about two thousand times that of the hydrogen ions in the electrolyte.”

“... Through rough calculation, we can find that the mass of this particle is about two-thousandths times that of a hydrogen atom...”

“... As we all know, the atoms consisting of Hydrogen are the lightest and smallest, which makes Hydrogen the first place on the periodic table. Then how do we understand this particle?”

“Is it a new kind of ‘atom’? Or something else?”

...

Around eight o'clock in the morning, Fernando was pondering about a problem in his study.

At this time, he saw Lucien, who arrived half an hour earlier than usual.

“Sir, I’ve conducted a series of experiments and developed a new paper. Please take a look at it,” said Lucien with a casual smile.

Fernando knew that there was something in Lucien’s smile. He took over the pile of paper and saw the title,

“The Finding of a New Particle”

The look on Fernando’s face became more serious. He started to read the paper very carefully. After a long time, Fernando looked up at Lucien’s face without saying anything.

“... Yes, sir?” Lucien felt very insecure being stared at by Fernando’s red eyes.

Fernando rubbed the corner of his eye and smacked his lips.

“I think you’ll demolish the world one day.”

Chapter 350: The Small Gathering

After joking, the Lord of Storm said to Lucien seriously, "Hathaway and I have made some achievement in removing the impurities from the elements and we've found some elements of similar properties like twins, triplets, and even quadruplets. The biggest difference between them is their atomic weights, which resulted in the inaccurate measurement of atomic weight data. After removing the impurities, the weights of the elements have perfectly matched the data provided in the periodic table of elements. Now both of us no longer doubt the accuracy and validity of the table."

Lucien wondered why all of a sudden Fernando wanted to talk to him about the isotopes. The smile on his face was a bit confused, "So it seems that my previous proposal worked, right?"

Since Lucien put forward his assumption that energy was in fact delivered in portions and thus solved the problem in the experiment of thermal radiation, Lucien had been very busy with his work in his Atom Institution. Therefore, Fernando had changed his way of teaching. Instead of asking Lucien to read the letters for him, he gave Lucien some tasks every week, say, reading the books in different arcana fields, or analyzing a fifth circle spell, and then he would solve the problems that Lucien encountered in the process.

As for Fernando's progress in his own project, he only shared it with his students on their monthly regular meeting, thus it was Lucien's first time knowing that Hathaway and Fernando had made such great progress in separating isotopes.

"No, it almost led us to the wrong path," said Fernando a bit unhappily. "Hathaway suggested that we put the similar elements—we temporarily call them equivalent elements—into the same position on the periodic table of elements for now. The finding has made us completely abandon the belief that atoms are not further divisible, or there would be no explanation for the existences of the equivalent elements. We were planning on publishing our paper on the next month's Arcana to make most of the arcanists to be mentally prepared for the theory shift. However, now you've found

the new particle that is way smaller than an atom by messing around. So now no one can deny the fact anymore."

Fernando still did not give any high comment on Lucien's finding, instead, the words he used were "messaging around". However, Fernando looked very serious. "Your finding is going to be a huge shock to a lot of arcanists, especially those who study elements. So right now you shouldn't submit this paper. We shall seal it for now temporarily. Hathaway and I will find some open-minded arcanists first to gradually spread out your idea, so they can have some buffering time."

This paper was different. What was in the paper was not just an assumption, but a final conclusion with solid evidence support.

"No problem." Lucien nodded.

After Lucien left Fernando's study, the Lord of Storm walked back and forth with his hands behind his back, wondering what he should do. The senior-rank arcanists who he was looking for must have already noticed the problem with the old theory and thus be ready to accept the new one. Ideally, they should be from the Will of Elements. The Lord of Storm should be very careful not to let the Hand of Paleness and Moonsong League know this, or it would be their great chance to weaken the Will of Elements.

Among the six major organizations in the Congress, the most powerful ones were the Will of Elements, the Hand of Paleness, and the Cabin of Palmeira, and each of them had a grand arcanist and a legendary archmage behind as their support: Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg, the Lord of Elements and Davy, the Creator, behind the Will of Elements; Vicente Miranda, the Thanatos, and Congus, the Demigod-lich, behind the Hand of Paleness; Hellen Price, the Witch of Iceland, and Hull-Chulia, the Lord of Gas, behind the Cabin of Palmeira.

As for Moonsong League, it was Chelsea Holt, the Moon Scholar, the legendary archmage, standing behind it. Chelsea was very close to Brook, the Emperor of Control. And as for Family of Sorcerer, the two legendary archmages, the Eye of Curse and the Master of Transformation built it up from the very beginning.

The Prophet, who led Tower, was a scholar dedicated to his researches and was the closest to the Congress.

The rest of the grand arcanists and legendary archmages were all on the same side with the Congress.

After a while, Fernando became more impatient. Lucien, his student, was causing him troubles all the time, and his ability to cause troubles had almost surpassed his ability to study arcana and magic!

Lucien definitely brought the Lord of Storm a good headache.

...

A few days later.

When Lazar, Rock, and the apprentices were being very passionate conducting the experiments, they somehow got a day off from Lucien. However, they believed that they did not really need it, except Jerome.

Jerome was married, so he finally could spend some time with his wife, which made the two bachelors, Lazar and Rock, feel quite envious.

While in the institution, the powerful and influential arcanists and archmages all gathered here.

There was Mr. Douglas, the president of the Congress, Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, Mr. Fernando, and also Mr. Oliver, the Hand of Annihilation. This was Lucien's first time meeting Oliver. He looked rather elegant and well-mannered, although he was already close to forty.

Except for the Emperor of Control and Thanatos who did not get the invitation, and Hellen, who just left Allyn a few days ago, all the grand arcanists were here.

There were also a few legendary archmages here. Kloss, who always had the cunning smile on the face and was always carrying a blond little girl puppet around, was also the inventor of the magic steam

train. The Eye of Curse, Atlant, whose eyes never opened, was also here but he did not say a single word so far. There were four legendary archmages present in total.

There were more than forty senior-rank arcanists here, including Morris, Raventi, Gaston, LockLynn, and other arcanists who had already doubted the theory of atom. Some senior-rank mages and archmages famous in other fields of magic also attended the meeting.

The meeting room of the institution was completely filled. Lucien could not help thinking to himself that if something terrible happened to the meeting room, that would basically mean the end of the Congress.

"Lucien Evans, so this time your experiment was going to show us the discontinuity of the form of energy?" When Lucien was about to enter the lab behind the mirror, a tall and thin elder man of a quite good manner asked him in a slightly bit aggressive way.

Lucien just heard Fernando mentioning that this elder man was an archmage, Lauren, the major supporter of Energy Essentialism, the winner of Silver Moon Medal and Ice & Snow Medal, the member of Arcana Review Board, and he specialized in the School of Electromagnetics, Light-darkness, Thermodynamics, and Force Field.

Some other senior-rank mages also looked at this direction. It was also their question to Lucien.

"I've found a new particle," answered Lucien briefly.

"Inside of an atom?" asked Gaston a bit emotionally, although he had been suggested in advance by Hathaway and Fernando and thus he was more mentally prepared.

"We'll see." Raventi watched Lucien stepping into the lab.

Morris looked rather serious, "I have the feeling that something not good is going to happen."

The experiment was not challenging, and once the vacuum

environment was created, Lucien adjusted the electric and magnetic field. Then the arcanists started to calculate using the data.

Soon, Raventi growled, "The weight is... two thousand times smaller than that of a hydrogen atom!"

Even the heavy elements at the back of the periodic table had a way bigger atomic weight than that of a hydrogen atom. Therefore, it could be preliminarily determined that the particle was not an atom, but a smaller particle, unless there were a thousand more undiscovered elements in front of hydrogen on the periodic table.

Except for Raventi, the rest of the sorcerers were all a bit absent-minded. Although they had doubted the atom theory, and that was the reason why they were selected to attend the meeting, they still felt lost, as if something beautiful in their memory was broken.

Lauren watched the entire experience and said aloud, "A great experiment!"

Lucien was surprised. He never expected that Lauren, who was just being so aggressive to him, would congratulate him like this.

"It is a radical repudiation of atom theory. It has confirmed that energy constitutes everything and that atom doesn't even exist!" Lauren's eyes looked a bit crazy.

The biggest enemy of Energy Essentialism was the theory of atom!

Ignoring how Raventi and the rest of the arcanists stared at himself, Lauren said to Lucien excitedly, "Congratulations, Evans. You've brought people a step further toward the truth of the world!"

Before Raventi started his roaring, Lucien said seriously, "On the contrary, I think the discovery of the even smaller particles further shows the physicality of atoms. Inside an atom, there is probably a unique structure..."

When Lucien was about to further explain his belief, Douglas raised his hand and stopped their argumentation.

Looking around in the meeting room, Douglas was gratified to see

that all the selected arcanists had lived to their expectation and had basically accepted the existence of the new particle, thus he said a bit emotionally, "We've witnessed this great experiment - an experiment that leads us to the real micro-world and a brand new research field! Although the more specific measurement of the particle's electric charge and its relationship with an atom requires more studies, Atom Institution's and Lucien's great contribution to this is enormous. The whole arcana world has marched forward in a big step because of it!"

...

"To handle this kind of subversive research outcomes, I think it's good to inform some arcanists and sorcerers first just like what we are doing right now. We can use this as a regular method in the future," said Douglas.

As the subversive findings emerged one by one in the past very short period of time, Douglas had made up his mind that a coping mechanism must be built up.

Oliver agreed but he soon came up with a question, "So who should be the one judging what is subversive and what is not?"

As soon as Oliver put forward the question, most arcanists turned around to look at Lucien.

Lucien had some sense of foreboding.

Chapter 351: The Board Member

Chapter 351: The Board Member

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Oliver also looked at Lucien and adjusted the gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, “So... Lucien should become the member of the review board and be responsible for deciding what kind of findings can be regarded as being subversive, right?”

“His way of thinking is pretty subversive.” After about a minute, Hathaway commented short and brief.

Morris also added, but in a bit unhappy way, “Recently we’ve got quite a few pieces of shocking news all from Lucien. Obviously, he has his own unique understanding in the current arcana system and he is not restrained in his own thoughts and beliefs. He’s capable of putting forward these subversive points of views and thus it’s reasonable for us to believe that he will also be open-minded enough for the job. Also, he’s not a senior-rank yet, and this makes him even more suitable for this position.”

The reason why Morris was unhappy was that he clearly knew that this finding would again win Lucien another Holm Crown prize. Morris needed to raise the rewarding standard of the prize. Morris had no idea since when the old standard—making a breakthrough contribution to the field of Element and being able to leave a footprint in the history of element magic—became so easy to achieve?

The vault of the Will of Elements gathered its wealth from the gains of the grand arcanists, legendary archmages, archmages, and senior-rank mages when they explored the other dimensions. Although the wealth came from the parts that the powerful sorcerers did not need, the value was still very considerable, plus the Will of Elements’ additional income from their alchemical industry and the rewards from the daily tasks, Morris was able to give out the prize once a year without digging deep into the vault, as long as the

prize-giving did not happen two to three times a year.

Hearing that, the other senior-rank arcanists all nodded silently. Obviously, they could not do the job. Although this time they were fine with accepting the new idea, it was because before today they had already doubted the atom theory.

Therefore, choosing a young and creative arcanist was a good option.

Being stared by the many arcanists, Lucien felt that he deserved this.

“I agree. But as for Lucien’s rank and reputation... I’m not sure...” Oliver shrugged.

Lauren also had the same concern, “He’s only a level five arcanist, fifth-circle sorcerer, I don’t know if he’s capable of reviewing all the papers, and whether his judgment is reliable enough.”

Fernando responded, “Although he still has some problems in mathematics, in Element, Thermodynamics, Light-darkness, Electromagnetism, Force Field, Alchemy, and Astrology, he’s no inferior to other senior-rank arcanists. People think he’s not qualified simply because he’s too young. He can be the one judging whether a finding is a breakthrough and whether it’s subversive, and then the paper can be handed to other arcanists for further review.”

Arcana level was an important standard, but not the only one.

“If his arcana level is six, it shall be good enough,” Hathaway said all of a sudden. The look on her face was still cold.

A level six arcanist was a senior-rank arcanist.

Lauren doubted again, “Your Excellency, Lucien Evans’ paper hasn’t proved that the newly-discovered particle is part of the inner structure of an atom, so the paper was only going to bring him four hundred to six hundred arcana credits. With all the citation credits, I have to say that he’s still far away from becoming a level six arcanist.”

The finding of a new particle was very valuable and it deserved a very considerable reward. Compared to the periodical table of elements, the discovery of the new particle brought the arcanists and sorcerers one step closer to the truth of the world. According to the tradition, the reward should equal that of Brook's finding which proved that light was a kind of electromagnetic wave. Brook got a thousand credits, and Lucien would probably get half because his paper had not proved the relationship between the new particle and an atom.

"You've forgotten our recent discussion?" Raventi roared at Lauren, "The influence factor of Arcana has been decided to be three. It will be put into effect next month!"

Currently, Lucien had four papers on Arcana, and the influence factor meant that the citation credits that Lucien got would be three times more than what he was gaining right now by the end of next month. It was very hopeful that Lucien could get more than two hundred credits every month.

"Raventi, you'd better remember that right now there's a trend, and that's why the citation of Lucien's paper is bringing him this many credits. I don't think the trend will last long. Even if it can, it's still going to take Lucien Evans another four to five months to become a senior-rank. We can't make him a review board member right now! People won't believe in him!" Lauren refuted.

Knowing that the trend of the heated discussion on Lucien's new findings was actually going to last for a quite long time, Lauren was just trying to postpone the decision and make it end up with nothing definite.

Many arcanists and board members agreed. The tradition that the board members must be senior-rank arcanists should not be broken.

Raventi also calmed down a bit and nodded. In his eyes, Lucien becoming a member of the board was just a matter of time.

"He can reach level six right now," Hathaway said to the rest of the room.

All the people present, including Fernando, were a bit confused. They wondered where Lucien could get eight hundred to nine hundred credits right now.

Morris was the first one who understood what Hathaway meant. He turned to Lucien, seeking for his opinion.

Lucien also understood what Hathaway was suggesting, and he nodded seriously.

Morris turned around and there was a forced smile on his face, “The designer of Miracle Experiment is Lucien.”

Arcana’s above. That meant another Holm Crown Ring, or probably plus an Immortal Throne award!

The meeting room was completely shocked. Many arcanists and board members were right now staring at Lucien as if they had never known him before.

“He... designed the experiment?!” Lauren could not believe his ears.

The fact that the experiment could produce the life ingredients in the synthetic primitive environment naturally was a great shock to every single arcanist, including the ones who did not stick to the theory of Life Force—every arcanist wanted to dig into the secret of life.

Facing this kind of response, Lucien could see his rank on Cleansing List rising like crazy.

“Morris! You can’t speak it out!” Raventi was very angry.

Although he saw Lucien nodded, Raventi did not think that Lucien was ready enough to handle the great threat from the Church.

Morris smiled, “Although the discovery of the new particle can’t strike the Saint Truth as severely as Miracle Experiment, it is still subversive to the improved divinity system. No matter whether Lucien is the designer of Miracle Experiment, Lucien is going to be stricken by the Church either way. Also, when Felipe’s name got into the top hundred list, he was only of the fifth-circle. I don’t

think Lucien was inferior to him at all.”

“Hathaway has kept the secret for a really long time,” said Douglas very kindly to Lucien. “Today, I finally got to know who designed the experiment which I really liked. The experiment has revealed many things to us. You’re the most outstanding young man I’ve ever seen, and I think you’re qualified enough to be a member of the review board.”

Fernando rubbed the side of his forehead, and he felt that his student was pretty much a big trouble.

As the member of the board in the field of Element and Alchemy, Gaston grinned, “The credits for Miracle Experiment should be around six hundred. Plus all the citation credits, Lucien should be able to get close to a thousand credits at once. Also, Lucien has the new paper on the newly-discovered particle. Basically, Lucien’s a level six arcanist already, and the only thing he needs to do is to update the badge. You still have any problems?”

“None,” Lauren said in a bit pissed manner.

Lucien was very likely to be the one who was going to win Holm Crown prize for three times, and also likely to be the future winner of Immortal Throne award. And right now he was of level six. Lucien was definitely qualified to be the member of the review board!

Oliver slightly nodded and agreed. Douglas announced, “In the future, when submitting papers, the author has to note whether the paper contains any subversive findings or viewpoints and whether the finding conflicts with any currently existing theories. If yes, Lucien shall be the one reviewing the paper.”

“Congratulations, Mr. Evans,” Morris said to Lucien with a bitter smile.

He was the youngest member of Arcana Review Board in the history ever!

Chapter 352: The Truth

Chapter 352: The Truth

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

After the warm applause, Douglas smiled. “In the past month, many arcanists, including me, have proved the existence of cathode ray based on your findings, and the experiment you just showed us is of good validity. We can say it preliminarily that it’s a new particle smaller than an atom. As the one who discovered it, you’ve got the right to name it.”

Although Lucien’s paper on the finding of cathode ray would not be published on Arcana until the month, the arcanists and sorcerers present had all read it.

“Let’s call it... electron.” Lucien decided to stick to the name that he was familiar with.

“Good. Pretty nice name. The electron will lead us to take our first step into the microworld, and it’s a great progress for us to approach the truth of the world.”

Douglas lectured to the senior-rank arcanists, trying to turn this great theory shift into the glorious victory of arcana, “But we shouldn’t just be proud of it. We want to take a step back and think: why gas, when discharging, can produce the stream of electrons? What kind of properties does an electron have? What is its precise mass and charge? Is it related to an atom? What is the inner structure of an atom? Can an electron be further divided? We need to keep working on it.”

That was very typical of Douglas, and Lucien found that hearing Douglas’ lecture was bringing him some slight headache. Now he had realized why Fernando had given Douglas the nickname – Hundred Thousand Whys. From Fernando, Lucien had got to know that, when conducting Miracle Experiment, Fernando and Douglas were also present watching him from upstairs, and thus they had heard Lucien’s response to the hundred and thousand questions.

Lucien turned to look at Fernando. Fernando slightly lifted his chin.

At this time, Oliver grinned and said, “Mr. President, let’s give Evans some time. He’s the main character today.”

Douglas laughed, “My apology. I am being too excited. Let the young man take the stage.”

“Evans, I’m very curious, and I’d really appreciate it if you can share with us how you jumped out of the cage of the current arcana system.” Oliver smiled elegantly, “You know, Florencia’s a firm supporter of atom theory and I need to spend time on gradually changing her viewpoint. Don’t take me wrong... I’m not forcing you. If you want to keep it to yourself, I’m fine with it.”

Oliver was not the only one being curious. Even Fernando slightly straightened his back, wondering how his student’s way of thinking was like. Hathaway was the only one who remained the same cold and quiet.

Standing in front of the grand, senior-rank arcanists and legendary archmages, Lucien was very confident, “In fact, I do have a personal philosophy belief that I would like to share with your Excellencies. In my opinion, there are also differences between truths. Some are absolute truth and some are the relative truth. Absolute truth refers to the essence and the law of the world. It does not change because of the proposal of any new theories, and, that is, the truth we always endeavor to seek for.”

The easy smile on Oliver’s face slowly disappeared. Frowning slightly, he looked more serious.

“But due to the limitation of our knowledge, our way of thinking, the ways we explore the world, and our physical and mental capabilities, we can only get close to the absolute truth as possible as we can, but finally obtain the relative truth in the end which applied to a certain range. This kind of relative truth can only serve our needs within this certain range, and when the range is exceeded, the relative truth will turn itself into an error.”

Fernando’s red eyes squinted, while Douglas’ body leaned

backward, trying to find a more comfortable position to rest. Hathaway posed her chin on her right hand, and unconsciously and gently rubbed the arm of the chair, just like how Natasha usually did when she was thinking.

“Therefore, many of the theories that we have overturned are not simply meaningless, as they are the relative truths under certain conditions. However, with the development of arcana system, the range of our exploration has exceeded the conditions when they were first established, so now they have turned out to be wrong, and even absurd. For example, in the most ordinary alchemical reactions when producing the most common potions, based on our observation, an atom is indeed the most fundamental unit, and it is the relative truth in this condition. Also, I once asked myself why the ancient magic empire still managed to develop itself into a great power and had produced so many legendary archmages despite the fact that many of their beliefs have been criticized by us right now as being completely ridiculous. I am convinced that it is because their beliefs are some relative truths that work under some certain circumstances.”

All of the arcanists, even including Raventi and Lauren, never expected that such a young arcanist like Lucien would have this profound and well-developed insight. They thought that Lucien's accomplishment was from his energy of youth, intelligence, and courage.

“As we explore further, the real world is getting closer and closer to us, the range that the truth should serve also needs to be expanded, and the relative truth is approaching the absolute truth. However, the world is so big while we are so tiny. It is definitely safe to say that, for a very long time, we can never obtain the absolute truth, but the relative truth is getting closer to it step by step. And thus we have to be mentally prepared that our truths can turn into errors at any time. Therefore, we should always keep in mind that the truths recognized by us right now are not the ultimate answer that we are looking for. We can use them, and we can trust them, but we should also know that the truths only work within a certain range. Therefore, we can be more ready when facing the subversive findings.”

When giving the speech, Lucien was also working on solidifying his own philosophy belief, and also preparing himself for the future cognition shifts. Also, he hoped that his sharing could inspire some of the arcanists and sorcerers.

However, he was also aware of the fact that it was very hard to change one's belief once it was established, which was especially true when it came to sorcerers and arcanists. There was no way that their belief could be transformed by Lucien's single speech. If one could restrain one's subconscious and completely control one's body and mind, in the world of the Earth, the person would not be regarded as a common human being anymore.

Therefore, in the future, there were definitely going to be more sorcerers who would have their heads exploded from the collapse of their cognition world; there were still going to be sorcerers arguing with each other or even killing each other because of the conflicts of their beliefs; and there were also going to be sorcerers who would fail to use the new theories and philosophy belief to guide their own practice. Lucien was just hoping that what he was saying could help some of them.

After the speech, silence presided in the meeting room for a while.

Then, Douglas first applauded, "Very good point! Very good philosophical belief! Lucien's words explained why the ancient magic empire managed to grow successfully and how the Congress has come all the way. We've grabbed some of the truths in our hands, but we cannot follow them blindly. We should ask more questions, more whys. Lucien, you are more mature than I thought. I'm not talking about age, but here."

He pointed at his head, "I have nothing to worry even after you became that member of the board."

It was obvious that Douglas loved philosophy very much.

The words discussing the absolute truth and the relative truth made many senior-rank sorcerers think, but also, they still felt more or less suspicious towards the claim, because many theories and laws in the arcana system looked so valid and solid that it was hard for

them to doubt it.

After a round of short discussion, the senior-rank arcanists started to leave, as they needed to go back and tell their students and friends the problem of atom theory as soon as possible, and thus gradually enabled Lucien's new finding to spread out, hoping that the most of the sorcerers could change their viewpoint slowly.

"Lucien, when your paper is published... I will talk to the senior levels... about your next Holm Crown prize," Morris said to Lucien word by word. And the look on Morris's face was sophisticated, but there was definitely sadness in there.

"I am totally fine with it." Lucien did not want to further upset him.

Morris nodded, and when he saw that Raventi had already left the meeting room, he put on the smile again and said, "In fact, Miracle Experiment is enough to win you the Immortal Throne award... I mean, you don't really need another ring, right? Ha, I'm just joking. Don't mind me."

Morris hurriedly walked away when noticing that the Lord of Storm was approaching.

...

A few days later, in Cole's magic tower.

A gas servant was about to give its master a letter, but found the message left by the latter, "I'm doing an experiment with my teacher. Leave the letter following the keywords."

Therefore, the gas servant opened the envelope and started to read the letter to get the keywords:

"...Cole, it's really hard to believe that my teacher, Lauren, has discovered the conflict between the periodicity of the elements and the atom theory. He said that there was going to be something even smaller than an atom, which goes the opposite way with your belief! Atom is very possibly not the most fundamental unit of all of the substances. In fact, the substance is just people's illusion. Energy should be the essence of everything!"

...

In Heidler, the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness, over the meeting among the senior levels.

“Recently, there are rumors spreading out that the theory of atom is problematic, and many senior-rank arcanists have pointed out many problems in atom theory.” Rogerio gently knocked on the table with his knuckles, “It is weird.”

Pesor sneered, “What is weird about it? Obviously, there has been a new experiment showing that atom theory might be wrong. The Congress is trying to slowly change the viewpoint of the arcanists. We have done the same things before.”

“Very possibly. Unfortunately, we don’t know what kind of experiment it is, or we could really teach the Will of Elements a harsh lesson,” said a senior man in a venomous way in the corner.

Felipe, sitting in another corner quietly, looked up and said sarcastically, “Mr. Sousa, you think right now we could really do this without letting the Congress know? You think they are all idiots?”

Under the great pressure from the Congress, at least in Allyn, the conflicts between the powers and parties remained relatively reasonable.

“But if somehow we get to know what the experiment is, it is going to be their fault.” Sousa put on a cold smile.

The meeting ended earlier after the task of figuring out what the experiment was given out.

When getting back to his own magic tower, Felipe said to his servant directly, “Bring the recent papers from Lucien Evans to me.”

When Felipe started to read the papers again, the look on his face became more and more serious, “They are all about cathode ray... Particle stream... negatively charged?”

...

In the Radiance Church in Holm.

A secret piece of information was sent to the room where the several red-robed cardinals gathered.

Chapter 353: Conflic

As the Church's most recent strategic center, the kingdom of Holm had assembled four legendary knights, and seven to eight gold knights, which had way surpassed the power that the Church would usually lay in an area as, for example, the Duchy of Violet. Therefore, even when changing the shifts, there were still three red-robed cardinals in the retreat room.

The three cardinals looked up at the same time when hearing someone knocking at the door. One of them stood up and walked to it.

"Is it from our person in the Congress?" This red-robed cardinal had a very lean face, with blue deep eyes.

Taking out a letter, the night watcher answered respectfully, "Yes, Your Excellency."

Taking over the letter, Andrade crossed in front of his chest, "God bless you."

"Only truth lives forever!" said and night watcher in a solemn way and then turned around and left.

"Andrade, what is it about? Shall we report it to the grand cardinal?" asked a red-robed cardinal in a very concerned way.

To figure it out what the letter was about, Andrade flipped the envelope and checked the keywords on the other side. Due to the few great shocks that overwhelmed them in the past, the Church had asked their spies in the Congress to leave the keywords suggesting the theme of the information on the back of the envelop where the letter lay in, especially with those that were possibly able to shake the doctrine and the fundamental theories of theology, thus the grand cardinals and red-robed cardinals could be more mentally prepared for most of the great shocks. Last time, even the leader of the ascetics, Varantine, was injured because of the sudden, unexpected cognition shift.

"Saint, new particle, shakable, atom theory."

These were the four words in Andrade's deep eyes.

The first word stood for the importance level of the intelligence. The most confidential and important level was Archangel, then Angel, and then Saint was the third class. A piece of third class intelligence was still regarded as being important and it must be sent only to a grand cardinal immediately.

Andrade's eyes squinted slightly and answered as if nothing unusual ever happened, "Pious follower level. It's about the Congress's routine."

"Then you can take care of it," said another red-robed without any doubt.

After all, if a red-robed cardinal had abandoned his or her belief, the only ending for the cardinal would be death brought by the holy light.

In the retreat room, the three desks formed a triangle. Sitting behind his own table, Andrade started to read the letter undisturbedly like he was just reading a common piece of information. And then he wrote it down, "Because of the conflict between the periodicity among the elements and atom theory, many senior-rank arcanists have started to reflect on atom theory, but no solid findings have been discovered yet."

Then some more pieces of intelligence were sent here into the retreat room. Each of the three red-robed cardinals handled some and developed them into the reports.

When it was close to ten, the bishop responsible for giving out the information came into the room and took away the reports.

Later, at ten thirty, the reports were sent to the different ranks.

In the quiet retreat room, the three cardinals started to exchange what they had read to put them together. At eleven thirty, the joint report should be in the hand of Philibell, the grand cardinal, and Vaharall, the leader of the inquisition.

Andrade squinted his eyes, smiling, but did not say anything.

Cannon was the doctrine, the words of God, the gospel for the followers, which was vaguer and of greater metaphysics value, while Theology was the interpretation of Cannon, which involved more detailed discussion in all the fields.

...

Cardinal Abidal had always been respecting the updated theology by the Pope, as he was clearly aware of the fact that, without the Pope's contribution, his own intelligence could have never pushed him this far to let him become a level five bishop at the age of thirty-five, and now he was in charge of the biggest abbey in the entire district.

"This is the giving of the almighty Lord, to the Lords's most pious followers. The speaker of the Lord under his holy light has brought us the truth." Abidal prayed every day, "Greed and timidity blind us to lead us to ingratitude, though gratitude was the most precious value of human beings. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven..."

At the end of the prayer, Abidal crossed in front of his chest and said in a low voice with his eyes closed, "Only truth lives forever."

When opening his eyes, Abidal saw that the young pastor was waiting for him respectfully and holding some intelligence documents. Abidal nodded to let him in.

"Anything important?" Abidal asked casually.

"Not really," answered the young pastor full of respect.

Abidal nodded slightly and started to read. He read rather fast, having approached the end of the report in a short time. He looked rather serious and he was very stern when it came to teaching Theology, thus many pastors in training secretly called him the demon angel. However, right now there was great fear on this face as if the cardinal had fallen into the hell and found out that something had turned him into a real demon!

"About... one in two thousand..." he murmured. His voice sounded very hoarse like sandpapers rubbing against each other.

"The divinity of atoms... the foundation of Theology... have been destroyed by His Almighty..."

The young pastors did not leave, waiting for further orders from the cardinal.

After a while, the young pastor felt that the room was getting hot, and some vague sounds came out from Abidal's throat.

The young pastor hurriedly looked up, and he saw the scene that he could never forget in his whole life.

Abidal's face was written with great fear and loss. Then, a beam of pure and holy light burst out from his body and devoured the shocked face.

The small pieces of light were everywhere in the room. The young pastor failed to make a sound.

Under the bright light in the afternoon from outside of the window, the holy light seemingly had been dyed with touches of scarlet.

Abidal was not alone here in the parish of Holm. Other several bishops who were rather devout were also devoured by the holy light. As the report was sent out after the Church's verification, no one ever felt suspicious before opening it.

As for another twenty bishops, although they were lucky enough to have their lives spared, they had started to doubt the doctrine and theology, thus it was going to be very difficult for them to go any further with their divine power.

...

At noon, in the Radiance Church.

When Philibell was about to pray, he heard the scurried footsteps outside of the door from the red-robed cardinals.

"What happened?" asked Philibell, having a bad foreboding.

The red-robed cardinal was still in panic and answered a bit confusedly, "Sir... six bishops have been devoured by the holy light... twenty-three have been severely injured. Also, a red-robed cardinal, Vily, was also injured in his belief."

"Devoured by the holy light? Injured in belief? What did they see? They shouldn't get the access to the newspapers," Philibell asked coldly.

"It wasn't the newspaper... It was the intelligence." The red-robed was also in a great shock and his utterance was not organized at all, "A new particle has been found, inside of an atom..."

"What?!" Philibell could not believe his ears.

...

It did not take the inquisition long to figure out that Andrade was the one who did this.

In the interrogation room sat Andrade and Vaharall, the Adjudicator, while Philibell and Varantine were standing beside the glass, observing what was going on inside of the room.

"When... When did you give yourself up to the Congress?" Vaharall was furious, but also, at the same time, he felt curious. He wondered why Andrade could still use divine spells.

The smile on Andrade's face was rather pure and calm, "I don't have anything to do with the Congress. The pope, using the Congress's theory to alter the theology, is the biggest defiler! He is messing with the divinity of the power, and showing no respect to the Lord. Again and again, the Congress juggled us between their hands! We shall abandon the theology of this kind!"

Outside of the interrogation room, Varantine's eyes squinted and he said to Philibell, "Since when the power of this kind of radical conservative has risen again?"

"When facing the Congress directly, and facing the great shifts over

and over again, there are some of us who would start to doubt the necessity of reforming theology."

While in the room, Vaharall roared, "So that's why you decided to kill the bishops, your siblings! What do they have to do with your so-called piety?!"

"Anyone who got severely injured by the experiment is the defiler, as they had completely given themselves up to the profanity! Killing them is my best way to show my piety to the Lord!" said Andrade with no fear. "Burn me down to ashes, Your Excellency, Vaharall! I shall ascend into Mountain Paradise in the fire!"

...

In the headquarter office of the Congress.

Atlant Forman, the Eye of Curse, grinned to Douglas, "It is true that we cannot force the pastors to do things that conflict with their fundamental belief, but what if they have already let the seed of doubt grow? We find the holes in their mind, and then we make the most use of them. I call this the ultimate application of Illusion."

Atlant opened his eyes. In his black pupils, there were creepy shadows and figures.

"As long as one can think, one can never avoid being affected by Illusion!"

Chapter 354: Message

Chapter 354: Message

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City.

Except for Bellia the God's Glory, Stone the Four-winged Knight, and Philibell the Bright Angel, who were too important to leave the fortresses unattended, all the major members of the grand cardinal group had gathered together. Their power was so great that the air in this hall was beyond heavy.

"Your Saint Highness, the Congress has been progressing toward prying into the exclusive reign of God, and we cannot stay timid and hesitant anymore. We must destroy the Congress completely before it grows even stronger," said Azaro, another leader of the inquisition, the Light Guard. He was the one who first started talking, and it was evident that Azaro wished to declare war against the Congress.

Holding his scepter, the Pope, Benedict II, listened to Azaro without saying anything.

Then, Sard, the grand cardinal in the parish of Violet, stood out, saying:

"Your Saint Highness, the discovery of the new particle is only an overturn in the understanding of atom theory in theology, which has nothing to do with the doctrines in Canon. We have discussed this before as well, and we also once doubted atom theory before. This so-called overturn cannot affect most of the cardinals, bishops, pastors, and followers, and it cannot do any harm to your dignity and glory."

Sard was as quiet as a lake, which seemed to be rather clear but, in fact, hard to see through. His flat, unhurried voice and tone was like a spring breeze.

“I think Sard just made the point. Since the former several popes started to reform theology, we have been altering our theories constantly. This time, nothing is really special compared to what happened previously. There’s no reason for us to prudently declare the war,” agreed another grand cardinal, Astira, the Wind Angel.

In another several grand cardinals’ eyes, Sard and Astira were beyond cunning.

It was true that the former popes had been working on reforming theology, so an overturn like the discovery of the new particle was very likely to happen every few decades. However, the decline of the Pope’s reputation and dignity was also due to the repetitive changes to theology! As the only speaker of the Lord, how could the Pope keep making the mistakes like this?

Although knowing that Sard and Astira’s words were not true, many grand cardinals lowered their heads without saying anything. Being able to stand here, no one in the Bright Hall was stupid. The truth was not always that important.

When the Pope lost his stateliness, the members of the grand cardinal group must be the ones who would get most of the benefits! The same thing had happened to the North Church!

At the same time, there were also many grand cardinals standing by the Pope. They were saying that it was now time for the Church to switch the focus onto the Congress, instead of the North Church. The Church had made the bad mistake and thus left the Congress the chance to grow this fast.

When more and more grand cardinals were involved in the argument, the Pope raised his scepter and said solemnly, “The thing has happened. What we need to do now is update the theology theory as soon as possible so that most of the clergy can avoid being affected. Meanwhile, we shall put greater pressure on the Congress, and when we’re ready, we destroy them.”

The Pope had chosen a neutral viewpoint.

The Pope’s words surprised many of the Pope’s supporters. In the

history of the Church, although there were only few times when a war was declared to defend the glory of the Lord, way more frequently a war was launched when a pope's dignity was challenged, including the war between the South and North Church over several hundred years. They did not expect that the Pope would just handle it so easily.

There was an imperceptible smile on the Pope's face. He took a glance at Sard and Astira meaningfully.

"Your Saint Highness, we can't just sit and do nothing before we are ready. If that's the case, the devout followers would doubt us that we're doing nothing to defend the glory of the Lord." suggested Azaro, "We shall figure out who the finder is and put the person onto the Cleansing List. We shall purify the person."

Benedict II slightly nodded, "Philibell shall be the one handling this."

Sard knew what was in the Pope's glance. Now he stood out again and said, "Your Saint Highness, we should keep a close eye on the clergy in Holm. The presence of such a radical conservative like Andrade is not just an accident but shows that there's a trend in Holm. We shall treat it very carefully."

"Let Varatine and Vaharall handle this. They're members of the grand cardinal group. They are pious and capable," said Benedict II in the same calm manner as if he did not have any negative emotions such as anxiety or anger.

Varantine was the leader of the ascetics, the representative of the most devoted follower, while Vaharall, the Adjudicator, was also one of the leaders of the inquisition. They were the best ones to handle this kind of issue.

...

In the Radiance Church in Holm.

Philibell just got the command from Lance and the updated version of theology.

“So, we have deleted the chapter talking about the divinity of atom and added the part that God created many basic particles to build the world. Our major focus is that God is the first and foremost reason for the existence of the world and the first and foremost drive for the world to develop—called First Cause. After building the world, human beings and everything else in the world, God does not directly get involved in the functioning of the world, but makes sure that the world is progressing on the right path through showing us those holy signs and the saint adjudication.” Philibell read the lines to Vaharall, Varantine, and Stone, the major three members of the grand cardinal group.

There was a miserable look on Varantine’s face, “The power of God... had descended to such an extent?”

Facing the great pressure from the Congress, the Church was always trying to get ready whenever a new cognition shift came to them. Through all these theology meetings and discussions, the Church could always find a new explanation based on their previous belief in order to weaken the power of impact.

As the original explanations of the overturned theories most came from the cardinals and bishops, it was not hard for most of the clergy to accept the changes of the theories. At the same time, the dignity of the Pope could thus be maintained, as the Pope was never directly responsible for it.

All the three grand cardinals had attended the meetings which took place a few days ago, and the updated content was not a surprise to them. Varantine was strongly against the modification, however, there was nothing he could really do.

The updated theory believed that there was the law of causality between any things in this world, and the first and foremost reason was God, called First Cause. Meanwhile, when all the laws of the world had been built up, there should be an initial push to drive the world, and, again, God generously offered the push.

Stone, the Four-winged Knight was a bit upset, “So we should just sit here waiting for some ridiculous chances? We are not going to do anything, right? Again and again, the Congress keeps

challenging the dignity of the Lord... What kind of guards of Lord are we?"

Although they believed that it was the radical conservatives in the Church who should be mainly responsible for the great loss, the grand cardinal still regarded the discovery of the new particle as a provocation from the congress.

There was a slight smile on Philibell's face, "This time, our loss resulted from the leak of information, which in turn shows that the Congress isn't prepared either. They are still working on persuading their own people. So, as we have suffered from the loss and already paid for it, why don't we just publicize the finding of the new particle. After all, many middle and senior-rank mages are taking a much firmer viewpoint on the side of atom theory than us."

As for the pastors and those in training, they were still studying the development of theology, and thus they would not be affected too much.

"I agree. We can't lose more." Vaharall nodded, "We can make a good use of it to strike a blow to the Congress."

The only thing was that it seemed to be rather weird and even ridiculous that the bishops and pastors started to inform the arcanists and sorcerers new arcana theory.

"We start from Rentato, where the headquarter of the Will of Elements lies." Varantine suggested, "Many of those sorcerers from the Will of Elements believe in atom theory."

Stone showed his support, "Good plan. But we still have to figure out who found the new particle. We must purify the person!"

...

In a quiet corner close to the Holm Royal Magic Tower, a pastor was promoting the new theology theory to a coachman aloud, while taking a glance from time to time at the gate of the magic tower not far away from them, "God first created the particles, including atoms. There are also even smaller particles than atoms. God used

all the particles to build the world...”

The coachman felt confused. He could not understand the words very well. He was only capable of repeating, “God is sacred and almighty. God has created the world.”

After a long time, not a single sorcerer came over or even walked by. The young pastor was a bit concerned, “Why does the tower seem to be so quiet?”

“Sir, I’ve heard that those sorcerers in the tower are doing some kind of... closed... training.” The coachman grinned, “I don’t really know what it is.”

...

In the Radiance Church, the report that their action had failed soon arrived.

“The Congress is well prepared,” said Philibell seriously. “Andrade’s thing... did not happen by accident.”

Vaharall was responsible for this and he put forward his own thoughts: “Andrade was indeed a radical conservative. But I don’t think it’s a mere coincidence that the intelligence happened to arrive at the retreat room when Andrade was on his shift. There are two possibilities: either the senior spy has betrayed us, or the spy has been found out by the Congress, which is using this as their weapon. Also, Andrade’s way of thinking is way too radical, I think he was affected by some illusions. Illusion is the most difficult magic to be noticed...”

The study became very quiet. They did not want to face the fact that very likely their senior spy to which they had devoted lots of effort had been exposed.

For many times, they had given up using the senior spy just to protect him!

The grand cardinals started to get quite upset.

All of a sudden, something hit Philibell and he hurriedly took out

the original piece of intelligence and started to decode using the rules they had agreed on a long time ago.

Within a minute, Philibell got the short message from the senior spy:

“Win trust.”

Chapter 355: The Inscription

Chapter 355: The Inscription

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The periodic table of elements had been used for more than two years, and its periodicity had been suggesting the arcanists and sorcerers that an atom was way more complex than they thought. When the senior level, including Morris, Raventi, and Gaston, gradually pointed out the problems and suggested the possible errors in atom theory, most middle and senior-rank mages started to feel suspicious of the theory.

In the closed training, Hathaway gave another heavy blow to atom theory established by herself using the discovery of the isotope. Almost all the middle and senior-rank mages had accepted the fact that atom theory might be wrong. As for the junior-rank mages and apprentices, accepting a new theory was not that difficult for them.

And it was even easier for the sorcerers and arcanists who did not specialize in the field of Element to switch their belief.

It was an era when all the theories were developing rapidly. Not only the Congress was working on it, but also the South Church, the North Church, and the druids, all seizing the chance to grow. Whoever was left slightly behind would probably completely disappear one or two hundred years later. Therefore, when seeing the positive trend of the switching of viewpoint, the highest council had decided to publish Lucien's new paper, The Discovery of a New Particle, as the leading paper on the issue of Arcana in October, and the curtain behind which the microworld was hiding should now be pulled up!

As for those stubborn ones who still stuck to atom theory, the Congress had decided to abandon them.

"It's cruel. But we have to." Outside of Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien said to Lazar and the other sorcerers.

Lazar was an elemental sorcerer with a firm belief, and when hearing Lucien's words, his smile looked a bit sad, "I still remember what you said before, Lucien. The wheels of history are always rolling forward. No matter what is in the way, it will be completely crushed into pieces. But it is still hard for me to accept the fact that those outstanding arcanists have been abandoned just within a month."

Lucien was in charge of Atom Institution, so it was also his responsibility to switch the belief of sorcerers and apprentices from his institution.

Fortunately, as the finder of the periodicity among the elements, and the first arcanist ever who dig into the law behind it, Lucien's attitude had influenced his friends directly and indirectly. Also, the arcanists and sorcerers also contributed to many of the experiments of finding the cathode ray. Two weeks earlier, Lucien had sent them the paper and showed them the experiments in person. All of the institution members had successfully changed their belief.

"It is cruel. But we have prepared them for the cognition shift, and they still have the hope to restart over again if they could force themselves to accept the new theory with their modified cognition world." Lucien tried to comfort Lazar.

Lazar grinned, "Thanks, Lucien. I am just being a bit emotional. Many sorcerers have stopped making any progress because of all these reasons, but they're still much luckier than those who somehow died from doing the experiments in the lab."

Then Lazar pretended a cough and lectured in the way of a divine judge, "Those sorcerers try to pry into the realm of God. They have violated the law. Thus they become exhausted; they die; they are cursed! That is the cost!"

"No! The so-called God of Truth is afraid of us! The closer we are to the real truth of the world, the more terrified the so-called god is! We are cursed because we are on the right path. One day, we shall tear up the pretender's mask!" Lucien also joked.

These were the lines from the most popular play in Allyn these

days. The opera named Siroid was loved by many sorcerers and the lines could be heard everywhere. The main character, Siroid, was a made-up figure who had outstanding arcana and magic talent. Siroid managed to improve many powerful magic spells but he was later betrayed by his lover and was burned to death by the Church. The lines that Lucien and Lazar just repeated was from the part of the inquisition scene.

And the author of the play was the grand arcanist, Oliver.

Watching them playing the roles, Rock said to them, “If you guys are that fond of the play, go directly onto the stage. Lucien, you’re always talented in music and perhaps you can turn the play into an opera. Anyway, I need to go now and update my arcana badge. I can’t wait to see it when I can become a middle-rank!”

Nagging, Rock walked between Lucien and Lazar, followed by several apprentices. Although the apprentices cast Lucien a sorry look, in the next second, their faces were written with great excitement—they were going to become real arcanists now!

Before they were being busy with all the experiments, and it was Lucien who reminded them to come here and update their badges.

“Maybe... I am already a middle-rank...?” Lazar realized why he came here and quickly walked to Eric’s office. In the past month, he still got some citation credits.

Lucien slightly shook his head and smiled. He also walked into Eric’s office.

Today, all of the institutions’ members were here updating their badges.

“You only need another five arcana credits to reach level three. Lazar, the finding of cathode ray has really fed you full.” Eric made fun of Lazar using the slang in Allyn.

If it had been before, there should have been a big smile on Lazar’s face. However, Lazar sucked his lips and shook his head, “Still needs five more credits...”

Seeing that Lucien came in, Eric stood up and shook his hand, “Congratulations, Evans. When you first started Atom Institution, many committee members were taking a rather pessimistic attitude, and they did not believe that you could achieve anything in three years. However, you’ve proved them wrong. Unfortunately, my major is not Element, or I would have quit my job and applied to join your institution.”

“Thank you very much for your trust and compliment, Mr. Eric. At least, we don’t have to worry about the three-year target anymore, and so we can focus on our research interest.” Lucien handed his arcana badge to Eric, “Sir, can you please update the badge for me?”

There was a small smile on Eric’s serious-looking face, “The Influence Factor for each journal has been decided. Among the journals, Arcana and Magic are the highest—3.0. Anyone who is capable of publicizing his or her paper on the two journals should get a very good reward, and of course, including you. You’re probably going to become a level six arcanist in two to three years. Your arcana level is going to be higher than your magic level once more.”

As he was saying that, Eric put Lucien’s arcana badge in the cage and rang the bell.

“Today should be the day when the system of Influence Factor comes into effect. What about the other journals?” asked Lucien.

Eric picked up a newly-received piece of document and said, “2.5 for Electromagnetism, Force Field, Element, and the other four schools’ individual journals. 2.0 for Light-darkness, Illusion, Transformation, Summoning, and the six small branches including Golem and Snow. 1.5 for the nine smaller journals including North Magic Newspaper, Solar Island Journal, Sound Wave. 1.0 for the four small-field journals including Blessing and Cursing, and the five comprehensive journals including Arcana Study.”

Because there were more sorcerers now, Arcana Review Board had approved the establishment of some more journal branches.

As for the evaluation standards, as the committee member-to-be, Lucien knew better than Eric. The reason for setting up the standards was to encourage the development of arcana and magic study.

At this time, the cage burst out the silvery light, but it was also mixed with milk-white light.

Eric slightly frowned, wondering what was going on here.

The corner of Lazar's mouth twitched. Everywhere Lucien showed up, something different should happen...

Besides the arcana badge, there were other items: another badge with its back upwards, two documents, and a journal in black cover.

"Arcana?" Eric picked it up. He never expected that the journal would be sent directly to him through the magic circle.

There was a line of silver-stamped letters on the cover of this month's Arcana,

"The Gate of the Microworld is Opening for Us. – Lucien Evans"

Eric turned around and looked at Lucien, feeling shocked. Those times when Arcana had an inscription on its front cover were very limited—about thirty times so far. Every time when this happened, it meant that something very important and groundbreaking had been discovered, and thus a grand arcanist or a legendary sorcerer would develop the inscription to show its value. However, this time, the inscription was from Lucien Evans?!

Lucien thought to himself in his mind that he wished to add another sentence:

"Arcanists, if you want to ascend the Throne of Arcana, go to explore the unknown microworld!"

Chapter 356: The Two Documents and Two Badges

Knowing Lucien quite well, Lazar was aware that sometimes Lucien would say things that they did not understand. So Lazar smiled and said, "Mr. Eric, please take a look at the first paper. You'll see what Lucien's inscription mean."

Eric hurriedly opened the journal and jumped to the first paper. He saw Lucien's name on it—Lucien Evans X, fifth-level arcanist, fifth-circle sorcerer.

The title of the paper was: The Discovery of a New Particle.

Thinking of all the rumors that he had heard during that month, Eric suddenly felt quite nervous.

"You probably want to calm down a bit first, Mr. Eric." Lazar joked. Knowing that Eric was not an expert in element spells, he had no worries at all that Mr. Eric would get hurt from reading it.

After Eric quickly scanned the paper, he suddenly looked up and his gray eyes were shining with the light of excitement, "It's way smaller than an atom! It's a new particle! Evans, your contribution is so great that can definitely be compared to the discovery of planets! The world is way more complex than we thought!"

For the arcanists, the finding of the new particle was way more meaningful than that of the periodic table of elements. The latter was just a summarized finding, while the former had led them to the new era of arcana study.

Lucien did not expect that, after working in the office for so many years, Mr. Eric was still this passionate about the study of arcana and curious about the truth of the world. However, Lucien was still holding the suspicious attitude toward whether other planets really existed in this world.

"I'm not sure if the existence of other planets is true..." Lucien

murmured.

"No... I mean... yes, we haven't figured out if the planets are really there." Eric quickly corrected himself and said, "The value of the discovery of electron should be compared to that of the finding of the fact that light is a kind of electromagnetic wave, the proposal of electromagnetic equation, the establishment of the three laws, and Miracle Experiment! The world is so big and at the same time so small. But we're even smaller living in this world!"

Eric used some quite long sentences. He was being a little too excited.

Lazar grinned at Lucien, "I've never seen Mr. Eric acting like this before."

After a few minutes, Eric slowly calmed down. He combed his think hair a bit with his hand and said, "Your inscription is definitely valid! You're right—the gate of the microworld is opening for us. How small can a particle be?"

"Our knowledge's still rather limited," said Lucien with his fingers crossing. "We can talk about it later, but Mr. Eric, can you please take out the documents and badges for me?"

Lucien's words reminded Eric what his true job was. When he hurriedly reached the badges and documents in the cage, he said to Lucien, "There's another line on the cover—Vol. 10, 789, for Mr. Evans."

Lucien realized that this issue of Arcana was a special edition for him.

"Le... level six?!" Eric stammered a bit when he saw the dazzling stars on the badge.

Lazar was also shocked. Although he knew that the discovery of electron could bring Lucien a very good credit reward, Lazar never really expected that Lucien could become a level six arcanist this fast.

Lucien was now a senior-rank mage. He was now a member of the

upper class in the Congress!

"Credits... Three thousand and sixty-nine..." Eric double checked to make sure this was not a mistake.

Lazar put on a confused smile and said, "Maybe the discovery of electron is so important that the reward is even more than what we expected."

"Can I take a look at the document, Evans?" asked Eric politely. After all, Lucien was already a level six arcanist.

Lucien did not mind, "If you want, please read to us, Mr. Eric. I think Lazar wants to know as well."

Lucien just turned in the paper a few days ago. The review comment was sent back together with the journal.

"Sure I want to know the comments." Lazar grinned.

"The comment from Mr. Raventi is: 'Simple but classic experiment. It has discovered a new particle which is smaller than an atom. The experiment has shown us a brand new field with endless possibilities. It has pushed open the gate of the microworld for us. The finding will probably change the world we live in, and maybe not until many years later can we see the true value of it. The paper is worthy of in-depth discussion and it has overturned atom theory. Six hundred arcana credits and five thousand arcana points are suggested to be given to Lucien Evans as the reward'," Eric read the comment.

The comment from LockLynn was close to that of Raventi, and the suggested credits given was also six hundred. The combined review comment was:

"The groundbreaking finding in the microworld. The finding has proved the theoretical limit of atom theory and is of great significance to the school of Element. Worth of detailed discussion. A new era shall begin. Six hundred credits and five thousand arcana points are given as the reward."

The given credits were not much higher than their expectation.

"These are really high comments, even higher than that of the periodic table of elements! You're really putting great pressure on us!" Lazar joked, "But... the finding of the electron has just brought you six hundred credits. What about the other a thousand credits?"

"There's another document." Lucien pointed at the file in Eric's hand. Since the document was directly sent to the office, there was no need for Lucien to keep it as a secret.

Eric hurriedly opened it. After he scanned the file, he suddenly looked up and said to Lucien in the trembling voice, "You... You designed Miracle Experiment?"

"What?!" Lazar could not believe his ears. Although he was not on the scene when Raventi conducted the experiment in the manor, Lazar repeated the experiment on his own in the lab. He was deeply shocked by the result—the secret of life was so charming!

"I was not able to handle the consequence brought by the experiment, so I chose to keep it as a secret. But now things are different." Since Lucien's cognitive world had started to substantialize and the existence electron had become part of the structure of his mental world, the efficiency of Lucien's meditation practice had doubled. Now, Lucien had enough money to buy all the potions and materials. Maybe in four or five years, Lucien's soul and spiritual power could become strong enough to directly interfere with the reality.

"You... You're such a monster!" Lazar was more than shocked.

Eric was absent-minded for a while and then he forced a smile on his face, "Miracle Experiment almost dragged the God of Truth down from the throne. Lucien, you're a genius arcanist."

"And also crazy..." Eric thought to himself.

Then, Eric reminded Lucien, "Be careful, Lucien. The church must be watching you, and some of the crazy sorcerers might go extreme as well."

"Thank you, sir." Lucien nodded, "I am prepared."

"The final comment on Miracle Experiment is: 'The experiment has shown us a possible answer about how life first came to this world. It is simple yet very mysterious, just like a miracle. The experiment is pioneering and pathbreaking and is of great value. Six hundred arcana credits and five thousand arcana points are given,'" once again, Eric read the comment.

Plus all the citation credits that Lucien had got, he had obtained enough credits to become a senior-rank.

"Congratulations, you've become a senior-rank arcanist." Eric handed Lucien the badge, the two files, and the journal.

As for Eric, he never expected that one day he would become a senior-rank arcanist. His only wish was to become a sixth-circle sorcerer before his soul was drained up, so he could prolong his life-span.

Lucien left his own spiritual mark in the badge and found that there was another permanent magic effect enchanted in the badge. The wearer was going to be immune to the common magic spells restraining one from moving such as Slow, Spider Web, and Grease.

The magic effect was a good one. Lucien nodded, feeling satisfied. Obviously, this precious badge was previously made. The original data saved in the old badge was transferred to the new one.

Lazar took an envious glance at the badge on Lucien's chest.

At this time, Heidi knocked at the door. She saw it from the gap of the door that Mr. Evans and Mr. Lazar were just about to leave. She gently pushed the door open and walked into the office, "I'm an arcanist now."

The black badge with a silver star on it was shiny.

"Good for you." Lucien nodded approvingly.

"Six... six stars..." Heidi was very surprised, "Are you already a level six arcanist, Mr. Evans?"

In the corridor, Felipe walked past with his hands in the black

pockets. He looked quite sick. On the first day of October, he was also here updating his arcana badge and borrowing some books from the library.

When walking past the door, the corner of Felipe's eyes saw Lucien standing in the office. Felipe saw the arcana badge with six stars on it in front of Lucien's chest on the left.

Lucien also noticed Felipe and the six silver circles on his magic badge. Lucien smiled and nodded as his greeting.

Felipe looked the same gloomy so he would not show Lucien his surprise and bewilderment. After a quick nod, Felipe walked past the door.

"There's another badge?" Eric picked it up and saw the badge on which a quill was drawn.

Lucien thought that there was going to be a formal procedure for him to work in the review board. He did not expect that the badge was directly given to him.

"Arcana Review Board, Lucien Evans..." Eric read out the words and could not believe his eyes

Felipe was still not far away from the door. In the corridor, he heard Eric's voice. His hands in the pockets clenched tight for a moment, but the look on his face remained the same. Calmly, he left the corridor.

Chapter 357: The Rank

Chapter 357: The Rank

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Haze and mist always lingered around Heidler, the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness.

With his hands in the pockets of the long, black coat, Felipe looked out of the window attentively. Beside him on the desk lay the latest issue of Arcana. The title of the journal's very first paper was: The Discovery of a New Particle.

"... Only about 1/2000 of the size of an atom..." Felipe murmured to the gray sky, "He's faster than I thought. But the discovery of the new particle shouldn't be enough for him to become a senior-rank arcanist..."

Felipe was confused.

Suddenly, Felipe reached out his hand and talked to the black wristband, "Mr. Rogerio, did you figure it out about Lucien Evans?"

Rogerio's voice came out from the wristband, "I did. They are not keeping it as a secret. The Miracle Experiment... was designed by Lucien Evans."

"Was it?" Felipe was shocked, but it did make sense. He had once guessed whether Miracle Experiment had anything to do with Professor, or there was no way that the Will of Elements could manage to put forward such a shocking experiment within such a short period of time after Felipe published his paper.

Thinking of this, Felipe's face turned even paler.

Felipe gritted his teeth and the words squeezed out from his teeth, "Professor..."

Rogerio also disliked Professor, and he said, "So... I think he's still

working on overthrowing the Life Force Theory.”

“I don’t think so. It was probably just an accident.” Felipe recalled what happened at that time and he believed that Lucien was not capable of taking every factor, even those accidents that happened later, into consideration. In fact, except for the Prophet, even the legendary archmages were not able to do so. Even if it was the Prophet, he was still not capable of seeing every detail when facing a strong enemy.

“We should thank Traquair. He disturbed Lucien’s plan, and thus things went to the direction as we wished,” said Rogerio. “Alright, Felipe, we cannot change anything that has already happened. Although he has become a member of Arcana Review Board, your magic level is still higher. You know, he’s only a fifth-circle sorcerer. No matter how many high-rank magic items he has, Lucien is still in great danger from the Church. Maybe we can attend his funeral in a year or two. A year or two... It’s quite long. The Church won’t take any actions in the next few days when he is closely protected by the Congress.”

As a member of Affairs Committee, Rogerio knew clearly that Lucien had had a funeral before already, and he also knew that Felipe disliked Lucien Evans very much and regarded Lucien as his biggest competitor, although they were only competitors in the field of Element and Alchemy.

“After a year or two...” Felipe shook his head. He did not believe that what Rogerio just said would happen.

He never doubted that Lucien could become a senior-rank sorcerer before turning thirty. Felipe just wondered how fast Lucien could do it.

After sharing the intelligence with Felipe, Rogerio stopped the connection. He was working on his own research. After the Influence Factor of Magic had been improved to 3.0, Rogerio saw the great hope of him becoming a level eight arcanist in ten years.

Felipe released a long sigh and said bitterly, “Miracle Experiment... New particle... Good for you, Lucien Evans!”

“You don’t look very pleasant, Felipe.” A deep and hoarse voice came out from the empty room.

Felipe was not surprised. He slowly turned around and responded, “Do I? This has aroused my passion for studying arcana. Both Magic and Arcana have the Influence Factor of 3.0. If I can develop several good papers, I can become a senior-rank arcanist in a year.”

Felipe was not far away from becoming a level six arcanist.

On the chair across the desk, there was a figure appearing. To be more specific, it was a horrible ghost with a rotten face and the white skull. The ghost was wearing a long, black robe drawn with many fancy patterns.

The ghost giggled, “You need my help? Although I am not an expert in arcana, I know some of the special materials from the World of Souls that can really help you to progress further. As long as you can sign the compact with me, I can guarantee that you can become a seventh circle sorcerer in five years.”

“Angwoods, I can take care of my own stuff. Keep it in mind. You’re summoned by me, so I am your master. When I don’t need you to talk, you don’t talk. Get it?” Felipe’s deep eyes looked at the ghost in an imposing manner.

Angwoods’ skeleton slightly cracked, “Yes, my master.”

Putting back his hands into the pockets, Felipe walked to the door of the study. When walking past Angwoods, Felipe said to the ghost just like he was talking to a servant, “Good. I am going to conduct the magic experiment. If there’s no emergency, don’t let anyone bother me.”

“Yes, my master,” said Angwoods with great respect. When Felipe left the office, Angwoods angrily swore, “Arrogant idiot!”

In the corridor, the corner of Felipe’s lips curled up, “Idiot. The ghosts in the World of Souls just can’t send me a better one to sign the compact with me... Do I look so silly that I would follow that thing’s words?”

When stepping into the lab, Felipe turned on the magic circle and the look on his face became very attentive.

It was very cold in the lab, and the white fog was always lingering. In front of Felipe, on the operation desk, there lay a human body. The body was bought.

For this poor man, using his dead body in exchange for money to support his family was a sweet thing.

From the previous experiment, the dead body's eyes opened wide. The reflection of Felipe's cold and gloomy face was in the blue pupils.

Picking up a silver dagger, Felipe cut it down in the dead body's chest and took out the dark red heart. After putting the heart in the magic circle, he walked to another operation desk where a strong undead creature lay—a ghaſt, the advanced form of the ghouls. The ghaſt looked rather ſhort, like a kid, however, the ſmell of its rotten ſkin made one want to throw up, and the bones underneath were thus revealed.

Felipe was very uſed to it. Using the dagger, he took out the ghaſt's black, rotten heart and put it in the ſame magic circle.

Activating the magic circle and getting rid of the irrelevant tissues, Felipe cut down a thin piece from each heart. Then he uſed a bottle of reagent and dyed the cuts ſilvery.

Felipe put the two pieces in the enlargement magic circle functioning as a microscope, trying to find the ſecret hiding behind human's cells and the undead creatures' cells.

The magic circle did not work well enough. Felipe could not ſee better.

...

In Radiance Church.

“The damned defiler! He did it!” Vaharall's furious roaring lingered in Philibell's ſtudy, “I'm going to ſentence him! Purify him!”

“He’s for sure a demon, a demon that fools people! Or there was no way that he could write Ode to Joy!” Varantine ground his teeth.

The four pairs of white wings covered with spots of light stretched out behind Stone, the Four-winged Knight, “We must purify him. He’s the biggest defiler in a hundred years!”

“Not only him... Including his relatives and friends!” suggested Vaharall coldly.

The look on Philibell’s face was gloomy, “Lucien Evans must die. But his relatives and friends have reported him to the Church, so we cannot touch them. Also, I don’t think Lucien Evans will care.”

“Anyway, it’s time for us to take action.” Varahall’s eyes were very dangerous.

Philibell looked at Varantine and Stone. Both of them nodded seriously.

“So, we put Lucien Evans on the Cleansing List,” said Philibell seriously. “Inform the clergy, we must purify Lucien Evans... at any cost!”

“I agree. Also, as the designer of Miracle Experiment and the finder of the new particle, Lucien Evans has threatened the divinity of the Lord more than once. He’s a dangerous and cunning demon, and he should be put on the fifty-third place on the list,” said Varahall.

The number of the legendary level was of course more than fifty-two, the reason why Lucien could rank No. 53 was that the legendary from the church, the noble knights, the demon dukes and the devil lords which had not arrived in the main world, and the powerful magic creatures in the Dark Mountain Range, or the prehistorical evil creatures in the other dimensions were not on the list.

“I agree.” Philibell nodded, and so did the other two grand cardinals.

“Then we’ll send them the material of Lucien Evans, the Demon of Primary,” said Varahall coldly.

The Demon of Primary was the code name for Lucien Evans. It came from Miracle Experiment that Lucien designed. At the same time, it also referred to Lucien's treacherousness and hypocrisy, just like a demon.

"We shall take action as soon as possible. We seek for the chance; we wait, and finally, the chance will be there." Philibell reminded Varahall in the end.

Chapter 358: The Vase

Chapter 358: The Vase

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

On the fifteenth floor of the headquarter of the Congress, in a bright office.

The exotic, dark-yellow carpet was thick and soft. The magic crystal light on the ceiling was dazzling even when it was not on. Several complicated magic circles were carved on the surface of the dark-red table made of precious wood. In the corner of the room, behind the bar counter, there were the bottles of wine and Lucien's favorite drink, Sky Blue... This was the office for Lucien Evans, the fifty-fourth member of Arcana Review Board. The papers would be sent to Lucien through the magic circles.

"If I am not in the office, sort the papers first and then send them to me every evening," said Lucien to the steel golem. "If I am not around, you can send the papers to my teacher, the Lord of Storm."

Lucien dared not send out the papers to the other members of the institution. After all, the reason why the papers were sent to him was that they were all possible bombs. However, fortunately, this kind of papers were very few.

The eyes of the golem shone with red light, and it responded in the metallic voice, "Yes, master."

After becoming the board member, Lucien not only got his exclusive office but also a magic servant. He could choose from the arcana puppets, gas servants, elementals, and the golems. After selecting carefully, Lucien chose the most expensive one—the steel golem made in the year of 812. It was said that the golem could fight for its master for a few minutes even in a very strong magnetic field.

Lucien adjusted his collar a bit and stepped out of the office.

Walking along the corridor, Lucien ran into the several junior and middle-rank arcanists working in Arcana Review Board.

When seeing the badge on Lucien's chest, they greeted Lucien with great respect, "Arcana's above, Mr. Evans."

"Morning." Lucien slightly nodded.

When stepping into the hall, the gate guard, an adamantine golem, also greeted using its low voice, "Take care, Mr. Evans."

Lucien heard that an adamantine golem was capable of fighting against a gold knight. Looking at the golem up and down, Lucien's eyes lit up and he wished that he could have one.

In the entire Congress, there were only a few adamantine golems. Each one or two of them were responsible for safeguarding the most important places in the tower such as the highest arcana and magic library, the major warehouse, the high-level summoning chambers, and the highest council office.

And Lucien's current wealth could not even afford a senior-rank mithril golem.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the magic tower of Allyn.

As usual, Lucien was in his teacher's office having his homework checked.

In the office, besides the Lord of Storm, Thompson and Alferris were also there. Right now, Alferris was sleeping on the carpet next to Fernando's feet just like a little puppy, slightly snoring.

"Thompson, I'll talk to you about the paper later..." Fernando put down the paper in his hand and looked at Lucien, "Lucien, it's time for you to switch to a new meditation method now since the new power of your soul has become more stable. Your spiritual power level's about the fifth circle, so your current meditation method is not really working for you. I have a new meditation method here that's quite suitable for you, and it's enough for you until you reach

the eighth circle. Do you want to try it?”

Of course, Lucien would love to follow a better meditation method. He felt that his teacher should not even bother asking. Lucien had been prepared to buy a new meditation method from the highest arcana and magic library if his teacher was not going to make any offers.

“Sure, sir. Thank you very much!” Lucien’s eyes were full of excitement.

Fernando took out a black old book and said to Lucien seriously, “My meditation method isn’t bad, but the best meditation method for you should be developed by yourself based on your own situations and needs. When your cognition world has been basically substantialized, you can alter and amend your spiritual power and soul bit by bit using the several high-level mediation methods. If you can come up with your own meditation method that really works for you, it will be more hopeful for you to reach the legendary level. However, improving meditation is a risky and tough job. Before you’re prepared, don’t try it like a fool. I don’t want to have a student like a fool.”

Fernando’s red eyes stared at Lucien in a very stern way, and he added, “Even one day when your cognition world has been basically substantialized, you also have to be very careful, or after a big bang, nothing of you would be left. You hear me?”

“Yes, sir.” Lucien dared not to tell Fernando that his cognition world had been basically substantialized, so he was going to wait for another two to three years in case Fernando would feel suspicious. At the same time, Lucien was also glad that he was still being busy with something else and so far he had not got enough time with improving his meditation method. There were two reasons why Lucien could substantialize the cognition world so fast: one was that he knew that the transmission of power was not consistent; and the other was the fact that the two cosmical constants in the two worlds were, in fact, the same, which had brought Lucien great cognition impact and his cognition world had thus been reformed. This was Lucien’s biggest secret, and it was very difficult for him to find other excuses to explain.

Taking over the old book, Lucien was a bit embarrassed to see the name of the book: Fernando's Meditation Method. It was obvious that Fernando was not an expert in naming things.

"You'd better stay in Allyn in the next three years, Lucien. If you have to, you must report to me or Affairs Committee." Thompson reminded Lucien, "You're on the 53rd place on the list now, the first person under the legendary level. Countless night watchers, red-robed cardinals and saint knights are eagerly trying to kill you. I even wouldn't be surprised if Philibell or Vaharall come to kill you in person."

Lucien nodded seriously, as he knew that the Church was like a crazy hound and he was right now like a little hare. Even Felipe, a person who was definitely very proud and arrogant, had also been staying in Allyn or Heidler for the two years and improving himself quietly. However, two to three years later, there would be for sure other big things happening and the Church would be distracted.

This was why Lucien was willing to reveal the fact that he was also the designer of Miracle Experiment when putting forward his discovery of the electron. He was prepared to stay in Allyn in the following two to three years, and then things should be fine.

"Then... Can I go to Rentato?" asked Lucien. As one of the senior members of the Will of Elements, Lucien should attend the meetings.

Fernando waved his hand in a straightforward manner, "Let them come to Allyn... Or you use Hathaway's demiplane to go directly to the Royal Magic Tower of Holm."

...

After Lucien left the office, Thompson sighed, "Lucien's going to get another two items with the Holm Crown prize, and maybe also an Immortal Throne. I'm already an eighth-circle arcanist, but the highest honor is still like a dream to me."

The ears of Alferris also twitched a bit in the dream, as if the little dragon also heard Thompson's words.

"If everything goes well, an Ice & Snow Medal should also go to Lucien," Fernando said so to motivate his student.

Alferris slightly opened its eyes and it seemed that its amber-colored pupils could see the precious stones on the rings and the many powerful amulets.

Thompson put on a bit bitter smile and said, "Before becoming a senior-rank, Lucien can probably get the highest honor in the three different fields. Something like this has only happened four or five times in history so far."

"Lucien found the electron from gas discharging... It reminds people of lightning..." Fernando suddenly switched the topic. "Brook has seized the opportunity by taking the risk of entering the cloud layer where flashes of lightning and thunders were in. He has proved that the electron is one of the reasons for the formation of natural lightning. In other words, if Moonsong League can be more generous, Lucien should be qualified of getting a Silver Moon Medal as well."

Fernando's words made Alferris's mouth water. Hurriedly, Alferris raised its claw and wiped the drool away. Its eyes were shining with excitement.

"The highest honor from the four different fields... This has never happened before..." Thompson felt that it was better for him to stick to his career as a battle mage.

"But Lucien's from the Will of Elements, so I don't think Moonsong League will be that generous. They will find an excuse." Fernando grinned since he did not care, "They can play blind, and I'm not going to accuse them of doing so. One day, they will find no more excuse other than giving Lucien the medal."

Thompson never expected that Fernando would speak this highly of his student.

"I'm going to teach Lucien more things about electromagnetism," said Fernando. He confidently picked up Thompson's paper.

Thompson realized that Fernando was actually speaking highly of himself.

When waiting for his teacher reading the paper, Thompson felt a bit nervous. Meanwhile, Alferris quietly moved to the door of the office.

After Alferris tiptoed out of the office, Fernando smiled, "I'll be more assured if Lucien has Alferris following him around."

"I wonder this time how many years will Alferris sell itself to Lucien for?" Thompson joked.

...

Lucien went back to his office in Atom Institution.

"Mr. Evans, good afternoon," greeted Lazar humorously, but also with some respect. "Hey, if I directly submit my paper to you, can you give me some more credits?"

Rock, Lazar and the rest of the arcanists in the institution had been playing the joke a lot recently.

"No problem. But if it's not a subversive paper, I'll take a hundred credits from you." Lucien grinned and opened his office door.

In the office, Lucien smelled the refreshing fragrance of the flowers.

"Flowers in my office? You did this for me?" Lucien asked. There was a lovely designed vase on his desk holding a bunch of bright flowers.

"It wasn't me." Lazar shook his head, "Maybe it's a gift from someone else... Many sorcerers have been coming to us recently to say congratulations to you, and, of course, wish to join the institution."

"So I've been hiding in my office recently," as Lucien was saying, he walked towards the desk. When he walked past the vase, he suddenly noticed a slight burning feeling on his skin. His cognition world that had been basically substantialized also suddenly thrilled

from the burning feeling, and the electrons circling around were moving very fast.

“Radiation? A radioactive element? Curse?” Lucien was shocked.

Chapter 359: The Investigation

Chapter 359: The Investigation

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The many thoughts flashing past Lucien's mind rooted him there beside the desk, and Lazar almost ran into him.

"What happened?"

"There's some kind of curse on the vase," Lucien said to Lazar straightforwardly.

"What?!" Lazar's pitch suddenly rose. He could not understand why Lucien remained so calm.

"Arcana's above! Lucien, someone's trying to kill you!" Lazar grabbed Lucien's arm and fiercely pulled him away from the vase. However, he was certain that, for one second, he saw the excitement in Lucien's eyes.

Lucien was indeed excited, but he knew that he should play like a victim. His voice became angry, "Lazar, close the gate of the institution! Do not let anyone out! Collect all the gifts received! I'll report it to the Affair Committee."

"Got it!" nodded Lazar seriously.

After Lazar left the office, Lucien started to check the vase very carefully under the protection of a magic circle. As the radiation had caused the stir in Lucien's cognition world, Lucien guessed that it was very likely to be the β -ray.

In fact, a long time ago, Lucien had started to find the powerful radioactive elements, as the application of these elements was very wide. However, although many unstable isotopes were indeed radioactive, neither of them could meet Lucien's need. Until today, Lucien finally found the ideal one from another people's evil curse against him.

Making the most use of the time, Lucien adjusted the monocle that he was wearing on his left eye and said, "Thompson, I found a cursed vase in my office in the institution. Please send someone here as soon as possible to inspect it."

"I'll send the investigator from Punishment Department there right now. And I'll get back as soon as possible as well." Thompson got back to Lucien instantly.

After submitting the paper, Thompson had gone out to deal with some of his personal stuff. But he was aware of how serious this issue was, not to mention that Lucien was his fellow, and also the senior-rank arcanist with the highest potential.

Three minutes later, the investigators from Punishment Department had already stepped into Lucien's office.

There were five investigators, and the leading one was a middle-aged man with brown curly hair and dark skin color. He was wearing the badge from Punishment Department on which there was a black scepter. Besides the badge, there was also a four-star arcana badge and a six-circle magic badge.

"Mr. Evan, I'm Bellak, from the Punishment Department. Mr. Thompson sent us here to investigate the cursed vase," said Bellak rather seriously. His dark skin revealed the fact that he was very likely from the desert nation originated from the south part of Calais and Brianna.

There was no minister in Punishment Department, as it was directly led by Affair Committee. There were twelve vice ministers in charge of the department. Their arcana level was not very high, and their magic level was of seventh or eighth-circle. Therefore, although Bellak was already a senior-rank mage, he was still just an executive.

Lucien asked the sorcerers and apprentices to gather in one of the offices to undergo the questioning by an investigator. Lucien and Lazar led Bellak into the small meeting room and showed him the vase.

Bellak used the magic spell to check it, however, the vase seemed to be rather normal.

Bellak was very confused. He activated another magic item that he was wearing. The green light spots were speckled on the vase. But still, nothing special happened.

He checked over and over again but found nothing at all. He turned to Lucien, “Mr. Evans... I don’t see any curse here. Did you use a special spell when checking it?”

“I don’t have any special spells, but the magic circle in the lab can tell,” explained Lucien.

“Can you show me, sir?” Bellak responded, “As an investigator, I have to check every detail.”

“No problem.” Lucien nodded. He asked Bellak to bring the vase and the other cursed items that Lucien sensed.

...

“This... This is cathode ray?! The power is much greater!” When seeing the familiar reactions and features, Lazar was shocked. And then he realized why Lucien could discover the curse so quickly – no one was more familiar with cathode ray than Lucien!

For the sorcerers whose soul had been substantialized, when they got familiar with something, they were very likely to sense that thing in many ways, which was more common among senior-rank sorcerers.

“But how does this have anything to do with cursing? Isn’t this your newly-discovered particle?” Bellak was still confused, “Maybe the material of the vase is special and it can send out streams of electrons... Maybe it’s just a coincidence.”

“I don’t think so. My Host Star of Destiny sensed the danger.” Lucien found an excuse.

Bellak wrote down Lucien’s words carefully, “I’ll report this to Affair Committee and have a senior-rank mage or archmage to help

out. Mr. Evans, please give us some time. Meanwhile, we'll still investigate the vase."

That was what a review board member should deserve.

"Thanks." Lucien nodded, and then he came to the outside of the small meeting room with Lazar and Bellak.

Bellak asked Lucien and Lazar to stay here in case there were any other curses, while he went into the office where the other investigators were in to see if they had found anything.

"What is the vase made of?" Lazar asked, "Bellak said that the vase was probably able to emit cathode rays... If we had known a material like this, we would not have used gas discharging for our studies."

Lucien answered and he could not help grinning, "It might be some special material. Hopefully, I can get something out of this assassination attempt."

"No wonder I saw the great excitement in your eyes." Lazar finally understood, "You're really a money-digger, Lucien. One day your passion for wealth should surpass that of a dragon."

Lucien took a glance at him and said jokingly, "I don't think you know a dragon very well."

After about ten minutes later, when the several investigators had finished putting together all the record, the gate of the institution suddenly opened. A tall and thin elder man walked in accompanied by Thompson.

The elder man looked ordinary. His eyes were closed tightly, and his hair was covered by the hood. The magic robe he was wearing was of pure black like the deepest night.

"Sir... the Eye of Curse?" Lucien recognized him. He was Atlant Forman.

"I am not leaving for Calais any time soon, so I am going to stay in the headquarter for a while. Fernando told me what happened to

you. I am here to take a look. My hobby happens to be collecting all kinds of weird curses,” said Atlant. His voice was gentle and soft. Although the way he spoke was quite slow, his tone was assuring.

“Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.” Facing the Eye of Curse, although it was not Lucien’s first time standing in front of a legendary-level archmage, he still felt the great pressure and fear.

Atlant nodded casually. He walked slowly to the vase. After a few seconds, he suddenly opened his eyes, and the entire vase was covered with a layer of deep green light.

When the eyes of cursing opened, Lucien felt a sudden dizziness.

There were countless figures in Atlant’s deep, black pupils.

“Indeed... it’s a curse.” Atlant made his conclusion.

There were black spots in the deep green light.

“The magic structure itself is not complex, but the material used is very special, therefore, most of the inspection spells have failed to work. If being affected by the curse for too long, your organs would wear away gradually and you would die from all the fatal diseases.”

Lucien nodded, and he was now certain that the use of the radiation was also part of the cursing spells. However, he did not know anything else about curses.

“Thank you, sir, for your confirmation...” Bellak reported to the Eye of Curse, Lucien, and Thompson. “We’ve found a couple of suspicious sorcerers but we cannot make sure whether they did this on purpose or not. Because all the cursed items made from the special material are from the same shop, and the details of the items resemble each other.”

“I want a thorough investigation!” Although Thompson was always rather nice, right now his tone was stern and cold.

Atlant smiled, “So my job is done. But... can I take the cursed vase? I’m especially interested in the curse and the special material.”

“No problem,” said Thompson, since, of course, there was no way that Thompson would say no to a legendary archmage. “There is more than one cursed item.”

Lucien hurriedly added, “Can I keep a couple of them as well? I am interested in the special material as well because it might be closely connected to the electron that I’ve been studying recently.”

“Sure. The Congress is putting much emphasis on the exploration in the micro-world.” Thompson nodded, as he was very impressed with Lucien’s research attitude. Facing the evil assassination, Lucien was still dedicated to his study. No wonder he had won so many honors at such a young age!

Leaving an investigator safeguarding the items, Bellak led the three investigators to dig deeper into the assassination attempt.

Because there was not yet a conclusion, except Lucien, the rest of the institution members were asked to spend the night in the Congress. Lucien also comforted Heidi, Katrina, and Annick that everything would be fine.

After finishing all the work, it was already late. Lucien had decided to stay in the lab tonight to hurry up studying the radioactive elements in the vase.

The fact that the cursed items were sent to his office only a few days later after Lucien published his finding made Lucien feel quite insecure. Therefore, he suspended his work on producing the new fourth-circle spell—called X-ray, which used the power of cathode ray, and instead started to work on producing two to three new attack or defense magic spells to protect himself, just in case.

There were a lot of new magic spells that could be put forward using radioactive elements, besides the theory of relativity and mass-energy equation that Lucien was so far not able to derive because of his limited knowledge, there were still other things that Lucien could do, such as producing more cursed magic spells and find the element called Helium.

Once Helium was discovered, Lucien would be able to use its

liquefied form to produce another new spell and further push forward the limit of ultralow temperature. He would even be able to make the power of the spell reach the temperature which was only three or four degrees higher than the absolute zero.

The books in his spirit library were still locked as Lucien had never learned about the theories before. Even if Lucien could figure out how to use these most challenging theories, the correspondingly constructed spells should be of the legendary level, which was far from being practical to him.

This ice and snow spell could be even more powerful than a senior-rank one!

The only problem was that Lucien needed to find the right material when casting it, so he could make sure the caster would not die from it.

Chapter 360: The New Magic

Chapter 360: The New Magic

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Late in the night, after Lucien finished separating the three rays and managed to figure out some of their characteristics, his cognition world changed again: two brand new light spots representing the two new elements showed up, and following the periodicity, the two light spots joined the trajectory of how the previously existing elements were operating.

With no special feature, one of the two elements did not have color and seemed to be rather “lazy”, while there were three different rays shooting out from the other silver-colored spot—one ray had no color or smell, one had mixed colors that were hard to describe, and the third one had some special connection with the electrons surrounding the elements. The rays contained many missing magic symbols in them and together they constructed a rather weird model.

From the incomplete model, Lucien felt the power of cursing—the power to kill when one had no idea of what was going on.

Lucien was not good at using curses, and so it would take him at least half a year to complete the model and turn it into a real magic spell. Experienced as he was, he made the conclusion very quickly. So, if he wanted to improve an existing curse spell, it was going to take him at least five years as there was no guidance from his own cognition world to help him.

It seemed to him that this curse spell was of a quite high level, probably around the sixth circle, as its structure was more complex than that of Elemental Order. If Lucien had some radioactive elements as the reagent, as a senior-rank-mage-to-be, he should be able to cast it two to three times before his spiritual power was drained up.

Before the discovery of the electron, Elemental Order was a third

circle spell. Now, Lucien had improved the spell to the standard of the fifth circle, and its power had been strengthened by twenty percent.

Although the structure of this cursing spell was complicated, with the help of the reagents and proper casting, Lucien should be able to use it with his outstanding mathematical knowledge and magic analysis ability, but the cost was great.

Lucien started to consider how to name the cursing spell: Invisible Death? Arcana Curse? Evans's Shadow? Lucien's Stare? Professor's Solicitude? Knowing that in a year or even half that he would obtain a new cursing spell, he was in a pretty good mood.

Later, Lucien started to use the element of helium as the reagent for casting. He was trying to get helium from the air. Lucien was doing so by using the fifth-circle spell called Hathaway's Collecting Spell, which was a must-have for most advanced magic labs. However, its magic circle was too expensive for the common labs.

After casting the spell, Lucien did not sense any gas gathering. Frowning, he guessed that it was because the proportion of helium in the air was too low. Fortunately, Lucien's lab was equipped with the fancy magic circles. So Lucien turned them on and finally collected a few tubes of helium.

This made Lucien think of his future methods for collecting his casting materials. Maybe in the future, Lucien could gather adequate materials in the space, but the radiation there was too terrible. So far, Lucien could only turn to Mr. Fernando for help.

The Eye of Curse, Atlant, was studying the cursed vase. Although he did not have a specific target like Lucien, and he was not an expert in arcana, it was also just a matter of time for Atlant to find the fact that a certain kind of ray was actually from the atomic nucleus of helium and create the new cursing spell.

Therefore, Lucien was planning on developing the paper about the new cursing spell as soon as possible and waited for the proper chance to publish it, so hopefully, he could get a few more years of the exclusive right of the new magic spell.

The Congress had developed its mature way of thinking to come up with new spells once a new theory or finding was put forward, no matter it was for constructing a new cursing spell or the improvement of a new ice and snow spell. Therefore, it totally made sense that Lucien could come up with these two new spells within such a short period of time.

Staying focused, Lucien started to use the magic circles to liquefy helium.

...

It was close to the early morning. In an advanced magic circle, there were drops of colorless liquid in front of Lucien.

Suddenly, in Lucien's half-substantialized cognition world, part of the colorless light spots turned into a light drizzle and then ice and snow followed. The mysterious, crystal-like magic symbols showed up. Although the symbols were complex, they were still not complete.

Following the Congress' mature way of thinking, and according to what he had learned from his fellow students, Lucien made a quick evaluation that he could complete the magic structure within three days. However, the magic spell was going to be very dangerous and complex, and it required a more powerful pressure magic spell than Pressure Cage to be completed.

To maximize the power, the ultimate version of the spell should be of the ninth circle. At the ninth circle, the temperature created by the spell would be one degree above absolute zero!

If to make it more practical, Lucien did not have to use a very powerful pressure, the temperature created by the spell would be about three or four degrees Celsius above absolute zero, and the level of the spell should be about the seventh circle.

It was a very powerful and terrifying ice and snow magic spell! Even Lucien himself was very surprised. The temperature created by most of the spells owned by Ashikana, the senior-rank mage who specialized in snow and ice magic, was still about fifteen degrees

above absolute zero. Lucien started to wonder whether that was the limit for ice and snow magic.

However, he was never an expert in this field, and he had never studied the legendary snow and ice magic spells. Maybe the temperature created by some of the legendary level magic spells had already got very close to the absolute zero, but they cost too much to cast.

What made Lucien's upcoming ice and snow magic spells more terrifying was its practicality. The most challenging part of the spell—the construction of the structure of helium, its liquidation, or even solidification—could all be prepared in advance using the casting reagents, which could bring the degree of difficulty for casting the spell to about the sixth circle.

Right now, however, Lucien still had to solve one problem—how could he cast the spell without freezing himself to death?

Lucien carefully collected a tube of liquefied helium in an expensive tube, inside of which there were vacuum layers and heat shields.

One single tube like this was worth a level five magic item. After the discovery of the electron, the Congress had finally approved the institution's application and gave the institution five of the tubes. To make further progress in developing this ice and snow spell, Lucien needed a lot of money!

Lucien had some clues to solve the biggest problem: first of all, it should be a ray spell instead of range attack; Also, Lucien had to activate a vacuum shield to protect himself. But no matter how Lucien designed the magic, using the magic was still going to be dangerous for him. Lucien then started to consider how to name this spell. After a while, he had decided to name the seventh -circle version Evans' Freezing Ray, and its ninth-circle version Snow Goddess' Whip.

After putting forward laser and magnetic trap, Lucien thought to himself that he would be able to construct a legendary spell probably named Snow Goddess' Forgiveness... or maybe Professor's Forgiveness. Lucien amused himself when thinking of this. When he

became more capable and was ready to enter the upper air or the starry sky, Lucien would find the existence of positive electron, and then possibly he could create the magic spells such as Substance Demolishment or Positive Electron Artillery...

...

Although he had been working for the whole night, Lucien was super excited. Because he was going to carry around the tube in which the liquefied helium was stored, he was quite concerned that once the tube somehow got broken, that would be the very end of him.

“So, your experiment is done?” A familiar and childish voice came into Lucien’s ears.

Lucien was taken aback. When he looked back, he was amused. Alferris, the little crystal dragon, was wearing a white apron and holding a plate on which there was a bloody steak. The little crystal dragon was right now looking at Lucien in an ingratulatory manner.

“What’s this, Alferris?” Lucien asked, trying not to laugh.

“Your breakfast!” said Alferris as if it was too obvious for Lucien to ask, “I can cook well!”

Looking at Alferris’ crystal scales, and the rare steak on the plate, Lucien rubbed his forehead, “Where did you learn how to cook... Wait, why are you cooking breakfast for me?”

“I learned it from a book called A Cannibal’s Secret Recipe. Many dragons have told me that I’m a good chef!” Alferris did not answer Lucien’s second question.

Lucien asked, “What’s the recipe...?”

“Tear it, roast, eat.” Alferris tried hard to recall what was on the booklet.

Lucien cleared his throat a bit, “So... Why are you following me, then?”

Alferris suddenly jumped forward and licked Lucien with its red tongue, “Boss, please keep me!”

“Don’t!” Lucien was scared, “I don’t want to die with you!”

He was still carrying the tube!

When Lucien was considering whether he should spend a barrel of money to have the little dragon be his guard for the following few years, Bellak came back with the first-round investigation report.

Chapter 361: The Safeguard

Chapter 361: The Safeguard

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Bellak was taken aback when he saw the monster squatting next to Lucien. The monster had beautiful and crystal-like scales.

“Dragon?” Bellak immediately recognized the monster and recalled that the Lord of Storm did have a dragon student, so he calmed down.

Alferris lifted its chin and hummed in an arrogant way. It did not want to talk to Bellak.

Seeing the arrogant look on Alferris’ face, Lucien was amused. He turned to Bellak and asked, “Any findings, Bellak?”

“According to our first round of investigation, the sorcerers who brought you the cursed items did not know what the items really were. They all bought the gifts from Lorban’s Shop and since the shop sold these items, it never reopened again. We have no idea whether the owner, Lorban, is still alive or not. However, we can say for sure that the fact should be way more complicated than just some random careless people making the items using the special material by mistake.”

Although a senior-rank mage was not able to invade someone’s brain to read and rewrite one’s memory, he or she could still use some illusion spells to get what they wanted to know from the middle and junior-rank mages.

“No idea whether Lorban is alive or not...” Lucien repeated, murmuring. He wondered whether Lorban had been killed after being utilized as a tool or he had run away as the chief plotter... Lucien believed that the latter was more likely to be the case, as the former would require too much luck and involve a lot of uncertainty to carry out the vicious plan.

Bellak turned the page and said, which confirmed what Lucien was thinking, "So far we believe that Lorban was involved in this whole thing and he knew what he was doing. According to the several sorcerers, they were encouraged by Lorban when they went there buying some common-used potions that they should build a good relationship with you so in the future they could possibly work in the institution. The several sorcerers were regular customers of that shop, and it was Lorban who recommended them to buy those cursed items."

"I see..." Lucien rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Any further information about this person?"

Alferris seemed to be rather bored. It bent over to the ground and soon fell asleep.

Bellak turned his page again and said, "Lorban, born in Rentato, Holm. His family has been living here since his grandfather's generation. His magic talent was discovered at the age of twelve and thus he was sent to Allyn magic school. With a relatively good score, he graduated four years later and became a sorcerer, specializing in Light and Darkness, Astrology, Element and Alchemy. Soon after becoming a middle-rank, his soul was severely damaged and became broken in one of his adventure outside of Allyn, and he could not improve his rank any further. He was also not good at studying arcana. Therefore, he started to run the alchemy shop in Allyn. Lorban is single. He's got no children, and his parents have passed away. He didn't talk much, and neither did he really have any friends. However, in the last five years, he had become more calm and mild and started to get along with people. He went missing about two days ago and we currently have no clue. We have informed the senior-rank sorcerers specializing in astrology in Punishment Department to see if we can get to know where he is right now. I guess that he has joined the Night Watch."

"Do we have other methods to approach the case?" Lucien slightly frowned. It seemed that this thing would soon come to an end since Lorban had gone missing.

Bellak was still wearing the same serious look, "We're still trying to figure out where Lorban got the special materials. Maybe we can

catch more spies in this way. Affair Committee is very concerned about your safety, Mr. Evans, so I will be your guard for the following three months since this time period is most likely to be dangerous to you. In Allyn, you can just feel free to walk around and do your own things—don't mind me. I'll check around and examine the items that you use. If you're going to leave Allyn, Mr. Evans, please inform me in advance so I can report to the committee to protect you outside of Allyn."

"Thank you." Lucien slightly nodded. At least Affair Committee had shown their proper attitude.

When Bellak was checking the other items in the office, Alferris suddenly stood up and stared at Lucien with his amber-colored, big eyes, "I can do a better job than him! I can be your guard! If you can give me a beautiful Holm Crown ring, you will have me protect you for ten years! I have fulfilled my last compact, so don't worry, boss!"

"I remember... You once said that a Holm Crown ring could buy you as a guard for a hundred years." Lucien grinned.

Alferris was a bit surprised and its eyes turn round, "Did I?... I wasn't really thinking at that time... Boss, you're getting more Holm Crown rings very soon, and also Immortal Throne amulet, Ice & Snow Medal, Silver Moon Medal..." When Alferris was saying that, its mouth started drooling again, "You just give me one ring, and then you can have a dragon! A dragon that can fight, cook, you can play with, and do experiments on! It's worth it!"

"These are my honors... I can't use my honors to pay you..." said Lucien in a pretended serious way. "Also, these magic items are enchanted with senior-rank spells. I should wear them to protect myself."

"I'm more useful than your items! I know how to cast many senior-rank spells, and I can also fight physically!" Alferris was trying hard to sell itself, "I'm really good at spiritual and mind-affecting magic, and also the ones that work on one's soul!"

"I don't think so. Maybe when I become an archmage or a

legendary sorcerer, and when these items become my collection, I can consider lending you the rings, amulets and medals for a couple hundred of years.” Lucien was trying to lure Alferris while promising the little dragon nothing really solid.

“A few hundred years?” Alferris’s eyes lit up. For a little dragon like Alferris who was still young, the fact that it could keep the precious items to itself for one or two hundred years was already very tempting. Also, Lucien did not say that it could borrow the items for only once.

Alferris made a cough, and it said in a pretended serious way, “Even if you can become an archmage, I have to wait for many years. Your promise means nothing. I’m not a stupid dragon.”

The tone of Alferris really resembled that of Fernando.

“I’m not just promising you a fake hope. I’ll pay you every month,” said Lucien. He was saying so because right now he was already relatively rich. The cost of buying the experiment materials was covered by the fund for the institution, and Lucien’s monthly share of profit from Holm Mineral and Harvest was already close to three thousand.

At the same time, after becoming a senior-rank arcanist, Lucien was getting three hundred and eighty arcana points from the Congress. Lucien was also getting three hundred from the Will of Elements. Plus the one thousand and five hundred arcana points that Lucien was getting from Arcana Review Board, his income was no less than that of most senior-rank mages.

Lucien was going to receive a few highest honors, so there was no need for him to make any magic items recently, and thus the cost was saved. So even if he was going to hire a dragon, Lucien would still have enough money for his future senior-rank rites and the construction of his own magic tower.

“I’m expensive,” Alferris emphasized. Then it stuck out its red tongue and licked at Lucien’s hand using moderate strength, “Boss, how much do you want to pay me?”

“Two thousand Thales every month. When I am not out of Allyn and when I don’t need you to be my experiment subject, you’re totally free. So you can earn some more shiny gold coins from other people if you want.” Lucien’s tone was very tempting.

“Really? And I can also borrow your rings, amulets, and medals when you become an archmage?!” Alferris’ big eyes were shining, and it fiercely pulled out a piece of parchment from beneath its belly and said, “Boss, let’s sign a hundred-year compact!”

Lucien was very happy. It was really worth the money he spent to have a dragon whose illusion level was very likely to be the seventh circle as his guard!

“If you are okay with it... Can I pay you in arcana points?” asked Lucien. He guessed that Alferris would prefer to receive shining coins and pieces of jewelry.

“Arcana points? No problem! I can use the points to buy the gems and crystals I like!” Like doing magic, Alferris pulled out a magic badge on which there were seven circles, and, at the same time, it looked at Lucien confusedly, “You don’t like using arcana points? It’s so convenient!”

Lucien felt that he was quite out of date.

After signing the compact, Alferris licked the piece of parchment and folded it carefully. Using the childish voice, it said, “Boss, I need to finish my last compact now.”

“But you said...” Lucien was a bit speechless.

“Almost, almost! Up to five days!” Alferris blinked and waved his claw. In a second, Alferris had already run out of Lucien’s office.

Lucien was just standing there, rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

...

Three days later.

Lucien received the notice from the Will of Elements that he was

invited to attend the meeting held in the Holm Royal Magic Tower to discuss the Holm Crown prize, and they had also informed him how to get to the magic tower using Hathaway's demiplane.

"Mr. Evans, for your safety, I have to follow you," said Bellak.

Lucien nodded. He and Bellak arrived at the top floor of the Will of Elements' magic tower in Allyn and then turned on the magic circle. The dim light shone.

After feeling a great dizziness, Lucien and Bellak arrived at the land which was seemingly surrounded by the starry sky. The stars were dyed with all the colors, just like the different elements. Up and down, the land had colors of green, yellow, red, gold and more.

Not far away from them, there was a very high tower directly extending to the starry sky. It was the magic tower of Hathaway, the Lord of Elements.

Lucien and Bellak did not have the time to appreciate the breathtaking view in the demiplane. They walked to the other side of the magic tower and activated the magic circle there.

When the light disappeared and when they could see everything in front of them again, they were already on the top floor of the Holm Royal Magic Tower.

Chapter 362: The Change

Chapter 362: The Change

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

In the Royal Magic Tower of Holm, as soon as Lucien pushed the gate open, he saw the leading characters in the Will of Elements who he was familiar with including Morris, Gaston, Florencia, and so on. There were in total about fourteen or fifteen of them here. Some of them did not make it either because they were out of Allyn for their adventures and explorations or they were in the middle of the key stage of their magic study.

“Mr. Evans, you should be safe here. I’ll stay outside.” Bellak whispered to Lucien.

Lucien slightly nodded and walked in slowly. He smiled and greeted the sorcerers in there, “Morning, Mr. Morris, Mr. Gaston... Very nice to see you, Ms. Florencia...”

“Welcome Mr. Evans, our youngest Review Board member in the history, and also the youngest winner of Holm Crown prize,” Morris stood up and introduced Lucien to the rest of the important leaders of the Will of Elements, “and he is also going to win... win... Umm, the Immortal Throne award, which is going to make him the second winner of the award in the Will of Elements! A very promising young man!”

The first arcanist who won Immortal Throne award was Hathaway, who put forward the theory explaining the basic elemental constitution of the human body.

Morris was quite unhappy with the fact that Lucien was going to steal another great sum of money from the organization’s pocket by winning another ring. The leading sorcerers present were already very used to it and they even tended to make fun of it. Seeing the look on Morris’s face, they murmured Morris’ nickname that was given by them—the Silver-grey Miser.

Florencia was amused and also felt a little embarrassed. As a senior-rank sorcerer who was good at real fighting, and as the wife of the grand arcanist, she never worried about getting money or materials. However, for sake of the fact that Morris was her teacher, sometimes she would be on Morris's side when Morris put forward some suggestions to save the budget.

“Lucien, this is our president, Mr. Donald, the member of the Highest Council, and he just came back from the other dimension.” Morris introduced Lucien to the elderly man with the mixed black and white hair.

Donald was the typical gentleman sticking to the classic, elegant tradition of the Kingdom of Holm. He was dressing in a rather formal way, and beside him, there was a black top hat and a walking stick. His light blue eyes were neither dull or sharp, but mild and gentle.

Facing the leading sorcerer who had won over the many powerful ninth-circle archmages and one of the members of the Highest Council, Lucien definitely needed to treat Donald very seriously. His titles—a level nine arcanist, a ninth-circle sorcerer, the winner of Holm Crown prize, and so on—could easily make him a dazzling role model.

“It’s my great pleasure meeting you, Mr. Donald. I’ve been very curious about those mysterious dimensions and thus I am always holding my very respect to you and the sorcerers who are able to go there. Can you share with me some of your experiences in the dimension?” said Lucien to Donald very politely and he was trying to build a closer relationship with the president.

Donald’s voice was hoarse as if his throat was somehow damaged, “Evans, as the member of Review Board, you have the access to most of the information stored in the senior rank arcana and magic library to know about the dimensions. But, of course, we all know that you’re rank on the Cleansing List is rising fast, so I guess you probably do not have the time to read the books and materials.”

Florencia grinned. Before Lucien, Donald, the Elements Chaos, ranked no. 53 on the list. Lydia, who had part of the succubus

blood, also turned around and looked at Lucien with interest in her dark red eyes.

Before Lucien answered, Donald went on, “There are many types of dimensions, but because we haven’t managed to find the newly-born ones, so far we still haven’t figured out the reasons of their formation, which maybe involve the deepest secrets of the formation of the world. The two oldest, dangerous and board dimensions are not strange to us—we call them hell and abyss. They are divided into layers just like a magic tower.”

Lucien listened to Donald’s words carefully, and so did the arcanists and sorcerers around.

“As for the so-called Mountain Paradise by the Church, it remains quite mysterious. Mount Paradise has the most features shared by the dimensions, and the angles in Mount Paradise can be summoned just like how the other creatures could be summoned from the different dimensions. However, just like these missing planets, we have no clue where it is, and thus there is no way to explore it, ” said Donald, “and the common dimensions are much smaller than the main word. We can reach the boundary of it beyond which there is darkness chaos. The geographical features, creatures and the ores produced there are also of a single variety. There is a Fire Dimension where the flame is everywhere; A nature dimension where unicorns live... In some dimensions, some planets do exist but no lives can be found on them; There are also Star Tombs where there is no gravity or any light; and also, of course, some worlds like a human society where countries are established.”

The name of Fire Dimension came from the ancient magic empire, and the Congress kept it.

When hearing the name – Star Tomb, Lucien recalled the science fiction films that he watched in his last life. It sounded that a star tomb resembled the universe that Lucien knew. But why there was no gravity and light in a star tomb?

“So far the Congress has explored 87 different dimensions and we have control over 11 of them. For the rest of them, some are under the control of the South or the North Church, some have changed

hands multiple times between the aborigines and the Church, and some are being controlled by the Dark Parliament or the groups believing in other gods or goddesses. Some, for example, hell and the abyss, are out of our control because we're not powerful enough. The purposes for us to explore the dimensions are to get the precious materials and resources and to find the truth of the world. I went to the star tomb this time trying to figure out if it has anything to do with the unfound planets, but unfortunately, I did not find anything."

After Donald's brief introduction, and when Lucien's curiosity was satisfied, Morris introduced Lucien to the rest of the leading sorcerers and arcanists from the Will of Elements. At this time, the gate of the hall was pushed open again and the grey-haired Raventi walked in. On the black magic robe he was wearing, the periodic table of elements was drawn.

"Alright, since we're all here. We can start our discussion now." Seeing that Raventi sat down in the chair which was quite far from him, Morris was in a pretty good mood.

Lucien slightly nodded to Raventi in order to show his thankfulness. The reason why Raventi was late was that he needed to safeguard the branch of the Will of Elements to secure Lucien's safety while he was using the demiplane.

Raventi did not care. In his eyes, it was just his responsibility.

"The first thing... about... Holm Crown prize..." Morris rubbed his forehead and then said, "The ring for Larry called ionization is ready. Shall we wait until Evans's two rings are ready so we can give the prize together?"

"Together. One ceremony is enough." said Raventi directly, "What is important should be the ring and the honor. Don't waste each other's time."

Raventi had given out the idea, and the rest of the arcanists did not think there was a need to dispute with him. So they all nodded.

"Al... Alright, I personally agree with Raventi's words. What really

matters should be the honor, not the prize... So maybe we can just use a level-four or five ring to..." Seeing the angry look on the face of the many arcanists and sorcerers, Morris hurriedly corrected himself, "... I'm just joking... Now let's talk about the name for the two rings for Evans."

The senior arcanists would be really embarrassed if the Will of Elements was going to use a level-four or five ring as the prize.

"It's simple. One named Origin, and the other named Electron, Micro-particle, or Gate." Florencia smiled.

At this time, Lucien, as the winner of the prize, could only remain silent. In order to avoid irritating Morris again and also keep this as his secret weapon, Lucien was planning on submitting the paper on the radiant element next year. This paper could prove that electron was part of the inner structure of an atom and show that elements can be transformed. Therefore, theoretically speaking, the paper had proved one of the highest dreams of the school of Alchemy to be possible, and thus it was definitely worthy of another Holm Crown ring. Following the method used in submitting Miracle Experiment, the paper would be read by Fernando and Cole first and then be sealed.

The school of Alchemy originated from the skills of making magic items and potions in the ancient magic empire. Later, the sorcerers specializing in this field tried to change the properties of the substances fundamentally and tried to turn the common materials into real gold. But it never worked.

After the discussion, the two rings for Lucien were named Electron and the Origin.

Later, the senior members started to discuss some important issues in the Will of Elements. As a new member, Lucien rarely talked but only listened patiently and voted when it was necessary.

According to Lucien's observation, although the atmosphere in the Will of Elements seemed to be quite harmonious, in fact, there were also conflicts: Morris seemed to have some friction with Donald and each of them had some supporters; Gaston and the other two senior-

rank arcanists formed their own group and they belonged to neither side; as for Raventi, he did not care about this at all, and he just directly yelled at anyone who he believed was being stupid.

...

The meeting ended an hour later.

“Lucien, the Hand of Paleness has decided to confer you Immortal Throne award. They want to ask you whether you prefer an amulet, a necklace, or something else? ”

Morris was happy to see the money coming out from some other people’s pocket.

Lucien opened the gate of the meeting room for Morris and smiled, “A magic robe is great.”

Lucien had Sun’s Corona, so it was not ideal for him to have two amulets together.

Morris nodded and put on a bitter smile, “Hope that I won’t have to ask you what you want in the future.”

Lucien and Morris walked together, chatting, and Bellak caught up with Lucien.

“Mr. Evans, do you want to stay here or go back to Allyn?” whispered Bellak.

“We go back.” Lucien smiled. And then he said goodbye to Morris, Gaston, Florencia and the rest of the arcanists.

Florencia stared at Lucien using her green eyes, and said in a pretended unhappy manner, “I was about to discuss with you about the discovery of the new particle.”

“We should have a lot of opportunities in the future.” Lucien grinned, and then he walked to the gate connecting the demiplane. Raventi was also about to go back to Allyn with Lucien, as he was on duty today.

...

At this time, two middle-aged sorcerers happened to walk out from the demiplane warehouse.

They exchanged a look and they saw the deep hatred in each other's eyes.

The black-haired sorcerer pulled the necklace on his neck and murmured something. Then he turned around and walked to the core of the magic tower. The blond-haired sorcerer adjusted his collar and cuffs, and then he walked to the intersection of the two corridors.

It was only a short distance. Soon he arrived at the corridor and saw Lucien.

Meeting Lucien face to face, the blond-haired sorcerer slightly lowered his head and kept walking.

The second when he walked past Lucien, the blond-haired sorcerer lowered his head even deeper in a seemingly respectful way. However, the smile on his face was rather vicious.

It was the last moment... Then he would be free...

Streaks of burning light burst out of his magic robe, and a large amount of powerful alchemical explosives attached to his waist and chest blasted all together!

Bang! The power of a middle-rank sorcerer's self-destruction and the rows of high explosives blasting could match that of a sixth-circle magic spell!

"Demon! Go to hell, demon!" The sorcerer's last desperate and shrill cries lingered in the air.

Chapter 363: The Interlocking Plo

Chapter 363: The Interlocking Plot

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The blasts together with the tumbling flame were about to overwhelm Lucien. The gray slates covering the corridor were lifted fiercely with the great power, as if they were paper pieces. The bombing was deafening, so no screaming or crying could be heard.

However, when the flame and air billows were about to cover Lucien, they were instantly restrained inside an invisible cage, and thus Lucien was not hurt. In the cage, the white gas shining with the glow of fire simply could not move even an inch closer to Lucien.

The seventh-circle spell, Forcecage!

The person who was walking with Lucien was Raventi, the ninth-circle archmage, a member of the Highest Council, and the friend of the Astrologer, who was one of the leaders of Tower. Therefore, even though he did not specialize in the school of Astrology, Raventi still had the magic item enchanted with some precautionary spells. When the blond-haired sorcerer lowered his head, he immediately had the bad foreboding. In the next second, Raventi activated the spell, Forcecage, and it caged the blond-haired sorcerer within when the burning streaks of light first appeared.

Although the power of the explosion was astonishing, it was not magic. The air blast slowly died out, failing to do any damage to the magic cage. The fading sound from the air blast was full of desperation.

In front of the archmage, the middle-rank sorcerer's assassination did not work.

At this time, the movement of the dust in the air suddenly slowed down, and the colors in this space faded away.

The ninth-circle spell, Time Stop!

Lucien heard Donald's hoarse voice, "All of you, leave the place."

Unlike Raventi, Donald studied the school of Astrology, and he had rich experience in exploring the starry sky and the star tombs, therefore, his Host Star of Destiny was more sensitive than that of other people. He noticed that something was wrong even earlier than Raventi, however, the casting time of Time Stop was a second or two longer than that of other magic spells, so Raventi's Forceage was first activated to win some time.

Lucien was a bit perplexed. He did not understand why Donald just asked them to leave. After all, the explosion had been stopped by Raventi's spell, why did Donald still choose to cast the ninth-circle spell? But Lucien still followed Donald's words, and, meanwhile, Bellak took a step forward to protect Lucien.

As soon as they started to retreat, Morris started to cast the weird spell which made him feel really dizzy. When Morris was prepared, Donald stopped the ninth-circle spell two seconds before it expired. The dust in the air started to roll and tumble again, but a half-transparent figure was pulled out of the flame and dust by an invisible power.

The ninth-circle Necromancy spell – Soul Bind!

Unlike the low-rank magic circles that shared the similar name with it, this ninth-circle spell could catch the soul before it dissolved in the air and trap it in a precious stone. Unless the spell-caster was an expert in the field of Necromancy, he or she must chant the spell first instead of directly activating it.

Lucien could see, although very blurry, that the soul of the blond-haired sorcerer was pulled into a flame-like ruby, screaming and crying. The ruby was thus covered with a layer of dark green light.

In front of an archmage, killing oneself was not even that easy!

"I'll figure this out." Holding the precious stone, Morris walked to Lucien, "Are you alright?"

“I’m...I’m okay.” Although Lucien was always quite calm and quick-reacted, in front of the three archmages, he still appeared to be rather slow.

At the same time, the rest of the leading sorcerers including Gaston and Florencia of the Will of Elements also came. They cared about Lucien, and they also wanted to know what just happened here. They could not believe that Lucien Evans, one of the senior members of the Will of Element, just encountered assassination in the headquarter.

This had to be thoroughly investigated!

“Stay where you are!” Bellak suddenly raised his hands to stop them.

The arcanists and sorcerers including Lucien, Morris, Donald, and Raventi all looked at Bellak, feeling very confused.

The look on Bellak’s face was rather serious and he said at a fast pace, “Forgive my rudeness, your Excellencies. The blond-haired sorcerer’s target was for sure Mr. Evans. It seems that he is one of the sorcerers whose cognition world is permanently damaged because of Mr. Evans’ discovery of the new particle, and he wanted to die with Mr. Evans in despair. In the past several hundred years, we have dealt with this kind of case multiple times, and it is not a big deal. However, the problem is – why the assassinator knew the time so well? Why he walked out of the demiplane warehouse only a few minutes after the meeting ended?”

The corridor along which the blond-haired sorcerer walked here was only connected to the demiplane warehouse, and the security on this floor was very strict – No one was allowed to wander around here. If the blond-haired sorcerer was doing an ambush in the corner, the patrolling golems and the built-in magic circles must have activated the alarm.

“So, my guess is that – At least one of the senior members in the Will of Elements was helping him! For Mr. Evans’s safety, please stay no closer to him, your Excellencies, in case the real ringleader of the assassination can find the chance!”

Hearing what Bellak just said, the senior members of the Will of Elements were all very surprised and they looked at each other – His reasoning made sense! But who did it?

Subconsciously, they were divided into three groups, and they were on the alert toward each other. Only Raventi roared angrily, “This’s a shame! Shame!”

“Mr. Raventi, Mr. Donald, Mr. Morris, please launch the investigation as soon as possible. Mr. Evans should not stay here any longer, and I’ll safeguard him back to Allyn.” suggested Bellak. He trusted the three archmages who just helped, especially Raventi.

Except for Lucien whose story was like a miracle, the rest of the senior members of the Will of Elements were at least senior-rank sorcerers. If there was a traitor among them, only the archmages could handle.

Donald nodded to Morris, “Let’s handle this. Raventi, please send Evans back together with Mr. Bellak.”

The second after Donald finished his words, the entire magic tower started to shake fiercely. A series of deafening explosions came from some distance away.

“The core!” Morris’s facial expression suddenly changed. Reaching his hands forward, a mysterious gate drawn with many magic symbols suddenly showed up in the air.

The rusted, heavy black gate was pulled open by Morris. As soon as he stepped into it, Morris and the gate disappeared together.

The ninth-circle spell, Precise Transfer!

The spell worked within the range of a thousand meters. And it worked the best within the spell-caster’s magic tower!

“The assassination is for distracting us?” Donald murmured to himself. Although he wanted to send out the senior sorcerers present to safeguard around, he was concerned that this might provide the traitor with the opportunity to do any further damage to them.

So he said to Raventi, “You go to the control core and turn on the second level defense of the magic tower, in case the tower is further damaged. I’ll handle the assassination case.”

Except for the two legendary sorcerers, only the president and the vice president had the right to turn on the top three levels of defense of the Royal Magic Tower of Holm.

Then Donald turned to Bellak and said seriously, “You safeguard Evans back to Allyn.”

Allyn was very carefully designed by the congress, and the teleport magic circles were everywhere. Any fight in Allyn would be spotted immediately, and thus Allyn was now way safer than the Royal Magic Tower of Holm.

Also, right now, Lucien’s teacher, the Lord of Storm, was also in Allyn, while the other two major leaders of the Will of Elements were being very busy: Hathaway was out of the city, and Davy was fascinated with trying to create a new transformation golem.

“As your command, Mr. Donald.” Bellak bowed seriously, and the turned to Lucien, “Let’s go, Mr. Evans.”

Lucien took a glance at the senior members of the Will of Elements who had divided into three groups in a subtle way. Lucien shook his head in his mind. Then he followed Bellak to the room where the demiplane magic circle was in.

Pushing open the gate, Lucien and Bellak walked to the magic circle. When they stepped on it, the magic circle was about to activate when the light burst out.

However, the same light covered Bellak as well.

The light suddenly swelled, and the whole space was filled with the light!

Feeling extremely dizzy, Lucien was not able to stay focused. He looked at Bellak in great shock and realized that the darkness had enveloped him. In the background of darkness, the many time curves were creepy and mysterious, and the light spots were

surrounding.

Bellak...Bellak was the one who plotted all of these?!

Lucien was shocked.

And they even wasted a ninth-level magic scroll, Space Countercurrent.

Space Countercurrent was a ninth-circle spell used for interrupting the process of teleportation!

When the darkness disappeared, the sudden light dazzled Lucien's eyes. But in the next second, he activated Douglas' Absorbing Wall immediately.

When the dizziness disappeared, he found himself in the middle of a broad lake. Bellak, floating in the air, was right in front of him.

There was a triumphant smile on his dark-skinned face. Putting his right hand on the left side of his chest, Bellak bowed at Lucien elegantly,

“Black Revenger, no. 135 night watcher, sends greetings to you, the Demon of Primary.”

It was him!

When Bellak was waiting outside of the meeting room, he could do the timing based on the sound of their footsteps.

There were two purposes behind the cursed vase.

If Lucien had not found the problem in the vase, he would gradually drain out and die, and the Church would use this as an excuse to attack the congress because they would say that Lucien's death was because of the God's condemnation.

But Lucien did find out, and Bellak thus managed to have the opportunity to get close to Lucien!

Chapter 364: The Retribution

When Bellak bowed to Lucien, a layer of dim light covered the creepy black ring on his right hand.

The ring was designed in the shape that the two black snakes joined head to tail. Targeting at Lucien, a dark ray suddenly and fiercely shot out.

The magic wall shielding Lucien disappeared, and so did the enchanted magic effect on the senior-rank arcana badge—Freedom of Movement (Common). A small anti-magic field was formed around Lucien.

The seventh-circle spell, Anti-magic Ray!

As a battle sorcerer, Bellak was more cautious than the senior-rank sorcerers that Lucien once had fought against. At the very beginning, he had picked the spells that worked the best on Lucien and activated his best magic item. Also, he had limited Lucien from using any high-rank magic items by building the anti-magic field.

Lucien was unable to activate his ring, Element, and thus the magic spells built in it could not be used. Fortunately, he was relatively experienced facing the anti-magic ray, so he immediately dodged aside and tried to find somewhere to hide, as the anti-magic field would not last long.

When Bellak saw Lucien's swift movement, he realized that Lucien was also a quite competitive knight, but it did not matter to him. Smiling, he reached out his hand and gently pointed at the air in front of Lucien, and instantly, a tall and invisible force field wall rose straight from the ground.

Bang!

Lucien failed to change the direction of his movement and he ran into the wall.

Having no time to waste, using the rebound momentum, Lucien

altered his direction and started to run at his full speed along the wall.

The biggest problem of this fifth-circle magic was that it was just a wall, not a cage!

When Lucien was about to jump into the lake, Bellak's buffering time for casting had ended and another gray ray shot out from his finger. No matter how Lucien tried to dodge, the ray still got him.

Lucien's eyes became glazed, and the body part struck by the ray began to harden like a grayish-white rock.

The grayish white color rapidly expanded, and in just a second, Lucien was transformed into a stone statue.

The sixth-circle spell, Stone!

"Ha, the so-called Demon of Primary... How weak you are!" Bellak put on a triumphant smile and he could not help making the sarcastic comment.

As a spy, Bellak was always under great pressure. He needed to take the chance to vent on his enemy or he would definitely go crazy. But although he was being sarcastic, he did not lower his alert. With the following series of casting, Bellak constrained Lucien completely.

After that, Bellak finally felt a bit relaxed. After all, Lucien was the student of the Lord of Storm and who knew if he had any strange magic items or scrolls.

Staring at Lucien who was right now a stone statue, there was a smirk on Bellak's swarthy face, "The command was to end the life the Demon of Primary ranking No. 53 on the list, but I just caught him alive! When the Church burns him down into ashes in public in Lance, my reward shall be abundant and my honor shall be recognized by everyone!"

He knew that he was going to spend the following several decades hiding in the Holy City, Lance, as Holm parish would have no way to protect him when facing Fernando's fury.

In Holm, all the night watchers were hiding very carefully. Once they were exposed, that would be the end of them.

Then Bellak looked around to figure out where he was right now.

Although the magic scroll carrying the magic Space Countercurrent just sent them to this random place, based on how long they had traveled just now, Bellak had the rough idea that they were not far from Rentato, and to be more specific, they should be right beside the Chirag Lake in the southeast of Rentato.

Using magic, Bellak turned Lucien's stone statue into a miniature that he could hold in his hand. The miniature looked very lively despite the gray color.

"You're a defiler, and you're doomed to be burned down by the sacred flame. What a pity... or I could ask the Pope to turn you into a permanent statue and place you in my collection room. So far you're the sorcerer ranking the highest on the list among those I've hunted, but, surprisingly, you're the weakest one as well!" Holding the statue in his hand, somehow Bellak went a bit out of control, "You get it now? With no strong enough magic power, no matter how big an achievement you have in arcana, it's just a phantom. A so-called great arcanist can easily be caught or killed by a senior-rank sorcerer!"

The fact that his arcana level was low was a wound in his heart. Bellak was not good at arcana and he had always been mocked by his fellow schoolmates and even his teachers and colleagues. No matter how his magic level improved, people around him just could not see it. And his beloved girl also jumped into the embrace of the guy who he hated the most—the guy whose arcana level was two levels higher than his, but at that time, Bellak's magic level was still one-circle higher.

"You know what? Later in an adventure, I caught him... I killed him, but slowly. I tortured him... He begged me so desperately. But I was so happy. He was always up there, looking down upon me, but finally, he knelt down in front of me, and he even wanted to send me his wife as the gift. Your high arcana level doesn't always help you, you know?"

If Lucien had been able to think, he definitely would have mocked Bellak that he was being overly sensitive and thus his life was turned into a failure. In the Congress, no one dared to mock a sorcerer face-to-face whose magic level was higher than his or her arcana level.

Bellak calmed himself down after venting out his anger. He was ready to set off for the Radiance Church as there was no more time for him to waste. Once the senior members of the Will of Element arrived, that would be the end of him.

Bellak knew what he should focus on right now despite all the emotions in his heart.

"Confess, Mr. Lucien Evans, the Demon of Primary! Confess good before going to hell! You should regret that you did not focus on improving your magic level!" Bellak shook his head when taking a glance at the miniature in his hand.

However, at the glance, Bellak saw that the statue was putting on a creepy smile!

Something was not right!

Subconsciously, Bellak immediately tried to throw out the miniature statue. He did not care whether the statue was going to be broken.

However, it was too late, as the cone breath fiercely came out from the mouth of the statue. The breath was dim and gloomy like the human beings' dark and ever-changing mind. Bellak was too close to the statue, and he got affected by the breath.

Instantly, Bellak's brain was paralyzed. He had so many thoughts flashing past his mind, that he could not stay focused!

At this time, some strange light flashed past and Bellak disappeared. At the next second, he reappeared on the other side in the air. He had got rid of the influence of the cone breath and the power of his mind was slowly recovering.

Meanwhile, a senior-rank magic armor covered his whole body.

The sixth-circle spell, Spell Trigger, which was a powerful magic spell used by senior-rank sorcerers to handle the emergencies such as assassination or surprise attack!

As soon as the paralyzation was gone, Bellak realized that it was the paralyzing breath from the crystal dragon, Alferris!

Not all of the crystal dragons had this kind of power. Alferris' dragon breath had been improved by Fernando.

Layers of stone power fell from the statue, that became bigger and bigger. The breath of the dragon was imposing, and the fish in the lake all sank to the bottom out of fear.

After signing the compact with Lucien, Alferris had suggested that no matter where Lucien needed to go, it would turn itself into Lucien's substitute using the illusion magic in order to find out who did all the plotting behind the cursed vase. As the real Lucien would follow Alferris like a mirror reflection while using the invisibility spell, Alferris' way of talking and movement would be exactly the same as that of Lucien.

However, to make sure everything looked perfect, Alferris needed to wear all of Lucien's senior-rank magic items, since they could not be replicated. Lucien was a bit concerned about it.

Alferris' illusion magic could easily fool a seventh or eighth-circle sorcerer, if he or she did not use the special magic to examine carefully, not to mention Bellak. Therefore, since Donald, Morris, and Raventi could see the truth, they did not worry at all with letting "Lucien" go back with Bellak alone.

In fact, all of Bellak's magic had failed to work except the anti-magic ray, since Alferris was immune to many spells. However, Alferris managed to deceive Bellak by using illusion, and was waiting for the chance to fight back.

Since the anti-magic ray did not affect the real Lucien who was in his invisibility, Alferris' illusionary power was still working. Later, Alferris was able to get rid of the effect of the anti-magic ray faster than a senior-rank sorcerer.

"Well, call me Lucien Alferris!" said the little crystal dragon triumphantly. One of its big claws was wearing the beautiful and shining Holm Crown ring, Element.

Although Bellak was pissed, he did not panic. Bellak knew that Alferris just turned into the seventh-circle, so it would not be too hard for him to escape away under its claws. While feeling rather confused and wondering where Lucien really was, Bellak was ready to retreat.

However, before he managed to activate the magic model in his soul, Bellak suddenly sensed a great danger!

In the air above him, the real Lucien Evans showed up because the illusion magic from Alferris had been dispelled. Beside him in the air, there was a tube of colorless liquid, and Lucien was casting a long and weird spell.

In the next second, a colorless and dim ray shot out targeting at Bellak, who immediately activated the sixth-circle defensive spell—Starlight Cloak.

The light of stars joined together and became a cloak covering Bellak when the freezing-cold ray shot him in his chest.

Bellak heard the ice-cracking sound in his mind, and to his great shock, he saw that even the starlight cloak had failed to prevent the ray. The cloak was frozen, and the freezing process quickly extended to his body.

The water drops around were frozen into solid pieces; the hydrogen in the air was solidified; oxygen was solidified—the air was also frozen. There were light-blue snowflakes in the air, shining under the sunlight, and they were from the colorless liquid.

Bellak could not move. His magic ring was frozen and then broke into pieces, the blood in his body was frozen solid, and his skin was turned into a layer of crystal ice. In the last second of his life, the shock and great fear lingered in his eyes. He had never expected that Lucien, in fact, possessed such a horrifying magic!

What was it? However, Bellak would never know now.

Mimicking Bellak's manner, Lucien put his right hand on his chest and slightly bowed.

"Thank you for the vase you sent me, Mr. Bellak."

Chapter 365: The Great Disturbance

Chapter 365: The Great Disturbance

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The sun was shining and the lake rippling.

Before Bellak, who was frozen solid, started to fall, the ice and snow pieces surrounding him started to melt and evaporate, and then his body and the magic robe he was wearing were turned into the white powder, simmering in the air.

The power of Evans' Freezing Ray even surpassed Lucien's own expectation. The spell just turned a six-circle sorcerer, who had already cast his own defensive spells, into pieces of ice crystal and a handful of powder. Even the magic he just used was also frozen and broken into tiny pieces!

Although it was possibly because Bellak underestimated the power of the ray, no one could deny the fact that this seventh-circle magic had already won against the rest of the snow and ice spells, and what was even more terrifying was that, with the proper casting reagent, even a senior-rank-to-be sorcerer whose cognition world had been partly substantialized could use it.

In order words, because of the progress in arcana study, Lucien had managed to lower the requirement of casting this seventh-circle spell while retaining the power, which complied with the effort that the Congress had always been making.

The powder of the magic items that Bellak wore fell onto the small piece of land at the center of the lake. Lucien turned around and saw the shocking look on Alferris' face. Its amber-colored eyes opened wide.

Lucien, of course, wanted Alferris to keep it as a secret for him.

He put on a kind smile and asked Alferris who looked in shock, "Are you alright?"

“My rings... amulets...” Alferris’ childish voice trembled as if there was deep sorrow in it. It had been eager to collect Bellak’s magic items for a long time, which was always its biggest interest. As for how powerful Lucien’s spell was, sorry, right now it was not in the mood to think of it at all.

That was Alferris. Lucien released a sigh of relief in his mind, “You know what? The powder and pieces are still valuable.”

In fact, after Lucien’s cognition world was substantialized, using Elemental Swirl would not drain him up anymore, and he could even use it twice in a row. Lucien had several ways to kill Bellak, but to be careful, he directly used his most powerful hidden weapon.

“Really?” Alferris cheered up.

“Of course,” answered Lucien very calmly.

Although Lucien was not lying, as the broken pieces and power did have some value, when compared to the original rings and amulets, the value was not even close. However, Lucien was not going to tell Alferris the truth, since the dragon only collected them, and in fact, would never sell them.

Alferris dived and very quickly collected the powder and pieces.

“Are you happy now?” The smile on Lucien’s face was still nice and kind.

“Yup!” Alferris counted the materials it got and answered cheerfully.

“So... It’s time to give my ring back to me.” Lucien continued to smile.

Alferris’ body suddenly became stiff as it was just struck by an invisible bolt of lightning. And then it said in a pretended calm way, “Let me keep playing Lucien Evans.”

“I don’t need to leave Allyn recently,” said Lucien. He adjusted the monocle he was wearing and informed his teacher, Fernando,

Thompson, Morris, and Raventi respectively.

Seeing that Lucien was being very firm, Alferris became very depressed. Slowly and carefully, it took off the ring and handed it back to Lucien.

...

In Rentato, the Kingdom of Holm.

After finishing his preach to the several leading conservative nobles, the red-robed cardinal, Adrian, stepped out of the strictly-guarded manor.

The experienced coachmen gently pulled the reins and coaches stopped in front of Adrian nicely and smoothly.

The pastors and knights guarding the red-robed cardinal quickly walked forward and divided into two rows to guard the coaches, waiting for Adrian to get on one of them.

Adrian crossed in front of his chest and prayed at a low voice. Then, he slowly walked to the coach in stateliness.

Suddenly, as if he was warned by God, he sensed a great danger and immediately activated a seventh level divine spell, Chaos Teleportation.

A sacred gate covered in white light slowly opened in front of him.

However, when Adrian was about to step in, the visional gate connecting to Mountain Paradise shook fiercely and then shattered.

The ninth-circle Force Field spell, Space Lock!

Then, the temperature of the environment rose rapidly and the air became boiling hot. The ground had been turned into a orange-red lava and devoured the pastors, bishops, and knights before they could release their bitter screams.

The red-robed cardinal started to fall into pieces, and the activated divine armor and protective screen were also melting like small

candles before a great flame.

The ninth-circle elemental spell, Raventi's Flame Hell!

Adrian could not move at all because of the space lock. Crying and screaming, he was burnt to ashes!

A few minutes later, the flame hell quieted down. The coachmen were more than scared seeing the big pit in front of them. The area of the pit just covered the area where the clergy was standing. However, the coaches and the coachmen who were just a few inches away from them remained completely unharmed, and the horses were even snorting in a quite relaxed way.

The remaining flame formed the words on the ground,

“Equal Revenge.”

...

At noon, in a quiet church in Rentato.

There were no followers coming in and out since it had been converted into a cloister for the ascetics. All the fancy decorations had been removed, and the thistles and thorns representing all the sufferings were planted.

In the room which originally belonged to the bishop, a young man in his early twenties was tempering his will using pain. His hair was rather short, and his figure was robust.

Abraham was the most outstanding and talented ascetic among his peers, and he had directly contributed to the improvement of theology. Although Varantine disliked some of his point of views, he had to concede that Abraham was very likely to become a red-robed cardinal in the next five years. Many grand cardinals even regarded him as the future Saint!

Ever since the main focus of the Church started to change after facing the continuous provocation from the Congress, Abraham was among the first team of clergy who volunteered to come to Holm. Abraham once said, “Only dangers and obstacles can purify one's

piety. Without death and the sufferings, no honor of devotion can be proved.”

In the darkness, Abraham walked on the thistles and thorns with his bare feet, however, he did not release a single groan. Suddenly, his eyes opened wide, as the dark room was somehow lit up.

Outside of the cloister, four flaming meteorites fell from the sky and directly hit the building.

The ninth-circle spell, Meteor Swarm.

It was a magic belonging to both the school of Element and Astrology.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The cloister was completely flattened after the series of explosions.

Abraham's body was now in chunks and pieces, and his eyes were still open wide. In the last second of his life, he still had no idea what just happened.

In the air, Morris opened the gate of Precise Transfer in the sky and left before the defense magic circles in Rentato were activated.

...

Not far away from Radiance Church, in the station of the Knights of Grail.

The level-six radiant knight Sigma was leading his team, doing the regular patrolling as usual, and the sounds of the pure-white armor pieces clacking were short and crisp.

All of a sudden, he jumped forward very swiftly, but the lightning from the sky was even faster.

The lightning hit Sigma's back along with the sacred wings he had. The lightning did not numb Sigma like the common ones, but it vibrated at a high speed. Like a table-knife cutting a piece of cheese, the lightning blade easily cut open Sigma's armor and his

body. The cut was burned black.

That was Fernando's Lightning Smelter!

The power of this fifth-circle spell, when cast by an eighth-circle sorcerer, was no inferior to that of an eighth-circle spell!

After leaving the words "Equal Revenge", Thompson quickly left.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress of Magic in Allyn.

"The red-robed cardinals, ascetics, and radiant knights, ten in total, have been eliminated. We have shown the Church our resolution on taking revenge. In the future, if they dare to do anything like this again, we will make them pay tenfold," reported Thompson to the Lord of Storm.

Fernando nodded slightly, "So they are all supporters of the Pope, right?"

"That's correct. The red-robed cardinals and ascetics supported the theology reform, and the knights were even more loyal," said Thompson in an assuring way, and then he added concernedly, "We shall be prepared for the war now, sir. Seeing what we did, the Church will for sure fight back."

"Gather the sorcerers to get prepared. Also, inform the nobles. They were the ones who were pursuing the balance between the Congress and the Church, and thus they should be ready to bear the consequences," said Fernando a bit sarcastically. "We'll see if they want to support one side, keep the weak balance... or... they are going to wait until we are both weakened from the war to benefit from it. However, if there is going to be a war, the war will for sure take place in Holm. There's no way that the nobles can just look on with folded arms. The best way for the nobles to act is to threaten the Church to stay calm, and thus the delicate balance can be kept."

After listening to Fernando's analysis, Thompson left the office to

inform Affair Committee the will of the Highest Council.

After a while, Fernando saw that Lucien walked in, followed by Alferris.

“You were being quite careful this time...” Fernando was still the same tightfisted when it came to giving any praises, “So... why are you here?”

“Sir, I have finished another paper.” Lucien smiled.

Fernando did not take the paper instantly but carefully looked Lucien up and down with his red eyes.

Chapter 366: The Annoyed Nobles

"Did you first go over it?" After a while, Fernando finally asked.

Lucien, of course, understood what Fernando meant. He grinned and said, "Sir, it's not a subversive paper... not at all. It's just a following-up paper about the discovery of electron. Sir, you must know that I found the curse in the vase because of the induction of stream of electrons, so I verified the special material of the vase using the method of studying cathode ray."

Fernando took the paper and complained casually, "I was always the one handling all the troubles you made after reading your papers. Can't you just write some normal papers?"

For Fernando, he was in fact quite happy to see some okay-subversive papers because he was always looking forward to the progress in the world of arcana. However, coping with the aftermath of an extremely overturning theory such as the discontinuity of the form of energy was a totally different story. Being quite bad-tempered and impatient, Fernando hoped that he could just wait and then read the summaries of Lucien's papers just like Douglas, however, as Lucien's teacher, he was always the one in the front to handle all the huge cognition shifts.

However, Lucien was more than happy to have his very powerful and influential teacher handle all the troubles for him and to prevent more sorcerers from having their head exploded.

So Lucien just smiled but did not say anything when hearing Fernando's complaint.

Turning the pages, the look on Fernando's face became more serious. After a while, he finally made the comment, shaking his head, "Morris will for sure hate himself because he did not help Bellak."

The title of the paper was A New Element that can Radiate Electrons Stream and Another Two Types of Rays. In Fernando's eyes, the greatest finding in Lucien's new paper was not so much

the discovery of the new element called Uranium but it had proved the fact that the electrons indeed were from the corresponding atoms, and therefore, the inner structure of atom indeed existed. This accomplishment was worth another Holm Crown prize.

"It's not the major focus of the paper, sir." Lucien reminded Fernando in a low voice.

Fernando looked up with his sharp red eyes.

"Somehow the special material also emits a new element..." Lucien tried to make his language vague and ambiguous in case too much information would be released.

"What do you mean by emitting 'a new element'?" Fernando doubted his own ears.

Fernando went back to the paper and read the specific part carefully. As he was reading, his tone became more serious, "Have you ever analyzed the special material? Is this new element part of the material itself?"

"I did. I extracted some of the special elements using the Collecting Spell and the magic circles, however, the new element—I called it helium—still existed. Although there can be some undiscovered elements in the material extracted, I am sure that no helium or its alchemical form was in it," Lucien said to Fernando, pointing at the last several pages of the article.

"What is behind the elemental changes? Can elements change into each other?" Fernando could not help asking himself. After a few more minutes, he calmed down and said to Lucien as usually, "You're indeed blessed by the Goddess of Luck, Lucien. You can even get a special material from the assassination against you. I believe that, at the end of our exploration, we'll understand the secret behind the birth of substances."

Following the tradition of the ancient magic empire, the Congress liked to use the title of the goddesses to refer to different things: the nature and essence of magic were called the Goddess of Magic, the more threatening coldness was called the Goddess of Ice and

Snow... However, they meant totally different things from what the churches believed.

"Sir, I don't want to submit the paper right away. I want it to be sealed for a few years just like how we did with Miracle Experiment," said Lucien.

"Why?" Fernando was very confused, as this was not a subversive paper and thus it would no further piss off the Church and other sorcerers. It would be great if more arcanists could read this paper and thus had the guidance to explore the micro-world.

Fernando turned the pages and saw the new magic spells created by Lucien at the end of the paper: Evans' Freezing Ray and Snow Goddess' Whip.

"Just for this?" Fernando asked although he knew how powerful the two spells were as the founder of the field of Thermodynamics, "Your two spells have lowered the limit of ultra-low temperature by more than ten degrees, and as soon as you publish it, you can win and Ice & Snow Medal right away... You still don't want to turn the paper in?"

Hearing that, Alferris' stared at the paper very enthusiastically. It wished that the name, Alferris, could be added on the paper.

"Knowing the existence of helium, one can easily come up with the two spells. I want to keep them as my secret weapon." Lucien explained.

Fernando grinned but shook his head, "You can't keep them to yourself for long, Lucien. Don't forget that Atlant has also taken away part of the material, and Punishment Department also has it. Take a guess, when can they figure this out?"

"In three or four years," answered Lucien.

Fernando grinned, "The upcoming five to six years should be the key stage for you to become a senior-rank, and I don't think it'll be wise if you leave Allyn too often. So you don't really need a secret weapon. Even if you have become a sixth or seventh-circle sorcerer,

the two spells can still help you as they are indeed very powerful. You killed Bellak with the freezing ray, right? So your cognition world has been substantialized primarily?"

"Yup... when I confirmed that electron is part of atom's inner structure." Lucien dared not to say that the substantialization, in fact, happened when he put forward the assumption that the form of power was discontinuous.

Lucien thanked Bellak and the cursed vase again in his mind, as the finding that electron was part of atom's inner structure was also shocking enough to substantialize one's cognition world, or Lucien would not have any proper excuse.

The Lord of Storm did not doubt Lucien's words but nodded slightly, "I see. You're likely to become a senior-rank in three to four years. If you need any materials, go to my demiplane warehouse to see if you can find any. As you wish, the paper can be sealed for two years, but I'll inform Atlant about it, I just don't want him to waste his time. It can be a good thing that you postpone the submission. If you turn the paper in right away, Morris, the money pincher, is going to find his excuse that this was just a following-up finding and refuse to give you a separate ring. But, I've heard that Timothy and Ulysses are both working on the constitution of gas, and they've made some progress, so your paper probably can't be kept as a secret for too long."

When hearing that Lucien could have the access to Fernando's demiplane warehouse, Alferris' eyes immediately lit up and it stared at Lucien as if it was trying to incite him to take away every single item from the warehouse.

Lucien pretended that he did not see Alferris. Although he himself was pretty much a money pincher as well, he knew that he should not be greedy here, especially when right now he was not having a very tight budget.

"Anyway, in the next years, focus on improving your magic power first," Fernando said to Lucien.

...

In Rentato, in Nekso Palace.

"We have to stop this! The Church and the Congress can't launch the war!" James, the bareheaded duke said aloud.

The major nobles of the Kingdom of Holm who were right now in Rentato were gathered by King Feltis and Prince Patrick for the emergency that broke out today.

The leader of the noble parliament, Flenburg Duke Rakers, looked at James in a cold way, "Stop them? We've tried so hard to maintain the balance so the damned sorcerers can make their own living, but you see how they paid us back? It's going to be a horrible mistake if we keep supporting them!"

Rakers was wearing the red wig and his face was carefully shaved. The deep wrinkles at the corner of his eyes shaped the contrast to his blue eyes. His eyes were shaped as those an imposing griffin, which complied with his title, King's Griffin.

"No matter how open-minded and radical a noble is, he would not completely abandon the Church; and no matter how conservative a noble is, he is also aware of the fact that, without the Congress, we nobles would never have the power and status that we're enjoying now." Wolfburg Duke Russell did not want to waste any time but directly put the fact on the table.

Then the argument between the Conservative and the Liberal suddenly stopped. Silence presided over the palace.

Seeing the king's squinted eyes, Hackson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, hurriedly made a pretended cough and said, "Please be careful with your language, Russel. Our honor and power come from God's blessing, the generosity of our king, as well as our own effort."

Prince Patrick said seriously, "The Church first caused the conflict, and we shall not put all the blames on the Congress. Meanwhile, we can't let this rich and beautiful land suffer from war, so the mediation work is our responsibility."

Mentioning their own benefits, power, and status, the nobles gradually came to an agreement. Only several old nobles who were extreme conservatives furiously left the meeting halfway.

After assigning all the tasks to the nobles, only the king and the prince were left in the palace except the servants.

The old king cast Prince Patrick a meaningful look and slightly shook his head. As he turned around, the king murmured to himself:

"What's the future of kingdom... What's the future of the family..."

All of them knew that the balance was too delicate to last forever. However, right now, they could only turn a blind eye to that fact because there was simply no better choice.

...

In the coach, Flenburg Duke suddenly sighed.

Another noble who was sitting opposite to him in the coach asked, "Sir?"

"The Congress of Magic is way too powerful. If we keep spoiling them like this and let them grow, we'll pay for sure. James and those people are too myopic," said Rakers.

"Then why did you support mediation?" asked the noble, "Let the Church and the Congress fight."

Rakers shook his head, "Launching the all-out war right now isn't good for us. We have to find the proper chance to defeat the Congress with one strike together with the Church, and then, again, we support the remaining power of the Congress so the Church would not take all the power. We keep repeating it this way, and thus hopefully the balance can be kept."

...

"How long can we keep this balance?" asked the bareheaded duke James in Russel's coach.

Russel answered in a deep voice, "One day, we finally need to make a choice—whether we should weaken the Congress, or completely remove the South Church like the countries under the control of the North Church. Before the Saint Truth dies out, the Congress will not become a threat to us. Also, the balance in the overall situation is easier to maintain than the smaller balance in an individual country. Without being careful, this precious thing can be broken."

"If so... we won't be able to ascend to Mountain Paradise." Hackson sighed.

"Mountain Paradise? Haha.." James repeated with a laugh.

...

Several days later, Allyn still remained safe and sound. No war was launched by the Saint Truth.

Lucien got the message from Florencia:

"This weekend, your Holm Crown prize will be granted to you in Allyn."

Chapter 367: Lucien's Plan

Chapter 367: Lucien's Plan

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Lucien did not expect that the ring from the Holm Crown prize would be given to him so fast, after all, the ring-maker, Morris, was very unwilling to give him the ring. It was only two days away from the weekend.

Unlike Aalto, in Allyn, weekend always referred to Sunday.

Florencia's voice in the electromagnetic message magic sounded amused, "You were taken away in the Will of Elements's headquarters, and my teacher, Morris, feels very embarrassed. That's why."

After pausing a bit, Florencia then sounded more serious, "At least, with the three Holm Crown rings and the magic robe from the Immortal Throne, you will be able to survive when facing a senior-rank sorcerer."

"Really?" Lucien was quite surprised. As the leaders of the Will of Elements had no idea of the fact that his cognition world had been primarily substantialized, how could they be sure that the rings could help him so much?

Florencia giggled, "This time, the magic spells enchanted in the rings are precious. My teacher's being generous and the two spells match each other very well. Of course, he regretted immediately after the rings were made. And he even tried to cancel the banquet on the ceremony to save some tiny money."

Lucien asked curiously, "May I know what the two seventh-circle spells are?"

"Umm... It's a secret. You'll see." Florencia laughed. "Keep your curiosity, so you can stay young."

Then, the electromagnetic signal was cut off. Lucien could not help his curiosity and so he started to leaf through Astrology and Magic Elements and Senior-rank Magic Book, guessing what two enchanted magic effects would be given to him.

At the other end of the office, Alferris was lying on the couch, counting its salary for this month.

...

In a retreat room in Radiance Church.

Rakers, the leader of the noble parliament, King's Griffin, was having a meeting with the grand cardinal Philibell, the leader of the Inquisition Vaharall, and some other leaders from the Church.

"Rakers, I know what you mean, and I do agree with you. I'll report this to the Holy City." The usual anger on Philibell's face had disappeared, but only tiredness was left.

In the Kingdom of Holm and the rest of the three countries, the Church's power was inferior to that of the Congress of Magic. After all, most of the Congress' legendary archmages were in Allyn, while the Church's powerful leaders were mostly spread out, and gathering them together was not an easy thing, as there were still other threats that the Church had to take into consideration.

Although the leader of the Knights of Grail, Stone, had always been a supporter for launching the war, right now he was rather calm, "We're more assured now, knowing the nobles' attitude. We hope that once the opportunity is available, you can be prepared. We'll handle the rest of the things."

Stone was not a fool. When the Congress was fully prepared, launching a war against it was obviously not an ideal thing for the Church to do.

Although Vaharall and Varantine were definitely not happy with the result, the changing attitude of the nobles was still a comfort to them.

"But according to what I know, some of the major nobles such as

James and Russel are still more on the Congress' side. Do you have any suggestions, Rakers?" asked Philibell about the inner division among the nobles.

Rakers nodded seriously, "The so-called Liberal nobles are in fact not too big of a threat. They don't have many people on their side... only about ten percent. Their power is not even half of the power of the nobles who support the Church. As for the rest of the nobles, although they claim themselves to be neutral, I'm sure that they don't reject the Church. They can join us if the offer is generous."

As a knight, Stone knew the nobles better, "Rakers, you've forgotten the fact that most of the nobles are still on the same side of their lords. You're neither the king of Holm nor the successor."

If the offer was not generous enough to make the nobles crazy, they were still going to support their lord. Without the lord, sooner or later they were going to fall apart. And once they had to rely on the Church, it would be almost impossible for them to gain independence again.

Rakers remained silent for a while and his voice became deeper, "I'll convince the king."

"King Feltis is old now, and his knight level isn't high. In a few years, maybe he will receive the call from God. Can you find the opportunity in the next few years?" Philibell shook his head. As the grand cardinal who was responsible for providing medical care to the king, he knew the king's health condition very well.

Looking gloomy, Rakers did not deny.

Philibell looked at the rest of them and said in a plain tone, "But the prince is too partial to the Congress."

"...The prince is too partial to the Congress..." repeated Rakers in low voice.

...

At eight o'clock on Sunday night, the division of the Will of Elements in Allyn was brilliantly illuminated. The grand hall was

filled with the sound of glasses clinking against each other.

“Lucien, Morris isn’t in a good mood recently, and I don’t think he’ll recover in a short period of time. If there’s nothing special, you’d better stay away from him.” Holding the glass, Gaston joked.

On the other side of the hall, Morris forced a smile on his face and was being busy with greeting other senior-rank sorcerers.

The members of Review Board naturally gathered together, and they were surrounded by their students and friends.

Right now Lucien was standing with Larry, Ulysses, K, Lazar, and the other sorcerers from Atom Institution.

Lucien shook his head and grinned, “Now the gate of the micro-world has been opened, and more great findings are following. Mr. Morris has to be prepared.”

“Is that right?”

It was Morris’ voice, light as a ghost’s. There was definitely hatred in his voice.

After greeting the important sorcerers, Morris walked back and he happened to hear what Lucien just said. He felt that there was a sharp arrow in his heart.

“Of course, this is a brand new field, a field that involves the deeper secrets of the substances.” As if Lucien just completely ignored the hatred in Morris’ voice, he said to the rest of the board members honestly, “I think Holm Crown prize should be given out every year.”

“Impossible!” Morris raised his tone and looked very serious.

Florencia grinned and looked at Lucien, although she did not understand why Lucien wanted to piss Morris off. The rest of the senior members of the Will of Elements also looked at this direction, feeling quite amused.

Lucien did not care, “If no one’s qualified, the position should

remain vacant. If there is more than one qualified sorcerer, the prize should still only be granted to one sorcerer for only one achievement. And the time for granting the prize should be settled in each year, so we can look forward to it.”

“That’s a very good suggestion!” Morris hurriedly agreed.

“The problem is... this can just postpone the time, but it can’t help saving the warehouse’s loss.” Florencia reminded her teacher. She wondered what Lucien was thinking.

She would not believe that Lucien was just talking without any specific purposes.

Lucien slightly swirled the wine and smiled, “Neither the materials nor wealth can grow themselves in the warehouse, but doing investment is different. If the time of giving the prize can be deferred by one year, the investment payback should be very considerable. The prize is always going to be someone else’s, but the profit can always stay.”

“What do you mean?” asked Morris. He was not a fool.

Lucien grinned, “I’ve talked to Mr. Arthur Doyle, and he is very interested in generating electricity using water current. He also mentioned to me that the process of making a magic crystal light can be simplified and thus be popularized among the nobles, and we can lower the requirement for using the Electromagnetic Message spell by turning the magic for keeping one’s voice into a manufacturable alchemical product, and meanwhile building more magic towers for transferring signals.”

The sorcerers knew that Lucien made quite a fortune with his strange-named product, Jinkela, so they all nodded and believed that it was a good idea.

Lucien smiled and continued, “What was more important was that once the nobles and the common people are used to the usage of magic in their daily life, they will not follow the Church this closely anymore. Indeed, we sorcerers don’t usually associate with the common folks, but as the Church has been preaching to them all the

time, we must take away the things they need from them. And when the foundation of the Church is shaken, the end of the Church can be seen. Anything in the way of the development of magic will be crashed into pieces.”

“We shall talk about this later.” Morris was definitely persuaded. He turned around and said to the other leaders of the Will of Elements.

Lucien cheered in his mind. The Church would for sure take the revenge when Lucien’s alchemical product was spread everywhere. If Lucien took all the profit and was not willing to let the other sorcerers take a share, when he was in trouble, no one would help him out.

However, the Will of Elements would get on board now.

A person could be greedy but also had to be smart.

Morris was in a better mood now and he said to all the guests:

“Ladies and gentlemen, the development of arcana and magic is like a speeding steam train, and the changes brought by it are unprecedented. Today, we present Holm Crown prize to the two distinguished arcanists for their outstanding contributions to the field of Element and Alchemy. Let’s welcome Mr. Lucien Evans from the Will of Elements first.”

When Lucien walked on the stage, Morris started to read the award speech, “He found the new particle. He has opened the gate of the micro-world. His contribution to the school of Element is ground-breaking and significant. He has led us to a brand new era!”

Morris took out a specially designed ring of two crossed silver circles, at the center of which there was a crystal-blue, brilliant precious stone.

“To honor his outstanding contribution, the No. 30 Holm Crown ring, Electron, is given to Mr. Lucien Evans.”

The No. 28 ring was Origin, and No. 29 was Ionization. Therefore, Lucien first got the Electron ring. Origin would be given to him later.

In the warm applause, Lucien accepted the ring. In the inner side of the ring, it wrote: "Year 819, Holm Crown, to Lucien Evans' contribution."

Lucien immediately left his spiritual mark in the ring and got the information in it:

"Holm Crown ring, Electron, level seven perfect rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power reached the senior rank could unseal the ring and the full power could be released.

The unique ring is very powerful because of the enchanted seventh-circle spell, Anti-magic Ray!"

Chapter 368: The Powerful Ring

"The ring can help the caster to stay calmer and more focused, so the casting process is less likely to be interrupted. The effect was equivalent to the fifth-circle magic spell, Focus. The pure ring contains a great magic power which enables the caster to use the fifth-circle spell Lightning Ball two times a day, and the seventh-circle spell Anti-magic Ray two times a day. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still forcibly cast the seventh-circle magic once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

"The discovery of electron has opened the gate of the micro-world, and it has changed our understanding of the material base of the world. This ring is given to Mr. Lucien Evans, the outstanding arcanist, for his great contribution to the school of Element.

"The discovery brought by the ray is going to be more powerful because of the ray!

"From: Morris Hoffenberg."

Lucien was shocked after getting the detailed information of the ring, Electron. He believed that Morris' achievement in alchemy was only inferior to the two legendary alchemists, Davey and Klaus.

Although compared to the last Holm Crown ring, less permanently enchanted magic effects were given, this time the enchanted seventh-circle spell was Anti-magic Ray. The special feature of this magic spell made it hard to be compatible with the others. The fact that Morris could still add another enchanted magic effect and a fifth-circle spell already impressed Lucien a lot. If used properly, even if Lucien's cognition world had not been substantialized, indeed there was a good chance that he could survive when facing a senior-rank sorcerer.

Seeing that Lucien put the ring on the middle finger of his left hand, Morris almost burst into tears. The ring was a memorable masterpiece for him in his alchemist career.

Calming down a bit, Morris took out another ring. The hollowed-out white ring was inlaid with a big, transparent diamond. Under the light, the diamond was dazzling.

Morris forced himself to read the award speech:

"Since we human beings got rid of savagery, we have been exploring the secret of life. We crave to know where we come from and what life is. Many great sorcerers spent their whole life on finding the truth, but unfortunately, they never managed to get one step closer. Lucien Evans, however, designed the genius experiment, Miracle Experiment, using his extraordinary way of thinking. Miracle Experiment has revealed us one possibility of the origin of life. At that moment, his radiance could rival that of any gods.

"This is the first step that we human beings take into this forbidden area, and more steps will be taken. The Will of Elements and Holm Royal Magic Academy honor Lucien Evans with the ring for his outstanding contribution to this field. This is the No. 28 Holm Crown ring and its name is Origin."

The applause became even warmer. Although the discovery of the new particle was a great surprise, nothing could be compared to the shock which was brought by Miracle Experiment designed by Lucien. Every human being would stand in great awe before life!

Lucien had brought the apprentices in with him for the free dinner. Right now, the apprentices were staring at their teacher on the stage as if Lucien was shining. The dazzling rings almost made them feel a bit dizzy. The youngsters were also longing for the great honor, even including the most introverted apprentice, Annick.

Katrina's eyes were shining when Lucien accepted the ring, Origin. As a lady and an arcanist, she burst out, "I really want a ring like this!"

"I really want a ring like this..." Another childish voice came from the side. Drooling, Alferris was holding the largest plate, fork, and knife, but its eyes were only focusing on the rings Lucien was wearing.

"Mr. Evans' so charming!" Heidi and Layria had a different focus, although they longed for the ring as well.

In fact, even for a senior-rank sorcerer in the school of Elements or Alchemy, a Holm Crown ring was still a great goal not because of the value of the ring itself, but for the honor it represented.

Seeing his teacher on the stage, Sprint held his fists tight and his body slightly trembled out of excitement. He kept telling himself that one day he would be on the stage accepting the great honor just like his teacher.

"I'm a bit regretful. Why did I choose to be a battle mage," said Florencia in mixed feelings. "I designed so many rings, but I don't own any of them."

"You've still got one. We've got nothing," said another senior member of the Will of Element, Caroline, who was also a battle mage, said in a half joking and half disappointed tone.

There was indeed a Holm Crown ring on Florencia's right hand, but that was not hers. It was her husband Oliver's ring, named Cornerstone.

Timothy and Ulysses exchanged a look and they saw the bitterness in each other's eyes. In the past, Larry, Felipe, Timothy, and Ulysses were peers and they were at the same level. However, now both Felipe and Larry had won the prize, and the late-comer, Lucien, had even won three rings. Sometimes, Timothy and Ulysses had to admit that geniuses did exist, and thus they had to work even harder.

They understood what was in each other's eyes. Raising the glass, Timothy and Ulysses toasted.

Lucien accepted the ring and gently stroke its inner side.

"Year 817, Holm Crown, for Mr. Lucien Evans' great contribution. (In Year 819)"

"Holm Crown ring, Origin, level seven perfect-rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power reached the senior

rank could unseal the ring and the full power could be released.

"Three magic effects are permanently enchanted on this dazzling ring: It can affect the target senior-rank sorcerer's ability to see the future and thus a senior-rank sorcerer's prophecy can be incorrect; It can accustom the wearer to the extreme environments such as hell and abyss; It could store the wearer's spiritual power and give it back to the wearer when his spiritual power is drained up (the amount of stored spiritual power should be able to support the wearer to cast another three fifth-circle common spells).

"The ring enables the wearer to cast Chaos Teleportation twice a day because of its chaotic and furious magic power. Chaos Teleportation—a level seven magic spell. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still forcibly cast the seventh-circle spell once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

"Miracle Experiment has revealed us one possibility of the origin of life, enlightening us with its breathtaking design and shocking result. We give this ring to Mr. Lucien Evans, the chosen one by the Goddess of Life, for his great contribution. He has connected the existence of non-life substances in the world to the birth of life and expanded the range of the School of Element. When it comes to the history of elemental magic, his name is for sure going to be mentioned!

"The origin of life may start in the chaotic and dangerous primitive environment; Chaotic Teleportation sometimes can also contribute to the continuation of life. Of course, this requires the blessing of the Goddess of Probability, the favor from destiny, and the mercy of the Goddess of Luck.

From: Morris Hoffenberg."

Chaos Teleportation was a spell shared by both the divine and magic power. Requiring no spatial orientation, it could send the caster to another place dozens of kilometers away from the place where the caster was originally at in half a second. However, no one knew what kind of place the caster would be sent to: maybe at a crater facing the burning lava; maybe in the crack of a demiplane;

maybe to the place where the caster's most reliable friends were; maybe right in front of another enemy's face...

Lucien knew that making this ring was also extremely difficult.

The most precious thing about this ring was its capability of storing Lucien's spiritual power. Using the three Holm Crown rings properly, Lucien could forcibly use the powerful spells in the two rings and escape using Chaos Teleportation after getting the replenishment. But, as the storage volume was still limited, if Lucien dared to overdraw his spiritual power twice, the consequence would be severe.

Of course, Lucien, as his cognition world had been substantialized, was not in a rush to use the spiritual power he would store in the ring, as his spiritual power was already enough for him to cast four seventh-circle spells consecutively. When facing a senior-rank spell, Lucien was not that vulnerable anymore.

Tampering with his hair, Morris did not want to see Lucien putting on the ring. He then said to the guests:

"Let's welcome Mr. Evans to give us a short speech."

Florencia and the rest of the sorcerers and arcanists applauded warmly, as they were very curious about what Lucien would say after only two to three years when he gave the last award-winning speech, which was classic.

Lucien took a step forward, smiling, "I remember that when I won the prize last time, I said that there were greater secrets hiding behind the periodicity among the elements, and our exploration of it would lead the elemental magic to the very nature of the world. Now it has been three years... I found electron because I studied the periodicity, and thus the veil covering the micro-world has been revealed. Meanwhile, Her Excellency, Hathaway, and my teacher, Fernando, have separated out the equivalent elements. After figuring out what these equivalent elements are different, another Holm Crown prize shall be granted."

Hearing that, Morris' face paled.

"So, the exploration in this field is going to lead more sorcerers to reach the greatest honor. And the brand new understanding of the world shall commence."

Morris' face became even paler. He did not get Lucien's main point—the brand new understanding of the world.

Raising his hands wearing the Holm Crown rings, Lucien slightly bowed, and said meaningfully:

"All phenomena can be explained. The most unexpected accidents can also contain inevitability."

Lucien thought to himself that, maybe in the future, one would have to be more careful with using the word "inevitable".

The sorcerers present started applauding warmly. In their eyes, Lucien Evans was the role model of staying curious about everything and always asking why.

...

At the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness, in Heidler.

The ghosts, Adol and Angwoods, were floating in the air, flickering in the shadow.

Staring at the gray clouds, Adol grinned, "We shall keep a close eye on the sorcerer who was going to come here to receive the Immortal Throne award."

"Why, may I ask?" asked Angwoods. It seemed to have a lower status.

Adol's cold voice was indifferent:

"On him, I smell Maskelyne..."

Chapter 369: Urgency

Chapter 369: Urgency

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

“You... smell Maskelyne?” Angwoods didn’t quite understand Adol’s words, but his tone became rather serious and grim when he mentioned the name.

Under the pale sunlight, Adol’s delicate but lifeless skin was covered by a faint black air, and under his hood two red light spots were dancing like flames. He snorted, “The amulet he wears is made by Maskelyne... I can recognize it. Maskelyne can sense me using the amulet, and I can also recognize the amulet he made...”

“So, the last time when you leaked the secret information to Sousa was not because of Felipe, nor for triggering the internal strife in the Hand of Paleness?” Angwoods reached out his hand and caught a piece of rotten flesh falling from his body, and rubbed it back in his face.

“Those human beings are stupid and greedy. Their mind can’t see. So we can play them between our hands.” Adol sneered.

Angwoods’s voice became deadly, “Maskelyne knew too much about our secrets, and he was a powerful prophet and an astrologer. There must be a reason why he left this magic item. Since the sorcerer named Lucien Evans in coming to Heidler for receiving the award anyway, shall we just...”

He made the gesture of grabbing someone’s neck tight.

“Idiot, have you ever thought about the consequences of killing Lucien Evans in Heidler? Are you trying to let the secret of the World of Souls out, or trying to directly show the Congress the secret of the World of Souls? We may be able to do so if facing a grand arcanist or a legendary archmage, but we are now facing seven grand arcanists and eleven legendary archmages! You’ve got any secret weapons? Don’t forget, the Congress is not our only

enemy!” scolded Adol severely.

“So are we just going to let him keep his own life although he is going to give out our most important secret at any time?”

Angwoods replied angrily. Although Adol’s rank was higher than his, Angwoods was still a senior-rank specter. Adol should not rebuke him like this.

Adol turned around and the two red light spots flashed a bit under his hood, “If he was going to say, he would have already done so. When knowing this kind of information, it is always safer to him to keep it as a secret, since the powerful ones who know about the World of Souls are going to make his mouth shut up forever. Since there is no sign showing that the Congress is taking any actions, it shows that Lucien Evans does have a brain. Even if he is going to leak the information, Lucien Evans will wait until he becomes a legendary archmage so he is able to protect himself. We still have plenty of time. Sooner or later, he is going to leave Allyn for his exploration, and the grand arcanists cannot follow him everywhere.”

Angwoods tried to say something but finally closed his mouth.

Adol warned him, “Our most important task right now is to draw the power to get ready for the return of Lord. You’d better watch your behavior, Angwoods. If you interrupt the plan, you will be thrown into Souls Furnace.”

“I hear you, Adol.” Angwoods put on his hood and answered in a low voice.

...

In the brach of the Will of Elements, on the first floor of the magic tower.

After Lucien bowed to the audience and left the stage, Morris calmed down a bit and introduced the next award-winner:

“Now, let’s welcome Mr. Larry Clark!”

Larry, wearing a magic robe embroidered with the element

symbols, walked out of the crowd. On his way to the stage, Larry walked to Lucien.

“Congratulations, Mr. Larry.” Lucien smiled and nodded to him.

“Thanks, Evans...” Larry touched his yellowish-brown beard a bit awkwardly, “The weather is not bad today.”

Lucien was amused. Maybe Larry was too nervous.

“Congratulations. The Will of Elements is proud of you. You’re the first one who has won Holm Crown prize for three times.” Florencia raised the glass and smiled to Lucien.

Lucien showed Florencia the rings and slightly bowed, “Thank you very much for the great design, lady.”

Listening to Morris’s introduction of Larry’s great contribution to the field of magic potion making and the school of Alchemy, Florencia swirled the wine in her glass and said to Lucien, “We have got the investigation result. Bellak applied for the shift himself using the excuse that he wished to take a long break later.”

“So, that being said... Was Bellak the only plotter?” Lucien slightly frowned.

As soon as Lucien went back to Allyn, the investigation on Bellak had started, as Lucien believed that this was not only a coincidence, but someone else was helping Bellak, or how would Bellak know when Lucien could notice the cursed vase?

However, according to the investigation result, Bellak just chose the time that Lucien was most likely to notice the difference of the vase. If Lucien did not notice the difference at the first a few days, Bellak would have plentiful time to get prepared and the vase would gradually damage his health. However, Lucien did see it through, and Bellak thus had to be the one taking action directly.

After all, no assassination was guaranteed to be successful.

Florencia nodded slightly and her blond hair hung down gently, “So far we haven’t found any senior members suspicious. But we did

make some other progress: we found Lorban in Bellak's magic tower, and from the remaining materials and Lorban's memory, we have caught a dozen low and middle-rank mages who have surrendered to the Church. Some did so because they could not make any further achievement in magic, and some because of money and materials for better development."

"We cannot fully get rid of religion when there is still death, pain, and desperation, but we cannot surrender to the Church. All the religions must be in our control." Lucien sighed.

Florencia was quite surprised by Lucien's words, but a second later, she started to laugh. She was laughing so hard that her body was shaking, "Lucien, no... I should call you Mr. Evans, you are acting like a board member! You sound exactly the same as the president Douglas and Mr. Fernando!"

Lucien smiled, feeling a bit embarrassed. He switched the topic by joking, "Really? I'm thinking of establishing a board called Sorcerers' Development and Mental Health."

"Hahaha... Sounds awesome!" Florencia laughed really hard.

On the stage, Larry was giving a short speech.

After taking a sip at her dry throat from laughing too much, Florencia said to Lucien through the electromagnetic message, "You asked me to look into where the special material came from, and I've got some clues here. Although it was the Church who provided Bellak with the special material, as it is very special, we have traced it back to the desert in the south part of Gusta."

"It's really a good news," said Lucien sincerely. In the future, he was going to need the special material made from the unique mineral.

Florencia's green eyes stared at Lucien and asked through the secret messaging, "Although the special material consists of the new element, why is it so important to you?"

Lucien did not keep the first part of his paper as a secret—the part

discovering the new element, Uranium, and he got thirty arcana credits from it. Facing Florencia's question, Lucien just smiled but did not give her an answer.

Florencia was always very curious, but she knew how to restrain herself. Seeing that Lucien did not want to say, she joked, "Oh, my poor teacher, Mr. Morris..."

Their conversation ended there, and they turned to look at Larry on the stage giving his speech. Larry was calmer now, and his speech was more and more fluent:

"Just as what Evans mentioned, the most unexpected accidents can also contain inevitability. So I am thinking: why when a substance dissolves, it will be broken down into ions carrying different charges? Why do we have valence states? Why do the states show periodicity? Does it have anything to do with the internal structure of atoms? Does it have anything to do with Evans's newly discovered electron? In the world of arcana, if there is a result, there must be a reason. Any phenomenon is strictly determined by the law, so we cannot be satisfied with simply getting the result, but we need to explore further."

Florencia looked at Lucien and joked, "Mr. Douglas is really acting like a role model. More and more people resemble the president, and you are the No. 1, Lucien."

"My great honor." Lucien smiled.

...

In the wilderness of death, where tombstones were everywhere.

Lucien, Alferris, and a skull-headed lich wearing a dark brown robe showed up at the edge of the wilderness.

"So this is the Land of Long Sleep?" Lucien looked around curiously at the demiplane belonging to Thanatos.

"Yes," replied the skull-headed lich whose eyes were the two spots white flame, "His Excellency Thanatos created the place. We should move on now, Evans."

“Sure, sir Morus.” Lucien grabbed Alferris since it was trying to rob the tombs, and walked to the teleportation circle after the lich.

The Hand of Paleness was very unwilling to give Lucien the award, and thus it was not going to spoil Lucien like how the Will of Elements did by holding the ceremony in Allyn. However, at the same time, as the organizer, the Hand of Paleness also had the responsibility to protect Lucien. Therefore, Morus, the vice president, a level eight arcanist, ninth-circle necromancy archmage, was given the task to welcome and protect Lucien.

Time and space changed. After the familiar feeling of dizziness, Lucien arrived at the headquarter of the Hand of Paleness.

Morus led Lucien to the lounge and said to him:

“Evans, you take a rest here. Two hours later, I’ll take you to the banquet hall. By the way, many of our researches are not very pleasant to be observed and many necromancers don’t like you, so you might not want to walk around. If anything happens, it would be a trouble to every one of us.”

After Morus left, Lucien stood beside the window and stared at the quiet streets down there and the gray sky.

Heidler was different from other cities. Although there were a few human-shaped creatures wandering on the streets, they rarely talked to each other. Most of them were ghosts, zombies, ghouls, skeletons, and the low intelligence undead creatures developed by the Hand of Paleness such as the Skinless, whose eyes were shining with red light, and zombie dogs.

Looking into the distance, Lucien saw an invisible gap connecting to the World of Souls surrounded by the magic tower. An idea came to him—did the Hand of Paleness find the existence of the World of Souls?

When Lucien was thinking, he felt that one spot in his neck was burning. He was surprised that Mr. Rhine was now reaching to him. When being close to the gap, the power of Rhine’s casting could be intensified.

“Alferris, I need to take some rest. You have fun,” Lucien said to the little dragon and lay in the bed.

Lucien hypnotized himself in the bed and soon fell asleep. Seeing that Lucien had fallen asleep, Alferris jumped toward the bed and sat beside it like a little puppy, staring at the three Holm Crown rings while drooling.

Suddenly, Alferris snuffled a bit confusedly and its big amber-colored eyes blinked, as if it felt something, however, it did not find anything. Soon, its attention was drawn to the rings again.

In Lucien’s dream, Rhine showed up again. He said to Lucien directly, “Something big happened to the World of Souls. Soon, the world is going to change.”

Chapter 370: Rhine's Plan

Although Lucien was quite used to hearing bad news, he was still a bit nervous, "What happened, Mr. Rhine?"

The World of Souls contained the genuine secret of immortality, and thus even a slight change could be vital. Lucien was even more nervous seeing that Rhine was this serious.

Was it going to be a catastrophe?

"I don't know for sure. You know, I am trapped here, and I can only feel that something very horrible is slowly waking up. Its power is strong enough to overthrow the entire world. Maybe in a year or two, the horrible change will start. And it's most likely to go in the worst direction," said Rhine, dressing very formally like he was attending a fancy dinner. Although he was talking in a very serious manner, Rhine did not panic.

Lucien frowned, "So... I should inform the Highest Council of the existence of the World of Souls."

Even though the Lord of Storm was Lucien's teacher, Lucien was still unable to feel a hundred percent at ease with telling Fernando the big secret. No one could say for sure that Fernando would not kill Lucien because of greed. After all, Lucien had not had much time to get to know the Lord of Storm well enough. Therefore, when the situation really became very serious, Lucien would inform the entire Highest Council because the grand arcanists and legendary archmages would restrain each other, so Lucien would be much safer.

"We're not there yet. I told you that I had some planning before I entered the World of Souls, and I asked you to help me get out of this place after you become a senior-rank sorcerer..." said Rhine very seriously, which was rare. "I know you are still working on it, but I still wish that you would get close to senior-rank in the next half a year, and then you can spend another half year activating my plannings. At that time, I will give you a spell. Hopefully, Zie can

suppress what was going on deep in the World of Souls. If my plan does not work, you should tell this to the Congress."

Neither of them, Rhine or Lucien, was an idiot. If they were helpless, they would not keep the secret and just let the worst happen.

"Zie?" Lucien repeated confusedly.

Rhine nodded seriously, "The ancestor of we vampires, the closest existence to God, the true incarnation of the deathless silver moon."

"Alterna?" Lucien had seen this name many times in the books stored in the Congress. It was said that, like the Pope, Zie was the closest to the realm of God.

However, because Zie was only a legend, the Cleansing List did not include Zie's name.

The corner of Rhine's mouth twitched a bit, "You can call Zie Alterna, but unlike what is said in the books, the primitive existence does not belong to any gender. The Congress follows the bad tradition left by the magic empire and likes to describe all the gods and the nature of the world as female... However, the Pope is always a male..."

"I see... Maybe Zie can really save the world." Lucien nodded, and he was also thinking that, if he could have the honor to meet Zie, he wished to be granted a piece of Zie's flesh, a drop of blood, or even a hair for his study.

Lucien had already become a crazy arcanist.

Rhine grinned, and the handsome smile was back again, "I can't believe we're both being busy saving the world now."

Lucien thought to himself that, in fact, Mr. Fernando had always been busy with preventing his student, Lucien, from destroying the world.

"So... where should I go to activate the magic circles?" asked Lucien.

"First, go to my castle located in the Dark Mountain Range to get the Transformation Mask, the three items for activating the magic circles, and your reward. Then you go to Kuo-toa's altar in the polluted area of the Boundless Ocean, the Manticore Tomb in the southern desert in Gusta, and the Sun King Thanos' underground palace in the capital Antiffler of Holy Heilz Empire. You activate the magic circles there using the spell and gesture. Finally, you come back to my castle. You light up all the candles and lights in my castle when the silver moon is the brightest. Under the moonlight, you enchant the spell again." Rhine's projection started to shake. His power was fading.

The polluted area, the southern desert, and the Sun King... It was not Lucien's first time hearing the words. Not to mention the Sun King, Lucien learned about the polluted ocean area when he came to Holm by ship as a stowaway, and he even earned an arcana credit from selling the information. Lucien heard about the south desert from Florencia the other day: it was the source area of uranium, and this area was under the ruling of another magic empire named Meshkate.

There had been three paralleled ancient magic empires - Sylvanas, Meshkate, and Asso. Meshkate studied deeper in Necromancy, Illusion, and Summoning, and it ruled the southern desert of the Empire of Gusta, the oasis, and the Dragon Moor; Asso was famous for its navigation techniques and the buildings underwater, whose territory extended from today's Duchy of Calais, the Kingdom of Brianna, and the many islands including the Pearl Islands in the Boundless Ocean; and the rest of the land was governed by the most powerful magic empire, Sylvanas.

Rhine grinned, "I don't have the power to set up all the great magic circles, so I borrowed the power of the altar, the tomb, and the underground palace. Don't worry... When you get close to becoming a senior-rank mage, if you can use the mask and the magic items in my palace properly, you are not going to take too big of a risk. The only problem is that you might not be able to do all of these within half a year... You can't fly as fast as a senior-rank mage..."

"Umm..." Lucien had to confess, "I think I should be able to set off

in a few days. To some degree, I am already very close to becoming a senior-rank."

To become a senior-rank, the substantialization of the cognition world was the most challenging stage, followed by the process of performing the magic rite. After these two steps, one still had to finish analyzing a sixth-circle spell and thus, finally, be able to interfere with the reality using his or her spiritual power and soul. Lucien had finished substantializing his cognition world, and he was about to finish analyzing the sixth-circle spell very soon.

Rhine knew about magic relatively well. Hearing Lucien's words, he took a deep breath and looked around in the dream. He felt a bit amused as he said, "I thought you just went back to Allyn a few months ago... Am I having a problem with my sense of time from being trapped here?"

When Lucien was in Allyn, Rhine could not project himself in Lucien's dream because the grand arcanists and legendary archmages could easily notice it.

"I'm... how to say... quite different," Lucien said in an ambiguous way.

"You're getting boring. When you become a legendary archmage, you'll be really boring." Rhine sighed, "Then, please take action as soon as possible."

The dream was gone. Lucien opened his eyes. The conversation that Rhine just had with him repeated in his mind.

Lucien knew that it was very likely Rhine that was still hiding some things from him. Rhine knew about the World of Souls way more than Lucien could expect. However, Lucien was also aware of the fact that sometimes knowing too much was not a good thing.

Lucien sat up suddenly, and Alferris was startled. Its tail swung and almost whipped a chair into pieces.

"I didn't do anything!" Alferris raised its tone.

Lucien wished that he could take Alferris with him, but except for

guarding the great secret, Lucien could also imagine how Alferris would rob Rhine's warehouse.

The biggest problem Lucien was facing now was that he needed to find an excuse to leave Allyn as the Lord of Storm would not easily approve his departure.

...

In Heidler, in the banquet hall of a magic tower, the white candles dimly lit up the hall.

Standing in the hall, Lucien felt that he was attending a funeral. Holding the white, sticky drink, Lucien was hesitant with tasting it, while Alferris was quite enjoying itself, and right now it was holding the big plate indulging itself in all kinds of strange food such as the fried meat strings like fat maggots, the skull-shaped bread, and the organ platter...

Looking at the food, Lucien shook his head a bit, and then he saw Felipe wearing his black long jacket walking toward him.

Stopping in front of Lucien, Felipe put on a light smile, "I thought you dared not to come to Heidler, as your magic rank is still low... You do have the reason to worry."

"I thought you would not have enough courage to come here today, to watch me winning the award." Lucien fought back, "I'm a member of the Review Board. Why should I worry about visiting the place under the rule of the Congress?"

"Shall I give you the first-hand material of my study on cell memory?" Felipe did not retreat, "So, even if you are killed, there is still hope for you to come back to life."

Lucien shook his head, "I don't really trust the research outcome of low or middle-rank arcanists."

That was how they greeted each other. At this time, an elder man wearing a fancy Meshkate robe came to them. Holding the red wine in his glass and staring at Lucien with his red pupils, he said to Lucien in a cold tone, "Thank you for your Miracle Experiment."

Then, he directly walked away.

"Who is this?" Lucien asked Felipe.

Felipe's face, which always looked very sick, put on a smile and answered, "Mr. Sousa, a level six arcanist, seventh-circle necromancer, one of the senior members of our group. He once almost got exploded. So I'd say that the hope is rather dim for him to become an eighth-circle sorcerer."

Talking about this, Felipe was in quite a good mood. He was never a nice and generous person.

"There are many things in the world that we cannot control." Lucien swirled the wine in his glass.

There were not many people at the banquet, as many necromancers were very unwilling to watch an elemental sorcerer winning the Immortal Throne award. Only the invited guests came to greet Lucien, for the sake that he was a member of the Review Board.

One of the two presidents of the Hand of Paleness, a very powerful lich and ninth-circle necromancer, Schokola, walked onto the stage wearing a heavy black magic robe. Then, he invited Lucien to go onto the stage as well.

Behind him stood a mummy holding a crystal tray, on which there was a neatly folded, dark gray magic robe. Under the light, there was the flow of glory on it.

"Mr. Lucien Evans' Miracle Experiment has shown us another possibility of the origin of life, which is the secret that all the necromancers have been pursuing," said Schokola briefly. "He is definitely qualified to be the one on the Immortal Throne."

Chapter 371: The Good News

Chapter 371: The Good News

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

After the short speech, Schokola put the dark gray magic robe on Lucien and said, “The exploration of the secret of life shall bring us the real immortality.”

As told, Lucien left his spirit mark in the magic robe and got its information:

“Fountain of Life, level seven perfect-rank magic item (one layer of seal). A sorcerer whose spiritual power has reached the senior rank can unseal it and the magic robe’s full power could be released.

“When wearing the magic robe, the wearer can awaken all the dead bodies within two kilometers (except those above senior rank) and make them fight for the wearer. When wearing the magic robe, the wearer can have the ability of transformation. Without the careful check, even senior-rank sorcerers and archmages will not be able to notice the difference. When wearing the magic robe, if the wearer dies, his soul will be protected by the magic robe, and once someone else tried to possess the magic robe by controlling its core, the magic robe will exchange the two souls between, and thus the wearer can take over the new body.

“The magic robe also offers the wearer the magic resistance power of a fifth-circle sorcerer and the defense of a level three grand knight. The great power of death enables the wearer to cast Soul Cage, the fifth-circle spell, three times a day, Ghost Transformation three times a day, and Weakening Ray, the seventh-circle spell, three times a day. When sealed, the wearer, before reaching level six, can still force to cast the seventh-circle spell once at the cost of completely draining up his spiritual power and damaging his life force.

“October, Year 819, for Mr. Lucien Evans’ great contribution to the origin of life.

“The origin of life contains the secret of immortality!

“From: Gauci Cromwell.”

Putting on the magic robe, Lucien was a bit amused by the stinginess of the Hand of Paleness: The enchanted magic effect on the robe was transformation, and the two fifth-circle spells were almost useless. Soul Cage could draw one's soul out of the person's body when the person was still alive and put the person's soul into a magic item, which was used mainly for getting information, and it did not work on a dead person whose soul had not dismissed. Ghost Transformation could turn the common undead creatures and the caster into the form of a ghost.

Lucien was definitely hoping for something better, such as replenishing his life force or regrowing limbs, so he would be able to use his rings with no fear. However, there was no way that the Hand of Paleness would be that considerate.

Fortunately, Lucien still quite liked the seventh-circle spell and the other enchanted magic effect. Weakening Ray, like Dark Sword, could ignore the target's defense level and lower the target's power by one level. If no action was taken, the target's power level would be further lowered twelve seconds later. However, unlike Dark Sword which required one to conduct the special rite to recover the power, Weakening Ray's effect could only last five minutes, and it could be counteracted by other spells.

Although Lucien felt that it was quite dirty hiding oneself in the magic robe and stealing another person's body, Lucien had to concede that it was a perfect way to save one's life and the only left hope, which complied with the style of the Hand of Paleness.

“Mr. Lucien Evans, would you like to share with us your feeling right now and your insight into Necromancy?” asked Schokola with no facial expression as he only had the skull.

“My insight... in Necromancy?” Lucien murmured to himself. He took a step forward and saw the cold face of Felipe and Sousa's eyes shining with red light.

Lucien remained rather calm and said, "The immortality of life is the ultimate pursuit of the School of Necromancy, and this is also the terrain we hold the most respect toward. There are so many things we want to explore: why can the bloodline be passed on? Why can blood powers be combined? Why do people age? When aging, what happens to the cells? However, our ways of investigation are restraining us from going further, and thus we need the other schools of magic to work together. There is no such a thing as an isolated school of magic!"

Hearing Lucien's words, Felipe frowned a bit. He wondered what kind of progress Lucien had made. Was Lucien facing the same difficulty as he was?

Lucien finished his short speech, and Felipe saw him walking off the stage directly toward him, with a gentle but suspicious smile. So he asked confusedly, "What?"

"I remember... we once had a promise." Lucien grinned. He almost forgot the promise, but when he saw Felipe's face on the stage, Lucien was reminded of it.

Felipe's facial expression changed, "What do you want? Prolong your life-span? Strengthen your soul?"

Felipe was reminded by Lucien. He remembered that after escaping the assassination from Traquair, he was being rather short-tempered to take his revenge, so he instigated and also threatened Lucien to publish his paper on the synthesized carbamide. Felipe promised Lucien that he would run a rite for him.

"Strengthen my soul. My soul potential has just got developed, so the common magic rites won't work," said Lucien with a meaningful smile on his face.

Felipe squinted a bit, "The Hand of Paleness does have some special rites."

However, those rites were very expensive! Still, a promise was a promise. Proud as Felipe was, he would not fail his own words. No matter how expensive the rite was, he had to pay for it. He indeed

earned some decent money from improving Life Hiding, but now the money would be soon gone.

He had to say that he did feel a bit regretful.

“Thank you very much. I hope that you can kindly run the rite for me as soon as possible. Well... in Allyn, under the watch of my teacher, Mr. Fernando.” Lucien grinned and slightly bowed to Felipe.

Felipe’s hands clenched into fists in the pockets and he wished that he could directly punch Lucien’s smiling face. And he said the words one by one from his teeth, “You have to give me five days to get prepared.”

“No problem. I’ll be waiting for you, Mr. Felipe.” Lucien was in a very good mood. He did not care about Felipe’s attitude.

Seeing that Lucien just turned around and was about to leave, it suddenly occurred to Felipe and he hurriedly asked, “Your cognition world has been substantialized?”

Was that why that Lucien was in a rush to strengthen his soul power?

Felipe was clearly aware of the fact that, for the geniuses like Lucien and him, under the special attention from all the directions focused on them, getting the important magic potions was not a big deal for them, and their speed of improving the soul power and spiritual power mostly depended on themselves and their teachers’ suggestion—who usually would not rush their students to advance, as the foundation might not be firm—, therefore, the two biggest challenges for them to become a senior-rank were to substantialize their cognition world and to analyze the sixth-circle magic spell.

Facing the two challenges, no one could help them, but they could only rely on their own effort. Felipe himself substantialized his cognition world after he successfully synthesized grease, and then his spiritual power and soul soon met the requirements of the further advancement. With the help of the magic rite, he managed to become a senior-rank with relatively less effort. However,

Lucien's advancing process was too fast, and unlike Felipe, his spiritual power level was not ready yet, and solely relying on the magic potions could not help him.

When Felipe was still a middle-rank mage, he got the guidance and help from Congus, the Demigod-lich, and thus he soon became Congus' student after reaching the senior rank.

Lucien turned around and thought for a second, "Well... I'll let you guess..."

There was no way that Lucien would directly tell this to his enemy! Felipe was quite pissed off, but Lucien's reaction affirmed his guess.

Did he substantialize his cognition world because of the assumption of the discontinuous form of energy, or the discovery of electron?

Many thoughts flashed through Felipe's mind.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the magic tower in Allyn, Lucien was standing in front of Fernando nervously.

"Are you sure you want to use the rite from the Hand of Paleness?" asked Fernando seriously, "Your soul's potential has just got developed. Rushing to use the rite will leave you an unstable foundation, and you'll have a harder time improving your power in the future. If you take the steps one by one, after becoming a senior-rank mage, in the recent fifteen to twenty years, there is a possibility that you can become an archmage. But if you insist to do so, it is going to take you thirty years, sixty years, a hundred years, or even longer. I did once consider whether I should help you with running a similar rite for you, but I decided to let you grow by yourself. Why are you in such a rush?"

After thinking about it for a second, Lucien said to Fernando directly, "Sir, I have some personal stuff to deal with, and it is an emergency. I have to leave Allyn. For my own safety, I have to do so."

"Personal stuff? What is it? Do you know how big a risk you are

taking? Did someone cast any spells on you?” asked Fernando. His red eyes shone with many tiny bolts of lightning to make sure that Lucien was not mentally deluded by anyone.

“Sir, can you keep it as a secret?” Lucien was anxious. He did not know how to persuade Fernando other than telling him the truth.

Fernando’s red rigorous eyes stared at Lucien for a long time, but he did not say anything.

Lucien was almost sweating. Finally, Fernando closed his eyes and slightly nodded, “It’s your own choice. Don’t regret it.”

Lucien released a long sigh seeing that Fernando did not insist on asking. When Lucien was about to leave, he heard Fernando’s voice:

“Wait.”

“Yes, sir?” Lucien became nervous again.

Knocking at the desk with his knuckle gently, Fernando said, “The special soul rite from the Hand of Paleness is indeed much better than the similar rites that I know. Still, maybe it is not going to affect you that much.”

“Yes, sir.” Lucien did not get Fernando’s point.

Fernando paused a bit and then slowly took out a scroll from under his magic robe, “You used it before... the teleportation scroll. Take it with you. Don’t get killed, my flathead student.”

“Sir...” Lucien was touched.

Fernando suddenly grinned, “When I was young, I did many ridiculous things as well. When I look back, some of them are very funny. So I more or less understand how you young people think. And this is probably the price you have to pay to grow. Well... the scroll is made of the skin of ninth-level creature called Karachi. I only have two pieces. So you don’t have another chance to be stupid... Also, I don’t think you have had enough money to buy all the materials you need for reaching the senior-rank. Go to my demiplane warehouse to take a look, but you should leave me your

following three years' annual earnings as a pledge.”

“Yes, sir...” Lucien’s voice trembled slightly.

Chapter 372: Banshee's Blessing

After accepting the scroll, Lucien calmed down a bit and asked curiously, "Sir, you mentioned that you did many ridiculous things when you were young. What are these things?"

Fernando immediately threw a furious stare at Lucien and roared, "That's not what you should pry into! Go back and study Spell Trigger! Don't think you can easily become a senior-rank just because of the rite!"

Lucien was startled by Fernando's roaring and he hurriedly jumped out of his teacher's office. After closing the door, Lucien murmured to himself, feeling a bit amused but also perplexed:

"So Mr. Fernando indeed did some really ridiculous things..."

...

Five days later, in the empty hall on the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress.

On the floor, a creepy magic circle in the shape of a human body was drawn using Banshee's blood and some other precious materials. The head, left chest, hands, and feet of the human body shape were drawn with the many magic lines forming into the many beating dark-red hearts.

"Lie down in the magic circle," said Felipe.

After setting up the basic magic circle, Felipe finally let Lucien and the Lord of Storm come in the hall, leaving them out until that moment to prevent them from learning the special soul rite, called Banshee's Blessing.

After taking off all of the magic items he was wearing, the Holm Crown rings, Ice Revenger, Ogre Glove, Sun's Corona, Fire Weaver bracelet, and the magic and arcana badges, Lucien also took off the Immortal Throne magic robe and the Sidestep boots. Then, he handed all of these items to Alferris to safeguard them, who was

longing so badly for them on the side.

A soul rite like this should not be disturbed by any magic items.

Alferris was not focusing on the rite at all. Staring at the items, its big amber-colored eyes were shining, and from time to time, it would lick the amulet and rings with a great sense of satisfaction.

Wearing a white shirt and slim pants, Lucien lay down as told by Felipe. The necromancer took out six huge bone nails made from senior-rank Banshee's fangs.

"Don't scream," said Felipe in a very cold tone.

As soon as he finished his words, Felipe picked up one of the nails carved with the complicated patterns and directly knocked it in Lucien's right hand.

The nail was even sharper than Lucien expected. Lucien was a level two knight, but it still directly went through Lucien's body and nailed him to the ground. Lucien grimaced in pain although he was mentally prepared. However, he had experienced something even worse, so he did not scream.

Lucien's drops of blood shining with the dim moonlight dyed the Banshee's bone nail in crimson. However, soon the color faded very fast and finally disappeared. Lucien's blood was sucked in by the bone nail and the blood slowly went into the lines of the magic circle.

After nailing Lucien's left hand, right ankle, and left ankle to the ground, Felipe gently stuck the remaining two bone nails into the skin of Lucien's forehead and his left chest respectively. Although the two nails did not go in deep, they were immediately connected to the magic circle that Lucien was lying on, and thus they stood still in Lucien's skin, although it seemed that the two bone nails were directly knocked in Lucien's head and heart.

After finishing all of these processes, Felipe took a few steps backward and started to cast the spell. The lines of the magic circle lit up one by one.

Felipe's casting was like singing, and the hypnosis power overwhelmed Lucien through the bone nails and the magic circle. Lucien began to have a difficult time keeping his eyes open when his mind was wandering. Lucien remembered that the analysis of the spell, Spell Trigger, had been done over half... and in the next second, Lucien started to wonder what Arthur and Florencia thought of his effort on improving the structure and the material used for the magic crystal lights.

"The wind from the Land of Death, please embrace the helpless soul, and always embrace it." Felipe lifted up his black magic staff inlaid with many colorful gems. The language he used was the special language of necromancers created by the ancient Empire of Meshkate. He walked around the magic circle about one-third of the distance.

A big white gem lit up, and Felipe's long coat flapped in the air like the wings of a bat. The wind smelled a bit decayed.

Lucien fell into a deeper trance.

"The fire from Skeleton Land, please warm the helpless soul. Please bless the soul forever." After walking around the magic circle about one-third of the distance, Felipe cast the spell again.

The clusters of faint white flame grew out of the magic circle. Instead of doing any harm to Lucien's body, they warmed Lucien and made his soul even purer.

Fernando was standing on the side, observing what was going on with his eyes half open. In the white flame, Fernando saw the indistinct figure of a monster wearing a long black robe and holding a sickle, behind which was the background of the wasteland, where countless ghosts were loitering.

"The coldness from the silent hell, please surround the helpless soul. Give him the eternal peace." Felipe finished the last part of the walk and a silver-colored gem lit up.

The endless silence and coldness surrounded Lucien's soul and further substantialized it.

After all of these, Felipe raised his left hand and screamed silently.

The six bone nails were engorged with Lucien's blood, and now they were distorting like real snakes, and their shadows suddenly rose into the air.

The shadows turned out to be the phantoms of some beautiful females. The fair-skinned women were half-naked, but their faces were written with great pain. However, as Felipe's silent scream continued, they opened their mouth and started to sing.

The singing was beautiful, but it could only be heard by one's soul. Vaguely, Lucien saw his own soul ripple in the singing and it slowly absorbed all the flowing liquid in the magic circle.

Two minutes later, Felipe's forehead was beaded with sweat. Putting down his left hand, Felipe took out a strange black mirror inlaid with small gems in the shape of leaves and some pale eyeballs. The back of the mirror was covered with the facial skin of a horrible Banshee.

Felipe tossed the mirror into the air and the mirror floated above Lucien. The black mirror floated right above him.

Felipe started to cast the creepy necromancy spell again. At this time, all the gems on his magic staff lit up together, which even managed to draw Alferris' attention.

The mirror slightly trembled. The six Banshees' song was turned into a bitter scream. The black mirror then cracked, and a white eye was revealed! In the pupil, the creepy and distorted figures were dancing in a weird manner.

The eye looked at Lucien, and Lucien's soul suddenly rose high. Higher above the clouds, high above the sky... His soul went straight upward and finally met his Host Star of Destiny. Lucien could feel that, in the far end, in the place where Lucien could not reach, something had already been connected to his soul.

It was overlooking Lucien, with a condescending attitude!

The lines of the magic circle started to tremble as if they were alive.

Then, Lucien's body was entangled by the lines. The lines went into his body and fiercely pulled his soul back. After shivering for seven times, Lucien finally sobered up.

"I have done what I promised," Felipe wiped his forehead with his white handkerchief. "I don't owe you anything now."

Felipe turned around and directly left. Lucien still felt a bit dizzy, for he was not yet used to the power of his soul. After a few minutes, he casually exerted his spiritual power and turned the bone nails into powder.

"My spiritual power and soul can interfere with the reality now..." Lucien murmured to himself with mixed feelings. He must be the one in the Congress of Magic who made the fastest advancement but at the cost of his future progress.

Lucien stood up, and his body was completely unhurt. The magic circle on the floor had disappeared completely.

"What was that eye?" murmured Fernando, feeling a bit perplexed.

A grand arcanist like him always saw the nature of the things through the fancy form of the rites. He could understand most part of the rite, but Fernando could not figure out what the last step was.

Recalling the last step, Lucien asked a bit concernedly, "Sir... I feel my soul was connected to something very far from us at the end of the rite. Is it normal?"

Before this rite, Lucien didn't dare to ask Fernando things like this because he was afraid of revealing the secret of the spirit library. However, since Fernando also did not fully understand the rite, Lucien could use the rite as a perfect excuse for almost everything strange about him.

"That is what I said..." Fernando sighed. "Your foundation is not solid. There is still a large portion of the knowledge about becoming a senior-rank that you do not know. This is more than normal. It is believed that it is because of the interaction between the cognition

and the real world and the illusion produced by the nature of the real world."

Hearing that, Lucien was more relieved.

Fernando took a glance at Alferris and asked it to return all the items back to Lucien. Then he said, "Take a rest for a week to get used to the power. Don't rush to hold the rite for your senior-rank advancement."

"Yes, sir." Lucien nodded seriously.

...

In the advanced warehouse section on the twenty-eighth floor of the Congress.

"Red Dragon scales...

"Scarlet Tree sap...

"The green Soul-eater Flower...

"Six sunstones...

"The brain of Ghast...

"The tear of Ghost..."

...

"Mr. Evans, these are the materials you need," The warehouse guard, a fifth-circle sorcerer, Smith, handed Lucien the materials. He could not help but ask, "So, Mr. Evans... You're reaching the senior rank?"

Many of the materials used for this magic rite were precious and expensive. So all of the fifth-circle sorcerers who were in need could report it to Sorcerer Administrative Department to get the materials from the Congress at half price. Holding the documents, Lucien came to the warehouse. However, he had only gathered one-third of the things he needed after almost spending all of his arcana credits

and Thales.

It seemed that Lucien had to give Fernando his following three years' annual earnings to collect all the things he needed. Thinking that he still had to pay Alferris in advance with his subsidy from the Congress and the Will of Elements to make Alferris transform into himself during his absence, Lucien's heart twitched.

Then, he grinned, "I am just preparing in advance."

Smith did not believe what Lucien said. He had never heard anyone buying the materials in advance. The warehouse never moved!

Smith was deeply shocked by Lucien's pace of advancing.

...

Seven days later, Lucien came to the hall again where his previous rite was held. He was a bit nervous as the rite for pushing him forward to become a senior-rank was very likely to fail. Three to four out of ten fifth-circle sorcerers would not get the results they wanted. And for Lucien, this would be even more difficult as his power just came from Banshee's Blessing rite.

Chapter 373: The Untraceable Destiny

There was a complex magic circle drawn with a silver-colored liquid on the floor. The big array consisted of thirteen circles, and at the center of each, different creepy patterns were drawn. The twelve smaller circles surrounded the biggest one, which was decorated with the many symbols representing the earth and the six hexagrams.

Between the circles, there were many silver-gray lines connecting them together, forming the mysterious stellar map. In the smaller circles, there were also many constellation signs and symbols of elements.

There was more than one magic rite for one to improve to senior-rank, as sorcerers majored in different schools and their cognition words also varied. If a rite was more on the necromantic, force field, or illusion side, it would not be appropriate to be applied to a sorcerer who studied elements and electromagnetism. Therefore, there were more than dozens of magic rites.

After checking carefully and making sure that the magic circle was set up correctly, Lucien took a short break to be fully prepared for the rite.

Fernando, the Lord of Storm, stood beside, and he had no plan to help Lucien with the magic circle. In his eyes, that was something that Lucien should be able to do on his own, and if he made any mistakes, Fernando was definitely going to yell at him furiously.

Thompson was in a great shock when he heard that Lucien was about to become a senior-rank mage, and now he was also here observing the rite. He was well aware of the fact that Lucien had just become a fifth-circle sorcerer six months ago, and although he could use the potions and the rites to help him meet the requirement of the spiritual power level and soul power, there was no shortcut for him to achieve the substantialization of his cognition world. Lucien either had to greatly improve his knowledge of the true world and thus get close to the real nature of

the world, or he had to boost his spiritual and soul power to the level that was almost crazy, like the ancient sorcerers did, and then use the rites to help him with the substantialization of his cognition world.

However, even if that were the case, Lucien's advancement was still inconceivably fast. It did not make sense to Thompson.

When seeking for advancement, most arcanists nowadays often combined the two methods together: they first explored the world and studied arcana to improve their cognition and to push their cognition world toward the edge of being substantialized, and then they would turn to the magic rites. Therefore, hopefully, they could reach senior-rank in about twenty years.

For those who managed to become a senior-rank before thirty years old, they all had substantialized their cognition world simply from their exploration of the world.

Thompson shook his head to get rid of his slight feeling of envy toward Lucien. He wondered if one's understanding of the micro-world really mattered that much and if the micro-world was the truth of the world. It took Thompson sharp twenty-six years to reach the sixth-circle, and by that time he was already close to his fifties.

However, his attitude toward Lucien's rushed advancement was different than Fernando's. Thompson agreed with what Lucien was doing. After all, Lucien was always surrounded by danger, and thus, when it was possible, he should make his advancement as soon as possible, or when he encountered a real danger, it would be too late for him to do anything.

In Thompson's eyes, reaching a higher circle was still very necessary as long as the cost was not too great even if Lucien had not been a troublemaker. When one's arcana knowledge had not been transferred into his or her magic power, the sorcerer was always in a certain kind of danger. It happened before that a few great arcana geniuses died before they managed to improve their magic power.

Alferris held no opinion toward what Lucien was doing. It only had

a vague understanding of time. When Alferris reached senior-rank, it did not use any rites. It only relied on its arcana and magic knowledge to improve its soul's power and used the power to stimulate its body, just like how the mature and fully-grown dragons did. Therefore, right now, Alferris was having a sweet time playing with Lucien's many magic items, wearing the Holm Crown rings on its claws to show off.

Although the Immortal Throne magic robe did not have any precious stones on it, Alferris knew that it was still worth a lot and could be traded for crystals and precious stones.

When Lucien was ready, he took out the twelve crystal balls out of his magic pouch.

They were made of the different crystals with Sun Stones, Wave Stones, Scarlet Tree sap, and some other materials respectively, each shining in different colors. Some were like stars, some were shining like a sun, and some were mysterious like the ocean. The twelve crystal balls symbolized twelve constellations and twelve elements.

Lucien placed the twelve crystal balls at the center of the twelve smaller circles, one at each respectively. The crystal balls were instantly connected to the power of the magic circle and burst out with dazzling lights. The invisible power of the magic circle raised them up.

Then, Lucien stepped in the biggest circle in the middle and stood on the symbol representing the earth. Lucien took out another six dim crystal balls and put them at the center of each of the hexagram symbols.

Throwing the pouch out of the magic circle, Lucien started to activate the core part of the magic circle.

The six hexagrams burst out silver light and rose into the air, like six altars. The six crystal balls representing the other six kinds of the element were also on the altars.

Bright red, dark blue, black, light cyan, jade green, and pure white,

the six colors of light burst out of the crystal balls like six small suns.

Lucien cast the spell in a low voice, and then his volume gradually increased, like a song of praise for the starry sky and the universe. Along with the enchanting, the silver lines of the magic circle lit up one by one, and there were also the same lines connecting the crystal balls together.

Slowly, the crystal balls started to move around Lucien. There were twelve crystal balls on the outer ring and six inside. Although they followed different traces, they did not hinder each other's movement at all.

The light covering the magic circle made the rite look like a dream. The moving crystal balls were just like the mysterious stars in the sky.

Driven by the power of the magic circle, Lucien fell into the half-virtual cognition world. The starry sky was still up there, hanging the invisible gravity strings. Lucien's Host Star of Destiny was above there in the sky at the center of the world, connected with its reflection in Lucien's soul, suggesting the unpredictability of one's fate.

The furious fire, the free wind, and the gentle water consisted of the foundation of the world. The form of energy came no more in flows but in portions.

The many light spots representing the many elements further laid the foundation of Lucien's cognition world. The electrons were moving around, and from time to time, radiant light shot out.

Drops of liquid then brought the world ice and snow, glittering.

The crystal balls went through the boundary between the reality and the visionary world, stirring this cognition world, and then they went back to the real material world where the magic circle lay, like dazzling meteors.

Between the real and the illusionary, Lucien was not sure where he

was right now.

Forcing himself to focus, Lucien started to manipulate the reflection of his Host Star of Destiny in his soul. Instantly, the shining star line lit up and connected to the host star in the sky.

The line trembled suddenly, dragging both ends!

The reflection of the star caused the vibration of Lucien's spiritual power, following which Lucien's soul also started changing. The Host Star of Destiny moved along with the cognition world, and the power from both ends interacted with each other!

This could only be achieved after the substantialization of one's cognition world. In the past, when Lucien was doing meditation, he could only control his soul but not his cognition world.

One crystal ball spun into the cognition world as expected and it directly hit the star line. The violent vibration was caused and the star was broken into shining pieces, which then went into Lucien's soul, his Host Star of Destiny and the elemental light spots.

A dazzling spiritual power ray shot out of Lucien's soul and became the first line forming the structure of the spell, Spell Trigger.

There were more and more lines gathering, and the vibration of Lucien's cognition world became more and more violent. The hiding power was going to burst out as if something was trying to jump out of the illusionary world into the real world and to become part of Lucien's soul.

More crystal balls hit the illusionary world and a very complex magic structure was gradually built. Like facing a catastrophe, Lucien's cognition world started to boil. The Host Star of Destiny started to swell. Bigger and bigger, the star occupied most of the starry sky.

Because of the power of the crystal balls, the elemental light spots also enlarged. Lucien was like an electron looking up at the huge nuclei.

However, the nuclei were hiding in the wind, fire, and water. They

were prevented from approaching the stars seemingly because of an invisible force wall.

The elemental world and the astrology world were very different just like the micro-world and the macro-world.

When the last crystal ball hit the star string, the final stage of the rite was triggered.

In silence, the Host Star of Destiny shone like a burst, illuminating the entire cognition world. The starry sky expanded rapidly, swallowing up the environment of wind, fire, and water, as well as the elements, atoms, and electrons.

Using the power, Lucien's consciousness remained very stable, and he managed to finish the final touch of the magic structure.

There followed a low bang. All the light went into Lucien's soul and joined the magic model.

However, at this time, Lucien found his own soul was unable to control the explosive power of his Host Star of Destiny and the expansion of the starry sky. His cognition world was probably going to explode in any second!

Fernando took a step forward and raised both his hands. Between his palms, there were bolts of bright lightning, and there was a powerful storm in his red eyes!

If this was out of Lucien's control, he would break off the rite even if Lucien would be severely hurt by it, which was always better than being exploded!

Thompson's right hand, using which he was planning to adjust his glasses, was right now suspending in the air. He knew something was wrong with the final step.

Even Alferris forgot the shining rings and amulets. Although it did not really understand what was going on in the magic circle, Alferris was also worried.

Lucien's consciousness, as a bystander, quickly came up with all the

knowledge he had learned. His soul was only able to control part of his Host Star of Destiny. With the expansion and swell of the star, it already looked like clusters of light.

Lucien had got only one way to go!

He controlled part of the star and let it burn furiously and grow bigger at an even higher speed!

Was he out of his mind?!

The part of the Host Star of Destiny became brighter and brighter, however, after reaching the limit, it suddenly went dim. Lucien did not stop it but kept pushing it to explode, which shaped a sharp contrast to the other part.

The expanding of the star had reached the final stage, and the part of the star under Lucien's control suddenly collapsed. Lucien felt the sharp pain in his soul.

Bang!

The collapsed part of the star formed a black swirl, devouring everything around it, even the light!

Using this power, Lucien managed to stop the further expansion of the remaining part of the star. The established magic model's reflection was now in his cognition world in the form of a dazzling star.

The rest of the magic models were also cast to the sky, forming the smaller stars. Surrounding the model of Magic Trigger, a galaxy was formed, and it was close to Lucien's entire cognition world.

At the center of the starry sky, the Host Star of Destiny was much brighter now. However, when it spun, no one could see what was behind it. There was endless darkness behind it, like a swirl that could devour everything around it, and even the tracks of the light close to it were distorted.

The dark swirl and the bright star were like twins.

Their reflection in Lucien's soul was also like this. Lucien had no idea whether it was good or bad.

Anyway, he had finally become a senior-rank mage!

When Lucien opened his eyes, the eighteen crystal balls fell onto the ground at the same time and collapsed into clusters of dim power.

...

When the back swirl appeared, a bolt of lightning flashed through his red eyes.

"The Untraceable Destiny?"

Chapter 374: The Secretive

Chapter 374: The Secretive

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The dream-like magic light disappeared. The silver lines on the floor had all turned into burned black as if they were drawn using charcoal.

Lucien had never felt more powerful, as the bond between his soul and his cognition world had been further strengthened. He felt that one day he might be able to cast his soul and cognition world into the real material world to turn the virtual into the reality. However, Lucien was aware of the fact that this would at least require the power of a legendary level archmage. For example, he knew that when his teacher, Fernando, was suffering from the great shift of his cognition world, the entire Allyn was covered with the dark clouds, shivering with the flashes of lightning.

Lucien finally felt what it was like to be a senior-rank mage. Raising his hands, he looked at them, feeling very encouraged. Although his hands looked still the same, Lucien could feel the power in them from his soul, spiritual power and his cognition world.

“Sir, what did you say?” Thompson asked, “Untraceable... Destiny?”

Lucien heard the question. He had no idea what Thompson was saying. What was Untraceable Destiny? What happened during the rite? Did it have anything to do with his Host Star of Destiny?

Lucien had so many questions in his mind.

Thompson felt the horrible power in the magic rite and the words Fernando burst out. As an eighth-circle sorcerer and a member of the Affairs Committee, he had never heard about something like this. What happened to Lucien?

Fernando did not answer his question right away, but gently rubbed

the head of Alferris, who also felt rather confused. Then, he asked Lucien:

“Are you a senior-rank now?”

“Yes, sir... I managed to stop the expansion,” answered Lucien honestly. “Sir, what did you just say? What is this Untraceable Destiny? When I was trying to control the power, I felt something changing in my Host Star of Destiny.”

“You’re such a troublemaker,” said Fernando with a gloomy look. “Couldn’t you just wait for another three or four years to make the advancement? But you just had to do it right now.”

However, after pausing a bit, Fernando continued, “I should not comment too much on those things related to your cognition world since it is your own business. But, if you want to know, I’ll tell you something... The Untraceable Destiny refers to the special group of sorcerers who are free from the constraint of destiny. When they connected to the Host Star of Destiny and got their own reflection, because of some unknown reasons, their reflection collapsed and the host star lost its radiance, and thus the trace can never be observed again. In other words, they are the sorcerers who cannot be prophesied.”

“What?!” Thompson was very surprised, and then he turned to look at Lucien in great shock.

Any sorcerers who studied astrology would hold destiny in awe. It was Thompson’s first time hearing that there was a group of people who were not affected by destiny!

“So what... They still died anyway.” Fernando sneered.

“They died... Sir, who were they?” asked Lucien curiously.

Fernando grinned, “I know five of them. The most famous one should be the archon of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the Sun King, Thanos. The other four sorcerers were also legendary archmages but all of them died.”

“Thanos was an Untraceable? Then how did he become the Sun

King? There is no historical record for this..." Thompson was very surprised. After all, the Sun King was one of the legendary classes of the school of ancient Astrology, and it was said that to become a Sun King, one had to turn his or her Host Star of Destiny into a sun to make further advances. If his Host Star of Destiny had collapsed, how did he make the further progress?

Lucien was just as confused.

Fernando shook his head and smiled, "Only the members of the Highest Council can have the access to the secret record. Well, maybe some really old ancient sorcerers have also heard something about it. Thanos reached the legendary level with an artificial small sun made of a great number of sunstones and the body of an ancient evil creature called Chirchira. At that time, almost every single legendary sorcerer believed that a sorcerer using this kind of method to reach the legendary level would not be able to proceed any further, however, in the end, Thanos became the one standing on the summit."

"So, the Untraceable always create miracles... Are they the sons of Destiny?" As Thompson was saying, he looked at Lucien.

Fernando looked at Thompson seriously and said, "Don't exaggerate... They are only immune to the prophecy magic, nothing else special. As for why all of the Untraceable were legendary archmages... you should think the opposite way. Those ones who did not manage to become a legendary archmage would not be remembered. I believe that there are many Untraceable, even among the many ordinary people."

"This is already very awesome..." Lucien hoped that he was an Untraceable.

"I don't believe in such a thing... the so-called Untraceable," Fernando sneered. "To be more specific, their destiny just cannot be observed. They are still under the control of destiny. With the development of the more advanced methods in the school of Astrology put forward by arcana, we will be able to see the invisible traces!"

Fernando was rather confident, and his tone was rather firm. As a grand arcanist who had experienced the rapid development of arcana, Fernando was always confident.

“So... Is Lucien an Untraceable?” Thompson could not help asking. Alferris was also very curious.

Fernando took a glance at Lucien and shook his head. He sounded a bit confused, “I thought he was, and I was wondering why did his talent only show up after reaching the senior-rank, but now I think that he is not an Untraceable, as his Host Star of Destiny can still be observed.” Fernando turned to Lucien and asked, “What happened in your cognition world?”

“I was trying my best to control the star to stop the expansion, but it did not work well. When I reached my limit, somehow the Host Star of Destiny split into half. One half suddenly collapsed after the sudden expansion and formed a swirl that seemingly could devour everything. The other half stopped the burning of the Host Star of Destiny, and thus I seized the chance.”

Lucien did not tell Fernando the entire truth. He did not explain the reason why the Host Star of Destiny was split in two, as no one could explain why the Untraceable existed.

Fernando folded his arms, “Why did the star split? How is your cognition world formed? If you don’t want to say, you don’t have to.”

“There is nothing I cannot say.” Lucien grinned. He described his cognition world but hid the parts about the constitution of fire, wind, and water and the ice and snow world, as Fernando, Thompson, and Alferris all knew that it was Lucien who put forward the assumption that the form of energy was discontinuous, and they also knew that Lucien regarded electron as part of the inner structure of an atom. What Lucien could not let Fernando know was the fact that his belief in the discontinuity of the form of energy had led to the substantialization of his cognition world.

Fernando guessed that part of Lucien’s cognition world had ice and snow, but he did not say it directly. Fernando looked a bit confused,

“I don’t see the connection... Where were you born?”

One’s date of birth and some other factors could intervene in the choice of the Host Star of Destiny.

Instantly, Lucien was inspired. He wondered if the split of the star had anything to do with his reincarnation.

Lucien answered Fernando’s question, and Fernando did not doubt his words. Fernando took out a crystal ball to see if astrology still worked for Lucien.

Lucien was also very curious. He wished that his teacher could help him with figure out what the division of his Host Star of Destiny meant.

There were stars following the traces in the crystal balls.

Lucien could feel nothing different facing the fortunetelling power of a grand arcanist, which meant that he could not get prepared if a grand arcanist was trying to pry into his destiny. Behind his Host Star of Destiny, the black swirl was still sucking in the light.

Fernando looked more serious. He kept working on it and finally stopped after a few minutes.

“What is it, sir?” asked Lucien eagerly.

Fernando gently stroke the crystal ball and said in low voice, “I am this close to you. The astrology should be able to locate you perfectly and give me more information about you. However... the crystal ball told me that you are two meters away from me on the left.”

Lucien checked where he was standing: He was indeed standing in front of Fernando on his left, but was only about a meter away!

“So... All the prophecies about me are going to stray away from the correct track. The deviation degree depends on the difference between my level and the prophet’s level, but the deviation will always exist!”

Fernando nodded seriously, “Maybe we should call you... Secretive Destiny.”

Chapter 375: The Medal

"Secretive Destiny?" Lucien repeated the title in a low voice and found himself quite happy with it. After all, a slight deviation in a prophecy could easily lead to a great difference.

Lucien did not know who was qualified to become a Secretive. Did he become one because of his knowledge in black holes, or his reincarnation?

Lucien knew that right now he was not able to find the answer. However, what he did know was that if he could apply the knowledge about black holes to the related astrology prophecies, very likely he would be able to observe part of the destiny trace of the Secretives! And, if the theory of gravitational lens was applied, the deviation in the prophecies about him could be more or less fixed.

The related knowledge all came from general relativity, and the corresponding books, in Lucien's spirit library, were still sealed. Lucien had no idea how long it would take him to figure these things out on his own without the assistance of the books.

Fernando took a glance at Lucien and said, "Although as a senior-rank you're much safer now, you still have to be careful all the time. You hear me?"

"Yes, sir. I will." Lucien smiled and nodded. He could feel Fernando's care in his stern tone.

Fernando twitched the corner of his lips and then took out a badge, "This is yours."

"This is... Ice & Snow Medal?" Lucien was very surprised seeing this very beautiful badge.

The hexagram-shaped medal was made of silver-white metal, inlaid with many ice crystals. It just looked like a bigger crystal snowflake. Between the gaps of the hollowed-out snowflake medal, there was a small word Helium written with even finer ice crystals,

and beside it, there was a number: 1.

Alferris was drooling at the mouth. Its brain was unable to think clearly for a moment.

Fernando cast a look at Thompson to ask him to temporarily leave the room. After Thompson left and closed the door, Fernando explained briefly, "Following your paper, Hellen increased the pressure and managed to turn liquid helium into solid, and thus, for the first time, we have reached the range one degree Celsius above the absolute zero, which is a great progress in the magic of ice and snow. There is no doubt that you can win the medal."

"But... but sir, I thought the paper was sealed for now." Lucien was confused.

Fernando scolded, "Stupid. You are leaving Allyn and you have no idea what you are going to face. What is the point of keeping the paper as a secret? Even if the public can get access to the paper right now, how is that going to affect you? You are leaving Allyn very soon, anyway. And in that case, getting a good magic item is way more useful to you than keeping a secret for nothing."

Lucien was a bit embarrassed. He rubbed his hands together. He knew that what Fernando just said was correct.

After that, Fernando softened his tone a bit and said, "Hellen is the only person to whom I gave the paper. She agreed that the paper can for sure win you a medal, and so she made the medal in advance. When you reveal the paper to the public, the awarding ceremony would be given to you later. Now you have won the highest award in three different fields, which is worthy of a record in the history of the Congress. Including you, there are only five sorcerers who have made this achievement. If Moonsong League did not choose to turn a blind eye to the discovery of the electron, you'd be the only one who was qualified for the highest award in the four different fields before reaching senior-rank... Of course, nevertheless, you are not even close to me."

It was Fernando's habit to be cheap with giving his students good comments.

"So, how many awards did you win before reaching senior-rank, sir?" asked Lucien curiously. Lucien was touched by the fact that Fernando took the initiative and talked to Hellen Paris to get him one more magic item.

"Not a single one!" Fernando's eyes rounded. "Before I reached the legendary level, there was no such award at all, or at least I would be able to win four of them! But the Congress has compensated me with Holm Crown prize, Ice & Snow Medal, Silver Moon Medal, Arcana Scepter, and Sorcerer Laurel. As for the number, I rank the first place among all the grand arcanists and legendary archmages. You want to beat me? You have to win all of them."

Fernando was very proud of himself as he was good at the many different fields. Even when it came to the field of Illusion, Fernando's power was only a bit inferior to that of the legendary-level masters in Illusion such as Nightmare King and the Eye of Curse.

Before Lucien could respond, Fernando threw the medal at him, "I don't want to spoil my students with giving them a lot of powerful magic items when they are out of Allyn on their adventure, as it is not going to help them with their mastery and use of magic. However, you deserve the medal. Take it. It took Hellen nine days to produce the medal and it is way more powerful than what a young guy like Morris can make, so I did not bother talking to Morris about your fourth Holm Crown ring. Also, because Hathaway and Davy are out of Allyn right now, the application will not be approved."

Lucien swiftly caught the medal in the air.

Fernando turned around and shook his head, "Stay here for a few more days until you have mastered Advanced Fly spell."

Advanced Fly and Fly shared the same basic structure. Therefore, the analysis was not going to be too difficult.

After watching Fernando leave, Lucien infused his spiritual power into the Ice & Snow Medal and he instantly felt the harsh strike of coldness, which was so powerful that could hurt one's soul!

Shivering, Lucien carefully left his spiritual imprint in the medal to become its owner. The coldness, instead of freezing Lucien's consciousness, started to bring him the great feeling of refreshment.

"Ice & Snow Medal, Helium, a level seven perfect-rank magic item. Coldness alerts and sobers people. It can prevent people from being deceived by their desire. When wearing the honored medal, the wearer's resistance to illusionary spells and spells that work on the wearer's soul will be improved to that of a seventh-circle Ice & Snow Witch.

"As honor is the halo above the head, Ice and Snow Realm represents the halo of power. When activated, the wearer will bring a world of ice and snow with a radius of five hundred meters. For any creatures of middle-rank and under, if not immune to coldness, they will be frozen to death immediately; any creatures of senior-rank will be severely hurt by the ice and snow, and their movement will be slowed down to a great extent; any creature above senior rank, without the protection of the corresponding spells or blood power, will be hurt as every second proceeds, and their movement will be slowed down to a small extent – the slow-down effect will accumulate as time goes on.

"Ice and Snow Realm, also called Ice Halo, a seventh-circle spell, can last three minutes when the full range is activated; When casting in a smaller range, it can last up to fifteen minutes. The wearer can use it three times a day.

"The unearthly coldness from the Hell of Silence can freeze one's soul, and so can the seventh-circle spell, Silence Coffin, which derives from the coldness. The freezing ray that is able to damage one's soul can be cast by the wearer three times a day. But remember, since the temperature of the ray is not extremely low, the damage it can do to one's body is limited, and when a radiant knight is prepared, the ray will not be able to penetrate the radiant knight's body and freeze his or her soul. At the same time, due to its special properties, the effect of most defensive spells will be ignored.

"To approach the absolute zero is the lifetime pursuit for every sorcerer who specializes in Ice and Snow magic. Although several

legendary spells have already shown us the great power when the temperature approaches the absolute zero, we are not able to figure out the theories behind them, and this is preventing us from moving forward.

"Many thanks to Mr. Lucien Evans for his discovery of Helium and the new Ice and Snow magic that he invented. We are now able to reach the range where we are only one degree Celsius from the absolute zero, which is a great breakthrough in Ice and Snow magic. Mr. Lucien Evans has brought us into a new era in the history of Ice and Snow magic!

"Year 819, Month of Gold, to acknowledge Mr. Lucien Evans' great contribution to the school of Thermodynamics in the field of Ice and Snow magic.

"The greatest dream among all the ice and snow mages--the absolute zero.

"From Hellen Paris."

"It is much better than the Holm Crown ring..." Lucien swallowed hard out of great excitement. Although the medal only had one enchanted magic effect, the enchanted seventh-circle was already alluring enough.

Without any doubt, the value of the medal was above the ring's, not to mention the Immortal Throne magic robe. Only the Sun's Corona that Lucien was wearing, whose the third layer of the seal was going to be released, could match the value of the medal.

At this time, Lucien heard the swallowing again. At first, Lucien thought that it was from himself, but when he turned around, he saw Alferris' big eyes staring at him, twinkling.

"Alferris, you know what you need to do now," Lucien grinned.

Alferris, carrying Lucien's magic robe and the many magic items, instantly took a few steps back from Lucien and shook its head in grief. After a great inner struggle, Alferris finally gave them back to Lucien.

When Lucien was wearing the magic items, a good idea suddenly stroke him. Lucien turned around with a big smile and asked, "Would you like to have a ring, Alferris?"

As he was saying, Lucien took out a ring, the Ice Revenger.

"Yes, yes!" Alferris nodded hard. Although it knew that the ring was not very valuable, the beautiful shape and the shining precious stone was still very tempting.

Lucien felt that he was lying to a little kid, grinning like a wolf grandmother, "Give me two tubes of your blood. And I will give the ring to you."

Alferris was good at casting illusion spells. So if Lucien could have its blood as casting reagent, the effect was going to be great.

"Blood?" Alferris was a bit surprised and it looked around and then said, "My blood is expensive!"

"Alright, then," Lucien was about to put back the ring.

"Wait, wait, deal!" Aferris hurriedly stopped Lucien before he made any further movement. It quickly took out two magic tubes and drew its blood into them. Losing this small amount of blood would not affect a dragon at all.

...

In the early morning after a week, Lucien had mastered Advanced Fly.

After checking carefully, Lucien cast Disguise on himself and left for the magic train station.

In the air of Allyn, Angwoods was watching Lucien's every single movement with a creepy smile. As a senior-rank specter, it could see through most of the disguises, and also invisibility.

As the creature summoned by Felipe, from the materials Felipe got for the rite for Lucien, Angwoods knew that Lucien was rushing into becoming a senior-rank. Angwoods had expected that Lucien was

going to leave Allyn. So when Felipe completely devoted himself to his experiment, Angwoods would come here to watch Lucien.

However, afraid of being detected by Sun's Corona, Angwoods could only follow Lucien a long distance away from him.

Lucien spent half a day on the magic steam train and arrived at the big city in the south of the Kingdom of Holm. Then, he flew to the remote mountains and found a hidden cave in there. Lucien entered the cave.

Landing outside of the cave, Angwoods was a bit hesitant. If it was going to follow Lucien in the cave, very likely he was going to lose the target, as it could not approach Lucien.

Angwoods thought for a moment and decided to follow Lucien into the cave. It would stay out of the detection range of Sun's Corona and use prophecy magic to locate him.

Chapter 376: The Resen

Chapter 376: The Resent

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The cave was dark and small, just like the common caves. There were piles of faeces of wild animals in the corners. When Lucien entered the deeper part of the cave following a narrow path, there were more and more forks in the road as if he was facing a spider web.

Taking the crystal ball out of the magic pouch, Lucien gently stroked its surface and, with the information provided by Rhine, he cast a simple prophecy spell to figure out which path to choose.

Following the fork path downwards, Lucien made his way a few dozen meters and saw a new fork. He recognized the pile of oddly-shaped, dark coal ash as Rhine described.

The pale coal ash looked like the palm of a person's hand, like a road sign.

Lucien had to visit the Dark Mountain Range, the polluted area in the Boundless Ocean, the desert in the south part of the Gusta Empire, and the capital city of Holy Heilz Empire named Antiffler. These places extended from the south to north, west to east, covering the entire continent. Although Lucien had mastered Advanced Fly, it was still very difficult for him to visit all the places with great caution. Therefore, Rhine offered Lucien a dimension under the control of the vampires to help him jump through the space and save a lot of time.

Although most common sorcerers would imagine that the formation of the other dimensions and the main material world was just like the many small bubbles attaching to a big bubble, the reality was totally different. The form of the existence of space had exceeded their imagination and what they knew from their experience. Their existence could only be proved by the formulas.

The dimensions were connected to the main material world by many space joints. Although these dimensions were way smaller than the main world, despite the different coordinate that two dimensions had, say, one in the Dark Mountain Range and one in Allyn, the distance between the two dimensions was probably way shorter. Therefore, using the Dimension Gates on the space joints was a great way to travel far.

However, an unknown dimension could be very dangerous, like a maze. Due to the barrier between the different planes, one would not be able to connect to the main world when in another dimension. Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, when she once explored a dimension called Elks Maze, it took her ten years wandering in this dimension trying to find the exit. In the end, she had to use her own connection as a legendary archmage to her demiplane and forced her way by using Space Drifting to come back, which took her another five years.

Therefore, Lucien was very cautious and careful when it came to the existence of the World of Souls. It was like a chaotic reflection of the main world without any space joints. However, it was, at the same time, connected to the many space cracks and gaps like a spider web.

Lucien held the World of Souls in awe because of its dark features. Knowing that those very powerful archmages, such as Maskelyne, had been trapped in there, and that there were many souls, zombies, and specters wandering around, he was worried that one day the World of Soul might destroy the main material world.

This was why Lucien decided to help Rhine. It was partly because he once promised Rhine, but more because he believed that the task was still achievable to him. If it turned out that he was still incapable of finishing all the work, Lucien would go back without hesitation and take the risk to report it to the Highest Council.

When seeing the first inconspicuous road sign, Lucien followed the path downward faster and faster. He did not need the help of prophecy anymore.

However, Lucien did not put back the crystal ball but let it float in

the air in front of him. He gently stroked the crystal ball five times.

The crystal ball became brighter and brighter, and more and more crystal clear. Suddenly, it went dim and a weird “thing” was spat out.

The thing was only of the size of a thumb. It was all black, with deep creases.

Lucien pointed at the thing with his finger and it rose in the air. The thing opened a crack in the middle, that quickly grew bigger, and then a pupil was revealed.

It was an eye!

The creepy eye became vague and then divided into nine equal-sized eyes. After becoming invisible, the nine eyes spread out toward the different directions.

The crystal ball became clear again. The scene in the ball was divided into nine parts, provided by the nine eyes.

This was the fifth-circle astrology spell, Spy Eye.

Meanwhile, Lucien also cast a fourth-circle astrology spell, Detect Danger, on himself, which could remind him of any possible dangers and spies in the range of fifty meters.

Looking at the crystal ball while being very careful with the surroundings, Lucien moved further toward the underground. According to what Rhine told him, there could be some monsters and creatures hiding in this ancient dwarf relic close to the space joint, such as the Underground Hunters, the specter of the dwarves, the distorted Hive Mother and the many evil creatures she produced. Although they would not be a big threat to Lucien, he still wanted to be very careful.

...

The many forks dizzied Angwoods. In this dark, moist, and suffocating cave, it had lost all trace of Lucien, including his smell.

After all, on erasing his trace, Lucien was well taught by Natasha, a radiant knight.

Angwoods remained rather calm and the two spots of red flame on its rotten face flickered. He cast the spell silently. It started to use prophecy to locate Lucien.

Although there were many forks, Angwoods was sure that the distance between them was no more than one kilometer, and therefore it was very confident that the prophecy spell would work very well.

Angwoods did get the astrology coordinate of Lucien, (159,260), and he knew that Lucien was only four hundred meters away from him. With the information, Angwoods carefully picked the forks in the road. As soon as it met a dead end, Angwoods went directly through the wall.

There was no such a standard in using astrology coordinate, and there was a prominent difference between how the senior-rank specters and the Congress of Magic used the coordinates. For the specters, their magic power came from their inherent talent, and they automatically gained new spells when they reached a higher rank.

After going through the walls more than ten times, Angwoods could feel that Lucien was already very close. Angwoods reminded itself that it could not step in the range within thirty meters of Lucien, or it would be detected by Lucien's divine item. Once Angwoods figured out Lucien's destination, it would be waiting there and launching an ambush at him.

...

With the assistance of the nine eyes, Lucien was very prepared when the degenerate creatures jumped out. Using the simplest and the fastest-cast spell, Magic Missile, he killed them easily one by one.

Some of the degenerate creatures were of the size of a human being, and some looked like dwarves. All of them had crooked horns and

the sticky liquid on them had solidified into their black armor. The white bones in their right hand were revealed. Some of them were holding heavy axes and some long swords, and in their left hand, a black shield was carried.

They rushed to Lucien in groups, and their roaring sounded very evil, making Lucien feel a bit dizzy.

After killing four of them, Lucien took a glance at the disgusting liquid produced from their body. Because his magic pouch was already rather full, Lucien decided to give up collecting it.

As he was walking, he suddenly felt the burning from the amulet, Sun's Corona. Three layers of its seal had been revealed, and thus it was more sensitive now!

Lucien knew that the powerful specter was only about less than twenty-five meters from him, and he could feel that it was still following him. He wondered if Rhine's plan had been found out by someone else.

Rubbing the ring, Lucien was prepared.

...

Angwoods could feel that now it was only sixty meters away from Lucien, and it became more and more alert. Because of the many powerful magic items Lucien had, if Lucien was prepared, Angwoods would definitely be in trouble.

Hiding into the Wold of Souls and going through another gray stone wall, Angwoods popped out of the wall on another fork in the road. However, when it was about to relocate Lucien again, Angwoods was shocked to find that Lucien was standing in the corner, smiling at it. The sorcerer shot a dim ray shot directly at Angwoods, as if he was expecting this for a long time.

"It's impossible! How come I'm this close to him?!" Angwoods thought to itself in great shock.

Before it could take any action, the anti-magic ray directly hit it. All the magic effects on Angwoods had disappeared!

Lucien was also a bit confused when seeing the ray just hit the specter so easily. What was it doing there? The situation was a bit embarrassing. Lucien did all he could to get prepared for the ambush, but this senior-rank specter behaved in the way like it was just passing by.

However, soon Lucien noticed the familiar white patterns and the creepy black robe. He saw them before on the senior-rank specter when he was in the World of Souls. After the ray hit the specter, Lucien immediately cast Dimensional Cage. The spell was specifically used for binding specters.

Hit by the anti-magic ray, Angwoods temporarily lost the ability to go back and forth between the World of Souls and the main material world, as well as the ability to cast spells.

Angwoods, as a specter, was not able to fight hand-to-hand like a Death Knight. Right now, Angwoods rushed toward the stone wall to win a few seconds for itself.

It only needed a few seconds to recover!

However, as soon as Angwoods touched the stone wall, it failed to go through the wall as it expected but immediately bounced back.

Although Angwoods just hesitated for a few seconds, he had lost its precious chance.

At this time, the air surrounding Lucien started to become solemn and sacred, and a halo spread out.

The sixth-level divine spell, Exorcist Halo!

Dimensional Cage was just a third-circle magic, so Lucien did not have to spend much time on buffering.

When covered by the halo, like the melting snow under the sunlight, the entity of Angwoods started to thaw. Its bitter scream lingered in the narrow cave everywhere. Without any defense spells, Angwoods could not protect itself at all.

Angwoods did not understand why it never even had a chance to

use its power, and why the prophecy magic showed such a terrible difference to the actual situation.

Before Angwoods was annihilated, an invisible pair of shackles trapped it and dragged it to Lucien.

The spell was from the Immortal Throne robe, Soul Cage!

Lucien definitely would not let the chance slip out of his hand. He was going to get what he wanted to know out of the specter. He started to read the specter's most important memory.

Lucien first felt the bitterness, then anger, and confusion.

Chapter 377: The Lost Civilization

The cave was very dark. The only dim light Lucien could see was from the noctilucous moss. However, with his Moonlight blood power, which the Church called Blessing, Lucien could see very well in the darkness.

In Lucien's dark pupil, there was the vague figure of Angwoods, flickering and shivering like a candle which had come to its end. Finally, it went out.

"The Lord... shall be back?" Lucien repeated in low voice. This was what he found in Angwoods's deepest memory except for its boundless anger and hatred.

When Lucien found this piece of information in Angwoods's memory, he could feel Angwoods's great respect and excitement.

Lucien wondered if something horrible was really going on in the World of Souls, if the real immortal would wake up and come back.

Of course, the Lord that Angwoods referred to was by no means the God of Truth followed by the Church. Zie should be the God believed in by the senior-rank specters in the World of Souls. However, Lucien had no idea whether this was a true god or just some kind of abstract representative, or if it was like the ancestor of the vampires—Alterna.

Lucien's power at reading one's memory was nowhere close to that of Thanatos, and therefore, this ambiguous piece of information was all that he could get. The only thing that he got to know from it was that he had to take some immediate actions, or something very horrible would definitely happen to the main world.

Meanwhile, because of the information that Lucien got from Angwoods, he was more reassured with Rhine's words. Yet, Lucien was not going to force himself to complete all the tasks to save the world. After all, he was just a senior-rank mage, and this was something that should at least require the power of a group of legendaries. When it was necessary, Lucien definitely would report

this to the Highest Council.

Lucien also got to know that it was Felipe who summoned this senior-rank specter, and right now Felipe had not noticed the existence of the World of Souls and where the summoned specters came from. In Angwoods's deepest memory, there was its contempt for Felipe's arrogance and its wish that another senior-rank named Adol would end up being tortured and killed by a legendary archmage.

According to the general information he got, Lucien guessed that the Hand of Paleness was indeed aware of the existence of the World of Souls, but they chose to keep the information to themselves in order to explore it on their own, however, it was used by the senior-rank archmages only.

A bright cluster of flame grew out of Lucien's palm and completely burnt out the remains of Angwoods. Then, very carefully, Lucien erased all the traces of fighting in this cave, in case some other senior-rank specters would discover what happened there.

Finishing the work, with the assistance of Spy Eye, Lucien proceeded further toward the underground.

In the darkness sprinkled with the dim light spots, Lucien walked in this underground maze for more than ten minutes. Gradually, Lucien felt that the air had become a bit warmer, and then he heard the sound of a river flowing.

Lucien knew that he was already very close to the underground ancient city of the dwarves. He became even more cautious.

Turning around a corner very carefully, what Lucien saw surprised him.

What was in front of him was a huge passage, seven or eight meters high, and twenty or thirty meters wide, and the ground and the walls on either side were built by large gray stone blocks, with black pillars in the middle, supporting the ceiling. From the pillars, the passage was divided into three paths. At a glance, the great sense of grandeur seized Lucien's mind. As the underground passage

was already this magnificent, he wondered what would the dwarves' city look like?

According to the historical records, the dwarves of ancient times did not have magic, nor great blood powers!

The noctilucous patches of mosses growing wantonly on both sides of the walls cast a dim light on the passage. Under the dim light, everything looked very blurry and dream-like. In this kind of environment where silence and gloom resided, Lucien felt that, at any moment, a corpse would crawl out, or maybe a ghost would float out.

After checking around using the eyes, Lucien stepped on the passage. Although he tried to be very gentle, his footsteps still echoed and lingered in the empty space while he was walking on the stone passage.

Lucien activated his blood power and accelerated his movement speed. Now his footsteps could not be heard, and Lucien was moving very fast but, at the same time, he made sure that he was still in the detection range of the nine eyes.

Both sides of the passage were lined with a pair of black metal tracks, which appeared to be the track for some special vehicles to transport goods. Lucien sped along them, and soon he saw the exit of the passage.

Lucien slowed down his pace, and from the pictures sent back by the eyes, he could see that in front of him lay a vast, abandoned architectural complex.

The cave was naturally divided into more than a dozen blocks by the rock walls and pillars supporting the roof. The half-collapsed tall stone houses, overgrown with weeds, looked down on streets that had not been occupied for thousands of years.

What made Lucien a bit nervous was that the stone houses were joined by a series of metal pipes, which protruded from any parts of the houses and then connected to the huge metal pipes at the top of the cave. Growing into the cave roof, no one knew where they were

going.

Walking through the cold dreadful streets, Lucien could see at times the familiar metal parts such as bearings, springs, pistons, and gears on the ground, as if he had returned to earth and entered a factory.

The corner of his eye saw something glittering in the grass. Lucien bent forward and picked it up. It was a huge steam rifle as thick as a bazooka. The gears were all rusty and corroded, but Lucien could still tell their sophistication. Also, the steam rifle was attached to a high-pressure steam backpack made of steel, with half the size of a human one.

Gently stroking the rusty rifle, Lucien released a sigh, since it represented the loss of an ancient civilization.

Before the development of human beings, the dwarves who were good at all kinds of crafts, had invented many steam engines and built a splendid Steam Civilization.

Although the dwarves were rather short, the huge airships which could cover the sky, the steamboat which could voyage in the Storm Strait and Boundless Ocean, the cannons that could hold several people inside, the powerful steam rifles, and the steel factories and engineering works that released black smoke day and night were just gigantic as if they were designed for dragons.

Dwarves did not have much theoretical guidance. Relying on their talent and experience, they magically developed the steam, and summarized the mechanical design knowledge in many fields. Even the legendary alchemist, Klaus, had to learn from the dwarves to improve the steam train based on the airships. Klaus' inventions were more like the improvements based on the original creations of the dwarves, but he managed to use magic or divine power to fuel the vehicles and lower the cost by shrinking their size.

Unfortunately, that civilization had been lost. Lucien got to know about it from the senior-rank Arcana and Magic Library. Even a profound sorcerer like Lazar who grew up in the Congress would have no idea that it was the dwarves who first invented the steam train and used them to transport goods. For him, Klaus was the one

who invented the magic steam train.

In the later stage of the dwarves' Steam Civilization, the pace they had when making that progress started to slow down. The periodic invasion of the dark creatures from the Dark Mountain Range made the dwarves pay hard. The power of the horrible senior-rank creatures was completely out of the dwarves' expectation, and the steam rifles and cannons failed to work when facing the evil creatures. Within short twenty years, the splendid civilization had retreated to the underground.

However, down there under the ground, Steam Civilization had no space to grow. The civilization finally died out under the attack of many evil creatures and hunters after witnessing the development of the Dragon era, the Nature Elf era, the heyday of Werewolves. At that time, the ancient magic empire first started to gain its power. Only the small proportion of dwarves who chose to stay on the ground, in the end, managed to gain the blood power and spiritual power because of the experiments conducted by the crazy sorcerers. Slowly, those dwarves living on the ground built up their own countries again.

Although today's dwarves were still good at the alchemy techniques, their civilization was a different one now.

Without the power to safeguard a civilization, one could only see the civilization dying out as time went on. Those ones who were remembered were the profound sorcerers, long-living vampires, and dragons. The rest would eventually be forgotten.

Lucien had some mixed feelings in his mind. He wondered how many splendid civilizations and great figures had been forgotten by history.

He put down the huge steam rifle and moved on. From time to time, he would bent down to pick up some other random stuff, including a silver coin forged with the pattern of a strange hammer and a set of gear, books such as Elementary Mechanical Forging, Steam Rifle Producing, the Illustration of the Steam Engines, the Illustration of Airboats and so on, and the many mechanical articles of various unique styles.

Fortunately, the dwarf language was relatively well preserved and was not very different from the language that the dwarves were using today. Lucien leafed through a few books and copied them in his spirit library.

After a few more minutes of walking in the lost civilization, Lucien saw a huge metal golem half lying on the ground and half leaning against a tall factory building. He stopped to take a closer look at its exposed interior mechanical structure.

Golems—the last piece of straw that the dwarves could grip to safeguard the falling civilization.

The dwarves tried to beat the horrible magical creatures by using this powerful weapon, but the golems that moved very slow failed to fulfill what they hoped. However, it had inspired the sorcerers later and thus they managed to invent the more powerful golems.

Suddenly, a sharp voice was delivered into Lucien's soul. One part of the crystal ball in his palm suddenly dimmed.

A magic eye was gone!

There came the sound of mournful cries, followed by the sound of busy footsteps that really got on Lucien's nerves.

Lucien looked up and saw in the distance large pale tentacles popping out of a factory building, and then a huge and disgusting monster got out.

The monster had the upper body of a plump old woman, fat and ugly, and its small eyes were basically just two tiny gaps flickering with fierce and ferocious light. The monster's huge naked breasts were covered with many black and white eyes, and its lower body was like a white octopus which had many tentacles with suckers.

Hive mother!

A hive mother could produce hundreds of thousands of evil creatures. Without enough food, the evil creatures would eat each other or try to get to the surface.

Following the hive mother, the many evil creatures came to Lucien like the waves of a tide coming from all directions. The number of them was hard to calculate, and among them were even many shooters and warlocks.

Lucien raised his right hand and stroked the badge on his chest. Suddenly, a halo of glittering light spread outwards and quickly covered the range of about five hundred meters.

A powerful storm started to blow, and the many degenerate evil creatures were instantly frozen into pieces and blown away by the strong wind.

As soon as the stone arrows came within the range, they directly fell to the ground since they were frozen with a thick layer ice. The same thing happened to the missiles, spider webs, and magic rays.

Lucien moved forward very quickly, and the halo moved following him. The tall buildings were frozen with the ice and frost. None of the evil creatures could stop him.

The hive mother noticed what was going on. Reaching out its tentacles, it started to climb and jump. The many black and white eyes shot out acid, spider webs, and toxic gas.

However, once they came in the halo of ice and snow, the liquid and gas were frozen solid and then broken into piles of powder.

A few seconds later, Lucien caught up with the hive mother and trapped it in the halo. The movement of the hive mother started to slow down, as its tentacles were frozen solid and thus became very heavy.

At the same time, under the power of the storm, the hive mother's body started to crack because of the extremely low temperature. As soon as the black fluid came out, it was turned into black ice.

Bang! Thirty seconds later, the hive mother died from cracking into pieces.

By the time Lucien stopped running and the halo disappeared, the entire dwarf city was covered with ice and frost. Some were black

and some white. The city became empty and silent again.

The magic spell definitely worked very well, but it was also very likely to hurt Lucien's own teammates.

...

After more than ten minutes, Lucien finally found a space joint in the underground city. It was a distorted space gap, surrounded by the dwarves' altars, which were designed in a rather simple way.

It seemed that, at the final stage of the Steam Civilization, the dwarves also started to learn from the magic creatures, but obviously, it did not work very well. As a profound arcanist, Lucien was deeply touched by seeing how the great civilization finally fell.

Lucien took a glance at the poor magic altar, took out the materials and started to worry about his own safety. He wondered if he would get lost when entering another dimension using an altar like that.

After all, close to the space joints under the control of the Congress of Magic, the Congress had set up many space gates using the ninth-circle magic, Gate.

After carefully checking the space gap out and making sure that the gap was relatively stable, Lucien took out the materials and rearranged the space joint teleportation circle. He was glad that the poor quality of the teleportation circle was within his expectation.

It took Lucien three days to reset the teleportation circle. He stood up and did some exercise to warm up and then cast many layers of defense spells on himself. He had no idea what was there on the other end. After all, the last time Rhine used this space joint was several hundred years ago.

Then, Lucien stepped into the dimension which the vampires took away from the dwarves, Night Highland!

Chapter 378: The Night Highland

A grim and dark-looking castle stood by the lake covered with black duckweed. Its pinnacles on the top resembled the javelins in the style of the ancient magic empire.

Harold Hammer, carrying a heavy bag of ore on his back, was walking slowly toward the castle's warehouse. As an underage dwarf, he was not as strong as the muscular fully-grown dwarves who could easily wield a huge heavy hammer like a toy. The bag of ore was really heavy for him.

However, Harold had no complaints about hard labor since at least he could still survive. Those strong dwarves were selected out to become the food of the vampire masters.

This castle belonged to the Great Kindred Count whose name was Vlad Cecil. The surrounding more than a hundred dwarf villages were under his control. The vampires chose "the pure blood and flesh" from among them for food, and drove the rest of the dwarves as their slaves to do the hard labor in the mines and castle. Day and night, the slave dwarves had to mine the special metal called needham gold from the plateau as well as caramo iron and mythrill for the vampire master.

It seemed that the dwarves' destiny was doomed as soon as they were born. They either ended up as food for the vampires or died early from the intense laboring. The only sweet moment was when they found their beloved partner and had their offspring.

Though Harold had never left this village under the control of the castle, he heard that the dwarves living in the north were also suffering just like them. All the dwarves on the highland were in great pain, living like domestic animals.

Harold looked up at the night sky and the bright constellations over the highland. He was at a loss and depressed, wondering if his life was just going to be like this without any hope and if the past glory of dwarves could never come back again.

A sharp pain came from Harold's face as the thick whip left a deep and bloody wound on its left side. The wound stretched across the dwarves' distinctive big nose to the right.

"Move!"

There came the evil voice, and the shadow of the whip was in front of Harold.

Yes, some dwarves still had a third choice. They could choose to turn their backs on their ancestors and act like a well-trained dog to the vampires to become their blood servants, who were responsible for torturing their own brothers and sisters.

The elegant, privileged vampire counts would not watch the miners working in the dirty mines themselves, and thus they needed some servants. Every embrace would cost them the original blood power and the weaker vampires would be drained off if giving embrace for too many times. Therefore, even the powerful vampires were not willing to have many children.

That was why the number of vampires was never big. Most of their servants were just the blood servants whose blood was drained up by the vampires but did not die. They were simply puppets of the vampires.

The servants were as strong as knights, but their power could not be further improved any more. Their life-span was only of one-tenth of their master's lifetime, and they could never, and would never launch a rebellion.

Harold glanced at the dwarf dressing in fine clothes and holding the whip, and then he looked down and responded in low voice, "Yes, Butler Wells."

Countless dwarves died because of this abominable traitor. Although Wells was only a supervisor, he preferred to be called a butler. When the real vampire butler, Galata, showed up, Wells would kneel on the ground to kiss Galata's shoe.

The red-haired Wells had removed all of his beard because his

master, Vlad, hated it very much, and thus his bumpy skin was revealed. Seeing Harold's good-looking dark brown beard, Wells was quite pissed. Lifting his right hand, he whipped Harold again.

"What were you thinking? Dwarves don't need to think! You hear me? You filthy dirty bastard!"

It seemed that Wells had forgotten the fact that he was also a dwarf, instead, he regarded himself as a decent servant for the noble kindred.

"Yes, Butler Wells." Harold gripped the bag loaded with the ores even tighter.

"Get out of my sight. Move!" Wells scolded.

After taking a few steps, Harold heard that Wells's voice had become disgustingly sweet, "Good afternoon, Madam Tess, Sir Galata! This way, please... It's dirty over there. Those filthy dwarves should not be seen..."

Without looking back, Harold could easily imagine Wells' flattering manner, and how well-dressed the tall vampire butler Galata was. Galata always dressed in a fancy black suit decorated with a neat bow tie.

Madam Tess must be the same charming and beautiful. She had the shining blond hair and proportioned figure. Her jade-colored eyes never changed after she was turned into a vampire by the embrace from Count Vlad.

Harold's heart twitched when thinking of Madam Tess. She was the most beautiful female dwarf who was famous in the surrounding many villages, and she was also once the dream girl for Harold. However, she was picked by the count and then became his vampire bride.

The cool wind from the highland reminded Harold what he should do. Harold lowered his head and moved forward slowly bearing the ore bag. He heard the commands from behind.

"Hurry up with the smelting. Be careful. Some dwarves who have

managed to escape have formed a rebellion force."

...

When the evening arrived, Harold finally finished the hard labor and could take a rest. After getting the food—two black bread sticks, Harold was ready to go back to his place in the nearby village.

As he walked, he looked around and suddenly behaved very cautiously. When making sure it was safe, Harold became excited and quickly took a quiet path in the darkness.

After more than ten minutes, Harold had gone through a few thin groves. A common-looking huge stone appeared in front of Harold. Carefully checking around again, Harold cautiously walked to the other side of the huge stone and gently knocked at it.

"Steam above," whispered Harold in very low voice using the dwarf language. Although it sounded like a spell, there was no spiritual power involved.

The huge stone suddenly split like an opening gate. A dwarf popped out. After looking around, he hurriedly said, "Come in, Harold."

Harold went into the gap swiftly. After the dwarf locked the stone gate from inside, Harold gave him a breadstick and said, "Uncle Warren, I should go down there now."

"Go, my child. The Elder is waiting for you," said Warren.

Warren took a bit bite at the bread and swallowed it down with water as if he had starved for a long time.

Harold knew that the lack of food was always a big problem for the rebellion force. He chewed the black bread and gulped the water that he carried with him when walking downward. He was deeply impressed by the underground palace built by the dwarf ancestors.

He wondered why their powerful ancestors were defeated by the vampires. Had all the gods decided to abandon them?

The wall paintings along either side of the passage were magnificent: There were airboats in the sky, steamboats in the ocean, powerful cannons aiming at the dragons, and running steam trains on the plain... Although it was not Harold's first time seeing the paintings, he was just as excited as before. He loved listening to the glorious stories told by the Elder, Augustus Heartbroken. When he thought of the honor and glory that once belonged to their ancestor's civilization, Harold's heart was filled with hope.

At the end of the passage, there was a big hall, accompanied by two rows of small rooms on both sides. The roar of steam kept coming out, and a sturdy dwarf was driving the steam hammer to forge weapons.

"Hey, Harold." A dwarf with long white beard nodded slightly. When the dwarf saw what Harold was looking at, he sighed, "Our civilization has been lost. We cannot duplicate the complex steam engines, cannons, and rifles anymore. We can only try our best to make the sharper swords and axes. Although they are enough for killing the blood servants, the swords and axes cannot hurt the vampires."

The way the elder dwarf talked was rather gloomy and dismal.

The several dwarves dressing simply tried to cut in when the elder dwarf was speaking. They were of a higher rank in the rebellion force and did not want this desperation to spread out.

Augustus put on a peaceful smile and said, "Myrna, Aquinas... We have to let them know what we are facing. Yes, there is no hope. But shall we have our knees on the ground for the rest of our life, or shall we fight and bleed to safeguard our ancestors' glory and die like real dwarves... This is our own choice."

"Steam above!" The dwarves in the small rooms burst out the roaring. They were going to die anyway, and they wished to die as a warrior.

Sharing the food, Augustus asked Harold what was going on in the castle. The reason why they decided to hide on Count Vlad's territory was that they heard Count Vlad was injured when he was

on the battlefield and thus he needed to sleep from time to time to heal himself.

"Madam Tess has sent out the blood servants to find you..." said Harold. As a worker, he did not know much. Then Harold looked at Augustus, and his eyes were shining with hope, "Can I know more about the ancient steam civilization?"

The good-looking, young female dwarf whose name was Myrna was also looking forward to the stories. The stories were like the warm sunlight that could give hope to everyone in the rebellion force.

"... We dwarves... once ruled the boundless land. We had magnificent cities at the ports of the boundless ocean and along the Nigreen River... At that time, the erected iron chimneys were like tall forests, and the smoke coming out from them could cover the sky..."

"There were steam trains traveling between the cities. From here to the north, it would only take you a few hours. Every one of the dwarves could get enough food and have access to all kinds of mechanic inventions. We had the steam elevators that could directly lift one to the top floor of the building, and we always had hot water because of the steam boilers..."

"... The brave dwarf warriors were expanding our territory equipped with high-pressure steam bags, mechanic arms, and steam rifles. Our steamboats were sailing in the oceans. Our great cannons made the enemies bend their back..."

Although the dwarves did not even know what sunlight was, they were still listening to the stories with great interest. The stories could show them paradise. They listened to the stories while staring at the frescos. They could see the cities flourishing with the steam civilization.

Harold tightened his fists. He swore in his mind that one day he would rebuild the dwarf cities.

When telling the stories, Augustus' face was written with pride and hope.

"Alright... This is all for today. It's time for us to worship the God of Steam, the master of life and death." Augustus stood up and walked to the center of the hall, where there was a strange-looking altar.

"Does it work?" The young dwarf, Myrna, asked a bit confusedly.

Augustus cast her a stern look and said, "When we found this place, we found the rite left by our ancestors. They were that powerful and smart, and I am sure that they would not waste their time on things that were useless. Maybe our ancestors were abandoned because they were not showing enough respect to the God of Steam. We should be very pious, so we can win the mercy of the God of Steam again."

The dwarves all nodded. In this desperate situation, they were not going to let go of any hope.

Therefore, all the dwarves gathered at the front of the altar. Following the Elder, they started to dance in a strange way.

"The almighty God of Steam! Your devout followers and servants are praying."

Chapter 379: The God of Steam's Arrival

"You rule everything. You decide life and death. You are the god of gods, the king of kings."

The movement of the Elder was quite distorted in a weird way, and he moved around in a quite disorganized manner. However, if one observed carefully, one could tell that Augustus' movement was still following some mysterious patterns.

The rest of the dwarves were having a hard time following his movement, and at the same time, they repeated the Elder's words, "You give us life; you give us food; you give us the courage when facing the difficulties, as well as goodness, integrity, and perseverance."

At the entry of the palace, four transparent figures were staring at the dwarves' praying.

"It looks like the manner from the ancient magic empire..." said the vampire bride, Tess, using the kindred's talent called Short-distance Mind Communication to the butler Galata, Wells, and the maid Edith. Tess was feeling both amused and confused.

They had found the place where the rebellion force hid!

Both Wells and Edith were blood servants, and they grew up on Night Highland. The farthest place Wells and Edith went to was the castle of another vampire count. They had no idea what the ancient magic empire was, and thus when hearing Tess' words, both of them lowered their heads but did not know what to say. Of course, they did not have access to the study in the castle, and Wells did not even know how to read!

"The old dwarf is acting quite differently. His movement is very complex and distorted," responded the vampire butler, Galata, respectfully, "To me, it resembles the ritual dance from the Saint Truth."

"The ritual dance from the Saint Truth came from the simple magic

rites," said Tess in a low voice. "Galata, don't you see that the old dwarf is playing the six different roles? The dance should be carried out by six sorcerers in six different directions, using different movements... But he is now dancing all by himself."

Both Wells and Edith lowered their head even further. They dared not to interrupt the conversation, as they knew that Count Vlad was severely hurt by the divine power of the Saint Truth at the end of a war called the War of Dawn. Count Vlad never completely recovered from it, and thus in the recent several hundred years, the count had been sleeping for most of the time and never left Night Highland again. Therefore, no one was allowed to talk about the Saint Truth except for the noble kindred.

"Madam, you are right," Galata agreed after a closer observation, "but their praying song is for sure not a spell, so the rite won't work. I can't tell what the rite is, though."

"It doesn't matter. It is not going to work anyway. When we catch the filthy dwarves, we will know," Tess sneered. "I hate those pastors and preachers. Because of them, my dear Vlad cannot always be with me!"

"We can never know where the rebellion force is without your sharp perception, madam," flattered Wells. He was worried that Madam Tess' emotion would get out of control.

Tess smiled, "He is different. Laboring in the mine for three years, he is still energetic and his eyes are still filled with hope. That is not right. I did not expect that he was connected to the rebellion force, though."

"As you said, madam," Edith flattered, "dwarves do not deserve having any hopes. They are animals."

Seeing that the rite had almost come to the end, Tess raised her hand and commanded, "Kill them all. Let the bodies dry on the wall."

"Yes, madam," answered Galata, Wells, and Edith together.

Harold knelt on the ground in an extremely respectful manner following the Elder, and they prayed in low voice, "The great master of life and death! You have mercy on us and you have the great power in your hand. We shall make everyone respect your name. May we get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

"May your sacred name, Steam, ascend to the top again!"

Harold added in his mind, "May we rebuild the splendid steam civilization under your blessing!"

Then, he heard a bitter scream!

Harold quickly got up and hurriedly looked at the direction where the scream came from.

Four figures slowly appeared. They were Madam Tess, butler Galata, Wells, and Edith.

Galata's two white fangs pierced through the neck of a dwarf. Wells just cut the throat of another dwarf, and the blood spread everywhere.

A blood servant did not deserve enjoying the blood.

"Why... How did you find this place?" Harold burst out because of the great fear. He could not help trembling.

The beautiful dwarf vampire took out a fine handkerchief made of Black Nightingale from the Kingdom of Holm. She gently wiped the corner of her lips and said, "It was you who led us here."

All of the dwarves looked back at Harold. They were all shocked, and their eyes were filled with bitterness and hatred.

"Harold... why?" Aquinas picked up the heavy ax.

"I trusted you!" Myrna's voice trembled.

"I didn't... I... Elder, I didn't!" Harold hurriedly explained, "Please trust me! I never did this!"

Tess giggled. She signaled to tell Galata not to kill the dwarves right away. She liked watching this.

"I trust you, Harold," said the Elder. "If you did betray us, they would have directly broken in."

Harold almost burst into tears.

Augustus sadly shook his head and then said to the rest of the dwarves aloud, "You want to fight? Or you want to kneel down?!"

"Steam above!" cried out the dwarves holding their weapons.

Tess covered her mouth and said in a disappointed way, "Boring... Galata, do it."

Galata adjusted his bow tie slightly and then bowed, "As your command, madam."

Facing the dwarves holding the axes coming to him, Galata was still very relaxed.

When the ax almost hacked in his back, Galata turned into a streak of shadow like a ghost and then showed up behind the dwarf holding the ax.

Galata's left hand was now a sharp claw. He instantly tore the dwarf's body into half. The dwarf let out a bitter scream but his voice was immediately choked by the gurgling of blood from his cut-open throat.

Then the shadow swiftly went into the crowd of the dwarves. The screams were everywhere.

When the many dwarves finally encircled Galata, countless small bats covered the vampire butler. Then, the vampire showed up on the other side of the hall, following the bats.

The rest of the dwarves were fighting against Wells and Edith. There was no big difference between their power. The heavy axes was a big threat to the two blood servants.

Seeing that there was little hope to beat Galata, Augustus commanded, "Go to the gate! Get out!"

The seven or eight dwarves exchanged a look. They burst out a harsh roar and together charged at the vampire butler. They were going to use their life to win time for the rest of the dwarves.

However, they died one by one. The time they could win for their people was not long.

The rest of the dwarves rushed toward the gate, with tears in their eyes. Wells and Edith lost the gate, and the dwarves almost reached the passage!

"Useless..." said Tess coldly. Two white fangs grew out of her beautiful and delicate lips. She raised her right hand and a cluster of black smoke covered the few leading dwarves.

Ahhhh!

When the black smoke disappeared, the several dwarves fell onto the ground and their blood had been drained up.

The rest of the dwarves were scared. They ran around out of panic but all stayed at least a meter away from Tess.

"Why... Why is she so powerful?" The dwarves in the back, including the Elder, murmured out of shock.

Although the Elder was rather calm, and he knew that the rebellion force could not fight against the senior-rank vampires, he had never expected that the common and middle-rank vampires were also this powerful. They were slaughtering the dwarves like killing domestic animals!

The Elder knelt down facing the altar. He raised his hands and cried, "Why all our efforts... means nothing... We sacrificed, we died... for nothing?!"

Tess took out the fancy handkerchief and wiped her hands, "Why don't you understand? The only reason why you are still alive is that we are too bored. We are just playing a game with you."

"Is that right..." There were tears in the Elder's eyes, and he hit the floor using his head, "So we dwarves died for nothing...?"

Augustus turned around and cried to the altar, "The God of Steam! The Almighty God! The master of life and death! Please... please save us!"

More dwarves were dying behind him.

"Wake up, dwarf. No one is going to help you," Tess teased. "You dwarves have been so innocent for thousands of years."

The Elder did not listen to her. Praying, repeating the name of the God, the Elder hit his head against the stages of the altar. His blood dyed the altar surface red.

"Idiots..." Wells mocked at him.

The rest of the dwarves all knelt down desperately. Was that the end? Just like that? Harold could not bear the great pain.

However, light suddenly burst out from the altar. The entire altar was covered with a pure light!

Ecstasy rose in Harold's mind. He knelt on the ground on all fours, crying.

"The great master of life and death. Have mercy on us; you hold the ultimate power. We shall make everyone respect your name."

The Elder, Myrna, and Aquinas were all shocked. With tears, they prayed facing the altar, "May we get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

"May your sacred name, Steam, ascend to the top again!"

A figure wearing a black suit slowly appeared.

"My Lord, your arrival brings us all the blessings!"

"The master of life and death, your glory can purify everything!"

The Elder, Harold, and the rest of the dwarves were very excited.

Was it the God of Steam?! Did Zie come to save them?

Tess, Galata, and the two blood servants stared at the altar in great shock.

What was going on!?

Chapter 380: The God of Steam

Chapter 380: The God of Steam

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The light became brighter, and the figure also became clearer, but the light rippled in the air and covered the face and the upper body of the figure.

At this time, the figure suddenly disappeared. Only the white pure light still lit up the whole hall.

The Elder, Harold, Aquinas and the rest of the dwarves did not see that since they were still prostrating on the ground, but Tess, Galata, Wells, and Edith saw it.

“Haha, their god has disappeared! Their god has just abandoned them again!” Wells released a long sigh and said with wild joy.

When the altar lit up, Wells freaked out. For a moment, he thought that the dwarf’s god did come to save them. Wells could not read, and because of all the stories he had heard, he believed in the existence of God. Although he was a blood servant of his noble kindred master, facing the unimaginable power of God, as a traitor, Wells’ heart was still filled with fear.

Edith laughed very hard, “See... haha, your god is not going to bless you anymore. The kindred is the chosen one!”

When the altar lit up, Edith was just as nervous.

The dwarves hurriedly looked up and saw the empty altar.

“Did the God of Steam abandon us?”

“What did we do...?”

Desperation spread out among the dwarves who were still alive. For a moment, they thought they were saved.

“Senior-rank Invisibility! He is a sorcerer!” The profound butler suddenly realized what was going on, “That is a teleportation circle! A space joint!”

“Galata, kill him! I am going to inform the count!” Tess got nervous, and the black bat wings stretched out behind her. She hurriedly turned around and left the underground hall immediately.

The space joint was like the gate for a castle. Therefore, controlling as many space joints as possible was very important to safeguard one’s territory. Usually, a space joint would change hands many times between the different powers.

Both Tess and Galata knew how important it was to control the space joint!

At the same time, since they did not know how powerful the sorcerer was, Tess had decided to go back to seek the help of the count. Galata should be able to win some time for them.

Although Vlad had been tortured by the divine power for a long time, as a senior-rank vampire, he was the most powerful kindred in the area.

Usually, the power of a vampire was directly linked to his or her title. A baron vampire’s power was about the level of a level one knight or a dark mage; a viscount vampire had the power of a middle-rank mage; a vampire count or marquis was as powerful as a senior-rank mage; a duke’s power could be compared to that of an archmage or a gold knight; a vampire prince was of the same level as a legendary archmage.

However, the titles did not work all the time. Many vampires had been living in the human society or living alone for a very long time, and even though they had become more powerful, they would not bother reporting this to the Vampire High Council. As for Rhine, who had been living for more than thousands of years, he simply preferred the count title. In fact, he was well-qualified for the title of a vampire prince.

Galata hesitated for a moment, but in the next second, he jumped

on the altar with great determination. He was totally loyal to the count, and of course, he would obey Ms. Tess' command.

A vampire was very sensitive to life force. Galata was sure that the sorcerer was still on the altar.

As soon as Lucien was sent here, he saw the dwarves prostrating on the ground, praying and crying around him. He was so confused for a moment that he thought he just jumped into another world again!

However, Lucien still immediately cast on himself the fourth-circle spell, Invisibility (Advanced), to hide.

When Lucien realized that he could still use magic, he was certain that he was still in the same world.

After becoming invisible, he started to calm down. As an expert in language, it was not difficult for him to tell the fact that the dwarves were using the ancient language, which shared the same origin with the modern dwarf language.

Lucien wondered what the dwarves were doing. However, before he figured out the answer for all of his questions, he heard the vampires saying the words "space joint".

When he saw the vampires, Lucien became certain that he had indeed arrived at Night Highland. In the next second, he saw a male vampire coming directly at him.

Lucien's eyes slightly squinted. He raised his hand to point at the vampire. He could not let others know the existence of the space joint!

He still needed the space joint on Night Highland to make some more jumps between the dimensions. If this was discovered by the vampire princes, Lucien would be in great trouble.

Rhine did not tell him which vampire was trustworthy, and that meant he could trust nobody.

Harold stared at the empty altar and the pure light that was slowly disappearing. He started to accept the fact that they had been

completely abandoned by their god.

Was it because they were not devout enough?

Was it because the cruel vampires had won the favor of gods?

Was their fate doomed already?

Biting hard, his lips started to bleed. He felt extremely desperate, confused, and lost. Harold wished to die right away.

Only death could end the great pain!

Only death could bring him the forever peace!

Harold was not alone here. All the dwarves felt the same way, even including the Elder, who had lost all of his fate.

A shadow suddenly swept over them toward the altar.

They knew it was Galata, but that was also the only thing that they could come up with.

All of a sudden, a dazzling light lit up the Elder's turbid pupils! Galata was covered in a colorful light!

Red, black, and green... The light spots burst out. Some turned into gas very quickly; some smelled like sulfur; some changed colors very fast and fell on the ground flat.

Within a second, Galata disappeared completely. Only the light spots were left.

"What is that?!" Tess was totally shocked. Galata had been killed even before she had the chance to fully stretch out her wings. How was that possible?!

She had never seen magic like that before!

Was that a legendary archmage? She once heard the legend that Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, had the power to break someone down into countless elements!

A great fear seized her mind. She knew that she must run, right now!

A cluster of black smoke suddenly rose, and countless small bats flew out in all directions.

It happened so quickly that Wells and Edith did not even have any time to take actions.

Seeing that their god decomposed Galata so easily, Harold's heart was filled with joy and surprise.

Their god was still with them!

The God of Steam still remembered them!

He burst into tears. A gentle, warm stream flowed in his body, and it felt like the nice pat that he received from his parents when he was young.

"Is this the power of God?" Harold murmured.

He could not think clearly, but he heard a bitter scream. He turned around hurriedly and saw that the white smoke rose out of Wells' body, and his rotten pieces of flesh were falling on the ground. Soon, there was only his skeleton left on the ground, and the same thing happened to the maid named Edith as well.

Close to the passage, all the small bats had also fallen on the ground, cramping and twitching. Then, the bats quickly disappeared in the holy light.

Exorcist Halo!

A few seconds later, Harold heard the scream from Tess.

"Tess and Galata... died?" The dwarves could not believe it was real.

They were vampires, the nightmare that had been torturing them for so many years!

Was this the power of God? They did not know.

Aquinas was very close to the altar, and the remaining pieces of Galata were right in front of them. He carefully picked up one of the black pieces.

His eyes suddenly opened wide, and his hands were trembling. "This is iron! And coal! The real God of Steam has come to us!"

He hurriedly threw the pieces in his hands away and prostrated himself on the ground, praying aloud, "The great master of life and death, have mercy on us, just like you have the ultimate power."

"We will get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory!"

The dwarves looked around and became certain that their god had arrived here for them!

"The mortal eyes cannot see the true god; the ordinary painting brush cannot portray the ultimate power; the real master never appears in front of the mortal!" The Elder came up with the reason why they could not see their god, and exclaimed aloud.

"You rule everything, from life to death. You are the king of kings, the god of gods."

The rest of the dwarves also hit their head against the ground with ecstasy toward the altar following the Elder. Lucien still did not understand fully what was going on here.

"Our glory, our life, and our power, all go to you! The almighty God of Steam!"

The dwarves exclaimed aloud together in a very devout manner.

God was as gracious as the sea and as mighty as the mountains!

Chapter 381: A Dream City

Lucien finally realized what was going on there. The dwarves thought that he was their God of Steam, the master of life and death, and they were worshipping him.

This was Night Highland, once under the control of the dwarves, but later they were conquered by the vampires.

They should be from the last group of dwarves left from the Civilization of Steam, and they were raised by the vampires as labors.

These dwarves managed to escape from the vampire and found the relic left by their ancestors. They thought that the teleportation circle was an altar, and they misunderstood the material left by their ancestors when they tried to learn magic as the instruction for reaching their God. In this case, he was sent here when the dwarves were carrying out their rite.

It seemed that the vampires killed by him were here to kill the dwarves, and thus the dwarves, after witnessing his power, firmly believed that he was the God of Steam.

Lucien's brain worked very fast. It did not take him long to figure out the story.

Then, Lucien's first thought was that he should use magic to erase the dwarves' memory. However, when Lucien saw the cast-iron stoves in the rooms around and the steam hammer, an idea suddenly stroke him. The dwarves had mastered the basic knowledge of the Steam Civilization and should be able to carry out some relatively complex smelting procedures.

To simplify the alchemical products and items, Lucien first needed the skilled workers who were able to make the gears.

Since the skills of making alchemical items and products were mostly owned by the sorcerers, and the Congress would not waste the apprentices' time doing the harsh labor work, very rarely could

an ordinary person join an alchemy work. This problem had been bothering Lucien for a long time, preventing him from spreading the usage of alchemical items and products, which would not only bring Lucien a great amount of wealth but also shake the ordinary people's belief in the Church.

Lucien thought that this would take a very long time, at least a few generations. However, he saw new hope in the dwarves from the Civilization of Steam.

"The almighty God of Steam, may your name spread throughout the world!"

The dwarves' praying inspired Lucien. He quickly got a plan: he could make the dwarves work for the Congress of Magic using the name of their God, so the dwarves would be completely loyal to them, and it would also be much easier to make them sign the magic compact.

Facing the fact that Lucien had saved their life and could provide the dwarves with a bright future to work as the new workers for the Congress, the dwarves would definitely accept the offer instead of being the slaves for those vampires. However, Lucien still wanted to make sure that the dwarves would be sincerely willing to work for them.

Lucien still had his mission to complete. Furthermore, the teleportation circle set up beside the space joint was not able to send many dwarves out, but using the teleportation circle too frequently in a short period of time would draw the vampires' attention. Lucien decided to let the dwarves hide here on Night Highland for a bit longer, and in that case, they could also have some time to grow bigger by enrolling more dwarves. Once his mission was completed, to avoid the great conflict, Lucien would ask the Congress to set up another gate to take away all the dwarves.

If a war broke out between the Congress of Magic and the vampires, the Church would be the biggest beneficiary.

Although Lucien was moved with compassion seeing how the

dwarves were suffering, currently he could not come up with a better solution.

The fourth circle magic spell, Invisibility (Advanced), would still last for a while. Lucien took out a tube of liquid and gently uncorked it. The liquid instantly turned a colorless and odorless gas, which soon filled in the entire hall.

...

The dwarves were still praying, praying to their almighty God, praying for their beautiful future full of hope.

Suddenly, Harold felt that the temperature started increasing. When he opened his eyes, to his great surprise, Harold saw that the floor made of grey stone bricks had turned into yellow hot sand.

"Go. Go deep into the desert to find my Kingdom.

"Go. Go there so you could find everything you want."

The sacred and solemn voice came from the sky. The dwarves again deeply lowered their heads and put their faces against the hot sand. "Your name is respected. Your will is fulfilled. Master, you dominate everything in the world."

The voice then disappeared. After a long time, the elder slowly looked up and saw that they were now in the boundless desert. Close to the horizon line, he saw something green that he believed was an oasis.

It was the first time that they witnessed the unimaginable power of God.

The hot wind burnt their faces. The dwarves remained where they were, totally shocked. It was even the first time that they saw the sun! Night Highland would never be lit up.

Harold moved his lips and murmured, "Sun... Daylight..."

His words awakened the elder and the rest of the dwarves. Myrna asked as if she was in a dream, "Where shall we go...?"

"...Where?" The Elder hesitated for a moment but very quickly cheered up, and his voice was full of hope and passion, "We go deep into the desert! We find our master's Kingdom!"

Harold felt that he was almost going crazy from the excitement, "So we can get back our lost civilization, right? We can build a steam city!"

Very excited, Aquinas also quivered, "Me, too. I want to see those black chimneys, the grand airboats, the great cannons again!"

Rebuilding a steam city was the ultimate dream for the dwarves from the rebellion force. A steam city represented their supreme honor!

The Elder looked around at the dwarves' sweaty red faces. He raised his arm and cried out, "The master of life and death told us that we can find everything we want deep in the desert! So we go deep into the desert!"

"Steam above! We go deep into the desert!" repeated the rest of the dwarves aloud together.

...

Although they did not have a clear guidance, the dwarves could feel that something was calling them in the front.

Walking in the desert was hard. The sunlight was dazzling, and the wind was drying them up. The dwarves came to know how horrible a desert could be. They were thirsty. They felt dizzy.

"Myrna, are you alright?" Harold quickly grabbed Myrna's arm when she was about to fall over.

Myrna shook her head and bit her lips, "I'm okay. This is the trial given by the Master. To get to his Kingdom, I won't give up."

The dwarves were encouraged by Myrna's words. What she said was true. If they could not bear the pain, they did not deserve the blessing.

Suddenly, they heard the cheerful voice of the elder, "Look! It's there!"

The dwarves looked at the same direction together and saw the huge city in the oasis.

The city was there! Their Master's kingdom!

The dwarves had completely forgotten the exhaustion. They ran toward the huge city as fast as they could.

When they were closer to the city, a sudden loud buzzing sound came from the sky.

The dwarves all looked up and saw a huge weird bird coming from the other side of the sky toward the city. When the weird bird was right above them, the dwarves finally recognized what it was. It was not a bird, but a giant machine covered with a silvery white metal!

The bird was so huge that the dwarves felt that they were just a group of ants.

The machine bird lowered its speed and slowly landed in the city somewhere they could not see.

"Is this... an airboat?" Harold was shocked, but the machine bird looked different from what he saw on the frescos.

The elder slowly shook his head, "No... That is not an airboat. An airboat is not that fast. But it is definitely man-made!"

What was it then? All the dwarves asked themselves.

"We will figure that out when we reach the city," said the elder with great determination.

The dwarves set off again, and silence covered them. They did not know what they would see next on their way approaching the city.

After more than ten minutes, the dwarves reached the edge of the oasis and finally saw the city.

Many of them took a deep breath since they were deeply shocked by the view. This city was totally out of their imagination!

On the one side of the city, they saw the very tall and straight chimneys and the many factories and plants. The dwarves were more familiar with the scenery since they had seen it many times in their dreams. However, on the other side of the city, there were buildings even taller than those chimneys. Even the most exaggerated legends had failed to describe that resplendence and imposing manner!

The tall buildings were close to each other, tiled in different colors including black, gray, silver white, and brown. The well-aligned windows reflected the sunlight.

Between the tall buildings and factories, there were wide roads and even land bridges, on which ran the strange but also good-looking vehicles very fast.

The shadowy figures guarding the city were holding metal objects like steam rifles in their hands, but smaller and lighter.

Little did Harold ever realize how sharp his eyes could be. He could even see the slow-moving elevators in the building, and the many shadowy figures using the strange devices talking to each other even when they were in the different buildings.

Myrna also saw the shadowy figures holding some strange metal tablets. All kinds of pictures showed up just with a gentle tap.

Night fell very soon, and the city was lit up by the many lights, turning it into a place where all the stars gathered on the ground.

The dwarves were speechless for a long time at the incredible splendor of the city.

Suddenly, a gap opened in the ground at the edge of the city, and a huge "metal arrow" shot out with a bright flame into the distance.

"What is that?!" The dwarves were totally shocked.

Then, the metal arrow fell to the ground on the horizon, followed

by a deafening bang!

The ground was shaking, and the dwarves' ears buzzing. There was a new sun at the edge of the desert, burning and glowing, with enough power to destroy the entire world. The bright sun soon disappeared. Heavy smoke in the shape of a huge mushroom was left there at the horizon as if there was another horrible hell in the distance.

Seeing that, Harold swallowed hard. The metal arrow could definitely destroy the entire Night Highland.

The look on the face of the elder and the rest of the dwarves were very serious. They held the power in awe. When they looked back at the dream-like city, the beautiful lights blurred their eyes.

"Where is this place?" Harold blurted out, feeling afraid but also excited, "This place is even greater than the steam city described in the elder's stories!"

"This is..." Myrna murmured, quivering.

The solemn and sacred arrived again,

"This is Atlantis. My kingdom."

Chapter 382: Count Vlad

The dwarves had never seen anything like that before. The scene had exceeded their ultimate imagination.

The tall buildings made them feel so small, and the star-light lights made the city look even bigger and more splendid. The civilization that the city belonged to was way more advanced than Steam Civilization.

The dwarves felt that they were facing the boundless starry sky. They were deeply shocked by how insignificant and tiny they were.

This was the power of civilization.

After a while, the elder finally sobered up and knelt down on the ground, prostrating, although the sand was still very hot.

"Our almighty God of Steam! Your kingdom is the domain where all the gods live. Your kingdom shows the ultimate power of steam!"

Hearing the elder's prayer, the dwarves also knelt down in an extremely devout manner, facing the city,

"Your blessing is as vast as the ocean; your stateliness is as solemn as the great mountain."

The solemn voice arrived again, "My name shall not be revealed to the heretics."

It took the elder a second to comprehend the words and then he quickly repeated leading the rest of the dwarves, "The name of Master shall not be revealed to the heretics."

The solemn voice continued, "Traitors will all be devoured by steam."

The dwarves followed, "Anyone who betrays us will be devoured by steam."

The voice became ethereal, "Be my people. Be my willing servants. No more slavery."

The dwarves answered together, "Your glory above!"

The voice slowly disappeared in the air. At this time, Harold saw the city swelling in front of them and then turned into bubbles and pieces of shadow.

In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the strange vehicles became bigger and the inner complex structure was completely revealed, including the pistons and bearings, as well as the mysterious patterns, which were totally different from that of Steam Civilization. In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the strange metal bird also went transparent, and its structure, wires, and gears were also revealed.

In the bubbles and pieces of shadow, the structures of the tall buildings, factories, chimneys, and the land bridges were all shown to the dwarves.

...

Feeling extremely dizzy, the dwarves felt that their head was going to explode since what they were looking at had gone way beyond their comprehension.

The bubbles and pieces of shadow surrounded them, and the entire world started to ripple and fall into parts.

"I have shown you what you want, and for the rest of it, you have to find it yourself using persistence, courage, and bravery." This was the last message left by the solemn voice.

The elder still remembered to pray despite the great dizziness, "Respected be your name. Follow your path. We shall build up your kingdom on the ground!"

The desert had completely disappeared. The space started swirling, and the dwarves passed out. After a long time, when they slowly woke up, they found themselves lying on the ground of the familiar underground cave.

"What happened?" Facing the altar, the elder felt that he was still in a dream.

Looking at the thick book in his head, Harold was confused. He had just learned how to read after the elder for two years, and therefore, it took him some time to recognize the words on the surface of the book - Elementary Mechanical Forging.

"It was real! God of Steam saved us!" Harold blurted out excitedly.

The rest of the dwarves also noticed the book. They started to cry since they finally saw hope for the first time.

At this time, all the memory came back to them:

The dwarf rebellion force found the secret cave where the Civilization of Steam used to pray to God by chance, and thus they settled down to hide here. Also, they carried on the tradition to pray to God. Today, they were attacked by the vampires and many died in the bitter fight.

When the great desperation seized them, the dwarves' God saved them from the vampires and led them to an underground palace where the dwarves' frescos were everywhere. When they pushed open the gate of the palace, they saw the miracle city—Atlantis, their God's kingdom!

The Elder sighed when his memory was still in a chaos, "So the underground palace, frescos, desert, oasis, and Atlantis... They are not real. The God of Steam made our soul see them..."

In the chaos, most of the people who more or less knew about magic would guess that their memory had been modified, but the dwarves were different. They believed that what happened was a miracle revealed by their God, and therefore, they saw nothing wrong with it.

Sometimes, how powerful an illusion spell was really depended on how the caster used it.

Atlant, the Eye of Curse, once put it in his paper, "By finding one's weakness, one can easily put fake memories into a person's brain,

even without using illusion."

"I don't think so... your grace!" disputed Aquinas, the leader of the rebellion force. "It exists in the Steam Paradise! One day, the will of God shall be done on earth!"

Harold still remembered what the dream city looked like, and he murmured, "I... I thought the steam city was the ultimate miracle, the most exciting place in the world, but Atlantis... Atlantis is... incredible..."

Harold did not know how to put a proper comment on it.

Another dwarf cut in, "All of the machines there are so amazing. I guess that's how Steam Civilization will be like when it peaks... No, no... Atlantis has way surpassed the power of Steam Civilization!"

The rest of the dwarves all agreed because they had seen it with their own eyes!

A dream city!

Harold looked very excited, with his hands clenching into fists, "Atlantis... Atlantis! My dream is to build an Atlantis on the ground, even if it is only one-third of a miracle compared to the real one!"

"I can never forget the river of stars..." Myrna murmured like she was still in the beautiful dream, "What a pity... We did not see the structure of the huge metal arrow."

"That's right..." The dwarves were quite disappointed. After all, the destructive weapon created by their God was so powerful that it was capable of completely destroying the entire world!

"Also... we did not see the other inner structures clearly," said Harold, feeling upset. But he soon cheered up and said, "First, we should have a solid foundation!"

Harold raised the book in his hand and found that there was a piece of parchment in the book.

It was a compact, a compact with their God.

Finishing reading the compact, the elder excitedly announced, "The Almighty God of Steam asks us to sign the compact with the City of Atlantis, as we have peeped into its secrets."

Of course, the dwarves signed the compact without any hesitation. The compact represented the future hope that the dwarves had to get rid of their destiny as the vampires' slaves.

Light burst out of the parchment pact. Lucien, a distance away from the dwarves, slightly nodded and then left.

It took him a lot of work to move the dwarves to the secret underground cave that he found using magic. He reordered the dwarves' memory and then interwove some fake ones into it.

Once the dwarves had accepted the memory, it was hard for them to tell the fake from the true.

Lucien used Alferris' blood and constructed the desert and the city called Atlantis using the fifth-circle illusion spell, Fantasy. Lucien borrowed the basic design of a metropolis on the Earth and mixed it with a number of magic symbols.

After leaving the underground cave, he looked very serious. He knew that, since the vampire bride and butler had been killed by him, the count would not easily let this go. Sooner or later, the count would find the underground palace and the space joint.

Lucien had to take care of this.

Thus, he headed for the count's castle.

...

On the next day, in the early morning, the dwarf slaves were already working under the threat of the thick whips. The constellations were still above them.

The supervisors were not worried about the fact that Madam Tess and the butler had not come back at all because they were informed that a group of rebellion force was identified. It was more than normal that Madam Tess and the butler had to spend a few days

taking care of that.

In the dark basement of the castle, in the middle of many dark magic circles, there was a bloody coffin, from which black smoke kept coming out from time to time. This was the core of the castle, the place where Count Vlad slept and cured himself.

Every time when Vlad was about to go sleep, he would fully turn on all the magic circles and traps around him to protect himself.

According to Vlad himself, the construction and design of the castle took him more than a thousand years. It was impossible to break in without activating the magic circles, even for a vampire marquis or duke. The castle was like a masterpiece in defense.

Therefore, the castle showed a relatively lower power when it came to attacking its enemies.

Madam Tess, butler Galata, and another two vampire brides knew how to reach Count Vlad.

Therefore, the best way for Lucien to kill the count would be using the two vampire brides to get Vlad out of the core basement.

Count Vlad survived in the War of Dawn. He was not an idiot. Once Lucien made a mistake and missed the best chance to kill the vampire, that would be the end of him.

Lucien could not bear even a single mistake.

Chapter 383: The Other Way Around

Chapter 383:

The Other Way Around

Translator: Kris_Liu Editor: Vermillion

The hand-shaped silver candlesticks lit up the corridor in the dark and gloomy castle. The red candles flickered to provide a dim light, showing a sense of creepy beauty.

Wearing a black robe with a hood, Lucien stood outside of the basement quietly, studying the defensive magic circles placed by Count Vlad.

The gate of the castle usually opened for the slaves to go in and out, as well as for the transportation of ores and metals. The several detecting magic circles were not a big deal for Lucien. As a senior-rank mage, Lucien entered the castle rather easily.

Lucien could tell that these defense magic circles were rather powerful. As a vampire who had survived for a few thousand years, Vlad did collect some good magic circles. The twenty-seven dark magic circles had formed a strong protection reliable enough to resist a level eight divine spell. Fortunately, the castle did not have an alchemical life in it, or there was no chance that Lucien could sneak into this place.

On the corridor, the female blood servants walked past Lucien as if he did not exist. They were once human beings, elves, or dwarves, but now they had become the servants in the castle.

Lucien had not learned the sixth-circle spell, Suggestion (group), and thus it took him quite a long time to cast the suggestion spell on every single living thing in the castle one by one. Although he was already a senior-rank mage, his spirit had been drained up from doing so, and he waited for a long time to have it recovered.

Standing in front of the basement, Lucien rubbed his chin

thoughtfully and did his analysis: It would take him at least two months to crack this defense system, and the biggest trouble was the fact that Count Vlad could notice it at any time. Once Vlad woke up, that would be the end for himself.

Although Vlad had been sleeping for a long time, his power and knowledge were pretty up-to-date, as he cast spells using his blood power, not his cognitive world.

Lucien had to find a way to get Vlad out.

Many thoughts flashed through his mind, such as to inform Vlad that there was an affair between Tess and Galata... However, neither of them worked.

Lucien decided to take another perspective.

After a while, he nodded thoughtfully and started to work on analyzing the structure of the magic circles and how the power in them flowed.

...

More than ten days later, the castle still operated normally as usual. The brides, butlers, blood servants, and slaves were all busy minding their own business.

Somehow they all turned a blind eye toward the strange young man wearing a black robe. He was busy too. He was busy with placing all the precious materials around following some kind of pattern.

Finally, the magic circle was done. Clapping his hands, Lucien stood up straight slowly.

When Lucien cast the spell, his spiritual power spread out and the magic circle in front of the basement was activated. The light streams lit up one by one and the power lines flowed in all the directions.

Except for inside the power room in the basement and the controlling core, different magic circles lit up in all the important sectors and parts in the castle, including the constraint rooms,

summoning rooms, magic garden, power wells.

Soon, the magic circles joined together and the whole castle was covered in a dream-like shield made of dazzling starlight!

The magic dome suddenly shrank and attached tight against the walls of the basement. The light disappeared as if it had joined the dark magic circles.

Then, everything quieted down.

The vampires and dwarves were still doing their own work as if nothing had ever happened. In the basement, Count Vlad was still sleeping. He did not notice any difference.

That was because Lucien had never tried to crack the count's dark magic circles.

The function of the powerful magic circle that Lucien just placed was very simple. Lucien added another layer of defense on top of what the count already had. Lucien wanted him to sleep more safe and sound.

Therefore, the defense was also not easy to be cracked, either from inside or outside. It would even take Lucien himself almost ten months to remove the protection. Also, the power from the magic wells and garden would constantly infuse into the magic circle. When the count woke up, part of the power from the power rooms would be constrained. Even with the help of the controlling core, Vlad would have to spend five to six years to get out, and before that he could not even send a message out.

Five or six years later, Lucien believed that he would not have to worry about the exposure of the space joint anymore.

That was what Lucien meant by taking another perspective. When the defense was powerful, instead of destroying it, Lucien would make it even more unbreakable.

There was a naughty smile on Lucien's face. However, at the same time, constructing those magic circles also cost him a lot. Although most of the materials came from the count's warehouse, Lucien also

spent some of his own materials on it. Count Vlad's most important treasury vault was in the basement, so Lucien did not get anything too valuable other than the lots of mythril and precious metals.

After checking the magic circle again, Lucien placed another secret magic circle beside the entry of the basement, in which Vlad's voice was mimicked and saved.

If anyone tried to wake him up, the voice would refuse politely.

After all these things were done, Lucien walked out of the castle at a leisure pace. A few steps away from the gate, Lucien turned around with his right hand on his chest and bowed.

"Have a sweet dream, Count Vlad."

...

In the underground cave, the dwarves who had signed the compact had found the steam hammers, smelting pots, food, paper, and the other items following their "memory".

"We need to do three things," said the elder, Augustus, in high spirit, holding three books in his hands, Transforming Electromagnetic Waves and Basic Application, Religion Theory, and Protracted War. "First of all, we have to develop our doctrine as soon as possible to enroll more of our people; Second, we shall start farming by looking for the farmable soil on Night Highland to end famine; Third, we shall avoid the head-on confrontation with the vampires as much as possible until we grow much bigger and with better weapons."

The three books left gave Augustus a lot of encouragement.

"Yes, Your Honor! Steam Above!" The dwarves raised their arm and shouted. The knowledge from the books had shocked them, and now they longed for knowledge more than they had ever before.

They once thought that they had inherited part of the culture and wisdom of the Steam Civilization, but now they had realized that they were not even close to it, not to mention to the ultimate civilization like Atlantis!

The dwarves were full of hope and motivated. When they started working on their own staff, the elder kneeled down again in front of the altar. After praying, the elder took out the paper and quill and wrote:

“Machine Revelation: Zie has arrived to tell people that when there is gain, there is loss, and when there is the loss, there is gain. All the sufferings have meanings, and by going through the sufferings, one can obtain wisdom and a strong soul. There is an equal exchange. With this belief, one could stay away from falling into hell.”

...

After watching these dwarves for a while, Lucien was relieved and started to head north.

In the north, there were a few very powerful vampire princes. It was said that one of them, the most powerful one, when sleeping, could turn his dream into reality on Night Highland.

However, at that moment it had nothing to do with Lucien. When arriving in the north, Lucien soon changed his direction and headed for a castle enveloped in darkness.

The outline of the castle looked rather vague as if it was just a projection of a great castle from the main material world. The castle was called the Observer's Castle, and it belonged to Count Silver Eye, Rhine.

Rhine was as powerful as a vampire prince, and he was watching one of the space joints connecting to the Dark Mountain Range. Using the magic circle near the space joint, Lucien could directly arrive at the outside of the castle in the Dark Mountain Range.

In the fog, Lucien walked in this shadow castle and dispelled the magic traps one by one following the instructions left by Rhine.

Soon, Lucien saw a magic circle on the ground. Stepping on it, he cast a spell. The light devoured him, and he disappeared.

...

On Night Highland, in a luxurious castle of Syracuse style.

Holding a glass in his hand, a good-looking man said to his butler, who was standing beside him, “Rhine has been missing for a long time, and the old guy is ready to take some actions...”

His red eyes slightly squinted, and his attitude toward what he was talking about was rather ambiguous.

Chapter 384: Transformation Mask

Chapter 384: Transformation Mask

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

After the familiar dizziness left Lucien, he saw many creepy red flowers in front of him. The sea of flowers in red was boundless.

Sensing the smell of a living thing, the flowers gradually bloomed, petal by petal, and the inner blood and flesh were revealed. The flesh was moving! Like a heart, the center of the flowers could beat!

Seeing the flowers, Lucien's heart missed a beat. He knew how dangerous these flowers were! However, soon he calmed himself down since he was standing in Rhine's garden, after all. Lucien started to cast a creepy and mysterious spell.

Once the spell was cast, the beautiful but ominous flowers gently swung back and forth as if they were welcoming Lucien, and then the flowers quickly turned into countless tiny red bugs and retreated like the fall of the tide, leaving the black land in the middle.

Lucien was curious, wondering how to define those creatures. Were they flowers, or bugs? He had never read anything like this in any books. As an arcanist who was crazy with all kinds of arcana studies, Lucien almost tried to catch a few of the bugs for future experiment...

However, he had a job to do. He walked out of the magic circle and through the gate of the hall following the black path revealed. After Lucien left, the tiny blood-colored bugs quickly gathered again and returned to the form of the eerie beautiful flowers. The flowers smelled incredibly sweet, making one feel very dizzy and soggy in his limbs.

Lucien immediately cast a filtering bubble to keep away the unpleasant sweet smell.

However, the red ocean suddenly boiled and leaned toward Lucien aggressively, like countless ghosts and zombies trying to grab him with their rotten pale arms.

Lucien did not expect that the flowers, or bugs, were this sensitive to magic waves! He tried his best to stop himself from casting more spells to protect himself, and instead just simply let the petals gently sweep on his face. Lucien felt a bit itchy and numb.

Although no further magic waves could be detected, the furious red ocean was not going to calm itself down. Surrounding Lucien, the ocean was roaring.

With the help of his Holm Crown ring, Lucien stayed very calm and completely ignored the dangerous and horrible scene.

Although he had no idea how powerful these flowers or bugs were, he had decided to be very careful with everything in this castle.

In a pretended calm manner, Lucien walked out of the red ocean and stepped on the path connecting to the gate of the castle.

Two rows of tall trees were planted beside the road, and pieces of semi-withered yellow leaves were swirling to the ground. The beautiful scenery in front of this dark, gloomy castle was like what Lucien was used to seeing in Gesu District in Aalto.

When Lucien was walking toward the gate, suddenly, the rows of eyes on the trunk of the trees opened, revealing a sharp contrast of black and white. Lucien's figure was reflected in every single pupil, but some of the eyes looked confused, some were calm and peaceful, some angry, and some cold...

The eyes were all staring at Lucien. Sweat formed on his forehead, and he knew that this time the trees were the real scarlet trees. The last time Lucien saw these trees was in his dream. As what he saw in his dream was based on his imagination, the trees in the dream were quite different from the real ones.

Not many of these magic trees could manage to grow mature, but once they grew up, the trees were of the power of a senior-rank

mage, and like the Beholders, the trees could shoot out many rays. Also, the scarlet trees could drain one's blood and produce illusions.

Although wearing many great magic items, Lucien was confident that he could deal with one or two scarlet trees and turn them into some good magic materials. However, there were two rows of them!

Under the gaze of the trees, Lucien walked step by step and finally reached the gate of the castle.

When Lucien's feet touched the smooth and hard floor, he released a sigh of relief. It was such a torture walking through the crowd of horrible creatures, although Rhine had told him the spell to protect himself.

Before Lucien raised his right hand, a deep voice came from the inside of the castle.

"I feel master's mark on you."

"Yes, Mr. Rhine sent me here to pick up a few items," said Lucien, short and brief. Once he was recognized by the alchemical life in the castle, the rest of the mission should be of no risk.

The deep voice responded, "I'm Castle Mikhalik. Password, please."

"Kilahkim," answered Lucien. He realized that the password was simply the retrography of the name of the alchemical life. Lucien had to say that this was not creative at all.

"Distinguished guest, please," the gate of the castle slowly opened, and the elegant and well-decorated main hall was revealed. "Except for the controlling core, energy room, and the base of the treasury vault, you can go anywhere you wish."

...

In the study loaded with all the different kinds of books, Lucien cast the spell Rhine taught him and, at the same time, he formed the spiritual power in the shape of a sharp spine and fiercely stabbed it at the quill pot.

The quill pot lit up with a layer of dim light and started to make a cracking sound. When the pot retreated, a black hole was revealed.

After carefully checking around, Lucien took several items using Mage's Hand out from the hole. There was a mini-statue of a Sphinx, a filthy bloody ball, a Broom Brooch, and a clown mask with a ridiculous smile on it.

"Transformation Mask, a level nine middle-rank magic item. The wearer can transform oneself into any creatures of the same gender, but cannot carry on the creatures' talents. With the corresponding blood sample, the wearer can become another person completely."

Lucien studied the mask using his spiritual power and found that so far the mask had recorded seven thousand eight hundred and ninety-five kinds of blood, and it was up to the wearer which one to pick.

"The power of transformation came from the blood, therefore, even a legendary archmage can be deceived without carefulness. The wearer's spiritual power or willpower has to be close to senior-rank, or the wear would go crazy.

"Very often, identity works better than magic! From: A mind-split, anonymous sorcerer."

Lucien got to know the complete information about the mask with the spell, Identification. And for the rest of the three items, he could only tell that they contained some kind of mysterious and ambiguous supernatural power, and each of them was different from the other. They were the items for activating the three magic circles.

Putting the mask and the three items into the pouch, Lucien recorded some of the books in the study in his spirit library. Rhine always called himself the Observer of History, and Lucien was certain that there were some interesting books here.

It took Lucien a while to record the books, as he did not want Mikhalik to notice his special ability. Lucien recorded fifty of the books after six hours.

...

The shining gems, gold coins of different time periods, brand-new knight armors, many magic robes, weapons, and magic items dazzled Lucien's eyes. Rhine's collection consisted of all the more precious items!

Among the many extraordinary items, most of them were of senior-rank, but the level nine, ten and legendary items were obviously stored in the basement of the treasury.

After careful selection, and after making a lot of difficult decisions, Lucien finally picked out a scroll and a belt.

The eighth-circle magic scroll, Night Travel.

Health Belt, the level eight high-rank magic item. The wearer would be immune to disease, poison, negative energy, and magic spells that could sicken the target.

"Health is the key to life. From: White Philosophy."

The scroll could make Space Lock invalid, thus it would be very useful for escaping. Since Time Travel was the talent magic of vampires, arcanists had not figured out a way to copy it. Lucien was planning on studying the scroll and using it at the most crucial moment.

Furthermore, the belt was also very powerful.

After leaving his spiritual mark in the belt, Lucien looked at the shelf where all the magic staffs were stored. He was about to pick a good one for himself. The one he had right now was still a level two magic staff, which did not really match his rank.

When Lucien was having a hard time making up his mind, he saw a very ordinary-looking sword on the shelf beside it. The sword looked so plain with its wood cross guard.

Lucien was curious why Rhine would keep such an ordinary sword in his collection. Thus, he quickly cast Identification on the sword. When he received the message, Lucien was shocked:

“Pale Justice, level eight, perfect rank, extraordinary sword. When facing evil creatures, including evil spirits, demons and devils, the sword can become a rank one legendary weapon. The person who wields this sword is immune to fear, charm, ferocity, and helplessness, and each hacking and attacking can hit the target as guided by justice. The person has to at least have the power of a level six radiant knight to pick up the sword of justice.”

“Justice can be pale, especially when compared to other kinds of radiant powers, but justice is everywhere, and it applies to everyone and everything. Be it on the battlefields or in the farming fields, justice is everywhere.”

Lucien heard of this famous sword before!

Chapter 385: Vampire High Council

The dazzling stars were like shining pure diamonds on the black velvet.

The astonishing scenery of the dream-like night sky above the highland was eternal.

In the darkness slightly lit by the starlight, Lucien left the projection of the Castle of Observer.

In the shadow of the trees, he put on the transformation mask. He grew taller, his skin became finer and pale, the color of his eyes turned into that of the silver moon, and his hair also became silver.

Within a few seconds, Lucien had turned himself into Rhine, wearing his typical red shirt and black suit.

Adjusting his bow a bit, Lucien headed for another vampire castle in the distance with an elegant pace.

In that castle lived Marquis Lasare, a five-thousand-year-old powerful vampire, who was responsible for safeguarding the space joint connecting Night Highland to the desert in the south part of Gusta.

When Lucien was in the treasury room, he finally picked the sword named Pale Justice, not because it was immune to all the negative effects, but because it was a rank-one legendary magic item when facing evil creatures!

Right now Lucien needed to deal with these powerful vampires, thus he needed to pick the weapon that was the most useful for him right now.

As for the limit that only a level six radiant knight could use the sword, Lucien had his own way to deal with it. With Ogre Glove, Lucien could have the power of a level five grand knight, and plus a few middle or low rank spells for strengthening power, for example, the fourth-circle spell, Brute Force, and the second circle spell, Ox

Force, Lucien could meet the minimum requirement for picking up the sword.

Although this could only last for a few minutes, that was enough for Lucien! After all, during a few minutes, the sword would always hit its target.

And even among the sixth-circle spells that Lucien had not learned, there was a magic spell called Baler's Transformation that could enable sorcerers to turn themselves into knights of the corresponding levels.

In fact, there was more planning in Lucien's mind: this powerful knight sword could be a gift.

From time to time, Lucien would still long for the beautiful future.

...

To the left of the strange-shaped castle, there was a grand palace with thick stone pillars and smooth floor.

In Lucien's eyes, it resembled the temples of ancient Greece on the Earth.

The crisp sound of leather shoes stepping on the floor came from a distance, and a tall and strong vampire stopped in front of Lucien.

"Why are you here?" asked the vampire in an arrogant manner.

Lucien, who was now Rhine, smiled, "I'm here to use the space joint circle."

"Did Sir Marquis agree?" the vampire asked.

Lucien pretended to be calm, "According to the Vampire High Council, we all can use most of the space joints on Night Highland. Is this one an exception?"

He did not want to stay here for too long, as Lucien knew that Rhine was a member of the High Council, and once other vampire princes came, it would be very risky for him.

The vampire knew that was true, but he still answered coldly, "We have identified some traitors, and maybe you are one as well. Without the permission of Sir Marquis, I have to check carefully."

When the vampire was saying, his right hand slightly moved to make a sign, as if he was asking for something.

Lucien knew what the vampire was trying to do, but the role he was playing now was an elegant and proud vampire, thus there was no way that Lucien would bribe him.

Once Marquis Lasare got to know this, Lasare would be able to tell immediately that he was not the real vampire prince, Rhine.

Lucien's silver eyes slightly squinted, and when he was about to tell the vampire to leave him alone, he heard an old voice, "It's been a while since we saw each other last time, Sir Observer."

He should be Marquis Lasare! Lucien tried his best to prevent his heart from beating too fast. Right now he only wished that Lasare did not know Rhine well, or Lasare would probably tell that he was a fake one!

"Sir... Observer?" The vampire who was trying to extort money was shocked, and his body trembled. He did not know that the vampire in front of him was, in fact, a vampire prince. When the legendary-level vampire squinted, that was almost the end of him!

Lucien still pretended to be rather casual and calm, "Lasare, I'm heading for the South Desert." He just wanted to keep everything short and brief. And Rhine told him to call the marquis' name directly.

"Sir Observer, Prince Dracula has been looking for you," said Lasare with a mysterious smile. He was an old but elegant vampire, who was always holding his exquisite cane.

"What does he want?" Lucien turned around, wearing the typical smile of Rhine.

Lasare thought that Rhine was playing silly on purpose. Prince Dracula had always been envious of Rhine's talent in being able to

borrow the power of the Originals.

"Prince Dracula wants to see you in the next High Council meeting, over the inner conflict of the Dark Council." Lasare offered an excuse which was not really the case.

It was said that Rhine, Count Silver Eye, was absent for a long time because he was severely injured by a legendary, and right now he was hiding to recover. Therefore, Prince Dracula was eager to take some actions, since his talent was to devour and take other vampires' talent.

Prince Dracula had always been upset with the fact that, obviously, Silver Moon Alterna was showing more grace on Rhine, not him. But it was he who was the most powerful vampire prince, born before anyone else.

The casual smile was still on Rhine's face, and he said to the level eight vampire, "I've always been absent. So I guess missing the meeting one more time still doesn't matter."

It was really hard talking in Rhine's manner. Lucien believed that playing Fernando, his teacher, would be way easier because all he needed to do was to roar.

"Sir Observer, I'm sure that Prince Dracula has awoken because he learned that you're back," said Lasare in neither humble nor pushy way, "and he would like to meet you to talk about the future of the Kindred."

"Sorry, I'm in a rush." Lucien felt that he was getting more and more nervous.

When Lucien was about to walk to the space joint magic circle, Lasare stopped Lucien hurriedly, "Please wait a moment, Sir Observer."

"Lasare..." Lucien turned around and stared at Lasare with a mild smile, but he called the Marquis' name.

Lasare immediately sensed the great threat hidden under the smile. He took a few steps back and could not say anything else.

Lucien slightly nodded and continued to walk toward the space joint.

Lasare tried to say something, but he did not know what to say. He could only look at the gate of the place nervously, wondering if Prince Dracula had awoken.

Although Lucien was walking in a rather calm pace, he felt that he was about to pass out at any time because of his great tension. Finally, he stepped onto the magic circle and activated it.

Lasare released a sigh after seeing Rhine disappear in the magic circle. If given a few more minutes, Lasare would be able to send the message to Prince Dracula.

He was not able to stop a vampire prince. He regretted that he did not buy some of the useful telecommunication magic items invented by the Congress of Magic.

...

Beside the huge tomb in the shape of a pyramid, Lucien dragged a sphinx to the corner. After a few days' observation, Lucien was certain that this sphinx was the tomb guard on duty tonight.

Taking out a drop of blood from it, Lucien dropped it on the mask. The clown's face grinned in a funny smile, and its look kept changing. When the mask stopped changing, Lucien put it on. His body suddenly grew bigger and four lion legs and a tail came out.

After hiding the sphinx properly, Lucien, who was at that moment a sphinx, picked up the dart and raced towards the campsite. The level nine high priest was there!

Lucien left the space circle and directly went deep into the desert.

On the campsite, the sphinxes were dancing in a weird way surrounding the bonfire, and later they started mating.

When Lucien was watching, a strong sphinx came to him and said, "Fil, stop drooling. It's your shift now. Go!"

Lucien was a bit speechless as he was not drooling at all. However, he still turned around and ran toward the tomb.

"Fil, why are you going that way?" asked the sphinx confusedly.

Lucien suddenly stopped. He did not know what was wrong.

Chapter 386: Step by Step

The grandeur of the sun setting on the horizon was breathtaking.

However, on the sphinx campsite, Lucien felt the cold sweat on his back.

Before Lucien figured out the answer, the sphinx scolded, "Filthy Scorpion, you have your head between your legs? Use your brain! Go and shower yourself in Sun Water! You wanna become one of those undead creatures?"

The desert environment was very harsh, thus the nobles in the Empire of Gusta were reluctant to expand southward. Therefore, most of the sphinxes' bad languages were about scorpions, because they were the sphinxes biggest enemy.

Sun Water? The sphinx's words reminded Lucien that this sphinx that he was playing, whose name was Fil, would always spend a little while in the stone house on which the midday sunlight directly shone, and then it would go to safeguard the tomb with the other sphinxes.

Lucien took it for granted that the stone house was an agreed place where the sphinxes would gather, so when he got Fil's memory using mesmerization, he did not cover this part.

"I'm terribly sorry... I'm going right now." Lucien hurriedly nodded and left. A few seconds earlier, Lucien was deciding whether he should use Implication, Charm, or Necrotic Control to make sure that this sphinx would not bring him any further trouble.

In the stone house, there was a pool in the shape of a golden sun, in which there was gold-colored liquid.

Beside the pool, a rough and robust-looking female sphinx was scooping the liquid with a strange big gold spoon and sprinkled the liquid on the sphinxes waiting in line.

Although the male sphinxes all looked very barbarous and ill-

mannered, they showed great admiration toward the female. Lucien wondered if she was a real beauty as a female sphinx.

However, in Lucien's eyes, she was barely a standing female lion. Lucien could see zero beauty in her.

He walked forward and let the golden liquid sprinkle on him. The liquid felt very warm like sunshine, but Lucien did not get wet at all from it.

"Fil, you're acting a bit strange today," said the female sphinx, Sana, in a low voice. "You've lost your courage? You are not looking at me today."

Lucien got nervous again.

"Yeah... maybe..." Lucien decided not to contradict this proud female.

Sana laughed, "I'm curious. What made you lose your courage? You are even not keen on pursuing your mate!"

When Lucien was in this dilemma and did not know what to do, another male sphinx jumped out and "saved" him. "Fil, don't waste our time! Don't act weird to catch Sana's attention! Don't even try! Last night you were still staring at Sana secretly!"

Lucien pretended that he had been seen through and looked at Sana in a way full of both hope and fear.

Sana realized what Fil's strategy was and purposefully turned her back against him.

When Lucien left the stone house, he felt really tired, as if he just went through a good fight.

...

"Follow me into the tome. Don't disturb His Majesty's sleep." A big muscular sphinx holding a long spear said to the tomb guards sternly.

"Yes, Sir Helges," answered the sphinxes together.

Lucien lowered his head and opened his mouth, pretending that he was answering. In this way, he figured out the name of their leader. It seemed that Helges had the power of a grand knight, and five or six of the guards were of the level of knights. The rest of them, including Fil, were about the level of knight squires.

The guards here were all selected. It was a great honor for a sphinx to become a tomb guard.

Under the guidance of Helges, Lucien stepped on the brownstone bricks and entered the tomb.

Instantly, the heat in the desert disappeared and the cold air became dominant as if they had come to the world of death.

The bricks and stone beams were in very good condition, and the gems, pearls, and crystals were shining the cold light.

The tomb was even grander than any villas, manors, or magic towers that Lucien had ever seen. The rooms and corridors were spacious enough for giants to enjoy themselves there.

Influenced by the Empire of Meshkate, it was believed that sphinxes controlled the secret of life and death and that death was not the end, but the beginning of the real immortality. Pyramids were the magic building for the powerful sphinxes to ascend to the immortal heaven, and therefore, the pyramids were all beyond magnificent.

Meanwhile, many sphinxes believed that their greatest king, the king who was during his eternal sleep, would finally wake up in the pyramid and lead the sphinx to rule the entire world.

And Lucien was in the greatest king's tomb right now.

Holding the spear, Lucien patrolled around following Helges. He saw rotten dead bodies hanging on the wall in many halls. Some of them were scorpions, some were human beings or other races. They were all sacrifices.

Ascending a few floors, the tomb guards entered a hall drawn with

countless weird symbols. The most eye-catching fresco was the scene of a powerful sphinx killing members of other races.

At the center of the hall, there were black stone coffins. When passing by, Lucien could sense the evil and cold power in the coffins! He wondered if they were sphinx sacrifices which had been converted into mummy guards.

Since he was in a tomb right now, Lucien temporarily deactivated Sun's Corona so he would not be that sensitive toward the power of death.

Leaving the creepy hall, Helges and the other tomb guards continued to patrol around. Along the winding corridors, they came in front of a huge stone gate. On the gate, one side was drawn with the sun, and the other had a silver moon, symbolizing life and death respectively.

Even without spreading out his spiritual power, Lucien could still feel the horrible power of death behind the stone gate!

Behind the stone gate, Rhine secretly set up a magic circle using the power of the tomb.

In front of the stone gate, two grand-knight-level guards were holding their spears tight. Their legs were much thicker compared to that of Fil.

Close to them, there was a stone chamber. A solemn-looking sphinx high priest was sitting in it, praying for the resuscitation of their greatest king.

Lucien had gained a basic understanding of the layout of the tomb, but the problem was how he could get in there. His brain worked fast, trying to figure out a solution. It was not a difficult job for Rhine, a legendary-level vampire, as he could directly go through the stone gate in the form of a gentle breeze.

Lucien was not going to force his way into this place. He knew how powerful the sphinxes could be in the tomb.

Also, right in front of the high priest, he also could not attack the

gatekeepers.

"We go back," said Helges after saluting the high priest. That was the first round patrolling.

Lucien had to leave after him since right now he had no good plan. He tried to walk as slow as he could and finally fell to the end of the team. When they walked past a corner, Lucien dropped a tiny block stone on the floor silently, one by one.

When they were about to walk past the hall placed with the black stone coffins, Lucien saw two sphinx dressing in the same way as the gatekeepers coming from the opposite direction.

Lucien got an idea in his mind. He lowered his head and kept following the team. The two gatekeepers walked past him.

When they reached the creepy hall, Helges said to them in low voice, "Take a break here. The next team will come soon."

The hall was very cold, and Lucien could almost feel that the coldness was trying to get into his body like it was alive, however, it was kept away from his body by the warm feeling given by the golden liquid sprinkled on Lucien. Helges, obviously, disliked the air of death and coldness very much. He took a few steps forward and stood outside of the hall.

Seeing that, Lucien secretly moved toward the corner and sneaked into the corridor connecting to the stone gate.

"What are you doing?"

It was Helges' voice!

Lucien looked up and said in the pretended nervous way, "Sir... My, my precious stones are lost... in the corridors..."

As he was saying, Lucien showed the pocket with the hole in it to Helges.

The imploring look in Fil's eyes somehow touched Helges' heart. Helges lowered his voice, "Go and get them back. Do not disturb the

high priest."

Helges did not think that a random tomb guard would bring him any big trouble.

Fil, or Lucien, was very grateful and almost burst into tears. Turning around, Lucien left the hall cautiously without any noise. With proper mental guidance and good performance, Lucien restrained the power of the spell, Indication, and thus the magic wave was greatly reduced.

...

Lucien walked fast and gradually caught up with the two gatekeepers, following them from a proper distance, until they reached a quiet corridor.

Lucien picked up the pace and walked past them, but he purposefully yanked one of the gatekeepers' arm and pretended that was an accident.

"Hey!" roared angrily the gatekeeper, Aska, in a low voice. How dare the humble tomb guard just run into him without apologizing properly?!

"Ah... Sorry. I'm sorry." Lucien lowered his head as if he just noticed the mistake he made.

Aska was pissed off seeing the sphinx's attitude, "You walk alone here, it's very suspicious! And you just say 'sorry'?! That's it?"

"I got the permission from Sir Helges, to get back my gems," answered Lucien like a simple-minded fool, "I ran into you. And I said sorry."

"You shall kneel down!" Aska was angry, "Helges is nothing to me!"

"I listen to Sir Helges! His permission is everything! And I apologized already!" Lucien's body slightly trembled, but he would not compromise.

Aska wasted a few more sentences on the sphinx, but saw that the

humble tomb guard was basically asking for a good lesson to learn how to behave properly. Blood flooded Aska's mind as he was going to beat this filthy scorpion up with his big fist.

"Aska, wait. The high priest can see you through the magic circle," said the other gatekeeper, Inke, "Go that way. They cannot see you."

Aska grinned in a gloomy way and picked Lucien up from the floor, "I'll teach you a good lesson today."

"S... Sorry..." Lucien seemed to be startled.

Aska laughed as the winner. He dragged Lucien with him and turned around a corner.

When he was about to give Lucien a good punch, he felt a sharp pain in his lower abdomen. And before he could release a scream of pain, another punch given by a fist covered with dim light followed.

Aska lost his consciousness. He directly passed out.

On the other side, Inke could hear the dull sound of the punchings and he shook his head slightly. Aska was too bad-tempered, he thought to himself.

After a while, Inke saw Aska walk out with a big satisfied smile. Inke asked curiously, "Feel better now?"

"Haha, now not even that bastard's mother could recognize him!" said Aska in a good mood.

"What did you do?"

It was the voice of the high priest!

Chapter 387: The Saint's Gate

Chapter 387: The Saint's Gate

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The look on Inke's face suddenly changed when he heard the voice of the high priest. He took a step sideward and looked at Aska.

Inke was suggesting that it was Aska who made the trouble, and meanwhile was trying to keep the distance between them.

Aska, or Lucien, in fact, caused the conflict on purpose. Lucien knew that the gatekeepers would avoid the magic circles and take him an isolated corner, and there Lucien would have enough time to transform himself into one of the gatekeepers.

The high priest was also a sphinx but all of his four fuzzy legs were wrapped with black shrouds. He was the very one whom Lucien saw beside the Saint's Gate. Right now, the high priest was staring at Lucien coldly with his pure black eyes.

Lucien felt that the look of the high priest was somehow amusing, but still, he lowered his head, pretending that he was nervous and afraid, "Your Holiness, I just saw a tomb guard violating the rules. He was running around. When I stopped him, he was showing no respect to me. So... so I taught him a lesson on how to behave."

The high priest took a careful glance at Lucien from tip to toe. The look was extremely cold and carried the smell of death.

Lucien controlled his muscles to pretend that he was slightly trembling. He made his heart beat a bit faster, showing that he was feeling anxious.

After carefully checking Aska, the high priest asked slowly, "You used magic?"

His tone was rather flat and emotionless.

“He tried... to fight back... It wasn’t on purpose!” Lucien hurriedly answered in a pretended stammering way. In fact, Lucien did that on purpose to make the high priest notice the magic waves.

If Lucien had just simply left Aska there, within ten minutes, Helges would definitely come to find Fil, and that would be the end of everything that Lucien planned. Thus, he had to find the chance to send “Fil” back first.

Lucien used Transformation and turned Aska into Fil. When he was doing so, he used two kinds of inherent spells of the sphinxes to hide the magic waves caused by Transformation. Therefore, Inke, although he was just around the corner, failed to notice it. Lucien had successfully turned himself into the gatekeeper, Aska, who used magic out of the great anger.

Lucien knew that the magic waves would always be detected by the magic circles in the tomb, and it was part of his plan that the high priest on duty tonight would come to them.

The high priest stared at Lucien’s eyes as if he could see through a lot of things. In Lucien’s eyes, the high priest saw anxiety, nervousness, and the lingering pleasure from giving the tomb guard a good punch.

“Aska, you should not use magic at any time in the tomb unless there are enemies here,” said the high priest in the same flat tone, which made him sound like a dead creature, “Come to me after your shift for the caning.”

“Yes, Your Holiness,” said Lucien depressively.

“You bring the tomb guard back to his team and leave him to the team leader to decide the punishment...” continued the high priest. “Tell the team leader to come to see me later as well.”

The high priest would not let the tomb guard just lying on the floor like that. However, the high priest himself was too honorable to do things like that. Everything went as Lucien wished.

“Yes, Your Holiness,” answered Lucien. His mind was full of joy.

After the high priest went back to the Saint's Gate, Lucien took an angry glance at Inke and said, "Never talk to me again, you coward scorpion."

Inke was about to make some explanation out of his guilty conscience. Lucien's words pissed him off. Inke sneered and said, "Enjoy your caning!"

Lucien had easily ruined the partnership between the two gatekeepers, so he did not need to worry that Inke might find the truth from any further conversations between them. Dragging "Fil" on the floor, Lucien walked back to the hall in a pretty good mood.

...

Outside of the creepy hall filled with many black coffins, Helges roared angrily, "What did you do to him?!"

Lucien threw "Fil" on the floor and answered casually, "This scorpion was not being polite to me. So I taught him some lesson."

"You filthy scorpion! I'm his leader, and if he needs any lessons, I should be the one to give it!" Helges was very angry. He took a step forward and looked directly into Aska's eyes. He was only about a fist's distance away from Aska.

"So what? You want to beat me?" Lucien laughed hard, "Tell you what. The high priest wants to see you after your shift. You are in trouble haha!"

Helges' anger suddenly disappeared and his voice trembled a bit, "What?"

"Haha, enjoy your caning." Lucien borrowed the words from Inke and turned around, behaving in the typical Aska's manner.

Helges was very upset, but there was nothing he could do. He could only walk back and forth.

"Shall we find a priest to cure Fil...? So he can wake up earlier?" A tomb guard came to him, trying to please Helges.

“You idiot scorpion!” Helges lifted his front leg and kicked the guard hard. Then he bitterly stamped on Fil to release his anger.

No one dared to piss off the high priest!

...

In silence, Lucien and Inke stood in front of the Saint’s Gate and started their shift.

The high priest had also gone back to the stone room and continued to pray.

Time quickly passed by, and the tomb became colder and colder. The power of death was boiling and shouting behind the gate as if countless undead creatures were hitting the gate with their pale, skinny arms.

In the silence, Lucien started to consider how he could go through the gate.

Rhine had left Lucien all the information he needed, including the magic circle design of the gate and the spells. Even as a legendary vampire, Rhine could not directly go through the gate.

Lucien secretly used his spiritual power and checked the gate. After making sure that the information he got was correct, he came up with the basic plan. He was about to use the very quick power change happening at the edge of day and night to hide his magic waves.

Everything went well for Lucien, except when Helges and his team patrolled by, Helges stared at Lucien a few times with great anger.

Before the early morning, at the darkest and coldest moment, the gate suddenly became unreal and distorted, as if it had been transformed into a shadow gate connecting to the hell!

Under the strong smell of death and coldness, Lucien even could not help trembling slightly.

He was very shocked when he sensed the familiar atmosphere—the

atmosphere from the World of Souls!

Although Lucien was not wearing Sun's Corona, since he had been in the World of Souls and dealt with the senior-rank specters from there a few times, Lucien was sensitive enough to tell!

Lucien had so many questions in his mind:

Did Finks, the King of Sphinx, know about the existence of the World of Souls already? Was that the reason why he chose the place close to the gap connecting to the World of Souls to build his tomb?

Did that mean that the Kuo-toans' altar and Thanos' underground palace also had the gaps nearby?

Did Thanos know about the existence of the World of Souls? Was his death related to it?

Lucien had become more cautious and nervous about the World of Souls. He knew that it was not a good time for thinking too much. He tried to stay focused and waited patiently until the daylight arrived.

On the horizon, a slight touch of orange slowly rose and its divinity and grandeur pierced through the darkness.

As soon as the sun started to rise, a ray of sunlight somehow cast on the apex of the pyramid.

In the tomb, the horrible power of death hitting the Saint's Gate suddenly retreated like snow melting under sunlight. The power retreated so fast that it caused very strong power waves.

The high priest was completely focusing on the Saint's Gate, while Inke had seen this so many times, that he was simply looking at the front.

Suddenly, Lucien's body rippled like water and a creepy transparent figure came out. Under the cover of his sphinx body, the transparent figure silently cast the spell and sneaked into the gate from underneath.

However, in front of the gate, Aska was still standing straight.

The fifth-circle illusionary spell, Persistent Image!

And the fourth-circle spell, Gaseous Form!

Chapter 388: The Horrible Pressure

The black smoke quickly rose in the hall packed with the coffins and extended to every corner in the tomb, like ugly and vicious creatures fiercely seizing their territory.

Facing the apex of the pyramid, the tomb guards were all praying. Although most of the time they were all very violent and rude, now they were prostrating themselves on the ground, as docile as little lambs.

The black smoked overwhelmed everything, but the golden light covering their bodies prevented the horrible power of death from approaching them.

In the tomb, the bodies hanging on the wall started moving and roaring wrathfully.

The black coffins suddenly popped open under the invisible power, and many arms and hands wrapped with bandage reached out.

The old bandage soaked with the light yellow oil from the dead bodies looked extremely disgusting. Bitter moaning and angry shouting made the tomb a living hell.

"Lucien" and Inke lifted their spears and cut open the black smoke like dividing water waves. The black smoke went into the gate directly. Despite its ferocity, the black smoke also disappeared very quickly. After about ten seconds, it was completely gone, together with the vicious moaning and roaring.

Seeing that everything had become normal, Inke said to Aska without putting too much thought into it, "Finally, it has come to an end."

"I don't talk to a filthy scorpion," answered Aska coldly.

Inke was very angry, and the flame of anger in his eyes was burning.

However, Aska just sneered and turned around.

Although Inke was very pissed, he didn't dare to cause any troubles right in front of the high priest. He could only look forward, biting his lips. He would never talk to Aska again!

The high priest had noticed what was going on there, but it was not something important for him. He lowered his head and continued to pray to accumulate power.

The fifth-circle illusionary spell, Persistent Image, could create a substantialized copy of the caster that could speak and move, and the caster could even leave some simple messages to the copy to make some casual conversations possible.

...

Behind the Saint's Gate, the black smoke was silently boiling.

In the darkness, Lucien's figure was revealed. He had turned back to his original look and then put up the black hood to cover his face.

To him, this place did feel like the World of Souls. Looking around, Lucien saw some gray spots floating in the air in the boundless silence.

Lucien was right now in a round palace, around which the pattern of sunflowers was delicately drawn everywhere. On the floor, there were golden rays carved on the ground using unknown materials, extending all the way to the lifted altar in the middle.

There was a gold coffin at the center of the altar. On its lid, there were many different patterns of the silver moon.

Since the black smoke with the great power of death was blocking everything from the outside from peeping into this space, it was safe for Lucien to use magic now, and so he cast layers of defensive spells on himself.

However, Lucien still didn't dare to take out Sun's Corona, since it was very closely related to the World of Souls, and Lucien had not figured out the connection yet.

After making sure that the arrangement of the palace was the same as Rhine's description, Lucien started to walk to the altar in the middle following the weird route that Rhine told him.

The closer Lucien went, the colder he felt. The power of death was right above his head. Lucien could hear nothing, and gradually, all the colors also faded.

It took Lucien more than ten minutes to walk to the altar. He put one of his feet onto the gold steps.

Without Rhine's experience, there was no way that Lucien could arrive in front of the gold coffin so easily. It would have taken him days to analyze the arrangement of the magic circles there.

Without wasting any time, Lucien took out the miniature sphinx statue and clicked it into a groove in the lid of the coffin. It fit the groove perfectly, as if the miniature statue was just supposed to be there!

Lucien took a step back and cast a spell. Streams of blood came out of the sphinx statue, and it looked extremely creepy and weird.

The blood went into the coffin, and the black smoke suddenly twitched like it was alive. The silver moon patterns on the lid burst out dim light for a second and went out very quickly.

Although he was prepared, Lucien was still very surprised that everything was just that simple.

He would like to study the magic circles there, but also didn't dare to waste any time. After all, the high priests could find him at any time.

Turning around, he had just taken a few steps when he suddenly felt a horrible and threatening pressure in the space, as if the entire world would come to an end because of it!

A powerful vampire? Prince Dracula? That was Lucien's first thought. He had the blood power, Moonlight, and thus he was very sensitive to the power of a vampire. Clearly, the power was not trying to hide at all.

Facing that great power, even the black smoke had retreated like a scared puppy.

Outside of the tomb, the light at the end of the sky had now disappeared. The sun had disappeared.

Lucien felt that someone had just taken a glance at him, from left to right. He was sweating under the great pressure. His forehead was covered with tiny beads of sweat.

He could feel that the eyes stopped on his Ice & Snow Medal and his Holm Crown Ring for a second and then kept moving forward.

And then, outside of the tomb, the orange sun appeared on the horizon again.

Lucien wondered in fear if that was the power of Prince Dracula. Although his teacher, the Lord of Storm, was as powerful as Prince Dracula, Lucien had never experienced a legendary level's power over himself like this!

Before the darkness disappeared completely, the lid of the coffin squeaked open!

"Who... has... interrupted... my sleep?" The voice was husky, and the tone was completely flat and emotionless.

Lucien suddenly realized that a very vicious power was slowly waking up!

"I've... been... sleeping... for ten thousand years... I've been... trapped. You shall... bear my anger..."

The voice started to become emotional.

Did the Sphinx, who had died ten thousand years ago, come back to life from the World of Souls because of the power of Prince Dracula?

Chapter 389: Finks

Chapter 389: Finks

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Finks, the legendary-level leader who opened the golden age for sphinxes, was also the first leader ever in history to make all the tribes kneel down in front of it.

Although at that time many figures were still much more powerful than Finks, its power was beyond Lucien's imagination. There was no way that Lucien could fight against it. Also, Lucien had no idea what changes had happened to Finks before it came back to life ten thousand years later.

Run! That was the first thought flashing past Lucien's mind.

And it was his only thought when facing a legendary-level enemy!

However, after running backward for just a few steps, Lucien calmed himself down and prevented himself from blindly running for his life.

Run? To where?

If Lucien direct went out through the gate, the level-nine high priest would kill him very easily.

Should Lucien sneak out? He had no idea if he had enough time.

Should Lucien hide in the gap of the World of Souls? No, inside the gap there was the projection of the mausoleum. Something unknown inside of the World of Souls had made Finks come back to life, thus it was the most dangerous place right now!

Lucien still had the space jumping scroll given by the Lord of Storm, and this was probably the only way out for him now. He took out the scroll and was ready to activate it.

“I have been... sleeping... for ten thousand years here... I am... trapped here. How... dare you!”

The voice of Finks sounded rather cold and dry as if it was a piece of wood cracking.

Wait! Lucien noticed the word “trapped”!

Finks was trapped there?! So it had no control over its own death and resurrection?

Then Lucien might still have a slight hope!

Lucien was born to be an adventurer, and his heart gradually started to beat at a regular pace. Holding the scroll tight in his hand, he could feel the rising of the great vicious power on the other side.

The recovery of the power was very slow. Although the power grew rather steadily, it was very slow! To recover its power after ten thousand years, Finks still needed time!

Lucien estimated that Finks still needed at least thirty seconds to fully recover its power. As if he was just like a bystander, Lucien took every factor into consideration.

He quickly cast Strength and Bull’s Strength on himself, and in case, he also finished a tube of the magic potion called Molten Giant’s Fists.

Since Lucien had expected the great danger that he would encounter during the adventure when he was still in Allyn, he had spent all of the arcana points that he got from Fernando using his annual profit to buy the materials. However, he had used a great amount of them to trap Count Vlad.

Lucien had to admit that every fight was basically burning money. Fortunately, he got some good supplement from Rhine’s treasury.

Lucien’s blood boiled in his veins after taking the potion. Bulks of muscles grew out on Lucien’s arms, and he could feel the power of fire in his body.

There were about twenty-one seconds left... Lucien's body became very heavy and clumsy, but he could not take any more potions for improving his agility. He cast the second-circle spell *Elegant Cat* on himself to improve his speed a bit.

"Nineteen seconds... eighteen..." counted Lucien in his mind.

Lucien held the scroll with his mouth and took out the ordinary-looking sword from his magic pouch, holding the handle of the sword very tight.

The warm stream of power infused into Lucien's hands and drove the fear and anxiety away in his mind. What was left was Lucien's willpower that was further strengthened.

"Live... or dead... You shall be my... slave... forever..."

The fury in Finks' voice was more and more obvious, together with the pleasure of gaining its great power again.

However, it was still in the gold coffin, just like what Lucien expected. Its power was not ready yet!

"Fifteen seconds... fourteen..." Lucien had to leave the last five seconds to activate the scroll in case his great gambling would go wrong.

Lucien counted the seconds in his mind, feeling that the great power was slowly accumulating. He walked toward the gold coffin.

"I... have been... awakened... I shall... return..."

The voice of Finks became louder and louder, and the black smoke started to approach the Saint's gate.

"Twelve... eleven..." Lucien was still counting the seconds.

The lid of the gold coffin moved and the dense black smoke quickly covered Finks' body. Lifting *Pale Justice*, Lucien hacked at the cluster of black smoke using all of his strength.

There was no bright light, nor the overwhelming momentum. The

ordinary-looking sword just hacked right in the black smoke. A warm light flashed past, and the black smoke quickly retreated like snow melting in direct sunlight. Finks' body was revealed.

Finks was two to three times bigger than most of the sphinxes. It was wearing a gold crown inlaid with many sunstones and moonstones. Its face and body were wrapped with white bandages, and only its long and narrow eyes could be seen. There was cold and vicious light shining in its eyes.

"I am... back... from... death..."

Finks' mouth did not move, but the voice continued. However, before the words were finished, Lucien's sword hacked right in its face.

Suddenly the sword burst out its great power, determined, fair, and brave!

Finks let out a bitter scream. The strips of bandage broke into pieces and the rotten and pale skin and flesh were exposed. Its golden-brown, fuzzy hair had turned into the clusters of black, filthy hair.

A strong stench came out when the flesh was cut open and the light yellow fluid went down. Facing the power of the sword, the fluid quickly evaporated.

In Finks' bitter scream, countless tiny black bugs crawled out of its body like dark clouds and prevented the blade from cutting deeper.

The power fiercely pushed Lucien backward. Lucien realized that Finks' body was even more resistant and strong than the hardest alloy from the Congress!

The black bugs fell down like it was raining. White and gray light covered Finks' body, and the light filled the gold coffin.

Under the unknown power, the gold lid was drawn back and the coffin was sealed again.

Everything calmed down, leaving the black smoke slowly rolling

over and over in the air.

The power of Pale Justice, when facing demons, devils and the dead creatures, equaled that of a legendary level weapon!

Lucien used the sword to support the weight of his body, as the single one hacking had cost all of his strength. Fortunately, he had stopped Finks from coming back to this world.

Lucien never planned to directly fight against Finks, a legendary level creature. The reason why Lucien could hurt it was that Finks was still trapped in the gold coffin.

Therefore, seeing that the coffin stopped moving, Lucien took a few steps backward.

There were many questions in his mind – Who trapped Finks? Why? Why it could come back to life?

It was not a good time to time into all the questions. Lucien had to leave this place as soon as possible.

When he was about to leave, he recalled what Finks just said. He suddenly felt like playing a joke, so he slightly bowed in front of the coffin.

“Please go back to sleep.”

...

Trembling, all the priests prostrated themselves on the ground under the great pressure from the stare of Prince Dracula, although the vampire prince had calmed down.

When the high priest felt a bit more relieved from the pressure, it felt something different happening behind the gate. The black smoke was stirring, as if it was embracing something, or celebrating.

The high priest knew that something was going on behind the gate. When he looked at the corridor, he saw a skinny sphinx wearing the gold crown decorated with many black feathers coming to him in a

hurry.

“Your Holiness Hrotos.” The high priest hurriedly lowered its head.

The skinny sphinx was the level nine holy priest, whose name was Hrotos.

The look on Hrotos’ face was very serious, “A legendary level leader with a horrible power just passed here. I’m concerned that the long sleep of our king might have been affected.”

Suddenly, Hrotos’ eyes opened wide when seeing the gatekeeper, Aska, who was still standing straight in front of the gate, while Inke was sitting on the floor out of fear.

“It’s a copy! Someone has sneaked into the gate!” As a level nine holy priest, Hrotos could easily tell.

The high priest was shocked. After casting a spell to check on Aska, the high priest finally realized what had happened.

“Someone’s in the gate!” blurted out the high priest.

Chapter 390: The Demon Compact

Chapter 390: The Demon Compact

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The holy priest burst out an angry roar and pointed its gold scepter toward the Saint's Gate. Shining lines quickly lit up on the gray stone gate, outlining the strange shape of a beetle.

Suddenly, the Saint's Gate burst out strong light like a small sun. The light was so bright that the high priest had tears in its eyes. For a second, it could not see anything.

In the bright light, the gate slowly opened. The boiling black smoke was suppressed.

...

Lucien suddenly became very alert when he heard the gate opening. He had no idea what had happened, but he was certain that the sphinxes had somehow figured out that there was someone in there.

Should he activate the level nine scroll? Lucien was still holding Pale Justice in his one hand and in the other hand the scroll from Fernando. When his brain was working very hard to come up with the possible solutions, Lucien looked around in the palace. When he saw the gold coffin in the middle, he got an idea.

At that specific moment, it was still not necessary for him to waste this precious scroll.

The gate slowly opened, and bright light cast in.

Lucien used his left hand, the one holding the scroll, and took out another item from his magic pouch. In the middle, there was a cross, surrounded by sunlight rays. It was Maskelyne's Sun's Corona!

Since Finks had gone back to sleep, hiding in the gap of the World

of Souls was less dangerous now!

The warm and soft feeling from the divine power soothed Lucien, although the space gap connecting to the World of Souls was just above the gold coffin.

The black winding gap was hanging above the coffin as if there was a sharp sword hanging over Finks.

Holding Pale Justice, Sun's Corona, and the scroll, Lucien jumped in the gap dragging his heavy body.

When the holy priest walked in and scanned the entire palace with its spiritual power, it found nothing there!

"Filthy desecrator!" Hrotos roared angrily, and all the sphinxes outside lay prostrate on the floor again.

Although the holy priest found nothing there, it did sense the smell of a stranger. Hrotos thought that the intruder had escaped.

Raising the gold scepter, Hrotos released a creepy roaring. One of its eyes turned as shiny as the sun, and the other was as bright as the silver moon.

In his creepy eyes, the scenes repeated. The holy priest saw the mysterious man wearing the black hood sneaking into the palace, hacking at the gold coffin, and when he jumped forward, the space twisted.

The ninth-circle spell, Retrospective Sight.

Although Hrotos could not see the details, it could tell that what the man did there.

The intruder had prevented Finks, their greatest king, from coming back to life!

"Your Holiness Hrotos, where is the intruder now?" asked the high priest using a lot of courage.

"He has escaped," said the holy priest coldly, whose voice sounded

from hell, “He tried to ruin the body of our king to prevent him from coming back to life.”

“Then...” said the high priest in panic.

“The greatest king’s power is beyond that tiny bug’s imagination,” said Hrotos, staring at the gold coffin, “I can still feel that our king is watching us. I can still feel his overwhelming power.”

Then Hrotos raised the scepter and tried to find more clues.

The light of sun shone, but it went dim suddenly. Hrotos was shocked, “He’s not in this world?!”

No... that was not accurate. Hrotos could feel the man’s existence, but it could not find him!

At least, the mysterious man was not in any dimensions that Hrotos knew.

...

After jumping through the heavy curtains at the entry of the World of Souls, Lucien felt the familiar deathly stillness. There was only black, white, and gray in this world.

However, he was still in the same palace, and the only difference was that it had been deprived of all the colors.

No, it was not all the colors. Lucien was shocked when he saw the dim red lines covering the gray-colored gold coffin. Those lines extended to all the magic circles in the palace.

Although the brownish-red color was rather dim, it still easily stood out in the black-and-white world, and there was no way that Lucien could ignore it. Above the gray coffin, there was also a bloody, dark-red light ball. It was beating like a heart in that very creepy world.

Closing his eyes, Lucien noticed that he could not feel this light ball at all with his spiritual power, however, when he opened his eyes, the light ball was just over there!

And there were many more things changing inside of the light ball.

Lucien wondered what that light ball was, and, in his eyes, these lines were drawing Finks' power. He tried his best not to spend some time there for any investigation, including collecting one of the lines, or taking a closer look at the light ball, after all, a senior-rank specter could be there at any time!

Putting back the sword, Lucien dispelled the spells for strengthening his power and cast a series of new defensive spells on himself. Then, he pushed open the Saint's Gate from inside.

There were no level eight or nine undead creatures since all of the holy priests and the highest priests could build their own tombs.

Beside the gate stood two sphinxes as well. They were the underworld guards wrapped in bandages.

The two guards released silent scream and attacked Lucien in a rigid way, like two cold statues.

Lucien calmly touched the corona that he was wearing in front of his chest, and a holy halo rippled out.

Affected by the warm light, the two guards suddenly became very stiff and they were trapped still. Then they were turned into two piles of ashes as if they had been weathered for thousands of years.

The six-level divine spell, Exorcist Halo!

Lucien quickly ran downwards along the corridor, and the halo was still around him.

The tomb behind the gate sensed the incompatible brightness and a great stir suddenly happened. In the world of black and white, the many underworld guards holding the spears came back to life and chased after Lucien with innumerable black little bugs like flood waves.

The entire tomb slightly trembled when the halo touched the edge of the insect waves and further spread out. The black bugs burned in smoke, and the gray and white guards were instantly demolished

into ashes.

The corridor had been cleared out. Lucien ran fast through the corridors and he was already very close to the entrance of the tomb.

Suddenly, a tall and big guard whose eyes were shining with white light jumped out. Surrounded by a death halo and holding a giant sword, it directly rushed at Lucien from the corner.

Lucien did not try to avoid the attack, instead, he activated Sun's Corona before the layers of protection on him were cut open.

A thick light pillar shot down from the ceiling and directly hit the underground guard. The guard was instantly decomposed into many black light spots and they evaporated very quickly.

When the light pillar was gone, there was only a deep hole left on the floor. The black pieces were the remains of the guard.

The level eight divine spell, Sunburst!

Seizing the chance, Lucien ran out of the tomb and saw the gray sky of the World of Souls and the faded desert.

However, what Lucien just saw in the palace, including the dark-red lines, the hidden magic circles, and the dim light ball, still lingered in his brain. It seemed that they were all drawing Finks' power, and probably Rhine was stealing the power as well.

Lucien wondered who set up everything at the very beginning. He had some guesses, but the rust-colored light ball was still a great mystery to him.

However, he dared not to waste too much time there. Lucien activated the transformation mask and turned himself into one of the most common undead creatures in the World of Souls to find another exit.

...

In Viscount Nour's castle in Province Marimburg, Gusta Empire.

The viscount closed the door tight and activated all the magic traps, then walked into the secret chamber in his study. In the chamber, there were rows of beautiful females at different ages lying there, with their faces flushing like roses. It looked as if they were just sleeping.

The way that the viscount looked at them was sick and crazy. As if he was appreciating a piece of delicate artifact, Nour reached out his right hand and gently stroke one of the little girls' faces, who was just about thirteen or fourteen. He felt the coldness from her skin.

"They never understand... Bodies are the best in this world. Women with intelligence, they betray, they lie, they cause troubles... Only bodies are perfect! The coldness you feel when you touch them, and the soft muscles... This is art!" murmured the viscount crazily.

After being transformed into a vampire by a countess, Nour had developed necrophilia. Other vampires disdained him strongly, thus he needed to hide in human society to enjoy.

Suddenly, he sensed a certain stir in the air, and to his great shock, Nour discovered that he could not move anymore. In the mirror at the other end of the room, he saw a mysterious man wearing a black robe standing there.

"What... do... you... want?" Even his throat became very stiff.

Nour was very afraid. He knew that the man must be a senior-rank sorcerer as the third-circle necromantic trapping magic was very powerful.

"I was about to borrow a bit of your blood from you, and let you sleep for a while," said Lucien disgustedly, "but now... I have to say that I'll take your head."

After leaving the World of Souls through another gap, Lucien tried to find the vampires hiding in human beings society. Since Prince Dracula was still chasing after Rhine, turning himself into another vampire and returning to Night Highland was Lucien's best way out.

“No!” shouted Nour bitterly, but the sound he made sounded somehow ridiculous.

The bright light overwhelmed Nour and the beautiful bodies behind him.

...

Antiffler, Holy Heilz Empire, the grandest city in the world.

Standing in the corner and staring at the magnificent city wall built to prevent the invasion of the giants, Beaulac Von Anjou, the immediate member of the Gorse family, looked rather gloomy.

“Young Master, we shall go now.” A thin man in a black jacket walked to him.

Beaulac turned around and slightly nodded, “I hear you, Giz. Hopefully, we can get something this time.”

“Master Beaulac, the duke is still going to last for a while.” Giz looked at the young man who was quite anxious, smiling.

As one of the most famous and long-living families in Holy Heilz Empire, the Gorse family today still had two gold knights and was in charge of its own order of chivalry – The Order of the Gorse. Since the eldest son of the old duke passed away many years ago, Beaulac had become one of the most promising contenders for the title because of his pure blood. However, for some reason, he had not awakened his Blessing yet, thus right now his competitor, Arthen, a level three grand knight, was having a great edge over him.

Thinking of how arrogant Arthen was and all the noble pleasers around him, Beaulac felt very humiliated.

He had sworn in his mind that one day he would make all the people who had once abandoned him feel extremely regretful!

Realizing that the magic potion from his family would not be helpful to him, after experiencing the great inner struggle, Beaulac finally made up his mind and came to the black market to seek for

an amazing magic item that could do the job.

Led by Giz, Beaulac walked into an ordinary-looking villa. Under the villa, in a basement way more spacious than it would seem, hid the biggest black market in Antiffler.

Picking up magic items one by one and then dropping them down, Beaulac looked very disappointed.

At this time, a white-haired old man walked to him.

“Young man, I’ve seen your destiny in the crystal ball. Do you want to know it?” The mysterious old man smiled.

Beaulac’s eyes suddenly opened wide, and he looked at the crystal ball in the old man’s hand. How dare the sorcerer just show up like this in the black market?

“I don’t believe in fate. Everything is a blessing from God.” Obviously, Beaulac would not easily trust a stranger.

The old man wearing the black robe did not mind it, “It’s fine. One’s destiny is always changing. If you are desperate, come to me.”

And then the old man left.

Shaking his head, Beaulac continued to look for the magic item he wanted. It was already the ninth time that he came there. As a quite stubborn person, he believed in the power of number nine. Beaulac was convinced that it was most likely for him to find the thing he wanted this time, and if he failed, the hope would become slim to none.

Right now, he was becoming more and more disappointed.

Maybe... maybe he could never defeat Arthen. Beaulac was beyond depressed.

“Young master... maybe we can try... I mean, the divination...” Giz suggested.

After a long silence, Beaulac nodded.

They went to the old man's booth and sat down, "Please."

The old man grinned as he gently stroke the crystal ball. It quickly became turbid inside.

Spots of light shone in the crystal ball and soon disappeared. The old man looked up and said, "You're expecting a great shift in your destiny."

"What is that?!" burst out Beaulac nervously.

The old man said slowly, "What I can see is that it will happen in the remote villa left by your father when the darkness arrives."

Beaulac was shocked that the old man had seen the remote villa belonging to his father. His father's mistress once lived there, and most of the family members did not know.

After paying the old man two Thales, Beaulac left the booth. Somehow, when he looked back, the old man had disappeared together with his tiny booth!

In the entire black market, they never found the black-robed old man again.

"Where did he go?" Beaulac and Giz exchanged a look filled with shock.

...

When night arrived, in the remote villa, Beaulac had dismissed all the servants. He tried to find something special in the house as indicated by the old man, but found nothing.

Beaulac became even more confused as he murmured to himself in the study. It was already mid-night, and the silver moon was hanging high in the sky .

When he was totally desperate, he saw that a beam of moonlight fell on his father's portrait. Under the moonlight, Beaulac saw the

index finger of his father's right hand slightly distorted, pointing inward.

Inward?

Inside!

Beaulac jumped up from the couch and took out the portrait from the frame. After checking the portrait carefully, he discovered a piece of parchment behind it.

The parchment reminded him of his father's words that he was told a long time ago, "When you feel beyond desperate, come and see the portrait to find your power."

Beaulac's memory was rather vague. He hurriedly unfolded the parchment excitedly.

A piece of white paper fell out from the parchment roll, and he saw the familiar handwriting from his father.

"Beaulac, when you have lost all of your hope, you may want to borrow power from the compact. However, you cannot sell your soul to the demon, nor can you rely on it."

His breath became very heavy. The parchment was written in the ancient language of Sylvanas:

"The rule of demon: you pay when you want to get! Are you willing to accept it?"

Beaulac bit his lips tight and he gripped the parchment in his hand. After a while, he nodded heavily.

A line of words appeared on the parchment. Although Beaulac did not know the language, somehow he could understand it,

"You, who wants to sign the compact, shall follow the steps to summon the most powerful demon: when the clock strikes twelve, light a white candle in front of a mirror. With your hair disheveled, peel an apple. If the peeling goes all the way from the beginning until the end, and the candle does not go out, you will summon the

demon!”

Chapter 391: Greed

Chapter 391: Greed

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Staring at the parchment in hand, Beaulac felt that it was just a joke. The so-called magic rite was too simple and ridiculous. It seemed that this magic rite just came from a piece of folktale.

How could anyone manage to summon the most powerful demon like that?

Although Beaulac never learned magic, he had some basic understanding of magic rites. As one of the most flourishing families with a long history in Holy Heilz Empire, the Gorse family had gathered a lot of precious documents related to magic, so the family members could be profound enough for their adventures outside of the empire. There were rumors saying that the Gorse family was the descendant of Thanos, the Sun King, from the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire.

However, although at the first glance, the magic rite looked rather ridiculous, it was surely creepy. Maybe something powerful and mysterious was hiding behind it.

After around ten minutes, Beaulac started talking to himself as if he was puffing himself with the courage, “It wouldn’t do any harm if I just tried it... Maybe it’s just a joke, but maybe... I’m ready for signing the compact anyway.”

He clenched his fists and the look on his face was quite distorted. His eyes were filled with enthusiasm and cruelty.

Looking up at the clock, Beaulac realized that it was already close to eleven thirty at night. He hurriedly set off to find the candle, mirror, apple, and knife.

However, the faster he rushed, the harder it was for him to collect all the materials. After more than ten minutes, he finally found a

mirror and a knife, but the white candle and the apple were still nowhere to be found.

He was very regretful that he had dismissed all the servants and gave them one day off. He never had to rummage around himself!

His forehead was covered with sweat, and he even wanted to slap himself in the face, for he was going to miss that great opportunity tonight! It was almost twelve at midnight!

However, eventually, he managed to find a white candle and an apple in the kitchen.

He had never felt luckier before. Holding the candle and the apple in his hands, he felt the sincere joy.

Hurriedly running back to the study, Beaulac blew out the rest of the candles and only left one to provide light. Then, he placed all the items on the desk.

It was only two minutes to midnight. Beaulac made his blond hair a great mess and now he looked like a vicious wizard in the folktales.

After finishing all the work, he sat behind the desk and waited. Suddenly, a thought worried him greatly. He wondered if the clock was accurate.

Taking out his fancy pocket watch, Beaulac double-checked the time, but then he started to doubt if his pocket watch was still working properly.

Although Beaulac knew that it probably did not need to be this accurate, he was still very nervous. He felt that this was his last gleam of hope.

Tick-tack... Tick-tack... The sound of the clock sounded rather loud. Beaulac's heart beat fiercely as if it was going to jump out of his chest. His blood was flowing faster and faster.

Dang... The clock struck twelve. Beaulac's back suddenly straightened. He hurriedly blew out the candle and lit up the white one. Under such a great sense of pressure, he almost broke the

candle.

The dim candlelight looked rather mysterious and dreamlike in the mirror, as if countless demons were hiding in the shadow.

In the dark closed room, Beaulac shivered from the atmosphere. He started believing in this magic rite now.

With his trembling hands, he picked up the knife and the green apple and started peeling it. Although he never peeled an apple himself, with his power equivalent to a high-level squire, Beaulac was quite good at controlling his hands. A few times, he almost failed, but still successfully got the job done.

When he looked in the mirror, he saw his face covered by his messy hair. The candlelight lit up part of his face.

He never looked at himself in this way, and Beaulac even dared not to recognize himself in the mirror, as if he had already fallen in the hell. The long and thin apple peel fell on the desk. Beaulac hurriedly looked up, hoping that the summoning had worked.

However, all he could see in the mirror was still himself.

Beaulac was very upset. He had no idea which step was wrong.

Suddenly, a cool draft rose in the closed study, making the candlelight flicker. Beaulac hurriedly looked in the mirror again and saw that there was a creepy smile on his face.

The 'Beaulac' in the mirror, with that vicious smile, started pulling the skin off from his face, and the bloody flesh underneath was revealed.

Beaulac wanted to scream but found himself unable to. He wanted to stay away from the mirror but discovered that he had been trapped on the seat.

The blood and flesh started wriggling and finally turned into a white-faced demon with a long red tongue hanging.

"You have summoned me, from the deepest places in hell. Now, you

may say your request.”

The extremely cold voice made Beaulac shiver, but at the same time he finally realized what was going on—he had indeed summoned the demon! The rite worked!

“I want to... I want to become a knight! A grand knight! No... I want to be the Gorse Duke!” burst out Beaulac, feeling extremely thrilled. At this time, in his eyes, the ugly and horrible demon was his last hope!

“You get; you pay. That’s the rule of demons. Are you ready to pay?” With its long tongue hanging down, the demon put on a cold smile.

When Beaulac was just about to nod, a thought flashed through his mind and he stopped himself. Instead, he asked, “The costs are different, aren’t they? For different things.”

“Of course. I’m one of the seven most powerful demons from hell, and my name is Greed. Your pay must satisfy me,” said the demon.

The demon’s words reminded Beaulac of the most ancient story told in his family. In that ancient story, there were seven mysterious demons from ancient times, for example, Greed and Wrath.

Thus, Beaulac had completely believed in the compact and asked respectfully, “Your Excellency, Greed, what would cost me to be the duke, and what would it be to be a grand knight? What about just becoming a knight?”

When trading with a demon, one had to be extremely careful. Beaulac remembered the note left by his father.

Greed responded, “If you want to become the duke, you have to give me your soul when you die. No worries. Your soul will still be able to enjoy the endless happiness in my realm. If you choose to become a grand knight, you have to give me the rest of your life after reaching fifty. No matter who you are and how powerful you become, you can only live up to fifty years. If you just want to become a knight, you shall give me ten years of your life.”

Beulac took a deep breath and became hesitant. Of course, he did not want to sell his soul to the demon. What was the point of he becoming the duke if he had to die at fifty?

However, the demon, Greed, seemed to be quite different. It was not lying about anything, and it was very clear about all the consequences.

After a long time, Beulac asked in the low voice, “After I make the choice this time, if somehow I fail to hit my final target, can I summon you and make another choice again?”

“No problem. But that will be another trade,” said Greed.

“Then...” Beulac took a deep breath, “I choose to become a knight who still has the potential to become a grand knight.”

“As you wish. However, to do so, I have to slightly change your destiny track. So, you have to tell me in details whatever happened to you. The more detailed your description is, the more likely I can make sure that you can still become a grand knight in the future,” said the demon in a very well-mannered way.

Beulac could not wait to become a knight and did not doubt the demon’s words. He was told that the more a prophet knew about a person, the more accurate the fortunetelling result would be.

“... My first time... happened when I was seduced by my father’s mistress. She’s getting old now, and I’m pulling away from her...” Beulac confessed his life experience in great details, including his personality and many habits.

Outside of the study, the secret guard was just staring at the other end of the corridor. According to the tradition of the family, the guards could not interfere with inheritors’ doing. As long as the inheritors had not sold their souls and betrayed the family, they could do whatever they had to become the duke, even including seeking the power from demons.

The motto of the family was: power and means form the foundation of everything.

Therefore, the guard did not stop Beaulac in the black market but simply protected the young master and later he was about to report this to the old duke. When he knew that the young master was looking for some white candles and apples, the guard wondered why the magic rite was so strange.

Soon after the rite started, the guard felt dizzy and then lost his consciousness.

...

In another room of the villa, wearing a black hood, smiling, Lucien was quietly looking at the mirror in front of them and listening to Beaulac's life story.

The best way to get someone's detailed information was to let the person talk himself!

Sometimes, even without using magic, one could steal another person's memory as long as the biggest weakness of the mind was found!

Chapter 392: The New Beaulac

When he was telling everything to the demon, Beaulac had a sense of relief, as he was letting out all the emotions that had been hidden for so long.

In the end, Beaulac felt that his mind was cleaner as if he had found the power to move forward.

The night was very quiet. Beaulac felt that his soul was drifting in the air and then slowly became part of the darkness. In the darkness, he felt very sleepy.

"You have signed the compact. When you wake up, you will find yourself a real knight," Greed's voice made Beaulac feel even more drowsy.

Beaulac was very excited and finally felt very relaxed. Then, he fell into the boundless darkness.

...

The secret guard outside of the study shivered because of the cold breeze in November, and then he heard a vague voice in the study, "You have signed the compact. You will give me ten years of your life as the payment, and you will become a knight, still with the potential to become a grand knight."

Frederick, the secret guard, who was a level-five grand knight, slightly nodded when hearing that Beaulac did not choose to sell his soul or betray the family. However, he had no idea why, for a short while, he felt very dizzy and lost his mind.

As there was no clock in the corridor, and Frederick also forgot to check his own pocket watch. He thought that his dizziness only lasted for around ten seconds, thus in his mind, everything was fine.

When Frederick extended his willpower into the room, he felt the strong heartbeat from Beaulac. He could tell that the heartbeat belonged to a knight.

It seemed that Beaulac, who had just become a knight, was not yet able to control the state of his body, thus Frederick was able to detect the difference.

Frederick could not believe that the ridiculous magic rite indeed worked, but it was true. Driven by greed, he felt like trying the magic rite as well, since he had been trying to become a radiant knight for almost thirty years!

...

In the study, Lucien looked at himself in the mirror in the dim candlelight. In the mirror, he had turned himself into a good-looking, blond young man with blue eyes.

It was known that the members from the Gorse family were all very good-looking. The blond Lucien smiled and combed his shoulder-length hair with his hand casually.

The gloomy and depressed Beaulac was gone, and he was now looking energetic and confident just the way he was five years before.

Among the many widely-told stories and poems about the Gorse family, although there were countless made-up or exaggerated ones, there was one thing true: the family was indeed the descendant of Thanos, the Sun King. Underneath one of their old villas in Antiffler lay the palace of Thanos, guarded by a gold knight all the time.

Lucien had to go to the palace, but there was no way that he could force his way into it.

The good news to Lucien was that there was an old and important tradition in this family: when time was proper, more than ten candidate successors would be sent to the secret underground palace, and they would fight against or cooperate with each other to explore the palace. The one who first completed the mission would be the first successor.

In the palace, the powerful knights in the family would not interrupt the competition. Only those who were dying would be

sent out by magic circles. Therefore, the game was rather cruel: some chose to fight face to face; some chose to use the dirty methods; some lied; and others betrayed, and since the palace itself was rather mysterious and dangerous, the winner of each generation was either very powerful or resourceful. In other words, it was blood which made the family stay strong for hundreds of years.

However, in the recent several decades, the relatively remote nobles from the Gorse family also started to send their children to the palace to challenge the young nobles. In the game, they could also become closer to the possible future successor. Some young nobles from other big families might also join the game, as they simply wanted some excitement in their boring life.

In this game, social skills were very important.

Since only the Gorse family's blood could open the inner chamber where Thanos' Quadrant was kept. Based on Lucien's observation, he picked Beaulac, a young successor with many strong desires in his mind, which made his mind very vulnerable.

Because the spell for opening the chamber was very complicated, Lucien could not charm Beaulac to do the job for him. Lucien had to go himself.

In front of the mirror, Lucien made sure that the way he behaved was typical of Beaulac. Then, he looked at Beaulac, who was sleeping in the secret chamber which Lucien just spent two days building. He put on a smile and said to Beaulac, "When I have some spare time, I'll change your blood power."

If one still wished to grow into a grand knight after becoming a knight with external help, there was one way: a senior-rank vampire could change a person's blood power using another form of Embrace. And right now, Lucien was a senior vampire who was able to do so.

At the very beginning, it was vampires' Embrace that inspired the sorcerers when they were studying how to change blood powers.

At that time, they discovered that a vampire's Embrace could give the target the power of a knight, and the target was still able to increase the power further. Although the process would be much slower, this was definitely an easy way to obtain power.

The sorcerers thought that they had found the best way of acquiring power, and they used the method on some human beings. However, it turned out later that without a very strong willpower, one could never become a grand knight merely with external help. Even if magic could push a human being's body to the limit of a radiant knight or even a gold knight, the person would still die from the power collapsing, and his body would explode.

As for what would happen to Beaulac after he got the blood power from a vampire, Lucien did not care. Sometimes, Lucien could be as cunning as a demon.

And if Beaulac could be very careful, it was very unlikely that the family would notice, unless someone caught Beaulac sucking blood right on the spot and carefully checked. The power of the family came from Thanos, the Sun King, and thus any blood powers, or Blessings as the Church called it, that were related to the stars in the sky could be awakened, including the top ones such as Sun, Silver Moon, and Stars, and the relatively inferior ones including Thanos and the ones named after the other constellations. Therefore, the blood power of Silver Moon was very similar to the power of vampires.

Blowing out the candle, Lucien walked to the bedroom in the darkness, with his eyes dimly shining with a light akin to moonlight.

In the darkness, Fredrick slightly nodded. He had recognized the power—Silver Moon.

After the transformation, Lucien was still able to use his blood power, and his, Moonlight, worked especially great with the power of the Gorse family.

Lucien's plan worked very well. At the very beginning, Lucien had planned everything. Beaulac's choice would not affect the plan at

all.

...

In Fredrick's eyes, the young master only spent a few days getting used to the power before becoming active again.

A fancy coach drawn with delicate pattern of gorses under the sunlight was speeding along a wide street.

The profound citizens living in this capital along both sides of the street were guessing who was in the coach. Was it Arthen who was getting all the attention? Or was it the poor Beaulac?

They knew from the shape and design of the coach that the person sitting in it was not a duke, marquis, or count. In Holy Heilz Empire, where the traditions were highly respected, any arrogation of the ranks was strictly forbidden.

"Obviously, it's Beaulac, the poor guy," said a citizen with great confidence, as if he was a member of the Gorse family. "Baron Arthen is a grand knight. He has his own seal. Beaulac never managed to awaken his blood power. He's not even close to my neighbor, Liddell."

Another man shook his head, "Baron Arthen is very confident with winning the dukedom, thus he never uses his own seal. He's been waiting for the day after the competition next month when he can use the gold-eye seal of the family."

Like the title, the Violet Countess, for the Violet family, the Gorse family's leader's title was the Tillis Count, and the core of the seal was a gold eye.

The residents in the capital were indeed quite knowledgeable. They even knew that the family competition would be carried out a month later.

Sitting in the fancy coach, Lucien, wearing the brand-new white shirt, was heading for a party held by the son of a count.

"Look, look... Aren't you Beaulac? I thought you went missing."

Lucien heard the sarcastic tone from the left side of the coach. He lifted the curtain and saw a dark-red coach moving parallel with his. From the window, the eyes on a pale face were looking at Beaulac with excitement and provocation.

"I'm terribly sorry, Duda. I never went missing, to your great disappointment," answered Lucien calmly. Recalling Beaulac's narrative, Lucien recognized the pale face. He was the son of Count Porti and used to hang out with Beaulac a lot, but now he was a loyal supporter of Arthen.

Seeing the confident smile on Beaulac's face, Duda recalled the time when Beaulac was gaining the greatest momentum several years ago. What happened to Beaulac? Duda could not help wondering.

"No kidding... You're coming over to Deniz's party?! Don't you know that Arthen will show up with Jocelyn tonight?" Duda hated seeing today's Beaulac, and he kept trying to embarrass his friend from the past.

"So? Arthen is not yet the Gold-eye Count," responded Lucien in a plain tone.

Beaulac loved Jocelyn before, who was the daughter of a marquis. He had spent a lot of time on pursuing her, but when they were about to engage, Arthen took Jocelyn away from him.

Seeing that Beaulac remained so indifferent, Duda tightened his right fist. He had no idea what had happened to Beaulac, but what Duda did know for sure was that Beaulac was even more confident and calm than he was before, as if everything was under his control!

Putting down the curtain, Lucien closed his eyes. His coach continued moving forward toward the garden villa where Deniz was holding the party.

Duda sat in the coach with a gloomy face. He knew that he must tell Arthen about this.

Chapter 393: The Guests

November was the Month of Winter. The city in the north, Antiffler, was ready to become the world of ice and snow at any time under the freezing wind.

The light blue and clear river named Donati went through the city, and Count Mecklen's garden villa was located on the piece of highland near the river. Behind the villa, there was a very steep hill called Saxony, carved with countless fine relief sculptures.

This was a classic pillar-structured villa, which accorded with the conservative building style of Holy Heilz Empire. However, when Lucien went through the garden blooming with the light-purple flowers called Crystal Elf and stepped into the hall, he discovered that the design of the place was definitely inspired by the passion from the Kingdom of Syracuse based on its luxurious decoration, the featured curved lines on the walls, and the unique layout of the place.

The walls around and the ceiling above were drawn with many beautiful half-naked young women. Together with the well-built male statues placed in the space, a bold and unrestrained atmosphere was created.

Lucien had some understanding of art and psychology. When he was appreciating the stunning design of the place, he was also trying to figure out what the young nobles of the empire were thinking. It seemed that the younger generation of the nobles in Holy Heilz Empire had been fed up by the extremely conservative traditions and rules, and they were leaning toward the luxurious style from the Kingdom of Syracuse not far away from them.

This was for sure a piece of good news for the Congress of Magic and the Kingdom of Holm.

While many places like Allyn, the Kingdom of Holm, and the Duchy of Calais were all developing at a fast pace with great energy, and the popularization of the alchemical items were also bringing many

big changes to the social structures and people's way of thinking, the younger generations in Holy Heilz Empire and the Kingdom of Syracuse were still blindly enjoying their wealth and extravagant way of living.

When the young fell, the nation fell. Those people who worried could survive, and those who saw no dangers would die.

Wearing a polite smile on his face, Lucien walked to the host of tonight's party, Deniz Mecklen.

"My dear Beaulac, I thought you wouldn't come!" said Deniz, who was a delicate and pretty young man with long blond hair. There were many exquisite designs on his dark-red suit, including the mysterious ruby brooch and the fine silver chains.

In Lucien's eyes, Deniz was like a postmodernism artist, which complied with the description of Beaulac: Deniz was passionate about painting and sketch, and he also designed jewelry and clothes himself. At the same time, he regarded himself as a fine and perfect female, and thus Deniz liked men.

Lucien knew that he could never underestimate Deniz, who was the first one among the younger generation of the nobles in Antiffler to become a grand knight. At that moment, Deniz was only around twenty-seven, but he was already a level-five grand knight, and his blood power, Thunder, was very powerful.

After gently hugging Deniz, Lucien grinned, "Why wouldn't I?"

Deniz covered his mouth and giggled, "That was just my instinct. Men are always rude but fragile. I was afraid that you and Arthen might give each other some hard time over the party, and I know that Arthen has been waiting for this opportunity for so long, so he could rule you out from the underground palace competition. Then, it would be way easier for him to win the game. The rest of the monkeys will bend their knees in front of him."

Lucien had some uncomfortable feeling in his stomach, but he tried to maintain the loving smile on his face, "Monkeys are just monkeys."

Lucien's response surprised Deniz, and he looked at Lucien with his light-brown eyes, "What happened to you, Beaulac? You're different now. I can feel your confidence."

Playing to be mysterious, Lucien just smiled but did not say anything.

Deniz giggled again, "This is getting very interesting now. I'm wondering if I should go down there as well. Please me, Beaulac. Maybe I am willing to help you beat Arthen."

The fact that maybe Beaulac could win the important help from Deniz was the very reason why Beaulac accepted the invitation to the party.

Lucien purposefully put on a quite encouraged look, but he also said, "Maybe Arthen will have some helpers as well."

Deniz laughed, "Don't get all excited. This is not a decision yet. The old one in my family carries a lot of hope in Arthen after all."

Clearly, Deniz was waiting for Beaulac to ask again and use all the means he could to please him, but Lucien did not really need his help. So, he decided to look up at the ceiling.

"Isn't this my beloved cousin Beaulac?"

The deep and feigned voice came from the gate.

Lucien believed that he had heard the voice earlier when he was walking around. Turning around, Lucien saw a tall blond man walking toward them holding the arm of a beautiful young woman.

The young man was wearing a fancy and formal uniform from the military. On his right chest, there was a fine ribbon, and on the other side, there was a row of medals. Beside him, the young lady was very elegant dressing in a light-blue evening dress. She was definitely attracting most of the men's attention at the party.

Lucien looked at the blond man and grinned, "Arthen, you might want to behave in a more mature way, as a member of our Gorse family. The other guests here might think we're rude when you are

yelling."

"Beaulac, you..." The look in Arthen's eyes changed. What Duda told him was correct. Something had happened to Beaulac, and right now he was showing a completely different attitude to him!

Arthen did not show his thoughts on his face, instead, he still put on a smile, "My dear cousin, nobility comes from our blood. A noble who cannot awaken his blood power is not qualified. Also, you know nothing about art. You don't know painting, music, piano, or poem. You tell me how you differentiate yourself from those ordinary citizens. After all, many of them at least know how to play a musical instrument!"

When Beaulac was the most promising inheritor of the title, he was busing with reaching out to the other nobles and attending all the parties, so he hardly had any time studying art. And when he lost his edge, he devoted all his time to knight training, but he obtained nothing in the end. Thus, many nobles called Beaulac a savage behind his back.

Lucien was not interested in winning the quarrel. He simply lifted his eyebrow a bit and responded, "He who laughs last laughs best."

"Oh, really? I've heard that you've been to the black market very often recently, my dear cousin. I'm sure that you've discovered some good stuff there. But I would like to advise you to think about how far you can go with this external help." Arthen was indicating that he was constantly watching Beaulac.

As he was saying it, Arthen held the young lady's hand tight in his own, "And the really wise lady, like Jocelyn, always chooses someone like me."

Jocelyn lowered her flushed face. However, to Lucien, a real wise lady should always rely on herself and her power.

When Lucien was considering how he should respond to this in accordance with Beaulac's personality, the hall suddenly quieted down. A blond girl dressing in an exquisite white evening dress showed up at the gate. Decorated with sweet laces, the girl was like

an elf. She was not very tall, but there was energy in her elegance. Behind her, there was an old lady wearing a black dress.

"It's my great pleasure to have you here, Princess Sophia." Deniz walked to her and kissed her hand respectfully.

Somehow, Lucien could always encounter princesses.

Sophia grinned, "Deniz, I'll only recognize your hospitality if you play for me."

Deniz giggled with his pinkie up, "Come on, I'm not good at it. There're so many guests here. We should have a gentleman playing for us."

Lucien had some uncomfortable feeling in his stomach. When he looked up, he saw that the old lady was looking at him.

The old lady's eyes slightly squinted. It seemed that she could tell Lucien's knight power.

"I'd like to play for you, Your Highness." All of a sudden, Arthen stood out.

The look on Jocelyn's face became quite gloomy.

As known to all, Princess Sophia was a big piano fan. However, because she was not a knight and she did not have much talent in music, she was not good at playing the piano at all. At the same time, she was the second-in-line inheritor of the empire and a level five alchemist, thus Princess Sophia also had many pursuers.

Arthen's proposal surprised Deniz, after all, he was just joking. On the other hand, Sophia just smiled and her green eyes looked at Arthen, "I am looking forward to it, then."

Feeling encouraged, Arthen walked to the piano in the center of the hall and started playing.

Hearing the song, Lucien could not help rubbing his forehead, as what Arthen was playing was For Silvia.

Soon, Arthen finished his playing. All the nobles started applauding. Although Arthen was not good at music, as a grand knight, it was not hard for him to play a music piece after proper training.

Seeing the beautiful smile on the princess' face, Arthen stood up wearing a triumphant look. He cast a glance at Beaulac suggesting it again that he was nothing more than a savage.

Lucien spent a few seconds considering how Beaulac would respond to this, and then he also stood out, "Your Highness, can I do an improvisation for you?"

"What?" Both Deniz and Arthen were very surprised.

The surprised look on Sophia's face only lasted for a second, and then her elegant smile returned, "This is really out of my expectation, Beaulac. I did not expect that you would stand out. But if you can play a beautiful piano piece for me tonight, I would see hope again in my own playing. Are you going to give me some confidence?"

Her voice was soft and gentle. The scent of her body was very charming.

"I will." Lucien had already fallen in love with someone else, so he was not much influenced by the charismatic princess.

Lucien sat down in front of the piano and put his hands on the keyboard. Then, he pressed down the first key gently.

The impromptu was very beautiful. Deniz opened his mouth big as he could not believe that a savage could play such a beautiful song. Arthen looked very upset. He now believed that Beaulac had found some really useful magic items from the black market.

Lucien soon finished his playing. Sophia smiled and applauded, "Thank you, Beaulac, for giving me the confidence. I never knew that you were this talented in music."

After bowing slightly, Lucien walked to the princess, "About this, I've got a secret to share with you, Your Highness."

"Oh really? What is that?" Sophia blinked out of curiosity.

"Of course," said Lucien like a gentleman, "I can only share it with you, Your Highness."

All of the nobles could tell that Beaulac was trying to stay closer to the princess, but there was nothing they could do to stop him.

Lucien whispered in the princess' ear, "If you only play the black keys, in other people's eyes, you will look like an expert as well."

Sophia burst out laughing. When she laughed, she was as beautiful as a blooming flower. The nobles, including Arthen, were rather jealous.

The black keys could form the pentatonic scale, thus even an improvisation could produce a piece of classic melody.

Chapter 394: Their Own Plans

Chapter 394: Their Own Plans

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Although Princess Sophia was quite outgoing, as a well-educated princess, it was very unusual for her to burst out laughing like that. Seeing that Sophia was so amused by the trick, the rest of the nobles were very jealous. They wondered what Beaulac had told the princess and why it made the princess so happy.

It took Sophia a few seconds to calm down, and then her beautiful green eyes blinked. “Beaulac, you’re very interesting. More interesting than I thought.”

When the princess first became active in those social events, Beaulac was frustrated with the fact that he was not getting any attention. Facing the elegant and noble princess, as a hopeless inheritor, Beaulac never dared to take one step forward, although he knew that marrying the princess could for sure consolidate his position.

Therefore, the impression Beaulac left Sophia with was not good at all: gloomy, silent, and there was no hope for him at all to become the next Gorse Duke.

Lucien bowed deep to the princess, “Thank you so much for your sweet comment, Your Highness.”

At this time, Lucien sensed that the mouth of the old lady standing behind Sophia slightly opened. And then the princess smiled again. Sophia held the corner of her dress in her hands and leaned forward. She whispered in Lucien’s ear right in front of the public, and Lucien could feel her sweet scent from the breath.

“You’re much better than these nobles who only know how to fight against each other and how to enjoy their extravagant life. They are so boring. I hope you won’t become one of them.”

Lucien was very surprised that, all of a sudden, the princess just became so close to him. He tended to be very suspicious by nature, thus Lucien did not believe that the princess was simply in love with him.

There was something unusual behind it, but what was it?

Did the old lady just tell the princess that Beaulac was already a knight? Maybe the princess wanted to get involved in the selection of the Gorse family's next duke to keep the family in better control of the royal family?

Although Lucien had many thoughts in his mind, he pretended to be shy and also excited. He nodded hard and said in a low voice beside the princess' ear, "I'll stick to who I am, Your Highness, and I won't let you down."

Lucien's response was so reasonable that he would even regard himself as a good actor. When he was talking, he made his breath hot and deep. The breath touched the princess' earlobe, and the princess' ear and neck began to redden.

As a very experienced actor, Lucien was sure that the princess was not in love with Beaulac.

However, what Lucien was thinking did not matter. Many of the nobles were now staring at Lucien very aggressively.

Sophia dropped down the corner of her dress and tried to put on a sincere but casual smile, "I'm glad that now I know you better, Beaulac."

Before Lucien could respond, she looked at Deniz and hurriedly said, "I've got something to ask you, Deniz."

"Let's go to the dressing room, then." Deniz held the princess by her arm and led her out of the hall. He was also curious what Beaulac had told Sophia.

With his eyes slightly squinted, when Lucien was looking at the princess from behind, he sensed a burning feeling on his face. Turning around, he noticed that the old lady wearing a black dress

was staring at him coldly.

He nodded to the old lady, but only received an even colder look. The nobles spread out in small groups after the princess left, and Lucien was now all alone by himself.

Some tried to talk to Beaulac, but they were just doing some casual greetings. Lucien was definitely excluded, especially when compared to Arthen who was having a heated conversation in his group.

Picking up a glass of Gold Rum, which was Beaulac's favorite, Lucien tried to make himself look more decent.

"Beaulac, you've changed a lot."

When Lucien was taking his first sip, a soft female voice came to him.

It was Jocelyn.

Lucien saw that Arthen was surrounded by a bunch of young nobles, laughing and making small talk. He turned around and smiled to Jocelyn. "When one is desperate, one seeks for changes. Only changes can bring new hope. I have nothing to lose, so I'm not afraid of changes."

Lucien was quite satisfied with his ambiguous response.

"If... I mean if you had been like this last year, I wouldn't have..." Jocelyn sighed, but she did not finish her sentence. Turning around, Jocelyn's figure looked rather lonely.

Swirling the golden liquid in the glass, Lucien thought to himself that if the real Beaulac was there, he would probably show mercy on Jocelyn because of what she just said, but Lucien would not. When they were in the underground palace, Lucien would still do what he should do.

Holding the glass, he casually walked around in the hall. He saw a blond beauty dressing in black walking toward him. The blond beauty had deep blue eyes and looked a bit like Beaulac.

“Dear cousin, I am glad to see you like this.” The beautiful lady gently clinked her glass against Beaulac’s.

“I thought you’d be glad that one of your competitors was gone, Claire,” said Lucien casually.

Claire von Anjou was Beaulac’s cousin, a female knight, and also a competitive inheritor of the title. In most countries, since both men and women could become a knight, women also had the heirship to the title.

“No, without you, Beaulac, I would become Arthen’s target. I know I am not able to handle him.” Claire smiled. “He is too flamboyant and aggressive, and if he is the winner, it’s a piece of bad news for all of us. He is for sure going to give us a very hard time. So, comparatively speaking, I would rather have you to be the Gold-eye Count.”

“So, what are you trying to say?” Lucien put on a confident smile as if everything was under his control.

Claire grinned, “We cooperate with each other and teach Arthen a good lesson in the underground palace. After we solve the biggest trouble, we can have a fair competition. What do you think?”

“My pleasure,” Lucien answered simply, without mentioning anything that would take place after beating Arthen.

Seeing that Beaulac did not care about the following competition at all, in her mind, Claire was quite concerned. She had no idea why Beaulac seemed so confident. Before turning around and leaving, Claire reached out her left hand and held Lucien’s, and her fingers gently scratched Lucien’s palm. Her voice became deep and arousing, “No matter who wins in the end, we can still enjoy a wonderful night together.”

“Claire...” Lucien was quite shocked.

She put on a sophisticated smile, “Don’t pretend, Beaulac. You even sleep with your father’s mistress, and I am just your cousin. If you can awaken the blood power, Sun, we can even get married.”

The blood power called Sun required the pure blood, therefore, in many empires, it was very common that close relatives got married, such as the Rafati family from the Duchy of Violet, and the Gorse family was no exception.

Standing with her back to Lucien, the smile on Claire's face disappeared, and it was replaced with a sarcastic sneer.

Lucien slightly shook his head. Although he had no idea what she wanted from him, he was clearly aware of the fact that what he wanted was different from all of theirs. After a while, when Lucien walked close to the balcony, a blond man suddenly approached him and invited him to the balcony to have a conversation.

"Yes, Relph?" asked Lucien a bit impatiently.

Relph was another possible inheritor from the family. He was quite good-looking, but he had not awakened his blood power yet.

In the cold wind, Relph looked rather serious but also excited, "Beaulac, I wish to work with you to beat Arthen. He is too powerful. If we don't unite, there would be no chance for us to win."

"That's good." Lucien's attitude remained uncertain.

"I know who your father is. He's the youngest brother of the duke. And I know you must have got a lot of extraordinary magic items or magic potions from him. You can't see my worth, right?" Seeing Lucien's attitude, Relph was a bit irritated. "Look, I've awakened my blood power, Sun!"

"What? Sun?" Lucien was quite surprised.

Relph first looked back and then he turned around, "This is my biggest weapon, and I'm now telling you this to show my sincerity."

When he was saying it, a ray of sunlight appeared in his hand, which showed that he could use magic.

"I'm glad to have you on my side," said Lucien using Claire's words. "Our biggest competitor is Arthen. We first beat him, and then we

see who is the winner.”

“Good. You’re seeing this very clearly. I gotta go now, or Arthen would see us...” said Relph. “By the way, be careful with Claire. It seems that she has been involved with the royal family.”

“Understood.” Nodded Beaulac seriously.

As soon as Relph left, the look on Lucien’s face relaxed. As a senior-rank arcanist, sorcerer, and a member of the Review Board, Lucien knew that the power that Relph used to cast the sunlight ray was not his blood power! Obviously, Relph had his own plans as well.

However, Lucien did not care. He knew that none of the nobles could become his concern.

...

In the study of the Gorse family’s manor, the old duke was reading a report carefully. Part of his hair had turned gray.

“Greed... Demon Greed...” There was a sophisticated smile on the old duke’s face. Fredrick, one of the men protecting Beaulac, was right now standing in front of the old duke.

Fredrick nodded seriously, “I’ve read the piece of parchment and I heard it myself, Your Highness.”

“Good. This time you will go down into the underground palace as well. As the invisible power for protection, you need to keep things under control,” said the duke seriously.

“Yes, my lord,” said Fredrick very respectfully.

After Fredrick left, a figure covered with a long black robe sneaked out of the shadow in the corner, “Why do you want to send him there? He’s going to help Beaulac. Have you changed your mind and now you want Beaulac to win?”

The only duke only sneered. His eyes focused on the word “Greed” in the report.

Chapter 395: Gathering Together

In the following month, Lucien spent most of his time getting used to and improving his blood power, like what the real Beaulac would do. In the rest of the time, he attended many parties held by different nobles, where he further achieved a few preliminary agreements with them for the cooperation in the underground palace. He also remembered to go back to the remote villa to reinforce the power of Fake Death and Sleep (Strong) that he cast on the real Beaulac and gave Beaulac the nutrition to survive. So far, Lucien had not found the time to conduct the magic experiment on Beaulac to awaken his blood power.

Today, the sky was rather gloomy, and the wind was freezing. It seemed that the first storm of the year was coming.

The smell of old rotten wood was everywhere in the Gorse family's villa built in the time period of the ancient magic empire. Lucien was wearing a black knight armor and walked down to the bottom floor of the basement with great confidence.

Seeing Lucien's manner, the leaders of the Gorse family, no matter if they liked Beaulac or not, slightly nodded. In their eyes, the spirit that Beaulac was carrying right now matched the great honor of the family, and only a young noble like this was qualified for chasing after the dukedom.

"It's been only a month... Beaulac looks pretty good. Wait... has he awakened his blood power?" exclaimed Nuremburk von Anjou, the Aldenburg Count, who almost forgot to put back his thick cigar back to his mouth out of his surprise.

Nuremburk von Anjou was the third most powerful member of the family. He was a level eight radiant knight, respected as Dim Starlight. It was very easy for Nuremburk to tell the power of Beaulac since Lucien was not hiding it at all.

Ulrich, the Gorse Duke, a level-seven radiant knight respected as the Moon of Order, nodded. "The heritage that he got from his

father definitely helped him with to awaken his power."

"Beckman had much of uncle's affection. He must have some good stuff." Nuremburk looked at the duke with a meaningful smile on his face. Both Ulrich and Nuremburk had the same blond hair and blue eyes, but some of the duke's hair had gone gray.

The uncle that Nuremburk mentioned was the father of Ulrich and Beckman, the previous duke. It was said that the previous duke had considered Beckman to be his inheritor, but in the underground palace, Ulrich all of a sudden revealed his power as a level-five grand knight, thus he finally beat Beckman, who had a lot of magic and divine items. In the end, Ulrich became the inheritor of the dukedom.

The marquises and counts from the family were all looking at the old duke with a strange look on their face. In their mind, they shared the thought that Beckman died young because of the old duke.

When Beaulac had no blood power, he was not a big deal to the old duke at all. However, Beaulac was totally different now. Such a confident and calm young man surely would get the special attention from the old duke.

As the duke, Ulrich said in a cold tone, "I don't like those who win because of the powerful items, but a winner is a winner. A winner will not be condemned and will have everything promised."

Obviously, the old duke was holding a contemptuous attitude toward Beaulac, but he also promised that he would make this competition fair.

"Very good," said Nuremburk meaningfully. In his mind, he doubted any grandiose speech from the noble family, especially the duke who had been controlling the family for almost forty years.

Within the Holy Heilz Empire, there were many other noble families that longed for the Gorse family's power with envy, not to mention the mysterious and ambitious emperor. Thus, Ulrich must be very capable as the leader of the Gorse family.

The Emperor, Rudolf II, was the only one who managed to ascend to the legendary level after inheriting the throne after the first few ancestors in the blessed family. His power was horrific, and he gave himself a strange title, the New Law and the First Born.

When the leaders of the family in front of the weird stone gate were talking, Lucien joined the other family members who were already there.

Claire and Relph pretended to regard Beaulac as their enemies, so they did not even greet him. The atmosphere was a bit embarrassing.

After a few seconds, Arthen, who was still wearing his fancy military suit, walked in with his noble friends, including Jocelyn and Duda. With great confidence, he nodded to the other family members, including Lucien.

"Are you going as well?" Seeing that Jocelyn, Duda and the rest of the young nobles were fully-equipped, Nuremburk asked.

Duda's voice came from underneath the sallet and it sounded hollow, "Yes, Your Excellency. I'm only one step away from becoming a real knight. My father sees the competition as a great opportunity. If anything happens, I believe that the magic circles built by the Gorse family can send us out in time. We won't die in there."

Obviously, Duda was more or less afraid.

"I can assure you. Aside for the magic circles, the Glorious Crown, Sir Metatron, will also go down into the palace to keep things under control," said Nuremburk assuringly. He and Duda's father, Count Porti, were friends. And of course, he did not mention the hidden power. The Gorse family wanted no one from the other noble families to die in the palace as they did not welcome any unnecessary trouble.

Hearing Nuremburk's words, Lucien closed his eyes to hide his concern. The fact that Metatron would also be in the underground palace was not a piece of good news for him.

The Glorious Crown, Metatron, was one of the two gold knights in the Gorse family. He was almost three hundred years old, much senior to the current leaders of the family. Thus, he was very respected.

"There is no need for us to worry at all knowing that Sir Metatron will also be there." Duda nodded, feeling more relieved.

Although most of the young nobles had awakened their blood power on their own, they still lacked real fighting experiences when compared to the nobles from the Duchy of Violet and some other countries. The greatest challenge that they ever faced was fighting against the goblins and cynocephalus. In other words, they were like flowers living in a greenhouse.

Therefore, when facing a real cruel fight, the young nobles were still very nervous.

Seeing that Nuremburk was looking at them, Jocelyn put on an elegant smile, "Sir, I am already a knight, and I want to be on my fiance's side."

The rose-colored chain mail revealed her beautiful figure. Many of the young nobles standing behind Arthen were stealing a glance at Jocelyn from time to time.

Hearing Jocelyn's words, a big smile appeared on Arthen's face. At the same time, the rest of the nobles turned to stare at Beaulac, waiting for the embarrassed look on Beaulac's face.

However, Lucien was just smiling, as if he was watching a boring opera.

Lucien's response greatly disappointed Duda and Arthen, and a young noble named Andris could not help being sarcastic, "Beaulac, are you a lady?!"

In his eyes, Beaulac was just a coward!

Lucien cast a glance at Andris and then said, "I hope you won't kneel down in front of me later."

"We'll see. Are you going to fight with the many items left by your father?" Andris saw the pouch tied to Lucien's belt around his waist.

"I can promise you that you will never want to see them in person," said Lucien using a threatening tone. Lucien had put his rings, amulet and all of the other divine and magic items in the pouch.

When Andris was totally pissed off by Lucien's attitude, a bunch of people walked in from the gate of the basement, and Deniz was the one leading the group.

"Hi, dear Beaulac, we're here to help you," greeted Deniz right in front of the nobles. However, no one was paying attention to him, since the blond-haired and green-eyed young lady was Princess Sophia, the only daughter of Rudolf II.

"Sophia, you are here for the competition as well?" Ulrich, the Gorse duke, slightly frowned.

There was a very sweet and adorable smile on Sophia's face, "That's right, uncle Ulrich. I want to join the competition to see what will happen down there. It's also a test for myself. I'm a level five alchemist. Even without the protection of Ms. Marnina, I am still the most powerful one among all of us."

"But..." All the leaders of the Gorse family were rather hesitant. If anything ever happened to the princess, the family would be in great trouble.

"Let me in please, uncle Ulrich! I can protect myself!" Sophia blinked and secretly pointed at her chest, indicating that she still had another way to guarantee her own security, "Some other royal family members also went down before, and I've been given my father's permission."

The last royal family member who joined the competition was the emperor himself, and at that time, he was still a prince.

Since the emperor had agreed, Ulrich nodded with a gloomy face, "Do be careful."

"Yeah!" Sophia celebrated happily. Then she walked to Lucien with

Deniz. Today she was wearing an armored, milk-white dress, and she greeted, "Good to see you again, Mr. Beaulac."

The princess was as beautiful and sweet as a blooming tulip surrounded by many butterflies and bees, and Lucien found it was hard to remove his eyes from her.

"I will try my best to protect you, Your Highness, even at the cost of my life," Lucien answered using the opera tone. However, his heart was filled with questions. Why did Sophia want to join the competition? What was her plan? Was she just helping Beaulac become the next inheritor of the Gorse family?

Lucien hoped that his plan could still be carried out as he expected.

The rest of the nobles looked rather pissed. They had no idea why the princess would show affection to this useless Beaulac. The princess was a level five alchemist with an awakened blood power!

Meanwhile, many young nobles started considering if they should join Beaulac's group. In their eyes, with the support of the princess and Deniz, Beaulac was very likely to win!

All of a sudden, the situation had changed!

Suddenly, a deep voice came from the gate, "Uncle Ulrich, I am in as well."

All of them were very surprised. A tall and blond man walked in. His face was very featured, showing his manhood. Obviously, he was a tough man.

Seeing that the man looked a bit like the princess, Lucien was even more confused. Why was everyone interested in the competition of the Gorse family?

"The prince?!" They could not believe his eyes.

The young man who was wearing the simple silver armor was the first successor in order of Holy Heilz Empire - Beyer, the Prince of Steinburg!

He was a genius close to becoming a radiant knight!

Chapter 396: The Beginning of the Game

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Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Beyer looked at Arthen confirmedly and smiled, “This is a great opportunity for me to face a real fight, and as a knight, this is always what I have been pursuing. I am here as a knight, not a prince.”

Then, he turned to the duke, “Uncle Ulrich, since you have let Sophia in, I believe that you won’t turn me down, right? I have won my father’s permission as well.”

The old duke sighed, “You young people... Alright...”

His lowered his gaze, and all his emotions were hidden in his blue eyes.

Nuremburk laughed, “Good for you, Beyer. A knight shall face the real fight. If I had not gone to the north and joined the battle against Schachran Empire, probably I would’ve never had the chance of becoming a radiant knight. The blood and fights taught me how to become a radiant knight.”

“You’ve always been my role model, uncle Nuremburk.” Beyer grinned. Then, he turned around and walked to Arthen. Very casually, he said, “My friend, I hope we can fight together.”

Arthen suddenly looked very excited. He went down on one knee and said respectfully, “This is my great honor, my prince. I am your knight forever.”

All the nobles on Arthen’s side became excited as well. Gaining the power of the prince had given them the faith again that they would win!

This was why Arthen was so excited. The presence of the prince had brought him great hope again!

Lucien was a bit concerned. Seeing the look on Beaulac's face, Sophia smiled, "This is getting more interesting. Without my brother, the game would be unfair for them."

Right now, Arthen was only a level-three grand knight.

"Unfair..." Lucien was a bit amused by Sophia's words. He looked over Sophia's nose and observed the look on Claire's and Relph's faces.

Claire was biting her lips unconsciously, and her eyes had lost their focus. Relph's right hand was holding tight in a fist against his mouth. Both of them looked a bit disappointed. Obviously, the prince's presence greatly discouraged them.

At this time, a young man, around seventeen or eighteen, among the rest of the nobles stood out, "Sir, I wish to resign."

Ulrich looked at him seriously.

The young noble said in a very depressed way, "They are too powerful. There is no way that I can win."

"Very smart," said Duda in a triumphant tone.

Ulrich did not comment on it. Sometimes quitting did not suggest one's cowardice, but intelligence.

Following him, the rest of the candidates except for Arthen, Beaulac, Claire, and Relph had all decided to quit.

"Your momentum is overwhelming, Your Highness," said Andris in a very pleasing manner. "You're the most talented knight among the younger generation."

The blessed family owned the blood power called Seraph, but each of the family members had different powers. Some were better at close combat, some specialized in casting, and some were good at both. The blood power of Rudolf II was quite balanced, called the Angel King. Sophia's blood power called the Angel of Wind had turned her into an alchemist specializing in casting, and Beyer's blood power named the Angel of Justice made him very competitive

in close combat.

Beyer shook his head and said, "Although I am quite confident, I have to say that I am not the most talented knight in our generation. Princess Natasha in the Duchy of Violet became a radiant knight at the age of twenty-six. This is even very rare in history. She possesses the two top blood powers at the same time, and with that willpower, she is totally capable of becoming a gold knight. I admire her very much, but I know right now I am still not good enough for her. I hope that I can become a radiant knight as soon as possible, so I can go to Aalto to see her one day... I wonder if the legends about her are true..."

Beyer said so very straightforwardly. Obviously, Natasha was a role model and dream lady to him.

"Maybe Natasha will be the future queen of our empire," said Andris.

Lucien rubbed his chin and watched them meaningfully.

"My brother's dream will never come true. The church will never let the Duchy of Violet go back to our empire again. You gotta know that Princess Natasha is already the Countess of Violet," said Sophia in low voice, smiling.

Deniz combed the hair on his forehead with his hand, "It's hard to say. Love can turn people into idiots. If both the empire and the duchy show the same firm attitude, the church cannot make the decision."

"Then it's all up to Beyer now." Sophia giggled.

Lucien thought to himself that Sophia's bother would be rather hopeless in front of Natasha. He would say that Sophia would have a greater chance.

It was close to the time. Ulrich, the Gorse duke declared,

"The competition has started. The first candidate among you four who can enter the secret chamber hanged with the paintings of our family's ancestors is the winner. If no one can reach the chamber,

the one who can make it until the end wins. Remember, the underground palace is always changing. No matter how much money you spent buying the maps, they are useless. Also, once you enter the palace, you will be sent to different locations. Don't stay where you are. It's a waste of time."

No rules. Basically, there were no rules in the underground palace. However, in the competition, no one could bring his or her attendant, and their blood power had to be examined in case someone had hired a radiant knight to play his or her role through transformation.

The weird stone gate behind Ulrich slowly turned black, like the open mouth of a monster. Arthen was the first one standing in front of it.

Count Nuremburk took out a Gorse pin and stabbed it in the back of Arthen's hand.

Lucien knew that it was for testing his blood power. He was a bit concerned as he wondered if the transformation mask was capable of hiding him from it.

A drop of blood hung at the pinpoint and was quickly absorbed.

Nuremburk slightly nodded, "You can go in now, Arthen."

Arthen walked to the gate. Before entering the palace, he looked back at Beaulac in a provoking manner and swung his fist. Before Lucien responded, Arthen had disappeared in the darkness.

Then it was Lucien's turn.

Lucien reached out his left hand calmly, trying his best to control his heartbeat and muscle. Lucien felt a slight electric shock when the pin stuck into his skin.

Once the pin left his hand, Lucien suddenly became very alert. If he was identified, he would seize the best chance holding Sophia as his hostage to leave that place.

The drop of blood looked like a mini silver moon, and the

moonlight was gentle and soft. It trembled slightly at the pinpoint, and Lucien's heart missed a beat.

A second later, the drop of blood was absorbed.

"You may go in now, Beaulac," said the count, "but where are your weapon and armor?"

Lucien pointed at his pouch and answered respectfully, "They are all here."

Nuremburk nodded and did not ask further. At the same time, Relph and Claire who were standing behind Lucien looked a bit surprised.

They could tell that Beaulac had awakened the blood power called Silver Moon.

Without looking back, Lucien walked into the darkness very calmly.

...

It felt that he had gone through a thick and cold layer of mist. Lucien now found himself in a spacious servant room placed with rows of wood beds and several old wardrobes.

Lucien put on Fire Weaver's Bracelet, Sidestep Boots, Transformation Robe, and Ogre Glove. Then, he turned his magic robe into a silver armor. Holding the sword named Frost in his hand, Lucien left the room and stepped into the corridor. Using the information given by Rhine, he started looking for the secret chamber.

Lucien was told that once there was an alchemical life in this underground palace, but somehow it had disappeared. Thus this palace was under the constant change following its own instinct, and the order resembled Thanos' horoscope.

Lucien walked slowly in the underground palace, observing the flow of energy.

Since he had no idea if the duke and the rest of the nobles could see

what was going on down there, Lucien was being very cautious. He never extended his spiritual power.

Turning around the corner, Lucien ran right into Andris and Jocelyn in the open room in front of him.

“Haha, you useless waste! Where is your princess? Where are your helpers?” Andris laughed hard, wearing his black armor. “It seems that God has abandoned you!”

Andris held his heavy sword high and rushed directly at Beaulac.

Jocelyn and the helpers felt quite lucky. Running into Beaulac when he was alone was a great opportunity for them. Once he found the princess and Deniz, Beaulac would be big trouble to them.

At the same time, Jocelyn also showed mercy in her eyes. After all, Beaulac had loved her for so long.

Maybe Beaulac was held still by the fear, as he did not move at all. Andris jumped up high and launched a fierce hack at Beaulac.

“Go to hell!” yelled Andris.

Suddenly, a pair of silver hands stopped his heavy sword.

The hands were rather cold, but they were powerful enough to stop Andris’ momentum, who was right now hanging in the air like a helpless frog.

Jocelyn and the rest of the nobles were totally shocked, having no idea what to do.

Andris looked into Beaulac’s blue eyes, and somehow a great fear seized him.

The light of a sword flashed, and Andris felt a chill. His armor cracked open right in the middle, including the inner shirt. When his armor and clothes fell on the ground in halves, Andris became totally naked.

If the power went in an inch further... Andris dared not to think.

Losing all the strength in his legs, he kneeled down on the ground.

“I said... Don’t beg for my mercy in front of me.” Lucien shook his head.

Chapter 397: The Strange Change

Chapter 397: The Strange Change

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

Under the light of the everlasting torches in the underground palace, Beaulac's shining armor looked rather cold. In Andris's eyes, Beaulac was the most horrible demon. He had no idea what just happened. He had no idea why his armor all of a sudden became as vulnerable as an eggshell.

Jocelyn and the nobles refused to believe what they just saw as if they were watching an opera of a very vicious theme. They could not figure out how Beaulac could have become so powerful within just a single month.

With the level-four chainmail named Rose and the pair of level-three daggers given by her father, and together with all of her magic and divine items, Jocelyn was clearly aware of the fact that she still would not have been able to stop Andris' heavy sword. However, Beaulac held the edge of the sword like it was just a kid's toy.

Therefore she was certain that Beaulac had at least one extraordinary item that could improve his power to level five, and the sword Beaulac was carrying was at least a level-three weapon. Also, obviously, Beaulac had awakened his blood power, maybe a long ago. Jocelyn felt humiliated and angry knowing that Beaulac had lied to her.

Meanwhile, she also could not help feeling jealous. Beaulac's father, Beckman, was the most loved kid of the previous old duke. Thus, the items that Beaulac had were way better than hers.

Jocelyn came from a very distinguished family, and her father was one of the most glorious nobles of the empire. In her father's hands, there was vast land and great treasure. Through the years, they had collected quite a few middle-rank extraordinary items. However, since her family did not have any casters, the family could not

produce any weapons or items on their own. Therefore, Jocelyn did not have many choices when picking her weapons and equipment from the family's treasury.

On the other hand, the Gorse family had produced many blood-power casters, and they had also secretly collected some magic books and alchemy manuals. Only the royal family's treasury could compete with theirs in regard to the collection of low and middle-rank extraordinary items.

However, what Jocelyn did not know was that, in fact, Beaulac's father's extraordinary items had all somehow gone missing after his death, or Beaulac would not have been so frustrated for such a long time.

"He's a demon..."

"Is he a knight...?"

"Run!"

Jocelyn was pulled out from her own thoughts by the noise and shouts. All of their helpers had run away rather awkwardly. No one dared to get one step closer to Lucien, not to mention saving Adris from him.

Watching them hurriedly fleeing away like wild dogs and hens, Jocelyn felt very disgusted.

Feeling relatively confident that Beaulac would not harm her, Jocelyn crossed her daggers in front of her chest and started retreating. As she expected, Beaulac did not chase after her.

After retreating to the other corridor, Jocelyn started to blame herself that she was still thinking of the Gorse family's treasury in that situation. If her enemy had been someone else, she would have been in great trouble now. Obviously, she lacked real fighting experience.

Meanwhile, Jocelyn had to concede that Beaulac's power made him very charming in her eyes again.

Watching them fleeing away, Lucien stood there still. Andris was right now kneeling on the floor, his body shaking out of fear.

“Who is there!” Lucien suddenly lifted his sword and looked at the corner alertly.

The figure in the shadow around the corner started to applaud and a female voice came, “The princess who needs the protection of the knight.”

It was Sophia, who was holding a jade-green magic staff in her hand. She smiled, “I’ve seen your blood power. You’re a real knight, Beaulac. Can you protect me, a vulnerable princess? The way you held the heavy sword was very impressive!”

Although she was saying so, her tone was quite calm.

“I’ve always been the princess’ knight,” responded Lucien meaningfully.

Nodded with satisfaction, Sophia cast a look at the naked noble on the floor curiously and shyly. Hurriedly, Sophia covered her eyes with her left hand, but Lucien could tell that she was still peeping through the gap of her fingers.

Seeing that the princess was there, Andris felt his face burning like fire. He just wanted to kill himself right there!

“Let’s go, Your Highness. We shall not waste our time,” said Lucien. When the princess and the prince showed up, Lucien had some weird hunch. Therefore, he believed that Sophia knew some secrets of this place. It was better to stay close to her.

Sophia looked back and walked to Lucien, “No problem. I’ll figure out how the palace is changing. And you, my dear knight, you protect me.”

After Lucien and Sophia left, Andris finally raised his head again, and his face was totally flushed. He felt very humiliated that Beaulac did not even want to have a fight with him.

“Haha, Andris, what are you doing here, with your naked butt?”

The voice was rather familiar.

Andris suddenly jumped up with his hands covering his lower parts. Turning around, he saw that the several nobles who just fled away had come back.

“Don’t let Jocelyn see this, haha!” Another young noble burst out laughing so hard.

“You were always saying that among all the high-level squires, you’re the most powerful one. But why you couldn’t even handle Beaulac’s one single hack? Look at yourself...” The young noble who disliked Andris seized the chance to humiliate him even further.

“Why Beaulac did not hurt you and send you out of the palace? Well, did you...? Hahaha...” said another noble in a dirty tone.

The words were like arrows stabbing right into Andris’ heart. Holding his fists tight against the floor, Andris could feel the blood rushing to his brain. Shame, hatred, and the lingering fear were burning his guts. He felt extremely dizzy, and his eyes had gone red.

“Are you alright, Andris?”

It was Jocelyn’s voice.

Andris could not help bursting into tears, but crying did not really help.

...

Proceeding along the several corridors, Lucien suddenly looked back. They had gone through three gates.

“Beaulac, what is it?” asked Sophia, who was studying the layout of the palace.

Lucien slightly shook his head, frowned, “Nothing big. I felt someone was watching us from behind.”

“But my warning spell did not go on,” said Sophia.

“Maybe I am wrong,” responded Lucien. Of course, he would not tell Sophia that he had felt some strange changes in this underground palace. He sensed something familiar, but they also disappeared all of a sudden. And only a senior-rank sorcerer who had a deep understanding of magic circles could notice.

Lucien held the sword in his hand tight, feeling the power changing in the palace.

Sophia did not ask further. Holding her magic staff, she walked beside Lucien and gave him directions from time to time.

Lucien was surprised that the direction given by Sophia was completely correct. When they were proceeding, Sophia was in a pretty good mood and she kept playing jokes.

“Wait!” Lucien lifted his left hand and stopped Sophia.

“What is it?” Sophia bit her lips and became serious.

“I smell... blood,” said Lucien, frowning his eyebrows.

Sophia got excited, “It’s time to let them see my fireballs!”

“Watch out.” Lucien held the sword with both hands, and very carefully, he pushed open the gate in front of them.

The metal gate slowly opened, and the strong smell of blood was overwhelming. Lucien saw a black figure kneeling down on the floor, and there was a man wearing black armor lying in front of the figure. The man’s throat was cut open, and blood gushed out from the cut.

Hearing their footsteps, the black figure hurriedly turned around. It was Duda!

Looking down, Lucien saw the big cut in the man’s throat more clear. The cut was so deep that the man’s vertebra was revealed. Obviously, the man had already died.

Lucien recognized the dead man. He was Relph's helper, one of Relph's noble friends.

"I... I didn't mean it!" Duda's face was as pale as death.

Chapter 398: The Different Sophia

Chapter 398: The Different Sophia

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

“Did... Did you kill him?” Sophia asked with her voice trembling. It was her first time seeing someone that she knew die right in front of her. The bloody scene and the disgusting smell were poking at her nerves. In her expectation, as this was just a competition, no one should be killed in this underground palace.

Lucien was already used to this. Pretending that he did not want to see the body, Lucien looked up at the ceiling of the underground palace. He wondered if the teleportation magic circles were still working after the strange change happened to this place. Having no idea whether the change was normal or someone did something to the palace on purpose, Lucien decided to be more cautious. However, on the other hand, if the magic field covering the palace had changed, probably now the duke and the counts on the outside were not able to observe them anymore.

If that was true, it would be a piece of good news for Lucien. When no one was watching, Lucien could completely reveal his power. Then it would be much easier for him to find the secret chamber to carry out the magic rite.

However, what concerned him was the fact that he still had no idea where the gold knight and Metatron were. Before figuring this out, Lucien still had to be very cautious and stay with Sophia.

Duda knelt down with his hands on the ground, murmuring in great fear, “I... I didn’t mean to kill... kill him. He was... standing there still, doing nothing! He just wouldn’t go! I don’t know why! This wasn’t my fault! Not my fault!”

Duda went hysterical, shouting and yelling.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, that was the term that rose in Lucien’s mind. It was Duda’s first time killing a person without any

mental preparation, a person that actually he knew in person.

“Calm down, Duda. Calm down. This isn’t your fault. The magic circles in this palace have gone wrong,” Lucien tried to comfort Duda in a quite professional manner. Lucien had been reading some psychology books to cope with the possible mental side effects left by using Transformation Mask

His deep and soft voice also calmed Sophia down. She was quite surprised that Beaulac could remain so calm when facing death and such unknown changes directly.

“He’s right. It’s not your fault,” agreed Sophia, “...It was the magic circles...”

Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, Duda hurriedly nodded, “That’s right! That’s right! Something went wrong with the magic circles.”

Seeing that Duda had calmed down a bit, Lucien took out his pocket watch and said to him, “Can you tell us what just happened?”

Eager to get rid of the horrible feeling of guilt, Duda told the complete story to them.

After entering the underground palace, when Duda was trying to find Arthen and his helpers, he went right into another young noble. The two enthusiastic young men immediately started their fight.

For the first time, the fight was not a performance, not a test. It was real. And there were no mentors watching them. Duda got more and more excited, and the hiding beast in his heart came out. After several rounds of combat, Duda knocked off the young noble’s sword. And seizing the great opportunity, Duda used all of his power to hack at his enemy’s neck. It was an all-out hack, as Duda knew that before a participant was severely hurt in this underground palace, the person would be sent out to receive immediate medical treatment through the magic circles.

However, the warm blood that burst out from the young man’s neck

greatly shocked Duda. Duda could never forget the desperate look on that person's face. And when the young noble's body collapsed to the ground, the look remained unchanged.

Based on Duda's account, Lucien confirmed the time. The moment when Lucien sensed the difference in this underground palace was the time when the magic circle failed to work.

"At that time, you told me that someone was watching us," said Sophia in a low voice, in case Duda heard their conversation.

Lucien nodded, "My blood power enables me to sense some upcoming dangers. Maybe because the power is related to astrology."

Sophia did not see any problems in Beaulac's explanation, and she said using the tone of a delicate and charming little girl, "I did not expect this at all... Beaulac, who did this? What's that person's plan?"

Sophia's green eyes and her petal-like lips would easily arouse the tenderness in most men's heart. They would totally forget the fact that Sophia herself was a level-five blood power alchemist and tried their very best to protect her in their arms.

However, in Lucien's mind, his response was rather cold. To him, although Sophia was right beside him when the change happened, he still could not rule out the possibility that it was the princess who did all of this.

"No worries, Your Highness. I'll protect you with my life." Lucien pretended that he had completely fallen in love with Sophia. With a bit hesitation, he reached out his left hand and gently patted on Sophia's shoulder.

Sophia slightly nodded and her arms climbed onto Lucien's left arm. With her body leaning against Lucien's, Sophia said, "I am a caster. Only with the protection of a brave knight can I fully exert my power. If we support each other, we can destroy all the conspiracy. I can help you become the next duke. At that time, we..."

"I will destroy all the conspiracy! For you!" Like all men who were carried away by their passion and love towards a woman, Beaulac promised the princess very confidently, as if all of a sudden, he had become unstoppable.

Meanwhile, Beaulac's right hand which was holding the sword lowered to his waist.

After a short while, Sophia suddenly took a few steps back with her flushed face as if she felt too shy to stay this close to Beaulac. On the other hand, Beaulac also grabbed the sword tight again, but he had taken out the Holm Crown Ring, Electron, and put it on already.

"Only two people can do this: my brother, or Arthen. While my brother is the future emperor, Arthen is the one who is most likely to become the future duke. They have the power to make Sir Metatron, the Glorious Crown, work with them. After all, Sir Metatron is no longer young, and thus he had to consider his family's future," Sophia stopped acting like a little girl and analyzed seriously, "and with no doubt, their targets are you and me. My father loves me, and the empire had queens before. It also happened before that the first successor in order died before ascending to the throne. My brother won't feel safe when I am still alive! No wonder he wants to be part of the competition as well."

"Sir Metatron is also helping them? What shall we do?" Lucien pretended that he was deeply shocked, "They are not afraid of the investigation? His Majesty will be enraged if you die."

The look on Sophia's face was rather gloomy, "They have taken actions, and they must have been prepared for what is coming to them. Maybe even uncle Ulrich is their ally as well! Once we die, they can say anything they want! But there's still hope for us..."

"Hope?" Beaulac was very confused.

Sophia nodded and said in low voice, "Although Sir Metatron is very powerful, like I said, he's old, and his power is receding. If we can find the secret chamber first, through a hidden passage, we can go into the inner structure of the palace. There we can find a

powerful scroll which is used to control the powerful magic circles. My father told me this when he was in this competition, and I am sure he only told the secret to me.”

When she finished her words, Sophia looked up and said to the young man both solemnly and helplessly, “Beaulac, are you going to fight for me? Are you going to pursue the hope with me?”

“I am forever your knight, Your Highness. I shall never retreat.” Beaulac nodded affectionately.

There were tears in the princess’s eyes. “Then, we should set off to find the secret chamber right now! We can only rely on each other!”

Sophia was rather satisfied seeing that Beaulac had become totally carried away by her provocative words. Turning around, she asked Duda to find a safe place to hide and wait until the end of the game.

The moment when she turned around, the excited look on Beaulac’s face twitched a bit.

Lucien knew that he was right. The princess indeed knew the existence of the inner structure of the palace.

But what did the princess want? Her personality just changed so fast.

And why would she needed Beaulac to help her?

Chapter 399: The Denouncemen

In the underground palace, Lucien was running fast along the corridor like a shadow, and Sophia, after casting Speed on herself, was following close behind him. However, they could not move at their full speed since they had to stop and figure out the direction from time to time.

"Watch out. The door up ahead is dangerous. There's a magic circle behind it," Sophia said after closely studying the magic patterns around and comparing them to those on the map.

Lucien, who had been aware of the danger behind the door long before the warning, pretended to be lost and said while frowning, "What shall we do, then? Cracking the magic circle would be a waste of time."

Sophia was amused by Lucien's words, and it seemed that her fear had gone completely, "We're not cracking it. We are going around it. This is not a test from the Congress of Magic. Except for me, barely do anyone knows about magic. The rest of the candidates will either go around or wait until the magic circles become invalid."

"So which takes longer? Waiting, or going around?" asked Lucien. He felt that he was like a professor, trying his best to give the clues to the student.

Sophia answered without hesitation, "We go around. Take this way to the room. It is connected to the other corridor."

As she was saying it, she was pointing at the room with the rosewood door. As a caster, her face was lit up with pride.

Like a teacher, Lucien nodded in his mind. Then, he took a few steps forward before Sophia and pushed open the door.

In the underground palace, sensing failed to work. Lucien was also unable to spread out his spiritual power as Sophia was right beside him.

The rosewood door was even heavier than Lucien's expectation as if it was made of the most precious metal, not wood. When the door slowly opened, the stench that came out was overwhelming.

"Be careful!" Sophia hurriedly reminded him.

At the same time, Beaulac made a sudden dodge aside as if he was well-prepared.

Sophia quickly lifted her jade-colored staff and a strong wind was brought to the space.

"Toxic gas?" asked Lucien, although he had known the answer.

Sophia nodded seriously, "Maybe someone just passed here and activated the magic circle. Do be careful."

Lucien nodded and grabbed his blue sword tight. He walked into the room using the knight pace ready for fighting.

In the room, the wardrobe, couch, and the desk had all been severely damaged, and the pieces were scattered all around the floor. Clearly, a fierce combat had just taken place there.

On the ground on the other side, there were two young nobles. Their faces had turned black and their hands showed contractures, like chicken feet. At the corners of their mouths, there were stains of vomit.

"They have been poisoned... to death?" Lucien recognized that they were the two nobles helping Arthen, and one of them had even awakened his blood power.

A short cry came from the back when Sophia saw the two bodies. Her face turned gloomy again, "They are Deniz's cousin, but they died here. No matter how the competition ends at this time, your family is going to face big trouble. The noble families will unite together. It will cost a lot for the Gorse family to pacify their wrath."

"The damned plotters! The bloody traitors in our family!" cursed Lucien, just like what Beaulac would do. Then, he slowly moved to

the two bodies and carefully checked the wounds.

To Lucien's surprise, he saw a big dent in the chest of one body. A human being was very unlikely to be able to launch such a horrible attack on the body!

As soon as the thought struck Lucien's mind, he instantly made a sideways roll. The next moment, the rosewood door broke into pieces, and a strong wind blew in.

"Steel golem!" cried Sophia to remind Lucien.

Lucien pressed his elbow against the ground and turned around. He saw a big steel golem about four meters tall. Two red spots, which were the golem's eyes, were shining coldly. The golem lifted its huge hammer high, which swooped down right upon Lucien.

Lucien knew that he could not use magic right now, so he made a swift dodge and then hacked at the side of the huge hammer with the sword, Frost.

Bang!

In the sharp sound of the metal collision, the heavy hammer was hacked sideways. Under the great power, Lucien's hands felt very numb, and right now they were trembling slightly.

The power of the steel golem had greatly exceeded that of a grand knight. Although Lucien was wearing the Ogre glove, it was still hard for him to take the pain.

The steel monster, however, was not much influenced. After swinging the hammer in a semicircle in the air, the weapon was swung right toward Lucien again!

Both of Lucien's hands shone with a layer of silver-colored light. He pulled back the sword and blocked the fierce attack.

Suddenly, wind blew fiercely. It turned into countless blades targeting the golem. However, the many blades only managed to leave some scratches on its steel body.

Lacking experience in a real battlefield, at the very beginning, Sophia had picked the wrong magic!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Without being affected, the golem wielded its heavy hammer continuously, and facing the great power, Lucien was busy with defending, which was the only thing he could do at that moment.

Lucien still remembered what Natasha and John had taught him to fight like a knight. However, the room was not spacious enough for him to move freely. Step by step, Lucien could only retreat to reduce the great pressure on his sword.

The power of the golem was around that of a level-five grand knight. Lucien started to feel tired. However, he did not panic. Although his hands were shaking, he still held the sword very tight.

A blue light started to shine, and the golem and its hammer were gradually covered with a layer of ice and frost. Although the golem was not hurt, it started to act slower and slower.

at

Seizing the chance, Lucien took a step forward and avoided the attack of the heavy hammer. With all his strength, Lucien managed to hack the knee of the golem.

Bang! This was Lucien's first time attacking the golem. A layer of ice climbed onto the golem's knee. Although the thin layer broke into the fine pieces as soon as the steel golem moved, it slowed the monster down for one second. Very decisively, Lucien attacked the other knee joint of the golem.

A strong wind blew, which turned into many ropes. The neck, knees, elbows, wrists of the golem were all constrained, and now it was moving even slower.

Lucien's fighting had inspired Sophia. Now she knew what to do to help him!

It was time for Lucien to launch his full attack. Like raindrops in a fierce storm, Lucien's sword fell on the body of the steel golem

without stop.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The smile on Lucien's face was confident. He felt that his blood was burning because of the fight!

The golem's red-light eyes shone. Its iron jaw opened, and from it, a greenish-yellow gas came out.

When Lucien was about to dodge, the gas was pushed backward by the strong wind.

Dissipate Smoke. Sophia chose the proper magic again!

With his feet pressing against the ground, Lucien rushed forward again. His swift movement made the heavy hammer miss its target again. With another successful hack, the steel golem moved very slowly like it was already rusty.

However, Lucien's level-four sword could only leave some shallow cuts in the golem. With so many cuts, its knee joints were still able to move. For a few times, Lucien was almost hit by the dangerous, big hammer.

Still, at this time, Lucien felt a strong pulling force from the opposite direction, attracting the sword in his hand. Meanwhile, the golem was even not able to move forward an inch at all!

After around ten seconds, the low sound of metal cracking came from inside of the golem. The two red light spots dimmed. Then, the steel monster collapsed like a falling small hill.

It seemed that Sophia had finally come up with the idea that the spells creating a strong magnetic field worked best for beating the steel monster. So she cast her talent magic spell - the level-five spell, Magnetic Field Shock.

Lucien was glad that right now he was not in his teacher's palace, the Lord of Storm, since most advanced steel golems produced by the Congress of Magic were still able to fight in a strong magnetic field for a few minutes, and during those few minutes, a steel golem

was able to kill most middle-rank sorcerers and grand knights.

Gasping hard, Lucien felt very exhausted, yet he also felt very good after the great workout. Ever since he became a sorcerer, he hardly ever fought physically anymore. For a few times, he almost used magic.

From the fight, Lucien realized the importance of exercise again.

As usual, his brain was filled with many strange thoughts.

Seeing that Beaulac was gasping hard, Sophia approached him with her flushed face, "Sorry... I was too nervous. All the knowledge that I learned... did not come to me until later. Are you alright?"

"I'm okay. It's your first time facing a real monster, and you did very well, Your Highness," said Lucien, who felt that his power was recovering very fast when his blood was running fast. At the same time, he was wondering if the power of wind was equal to electromagnetic force in this world. This was because he was told that Princess Sophia had the blood power called the Angel of Wind, but her talent still allowed her to cast the spells that created strong magnetic fields.

According to what Lucien knew, the Congress of Magic had redefined the four elements. Many arcanists had agreed on the statement that the element of wind represented electromagnetic force, and the element of earth was created by gravity. However, there was no agreement on how the element of fire and water were related to the other fundamental forces.

"This was a cruel fight. It is so nice having you as my knight," said Sophia gently.

"My pleasure." Lucien pretended to be very excited.

Sophia nodded, "We take a short break and then move on."

When she was casting the spells to check the corridors ahead, Lucien looked down and slightly shook his head. He believed that Sophia was testing him during the fight.

Unless she was scared out of her mind, or no one had taught Sophia how to stay focused, there was no way that the interval time between two of her spells was this long! Within a minute, Sophia had only used four spells. Even taking into consideration the time she needed for thinking, it was still too slow.

After a while, Lucien and Sophia set off again.

To avoid all the rooms filled with dangerous magic circles, they somehow arrived at another hall directly from the original one they were in.

In this hall, more than ten nobles were already gathering!

Relph and Claire were standing in two separate corners in the hall, and each of them had two to three young nobles on their side. In the opposite corner of the hall, Arthen and his helpers were ready for the fight.

In the middle of the hall, a few bodies were on the ground, with blood and flesh everywhere.

Their faces were written with fear. They were scared by the real death right in front of them.

From their numbers, Lucien guessed that probably most of the nobles had not found the correct way, or they had been scared out of their mind and were now trying to find a safe place to hide, like Duda. For those nobles who were there, they had already proved their competence. If they were still alive when they got out of this place, they would probably become the leaders of their generation.

"You! You changed the magic circles! Beaulac!" Seeing Lucien and Sophia, Arthen cried out loud, with his sword in his right hand and shield in left hand, and his voice was filled with strong hatred, "You want us all to die here!"

"Among us, only the princess is a caster, and she is able to change the magic circles. And she supports you!" shouted another young noble.

"Claire, Relph! We should kill Beaulac together first!" Another noble

also yelled.

All of the young nobles were more than furious.

Chapter 400: The Many Unexpected Changes

Lucien was not much influenced by their denouncement, as this was totally within his expectation. Also, he knew that he was much more powerful than all of them.

With his great confidence, Lucien remained rather calm.

However, Sophia was so angry that her face had turned pale, "That's nonsense! When the magic circle first started changing, Beaulac and I were finding the correct path! We had no time for that!"

"There is no witness. Only Your Highness and Beaulac!" Arthen put on a cold sneer. The rest of the nobles including Relph and Claire also fixed them with a distrustful glare.

Seeing the situation, Sophia got even more irritated and her whole body was shaking, "This is a legendary sorcerer's underground palace. There's no way that I could change the magic circles here!"

"Is that right? I remember that His Majesty once took this test as well, thus he knew the layout of this place very well. Now His Majesty has already reached the legendary level, and he's capable enough of interfering with the magic circles here. Maybe...maybe somehow you got to the method by accident, Your Highness, and you believed that you could control the test and trap Sir Metatron. You have picked Beaulac, this useless piece of trash, to be your tool, so you can control the Gorse family! Or why a spoiled princess would want to come down here?!" Arthen's words resonated in the hall.

Hearing what Arthen just said, now the nobles were staring at Sophia as if she was a beautiful but dangerous succubus. The way they looked at Sophia was full of alert and hatred, and they could rush forward together and kill the princess at any time!

To be honest, after hearing Arthen's words, Lucien also became suspicious of Sophia's purpose of coming down there. Although

Arthen did not have any evidence, his explanation did make sense. Lucien also had many questions in his mind.

However, since when Arthen became this articulate? According to what Lucien got to know from Beaulac, giving speech was never Arthen's strength. Was Arthen playing the role of a muscular but simple-minded knight all the time?

Also, Sophia never left Lucien's side since they met in the underground palace, and thus she hardly had any chance to interfere with the magic circles. If she had set up all the tricks in advance, how did Sophia know where to find Beaulac in time? Also, there was no need for Sophia to hide her purpose from Beaulac, as there were so many excuses that she could find. If Beaulac had known that the princess was willing to spend this much effort supporting him, he would definitely pledge his allegiance to the princess and protect her safety with his own life. However, right now, once Beaulac heard the accusation from the others, it was very likely that he would feel suspicious.

Sophia stamped her feet out of frustration, and she turned to Lucien with tears in her eyes, "Do you trust me?"

"I trust you with my heart." Lucien looked at Sophia to comfort her, but meanwhile, he was estimating how far the secret chamber was from the hall.

There was a charming smile on Sophia's face, like a blooming tulip. "As long as you trust me, I am not afraid of their accusation at all."

Seeing how close the princess and Beaulac were, many of the young nobles who had a secret crush on the princess were very pissed. Out of their great rage, they wanted to put them on the burning gallows right away.

Arthen knew that all of the young nobles had reached the climax of their irritation, thus he lifted the sword in his right hand and cried out loud, "Relph, Claire, do you want to die here? If you don't, we shall stay together and kill them first!"

The look on Relph's face was complicated, but finally, he answered

aloud, "Arthen, I'll follow you!"

He had trusted Arthen's words.

"Good, what about you, Claire?" said Arthen. At the same time, he lifted the black shield covered with a layer of magic symbols, in case Sophia would cast magic at any time.

Maybe Sophia was too shocked by the situation, but there was no sign that she would launch her attack first before the other nobles gathering together, while Lucien had decided to wait and see how things would change. In the meantime, he was still working on figuring out where the secret chamber would be.

Claire was also wearing a tight chain mail like Jocelyn, which showed her curved figure perfectly. But Claire's chain mail was black.

"Me?" Claire squinted her eyes slightly, and she smiled, "I'll fight with Her Highness and Beaulac."

"What?!"

The rest of the nobles could not believe their ears.

Arthen said calmly, "Are you one of them, Claire?"

"Stop your nonsense, Arthen," Claire lifted her blond eyebrow. "I'm doing so because I think you are the one who did all of these! Facing this situation, we should stop fighting against each other and wait for uncle Ulrich to send the rescue in. Only the murderer would want to provoke such a big conflict so he could kill all the people he wished before others arrived! Arthen, confess! What do you want?!"

As she was questioning Arthen, Claire and the nobles who supported her were moving toward Sophia.

Sophia was very surprised, "Thank you, Claire! You deserve the name, 'the Wisdom Gorse!'" At this time, she noticed that Beaulac was looking at the other direction, "What are you looking at, Beaulac?"

Lucien had remembered the layout of this place. He turned around and the corner of his mouth twitched, "I'm... Uh... I'm looking for a little boy named Conan, Edogawa Conan."

The murder, the secret chamber, dead bodies... These were all the key elements in the Japanese cartoon Detective Conan.

"What... Conan? Never heard this weird name before. A little boy? How can he come down here? How do you know him?" Sophia was very confused.

"Sorry, I was just joking. He's... uh... He's just a little boy that I know. Every time I see him, bad things happen. I was... joking, really." Lucien was a bit embarrassed. He had no idea where and why his sense of humor just came out in this situation.

Surprisingly, Sophia understood Lucien's strange response and nodded to him. Then, she turned back to Claire and said sincerely, "I have to say that I did not like you much before, Claire, but now I must apologize because I did not discover your wisdom and beauty earlier. Please forgive me, Claire."

"No worries, Your Highness," Claire smiled. "Under your radiance, I'm not that eye-catching."

When Claire turned around to face Arthen, she blinked at Lucien to remind him that their agreement still worked.

Arthen's face was rather gloomy, "Claire, if we don't unite, Beaulac and the princess will leave us no chance. Compromise and yielding will bring us no safety!"

"That's right!" agreed Relph and the rest of nobles loud.

Lucien had also observed the reaction of the nobles, and with the psychology knowledge he learned, he saw their immediate consensus rather suspicious.

"Fight! Only fight brings safety! Only fight can get us out alive!" Arthen patted on his shield with his sword and shouted. As if Arthen's vigor and posture had affected the nobles following him, the morale was extremely high.

Arthen's body was covered with a layer of dazzling light and he took the lead rushing toward Lucien, Sophia, and Claire. The entire hall was slightly shaking from his heavy steps.

As the knight, Lucien held the sword Frost tight with both of his hands and ran toward Arthen. Claire followed him close.

In Arthen's team, a black tornado was summoned. Several nobles were scooped up high by the wind force and in the next second thrown to the ground fiercely. They directly passed out.

No one could resist the power of a level-five blood power caster without the strength of a grand knight or the same level extraordinary magic or divine items. However, Sophia was clearly restraining herself as she had no plan on killing them, or it would bring her big troubles when she got out.

In the tornado, however, Arthen was as steady as a big rock. In a few seconds, he had come in front of Lucien and launched his attack!

Lucien also wielded his sword from the bottom to the top, and Frost directly hit Arthen's level-five magic sword.

Bang!

To Lucien's great surprise, he felt no strength in Arthen's sword.

With a single hack, Arthen was blown backward as if there was some fierce wind, and as soon as he hit the ground, he kept moving back.

At this time, Lucien heard an exclamation from behind. In the next second, the soft female body ran straight into him. Then with several strong magic waves, four transparent walls had surrounded them!

"Claire... What are you doing!?" Sophia angrily asked Claire, who was standing outside of the walls. It was Sophia who ran into Lucien, and her shield of wind already had many cracks.

Claire smiled coldly, "Your Highness, I have always been on

Arthen's side."

"Claire, you...!" Sophia was so pissed that she was speechless.

Lucien noticed that Relph was also in the wall trap when Relph questioned Claire furiously, "You are with the royal family, aren't you? Why are you helping Arthen?"

Slightly frowning, Lucien stared at the transparent wall in front of them. To him, the way the power was flowing in the walls and how the magic symbols were changing were strange.

At this time, except for Arthen, Claire, and the several nobles who had passed out on the ground, the rest of them were all trapped.

They finally realized the truth. A young noble yelled, "You were the one who changed the magic circles. It was you!"

"Hahahaha..." laughed Arthen loud, "I'll have nothing to worry when you all die! There is no way that Claire will want to fight against me because of the dukedom! Soon she will marry the prince!"

"Is that you, my brother?" Sophia finally understood everything, and she turned to look at the other direction with a smile.

"Sophia, you're never my target. I was just wondering how our father managed to make the breakthrough and reach the legendary level. However, it is also not bad if I can take advantage of this and kill you, my sister. I know what you are doing, Sophia." From the other entrance of the hall, prince Beyer walked in calmly.

Claire hurriedly walked to the prince, with an admiring look on her radiant face. Obviously, she had fallen in love.

Arthen said to the prince respectfully, "Your Highness, Sir Metatron only promised to give us five minutes. We have to do this now."

"Turn on the anti-magic circles and let out the toxic gas and golems. Sophia is the only one you have to be careful with. Then, find Deniz and finish him," said Beyer as if he was just dealing with something very unimportant.

Arthen took out a colorful stamper of the size of a fist and walked to Beyer. He was ready to end the nobles' lives.

All of a sudden, a bright light flashed.

The look on Arthen's face froze. In the next second, he was rolling back and forth on the ground. A pool of blood came out from underneath Arthen's body.

All of them in the transparent wall trap saw the prince coldly pulling out his sword from Arthen's chest.

"Why... Why?" Arthen did not die right away because of his power as a grand knight. However, if he did not receive treatment as soon as possible, his death was just a matter of time.

Beyer put on a triumphant smile. "It would be even better if my love was also the Duchess of the Gorse family."

There was also a big smile on Claire's face. She was looking at Beyer as if he was her idol.

Beyer took a step forward. He was about to behead Arthen to end his life.

Suddenly, a thick bolt of lightning dropped from the ceiling, and it hit the sword right before it hacked at Arthen's neck!

"Deniz!" Claire was shocked. She had no idea how long Deniz had been hiding, and why he did not take action earlier.

The look on Beyer's face suddenly changed when green wind ropes bound his wrists and ankles tight.

Smiling while holding her staff, Sophia walked out of the transparent walls without any effort.

Meanwhile, the light of a spell, Curing Wind, gently fell onto Arthen's chest.

Some of Relph's people were now keeping Lucien in control; some had surrounded Claire, and others were helping Deniz.

"You...?!" With all the constraints, as the man who was close to becoming a radiant knight, Beyer was still able to block Deniz's attacks in succession.

Arthen coughed, "Your Highness, all of us are the knights of the princess."

White wings spread out behind Sophia, covered with many green light spots as if the wind elves were flying around her.

...

Duda, hiding in the corner, was gasping hard with his lowered head. Suddenly, he saw a pair of brand new boots walking toward him.

Chapter 401: The Causes

Duda was still panicking after killing the other noble by mistake and experiencing all the changes in the underground palace. Seeing that someone was standing right in front of him, his brain was completely blank. Slowly, he looked up and saw the man who was wearing a pair of brand new boots.

"It's you..." Duda felt much relieved seeing his friend, Andris. After releasing a sigh, Duda's heart started beating fast and fiercely again, as if his heart was trying to compensate the beats that it missed in the previous few seconds.

"It's me," said Andris with the corner of his mouth curling up.

"I'll tell you. This underground palace is horrible! The teleportation magic circles are not working. Come here, Andris. We wait here until the competition finishes..." Duda hurriedly told his trusted friend what had happened, but he did not mention the part where he killed someone.

Then, Duda became confused, "Where is your armor?"

Duda remembered clearly that in the morning when they came here together, Andris was fully equipped with a set of the black armor, instead of the white shirt and the tight pants he was wearing now. The only part that had not been changed was the pair of brand new boots.

The weird smile on Andris' face lingered, and he did not answer his friend's question, but murmured, "You think it's horrible here? I think this place is nice." Andris closed his eyes, and if he was tasting a glass of beautiful wine, "I have smelled the blood, the sweet aroma... I have also smelled the pain, hatred, and greed that have been piling up for hundreds of years..."

Duda somehow felt very cold, and his heart was full of fear, "Andris? Are you alright? You killed someone by mistake... too?"

"Killed someone by mistake?" The muscles in Andris' face suddenly

started wriggling very fast, like a flour dough.

Very quickly, his hand went through Duda's chest. "Like this?" Andris asked like he was sleep-talking.

Duda's face was written with such great fear that it had been twisted. He saw that Andris' face quickly aged and became terribly wrinkled, but a second later, his face became young and familiar to Duda again.

Now Andris had retreated his right hand. The hand was holding Duda's heart, bloody, but still beating.

Before falling into the eternal darkness, Duda saw what his own heart looked like.

"The pain is so sweet," Andris closed his eyes and tasted the smell of blood in the air.

...

In the hall, the six pairs of white wings behind Sophia were slightly flapping. She was now like the Monarch of Wind described in the legends, and her face was written with mercy in the holy light, which made her look even more gorgeous.

In Lucien's eyes, although Sophia was definitely a beauty, she was too young and inexperienced. Compared to the outstanding beauties such as Natasha and Silvia, her beauty was not as impressive. However, at that moment, like an angel, Sophia was no inferior to anyone.

Her magic staff pointed forward, and more wind ropes severely restrained the prince's movements and were further strengthened. Deniz, whose hair was tied in a ponytail, looked very determined. His successive attacks were like bolts of lightning, forcing Beyer to hurriedly retreat.

On the other side, Arthen had been cured by Sophia's power, and surprisingly, his strength had also fully recovered. It seemed that Arthen's blood power might be quite special.

Holding a black shield, Arthen charged toward the prince with the dazzling sword in his right hand. How dared Arthen, who had just become a grand knight, to launch the direct combat against the prince?

Beyer's sword shining with a dim green light blocked Arthen's attack, however, as soon as the two swords crossed, the prince felt the great strength from Arthen's weapon.

What sword was Arthen using? Beyer had no idea.

"My brother, Arthen is fully equipped with a level-five knight armor, called the Nameless Starlight. Anyone who fights against him will become slower and slower, including you. Now since you have been confined, Arthen can finally exert the power of his equipment," said Sophia coldly to her brother. Meanwhile, Sophia further numbed Beyer with small clusters of lightning.

Deniz's and Arthen's swords were now right above Beyer's head!

Suddenly, white wings spread out behind Beyer and embraced him in the middle.

Bolts of lightning and starlight fiercely burst out when the swords hacked at the wings. Many white feathers were falling to the ground. The wings had given Beyer a few seconds to fight back. Wielding his green sword, the prince managed to force Deniz and Arthen back.

However, when Beyer was about to take a step forward and launch a second attack, the space around him suddenly twisted, and for a second Beyer lost his balance.

"Twisted Magnetic Field!"

Seizing the chance, Deniz and Arthen quickly turned around and rushed at the prince again.

Feeblemind, Hypnosis, Fear, Sleep, Wind Rope, Twisted Magnetic Field, Magnetic Field Vibrating, Spider Net... Sophia cast a series of spells to constrain her brother. She did not try to attack but was interfering with Beyer's movement properly to create the chances

for the two knights.

Sophia's strategy worked, and Beyer was now in a disadvantageous situation. In the ancient magic system, the element of wind was linked to Illusion.

However, because of his blood power, Seraph, Beyer was very resistant to magic. Most of Sophia's spells could only affect him a little bit, and the light from Beyer's wings soon drove the magic effects away.

Sophia stuck to her own pace. On the one hand, she kept casting her spells, and on the other hand, she kept distracting Beyer.

"My brother, are you still trying to figure out where our father got his power from? Are you still wondering why he managed to reach the legendary level? Think about it. Why could you find the hidden document? Do you think our father would have written down his biggest secret?"

Beyer's heart sank, "Was it you?"

"Ha, I did quite a good job in imitating our father's handwriting, right? If you had never seen those documents, you would have never come down here, and you would have never left me such a great chance to kill you." The smile on Sophia's face was still pure.

"So the secret does not exist?" Beyer murmured. His hope had been destroyed. Deniz's and Arthen's swords almost cut him. Claire was also almost defeated by the several nobles who had awakened their blood powers.

"No, it does exist, but it belongs only to us. Me and my knights! I am very lucky. Relph found this biggest secret from the family legend, thus we were able to put you into this trap. Including Arthen, they are my knights. They are willing to do everything for me, even at the cost of their lives! Our performance wasn't bad, right?" Sophia's smile was very charming by nature, and her petal-like lips could easily seize a man's heart, "Also, many thanks to Beaulac, this little fool. You thought I was trying to control and help Beaulac, but you had no idea what my true purpose was."

Then she turned around, and within her expectation, she saw the expressionless face of Beaulac. She slightly pouted and said to Lucien like a little girl, "I do like you very much. Without you, my brother would never have fallen into our trap."

"You..." Lucien responded as if he was totally speechless. In his mind, he had almost figured out the location of the secret chamber.

Sophia giggled, "Stop playing. I know you're not simple-minded and you never fell in love with me."

"How do you know?" Lucien asked sincerely. He always regarded himself as a good actor, and he had no idea which part of his performance failed.

After further confining Beyer with the wind ropes, Sophia answered, "Your enthusiasm was just on the surface. I saw no heart-felt passion. You know, women are always very sensitive in this aspect. I was also playing my role. No matter what plan you have, it is not important anymore."

Now Lucien was really speechless.

Turning back to her brother again, Sophia kept pissing Beyer off, "You are even crueler than what I expected. You had almost killed Arthen before we carried out our plan. You almost ruined the plan."

Although she was saying so, she was not worrying and her voice had no fear at all, as if everything was under her control.

"It was you who found the secret?" Lucien said to Relph who was standing beside him.

Relph had cast the spell, Slow, on Beaulac and made him unable to move freely. Now he laughed hard, feeling rather proud of himself, "Right! It was me! You were quite surprised that all of a sudden I had awakened the blood power, Sun, weren't you?"

"Was it fake?" Lucien would never tell Relph that he had seen it through already.

The triumphant smile on Relph's face was even bigger, "It was not a

blood power. I'm a sorcerer, an honorable sorcerer! The Gorse family is the descendant of the Sun King, Thanos, the greatest sorcerer ever! But now they are begging for awakening their blood powers, which came from the experiments that the sorcerers did on their slaves. That's completely wrong! So I have been secretly studying magic, and by chance, I found a secret scroll left by the Sun King. Thus, I discovered the big secret of this underground palace, the secret that made Sun King so powerful!"

Lucien did not respond, so Relph kept showing off.

"In the secret chamber hung with many paintings, there is another chamber. It requires the blood of a real Thanos' descendant and half of his life force. When everything is ready, we will use your blood to open the gate and acquire the unimaginable power. At that time, I will become as powerful as the Sun King, and then I can marry..."

Relph's voice lowered. He took a glance at Sophia with the corner of his eyes.

Lucien guessed that Relph was talking about a different chamber, not the one Rhine told him. He wondered how many secrets were still hiding here.

Seeing that Beaulac did not reply, Relph was quite disappointed, "You don't want to say anything, Beaulac?"

"...Well, thanks for telling me," said Lucien sincerely.

...

Hearing Sophia's words, Beyer burst out laughing all of a sudden, "My dear sister, thank you. I'm so glad to hear that the secret does exist!"

Beyer's six pairs of wings saved him again from Deniz's and Arthen's swords and Sophia's magic, but one of the wings almost broke.

At this time, Lucien sensed the ancient and horrible power under the wings. Then, he saw Beyer holding a small scale in his right hand. The left side of the scale was white and the right side black.

"Justice Scale?" The look on Sophia's face suddenly changed.

It was a well-known divine item from Holy Heilz Empire. It was said that the scale was left by God and its power could be compared to that of a legendary leader.

Obviously, the scale Beyer was holding was just a projection of the real item, like the duplicate of the Sword of Truth that Lucien saw before. However, the projection was still a level-five extraordinary item, and a projected item like that always had some special power that anyone under legendary level was unable to be immune to.

Even if the power could only be used once, the scale was already powerful enough to turn the things around!

Chapter 402: Three Sighs

Chapter 402: Three Sighs

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Vermillion

The small scale was a piece of toy. The white and black pan went up and down in turns, and soon they reached the balance. Instantly, the atmosphere around Beyer somehow became very weird.

The wind ropes constraining Beyer suddenly broke into pieces; the big and thick spider net was gone, and the twisted magnetic field had also calmed down. On the other side, the bolts of lightning attached to Deniz's sword had died out, and the dazzling starlight surrounding Arthen had also disappeared.

In the middle of the hall, Sophia flapped her six pairs of wings. A summoned piece of cloud with the strong power of death had been driven away as soon as it approached Beyer.

Deniz bit his lips tight. He could not feel his power of lightning anymore.

In the range of the power of Justice Scale, any extraordinary power should obey the order!

Beyer felt revitalized again after getting rid of all the constraints. Lifting his green sword named Demon Horn, Beyer said to his enemies loud, "Come and show me your real power! Show me what you've got!"

Flapping his wings, Beyer had come to Arthen and raised his sword.

"Without all the items, you are nothing!" Beyer sneered.

So far, the power of the scale had been used up.

Arthen hurriedly lifted his shield to defend himself. But as soon as the shield touched the sword, Beyer disappeared right in front of Arthen.

Arthen had lost his target! Instantly, his heart sank. However, in the next second, he quickly swung his sword backward.

Bang!

Arthen was unable to resist the great strength. Losing his balance, he was thrown on the ground, and Beyer's sword was right above his head!

A flash of lightning blocked Beyer's attack. It was Deniz, who was holding the sword with both his hands. However, this one single confrontation had consumed much of his strength.

In Beyer's eyes, Deniz, who just became a grand knight and was far away from reaching the level of a radiant knight, was not a threat at all.

Beyer was very confident. Moving fast, he exchanged several blows with Deniz within a few seconds. Deniz could feel that the green sword that Beyer was using was slowing down his speed and weakening his strength.

When Beyer and Deniz were fighting, Sophia did not do much because she was unable to lock onto Beyer. Although some proper spells that Sophia knew could be useful in this scenario, she could not use them as the spells did not fall into the range of magic that she could cast with her blood power.

This was the destiny of a caster. The spells that a caster could use only were decided by his or her blood power, and working hard could not help at all.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Beyer hacked faster and faster.

Suddenly, Beyer jumped out from his fight against Deniz and came right to Sophia.

"A caster thinks she can kill me?!" shouted Beyer.

Sophia was totally surprised. At that moment, she had forgotten to jump away with the wind!

Under the great force coming from Beyer's green sword, Sophia's wind shield started cracking into pieces!

Arthen hurriedly rushed back to his princess and blocked Beyer's following attacks. Sophia hurriedly stayed away from Beyer to get ready to cast again.

Without all the constraints, Beyer could fully exert his power, and his series of attacks had loaded Sophia, Deniz, and Arthen with great pressure. When he had the chance, Arthen even killed one of the nobles who was fighting against Claire, thus much of Claire's stress had been removed.

Lucien, however, was right now just a bystander. After seeing Beyer's power, and he had understood why Sophia decided to make such a complicated plan to kill her brother. Meanwhile, he was also learning some fighting skills from watching Beyer.

Beside Lucien, Relph was very nervous watching the fight, with his hands clenching into fists. Lucien had to say that Relph was not at all a good sorcerer when it came to staying focused. As a sorcerer, Relph's mind was far from being strong. Comparatively speaking, Sophia was doing a way better job in staying calm during the fight.

Lucien had figured out the rough direction to find the chamber, but it would still take some time for him to find the more accurate location.

"That's all you've got, Sophia?" Beyer's shouting was as loud as thunder!

Neither Deniz nor Arthen could stop him.

Seeing this, Sophia secretly took a few steps back.

At this time, Lucien, who was right now staring at a piece of gray tile in the middle of the hall,

had also figured out how to get into the secret chamber.

However, what was out of Lucien's expectation was that, before he could take any action, Sophia had stamped on the tile very

decisively. Walking backward, she reached the entrance of the secret chamber!

A low but deep noise came from underneath the hall. One of the stone walls in the hall had turned into an old gate and it opened for them slowly.

Relp was not surprised seeing the secret chamber there, but he had no idea why the princess had chosen to open the gate at that moment.

The knights were still fighting without being distracted, but Beyer had sped up his hacking even further. Clearly, he was rushing to kill the two grand knights as soon as possible before any unexpected changes could take place.

...

Above the ground, the Duke Ulrich and the rest of the leaders of the family had already noticed the weird changes in the palace, but the dark gate had refused their entry.

“We have to break in! If the prince and the princess died in there, His Majesty would be so furious that who knows what he would do! That might be the end of the Gorse family!” said Count Nuremburk very anxiously. Behind him, there was a cluster of dark air, in which countless dim stars were orbiting.

Nuremburk lifted his hand and the stars followed his order. They fiercely rushed toward the dark gate and hit it with great force!

Bang! The explosive sound was deafening.

However, a legendary archmage’s palace was not that easy to be broken into!

Another count agreed with great anger, “When I get to know who did this, I will peel off his skin, slowly!”

He was not exaggerating. He did skin people! He was Count Wolfgang, the Blood Curse.

“Why Sir Metatron did not control the core of the palace to turn on the magic circles again?” murmured the duke gloomily. Staring at the dark gate, he was not rushing to take any action.

Nuremburk and the rest of the nobles were shocked. One of them hurriedly asked, “You are saying... Sir Metatron is involved in this? Is he out of his mind? Many of them down there are from other big families!”

“Many of them are down there, but... not all of them,” said Ulrich gloomily.

“What shall we do then?” asked Count Wolfgang, slightly frowning.

Ulrich mused, “If Sir Metatron’s plan works, the Gorse family will become the biggest supporter of the future emperor, and the entire family will benefit from it. If he fails, we know nothing about this plan. We shall try our best to save them, so if anything happens, the worst scenario will be the emperor killing Sir Metatron and his family members, but the biggest part of the family can still stay safe.”

“I see. We can have your helper here. He is a senior-rank sorcerer, and he’s more resourceful than we are. If he still doesn’t know what to do, we have to have His Majesty here. We cannot let the other legendaries know. We have to make as fewer people know this as possible!” said Nuremburk, who was looking at Ulrich seriously.

The other gold knight of the Gorse family was sent by the emperor to the dimension under the control of the empire. As the descendant of Sun King, the Gorse family, with its many precious magic books and records, could easily attract many sorcerers from the ancient magic system secretly.

Very seriously, Ulrich nodded.

...

Squeaking, the ancient stone gate slowly opened.

Lucien stopped himself from rushing into the secret chamber as he had no idea if Metatron was in there. But at this time, he sensed the

strong smell of blood from the chamber.

What happened? Lucien frowned.

After a while, Relph also noticed the smell. With his nose twitching, Relph said confusedly, “Blood... A lot of... blood?”

Sophia was still focusing on the fight, helping Deniz and Arthen against Beyer.

As the gate opened more, Lucien and the rest of the nobles finally saw what had happened in the chamber: blood was everywhere on the walls, and the paintings of the family members had all been horribly stained. On the floor, there were pieces of bones and flesh scattered around, and some of them were even on the walls.

The chamber was like a slaughterhouse!

In the slaughterhouse, there was a black figure quite familiar to Lucien. The figure was twitching and writhing as if it felt horribly itchy. When feeling the light, the figure hurriedly turned around.

It had a pale face, covered with many bulging red veins.

The figure looked around the hall and burst out laughing, “Beaulac, I have become a radiant knight! A radiant knight! I have... finally... become a radiant knight!” The figure became more and more hysterical.

Shocked by the extremely horrible scene, Beyer, Deniz, and Claire had stopped fighting and were staring at the strange man in great alert.

“...Frederick?” Lucien recognized him. Fredrick was Beaulac’s secret guard. Why was he there?

At this time, Sophia smiled, “Yes... You’ve become a radiant knight. You deserve everything that you want, say, the dukedom, the endless wealth, and marrying a princess like me.”

“Yes... I’m a radiant knight now, and I can have everything that I never dared to dream of. Your Highness, my love, tell me, why are

you frowning?” Frederick laughed hard.

Watching the scene, a strange idea came to Lucien.

“It’s him! He wants to kill me!” Sophia pointed at Beyer and almost burst into tears.

Frederick heard Sophia’s words and nodded, “I see... He’s the prince... If I kill you, Your Highness, can I become the emperor?”

It seemed that Frederick was now completely a psycho. Suddenly, he turned to Lucien and grinned, “Thank you for the rite, with Greed.”

His words were like a clap of thunder in Lucien’s brain. Lucien realized what had happened, but he also had no idea how it happened!

As soon as Frederick finished his words, he came to Beyer with an astonishing speed. Within one single punch, Fredrick hit the green sword in front of the prince. The prince was forced to take a few steps back by the great strength.

Seeing this, Sophia sighed with surprise, “Greed...”

Above the palace, the duke felt something when he was trying to break the gate. He turned around and looked at the rest of the family leaders, and there was the combination of mercy and sneer in his eyes. He sighed, “Greed...”

Putting his right hand into the magic pouch when seeing that Beyer was in great danger in front of Frederick, Lucien also sighed, “Greed...”

Relph had no idea what was going on, but when he turned around, he saw Beaulac easily take out a piece of item from the pouch, despite the restraint of the magic effect on him.

It was a black badge, with shining silver stars on it.

One, two, three... six! There were six stars!

Relph's eyeballs almost jumped out. Most of the nobles might not be able to recognize it, but as a sorcerer, Relph knew what the badge was as soon as he saw the stars!

This was... an arcana badge! For a senior-rank arcanist!

This was a senior-rank arcanist's badge enchanted with the constant magic effect, Free Move!

Chapter 403: Astonishmen

"Level six... arcanist!" Relph was totally shocked. In his eyes, Beulac suddenly became so strange to him. No... He should say that the man standing in front of him was right now a total stranger to him. There was no way that the real Beulac could have become a senior-rank as he had never left Antiffler before.

It must be that a senior-rank sorcerer or archmage had turned into Beulac and used some special ways to hide from the blood power check done by Nuremburk. As for the purpose, the sorcerer was certainly there to pursue the secret left by Sun King.

Suddenly, a scene flashed past his mind: he remembered the sincere appreciation from Beulac after he bragged about the existence of another secret chamber and showed off by telling Beulac how to open the chamber.

"...Well, thanks for telling me."

That was what Beulac... no, the arcanist, said.

Relph could not believe how stupid he had been. Although he wanted to cry out loud to remind the princess, Deniz, and Arthen that this was not really Beulac, he was clearly aware of how powerful a senior-rank arcanist was. Within a second, the arcanist could easily kill him with a single glance; and even if all the nobles present had decided to unite together, the arcanist could still kill them one by one within half a minute.

The only way to survive was to yield and wait until Sir Metatron showed up in time as agreed.

Relph had absolutely no idea how the senior-rank arcanist managed to creep in. It was like a lion staying with a flock of sheep!

He could not help trembling out of the great fear and could not concentrate his spiritual power at all. However, he knew that there was no need for him to stay concentrated as he had no chance to cast when standing beside a senior-rank arcanist. Although he was

already very close to obtaining the secret of Sun King and he did dream of becoming a sixth-circle sorcerer, Relph was only looking forward to using his power to acquire glory and high status.

A level-six arcanist was very likely a seventh or eighth-circle sorcerer or even a ninth-circle archmage! Relph had completely given up resistance.

"Smart." Lucien smiled and took a glance at Relph, whose face had completely turned pale.

Relph nodded like a golem as he was incapable of thinking. Staring at the blue eyes of the fake Beaulac, Relph fell deeper and deeper into them...

Very easily, Lucien had seized the control of Relph's mind, putting him in a great panic.

The fifth-circle illusion spell, Dominate Person!

When knowing that his experience in Castle Bertren was a test from his teacher, the Lord of Storm, Lucien also got to know that it was the little crystal dragon, Alferris, that was playing the demon, Hatred. From the Lord of Storm and Alferris, Lucien had learned a lot more in details about the seven mysterious demons from hell and realized that Pain Fable was not merely a joke.

According to Fernando and Alferris' speculation, when certain negative emotions piled up, the projection of the corresponding demon would show up, and this process did not require the help of any special rite. The rites that people believed in were for improving the projections' power to make them grow, and the rites thus were in fact not magic rites, but just something that further convinced people of the existence of the evil power.

Therefore, it seemed that even the most absurd magic rite could also summon a powerful demon.

Pain Fable played a very important role in collecting a person's negative emotions. A person who enjoyed reading the fables tended to gain the connection to the mysterious demons including Wrath,

Envy, Greed and so on. At this time, the person's mind could become twisted, but without the stimulation of a major accident or any following rites, the person could not gain a great evil power.

In other words, the steps of a rite did not matter, and what mattered was the rite itself. Without a rite, the projection of a demon could not gain its power. Meanwhile, what was more important than the rite was the gathering of negative emotions, or there was no way that a demon could cast its projection in one's mind.

When Lucien's was deceiving Beaulac into following the pure made-up rite, the former randomly made a joke about the steps of the rite, since he was quite certain that, without the emotional foundation shaped by the special book such as *Pain Fable*, neither Beaulac nor Frederick could successfully summon the projection of Greed.

However, what was going on right now was totally out of Lucien's expectation. Frederick had successfully summoned Greed using the ridiculous magic rite made up by Lucien, and had gained the power of a radiant knight!

Although his power was not yet fully developed, Frederick was unstoppable. The creepy and horrible look on his twisted face had made Lucien believe that all of these was a masterpiece done by the demon, Greed!

Lucien had no idea how Fredrick had collected such a strong feeling of greed within a single month. Was it from watching Beaulac summoning the demon? Or was it because of this creepy underground palace?

However, no matter what it was, Lucien had to hurry up, even if he had to use magic! As time passed by and more people were killed, Frederick's power as a radiant knight would be fully developed!

From the few rounds of the fight between Fredrick and Beyer, Lucien speculated that he still had three to four minutes to take actions. He first had to turn on the magic circle in case later anything unexpected would happen. After all, this was Lucien's ultimate purpose in going down there.

While keeping Relph under control, using Secondary Telepathic Bond, Lucien made sure that neither Relph nor Metatron knew the existence of the other secret passage and the inner part of the palace, and then he secretly examined the slaughterhouse-like chamber and made sure that no one was in it.

Then, when Sophia was busy with casting spells to help Beyer defeat Fredrick, Lucien cast Persistent Image and Gaseous Form and sneaked into the chamber where they found Frederick.

Compared to Frederick's power, what concerned Lucien much more was the fact that Metatron was also down there in the palace. But as long as he was not in the secret chamber, things would be much easier!

Once Lucien stepped into the secret chamber, he was overwhelmed by the strong, disgusting smell of blood and flesh, but he was not affected by it at all. He walked to the painting of the first Gorse Duke and started casting a long and strange spell, with the help of complex hand gestures.

The sound of metal collisions was loud, and no one wanted to stay close to the secret chamber because of the strong smell of blood. Therefore, no one heard the low voice casting a spell in the chamber.

Finally, Lucien finished casting the long spell given by Rhine. In the gas form, his body rose in the air and somehow entered the painting!

Inside the painting, there was a passage which was not very long. Without any barriers, Lucien had successfully entered the inner layer of the palace, which looked exactly the same as the hall above the ground!

In the middle of the hall, there was a sun altar, on which there was the statue of Sun King, Thanos.

It was a middle-aged man looking up, as if nothing else was worthy of his attention except for the endless and mysterious starry sky.

Thanos' face was well-featured and the look on it was serious. The statue was wearing a magic crown inlaid with magic precious stones and a black magic robe with complicated red patterns on it.

The statue was very well-built, which showed the great manner of Sun King when he was still alive. Meanwhile, the statue's right hand reached out, as if it was holding something invisible.

Lucien could simply put the gorse brooch back on the statue and then he could start the advanced magic rite, but now, he frowned and stood where he was.

Why... Why he could not sense the existence of the World of Souls?

According to Lucien's experience in the tomb of Finks, he believed that the three places that Rhine told him should all have some close connection to the World of Souls, but...

After a few seconds' of thinking, Lucien took out Sun's Corona and wore it around his neck.

Instantly, his eyes became blurry and the statue changed.

Above the right hand reaching out, there was a half-transparent, white light ball. However, there were other colors hiding underneath, that Lucien could not tell what they were with his bare eyes. The light ball was going through some constant changes, like a beating heart.

The light ball felt very familiar to Lucien, just like the rust-colored one that Lucien saw in Finks' tomb. Although it was right there in front of him, he felt that the light ball did not exist in this world.

In the light ball, there was a small black crack, twisted and disgusting.

Lucien sensed the weak smell of death from the crack.

The gap of the World of Souls was wrapped in the light ball! No wonder Lucien could not feel its existence!

Lucien still had a few more minutes, thus he could not help being

curious and wondered what was in the light ball.

Calming down, he cast a series of detection spells, but all of them directly went through the light ball.

After thinking carefully, Lucien cast a few layers of defensive spells on himself. Then, with great determination, he reached out his hand.

His fingers slowly touched the margin of the light ball.

Chapter 404: The Ruthless Sophia

The light balls kept swelling bigger and then shrinking smaller. A glowing white radiance was flowing inside. Lucien's fingers approached the light ball slowly, but when he was almost touching it, his hand stopped!

Lucien felt his heart beating very fast as if it was going to jump out of his chest. His heart-beating pace closely followed the contraction frequency of the light ball.

Lucien had a thin layer of sweat covering his forehead. He had no idea why he just decided to take such a great risk by touching this mysterious light ball when he knew completely nothing about it? What if the light ball had exploded? What if it had contained some kind of curse?

He felt very lucky that his discretion and prudence had stopped him in the last second. Meanwhile, Lucien also reckoned that it was very strange of him to be this reckless. Somehow at that moment, he was caught by his curiosity and greed. Although he was clearly aware of the danger, he could not help reaching out his hand.

Lucien withdrew his hand and stared at the mysterious light ball in front of him. Trying his best, he was analyzing what just happened.

He wondered why. Was it because of the underground palace, or the arrival of the demon, Greed? Or was it because of the light ball itself?

Or perhaps... they were the same thing? Were they all connected?

There were so many thoughts in Lucien's mind, but he soon made a decision: He could not simply focus on the light ball, instead, he should also try to look for the materials or documents left by Sun King somewhere else. Lucien could waste his time here no more. He had to hurry up and carry out the magic rite to activate the magic circle left by Rhine.

Rhine had checked this place carefully and did not find anything

else except for the magic circles here. It seemed that the other secret chamber that Sophia and Relph just mentioned was more likely to be the one keeping all the precious documents of Sun King.

Lucien took out the gorse brooch containing the unknown power and carefully put it on the statue's left chest. The brooch had now been put back to where it belonged.

Taking a few steps back, Lucien started to activate the magic circle using complex hand gestures and an incomprehensible spell.

...

In the hall above.

The fight was becoming more and more intense, and Frederick's pale face was covered with countless protruding veins. Although he looked terrible, Frederick's power had grown stronger and stronger, and even the prince was not his match.

Since Arthen's power all came from the divine and magic items he had, he could not follow the prince's and Frederick's pace anymore. Right now he was standing beside one of the gates in case Beyer decided to flee.

Deniz was the same. Now he was not in the fight either. Frederick's way of fighting was too crazy and rude to take anyone else into consideration. Anyone who tried to help Frederick could be severely hurt by him. Therefore, Deniz was now standing in front of the other gate.

Only Sophia could follow Frederick's movements. The series of spells she cast had really put Beyer in an even bitter situation. Counting the seconds, Beyer had no idea how much longer he could hang in there!

Sophia had also put Claire back into sleep. However, she never tried to use Claire to threaten Beyer as she knew it clearly that a woman was never that important to her elder brother. Sophia had decided to save Claire until later in case more blood from the Gorse Family was required in the secret chamber.

At this time, the look on Arthen's face suddenly changed and he pulled the gate of the hall open.

"Jocelyn, what happened?" Arthen asked hurriedly.

Jocelyn's face had completely turned pale. Stumbling into the hall, she grabbed Arthen's arm and cried, "Run! Andris has turned into a monster! ...Monster!"

"...What?" Being grabbed by the arm, Arthen, for a second, did not know what to do. He had no idea what Jocelyn was talking about. Speaking of monster, they also had one there.

It seemed that Jocelyn had been scared so bad that the words from her mouth had become messy, "Monster... Andris is a monster! Killed many people! No... ate! He ate people! Run!"

In the end, Jocelyn started wailing. Her face was covered with tears.

Seeing that Beyer and Frederick's fight was still going on, Arthen held Jocelyn in his arms and asked, "What do you mean...? He ate people? What happened? Are you alright?"

"I don't know. Andris has turned into a monster..." Jocelyn was still repeating herself. "He has forgotten me..."

Arthen could not understand Jocelyn, so he turned to look at Sophia for help.

Slightly frowning, Sophia pointed at Frederick. She was telling Arthen not to worry since they had a radiant knight there!

Arthen indeed calmed down immediately. That was right. They had Frederick, who was gradually mastering his power better and better. Even a monster was not a threat to them!

Arthen turned to comfort Jocelyn, and Sophia also cast a spell to calm her down. The gentle green light fell on Jocelyn's hair like a piece of veil. Slowly, Jocelyn's bitter crying had been replaced by weak sobs from time to time.

Seeing that everything had been under control and how Frederick was fighting Beyer for her like a monster, there was a triumphant but sarcastic smile on Sophia's face.

Greed was the most powerful sin. Thus, no one could escape the punishment.

Sophia took a glance at Beaulac, who was standing there just like a fool, and then looked at Relph. She gave Relph a hint with the eyes, telling him to get ready for the next step of their plan. Later Relph would take Beaulac to the secret chamber together with Sophia and Claire, and Arthen and his people would be killed by Frederick who had already turned lunatic.

Once Sophia got the secret of Sun King, Sir Metatron would come to the stage. Sir Metatron would kill the monster, Frederick, who would have already killed many young nobles, even including the prince, as well as Relph. People would get to know that it was Relph, the vicious sorcerer, who summoned the evil power and turned Frederick into such a beast.

Sophia had the entire play in her mind:

One of the inheritors of the Gorse family had been deluded by the demon and lost his belief as his years of effort of awakening his blood power still eventually turned out to be in vain. The young heritor thus became a vicious sorcerer, and by accident, he discovered the magic rite for summoning the demons from the most ancient books of the family. From the books, he also found the powerful spell which could temporarily deactivate the magic circles in the underground palace. Therefore, the young inheritor, whose name was Relph, decided to use the magic rite and the spell to defeat all the other candidates and become the count.

However, the summoned demon went out of control. Seizing the soul of a secret guard, the demon launched a horrible massacre in the underground palace. When Sir Metatron finally broke the magic circles and came in, only the princess survived as she was hiding in a secret chamber all the time.

The citizens would mourn for the righteous prince; they would

mourn for the loyal knight whose name was Arthen; and the young noble whose name was Beaulac...

The entire play was flawless!

Sophia took a glance at Deniz with a sorry look on her face. She did not want to do this, but she had to. Anyone who knew what happened down here, except for uncle Ulrich, Sir Metatron and herself, had to be killed.

She did not have the power to kill the Gorse Count and the Glorious Crown, or she would have chosen to kill the two of them as well!

Only when the soul and body were not able to be found anymore could a dead person keep a secret safe!

Beyer was feeling his arms getting rather heavy. In his eyes, Frederick was moving so fast that he had turned into blurry shadows. The prince knew that he had reached his limit.

He knew that he had to go all out.

Looking rather determined, Beyer held his willpower strong. The hanging wings behind his back suddenly stretched out and a radiance started flowing out. The feathers fell, and the wings quickly disappeared. A layer of holy light covered Beyer. Even his green sword, Demon Horn, was dyed milk-white.

"The Anger of Justice!" Sophia burst out.

Only when the blood power, the Angel of Justice, reached the level equivalent to that of a radiant knight, could it exert the ability called Anger of Justice! The Anger of Justice could launch a powerful attack on all evil creatures by improving the knight's power by one level!

But how was this possible? Beyer was not yet a radiant knight!

The holy light flashed past, but it was so bright that the entire hall was lit up.

When the light was gone, Beyer was gasping hard, with the sword

in his hands. He had completely lost his blond hair, and the wrinkled scalp was revealed! But he was still standing there!

Frederick took a few steps back and a bloody cut appeared in his face. The cut extended and stretched fast. Frederick's head was almost cut open in half!

Beyer's heart was full of hope. He guessed that his victory had come.

Sophia frowned. She wondered if Frederick had died.

Deniz and Arthen were deeply shocked by Beyer's incredible power, and they had no idea what to do next.

However, the corner of Frederick's lips curled up, even with his head cut open.

The creepy smile made them very nervous and scared. And at this time, the veins that were hiding underneath his skin were now stretching out like countless, scary tentacles!

The alien-looking blood veins quickly reached the corners of the hall and completely covered the gate and the walls.

The several main thick veins went right into the bodies on the floor. Soon, the bodies shrank and became the nutrient for Frederick through the veins.

"Come to me. This is what I deserve!" murmured Fredrick, whose tone was filled with vicious greed. Meanwhile, the deep cut in his head started healing very fast.

"Mon... Monster!" Jocelyn was shocked by the disgusting and horrible scene again.

They had no idea if Frederick should still be regarded as a human being. Was he going to be out of control?

Seeing that the entrance to the secret chamber had not been fully covered by the veins, Sophia, who grabbed Claire, started moving to the secret chamber secretly. She gave Relph a hint, asking him to

grab Beaulac and come with her.

Frederick's power had exceeded Sophia's expectation. They could waste their time here no more.

However, when she took a glance at Relph, what she saw greatly surprised her. Beaulac, who was just standing there like a fool, had turned into piles of foams as soon as the veins touched his body.

Foam?

For a second, Sophia was beyond confused. However, when she saw the veins turning into ashes when she reached the secret chamber, she suddenly understood what just happened. She saw an almost transparent figure come out of the air and reveal itself. It was Beaulac!

Sophia realized that Beaulac was, in fact, a sorcerer who used the fake blood power to hide his own identity. He had just sneaked in to find the treasure of Sun King.

Sophia was always aware of the fact that Beaulac was not a fool. He pretended that he was in love with Sophia but had his own plans. However, Sophia did not care. No matter what plan Beaulac had, in Sophia's mind, he was never a threat to her in the presence of Frederick and Sir Metatron. And now she had finally figured out what Beaulac wanted.

"Catch him, Deniz!" cried Sophia.

She also moved. Flapping her six pairs of wings, green wind ropes were summoned surrounding Beaulac. Meanwhile, since Claire had fallen into sleep, another young noble on Sophia's side, whose name was Joseph, had the chance to rush at Beaulac, holding the sword tight in his hands.

However, at this time, Sophia was shocked when she saw her wind ropes being quickly absorbed by a summoned light wall. As the magic symbols in the wall flowed fast, the wind ropes were all gone.

"Douglas' Absorbing Wall?!" Sophia recognized the wall.

At this time, Joseph had arrived in front of Lucien before Deniz's lightning bolts were summoned. In front of Joseph, the young man with clear blue eyes was wearing a mild smile.

Puff... A cluster of black fume directly covered Joseph.

Deniz's eyes suddenly opened big, and out of his astonishment, the summoned lightning bolts attached to his sword had disappeared: he saw that, when the black fume dispersed, there was a pink rabbit on the floor, but Joseph had disappeared.

Rabbit?

Baleful Polymorph!

"You aren't Beaulac?!"

Sophia's face turned pale. For the first time, she was mildly in panic. It was not because of the fact that the fake Beaulac could cast the fourth-circle spell, Douglas' Absorbing Wall, or the fifth-circle spell, Baleful Polymorph; what mattered was how easily the light wall absorbed the wind ropes and ald how he could cast a fifth-circle spell without any effort!

Silence had seized all of the young nobles, except for Frederick, who had turned into a complete monster.

Chapter 405: The Destroyed Confidence

"Kill him, now!"

Sophia was the first one who realized what to do. Through Secondary Telepathic Bond, she commanded Frederick to take action.

She was not panicking. She had Frederick, a radiant knight whose power was given by a demon, to fight for her. Also, the gold knight, Metatron, was on her side. Even a senior-rank sorcerer would not be too much of a threat!

Pretending to be afraid, she took a few steps backward. Her right foot reached the floor tile which was a bit untight.

As soon as she entered the hall, Sophia's every single movement was well planned.

Things had gone beyond her expectation. She had to leave right now.

At this time, she saw the beautiful sapphire ring on Beaulac's left hand. Before Sophia could cast any spells to protect herself, the ring suddenly lit up and then a light ray hit her straightly.

Instantly, Sophia realized that her connection to magic had been completely cut off. Although she could still feel her own blood power, the power was constrained within her body. The telepathic bond between Frederick and her had also been disabled.

"Anti-magic Ray?" Sophia's green eyes opened wide. There was no doubt that the stranger who was playing Beaulac was a senior-rank sorcerer!

As a caster, she knew how terrible the power of a senior-rank sorcerer could be. Although she was always quite confident, now Sophia felt her legs trembling. Thus, she turned to look at Frederick with her beautiful and helpless eyes.

Unlike Wrath or Pain, Sophia was still more or less able to communicate with Greed because of her status as a princess and her dazzling beauty.

Frederick burst out a loud cry, "All mine! Mine! You can't take it away!"

Around Frederick, the haze of blood slowly rose and then surrounded him. Targeting the new enemy, Frederick rushed directly at Lucien.

Swept by the blood haze, Prince Beyer went down on his knees, and his green sword was also dropped. He was not able to stand on his feet anymore after using the Anger of Justice.

Prince Beyer's original plan was to frighten Sophia and her people to make some time for himself by using the Anger of Justice, however, somehow Frederick had changed his target and right now the fight was between Beaulac and Frederick.

What was to his surprise was that Beaulac was, in fact, a senior-rank sorcerer.

This provided Beyer with a little hope. No matter, in the end, the sorcerer won or lose, the consequence would not be worse than Sophia and this monster winning the game. At least Beyer could try to talk to the sorcerer. After all, they were not direct enemies.

The enemy of his enemy was his friend!

He realized that the cost of using Justice was great. Beyer felt extremely dizzy and he already could not see clearly. The things that he saw became very blurry.

Seeing Frederick being covered in the blood haze, Lucien's right pupil darkened as if there was a night sky in his eye. In the back velvet of the night sky, there were countless stars.

"Level six radiant knight... Just reached the level. Ability: Fusion and Devouring."

"Crazy. Non-energy body. High spell resistance."

"Blood Haze. A defense spell. Strongly corrosive. Absorbing."

This was the fourth circle spell in the school of Astrology, Analysis.

The spell was built on the caster's knowledge. Using the spell, the caster could assess how powerful his enemy was and find the enemy's strong and weak points.

A bolt of lightning, which just lit up, quickly disappeared in the air. Deniz tried to fight with Frederick against Lucien, but the summoned lightening was instantly devoured by the blood haze.

Frederick was almost right in front of Lucien. Some dim light covered Lucien but also quickly disappeared.

Then the blood maze started swirling, mixing with the sound of the blast. The blood eddies appeared one by one as the air formed the horrible, messy currents.

Soon the maze was divided into parts as the air currents were driving and pulling it. Inside, the disgusting monster with no skin and veins was exposed.

The fifth circle force field spell, Devouring Vortex!

The monster burst out a harsh cry. The veins quickly retreated like wriggly tentacles. At this time, the light purple ring on Lucien's right hand became bright and dazzling.

Gold, green, blue, black... The colorful light spots enclosed the monster and formed a huge vortex, tearing down everything inside that consists of elements.

The body of the monster was destroyed, and the monster's soul was also gone.

When the vortex disappeared, the broken veins were the only things left on the ground.

At this time, the veins started wriggling, as if they were trying to assemble together again!

Lucien's face was expressionless. He reached out his right hand, and his fingers spread out. The mysterious symbols joined together and formed an old book page. Then all the veins exploded silently and then evaporated.

This was a unique magic from the congress, Demon Elegy!

Seeing this, Sophia's body slightly trembled. She could not believe what just happened in front of her: Frederick, whose power was given by the demon, Greed, had been killed so easily like this!

She had no idea how powerful this senior-rank sorcerer was.

Her face turned very pale. She looked back at the entrance of the hall several times, but no one was there.

Holding the sword, Deniz had come back to Sophia. Although he was scared, Deniz still chose to stand in front of the princess to protect her.

Sophia kept telling herself that she had to calm down right now. She had to somehow make more time for herself until Sir Metatron came.

Knowing that the Glorious Crown, Metatron, was still on her side, Sophia came down again. When she was about to make the offer to the mysterious sorcerer to share Sun King's treasure, and promise him that he could leave safely later, the look on Sophia's face slightly changed.

Arthen was having a hard time swallowing down his saliva mixing with blood. Seeing the strange Beaulac, he almost collapsed to the ground. He wondered who this young man was, and which side was he going to help.

Although with his strong willpower as a grand knight, Arthen still managed to stand still, he had no idea what to do. He did not know whether he should launch his attack or defend, or probably just be here waiting for the trial from the fake Beaulac.

Jocelyn, who was beside Arthen, murmured, "This isn't Beaulac... He's not. No wonder all of a sudden he just became so confident and

elegant, and so powerful..."

Hearing the praising, Arthen felt rather envious and pissed. He could not bear that Jocelyn had such affection for the fake Beaulac, and he even thought to himself whether Jocelyn was, in fact, hoping to see the fake Beaulac winning the title and the even the entire empire in the end!

Lots of negative emotions were boiling in his mind.

After destroying the demon, Greed, with the mild smile which made Sophia rather scared, Lucien walked to her.

"Sir, the distinguished sorcerer, we can join our hands. You can leave this underground palace safe and sound," said Sophia with a sweet smile, which was also rather touching and delicate. However, at this time, a flash of joy very quickly passed in her eyes in a very unnoticeable manner.

Behind Lucien, the look on Arthen's face suddenly became very creepy. The blue veins under his forehead skin bulged and then quickly turned dark red.

"...!" Seeing the change happened to Arthen, Jocelyn's heart was filled with fear. But before she could cry out, a distorted, dark red vein stuck out from her throat.

Her beautiful eyes quickly dimmed. Her face was written with immeasurable shock and fear.

Arthen's smile became even scarier. The demon, Greed, was not that easy to be killed.

At this time, a cold light ray fiercely burst out from Lucien, who did not even turn around. And the ray hit Arthen directly with great accuracy.

A layer of ice crystal quickly covered his body, as if he had been put into an ice coffin.

The light reflected on the ice coffin was dazzling, but the light was rather cold as if it was capable of freezing one's soul.

What also froze was the smile on Sophia's face.

Very quickly the ice coffin melted down, together taking away Arthen's body, soul, as well as the projection of the demon, Greed, on him. After a few seconds, everything was gone.

Lucien knew from the very beginning that there was no way that Devouring Vortex and Demon Elegy could completely destroy one of the most mysterious demons. He was just luring the demon to find a new body. What could really kill the demon projection was the spell, Silent Ice Coffin.

Lucien's knowledge of the demon was all from the little crystal dragon, Alferris! He had to extend his sincere gratitude to the little dragon!

"Your Highness, was Frederick an uncontrollable monster?" Deniz knew what just happened to Arthen was a horrible sign.

And the rest of the nobles who were still alive also knew this.

Sophia's lips trembled. The way she looked could force a man to show great gentleness and mercy for her. The senior-rank sorcerer's power was beyond her imagination. In front of him, Sophia and Frederick power were like kids holding their toy sword. There was no way that they could fight back.

She did not respond to Deniz's question because of the fear. Again, she looked at the entrance, waiting for her the most powerful support.

Then her eyes instantly lit up like stars had fallen into her eyes, for she saw clearly that the one who she had been waiting for was standing right there.

Sir Metatron had arrived. Because of his age, he had white hair. Thin and tall, he was wearing a white shirt and a pair of fitting trousers and dark brown boots. He looked rather calm.

"Sir Metatron! A vicious sorcerer is here!"

Sophia cried and ran to the old knight as if she was a kid who had

been bullied. She did not worry at all that the sorcerer would attack her from behind, for she knew that she was standing within the defense range of a level nine gold knight!

The corner of Metatron's lips curved up. A slightly painful smile was on his face.

Sophia finally saw her bright hope. Finally, everything could come to an end when Sir Metatron killed all her enemies here.

Suddenly, a familiar figure rushed in front of her, and then it was pierced through by a sharp, black thorn.

"...Deniz?"

Staring at Deniz's beautiful face, Sophia was confused. But when she looked up, fear completely seized her heart. The face of Sir Metatron, the Glorious Crown, was written with the most painful smile!

Surrounded by the black mist, the old knight stood there. In the black mist, there were many painful faces. She saw Andris's face, and also Duda's!

"Monster... Sir Metatron is also a monster now!"

That was the end... Sophia's breakdown point was there.

She burst out the bitter scream and collapsed to the ground. All of her elegance and calmness had gone. She even peed her pants.

Deniz tried his best looking back, and left his last words, "Only you... treat me... like a sister..."

His eyes slowly closed, and his breathing stopped.

Sophia's tears ran out of her eyes out of control. They were the tears of sorrow, pain, despair, and regret. Together, these emotions formed a nightmare maze that she could no longer escape.

With the countless painful face, Metatron took a step back. His eyes had no focus.

Sophia cried out loud again and crawled back on the ground with her hands. Her mind could not take this anymore.

"Please...please help me..."

When she almost passed out, the figure that was wearing the black magic robe came to her. Gripping her last line of hope, she looked at Lucien and cried for help.

The young sorcerer was also looking at her, and he sighed,

"Greed..."

Chapter 406: Opportunities Come to Those Who are Prepared

Chapter 406: Opportunities Come to Those Who are Prepared

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Henyee

The gentle sigh directly struck Sophia's mind like lightning. The dense smog was driven away, and some memories had come back to her.

After knowing the secret of Sun King from Relph, Sophia chose to collaborate with the Gorse duke and the Glorious Crown in order to win the royal throne. To set up the complex trap, she had betrayed her good friend and the knights who were loyal to her.

However, in the end, the people she chose to collaborate with had turned into the horrible monsters. If Deniz had not chosen to sacrifice himself to save her life, Sophia must have already been killed. All her dreams and ambition would have been turned into foam upon the water.

And this was all because of her greed...

Recalling how she laughed at Frederick, Beyer, and Arthen for their greed, Sophia realized that what was happening to her was rather sarcastic.

Feeling regretful, annoyed, anguished, desperate, abandoned, there were many negative emotions tangling with each other in Sophia's mind. She cherished her life a lot, for she was a princess who owned beauty, wealth, youth, and power. She was not going to give up her life so easily!

"I don't wanna die!"

Sophia cried out loud. She had put all her hope in the mysterious, young sorcerer.

Although the sorcerer's power was horrible and she was his enemy,

Sophia believed that as long as her offer was tempting enough, she still had a chance to survive. But if the monster – Sophia looked up at the demon surrounded by the black smog – defeated the sorcerer, she would for sure be killed in great pain!

She shook her head out of fear, and then her green eyes fixed on the young sorcerer. He was her only hope. She could give him anything he wanted!

Trying her best, Sophia forced herself to calm down using magic. However, another round of emotion followed.

She felt extremely nervous and worried.

Although this demon, Pain, was different from the one named Greed, since it was still not fully developed, and it was not one of the seven most mysterious and powerful demons, its host was the body of a level nine gold knight, whose power and speed much surpassed that of senior-rank sorcerers and radiant knights.

Was the mysterious sorcerer able to defeat the demon?

Recalling how the sorcerer just fought, Sophia realized that all of the most powerful spells that he used were from his magic items, and the magic that he cast using his soul power were only up to the fifth circle. Although using magic spells properly in the correct situation was more important than anything, the fact that the young sorcerer never cast a sixth circle spell still concerned her a lot.

Maybe...maybe the young man just became a sixth circle sorcerer in less than a year. Maybe he had not acquired enough sixth circle spells.

Sophia felt more than desperate again.

So she started praying, to the God of Truth. Although she was a sorcerer, and it was rather improper for a sorcerer to pray to the God of Truth, she had no idea what else she could do.

Although it seemed to be a quite long time, in fact, all these emotions went through Sophia's mind just within three seconds.

Metatron murmured as if they were in a dream,

“Come...Come and fall in the deepest pain, as the nature of the world itself is the pain, as well as the nature of life.”

Dragging the heavy burden of pain, Metatron forced his way forward. The stars in Lucien’s right eye moved faster and faster. However, because of the great disparity in power, Lucien could not get detailed information anymore,

“Relying on Metatron’s own willpower which is beyond strong, the demon, Pain, has gained great power from him and is growing very fast. However, Metatron’s willpower is still resisting, and this is why Metatron is moving slow and stiff, not as swift as Greed.”

Lucien knew that there was no way that he could fight against a level nine knight. Even with his sword, Pale Justice, if he was still not fast enough, Lucien was still going to be killed by Metatron within one stroke.

The distorted faces in the black smog written with great pain started talking:

“The arrival of a newborn brings pain to mother...”

“Growth brings pain...”

“Illness brings pain...”

“Poverty brings pain...”

“Love brings pain...”

“Despair brings pain...”

“Death brings the ultimate pain...”

Each face represented a certain source of pain. The creepy atmosphere which enclosed Lucien started more or less affecting his mind.

Lucien knew that he had to do something.

Forcing himself to stay concentrated, he took out an item from the magic pouch.

At this time, a bright light lit up Metatron's mind like a glorious crown. The power of the light restrained the black smog, thus the pain faces stopped gabbling annoyingly.

Lucien discovered his opportunity! The blood power of Metatron was still resisting the power of the demon!

Once this chance was gone, Lucien would not have a second one to survive!

Very decisively, Lucien threw the tube in the air. Meanwhile, he started casting and making complex hand gestures.

The light became brighter and brighter as if it was going to burn the entire hall down to ashes.

Sophia squinted her eyes, and she had lost all of her hope. Under the brilliant rays from the Glorious Crown, they would all die.

The solid, colorless material in the crystal tube tossing in the air was freezing cold.

Driven by the power of the spell and Lucien's spiritual power conveyed by the hand gestures, the colorless solid started wriggling and became colder and colder. Soon, it became a dim ray and shot out toward Metatron.

When Lucien got his Ice & Snow Medal from Fernando, he was told that the Witch of Iceland had obtained solid helium by exerting high pressure. Thus Lucien asked his teacher to do him a favor and collected two tubes of solid helium for him. The solid helium was put into two very precious magic tubes, which was the most powerful weapon that Lucien had for his adventurous trip.

Lucien always treated his life very seriously!

The ninth-circle spell, owned by Lucien, Snow Goddess's Whip!

The freezing ray fiercely stuck into the bright sunlight.

Metatron did not realize what was going on until the ninth-circle spell was ready. He had no time to dodge, so he could only drag the black smog back and cover himself with it.

The black smog was solidified, as well as Metatron's blood. His skin looked like crystal, reflecting the sunlight. The scene was like a beautiful dream.

Close to the entrance of the hall, air and moisture in the space had gone and the space became totally solid. The only things that were still moving were the distorted faces, but they could not get out of the solidified black smog.

Sophia had no idea what the spell was. The power of the spell was definitely inconceivable. She also could not believe what just happened to Metatron, a level nine knight!

Who was this young man?

Sophia doubted the power of the mysterious sorcerer no more, for he did not use any magic items or scrolls, but just a simple magic tube.

Without any doubt, this mysterious sorcerer was very, very powerful!

Sophia wished that she could have been as powerful as him, so when facing danger, she could protect herself. Out of the great shock, Sophia's mind started wandering.

Lucien, however, was not feeling great right now. Although he had managed to cast the ninth circle spell, he was pushing himself to the limit too much. Snow Goddess's Whip had almost exhausted all of his spiritual power. The headache that Lucien was suffering was killing him.

At this time, the cool and refreshing feeling came from Lucien's left hand. The Holm Crown ring, Origin, had returned the previously saved spiritual power back to Lucien's body. His headache was thus relieved. Seizing the chance, Lucien instantly cast Bull's Strength.

The freezing ice could not kill the demon. Before the ice melted,

Lucien had to give it the final stroke!

The ice was melting fast, turning into white moisture rising in the air. Lucien took out a tube of magic potion and drank it all.

Grabbing his sword tight, Lucien strode across the hall toward the demon.

Lifting the sword high, Lucien fiercely hacked the faces off!

Sophia could no understand why the sorcerer all of sudden had turned into a knight. But she did not really care since she knew that the demon was not the young sorcerer's rival and she was safe now.

Pale Justice got right into the black smog ball, and the painful cry from the faces lingered in the hall.

The black smog slowly cleared. The distorted faces were also gone.

Chapter 407: Thanos's Secre

Chapter 407: Thanos's Secret

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Henryee

As soon as the demon disappeared, the gloomy and dim hall became bright and graceful like it had been washed clean by clear water.

“You won!” Staring at the mysterious sorcerer, Sophia waves her fist in the air, feeling rather encouraged. Meanwhile, her brain worked fast to think about how she could persuade the sorcerer to work with her.

However, Lucien did not lower his alert. Grabbing Pale Justice tight in his hands, Lucien looked around at the nobles who were still alive. He concentrated his spiritual power on Ice & Snow Medal to activate Silent Coffin at any time he needed.

Lucien knew it well how creepy and cunning a demon could be, and he believed that Pain was not an exception. It was hard to say if Pain had chosen another host among one of the nobles and was waiting for the opportunity to kill Lucien.

In fact, the best way for Lucien to stay safe was to kill all the living things in this hall. However, as the demons were produced by the most extreme negative feelings, Lucien would easily fall into the trap and get lost in his own desire of killing. Then the demons would possess him!

Lucien used his eyes to check every single of the nobles who were still alive one by one. When his eyes rested on them, the coldness in Lucien's eyes made them shiver and scared. They wanted to stay away from the young sorcerer, but they found themselves not able to move.

After that, Lucien turned to stare at Sophia's face.

Sophia's heart missed a beat when the deep, cold eyes looked at

her, but she managed to keep calm as she was already mentally prepared. A sweet smile emerged on her face and her petal-like lips slightly opened, ready to communicate with the young sorcerer. No wonder what he would ask for, as long as there was something he desired, there was still hope.

She was quite confident, as she believed that there was no reason that the sorcerer would see her as an enemy who must be killed. She could leave him with the entire treasure of Thanos, as well as the secret. Also, she was not going to become the inheritor of the Gorse Family anyways, and the sorcerer did not know she was planning on killing Beaulac later.

Instead, as long as she was alive, Sophia could bring him more than what he could find in the underground palace, including the secrets of the royal family, the precious, ancient documents, the great wealth, and even herself.

The words for negotiation were right on the tip of her tongue, however, at this time, she noticed that the young sorcerer slightly looked down. She also looked down following him but to see the very obvious wet stain on her dress, and the long, wet trace on the floor left when she was climbing to stay away from the demon.

Sophia's face burned. The sweet smile turned into a distorted grin. She felt that her face was hot enough to cook an egg. She almost wanted to kill herself from the great humiliation.

Sophia annoyedly thought to herself that the sorcerer was a bastard and he was no way close to a gentleman.

Lucien was not in the mood to care about how Sophia was feeling right now, instead, he felt a bit amused. When lost all she had, Sophia failed to maintain her elegance and intelligence. But if Natasha had been here, she would definitely choose to fight until the last second of her life.

Sophia was not even close to Natasha.

In fact, Sophia had just turned into twenty, and she was already a level five caster, due to the great blood power that she possessed. If

one possessed the best blood power and was also gifted, he or she would spend much fewer years than most of the sorcerers to make a great achievement, but most sorcerers could reach a higher level in a shorter period of time compared to the knights. Only a small percentage of the nobles could possess the best blood power. To acquire one top power steadily generation after generation, the ancient sorcerers had killed more than a hundred thousand people for their experiments.

But it was still just a beginning. Their future progress still relied on how they trained their own willpower, while arcanists were able to do so by exploring the truth of the world. And this was the reason why although Lucien was only a year elder than Sophia, he was already a sixth-circle sorcerer. If Sophia wanted to become a senior-rank caster, without any help from the outside, she had to spend at least ten to twenty years working on it.

A light green halo spread out. Many instantly felt very tired and fell asleep. Only Sophia was not affected.

Lucien had left the alert magic on the nobles. Once they woke up or tried to do something, Lucien would be informed immediately.

“Bring me to the secret chamber of Sun’s King,” Lucien said to Sophia in low voice.

“... No problem!” Sophia was a bit surprised and she hurriedly got up from the ground, “I can do anything for you, sir, as long as...”

She paused, for she had no idea what to say next.

Lucien nodded slightly and responded in Beaulac’s voice, “As long as you follow my orders, and if the following the orders won’t kill you, I am not interested in killing you neither. We are not enemies, and now you’ve decided to give up the treasure. Also, I’m not staying in the empire. Is that what you want?”

“Exactly!” Sophia’s heart went wild with joy. Sorcerers were really smart!

Lucien also grinned, for he had no idea at all if Sophia could survive

later.

Relph was the first one walking to the secret chamber under the control of Lucien's spell, followed by Sophia who was dragging Claire on the floor. And Lucien was the last one in the team, who was being very careful sensing the surroundings in case one of them would suddenly turn into the demon.

Entering the chamber, Relph lowered his body and pressed down a grey wall brick. Taking out a silver dagger, Relph cut open his hand and let the blood run down to the brick.

His blood collected, and then he put his harm on the brick. Dim white light came out of his body and went into the brick.

The brick silently absorbed the blood and a gate painted with the weird, ancient patterns emerged in the wall.

Relph had lost half of his life force and looked rather weak. Although he even could not stand still, under the control of Lucien, he still forced himself to open the gate and walked in the second secret chamber.

Seeing that Relph was quite safe, Lucien double checked again. Finally, he led Sophia and Claire into the energy gate.

Behind the gate, there was an ancient hall, decorated with the many wall paintings and covered with many magic circles. The lines of the magic circles finally led to the creepy sacrificial altar in the middle of the hall.

Different from the other altar that they saw down here, this altar was in the color black and dark red, inlaid with the demon horns drawn with the mysterious patterns. In the air above the altar, there was another similar altar but upside down, blazed with the sacred heat feeling like the sun, and there was a magic staff mounted with a huge Sun Stone.

Lucien took a quick glance at the complicated magic circles and the altars and believed that they were used for constraining and extracting. On the one hand, he had to be very careful with Sophia

and Relph, and on the other hand, he observed the wall paintings very carefully.

To his great surprise, the first part of the wall paintings resembled Viken's Summoning Ritual: A man whose face was written with hatred was drawing a puppet, and then he threw the puppet in the fire. Finally, a demon with two special-looking horns was summoned.

And the rest of the wall paintings were even more horrendous. When the man had been possessed by the demon and obtained the great power, he killed everyone he hated. However, at this time, a magic circle emerged and constrained him. A middle-aged man wearing a magic crown walked out of the magic circle and pulled out the demon projection from the body of the man. It seemed that the middle-aged man was Thanos. He turned on the altar, dissolved the demon projection, and then absorbed the power in!

Lucien finally realized how Thanos got his power. Thanos managed to catch the projection of the seven demons and absorbed them like obtaining blood power. He was such a crazy and ambitious man!

Lucien was very impressed and shocked, as most sorcerers when facing the seven powerful demons, would choose to stay away from them as possible as they could or to trade with the demons to gain great power. But Thanos chose to study them and eat them in.

For Lucien, what he wanted to find most were Thanos's experiment records and notes, and then the magic staff above.

Sophia pointed at the small door in the corner of the hall and put on a sweet, pleasing smile, "Sir, there are some left notes in the chamber. Uncle Ulrich told me that before Saint Calendar started, a legendary sorcerer already found the place and took away more of the materials."

Was it Viken? Lucien wondered. Was that how Viken's special summoning ritual was created? Then what about Pain Fable? How could it be possible that the summoning ritual had become so accessible?

To some degree, Lucien knew more about this place than Sophia. Although he had so many questions in his mind, he decided to put them aside.

“Sophia, go and get the magic staff.”

Sophia's face turned pale. She had no idea if any curses were attached to the magic staff. But she could not disobey the sorcerer's demand.

She looked around, hoping to find someone else to get the magic staff. But the young sorcerer's cold look ended her hope.

Shivering slightly, Sophia walked to the altar and grabbed the magic staff using Mage Hand.

Nothing happened to her. She felt more relaxed and gave the staff to Lucien.

Lucien cast Identification on the magic staff but did not get much information back. However, Lucien was quite excited because that meant the magic staff was at least of level nine. Lucien had to spend a few days to analyze it.

Putting back the magic staff, Lucien walked in the chamber followed by Sophia, Relph, and Claire. Most of the shelves were empty. On the metal desk, several incomplete notebooks were left there.

Chapter 408: Assistan

Chapter 408: Assistant

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Henyee

After casting the constraint spell on Sophia and the rest of them, Lucien checked the notebooks carefully again. Finally, he picked it up.

The notes were very incomplete, and the handwriting was very casually and hard to read. However, from the words and the handwriting, Lucien could tell that the notes were from the same person and the person's tone had changed as he or she aged:

“... After exploring the ancient relic deepest in hell, they, including Solano, and even the teacher, are somehow different now. But why shall I care? They never see hope in me. After all, as a student in Astrology, I cannot even locate my Host Star of Destiny. If my father had not saved my teacher at the cost of his life, the teacher would have abandoned me already. They have no idea what the meaning of my Host Star of Destiny is.”

“... They aren't human beings anymore! They are demons! They have been possessed! ... I can't let them know I have figured this out. I gotta be very careful...”

“... What I can make sure is that the demons that have possessed them have never been put into any record. They like playing tricks with and distorting human mind by accumulating the negative emotions. I can't stay here anymore. I have to find an excuse to leave...”

“... It was close. They would have caught me if I did not own the special Host Star of Destiny...” “... I have finally figured out who they are: Arrogance, Envy, Greed, Hatred, Pain, Lust, Hypocrisy... They are completely different from the other demons that we know...”

“... It was so foolish of Solano... He tried to kill me. He must have

no idea that I am already a seventh circle. He's my perfect experiment material who came right in front of my door. I gotta check and see what in hell Demon is..."

"... There's not a single way available for constraining the projection of a demon. What should I do? Maybe I should go and explore the deepest in hell. Hopefully, I can find something..."

"... There's no way out. I'll try if I can merge it with the common demon blood power..."

"... The results turned out to be fascinating. Gifted power can derive from the fusion and become part of the soul. The power can also strengthen one's body and solidify one's cognitive world. Maybe... it can accelerate my progressing..."

"... Since the accumulation of negative emotions can finally lead to the connection with the seven demons, I can do this on purpose. I have to design a special palace and a ritual..."

"... What is this?"

"... I was wrong from the very beginning..."

"... I think I've discovered the secret of the seven demons. I think I've seen the truth of the world..."

Lots of things were missing in the notes. Nothing really significant was left. It seemed that the pieces of notes were not left here by someone on purpose, but were ignored when some people were fighting for them. The winner knew that they were not the important parts and were in a rush leaving.

And then the notes were recollected by the ancestors of the Gorse family and compiled together.

The notes were automatically taken down in Lucien's spirit library. Lucien wondered what the secret was and why it was related to the truth of the world, but the incomplete notes were not able to explain all the questions that he had in his mind. His curiosity was burning his guts.

Calming himself down, Lucien carefully checked the secret chamber again but found nothing else. Using the power of his spirit library, he recorded the design of the altar and the magic circles.

This place itself was a great treasure. According to Thanos, the altar and the magic circles could extract the projection of the demons, confine them, and even absorb them.

For Lucien, the seven demons were too powerful to be controlled. He was not interested in absorbing the projection of the demons to gain power since the risk was too high. However, knowing the way to extract and confine them was a great advantage. Also, studying mysterious creatures was a great fascination for every arcanist, not to mention the fact that they were related to the truth of the world.

Finishing all of these, Lucien put Relph and Claire into sleep and cast the alert spell on them. Then he woke up Sophia,

“I still need you to do something for me. Follow me. Be my assistant.”

“Alright,” Sophia answered politely, but in her mind, she felt very resentful. Of course, she was not his assistant, but his tool for exploring the unknown areas.

But she could not do anything. Her life was in the sorcerer’s control. She could only follow the sorcerer docilely. They left the chamber and came to the portrait of the first Gorse duke.

Sophia was totally shocked when she saw Lucien revealing the entrance of the other chamber. And then great fear rose in her mind. She had no idea if the sorcerer would kill her since she had known the secret.

“If you want to stand there still, you don’t have to move anymore.” Lucien smiled.

In Sophia’s eyes, the smiling face was like that of a demon, which was even more vicious than a demon. She wished that she could punch right in his face.

However, that was just her wish. In reality, she still had to say, “I’m

going, sir.”

She had no choice.

Walking alone the secret passage, Sophia was very alert with her every single step. Finally, at the end of the passage, she saw the inner palace exactly the same as the outside one and the statue of Thanos.

Looking around, Sophia released a sigh of relief. Her knees had almost lost all the strength.

Lucien led Sophia to the statue and pointed at the right hand of the statue.

“You touch there,” said Lucien.

“Nothing’s there...” Sophia was very confused. But when she reached out her hand, she paused and looked at the direction where Lucien was standing.

No one was there!

“Keep going.” The sorcerer’s low voice came from some distance away. Sophia turned around and found that the mysterious sorcerer had already retreated back to the secret passage.

Sophia stammered, “Why... Why are you standing over there?”

“It can be very dangerous,” said Lucien honestly.

Instantly, sweat oozed from her forehead.

“Hurry up. We still need time to sign the magic compact.” Lucien gently reminded Sophia, still smiling.

Sophia knew that it was a threat. She felt her right hand extremely heavy. Very slowly, she lifted her hand.

“Move,” Lucien commanded. Wearing Sun’s Corona, he saw that Sophia’s hand had touched the edge of the white light ball.

Sophia's thin and beautiful hand was trembling. She had no idea what was going on.

"That's enough." Seeing nothing happened, Lucien was quite confused.

Sophia flopped down to the ground as soon as she heard Lucien's command.

Checking Sophia with the special testing spell, Lucien was certain that she was not lying. Sophia indeed did not feel the light ball and nothing happened to her. To get the first-hand data, Lucien did not control Sophia using magic. Lucien waited for a while to make sure it was completely safe, and then he walked to Sophia.

He made Sophia leave some of her power in Sun's Corona, so she could utilize part of Sun's Corona power just like how Lucien used the Saint Truth Badge for the first time.

Sophia finally saw the creepy white light ball above the right hand of the statue.

"Try again," said Lucien coldly.

Sophia cursed in her mind, but she even did not know who this young sorcerer was.

Taking a deep breath, Sophia kept telling herself that this was the last time she had to bear such a risk. Trembling, she reached out her hand toward the light ball. And within her expectation, the bastard sorcerer had retreated again.

The tip of Sophia's fingers touched the light ball. It was cold.

Her hand went through without any difficulty. When Sophia touched the small gap, she felt something like heavy curtains.

Pulling back her hand, Sophia gasped hard.

"Sir... Nothing happened."

Lucien erased the mark left my Sophia from Sun's Corona. When he

was about to give Sophia some further orders, someone triggered the alert magic circles he laid!

The first idea flashing through Lucien's mind was that one of the demons was back.

Lucien put his hand back into the pouch and further retreated to the center of the hall.

"There's another secret chamber here. Interesting." From the other end of the passage, a blond, blue-eyed man slowly walked in.

It was Beyer, the prince.

However, Beyer's eyes were rather sharp and clear, and his gestures were elegant. Obviously, he was not possessed.

His hands crossing behind, Beyer walked past Lucien and looked at the right hand of the statue.

"It's here. I was right."

There was joy in his voice.

The look on Lucien's face suddenly changed. He realized what was going on here.

Meanwhile, Sophia's whole body started trembling. Her voice was full of surprise and

"F... Father?"

Chapter 409: Rudolf II

Chapter 409: Rudolf II

Translator: Kris_Liu **Editor:** Henyee

The feelings were complicated in Sophia's calling. She was afraid that her father would severely punish her because of what she did down here, but meanwhile, she was more than happy to see her father in such a desperate situation, who could save her from the vicious sorcerer.

The man turned around and slightly nodded, "Any conspiracy must be built on power. Do you understand now?"

He was indeed Rudolf II, the emperor of the empire, the legendary leader who was as powerful as a grand arcanist!

But he was using Beyer's body... How did he go through the examination? And somehow... Lucien could not at all sense the imposing air from Rudolf, a legendary.

Lucien had to admit that his nerves were almost stretched to breaking point, as he was now standing in front of a legendary. His body was slightly trembling, but his brain was still working well. Slowly, he pulled out his right hand from the magic pouch.

Rudolf cast a glance at Lucien and then turned back to looked at the statue. To the air, Rudolf said, as if he was just talking to himself, "I didn't notice that a senior-rank sorcerer is also here. You are good, very good."

Although Rudolf was being very arrogant, he was not aggressive. Lucien also did not want to take any rush actions. In the calm voice, Lucien replied,

"I did not notice Your Majesty neither."

"Everything of my family started from here. Our ascendancy is derived from this place. Of course, when I am available, I shall

come back to see if there are more secrets hiding here and to figure out where we should go in the future. I didn't expect your presence here. You're the surprise." said Rudolf very calmly, with his hands crossing behind his back.

Looking ahead, Rudolf showed the manner that there was nothing here that he had to be afraid of and no secrets he had to hide.

However, Lucien could feel the sore in his muscles from the great intense of his nerves.

Hearing Rudolf's words, Lucien was quite shocked, "So... Your Majesty... You also became a legendary by absorbing the projection of the demons?"

Rudolf sneered, "I'm not as filthy as Ulrich. Fools can only see how they can benefit from absorbing the power of the demons. But Thanos and I... We are out of the control of greed, and we see truth to find our own path. The world belongs to people like us."

Obviously, Rudolf II was not trying to hide his arrogance and confidence at all.

Lucien reflected on Rudolf's words and suddenly got an idea, "So, Your Majesty... To go through the duke's check, you cast your own projection in Prince Beyer's mind or soul beforehand just like the demons. When the time is proper, you get control of the prince's body and grow?"

Rudolf II slowly turned around. It was his first time looking intently at Lucien since he came in. He slightly nodded and said, "Very smart. Although this isn't all correct, basically, I'd say yes."

Rudolf did not tell Lucien where his mistake was. Maybe it was related to some bigger secrets.

Lucien was more than shocked. He wondered what Rudolf did to himself to obtain such creepy but great power just like that of the demons. Also, Lucien had no idea if Rudolf would kill him because he had discovered the secret.

Although Lucien's heart was beating very fast, this was not affecting

Lucien's thinking and his belief in hope. He would never give up and yield to the situation!

His right hand was still in the magic pouch. He was ready for the activation at any time.

Sophia, standing below the statue, spent some time watching them talking. Hearing the sorcerer's words, she finally realized what happened and then she cried to her father, whose voice was full of grievance and hatred, "Father, he tried to kill me!"

She wanted the sorcerer to die! Right now!

Before Lucien could take any actions, Rudolf cast a glance at Sophia and said coldly, "Can't you see it? I'm now using Beyer's body. A level seven or eight radiant knight's power is all I can use right now. I'm not able to kill him. And if we fight, under the power, you can't survive."

Lucien was choked. He never expected that the emperor was this straightforward and honest. However, with a second thought, Lucien guessed that maybe Rudolf was just trying to lower his alert... But that was not really necessary.

"I was confident I could kill you. But the ninth circle magic you just cast frightened me a bit. Is that the latest research outcome from the congress?" asked Rudolf very straightforward.

Lucien slightly nodded.

Rudolf also nodded thoughtfully, "My way of doing things is simple. I am not fully confident with killing you, so I won't try, in case the fight will hurt Sophia and Beyer. However, if you are so stupid that you want to seek for trouble, I won't mind it. I can have more sons and daughters, and this is only my projection, so the real me will not get much hurt. You sure you want to do it?"

Then Rudolf turned to Sophia, "Come here."

Sophia was very terrified of the mysterious sorcerer, worrying that he might take actions at any time, but she still walked to her father step by step.

Lucien knew that what Rudolf said made sense.

When Sophia finally reached her father, she could finally relax. Tears were in her eyes, and her body could not help trembling.

“You made two mistakes in your plan. One, you are not powerful enough, and neither are the people who served you. So you have to rely on Metatron to clean up all these things in the end, but in fact you cannot fully trust him. Second, you chose to cooperate with Ulrich, who is a hissing serpent. All the plans he made were beneficial to himself but would not bring him much trouble or risks. He doesn’t care about his partners’ safety. You should learn from him, Sophia. You shouldn’t be here right now, instead, you should stay outside, pretending that you’re waiting for rescue in a safe place. As for what happened to Metatron... He’s getting old, and his fear of death and pain was utilized by the demon and triggered by the agony of Andris. These were not in your expectation... That’s why I said you shouldn’t have come down here. You should stay outside like Ulrich.”

To their great surprise, Rudolf started analyzing Sophia’s failure.

Sophia was very shocked, “F... Father... You don’t blame me for almost killing my brother? Many people died down here...”

“A young griffin can only grow in iron and blood,” answered Rudolf short and brief, “but you have to deal with the remaining problems on your own.”

Sophia finally realized that, from the very beginning, there was no chance at all for her to win since her father had cast his projection on her elder brother, Beyer. She took a quick glance at the mysterious sorcerer, as she felt that her well-plotted scheme was now like a kid’s trick being watched by two adults, in spite of the fact that many people died in this kid game.

How childish she was in their eyes! Sophia wondered.

Suddenly, the underground palace started shaking fiercely, together with the magic circles.

“They’re almost here...” Rudolf looked up.

Sophia was very encouraged, as she knew that when the rescue came, that would be the end of the mysterious sorcerer. She would not kill him on the spot, instead, she was going to torture him with great patience!

At this time, Lucien instantly activated the item in his right hand.

Although Rudolf II had not launched an attack against him yet, this did not necessary mean that Rudolf would never try to kill him. Once the rescue arrived, Rudolf might trap him, and that would be the end of Lucien!

The magic scroll in Lucien’s right hand suddenly lit up and the black haze rising from the scroll enveloped him, and then the power of the black haze broke the magic circles for blocking the space!

The space was distorted by the power, and then the mysterious sorcerer disappeared with the black haze.

“Where did he go?!” Sophia could not believe her eyes.

Rudolf squinted his eyes slightly and murmured in low voice, “Night Travel... from the Vampires?”

But he was not at all surprised with Chaos Teleportation cast following Night Travel.

Seeing that Sophia was still shaking her head, feeling rather upset and annoyed, Rudolf II turned around and said to her, “We shall go outside now. Ulrich should not know the existence of this place. I’ll see how things will go...”

He never tried to ruin this place, as he would come back here from time to time.

“Yes, father.” answered Sophia in low voice.

“But before this...” Rudolf’s voice suddenly became cold.

Reaching out his right hand, which was lit up with some kind of

white light, Rudolf grabbed a twisting cluster of shadow out of Sophia.

The projection of Pain did not die out, instead, it was resting on Sophia, waiting for its chance... Sophia's face turned pale again.

Rudolf clenched his fist, and the black shadow burst out bitter scream.

Chapter 410: Outside of the Underground Palace

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Translator: Henyee **Editor:** Henyee

In a remote area of Antiffler, a dim ball of light emerged in the darkness and then suddenly expanded into a mysterious gate.

The gate was fiercely pushed open, from which Lucien walked out.

And then everything went back to normal.

Spreading out his spiritual power, Lucien examined the surroundings very carefully.

This was a wooded area with small hills. Except for the several startled animals that were able to resist the cold, there was nothing else nearby.

Lucien finally could lower his guard, and he put the Space Jump scroll back into his magic pouch.

The enchanted seventh circle spell, Chaos Teleportation, could send the caster to an undesignated place. Lucien could have ended up showing up in White Maple Palace of Antiffler, in a cathedral, or in the middle of a random street.

But Lucien got lucky this time. Maybe it was because of the power of the underground palace, or maybe it was because of the special connection formed by Lucien turning himself into Beaulac, Lucien had been sent to the place very close to the villa where Beaulac was hidden.

Casting Invisibility on himself, Lucien rushed toward the direction of the villa.

Lucien decided to leave something for Beaulac.

With these many things happening, Lucien would not bear the risk for staying in Antiffler to improve Beaulac's blood power.

However, Lucien was such a man of his word that he did not want to break his promise. Beaulac, willingly or not, helped Lucien a lot, so Lucien should pay him back.

...

In the old manor of the Gorse family, oppressed by the silence, the nobles all looked very gloomy. Some of them were being seized by the deep sorrow, as their beloved children had died in the competition, in spite of the fact that the competition was always claimed to be very safe by the Gorse family.

"... So this is what happened..." said Ulrich, the Gorse Duke, in deep grief, "A mysterious senior-rank sorcerer fooled us with his unknown transfiguration spell and went down into the underground palace. In the palace, he summoned the ancient demon and controlled Sir Metatron, launched slaughter, and took away our family's treasure, the Sun Staff. By the time when the rescue force managed to get in, Sir Metatron had sacrificed himself, thus Prince Beyer, Princess Sophia, and a few lucky young men were able to survive."

"I understand how you are feeling," continued Ulrich, "as our family also lost Arthen, Relph, and Sir Metatron. The Gorse family will try our best to meet your demands."

This was the "truth" which had been negotiated by the Duke and the Princess. They put all the blame on the mysterious sorcerer. And before the underground palace was broken in, they had decided to kill Relph to make sure the true version of the story would not be revealed.

The rest of the young nobles who joined the competition were all involved in the assassination of the Prince, and they would keep it as a secret within their families. Meanwhile, they had been put to sleep by Lucien, thus they had no idea what happened to Sir Metatron.

Count Porti, whose face resembled Duda, said in a stiff voice, "Demand? I've only got one demand – Find the damned sorcerer! I'll cut him into pieces!"

Duda was his most beloved son.

The rest of the representatives of the noble families agreed. They did not choose to turn into enemies against the Gorse family, since those families which managed to send their youngsters to the competition all had close connections with the Gorse family.

There was no need to suddenly turn hostile because of such an unexpected tragedy. Also, the loss of the Gorse family was way heavier than theirs.

Therefore, the nobles showed their understanding.

"You have my word," said Ulrich decisively, "and the Gorse family shall never give up as well. We must find this vicious sorcerer and burn him to ashes in the underground palace! Although currently, we still haven't figured out who he is because of the creepy transfiguration spell he used. We sent Count Nuremburk to find the grand cardinal, Sir Inman, and the grand cardinal has arrived here. Sir Inman will use divine power in the underground palace to find more clues about the sorcerer."

Count Mecklen nodded with a gloomy face. Although Count Mecklen did not like his son much, Deniz was still his blood.

...

Ten minutes later, the grand cardinal, Inman, who looked middle-aged, walked into the underground palace accompanied by the nobles.

However, the result was to their great disappointment.

"The sorcerer was very careful. The fight between the sorcerer and Sir Metatron caused a lot of damage here, and many clues have been erased," said Inman in a tone full of mercy.

Count Porti's breath became heavy and blue veins popped out on

his hands, “Sir Inman, are there any other ways to identify the sorcerer? Are we just letting the young nobles die for nothing? The damned sorcerer deserves the sentence and punishment from God!”

No one present could accept such a result.

Inman remained silent for a few seconds and then nodded, “I’ll pray to God to receive the instruction.”

Level nine divine spell, Pray!

Porti suddenly cheered up. “Thank you... Thank you so much, Sir Inman!”

Under the many nobles’ gaze, Inman and went down on his knees, holding the Saint Truth badge.

The nobles also followed him.

A cluster of pure light enveloped Inman, and in the embrace of the light, Inman said in low voice,

“My almighty God, please reveal to me who the sorcerer in the underground palace is.”

The emotionless voice came from an unknown direction above, “Sixth circle, from the Congress of Magic. He has way more powerful magic items than a senior rank sorcerer usually possesses.”

Apparently, the information given was not enough for Inman to discover the identity of the sorcerer. Any students of a legendary archmage could possess more powerful magic items than a senior-rank sorcerer.

But the voice just disappeared, and it never came back again.

After a while, Inman stood up and said to the nobles, “He is a student of a legendary archmage. The archmage interfered with my power, so the information revealed is limited. Hopefully, it’s helpful.”

Hearing Inman’s words, Ulrich ground his teeth in anger, “There are

only a few hundred sixth-circle sorcerers in the Congress of Magic. One by one... I'll find you!"

...

In the White Maple Palace of Antiffler.

Sophia said to the majestic middle-aged man, "Father, do you know who he is?"

In the underground palace, Sophia saw how her father, Rudolf II, destroyed the clues left in the hall, and how he interfered with Inman's praying just now. Sophia thought that her father had the answer.

Rudolf II answered expressionlessly, "When he cast his transfiguration spell, his fate was closely connected with that of Beulac. If I hadn't been there, I would not have told the difference. I interrupted Inman's praying just because I don't want him to know that I was down in the underground palace as well, to avoid more trouble..."

"I see..." sighed Sophia out of disappointment.

"He has changed the look of the magic items he was wearing, so we have to spend a lot of time on tracing them back based on their use," said Rudolf II. In fact, he did not really care who the sixth-circle sorcerer was.

Before Sophia responded, Rudolf II continued, "You did not bad this time. You'll have the title – the Duchess of Alman – as your award."

"Re-really?" Sophia was very surprised. Although the manor of the Duchess of Alman was not very big, it contained rich mineral resources, ranking one of the top five most wealthy manors in the empire. It was definitely no inferior to Beyer's Steinburg.

Rudolf II slightly nodded, "You have my word. You and Beyer should work hard. Maybe... I'm not going to be sitting on the throne for too long."

"Yes, father." Sophia was very encouraged.

She remained in the high spirit until she went back to her own palace. The familiar arrangement of her room reminded her of the happy days that she spent with Deniz.

Again, she swore that she would find the damned sorcerer!

...

Beaulac slowly woke up in the bright light. Feeling extremely weak, he recalled the endless dream he went through. In his dream, Beaulac became a level two knight, and he won the title of Count Tillis after beating Arthen.

Beaulac suddenly came back to reality after realizing that he was in his own bedroom. All the memories rushed back to him. He remembered that he was in the study summoning the demon, Greed, and he used his ten years to trade for knight power.

He felt thrilled, as he knew that these were not illusions but something that really happened. Finally, he could stand out for himself against Arthen, and now he could even join the underground palace competition!

However, after Beaulac tried to move his arm, the big smile froze on his face. He was totally shocked to find that he was still a knight squire.

He thought he had signed the compact!

He thought it was not a dream...

When Beaulac was feeling rather depressed, he noticed something in his pocket. Hurriedly, he pulled it out. There were several pieces of paper and a tube of dark-red liquid. The dark red liquid slightly shimmered, and somehow it seemed to be able to attract one's soul.

Unfolding the pieces of paper, Beaulac saw a process diagram which was not very complex. Above the diagram, there were several lines,

"To gain the power of a level two knight and to keep the possibility of becoming a grand knight in the future, please follow the procedures:

First, find a sorcerer or a caster.

Two to nine, complete Embrace surgery following the eight procedures in the diagram. Let the vampire blood become part of your body.

Ten, enjoy the power. There is no side effect at all.

P.S. If you think this is too dangerous, there is still another way: First, find a senior-rank vampire, and two, let it bite you.”

Below the diagram, a sketched demon’s face was laughing hard.

Damned it!

Beaulac realized what was going on. Blood flushing to his face, he angrily tore the paper into pieces and fiercely threw them to the ground.

He was fooled!

“Damn you!” Beaulac swore, “If I follow your words, I’d be the biggest idiot ever!”

At this time, someone knocked at the door.

Beaulac reluctantly stood up, opened the door, and found that it was uncle Nuremburk.

Nuremburk slightly frowned when seeing how dispirited Beaulac was. When Beaulac started feeling anxious, Nuremburk finally started talking,

“Anyways, congratulations, Beaulac, you’ve become the new Count of Tillis.”

“...?” Beaulac silently opened his mouth but could not make a sound, as if he was right now in a dream.

Nuremburk explained, “Something happened, and we’ve made sure that you were not involved. To put it in a nutshell, you’ve become the new Count.”

Both Arthen and Relph died. Claire, because of her close connection with Beyer, was not a proper inheritor of the title anymore.

This piece of news was too surprising for Beaulac to digest within a few seconds. After a while, he burst out a cry, “I AM the biggest idiot!”

He shut the door despite the fact that Nuremburk had not left yet. Throwing himself down on the ground, Beaulac hurriedly started collecting the paper pieces that he just threw away!

Beaulac wished that he could still find all the pieces!

...

The dark blue of the ocean connected to the lighter color of the sky, and Lucien was now flying through the clouds.

After several days of effort, Lucien had finally cracked the seal on the magic staff.

Right now, he was leaving his spiritual imprint in it,

“Sun Staff, level nine high-rank magic item. The owner of the staff is the king of all the stars. When the owner casts any astrology spells which are under the ninth circle, the power is improved by one circle.

“The mysterious magic power hiding in the staff enables the owner to cast the eighth circle spell, Maze, three times a day, the ninth circle spell, Thanos’ Maze, two times a day, and Imprisonment once a day.

“Any mysterious enemies will be imprisoned — from: Thanos”

Figuring out how powerful the staff was, Lucien was very encouraged. The Kuo-toans’ alter was the least challenging and dangerous part of the entire mission, and with the staff, everything would become much easier.

Chapter 411: Strike

Chapter 411: Strike

Lucien's mind was broadened by the boundless blue ocean. Slowly, he lowered his altitude and cast Advanced Invisibility on himself.

The closer Lucien was to the ocean, the worse the ocean stank. Lucien activated his Health Belt to keep the disgusting air away from him.

The surface of the breathing blue ocean was covered with grey, black, and dark green bubbles. The bubbles silently grew and broke. Their filthy color dyed the water, producing a sense of chaos.

"Contaminated Water contains lots of space gaps but, unlike that of the Dark Mountain Range, was smaller and more homogenous, connected only to the Abyssal Maw. Affected and contaminated permanently by the devil power, the creatures living in the water have been demonized and become very dangerous."

This piece of information quickly emerged in Lucien's brain. Contaminated Water was far from Solar Islands and Pearl Islands, thus belonging to the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean. Although Lucien had mastered Advanced Fly, it still took Lucien days to arrive here. Of course, he spent the nights resting on islands to prevent overfatigue and to interpret the Sun Staff.

Since Contaminated Water was so far away from the mainland and was quite a poor area without any mines or treasures, the Congress of Magic had not noticed its existence until the Kuo-toans robbed the commercial fleets of the wave stones. Later, the Congress sent some sorcerers here and drew the map.

At that time, Lucien was only a first circle mage, and he was not planning on exploring this area at all. He left it behind his mind after earning one arcana point by sharing the information with the Congress. Later, when he had accepted Rhine's request, he read the Congress' investigation documents with regards to Contaminated Water and the Kuo-toans.

Although Lucien only earned one arcana point from sharing the information, he finally benefited from his own contribution, which proved that the work efficiency of the Affair Committee was pretty good.

Lucien recalled the information on the Kuo-toans' altar and Contaminated Water:

“... the Kuo-toans, intelligent creatures, believers of the Lord of Ocean, Amboula. They have the facility of casting water and illusion spells and are physically strong when fighting underwater. The Kuo-toans are very commonly seen in the area of Storm Strait and the Boundless Ocean. Developing from tribes, they have founded their countries around the Altar. The imperial family lives five thousand kilometers to the northeast side of the Solar Islands.”

“... It was said that Amboula, the Lord of Ocean, had fallen asleep in ancient time, thus no prayer was ever answered. In the last thousand years, the power of the Kuo-toan priests was taken over by the imperial family and the priests are now only a symbol of belief and honor. Therefore, the priests are very discontented, but they are not powerful enough to retake what they want...”

“... At the beginning of the fifth month of the year 816, a group of the Kuo-toans living close to the Altar in Contaminated Water claimed that they had received the oracle of Amboula. They called for the followers to collect a great number of materials to open the hidden relic underneath the Altar to awaken Amboula and recover the divine right of the Lord of Ocean. The information and related record have been submitted to the Highest Council as the issue involves divine power.”

“... In the first month of the year 817, the Kuo-toans collected enough materials and opened the relic. Edwyn Brook, the Emperor of Control, Chelsea Holt, the Moon Scholar, and a few other leading sorcerers observed the Kuo-toans' rite on site. When the relic was open, the Prince of the Kuo-toans arrived leading his army and took over the control of the relic. Then the awakening rite was held by the Prince...”

“The rite failed. Amboula was not awakened. Brook and the other

magicians also did not find any remains of Amboula. However, the discovery of the relic still improved the Altar's resistance against contamination, thus many priests believed that the rite still worked and retained part of their hope. They believed that Amboula's power is slowly recovering and as long as they keep worshipping and praying, Amboula will come back to them one day fully recovered."

"Because of interference from the imperial family, the Altar in Contaminated Water area right now only has two seven circle chief priests, two level seven ocean warriors, an order named Blue Guard consisting of a hundred Kuo-toans, and a few thousand of devout followers."

This was the piece of information that made Lucien believe that getting what he wanted from the altar would not be too big of a challenge for him. After all, when Rhine first snuck in, there was a level nine Revered Priest, nine senior-ranks, and three Blue Guard orders. Because of the inner conflict in the Kuo-toans, the Revered Priest and five senior-ranks had gone back to the Ocean Heart Altar, and most of the devout followers and orders were also removed.

Another good thing for Lucien was that since the Kuo-toans had to eat a lot daily and the creatures around Abyssal Maw were very dangerous, the senior-ranks had to lead the rest of the Kuo-toans out seeking for food. Very often, only one senior-rank would be left to guard the Altar, which was a great opportunity for Lucien.

Lucien was worried that once the awakening rite failed, the arrangement left by Rhine would go invalid as well. However, Rhine assured him that the awakening rite would have no problem and could instead strengthen his magic circle.

But at the end of their conversation, Rhine, frowning slightly, said to Lucien,

"For your own safety, when you throw the filthy blood ball into the altar, make sure you grab Pale Justice. As the Altar is connected to Abyssal Maw, the activation of the magic circle could possibly disturb crazy, evil creatures. Although they cannot come to the main material world themselves, they can still contaminate you tracing the connection using their evil power. Sun's Corona can also

do the work, but Pale Justice is even better.”

Lucien planned to sneak in directly after careful observation.

The ocean waves almost hit Lucien, and the bloody smell of the ocean was overwhelming. Suddenly, a flatfish sprang out of the water, trying to bite Lucien!

The flatfish was different from regular ones. It was totally black and its teeth were as sharp as small daggers. What was more disgusting was that it even had four baby arms on its body, which was glimmering with a layer of faint blue light. The flatfish was just like a monster from nightmares!

Demonized creatures could see through invisibility!

Lucien was drawn out of his thoughts and turned to look at the flatfish.

Instantly, the demonized flatfish resolved into many colorful light spots, returning to pure element form, and disappeared in the waves.

Lucien recalled that when the Altar first received Amboula’s oracle in the fifth month of the year 816, Maskelyne’s Grand Cross just collapsed. He was sure that this had something to do with the World of Souls...

Lucien stopped himself from thinking too much and cast on himself Water Breath, Move in Water, and some other spells that helped to conceal his trace. Then he dived into the ocean.

The water overwhelmed him like a gentle dream. Following the guidance of the information he collected and the map, Lucien quickly swam toward a cave in the ocean — the Kuo-toans did not live deep in the ocean, but rather in the areas where sea cliffs, walls, and seagrass gathered.

On his way to the underwater cave, Lucien could see strange-looking, half-demonized fish swimming past him, and from time to time, he saw them fighting with each other viciously. About half an hour later, Lucien saw the cave, which was guarded by two fish-

head monsters.

.....

Three days later, Lucien had become familiar with the daily routine of the Kuo-toans. This day, he secretly knocked out a Kuo-toan and cast Transfiguration to disguise himself. Dragging a demonized sea serpent, Lucien walked straightforward into the cave where Invisibility did not work.

As soon as he turned around the corner, Lucien threw the serpent away into an empty nest and slightly changed his Kuo-toan look. Grabbing his sword, Frose, Lucien carefully approached the Altar.

The Altar for Amboula, the Lord of Ocean, was decorated with a great number of Wave Stones. They looked crystal clear and shined with dreamlike gloss. In front of the altar, there was a grey Kuo-toan whose entire body was wrapped with grease. Its scales had tarnished.

All of a sudden, on the altar, the Murloc statue burst out in blue light. And the light quickly attracted the Kuo-toans who were left here to safeguard the place.

“A stranger is here... The imperial family hasn’t given up? Are they still trying to pry into the secret of the Lord of Ocean?” Murmured Branhit, the chief priest with a strong dislike.

Branhit told the Blue Guardians to get prepared.

“When the stranger comes in, catch him using the magic circle. I’ll use him to figure out what the imperial family’s intention is!”

“Be careful. Although his speed is only that of a level two ocean warrior, he has many magic items around level five.”

“Yes, chief priest!” The Blue Guardians answered together. The stupidity of the Murloc sent by the imperial family amused them. How came he picked the time period when the chief priest does daily praying to sneak in!

As soon as the Murloc snuck into the cave, the ocean water

suddenly turned dark green. The dark green water could numb the invader and extract his power. Meanwhile, more than ten Blue Guardians, together with hundreds of shadow ocean warriors created by the power of the magic circle, blocked all the possible entrances and exits.

“How dare you!” said the chief priest coldly to the furtive Murloc, “You think you can just walk in with your little toys for slinking?”

Branhit did not take actions. There was no need for him to do anything at all when facing merely a level two Murloc warrior.

However, a glittering halo spread out from the invader all of a sudden, and the cave was instantly filled with a heavy snowstorm.

The Blue Guardians were directly frozen to the ground. If it were not for the fact that Murlocs were good at bearing freezing cold, half of them would have already been dead.

The frost halo spread out very quickly. Under its power, the shadow ocean warriors broke into fine pieces after freezing into ice statues. Even the chief priest, Branhit, was also slowed down for two seconds.

“Damn!”

At this moment, Branhit’s heart was filled with fear and hatred. He never expected that the imperial family would directly send a powerful Murloc mage here to kill them all!

The Murloc mages beside Branhit had been turned into ice sculptures, but the magic robe that Branhit was wearing protected him from the frost.

Branhit knew that he must activate the Altar right now!

He was also a senior-rank!

However, the magic staff inlaid with a big Sunstone that appeared in Lucien’s hand shocked Branhit.

The light of the magic staff was dazzling. Dark night covered

Branhit and a starry sky was summoned!

“Maze... He’s of the ninth circle?!” Branhit panicked.

Maze spells usually did not pose an immediate threat to one’s life, so Branhit’s defense spells were not activated.

In the end, Branhit thought to himself,

“The altar will be ruined...”

“The Lord of Ocean will never forgive me...”

.....

Lucien exposed himself to the Murlocs to lower Branhit’s alert. When Branhit was slowed down by the frost halo, Lucien trapped him with Thanos’ Maze.

Although the maze would only last for five minutes, it was more than sufficient for Lucien to activate the magic circle and leave safely.

Chapter 412: The Strange Maze

Chapter 412: The Strange Maze

In the cave where the Altar existed, it was of dead silence. This place had been turned into a world of ice. The Blue Guardians had been frozen into exquisite ice statues of different postures: some of them were holding a trident, and some were holding a coral staff. Their shining scales were revealed in the finest details.

Only the part of the ocean water that was close to the Altar still flowed under the extraordinary power. Stepping on the red coral reef, Lucien walked forward and laid his hand against the boundary of the frozen and the unfrozen.

Lucien started his casting. A complicated magic circle showed up in the dark blue water, surrounded by the many mysterious magic symbols.

According to Rhine's description, it would take Lucien three to four minutes to crack the defense magic circle sealed in the Altar, if he wished to avoid triggering the hidden trap. However, Lucien was not worried about this at all. Watching how the magic symbols changed, Lucien made complex gestures and directly opened the defense magic circle using his spiritual power.

Bang! The waves surged fiercely in the cave from the explosive power, and the red coral reef suddenly began to make a deafening sound.

Normally, the chief priest would sense the alert immediately and come to deal with the invaders. However, now the sharp alert could not cause Lucien any trouble, since the chief priest had been captured by Thanos' Maze and the rest of the senior-ranks were far away looking for food.

It was thus a piece of cake for Lucien to walk through the layer of dark blue water and step onto the precious altar made of Wave Stones.

Although Lucien did take some risk with this plan, carrying it out was still much easier and safer than somehow luring the chief priest away from his base.

Even if the chief priest was cautious enough to turn on the Altar against Lucien, Lucien was still confident that he could break out of the encirclement. A level seven chief priest of the Kuo-toans could cast only a very limited number of spells relying on its own talent, as it could not receive power from the Lord of Ocean who had fallen asleep for many years.

For sorcerers, knowing an enemy well beforehand to prepare accordingly was a great advantage.

In the middle of the Altar, there was a dark blue pool where the tall Murloc statues stood. Except for the pool, this area was completely water-free.

Lucien took a look at the statue of the Lord of Ocean: Amboula had six arms and each was holding a trident. Lucien smiled and shook his head at the primordial religious taste of beauty.

Without wasting any time, Lucien cast Strength and Bull's Strength on himself and washed down a tube of magic potion. Holding Pale Justice in his hand, Lucien took out the filthy blood ball from his magic pouch and put it into the pool. The blood ball quickly dissolved in the water and dyed the water into the color of rust.

Lucien stood up and started casting the long and mysterious spell. The ocean water around shivered with his voice.

As the shiver was getting more and more intense, the blood-colored water dyed the statue.

It was not until now that Lucien finally sensed that there were two distorted space gaps within the statue. One belonged to the World of Souls as expected, while the other was warm and comforting, giving Lucien a familiar but also strange feeling.

However, Lucien had to stay focused and had no time to think about it.

When the casting came to an end, the blood merged into the statue, and the water in the pool became clear once more. All of a sudden, the six arms of Amboula started waving, and something very powerful landed from above.

Finishing the last line of his spell, Lucien's eyes saw an entirely different world. His right eye saw that, in a space of black and white, an about ten-meter-long Murloc with tightly closed eyes and lackluster scales was lying in a pale pool. Although he seemed to be dead, its illusory body still gave Lucien a somehow divine feeling of heavy pressure.

Meanwhile, Lucien's left eye saw a silent and deadly wasteland, where countless specters were wandering.

In the middle of the wasteland, there was a grand palace built with huge bones. Under Lucien's gaze, it started becoming more transparent. Surrounded by the specters, dead bodies, and bones, a dreadful monster wearing a long black robe emerged. It was holding a heavy and huge sickle, and its cheekbone was only covered with a thin layer of dried skin. Its two eyes were just two hollow holes, showing no sign of vitality at all.

The monster slightly turned aside. Looking from across a great distance, its sight met that of Lucien.

A freezing feeling came out from the inside of Lucien's body, while irresistible numbness seized him. Lucien could feel that his life force was leaking out and under this speed, he would end up as a decayed corpse in seven to eight seconds.

Although he was still able to think, Lucien could not resist the numbness at all.

Suddenly, a warm stream rose from Lucien's left hand and chest, driving away all the numbness and coldness.

When he was able to move again, Lucien couldn't help but trembled a little. Instantly, the eerie world disappeared and Lucien came back to the altar made of Wave Stone. Facing the statue of Amboula, what just happened to Lucien seemed to be a dream.

Based on his knowledge, Lucien recognized that the wasteland was in fact the place called Skeleton Land. Therefore, the monster he just encountered could be Apomos, one of the devil lords. But according to the legends, he should have gone missing for more than a thousand years.

Apsis ruled Skeleton Land, which was the 123rd layer of Abyssal Maw. He has many titles, and the most important ones were the Lord of Specters, Life Reaper, and the Lord of Death.

Shaking the confusion out of his head, Lucien started erasing all the traces he had left. When he left the Altar, he turned himself into a common demonized fish and swam quietly to a faraway spot in the ocean. Then he cast Invisibility on himself and started flying.

Three minutes later, when Lucien was far away from Contaminated Water, he thought to himself in amusement.

“Every time when I tried to do something, there were always difficulties. I never expected that things would work out so well like this.”

“There are always good things and bad things. I guess I am not that unlucky all the time...”

.....

In the dark night sky, countless dazzling stars were hanging.

When Branhit approached one of the stars, he found out that it was not a real one, instead, the world he was in was actually an incomplete, very complicated constellation diagram.

Branhit's breath became heavy. He realized that this was the most vicious and strange maze ever.

Although he was not a caster who mastered a lot of spells, Branhit still knew that if he could find the exit of the maze, he would be able to get out earlier. Most mazes were distorted spaces, but this one was different. He had to find the several incomplete constellation diagrams and put them together to find the way out.

For most senior-ranks, this was the most spiteful maze ever! Because most of them were not experts in astrology at all! To get out, one had to either break the maze using power exceeding that of the caster or wait until the maze expired, which usually took three to fifteen minutes.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Two minutes later, Branhit burst out roaring painfully. His eyes were lit up with great anger. His intelligence could not support him to figure out the puzzle pieces!

If Branhit had known that Lucien had already started planning on coming up with more mazes when he reached the eighth or ninth circle, such as Evans' Math Maze, Lucien's Brain Teaser Maze, Evans' Antinomy Maze, Lucien's Riddle Palace, Branhit would have bit his tongue off out of annoyance.

Three minutes later, Branhit desperately watched the star sky breaking into pieces.

He assumed that the Altar must have been ruined already, and the imperial family would not admit what they did for sure.

Branhit knew that even if they had been in a fair fight, there was no chance for him to beat the Murlock, since it had such a powerful magic item.

He wondered if it was the prince who lent the invader the magic items.

Branhit had no idea at all that the invader was in fact not a Murloc but a sorcerer, as he could not see through Lucien's Transfiguration.

When Branhit returned to the cave, he found that the ice was already gone. Except for a few guardians who were injured more seriously by the cold, most of the Murlocs were safe and sound. These Murlocs were looking around with a confused look on their face. Obviously, they were wondering why they were still alive.

“What happened?” Branhit asked himself.

He hurriedly looked back at the Altar, and to his surprise, the Altar remained intact as if nothing had ever happened to it.

Being cautious, Branhit checked the altar carefully but found nothing strange. Now, Branhit was totally lost.

He almost felt that what happened was just his illusion, but the moaning of the few injured Murlocs reminded him that it was not.

The Murloc mage also felt very confused. With some hesitation, he said, "Maybe... Maybe he found the wrong place."

Found the wrong place?!

Branhit cast an angry glance at the mage since the explanation just sounded so absurd. However, he could not find a better answer either. The senior-rank Murloc had frozen the entire guardian team and trapped the seventh circle leader, and then he just left without achieving anything... How was that possible?

.....

After a few days, Lucien had flown back to the port. Through a noble's castle in the Duchy of Calais, he entered Night Highland again and caught a vampire viscount there. Turning himself into the viscount, he used another space joint guarded by a vampire marquis using the excuse of gathering materials and arrived at the Dark Mountain Range. Using Viscount Nour's identity too frequently would attract unnecessary attention, and Lucien could not use the space joint in Rhine's castle anymore since Prince Dracula must be closely watching it.

The tall trees had blocked all the sunlight, and the environment was very damp with a moldy smell. Lucien, who had turned himself into a vampire bat, approached Observer's Castle following Rhine's instruction while carefully avoiding the powerful dark creatures.

Two days later, the castle was visible from the distance.

Chapter 413: The Trustworthy One

Chapter 413: The Trustworthy One

It seemed that the old castle was forever enveloped by darkness at the edge of the cliff. Showering in the cold moonlight, the castle up there looked rather lonely.

Lucien had turned himself into a werewolf with dark fur. Hiding in the trees, he carefully watched the Observer's Castle, which seemed to be reaching for the silver moon. But Lucien was not alone here. In the forest, close to the cliff, many dark creatures were also gazing at the castle.

Any creatures that were more or less knowledgeable should recognize the extraordinary features of the castle. It was reasonable to assume that some greedy dark creatures had already died here trying to break in, while the rest of them were still waiting for a chance.

Their existence was a relief to Lucien, as he did not have to worry about hiding himself anymore. The reason that he had not entered the castle was that he was not sure if Dracula's projection was watching this place. As the strongest vampire, Dracula had the ability to create surveillance projections and to descend whenever Rhine was spotted.

Lucien wondered where the real Dracula was. If Lucien had been him, he would have chosen to stay at the Observer's Castle. Since Rhine had disappeared in the desert to the south of Gusta Empire, waiting for Rhine in his own castle sounded like a good idea.

Lucien also believed that Dracula, as a legendary who had lived for countless years, had enough patience for watching and waiting.

He had to figure out a way in.

Lucien slowly retreated. It was not his way of doing things to directly enter the castle without knowing what risks awaited.

The good thing was that finishing his job in the first three places did not cost him much time, so Lucien had got enough time for planning. Besides, to carry out the last step of his plan, Lucien had to wait for the night when the silver moon was the brightest, which was at least eight days later.

When he was far away from the castle, Lucien found a safe corner and started thinking about the plan.

Lucien hoped that he had someone to talk to, a person who would not dig into his secrets but was still willing to give him suggestions. Lucien knew who the person was, but he did not want her to get into potential trouble.

Stepping on the soft earth, Lucien paced back and forth, unable to make up his mind.

“What will she say?” Lucien thought to himself.

Lucien stared at the big tree with knots in front of him and imagined that it was Natasha.

Lucien believed that the heroic girl in the white suit of armor would grin and say, “All right. I’ll help you with this, but you have to write me a composition as a gift.”

Natasha never wasted a single word.

If Lucien chose not to turn to Natasha for help, she would definitely give Lucien a lesson: Although the last person one could rely on is always him or herself, a person still needed to ask for help from his or her true friends.

Lucien took a deep breath and removed Transfiguration. Then he put on the monocle and activated Fernando’s Electromagnetic Message.

Against the deep silence of the dark forest, the sound of electric currents could be heard very clearly.

Lucien waited for a while, but no one answered. Perhaps Natasha is already asleep... he thought.

When he was about to stop calling, he heard the familiar voice.
“Lucien?”

“Yeah, it’s me.” Hearing Natasha’s voice, Lucien suddenly felt at ease.

Natasha’s voice showed how surprised she was with receiving Lucien’s call. “Are you near the Duchy of Violet? Yesterday I just read the letter you sent me in late June. Your call really surprised me. It took me a while to come to the garden without letting Auntie Camil know.”

Lucien felt that they were like those youngsters having a secret phone call behind their parents. He smiled and said, “I’m in the Dark Mountain Range.”

“Are you in any trouble? Do you need the help from a brave knight now?” Natasha laughed in low voice.

Lucien became serious. “I need your help, but the task could be dangerous.”

Natasha made a click of her tongue and then spoke in a very straightforward way, “Tell me where you are, and I’ll come to you. Deal.”

Lucien’s heart softened, so did his voice. “You might want to bring Auntie Camil with you, but we can’t tell her what we will be doing.”

Lucien was clearly aware of the fact that, as the Violet Countess and the inheritor of the Duchy of Violet, Natasha could not do as she wanted all the time. When she left the palace, the guards would be with her. Since Lucien could not tell Natasha what was going on, he should at least ask Natasha to bring Camil with her to secure her safety.

“I was about to ask,” Natasha grinned. “Alright, tell me where you are.”

“No, we move together, and we’ll meet at the foot of Mount Skayan.” said Lucien. The route from Aalto to Mount Skayan was

usually relatively safe, and it would be much easier for Natasha to find him there.

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It would not take a long time to fly from Aalto to the Dark Mountain Range. But once one entered the area, flying over the tall trees would become much more difficult, since one would easily be exposed to the dark creatures in the mountains.

Two days later, wearing the monocle, Lucien was anxiously walking back and forth at the foot of Mount Skayan. The silver moon over his head was bright and gorgeous.

Lucien started worrying about Natasha, wondering why she had not shown up yet, and why even the electromagnetic message couldn't be delivered.

Although Lucien had chosen a safe route for Natasha, he was still worried: What if Natasha accidentally ran into a powerful being from the Dark Council who happened to pass by?

At this time, Lucien saw two figures rushing out of the forest against the silver moonlight, one black and one purple.

Lucien released a sigh of relief and walked to them.

Both Natasha and Camil were fully armed.

Natasha was not wearing her white armor but a set of dark purple one. It was called the Violet Guardian. In her left hand, there was a small black shield. The shield was very finely crafted and was releasing profound holy power. Natasha's eyes were still of the dreamlike color of purple, and so was her long hair. In Lucien's eyes, she looked like the Goddess of War.

"The Shield of Truth?" Lucien exclaimed casually, despite that he had been hesitant about how to say hello to Natasha after a long separation.

Camil took a cold and meaningful glance at Lucien. Then she walked away.

Natasha lifted the black shield. "This is just a replica. I'm not capable of carrying the true version yet. So, my knight, how can I help you?"

As usual, she did not waste any time.

Lucien took out the clown-faced mask. "You take this. Six days later when the silver moon reaches its full size, put it on a condemned prisoner. The mask will turn him into Mr. Rhine. Then, make him go past Castle Hazlehurst in Province Tiran and let the owner of the castle notice him. Please remember, do not do this yourself." Lucien added.

Lucien explained further, "This is for attracting the attention of Vampire Prince Dracula. So you have to be cautious about your timing. Do not control him all the time. When he gets close to the castle, knock him out or put him to sleep. Then you must leave quickly."

He had to make sure that Natasha knew how horrible the enemy was.

"I see... Mr. Rhine is a vampire, and his role is important. No wonder..." Natasha gently rubbed her chin. "But... if we do it this way, Prince Dracula would find out very soon. Do you have enough time? Maybe we can turn this into an ambush instead. My teacher 'God's Glory' Sir Milton and Sir Sard are definitely interested in besieging the Vampire Prince. In this way, can win you more time. And I'm sure the Grand Cardinal can find two more saints for help."

Without asking what happened, Natasha tried to find a better method. Facing the legendary level vampire, she was only confident if two saints, one Grand Cardinal, and two legendary knights were present.

"No, Cardinal Sard is not trustworthy. We cannot go to him. Without him, the two legendary knights will be killed instantly by Dracula." Lucien shook his head. "Although I must hurry, the time should be enough. Trust me. I won't risk my own life."

"Cardinal Sard is not trustworthy... Something indeed happened in

Aalto then..." Natasha spoke thoughtfully, "but I do believe that you cherish your life a lot. After all, you just won that many awards and were listed on the Cleansing List, my genius arcanist."

She chose to trust Lucien.

Lucien put on a complicated smile on his face. "Sending letters is always much slower than how these things spread..."

"But I still like reading your letters," Natasha grinned. Although she was a follower of the God of Truth, she never dug into theology. As for what happened because of the Miracle Experiment, that was a long time ago and she had already accepted it. In fact, she even felt a bit proud of Lucien.

"So, why do you choose the vampire castle in Province Tiran? Is it because that it's close to the North Fortress? So that I can hide in the fortress even if the Prince finds out."

"Also because the owner of Castle Hazlehurst is only of middle-rank..." added Lucien.

Natasha put on a big smile. She looked up at the silver moon and then said to Lucien, "alright, I'll go back now to work on this. You take care of yourself."

"No problem." Lucien nodded.

When taking over the mask and leaving her power in it, Natasha became very surprised. "You've become a senior-rank?"

Only a senior-rank could use this mask.

"Yes, at some cost," answered Lucien honestly.

Natasha looked at Lucien, her eyes filled with joy and surprise. "We are of the same level now! It was right that you chose to study magic, but don't rush. Also, I have to improve myself as well. I can't let you beat me."

Then she flew to Camil. When she was halfway up in the sky, she looked back and grinned. "You aren't doing anything bad, right?"

“Of course not. I’m saving the world,” said Lucien half-jokingly.

Natasha burst out laughing. Then she left with Camil.

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Several days later, after making sure that Natasha was ready, Lucien went back to the Observer’s Castle. When the silver moon reached its full size, Lucien returned to the forest under the cliff.

Chapter 414: The Castle Ablaze with Lights

Chapter 414: The Castle Ablaze with Lights

Staring at the castle which looked like a black eagle swerving over the cliff, Lucien stood some distance away from it. Since he did not have the transfiguration mask with him, it was very easy for him to be caught by Dracula, as Dracula had noticed him before in Sphinx Mausoleum.

Rhine had disappeared in the desert to the south of Gusta Empire, and when Dracula was looking for Rhine, he met a mysterious senior-rank mage with lots of precious magic items in the Mausoleum. If somehow Dracula saw the same mage visiting Observer's Castle later, he must be able to see the connection.

Lucien took out his pocket watch and confirmed the time again. Casting all the helping spells on himself, swallowing down all the magic potions he still had, and grabbing Pale Justice in his hand, Lucien carefully sensed what was going on around the castle. Meanwhile, he had turned on the monocle. If anything happened, Natasha would contact him.

Indeed, Lucien could still carry out his plan without Natasha's help, but that would bring him a lot of extra troubles and potential risks.

Lucien assumed that five minutes was enough for Viscount Hazlehurst to report to Dracula, for Viscount Hazlehurst was Dracula's offspring.

Putting the pocket watch away, Lucien started to count the time. Another reason that he chose Viscount Hazlehurst was that Dracula relatively favored him.

And Lucien fully believed that Natasha would do exactly what he asked. There was a mutual trust between them.

Time went by in seconds. Three minutes and fifty-six seconds later,

Pale Justice suddenly started to tremble, as if a horrible enemy was approaching.

Through the sword, Lucien could feel that at the edge of the cliff close to the Observer's Castle, some weak but extremely vicious power flashed across. The power consisted of the purest darkness and the breath of death.

Holding his breath, Lucien started the countdown.

"Ten, nine, eight..."

The Observer's Castle which was seemingly forever covered by darkness lit up slightly as if a layer of dust had been removed. A layer of dim light, which was a byproduct of Speed that Lucien just cast on himself, also appeared on Lucien.

"... Five, four, three..."

Night breeze passed by. Tonight there was no sound at all, except for a slight rustle made by the dark creatures. Lucien took out a tube of potion which would help accelerate his flying speed and drank it all.

"... Two, one."

When he reached the last number, Lucien left all his worry and fear behind. He dashed for the castle like a speeding bullet.

Lucien could feel the strong wind flapping against his face, and the dark forest underneath retreated fast like black tides. Many dark creatures, looked up in the sky in great surprise.

Lucien had no chance to look back. He must be fully determined to seize the chance and be safe!

Against the wind in the sky, before those dark creatures could take any actions, Lucien landed in front of the Observer's Castle.

"Kilahkim." Lucien spurt out the password.

All of a sudden in the darkness, countless fist-sized, red-eyed bats

fiercely flew out, aiming at Lucien.

Although Dracula had left the castle because of Lucien's plan, he did not forget to leave projections of blood bats here.

Although these bats were just projections, they were still very sensitive and alert since Dracula had the power to half substantialize things even in a dream. The bats could even launch real attacks!

Flying and swirling, the countless blood bats released dizzying sound waves.

"Welcome, distinguished guest." The castle's alchemical life, Mikhalik, greeted Lucien in a low voice. Then the gate slowly opened, as if the bats did not exist.

Grabbing Pale Justice tight, Lucien was given immunity to rage, charm, weak and many other negative influences, making he able to resist the dizziness deep in his soul. He jumped toward the half opening gate very swiftly.

Lucien's strength and speed had been improved remarkably by the potions and the magic items he had, but his level of quick-response and balance were left behind. Therefore, Lucien stumbled and tottered into behind the gate.

The blood bats fiercely hit the edge of the gate. At this time, Mikhalik's low muffled voice came again.

"Enemy attack. The first layer of defense activated."

Black bolts of lightning covered the walls and the gate. As soon as the bats touched the lightning bolts, they were burnt down into piles of dust. But the bats were not afraid of death. Instead, they continued with their attack.

Lucien pulled himself up and put away Pale Justice. Removing the magic effects of strengthening, Lucien regained his balance. Then he rushed for the main hall, casting magic spells along.

At this moment, although Dracula was informed that someone had

broken into the Observer's Castle, he would not come back in person, because he was now occupied by the fake Rhine!

Obviously, Rhine was much more important! Dracula would not waste a second!

Lucien, after acquiring his balance again, ran at full speed through the blood-colored flower sea. He had seen this before, so he was not afraid. Right now, the only thing he kept in his sight was the door of the main hall.

The numbing sweet smell was resisted by Health Belt, and the eyes could not affect Lucien at all since he was not looking at them. Drawing a straight line, Lucien arrived at the door of the main hall like a shooting star.

"Kilahkim." Lucien cast the spell again.

Although it had been only a bit more than ten seconds, Lucien felt that it was as long as his whole life. All of the strength in his muscles had been extracted and squeezed out. He felt completely exhausted.

Taking out the magic potion Congus Forest, Lucien drank all of it. When the feeling of exhaustion was gone, Lucien heard Mikhalik's voice again, "Welcome, distinguished guest. Except for the controlling core, the energy room, and the base of the treasury vault, you can go anywhere you wish."

Lucien did not lower his alert. He gave Mikhalik the password that Rhine gave him.

"Please give me your command, my distinguished guest." Mikhalik's voice became more docile, "Except for the excess to the controlling core and the base of the treasury vault, I shall take your order as I take my master's command."

"Good. Top alert. Activate all the defense magic circles. No one can come in except for Mr. Rhine." Lucien spoke very fast, making the best use of every second.

Mikhalik burst out an exclamation as he realized how serious it

was. Then he answered, “As your command.”

The black bolts of lightning outside the walls all disappeared. Instead, a transparent shield covered the entire castle as if it had been the castle’s extension.

The magic creatures including the Scarlet trees in the magic garden had all disappeared. Everything was overwhelmed by deep darkness.

A few seconds later, Mikhalik responded, “Defense magic circles all activated. Alert level: legendary. Any other command?”

Until this moment, Lucien finally could let out a sigh of relief. Even if Prince Dracula came back himself, it would still take him at least a few minutes to break the shield and the protection mechanisms of the castle.

“Turn on the lights. All of them.” Lucien commanded.

“Yes,” answered Mikhalik very decisively. The alchemical life understood the meaning of this.

The creatures hiding in the dark forest under the cliff saw, for the first time, that the castle was lit up in light. The light was so bright as if it could pierce through the thickest darkness.

The dark creatures were confused.

Following the first light, more lights were lit up one by one in every single room of the castle. Within a few seconds, the entire castle had become ablaze with lights. The details of the castle were fully revealed.

When the darkness was driven away, the bright moonlight directly shone on the castle. Because of the reflection from the walls and glass, there was a pure silver-colored halo in front of the main hall, which seemed peaceful and cold.

“Turn me into Mr. Rhine. Use the best transfiguration spell.” Lucien commanded again. The last thing he wanted to do was to let Dracula know the existence of a sorcerer whose name was Lucien.

“Yes, sir,” answered Mikhalik respectfully.

Dark air fell upon Lucien, and when it disappeared, the transfiguration spell had taken effect.

Cherishing every second, Lucien stepped into the moonlight halo, which gave him a kind of feeling which was hard to describe.

When Lucien was just about to cast the special summoning spell taught by Rhine, the moonlight suddenly dimmed, as if the entire sky had been covered by a huge shadow!

“You filthy little bug! I’m going to eat you up!”

The low voice was full of fury. Under the power, all the trees in the nearby dark forest were snapped, and the dark creatures exploded one by one like firecrackers! Even the shield covering the castle also started squeaking.

Prince Dracula had come back! This was faster than Lucien’s expectation!

What happened to Natasha?

Would the summoning rite still work while the silver moon was blocked?

The two thoughts rose simultaneously in Lucien’s mind.

Chapter 415: The Scarlet Moon

No matter how worried he was about what happened to Natasha, he was unable to help her in the situation right now—Lucien was very well aware of this fact. Therefore, he managed to put all the thoughts behind and focused on what he was faced with right now.

With the castle's magic circles resisting the imposing pressure from the Legendary, Lucien was sheltered and could thus still stay focused. He looked up, and when he saw a remaining thin layer of the silver moon's light, his soul felt the special connection again.

Lucien quickly drew his conclusion: Although the moon was blocked, the remaining light was still able to provide power to the summoning magic circle, and the level of the magic circle was close to the power of Dracula! Also, it seemed that the summoning magic circle had a bit to do with Alterna, as She had left Her imprint on it!

Huge bad wings covered the entire sky. In the air, Prince Dracula gazed down at the castle furiously. All of a sudden, he merged into thick darkness, enveloping the surroundings and cutting off all the connections that the castle had with the moon.

Affected by the magic circles, Dracula could not see through the disguise brought by Transfiguration. However, since he was this close to the castle, he could be certain that the person standing in the hall was not Rhine due to the special connection between the first-generation vampires. He had mixed feelings about this: On one hand, he felt encouraged, because Rhine was obviously not in a favorable position right now or he would not have sent a filthy little bug here to carry out the rite for summoning the Primordial Ancestor of Vampire; On the other hand, he felt quite pissed that the bug had tricked him and was trying to summon the almighty God of the Silver Moon.

Prince Dracula's dark-red pupils gazed at Lucien. However, Lucien was not affected by what was going on outside of the castle at all. He lifted his hands with his eyes half closed, his magic robe swaying in the wind, and the monocle reflecting the light. In the

ancient language of the vampire, Lucien cast the spell.

How was this possible?! Without the connection to the silver moon, how could the summoning rite still work?!

Prince Dracula could not stand it: Apparently, both the mysterious spell and the incredible spiritual imprint belonged exclusively to Rhine. Although Dracula had searched for it in the castle for several times, he found nothing. However, right now, it was obvious that this little bug definitely knew much more about the Primordial Ancestor than he did!

Dracula raised his head slightly and burst out a silent cry of anger. Under his overwhelming power, all things within a range of more than ten kilometers were crushed into ashes. The only things that survived were the Observer's Castle and the cliff on which it was located, thanks to the light shield.

However, under such great power, even the light shield started cracking and shaking violently, as if it were to collapse at any time.

Although what was going on outside was beyond horrible, Lucien was not affected, since he was not directly exposed to the power and horror. To him, it felt like watching a disaster movie with great visual effects. Meanwhile, he could still stay very focused on casting.

A small puddle of light from the silver moon emerged under Lucien, and soon the bright moonlight halo was formed again.

Seeing this, Dracula felt rather offended. How came this filthy tiny bug had such strong connection with the Primordial Ancestor?!

In great silence, a huge flock of bats was summoned by Dracula out the darkness, its amount large enough to block the entire night sky. Each one of them was of the size of a human's head, and they all had a pointy face and bloody fangs. As soon as these blood-thirsty bats landed on the light shield, the shield dimmed at a speed visible to the naked eye, as if its power was being quickly absorbed. Meanwhile, as soon as a bat was killed by the defense shield, a new one was born from the boundless darkness.

The power of the prince was so formidable that it could directly gain power from the shield like it was sucking blood!

"... The call from the blood prays for the reappearance of our Ancestor, may the silver moon pierce through the deepest darkness..." Lucien closed his eyes to stay concentrated, deciding not to look at the tottering light shield anymore.

The light of the shield had dimmed to an extreme, but it was still resisting the attack of the bats. Affected by the connection between the mysterious spell and the silver moon, Prince Dracula was acting in an irritated manner. He gathered all the bats together and formed a bloody mouth big enough to devour the entire castle.

The mouth opened and two white fangs were revealed against the moonlight. Fiercely, the fangs sank into the light shield.

Bang! The shield crashed and vanished.

"Defense magic circle severely damaged. Defense level lowered..."

As soon as Mikhalik's muffled voice was heard, the second layer of defense was directly destroyed by the fangs!

At the same time, Lucien felt that his soul had risen into the air. Although he was actually still standing in the hall, he was also somehow coldly overlooking Prince Dracula who was bitterly launching his attack. Lucien also saw more obscure scenes beyond description, which were stretching out in every direction incorporating all possibilities.

The bloody mouth disappeared, and the bats turned into roaring black waves. A huge, pale hand with sharp nails grew out of the bat crowd and targeted at the castle down there.

Dracula decided to find out who this filthy tiny bug was!

Lucien's expectation was that Observer's Castle could withstand the fierce attack from the legendary for a couple of minutes, but in truth, it only lasted for less than thirty seconds!

The energy wave on the surface of the light shield disappeared, and

Dracula was just about to find out who was summoning the Primordial Ancestor.

However, at this moment, he saw a small silver moon rising behind the caster. Although not very bright, the pure moonlight covered the little bug within, so Dracula could not see anything.

Then the small silver moon became bigger and bigger, as if the real silver moon had descended inside the castle.

Meanwhile, the silver moon in the night sky had somehow mysteriously disappeared. Only a few stars were still hanging above.

In the silver moon behind Lucien, a figure with blond hair emerged. A pair of scarlet eyes could be seen clearly, and they were rather cold and indifferent.

As soon as the figure showed up, Lucien felt that his soul was no longer looking down from above, but was embraced by the boundless power of darkness. However, the dark power did not feel eerie or intimidating. Instead, it was peaceful and warm, and even sacred, like the embrace from mom at night, or the ultimate home to return to when life came to the end.

Panic flashed through Dracula's dark red pupils as soon as he saw the blond-haired figure. Flapping his huge black bat wings, he was about to leave and escape to another space.

The filthy little bug did it!

The little bug, with no distinguished blood at all, managed to summon the Primordial Ancestor!

Feeling the special connection, Lucien lowered his right hand, and the blond-haired figure also lowered the sword in its hand.

A slash of moonlight pierced through the darkness. Its light was so bright that it lit up the sky. Like a sharp blade, the moonlight split Dracula into two halves.

Ahhhhhh!

In the bitter scream, black smoke came out of Dracula's body. Then the two halves suddenly joined themselves together and quickly disappeared into the darkness without any hesitation.

It was a great pity for Lucien that even using the God of Silver Moon's power, he could only hurt Dracula slightly. But still, it was a great lesson for Dracula in thousands of years.

In fact, as the Vampire Prince, even when facing the God of Silver Moon, Dracula should have been able to fight against the moon power for a while and retreat remaining intact. However, his deep-buried fear toward the Primordial Ancestor had made him lose the will of fighting immediately!

With the single strike, the sacred power left Lucien's body. The power ascended into the sky and disappeared in the darkness.

At this moment, the real silver moon reemerged in the sky again. But inside it, the blond-haired figure was faintly revealed.

Lucien did not quite understand the situation.

Although he was very confused, he activated the scroll for Space Jump without delay. He had to seize the chance to leave this place, or Dracula might come back to him after the rite. Also, he could not rule out the possibility that Alterna, the God of Silver Moon, might choose to kill him to keep what happened a secret!

Before Lucien was thrown into the chaotic space currents, he took a last glance at the silver moon in the sky.

Hanging in the sky, the silver moon was incredibly bright and big. Lucien could still see the blond-haired figure in it. Besides, now the moon was rimmed with a layer of fixed black, gray, and white, inside of which there were fuzzy figures wandering around.

The blond-haired figure lifted the sword in hand again, and the gray layer was hacked into pieces.

When the solidified illusion was broken, there were light balls between the color of white and black flying up. Seemingly to both dead and alive, the light balls fiercely collided into the silver moon.

In Lucien's eyes, the elusive light balls were like clusters of black, gray, and white cloud. They looked down upon Lucien and were full of changes.

Time seemed to stop for a second. And then, the elusive scarlet moon, which was covered with the light balls, fell from sky fiercely. Trailing a tail of light, it pierced through the layers of barriers between the spaces and fell into a broad and strange world.

The world seemed to be a dimension that had never been discovered before. It was the most spacious dimension ever!

Meanwhile, however, the real silver moon was still hanging in the sky, but was dyed with a scarlet cover and appearing rather eerie.

That was the last scene that Lucien saw before he entered the space jump.

...

Allyn. In a very tall astronomy tower.

Douglas spoke seriously. "We have to find that dimension and figure out what happened."

Beside him, a white-mustached old man wearing a pointed hat was subconsciously stroking the bright crystal ball in his hand. He said in a low voice,

"The scarlet moon. It this the beginning of an era of chaos and killing, but also revolution and development?"

The scarlet faded gradually, and the silver moon recovered its usual silence and coldness.

Chapter 416: The Search that is About to Get Crazy

Chapter 416: The Search that is About to Get Crazy

After arriving at the small hill nearby Allyn through space jumping, Lucien quickly took out his crystal ball and cast the spell Horoscope under the dim morning sky.

The crystal ball darkened, in which countless stars lit up. When he saw that Natasha's Host Star of Destiny was still shining brightly, Lucien released a long sigh of relief.

Lucien finally relaxed. He looked in the east and saw the rising orange sun, lighting up the entire sky.

An idea suddenly came to Lucien's mind: The main material world was also a sphere, as there was a time difference between the Dark Mountain Range and Allyn, in addition, there were also horizons.

After using the scroll last time, Lucien had confirmed with the Lord of Storm that space jumping would only take about half an hour. From the different positions of the silver moon that Lucien saw in the Dark Mountain Range and in Allyn, it was easy for him to notice the existence of time difference.

Because of this very reason, arcanists never doubted the cosmology theories developed by Douglas.

Lucien wondered why that, despite the theories, the arcanists could not see the world or find any planets when they managed to fly into space.

He shook his head, knowing that it was not a good time to contemplate such a question that had been bothering the Congress of Magic for many years. Lucien rose into the sky and flew towards Allyn.

Landing on the edge of Allyn, Lucien did not waste his time going

back home first. Instead, he cast Speed on himself and rushed to the Congress of Magic's magic tower as fast as he could.

Dashing out of the elevator and into his teacher's office, Lucien finally saw Fernando. Wearing the same scarlet magic robe and holding a magic book in his hand, Fernando was tutoring Alferris, who was holding a thick and large quill-pen trying to figure out a tough magic question.

Alferris had shrunk to the proper size for the desk. Right now, it was listening to Fernando so attentively that its attitude surprised Lucien.

"Here you are... So the things before daybreak had something to do with you?"

Fernando was aware of Lucien's arrival as soon as his student entered the magic tower. Less than an hour ago, the scarlet moon rose. Then, Lucien returned to the Congress of Magic. It was obvious that he had something to do with it.

Lucien nodded. "I summoned the God of Silver Moon, Alterna, to help a friend get out of a trap. But what was out of my expectation was that Dracula, the vampire prince, showed up. I have no idea what happened in the end."

Lucien was being quite honest; he just didn't mention the World of Souls.

From Lucien's story, it seemed that there was a first-generation vampire who got trapped by the vampire prince, and Lucien was commissioned to break the trap by summoning the God of Silver Moon. Then some mysterious existence which was behind Dracula showed up and led the whole thing to an unknown direction.

To be honest, Lucien did not have any idea about what happened exactly. He only had some vague guesses based on what he knew about the World of Souls.

Of course, Lucien was taking a bit of risk here. If nothing so inconceivable like this had happened, if space had not been

distorted by the power of the scarlet moon, and if Lucien didn't have to use the Space Jump scroll which was connected to Fernando's demiplane and thus allowing Fernando to deduce from the results that Lucien had gone to the Dark Mountain Range, Lucien could have saved his efforts coming up with all the excuses, as Fernando would have seen a different story himself. After all, Lucien was born with the talent of a Secretive.

However, after going through all the things that happened before, Lucien believed that his own teacher was quite trustworthy. Even if Fernando found out the secret of the World of Souls, Lucien should still be safe.

When it came to something serious, Fernando was always short-tempered but earnest. Tapping on the desk lightly, he said,

"It was the Observer who was trapped, right? He's the only one who can summon the God of Silver Moon. In fact, it was quite a good opportunity for you. When Alterna descended, you were temporarily affected by Alterna and saw the world from Her perspective, a perspective that only She can provide you. After all, Alterna is the closest existence to the truth of the world, which is the ultimate goal of every arcanist's research. You might not be able to feel it right now, but you'll understand its value when you step into the realm of the legendary one day."

Compared to questions like what kind of power was behind Dracula, what the solidified colors of black, white, and grey were, or where the other falling dimensions were, the question that Fernando cared more about was what Lucien saw when the God of Silver Moon arrived.

Lucien did not try to hide this part, as he also had no idea what he had seen. "I felt I was in the air, looking down upon everything. There were... things I have no idea how to describe. They were... possibilities... of the world."

What he saw was way beyond his words.

"In the air, look down... Possibilities..." Fernando slightly frowned. "It is said that when one approaches the truth of the world or—

what others call—god, the person is essentially changed, in a good way. He or she would be able to see the track of destiny from another perspective, but it's not like what you said... not really. Anyways, Lucien, you own this. When you become a legendary and experience something similar one day, the blurry images shall have more specific meanings."

Obviously, neither did Fernando find anything really valuable.

Before Lucien responded, Fernando put on a mischievous grin. "Speaking of this, I have to thank you. Your intervention caused the injuring and falling of the God of Silver Moon and the mysterious existence. If we can find the dimension where they fell before They woke up, very likely we'll be able to collect some valuable materials to fill in the blank of our research. Aren't you a lucky star for the Congress!"

Yes, every high-rank arcanist was a lunatic when it came to conducting researches, and the grand arcanists were the greatest representatives. Lucien realized that his vision was still far away from that of his teacher, as he hadn't thought from this perspective.

"So how long it will take us to locate the dimension?" asked Lucien, who was also unconsciously affected by the passion.

"Around three to ten years. We will use astrology, on the premise that we know its existence for sure and have blurry image memories for guidance." Fernando replied.

"The Congress will try its very best. Besides us, the South Church, the North Church, and the Dark Congress should also have seen what happened. Since it's related to the secrets beyond the legendary level, they'll all get crazy. Whoever finds it first gets the best share."

After explaining briefly to Lucien, Fernando said, "So far, don't bother with this anymore. Your astrology is way far from prying into the truth. When the dimension is found, I'll request the Highest Council for an exploration. If you and the other students are willing to go, you guys can come with me."

Straightfoward. That was very typical of Fernando.

“So why are you here? In such a hurry...” asked Fernando after finishing his speech.

Lucien was reminded of his purpose. Putting on a flattering smile, Lucien said, “Teacher, I wonder if I can use your demiplane to go to the Duchy of Violet.”

“But you just came back.” Fernando felt a bit confused, which was very rare for him.

Lucien hurriedly explained, “I got a friend to help me distract Prince Dracula this time. Although Horoscope has told me that she’s safe, I think... it’s better if we talk face to face. After all, Prince Dracula’s power of cursing and casting nightmares is also well-known.”

“She? The little girl from Hathaway’s family?” Fernando slightly nodded, knowing that Lucien and Natasha were quite good friends. “You need me to bring you back?”

“Yeah, please.” Lucien suddenly felt that Fernando was like his guardian and was somehow amused.

When Fernando stood up and was about to bring Lucien to his demiplane, Lucien noticed that Alferris was still focusing on its own study, sparing no time for greeting at all. Driven by curiosity, Lucien asked, “Hey, what are you busy studying at, Alferris?”

“Alchemy, Golem Making,” answered Alferris without looking up.

“What for? You need golems?” Lucien felt it was even stranger, since Alferris always tore down the golems for their shining pieces.

Alferris answered while pretending it was not a big deal. “The Congress has been encouraging senior-rank mages to develop new golem models. A seventh circle mage like me can collect some precious materials from the Congress for free two times, as long as my golem making skills reach a certain level.”

When it mentioned the free precious materials, its amber-colored

eyes were shining with excitement.

No wonder... This was very typical of little Crystal.

“By the way, boss. I recently read a story about the brave and the dragon.” Alferris seemed to recall something and finally looked up at Lucien and grinned.

“So... what do you mean... You want to defeat the brave?” Lucien felt a bit suspicious.

“No no no... boss, I mean— Here’s my plan. I can play the role of the dreadful dragon. We kidnap a princess and I’ll demand for treasures. Then you’ll be the brave and defeat me to win the abundant reward. Then we do half-half...” Before Alferris could finish his proposal, it was deterred back to its own textbook by Fernando’s one single glance.

.....

After a few minutes of space jump, Lucien was taken to Fernando’s demiplane. He finally could see this place clearly: It was a space full of thunder and lightning. Fernando’s black magic tower was like a huge lightning rod, conducting the electricity power down to the ground with bright silver-white flashes.

Fernando suddenly asked, “Is the Count Silver Eye safe now?”

“...?”

Being busy running for his life, finding excuses, and worrying about Natasha, Lucien finally realized now that he still had no idea if Rhine had been rescued from the trap in the World of Souls.

Seeing Lucien’s confused expression, Fernando teased him.

“Hmm... Obviously, you are in such a hurry that you don’t even remember what you did all these things for.”

But in Fernando’s mind, he actually understood Lucien. After all, this young man just went through a series of great challenges. Fernando, smiling, slightly shook his head. From his own

demiplane, Fernando took Lucien with him through another space jump.

Finally, they arrived at Melzer Black Forest outside Aalto.

Chapter 417: Partly Good and Partly Bad

Adjusting the piece of monocle decorated with a fine silver chain on his nose, Lucien was about to activate Fernando's Electromagnetic Message. However, just at this time, Lucien received a call.

After the disturbance of the electric current noise, Lucien heard Natasha's voice, sounding both concerned and relieved.

"Lucien?"

Obviously, getting back into contact was a great relief to this young lady.

"It's me. I was about to call you as well." Lucien could not hold back the smile on his face. Since Natasha's call came as soon as he arrived in Aalto, it was reasonable for him to assume that Natasha had kept on calling him for at least the past half an hour.

Unlike Lucien, who mastered the knowledge of Horoscope, Natasha could not tell if her friend was safe through divination. The many accidents that happened during their plan greatly worried Natasha.

"Good news," said Natasha in great relief. "I was worried about you since Dracula went back earlier than we expected—he never approached the bait in the mountains. But it seems that you did it, right? Was it because of you? —I'm talking about the scarlet moon."

Lucien's connection to the scarlet moon was too obvious to ignore.

Lucien also felt relieved hearing Natasha's words. Apparently, it was some kind of special connection that Prince Dracula possessed with other first-generation vampires that helped him find out it was a trap, so he never really got close to Natasha. In this case, Lucien did not have to worry whether Natasha had been cursed anymore.

"I summoned the God of Silver Moon, but I've got no idea why the moon turned scarlet. So far, I can't say the task has been fulfilled, since I haven't heard anything from the other side." Lucien could not confess to the Princess that he was in such a hurry to confirm

her safety that he had not spared time to contact Rhine yet.

"Anyways." Lucien paused with an unaware smile on his face.

"Thanks for your help, really. There was no way that I could do this without you. Dracula could have killed me like crashing a little bug... I'm so glad you're not in any trouble because of me..."

"Of course. I'm always trustworthy." Natasha cut Lucien off triumphantly. "Where are you? I'll give the mask back to you."

Lucien, who had got used to Natasha's style, immediately informed the Princess where he was.

After less than ten minutes, Lucien saw Natasha in her fine milky-white full set of armor, followed by Camil. As usual, she was glamorous.

"It's a pity that the mask can't turn a male into a female," said Natasha sincerely when she handed the mask back to Lucien while staring at him.

Lucien was speechless, so he decided to simply look up at the sky where the silver moon was still hanging when he took the mask back.

Natasha was just subconsciously joking. Seeing that Lucien was not into this kind of talk, she laughed and soon became serious again. "I was told that Dracula is an expert in casting curses and nightmares. You probably want to have your teacher or Hathaway to check you out as soon as possible when you go back. Umm... I think you should go and find the Eye of Curse. He is the authority on these cases."

"No worries. I was under the defense shield all the time. Before Dracula broke the shield, the God of Silver Moon was summoned and drove him away. I was not affected at all." Lucien grinned again, feeling rather sweet and warm in his heart.

"Great." Natasha nodded slightly and then looked at the sky. "When you summoned Alterna, the black, white, and grey... the solidified colors, they were the same with what you saw beside Lake Elsinore,

right? It's another dimension... I wonder if Mr. Rhine and the Grand Cardinal Sard have something to do with it..."

She was not digging into Lucien's secrets but was just putting forward questions without demanding for an answer. Meanwhile, she was also trying to remind Lucien that other powerful existences who experienced the collapse of the Grand Cross should have also figured out some pieces of the puzzle. After all, at that time, the silent world of black, white, and grey emerged out of the water. Although so far "no one" had found the entrance to the world yet, it was easy for one to connect the two things together. Therefore, Lucien had to be even more careful in the future.

Natasha believed that she was so far the only one except for Lucien who had grasped something about Rhine and Sard, since Lucien had given her the reminders.

"You're right. To find the entrance of the dimension, Mr. Rhine decided to work with Sard, but he was betrayed by Sard, who definitely was hiding some secrets. Therefore, Mr. Rhine was trapped. To help him get out, I summoned the God of Silver Moon. But obviously, the secrets of the dimension are even more complex than I expected. So far, I have no idea whether I succeeded or not."

Since Natasha had figured out much of the story on her own, Lucien generally explained the situation to her without touching the deeper secrets. Besides, Natasha's unconditional help made Lucien trusted her even more.

Natasha nodded solemnly. "Since the fall of the Magic Empire, despite the ongoing conflicts between the South and the North Church, there have been no conflicts powerful enough to involve in the entire continent. In the dimension that attracted both Sard and Rhine hides the power that rivals that of Alterna. Maybe... this is the beginning of a new great era."

Natasha put on a confident and bright smile. "In every great era, there are great powers that ended up fallen, but there are also new powers catching up and exceeding the former. We shall work hard together, Lucien! I can feel that my blood's longing to fight!"

"I've caught up with you." Lucien pretended to be quite aggressive. "Perhaps sooner or later, my power will exceed yours."

Natasha readily accepted the challenge, happy and excited at the same time. "We'll see who becomes a level nine first, and who becomes a legendary first. If you lose..."

She put on a cunning smile, as if she was hiding some little secrets.

"Alright, you should go now. For what happened tonight, the Grand Cardinal and the priests must be on high alert right now. Although we're not that important, we still gotta be very careful. After all, your mentor is a grand arcanist..." Natasha hurried Lucien as she did not know that Lucien came here by space jump. "And remember to write to me!"

Lucien's heart suddenly sank. How came he forgot this part? He was in such a rush that he directly jumped to the suburb nearby Aalto. Sard might have already noticed it! Luckily, Fernando was still with them!

High up in the air, where Lucien and Natasha's sight could not reach, Fernando in his red robe was smiling at an old man in front of him. It was Sard, the Grand Cardinal of Aalto.

"It's not decent to peep at the kids' dating." Fernando grinned.

"Tonight is not a peaceful night," said Sard expressionlessly, "so as the Grand Cardinal of Violet, I'm responsible for the Princess's safety."

He was the one who made the most information out from the scarlet moon incident tonight. Thus, right now every single unusual sign and anyone in Aalto who was worth extra attention was being watched by Sard.

Fernando stood right in front of Sard and blocked his way like an old scoundrel. He sighed and said, "Sard... you're so close to becoming the Saint. I really want to destroy you right now."

Obviously, Fernando was threatening Sard by reminding him that he was still not yet a Saint!

"Bellia and his people are also watching," Sard replied. It seemed that Fernando's words did not really bother him. After all, there was more than one legendary in the parish of Violet.

Meanwhile, Sard did not take any further movement either, as he knew that this short-tempered legendary-level archmage could fulfill his words at any moment.

Fernando stood still while observing Sard with a meaningful smile. However, in his mind, he had already blamed his student multiple times for his unusual recklessness. After what happened, a space jump would easily catch the attention of all factions including Aalto and the North Fortress.

Fernando looked down. He secretly criticized again that Natasha was being enough impetuous this time as well, and somehow Camil did not even stop her.

These kids... Fernando sighed.

He was here not just for sending and picking up Lucien!

.....

After Fernando's ten-minute-long roaring, Lucien made an in-depth and sincere self-criticism. Then, wearing the Transformation Mask, he arrived in Rentato by magic train. There Lucien found a random hotel and went to sleep to summon Rhine's projection in his dream - Allyn's many magic circles would prevent Rhine's from projecting to Lucien.

In the foggy world of dream, Rhine, who was wearing a tight red shirt and a black high-necked coat, soon appeared.

"Mr. Rhine, you are still trapped..." Seeing that Rhine was still projecting through the World of Souls, Lucien got the answer.

Rhine smiled helplessly, though his silver-colored eyes were charming as usual and his bearing was still elegant. "The Primordial Ancestor was injured and fell together with that thing from deep of the World of Souls. Thus, He had no chance to help me out. Hopefully, the Primordial Ancestor can wake up as soon as

possible... Or probably I should count on you and wait until when you become a legendary."

"Then what about the threat from the World of Souls? Has it stopped?" Lucien hurriedly asked. He had taken such a huge risk and sincerely hoped that it would not go in vain.

Rhine nodded gently, the helplessness and bitterness disappearing from his smile. "It has stopped. These senior-rank specters are in such a rage that they are now using their most powerful Horoscope spells to figure out who did it. But because of the power of the Primordial Ancestor and your strange track of destiny, they can't find you."

"I indeed felt from the imprint in my soul the moment when the Primordial Ancestor fell. He was severely injured, so His rank could not be maintained, and recovery would require a long time. Of course, even if killed, the Primordial Ancestor could still gain power from the darkness and the silver moon to resurrect. He never dies."

"As for the mysterious existence from deep of the World of Souls, because it never woke up completely, it has been broken into many pieces. Its recovery might take even longer. Part of its pieces fell into the unknown dimension. So, Lucien, if you can find them, I'm sure it would be a remarkable benefit to you, since it could make up the cost you paid for becoming a senior-rank in a rush, not to mention that it can also guide you in your future progress."

Lucien nodded. If he could find the pieces, with the knowledge in the spiritual library, he could perhaps reveal most of the truth of the world.

As for how to compensate for the loss caused by advancing too fast, Lucien did not need the extra help, since he had already found the direction: To create his own meditation.

Because of some magic experiments, arcanists believed that spiritual power and light were in fact the same by nature. Therefore, whether light came in the form of waves or particles involved the understanding of spiritual power, and in which direction meditation should go.

So far, despite their differences from each other, most meditation methods were based on the belief that light came in waves. However, there were still a few that were based on the Theory of Particles, and they worked quite well—even better than Theory-of-Waves meditations for some arcanists with unique cognitive worlds.

Building on the photoelectric effect that has been discovered, the next step that Lucien was going to take was to study the wave-particle duality of light, which was also the wave-particle duality of spiritual power!

Chapter 418: Fernando's Roaring

On the thirty-fifth floor of the Congress of Magic's headquarter tower, in a medium-sized meeting room.

In the center of the room, there was a long cherrywood table surrounded by twenty-four chairs. The chairs were all made of precious wood and their red velvet cushions were nice and soft. The backs of the chairs were carved with different fine patterns, such as the symbol of elements, a storm enveloping bolts of lightning, the crown of magic and arcana...

"It has been confirmed that the God of Silver Moon, Alterna, brought about the change of the scarlet moon. As for Alterna's enemy... it was an existence which has never been discovered before, probably coming from a silent world where all colors are devoid except for black, white, and grey." The Prophet, who was wearing a grey pointy hat, concluded primarily.

The scarlet moon and what happened to the two beings so close to the "truth" caught the attention of the Congress of Magic immediately. The Highest Council called for a meeting to decide further arrangements.

Since the meeting was a rush decision, only eighteen out of the twenty-four members managed to attend. Hathaway and the other five members were not in Allyn right now.

Hearing what the Prophet just said, Vicente Miranda, also known as the Thanatos, knocked at the table and said, "What we should really care about right now is which dimension Alterna and the unknown existence ended up falling into, and why They started fighting."

Vicente Miranda was covered with a black cloak. Inside his eyes, two dark red flames were flickering.

"It perhaps has something to do with Dracula, the Vampire Prince, and Rhine, the Silver-eyed Count. They aren't getting along with each other. According to the information yielded by Horoscope, I went to the Dark Mountain Range this early morning and found

that Rhine's castle has jumped into the Night Highland to recover from severe damage. The surroundings have been completely destroyed into ashes, and traces left by Dracula were everywhere..." Douglas said in a calm tone. "As for why they started fighting, and why the unknown existence was involved, no idea so far."

Fernando's red eyes surveyed around the meeting room, and many of the legendary archmages slightly lowered their eyes to avoid direct eye contact with him. They did not want to be roared at by Fernando if he somehow found a fault of theirs.

"I've sent Bergner and Annonis to locate the dimension. If any of you are free, please join in. We all know how important this is," said Fernando. He had been safeguarding Allyn in recent years and was therefore responsible for making the arrangements at this point.

Bergner was the Prophet's name, and Annonis was the Astrologer.

"Also, I have confirmed from other sources that it was Dracula and Rhine who caused it. If we want to find the reason for the fight, we must focus on the mysterious existence and the silent world made of black, white, and grey!"

As Fernando spoke, he looked directly into Vicente's eyes.

"What do you mean, Fernando?"

The dark flames in Thanatos's eyes flickered. He was not a crazy mage who had no idea of interpersonal relationships. Thus, he understood what Fernando was indicating.

"I've got a message from the Duchy of Violet. At the end of April in year 816, great changes took place beside Lake Elsinore. Some adventurers survived and they described the changes as 'all colors but black, white, and gray started to fade, and the sounds also disappeared'. Don't you tell me this has nothing to do with what happened last night!"

"Also, Rogerio was there at that time! Why he didn't he include this in his report?!"

The light in Fernando's eyes was sharp and he was almost roaring. The survivor he was talking about was, of course, Lucien.

Because of the ambush of the Church and Hathaway's involvement, there were quite a few survivals from the catastrophe. Some of the night watchers and knights who were chasing after Argent Horn were there as well. Therefore, the information was in fact relatively easy to access. Thus Lucien did not try to hide it from his teacher, instead, he confessed in front of Fernando, which was in actually a good way of showing that he knew nothing about the World of Souls.

"You gotta ask Hathaway." Thanatos tried to shift Fernando's attention to Hathaway who was not present.

"Shall I also ask Hathaway why there's also the solidification of black, white, and grey in Heidler as well?!"

Fernando's roaring kept going on. Thanatos couldn't help leaning slightly to one side.

The rest of the members of the Highest Council all knew what happened in Heidler. But because no possible reasons were found, none of them mentioned about it before. Now that what just happened resembled Heidler's condition so much, they all started feeling suspicious. However, facing Vicente, they were hoping that the Lord of Storm could take the initiative to put it forward.

Fernando did not disappoint them.

Thanatos was so skinny that there seemed to be only a layer of skin covering his cheekbones. He responded in a rather calm manner, "Heidler is connected to an unknown dimension. It became like this because it was contaminated. Unfortunately, we haven't found the entrance of the dimension yet, so we're unable to explore it further. Currently, we have no idea if this has anything to do with the silent world. I was about to make some further investigation when I return there."

At this point, Vicente could only choose to tell half of the truth about the World of Souls. It was very difficult to find the entrance

anyways.

"Good. We've got some clues. I'll ask Hathaway and Rogerio as well. I hope all of you in this room can set aside some time to help investigate these two cases. After all, this involves the truth of the world." Douglas hurriedly concluded before Fernando's fury proceeded.

After all the members left the meeting room, Fernando shook his head.

"This's more complex than what was expected."

In fact, Fernando knew that Lucien was not telling the whole true story, but he respected Lucien's right to privacy and did not probe further. For Fernando, knowing the correct rough outline of what happened was enough.

Confident as the Lord of Storm, he believed that anything that happened before must leave some clues behind. As long as there were clues, he could find out the truth.

For example, although Lucien said that Dracula never saw his face or detected his smell, so he would not be chased after. But since he had turned to Natasha for help, someone who's careful enough could still trace back to Lucien by studying Natasha's whereabouts.

Therefore, the reasons why Fernando took Lucien back to the Duchy of Violet were twofold: One was to confuse others, as no one in their right mind would immediately return to the site after causing such trouble; The other was that if there truly is a secret hidden behind all these and someone began to suspect Lucien, then Fernando's act would be interpreted as that Lucien had already shared the secret with the Congress of Magic, thus Lucien would be much safer—if someone wants to silence the witness over the affair, then they must silence the whole Congress of Magic!

...

Since spiritual power was closely related to the soul and one's world of cognition, any exploration into spiritual power or advancement

of meditation methods required great caution. In the past years, more than a few senior-rank sorcerers had been severely injured when trying to modify their meditations, some even died from it. Therefore, after conducting the photoelectric effect experiment and applying the theory of wave-particle dualism to spiritual power development, Lucien did not come up with a new meditation right away. Instead, he modified it bit by bit during every day's practice. He estimated that it would take him two to three years to complete and perfect the new meditation.

Opening the window, Lucien felt the night wind blew in. It was already the Month of Ice, the wind made Lucien shiver, but was also very refreshing.

Lucien grinned when he saw that Alferris was focusing on roasting a whole lamb down there in the garden. He had been back for a few days and had been showing up in front of people more and more often. No one ever doubted him for having anything to do with the scarlet moon, as in the eyes of the arcanists other than Fernando, Thompson, and those who he was close to, Lucien Evans, the leader of the Atom Institution, never left Allyn.

To their way of thinking, Lucien was spending all of his time on improving himself as he was worried about the Church's possible assassination.

It was because that Lucien did not leave for too long, while Alferris' disguising himself as Lucien also helped a lot.

"Sir, Mr. Arthur's here again. Shall I decline him again using the same excuse?" asked Leo, the chief butler, who was among the few who knew that Lucien just came back.

Lucien shook his head. "Let him in. I gotta ask him about the production of the magic crystal light."

Although he got Health Belt, Pale Justice, and other precious magic items from this adventure, he also consumed lots of senior-rank materials and potions. All he had left right now was a tube of solidified helium, a tube of Alferris' blood, three tubes of liquid helium, four tubes of Water Song, etc.

In addition, the materials that he used for the promotion to senior-rank were loans from Fernando, therefore he had to leave the income from Holm Mineral and Harvest to Fernando as a pledge. His subsidies from the Congress had to go to Alferris for its salary. Although Lucien could still get the materials he needed for experiments using the budget of the institution, he did not have enough Thales or arcana points to do anything else. He needed a new source of revenue urgently.

The air of the dragon in the garden was oppressive. Arthur walked through the garden, feeling quite weak in his knees. When he walked into the living room, enthusiastic smile piled up on his chubby face. "Hi, Lucien, our youngest member of the Arcana Review Board! Finally, you've finally got some time for me!"

"So what makes you here this late?" Lucien was being very straightforward.

Arthur undid the top button and laughed. "Your place's surely much warmer than mine. My fireplace never worked as well as your magic."

"Anyways, Lucien," Arthur continued, "I'm here because the first order of magic crystal lights has been produced. Remember? You changed the materials for producing. Sir James, the Duke, wanted to install crystal lights in his villa in Rentato. We've placed wires from the magic circles powered by water to his villa... of course, under the guidance of several sorcerers from the school of electromagnetics."

Lucien nodded, waiting for Arthur to finish his words.

"So tonight, we are about to light them up! Sir James' place will be the first noble's villa ever that's lit up by magic! This will be a historic event! As the designer, you should definitely be present!" Arthur said humorously with a radiant smile.

Chapter 419: Divergence

Night in the Month of Ice fell early. Tiny but dense snowflakes were dancing like fairies under the light of the arc light street lamps, holy and hazy.

There were barely any people left on the street. Shaking the snowflakes off their coats while advancing quickly, they had no time for such a beautiful view.

"So beautiful... But why do they have to melt." Alferris looked at the shiny dots in his "palms" melting into water quickly and muttered in a depressed voice.

The snowflakes were shiny and their structure was complicated, which fits Aferris' taste perfectly. He would have collected them if he had not known what they really were, and that was the reason why Alferris did not really enjoy the winter.

As someone who signed a 100-year contract with Lucien, Alferris happily followed Lucien to Rentato after he devoured the rare roasted whole lamb. He disguised himself as a young boy that was around seven to eight years old so the citizens would not be terrified. He had a pair of amber eyes, dark blonde hair, and he was wearing a little suit with a little tie.

In the carriage, Arthur Doyle was shivering in the corner as he knew what the cute boy really was. Although he knew a lot of things and he had a strong background, he was still scared when facing a legendary "monster".

"The arc lamp is way too hot and way too expensive. Most of the cities can't afford it, not even Rentato. You can only find such a lamp in the noble district and the busiest market." Lucien changed his outfit back to Holm style. He was smiling while looking out of the carriage.

Arthur overcame his fear with the desire for wealth. He followed Lucien's sight and looked at the night view outside. He said excitedly, "After the magic crystal light passes the field test, its cost

will be lowered again, and I'll talk to the Governor of Rentato City Hall. All the streets in the city will use our magic lamp and it's hard to imagine how much money we'll get. We can also promote the product in other cities and other countries..." He could not imagine how much value the lamp could create.

Alferris turned his head around suddenly after hearing the word "money". He tried to figure out what they were discussing. Arthur was so scared that he almost knocked over the glazed white porcelain teacup.

"This business comes with great opportunity and the profit will be incredible, Alferris. If you want to join us, you must buy a share with your golds, gems, and crystals. You have a lot of them in your collection, right?" Lucien was just joking with Alferris. However, if Alferris really wanted to join in, the Will of Elemental probably would not have an issue. The initial production and promotion phase required much investment. And before the cost was lowered again, not everyone would be able to use the lamp. That would make the stingy Morris's heart broke.

"Gold, gem, and crystal? For real..." Alferris tried to make it look like that he did not care but he was actually struggling badly in his mind. The possible great wealth in the future and the shiny gold, gem, crystal in his collection. He wanted both!

Alferris struggled so bad in his mind that he did not even notice the carriage had already arrived at Duke James' mansion in the noble district.

"Welcome, Evans, our youngest and most handsome member of the Arcana Review Board. Sadly, my daughters and my granddaughters already have their own families, or they'll definitely ask me to introduce you to them." Duke James, who looked like a bald mobster, smiled as he welcomed them. Surrounded around the warm campfire in the garden, he and his guests seemed to be waiting for something.

Lucien smiled as he got off the carriage. "It's a great honor to be welcomed by Duke James himself. I feel like I'm a king or a prince. Why is everyone outside?"

The mansion is completely dark without the slightest hint of light. It almost felt like the mansion had merged with the dark night.

"All the candles in the mansion have been changed to magic crystal lights and we'll light them up one by one in the dark night. It's a memorable moment, and we should begin only when all the guests are here." The Duke's head was reflecting the orange light from the campfire.

Lucien chuckled in his mind as he thought that the Duke had the spirit of a hipster, although an old one.

There were some special set up in the garden, so that although there was only one single campfire, it was not cold at all. The noble girls and ladies were not complaining at all, on the contrary, they were considerably interested in this new party format.

"The Prince's body is weak and the night is cold, so I did not invite him. Alright, let me introduce you to some friends." Duke James led Lucien to several people that looked like sorcerers after Lucien greeted the nobles that he was familiar with. It seemed like they were the Electromagnetics Sorcerers that Arthur had mentioned about who had helped set up the routes and converters.

Approaching the two men and one woman, James pointed at Lucien and said, "I guess you already know who he is and I should probably skip the introduction. Level six arcanist, Fifth circle sorcerer, the youngest member of the Arcana Review Board, the genius who has claimed the highest Elemental and Necromancy honors, Mr. Lucien Evans."

Lucien had not submitted his sorcerer rank yet. He was waiting for everything to settle down first.

"Greetings, Mr. Evans," the old man with well-organized black and white hair said. The young man and the young woman around him also bowed politely. "Greetings, Mr. Evans."

"This is Mr. Barek Trevors, a level-six Electromagnetics arcanist and a seventh-circle sorcerer. He's a student of the Emperor of Control, Mr. Brook." James introduced the old man with blonde eyes and a

serious expression to Lucien. "And they are his student, middle-rank sorcerers Lillian and Issac."

Lillian was a delicate girl with long brown hair, while Issac seemed to have the Fire Giant's bloodline as he was tall and muscular; his hair had the color of the flames.

"Mr. Trevors, Lillian, and Issac. Nice to meet you." Lucien nodded slightly and greeted them one by one.

James chuckled. "Barek is a friend from my childhood. He failed to activate his bloodline power so he became a sorcerer. However, he showed his talent as a sorcerer and was recognized by Mr. Brook. He became a high-ranked arcanist smoothly. I think it wouldn't take him too long to surpass me, although I started much earlier than him.

"This time we're trying to create some new alchemical things that deal with Electromagnetics, which is his specialty. So I decided to ask him to help."

It sounded like that Barek came from a small noble family. Although he had no title of nobility, he was still a representative of those board members who were close to the nobles. After being introduced to the liberal group by Prince Patrick, Lucien had expanded his social networks.

"Evans, the electrons you discovered are very helpful in the electromagnetic field. A lot of theories now have a deeper meaning." It seemed like Barek did not know how to interact with people. He went straight to arcana topics.

Lucien did not want to waste time on saying preliminaries anyway, so he started talking with Barek about the possible situations of the study in the electromagnetic field. Lillian and Issac decided to remain silent and just listen to their conversation on the side.

"Evans, have you heard of the experiment conducted by president Douglas?" Barek suddenly mentioned an experiment.

Lucien shook his head in confusion. "You know, I spent most of my

time lately analyzing spells and improving myself, so I had no idea what happened recently."

"President Douglas designed an experiment, trying to validate that there is no relative movement against ether and the speed of light is the same in all direction." Barek was speaking in a calm tone. It did not even sound like that he was talking about a trending hot topic.

Lucien finally understood what happened. Without other things interrupting, Douglas eventually completed the experiment he mentioned in the letter and confirmed that ether did not exist. Without the ether, there was no way that light could arrive at the ground if light had been waves, and the world should be completely dark.

He denied the wave theory of light from an opposite approach.

"Evans, what do you think of this experiment?" Barek's blonde eyes suddenly turned bright and his expression became even more serious. It seemed like Lucien's answer would decide if they could become friends or not.

Lucien struggled in his mind after seeing his expression. He did not expect the wave theory supports and the particle theory supports to hate each other so much.

Recalling in the magic school that the Electromagnetic faculties supported the wave theory and The Elements faculties supported the particle theory was the main reason for their conflicts, Lucien had a deeper understanding of this principle contradiction which persisted throughout the history of magic.

When they open their eyes for the first time, people could feel the light. By comparing the day time to the night time, the ancient human beings admired the light. They thought light represented life and divinity. Ever since magic was born, sorcerers never stopped exploring the truth of the light. After they found that light was similar to spiritual power, the study of light became one of the eternal topics in the field.

Compared to theories like the Energy Essentialism supported by

Viscount Roland, the Atom Foundation Theory of the Element School, and the Theory of Life Force of the Necromancy School, the Particle Theory led by Douglas and the Wave Theory led by Brook were the two major theories that involved all sorcerers of the Congress. They were also the main conflict in research.

If the board were to be turned into a church, then aside from a few people who sat on the fence, the wave supporters and particle supporters would definitely condemn each other as "heretics"!

In this environment, mentioning the wave-particle dualism would not be a compromise. Instead, it would just become a new heresy and was likely to be attacked by supporters of both theories.

Lucien thought for a while and smiled. "Based on your description, Mr. Barek, it seems like the experiment is based on the current Astronomical Revolution System, which hasn't been validated by the discovery of a planet yet."

Lucien repeated the same words he used to answer his teacher Fernando.

"That's reasonable." Barek's expression loosened. It almost felt like that as long as Lucien did not support the Particle Theory and Douglas's experiment, they could be friends.

At this moment, all Duke James's guests had arrived, so he clapped and made sure that everyone was looking at the mansion. Sorcerer Lillian walked to the entrance and smiled. "Everyone, with electricity, the magic crystal lights no longer need to be turned on by with spiritual power. Even the most untalented noble will be able to use them like using quills. Actually, it can be even easier. For example, I just need a single tap and the light in the whole mansion will be turned on."

To make sure that Duke James could show off, Barek made a temporary master switch outside.

"Great, let's put out the campfire first." James was satisfied that the gentlemen and the ladies were all staring at the mansion curiously. He waved his hands to put out the campfire.

Lillian pressed the switch hard intentionally in the darkness.

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After a soft noise, all the magic crystal lights in the mansion were turned on.

The bright light tore the dark apart and expelled the fear. The place was full of a "divine" feeling. It was like the morning light driving away the night!

It was a big step in human's history!

Chapter 420: Using Electricity Safely

In the winter night when snowflakes were swirling in the air, crystal lights flowing with colors lit up the entire place of the Duke's villa, which looked like a shining gem against the black background of the night. The light that burst out from the villa was so eye-catching that it seemed as if all the stars had landed and gathered here.

Even if among the senior-rank sorcerers, no one had ever tried to use this many crystal lights in his magic tower. In most cases, they were used to using magic candles, as the candles' effects were also not bad.

For most of the nobles present tonight, it was not until today that they finally realized what the word "brilliance" meant. They had never imagined that a man-made view could be as imposing as natural scenery. This power came from human beings, and this scene could be spread and seen throughout the world!

"Ladies and gentlemen, come in, please." Barek's student, Lillian, was the emcee tonight. With a lovely smile, she invited the guests to take a tour in the luxury villa lit up like the palace of the Sun King.

The noble ladies lifted their skirts elegantly and glided in, followed by the gentlemen. All of them were very curious and could not wait to see the magic crystal lights closely.

"Very impressive. Our first stage of promotion has succeeded." Arthur was a businessman, and the impressiveness of the scene did not outweigh the importance of making money for him.

He was carefully observing how the nobles responded to the magic crystal lights.

"I want them for my magic tower!" Alferris drooled seeing how bright the lights were, as he was known for being captivated by shiny things. "I'll pay in arcana points!"

Gold, gems, crystals... Anything that had gone into Alferris' pocket would not come out again. Lucien even doubted if Alferris had embezzled half of the building materials of its magic tower, as it looked so deformed that it resembled a crooked peak — Located in Allyn, the tower's chance of being attacked was slim to none, so there was nothing to be afraid of.

"But these lights, because of the cost, can only benefit the nobles. If we can't lower the cost further, common citizens still won't be able to enjoy the light. Every single human being should benefit from the progress of civilization." Lucien was inspired by the scene; To Lucien, the standard of judging whether a civilization is advanced or not should be the popularization of technologies. The commencing age of electricity should be able to do so!

Arthur certainly was not sharing Lucien's view. "But... It is not very likely that we can lower the cost further, at least not in a short period of time."

"Well... We will need a great number of skilled workers. The procedures that don't require magic could be separated out and put on assembly lines to produce standardized parts. Then, the cost can be further lowered." Lucien nodded slightly like a sophisticated capitalist. The candidates in his mind were the dwarves on Night Highland. But since he had caused the vampires such great trouble, Lucien had to wait for at least two to three years to carry out his plan, when all the attention were drawn to the exploration into the new dimension.

"It takes lots of time training workers..." Arthur did not understand the terms Lucien was using, and he was also not interested in asking, since currently even the basic preconditions couldn't be satisfied.

At this time, Lillian turned off the main crystal light in the hall and only left several smaller ones. The light instantly became dim and soft. A romantic and elegant atmosphere was created.

She smiled humorously. "No worries, ladies and gentlemen, you won't lose the romance of having candlelight dinner because of these magical lights. Romance is in our soul and heart."

"Also," she added, "when you walk around in your castle, darkness shall never be intimidating to you anymore. We've brought light to you, forever, with the magic crystal lights."

Lucien suspected that Arthur had paid Lillian beforehand for such painstaking promotion. But Lucien liked it, for the profit it was going to bring!

Following the tour in Duke James' villa, it was time for the court dance. In the Kingdom of Holm, which was known for being very conservative, the circle dance from the palace of Tria had not yet prevailed. Many old-school nobles disdained such a dance that requires the dancers to be so close to each other. Only some young nobles, when having their private gatherings, would do the circle dance.

"Mr. Evans, your design is definitely very impressive. I've ordered a set from Mr. Arthur. I had never imagined that crystal lights could be so accessible." A dignified young lady walked to Lucien holding a glass of water in her hand, her eyes full of admiration.

The "a set" she was talking about was a set for an entire villa, and the cost was equivalent to that of a single magic crystal light before.

Lucien swirled his glass of liquor, Sky Blue, and smiled. "This is because now electricity can be delivered very efficiently."

"Honestly speaking, when the lady turned on the lights, I was shocked by how bright the lights were. I can't describe it with my own words... It was like a dream. And somehow I also felt very proud. You're a sorcerer who creates miracles..." The young lady's face flushed. "I am neither a sorcerer nor a knight... But now I can enjoy the light as well."

Lucien grinned. "Popularizing alchemical items so that most ordinary people could be able to use them is always my dream."

"You're such a great person."

The young lady's sincere praise made Lucien, who was in most cases a relatively "cheeky" person, blushed a little.

"... To make most ordinary people be able to use them... Great vision, Evans." Duke James and Barek, the seventh circle mage, together walked toward them. Hearing what Lucien just said, Barek released a soft sigh, as if he had seen through Lucien's hiding intention.

Seeing the Duke, the young noble lady's face burned. She hurriedly said, "Mr. Evans, I'll leave you alone to the Duke."

"Ha, Evans, why are you just standing there like we old fellows? Can't you tell that Julie was waiting for you to ask her for a dance? Don't tell me you don't like Julie. She's the beloved granddaughter of Count Hackson." James joked. "And obviously, Julie is not the first lady who you have refused."

Lucien took a sip of Sky Blue and spoke half-dramatically, "Perhaps... I'm an old man in my heart..."

Young and good looking, promising and talented, wealthy and of high social status, Lucien was quite popular among the noble ladies. At this banquet, the ladies present were all from the liberal families which were open-minded to magic. They did not mind marrying a sorcerer at all, and some of them even had this fantasy.

Duke James laughed and said, "When there are more water-current magic circles for generating electricity and more electric wires, perhaps the ordinary people can also benefit from magic. The great changes in their lives will be brought to them by magic, not by any divinities. At that time, your vision will be accomplished."

Lucien realized that maybe he should reconsider what kind of person the Duke was. Although the bareheaded duke looked quite robust and ferocious from the outside, he was, in fact, quite sharp and open-minded, as he had figured out this much information from one single comment of Lucien. Fortunately, James was in alliance with them.

"When electric wires and electricity-powered devices are more accessible, we have to consider one important factor — Electricity can be dangerous, much more dangerous than candles. Touching flame with your hand will only burn you, but touching a broken

wire will probably kill you. The Church will depict electricity into something vicious to prevent its popularization." Lucien put forward his concern. At the moment, electricity was both the cheapest and the easiest-to-transfer energy; Spiritual power, solar or tidal power were not its rivals.

James looked sideways at Barek and received his confirmation, "Every year there are sorcerers who forgot to cast adequate protection dying from electric shock in electromagnetics labs."

There was a rank in Allyn for the dumbest ways to die, and electric shock ranked the 50th:

The poor sorcerer, Osan, discovered a powerful lightning spell by accident in his experiment. When he approached the ball lightning, he was shocked to find that the power of the lightning balls which were rolling all across the room had exceeded the limit of his protective shield. Let us thank him for his remarkable contribution to the magic of lightning, and for telling us, with his charred body, that we must stay away from uncontrolled electricity currents.

"So what shall we do? You've put forward the question, so you must have already figured out the solution." James smiled and looked at Lucien confidently.

Lucien took his time with his answer. "Electricity is always dangerous to the human body. We can neither require all our users to be sorcerers nor cover every single piece of wire with magic protection. I hope that, Mr. Barek, your sorcerers from the school of electromagnetics can work out a Handbook of Electrical Safety to teach people how to avoid the possible risks."

James nodded thoughtfully.

"Facing something unknown, and especially when it can be both beneficial and dangerous, we shall not simply and blindly reject it like fools. Instead, we should try to make the most use of its positive sides and minimize the hazards. And this is the value in arcana that we should promote. It's the same as how we use fire." Lucien added.

"Also, if the Church and the conservatives are going to encourage people to refuse the use of electricity by exaggerating its possible hazards, we should raise people's awareness by teaching them what electricity really is, letting them understand the pros and cons. It's not going to be an easy job, but it's meaningful." Lucien kept going, and his tone was quite alike to that of a proper member of the Arcana Review Board.

James nodded and turned to Barek. "Evans' words make sense. Can you find the right people to work on the handbook?"

"No problem," Barek replied.

In their eyes, although Lucien's teacher was the Lord of Storm, Lucien had not revealed much talent in the school of electromagnetics and had not presented any outstanding outcome — For many mages majoring in electromagnetics, the discovery of the electron was just a side product from Lucien's exploration of elements.

"Evans, when can you finish the simplification of the record magic circle? Nobles will definitely like it!" said James.

This was the purpose of James coming to Lucien.

Right now, the study on electromagnetism messaging had stepped into a dilemma and they did not believe that Lucien would be the one solving the problem, so they never mentioned it in front of Lucien.

Lucien shook his head. "I'm still looking for the proper material by conducting experiments over and over again. When it comes to choosing materials, it takes time."

In fact, because of his knowledge from the Earth, Lucien had some clues already, but he was not going to publicize it right now. Lucien would wait until the promotion of crystal light became a success first, as the early stage of the electrical revolution requires all strength to be concentrated on one aspect.

"I see..." Duke James sighed.

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In the Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric said to the poor middle-aged man who he was familiar with, "Levski, long time no see. Are you here to submit your new paper?"

"Long time no see, Eric. I've... improved my previous paper..." said Levski in a low voice. His yellow hair was as messy as a bird nest, and his blue eyes were dim and weary. This middle-aged man was as thin as a pole.

Eric frowned. "But... the previous one... was rejected by the board members, right?"

"I have improved it," Levski said firmly, "and I was told that papers putting forward subversive theories can now be submitted to Mr. Evans."

"I mean... Those board members said that the geometry you were talking about was just based on your own imagination. Your theory was ridiculous..." Eric said awkwardly, trying to persuade Levski to give up.

Levski tightened his fists and lowered his eyes. His voice trembled a bit, but was still firm. "I don't think I'm wrong. I want to show it to all the arcanists. Eric, please."

Eric nodded and took over the paper. The title was,

New Principles of Geometry with Complete Theory of Parallels.

Chapter 421: Levski's Perseverance and Expectation

Chapter 421: Levski's Perseverance and Expectation

Seeing the title, Eric sighed. "This is of no use, Levski. It's not worth your effort. No one from the Board would accept it. What you're saying goes completely in the opposite direction from our observation and the basic geometry principles. Without a doubt, this is not correct. This is not the first day we know each other and I'd suggest you to stop wasting your time on it."

Because of the need for magic pattern construction and the substantiation of the cognitive world, the study of math had a long history. I was widely acknowledged that Geometry was based on the five axioms and the five postulates put forward by Muenterse, a legendary archmage from the Magic Empire, in his work *Geometry*. Thus, it was known as Muenterse's Geometry. And also because that Muenterse was the founder of Tower, Muenterse's Geometry was also called Tower Geometry.

Among the five postulates, the fifth one was the source of much interest for being very prolix and looking more like a theorem that needs to be proved rather than a postulate. But it was, in fact, equivalent to a proposition that was popular on the Earth: In a plane, through any point not on a given line, only one new line can be drawn that's parallel to the given line. Since the establishment of the Congress of Magic, with the fast development in mathematics, more and more sorcerers, who pursued the sense of aesthetics that values simplicity in math, attempted to prove the results without using the postulate. However, no one had succeeded yet.

In Eric's eyes, Levski was one of them who failed. Levski tried to use proof by contradiction to support the fifth postulate and started with the assumption that: In a plane, through any point not on a given line, at least two new lines can be drawn that's parallel to the given line.

However, the result he got was surprising. By combining the

assumption, the five axioms, and the rest of the four postulates, Levski drew up a geometry system that was logically consistent yet at the same time greatly conflicted with reality. The arcanists from Tower all believed that the system was absurd and treated it indifferently.

After Levski submitted his paper against the oppositions, the criticism of his reasoning was like a fierce storm. Without a doubt, his paper failed to pass the review.

“Eric, have you carefully read my paper? Do you see how I demonstrated it? Both the premise and the derivation are correct! Why you just can’t accept it?” Levski’s body was trembling from anger. Years of criticism and poverty had not made him yield: For more than ten years, his magic level and researches remained paused, countless mockery and satire were directed at him, but Levski never gave up his theory.

Eric raised his hand, signaling Levski to lower his voice. “Yes, I admit that your use of proof by contradiction and your logic reasoning are absolutely correct. But Levski, open your eyes and see this world. This table, the room... They all look different from what your geometry describes! They are real, my friend. And you tell me what we should believe! You’ve tried so many years, even printed out numerous copies and propagated them to the other arcanists, but has anyone believed in your geometry system so far?”

“No...” Levski lowered his head, dispirited. In the past, he thought that his paper was rejected because the members of the Arcana Review Board and the arcanists from Tower were too conservative, so he submitted his paper directly to the younger arcanists and to the authorities in mathematics including Douglas, Hathaway, and Paris. However, the younger arcanists still mocked his proposition, calling it “lacking common sense”.

Meanwhile, the authorities in mathematics also chose to keep silent.

“I’ve modified it...” Levski hurriedly emphasized; his tone softened for only a single second. “This time it should be able to pass. Eric, please.”

Eric sighed. "But you can't keep acting like this, Levski... You've submitted this paper multiple times in the past ten years. And you never succeeded. Also, we have regulations. You can't submit the same paper for multiple times. It's a waste of the board members' time. You're already in your forties... I have to remind you. You're still a junior-rank mage..."

"This time is different! I've perfected it. Eric, please... Let Mr. Evans read it... I promise I'll focus on studying magic in the following years." Levski begged with hope in his eyes.

Eric's serious face slightly twitched. "Mr. Evans only reads those subversive papers... You know, those that will make sorcerers' brains explode. But yours only discusses the pure theories in math, and it won't affect one's cognitive world. So I'm afraid..."

A sorcerer's cognitive world was based on his or her exploration into the truth of the world. Math was just their tools and thus could not affect its stability.

Before Levski kept insisting, Eric sighed again. "What about this... I'll put 'subversive' and 'math' on the front page of your paper. So your paper will be sent to two board members specializing in mathematics, and Mr. Evans as well."

Eric understood that it was Mr. Evans who brought Levski the gleam of hope. The board members had not changed much within the past several years, and they were all quite annoyed with Levski's paper. If it were not for newly-joined Mr. Evans, Levski would not have been so determined to submit it once again.

At least there was still hope!

"Thank you, Eric..." Levski became speechless from the surprise.

Eric waved his hand. "Go back and wait for the result. Hope your life can back on track as soon as possible."

Levski nodded seriously, feeling anxious but also full of hope. He had no idea if Mr. Evans would treat his paper fairly.

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On the fifteenth floor of the magic tower, in a bright and spacious room.

Arms extending from both sides of a magic circle were busy sorting the papers.

“Math, Subversive...” The cold, metal voice paused a bit before making a final decision. “To Mr. Neeshka, Ms. Milina, and Mr. Evans.”

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In his cognitive world, where strings of starlight hanged down while elements and electrons revolved, Lucien spread out his spiritual power in waves and let the power fuse with starlight, elements, ice, and snow. Then he carefully vibrated his spiritual power waves to add the properties of spiritual particles onto time’s instantaneity.

Lucien was being extremely careful with the tiny modifications, for if his spiritual power went out of control, his entire cognitive world could be ruined within a second.

After a long time, Lucien finally ended his early morning meditation and left his bedroom to enjoy breakfast. Then he walked to the Congress of Magic’s headquarter tower as part of his physical exercise.

As soon as he stepped into the institution, he saw Lazar, who never came to the institution early, was walking back and forth in the office with a big smile on his face.

“Hey, Lazar, what makes you so happy today?” Asked Lucien.

“You come so early, Lucien!” Lazar was quite surprised, and then he said in a triumphant tone, “I can fly now!”

As he spoke, Lazar started flying in the office, almost hitting the ceiling.

“I see... So you’re a middle-rank now. Gotta celebrate that.” Lucien grinned.

Lazar, whose landing still lacked some balance, laughed. “Of course! We’re having a party!”

Then he said to Lucien with gratitude, “Thank you, man. I’ve learned a lot in the past several months doing experiments with you. Your advanced research in the field of Element, especially the discovery of the electron, helped me gain a better insight. My cognitive world has become more stable since then, so I am able to make such a progress while I am still working on math.”

“That’s why we are always exploring the truth of the world.” Lucien smiled, but then his tone became a bit more serious. “But Lazar, you still have to work hard on your math. The more progress you make, the heavier you will rely on math as your tool.”

Lazar nodded seriously. “I know where my problems lie. Also, since joining the institution, we’re all making great progress. Annick, Sprint, Katrina have told me that they are almost ready to become real sorcerers. They just still need some time to build up their spiritual power and to get some potions as aids.”

When Lucien was absent, Lazar and the students followed their prior plan and kept working on studying cathode ray and cryogenic materials. But their schedules were not that tight anymore, so they could have some time to do their own experiments.

“I’m glad to see their progress.” Lucien nodded in satisfaction.

After chatting for a while, Lazar suddenly jumped to a new topic. “So Lucien, how do you think of Mr. President’s recent experiment?”

This was a heated topic for almost every arcanist recently, and it had to do with the long-time debate over waves vs. particles. Lucien answered briefly, “If Mr. President’s theories are proven correct, we should be able to abandon the theory of Ether as a medium.”

Of course, many would still try hard to come up with all kinds of theories to mend it.

“This’s the Evans I know. Lucien Evans is always sharp and loves to

see people's brain explode." Lazar joked. This comment was agreed by many arcanists.

"Maybe I'll get a title because of this... Lazar, I'll go and check out the Review Board first, and go to visit my teacher. When I'm back, I'll celebrate for you." said Lucien.

Seeing that the other students were showing up one by one in the institution, Lucien decided to spend some time in his office of the Arcana Review Board. Although even if he did not show up, the golem would always send the papers to his place in the early evening. But since he was here in the headquarter tower, Lucien decided to take a look in the office so that it wouldn't be empty forever.

.....

As soon as Lucien stepped into the luxury office on the fifteenth floor, the golem welcomed him and said in its cold voice, "Master, a paper has just been sent to you."

"Paper?" Lucien was a bit surprised, since rarely were there papers qualified for being subversive.

Taking over the paper from the golem, Lucien saw the two words: Math and Subversive. Instantly, he had some expectations, since there were just a few possible findings in math that could be regarded as subversive within the current level of study.

" New Principles of Geometry with Complete Theory of Parallels"

Lucien quickly browsed the paper and noticed that it was an improved version. Slightly frowning, Lucien said to the golem, "Go and get me the previous papers submitted by this person... together with the review comments of the board members."

Chapter 422: Lucien's First Review

Commnen

Sky cleared up after the snow. Sunlight warmed up everything on the ground.

The heavy steps of the steel golem echoed from within the corridor. Pushing open the office door, the golem said to Lucien in its cold rigid voice, "Master, here are the six papers submitted by the same author, as well as the comments by the board members."

This was one of the advantages of being a member of Arcana Review Board — A member did not need to spend any arcana points for checking papers and their corresponding comments. This was for encouraging the in-depth study of arcana and the prudent attitude for writing reviews.

Lucien took over the pile of papers, signaled the steel golem to guard outside his office, and immediately started reading.

From the several papers submitted in the past, it could be seen that the author, Levski, had delved into a geometry system which was contradictory to the current Tower system. In his most recent paper, Levski had developed a brand new system of geometry based on the five axioms, the four postulates, and the premise that in a plane through any point not on a given line, only one new line can be drawn that's parallel to the original one.

Lucien was very surprised that, a person in this world had worked out Lobachevskian geometry on his own!

Lobachevskian geometry was the first non-Euclidean geometry system developed on the Earth, and it was named after its discoverer Lobachevsky. When Lobachevsky first came up with the system, he was still a widely-recognized, young and promising mathematician. However, the cost of him introducing the new geometry system was life-long criticism and humiliation. The authorities either fiercely attacked the new system or ignored it completely. Even Gauss, the foremost of mathematicians, who in

fact saw the rationality of Lobachevskian geometry, chose to remain silent in fear of the great pressure from the whole academic community.

But despite the miserable situation, Lobachevsky never gave up. He kept on trying for the new geometry system that he invented and even published another monograph in geometry in the last year of his life. Unfortunately, by the time he died in great pain and poverty and nearly blind, the academia still refused to recognize the enormous value of his geometry system.

It was only more than a decade after his death that his new geometry system was proven correct on special surfaces by another mathematician. Finally, the significance of his finding was acknowledged and it was thus highly appraised by the academic world.

It seemed that in the current stage, the study could neither help the progressing of arcana nor the improvement of magic. However, when the development of arcana and magic proceeded further and reached the realm of space and the universe, the current mathematical tools would become insufficient for describing and solving practical problems. By then, development in math studies and new math models would be in need.

For example, another non-Euclidean geometry, Riemannian geometry, was the mathematical foundation for the great General Theory of Relativity which addressed the problems of space and time, while the application of Lobachevskian geometry was seen in human being's exploration of the universe.

If it could be said that Tower Geometry (Euclidean geometry) was human beings' direct perception of the world, then the two non-Euclidean geometry systems were closer to the objective truth — In fact, the three geometry systems were just different in curvature.

Compared to studies in magic, subjects that were being used as tools, such as math, faced a more challenging and tough journey for the discovery of subversive theories, for the authorities were even harsher and more conservative. Lucien sighed as he saw the comments given by the board members:

"A ridiculous reasoning has led to a ridiculous result. I'd suggest that the author should look through a window and see the real world. The paper shall not pass."

"... full of mistakes and useless. Fail to pass."

"... this is a vagarious and incomprehensible dream talk. The best and only use of this paper is to be thrown into a fireplace. Obviously, fail."

...

Lucien shook his head repeatedly when he read through the comments. Although his paper had also been looked down upon in the past, the comments were still given in a standard tone, and they were mostly due to the inability to understand the paper or incapacity to verify the results with experiments. Yet the review comments here looked more like attacks and calumniations towards the author, which should never come from a board member, whose duty was to review a paper based only on its theorem and proof.

After informing Fernando, Lucien spent his time reading Levski's paper carefully from the very beginning to the end, while doing the deductive reasoning on his own. Then, he picked up the quill-pen and started writing down his first review result as a board member.

"A daring hypothesis, rigorous deductive reasoning..."

.....

The dusk light in the early evening dyed Allyn with a layer of shining gold-orange color, which made the whole city look stunning.

In a very tall magic tower which rose into the sky, a frowning old man was concentrated on deducting a math problem, over his white eyebrows was the special grey pointed hat of Tower. The several complex magic circles which occupied most of his desk space burst out light from time to time, assisting him with the sophisticated calculations.

At this time, his assistant knocked on the office door.

"Come in," said the level-eight, seventh-circle mage in a bit short-tempered tone, as he hated to be interrupted in the middle of his work.

His assistant was a young beautiful lady who always looked serious. Wearing a traditional Holm dress and holding a pile of documents, she said, "Teacher, the puppet has sent today's papers over. Please take a look at them."

The old man in his sixties rubbed his brows and nodded. "Give them to me."

If the papers were not that serious or difficult, his students should be able to handle them.

The emotionless young lady approached him with a constant pace and put the papers on the desk beside his right hand.

The old man first took a glance at the title of the paper, and then the look on his face instantly changed. Banging the desk fiercely, he yelled,

"Again! Levski's submitting his imagination geometry again! Is Eric daydreaming? It's such a waste of our time! The Board should prohibit him from submitting this paper again forever!

"Samantha, just scribble something based on the comment I wrote last time and throw it back!"

.....

Meanwhile, in a villa in Allyn which claimed to have the biggest collection of flowers in the world.

A beautiful and elegant lady, whose hair was tied back, threw the paper in her hands on the ground. "Levski still won't give up?! What a waste of his talent and life! What's the point of submitting the same ridiculous paper again?"

With a second thought, she picked up the paper from the floor and grabbed a unique-shaped pretty quill-pen. Within two minutes, she had finished her comments.

Then she said to her servant angrily, "Give it back to the Board two days later, in the evening."

Let this stubborn madman live under the torture brought by hope for two more days!

.....

After sending his comments back to the Board, Lucien started working on his own paper with a smile on his face.

Three days after in the morning, as soon as Lucien stepped into Fernando's office, he saw Douglas, the president of the Congress. Douglas was wearing a black suit and looked kind and easygoing as usual.

"Morning, Mr. President." Lucien greeted, wondering what was going on this morning.

Douglas grinned. "Quite surprised to see me, right? I'm here to talk to your teacher about the two theories published on Arcana and Magic — the two that disproved my experiment."

"You know, I like to talk to Fernando face to face at times like this," Douglas added. "Listening to him roaring against the theories lifts my spirit up."

Lucien almost burst out laughing.

Fernando looked quite pissed. Shaking his head, he said, "I don't get it... Why these worthless papers could even be published on Arcana and Magic? I know their standards has never been impressive, but now it is becoming unacceptable! What does it mean by 'charged particles are shortened when put against ether, so there would be a deviation in measurement'? Are there any evidence from solid experiments to prove this?"

"Comparatively speaking," Fernando calmed down a bit, "Brook's paper which throws doubt against your system of celestial body motion is more powerful. After all, those planets only exist in your dreams right now."

Douglas did not feel offended by Fernando's comments at all. Smiling, he turned to Lucien. "What do you think, Lucien... with regards to my experiment and the debates?"

Lucien was a bit speechless, as he had been asked about the same question almost every day recently. But this time, in front of the president, he had a prepared answer which derived from his careful thinking:

"Mr. President, I do have some thoughts here. The core of your theory is based on the existence of planets, which is also the most problematic part, since we haven't found a planet yet. Therefore, your theoretical system lacks firm support."

"So what? You can find a planet?" Fernando questioned bluntly.

Lucien looked very serious, and he said firmly, "If we can't find one, why don't we make one?"

"Why don't we make a small planet that rotates our world following the orbit that we calculated?"

"If it moves as what we expect, and if it can be observed, then gravity system can definitely be proven!"

This was Lucien's proposal! He had been reflecting on it for a very long time ever since he read the letter from Douglas!

The study suddenly quieted down. Only the sound of the wind shuffling papers could be heard.

.....

In Sorcerer Administrative Department, Levski, who wore the same old magic robe, knocked on the door of Eric's office. His heart was full of hope, but also fear and anxiety.

"You come here quite early..." said Eric stiffly. In fact, he was not surprised at all.

Levski nodded, his face pale from the cold wind on his way here. "Yesterday was the third day. Today the comments should be

available..."

Eric had just arrived in his office. Tidying his desk up, he answered, "wait a moment. The earliest results should be available at around a quarter past nine."

"Alright..." Levski sat down. But a few minutes after, he sprang up from the chair and paced back and forth. He wished that he could light a cheap cigarette, but it was in Sorcerer Administrative Department.

Time passed by seconds. Suddenly, the iron cage burst out milky white light.

"Is it...?" Levski hurriedly asked, excited and scared at the same time.

Eric picked up the pile of papers and leafed through, then he looked up abruptly, appearing very surprised. "No, your paper is not here!"

"W-why?" Levski had no idea what was going on.

.....

On the fifteenth floor of Sorcerer Administrative Department, in the hall of Arcana Review Board.

Holding the three review results, the alchemical life was in a great dilemma.

Chapter 423: Thank You Also what the author wants to say to you all, dear readers

Chapter 423: Thank You (Also what the author wants to say to you all, dear readers)

The alchemical lives that worked for Arcana Review Board were responsible for several tasks: First, sort the papers received based on their keywords and forward them to the board members in the assorted fields; Second, send review results to the Sorcerer Administrative Department; Third, work out the weighted average of the comments given by the two assigned board members to conclude the final descriptive evaluation as well as how many arcana credits and points should be rewarded; Fourth, when two members' comments differed greatly, send the paper to a third person.

And if the two board members did not agree on the review result given by the third person, a small meeting consisting of all the board members in this field and the author of the paper should be called for, during which the final decision would be reached after an oral defense of the author and discussion among the attendees. The meeting would be audited by a special consultant from the Highest Council.

The Arcana Review Board, as the most special department in the Congress, did not follow the formal organizational form and had no president or vice president. The entire fifteenth floor only consisted of the members, their servants, and some middle-rank sorcerers doing administrative work.

The alchemical life was now in a dilemma: It had somehow made a mistake and sent the paper to three board members at once. Now that all three of them had reviewed the paper, yet their opinions diverged remarkably like the difference between heaven and hell.

Finally, it left behind its own mistake and found a way out: Send all

the comments to Mr. Neeshka, Ms. Milina, Mr. Evans, and the author Levski; Invite them to attend the small meeting which was going to be held at nine in the morning tomorrow; Also, send invitations to the other board members specializing in mathematics and to the Lord of Storm.

As the grand arcanist who had been guarding Allyn in the past several years, Fernando was the most ideal person to be the special consultant. If he was too busy to spare time for the meeting, he would be able to turn down the invitation at as soon as possible, leaving enough time for the alchemical life to invite other grand arcanists or legendary sorcerers.

...

In Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric scratched his thin hair in confusion. He vaguely remembered that something similar happened before, but he could not come up with an accurate answer on what was happening.

Levski's face, which was pale from catching the train early in the cold morning, now looked beyond miserable. "M-maybe, my paper was thrown into a garbage can..."

It was something that he had once experienced. At that time his paper had failed to pass, so he tried to submit his paper to some journals including Arcana Discussion, hoping that more people could see it and maybe even approve it. However, he never heard back from any journal, not even a rejection letter. Later, Levski was told that the editor had thrown his paper away after reading only one-third of it, believing that it was someone's mischief.

"..." Eric was not sure. Although he knew Lucien relatively well and regarded Lucien as a mature young gentleman, Eric was uncertain if Lucien would throw the paper away, since it was understandable for someone so talented like Lucien to be proud and perhaps, a bit arrogant.

Suddenly, the iron cage burst out white light again. Levski got slightly startled, and silence seized the office.

“Maybe your paper is there... It was missed.” Eric comforted Levski.

Levski nodded fiercely, bereft of speech.

When the light disappeared, Eric took a closer look at the file and grinned. “It’s yours.”

Levski released a sigh of relief. But just in the next second, he became nervous again. Levski tried to reach out his hand several times, but retreated it in the end. He said in a trembling voice,

“Eric, please read the comments for me, one by one.”

Eric was also curious, so he agreed. In his mind, he hoped that Lucien’s comment could be sharp and straightforward, so Levski could finally know that it was time to give up and return to his normal path of life — Before Levski got obsessed with his geometry system, he was a hard-working promising arcanist majoring in Astrology and Math, who was appreciated by both the Congress and Tower.

Picking up the file, Eric saw two pages of comments and started reading.

“Mr. Neeshka, level eight arcanist, seventh-circle mage, authority in Astrology, Force Field, and Math, commented, ‘If Levski’s dream was to develop a paper that no one in the world could understand or accept, his dream would have come true. This paper is full of ridiculous errors. Like what I said, I strongly recommend Levski to look out of his window to see the bright sunlight and blue sky. This is our true world, and it has nothing to do with the geometry system in his imagination. My conclusion remains the same. The paper is useless.’”

Levski lowered his head. The comment from Neeshka was within his expectation, but was even bitterer than the last time. His hands clenched in fists, and his body uncontrollably trembled slightly.

Eric cast a sympathetic look at Levski, and he continued to read.

“Ms. Milina, level seven arcanist, seventh-circle mage, authority in Astrology, Electromagnetism, and Math, commented, ‘This paper is

full of strange reasonings that do not make any sense, and the conclusion goes the opposite from common sense. Here I warn the author: Stop harassing the board members using your paper. Except for the format, the paper has nothing that meets the requirement for submission, but format will not help it pass the review. I don't think there would be a new geometry system that differs from Tower Geometry.”

Levski lowered his head. It was not known whether he was trying to hide the rage and despair on his face, or was he simply too embarrassed to look up. But judging from his still tightly-clenched hands, the answer was quite obvious.

At this moment, Levski felt like he was falling down from a cliff. He tried hard to fly up, to grab onto something, but he was not unable to do anything. He was going to fall into the pit of forever darkness, with his eyes wide open.

Then Levski heard the sound of Eric turning the pages. Levski's face flushed, and his body shook, as if he had just caught a last glimmer of hope.

After a second, there was only silence. Ten seconds later, silence. After a minute, there was still only silence. Unable to bear it anymore, Levski finally looked up, only to see that Eric was just standing there, staring at the page, like a statue.

“Eric?” Levski's voice quavered.

Like he had just woke up from a dream, Eric started reading as if in somniloquy.

“Mr. Evans, level six arcanist, fifth-circle mage, authority in Element and Thermodynamics, commented, ‘A daring hypothesis, rigorous deductive reasoning with no mistake at all. The author shows us a brand new geometry system that differs from Tower Geometry. If we can put aside our past experience and what we can see with our bare eyes, we will recognize an independent, well-developed, true, logical geometry system that should be named as Levski Geometry.’”

Levski's mouth opened subconsciously. He was completely shocked. What he just heard made him feel it was a dream.

Eric was now staring at Levski as if he had never known this old friend. Then he kept reading.

"Although the value of this finding cannot be compared to that of calculus, I would still like to use the award given to the discovery of calculus as the standard to address the significance of this paper. May us all appreciate Mr. Levski's great contribution to geometry, as well as his long-time perseverance."

His head was buzzing. When Levski heard the thankful words, his eyes were blurred with tears.

Eric shared Levski's feeling, and his voice softened.

"This is a groundbreaking, innovative, and universally-applicable paper, which deserves extensive discussion and surely will play a significant role in the development of arcana. I suggest that six hundred arcana credits and five thousand arcana points be given as awards."

Levski opened his mouth, trying to say something, but failed. Suddenly, he burst into tears. Finally, his many years of hard work paid off! His many years of suffering and pain paid off!

Levski had a tough character and had never cried over this issue in the past decade. But now, he could not control himself anymore.

In fact, Lucien had thought of regarding the paper as "of extreme importance". But since Levski had not provided any mathematical model so far, Lucien decided to give the paper a slightly more moderate comment.

Reading the remaining content the file, Eric waited until Levski calmed down a bit and said, "Since the comments vary greatly, a small meeting is going to be held at nine tomorrow morning. Remember to come."

"I will," Levski answered firmly. As long as there was one board member who saw the value of his paper, Levski was already very

encouraged and believed that his life was no longer a waste.

Standing up, Levski murmured in low voice, "Thank you, Mr. Evans."

...

In Fernando's study.

After a minute of silence, Douglas stood up excitedly. "Young people are indeed more creative. Lucien, although what you said isn't an easy job, your words have made me feel energized again.

"Maybe Bergner said is true... This is the era of great revolution and rapid development. I can't wait to carry out the idea!"

As soon as Douglas finished his words, he summoned a space gate and went back to his own demiplane at an astonishing speed.

Fernando's red eyes were now staring at Lucien thoughtfully. After a while, when Lucien was starting to feel a bit uncomfortable, Fernando finally said,

"I don't think your proposal is that simple..."

"It's not that complicated," said Lucien "full of confidence".

When Fernando was about to ask some more questions, the magic circle on his desk lit up and a file appeared.

Picking up the file and skimming through it, Fernando grinned. "You're such a troublemaker, Lucien. Tomorrow morning at nine, on the fifteenth floor there's going to be a small meeting for the paper you reviewed. Huh, why are you always different from other people?"

Lucien was not surprised, "So, are you joining the meeting, sir?"

Fernando glared at Lucien and said sarcastically, "I gotta think carefully whether I should get involved in something that is supported by you. After all, it's probably very dangerous... Wait a second, oh it's a mathematics paper, so it won't affect the cognitive

world. But I still have to read the paper first.”

Lucien was a bit speechless. He was not sure how Fernando actually thought of his student in his mind.

.....

In the tall tower, Neeshka was looking at the file silently. After a while, he threw the file onto the desk and said angrily, “What is Lucien Evans thinking about? Does he just simply supports everything that is shocking? Does he know what logic is?! Can he see the real world?!”

Chapter 424: The Roaring Lucien Almost twice the regular length, thank you all

Chapter 424: The Roaring Lucien (Almost twice the regular length, thank you all)

Winter sunlight pierced through the thick layer of cloud, went through the window glass and fell on the astrology maps hanging on the study's wall. The light yellow halo made the space warm and cozy.

Neeshka's student, Samantha, wore the same you-still-owe-me-ten-thousand-arcana-points blank expression. "Sir, are you joining the meeting tomorrow?"

"Of course, why not?!" Neeshka was rather pissed. "I'll teach Levski and Lucien Evans a good lesson! This rubbish should never be sent to the Board again!"

Samantha nodded slightly, obviously not affected by her teacher's fury at all.

"I'll tell the coachman to prepare for tomorrow morning and don't be late again."

Then she picked up the pile of files and left the office, leaving the furious Neeshka alone staring at the paper and the comment from Lucien.

.....

In the villa surrounded by flowers, Milina was standing in front of a dressing mirror, looking at her own face which was written with sheer anger. Beneath her feet, there were a few papers torn into pieces. She lowered her voice and murmured, "Lucien Evans..."

In her eyes, Tower Geometry was the only geometric system in the world and there was no other "new geometry" that was essentially different from it. It was just so obvious that Levski's paper was full

of stupid errors, as it conflicted with the real world. All the good words that Lucien Evans used on the paper were complete nonsense. What Lucien Evans was trying to do was to confuse right and wrong, to disguise a pile of cow dung as whipped cream!

There was no doubt that Lucien was now slapping her face, as well as shaming all the Tower arcanists studying mathematics, as the achievements in the field of math were rarely able to receive an appreciation like this. Even her achievement in math, which had made her win Arcana Scepter, never got such a high comment!

Walking away from the mirror, Milina came to her bookshelf and pulled out the papers that she had published. Combining the viewpoints together, she quickly developed a new paper.

Only when she finished did she put the title on: *On Parallel Lines* .

As a rigorous mathematician and astrologist, she never fought unprepared!

As for the rest of the authorities who had received and read the paper and its comments, they shared the same attitude with Neeshka and Milina. When Levski's paper was first submitted, they had all contributed to the crucial criticism against this poor arcanist.

.....

In the early morning, the haze that had lasted several days finally disappeared. Now the sky was as clear as washed.

Standing in front of the mirror, Lucien leisurely adjusted his black double-breasted suit, white shirt, and light yellow waistcoat. After carefully checking his appearance was proper and decent, Lucien smiled and said to himself, "You gotta change your style today."

Then he put Element, Electron, and Origin on his right thumb, middle finger, and little finger respectively. The flowing light and colors of purple and blue enhanced each other's radiance, making the rings rather dreamy and eye-catching.

Following that, Lucien took out his shining six-silver-star arcana

badge and his Review Board member badge, on which was a hand holding a quill pen, and set them on his left chest.

Meanwhile, on Lucien's right chest, there was a prominent pattern of a magnificent throne supported by bones. The pattern was there because Lucien had transformed his Immortal Throne magic robe into this black, double-breasted suit.

Although most members in the board had won the highest honor in the fields that they specialized in once or twice, Lucien's case was still very rare as he had won the most influential awards in three different fields and so many rings. Apart from Fernando, among those who would attend today's meeting, the best had only won the top awards twice. So Lucien should be able to bring them some pressure by showcasing his achievement. The only problem was that Lucien had not won Arcana Scepter, which was the most authoritative award in Math.

Checking his appearance in the mirror once again, Lucien picked up his black top hat from the hat rack and put it on as he left his villa.

Past the streets, into the headquarter magic tower of the Congress, into the elevator, and up to the fifteenth floor, Lucien arrived at the meeting room at a leisurely pace.

"Mr. Evans?"

When Lucien was about to push open the meeting room's door, he heard a hoarse male voice calling his name.

Turning around, Lucien saw a middle-aged man who was standing on the nearby patio, looking quite uneasy and restless. The magic robe he was wearing was rather old and out of date, and smoke was slowly rising from the lighted cigarette between his fingers.

"Mr. Levski?" Lucien figured that the middle-aged man was the main character for today. "Why are you still here?"

Levski combed his messy hair with his hand and put on a bitter smile. "As soon as I get in there, the six board members will for sure start criticizing me right away. I'd better just stay here, and... you

know, to calm down a little bit.”

Compared to the numb and reserved Levski from several days ago, today's Levski was definitely more encouraged and confident. Now he could at least express himself efficiently.

Lucien understood his feeling, and he smiled gently. “So, are you ready? Are you ready to face their coldness, attack, and sarcasm, and show them your new geometry system?”

Levski frowned, as if seized by the pain in his memory. He said, with less confidence, “I'm ready... but them... I once introduced my paper in front of all the math arcanists in Tower. That was my first time... No one believed in me. There was no follow-up discussion, and all they gave me were nothing more than indifference, ignorance, criticism, and howls of derision. I'm afraid you have to suffer from this with me later, Mr. Evans.”

“I have faith in you, and in your new geometry system. So I am not afraid.” Lucien said to Levski sincerely.

Levski cheered up again, as he finally found the one person in this world who understood his perseverance and his work. “Mr. Evans, thank you so much. You're the first person who's willing to accept my geometry system, and the high appraisal you gave me, even I myself had never described my paper with those words... They really mean a lot to me. Thank you, thank you...”

Levski had devoted most of his time into studying math and arcana, so he was not good at eloquence and could only show his gratitude towards Lucien by saying “thank you” over and over again.

At this time, Fernando, who was wearing his floor-length red magic robe, arrived and asked the two of them to get in.

“Morning, sir. Thank you for coming.” Seeing that Levski had sat down, Lucien turned to greet Fernando.

Fernando wore a solemn expression used when discussing serious matters. “I've read his paper. Although his geometry conflicts with the world that can be perceived directly, it is still kind of

interesting, kind of entertaining.”

The Lord of Storm never gave direct praise to anyone.

In the meeting room, there were six other board members besides Lucien. Compared to other conventions which usually involved fifteen or sixteen people, meetings in the Mathematics field were much smaller.

There were not as many math arcanists as those in other fields. Many board members specialized in more than one field and could thus attend different meetings, for example, Lucien was able to attend meetings in Elements and Thermodynamics. However, most arcanists were not willing to dig into math as it was only a tool, which could not directly lead to a change in the cognitive world or an improvement in magic. Therefore, only nine members of the Board in total were qualified for reviewing papers in math.

“Mr. Evans, I’m Neeshka.”

Neeshka, who was wearing the grey pointy hat, greeted Lucien with no smile on his face. However, when seeing the pattern on Lucien’s suit and his three rings, his white eyebrows twitched slightly. Subconsciously, he wobbled the black, mysterious scepter in his hand.

Milina and the rest of the members in the room also stood up and greeted Lucien. Although they were not at all enthusiastic, they still remained polite. After all, Fernando, who was famous for his cranky and merciless temper, was also here today, and he was Lucien’s teacher. No one wanted to be furiously shouted at on matters not related to academics.

Lucien also responded politely. He noticed that five out of the six members belonged to Tower. They were all wearing the unique, pointy grey hat, including the two ladies. Somehow the hat looked a bit funny to Lucien.

In Lucien’s opinion, it was obvious that the hat did not suit ladies at all. He purposefully on the opposite side of the long table, facing against the six members directly.

Fernando hated wasting time with words, so he said straightforwardly, “Because Mr. Neeshka, Ms. Milina, and Mr. Evans hold completely opposite opinions for the paper, *New Principles of Geometry with Complete Theory of Parallels*, written by Levski, we are having the small meeting today. First of all, Levski will explain his paper to us. You board members can raise your hands and ask questions at any time.”

Levski silently picked up his paper and walked to the small magic platform in the front. However, just after a few steps, he stumbled against a chair, made a loud noise and almost fell over.

Neeshka, Milina, and the other board members sneered. Levski’s face flushed instantly.

Forcing himself to calm down, Levski projected his paper onto the wall using the magic circle and started explaining his geometry system.

“Yes, Mr. Neeshka?”

Levski’s explanation was interrupted by Neeshka when he reached the first conclusion drawn by deductive reasoning.

Holding the black Arcana Scepter, Neeshka said coldly with suppressed anger, “You tell me, why is the sum of angles of a triangle smaller than 180° ?”

“It’s based on the axioms and postulates I mentioned...” Levski pointed at the notes.

Neeshka snorted. “Alright, then you find one for me.”

“...” Levski was speechless. This was sheer logical reasoning, and it was not built on a physical model.

Neeshka ground his teeth and said word by word, as if to express the anger inside him. “If you can’t find it, it means that it contradicts with the reality, then your paper is completely a mistake!”

Then Neeshka sat down, giving no chance for Levski to explain

himself.

Levski wilted like a piece of limp lettuce, but he still tried to look up. When he saw Lucien's smile, Levski felt encouraged again.

Fernando lifted his hand. "Keep going."

Levski took a deep breath and continued. After a while, Milina raised her hand.

"Yes, Madam?" Levski asked. He found that he was trembling a bit. Based on his years of experience, he could guess what question was to come.

Holding the Arcana Scepter inlaid with many star-like gems in her hand, Milina stared at the poor, middle-aged man. She put on a cold smile. "So, Levski, tell me, why the perpendicular line of one line does not always intersect with the oblique line."

"It's also based on the earlier reasoning..." Levski said in a way rather lacking confidence. Lucien could not help shaking his head. This was the very moment that Levski should show his confidence and firm attitude!

Milina picked up the pile of papers in front of her, her smile disappeared, and said, "Show it to me, or find the model."

"I haven't..." said Levski honestly, "but if we follow the logic reasoning, there is no problem with it."

"This is your problem, not mine. We live in this real world, not your imagination." Milina criticized without mercy.

Then she started reading her own paper, in which every single argument accused Levski's absurd belief.

Her arguments were stabbed into Levski's heart like daggers. Levski's face turned so pale that it looked like he was going to faint at any time.

"That is all," Milina said indifferently. She turned around without sparing a single further glance for Levski, as if he was a clown who

intentionally presented exaggerated eccentric papers to draw attention from others.

“Keep going.” Fernando said to Levski.

Lucien cast an encouraging look at Levski, which gave this poor man some power, although his voice still lowered.

The board members raised their hands from time to time. Some deliberately distorted Levski’s idea to prove his fallacy, while some followed Milina and Neeshka’s method and objected him based on real life. Since this question had been bothering them for more than ten years, all of the board members were subconsciously using bitter words to attack Levski and his geometry system. Levski’s face turned paler and paler.

He, however, still managed to finish his part politely.

Returning to his seat, Levski closed his eyes, as if he had already seen the final result. He had to admit that there was no solid model to support his belief. Finally, he opened his eyes and cast a sorry look at Lucien.

“The members have explained their point of view during Levski’s presentation,” said Fernando, “so now let’s have Mr. Evans explain to us why he believes this paper is of great value.”

Lucien adjusted his collar a bit and walked to the platform in the front at a firm pace, with a pile of files in his hand.

“If I were you, Mr. Evans, I would not keep insisting,” said Neeshka suddenly, “I understand how much you appreciate subversive theories, but we still have to respect what is true.”

He was being this polite to Lucien only because Lucien was the student of the Lord of Storm.

Lucien smiled and looked at him. “Truth is the only thing that I respect.”

Judging his expression and tone, it was obvious that Lucien was referring to Levski’s paper.

Milina chuckled, however, the look on her face was as cold as a winter blow. “Mr. Evans, I’d like to remind you that you might be expelled from the board if you make a mistake too obvious on purpose.”

“This is what I’d like to remind you all as well.” Lucien’s smile was gentle, yet his tone was firm and sharp.

All the board members present felt like something exploded in their mind.

— Was this young man accusing them?

Fernando blinked his eyes, feeling a bit surprised that his student, who was always elegant and polite, would say something so aggressive. It’s so abnormal, and it looked like that someone’s in trouble...

“Mr. Evans, you better first think about how to bring an imagined geometry into reality.” said another member, Mabel, who was a serious, ordinary-looking woman. Wearing the grey, pointy hat, she looked like an old nun.

Pinching his face, the middle-aged man with messy black hair named Salgueiro asked in a low voice, “Mr. Evans, I’d really like to know why you think his paper will bring a revolution to geometry like how calculus changed maths. How can you prove it?”

“You never made any achievements in math. I doubt that you’re qualified for reviewing this paper,” Neeshka said rather straightforward.

Pissed off by Lucien’s words, the members had become as aggressive as a rooster.

Lucien raised his hand to quiet them down. His voice was loud and clear. “If any of you doubt my capability in maths, please go and talk to the Board after this meeting.”

Lucien paused a bit and then raised his voice even higher. “From now on, all things that are not related to this paper shall disappear. You are all board members, not kids!”

Lucien's sudden roaring made the meeting room silent.

Lucien looked around and nodded to Levski slightly. Then he said in the same volume, "When I speak, no questions, no interruptions. All the questions should be raised after I finish. But during my speech, I am going to ask you questions. Please answer my questions honestly, for the sake of the board member badge you're wearing and for the starlit sky above you!"

The board members were silent and were at a sudden loss of any excuses to reject Lucien. As a board member, three-time winner of Holm Crown prize, and winner of Immortal Throne, Lucien was qualified to make some reasonable requests. Also, Lucien's imposing and aggressive manner made them wanted to avoid getting into trouble with him.

"If no one says no, then I'll take it as a yes." Lucien looked at his teacher.

Fernando said with a straight face, "then do as Mr. Evans asked."

Lucien turned around and operated on the magic circle, so that now only the most basic axioms and postulates were shown.

"Mr. Neeshka, let me ask you. Are these axioms and postulates wrong?" Lucien asked.

Neeshka answered subconsciously, "this is different from the real world."

"Mr. Neeshka, forget about the sunlight outside, forget about the world outside, forget the contents of that paper. Tell me, honestly, are these wrong?" Lucien further raised his volume and demanded harshly.

Shocked by Lucien's manner, Neeshka took a closer look and found out these were the five postulates from Tower Geometry, the four axioms, and the hypothesis put forward by Levski. So he nodded. "These are correct, but the last one is ridiculous."

"It is proof by contradiction. Don't you know proof by contradiction?" Lucien asked, his voice full of reproach.

Neeshka's white brow twitched a bit. Obviously, he just could not say he had no idea what it was. So he nodded. "Then..."

"So anyone? Anyone here thinks proof by contradiction is problematic? Raise your hand!" As if he had been teaching in a magic school facing rows of pupils, Lucien maintained his imposing manner.

The rest of the members all shook their heads.

Lucien then projected a few more lines of Levski's paper.

"Ms. Milina, following the logic, do you think this part of the reasoning is problematic, based on the premise?" Lucien cast a rigorous look at her.

Milina sneered. "It's different. You can't find..."

"Forget those! I said forget them! Only think about the premise and the deductive reasoning! Think about math!" Lucien interrupted Milina, roaring. "Tell me! Is it logically problematic?!"

Faced against Lucien's roaring, Milina was unsure how to refute him. She carefully deduced from the given premises and then shook her head. "No... Logically speaking, it is correct. No equivalent proposition is used as a condition here."

"Good." Lucien gestured Milina to sit down, and then showed a few more lines.

"Ms. Mabel, following the logic, do you think this part is problematic, based on the premise?"

Lucien kept asking and roaring, over and over again. He kept pushing the board members to only think of the axioms and postulates and logical reasoning.

Answering "No" to Lucien's questions again and again, the board members faces gradually paled. While the board members had sweat on their foreheads, Levski felt more and more encouraged. Every time when Lucien roared, he became a bit more confident. Meanwhile, Fernando nodded thoughtfully.

With the last a few lines of the paper projected on the wall, Lucien turned to Neeshka and asked in a low voice, “So, Mr. Neeshka, following the logic, do you think this part is problematic, based on the premise?”

His hands clenching tightly, Neeshka could feel himself sweating. He gulped and did not dare to mention the real world again. “No...”

“Good. No.” Staring at the six members, Lucien murmured.

Then, suddenly, he roared at the top of his lungs like a violent storm.

“No problem with every single line! Then tell me why this paper is wrong!

“Tell me!”

Startled, Milina burst out, “It conflicts with the reality and what we know...”

“Throw them out of your brain!” Lucien roared, “Tell me, in the sense of pure math, following the logic, based on the premise, where is it wrong?!”

“Tell me!”

Neeshka, Milina, and the members all remained silent, having no idea what to say. If, as Lucien said, only in the sense of pure math, the paper was indeed correct.

Levski held his fists tight, his head slightly raising. Closing his eyes, his face was written with complex looks, a mixture of elation, sorrow, pain, and hope.

Somehow, the members started thinking to themselves:

Lucien’s roaring resembled Fernando a lot. He was indeed the student of the Lord of Storm. Maybe... this was another the Lord of Storm...

That was what all the members were thinking right now.

Fernando shook his head and murmured to himself amusingly, “I don’t remember I’ve got a love child.”

Seeing that the members were all shocked, seizing the momentum, Lucien put another paper in the magic circle and projected it on the wall together with that of Levski.

“An Attempt to Explain Non-Tower Geometry...” Milina silently read the title of the paper, and then she went on reading further.

One by one, the pages of Lucien’s paper were cast on the walls surrounding the board members.

Neeshka rubbed his brows and said confusedly, “So this is differential geometry that he’s using...”

Mabel and Salgueiro started reading as well. A while later, their faces lost colors. Beads of cold sweat rolled down from their foreheads. They could barely hold their quill-pen.

“This is...!” Levski sprang up from his seat, as if he saw the Goddess of Magic standing right in front of him. Because what was in front of him was the very geometry model he had been looking for! This is the Hyperbolic Geometry model that went beyond normal imagination and experience. This was the most powerful proof!

He cried out silently. After so many years, he finally saw the sun rising in this world, driving away all the darkness. After so many years, he finally saw hope!

Lucien’s paper was not complex. To be more specific, it was in fact very simple. Using stereographic projection on the unit circle, Lucien proved that Levski Geometry was compatible with Tower Geometry. Thus, if Tower Geometry was tenable, so was Levski Geometry!

Lucien’s concise derivation and wonderful proof were full of the beauty of math. This was the most shocking as well as the most solid proof to persuade the members!

Levski cried out loud in his mind: He was not wrong! He was the one who had been right all the time!

At this time, Lucien started speaking again, but his voice had softened. “As is known to all, we are only able to see light within part of the spectrum. To see more, we have to use tools, but the tools also have their limitations.”

Since some prerequisites that the paper was based on were not available beforehand, Lucien had to prove them in his paper, which made the paper to some degree more complicated than Levski’s, but the members could still understand. Hearing Lucien’s words, the board members wondered what Lucien was trying to say.

“... So, when light plays tricks in some scenarios, our eyes can deceive us, thus we have illusions. Some illusion spells were created based on this.”

The board members nodded, agreeing with Lucien’s words.

Lucien kept going in the soft voice. “Similarly, our ears can also deceive us. We can’t hear when sounds exceed a certain frequency. And under some circumstances, we hear things that do not exist.

“So, our knowledge and experience are limited to the design of our body and soul. We all know how to transform. When we transform into other creatures, do we still feel the same way in this world as we do right now?”

“No,” said Levski firmly. Although many transformation spells came from the advancement of anatomy — before the discovery that bats used echolocation, the bat transformation spells all had similar errors — ancient sorcerers still managed to see the world in the eyes of other creatures with the transformation spells obtained from those creatures’ magic patterns.

Looking at the confused board members in front of him, Lucien smiled. “So are we correct? Or are those animals and creatures correct? Obviously, we are all correct. We just have different perspectives. The truth we see is part of the bigger truth. Therefore, our knowledge and our experience are always limited.

“Our imagination is based on our experience, thus our limited experience can easily put constraints on our imagination. As we

explore this world further, we'll see more and more things that go beyond our perception and understanding.”

Fernando nodded seriously. He knew what Lucien was trying to say.

Neeshka, Milina, Levski, and the rest of the members were still feeling a little confused. They stared at Lucien, waiting for further clarification.

Lucien raised his right hand and his look became serious.

“So, your eyes can lie to you; your ears can deceive you; your experience can mislead you; your imagination can restrain you.”

Lucien paused a bit. Under the board member's gaze, Lucien pointed at the paper projected on the walls and said in low voice,

“But maths won't.”

Chapter 425: The Belated Recognition

Chapter 425: The Belated Recognition

Lucien's voice wasn't loud, but his words were beyond shocking to the board members present.

As the authorities in math who had won the Arcana Scepter Award, they had to admit that they were more or less proud. However, in fact, they only regarded math only as a tool for studying arcana and analyzing magic spells. Very few arcanists were willing to devote their entire life to the beauty of math, most of them would never explore further in maths past what is sufficient for their purposes.

The Tower's arcanists who were fond of math more or less shared the same belief before, but it was either a occasional remark of pride or just a flash in the pan. No one had ever, like what Lucien just did, managed to prove by using such shocking reasoning and imposing manner the great value of math: Math went beyond human beings' intuitive understanding and experience. Thus, maths' importance and significance had been raised to a degree no one had ever dreamed of before.

Although they understood that Lucien was helping Levski, the board members, who were also mathematicians, were the same excited and encouraged.

Levski's body was trembling out of great excitement. He knew that math would not lie, or *New Principles of Geometry with Complete Theory of Parallels* would have never been born. In the furious ocean of arcana, Levski clenched tight to the vessel named Math. Because of his belief, he could travel across the ocean without being overwhelmed by the waves and tides, or by despair!

Fernando did not say anything but merely nodded. He knew that Lucien's words were indicating something even deeper.

Lucien put back his right hand and removed the projection from the walls. Then he put another thick pile of paper on the magic circle and smiled gently. "Now let's see if we can find more from another

perspective.”

Despite all the proof, so far the board members were still reluctant to admit the errors they made, reluctant to admit that they had been wrong for more than ten years. Although, in their mind, they had already begun to accept the new geometry system — They had to, or otherwise Tower Geometry, which was compatible with it, also had to be overthrown.

Besides, they had to admit that Lucien’s words were persuasive. Therefore they were now quite calm and objective towards the new paper.

“Another Perspective on the Parallel Postulate...” Milina read the title in a low voice, and she had some clues in her mind...

“Another perspective...” Levski felt that the mist in front of his eyes was slowly dispersed. He saw something that he had ignored in the past decade.

Like teaching in the magic school, Lucien pointed at the lines on the wall one by one. “So Mr. Levski postulated that ‘For any given line R and point P not on R , in the plane containing both line R and point P there are at least two distinct lines through P that do not intersect R ’. Here we can make another postulate to complement the entire geometry system: For any given line R and point P not on R , in the plane containing both line R and point P there is no line through P that does not intersect R .

“Now, let’s do the deductive reasoning and see what will we get?”

Levski took a deeper breath and became excited once again. The rest of the board members stared at the paper’s projection and looked very serious.

Lucien went through the paper very fast as he was facing the authorities in math. However, the board members looked more and more grave, more and more confused. Finally, Mabel burst out, “This is another crazy conclusion... different from Levski’s geometry system!”

“Why...” Salgueiro’s murmur was drowned out by Mabel’s voice.

Milina was very perplexed. “Is this a new geometry system different from Tower Geometry?”

Just a few hours earlier, she firmly believed that Tower Geometry was the only geometry system in this world. However, in less than one day, her belief was mercilessly shattered, for twice.

She was glad that knowledge in maths did not affect the cognitive world, or her head would have exploded already. Lucien definitely deserved the titles that people secretly gave him, namely, Headcrusher and Brain Eater...

Levski was not confused, instead, his mind was seized by many thoughts: Why could this happen? Why completely different yet equally correct geometry systems could be deduced from the fifth postulate? Did this have anything to do with the real world?

Under the influence of president Douglas, many arcanists tended to ask “why” very frequently, but few were like Lucien.

“Interesting...” Fernando nodded slightly.

Time flew, and Lucien’s paper had come to the end. Using a spherical model, Lucien proved the system’s compatibility.

Neeshka sighed, “This is another new geometry system... Evans Geometry...”

“Math won’t lie... indeed...”

The board members missed the chance of naming a new geometry system after themselves because of their own prejudice and arrogance, as if one accepted Levski’s hypothesis, then the postulate that Lucien Evans just put forward was in fact not difficult to come up with.

Lucien had not finished yet, and he showed the last few pages to the audience. “In my paper, I’ve defined the term ‘curvature’. Based on calculation, we can know that when the curvature is zero, we get Tower Geometry; when the curvature is below zero, we have Levski

Geometry; when the curvature is above zero, we see the geometry system that I just introduced. They have commonalities in their essence, and they are compatible with each other.”

Milina released a soft sigh. Now the two new geometry systems seemed more acceptable to her.

Enlightenment came to Levski. When he was about to applaud out of great excitement, he saw Lucien’s gesture asking them to remain quiet.

What else did he want to say?

This was the question shared by all the members of the board as well as Levski.

Lucien was not roaring anymore, instead, he said in a very soft voice,

“As we can see, under some certain situations, the math questions we’re trying to solve exceed our experience and knowledge. We are therefore restrained, so is the development of math...

“So, maybe we can try to separate our understanding of math from the reality, and temporarily put aside their physical models and meanings; Maybe we can start from the purest axioms and concepts, and, through strict deductive reasoning, derive new consistent math systems logically. As for how to apply those systems, we can think about it later when there are needs...

“This is my personal belief.”

Lucien mentioned the notion of axiomatic systems briefly, but did not dig deeper into it. He preferred to wait until most arcanists had accepted the concept. Everything took time.

Levski started applauding. His applause was lonely in the meeting room. He shared so many commonalities with Mr. Evans, and what Mr. Evans just said was exactly those things that he had been searching for — He had the impulse, and he could feel there were things he wanted to tell the public, but he failed to put them together into words. Levski felt that Mr. Evans just saved his

geometry system, as well as his life.

Hearing the applauding, the look on Neeshka's face changed several times. Finally, he slowly lifted his hands and also started applauding.

Following him, the rest of the board members all joined in. After an initial hesitation, their applauding became more and more sincere.

"So, is there anyone who still rejects Mr. Evans' comment on Levski's paper?" Asked Fernando after the applauding stopped.

Neeshka rubbed his white brow and sprang up from the chair. Looking at Levski, he said, "Please accept my apology. This is a paper that deserves Arcana Scepter, yet my arrogance and prejudice had deprived me of judgment. I completely agree with Mr. Evans's comment."

"I would also like to apologize to you, for the past years of criticisms and attacks I imposed on you. Levski, you are a talented, outstanding mathematician. My stubbornness and shallowness had blinded me. You deserve Mr. Evans's comment and Arcana Scepter." Using the manner of Arcana Above, Milina put her hand on her forehead and bowed deeply to Levski.

Levski knew that the board members would no longer object his theory, but he never expected that they would apologize to him in public. Instantly, his head buzzed, his nose felt sore, and his eyes became blurry. Seeing that the board members all stood up to apologize one by one, he was dumbstruck.

Was there sorrow? There was!

Was there pain? Of course!

But now all the pain and effort had paid off!

Levski's eyes were red. His lips quivering, but not a single word could come out from them. Neeshka looked at Levski and sighed understandingly. Then he turned to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, I also owe you an apology. You are, without a doubt, a genius and authority in math. Your geometry system and Mr. Levski's will for sure win

Arcana Scepter!”

“Thank you.” Lucien replied in a very low voice.

Milina noticed Lucien’s unusual behavior, and she asked, “are you alright, Mr. Evans?”

Lucien smiled wryly. “My throat hurts...”

It was never easy to mimic how the Lord of Storm talked!

Chapter 426: A New Journal

Hearing Lucien's words, the gentlemen managed to refrain themselves, but the two ladies present could not hold back their giggles — Mr. Evans had to pay for his roaring!

Levski's paper introduced a brand new geometry system, and it included lots of propositions. The length of the paper way exceeded that of an ordinary paper and was almost equivalent to a book. Although Lucien skipped many parts when lecturing, his throat still hurt, despite of the fact that he was also a knight.

Lucien's answer amused the rest of the board members, and also more or less healed their mind after the intense roaring. During Lucien's speech, they were so shocked by Lucien's imposing manner and violent roaring that they subconsciously assumed that he was another Lord of Storm, who would never be bothered by too much roaring. Now the problem had been solved, they started to feel that Lucien was in fact quite easy-going.

"You need some potions?" Milina chuckled.

Lucien shook his head, and his voice was still a bit dry. "I'm okay. I'm a level-two knight, so I should be able to recover after one or two hours."

Neeshka sighed and then said, "Mr. Evans, you just read Levski's paper for the first time a few days ago, right? It's unbelievable that you managed to find two ways to prove it in such a short time. The second method is particularly concise and beautiful, which has perfectly proved the compatibility between Tower Geometry and Levski Geometry. Facing it, we can no longer let arrogance and prejudice blind us anymore. You're such an incredible genius in the field of Maths."

"Um... In fact, it's the studies of differential geometry and sphere surface in recent years, the studies that have been done by you all, that provided me with a solid foundation and inspirations. Without your studies, even though I was able to see Mr. Levski's paper from

a relatively objective perspective, I wouldn't have been able to finish the reasonings in such a short period of time," said Lucien.

He was being rather humble. After all, he could not tell them that the credits should all go to the great mathematicians on the Earth.

Lucien expected that, if he had not stood out to support Levski's theory, the great value of Levski's paper would be realized around four to five years after the death of Levski, if Levski could not advance to middle-rank. What Lucien did just now was returning to Levski his rightful honor and award when he was still alive, not until after he died in misery.

Lucien's sincere attitude completely resolved the board members' uncomfortable feelings. They apologized again, in the most earnest manner.

Neeshka looked at Levski, who had gradually calmed down, and said, "It's such a pity that so far the new geometry systems put forward by Levski and Evans cannot be applied to our daily arcana study, nor could they be accepted by Arcana. This pity is often shared by we arcanists in math. I guess we can only publish them on the journal Astrology funded by Tower."

This was a world where a theory would only be valued when it could be applied to reality. The reason why calculus was called the tool that had changed the entire era was that it could help a sorcerer accomplish the complex calculations required for completing a magic model, thus simplifying the process and lowering the requirement for the level of spiritual power. In the past, a sorcerer would need ten to twenty years to become a middle-rank, but now it could be done within five to six. Some geniuses even made it in one year! Of course, when exploring the truth of the world, calculus was an indispensable tool as well.

Also, the reason why complex variables functions had been the most heated study focus in recent decades was that they could be used to describe and calculate the force field of spiritual power. All the valuable papers that focused on complex variables functions were very likely to be published on Arcana and Magic.

So Levski's and Lucien's findings, despite that their mathematic models had already been established, might be gems that only thrilled the mathematicians in their own world. It is very unlikely that these papers would be published on Arcana.

Lucien said in a half-joking manner, "Perhaps the other side of the world fits perfectly into the new systems. When we find it out, maybe Arcana will do us a special supplement to acknowledge the significance of our findings."

Although Lucien could use his privilege as the member of the Review Board to publish the paper on Arcana, it would not help Levski much. So Lucien preferred to publish his and Levski's papers on Astrology together. He believed that this month's issue of Astrology would be remembered by all the arcanists in the future because of their papers.

"Hopefully." The rest of the board members did not really think that it was going to happen and simply offered their sincere wish. Even with President Douglas' theories that the world is a sphere, and with the important role that Evans Geometry played in the study of spheres, it was still quite hopeless for the paper to be published on Arcana. Since the coverage of most of the magic spells was limited, Tower Geometry and the properties of curves were equivalent tools for the sorcerers. There was thus no need to get too complicated.

Except for Ross who was a firm representative of the Congress, the rest of the board members present were all upper echelons of Tower, so they could decide what to be published on Astrology. After a brief discussion, Milina said to Levski and Evans, "the month just started, and this month's Astrology just came out. But to acknowledge the great contribution from you two, and to let most of the arcanists access your papers as soon as possible, we want to put your papers on a supplement for this month. What do you think?"

In many arcanists' mind, a supplement was not formal enough.

Levski was totally fine with it. His paper had passed the review and won such high recognition. Because of it, he would become a level-four arcanist and was now a candidate of Arcana Scepter. To him,

ensuring that his paper was available to the public earlier was more important, as his dream was to make his geometry system be accepted by as many arcanists as possible.

But Levski did not respond immediately. Instead, he looked at Lucien and waited for his answer. After all, it was Lucien who brought him all these.

Hearing that, Lucien had a new idea. When Lucien was thinking on it, Milina took his silence as reluctance, so she hurriedly added, "Since the two papers are quite long, if we put them together and publish them on the next month's issue, it's gonna be too thick to make room for other papers. So either for this month or next, we still have to make a supplement. It's the first time that we only publish two papers on one issue since the era of calculus. So it's actually an honor..."

Lucien waved his hand and smiled. "It's not a problem to me. I was thinking of something else... I mean, since now we're planning on adding a supplement, why don't we establish a new journal that affiliates with Astrology for publishing math papers exclusively? While Astrology can focus on publishing papers in the astrological field and avoid being criticized that math papers are taking up space for papers focused on blessing, prophecy, and curses, arcanists who are devoted to math study can also find their own platform for discussion. I think this is gonna be a great encouragement to them."

Producing a new journal was not an easy job. Also, the math papers that they could collect at this stage might not be enough for establishing a new one. But for an affiliated journal, many worries could be saved.

"Affiliated journal... We don't have it before. How do we determine its Influence Factor?" asked Neeshka. He was an authority in math, thus, having a journal exclusively for math was a great temptation to him.

Lucien first briefly introduced the benefits of having an affiliated journal, and then said, "As an affiliated journal, its Influence Factor should also follow Astrology but at one level lower: Astrology's

Influence Factor is 2.5, then we should give 2.0 to it."

"We're very interested in the proposal, and we'll apply to the Board tomorrow," said Milina after a short discussion with the leaders from Tower, and then she turned to Lucien and Levski. "... So, if you two publish your papers on the new journal, the Influence Factor is 0.5 lower, and the arcana points awarded for citation will be less..."

Lucien smiled gently. "I'm fine with it. It is my honor publishing the paper on the first issue of a journal."

Levski also nodded. "Me too. So far I can't see a wide application of my new geometry system, so there shouldn't be a big difference in the citation credits. It's also a great honor for me."

Levski thought about it carefully and nodded. "Thank you, I'd love to. I'll try my best." He believed that compared to other jobs, this job would allow him to spend more time on studying math and arcana.

"No problem." Lucien laughed. Could this count as Tower's pay to him?

Neeshka added, "Mr. Evans, can we put the short speech that you just delivered on the front page of the journal? We'd like to have your words to be the inscription as well."

"My great honor," responded Lucien briefly. His throat still hurt.

Finally, Milina realized that the new journal was still waiting for a name, so she said, "Mr. Evans, since you made the proposal, why don't you name it?"

The board members all nodded.

Lucien thought for a while and said softly,

"Math is the most wonderful and essential language in nature, and it shows the rules that all fields and realms shall follow..."

"So, let's name it — Nature!"

Chapter 427: The Hard-won Complimen

Chapter 427: The Hard-won Compliment

“Nature...” Neeshka coughed a bit, “... Your explanation is persuasive, Mr. Evans, but... isn’t this title a bit too broad for a math journal? I’m afraid that people wouldn’t be able to understand it at first glance.”

That was the thought shared by all the board members, including Levski. Unlike the other journals, for instance, Arcana, Magic, and Astrology, whose names had a very clear indication, Nature sounded like a journal that was established by the Druids. Although they appreciated Lucien’s belief in math, they still had to face the reality that math still served the study of arcana and magic.

Obviously, Lucien couldn’t say that it just a mischievous decision — “Science” would require him to create and define a new word in this world, but for “Nature” he could quote directly — so he explained, “I’m in fact putting a lot of hope into the new journal. Although so far Nature is still a math journal, in the future, I hope it can publish all the arcana theories that are hard for people to accept or understand instantly. With its main focus still on math, Nature will hopefully become a journal describing the World’s Truth that is as important as Arcana and Magic.”

This was too ambitious to the members present. Both Arcana and Magic had a history of over several hundred years, with Arcana focused more on theories, while Magic was more on the side of application. They were the top journals to arcanists just as Canon to the followers of the Saint Truth. Their position was irreplaceable.

Therefore, the members did not take Lucien’s words to heart. What Lucien just said would be a beautiful wish or an aim that they could work towards. Milina spoke with a smile, “as you said, we use math to describe the true world... From this perspective, I guess Nature isn’t a bad name. Names like World or Truth sound too arrogant, and Math sounds too limited...”

"I agree on the point that Nature can be the platform for sharing the theories that are relatively hard to accept. Our journal could provide them help..." Levski thought of his experience and agreed upon Lucien's idea.

Salgueiro, the middle-aged man with messy hair, slightly frowned. "But how do we tell between those really valuable papers and the absurd ones that deliberately seek to be weird? If Nature opens the gate to all of them, as a journal of 2.0 Influence Factor, it would encourage many arcanists to spend lots of effort in fabricating eye-catching theories that are unrealistic and incomprehensible."

Levski did not know what to say, while Lucien answered preparedly, "Nature is a pure math journal. Then our judgment should base on pure logical deductive reasoning. If a paper logically makes sense, but it can't pass the review of the board, we can publish it in the discussion content. However, if a paper has fundamental fallacies in logic, it is not qualified and should be rejected."

"That's it!" Levski recalled Lucien's enlightening speech.

The board members present all nodded silently. They had learned from their mistakes in Levski's case.

A few minutes later, Neeshka said while he looked out and saw that the sun sinking low in the west, "This is the longest review meeting that I have ever attended, and from which I got the greatest lesson. Mr. Evans, please submit the three papers to the review board as soon as possible; we are waiting to write new comments for them. Hopefully, we will be finished before the application for Nature is approved."

Although all the board members specializing in math in Allyn were all here, the procedures for reassessing the papers should still be followed.

"I'll do it today, before the Sorcerer Administrative Department closes." Lucien realized that it was already past five, and they had all skipped their lunch.

After watching the board members leave the meeting room, Levski turned to Lucien. “Mr. Evans, thank you very much. Without you, I would still be living the same miserable life.”

Since Levski was completely devoted to developing his geometry system, he had not reached middle-rank, and he had no time for doing tasks given by the Congress to earn more money. For a long time, Levski lived a very poor life. He had to move out of Allyn as everything in this city was too expensive. His income relied on the subsidy from the Congress for level-two arcanists and second-circle sorcerers. When he was sick, life became even harder and he had to look for other sources of income.

Therefore, Levski was still very excited when expressing his sincere gratitude to Lucien again. To him, Mr. Evans saved him, as well as his theory – For the many years, Levski saw this geometry system as his kid.

“You don’t owe me anything. You deserve it,” said Lucien gently. “Try your best to run the new journal, Nature, so you can help more geniuses like you.”

Levski had experienced strong emotional fluctuations today. Now after he had calmed down, he felt quite exhausted. He grinned to Lucien. “You’ve changed my life... That’s for sure. Unfortunately, I don’t know much about elements, or I would definitely try to work in Atom Institution to learn more from you, Mr. Evans.”

“I’ve learned things from you as well – Perseverance. You can just call me Lucien or Evans by the way,” said Lucien. “Every single person has his or her own strength. Both of us know that our new geometry systems are still frameworks right now. They lack analytical abilities and still require further exploration. I hope we can all work towards this direction.”

“... Also,” Lucien added, “don’t forget about arcana and magic. To explore further and solve more problems in the field of math, you have to improve your knowledge of arcana and magic. Only in this way will you live longer, and when you’re elder, your brain will still be able to function well.”

“Yes, yes!” answered Levski excitedly.

Seeing the fatigue in Levski’s eyes, Lucien asked him to go back and have a good rest.

His hands in the pockets, Lucien watched Levski left the meeting room. When Lucien turned around to collect the documents, he heard Fernando’s voice.

“Your speech isn’t bad. The closer we are to the truth of the world, the greater the limitation our body and soul can impose on us. We have to stick to our tools — math and magic — to free ourselves from what we see and feel. Abandoning its correspondence with reality and focusing exclusively on axioms and deductive reasoning, this might be the direction for math development in the future.”

Staring straight ahead, Fernando paid a compliment to Lucien, which was very rare of him.

Lucien was quite surprised. He carefully examined Fernando, making sure that he was not Little Crystal in disguise.

Fernando stared back at him. Confirmed, it was indeed Fernando.

“I was inspired by what Levski and his New Geometry had experienced...” Lucien said.

“Really?” Fernando looked at Lucien meaningfully.

Lucien replied fast, “Of course. By the way, what are you studying recently, Sir?”

Fernando looked a bit pissed. “I did the experiment on cursing substance, and found that it could radiate electrons and a new element, as expected. But I also detected the trace of another strange unknown element. The amount was extremely low, so it will take some time and effort for extraction.

“But this is finding is enough to make most arcanists crazy. What are elements and atoms in essence? What do they look like inside? Why are there new elements being radiated out?”

“So... I’ve been trying to probe into the inner structure of an atom. Unfortunately, there are currently no proper and handy magics available to assist in the exploration of the microworld. We’re indeed limited by our soul and body.”

Lucien finally realized why his short speech was able to touch Fernando and win his rare compliment. After weighing his words, Lucien said carefully, “we can make bold assumptions first, and then rule them out using experiments. We can’t see the inner structure of an atom directly, so we can only rely on indirect methods...”

“You think I don’t know it?!” Fernando roared at Lucien.

.....

Inside Tower.

Holding a thick stack of papers, Samantha knocked at the door and heard her teacher’s voice, which sounded a bit melancholy.

“Come in.”

Samantha was quite surprised seeing her teacher in such a mood. She lifted her blond brow slightly while maintaining the serious look on her face and pushed open the door.

“Sir, these are the papers today.”

“From Lucien Evans?” Asked Neeshka, looking back.

Samantha browsed the paper stack,

“Another Perspective on Parallel Postulate... from Lucien Evans... Sir, you lost today?”

“Lost... Yes, we lost... in a very bad way. Arrogance and prejudice defeated us. Levski’s right. His new geometry system is different from Tower Geometry, but compatible with it,” said Neeshka, who now looked ten years elder when he was with only his student.

Samantha was slightly shocked. “So Lucien Evans came up with a

real model?”

Samantha was also an arcana genius and enjoyed the same reputation as Larry, Jurisian, and Rachel. She specialized in Astrology, Electromagnetism, and Maths. After reading Levski's paper, she also could not accept it.

“Yes... It is a hyperboloid that looked like a saddle...” said Neeshka in the bitter tone, “He also provided the proof showing how the two geometry systems are compatible using the unit circle. And he put forward another new geometry system that corresponds to Levski's system. He is indeed a genius. Maybe next month he will be winning Arcana Scepter with Levski... Not sharing, but separately.”

Samantha's attempt to keep her face expressionless finally failed, and the look on it became complex. “Why I didn't think of this... winning the highest honor in three different fields before senior-rank...”

“Pass me the paper,” said Neeshka briefly. After leafing through the paper, he picked up the quill-pen and wrote,

“Starting from Levski's geometry system, but heading the opposite direction, Lucien Evans assumed that for any given line R and point P not on R , in the plane containing both line R and point P , there is no line through P that does not intersect R . Using perfect deductive reasoning, he obtained a series of propositions and conclusions that no one could ever imagine. Thus, a new, fully-developed, and independent geometry system has been established — the Evans Geometry. He also proved the realizability of the system on a curved surface. Therefore, it is no more just an imagination.

“Putting aside practical significance, focusing simply on axioms and postulates as well as strict deductive reasoning, Lucien Evans has shown us his unique conception. His geometry system is of great impact, and has brought us a conceptual revolution.

“Without doubt, his new geometry system is a great contribution to the development of geometry. It is universally-applied, groundbreaking, has a significant position and deserves broad discussion. I suggest four hundred arcana credits and four thousand

arcana points be given as a reward.”

When Neeshka was writing, Samantha stayed beside him, watching. The look on her face kept changing, from frustration to admiration to disappointment.

“Samantha, a new journal is in preparation, and Lucien Evans’s speech will be put on the front page as the inscription. You read it carefully. It can be inspiring to you.” Neeshka added while putting down his quill-pen.

“Uh?” Samantha was first surprised, and then she became very curious.

Chapter 428: Nature

In the villa surrounded by flowers, Milina was shocked again by the beauty of math in Lucien's paper. After quite a while, she finally picked up her quill-pen and wrote,

"With amazing conception and precise demonstration, Lucien Evans's paper shows us the beauty of math and also proves the compatibility between Levski Geometry and Tower Geometry. The paper gives a solid foundation to the establishment of the New Geometry System and changed the world of Math, which was constructed based on our direct perception of the world. This paper reveals to us another path for math development and demonstration.

"This groundbreaking paper is apparently significant to the establishment of the new geometry system and deserves broad discussion. Forty arcana credits and five hundred arcana points are suggested to be given as reward."

Strictly following the standards of review, Milina gave her comment objectively. If she had let her preference played the leading role, as an authority in math and mathematician, she would have given the paper an even higher comment because of the beauty the paper displayed.

.....

Meanwhile, Salgueiro was also reviewing Lucien's paper *An Attempt to Explain Non-Tower Geometry*.

"The paper provides a math model that contradicts our knowledge but actually exists; it makes a breakthrough contribution to the establishment of Levski's geometry system. It makes us realize that Levski Geometry is a new system which was essentially different from Tower Geometry.

"Given the groundbreaking contribution brought by its math model and the demonstration, this paper's content deserves broad discussion and research. Thus, sixty arcana credits and six hundred

arcana points are suggested to be given as reward."

When he put down his quill-pen, Salgueiro realized that the winter evening had already closed in. The wind was blowing outside of the window, and everything had been encased by the darkness. However, from this cold darkness, he seemed to notice a slight glimmer of light; there was light in the future of math.

"If the new geometry system is actually applicable to arcana...

"What Evans said earlier today was interesting... the axiomatization of math..."

.....

After a week, in the morning, Samantha came to Tower to study with her teacher as usual.

"Morning, Ms. Samantha," greeted the several low-rank arcanists.

The dome of the hall was black, inlaid with magic crystal lights that lit up the entire space. The arrangement of the lights followed the order of constellation, forming a huge astrology chart above.

Samantha nodded politely but also seriously. Then she asked out of confusion, "Leo, Gina... Why are you two here so early?"

According to what she knew, their teacher, level-four arcanist and fifth-circle astrologer Da Serra, who was also her friend, never taught students on Fridays. And the time right now, the labs and libraries inside Tower are not open yet. There was no reason to come this early.

"Ms. Samantha, don't you know?" Said the round-faced Gina, "Tower sent a notice yesterday that today a new journal is going to be issued. We're all curious, so we came early to wait."

In order to improve one of her magic spells, Samantha studied the stars at night and slept during the day in the past two days, thus she never heard about it. Now the look on her face slightly changed and she murmured, "A new journal... Is it the one with Lucien Evans's inscription?"

"No... No idea..." The young man named Leo, who developed a middle-aged spread before the age of 25, shook his head.

"Hey, Samantha! Are you here for buying Nature as well?"

It was Rachel. She was always full of energy and cheerful. Everyone liked her as she lifted people's mood.

Samantha also smiled, which was unusual for her. "Are you here for this as well?"

Although they had opposite personalities, they were very good friends.

Rachel sighed deliberately. "Yup, as a member of the Arcana Review Board, my teacher Ms. Isabella should have enjoyed delivery of the journal. But she's out of the town right now exploring new materials, so I have to come here myself. Poor me..."

Facing Rachel, the low-rank arcanists were more respectful. For one thing, they were unacquainted with Rachel; for another,, Rachel was the winner of Sorcerer Laurel. The crystal hairpin on her linen-colored hair shocked the students.

"You know about Nature's content and inscription?" asked Samantha. After all, Rachel did not have to come here so early; with her status, she would definitely be able to get a copy.

Rachel looked at Samantha confusedly. "No... But this is the first issue of the journal. I'd like to put it into my collection! It's even better if I buy it myself!"

"..." Samantha forgot that her friend was an enthusiastic collector.

At this time, the library behind the reception desk opened. Two female apprentices pushed out several stacks of books with a black cover.

"I've gotta take a look at it," said Rachel curiously as she pulled Samantha's arm and walked to the reception desk.

Samantha recalled, "Should have things to do with math..."

Her teacher, Neeshka, mentioned about it before. And when she was helping her teacher send back the review comments, she had a look at the new geometry paper from Lucien Evans and found the paper was too mind-blowing for her to accept.

However, soon, she was shocked by the math model provided in the paper. Despite the strong resistance in her mind, she was persuaded by the strict logic reasoning and the solid math model. After reading the paper, she was at lost for at least two to three days. And then she finally started accepting the fact that new geometry systems did exist.

"Finally! Tower has a journal for math! Awesome!" Rachel became very excited.

Tower sorcerers were all more or less emotionally connected to math in a complex way, and Rachel was one of them.

"Ladies, can I have two of them, please?" Rachel took out her magic badge.

"Sure, sure! Ms. Rachel" The two young ladies answered as they hurriedly put the badge into the magic circle to deduct arcana points and handed two new journals to Rachel and Samantha.

Almost everyone in Tower knew Rachel after she won Sorcerer Laurel.

"So thick!" Rachel exclaimed, while Samantha quickly looked at the cover of the journal — After all, her teacher's words had made her curious for the entire week!

Like Arcana, Nature also had a black cover, on which silver lines formed many math symbols, equations, numbers, and geometry shapes. Joining together against the black background, they were like stars in the dark universe.

Samantha believed that the cover was designed to express the aim of the journal: Using the language of math to describe the truth of the world...

That was also her first thought after she saw the cover.

Against the starry sky, there was a big word — Nature — written in a special fancy font. The characters looked like a wonderful formula.

Under the big word, there were several lines of smaller words:

Your eyes can lie to you... , beside it was the numbers showing visible light spectrum;

Your ears can deceive you... , surrounding it was the numbers showing human beings' hearing range;

your experience can mislead you... , following it was the simple but significant formula in calculus - $0.99999... = 1$;

Your imagination can restrain you... , under it was the hyperboloid model looking like a saddle and a sphere-like curved-surface model.

Samantha's eyes traced the lines and figures. She felt that she had understood what the words meant.

Her eyes fell on the last line... It was a brief but powerful one:

But math won't!

This line was a size bigger than the above ones and was on its own on the cover, with no figures following it. But all the symbols, equations, and numbers were its best testimonies.

It was shocking beyond words.

Samantha did not know what others felt, but she knew that there were a lot of things going on in her brain. She felt like she had understood many things, however, she also felt that she had not figured out anything yet.

Beside the last line, there was a name,

Lucien Evans X.

Samantha wondered if that was Lucien Evans' perception of math.

Rachel, who was standing beside Samantha, also remained silent. She hurriedly opened the journal and started reading the inscription, which was Lucien's speech. Then she browsed through the paper, sighing and exclaiming from time to time.

After a long while, she finally woke up from the world of math. Following a long sigh, she said,

"Is he still a human being?"

"Levski Geometry... Evans Geometry... If they were not findings in math but in other fields, countless people would have their head exploded! Although I've seen the demonstration and the models... It's still hard to believe..." added Rachel.

Then her face lit up, "But I love what he said very, very much!"

The low-rank arcanists also got a copy. They were the same deeply shocked by the lines on the cover, but the content was still too difficult for them to understand so far. They had to take the journal back and slowly dig into it, treating it like their textbook.

.....

... Ms. Florencia, Mr. Gaston, and my teacher, Mr. Larry cheered that you've shifted your focus upon math, so the arcanists in the Congress are now much safer. Ok, no more jokes. They, including me, hope that you won't waste too much of your time in the new geometry system. Your talent belongs to the world of element and atoms, where findings of practical arcana and magic significance can be made. Leave geometry to Tower; they should get their own job done. Your friend, K.

After Nature issued, Lucien had received lots of letters. Some were sending congratulations, some were invitations for speeches, and some were from his friends. In Lucien's friends' eyes, the new geometry system was just like a piece of toy for Lucien, as it was of no practical arcana or magic significance.

Lucien sighed, as he knew that the new geometry systems were going to bring a more horrible and powerful impact than anyone

had imagined.

Putting aside the letters, Lucien said to the apprentices waiting outside of the study, "Let's go to the garden. We'll see what are keeping you guys busy recently."

Lucien learned this free-communication method from the several physicists on the Earth who were good teachers.

Chapter 429: Being A Teacher

Chapter 429: Being A Teacher

Although it was already winter time and the freezing wind was blowing outside, Lucien's garden was still warm and cozy, with lots of blooming flowers spreading a sweet aroma.

With his hands in his suit pockets, Lucien did not start asking the students about their studies right away. Instead, he asked about their progress in promotion, "I've heard it from Lazar that you're all very confident in becoming real sorcerers soon, and maybe a few months later, you will be able to do so with the help of the magic potion, Silver Moon... Is that right?"

Annick, Heidi, Layria, and Katrina exchanged a look between each other, having no idea whether their teacher's true intention was to praise their fast advancement or to criticize their arrogance. They got a bit nervous and did not reply.

Yet Sprint, the apprentice who was always the most confident one among them all, nodded confidently. "Under your teaching, our math and magic analysis level is no inferior to that of the low-rank sorcerers now, Sir. The requirement for our spiritual power level is thus lowered. We'll try advancing in a few months. We've talked to a few low-rank sorcerers and they all agreed."

When mentioning Lucien's way of teaching, Sprint's heart twitched a bit. Memories of the high piles of test papers and exercise books still lingered around in his brain.

Lucien paced leisurely and said casually, "In the Ancient Magic Empire, barely one out of a hundred apprentices could become a real sorcerer. Ever since the establishment of the Congress, in spite of the multiple developments and perfection of arcana and teaching methods, we still only have three to four students in a senior apprentice class who can finally make it."

Annick and Layria's face flushed, and the words of apologies almost burst out from their mouths. While Sprint, Heidi, and Katrina felt

that they were wronged and were about to explain.

Lucien waved his hands and continued. "But you all are different. You're relatively talented, and plus my strict teaching, you have a relatively solid foundation for further studying math and magic. Ha, this is how a large amount of exercise and practice can help you. Also, you guys have been working in the most advanced institution, and all the studies you have been exposed to in every single day are only available on the journals to most people, and those are studies that most low-rank arcanists find very challenging to understand. In this case, if any of you fail to promote, it is surely because of your own inattention and carelessness, not because you are not ready. Am I clear?"

"Yes, Sir!" the apprentices all grinned. They realized that their teacher was encouraging them!

During the long journey of studying magic, to become a real sorcerer was the first biggest challenge to these cubs. Although they were quite confident, there must still be worries and anxiety deep in their hearts. These apprentices had seen their peers failed promotion, and this must have left negative impacts on their young mind, further strengthening their worries.

Now that Lucien had analyzed their strengths for them, he relieved their fear and gave them lots of hope to succeed.

After encouraging his students, Lucien smiled and said, "so, what about the studies you guys are working on recently?"

Sprint answered first, as always. He said in frustration, "Sir, you asked us to study gas discharge to figure out its causes. But as soon as we discovered cathode ray and electron, Mr. Brook found the answer from lightning between clouds: It is the free electrons that caused gas discharge. So we lost our direction and have to go back to study cathode ray and electron to see what we can find here in this new field."

Brook's experiment was very simple but extremely risky. Only a legendary arcanist could manage to do so. Even he himself would have to resurrect from prepared methods if anything went wrong.

Therefore, the apprentices lost their precious opportunity and could only watch Brook publish the paper.

“Cathode ray and electron are related to the inner structure of an electron. Studying them will help you guys step into the real microworld. Even if Mr. Brook hadn’t found the answer, I would still suggest you go for this direction. This is a brand new realm, a vault full of treasures. Within reaches, you can find things that are totally inconceivable in the past.” Lucien spoke seriously, like a real teacher.

Heidi and Sprint nodded enthusiastically. For countless times in the past, it had been proved that it was the bold pioneers who got the biggest gains when a new field was discovered, while the cowards were left with nothing but regret.

“Sir, can we also study cathode ray and electron, apart from the low-temperature studies?” Katrina asked anxiously.

In the experiment of charcoal’s absorption of air under low temperatures, Katrina and Layria helped Jerome a lot as his main assistants. However, because it was a project assigned by Lucien, Lucien was unquestionably the first author, followed by Jerome who conducted the experiment. As apprentices, they could not even have their names put on it. At that time, they could only watch their teachers gaining lots of citation credits and patent use income, as they were not yet formal arcanists.

But Lucien was quite generous to the apprentices. Although he could not give any arcana credits to them, since it was the rule of the Congress, Lucien gave them a proportion of arcana points from selling the patent of creating vacuum using low-temperature charcoal. Although it was not a lot for Lucien who, after all, had a dragon as “pet”, Katrina and Layria quickly saved up enough points for buying the magic potion they needed and could now afford their own experiment materials.

Therefore, Katrina was full of passion facing the brand new realm of atom. She hoped that she could win the highest award in this certain field like Mr. Evans and Ms. Isabella, and fulfill her dreams.

“Of course. In your spare time, you all can do whatever experiments you’re interested in. You can use the magic circles and alchemical circles in the institution as well.” Lucien nodded.

“Awesome! Thank you, Mr. Evans!” Layria cheered. “In the past two to three months, we haven’t made any substantial progress in studying cryogenic materials, only collected some more data. It can be boring sometimes...”

“Studies on alchemical materials require repeated experiments and extensive collections of data. Thus, it is one of the most time-consuming projects and requires lots of patience. Don’t think about making a huge achievement right away, but don’t underestimate your work either. Every single experiment can be vital for your future finding. In the future. Your finding can be significant in popularizing level one and two alchemical items and lowering the price of high-rank items. You may win the Holm Crown prize because of it,” said Lucien.

After chatting with most of his students, Lucien looked at Annick, the young man who was always quiet and shy. “What are you working on recently? You’ve got a direction?”

Annick’s face slightly flushed. “Mr. Evans, I’ve been studying electron as well. Since free electrons are the cause of gas discharge, I wonder if the electric current is caused by electrons as well.”

“Interesting. Go on.” Lucien slowed down his pace and walked with Annick side by side. The other apprentices were also looking at Annick curiously.

It was a rare experience for Annick to attract so much attention, so he got a bit nervous. “I’ve been trying to design an experiment to prove it, but my knowledge in Electromagnetics is too shallow, so I could not find a way out. I-I then turned to some of the books by Mr. Brook, including Electromagnetics and his most recent papers, and his paper discussing the surprising result of the photoelectric effect experiment inspired me.”

“So you’ve figured this out?” Asked Lucien, feeling a bit amused. Obviously, Brook had great faith in his quantum theory, which had

been forgotten by most arcanists. Right now most arcanists were directly using the thermal radiance equation without giving any thoughts to why it works.

Annick hurriedly shook his head. “No, no... There’s no way that I can figure out something that has been able to bother Mr. Brook for so long. I was inspired because the paper showed that, when casting a certain frequency of light on a piece of metal, there were electric currents. As a piece of metal itself does not carry any electricity, and light cannot be converted into electric currents, then what created the currents?

“If it’s like what I assumed... that an electric current is related to electrons, does it mean that the projection of light makes the piece of metal carry electrons? If the answer is yes, does it prove, from the other way around, that an electron is part of the inner structure of an atom?” Explained Annick.

“Good, very good. A very daring hypothesis...” Lucien was generous with his compliments, “So the next step is to prove it. You will need a carefully-designed experiment to show that the photoelectric effect produces electrons.”

Hearing the encouraging words, Annick’s face turned into a red, ripe apple. He nodded hard. “I... I’ll try my best.”

Annick was not afraid of Mr. Evans stealing his idea, as Mr. Evans was always surrounded by the highest awards in different fields: He had won Holm Crown prize and Immortal Throne, and he was going to win Arcana Scepter.

There was no way that a teacher like Mr. Evans would steal his student’s idea.

Also, as Mr. Evans was present, the rest of the apprentices would not dare to put their hands upon it, unless Annick invited them, or he gave up upon the project on his own.

The rest of the apprentices more or less envied and had some dark thoughts flashing past. But seeing Mr. Evans’s warm smile, they quickly drove the dark thoughts away.

“Soon you’ll all be real sorcerers...” Lucien paused a bit on purpose, and continued when the apprentices’ face lit up, “... but don’t think that you do not need to study hard anymore after that. On the contrary, more profound knowledge is waiting for you. To get you all more prepared for the future study after becoming sorcerers, I’ve prepared many sets of calculus and math analysis exercises.”

The lovely smile on the apprentices’ face suddenly disappeared.

“Also, I will turn the contents from the school of Electromagnetics, Light-darkness, Force Field, Thermodynamics, Element, Alchemy, Illusion, Astrology, Transformation, Necromancy into basic modules and exercises. So you guys can learn better,” said Lucien.

Summoning was not Lucien’s strength, and he was not planning on delving into it any sooner.

The apprentices were now very dispirited. Heidi murmured to herself,

“May I’m not in a hurry to promote...”

.....

After the apprentices left, Lucien’s villa had a new visitor.

“Mr. Evans, my teacher, Mr. Douglas, wants to invite you to his demiplane to talk about artificial planets,” said the young man not even in his thirties.

He had the typical black hair and blue eyes of Holms and was wearing a monocle. The young man with fine features looked gracious and gentle, but the badges in front of his chest clearly showed that he was a level-six arcanist and eighth circle sorcerer, as well as the member of the Affair Committee.

Is it about to begin?

Lucien has some unreal feeling in his mind.

Chapter 430: The Intense Argumen

Douglas's demiplane was very different from Thanatos's The Resting Place, Fernando's Thunder Hell, and Hathaway's Element Paradise. When Lucien first stepped in the demiplane with Norman, a member from the Affair Committee who was here to guide Lucien, he did not even realize that they had arrived in a demiplane. Douglas's demiplane looked just like an extension of the real material world. Everything in here functioned following the same rules. Although they all looked plain and normal, fascinating secrets were hiding behind.

Although the demiplanes all looked different because the legendary sorcerers had different understandings of the world and different preferences, they all represent unique features. Yet in Douglas's demiplane, there were lush black forests, and mirror-like lakes, connecting to tall green mountains at the other end of the sky. The magic tower was surrounded by a green lawn that was like a fuzzy carpet. This place had no difference from the real material world.

"My teacher's dream is to understand the world. So his demiplane resembles the real world the most." Norman smiled and explained.

Lucien nodded slightly and looked around. "No wonder Mr. President chose to name this place Linsorde."

In the language of the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, Linsorde meant the truth of the world. Therefore, Douglas's demiplane was also called the Land of Truth, and the World in Mirror.

Entering through the magic gate guarded by two mythrill golems, Norman led Lucien into a small living room. Two guests, one male and one female, were already sitting there.

The living room was decorated with scarlet carpets, scattered armchairs, tea tables, and several rows of bookshelves. The arrangement was rather casual and cozy. This place looked like Douglas's private meeting room for seeing his friends and the juniors.

"Mr. Douglas, His Excellency the Lord of Storm, and His Excellency the Prophet are still doing the last test. Let's wait here for a moment." Norman explained, and then he introduced the two guests to Lucien. "They are Mr. Douglas's students as well. They happened to be in town right now and are thus here to witness the historic moment: If the planet created by Mr. Douglas can revolve around this world, and be observed by the astrology towers on the ground, it will be a powerful proof for his celestial bodies motion system. There'd be no more queries or suspicions."

Norman was, obviously, so excited that he almost forgot to continue the introduction. Thankfully he realized in time and, pointing to the middle-aged man with grizzled hair, hurriedly said to Lucien, "This is Artil, the student who has followed Mr. Douglas for the longest time. He specializes in Astrology, Force Field, Transformation, and Light-darkness."

Artil had a thin face and protruding cheekbones. His eyes were narrow, and so were his lips. The badges he wore showed that he was a level-eight arcanist and ninth circle archmage, but was not a member of any board or committee, nor of the Highest Council.

He nodded and said in a plain but slightly biting tone, "I'm not the student who has followed Mr. Douglas for the longest time. There is one who's elder than me and has been the student of Mr. Douglas for even longer."

Hearing that, Norman and the female were quite embarrassed, having no idea how to respond. Lucien realized who Artil was talking about: He was referring to the Emperor of Control, the Poem of the Goddess — Mr. Brook. It was said that now Brook and Douglas had become strangers because of their divergence over the particle or wave nature of light.

Norman and the female arcanist were still relatively young, and they never experienced this with their own eyes. To them, the past between Brook and Douglas were written legends and, without experiencing it by themselves, it is difficult to hold extreme disgust and hate towards Brook. Artil, however, had been following Douglas for a long time and probably had also been classmates with Brook for a long time. In his eyes, Brook's behavior was a filthy

betrayal. No wonder Artil was showing no respect to Brook at all.

Seeing that Lucien did not try to dig further into the topic, Norman hurriedly turned to introduce the young lady to Lucien. "This is Luciana, also a student of Mr. Douglas. She specializes in Element, Astrology, Force Field, Summoning, and Transformation. Also, she has an in-depth study in math. She should share many topics with you, Evans."

"I've just finished reading Nature, and I'm very interested in the new geometry systems put forward by you and Mr. Levski. I'm planning on further developing them." said the young lady with red, flame-like hair. It seemed that she was not even twenty-five, but her badges showed that she was a level-seven arcanist and an eighth circle sorcerer, as well as a member of the Arcana Review Board.

Before Lucien could reply, Artil smiled and said, "Luciana, why waste your time on math? It's useless for practical arcana and magic. Time is precious to everyone. Although we live quite long, we need to spend hundreds of years to get an inch closer to the truth of the world. So, we can't afford wasting time at all. If our teacher's experiment on artificial planets works, it's going to be a huge breakthrough in both Astrology and Force Field. You'll be overwhelmed by the new research projects."

The new geometry systems were nothing important to him, obviously.

Norman, standing beside, nodded imperceptibly. He seemed to agree with Artil, but he could not speak it out right in front of Luciana like Artil, especially when Lucien was present.

"It's my habit. It's what I like to do to relax," refuted Luciana coldly. She loved studying the beauty of math, but, in fact, she also had not seen the practical value of the two new geometry systems for arcana and magic.

"... So, this is Mr. Lucien Evans... I believe I don't have to say much here. Mr. Evans is the most well-known genius arcanist, and has a special talent in Element, Thermodynamics, and Math." Norman quickly changed the topic.

Artil pointed at the couch and said, "take a sit, Evans. Before our teachers come back, we can have a talk. Although I don't know much about elements, I do know that what you recently found - electron - is the cause of lightning. Interesting, I thought the school of electromagnetics was based on the wave theory."

When Artil was not expressing his contempt, he was okay.

"In fact, the school of Electromagnetics always believes that electric current is the external expression of the motion of electric charge. Before, the only problem was that it was never connected to microscopic particles," said Lucien justifiably as he took a sip of the lemon black tea brought by the servants.

"Anyways, particles form the essence and foundation of the world!" Artil said in a frenetic way, "as long as the experiment works and artificial planets are created, Brook will never be able to attack our teacher's theory anymore! There must be other reasons why we haven't found any planet yet! In this case, our teacher's experiment on light speed will strongly prove that the medium Ether does not exist, and without medium, the wave theory of light will collapse like a tall building that has lost its foundation!

"Light and spiritual power come in the form of particles! They must be particles!"

Norman frowned and interrupted Artil. "Mr. Douglas's experiment has not succeeded yet. Even if it does, it will only be a powerful proof, not a complete proof. Maybe there will be other explanations of this experiment based on theories containing Ether. So far, we cannot use the particle theory of light to explain the diffraction of light and the spot discovered in Brook's experiment. We can't get too optimistic."

"Okay, Norman, I get it. You're in fact an advocate of wave theory, right?!" Artil flew into a rage. "Why isn't it the other way around? Why don't you say that the diffraction of light is only a powerful proof, not a complete proof, and there may be other explanations based on the particle theory? "

Offended by Artil, Norman became a bit irritated. "Open your eyes,

Artil. In the past decades, all the theories trying to explain the particle theory have been proved wrong. How many arcanists in the Congress are still supporting particle theory? If you want to overthrow wave theory, you first explain the diffraction of light! Your eyes have been blinded by jealousy!"

"Jealousy?!" Artil pointed to himself angrily and unbelievably. "I'm jealous of Brook, that jerk?! I'm merely believing in my own judgment!"

Luciana also joined the argument. "Unfortunately, Norman, sorry to let you down, but I'm also one of the few arcanists who still support particle theory. You don't possess truth simply because you've got more people on your side!"

"It's true that sometimes the truth may be held in the minority's hands, but particle theory cannot even explain the experiment phenomena! How could you make the arcanists believe in it!" Norman unconsciously revealed his true inclination.

"You betrayed us!" Artil's narrow eyes widened because of anger.

"I'm simply adhering to the truth!" Norman refuted tersely.

The three students of Douglas were involved in a fierce quarrel because of the wave theory and particle theory, and Lucien was left aside by them, forgotten.

Lucien wiped off the few beads of cold sweat on his forehead, worried that they might start fighting at any time. Obviously, any debate over the wave theory and particle theory in the Congress could be very dangerous...

"Norman, are you still working on the first driving force? Such arrogance! Even our teacher cannot solve the problem! Who do you think you are!?" Shouted Artil.

"It's none of your business. Mr. Douglas also put much emphasis on it, as it has something to do with the ultimate destination of his theoretical system. Artil, I know you've been working on it secretly as well! Look at yourself first!" Norman yelled.

Their argument became more and more intense, and suddenly, the three of them turned and looked at Lucien simultaneously.

"Evans, what do you think? Is it the wave theory or particle theory?"

"Evans, I was told that you are the one who proposed the experiment on artificial planets to help Mr. Douglas prove that Ether does not exist?"

"I believe every arcanist specializing in Element should be a firm supporter of the particle theory."

Lucien was suddenly forced into the argument. When he was still weighing his words, Douglas, Fernando, and the Prophet from Tower walked down the stairs.

Chapter 431: The Launching

Chapter 431: The Launching

The formal evening dress that Douglas used to wear had been replaced by a flowing grey magic robe of fine texture, on which countless dots and lines formed various mysterious patterns. He was also wearing an ancient Magic Empire top hat of the same color, surrounded by many colorful crystal stones that resembled a tiny celestial system.

The way how Douglas was dressed reminded people that Douglas was not only the establisher of the Congress of Magic, but also a survivor of the ancient Magic Empire after its downfall. The aesthetics that had been fostered when he was young are still imprinted in his brain.

“Lucien, thank you for your suggestion. With strict calculation and complex alchemy procedures, I have made an artificial planet. The next step will be sending it to the preset orbit.” Douglas greeted Lucien genially.

Meanwhile, Douglas put his right hand on the magic pouch, and a silver-grey sphere instantly rose up in the air in front of him.

As the product of a first-time experiment, the size of this artificial planet was quite small, only half the size of a human body. The tiny, mysterious planet was covered with silver-grey metal gloss and inlaid with all kinds of gems and sophisticated magic lines. The whole sphere seemed to be completely wrapped in layers of magic circles.

“It looks very sophisticated...” Lucien murmured. According to Lucien, the purpose of the experiment would be achieved as long as Douglas could prove that a satellite was able to revolve around this world. Other further functions were factors that could be considered later, such as communication, investigation, location, as well as being used as a weapon, or it would be a waste of time.

Douglas grinned. “Not really, not really... This universe is full of

hazards: this magic circle is designed to resist low temperature..."

Very patiently, Douglas started introducing every magic circles on the surface of the metal ball to Lucien.

Lucien could not agree with him in his mind, yet he still listened to Douglas carefully to learn more about the magic circles and asked questions from time to time. In the end, Lucien asked on purpose,

"Mr. President, why don't you add the magic circles for receiving and sending signals? So we can locate it from here and keep a closer track of it."

"I've put the similar permanent magic circles in it," Douglas was not disturbed by Lucien's many questions at all, but answered him with patience, "... also, the function of its main magic circle goes beyond your imagination. It's a magic circle that could almost rival legendary magic."

"What is it?" Asked Luciana curiously.

"I'll keep it as a secret for now. You'll see when it works." Douglas smiled at his students.

Artil's narrow eyes stared at the metal ball frenetically. "I can't wait to see it... I can't wait to show those idiots that our teacher's theory is correct, to show them that their dream about Ether is just an illusion!"

Fernando snorted. "Claiming victory before the experiment even started. You're the most stupid idiot I've ever seen."

Fernando's words lashed out as usual, even though Douglas was just beside him. If it had been Douglas who said those words, Fernando would have given the same response as well.

Artil dared not to debate with Fernando. He lowered his head, feeling quite humiliated.

Bergner, the Prophet from Tower, looked at Douglas with slight concern. "The reason why no planet has been found yet is complicated. Maybe we can't observe an artificial planet in the

universe neither. Mr. President, you have to be prepared for the possible failure. The failure can't completely deny your theory."

Bergner was wearing Tower's unique grey, pointy hat. His brows and beard had all turned white. Except for his eyes, which were as deep as the starry sky, he looked like an ordinary old man.

Since it was a reminder from the Prophet, the look on the students' face slightly changed. They wondered if Mr. Bergner had already seen the result by casting Horoscope...

But their concern was wiped out by Douglas immediately. Douglas smiled casually and said, "I have failed many times trying to find a planet. One more failure isn't something that can defeat me. It only means my theory is not yet perfect. Maybe I missed something, and all the failures will lead me to find the answer. A throne of success is always made by failures. Don't be dazzled by my current reputation and status so that you forget that I have also already been through countless failures."

Douglas looked up and stared at the virtual starry sky of the demiplane above. "The world is so vast and broad. The further you explore, the smaller you feel about yourself. What did this world look like at the very beginning? Where will the many questions lead to in the very end? We have no idea. Anything that is unknown deserves our reverence. We can't keep ourselves away from them because of fear and uncertainty.

"If today our experiment works, we will prove that human beings can also create planets and create a world. We are taking the first step!"

Douglas' smiling eyes turned to look at Lucien, "And this is all thanks to Lucien. His unrestrained thoughts and reversed way of thinking have freed me from my past experience."

Hearing the praise, Lucien thought to himself that the president's small step probably meant one giant leap for mankind.

Fernando noticed that Lucien was being absent-minded. He gave Lucien a threatening stare and then turned to Douglas. "No more

lecturing. An award-winning speech should be saved until success, or it would turn into a joke.”

Bergner also smiled and explained, “What I just said was not a prophecy. I was simply showing my care to an old friend. If I want to do a fortune telling for Douglas, I would have to prepare for at least a month for the result to not be too ridiculously wrong.”

Artil, Luciana, and Norman gradually cheered up.

Douglas did not say anything. He nodded slightly and put the artificial planet back into his pouch and turned on the magic tower.

The stars in the virtual night sky suddenly went out. The mountains, forest, lake, prairie, and the magic tower itself were completely encased by the darkness.

Then the white lines on the magic tower lit up one by one and formed a very complex magic circle.

As soon as the magic circle became complete, the magic tower started trembling fiercely with a loud buzzing noise. A great power, like a roaring ocean, gathered in front of Douglas and formed a mysterious gate inlaid with countless constellation symbols.

“All of you, go back to Allyn, and watch the sky carefully,” said Douglas.

Meanwhile, his formidable spiritual power spread out. The power was like a burning sun, and it made Lucien and the others unable to open their eyes or spread out their spiritual power.

Finishing his words, Douglas pushed his spiritual power fiercely toward the stargate and opened a gap. Then he stepped in and disappeared in the darkness and void.

This was how a satellite was launched in this world. Lucien stared at the gradually vanishing gate, speechless. No expensive fuels, no giant rocket, no ignition device. All Douglas needed to do was to take the satellite with him and do a space jump.

Lucien truly realized that, in this world of magic, there were still

many aspects that were more advanced than that of the Earth. It's just he still had no clue how they worked.

In this world, a grand arcanist himself was a rocket, a satellite, an intercontinental missile, a combination of power and glory!

"To explore the planets far away from us, it will take two to three years to prepare a space jump. The longest might take several decades. As for a short-distance jump like this, it only takes a few days of preparation," explained Fernando.

Bergner, the Prophet, looked at the crystal ball in his hand. "Let's go back to Allyn. We cannot miss this great moment. Three to five minutes later, Douglas will be able to enter the preset orbit."

Douglas will be able to enter the preset orbit... Lucien thought this sentence sounded a bit weird, and had a deeper understanding of the grand arcanists' non-human nature.

Then he went back to Allyn with rest of the people in the demiplane.

Standing on the thirty-third floor of the headquarter's tower, they stared at the night sky. Time went by, but nothing happened.

Luciana asked nervously, "is there a problem?"

It sounded like she was asking other people, but also like she was murmuring to herself.

"No, there will be no problem. It is just somehow delayed," said Artil decisively.

Norman remained as calm as the two legendary sorcerers. He said in a low voice, "Mr. Douglas's theory should be correct..."

Lucien stared at the sky, feeling both excited and worried. This was another exploration of the truth of the world.

Would it work?

Would a new star be born?

The stars in the sky were like countless eyes. Following the tracks that they had been obeying for millions of years, the stars were always the same silent.

.....

Watching the stars on her own platform at home, Samantha was trying to improve a magic spell for interfering in destiny.

During her short break, she was still looking at the night sky with pure appreciation.

“A starry sky is the most gorgeous scenic beauty in this world. It is deep and boundless. It is charming, and also formidable...”
Samantha murmured to herself as if reciting a poem.

All of a sudden, her beautiful eyes opened extremely wide! So wide that her eyeballs could probably fall out from her eye sockets.

In the starry sky, a new star appeared without any prior signs!

It was so close, so bright, and its track was so special!

“The birth of a star?”

Samantha could not close her mouth.

.....

Lance, the Holy City.

The pope was leafing through a book. Suddenly, he felt something and looked out of the window. He saw that, in the sky, there was that dazzling bright star that had never been seen before. The star was so bright that it had lit up half the sky. Even the sunset glow could not hide the light of the star!

The book dropped to the ground from Benedict II's hand. Totally shocked, he murmured subconsciously,

“A new star...?”

“Who did it?!”

.....

In Allyn, when the star lit up in the sky, Artil burst out a low roaring, giving a full vent to his feelings.

“It worked! Mr. Douglas is correct!” Luciana hailed, with tears in her eyes.

Fernando slightly shook his head, “So bright... like he’s afraid the others won’t see it.”

Lucien rubbed his forehead, feeling a bit speechless. So that was the function of the main magic circle? ... To burst out bright light like the sun? Was Douglas worried that the Church might miss this historic moment?

But Lucien thought that since this satellite would soon be shot down within several hours because of the main magic circle installed in it, the launching of other satellites with different functions could be put on their agendas.

It actually worked...

It really is a planet...

.....

In Rentato, in Antiffler, in Tria, in Aalto, and in countless other cities, no matter it was day or night, those with extraordinary power and the ordinary people were all staring at the sky, totally stunned.

They had never seen the birth of a new star!

Chapter 432: Reactions of Different Parties

The stars in the sky all dimmed under the dazzlingly bright light from the new star, as if a new sun had appeared. Radiating a glaring light without any constraint, the new star orbits along its own track unaffected.

Feeling that something was going on, Brook walked out from his demiplane. Standing on the thirty-fourth floor of the Allyn magic tower, he stared vacantly at the starry sky,

"This isn't the birth of a new star..."

"Its orbit is too close. If it's a real star, it will crush into this world, destroying everything..."

"What is it?"

"The power is beyond mighty..."

As a grand arcanist and legendary sorcerer, as well as the student of Douglas, Brook had figured out in his head the range of the orbit based on only observing the size of the star, its brightness, and some other parameters. Although it was not accurate, it was enough for him to tell how far the star was from this world.

For this very reason, Brook was a bit shocked. To him, if it had actually been the birth of a new star, he would not have been so surprised and confused, but would have rather taken it as something worthy of in-depth study and prepared the relevant spells for research.

But this one was an artificial star!

...

In the Kingdom of Brianne, in a tall magic tower reaching the sky.

Staring at the stars in his crystal ball, a senior-rank astrologer who

was supposed to be doing his fortune-telling was, however, now gazing at the night sky with his mouth slightly open. He had never seen such a bright star before, and the birth of the star just happened like that without any signs!

This was even more bizarre than the scarlet moon!

"What star is it?" The astrologer murmured after quite a while.

Then, he hurriedly looked down at the crystal ball in his hand. When a new star was born, the track of destiny would surely be affected. He was somewhat annoyed and frustrated, as the birth of a star will bring great changes in the River of Destiny and he would have to restart his divination.

Half an hour later, he suddenly raised his head and looked into the sky, stunned.

"Why is there no reflection of fate?"

"Is it a real star?"

...

In the Dark Mountain Range, at the campsite of adventurers.

Stanis, the King of Nightmare, who enjoyed living among ordinary people and observing their dreams, was appreciating his afternoon tea in a small cabin. Suddenly, the white porcelain cup fell from his hand to the ground and broke into countless pieces.

Stanis did not care about it at all. Instead, he flashed to the window, raised his head and looked to the East.

Across the sky, a brilliant star suddenly emerged and lit up half of the sky. It was as bright as the sun!

Stanis wondered if his cognition world had gone wrong and he had been affected by his own dream or illusionary spell.

After a glance at the sinking sun in the west, Stanis turned back to the newly-born star, which was moving unaffectedly following its

own track.

"If this is a dream, what does this horribly bright star stand for?"

"If it is not a dream, who did this?"

"Such a miracle can never be performed by a mundane..."

...

In Rentato, at the avenue which had not been equipped with arc lamps, it was dark and cold. Only several stars in the sky slightly lit up the way.

Because of the increasing number of alchemical workshops, the spinners had been improved by the alchemists. More and more commoners in Rentato had to work extra hours for higher productivity. Now, a few clusters of them were walking on the street. Feeling the harsh winter wind whipping, they all picked up the pace to return home as quickly as possible.

As they were walking, they saw the road in the front was strangely bathed in bright light as if it had been daytime.

Astounded, they looked up and then lost all their words. There was a bright star hanging in the sky, moving slowly in its own track. It was completely different than the silver moon, but was equally outstanding.

They wondered if this was a miracle from God.

"The almighty God of Truth..."

"Only Truth lives forever..."

Out of great astonishment, they thought that it was the God of Truth that created this miracle. They kneeled down on the ground regardless of the mud from the melted snow, and they prayed with passion and devotion.

...

In Aalto, Natasha, who was wearing a full set of hunting suit, was riding a horse through the thin forest.

Suddenly, she put an arrow to her bow and shot it out fiercely. With great power and momentum, and twined with illusional space gaps, the arrow showed up in front of a big tree several hundred meters away in a blink of eye. It then penetrated dozens of thick trees one by one like a hot knife through butter. Finally, the arrow nailed a grey hare to the ground which had just jumped out of the bush.

The scene was like a sketch, and as if someone had made a hole in the middle of the trees using an eraser, everything in this picture was safe and sound except the trees.

Natasha, however, was not paying attention to the perfect shoot she just made. Instead, she looked eastward and saw the new, bright star.

She instantly recalled the scarlet moon incident a while ago.

"Is it because of him, again?" Murmured Natasha.

...

In the Holy City of Lance, the pope, Benedict II, was standing beside a window, holding the staff. The new star was under his close scrutiny.

"It's not vanishing..."

"The track doesn't make sense..."

"Based on the position... Is it from the Congress of Magic?"

Soon the pope calmed down. He gazed at the new star indifferently and observed its orbit. When he believed that he had understood and remembered all the information about it, the pope raised the staff, his body bending slightly backward. Benedict II half closed his eyes and said to the sky in a low voice,

"Almighty God of Truth, you are one and everyone."

"You are the instant and the forever."

"You are the creator and the master."

As he was praying, a layer of white holy light covered him. The divine powers started collecting from above, and slowly spread out and covered the entire city and its surrounding areas.

Feeling the power, the Grand Cardinals, Divine Knights, the Cardinals, and the common followers all calmed down from the great shock of seeing the new star. The look on their face softened as they were deeply touched.

It was the air and power of the Lord!

"You are one and everyone."

"You are the instant and the forever."

...

Hundreds of thousands of people started praying. Under the dominating power, their voice joined together and an astonishing resonance was created.

The scene was beyond magnificent.

When the praying became louder and louder, the pope pointed at the sky with his staff!

In the sky, a white light spot emerged from nowhere. It grew bigger and bigger. Soon, its light became as bright as the artificial star and the sun.

From inside of the light ball, a beautiful and refreshing hymn came out. The entire sky became holy and clean.

In Lucien and the rest of the sorcerers' eyes, the entire night sky had been lit up by the light ball. They could also faintly hear the hymn.

Lucien had expected that the Church would not keep the artificial star in the air for too long, since it was a great provocation to the

authority of the Gold of Truth.

If sorcerers could create stars, then what was the God of Truth who was said to have created the world? Just a sorcerer who is a bit more powerful than the grand arcanists?

But what Lucien did not expect was that the Church would react in such an exaggerated manner.

The light ball became clearer and clearer. It seems that its inside was divided into seven layers. In the first layer, beautiful angels with a pair of wings and pure white souls were playing the wonderful hymn praising the true God on the pianos, harps, clarinets, and horns.

From the second layer to the fifth, the convivial scenes were similar. The angles and souls had nothing but pleasure and happiness to enjoy. The only difference was that the angels had more wings - there were Virtues, Principalities, and Cherubim.

In the sixth layer, there were the illusional figures of six Seraphim. They each stood in one direction, as if they were escorting the seventh layer.

In the seventh layer, besides the endless holy light spreading out, there was a Seraph holding canon. Lying prostrate beneath the light, the seraph was serving the God of Truth.

Lucien knew exactly what it was!

This was the real divine spell, which killed the last consul of the Magic Empire!

This was the real divine spell of great cost to the caster!

This was the real divine spell that only the pope could cast!

God's Arrival!

While observing the divine spell very carefully, Lucien turned on the monocle permanently enchanted with electromagnetism messaging to test how the artificial planet responded to signals.

In the light ball, all the angels burst out pure divine light, and the light joined with that of the seventh layer. Like ocean waves, the light spread out and covered the entire sky.

"This is the response from Antiffler No. 1..."

Then the sound of electrical noise took over.

Staring at the sky which had turned milky white from the holy light, hearing the electrical noise, Lucien subconsciously compared the power to that of the God of Silver Moon and concluded that, although the two powers were within the same level, Alterna was slightly weaker.

Then again, this was just a vague conclusion drawn by a senior-rank sorcerer. Maybe it was far from being accurate. Even for a legendary like Douglas or Dracula, evaluating these kinds of power could be very difficult.

The reason why the artificial planet was named Antiffler No. 1 was that Antiffler was the capital city of the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire, where Douglas was born and grew up.

A mysterious gate drawn with countless constellation symbols suddenly showed up in front of Fernando, Lucien, and the other sorcerers. Douglas in his grey magic robe staggered out of it. The colorful gems circling above his head had mostly disappeared.

However, Douglas was in a high spirit. His excitement could not be hidden on his genial face.

"Finally, I've experienced God's Arrival..."

"Unless he wants to fall early, the pope won't be able to use God's Arrival in the next five years!"

Lucien finally realized why the president made the artificial planet so bright. It was not simply for showing off his achievement.

Chapter 433: The Change and The Plan

In the Radiance Church in Holm.

Awoken from their prayers, Philibell, Vaharall, and Stone were staring at the night sky, which was dominated by the holy light and the projection of Mountain Paradise, with a blank expression.

"God's Arrival... The pope used God's Arrival!"

"The new star was made by the heresies? ... No, it was made by the vicious sorcerers!"

"But the made star could move around this world like a real one... No wonder the pope had to use God's Arrival..."

The looks on their face were complicated. There was awe, admiration, joy, confusion, and anger.

Ever since the scarlet moon incident, the focus of the South Church shifted again. Now, they were focused on exploring the unknown dimension and the solidified shadows of black, white, and grey. Therefore, Varantine, the leader of the Ascetics, had returned to Lance, and soon Vaharall would be back as well. Only Stone would be left to lead the Knights of Grail in Rentato to help Philibell and the four parishes in Brianne, the Duchy of Calais, Colette, and the North Coast to guard against the Congress of Magic.

The great war plan against the Congress of Magic that they had been preparing for almost two years was thus halted. Now the Church was taking a strategic defence position.

To the Saint Truth Church, nothing was more important than finding the fallen Alterna and the mysterious existence.

Besides, they believed that the Congress of Magic had shifted their focus as well and would not have much time to work against them either.

"The glory of God is everywhere. Please show mercy to the

mundane, and save them." prayed Philibell in low voice.

Vaharall drew a cross in front of his chest and said sincerely, "The pope is the true spokesman of God. He is beyond decisive. If it had been me, I would have spent hours hesitating. In that case, more people would have seen the vicious symbol in the sky, and their faith would have been affected."

Although the pope could not use God's Arrival anymore within five years, he was still the most powerful man in this world, surpassing all the legends, and his presence was threatening enough for all the enemies. However, the fact that the most powerful divine spell could no longer be used again in five years would definitely be a temptation for many, which would have a very negative impact on their search of Alterna. Therefore, in Vaharall's eyes, this was a tough decision.

However, now, under the frightening holy power, the vicious symbol had turned into ashes. Even if the Congress tried to show off their achievement, it would only become a joke. Any attempt into the realm of God would face the fury from God. Only the God of Truth could create this world and the other planets, and even if others could make similar things, they would not exist for long.

"That thing's dangerous. The sooner it is destroyed, the better it is." Stone, the divine knight, nodded. He felt extremely uncomfortable when he thought of the fact that an artificial planet made by sorcerers was looking down upon them from the sky.

Although, there was no such concept called air supremacy in this world yet, anyone who could fly understood how important this ability was to a fight. Except when fighting indoors, based on the ability to fly, a radiant knight could easily attrit more than ten grand knights to death even if he was seriously injured, as the grand knights had no methods to strike long-range.

Therefore, a planet made by sorcerers would be a nightmare to the Church if it had been equipped with all the methods for surveillance and striking.

After the prayers, Philibell looked as if he had aged a bit. With a

slightly exhausted blank expression, he said, "the Congress of Magic chose to reveal the artificial planet on purpose, or we wouldn't be able to find it out this soon. If the artificial planets become more advanced in the future... say, if they will be equipped with Invisibility, Deflect, or even Space Jump magic circles, we would be in great trouble.

"We have to improve some of the divine spells. Besides God's Arrival, we have to have other powerful spells for extra long distance attack.

"... Also, we have to have new divine spells and items that can detect artificial planets, so we can turn on the defense divine circles in time.

"If possible, we need to steal the information from the Congress of Magic to see what are their plans for the artificial planets, so that we can make similar products. An artificial planet will be the best self-defense weapon against other artificial planet... That's for sure.

"We have to set up space jump circles near-orbit, through which the saint cardinals and divine knights can reach the target in the shortest period of time without extra preparation.

"... Find the leading sorcerer of the artificial planet plan. If we can, we cleanse them. I don't think it's very possible though... Only a legendary sorcerer could carry out such a plan."

Philibell's many suggestions made Stone slightly frown. Obviously, the strategies they were taking now were completely different from those adopted before.

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Under the pure divine light, Duke Paphos' villa was as bright as a crystal palace. Inside it behind the big windows stood James and Russel, the Duke of Wolfburg.

"The power of God is so broad and vast that it's impossible to resist." The bareheaded James released a long sigh as he watched the holy sea of light slowly retreating.

Holding a glass of wine, Russel slightly lowered his head and gazed at the red liquid inside, as if he dared not to directly look at the projection of Mountain Paradise,

"Since the establishment of the Church, God's Arrival have been used for only eight times. Among the eight times, six witnessed the falling of one of the most powerful existences in this world:

"The Light of Stars - the last consul of the Magic Empire; the Lord of Death; Abel - the vampire prince; Aflora - the ancient dragon of Time; the fiend of the Church of Sun; and the "goddess" Mother Earth. Only Alterna and Maltimus, the Lord of Hell, survived so far.

"It's hard to believe that the pope just used it, facing this new star..."

"Maybe it's not a real star..." As the leader of the Liberals, James knew more about the Congress of Magic than Russel. Although he was not certain about it, he was told that Douglas was working on something big.

Ross was very surprised, "What do you mean?"

"Maybe... Just maybe... It is an artificial planet made by Douglas. I hope he was not killed by God's Arrival..." said James, slightly excited and worried at the same time.

If the president had fallen, it would have been a fatal strike to the Congress of Magic. Although the many powerful grand arcanists would not let the Congress collapse, the inner conflicts between the grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers would be very hard for the Lord of Storm and the Hand of Annihilation to control. Thus, the Congress would start falling into decay day by day without a doubt, which was, of course, no good news to the Liberals.

"Ar-Artificial planet?" Russel was startled. Unlike building a demiplane, making a planet meant a new world had been built! — According to Douglas, the main material world was just a larger planet.

The shades on James's face fluctuated under the candlelight. "That's

true. The Congress of Magic is even more powerful than we expected, and also more dangerous. Maybe in the future we'll be collaborating with a 'God'..."

"Only Truth lives forever..." Russel, who still had a small amount of faith remaining, drew a cross in front of his chest.

.....

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower.

"Sir... the pope used ... God's Arrival?!" Luciana exclaimed unbelievably. Every sorcerer knew how horrible the power of God's Arrival was. Luciana wondered if her teacher Douglas had reached the level of Alterna, the God of Silver Moon?

Douglas grinned and waved his hand. "The pope's target was Antiffler No. 1. He had no idea that it was me who launched it and brought the initial velocity, so I was out of the range and only experienced it from nearby, or I would not be able to come back."

Mentioning this, Douglas did not feel depressed or scared at all. Now he knew the power of God's Arrival and saw how it worked by observing it from a close distance, it would benefit him a lot in the future.

"I'll write to you all to share this experience when I've finished digesting it," said Douglas to Fernando, Lucien, Artil, and the others.

Except for teaching and sharing his experience, he also planned to write the letters to express his appreciation — Without the help of the Lord of Storm and the Prophet, Douglas would not have been able to make the artificial planet within such a short period of time; without Lucien, the plan would have never even existed.

Lucien thanked Douglas, while feeling a bit melancholy in his mind. Was this the end of the first artificial planet project? It started so fast and ended so fast. Several hours earlier, Lucien, who was very excited and in the spirit of acting, was about to name this project the Star Wars Project.

"Sir, the project is a success! Your theory has been proved! No one can doubt you anymore!" said Artil very excitedly, his lips slightly trembling.

Although Douglas's theoretical system had been planted into every arcanist's heart, there was still criticism. The criticism had become particularly loud when Douglas' experiments based on this system proved that the velocity of light did not change in different directions, that ether did not exist, and that the wave theory of light was rather problematic.

Norman and Luciana were the same excited. The artificial planet had strongly backed Douglas's theoretical system.

"It's just the first step. Antiffler No. 1 was destroyed by God's Arrival before it could finish a complete revolution around the world. Next, we'll have Antiffler No. 2... Of course, it's gonna be done in a very secretive way." Douglas answered smiling. Although he was being very humble, his tone now contained more confidence.

Mentioning this, he became a bit emotional. "My theoretical system has been proved, but this has brought me more questions and make me feel even more in awe of the unknown truth: How did the gravity system come into shape at the very beginning? Why did it happen?"

Here he goes again... Fernando's mouth twitched a bit.

Seizing the chance, Lucien hurriedly said to the grand arcanists, "Mr. President, teacher, Mr. Prophet, I've tested the signal from Antiffler No. 1, and it was very clear! If we put a magic circle for transmitting signals in an artificial planet, we could significantly enlarge the coverage range of Electromagnetic Message. After all, signal transmission is much easier in the sky than on the ground. If that's the case, we will be talk to the Dark Mountain Range when we are still in Allyn. That's even more convenient than Space Jump!

"Also, we have to consider the functions of surveillance, locating, and attacking. We need different kinds of artificial planets!"

Douglas smiled and nodded. "Very interesting suggestion. Better

communication will for sure bring a great revolution to society. However, the cost is still too high. The alchemical products needed should be of at least the fifth circle. Only senior-rank sorcerers could possibly be able to use them. I'm afraid that we cannot popularize it so far."

Under the influence of Jinkela, the word, popularization, was being mentioned more and more often by sorcerers.

"I do have a package plan for this!" Lucien was already prepared.

Lucien was not able to launch a satellite himself, so he had to try his best to cooperate with the president and Fernando.

Fernando chuckled briefly. He knew that his student was already preparing for this when he proposed the artificial planet project.

Chapter 434: Lucien's Package Plan

Douglas looked around. All the people here were either the members of the Highest Council or his student, and they could all be trusted.

So Douglas smiled and asked, "a package plan? You've been thinking about this for a long time?"

Douglas worked all the way through and finally established the Congress of Magic. His theoretical system had influenced not only sorcerers generation after generation, but also even his enemies including the Church and the vampires. Whether speaking of intelligence or wisdom, he ranked top three in this world. Therefore, although he did not know Lucien as well as Fernando did, he could still find some clues to Lucien's real intention in this single sentence.

Cheeky as he was, Lucien did not mind that his true intention was detected by the two grand arcanists. He said with a smile, "firstly, as for satellite communication... I've read your article, Sir. If we want to build a communication domain that covers the entire continent and the oceans, we have two choices. Option A: The satellites' orbital planes need to be above the Northland and the South Ice-ocean, so we need at least two artificial planets. Option B: we put a synchronous orbit satellite above the right ascension..."

The arcanists present were all experts in Astrology, so Lucien did not explain in details, but only presented the outline of his plan.

"... But the best way would be to combine the two options together. And to guarantee the quality of communication, the more satellites we have, the better it is. Of course, because of the high cost of producing an artificial planet and space jumping, we have to do it step by step and turn it into a long-term plan. I propose that we name it Constellation Plan — The plan of making constellations around the world using artificial planets.

"... Also, we better set up a company for this and charge every

sorcerer who needs to use the satellites to compensate for the costs. The company will sell special products for satellite communication. If anyone wants to make one on their own, they still have to buy a license for it."

As an authority in Electromagnetics, Fernando slightly frowned after he heard Lucien's speech. "The problem still hasn't been solved. To ensure the clarity of the signals, a higher standard of Electromagnetism Messaging will have to be adopted when the satellites cover the entire continent. Then again, only sorcerers above the fifth circle would be able to use it, which only accounts for a very small proportion of the entire sorcerer population, since few middle-rank or low-rank sorcerers could afford it."

"So we should charge a bit more, and open some unimportant satellites to the rich nobles. Presumably, they should welcome the convenience and they can certainly afford it," said Lucien.

He had not mentioned the next steps yet: to build magic base stations. He would wait until there were enough satellites.

Planets up in the sky were hard to strike, but base stations on the ground were easy targets. Only when the nobles started relying on the convenient communication method would they willingly defend the base stations.

Lucien continued. "As for the need of the low-rank and middle-rank sorcerers, I have come up with a new second-circle spell called Electromagnetic File Transfer by simplifying Mr. Fernando's Electromagnetism Messaging. Although it can only work in a limited range, and cannot support real-time calls, it can still serve the function of transferring documents similar to the magic circles inside a tower. I think it should be enough for them right now."

This so-called Electromagnetic File Transfer was in fact radiotelegraphy. As for the invention of intercom, it was only of very limited value because of the existence of Secondary Telepathic Bond, so Lucien had not spent time to invent the spell.

"A second-circle spell... Then most nobles with titles and manors should be able to use it." Norman nodded slightly.

"Yes, it is going to be one of our products for popularization," said Lucien in a businessman tone like that of Arthur. "Also, inspired by the power lines that have been installed recently, I've got a new idea. The high requirements of Electromagnetism Messaging are from the fact that this spell relies on electromagnetic waves transmitting in the air. During the process, the waves can encounter all kinds of environments and landforms, and they are thus weakened. To make up for this loss, we have to enhance the signals by using more complicated magic circles.

"... Using satellites as relay stations can be one solution. And there's also another one: To set up exclusive pathways for the transmission of electromagnetic waves just like the power lines. So the transmission will be limited within the wires, and we could avoid the complex environments when installing the lines. Where the wires join, we set up magic circles for selecting and forwarding signals.

"... If the wires can extend to every city, every manor, and every house, it will be a great benefit to the ordinary people. The only problems are that the popularization requires a huge amount of investment in the beginning, and the Church can easily destroy the wires."

His fingers showing numbers, Douglas said, "to make this come true in Holm, the first step of establishing the wires itself would be a long-term plan... something that has to be measured in decades, not to mention other countries like Brianne and those across the strait.

"... But in the many decades to come, based on the current speed at which we are developing, we should be able to suppress the power of the Church within the Kingdom of Holm. In this case, maybe your plan can be partly carried out first in the prosperous places like Rentato and Paphos. An ordinary person can talk to her friend through an alchemical item."

Then Douglas smiled warmly. "There are multiple layers in your plan, Lucien. The artificial planets for communication cover sorcerers above the fifth circle, major nobles, leading businessmen; Electromagnetic File Transfer targets at low- and middle-rank sorcerers, smaller nobles, rich business people; and there is also the

establishment of wires aiming at serving apprentices, dilapidated nobles, and common citizens. You've taken all of them into consideration."

"In fact, the plan for setting up wires can still be further divided into two parts: one is to enable users to talk through wires directly, and the other is like using Electromagnetic File Transfer. The latter has an even lower requirement for the terminal magic circle. Also, we can first open up service branches in some smaller cities for now. When people are in need, they come to us to use the products. In this way, we won't need to wait until the wires are popularized to most of the families to begin our plan." Lucien pictured the image according to the images of earth in his mind.

The feeling that he was able to change this world gave him a thrilling feeling.

"Good. When most commoners start to benefit from magic, their belief in the Church will be shaken as never before. We need to be prepared for counterattacks from the Church." Douglas nodded in satisfaction.

Obviously, the president and Lucien's teacher were also aware of the fact that the popularization of magic items would greatly challenge the foundation of the Church. Lucien realized once again that he was definitely not the only smart guy in this world, so he hurriedly put forward another plan.

"I've been working on producing a new, affordable alchemical item. It can receive electromagnetic signals within a certain range and turn it into voice. Although it cannot accommodate point-to-point communications, it can still change ordinary people's life!"

What Lucien was saying was a magic version of the Crystal Radio that belongs to level-one alchemical items. Through mass production, the technique requirement could be lowered to the apprentice level. A common citizen could afford it with several years of saving.

"Life-changing?" Fernando directly got to the point, even though Lucien was not being very specific.

Lucien put on a mischievous smile. "We can form a radio program and send message to the countries across Storm Strait at a specific frequency. We can play symphonies, pianos pieces, operas, stories, and legends. We can even introduce some basic knowledge of arcana and magic to people, as well as the dark history facts of the Church..."

Hearing Lucien's words, Luciana slightly opened her mouth and exclaimed in a great shock, "It's tearing down the foundation of the Church. They will go crazy!"

"Therefore we gotta be careful with the time and the frequency band. The programs should also be interesting so that once people start liking the programs, they will keep them as a secret and gradually be converted. Of course, at first, we have to protect our listeners by choosing the areas where we are able to exert our power. We have to make sure that they won't be put on the gallows even if anyone inform against them." Lucien answered seriously.

Douglas released a sigh. "Very good. You shall name the program then."

All of them present were aware of the value of the plan.

"Um... Let's name it Arcana Voice." Lucien would not tell anyone that he had decided the name a long time ago.

"Let's set up a company for turning all the alchemical items and communication plans that you just mentioned into real. The shares are divided according to our own contribution and investment. As the initiator and the inventor of the alchemical items, Lucien, you will get 25 percent." Fernando made the final decision. It looked like a fair decision, but in fact, favored Lucien a lot.

Fernando was the one who created Electromagnetism Messaging. Douglas, Fernando, and the Prophet would be responsible for launching the satellites. Luciana and Norman would be the ones to carry out the specific plans and make investments. All of them, including the sorcerers that were going to join them in the future, only owned 75 percent of the company.

Douglas agreed as he was grateful to Lucien who suggested the artificial planet project. He smiled and asked, "what about the name for the company?"

"Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company..." Lucien responded subconsciously, then he hurriedly explained. "... It means using electromagnetic waves to communicate and transmit messages."

After drawing the basic plan, Douglas looked at Lucien. "So for the applications of artificial planets, you got any other suggestions?"

He was sure that this young man's ambition was far more than this.

"First of all, we shall conduct more in-depth studies in the ionosphere to look for a better plan for transmitting electromagnetic waves. Secondly, we have to put more defensive magic circles to protect the planets, including Invisibility and Orbital Transfer," replied Lucien without hesitation. "Thirdly, since the planets are high above, most attacks from them will be weakened greatly before they reach the ground, so we have to come up with super-range attack magic spells with much more concentrated energy... hopefully the spells will be lower than legendary level."

Or the cost for producing a legendary-level artificial planet would be too high.

"Fourthly, we can use artificial planets to monitor our targets on the ground..."

Lucien indeed had a complete package plan. Many of his suggestions made the grand arcanists present feel deeply refreshing.

"You have too many suggestions. We have to go back and digest them first. We'll set up Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company first; forming Arcana Voice will be our current priority." Douglas was affected by God's Arrival, and he sounded a bit tired after the initial spirit-lifting buffering expired.

However, standing beside Douglas, Artil was rather excited. "I'm going to write papers and challenge all the arcanists who ever

doubted your theories and experiments on the velocity of light, Sir!"

Chapter 435: Start of the Debate War

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In the next half month, besides the birth of the new star and God's Arrival that everyone was talking about, everything else was quiet and peaceful in Allyn, Rentato, Lance, and the other cities.

The strange peacefulness continued as year 820 of the Saint Calendar came. It felt like the new star was a normal celestial phenomenon and nothing was going on.

After short vocation, Lucien entered the gate of the Atom Institution with the Sun Staff, which was transformed into a gentleman's cane. He was thinking about the initiation of Allyn Telephone and Telegraph company and the promotion of the alchemical items.

Before Lucien could take off his hat and put it on the rack, he heard Lazar's voice. "An... An artificial planet?" Lazar's voice was trembling uncontrollably.

"The star that brightened up half of the sky that night was created and launched by President Douglas!" Heidi still had a crisp voice like a girl, but it was extremely sharp at the moment. It seemed like she was shocked by some unimaginable power.

Lucien realized that Douglas had published the experiment on *Arcana*. He then smiled and greeted Lazar and Heidi who were still in shock.

"Hey, Lazar. Hey, Heidi. Happy New Year. You're so early."

After reaching the third circle, Lazar already knew what he should do now as a middle-rank mage. He would read every issue of *Arcana* and *Magic* as soon as they were released. Before, Lazar could barely understand any articles that were published on *Arcana* and *Magic*, so he had no interest in buying them. Most of the time, he simply borrowed them from the arcana library. He was more interested in *Element* and *Common Arcana*. Now, Lazar would arrive early only on the release days of the two journals every month and

Lucien was thus not surprised.

What surprised Lucien was that Heidi, who usually woke up late, could get up so early.

“Mr. Evans, Annick has become a formal sorcerer!” Heidi turned her head around and answered Lucien’s question without thinking too much. “I’m motivated! I’m going to get up early and meditate. I am going to get up early and study!” She tightened her fist.

Lucien did not know that Annick had become a formal sorcerer. Although the communication satellite had not been launched yet and no long-distance calls could be made, Lucien still spent most of his spare time on the initiation of Allyn Telephone and Telegraph Company and its subordinate Arcana Voice. He only had time to chat with his apprentices during the New Year’s party and did not know that Annick was already very close to advancing.

This made Lucien consider handing the matters over to professionals or sorcerers who enjoyed running businesses after setting everything up. He could just sit there and get his share. The most important thing for him was to advance his arcana and magic level. He also needed to improve the alchemical items.

“When did he rank up?” Lucien asked delightedly.

Heidi tightened her fists.

“Yesterday! He has been working on his private research recently and he didn’t even rest during the New Year holiday. He suddenly had some breakthrough yesterday. Then, he successfully advanced without the help of potions, before he had enough spiritual power! If I hadn’t gone to ask him on a difficult problem I encountered, I wouldn’t be able to find it out!”

“Advancing just several months after his adult ceremony, Annick is not bad at all when compared to the other apprentices at his age.” Lucien nodded, satisfied. It seemed like Annick made quite some progress on the verification of the photoelectric effect, proving that it was electrons that were emitted.

It suddenly occurred to Lucien that he might have trained a bunch of future Holm Crown Award (or Silver Moon Medal, etc.) winners. In the future, there might be a sentence like this in the History of Magic: “Atom Institution, a small place with a lot of honorable names and forerunners that are respected by the later generations”.

Although with Lucien’s paper on his discovery of the natural radiation ahead, Annick would probably not be able to get the Holm Crown Award this time. It was highly likely that he would be able to get the award later if he could keep exploring at the frontline of elemental research.

Heidi tightened her fists again. “I’m certain that I could do better than them!”

At this moment, the other apprentices arrived, all appearing energetic and excited.

“Congratulations, Annick, you’re a formal sorcerer now,” Lucien smiled and greeted.

“What? You became a formal sorcerer?” Sprint burst out. He thought he would be the first one to advance among the apprentices.

Layria and Katrina also stared at Annick with surprise, joy, admire, and depress. They could not believe that the always reserved Annick could become a formal sorcerer so fast.

Annick blushed under the attention of the others. “I made some progress with my experiment yesterday; my meditation environment then changed, so I consumed the potion and tried to construct a first-circle spell. I only tried it once and I somehow succeeded.” He sounded a bit shy.

Annick had never been stared at like this and he felt a bit uncomfortable. He lowered his head as if he wanted to bury himself into the ground.

“You’ve verified that it’s the electron?” Lucien asked. He was happy with Annick’s achievement.

Annick nodded. “Yeah.”

“It’s a result that might get you the Holm Crown,” Lucien said half-jokingly.

Heidi, Layria, Katrina, and even Lazar suddenly gasped deeply. They thought for a while and realized that there was indeed a chance for Annick to be awarded the Holm Crown prize.

Yesterday, he was still a sorcerer apprentice, but now there was a chance that he could be awarded the Holm Crown. It sounded more like a legend than an actual legend. Even Lucien, who got the most honorable reward when he was not yet 19, had already become a formal sorcerer for almost a year by then.

Annick felt even more uncomfortable after he heard the gaspings.

“It’s impossible. I can only prove that the electrons come from the metal, but no practical evidence shows that it comes from inside the metal atom. There’s a chance the atoms absorbed the free electron when binding together.” Annick shook his head.

Then, Annick sounded as if he was talking to himself. “I don’t want the reward even if I have the chance to get it.”

“Why?” Lucien was not the only who was curious here. It’s surprising that someone would decline an honor like the Holm Crown prize.

Annick responded, “I don’t like standing in the center of the stage. I can just study, do my experiment, and improve quietly, right?”

“If you’re qualified for the award one day but decline it, you’ll draw even more attention. It’s something that has never happened before.” Lucien smiled and explained why Annick’s plan was impossible.

“That’s right...” Annick belatedly understood the reason.

At the same time, Lazar finally realized what was happening. He raised the *Arcana* he was reading and exclaimed, “everyone, do you remember the newborn star that was destroyed by God’s Arrival

about half a month ago?”

“Yeah, why?” Sprint’s attention quickly shifted to Lazar. The incident that night had left a deep impression in his mind.

Layria and Katrina also turned to look at Lazar curiously. They beautiful bright star was still clear in their memories.

As the other apprentices’ sight shifted away from him, Annick was relieved and his expression loosened. Then, he also turned to look at Lazar in the same way.

In Allyn, every sorcerer who knew about the background are shocked by or, at least, interested in the Newborn Star.

When Lazar was going to show off the big news he found and tell everyone how shocked and respectful he was, Heidi took his chance and spoke first. “The star was created and launched by Mr. President!”

“What?!”

“That’s impossible!”

“It’s artificial? Seriously?”

The exclamations expressed how surprised everyone was.

“It’s true! The first paper on this issue, Summaries of Simulating the Astronomical System

with an Artificial Planet, is from the President!” Lazar quickly waved the *Arca* in his hand.

“The experimental data, the actual data, the comparison between the two, and the descriptions of the trajectory. It must be true!”

With the idea of the artificial planet, it would not be hard for people who had studied Douglas’ theoretical system and achieved some results to create the whole model with the previous data, so Douglas did not try to hide his experiment. For people who could understand the experiment, it would not take them too long to

figure everything out, and for people who could not understand it, they would never be able to figure out the truth.

Though obviously, he hid some of the actual situations and Lucien's plan was only mentioned in a small discussion, so the enemy would not be enlightened by the published materials.

"H-How is this even possible?" Layria muttered. To the sorcerers specializing in Astrology, the stars in the sky represented the fate of all creatures with intelligence. No one believed that "fate" could be man-made.

Sprint, Annick, and Katrina were all in a state of absence. Their pride from their recent improvement of skills and knowledge was destroyed by the shocking truth.

Lazar noticed that Lucien was simply smiling silently, as if he was not surprised at all. Suddenly, Lazar had a flash of intuition.

"Lucien, don't tell me you participated in the experiment?"

Everyone's sight instantly fell upon Lucien's face.

"I provided some suggestions." Lucien smiled and nodded. He had nothing to hide as long as no one knew who initiated the experiment. After all, the Church's attention was on the one who completed the experiment.

Lazar clicked his tongue twice. "I don't why, but I was not surprised at all when I heard you were part of it."

Heidi quickly turned the pages and, not surprisingly, she saw Douglas's words at the end.

She started reading in a clear silvery voice. "Special thanks to those who helped me during the experiment, Fernando, Bergner, Lucien, Artil, Luciana, Norman... Teacher's name is really here..."

Once again, they realized how talented Lucien was.

"Let me what else is published on this issue." Lucien raised his hand and took over the journal. His own issue was probably in his office

of the Arcana Review Board.

Lucien checked the titles and suddenly saw an article published by Artil by the end. The title was *Does Ether Really Exist* . It was an article for pure discussion purposes and could not earn any reference credits.

Lucien inhaled slightly and slightly read the short article, which sounds like a declaration of war.

“... The artificial planet experiment strongly proved the President’s theories, and the lightspeed experiment based on the theory has proved that Ether does not exist.”

“... I will offer a reward of 50,000 arcana points for other theoretical explanations of the experiment, explanations including Ether!”

“The arcanists who question the experiment and believe in the existence of Ether, please use your wisdom and ‘imagination’!”

Lazar was reading the article by the side and he abruptly shouted in excitement, “that’s it! It’s time to make the ones who believe in the wave theory face their mistake!”

Elemental sorcerers like Lazar and Rock always believed in the particle theory.

After hearing Lazar’s words, Lucien felt like that a debate war was coming.

Chapter 436: Progression

Douglas School, in a mansion for the teachers.

Rock, who went to drink at his friend's home during the New Year holiday, was shouting with Arcana in his hand.

"How's that even possible?!""Great job!" Surprised and excited, he exclaimed from time to time.

"Damn, I'm gonna be late!" Rock saw the time on the clock in the living room while cheering, and he suddenly bounced up. He realized that he just made a big mistake and quickly put on his soft hat. He said goodbye to his friend and opened the door in a hurry.

On the street in the school, the falling autumn leaves created a peculiar romantic atmosphere. But Rock had no time to enjoy the beautiful view as he was rushing towards the carriage rental center.

"Isn't this Rock? An important member of the Atom Institution just returned to the school?" A mocking voice came from the side.

As heard the deep and hoarse voice, Rock paused abruptly. He turned his head to the other side of the street and noticed that Beate and several other people with innocent looks were standing under the tree.

"Beate?" Rock's expression became excited. He did not mind Beate's hostility and said with a laugh, "have you read today's Arcana?"

Beate was stunned. He and Rock would argue every time they met. He wondered why the situation changed this time.

"No, what's up?" A teacher from the Electromagnetics Faculty asked curiously.

Rock tried his best not to just tell Beate everything. Instead, he smiled mischievously and asked, "do you remember the bright star from around half a month ago? The star was created and launched by the President! The first paper is about the details of the

experiment!"

"What? H-how's that even possible?" Beate did not connect this news with other things. He was just surprised as he did not know that it was something that human beings could accomplish.

The other teachers around him had the same surprised look on their faces.

Rock patiently guided them. "It proves that the President's theory is correct, and it has successfully answered the questions of the past several hundred years."

"You're right." Beate agreed. Douglas's theory system left a deep impression in people's mind and he nodded without thinking much.

Rock suddenly laughed. "Do you remember the last time we talked about the President's lightspeed experiment? You didn't agree because you thought the President's theory system was wrong, right? What about now? Do you believe it or have you found another reason?"

"Rock!" Beate raised his right hand and pointed at Rock, his fingers shaking violently.

He was just a level-two arcanist and he could not think of another theory to argue back.

"Wait, one more thing, the two theories that were proposed in the last issue of Arcana and Magic have been rejected by the Lord of Storm. The first theory was rejected based on the errors in it; the other one required experimental proof. However, I'm certain that the one who suggested the theory would have attached the result of the experiment if he had it. If he didn't, it means that the result his experiment was against the theory." Rock was not giving Beate any chance.

The furious and threatened Beate had a hard time accepting this, and he yelled, "Then you explain the Double-Slit lines and Brook Spot with the particle theory!"

"This is not the point that we are discussing right now. Come on,

give me another explanation regarding the President's lightspeed experiment so you can prove that Ether exists! If Ether doesn't exist, the wave theory will be pointless. Also, in Arcana, Artil offered 50000 arcana points for similar theories. He wants the Arcanists who support the wave theory like you to use their imagination! IMAGINATION!" Rock dodged Beate's question and emphasized on the term "imagination".

Beate's mind would have already changed without the support from the classic light image theory and he now kept his end.

"Even if we can't come up with any theories now, it doesn't mean we can't in the future! Why don't you explain the experiments like the double-split diffraction experiment with the particle theory first! It's been over 100 years!"

"Stubborn. You should just accept the reality!" Rock mocked in a loud voice.

"You too. You should take the classic experiments more seriously!" Beate raged.

The long debate between Rock and the teachers started like this. But they were just talking about what they considered correct and no one was trying to answer the opponent's questions. It seemed like they could not reach an agreement even until the end of the world.

"Damn, I'm late!" Rock finally panicked when he felt the warmth of the winter sun. His heart ached at the thought of his arcana points that were about to be deducted.

Rock stared at Beate and the others after realizing he was getting late. "Stop playing around. You can go and claim the reward if you can refute the President's lightspeed experiment! I'm waiting for you to claim the 50000 arcana points, exchange them for bronze coins, and throw them all over my body!"

"Don't promote the wave theory if you can't do this!"

He turned around and left after finishing the sentence, leaving no

chance for Beate to reply. Obviously, he knew very well how to end an argument with an advantage.

Beate wanted to argue back with the classic experiments but he noticed that Rock was already gone. The anger of unable to vent was like a flame burning his mind. "That damn fool! Dumbass! Stupid!"

Similar events were happening all over Allyn. However, it was only a small group of arcanists who support the particle theory that was arguing with the many supporters of the wave theory. Yet with the evidence from the lightspeed experiment, they somehow gained the advantage over the wave theory supporters, who were furious but had no way to argue back.

The only good news was that the arcanists whose cognitive world was based on the wave theory did not endure any serious injuries, thanks to the existence of the classic light experiments. They believed there will be other theories that included the Ether to explain Douglas's lightspeed experiment.

...

In the Electromagnetic Kingdom, Brook was reading the latest issue of Arcana.

Rubbing his wig, Brook sighed slightly, "I didn't expect teacher to prove it in this way... He's incredible..."

He turned the magazine to the last page and read Artil's "War Declaration" carefully. He shook his head, then stood up and walked to the window. Staring at the twisted magnetic field, running electrical current, jumping electrical arcs, and the invisible electrical waves, he muttered,

"What is the problem with the lightspeed experiment?"

"The result is correct, but Ether might still exist. Maybe Ether is all over the sky in a way that we can't imagine.

"We should thank teacher for the experiment. It helped us filter out many thoughts we had about Ether. We are getting closer to the

truth.

"In what way will the existence of Ether fit in the result of this experiment?" Brook immersed himself in thoughts.

Unless faced with irrefutable evidence, every Grand Arcanist extremely persistent in their theories.

...

In the Theatre of Destruction.

Oliver Constantine was lying leisurely in a chair in his pajamas. His wife, Florencia, was feeding him grapes while he read Arcana.

"Heh, Artil is challenging us?" Oliver smiled and looked at Florencia.

Only about a dozen years after Brook became Douglas's student, Artil also became Douglas' student. He thus had a deep background and was familiar with every Grand Arcanist and legendary archmage.

Florencia raised her brow. "Challenge? What challenge?" Her magazine was taken away by her husband after she just finished reading the first article by Douglas.

Oliver spoke after murmuring two lines of opera, "he offered a reward for a theory that could explain the lightspeed experiment, but the theory must include the Ether."

"Hehe, it's a good thing, isn't it?" Florencia had a charming smile on her face. As a high-level arcanist, she quickly understood the relationship between Douglas' artificial star and the lightspeed experiment. As a sorcerer specializing in Element, she supported the particle theory, which contradicted the wave theory that Oliver supported.

Oliver smiled. He raised his hand and squeezed Florencia's nose tip.

"Why? Are you going to argue with me again? Regarding the wave theory and the particle theory?"

"Of course, I think you can't explain the lightspeed experiment." Florencia was very firm when it came to arcana theories.

"If I can explain it, you'll have to do one thing for me." Oliver chuckled.

"No problem, if you can't explain it, you must do one thing for me too." Florencia helped Oliver turn the theory argument into some fun bet between a couple. That was how they stayed peaceful when they had different opinions on various theories.

Olive straightened his back and smiled. "I think I'm filled with motivation now!"

...

Lauren, the winner of the Silver Moon Medal and authority in the Electromagnetics, stared at the journal in front of him gloomily.

"Damn Artil!" He shouted in a low voice.

He did not only support the Energy Essentialism but also promoted the wave theory. The two theories had no contradiction as the energy theory was about the materials, while the other one was about light and spiritual power. He even believed that wave was the only way to represent energy other than the materials.

"Damn Norman, damn Luciana, damn Lucien!" He dare not to say anything bad to Douglas and Fernando, but he cursed everyone else that was on Douglas' appreciation list.

He finished swearing and started to focus on the paper again. He paced around in the room and tried to find a way to explain everything.

Every arcanist who believed in the wave theory and who was above the mid-level was doing everything they could to find a way to explain the experiment after they calmed down.

...

However, Lucien remained silent this time, which was rare as in

everyone's eyes he loved to cause arguments and solve difficult problems. He did not make any valuable comment on the wave theory and the particle theory.

When the Congress of Magic was once again lost in a debate war between the wave theory supporters and the particle theory supporters, the second artificial star successfully revolved once around the world, and the third communication star entered its track secretly. The Allyn Telephone and Telegraph company was founded.

The theory war became more and more intense as the end of January approached, when Lucien received an invitation from Tower. Levski and Lucien would be awarded the Arcana Staff at the Tower's headquarter in Allyn.

The carriage carrying Lucien, Lazar, and several other people from the Atoms Laboratory stopped at the entrance, encountering Levski, who arrived at almost the same time.

"Good evening, Levski." Lucien greeted Levski as he got off the carriage.

Levski had a bitter smile on his face.

"Not good at all. The new geometric system was hard to analyze and my friends were always arguing about the wave theory and the particle theory. I'm in dire need of some peaceful time."

Lucien was also a bit speechless as he did not expect to hear about the debate war here.

Chapter 437: The Undercurrent

Allyn sat in the midair, and the tower, which was used as a platform to observe the stars, was high above the clouds. Sometimes, bright colors rippled on the dark body of the tower and it almost looked like the entrance was shimmering under the light.

Lucien closed his mouth and smiled after hearing Levski's word. "The particle theory can't explain most of the results and the wave theory can't find its foundation. They both have big problems. I think they should just marry each other. It'll solve all the problems and the war between wave and particle will end peacefully!" Lucien spoke in a joking way.

"That's impossible. Your thought is interesting, Evans," Levski chuckled. Although he was good at math, he was still an arcanist and had done some research on the wave theory and the particle theory. He thought Lucien was just joking.

Lazar and the others who got off the carriage after Lucien all started smiling. Heidi even burst out laughing uncontrollably. The two theories should get married? Only Mr. Evans could think of a lame joke like that, and "lame joke" itself was a strange term coined by Lucien.

Lucien waved his staff and said, "anyway, when there's no result that can decide the outcome of the war, the third war between the two theories will not be ending very soon. We should probably just focus on our own studies."

He was not worried that his joke could enlighten Levski, Lazar, Rock, and the others. To jump outside the box of the conflict between the wave theory and the particle theory not only needed some incredible ideas but also a series of supporting experiments. Without the experiment results, the wave-particle dualism could never even be imagined. A great scientist as Einstein, his thesis only suggested the concept of the light quantum and used the instant and the average to discuss light. It was far from the actual wave-particle dualism and was more like the particle theory.

And whether it would make the arcanists think of the hypothesis of the light quantum, the answer was obvious just by looking at the recently published papers — there was not a single thesis trying to explain the black-body radiation and the energy quantum hypothesis! Almost all arcanists considered it as something that they should not touch and wanted to drive the thought out of their minds. Under a situation like this, how could they be enlightened and develop new ideas?

Although students like Annick, who were pretty much worshipping Lucien, might accept the hypothesis of the energy quantum as their meditation environment had not been completed yet and their belief was not stable. However, they did not have enough knowledge to explore the field of heat radiation and they had no chance to use or study the quantum theory. They had a general idea of it but they did not know how to learn about it and it was thus impossible for them to use it to come up with hypotheses for light.

"You're right." Levski nodded seriously. Compared to the argument between the wave and particle theories, he preferred studying the two new geometric systems and the theory displayed by President Douglas' artificial planet experiment.

Then he saw the ninth-circle archmage, Annonis the Astrologer, walking to him from the entrance. "Mr. Annonis is here."

Annonis was known to the public as was the president of the tower and a member of the Highest Council.

Annonis was wearing a tall grey hat. He was tall and strong, like the strongest warrior, and there was no beard on his young-looking face. However, the pair of deep black eyes gave the feeling that he had experienced a lot of things and that although he looked young, his mind and body were already very old.

"Mr. Annonis." Lucien, Levski, and the others greeted Annonis respectfully.

Annonis was a person who did not smile often. He nodded slightly and said to the two in a serious tone, "come in, please, you're the stars of today's party."

In the hall, under the "stars", many guests were toasting each other.

Entering the hall, Lucien noticed many familiar arcanists such as Raventi, Florencia, Neeshka, and Milina.

After exchanging eye contact with Levski, Lucien picked up a glass of "Starlight" drink from the waiter's plate and then headed to the group of people from the Will of Elements.

"The most talented person of the whole Will of Elements is here, the genius who claimed the most honorable rewards from three different fields before reaching the high level." Florencia clicked her tone and smiled lazily. She jokingly mocked Lucien, implying that he had not entered the headquarters or the divisions of the Will of Elements for a very long time as he was busy with studying and dealing with affairs of the Atom Institution.

Lucien smiled and raised his glass. "I was really busy recently. I was helping my teacher with setting up the Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company."

"It seems that you're very interested in the projects that will bring you money. The magic crystal light is still in the promotion phase and you're already starting something else." Gaston chuckled.

Raventi scrunched his brow. "Lucien, you do need a lot of resources to explore the unknown world and to increase your own power. However, money is not the most important thing. The most important thing is to study and do research. Don't forget your original intention." He did not want Lucien to choose the wrong way so he decided to tell Lucien what he was thinking directly. He was not worried that what he said would make Lucien angry as that was just what he would do.

Florencia giggled after hearing Raventi's word. "Lucien is still doing research. He had just created a new geometric system, right? That's why we're here. This is the ceremony for his Arcana Scepter Reward."

"The first part of the set up has been completed. I'll focus on increasing my magic skills now." Lucien was talking about creating

his own meditation method, however, it sounded like he was going for the senior-rank to Raventi and the others. They all nodded as they agreed with Lucien's plan.

Raventi stared at Lucien with his deep grey eyes and followed Florencia's words. "The field of math used to be the weak point of your arcana ability but it seemed like you've already solved the problem. Great, you have the ability to succeed. However, I suggest that you stop continuing your research in the new geometric system. The research has no actual arcana or magic meaning at the moment. You should spend more time on the functions of the complex variable so you can build the foundation for calculating the complicated spiritual power fields after you reach senior-rank.

"You have the highest chance to become a legendary sorcerer in the Congress of Magic, so don't waste your time."

Raventi had a high expectation of Lucien, so he was trying to give him some suggestions. He knew that Lucien's cognitive world was preliminarily substantial. With Lucien's age and arcana ability, reaching senior-rank shouldn't be a problem, what he needed was the foundation of reaching the legendary level.

"Yeah, Lucien, you can leave the new geometric system to the arcanists of Tower. You can just use the systems after they find the actual meaning of them," K added, as a friend.

There were many people who were jealous of Lucien's relationship with the organization and talent and some even tried to trick him, but that was not the only problem — Lucien also had a lot of pressure on him from the people who cared about him and might even receive wrong advice. Many talented people lost their path to success because the people who cared about them gave them the wrong suggestions.

Sometimes, one might do the wrong thing even with good intention.

"I'm already trying to learn more about this field." Lucien nodded and responded, "however, I always think that we should pay more attention to the math. It's like we need better equipment before a

battle. We don't know what's waiting in front of us so we need more math tools, even if we can't find the arcana meaning of them at the current moment."

"Well..." Raventi was going to say something else but Florencia stopped him. "After reading Nature, Oliver agreed with your point. He had trouble finding the correct math techniques for the field that he was researching until he saw the two new geometric systems."

Since the grand arcanist agreed, Larry and K decided to remain silent. Lucien seized the chance and changed the topic. "has the War between Wave and Particle spread into the organization?"

"Yeah, there are many arguments going on and I can see sorcerers arguing every day. Some of them were so angry that they started fighting. Thankfully they were stopped in time and no one was hurt." Gaston sounded a bit frustrated.

The fact that there were still many sorcerers who supported the wave theory of light in the Will of Elements, the base camp of elementalists, proved the dominance of the wave theory of light.

It seemed like Gaston was not interested in the War between Wave and Particle as he had seen too many situations like this and this group consisted mostly of particle theory supporters. He looked around and said, "the Hand of Paleness did not send any members are not here."

"Why?" Lucien was a bit curious. He knew that they definitely received the invitation.

Florencia checked the surroundings and lowered her voice, sounding a bit hoarse and sexy. "The Highest Council and the Affair Committee are investigating the relationship between Heidler and the solid world of black and white. The Hand of Paleness was causing trouble for them and they had some conflicts, so the members of the Hand of Paleness are probably trying to show their altitude in this way."

Lucien's brow furrowed. He didn't expect that after discovering the mysterious existence in World of Souls and the hidden threats, the

Hand of Paleness would still try to keep it as a secret. It was such an unwise decision! He wondered if Thanatos and the demi-god liches wanted to explore it by themselves.

But they were weaker than Alterna and the mysterious being. As grand arcanists, they should not make mistakes like this. Maybe, there was something else going on.

He wondered if he could learn something from Felipe.

At this moment, Annonis the Astrologer walked to the stage and invited Levski up, as he was going to award Levski first.

Annonis was holding a wavy dark staff. He looked at Levski and said seriously, "it has been over ten years, yet no one discovered the true value of your thesis. You were looked down and attacked. It was Tower's mistake and it was also my mistake. I've never even thoroughly read your thesis before throwing them aside.

"Luckily, we still have a chance to make up for it. We'll use the 21st Arcana Scepter, Levski Geometry, to honor the new geometric system you created and to honor your contribution to the field of math. You passed through the difficult challenges and you insisted on what you believed. This is the true spirit of arcana and magic!"

Levski took over the scepter with many emotions going through his mind. He almost cried and he spoke briefly.

"First I would like to thank Evans. Without his proof and his logical insights, I would not be able to receive the scepter today.

"Also, I want to tell everyone that the field of math is different from other arcana fields. In this field, we need to make purely logical thoughts that are not based on reality. We need to be brave."

His emotion got unstable as he talked and his voice was a bit blurry.

"It might not be a happy thing to believe in your own belief, but it is definitely a worthy thing!"

Everyone was clapping, not only as congratulations but also as

apologies.

After Levski finished the speech, Annonis asked Lucien to get on the stage.

Chapter 438: The Second Reward

Chapter 438: The Second Reward

Annonis, the Astrologer, took out a unique-shaped bracelet, on which a pocket watch was attached. He said in a serious tone, “many thanks to Mr. Lucien Evans, for putting forward the mathematic model and demonstration for Levski Geometry, which freed us from our own arrogance and prejudice and made us see the beauty of math from another perspective. He showed us the great necessity and sufficiency of correct axioms and rigorous logic. Only an arcanist with such courage and intelligence like Mr. Lucien Evans can make such a great contribution.

“... Also, many thanks to Mr. Lucien Evans again for building another new geometry system, and making our overall geometry system more complete. Using the twenty-second Arcana Scepter, we commend him for Evans Geometry and his outstanding contribution to mathematics.”

Lucien had Sun Staff already, therefore he asked Tower to turn the Arcana Scepter into a bracelet-like accessory — a “hand watch”.

Touching the silver-grey watch, on which constellation patterns and diamonds were engraved in golden ratio, Lucien left his spirit imprint in the core of the sun pattern surrounded by the zodiac stars.

“Arcana Scepter: Evans Geometry. Level-seven perfect rank item. Requirement: Sixth-circle spiritual power and primarily-substantialized cognitive world.

“This unique-shaped bracelet is enchanted with two permanent magic effects: Improving the accuracy when casting Horoscope, and increasing the owner’s presentiment against danger by allowing him to connect to his Host Star of Destiny without entering meditation status

“As a piece of work from a Tower alchemist, it is also enchanted with the power of stars and destiny. Its owner could cast the fifth-

circle spell Curse of Doom twice a day, the fifth-circle spell Star Blessing twice a day, and the seventh-circle spell Destiny Interference three times a day.

“January, year 820. In acknowledgment of Mr. Lucien Evans’ great contribution to mathematics.

“The flow of time is independent, absolute, and mathematical; so is destiny. We can observe it, refer to it, predict it, and even interfere it to a certain degree!

“—— Caxias Annonis”

Putting on the watch, Lucien turned to the arcanists down the stage and said to them meaningfully,

“from the ancient Magic Empire to the Congress of Magic, hundreds of years have passed. During which, there were many times when an initially ignored research finding became widely recognized when arcanists encountered bigger difficulties later.

“Our research projects should be practical, of course. But we should also encourage the arcanists who have spare time and vigor to be more far-sighted and take on projects that are more advanced than what we understand right now. Only by so can we have handy tools in future explorations to guarantee the rate of our development .”

Neeshka, Milina, Gaston, Rachel and many started smiling. Lucien was obviously very stubborn. People were saying that his new geometry system was of no practical use, so he now was repeatedly arguing that his system was, in fact, too advanced to be employed right now. Was he right? No one knew it.

Lucien did not stop because of the kind smile on his acquaintances’ faces. “Mr. President’s artificial planet experiment has proved to us the rationality of his celestial bodies motion system, and also the profound mystery of the universe. When the gate of micro-world first opened, we saw for the first time how small a world can be. As we can see, there is a world way bigger than we can imagine, and another way smaller than we can imagine, and both of them are beyond our current ability of direct observation by using magic.

Recently, I believe all of you have experienced, or are currently experiencing, the helpless feeling of unable to carry out experiments despite having ideas and theories.”

Studies of the micro- and macro-world had also attracted the attention of countless sorcerers. It was currently the second hottest topic aside from the debate war of the wave and particle theory of light. Most sorcerers attending the ceremony had more or less ventured into it. They nodded as they could all relate to Lucien’s words. When studying the micro- and macro-world, the current magic methods have reached their limitations.

Lucien’s face had the same gentle smile as ever. “Therefore, math becomes the only tool that we can rely on. We observe the phenomena, and we find its rules. Math is going to play a vital role when we explore the micro- and macro-world and will beacon the darkness in front of us!”

Raventi listened to Lucien’s speech seriously. Although there were vague concepts of micro- and macro-world before, Lucien was the first person who clearly categorized the two and used them to divide magic sectors.

The look on Lucien’s face suddenly became serious, “The world we live in is totally different from the micro- and macro-world. In the future, maybe we will find our theories and beliefs totally inapplicable to them. Maybe everything in the two worlds goes far beyond our imagination. Maybe what can be considered miracles in our eyes are nothing more than normal there.

“Then, we cannot rely on our eyes, ears, or even soul; neither can we depend on our past experience and theories. Math will be our only tool!”

The arcanists present started applauding, showing their respect to the winner of the award, but they were not paying real attention to Lucien’s prophesy since it still sounded too bold to be true. The field of Math was set in an abstract world, and it was thus understandable that unimaginable new geometry systems could be found. But it is hard to believe that, in the real world of arcana and magic, unimaginable miracle-like phenomena and theories could

appear.

Although the School of Transformation, Summoning, and part of Illusion still could not be brought into the current arcana system, the arcanists believed that with a more in-depth understanding in the human body, time and space, as well as the application of electromagnetic waves, these schools that still bore the impression of the ancient Magic Empire would also fit into the system.

Using the grand arcanist Brook's words, "They should be included in the arcana system, and will be!"

At this moment, they had forgotten Lucien's Energy Quantum Theory which they left behind their mind on purpose, the hypothesis seemingly containing the power that could destroy the entire arcana world.

...

In the garden villa.

Lucien put on the monocle that he had improved himself, and turned on Electromagnetism Messaging. After a while of electric current noise, he heard Natasha's surprised voice.

"Lucien? Are you close to Aalto right now? Again?"

Through the satellite, her voice sounded a bit different, and the quality of the connection was not very good.

"No, I'm calling you at a super long distance through the artificial planet." Lucien smiled. The quality of the call was within his expectation, and it could be improved later after they had more experience.

To utilize a satellite properly for communication, locating, and monitoring was not an easy job. With the more extensive applications, more and more problems would appear, some were going to cause a headache for the grand arcanists as they would not be able to find the reasons behind.

However, problems were exactly what Lucien was expecting!

He had two major aims behind putting forward the package plan besides proving Douglas's celestial body system: First, to talk to Natasha; Second, to make the problems emerge, and thus the foundation of the special theory of relativity and the general theory of relativity could be laid.

Although the related books in his spirit library had not yet been unlocked, Lucien still got to know the great influence that the two theories of relativity had on satellites, such as the velocity time dilation effect and the gravitational time dilation effect. Without a doubt, the problems were caused because of them.

Since he was using a synchronous-orbit satellite, the velocity time dilation effect can be ignored. Lucien only had to consider how to deal with the gravitational field. Also, because the satellite system was still very simple and there were very few users right now, he was able to talk to Natasha.

Natasha remained silent for a moment and asked, "So the newborn star that day... was an artificial planet? No wonder the Pope used God's Arrival..."

Then Natasha recalled the scarlet moon, and she asked with complex emotions, "you made it?"

"I made a proposal. Mr. Douglas put forward the theories and made it." Lucien answered honestly.

Natasha clicked her tongue. "I knew it! It was your idea. I feel like I am lagging behind those all kinds of thoughts of yours. And you're always able to turn these thoughts into reality! Making friend with you is something full of surprise, but I'm also concerned that maybe one day, you will fool me easily. Anyways, talking to you like this makes me feel we're in fact not far away from each other. I like it."

"So I called you immediately after I could," said Lucien ambiguously. He was too shy to say it out directly that talking to her was one of his main purposes for launching satellites.

"Haha, it's my great pleasure that you still remember... me." Natasha laughed, but her voice paused a bit. Maybe it was because

of the quality of connection, or something else.

Their conversation was very convivial, and it lasted until both Natasha's and Lucien's spiritual power could not support the calling devices anymore.

"Right, I noticed that the Grand Cardinal Sard disappeared from the public since what happened to the scarlet moon. No idea what he is doing right now." Natasha gave Lucien a warning.

Lucien nodded as he felt the heat of the monocle that he was wearing. "Considering what has happened, it's not surprising that he's behaving weirdly. Well... I'll put a cryptographic magic circle on the electromagnetism messaging devices as soon as possible, or our conversation can be easily exposed."

"I see." Natasha did not know much about electromagnetism, but she was rather assured that Lucien would take care of it.

After the conversation, Lucien saw Annick walking towards him, surrounded by the other apprentices. The apprentices all talked at once,

"Sir, Annick's paper has been published on Arcana! He's a level two arcanist now!"

Due to the citations of the study on cathode ray, Annick was not far from promoting to the next level. After gaining fifty credits this time, he became a level-two arcanist naturally.

"Really? Let me take a look." Lucien was quite gratified and took over the journal. At first glance at the table of contents, he saw Artil's name. His paper was the last one in the issue and was still a discussion paper. The title was

A Reward offered for Theory Explaining the Photoelectric Effect.

"... From Annick's paper we can see that the electric currents produced by casting light on a piece of metal consist of electrons, which has made the question even more prominent: For light under a certain frequency, no matter how we try to increase its 'wave' intensity, photoelectric effect and electrons are always absent.

Why? And also why, when we increase the energy intensity of the same frequency light, more electrons were emitted, but they are of the same intensity? It obviously contradicts the classic wave theory of light.

“... Here I offer a fifty-thousand-arcana-point reward to seek explanations, especially from you who support the wave theory! Use your imagination!”

Seeing the second declaration, Lucien became silent. He wondered if he should say something to first plant a seed in the arcanists' mind.

Chapter 439: An Enlightening Viewpoint

Lucien had reasons for being so cautious about the wave-particle dualism. Besides the fact that he was still exploring his own meditation method, the most important reason was that it was such a subversive and revolutionary concept that it could easily explode the head of ninety-nine percent of the middle-rank arcanists in the Congress if he just threw it at them. And without the support of the Congress, Lucien would for sure meet his own end as well.

Also, to prove the wave-particle dualism would require a series of experiments, new discoveries, and new theories, or it would certainly undergo fierce attack. Some experiments could not be carried out within the current research level, for example, the experiment for verifying light quantum. Maybe after a year or two, someone would make this achievement, but if Lucien put it forward right now, no one would believe in it. The mass-energy formula that Lucien needed was based on the special theory of relativity, which also received countless years of attack and discredits after it was proposed.

Therefore, previously, Lucien was planning on first putting forward the prerequisite theories and discoveries gradually, and when they were widely accepted by people, he then would throw the more shocking experiments and findings at them. Finally, he would join the debate war between wave and particle.

However, things were different now, as Lucien found that the two sides were completely against each other. So to make sure that most arcanists' cognitive world would not collapse when the war ended, the best solution was that Lucien introduced the related findings and perspectives to the arcanists bit by bit, starting right now, in order to shake their belief step by step. When arcanists became capable of carrying out the important experiments, the impacts that they were going to face would become less intense. Admittedly, there would still be some arcanists whose heads were going to explode, the number could be controlled, so the Congress' overall strength would not be damaged greatly within a short period of time.

"Then... before the experiments come out, my papers are going to suffer from broad neglect, queries, and even fierce attack," murmured Lucien, "... but just like what Levski said, the effort is worthwhile... I have to pay in advance for the benefits that I'll get later..."

Lucien's careful consideration was not only for the Congress but also for himself. If Lucien's finding exploded most of the middle- and high-rank arcanists' head, the Church would probably give him tons of gold to reward his effort in destroying the Congress of Magic before burning him down to ashes on the gallows.

So far, Lucien hoped to see the Congress of Magic survive and thrive, even though he had to pay something for it.

"What was it, Sir?" asked Heidi curiously. She thought her teacher just made a comment on Annick's paper.

Lucien shook his head and said, "Nothing."

Then he turned to Annick, "It's a very good start for you, Annick, to have your paper accepted by Arcana as a low-rank arcanist. But don't let the small achievement blind you. Remember, arrogance and laziness are your biggest enemies against success. Never lower your standards for yourself"

"Yes, Sir," Annick replied seriously.

Lucien smiled, "You may call me teacher."

"...?" Annick did not understand.

Layria nudged him gently, while Heidi said to him directly, "idiot. Mr. Evans has accepted you to be his real student!"

Annick suddenly became the envy of all the apprentices!

Annick instantly got very excited. Since he first met Mr. Evans in Stuart, he had already regarded Mr. Evans as his own teacher and treated Mr. Evans with heartfelt respect. However, seeing Mr. Evans winning so many major awards and becoming the most promising arcanist of the Congress, Annick started doubting himself whether

he was qualified to be Mr. Evans' student.

"My... My great pleasure!!" Annick's face flushed. He was about to salute Lucien using the most formal and solemn manner of the Congress.

Lucien smiled and raised his hand. "Save that. I'm not a big fan of formalities... as long as you consider me your teacher."

Then Lucien turned to the rest of the apprentices. "You all have been working in the Atom Institution for a while, and I am quite impressed. You all are confident but not arrogant, diligent and full of imagination, and those are the qualities that I am looking for in my ideal students. When you become a true sorcerer, you all can become my students, just like Annick."

"Really?!" Heidi burst out, looking very excited.

Lucien smiled and nodded.

"Awesome!" Katrina cheered. Katrina thought that she would never become Lucien's real student since she and Sprint did not leave a good first impression on Mr. Evans, although Mr. Evans still tried his best to teach them and recruited them into the Atom Institution. Now, she could not hold back her complex emotions of surprise, excitement, gratefulness, and regret.

Meanwhile, Sprint also compressed his lips into a thin line and hid his slightly-trembling hands behind his body.

In the Congress, where part of its tradition was inherited from the ancient Magic Empire, the relationship between a teacher and a student was very serious.

Lucien left the excited apprentices aside and turned to Annick again. "I've prepared all the exercises, tests, and textbooks covering the ten magic schools. They are on the desk in my study. Go and grab them yourself."

Annick's face instantly dimmed. Here came the haunting nightmare, again. Although Annick was a very diligent and hardworking young man, he was still scared of the tons of exercises.

Heidi burst out laughing, with her hands on her waist. She took pleasure in seeing Annick, who was the first to become a formal sorcerer and Lucien's true student, to also become the first to face the nightmare of exercises and tests.

Although she'd probably face the same fate in the future, she would not worry about herself right now. After all, there was still a period of time to go.

When the apprentices all left, Lucien paced to his study and pulled out the rolls of parchment made specifically for writing arcana papers. After sitting quietly in front of the parchment rolls for a while, he finally picked up the quill-pen and wrote,

"An Enlightening Viewpoint on Light."

Starting from black-body radiation, bringing in the classical kinetic theory of gases, Lucien generalized the hypothesis that "the absorption and emission of energy came in portions" into "the electromagnetic waves also came in portions". Then, since the light was also a kind of electromagnetic wave, then light should also be delivered in portions. The portion of light was termed the light quantum, and its energy was determined by its frequency, by which it interacted with all kinds of substances.

Then Lucien introduced the hypothesis of light quantum into the photoelectric effect and explained the phenomenon perfectly. He also made many predictions based on this theory, including that at a fixed frequency of light, the energy of the electrons emitted was also fixed.

"... based on the instantaneity of time, light presents the prominent property of quantum. However, based on time average, light shows the property of wave. Therefore, perhaps we should be more open-minded facing the wave-quantum argument."

After careful consideration, Lucien still put the vague but meaningful words on, although every arcanist who read the paper would see it as an improved version of the particle theory, despite the fact that the paper started from the unpleasant concept of quantum.

Finishing the paper, Lucien made another two copies of it. He would send one to the Arcana Review Board, one to his teacher Fernando, and one to Artil — Lucien needed the fifty thousand arcana points from Artil as a comfort.

Even though Artil did not like the concept of energy quantum, as a firm advocate of the particle theory, he would still support Lucien's paper, in which all electromagnetic waves were believed to be in the form of separate portions. Maybe Artil would even directly name light quantum as quantum photon.

After putting the papers into file cases, Lucien started writing to his friends one by one. Although there was no solid experiment to support his theory yet, and although his standpoint was the quantum theory, which was a beyond controversial topic, Lucien still wanted to give them a reminder first to be as safe as possible.

"... The paper I am going to submit, from my personal perspective, is the only one among all the papers that I've written that can possibly match the revolutionary meaning of the article that put forward the hypothesis of the energy quantum. Fortunately, it is not yet supported by any solid experiment..."

.....

In Sorcerer Administrative Department.

Eric carefully checked the file submitted by Lucien, and he released a long sigh when he made sure that the word "subversive" was not on it. Something that was probably a smile appeared on his stiff face. "Every time you submit a paper, I'm a bit scared..."

"It's just a viewpoint to see if it can enlighten other arcanists. No experiment support yet. Hopefully, the phenomena derived from the hypothesis can be verified in the future." Lucien smiled and answered.

He was saying the truth, but only part of it. The most subversive step had been taken by the hypothesis of energy quantum, anyways.

Writing "Light-darkness" on the file, Eric thought for a while and

said to Lucien, "you're good at Elements, Lucien, so I'd assume that you used particle theory in this paper on light. Am I right? If I submit the paper to the authorities in the school of Light-darkness, the comments you'll receive might be bad. If the paper also has to do with other fields, you know... we can submit it to other reviewers."

The school of Light-darkness was established based on the school of Electromagnetics, and in it the wave theory was the exclusive ruler.

"It's not necessary. The more we argue, the sooner we'll find the truth," said Lucien humorously. Unless the paper could be submitted to someone he knew well from in the school of Element, the review comments on this paper would always be quite bad. Eighty percent of the members in the Arcana Review Board supported the wave theory of light, and among the remaining twenty percent, less than three were interested in the hypothesis of energy quantum. Before any solid experiment evidence was to be carried out, it was almost impossible to find another person like Artil, who was so stubborn and firm a supporter of the particle theory that he would be willing to reluctantly accept the energy quantum theory.

Eric nodded, and submit the paper to the Review Board.

"Light-darkness... To Mr. Lauren and Mr. Teixeira," said the alchemical life without hesitation.

.....

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, when he saw the title of Lucien's paper, Fernando could not help rubbing his brows.

"Enlightening viewpoint..."

Chapter 440: Reviewing and Being Reviewed

"It's just about using the hypothesis of energy quantum to explain the photoelectric effect," said Lucien honestly with a constant smile on his face.

The corner of Fernando's mouth twitched a bit. "You call this 'enlightening'... I don't think there are arcanists who want to be enlightened like this."

Fernando and Lucien had excluded all the other possible explanations together, and the only possible answer left was the hypothesis of energy quantum. Therefore, after the initial reluctance and struggle, Fernando was the one who accepted this hypothesis the most. However, even so, Fernando would only use it when analyzing the black-body radiation, but never in any other fields.

Then Fernando mumbled. "So you want to use the hypothesis to build your own system?"

If Lucien's paper was just a further explanation of the hypothesis of energy quantum, it would not be that subversive. As long as Lucien had not proved the hypothesis with experiments, Fernando would not need to be too worried that Lucien might destroy the entire Congress with his theory.

As he turned the pages, Fernando's expression became more and more serious. "Although in the studies of the black-body radiation, I've started to feel inclined to use the quantum hypothesis for explaining the energy absorption and emission, I still don't think it's necessary to further apply the hypothesis to explain the presence and transmission of light. Brook's equations have well offered a good explanation, and hypotheses should not be multiplied unnecessarily."

Although Fernando was on the side of the wave theory of light, he was not a firm supporter. But any arcanists who specialized at

Electromagnetics would be deeply shocked by and fell in love with the beauty in Brook's equations, which was like an elegant piece of poetry of the Goddess of Magic. Therefore, facing the hypothesis that challenged Brook's theory, Fernando still had spontaneous rejection in his heart, although the hypothesis perfectly and precisely explained the photoelectric effect.

Lucien was not surprised that this idea was very unacceptable even for an open-minded grand arcanist like Fernando.

Fernando put down the paper and said in a serious tone, "however, this is the best explanation of the photoelectric effect that I have ever seen so far. If you spend some time to improve the magic circles and conduct an experiment with great precision as your evidence, it might be easier for people to accept it."

"So far I'm not capable of doing such an experiment." Lucien did not mention the true reason behind it was if he included the experiments, some sorcerers' cognitive world would be shattered or injured.

After he read the paper, Fernando knew that the requirements for carrying out the experiment were extremely high, so he didn't think much after hearing Lucien's excuse. "Although I do not agree with you, yet based on the entire process, I still have to admit that your viewpoint is very enlightening, as it reasonably and succinctly explained the photoelectric effect. Your explanation does leave a deep impression on me. But, the last part, in which you talked about the particle-like property of the instantaneity of time and the wave-like property of the time average... It's too weak and redundant! It makes people feel that you're not even a firm supporter of your own hypothesis yourself! You're trying to find a peaceful place to get along with the wave theory, in a ridiculous way!"

"In fact, this is my true point, or we can't explain the diffraction of light, nor the photoelectric effect." Lucien tried to be bold.

Fernando gave him a stern look and asked, "so you're saying it's both wave and particle. Then what on earth is light? You assume that quantum effect divides light into portions, so it's a combined

formation. But why don't you think further? Why these many light quanta generally show the properties of wave? Why do the quanta march forward following the rule of wave?

"Did you ever see the knights charging? Without strict command and training, their charging would be a disaster, instead of in an organized form of a triangle. But who commands the quanta of light so that they move in the form of waves? The God of Truth?!"

"Have you ever thought about it?!"

Even when talking to his favorite student, Fernando was still the same strict and straightforward. Lucien could almost feel the sprays from his teacher.

"... No one's giving command, Sir. It is wave itself, and, of course, exhibit the features of wave. Sir, I don't think it will work trying to explain why light carries the features of waves from the perspective that light is particles. Light is wave itself," said Lucien sincerely.

However, Lucien's words did not make any sense at all in Fernando's ears. To him, light's form of existence could be something beyond his imagination, but it still had to make sense!

Thus, he roared. "What about the photoelectric effect?!"

"Light also consists of light quanta. In this case, we don't need to think about it from the perspective of waves." The way Lucien was talking started to become philosophical.

But Lucien was not planning on roaring against Fernando right now, not at all, since he was still far from revealing the final answer. So he said, "Sir, this is not yet a mature theory... I'm still thinking. So it's not included in the paper."

Fernando slightly nodded, although he still kept a straight face. He allowed his student to have a rich imagination, but it had to base on solid reasoning. "Comparing to your true viewpoint, I find this paper much more lovable. I don't want to arcana studies to fall into a philosophical debate in the end."

Then Fernando knocked at the desk and said, "are you sure you're

going to submit the paper without any experiment support? Be ready to face the attack from most of the arcanists."

"It's okay. Without a conclusion, they'll soon forget about it." Lucien did not really care.

Looking at Lucien, Fernando shook his head, "Don't underestimate the perseverance of the arcanists. Some won't let you go."

...

Returning to his own office in Arcana Review Board, Lucien saw a paper on his desk. However, as soon as he picked it up, Lucien frowned. Since people got to know how he helped Levski and saw how successful Levski was right now, many arcanists started submitting their own "subversive" papers directly to Lucien, hoping that Lucien would support them so they could become famous overnight.

However, their papers did not even respect basic logic, and Lucien could not even take a second glance at their derivation processes. Claiming that they had overthrown Brook system and Douglas system, the papers were more than absurd. Lucien had to try his best to hold himself back from the urge to tear down the papers into pieces, throw them on those people's face, and call them "folk arcanists"!

However, after calming down a bit, Lucien still wanted to be objective, since he was well aware of the fact that how destructive prejudice and stereotype could be. He started reading the paper carefully.

It turned out to be worse than ever. The author did not even understand the theoretical system that he wished to overthrow before claiming that he had found its problems. Lucien started to feel that the previous authors were in fact quite sweet, since at least the problematic parts were in the reasoning sections.

"Not bad as a joke though..." Lucien picked up the quill-pen and started marking.

In Sorcerer Administrative Department, there was a totally absent-minded look on Eric's face. He sat still with his eyes staring forward at the void.

Sitting in front of him was a black-haired, blue-eyed, good-looking young man in his early thirties. Words were pouring out from his mouth. "Based on my years of studying, I have located the fatal error in Mr. President's theoretical system in Force Field. My finding is powerful enough to pierce through the seemingly solid system and save all arcanists in the Congress from the misunderstanding which has lasted for hundreds of years."

Eric did not want to say anything else. The man sitting in front of him was a sorcerer specializing in the school of Electromagnetics. Obviously, he knew nothing much about the Force Field theories.

"Unfortunately, most members of the board don't have their own thoughts. All they want to do is to follow the authority. However, now we have Mr. Evans, a young and brave board member who dares to challenge the errors. I'm sure he'll be able to understand my paper and face the errors. I will earn my honor back," said the man triumphantly and confidently.

Eric touched his thin hair and said, "Peavy... There are still other people waiting... You can come back three days later."

Peavy shrugged. "What a pity. I was going to tell you some details about my theoretical system."

Suddenly, the iron cage burst out white light, and a document appeared inside.

"Hey... I think it's yours, Peavy." Eric called Peavy, who was already at the door.

Peavy was very surprised. "My paper deserves this fast response?!"

He wore a badge for fourth circle sorcerer and one for level-one arcanist.

Eric took a quick glance at the paper. The muscle of his face twitched a bit, and then he handed the paper back to Peavy. "You

may want to take a look at it yourself."

Peavy turned the pages, only to find the many crosses in red ink. Following each cross, there were comments and the corresponding correct derivation process. At the edge of each page, there were strange comments such as "Two points are deducted."

Seeing the red crosses, a blue vein bulged in Peavy's forehead. All he could see now were the red crosses.

He quickly turned to the last page, and saw Lucien's comment: "Starting from the full score, 100 points, after deducting all the points for the errors, only 1 point is left. Ten points are given for the clean-looking handwriting. 11 points in total. The standard for passing is 60 points. Therefore, the paper fails to pass."

Lucien had veto power on deciding whether a subversive paper could pass. Also, the paper had been rejected by the other members before as well. Therefore, the alchemical life directly gave the final decision — Fail.

Peavy's face burnt as he saw Lucien's many comments.

In his mind, since all of Lucien's comments were against his derivation and reasoning, Lucien must be wrong!

"Evans has nothing different! He's just another puppet of the authorities! He doesn't want to see a genius like me to rise, doesn't want to see me overthrow the president's system, doesn't want to see me win even more prizes than he had!" Peavy turned around angrily and left the office. There was hatred in his voice.

Eric released a long sigh. In his opinion, the Congress should put these people together, and let them have fun and argue within their own small circle.

...

One day later, archmage Lauren came back to Allyn and started reading the paper.

"Stupid and stubborn! Why is he still bothering with his hypothesis

on energy quantum? Ridiculous..." Lauren dropped the paper, looking rather pissed. "How dare he to even try to quantize light?! That's drawing close to the particle theory!"

Lauren started doubting Lucien's past achievements, wondering if it was just because of his good luck. The paper submitted by him completely made no sense, and there was no evidence at all!

"I am going to do an accurate photoelectric effect experiment and throw the result on your face!" Lauren's fury was burning, as the two theories that he believed in were under the attack from Lucien's absurd hypothesis.

However, after he calmed down, Lauren realized that currently, he was not capable of carrying out the experiment because of the limitation of apparatuses. But this did not mean that he could not give the review comment. So he sat back at the desk and grabbed his quill-pen.

Chapter 441: Crisis

Chapter 441: Crisis

“This is a hypothesis made exclusively for explaining the photoelectric effect. It does not apply extensively as a standard hypothesis is supposed to be, for it cannot be used to explain other phenomena of light. It even contradicts to what the diffraction image tells us. With no experiment as its support, the hypothesis is rather doubtful. It is a hypothesis with logical, succinct, and beautiful reasoning yet goes the opposite way from the true situations...

“Arcanists have made lots of similar hypotheses like this one. When a hypothesis does not have broad application, it usually means that the direction of the hypothesis is problematic. I share the same opinion for this paper...

“I believe that Mr. Lucien Evans is also aware of this fact. He knows that his hypothesis contradicts Mr. Brook’s electromagnetism system, as well as the series of classic photics patterns. This is why he added to the last part of his paper that he is only addressing the instantaneity, while light was still wavelike from the whole picture.”

The more Lauren wrote, the angrier he got. What was preventing him from scolding Lucien right in the face was the fact that Lucien was the Lord of Storm’s student, a member of the Review Board, and someone with many awards. In his eyes, Lucien should be realistic, give up his ridiculous dream pursuing quantum theory, and open his eyes to see the stable and perfect current arcana system.

Taking a deep breath, Lauren continued to write. “... Also, this hypothesis, which seems to be another version of the particle theory, starts from the idea that energy is not transferred successively, which is absurd. Even those who support the particle theory would not agree with this. However, what has to be admitted is that this is a complete paper that can be quite inspiring,

and it offers a temporary solution to explain the photoelectric effect. So my review decision would be:

“It is a paper worth of broad discussion, but its value is also limited to this for now. When there is precise evidence support, the review result can be changed. My current suggestion is that one arcana credit and five arcana points should be given as the reward.”

When writing the conclusion, Lauren was being quite cunning. He dared not to speak out his true opinion, because Lucien Evans was very famous and the young genius arcanist also had lots of support from his teacher. If Lauren was not being careful enough, he might lose his job and position on the Board.

Lauren had his reason for letting the paper pass. In the Congress, there were still supporters of the particle theory of light. If he rejected Lucien Evans’s paper using the fact that the paper contradicted Brook’s electromagnetism system, the same thing would happen to all the submitted papers advocating the wave theory, as the Review Board members supporting the particle theory would reject the wave papers using the fact that they contradicted Douglas’ light speed experiment and the photoelectric effect. Therefore, he had to make a compromise. Although wave theory had taken the more dominant position out, the particle theory out there had not admitted its failure yet.

After he finished writing the comment, Lauren picked up his pipe and took a drag. There was a cold smile on his face — He was going to recommend Lucien Evans’s paper to Drummond and make him publish the paper on *Arcana* as a paper open for discussion, whether Lucien Evans wanted this or not. This young genius had to prepare himself for the endless criticism and attack.

Because currently no other theory could be found to explain the hypothesis of energy quantum, rarely were there any arcanists who would write a paper refuting it. But now the situation was different: Lucien was directly challenging one of the two classic arcana systems. In other words, he had chosen the opposite side against most arcanists. With classical theories and experimental data, they would not let Lucien get around that easily!

Lauren then wrote a letter to Drummond and sent it. Standing up, he paced back and forth in his study with his hands folded behind his back, and he murmured to himself, “The best way is to refute his hypothesis by using a hard experiment result. A decisive result will leave Lucien Evans no space for finding excuses...”

...

In the Allyn branch of Moonsong League, a unique-looking, middle-aged man was reading a paper. He had lots of electric-arc-shaped tattoos, and there were fine tiny electric currents sparking on his bare head as if he had thick silver hair. His eyes slightly squinted, in which there were electric sparks as well.

“Finally, Lucien Evans has revealed himself as a supporter of the particle theory. Or... is he trying to promote his quantum theory?” Teixeira, the level-seven arcanist and eighth-circle sorcerer, sneered. “No matter what his purpose is, this paper is useless except that it does explain the photoelectric effect. He scraped together the entire paper just for the sake of explaining the effect. Of course, Lucien Evans does not have any hard experiment evidence to support, or his head would have been exploded from seeing the experiment image.

“Lucien Evans had written this much words and formulas in the paper... I’ll let the paper pass but only admit its value for discussion. Heh, I wonder how that crazy hound, Artill, would respond?”

Teixeira then started putting his thoughts down into written words. “... It is undeniable that the paper deserves some discussion, and it offers us a possible direction in explaining the photoelectric effect. Two arcana credits and six arcana points are suggested to be given as the reward.”

Before, Teixeira had nothing against Lucien. But now it was different as Lucien was attacking the system of electromagnetism, which was the foundation of Teixeira’s cognitive world, using the particle theory and the quantum theory.

If it had not been for Lucien’s many previous achievements,

Teixeira almost started doubting that if Lucien was actually a real arcana genius like what people said.

Putting down the quill-pen, Teixeira picked up the materials on the photoelectric effect, which had been his very interest recently. As he read further, he could not help frowning.

If Lucien Evans's hypothesis was applied, the photoelectric effect indeed could be explained precisely and briefly.

"Why..." Teixeira was rather bothered. "This hypothesis completely contradicts the classic experiment image, but it could explain the photoelectric effect which contradicts with the wave theory..."

...

Unwilling to see Brook, his students, and his supporters, Artil chose to live in the small town which was his hometown. His black, pointy magic tower always attracted lots of attention from the residents and travellers, who were in awe of it.

In his study, the extremely furious look on Artil's face had been replaced by appreciation and ecstasy,

"Haha, Light quantum, light quantum... Don't think I can't recognize you when you just changed the word! It's just another name for the quantum photon in the particle theory! Portions, with a minimum limit... Isn't that particles?!"

"Quantizing light is no more than another exposition for particle theory, and the hypothesis explained the photoelectric effect perfectly! Lucien Evans deserves the reputation given to him! He's a genius! For sure, he's the most promising one who's gonna be a grand arcanist in the future!"

Lucien's proposal for launching the artificial planet helped Douglas greatly, and now he was explicitly supporting particle theory. Therefore, Artil started regarding him as his most trusted friend.

He felt thrilled imagining how those idiots who supported the wave theory of light would respond to the paper.

Feeling rather refreshed, Artil started writing to Drummond. He gritted his teeth while maintaining a big smile on his face. The only part that he was not perfectly happy with was the last paragraph of the paper, as it sounded a bit hesitant. But it did not really matter. If no one could overturn Lucien's hypothesis in a year, the fifty thousand arcana points would go to Lucien Evans. In fact, Artil wished that Lucien Evans could have taken away the points already!

After sending the copy of the paper to Drummond, Artil cheerfully thought to himself that now Lucien's hypothesis of energy quantum had sounded more reasonable to him if he set off and think deeper from the perspective of the particle theory.

...

In Sorcerer Administrative Department, Eric received the review result of Lucien's paper.

As the witness of Lucien's multiple success, Eric turned the pages out of curiosity. Then his face stiffened, as he was also a firm supporter of the wave theory of light.

After he skimmed through the paper and read the comments, Eric had the impulse to write something to refute Lucien's idea. However, what happened when Lucien first came up with the periodic table of elements came back to his mind. At that time, Lucien's paper also got a very poor result, but it turned out to be rather valuable later when the new elements were discovered. The two board members that reviewed the paper apologized to him and re-evaluated the paper, giving an extremely high appraisal this time.

"This paper also contains many hypotheses based on the existence of the light quantum... Maybe..." Eric started feeling suspicious, but he soon decided to stop thinking about it. "... I should wait until an accurate experiment comes out..."

...

Under Lauren's effort, although it was still around two to three

weeks ahead before the next issue of *Arcana* , all the arcanists had already been informed that Lucien Evans, the young genius arcanist, used the particle theory to explain the photoelectric effect and had put forward the hypothesis of light quantum. Many were hurling abuse at Lucien. But most people, like Eric, were more cautious and chose to remain silent for most of the time due to the many awards that Lucien had won. They were afraid that, if they get too emotional, once Lucien could carry out a solid experiment to support his paper, their head would explode.

Those people's attitude was further shaken when they found out that Lucien's hypothesis indeed could explain the photoelectric effect. Although from time to time, people would whisper criticism against Lucien's hypothesis, they were still waiting, waiting for the final answer.

In Allyn, the intense atmosphere lingered. Even Lazar and the apprentices had felt people's hostility. However, Lucien was not affected by it at all. He was still working on improving his meditation and constructing his sixth-circle magic.

Yet, radicals exist in every population. By the end of the month, Lucien received a thick pile of letters. These were all anonymous threatening letters.

Smiling, Lucien leafed through the letters, feeling like that he had turned into the shared public enemy of Allyn. However, when he saw one of the letters, he suddenly frowned,

"... Maybe I'm not capable of killing you, but what about your friends and students? Take back your ridiculous hypothesis, and admit your fault in front of all arcanists!"

Chapter 442: Unjustifiable Self-defence

Lucien narrowed his eyes, his monocle reflecting the cold light of spring.

The message on the letter was composed of words cut down from newspapers, and the paper had been processed by tracing-proof divination spells. However, the person who sent this letter had obviously underestimated how well Lucien had mastered senior-rank Astrology.

Lucien pulled out the anonymous letter and laid it under his Morning Light crystal ball. There was a forbidding look on his face. He put both hands on the crystal ball and stroked it in a specific rhythm.

The crystal ball dimmed and turned black quickly. Shiny stars emerged inside. Meanwhile, the Arcana Scepter watch that Lucien was wearing also started to be covered by a vague layer of starlight. The miniature sun and constellations inlaid in the plate began to revolve silently.

In the starlight, Lucien saw blurry pictures, which depicted the many steps of how the letter was delivered.

Owl... Allyn Animal Post Office... the Magic Steam Train Company belonging to the Affair Committee... The train... Tracks... Forests, fields, and hills... Cocus, the capital city of Calais... An apprentice that Lucien did not know... A request from a friend...

All the major steps were reflected one by one. Then the letter finally returned, unexpectedly, back to Allyn, back to the Animal Post Office, and to the hands of a restaurant waiter.

At this time, Lucien had used up most of his spiritual power. The pictures became vaguer and vaguer and were soon about to disappear.

Then a next picture came. Lucien could only faintly see a man wearing a black hooded robe handing the letter and some gold

Thales to the waiter.

The ring on his left hand, the Origin, lit up in time. A cool refreshing feeling came from it and restored some of his spiritual power. Removing his right hand from the crystal ball, Lucien quickly lifted his Sun Staff.

The Sun Staff could enhance the power of Astrology spells under the ninth circle by one level!

The light from the staff lit up the picture in front of Lucien's eyes. Behind the sorcerer whose face was hidden under the black hood, a misty, distorted star rose. The fine, nebula-like, shimmering lines linking to his Host Star of Destiny were now visible to bare eyes.

"Got you," Lucien whispered in a low voice.

He recorded the features of the Host Star of Destiny and its track. When his spiritual power recovered partly, he figured out who this man was using the help of Sun Staff and Arcana Scepter.

"Peavy Belges, a member of Moonsong League, specializes in Electromagnetics... Egocentric and prone to go extreme..."

Lucien found the name somehow quite familiar. After a while, he recalled that this name was on the paper that he rejected a few days ago.

The man named Peavy definitely hated Lucien for turning down his paper; then his hatred was further stimulated by Lucien's hypothesis about light quantum, so he wrote this letter to threaten Lucien.

When not used for predicting the obscure future, and when an important item that had gone through the processes was at hand, the power of senior-rank Astrology was beyond the imagination of low or middle-rank sorcerers. With the assistance of Sun Staff and Arcana Scepter, Lucien could divine many things in great detail like an archmage. Also, since the Congress of Magic had Peavy's personal information, the features of his Host Star of Destiny was not at all a secret. After careful comparison, Lucien could find him relatively easily.

Every person had his or her own Host Star of Destiny. However, if the person never studied Astrology, they would not have the host star reflection in their soul.

Therefore, Lucien had been very careful with erasing important traces left after anything he did. If it was not possible, at least he would use some senior-rank spells to cover his Host Star, or turn the black hole side to the front, which was only known by Fernando and Thompson.

Lucien thought about it for a second whether he should report this to the Affair Committee. However, the punishment for menacing, presumably fifteen days of detention, would be too weak to prevent this lunatic from hurting Lucien's friends and students, and it might even further infuriate him. So Lucien shut down this option.

Although most people see Lucien as a young, talented arcanist who was usually very polite and gentle, Lucien never showed any mercy to those intended to hurt his friends and students.

Facing this vicious, overreacting letter, Lucien was determined to overreact to it.

Lucien weighed the cost seriously — With this letter and the information he just collected as evidence, unjustifiable self-defense, in the worst case to him, would put him into prison for six months and cost him a good sum of arcana points as a penalty.

And he made the decision.

Finding the materials he needed, Lucien started to make a puppet, which was essential to his plan. After several hours, Lucien was holding a brownish, creepy puppet. The puppet had long narrow eyes and a tightly-shut mouth. Its arms were so long that they dropped down under its knees. The entire puppet was also covered with unique patterns and symbols which was very similar to the trace of Peavy's Host Star of Destiny.

"You better not try, otherwise..." Lucien said coldly while putting the anonymous letter on the puppet and activating his Arcana Scepter watch.

The constellation symbols on the watch suddenly started glowing together! Some were radiant and enchanting, some were bright and clear, some were broad and cold, some were eternally unchanging...

The seventh-circle Astrology spell, Destiny Interference!

Wriggling, a thin layer of human skin quickly grew out of the lifeless puppet and covered its face. The layer of skin became the face of Peavy, but its eyes were closed as if it was unaware to what was now happening.

Lucien then started casting on the Peavy Puppet.

...

In a garden villa.

Peavy was humming a new piece of music from the most recent play in the town in a very good mood. His high spirit was not because of the melody, but from the pleasure imagining the great panic that Lucien Evans was now suffering knowing that his friends and students were in danger, imagining him running back and forth making sure no one had been hurt.

Lucien Evans would submit the letter to the Affair Committee, but so what?

In Peavy's eyes, this arrogant so-called genius deserved this, for rejecting his paper out of jealousy and attacking Mr. Brook's theoretical system.

He had done some research and knew that only legendary archmages could locate the sender of an anonymous letter. He also had done everything he could to avoid the tracing of most Astrology spells. He chose not to directly attach a self-destroying spell to the letter, since Lucien Evans would definitely notice the magic waves coming out from it and wouldn't even bother to open it, then sending the letter would be pointless.

Not to mention that whether Lucien Evans would ask an archmage to cast spells just because of a threatening letter, even if Evans

found out that if was him somehow, he would only be fined a few arcana points and be confined for a few days. The minor punishment would be nothing to him.

Furthermore, Peavy believed that all sorcerers who supported the wave theory of light would be on his side. Maybe Lucien Evans could protect his friends and students right now, he could not do this forever. Lucien Evans had to pay blood for what he had done! Only blood could make him realize his huge mistake!

The look on his face was completely distorted and vicious, as if Lucien had killed his father or cut off his path leading to becoming a grand arcanist. As an experienced fourth-level sorcerer who was experienced in fighting, Peavy was confident with his ability of killing. He knew well that if killing sites were well-chosen, even a legendary archmage would not be able to get any results with Horoscope.

In such a good mood, Peavy suddenly got inspired. He believed that he had come up with an experiment on testing the photoelectric effect accurate enough for exploding Lucien Evans's brain!

Unable to hold back his excitement, Peavy believed that he would become the new genius after Lucien Evans's head exploded. And by that time, his theory would be long remembered by the entire Congress just like that of Mr. Brook. Needless to say, he would become an almighty grand arcanist respected by everyone!

Walking into his lab, Peavy found his brain extremely clear. The procedures of the experiment emerged readily in his brain. Then Peavy started to reconstruct the magic circles.

The equipment for carrying out the experiment would cost a senior-rank sorcerer months to finish setting up, but he finished it within just ten minutes! Peavy wondered if his long-suppressed talent finally burst out.

With the equipment all set, Peavy started to conduct the experiment and collect data.

A few minutes later, beads of sweat dropped down from his

forehead. He could not believe what he saw.

"Impossible... Impossible! Something's wrong!"

The experiment showed clear quanta features!

He hurriedly restarted the experiment all over again, but the result remained unchanged.

"No... No..." Peavy shook his head helplessly.

Bang!

His head exploded. Small pieces of red and white were everywhere on the floor and the walls of the lab.

"Ahhh!!!"

Peavy released a bitter scream and sprang up from the couch. Lips trembling, Peavy murmured to himself,

"Ha..Haha, that felt so real..."

His laughter sounded dry and embarrassed.

Wiping off the sweat from his head, Peavy walked to his lab. The horrible dream he just had reminded him that he had still got an experiment on lightning to do today.

As he walked into the lab, Peavy's heart was still beating fast, and his mind was still a bit confused. He turned on the magic circles while he tried to calm down.

In the magic circle, bolts of lightning grew and began to bounce around within the lab. Peavy, as usual, was about to turn on the most powerful defensive magic circle to shield himself from the lightning.

However, his face immediately paled.

"Why... Why can't it be turned on? Right, it broke yesterday..."

Peavy finally recalled blankly that the defensive magic circle

probably had been out of order since yesterday, and he was planning to pay a senior-rank sorcerer from the Magic Engineering Department to come and repair it.

But he just forgot it! He forgot it!

"No!!!"

Layers of defensive spells were activated; pieces of magic items glowed. However, the power of the horrible lightning arc was unstoppable, and it penetrated the spells and items promptly.

Only the bitter scream of Peavy was left echoing in the room.

...

A few seconds after Lucien confirmed Peavy's death, Thompson of the Affair Committee showed up in Lucien's study with a flash of light.

"Who did you just attack?"

In Allyn, a spell used for attacking would be detected by the mythical enveloping the city from above. The Affair Committee would then be noticed to interfere.

"Someone who deserved it," said Lucien gloomily.

Lucien threw the threatening letter and his prophecy result to Thompson. It looked like that Thompson was the designated person in the Affair Committee for handling the affairs that involved Lucien.

When he finishing reading the letter and the result, Thompson figured out what happened. He looked angry as well, and even said,

"Good job."

Then Thompson restrained his personal emotion and asked, "With these as evidence, we could charge you as unjustifiable self-defense without doubt. You wanna pay ten thousand arcana points, or go stay in the magic-forbidden prison for a year?"

"Arcana points," said Lucien word by word, his heart aching. All his income from inventing magic crystal light and promoting charcoal would go into this, but it was still worthwhile as he got rid of a lunatic.

Thompson nodded. He wrote down the punishment decision and was about to leave. Lucien could not help asking.

"Those sorcerers that have gone extreme, I don't think you guys should leave them there in the public. They need a psychotherapy center, Thompson."

Thompson shrugged. "You have to know, Lucien. With years of dangerous and lonely exploration, many sorcerers have, more or less, turned into psychos. No one will agree with this proposal."

Lucien wondered if he should propose that the Congress start giving lectures on mental health.

...

"The latest one on Allyn's Dumbest Ways to Die - No. 17: Peavy used his death to tell us that we should never forget the first and foremost rule in the laboratory manual - 'Carefully check your equipment and magic circles before starting your experiment,'" said a man with cheerful smile on his face, who was introducing Allyn to the new sorcerers and apprentices on the magic steam train.

In front of him was a beautiful girl who had a white wolf lying beside as her companion.

Chapter 443: Reunion

Outside of the windows, green fields and thriving forests were retreating quickly. Sitting in this steel monster marching forward fast and smoothly, tasting the delicious black pepper steak, Louise felt that she was in a dream. Ever since she arrived in Holm, everything she saw was beyond her imagination.

Magic apprentice could cast spells in public and not worry about attracting the Church; The magic steam train station was built right in the city within the sight of ordinary people passing by; The enormous steel monster, although it carried hundreds of people, could move so fast and smoothly...

Louise thought that only senior-rank sorcerers could get on the magic train, but it turned out that the train was even accessible to apprentices. What she saw right now was completely different from what the old books told her about the ancient Magic Empire.

Louise would have thought that she was already in a new world if she had not seen how people in Holm lived their life: They were just a bit more conservative in dressing, and other than this, they were not different from the people in the Duchy of Violet.

However, to some degree, this was a new world for Louise. Her life had turned to a new page from here!

Louise stroke her black hair gently, her heart filled with determination and hope. She came from an ordinary noble family, where magic had been a secret tradition for several generations. The family members who failed to awaken their blood power would study magic instead. In this case, her family could always access the magic potions for turning a person into a knight. Therefore, there will always be knights in the family, and its status and title could be ensured.

However, all methods and insurances were fragile against the hands of fate. Her family was involved in the war against the heresy in the north, and most male members died on the battlefield. The female

members then either married or remarried. In the end, only a very young Louise and her grandfather were left, so some remote relatives started coveting their wealth and title.

Failed to awaken her blood power, Louise had no choice but to step onto the road of magic. The sorcerer recruited and sheltered by her grandfather was her first teacher.

The amazing world of magic attracted her deeply. However, the it could not provide her with peace and safety. Day by day, she lived like a intimidated mouse, worried that someone would discover her secret. Until one day, she found out by accident that the famous musician, Silvia, was in fact the apprentice named White Honey that she knew. She was therefore inspired and started to also use her music talent to cover her secret identity of a magic apprentice.

Then, she inherited the wealth and the mysterious materials from her family, which she used to trade the silver moon magic potion from her teacher and became a formal sorcerer. To hide her spiritual power, she used almost all of her heritage and savings to exchange for the Holy Water and successfully awakened her blood power, which enabled her to control animals. She also became a quite famous musician because of her blood power.

However, she was still not satisfied with the situation. The fact that her own teacher was killed by the night watchers when exploring relics in the forests caused her to frequently awake from nightmares in the middle of the night. Terrified one day that the night watchers would show up in her room, she desperately studied and worked as a musician, hoping to become more and more famous so that one day she could get to know some major nobles and receive their protection.

"I'm not asking for too much. All I wanted is to study magic quietly in peace. It seems that such a simple wish could never granted." Each time when the past came to visit at midnight in her dream, she would lament like this.

Yet one day, when the arrival of a sorcerer called Professor opened the gate to a new world in front of her, she finally saw hope. The only pity was that she had to say goodbye to her beloved music and

the Aalto Musician's Association.

"Miss Louise?"

The young sorcerer sitting in front of her woke her up from her memory.

Louise put on a soft smile and said, "Sorry, the amazing magic steam train triggered some memory of mine. Mr. Pan, please continue with the Allyn's Dumbest Ways to Die... It's very interesting, and enlightening as well."

Her voice was like a piece of smooth silk. Elegant and gentle, with a hint of melancholy, Louise was unique from most female sorcerers. There were, of course, female sorcerers who looked even more gorgeous than Louise, but the aesthetic air of a musician was hard to be ignored.

Klein, the young sorcerer whose black hair was combed back neatly, also grinned and said, "that's right. I could never imagine that there could be so many dumb things happening during experimentation, exploration, and everyday life. I gotta be careful. I don't want to become a joke between sorcerers after I died."

Mr. Pan carried the typical features of a Holmish and had a bright smile. "We're almost there. When you guys have settled down in Allyn, we can have dinner together. I've got more stories."

When Pan was speaking, he took a few shy glances at Louise.

On his opposite side sat Louise, Klein, Zapataro (Flame), and Ricardo (Hanger), who had been absent-minded all the way since he saw the city of Heidler — Some apprentices never leaved Aalto; some died on their way; and in the last, only the four of them, two sorcerers and two apprentices, successfully arrived at Sturk.

Hanger and Flame were actually not qualified for coming to Allyn, since Stuart would only send sorcerers and selected apprentices here. But they managed to be included in the trip by pretending as Philosopher's students..

"Almost there? I don't see it..." Louise looked out but saw no hint of

a city.

Pan smiled and pointed up. "Allyn is above the clouds. You can't see it from here."

Louise nodded and turned back her eyes. After a second of hesitation, she asked with a slight smile, "Mr. Pan, may I ask you a question?"

"You're more than welcome, Louise. Also, you can just call me Pan." Pan secretly omitted the "Miss" when addressing Louise.

Louise asked, somehow a bit nervously, "Pan, do you know a sorcerer called Professor?"

Since Professor was on the Cleansing List, she assumed that he should be relatively well-known in Allyn.

Philosopher, Hanger, and the others all turned to look at Pan. Professor was the only sorcerer in the Congress that they knew of.

"I do know him. He's on the Cleansing List and is a member of the Will of Elements that I just mentioned. But most sorcerers have no idea who he really is, including me." Pan shook his head.

They all felt a bit disappointed, and Klein asked, "Did you ever guess who he is?"

Before Pan could answer, the apprentices burst out in exclamation.

Outside of the window, the rails went straight up into the air and the train speeded in midair. The green fields, forests, and cities underneath became smaller and smaller.

"It's a miracle of God..." Klein murmured. Influenced by the Church in Aalto for most of his life, Klein immediately had these three words jumped into his mind when he saw the train flying.

And when he saw the inverted, floating mountain peaks, the cloud-covered magic towers, the beautiful gardens, and the magnificent city of Allyn, Klein did feel that they were all made by a god.

"Welcome to Allyn." Pan bowed slightly, his left hand on his chest.

Louise murmured dreamily, "this is... Allyn..."

After they filled out in the feedback form of the train, the sorcerers and apprentices got off. They headed for the headquarter in a coach under Pan's guidance.

Appreciating the scenery along the streets, impressed by the interesting and pleasantly-surprising alchemical items and assorted non-human races, they soon arrived at the Allyn Magic Tower, where they were greeted by Prospell.

Prospell, as usual, could not hold itself back when it saw a beauty.

Although Louise knew that some of the words to her used by Prospell were not that well-mannered, she did not really care. Instead, she was impressed by the fact that an alchemical life could be so lively, and could even seem a bit like a... pervert.

"When you guys reach senior-rank, you'll have your own magic tower. Then you can make alchemical lives yourself." Pan grinned while describing the beautiful future, although he was well aware of the fact that reaching the sixth circle was an unachievable dream for most low-rank sorcerers.

"Senior-rank..."

The apprentices and sorcerers knew what it meant — A much longer life, much more powerful spells, and even the chance of exchanging to a younger body.

Pan took a glance at Louise's white wolf, which was looking around curiously. "Louise, you can take your wolf to the Task Zone to apply to participate in some breeding experiments. I believe that those sorcerers who study blood power, transformation, and companion pets would love to accept your application, and you can also get precious arcana points from it."

Louise didn't expect that such things could be discussed publicly, and her face flushed slightly. "In Aalto... castration has to be done for these large animals, in case they become out of control from

rutting..."

The white wolf buried its head into the front paws.

"What a pity. But you can still take a look at the task for regrowing mutilated limbs. It takes some time, but it will work in the end..." suggested Pan.

Then he turned to the rest of them. "Alright, we'll talk about it later. I'll first take the apprentices to the Apprentice Assessment Department, and then take the sorcerers to the Sorcerer Administrative Department."

"No problem," replied Klein, overwhelmed by the surroundings in this silver hall, the style of which was totally different from that of the Church of Truth and the noble's villas.

Louise was also looking around curiously like a fledgling. She took a few steps and caught fragments of words from two sorcerers walking past.

"... though Lucien Evans is indeed talented..."

Lucien Evans?

Louise abruptly turned around, wondering if she just had misheard it, but the surprised look on her companions' face told her that she did not.

Maybe it's just someone with a same name... They wondered and listened more carefully.

"... Ever since he joined the Congress of Magic, he never made a mistake in his magic and arcana achievements. I don't get it... Why he has to be so obsessed with the theory of light quantum? What a pity..."

"The next issues of Arcana and Magic is coming out. I heard that so far no accurate experiments have been carried out for supporting his hypothesis. Maybe we can start developing papers on analyzing the errors in his paper?"

"... Let's wait a bit longer... I'm afraid Lucien Evans's reputation is going to be ruined."

"... It's not that bad. Every grand arcanist has more or less made some mistakes. But I do dislike people who support the particle theory!"

...

It sounded that the Lucien Evans they were talking about was a senior-rank sorcerer, therefore, he must be quite old. Louise released a soft sigh, believing that it was just someone with the same name.

She turned to Pan, who was also listening to the discussion attentively, and asked casually, "Pan, is Mr. Lucien Evans very famous?"

"Mr. Evans is a genius! He has won three highest awards in different fields before reaching senior-rank!" Said Pan in the tone of sheer admiration and dissatisfaction.

"So he's a member of the board?" Klein recalled what Pan told him about the three boards.

Pan nodded, "He's the only one in Arcana Review Board who is at the fifth circle."

"He sounds like a legend." Louise smiled. She started getting curious.

Pan was about to say something, but suddenly his eyes fixed on something and he pointed at the gate. "Here comes Mr. Evans."

Louise, Klein, and the rest of them turned around and froze.

Surrounded by a group of young sorcerers was a young man of medium-height wearing a black, double-breasted suit. With his hands set in pockets, a black top hat on his head. and a piece of monocle on his left eye, the young man look even more elegant and handsome.

"Mr... E... Evans..." Louise's lips moved like she was in a dream.

He was the very great musician, the angel of music who had passed away, Lucien Evans!

He was just dressed in a different style!

Chapter 444: Draw on Advantages and Avoid Disadvantages

Klein's brain started buzzing... Pieces of memory flashed back, and they started joining together to form a whole picture:

Professor's arrival when Lucien Evans was being questioned... It was Professor who launched the attack in the Melzer Black Forest incident, but it was Lucien Evans who benefited from it the most... Professor's unexpected visit during midnight... The trap they set together for Clown... And, the death of the great musician, Lucien Evans!

Everything started making a lot of sense when they saw Lucien Evans, who had already become a member of the Arcana Review Board, standing in the middle of the headquarter hall of the Congress of Magic!

Klein was almost certain that Lucien Evans was the very profound Mr. Professor!

"Prof... Evans..." Klein shut his mouth up before more words came out. Fear seized him: Klein had no idea if Lucien Evans wanted to have anyone knowing who he truly was.

As a consul who had worked in Aalto for more than a decade, he knew how to be very careful, especially when facing someone powerful and of high status.

Hearing Louise's murmurs, Pan asked her quite surprisedly, "you know Mr. Evans?"

"Isn't he... dead?" Hanger Ricardo and Flame Zapataro exclaimed at the same time in a low voice.

Dead? They witnessed Mr. Evans's death? Pan knew that they came from Aalto, and he knew that in Aalto a famous musician named Lucien Evans passed away and a grand funeral was held for him. Pan started getting some clues...

Recalling their chat on the train, Pan also felt very shocked.

He knew Lucien Evans, the great musician, whose music pieces were extensively popular even in Holm and Allyn. Although Ode To Joy was a half-religious music piece, and it thus did not become as popular as Lucien Evans's other works in Allyn, Pan knew that many sorcerers in actually loved Ode To Joy very much personally, including himself. They would often sing it in private, more often than any other songs from operas.

Although the two Evans were close in age, Pan still could not relate the genius sorcerer who was obsessed with studying magic and making money by inventing new alchemical items to the elegant and talented musician whose piano performances could be called art themselves. Pan wondered if the newcomers had made a mistake.

Louise quickly shut her mouth as well, just like Klein. Any sorcerer that could survive in Aalto for these many years without converting to the Church as a spy would form the habit of being extremely careful.

At this time, Louise saw that the young genius' head tilted imperceptibly, then turned to face them completely. Lucien put on a tender smile and, after he said something to the young students around him, started walking towards them at a leisurely pace.

"Mr... Mr. Evans." Klein was the first one to respond. He bowed to Lucien Evans politely.

Before he bowed, Klein's eyes stopped on the three badges that Lucien was wearing on his left chest: The black one with six silver stars, the silver one with five black circles, and the one which was a hand holding a quill-pen. Klein had known what they meant from Pan.

Lucien smiled. "Finally, you are all here. It must have been a long journey."

They were all very surprised, as they never expected that he would just directly admit who he was!

"Thanks a lot for guiding us, Mr. Pro... Mr. Evans." Klein was the first to recover from the shock.

Lucien looked around and asked, "only the four of you?"

Louise finally calmed down a bit and said with a hint of fear, "we ran into great troubles several times on our way. The closer we got to Stuart, the more dangerous it became. I saw several apprentices killed by the night watchers and pastors."

"There are still people on their way. They have many concerns and couldn't set off as soon as we could." Klein added.

Unlike Louise, who knew the great magician, and Klein, who collaborated with the Professor, Hanger and Flame were not that familiar with Lucien. So they chose to remain silent and listen carefully.

"Mr. Evans, who is this?" Heidi took Annick and the rest of the apprentices to them out of curiosity.

Lucien pointed at Klein and Louise. "They are my friends from Aalto, and they are here to join the Congress."

Then Lucien introduced his apprentices to Lousie and Klein. "They are my students Annick, Heidi, Layria, Sprint, and Katrina. They are currently working for me in the Atom Institution, and are also temporarily living at my place."

Hearing Lucien calling all of them his students in front of his acquaintances, Heidi put on a big smile.

After greeting each other, Heidi asked curiously, "Louise, what did Mr. Evans do in Aalto? Every time I asked him, he would just smile but never reply."

Louise did not know what to do. She looked at Lucien awkwardly, her mouth slightly opened, and her hobby as a lady made her notice that Lucien was wearing three finely-designed rings.

"Mr- Mr. Evans, are you that great musician of Aalto?" Pan finally asked, as he could not resist the curiosity anymore. When he knew

Lucien Evans passed away at such a young age, he also felt very sorry with deep sorrow that Lucien wouldn't be able to compose any more classic pieces of music which would be passed down through ages.

What? Deeply shocked, the apprentices wondered if there was something wrong with their ears! Annick was from Violet, and Heidi was from Syracuse. They both heard of the name before, but never thought that the two Evans was the same person!

"The great musician already died. I am now Lucien Evans, the Demon of Origin, as people call me," said Lucien half jokingly. Professor ranked the last one on the Cleansing List, and it was nothing comparable to the rank of his true identity. Also, it had been years since the experiment for synthesizing carbamide came out; revealing it right now would not do any harm to Lucien.

Pan took Lucien's words as confirmation. He glanced at Louise, and saw her nod slightly.

Pan exclaimed in great surprise, "it's really you, sir! I'm a big fan of your music! It's great knowing you're still alive! Are you by any means planning on holding a music concert in Allyn?"

Pan temporarily forgot that Lucien was a annoying supporter of the particle theory and the one put forward the hypothesis of light quantum.

"We'll see..." said Lucien.

Currently, Lucien had no plan on doing this at all. Right now he was not that eagerly pursuing money or wealth like he was in Aalto, and there was no lady in Allyn whose attention he wished to attract. So there was no point for him to do a concert.

"I'll be waiting for it!" Pan said excitedly, as Lucien Evans did not reject directly.

"Me too!" For the first time ever, Annick spoke out this loud.

When he was studying hard all alone in Violet, and when he was about to give up facing against the difficulties, it was the Symphony

of Fate that gave him the power to proceed!

Layria, Heidi, and Katrina's face flushed lightly. When they were younger, the great musician Lucien Evans was the prince charming in their dreams. Although they had only seen him on the newspapers' blurry pictures, the beautiful music triggered endless fantasies. Yet the fact that the person they were dreaming about turned out to be their most respected teacher made them feel a bit strange and embarrassed. Fortunately, they never talked about the great musician in front of Lucien Evans.

"The Demon of Origin? Is that your new title?" Asked Louise, who relaxed a bit seeing Lucien was being very friendly and kind.

Heidi answered proudly, "although the title from the Church doesn't sound nice, it matches Mr. Evans' rank on the Cleansing List — No. 53!"

Fifty-third?! Klein, Louise, and the rest two felt that what they just heard was a myth. In the past half year, they had stopped keeping track of the Cleansing List as they had to run for their lives on their way to Allyn. They had no idea since when the Demon of Origin appeared on the list. Lucien Evans must have done something that could threaten the entire Church to get to this rank. If they remembered correctly, such a high rank was supposed to be only for the legends!

They thought Lucien Evans had revealed to them his biggest secret when they found out his true identity, but now they realized that this young man who was always wearing a tender smile was much more powerful and mysterious than they thought!

Lucien noticed that more and more sorcerers were slowing down their pace and started to gather around, so he said, "I'll let you guys go for registration right now. We can talk later."

Then an idea came up to Lucien, and he quickly asked, "Klein, Louise... I wonder if you're interested in doing a part-time job for me."

"Part time job?" Louise had no idea how she could be of help for the

powerful Lucien Evans.

Lucien said briefly, "I'm preparing a program called Arcana Voice, for the purpose of creating some short music pieces for the farmers, the townspeople, and the general public. I hope you can help me here, Louise. It's hard to find sorcerers like you in Allyn who is both talented in music and currently has some free time."

Lucien would prefer classical music to heavy metal in his program.

Louise was a bit lost, as she did not understand what Arcana Voice was and what a program was. However, working with such an influential sorcerer and musician sounded not bad at all to her, as she could still stick to her hobby of music while studying magic.

So she nodded. "Sure."

"Mr. Klein, I know you were the consul of Aalto, so I suppose that you know some of the secrets of the Church and how their followers are living their life. I hope that you can run a program on this," said Lucien. "... The congress will pay, and the pay will be good."

Klein also nodded without hesitation. "My pleasure."

"Good. After registration, you two can wait for me in my office of the Arcana Review Board," said Lucien.

Then he walked to the elevator together with his apprentices and headed for the Atom Institution.

...

In a desolated graveyard in Heidler, the gray fog was rather condensed.

Adol, the spectre, stared at the magic towers at distance and said gloomily, "actions have to be taken to prevent the Congress of Magic from investigating further, or it would be just a matter of time for the gaps to be exposed."

The new spectre beside looked at him. "You seem to have a plan, Adol."

Adol nodded. "Did you read the latest Arcana? Lucien Evans has joined the war, and now he's under the attack from the supporters of the wave theory."

"So?" asked the new senior-rank spectre.

Adol's voice was dry and coarse. "I know it from Rogerio that Lucien Evans killed a Electromagnetics sorcerer who supported the wave theory after receiving a threatening letter from him. This is our chance. Those wave theory supporters must be furious if they know about this. If we fuel their anger properly, some of them will do things that can greatly infuriate Lucien Evans again. According to his temperament, Lucien Evans will again seek revenge for sure.

"... Then, those who support Lucien — say, Fernando, Hathaway, and Douglas — and those who are on the other side — Brook, Oliver, Hellen, Miranda, and most of the remaining arcanists — will fight against each other. The Congress of Magic will be caught in an unprecedented mess, and at that time, Heidler will be forgotten."

The new spectre's bones clapped. "Great idea."

Then the two spectres secretly returned to the magic tower.

At this time, in the desolated graveyard, several pieces of rotten flesh suddenly started wriggling on the ground like worms and disappeared in situ.

In a newly-built magic tower in Heidler, Felipe opened his hand and stared at the flesh worms on his palm. Very rarely, he looked a bit bewildered.

Although his study of arcana had come to a pause recently because of the limitation on the observation methods, Felipe had progressed some further in magic.

The World of Souls was not a peaceful place. Recalling the scarlet moon incident, Felipe stared at the entrance of the two demiplanes and wondered why Adol still wanted to trust and work with those from the World of Souls.

However, Felipe soon made his decision. He could not see any

benefits but only promised danger in betraying the Congress for their suspicious partner, the World of Souls, especially since he was only a new senior-rank.

He quickly found some letter paper and murmured to himself,

"Lucien Evans is out of his mind! This is such a ridiculous hypothesis. I must write to him and teach him a lesson!"

Chapter 445: Legendary

In the garden villa, Lucien looked at the thick pile of letters and released a sigh. After checking them carefully with magic to ensure that they were safe, Lucien opened them and quickly browsed through.

"Felipe?" Lucien looked at the letter in his hand, feeling a bit confused. He had no idea why Felipe would write to him.

Was this for an academic discussion? As younger-generation arcanists that received high hopes, they were both deemed to be of the few that were most likely to become legendary sorcerers. They were certainly competitors, but they specialized in different fields — Element and Necromancy were two schools quite opposite to each other in some fundamental beliefs. Besides, also they collaborated in private once, they couldn't even be called friends and had never written to each other before. It was very unlikely that the proud Felipe would suddenly write to Lucien to discuss academic problems.

Was this another criticizing or threatening letter? Lucien did not think so either. Although as a necromancer, Felipe was, without doubt, a supporter of the wave theory, as Necromancy perceived the existence of the soul as something close to electromagnetic waves, he was too proud to do such filthy things. If he strongly disagreed with Lucien, Felipe would directly write to the journal and dispute in public.

"Something's fishy..." Lucien carefully checked the letter again, making sure there was no cursing, poisoning, or soul controlling magic on it. Then he even cast Horoscope and activated quite a few defense spells before finally opening the envelope.

It turned out to be just a common dispute letter, in a typical Felipe tone. There's nothing really special about it, even the evidence listed inside it lacked experimental support and contradicted with the classic electromagnetic theory. However, as Lucien read further, he started frowning.

There were simply too many spelling errors in this letter — almost thirty of them, in just a few pages. Although they were just tiny errors which did not hinder the understanding of the letter, Lucien still caught them because he was suspicious about this letter and read it scrupulously.

Lucien spontaneously picked up a quill-pen and started correcting the errors in red ink, which was a habit he formed from reading the apprentices' papers.

Lucien had only read Felipe's published journal articles, so he did not know if this was the very way that Felipe wrote his letters, but he did not think a person as proud as Felipe would send a letter full of spelling errors to his despised opponent. He seemed to be the kind of person who hated to lose face in front of an opponent

Suddenly, Lucien noticed something unusual. His heart squeezed for a second. However, he face looked the same calm, revealing nothing inside of his heart.

He stared at the misspelled words and replaced them with the right letters in his head.

And the right letters formed a few words:

"Spectres conspiracy... particle vs. wave... internal conflict... inform congress..."

Lucien caught some clues, but there were still four letters that he could not make use of.

Although Lucien had not figured out the full information, he had got enough for him to understand the situation: The spectres in the World of Souls were trying to trigger an internal conflict in the Congress utilizing the wave-particle debate war.

As for their purpose... Lucien believed that it was because of the Congress's investigation into Heidler.

Lucien rubbed his chin and thought to himself that this definitely meant something big. Felipe wanted him to inform the Congress, which was probably because Felipe had confidence in neither

Lucien nor himself. Facing powerful sorcerers, say, Thanatos and the Demigod-lich, senior-rank sorcerers really had nothing much to do here. The difference between could not be compensated by wisdom and strategy. Meanwhile, Lucien also wondered why Felipe would trust him. What if he was working with the World of Souls as well?

Lucien put the letter back into its envelope and threw it aside. Pacing back and forth in his study, Lucien began to think about how to make the best use of the letter and reveal the deal between the Hand of Paleness and the World of Souls.

Walking to the bookshelf, Lucien took a random glance at the books. Just as he was about to turn around, he noticed the row of language books including ancient Sylvanasian, the common tongue, ancient Meshkatish, elf tongue, devil tongue, demon tongue...

The brilliant moment came; Lucien realized that the meaning of Felipe's last four letters may not be that complicated.

"This letter is the second alphabet of the common tongue; this is the 23rd; this is 11; this is six... so, it's 223, 116." Using the mind of an Astrology sorcerer, Lucien immediately recognized that it was a coordinate pair!

It corresponded to a location within the city of Heidler... It's the entrance of the gap connecting to the World of Souls!

Lucien's plan started coming into shape:

He was going to use the Hand of Paleness to make the Congress find clues about the World of Souls. In this case, he would be safe, as he could directly submit the letter to the Congress and appear as someone who knew nothing else other than the letter. So even if the Congress decided to silence someone, it would not be him.

Meanwhile, he had an even bigger plan in his mind: He was going to expose the dangerous plotters in the Hand of Paleness together with the spectres, so the Hand of Paleness would fall into complete chaos. The Congress could thus seize the chance and incorporate the Hand of Paleness into its system, hence preventing further

threats once and for all.

...

Possessing a somber air, the grey gravestones planted on the barren plain looked both lonely and miserable.

In a giant mausoleum, "Thanatos" Vicente Miranda was floating in midair, attempting to turn the powerful golden dragon in front of him into a puppet lich.

He had no flesh; only a thin layer of pale skin covered his the bones. The dark-red cluster of flame in the two eye sockets flickered, and the deadly wind traveling across the plains suddenly came to a stop, so did the legendary-level spell he was casting.

The golden dragon howled in agony and was about to seize the chance to take off and escape!

The Miranda Twelve Life Circles magic circles burst out bright light one by one and restrained the powerful creature within.

Seeing that it could not escape, great determination rose in the dragon's golden pupils, and its body started inflating quickly.

Bang!

The power of its explosion was so great that the entire mausoleum seemed to be struck by a horrible earthquake! From above fell down the stone pillars, the vault, the walls... and everything.

When stone and dust settled, what was left of Vicente Miranda was only a skull head. Vicente was now quite pissed and even more gloomy, as it had taken him lots of effort to capture a golden dragon close to the legendary level.

However, he soon calmed down and flew back to the main hall of the mausoleum. Landing on a giant black coffin, he illumined the vault, and countless stars lit up.

A moment ago, when he was dealing with the dragon, he suddenly had a great sense of danger and thus became distracted. As a result,

he was almost backfired by his spell. Although the backfiring turned out to be more startling than dangerous, he still lost the dragon and his body as a cost.

When one reached the legendary level, no matter whether the sorcerer was good at Astrology or not, he or she would purposefully pay great attention to make up for it. Even if the power of Astrology conflicted with their body constitution or soul, a legendary level sorcerer would still try to find a same-level astrological magic item for compensation. Otherwise, a legendary sorcerer who specialized in Astrology could become their most dreadful enemy at any time!

The power that Astrology could give became one of the prominent advantages for being a sorcerer over being a caster or a knight. Unless their talent includes prophecy-like powers or they possess similar legendary items, a knight or a caster could only rely on intuition to predict danger within a small range, but would be completely blind when facing the unknown hiding threats in the broader sense.

Vicente Miranda's spiritual power was not in conflict with Astrology. Therefore, although he did not study Astrology in depth, what he knew were enough for him to use and actually greatly surpasses that of the other legendary sorcerers who did not have the title of grand arcanist.

Against the black vault, the tracks of the stars was rather clear. The remaining skull head of Vicente bobbed in the air, and soon figured out the result:

"Storm... Tumult... Fernando... Destructive strike..."

The two flames in the skull flickered several times, and then Vicente said to the darkness,

"Congus, Rogerio, Demartes, Adol... Come and see me."

The lid of the black coffin opened fiercely. A giant corpse surrounded with black smog sprang up. In the smog, countless layers of bodies made up the giant corpse. Those were all bodies of intelligent creatures — human beings, elves, dwarves, demons...

The huge corpse which was as tall as half a mountain possessed an extremely dangerous air, as if it could absorb all life power. Vicente's skull landed on top of it, like a pale crown.

The corpse's eyes suddenly opened wide, and two clusters of dark-red flame lit up in the eye sockets.

Only silence and darkness were left in this space.

...

On the thirty-third floor of the headquarter of the Congress.

"Sir, I received a letter from Felipe," said Lucien straightforwardly to Fernando, who was strolling back and forth in his study.

"What letter?" Fernando asked with a strange look that was both serious and confused.

"He used a secret message in the letter, telling me that the Hand of Paleness has made an agreement with the spectres in the mysterious black and white space. They are going to stir internal conflict within the Congress using the debate war over the particle and wave theory to gain benefits. Felipe worried that the mysterious space could go out of control. Thus, he's on the Congress's side and told me the coordinate pair for the entrance of the space." Lucien spoke briefly and clearly, but purposefully described the Hand of Paleness as the initiator.

Fernando nodded slightly. There was a hint of anger in his voice. "So that's why..."

"What is it, sir?" Lucien was quite surprised by Fernando's response. From what Lucien knew about his teacher, Fernando was supposed to be beyond furious right now.

Fernando looked out of the window and said in a low voice, "five minutes earlier before you arrived, Vicente came with Congus and the others. He asked to call for the Highest Council meeting."

"What?" Lucien had no clue what was going on.

Fernando snorted. "Vicente has caught all the spectres in the Hand of Paleness that came from the mysterious space, and put all the blame on Congus, Rogerio, and the others, claiming that they misled him. He then confessed all the secrets in the World of Souls, and told me that it is a space full of great dangers, so we have to take time to explore it."

"... What about Mr. Congus? What did he say?" Lucien could not believe what just happened. He had arrived here as quickly as possible after reading the letter. How could so many things happen within such a short period of time? Had they caught Felipe?

Fernando shook his head. "Congus and his people took all the blame, but they denied doing any damage to the Congress. Hiding some secrets itself won't bring them any severe punishment. The next step is to investigate those spectres..."

Fernando paused a bit, and then cast a glance at Lucien,

"If you don't know how to cover yourself using Astrology, don't ever plan on turning against a legendary sorcerer again, especially when you are trying to pose a threat to their life."

Chapter 446: Result of the Investigation

Lucien's mind became blank for a second, and then he finally figured out what Fernando was indicating.

"Sir... are you saying that Vincente sensed what I was plotting? Even it was just a thought?!"

That was too much for Lucien.

So far, Lucien had gained access to most materials under legendary level in the Advanced Arcana Library, but his knowledge of the legendary was still limited to what was in the book *Astrology and Elements* — the promotion of two legendary classes and the construction of the corresponding legendary magic spells. Lucien did hear more from Fernando, however, they were just pieces of information. He had no concrete knowledge that could form a complete picture of the legendaries at all.

Therefore, Lucien was very surprised with Vincente's god-like omniscience. Although he did realize Baron Habearo's conspiracy using Horoscope before, at that time, Baron Habearo had already started taking actions and they were in the same castle. This time, Lucien had just used ten minutes on conceiving the plan and hadn't even had the chance to discuss with Fernando. However, Thanatos had sensed the upcoming danger and made the faster move.

Fernando said with a serious face, "reaching the legendary level brings qualitative change to life. When the War of Dawn just began, in the Church's description, a legendary was equal to a demigod. If your plan would really work and threaten Vicente's life, the tiny deviation in his track of destiny would be amplified in his cognitive world into a very strong warning."

Fernando paused a bit here, thinking of some possible examples to make Lucien treat this more seriously.

"When you were trying to save the Observer, when you were planning on distracting Dracula, did you ever think about killing him? Did you ever had a plan that could result in his death?" Asked

Fernando.

"No," Lucien answered. From the beginning, his very and only aim was to save Rhine, which had nothing to do with Dracula the Vampire Prince. If Dracula had not gotten in his way, Lucien would have stayed away from him as far as he could, and Natasha would not have had to take such a great risk.

Lucien could never kill a legendary like Dracula on his own, unless he had more legendaries on his side. He even rejected Natasha's proposal for using Sard to kill the vampire prince.

Thinking of this, Lucien finally realized why Rhine made the entire plan like this way — It was not until the God of Silver Moon and the mysterious existence from the World of Souls started fighting did Lucien realize what he was truly facing.

From the Sphinx Mausoleum to the underground palace of the Sun King to the altar of the Kuo-toans, Lucien only knew that he had to help Rhine break free from the trap so the World of Souls could become less of a threat. Rhine never told him the entire story. Obviously, Rhine was trying to keep Lucien safe from activating the mysterious existence in the World of Souls' sense of danger. Fortunately, since Its power had not fully recovered yet, they managed to get by.

Lucien then recalled more: The King of Nightmare found the complicated math problem deep in Lucien's brain due to his own actions; The King of Sphinx, when Lucien faced It, had not fully wakened up from Its thousands of years of sleep; For Sard, Lucien was just using his hands to kill Clown, but never thought of harming him; And for the other legendaries, including his teacher and the president, Lucien was always being very careful and constantly foreshadowing when he put forward those subversive papers.

Seeing the thoughtful look on Lucien's face, Fernando knew that his purpose had been achieved. "So, if there's a next time, do not draw any plan on your own. Come to me directly."

As if he were not fully assured, Fernando added. "But submitting a

subversive paper is different. It has to be reviewed first, and sufficient cushioning is always necessary."

In Fernando's eyes, his student, Lucien Evans, was someone who could throw at people head-exploding papers at any time.

"Legendaries can't sense the danger brought by subversive papers?" Lucien was confused again. This was different from what he thought.

Fernando's red eyes gazed at Lucien. "A half-solidified cognitive world, its fusion with the soul between the unreal and real, and its interaction with the reality and the star sky of destiny... These are what will happen to a sorcerer when reaching the legendary level. These, together with the inverted image of Host Star of Destiny and the legendary level Astrology knowledge, are the sources of a legendary's ability of knowing approaching dangers. If a subversive paper could cause danger to a legendary, the paper must be in conflict with his cognitive world. In other words, his cognitive world does not accept this result, and will thus not regard it as a threat. Therefore, it can not be sensed."

"I see..." Lucien finally understood it to some degree, and then he asked worriedly, "then... will Thanatos know that it was me? What about Felipe?"

Being the enemy of a grand arcanist was even worse than turning against a legendary, because a grand arcanist had countless secret ways to take away one's life, not to mention that Thanatos was a grand arcanist specializing in Necromancy, cursing, and life conversion.

Fernando grinned. "Idiot. You forgot you are 'the Secretive'? Very possibly, the result of Vicente's Horoscope fell on me. This actually makes more sense, as in consideration of the close relationship between you and me, your plan will most likely be carried out by me. So, no worries, if Vicente can't trace to you, he can't trace to Felipe."

That diverged quite a lot from the truth... Lucien nodded, but in the next second, he started worrying again, "But Sir... Thanatos will

resent you for this."

"So? Do I look afraid?" Fernando's eyes opened big. "... Alright, you may go now. I need to attend the Highest Council Meeting discussing this, and then investigate the spectres from the world of black and white."

"I wonder what's their plot..." said Lucien curiously, wishing to know if he had become one of their targets, as he had killed one dumb senior-rank spectre in the cave of the dwarf relic.

Fernando's scowled. "If you should know, you will know. But I don't think we'll be able to get anything valuable — The spectres were sent by Vicente, and the memory left in the him mind must have been modified by him. What we could see will be what he wants us to see."

Lucien suddenly recalled that Vicente Miranda was also the top expert in brain and soul memory. Only those mind-playing-fancying octopuses living in the Dark Mountain Range could be a possible match to him. Thanatos was especially good at intruding the mind and browsing memories, and even modifying and deleting them.

Fernando and Douglas could tell which part of memory was fake, but they would not know which part was missing.

.....

Sitting in his office, Lucien was reading the selected investigation result sent to him by Fernando.

The spectres were trying to cause an internal conflict in the Congress using Lucien. If Felipe had not sent the message, it would have turned into big trouble.

Without Felipe's betrayal, Lucien would not have had the plan; without his plan, Thanatos would not have sensed the danger, and then the Hand of Paleness's plan might have worked. In this case, Lucien would become the one in the biggest trouble.

However, Lucien was also much safer now because of what happened. Anyone who dared to use Lucien's hypothesis as the

excuse to trigger any controversy would be regarded as a suspect or even a spy by the Congress.

"They knew more about the World of Souls than I do, and they are well aware of the great danger in the deep. The scenes retrieved from the memory of the spectre named Adol about the deepest place of that world shocked all the members from the Highest Council..."

Lucien could not access the information about what they saw, but Fernando made it clear what actions the Congress was going to take: They had decided to develop new magic spells for detecting the gap entrances of the World of Souls by tracing the memories and features of senior-rank spectres that they collected from the investigation. They would build stations close to those entrances and then take their time to explore further. Only until they located the new world which the God of Silver Moon and the mysterious existence from the World of Souls fell in, found the power pieces of the Gods, and gained results from researching them would they go deeper into the World of Souls.

It seemed that Thanatos was not yet completely on the World of Souls's side as he was not planning on luring the legendary sorcerers into the deepest. However, nothing about Mr. Maskelyne and Mr. Rhine being trapped in the deep part of the World of Souls was mentioned, which made Lucien wonder if it was because Adol did not have the access right to knowing it.

Lucien had been about to, when the Congress found out that Rhine was trapped by Dracula in the World of Souls, play innocent in front of Fernando. Now, there was no need for this.

The rest of the investigation result amused Lucien: Several conflicts within the Hand of Paleness were purposefully caused by the spectres from the World of Souls.

Lucien could imagine how furious Thanatos was after knowing this, but the good thing was that Thanatos would now be aware that the spectres also had some evil intents towards the Hand of Paleness.

Lucien was more assured now, knowing that the Congress had

known what they were facing.

After Lucien finished reading the report, a small cluster of fire lit up above his fingertips. The parchment was burnt into ashes and then flushed down the pipes.

Standing up, Lucien was about to leave Atom Institution when Lazar also walked out.

"You stay here late, Lucien." Lazar took a curious glance at Lucien from head to toe. "... Can't relate you to a great musician. Totally can't. I thought you only know magic and arcana! I know several music pieces of yours are quite romantic... say, To Silvia, and Moonlight! Why are you still here? Some of your music lovers must be waiting to visit you at your home. I'm sure some noble ladies from Rentato are looking forward to meeting you in person!"

"This's why I'm still here." Lucien rubbed his forehead.

Lazar made an exaggerated sigh. "What a waste!"

Then he put on a funny look and asked, "so what about the rumors... You and the princess of Violet are in love? Is that why you're not interested in those beautiful ladies?"

Lucien never expected that Lazar could be this gossipy. But facing the question, Lucien also did not want to deny, so he chose to remain silent.

Lazar understood, and made a prolonged "Ohh".

"One in the east, and one in the west. One in the Congress, and one in the City of Psalm... Difficult, I must say, brother. You keep the hard work and become a legendary as soon as possible. Then you can lead the Congress to defeat the Church and go all the way to the City of Psalm. Then you have the Princess!" Lazar kept talking as they walked out together.

When they walked into the elevator, Lucien saw Felipe standing in front of them, wearing a black long coat.

"For the new arcana badge. That's why I'm here." Felipe's adjusted

the level-six arcana badge in front of his chest a bit. His face was cold without the slightest hint of smile.

Since the Influence Factor was applied, Felipe had gained much more credits.

Lucien suspected that Felipe was waiting here specially for him. Obviously, Felipe had not fully calmed down from what happened a few days ago.

Lucien laughed knowingly. "It's a bit disappointing seeing you're still alive."

Felipe snorted, although in his mind he was now much more relieved. Soon after he sent the message, Thanatos suddenly took a series of actions. It posed beyond great pressure on his nerves and made him feel like that he was a cornered beast. Luckily, he always had a strong mindset so he stopped himself from jumping out in front of Thanatos.

"I'm working on developing a new magic spell for amplification. If things work well, maybe three or four years later, we'll have a much better version of it. A senior-rank version," said Lucien, looking straight ahead.

Felipe's eyes slightly looked aside, and his hands in the pockets clenched tightly. "What are you trying to imply?"

"I'm preparing a programme. I hope you can come to be my guest host." Lucien had a mischievous smile on his face. Lucien did not want to owe Felipe anything and he did not wish to make friend with Felipe at all. Lucien hoped that he could pay Felipe back as soon as possible, so he could call it even.

Felipe did not quite understand. "Programme? Guest host?"

"You'll see," Lucien answered mysteriously.

Then he walked out of the elevator with Lazar and stepped into the main hall.

Chapter 447: Arcana Voice

In the year 823 of the Saint Calendar, at the end of the Month of Dormancy (February), in the district of Sardni in Rentato.

The district of Sardni was originally a small fishing village where the fishermen and merchants selling Storm Strait fishes resided. Then the district thrived because of the development of the related industries of producing, sorting, and selling preserved fish products and the close relationship between the Kingdom of Holm and the Congress of Magic. During the second expansion of Rentato, the district was included in and named after the local bream called Sardni.

However, as magic stream trains between Patray harbor and Rentato started gaining their popularity, wealthy merchants had gradually took control of the local fishing industry using fresh goods and low prices. The monopoly put the local small shops and markets out of business. Some local fishermen gave up what they had done for decades; some were now working for the major merchants; some landed in the miserable situation of being unemployed.

Fortunately, the promotion of all kinds of alchemical items saved the unemployed. The newly-built alchemical workshops accepted them and, within just several years, Sardni turned into a half-fishing, half-alchemical district.

In the dark night, dim candlelight came out from the windows of the poor houses and shanties along the street where magic crystal lights were still unaffordable. However, the street lamps connected by the spiderweb-like electric wires were warm and bright. The light produced by the lamps intertwined with the darkness of the night.

"Shame on you!"

A teenager around fourteen or fifteen spat on the ground, staring at the young couple snuggling in the darkness behind a lamp.

Although due to the conservative style of the Kingdom of Holm, the couple was simply hugging and whispering to each other, and never did anything else too intimate like kissing or caressing, there was still strong envy and longing in the teenager's eyes.

"Andy! Stop looking! It's starting soon!"

A low voice came from behind the nearby trees along the street.

Startled, Andy hurriedly turned around and saw his three friends' head sticking out behind a thick tree with great caution.

"What? It's starting..." The look on Andy's face suddenly changed. He looked both nervous and excited. It seemed that they were doing something dangerous but thrilling.

He carefully approached the tree and grumbled. "William, Mickey, Martin... Why don't you come earlier?"

The brown-haired Martin giggled. "How dare we interrupt you? You're definitely peeping someone dating."

"Yup," the blond William cleared his throat, "... Spring has come, and creatures start getting restless, including Andy, who's already in heat..."

"You wanna try this?!" Andy was pissed off, his hand clenching into a fist. Embarrassment filled up in his blue eyes.

"Shh!" Micky, the shortest one among them all, hurriedly pressed down Andy's hand.

Andy took a deep breath and sealed his mouth. He pointed to the direction where they were about to go.

"Let's go, or we'll miss Miss Nightingale's song at the beginning," said William yearningly.

Martin put on a look of disdain. "William is in heat as well."

Giggling, the young lads secretly sneaked into the darkness and moved forward stealthily.

As they turned around the corners and traversed the trees, their voice quieted down and their breath became heavy.

They came in front of the row of low houses in a quiet corner of Sardni, and headed towards the two-story to the end.

Pulling up the collar until it covered half of his face, Andy knocked six times at the pace of two short and three long.

The door opened silently. A middle-aged man looked around in great alert, and eyed the boys to come in.

Andy, Martin, Micky, and William knew this place well and they did not need any guidance. The living room was already filled with people, a lot of people. In a circle, some were standing, some were sitting. All the curtains were drawn close; only a candlestick lit up the room with its flickering light, which seemed quite vulnerable. The atmosphere was ideal for telling a horror folktale and for one to take place.

Among the people, there were adult males and females, kids, seniors, teenage "in-heat" boys like Andy, and several blooming adolescent girls.

Exchanging a look, the boys thrust their way forward into the crowd and finally came beside the teenage girls after the great effort.

One of the boys grinned a bit shyly. "Scarlet, Selma... Good to see you two here."

The blonde girl gave him a stare and put her finger on her lips. "Shh... Quiet. It's gonna start."

Hearing that, the boys instantly quivered. They temporarily put aside the attempt to get close to the girls, but started waiting patiently and expectantly.

The owner of the house, the middle-aged, serious-looking man in an old white shirt, came to the center and started fiddling with the strange box the size of a head.

The grey box was engraved with mysterious patterns, on which there was a row of black buttons and two knobs. There were also two metal sticks on top of it that looked like ram's horns. They were of half-meter long and also had weird patterns and symbols.

No one talked when the man was working on the box. No matter men or women, young or old, no one spoke a single word. They held their breath, as devout as praying in the church. To them, the box was divine.

Hiss... The familiar electric current noise came.

People in the room instantly sat up or stood up straight.

From the box came a female voice that sounded far from them and wasn't very clear. But with the man's patient calibration, the quality started getting much better:

"Good evening, everyone, this is FM 592.6M, welcome to Arcana Voice. Now it's ten at night in Allyn and I'm your friend, Nightingale. Glad to have you in the next four hours, my friends."

The sweet female voice tickled the boys' hearts, making them wonder how beautiful Miss Nightingale must be.

"So the first section of today: General Knowledge in Everyday Life. I'll introduce you to a healthier and wiser lifestyle and help you stay away from all the possible traps in your life.

"... In recent months, in Rentato, as well as other cities in Holm, many illegal merchants are selling 'radioactive' toothpaste and body shampoos, claiming that those products are more fashionable, work better, and can help bring us longevity. Is that true?

"To find out the truth, let's start from the paper written by Mr. Lucien Evans, the member of Arcana Review Board, senior-rank arcanist, the three-time winner of Holm Crown prize, winner of the Immortal Throne, Arcana Scepter, and Ice & Snow Medal. Mr. Lucien Evans wrote the paper titled A New Element Which Emits Electron Currents and Two Other Rays three years ago, but it was not until five months ago did he publish it. It was also the very

paper that won him the Ice & Snow Medal. In this paper, he coined the term 'natural radioactivity'. He believes that some elements with unstable structures might emit new elements and electron currents."

"Selma, did you hear it?! Mr. Evans is not only the composer of our favorite music pieces in the Music Gallery, but also a great scholar who has won so many awards! You know the great musician in Aalto? They have the same name!" Exclaimed Scarlet full of admiration.

After listening to the programme for over a year, Scarlet was aware of the value of the awards mentioned. And she was not the only one who felt beyond impressed in the living room. Gasps of admiration and praises filled the space.

Andy, however, held an ambivalent attitude towards this Lucien Evans. He did admire Lucien Evans's talent, but Scarlet was the girl he liked.

People in the living room knew what Miss Nightingale was talking about, as it had been several months that they lived under those merchants' constant promotion. Using the merchants' words, those 'radioactive' toothpaste could effectively remove the stains on their teeth and make their teeth white again, and the new elements contained in the toothpaste could keep them fit and healthy. According to the merchants, many nobles had started using the new toothpaste.

"... To seek for the truth, we have talked to Mr. Evans, who made a thorough explanation for the term, 'natural radioactivity'. According to Mr. Evans, while emitting new elements and electron currents, these ingredients also release 'curses', which can make your hair and teeth fall as well as weaken your body and disrupt your blood circulation. The new elements and electron currents emitted will also do severe damage to your body." said the sweet voice.

The listeners were shocked and terrified.

"... This kind of damage is not only limited within you. Newborn babies can suffer from malformation because of the radioactive substance. So please, everyone, DO NOT buy those products sold by

those dishonest and mercenary people. DO NOT buy them simply because many are using them"

Miss Nightingale paused a bit and then made the conclusion. "Using Mr. Evans' words: While the Saint Truth corrupts your entire life; Radiation corrupts three generations in your family!"

The listeners were scared and shocked, but they also felt lucky that Arcana Voice had told them the truth. Their mind was completely occupied by the idea that they had to throw away the toothpaste as soon as they went back home, so they were not in the mood to object to the religious part in Lucien Evans' comment.

Suddenly, Scarlet whimpered. "I've been using it for a month... What if... "

Miss Nightingale continued. "To relieve our listeners, the good news is that since the added dosage in the toothpaste and shampoos is very small, if there is any, once you stop using it, no sequela will be left."

The listeners in the living room all released a sigh of great relief!

"After the wonderful melody, Mr. Philosopher will bring us the 'Unravel' section. Based on his thirty-eight-year experience as a consul, Mr. Philosopher will tell us stories about those pastors and cardinals he used to interact with, showing us that underneath their sacred aura, they do have their own feelings and desires, just like every human being." introduced Miss Nightingale.

"Wow! Affair with nuns again?" Andy got excited.

A brawny guy whose arm was as thick as Andy's thigh looked back at him and joked. "Maybe it's with boys like you."

Before Andy could refute, the strange box called radio started playing a peaceful, relaxing melody.

"Mr. Evans's light music, City in the Sky," said Scarlet in a very low voice, afraid that she might interrupt the wonderful music.

After the following few sections Unravel, Approaching Arcana, and

the Magic Room, Nightingale's sweet voice came back again, "Next section is Body Secret, and I know it's the part loved by many of our listeners. Tonight, we are lucky to still have the authority in the study of the human body, Mr. Felipe, to be our guest speaker."

"I like Mr. Felipe. He's cold, but I like it!" Selma beamed with joy.

"Hello, Mr. Felipe."

"Good evening, Nightingale."

"As it is known to all, the human body starts to develop fast at the age around twelve, and great changes ensue. This stage of life can bring great bothers to many teenage boys and girls. So, Mr. Felipe, I wonder if you can talk more in details about the changes and make them understand that these are just natural changes and there's nothing to worry about."

"..."

"Mr. Felipe?"

"..."

"Mr. Felipe... Sir! Please calm down..."

Chapter 448: "Truth of the World"

The listeners exchanged looks between each other, having no clue what was going on. Pauses did happen in the past when there were 'technique issues' or mistakes made by the hosts, but tonight was different.

The owner of the house who was in charge of the radio was a magic apprentice sent by the Congress of Magic, responsible for promoting radios and taking in listeners, and now the corner of his lips on his serious-looking face curled up slightly, as he knew what was going on: Obviously, the director of the programme never told Mr. Felipe in advance that he would be asked to talk about pubertal development. Cold and short-tempered as Mr. Felipe, it was no wonder that he would react like this.

Hiss... the electric current noise cut off the programme. Before the middle-aged man decided to tune the radio again, Nightingale's sweet voice returned,

"Sorry, my friends, our sincere apologies. Our guest speaker, Mr. Felipe, has left because of his personal emergency. We'll have Mr. Ricardo continue with the topic. Mr. Ricardo is also an expert arcanist specializing in studying the human body..."

The voice was the same pleasant to ear but now there was a slight hint of fear.

"... Mr. Felipe has left..." Scarlet sighed and felt very disappointed. She really liked Felipe's low and charming voice, especially his tone which carried the just right amount of arrogance.

Her friend, the pretty and petite Selma, shared her feeling, but she soon realized what just happened. "Mr. Felipe doesn't like the topic! No wonder he remained silent and left!"

Then she covered her cheeks with both hands and said in both curiosity and excitement, "... But it must be so cute if Mr. Felipe took the topic! I bet his face would flush! Oh my... He's so adorable just leaving like this! So cold and proud!"

The middle-aged house owner's face twitched a bit when hearing the teenage girl's words. He could not help wondering how Mr. Felipe would respond if he had heard the comments. They would probably disturb him more than the puberty topic.

After her excitement calmed down, Selma was suddenly struck by a thought. "What if Mr. Felipe never comes back in the future?"

"I think he will be back... Don't know for sure... But next time the topic's gonna be different," said Scarlet.

Meanwhile, their eyes flashing, Andy and the rest of the teenage boys had been fully absorbed in the topic. Tonight's topic had answered a lot of questions in their mind which they dared not to speak out. And when it came to how a girl's body would change during puberty, imagination seized them.

"... That's too much!" Scarlet covered her ears and moved closer to the other girls, as if she did not want to listen to it. However, her hands were not covering her ears tight at all.

The rest of the girls who were elder finally realized what the changes were and why they took place. When they went through the changes, the girls were scared and very nervous, having no idea what was going on, and it was not until today did they finally figure out and get to know how to take better care of themselves.

The married aunties took a step forward to shield the young girls. They glared at those men and scolded,

"Hold your eyes back! Go back and look at your wife and mother!"

So those men in the house looked away. Many of them then thought to themselves that extra care should be given to their women just like what the arcanist had just said, as every month's suffering could be this bad...

After the section of Body Secret, followed a voice full of passion,

"Apollo magic crystal light! Hold light in your own hand! Have electric wires set to your place now and receive six months of free electricity! What are you waiting for? Grab your wallet and apply!

Visit local town halls, branches of Gift from Elements, and Holm Mineral Union Bank for more information!"

Because of today's topic of Body Secret, people in the room today were not as tense as usual. Although they still dared not to talk aloud, the look on their faces was quite relaxed. While the ladies were sitting together, whispering, the teenage boys were also chatting and taking glances at the girls from time to time secretly.

"Jinkela, Jinkela, the best formula! Make your harvest spectacular!"

After several ads, Nightingale's beautiful voice came back,

"Now let's have Music Gallery take the lead for introducing the second half of tonight's programme. Relax in the wonderful melody and put aside all your exhaustion and tediousness from the day. Tonight we have Mr. Evans's latest piano opusculum, Free Mind, a piece of light music but with mild passion."

As Arcana Voice started to be known to more sorcerers and nobles, Lucien's music talent was also revealed. Thus, he put forward his principle for choosing and composing music: Get closer to citizens, to farmers, and to all the ordinary people; From the grand, structural symphony pieces, develop more light music pieces which were simple, romantic, short, but still beautiful.

He composed many pieces of light music by himself, and also copied some from the masterpieces of Earth, including Castle in the Sky. The public's response was mixed, but those who were close to Lucien and knew his "great musician" identity understood the situation, as it took time for the transition in styles.

Now it had been three years, and the quality of Lucien's own light music pieces had become much better. They had gained wide popularity among common citizens and young nobles who fancied romance. The fine teahouses along the streets had started to play these music pieces to create a romantic and elegant atmosphere to attract guests, and it turned out to be quite useful.

"A new piece from Mr. Evans?" Scarlet said excitedly, her fingers crossed together against her chin.

All the listeners stopped chatting. They were common citizens, and rarely did they have the chance of visiting a concert hall to listen to music played by a real musician, but now Arcana Voice offered them this precious enjoyment. Although they did not know much about music, they were aware of the heartfelt appreciation in their mind when they first heard the light music pieces.

The melody was wonderful and refreshing. The keys jumping like little fairies pulled the listeners into a quiet and peaceful realm surrounded by nothing but mountains and trees, where birds presented their soft chirping and the stream played its crispy splashing.

The listener's mind was washed and cured, as they were in the gentle and soft embrace of mother nature, where both their body and soul could take a rest.

Leaves and branches revealed the traces of wind. The wind was free, free to travel to wherever it wanted. The wind made these people who had suffered in their lives and were restrained by their religious belief felt that they have this ticklish feeling in their hearts, that their hearts were covered with a layer of dust, so the hearts could not go with the wind freely. But yet they had not realized what exactly this layer of dust on their mind was.

The free wind gradually faded, yet the sweet aura created by Free Mind was still lingering.

"Beautiful...!" Scarlet murmured as if she was still in the dream.

Too excited to say a word, Selma simply nodded hard.

"After Free Mind, let's listen to the light music piece, Streamside, composed by Miss... Louise." Nightingale introduced.

When mentioning the name, Nightingale paused a bit.

Music had relaxed the listeners' spirit greatly, and now their peaceful mind was open to almost everything.

The silvery voice said to the listeners,

"Now, welcome to our section, the Voice of History. Today, our young historian Mr. Pande will unravel some of the secrets in the War of Dawn and the unknown facts about the Inquisition."

"I do have a book compiled by the Church here, called Hunting Sorcerer, and I do believe that the lines in the book are reliable," said Pande in his piercing voice, "... If a person lives alone and rarely talks to other people, he or she is a sorcerer, without doubt; If a person often shows up on parties and is outgoing and cheerful, then obviously, he or she is just pretending to avoid suspicion..."

The listeners' faces turned pale as Pande was talking.

It's so scary! The Church was suspicious of everything!

As the listeners of Arcana Voice, they could never be enough careful! Otherwise, if the Church knew — No! — if they suspect about this, then...

"Alright, I know the history might be quite heavy, so here comes our most favored section, the Thousand and One Nights! Previously, Harry, the poor boy from the slum, finally arrived at the amazing magic school of Pesancho, and then a series of interesting stories followed..."

Listening to the story, Andy said to his friends, "A poor lad can become a sorcerer. What about us...?"

The cheerful story made them long for the life in a magic school.

The adults were also very impressed. "Those sorcerers are living an even better life than the nobles! They are enjoying food from all over the world, and the cheap, practical alchemical items have made their life much easier and pleasant..."

Their hearts were full of admiration, and they had also learned a lot. Their horizons had been greatly broadened. If any upstart merchant dared to show off his knowledge in front of them, heh, after listening to Arcana Voice, they were not that easy to be fooled!

"... You see? Transformation, Illusion, and Necromancy are not as

dark and horrible as you think..." said a listener in low voice.

Some sections in Arcana Voice aimed at eliminating people's fear and hate towards magic caused by ignorance.

"Knowing brings understanding; Communicating connects the world" — this was one of Arcana Voice's tenets.

A fruity voice boomed out from the box. "Welcome to Man and Nature... On the savannah in the south, the rainy season has just passed..."

...

In the middle of the Boundless Ocean, in the Solar Islands branch of the Congress of Magic.

A young sorcerer couldn't help but laughed when hearing Nightingale asking Felipe to calm down. Leaned against the back of the chair, the sorcerer was listening to Arcana Voice. His spirit had been lifted and now he was in quite a good mood.

He was receiving the signals using the low-frequency band made specifically for long distance transmission. Arcana Voice had made his life on the island instantly became much more colorful and exciting.

When Arcana Voice ended, he sat up straight and switched to another band.

A serious and clear voice came. "Welcome to Truth of the World..."

The young sorcerer named Blake listened to it attentively. For sorcerers like him who lived far away from Allyn and Rentato, getting the most up-to-date information wasn't easy at all. The delivery of the journals including Arcana was much slower than to the major cities, since in most cases, magic steam trains and boats were used for delivery. Transmission magic circles were used only in rare, important cases.

Living on the island, Blake belonged to one of the last groups of sorcerers to receive the journals and messages, which often took a

month longer. He could not stay up-to-date with the latest currents in the Congress, and knew nothing about what was going on in Allyn except what were on the journals.

However, the living cost here was much lower than in Allyn and Rentato, and they could make twice more in these remote areas as there were few local sorcerers. They needed money and materials to get promotion, so they did not want to leave.

The birth of Truth of the World solved this big problem.

"... Then, we're going to review the major news in Allyn in the past week."

Chapter 449: The Past Week In Allyn

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“Monday, the thirty-second ring of Holm Crown prize finally found its winner in the Year of 822. Mr. Jerome was awarded for his discovery of X-ray. He is the second winner of Holm Crown prize from the Atom Institution after Mr. Evans.

“... In the Atom Institution, Mr. Jerome always remains a low profile. He does not seem to be as brilliant and eye-catching as Mr. Evans or as talkative and open-minded as Mr. Lazar and Mr. Rock, nor does he have the same solid academic foundation as Mr. Evans’ students do. Then what made him gain such a great achievement? How did Mr. Jerome, a simple and honest gentleman in the eyes of the others, became a level-four arcanist and third-circle sorcerer, became the winner of the thirty-second Holm Crown ring?

“It’s our great honor to have Mr. Jerome here today to answer these questions. Hi, Mr. Jerome, thank you for being with us today.”

Blake, who had the typical light blue hair and dark blue eyes of the Solarians, listened to the radio very attentively. Except for the discovery of X-ray, the news about the Atom Institution in recent years basically had nothing to do with Jerome. His name was always at the bottom, attracting little attention. However, all of a sudden, he had won the top award in the School of Element and had become the envy and model of thousands of arcanists.

The rich male voice answered, “in many people’s eyes, I am not a talented arcanist. I am not a match for Rock and my colleagues, not to mention Evans. Therefore, many arcanists believe that my achievement came from the favor of the Goddess of Luck... that an accident of forgetting the fluorescence piece led to an even more accidental achievement.”

Blake nodded. He also thought so, and it was not because of feeling jealous. The paper published on Arcana last year proved that Jerome’s finding was more of an lucky accident than a discovery

guided by developed theories.

“Then what do you think, sir?” Asked Lark, the host of the section, genially.

Jerome smiled. “Indeed they are all right. But I have to add something here: Before I found X-ray, I had already conducted the related experiments for a thousand two hundred and twenty-seven days. When Lazar, Rock, and the students believed that there was nothing more to explore, I was still working on it using my own spare time.

“At that time, I never expected anything big. I was doing so simply because there were still things I did not understand. I am not smart, but I am proud of my diligence, perseverance, and patience, which are the only things that I can rely on.

“Maybe arcanists like me are not the ones to come up with those earthshaking theories which required much imagination, but we can lay the most solid foundation for the high tower of Arcana and add details to it. People like us are also valuable and promising.”

Jerome’s words were simple but not plain. His words motivated Blake greatly. Diligence, perseverance, and patience... Blake repeated the words to himself in his mind.

“Diligence, perseverance, and patience...” Lark also repeated the words in the radio and smiled. “Thank you for sharing, Mr. Jerome. I believe what you just said is a great encouragement to many arcanists, including me. Anything else you’d like to share with us?”

“Umm... First of all, I’d like to express my many thanks to Mr. Evans, whose great talent in arcana is known to all. Working with him has offered me much to learn. No matter what others say about his light quantum hypothesis, I believe in him. He was the one who offered us free access to all the facilities in the Atom Institution and encouraged me when I felt like giving up. Therefore, I named the ray using the letter ‘X’.”

Jerome continued emotionally. “... Also, I’d like to say ‘thank you’ to my wife, Vera. Her love and courage have been accompanying

me all the time and giving me the power to do the tedious experiments over and over again. Without her support, I would never have been able to win the prize. She shares the ring with me.”

“That’s so sweet. The couple also just got their first baby! Let’s wish them an even sweeter and brighter future!” Lark said sincerely and then turned to the other guest speaker. “... Today, we also have the president of the Will of Elements here, Mr. Morris Hoffenberg. Welcome, sir. So, for what Mr. Jerome just said, how do you feel about it?”

“Diligence, perseverance, and patience... These are very good qualities, regardless of talent.” Morris had a deep and charming voice of a mature man.

Lark agreed, and then asked, “So Mr. Morris, we had received lots of letters from our listener this week, and they shared one question — Why wasn’t Mr. Evans rewarded with the price?

“Mr. Evans’s paper on radioactive element, which won him the Ice & Snow Medal, should further win him Holm Crown prize for at least two times: one for proving that electron is part of an atom’s inner structure, and the other for leading us into the microworld and showing us the change of matters by discovering the new element Helium. His research is beyond exciting; it made us believe that we’re on the way mastering matters, which used to be the forbidden zone of Gods. But why didn’t such an important paper win the prize?”

Morris remained silent for a couple of seconds and replied, “proving that electron is part of an atom’s inner structure is a follow-up of the discovery of the electron. After discussion, we believe that this finding should not win Holm Crown prize again as Mr. Evans already has the ring Electron...”

“The emission of a new element does involve how matters produce and change, but it hasn’t been proved yet. When Evans can prove that a radioactive substance can be turned into another element due to the radiation of a new element using a solid experiment, the prize will go to him again. Hopefully, he will be able to put forward

a whole set of theories explaining the complete structure of the atom and how matters change.”

... So the next Holm Crown prize ring for Lucien Evans would be able to cover all of his achievement in this field... Morris thought to himself.

Lark did not take in Morris’s words easily. “I’m afraid this isn’t convincing enough, sir. Mr. Ulysses won the thirty-first Holm Crown prize ring with his paper on measuring electron charge, and Mr. Lucien Evans’s discovery is of the same great value, isn’t it?”

“... In some of the letters, some arcanists believe that it was you who prevented Mr. Lucien Evans from winning Holm Crown prize one more time, sir, since he has already won the prize three times. They are suspecting that you see giving the award to Mr. Evans again as a waste of money and resources. Facing these rumors, do you wish to clarify yourself, Mr. Morris?”

“This is a totally absurd and groundless accusation. Openness, fairness, and impartiality have always been our principles when deciding the winners. Evans was also present during the discussion. He didn’t have any problem.” Morris sounded offended, and then he paused a bit. “Time’s up. I will answer no more questions. And I will not attend such absurd interviews anymore, unless you show more ‘sincerity’ when making the appointment.”

Blake wondered why Morris sounded a bit self-conscious.

“... Alright, that’s all for our review of last Wednesday. Now, let’s take a look at what happened last Thursday.

“... Frictions took place again between the Congress’s patrolling magic steamboat and the Saint Truth’s airship. As we’re getting closer to locating the mysterious dimension, the number of frictions is continuously increasing. We must be prepared.

“After the downfall of the ancient Magic Empire, countless sorcerers suffered day and night under the brutal hegemony of the Church and were almost erased from the ground. Fortunately, the establishment of the Congress reversed the trend. Therefore, the

confrontation is irreconcilable. Every sorcerer should bear this in mind. Any attempts trying to ingratiate himself with both sides are beyond foolish.

“We shall retreat no more. Behind our back is Allyn!”

...

“... Leading almost a hundred elementalists and necromancers, Mr. Donald, the member of the Highest Council, the president of the Will of Elements, recently paid a visit to the royal elf court and the Druid Elders of Stroop forest. Elder Malfurion offered Mr. Donald and his companies a warm welcome. Both sides exchanged opinions on recent situations and issues and reached an agreement. Together they attended the grand ceremony Spring Sowing, which took place in the manor close to Stroop forest and where Jinkela No. 822 first revealed its veil in front of people.

“The Lord of Storm, member of the Highest Council, has submitted his paper on his experimentation using helium atomic beams to bombard a thin foil of metal. Some particles in this experiment scattered further than others. Based on this finding, the Lord of Storm has overturned the atom structure model proposed by Her Excellency Hathaway, in which electrons are believed to be inlaid in the atomic nucleus. According to His Excellency Fernando, the inner structure of an atom should resemble the celestial bodies motion system suggested by Mr. Douglas, the president of the Congress, that is, electrons spinning around the atomic nucleus like planets around the sun. The macroworld has overlapped with the micro!”

Blake suddenly sat up straight out of astonishment.

The tiny atom's inner structure was similar to the system of the entire universe! How amazing and wonderful this world was! Fernando's theory again brought out the aesthetics of science! Blake could not help wondering if there was a universe within each atom and whether if there were also life forms living there. He knew that the theory of Magic Fairy was once very popular in the ancient Magic Empire.

The truth of the world was beyond fascinating!

“... On the other hand, His Excellency Edwyn Brook, the Emperor of Control, member of the Highest Council, has also put forward that since the electrons are charged, when they spin around a nucleus, they should radiate out electromagnetic waves. Due to this loss of energy, the structure can never exist with stability...”

Blake put some thoughts into it and then nodded, as it did conform to the classic electromagnetism theory. He was a bit disappointed.

“... The Lord of Storm also said that this is so far just a rough model, and improvements have to be made for sure. But most elementalists believe that even the current rough model has already qualified the Lord of Storm for being the next winner of Holm Crown prize in the following year.”

...

“Saturday, reliable source confirmed that the Emperor of Control, who returned a year and a half ago, has finished his project of improving the magic circle for accurately measuring light quantum. Meanwhile, Mr. Lauren, member of Arcana Review Board and the winner of Ice & Snow Medal and Silver Moon Medal, has also told us that the same achievement has been made by him after three years of effort. Soon he will fight back against Mr. Evans’s light quantum hypothesis using the experiment result...”

“According to our survey, arcanists who advocate the wave theory are getting very excited, while many arcanists on the side of the particle theory are worrying about what will be coming to them and have refused to further respond to our questions.”

Chapter 450: Everyone's Experiments

"It has been three years since the Debate War between Wave and Particle was launched again after Mr. Douglas's light speed experiment posed strong doubt against the existence of Ether and reached its climax by Mr. Evans's light quantum hypothesis, and it shows no sign of calming down. Thus, it has officially become the third War between Wave and Particle in history.

"When we look back at the previous two rounds of confrontation, Mr. Brook and his team have come close to completely defeating the particle theory. In the past a few years, supporters of the particle theory relied themselves on the last piece of straw, constantly telling themselves that the existence of Ether had not been confirmed, to prevent their own cognitive world from collapsing. However, the particle theory has recently picked up its momentum again using the light speed experiment and the light quantum hypothesis, even launching a new round of attack against the wave theory. The light speed experiment and the photoelectric effect have become two heavy burdens on those wave theory supporters' mind, yet so far they could not find a proper answer to them."

Lark briefly introduced the history of the War between Wave and Particle, which made the young Blake feel the blood pulsing through his veins. Holding his fists, Blake wished that he could punch in the faces of the few sorcerers who were still being stubborn. Meanwhile, he vaguely heard some nasty comments made by other sorcerers coming from the open window. Obviously, in this place, not a single particle theory supporter could be found.

"After three years of brewing, the war is perhaps reaching its final stage. His Excellency Mr. Brook and Mr. Lauren have both completed the improvement of the magic circles and are now ready to conduct an accurate photoelectric effect experiment. If the data and images obtained can prove that the light quantum hypothesis is wrong, then the particle theory has to retreat back to its previous status again, using only the light speed experiment to sustain its last breath."

"This is going to be one of the most meaningful experiments in the history of the Congress, and the result of the experiment will direct us further into the truth of the world and tell us where to make our next step. Today, with our guest arcanists from the Congress, we are going to exchange some of our ideas and attitudes on this..." Lark's crispy and passionate voice turned to the invited guests present. "Good to have you all here. I'm Lark, the host of Allyn's Past Week."

"It's very nice to meet you, Miss Lark. You're as beautiful as your voice." said a male voice a bit excitedly.

The rest of the male arcanists sounded a bit shy and greeted Lark in a dull tone.

"Nice to meet you, Lark. I'm a fan of Allyn's Past Week, and you're even more beautiful than we thought," said a female voice, on behalf of the rest of the guests.

Lark responded in her sweet voice. "Thank you all very much for your support. So, ladies and gentlemen, how do you think of the following experimentation on light quantum which is about to be carried out by Mr. Brook and Mr. Lauren?"

"Well, we've been waiting for this for so long, you know... Ever since Mr. Evans put forward his hypothesis, we've been waiting for someone to step out and prove that the hypothesis is wrong, as we're not capable of doing so ourselves before reaching senior-rank. It has been three years, and the day will finally come, the day that we can refute this absurd hypothesis righteously. I believe that Mr. Brook and Mr. Lauren will give us an accurate and convincing result," said the loud male voice, who seemed to be quite talkative.

"I'm very delighted to see that the magic circles have been improved. I've been fed up with those who keep talking about their particle theory."

"The results will prove the wave theory."

The male arcanists answered one by one.

"Although I personally think highly of Mr. Evans, and I'm very

impressed with his great achievements, as well as the fact that he has won the four highest honors before reaching senior-rank, I don't think his hypothesis is correct. I mean... even Mr. Evans can make mistakes. And I do feel that the rare mistake made by Mr. Evans has made him more approachable..." The soft female voice seemed to want to continue but was cut off by her companions.

Hearing their answers, Lark further asked, "it seems that no one believes that the experimentation result will favor the light quantum hypothesis. Does the wave theory of light really have such a solid foundation? It has been three years, and no other theories except Mr. Evans's hypothesis could explain the photoelectric effect. So far the light quantum hypothesis has conformed with all the results yielded by those less inaccurate experiments, and one of Mr. Evans's prediction has even been proved correct. Are you really so sure that the result will prove the light quantum hypothesis wrong?"

"Absolutely."

"Yes, for sure."

"Without a doubt."

...

The arcanists all answered affirmatively, but somehow there was a bit of uncertainty emerging in their voice.

Blake loosened his grip and started putting more thoughts into it. What Lark just said was true. Yes, it had been three years, yet no other theories but Mr. Evans's hypothesis could explain the photoelectric effect. All the experiment results were saying that Evans's hypothesis was correct. And meanwhile, several attempts aiming at explaining light speed experiment had failed. The existence of Ether had become a question.

Was the wave theory of light completely correct?

Would the experiment's result overthrow the light quantum hypothesis? Or the opposite?

...

A slightly dry and wrinkled hand pressed the button on the radio and turned it off when the signal had been replaced by the noise of electric currents.

Barek turned around and saw his teacher, Brook, staring ahead at the distorted magnetic fields and flashing electric arcs outside of the window, his hands folded back in the manner and air of a dominator. Carefully taking in a breath, Barek asked, "Sir, did you listen to Allyn's Past Week?"

"Yes, I did," answered Brook, who wore a wig and looked like an elegant but old-school gentleman. "The programmes are interesting. As usual, Evans makes good achievement in every field which he would like to put efforts in. But I'm not very used to his humor and the new words that he created."

"It's becoming a new trend. Using the new words has been popular among younger sorcerers in Allyn, Rentato, Cooks, and even in the Solar Islands. It seems to have already become a trend, and whoever not joining in is falling behind," said Barek, and then, looking more serious, he asked hesitantly, "so Sir... You must have listened to the interview done by Lark, right?"

"So?" Brook turned around and looked at his student.

Barek tried to be brave. "... I'm worried... about the experiment result."

"Make your point," said Brook calmly. When it came to arcana, he preferred to be straightforward.

Barek weighed his words, and said, "I've done a couple of experiments before, and all the results favor the light quantum hypothesis, which now seems to be the only explanation for the photoelectric effect. I'm afraid that the accurate experiment result might not be on the side of the wave theory. So, Sir... I hope that when you conduct the experiment, you can put aside your beliefs. The wave theory still has its chance... we still have the diffraction image and a whole set of theory..."

Brook's jade-like eyes behind the gold-rimmed glasses looked at

Barek attentively. Finally, when Barek started sweating a bit, Brook looked away at the window again. It seemed that his green eyes could see through his demiplane and see the dark evening of Allyn in early spring.

"It's going to rain." Murmured Brook.

...

In the headquarter in Allyn, on the thirty-first floor, which was a section specially for the Sky radio station.

During midnight, Truth of the World had come to the end. Arcana Voice had ended earlier, so no the entire floor was very quiet.

After drinking a tube of potion for throat protection, Samantha, who used the name Lark in the radio, walked out of the lounge in a good mood and was ready to go home.

As soon as she walked out, she saw that Lucien Evans was greeting the rest of the arcanists working for Truth of the World. She kept her serious and indifferent look, but asked curiously in her silvery voice,

"Evans, why are you still here?"

It was very late. Ever since the two programmes started running smoothly, Lucien had never come here during midnight. What was going on tonight? Was it because of Mr. Brook and Lauren's experiment?

"Just finished some experiments in the institution. I know you all are still here, so I decided to drop by." said Lucien briefly.

"Experiments? On the photoelectric effect?" Samantha got even more curious.

Lucien shook his head. "No, Mr. Fernando's experiment inspired me, and I was using helium atomic beams to bombard some gases to see what I could find. Also, I used electron currents to bombard gold foil."

"You're being too honest, you know? I might steal your idea."
Samantha slightly lifted her brow.

Lucien smiled. "This isn't something fun. I had to sit there staring at the flashing light spots for a long time to seek for the traces, never knowing when I can find something, if there's any."

"Umm... I feel that your honesty comes from the fact that you've already found something." Samantha revealed a small smile.

Lucien shook his head again and laughed. "You just simply don't take my words. By the way, the programmes have been very successful. You and Louise have become the lady in the young arcanists' dream. The only thing is that staying up late all the time isn't something good."

"It doesn't matter to me. I'm an astrologer, and I'm very used to staying up late watching the stars. Now the programmes are recorded at night, so they can be aired on the next morning..." said Samantha, who was silent for a while as she saw the six-circle badge on Lucien's chest. "... It's late. We can go and grab a bit, so you can better carry on your experiment."

Lucien answered, "thank you, but I need to head back now. When my magic tower is ready, I'll invite you all to come for dinner to thank you for the great effort running the programmes." Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

Lucien then turned around and left. When his figure disappeared around the corner, Samantha released a light sigh.

Coming back to the institution, Lucien walked back to the lab, turned on the magic circles beside the alchemical viewer to continue with the experiment, and recorded the data.

Beside his right hand on the operation desk, there was a pile of papers left in the corner. The papers were mostly covered under the other assorted stuff on the desk. But at the bottom, one sentence could vaguely be seen,

"Above are the accurate data record of the photoelectric effect experiment and its image."

Chapter 451: New Alchemy

Chapter 451: New Alchemy

In a magic tower in Salyvaor, the capital of the Kingdom of Brianne.

The ending song of Allyn's Past Week was still lingering in the room, however, it was suddenly cut off by a hand that turned off the radio. The slender-figured archmage Lauren had a sneering look on his face, and even his little mustache was showing his scorn. "What a good student of Neeshka. Lark doesn't even want to hide her inclination."

For a sorcerer like him, knowing who was hiding behind 'Lark' was just a piece of cake.

Lauren was standing in his study, which was decorated with dark red curtains and soft crystal lights, and looking at his students in front of the desk.

A senior whose hair had all turned grey said bitterly, "Arcana Voice, Truth of the World... Lucien is the one who is hiding behind. No matter how hard they try to cover it, they are always sitting on the chair engraved with the words 'the Particle Theory'. Shame on them! A programme at least should be bias-free! How could they let Lark intently shake the wave theory supporters confidence!"

He looked much older than Lauren.

"Christal, it doesn't matter," said Lauren calmly. "The world of arcana only respects truth, which makes here the justest place to live in. No matter how tricky they are, in the end, the experiment results will speak for us."

Although he just mocked Lark, Lauren didn't really hold anything against her. As an archmage whose great honors had been piling up, he did have the confidence and tolerance to only attack Lucien in a dignified manner with the experiment results and images.

Sitting beside Christal was a young man with light brown hair, yet

his yellowish-brown eyes belonged to that of an aged man. He said to his teacher hesitantly, “Sir... About the result...”

“Yes, Manuel?” Lauren looked at him, frowning slightly.

The student’s lips pressed against each other into a thin line, and finally, he became determined to speak it out, “Sir... I think we should be prepared for the fact that the experiment result might not be able to overthrow the light quantum hypothesis.”

The middle-aged woman who had beautiful light purple hair also seized the chance and agreed. “It’s True, Sir. The several experiments in the past a few years have shown that the light quantum hypothesis can perfectly explain the photoelectric effect.”

“You...!” Lauren stared at his students angrily. He did not want to believe that what Lark said in the programme had indeed shattered his students’ confidence.

“If that was true, I’d rather prefer there is no explanation for the photoelectric effect at all!” Lauren reproached his students and then walked out of the study in a rage.

Outside of the window in the darkness, the fine spring raindrops were thrumming the field, indicating the upcoming harvest of a season.

.....

In the Atom Institution, Lucien was still working on observing the tiny flashing light spots, trying to find what he wanted from their messy traces he took down. Meanwhile, the improved magic circles were now buzzing as the powerful electric currents passing through, slightly twisting the surrounding magnetic field.

Thanks to the Lord of Storm’s experiment of using helium atoms to bombard a piece of metal foil, Lucien now had the perfect reasons for applying to Magic Research Board for introducing the lately improved magic circles and alchemical facilities to meet all the requirements for conducting the experiment — the Atom Institution specialized in studying the microworld and the inner structure of

the atom. Since the Lord of Storm had proved the existence of the atomic nucleus and described the atom's inner structure by colliding particles, the Atom Institution had the very reason to conduct further studies based on the Lord of Storm's achievement, and the institution's request should be fulfilled without a doubt.

Finally, Lucien had identified the trace he had been seeking for!

Charge-to-mass ratio, charge quantity, mass... all the data flashed through Lucien's brain. In the next second, he sprang up from the chair and started measuring the particle that made the trace!

Time flew, and Lucien's work was almost done.

Charge-to-mass ratio, the same!

Charge quantity, the same!

Mass, the same!

The numbers had overlapped with each other!

Suddenly, Lucien's cognitive world embraced him again, and the elements in the sky and the environment started changing in front of his eyes: the central core surrounded by the electrons had turned into the combination of two particles! The only difference between all the elements such as hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon was the different numbers of particles they had!

This was the nucleus of hydrogen! This was proton! This was the nature of the elements!

The great shift in Lucien's cognitive world was done within seconds. Lucien could sense the fundamental changes it brought, as he could now feel the connection with all the elements much more sharply. Seizing the chance, Lucien quickly entered his meditation world and now his spiritual power possessed both the properties of particle and wave. This was not a simple combination of wave and particle, as now even a single spiritual quantum of his showed the nature of wave!

.....

In his Kingdom of Electromagnetism, Brook stepped into his lab.

His lab looked like a fantasy: Cold metals, weird patterns and shapes, jumping and flashing electric arcs, black twisted magnetic fields, as well as the vast starry sky...

He stopped in front of a complex alchemical operation table, placed on his right-hand side were all the experiment notes and records.

Brook took a glance at the records he made, and a strange look stopped for a second on his face where his years had begun to show. Then he put aside all the thoughts and started focusing on the experiment.

.....

By the time he walked to the door of the lab, Lauren had calmed down. He turned around and said to his students following him, "Manuel, Diana, you two can leave now. I will start my experiment."

Manuel tried to say something, but Lauren had disappeared behind the door.

The door charged with flashing electric currents cut the students off from their teacher.

"It's gonna be alright, isn't it?" Manuel murmured subconsciously.

Christal had a cold look on his face. "Of course. The light quantum hypothesis can not explain everything, say, the diffraction image."

"That's true." Agreed Diana.

She was not feeling too nervous, since she believed that the experiment result would not be too surprising. She was confident that the worst scenario would just be that her teacher suffered some damage to his cognitive world, which would only take a few years for Mr. Lauren to fix. In the past three years, she had gradually shifted her cognitive world to a more balanced position, if it was not more on the particle theory's side, thus she was prepared for both outcomes.

If she could do so, it should not be a problem for her teacher.

Lauren put on his magic robe, and a layer of grey covered him from head to toe. After carefully checking all the magic circles and alchemical facilities, he started the experiment conscientiously, just like every time in the past.

.....

In Lucien's cognitive world which was basically substantialized, his spiritual power had filled in every corner of this space. The joining spiritual quanta together formed mysterious and dreamlike cloud clusters, but when Lucien approached them, they scattered and became particles and waves.

When everything calmed down, the image of Lucien's cognitive world also disappeared. Lucien opened his eyes, knowing that he finally made the last step for finishing his own meditation method, called the Evans's Duality Meditation. The meditation method was still in its first stage though, and Lucien could still make further improvements on it.

With this meditation method, the cost that Lucien paid for forcing his way into senior-rank could be compensated. Lucien tried with his new meditation method and drew the conclusion that his meditation worked at least three times better than the best existing senior-rank meditation method, and it would take him just another one or two years to reach the seventh circle.

In the past three years, due to the damage done to his soul previously, Lucien did not make any remarkable progress in increasing his spiritual power. Therefore, he had spent most of his time studying sixth-circle magic incantations and creating new spells. By now, Lucien had constructed twenty-one sixth-circle magic spells within his soul. Among them, there were three newly-created spells: a curse spell *Professor's Solicitude* , an electromagnetic spell, and an astrology spell.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien repeated the experiment he just did. Then he took out the special parchment for writing arcana papers and a quill-pen and started writing his paper right on the operation

desk:

“... The experiment showed that when using helium atomic beams to bombard nitrogen, positively-charged hydrogen atoms were produced. Therefore, a conclusion could be made here — Hydrogen nucleus could be extracted from the nuclei of nitrogen, thus a hydrogen nucleus is also an inner part of an atom. Because a hydrogen atom only contains one such particle, in the past, it was only thought of as the hydrogen atom...”

“... I'll name this fundamental particle 'proton'. The positive charge it carries is equal to the negative charge an electron carries. Considering its mass and its electric neutrality, it is reasonable to say that a hydrogen atom consists of a proton and an electron...”

“... To push the conclusion further, it is found that the listing of the elements in the periodic table of the elements also follows the number of protons. Based on the nuclear charge and the electromagnetic theory, it can be predicted that besides proton, there is another kind of particle which has the same mass but is not charged within the atom nucleus. The number of this neutral particle decides the variants of a particular chemical element...”

Lucien did not restrain himself within the experiment result, instead, he extended his conclusion to establish a theoretical system. His theories and predictions went beyond the evidence provided by the current experiments, as usual.

“... Starting from the conception of Mr. Fernando that the atom structure resembles the celestial body motion system, and by introducing the quantum theory, the structure of electrons orbiting around the nucleus could be quantized... That is to say, we no longer see electrons as particles orbiting around, but rather of different energy levels. When absorbing and emitting energy, they do transitional movements, and skipping levels is possible...”

“... This is proved by the discontinuity of the emission spectrum of atomic hydrogen...”

This time, Lucien did not choose to wait for more theories supporting him to come up, instead, he directly introduced the

quantum theory into describing the atom structure by skipping many studies as prerequisite conditions and making predictions boldly.

There was roaring thunder coming remotely in Lucien's cognitive world when the electrons orbiting around the nucleus all stopped. The electrons were on different energy level tracks – Some of them were absorbing spiritual quanta and making phase transitions, and some were losing spiritual quanta when dropping to lower energy levels. There were these continuous ups and downs as well as the constant reciprocal transformations in the flow of Lucien's spiritual power.

Not distracted by what was happening in his cognitive world, Lucien kept writing very fast,

“... The number of electrons in the outside shell decides the alchemical property of an element; all alchemical reactions can be described and explained by the concept of gaining and losing electrons, including ionization and the valence state. As for the reason behind the configuration, I currently assume that each shell has a certain number of electrons, but this still requires further study...”

“... In this way, the School of Alchemy has been fully included in the School of Element!”

In his cognitive world, the electrons around the atomic nucleus started exchanging with that of the other nearby elements, and more matters and substances started to form. Lucien's cognitive world became more abundant and colorful, in which his magic model of Elements Order had been further improved, and now the structure was already very close to being completed!

The quill-pen in Lucien's hand moved fast, presenting Lucien's profound thoughts on the parchment.

The darkness of the night outside of the window became denser. The moist air foreshadowed the upcoming rain.

.....

In the lab, as more data had been collected, and the image gradually became complete, Brook's eyebrows knitted in a frown.

Taking down the last group of data, Brook did not write down any conclusion. Instead, he looked out of the window at his demiplane, the Kingdom of Electromagnetism, and finally released a sigh.

Bang! Bang!

In the deafening thunder, fierce and thick bolts of lightning directly struck the twisted magnetic field from above and instantly tore the flowing electric currents and flashing electric arcs into pieces!

Under the ground of the demiplane, all the substances and matters were collapsing under the power of the strong magnetic field. The destructive power was dismantling the space as easily as crushing dry weeds and smashing rotten wood.

The momentum was unstoppable. This seemed to be the end of the entire Kingdom of Electromagnetism.

"Sir..." In the magic tower shaking violently, Barek looked at the upper floor helplessly.

.....

In Brianne.

His eyes gazing upon the data and the experiment image, Lauren was unable to suppress his panic.

"Impossible!"

His hands trembling, Lauren tried to stop, but his drastically-changing cognitived world interfered with his soul, and he could not resist the urge to continue.

The experiment result was there, right in front of him. The look on Lauren's face was distorted, as if he had been possessed by a demon. Boundless fear seized him.

He could not believe this.

“... based on the instantaneity of time, light presents the prominent property of quantum; based on time average, light shows the property of wave. Therefore, perhaps we should be more open-minded when facing the argument.”

Lauren recalled Lucien's paper.

He could not understand. He shook his head, murmuring to himself. “How could something like this exist?”

In his cognitive world, the electromagnetic waves fiercely swelled up and snapped!

Like blowing up a balloon, Lauren's head seemed to grow bigger and bigger. He burst out a painful cry.

His head had been blown up to its limit. Silently, the bloody firework bloomed.

There was red and white, falling down to the floor like raindrops.

.....

“... In the radioactive substance, I have found the trace of the new element, which perfectly matches what I expected: In the process of radioactive decay, energy and the helium nucleus are released and thus new elements are formed...

“... Since human beings acquired magic, the dream of turning elements into gold has always been there. This is not merely our pursuit of wealth, but the longing for the truth of the world, as we always wish to master the secret of matter transmutation!

“... However, for thousands of years in the past, there was not a single alchemical reaction which had successfully transmuted a substance fundamentally without relying on a permanent magic circle... In front of the gate of the forbidden zone belonging only to gods, we human beings could not march further...

“... But now, after discovering the inner structure of the atom, by studying the nature of decay, we can find the path for fundamentally changing substances and creating new elements!

Following my theory, although the product might not be worth the cost, we can finally take over the power once exclusively owned by gods! Now we see the deepest secrets hiding behind substances, and we are on the way achieving the shared dream of sorcerers for generations!

“... This is a big step forward in the history of arcana, but more of further improvement of the human civilization!

“... The journey waiting for us is full of challenges and even risks, but I hope that we can go much further together.”

Piling up the rolls of parchment, Lucien wrote down the title,

“New Alchemy”.

Outside the window, the spring thunder came, and lives started thriving.

Chapter 452: The Two Generations

Hearing the thunder, Lucien looked outside the window. It was already early morning. The soft dawn light was a bit fuzzy in the drizzle.

Turning off the magic circles and alchemical facilities, Lucien walked to the window with a cup of tea in his hand and pushed the window open. The refreshing, moist air came directly to his face.

What a lovely day.

Thinking of the paper titled New Alchemy that he just finished, which was actually a compilation of dozens of papers, Lucien took several deep breaths of the fresh, cool air and then said to himself in low voice,

"Here comes the era of head explosion."

The realm that they were stepping into was strange and unimaginably queer, diverging completely from human being's intuition. The query brought by that 'cat' would trigger a brainstorm for every arcanist.

.....

In the Kingdom of Electromagnetism, the magnets were crumbling, the electric currents disappearing. The bolts of arc light in the sky had joined the lightning. Together, they struck the ground and the protection shield of the magic tower.

"Is this the end... Sir?" Barek looked out of the drastically shaking window, and he saw the many black cracks appearing on the shield.

Suddenly, the electric currents in the sky joined together and turned into a giant electric snake. It slithered all the way up along the magic tower and opened its mandibles wide. As the bolts of lightning in the sky were absorbed by the snake, its body had swelled up to its limit.

The snake exploded abruptly, filling the space with silver-white fireworks. Whether visible or invisible, the electromagnetic waves suddenly became prominent in the entire space, like the magnificent tides of an ocean.

Starting from the middle, the waves seemed to broke into small pieces. But the shape of the waves was maintained.

However, this spectacular scene lasted for not even one second. Before Barek realized what he saw, it had completely disappeared.

The collapsion had stopped. The Kingdom of Electromagnetism survived. However, evidence of the terrible destruction was everywhere. Less than ten percent of the electric currents and magnetic field were left, and there were even terrifying black holes in the air.

A long sigh followed.

"Sir..." Barek was worried, as he knew clearly that a legendary archmage's demiplane was the reflection of his own cognitive world. Witnessing what had happened to the demiplane, Barek knew that his teacher's cognitive world must have experienced something very bad.

Wearing a wig and gold-rimmed glasses, Brook walked down from the stairs. His face was abnormally dull-red. He shook his head, and said, "there's still no way for me to fit the light quantum hypothesis into the wave theory."

"So the result..." Barek asked subconsciously.

Brook said in a low spirit, "although I was mentally prepared, the fact that the experiment result perfectly matches the hypothesis was still a bit hard for me to accept. Thus, my cognitive world was shaken. Then I tried to understand the hypothesis from another perspective and combine it with the wave theory to reconstruct my cognitive world, yet I cannot find the breakthrough point."

Barek was not young anymore, but now he was still caught in a great panic. "Sir, your cognitive world has..."

He could not say the words out.

"Has broken and solidified." Brook rubbed his forehead, revealing a hint of fatigue and helplessness.

Barek knew how this worked, but he still could not believe it. He was even more shocked and grieved than Brook. "So Sir... You can't make any further progress anymore?"

"That's right." Compared to Barek, Brook appeared to be quite calm. He shook his head self-deprecatingly and said, "I have to be grateful. Three years ago when I first saw Evans's light quantum hypothesis, if it had not been the limited experiment conditions, I would have done this experiment right away. If that had been the case, my cognitive world would have collapsed completely, and the Kingdom of Electromagnetism would have been destroyed thoroughly, together with half of Allyn. Fortunately, because of the mental preparation and the feedback of the experiments in the past years, I'm still alive."

The collapse of a legendary archmage's half-solidified cognitive world could be powerful enough to affect the main material world.

Therefore, Brook was not exaggerating. If the Kingdom of Electromagnetism had gone down, half of Allyn would have indeed been buried with its falling. What was needed to say here was that Allyn was a city with the protection of the most powerful Mythals in this world, and if this were to happen in other cities like Rentato or Aalto, the entire city together with the surrounding towns and manors would have been completely devoured by the explosion of the electromagnetic storm.

"Bloody Evans!" Barek flared. Although he knew that this was not Lucien's fault, he could not accept this emotionally.

Brook waved his hands; his face had turned from dull-red to pale. "If he was insisting on an absurd belief, I would definitely fight him until the last second. However, the experiment result has proved his hypothesis, which means I am the one who's wrong, and I am the one who's too obsessed with my own incorrect belief. In this case, shall I hate this world for not existing as how I wish?"

Although his cognitive world had broken and solidified, Brook still maintained his manner.

Brook was completely different from Fernando, whose feelings and emotions were always intense, but there were two things that they shared in common: the reverence towards the unknown, and the passion for arcana.

"But..." Barek still could not accept the reality. His brows knitted together bitterly, as if he had been the one who had lost all the hope for making any progress in just a few hours.

Brook walked to the window in the living room with his hands folded behind. "This isn't necessarily a bad thing, Barek. For me, there is indeed desperation, but there's also hope. In this great setback, there is also chance."

"...?" Barek did not get it.

Brook lifted his right arm and opened his hand. "We don't know if the God of Truth really exists, but except for the Him, there are only four who have managed to reach the level of Alterna from the legendary level in history — the Lord of Hell, the Will of Abyss, the mysterious existence in the World of Souls, and the Pope. The first three were said to be born with this power, just like the God of Silver Moon."

"But Sir, didn't the previous Popes also reached this level?" Barek asked.

Brook coughed a bit, and then answered, "to me, the Pope is only a symbol, a symbol of 'the Speaker of the God of Truth on this world', not a specific existence. The pope uses the power of the God of Truth to reach the next level. Therefore, the name behind the title is meaningless. All the previous Popes and the current one should be counted as one."

"It's true." Barek nodded.

Brook looked at his half-destroyed kingdom and said in the same gentle voice, "... From the legendary level to demigod is a journey

beyond arduous. In the past thousands of years, only the Popes succeeded relying on the power of the God of Truth. The many great geniuses like the Sun King and my teacher all failed to progress any further. Although they are setting out to seek the falling pieces of Alterna and the mysterious existence in the World of Souls, I don't see much hope in finding anything that really helps."

"Therefore," Brook paused a bit and drew the conclusion, "stopping here at this level isn't something urgent and serious."

Barek released a sigh of relief. He knew that his teacher was right. Although Mr. Brook's cognitive world had broke and solidified, he was still an archmage at the climax of the legendary level, whose power was only inferior to that of the three demigods who never really showed up. And even if his cognitive world was intact, he could not advance further.

"There is desperation, for sure, but this could also be a chance..." Brook's voice lowered, "In this experiment, I saw the great flaw of the wave theory of light. When I figure out why there is this duality in the electromagnetic waves, perhaps I can rebuild my cognitive world and even make a further breakthrough."

Hearing his teacher's words and seeing that his teacher was still the same ambitious and positive facing the horrible setback, Barek recalled the great respect he held when he first became Brook's student. It had been years, and the respect was always there. Brook just mentioned the Sun King and Mr. Douglas as examples of great geniuses, but in Barek's mind and in many Congress arcanists' minds, Brook was also a genius who was no less powerful and intelligent than the two.

Brook deconstructed the ancient magic system and built the vast kingdom of electromagnetism. He obtained the title of grand arcanist before reaching fifty and then became a legendary when he was eighty. No one would ever doubt his giftedness.

"Sir, are you going to publish the experiment result?" Barek asked.

Brook nodded. "Yes."

"But..." Barek was afraid of a mass head-explosion incident.

Brook sighed. "I am the founder of the wave theory of light, and also one of those who completed it. That's why my cognitive world still broke and solidified even after three years of preparation. The other arcanists will not suffer this bad like me after these three years. In the worst scenario, their cognitive world will be just severely damaged."

"There are those who are extremely stubborn..." Barek still hesitated.

Brook's voice became cold. "It's been three years. If now their heads are still going to explode, giving them another three or even thirty years will not change the result. Stubbornness has merged into their cells and blood. But the development of arcana and magic will not wait for them to change their mind."

"If Lucien Evans wants to become a grand arcanist..." Brook continued rather seriously, "... he has to march forward stepping on the exploded heads, scattered brains, and river-like blood. These will finally become his ladder for ascending. Sometimes, this is even crueller than a true war."

Brook was totally qualified for making the statement. He was the one who caused the previous mass head-explosion years ago.

"I'll go and organize the data then. The introduction part will be left for you, Sir," said Barek. He felt a chill creeping over his body.

Brook nodded lightly. "Go ahead. I'll take a rest and do the next experiment." Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

"What experiment?" Barek was confused.

Brook laughed a little as if he was mocking himself. "Since the light quantum hypothesis matches the result of the experiment, now we can treat light as the complex of particles. A particle should not only carry energy, but also momentum. I am going to bombard different matters using the newly discovered X-ray to see if the

momentums are changing.

"I never expected that I was going to be busy with proving the particle theory..."

.....

In Lauren's magic tower.

Manuel and the rest of the students were waiting anxiously. Suddenly, the strident alarm went on.

"Accident in the lab. Call master, call master..."

"No response, no response, inspection activated..."

"No toxin released, no cursing, no dangerous creatures... Lab door has opened..."

The cold and indifferent alchemical life's voice filled the hall.

Manuel and Diana exchanged a look between each other and in the next second, they were already on their way rushing to the lab. Entering the lab, they saw the scene that they would never forget in the rest of their life:

The body on the ground was wearing that grey magic robe which they could not be more familiar with. However, the head was missing. The entire space — the walls, the operation desks, the piles of paper, and the energy shields on the magic circles — was covered with mixed red and white bloody stains as well as tiny bone pieces. The smell of blood overwhelmed them.

On the chest of the boy, there was the ninth-circle and the nine-star badge, as well as the Ice & Snow Medal and the Silver Moon Medal.

Chapter 453: The Strike

"Sir..." Diana's voice was weak and remote, as if she was trapped in an endless nightmare.

Manuel's yellowish-brown eyes were filled with agony and terror, as this was totally out of his expectation. After three years of foreshadowing, the worst scenario he thought of was that Lauren's cognitive world became broken and solidified. As a ninth-circle archmage, Lauren could transfer to a lich or extend his life in some other ways after he reached his life limit of around three hundred years old, and there was still a slight chance that he could reconstruct his cognitive world in the future... However, what was in front of him now was the death image of this ninth-circle archmage.

"No! It can't be like this!" Christal burst out a bitter cry, his grey hair now looking completely messy, his wrinkled face distorted and hideous. "... He's still alive! Mr. Lauren used Life Harbor, right?"

As a ninth-circle archmage, Lauren was capable of taking precautions against unexpected deaths. Although Life Harbor did not work as well as a lich's phylactery, it was enough for handling most situations.

Diana buried her face in her hands and murmured with great sorrow, "Life Harbor won't work... He's gone. Even a lich's phylactery is useless against the complete destruction of the cognitive world..."

Currently, powerful sorcerers could divide their soul and life force into pieces and save them in a phylactery or hide them with spells. As long as the pieces were kept intact, they would never die completely. However, the cognitive world was something even more elusive than the soul. It took root in a sorcerer's consciousness and could not be attacked by magic or divine power. Therefore, the cognitive world could not be divided either. Once a sorcerer's cognitive world collapsed, a true death ensued.

A legendary sorcerer's demiplane was, in fact, a projection of the meditation world in the true world reflecting his or her cognitive world, and the change in their cognitive worlds would be reflected in the demiplanes. However, it was not vice versa. A demiplane destroyed by an enemy would not do any damage to a legendary sorcerer's cognitive world.

Also, if one built a subversive theory in an illusion spell to make his or her enemies' cognitive world collapse and their heads exploded, this would not kill them in reality. It would, at most, cause them to feel very dizzy and confused for a while. Currently, the only person who could kill by projecting the cognitive world collapse in an illusion spell to the reality was the King of Nightmare.

There was only one situation that a sorcerer could come back to life after cognitive world collapse — the cognitive world was not fully destroyed. When a sorcerer was more or less mentally prepared or had been unconsciously influenced by the subversive findings, the situation of their cognitive world would then fall between being solidified and destroyed. In this case, the sorcerer would have the chance to transfer their souls to somewhere else before their head exploded, and the blow would be neutralized by the explosion of the head. Yet to those who did not have a phylactery or other ways for revival, this meant the total loss of their cognitive world.

"Who did this to him?! Lucien Evans?" Christal yelled madly. "It must be Lucien Evans! He killed Mr. Lauren to stop the experiment!"

He dashed to the operation desk, stepping on the floor of brain juices and blood.

Manuel and Diana were in such a great shock and sorrow that they did not realize what was about to happen to Christal. They blankly watched Christal pick up and read the experiment notebook, blankly watched him stare at the magic circle with his eyes wide open.

"It is fake! It must be!" Christal had gone crazy. He turned on the magic circle and started verifying the last set of data.

Fake... Manuel was lost. After a while, he suddenly realized what was going on. Casting a spell, Manuel tried to stop Christal.

"Stop it!" He cried.

Before his voice faded in the air, warm drops of blood and brain tissues fell on his face. The smell of blood went all the way up his nostrils.

"Ahhhh!!!" Diana the fifth-circle sorcerer screamed like a helpless little girl.

Christal's headless body fell to the ground with a loud thump.

"Another..." Manuel could not respond to the scene. He wondered if he needed to consult a psychologist.

The fifth popular programme of the channel Truth of the World was called Chicken Soup for the Soul, which was designed for caring about sorcerers' mental health, while, without a doubt, Allyn's Past Week was the no. 1.

Manuel forced himself to calm down. He could guess and had accepted the result. Walking to the operation desk, he picked up the notebook soaked in blood and brain tissues.

Manuel cleaned it up with magic while trying his best not to vomit. Then he carefully read the record and released a long sigh.

"So... the hypothesis is correct, isn't it?" After she finally recovered partially, Diana asked in great sorrow.

Manuel nodded, having no idea how to respond to the result. "Yes, it has basically proved the light quantum hypothesis."

He should feel encouraged by the result, as all his effort of gradually shifting his belief in the past three years had paid off and he could possibly reach the eighth circle within five years. However, the two headless bodies on the ground covered with blood and brain were dragging down his heart.

"So this will be Mr. Lauren's last paper... Shall we publish it for

him?" Overwhelmed, Diana was not thinking in a logical manner anymore. Somehow, she asked this question.

Manuel nodded. "We will. But we'll say that our teacher's experiment result has proved the hypothesis and he also accepted it. His death was an unfortunate accident. We must protect his reputation. After all, His Excellency Mr. Brook is also doing the same experiment, so we can't hide it from people..." Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

"What about Mr. Brook? Will he be alright?" Diana asked, terrified.

She didn't even ask how many arcanists would actually believe that Lauren died in an accident.

Manuel suddenly felt very insecure again. "We must go back to Allyn immediately and send him the experiment report. Hope that he hasn't started the experiment. If Mr. Brook also... this will become a disaster..."

"So shall we... for our teacher... Lucien Evans..." Diana said ambiguously.

Manuel knew what Diana was trying to indicate. He put on a bitter smile and shook his head. "If Christal was still alive, he would definitely seek for revenge. After all, he was the one receiving the most attention from our teacher. I do hate Lucien Evans for what happened, but honestly speaking, I don't think this is his fault. He neither designed nor carried out the experiment. Perhaps in the future I would oppose his theories or proposals because of what happened today, but there is no reason for me to take direct revenge on him."

What was more important was that Manuel had already changed his side and warned his teacher.

Diana nodded. She shared the same thought with Manuel, but also had her own concern:

Lucien Evans was currently a level-six arcanist and sixth-circle

sorcerer. It was said that he had almost nine thousand arcana credits due to the introduction of Influence Factor, thus he was going to reach level seven in less than two years. Also, those who were standing behind Lucien Evans were at least senior-rank sorcerers, including his condisciples Thompson and Chloe, as well as the Lord of Storm! There was no way that a level-four arcanist and fifth-circle sorcerer like her could seek revenge.

...

Having no idea that Lauren had fallen, Lucien was enjoying black tea as well as the crispy spring morning.

Sensing that someone was approaching, Lucien slowly turned around and saw Sprint push open the lab door and walk in.

"Morning, Sprint. That's early." Lucien smiled.

Sprint was startled, for as a second-circle sorcerer, he did not sense his teacher's presence at all. Was it because Mr. Evans had progressed further again?

"I have been coming early recently... Got some work to do in the lab," answered Sprint honestly. Lucien was currently the only person he felt a bit afraid of, since he had not met the Lord of Storm yet.

Lucien nodded slightly, and walked away from the window with the teacup in his hand. "Jerome's achievement motivated you, didn't it? Good. It's good to apply your pride to things like these."

Sprint did not want to admit, instead, he looked around and saw the pile of parchment. "Sir, are you turning in papers again?"

"Just one. I'll wait for a few more days," said Lucien peacefully.

"Why? The next issue of Arcana is about to come out," asked Sprint. He believed that the paper was about something big, since he saw how hard his teacher had worked in the past days.

Lucien shook his head and smiled. "A few more days."

Before Sprint could say anything, the gate of the lab opened again. The students Annick, Heidi, Katrina, Layria, and Chely filed in, and were all surprised when seeing their teacher and Sprint.

Lucien nodded in satisfaction. As a teacher, he was happy to see his students working hard.

It had been three years. Chely had become a real sorcerer last year, and the rest of the students had reached the second circle. Among them, Annick was the leading one. He had come close to middle-rank. Keeping up with the most advanced arcana theories had benefited them a lot.

...

On the Solar Islands, the arcanists including Blake were gathered in the hall to listen to Truth of the World. They always enjoyed discussing with each other while listening.

Today should be the releasing day of the latest issue of Arcana and the other journals. The programme of the channel, Watching Magic, which was broadcast at nine in the morning, was going to briefly introduce the important papers on the journals.

This programme did not mean much to sorcerers in Allyn and Rentato. However, for them who lived remotely from the big cities, they really appreciated this first-hand update.

The sorcerers on the Solar Islands were particularly big fans of the programme. On the islands, soon after the last issue of Arcana and the other journals arrived, the next issue was already available in Allyn. The programme helped them pick out the most important papers, thus their time was greatly saved.

"Welcome to Watching Magic. I'm your old friend, Eagle."

The gentle and rich male voice came out from the radio. "Now with me are the latest issue of the ten journals. I'll start with this month's Arcana, the one that everyone has been waiting for so long so badly. I know that, including me, we have all been waiting for His Excellency Mr. Brook's and Mr. Lauren's experiment results. Will

this month's Arcana tell us the answer?"

Blake silently clenched his fists.

The other arcanists were also very nervous and excited. Today might be the day of overthrowing the light quantum hypothesis and defending the wave theory of light.

"Alright... I do see two papers here — one from Mr. Brook and the other from Mr. Lauren. Let's take a look at Mr. Brook's paper first."

The short silence became burning to the arcanists present.

A few seconds later, Eagle finally started reading, but his tone was a bit hesitant. "... I did the experiment to fight against the light quantum hypothesis. However, the result and the experiment image perfectly matched the features of the light quanta. I have to admit that my effort for denying the hypothesis turned out to be, at this stage, the evidence supporting it."

Blake abruptly lifted his head out of the astonishment. His head buzzed. Since he was listening to the radio, instead of reading the paper on his own, and also, most importantly, his meditation world had changed gradually in the past several years, his soul only suffered some slight damage. Two trails of blood came out from his nose.

However, as soon as he looked up, sticky blood and tissues splashed onto his face, covering his eyes and mouth. The smell of blood went all the way up to his brain, and all he could see had been covered with this thick red and white.

"... Sonia's head exploded...!"

He heard other arcanists' dazed and terrified voice.

Something fell down to the ground.

Head? It took Blake a second to comprehend the situation, and then his stomach started churning. Hurriedly turned aside, he puked badly.

Somehow, when Blake was puking, he also felt a bit lucky —
Fortunately, there was only one whose head exploded after hearing
the result.

Chapter 454: Gloating

Chapter 454: Gloating

In the magic tower of the Congress' headquarter in Allyn.

The always young and vigorous Rachel had put on a dark magic robe, which revealed her heavy mood. She had been waiting for the final result of the experiments conducted by His Excellency Mr. Brook and Mr. Lauren, wondering what the results would be and if they could deny Lucien's light quantum hypothesis.

Affected by her best friend Samantha, Rachel's cognitive world had changed a lot in the past three years. She was no longer a solid supporter of the wave theory of light, instead, she was now even leaning towards Lucien Evans' hypothesis. However, all the knowledge that she had acquired since she was an apprentice, together with the classic double-slit interference image as well as the Brook bright spot, all reminded her that light displayed the nature of the wave.

Maybe just like Lucien said, they should go up to a higher level to examine the stalemate between the wave and the particle theory. Rachel thought to herself before stepping on the stairs. Taking back her right foot, she quickly turned around and headed for the exchange office. Although in her teacher's office, she would get to read the latest issue of Arcana half an hour later, Rachel could not wait any longer.

Her pace was slightly faster than usual. When she came close to the exchange office, Rachel saw it was crowded with people. She was not surprised — Everyone was waiting for the experiment result of the wave and particle war. Normally, there wasn't such a big crowd waiting for Arcana, as most arcanists below senior-rank could not understand all the articles on it.

Rachel forced her way into the crowd, trying to reach one of the desks in the corner surrounded by slightly less people. What made her feel strange was that the crowd was rather quiet. Strangely

quiet.

“What happened?” Rachel wondered. Driven by curiosity, Rachel cast a couple of spells on herself and pushed herself to the exchange desk surrounded by most people.

“Ah!... ” The short scream stopped abruptly.

Rachel saw an incomplete body, head exploded... red blood, white brain tissues, and the latest issue of Arcana lying open on the floor.

Many arcanists in the crowd had killed someone in the past, however, the scene was still too much for them. After all, in the recent hundred years, head-exploding was just a remote story told by seniors. Only some middle-rank and senior-rank sorcerers from the Will of Elements and the Hand of Paleness had witnessed it once. On the contrary, pastors or cardinals turning into a holy light torch or fireworks could be seen every once in a while.

Those low-rank sorcerers and apprentices who hadn't been sent out on missions before were even more frightened. Murmuring the terrifying name and the title, Headcrusher, their faces had turned pale as if their heads were tightly grasped in the claws of a devil lord.

Rachel wondered if more arcanists would come to her and her teacher for illusionary therapy for curing mental trauma in the future; After all, Chicken Soup for the Soul was popular among arcanists... She had no idea why the thought came to her at this depressing moment.

The scene was not the major cause of the stressful and terrifying atmosphere, instead, it was because of the journal lying open on the floor. On the page shown, there were several lines of bold letters,

“... I did the experiment for fighting against the light quantum hypothesis. However, the result and the experiment image perfected matched the features of the light quanta. So I have to admit that my effort for denying the hypothesis turned out to be, at this stage, the evidence supporting it...”

“— Edwyn Brook, grand arcanist, level four in the legendary class ‘the Emperor of Control.’”

Rachel removed her eyesight from the page and turned to look up at the ceiling. She did not know what to say — Since she became a student of the magic school, the wave theory was one of the most fundamental beliefs introduced by her teachers. In her mind, the wave theory of light was like a giant tower, standing straight up on the solid ground just like the other theoretical systems put forward by His Excellency Mr. Douglas and Mr. Brook.

She felt that the world had become strange to her.

The rare sentimental feeling seized Rachel’s heart. Silently, she retreated herself from the crowd and then went to the Arcana Review Board. Knocking at the door of her teacher’s office, Rachel felt that she was like a child seeking her mother’s comfort.

“Come in.” Isabella’s voice came from behind the door.

Hearing her teacher’s voice, Rachel suddenly woke up from her dreamlike wandering and found herself in the wrong place. She was supposed to go to the Brain and Hormone Research Center beside the Atom Institution to wait for her teacher. Also, Ms. Isabella wasn’t supposed to be in her office this early.

Carefully pushing open the door, Rachel saw that her teacher’s magic robe had turned into a long black dress. On Isabella’s chest, there was a small white flower.

“Who is it...?” Rachel asked carefully.

“Lauren, Christal...” Isabella said the names sorrowfully. She had known those stubborn mages for quite some years.

“Mr. Lauren...?” Rachel recalled the look of the tall and thin elder man. But what left her with the deepest impression about him was the row of badges in front of his chest, indicating the great honor that belonged him.

Isabella nodded, her eyes glistening. “Yes, an archmage has fallen. An archmage who once won the highest honor in the school of

Electromagnetism, Light-darkness, and Thermodynamics has fallen. He was eliminated by the development of arcana and magic...”

“...” Rachel suddenly understood the cruelty of the world.

In front of her student, Isabella forced a smile on her face to cheer her up. “Don’t be afraid. Don’t get lost. This is not something abnormal. When I was young, every once in a while, some particle theory supporters’ head would explode. This is why there are now so few arcanists supporting the particle theory right now. You should feel lucky, Rachel, so should I, for we had the past three years to get prepared. The committee members who reviewed the papers of Mr. Brook and Mr. Lauren thus survived. They just need a few months to have their soul recover from the trauma.”

“I understand.” When she was in school, Rachel read about this piece of history. During that period of time, His Excellency Mr. Brook’s outstanding talent was glowing and he managed to overthrow the particle theory of light. Stepping on blood and exploded heads, he finally ascended to the throne of grand arcanist and became the second top legendary in the congress. It was said that a close friend of Mr. Douglas, who was a member of the Highest Council and also a legendary archmage at that time, fell together with his demiplane.

But reading history from books and seeing it with her own eyes were two completely different stories. Rachel’s heart was still palpitating from the horrible scene.

Seeing that her student’s face still looked pale, Isabella walked to Rachel and gently stroked her hair, like a mom comforting her daughter. “An era of progress is coming. In the past several decades when Mr. Brook brought the huge revolution to the Congress, we saw new leaders entering the stage — The two grand arcanists, Hellen and Vicente, as well as the other four legendary sorcerers. The power of the Congress of Magic almost doubled. Now we have more archmages and senior-rank mages than ever before. When I was young, the Congress only had about twenty archmages, but now we have sixty-two... sixty-one.”

“This is our chance,” said Isabella, “keep it in mind. We shall never

become blindly obsessed with our belief nor lose our faith. We must believe in facts.”

...

In the Radiance Church in Holm.

“Lauren, Lightning of Destruction, ranking no. 76 on the Cleansing List.” Vaharall read the list with a big smile on his face, “Christal, Bloody Thunder, no. 269 on the Cleansing List... Oh, I wish that I could give Mr. Lucien Evans, our Professor, a Night Angel badge, in order to honor his great contribution to eliminating the vicious sorcerers!”

After spending a long time in Holm, Vaharall had learned the standard Holm Crown prize awarding speech and turned it into a joke.

Stone, the divine knight, also laughed hard. “An archmage, three senior-rank sorcerers, twenty-seven middle-rank sorcerers... not to mention those whose cognitive worlds have gone broken and solidified! If Lucien Evans is willing to become a night watcher, he would definitely be in top five because of these numbers!”

There were only three legends in the Inquisition, and one of them was an ancient sorcerer who had converted, therefore, he was also in the ranking of the night watchers. The ancient sorcerer once killed a legendary ranking in the top 30 on the Cleansing List, and thus became the top night watcher. Although there were many senior-ranks in the team, no more than ten had reached the power of the ninth circle, even few had ever cleansed a level-nine arcanist and ninth-circle sorcerer like Lauren.

Philibell could not hold back his smile as well. This was the most wonderful news to him in the past ten years. To them, it did not matter at all whether light was wave or particle. There were pastors devoured by the holy light before when Brook proved that light was a type of electromagnetic wave, but it was because of the fact that the finding had deprived the divinity of light. As for the light quantum hypothesis, they were totally fine with it.

Rubbing his thick white beard, Philibell grinned.

“What a pity that Evans failed to explode Brook’s head, or the Pope would have to give him the title of Saint. You two remember the time when some were saying that we should directly call Brook a Saint? Compared with Brook, Lucien Evans is still a bit behind, isn’t he?”

Hearing the comment, Vaharall and Stone burst out loud laughter, gloating over their enemy’s loss.

“It is said that Brook was also badly hurt by this. I wonder how does his cognitive world look like right now. If his cognitive world has gone broken and solidified, I have to say that this is the perfect arrangement of the God of Truth. So many years ago, he took away countless pastors’ faithful hearts and destroyed many sorcerers’ cognitive worlds. What goes around comes around,” said Philibell piously. He deeply believed in the existence of the God of Truth, more faithfully now than ever before.

“Only Truth lives forever.” Vaharall and Stone drew a cross in front of their chest together.

Then the three exchanged a look with each other and smiled again.

Philibell said humorously, “shall we pray for ‘Saint’ Lucien Evans? Let’s pray for his safety so he can carry on his glorious mission serving the Lord?”

...

“New... Al-che-my?” Fernando stressed each syllable of the title of Lucien’s new paper. His scarlet eyes stared at the calm and composed Lucien alertly.

Chapter 455: Creation and Destruction

Today, Lucien felt totally relaxed standing in front of Fernando.

"Sir, this paper is about the microworld. Using a new particle found inside the atom and two recently discovered elements, I further improved your atom structure model and applied it to describing alchemical reactions and explaining ionization and valence. As this study looks into the secret behind the transformation of matters, perhaps it can fulfill the shared dream of the generations of alchemists. So I named this new theoretical system 'New Alchemy.'"

"A new particle found inside an atom and two new elements?" The look on Fernando eased a bit. He asked casually as he started reading the paper.

After the belief that atom was indivisible had been discarded, the exploration of the inner structure of the atom had stepped into a brand new realm. Fernando felt a bit more relaxed since the paper in his hands was certainly not going to destroy any sorcerer's cognitive world, as no one was using the brand new theories to construct his or her meditation environment.

When Lucien first appeared in his office with the new paper, Fernando had to admit that he was quite worried. The aftermath of the experimental verification of the light quantum hypothesis was not over yet, and Allyn could not bear to see more sorcerers' head explode.

Personally speaking, Fernando, also found the bloody scene quite thrilling to some degree. However, it would definitely scare away the younger generation from joining the Congress to pursue their magic dream. That would be bad, as, despite the improvement of the theory system, reduction in the subsequent generation's population would impact the Congress' strength.

"I was inspired by your experiment, Sir, the one using helium atomic beams to bombard a thin foil of metal. So I turned to bombard gases and knocked out hydrogen nucleus from nitrogen.

The nucleus carries one unit of positive charge, so I believe that a new particle has been found. Then, the discovery of the positive ray confirmed my belief. As for the two new elements, I found their traces when analyzing the radioactive substance, based on the experiment that you temporarily put aside."

Seeing the look on Fernando's face softened, Lucien knew what Fernando was thinking. He could not help but slightly shake his head, as the realm they were stepping into now was going to be even more subversive and incredible than ever before. The knowledge they were going to obtain would overturn most sorcerers' macro-cognition and ontology.

Fernando had finished reading the part on the discovery of the proton. He commented. "If it wasn't because of your light quantum hypothesis, Hathaway and I would continue the study of the radioactive substance, and perhaps we would have already discovered the elements..."

Again, he perfectly saved his praise to his student.

Fernando kept reading and quickly browsed the data of the two newly-discovered elements. He started frowning again. "Your research data is saying that the two elements come from the decay of the previous element. This is one step into the Gods' zone. No wonder you call it New Alchemy."

"In fact, combining this with the finding of the proton, a theoretical system explaining the transformation of matter can probably be built," said Lucien with the same calm look on his face.

Fernando suddenly looked up at Lucien, his scarlet eyes filled with fine lightning. His great power enveloped Lucien.

"You know what you're talking about?"

Lucien was being careful with his words, using 'probably' to soften his tone. However, Fernando had directly caught the point — His student just claimed that a theoretical system had been built!

If he could call it a system, it would not only consist of one or two

hypotheses!

"I do," replied Lucien.

Fernando kept on asking. "Do you understand that you are heading into the forbidden zone, trying to take over the Gods' power of creating the universe for human beings?"

"I do," answered Lucien determinedly.

Fernando asked one more time, "Then do you understand what this means?"

"I do. It will change the time. And it means the title of grand arcanist." Lucien answered while looking directly into Fernando's eyes. "... But the system is still on the theoretical level. Currently, the magic circles and alchemical techniques are not qualified for carrying out specific experiments. It will take a long time to verify the system."

Fernando closed his eyes for a while as if he was taking a break. Then he picked up Lucien's paper and continued to read. He did not make any further comment again until he saw Lucien's prediction of the existence of the neutron.

"Reasonable..." The Lord of Storm slightly nodded. "... So this is the reason behind the differences between the elements. The periodicity can also be explained. With the theoretical guidance and the method of particle bombardment, it will be just a matter of time for the neutron to be found."

"So Sir, you do believe that particle bombardment can be a regular technique, right?" Asked Lucien expectedly.

Fernando was a bit amused and cast a glance at his student. "You have believed it for quite a long time, haven't you. Aren't you adding these kinds of magic circles to your magic tower? Adding these magic circles is very time-consuming."

"Sir, you've been there?" Lucien was a bit surprised. He did not expect that his teacher would pay a visit to his magic tower under construction.

"Two silver hollow metal semi-rings engraved with magic circles. And a feeling hard to describe..." Fernando would not admit that he was secretly paying close attention to his student, and he roughly described the underground part of Lucien's magic tower. "... I roughly know what you are trying to do."

"A cyclotron. It accelerates charged particles outwards from the center along a spiral path, so cyclotron beams can be used to better bombard other atoms..." Lucien briefly introduced his concept. "Theoretically speaking, the acceleration is limitless. But due to many factors, there is indeed a range. But the result will already be much better than before."

The many factors that Lucien ambiguously mentioned were in fact relativistic effects.

"Limitless... bombardment... I feel that you're destroying the world..." Fernando repeated the keywords and rubbed his brows. "... But this isn't bad. I think I'll get one as well."

Fernando was also a fanatic when it came to doing experiments.

"When I reach the legendary level and own my demiplane, I want to have a Large Collider!" In front of his teacher, Lucien did not need to hide his passion and dream.

There was a smile on Fernando's face for a second, and then he went back on reading the paper. Based on the atom model and the theory of decay, the following sections of the paper were very logical, thus they were totally within Fernando's expectation. Finally, when he saw the part in which Lucien introduced the quantum theory into the understanding of electron orbits, he pressed his lips against each other into a line and then said, "before the light quantum hypothesis was proved, I would scold you for this. But now even light's quantization has been proven, the quantization of electron orbit seems acceptable."

Lucien grinned. This was the chance that he had been waiting for.

"But it is still hard to believe that electrons are also doing space jumps and skipping the areas in between... Is it because they have

special properties?" Fernando was using his own understanding to explain the transition of electrons.

In Lucien's expectation, Fernando would give him a good lesson after reading this part on the quantum jump, since the discontinuous transition indeed seemed to be absurd. However, he forgot that space jump worked in this world, which made the concept more acceptable by sorcerers.

So Lucien answered in a low voice. "Currently there's no idea why it works like this. Though it is a logical conclusion following quantization."

Fernando did not make any further comments on the following predictions made by Lucien. He kept reading until he finished the last part on explaining alchemical reactions using atomic electron transition and describing ionization and valence. He put down the paper and said to Lucien rather seriously,

"There are still contradictions between your new alchemy system and the classic electromagnetism theory. Perhaps further improvements are needed. But I currently do agree with you on the structure of the atomic nucleus and the transformation of matters, and on the extranuclear electrons and alchemical reactions."

"Ever since human beings acquired magic, the history of alchemy also started..." Fernando took a pause. "... But you are the first one pointing out what alchemy is!"

Fernando rarely spoke so highly of Lucien, and this praise made Lucien's face flush.

However, Lucien had to say that the Congress's progress in the school of Alchemy was rather imbalanced. The arcanists were reaching the level of matter transformation, yet on the other hand, the research on the structure and the synthesis of organics was still in its infancy.

"Because of your theory, the school of Alchemy is now included in the school of Element. If Hathaway could accept, assimilate, and further improve your theory, she will become a top legendary in a

few years." Fernando said a bit emotionally.

Lucien cared more about his own teacher. "Then what about you, Sir?"

"Me? I am shifting between too many interests, so my promotion has always been relatively slow. The atomic structure and matter transformation do not have much to do with my legendary class, unless they are related to studies on energy blast or high temperature. If they do, I can go up further and become a top legendary." Fernando treated this topic as one of his jokes, as he knew it well the result of focusing on too many fields and always being distracted.

Lucien nodded, but made no comment.

Fernando stared deeply into Lucien's eyes and said, "when this theoretical system is fully developed, you should be able to obtain the magic pattern for creating your own legendary class through the interaction between your cognitive world and the real world. Because of the nature of your theoretical system, when you become a top legendary or a demigod, you should be able to directly manipulate the particles and energy and turn them into various matters. Your title can be 'the Creator'."

"It's such a provocative title to the Church." Lucien smiled. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

If he could manipulate the particles and energy, Lucien thought to himself, he would be able to make use of the power of fusion reactions. Then his title should not be 'the Creator', instead, he should be called 'the Lord of Destruction'.

Creation and destruction were two sides of the same coin in the sense of the particle world.

Fernando found Lucien's response funny. "So your New Alchemy system isn't something provocative to the Church?"

Before Lucien could say anything, Fernando grabbed the paper on

the desk and said to him, "Let's go and find Douglas. We'll have a plan to give the Church a good strike. They've been enjoying themselves for too long recently."

Chapter 456: The Mad Dog

In Douglas's magic tower in his demiplane.

The latest issue of Arcana beside him, Artil burst out loud laughter. "It's been proven! I knew it! What a pity that I wasn't there in Brook's lab and missed the chance to see the look on his face! He must be beyond desperate! I'd be laughing in my sleep now if his cognitive world had exploded just like that idiot Lauren!"

Joy. Wild joy. Artil could not hold it back.

Fed up with Artil's crazy spirit, Norman coughed a bit and secretly thought to himself that Artil indeed deserved the title of the Mad Dog — that was how the other arcanists called Artil.

Norman's face was a bit pale from the injury in his soul. Using Douglas' lab, he just verified the conclusion published in the journal.

To find the mysterious dimension, the legends in the congress had gone all out. Very frequently, they had to leave Allyn for the exploration. Therefore, although Douglas was also paying lots of attention to the verification of the light quantum hypothesis, his progress in improving the magic circles was slower than that of Lauren. However, after the design of the experiment was published in Arcana, it only took him half an hour to finish the improvement.

Luciana was in a very good mood as well. After the suppression of all these years had been released, she did share the same wild joy with Artil. However, she was definitely much more restrained. "Lucien Evans is indeed the most promising one of the younger generation to become the next grand arcanist. His hypothesis derives from the perspective which was ignored by all our particle theory supporters. I'm starting to appreciate the light quantum theory now. Maybe the form of the world is actually discontinuous..."

"If it is discontinuous, then what about calculus?!" scolded Artil. The fact that he had paid Lucien the fifty-thousand arcana points

did not mean that he had fully accepted the hypothesis. In his eyes, Lucien's hypothesis was just another variation of the particle theory, and it had nothing to do with if the world was continuous or not.

"There must be something wrong with the hypothesis! It has to be changed! I'd say the same thing even if Lucien Evans was standing right in front of me!" said Artil.

By the way, Lucien had used the fifty-thousand arcana points to pay off his debt with the Lord of Storm.

Luciana was just expressing her happiness, and she used 'maybe' before her ideas. However, it still triggered Artil's anger. Luciana felt offended and her lips moved silently in the shape of the words,

"Mad Dog."

Artil did not care about Norman and Luciana's attitude at all. He picked up a piece of information and read it, then let out a satisfied and vicious laugh. "Lauren, Christal... An archmage, three senior-rank mages, twenty-seven middle-rank sorcerers, and more whose cognitive worlds have gone broken and solidified. Those bloody wave theory supporters finally got what they deserve! When they were showing off their victory years ago, had they ever imagined today's situation? When Brook reached his throne of grand arcanist stepping on blood and brains, had he ever thought of his miserable ending?"

His hatred was even stronger than what Luciana and Norman imagined. Luciana frowned. Although she was also a supporter of the particle theory, she still thought that Artil's hatred was too much — Lauren and the others were all sorcerers of the Congress, one shouldn't act such happy and thrilled to their death.

Norman looked quite pissed. When he was just about to refute Artil's words, the look on his face suddenly changed to respect.

"Sir."

Douglas had walked down the stairs. Slightly frowning, he said to Artil. "Mind your manner, Artil. There are still phenomena,

including the classic double-slit interference image, that cannot be explained by the light quantum hypothesis. We have to remain careful and humble all the time. All the sorcerers who died are our companions. We do have disagreements, but we still share the same goal — to strengthen the Congress of Magic."

"Yes, Sir..." Artil held back his joy. "Lucien Evans is the one who made this happen; too bad he couldn't carry out the accurate experiment three years ago. I wonder how he's feeling right now, and what he is working on."

"I heard that Lucien Evans is working on particle bombardment following his teacher, the Lord of Storm," answered Norman. As a member of the Affair Committee in charge of the Magic Engineering Department, he knew that the department was sending senior-rank sorcerers to Lucien's Atom Institution to improve the facilities.

Douglas nodded. "Fernando has taken Lucien here. Artil, if you really want to know, you could directly ask them. Norman, if you don't feel comfortable seeing Lucien, you can go back. Don't force yourself to do it."

Norman was a bit discouraged. "No matter what I think, the experiment result speaks the loudest."

"Great. I was about to thank him and have a conversation with him in person." Luciana, on the other hand, was surprised and delighted.

She was working on improving her own meditation method using the light quantum hypothesis, and she had many questions to ask. Some of the questions she could talk to Douglas, but the rest would be most efficiently solved if she could directly talk to Lucien.

Artil was also excited. "I have to ask him if he still has other experiment clues for completely destroying the wave theory!" Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

— And send most sorcerers in the Congress who were above middle-rank to death?

Casting an angry glance at Artil, Luciana hoped that Artil knew what he was trying to encourage.

After a few minutes, Lucien, who was wearing the black double-breasted suit and his monocle, walked into the small living room following the Lord of Storm.

"Got something new again?" Douglas saw the thick pile of parchment in Fernando's hand.

The paper rose up in the air and flew to Douglas.

"Lucien's 'New Alchemy'. Take a look at it yourself," said Fernando.

Fernando's scarlet eyes looked around. Artil, Norman, and Luciana all took a step back spontaneously from his vigor. With the Lord of Storm present, they dared not to pry into the paper using their spiritual power.

Seeing that Fernando was being unusually serious, Douglas started reading the paper attentively,

As he read further, Douglas's mouth slightly opened and raised his right hand, as if he was about to make some strong comments. But he held himself back and kept reading.

Time went by. And it had been two hours.

Douglas's students just waited there. They dared not to talk or even use Telepathic Bond. Douglas should not be disturbed at this moment — They knew it very well.

Before the fall of the ancient Magic Empire, Douglas had already become an archmage. He was deeply influenced by the Empire's tradition in the relation between students and teachers — although Douglas was indeed kind and patient to his students, his students had to be deferential to him as well.

Douglas finally put down the paper on the walnut table, and then he closed his eyes. In the following half-hour, he was quiet and seemed to be simulating something in his own cognitive world.

Finally, Douglas opened his eyes and said to them rather seriously,

"The Church has always been accusing us of profaning the divinity of God, of attempting to step into the forbidden realm that only belonged to God. However, we are all aware of the fact that we do not deserve such high comments from our enemy. We have just peeled off some holy wrappings on the outside, but are still far away from that realm. But now, it will be different. The theoretical system in Lucien's paper has brought us right to the gate of the forbidden realm, and what is needed for pushing open the gate is the experimental proof. Finally, we won't let the Church down anymore.

"But we can only fully rely on the theoretical system until the experiment's proof is available. Lucien, your theoretical system can only be verified until the neutron is found, until how an element is changed by bombardment is proved, and until all your predictions come true. All the grand arcanists after me have gone through this after their theoretical systems first came out."

The title, grand arcanist, only emerged after Douglas's theoretical system was widely accepted.

When he was talking to Lucien, Douglas seemed to be a bit excited.

Finally, they had approached the truth of the world, the secrets behind magic!

The power of creation had always been the ultimate pursuit among all sorcerers! They were now much closer to the dream than ever before!

If human beings could do the same thing as Gods could, then what was the meaning of having Gods?

"What? Grand arcanist? The forbidden realm of God?" Asked Artil hurriedly.

After looking at Fernando and saw him slightly nodding, Douglas allowed the finding in the paper to be revealed to the students present. After all, the paper was going to be submitted very soon.

"Lucien's new theoretical system, New Alchemy, will be able to give us insight into the secret of matters and hand us the power of creating. It's going to be a theoretical system capable of changing the era," said Fernando.

"... What?" Norman could not believe what he just heard.

Luciana's spirit had been lifted again after the long wait. She looked at her teacher and the paper on the table and then turned to look at Lucien. She wondered if another grand arcanist was about to appear — a twenty-something-years-old grand arcanist.

Seeing the elegant, well-mannered young man standing in front of him, she could not imagine a man like this just claimed that he had mastered the secret of creating the universe.

She suddenly understood how the pastors in the Church felt. There was no way that they could accept the fact that there was no difference between God and human beings.

Artil shook his head fiercely. "This is impossible! Nobody can step into God's realm! Impossible!" He was even more agitated than when he attacked the wave theory supporters.

As if he had gone mad, Artil suddenly made a rush for the paper beside Douglas and picked it up.

Fernando was just about to stop him, but saw Douglas slightly frowning and shaking his head, so he decided to remain silent and watch.

Lucien felt that he had grasped something.

"Proton... Neutron... Electron... Nonsense! How dare you make such a claim without any experiment support?" Artil turned to Lucien and asked furiously with a completely distorted look on his face.

Lucien answered calmly. "If you don't believe in the existence of proton, I can go to the lab and prove it to you on the spot. As for the prediction of the neutron, it's based on atomic weight, proton mass, and electronic mass. It makes sense logically."

"Then let's go to the lab!" Artil grabbed the paper and started heading for the lab, and he saw Lucien followed him behind at a leisurely pace.

Nodded in confidence, Lucien said, "no problem. I'll show you two experiments. Also, we should be able to locate the trace of the new element in the radioactive substance now."

He was referring to the fifth-circle spell for collecting small amount of elements put forward by Hathaway.

Norman and Luciana had no idea what was going on. Why was Artil acting so weird? Why would he hate Lucien so much for this? Was it because that he hate someone who could receive the title of grand arcanist at so young an age, someone just like Brook?

"It must be a fake experiment... It must be..."

As Artil saw Lucien's attitude and knew that the design of the paper was reliable and the data was persuasive, the look on his face was replaced by perplexity. "How's this possible? This is... God's realm..."

Lucien then saw a beam of bright light burst out from Artil's body and devoured him.

Before the power of the light could spread out, Douglas's magic shield had stopped it.

The scene of the light spots slowly falling down was as beautiful as a dream. Watching it, Lucien knew that his sense had been correct.

Artil was not mad. He was not really a 'Mad Dog'.

"No wonder he was continuously challenging the wave theory..."

"If he had believed in the particle theory that bad, his head would have exploded years ago..."

Chapter 457: The Heart of Faith

"Such a good student, Douglas."

When the small firework died out, Fernando said a bit sarcastically.

Douglas seemed to have aged in seconds. With the bitter smile on his face, he said, "ever since Brook became a grand arcanist based on the electromagnetism theory and the wave theory, I noticed that Artil started behaving strangely. He was prone to exaggerate things, and often said that the reason why there were currently unexplorable and unexplainable questions was that we had not found the Origin. I first thought that it was because Brook's achievement was too much for him to take. But then I started feeling suspicious... and I did find some clues later..."

He released a gentle sigh and continued. "... Then he seemed to become aware of it. He came to me and confessed that he was trying to take advantage of the Church to get rid of Brook instead of actually believing in the God of Truth, and that the more the Church had trusted him, the more useful it would be for the Congress. Artil has been my student for more than a hundred years; I watched him grow up from a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old kid. I thought I knew him well, so I didn't invade his mind. I chose to trust him at the time being and tested him with other methods...

"Artil behaved well when we launched the artificial planet and when the electron was discovered. Also, he had always been strongly against the wave theory in the past years, so I lowered my alert... I didn't expect this..."

Norman and Luciana finally realized that Artil was a spy of the Church. It was the holy light that killed him, not head explosion! But Artil cast magic, not divine spells!

"Unless a demiplane was formed based on his cognitive world, there was no way for us to track if his part of his cognitive world demonstrates divine creation," said Fernando rather seriously. While the sorcerers' power grew when they got closer to the truth of the

world, the clergy's power came from their faith. Once their faith became unstable, they would lose all their power or even be devoured by the holy light. Therefore, the Congress was unable to send any higher-rank spies into the Church.

Lucien nodded thoughtfully. After integrating the Light of Faith into his cognitive world, although Artil was not able to cast divine spells, he more or less believed in the existence and power of the God of Truth. Therefore, when his faith was shaken, the holy light burst out when his cognitive world collapsed and devoured him before his head exploded, which was a sharp contrast to the old mage from before, who believed in the God of Truth but whose head exploded. Lucien guessed that this depended on which side played a more dominant role in the cognitive world.

In this case, it seemed that the power of Sard, and the power of the North Church's pope and the Saints, as well as that of the heretics of the Saint Truth that Lucien once met, did still come from their faith.

It seemed that as long as they still had faith in the God of Truth, no matter how their understanding of the doctrine and cognition changed, they were still able to use divine spells without being devoured by the holy light.

But Sard and the heretics didn't seem to be that devoted to the God of Truth either... Lucien rubbed his chin in confusion.

"In fact, I also suspected him... but I put the thought aside seeing that he was fine after Evans's Miracle Experiment," Norman recalled. "... He had two friends in the Affair Committee; they could influence many things indirectly."

A veteran senior-rank sorcerer like Artil, although bad-tempered, still had quite a few friends.

"I'll have Vicente investigate them," said Douglas briefly.

Meanwhile, Lucien started analyzing the constitution of Artil's cognitive world. "He did not see Miracle Experiment with his own eyes, and he had been mentally prepared by convincing himself that the experiment could not completely deny Creationism, but simply

offered another possibility. Also, there was no following theory coming up to further support the experiment. However, New Alchemy is based on a complete and reasonable theoretical system. Once the neutron is discovered, following the system, creating spells that could overtake the throne of creation will become possible and practical. It's too much for him."

"So, in his cognitive world, the God of Truth should be the origin of the universe and the initial creator." Fernando drew the conclusion and then turned to Douglas. "I was about to ask you how we can use New Alchemy to give a good strike to the Church, but here we got a spy first."

"If we wait until when the neutron is found and when the new spells for permanently changing matters are created to publish New Alchemy, at least one or two saint cardinals will fall. But now because of Artil's death, the Church will soon find this out. When they are mentally prepared, we'll miss the chance." Douglas regained his usual calmness, but the loving smile on his face had disappeared.

There were horrible storms in Fernando's red eyes. "You investigated him before, right? So you should know how he reached out to the Church. Seize this opportunity, and give the Church a good lesson."

"To make it a harsh lesson, just the New Alchemy without experiments as proof might not be enough. I'll have Atlant join us here to come up with a plan and create the most powerful atmosphere for mental hint." Douglas slightly nodded and gestured Norman and Luciana to remain his office for a while.

...

In the headquarter of the Will of Elements, the royal magic tower of Holm.

Raventi just received a thick pile of paper and a thin piece of secret message.

"New Alchemy? Lucien Evans?" Raventi slightly frowned when

seeing such a brief and general title.

But he knew that Lucien was always being very cautious and precise, so there must be a reason why he chose the title. He put the question aside and started reading the paper.

The school of Element and Alchemy were always closely interrelated with each other. Therefore, the Holm Crown prize was also the highest award shared by the two schools. The four arcana review members from the Will of Elements were also authorities in the field of Alchemy.

As soon as he started reading, Raventi sunk into Lucien's paper deeper and deeper. His brows twitched and his hands were slightly trembling as if he was truly an old man.

After a long time, he seemed to be a bit out of control and roared in a low voice to himself. "So, this is the deep-hiding secret behind matters!?"

His sight became blurry. In the vagueness, there seemed to be a white-haired old man who was so thin that pretty much only bones were left lying on a bed in the magic robe of element. His soul was severely damaged by the failure of the lich-transforming rite and was near collapsing, however, his voice was full of great passion and solemnity.

"Raventi, do you know what it means – the word 'Alchemy'?"

"It means our dream – to master the secret of matters!"

"Take my place, carry the dream on!"

Raventi closed his eyes and murmured, "Sir, can you see this? New Alchemy!"

Lost in this atmosphere, Raventi took a long time to calm down. Then he picked up the secret message.

"Artil is a spy from the Church? He's devoured by holy light after reading New Alchemy?" Raventi's brows knitted together.

He finished reading the message and called the student waiting outside in.

"Go and check who is close to Artil." Raventi gave the order.

"Why?" His student confused.

Raventi repeated the message to his student and asked solemnly, "understand?"

"Yes." His student was just about to turn around, but he suddenly thought of something and asked, "Sir, shall we keep the message a secret?"

"The message can be revealed. Accessing the message doesn't require a high level of authority." Raventi recalled the notes behind the message.

When the student left, Raventi headed for the lab. He had to verify Lucien's experiment first before writing the review.

Mr. Raventi had always been a cautious and conscientious arcanist.

...

In a demiplane, another member from the school of Alchemy whose name was Prado waited beside the desk full of respect.

It seemed that the black-haired, black-eyed man who always had a cunning smile on his face had fallen asleep. Sitting behind the desk, he did not open his eyes even when a doll puppet that had the appearance of a blonde little girl walked in to bring him tea.

After a long time, Klaus sighed. "Finally... I see this alive with my own eyes."

Looking at the delicate expressionless doll, and then turning to look at the bright blue sky outside of the window, he let out a burst of low laughter.

"Such a wonderful world."

"New Alchemy. How far could it go?"

...

In the Radiance Church in Holm.

Philibell had just finished his daily prayers when he saw the cardinal directly rushing in.

"Message! Archangel level!" Cried the cardinal before Philibell could scold him for being so reckless.

Archangel level? Philibell was rather surprised. He wondered if Douglas had reached an even higher level, or if the sorcerers had made any new major discoveries that lead them into the realm of God.

Philibell had lots of questions in his mind. Knowing the importance of the message, he took over the thick pile of parchment and asked the cardinal to invite Stone here.

"Archmage level... from Artil, as expected... important material attached, contains curses..."

Philibell checked the file carefully and noticed that indeed there was cursing power emitting from a small pouch tied to the file. Thus, he trusted the message even more.

"Philibell, what is it?" asked Vaharall. He was right in the church, so it was easy for him to come quickly after receiving the message via the divine circle.

Seeing that there were two legends here as his witnesses, Philibell opened the file and started reading the thick pile of paper.

Seeing the complicated magic spells and arcane symbols, Vaharall looked away and waited for Philibell's summary. Meanwhile, it seemed a bit weird to him to have the entire paper sent to the Church. In most cases, an important piece of paper should be summarized first before being sent. How could the entire file all belong to the archangel level?

As he read further, Philibell's body started trembling out of anger, and his eyes were written with fury. Skipping some parts, he directly jumped to the most important section.

"... In the radioactive substance, I have found the trace of the new element, which perfectly matches what I expected: In the process of radioactive decay, energy and matter are released from helium atomic nucleus and thus new elements are formed..."

There was a line of words here: "See attached material. Important."

Philibell quickly opened the black pouch and saw a piece of ore marked with magic symbols. It was red, but with the emission of the faint rays in three colors – black, white, and green – part of the ore stone turned blue, and then dark radiant green.

The tiny traces of the new element within was amplified by magic, while the magic waves had been hidden by the cursing power.

This was a real piece of ore stone from nature, except that its changing process was presented by the magic tags.

"This is an element turning into another through decay..." Philibell could not help reading further, as if he had been possessed,

"... Since human beings acquired magic, the dream of turning elements into gold has always been there. This is not merely our pursuit of wealth, but the longing for the truth of the world, as we always wish to master the secret of matter transmutation!"

"... However, for thousands of years in the past, there was not a single alchemical reaction which had successfully transmuted a substance fundamentally without relying on a permanent magic circle... In front of the gate of the forbidden zone belonging only to gods, we human beings could not march further..."

Recalling the atom structure put forward by Lucien Evans and how he described the decaying process, Philibell felt that his brain was seized by panic. The answer had emerged in his mind...

"... But now, after discovering the inner structure of the atom, by studying the nature of decay, we can find the path for

fundamentally changing matters and substances and creating new elements! Following my theory, although the product might not be worth the cost, we can finally take over the power once exclusively owned by god! Now we see the deepest secrets hiding behind substances, and we are on the way to achieve the shared dream of generations of sorcerers!"

Philibell's head buzzed as if someone just hammered his head. Driven by great fury and hatred, the everlasting peace in his mind was gone.

"How dare these filthy sorcerers to pretend to the throne of creation! How dare you, Lucien Evans!" Roared Philibell.

This was no longer a groundless accusation, but solid evidence. In the upcoming future, Lucien Evans would step into the forbidden realm once only controlled by God!

Before he could say more, several cardinals rushed in, with messages in their hands.

"Your Excellency, Artil has been devoured by the holy light because of New Alchemy!"

"Your Excellency! Confirmed! Artil's faith was shaken; holy light outburst!"

They had no idea that Artil was a spy before this, but now they had all realized what was going on.

The messages arrived just in time. Philibell got a bit confused and helpless – He thought that the finding still needed to wait until the discovery of neutron to be proved.

His eyesight fell on the bottom line of the message. The words had turned scarlet under the rays. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

"Artil has been devoured by holy light. What about you?"

The red ore stone in his left hand was still emitting rays; it was still

turning into a blue new element.

Philibell heard his heart thumping. Voice and sound faded away from him. He simply could not look away from the red decaying stone, and he even used divine power to verify it.

It turned out that the decaying process was indeed real, the same with the existence of the new element. Lucien Evans's description was correct. If the process could be controlled or even reversed, the changing of matter could no more be a secret which once only belonged to God.

Fear and panic possessed him. Philibell could not help murmuring to himself.

"The Lord is still almighty! The Lord is still the origin of the universe. But... but if an ordinary human being can do the same thing as God can do, then..."

Vaharall's eyes suddenly opened big. He sensed the danger a second before it arrived.

Outside the Radiance Church, people walking by were shocked to a powerful, majestic light pillar soar into the air and everything within the range vaped. Then, quickly, the divine circles outside of the church were activated and counteracted the power of the light pillar.

Standing far away from the church, after seeing how the central part of the building was ruined and the clergies who screamed bitterly in the holy light, Douglas sighed. "It has been hundreds of years; we never did any damage to the building. But today we almost completely tore it down."

"But it looks like Philibell is not as devoted as he claimed." With his eyes closed, Atlant the Eye of Curse said to Douglas, Fernando, and Lucien.

In the air, Vaharall looked down at the church which had been severely damaged and the clergies who did not manage to escape, he felt the anger burning his guts, but at the same time, he also felt

lucky that he could not understand the paper.

"Philibell, are you alright?" Varahall asked Philibell, who was kneeling on the ground in the center of the huge hole, as if he was making a confession.

"My faith was shaken..." said Philibell bitterly; his grand cardinal robe had been torn into pieces. "... Not only can I never reach the next level, but my power has even receded by one level."

Chapter 458: The Angry Pope

Chapter 458: The Angry Pope

Finishing the experiment together with his teacher, Prado relaxed down as he looked and saw the dreamlike sunset glow. He felt more satisfied than ever, as he had clearly identified the next step he was going to take in the research — find neutron to support Lucien Evans' matter transmutation theory.

He used to think that he would never reach the legendary realm and become an “Excellency” like his teacher, but now the New Alchemy had brought him hope!

With a big smile on his face mixed with excitement and joy, Prado picked up the quill-pen.

“Please first allow me, as an alchemist, to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Lucien Evans, the author of the paper. He has made generations of alchemists' dream come true!

“Starting from fact, Mr. Lucien Evans has made a comprehensive but detailed description of the inner structure of the atom and its properties. He then built a theoretical system that could thoroughly explain alchemical reactions, ionization, valence, periodicity of elements, and spectra lines patterns of elements. This theoretical system also elaborates the nature of elements. Furthermore, based on the new element found in the radioactive substance, Mr. Lucien Evans has reasonably explained how matters transmute and predicted several methods of transforming matter.

“If Mr. Lucien Evans' theoretical system is proved, it will become the greatest research achievement since that of Her Excellency Hathaway. His theoretical system is powerful enough to change the era!

“As an alchemist, I'd say that this theoretical theory will become the code for the school of Element and Alchemy. The glory of this achievement is greater than ever.

“However, since the final establishment of the theoretical system still requires solid experiment support, so far I cannot directly send all these compliments to Mr. Evans, nor the title of grand arcanist.

“Based on what we have so far, I can say that this theoretical system explaining the school of Element and Alchemy is groundbreaking, innovative, extremely important, universally applicable, and is greatly worth discussing. Five-thousand arcana credits and one-hundred-thousand arcana points are suggested to be given as a reward.”

When he put down the quill-pen, Prado was still in the excitement.

He looked out at the dimming night sky, and he knew that tomorrow when the sun rises, it would be a glorious bright day.

.....

Thanks to the divine circle God’s Guard designed for defense against the grand arcanists, the periphery of the Radiance Church was left intact.

However, as Stone the Four-winged Knight rushed here and saw the shocking scene, the look on his face became extremely distorted with great hatred and sorrow — All the cardinals and bishops in the central part of the Church, who either lived here or were on duty, were all dead.

Stone’s vision became blurred, as if the blood of the clergy had covered his eyes. The loss was too much for him to bear.

To stand against the Congress of Magic which growing stronger day by day, the parish of Holm was the center of the surrounding four districts Colette, Brianne, Calais, and the coastal area of the northland. Thus a great number of cardinals were gathered here, most of them in the Radiance Church.

“So far, it is estimated that at least three level-nine red robe cardinals, fifteen red robes of lower ranks, and almost a hundred cardinals were martyred...” Vaharall’s coarse and miserable voice seemed to be directly blown out from hell. Yet he could not let the

sorrow and angry completely seize his mind right now, as he still had to turn on the divine circles to prepare against the possible upcoming attack from the Congress of Magic.

“Lucien Evans!” Recalling that he had just gloated over Lucien’s kill record, Stone could no longer hold back his anger..

Great shame!

He had known from Vaharall that it was Lucien Evans who caused this. Such a scale of loss was even rare during the War of Dawn and the war against the North heresies. Although the South Church claimed that the number of their middle-ranks and senior-ranks was equal to that of the Congress and the North Church added together, due to the vastness of their realm, they were still in trouble regathering enough pastors and cardinals in a short period of time.

However, what pained him the most was the degradation of Philibell’s power! This was their greatest loss!

“Also, Douglas, Fernando, Atlant...” Philibell knew the legendary sorcerers very well. Lucien Evans was not alone.

Douglas was Artil’s teacher, and Fernando was Lucien’s. And the way they did this was of the typical style of Atlant.

Philibell seemed to have aged within seconds. “I’ve sent the message to His Holiness the Pope. War is inevitable. Lucien Evans must die.”

Lucien Evans must die now. It would be too late when he became a grand arcanist and legendary sorcerer.

Given New Alchemy enough time, the future of Lucien Evans would be out of their control!

“We’ll wait for His Holiness’s command.” Stone tried his best to restrain his fury.

Philibell added despiritedly. “I’m not able to lead the Holm parish anymore. I’ve applied to His Holiness to send a more powerful grand cardinal here.”

“Philibell...” Vaharall knew how this felt.

The sky dimmed. The night fell much earlier than expected.

.....

Using the magic circle improved by the Will of Elements, the rigorous Raventi did two separate experiments to confirm the existence of proton, while the discovery of the new element was much easier.

Picking up the quill-pen, Raventi recalled the time he first saw Lucien, who was wearing a black double-breasted suit and standing quietly among the low-rank sorcerers. Except that he was better-looking and more well-mannered than his peers, there was nothing else that made him different from the others. Raventi had never imagined that this young man would have made such amazing progress within just a few years. Now, he was very promising to become the eighth grand arcanist in the Congress, when he was only around thirty.

His Excellency, Lucien Evans, the Creator.

“The scarlet moon... The tide of the time...” Raventi murmured to himself silently.

Then he started writing the review comment. To him, a level-nine arcanist and a ninth-circle sorcerer, New Alchemy showed him the hope of reaching the legendary level!

“Although the Introduction of the quantum theory into the atom structure model still requires more experiments as verification, it is, without doubt, a paper to which all sorcerers in the school Element and Alchemy have to bow. It is the Code of Element and Alchemy.

“As long as the neutron can be found, and that the artificially created matter can permanently exist outside of the permanency magic circle, Lucien Evans’s New Alchemy will be able to shift the direction of elemental and alchemical magic development and change the time. Perhaps the theoretical system is still not perfect, but so far it is definitely reasonable and logical.

“Lucien Evans has combined the many alchemical reactions together and offer them a shared explanation derived from his theoretical system.

“So far my review comment has to be made based on the current experimental results. Therefore, I’d say that this is a groundbreaking, extremely important, and universally applicable theory worth broad discussing. Six-thousand arcana credits and one-hundred-thousand arcana points are suggested to be given to Lucien Evans as a reward.

“This is an epic step into the exclusive realm of gods of us sorcerers. Now, we are only one step away from accessing the throne of creation.”

The darkness of the night outside the window was thick and dense.

.....

In the Bright Hall, Holy City Lance.

The members of the Grand Cardinal group were silently waiting for the arrival of the pope.

Suddenly, the space was filled up with tyrannical, divine, and bright power. The superior power made them lower their heads.

“Lucien Evans stole the Lord’s power with his New Alchemy. Severe punishment he deserves! And the Congress of Magic!” the Pope, Benedict II, strode out of the divine circle holding his scepter high. There was a distinct rage in his voice.

The members had never seen the pope this furious. They quickly exchanged a look between each other.

Stealing the power of the Lord and profaning the glory of divinity, these charges were indeed very bad, but Lucien Evans was not the first sorcerer who did those. Douglas, Brook, and the rest of the grand arcanists... they all more or less deserved similar charges, but the Pope had treated their issues calmly. What was the difference this time?

Was it because this theoretical system could really change matters freely that it even made the Pope uneasy?

His white hair neatly combed backward, Benedict II gave the top command. "I declare war against the Congress of Magic. The five parishes — Holm, Colette, Brianne, and the Northland along the coast — will be leading. Support will be given. And the Parish of Holm will be in charge.

"Philibell is injured. Someone must take the role in the Radiance Church in Rentato. A Saint."

After a short period of silence, Sard stood out and said, "Your Holiness. I wish to take the role of the Grand Cardinal of Holm and lead the five parishes."

Although he looked just like an ordinary old man, Sard had reached the third rank of Saint Cardinal two years ago and had been given the title, Saint.

"Your devotion makes you glow, and the Blessing will always be with you. When the war begins, we shall all join," the Pope nodded.

Then the Pope started drawing the plan for the upcoming war, with Sard giving advice.

No one dared to say a word against the decision of the furious Pope. The plan was drawn fluently.

Then the Pope said to them, "the top thirty night watchers shall all see eliminating Lucien Evans as their top priority once they are available. Lucien Evans now ranks no. 19 on the Cleansing List.

"I have one thing to clear up," said the Pope all of a sudden, "Lucien Evans was once a Seraph beside the Lord, thus he owned the incomparable talent in music and wisdom. But he was lured and betrayed the Lord. He stole the power of creating from the Lord and fell to the ground.

"He is the Primordial Demon, and also a Fallen Angel!"

The grand cardinals and the leaders of the Inquisitions all

understood the Pope's words immediately. The Pope was saying so for solidifying the followers' belief — Human beings could never be as powerful as God; Lucien Evans was able to do so because he was a thief who stole the Lord's power.

Ranking no. 19 on the Cleansing List, the name Lucien Evans, the Fallen Angel, was even above many legendaries!

The Pope raised the scepter high and was about to declare the start of the war. However, at this time, Benedict II suddenly looked up at the sky and then, it felt that the entire world trembled a bit.

Standing among the stars in the sky, seeing the blurry scenes of the foreign dimension in front of his eyes, Oliver grinned to Hathaway.

“Here it is.”

Chapter 459: The Start of the Chaos

In the Bright Hall, the Holy City Lance.

The entire world trembled a bit. All the cardinals present felt it. In the clear blue sky, there was a blurry image of a brand new world, so strange and so familiar at the same time.

It was the dimension that they had been seeking for in the past three years, where Alterna and the mysterious existence fell.

"Someone found it," Squinting his eyes, another Saint, Anasta, broke the solid silence in the Bright Hall. "This world seems to be quite special; its revelation made too big a stir, so now we can also precisely locate it... it's another fair competition."

All of them turned to look at the Pope, waiting for his further decision. Should they stick to the war plan, or switch their focus to the newly-found dimension, to finding the injured Alterna and the mysterious existence?

Except for the two Grand Cardinals, who looked rather calm and indifferent, the rest of them all looked a bit excited. For them, the choice would definitely be the latter!

Was Lucien Evans important? Of course. This was not the first time that Lucien Evans brought disaster to the Church, and they all knew it well that Lucien Evans was very likely to become the next grand arcanist and legendary mage in his thirties or forties. If they simply left Lucien Evans alone, he would quickly grow into a huge threat to the Church.

However, compared to the secrets hiding behind Alterna and the mysterious existence, Lucien's importance paled. If they could catch Alterna and the mysterious existence and find out their secrets, the gain would be immeasurable for the Church, for the Pope, and for everyone!

All the previous popes wished to be immortal like Alterna, just like the saying —"eternal is the Silver Moon, eternal is the Moon God."

However, because their power came from the God of Truth, they could not prolong their years using magic and potions, thus five-hundred years was their limit. Also, after becoming the pope, their bodies aged even faster from bearing the power of God, even though they were already Saints before ascending to the throne.

The Grand Cardinal group's members could easily notice that the popes never lived long, but they did not know the reasons behind. The most reasonable guess was that a human being's body and soul ascending to demigod level would have to bear unrepairable damages.

Therefore, knowing the secrets of the real demigods could for sure prolong the Pope's life span.

As for the grand cardinals, knowing even the smallest piece of secret would greatly benefit them. They would see much bigger hope in ascending or even becoming demigods, Saints, or Angels on the Ground to enjoy immortality.

With such power, the entire Church would be invincible!

Under the burning gazes, the Pope released a sigh and said calmly, "eliminating Lucien Evans, the Fallen Angel, was what we were planning on. However, now the Lord has decided to send us to an even more dangerous and challenging task. This is our honor and pleasure. Sard, you will still lead the parish of Holm, as well as the entire five parishes to stand against the Congress of Magic. Before this ends, no spare support can be sent to you. This is a tough situation."

"Your command is the will of the Lord. Only truth lives forever," answered Sard without any personal emotions. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

However, in other grand cardinals' eyes, he was of extremely bad luck.

Being the leader of the five major parishes and ranking only below the Pope in the Church was once the ultimate pursuit among all the

powerful characters in the Church. However, the Congress of Magic had become much more powerful than ever, and thus the role had now become a very risky one. What was more important was that Sard was going to miss the chance heading for the dimension to look for Alterna and the mysterious existence. But since Sard did not say anything, they were also glad to have fewer competitors.

"Anasta and Maria, you two shall come with me." Benedict II commanded calmly.

Maria was another Saint, and just like Anasta, he was fully trusted by Benedict II.

Different from the constitution of the North Church, in the South Church, the Pope had unparalleled authority and power. No one dared to stand out and speak against the Pope. What surprised them even more was that the Pope was going to join in the exploration of the dimension! Ever since the division of the Church, His Holiness had never stepped out of the Holy City.

The Pope has put an even heavier emphasis on this than they expected.

"Arzaro, Varantine, Bellia..." The Pope picked another five members from the Grand Cardinal group, who were either saint cardinals or legendary knights. "... should also come along with me."

This arrangement had made the most from what the Church had right now. The Church had so many enemies that the Pope had to be very cautious all the time in case they would launch a strike when the Church was unprepared, although the Pope believed that their enemies would also choose to focus on chasing after the newly-found dimension.

Also, this time the Pope would join in person, and he is confident in himself.

After the arrangement, the Pope said to them, "get the senior-ranks, top two hundred night watchers, radiant knights and above to prepare themselves. We know nothing about the dimension yet. Maybe it's as broad as the Star Tomb, then we'll need stronger

support.

"As for the punishment that Lucien Evans deserves, two or three top night watchers should still bear the mission in mind."

The Pope still insisted on killing Lucien as soon as possible even now.

"As command, Your Holiness," answered the members in chorus, as they drew a cross in front of their chests,

"Only Truth lives forever!"

...

In the boundless starry sky, Oliver shrugged at ease and said, "there's something wrong with this dimension. The stir we made was too loud to avoid the attention. The North and the South Church may already be on their way now. I'll get in there first. You go back and tell the president all the information we collected. Let him make the plan and gather everyone else."

"I see." Hathaway did not waste her words. Turning around, she did an elegant Space Jump using her demiplane — Element Paradise. A few hours earlier, she received Fernando's secret message and was informed about Lucien's New Alchemy. Therefore, she resisted the temptation of exploring deeper into this dimension, and instead, applied to guard Allyn in the next five-year period, in order to assimilate and further improve the theoretical system.

After Hathaway left, Oliver released a sigh,

"Here starts the chaos."

...

On the Night Highland, in a busy city.

The buildings in this city carried the style of ancient times. Some were heavy solid stone huts from of the Age of Steam, while some were green treehouses left from the time when elves were still ruling this territory. However, most houses and buildings in the city

had pointy tips and looked grayish, which was typical of the ancient Magic Empire. This city was a place where most races in this world gathered together, including human beings of different ethnicities, werewolves, beautiful elves, pale vampires, scaly Kuo-toans, and so on.

All of a sudden, the space and the living creatures cracked like a mirror. The image of the two human beings having a heated conversation in the corner broke into small pieces, together with the buildings and the entire city.

On the empty land, a black castle emerged. In the castle, the lid of a huge coffin opened fiercely, and a man in his thirties wearing a black evening suit and a cloak that was black on the outside and red in the inside flew out. His eyes were scarlet, creepy but enchanting.

"Finally..."

In the next second, Dracula had vanished.

On the Night Highland, the several vampire princes all responded in the same way. They had all set out, leaving their territories behind exposed to possible attacks — There was nothing more important than the Primordial Ancestor.

In San Ivansburg, in Antiffler, in the Dark Mountain Range... Countless legends looked up at the sky simultaneously and immediately set off for that dimension, with or without companies. No one could resist the temptation, not even the arrogant Rudolf II or the mysterious Pope of the North.

...

"We are heading for the dimension — Douglas, I, Vicente, Hellen, Atlant, Hull-Chulia, Chelsea, Davy... Eleven legends in total to support Oliver," said Fernando who just directly showed up in the Atom Institution. "You stay in Allyn. Don't fool around. If you have to, use your Transformation Mask."

If Lucien had not made such a mess and thus became the most

hateful one in the eyes of the Church, Fernando would bring him and his other students together with him, so they could gain experience by exploring the dimension under his protection. However, now the dimension would soon be turned into the battlefield among the legendaries. Lucien should not take such a risk.

In case the Church would launch a sudden attack, the Congress also saved six legendaries to help Hathaway safeguard Allyn, including Brook, who was still recovering from the damage in his cognitive world.

Although Lucien was, of course, very curious and he did long for the power hiding in that dimension, he had not lost his reason to greed. Joining the battlefield of the legendaries as a sixth-circle sorcerer would be directly courting death. He had better just stay here and hope that the Congress could bring back some pieces, so he apply to research on them in the future as a grand arcanist. With the credits he just earned from the light quantum hypothesis and New Alchemy, Lucien was now already a level-seven arcanist. Expecting more citation credits coming up, plus the Influence Factor, Lucien believed that he could become reach level eight in a few years.

"Yes, Sir. I'll be cautious," said Lucien like a deferential, good student.

Meanwhile, his brain was spinning fast — Seizing the chance, he could bring out the dwarves from the Night Highland once his magic tower was ready.

This was the best chance ever!

Chapter 460: Lucien's Magic Tower

A few days later.

The tall silver-gray tower reached all the way up into the cloud, featuring its elegant curves and lines. Compared to the many other magic towers owned by the senior-ranks, which more or less looked gloomy, Lucien's magic tower was a good match to the starry sky and had some kind of unique taste in it.

"Hmm... A musician's fantastic magic tower," commented Rock, who was still quite whimsical even though he was already a third circle sorcerer now after the several years.

As an expert in Astrology, Lucien had to observe the stars, so a tall magic tower made sense. However, it seemed that the color and the shape of this magic tower were almost too unique and eye-catching to match Lucien's even-temperedness. However, considering the fact that Lucien was also a musician, the guests present all accepted the design.

Louise fancied the design of the magic tower quite a lot. It suited her taste much better than the traditional, gloomy-looking towers and castles. She smiled and said to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, you also have a very good taste in architecture. I'd appreciate it a lot if you can offer me some opinions for my villa's reconstruction in the future."

Although Lucien had told her multiple times that she could just call him by his name, Louise was still being the same respectful. After becoming the host Nightingale of the radio programme, Louise made quite a lot as a second-circle sorcerer. Therefore, she bought herself a garden villa in Allyn where property price was rising day by day.

"Did you name it, Evans?" Asked Samantha casually with the same indifferent look on her face.

Normally speaking, a sorcerer would not bother naming their magic tower. A name was usually saved for the demiplane. But Lucien was

not only a sorcerer, but also a artist.

Lucien grinned as he stepped on the stairs. "I call it Babel."

"Babel...?" Lazar and the students repeated the syllables confusedly. They had never heard the word before.

K was about to ask, but stopped himself when he saw the mysterious smile on Lucien's face, knowing that this was probably Lucien's little secret.

"Welcome back, my Lord. Welcome, distinguished guests. I'm Pinocchio. The brave, loyal, and honest Pinocchio." The silvery voice of the alchemical life rang.

Lucien pointed at the gradually opening silver-gray metal gate and said, "this is Pinocchio, the tower guard."

The guests greeted the tower guard although they had no idea what did such a name mean. Through the gate, they entered the hall, in which there was a metal sculpture of a huge wheel in the center.

"The Wheel of History. That's what the sculpture is called." Introduced Lucien.

Rock first burst out laughing. "Ambitious, Lucien, ambitious! But I'm sure the last thing you lack is ambition. A future grand arcanist who put forward New Alchemy will never lack ambition. No matter it is the Church in the South or North, they'll be completely crashed by the wheel of history!"

"Despite bendings and windings, history keeps progressing," said Lucien in a good mood.

The magic tower would be his first real home in this world. Here, with the magic tower, Lucien would be able to protect himself against the attack of a ninth-circle.

Samantha nodded lightly. "Your mind is sober. New Alchemy did not lead you to arrogance."

Although the special supplement New Alchemy of this month's

Arcana had not yet been published, most sorcerers present had enough background and had thus already read this era-changing paper.

After reading the paper, the younger generation, including Samantha, Rachel, Larry, and Ulysses, held deep admiration for Lucien, but also felt a bit depressed. Before New Alchemy came out, Lucien was a leading rival of his peers, and chasing him up was a shared goal among the younger arcanists. The goal was almost unrealizable, but it was there. However, now they had realized that Lucien was no longer one of them. Lucien should be in the team of the legends, standing beside those including Douglas, Brook, Hathaway, and Klaus. They were too far behind to catch up.

This caused the feeling of helplessness among them.

"Underestimating your enemies is underestimating your own life." Lucien looked at Samantha and said with a smile, "I'm not as talented as you all think. Like I said before, the study of the atom is such a brand new field in which even the smallest finding can lead to the discovery of a much bigger secret. In this field, there is so far no authority and no difference between us. When conditions are ready, we can all find something amazing. I just took a step ahead, and it does not mean that no one can catch me up. Being young and open-minded is the most valuable thing."

Samantha looked into Lucien's serene eyes and knew that he meant it, instead of just being humble out of courtesy. She put on a sincere smile and said, "What a pity... I'm good at the school of Element."

The rest of the guests, including Larry, K, and Lazar, nodded thoughtfully. They knew what Lucien just said was true.

Lucien pointed up at the sky and said, "the macroworld is as important."

"Sir, can we take a visit to your lab?" Before Samantha could respond, Heidi asked curiously.

Lucien nodded and then led them to the elevator and then to the underground level. On their way, they walked past the spare energy

room, the binding rooms, the underground magic garden, and arrived at the vast lab.

Most of the magic circles and alchemical facilities in this spacious lab were easily recognized by the sorcerers present. However, they had no clue what the two metal halves placed in the high-magnetic, vacuum magic circle in the middle of the lab were.

The two silver halves engraved with magic patterns somehow resembled the style of the magic tower.

"This is a cyclotron for accelerating charged particles. If any of you want one, my design plan is available in the Exchange Zone." Lucien briefly introduced how the machine worked to them, which was a smart and secret way of luring his friends.

Although the Congress did help Lucien out to some degree with this far-beyond-budget magic tower by selling the materials to Lucien at much lower prices, Lucien still had used up all of his savings in the past three years to improve his magic tower to an even higher standard to prepare for the future upgrades, so he was now in great need of extra arcana points.

Lucien was impressed by his own pace of progressing. Although he had made quite a fortune from the projects and papers, he was still far from being rich compared to those senior-rank sorcerers who had lived over a hundred years and thus had enough time for accumulating wealth. Lucien found his budget beyond tight, especially that he was seeking for the best materials for everything.

"What's this then?" Asked Larry, pointing at the sealed box connected to the transmitting part on the top, on which there were many thermodynamic magic circles.

"It is a cloud chamber, for assisting alchemical experiments," answered Lucien.

"Cloud chamber? For what?" K asked.

"When it is turned on," Lucien smiled and explained, "it is filled with supersaturated vapor. When an energetic charged particle

passes, it will be ionized, leaving a mist-like trail of ionized gas particles looking in the form of droplets. So we can observe and record the trace of a particle better."

"I can't believe I never thought of it!" exclaimed Ulysses, who specialized in the school of Thermodynamics. The observation of particles in the microworld had always been a big problem in their study. While lots of sorcerers were still working on improving amplification facilities, Lucien had solved the problem using vapor.

Louise and Heidi said simultaneously, "san we take a look?"

Lucien nodded and turned the cyclotron on.

In the box, elegant mist-like trails suddenly appeared against the dark background. The beauty of the curves was stunning.

The lab, for a while, became silent.

.....

After taking the tour in the lab, Lucien led the guests to the banquet hall. When the senior-ranks including Raventi, Gaston, and Isabella arrived, the banquet began.

In the cheerful atmosphere, Lucien presented eight pieces of piano bagatelle, and he also played the violin, impressing all the guests present.

When the performance part ended, the guests started talking to each other casually. Seeing the scene, Lucien suddenly felt a bit lonely. He knew that he was missing his friends and family in Aalto. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Lucien found a chance and snuck out of the hall and came to the balcony. Then he cast Electromagnetism Messaging.

"Hey, good evening, Lucien. Congratulations on your magic tower." Natasha's cheerful voice soon came.

Lucien also grinned. "Good afternoon, I'm celebrating."

"What a pity I can't be there. But still, congratulations, the Fallen Angel." Natasha joked, "His Holiness is creative when creating these titles."

Lucien replied seriously, "I'm only studying the particles in the microworld for the sake of arcana. But I think the experiment results show that the God of Truth has already handed human beings and nature the power of creation as a gift after the world was first created, and now the God of Truth only serves as spiritual guidance."

For the sweet future, Lucien had been working on gradually shifting Natasha's religious belief.

"So you're saying... God is in our hearts, and the Church has been lying to us?" Natasha didn't seem to be bothered. As long as Lucien was not indicating anything profane, she was fine with it.

Lucien answered decisively, "of course. Ms. Meredith was also a good person, right?"

Natasha giggled. "Alright, this isn't my point. The thing is that when the Church started calling you the Fallen Angel, I began picturing you in an angel costume, you know, like the one in an opera. It'd be even better if you are equipped with a pair of wings."

"I remember the costume for angels is usually genderless..." Lucien knew what Natasha was thinking.

Natasha burst out laughing, but with a hint of guiltiness. "Yeah... yeah... By the way, why the signal wasn't as good when I called Granny Hathaway?"

"The communication satellites still need further improvements. Mr. Douglas has been working on this in recent years," answered Lucien.

As a result, the plan of having satellite constellations was falling behind.

Natasha said thoughtfully, "but the quality of our conversation is... You know what's wrong, right?"

Lucien chuckled but said nothing.

Natasha knew when to stop asking questions. Then she released a gentle sigh. "The mysterious dimension has been found, and my mentor has set off to follow the Pope in there. Every time when I think of the battlefield there, my blood runs fast and I feel beyond thrilled. But I know I am not ready yet. However, His Holiness has also asked all the radiant knights and above to get prepared as the reserve force. If there's something wierd with the dimension, we will join in.

"If the day comes, I'll lead the nobles in Violet into the dimension."

Facing such a situation, the royal house must send a representative to be the leader. It would be either the Duke or Natasha, otherwise, the others would not obey heartily.

"I'd like to go, too." Lucien said implicitly. The words he omitted were "with you".

Natasha laughed, "Come on. None of the legendary sorcerers would pick on me, but you're different. The entire Church wants you to die. You're such a troublemaker!"

Their conversation did not last long, as Lucien could not just leave his guests alone. After knowing from Natasha how John and his family were doing, he had to end the call.

Turning around, Lucien saw Samantha looking at him from a distance with a plate on her hand. On the plate was steamed fish, a dish improved by Lucien that was favored by all the guests.

"I didn't hear anything, but I can tell it from your face. Besides magic and arcana, some space in your heart is still saved for that lady." Samantha sighed out of disappointment and then turned around without hesitation.

In the Congress of Magic, there were much more sorcerers who were single. Although they did pursue marriage just like common people, longevity made many of them lose their beloved ones. Also, some were deprived of desires, mostly the liches, so they chose to

become single again. Rarely were there couples who both had the power to live very long.

Among them, the grand arcanists had the lowest rate of marriage — Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, and Hellen were all single; Vicente Miranda's wife had passed away a long time ago, and rumors said that until today, his biggest dream was to truly bring his wife back to life. Brook's wife fell in the assassination of the Church; Oliver was the only one among them who had a sweet family.

.....

In the underground caves of the Night Highland.

Augustus the Elder was praying to the God of Steam attentively.

It had been a few years, and the Night Highland was getting more and more dangerous. The dwarves were still waiting for the guidance from their god.

Chapter 461: The Exodus from the Night Highland

Chapter 461: The Exodus from the Night Highland

“The Almighty God of Steam, the Lord of Life and Death. Your devout servant, Augustus, prays to you.”

“... Under your lead, we have spread out your grace across the land of Vlad, into all the middle-rank vampires’ castles. Now, we have twenty-three thousand seven hundred and eighty-six dwarf brothers and sisters praying in your name and following your words...”

“... Two thousand six hundred and nine brothers and sisters of us have devoted their lives to the fight against vampires and blood servants. The attention of the senior-rank vampires has been attracted. Our actions are getting increasingly dangerous...”

“I beg your guidance. I beg your mercy on all devout dwarves. I beg for help to break the chains and for new lives away from the Night Highland...”

“Steam Above.”

The holy statue in front of Augustus looked very strange. In the shape of a round, tower-like cone, it was engraved with countless unique patterns — The dwarves made the statue based on the beyond destructive weapon they saw in Atlantis.

In Lucien’s eyes, they were praying to a nuclear bomb.

Prostrate on the ground, Augustus was praying with all his heart. It had been three years, and the God of Steam never gave them any guidance again. But his belief was still solid. Augustus regarded this as their trial.

This did not mean that he was not worried. Several years ago, before their troop expanded, because Madam Tess had died and Count Vlad had fallen asleep, the Dwarf Rebellion grew fast with

ease. They had the knowledge and had won the control of some mines and forges, thus their weapons and armors had been greatly improved — High-pressure steam rifles, vampire-killing bullets, mythril-mixed chain mails which were effective against the claws of vampires. And they were finally able to fight back.

However, as they started having more followers, and when they had reached the territory of the middle-rank vampires nearby, the situation suddenly became intense. It would cost the lives of over a hundred dwarves to hurt and back off a middle-rank vampire. Even the explosive bullets they invented later whose power did not differentiate vampires from dwarves did not work very well.

According to Harold and Aquinas, their only hope was to remake the huge warship from the ancient Steam Civilization, which could probably be very efficient for killing middle-rank vampires.

“But based on what we have — the knowledge and the techniques — there’s no chance for us to build such a thing...” said Aquinas, the leader of the Dwarf Rebellion, a bit desperately over the meeting.

Augustus, the leader, said with even greater worry, “now we’re only fighting against the middle-ranks. If the senior-ranks wake up, if Count Vlad wakes up... even the warship will become useless, unless...”

Augustus did not finish his words, but his listeners all understood. What Augustus was indicating was the ultimate weapon they saw in Atlantis, the one whose power was enough to temporarily create a new Sun and destroy the entire Night Highland.

Thinking of this, Augustus’s prayers became even more sincere. Their God was testing them, Augustus believed.

“You dominate everything, Life and Death. You’re the King of the kings, the God above all gods.”

Finishing his prayers, Augustus was about to stand up when suddenly heard a remote, powerful voice in his brain,

“The future has arrived. Take your staff, and guide your people to the new life.”

His eyes suddenly opened wide. Out of the ecstasy, Augustus trembled when he hurriedly mumbled the words. “In your name. As you command.”

He saw bright light blooming before his eyes, lighting up the entire underground cave. The light was an illusion resulted from his ecstasy.

After calming down a bit, Augustus asked very humbly, “Almighty God of Steam, how shall I guide them out of Night Highland?”

Although the tales passed on for generations said that the ancestors of the dwarves were from another place, Augustus had no idea how to leave the Night Highland.

“Do as I say. Do not ask why.”

“We shall sing forth the honor of your name. May we get out of the pain and sufferings under your blessing and glory,” said Augustus, his head lowering deeply.

Then he walked out of the altar and opened the gate in extremely high spirit. Full of confidence, he exclaimed in front of the dwarves,

“Command to you all! And all dwarves devoted to the God of Steam. We shall gather in three days! The Almighty, the God of Steam, has given us words — WE SHALL LEAVE THE NIGHT HIGHLAND!”

After a short silence, under the lead of the young dwarf lady Myrna, all of them present cried out loud.

“Steam Above!”

Joyful tears ran across their faces.

...

Three days later.

In the huge underground cave located within the territory of Count Vlad, close to twenty-one thousand dwarves were gathering here.

Some of them were carrying high-pressure steam backpacks and holding big steam rifles, guarding the entrance of the underground caves connecting to each other, while some wore only ragged cloth bags and their bodies were covered with wounds left by whipping. However, they had one thing in common — Their eyes were shining with bright hope.

“It’s the time. I’m very encouraged by the fact that we have all of us here. Your devotion deserves the blessing.” Augustus walked across the crowd, wearing the dwarf robe and holding a missile-shaped staff. “and I, Augustus, the Speaker of God on the ground, will lead you forward.

“On our way out, we shall have no fear and no hesitation, no matter what is waiting for us in the front. Because, we are blessed!”

“It’s time to hit the road!”

“Steam Above!” the dwarves cried out loud together.

Joining the teams they belonged to, the dwarves followed the instruction in the book, Military Training, which was left to them by the God of Steam, and walked in the underground caves quietly.

They all understood it. Staying here on the Night Highland only meant death and shame. The landing of the God of Steam gave them the only belief in the boundless darkness. Death, or fight. They chose to fight, although they were afraid.

Going through the caves, the path elevated, and countless tombstones appeared beside.

“Here sleep our heroes, who died for our freedom. Some of them were warriors, and some were just common men and women who died protecting us. At this moment which decides the living or death of us dwarves, every one of us is a hero!” Augustus said aloud in great respect, while leading the troop to salute the dead.

The two thousand six hundred and nine tombstones watched them

march forward, and the atmosphere became rather solemn. Suddenly, a sharp scream penetrated the silence from behind — Two to three senior vampires, leading seven to eight lower-rank vampires, chased up them in the air!

“It’s Sanelson!” The dwarves screamed. “They’re here!”

Sanelson was a level-five vampire knight who had killed hundreds of dwarves.

Did anyone betray them?

Was it because the vampires had caught some dwarves on the way?

Panic and despair spread out. The dwarves knew how powerful those vampires were. The vampires were already close to senior-rank. In such a crowded place, many of them would die, without a doubt.

Harold stopped his steps, looking at his brothers and sisters helplessly screaming and running in panic. He made his decision within a second. He spat on the ground and commanded,

“Warriors from Mechanic Knight, stand out! We die for the God of Steam! It’s time for us to devote everything for our brothers and sisters!”

Damn it! They would rather die standing than die for nothing!

At this moment, he conquered his fear of death.

Holding the huge rifles in their hands, the warriors were also afraid. Despite that, some still stood out with great determination. They shot at their best, but only hit a lower-rank vampire, who roared in pain and rolled back and forth on the floor.

When Harold had no idea what to do, Augustus’s voice arrived,

“On our way out, we shall have no fear and no hesitation, no matter what is waiting for us in the front. Because we are blessed!”

“Hold your weapon, keep moving! We are blessed!”

It was the command!

Harold did not understand. If they kept fighting, there might still be hope, while they all would die if they followed the command. However, Augustus's severe eyes could not be disobeyed.

"All, keep moving!" Harold had to obey.

The dwarves did as asked, marching forward slowly in great fear.

To their great surprise, all of a sudden, the surrounding tombstones started shaking fiercely. The dead dwarves climbed out: Some had turned into bones, and some were half rotten.

At first, they thought that it was the vampires who were manipulating the bodies. However, the over two-thousand tombstones all started writhing, and the over two-thousand bodies stood up one by one, as the world of death had befallen.

Silently, the bodies rushed to the vampires in great numbers. And then —

Bang! Bang! They exploded.

Were they still protecting their people after death?

Were they still clinging to the hope of freedom?

The dwarves recalled that another name of the God of Steam was — the Lord of Life and Death.

Tears in his eyes, Harold looked at the dead dwarves exploding together with the vampires, and his fists tightened — He must complete the dream left by those heroes; They must free themselves!

For over ten thousand years, this was the solid belief shared by dwarves!

Harold lifted his arm and cried, "Steam Above! Keep moving!"

Through the cemetery, the dwarves left the underground cave, and

they saw a giant rock in front of them.

Following the instruction of the God of Steam, Augustus opened the gate of the underground palace. He walked in leading the troop and saw a mysterious gate in the middle of the hall, on which bright starlight glimmered.

“Behind the gate is the new world. The world of redemption.” Augustus pointed at the gate. “If you have made up your mind, go through it.”

At this moment, no one would hesitate anymore. Under Harold’s organization, the dwarves walked through the gate and disappeared. The space shook because of the teleport. However, none of the vampire princes were here on the Night Highland as they were all rushing towards the dimension for the Primordial Ancestor. As for the senior-rank vampires, they were not as sensitive. The only senior-rank vampire living nearby was Count Vlad who was still trying to get out of the trap in great fury.

When only members of the Mechanic Knight was left, Sanelson and the rest of the vampires finally got rid of the dead dwarves and arrived.

“What should we do?” the warriors exchanged a look with each other. Some of them were ready to cover the rest to make sure most of them could leave.

Harold put his hand on his chest and said, “don’t be afraid. Don’t stop.”

As soon as he finished the words, a silver shiny coin appeared above the gate, rolling upward.

As the coin rolled, distorted magnetic field and silver electric currents appeared in its surrounding. They twisted and wound around the coin, forming a giant, thick snake of electric currents.

Sanelson’s scarlet eyes opened wide out of great fear as he watched the lightning filled the hall.

The horrible power devoured the vampires swiftly. There was no

chance for them to run away.

Chapter 462: The Morning Star

Bricks of stone fell like rain drops. When the lightning disappeared and he regained his sight, Harold finally realized that the vampires were all gone and the hall itself was also on the edge of falling apart.

"It was just a... silver coin..." murmured one of the dwarves.

Harold quickly calmed down and scolded. "The coin was possessed of the power of God! The Almighty God of Steam is not only the God of Machinery, but also the Lord of Life and Death, the King of Lightnings, the Lord of Punishment!"

"Why a silver coin then?" asked another dwarf.

Harold wasn't good at explaining this kind of stuff. He squeezed the words out with great effort. "That shows the Almighty God of Steam is also the God of Wealth, the King of the kings, the God above all gods!"

Everything could be explained by the almightiness of God.

The dwarves nodded under the convincing words. All of them, including Harold, put their hands on their chests and bowed deep in front of the gate,

"Steam Above!"

They then walked in the gate in pairs. Within half an hour, they had all left the underground hall.

As soon as they left, the power supressing the space instantly disappeared, and the space started shaking fiercely. Pieces of starlight fell from above, and soon the entire gate disappeared together with the collapse of the underground palace.

.....

After quite a few days, Sanelson's "father", a vampire duke, arrived

at the ruins following the blood connection between Sanelson and him. He came to figure out why Sanelson had gone missing for days.

A space joint! The vampire duke was shocked.

Staring at the collapsed underground palace, he now cared no more about what happened to Sanelson. In great anger, he turned around and was ready to teach Vlad a good lesson — Even if he had fallen asleep to recover, Vlad still must be responsible for this.

An unreported space joint in his territory! The Church might find it and launch an attack at any time!

Another few days later, a deafening noise burst out in the direction of Count Vlad's castle. The vampire count's anger surged right into the air,

"I will kill that bastard who trapped me!"

However, Vlad had no idea who did this to him and had no clue to trace him, not even with Horoscope.

.....

Lighting up the torch, Augustus saw an abandoned city; there were thick chimneys, metal pipes, bolts, springs, and gears everywhere. The civilization of Steam was right in front of them. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

He immediately understood. Tears gushed out. He cried in great excitement and sorrow. "This is our homeland, where our ancestors worked and lived!"

Augustus knelt down onto the ground and kissed the cold land overgrown with weeds. "We're back! We're finally back!"

The dwarves all followed him, kneeling and kissing their land of origin. Bitterly they cried, shedding tears for what they had lost.

After Harold and the rest of the dwarves came and the gate

disappeared, Augustus took a deep breath and said to the over twenty thousand of dwarves, "this isn't our final destination. We shall go back to the ground, and start our new life! There shall be no more slavery, no more painful deaths, no more suffering!"

His eyes were shining with hope and determination. "Grab your torches and follow me! Don't hesitate. Don't be afraid. This is the revelation of the God of Steam!"

"Steam Above!" Answered aloud the dwarves together.

The torches were lifted. Following the command of the instructors, the dwarves marched forward in order, in units of families and villages, through the abandoned city of steam. The Mechanic Knight was divided into four, safeguarding in four directions.

The city was huge. Enveloping the light of the torches was the endless darkness. In the darkness, the only light came from the dim green shine emitted by noctilucent moss, but it wasn't a comfort for the dwarves at all. They were afraid of the darkness, and the green light seemed to be the blood-thirsty eyes of countless monsters.

What was in there? They didn't know.

Silence seized them, only the sound of their own steps could be heard. The journey seemed to be getting longer and longer, as if they could never leave this place.

When the dwarves started getting lost and panicking, Augustus's voice came again.

"Don't hesitate. Don't be afraid. Follow me!"

"Yes!" Answered the dwarves together, although not too confident.

Augustus raised the staff high,

"The God of Steam is with us! No difficulty, no danger, no suffering can conquer us!"

Hearing the name of the God of Steam, the dwarves became braver. Saying God's name silently in their mind, they were equipped with

the courage for scattering the darkness. Gradually, they walked faster and faster.

Bang, bang! The rifles shot together, throwing the monsters leaping from the darkness to the ground in blood and flesh.

They had the power of steam, thus, they were invincible!

"The Almighty God of Steam, the Lord of Life and Death, the King of Lightnings, the Lord of Punishment, the God of Wealth..."

"You're the God above all gods, the King of the Kings..."

The dwarves sang forth the names together. Their voice joined into this force driving away the creatures hiding in the darkness.

Finally, this huge troop walked out of the city through the tunnel and came to the caves connected like spider webs.

"This is the last test. Only true followers can walk out from the maze. Don't hesitate. Don't be afraid. Follow me!"

"Yes!" This time, their voice was much louder and full of confidence.

All the forks looked identical, and the dwarves were very afraid of getting lost. However, their leader Augustus had closed his eyes, walking following his heart.

Seeing what their leader was doing, the fire of hope lit up in the dwarves' hearts again.

They should have faith in the Almighty God of Steam, have faith in His chosen exarch. Here, eyes and ears should not be used to seek the path, but hearts and faith!

They dwarves walked on, panicking no more, confused no more.

After a long time, they saw a dim light in front of them and a broad forest in the far end.

They did it!

They were on the ground now!

Suddenly, Myrna pointed at the sky and said, "look!"

The far end of the sky was partially lit up, where a bright star was hanging. The star was quiet but twinkling, directing the path eternally.

"Morning star...?"

"Is dawn coming?"

Those dwarves were born on the Night Highland and they had never seen daylight. They had only heard about morning stars from the stories passing on through generations and knew that it represented the arrival of light.

"You're the Lord of Life and Death, the bright Morning Star. You connect night and day. You bring us new life!" said Augustus devoutly.

The morning star was replaced by the orange light in the east, and then, a fireball slowly rose above the horizon.

The dwarves had never seen anything like this. Now, they started to actually feel the arrival of their new life!

Augustus raised his arm and cheered aloud. "Our new life has commenced. We'll strive for the prosperity of Atlantis! The Atlantis on the ground!"

"Strive for the prosperity of Atlantis!" The more than twenty thousand dwarves responded at the same time, their loud voice disturbed the flocks of birds hiding in the forest.

At this time, a melody full of passion arrived from faraway.

The dwarves turned their head and, to their great surprise, they saw a fat man wearing a long black windbreak and a beret walking towards them, followed by a group of human. The melody came from the small box engraved with strange black patterns in his hand.

Before the dwarves reacted, Augustus told them, "he's the guide. I received the words of the God of Steam. He'll be leading us to our brand new life."

The dwarves were no more afraid. Belief had given them the power for conquering fear. They quietly stared at the fat man and his companies, who studied them like how they looked at buckets of ale and how the vampires look at blood.

"I am Arthur Adol, the one who will lead you to your new life, a life much, much happier than the previous one you had on the Night Highland." Arthur grinned broadly at the dwarves.

In his eyes, the troop of dwarves was the symbol of a large amount of money. With so many skilled dwarves, the mass production of the alchemical products could be realized.

Following Arthur, the dwarves walked all the way down to the station. On the platform, when they saw the long magic steam train, they burst out into tears again. They were convinced again that this place was their homeland, the paradise of steam.

The dwarves stared at the magic steam train out of great curiosity, wishing that they tear it down and check every part of it, until they got on the train.

"Why is the guide sent by the God of Steam a banker?" Myrna just learned the word 'bank'.

Harold said proudly, "I said it. The Almighty God of Steam is also the God of Wealth. It makes sense."

Then he said longingly, "I saw the small silver coin turn into a powerful bomb with powerful electric currents... I wonder if the Civilization of Steam picked the wrong side for studying huge warships and cannons. Maybe... maybe we should invent new cannons using the power of electricity..."

"Here you are, the new book from the Lord." Smiling, Augustus handed a book to Harold.

Harold picked it up and saw the name: Basic Electrical Engineering.

Later, Arthur walked to the last carriage of the train and sat down in front of a young man wearing a double-breasted suit. He said to the young man like an old friend but also respectfully, "Evans, I can't believe you can find this many skilled dwarves!"

Lucien Evans was probably the next grand arcanist. Arthur had to show respect.

Holding the teacup in his hand, Lucien said, "treat them well. Give them enough salary and freedom. After all, they left that place because of me. When they have acquired basic electrical engineering skills and knowledge, they'll be able to train more workers."

Because the vampire princes and the most powerful vampires on the Night Highland had left for the mysterious dimension, searching for the Primordial Ancestor, Lucien's rescue plan carried out rather smoothly. He achieved the guidance using the power for awakening the dead of the Immortal Throne magic robe and a new electromagnetic spell, Lucien's Electromagnetic Gun - Although this spell was not that powerful yet, when Lucien reached a higher level, its power would also grow.

"You have my words. I'll treat them well," said Arthur without hesitation. He did not ask a single word about the so-called God of Steam.

The magic steam train was approaching Rentato. In the early morning, the lights in Rentato were still on, as brilliant and bright as constellations in a sweet dream.

The dwarves were so surprised that they could not close their mouths. It was as if they had come back to Atlantis.

.....

"Evans, since most sorcerers in the school of Electromagnetics and Light-darkness — Sorry, I have to say this — dislike you quite much, for your safety, we are giving the public another excuse for holding this banquet rather than telling people that it is your award-winning party. I hope you understand," said Joaquin, the

president of the Moonsong League, a level-nine arcanist ND ninth-circle archmage, while smiling.

Since Brook just confirmed the change in momentum several days ago, which verified Lucien's light quantum hypothesis, no matter how reluctant Moonsong League was, they had to accept it.

Following Joaquin, Lucien grinned. "We can save the trouble. You could just give me the prize. I'm worried that my presence might be too much of a surprise to the guests."

"No, this is the tradition. We got to have a decent banquet when awarding you the medal." The president shook his head seriously.

Otherwise, the public would look down upon Moonsong League, accusing them of being too narrow-minded to properly recognize Lucien's great contribution.

Chapter 463: Lucien, the Devil King

The hall of the Allyn branch of Moonsong League was covered in a layer of cool and soft moonlight.

"Jurisian, what's the banquet for?" A short young man looked around in confusion, "Why are those elementalists here today?"

It looked like he was only in his seventeen or eighteen, but his voice was rather mature.

The man he was talking to had black hair and dark brown eyes. With a gentle smile on his featured face, the man said, "no idea. The president informed me to come, so here I am. I'm not gonna stay here for long though, a banquet like this is always boring."

Jurisian was wearing the five-star arcana badge and the five-circle magic badge. Thanks to the introduction of the Influence Factor, he had reached the next arcana level in these years. Also, because of his constant practice in fighting skills, his magic level had also advanced. Now, he was heading for the senior-rank.

"Jurisian, I'd rather it had been you who put forward the light quantum hypothesis." Another sorcerer from the school of Electromagnetics joined their conversation and moaned to Jurisian. "Why you stopped digging in after discovering the photoelectric effect?"

Jurisian swirled the golden liquor in his glass. The smile on his face remained unchanged. "How do you know I never dug into it, Pono, Feya? But putting forward the hypothesis not only relies on conducting multiple experiments, but more importantly, an open mind and brilliant imagination unconstricted by the past theories. I never paid enough attention to the paper written by Lucien on energy's discontinuity, so how could I get the key premise for raising the hypothesis?"

Pono was the short man who was talking to Jurisian earlier. He was more talented in magic than in arcana and was one of the sorcerers in Moonsong League who were most likely to reach the senior-rank.

Hearing Lucien's name, Pono said in resentment, "every time I think of that person, I want to destroy the place with lightning balls! My teacher's cognitive world was broken and solidified because of his hypothesis, and my friend... his blood was all over my face..."

"If I see him outside of Allyn, I'll put him in trouble!" Pono claimed.

"Put him in trouble? How?" Feya asked sharply, "as a fifth-circle sorcerer? Will all those awards, he could counter a seventh-circle sorcerer, not to mention New Alchemy. Lucien Evans is the future grand arcanist. Stop dreaming."

She did not want to be this sharp. Her sarcasm came from the feeling of helplessness, for the sorcerer Polo just mentioned whose head exploded was also her friend.

"I know," said Pono remorsefully, "but if I don't think in this way, I'd go nuts. At least, when I see Lucien Evans, I do have the courage to spit in his face."

"That's very impressive. I think I do, too." The corner of Feya's eyes went red.

Jurisian was still wearing the same indistinguishable smile on his face, listening to their conversation quietly. The conversations of the other sorcerers could also be heard.

"If I see Lucien Evans in person, I'll go and ask him directly how to explain the diffraction and interference of light using his hypothesis."

"There will be one day when his head will explode because of a similarly bold hypothesis based on the wave theory!"

"I don't care if he is a grand arcanist in the school of Element and Alchemy or not. Lucien Evans will never understand Light-darkness using his particles. The light quantum hypothesis is very likely simply a part of a correct wave theory. It's not the end yet! We still have the classic theory in electromagnetism and the experiment image!"

Jurisian slightly rose his eyebrow. In his eyes, those high-rank

sorcerers were like some little puppies whining after losing a game.

In such a situation, most sorcerers present were actually talking about Lucien. This was enough to show how much they hated Lucien Evans and his hypothesis. At the same time, on the other side of the hall, the elementalists and alchemists were also having a heated discussion over New Alchemy, although it was no longer a new topic among them. In their eyes, Lucien was going to be the future grand arcanist, the legendary, the new leader of the entire Congress.

Suddenly, Pono's eyes opened big. He pointed at the stage in the front of the hall,

"There!"

Jurisian looked over and saw that Joaquin walked on the stage together with a cultured young man.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Joaquin, "this is Mr. Lucien Evans."

Lucien Evans? Pono recalled the horrible scene of his friend's death as soon as he saw the young man on the stage. Until today, he could still smell the blood and feel the squishy brain tissues on his face. The sight of the headless body collapsing to the ground came back to him.

He had this great fury burning inside his heart, but fear seemed to be more. He could not utter the feeling, as if staring at this young man one more second would blow his head up.

The fine glass dropped onto the floor from Pono's hand with a crispy sound. The scarlet liquid stained the carpet, just like the uncleaned floor from then.

More glasses dropped. Staring at the color of the wine, Feya couldn't hold back her nausea anymore. The scene reminded her of that day, the day of blood.

Unable to control their anger, many sorcerers directly squeezed the glass in their hand into pieces. Wine splattered over them,

Their faces became distorted because of the hatred but also fear.

As the sound of glass breaking died away, silence dominated the entire space. Even the sound of breathing had disappeared.

"Ladies and..." Lucien took a step forward and bowed politely.

Lucien did not even finish his starting words. As he took a step forward, the guests backed away subconsciously. Some were shaking their heads as if they were trying to get Lucien's words out of their brains, or their heads would also explode. Among them, there were a few senior-rank sorcerers from Moonsong League who Lucien also knew, yet they were the same afraid as if Lucien would utter some extremely subversive theories at any time.

Silence resumed.

Lucien wondered if his name had joined one of the spooky campfire stories or nasty stories to scare young kids. Luckily, there was no kid here.

Joaquin was a bit pissed with how these sorcerers from Moonsong League responded to Lucien's arrival — They had lost their decency!

Joaquin coughed a bit, and the solidified atmosphere started to break, yet no one dared to challenge Lucien in the face, although many of them were bragging about this minutes ago. They were afraid of Lucien; this fear was a result of many broken skulls, fresh blood, and brains.

"We're gathering here today for awarding Mr. Lucien Evans with the no. 21 Silver Moon Medal, to recognize his great contribution to the school of Light-darkness and the school of Electromagnetism, for raising the Light Quantum Hypothesis," Joaquin said a bit sorrowfully — The award was first established in memory of the birth of the wave theory and the classic electromagnetic theory, but now, the award would go to the hypothesis which overthrew them.

Jurisian examined Lucien calmly. It had been three years since the hypothesis first came out and he had already accepted it. As a young and less conservative arcanist of the new generation, he was

not saddened by the fact. However, Joaquin's words seemed a bit sarcastic to him — Lucien Evans's great contribution? Contributing headless bodies and broken cognitive worlds?

The guests present finally realized the reason for being here today. It seems that without doubt, His Excellency Mr. Brook had found the evidence to prove the hypothesis.

"I always believed that It's rather stupid to be obsessed with the question 'particles or waves'." Lucien, the devil king in the audience's eyes, started speaking again in the aggressive air of confidence before taking over the Medal. "Is it really hard to accept the truth, to admit that the experiment results indeed show duality? We should see this from a broader and higher perspective. The micro-world goes beyond our imagination, thus we need to recourse to only the experiment results and math equations."

No one dared to utter a word, however, it did not mean that they agreed with Lucien.

Duality? Both particles and waves? How could that happen?

Lucien glanced at the expression of the audience and didn't go any further. It was better to just give them some hints. Smiling, he continued. "This's my first time winning the Silver Moon Medal, and I am totally confident that this is not the last time. In this brand new realm, honor is only saved for those who are open-minded and unbiased."

Then, Lucien took over the medal and wore it on his left chest, next to his Ice & Snow Medal.

He had won the highest honor of five different fields. Including Lucien Evans, only two accomplished this achievement in the Congress. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

"The Silver Moon Medal, Light Quantum, level-seven perfect-rank magic item.

"Electric currents can paralyze the body and destroy the soul. The

sorcerer wearing this medal could gain greater power in paralyzing his or her enemy when striking the target with lightning. Meanwhile, the power of the spells in the school of Electromagnetism and Light-darkness can be empowered to the seventh-circle.

"Great magnetic force will form a halo and encircle things within, which works perfectly when the targets are metal golems or knights wearing non-magnetic-proof armor — Seventh-circle Electromagnetic spell, Magnetic Halo. Cast three times a day.

"The giant lightning shall destroy everything — Seventh-circle Electromagnetic spell, Thunder Rage. Cast three times a day.

"Thanks to Lucien Evans for putting forward the Light Quantum Hypothesis, allowing us to see light from another perspective.

"We have figured out what lightning is, but not yet what light is.

"From Edwyn Brook"

...

Rentato, Hexagram Station.

The black-haired man who was always chewing something in his mouth walked casually on the platform. He looked ordinary, like a random passing-by traveler.

Night watcher rank no. 13, level-eight radiant knight — "Flesh Manipulation" Ramiro.

Chapter 464: New World

At the parcel collection point of Hexagram Station, Rentato.

A fine-featured lass smiled politely. "Hello, how may I be of service?"

"I have a luggage bag that needs to be stored here until my return from Allyn," Ramiro replied with a minty, relaxed smile.

The minty smell came from a specialty from the Kingdom of Brianne known as "Mint Fragrance", which was a kind of tobacco, though it was not to be smoked but rather chewed on after a secret drying process and provided a mind-refreshing cigarette-like intoxicating effect.

The lass asked with a smile, "how many days would that be? Are you a sorcerer?" Despite being an average female in Rentato, she managed to find a leisure job with decent pay all thanks to "Arcana Voice", which made her got rid of her bias against sorcerers and dared to apply for the job. She successfully stood out from the few applicants and secured the job. As a result, she became very fond of sorcerers.

"I'm just an ordinary sorcerer. Let's make it three days. Nah, can I pay for seven days upfront and make adjustments later?" Ramiro asked calmly. It didn't look like he was pressed for time in any way.

The lass replied, "no problem, please pass me the baggage for inspection."

After listening to "Arcana Voice" and working at Hexagram Station, she realized that sorcerers weren't as wealthy as she had imagined. There were many who, in the pursuit of power and arcana research, were left with barely enough to live by.

Like any normal traveler, Ramiro handed over the black luggage bag in his hand.

The female worker did not cut any corners. Abiding by the training

protocols, she placed the luggage inside a magic circle within a piece of large alchemy equipment. Then she pressed the switch and turned it on.

The company "Gift from Elements" had developed this simplified alchemical item for exactly this kind of purpose. They could be powered by electricity, thus allowing ordinary people to use them. As a result, it had been widely implemented at locations including the Magic Steam Train Company, Nekso Palace, the villas and orchards of nobles, music halls, opera theatres, and the town hall.

The inspection had confirmed that there weren't any cursed or dangerous items in the luggage. It was only after this confirmation that the lass opened the luggage to screen the items with her naked eyes. She found that the majority of the items were normal clothes, with a small portion being tobacco from Brianne. There was also a light-dark colored piece of meat wrapped in gray cloth.

"Specialty steak?" she asked out of curiosity.

Ramiro's mouth twitched. "Ya"

"A silver a day, for a total of seven." The lass closed the luggage and attached an identification tag on it. She then took it to the warehouse behind and placed it on the corresponding shelf.

After she returned, Ramiro took out seven shiny silver pieces. He let the pieces fall through his fingers one after another onto the counter while listening to the crisp sounds with slanted eyes.

"This is your receipt, please keep it with you for the final tally." The female worker respectfully passed Ramiro a receipt that had been stamped with a special magical ink paste. Only official magicians — who wouldn't do it for such a little money — could forge the ink paste.

Ramiro picked up the receipt. Still chewing on the tobacco, he nodded. "Thank you."

Then, with hands tucked into the pockets of his tuxedo, he headed off towards the Magic Steam Train station. When he came near to a

silvery-black trash bin, he pulled out his right hand and threw a carbonated piece of paper into the bin.

The black paper fell slowly, breaking into a countless number of butterflies at the slightest touch of wind. Not a trace remained.

Afterward, Ramiro went inside a restroom. He surveyed the surroundings carefully while wearing a carefree expression. After confirming that there was no one else around, he faced the mirror and pinched his face. His entire body suddenly wriggled erratically like a slime.

Seconds later, he had transformed into a beautiful young lady with a voluptuous figure. His tuxedo has also transformed into a lilac-tiered dress. The collar and cuffs had transformed into ruffles.

Looking into the enchanting deep blue eyes in the mirror, Ramiro smiled at "her". "Long time no see, Avelina. Sometimes I find that being a girl is much more interesting than being a man."

Naturally, "Avelina" didn't respond.

After tidying up her clothes and donning a broad-brim hat with a beautiful long ribbon which she had seemingly conjured from thin air, Ramiro left the restroom elegantly and boarded the magic steam train that had just arrived.

"Avelina, so you've returned from Brianne?" A young man stood up from his seat in joyous surprise.

Ramiro smiled sweetly. "Yes, the magic development in Allyn is faster than I had anticipated. If I were to remain in Brianne, I would not be able to keep up with the times. So I'm back."

"That's marvelous. Where is your boyfriend Lavrov?" The young man eagerly invited "Avelina" to sit down.

Ramiro's expression turned sorrowful. "We've broken up."

"What?" The young man fought to suppress his happiness. Feigning sadness, he consoled her. "Cheer up, the best is yet to come."

Ramiro watched "with grief" as the platform faded from view. Listening to the sound of the train horn and the clickety-clack of the wheels against the track, Ramiro thought angrily.

"Who on earth was that?"

Avelina had not spoken of this man after she had been controlled...

The "silent melancholy" that she exuded intoxicated the young man, rendering him speechless. Time passed swiftly. The magic steam train gradually ascended towards Allyn.

When they passed through the mythal of Allyn, Ramiro narrowed his eyes. He could feel the power of the mythal brushing past his body.

As expected, though Allyn appeared to be as open a city like any other ordinary city, the security checks that were hidden from view were extraordinarily stringent. Luckily, his "Flesh Manipulation" ability allowed him to be passed off as the real 'Avelina'.

The magic steam train stopped at the station. Ramiro saw the brilliant starlight released by the Congress' Headquarter Magic Tower from a distance, with an intensity rivaling that of the red sun in the sky.

"What's happening?" Ramiro had recognized what it was, but he asked regardless.

The young man examined carefully and replied, "it seems to be the Portal to Alternate Realm. Could it be that the grand arcanists have returned from their investigation of the mysterious realm?"

"We'll find out if we take a closer look," Ramiro replied smiling.

This appeared to be an opportunity, yet it seemed to be too much of a coincidence.

However, Ramiro was not about to abandon such an opportunity. As the night watcher ranked number 13th, his powers and abilities overwhelmed many strong level-nines. Decisiveness and willingness to take the initiative are what enabled him to become who he was

— Those who were accustomed to plotting and scheming would never anticipate him to barge in like this.

"Merely two point seven seconds..." Ramiro whispered to himself. This was the amount of time that he had before the mythal would react, given that Allyn Mythal was not on its full power yet. He wasn't exactly confident that he could kill Lucien Evans in such a small time window either and could only play it by ear.

.....

On the 32nd floor in the Headquarter Magic Tower of the Congress, within the grand hall stood an illusory door that was five-meters tall and three-meters wide.

The door was built on a complex magic circle that was made up of countless gems and rare materials. Rays of brilliant starlight shone outwards from the top, and many sorcerers had gathered around it.

"Sir, why are so many senior-rank sorcerers and archmages assembled?" Lucien had received no notice beforehand and arrived only after he detected the anomaly.

Fernando, who wore his scarlet magic robe as always, said solemnly, "the races of this world are normal, but its environment is special. Every corner is filled with a strange sensation, one that suppresses our spiritual power greatly. Even Douglas' senses can only extend to a radius of 300 meters. This world is separated into countless little pieces by many spatial barriers that are incompletely solidified. Normal people are hardly affected by it, to them, the world is still whole. However, for us legendary sorcerers, it means that flight is almost impossible, for it's too easy to collide into one of such barriers."

"Under such circumstances, it would be very difficult to locate Alterna and the mysterious existence, as they can automatically shield themselves from many magical prophecies ineffective..." Lucien had a rough idea of why so many senior-rank sorcerers and archmages have gathered here. Strength lay in numbers in times like this.

Fernando nodded in agreement and continued. 'We had a fight with the Church. The Pope was involved, and it caused us to fall leeward. However, the numbers that they could spare to send after us were not enough to surround and kill us. Then, after discovering the peculiarities of this alternate space, we reached a tacit agreement to stop the fighting. The highest priority now was to explore the new world and find Alterna's whereabouts. Fighting directly would give advantage to other parties.'

"A new world ..." Lucien wondered if it meant that Natasha would lead the Duchy of Violet's radiant knights to there as well.

Fernando noticed that Lucien wasn't paying attention. He smiled and said, "according to preliminary calculations, this alternate space is half as big as the main world, so it can be considered as a new world. If anyone can claim ownership of it, they would gain vast amounts of resources."

"So that's how it is, then why weren't the middle-rank sorcerers also summoned? The number of senior-rank magicians and archmages are quite small in comparison," asked Lucien puzzledly.

Fernando shook his head. "That's because a special kind of powerful beings exists in this world. Their abilities are beyond that of high-rank sorcerers. Sending middle-rank sorcerers in would only result in a large scale of loss."

"A special kind of powerful beings?" Lucien had never heard Fernando speak of powerful beings in such a way.

Fernando's expression turned solemn. "False gods, those that came into existence in the early phases of the War of Dawn. They are a variety of monsters with powerful abilities. However, due to some strange reasons, they could bestow powers to their followers, much like demons and devils. Their minds are in a state of crazed stubbornness. Currently, one has been captured and is being researched on."

"Captured one..." Lucien suddenly had the impression that the False Gods were pitiful animals being hunted.

Fernando noticed that the senior-rank magicians and archmages were just about to finish entering the Portal to the Alternate Realm. He threw a stare at Lucien and warned. "Abandon any ideas that you might have. Just stay in Allyn and improve your magic. Until your power matches your Cleansing List ranking, you better not wander around. Don't think about participating in this mysterious space matter either."

But the power matching Lucien's Cleansing List ranking should be that of a legendary... Lucien rubbed his chin in frustration.

Fernando didn't speak another word, gesturing Thompson to enter the Portal to the Alternate Realm with him together.

With his entrance, the batch of reinforcements finished their transfer. Around the portal, only several friends and apprentices remained — This expedition was much more dangerous than the previous ones; It could very well be their last farewell. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Amidst the crowd, Ramiro watched the starlight dissipate and began calculating. The Portal to the Alternate Realm would soon regress back to its semi-charged state.

With the Portal to the Alternate Realm's scattering energy, the Allyn Magic Tower and its surrounding mythal's reaction time was seven seconds.

To avoid alerting Lucien, he only cast a fleeting glance at Lucien at the start and ignored him afterward.

"Seven seconds..."

The opportunity was prime. Let's take action now!

Chapter 465: Behind the Scenes

Chapter 465: Behind the Scenes

Seven seconds.

Ramiro's face was filled with excitement and happiness. Her starry eyes sparkling, she walked quickly towards Lucien. Her expression, gaze, and gestures were screaming to others the fact that she adored Lucien. Meeting her idol at the first opportunity in Allyn, she could suppress her urge no longer.

It was normal that Lucien, whether as a musician or an arcanist, received such adoration from the younger generation of sorcerers. The other surrounding sorcerers only muttered about how it was such a waste of a beauty — According to street gossip, Lucien was a crazy researcher who practiced strict abstinence, just like President Douglas. The swarm of beauties surrounding them was left absolutely untouched. If it had been Oliver, it would have been the complete opposite result.

“Really...” The young magician who had brought in “Avelina” watched enviously. If he had even a fraction of Lucien's talents, Avelina would have fallen for him long ago.

Six seconds, Five seconds.

The ecstatic fan closed in on her idol. With slightly parted lips, she seemed to be considering how to start a conversation.

Lucien had also noticed that a young, beautiful young lady was heading towards him. He extended a hand and signaled her to stop. After receiving knowledge that his rank on the Cleansing List had risen to number 19, Lucien had kept a distance with everyone except his acquaintances.

It was caution that allowed him to still be alive. If she had anything to say, she could speak from where she stood. Only at this distance could his Contact Spell be activated undisturbed.

It seemed that Ramiro didn't understand Lucien's gesture and continued forward.

"Her" eyes were mystified; "her" cheeks were rosy. Most men would be harboring naughty thoughts by now.

Just a little bit closer, just a bit closer!

Four seconds.

Suddenly he saw Lucien raised his right hand, gripping the Sun Staff inlaid with a huge sunstone.

"What the f**k, he's this cold even towards such a beautiful admirer? Not even the slightest shred of hesitation?" Grumbled Ramiro to himself in his mind. There was no doubt that if she took even a step further, Lucien would actually activate the magic.

The spell Thanos' Maze could not only trap enemies but also restore composure in excited "fans". Lucien had no trouble selecting the magic spell to use.

If the one charging at him was an enemy, the element of surprise would have been lost after being trapped in Thanos' Maze. Within the walls of the Allyn Magic tower, it would leave the enemy entirely at his mercy. Even if Prince Dracula was here in person, there was no guarantee that he could leave alive. Grand arcanist in charge, along with the top-class mythal, the legendary-rank magic tower, and quick support from other top legends — Now that God's Arrival was unavailable, even the pope would be wary of such a combination.

If it really was an over-eager fan, she would be left unharmed after Thanos' Maze expired — the shattered confidence in her intelligence ignored. A simple apology would resolve the matter easily.

A brief urge to swear flashed across Ramiro's mind. After estimating the distance, he suddenly bolted across the space between them like a phantom.

Had he been just a bit closer, Ramiro could guarantee to land a

magical blow on Lucien before the latter could react. That would drain his Contact Spell and set the stage for the assassination. However, now that the situation was already like this, and that it was very impossible that there would be another opportunity as good as this, he had to ignore the distance.

To a level-eight radiant knight, this distance was practically nothing. Also, Ramiro believed that his magic resistance could cancel out most of Lucien's magic — at this range, there was only enough time for one spell!

“So it's indeed an assassin.” With a mere thought of Lucien, the Sunstone on the Sun Staff shone brightly. If they were not immune to maze type spells, even legends could fall prey to Thanos' Maze. Though of course, considering the legends' magic resistance, it would depend on who was more blessed by Lady Luck — the chance of successfully trapping one is about once in twenty to thirty attempts.

Ramiro's gaze tightened, his acute instincts warned him of great danger. Thus, he abandoned the initial idea of relying on his magic resistance against Lucien's magic. He narrowed his eyes, and another idea hatched.

Three seconds

Boom, a huge explosion sound spread from within Ramiro's body. A horrifying shockwave rushed towards Lucien.

A rainbow of bright, clear protective shields lit up one after another. The surrounding sorcerers had unconsciously used their most adept protective magic.

Simultaneously, they watched in horror as the beautiful young lady exploded into countless pieces in the blink of an eye. Finger, arm, feet, heart, intestines, and brain rained down all across the floor.

What had happened? As most high-rank sorcerers and archmages had just left through the Portal to the Alternate Realm, none present knew how to cast ninth-circle spells. Even if they could react in time, they could not pause the time.

With Ramiro's self explosion, Thanos' Maze suddenly lost its target and stopped. Lucien couldn't tend to anything else other than quickly altering the spell model within his soul. Suddenly a faint rippling light surrounded him as if he suddenly sank to the bottom of a lake, surrounded by water.

As soon as the intense shockwave came into contact with the "water waves", semi-transparent whirlpools sprouted one after another, dissipating the force.

Sixth-circle magic, "Energy Absorption Field."

"Self-explosion?"

Before Lucien could take a breather, he suddenly saw the body parts on the floor come to life and catapult towards him with a spring. The scene was strangely terrifying.

Other than the Portal to Alternate Realm behind him, the body parts blocked every path of escape.

Two seconds.

Since they were not energy, the body parts passed through the absorption field with ease. Lucien was about to be hit.

If they were not energy, they must be matter!

Lucien was suddenly surrounded by huge whirlpools. Red, yellow, gold, silver... countless light spots gathered and spun. All body parts that attempted to pass through the whirlpools were decomposed into basic elements of charred coal, of gas, of iron scraps. All had returned to their original state.

Element Whirlpool!

Blood on the ground congregated and twisted into a humanoid shape. After his two failed attacks, Ramiro understood that his mission was going to end with failure. Now only one second remained before Allyn Magic tower and the grand arcanist on guard would react.

His gaze steeled. The blood began to boil, and suddenly, erupted with rays blinding as the Sun. The terrifying explosion headed for the Energy Absorbing Force Field like a tsunami.

This was the true self-explosion of a level-eight radiant knight. A power that could erase a mountain top was heading straight for Lucien.

From the beginning, Ramiro had not planned any time for escape, for it was unnecessary!

That's right, one who would self-explode into nothing would have no need to escape.

At the same time, the body parts within the Energy Absorbing Force Field no longer tried to pass through the whirlpools but exploded.

Attacking from both sides of the force field was the true power of a level-eight radiant knight's self explosion. Energy Absorption Field was torn into pieces, like a piece of paper in a storm.

Even if this couldn't kill Lucien, Lucien will not end well!

Energy Absorption Field shattered. Element Whirlpool shattered. But Lucien has yet to recover from the cooldown between castings.

In this time of crisis, Contact Spell was activated.

Short Range Blink and Energy Harm Protection were activated in an instant, and Lucien vanished.

However, Short Range Blink was not teleportation. The huge and terrifying surrounding energy could tear Lucien into mincemeat within the briefest of moments. There was only one direction left to go: behind.

After the blink, Lucien should have appeared across the hall, where he would only be affected by residues of the shockwave. However, unfortunately, behind him was the Portal to the Alternate Realm. So he blinked into the Portal, right before it regressed completely to the semi-activated state.

Starlight rippled like water. The shockwave immediately impacted on the door afterward, inducing violent vibrations. Many tiny cracks to appear on the Portal.

One second.

Allyn Magic Tower was activated, and the elegant, pretty Hathaway appeared above the Portal to the Alternate Realm. She pointed a finger, and the terrifying explosion disappeared immediately, as though they had never appeared in the first place.

Not a drop of blood nor a shred of flesh could be found on the floor of the hall. The power of the self-explosion had erased all traces. Only the cracks on the Portal remained as evidence of what had just happened.

Expressionlessly, Hathaway waved and activated the Portal to the Alternate Realm. Then, she stepped in to confirm the safety of Lucien.

However, the Congress of Magic at the other side of the Portal did not see Lucien arrive. It seemed that the explosion had interfered with the teleportation, and as a result, Lucien had been transported to an unknown location.

The only thing that could be sure that Lucien was indeed in this new world, for the main space joint did not change.

.....

The Hexagram Station, Rentato.

At the warehouse that stored the deposited luggage, a black suitcase suddenly started shaking. It opened with a bang, and a pale hand stretched out from it, a hand that appeared to have been severed.

The hand was enveloped by a piece of gray cloth. Slowly, limbs, body, the other hand and legs, as well as an ordinary-looking head grew from it.

The black-haired young man coughed violently, sounding rather creepy and scary in the silent warehouse.

“Lucien must have been forced into the New World. Now let’s see who he’ll run into first, legendary sorcerers from the Congress of Magic or our Grand Cardinals,” Ramiro murmured weakly to himself.

This kind of full-on self-explosion came at a great cost to himself as well. His power would drop one-level lower in the short term. Even with treatment of the Holy Water and divine spells, it would still take him at least a month to recover.

Putting on clothes taken from the suitcase, Ramiro shook his head. This operation was too reckless and dangerous after all. He was almost caught by Hathaway.

Even someone who was used to immediate action like him still found this operation too bold in hindsight.

After he finished dressing, he took the suitcase and left the warehouse, heading towards the Radiance Church.

After he left, an ominous wind suddenly blew inside the silent warehouse. A creepy, creaky, barely audible voice said, “obtain Maskelyne’s Protective Charm... I’d like to see if he would have some interesting interactions with the mysterious existence...”

.....

Ramiro received his orders promptly upon returning to the Radiance Church.

“By the Pope’s decree: The upper third of high-rank clergies, the top 200 night watchers, half of the radiant or higher-level knights of each country are to enter the New World.”

Chapter 466: Secret Praying Congress

Thick dark clouds blocked out the sky. The streets were enveloped in darkness by dusk. Many were hurrying home. Regardless of the time or era, save for a few individuals, being drenched in rain was not considered a pleasant experience. It was especially the case in parts where medical treatments were absent or lacking, for catching a cold could often spell death.

The passersby were all wearing linen clothes of a similar gray color, absent in variation of color or styles. Only the occasional patrol soldiers stood out from the crowd. The bronze breast and shin plates together with the iron-black swords and spears equipped them with an air of toughness.

With his entire body wrapped in a linen robe, Lucien tailed behind a middle-aged man whose pace altered frequently. The man weaved between alleyways and main roads, just like every other ordinary passerby.

The sky grew darker, and winds began howling. A storm would come at any moment. The patrolling soldiers had no choice but to speed up their march towards the camp within the city walls.

Stopping in front of a stone two-story building, the middle-aged man surveyed his surroundings cautiously. Only after confirming that no one was paying attention in his direction did he knock gently on the walnut wood door with a peculiar rhythm: first twice on the center of the door, followed by thrice on the left near where the door would pivot, and finished with once on the lock. Each part produced a different sound.

After a ten-second silence, a hole suddenly appeared on the door, and a light-brown eye peered from it.

The middle-aged man took a step back, making sure that the gray rose on the corner of his shirt was clearly visible to the eye.

The image was so unobvious that unless one had known about it beforehand, he would never be able to spot it.

Lucien also adjusted his posture such that his "gray rose" stood out.

The brown eye blinked and vanished behind the door. Then, the walnut door opened slowly, and a midget-like hunchbacked man said in a low voice, "Respected initiators, 'Crown' is waiting for you."

The middle-aged man took the lead and entered the room swiftly, his gaze signaling Lucien to follow.

Lucien was not as agile and alert as the middle-aged man. He pushed the doors open with a smile and entered the room leisurely as if it was a normal visit to an ordinary friend.

The middle-aged man nodded his head ever so slightly after witnessing Lucien's performance.

After the night watcher assassin forced Lucien into the Portal, the teleportation was disrupted due to the self-explosion attack on the gate, and Lucien was thrown into this baffling city "Politown". Furthermore, as Lucien had separated from the protection of the Portal during the final stage of the teleportation, he was affected seriously by space turbulence. Not only was his body severely hurt, but his spirit was now also very weak. He was only at the level of ordinary knights and middle-rank sorcerers. His equipment had also taken damage during the space storm, and required repair before they could be used again.

However, Lucien was rather lucky: He had neither run into any high-ranking godhood personnel and the Grand Cardinal of the Church nor into false gods or monsters. Instead, He had been taken in by a kind-hearted old man named Norton. After two months of recovery, his magic power and knight standard had recovered.

The only problem remained was that the magic items that he had equipped at the time required special materials to repair. Of course, the legendary Sun's Corona and the ninth-level Sun Staff were protected by their tier-corresponding magic and were undamaged.

Frost Freeze, Pale Justice, Transformation Mask, and the other items in the storage bag were also undamaged. Even Norton only

saw the transformed ordinary-human appearance of Lucien.

In the past two months, Lucien had not run into any sorcerer or the Saint Truth personnel, neither had he managed to obtain any relevant information. It appeared that they were far from the city, far enough that even rumors about the incident were nonexistent. If he had not felt the strange, omnipresent sensation suppressing spiritual power that Fernando mentioned about, Lucien would suspect that he had entered a different alternate dimension.

According to the old man Norton, Lucien came to know that Politown was situated at the shores of ocean Erdo, and was the heart of the Erdo peninsula's politics and economy.

In the beginning, the indigenous Barril people ruled over this land. They built the Barril empire and worshipped the "the Lord of Fire and Destruction" Avando. However, a hundred years ago, the massive Angornorma Empire attacked from across the sea and conquered the land. Avando was also defeated and exiled by "The Lord of War" Antanas, who was worshipped by the Empire.

Seeking to crumble the foundation of faith of the Barril people, Angornorma's Servants of God spread the word that Avando had been killed.

The Erdo Governor-Generals appointed by the Angornorma Empire had always ruled with cruelty and treated the Barrils as slaves. As such, the island was rife with war. Rebels who claimed that they were blessed by Avando and those who started worshipping other gods waged war frequently. However, due to the strength of the Angornorma empire, coupled with their horrifying "God", the uprisings were quelled time and again.

This should have mattered little to Lucien as he was, with great caution not to reveal himself, preparing to gather information about the surrounding geography and kingdoms in hope of finding traces about the Congress of Magic. After all, sufficient preparation would guarantee a safe journey — The strange sensation that suppressed spiritual power suppressed Electromagnetism Message as well, and Lucien estimated that effective communication could only be established within a range of ten kilometers.

Thus, Lucien would not dare to venture out without precise information. Who knows if he would run straight into the Saint Truth personnel or lands ruled by the vampires. The Transformation Mask could fool your average Joe, but definitely not the Grand Cardinal personnel, not to mention the pope and Prince Dracula.

However, Norton, who was in the last phase of his life, seemed to have felt that Lucien performance in the past two months had steamrolled the youngsters and children that he had taken in. He was also convinced that Lucien was undoubtedly a faithful Barril by Lucien's mastery over the Barril tongue — The Angornorma empire had gone to great lengths to popularize their tongue, so unless taught since a young age and coupled with a longing for Barril's independence, no young man would be able to speak the Barril tongue with such fluency. As such, he decided to pass on his secret identity to Lucien before his death.

The identity was that of a high ranking member of the "Secret Praying Congress", the seventh apostle of the incarnation of the "Lord of Fire and Destruction".

Lucien was well aware that his mastery of the Barril tongue was entirely the credit of the magic spell Mastery of Languages. However, considering that information would be much easier to come by in an organization, he agreed. Due to the constant rebellions, Politown was under close surveillance of both the "Erdo Governor-General" and the "Lord of War Temple". Under such conditions, trying to fool with others' memories was unlikely to work well. Therefore, infiltrating into Angornorma's high ranking officers to find information could only be attempted once, as he would be at risk of being exposed if the matter drags on for more than a day. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Honestly, if it hadn't been for Norton's protection, Lucien would have faced many identity checks already. As for the Erdo Governor-General, rumors had it that he was a hybrid child of god and human, and was capable of using the "Strength of God" like the chief priest of the God of War Temple. It was equivalent to having two ordinary two level-nine red robes stationed there.

There were no crazy sorcerers nor bloodline knights in this world. However, the false gods often indulged in promiscuity and produced many offspring. These offspring were also equipped with qualities similar to that of bloodline knights.

Ordinary humans could only promote by becoming Servants of God and rise along the ranks of the priests. The army was only capable of dealing with ordinary folk and was helpless in the face of the divine-blood "heroes". Luckily, the divine-blooded were few in numbers, and the army was still useful in suppressing uprisings if things don't get too out of hand.

Following the fifth apostle "Anheuse", they passed through the great hall and arrived behind the building. As Anheuse opened a secret passage that revealed a staircase leading up, Lucien looked on detachedly as he pondered if he should find a chance and research on this incarnation of "The Lord of Fire and Destruction". It was the first time that he encountered the incarnation of a False God, and it would be a prime opportunity to obtain first-hand information. This was also one of the main reasons why he decided to join this "Secret Praying Congress".

The staircase looked like it would lead them straight to the ceiling. However, Anheuse stopped abruptly when they were halfway up and opened yet another hidden door. The staircase that appeared this time led downwards.

The two proceeded in silence for a substantial amount of time before finally arriving in front of a bronze door. The door was covered in all kinds of strange flame patterns.

His hand placed on one of the flame patterns, Anheuse's entire body radiated a red light. Then he pushed open the bronze door forcefully.

Beyond the door was a hall filled with a row of lit braziers. It was rather bare save for the stone pillars and a round table at its center.

There were 13 chairs around the table, one of which was gold and embedded with rubies. No one had occupied it yet. At both sides of the gold chair were 6 silver chairs, which were also decorated with

similar flame patterns.

Five out of the twelve silver chairs had been occupied. An ashen-haired old man with a full beard looked at Lucien and said, "According to Norton's recommendation before he passed away, the great God of Flame and Destruction had prophesized that you, Leviathan, would be the seventh apostle."

Leviathan was Lucien's alias.

"However, you have not yet demonstrated any power nor made any sacrifice for the god. In the coming year, we will examine you. Only after passing the tests will you be granted the 'Seed of Spirit' and receive extraordinary power."

"Understood." Lucien was immediately curious about this "Seed of Spirit". Could this be the key to deciphering the secrets of the divine spells? Should he capture the apostles or the "Lord of Fire and Destruction" for research?

After the old man finished his piece, he glanced at Lucien. "Have a seat. We will carry out the Flame Baptism for you in a while. As for now, we have more urgent matters to tend to."

"What matters?" Anheuse had thought that they had gathered for the sole purpose of carrying out the Flame Baptism for the seventh apostle.

"It's about our path in the future, about how to let the god recover completely". The old man, who was the first apostle Jacob, said in a low voice.

Chapter 467: The Gues

Chapter 467: The Guest

Anheuse stole a glance at Lucien. He was uncomfortable with the idea of discussing matters of such importance in the presence of Leviathan, who had only just become the Secret Praying Congress' seventh apostle. For all they know, he could be a spy sent by the evil god Antanas, looking for the whereabouts of the God of Flame and Destruction. They should have waited for him to pass the one year trial period and made sure that nothing was amiss about him before allowing him to participate in the discussion of core matters.

Members of the Secret Praying Congress were extremely cautious in Politown, for those who weren't were all already died, some even brought serious loss to the Secret Praying Congress.

"Why are we suddenly discussing this? I remember that the previous plan 'Missionary' had only recently been confirmed?" Anheuse looked at Jacob solemnly.

Jacob pressed the gray rose pattern on the corner of his shirt and replied in a low voice, "this is the direct order of 'Crown'. We shall wait for him in silence."

"Crown" was the Secret Praying Congress' leader, the Lord of Fire and Destruction's divine son, and the one claiming to be His incarnation. The father and son shared a body. As for apostles like Lucien, they were known as "initiators", those spreading the wisdom of religious discipline.

Anheuse's expressions finally relaxed, and he sat down on a chair on which the flame patterns formed the word "five" in Barril tongue. Some apostles looked at Lucien with caution, while others did so with scrutiny or indifference. Lucien mirrored Anheuse's actions and found himself the silver chair with the pattern "seven". He appeared as if he had been at his own home.

"Leviathan, Norton has spread the word that you have great strength, on par with the worst of the divine-blooded. Is that true?"

A mess of white beard covered Jacob's face, making his expressions hard to read.

The other apostles stared at the dark red round table, as though they had not heard Jacob's question, nor were they waiting for Lucien's answer. Though strength of this degree was rare among humans, it was not unprecedented. Being on par with the worst divine-blooded also referred solely to raw strength. As soon as the divine-blooded used the "Supernatural Power" of their bloodline, they cast miraculous spells and control nature itself. A human with super strength would then fare no better than a normal human, and death would follow swiftly.

Black hair and black eyes, Lucien's appearance was that of an ordinary Barril man. He replied with a smile, "I have not fought with any divine-blooded yet and thus can't say how I fare against them. However, it is enough to deal with common monsters."

Lucien had claimed that his injury was the result of an encounter with a terrifying monster in the wild and that he had escaped only due to his natural strength. Norton, who was only capable of using spell-like abilities, was amazed by the knight's strength. This could be one of the reasons why he recommended Lucien to become the seventh apostle.

Jacob's back straightened, but there was no change in his gaze nor his tone of voice. "Then your future Seed of Spirit might lean towards that direction. Strength to crumble city walls, skin tough enough to withstand sword and spear, as well as immense speed. Just like that of the fiend Antanas before he killed his father."

According to Angornorma's legends, The Lord of War Antanas was the son of the Lord of Sky. He was a demigod of boundless strength; Even the sharpest blade could leave only scratches on him. Despite slaying the nine great monsters terrorizing the empire, he was blamed by the Lord of Sky. As such, he rebelled and killed his father, and rose to the main god of the Angonormanian pantheon.

"However, you need to use your strength to serve the great Lord of Fire and Destruction before you can attain such power," said Jacob before Lucien could respond. Jacob had said similar pieces to all

new members of the Secret Praying Congress, those who had yet to receive the Seed of Spirit.

Suddenly, the secret hall was filled with the air of heat and destruction, as though a fire had befallen.

Jacob rose from his seat. He placed his hand over his chest and lowered his head. “Welcome, Crown.”

The other apostles followed suit. Lucien did likewise while judging the power of the “Crown” at the same time. If “Crown” had released his aura without restraint to intimidate the initiators, then his strength was about level seven. However, his aura was extremely strange — It was not a suppression of spiritual power, or willpower domination, or even divine pressure. In fact, it felt like a mix of the three. Nothing about it was outstanding.

False God, incarnation, son of god... Lucien secretly thought that things are getting more and more interesting by the minute

For Lucien, the main goal of joining the Secret Praying Congress was to gather information and to avoid danger. Research had only been a secondary motive. However, the things that he had been exposed to kept tugging at his arcanist instincts. He found himself wanting to actively participate in the matters of the Secret Praying Congress.

Meanwhile, Lucien calculated in his mind: If “Crown” really is the sole incarnation of the Lord of Fire and Destruction, then the false god’s level should be at eight. For the Lord of War to allow him to escape, it appears that the Lord of War is not yet of the legendary level. Probably at the peak of level nine.

In the early phases of the War of Dawn, the sorcerers that survived the massacre of the Saint Truth Church did not know much about the false gods. But with the rise of Thanatos Vicente Miranda, the congress later obtained much information on the false gods from the South Church

Despite having limited knowledge about the false gods due to his limited access, Lucien knew enough to know that false gods were

capable of using their power to create incarnations. The incarnations will peak at a power one level lower than that of the original, and their numbers were limited at two. If more incarnations were to be created, their power level would need to be lowered.

Since the Secret Praying Congress had claimed that they were the main group worshipping Lord of Fire and Destruction, Lucien deduced that this incarnation of Avando was of the strongest type.

A young beautiful raven-haired man appeared from the shadows of the stone hall. He donned a pure white robe, and an olive garland sat on his head. The phantom flame covering his exposed skin gave his muscles a sense of beauty and strength.

Judging from the appearance, Lucien deduced that this incarnation was skilled at physical combat and equipped with some level of knowledge about magic. His skill set should be similar to a knight. Or rather, similar to a powerful demon from Hell.

“Crown” Ell looked at the seven apostles present and sat on the gold chair. He then lowered his right hand, signaling the apostles to sit.

“Our kingdom has been taken over by fiend, and our children hurt by the heretics. The number of those who stand with use is dwindling by the minute. Yet we still cling onto our bloodline and our Father. Hence our successors, devout young men, have continued to arrive. Leviathan, we hope that you can guard the gate of the Divine Mountain and spread the name of our god to fellow Barril men.”

Ell had acknowledged Lucien as the seventh apostle. After all, Erdo was under the strict control of Angonorma, and talents were hard to come by.

After Lucien saluted and thanked him, Ell said to the seven apostles, “I have gathered you to discuss the future. You should have noticed that the rebellions have dwindled, as are Barril men who place their faith in God the Father. Let me hear what you have to say about this.”

“They had forgotten about the majesty of the gods, and no longer fear fire and destruction. We must make them remember the fear that had been etched in their soul, make them remember the Fire Cleansing that will come. Only then will they fight for the great Avando.” Anheuse said sternly.

After seeing that the other apostles all agreed to Anheuse’s opinion, Lucien shook his head lightly. It appeared that this Secret Praying Congress was still rather primitive, relying solely on fear to spread their religion rather than combining with redemption and hope. It was not suited to the current times. If they continue with this method, their followers would only grow fewer until they are eventually eliminated by the Angonorma.

Ell’s eyes seemed to dance with fire. He said in a low voice, “it is our duty to spread the majesty of God the Father. However, I believe that it’s time we changed the method by which we do so.”

Lucien and the other apostles looked towards Ell. While others were confused, Lucien wondered if Ell was considering new ways of popularizing their religion.

Ell said passionately, “as of now, His children and ministers are suffering under the rule of the heretics. Fear would no longer bring us to their heart. What they need is salvation, a way out from the sufferings. We need to tell them they don’t need to fear death, where eternal peace and happiness awaited them in the Divine Mountain of God; Tell them that their sacrifice will help to build a Divine Kingdom free of war, killing, fear, and hatred for their offspring; Tell them only such Divine Kingdoms would escape the wrath of the Fire Cleansing.

“Of course, those who betrayed God the Father must be punished. After just judgment, they would be exiled to the kingdom of the dead to endure unimaginable suffering.

“God the Father will not only watch over the Barril. He is empathetic, benevolent, and willing to accept any race that is willing to place their faith in him.”

Lucien was stunned by Ell’s words. These were concepts of mature

religion. It evolved from that of a god reigning over a race or region towards a more abstract and encompassing god. Could it be revelations from the previous failure?

“But the great Lord of Fire’s domain does not include salvation, peace, or judgment,” Jacob asked, puzzled. For the Barrils and Angonormians, different gods were in charge of different things, and there was no single omnipotent god.

The fire in Ell’s eyes lit up. “God the Father’s godhood was compromised as he had parted his power to other gods when he created them. However, the other gods had betrayed him in this war and caused his defeat. He thus decided to wage war on them and reclaim his godhood. If he manages to return to his initial state before he created everything, he would be able to defeat the fiend Antanas.”

Not only did he explain why the God of Fire and Destruction who created the world in the legends was defeated, but he also gave them a direction — to unite the forces within the pantheon.

“Right, the gods who betrayed the God of Fire also divided Barril. Respected ‘Crown’, who shall be our first target?” Anheuse was very much in agreement with Ell’s idea, possibly due to anger towards followers of other gods.

Ell replied coldly, “Asin, the God of Moon”.

The God of Moon... Lucien suddenly felt something was amiss.

Ell suddenly stood up. “God the Father has made this decision merit of a philosopher from the east.”

He turned and said, “Mr. Francis, please advise the details as to how we should proceed.”

Francis? Lucien frowned slightly. Another man with black hair and eyes appeared from where Ell did earlier. He had a slender frame and his face was soft. He carried a sword on his back and wore a loose white robe similar to Ell’s.

Chapter 468: The Mysterious "Philosopher"

"A philosopher from the eastern kingdoms?" The first apostle Jacob looked at Francis, confused.

Jacob wasn't questioning this philosopher's abilities or background — He had passed Avando's test and won "Crown" Ell's trust. Jacob had raised the question hoping to learn more to make a better judgment about Francis' proposal. After all, he was the Secret Praying Congress' main leader.

The other apostles shared similar concerns. Even Lucien bore a similar expression.

The situation of this world is rather special. False gods, including those that have Moon as part of their domain, are plenty. When the authentic God of the Silver Moon, Alterna, fell to this world, She would be attracted to those whose godhood is similar to hers. It was possible that she would try to reclaim her powers from them. After all, She was also the Primordial Ancestor of the Vampires and was able to harness blood and godhood.

The Congress of Magic's understanding of divine powers was extremely underdeveloped and Lucien's descriptions were largely borrowed from the Church. He had only a vague idea of what terms like "domain" and "godhood" referred to, but was unclear to what they were exactly.

With this in mind, Lucien thought to himself that if there are no better methods of finding the Alterna, one effective way to locate Her would be to control and monitor the false gods whose duties were related to the moon.

As for Francis, Lucien wondered which church was he from. He could be from the North Church, the South Church, or the Church of the false gods in the Northwest of the Dark Mountain Range. He could also be from the Congress of Magic or the Dark Congress... The only thing to be sure of was that he's definitely not a Druid or

an elf.

Ell's words about a mature religious concept did not make identifying Francis' identity any easier, for Lucien was able to spew similar sentiments himself. If Francis was from one of the Churches, then helping the false gods revolutionize their religion seemed to conflict his own faith. However, for members of the Church's upper echelon and the high-ranking night watchers, it wouldn't be too big a deal to slightly bend one's faith for matters important as finding the God of Silver Moon.

Thinking about this, Lucien grew cautious and alert. Most of his magical items were damaged, and he would be disadvantaged in a long, drawn-out fight. It was also unknown whether Francis had any allies nearby.

Ell pointed at Francis and smiled. 'Mr. Francis had come from an oasis in the eastern desert. He has done extensive research on philosophy, divinity, and occultism. One night, he witnessed a star glow curiously bright for a short while before swiftly returning to normal. It symbolized the rising of God the Father, and Mr. Francis thus came to Erdo to pay religious homage and establish communications.

This quack... Lucien swore under his breath. His suspicion about Francis was growing by the minute. The astrological phenomenon that he had described was one indicating the fall of an "old god" for a new one to take its place. It had nothing to do with the rise of Avando.

Was he simply making things up or had he said it deliberately to taunt Avando and Ell who clearly knew nothing about Astrology?

Francis sat down on one of the silver chairs. Still wearing that faint smile, he looked at the apostles and said, "the great God of Fire and Destruction is no longer worshiped by Barrils, not only because the way of preaching was problematic but also was He indeed defeated by Antanas. The Barrils who had feared Avando realized that the God of Fire and Destruction was weaker than they had imagined."

"That's because the other gods betrayed Him!" The second apostle

said loudly. He was unwilling to accept that the God of Fire Avando who was able to destroy the world was defeated.

Francis laid back into his chair leisurely. "Regardless, He was defeated. For the gods, defeat is even worse than death. As such, I suggest that we forget about Avando's image of the past, and embrace a new method of preaching. We can say that from the flames of destruction, Ell the Savior was born. The previous failure of Avando was only a test for His followers. Those who failed to pass the test must repent devoutly, for only then will they receive redemption from Ell and harvest on the fertile lands after the fire.

"It will be a new god — Ell, the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. He will then gradually embody traits of Avando and assume the domain of Fire and Destruction. Then the followers will understand that Ell is Avando and vice versa. The two of them will be able to become a truly powerful god when They become one.

"Anything that happens after can also be explained as simply another test of god."

The six apostles around the round table fell silent. Francis' plan made sense. However, writing anything off as the test of the gods sounded rather blasphemous.

On the other hand, Lucien noticed that Francis delivered his words with no sarcasm but rather with an air of fanaticism, which made his words very convincing.

Lucien was more and more convinced that Francis was a "visitor" from the main material world. He wondered if Francis was really that great of an actor, or was he seeking the God of the Silver Moon for other motives.

The apostles remained in silence. Francis stood up, placed his hand on his chest, and saluted Ell.

"We mortals are incapable of truly understanding the minds of god. If anything goes wrong, it must mean that we have failed to understand enough and neglected His test.

"God has been around since the dawn of time and will continue to exist forever. God does not require our worship. However, we need to worship god for redemption.

"God represents truth, virtue, redemption, and every other positive value. He is the only true god in charge of everything!"

Ell's expression became slightly excited upon hearing those words. The flames in his eyes danced even fiercer. Francis' altered religious doctrine elevated his "divine throne" dramatically such that he was now distinct from the false gods that walked among mortals, which made it easier for followers to worship him wholeheartedly.

"Isn't this the latest edition of the Church's explanation of divinity?" Lucien silently cringed.

The Saint Truth needed to be on top of the advancements in arcana, as did arcanists require knowledge on divinity. Both sides knew well of the power of knowing their enemy.

This made it even harder for Lucien to determine Francis' identity. Ironically, the chances that Francis is a member of the Saint Truth is the smallest. Even the pope would be accused of blasphemy had he applied the Saint Truth's religious doctrine on false gods, unless he had ulterior motives.

"Great God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, please accept our faith and pardon our sins. Save us from this tainted world." Jacob, the most experienced preacher was the first to recognize what they should do. He immediately started worshiping Ell and accepted the new "God of Fire and Destruction" on behalf of the other apostles. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Ell nodded contently. "My godhood has been passed onto me by God the Father, but it is still weak. We must wage war on the other False Gods who have similar domains to strengthen it. The God of Moon Asin bears the duty of immortality, fertility, and peace. It is intrinsically tied to Resurrection, Fertility, and Redemption. He shall be our first target."

Ell no longer viewed Asin as a god.

"Asin had betrayed the great Avando in the war against the fiend Antanas. She is currently spreading her religion at the Solna river valley. Other gods who also betrayed Avando are competing with her for the limited resource of faith. Fearing the great Avando's revenge, their divine realms are ever more elusive. Our chances of winning, even with the great Avando at our side, are slim if we were to fight them in their own realm." Anheuse frequently preached in the outside world and was very familiar with the state of the world.

Their blatant thirst for faith resource made Lucien ponder over the origin of divine powers. Lucien wondered if the source of divinity is indeed the power of faith, then does it mean that mental power exists or does it mean that mental power is a special form of spiritual power with a special frequency.

Francis smiled. "God of Moon Asin's guard would be lowered if he faces Ell under the title of the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. On my way here, I learned that there will be a divinity debate taking place in the Solana river valley, where the temples could attract followers by boasting about the capabilities of the one's god. Those who fail would be exiled from the river valley. The priest of the fiend Antanas would be there too. He seeks to 'convert' the false gods there to true members of the Angonormanian pantheon.

"We shall participate under the name of a new religion. During the debate, try to agitate Asin and lead him to the ambush."

Ell nodded. "Let's do what Mr. Francis says. When the time comes, Francis, Jacob, and I will kill Asin easily outside of his realm."

"Mr. Francis too?" Jacob asked in surprise.

He was the leader of the apostle and received the most powerful "Seed of Spirit" from Avando, which was equivalent to the total of the other apostles. His strength was about level six, equivalent. What made Francis worthy to fight alongside him?

Francis smiled. "I was once blessed by the great true god. I managed to run into the death of a Hydra who had strength on par with false gods. After bathing in its blood and devouring its heart, I too have obtained strength akin to that of the divine-blooded."

Bloodline knight? Despite the lie, Lucien understood what Francis was trying to get across and thought that if this was the case, he could not be a member of the Congress of Magic.

There were no bloodline knights in the Congress of Magic.

Jacob was taken aback and ceased his questioning to Francis. He turned to the other apostles. "Leviathan, it's time for you to serve. Since you have yet to come into contact with other religions, you can represent the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. Anheuse shall aid you..."

"I will accompany you there too. It would be otherwise hard to win the debate and agitate Asin for someone untrained like you." Francis added.

Chapter 469: The “Theology Debate”

Solna River flowed quietly, nurturing one-third of the creatures living on the Erdo Peninsula. Many river valleys formed alongside. In the valley named after the river, Solna Valley, there were a few city-states. Thanks to the plentiful water resource and rich land, Solna Valley became a very prosperous place second only to Politown. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

In front of the newly-built temple for the Lord of War in the city of Husum, there was a spacious square, on which a stage had been built up. People wearing flax robes crowded around it voluntarily, supporting the different god they worshipped. The soldiers of the Angonorma Empire stood by lazily in their bronze armors, showing no care to the small conflicts between the followers, as if they wished that those heretics could just kill each other, which would save much trouble.

On the stage sat the eight chief priests, who were representatives of the remaining eight gods of Barril — the God of Moon, the God of Thunder and Lightning, the God of Storm, the Mother God of Earth, the Lord of Underworld, the God of Sun and Justice, the God of Wisdom, and the Goddess of Love and Breed. They waited for the start of the debate on the silver chairs. Should they fail to win victory in this debate and turn their god into one of the three deities, their god would be driven out of the valley by the Lord of War. Over time, the expelled gods would gradually lose their followers and eventually die or become an avatar of the Angonormanian pantheon due to assimilation.

Although they all knew it well that selecting the three deities was just the Lord of War's strategy for dividing and better ruling them and that, in the end, all of them would be assimilated into Angonormanian pantheon, no one dared to speak against of it as this was the consequence of their own choice. Also, to them, there was still hope if they become one of the three deities — Once they survived, they could gather a great number of new followers in Solna Valley. Maybe, in the future, they would have a chance to in

turn replace their counterpart in the Angonormanian pantheon.

Sitting on the golden chair highest above, the chief priest representing the Lord of War was a brown-haired beautiful lady. The slit of her white Angonorma-style dress reached all the way up to her waist, revealing her curves and long, graceful legs.

She was high priestess Nena, the second chief priest in the Temple of War in Politown.

"Salute to the great Lord of War, the master of all conflicts and destruction." The sixteen leading priests of the eight gods bowed together, in the same way as they once bowed to the Lord Avando.

After performing the war dance herself to please the Lord of War, Nena was about to start the debate.

At this time, two black-haired men in white robes came in front of the stage and said to the guards aloud, "let us in! The God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption sent us here for the debate."

"I never heard of this title. It must belong to a false god. Guards, expel them!" Nob, the priest of the God of Moon scolded.

The power of the God of Moon, Asin, was ranked in the middle among the eight remaining Gods. Thus, facing the competitors coming out of nowhere, the old priest was definitely not happy.

As the follower, Francis hurriedly eyed Lucien to deliver the prepared speech.

Fearlessly, Lucien looked right into Nob's eyes and said, "this isn't your decision to make. Only the almighty Lord of War can decide if we could join or not. How dare you speak before the chief priest of the Lord of War?"

Francis was a bit surprised. What Lucien just said was not the version they previously agreed on. However, it worked better. It seemed that this guy named Leviathan was quite good at improvisation.

Overwhelmed by surprise and fear, the chief priest of the God of

Moon suddenly became speechless.

Lucien turned to Nena and said sincerely, "dear Lady Nena, the Lord of War told us that all gods preaching in the valley are qualified for attending the debate. Did I understand it wrong?"

"No," Nena answered coldly and briefly.

Lucien smiled. "Our Lord, the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption also has followers in this valley. Please allow us to join in."

"You must prove it." Nena did not refuse, as adding one more god to the debate would not hinder the Lord of Wars arrangement, but could instead intensify the conflict and provide an advantage for the future assimilation.

Lucien raised his right hand. Anheuse, who was hiding in the corner, started applauding. Hearing that, all of the secret previous followers of the Lord of Fire and Destruction began clapping their hands and loudly praising Ell, the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption.

Nob and the other chief priests exchanged a look. They didn't expect the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, whose name and titles they had never heard of, had already gained such influence.

It never occurred to them that the so-called God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption was in fact Avando, the previous Lord of Fire and Destruction. It had never happened before that a god would change his godhood, for godhood reflected a god's power and the possible spell collections possessed. Therefore, even though the name of the god was changed, their godhood would remain the same. Also, the change of the name mostly happened when a god had assimilated another god and wanted to create another incarnation in order to absorb the pre-existing faith.

However, Revival, Fertility, and Redemption seemed to drastically differ from Fire and Destruction. Thus, it was hard to realize that Ell was actually Avando's new identity.

Under the hostile gaze of the other priests, Lucien walked on the stage with Francis and sat down on the added silver chair.

Nena said to them, "today's debate is to tell the true gods from the fake. Only the true gods deserve people's faith. The Lord of War said that the universe came from the number three. Therefore, there will be three final winners."

That being said, no matter how the debate went, the Lord of War was always the dominator, since even the winner was decided under the Lord of War's oracle.

"My Lord is the sun. His radiance nurtures everything on the land and drives away the darkness, like the fire. He is the light, the power of punishment. The power of light brings us brightness and justice. Therefore, my Lord is the one who made the rules that restrain gods and human beings. Undoubtedly, my Lord's power thus exceeds that of the other seven gods." The chief priest of the God of Sun and Justice spoke before everyone else, describing his god's power to attract followers.

The uneducated followers nodded. They did not know much, but they could see the sun hanging up in the sky almost every day. It brought them warm, which contrasts greatly with the darkness, so it should be very important. Thus, it seemed that the God of Sun and Justice should be very powerful as well, and it would do them much good if they worship him.

Seeing that, the priest of the Lord of Underworld took a step forward and said, "when there is life, there's death. No intelligent creature can escape from death. Life is short, but death is eternal. The almighty Lord of Underworld is the one you'll go to after death, the ultimate god that you'll belong to in the end. It is true for everyone. He is unquestionably more important than all the other gods."

Everyone was afraid of death. Imagining the darkness, coldness, and pain that one would suffer after death, many of the listeners were persuaded — maybe worshiping the Lord of Underworld is a better choice than worshiping the God of Sun and Justice. He appeared to be very powerful and important from the descriptions.

"The earth carries everything, including the underworld. Earth carries life, as well as death. Anyone who offends the Mother shall suffer from starvation, earthquake, and landslide." The priest of the Mother God of Earth threatened the crowd.

Now the afterworld sounded too illusionary and far from the listeners. Compared to the long sleep after death, they knew much better how it felt having an empty stomach, not to mention the horrible power of an earthquake. They no longer dared to deviate from the Mother God of Earth.

"My Lord controls lightning — Lightning powerful enough to punish gods, not to mention the mundane. Anyone who disobeys shall be struck by lightning and thunder." The priest of the God of Thunder and Lightning followed.

The priest of the God of Storm would not miss the chance either. "If any of you betray the God of Storm, He would send forty-nine days of storm. Ocean will gush into the cities and towns. Land will be overwhelmed with flood. No creature will survive."

Gradually, most of the priests started to threaten the listeners, controlling them with fear as they always did. However, the priest of the God of Wisdom and the priest of the God of Love and Breed could not use the same strategy. They quitted the debate rather helplessly.

They never had much hope to begin with. Their words about love and wisdom were too pale.

Facing such a chaotic debate where the braggest one was the strongest, Francis felt quite uncomfortable. He sent a secret message to Lucien by controlling the wind in the air. "When it's your turn, try your very best to exaggerate the power of great Ell. You know, using the cycle theory — create, control, destroy, and resurrect."

"The silver moon witnessed the birth of this world. The moon is immortal, and has the power to drive away darkness but also absorb the power from darkness. It brings peacefulness to our mind," said Nob with fine sweat beads on his forehead. Compared to the other gods, Asin the God of Moon had no advantage when it

came to threatening others. The god who was best at this was the God of Fire and Destruction.

Finally, after one round, it was Lucien's turn. All the priests turned to look at him, waiting to listen to his words speaking for the so-called God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption.

Sitting straight on the silver chair, Lucien said slowly, "seasons come and go; the sun rises and sets. In this world, when there's birth, there's death. But there's also resurrection after death. And my Lord is the God of Resurrection."

The priest of the God of Sun froze. He knew the meaning of the words — The representative of the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption was saying that the sun was solely a phenomenon, while resurrection was the underlying essence.

"Death isn't the final end; different souls belong to different ends. According to what a person did when he was alive, a fair judgment is given. Those who are kind will jump out of the cycle of life and death and enter the paradise of my Lord, and thus enjoy eternal happiness. Those who are neutral will come to this world again as infants and keep going through the joy and pain of life. While, the vicious and the contemptible will be punished in the underworld, enduring endless suffering...

"However, the followers of my Lord, anyone who's willing to make a heartfelt confession, will be saved by the Lord, and become the one's enjoying the forever happiness as I just mentioned."

The listeners had never heard of anything like this before. They'd rather believe in this young priest's words than the horrible images described by the rest of the priests, because they could now see hope in their tough life, the hope for starting all over again and being saved!

Francis was very impressed by Leviathan's talent, for Leviathan was able to construct a rather comprehensive theoretical theology system based on his simple cycle theory. He didn't expect to find someone this talented in such a primitive otherworld.

The face of the priest representing the Lord of Underworld darkened. Such a theory had instantly degraded his Lord.

Seeing this, Nob made his decision. If he lost this debate, he'd lose everything anyway, so why not use the heretic myth to turn the tide.

"Your gods are all in charge of some specific functions in operating this world, but my Lord is the one who created this world as well as all of the creatures. My lord is the God of Brightness and Creation. In the primordial darkness, my lord brought brightness to the forever silence; he shaped the earth and the lives!" Nob cited one version of the creation myth, completely ignoring Nena's expression.

The rest of the priests were all taken back — Now that the God of Moon claimed to be the god who created the world, how could their god overpower Him? They thought hard, trying to find similar myths of their god to use.

At this time, the priest of the God of Thunder and Lightning burst out laughing. "Alright, the God of Moon created this world and the lives, but my Lord is capable of ruining all of these. When everything sinks back into darkness, only my lord's followers will be saved."

He partially borrowed the theory of redemption from Lucien.

The priest of the God of Sun and Justice was unwilling to fall behind. "My lord is the god maintaining the functioning of the world and delaying the day of destruction..."

"My lord is the pristine darkness and peacefulness." Sneered the priest of the Lord of Underworld.

"This isn't a theology debate... They're simply bragging." Francis rubbed his forehead and complained to Lucien in a low voice. "I'm not good at this at all. It's up to you now."

Seeing that the other priests were gaining support, Lucien did not feel any pressure at all. "Our world is just a small world. The

creation, development, and destruction of such a small world are of nothing special. Three thousand of small worlds like this are needed to form a middle world, and three thousand of middle worlds are needed to form a big world. However, there are countless big worlds as many as the grains of sand at the bottom of the Solna river.

"However, the boundless world that contains the countless big worlds is created by my Lord.

"My Lord said, 'Let there be the boundless world', and there was the boundless world.

"My Lord said, 'Let there be light', and there was light.

"When my Lord said, 'Let all be destroyed', and then everything annihilates."

When it came to bragging, Lucien feared nobody.

Chapter 470: The Best Braggart Ever

Chapter 470: The Best Braggart Ever

All the priests and the followers were now very confused. They felt that the information was too much for their brain to handle. Things like the small world, the middle world, the big world, and the boundless world had never ever occurred to them. However, although they did not quite understand, they had to admit that the words from this young priest's mouth sounded very powerful and profound. Ell, the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, had become a level higher than the rest of the gods.

Anheuse, who was hiding in a corner, was also very confused.

“Are we talking about the same great Ell...?” He murmured.

Francis was a bit amused. He had to hold himself back from bursting out laughing. Indeed, this young man was quite gifted in terms of telling stories. Even if this young man could not become a real disciple in the future, becoming a bard and telling stories would also make him an epic figure.

Nob felt a bit dizzy from the blood rushing all the way upward into his brain. He felt that his imagination was being ground into bits. He could not believe that there was someone better at bragging than himself, but it was the truth.

Nob could not copy Lucien anymore. Although following Lucien's words, the bragging can never come to an end as Nob could say that there were also small boundless worlds, middle boundless worlds, and big boundless worlds. But it would be too obvious that he was stealing Lucien's theory in front of the listeners, which would make him lose the debate even faster, for it would give the crowd the impression that the God of Moon could only repeat the words of others and was lying all through the debate.

Similar thoughts flashed through the mind of the rest of the priests. Frowning, they tried their very best to find a new perspective to defeat Leviathan's view of the world. However, the religions they

belonged to were still in the primitive level, even the simplest philosophy had not yet developed. With the priest's imagination limited by themselves and their era, there was nothing available to them to be used as a weapon.

As for the Mother God of Earth, the God of Wisdom, the God of Storm, and the God of Love, since they had already lost the debate in the previous round, they were now taking pleasure in watching the other priests' respond — If they were going to be expelled from the valley, they should all be expelled together.

Lucien took his time and continued. "My Lord creates the boundless world, maintains it, and then destroys it. But again, from the destroyed, a new boundless world is created by Him. My Lord is the Lord who creates, maintains, and destroys. He is the cycle; He is the resurrection."

... The rest of the priests were speechless.

"My Lord has also created an eternal fairyland outside of this endless cycle of life and death. This place is the ultimate joyous land for our most loyal brothers and sisters. My Lord calls it..." Lucien paused a bit, "... calls it the Pure Land."

Lucien was about to borrow the name 'Mountain Paradise', but he did not want Francis to feel suspicious.

The audience burst into an uproar. They did not expect that the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, with such great power and might, would still lend his hand to them! But the descriptions given by Lucien all linked together well, and they started to believe that the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption could really help them get out of such a vicious cycle and leave this world full of pain and corruption.

He was indeed the God of Redemption!

While Nob's face turned pale and could find no way to refute, Nena's eyes slightly narrowed, as if she was also thinking.

Suddenly, Nob sprang up from the silver chair and took a big step

forward. He questioned aloud,

“Leviathan, let me ask you. How was it before the world was first created by your so-called God of Redemption! How did the boundless world look like in the very beginning? What did the Pure Land look like in the very beginning?”

Lucien did not expect that Nob could put forward such a critical question and was stunned for a second. However, he quickly realized what was going on: Nena’s lips were moving very slightly.

This might escape from other priests’ eyes. But Lucien was also a knight, so he could spot it easily.

It seemed that the priest of the Lord of War could not hold back anymore.

“There was nothing; there was chaos. There was the original point of space and time.” Lucien decided to give Nob a chance on purpose. A perfect performance might lead to Francis’ suspicion.

Nob burst out laughing. “Then let me ask you: Where does ‘nothing’ come from? Where does ‘chaos’ come from? And what is it outside of ‘nothing’ and ‘chaos’?”

Nob’s answer was ready — It was the almighty God of Moon.

The followers also became confused. They wanted to know the answers; they wanted to know if a greater being existed before and outside of the “nothing”.

Francis’ eyes lit up, as he finally found the chance to fight back. After exchanging a look with Lucien, he stood up and said, “outside of ‘nothing’ is the ‘indescribable’, namely, my Lord!”

“Indescribable? What is it?” Nob and the other priests laughed at this response.

Francis said seriously, “the so-called ‘nothing’, ‘chaos’, and ‘the original point of space and time’ are all based on human understanding and are still within the human imagination. But the existence of my Lord exceeds any definition, meaning, concepts,

logic, material, spirit, and language. It is indescribable; it is undescrivable.”

Francis’ words were even more incomprehensible than that of Leviathan. All the priests, including Nena, could not find a clue at all.

Francis smiled, “I come from the country in the desert to the East. In my country, a famous wise man whose name is Lucien Evans once put it in this way...”

Lucien Evans, the wise man... Lucien almost burst out laughing himself, but he managed to force it back.

However, the priests and the listeners only caught the fact that Francis came from the East. They wondered if the power of Ell had spread across the East.

“He said that our observation of any objects in this world is based on our body and soul. Therefore, the information we obtained would never be comprehensive. For example, when we see light, we think light does not have a specific color. But if we see light through a bubble or a crystal, we know that light is in fact colorful. Therefore, our understanding is the mundane understanding. And our understanding can never describe the real almighty being, which is my Lord.

“Therefore, the existence of my Lord exceeds any definition, meaning, concept, logic, material, spirit, and language. Even the idea of ‘nothing’ is far from being capable of defining the Lord. In other words, any mundane attempt trying to define the existence of God is a kind of profanity.”

Francis’ words refreshed all the priests’ understanding of god. In the past, their understanding of god was too shallow to step out of the ordinary person’s mindset. But... their god, who made their presence and power felt from time to time, seemed to fail the standard of divinity.

Lucien also stood up and smiled. “My Lord has an existence, and also has not. My Lord is the nothing; he is also the everything. My

lord shall not be defined by any means, no property, no difference, no shape, no space, no limit, no concept... My Lord is supreme by nature. My lord does not need faith or worshipping.

“But we human need faith. We need to be saved. Therefore, our perception of the true lord became the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption in a lower level of concept. He is the avatar of the true lord, an avatar that we can worship.

“We only need to worship the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. We make heartfelt confessions, and then we can be saved. We can never understand or describe the true lord, and the true lord does not need our understanding or description. We can never affect the true lord, neither will the true lord try to affect the world.”

Francis nodded in agreement. Leviathan’s explanation was indeed very impressive, which showed that he was obviously a genius in theology. However, this explanation was still too complicated to be used in preaching.

However, Francis found this young man to be a bit suspicious and wondered if there was something wrong with him.

Lucien smiled to himself when he explained. An existence that would never be affected and would never affect anything, an existence that any discussion on which was meaningless — according to the Occam’s Razor theory, such an existence didn’t even need to exist. If the existence of god was really like this, Lucien could safely conclude that god was dead.

Anything that had an influence on this world must more or less left some traces, must could be explored and explained.

The confused crowd caught the main point in Lucien’s words — No matter what, they had to follow the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. This God was very powerful!

Nena, the priest of the Lord of War, could not find any way to object. She felt a chill went up her spines, her right fist clenching tight. As a follower of the Lord of War, she was not good at smart

articulation, however, she had got power to eliminate the enemies.

Lucien felt that the way Francis looked at him had changed, so he quickly switched the style of his talking. “Don’t even try to pry into the real lord, or you’ll be infected by this unknown power and be twisted into nameless monsters in forever pain.”

The listeners, including the priests, subconsciously stopped what they were thinking immediately. It sounded so horrible!

However, after a second thought, they believed that a real powerful god should be just like this.

Francis slightly shook his head. This young man and the belief he represented still could not get rid of the use of intimidation commonly seen in primitive religions. He was still confined by his surrounding environment, such a waste of his talent...

From afar, Ell was looking at the debate stage attentively. The clusters of fire in his eyes flickered peacefully, carrying the power to purify.

He murmured to himself,

“Is that... me?”

“Am I that powerful?”

Chapter 471: "Who Am I"

On the debate stage in front of the Temple of War, the other priests had all fallen into silence after hearing Lucien's speech.

Lucien looked around in his plain white robe and then said to Nena peacefully, "respected Lady Nena, shall the results of the debate be announced now? It seems that no one else wants to continue anymore."

Nena was a bit startled by Lucien's question. She took a cold glance at Lucien and turned to the priests, "do you all agree?"

Nob was about to oppose, but he could not find a single reason. The only words coming up in his mind were those just said by Lucien.

His brain had stopped working. Without the guidance of the brain, his mouth had given out the words, "A... Agree..."

Depressed, the priests of the God of Love and the God of Wisdom who had lost in the first round also agreed.

After a short hesitation, the other priests agreed as well — There would be three winners today, so they still got a chance.

Nena lowered her eyes and hid her emotions. Then she said in cold voice, "according to the words of the supreme Lord of War, the winners from today's debate will be three. Their Church will be awarded the right to stay in the valley of Solna and preach. They are..."

Unconsciously, she had applied the word, supreme, to the Lord of War.

Everyone all held their breath and waited for the final result nervously, including the listeners, as if one single breath could blow the good result away.

"... The God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption," said Nena, announcing the not-at-all surprising result.

Seeing how calm Leviathan and Francis were, the listeners present started to more or less believe in the existence of God Ell.

The manner of a priest could well represent how much confidence he or she had in the god, as well as how powerful the god was.

"The God of Moon,"

Out of great excitement and joy, Nob kneeled down to the ground and kissed the floor while praying and praising his god.

"... and the Lord of Underworld."

Volcan, the priest of the Lord of Underworld, cheered aloud, praising the Lord of Underworld and thanking the Lord of War.

The rest of the priests, however, all looked very pale now.

"Before tomorrow's sunset, the rest of you must leave the valley. The followers must change their belief, otherwise, they shall be exiled as well!" Nena's words were cold and cruel.

"...!" The priests and listeners looked at Nena in great shock and anger. Although they knew that they had to leave, they did not expect the fact that they could not even keep their own followers.

Solna Valley was a rich piece of land. Anyone willing to work hard should be able to feed themselves. Once leaving the valley, what was waiting for them in the wild was definitely not pleasant. Therefore, the priests understood that they were doomed to lose most of their followers now.

However, as priests, they did not have a second choice. They had to stick to their belief, or they would be devoured by the Seed of Spirit within themselves.

The many furious gazes did not bother Nena at all. She slowly lifted her right hand, and the soldiers instantly lifted their black-iron weapons. The swords formed a sharp and dense black-iron forest that reflected cold light.

The scene reminded the rest of the priests that Nena was almost as

powerful as their god. Thinking about Politown, they lowered their heads and left the stage.

Here started the wandering.

Nena paid no further attention to the scattering priests. She said to Lucien, Nob, and Volcan, "your preaching must obey the law established by the Temple of War, or you will be exiled too."

Then she simply turned around and left. There were no celebration nor encouragement.

Watching Nena walking away, Francis sent a secret message to Lucien and said casually, "it looks like the Dear Lady has already got the intention to kill us, or, I should say, the Lord of War has got the intention to kill us. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been treated this way. Maybe our description of the almighty Ell made them feel insecure..."

The topic was rather serious, but Francis didn't sound like he was taking it seriously.

Lucien was still playing his role well. With a slight amount of shock that suited his current identity, Lucien asked, "What shall we do then?"

"We'll discuss later. The situation may change." Francis directed Lucien to meet Ell, Jacob, and Anheuse in the hotel.

Lucien nodded seriously. He wondered if Francis was waiting for the rest of the priests to react.

They walked off the stage, and the followers immediately surrounded them. Their eyes were written with great hope for redemption.

They were all followers of the Lord of Fire, and Destruction. Hearing Lucien's words, they preferred the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption to the horrible Avando, as what they longed for was the hope of ascending to the Pure Land, instead of being driven by the fear of the bloodthirsty Avando.

Francis smiled but did not say anything. He was waiting to observe Lucien's response and he didn't even try to hide his intention.

Lucien spoke in a soothing tone, "the almighty Ell always shows mercy. My Lord would never abandon this world full of pain. Instead, my Lord is willing to serve as a bridge, connecting the two worlds to save you all from the endless cycle of pain. Supreme as my Lord, as long as you pray and confess devoutly and act out of kindness, your wish will be heard by Him.

"This is also where the supremacy of my Lord lies: You believe, and then the Lord will be in your heart. I am not superior to any of you, instead, I merely heard the Lord's instruction earlier than you. I will be your mentor, guiding you to see the almighty Ell in your own heart and then to be saved. I am not a priest, but an initiator."

Lucien had his principle: He was never willing to make a fortune out of these followers. Although it was already not the first time that he used divinity to achieve his purpose, he never intended to turn himself into the biggest beneficiary.

If it had not been that Francis and Anheuse were right here, Lucien would like to share with them how he understood superego, ego, and the inner self.

Then Lucien wondered if he was addressing too much about the inner peacefulness. Perhaps, he was on his way shaping something like Buddhism.

Hearing Lucien's words, the followers almost burst into tears. Never had they heard something like this before from a priest — in most cases, they were frightened and threatened.

Francis was a bit amused. In his eyes, Leviathan was such an innocent young man who just joined the Secret Praying Congress but still had his own set of belief. Yet it made sense to Francis, as such a young man who made the previous speech should have his own understanding of divinity.

"Dear initiator, how should we pray? How can we see the almighty Lord Ell in our mind?" Asked one of the followers.

Lucien put on a soft smile, "Anheuse, our another initiator, will tell you the prayer later. Before you pay, you have to learn how to put aside all your emotions first, including your joy, pain, and worries."Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

The specific prayer had to be modified after today's debate.

"Put aside..." repeated the followers thoughtfully.

"It's simple. You take a deep breath and then exhale... That's right, to release the emotions out..." Lucien showed them.

Lucien could not stay here for too long. Therefore, after leaving the followers to Anheuse, he went back to the hotel with Francis by oxcart.

"To save them, we have to save their mind first." nodded Francis in the oxcart on their way back. He smiled and said, "I thought the debate was a chance for discussing divinity and humanity, universals and primary substance, a priori and transcendent, but it turned out to be for bragging. You did very well."

"Mr. Francis, you taught me a lot," said Lucien, "but since the Lord of War is involved, we cannot target at the God of Moon anymore."

Francis shook his head. "This's also a chance. You'll see."

When the oxcart almost arrived at the hotel, a paper wad was darted fiercely through the curtain. As fast as an arrow, it was just an inch away from Lucien's face.

At this time, Francis raised his right hand and caught the paper wad rather easily.

Lucien slightly squinted — Francis was at least a senior-rank.

Someone on the street made a soft exclamation of surprise and then disappeared in the crowd.

As if Francis was exactly waiting for the paper wad, he did not even check it before opening it. After reading the message, he grinned.

"Here it comes."

Lucien took the paper over and saw the message on it:

"Nena, The chief priest of the Lord of War, has given order to the God of Moon and the Lord of Underworld, asking them to attack you tonight in order to force the almighty Ell to reveal His presence, so they can kill the almighty Ell. The one among us six which makes the most contribution tonight will earn the place left. However, I am much more willing to work with the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, as the Lord of War is such an unpredictable dictator. If the almighty Ell agrees, we'll meet each other in the middle of the river outside of the city before dawn."

At the bottom, there was a symbol of the sun.

"Cooperation? Or a trap?" Lucien asked, pretending to be both excited and confused.

Francis shrugged. "How should I know? Alright, let's get in the room first."

Lucien walked in the room and saw Ell standing beside the window covered in a white robe. His imposing manner was as great as that of mountain chains. Ell was somehow different now.

Ell turned around when Lucien was still a bit confused. There was no fire in his eyes anymore, instead, his eyes now looked as deep and black as death. Ell put on an easy smile. "Until today when I heard the debate, I finally realized that that Ell in the past wasn't the real Ell. Now, I finally have woken up from the chaos and obscurity."

Lucien and Francis were shocked.

Chapter 472: Speculation and Experiment

Chapter 472: Speculation and Experiment

Lucien was speechless. He was just bragging.

That the other priests including Nena believed in his words was not surprising, for they had no idea what the truth was; however, Lucien could not believe that Ell himself had also been persuaded by the lecture.

In Lucien's understanding, his lecture should be like a joke to Ell.

He tried hard to accept Ell's change, telling himself that Ell was one of the false gods who were stubborn and crazy according to the Congress' record and that the proper treatment for these false gods should be electrotherapy. However, Lucien still could not understand what happened to Ell.

Lucien wondered if Ell had even actually become more powerful.

It was not scientific, no, not arcanic to Lucien at all. Fortunately, he was more or less mentally prepared for any unusual changes within the divine realm. Calming himself down, he started observing Ell's reaction and taking down detailed notes in his spiritual library.

Lucien secretly looked aside at Francis and saw Francis also looking back at him with a confused smile. Obviously, Francis was also surprised, just like Lucien. Yet in the next second, Francis seemed to have already accepted it and was now keeping his eyes on Ell attentively with a slight hint of fanaticism.

Lucien could more or less understand what Francis was thinking. If Francis was really an expert in theology and philosophy like he said, changes of a god could certainly trigger his interest. And this was perhaps why Francis had chosen to present Ell using part of the theory of the God of Truth.

However, in this way, Lucien became even more confused about where Francis came from. Most of those who were both powerful

and profound in theology came from the Church, but so far, Francis had been behaving like a sheer blasphemer.

Retreating his sight, Lucien asked in surprise, “great God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, I don’t quite understand...”

Ell said calmly wearing the same smile, “to put it simply, I have found my true self. I have seen the undescrivable existence in excess of the universe and its projection in both the spiritual and the material world. Whether the Lord of Fire and Destruction or the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, they share the same origin. Based on what human beings see, know, and believe, the projection takes multiple forms, but there is only one ‘self’. I have found the true self, so now I am able to completely control the two forms — Avando and Ell — the two integrated forms.”

“My Lord, are you alright?” Francis asked out of concern. The corner of his mouth secretly twitched a bit.

“I feel fine. I feel better than ever,” said Ell in great confidence.

Lucien felt that Ell might need some medical treatment. In his eyes, the current Ell seemed to have created a third personality to govern the previous two.

Seeing that Leviathan and Francis still looked very concerned, Ell released a sigh inside — No matter how smart humans were, their intelligence was still far from matching the mightiness of gods, so Ell decided to show his strength to them.

Ell darkened the room, turning the space into the dimension of the dead. A dense black mist rose, and spectres were hiding within. The rotten brought rich nutrition to the soil. The several plants on the ground in the room grew wildly, while the atmosphere became tranquil and peaceful.

Resurrection, fertility, redemption... Ell was no longer an avatar of the God of Flame, instead, He had now become the true God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, whose power had reached level eight, equivalent to that of a radiant knight. But Ell was still in a poor state, so the power He could use right now should be around

level seven.

Ell's godhood had changed. Was it because of Ell's own awakening? Or was it because the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption had started accumulating more devout followers?

Lucien carefully took down the notes, recording everything that he saw while making some comments beside,

"If it's the former, then this world is even crazier than I thought, as the change resembles that of one's cognitive world but seems to be more preposterous, and it means that there's still a long way to go for arcana; if it's the latter, then a theoretical system can be formed about this world with some of the untested hypotheses available, however, the key part is still missing. Be careful with further exploration. Arrogance leads to head explosion."

"If the former assumption is true, then this world might run under the Strong Anthropic Principle."

"If the latter is true, an assumption can be made here: Every human being has spiritual power, but some are stronger, while some are relatively weak. Those whose spiritual power exceeds the average level can use meditation to control and utilize spiritual power and thus become sorcerers; As for those who are not gifted in terms of spiritual power and cannot afford or find the power-trigger potion, they follow the uniform instruction and guidance from the Church and pray, so that when they pray, their spiritual power will be attuned to the same frequency and even gather together."

"If a god already has a separate entity, then this special spiritual power or better call it the power of faith, will gather together to the god. Different wishes create different godhoods, and different godhoods use the different special spiritual power to master the corresponding spell-like abilities and enhance their own power."

"This might be a proper explanation for why the Church needed followers. But if the God of Truth did exist, powerful as He is, why would the Congress of Magic still be allowed to survive? Why did the God of Truth allow the Church to be split into two? Why did cognitive worlds exist? Why didn't the God of Steam come into

being despite the fact that there were so many dwarves as followers? Why didn't the God of Truth have a specific godhood domain?"

"... According to the most shared belief in the Congress, spiritual power is a special kind of electromagnetic wave, in other words, it's a kind of invisible light. Then why are souls able to emit special electromagnetic waves?"

"... The school of Necromancy and Electromagnetism have a rough explanation — This is due to the combination of some special electromagnetic fields and some elements..."

When he wrote this sentence, Lucien paused as a strange idea suddenly occurred to him—

One day, the God of Truth might have an exclusive radio channel.

"Welcome, this is FM xxx.x, the God of Truth..."

That was very, very weird.

Although Lucien had written a lot in his spiritual library, only a few seconds in the real world. The air surrounding Ell had changed again. Twirling fierce flames filled the space; the power of destruction withered the newly-grown plants.

"Flame and destruction, level eight, radiant knight level, but still in a weak state..."

More words appeared on the notebook in Lucien's spiritual library.

"Although it seemed that Ell's power did not actually increase, he had integrated with Avando..."

This had something to do with the mind, so Lucien believed that the change came from Ell's sudden enlightenment. Lucien secretly thought that it was like curing a disabled person caused by psychogenic reasons.

As an arcanist, Lucien felt the enthusiastic desire to research rose in his heart. He longed for knowing more in-depth about the false god

standing right in front of him. He had no idea whether capturing a false god, bringing it back to Allyn and cutting it up for research would yield any results. But he was certain that observing one closely in such an invisible way, giving stimulations, and recording changes were very effective.

To study wild animals, researchers should go into the wild. It was the same with studying false gods.

At this time, Lucien heard Francis' gentle sigh. Francis smiled and praised, "my most sincere congratulations, my Lord! Your true self has been found, and my Lord, you're now the one and only almighty true god!"

"The one and only true god?" Ell asked confusedly.

"You're the projection of the true almighty, my Lord. Any other so-called gods are false ones in front of you. You're the one and only true god, as your power spread across the world. Some false gods stole your power when you were lost, but now it is time to get them back and reclaim the supreme throne." Francis praised passionately.

Lucien was also a bit lost. The one and only? Was Francis talking about the God of Truth?

Ell slightly frowned, "Are you saying that I should kill all of them and take away their divinity? Then no ally will be left." He seemed to still have some sanity remaining

"It is not necessary, my Lord. The one and only almighty only needs servants. He shall grant part of his power to His servants, my Lord, and let them work and think for Him. But the servants will never be gods, neither do they possess godhoods. The gods who obey your commands can be given this chance, but they will be just half-divine creatures. You don't have to kill them, my Lord." said Francis.

"Intermediaries between God and humanity... What shall I call them?" Ell understood Francis' words and asked full of interest.

Francis put on a flattering smile. "Angels. And there are different

ranks of angels, so they have the chance to promote.”

The look on Lucien’s expression remained unchanged, but his heart suddenly skipped a beat when he heard Francis’s proposal. Francis was trying to make another God of Truth! Who was this man named Francis? Was he studying the secrets of the God of Truth? Or did he have other purposes?

“Good.” Ell burst into hearty laughter. “I am the one and only true god!”

While Ell laughed, Francis rubbed his brows gently with a mysterious smile on his face. Lucien looked away and confirmed his plan that he must carry on his secret experiment with Ell, to observe, stimulate, and record.

The laughter stopped, and calmness returned to Ell’s eyes. “The priest of the God of Wisdom, the God of Love, and the Mother God of Earth sent messages. They have confirmed that the God of Moon and the Lord of Underworld will come and attack you tonight in order to lure me out, so they can find a chance to kill me.”

“My supreme divinity has not yet recovered. We’ll lose facing the God of Moon and the Lord of Underworld. Also, it is unknown yet if this is a trap.” Ell could never forget how he was betrayed last time.

“In the debate, my true identity has been revealed, and now the Lord of War is afraid of me. If we still stick to the previous plan, it is going to be very dangerous. Shall we leave for now to wait for future chances? What do you think, Francis, Leviathan?” Ell asked.

“No!” Francis and Lucien burst out at the same time.

Chapter 473: The Cooperation

"Why?"

It was Anheuse who asked the question.

Anheuse had come back in disguise after finishing up guiding the believers. He was very concerned about the current situation, and the decision could lead to a major consequence. Although the almighty Ell's true power had awakened, the enemy they were now facing was also much stronger than the God of Moon Asin.

Facing the enemy consisting of the Lord of War and the rest seven gods as well as their strongest priests, Anheuse did not believe it at all that Ell had a chance to win.

Therefore, although both Lucien and Francis were quite good at giving speeches, and Anheuse indeed felt quite encouraged, Anheuse would prefer to rely on his own judgment when facing this major decision, rather than blindly hoping for the great existence beyond definitions and imagination to bestow power on Lord Ell.

Hearing Lucien and Ell deny at the same time, Ell did not appear to be surprised at all.

"Say your reason." He said slowly and firmly.

Lucien felt that whether it was because Ell's psychosis became more serious or not, at least He now seemed more like a God. Ell was now calmer and more patient. Although they could not be optimistic at all facing the current situation, Ell's current attitude was definitely more convincing than acting furious and worried.

Lucien took a look at Francis and saw he was just smiling. Obviously, Francis was waiting for him to reply.

Being very cautious, Francis was still testing Lucien.

Weighing the words, Lucien said carefully, "because... because it is a chance, a very good chance."

"Chance? You mean the chance of being killed and entering the underworld?" Anheuse was quite pissed, thinking of the fact that their enemy was now at least eight times stronger than the previous.

He was pissed also because, in order to win the debate, Leviathan and Francis revealed the almighty Ell's true identity, and thus incurred the anger and fear of the Lord of War. Anheuse suspected that it was the almighty Ell who purposefully told Francis and Leviathan his true identity to ensure that the plan could be carried out smoothly. Thus, Anheuse was even feeling a bit jealous — He had been serving the Lord of Fire and Destruction for more than twenty years, yet the Lord trusted the two youngsters who just joined the Secret Praying Convention more than him.

Lucien asked seriously, "why does the Lord of War's priest want Asin and the Lord of Underworld to strike tonight? Why does the Lord of War want all of the churches to get involved?"

Ell nodded, as if He had completely understood what Lucien was trying to imply. He then turned to Francis and gestured him to elaborate.

"Because the Lord of War is afraid, afraid of the almightiness of our Lord, afraid of falling under the magnificent radiance of our Lord. The Lord of War wants to be very cautious. Before he could ascertain the current strength of Lord Ell, he does not dare to strike directly. If our Lord has awakened completely, such a dangerous move could lead to his death."

Francis made lots of praises, but the core message was simple — He and Lucien boasted so far off that the Lord of War was shocked. He became concerned about the power of the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption and therefore decided to send the rest of the eight Gods and the priests to carry out this mission. If something was indeed off, the Lord of War could easily find an excuse and tell the followers that it was just a private conflict.

In the theology debate, Francis and Lucien described the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption as a lawful good god full of mercy and kindness. As long as there was no evidence that the God

of War was directly involved in the assassination, the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption would have to show generosity and tolerance.

Meanwhile, according to the information they had, Lucien and Francis believed that the gods of the Angonormanian or Barril pantheon did not believe that there was an omniscient and omnipotent existence above, so many gods died of plotted murder and deception.

"I see..." Anheuse started getting some clues.

During the debate, Nena was acted rather calm, or at least relatively calm, during the debate. She had probably already got the plan at that time.

Ell slightly nodded, the corner of his mouth formed a imperceptible smile that disappeared in a second.

"But, our enemy is still very powerful. The eight gods, and their priests," said Anheuse in great concern. "They are too strong for us now. We'd better leave. Our Lord the almighty Ell has awakened and he will become stronger in the time to go. We can wait in patience, instead of taking the risk for literally nothing."

Lucien was a bit speechless. He wondered if he'd also start having mental problems if he continued to get around with them,

He coughed and said, "according to Mr. Francis's description, our Lord can only gradually grow stronger by taking away others' godhood. If we run away this time, the Lord of War and the rest of the false gods will find it out that we're still weak. They'll abandon any hesitations and keep trying their best to kill us outside of the valley. Then the situation will be even worse."

Before Anheuse could speak, Lucien continued. "Think about it. Except for the God of Moon and the Lord of Underworld, will the rest of the gods really work together? Only one out of the six can win our position to preach in the river valley. This seems to be a very slight chance, so will they try other plans? Say, kill the God of Moon 'by mistake', or set up a trap, or... work with us?"

"They surely will," said Anheuse with no doubt.

Ell remained rather calm, "This is indeed our opportunity if we know the right thing to do. But Leviathan, Francis, how do we know who really wants to work with us, and who schemes to betray?"

Francis grinned. "Why need we?"

Even Ell was a bit surprised this time.

"The situation is too complex, and the gods' attitude changes all the time. It's impossible for us to tell who really wants to be our ally. We can trust nobody," said Francis.

Anheuse looked at Francis in confusion.

Lucien took over and continued. "I agree. Since their attitude is changing all the time, we should not waste our time telling who are our allies. Instead, we should focus on turning everyone into our allies!

"The Lord of War is afraid of your power, my Lord, so are the rest of the gods. They are waiting to see if you are that powerful as we said. As long as we are confident enough and show them the power, I believe that they will prefer expelling the Lord of War and sharing the valley with us to fighting for the single position left.

"Yes, the message might be a trap, but it also hints their hope. If we can show it to them, we can turn the trap into our opportunity to fight back; but if we retreat, we'll lose the hope and turn the opportunity into a trap!"

Francis added just in time. "Of course, very likely they'll wait and watch on the side until the situation settles, but that is exactly what we need - Kill Asin, the God of Moon, and take our time to leave!"

"Then what? They'll know that we're using them, and the Lord of War will find it out, too." Anheuse understood Lucien and Francis' idea, yet he was still quite concerned.

Francis asked, "why are we here in Solna Valley?"

"To kill Asin, the God of Moon, and take away His godhood," answered Anheuse.

"Did the Lord of War show mercy to us before? The Lord of War was already seeking for a chance to destroy Avando a long time ago." Lucien smiled.

Anheuse nodded, "That's true. Fortunately, I am very good at disguising, or I would have been killed by his priests already."

"Did we see any help from the rest of the gods?" Francis and Lucien in turns took turns to ask their questions. Their target was not Anheuse, but the mysterious Ell.

"No, not at all. They were helping the Lord of War," said Anheuse bitterly.

"So, we're going to achieve our target, and the consequence will not be worse than before. Why not?" asked Francis.

"The most important thing now is to have our Lord's power recovered. Without power, even allies will turn into enemies." Lucien concluded.

Anheuse remained silent for a while and finally said, "I've got no more question."

When the almighty Ell took in the godhood and the power of the God of Moon, the rest of the gods would choose to be their allies themselves.

Ell smiled, "A very reasonable analysis. But what shall we do to demonstrate our strength, to make the timid be afraid, to make the plotters stand aside,?"

Francis proposed,

"Using the excuse that he profaned your glory during the debate, we will challenge the chief priest of the God of Moon to a duel. When we kill Asin's chief priest right in front of the temple, Asin will definitely take actions, or He would be abandoned by the followers. In this case, when the rest of the plotters see that we are able to kill

the God of Moon's priest even without your presence, they'll choose to be cautious onlookers, instead of directly being involved in this fight.

"If we can make a good plan and seize the best chance, we'll have enough time to kill Asin and escape when He is unprepared and the others have chosen to step aside."

His proposal was based on the premise that the divine circles of the Temple of War were still relatively undeveloped so that they could not cover the entire city like the circles in the main material world. Also, they were very close to the Solna River.

"Nob is the chief priest of the God of Moon, and his power should rival that of Jacob. Even if I give Leviathan the Seed of Spirit right now, he'll not be able to adjust to the power and kill Nob," said Ell, who had walked to the window with his hands behind. "Francis, you do it."

Unlike Ell, Jacob did not have special power or speed matching that of a radiant knight. In case of any secret tracking, he was hiding somewhere else in the city.

"I'll show my loyalty, my Lord," said Francis.

Ell nodded. "I am impressed with what you have done for me, Leviathan. When I take in Asin's power, I'll give you the Seed of Spirit. But not now. At the moment I have to keep my power intact against our enemies. This is a bracelet made of Mision stone from Solna River. It enables you to breathe and swim like fish in the water. When the fight starts, go under the water immediately and leave. Wait for us at the promised place."

Taking over the green bracelet, Lucien felt the slight amount of divine air it possessed.

.....

In the afternoon, a great stir broke out among the people in the city of Husum - Years after, another fight between two priests was finally going to take place.

A young, black-haired man mixing in the crowd was listening to the discussion attentively.

Slightly frowning, he wondered who was hiding behind this fight and what the purpose truly was.

He was the night watcher ranking no. 13 —"Body Controller" Ramiro. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Chapter 474: Blood Power

Solna River had become much fiercer after the rainy season. Roaring and rolling, the river currents marched forward.

In front of the temple that stood up high beside the river, Nob was waiting for Francis with a fine laurel wood staff in his hand and this very gloomy look on his face. He had never expected that the priest of the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption would challenge him to a duel. He wished it so bad that the duel could come one day later. After tonight, he would bear no more risk fighting against an enemy he knew pretty much nothing about, because all of them from that side would be dead by tomorrow.

Soon after the debate held in the morning ended, Nob received a secret command from Nena — The Lord of War needed the God of Moon and the Lord of Underworld to kill Leviathan and Francis tonight, in order to lure Ell out.

Therefore, he had spent the entire noon as well as afternoon sending secret messages to the God of Moon hiding in the nearby forest, and they had together worked out an almost perfect plan, including how to coordinate the priests to launch a sudden strike, how to rope in the other churches using the name of the Lord of War, and how to infuriate the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption by torturing and killing Leviathan and Francis in the most brutal manner.

However, when they were still celebrating their perfect plan and the near victory, a formal challenge letter was sent to Nob.

Nob was confused, but even more, intimidated.

And what horrified him the most was the look on the face of the God of Moon. Nob saw fear on the almighty God of Moon's face as well, fear towards the boldness of the priests of god Ell and the one behind them. In the past, no one had ever heard about Ell the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption; no one knew how strong he was, and they could only draw guesses based on the description

beyond imagination given during the debate.

Nob tried his very best to postpone the duel to the second day, but he failed. In a theocratic society, it was impossible to turn down a duel challenged in the name of profanity, as it was directly associated with the fame and reputation of one's Lord. Nob had no choice.

"... It's okay. Very possibly, they are just liars." Nob murmured to himself as he watched the crowd gather.

In the Solna Valley, before the Lord of War came into power, fights between chief priests were quite common. Therefore, people in the city of Husum were already very experienced. They would like to see the fight but were also aware that they had to stay far away from the site, say, the other side of Solna river. After all, the fights between priests weren't as plain as those between commoners, as the sound and light could be heard and seen from far away.

"I'll say that Nob will return to the embrace of moonlight today. The God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption is so powerful, and, of course, so is his chief priest," said a young man aloud beside the river. He was a new follower of the Lord of Underworld, but now he was on the edge of switching belief.

"It's hard to say. A debate isn't a fight." Refuted a devoted follower of the God of Moon.

Standing behind, Ramiro folded his arms and listened to the discussion quietly. He was quite confused as before he had never heard of the title "the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption", although he had done quite a bit of research prior to arriving in Erdo. Since the target was the God of Moon, Ramiro wondered if this new god was a role played by Alterna, or that it was a guise of the other forces.

Ramiro had turned himself into an ordinary Barril man. Standing in the crowd, he was like a drop of water in the vast ocean.

At this time, two young men wearing a simple white robe stepped onto the stairs in front of the God of Moon's temple. And the crowd

instantly quieted down.

Carrying a heavy sword, Lucien stopped when he was about ten meters away from Nob. Standing on the closer side to the river, he said seriously, "today, we fight for the glory of our Lord, and we shall fight until the last breath. Are you ready?"

Until the last breath... Anger rose beside fear in Nob's heart. He asked, "Leviathan, is it you, or Francis?"

"I am the blessed one of the great God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. I'm my Lord's spokesperson and initiator. You, the priest of a false god, are far from being qualified to fight with me. Francis, send him to the underworld, and a just trial of my Lord awaits him!" Lucien tried his best to infuriate Nob.

"False god?! I'll let you see who is the false one!" Nob, who had become infuriated, yelled furiously. He could feel the anger of his Lord in the temple behind him.

"After I kill Francis, I'll challenge you! You can't say no!"

Lucien smiled. "I have to remind you, priest Nob. A dead man cannot challenge anyone."

"You'll see!" Nob took a deep breath and tried to calm down at the moment. He had to focus on the fight against Francis, instead of losing his mind because of Leviathan's evil words.

Francis drew the heavy sword from his back with both his hands and took a step forward. Gazing at Nob, he said, "on behalf of my Lord, I shall sentence you!"

"On behalf of the God of Moon, I will punish you!" roared Nob. Hearing this sentence, Lucien almost failed to hold back his laugh.

The priest from the Temple of War announced. "Let the fight begin!"

Holding the heavy sword, Francis thrust at Nob like a fierce blow. The heavy sword swept fiercely, its power could even cut off the wind.

A silver-white moon lit up in Nob's eyes, and layers of illusions covered him, like the shadows cast by moonlight in the night.

The heavy sword hit the shadows and disappeared briefly as if it was lost in a haze.

Seizing the chance, Nob quickly pointed his laurel staff at Francis. The temperature within the range dropped significantly and a dense patch sharp icicles formed. The icicles formed a ball that trapped Francis within.

Nob was quite relieved seeing that Francis relied on the strength of his body to fight, instead of using magic. The icicles might not be able to hurt him badly, but they were totally capable of restraining him.

Facing the hideous spear-like icicles, a smile appeared at the corners of Francis' lips. He swept the heavy sword horizontally and, with a deafening roar, slashed it downwards. Surrounding him, all of sudden, eight replicas of him emerged. With the same smile, and the same heavy sword, Francis and his replicas hacked downwards together in the joint power.

But the nine heavy words had different colors — one was covered with electric currents, one with green acid, one with flame, one looked rusted and rotten, one looked colorful, one looked freezing cold... The swords were not just shadows but carried real power.

The icicles reached Francis and a thick layer of ice expanded across. However, under Francis's fierce strikes, the layer of ice instantly broke into pieces, yet there was not even a single shallow wound on Francis' body. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

The nine swords slashed at Nob, who did not have enough time to cast the next spell nor was fast enough to dodge.

Nob's body broke into pieces like glass in the mixed colors of light.

From the shadow nearby, Nob appeared again. However, he looked rather embarrassed. All kinds of demi-divine spells reached Francis,

however, Francis was not affected by them at all. Together with his eight replicas, he came right in front of Nob, and his sword was ready to taste Nob's blood.

Lightning, acid, flame, withering, toxin, ice, death, mental... Highly resistant to magic and divine power... Lucien was watching from aside analyzed Francis's blood power attentively. Without a doubt, it was the blood power called Hydra. Although Francis was only showing his power up to level seven, Lucien believed that he was at least a level-eight Hydra-blood knight. Therefore, Lucien was certain that Francis was neither a nobleman nor a knight from the Northland or the Dark Mountain Range. He was very likely a night watcher from the South or North Church, or from another secret religious organization.

There were a number of level-eight radiant knights in this world, but definitely not a lot. There was no way that a level-eight knight would pop out of nowhere. The Congress of Magic had information about most of the level-eight knights, except for those who were night watchers and those from other religious groups. Lucien carefully recalled the list, but could not relate anyone to Francis.

However, on the other side of the river, the look on Ramiro's face had changed.

It was him?

"Impressive... Such a powerful Divine-blooded..." Those priests who were hiding in the crowd could not help murmuring to themselves. They had believed that the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption was not a false god.

At this time, the Solna River suddenly surged. Waves over ten-meter high, driven by the gravity of the moon, were thrown at Francis with great momentum.

Asin, the God of Moon, finally took action!

Lucien did not hesitate. He started running very fast, but still within the controlled speed to hide his real power. After a few seconds, he had come to the cliff where was not affected by the waves. Then,

Lucien jumped directly into the Solna River.

Francis' body leaned backward, and the eight shadows followed, like a hydra roaring at the sky. The lighting, flame, acid merged together and formed into huge black waves. The two different colored waves crashed right into each other.

The blood power of Hydra was also good at controlling water!

At this time, a slim glitter of moonlight lit up. Behind Francis, an old man with a white beard holding a bent blade appeared and was about to attack Francis. Covering in moonlight, the old man was Asin in the human look!

As soon as Asin's blade reached out, His movement paused. A long, black sword carrying a great dark power of destruction came from above and slashed at His back!

Avando's supporter? Asin was both shocked and furious. Then Asin recognized that it was Avando's chief priest Jacob.

However, all the defense spells that Asin cast beforehand were for resisting the power in the field of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. The spells would not do much help facing the black sword!

Lucien had no idea what was going on above the water. Before he jumped into the water, he heard Ell's cold and detached voice.

"I sentence you to death!"

The river water embraced Lucien. The bracelet worn on his right wrist brought fresh air into his lungs. Instead of swimming along the currents, Lucien went countercurrent like a fish.

The cold light spots drifted away from Asin's body as the power of moonlight was collected by Francis. When Ell was about to kill Asin with the next hack, a long black iron arrow suddenly pierced through Ell's chest with horrible power and momentum!

"You false god!"

A terrifying roar came from the Temple of War.

It was the Lord of War! Somehow the Lord of War not in the Angornorma Empire but was in the Solna Valley, and he had joined the fight!

What attracted the Lord of War here?

Chapter 475: The Connection

Since this dimension was filled with half-solid space blocks, the speed of flying was greatly restricted. Also, since the world was relatively undeveloped, long-distance teleportation circles did not even exist. Thus, Francis and Lucien both excluded the possibility that the Lord of War would arrive and get involved in this fight when they were making the plan. After all, they thought that the Lord of War was still in the Angonorma Empire, which was quite far away from Erdo. It would take a legendary at least two days to arrive here from the empire. As for a false god like the Lord of War, it would at least take seven to eight days.

Also, no false gods would like to leave their own domain for too long. When Avando escaped after defeated by Antanas, instead of following up the victory, Antanas only asked the priests and the divine-blooded heroes to chase after Avando and himself went back to Angonorma Empire immediately. Unless facing a super serious issue, a false god would never show his full presence.

Neither did France nor Lucien expect this. The real Lord of War had used the level nine legendary power, and thus, the arrow pierced through Ell's chest.

Thoughts quickly flashed through Francis' mind:

The Lord of War must have left Angonorma Empire a week ago to arrive here now. Therefore, the impetus must not be the debate, but something else. Was the Lord of War here to eliminate all the false gods including the God of Moon? Was this debate a mere conspiracy?

But if this was the case, the Lord of War would not have to come here in full presence. An avatar of Him, plus a few chief priests and the divine-blooded heroes, would be more than enough to suppress the weaker churches. The reason should be more than this...

Only a handful of false gods in this world, such as the three Goddesses of Fate on the ice plain in the north, possess the gift of

prophecy, the Lord of War was for sure not one of them. There was very unlikely that the Lord of War came was because He sensed some kind of danger, as Ell was not a threat to the Lord of War at that moment at all — Moreover, the almighty power of Ell only existed in their bragging. Even if Ell's power would grow rapidly in the future, no prophecy spells could foresee such a remote fact at the current time.

On the rushing Solna River, the shadow of the cliffs suddenly aggregated and fiercely rose up in the air. Ell took form in the shadow but was now even weaker. Obviously, the penetration from the arrow was bad. If it had not been that he now possessed power in the domain of redemption and evaded the fatal strike by blurring life and death, He would have been completely dead by now.

Ell did not have time to rejoice over His survival — the arrow had torn down his disguise, and the Lord of Underworld and the rest of the gods had known the truth. They were now no more afraid of or concerned about Ell's power — Ell was weak.

However, the biggest threat still came from the arrow. The iron arrow was free from the limitations of space and could arrive without any trace within a blink of the eye.

The Lord of War howled again, and the horrible power gathered one more time. The false gods hiding around were ready to take action. Francis flashed past the air above the Temple of War and turned himself into a dense black cloud, blocking the sky completely.

In the dark cloud, a snake as huge as a mountain lifted its nine heads, revealing the cold, sharp fangs.

Then the hydra dived fiercely and became nine flashing black blades, the black mist winding around carrying this great power of destruction.

All the powers of the rest eight heads joined in the one in the center. The ultimate power of devastation was formed!

Therefore, a radiant knight with the bloodline of Hydra often

owned a title closely related to destruction and death, for example, the Eye of Hell.

Boom! Solna River had gone crazy. Huge waves dashed all the way up towards the sky. Those people standing on the ground could no longer keep their balance and stand on their feet anymore.

However, the Temple of War had been wrapped by the dark cloud. No one knew for sure what was going on in there, but there must be a very bad fight.

"It's you, the Haze of Destruction..." Rocking back and forth just like those ordinary people, Ramiro was actually estimating Francis' true power.

If it was Ramiro himself fighting against the Lord of War, he should be able to last over thirty seconds. If he was willing to pay for the cost, he would have a big chance of managing to escape. After all, although the Lord of War was of level nine, when it came to the real fight, His power could only rival a gold knight due to the lack of experience in real fights.

"The power of this blessed is even a bit greater than that of Avando..."

"Why was Ell so weak? Was his power still recovering?"

"Was Ell hiding his true strength?"

The rest of the gods hesitated again; they feared that Ell was indeed a powerful god in a weak state. If this was the case, Ell could still temporarily regain horrible power, and they did not want to be the one to face it.

Suddenly, the part of Solna River beside Ell became pale and full of the air of death. The Lord of Underworld, who was covered in a black robe, rose up from the water, surrounded and guarded by countless specters.

The Lord of Underworld had become the servant of the Lord of War and was allowed to preach in the valley, therefore, He had to take actions right now to prove His loyalty. Besides, the fact that the

Lord of War came here in full presence gave the Lord of Underworld confidence. Thus, unlike the other six false gods, He made a prompt decision to attack Ell.

People screamed. The rotten specters around the Lord of Underworld were too intimidating.

Two red needle-like spots of light flickered on the Lord of Underworld's face, locating the still-weak El. Dragging the heavy sickle, the Lord of Underworld came directly for Ell.

Beg for mercy! Accept my sentence!

The Lord of Underworld could not be more confident facing Ell, who was just severely injured. Hatred generated from the debate in the morning rose in his heart.

Ell could feel the freezing cold air of death. Having only partially recovered from the arrow, Ell had to utilize all of His remnant power to use His most powerful spell.

"I command you, to die!" Ell spat out two ancient Baburian words in a tone of great authority. Ell learned this divine-like spell Command after obtaining the domain redemption. The power of the Command was always one level lower in both requirements of usage and power than the corresponding magic spells of the same level.

However, there was no way that the Lord of Underworld would just be killed by a single Command. The Lord of Underworld was not a fool.

The rest of the false gods were ready to join the fight as well. Obviously, Ell's spell had failed to kill the Lord of Underworld, so Ell was not as powerful at all as his followers described.

Ell could feel the power of death from the Lord of Underworld and saw the two red light spots flickering excitedly in the two hollow eye sockets.

To be honest, Ell had tried the very best. The only thing He could do right now was continuing to cast Command. But he also knew that, due to the discrepancy between their power, His command

would be of no use at all.

To Ell's great surprised, the flickering light spots suddenly disappeared. Silently, the Lord of Underworld disappeared in the air.

What was going on?

The fake gods hiding around were all more than shocked, including Ell.

The spell of Command did not have this kind of power — the power that could just dissolve the Lord of Underworld in the air, leaving no trace at all!

Confinement Spell! The looked on Ramiro's face suddenly changed as he recognized the spell. There must be an archmage hiding nearby!

This mysterious archmage hid the magic waves when Ell was casting the Command, thus neither false gods nor Francis noticed it. But Ramiro was standing right beside the river and he was quite profound in terms of knowing magic, so he still managed to notice the tiny difference. He knew that it was the ninth-circle magic spell Confinement.

The whole thing was getting increasingly complicated. Ramiro believed that he could use some extra support now.

Shocked but exhilarated, Ell burst out laughter. "I am the true god of this world. This is my true power! My power is even much stronger than I can imagine!"

The rest of the fake gods were greatly intimidated. They were glad that they did not rush to take any action. What happened to the Lord of Underworld was their lesson. It seemed that Ell's mysterious power could never be drained!

Obviously, Ell believed that it was His own power that killed the Lord of Underworld. Ell's understanding was that when in face of the great danger, his almighty power somehow managed to gain some connection to the supreme version of himself above, and

therefore, His long-lost power resumed.

But anyway, no matter to what extent Ell believed in this explanation, He must be confident enough to make others believe in him!

Hearing Ell's laughter, the power coming from the Temple of War stagnated for a second. Seizing the chance, the nine black snakeheads joined together into a flash of sword light and fiercely chopped at the temple.

The ground trembled. Deep cracks appeared, from which black smog came out and devoured the temple.

"Leave!" Francis was still in the form of the black smog. Grabbing Ell and Jacob, who were still during the middle of the fight against the Lord of War, Francis fled away towards the horizon. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

A while later, after the black smog entangling the temple suddenly dissipated, an extremely angry roaring came out.

"You all must die!"

.....

Putting aside Sun Staff, Lucien activated Transformation Mask and turned himself into a small fish. He swam downwards at a very fast speed.

Having a false god as an experiment subject was not something that happened very often. Lucien did not want to give up halfway.

After a while, Lucien suddenly stopped — He felt that he was being watched!

The feeling flashed past very fast. Lucien carefully checked around but found nothing. Instead, he felt a strong air of death. The fish nearby were both alive and dead — they were all rotten, but somehow still swimming.

No wonder the Lord of Underworld just emerged from the water; It seemed that His realm was hiding deep at the bottom of Solna River. As soon as Lucien figured this out, he swam out of the city of Husum following the currents, since staying here for too long would be very dangerous.

Chapter 476: The Seed of Spiri

In the far west, a bright star appeared in the dusk sky, indicating the arrival of the night. The mountains along the valley started looking darker and darker.

When Lucien arrived at the secret cave as agreed, Ell, Francis, and Jacob had already been waiting there. Even with winding a long distance to get rid of the tailing false gods and priests, they still managed to arrive earlier than Lucien.

"Why so late, Leviathan?" Asked Jacob in low voice, who was at the same time casting spells to make sure that no one was following Lucien.

Ell and Francis also had the same question, as this cave was not far away from the city of Husum, and Leviathan had left the city much earlier than they did.

Lucien explained, well-prepared. "I jumped into the river but got into a bit of trouble because of the tides and waves summoned by the God of Moon. It took me some time to swim away from the currents."

"I see." Jacob nodded, feeling more relieved when he ensured that no one had followed Lucien here.

Ell looked a bit pale but was still smiling in a good spirit. "Although Asin's still alive, his godhood has been taken away, and the rest of the false gods are now all intimidated by my power. You all did very well, and you deserve good rewards."

"Our great pleasure," answered Jacob hurriedly.

At this time, Francis took out a small laurel box which revealed a slight air of divinity. The laurel box made the entire cave smell pleasant.

The box was given to Francis and Jacob by Ell, for collecting the godhood of the God of Moon. Without this box, the mundane could

never see or touch the divine power, not to mention collecting it.

"Great God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption, this is the godhood of Asin, the God of Moon," said Francis.

To Lucien's surprise, Francis handed the box containing the God's Glory to Ell just like this.

Ell was, by contrast, more in a rush. Ell eagerly opened the box right in front of Jacob, Francis, and Lucien. As soon as the box opened, rays of cool light burst out. They felt like water when touching the skin.

Without hiding his curiosity, Lucien gazed at the glory attentively.

In the wood box, the tiny fragments that looked like the silver moon seemed quite unreal, as if they were very, very far away from Lucien. Meanwhile, there were obscure images changing in the fragments, mysterious and divine.

The moonlight fragments floated in the wood box as if they were dead, occasionally contracting and expanding slightly.

... Lucien felt this scene to be rather familiar. He searched his memories, trying to recall where he once saw them.

"Guard me, you three," said Ell in a low voice. He was in great eagerness, as He had been waiting for this moment for too long. Before Leviathan arrived, Ell was worried that there probably would be enemies following behind, so He did not consume the fragments. But now, the moment of taking in the godhood of the God of Moon and resuming power had finally arrived!

"As your command," said the three followers.

Both Francis and Lucien were staring at every single movement of Ell with the same enthusiastic look on their faces.

Ell's right hand was now covered in a layer of light that possessed the soothing power of both eternity and peace. With the light, Ell reached His right hand into the wood box and grabbed the floating silver moon pieces.

The tiny pieces started aggregating under Ell's power. Gradually, they formed a small silver light ball, just like a small moon.

The light ball throbbed like a beating out, giving out an aura of indifference and divinity, just like the eternal moon watching indifferently from the night sky.

Lucien's mouth opened slightly out of great shock. He finally recalled the familiar scene!

In the reflection of the Sphinx Mausoleum in the World of Souls, there was a light ball stained by rust and blood floating above the Sphinx coffin...

In the inner part of Sun's King's underground palace, there was that white light ball floating above the palm of Thanos' statue...

Memories flashed by like the frames of a movie — clear, and shocking. Although the details of each scene were different, the aura of the power felt exactly the same!

Something struck Lucien, as if he had got a grip on part of the secret of gods and ancient demons. However, soon his mind was filled with more questions — The existence of Alterna, the silver moon, could date back to the time way before all living creatures came into being, and the birth of the powers in ancient hell and abyss was also prior to that of the most creatures. Then where did they come from? Why was there a great difference between the form of existence of the ancient seven demons and the gods including the false ones?

Was he thinking in the wrong way?

Obviously, the World of Souls still hid more secrets than Lucien thought. Meanwhile, Lucien wondered whether it was Sun's Corona or the laurel box that enabled him to see the godhood of the God of Moon.

The silver-white light ball slowly merged into the light covering Ell's right hand. The light joined.

Ell's face was distorted, as if the entire process was very painful.

Then the light suddenly expanded and embraced Ell within like a cocoon, throbbing like a heart.

After quite a while, the cold, divine light burst out from within the cocoon and quickly went into Ell's body. Now, the light was a part of Ell.

Ell opened his eyes and his pupils were now much deeper, like the starry sky, and the way Ell talked and behaved had also changed to the softer and gentler side.

"My three domains — resurrection, fertility, and redemption — have all been enhanced. My power has resumed. And now I have two new domains, specters and moonlight."

Now they should figure out a new title for Ell, with so many godhoods.

"Revival and the specters are all in the realm of Death; flame and fertility belonged to the realm of Life; Redemption and moonlight come from the power of spirit and material; while Destruction covers them all. Therefore, my lord, you are the dominator of both material and spirit, the lord of life and death. You do not have to bother constantly changing your title, you're the Supreme Lord, the Saviour. As for assimilating Asin's godhood, all you need is an avatar named Asin, my Lord."

Obviously, Francis was still pushing Ell towards the side of being 'the one and the almighty', which the God of Truth exactly featured.

Lucien watched carefully, hoping that what he saw might be able to solve some of the questions in his mind.

"Good, this is the title that matches me," said Ell. There was light in his eyes. No matter he believed in it or not in the past, from now on, this would be the only target as his motivation.

"I'll take away the godhood of those fake gods, one by one," Ell claimed.

Obviously, taking in Asin's godhood had brought Ell a completely new experience, and Ell had become obsessed with it.

Ell turned to Francis and Lucien, "Both of you have proved yourself. I'll give both of you the Seed of Spirit to make you stronger and live longer."

Ell reached out his right hand, and a white light ball fell on his palm. Compared to God's Glory, this light ball seemed to be more approachable, but still carried great divinity. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

This was the Seed of Spirit. Transformed by a god, the Seed of Spirit would be turned into God's Glory, visible to bare eyes. Lucien guessed that this was the origin of priests' power.

Although Lucien had had a rough idea of what the Seed of Spirit was, he was now even more confused. According to Ell, giving out the Seed of Spirit would reduce the power of a false god, then the number of the seeds give out must be severely restricted. However, there were thousands of pastors, priests, cardinals, grand cardinals in the Saint Truth, and all of them could exert divine power. What happened to the God of Truth? It seemed that the power of the God of Truth had way exceeded that of Alterna, making segmenting deity something more than normal and common that would not hurt the God of Truth at all. What was the difference between the God of Truth and the rest of the false gods?

"Francis, you have shown your power in the fight. It was you who helped me defeat the God of Moon. You're the one who made the biggest contribution and effort. Although this seed can only give you a chief priest's power, you can use divine power from now on. With the seed, you communicate with it using devoutness, and you'll be able to have it as part of you."

Ell was already rather good-looking. After taking in Asin's godhood, Ell's features now looked more feminine. As Ell was talking, the smile on His face was faint and a bit mysterious.

If Francis was planning on something else, he would not dare to take in the seed. If his faith fell, he would be devoured by the Seed of Spirit, both his spirit and body.

Lucien estimated that the seed would give Francis the divine-like power around level six. He carefully watched Francis, waiting to see how Francis would react.

"My devoutness is no inferior to that of anyone." Francis smiled and took over the seed. Holding it on his palm, Francis started praying to Ell.

Soon, the Seed of Spirit began trembling and buzzing, and then it dissolved into Francis's palm. Divine air covered Francis.

Lucien was so surprised that his mouth slightly opened.

Just like this?! There was no way that Francis was a devoted follower of Ell. Why Francis was not concerned at all?

Was it because Francis had his own solution?

In Lucien's mind, the secrets Francis had were no less than his.

"Leviathan, you are smart and brave. Your contribution should also be recognized. This is your seed, which will give you the power of a common divine-blooded hero." Ell was quite content seeing Francis's loyalty. He made another seed for Lucien. However, it was much less powerful.

It made sense because basically what Lucien did was just talking and talking. By contrast, Francis was the one who fought and fought very well.

Francis smiled, as he had become the onlooker. Ell, Francis, and Jacob watched Lucien take over the Seed of Spirit.

Lucien knew what happened to the ancient sorcerers who tried to borrow the power of divinity. He was well aware of the fact that the seed would bring stormy chaos to his cognitive world, and Ell, Francis, and Jacob would know.

The seed was too dangerous to Lucien. He could not just simply take it in like Francis.

"You are new in the convention, and you do not have Francis'

power. It might be hard to absorb since it's your first time. You can try multiple times," said Ell, in a tone both encouraging and urging, while Francis and Jacob were staring at Lucien and grinning.

Lucien looked down and held the seed with his both hands up to his chest. The seed touched the center of his chest.

Chapter 477: Lucien's Saint Badge

In Lucien's half-substantialized cognitive world, the bright Host Star of Destiny abruptly started orbiting. The black hole behind that seemed able to devour everything rotated to the front, bending the surrounding light. Even time seemed to slow down. Any prying into this space using basic senses became unreliable, as sight and light had deviated from its trajectory.

Praying, Lucien appeared to be rather serious and devoted. Suddenly, the Seed of Spirit began trembling like a hound that saw its bleeding prey. In the next second, the seed had dissolved into Lucien's chest and burst out pure and cold light, enveloping Lucien within.

Ell was surprised to see that the power of the moon suited Leviathan so perfectly. The slight deviation in Lucien's cognitive world made Ell believe that there was nothing suspicious about what just happened, but only the proof that Leviathan was quite gifted and trustworthy. Ell nodded approvingly and retreated his sight.

Jacob was also a bit surprised and shifted his gaze as well. Their reaction made the speculative mysterious smile disappear on Francis' face. Once again, nothing here seemed to attract Francis' interest.

The light of the silver moon gradually dissipated. Lucien now looked even calmer and introverted. He took a swing with his fist, and, not surprisingly at all, it left moonlight shadows in the air. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

"Your body took in the Seed of Spirit very well. The power of the moon suits you. The result is the best." What Ell wanted to say was that the result even exceeded his expectations. However, it suddenly occurred to him that as the Supreme, he could not admit his uncertainty about the specific power the seed carried, so he changed his words.

Jacob chimed in. "You have really become the seventh apostle now, Leviathan. It seemed that your power has reached that of a competitive divine-blooded!"

"This is the blessing from my Lord," said Lucien calmly. The seed seemingly brought calmness to him, so he was not in any wild joy at all.

Ell nodded. Next, Ell turned to instill power Jacob's Seed of Spirit, enhancing it to the limit of level six. Then Ell released a sigh and said, "It's a pity that I totally destroyed the Lord of Underworld, or I would've been able to find His realm and assimilate the godhood of death."

Ell looked rather confident, for He had managed to persuade Himself that it was His own power that killed the Lord of Underworld.

Lucien almost burst into laughter but held it back. Weighing his words, he said, "Great Lord, when I was in the water, the currents pushed me to an area which I believe is the Lord of Underworld's realm... Maybe there is treasure left..."

Confinement Spell could seal the target in a space created by distortion. Unless the target was at least three levels stronger than the caster, there was no way the target could get out. The target would either be confined in the space forever or get lost in the space maze and finally be destroyed by the space storm.

The only chance to get out for the target was to send out a message asking for help. As long as the location was known or could be located through prophecy, the ninth-circle magic spell Freedom could be used to crack Confinement.

Therefore, when Lucien helped Ell by activating Sun Staff's Confinement, he was well aware of the fact that it was the true self of the Lord of Underworld that was confined, not the avatars. The Lord of Underworld's avatars would at most become weaker due to the reduced connection.

"His realm is at the bottom of Solna River? Wasn't it in the Death

Vally where the river originates?" Asked Ell in surprise. "Did the Lord of Underworld move for fear of the possible revenge from me? Such a pity, the Death Valley is the perfect place for the godhood of death and underworld... Or was there some kind of agreement between the Lord of Underworld and the Lord of War that made the Lord of War move there at ease? Maybe it has something to do with the arrival of the Lord of War in the city of Husum and the debate..."

Ell did not doubt that Leviathan, the "devoted" follower, would lie on this matter.

Having no clues for the answers to these questions, Ell said, "Although Antanas could never expect that we would go back to the city of Husum, there's still no need for us to go back. The Lord of Underworld is dead, and the treasure is always there. When we find the realm of the rest of the fake gods after we kill them one by one, treasures are guaranteed."

In the past, Avando had been obsessed with treasure and beauty. But now, Ell, after awakening the ambition and vision, was now able to control the desire. There was nothing more important than ascending the supreme throne again.

Ell smiled and then threw Lucien the laurel box that had started to rot. "If you like treasure, I'll give you some, as your reward."

Lucien took the box and saw a layer of fine silver powder lying at the bottom, which seemed to be the remainders after Ell consumed the light ball that was the godhood of Asin.

It was powder of the Stone of Moon God! Lucien was very surprised, as it was even more precious than top-quality Moonlight Stone or Death Stone. More importantly, the powder could be used to repair Lucien's Ice & Snow Medal and Immortal Throne robe!

Lucien was about to use other materials to fix the medal and the robe, but now he had found this much better alternative.

The smile on Francis' face became rigid for a second — He also wanted the powder.

Jacob said cautiously after hearing Ell's ambition, "we have to be careful. The false gods might join the Lord of War and use themselves as baits. We can wait for a while until the Lord of War's patience wore off, and then we can deal with them one by one."

"I know." Ell nodded and said, "Leviathan is smart and motivated, Francis is powerful and profound, and Jacob is cautious and well-organized. You three are my best servants."

After Francis, Lucien, and Jacob expressed their loyalty one more time, Ell continued, "Francis once talked to me about the ranks of angels, and I am satisfied with it. You three are the most powerful angels following me. Francis, you have the power of destruction, so you are the Angel of Death, and also the Angel of Justice.

"And you, Jacob, you are my first follower and you have ever been preaching my words. You are the Angel of Enlightenment, and also the Angel of Redemption. You, Leviathan, you are the new and youngest apostle, full of energy. So you are my Angel of Glory, the Morning Star, the Son of Dawn."

Lucien was a bit speechless. He wondered why the title "the Fallen Morning Star" followed him to this alternate realm.

"I will go back to my realm to enhance my godhood and stabilize my domain. Jacob, go back to Politown and get ready for preaching. Also, send some followers to watch over the false gods and to take down records in order to assist Francis for future plans. Leviathan, you go to the place we previously agreed on to wait for Anheuse and then go back to Politown with him. On your way back, start preaching but do it secretly." Ell gave orders to them one by one, leaving Lucien to wait for Anheuse because it was known that Leviathan could not fly.

"As your command, my Lord," answered the three in chorus.

After Ell, Jacob, and Francis all left, Lucien finally released a sigh of relief. They, Francis in particular, were giving him great pressure.

After waiting for another while to make sure that they were not somehow coming back, Lucien touched his chest and took out a

patterned badge covered in a layer of moonlight.

Before joining the Secret Praying Congress, Lucien was told about the Seed of Spirit. The existence of it was constantly being mentioned afterward. Cautious as Lucien, he must have been prepared.

After reading through the materials, based on the features of the false gods and their power, referring to the design of Sun's Corona, Lucien made a semi-finished badge using the materials he had.

Although at that time he did not have the full grip of the structure that he learned from Sun's Corona, Lucien was still quite confident that it could absorb the power of the Seed of Spirit and turn into a complete divine item.

After knowing how God's Glory and the Seed of Spirit worked, Lucien was totally confident that his plan would work. Therefore, he took his time watching how Francis took in the power of the seed.

Then, as the Secretive, Lucien successfully deceived Ell and Francis, who never thought of thoroughly investigating Leviathan. Relying on the resonance from Sun's Corona, Lucien absorbed the Seed of Spirit using this badge and turned it into a level-three divine item.

The badge could improve the wearer's recovery ability, agility, speed, and strength to level three. If the wearer's Blood Power originated from the silver moon, then the level would be increased to four. But, since the badge did not improve the wearer's reaction speed, a real level four grand knight would still be more competitive.

Lucien left the message within the item and named it,

"Ell's Saint Badge, level-three senior-rank divine item."

...

"Perhaps, this badge is the truly devoted follower.

"From Lucien Evans."

Hanging the badge under his robe, Lucien started fixing the two magic items using the powder. Then he would be meeting Anheuse.

.....

At the bottom of Solna River, among the currents, there was dim light emerging. The voice of the Lord of Underworld came,

"I'm finally free! I will kill you, Ell! I'll put your soul deep into the underworld and lash it for ten thousand years!"

Somehow the Lord of Underworld had freed Himself from Confinement and returned to this dimension.

After the dizziness from teleportation disappeared, the two red light spots in the Lord of Underworld's sockets suddenly froze,

The Lord of Underworld saw no one around, but he thought that it was his avatar finding the Lord of War for help that freed him.

As soon as this thought appeared, a sword entangled with flame emerged out of nowhere, carrying an overwhelming power of destruction.

A deep crack appeared the body of the Lord of Underworld. The two red light spots disappeared easily, like candlelight that was blown out.

.....

"My sincere appreciation and gratefulness, my Lord. I did not expect this at all... It was all my fault." After losing the power for maintaining the human look, Asin now had gone back to his real look — an old centaur. As Asin spoke, his white beard swayed fiercely. He was obviously very upset.

The Lord of War, whose appearance was a middle-aged man wearing an eye patch, nodded. "The enemy is too cunning, and the rest of the gods are too timid. You are the first one serving me in loyalty, and I will treat you well.

"This godhood is from a false god I killed last month. It suits you, so

take it."

A light ball was sent to Asin from the Lord of War's hand.

It was a great surprise to Asin, as he never expected that the Lord of War would make such a generous reward.

"My Lord, this is... godhood of the Morning Star?" Asin stammered.

"The Star of Morning, the Star of Dusk, the Incarnation of Love and Beauty, the Secret Death and Resurrection. After you take in the godhood, you will become Ell's main target," Antanas said rather openly. The four duties coming from the godhood would be a great tempt to Ell, as nothing else other than the godhood of the Lord of Underworld and this one worked better for Ell to boost his power.

The Lord of War was using Asin as a bait, obviously. After a second of hesitation, Asin still took in the light ball. There was no other option.

As Asin absorbed the godhood gradually, His body started to change. Features of the centaur and the beard disappeared, the shape of human body resumed, but now Asin had turned into a gorgeous beauty with fine skin and blond hair.

"Good. From now on, you're the God of Love and Beauty, the Star of Morning and Dusk," said Antanas, satisfied, as he reached out his right hand and touched Asin's face.

After Asin left, the hall became quiet again, and cold wind blew in. Antanas just stood there in silence for a long time.

Chapter 478: Face to Face, But Not Able to Recognize

In city Husum of the Solna River Valley, there were soldiers everywhere searching for preachers and believers of the God of Revival, Fertility, and Redemption. The searching messed the entire city, and the mess extended all day long into the deep night.

However, the search yielded nothing. Most of the followers of Ell were the previous followers of the God of Flame and Destruction, who were experts in hiding in the crowd. Unless the clergies of the Lord of War and the other gods could match in number with that of the Saint Truth Church so that they could examine the people one by one on the street using divine spells, it was impossible that they could find a clue tracking the secret preachers.

As for those new followers of Ell who converted after attending the debate and seeing how Ell killed the Lord of Underworld within a second, they were of no value for the searching, as these new followers knew nothing about the initiators and priests.

"Send out these letters and do as said in the letters. This is the prepayment. When my friend sees the mark and finds you, you'll get the rest," said Ramiro who had changed his look again to a merchant.

The traveling merchant nodded hurriedly and took over the gold coins and the letters. The pay was too generous to make him say no!

He wished to hit the road right away! He was so lucky to run into such a wealthy man!

In fear of the mysterious ninth-circle archmage and the Lord of War, Ramiro decided to reach the three top night watchers who had arrived in Erdo with him, the five senior-rank priests, two gold knights, and six radiant knights investigating the meteorite incident that happened three years ago in the north to ask for help. Something going on here was definitely not right!

Because of the certain restriction in this dimension, the Church only managed to set up a few teleportation circles in the fully-controlled countries. In remote areas, they still had to rely on the most primordial methods to communicate.

Ramiro also decided that currently there was no necessity to report this to the grand cardinals and Varantine, the leader of the ascetics, who were investigating different things across the dimension. They were already short of hands, and aside from the unconfirmed existence of the mysterious archmage, there was nothing worthy of attention here

Three years ago, many places in this dimension witnessed meteor showers, making it impossible to know where Alterna and the mysterious existence from the World of Souls exactly ended up falling. Ramiro had to find a chance to approach the false god who took away the godhood of the God of Moon. Somehow, all the dimensions where human beings were living shared a similar length of day and night and the length of a year like the main material world. In the dimensions not suitable for humans to live, it was the opposite case.

When Ramiro turned around and was about to leave, he heard the nearby people talking,

"I heard that the Lord of Underworld had been killed by the almighty Lord of Redemption. Keep it as a secret: The statue of the Lord of Underworld in the temple cracked right from the middle, and most of the priests of the Lord of Underworld had lost their power."

"Really? I remembered that the almighty God of Redemption only said two words at that time!" Said another man. Ordinary folk like him could not understand ancient Baburian.

"So what the priests said on the debate is true. When the searching comes to an end, I'll..." The man who was talking did not finish his words, as he could not fully trust the people he was talking to.

"Don't say that too early. If Ell is that powerful, Ell would have killed Asin a long time ago. But now Asin had resumed his power

and became the God of Love and Beauty, the Star of Morning and Dusk. Now, Asin's priests are receiving the new power," said another man, who was the follower of Bero, the God of Sun and Justice.

Ramiro was very surprised to know that so many things had happened. The Lord of Underworld had died! Who did it?

According to the Church, the temper of those false gods changed greatly as they took in different godhoods, and some of them ended up being driven by their desire and losing the ability of thinking. When Ramiro was thinking to himself, he noticed something unusual — When those people were talking, one of them was obviously absent-minded and kept looking around.

There was definitely something wrong with this guy. Ramiro believed that this man was not the follower of the Lord of Underworld, because the man was not interested in the conversation at all.

Ramiro decided to follow this short, young man. As an experienced night watcher, Ramiro was very sensitive to anything worthy of investigation.

In an ordinary mud hut.

Reis, the short young man, sneaked into the hut after carefully checking around. Anheuse was waiting in the hut.

Reis said to Anheuse, "my dear Initiator, the almighty Lord of Redemption and the rest of the initiators have left the city. The number of guards at the city gate has been reduced. I was also told that..."

Anheuse was left in the city to deal with the remaining issues after their original plan failed. Due to the strict search, Anheuse had been waiting for the chance leaving this city for quite a while.

Hearing Reis' information, Anheuse drew a cross in front of his chest and said, "my Lord's almighty power is profound. The Lord of Underworld tried to betray the true lord, severe punishment then

ensues. You can leave now. When everything settles down, I'll preach to you about the blessedness granted by the Lord."

"We only follow the Lord of Redemption." Reis also drew a cross in front of his chest and left in respect.

Watching Reis go, Anheuse locked the door and was about to put the makeup on to disguise himself. At this time, someone gently patted him on the shoulder, and he heard a low laugh just beside his ears.

"I'd like to hear about the blessedness granted by the almighty Lord of Redemption as well."

.....

The silver moon hung high in the night sky. It was late and silent, and Lucien was waiting for Anheuse beside the river in the darkness.

After quite a while, Lucien finally saw Anheuse came stealthily.

"Are you here, Leviathan?" Asked Anheuse in low voice.

After he made sure that it was truly Anheuse, Lucien walked out from the darkness. "It's late. You got in any trouble?"

"A bit..." answered Anheuse briefly. "Leviathan, I suppose you've earned the Seed of Spirit from the Lord, right?"

Lucien was a bit surprised to hear this question. The timing seemed to be quite bad. But he still answered, "yes, the almighty Ell gave both Francis and me the Seed of Spirit. Jacob was awarded, too. When you return to Politown, you'll receive your award as well."

"I see... is it powerful? How does it work?" Anheuse asked eagerly and looked a bit jealous.

Lucien understood how Anheuse felt, so he smiled. "It's just for improving my strength, speed, agility, and the ability to recover. Plus my inherent strength, I can now fight against a divine-blooded hero."

"Good," Anheuse's voice revealed a slight of his joy, as if he was glad to know that there was nothing special about Leviathan's Seed of Spirit. "Alright, we should go now."

Deep inside, Anheuse was indeed happy. Because he was, in fact, Ramiro the Body Controller. Ramiro had killed Anheuse after absorbing his conscious memories and body cells.

Ramiro felt so blessed for being this lucky. Finding Anheuse meant that he could now find Francis and figure out why they wanted the godhood of the God of Moon. When Ramiro found that he could not cast all of Anheuse's divine spells and was concerned that this might be his major flaw, the apostle he found named Leviathan was not able to tell this at all, since the Seed of Spirit Leviathan received was just for improving his physical strength. What's more, Ramiro could easily turn himself into Leviathan, and then he would be perfectly safe.

Ramiro was rather pleased with himself. He believed that this was because of his many years of loyalty to his Lord.

Glancing around, Ramiro was about to take action.

Lucien suddenly realized that there was something wrong with Anheuse's words! Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

If Anheuse was feeling jealous of the award that a new apostle received, and was concerned that the power of a new apostle might exceed his, why did he not ask about Francis?

Anheuse was a loyal follower of Ell. Then why did Anheuse not mention anything about Ell?

His eyes narrowing slightly, Lucien pretended that everything was fine, while he was ready to take action at any time. He wondered if Anheuse had probably been possessed by a false god.

Ramiro had made sure that no one was around. A creepy smile appeared on his face, and the inner part of his body started

wriggling.

In Ramiro's eyes, Leviathan was like a vulnerable lamb that had no power to defend himself.

They were now out of the city of Husum. Ramiro could take his time absorbing Leviathan's memories and investigate him.

The smile on Ramiro's face became bigger. He was going to show this innocent lamb his horrible power.

At this time, suddenly, a person arrived and landed on the ground, stopping Ramiro before he could take action.

"Francis?" Lucien was now even more alert.

Francis grinned. "I'm interested in the treasure left by the Lord of Underworld. Leviathan, take me there."

Although Ell was deeply convinced that the Lord of Underworld was killed by his own power, Francis believed that, based on what he saw, it was Confinement or a maze spell. He suspected that an archmage had also arrived in the city of Husum and the archmage's target was the Lord of Underworld.

.....

In the realm of the God of Sun and Justice, Bero was pacing back and forth in the hall in annoyance. Although the Lord of War had withdrawn the order of expelling Them temporarily, if They failed to kill Ell within a year, more severe punishment would be waiting for them.

Considering this over and over again, Bero thought of the mysterious lady who visited the temple a few days ago claiming that she was selling secret knowledge.

Bero hoped that her secret knowledge could help Him become more powerful, so that not only Ell, but also Antanas... Bero had made up His mind.

After a long time, a gorgeous blond lady as beautiful and pure as an

elf entered the realm, led by Bero's chief priest.

"Ms. Sophia, what secret knowledge do you have?" Asked Bero straightforwardly.

Sophia's jade-green eyes were clear and her smile was innocent and sweet. She took out a few books from her pouch and said, "it depends on what you want, revered God of Sun.

"I have the Book of Honesty, the Book of Order, the Book of Kindness and so on, as well as the ultimate one, the Book of Virtue."

Chapter 479: A Good Place

Chapter 479: A Good Place

The moonlight spread gently on the river bank, making everything look a bit fuzzy like it was in a dream.

Hearing Francis' words, Ramiro was quite surprised. He then purposefully put on a greedy look and asked, "the treasure of the Lord of Underworld? Can I go with you?"

In the city of Husum, when Ramiro first heard that the Lord of Underworld had been killed, he was more than shocked. The ninth-circle spell Confinement was not Command Death, it should not be able to kill a fake god!

Once, there was a demon count who had been confined for over a thousand years but was still alive. He was set free by the hard effort of his numerous followers when the power of Confinement started fading. Therefore, Ramiro seriously suspected that the ninth-circle archmage had just confined the Lord of Underworld and would release this false god at some point after he made enough preparations to kill Him swiftly.

Ramiro would like to further investigate this, but he knew neither where the Lord of Underworld was being confined nor where the Lord of Underworld's realm was. So he had temporarily put this aside and turned to investigate the godhood of the God of Moon instead.

Knowing that it was Leviathan who found the realm of the Lord of Underworld, Ramiro was very eager to go there and try to see what actually happened to the Lord of Underworld to make Him the pray of a ninth-circle archmage.

Because of the death of the Lord of Underworld, Ramiro had ruled out his last bit of suspicion towards Leviathan. Ramiro saw it with his eyes that Leviathan jumped into the water, and that was possibly where the Confinement was cast.

Obviously, there was no time for Leviathan to go back and forth between the several agreed places without attracting Francis' attention as both of the places were relatively far away from the city of Husum, unless Leviathan had the legendary level power.

However, if that was the case, there would be no necessity at all for Leviathan to hide around. Instead, he could just directly sweep over Erdo.

"A false god's treasure must be very abundant, and I don't mind you taking a portion, Anheuse," said Francis with a smile. His main purpose of going there was also to figure out what happened to the Lord of Underworld. "You can help us, so we can finish our searching as soon as possible before the Lord of War notices."

With the same smile on his face, Francis asked Leviathan casually, "Leviathan, don't you want to go? I thought you were longing to go."

"If it was me alone, I wouldn't go for sure. Who knows what horrible things are hiding in the Lord of Underworld's realm. But now since you two are in, I'll definitely not miss it!" Lucien pretended that he was zealous. He had his own purpose for going to the domain — to investigate the mysterious sight he felt when he swam past it and the reason why the Lord of Underworld suddenly chose to move to the bottom of Solna River. Maybe he would also be able to find some good materials for fixing his magic items.

Ramiro frowned. "Then we must hurry. The realm would slowly collapse and disperse after the death of the Lord of Underworld."

After they enter the realm, Ramiro could find a better chance to kill Leviathan behind Francis' back to steal Leviathan's identity. And then he could put all the blame onto the unpredictability and strangeness of the realm.

"Show us the way, Leviathan," said Francis leisurely. In his knowledge, the Lord of Underworld was just confined, and his incarnations still existed, therefore, the domain was not going to disperse.

Lucien had the same opinion as Francis, but neither of them expressed it out. After all, Ell and his devoted followers were deeply convinced that the Lord of Underworld was killed by Ell.

Wearing the stone bracelet, Lucien took the initiative and jumped into the river, followed by Francis. Ramiro used his blood power to cast a divine-like spell on himself to breathe underwater and followed behind quietly.

Swimming against the currents for quite a while, after passing the old watergate, the three of them had approached the realm of the Lord of Underworld. For a second, Lucien sensed the weird feeling of being looked at again.

“It’s here,” said Francis, nodding when he saw the schools of half-rotten fish. Relying on his acute sense of the power of death, he started leading Lucien and Ramiro to swim down towards the bottom of the river.

Past the clusters of strange-looking, pale water reed, Francis purposefully hit a common-looking stone. Then, the stone quickly distorted and turned into a heavy, black gate that emitted a strong scent of death.

The stone gate was very dilapidated. The black paint was falling in tiny pieces, and the inner material was rotting.

“The Lord of Underworld died?!” Francis casual smile froze on his face — Wasn’t it Confinement?!

Both Lucien and Ramiro looked at Francis in confusion. “What do you mean? The Lord of Underworld died days ago.”

There was a hidden mocking in Ramiro’s tone.

Although the look on Lucien’s face was the same as that of Ramiro, Lucien was actually clenching his fists really tight, so tight that his nails almost sank in the skin. Lucien was, in fact, as shocked as Francis, if not more.

Lucien was the one who cast Confinement. No one knew about the situation better than him. However, now the Lord of Underworld

had really died, but Lucien had no clue about this at all.

“Still... Seeing it with my own eyes feels different.” Francis had resumed his usual calmness and casualness. He was not afraid of any suspect from either Anheuse or Leviathan, as, after all, he had taken in the Seed of Spirit, and he was the most powerful one among them.

Ramiro turned to look at the black stone gate and started looking for ways to open it. Later, if there was an opportunity, he could also kill Francis, which would be a good extra credit to him.

“According to the doctrine and the legends, in the Lord of Underworld’s realm, there are seven stone gates outside of His palace. Every gate should be opened with an oblation, or one would be trapped between two gates until one’s soul dissolves.” Francis introduced briefly. “But now the domain is collapsing, and the underworld guards have fallen into sleep, we can use anything to open it.”

Francis picked up a pebble and insert it into the big keyhole in the stone gate.

Within Francis’s expectation, light burst out from the black gate and the gate silently opened for them. Behind the gate, there was bitter and painful groans and moans, and the wind came was freezing cold.

Francis did not hesitate and took the initiative to walk in. Lucien followed him in full alert. However, it wasn’t until a minute later when Ramiro finally came in.

Standing in the overwhelming darkness, Ramiro hurriedly explained. “I’ve cast a couple of spells, in case the power of death is too strong.”

Ramiro was extremely cautious about stepping into the domain of the Lord of Underworld. No one knew that if the ninth-circle archmage was here or not.

Francis did not say anything. He turned to walk to the next gate

dimly lit up by luminous moss.

Suddenly, distorted pale faces emerged in the darkness, men and women, young and old. Floating in the air, they aimed directly towards Francis, Lucien, and Ramiro full of hatred and viciousness.

Dark haze rose from Francis's body and filled in the space. The pale faces immediately disappeared silently as soon as the haze reached them.

"The place is fading, and the specters are out of restrictions now." Francis reminded them.

He took out a silver coin and opened the next gate.

Then, the three of them run into all kinds of low-rank specters as well as mummies. With Francis, a radiant knight, walking in the front, the specters imposed no big threat to them at all. From time to time, Francis would miss a few, but level-four knight Leviathan and level-four priest Anheuse were able to handle them.

When the sixth stone gate opened, what was behind the gate was no longer pure darkness, but dim bright fog.

In the fog, many figures were moaning and writhing on the ground; many were starving to death, too weak to cry out; many were crying in fear, but were sent to the altar by the indifferent and cold crowd; some were being torn apart into pieces by beasts; some were killed by the fights between gods and priests; some were drowned to death because of the flood summoned by gods; some were dying on battlefields during wars; some were being slaved, being killed by beasts to please the nobles...

In the fog was real hell depicting the pain that ordinary people were suffering from in this world.

"Let's go. We pray in piety, so we won't be influenced." Ramiro inherited part of Anheuse's memory and knew what to do now.

Walking in the haze, Lucien could hear sounds of sharp screaming in agony. The thin, pale arms trying to grab him in desperation were like spreading tree branches. However, the sound and the

scene did not cause a stir in Lucien's mind. The arms directly went through Lucien's body as if they were just shadows.

When they got out of the haze, two stone gates emerged in the front. Both of them were dispersing.

"Two ?" Francis asked Ramiro.

Ramiro shook his head, "No idea. But we'd better hurry. Let's take different paths here. You're the most powerful one among us, Francis, so you take one yourself. Leviathan and I will take the other."

Like a wolf stalking a lamb, Ramiro knew that his opportunity was coming.

"Alright. Let's split and hurry up, or we wouldn't be able to search all the places." Francis agreed and went into the gate on the right.

Ramiro turned to look at Leviathan with a smile on his face. "Let's go."

"Sure." Lucien smiled back.

Behind the left gate was a corridor alined with stone pillars. The winding corridor extended into the far side. It was empty and silent, the perfect place for killing.

Seeing that Leviathan had lowered his alert, Ramiro was ready to take action after passing around the corner, when they were far from Francis.

After several minutes of walking, they turned right along the corridor. There were rooms along both sides, but still nothing around.

This was such a good place for Ramiro.

A ferocious smile appeared on Ramiro's face as he examined Lucien from behind.

Chapter 480: Twists and Turns

All the previous events had eliminated Ramiro's suspicion towards Leviathan and made him believe that Leviathan only had the equal to that of a level-four knight. Yet although now in Ramiro's eyes Leviathan was of no threat to him at all, he was still being very cautious. He was, after all, a high-ranking night watcher that had secretly assassinated and directly slain many powerful heresies. Except for the mysterious smile on his face, his behavior revealed none of his inner thoughts, for he needed to make sure that Leviathan would not be alerted so that he could kill Leviathan within one single strike.

Ramiro's guts and organs started melting into a pile of muddy flesh. Soon, Leviathan would be completely wrapped by the flesh, digested, and absorbed. To reduce the possible risk, Ramiro had decided to devour Leviathan directly without wasting time on interrogating him.

"Leviathan" did not sense the danger at all.

His ankle bending slightly, Ramiro was about to jump onto Leviathan. However, at this very moment, Francis' cheerful voice came from behind.

"Here you are!"

Damn it, it was the second time! Ramiro stopped himself in the last second, stumbling. Ramiro followed the momentum and turned around, his pace a bit pale. "What, Francis? You scared me there!"

Lucien was also a bit startled. "Anything wrong with that side?"

Francis grinned. "Behind the gate is the Bridge of Soul. Both the Styx and the Bridge have dispersed severely and were in a terrifying state of voidness. I can't pass."

"Then we really have to hurry up. The same thing might happen to this side as well," said Lucien as he signalled the two to hurry.

Francis nodded and again walked in the front. Ramiro followed them, feeling quite frustrated. He wondered if his blessing had come to the end. It seemed that his luck had started to leave.

He prayed in his mind, hoping the proper chance that he could absorb Leviathan would come.

In front of the corridor, darkness resumed again. A grayish-white river where countless bodies and bones were floating appeared, winding to the unknown far end.

"Is this the Styx?" Lucien examined it curiously.

Ramiro nodded, "Yes. Every drop of the Styx came from a bitter and sorrowful soul. Even the gods would become crazy after touching it, the Lord of Underworld is the only exception."

There was a canoe beside the riverbank, but the canoe-man had disappeared because of the collapse of the entire realm.

"How was the realm formed? Consciousness and matter, which comes the first?" Asked Francis in the tone of a philosopher. The person he was asking was, of course, the experienced initiator Anheuse.

The first question was also a question shared by Lucien. He first thought that a realm was something like a sorcerer's demiplane, but the collapse of a legendary sorcerer's demiplane was not caused by the sorcerer's death, but rather the destruction of the cognitive world.

Ramiro answered with a cold smile. "The power of faith gathered, and gods form godhoods from the power. The remnant power formed the realm depending on the god and the godhood. The power of a god can be greatly improved when the god is in His own domain. When a god falls, if his godhood had nowhere to go, or if the other god who takes away the godhood is unwilling to maintain the realm, the space will gradually collapse. The escaped power of faith will follow the guidance of godhood and come to it."

The godhood with nowhere to go to would dissipate gradually.

"No wonder you are the initiator, Anheuse." Francis smiled and stepped onto the canoe.

Ramiro thought to himself that the real Anheuse would have never articulated the idea as clear as he did.

When Leviathan and Anheuse were both on board, the canoe set off. On the surface of Styx, the canoe moved silently as if it was on a mirror.

When they reached the other side and got off the boat, they saw the magnificent palace enveloped in a haze right in front of them. There were huge stone columns supporting the giant domes. Everything consisting of the palace looked very real, not like those things they saw earlier, which looked illusory.

"This is the place where the Lord of Underworld lived. Five thousand ordinary men were sent here and labored to death as sacrifices. It's quite something that the Lord of Underworld even moved such a huge palace from the Death Valley to this place," said Ramiro.

Both Lucien and Francis had heard of this before, as it was recorded in the doctrine of the Lord of Underworld.

In such a primitive religion, fear was always the most commonly used method for ruling followers, and thus sacrifice was among the most frequently mentioned words. Some false gods, especially those who were greatly influenced by their godhoods, were obsessed with the blood rituals and live sacrifices, including the previous Lord of Fire and Destruction, Avando. However, after becoming the Lord of Redemption, Ell had greatly calmed down and had never shown this tendency again.

"This palace is huge. Let's go separate," suggested Ramiro again.

Francis agreed. They still had to save time for getting out. As for what they would find in the palace, Francis would be able to check them secretly later using his powers.

Lucien also agreed as he was seeking for Adamantine, Mythril,

Orichalcum, Ice Iron, Soul Stone, and Meteoric Iron to refine the alloy unique to the Will of Elements for fixing his Holm prize rings. Of course, those materials for fixing his medal, staff, belt, and gloves were also his targets.

Pushing open the palace gate, Francis walked straight to the front, Lucien turned left, and Ramiro entered the left side of the palace.

A while later, Ramiro secretly came back to the main hall. He cast an alert look at the direction chosen by Francis. After making sure that there was no sign of Francis coming back, Ramiro's sullen face disappeared in the darkness.

Silently moving in the darkness like a shadow, Ramiro was approaching his target.

A radiant knight's velocity was amazing. Pass the corridor and the rooms, Ramiro soon saw Leviathan, who was searching every corner of this place cautiously with the sword in his hands.

At the end of the corridor, there was a black metal gate with a white skull and a river of blood drawn on it. The death power on it was almost gone after the falling of the Lord of Underworld.

What Lucien was holding was just a common steel sword, given by Ell as an award when Lucien left Politown.

Staring at the gate, Lucien grabbed the sword tight with both of his hands and hacked at the white skull in the middle. Then Lucien dropped the sword, letting the sword taking away the rest of the death power on the gate.

When the steel sword dropped on the floor, it sounded like a rotten piece of wood.

Lucien pushed open the gate, and finally saw the treasure left by the Lord of Underworld: Most of it was gold, silver, and gems, dazzling under the candlelight. In the middle, there were different pieces of metal, exotic items, and divine weapons.

Lucien saw Mythrill and Soul Stone at first glance. Meanwhile, he became more alert and spread out his spiritual power, for he had no

idea whether or not there were still any guards around. Also, it was possible that Francis and Anheuse would kill him to take away all the treasures, especially Anheuse, who seemed to be a bit strange.

Standing behind in the darkness, Ramiro thought that Leviathan must have been shocked seeing such abundant wealth. It was a great opportunity for him!

The opportunity that he had been waiting for so long!

Ramiro sprinted out from the darkness!

However, the minute when he jumped out, Ramiro sensed a stranger coming from the other side of the corridor.

Damn! Ramiro almost went nuts. It was just such bad luck!

However, he had no better options. Ramiro rushed into the treasury and sent a secret, silent message to Lucien,

"Hide! Someone's coming!"

Lucien had sensed Ramiro's presence when Ramiro was about to jump on him, as well as the stranger. Following Ramiro, Lucien went into the treasury and hid in the corner where nothing could reflect him.

Half a minute later, an elegant and fine-curved figure secretly sneaked in. Lucien saw the reflection on a piece of metal: It was a gorgeous, goddess-like beauty. Each of her movements was full of bewitching charm, but somehow Lucien felt the lady quite familiar.

He was a bit confused, as he did not remember seeing this lady before.

The gorgeous lady walked to the other side of the treasury. Then light like the first rays of the morning sun poured out from her body, and a secret gate was exposed.

However, there was nothing behind the secret gate.

"It's gone? Didn't He obtain a powerful thing from where Solna

River originated..." Murmured the beauty to herself in a low, sexy voice.

Both Lucien and Ramiro recognized her at the same time and felt the godhood possessed by the lady. She was Asin, the God of Moon! How come He became female? It seemed that Asin had got some new godhood related to beauty and morning glory.

Since Asin was about level seven, and both Lucien and Ramiro had to avoid showing their true power to each other, they chose not to jump out. They watched Asin casually take away a couple of divine items and entering into another secret tunnel. It seemed that she could come back at any time for the rest of the treasure.

After a while, Ramiro walked out and smiled. "I was following Asin."

Of course, Lucien did not believe him at all.

Seeing the serious look on Leviathan's face, Ramiro grinned. "You don't believe me? It's okay. No one is gonna interrupt me now."

Thank God. After three interrupted attempts, he could finally eat Leviathan in!

Ramiro's body started wriggling like there were no bones in it.

Lucien instantly recognized who he was. He forcedly gave up the plan of using Confinement and Maze, because Ramiro could get out at any time by self-explosion.

Like a pile of muddy flesh, Ramiro jumped towards Lucien, leaving Lucien nowhere to retreat.

Suddenly, Ramiro's mind paused a bit as he saw a flash of green light in Leviathan's eyes. Then he felt that his level of magic resistance had been greatly reduced.

Resistance Reduction?

He was a sorcerer?! Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for

visiting.

Ramiro saw dim light on Leviathan's robe forming a deadly grey ray shooting directly toward him.

Without any preparation, Ramiro was shot by the very fast ray. He felt that his body was full of this negative energy and his power had been greatly reduced by at least one level.

Weakening Ray? He was the ninth-circle archmage?

Damn it!

Ramiro had fallen into great depression and desperation. For a second, he even started doubting the God of Truth.

Why did his Lord not warn him of the great danger, and why had the blessing abandoned him?

However, he soon found an explanation:

He had been interrupted for three times. The God of Truth had warned him for three times. It was his arrogance that blinded his eyes!

Chapter 481: The Strange Encounter

Lucien Evans! He was Lucien Evans!

Although Ramiro's power had been reduced to level seven, he still recognized who this young man was as Lucien did not even try to conceal his magic waves. Ramiro had a much deeper understanding of what kind of danger he was now facing.

After twelve seconds, his power would probably be further reduced by one level. If that was the case, Ramiro would have no chance at all fighting against Lucien Evans who had numerous powerful magic items. Ramiro knew that Lucien Evans had a powerful magic staff inlaid with Sun Stone that could cast Confinement. If Lucien Evans got the chance to curse his soul or intervene with his destiny, it would be the end of Ramiro!

What was worse to Ramiro was that it was not his first time fighting with Lucien Evans, and Lucien Evans had for sure seen how he exploded but still survived. Now that his biggest secret weapon had been revealed to Lucien, Lucien would definitely take precautions against it.

Lucien Evans cast two magic spells successively. Seeing this, Ramiro believed that Lucien Evans was in the middle of the buffering time for the next round of casting.

This was the best opportunity for him to turn the tables. The longer he waited, the more dangerous it would be!

He had to make a decision, right now.

Lots of uncontrolled thoughts flashed through Ramiro's mind. But within a second, Ramiro, an experienced fighter, made the best decision based on the current situation — to explode himself!

Although it had been his second time exploding himself in the recent two to three months, although he had not recovered from the last self-explosion, although this might leave his body damaged for a long time and prevent him from reaching the next level, Ramiro

still made the decision! Hesitation would be the most powerful weapon he gave to his own enemy! If he died, his body would be damaged forever and he would never be able to reach the next level.

Bang! The deafening explosion turned the gold, silver, and gems nearby into ashes. The horrible power of the shock waves made a violent dash towards Lucien!

Ramiro did not expect that this would kill Lucien Evans.

But this would definitely interrupt and break off Lucien's next spell in preparation!

Ramiro's will seemed to fuse with this great explosion.

Lucien's buffering time for casting was a two to three times shorter than most sixth-circle sorcerers, as he had adopted the Wave-Particle Dualism meditation method, which was closer to the truth of the world. Also, more importantly, one of the first two spells he just threw at Ramiro was only fourth circle and the other was from the Immortal Throne robe. Therefore, it only took Lucien about a second to recover.

Ramiro expected that Lucien Evans would turn to cast a defense spell to protect himself against the explosion. It would win him a very short period of time for transferring his soul.

When overwhelming blast waves rushed from all the directions, self-defense was always the first choice.

Lucien recovered earlier than Ramiro expected and he was indeed about to activate Energy Absorption Field.

However, at this time, Lucien recalled what he had been warning himself repeatedly,

"If I can't kill or confine Ramiro, he will tell the Church who I am. If that happens, I'll definitely have no more chance to observe how a god is produced this closely, and I'll be in great trouble if a Grand Cardinal decides to target at me."

"I cannot let Ramiro get out of my control. I have to kill him or confine him!"

The consequences of letting Ramiro escape flashed through Lucien's mind. Therefore, instead of protecting himself, Lucien seized the chance to activate one of his magic items.

A crystal-clear ray shot out from Lucien's left chest and right into the dusty blast waves in freezing temperature.

Meanwhile, the horrible explosion hit Lucien, and he disappeared right on spot.

The next second when Lucien appeared again, he was already standing beside the entrance of the secret tunnel, with a layer of energy shield covering him.

Since Lucien first activated the magic item, the timing of opening the shield was slightly delayed. Lucien's face turned pale, and there was blood dripping from the corner of his mouth. He had to thank the protection from the Immortal Throne robe he was wearing, and also, the Short Distance Teleportation that removed him from the first and most powerful round of blast, or now he would have been severely injured again just like the time when he was thrown into this realm.

When the dust was settling down, Lucien took out a tube of Water Song and drank it all. His face now looked less pale.

Because of the freezing effect of Silent Coffin, the power of the blast didn't last long. It faded away completely after several seconds. On the ground was a layer of dust that was once gold, silver, and gems. Many divine items and materials were also destroyed during the explosion.

As Lucien examined his surroundings cautiously, he saw a crystal lying at the spot where Ramiro exploded. In the crystal, there was a strange shadow.

Lucien picked up the crystal using Mage Hand. He was sure that this was part of the Silent Coffin which had not yet completely

melted.

When Lucien took a closer look at the shadow inside the crystal, he saw the pale face of Ramiro. The look on the face was rigid and hollow as if the face had been frozen in there for over thousands of years.

It seemed that both Ramiro's body and soul were very special. Before when Lucien cast the spell, Silent Coffin, neither one's body nor soul could survive in the end under the dissolving power. Lucien sealed this crystal piece using magic and then took out his Morning Light crystal ball. Through the crystal ball, Lucien tried to see if he could find any connections to the face frozen in the crystal and thus locate any separate flesh that Ramiro might use for his resurrection.

Lucien once saw Ramiro explode with his own eyes, and then he saw Ramiro alive right in front of him. There was no doubt that Ramiro had his own way to come back to life. Lucien guessed that it was because of Ramiro's creepy self-division and reproduction power.

Lucien did not know whether directly wiping off Ramiro's remaining soul would thoroughly eliminate him or not, therefore, he decided to find what was left by Ramiro first.

Ramiro's resurrection did not rely on any magic rites, so there must be some restrictions on space or time. Thus, Lucien believed that Ramiro's way of resurrection should be different from a lich's phylactery or Felipe's improved Life Hiding spell, which could allow its owner to resurrect regardless of the place and time death occurred.

Of course, if Ramiro's blood power was indeed powerful enough to exceed the restrictions of time and space, or if Ramiro's remaining body part was hidden in the Holy City Lance, then Lucien would have no other choices but to run for his life after leaving the realm of the Lord of Underworld.

In the crystal ball, there were two light spots, connected by a faintly discernible line.

It seemed like Ramiro's body part for resurrection was just by the entrance of the realm. No wonder it took Ramiro a while before entering here — He was setting up the things needed for resurrection. Lucien was quite surprised. Putting aside the crystal, Lucien hurried up to collect the remaining materials and divine items.

From the line shown in the crystal ball, Lucien knew that the resurrection had not started yet, because he had frozen Ramiro's soul.

Lucien collected more Adamantine, Mythril, Soul Stone, and Blood Steel than he thought. Although the Meteoric Iron left was not a lot, it was enough for Lucien. Also, Lucien found a precious flower called Annocheer for fixing his Health Belt. Now, all he needed was some Ice Iron.

Suddenly, the entire palace started shaking so hard that Lucien almost fell to the ground. Black miasma poured in, dissolving everything.

What did Francis do?

The domain had started breaking down!

The situation suddenly became very dangerous. Lucien hurriedly turned to his Host Star of Destiny to find a way out using prophecy.

The stars changed the order, and the light of the crystal ball pointed to the secret tunnel Asin went into.

Lucien was a bit surprised to see that the secret tunnel was not for digging into the realm but rather the way to exist. But now there was no time for him to think about other plans. Casting Speed on himself, he dashed into the tunnel.

Along the tunnel, there were specters trapped inside the walls. The distorted faces extended their pale arms, trying to grab Lucien, but Lucien was too fast for them. The specters left behind were soon devoured by the collapse. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com

for visiting.

At the end of the tunnel, there was a hall, where a headless death knight rushed out directly at Lucien. The realm was collapsing, and the death knight had gone mad.

Lucien pointed at the knight with his right hand, and a jade-green ray shot out.

The death knight was too insane to dodge, and the green ray hit the death knight right in front of his chest. Instantly, its body dissolved into the tiny green light spots and disappeared.

The sixth-circle spell, Dissociation!

It seemed that the guards here had also been greatly weakened as the realm collapsed. Lucien wondered how Asin left this place. But since Asin even knew the existence of the secret chamber, He must have been well-prepared.

At the bottom of the palace, there was a huge black gate. The gate was so tightly closed as if nothing could open it.

Chasing behind Lucien was the overwhelming black miasma like waves, quietly devouring everything in its way.

Lucien started chanting silently. The invisible magic waves reached the gate and distorted it.

The part of the gate which had affected became translucent like it was a piece of black glass.

Lucien ran up to it and hit the glass with his right shoulder, and the gate collapsed like real glass!

The black pieces fell onto the ground, and Lucien used all of his strength and jumped out.

The sixth-circle spell, Dulag's Glass!

Lucien then felt the coldness of river water.

He looked back and saw that the realm of the Lord of Underworld had disappeared completely. He somehow had this feeling and took out the crystal containing Ramiro's soul and saw that the piece of flesh inside was wriggling, and the soul was swelling, as if it was going to explode.

Lucien was quite shocked and became quite anxious.

Not knowing what was going on, Lucien cast a spell named Sea Cloak and swam towards the place he located indicated in the crystal ball.

He could leave no chance to Ramiro!

The place was not far away, but before Lucien arrived, the crystal piece had melted, together with the soul and the flesh.

Coming to a huge rock in the river, Lucien approached the bank in great caution, knowing that Ramiro might have come back to life again.

Pushing the water plants aside, the look on Lucien's blanked out. He did not see Ramiro here. Instead, there was a young girl. Her blond hair was tied into a ponytail on the right and hung down onto her shoulder. Beside her was a long sword on black fire, and she was holding a strange-shaped tree branch, on which there was a dark piece of meat.

She was roasting the meat on the black fire of the sword.

"What are you doing here?" A strange feeling of intimacy made Lucien ask this question.

The young girl turned around. Her scarlet eyes looked at Lucien seriously as if Lucien just asked a question that was too obvious.

"I'm making beef jerky."

Chapter 482: Hiding

Chapter 482: Hiding

“... Beef jerky...” Lucien’s expression uncontrollably twisted a bit. If his prophecy did not go wrong, that dark piece of meat was exactly a part of Ramiro’s body which he prepared in advance for his resurrection. However, it had now been roasted by this young girl.

Yet somehow, Lucien did not feel disgusted, only amused.

Lucien felt that Ramiro was still lucky to some degree. In the middle of the wilderness, his flesh could have been taken away by a jackal. Comparatively speaking, being made into a piece of beef jerky did not seem as bad.

The scarlet-eyed girl picked up the tree branch and munched on the meat. It did not take her long before swallowing it down. Then she patted on her belly, looking still a bit not fully satisfied.

“I’m starving...”

Lucien was about to prevent the girl from eating random things she found in the wilderness like this, but seeing the young girl’s good appetite, he did not know what to say.

Blond hair, scarlet eyes, genderless beauty, and the fact that she could easily digest the flesh of a radiant knight... Lucien believed that he knew who this young girl was.

“Alterna?” He asked cautiously.

If the young girl was indeed Alterna, it would explain why Lucien felt the strange sense of intimacy and why he felt that someone was watching him before.

The blond girl stood up, using the long sword wrapped with the black fire as her walking stick. She stared at Lucien as if she had known him for a quite long time and complained seriously.

“I’m starving.”

“What do you need? Blood? A radiant knight’s flesh?” Lucien wondered if Alterna was still during the period of recovery after the fall.

Hearing Lucien’s question, the young girl frowned slightly and recalled the taste of the ‘beef jerky’ she made. Then she shook her head. “Don’t like it.”

Lucien was again speechless, although he was facing probably the most powerful existence in this world. He asked in patience, “then what do you want? What can make you recover?”

The blond-haired girl looked both indifferent and serious. “I want the cheese you confined.”

Her red eyes lit up in eagerness.

Cheese? When did he confine cheese? Lucien was confused. But soon he realized what happened. “Did you kill the Lord of Underworld?”

Lucien had so far only used Confinement once in this world, and that was for restraining the Lord of Underworld.

The girl nodded elegantly. “Yes. I want cheese like that.”

“So you need godhoods? Any kind of godhood? Or only those related to the Silver Moon, Death, and Resurrection? How much power do you still have? How long can it still sustain?” Lucien had basically made sure that the young girl was Alterna, the Silver Moon, and he hurriedly threw all the questions out.

Alterna snuffled a bit, and her body became a bit transparent. “Only the cheese like that.”

Then her body started looking more translucent and wavy. Her red eyes were half-closed.

“I need some sleep. Watch out for the Single-eyed.”

Then she turned into a sharp flash of silver moonlight and sneaked into Lucien's left hand before Lucien even realized it.

Lucien felt the will of Alterna — profound, boundless, and almighty. For a second, Alterna's will overwhelmed Lucien, and his mind blanked out. When everything in his mind settled down and he came back to his full consciousness, Lucien saw that there was a mark of the silver moon on the back his left hand. But soon the moon mark also dimmed and melted into his skin, vanishing finally as if nothing ever happened.

Lucien took a deep breath as he was shocked by how a demigod existed in this world. Alterna was now living in his own blood and flesh! This could never be achieved by any existing substances. However, if the form of a demigod was only soul, will, or spiritual imprint, why did the young girl, Alterna, look so real and how could she digest flesh?

Focalizing his spiritual power, Lucien carefully checked his left hand. After a while, he finally sensed the almighty will with the horrible power settling in his left hand.

Lucien tried to wake Alterna to know more, but there was no response at all.

Therefore, Lucien had to make his own guesses:

It seemed that Alterna was very weak right now. The fall had severely damaged Alterna and She would not be able to recover in a short period of time. Sleeping was Alterna's current method for sustainment.

It should have been a while since Alterna started watching the Lord of Underworld, or Alterna would not have been able to know the new divine realm of the Lord of Underworld. Perhaps, Alterna was the "thing" mentioned by Asin that was found and brought back by the Lord of Underworld. However, the fact that Alterna did not immediately consume "the tasty cheese" indicated that Alterna was either too weak to kill the Lord of Underworld or that She had been waiting for the chance to kill Him with one quick strike so that the attention of the other false gods wouldn't be attracted.

The latter seemed more reasonable as it should be Alterna who unlocked Confinement and killed the Lord of Underworld in the end. Therefore, Lucien guesses that after taking in the godhood of Death, and by falling into sleep for a while, Alterna could more or less accumulate some fighting power. However, if Alterna wanted a faster recovery or even to resume the power of the demigod, She would need abundant similar godhoods. Then, if Alterna could find the mysterious existence from the World of Souls and take in Its power, She should be able to recover in the shortest period of time.

Lucien knew that as long as the silver moon was still hanging up in the sky, the God of Silver Moon would always be able to return from “Nothingness”. However, it would take too long, even too long for the eternal God of Silver Moon.

But who was the Single-eyed? Lucien frowned, thinking over Alterna’s last words.

Suddenly, Lucien looked up at the direction where the Temple of War sat.

Lucien remembered that the statue of Antanas, the Lord of War, was a middle-aged, single-eyed man.

Was Alterna talking about the Lord of War? Had the Lord of Underworld told the Lord of War the situation of Alterna? It made sense, but... but there was no need for Alterna to warn Lucien about this. Lucien himself would never go and find Antanas to bring great trouble to himself. If Ell wanted to kill Antanas, he would always send Francis and Jacob first to the front.

Also, vampires were always proud and even arrogant. As their Primordial Ancestor, Alterna should be the same. Even if Alterna was now severely injured and might take caution in Her actions, Lucien did not believe that Alterna would admit it to him.

Unless there was a bigger story hiding underneath... The look on Lucien’s face was very serious, and he believed that he had got the rough answer.

Shaking his head, Lucien calmed himself down. He stared at his left

hand and wondered if from now on he should call this hand “the Left Hand of God”.

At this time, the look on Lucien’s face suddenly changed. He immediately activated the mask and turned himself into a fish hiding among the water plants.

From the almost fully-collapsed realm, a cluster of black haze flew out.

It was Francis.

Francis’s face looked very pale. It looked like he was severely injured. However, he also looked very excited. Maybe it was because he had found something important in the palace.

Looking back at the ruins and checking around carefully, Francis shook his head and sighed. “Such a pity that the talented Leviathan died in there.”

Obviously, Francis thought that both Leviathan and Anheuse had died in the collapsion.

Lucien was not planning on reuniting with Francis at all. After the fight against Ramiro and running into Alterna, Lucien had decided to give up the identity of Leviathan and put himself into the crowd, so he could hide better. The plan on watching how a god evolved had to be abandoned from now on.

Now that night watcher Ramiro had gone missing, and Ell had taken in the godhood of the God of Moon, the Church would very likely send more powerful priests here, probably even including a Grand Cardinal. Then, if Lucien was still one the apostles of Ell, he would definitely be closely investigated. What was worse was that, if Prince Dracula had also arrived here, there might be a connection between him and Alterna within a certain distance. That would put Lucien under great risk!

Therefore, Lucien decided to take the opportunity and hide in the crowd to be safe.

However, simply hiding would not work for Lucien for too long.

The more hungry Alterna became, the more likely problems would occur. Also, the cities and villages were still too small for Lucien to hide safely under the investigation from a legendary like Dracula. Lucien knew that his following step of the plan would be turning the current situation into a big stir when the timing was proper, big enough to catch the Congress's attention. Once he could come into contact with the Congress of Magic again, he would be safe.

Even if the Congress would not be able to locate Lucien over such a great distance, once there were lots of night watchers and radiant knights chasing after him, Lucien would be able to catch one and get the information of which areas were under the control of the Congress through harsh investigation.

Facing the current circumstance and the underlying risks, Lucien temporarily gave up without hesitation his observation of how Ell grew into a true god.

After confirming that Francis had indeed left, Lucien turned him into a common man and sneaked into the city of Husum. With the help of magic, he became a legal resident of the city.

.....

"Did you hear that? A few days ago, there were black, grey, and white waves gushing out in Solna River. In the waves, there were monsters that don't die! Rotten monsters!" Said a white-haired old man mysteriously to a few strangers in the early evening.

"Really?" Asked the strangers. Their life was quite dull in most cases, and thus they were especially interested in this kind of news and legends.

The old man said with great certainty, "I was told by someone else, but it was the priest of the God of Love the Beauty who saw it with his own eyes! Also, there was the true silver moon at the bottom of the river, not a reflection!"

"Which part of the river?" Asked a tough man who laboured on the docks.

The old man looked around and lowered his voice. “The part beside the Temple of War...”

The short man gasped. “Was it the Lord of Redemption? After taking away the godhood of the God of Moon, he’s coming back for the Lord of War?!”

The old man said alertly, “maybe.”

A while later, the old man found an excuse and hurriedly left to avoid attracting too much attention.

In the dark corner, the old man turned into an ordinary-looking man. It was Lucien, who had been hiding in the city of Husum.

Chapter 483: Who Is Behind

Lucien, who now looked just like an ordinary man, walked along Solna River to the slum, where many secret altars were located.

Those false gods including the God of Storm and the Mother God of the Earth were unwilling to give up this rich and prosperous source of believers just like this, thus they had left their secret preachers here. Lucien had been looking for them, in an attempt to find out how these false gods were doing, and thus he could infer how much Ell and Francis had progressed.

Lucien had been spreading out the story, half true and half fake, for over half a month. From today, Lucien was going to stop and leave the rumors to ferment on their own. The merchants and traders would carry the words to the rest of the places in this world. Those who were paying attention would notice.

Lucien planned to wait patiently from now on, waiting for a chance to get out of this dangerous situation.

Lucien felt the moist evening wind on his face coming from Solna River. At nightfall, the air had become cooler.

Suddenly, his left hand twitched uncontrollably. Lucien's head buzzed, and he felt coldness climbing up from his lower back.

Lucien was very concerned. This had not been the first time. And it was getting more and more frequent these days.

Lucien had thought that it was because Alterna was about to wake up after the half month's sleep or was hungry, and he was about to try to find a relevant godhood to feed Alterna. Yet after the repeated twitches today, he realized that the threatening coldness came from himself!

Lucien wondered if Alterna was trying to remind him something. Maybe Alterna had found something wrong with his body after sneaking into his left hand. Was it because there was something imbalanced between his body and soul?

No matter what, Lucien knew that the problem was from himself. He was very concerned, as he was well aware that there were countless cursing spells in the main material world!

He had to figure this out tonight.

Lucien put aside all his concerns and walked into the slum wearing his linen robe. This time, he disguised himself as a secret follower of the Mother God of earth.

"For your prayers?" Said a pauper walking past him in a low voice. The pauper cast a look at Lucien and showed him the direction.

Lucien whispered. "Yes, I'm looking for Priest Angrist."

Following the way the pauper showed, Lucien walked down the shabby street and ran into a few more followers, who further directed him to an ordinary-looking mud hut.

Lucien touched his face, the face that did not belong to him. It felt nice to have a face that was recognized by the other followers — The first time when he came here, he had to use a series of mind spells to make his way.

Pushing open the door of the mud hut, Lucien saw a skinny old man who was kneeling on the floor and kissing the ground.

"Priest Angrist, sorry for my interrupting," said Lucien politely.

Angrist's wrinkled face was written with a big smile, "don't mind it. I am very glad to hear that two false gods have fallen." Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Since the churches were now preaching secretly, the number of potential followers had been greatly reduced. As a result, the conflict between the six churches had become harsh and direct, and the relationship between local priests deteriorated quickly.

"What? Two false gods have fallen?" Lucien was truly shocked.

Angrist stood up. "When I was praying earlier this morning, the

Mother God sent me the message, but I thought I misinterpreted it. Yet half an hour ago, it was finally confirmed that the statue of the God of Storm and the God of Love had cracked, and their priests had also lost the revered power."

"The Lord of Redemption did it?" Lucien was surprised to see how fast Ell and Francis were taking actions.

Angrist nodded, grinning. "Yes."

Seeing Angrist's attitude, Lucien suddenly realized that some of the six false gods had betrayed Their alliance. At least, the Mother God of Earth sure had paid allegiance to Ell. The falling of the two false gods was the proof of the Mother God of Earth's loyalty to Ell, or Ell and Francis would not have made such huge progress already.

"May the Mother bless us," said Lucien.

Angrist drew a cross in front of his chest. "Now we should address Her as 'the Angle of Earth.'"

Angrist's behavior amused Lucien.

Angrist was not planning to hide the news from the followers. In such tough days, they needed good news to be exhilarated.

Lucien had expected this. He bowed again, smiling sincerely.

After leaving the slum, Lucien changed his look again in the woods beside the river. In the darkness, he returned to the same slum again from another direction. This time, his target was the secret group of Ell's followers, and his goal was to confirm what he had just been told.

As the previous initiator, Lucien knew the several liaisons in the city of Husum. Lucien got most of his information from them after his faked death.

When he was very close to the slum, Lucien heard someone pacing back and forth in the corner. Lucien turned his sight slightly and saw through the shadow a young man wearing a long linen robe.

No, it was a woman. Lucien's eyes slightly squinted. The woman in disguise triggered Lucien's interest.

Lucien had been secretly looking for suspicious outsiders recently, hoping to find a night watcher to get the information he needed. Obviously, the woman was the very target that Lucien would pay special attention to.

Lucien kept walking. He did not stop until he had entered the slum and found a dark corner where no one was present. Lucien then calmed down and cast True Seeing, then he changed his look again and walked out of the slum, pretending that he was in a hurry.

When he returned to the corner where the woman stood, Lucien pretended that he was just taking a casual glance, but his pupils were now deep and dark.

True Seeing was a powerful sixth-circle Astrology spell that allowed its caster to see through illusions, invisibilities, transformations, darkness, obscurity, reflections, secret doors, and a few special dimensions, and its validity depended on the caster's power. The woman's rank was much lower than that of Lucien, so her disguise was easily seen through by Lucien. She turned out to be one of Lucien's acquaintances.

She was Sophia.

Lucien instantly recognized that the woman who looked as innocent and gorgeous as a fairy was Princess Sophia of the Holy Heilz Empire. As soon as Lucien saw her, he recalled her horribly powerful father, Rudolf II, the legendary who undoubtedly had partially touched the secret of the seven ancient demons and primitive gods. It gave Lucien a headache

Thus, when Lucien first recognized Sophia, he immediately gave up the idea of capturing her and interrogating her on the information about the Congress of Magic's whereabouts. He had learned his lesson last time in the underground palace: It was possible that the mysterious Rudolf II had projected himself on his daughter.

Lucien slightly shook his head and sped up to leave.

Having no idea that she just got lucky, Sophia was still pacing in the corner. Feeling disgusted, she did not want to step into the smelly slum at all.

It was not long before Lucien ran into his second acquaintance after he left the slum. When the man walked out of the woods, Lucien recognized him immediately.

It was Francis!

And Francis walked to the corner where Sophia was at.

Lucien wondered since when Francis and Sophia had hooked up with each other. Lucien's wondering slowed down his pace, and Francis instantly looked over. Lucien had to restrain his thoughts and keep walking, pretending he was simply passing by. At this time, another man wearing a long linen robe walked out of the slum. He seemed to be gloomy and tyrannical.

Francis kept staring at Lucien's back until Lucien had walked out far away. Then, he finally looked back and nodded to the man and Sophia.

"Good, both of you're on time. Let's go to another place."

.....

After walking for a while, Lucien turned himself into a tiny river fly and flew back to the corner. However, Francis, Sophia, and the man were all gone, and there was no clue left.

Lucien sighed and canceled his plan on visiting Ell's follower today. He then returned to the place where he lived in the civilian zone.

Closing the windows and turning on the alert magic circles, Lucien ruled out all his thoughts on Francis and Sophia, focusing on only himself. He had to find out where this feeling of freezing coldness came from, or he would be very concerned day and night!

Since the feeling of coldness was very likely to have something to do with the power of evilness and death. Lucien decided to give it a try.

His body was instantly covered with a layer of silver moonlight, and his muscles bulked moderately, forming nice curves. The aura around him became oppressive and tense.

Sixth-circle spell, Baler's Transformation!

The spell was produced by the sorcerers in the ancient Magic Empire reflecting on their multiple failed attempts on blood powers combination. Baler's Transformation could transform a sorcerer into a knight of the same level in a period of time, and the power of the knight depended on the caster's own bloodline. Right now, no matter in terms of his strength, agility, velocity, or his willpower and the ability of dematerialization into moonlight, Lucien was now a real level-six radiant knight.

He took Pale Justice out from his magic pouch, took a few deep breathes, and slowly lifted the sword. But this time, his target was himself.

The ordinary-looking sword contained dreadful power. Before it reached Lucien's forehead, Lucien's heart was already beating very fast, and there was a power within his body that was urging him to stop immediately.

At this time, a feeling of coldness and repression came up from Lucien's left hand and refreshed his mind, strengthening Lucien's willpower so that he was no longer affected by the deep fear. With great determination, Lucien put the blade against his own forehead and cut in inch by inch.

A sharp pain came from Lucien's forehead, but he did not stop.

Suddenly, Pale Justice lit up in a metallic color. The power coming from the sword was more than warm and determined. Lucien heard a bitter scream, and his body and soul suddenly became relaxed.

Lucien instantly stopped cutting in. He could clearly feel the sharp, cold blade on his forehead.

Meanwhile, behind Lucien, a distorted pale human face vaped in the air, screaming in agony.

Someone left this in Lucien's body!

No wonder Ramiro could track Lucien all the way here!

This was by no means a coincidence!

Although Lucien was always very gentle and reserved, he looked quite angry now. Blood dribbled down from his forehead, making him look rather hideous.

The person who did this did not modify Lucien's memory. Maybe the person was afraid of seeing Lucien's many weird and absurd thoughts.

After all, what "the Headcrusher" was thinking was very likely to explode other people's heads at any time.

Chapter 484: Change in the Night.

Chapter 484: Change in the Night.

The Congress' research in the field of space and time was lacking and had not yet formed a complete theory. Thus, it was impossible for the arcanists of the Congress of Magic to determine where Lucien would be teleported to after the disruption caused by Ramiro would. On top of that, Lucien himself is the Secretive. Due to its special abilities as well as this world's disturbance to long-distance magic and prophecy, Fernando and Hathaway had yet to find him.

Lucien concluded that this surveillance specter had fused with his body and soul before he had entered the Portal to Alternate Realm.

Otherwise, how was the man behind the scenes able to find him before Fernando and the Prophet, and let the wraith possess him before he recovered?

As another expert arcanist in the field of Necromancy, Lucien knew that since this specter could be "executed" by the Pale Justice, then his mentor Fernando must have been able to sense it when they met. Therefore, the wraith must have possessed him sometime after Fernando stepped into the Portal to Alternate Realm and before Lucien was forced into it.

It seemed that the most possible explanation would be that the man behind the scenes did something to Ramiro's body so that when he self-exploded, the specter seized the opportunity and possessed Lucien. The explosion would also help to erase any trace, and since that Lucien had been forced into the Portal to Alternate Realm, even if Hathaway suspected anything, no trace was left to be found.

The man behind the scenes was aware of the exact time that the Portal would remain open. He was also able to let Ramiro carry out the assassination without knowing that he had been possessed. And finally, he is apt at this method of surveillance. Lucien wondered what Thanatos, the Demigod-lich or the Eye of Curse would want to

know from him — Fabricating memory or strong hinting could both make Ramiro do things without realizing that they weren't his own decisions.

Pieces of memory flashed in Lucien's mind. He was trying to check if he had missed anything.

Suddenly, it dawned on Lucien:

“When I was passing through the underground ruins of the dwarfs, there was a senior-rank specter from the World of Souls that ambushed me. I had assumed that it was because Rhine's plan had been discovered.”

“When Adol was captured by Thanatos and sent to Allyn, he did not have any memories about the fact that Maskelyne and Mr. Rhine were trapped in the World of Souls. I had assumed that Adol did not hold a rank high enough to know about the deeper secrets. Thinking back now, I'm sure I had misjudged the situation then. ”

“From the deep memories of that senior-rank specter one could see that, while it loathed Adol, it could only curse him to be cleansed by the Saint Truth. It must be that its rank is lower than that of Adol. Could have been his assistant or subordinate. If even he knew about the plans of Mr Rhine, then Adol must have known about it too.”

“If Adol really didn't know anything, then why did the senior-rank specter ambush me? To avenge its master Felipe, whom he described with the word ‘dumb?’”

“The two events form a paradox. The best explanation would be that Adol did know a lot. He knew that Maskelyne and Rhine were trapped in the World of Souls. He also knew how they were related to me, which is what caused him to target me. However, he no longer knew about these things after he was sent to Allyn. Someone must have erased his memory. ”

“Considering all these, His Excellency the Eye of Curse is not likely to be the man behind the scenes. As for Thanatos, even if he was not the one committing the act, he at least allowed it to happen. Is

he planning to use my connection with Alterna or the mysterious existence of the World of Souls to find Them in advance?"

"No wonder Ramiro came to investigate at Erdo. No wonder he could find Anheuse so quickly. No wonder that he attempted to attack me time and again. That's just way too many coincidences."

Lucien took a deep breath and tried to remain calm. The idea that someone of legendary rank was keeping an eye over him made him feel very uneasy.

Admittedly, other grand arcanists could also be the suspect. If the specter had possessed him before Fernando had passed through the Portal and Fernando did not detect it, then Lucien's deductions would crumble. Hathaway who was guarding the Portal also had enough time and ability to tamper with such things. However, comparatively speaking, these two were very unlikely to have been the culprit.

Given Hathaway's character, her rather average Necromancy, and the bright future ahead of her brought about by "New Alchemy", given the times Lucien spent together with Fernando and the fact that Fernando's character has remained constant for several centuries, Lucien chose to believe them.

Now that Alterna of the Silver Moon has appeared, but neither Thanatos nor the Demigod-lich had acted. Lucien wondered if this meant that their main target was the mysterious existence in the World of Souls?

But Lucien quickly denied this thought. When he first passed through the realm of the Lord of Underworld, Alterna had already noticed him but didn't come out to meet him. Instead, She had entrusted Herself to his care, sleeping inside his hand as She is now. It probably wasn't because She was worried that Lucien would get in the way of her killing the Lord of Underworld though. Now that thinking about it, Alterna could have noticed that someone was spying on Lucien. The collapse of the underworld realm rendered the surveillance temporarily ineffective, and Alterna then suppressed the specter before showing up in Her true form. Otherwise, She would have hidden with that "beef jerky" and

Lucien would have never been able to find her.”

Lucien felt a chill down his spine once this thought occurred to him. It wasn't because the specter still lived, but out of genuine fear. He had recklessly slain the specter. The legendary that sent it must have noticed.

Lucien immediately jumped straight out of the window. He could only hope that the legendary is hiding in a faraway place in fear of alerting the silver moon and the World of Souls.

Lucien found himself in a gloomy forest. However, with his radiant knight transformation, he passed through it in a jiffy. He then jumped into a river and transformed into a fish, and swam with the currents for a while.

After a while, Lucien came up to the shore and used magic to erase his traces. Then he jumped back into the river and headed towards the place where the divine temples congregated. Lucien had made his decision — If the legendary sorcerer was able to track his movements, then Lucien would lead him into the Single-eyed that Alterna mentioned. It was a desperate attempt at survival.

After he had reached the divine temple area, Lucien deliberately slowed down. He focused on sensing the surroundings, focusing on any changes to his left hand. If he had been able to escape the legendary arcanist tracing behind, then there was no need for him to provoke the Lord of War Antanas, as Lucien was confident that his special abilities of the Secretive coupled with the Silver Moon's self-cloaking would be able to let him escape this conspiracy.

He continued swimming like that for a while. Suddenly, Lucien sensed intense shaking in the water, as though there was an earthquake nearby.

Poking his head out from the water reeds, Lucien found that the mountain ranges on the outskirts of the city were enveloped by thunder. The air of death blocked out the moon, and the towering mountain peak collapsed.

Lucien surmised that senior-ranks were fighting there.

Could it be that Ell and the rest are trying to kill the God of Thunder and Lightning?

Immediately afterward, Lucien heard an angry roar. A black arrow flew out from the Temple of War.

As the distance between was too great, Lucien was unable to sense if the “Arrow of Antanas” hit its mark. However, the air of death did seem to tarnish a lot.

Then, a cloud of smoke rose from the Temple of War. Accompanied by the smell of conquest and the sound of the horn, Antanas bolted towards the outskirts of the city. Within a few seconds, he vanished into the air of death.

At the same time, from the Divine Temple of “the Star of Dawn and Dusk”, a bright star rose and chased after the Lord of War.

However, when it tried to pass the Solna river, a terrifying black haze suddenly enveloped it.

The brilliant star flashed once more before falling from the sky, crashing into the riverbed and revealing a mature and sexy figure.

Asin asked in terror, “Francis?”

Before he could finish, A bright, clear silver moon rose from the woods and lunged itself at Him.

By a fraction of hair, Asin managed to avoid the main impact. He jumped into mid-air, and His face was even paler. The scimitar in His hand had been snapped.

“Ell?”

With his exclamation, countless starlights appeared around Ell, who was barely tangible. The starlights twisted into the shape of a cage, attempting to trap Ell inside.

A concentrated air of death oozed from Ell, dissipating the starlight cage. Ell said calmly, “Francis, help me tie him down. I will use the Command to take over his godhood. My incarnation, the Angle of

Thunder and Lightning, the Angle of Earth, and the Angle of Wisdom cannot delay Antanas for long. After I absorb his godhood, I will be able to go toe to toe with Antanas.”

Lucien who was still hidden in the water deeply approved the incoming battle, for it would help him cover his tracks, and he would then wait for an opportunity to escape. Meanwhile, he secretly wondered if it was Sophia who had planned all this for the false gods to take Ell’s side.

As soon as Ell finished his sentence, a deep, rich sound asked, “Really?”

“Antanas?” Ell was shocked to see the towering, single-eyed man step out from the Temple of War. He carried a terrifying war hammer and gazed down at Ell with the steadiness of a mountain. Behind him was another well-built young man, the Sun God Bero.

Surprisingly, it was the true divinity of Antanas. He had sent out only his incarnation. What’s more, he had not even taken the opportunity to ambush Ell.

Antanas smiled cunningly. “Don’t pretend to be surprised. I know that Bero is lying to me. Your target is not Asin, but me. Come at me together, let me see what gave you your confidence!”

“What?” Bero took a few steps back in shock. His shield raised unconsciously.

He was indeed in cahoots with Ell. Pretending to be a double agent, he divulged to the Lord of War that Ell and his lot are plotting against the God of Love and Beauty, Asin. Bero told Antanas to use a special method to mix up his incarnation and his true divinity and hide within the Temple of War while waiting for the opportunity to give Ell and his lot a fatal blow.

The real plan, on the other hand, targeted straight for Antanas. As long as Bero could take advantage of the time when Antanas attacked Ell and let his guard down, He could land a fatal blow. Then, they would team up against Antanas. However, Antanas seemed to know the real plan.

Who had betrayed them? Why was Antanas so calm?

Francis calmed down. “The plan was simply there to make things easier. Since you have seen through our ploy, we would face you in honest battle.”

In the surrounding darkness, three silhouettes appeared. They were that of a gloomy man, an elder in white robes, and a breathtaking beauty who was wearing purple armor and equipped with sword and shield.

“Natasha?” Lucien, who was still underwater, almost cried out in surprise.

Chapter 485: Pulled In

The dark purple Violet Guardian, the pure black battle dress, the small and exquisite yet dark and thick holy shield, the silver-white longsword etched with simple patterns, and her chiseled features coupled with resolute deep silver-purple eyes... At that moment, Natasha was totally different from her friendly hospitable self. Instead, she was emanating a foreboding air.

Suppressing his surprise, he wondered with mixed feelings of joy and worry why he and Natasha could run into each other at a place like this, and where were the Violet Duchy gold knights and radiant knights under Natasha's command. Under normal circumstances, the South Church would never let the order of knights to be jumbled up. The nobles were only faithful to their own masters. The senior-rank personnel could make arrangements for them, but they're by no means obligated to abide by them.

Natasha must have entered this alternate dimension as the leader of the Violet Duchy's gold knights and radiant knights, so why was she unprotected? Why did she leave her troops?

No, Lucien quickly corrected himself — there was still someone protecting her. Lucien noticed that behind Natasha was a silhouette that almost melded into her shadows. It was "Blue Tide" Camil in a black dress.

Ramiro did not see Francis as his ally, which means that he was most likely from the North Church. Why was Natasha collaborating with him? The elder in white robes was definitely a senior-rank priest, and the gloomy man seemed to the night watcher ranking nineteenth, level-eight radiant knight, the "Fire of Purification" Dannel. They would never side with Francis.

Lucien was puzzled. Natasha's brother had died in the war against the Northern heretics, which in turn caused her mother to pass away early. She would never ally with people of the North Church.

Many night watchers kept their bloodline, history, and real name

under wraps. However, those with a high ranking were rather famous, and their code name and real name were known by most large organizations. As a result, Lucien had been able to find the identity of his attacker in the spirit library after Ramiro's self explosion. It mattered little whether Ramiro was his real name. That wealth of information provided by the spirit library also allowed Lucien to deduce from the aura and demeanor of the gloomy man that he was the Fire of Purification.

Two royal knights of the South Church, a senior-rank night watcher, a senior-rank from the South Church, and a radiant knight who seemed to belong to the North Church's Executioners — this combination seemed quite strange to Lucien. Maybe it was Sophia who brought this band of people together to form this temporary alliance? Lucien remembered Sophia who had remained out of sight so far. There was for sure something fishy about her father Rudolf II. She herself was not a devout follower either. Coupled with her nobility, she was a prime candidate to become a strategist.

The battlefield was quiet for a short while. Francis and his lot were scared and confused by the strange behavior of the Lord of War, while Antanas looked at them with a mocking smile. He surveyed the surroundings before taunting. "Just the lot of you? Come at me together!"

He raised the huge war hammer, and the surroundings were instantly transformed into a gory battlefield. Knights on horseback and on foot swarmed out from behind Him. They looked fanatic, battle-ready, and terrifying. In a mere second, he had assembled a banner of knights of at least grand knight status.

Everyone killed by Antanas and his subordinates who had died in battle would enter His semi-illusory frontier of war and participate in endless crusade until even their souls perish.

The key difference between the gold knights and radiant knights was that of the semi-illusory willpower frontier, which could span for several hundred meters. Antanas was undoubtedly developing his powers in the direction of knights.

"Kill!" Antanas roared.

"Kill!" His cry was echoed by the countless knights behind him. Their cries converged into a deafening cry, their lust for battle was so imposing that even senior-ranks took a step back involuntarily.

I am the Lord of War, I am the Leader of Armies!

Antanas and his men charged towards Natasha. As a divine-blooded who honed his skills on the battlefield, he could easily sense that she was the weakest among the enemy

Flags waving, spears raised, and divine spells flew. Francis, Danniell, the senior-rank priest, and Camil all felt their willpower robbed, causing them to react a split-second slower than usual.

Natasha was instead visibly excited. She did not avoid the brunt of the charge, rather, she jumped directly at the war hammer head-on with her shield raised high.

Bang! A small but horrifying crack appeared at the point where the black shield collided with the war hammer. The space around them seemed to congeal and solidify. With the point of impact as the center, shockwaves radiated relentlessly outward, and divine powers and spears from outside the sphere could not penetrate the solidified space.

Natasha's features were tense. She looked so lonely, yet so determined.

"Doesn't she know to dodge! Daring to fight a level-nine gold knight front-on when she's a mere level seven! Even if she had the replica of the level-nine Shield of Truth, she shouldn't be this reckless!" Lucien cursed silently. A part of him wanted to drag Natasha back from the battlefield.

Although she had risen to level seven last year, the difference in power between her and Antanas was still immense. Further, there were plenty of level eight radiant knights around to protect her! She should really take a lesson from Sophia, who was not even showing herself in a situation like this after receiving Rudolf II's teachings.

A tome of heavy divine aura appeared in front of the white-robed

elder. The pages turned rapidly while divine light flashed. A huge column of light connecting sky and earth then struck at Antanas.

A layer of what looked like rust and blood appeared on Antanas' body, shielding him from the Sunstrike. However, the knights who were charging with him were evaporated.

He attempted to strike at the elder, but Natasha would never let an opportunity like this to slip away. Her silver-purple eyes were cold, and she struck with her longsword. An otherworldly crack that looked like it could sever anything appeared in front of the swing.

Antanas's gaze tightened and forcibly changed his direction, evading the strike. Then, he struck a flurry of blows at Natasha with the warhammer. In the surrounding frontier of war, the spirit knights materialized once more.

At the same time, the darkness in the sky turned into the sea, crashing down on Antanas.

Simultaneously, silent white flames rose from the ground and lunged at Antanas.

The pages of the Cannon in front of the elder were flipping rapidly, and lights kept flashing. They were continuously buffing Natasha with divine power, blessing, war tide, and the like.

Their only chance of winning was if she could bind Antanas with her replica.

After Camil and Fire of Purification joined the battle, Natasha found some room to breathe. She shook her shield and readjusted her form. It looked like the relentless barrage of attacks by Antanas had turned her body numb with pain.

Francis looked at Bero, and communicated to him via a divine spell akin to Soul Connection. "If you can help them bind Antanas, I will then assist my lord to kill Asin. After my lord absorbs the "Hidden Death and Resurrection" godhood from Asin, he would rise to the level of Antanas and the situation would be under our control". Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience ,

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"No Problem."

When the Lord of War appeared, the God of Love and Beauty Asin's face was filled with heartfelt joy. Upon seeing that Antanas was tied down by his enemies, her expression changed a couple of times. Taking advantage of the fact that Asin was still trapped by the starlight cage, she tried to flee.

"It would do Antanas the most good for me to not be captured!" She thought to herself.

"Come back here!" Francis, who had been keeping an eye on her, transformed into a Hydra, and a thick black mist enveloped the surroundings.

Starlight shone but immediately dimmed. Knowing that it would be difficult to break out directly and not wanting to fight with Francis, Asin suddenly plunged down and tried to escape via the Solna river.

"I command you, freeze!" Ell had managed to escape from the starlight cage and used the Command that he had newly acquired after absorbing the God of Storm.

Starlight radiated from Asin's body, and her eyes turned lifeless for a while. The controlled plunge suddenly lost direction, and she fell into the river.

"Chance!" Ell and Francis both rushed towards the Solna River.

Lucien looked at the scene resignedly. Asin had landed right in front of him!

Just as Lucien tried to transform and escape in an effort to remain hidden, his left hand raised involuntarily.

Lucien seemed to have heard something similar to "Cheese!"

This isn't the time to be thinking about food! Lucien cried silently. However, his left hand betrayed him and his transformation failed. His left hand pulled him towards Asin.

Asin had barely recovered from the freezing spell before she saw a handsome man with black eyes appear from the river. His aura was so great and powerful, it caused even the false god to tremble. It was a feeling of meeting one's natural predator.

Driven by fear, Asin unleashed a torrent of divine powers. However, the hand that was reaching towards her was unaffected by the attacks. It penetrated the protection sphere and landed on her neck.

All divine powers disintegrated upon contact with Lucien's left hand!

Ell and Francis halted halfway in their rush when they saw the flashes of divine power in the river. Asin seemed to have unleashed her potential, and a scary one at that. They slowed down, guarding themselves against a possible final attack as well as making sure that she doesn't escape via other routes.

The flashes finally died down, and they were greeted with an unbelievable scene. The beautiful and sexy Asin was held at her neck by a handsome young man, and her godhood was being slowly extracted from her.

"Who is he?" Ell and Francis were gob-smacked. Who on earth was this powerful man?

Lucien's eyes met with theirs. He shook his head resignedly and greeted them casually.

"Good Evening."

Can he say that he'd been handed the wrong script?

Chapter 486: Take Actions

Chapter 486: Take Actions

“Lucien?”

“Lucien Evans?”

Natasha, Camil, the Fire of Purification, and the rest who were sieging Antanas had all noticed what was going on here. Some were surprised and some were confused. But all the mood swings only lasted for less than a second. Facing s false god, they had to be fully devoted to the fight.

Francis, however, did not recognize Lucien immediately. Judging from how the young man grabbed Asin, Francis assumed that he was a mysterious and powerful knight. Therefore, Francis first tried to search among the names of those radiant knights and gold knights in the main material world for a match.

Power flowed into Lucien’s left hand; It was the godhood of death and resurrection. Lucien felt that Alterna was slowly awakening.

However, when the part of the godhood which was related to death and resurrection had been absorbed, and Asin’s remaining godhood of “incarnation of beauty and love” and “star of dusk and dawn” had just started emitting, Lucien sensed that Alterna had terminated the intaking process and pushed Asin away. Alterna did so to avoid the possible conflicts with the cognitive world, and what was more important was that absorbing this part of godhood would possibly result in turning to a female.

Having no idea what just happened, Asin felt that there was such a mess in Her head. When the mysterious, black-haired man grabbed Her throat, Asin thought that it was the end of everything. But why did he let Her go after taking away only part of her godhood?

Alterna was obviously being very picky about her food.

Lucien then sent Natasha a message using Whispering Wind.

At this time, Ell had recovered from the great shock and was extremely angry seeing that his own prey had been taken. With anger and greed, Ell said in his cold and resounding voice,

“I command you, to die!”

The running river water quickly turned pale, the life force of it leaking away. However, the Command spell failed to hurt Lucien at all. It seemed that Lucien’s left hand had this creepy power which turned Ell’s spell completely invalid!

What was going on? Ell took a step back, unable to believe what just happened. Ever since Ell was able to use Command, although sometimes the spell might not be able to directly kill the target, the target would at least be more or less affected. However, this time, it was totally different. It even seemed like Ell had never cast the spell!

In Ell’s eyes, the young man standing in the river was as quiet as a demon hiding in the darkness.

Suddenly, the demon in Ell’s eyes moved. Its muscles bulged as a layer of moonlight covered him. As it fiercely jumped out of the river, the demon’s left hand reached out, targeting directly at Ell Himself!

Lucien was not the kind of person who would only sign and complain when things went wrong. He knew that since he was now exposed, trying to run away would become totally useless when facing Antanas and the possible legendary sorcerer hiding around. He had to seize the chance to feed the relevant godhoods to Alterna and help Her recover, as this was his biggest hope to survive!

This time, Lucien’s action was not driven by the hungry Alterna. Instead, he had taken the initiative and turned himself into a radiant knight to launch against Ell, for Ell’s godhoods of resurrection, eternal life, moonlight, redemption, and destruction were exactly what Lucien wanted!

An almighty and supreme will spread out from Lucien’s left hand. Ell’s mind became slow as if the will was born to be invincible for

Ell. Ell was just standing there, unable to give an effective response.

“Idiot! He’s driven crazy by his own godhood!” Francis was pissed off seeing that Ell just launched such a reckless attack at the mysterious knight in the river. He was hesitant with whether he should help Ell.

But as soon as he saw Lucien jumped out of the river. Francis had made sure that the man was just a level-six radiant knight. It was probably just that he had a special blood power that could refrain godhood and divine-like spells.

Francis grabbed the heavy sword and jumped down, aiming at Lucien.

Instantly, a huge swirl seemed to appear on the ground, pulling all the black miasma in. The miasma joined together and formed a black hydra. With its mixed power of lightning, toxin, acid and so forth, the hydra fiercely charged at Lucien.

Left hand in the front, right hand grabbing Pale Justice, Lucien dodged the huge black hydra which was big enough for blocking the entire sky and then quickly sprang up from the ground. His left fist, swung by his muscular arm, punched in the miasma.

As if something just snapped, when Lucien punched in the miasma, the black miasm quickly dissipated. And the silver moon in the night sky reappeared.

The heavy sword, now covered with cracks, dropped onto the ground. Francis stumbled backward. He could not believe it.

Stamping against the ground, Lucien dashed at Francis as quickly as a flash of moonlight.

With no time for more actions, Francis hurriedly swept the heavy sword for defense.

Lucien instantly lowered his body and avoided the sword, then he punched in Francis’s chest using his left hand.

Seeing this, Francis’s body twitched and clusters of black miasma

were released. He was trying to counteract the power.

Bang! The miasma could not stop Lucien's punch! The clusters of black smog suddenly became pieces of flesh!

Francis's rib bones snapped. Blood spurted out of his mouth. It was such a powerful strike that Francis was directly blown away.

Francis's bones had all broken, and his guts were severely damaged as well. Everything he could see was now covered in spots of red. He could not even move a single finger now. Yet compared with the damage on his body, the great shock and fear towards that left hand were even clearer in his mind: The power within this punching was so horrible!

Seeing that what the demon had done to Francis within a few seconds, Ell's mind was also filled with shock and fear. But at least Francis had won Ell a few seconds, so as soon as Ell got rid of the confinement from the almighty will, He turned himself into a flash of moonlight and was about to escape.

Suddenly, an elegant left hand appeared in front of Ell's eyes, on which there was a layer of cold shine. Then the hand clenched into a fist and punched at Ell's face.

"No!!!" Ell was no longer able to maintain his dignity under great fear. His face had become more than twisted because of the desperation, and many divine-like spells were activated. Ell cast some of them, and the rest of them were triggered by the divine items Ell was carrying. There were transparent force fields, flame shields, silent darkness, billowing waves of death, and swirling specters.

However, none of them could stop Lucien's left fist. With the blowing fierce wind, Lucien punched into Ell's face.

Bang! All the spell shields were cracked as if they were no more than a piece of paper.

Ell burst out a ground-shaking, bitter cry. But the cry was suffocated by the blood gushing out from his mouth, nose, and eyes.

The center part of Ell's face had been punched in. Blood splashed everywhere, together with some white tissues.

Lucien grabbed Ell's head as if he was grabbing a half-cracked watermelon. Ell was indeed a false god, as He was still alive after such a strong strike.

However, suddenly, Ell's body became shadowy and he flashed away from Lucien's hand, appearing again about ten meters away on the rock in the darkness. Lying on the rock, Ell was trying his best to maintain his life.

Lucien looked up in great alert, knowing that this was not Ell's own power. Someone saved Ell!

Antanas looked at Lucien with a creepy smile on his face. Ignoring the siege against him, Antanas took off his eyepatch.

Under the patch, there was a light ball whose color was a mixture of black, white, and grey. The colors seemed to be interacting as if they represented countless changes, while at the same time seemed to be silent and still as if they carried the secret of the origin of the world.

The muscles on Antanas's face started rotting away very quickly. The yellowish, festering flesh turned pale. The bones underneath were revealed, with the rotten flesh hanging on.

Around him, the world started to twist. All the colors and sounds faded away. Only eternal silence and the colors of black, white, and grey were left.

In such a world, Natasha, Camil and the rest of them's movement became extremely slowly, like small insects being trapped in a drop of pine resin.

"I was about to let Ell take in Asin to reach level nine, so I can save some trouble. But what a surprise, here you are."

Antanas' voice was as harsh as a piece of iron covered in thick rust.

Chapter 487: Ups and Downs

Lucien's face was grim. He did not say a word but lifted his left hand. His fingers stretched out straight, and his left arm and hand were like a sword.

Suddenly, the environment around him started to twist. The darkness retreated and cold moonlight enveloped him. The silver moon in the sky, however, disappeared.

"You've recovered to some extent after taking in Asin's godhood of death, but it's not enough." Antanas' harsh voice sounded like a sharp claw scratching a piece of rusted iron sheet. He lifted the warhammer covered in the grey flame of soul and fiercely swung it at Lucien.

The hundred-meter distance between them seemed to have vanished, and the hammer instantly came in front of Lucien. The realm of black, white and grey followed the track of the hammer and extended like a paintbrush, yet instead of adding colors, the realm took away the color and sound of all the objects on its way, burying them in everlasting silence.

Lucien watched Antanas coming for him in great calmness. All the motions were colorless and silent. Suddenly, a huge silver moon rose behind him. The moon was so big and bright as if it had descended from the sky. In Lucien's left hand, black flame suddenly burnt up and formed a sword of black fire.

Lucien swung the sword at Antanas using all his strength. His robe fluttered up in the wind, while dazzling light beamed from the silver moon. The moonlight crashed together with the concrete black, white, and grey.

The whole world seemed to become obscure. There was no color, no sound, no time, and no space.

The illusion lasted for less than a second. Natasha and the rest saw a small crack appearing on the color of black, white and grey, and then more cracks followed. As the cracks grew bigger and bigger,

colors and sound came in.

All of a sudden, the world of black, white and grey collapsed. The world had recovered to what it was supposed to be. However, Natasha and the rest of them still felt great numbness and could not fully control their own movements.

They, however, had seen the result of the fight.

Antanas was floating in the air. The temple cliff below him was gone. There was a giant deep hole in the ground, and huge swirls of river water gushed into the deep hole of voidness, trying to fill it up.

Pieces of rotten flesh were falling from Antanas' face and body. The bones revealed were covered in the color of rust and blood, which was dyed by the godhood of war. The light ball of black, white and grey now looked much more transparent and rigid.

Obviously, Antanas was badly injured.

However, compared to Lucien Evans, who had been blown away to the other side of the Solna River, Antanas' situation was still much better. When Lucien got struck away, he crushed down countless trees and river rocks before finally hitting on the ground. Lucien was now not able to move at all, and his left hand now looked pale and grey.

"I told you. Not enough!" Antanas' hoarse laugh could drive anyone crazy.

When the mysterious existence from the World of Souls was still recovering, Alterna interrupted it. Therefore, now it was still the Lord of War's side which was dominating. But under the influence of the mysterious existence, Antanas had become even crazier.

Antanas took a step forward. Looking at his enemy lying on the ground and struggling, Antanas's mind was full of joy and pride. "Your power will help me recover. Although I can't kill you now, I can send you to a long, long sleep. Alterna, take your time to come back!"

Antanas lifted the hammer, and the power of black, white and grey became contagious again.

Lucien could hear the death knell ringing for him.

Suddenly, the world of black, white and grey was lit on green flame and instantly collapsed.

Antanas appeared again, surrounded by a grey and white of death and silence, which was very different from his own black, grey, and white. It was the power of decay, and there were bitter souls and spirits howling and swirling.

"Ahh!" The bitter cry came from Asin. In great agony, Asin's life force was taken away by the power in the air. Within several seconds, His face had become extremely pale and His two green eyes had now become two flickering clusters of red flame. The air of death was emitted from his body.

The same thing happened to Ell, whose head was broken like a crushed watermelon, Ell released several painful moans and then stopped bleeding. What was now coming out of his body now was the light yellow corpse fluid. But maybe it was due to his godhood, the speed of life force leaving his body was much slower. He had not yet been turned into a walking dead.

Surrounding the Temple of War, within the radius of two hundred meters, countless Husum trees withered and rotted. The power in the air was absorbing their life force. The rich and moist soil had instantly lost all of its moist and become full of cracks. As soon as the water of the Solna River flowed into this area, it became deadly pale and awfully smelly.

One of the senior-rank priest exclaimed, "Life Ritual? The Demigod-lich?!"

As soon as he finished the words, the divine light surrounding him attracted the attack of the power of death. As if there was some kind of horrible alchemical reaction between the death power and the pure light, a horrible explosion occurred. This at lease level-eight red robe cardinal exploded, and his life force was thrown into

midair.

The death power also attacked Danniell, the Fire of Purification. The shield of white flame surrounding him was now much dimmer. He had to lean against his sword to prevent himself from falling down, and his life force was also quickly leaving his body. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Natasha was the first to realize what was going on. She ran to Camil and lifted her duplicate of the Shield of Truth in front of them. There were already tiny cracks on the shield.

But even the black shield was losing its color, as if it was losing life force as well. Natasha knew that the shield would become decayed in a minute or two, but she had no other choices.

Bero the God of Sun's eyes lost their focus. While His life force was being taken away, Bero's whole body was slightly twitching.

Lucien struggled to stand up. His left hand now looked completely grey, and he was having a hard time breathing.

Francis, lying on the ground and unable to move, tried hard to turn his neck. Looking at the area which now resembled the Skeleton Land, he felt lucky that the mysterious knight just threw him so away from Antanas that he was not in the cover range of the dreadful power.

Within the range, filthy dark clouds gathered in the sky. A black bolt of lightning lit up, and then it started raining. The horrible rotten smell made the severely injured Ell directly pass out.

The polluted greyish-white raindrops fell onto the ground, and the ground suddenly turned pale. Countless skeletons and bodies buried deep underneath broke out from the soil and slowly stood up. Showering in the rain, their death power became greater and greater.

Anything that the raindrops touched, including Daniel's fire of purification and Natasha's Shield of Truth, started rotting. But

fortunately, they were not the main target, therefore, the raindrops falling on them were not heavy. However, the rain poured over Antanas, polluting everything and eating into his realm of black, white and grey.

Antanas lifted the hammer again, but his power had been reduced.

However, as the mysterious existence in the World of Souls, Antanas' hammer could still make the spirits, specters, and walking deads acknowledge allegiance to him.

When Antanas was almost out of the confinement, a cold voice came from the sky,

"Spirit Confinement."

The broken souls and spirits surrounding Antanas twisted into the flashes of soul light and quickly sneaked into Antanas's body. Antanas' whole body swelled bigger and bigger. Grey and white liquid flowed out from the corners of his eyes, and Antanas could only stand there still like a stone statue.

"Life Ritual." The cold voice came, again.

The polluted clouds collapsed onto Antanas. Meanwhile, countless undead rushed towards Antanas and became part of the clouds.

Antanas' life force was fiercely pushed out of his body. Losing the inner support, Antanas' tall and strong body became saggy. The warhammer dropped onto the ground, and Antanas' skull snapped into pieces.

The solidified light ball of black, white and grey went out of his eye socket, fell onto the ground, and broke into a few equally-sized pieces.

The pieces still had the almighty power of eternity and supremacy, but it felt that the pieces had lost the soul and will within it. The black, white and grey slowly spread out from the pieces, dyeing the surrounding objects, but now the process was totally meaningless and purposeless.

An illusionary Mage's Hand appeared in the air, trying to pick up the light ball pieces. However, the hand directly went through them, as if the pieces were not in this dimension.

"Hm?" The voice sounded confused.

A lich in a black cloak appeared in the sky. His head had no flesh at all but just a white skull. In each of his two hollow black eye sockets, a fine, needle-like red light spot was flickering.

It was him. Congus, the Demigod-lich. Lucien released a sigh in his mind.

Congus was not in a rush to collect the broken pieces from the mysterious existence in the World of Souls. Instead, Congus turned to look at Lucien. He would never leave the chance to Alterna to recover. Alterna was his only threat on the spot.

"Life Depri..." Congus said two strange words. They were the most primitive magic words.

Congus was not going to underestimate Alterna by any chance. He directly used a legendary spell to eradicate Lucien and his left hand.

However, before Congus could finish the second word, a flash of bright light hacked at him from behind. The light possessed this very positive power that reminded Lucien of all the good characteristics including order, honesty, kindness, and so on.

The magic defense spells automatically triggered dissolved under the light. But Congus had flashily moved to another spot. As a legendary sorcerer, he was constantly prepared for sudden attacks.

The two needle-like red spots turned to look at the attacker. It was Bero, the God of Sun, who supposedly had lost all his power under Life Ritual.

However, now Bero was standing up straight in the air and spoke in a commanding tone.

"This is just a reminder."

"Who are you?" Asked Congus. He felt the power coming out from Bero rather familiar, but it wasn't Bero's own power, and Congus could not recall who it belonged to.

Bero did not answer the question. Countless white wings spread out behind him. Bero said to Congus in a solemn tone, "anything that dies must fall into the eternal sleep. This is the order of life. You filthy, evil creature, face this sentence!"

Then a scale, the left side white and right side black, appeared in front of Bero. After several swings, it reached its balance. The grey and white and horrible pale clouds then instantly disappeared, but the polluted land and the dying trees still remained the same.

"The Scale of Justice! You're Rudolf II!"

Congus did not have a clue how Rudolf II came here, but nevertheless he quickly cast the legendary spell on Rudolf II.

"Life Deprivation!"

Congus believed that this was just a projection of Rudolf, so he was positive that even though Rudolf had brought the Scale with him, the projection was still not a match to Congus himself.

Silently, Bero's face aged as if time passed by on him very fast. The wings behind him closed, converging into a streak of light.

"Comply with the order, Congus."

"The Light of Order!"

The streak of light rapidly expanded, filling in every corner of the world, carrying the power to dissolve anything that was unnatural in the space.

Meanwhile, Congus opened his mouth big and let out an awful howling — Demigod-lich's Howling!

Natasha's eyes lost focus again, and she had also lost the ability to hear or smell. The Shield of Truth in front of her cracked rapidly.

At this time, under the cold and bright moonlight, Lucien rose up into the air across the river. Wearing his long black coat, Lucien lifted his left hand up high, the flame of destruction twining it.

Francis and Camil thought that Lucien and Alterna had used up all of their power.

However, this was not the case. Before taking in the godhood of the Lord of Underworld, Alterna was already able to launch a full round of attack. Now, after absorbing one more godhood, plus the half-month sleep, how could Alterna lose the ability to fight after only one single strike?

Lucien came to the Temple of War on purpose. To get out of the trouble, he was trying to make the legendary archmage who had been watching him all the time and Antanas fight against each other. Before this fight, Lucien had taken Congus' arrival into his consideration, therefore, he did not use Alterna's full power.

Facing Alterna who had been severely injured, and the mysterious existence from the World of Souls who was still able to fight, Congus would definitely deal with the latter first.

Lucien would let them fight first.

Also, since Lucien happened to see Sophia around, and he knew that the Emperor had touched the secret behind the seven ancient demons, Lucien had also expected that Rudolf II would also get involved in this.

The power of silver moon had quickly repaired Lucien's body. When the huge moon rose again, covering the real silver moon in the sky.

Shocked, Congus and Rudolf II saw Lucien bow slightly. And then Lucien dropped his left hand down, and the moonshine suddenly expanded and filled up their vision.

Was it because Lucien was smarter and more sophisticated than them?

No, it was simply because Lucien knew much more information than Antanas. Lucien knew that there was a legendary hiding

around and that Rudolf II was able to arrive at any time. Therefore, he could draw up the best plan.

The information gap was Lucien's advantage!

The silver moon tonight was so bright that Congus and Rudolf II would never ever forget this scene.

Chapter 488: Ups and Downs II

In the endless silver moonlight, a fine black line appeared and grew bigger and bigger.

It was a long sword covered in black flame. The black fire blazed so brightly that it seemed like it could devour anything.

Francis who was at a distance could only feel that the black was drawing in all the light. Even time was slowed down and become solidified in it.

But he soon realized that this was simply his illusion, as he saw the dark green and greyish white colors as well as bright and rigid light coming out from the darkness. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

In the end, the darkness overwhelmed everything again and retreated within a second.

When the silver moon rose up again, under its brilliant rays, Lucien was floating in the air. His Pale Justice had been thrown to the other side of the river and was now stuck in the ground beside Natasha, his left hand was hanging beside his body weakly, and his face was as pale as a piece of paper. This one strike had consumed all of the power that Alterna had accumulated as well as Lucien's blood power after transformation. Now Lucien had gone back to the original shape of his figure.

The Temple of War and the peak where the temple once stood on were both gone. Congus stood still in midair, while Rudolf II had fallen to the ground. His black-and-white scale was gone as well. Maybe the scale was also just a projection.

The night breeze blew lightly. Congus's black magic cloak and robe fluttered and turned into tiny pieces. The white skeleton inside was revealed, and then as if the skeleton was melting, drops of white liquid fell to the ground, taking away the last slight of life force from the ground.

Congus' whole set of skeleton had broken down. When the skull cracked, the two needle-like light spots instantly died out. However, underneath the white skull, a smaller delicate golden skull was revealed. It possessed an extremely horrible power. In the eye sockets of the golden skull, the needle-like red spots lit up again.

"You'll never be able to run away." Congus, who was now only a golden skull, said to Lucien gloomily, the two lines of teeth opening and closing.

Then the golden skull also cracked. Inside the skull, there was an ancient ring. In the next second, the gold skull and ring disappeared together.

Lucien's heart suddenly sank. Congus had a resurrection spot nearby!

Lucien did understand that it was impossible for Alterna to kill Congus and Rudolf II using one strike when Alterna was still recovering. However, since he was now facing the projection of Rudolf II, Lucien was still hoping that Alterna's power could completely destroy this body of Congus so that he could only resurrect in his phylactery in the main material world. This would win him some precious time. However, things did not go as he wished.

But Lucien did not panic. He was the Secretive, and he had reunited with Natasha. Lucien just need carefully hide himself and find the Congress of Magic, then he would not need to worry about Congus anymore. It would at least take Congus half an hour to return. And what was more important was that...

Lucien's sight shifted to the solidified pieces of black, white and grey floating in the air — Once Alterna absorbed the pieces, Congus would definitely try to stay away as far as possible.

When Alterna's power further recovered, Alterna would be able to completely wipe Congus out!

A creepy smile crept onto Sun God Bero's face, and He suddenly collapsed onto the ground into a pile of ash.

Ell, Natasha, Camil, Francis, Danniell, and the rest of them had all either became unconscious or lost all their strength, while Asin had become an undead creature, yet it still kept some consciousness and knew that Lucien was definitely the one it should stay away from.

"I'm starving..." Lucien's left hand reached out and pulled Lucien up. It pressed against one of the pieces in the air, and then the rest of the pieces were also gradually pulled over and blended together.

Suddenly, the sound of wind disappeared in Lucien's ears, and colors disappeared in Lucien's eyes. All he could see was a space filled with black, white and grey. Anything that was over a meter away looked completely blurry. Lucien felt that he was in an isolated space, and even his mind had slowed down.

Francis tried hard to look up at Lucien, who was floating in the air still. He saw that, on Lucien's left hand, the color of silver was fighting against a mixture of black, white and grey. Lucien's eyes had lost focus as if he had lost his soul.

At this time, Danniell the Fire of Purification turned his neck. A mysterious smile rose on his face. Then he slowly stood up and flew towards Lucien with the sword in his hand.

"You know that my projection wouldn't die easily, but you have still turned to take in the essential pieces. Have you become too pretentious?" Danniell spoke, but the voice definitely belonged to Rudolf II!

However, the power from the projection was lower than the legendary level. It seemed that the power of the projection depended on the host.

"Huh, Lucien Evans knew that the projection would not die easily? How did he know?" In the noble district of the city of Husum, Sophia was sitting on the bed, staring at the black and white scale in front of her. She was watching the fight at the Temple of War using the divine item and the connection she had with the projection. However, her father's words confused her.

She would never forget what happened in the underground palace

of Sun's King three years ago. She had looked for the mysterious sorcerer for a long time to take her revenge but had not gained a single clue. Later, she gradually put this aside and started focusing on improving herself.

Before leaving the Congress, Lucien had submitted the two magic spells which he used in the underground palace. Because the principles of the two magic spells were quite simple, many sorcerers had also created similar spells based on the principles. As a result, the intelligence section ignored this, and Sophia thus missed the most important clue for tracking the mysterious sorcerer.

However, as a legendary, Rudolf II had instantly recognized Lucien Evans. After all, Lucien was not trying to hide his spiritual power at all.

Rudolf II talked to Lucien first to show that this was not a sneak attack. Then, lifting the long sword named the Fire of Purification, Rudolf II hacked at Lucien against the moonlight.

The sword was quick. The sword reflecting the silver moonlight seemed to possess many virtues, such as honesty, kindness, order.

When the white sword inlaid with the patterns of flame was only an inch away from Lucien's head, an ordinary-looking long sword came horizontally and blocked its way.

The clang of the blades was crispy. The Fire of Purification bounced back, and so did the ordinary-looking sword.

"You're still able to move?" Rudolf II said in astonishment to the beautiful young lady with a determined look standing in front of him.

Although it was not surprising that Natasha was still alive since she was not the main target of Congus's Life Ritual, it was indeed a miracle that she could still fight.

"Because, from the very beginning, Lucien had reminded me that the power of a legendary was coming. so I was prepared." Natasha's silver-purple eyes stared at Rudolf II tightly. "Although two items

were destroyed, it was Auntie Camil's power that was consumed. I was not injured much, and even took the chance during Life Ritual and slightly recovered from the previous fight."

Holding Pale Justice in her hand, which was thrown to her side by Lucien on purpose, Natasha stood between Lucien and Rudolf II. Her duplicate of the Shield of Truth and the level-eight Sword of Balance had been destroyed. Pale Justice survived because of its special property against Necromancy power.

"So he knew that Congus would come..." Rudolf II sighed.

Then he lifted the sword and launched a new round of attack as fast as raindrops in a storm hitting the ground. The area around him started to become hotter and hotter as if all the filthy things in the dimension have started burning.

The power of Danniell, the Fire of Purification, had been improved to the level of a gold knight with the projection of Rudolf II.

Natasha, however, was only focusing on defense, and her defense was perfect.

The metal blades were clanging like a string of notes.

Natasha was a level-seven knight, and even with Pale Justice, her power and defense had only reached level eight. However, her fighting skills and supreme blood power had compensated for the gap between the power of Rudolf II's projection and hers. Also, Rudolf II himself was not good at fighting as a knight as he had chose the other path of balance, and he was now not capable of casting many spells because of Alterna's previous strike.

After a minute, the two sides were still fighting, with no one showing any dominant advantages.

"You're indeed very talented among the younger generation." Rudolf II nodded and said, "but if you keep staying in my way, I'll kill you."

Natasha sneered. "Have you ever seen a real knight running away from the battlefield?"

"Then I'll let you die as a decent knight," replied Rudolf II.

The white wings spread out behind Rudolf II again, but this time, the feathers were less abundant and much dimmer.

Luminescent spots flew out of the wings and joined together. A thick book began to take its shape. Rudolf II hacked his sword down, and the book turned itself to a specific page.

The Angel King! The Prothonotary in Mountain Paradise!

Smile disappeared from Natasha's face. With a very serious look on her face, Natasha immediately swung her sword. As if the sky just cracked, a number of illusionary gaps appeared around her. Acting like a shield, the gaps blocked the attack from the Fire of Purification.

Bang! The sound was so loud that Sophia, who was watching far away, could not help covering her ears.

Sophia saw that Natasha's hands were bleeding hard. However, the pair of hands were still holding the sword tight, and the owner of the pair of hands was still standing at where she had been. Sophia was very impressed. She knew that her elder brother had a secret crush on Natasha, and now she had understood the reason.

Then, in great astonishment, Sophia saw that, behind Natasha, Lucien's eyes rolled and then his whole person came back to life!

However, what shocked Sophia the most was the staff inlaid with the big Sun Stone that Lucien was now holding in his hand and pointing at Rudolf II.

"It's him!" Sophia burst out. Her body was slightly trembling. The deep fear was still in her mind.

"That Bastard!"

Lucien felt that he just woke up from a long, long dream after a few years. His soul had reached the seventh circle. However, nothing around him changed. Lucien remembered the situation that he was facing. Therefore, Lucien quickly calmed down and lifted the Sun

Staff to cast Confinement.

A flash of light sparkled. Rudolf II's fierce attack continued. Natasha could barely have the time for taking a breath.

To Lucien's great surprise, Rudolf II was immune to Confinement!

Lucien did once learn that some really powerful legendaries were immune to spells like Confinement and Maze, but he had never met one before. He had not expected to meet one today. But it might be also because what was standing in front of him was just a projection of Rudolf II.

On Lucien's left hand, the silver light suppressed the mixture of black, white and grey, but it would take quite a while for Alterna to fully take in the power. Therefore, without hesitation, Lucien took out a colorless tube and started chanting.

"It's that spell...!" Sophia hurriedly shouted, as if she was trying to remind her father. Her forehead was covered with a fine layer of cold sweat.

Chapter 489: More to Come

Inside the translucent tube was a frozen colorless material that emitted extreme coldness. Even looking at it would make one feel frozen to bones.

As Lucien was casting the spell, the material in the tube started to boil and the tube seemed that it was going to break at any time.

Seeing this, Rudolf II slightly shook his head. He knew what Lucien was going to do, and he also knew the greatest problem with this spell —The chanting time was too long, so long that he could easily break it off.

The pages of the book behind him turned its pages and threw a deceleration spell at Natasha. Meanwhile, Rudolf II flew to the other direction and left the range where Lucien's spiritual power was locked on.

Rudolf II had seen Lucien cast this spell, Snow Goddess' Whip, before. He knew what the advantages and disadvantages were.

As a ninth-circle ice and snow spell which could create a temperature extremely close to the absolute zero, the spell itself was perfect when its caster was an archmage. However, if the caster was not yet level nine, the casting would take at least three to four seconds, which was too long to truly imperial a radiant knight or gold knight in a real fight.

Dragging the sword named Fire of Purification, Rudolf II flashed to midair and prepared for the next round of attack. He knew that he should never leave any gaps for Lucien, otherwise as a senior-rank sorcerer, Lucien would seize the chance to cast a series of helping spells on Natasha. Rudolf II was using Danniell's body, and he knew how much power he could use. When Natasha's power was strengthened by senior-rank spells, she would have a great chance to defeat Danniell, whose power had only just reached the bottom line of a gold knight — This was why a senior-rank sorcerer could be very threatening.

Also, if the fight went on for too long, when Alterna fully absorbed the pieces of Essence, or when Congus returned, there would be no chance left for Rudolf II.

Rudolf II's wings flapped, but at this time he noticed that Lucien's casting had stopped.

He realized that something was wrong when he saw the smile on Lucien's face. There was a silver coin in Lucien's right hand, and his body was covered with long, snake-like electric currents, while the space around him was distorted by the magnetic field.

The colorless material in the tube was the same as before. The tube fell down, shining in the darkness of the night.

It was a lie! Lucien was just pretending to be casting!

Rudolf II was furious, for as the "incarnation of the virtues", he absolutely hated to be deceived.

However, Lucien, at this time, instantly finished casting Lucien's Electromagnetic Gun since this spell was engraved into his soul. In the next blink, Rudolf II was under the heavy bombardment of the thick electric beam. It was so fast that he had no time to avoid it!

Rudolf II's face was grim. His wings folded together as a shield, covering his whole body under layers of white feathers.

Bang! The blast was deafening!

The burnt feathers twirled to the ground, revealing the hole in the middle of the wings. Even Rudolf II's chest was severely battered; his body trembled slightly and he temporarily lost the ability to move.

Yet the power of this sixth-circle spell was still not strong enough and could not cause fatal damage to a gold knight's body.

However, Rudolf II's temporary inability to move was all that Lucien needed. Lucien activated the Ice & Snow Medal he was wearing and a freezing ray instantly darted at Rudolf II's wounded chest.

With the wound as the center, layer of ice immediately froze over Rudolf II's body, as if a man-shaped ice coffin was specially made for him.

Lucien was planning on casting Resistance Reduction first and then Silent Coffin. However, when they were actually fighting, Lucien found that Danniell's armor had already been severely damaged by Congus' Life Ritual and Filthy Rain.

The light of the silver moon lit up the ice coffin. As if the moonlight had a temperature, the ice coffin quickly melted down, together with Danniell's body and the projection in it.

At this moment, Lucien grabbed the tube of solidified helium with Mage's Hand. Throwing it up in the air, he started casting again.

This time, the tube broke into pieces while Lucien was halfway through his chanting. The colorless material turned into a dim ray and bitterly whipped on the half-melted coffin following the gesture of Lucien's right hand.

The ice coffin lit up in blue light. The remanent part of Danniell's body became an ice statue. Then, the statue melted into raindrops and evaporated.

Suddenly, Natasha crossed the than ten-meter distance with a leap and hacked at the vapor fiercely with Pale Justice.

An illusionary face formed in the vapor and split into pieces under the attack.

Without a body, the projection was the same as a specter. The blade of Pale Justice was its invincible opponent.

"What a tough fight..." Lucien murmured.

When the specter disappeared, Sophia started trembling at a long distance away from the battlefield. Again, she realized how deceitful and unpredictable Lucien was. In her eyes, Lucien was a demon taking the form of a human being!

It took Sophia a while to calm down. She felt lucky that this time

she was just observing this remotely.

She wiped off the cold sweat on her forehead and sighed. "A grand-arcanist-to-be, a great musician... He's much more talented than a demon.

"No wonder even Natasha would fall for him. Brother, there's no hope for you at all."

...

Putting aside the sword, Natasha carefully examined herself, both body and soul. The power of Rudolf II was so weird that she had to be extremely cautious.

"Don't worry too much. He has been severely injured by the strike from Alterna. The projection has lost the power to possess a body or a soul again," said Lucien to Natasha in a comforting tone. Meanwhile, he also checked himself to make sure that his soul remained intact.

Natasha nodded but still checked again carefully and also asked Camil to do the same. Only after then did she finally smile and said, "it never occurred to me that Alterna is right now in your left hand. Is it affecting your activities somehow?"

Lucien found Natasha's smile rather meaningful. He lifted one eyebrow and asked, "what activities?"

"Like when you need your left hand..." Natasha pretended to be very serious but then burst out laughing. This made Lucien feel warm in his heart. That they could still discuss gentlemen topics together made him feel that everything was still the same between them after several years.

Natasha then suppressed her emotions and looked around, "this isn't a perfect place for joking. We gotta go before the Demigod-lich returns."

"Tell me where the Congress is. I'll go on my own," said Lucien.

Natasha lifted an eyebrow and rubbed her chin.

Seeing this, Lucien hurriedly explained. "My Host Star of Destiny is special, plus that I am with Alterna, so Congus can't find me. If I go with you, it brings danger to both of us."

Natasha nodded and accepted this reason. She said to Lucien decisively, "to get to the controlled area of the Congress of Magic, you should head east, cross the desert, and then cross an ocean. The continent you'll arrive in is the one the Congress of Magic is searching through. This area is supposed to belong to the Church, but they haven't come to the west yet. Take care. Don't trust the rest of the grand arcanists except your teacher and granny Hathaway."

"I'll hit the road right now," said Lucien. "Here, you keep Pale..."

Natasha cut Lucien off, smiling. "I keep Pale Justice with me? I'd love to. But I prefer to have it next time. Pale Justice should be protecting you right now until you are safe. I'm also heading for the same continent. If I can find granny Hathaway and the Lord of Storm before you do, I'll ask them to come and find you."Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Natasha did not conceal her liking for Pale Justice, but she also did not hesitate when she handed it to Lucien.

Lucien nodded. When he reached out his hand to take over Pale Justice, a strange feeling suddenly struck him. The mixed colors of black, white and grey covered his body, and the aura of the World of Souls came out. Meanwhile, the silver-white light on his left hand was trying hard to keep the situation under control.

Natasha raised Pale Justice and swung it at Lucien. With a dim flash, the concrete black, white and grey started to collapse and was again controlled by the silver-white.

"What is it?" Asked Natasha concernedly.

Lucien took a while to feel Alterna's will in his hand, and he sighed. "Alterna's taking in the pieces, but it's a hard process. The situation that just happened may happen again from time to time. But generally, Alterna's still in control, so it's not a big problem."

"How long is this going to take?" Natasha frowned. "If this keeps happening, Demigod-lich will definitely be able to find you. He knows you're heading for the east."

Lucien took a deep breath and said, "about a week."

Although a week was long and dangerous, Lucien somehow had this strange feeling — How Alterna fully absorb the mysterious existence in the World of Souls in only a week? Maybe there was something unusual going on.

"That's... too long. What about this? I'll go with you, and we can hide in the mountains in the north. It's easier to hide from the Demigod-lich in the forests." Natasha suggested seriously. "Aunt Camil will head to the east to seek help from granny Hathaway and the Lord of Storm. I can also use Pale Justice to help you control the conflict between the two powers. Since I'm helping you, I think Alterna should be willing to help me cover up my power and destiny track, right? It's not going to cost a great deal of Alterna's power..."

Lucien remained silent for a few seconds and then felt the power in his left hand. Finally, he said,

"Alterna said yes, but I think you should go to the east and let Camil stay with me."

"This is my business. Camil should not be involved in this. Also, aunty Camil had used up most of her power. Even with the potions, it will take her at least half a day to recover. And Demigod-lich won't wait for half a day to come here." After taking a glance at Camil, Natasha said to Lucien in great determination.

Lucien looked around. He knew that the time they had was rather limited, so he didn't waste his words.

"Alright, let's go."

Natasha nodded. She flew to Camil and talked to her for a while. Obviously, they had an argument. Camil's cold blue eyes stared at Lucien full of anger, but finally, she put aside her weapon and

stumbled away.

Natasha and Lucien then used all kinds of methods to remove their traces, and then they headed for the north.

After a while, Francis, who was lying on the ground far away from where they fought, started feeling strength coming back to his body and his broken bones healing. When he finally was able to stand up, Ell's smiling face suddenly appeared in front of him.

Ell's shattered head and face had recovered. He now looked even more gloomy and mysterious than before.

"You have proved yourself again. We shall leave this place temporarily."

Francis was shocked that Ell had recovered this fast. But smart as he was, Francis did not ask but lowered his head and said in the great but pretended respect, "I will only follow you, Your Almightyness."

Ell nodded in satisfaction. He veiled his eyes, blocking the mixture of concrete black, white and grey within.

Then Ell and Francis hurriedly left the city of Husum.

Chapter 490: The Trip

Chapter 490: The Trip

After heading to the north along the river valley for several minutes, Lucien told Natasha that they had to change the direction and head toward the east. Using Advanced Flying, Lucien and Natasha flew as fast as they could in the new direction. Meanwhile, Lucien removed the layer of dim moonlight on Natasha.

“You’re attracting Demigod-lich’s attention so that aunty Camil can leave the city of Husum and go into the desert in the east in safety, right?” asked Natasha. She did not complain at all when Lucien suddenly changed the plan, instead, she accepted Lucien’s decision and realized his plan right away. They had gone through fire and water multiple times together. They knew each other well.

Natasha knew that on the east side of the desert was a secret liaison magic circle set up by the Congress of Magic. The magic circle could send voice messages across the ocean to the areas under the control of the Congress.

Once knowing where Lucien was, Fernando and Hathaway could go back to the main material world first and then open another Portal to Alternate Realm to the northern mountains in Erdo Peninsula. This was the fastest route, although it would still cost them a day to come.

If a radiant knight was familiar with all the semi-solidified space barriers in this dimension, he or she would be able to get to the liaison magic circle in the desert within two days; if not, it would take three to four days. Unfortunately, Camil belongs to the latter.

Flying at a high speed in the sky, they could hear the wind howl as it thrashed the coldness into their bones. Lucien smiled. He nodded and said to Natasha via the telepathic bond between them, “it Demigod-lich can’t find our traces when he returns, he will definitely go after Camil, who is the closest person to us that survived the fight. When he gets aunty Camil, we will lose all our

hope of waiting for Hathaway and my teacher's help. What's even worse is that he will for sure use aunty Camil to threaten us. We must eliminate this potential danger."

"That's true. If Demigod-lich can lock on our trace, he will come after us." Natasha agreed. "Thus, as long as aunty Camil can hide properly, she will have enough time to recover."

"In this dimension, even a legendary's spiritual power field only has a radius of three hundred meters. At that time, aunty Camil will have already left the city of Husum. By then, Demigod-lich will have a very difficult time if he still wants to find her. And we all know that following one's track of destiny isn't very accurate." Natasha added. "Within a day, aunty Camil will be able to get in the mountains in the northeast, where His Excellency Varantine is patrolling. Unless he loses his mind and wants to challenge the Church right now by himself, Demigod-lich will have no choice but to give up tracking down aunty Camil."

Natasha, who was flying in the air like a sharp arrow, completely understood Lucien's plan. She told Lucien where Varantine was, in case he would run into Varantine.

To escape by fueling a fight between Varantine and Demigod-lich was not a possible plan, because Varantine could always inform the Church, and then Lucien would have to run away from the entire Church's hunting. The situation would be much, much more dangerous than what they were facing now.

"So we have to keep distracting Demigod-lich for a whole day," said Lucien seriously.

Natasha lifted her left eyebrow, "You are not worried that aunty Camil might tell His Excellency Varantine about you?"

"There's no perfect plan facing such a great danger," said Lucien honestly, "but after seven days, when Alterna finishes absorbing the pieces, I might be able to survive even facing the Pope. And, I trust you."

Natasha lips curved into a smile,

“I told aunty Camil that it would only take Alterna four days to fully absorb the pieces. If she chooses not to sell you out and successfully sends the message to the Congress, the Lord of Storm and granny Hathaway will come find you even earlier than you planned. If she indeed sells you out, when the Pope sends the priests here, it will have been three days later. His Holiness will definitely consider how big is their chance of winning when facing Alterna, who will have recovered to the level of demigod. I don’t think he will take the risk, especially when he’s currently unable to cast God’s Arrival.”

Lucien tilted his head and examined Natasha up to down. He was quite impressed. “I thought you were always very straightforward, no matter when fighting or dealing with things. I didn’t expect it at all that you could also be very sophisticated. But... aunty Camil has been protecting you for so many years, won’t you feel bad lying to her?”

Natasha grinned. “Hey, I gave aunty Camil the wrong message because you deceived me in the first place. A dignified knight like me doesn’t lie.”

After the joke, the look on Natasha’s face became more serious. “Although I do like to solve problems on my own, as the future duchess, I’ve always been living in great caution, or what happened to me last time with my cousin Verdi would definitely happen again. I trust that aunty Camil will never betray me, but I am not so sure whether she’d also not betray you. Maybe in her eyes, sending you to the gallows is the best way to protect me from the danger of being hunted by Demigod-lich. I can’t count on anybody by simply saying ‘I trust her.’”

Lucien saw a true duchess in front of him — decisive, determined, and cautious.

What was even more important was that Natasha still knew what she really wanted.

Lucien smiled lightly. “We’ve done this much, and the rest of the things are not within our control. We should head northward and eastward in turns, so that Demigod-lich will believe that we’re

heading for the desert in the east following an irregular route.”

At this time, the concrete colors black, white and grey climbed onto Lucien's left hand again and then covered his entire body. The flying spell was interrupted, and Lucien instantly fell from the sky.

With a dive, Natasha clutched Lucien. Then she pulled out Pale Justice and swung it at the mix of black, white and grey.

However, this time one single strike turned out to be insufficient. Natasha frowned and kept hacking at it. After three times, the mixture of colors finally retreated.

“Are you alright?” Asked Natasha in concern.

Lucien said calmly, “don't worry. The fight can get quite intense. When the absorption process approaches the end, there'll be a big one.”

“You gotta ask Alterna some rewards when Alterna recovers,” said Natasha half-jokingly. “You're taking such a huge risk.”

Lucien answered thoughtfully, “In fact, I think I've got some rewards already. Every time when this happens, the world around me stops working, but meanwhile, my soul is still growing stronger together with my cognitive world. When I first got struck by it, it felt like that I directly skipped two years. The two-year growth has turned out to be a great boost to my soul. Now, the power of my soul is at the seventh circle. When I finish analyzing a seventh-circle spell, I'll try to advance.”

“This is not fair. We are at the same level again!” Natasha exclaimed in great surprise. “... I was working very hard to be a level higher than you. After this ends, you have to reward me as well!”

“I will, as long as you're not asking me to wear weird costumes,” Lucien revealed Natasha's secret thoughts.

Natasha shrugged. “Alright, then you'd better get up.”

Lucien finally realized that Natasha had been holding him in her

arms all the time during the conversation. With a shy smile on his face, Lucien cast Advanced Fly again.

...

Half a day later, Lucien and Natasha arrived at a small town in the northern mountain range. Now, they were hiding in a mud hut and taking a break.

“The outbreak is happening so unpredictably! Before, we could still handle it, but after Demigod-lich sent out his specter minions, we are now under great pressure,” said Natasha.

Natasha’s eyes were fixed sharply on Lucien’s left hand, where the one to blame was residing. The only thing that could comfort her now was that according to Lucien, Alterna was a cute-looking blond girl. Thus, Natasha could still put up with Alterna. She also wondered why Lucien was always caught in big troubles.

Lucien could do nothing about this. “It’s completely out of my control. There’s no pattern in this at all.”

In the past hour, they had run into two teams of senior-rank specters. Many thanks to the fact that Pale Justice was the great bane of the specters, they were able to escape. Otherwise, they would have already been caught by Demigod-lich.

Natasha was about to say something to relax. Suddenly, the monotonous colors of black, white and grey haunted Lucien again.

She looked rather alert and serious. Pulling out Pale Justice, she hacked at the color layer from an angle as the many times she did before.

This time, the colors faded away immediately. But Natasha did not have time for celebrating. The next moment, Natasha leaped forward. Clutching Lucien, who was still not able to move, she rolled out of the mud hut.

Bang!

The mud wall was penetrated by a huge piece of stone. After a few

shakes, the hut collapsed to the ground, raising dust everywhere.

Natasha held the sword and stood in front of Lucien. She saw the disgusting, rotten monster.

It was a group of huge apes two to three times tall as a man. But they had no skin, thus the green, rotten muscles and tissues were all revealed. In each of their hands, there was a huge stone.

“Only a group of middle-rank Rotten Looters?” Natasha sneered. Her movements were so fast that the series of piercing and striking only took her a couple of seconds.

When Natasha returned to where she was standing earlier, the huge apes had all collapsed to the ground one by one. Their huge bodies quickly dissolved into piles of pus and then disappeared.

“There must be a high-rank undead creature as the leader behind! Let’s go!” Lucien reminded. Besides, he did not want to get the innocent residents nearby involved.

After casting Speed on themselves, Lucien and Natasha ran into the mountains, changing their directions aimlessly.

A few seconds later, Natasha suddenly took a wide leap onto the big tree beside them and pierced through a huge animal. It was another Rotten Looter.

“We’re still being followed,” said Natasha seriously.

Lucien looked back and frowned. “Something’s tracking us. We have to find it out, or Demigod-lich will be coming for us soon.”

Chapter 491: The Lunatic

"How?" Asked Natasha. Although she was an expert in anti-tracking, she knew that everything was different in this dimension where everyone's spiritual power and willpower were both restrained, so she asked for Lucien's advice.

Sorcerers were known for their multiple spells serving different and specific purposes. This was another advantage that they had over knights and clergies.

Lucien took out his monocle and covered his left eye with it. Images and scenes flashed through his left pupil. Meanwhile, electromagnetic waves spread out from his eye and his body to every direction, then providing feedback to him from time to time.

Using the fifth-circle spell Eye of Thunder and Lightning, Lucien was now like a radar in human shape.

"The feedback from over three hundred meters is weak and chaotic somehow... Is this the special suppression of this world? It feels like magnetic pollution." Lucien said to Natasha through the telepathic bond between them. "But don't worry. Let's keep moving forward. You keep pretending that you're still seeking around but have found nothing so that we can lure it closer to us. We gotta hurry up, there isn't much time left for us."

"Alright." Natasha agreed.

Clenching onto Pale Justice, she walked deeper into the forest with Lucien.

Lucien then cast True Seeing on Natasha and himself, pretending that they were still on great alert but could find nothing.

After a minute, Lucien and Natasha quickly exchanged a look and suddenly accelerated. Like two flashes of shadow, they sprinted towards the end of the path, ready to turn left.

At this time, Lucien stopped without any signs and cast Move Earth,

a sixth-circle spell!

The ground within a hundred meters started shaking fiercely. Invisible waves spread out, and trees fell one by one.

From the thick crown of an old tree, a black figure lost its balance and fell onto the ground.

The blackness of the figure could absorb in most electromagnetic waves including visible light, thus generating an alternative sense of invisibility. Without True Seeing, Lucien and Natasha would not be able to see it or sense it at all.

Natasha dashed forward and wielded Pale Justice downward in great momentum.

The black figure turned out to be a human-shaped monster with the head of a white tiger. The aura of death surrounding it was extremely dense. Its power should be able to directly manipulate low-rank and middle-rank specters.

Fast and agile, it dodged to the side in midair and avoided Natasha's blade. Then the black claws came for Natasha like sharp blades. Meanwhile, its power waves spread out — it was going to use its ability to cast magic-like spells!

However, the tiger-head monster suddenly lost its strength and fell right onto the blade of Natasha's sword.

Pale Justice was a legendary-level sword when facing evil creatures. Without much effort, the sword penetrated through the monster's body. Black miasma came out, and the body started rotting very fast.

"It's a senior-rank evil beast, good at tracking and assassination," said Natasha to Lucien through the telepathic bond. "Did you create this spell on your own? I've never heard such a powerful senior-rank spell that can interfere with gravity to such a degree."

"Yes, I did. It's called 'Gravity Chaos', a spell of the field of Astrology," said Lucien. He accidentally came up with the spell during the derivation of the Special Theory of Relativity.

Natasha was simply being curious, so she didn't ask further. "We gotta hurry up and leave — Watch out!"

Before she finished her words, a huge rock twice the size of the previous one that destroyed the mud hut rushed out of the woods towards them fiercely, stirring up a very strong blow.

Natasha stepped forward and swung Pale Justice at the huge rock. This one single strike slowed down the rock a little bit and slightly changed its direction. Lucien made the best use of the time and shot out a ray of green light at the rock.

The ray was so thin compared to the size of the rock, like a toothpick on a desk. However, the huge rock instantly broke down into tiny green light dots and scattered to the ground.

Something in the woods burst out in an extremely bitter howl. The howling was so sharp and miserable that one's mind could very easily be disturbed.

Natasha held Pale Justice in front of Lucien and herself. As soon as the evil howling touched the sword, it split into two halves from the middle just like a rushing flood around a small isolated island, thus Natasha and Lucien were not affected at all. However, the wild beasts nearby were all panicking under the great evilness.

Stamping on the tree trunks, a giant over five meters tall cut its own way through the woods and walked out.

The giant's skin was nearly black, and it had a pair of eerie orange eyes, pointy ears, but no hair. Its dirty nails were also orange. The most disturbing thing was that it was surrounded by a cluster of spirits forming a cloud. The horrible howl that they just heard actually came from the spirits.

"A Dead Gaint! At least level seven!" Lucien immediately recognized it. "There are two kinds of spirits surrounding it. One is those that came from the enemies it killed before, and they can be easily killed by Pale Justice. But the others came from the Dead Giants themselves and are passed down the generations as guardians. These spirits are not evil, so Pale Justice won't work well. We have

to kill the giant to destroy the spirits!"

"Be careful with its Unholy Blight and Flame Strike."

Through the telepathic bond, Lucien told Natasha the basic information about the enemy.

Natasha grabbed the sword and said, "help me so I can approach the giant. Let's finish it as soon as possible."

With many years of hard training and a powerful weapon, Natasha was not afraid of the giant at all. All she wanted was to save more time.

"I'll use Exorcist Halo to suppress the spirits," said Lucien. Although he had many options, he believed that Sun's Corona would definitely be most effective in this situation.

Natasha was ready. She bent her knees and was ready to strike.

However, at this time, a layer of concrete black, white and grey suddenly covered Lucien. He had totally lost his ability to move.

"Damn!" Natasha could not hold back the swearing. She knew that she had to stop the giant first.

Yet the Death Giant had already made its move when the colors first appeared and had now arrived right in front of Natasha.

Spirits howled and cried. Natasha, who was not yet fully prepared, was knocked off into the air by the giant. Meanwhile, although the eerie shadows surrounding it had dimmed, the giant still launched its second attack.

Pale Justice kept colliding with the evil spirits, yet much of its power was restrained due to the guardian spirits.

When Natasha was defending herself, the Death Giant found the opportunity and rushed at Lucien, who was completely incapable of fighting.

Natasha's silver-purple eyes became cold. She turned back a

somersault and came back to Lucien. Then using all her strength, she sprang up and swang the sword at the Dead Giant's chest.

The Dead Giant had to stop its attack to defend itself from the fatal attack. The spirits formed a black shadow that blocked Pale Justice, and its sharp orange nails came straight to Natasha.

Natasha, however, had given up defense. She let the nails sink into her rerebrace, and meanwhile, pulled the sword and slashed across the neck of the Dead Giant.

The giant grabbed its own neck with its hands, trying to stop the black blood from bursting out.

Natasha would leave it no more chance. Stepping on the ground, she was ready to leap up again and launch her second round of attack.

At this time, a beam of holy light came from the sky and encased the giant within.

The giant lost all of its life force. The surrounding spirits were finally released and slowly disappeared in the light beam.

"Are you alright?" Lucien flew to Natasha and asked concernedly.

Natasha coughed and pointed at her left shoulder. "You gotta fix this for me later."

There was a deep crack in her violet rerebrace. Her left upper arm was injured, and traces of black blood came out from the wound.

Lucien hurriedly stopped the bleeding and said to Natasha, frowning, "there's death curse in a Dead Giant's nails, and there's also toxins. Although as a radiant knight and with your top blood power, you won't die like the others. But your power will be reduced to below senior-rank. The best solution is the seventh-circle spell, Pure Blessing. A fourth-circle spell called Remove Curse shall also work, but it must be supported by some potions."

Natasha smiled. "So... you do not have the materials to brew the potions now, right? — Wait, are you also injured?"

Lucien did not look good. His face now looked abnormally dark. Obviously, he had been affected by Unholy Blight — When struck by the colors of black, white and grey, he was not able to defend himself at all.

Lucien did not realize it until Natasha pointed out. He hurried cast a spell on himself to prevent the situation from getting worse. "I didn't notice it. This also can only be completely removed using the corresponding spell and the potion called Heart of Sun."

Natasha grinned. "You didn't even notice that your own injury. You do care about me a lot, don't you?" Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Honest and straightforward as usual, she did not feel shy at all.

Lucien, on the other hand, felt a bit shy, so he switched the topic. "I do have most of the materials of the potions. But there's one missing called Bloody Family. It's a kind of red flower that is everywhere in the main material world. So I don't have them with me."

"Let's go then. This world resembles the main material world, so it shouldn't be too difficult to find the flower. We can also ask people living in the nearby small town." Natasha stood up.

Lucien nodded and cast the spells to take away the giant's heart, nails, and the piece of skin on its chest. In the future, he would use these materials to make the senior-rank magic items Dead Giant Belt and Curse Dagger.

Luckily, Demigod-lich had not caught them up yet.

...

It was a small town in the mountains where residents relied on hunting and logging.

Lucien, whose face was still abnormally dark, found nothing about the red flowers after asking the passers-by. By now, Natasha was already having difficulty lifting her left arm.

Lucien walked to a very old man and asked, "Sir, may I ask you something?"

"What?" The old man pointed at his ear.

Lucien took out a couple of copper coins used by the locals and tossed them. "Sir, I'd like to know if you know someone good at telling plants nearby."

The old man's eyes lit up. "There is one."

Lucien smiled and handed him the coins. "More specific?"

"Sir, if you just need a guide, you don't have to go to Nika the Lunatic. He's filthy and cruel, obsessed with cutting plants, animals, and beasts into small pieces every day. He says he's looking for the secret of gods. He's gone nuts..." When mentioning Nika, the old man was obviously full of disgust.

"The secret of gods?" Lucien and Natasha asked at the same time. Their left eyebrow lifted at the same angle.

The old man nodded hard, "Yes, he keeps telling people that the blessed power comes from the strange patterns on the horrible monsters. He wants to understand the patterns! Trust me, he's gone nuts. He's been acting weird since he was a kid. Things around him were always on fire or got broken. He must have been possessed by a demon!"

Lucien was very interested, "Where is he?"

"You'd better think twice..." said the old man, but when he saw the shiny silver coin in Lucien's hand, he hurriedly added. "... Well, people did not like him, so he had moved deep into that mountain. Follow the path and you'll find him."

Chapter 492: The Pioneer

After the previous several rounds of outbursts, it seemed that Alterna had temporarily come into control of the situation. It's been more than half a day since the last time the creepy colors crept out. Therefore, Lucien and Natasha had a relatively easy morning, which was a quite good thing to them as they were both injured.

Now it was already afternoon, and it was very hot. The sun was hanging up high above in the sky. Streams of sunlight fell through the leaves, casting bright light spots on the ground.

Natasha looked around and grinned, "I thought our injured looks would attract robbers, especially after you showed off the coins you have in front of the villagers. But the morning was quieter than I thought. That was much less fun."

"This is a world with no knights and sorcerers, remember? Although you're injured, the set of armor you're wearing is definitely a great threat to those who are interested in us. In their eyes, only the Divine-blooded and the Blessed can afford such a set of armor. They're not out of their mind..." Lucien grinned, and then he added casually, "also, compared to wealth, your beauty is for sure more appealing to them. I saw a couple of guys secretly tracking you in the town."

Natasha shot a glance at Lucien and said, "how could you be so sure that their target was me? By the way, look at the castle. It isn't bad, is it? I wonder if the guy named Nika had stepped onto the path of the ancient sorcerers."

In the front, where the black willows grew the thickest, there was a castle in the shape of a fortress covered with green vines and withered leaves. Although the color of the construction was hard to tell through the layers of plants, the pointy end of it had much resembled that of an orthodox sorcerer's magic tower. To the earliest generations of sorcerers, the pointy ends pulled them closer to the sky, as well as the truth of the world.

When they heard the anecdotes about Nika, both Lucien and Natasha related them to the origin of sorcerers.

Perhaps in the Age of Mythology and the Age of Steam, when dragons, elves, and werewolves ruled the land, it was because of the efforts of those lunatics like Nika that human beings were able to ascend to the power throne. However, because those ancient sorcerers had later gone down too far along the crazy and cruel path, they finally got their karma.

While in this world which was still ruled by divine right, magic had sprouted inevitably. Maybe Nika was not alone here in this world. Maybe in other places, there were more "lunatics" studying and researching just like Nika.

"Nika never learned meditation, nor is he able to cast any spells. But simply by using the incidental surges of his spiritual power, he could already move things and light things on fire. This means that his spiritual power had reached the third or fourth circle, and he's for sure much more talented in magic than I am. I'm afraid only a few sorcerers in the Congress such as Mr. Brook could rival him before learning magic systematically. He's such a genius. With so many years of hard work, it's sensible that he has made such an achievement." Lucien commented objectively.

However, being talented in magic did not necessarily mean being successful. Among the several geniuses that Lucien that mentioned, only Brook managed to reach the legendary level. In the history of magic, there were pioneers who were probably even more gifted than Nika, but none of them ascended to the senior-rank. However, it was because of the foundation they laid that the following generations could go further and further.

Talking, Lucien and Natasha approached the lonely castle.

A white, unusual-looking bird landed on the stone pillar in front of the castle.

"This's Nika's castle. Mr. Nika, the Wise, does not welcome any visitors." Chirped the little bird with its head held up high proudly.

Lucien smiled. "We wish to visit Mr. Nika the Wise, because we were told that he is an expert in plants and monster patterns. I'm also studying those, so I'd like to exchange some ideas with Mr. Nika."

"Umm? You're not another mocker?" Said the bird surprisedly, "you said you're also studying the secrets of the gods, but how could there be two lunatics? I don't know if you're lying or not. Hmm, I gotta test you first. Do you know what I am?"

"You're the only white crow in the world, Mr. Nika's pet, and you're intelligent," said Lucien smilingly.

The bird flapped its wings, content. "Great answer. But I gotta ask Nika first to see if he agrees to see you, another lunatic!"

After the bird flew into the window above, Natasha asked Lucien, "it's white because it's feathers have been dyed, right? There's no white crow according to Creature Encyclopedia."

"So it's the only white crow in the world. Other crows don't dye themselves." Lucien grinned.

Natasha realized and shook her head, smiling. "Alright."

A few minutes later, the castle gate squeaked and slowly opened. Behind the gate, a blond boy in a short, white robe said to them politely, "my teacher wants to meet you in his research room."

"Teacher? Are you Mr. Nika's student?" Lucien asked. He was having a difficult time believing that such a well-known lunatic would have a student, a boy who was only around eight or nine! Lucien wondered if the boy was kidnapped by Nika to use for human experiments.

The little boy was very familiar with the look on Lucien's face, as he had seen it many times before. "I AM Mr. Nika's student! Mr. Nika is not crazy, but a truly wise man! He knows those gods' secrets and has extraordinary powers. People say bad things about him because they are afraid of him!"

Then the little boy turned around angrily before Natasha and

Lucien could say anything.

Lucien first checked around as usual and made sure that there were no magic defense circles, then he held Natasha by her right arm and walked in with her together, as Natasha's left arm had become completely paralytic.

Walking through the shabby hall and then up the stairs, they came to a dark corridor. Just as they entered the corridor, the little boy who was still angry at them suddenly spoke. "Mr. Nika is not crazy, really. He's been cutting up the plants and monsters because he wants to study them. Those hunters also kill, and they are used to blood, but they accuse Mr. Nika of being cruel. They just don't like the scenes of the experiments."

He was trying his best to defend Mr. Nika, hoping that the two visitors would agree with him.

"I understand." Lucien nodded. As a sorcerer, he was also familiar with anatomy. Meanwhile, Lucien also appreciated the little boy; he is a good student.

When he heard that Lucien said he understood, the little boy was encouraged, so he continued. "The patterns do hold the secrets of the gods. It's true! Mr. Nika has figured out how the power works, so he can manipulate flame and ice. He can also put people asleep and slow down a fall from high up. He's even more powerful than the Divine-blooded and the priests!"

"Really?" Natasha also tried to be supportive.

As the conversation went on well, the little boy became quite cheerful. "Really! I also know a little about it. Look!"

The little boy murmured some weird syllables, and his expression became rather serious. Some slight amount of magic waves emerged and formed an invisible hand. The hand then took down one of the candleholders from the left side of the corridor.

"It's a primitive version of Mage's Hand," said Lucien to Natasha through the telepathic bond.

The spell had not been simplified yet, and the boy was mimicking the language of the monsters.

"It's cool, right?" The little boy raised in the candleholder in pride. Seeing that the two visitors were nodding approvingly, his face glowed with excitement. "Mr. Nika is way, way more powerful than I am! We have neither the divine blood nor the power from gods. It all comes from hard work!"

"Mr. Nika said that we human beings have to rely on ourselves to get rid of the control of the false gods. Others don't understand, but I do. He's a truly wise man. He's even smarter than the gods!" The little boy exclaimed full of admiration.

"Indeed, a great pioneer," said Lucien seriously.

The little boy's effort to persuade the visitors was adorable. After being encouraged, he kept talking and talking, unconsciously letting out many secrets of his teacher and the place.

Soon, the three of them came to a door covered with grey beast skin, on which were complicated magic patterns.

It was a Stoner's skin. Lucien slightly frowned. It seemed that Nika was even more powerful than he thought. Although a Stoner was not as stout as a Stone Lizard, it was still a senior-rank creature as it was able to cast the sixth-circle spell, Petrification.

The little boy knocked at the specific section of the door and said, "Mr. Nika found it in a valley. But the patterns are too complicated, so he's still trying to figure out their secrets. Mr. Nika uses the skin to protect the research room."

Then the door opened. The smell of blood that came out from it was overwhelming. The entire room was like a showroom of organs. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

In this world, glass had not been invented. The weird-looking hearts, eyeballs, guts, and chunks of flesh were randomly placed everywhere. The windows in the room were narrow, so the entire

space was quite dark. It's normal for someone to feel scared when staying in this room.

A middle-aged man whose black hair was all messy was concentrating on drawing something. On the operation desk in front of him lied a very terrifying monster. The upper part of the monster was a naked woman, and the lower part consisted of eight giant, black spider legs. The naked woman body was covered with mysterious patterns, and its mouth was protruding.

Lucien slightly nodded. It was a woman-spider.

The little boy felt a bit sorry as his teacher completely ignored the visitors. "Mr. Nika is always fully devoted to it when studying the patterns. He will ignore everything else, whether its eating, sleeping, or teaching me. It won't take long, though."

Lucien and Natasha exchanged a look, for they were in a hurry. Then Lucien turned to look at the parchment sheet in front of Nika.

There was a very complex pattern on the sheet and a rough coordinate system. Nika's eyebrows was twisted together. It seemed that he was facing a serious problem.

"(25, 78, 39)," Lucien suddenly spoke.

Nika unconsciously followed Lucien's instruction and traced his quill pen to the spot, then his eyes opened big and he turned around.

"You know this?"

The little boy was totally lost. Was this visitor teaching Mr. Nika?

"To analyze this kind of pattern, you must break it up. One of the coordinates is..." Lucien gave another pair of coordinates.

Following Lucien's instruction, Nika finished the analysis of part of the pattern. He stared at the numbers for a couple of seconds, and then his expression changed to a mixture of excitement and mania. He suddenly strode to Lucien.

"How did you figure this out?" Nika's voice was dry and hoarse.

Lucien did not answer him directly.

"When you're studying the patterns, you also need to look out at the world. The patterns are indeed mysterious and full of secrets, but what about the world? The sun and moon rise and fall; water flows from a higher position to the lower. What are the secrets behind them? Why is it when we jump up, we always fall back to the ground? Why don't we float up toward the sky?"

"What's about it? It's normal. We must fall back. It's the ground." The little boy chipped in.

Nika, however, was shocked.

Chapter 493: The Sage

Seeing that Nika was thinking hard but still couldn't find a clue, Lucien hurriedly cut him off. "It's the power of the earth. We call it gravity."

"Power of the earth?" Nika was still very confused. In this world where everything was still in the rudiment, even the concept of the four elements earth, fire, wind, and water was not yet proposed.

Lucien nodded. "The power of the earth attaches us to it and keeps the stars, the sun, and the moon revolving. Birds have to keep flapping their wings to resist the power and fly freely..."

As he was speaking, Lucien cast Gravity Chaos, making the gadgets on the operation desk rose into the air and then suddenly drop.

Nika threw a random monster's heart up into the air and watched it fall down to the ground. After the muffled sound of the pile of flesh hitting the floor, Nika repeated to himself, "The power of the earth..."

The boy's eyes opened big in surprise. "Sir, are... are you a wise man, too?"

The boy's voice dragged Nika out from his own thoughts, and Nika stared at Lucien in great enthusiasm. "Can you explain it to me in detail? And how did you break up the pattern..."

"We're in a hurry. I'll leave some books to you later," said Lucien, pointing at Natasha's injured left arm. "Mr. Nika, do you know a kind of blood-red flowers that can catch small animals?"

Having no idea how people in this world call Bloody Family, Lucien described its appearance to Nika. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Nika was slightly stunned. He frowned and said, "are you talking about the Gronin Flower? Aki, fetch one for this gentleman."

The boy named Aki hurriedly walked to the storage room next door.

Nika finally noticed that both of the visitors were injured. He calmed down a bit and asked, "are you here for cures?"

"No. I know magic," Lucien shook his head. "I just need the flowers to make some potions."

"Magic?" That was another new word for Nika.

Lucien slightly raised his chin and smiled. "That's how the power you have is called."

Nika remained silent for a while. In his eyes, the visitor was beyond mysterious.

Natasha, who was feeling fatigued from the injury, was just smiling and listening to their conversation.

Aki, at this time, had come back with a big red flower in his hand. Lucien saw the flower and took it over from Aki. He turned to Nika and asked, "this is the flower I'm looking for. Mr. Nika, can I borrow one of your spare rooms?"

As a sorcerer, Lucien always carried his alchemy hut with him.

Nika was not good at socializing. When he heard Lucien's words, he quickly nodded, completely forgotten that the flower belonged to him. "Aki, go and find them a spare room."

Lucien put his right hand on his chest and bowed lightly. "To show my appreciation, I have some gifts for you, Sir. Please give me enough parchment rolls or papyrus."

Nika shook his head. "You're my guest. I should help you. I don't need gifts, but later we can discuss..."

"The gifts are books about magic." Lucien cut him off.

The look on Nika's face abruptly changed.

"Aki, go and grab all my parchment sheets here!"

"Ha, Lucien, you sorcerers can be really straightforward sometimes, in a cute way," Natasha commented through the telepathic bond, laughing. "Just like that that you've never kissed a girl yet because you've spent all your time in your lab, haha!"

Seeing that his teacher was in such an elation, Aki, although he did not understand what magic was, also became very excited. He dashed for the study and then came back with a pile of parchment sheets almost as tall as him.

"From Magic Basics to Model Construction, The Significance of Modelling, Basic Magic Geometry, Element Equations behind Magic Formula, Basic Element, Low-rank Meditations, Basic Alchemy..." Lucien produced a long list.

Every time Lucien finished replicating a book, Nika read out the name. His eyes lit up with great excitement light the bright stars in the night sky. His body slightly trembling, Nika had completely forgotten everything else in the world, except for only the names of the books.

Lucien copied the elementary level books in his spirit library and translated them into the Baburian version. He said to Nika, smiling, "when you finish reading all of the books, you can organize and simplify your own knowledge and gain a deeper understanding."

Lucien was going to lead Nika to the Congress of Magic. After all, Nika was such a genius.

"Thank you, thank you!" Nika kept repeating the same words. Just from the names, he could figure out the value of these books. Then Nika said to Lucien a bit shyly, "sir, what about the power of the earth you just mentioned?"

Lucien thought it for a while. Seeing that there were still lots of parchment sheets left, he put his hand back on the pile again and copied another three books for Nika.

"These three books... One talks about theories of gravity and provides better calculation tools, one is a classic work in electromagnetism, and one introduces the latest theoretical system

of Element and Alchemy. Although you won't be able to understand them in a short period of time, reading them will help you build your knowledge system from a higher perspective, so your theoretical framework will be more complete."

"Math Principles in the Philosophy of Magic, Electromagnetism, New Alchemy..." Nika could not move his eyes away from the three books.

Aki had got lost with the piles of books on the desk. He asked excitedly but also confusedly, "what are they, Sir?"

Before Lucien and Natasha left for the spare room, Lucien asked. "Mr. Nika, do you have any iron ores that look like crystal here?"

Lucien hoped that he could also fix his Holm Crown rings, so he could be more prepared for what was coming for them.

"I do! Take as much as you want!" Said Nika without any hesitation, who had already started reading one of the books.

...

The sun sank in the west, inside the castle had become darker and darker.

The door of a guest room opened with a creak. Lucien and Natasha walked out full of energy.

"Your left hand really behaved itself for the entire afternoon. I hope the rest of the six days are all like this." Natasha joked.

In the past several hours, Lucien made the potion called Heart of Sun, removed the cursing toxin from their bodies, fixed his Holm Crown rings, and partially fixed Natasha's armor called the Violet Guardian.

Lucien replied on purpose, "it's always very peaceful before a storm arrives."

"No worries. I am on full alert." Natasha pulled out Pale Justice to show that she had fully recovered.

At this time, Nika pushed his door open and dashed out. Rather exhausted but thrilled, Nika said to Lucien with a book in his hand, "although there are lots that I don't understand, I have felt the profound knowledge and the great value in the books. My distinguished guests, please tell me, where are the great sages Derrick Douglas, Edwyn Brook, and Lucien Evans? I have to find and follow them!"

Natasha burst out laughing. Lucien cleared his throat a bit as his protest.

"You can understand some of it?" Lucien was surprised. Although he knew that Nika was very gifted and talented, it was still hard to believe that Nika can understand part of the three books without having any foundations previously.

Nika rubbed his hands against each other, and his face flushed slightly. "Just a tiny bit. I first read some of the basic books and understood the terms, and then I turned to the three books. Also, I've been thinking of some of the questions discussed in the books. Now I finally understand what element, atom, gravity, and lightning are!"

"I see." Lucien nodded. Nika definitely had a very good foundation for learning magic, it's just that he had never touched upon the theoretical section. Then Lucien switched the topic. "Sir, do you know any special spots nearby?"

Lucien hoped to know more about the northern mountain range so that they could hide from Demigod-lich more easily.

Nika hardly talked to people, so he was basically following Lucien's words to keep the conversation going. "Special spots? Well... I'm not sure what kind of special spot you're looking for, but I know a valley down below a nearby cliff, where many dangerous creatures live. The skin on the door was found there..."

"... If you go over the mountain, you'll see a very creepy forest. I'm not able to spread out my spiritual power there. Besides the forest is a very, very big lake. And it's incredibly deep. There's a secret cave at the bottom of the lake that is connected to the other side of the

mountain. I found it when I was hunting a water creature.

"Behind the dark forest, there's a valley filled with greyish white fog. Ghosts and specters cry in the valley all the time. So far I haven't gone into the valley yet. I dare not."

Nika tried his best to recall the places he had been to.

Lucien and Natasha listened to him carefully without cutting him off. When Nika finished, Lucien said to him, "thank you for giving us so much information. You can take the books with you and find a man named Rehau in the Metarin oasis in the eastern desert. Rehau will lead you to an organization that studies magic jointly, an organization built by the sorcerers around the world. When you get there, you will have a better environment for studying magic."

Nika knew what a sorcerer was after reading the introductory books. He nodded hard. "I can't wait. By the way, are the three sages still alive?"

Lucien simply nodded and was about to leave with Natasha. At this time, Nika finally realized that he never asked the mysterious visitor's name. "My distinguished guest, may I know your name? When I arrive at the oasis, who shall I refer to?"

Nika remembered scarcely that the groups for sharing books in the nearby area required a referrer.

Before Lucien replied, Natasha grinned and said, "his name? His name's Lucien Evans."

Nika was shocked. He suddenly lost all his words.

At this time, Lucien and Natasha had flown out of the castle.

...

Only a tint of dark red hung over the horizon. The early stars were hiding within.

"I think that the creepy valley that Nika mentioned is Death Valley, the previous divine realm of the Lord of Underworld. It's also the

origin of the Solna River, and where Alterna and the mysterious existence from the World of Souls fell." Lucien introduced briefly.

"Then we have to go and check it out," said Natasha seriously. "We can probably find something to fight against Demigod-lich. We can't keep hiding."

"What a pity that you're not yet able to pick up the Shield of Truth, or we'd have no worries at all." Lucien joked.

Natasha glared at Lucien. "I have to be a gold knight to be able to pick it up. Also, legendary items are as scarce as the legends. There's no way that we can find another now."

Basically, except for the few top legends, most legends or countries only had one to two legendary items.

The breeze coming through the tree branches was rather refreshing. However, it somehow felt too quiet, unusually quiet.

Something suddenly occurred to Lucien, and he asked, "when was the last time we spotted the specter servants sent by Demigod-lich?"

The look on Natasha's face changed. "This morning."

"Go!" Lucien suddenly tensed.

Chapter 494: The Great Danger

Right now, both Lucien and Natasha dared not to fly. If they flew close to the trees, they would be blocked by hills and tree crowns, which would slow them down and delay them even more; if they flew high up in the clear sky, they would easily be spotted.

After casting Advanced Speed on himself, Lucien was moving almost as fast as Natasha, who was a radiant knight. They flashed through the dark forest like two streaks of shadow.

As they were running, a burst of bright light exploded in front of Lucien's eyes. He lost his sight for a couple of seconds because the light was so unexpected and dazzlingly bright.

Natasha, however, was made immune to the bright light by her blood power. She changed her direction in midair and jumped at a big tree nearby.

The early evening stars had been dyed with red by the setting sun. In the warm hue stood an alluring beauty in a long, white robe. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

It was Asin, the God of Love and Beauty! Natasha instantly recognized who she was.

Without any hesitation, she wielded the sword in her hand, an unreal crevice that seems to not belong to this world appeared with the movement of the sword and directly whacked the light of the dusk star into two.

Before the defense shield was destroyed, Asin's body dimmed and was about to integrate into the darkness.

However, before Asin disappeared, Lucien had activated a magic spell with his spiritual power. An invisible wall appeared on the shadow. Asin hit the wall and bounced back. Then Natasha's sword cut Asin's throat open.

There was no blood coming out, only a thick cut. Against the power of Pale Justice, the two defense spells activated were torn open like a thin piece of paper. When Asin's head fell onto the ground, her body also quickly perished.

In the Life Ritual, Asin had already died and become an undead creature manipulated by Congus and was therefore unable to ward off Pale Justice, which was at the legendary level when swung against an undead.

Bits of God's Glory drifted out from Asin's body and attached to the cracks in Natasha's armor. Meanwhile, the rotten body had lost its power and turned into Asin's original look — a centaur.

Natasha was very surprised, but it was not the perfect time asking why. She came back to Lucien and said, "let's go. Asin tried to stop us even when he knew it would be a great risk. It means that Demigod-lich is already nearby!"

Asin's domain included that of tracking and hiding, that's why Lucien and Natasha did not find out that they were being followed. If Demigod-lich was still far away from them, Asin, who still had a little bit of intelligence remaining, would not reveal Her presence in front of Lucien and Natasha.

Lucien's sight resumed. He turned around and was ready to head for the dark forest over the cliff.

Suddenly, bitter crying and howling approached them. The atmosphere instantly became overwhelmed with the aura of death. Water and life force started to leak away.

Demigod-lich was here!

Lucien and Natasha realized it at the same time. Natasha swiftly turned around and help Pale Justice straight up in front of them to block the fatal sound waves brought by Demigod-lich's Howling.

In the crying and howling, birds within the radius of two hundred meters fell down to the ground one by one, their bodies already partially decayed before they even touched the soil.

Pale Justice lit up. Its light was warm, soft, but determined. In the horrible and sharp howling, the sword trembled fiercely, as if the power had reached its limit.

Facing a legendary over a thousand years old, an experienced sorcerer with endless spells, there seemed to be absolutely no chance for them to win at all. To die in peace would be a blessing from the God of Truth.

The dangerous power came closer and closer. The distance between them would soon be less than two hundred sixty meters!

Lucien, at this time, took a step forward and lifted his left hand. Dazzling moonlight came out from his hand, and black flame twined around it.

"En?" Accompanying the voice, white light of life force and pure moisture joined together, and they formed a wall of defense dazzling in green and grey light.

Lucien's left hand fiercely hacked downward, but nothing happened.

He immediately turned around and dashed. Through the telepathic bond, he shouted to Natasha.

"Run! Out of the three hundred meters range, then we may still have hope!"

Lucien just made Alterna temporarily stopped suppressing the power of the mysterious existence in the World of Souls, pretending that Alterna was ready to fight to frighten Demigod-lich.

Lucien could only use this method once. Although it would work if Lucien simply let Alterna out, in the end, Lucien would still die from the mysterious existence's pieces losing control. Unless there were no other choices, Lucien would not turn to this last plan.

Understanding how urgent the situation was, Natasha immediately pulled out the sword and caught Lucien up. She was faster than Lucien, so she grabbed Lucien's arm and dragged him to run around the cliff.

Under the great pressure, Natasha was running even faster than she thought she could. In the darkness, the two figures became two almost invisible shadows.

The angry voice came from far behind, advancing very quickly.

"I'm going to turn both of you into corpse servants!"

The concrete colors of black, white and grey extended out and covered Lucien's body. This was the consequence of Alterna temporarily let go of the pieces.

Fortunately, Natasha was prepared for this. She grabbed Lucien with her left hand and kept running for their lives as fast as she could.

When the long mountain road ended, in front of Natasha there were two options: On her right-hand side was the dark forest, while on her left was the extremely deep lake that Nika mentioned. Meanwhile, the horrible power approaching them from behind was closer and closer.

According to Nika's words, the lake was at least four to five hundred meters deep. She slightly slowed down and cut off the dull colors on Lucien with her sword. Then, she pulled Lucien together with her and jumped into the lake.

The world suddenly became silent. They sank fast in the water.

Not yet reaching the radiant knight level, Lucien was not able to move or breathe easily as he wished underwater. He also dared not to cast Sea Cloak, as Demigod-lich might sense the magic waves.

Natasha took a glance at Lucien and pulled him in her arms. Then her lips attached to that of Lucien and infused fresh air into his mouth.

Lucien had no time to taste the kiss at all. He was sinking fast with Natasha.

Pointing at the cliff, he gestured to Natasha that there was a slant limestone cave.

Under his black cloak, Demigod-lich stared at the two paths and came into a dilemma. He cast a couple of spells but none provided a solid answer. He was rather pissed: In this bloody world, the ultimate range covered by his spiritual power was about only two hundred meters. Even with those investigation spells, the figure could only go up by around a hundred meters.

After one day of tracing, he already knew that Lucien's track of destiny was unusual and that Natasha was shielded by the power of Alterna, so he did not waste his time on casting prophecy and horoscope spells.

However, as a legendary sorcerer, Congus the Demigod-lich was by no chance a fool. After a while of thinking, Congus sent out his Devourers, Dead Giants, and mummies to the dark forest to search for Lucien and Natasha. Meanwhile, Congus himself flew to the lake and cast the spell above the lake.

"Toxin of Filth."

Suddenly, the waves in the lake turned pale and the color quickly expanded. Fish floated to the surface of the lake, half-rotten.

The lake gurgled as if it was boiling. A shadow huge as large as a castle surfaced. It was a giant monster with a dragon bloodline!

However, it had also gone rotten!

Underwater, when Lucien and Natasha saw the slant cave, both of them were very encouraged.

However, at this time, Natasha noticed that the color of the lake was turning pale very fast. The nearby algae and weeds were all gone, together with the fish. Surrounding them was the sheer silence.

"Go!" Natasha yelled through the telepathic bond.

Swimming for their lives, their speed had reached their physical limit.

When they were almost there, the muddy paleness had also arrived.

Natasha, at this time, grabbed Lucien's arm and pushed him into the cave when Lucien was totally unprepared.

Meanwhile, she turned around and pulled out Pale Justice against the death power.

The power of the sword divided the paleness into halves. Pressing against the sea cliff with her left hand, Natasha turned over and jumped into the cave.

"Watch out!" Lucien hurriedly cast a spell and stopped the paleness in the shape of disgusting tentacles from catching Natasha.

As soon as Natasha jumped out from the water in the cave, she also turned around and hacked her sword at the pale tentacles.

With joint effort, they finally got rid of the filthy paleness. However, Natasha's armor, the Violet Guardian, had been severely damaged. There was even a hole in the back.

Natasha had never had such a dangerous experience before, and she now felt extremely exhausted. But she knew that they could not stop here as they have not escaped from the danger yet. She forced herself to move on and said to Lucien,

"Keep moving. We'll be safe on the other side."

"Will you?" A cold voice came from the front of them.

Demigod-lich emerged from nowhere in his black cloak.

All their efforts ended up to be in vain. For a second, both Natasha and Lucien had lost all their hope.

However, desperation only existed for a blink. After a brief communication through the telepathic bond, Natasha picked up her sword and swung it at Demigod-lich.

"Life Depri..." Congus knew that Pale Justice was extremely powerful to specters and could actually injure him, so he was very cautious. He was ready to kill Natasha with one single strike.

However, Natasha suddenly disappeared from where she was. Congus lost his target, while Lucien was holding Sun Staff inlaid with the big gem on the top.

"A ninth-circle maze... interesting..." Congus sneered. "But you're on yourself now."

He was ready to confine Lucien using Spirit Confinement.

Lucien begged in desperation. He seemed to be in a demented state.

"All you want is to kill me, right? You want Alterna and the pieces, right? Come and get them!

"But please let her go. She has nothing to do with this. She is implicated because of me, and, yes, she's a descendant of Her Excellency Hathaway!"

Congus was a bit amused, as he was a bit surprised to see that Lucien, who was praised as always remaining well-mannered and calm, had lost all of his dignity. "For this very reason, I won't keep her alive. If they know, Hathaway and that old bastard Lord of Storm would find every possible way to kill me."

Congus stared at Lucien and continued. "What a pity. You could have the chance to become a grand arcanist, and your achievement could exceed my students', or even mine. But you overestimated yourself. Your involvement in the World of Souls and the fact that Maskelyne gave you his amulet are doomed to kill you."

In Congus' eyes, Lucien had completely lost all hope.

Lucien burst out into tears. "Let her go! I give you all you want! Alterna, and the pieces!"

What happened next slightly shocked Congus: Lucien's right hand suddenly grabbed his left arm and directly pulled it off from his body. The white bones and red flesh formed a sharp contrast, astonishing by the sight.

"You want it? I give it to you! All!" Lucien cried out aloud and threw his left arm at Congus.

Had Lucien totally gone mad?

Although feeling it quite unexpected, Congus did now lower his alert. Using Mage's Hand, he caught Lucien's left arm in great caution.

At this time, the left harm burst out dazzling silver light and the colors of black, white and grey quickly extended. The colors instantly infected the mage's hand and then completely enveloped Congus.

All the exaggerated looks and emotions disappeared on Lucien's face. Calmly, he lifted up Sun Staff and pointed it at the void.

Natasha's figure emerged in the air. Without any hesitation, she wielded Pale Justice and hacked it directly at Demigod-lich!

Chapter 495: Reward

Chapter 495: Reward

The long sword looked ordinary, radiating a soft but determined glow. As the silver-purple in Natasha's eyes became pure crystal-clear, two illusory splits that looks as though they could split the world apart suddenly appeared on the blade. In a mere second, the sword had reached Congus' head.

The vital part of a lich was not its heart and neck. Only by damaging the head, where the soul resided, could one effectively injure a lich.

Under the weight of the "Pale Justice", streaks of transparent cracks appeared in the boring mix of black, white and grey. Two needle-like red spots were revealed underneath.

Puff... It sounded like the sword just hacked onto a piece of rotten wood. All the emergency defense spells were rendered invalid by the power of the mysterious existence in the World of Souls.

"Ah!!!" A bitter and piercing shriek burst out.

And Natasha was directly blown away by the power. Blood came out from her eyes, nose, and mouth.

This was not Demigod-lich's Howling, but the spiritual power waves released by Congus in great fury. Although with Pale Justice's protection, Natasha was still severely injured. Meanwhile, Lucien suffered even more from the great power. He felt beyond dizzy, and there was a strong taste of blood in his mouth.

"Good... Good!" Congus's furious voice seemed to come from far away.

Both Lucien's and Natasha's hearts sank for a second.

Was Congus still "alive"?!

Suddenly, Congus's black cloak split from the middle. The white skeleton inside collapsed to the ground and decayed instantly. The smell stank badly.

On the skull, two deep cracks appeared, under which warm holy light twinkled.

Then with a crispy sound, the skull cracked open. The smaller golden skull in the middle also bore undescrivable unreal injuries.

Without the protection of the defense spells, this one single strike was almost as powerful as the power of Alterna to Congus.

Pale Justice, the terminator of all evils, was a legendary weapon at this moment!

The silver moonlight seized control over the mixed colors of black, white and grey, preventing it from spreading out.

"I will be back. You'd better come up with some better tricks!" Congus proclaimed in a voice was full of viciousness.

The golden skull broke into three pieces and clattered on the ground, while Congus' soul slowly faded from the scene.

"Even with this he still isn't entirely dead! Liches, no, sorcerers are so troublesome!" Natasha complained half-jokingly in a finally relaxed mood.

Lucien was already lying on the ground, unable to move. He felt that his neurons twitched under the sharp pain. However, he felt such ease in his mind. Despite the cost, they had defeated Demigod-lich!, Although he had been stuck at the accident of the legendary level for hundreds of years, he was still a true legendary sorcerer! Without a doubt, they were very proud of themselves.

"Among... Among all the sorcerers, necromancers are the hardest to... to kill." Lucien gasped through the sentence due to the great pain. But after he pulled out a tube of Water Song and drank it all, he felt better. Then he continued. "But we nailed it! Now Congus has to go back to the main material world for his resurgence using his phylactery since he had used up his most convenient backup last

time. This means we'll be safe for at least one day."

Natasha stood up and carefully brought Lucien's left arm to him. "We can get ready by making the most of the day. Then as long as we can stay alive for one more day, given that the pieces can behave themselves like today, granny Hathaway and the Lord of Storm shall be arriving. By the way, can you put this back?"

"I'm not a radiant knight," said Lucien. But he still stood up slowly and took over his left arm. Pressing it against the cut, the flesh and nerves started growing, and the bones were covered in a layer of dim white light.

Carrying the Saint Badge given by Ell, Lucien was as strong as a grand knight. Plus his blood power, the magic potion Water Song, and the power of Alterna, although he could not fully recover, Lucien could still roughly put the left arm back. However, the pain and the torturing itch from the growing of flesh were so intolerable that Lucien had to bite his lips very tight to stop himself from crying out loud.

At this time, a cold hand touched Lucien's face, soothing his pain while delivering great willpower.

Natasha frowned slightly, but she joked deliberately to distract Lucien. "You finally get to know how I felt when there was a hole in my lower abdomen, huh? A grand knight can quickly recover, but it's an awful torture."

Beads of sweat covered Lucien's forehead, but were then gently wiped off by Natasha. A few minutes later, Lucien finally managed to force a smile and replied, "I couldn't tell by then. You were even discussing how to barbecue your own organs."

"Hehe, do you want me to cook one for you now?" Natasha grinned. Seeing that Lucien now felt much better, she asked. "How's Alterna right now? Is your arm growing back okay?"

Lucien nodded. "Alterna just released the control, so the pieces of the mysterious existence had a chance to recover a bit. Without my blood power and spiritual power, Alterna might not be able to

always stay in control. If that happens, we probably won't be able to escape to a three-hundred-meter distance in time."

Then Lucien tried to move his left arm and estimated. "I can lift it and do some simple actions, but not the complex ones, not to mention the delicate gestures for casting. I have to use a Necromancy rite to fully recover."

Natasha felt relieved knowing that there wouldn't be any permanent injury left in Lucien's arm. Like a victor, she lifted Pale Justice and said in good spirit, "although we haven't fully killed Congus, I'm sure I'm the first level-seven knight ever who managed to kill a legendary during direct combat! That's awesome! Absolutely awesome!"

She paced around full of excitement, her face flushing slightly.

"This's the adventure I long for! A friend that knows me well, powerful enemies, dangerous fights. If I can go back alive, this is gonna be a memory of my lifetime!"

"Me, too," said Lucien seriously, staring at Natasha's lips, "but we'd better not pursue this kind of fight all the time, or we'd die sooner or later."

"Of course, if it wasn't because of you, I would have gone back to Varantine's area directly." As the future top leader, Natasha understood how important it was to keep herself safe. She arrived in Erdo this time on her own because she had previously received Hathaway's message that Lucien went missing. Thus, she had purposefully picked the commission to explore and investigate the space, so that she could search for Lucien in the area controlled by the Church, where Hathaway and the Lord of Storm were not suited to enter.

It took her two months before she found Lucien on the remote Erdo peninsula.

Natasha then added in excitement. "I'm gonna put this on record in my family history. Descendants of my family will regard me as a real knight with great bravery and determination, and they'll know

that she has a sorcerer friend.”

After a short pause, Natasha smiled at Lucien. “I’m also gonna put on record that beside defeating Demigod-lich, she also took away the first kiss of a grand arcanist. Well, I’m sure you’ll become a grand arcanist in the future.”

She expressed her positiveness towards Lucien’s future achievements. At this time, thinking positively gave her the confidence to face the even greater danger coming for them the day after.

They had to equip themselves with hope to face desperation.

Feeling a bit embarrassed, Lucien smiled and asked carefully. “Don’t you feel... ugh.. disgusted when kissing a man?”

Natasha rubbed her chin and thought about it carefully, but then she said a bit confusedly, “I thought I would, but it wasn’t as bad as I imagined. Maybe it’s because you are my best friend, or maybe it’s clean as that was your first kiss.”

She smacked her lips, as if she was trying to recall how the kiss felt.

Lucien had to admit that Natasha’s masculinity was still impressive to him. Meanwhile, he was quite happy about it because this was good progress between Natasha and him.

“Alright, let’s go and check the Death Valley out,” said Lucien. “We’ll try to see if there’s a way to keep us safe.”

“Okay.” said Natasha. She wiped off the blood on her face and grabbed Lucien’s arm.

Before they left the cave, they saw something shining dimly on the ground.

“What is it?” Natasha approached it and found that there was an ancient-style ring hiding underneath the rotten golden skull.

Lucien’s eyes suddenly lit up. ” All the rest of Congus’ magic items were destroyed under Alterna’s strike. And he didn’t return to the

main material world and his demiplane after that, which means this is a...”

“Legendary item!” Both of them exclaimed at the same time full of wild surprise.

Lucien walked closer to the ring but did not touch it. He explained to Natasha.

“Many magic items have creepy powers. Take my magic robe as an example, I can hide my soul in it and then wait for a body to occupy when someone tries to take away the robe. The ring may be Demigod-lich’s only legendary item, so we have to be careful. Protect me with Pale Justice; It is a legendary item when it comes to defence against soul attacks or curses.”

Natasha nodded. She pulled out the sword and grabbed it tight.

Lucien calmed himself down and cast Identification on the ring.

Chapter 496: Congus Ring A Longer

"? ? ?"

Lucien didn't know how he should react when he saw the identification result. The Identification spell yielded no information at all. He figured that it was probably because the ring was much more powerful than his current level.

"What is it?" Natasha noticed the change in Lucien's expression.

Since there were only the two of them here, Lucien did not hide his feelings.

Lucien nodded. "I'm trying to analyze it. Watch out for me. If anything goes wrong, cut off the connection between the ring and me immediately."

"Be careful." Natasha held her sword tight and stood beside Lucien.

Lucien spread out his spiritual power and carefully touched the simple black ring with it.

Suddenly, Lucien's spiritual power was dragged into an illusionary land. He stood on the lifeless earth covered with cracks and under the gloomy sky. Surrounding him were clusters of dried grass and greyish-white rivers. However, the white sun in the sky radiated a strong life force.

On the barren land, graves and black tombstones were everywhere. Many of them were slanted or broken. There were so many of them that they looked like clusters of short bushes on the deserted land.

However, the scene revealed a completely different picture in Lucien's eyes. The tombstones, the graves, the rivers, and the filthy clouds connected with each other in a way that was too complicated even to him. The complicity of the structure exceeded that of any spell structures that Lucien had ever seen, and even merely looking at it made Lucien feel dizzy and weak.

Lucien first ruled out all the illusionary images and then started analyzing it bit by bit. The work was hard, but Lucien was not aiming at figuring out the whole structure but only knowing the function of the ring.

Casting Identification from time to time, half an hour later, Lucien finally figured out where the control core of the ring was.

Withdrawing his spiritual power, Lucien said to Natasha exhaustedly, "I need to take a fifteen-minute break now. Then I'll stimulate the control core of the ring and activate the spiritual imprint left by Congus within. You seize the chance to wipe it off using Pale Justice."

During the past three years, Lucien had been working on many cutting-edge math problems with the arcanists from Tower including Leviski, therefore, the legendary-level structure within the ring was not completely out of his comprehension. He was actually able to use some smarter ways to crack it. However, because of Lucien's lack of Necromancy knowledge and his relatively low level, although he had no problem with math, he still had to refer to violence. But with the adequate support of his knowledge, using violence would be much easier now.

"You can find a way to stimulate it? It's a legendary-level ring." After knowing that Lucien did not get any feedback from Identification, Natasha's previous excitement faded away. Sometimes, a legendary level item did not bring one good fortune or power, but spelled a disaster, especially when the difference between the levels was too big.

Lucien smiled, although his face still looked a bit pale. "Why not? Come on, I probably can become a grand arcanist before turning thirty. I can at least roughly figure out a legendary structure."

In front of the woman he admired, every man would try to show off his capability, no matter how old he was.

"When I first got to know you, I didn't realize you were this smart. Honestly speaking, every time when I saw you guys playing with those numbers and shapes, I was always very impressed, although I

can't quite understand." Natasha rubbed her chin and changed her tone as if she was talking to a junior. "But be careful, as I was told that overstraining your brain would make you turn bald."

Natasha did receive a full set of magic apprentice curriculum when she was young. Her mother taught her pretty much about everything except for meditation, including spell-casting, math, geometry, Element, Electromagnetism, Force Field, Astrology. Her mother hoped that Natasha could become a profound noble lady.

In other words, Natasha had at least a high school diploma if it had been in today. Besides, she also knew history, fighting, coat of arms, and manners very well.

Lucien was a bit amused. "You think a sorcerer can't deal with alopecia?"

"Well... I think you're right, but lots of nobles are worrying about it. Maybe you can help. It's always your motivation, isn't it? To benefit the public using magic." said Natasha.

The topic of their conversation kept drifting like all the time.

When Lucien first mentioned his ambition in front of Natasha, his words impressed Natasha greatly. Although as a top noble, Natasha could hardly fully understand the lives of the ordinary folks, there was no doubt to her that there was a lot of money for the nobles to dig in for in Lucien's idea, and the country could also thrive from it.

Evans Hair Tonic? Lucien thought to himself.

But he wasn't a big fan of the product name at all. He shot a glance at Natasha and then shook his head in great determination. "Enough. Let's start."

Natasha was quite content that her joke caught Lucien again. So she got more serious and held the sword tight again.

Lucien took a deep breath and again extended his spiritual power onto the ring. This time, his spiritual power did not just stay on the surface, but suddenly dived in, heading for the horrifying clusters of tombstones.

Then, based on his rough understanding of the place, Lucien came around the defense on the outside and then directly headed for one of the ordinary black tombstones.

A red line of epitaph suddenly appeared on it:

"This is the best place for confinement, as everyone will eventually be confined in this small coffin."

A name was inscribed underneath — Congus.

The scarlet words started distorting, turning into horrifying monster mouths, and they instantly tore Lucien's spiritual power apart into pieces. Behind the gravestone came out a blurry specter. Its eyes were shining in jade-green light.

"Now!" Lucien said aloud to Natasha through the telepathic bond. He was in agony as his spiritual power was suffering from the bitter impact.

This was the best chance!

Natasha was well prepared, and she fully trusted Lucien. Following Lucien's instruction, she hacked at the ring.

Greyish-white smoke was released from the ring, and it sounded like that the cluster of smoke was crying. However, under the power of Pale Justice, the smoke quickly disappeared.

Now the black ring looked very dim. The gloss on it earlier was now gone.

Lucien took some time to recover from the pain and started leaving his spiritual imprint in the ring. Meanwhile, Natasha kept staying alert in case there was a further trap left by Congus.

As soon as Lucien finished leaving the imprint, suddenly, the ring started sucking in Lucien's spiritual power like a huge vortex. Within seconds, pretty much all of Lucien's spiritual power had been drained. He had to turn to his Holm Crown ring, Origin, to get out the extra spiritual power that he saved earlier.

Meanwhile, Lucien seized the chance and turned the black hole in his cognitive world to the front, facing the huge spiritual power vortex! The two holes were like two suction pumps rivaling against each other!

The black hole finally distorted the entire space. The speed of Lucien losing his spiritual power suddenly slowed down. Then Lucien heard something snapped, and the suction from the ring instantly disappeared.

"Are you alright?" Asked Natasha concerned, seeing that Lucien's entire face had turned very pale.

Lucien sighed. "I did leave my spiritual imprint in it, but this ring is not something that I am able to use right now."

Then Lucien shared the information of the ring with Natasha through the telepathic bond:

"Congus Ring, level-one senior-rank legendary item. The wearer has to be close to the ninth circle, or he would be drained up of all spiritual power and turned into an idiot.

"The qualified wearer will be immune to all the magic spells from the first to eighth circle, immune to Confinement, Shadow Killer, Energy Drain, Command, and Banshee Howling. Also, the wearer will have a good defense against legendary-level spells in the field of necromancy and illusion, even if they are cast by a top legendary.

"The wearer's physical fitness, life force recovery speed, and physical defense will also be improved by to levels, reaching the limit of that of a gold knight. Meanwhile, there is also an extra level of magic resistance improvement up to level-two legendary, and the wearer will be immune to any toxin and disease spells lower than the legendary level, as well as some cursing spells based on necromancy power.

"In addition, the wearer is automatically cast with Advanced Invisibility (4th circle) and Advanced Speed (6th circle), unless the wearer chooses to deactivate them. Every day, the wearer can cast

Confinement (9th circle) for four times, Undead Scourge (9th circle) for three times, and Time Stop (9th circle) for two times.

"Meanwhile, the ring contains horrible magic power that gives its wearer the ability to cast unimaginable legendary spells. The wearer will be able to cast Spirit Confinement twice a day, Demigod-lich Howling twice a day, and Undead Rampart once.

"This is a super powerful ring made by a formidable demigod-lich!

"Both death and confinement frighten people.

"Congus".

Natasha remained silent for a while and then sighed. "This is such a powerful ring. If Congus had chosen to use Time Stop, that would have been the end of us."

"I don't think so." Lucien shook his head and pointed at his left hand. "I have two demigods inside of my body. Although neither of them could fight directly, their mere presence can make me immune to many spells, including Time Stop. Congus for sure already knew about it."

The ninth-circle spell, Time Stop, only slowed down time-lapse within a small region. It was not for completely pausing time.

Natasha nodded, and then she sighed. "What a pity that you can't use it... I thought we'd have much hope surviving in the next day and a half."

"We can't, but someone else can. As long as we can find a target close to the ninth circle and control him, we can make him wear the ring for us. Then problem solved," said Lucien seriously.

Natasha's eyes lit up. "That's right! Especially that the false gods here in this world are not as powerful as those of the same level from our world! So the target you're talking about is...?"

"Ell, the Lord of Redemption." Lucien already had the answer.

Then he took out the crystal ball and started searching for Ell's

whereabouts.

However, the crystal ball yielded no result at all. It never happened before.

Lucien frowned. "Something's wrong with Ell. I missed something."

"Try Francis. Maybe he's still around Ell." Natasha suggested.

Lucien nodded and started casting again. Then after a short while, Lucien suddenly looked up and said to Natasha, "Francis is very close to us! Maybe he's right in the Death Valley!"

Horoscope could not provide the exact location of Francis, but it's results were enough for Lucien to make a preliminary judgment based on it.

"Although we don't know what they're planning, it could be a chance for us," said Natasha. Then she turned to look at the ring, and disappointment was still in her eyes. "If we could use it, no matter what plan we take, it will be much easier."

Lucien smiled. "There are two ways to reach the ninth circle."

"What do you mean?" Natasha lifted one of her eyebrows.

Lucien continued. "First, your spiritual power will have to reach the ninth circle, but this isn't possible right now. So there's another way around: to have a fully substantialized cognitive world."

"So you are saying..." Natasha started having some clues.

Lucien nodded. "When I came up with New Alchemy, my cognitive world already reached close to the eighth circle. In other words, my arcana level is higher than my magic level."

Although one's arcana level came from the accumulation of arcana credits, therefore it seemed less reliable compared to the magic level, but to some degree, it reflected the level of one's cognitive world.

"But this still takes time. You don't have time to do research right

now, do you?" Natasha asked.

Lucien picked up the ring and asked Natasha to go with him.

When they came out of the underwater cave and to the other side of the mountain, Lucien found another hiding cave and said to Natasha in a low voice.

"I don't have time right now, but I've been working on my research for long enough."

As he was speaking, Lucien took out piles of files from his pouch and said, "these are data collected by Mr. Douglas with regards to the satellites and the questions he came up with. For the past three years, I've been working on solving them."

"That's why when you called me, your voice sounded so close and clear, right?" Natasha recalled. "And when I asked you why you didn't answer."

"Yes." Lucien nodded seriously.

In the past three years, Lucien had been working with Levski and other arcanists on the Evans Geometry, which brought them lots of problems that could only be solved by tensor analysis. Therefore, Lucien had been working hard on deducing the special theory of relativity and the general theory of relativity.

Although Lucien had not progressed much in the latter, the former had already been almost ready!

The past three years of planning, accumulating, and waiting should finally fruit now!

Lucien unfolded his alchemy hut and started developing his paper under Natasha's curious stare.

"On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation."

Outside of the cave, the sun had completely set down. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience ,

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Chapter 497: Time and Space

It was rather cold in the mountains at night. The summer heat had gradually faded away. When the light breeze found its way into the cave, both Lucien and Natasha felt very refreshed.

Natasha watched Lucien spread the parchment roll in great curiosity. Lucien activated the magic circle, turned on the crystal light, and picked up the quill-pen.

It wasn't her first time seeing an arcanist writing a paper, but she never knew that an arcanist could focus on developing his paper in such an environment and such a dangerous situation. Lucien always surprised her.

Holding her breath, Natasha watched Lucien finish writing down the title of the paper and start working on the introduction.

"The paper is developed on the basis of the relativity principle and the principle of the constancy of light velocity. Therefore, the preconditions are as follows:"

Howling of beasts came from distance.

And louder howling followed. Together, they sounded intimidating.

Natasha was a bit startled, then she murmured to herself, joking. "When night arrives, it is the beasts' and animals' turn to start their day."

She was a big fan of Arcana Voice, which was recorded and sent to her by Lucien, and learned quite some new collocations and expressions with the radio programme.

Natasha then tried to follow Lucien's deduction. She wanted to see how much she could understand.

After the first part in which Lucien had some difficulties in progressing, he started to write faster and faster. Lines, formulas, and equations flowed out of his quill-pen like a river. Natasha felt a

bit dizzy chasing the lines, so she immediately shook her head and looked up. Her eyes caught the profile of Lucien's face under the light. The serious and devoted look on his face made him rather attractive.

Her left hand holding her right elbow and her right hand rubbing her chin, Natasha looked at Lucien carefully. From time to time, she said to herself in a low voice.

"What a pity..."

.....

In an oasis in the eastern desert, a building complex floated in the air like a palace.

Among the buildings, the one that took up that most space was a Church with a tall cross in the front. In the back of it was a study decorated very simply, and in the study was the Pope, Benedict II who looked like an ordinary old man wearing a soft hat. He was reading the information sent back from all patrolled areas while taking a sip of his black tea from time to time.

Suddenly, Benedict II's right hand trembled. The white teacup fell from his hand. But when it almost hit the ground, it seemed to be caught by the wind and flew back to Benedict II's hand.

Slightly frowning, Benedict II put down the teacup and walked to the window. Staring at the starry sky, he felt his breath a bit heavy.

He did not know what had just happened. But he knew it was something big.

He took a deep breath and then took out his staff. He prayed in a low voice, seeking for an indication from his God.

But he received no answers. Benedict II wondered if a fight just took place between Alterna and the existence in the World of Souls.

.....

To the east of the stormy ocean, along the coast were a number of

magic towers.

In one of the magic towers, Douglas, the Lord of Storm, and Hathaway were discussing their next step. The Lord of Storm just came back from his search which had proved in vain. Meanwhile, Oliver and Thanatos were searching in the marsh in the east, chasing after a legendary-level false god. The false god itself was a black dragon, somehow worshipped by some human beings and other dragons, and thus reached the legendary level because of the power of faith. Acclaiming itself to be the Dark Dragon Lord.

Hellen the Witch of Iceland and Hathaway just had their duty shift. The former had returned to Allyn to safeguard the headquarter.

"Don't worry too much, Fernando. No news is good news." Douglas comforted the Lord of Storm.

The Lord of Storm disputed, hiding his true feeling. "Why would I worry? Lucien's always hiding so many secrets and research outcomes. He's the biggest trouble himself!"

"If there's no bigger story behind, Lucien should be safe," Hathaway commented briefly.

In Hathaway's eyes, Lucien's intelligence and resourcefulness should be able to keep himself intact.

"But if there is one..." said Fernando gloomily. His red eyes opened big. Outside of the magic tower, dark clouds started gathering because of Fernando's anger.

They were grand arcanists. Grand arcanists did not believe in coincidence. Facing all the things that had happened, they already had some rough ideas about what was going on.

As they were talking, Douglas seemed to sense something and looked out of the window. He saw that on the other side of the magic tower, the sun was slowly rising. The morning glow dyed the ocean red.

The view was supposed to be breathtakingly beautiful. However, in Douglas's eyes, the ocean now looked like a horrible blood pool.

"What happened?"

"It's good, but also not good..."

As an expert in Astrology and Force Field, Douglas could even rival the Prophet in making a prophecy.

Both Fernando and Hathaway looked out of the window. They had no idea what just happened, but they somehow felt contradictory feelings of oppression and freedom in their hearts.

.....

Natasha did not get bored at all watching Lucien working on his paper, instead, she actually found this to be entertaining. After a while, she looked around, feeling a bit confused. Somehow, she felt that space and time were changing.

The paper became longer and longer. Lucien's good effort in the past three years was now driving his cognitive world one step further, a vital step! Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Lucien's cognitive world started emerging around him. In his cognitive world, there were stars orbiting fast, rays shooting out, elements radiating and releasing particle flows, and all of them were experiencing a series of wonderful changes. It seemed that the forever = isolated river of time in his cognitive world suddenly started interacting with space, energy, and all kinds of matters. They were integrating into each other!

A silent storm was forming in Lucien's cognitive world, and the power of the storm was formidable. The structure of time and space in Lucien's cognitive world had completely deviated from the frame and description set up by Douglas and Brook. His cognitive world was getting closer and closer to the truth of the world and was now more complete.

When the deduction almost came to the end, Lucien's cognitive world had finally been fully substantialized!

Lucien did not stop here. He then turned to work on producing the mass-energy formula.

It did not take long. Lucien took a deep breath and wrote it down.

" $E = mc^2$ "

Bang! As soon as the simple but profound formula settled down on the parchment, the element light spots in Lucien's cognitive world split over and rejoined each other. The procedure released formidable power and pushed the other reflections in this cognitive world to the margin.

Bang! At her first glance, Natasha could feel the great power of destruction and booming vitality the formula had. But when she tried to take a closer look at it, the feeling was gone.

Bang! A mushroom cloud rose up from the union of elements, within which there was an extremely complex but still incomplete structure.

Bang! Somehow Natasha turned to look at the entrance of the cave. Against the small piece of sky she could see, an illusionary blazing sun suddenly appeared. Meanwhile, all the beasts' howling had returned to silence.

Bang! The Pope also saw the white sun in the sky. Its intimidating power and light overwhelmed the light of all the stars in the sky.

Bang! The grand arcanists' sights slightly froze as they looked towards the seaside, where the new sun rose up to the left of the orange morning sun!

Bang! Ell could not help raising his right hand to block his eyes. Somehow, he was a bit afraid of the new sun.

But after Natasha's one single blink, the sun had disappeared. It was still very dark outside, the burning sun was nowhere to be seen.

The howling resumed, but now the beasts were crying in fear.

Benedict II blinked. When his eyes opened again, the stars were still

bright and clear in the night sky, as if what had just happened was only an illusion.

Benedict II's eyes stared at the far side of the sky. He remained silent for a long time. Even he did not understand what just happened. He felt that his heart was thudding heavily.

In the magic tower beside the ocean, Douglas asked, half out of curiosity and half out of worry. "Did anyone just crack the secret of the sun? But why did we also see it? The half-substantialization of one's cognitive world can indeed affect the real world, but that was too much..."

The half-substantialization of one's cognitive world which affected the real world was a sign of reaching legendary.

Hathaway shook her head. "Might now be legendary. Remember this world is different, the strange things constraining spiritual power."

Douglas nodded in agreement. Then he looked at Fernando who did not say a further word. "What is it, Fernando?"

The Lord of Storm rubbed his brows. "I think it might be Lucien. I gotta find him as soon as possible. Now he might be on his way to destroy the world."

As a loyal listener of Arcana Voice, Fernando had learned quite a few of trending phrases.

"It is possible." Hathaway nodded. "But we don't know where he is."

"At least we know he's still alive." Douglas comforted them.

.....

Natasha saw Lucien put down his quill-pen. She asked gently. "Has your cognition word substantialized?"

"Yup, should be able to put on the ring now," answered Lucien, who was still feeling the changes in his cognitive world.

Natasha released a sigh of relief and asked curiously, "what are those formulas about?"

"Basically, they are proving that time slows down when you move approaching the speed of light. Meanwhile, space contracts, and mass increases. So when something's moving very, very fast, clocks run more slowly, and an object's length is measured to be shorter..." Lucien tried to explain them as simple as possible. "And energy can be converted to mass and mass to energy."

Natasha knew some basics about it, but she was now still more than confused and shocked, "They are related? But... but shouldn't time and space be independent from each other? Technically speaking, space and time should just be... you know, measurements..."

Before Lucien tried to explain further, she hurriedly said, "put it more simple, please."

Lucien thought to himself for a while and then said very seriously, "to put it simple, mass is energy, energy is mass; time is space, and space is time!"

The howling of beasts from afar became more and more bitter.

Chapter 498: Prototypes of Magic

Natasha's lips twitched. She wisely ended the topic. Such missions whose brief introduction was already dizzying enough were best to be left for the arcanists to understand.

She eyed Lucien up and down and asked half curiously and half concernedly, "What else have you achieved except for the substantiation of the cognitive world to the ninth circle? I'm told by both Grandma Hathaway and my mother that when similar research results were made, the cognitive world would interact with the corresponding mechanisms in the real world and yield different magic models. Considering the great noises you caused just now, you must've invented a few new magics, right? Are they about time and space, mass and energy?

The changes of the cognitive world was a main sign that marked the advancement of high-level sorcerers. Half-substantiation corresponded to the senior-rank, substantiation corresponded to archmage, and half-solidification and influencing the real world with projections corresponded to legendary.

"I gained two prototypes of legendary spells, about how mass could be transformed into energy." Lucien understood that they were the incomplete magic structure of fission and fusion. On the other hand, while his cognitive world about the structure of time and space had also changed, he lacked theories that could directly work on them. The best he could do was to optimize the spells such as Time Stop to make them simpler and easier to learn. In order to achieve the legendary spells that could really control time and space, he would have to wait until the general theory of relativity or quantum theory was released.

However, Lucien was the only one who could've obtained the structure of fission and fusion, the two legendary spells, because he was the one who proposed the model of the atomic nucleus and the decay. He was aware of the two phenomena and the chain reaction. If it were anybody else, even if they had deduced the energy-mass formula, they would've needed to learn the relevant knowledge first

and made breakthroughs in corresponding research in order to have interaction.

Natasha was immediately attracted. "Legendary spells? No wonder... Lucien, what are you planning to name them?"

The invention of a legendary spell was always difficult. Seeing it with her own eyes gave her a feeling that she was witnessing history, particularly when the inventor was only in his twenties.

"Evans' Little Boy? Lucien's Big Ivan?" Replied Lucien casually.

According to the incomplete magic model, the fusion magic currently required top legendary in order to be constructed within the soul without hindering his usage. The more familiar he was with it and the deeper his knowledge was, the more powerful it would be and the fewer requirements there would be. However, even after he completely grasped it, it had to be released by a sorcerer that's at least at the level-two legendary level through the remote projection spells, magic extension, magic delay and the cooperation of refined materials.

The fission magic, on the other hand, should be able to be constructed by a level-one legendary, after it was fully analyzed through relevant experiments and magics. If there were refined materials, it would be possible for a ninth circle to perform it, too. Thinking about that, Lucien couldn't help but fantasize. "I wonder if the fusion magic will turn into helium flash or gamma-ray burst when it is beyond the demigod level. That will definitely be world-destroying..."

Hearing the two names, Natasha immediately grimaced at Lucien's groin. "I don't think the two names are very good. They seem to be implying the two different states of the same object. You may want to change them."

Lucien was immediately embarrassed. It was indeed as expected of "gentleman" Natasha. He waved his hands and said, "The magic model is still incomplete. Let's consider the names later after they are completed."

"Okay. I'll come and help you name one of the legendary magics. I'm very good at words!" Natasha decided to take over the interesting job, although she was kind enough to leave one of the names to Lucien. "Right, what kind of magic will they be like?"

Lucien briefly described them. As she listened, Natasha couldn't help but turn around and look at the dark night outside. In shock, she remarked joyfully, "Perhaps, you will be given titles such as God of Sun, or Eternal Scorch."

"I don't that I can achieve it even if I advance into the level of the God of Truth..." Lucien replied frankly and continued to influence Natasha's religious stance, trying to make her God really retreat to the spiritual domain. It was a long-term, arduous job that concerned his future happiness. Lucien did not intend to let go of it.

Natasha thought carefully for a moment. "The power of God's Arrival was far from the ultimate view that you just described. However, it might have been because the power was reserved and controlled accurately. What a shame. Your 'Little Boy' is still incomplete, and we do not have magic materials of sufficient purity and quality. Otherwise, we could establish a magic trap that is a curse on the surface and a nuclear bomb below. Then, chances are that we could kill the Demigod-lich one more time with the cooperation of the Congus Ring.

For now, she referred to the magics with the names Lucien randomly came up with.

"Things will never go as smoothly as we imagine. Also, although my cognitive world has turned substantial, my spiritual power is still in the seventh circle, and I am still a half-seventh-circle sorcerer who hasn't constructed the seventh-circle magic yet. My spiritual power from the ninth circle is not so close. Even though it is significantly improved because of the influence of the two demigods, I estimate that my spiritual power will reach the eighth circle at best a week later. It will take years before I advance into the ninth circle.

Lucien evaluated his status objectively without any frustration. He said with a smile, "Our original purpose was to put on 'Congus Ring' to increase our chances of survival. Since the purpose has been

fulfilled, there's nothing to regret."

Although it was possible that Congus' head would explode if the paper was directly 'thrown' to him, Lucien believed that Congus must've learnt the lesson that he should not read or pick up Lucien's stuff carelessly after suffering two setbacks.

While talking, Lucian put on the black, iron ring that had vintage stripes.

The moment it touched his flesh, it started to absorb Lucien's spiritual power crazily. As his spiritual power quickly faded away, his cognitive world began to slightly shake, but the substantiation space and projection rapidly increased his spiritual power and slowed the flow.

After a few seconds, the crazy absorption slowed down. The black surface of the ring lost the previous dimness and emitted cold, weird metal colors.

Lucian moved his body and exclaimed in surprise, "Magic resistance, healthy, physical defense and the other qualities that 'Congus Ring' improve can coexist with the effects of other magic items, provided that they do not surpass its upper limits. This is truly a 'divine item'!"

In such a way, even if Lucien did not transform, he would have the magic resistance of the eighth circle and the body quality of a level-five knight.

"Also, it nullifies and weakens a lot of magics." Natasha observed 'Congus Ring' in amazement.

Lucien shook his head with a smile. "Nullification does not always work and can be avoided. For example, the hostile spells may target the environment instead of me and then hurt me by the changes in the environment. Also, after I put on the ring, I cannot cast magic defense below the ninth circle on myself. However, the spells prepared in advance will not be affected. So, it will depend on the actual circumstance whether or not to wear the ring."

"All in all, you can perform the legendary magic now. We will not be as helpless as before when we are faced with Demigod-lich again. Where are we going next?" Although it was only midnight, and there was still one day left before Demigod-lich arrived, Natasha knew very well that the better prepared they were, the more hopeful they would be.

Rubbing the ring, Lucien said, "One legendary magic will be enough to drain the power of the ring itself, as well as my own spiritual power. Therefore, we have to find the best opportunity. Now, let's go to the Death Valley to 'find' Ell."

"Didn't you already put on the ring? There's no need to catch Ell again, is there?" Natasha was somewhat confused.

Lucien smiled. "Something is wrong with Ell. We have to investigate it in case of any accident. Also, it is exactly because I have put on the ring that we need to catch Ell. Demigod-lich couldn't have seen it coming that I could substantialize my cognitive world or put on the ring so quickly. Then, if he sees us together with Ell, who do you think he will be wary of?"

Because Alterna and mysteries existences from the World of Souls were attached to him, Lucien was bold enough to make plans about trapping a legendary sorcerer. Otherwise, it was possible that Demigod-lich already sensed the danger the moment he settled his plan, like the Lord of the Undead.

"How cunning of you." Natasha observed.

"Alright, let's go." Lucien retreated to his alchemy table and his paper. He was about to start walking, when he thought of something else. "Natasha, you mentioned that I caused rather great noises?"

Natasha nodded affirmatively. "When you wrote the paper, there was a feeble feeling of time-and-space change around. By the time you were almost done, a new sun rose in the dark night outside, scorching and terrifying. The monsters and beasts were so scared that they are still crying at present. Although it lasted only one or two seconds, I'm certain that it was not an illusion."

"How did it happen?" Asked Lucien in surprise. Didn't such a phenomenon indicate the half-solidification of the cognitive world, which was starting to affect the real world? But he was still far away from legendary.

Interpreting his understanding to her, Lucien looked at Natasha in confusion, hoping that she could shed her insight.

Natasha looked at Lucien helplessly. "I'm terrible at such things. Well, perhaps it's because this world is unique. After all, even the spiritual power and the willpower are suppressed."

"Perhaps..." Lucien considered the possibility but did not think it through. In the meantime, he noticed the brilliance of Asin's godhood on Natasha's left arm. His lips cramped, but he decided not to remind her and simply wait for it to die away.

Natasha, on the other hand, noticed Lucien's eyes. She turned her head and looked at her left arm. "Is this God's Glory?"

"You can see it?" Lucien was even more surprised.

Natasha blinked her eyes, having no clue why Lucien was so surprised. She said innocently, "I can see it all the time, and so can other people. What's wrong?"

"That can't be right. In the main material world, people without special methods or items cannot see God's Glory." Lucien believed that Natasha was not lying to him. Then, Ell provided the laurel box at the beginning only because Francis, Jacob and the rest of them could not touch God's Glory, not because they could not see it?

"Perhaps, it's because this world is idiosyncratic." Natasha proposed the same reason. She was really not good at such things.

Lucien paced back and forth. "The idiosyncrasies of this world... God's Glory, according to my hypothesis, is the amalgamation of special electromagnetic waves. Then, how can they be seen by untrained people?"

Suddenly, Lucien had an epiphany. "Perhaps it's because the magnetic field of the body and soul of the intelligent creatures of

this world are slightly different from that of the main material world. It makes their power of faith stronger and easier to disperse. Also, because the fake gods in this place do not have specific doctrines and rituals, the special electromagnetic waves that is 'power of faith' mostly leak and spread out in the air, causing severe electromagnetic contamination that suppresses the spiritual power which is also likely to be an electromagnetic wave. Does it mean that the release of willpower is also based on electromagnetic waves?"

"By the same logic, because the special electromagnetic waves of different 'frequencies' are all over the place, godhood will 'interact' with part of them, resulting in the brilliance. That's why it can be seen by ordinary people. When my cognitive world changed, it reverberated with certain electromagnetic waves in the outside worlds and caused the anomalies."

"However, what about the projection and interaction of the real world, and what about the new magic models? Perhaps, my previous guesses are just part of the truth but not the whole of it."

Looking at Lucien's meditative look and hearing his murmur, Natasha comforted him with a smile, "It must be the mysteries of the highest level and cannot be figured out all of a sudden. Let's take our time. We can find intelligent creatures and study the differences of their magnetic field later."

"Yes, Demigod-lich is what matters most right now." Lucien stopped thinking and hinted at Natasha to leave for the Death Valley together with him.

At this moment, Natasha laughed like a fox. "I thought of something. Asin, that 'God of Love and Beauty', seemed to have been a male centaur in the past, as proved by his dead body. However, after he melted part of godhood, he turned into a beautiful lady."

While talking, she rubbed 'God's Glory' on her left arm, although she could not feel anything.

"No random thoughts." Lucien looked at her solemnly.

Natasha cackled and said, "Am I such an inconsiderate girl? The godhood conflicts with your cognitive world. How can I use it when it will harm you? Huh, I need to ask Grandma Hathaway to build an extraordinary item with the godhood. Do you think I should make an earring, a ring, or a belt, a tiara, a long skirt?"

"A longsword." Replied Lucien emotionlessly.

Natasha asked in surprise, "Why?"

"A longsword forged with the godhood of a senior-rank fake god can only be wielded by a radiant knight or a talented ordinary knight. Therefore, nobody will take it away by mistake." Lucien continued emotionlessly. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Natasha chuckled and said, "that works too. How do you think it should be named?"

Lucien thought for a moment and suddenly said in amusement. "It will be the Sword of Contract and Victory. When the young man draws the longsword, his fate is changed."

Then, ignoring Natasha's confusion, Lucien walked out of the cave.

Chapter 499: What You Want Is What You See

When they approached Death Valley, both Lucien and Natasha found it hard to believe their eyes. The valley in the darkness lost the gloom and scariness that it was famous for in the tales. It was covered in a mist, and the devastating cries of ghosts were gone. Indescribable tranquility was spreading out, making the intruders reluctant to disrupt the deepest sleep. Also, as they looked at the horizon, they could vaguely see the mild and sacred brilliance from the valley.

"Is this the Death Valley?" Natasha looked back at the cold, creepy forest to make sure that they were not in the wrong place.

Frightening roars were still echoing in the forest now and then, suggesting that the dead slaves of Demigod-lich were still searching for Lucien and Natasha.

Lucien shook his head. "This is exactly Death Valley. It seems that something is really wrong with Ell. I'm going to sneak in for reconnaissance with The Eyes first. We cannot break in recklessly."

Then, Lucien took off 'Congus Ring' first and cast many defense and alarm spells on Natasha and himself. Then, he took out the crystal ball and rubbed it, allowing it to spit out a dark meatball the size of a thumb, which had deep wrinkles all over the surface.

The meatball suddenly opened, revealing a pale eye that was filled with black lines. Then, it split into nine and melted into the darkness while they flew towards Death Valley.

Lucien, on the other hand, followed them with Natasha and hid themselves in the hollows in the cliffs not far away from Death Valley. The spiritual power was severely suppressed in this world. Even the reconnaissance magic like 'The Eyes' had been greatly shortened.

The unusual darkness inside the crystal ball was gone and replaced

by the view that The Eyes saw. They were sneaking into Death Valley from different angles.

"Is that..." Pointing at a certain part inside the crystal ball, where a ghoulish-like creature more than two meters tall was entering Death Valley cautiously without any knowledge of The Eye behind it, Natasha asked, "... Congus's spectral slave?"

"It should be. Considering the time elapsed, they must be done searching the woods. Also, Congus is still in the main material world and cannot remotely command them. Well, it is a Soul Catcher." Lucien slightly frowned.

Natasha did not know the monsters as well as Lucien did. She asked curiously, "A Soul Catcher? It sounds rather intimidating."

"Yes, it is a weird and strong spectre. Don't be tricked by its ghoulish-like appearance. Look at what is below its rotten abdomen." Lucien explained gladly, reminding Natasha that she should not underestimate such creatures in the future.

For a better view, Natasha leaned on Lucien without any reluctance. Her perfume could be smelled clearly, which made him blush slightly.

"There are three tiny but vivid faces on its ribs. They are in obvious pain." As The Eye changed direction, Natasha finally saw the front side of the Soul Catcher.

Lucien pointed at the abdomen of the Soul Catcher. "Those are the souls of the creatures it has killed. Since there are three prisoners, it means that it is a Soul Catcher that has mutated, equaling to the senior rank. Those souls can bring it enough energy to use abilities similar to magic. It can be regarded as a caster of the same rank who is good at Necromancy and Illusion. When it is attacked by magic, the magic effects and the damages of certain types will be transferred to the three souls. Until the three souls are destroyed, the Soul Catcher will be utterly unaffected, and the enemy's magic will be rendered useless."

"Of course, the magic in the category of physical attack works much

better on them. For knights, the most important thing is not to mistake them for ghouls or to be hurt by their magic-like abilities."

Dimples appeared on Natasha's face. "They are indeed weird. Let The Eye follow it and see what changes it will bring to Death Valley."

Lucien would've done the same thing even if she hadn't said so. He already asked one of The Eyes to follow the Soul Catcher quietly.

Inside Death Valley, the exuberant vines blocked the starlight, making the place dark and silent.

As the Soul Catcher and The Eye moved deeper, the darkness was thicker and thicker, and fewer and fewer things could be seen on the crystal ball. Finally, all the nine scenes fell into complete dark, as if they were caught in the unusual nothingness created by extraordinary forces.

Lucien tried to power The Eyes, but his command had no response from anything. The nine Eyes seemed to have been completely melted into the darkness.

Suddenly, a gentle light arose on the crystal ball, illuminating the Soul Catcher. It was fighting an angel who had a pair of wings in the back. Ahead of them was the realm of light that looked like dawn.

It was not until then that Lucien realized that six of the nine Eyes had been lost. Apart from the one following the Soul Catcher, only two passed the darkness ahead.

"An angel? What is this place exactly?" Natasha exclaimed in the telepathic bond.

Lucien hurried to control the other two eyes to change their directions, circumvent the battle, and move deeper inside. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

The Soul Catcher was rather strong, and it did not take long before it killed the 'angel'. It intended to press on, only to be surrounded

by more and more angels. There were even many Virtues and Cherubim that had four wings. However, their arrival only made it easier for Lucien's Eye to sneak in.

The view of The Eyes became clearer. Natasha's scarlet lips opened and shivered beyond her control.

It was a beach gently patted by waves. On the beach, pure souls were playing distant and yet pleasant hymns with harps and other musical instruments, while they let out devout and magnificent prayers:

"Praise the Almighty Lord, praise the omniscient and omnipotent Savior..."

The whole beach was enshrouded in sacred brilliance, as if it were in the middle of a cluster of light. Far away from the beach, there was a city with twelve gates, which had the same length, width and height, and which was decorated with agates, jades and other gems. Above the city, there seemed to be six similar divine domains, and the same merry scenes could be found in four of them.

The two floors on the top were beyond the sight of The Eyes. However, both Lucien and Natasha could guess what was in them.

"Blasphemy! This is the greatest blasphemy! Who has duplicated Mountain Paradise?" Natasha was never too obsessed about the content and theological knowledge on the church classics. That was why she could be influenced by Lucien and live in peace with him. However, the blatant mimicry stimulated her piety and made her feel that the builder was full of maliciousness.

"You are one, and everyone. You are the moment, and forever..."

The hymns and prayers came over through the crystal ball. Lucien slightly frowned. Even the prayers and rituals in the Saint Truth's Cannon had been copied, too? What did Francis want? Did he really want Ell to be a 'duplicate God of Truth'?

Got to say that it's rather creative... Lucien secretly complimented, but when he turned around, he discovered that Natasha was so

infuriated that her hands were shivering. However, since Lucien was still in danger, and the most important enemy right now was the Demigod-lich, she did not indulge herself but held back her anger.

Lucien was more or less moved. He couldn't help but extend his left hand and grab Natasha's left hand that was not holding the sword, pressing it gently to give her warmth and comfort.

Natasha subconsciously retreated her left hand, but she soon understood what Lucien meant. Her eyes turned gentle, and she slightly nodded her head, hinting that she was alright. When her hands stopped shaking, she slightly exerted her strength and withdrew her left hand.

Apart from the dance and the escape, it was the first time that Natasha and Lucien had held their hands. Both of them fell into a brief silence, thinking about their own things.

At this moment, a man in a white robe, with six pairs of illusionary wings on his back, appeared above the crowd of angels. He slashed down with his sword, turning into a black hydra that suppressed the Soul Catcher. It seemed that the senior-rank spectre would be killed shortly.

"Francis did this?" Natasha was aware that Francis was once Ell's follower, but she did not expect that he would become a counterfeit Seraph.

Lucien hurried to prove his innocence. "To obtain intelligence, I once transformed and blended into Ell's church. I ran into Francis there. He was adept at theology and had been alluring Ell to be the God of Truth. This Mountain Paradise must've been fabricated under his instruction."

As for his participation in the deception when he hoped to learn about the growth of the God of Truth from close up, it must not be learnt by Natasha!

"It's him! Isn't he a night watcher? How could he have committed such blasphemy?" Natasha tried to hold back her shock.

Lucian was equally shocked. "He is a night watcher?"

Before, Lucien had been too anxious when he was hunted to ask Natasha why she would cooperate with Francis. The man was a night watcher of the South Church? He was more like a blasphemer than Lucian, the Fallen Angel at the nineteenth on the Cleansing List!

Natasha nodded seriously. "At first, I did not know that he was a night watcher. Danniell, the Fire of Purification, and Masada, the cardinal, did not know it, either. However, when Francis spoke to them in private, he seemed to have offered certain tokens that won their trust. Then, they told me that Francis was the 'Thinker', who ranked the twelfth among the night watchers. He is a mysterious night watcher who only has a code name."

"It was said that he was deployed to the North Church as a spy. For that, his name appeared on the Cleansing List. He was another man of mysteries whose files were kept confidential."

"Did he really betray and join the North Church? No. The North Church couldn't have tolerated such blasphemy, either. Did he have another identity?" Lucien smelled the scent of a double spy.

Natasha shook her head. "In any case, whatever his purpose is, such blasphemy must be punished. After we are really out of danger, or if you decide to attack Ell, I will execute him in person."

However grave... Lucien secretly wiped his cold sweat, only to discover that Natasha was looking at him in a fake smile. "You once joined Ell's church. You must've contributed to the blasphemy, didn't you?"

Lucien was about to deny it, when Natasha said solemnly, "Don't lie to me."

Thinking for a moment, Lucien confessed to the role he played, the 'efforts' he made, and his purpose to study the mysteries of the gods. "... I did not hold any ill intentions. It was all meant to study the truth of this world."

"I know that you've been trying to influence me," Natasha suddenly sighed, "Perhaps because my attitude towards the Lord was affected by my mother and Grandmother Hathaway in the first place, I did not attach much importance to the Cannon and the Doctrines. The Lord is more like a cornerstone of chivalry. Therefore, I can accept your arcana studies. Perhaps, the Lord will completely turn into a spiritual symbol for me in front of your research results and the undeniable facts, but not now. I have my own boundaries. I hope that you can respect me. You are free to do whatever you want in private, but don't let me see it."

Lucien promised very solemnly, "Okay."

After the communication, both of them seemed to have dropped some burdens. They continued observing the 'Mountain Paradise' in Death Valley.

Suddenly, the black, white and grey on Lucien's left hand spread out, consolidating him again.

Under the influence of Alterna up ahead, the frequency of the pieces falling out of control seemed to be growing.

Solemnly, Natasha slashed Lucien with Pale Justice. After three slashes, the monotonous colors were broken and recalled. In the meantime, The Eyes were swallowed by the holy light when they lost Lucien's control.

"Let's evacuate first," Lucien proposed, "We haven't figured out what is wrong with Ell yet, and this divine domain is his home field. We cannot attack recklessly. At least, we need to draw him out."

Because the magics on Congus Ring worked on the outside world, Lucien feared that it would lose the cover of Silver Moon Alterna, which would raise Demigod-lich's wariness and make him realize that Lucien could use the ring. Therefore, Lucien intended to 'catch' Ell via other magics.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when someone flew out of Death Valley. It was exactly Ell, whose target was Lucien and Natasha!

Chapter 500: Relief

"No bait is needed. He's already out." Natasha was smiling in the telepathic bond, obviously making fun of Lucien's 'prophecy.'

Ell was still wearing a crown of olive flowers and a white robe, but he appeared more hallow and tranquil. Holy light was vaguely flowing on his skin, and seven floors of Mountain Paradise were reflected in his eyes, making him even more sacred and solemn.

Holding a longsword as dark as ink, he lunged at the two of them. Stinky, decayed fluids were dropping from the sword, only to be absorbed again by a mysterious force in circulation.

"He had been seeking to absorb the godhood in the fields of death and moon. It is possible that he was tempted by the pieces of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls and decided to check it. Such fake gods are susceptible to the attraction of clergy and godhood, to the point that they may lose their sanity." Although Lucien said that, he still found it odd. Ell was almost killed by him last time and was barely able to put up any resistance. Why was he charging at Lucien so confidently when he saw them again?

Lucien hurried to cast spells such as Bull's Strength and Bear's Endurance on to Natasha.

By the time Ell entered the range, Natasha wielded her sword and sprinted at him, and Lucien simply performed 'Advanced Dispel Magic'.

Ell, who was about to use Command, immediately saw the light on his body fading away, like blossoming fireworks. The two spells that he cast on himself in advance were immediately broken. In the meantime, Natasha had already flown to his front. Pale Justice was slashed down, raising an illusionary slash that could cut any material.

In haste, Ell raised his sword and blocked Pale Justice, only to be blown back by Natasha, losing his balance. He was too overwhelmed by the violent attacks to perform divine powers.

Lucien, on the other hand, activated the magic model unhurriedly. As his greenish eyes flashed, Ell immediately felt that his magic resistance plummeted. Therefore, the seven floors of Mountain Paradise in his eyes suddenly radiated, as if it were arriving at the real world. Bathed in the holy light, Ell grew significantly stronger, which led to the changes in the environment. The darkness ebbed, and the light surfaced again. Holiness and solemnity spread out, suppressing all the evil forces.

"Semi-illusory willpower frontier? Ell has advanced into a gold knight?" Lucien and Natasha exclaimed through the telepathic bond at the same time.

After three consecutive clashes, Natasha was forced to step back in midair. Then, Ell looked at Lucien with his sacred and pure eyes. "I command you to die..."

Before he finished the spell, Ell vanished into nothingness, because Lucien raised his right hand, which grabbed a scepter where a huge gem was embedded.

The bright, holy willpower frontier around was gone. Darkness embraced everything again.

"He is stronger than before, but he hasn't reached the level of a real gold knight. I can resist him." Natasha hurried to inform Lucien of her discovery."

Lucien slightly nodded. "He should be able to borrow the power of the divine domain within a certain range. No wonder he was bold enough to come out. However, the ability to use the power of the divine domain beyond the divine domain in itself suggests that Ell's capabilities are close to a gold knight. It seems that he has received abundant 'power of faith' after combining the God of Sun, the Mother God of the Earth, and other churches."

While talking, Lucien set up magic traps in specific locations according to Maze. At this moment, another shadow flew out of Death Valley, with six wings on its back. Surrounded by lightning, he had come to aid the 'Great God Ell'.

"The God of Thunder and Lightning, and now the Angel of Thunder and Lightning?" As the distance between them was shortened, Lucien recognized the bald, muscular male.

Solemnly, the Angel of Thunder and Lightning waved his wings and tried to stop Lucien's operation, but out of the blue, he vanished into thin air, too.

Observing Lucien perform Maze consecutively, Natasha remarked in amazement, "How marvelous magic is! You will never be scared of being outnumbered."

After setting up the magic trap, Lucien did not wait for the weird maze to end on its own but raised the Sun Staff to release Ell.

Ell seemed to have given up the idea of cracking the Maze. He was focused on enhancing himself with divine powers, but out of his expectation, Lucien canceled the maze after deploying only one trap. He was rather lost for a moment.

Black tentacles suddenly rose from the ground to the sky, entangling Ell. The elemental magic seemed to be from nature and was not under the suppression of Ell's divine willpower frontier. Also, the tentacles seemed immune to the damage of many different types.

In the meantime, Natasha lunged forward and stalled Ell whose activity had been limited, not giving him any chance to react.

Lucien's black eyes became fuzzy, and Ell was stunned where he was. In the next moment, Lucien stepped forward, and the light of intelligence in Ell's eyes was weakened to the minimum. He was like a beast that lost the ability to think.

Due to the Congus Ring and the substantiation of his cognitive world, the time cost for Lucien to cast spells had been reduced again. When he performed magic below the sixth circle, it was almost close to when he was wearing the fake Davey's Robe.

"It works really well to deal with fake gods who are prone to godhood through Distraction and Retardation." Lucien flew to the

front of Ell, who had been controlled by Natasha. His eyes became deep and dark. At a closer look, one would also notice stars spinning in sophisticated, captivating traces.

Ell grunted, and his eyes gradually became clear. However, he looked more respectful than ever. He said in a low voice, "At your service."

"Very good." Lucien nodded his head and gave 'instructions'.

"I feel that fake gods are rather easy to deal with. If it were a level-eight radiant knight who had a semi-illusionary willpower frontier, your Distraction and Retardation would've been weathered through by their willpower." Said Natasha half in confusion and half in amusement.

Lucien nodded and replied, "fake gods are terribly formidable in certain aspects, but their weaknesses are just as significant. For example, I cannot deal with Ell with magic in terms of Necromancy, Earth or Hypnotization. Those aspects are the focus of his clergy. So, most of the effects will be diminished, if not nullified. Also, since the battlefield is in Death Valley, the illusionary magics will also be suppressed by the divine powers, and it is not so easy to make them work."

Pausing for a moment, Lucien whispered to Natasha through the telepathic bond, "It is rather strange that we have taken him down without running into any danger, particularly when we expected that something was wrong with Ell beforehand."

"Wasn't it caused by the divine domain that's a duplication of Mountain Paradise? Perhaps, your astrology just now was inclined to the Lord. That's why you found nothing." Natasha offered her opinion, but she was not certain about it, because Lucien was the expert in this regard.

Lucien decided to try again. He took out the crystal ball and performed astrology again. This time, when the sky of fate was displayed inside the crystal ball, Ell's Host Star of Destiny was clearly revealed.

"Did I really foretell the God of Truth just now?" Lucien shook his head in confusion. Looking at Ell who showed no anomaly under his control, he said to Natasha, "Perhaps what you said is true, but why did Ell's fate overlap with the God of Truth's inside the divine domain?"

"It was not an overlap but a deviation of your prophecy." Natasha disapproved it quickly. If she acknowledged the overlap, wouldn't she be acknowledging that Ell was the God of Truth or His incarnation? That would've been a heartless satire and blow to her belief.

Lucien stopped wondering. "Let's go to the divine domain and try again. We can also kill Francis by the way and make arrangements to deal with Demigod-lich."

...

Inside Ell's divine domain, the Soul Catcher had already been killed, but Francis was already gone.

"So vigilant? No wonder he could be a spy in the North Church, and his name could be found both on the rank of night watchers and the Cleansing List." Natasha gnashed her teeth. Then, she found a secret spot with Lucien, where they performed astrology behind Ell.

"His Host Star of Destiny becomes fuzzy. Is it really because of the divine domain?" Frowning, Lucien looked at the fuzzy light spots inside the crystal ball. Then, he began to consider how to deal with Demigod-lich. "This divine domain that duplicates Mountain Paradise suppresses spectres badly. Demigod-lich will be greatly weakened here, and Ell will be boosted to the peak of a gold knight. Therefore, this will be the best battlefield to deal with Demigod-lich."

"Okay. We will attract Demigod-lich in the front, and Ell will 'ambush' him from the back. When Demigod-lich is distracted, you will deal with him through legendary magic." Natasha proposed a rough plan.

Lucien said solemnly, "We have to control the timing accurately.

Otherwise, there will be no way for us to resist Demigod-lich's magic except for 'Barrier of the Dead'. In such a way, everything will be exposed. Therefore, we have to rehearse repetitively."

"Also, Demigod-lich has Magic Trigger, Magic Order, and other magics on him. It will be highly unlikely to kill him with one legendary magic. We have to set up traps or magic circles that can disrupt the effects of Chaos Teleport, Shadow Jump, Blink, Shadow Well and other magics. Then, we will hide them with the power of the divine domain."

Since he did not know which of those magics Demigod-lich had selected for life-saving purposes, Lucien could only take random guesses according to the magic book based on his level. As a result, the preparation work was too tedious to be completed in one day. Therefore, Lucien chose a few most likely magics according to his prophecy and his experience.

Looking at Lucien preparing the magic traps wholeheartedly, Natasha rubbed her chin and said, "I finally understood what my teacher meant by saying, 'don't ever fight a prepared sorcerer'."

"This can only slightly increase our chances. The legendary are too strong to be taken down just by preparations in advance. Besides, we still have to lure him to come to the divine domain without getting killed." Lucien heaved a sigh. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Natasha raised her eyebrow in confusion. "I thought we were going to wait for him to come to this place."

Lucien shook his head and said, "he'll be alarmed if so. We'll circle the Death Valley according to this route. The moment our zone of activity is suppressed, we will return to the valley."

While talking, Lucien squatted down and drew a map on the ground, illustrating the importance of positioning.

After he was done, Lucien rose and said, "Now, let's rehearse with Ell first in case we are caught unprepared."

The wind blew over and wiped the arrangements on the ground. Lucien sighed, "I hope none of them are used in the end, because it will mean that we did not run into Demigod-lich and successfully hid ourselves for the last day and a half. That's what I'm hoping for most."

"So am I. However, only by making full preparations can we ever be greeted by such luck." Natasha patted Lucien's shoulder in a smile. Then she asked in the telepathic bond, "Right, why did you secretly control the Angel of Lightning and Thunder through Command just now?"

Looking at the holy light and listening to the hymns ahead, Lucien replied in a smile, "In case of accidents."

...

A day later, when it was almost midnight, the ever-rising howls in the dark forest came to an abrupt halt, as if the place had become a hell of death and silence.

Chapter 501: Life and Death

Inside a dark forest that seemed far away from Death Valley but in fact was very close to it in a straight line.

Lucien and Natasha observed the sky that was blocked by clouds through the leaves. There were neither stars nor the silver moon tonight. One could barely see one's own fingers. The deepest fear and panic were brewing.

"Our zone of activity has been minimized. It seems that we need to return to Death Valley." Leaning against a tree, Natasha sighed at the horizon with Lucien next to her. "It's almost dawn. Aunt Camil should've arrived at the Metarin oasis. It's a pity that we have to wait another day before reinforcements arrive. I wonder if we will ever see the sunrise again?"

The two of them were caught by Congus approximately one day later. Then, they killed him and forced him to spend more than one and a half days to rebuild his body and return to the main material world. After that, they had hidden themselves around Death Valley for more than half a day. Therefore, it had been more than three days since they left Camil. Even taking the time of her recovery into consideration, she should've already arrived at the Metarin oasis.

"We will certainly see the sunrise together." No frustration could be found on Lucien's face. The more dangerous there was, the more determined he would be. His face was beaming with a hopeful, gentle smile.

Natasha was the same kind of person. She soon grasped her longsword, as resolute and confident as ever.

She looked at Lucien's left hand with a smile. "After the morning outbreak, the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls must've been controlled by the silver moon. The frequency of loss of control is getting lower and lower. Perhaps, it will be one day later next time. If we can get away from Demigod-lich this time, he will not necessarily be able to find us again, even if we do

nothing but hide.

At dawn, the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls had the greatest rampage so far. Not only was Lucien frozen, but even Natasha, who was next to him, was also affected. She felt that two years had passed. Thankfully, it was only two minutes in reality, and no other accidents happened. Ever since then, the gap between loss of control was longer and longer, and the last loss of control was in the morning, which exposed their location and allowed Congus to reduce their range of activities.

"Alterna said that the most ferocious phase of a counterattack has passed. Next, it's time to digest the cake. However, isn't the mysterious existence of the World of Souls slightly weak? Even though he hasn't restored his consciousness, he is still rather vulnerable since he is absorbed by an existence of the same level in only seven days." Lucien expressed his confusion.

Natasha sniffed, "Is that so? If he persists for a few more days, we would be sent to the World of Souls by Congus as specters. Alterna definitely knows more about demigod stuff than you do. If she says that it's fine, there shouldn't be a problem."

Lucien was about to reply, when the last light in the forest went out. It sank into the purest darkness.

"Stop hiding. Come on out obediently, and I'll grant you peace after your death." Congus's voice that sounded like the frigid wind in hell came from the other side of the dark forest. "How much longer do you think you can hide?"

"He is less than a thousand meters from us." Lucien and Natasha looked at each other. They left the tree quietly and returned to Death Valley according to the planned route. They detoured on their way back in order to avoid the whole mountain of spectral slaves.

The scene around them was a vivid demonstration of 'scourge of the dead'.

Congus sneered, "I know that you are hoping that 'Blue Tide' has

already arrived at the Metarin oasis and informed the old pervert Storm and Hathaway to rescue you. However, do you think I'm such an idiotic and imprudent person?"

Natasha came to an abrupt halt, her face pale. Aunt Camil?

"It's alright. If Aunt Camil were killed or captured by him, he would've shown it to us to sway us." Lucien patted Natasha's shoulder and comforted her gently.

Natasha soon realized it and regained her resolution. She nodded at Lucien and sped up.

Congus' voice got closer and closer. "While I was in too much of a hurry to catch you two rats to deal with 'Blue Tide', I changed the contact in the Metarin oasis into my loyal subordinate. Rehau has always been a secret student of mine. Do you think your cry for help can be delivered to the other side of the ocean?"

Lucien's face slightly changed. It had been more than two months since Congus started to monitor him. He must've made arrangements regarding everything. However, while he lost that hope, he was still far away from desperation. Just like what Natasha said just now, if they could get rid of him this time, the remains of the mysterious existence would not run out of control easily, and they would be safe again. By the time Alterna recovered, the roles of the hunter and the hunted would be swapped.

Natasha took a breath in relief. She said to Lucien in the telepathic bond with a smile, "He indeed failed to capture Aunt Camil. Since Grandma Hathaway and the Lord of Storm asked me in private to search for you in the areas under the control of the church, they must've sent secret contacts specifically."

That's good. Lucien put on a smile, too.

Having no doubt that the two of them were around, Congus intimidated them with words and suddenly turned into grey smoke that was filled with countless weird bugs. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

The bugs were of the same color as the smoke, but their heads were twisted human faces, which were so illusory that they seemed to be made of souls. Humming, they spread out of the grey mist and soon covered the area. In less than twenty seconds, they finished the search in the area. Then, the smoke floated forward and covered a new area.

Seeing that, Lucien and Natasha accelerated again. They passed through a secret cave and returned to the entrance of Death Valley. Leaving blurred shadows behind, they rushed into the valley.

"Hum! Hum! Hum!" The upsetting noises of bugs suddenly echoed.

"Crap!" Lucien secretly exclaimed. He hurried to hold Natasha next to him with his left hand. Then, both of them blinked and disappeared.

The legendary sorcerer had too many uncanny methods. He had discovered the two of them in advance!

A green ray shot where the two of them were previously at only one second late. The stones, the mud and the plants all turned into green spots of light, and a gigantic pit that was enough to bury dozens of people appeared.

Congus cackled. "Got you two rats! Let's see how you get away this time!"

His voice was brimming with intense hatred. It was the greatest humiliation that a Demigod-lich could be killed once by two 'kiddos' who hadn't even reached the ninth circle!

Teleporting into Death Valley, Lucien and Natasha went at full speed and swooshed past the deep darkness, arriving at the area that they had prepared in advance.

"A divine domain?" Congus floated above Death Valley instead of acting recklessly this time. "You want to team up with a fake god to deal with me, and to weaken and restrain me with the enhancement of the divine domain and the magic circles you set up in advance?"

"Hehe. Let me show you what a sorcerer should be like!"

Congus raised his hands, and seven minor meteorites fell from the sky surrounded by fire. Illuminating the dark night, they smashed into Death Valley.

"Damn it! A massive attack!" While Lucien was braced for it, he was still shocked by Congus' cautiousness and decisiveness this time and cursed. In the telepathic bond, Natasha exclaimed in ways not expected of a 'lady', too.

"Hide!" Lucien and Natasha rushed to the place they prepared, while they asked Ell and the fake angels under their control to dodge.

The meteorites almost hit Death Valley at the same time. Under the stimulation, divine defenses immediately showed up, but they were soon shattered by the Meteor Swarm. After the attack, the defense of the divine domain was already ragged.

However, Congus did not stop. He raised his hands again, and another seven meteorites fell simultaneously.

Time seemed to have slightly halted. After a boom, a minor mushroom cloud rose from the valley. The overwhelming smoke deprived the area within several hundred kilometers of their original colors.

Inside the divine domain, the city decorated in agates and jade was half-collapsed by the blast. The parts that were directly hit were even razed to the ground. The vines that had blocked the sky in the past were broken and burnt. The pure souls and angels were blown away by the wild wind, not to be seen again. The holy halo was eclipsed by the rampant dust. The magic circles deployed in advance were riddled with holes, and dilapidated walls were the only things that could be seen.

It was not until five consecutive 'Meteor Swarms' that Demigod-lich Congus descended and searched for Lucien and Natasha.

Below the ground of the divine domain, Lucien and Natasha hid inside a 'fortress' while they listened to the incessant collisions outside.

"Thankfully, you prepared this bomb shelter in advance." Sensing the violent quakes and the dust that was sprinkling from the ceiling, Natasha raised her thumb at Lucien.

Lucien smiled and said wisely, "It is common sense to be prepared for air raids. It's good that they are just small meteorites."

"But the magic traps you set up have been rendered useless." Natasha looked rather solemn.

Lucien nodded his head. "Most of them, yes. However, a tiny proportion of them are rooted in the divine domain, which will not be completely destroyed as long as Ell is not dead. I hope that some of them are still functional."

The explosions outside stopped. Lucien hurried to reach out to Ell and confirm their location for the upcoming counterattack.

Congus landed inside Death Valley. Looking at the messy ruins, he searched for Lucien and Natasha through magic methods. In the meantime, since the holy halo was not entirely gone, he was aware that the master of the divine domain hadn't perished yet, and therefore was even more vigilant.

The 'mosquitoes of souls' flew out of him and spread out. Suddenly, a shadow rushed out of a collapsed building, with a common longsword in her hands.

Reflecting the fire and the holy halo nearby, the longsword carried the air of divinity, and the shadow seemed to have been melded with the longsword. Surrounded by two illusionary gaps, she slashed at Congus.

Congus did not use legendary magic that required the cooperation of short spells, in case the master of the divine domain attacked him with his ring when he cast the spells. He raised his hands, and all of the colors around Natasha faded away, replaced by the greyness of the void. Natasha's movement was halted under 'Time Stop', her longsword frozen in midair.

When Congus was about to extract Natasha's soul, another person

rose from behind his back. He had the Sun Staff in his right hand, preparing to 'lock' Natasha in the maze when necessary, and his left hand was emitting silver brilliance as it was raised high at the enemy.

"You are going to cheat again?" Ignoring the air of the silver moon on Lucien's left hand, and not bothering with Natasha who was in the zone of 'Time Stop', Congus summoned a void-like black ball in front of his skull. Unleashing the greatest horror, it was about to be shot at Lucien.

It was Orb of Ultimate Destruction, a ninth-circle magic!

"He is not using any legendary magic. He is truly wary of Ell." Delighted, Lucien instructed Ell to attack.

However, there was no response to his command.

Chapter 502: Grand Entrance

Chapter 502: Grand Entrance

“No response?”

“Something is indeed wrong!”

Apart from shock, Lucien couldn't help but feel that he had seen it coming. It was like something long-expected finally took place, or the other boot on the upper floor finally hit the ground.

Not trying to call again, and not wasting any more time, Lucien decisively commanded the ‘Angel of Lightning and Thunder’ who was hiding in another bomb shelter to attack!

When he said that it was in case of accidents, he meant the accident of when Ell went wrong!

The Orb of Destruction that seemed able to create a void took shape. The two needle-like red spots on Congus' white skull stared at Lucien and locked onto him, making him feel coldness rising from the bottom of his heart.

Suddenly, another shadow flew out from Congus' left rear. He had six wings on his back and was surrounded by lightning and the holy halo. Attracting the remaining atmosphere in the divine domain, it seemed that he was the master of the divine domain.

As a fake Seraph, he was on the second tier in the divine domain and could execute part of Ell's power on his behalf!

No expression could be seen on Congus' white skull. The Orb of Destruction blinked and arrived next to Lucien, and he started chanting: “Spirit Confinement.”

He had been wary that the master of the divine domain, who was close to level nine, would ambush him with ‘Congus Ring’, which had quite a few legendary magics on it!

“Spirit...” A complicated voice that almost overlapped with Congus’ spell echoed following him, and massive magic waves emerged.

Having no time to check the ‘master of the divine domain’ who had been solidified into a statue, Congus discovered in shock that Lucien had a black, weird ring on his right hand, which looked so familiar.

“He has just advanced into the senior rank. How can his cognitive world be substantialized?”

“How is it possible?”

For a moment, Congus felt that his soul and his cognitive world were collapsing. It completely violated his common sense!

“... Confinement!” As the weird spell ended, Lucien’s spiritual power flooded into the ‘Congus Ring’ incessantly like a river that had just broken the dam. On the other hand, the moment the Orb of Destruction hit the target, the trigger was activated, teleporting him to the other side of the battlefield. He was away from the confinement, and he watched the ruins turned into destructive black.

Illusionary souls appeared around Congus, trying to crawl into his body. Immediately, the two needle-like red spots on Congus’ face were frozen. As a result, the area of ‘Time Stop’ collapsed, and Natasha was normal again. In the next second, she did not bother to look at Congus but simply slashed at a certain corner in the ruins.

Out of nowhere, feeble magic waves spread out from the white skeleton enshrouded by souls. Congus vanished and blinked to a corner not far away. He freed himself from the illusionary souls that hadn’t really slithered in, but his forehead was greeted precisely by Pale Justice!

It was an estimation and a plan that Lucien made according to the effect of ‘Brief Blink’. When the other places were occupied by the holy air of the divine domain, there was an 80% chance that the spectres would choose this corner to hide in!

Congus, who was briefly affected by ‘Spirit Confinement’, did not

have any thinking ability, and could only count on his instincts!

A firm and gentle hue popped up on the longsword, surrounded by two illusionary, horrifying gaps. Congus' black cape was abruptly cut, and his pure skeleton fell apart. The gold skull was broken into three pieces, with earsplitting howls echoing from the mouth.

However, right then, the skull revolved and got covered by the feeling of a twist of time and space.

When everything was settled, Congus was already gone, and Natasha had been blasted by the howls.

Despite using Pale Justice to block, she was still blown away by the terrifying soundwaves. She fell heavily, with blood on her lips. She was apparently heavily wounded.

“Chaos Teleportation... He's still not killed. Legendary Sorcerers are really hard to kill.” Lucien's spiritual power was almost dry, and he could barely raise his hands. “Let's get out of here fast. Congus' capabilities are not really compromised.”

The main body of the Demigod-lich was the gold skull. The skeleton was mainly meant to stabilize part of the magics. It was not a big deal even if the skeleton was lost. Therefore, Congus still had at least 95% of his strength left. After he returned, he would definitely vent his fury through legendary magics. Lucien, on the other hand, had run out of spiritual power, and Natasha was also heavily wounded. If they did not seize the opportunity to flee, there would be no chance of survival for them except for mutual destruction with the enemy.

Natasha did not say anything but wobbled to Lucien, helping him to get back on his feet. They were ready to leave Death Valley. Now, the loss of control of the mysterious existence was longer and longer. As long as they ran a thousand meters away before Congus returned, he wouldn't be able to locate the two of them as easily as before. Their chances of survival finally did not seem slim now!

“Although I'm heavily wounded, I can still keep this speed. As long as Congus' landing point is not very close, we will be safe.” Natasha

comforted Lucien in delight and observed the surroundings warily. She did not need Lucien to remind her to know that something was wrong with Ell after seeing that it was the Angel of Lightning and Thunder that was standing there stunned.

Hardly had she concluded her sentence when everything around them changed. The collapsed buildings were raised again, and the town decorated with agates and jades were as complete as yesterday. Pleasant hymns and overwhelming halos appeared again, decorating the place as if it were the real Mountain Paradise, although the pure souls and angels were nowhere to be seen again.

Ell flew out of a bomb shelter. Wearing an olive garland and a white robe, he smiled at Lucien and Natasha who raised her longsword. "One of you is out of spiritual power, and the other is heavily wounded. Even though you have a legendary ring and a longsword that's equal to legendary, you still cannot put up any resistance."

His vibe was unpredictable and intimidating. However, Natasha refused to wait to die. Gritting her teeth, she was about to wield her sword and attack.

Right then, Lucien secretly patted her arm and spoke in the telepathic bond, "Wait a moment. There's still a chance. Later, you will run backward as fast as you can. Don't look back."

"You want to die together with the enemy?" Natasha's voice was shivering.

Lucien smiled, "There are still chances that I may survive. Over the past few days, the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls have been greatly weakened. Even if Alterna completely lets go of it and attacks the enemy, chances are that my body will decay but I can hide my soul in the magic robe of the 'Immortal Throne'. The extraordinary item will never be corrupted so easily. I'll have to count on your help then. It's not a big deal for a sorcerer to change a body."

"But..." Natasha wanted to say something, because it was only Lucien's own deduction. If the power left in the remains was

beyond his estimation, the item as well as his soul would be decayed together.

“There’s no need to say anything. This solution has better odds than you fighting him. Isn’t it obvious which option you should choose?” Lucien criticized Natasha’s hesitation. “In my heart, you have always been a determined knight who makes decisions after ruling out emotional factors. Don’t disappoint me.”

Seeing the unusual rigorousness on Lucien’s face, Natasha bit her lips and nodded hard. Her silver and purple eyes were covered with mist. Then, she slightly backed off and stood next to Lucien’s right hand.

The conversation was conducted in the telepathic bond and did not take much time. At this moment, Ell floated not far away and said while looking at Lucien’s left hand. “After I kill you, I will have plenty of time to return to the World of Souls before the Demigod-lich comes.”

The World of Souls? Both Lucien and Natasha looked at him in astonishment.

Ell enjoyed their astonishment and burst into laughter. “Do you still not recognize who I am?”

Solid black, white and grey colors surfaced in both of his eyes.

“The mysterious existence of the World of Souls? You...” Lucien was surprised at first and then looked at his left hand. No wonder it was so weak. Had the largest portion secretly escaped to Ell?

Ell smiled, “Alterna’s greatest mistake was that she did not foresee that part of my main consciousness had been awakened in advance. She was stalled by the power that I dropped. Until the power is fully absorbed, she will be swallowed if she gets distracted and attacks anyone. In the meantime, my current body is not bad at all. The power of faith is copious, allowing me to return to the ninth circle quickly. While I cannot deal with Demigod-lich for now, am I unable to deal with the two of you in your current states?”

“So, you can go to hell.” Ell summoned the power of the divine domain. The holy halo was more dazzling than ever before. Because of the blockage of the body, it was in no conflict with the mysterious existence of the World of Souls at all.

Enhanced by the power of ‘Mountain Paradise’, and surrounded by the sacred light, he looked like the real God of Truth.

Lucien’s heart became heavy. He began to discuss with Natasha about the time to run. In the meantime, he talked to Alterna and asked her to attack despite the risks.

Suddenly, the hymns and praises were thousands of times more magnificent, making Lucien and Natasha feel that their minds were cleansed. Ell, on the other hand, was stunned, but was still emitting the holy brilliance.

“What’s wrong with him? Lucien asked in confusion.

Natasha shook her head cluelessly.

“Hehe, finally.” A familiar voice came from the entrance of the Death Valley. Francis, in a plain robe, and with six illusionary wings, slowly walked in and watched ‘Ell’ zealously, as if he were appreciating a piece of artwork that he had just completed.

Natasha’s eyes were frozen. “Francis, what have you done?”

Francis seemed overjoyed, and Lucien and Natasha posed no threats to him right now. Therefore, he replied rather cockily, “Faith is gathered according to different prayers, sublimating into godhood. You should know it already as ‘Leviathan’.”

“You know that?” Lucien did not expect that Francis would recognize him.

Francis laughed. “I did not see it, but it does not mean that none of the existences saw it. I only learnt it a few days back when I was heavily wounded by you.”

After saying that, He continued his topic, “However, since godhood is the congregation of beliefs and represents the strongest desire of

different souls, how can regular creatures bear it? The fake gods such as Ell, Avando, Asin and Antanas became more and more bigoted, extreme and crazy because of the influence of godhood. Countless people must've been crying and driving them in their heads. Therefore, for the fake gods, the higher they go and the more faith that they gather, the crazier and more dangerous they will be. Few fake gods can advance into the legendary realm."

"Does it have anything to do with what you are doing?" Seeing that Francis was so calm that he seemed to have forgotten that a Demigod-lich was returning, Lucien asked in confusion.

"Oh, I'm off the topic." Looking at Ell respectfully, Francis said, "If a fake god had the doctrines, clergy, rituals and prayers of the Lord, and his believers worshiped him as an omniscient and omnipotent being like the Lord, do you think that his godhood will be closer and closer to the Lord?"

"How can you invoke the Lord? What you are doing is pure blasphemy!" Natasha berated him more than angrily.

Francis burst into laughter. "How can it be blasphemy? What do you think will happen when his godhood is more and more like the Lord?"

Instead of waiting for Lucien and Natasha to reply, he turned around to Ell and said piously, "You are one, and everyone. You are the beginning, and the end. You are the moment, and forever."

Boom. The final step of the ritual seemed to have been finished. Infinite holy light burst out from Ell, suppressing the mysterious existence of the World of Souls inside his body. In the sky, the hollow and unpredictable hymns echoed again. A gigantic, illusionary cluster of light that was divided into seven layers surfaced uncannily. From the first to the fifth layer, there were holy spirits and angels, there were all kinds of musical instruments, and there was happiness and peace. On the sixth layer, there were six Seraphim, who were worshiping the indescribable brilliance on the seventh layer.

"Mountain Paradise..." Natasha found it hard to believe.

Lucien, on the other hand, was stunned.

As if attracted by the enormous force, Ell was more and more synchronized and alike with the light of the seventh layer. In the end, with the main consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, he flew towards the infinite brilliance whose feet was embraced by an angel.

Francis declared frantically, “How can such an idiotic fake god resist the assimilation of the Almighty Lord?”

“What I have been worshiping and preaching has always been the Lord. How is it blasphemy?”

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Francis drew a cross on his chest devoutly, the vertical bar shorter and the horizontal bar longer!

Lucien, on the other hand, heard only one voice: “Welcome to FM XXX. This is God of Truth.”

Chapter 503: "Hunter"

Chapter 503: "Hunter"

Enshrouded in holy light, Ell had turned into a glittering ball that was projected to the seventh layer of 'Mountain Paradise' and melted into the infinite brilliance.

Natasha shook her head nonstop, overwhelmed as if she were the little girl whose mother had just passed away again. Her years of faith bordered on collapsing as she was faced with such a scene. Lucien's years of influence couldn't have amounted to the shock and desperation she had at this moment.

Facts were the most powerful weapons!

Lucien, vaguely knowing what was going on, managed to suppress the crazy roars in his head. Noticing Natasha's countenance, he suddenly had the bizarre idea that he should give Francis a great gift to thank him for his contributions to Lucien's happy life. Of course, that is, if he and Natasha could survive the disaster.

At this moment, while Lucien could not see his own face, he could absolutely imagine how fabulous it was. Shock, delight, confusion, panic, fear and all the other indescribable feelings were surging inside his heart like a tsunami.

Watching Ell being merged with 'God of Truth', Lucien suddenly discovered that the Saint Badge he wore quivered, and the source of divine power inside changed into 'God of Truth' without any resistance. It was not until this moment that Lucien understood why Francis was bold enough to accept the Seed of Spirit.

"Wait, the main consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls is still inside Ell's body. Will the God of Truth have indigestion? Will he explode and destroy the world?" Such an idea suddenly occurred to Lucien, who watched 'Mountain Paradise' with his mouth open. Did Francis know that Ell was possessed by the mysterious existence of the World of Souls? Somebody might get killed!

Hardly had the idea occurred to him when the infinite, obscure light on the seventh layer expanded abruptly, as if it was proving Lucien's speculation. He couldn't help but put on a bitter smile and leaned towards Natasha. Being killed by the self-detonation of 'God of Truth' seemed almost a kind of 'glory'. The future history of magic would probably record him in such a way: "This is a sorcerer who once slew a god, although he perished because of that, too."

A gentle breeze echoed. The dimmest piece of black, white and grey was spat out from the light. The monotonicity in him was broken and flew far away, and the projection of Mountain Paradise gradually faded.

"What a shame. They were not merged. Otherwise, I could've tried God's Arrival!" Francis watched the scene as zealously as before,

Try God's Arrival? With your capabilities, I'm afraid that your body and your soul will fall out on the spot. Lucien secretly laughed at him, but he was even more grave. Francis did know that the main consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls was hidden inside Ell's body. He was even more mysterious than they imagined. Would Lucien's suicide attack work in front of Mountain Paradise's projection?

Pointing at Francis, Natasha demanded, "Your rhetoric cannot cover the nature of your blasphemy! Your words in themselves are blasphemy!"

Francis drew inclined crosses on his chest slowly. "I am no less devout to the Lord than you are, except that our opinions on the Lord have great differences both theologically and generally. However, it is not evidenced that I am a heretic. We have only gained a new understanding of the existence and the form of the Lord under the enlightenment of a great prophet."

"A great prophet..." Lucien repeated in confusion. That sounded like the head of the heretics lurking within the North Church. Was he a certain Saint in the North Church?

Lucien was glad about the debate between Francis and Natasha. A delay was very helpful for him to recover his spiritual power. Even

though he could only use magic below the senior rank, Natasha was still capable of fighting Francis, who was only a level eight with his help. What he was worried about was the Demigod-lich who left through the Chaos Teleportation and the projection of Mountain Paradise that had not completely vanished.

Suddenly, the black, white and grey piece attempting to fleet stopped, and a gold skull appeared before it. Congus landed at a spot nearer than everybody anticipated. He had arrived in advance!

The black, white and grey piece shivered, as if it was communicating with Demigod-lich. After only two seconds, Congus burst into laughter. Opening his jaw, he swallowed the black, white and grey piece.

The two needle-like red spots danced crazily like fire in the wind and gradually turned gray. The space around Demigod-lich was twisted, and his vibe soared intimidatingly. In only one moment, he seemed to have broken away from the hundreds of years of being halted and upgraded by one level. Also, it seemed that he was the mysterious existence that controlled the specters, and not controlled by it.

The grey fire bouncing in Congus' eyes, he turned to Lucien, Natasha, Francis and the projection of Mountain Paradise that was about to disappear, before he said gloomily:

“You will all die.”

...

Inside the magic tower across the ocean, the Lord of Storm read the intelligence report before him. Lightning glittered in his eyes, and tornadoes rose around him, blowing away everything inside the house except for the chairs that Hathaway and Douglas were seated on.

“Congus...” Fernando roared. Then he rose abruptly and said to Douglas, “Ask Bergner to help me.”

Bergner was the name of the Tower Prophet. He had entered the

alternate dimension, too.

Douglas' usually kind face was filled with graveness, too. "Alright. You and Hathaway will go to rescue Lucien, and I will watch over Vicente in case he plays any tricks."

Fernando, being a reckless man, flew towards the place where the Portal to Alternate Realm was deployed immediately after Douglas' approval. Hathaway remained silent and followed him.

By the time they reached the lobby of the Portal to the Alternate Realm, Bergner, the Prophet, had already been notified by Douglas and was already waiting. His grey hat seemed to be a small version of the tower.

Nodding at the Prophet, Fernando entered the Portal to Alternate Realm in the lead and returned to Allyn.

When Hathaway and Bergner also arrived at the magic tower in the Congress of Magic, Fernando implemented a telepathic bond and walked out.

"Aren't we going to deploy a portal to the northern mountains of Erdo Islands?" Bergner confusedly watched Hathaway walk out with Fernando.

Fernando's voice bordered on screaming. "Relocalization and reestablishment will take another day. However, it will only take us less than a minute for us to reach Heidler from here. Since Vicente and Congus are not there, we will control the Hand of Paleness in no more than an hour."

"Bergner, foretell the location of Congus' phylactery and the location of the Portal to Alternate Realm he used." Hathaway requested straightforwardly.

Bergner was more or less stunned. "You want both of them?"

"If he is dead, everything will be settled." Fernando's red eyes were filled with terrifying and depressing storms.

...

“Your Excellency Demigod-lich, congratulations on advancing to the second level of legendary with the help of the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. You are likely to be promoted to a demigod and control the power of death.” Francis said in a smile unhurriedly, although he was faced with the threat of a legendary expert.

Congus was dazed. “Do I know you?”

Is he trying to surrender?

However, learning the lesson from the three previous encounters with Lucien, Congus did not intend to chatter on. Dead people were the safest targets to talk to!

Francis slightly bowed and drew the weird crosses on his chest. Then he said respectfully, “The great prophet will arrive with my body. I hope Your Excellency Demigod-lich can live until you enjoy your beautiful future.”

Congus suddenly had a bad feeling. The gold skull was opened, and a hoarse voice echoed, “Spirit Confinement!”

Soundless explosions took place. The remainder of the Mountain Paradise’s projection over Francis’s head unleashed holy brilliance that blocked the shadows which intended to confine his soul, creating the weird feeling that time and space had been twisted.

With the help of the twist, a most extremely evil, cunning and formidable air rose abruptly inside Francis’ body, which then formed a dark shadow dozens of meters tall behind him. The shadow had two curly horns and a pair of bloodred, mocking eyes on his obscure face. The enormous black wings on his back blocked the sky of Death Valley.

After he arrived, minor volcanoes rose in the divine domain similar to Mountain Paradise. Red magma flowed out, and black smoke spread throughout the place with an intense smell of sulfur. The temperature seemed to have risen by hundreds of degrees.

Below the volcanoes, there were another eight horrifying scenes.

There was a cold plain of eternal silence, there was a muddy stinky swamp, there was an infinite slope of rocks, there was a magnificent bronze castle, there was a world made of fire, and there was a colossal gap whose bottom could not be seen. After only one moment, Death Valley seemed to have turned into a hell.

Looking at the shadow in disbelief, Congus blurted out, “Lord of Hell!”

The shadow turned out to be Maldimos, the Lord of Hell!

Hearing Congus’ exclamation and learning the shadow’s identity, Lucien felt that lightning struck his head and illuminated the scenes he had forgotten, allowing him to connect everything.

Why did Rhine know that the seal of the Master of Argent had something to do with the secrets of the World of Souls?

Why was he confined when he was well-prepared and wary, when Sard got away easily?

If Rhine had not known the secrets of the World of Souls, or that the Master of Argent was sealed in Aalto’s projection, he wouldn’t have participated in the scheme or explored the World of Souls, which meant that he wouldn’t have been trapped. If he hadn’t been trapped, he wouldn’t have asked Lucien to summon Silver Moon Alterna to have a head-on clash with the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, resulting in heavy losses on both sides.

If the target had been the gods, few could have plotted against them without them knowing it.

The other identity of the Master of Argent turned out to be Tiphotidis, the Ice Duke, who was the lord of the eighth level of hell!

Perhaps, the Lord of Hell had already realized the World of Souls and the secrets it contained from the incident when Tiphotidis was sealed. It could be seen by the fact that he pretended to be the great prophet of the ‘Horizontal Cross’ church. The devil who was best known for his cunningness and prudence was certainly unwilling to

directly deal with the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. Therefore, he set up a scheme to attract Rhine to join the game and instigated Silver Moon Alterna to fight the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, so that he could take advantage.

So, Lucien had been pushing forward his scheme without noticing anything was wrong. There had always been somebody else behind the curtain.

It was indeed as expected of the Lord of Hell and the Head of Devils!

Chapter 504: Sunrise

Chapter 504: Sunrise

In the projection of hell, the devils surrounded in flames and smoke lunged at Lucien, Natasha, and the Demigod-lich with the cold wind that could freeze their souls. The succubi inside the bronze castle let out soul-stirring moans... As Maltimus, the Lord of Hell, arrived, the projections of countless devils formed a terrifying legion.

Demigod-lich, who had only a gold skull left, opened his mouth after brief astonishment, releasing an ear-splitting howl that echoed directly in the soul. The quakes spread out, and the intense air of death was rising.

Within the range of the howl from the Demigod-lich, the volcanoes, rocks and, castles remained unchanged, but all of a sudden, a senior-rank devil almost three meters tall who was wielding a fiery sword collapsed without a sound.

As if contaminated by him, the swarm of devils fell like wheat that had been reaped. In only two seconds, the first wave of the devil legion that marched aggressively was annihilated.

“Life Ritual.” After his advancement, it was much easier for Congus to perform the legendary magics. The time gap between the two unique magics that were based on the Land of Dirt, his demiplane, and Demigod-lich, his legendary class, was much shorter than before.

As Congus’ voice spread out, the fire from hell turned grey, the stinky swamp was dry and broken, the bronze castle decayed and faded, and the cold wind of death on the silent plain raged even more violently. The devils that had just collapsed rose again, their skin wrinkled and their muscles rotten. With needle-like redness beaming out of their eyes, they turned around and charged at Maltimus, the Lord of Hell.

The extracted vitality was gathered into filthy, dim clouds in the sky that was illuminated by black lightning. Grey water drops

poured down toward the Lord of Hell torrentially.

At this moment, Congus's demiplane seemed to have overlapped with the projection of hell. Soul Catchers rose one after another, the giants of death threw rocks, evil beasts commanded the legion of the dead, dozens of stinky skeleton dragons flew in the sky, and countless shadows wandered between illusion and reality unpredictably, making it barely possible to put up any resistance.

Scourge of the Undead!

Although none of the spectres were legendary, they had the advantage in numbers. Now that the Lord of Hell had been stalled by Congus, they could still hurt him.

After the space was twisted through the projection of Mountain Paradise, Maltimus' projection here had already reached the level of grand arcanist and close to the peak of legendary. Congus dared not be careless at all.

Lucien and Natasha were both shocked at what they saw. Congus was indeed too imprudent earlier. He did not carry out 10% of his abilities when he dealt with the two kiddos who were only seventh-circle and level seven. If he had treated them with his current attitude, however quick-witted Lucien was and however resolute Natasha was, they could've only died.

The fire that was similar to sulfur was ignited on Maltimus, blocking the dirty rain. He whispered: "Life Deprivation."

Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. The spectres exploded like blooming fireworks.

Eleven silver balls of light suddenly appeared next to Congus. They also expanded and exploded, and it was not until only two of them were left when he finally blocked Maltimus' Life Deprivation.

However, Congus' Undead Scourge had already been wiped out by then!

Inside the ruins, Natasha managed to stab Pale Justice before her to thwart the attack of Life Ritual and Life Deprivation. The sword

trembled and hummed violently, emitting the brightness of sacredness and determination, while it protected a tiny range nearby. It seemed that the sword might be broken at any moment.

For Maltimus and Congus, Lucien and Natasha, who had lost their combat abilities, were not worth their attention at all. The aftermath of their attacks could've killed the two of them, had it not been for Pale Justice, which was a legendary weapon for both spectres and devils.

For Congus, if Lucien restored his spiritual power at this moment and could still use his ring, he wouldn't mind working with Lucien temporarily to deal with the Lord of Hell. There were no eternal friends or foes but only eternal interests. However, it was a pity that Lucien absolutely did not have any ability to provide help.

Maltimus, on the other hand, was rather cautious and did not do his best. He was worried that Lucien would set Alterna free at the cost of his own life. However, Alterna, who only had the strength for one attack and who had been weakened by the material world, was not too great a threat for a demigod like him who knew all the details about her.

Swallowing the consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, and melting the World of Souls with the hell, were his greatest purposes. Otherwise, he wouldn't have tried so hard to diminish the consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. Even if he could not kill it, he could still assimilate it!

"Death Lament." Congus' spell sounded like an unpredictable, illusionary song, that made the sulfur flames on Maltimus die out dully.

Pale Justice wailed and blocked Death Lament, but it did not seem able to hold on much longer.

Lucien hinted Natasha to draw the longsword and run back when he launched the suicide attack with the strength of Silver Moon Alterna.

However, the ivory light inside Lucien's left hand suddenly

expanded. Unhurriedly, it swallowed and digested the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls.

Such quickness, such ease and such an astounding result dumbfounded Lucien, whose head seemed to be illuminated by a light that drove away all the darkness. All the details that had escaped his attention before were now clearly visible.

Why did the mysterious existence of the World of Souls lose control so coincidentally?

Why was it never out of control after he was wounded when he mixed the potion and wrote the paper?

Why was Alterna unable to control her 'appetite' when faced with Asin, if she had been so cautious before, to the point that she took the chance when nobody noticed to the Lord of the Underworld?

Furthermore, when the Master of Argent was slain, according to Rhine, he summoned Alterna and borrowed her strength.

It was a lie that the absorption and digestion would take seven days.

In his confusion and shock, Lucien only felt that the strength contained in his left hand changed and grew rapidly. In the next instant, the strength was poured into Lucien's body, allowing his spiritual power to soar, like the sorcerers whose capabilities were temporarily improved through projections or summoning.

At this moment,

"But it is not complete." Having no time to ask Alterna what happened, he could only reply that there was still a long way to go for 'fusion magic'.

Boom. Alterna did not say anything, but stronger, higher power surged into Lucien's soul and body. His perceptions of the world entirely changed.

Lucien, at this moment, seemed to be in space. The material world next to him lost all the external conceptions and turned into part of

his cognitive world: Electrons jumped in orbits, accepting and launching quantum photons now and then; protons and neutrons formed the atomic nucleus under the strong interaction... The deep and cold light flowed out quietly

Extending his hand that was made of his spiritual power, Lucien realized that he could directly ‘control’ them. He was immediately shocked.

However, Lucien soon realized that it was not the best moment to relish the experience. He hurried to review the knowledge and mechanism of fusion and project them into different magic models.

The time seemed to be elapsing slowly. Also, he had the main core of the fusion magic, and his spirit library had enough introductions to its mechanism. Therefore, a rather shabby magic structure without any assistant models soon appeared before Lucien.

“Control it, release it.” Alterna sounded as serious as before.

Lucien was rather scared. “No launch, no extension, no nothing! We are going to be killed, too!”

“I’ll take care of it. Hurry up.” Alterna promised him. The ‘cognitive space’ around immediately faded, revealing the real world, where Maltimus was still fighting Congus, and Pale Justice and Natasha were still managing to resist.

Lucien took a deep breath. The feeling of entering deep into matter lingered before his eyes. Therefore, he extended his left hand, and the silver light drew uncanny traces in the air as if he were controlling the particles of the entire world!

Natasha was the first one to notice that something wasn’t right. Sensing that Lucien was performing complicated magic, she turned around and looked, only to catch a pair of eyes that were deep, dark and filled with infinite mysteries.

The demonic eyes were emanating unimaginable charm. Natasha could barely move her head away after she saw them.

Lucien opened his mouth and declared hoarsely, as if he hadn’t

spoken for years:

“Eternal Blaze!”

Along with the spell, silver brilliance burst out of Lucien’s body. The moon seemed to have landed, turning Natasha and himself blurry.

It was not until they heard the spell that the Lord of Hell and Demigod-lich noticed Lucien’s changes. When they sensed him, they discovered, to their surprise, that terrifying, overwhelming strength that exploded from Lucien, and infinite light was coming at them like the scorching sun in the midday.

Having no time to take other actions, Congus hurried to chant, “Undead Rampart.”

Walls made of souls and bodies surrounded him, almost as good as Wall of Sighs, the highest defense magic in Necromancy.

“Alterna!” Maltimus, who was more or less braced for it, roared. The hell next to him collapsed into a Hellish Barrier.

However, under the scorching heat, the radiant rays and the enormous blast, rocks were shattered, ramparts were melted, and barriers were broken.

The Lord of Hell and Demigod-lich both wanted to leave using teleportation. However, they realized that they had locked the space during their battle earlier, like they usually did. Therefore, in their red eyes, the scorching light from the grey fire was brighter and brighter, occupying their horizon and swallowing everything!

Boom! The terrible explosion did not echo until this moment, deafening everyone!

Outside of the northern mountains, Lucien, Natasha and Alterna appeared from the fuzziness. Then, they all heard the explosion and saw an incandescent sun rising far away, dispelling the deepest darkness before dawn.

“It’s sunrise...” Natasha looked at Lucien and then at the ‘sun’,

mumbling to herself.

The sun soon disappeared. A gigantic mushroom cloud where the fire was surging popped up, blocking half of the dark sky.

Chapter 505: Roar

Chapter 505: Roar

In the headquarters of the Hand of Paleness at Heidler, inside a dark, steepled magic tower, after destroying the barricades through Advanced Cracking and Elemental Dissection, Fernando and Hathaway found the entrance to the Land of Dirt, Congus' demiplane, with the help of Bergner's astrology.

Then, they repeated what they did. Since their master was not here, most of the defenses were broken in only one hour by two grand arcanists and one prophet. The only thing left before them was Demigod-lich's secret chamber where his phylactery was kept. They saw a black box that was embedded with all kinds of rare gems and sensed the bouncing of soul fire inside.

"It's a barrier of 'Desperate Abyss'." Bergner reminded Fernando and Hathaway in case they were swallowed. The magic circle with which Demigod-lich protected his phylactery certainly entailed dangers.

Fernando simply twisted the space around with 'Electromagnetic Storm', blocking the last connection between the magic circle and the control pivot, while Hathaway started to brutally crack the barrier with 'Extravagant Dissolution'. They did not have the time or patience to analyze and guess the riddles to destroy the defenses at minimal cost. In order to gain more time for the rescue, it was acceptable to suffer the counterattack or even be heavily wounded.

The magic circle was dispelled and broken layer by layer. The secret chamber seemed to have become an abyss, and a powerful counterattack was about to be launched.

Suddenly, Fernando, Hathaway and Bergner all sensed something and raised their heads. Through the transparent barrier, they observed the black phylactery.

The space above the phylactery was twisted and blurred abruptly, displaying the outbreak of infinite light, in which a gold skull was

howling miserably while being broken and melted.

The air of destruction was able to be sensed by Fernando, Hathaway and Bergner even though there was a 'Desperate Abyss' in between.

As the gold skull quickly vanished, the projection of the scene was blurred, and the viewpoint went further and further away.

The three legendary sorcerers discovered in shock that a strange, orange cloud in the shape of a mushroom rose in the mountains where the light burst out. It was so large that almost half of the sky was blocked.

The blast spread out, raising rings of smoke, which made the 'mushroom' look exceptionally weird.

After leaving a deep impression on Fernando, Hathaway and Bergner, the mushroom disappeared together with the projection of the scene.

"The explosion was as powerful as a full-strength blow from the president." Reviewing what he just saw, Bergner reached the conclusion. He looked at Hathaway, as if he was asking the opinion of the authority in the elemental field. "It looked like simple, explosive magic. Generally speaking, the power of such magic can be improved. I wonder if it can reach the level of God's Arrival in the end."

Looking at her front in silence, Hathaway seemed to be considering something, or organizing her speech. "I sensed that the explosion had something to do with the mysteries of the sun. As to how much it can be improved, I cannot say anything without examining the theory and the structure of the magic first."

"Who was Congus fighting?" Fernando slightly frowned. "Mysteries of the sun... Is it still with the boy Lucien? But what did he use to perform the magic of such a level?"

When the illusionary sun rose earlier, Fernando already sensed that it was possibly related to Lucien. Now that the same scene had appeared again when Congus hunted Lucien, he naturally

associated the two incidents. However, he did not think that Lucien had advanced to the peak of legendary all of a sudden. Even though he had insights on the mysteries of the sun due to his previous research, and he achieved the model of legendary magic, his strength had to be improved step by step. Therefore, Fernando suspected that Lucien borrowed power from somewhere.

The precious magic gems on the black phylactery began to emit different colors and absorbed the other materials around, rebuilding a gold skull. Fernando and Hathaway looked at each other and accelerated the speed of cracking ‘Desolate Abyss’.

After almost an hour, the gold skull took shape, and Congus woke up from the dark. However, the outburst of light that resembled the arrival of the sun still lingered in his eyes.

For undead creatures, such light itself caused the greatest damage, not to mention that it came with a terrifying blast and unbelievable high temperature. Congus almost failed to weather through it and became the first lich who couldn’t be revived even though he had a phylactery.

“The Silver Moon had recovered a long time ago and had been waiting for a chance. Thankfully, I made it back alive.” Congus thought to himself in fear. At this moment, his soul was still being developed inside the gold skull, and he hadn’t sensed the surroundings yet. “Also, what exactly was the magic that Lucien Evans used? How could it have been so horrifying?”

Although he only had time for a peep, he could tell with his experience that Silver Moon Alterna lent her strength to Lucien and allowed him to perform the magic. If the spell had belonged to the Silver Moon, it could’ve been cast much easier.

“How many more secrets is the boy hiding?” The more he hunted Lucien, the more shocked he became. But soon, he calmed down and considered future plans. “The Silver Moon has recovered. The predator will become the prey. It’s a pity that the main consciousness of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls was wiped out by Lucien’s ‘legendary magic’ along with my shell. All my endeavors have proved to be for nothing. I even lost my ring!”

He had been quite satisfied about the legendary ring and regarded it as a divine item. Although he had chosen Necromancy, the field he was best at, and used his legendary class as the architecture in order to improve the odds of success, which meant that the abilities of the ring overlapped with his own abilities, it did not change the fact that the ring was the only legendary item that he had forged. It was a masterpiece that made him proud.

“Lucien and Natasha, the two rats, are not dead. I cannot stay in the congress anymore. Should I join the guys in the World of Souls, or should I hide in the Dark Mountain Range?”

Pondering for a while, Congus made up his mind to enter the World of Souls. He gnashed his teeth, “If there is any chance in future, I will definitely fulfill my promise and turn you two little rats into corpse prostitutes!”

A moment later, as his spiritual power restored, Congus’ gold skull floated, and his eye sockets were filled with the previous needle-like redness. He was about to go to the nearest gap to the World of Souls.

“You?” It was not until this moment that he noticed Fernando, Hathaway and Bergner who were observing him. Sensing the horrifying fury that the Lord of Storms was holding back, he hurried to say, “Lucien is not dead, and neither is Natasha!”

He was worried that the old pervert would change from roaring into attacking in excitement and wipe him as well as his phylactery. Now that his capabilities had been reduced by a half and not entirely recovered, there was no way that he could resist Fernando, not to mention that expressionless Hathaway was standing next to him.

“You have still done things that are punishable by death!” Fernando roared.

Congus calmed down and looked at the prophet that the congress sent. “Bergner, it was wrong of me to try to kill a senior-rank sorcerer of the congress and to search for Silver Moon Alterna and the World of Souls on my own. I should be punished as a warning

for the other sorcerers of the congress. However, Lucien Evans is not dead. Please be careful about the degree of the punishment. Also, I demand a meeting of the Highest Council, where all the members will discuss my punishment together. This is the treatment that a legendary sorcerer deserves!”

The congress had only eighteen legendary sorcerers. The Church, which was the most powerful of all, had only twenty of them. The legendary are the best warriors and the foundation for any organization. The loss of a legendary sorcerer was a great retrogression to every organization. Therefore, Congus was qualified to propose such a demand.

Bergner, who always considered the development of the Congress of Magic, nodded and said to Fernando and Hathaway, “Congus has violated the rules of the congress and almost killed a senior-rank sorcerer. It is indeed a horrible mistake. However, it’s still ‘almost’. Lucien Evans is alive. Therefore, Congus’ crime does not deserve the death penalty.”

“Also, I believe that you are well aware of the role of a legendary sorcerer. He should be punished aptly. For example, under the witness of magic source, Congus will swear to the two of you or to Lucien Evans that he will not hurt him anymore. He will also offer tremendous compensations and be appointed as an explorer of a few dangerous areas. That should be enough.”

“Hunting a senior-rank sorcerer of the congress blatantly is a severe provocation against the order of the congress. If such a behavior is not punished with alarming penalties, I believe that all the sorcerers in the congress will worry about themselves. There will be no sense of community at all. Compared to such a consequence, the loss of a legendary sorcerer is not unacceptable!” The Lord of Storm tried to suppress his anger, but he sounded like he was roaring even when he was only expressing his reasoning.

Congus still looked at Bergner and said, “However, Lucien Evans is not dead, and he actually did not suffer any loss. Is a senior-rank sorcerer more important than a legendary sorcerer? Although he may become a grand arcanist in a few years, that’s only a possibility! His new alchemy system hasn’t been proven yet! Do you

want to kill a legendary sorcerer just to appease him?”

“I believe that the members of the Highest Council should be able to make a judicious conclusion about which is more important, a sixth-circle sorcerer who may grow into a legendary sorcerer, or a sorcerer who has already advanced into legendary!”

He intentionally avoided the terrifying legendary magic that Lucien just performed and simply focused on his current identity and position.

As long as the case was appealed to the Highest Council, Vicente, who had the veto right, could at least keep him alive!

Bergner looked at Fernando and Hathaway in a dilemma. “In any case, the punishments for legendary sorcerers should be decided by the Highest Council together, not by us in private. Alright, Fernando, Hathaway, let’s bring Congus back to Allyn and convene a meeting of the Highest Council to discuss his mistake, evaluate his sincerity and value, and make a final decision.”

Douglas’ request for him, other than providing help, was to stop the two grand arcanists from outrageous actions. Therefore, he suggested that the two grand arcanists should consider the future of the congress and attach enough importance to a legendary sorcerer.

Fernando’s face was a bit twisted, and his eyes were occupied by storms. However, he contained himself and fell silent, as if he had accepted Bergner’s suggestion.

Seeing that, Congus was relieved and started enhancing himself with the magics such as ‘Magic Order’ in case of accidents.

Hathaway, on the other hand, simply walked out, as if she had accepted the result more easily than Fernando did.

By the time Hathaway reached Bergner, Bergner suddenly felt that a world-destroying storm burst out in the tiny chamber. Lightning rose like trees, and thunder blew up the ceiling. Noises of broken items echoed nonstop. The weather within ten kilometers was affected and changed into a thunderstorm, too.

Congus' cry came to an abrupt halt when it just rang out. The crystal ball in Bergner's hands glittered, and he was about to save Congus, but the silver, grey eyes on Hathaway's expressionless face simply stared at him without blinking, until he abandoned all his movements.

"Ahhh!" The phylactery was broken. A scream that seemed to be echoing inside the soul disappeared as quickly as it appeared.

The thunderstorm ended. Fernando walked to Bergner's front. With the remaining lightning flashing in his red eyes, he roared terrifyingly: "Let's convene a meeting of the Highest Council to discuss which is more important, two living grand arcanists or a dead legendary sorcerer!"

Chapter 506: A New Way of Searching

Chapter 506: A New Way of Searching

The gigantic mushroom cloud slowly disappeared, but earthquakes were still coming over from deep down like soundless cries. The violent wind raised dust that carried the air of death, making everyone feel that their faces were burning.

It was not one mountain but a group of mountains here. At this moment, having sensed such obvious aftermaths when she was outside of the mountains, Natasha had a new understanding about the power of 'Eternal Blaze'. "It's almost as good as Dracula's Scream..."

She had once entered the Dark Mountain Range and observed the place where Lucien fought Dracula with the Observer's Castle. She was shocked by the broken environment, and she had the same feeling today.

"There's still a huge gap. When the spell Eternal Blaze turns into 'atomic fusion', it will probably be as powerful as God's Arrival." As an earthling, Lucien had natural fondness of fusion magic, and he felt regretful that he could only perform it once with the strength of Alterna. In order to be a human-shaped hydrogen bomb, he would have to reach level three of legendary, which was where most of the grand arcanists were at. Also, the power of the magic was only limited by the user's capabilities and understanding about its mechanism. It wouldn't be strange that he could directly destroy the world someday.

By then, the Congress of Magic would have to solemnly swear that they would never use 'Lucien's Big Ivan' first.

"The temperature at the center. The sunlight it produced suppresses spectres and devils as well." Alterna said gravely next to him.

She had changed to a new hairstyle. The long gold hair had been combed to the left side of her head and dangled down from there, revealing her pure and beautiful face. Plus her white robe, she

looked much more like a princess than Natasha did.

While Lucien was very curious about whether Alterna understood the special theory of relativity and the mass-energy formula he wrote, or she had inferred the power and status of the magic based on the structure of the magic and his description for it, the secret involved a demigod, and he could not predict the consequences if he asked recklessly. Therefore, he calmed himself down and asked with a bitter smile, “Your Excellency Alterna, didn’t you say that you needed seven days to absorb the remains of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls?”

Lucien suddenly grew anxious as he said that. He had thought that Alterna was one of the silly guys who acted based on their instincts. Together with their natural closeness, he was bold enough to whine. However, she was apparently one of the scheming guys, and she was also an honorable demigod. Would she be infuriated by such a question and even kill him?

If he survived all the disasters, only to be killed by the Silver Moon for a complaint, he would definitely die with regrets.

Well, would she prefer to be regarded as a male than a female?

Alterna replied solemnly, “I needed seven days if I were to eat it slowly.”

She said with a ‘I didn’t lie to you’ look on her face.

Lucien and Natasha both felt awkward, because she could’ve digested it in one day or shorter. He asked, “Why didn’t you eat faster if you could absorb it quickly?”

Both of them understood that Alterna did it for the purpose of attracting the masterminds behind the curtain. It was only a subconscious question due to the fear and anxiety in the past days.

Pressing her face with the right hand, Alterna replied equally solemnly, “I ate it slowly because I was waiting for the main dish.”

The main dish? Lucien understood that it referred to Maltimus, the Lord of Hell. However, the central area of Eternal Blaze had such a

high temperature and such an intense release of energy. His projection that hadn't reached the peak of legendary yet couldn't have survived at all. What was there to eat?

If the purpose was to weaken him so that she could fight him in hell, the loss of a projection could only cause a minor injury at best. Under the enhancement of hell, Maltimus would still be able to compete with Alterna who was not in the home field.

According to the congress' descriptions on 'Lord of Hell' and 'Will of Abyss', they were slightly different from Alterna in that they seemed to be limited to the worlds they lived in. Therefore, they could not arrive at the main material world freely. Even if they did, they would be weakened. The only exception was the War of Dawn, when Maltimus gathered enough strength and sacrifices with a terrible scheme and opened the gate of hell, descending on the main material world. It was a pity that he was blown back by the pope's God's Arrival.

On the other side, their strength would be boosted in hell and in the abyss. They were the places that the Church had the weakest influence in apart from the alternate dimension controlled by other organizations.

Thinking about that, Lucien suddenly felt regretful. If even two experts in the legendary level couldn't have left any traces, there couldn't be any items or materials that survived the disaster.

Alterna seemed to have seen through Lucien and Natasha's confusion. She remained as solemn as before as she replied, "The roasted goat? He was not the main dish; the qualities he displayed were my target."

The qualities displayed? Lucien and Natasha looked at each other in shock? Was it the Lord of Hell's understanding about the nature of the God of Truth, the method that he briefly broke the limitation of arrival by twisting the space with the projection of Mountain Paradise, the skill with which he improved a level-eight radiant knight to a level-three legendary one, or the extraordinary abilities such as 'Life Deprivation' that he demonstrated during the battle?

The moment she recalled it, Natasha couldn't have seemed more torn. She found it unacceptable that the Lord of Hell could indirectly make the projection of Mountain Paradise arrive. Her faith was greatly shaken.

Lucien was more inclined to the first speculation. "God of Truth?"

Alternia neither nodded her head nor did she shake it. Instead, she said very, very carefully, "Do not walk on that path, for it may be wrong."

After that, she looked at Lucien's left hand. "The rest of my power and the 'cake' has melted into your left hand. You can take a look at it."

Thanks to the powerful recovery of the Silver Moon, Lucien's left hand that was ripped off had been restored. Hearing that, he focused his attention and moved his spiritual power over to examine it.

Before he knew it, Lucien had the illusion that he was viewing everything from an unimaginable perspective high above. Also, he seemed to have touched the mysteries of death and spirits for real and established a vague connection with the World of Souls.

However, it was still just a feeling. Lucien woke up very soon. He saw a silver moon rising before him, leaping into the sky and illuminating a corner, resonating with the sunrise in the east.

Under the illumination of the silver moon, the frozen, monochrome illusion popped up, and a pair of gigantic bat wings seemed to be rising inside.

In the next instant, everything was gone except for the sun.

"Mr. Rhine is finally unshackled." Lucien remarked in delight. Whatever role he played in Alternia's plan, whether he was tricked or directly involved, the fact remained that he was a friend who offered Lucien great help.

Looking at the sky quietly, Natasha suddenly said with a smile, "You played a lot of roles and tricked many people. Did you see it

coming that you would be tricked by such a beautiful and seemingly harmless girl without noticing it at all? This is truly remarkable.”

While the Silver Moon was genderless, Natasha obviously preferred to regard her as a girl.

Lucien explained with a helpless smile, “I just felt that a demigod could’ve attacked me directly if she meant any harm, and no tricks were needed. That was why I fell for it.”

“There’s no need to explain.” Natasha said in amusement, “Didn’t you say when you comforted me that the girls who seemed silly, soft, cute and beautiful, tended to be dark inside? Haha. Your theory has been proven.”

Lucien could only smile now.

“Right, what abilities does your left hand have?” Asked Natasha curiously.

Pondering for a moment, Lucien replied, “The greatest benefit is that I can study the nature of a demigod’s power and slightly sense their understanding about the world. My connection with the World of Souls is also strengthened. In the meantime, this left hand should be able to nullify magic, divine powers, elements and other abilities. However, since there is not much power left, it can only affect abilities no higher than the eighth circle. Also, unless I have groundbreaking research products in the field, there will be no way to improve it in the future. As for the rest of the abilities of the left hand, I have to figure them out during the usage.”

It was similar to Bloodline Elimination, but could not deal with the natural effects caused by extraordinary powers, such as the mountains collapsing by magic, or the illusionary gaps of space from Natasha’s sword.

“That’s great. You have earned a lot. Your spiritual power must’ve reached the eighth circle, right? Natasha said rather enviously.

Examining himself, Lucien nodded, “It only just stepped into the

eighth circle, but I haven't even constructed a seventh-circle magic yet."

Then, he comforted Natasha, "You've done a great job in the test of life and death this time. Your chivalry and willpower have both been trained. Also, with your bloodline, you will meet few obstacles before you enter into legendary after you become a radiant knight. Chances are that you will advance into level eight very soon."

"Chivalry..." Natasha suddenly sighed, "I don't even know how to face the Lord now."

Her chivalry was partly built on her faith. The collapse of faith tended to result in the plunge of willpower. She would not die of it, but further advancements would be very difficult.

Lucien comforted her in a gentle voice, "Sympathy, courage, protection, justice and other spirits of chivalry, are they all the bliss from Mountain Paradise? In your heart, is there not sympathy for the weak, the protection for your family, friends and subjects, the hope for order and virtue, the courage to fight enemies and difficulties, and the determination in your opinions and glory?"

"Natasha, all the virtues and spirits originate from our heart. The real Lord is not out there, not on Mountain Paradise, but in your heart. Each of us have a Lord that solely belongs to ourselves in our heart. Unless you give up on yourself, he will never be gone."

Natasha put on a smile that covered up her gloom. She said lightheartedly, "Lucien, you are very fit to be a priest. Well, I need time to review my mind. Alright, let's go. Your Eternal Blaze was too noisy. Perhaps, His Excellency Varantine is coming."

"I'll stay in the northern mountains and wait for my teacher and Her Excellency Hathaway to come. Considering the uniqueness of my fate, it will be difficult for Varantine to locate me." Although Lucien hated to say goodbye, he still said toughly, "You need to get out of here fast and return before the Church discovers this."

"Okay." Natasha did not hesitate.

Right then, a stormy roar echoed far away, “Lucien Evans!”

The roar seemed to be from a place far, far away. Lucien couldn't hold back his smile, “My teacher does have a loud voice...”

The transmission of electromagnetic waves was limited in this world, but soundwaves remained unaffected. Therefore, the Lord of Storm decided to search for him with ‘Lord of Storm’s Roar’, a ninth-circle magic, which was the most effective way.

However, it was still amazing that the voice was delivered so far away. Lucien could only remark that his teacher was not scared that he would be discovered by the Church at all.

“I’m going to meet Grandma Hathaway, too.” Natasha’s eyes glittered.

Chapter 507: Summer Change

Not far away from Death Valley that was already gone, Fernando, Hathaway and Bergner floated in the sky and observed the destruction, inferring the temperature and power of the explosion based on the astonishing traces and the gigantic pit.

"If this was really an explosive magic, wouldn't the sun be a planet where such explosions happen all the time?" Bergner asked at a loss.

It was not because he was hostile against 'fusion explosion'; it was just that he felt lost as a prophet when the sun, which was in a very important position in astrology and horoscopes, finally revealed part of its mysteries.

After Fernando killed the Demigod-lich, Bergner did not leave in fury. According to Congus' reason, it was obvious that two living grand arcanists were more important than a dead legendary sorcerer. If Congus' self-defense was left aside and the rules of the congress were respected, Fernando wasn't wrong doing what he did, either.

Perhaps because the Lord of Storm had always abided by the rules of the congress, people had forgotten that he was short-tempered not only in academic questions, or how he achieved his legendary class and nickname. It was not until he suddenly attacked that Bergner felt it was only reasonable and as expected of the 'Lord of Storm'. Therefore, he accepted the result with a bitter smile.

Fernando shook his head, "Technically speaking, this was not an explosive magic. I don't find any unique traces left by the traditional explosive magics. There's only the purest release of energy and an unimaginably high temperature."

He specifically added 'traditional' when he mentioned the explosive magics in the school of elements. It was obvious that he regarded what was before him as a brand-new way of using explosive magic that approached the mysteries of the sun. Walking down the path,

the faction of light and electromagnetism would be able to be partly included in the field of elements.

"Exactly." Hathaway nodded softly and agreed with Fernando's conclusion.

Bergner, a prophet who was not good at elements, sighed, "I can't imagine that Lucien Evans has created such a magic. However, I do have a feeling that the times have changed. Perhaps starting from this moment—No, since Lucien proposed the Energy Quantum Theory, arcana and magic have entered a marvelous and appalling era."

While Fernando and Hathaway did not respond to Bergner's words, their looks and their silence suggested that they were considering it. What a prophet said must not be overlooked easily.

At this moment, two people flew close from far away. Fernando's hands that had been clenched in fists all this time loosened, and he criticized gravely, "You were truly idiotic this time! You didn't know that somebody played tricks on you, and you were forced into the Portal to an Alternate Realm just like that! If you are this careless again next time, I think I will have to collect your body for you, if your body can be found at all!"

Hardly had Lucien arrived when he was greeted with the storm of roars that he had missed. He felt rather warm to see his teacher's angry look, and therefore hurried to admit his mistake.

"Granny, how did you come so soon? We thought we would have to wait until the evening or the next morning." Natasha had often heard Lucien talking about his teacher's roars. She observed it joyfully and planned to record it to make fun of Lucien later. However, after a while, she changed the subject for some reason.

Hathaway looked much more gentle as she stared at Natasha. She said casually, "We killed Congus and came from the Portal to the Alternate Realm that he established."

"You killed Congus?" Lucien was surprised and delighted. He was worried that 'Eternal Blaze' could not kill Congus who had a

phylactery, and that there would be infinite trouble if the guy escaped. He did not expect that his teacher had already taken care of the problem.

They must've held back a lot of pressure, mustn't they?

"He should die!" Fernando did not change his attitude. Then, he held back his 'anger' and asked with a fake smile, "What's with your magic? That illusionary sun we saw the other day was made by you, too, wasn't it? What about the Silver Moon and the existence from the World of Souls?"

"Master, you saw it, too?" Lucien did not expect that his teacher could've seen it over such a long distance. Then, something most important was obviously missing in his speculation at that time. The world was more complicated than he thought.

Hathaway had been standing quietly. She interjected at this moment, "Everybody saw it. Is it a legendary magic that was derived from the new alchemy?"

She was keener than anybody else as she was studying the 'new alchemy'.

"Yes. I noticed some phenomena when I studied the decay of atoms and reached a lot of conclusions. After I killed Congus for a second time, the knowledge was integrated, and the world gave me feedback. I achieved the prototypes of two legendary magics, which triggered what you saw. Later, with the help of the Silver Moon, I completed the main body of 'Eternal Blaze', or 'Atomic Fusion', and released it." Lucien did not reveal the special theory of relativity or the mass-energy formula but explained it from the experimental phenomena that would be seen in the new alchemy.

The deduction of the special theory of relativity was not difficult. Considering the knowledge and the existing accomplishments of the Congress of Magic, anybody who overcame their biases could come up with it in a few years. However, it was exactly because of the biases that Lucien dared not show his teacher the paper immediately.

While the wave theory of light and the particle theory were the foundations of different factions and cognitive worlds, the opinions on time and space was the fundamental 'common sense' that every arcanist used to understand the world. They came from everyday, intuitional and errorless feelings. For example, even the ordinary people had the feeling that time flowed by quietly as they enjoyed peace.

Therefore, for an arcanist, absolute, independent, time was the cornerstone of their worldview. It was well believed that 'Time Stop', the ninth-circle magic, merely froze the area and slowed down the movement, and that it did not really manipulate the time. The magic was like an upgraded version of Deferment.

The disruptive part of the special theory of relativity was not the mass-energy formula but the idea that time and space are relevant. It told people that time was a function of speed and depended on matter, which would be a revolutionary storm no smaller than the one caused by the Energy Quantum Theory. In the meantime, it declared the obsolescence of 'Ether'.

After all, the preliminary studies on fission and fusion did not require the mass-energy formula. Therefore, Lucien hid it for now so that his teacher could take it in slowly.

Thinking about that, Lucien secretly asked for forgiveness in his heart. "My teacher is always the first one to take the hit of the groundbreaking theories. I feel really sorry for him. Well, can fission and fusion help him reach a higher level?"

Fernando asked solemnly, "Fusion? The other is fission?"

The decay of elements that was observed was clearly fission. That was why he asked in excitement.

"Fusion releases energy just like fission does?" Hathaway asked the important question, with zealotry beaming out of her silver grey eyes.

They completely forgot that the area was under the control of the Church, or that an insane explosion of 'Big Ivan' just took place, but

simply floated in the air and discussed atomic fission and fusion.

Having been taught by Lucien in advance, Natasha listened enjoyably and chimed in now and then. Bergner, who was terrible at elements, was so overwhelmed that he simply left and stayed on alert.

After a brief introduction, Lucien said, "Master, Your Excellency Hathaway, the explosion previously must've been noticed by Varantine.

"Varantine? Does he dare to come here?" The Lord of Storm glared at Lucien. There were two grand arcanists and one level-two legendary prophet. Why would they be scared of the leader of the ascetics who was not even a Saint?

Even if the pope came here in person, Fernando still believed in the capabilities of his side as long as God's Arrival was not available. Although they could not beat him, it was not difficult to escape. A legendary sorcerer was more difficult to kill than any other class, unless they were surrounded and the space was blocked. But since a prophet was here, it was absolutely impossible to ambush and surround them.

Despite saying that, Fernando held back his desire in arcana exploration. He went on, "Let's go back to Allyn. You can write your experiences with the Silver Moon and the existence of the World of Souls into a report. Tell people the things about Maskelyne, too, if you want. You cannot face the World of Souls on your own."

Congus had some files left in his place, which let Fernando know why they had been chasing Lucien.

Natasha took the opportunity to bid farewell, ready to return to the knights sent by Duchy Violet.

"Talk soon." Natasha was not upset by the departure and made a gesture of electromagnetism messaging to Lucien with a smile. She flew away at ease after whispering something to Hathaway in secret.

Seeing that she left, Fernando suddenly put on a horrible smile. "Lucien, your pursuit of love seems very tough."

Have I been seen through? Lucien asked embarrassed, "What are you talking about, master?"

"Haha, don't be shy. I have abundant romantic experience. What have I not been through? The only reason why I'm single right now is that I do not think it is a big deal now. Whatever question you may have in that regard, you are free to ask me." Fernando made fun of his student without any reservations.

.....

In the Nekso Palace at Rentato, the capital of Holm...

A white candle was burning inside a silver candlestick. The dim light from it created an air of loneliness and desolation under the contrast of the storm and lightning outside.

Sard, wearing a white hat, looked at King Feltis who was lying on the bed and said, "Your Majesty, your life came to an end a few months ago, and it has been sustained by the divine power since. However, even the divine power cannot extend your life anymore. Everything is set. You can return to the arms of the Lord in peace. Rest assured. Death is not the destiny. You will enjoy eternal happiness and salvation on Mountain Paradise."

Feltis' dirty eyes became clear, and he appeared more or less guilty, but his guilt was replaced by more dutifulness and determination. He said intermittently, "Honorable Saint Sard... Rex, the things... will be in your hands. Holm has always been a kingdom favored by God... and it will always be one."

Rex, Duke of Frenburg and president of the Parliament of Nobles, was full of grief in front of the king whom he had served for years. On one of his knees, he grabbed Feltis right hand and said, "Your Majesty, I will live up to your hope."

"It's my mission to add more glory to the Lord. Your Majesty, rest assured, the prince will not fall into hell." Sard drew a cross on his

chest.

Crack. An enormous lightning struck and illuminated the room. Feltis closed his eyes with a smile, his right hand slipping off.

.....

In the residence of the Minister of Finance, Count Henson was woken up from his dream.

"What? His Majesty has been summoned by the Lord? Get the wagon prepared now!" Count Henson stood up from his bed abruptly and walked out in his pajamas. His lady hurried to follow and covered him with a black gown, before she handed over his staff.

Count Henson who had lost his usual grace went to the wagon at the gate of his villa almost running. Then he shouted, "Hurry! To the Nekso Palace!"

Having not activated his bloodline, he ran far more slowly than a wagon dragged by Dragon Scale horses. Being carried to the palace, on the other hand, it would expose his panic. Therefore, despite his anxiety, he simply cleaned his clothes inside the wagon to show that he was very calm in order to give other nobles confidence.

BOOM. A lightning bolt struck, and deafening thunder echoed, exactly an implication of Count Henson's heart. The wagon rolled fast as the coachman tried his best, making mud splash everywhere.

The four wheels rolled so fast that the whole carriage was almost thrown when the wagon took a turn.

The window was opened as a result. The wild wind blew in, and raindrops the size of beans poured into the wagon. The night outside was as dark as ink and seemed to contain infinite horror.

The wagon stopped outside of the Nekso Palace. Count Henson rushed into the palace despite the storm. Then, he saw Duke James and Duke Russell who were standing by the gate.

"What's the situation? Where is the prince?" Count Henson breathed

hard. He was already an aged senior.

With a gloomy face, James replied hoarsely, "The prince has been summoned by the Lord, too, because of grief."

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BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Count Henson's exclamation was eclipsed by a series of shocking thunder. He stood in the rain and simply allowed it to pour on him. There was nothing but fuzziness before him, now bright and now dark.

(End of Volume V)

Chapter 508: Candidates

Inside the Parliament of Nobles in the Nekso Palace.

Torrential rain was pouring outside with deafening thunder and dazzling lightning, as if it were the end of the end, but all the members of the Parliament of Nobles in Rentato had been gathered in the hall. White wigs and black capes could be seen everywhere.

Had it not been for the power of the natural lightning, which made the experts below gold knights too scared to fly here, all the members of the Parliament of Nobles would've been gathered, and it had only been one hour since the Lord summoned King Feltis and Prince Patrick. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Of course, the nobles who could not make it here had also learned from their spokespersons and allies in Rentato remotely and forwarded their opinions.

They had never been more grateful for the Allyn Telephone and the Telegram Company. While the 'wired phones' that they promoted were limited to Rentato and the capitals of a few counties because of the complicated infrastructure and the huge cost that came with it, it was the only means of communication for the nobles who were unable to deploy and use expensive teleportation arrays in such weather. Many nobles decided to help with the promotion after witnessing its advantages.

"How was the prince summoned by the Lord?" Count Henson took a hot bath in the restroom in the Parliament of Nobles and changed his clothes and wig. It was not until then that he was finally freed from shock. He put on a white paper flower and seated himself in the front row, asking James, Duke of Paphos, Russell, Duke of Wolfburg, and Viscount Harrison, who had come after informing the Congress of Magic.

The four of them were the leaders of the Liberal group apart from Prince Patrick. They had to reach a consensus first, or the nobles on

their side would lose confidence.

Duke James put on a white wig in the Parliament of Nobles to cover his bald head. He said sullenly, "I don't know, either. It already happened when Russell and I came to Nekso Palace. We examined the prince's body and discovered no anomaly. It was indeed a body collapsed caused by overwhelming grief. I don't think anybody could've assassinated him when he was protected by His Excellency Kritonia."

Kritonia, 'Heart of Time', was one of the two legendary knights of Holm. In the whole world, there could only be no more than five knights who could reach level three of legendary, he and Rudolf II were among them. As for the legendary knights who reached the peak of legendary, apart from the monsters such as Prince Dracula, Prince Abyss, and the lord of the first level of hell, there was only one among human beings, who was Saint Melmax, the captain of the Temple Knights and a member of the Grand Cardinal.

Although he claimed that no assassinations could've happened under Kritonia, James did not seem certain of it at all.

"His Excellency Kritonia was a hero in the War of Dawn and a legendary knight who crushed the Magic Empire's reign in Holm together with the late king. However, he is approaching the end of his life. He needs to consider and arrange more things than ordinary people do." Duke Russell said expressionlessly, "He cannot observe the situation as quietly as His Excellency Winston of the Solefen family."

Winston, 'Night Walker', was the other legendary knight of Holm, who was now supervising the kingdom's colonies in a few alternate dimensions.

Viscount Harrison sneered, "I, for one, don't believe that the prince passed away because of grief."

Harrison, Henson and the rest of them knew that Patrick had been a crown prince for four decades. It was inevitable that there was a conflict of power between the prince and the king. The two of them hadn't been intimate since a long time ago, particularly when their

ideologies differed greatly. The nobles might've believed it if Patrick's body collapsed because of ecstasy.

"With everything coming to this point, we need to forget our grief and focus on two things. Firstly, we need to ask the sorcerers of the Congress of Magic to investigate the prince's death in private. Secondly, we carry out our backup plan and support David to assume the throne." After Count Henson calmed down, his blue eyes became sharp again.

Patrick had always been in poor condition. The liberal nobles had been prepared that he would die earlier than the king. Therefore, they were not panicked after they passed the initial shock and panic.

David's father was King Feltis' cousin, as well as Archmage Morris' nephew and student. Although he had died in an adventure, David, a grand knight, was completely inclined to the Liberal in daily life as well as in official affairs under his father's tutelage. He was the most suitable candidate of the royal family for the liberal nobles. Also, his bloodline was very close. According to the law of nobles, he was the fourth heir on the list.

"Okay." Duke James nodded heavily and informed the other liberal nobles of the result of their discussion.

A moment later, Rex, 'King's Griffin', the president of the Parliament of Nobles who wore a blue cape and a white wig, walked in, followed by a black-haired, smiling man whose silver grey eyes told everyone unmistakably that he belonged to the Hoffenberg family.

"Gordon!" The liberal nobles became solemn.

Duke James couldn't have looked more awful. "Didn't he claim that he would serve the Lord for his life? Didn't he quit the Sword of Truth's Knights and go to Lance, the Holy City, to join the Temple Knights?"

"A level-eight radiant knight no more than 50, the Torn Sword..." Duke Russell and Viscount Harrison whispered gravely.

Noise echoed in the hall. The other nobles, be they liberals or conservatives, began to whisper to each other. Count Gordon was a genius and an eccentric of the Hoffenberg family. He became a radiant knight when he was only 35 years old. He was appointed as the deputy captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights by King Feltis. However, as a pious believer, he went to the Holy City at 40 and joined the Temple Knights.

His bloodline was much further from King Feltis than David's was. However, his rank as a radiant knight was influential enough to raise his right of succession to be on par with David. While the Hoffenberg family was not unpopulated, most of its members were more distant in bloodline, or were not knights, or they had already embarked on the path of magic, thereby forfeiting their qualification.

Duke James and the other liberals thought that Rex would support Alex, his nephew who had just activated the bloodline of 'Sword of Truth'. Then, in terms of strength or blood connection, David would inherit the throne without suspense. Nobody expected that Gordon would come back.

As the mallet knocked the table ahead, the hall of the Parliament of Nobles immediately fell quiet.

Rex drew a cross on his chest and said sorrowfully, "Our great king, His Majesty Feltis, and our honorable crown prince, His Highness Patrick were summoned by the Lord an hour ago. Let's have a moment of silence and pray that they be favored by the Lord on Mountain Paradise."

James and the other nobles stood up and drew crosses in the quiet and grievous atmosphere.

Five minutes later, Rex hinted that everybody should sit down and turned tough. "Because His Highness Patrick, heir of the kingdom, has also been summoned by the Lord, without leaving any children, the Parliament of Nobles will elect an heir according to the law. The election will be based on the right of succession, on the premise that they are blessed by the Lord."

By 'blessed by the Lord', he meant that a Grand Cardinal would come to host the ceremony of inheritance.

Rex did not allow the nobles to speak. Pointing at Gordon who was next to him. "The royal family of Holm is in peril after such a strike. Therefore, Count Gordon decided to consider for his family and asked for the Lord's forgiveness. He quit the Temple Knights and returned through the teleportation array of the Church. He is a level-eight radiant knight and of the purest bloodline of 'Sword of Truth'. I propose that he should inherit the throne. Please vote by raising your hands."

"Wait a moment." James stood up and said loudly, "Under such circumstances, according to the law, only if more than two thirds of the members agree and none of the nine dukes objects can the elected inherit the throne. Is it the case, President Rex?"

Rex looked at James gloomily, "Yes, and no. When all the other candidates have no more than one fifth of the votes, the last candidate will not need to meet the requirement. In emergencies, the candidate with more than half of the votes will inherit the throne directly. I believe that it is an emergency right now. The throne cannot be left empty."

"It is not up to you whether or not this is an emergency; it requires everyone's vote. Now, I propose Count David. He is closer to His Majesty in bloodline and much more entitled to the throne than Count Gordon. Also, he is a grand knight who has activated the strength of his bloodline."

James did not speak on the podium but looked around at other nobles on the spot. "I don't think any member will object to the hereditary hierarchy, right? If anyone agrees to it, then the candidates stronger than his son or his grandson can invoke the example and steal the title when they are about to inherit the title, right?"

It was the foundation to keep the nobles in fact. Every noble wanted to leave their title to their direct heir. If the strong were free to rob, every family would be filled with assassinations and internal strife.

Of course, that was one of the reasons why they succumbed to the Church. The independent and powerful church could ensure that nobody would disregard the rules because of their strength.

A conservative stood up and bowed at everybody courteously, "According to the law, the bloodline abilities are the foundation of nobles, and powerful strength will be considered during inheritance. Considering the strength of a radiant knight, Duke Gordon and Count David are on par. Therefore, electing Count Gordon is not in violation of the law and will not result in the collapse of order."

"Also, Count David's father was a sorcerer. We need to consider if he can be blessed by the Lord."

His brief reply completely resolved James' attack.

Count Henson stood up with a feather pen. He also bowed around courteously and said, "Just because the father is a sorcerer does not mean that the son is not a devout believer. Count David has never missed any church session and often donates to the Church. Everybody knows his piety well. I believe that the Lord can certainly see it and tolerate it. Count Gordon, on the other hand, once entered the Temple Knights. I find it hard to believe that he will place the interests of Holm before everything else in the future. This is not blasphemy of the Lord but a confusion of the power of the Church and the power of the king."

At such a moment, he had no time to be subtle but pointed out the confrontation of the two powers.

Gordon raised his hands and smiled, "Speculations are not proof. I believe that I will view the questions of nobles as the king of Holm instead of as a Temple Knight."

The other liberals and conservations stood and offered their opinions. In the end, Rex said, "Now, a show of hands. Those who agree with Count David, please raise your hands."

Arms were raised. They did not seem to be many, but they already made up one third. While the liberals were outnumbered by the

conservatives, they were more united.

Rex frowned at that as he could not invoke the first special clause now. Thinking for a moment, he proceeded, "Those who agree with Count Gordon, please raise your hands."

Arms were raised. It did not seem to be a problem that he would have the approval of more than half of the people. Rex began to consider how to make the motion of the state of emergency pass.

Suddenly, the raising of hands was stopped when there was still not half. Rex looked at Duke Solomon, stunned. The noble who had a black mustache shook his head, stating that he would not support candidates with distinctive church backgrounds. As a major leader of the conservatives, his attitude directly influenced many other nobles.

Duke James smiled, "President Rex, it seems that we need to discuss and negotiate for a long time."

Now that Duke Solomon hesitated, he was confident to kick Gordon out through compromises.

Rex fell silent. Looking at the mallet in his hands, he suddenly raised his head, "I will propose another candidate."

He intended to force Duke Solomon and the rest of them to agree with his proposal with the emergency of the situation, but they were more stubborn than he anticipated. He could only activate the backup plan now.

"Who? Who is higher on the hereditary hierarchy than Count David and Count Gordon?" Duke Russell expressed his objection.

Rex replied unhurriedly, "Natasha Violet, Countess of Violet, has activated the bloodline of 'Sword of Truth'. She is closer to His Majesty than Count David is. Also, she is a radiant knight and a devout believer that can be blessed by the Church."

Chapter 509: Resul

Duke James, Count Henson, and the other liberals looked at each other and saw objection in each other's eyes. While Natasha had been in Holm, she was still too young to have a political view. Also, it was an unchangeable fact that her teacher Beliel, 'God's Glory,' was a member of the Grand Cardinals. According to sources, she had been raised by the Church since six. She was a devout believer, only slightly better than Gordon as a candidate.

"According to bloodline, Natasha, Countess of Violet, is the heir only next to His Highness. She is a radiant knight and a devout believer. So, she is the most reasonable heir to the throne." Rex looked rather tough.

Duke Russell stood and said while shaking his quill pen. "President Rex, we are both aware of it, but why are we discussing other candidates? Because Her Highness Meredith, Countess Natasha's mother, automatically abandoned her right to the throne when she became a sorcerer. That is to say; her children are no longer entitled to it."

Count Henson and Viscount Harrison looked at each other with a bitter smile, in that they had to offer objections using sorcerers as an excuse when they were inclined to the Congress of Magic.

Duke Solomon said solemnly, "If the logic stands, David will not be entitled to the throne, either. A noble's right comes from their bloodline. Unless it is deprived according to the law, they will always enjoy it. What Countess Natasha activated is the purest bloodline of the Sword of Truth. Her right of inheritance comes directly from His Majesty."

Rex seemed more or less relieved. Duke Solomon seemed able to live with that. So, he went on, "I discussed candidates in the meeting just now, instead of asking Princess Natasha to inherit the throne directly, because she is now the only heir of Duchy Violet. According to Entry Three, Clause Five of the inheritance law, if the inheritor has the rights to other countries and families and such

rights cannot be combined, their position will be lowered by one level on the hierarchy, which makes her on the same level as David and Gordon."

Duchy Violet played an important role in the Church's defense in the northwest. The Church would never give it to Holm.

"Since the previous two candidates are not unanimously approved, it is definitely not a problem to propose Princess Natasha." He began to call Natasha princess, acknowledging her position in the royal family.

"Duke James, Count Russell, do you have any objections? If not, we will have a vote." Rex looked at the few leaders of the liberals.

Duke James and the rest of them were caught unprepared. They had thought that the conservatives would ignore Natasha as they did. After all, everybody knew the relation between Meredith and Hathaway. She was an excellent sorcerer herself. Who could have seen this coming?

Gender? No, females' right of inheritance was specified in the law.

Strength? Worse. As a genius who became a radiant knight in her twenties and who was likely to become legendary, she was more distinguished than any of them.

Too close to the Church? Won't work. Other than being a pious believer, Natasha did not have any behavior to be criticized. She had never flattered the Church by jeopardizing the interests of the nobles of Duchy Violet.

As for her suppression of the Congress of Magic on the surface and her ban on magic recorders and phones, such things could not be discussed openly. They could not publicize that they were cooperating with sorcerers, in which case Rex might change his attitude and ask Sard to come in and purge the nobles who had been corrupted by sorcerers. Those things could be done but never be talked about.

For a moment, the liberals couldn't find a good excuse.

Duke Solomon, on the other hand, cleaned his black cape and asked, "President Rex, I heard a rumor about Princess Natasha, and I hope you can explain it. It is said that she and Lucien Evans, the Fallen Angel, are a couple deeply in love with each other. Will she betray the nobles, indulge the Congress of Magic, and infuriate the Church because of that?"

After Louise came to Holm, Lucien's identity was no longer a secret. Every noble knew that he was that great musician. After he made it to the top twenty of the Cleansing List, the history of the great musician had been dug out, too.

Hearing Duke Solomon's question, James suddenly breathed heavily. If that were the case, it would not be unacceptable that Natasha became the queen.

Rex replied unhurriedly, "Regarding that, I learned the answer from His Excellency Saint Sard, who was the Grand Cardinal of the parish of Violet and knew everything. Princess Natasha is attracted to females. Lucien Evans is just an excuse and a disguise for her. They are not as close as rumors have it to be. Also, the princess is a very devout believer. Sylvia, her partner in the past, was killed by her without any hesitation after she learned that Sylvia was a magic apprentice."

"What?"

"Was the most beautiful musician killed because of that?"

"No wonder 'Ode To Sylvia' was rewarded with a manor by Princess Natasha."

It was the first time that the nobles heard the gossip, which was from Grand Cardinal Sard, who couldn't have lied about such things. They immediately whispered to each other.

Count Henson now found it impossible to accept Natasha as the queen. He coughed and said, "Homosexual love is in violation of the Lord's tutelage. Also, there will be no offspring. Such an inheritance will be meaningless."

"That's just the idea of some preachers. The Lord only taught us not to be obsessed with lust. As for the offspring, I believe we can make it clear to Princess when we invite her to inherit the throne that she must give birth to a child as soon as possible. As for her relationship with her spouse in private, that's not our concern. I believe that it is not a great compromise for her. If she doesn't accept it, we will discuss other candidates." Rex looked at the members of the Parliament of Nobles. "If there are no other questions, let's vote."

Duke Solomon, one of the leaders of the conservatives, raised his hand first. He was not as extreme as Rex and preferred a candidate that was acceptable for the Church, the parliament, and the nobles in case of a great conflict within the country, which would only result in the decline of Holm. In such a case, even the winning nobles would not earn much. Natasha was undoubtedly a suitable candidate.

Duke Solomon's father was 'Night Walker' Winston. His influence on the conservatives was as great as Rex's. Many people followed him to raise their hands, and so did the nobles who supported Rex. Soon, two-thirds of the participants had raised their hands. Duke James and Duke Russell, on the other hand, were gloomy and prepared to use the dukes' veto right.

Suddenly, Viscount Harrison thought of something. He wrote on a piece of paper, before he passed it on to Duke James in secret.

Knowing that he was scared that the gold knights such as Duke Rex could overhear them, Duke James did not blame his redundant move. Instead, he opened the paper that read, "Princess Natasha is closer to Her Excellency Hathaway than we imagine."

Duke James had a complicated look on his face. After discussing with Duke Russell, he suddenly raised his hand, which was quite a shock for most of the liberals. But they still chose to believe in him and followed his lead.

Rex put on a smile. "Very good. The Parliament of Nobles has unanimously passed the motion that Natasha Violet, Countess of Violet, is to be invited to Holm to inherit the throne."

He knocked the gavel and declared, "This meeting is now concluded."

.....

Watching the conservatives leave, Duke James said to Viscount Harrison solemnly, "I hope you're right."

"We can only take our chances. Rex seemed well prepared. I'll report the result to the Highest Council. They will decide whether or not assassination is necessary." Viscount Harrison left in a hurry.

In a secret chamber inside the Nekso Palace, Rex spoke to two seniors respectfully, "Your Excellency Saint Sard, Your Excellency Kritonia, Natasha has achieved the right to the throne as per your instruction."

"Very good." Sard smiled peacefully, his dangling eyelids blocking his dirty eyeballs.

.....

On the 35th floor of the magic tower in Allyn, in the meeting room of the Highest Council, one of the twenty-four chairs was gone.

"We discussed the problem before. I don't think it's the best choice to let Beliel's student be the queen of Holm. I suggest we eliminate her in advance." Said Vicente, the Lord of the Undead, coldly, without looking at Hathaway at all."

Vicente, who was well prepared, proved his innocence in Congus' incident, and provided sufficient evidence that Congus' students were unaware of Demigod-lich's actions, protecting them from being punished.

Several members of the Highest Council nodded, agreeing that Natasha and Gordon should be killed to ensure David's right to the throne.

Hathaway looked at them, coldly, "This is the Hoffenberg family's business. Whoever meddles with it will be my sworn enemy. Also, I believe that Natasha will be a just queen who will not be biased

towards the Church."

Due to her lack of eloquence, she simply threatened her enemy.

"But how many people support you? Vicente challenged Hathaway.

Davey, the Innovator, said lightheartedly, "I believe in Hathaway's judgment."

"What's wrong with you?" Without a sign, the Lord of Storm began to roar, "Kill Natasha and Gordon? Are you planning to terrify all the nobles in Holm, Brianne, Colette, and Calais? Sard will smile in his dreams! The nobles will be completely inclined to him! Seven legendary knights in four countries, plus the Grand Cardinals in their parishes, that will be twelve legendary warriors, two of whom are level-three! It's enough to suffocate us!"

The other members of the Highest Council couldn't help but shift their heads under the roar, but most of them secretly agreed with him. While Fernando was short-tempered, unamiable and even slightly freakish, he had always considered the development of the Congress.

"Fernando, what's your opinion?" Douglas asked in a smile. He was least influenced by the roar.

Fernando looked around with his red eyes, and most members did not dare to look back at him. "At the very least, Natasha is not a bad choice."

"Not a bad choice. Yes, I agree with that." Douglas was more willing to trust Hathaway and Fernando.

Vicente meant to object, but his influence was diminished by the Demigod-lich's incident. His allies were unwilling to support him at such a moment. Therefore, the Highest Council reached a conclusion very soon. Natasha would not be stopped, but her tendencies would be observed so that she could be destroyed or controlled when necessary.

.....

After he returned to his library from the meeting room, Fernando saw Lucien who was wearing a black, double-breasted tuxedo pacing back and forth.

"Master, what's the situation?" Sensing that his teacher came in, Lucien hurried to ask.

Fernando chuckled. "Natasha will not be stopped from inheriting the throne, but it's mostly up to herself. Violet is far away from Holm, and she still has her father to take care of."

Then, he said solemnly, "Lucien, this is the best I can do for you. It depends on yourself whether or not you can trick a queen into your bed."

Lucien smiled in embarrassment, "It's very difficult. Natasha likes girls."

"That's indeed a problem..." Fernando thought for a moment. Then, his eyes shined. He opened the space gate to the demiplane, leaving Lucien in the library in confusion.

A moment later, Fernando walked back with a belt with beautiful stripes. He gloated, "It's still there. This is my most remarkable achievement in alchemy when I was young. Lucien, put it on, and you and Natasha will be a loving couple soon enough."

"What's this?" Lucien found it odd and did not dare to take it over.

Fernando grimaced and raised the belt, "A gender-transitioning belt, of course. You will become a real girl after you put it on. Natasha is close to you enough. The only obstacle between you should be gender."

Lucien did not see his face, but he guessed that it must be filled with anger and awkwardness. "Master, this is my boundaries. Please don't joke about it."

"How boring. You are unwilling to sacrifice anything for love." Fernando shook his head exaggeratedly, teasing his student.

Lucien looked back at him expressionlessly, "That's not important.

The important thing is, why did you build a gender-transitioning belt when you were young, master?"

Fernando's smile was immediately frozen. Then he glared, "Somebody asked me to build it for him."

"Tsk..." Lucien shook his head, not convinced at all. "There are wrong names, but no wrong nicknames. No wonder they all call you a freak."

"What's that attitude? Life is all about trying. Lucien, I'm very worried about your life status. A man who hasn't tried anything is pathetic." Fernando sniffed and drove Lucien out. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

Chapter 510: Ceremony

In the Ratacia Palace in Aalto in the City of Psalm...

Hearing the news forwarded by Philibell, the new Grand Cardinal of the Violet parish, Natasha said with apparent grief, "I didn't expect that my grandfather and my uncle would be summoned by the Lord so quickly."

Although she knew that King Feltis was unwell due to old age and Prince Patrick had always been weak, and she was braced for bad news, Natasha still couldn't stop sorrow from surging in her heart. As she grew up, she had fewer and fewer blood family members who cared for her selflessly. That was the most heartbreaking experience in life.

"Patrick didn't succeed the throne after all..." Grand Duke of Orvarit, who knew the Hoffenberg family even better than Natasha, sighed. But he did not say anything more and simply looked at Natasha, "Are you willing to go to Rentato to inherit the throne of Holm?"

Natasha thought of Holm and Lucien. She then looked at her weary father, whose violet hair had now been mixed by grey. She shook her head firmly, "Holm has many heirs, but you only have me."

"I've been taught to shoulder the responsibility of the Violet family and Duchy of Orvarit. How can I leave?"

Grand Duke of Orvarit patted Natasha's shoulder comfortingly. He smiled at his daughter, "What if I want you to go?"

Huh? Natasha was stunned.

Philibell, who had a beard, echoed peacefully, "You can still come back after you go there. While the Church forbids the Kingdom of Holm from merging with the Duchy of Orvarit, you can be the sovereign of both countries and ask different offspring to inherit them. Therefore, you can stay in Holm for one year and Orvarit for another. The transmission circle will be open to you. This is the

Church's reward for your family's years of devotion."

In doing so, it would be easy to both control Natasha and direct the nobles to be used to 'autonomy.' The conflict between the royal power and the regular nobles would be greater.

"Also, I'm still in good shape, and I can be the Grand Duke for at least another twenty years," said Grand Duke of Orvarit half-jokingly, "Your mother was married far away from her family. She felt guilty when she saw her father growing old and her brother haunted by diseases. She failed to meet your grandmother for the last time when she passed away. She felt that she owed a lot to the Hoffenberg family. Therefore, I hope that you can go to Holm when it needs you the most to make up for your mother's regrets."

Natasha fell silent. Her hands were clenched in fists, and she nodded slowly, "Okay."

Philibell said half-seriously and half-jokingly, "Your Highness, the Church is aware that your favorite type is different from that of regular girls. Therefore, we have helped you remove the demand that you must be married. However, you still have to have offspring, which I believe is also the hope of the Grand Duke and the nobles of the two countries. You may consider asking the angels to arrive inside your body as your children. That's a glory only for the devout believers."

Sard blamed what happened in Aalto on Lucien, claiming that Lucien manipulated Princess Natasha when she wanted to comfort the Grand Duke. So, the Church knew that Natasha's sexual orientation was never changed. The Grand Duke learned a thing or two about it later, too.

Natasha lowered her eyes and said, "I'll try."

What she was thinking to herself, however, was something else. "Is the sexless conception that Lucien mentioned real? Can I borrow his... thing?"

Since he made up his mind, Lucien had made up various plans. In case Natasha couldn't handle the pressure and got married to a

random noble for a child before he won her over, he regularly introduced the knowledge, including artificial insemination and test-tube baby to her.

Having received Natasha's confirmation, Philibell said kindly, "I will not disrupt your farewell anymore. For your safety and convenience, it would be best if a minor legion of knights comes with you. Their family may use the transmission circle with them."

The regular knight legions, due to different functions, were made of a hundred to five hundred knights of various levels, their squires were ten times more, and soldiers were even more than that. A minor knight legion was the guards for the heirs to a throne, usually made of one radiant knight, three grand knights, six knights, a hundred squires, and five hundred soldiers. However, what Philibell mentioned obviously only included the official knights and their families.

He left after that. The Grand Duke said to Natasha with a smile, "Just now, I said that I could be the Grand Duke for another twenty years, but you'd better not keep me waiting for that long. I want to see my grandchild and the future of the Violet family sooner."

"I'll try." Natasha prayed that Lucien's 'technology' wouldn't go wrong.

The Grand Duke looked at Natasha and said, "I want you to go to Holm, not only because I want you to make up for your mother's regrets, but also because he is there. You won't be separated anymore. So, you need to hurry up on the grandchild thing."

"Father, what are you talking about? Who is he?" Embarrassed, Natasha pretended to be ignorant. Where was her father's misunderstanding from?

The Grand Duke said in a smile, "Who else? Lucien Evans, of course. While you were a pretend couple years ago, my intuitions tell me that you are not a fake one now. I'm very happy about it."

Father, you are overthinking... Natasha thought to herself. However, she hated to hurt the Grand Duke's feelings when they

were about to depart and therefore did not explain. In the meantime, she made up her mind to conceive with Lucien's bloodline.

"Don't think I know nothing. To whom have you been talking to for more than one hour every day over the past years?" Grand Duke of Orvarit suddenly felt that his daughter was not as emotionally keen as she claimed.

Natasha tried not to laugh. "That's because we are good friends. I never intended to hide it from you, or you wouldn't have known it at all."

"Alright, go pick your knights. Camil will go to Holm with you." Grand Duke of Orvarit decided to ask Camil to find an opportunity to 'remind' Natasha.

Natasha nodded his head. "Alright, I'll talk to you regularly after I reach Holm."

She began to make plans. "I'll bring John's family and give Lucien a surprise..."

.....

The transmission magic circle was opened in the Radiance Church and glowing.

It was one of the largest magic circles to provide reinforcements when the Congress of Magic attacked. Fifty knights could be teleported at once. Despite the fortune of the South Church, such magic circles were only deployed in Lance, Antiffler, Aalto, Rentato, and Hem.

In ivory light, Natasha, Camil, nine knights and their family, about forty people in total, appeared in the transmission magic circle. The ordinary people such as Joel were dizzy and gagging.

Of the nine knights, only John, a level-three grand knight, brought his whole family. The other knights thought that such trouble was unnecessary since they would return to Aalto in one year, and they only brought their wives and children.

"John, you can't go anywhere without your parents? Are you not grown yet?" Fenge, another grand knight, joked with him. He was John's friend and knew that John wouldn't be pissed by a few teasing words.

After weathering through the dizziness, John was in a hurry to take care of Joel, Elsa, and Elvin. He replied with a smile, "It's a rare opportunity to go abroad. Shouldn't we bring our parents and brothers to appreciate a different view? Also, wasn't it, Her Highness' notice that we must bring all family members?"

"I don't think so. Did you hear it right?" Fenge looked at Natasha in confusion.

At this moment, the maids from the Nekso Palace came over. They cleansed Natasha's hair, eyebrows, and other facial parts and donned a cape with the emblem of the Hoffenberg family outside of her ivory armor. That was a purple sigil enshrouded in clouds, with a sacred crown at the center that was next to a gold scepter and a blue longsword on two sides.

"Your Highness, please go to the Nekso Palace with your knights and return to the Radiance Church according to the marked route, where you will be crowned." Rex, president of the Parliament of Nobles, bowed respectfully.

Natasha said solemnly, "Please lead the way, Duke of Frenburg."

John and the other knights hurried to settle their families and leave the Radiance Church with Natasha, arriving at Nekso Palace.

It was late at night after a storm, damp and dark.

"Start!" Rex, who was leading the way, waved his arms.

A knight raised his horn and blew it hard.

Wu!

With the horns, four knights including John rushed out on their horses, followed by Natasha who rode on her horse majestically.

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The magic crystal lights in the manors were turned on, embracing the new sovereign like the stars in the sky.

"This is..." None of the knights had ever seen such splendor. They were rather shocked.

Wu!

Candles were lit by the houses next to the street. Countless people peeped at their new lord through their windows and door gaps.

Natasha suddenly grew nervous, because crowning required the illumination of the holy light. Could her faith pass the test?

She suddenly felt something. Tilting her head, she saw a black-haired man standing behind a window. His face and his unique monocle were so familiar.

She couldn't help but smile when she saw Lucien. What was there to be scared of if she had weathered through the hunting of legendary experts?

Did she not have sympathy, loyalty or bravery in her heart?

Therefore, Natasha pressed forward with her head held high, leaving a deep impression on the nobles and citizens of Holm.

As they passed through the streets, it was dawn when Natasha and her knights reached the Radiance Church. She was bathed by the first light of morning.

Getting off the horse and stepping into the Church, Natasha walked into the hall unhurriedly to the front of Grand Cardinal Sard, kneeling before the saint cross.

After questions and answers, she laid her left hand on the Cannon and raised her right hand, pointing at the sky with three fingers: "I, Natasha Violet, swear solemnly before the Lord.

"I am a devout believer of the Saint Truth, I will abide by the Cannon and the law of Holm and defend them with my life, and I shall always be ready to fight for the glory of the Lord and the interests of Holm until I die!"

Sard examined her faith with the book of Cannon in front of her.

With a peaceful mind, Natasha was interrogated by the holy light if she had ever broken her knight vow. When given a negative answer, the holy light glowed as if an angel had arrived.

Sard said gently, "You are a devout and determined believer; you are a brave and stubborn knight; you are qualified to be the sovereign of Holm."

While he talked, he took up the gold crown on the red velvet cushion nearby and put it on Natasha's head.

"I hereby announced that under the grace of the Lord, Natasha Violet is to become the Queen of the Kingdom of Holm and all the lands affiliated to it, the Protector of Faith, the Violet Countess, the Lord of Billbis Islands, the Lord of Soloho and Baltimore, the Duchess of Emden, the Lord of the Most Glorious Sword of Truth's Knights, the Most Magnificent Verdict Knights, and the Most Ancient and Honorable Saint Cross Knights."

Natasha raised her head with the crown and took over the symbolic 'Sword of Truth' that was glittering sacredly, allowing it to emit sharp brilliance.

Duke Rex, Duke Solefen, Duke James, Duke Russel, and all the other nobles fell to one of their knees: "Greetings, Your Majesty!"

Chapter 511: Discovery

The morning after the rain was particularly refreshing. The sun was not high yet but was warm and gentle.

The selected Dragon Scale horses, emitting silver grey brilliance, accommodated the proud knights to go to the Nekso Palace, galloping as gracefully as if dancing.

Behind them, Natasha accepted the tributes of her subjects with a gold crown and the 'Sword of Truth', followed by the nine dukes and other lower nobles.

After they reached the Nekso Palace, the nobles dispersed and went to the hall where the Parliament of Nobles was located, waiting for the queen to host her first meeting.

Natasha returned to the queen's house calmly and turned on a divine power circle, blocking the center of the Nekso Palace. Then, she took off her armor and changed into a black court dress under the help of Camil and two maids.

Hinting to the two maids to leave, Natasha finally revealed slight exhaustion. "That's a lot of pressure. I don't know who are my enemies, who are my friends, and who are supporters that I can win over. This place is too strange and depressing compared to Orvarit. I didn't even dare to speak when the divine power circle was not activated. Kritonia, 'Heart of Time', is the one responsible for the safety of the Nekso Palace and the entire Rentato."

It was obvious that she did not trust Kritonia.

"Actually, you don't need to come to inherit the throne. Holm is much more complicated than Orvarit. As an outsider who lacks concrete support, you can be involved in schemes and riots easily." Camil said a lot of things despite her usual coldness. "Whether you are inclined to the Congress of Magic, or the Church, or try to balance them, it will all be very troublesome."

Natasha said in a bitter smile, "I know it. Even if I collaborate with

the Church to strike the Congress of Magic, disregarding Granny Hathaway and the royal family of Holm, it may still not be enough to resist the Congress. They are expanding to fast. In order to contain them, we need both Holm and the help from Brianne, Colette and Calais. Also, it will raise objections and even the revolt of the liberals, which may result in the division of the kingdom, turning Holm into ruins."

"If I'm inclined to balance, the Church will definitely urge me, and I will have to consider that the Violet family and my father are at places where the Church is most powerful."

"Why did you make such an unwise choice if you knew it so clearly?" Camil blamed her.

Natasha shook her head and said ruthlessly, "What excuse did I have? If I state that I'm unwilling to assist the Church, it would be a betrayal of faith that will be punished by the Holy City, and the Violet family will be weakened openly and clandestinely. Therefore, when I heard the news, I thought that I might go to Holm someday, but not now. However, my father suggested that I come and let me know my mother's regrets."

"Since I couldn't find an excuse, and the blood of Hoffenberg runs in my body, I might as well shoulder the responsibility of Holm. I do not wish to see a civil war in Holm that transforms my mother's beloved hometown into hell. That's why I'm here."

"Besides, I am a devout believer, the leader of the Hoffenberg family and the Violet Countess. The Church should respect my will to some degree, just like before."

"Natasha, that was before. If the situation in Holm comes to a critical moment, the Church will never consider what you think but only ask you to sacrifice for the Lord." Camil found Natasha's plan too ideal.

Natasha smiled and said firmly, "If it is completely against my will, I would rather sacrifice myself. The Church cannot interfere with the power of the throne randomly. That's a deal the two parties reached before the Lord hundreds of years ago. If the Church

violates it, they will be heretics and raise all nobles' hostility."

Camil looked at Natasha and helped her clean her necklace. "What are you planning to do? What do you want Holm to become? What's your future direction?"

"Well, I don't know yet. I cannot make up my mind for now."
Natasha was more or less confused.

Camil looked at her solemnly, "Then, you'd better figure it out fast. Whether you are to lean towards the Congress of Magic or the Church, or to maintain balance, you have to make a decision soon. That's the only way to make preparations in advance."

She was referring to the Duchy of Orvarit.

"I understand. The principles of my administration must be settled soon in order to issue laws and eliminate opposition. However, that needs a much deeper understanding about the situation in Holm. Now, the only thing certain is that even the most liberal noble is unwilling to be eliminated by the Church and even the most conservative noble wouldn't want to return to the dominance of the royal power hundreds of years ago. That is, not considering people like Gordon who are completely devoted to the Church. So, I should try to maintain balance for the time being." Natasha nodded.

Then, she turned around and looked at the mirror. Touching the emblem of the Hoffenberg family, she said to herself, "Before that, I need to figure out my faith. What is the Lord to me in my heart? What's the relation between the Lord and the Church? Only by seeing through myself can I make future plans, advance into level eight and draw the Sword of Truth. Also, it's hard to tell what Grand Cardinal Sard thinks and wants..."

She did not tell the Grand Duke or Camil about the shaking of her faith. Besides Lucien, only Fernando and Lucien guessed a little from the projection of Mountain Paradise that Francis summoned.

"Alright, it's time to go to the Parliament of Nobles." Camil opened the gate.

Natasha looked at the mirror again. When she saw the fear and sorrow of the beautiful purple-haired girl inside, she suddenly thought of something else, "After I become the queen of Holm, I cannot go to the magic tower to visit Granny Hathaway, or check his unique magic tower and the Atom Institution that he mentioned a lot in Aalto. My every move will be interpreted by the malicious nobles. If I do those two things, it will be a sign that I'm inclined to the Congress of Magic."

"It's impossible for them to visit me under Kritonia's watch... While we are closer in distance, we are actually further from each other."

"I hope his new encryption algorithm can protect our communication..."

.....

In the hall of the Parliament of Nobles, Natasha stood on the podium and accepted the nobles' tributes again. Then she said concisely: "Now, I'm going to announce two things. Firstly, the whole country will mourn for a month as my grandfather and my uncle's funeral is prepared. In the meantime, the meetings in the Parliament of Nobles will be suspended, and all the orders and policies needed will be proposed to me."

Now that the king and the prince had both been summoned by the Lord, it was reasonable of Natasha to propose such a request. Therefore, none of the nobles had any objection.

Natasha went on, "Secondly, In light that I don't know much about the affairs of the kingdom yet, and based on my confidence in the policies that my grandfather and my uncle released, unless any unexpected and unprecedented event takes place, I will not approve any motion that changes current policies or ministers in the next six months. Please contribute to the prosperity of the kingdom just like before."

"What?" The nobles exclaimed in shock.

Rex stood up and objected, "Your Majesty, there are many problems in the kingdom that need to be addressed in time. Isn't it too

extreme that no motions will be approved?"

"Before my arrival, the kingdom has been growing prosperously thanks to the policies and the efforts of the ministers. Are they no longer applicable just because I am here? Will they turn from being helpful into poisonous in only six months?" Standing straight, Natasha asked back resolutely.

The nobles, who were used to the old King Feltis and the weak Prince Patrick, suddenly felt a lot of pressure.

"No, that is not what I mean. I'm only implying that they may not reflect the current situation." Rex defended himself. He did not want to be marked as someone who slandered the late king.

Count Henson, as the Minister of Finance, was relieved. His post seemed safe now. Therefore, he stood up and argued with Rex, "Her Majesty made it clear that, if anything unexpected happens, say, a certain minister proves to be guilty of a crime, then she will certainly replace him. But until then, carrying on the previous policies and personnel will help the kingdom pass the shock caused by the demise of the king and the prince. I agree with the proposal."

The winners in the past felt more or less regretful that they couldn't earn more, but they could live with it since their interests were not jeopardized. Therefore, both the conservatives and the liberals seconded it. How could anyone in the Parliament of Nobles not be a winner in the past?

"One more thing. I will bequeath estates and properties to the ten knights who came with me from the treasury of the royal family. If there are no objections, this meeting will be over. Let's prepare for the funeral." Natasha looked at the nobles.

It was not the nobles' place to comment on how the money of the royal family was spent. Therefore, they rose and bid the queen farewell.

After they went out, Camil looked at Natasha carefully. "Well done. It was redundant of the Grand Duke to ask me to watch over you."

She believed that Natasha had been well trained as the Violet Countess in the past ten years.

Natasha smiled at the garden up ahead. "There are abundant population and material resources in the new alternate dimensions. They will be the focus of the Church and the Congress. Therefore, I followed someone's advice and did things by not doing anything first."

What she did not mention was the other focus of the Congress, which was the mysteries of 'fission' and 'fusion' that Fernando and Hathaway were working on from the legendary magic models Lucien provided including 'Eternal Blaze'. Lucien couldn't explain the experiment phenomena, as it was based on the discovery and research on the particles such as neutrons. Therefore, he simply ascribed them to Alterna, claiming that he constructed the models by the power of the Silver Moon and the feedback of the world. As a result, the two grand arcanists had to completely dedicate themselves to the research. But of course, since there were magic models, it was still much easier than aimless explorations.

.....

In Allyn, Lucien stepped into the Atom Institution.

After Fernando confirmed the existence of nucleus by blowing gold foil with hydrogen particles and Lucien found neutrons by blowing nitrogen with the same particles, establishing his own alchemy system, the elemental sorcerers went crazy, and so did the sorcerers of other schools. More and more arcanists began to blow weird things with particles, hoping to find something. Therefore, Lucien saw quite a few more similar magic circles and alchemical devices in the Atom Institution, like the electromagnetic cyclotron he 'invented'.

"Master, you're back? We were hoping to find you!" Katrina and Layria exclaimed in delight.

"What's up?" Judging from their faces, Lucien could tell that it was a good thing. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

With a brilliant smile, Katrina said, "Master, we discovered an unusual phenomenon when we ran low-temperature experiments. When metals are lowered to a specific temperature, their electrical resistance will be gone!"

Chapter 512: Students Different Thoughts

Superconductivity? Lucien almost blurted out.

Before, when he asked Jerome, Annick, Katrina and Layria to run experiments on the changes of nature of different materials in low temperatures, Layria was mainly meant to create a vacuum with coal. He did not expect that they would discover superconductivity at all, because helium was not found yet, and there was no way to approach absolute zero. Later, he was so busy with other things that he forgot about their task.

After Jerome advanced into middle-rank and got his Holm Crown Ring, he filed an application to Lucien and changed the focus of his studies to X rays. So, his previous projects were given to Katrina and Layria.

However, Lucien merely regarded it as a potential supplement, and he asked the two girls to focus on the new alchemy, namely the particles in the elemental field. He did not expect that he would embrace a pleasant surprise today.

Holding in his emotions, Lucien asked in surprise, "The electrical resistance is gone?"

superconductivity, what a beautiful noun. Lucien couldn't help but think of the mag-lev technology, the large particle collider, the hope to strengthen his electromagnetic gun, and magnetics-restrained controllable fusion.

"If controllable fusion is achieved, the power source of Allyn will be better improved. Similar sky cities will no longer be restrained by energy. The legendary sorcerers will have one more standard item, which is a city that floats in the blue sky. Well, should I call it 'Sun Well' or 'Eternal Furnace', or maybe 'Evans Energy Core'?"

Lucien was woken up from his fantasy by Layria's delighted voice. "Yes, it is not gradually gone, but suddenly disappears when the temperature is lowered to a certain place!"

"What materials did you use? What was the temperature?" Lucien began to ask more carefully. Annick, Heidi, Sprint, Jerome and other people also came close. The two girls had been obviously overjoyed since a few days ago, but they didn't tell anything to their partners, so the other students were already filled with curiosity.

Calming down, Katrina said, "Master, since the helium you discovered lowered the minimally possible temperature, we were interested in the experiment again and tried many materials in our spare time. Half a month ago, when we studied the mercury in low temperatures, we discovered that its electrical resistance was suddenly gone when the temperature was lowered to 4.2 degrees from absolute zero. Later, we tried other metals such as lead and reached the same result, except that the temperatures were different."

"Yes, I never knew that electrical resistance could disappear!" Layria could not believe her discovery even to this moment.

Lucien listened carefully and asked them to repeat their experiment. He was gradually freed from his previous ecstasy, too. The superconductivity right now was still based on materials in an extremely low temperature, which meant that it was highly impractical. Despite the assistance of magic, it would be difficult to be applied in reality.

For example, if Lucien were to increase the power of his electromagnetic gun magic with the ultra-powerful magnetic field caused by superconductivity, he would not only have to combine the similar structures into it but also melt the parts in Snow Goddess' Whip where a low temperature could be created. As a result, the magic would be terribly difficult to achieve. Lucien estimated that it was at least legendary level. By the same logic, in order to achieve controllable fusion, he needed to be improved to Silver Moon Alterna's level.

Also, the relevant files in his spirit library had not been unlocked yet, so there was still a long way to go in the research of superconductivity. After the substantiation of his cognitive world, Lucien was already able to read the files on the special theory of relativity in the spirit library, part of them on the general theory of

relativity, and part on the quantum theory, but the more advanced and detailed files were still locked.

Lucien nodded in approval at the girls' demonstration. "Do you know the value of your research? It means that you will win a Silver Moon Medal. The sorcerers of the electromagnetics faction will crazily love you."

Jerome and others gasped, not expecting that Katrina and Layria could win a Silver Moon Medal.

Sprint, Heidi and Annick, on the other hand, were rather frustrated. They believed that Mr. Jerome deserved a Holm Crown prize, which was a reward for his devotion and persistence. When the man became a sorcerer, they hadn't even known what magic was yet, so there was nothing to be jealous about. However, now that some of their classmates were going to win the highest honor in electromagnetics, they felt rather complicated.

Katrina and Layria blushed and couldn't say anything in their excitement. It was not until a long time later that Katrina said, "Master, we knew that the research was very valuable, but we did not expect we would be awarded for it. Right, this is our paper. Could you see if there's anything wrong? If not, would you please sign your name?"

It was a project of the Atom Institution. Lucien couldn't break the rules. He browsed through the paper, checked the data, and signed his name, before he gave it back to the girls and said, "You should also sign your names. As second-circle sorcerers, you are qualified to share the honor."

Lucien smiled at Katrina and Layria whose hands were shaking. "You are waiting for me to come back before you publish it?"

"Of course. This is your research. You are undoubtedly the lead author. Also, being praised by you is more exciting for us than being given a Silver Moon Medal." Said Layria delightedly.

Lucien chuckled in a good mood. "Submit it in the Sorcerer Administrative Department later. However, you must not go easy on

your following research, and you should try to find materials with superconductivity in normal temperature. Right, you need to work on particles, too. Don't stray from the path you choose."

"Understood!" The girls replied with their heads held high, apparently overjoyed.

Suddenly, Katrina thought of something else and asked, "Master, when we discovered superconductivity, a very incomplete model appeared in our cognitive world. It was even more incomplete than the feedback you described. It's absolutely impossible to complete the model. Why is that?"

"Of course it is incomplete. Have you figured out the nature of superconductivity and understood why it only appeared at a low temperature?" Lucien patted their shoulder with a smile, "If you cannot complete it for now, you can improve other electromagnetic magics based on it to improve their power or lower their difficulty."

Layria hurried to ask, "Master, can we ask you questions about improving magics? We don't have any experience in that."

Although they learnt the basics in school, they had been working in the Atom Institution since graduation and never needed to improve any magic. Therefore, they asked for their teacher's help subconsciously.

"I'm your teacher. You are free to ask me any questions." Lucien nodded. He was rather curious about their incomplete model, too, and hoped to improve the power of his electromagnetic gun with it.

Receiving an affirmative reply from their teacher, Katrina and Layria went to the Sorcerer Administrative Department joyfully. Lucien, on the other hand, looked back at Annick, Sprint, Heidi and Chelly. Sensing their complicated feelings, he asked with a smile, "Very envious and jealous?"

As if stung in the back, Sprint suddenly stood straight and raised his head, "Not at all! I will definitely earn the highest honors of different fields just like you, master."

"Well, I'm indeed a bit jealous. I'm going to teach them a lesson tonight. They kept it from me for such a long time!" Heidi admitted it rather frankly.

She tried to cover her real feelings with a joke, but her smile was still rather awkward.

Annick scratched his head. "Sort of. However, I'm quite satisfied with my research about particles. According to Mr. Lazar, Mr. Jerome and Mr. Rock, it's a world full of treasures, and whether or not I find anything depends on my efforts. I believe that I will achieve something in the future."

He was only slightly more talkative in front of Lucien and his fellows in the Atom Institution.

"I envy them, but my studies on that are still shallow. It's perfectly normal that Katrina is ahead of me." Chelly, who came one year later, was rather cool about it, but she appeared to be bothered by other problems.

Lucien saw it but did not ask. He simply said, "I have just returned from an alternate dimension. Who can tell me the latest studies on arcana and magics in the past two months?"

Jerome replied, "After your New Alchemy was published, all the sorcerers in the Congress of Magic went mad! It touched the field of the Creator! Therefore, regardless of their faction, as long as they knew part of elemental magics, they were all working on your 'new alchemy' and the particles, even including the arcanists who had distinguished achievements in their fields."

"On the other hand, the war between the particle theory and the wave theory has entered a predicament. The former cannot explain light quantum, and the latter cannot explain the classic double-slit experiment. Hehe. The sorcerers of the two factions are both conducting relevant explorations, hoping to defeat the enemy."

Heidi shook her head at the stubborn supporters of the wave theory. However, it was true that the confirmation of light quantum hypothesis could not completely invalidate the wave theory,

because many phenomena were still inexplicable. Those sorcerers, living through their panic, picked up classic experiments as their weapons again.

The supporters of the particle theory, on the other hand, had made a gratifying comeback and was on par with the supporters of the wave theory now.

Annick added, "According to the journals in the past two months, many arcanists were trying to explain President Douglas' experiment from the perspective of the wave theory."

Lucien nodded at that. He planned to write a paper that copied the Lorentz transformation to explain President Douglas' experience, so that his teacher could be mentally prepared for the special theory of relativity that he was going to submit to his teacher later.

"Alright, I basically get it now. There is no need for you to envy Katrina and Layria. They deserve the honor because they persisted in the experiments on the materials in the super-low temperatures. You, on the other hand, are faced with a boundless world of particles where infinite mysteries lie. What you can get is solely up to yourselves."

"Is there anything you want to ask me? If not, I'm going to Rentato."

Annick and Sprint raised their hands when other people shook their heads. "Master, I have one question."

"What is it?" Lucien raised his eyebrow.

Annick and Sprint looked at each other and asked boldly, "Our question is the same. Master, theoretically speaking, your cyclotron should improve the energy of particles infinitely as long as the space is large enough, but why were the cycles of the particles changing and breaking away from the acceleration field of the cyclotron in the end? Should the cycles only be concerned with electric charge, mass and intensity of the magnetic field? None of the factors changed, and the particles were only sped up!"

Lucien frowned. He could not tell them that it was the relativistic

effect, right? The faster an object is, the greater its mass would be... In physics, the Lorentz transformations is a one-parameter family of linear transformations from a coordinate frame in spacetime to another frame that moves at a constant velocity (the parameter) relative to the former.

Chapter 513: Inside and Outside the House

Chapter 513: Inside and Outside the House

Thinking for a moment, Lucien asked, “As the speed and energy of particles are improved, the radius of their tract will grow accordingly. However, the capacity of the cyclotron is limited. In order to break the boundary, you will have to either expand the capacity with space-related magics, or build a particularly huge cyclotron, setting a radius of ten kilometers.”

If they were not clear about the problem, Lucien intended to fool them with this excuse for now.

“Master, that’s not what we meant,” said Sprint in a hurry, “Based on the specifications of the cyclotron in the institution, we calculated the theoretical particle energy we can reach, but it was quite different from reality. The particles deviated from the acceleration field much earlier than it was accelerated to that level. It was obvious that the orbits and the frequency of electrical field changes were in conflict, which was odd. Just like Annick said, shouldn’t the orbits only be concerned with an electric charge, mass and intensity of the magnetic field?”

Annick added, “We intended to adjust the frequency of the electrical field changes to adapt to the changes in the orbits, so that the particle energy could be better improved. However, we lacked the corresponding knowledge to calculate the new orbits. So, we are hoping that master could tell us whether you discovered the phenomenon when you invented the cyclotron, and whether you could point out the source of our problem.”

It seemed that they had indeed found a problem. Lucien nodded softly, “Annick is a very prudent man. Now that you dare to raise it, it means that it is a real phenomenon that has been repetitively tested. However, I was forced to enter the alternate dimension after I devised the cyclotron, and I haven’t run any experiments with it. I cannot think of an explanation just yet. Therefore, we need to work

on the problem together.”

“The formulas regarding the movement of particles in the magnetic field and the electric field seem alright. They have been proved in the early phase, too. So, we need to find out the different conditions that caused the problem.”

“The speed was fast.” Heidi interrupted. She had heard a lot about the problem from Annick and Sprint.

Sprint thought and said, “The energy was improved, and the radius of the tract grew larger.”

Lucien waved his hands. “The essence of the latter is the increase in speed. Considering the different conditions of the two phases of the experiment, does it suggest that the formulas are no longer applicable, or that the other specifications of the particles, such as electric charge and mass, will change, in high speed or high energy?”

Lucien already held back his surprise. He intended to raise the consideration of the arcanists, so that they would be mentally prepared for the special theory of relativity later.

“Hehe, how is it possible? The faster, and the larger the mass the more the electric charge will be?” Heidi grimaced. How could the improvement of speed change mass, the in-built nature of an object?”

Sprint and Annick looked the same. They believed that part of energy was transformed into electricity in the high energy state. For them, even if the formulas were not applicable in the high speed state, they were worth studying more than the joke that the mass had grown larger.

“There’s still some time until the end of the month. You will work on the question and write a paper. I’ll ask Mr. Drummond to publish it on ‘Arcana’.” Lucien ended the topic and asked about the studies of Jerome and the other people.

However, it had been only two months. It was already impressive of

the Atom Institution to discover ‘superconductivity’ and ‘relativistic effect’. Naturally, no significant breakthroughs were made in other experiments, although Jerome did dig into the nature and usage of X rays, discovering that it could be a chronic curse when energy was increased.

After inspecting the Atom Institution, Lucien returned to Rentato on the magic steam train, waiting for the evening.

.....

Tall, strong, gold-haired, and handsome, John was well observed by the maids when he patrolled in the Nekso Palace.

“John, your time is up. Time for me to patrol.” Fenge came to replace John when the night fell. Natasha had deployed the knights who followed her to Holm to different key locations in the Nekso Palace. “It will be your turn to supervise the interrogation room of the Nekso Palace. Don’t be captivated by the beautiful girls of Holm and forget that.”

John patted Fenge’s shoulder in a smile, “Do you think I’m like you? Alright, I’ll bring my family to the villa and settle them down first.”

John found Joel, Elsa and Elvin in a room in the Nekso Palace. Led by a maid, the four of them went to the villa that Natasha offered to them.

“The architectural style is vintage and graceful, obviously different from Aalto.” Joel observed his family’s villa in a great mood, not upset by the separation from his homeland. He was too focused on appreciating the exotic landscape of the foreign land.

Not an artist as Joel was, Elsa observed the environment and said in satisfaction, “As expected of a villa granted by the royal family. It’s much better than our house.”

Passing through the blooming garden and reaching the gate, the maid brought out a bronze key rather shyly and opened the gate. Then, she pressed the wall skillfully. After a crack, the hall was

ablaze with light. The crystals glittered brilliantly, driving away the darkness.

The view deeply astounded Joel, Elsa and the rest of them. Their own hall was as bright as day, splendid and dazzling, like nightless Mountain Paradise in the Cannon.

Noticing their shock, the maid said proudly, "Lord Baron, they are the crystal electric lamps that can only be seen in Holm. They are powered by the electric current transmitted from the river far away. It's very easy to use them. All you need to do is to press the switch."

As a maid of the royal family, she represented the queen. So, she could not call them magic lights, like the ordinary people did, but have to call them by their official name.

Pointing at the row of switches next to the gate, the maid showed the newcomers how to use them.

As the crystal lamps were lit one after another, stars seemed to be glittering in the villa splendidly. John, Joel, Elsa and Elvin were so dazzled that they thought they were in a dream.

"Unbelievable. I'm already falling in love with this place." Elvin, who had been an adult for a while, had the curiosity of a young person. He was thinking how to brag about this to his friends after he went back.

The maid led the few of them into the hall. Pointing at the bar near the dining room, she said, "The orange wall there can be opened. The lower part is to store wine and food, while the upper floor creates ice. If you put the ice into wine, you will enjoy a unique flavor and forget the heat of summer."

While talking, she opened the magic refrigerator that had been built into a wall. "There's also a wine cellar in the basement of the villa. They are both powered by electricity. Ordinary people are free to use them, too."

She was talking to Joel and Elsa.

"Oh, so cool! The ice cellar is a bumpkin compared to this!" Elvin

praised and took out a bottle of wine with ice, feeling the heat of summer dispersing.

“What’s this?” John calmed down and asked, deep in thought.

The maid smiled, “The inventor has named it ‘refrigerator’. They are expensive and cannot be manufactured yet. For now, you are the only ones who can enjoy them besides Her Majesty and a few great nobles.”

“By ‘you’, do you mean all the knights who come with the queen?” John asked, pretending to be casual.

The maid smiled but didn’t reply. She continued to show them the villa and introduced the novel objects here, showing, the silver boxes hanging in every corner of the house.

What surprised Joel and Elsa was that those boxes would blow out wind of different temperatures and create coolness as long as the buttons on the wall were pressed.

Before they finished their tour, something began to ring loudly.

“What’s this? John and Elvin asked the maid while they looked at the iron ‘monster’ on the table that was marked with numbers.

The maid hinted for him to pick up the bar-shaped object with a smile. “It should be for you, Lord Baron.”

John picked up the object in confusion and heard Fenge’s laughter before it reached his ear. “John, is that you?”

“Yes, it’s me. Fenge, what’s this about?” John asked in ignorance.

Fenge replied with great satisfaction. “This is Holm’s unique wire phone that supports remote, direct communication. What a marvelous object! If anything goes wrong, I’ll be able to inform you immediately.”

He seemed to be receiving the same introduction on the other side of the line.

“Most of the nobles and merchants in Rentato have such phones. The contact list is over there. You can dial and call them if you need anything.” The maid pointed at a notebook next to the ‘phone’ in a smile.

“Alright.” John needed to sort through his mind after seeing so many inventions at once.

After introducing the servants, the maid of the royal family left. The house became quiet again.

They should all be simplified magic objects. Were they made by him? John considered. When he raised his head, he saw suspicion in Joel’s eyes, too.

Suddenly, Elsa said in a low voice, “This is Holm. Do you think Evans is around?”

“What if he is? Can we even meet him? The queen has just been crowned by the Church. Besides, we sold him out once before...” Joel said somewhat bitterly.

Hearing his words, Elsa’s eyes turned red, and she couldn’t say anything.

John, on the other hand, fell silent and sighed.

Elvin, who hadn’t activated his bloodline, was not bothered. “We were doing what Brother Evans told us to do. Besides, magic items are everywhere in Holm. The sorcerers must be very close to the nobles.”

While saying, he adjusted the frequency of the radio he found.

“Don’t care about what other nobles do. As outsiders, we do not have support. We need to consider Her Majesty’s reputation.” John said thoughtfully.

Suddenly, a voice as refreshing as that of a lark echoed from the radio. “... Mr. Lucien Evans, a member of the Arcana Review Board, has returned from the alternate dimension safe and sound. He condemned certain extremists of the Hand of Paleness for their

stubbornness and the rumors that they instigated the Necromancy sorcerers who were unaware of the truth to spread out. Such rumors, as twisted facts, are a slander for himself and the Congress. He calls for everyone to be united around the Highest Council that is centered at President Douglas.”

“What happened exactly? Allow us to replay the story for you...”

“A member of the Arcana Review Board...” John repeated the title.

Joel and Elsa murmured, “Lucien Evans...”

Outside the villa, the lamps went on one after another. In their shadow, Lucien stared at the bright window with his hands in his pockets, wondering if he should go in and meet Uncle Joel in such a situation.

Hu. After a soft sigh, Lucien turned around and slowly walked to the royal magic tower of Holm.

Chapter 514: Anomaly at Nigh

The royal magic tower of Holm was in the district of the nobles. It didn't take long for Lucien to arrive at the gate. He took off his mask and entered the tower after passing the examination.

The night was getting dark, but the magic tower was more lively than any of Lucien previous visits. Since the queen was from the City of Psalm, it remained to be seen whether the attitude towards sorcerers would be changed. Therefore, for their safety, some of the sorcerers living in Rentato brought their family to Allyn, and some hid in the royal magic tower of Holm.

It was right after dinner. Sorcerers in groups of twos or threes were roaming or discussing in the hall. The merry laughter of children could be heard now and then.

Rebeca was talking with a few sorcerers of the Will of Elements about the most popular 'new alchemy system', when she saw a young man in a high hat walking in through the gate. Her eyes were suddenly frozen, and she exclaimed in both panic and shock, "Good evening, Mr. Evans."

All the sound in the hall was gone. Everybody shifted their eyes to Lucien and greeted him one after another, Good evening, Mr. Evans."

They were so respectful that they did not seem to be facing a young sorcerer no older than 25, but one of the legendary bigshots.

Lucien keenly sensed the attitude change of the sorcerers of the Will of Elements and the branch of Holm. Those sorcerers respected and envied him in the past, but they revered and worshiped him right now, as if he were a grand arcanist or a legendary sorcerer.

Was it because of the new alchemy?

Looking at the lady who greeted him first, Lucien nodded and said, "It's been a while, Rebeca."

Her 'mistake' allowed Lucien to take part in the annual meeting of elements and alchemy, where his paper on the periodic table was approved by Raventi. Therefore, Lucien remembered her very well. Besides, she was very close to Lazar, who talked about her all the time. Chances were that she would become Mrs. Lazar soon.

"You—You still remember me, Mr. Evans?" Rebeca asked in surprise and delight.

Lucien pointed at his head with a smile, "I always have a good memory. Besides, Lazar mentions you all the time."

"I wonder when he is coming back." Rebeca said with some worry.

After the small talk, Lucien bid her farewell with a smile and went to the upper floor.

The other sorcerers crowded after he disappeared into the lift and quacked: "Rebeca, you know Mr. Evans so well?"

"I have many questions and considerations regarding the new alchemy. Could you forward them to Mr. Evans for me?"

"Can you ask Mr. Evans whether more sorcerers are needed in the Atom Institution?"

Rebeca suddenly felt that time was really flying. She first heard Lucien Evans' name because her love for the Symphony of Fate and the great musician. Then, she learnt from Lazar that a genius arcanist had appeared whose very first paper had been highly praised. After only eight years, the quiet young man had created one record after another and was about to reach the summit of arcana to appreciate the landscape of the height with the few grand arcanists.

However, she was not jealous of him, because the gap between her and the terrifying arcanist who had been coming up with revolutionary theories was too large for any jealousy. She could only feel helplessness and admiration.

Also, the new alchemy was different from Lucien's previous achievements, which were only confirmed and accepted after

suspicion and disputes. It had been regarded as the spark of wisdom that would illuminate the new world since it was born. Most of the sorcerers were crazy about it.

They all understood that 'new alchemy' was essentially different from the previous 'alchemy', in that it was more of an internal model of atoms and a system that was built on such a model and depicted the changes of elements. 'Alchemy' was just additional knowledge; the mysteries of the microworld were its main content.

It was very important for the sorcerers who explored arduously in the depths and darkness of the microworld. From this moment on, the exploration in the field was no longer blind. It's like stars shining in a dark night, or a lighthouse that the ships in a storm finally saw.

Of course, they knew that a lot of problems regarding 'new alchemy' were yet to be addressed, but it had undoubtedly opened the gate of creation. Lucien would become a grand arcanist because of it someday!

"Perhaps one day, we will be able to change matter freely." A sorcerer said with sincere delight.

Another sorcerer looked at the lift and remarked with admiration, "When that day comes, Mr. Evans will definitely be one of the most dazzling names in the history of magic."

...

The new alternate dimensions were still being developed. The archmages and senior-rank sorcerers including Raventi mostly hadn't come back. Lucien entered his office and looked at the Nekso Palace that looked like a galaxy on earth through the window. Then, he turned on his 'communication glass'.

"... Hello, Lucien?" Natasha sounded exhausted.

Her earrings had been modified by Lucien, allowing her to hear the encrypted voice.

Lucien said with a smile, "Good evening, Your Majesty. Are you

reading the files of the intelligence department and the secret library?"

The reason why he spoke to Natasha from the royal magic tower of Holm was because he did not want to expose himself.

While there was no way that Sard or Kritonia could've cracked his encryption algorithm, they could detect the source of electromagnetic waves that they perceived. If he were to contact Natasha from Allyn, it would raise suspicion about his real relationship with her, but if he was in the royal magic tower of Holm, it would mislead people into thinking that he was Hathaway, as it was perfectly normal for a senior to care for a junior.

"Yes, although you told me a lot about Holm in the past years, it was broken and unsystematic. I need to grasp it more deeply and comprehensively." Natasha then chuckled and said, "As the queen's loyal knight, Count Lucien Evans, what do you suggest?"

Radiant knights were usually given titles of viscount or count. So, senior-rank sorcerers could enjoy the same privilege.

Lucien said with a smile, "Meet the great nobles, the powerful nobles and the nobles in charge of critical positions one by one. Talk to them and find people whom you can trust and depend on. As the queen, you have the natural right to command them. There's nothing to worry about. Right. After the funeral, start to inspect the Sword of Truth's Knights, the Verdict Knights and the Saint Cross Knights. Regroup part of the squads. Of course, most importantly of all, you need to improve yourself. The sooner you reach level eight and pick up the level-three Sword of Truth, the easier it will be for you to take initiative of the situation."

"But who can I trust and depend on?" Natasha said in a self-mocking smile.

Lucien comforted her, "You need to know your heart and your faith first. If you don't know what you want, you can never tell enemies from friends. Although you can intensify the conflict between the liberals and the conservatives and maintain the balance, it will not last. After all, the conservatives are backed by the Church, and the

liberals are supported by the Congress."

Instead of waiting for Natasha to reply, Lucien decided to stimulate her faith. "According to the news from the Congress, the prince may have been murdered."

"What? By whom?" While Natasha thought that the deaths of her grandfather and her uncle were coincidental, they had been on the verge of death in the first place, and it was still acceptable. But hearing what Lucien said, she was more than shocked and infuriated.

"We suspect that Kritonia, 'Heart of Time', did it. Only his abilities to control time could've make the prince die of grief flawlessly. At that time, Sard and Rex were both in the Nekso Palace." Lucien was sorry for Natasha but still finished brutally.

Natasha took deep breaths. "Are you saying that the Church and part of the conservatives planned it? What proof do you have?"

"There is no direct proof. What can be confirmed is as follows: Sard, Rex and Kritonia were all in the Nekso Palace back then, which can be proved by many nobles and maids; also, Her Excellency Hathaway examined Prince Patrick before the new year and believed that he could live for another five to six years; the liberals including Duke James proved that the prince and the king were as indifferent with each other as enemies. How could he have been grieving? You must know a thing or two about them." Lucien introduced the intelligence he collected in the past day.

After a long silence, Natasha said hoarsely, "I'll bid farewell to my uncle's body in the funeral. I wonder if I can find anything..."

Her voice sounded lost and overwhelmed, which pained Lucien. Knowing that he went too far, he hurried to rectify it, "Even though it was done by the Church, it does not mean anything. The God of Truth lies in everyone's heart, and everyone can pray to Him directly. The Church, on the other hand, is just an organization that tries to separate the believers from the Lord. It may be righteous, and it may be evil."

"Just review your path as a knight and consider what is it that you have been persisting in. Are you going to defend the glory of the God of Truth, or that of the Church?"

"Of course I'm defending the Lord. But if the Church is abandoned, how can we organize the rituals and praise the Lord?" Natasha was trapped by the details.

Lucien said with a smile, "The Church is a tool between the believers and God. If it is no longer necessary, just throw it away. If it is still useful, you can modify and make it suit you. There's no need to cling to the South Church."

"Wait, wait, wait. I need to sort through my faith." The fact that Prince Patrick could've been murdered by the Church was quite a shock to Natasha.

...

Under the night sky, Juliana, who was summoned from Aalto, spoke to a few night watchers next to her in an enchanting tone, "The Church is weak, the nobles are arrogant, and the glory of the Lord has been severely tarnished. Therefore, we will purge the unqualified believers as per the will of the Lord."

She pointed at a villa not far away. "Baron Austin is a corrupt man who is inclined to the sorcerers. According to his servants, he listens to 'Arcana Voice' every day. Our purpose is to clean him and defend the glory of the Lord, but we will probably be punished by the Church. Are you willing to do that?"

"Night gathers, and now my watch begins..."

Chapter 515: Sard's Apology

Chapter 515: Sard's Apology

In the living room on the second floor of the villa, Baron Austin was listening to the sweet voice of Ms. Nightingale attentively in his pajamas.

Since it was inappropriate to go to his mistress during the time of a national funeral, he could only kill time by listening to 'Arcana Voice'. Also, he found many programs in the channel very interesting, sometimes even more interesting than spending time with his mistress.

In Holm, except for the most conservative nobles and believers, it was a fashion to listen to the forbidden music radio station. The content in it was the topic in many parties of the liberals. Whoever did not listen to it would be considered outdated and rejected by their circle.

"... From today on, the program will change slightly. Next, you will hear 'Holm Observation' that is hosted by me. It will inform you of the major events in the kingdom."

"... I believe our dear audience have learnt that the beloved, respected Prince Patrick followed King Feltis due to grief after the king passed away. However, what about the process and the details? This program will direct you towards the truth behind the case."

Austin had been leaning against the sofa casually, but he sat straight and became solemn after hearing the introduction.

Holm Observation's exploration on the matter was still in the phase of unproven speculations. It interviewed random eyewitnesses to prove that Prince Patrick was in good health during the few days prior and couldn't have collapsed all of a sudden.

Although Nightingale did not say it outright, she was clearly insinuating that the Church did not like the prince for his favor of

magic and alchemy. Anyone could infer from her words that the Church had assassinated the prince.

Austin gasped hard. He recalled what the liberals in the Parliament of Nobles said. The more he thought, the more suspicious he became. A week ago, the prince had just hosted a gathering of the liberals. His body condition was exactly like before, and he was in such a terrible relationship with the king. How could he have died from grief?

"They are bold enough to kill the crown prince..." Austin put the wine cup back on the table and began to pace.

When his back was faced to the window, two shadows lunged in and attacked him who was only in the level of regular knight easily.

"Who are you? How dare you attack a noble... Night watchers?" Austin saw the black gloves that the two men wore. "You are bold enough to arrest a noble directly? You are breaking the agreement between the Church and the nobles!"

Juliana flew in from the window and looked at Austin coldly, "The Church is too weak. Only we can defend the glory of the Lord."

"Are you going to divide the nobles and the Church, weaken the Church, and make it impossible for the glory of the Lord to spread?" Austin was not an idiot. He realized that he had encountered one of those zealous, extreme night watchers. Therefore, he simply suggested that their doing was on the contrary of their purpose.

"The Lord is almighty. He did not stop you because it is a test for us. If purging the nobles who have been inclined to the sorcerers like you raises the objection of the nobles of Holm, it will mean that they are all corrupt and beyond rescue. The throne must kneel before the Lord." Juliana loathed sorcerers from the bottom of her heart. She extended her hand coldly and pressed Austin's forehead. "Repent in hell!"

"How dare you..." Holy light glowed, and Austin's head was pierced through. The blood was all vaporized. Even the rug was not stained.

Juliane put her left hand on her right hand and said, “Write down why we purged him and what he committed, submit it to the inquisition, and forward it to the Parliament of Nobles.”

“We punish sinners as representatives of the will of the Lord; we do not hide.”

“Understood!” The other night watchers echoed simultaneously.

...

Inside the royal magic tower of Holm, Lucien reminded Natasha in the end. “Be wary of Sard. There’s no telling what he is up to.”

“If he is really influenced by the World of Souls, like the pontiff and the saints in the North Church, his purpose may be to separate the five parishes here from the Church and to make himself the pontiff...” Since she hadn’t figured out her stance yet, she was not sure whether it was a good or bad result.

Lucien shook his head. “Don’t blindly refer to history. Sard is too sophisticated for that. After all, the South Church cannot stand yet another division. Besides, he has been in office for only two months. I fear that he hasn’t even won the cardinal of the Holm parish yet. What can he use to create division? Not to mention that there are parishes defended by other saint cardinals. Therefore, don’t be fooled by his recent performance.”

Natasha said softly, “All in all, I’ll try to find out his purpose. You’d better be careful, too, because you are the easiest one to deal with among the high-ranking experts on the Cleansing List.”

“Rest assured about that. I have the Congus Ring with me.” Lucien looked at the iron ring on his left hand.

Because his left hand would nullify the supernatural powers, Lucien had moved the Holm Crown Rings to his right hand and only kept the legendary ring that remained unaffected on his left hand.

“Okay, everyone knows that you have a legendary item!” Natasha pretended to be jealous. “After I sort through my heart and advance into level eight, I will have one, too! I’ll also bring the Shield of

Truth over. In that case, I'll have the strongest defense and the strongest attack. Haha!"

She did not want Lucien to end the call depressed and therefore made fun of him.

...

When it was dawn, Duke Rex, president of the Parliament of Nobles, flew to the Radiance Church gloomily.

"Your Excellency Saint Sard, I need an explanation. Why did the night watchers eliminate a baron and official knight without the approval of Her Majesty and the Parliament of Nobles?" Rex spoke to Sard in the library angrily, "It will dishearten all the nobles? How can they trust the Church and contribute to it later?"

Sard replied peacefully, "I only just learnt of the matter. I'll ask the inquisition to deal with the few night watchers. An explanation will be given. Rex, you know that there are a lot of extremists among the night watchers. You cannot let the friendship between the nobles and the Church be sabotaged by a few rabid dogs, right?"

Rex was more or less appeased by Sard's attitude. "If it was the personal operation of few night watchers, and they are punished rigorously, I'm confident to pacify the nobles who favor the Church, but it's hard to say the nobles who favor the Congress of Magic. Also, the queen will reject the Church and us if she runs into such things when she is just crowned. I hope that Your Excellency Saint Sard can control the Church well in case of other extreme cases."

"I'll try to get the Holm parish under control in two years. In the meantime, I hope that nobles can pay attention to what they say and do and inform me in time if they are noticed by the extremists of the Church." Sard replied friendly, "Right, write the nobles' reactions to the matter into a document. I'll report it to the pope. In any case, the extremists are devout night watchers. The pope has to approve it before they are punished."

Rex nodded. "Alright, I'll have someone write it. Now, I'm going to the Nekso Palace and explain it to the queen face to face, in fact she

is infuriated by the incident.”

Watching Rex leave, Sard picked up the paper on the desk, which was the list of the few rogue night watchers.

Reading it with a smile, Sard brushed it with his thumb, and Juliana’s name was immediately gone. Then, he picked up his quill and wrote, “... Because of the long suppression from the Congress of Magic and the consecutive holy light cases, many extremists have appeared in the clergy and night watchers in the Holm parish. Some of them believe that they have to eliminate the blasphemers within us to be united against the Congress of Magic. Some are similar to them. They believe that the Church is too weak and the nobles are too arrogant. Only by being radical can they wake up the numb people.

While others doubt the necessity to resist the Congress of Magic and believe that we can live in peace if we both make compromises.”

“The incident this time was caused by the second type of extremists. I admit that my control over the parish is not good enough. I ask Your Holiness to send my previous assistants, Vera Amelton and other people from the Violet parish, to help me, so that I can settle down the issue and contain the extremists, and the nobles will not be pushed to the side of the Congress of Magic again.”

“As for the punishment, I believe Octave, the cardinal in charge of the inquisition of the parish, holds full responsibility for the matter. Cardinal Amelton will replace him. However, in light of the complexities in the parish, he will still serve here...”

...

Reading the document submitted by the night watchers and listening to Rex’s defense, Natasha was emotionless.

It was not until he spoke of the Church’s decision that Natasha nodded and said, “Extreme lunatics are everywhere. The relation between nobles and the Church is not to be affected by them. I believe that most nobles will accept it as long as the Church shows sincerity.”

Rex was relieved. It was indeed as expected of a queen from the City of Psalm to be inclined to the Church. “It’s very wise of you, Your Majesty.”

Right when he was about to leave, Natasha suddenly asked, “According to the night watchers’ report, Baron Austin was listening to ‘Arcana Voice’ when he was arrested and executed, and the radio station was playing the content that implied Duke Rex assassinated my uncle Patrick. What’s your take on that?”

“It is without a doubt the slander of the Congress of Magic that tries to sow discord between Your Majesty and the Church! They do not have any proof. It’s just random talk.” Rex defended himself solemnly.

Natasha raised her eyebrow. “You listened to the program?”

“The intelligence workers listened and reported the content to me.” Rex explained.

Natasha nodded and didn’t pursue it further. “Submit the intelligence to me earlier next time.”

It was not until then that Rex realized he had misspoken. He hurried to say, “Because you were occupied by too many affairs recently, Your Majesty, I filtered the intelligence first and only submitted the important information. In the future, it will be directly submitted to you.”

“It’s alright. I understand your kindness. You may leave now.” Natasha asked Rex to leave, as casual as before.

It was not until Rex was out of the palace that Natasha suddenly turned solemn.

...

Lucien reached the 33rd floor of Allyn magic tower through a lift and entered ‘Thunder Hell’, Fernando’s demiplane, through the Portal to Alternate Realm in the library.

Fernando’s hair was more or less messy. It seemed that reverse

engineering of fusion and fission was more difficult than Lucien imagined when a lot of knowledge and discoveries were missing.

“Right on time. Describe your feelings when you performed ‘Eternal Blaze’ again.” Fernando raised his bloodshot eyes and looked at Lucien. Then, his face became rather complicated, “You have new papers again?”

Lucien was holding a pile of papers in his hands.

Chapter 516: Suppor

Chapter 516: Support

Lucien could feel his teacher's complex feelings. He handed his papers over and said, "There's nothing subversive in it. It's just trying to explain Mr. Douglas's experiment on light speed and the related correlation. It shares some similarities with the previous assumptions put forward by several arcanists."

Lorentz Transformation. That was what Lucien prepared for his teacher to get him mentally prepared.

Fernando still felt quite suspicious, but he took the paper anyway and started reading. As he read further, the look on Fernando's face changed greatly.

Lucien could not help asking, "Sir, is it alright?"

Fernando grinned, "This is the second time this month that I read something like this."

Lucien was a bit surprised, "Someone submitted a similar paper already? But, I didn't find anything similar when I searched among the files in Arcana Review Board. I wouldn't bring it to you if I knew..."

Fernando temporarily put aside all his questions about fusion and fission and looked more cheerful now than he usually was, "I know, because he hasn't submitted it yet. He dared not. He brought it to me and asked my personal opinion."

"Who is he?" asked Lucien curiously. He was actually not too surprised since the data from the light speed experiment had been available for more than three years, and many wave theory supporters were trying to use the data to support their belief. It was not a big leap forward if an arcanist had found something like Lorentz Transformation.

Although the sorcerers in this world were experiencing lots of

turnovers because they still had a lot to explore, when it came to sheer thinking, they were good.

“It was Oliver. Three years ago, he had a bet with Florencia, and he started working on it since then. His project was delayed because of the exploration of the new dimension, and he finally finished putting together the whole transformational equation group. His paper’s saying that, using Ether as the observer, moving length contraction happens to compensate for the difference in light speed in all directions, which explains Douglas’s experiment. I suppose your paper is about the same thing, right?”

Fernando just finished reading the introduction of Lucien’s paper. He assumed that Lucien’s paper was the same.

Lucien nodded, “Yes, but why did Mr. Oliver not submit it?”

Although Oliver was studying the Dark Dragon Lord, he should still be able to have his wife, Florencia, or his students submit the paper.

“Because he believed that there were still things, important things, missing, and he couldn’t explain why the phenomenon exists. He then got a new direction to go in, but the reasoning couldn’t go further. So he was kind of stuck, which was why he came to me.” said Fernando.

“So what’s your opinion, sir?” Lucien asked.

Fernando smacked his lips and said, “I told him that his thinking wasn’t clear enough yet. He was still swinging from one side to the other. But I also couldn’t help him with explaining the cause of the phenomenon. I told Oliver to find some time to talk to you. You’re known for being open-minded and creative, so you probably could help.”

Fernando put on a cunning smile and looked at Lucien, “I didn’t expect that you’d come up with the same explanation, but I remember that you’ve been ignoring Ether all the time. There’s no way that you suddenly decided to use Ether to explain Douglas’s experiment. Also, part of the equations, here, the length contraction, is problematic, and I’m sure you know it. So, Lucien,

what are you really trying to achieve throwing this paper at me?"

Lucien looked in his teacher's eyes, but did not say anything.

"I think you've dug in further. You are getting us prepared using this paper. You can take it out, your true paper." said Fernando.

Lucien saw his teacher's red eyes were very sincere and kind. He had to admit that his teacher knew him very well.

But should he just throw the special theory of relativity directly at Fernando?

Seeing that Lucien was still hesitating, Fernando glared at him and said, "What? You're worrying that I might not be able to take it? Come on. I've already got my lesson from light quantum and energy quantum. There's nothing that can explode my mind anymore. Even during that time, although I did lose control a bit, I'm still here, right? Safe and sound."

Lucien still remembered clearly how Fernando suffered from the great frustration and fury when this happened last time. But he dared not say.

Weighing his words, Lucien said, "I think the change in length doesn't come from the contraction of matter, but the contraction of space."

"Space contraction... Interesting. Maybe we should see space from another perspective... Oliver once mentioned it as well." Fernando wasn't too surprised because of the existence of space barriers, demiplanes, and space spells.

"If we just put aside Ether here, just based on Mr. Douglas's experiment, classical electromagnetic theory, and the studies on bodies in motion, we can put forward a postulate – the idea that the speed of light is a constant, independent of the relative motion of the source." Lucien explained further.

Fernando's right hand clenched and tapped his chin, "I see. If based on that, there'll be lots of things to talk about. You just give me the paper."

Lucien hurriedly added, “There’s one more precondition – the principle of relativity. There are quite some papers talking about it. You probably have read some of them before.”

Sorcerers often cast sound waves magic spells. A long time ago, they had found that when their enemies approached them quickly, the sound became quick and short; when their enemies fled away from them, the sound was prolonged. The change in sound waves seemed to be closely related to speed. The phenomenon was broadly discussed and therefore introduced the principle of relativity. Meanwhile, some arcanists were also looking at the changes in light waves from stars.

There was another common phenomenon that one could see in daily life to prove this: When a magic steam train approached from afar, the steam whistle would become increasingly sharper; but when it passed the observer, the steam whistle would become deeper.

Fernando nodded slightly, “Two preconditions only? Good. It’s like your style: Start from less axioms and hypotheses, and use more logical reasoning. Give the paper to me. I’m prepared.”

“Sir, why don’t you further develop Mr. Oliver’s transformational equations on your own based on the two preconditions? You can see the units in the equations from a brand new arcana perspective. In other words, they are no more mere math symbols.”

Fernando was a bit pissed, but he still accepted Lucien’s advice, “Let me see what conclusion you’re hiding!”

He walked back to his desk and picked up the quill-pen. He first wrote down the two preconditions, and then started working on the equations.

When he first started, everything went very smoothly. A grand arcanist’s knowledge was way more than enough for the initial deduction.

However, as he wrote down further, Fernando’s quill-pen stopped above a certain line.

The black ink formed a small drop at the pen point, and then dripped down onto the parchment.

The ink slowly spread out.

The space they were in, Fernando's demiplane, Thunder Hell, suddenly became very stormy. The thundering and lightning were roaring.

Fernando looked up. His red eyes were full of shock.

Lucien did not look away. Instead, he looked right into Fernando's eyes.

Fernando took a deep breath and closed his eyes. Then he started working on the equations again.

As Fernando wrote down more equations and more stage conclusions, certain changes were happening in the study.

Rulers, quill-pens, books were contracting, and the clock was ticking slower and slower.

Lucien closed his eyes and spread out his spiritual power. The changes were real.

However, the changes were so tiny that only a senior-rank or above could notice.

The changes taking place in Fernando's cognitive world was affecting the real world!

That was the power of a legendary sorcerer!

After a while, Fernando finally put down the quill-pen in his hand and looked at the final conclusion attentively. He laughed in a mocking way at himself, "I thought I'd had a basic idea about the truth of the world, but I was totally wrong. Space and time are in fact very, very different from what we feel. The equation shows that time is actually a function of speed, depending on the matter. If it wasn't my own derivation, I'd definitely yell at you badly."

Fernando then looked up and said very seriously, “But this conclusion is based on the single postulate, and we need things more solid than this, although this can be used to explain why part of the starlight saw spectroscopic redshifts.”

Fernando had not fully accepted it yet. The conclusion had to be proved by some further evidence, or it remained a fancy toy.

“Well... We might be able to use it to explain some of the problems that we ran into working on the artificial planets. Of course, this theory is not complete yet. Gravity is not involved, so it must still be problematic.” said Lucien.

Then Lucien mentioned some records of data that his students collected and the questions coming up, “... so when we accelerated particles, there was a difference between the result and what we expected, and the theory of relativity would be able to explain it: Mass increases as the speed increases, so the orbital period also changes. We can use this formula to work out the variable and adjust the changing frequency of the electric field. If the particles can be further accelerated without trying away from the field, the theory of relativity will be able to be indirectly proved.”

Fernando decided to take action immediately. In his magic lab, Fernando did exactly as Lucien said.

Then Fernando got the particles that carried the greatest energy ever. Then, he released a sigh,

“Lucien, in your programme, Arcana Voice, you talked about outlook of world, on life, and on value. In my understanding, the outlook on the world is how an individual perceives the world. Apart from humanity and history, it equals a person’s cognitive world.”

Lucien had no idea why Fernando wanted to talk about it now.

Fernando grinned, “But when it comes to how to understand space, it also involves the outlook on life and values. So I’m thinking... Why don’t we call you the Destroyer of Three Outlooks”

Lucien's face twitched a bit. He did not find Fernando's joke interesting.

Fernando looked Lucien up and down with a meaningful smile on his face,

"I've learned my lesson from you, Lucien. That's why I'm still here now after all of this. I am now more or less suspicious about every theoretical system. But for others, Lucien, you have to reveal your theory of relativity bit by bit, especially for Douglas. Your theory is a huge turnover to his, and he's been through a lot of things in the past one or two hundred years. The wave theory of light, quantum theory... I'm afraid that this might be too much for him to take. I mean, I don't think Douglas's head is going to explode or his demiplane is going to collapse. Not that bad. But what happened to Brook might happen to him again. Mental changes are possible, too."

"Sir, I never thought of throwing it directly at people. You insisted.." Lucien could not help complaining.

Lucien had started feeling more casual in front of Fernando.

However, Fernando just directly ignored Lucien, "I'll start with Oliver. He should be able to take it as he's seen the problems. Then I'll have him submit his paper to make the senior-rank and above think."

"Why senior-rank and above?" Lucien asked.

"Because those below can't understand," said Fernando succinctly.

Fernando then slowly walked back to his study and said.

"You're already level seven in terms of arcana credit. The argument between wave and particle theory is still going on, and the number of papers about your new alchemy should be booming soon. With all these, this paper should be able to take you to level eight. However, now you should work on improving your magic level, as it's just a matter of time for you to become a grand arcanist. You must have benefited from having the two legends temporarily

living inside of your body, and I'm sure that the congress will also favor you to a great extent."

Currently, Lucien had fifteen thousand arcana credits, which meant he was halfway from hitting level eight. He also expected that the reward credits from new alchemy would be very considerable.

In the study, Fernando handed Lucien the paper, "Take a look at what's missing here. If there isn't, I will not have to read your paper."

Lucien took a glance at it and found that his teacher had also missed mass-energy equation as Einstein did. He smiled and picked up the quill-pen,

"Sir, there's one thing missing."

Lucien started writing on the parchment. The point of the pen slightly scratched the surface and made a tiny, soft noise. Fernando watched the entire process of derivation, and the look on his face changed several times: There was solemnity, shock, and then great excitement.

Lucien kept writing. Eventually, the formula came out: $E = mc^2$.

A thick bolt of lightning flashed through the sky outside the window. For a moment, the entire demiplane was illuminated by it.

Then the deafening thunder followed. It's great power even made the window frames shake.

"I see! That's what that part of the structure means! The mutual conversion between mass and energy! No wonder extraordinarily high temperature is possible in new alchemy!" Fernando said aloud to himself, out of great excitement.

He was so thrilled that it sounded like he was roaring. Finally, he had seen direction in making further progress in legendary level using new alchemy and by putting together all the fields that he was good at together!

Although the two magic structures – fusion and fission – were still

too complex for him, and it would take time for him to understand bit by bit, he finally saw hope for reaching the next level!

.....

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City, the grand cardinals were discussing the latest report submitted by Sard.

“The priests and night watchers in Holm parish are not being reliable.” said Saint Melmax, the leader of Temple Knights.

The rest of them remained silent. They all knew what caused the priests’ mental instability. Part of it was because the Pope had been improving and modifying some fundamental theology theories. If they said anything improper, the Pope might be pissed.

“If we choose to launch a war right now, most priests and night watchers in Holm parish would be ready to fight, which is good. But right now we’re not ready for a war. We have to focus our power on the new dimension where both population and resources are abundant,” said Benedict II in cold voice, “so do as Sard proposed: punish the night watchers and gather the red robes, including Amelton.”

Philibell hurriedly nodded, “As you command, Your Holiness. I’ll assign a new red robe to the Inquisition.”

No one else said no because this basically had nothing to do with them.

.....

In the Radiance Church, Sard had received the written reply. He gently stroke the paper, smiling.

When his fingers came across, at the end of the punishment list, a new name appeared: Juliana.

But her punishment was much less severe, compared to the punishment for the other two night watchers who caught Baron Austin. She would be put into jail for a year, but the other two would be sentenced to death.

“Ask Octave to come.” said Sard to the red robe outside through the divine circle.

.....

A while later, Octave walked out of Sard’s study. The look on his face was extremely gloomy and sombre. A couple of minutes earlier, he had been stripped of his title and duty as the leader of the Inquisition!

The position was only lower than a parish leader.

Octave felt that it wasn’t really his fault. Radical night watchers came up almost every year.

Killing a noble who listened to Arcana Voice was not a big deal.

Should they just watch evilness spread out but do nothing?

The Church was getting more and more cowardly!

Walking in the Radiance Church, Octave felt the sympathetic eyes from other priests. He thought to himself in his heart,

“Your Holiness, do you see this? They think I am right! Your decision isn’t proper!”

.....

June 20th, after King Feltis and Princess Patrick’s funeral.

In a long, black dress, Natasha had an interview with Count James, Russell, and Henson.

“The Church has decided on the punishment. The two leading night watchers are sentenced to death, and all the other night watchers involved will receive different punishments. You may inform Baron Austin’s family, and please extend my heartfelt condolences.” said Natasha, crossing in front of her chest.

Count James wasn’t happy, “Only the night watchers? The lunatics won’t learn their lesson! We can’t live in fear all the time! The

leader of the Inquisition must be punished, and any night watchers who are prone to go extreme must be controlled and killed! That's what we nobles, at least most of us, believe. It's also for your own safety, Your Majesty!"

In fact, the punishment decision was already acceptable to him. The Church, he knew, had made big compromise. He was saying this to see Natasha's attitude.

Count Henson and Russell nodded.

Natasha said seriously,

"The Church is at fault, of course, as they did not keep an eye on those extreme night watchers. But they have apologized and made an acceptable decision. The murders' death is the most important thing that Baron Austin would want. Also, Octave has been stripped of his duty. I believe that Saint Sard will keep the lunatics in line. I understand your concern, but what you ask for needs time."

Count James was a bit disappointed, "We obey your wish, Your Majesty."

After leaving Nekso Palace, both Russell and Henson jumped onto James's coach, but neither of them said anything on their way.

When they almost arrived at the villa, Russell released a sigh and broke the silence, "Her Majesty has always been a follower since she was young, and she grew up in Aalto where the Church's power is extremely powerful. It makes sense if she slightly favors the Church. Let's not be too pessimistic."

"But I'm afraid this is just the beginning. Her teacher's Beliel, God's Glory." said James with his sullen-looking face.

Count Henson nodded, and he lowered his voice, "We have to be prepared, just in case..."

At this time, a Dragon Scale horse came close to the coach. It was one of Jame's knights.

"What happened?" asked James.

Somehow the look on the knight's face was full of surprise, "Her Majesty is visiting Holm Royal Magic Tower to see the seniors!"

"What?" Count Henson could not believe his ears. The world had seemingly gone nuts in his eyes.

.....

In a spacious living room in Holm Royal Magic Tower, Natasha was waiting to see the sorcerer members in the royal family in Holm. She said proudly, "I really have to thank those extreme night watchers, or I wouldn't be able to find a chance to come here. When Duke Rex asks, I'll say that I'm here to reassure the Liberals. The Church caused these troubles, so they won't say anything about this as well."

But Natasha was also aware that visiting the magic tower was the farthest she could go. She could never visit Allyn. Holm was different because many royal families still gathered here.

"You're not here just for this, right?" said Camil, who knew Natasha very well.

Natasha looked more serious now, "I took Lucien's suggestion and collected some of my uncle's hair and flesh. By testing them, we can know the accurate age of my uncle when he died to see if he was ever affected by the power of Heart of Time. This is very strong evidence, as time always leaves its trace!"

"'Heart of Time' could manipulate time after the princess's death." said Camil, who did not know much about the limit of Kritonia's ability.

Natasha shook her head, "He can't make time flow back. Also, Lucien told me that some changes only happened to people who were alive, unless he actually once brought uncle back to life."

"Sorcerers are always full of tricks." said Camil, who did not quite understand.

Natasha overlooked the city of Rentato from the high castle. After a while, she cheered up a little bit, "I've known Lucien for years, but I

never got a chance to celebrate his birthday with him. I was quite upset that I was going to miss this one as well, but now the problem has been solved. I'll visit Duke Rex's manor and properties during the day and come back here on Lucien's birthday in the evening!"

Natasha thought to herself hard what gift should she prepare for Lucien.

She walked back and forth in the living room, and then noticed that Camil was staring at her.

"What is it, aunt Camil?"

"Look in the mirror," said Camil, using her chin to point at the mirror in the corner.

Natasha was confused, but she did as Camil said anyways. In the mirror, she saw a purple-haired lady whose cheeks were flushed with joy and excitement. Her face was glowing with a sweet smile extending all the way from the corner of her lips to her eyes.

"I look... different." murmured Natasha surprisedly.

Natasha remembered that the last time she was like this was years ago, when she was still with Silvia.

Camil said calmly, "You've fallen in love with Lucien Evans."

She was not asking, but saying a fact.

"What?!" Natasha's eyes suddenly opened big as if she just got struck by a bolt of lightning.

Chapter 517: The Preparation

Chapter 517: The Preparation

Camil's face was rather cold, but her eyes were shining with wisdom. She said straightforwardly,

"You're always happy when you see him. You always share lots of topics with him, but you still feel good even if you two are not talking. Simply being with each other is sweet enough. And you keep mentioning him when talking to me."

"You fancy him turning into a female. Is that normal?"

"For him, you chose not to stop the night watchers; For him, you faced great dangers and temporarily put aside your responsibilities. You distracted Prince Dracula for him; you protected him from Demigod-lich. You call yourself his friend?"

Natasha was totally shocked, "But... but he's a man. I've been helping him because we are good friends!"

Camil's blue eyes stared at Natasha until Natasha started feeling a bit uneasy, "True. You're a knight and you help your friends. But how have you been feeling? You were once in love before, so you should be able to tell."

Natasha started walking back and forth in the room restlessly.

Suddenly, she strode towards the door.

"Wait!" Camil did not expect this. She was worried that if Natasha would do something extreme, say, killing Lucien or hurting herself.

Camil softened her voice to comfort her, "Natasha, love comes regardless of sex. You always told yourself this, right? It just happened that you fell in love with a woman, but this time, it's a man. Don't panic."

As she was saying this, Camil was also a bit worried. She was

worried if she just picked the wrong time to tell Natasha everything, if she would disappoint the grand duke.

Natasha slowly turned around, but the look on her face was full of joy.

Her eyes looked gentle and her cheeks flushed. There was great excitement between her brows. At this moment, she looked absolutely stunning.

Camil was so surprised that she became speechless. She felt that Natasha had somehow changed.

After encountering Demigod-lich, Natasha kept falling into confusion from time to time. But now, probably because she had found her new target, Natasha was no more at loss, instead, her eyes were shining with determination!

Natasha grinned, "Aunt Camil, don't worry about me. I'll work hard for my own happiness!"

"What...?" Now it was Camil's turn to feel lost.

Did Natasha already accept the fact within such a short period of time?

Natasha's clenched her right hand, she said with great determination, "I'm a knight. I don't dodge when there's a problem. I seek solutions."

Her voice gradually rose,

"My faith is to move forward, forward, forever. I'm going to defeat all the barriers in front of me!"

"No matter how he will respond to this, I'll not yield. I'm gonna tell him how I feel about him, defeat him, conquer him!"

That was the declaration from Natasha.

Camil should have thought about this as well. And so she had kind of expected this result.

Natasha grinned. Her left hand reached into her pocket. The small laurel box containing the godhood of the God of Love and Beauty was in it.

Natasha decided to be the one to solve the problem.

...

Lucien did not have to analyze Evans' Freezing Ray since he was the one who created the spell. After managing to control the fast-growing spiritual power, Lucien had built the structural model of the spell within his soul and became a seventh circle sorcerer.

Pushing open the window, watching the garden shining in the warm sunlight, Lucien's heart was full of joy. He was becoming stronger and stronger, the situation of the world was now relatively settled, and the lady he loved had come all the way to him. Although there were still many difficulties, things were heading to the positive side.

The monocle he was wearing was getting a bit hotter. Knowing that someone was contacting him, Lucien turned it on.

"Lucien, you know where I am right now?" It was Natasha's voice.

Lucien smiled, "You can't be in Allyn, right?"

"Haha, I'm at Holm Royal Magic Tower." said Natasha proudly.

Lucien was quite surprised, "Holm Royal Magic Tower? You don't care about the Church? They may overreact to it."

"No worries. I have to comfort the Liberals here, for what happened. It was the Church's bad, and they have to understand and support me." said Natasha half jokingly using the tone of a queen.

Words escaped Lucien's lips, "Then on June 25th can you..."

"On June 25, are you available..." Natasha asked him simultaneously.

They both stopped, and smiled.

According to the custom in this world, birthday celebration lasted for more than an entire day, from the night before to the next early morning.

Lucien rubbed his chin and the smile on his face was big, “I’m always available when the queen asks.”

“Great. Then on June 25th, at Holm Royal Magic Tower, I’ll celebrate your birthday with you,” said Natasha cheerfully, “I’ve known you for so many years, but I never got a chance to do so.”

After they ended the call, Lucien walked back and forth in his room excitedly. He wielded his right fist in the air out of great excitement.

“One more step forward.” Lucien said to himself.

He could not sit down. Thoughts flashed through his mind. He believed that Natasha also had some feelings toward him. Maybe he should try to make a breakthrough.

Lucien decided to write it down – his plan:

“Target: To be with the girl I am in love with.”

“Step 1: Prepare good ingredients and make a couple of good Chinese dishes.”

“Step 2: Arrive at Holm Royal Magic Tower earlier. Make things romantic using candles, piano, and wine.”

“Step 3: Lead the topic and try to see how Natasha will respond. Three choices available: Keep trying, speak it out, and temporarily stop.”

“Step 4: Details – If Natasha doesn’t like it, stay back but don’t give up. Take more time to build it up. If Natasha’s attitude remains ambiguous, keep talking about our past experience and building stronger connections. When things are right, seize the chance and speak it out.”

“Notes: What to prepare”

“First, Natasha fancies sweet and main courses that are tender and juicy. She doesn’t mind spicy and less common food. So the dishes can include sweet and sour fish, sautéed lamb liver, roast suckling pig, honey pumpkin, etc, depending on what ingredients are available.”

“Second, get a piano and a violin ready. The music has to be romantic, but For Silvia and Exodus should be strictly forbidden in case sad memories triggered. Music list includes Marriage d’amour, Ballade pour Adeline, Canon In D Major..”

“Third, write down all the possible questions and get prepared...”

Lucien wrote a lot, like he was doing an experiment. He thought really hard, trying to find anything that he missed.

Lucien read the plan line by line. Then he started considering what might happen if his plan did work out. He felt the muscles in his arm and chest. Obviously, they were not very impressive, compared to that of the knight.

Lucien smacked his lips, slightly frowning.

“I gotta get prepared for this, too.”

Ten minutes later, Lucien had arrived at Allyn Advanced Arcana Library. His face flushing, his throat a big dry, Lucien said to the alchemical life,

“Umm... I just... Umm... Pink Book, please.”

...

After seeing the sorcerers from the royal family, Natasha walked to the top floor of the magic tower using the excuse to take a rest. But she walked to the entrance of Hathaway’s demiplane, with a big, sweet smile on her face.

Her left hand was still gently stroking the small laurel box in her pocket. She had hope in her mind. She believed that when he chose

to wear the ring, all the barriers between them would disappear.

Lucien was good looking. If he became a lady, he must be gorgeous. She had to keep a close watch on her girl, in case someone would steal her.

That was what Natasha was thinking to herself.

But her left hand touched something cold. The big smile kind of froze on her face.

It was Pale Justice.

“I am a man.” said Lucien seriously. He once said this to Natasha.

The memories rushed back to her and filled her mind.

He was the black-haired, young man whose talent dazzled the audience;

He was that gentleman who she could talk to all day long about any topics without any stress or pressure.

He was the man that had great determination who never put her down from his back in the dark forest even when facing the greatest danger;

He was the resolved explorer who left Aalto for his magic dream;

He was that smart sorcerer who was always resourceful when Demigod-lich was chasing after them;

He was her knight, who cared about her, made fun of her, and stood in front of her.

Natasha stood where she was for a while. Then with a soft smile on her face, she turned around and left before she entered Element Paradise, Hathaway's demiplane.

The small laurel box had also been put into the bottom layer of her storage pouch.

Chapter 518: Birthday Gift

Chapter 518: Birthday Gift

It was June 25. The sun was as bright as Natasha's mood right now.

Whispering in a delighted tone, she prepared her face and her clothes in front of a mirror. Since she was not a rookie in romance, and she had plenty of similar dates when she was with Sylvia, she did not reject skirts, broad-edged hats, earrings or necklaces. Therefore, it was no trouble for her to find a delicate black dress whose edge was slightly puffy, revealing the mysteriousness of the night and the attraction of the unknown.

"Huh. This is not so flirty that it contradicts my style and scares Lucien, and nor is it as tough and charmless as the knight suit." Natasha moved casually and commented in satisfaction.

The court dress was not in the style of the conservative Holm or that of the open Tria, but in the graceful style of Aalto between them. The neckline of the dress was slightly low, making it possible to see the fair and delicate skin down below, but if she did not bend, nothing inappropriate would be exposed at all.

The dress had been finely cut, too, highlighting Natasha's long beautiful neck, highly-rising breasts and slender but powerful waist in the most eye-catching way, filling her with the charm of a female.

Natasha observed herself and encouraged herself, "Sylvia used to envy my body figure a lot in the past. I am never too thin or too fat. Lucien will definitely be amazed."

She was not unsure of herself. However, after dropping Lucien's 'gender transitioning plan' the other day, when she recalled the past, she realized that she had never attempted to stress her femininity during her company with Lucien, and she had no idea whether she was a lady or a gentleman in his eyes. Therefore, she intended to correct her 'bad' impression of Lucien as soon as possible.

Queen Natasha was certainly not someone who would back off. Whenever she had a target, she always pressed forward determinedly and would fix the problems if she ever encountered any.

.....

Allyn, in Lucien's magic tower...

Trays of Chinese dishes that had just been cooked were placed on the table in the living room, but there was no fragrance coming out, because they had all been kept with preservation magics.

Lucien took off the apron that he used for cooking and walked to the mirror while whispering a song merrily, observing himself, "Huh. Stick to the plan. I need to slightly change the style of my coat and give Natasha a brand-new feeling. I have to change the image of being just a good friend that I've built so far.

The black frock coat slightly wriggled into a black cloak. Inside it, there was a white shirt, a black waistcoat, and a rather casual bowtie on the neckline.

His pants that were in the same color were equally straight, covering his shiny black shoes.

Men's clothes were not as complicated as women's. However, the slight change of coat already changed Lucien's vibe. He was a quiet and even conservative man before, but he had additional passion and confidence right now, making him look even more attractive.

Putting on his monocle, Lucien combed his fringe, allowing it to cover the right side of his forehead from the left side.

After he cleaned himself up, Lucien frowned at himself, seeing that his hair had reached his ears, feeling that he was not masculine enough. He thought to himself, "Should I cut my hair short and keep a mustache?"

The idea had just occurred to him when Lucien realized something. He spoke to himself in amusement, "This should be what Natasha prefers. If I change myself into a masculine man, I will only achieve

the opposite of my purpose!”

Lucien turned around, fixed the dishes with magic, and put them in the storage bag that was awarded to him after he became a senior-rank sorcerer. Suddenly, he snapped his fingers and exclaimed ‘I almost forgot’ in his business. Then, he hurried to pick up a peppermint candy from the table in the living room and tossed it into his mouth.

“Keep your mouth fresh.” Lucien said in a smile and then bumped his fist at himself in the mirror:

“Keep it up!”

.....

Natasha was very satisfied with her look and barely put on any makeup. She merely changed her hairstyle to make her long hair even more alluring.

After she finished picking her clothes, as usual, she took out a few candies in different flavors from her storage bag.

“Which flavor will be better?” Natasha hesitated for a moment. Considering Lucien’s preference, she selected a sweet violet sugar and put it into her mouth.

After she was all set, Natasha was about to leave and begin her ‘quest’, when she suddenly remembered something from a long time ago, “Sylvia mentioned that Lucien had been staring at her legs and her silk stockings like a wolf since the moment he saw her. Huh, although Lucien explained that it was because he did not expect to see such a byproduct of alchemy, I would rather believe that he likes it than go there unprepared. After all, he certainly does not dislike it.”

Whispering again, Natasha opened her closet and picked a pair of black silk stockings and garters of the same color with her clothes.

Sitting on the sofa, Natasha took her right foot out of the black shoe and put it on the table. Her foot was slightly small compared to her height. It was graceful and chubby, and her toes were long and

cute. There wasn't any messy potion on her fingernails, either, which emitted healthy and attractive pinkness, like five vague roses.

As she rolled the thin silk stockings and covered the tip of her foot, hazy blackness buried her skin bit by bit and enshrouded her long, straight right leg.

After finishing both feet, Natasha put on the garters and stood up again. She pulled her dress and observed the result. Her legs behind the black silk stockings were obscure and unbelievably captivating.

"It's really good to be a radiant knight. My legs that were too solid before are now perfect. Haha." Natasha praised herself without the least embarrassment.

Then, she looked at the beautiful girl inside the mirror. Some anxiety and worries beamed out of her face.

However, those emotions were soon dispelled by her resolution. Natasha clenched her right hand and said to herself in the mirror:

"Natasha, you can do this!"

.....

Lucien walked out of the living room in a smile and reached the lift of the magic tower somewhat anxiously.

When he stepped into the lift, Lucien looked around and, upon seeing the garden outside of the enormous window, he thought of something. "Crap! I didn't prepare any flowers! I've forgotten such an important thing!"

Checking the time, Lucien realized that he barely had time to search for flowers elsewhere. Therefore, he focused his attention on his own garden. "Well, I can claim that I've raised and cared for the flower for years. That will definitely show my sincerity."

Comforting herself, Lucien left the lift and flew out of the window. Without any hesitation, he picked the violet, which was Natasha's impression in his heart.

“Thankfully, the bloom season hasn’t passed in the high sky yet, or I’d have to make them blossom with magic.” Lucien did not know Natasha’s view on flowers and therefore merely picked eleven of them.

Having no time to think whether he had forgotten anything else, Lucien cleaned his clothes again and walked out of the magic tower, but Sprint, Katrina, Annick and other students stopped him.

“Master, where are you going? Isn’t it your birthday today? We’re planning to celebrate it with you.” Heidi asked with delight and surprise. Why did her teacher seem so strange today? He had even changed his style.

Lucien did not expect to run into them, either. He said rather awkwardly, “I’m going to meet a friend. You can come again tomorrow night.”

Heidi, Annick and Sprint were going to ask which friend it was, but they were stopped by Chelly, Layria and Katrina respectively. The three girls held back their laughter and said, “In that case, we will not delay you any longer, master.”

That was exactly what Lucien wanted. He hurried to leave on a wagon.

“Why did you stop me from asking?” Heidi looked at the girls in confusion.

Chelly, who was the most experienced one of all, smiled, “Didn’t you notice that master’s spring has come?”

Huh? Sprint, Annick and the other bachelors were still baffled.

.....

Reaching the royal magic tower of Holm on a wagon, Natasha entered the previous guest room with Camil gravely and met many members of the royal family in a hurry.

Then, she took a deep breath and said to Camil, “Aunt Camil, I’m leaving.”

“Don’t make it like a battle. Take it easy.” Seeing how dominating and magnificent Natasha was, Camil hurried to ask her to be gentle.

“Okay.” Natasha nodded, knowing that she was a little bit too obsessed about it. She put on a casual smile, walked to ‘Lucien’s Office’ on the same floor, and knocked on the door.

Without any wait, the door was opened. Natasha’s eyes immediately shined. She seldom saw Lucien in such a style, and freshness always meant unknown, further adding to his charm.

Lucien, on the other hand, was rather stunned. He had never seen such a gorgeous Natasha that was filled with femininity.

Natasha was very satisfied about Lucien’s reaction. She smiled, “Are you not letting me in?”

Lucien was back to himself. He cleared the way and revealed the room that was in a hazy atmosphere.

In the office, the left side was a chamber with a bed, the right side was the library, and the living room was in the middle with a piano in a corner and a round table at the center. On the table were trays of unique, carefully-decorated food and two candles. As the dim light of candles flickered, the fuzzy and romantic atmosphere was building up.

Natasha, who used to have candle lit dinners frequently, never thought that such slight changes could make the common environment so fascinating.

Lucien directed her to the table, pulled the chair and asked the lady to sit down first. Then, he took out the champagne that was kept in ice. Pouring half a glass for each of them, he returned to his seat on the opposite side.

“After knowing you for almost eight years, I can finally celebrate my birthday with you now.” Lucien raised his wine glass and said, while he considered his plans:

“First of all, I will direct the subject to the meaningful things that we’ve experienced together, so that Natasha will be emotionally

softened. Then, I will play the piano and build the atmosphere as much as possible. After that, I'll be able to drop the hint."

Natasha raised the glass at Lucien. She smiled, "How time flies. You are 25 too now. Happy birthday, Lucien."

After a clink, both of them sipped the champagne. Lucien took the opportunity to review his plan. In a warm smile, he was going to direct the subject of their conversation.

At this moment, however, Natasha stood up and said in a smile, "I have a birthday gift for you."

"What gift?" Watching Natasha walk towards him gracefully, Lucien hurried to recall the other part of his plan that specified his reactions and directions after he received her birthday gift.

When he smelled vague fragrance, Lucien opened his mouth and was about to express his delight at Natasha's gift.

But suddenly, Lucien saw that Natasha bent over and held his chin with her right hand.

What's going on?

Lucien was stunned. Then he felt that Natasha's scarlet lips were pressed to his mouth, that her fresh and smooth tongue opened his teeth and stuck in with the sweet smile of violet, looking for a partner to dance with.

What's going on?

Lucien realized that all his plans seemed unable to follow the actual circumstances. He subconsciously hugged Natasha back, allowing their tongues to dance together.

After a long kiss, Natasha let go of his mouth. Her lips captivating and her eyes hazy, she looked at Lucien who was still perplexed about what was going on and said in a slightly hoarse voice:

"Do you like my birthday gift?"

Chapter 519: The Pace of a Knight

Chapter 519: The Pace of a Knight

“Do you like my birthday gift?”

Natasha’s voice was slightly hoarse. She tried to pretend to be casual, but her heart was still beating faster than usual, as if the anxiety deep inside her heart was spreading out. Did Lucien like it? Would he accept it?

Even though she was a queen and a brave knight, she found it hard to remain calm, and she was not as confident as she appeared

“Even if he refuses me, I will not give up. I will definitely conquer him someday!”

Natasha made up her mind and encouraged herself that one failure was acceptable.

Suddenly, she felt that there was a hand on her waist and her back, and she heard Lucien’s deepened voice:

“I love it, but...”

The hand on her back suddenly pressed hard. Caught unprepared, Natasha leaned forward to Lucien and saw his eyes where a surging storm was rising.

“... but it is not enough!”

Huh? Natasha hadn’t understood what he meant, when her mouth was already blocked by Lucien. She sensed his scorching breath spurting on her face.

Her lips were sucked and divided by Lucien, and a tongue broke into her mouth firmly. It went on a wild rampage, searching for the bold and open partner from a moment ago.

Well? Natasha seemed to understand something. She closed her

eyes in delight and excitement. The dimness before her eyes seemed to have been completely illuminated.

Lucien kissed particularly wildly to express his long-repressed feelings, but he was still more or less ill at ease. Was it only a birthday gift just now? Did it mean anything else? Was he mistaken?

Uneasiness, expectations, anxiety... Everything had been mixed and cooked into a pot of indescribable feelings. Lucien slowed down and waited for Natasha to give an affirmative answer.

Suddenly, Lucien felt that the fresh and smooth tongue entangled his own. It was so powerful and so sweet that it was even trying to push back into his own mouth. In the meantime, two hands held his head.

Boom. Lucien felt fireworks blooming in front of his eyes. Natasha had given her answer obviously.

Their kiss gradually grew intense. After who knows how long, the two of them were finally separated.

Lucien was about to say something, when Natasha, whose face was flushing, said in delight, "Lucien, you taste better than I thought."

Her pink tongue licked her lips quickly and agilely.

Lucien was immediately embarrassed. It was indeed as expected of Natasha. However, that was why he liked her.

Natasha breathed heavily. "After overcoming my mental resistance, I realized that I fell in love with you a long time ago. No, Lucien. I want to solemnly tell you..."

Her silver purple eyes became serious. "... that I love you. I hope we can try living together. I want to share my remaining life with you until death do us part."

As a girl with enough romantic experience, Natasha knew very clearly that confessions of love could only be done when two people knew each other very well. Confessing love to a stranger that one

barely knew would only terrify them, and if they were willing to accept it, they would be after the pursuer's fortune or sex.

Lucien suddenly felt that the date plan he drafted arduously was a waste of time, because it had proved useless before he had a chance to use it. Even the confession of love had been done by Natasha.

However, it was not the time to be bothered by that. Lucien looked at Natasha's eyes warmly and tried not to let his ecstasy shake his voice. "Natasha, I love you too. Since I don't know when, I have already been enjoying spending time with you. I realized what I wanted on our return to Aalto. Over the past years, I've been trying to approach you and pursue you. I also would like to share my remaining life with you. I want you to be my wife."

Always remembering that 'those who date not for the purpose of marriage are scoundrels', Lucien expressed his solemn attitude.

Natasha put on a brilliant smile. It was the best feeling in the world that the one you loved loved you back.

She seemed tired of keeping her back bent. Therefore, she descended with her hands on Lucien's shoulder and sat on Lucien's legs directly. Then, her face looked rather strange.

Lucien hurried to explain in embarrassment, "This... This is a normal reaction."

Crap. The romantic atmosphere was slightly sabotaged.

Natasha immediately realized what was going on. She slightly twisted her back and observed Lucien's funny face as she expected. Then, she craned her head and spoke alluringly next to Lucien's ear, "Lucien's Big Ivan?"

"Yes." Blushing, Lucien did not know how to reply.

Natasha opened her mouth and sucked Lucien's earlobe, letting the numbness spread throughout his body. Then, she let go and chuckled, "I like your reaction. Don't be shy."

More than embarrassed, Lucien turned his head and sucked

Natasha's fair ear softly, too. Out of his expectation, he saw that her body was shivering, and that redness rose from her neck to her cheeks.

Was it her sensitive point?

"I like you doing this do me, too." Her eyes as hazy as a mist, Natasha spoke directly. Then she asked both curiously and happily, "You said you fell in love with me and tried pursuing me years ago. Why didn't I feel anything?"

"I feared that you were only into girls. So, I've been trying to build up my relationship with you and change you." Lucien replied honestly.

Natasha smiled and seemed moved. "Lucien, I'm still into girls, but you are the only exception. Despite your gender, I don't feel uncomfortable at all having physical contact with you."

While saying that, she turned her waist to further prove what he said, making it even more difficult for Lucien to hold it back.

"Hehe. Since you were trying to build up our relationship, you must've made plans for the birthday dinner, didn't you? Would you have done it if I didn't confess?" Natasha seemed to be enjoying Lucien's self-containment. She moved her waist slowly but unstoppably while she asked.

"Yes. I made a whole plan that included food preparations, subject guidance, piano-playing, love-confessing and everything." His brain filled with blood, Lucien simply confessed dutifully.

Natasha was stunned. It was just a casual question, and she did not expect that Lucien did have a plan. Therefore, she asked in great interest.

Now that he had accidentally blurted out the embarrassing thing, Lucien had no choice except to introduce his whole plan. In the end, he said, "As it turns out, the plan is absolutely useless."

Natasha burst into laughter. "This is so you! How hilarious!"

Her voice suddenly stopped as she laughed. Her eyes turned deep and profound as she said hoarsely, "But I like! I like it very much!"

Lucien sensed Natasha's breath was getting hotter. Looking at her in the eyes, he understood her happiness.

Although he had never been through such situations before, he suddenly felt that the plan was not entirely useless. While the content on the plan was never put into use, the plan itself successfully touched Natasha. Lucien immediately felt sweet and happy, but that was soon disrupted by Natasha's declaration.

"Lucien, let's have a baby." Natasha seemed unadapted to being emotional. She hurried to hold herself back and suggested delightedly.

Lucien almost passed out. Wasn't it going too fast?

Sensing nothing wrong, Natasha continued happily, "I was planning to make a child by means of artificial insemination that you mentioned with your bloodline. However, such trouble is unnecessary now. We can be more direct. Haha!"

Lucien was embarrassed again. "Natasha, don't you feel that you have ruined all the romance?"

Natasha finally realized it. She said regretfully, "Right..."

But she was soon refreshed. She looked at Lucien in a smile, "In fact, I think this is the atmosphere that is most suitable for you. Don't you think so?"

"Me too. It's relieving without any pressure." Replied Lucien honestly.

Natasha went on the previous topic, "Lucien, I really I hope that we can be together openly someday, and that our children can grow under the bliss of their parents. Yes, that's an idea that I'm certain of right now and a goal that I will strive for. Protection is the feeling from the real Lord at the bottom of my heart. It is there and it will always be, never to be shaken by anything else."

Her eyes were clear and firm, as if she had found her path to walk on.

“Me too. I hope that our children can grow up in a complete family.” It was easy for a couple to fantasize about the future when they were together. Lucien, being no exception, smiled, too.

Natasha chuckled. “But first of all, we need to have a child.”

“We can work it out later.” Lucien responded in a smile.

Natasha, however, moved her waist again. “Is that so? Your Big Ivan seems to be suggesting otherwise. I want to take care of it right now.”

Instead of waiting for Lucien to reply, Natasha sat straight with only the support of her spine and grabbed Lucien’s hands.

“Natasha...” Lucien found it hard to keep up with the progress.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when Lucien felt that his right hand, under Natasha’s guidance, touched a highly-rising spot that had a tip on it.

“Do you like it?” Natasha’s voice was even more hoarse, as if she were fascinated, too.

His blood flooding into his head, Lucien couldn’t help but nod his head. Then, his left hand was pulled by Natasha through the layers of clothes and touched her smooth, elastic skin.

“Do you like it? Natasha leaned forward on Lucien and asked again hoarsely and sexily.

“I do.” Lucien felt that he could no longer be called a man if he contained himself any longer. Getting both of his hands busy, he said, “Let’s go to the bedroom...”

“Let’s do it right here, on the table, on the rug or on the chair.” Natasha chuckled and said, her voice filled with infinite charm.

Lucien felt that the first time was best on bed. Therefore, he tried to

pick up Natasha. But all of a sudden, he felt that a slightly cold hand dug into his clothes and slipped all the way downwards from his chest until it grabbed his thing.

“I can’t wait to taste your feelings.”

Water seemed to be dripping from Natasha’s silver purple eyes, as she kissed Lucien’s lips again.

Chapter 520: Philosophical Time

Chapter 520: Philosophical Time

There was no window in the bedroom. The bed was messy, filled with a fragrant and strange smell that brought blushing subtleties.

Holding Natasha, Lucien leaned against the headboard, deep in thought.

After relishing the wonderful feeling when their bodies and souls were melted together, he suddenly grew a lot and seemed to have become a psychologically real man after only a few hours. A heavy responsibility had been added to his shoulder. From today on, he would no longer be alone. He had a partner, and probably a few lovely new lives in the future, with whom he would walk together until the end of his life.

Therefore, Lucien began to review his life goals and adjust his plan, trying to figure out how to be together with Natasha openly.

“According to the files in the library, it’s true a man’s ‘philosophical time’ after doing that.” Lucien made fun of himself after thinking that. Such heavy subjects had never occurred to him before.

As his eyes moved to the rug in the bedroom and the doorstep, Lucien’s eyes saw the messy clothes that had been thrown all the way. That black dress had been torn into God knows how many pieces under their joint efforts. Lying on the floor, they outlined a shameful scene with the many suspicious traces around.

Looking at that, feeling the smooth and elastic skin under his right hand, and smelling the sweet fragrance that was mixed with a weird scent, Lucien suddenly felt hot, and his libido surfaced again. His right hand pressed slightly harder.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The bell of the Radiance Church echoed at this moment, announcing that it was already the 26th.

In a fragrant wind, Lucien was sealed by the pink lips again. The strong and sweet tongue softly divided his teeth and entangled his own.

The kiss was not intense but filled with warmth. They felt and tasted each other, not leaving out any corner.

After a long time, their lips were finally separated. Natasha said in a brilliant smile with her dreamy eyes, "Happy birthday, my knight."

Lucien hugged her again and gave her another long kiss. Then he smiled, "You didn't sleep?"

Natasha wriggled and leaned next to Lucien, before she said thoughtfully, "No. I've been considering my life path. I'm planning to figure out my confusion in my faith. I'm also thinking about what I should do to change Holm so that we can be together openly."

"It's going to be a long and difficult path, but I will not give up."

Lucien couldn't help but smile. Had Natasha entered the 'philosophical state', too? It was truly as expected of Her Majesty.

Thinking about that, Lucien turned to Natasha, only to discover that the thin, white velvet quilt had slipped during her previous movement, revealing the graceful and firm rising below. The tiny tip of redness on it made Lucien blush and pant again. He subconsciously turned around to avoid the wonderful view.

"Do you not like it?" How could Natasha have ignored Lucien's anomaly? She chuckled and laughed at his conservativeness. Then, her eyes passed Lucien's body and caught the broken clothes on the rug. "You were nothing like that before. You were as ferocious as a beast and tore my dress into pieces."

Holding back his urges, Lucien subconsciously argued, "It was torn by you."

"Is that so?" Natasha leaned her face to Lucien and said in a smile, "I remember it now. Somebody couldn't untie the dress a moment ago and forgot to use magic in his fury. Therefore, out of my love for him, I tore the dress myself. Lucien, do you prefer this

explanation or the one where you were as ferocious as a beast?”

Lucien had nothing to defend himself. So, he could only reply gloomily, “I prefer the first one.”

Natasha smiled and praised him, “However, your performance was indeed excellent. You appeared rather immature at first, but you were rather experienced in the second time and got me under you when I was unprepared. It felt rather good to enjoy myself without doing anything.

“Also, with all the magical assistance and your body condition as a grand knight, you gave me the ultimate pleasure that I had never experienced before. I have never been as exhausted without fighting.”

“Although I am too tired to even move my finger, I can’t feel more pleasant, particularly when we were melted. It’s like our souls are interwoven. That must be love.”

She talked about his performance without the least awkwardness.

Lucien secretly wiped his sweat. The atmosphere when he was with Natasha was too weird. They must be a unique couple.

“Me too. I had unprecedented happiness. Right, it must’ve been because of my instincts as a man that you felt that I was experienced.” Lucien certainly would not say how knowledgeable he was and how pained his back was right now. “I don’t think you experienced it before, right?”

Lucien realized that it was terrible the moment he said that, because it would remind Natasha of Sylvia.

Natasha was not bothered. “The knights’ control over the muscles is very strong. Ordinary people can make them happy, too. When there was love, the enjoyment would be as good, but still, I had a feeling that I enjoyed it but did not enjoy it enough. In comparison, I almost passed out just now. Hehe. The last few of your magics are good. We can try the assistance of other strange magics in the future.”

Queen Natasha was a curious but rational woman. However, she did not think she needed to contain herself when she explored things in that aspect with her partner.

“Okay...” Lucien replied almost he was almost at a loss for words. He was so hasty in the previous two sessions that he completely forgot the tricks on the Pink Book. He merely built up himself with the magics such as potency and rejuvenation.

In the meantime, Lucien thought to himself, “The body transformation of radiant knights lasts too shortly. It can only be used at the critical moment, or the cast will ruin the feeling. I need to develop a new transformation technique to let me have the strength and agility of the radiant knights but not their supernatural abilities. That way, it should be enough to extend the effect by half an hour.”

It was not used for fighting, so supernatural abilities did not matter.

Thinking about that, Lucien recalled what happened to the living room a moment ago. Even though their magic and supernatural powers were within control, their exertion of strength had already collapsed the chairs and tables. The cuisines he prepared were also tasted by Natasha in a very weird way. If they hadn’t entered the bedroom at the last moment, Lucien was suspicious that the bed would’ve been collapsed, too. “I have to craft magic furniture now...”

Natasha turned around and leaned on Lucien’s chest, allowing their naked skin to contact directly. She asked worriedly, “Were we too hasty? I just couldn’t control myself. After I realized that I fell in love with you a long time ago, my years of feelings burst out like a torrent.”

Lucien was too inexperienced, which made Natasha, who had entered ‘philosophical state’, slightly uneasy.

“Not at all. I’ve waited for years.” Lucien did feel that it went too fast, but he was gratified by the company of the girl he loved and did not feel anything wrong later.

Natasha nodded in satisfaction. After another long kiss, she said regretfully, "It's past dawn. Although I would like to stay with you, I need to go back to the Nekso Palace now, or I will raise the suspicion of the Church if I spend the night in the royal magic tower of Holm. We are both young and still have a long life ahead of us. I believe that we will be really together someday."

"I understand. The constraint right now is for the happiness in the future." Lucien hugged her and took out her storage bag, ready to put clothes on her.

Natasha suddenly winked. "Is that so? Your Big Ivan seems to be saying otherwise. It wants one more time, doesn't it?"

Lucien looked at the ceiling helplessly, "You need to go back."

"Well, there is still some time. It should be enough." Natasha's eyes were suddenly rippling like water. Then, Lucien felt that her long legs slipped past his own, whose smoothness was passed on to his heart in a numbing feeling. "Lucien, didn't you say that it was only because of shock? But why do I feel that you are really into silk stockings? Both the dress and underwear have been torn by you, but the silk stockings are still intact."

Lucien blushed and did not say anything. His body turned hot under the provocation, while the long leg slid all the way to the critical area.

Lucien couldn't hold it anymore and grabbed Natasha's leg, about to put her down.

Natasha reached Lucien's chest, her silver eyes glittering and her voice lascivious. "I will be on top this time."

The air was filled with panting and squeaky noises. Suddenly, the bed collapsed in a bam, but the two of them did not stop at all.

After a long time, Lucien lay on the bed, satisfied and fatigued, while Natasha stood next to the bed, sorting her black dress delightedly.

"I'm going back." Natasha bent and kissed Lucien. Then she said

solemnly, “I wonder if you could invite the King of Nightmare to stay in Aalto for a while in case of any trouble.”

“Rest assured. I’ll take care of it. The Grand Duke will not be in danger.” Lucien had already thought of it.

Natasha left the room in a light mood. After resting for a while and restoring part of his strength, Lucien got up from the collapsed bed and put on his magic robe. Walking to the living room, he watched Natasha get on the wagon and leave through the window.

“My life has entered a new phase after today.” Lucien remarked in complicated feelings.

After Natasha returned to the Nekso Palace, Lucien talked to her for another hour through electromagnetism messaging. It was not until then that he finally sat on the rug and began to analyze the eight-circle magics, trying to improve his magic level.

Before he knew it, it was already morning. Lucien cleaned his clothes and opened the door tiredly, picking up the ‘Holm Weekly’ that he subscribed to.

“... His Excellency Saint Sard is worried about the mental faculty of the clergy and night watchers in the Holm parish. He has decided that the personnel will study in the Rentato abbey and communicate with the other four parishes on this side of the Storm Strait...”

“What is Sard trying to do exactly?” Lucien scratched his chin at the headline.

Chapter 521: Paradox

Chapter 521: Paradox

Lucien, who knew a thing or two about Sard, speculated his intention with the newspaper in his hands. “He is trying to influence the clergy and the night watchers of the Holm parish and build them into his own subordinates? The communication of personnel must be for the same purpose. He will also be able to send spies to other parishes...”

When he thought that Vera Amelton had mastered the inquisition in the Holm parish, Lucien felt quite reverential for Sard, who had made such great use of the incident where a few radical night watchers lynched a liberal noble.

“Chances are that Sard is behind the few night watchers... But what does he want exactly by doing so? Divide the Church after he grows powerful? However, both the new church that he creates in the future and the South Church will no longer be the best in the world. Even their own territory will be invaded by the Congress, the North Church, or the Court of Elves. Sard can’t be that stupid, can he?”

“On the other hand, if the Lord of Hell is behind him, it would be understandable that his goal is to weaken the Church. However, for people like him, unless the benefits overwhelm his sanity, he will never degenerate into a servant of devils from a saint.”

“Is Sard trying to replace Benedict II after the pope is summoned by the Lord?”

“It’s been almost thirty years since Benedict II’s coronation. According to history, he has no more than thirty years before he ascends to Mountain Paradise like the previous popes. Sard, whose longevity is still huge, can definitely afford the wait.”

The phenomenon that popes in history always had a short time had been noticed by the Congress of Magic and other forces, but it never had a reasonable explanation. It was suspected that they were too close to the God of Truth and used the god’s strength too often, and

therefore their body and soul couldn't take it anymore.

Lucien shook his head and browsed through the newspaper, thinking to himself, "I hope Natasha learns a thing or two about Sard. If he intends to divide the Church, he will have the full support of the Highest Council. However, what I fear is that he is ambitious enough to instigate the Church to fight the Congress so that he can eliminate his opposition in the five parishes, before he ascends to the throne of pope with the secrets from the World of Souls.

"By then, he may very well break the limits of longevity for other popes, which will be a nightmare for any force."

While thinking, Lucien went to the top floor on the royal magic tower of Holm, ready to return to Allyn by way of the Element Paradise.

During the gap of the 'second battle', Natasha reminded Lucien that the Church paid even more attention to him after the new alternate dimension was discovered because a man who was likely to be at the peak of legendary must be suffocated in the cradle!

Therefore, she asked Lucien not to meet her too often, and she would contain herself, too. She also suggested that he jump via the demiplanes when he went to Allyn.

Strolling in the corridor, Lucien encountered many members of the Will of Elements. He greeted them in with a constant smile.

Those sorcerers, however, looked equally weird, which made Lucien rub his face and smell it in confusion. He had taken a hot bath before he left. There shouldn't be any scent of love on him anymore. What could be the problem?

"K, what's the look on your face?" By the time Lucien encountered the tall and frank K, who also had the weird expression, he finally couldn't help but ask.

Since Larry, K's teacher, was on a quest, K had been studying the 'new alchemy' independently for a while and met many problems

that he would like to discuss with Lucien. At this moment, he tried to hold back his smile and scratched his head, "Lucien, you are like a man who just had his wedding. You have this foolish smile on your face, and you emit a weird sense of satisfaction. You are also walking unsteadily. Anyone with the preliminary experience can tell what happened."

His meaning between the lines was obvious.

Lucien rubbed his forehead in embarrassment. Did he show his cockiness so patently?

So, he hurried to hide his smile and tried to make himself not look so happy.

After talking to K for a while, Lucien stepped into the Element Paradise. After the change of time and space, he saw a pair of silver-grey eyes before he was adapted to the dizziness.

"Your Excellency Hathaway..." Having just slept with her junior, Lucien couldn't help but feel that she was some sort of 'mother-in-law' standing before him.

Not having any expression, Hathaway said very seriously, "She is a girl that is very serious about love. I hope you are not as a playboy as Oliver."

Grand Arcanist Oliver had always been used as a negative example by the rational ladies.

"Your Excellency Hathaway should know very well my love life in the past years. Commitment is the gentlest but most powerful strength in this world, and that is my attitude towards both magic studies and my love." Faced with his 'mother-in-law', Lucien was naturally both sincere and solemn.

After a brief silence, Hathaway nodded her head slowly, with slight delight on her face as if she was comforted by the fact that Natasha and Lucien were finally together. "I've been watching you. If you were otherwise, I would've stopped you. If you contradict yourself, we will be enemies."

Her words were always concise and sometimes subtly ambiguous.

Lucien secretly wiped his cold sweat. Thankfully, he had always been strict about himself. Except for his illusions, he abode by his principles even when he was alone, or it would've been hard for him to pass the test of his 'mother-in-law'. "I will cherish her, respect, comfort her, and accompany her from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live."

Under the pressure of his 'mother-in-law', it was hard for Lucien to organize his speech, so he simply modified the wedding vow from Earth.

Hathaway did not pursue any further but nodded, "He who honors his words is a qualified man. I have some questions regarding the new alchemy to discuss with you."

Hu. Finally passed. Lucien took a long breath in his heart. Discussing arcana questions was much easier than facing the interrogation of such an intimidating 'mother-in-law'.

Lucien and Hathaway did not stop the discussion until more than half a day later. Then, Lucien returned to Allyn, planning to ask for the files about the clergy in the Holm parish. The files specified which of them were radicals, which were reactionists, and which were appeasers who wished to live in peace with the Congress of Magic. The list could be given to Natasha for her reference.

It was the beginning of the operation that Lucien had come up during his 'philosophical state', partly based on the British Reformation.

He found the order that Henry VIII issued very agreeable. "Those who do slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce, by express writing or words, that the king should be heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper of the crown... are guilty of high treason. "

Hardly had he left the magic tower of the Will of Elements when Lucien's monocle became hot. So, he turned on the magic circle.

“Lucien, where were you? Come here. Oliver has some questions that he wants to discuss with you.” The Lord of Storm’s loud voice echoed.

Lucien hurried to explain, “I spent the morning discussing ‘new alchemy’ with Her Excellency Hathaway...”

Fernando, however, had already cut the communication impatiently. He was rather bad-tempered when he was reverse-engineering ‘fission’ and ‘fusion’, and he was not interested in Lucien’s explanation at all.

Turning off the monocle, Lucien raised his eyebrow. Had his master made Oliver accept it? That was rather fast...

...

On the 33rd level of the Allyn magic tower, Lucien walked into Fernando’s library.

Fernando was scribbling when Lucien walked in. Suddenly dazed, he said in a vague smile, “Today is your birthday. Did you date the queen last night? Also, it seems that you’ve been well tasted by ‘Her Majesty’, haven’t you?”

“Huh?” Lucien secretly suspected that his disguise was flawed. How could his teacher tell?

Fernando immediately laughed out aloud. “How inexperienced of you. I was just bluffing. However, I could tell that you had a date with Natasha even without using the prophecy magic.”

“Why?” Asked Lucien, subconsciously.

Fernando chuckled, “I smelled the air of estrus when you were far away. How about it? Do you feel that your life has entered a new phase?”

Lucien was rendered speechless.

“How shocking. I thought that it would take you years before you made any progress, but it actually only took several days. I’m

beginning to suspect that you are not my student Lucien!” Fernando ‘mocked’ Lucien, “but I’m completely relieved now. Natasha is now definitely on the Congress’ side. We will try to support you to be the Prince of Nekso. But it will take time. Don’t be hasty. Lucien, what a rarely-seen gem you are. Not only are you capable of arcana studies, but you are also good at sex-traps...”

Fernando was in such a good mood that he sounded more and more absurd as he rambled on, but he seemed more happy about Lucien’s love life than about the Congress’ increasing influence on Holm.

Prince of Nekso was a title for the queen’s husband, originated from the title of the prince who built the Nekso Palace.

“Master, where is His Excellency Oliver?” Lucien hurried to change the topic.

Fernando grew serious when it came to arcana questions. He led Lucien to his demiplane and showed him Oliver, who was wearing a white wig. It must be admitted that he was a handsome, graceful middle-aged man.

“Evans, when Fernando gave me your paper, I found it unacceptable and believed that the view on time and space was ridiculous and wrong. However, after consideration, I realized that this view had germinated in my heart a long time ago, and I never had the guts to boldly take the step forward because of the boundary of the experience and common sense of the past.” Said Oliver in a smile.

Lucien was slightly relieved. It seemed that this guy’s cognitive world was not broken. “I feel relieved that Your Excellency Oliver does not reject it.”

“In fact, when we studied electromagnetism, many sorcerers and I tried to integrate Mr. President’s theory with Brook’s theory, thereby constructing a real arcana system that can be used in every aspect. After all, the sources of all things should have the same nature, which we can call magic, or arcana, or truth, but it can’t be in two different systems.” Oliver spoke of his dream.

It was the common wish of all sorcerers to find a system that could explain everything. They had been pursuing it for thousands of years since the Magic Empire.

“During the integration, we found a lot of problems and conflicts, which were never resolved because we could not let go of our common sense in the past. It was exactly because of those experiences that I found it not difficult to accept your paper. I believe that many other sorcerers are the same, but of course, those who cannot accept it are definitely the majority.”

Lucien nodded his head. He had estimated that the ‘relativistic time’ would be attacked by everyone and did not expect that certain sorcerers had already done remarkable research on the problem. The idea was so disruptive that Oliver and his fellows would certainly not write into papers but would only discuss in private until convincing proofs were found. Therefore, Lucien knew nothing about it earlier.

Oliver changed the topic. “But there are still a lot of problems in your paper. I would like to discuss them with you today.”

“With pleasure.” Lucien sat on the couch next to Oliver. Fernando was ready to join the discussion, too.

Oliver took out his paper and pen. “It’s about relativity and the dilation of time. Consider a simplified experiment. There are two twins. The elder brother flies at a speed close to that of light, whereas the younger brother stays where he is. When his brother reaches a planet that the light can only illuminate with a journey of fifteen years, he returns immediately. Then, which of them will be younger when he meets his brother?”

“From the perspective of the younger brother, he was still, and his brother flew away at a speed close to that of light. According to the formula where high speed equals to slower time, his elder brother obviously should be younger than him.”

“However, from the elder brother’s perspective, according to the principle of relativity, he can regard himself as still, in which case his younger brother had fled away from him at a speed close to that

of light. Then, obviously, the younger brother should still be younger.”

“So, it is a paradox.”

Lucien smiled. It was exactly the problem that he expected.

Chapter 522: On the Future

Chapter 522: On the Future

Lucien picked up a quill and drew two lines on the paper. “First of all, I admit that the system of relativity is very imperfect. It cannot explain inertia. It is also limited to the uniform-speed reference system and cannot be extrapolated to the uniform accelerated frame of reference.”

“However, regarding the question that you presented, it is not a paradox in this case. Here are the timelines of the brothers, let’s analyze them respectively. For the elder brother to fly away with a speed close to that of light, he would need an acceleration from stillness to his eventual speed, which is a process that cannot be neglected. If he intends to return, there would be another acceleration process in the opposite direction. It has to overcome inertia and cannot be neglected, either. In the meantime, considering the principles of relativity, the younger brother never overcame inertia...”

While analyzing, Lucien calculated with hypothetical data. The simplest approach was to explain inertia and gravity with the general theory of relativity, but Lucien couldn’t do it just yet. He could only slightly introduce the concept and then calculate the two timelines with his knowledge in calculus to reach a result.

“... Therefore, the elder brother would be younger than the younger brother. To be more exact, his body changes were slowed down...” Lucien concluded.

Oliver rubbed the quill and read Lucien’s calculation carefully. In the end, he nodded, “It was immature of me to have overlooked acceleration and deceleration. However, if his brother does not return but keeps wandering in space, after he reaches a stable speed, which one of them would be younger?”

“It’s a moot question. If the elder brother does not return or meet his younger brother, they would be in two different reference

systems and could not be compared, like two people living in two utterly unrelated worlds. They have their own lives, but they do not depend on each other.” Lucien smiled and pointed at the air nearby. “Perhaps, there is such a real material world right next to us. It overlaps our world, but they have absolutely no influence on each other. Chances are that some people are holding a lively ball exactly in this place of that world.”

Fernando did not find anything wrong with Lucien’s explanation. However, he became solemn after hearing the random example that Lucien came up with. “That’s a strange thought. If such a world does exist, our studies on time and space will be only at the beginning phase, because it’s hard to imagine that two overlapping worlds that are both made of materials do not affect each other.”

Lucien hurried to shake his head. “It’s just a random thought. There’s no need to ponder on it. It is not of any theoretical background or actual significance.”

In his carelessness, Lucien proposed part of the content of a certain view on time and space in the spirit library. However, it was just an unproven speculation that was not appreciated by the mainstream.

“Then, we will move on to the next question...” Oliver opened his mouth again.

After extensive communication, since the relativistic effect had been proved by the accelerated particles, Oliver accepted the system for now, but he also reached a consensus with Lucien and Fernando that it was still an imperfect theory. Being that according to the theory, time flows slower on artificial planets than it does on the ground. However, according to actual data, the opposite is true.

“In any case, we have finally made a huge step on this path. I have a feeling that it will be a major reform in the macroscopic field, and we need to direct other arcanists carefully. Hehe. Lucien, you’ve shown remarkable abilities in both microscopic and macroscopic fields. It will be a dilemma for you to choose your legendary class. Other people’s problem is that they can’t find or construct a legendary class that befits their cognitive world, but you are wavering between two choices. How they will envy you!”

Oliver praised him, "I'll submit the matrix of transformation as soon as possible so that it will be published in the next issue of 'Arcana'."

Lucien had been cautious about the problem and explained everything based on experimental results and actual phenomena. After all, it was possible that the relativistic system or the quantum mechanics system suddenly proved unfit for the law of this world.

Soul, spiritual power, space barrier, world feedback, magic models and everything else reminded him that this was a world which seemed the same as Earth but might differ greatly in critical fields.

However, since he could find better approaches to study them, Lucien could only slowly grope forward on his current path.

After ensuring his relationship with Natasha, Lucien had a more detailed plan about his future path. He was planning to adopt a more conservative attitude. After all, he was no longer alone. Which meant that he would focus on quantum mechanics and use relativity only as assistance during the construction of his cognitive world later, and that he was ready to modify the theory of relativity anytime according to quantum mechanics.

At least, according to Lucien, quantum mechanics was the only theory that could explain the differences between the two worlds, including magic, spiritual power and bloodline assimilation, when they had a lot of identical parameters.

Now that he was taking a bet, Lucien preferred quantum mechanics to the general theory of relativity!

Of course, the gravity control and time control that the general theory of relativity brought were something that Lucien could not abandon, either.

"The new alchemy is not perfected yet, and the construction of a legendary class is far away. I haven't thought much of it yet." Lucien speculated that the legendary class should be something like 'Atom Control', which would lower the demands on his studies of 'fission' and 'fusion'. Chances were that 'Atomic Fission' and 'Eternal Blaze' would be the fundamental magics of the class, like

‘Spirit Confinement’ for Demigod-lich and ‘Element Disintegration’ for Hathaway.

Lucien did not say anything else. He suddenly changed the topic. “Your Excellency Oliver, I’m told that you were studying the Dark Dragon Lord. Have you found anything?”

Since Lucien proved himself to be a master of the field after submitting ‘Report on the Changes of the Godhood of Ell’, Oliver did not hide anything but said directly, “I met many problems. The moment the Dark Dragon Lord leaves his alternate dimension and enters the main material world, his godhood will decline. It seems that the power of faith cannot be imposed on him against the space barrier. So, he can only resort to his previous accumulation.”

“But why is the Saint Truth not affected at all? Is this the difference between the Fake Gods and the True God?”

Although he was talking about the True God, Oliver showed no reverence. God for him was just a noun and a target to research on.

Lucien did not understand either. Recording what Oliver said in his note, he bid him farewell, ready to leave ‘Thunder Hell’ and went to apply for the files.

“Evans, wait a moment.” Oliver suddenly stopped Lucien.

Lucien looked at Oliver in confusion. He was not familiar with the guy. What else could they talk about?

Oliver smiled, “I made certain mistakes recently. Therefore, I intended to write an opera as an apology for Florencia. Evans, you are the best musician. I want to cooperate with you. The tunes and melodies of the operas in the past were hardly satisfactory.”

“I’ll try when I have time.” Lucien intended to build up his friendship with Oliver. It was always better to have one more supporter than one more enemy in the Highest Council.

Also, Lucien was also planning to write an opera as a gift for Natasha in the anniversary next year. Although he had the spirit library as his reference, he was hoping to adapt the works on a

large scale. After all, it would seem more genuine if the gift that he offered to his love was actually created by himself. He could use Oliver's advice.

Receiving an affirmative answer, Oliver left in satisfaction, promising that he would send the script to Lucien in a few days.

After he left, Fernando scorned, "He will die in the hands of a woman someday. I'm even suspicious that Florencia will give him a critical attack when he is asleep after she is done tolerating him."

"A legendary sorcerer cannot be killed so easily..." Lucien was not worried about Oliver's safety.

Fernando did not say anything else. He turned to Lucien and said, "Don't speak to anybody after your relationship with Natasha. Take it slowly."

Although somebody could've guessed that Natasha celebrated with Lucien for his birthday last night from their traces, it remained obscure how close their relationship was since she left at dawn. Also, Lucien exposed his own traces on purpose, because he could've returned under a transformation mask.

...

In the Affair Committee, Lucien found Thompson.

"You want the files of the clergy of the Holm parish? Since when have you been interested in politics?" Thompson was rather surprised. In his eyes, Lucien was an ascetic sorcerer who was not interested in the outside world at all, as proved by the fact that he did not even have a partner.

Lucien smiled, "We all live in the Kingdom of Holm after all. If we want to run experiments in peace, we cannot ignore politics. Thompson, I believe I have the clearance, right?"

"Of course you do. Your clearance are only second to the members of the Highest Council now." Thompson asked his subordinates to find the files and gave them to Lucien. "You can't take them away or copy them but can read them here."

Lucien browsed through them and focused on the people who were willing to get in touch with sorcerers, recording the names on his spirit library.

“... Cardinal Richard, level eight, spoke that God loves people and cares about what they do but not who they are in his public sermon...”

Rubbing the name with his thumb, Lucien had a target.

...

In the Nekso Palace, Natasha met the nobles large and small according to the previous routine.

Although a brief conversation was not enough for her to grasp what everybody was thinking, it was something worth doing because it could deepen her impression on the nobles and their reverence for the crown deep in their hearts.

“Your Majesty, I have a summer resort in the suburbs. Would you honor us by your presence?” Duke James changed his previous rejective attitude and said to Natasha rather flatteringly.

Natasha smiled, “I will visit it if I have time.”

As she expected, after her birthday celebration for Lucien was discovered by them, the liberals suddenly became much more enthusiastic and supportive of her.

After the baldy James bid farewell respectfully with a smile, Natasha finally asked Camil who just entered the hall. “Aunt Camil, what’s the reaction of the Church?”

The Holm parish’s reaction would be Sard’s reaction!

Chapter 523: Protection

Chapter 523: Protection

Camil had never agreed with Natasha and Lucien's test for Sard. She believed that it was too hasty and best be postponed until Natasha had a bunch of loyal supporters because it might infuriate the Church. However, she barely objected to Natasha's decisions after they were made, and she tried to cover the traces after they had determined their relationship.

At this moment, her solemn and rigid face looked somewhat strange. "A secret letter was delivered from the Radiance Church, reminding you that you should know your boundaries when you appease the nobles who are in favor of the Congress of Magic, and that you should not go to the royal magic tower of Holm too often, which would disappoint the devout and loyal nobles."

"Just that?" Natasha raised her eyebrow. It was a reasonable reaction, but the problem was that it was too reasonable. There was no telling what was on Sard's mind at all.

She, too, felt that Lucien's proposal was a bit risky, but she understood that the situation could not be changed if she did not overstep the boundary. Under the threat of the Congress of Magic and the Church, all the nobles would sit on the fence first before leaning to any side. The current situation was like a pool of dead water. She could not achieve a satisfactory result without churning it first.

Keeping the strange look, Camil continued, "Also, it encourages you to instigate Lucien Evans to repent, whatever it takes. As long as Lucien Evans betrays the Congress of Magic, and joins the inquisition and becomes a leader of the night watchers, it will be the greatest contribution. The Church will give you full support."

A grand-arcanist-to-be, and a talented sorcerer regarded as the future of the Congress of Magic, seemed to be in love with a certain pious believer. Such encouragement was more a reaction that the

Church would take.

“The reaction is a little weird.” Natasha paced back and forth, not knowing what Sard meant exactly. Did he really believe in her devotion and think that she could seduce Lucien over, or was he just covering the incident with a random excuse?

“It’s hard to guess what an old fox is thinking...” Natasha raised her left hand and touched the communication earring subconsciously, hoping to discuss with Lucien. But then she realized that Lucien should’ve returned to Allyn. Therefore, she hurried to stop in case the purpose of the test was exposed.

When her long, vigorous fingers accidentally touched her earlobe, Natasha suddenly recalled how Lucien cared for it. Her lips immediately curled into a smile, and her eyes became gentle, too.

Camil turned around at the window, as if she found such an expression unsuitable to look at. It was not until Natasha was back to herself a few seconds later that she continued, “There’s something wrong with Sard’s reaction, but it is still reasonable. I suggest you stop testing him in such a way in case you cause a fire. Sometimes, you just need to wait for changes to happen.”

“Aunt Camil, I understand. The most important thing right now is to improve my strength and to control the Sword of Truth as soon as possible.” Natasha said calmly, not making any radical judgment because of ecstasy.

After Camil shut the gate of the palace, Natasha stood behind the desk and picked up the quill. Taking a deep breath, she began writing: “Protection, sympathy, justice, kindness, bravery...”

The words that represented chivalry flowed from her pen, fluent and magnificent at first but dim and obscure later, as if they were interrogating her own heart, faith and path.

After a long time, the only words below Natasha’s pen was ‘protection’ and ‘bravery’. Also, the strokes became clear and emitted firmness.

In such a way, Natasha sorted through her experiences so far, her recent confusion, the dawn she saw after she made up her mind, and the ideas that Lucien imbued with her, gradually locating the source of her chivalry and her faith, which was the love for her family and subjects and the bravery against enemies and schemes.

“Perhaps, this is the Lord in my heart.”

Natasha dropped the quill. Looking at the words on the paper, she had a strong sense of relief, as if the dust on her heart had been wiped off. While her confusion and hesitation in the past hadn't been completely eliminated, she believed that she could definitely walk out of the swamp as time went by.

That would be the moment when she advanced into level eight and drew the Sword of Truth.

When that day came, she would not need to activate the defense in the Nekso Palace, or cover herself with Lucien's 'Congus Ring' next to her, when she intended to test Sard's reaction.

Warming up her body, Natasha suddenly had the desire of fighting that she hadn't felt for a long time. Therefore, she grabbed 'Pale Justice', opened the gate of the palace, and went to the 'Knight's Corridor' that had been intensified specifically, eager to unleash her delight by exhausting herself.

.....

Inside Duke of Frenburg's residence...

The conservatives, who have waited for a long time, also rose when Rex finally walked in. They asked, "What's the Church's attitude regarding the incident last night?"

Rex sat straight and frowned, "His Excellency Saint Sard reminded Her Majesty that she should not visit the royal magic tower of Holm too often, and that she should have boundaries when she appeases the nobles who are inclined to the Congress of Magic."

"Only a reminder?" Count Barady observed in disappointment.

Rex snapped his crimson coat. “The queen is also encouraged to allure Lucien to betray the Congress of Magic.”

“Isn’t it feeding a goat to a tiger?” Duke York said angrily.

In his eyes, Lucien would grow into a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer sooner or later, finding his way into the Highest Council. Even though Douglas would be the president for a long time due to the longevity of sorcerers, it would still be much better than betraying and joining the night watchers.

It was not the War of Dawn where sorcerers could barely keep themselves safe. The current arcana system was not esoteric for him, either. Queen Natasha would only be seduced by him if she were to seduce him. It would be best to ask them to draw the lines.

Could they only use radical methods when the queen was already enchanted?

Duke Rex shook his head. “His Excellency Saint Sard was worried that radical methods would anger the queen and make her lean towards the nobles who favor the Congress of Magic.”

Duke of York was a grand knight in his thirties. Not as patient as the older men, he couldn’t help but stand up and pace anxiously. “Are we going to let things run their course? The queen’s tendency is apparent now. It is balanced but more inclined to the Congress of Magic. Many nobles on our side are not firm. They are used to following the crown and their lords. It is estimable that more nobles will be working with James, Russell, Henson and the rest of them. Our comparison will be reversed in a year. We have to make preparations.”

Duke Rex stared at Duke York. “What preparations?”

Looking around at the five dukes, three marquises and five counts in the room, Duke York said subtly, “We will make preparations like what you did when the late king was summoned by the Lord, president.”

His family was Kritonia’s family. That was why he spoke to Rex so

boldly.

Rex changed his face. “York, I didn’t do anything. I only accepted His Majesty’s request to make Holm stronger. Did you hear any rumors?”

Duke Solefen coughed and interrupted Duke York. “York, do you want to divide the country? Do you want every noble in your territory to covet it? Order is the foundation for nobles, or we would’ve been separated and swallowed. We will only approach doom if we are too radical.”

He raised his hands to stop other nobles from interrupting and went on, “I believe that the current circumstances are tolerable. Although the queen is likely to be biased towards the Congress of Magic due to Hathaway and Lucien Evans, her other decisions obviously show that she will not abandon us. She needs balance and stability, which are what I want to see, too, instead of a ruined Holm.”

“Anyone who attempts to sabotage the stability of the kingdom will be the Solefen family’s enemy.”

He spoke bluntly without the rhetoric of nobles, but it was based on the fact that his father was the other legendary knight of the kingdom. Other people couldn’t copy him.

“This is my opinion. I’ll be on my way if that’s all.” Clearing his black cape, Duke Solefen rose and left, followed by two dukes, two marquises and three counts.

Duke York watched Solefen leave. In the end, he snorted, “Balance and stability. It seems that he has heard ‘Arcana Voice’ and ‘News of the World’ a lot.”

The phrases began to spread from those channels.

Duke Barsaton looked at Duke York weirdly. How did you know their origin if you hadn’t listened to it?

Then, he coughed and said, “As far as I know, the Solefen family has established alchemical workshops with sorcerers in private, earning abundant revenue from magic lamps, magic radios and

telegrams. Also, they have vast lands in the alternate dimensions. The introduction of fertilizer has increased their family wealth because of the improved yield of the lands.”

He was insinuating that, while most people in the Solefen family were firm believers, they were actually happy to see the ‘balance’ and ‘stability’.

Duke York opened his hands. “Therefore, we need to make preparations.”

Duke Rex and the rest of them looked rather gloomy. After deep thought, Count Barady said, “Maybe we don’t need to do anything. Somebody has always been discontented...”

.....

At night, the wind started to blow on Rentato, driving away the heat of the day.

Lucien, who had transformed, walked with Alferris, who was in the appearance of a little boy, was going to the ‘Salvation Church’ in the east district of the city.

“You will let me enter Richard’s dream later with Dream Casting.” Lucien said to Alferris.

Although he was capable of the sixth-circle magic, Alferris was one of the best experts in terms of illusions and dreams below the legendary level. It would be a better option.

According to the files, Richard was a renowned cardinal in the Holm parish. He was a native of the country and grew up in the Rentato abbey. He had never been away from the place during the hundred years when he turned from an intern priest into a level-eight cardinal. Many priests and bishops in the parish were taught and raised by him. However, because he was too gentle, and his interpretation about the Cannon was different from that of the Church, he was kicked away from the central circle of the Holm parish after the public sermon. He was a target that was worth getting in touch with.

Before, Lucien planned to ask the Affair Committee to send somebody to test and persuade him, and after the guy's ideas were figured out, he would be referred to Natasha for final observation. However, the files showed that the Affair Committee had sent a lot of sorcerers and liberals to persuade him, but to no avail. The Congress of Magic was certainly not so idiotic that they never thought of getting in touch with the appeasers before Lucien proposed.

Therefore, Lucien decided to meet Richard in person and get a comprehensive understanding about his opinions. But in the future, such things should be entrusted to the trustworthy sorcerers in the Affair Committee, because the most important thing for him was still to increase his strength.

Alferris licked the ice cream that Lucien specifically made for him and asked, "No problem. You can do whatever you want in the dream."

As a crystal dragon, he hated heat.

After they reached the Salvation Church, Lucien and Alferris found a corner to hide in, and Alferris cast the spell remotely. Now was the time of evening prayer in the church. The complete defense circle was not activated yet.

.....

After the prayer, Richard was going to return to his house, but he ran into a young man in a black cloak when he just went out of the church.

Narrowing his eyes, Richard smiled, his white eyebrow shivered. "A dream? Who are you? Do you want to persuade me?"

Lucien thought for a moment and said, "I would like to discuss justification by faith with you, Your Highness."

Richard was stunned.

Many sorcerers and nobles had talked with him before, but none of them had ever discussed doctrines with him.

Chapter 524: Questions

Chapter 524: Questions

“I heard that you said god’s love towards the mundane shows no preference. No matter if he’s an ordinary folk, a sorcerer, or even a vampire, as long as he follows the Cannon, as long as he behaves himself, he is regarded as a loyal believer, and he can be saved.” said Lucien calmly, like he was a scholar here for a theology discussion.

Lucien did not strictly follow the theological doctrine, justification by faith alone, as the Saint Truth was still different from the religion on the Earth. If Lucien just copied everything and used them here, it would be a big joke in Richard’s eyes.

Therefore, Lucien further developed the content and meaning of justification by faith alone, and gave it a more comprehensive religious context.

Hearing Lucien’s question, Richard gradually realized this young man’s intention. He assumed that the young man was a sorcerer or a demon here to tempt and persuade him. So he smiled and said, “So the honest have no fear, he will live in the hollow realm; the kind have no fear, he will ascend Mountain Paradise; the just have no fear, he will be blessed...”

What Richard just said came from Cannon, and he said, “If a sorcerer or a vampire, like you said, can serve the Lord with their whole heart and soul, can strictly stick to their belief, he is righteous and will be saved. The night watchers are those who have been saved. But what the rest of the sorcerers and dark creatures are doing goes exactly the opposite way.”

“So Cardinal Richard, I understand you’re talking about those ancient sorcerers. They killed masses. They were crazy. They are everything but righteous. They shouldn’t be saved, yes. But what about the sorcerers today? Most of them obey laws. They behave themselves, control themselves. Their ways of living comply with

the instruction of Cannon.” Lucien smiled.

Richard knew that the young man was talking about those arcanists who were fully devoted to their experiments, so he said seriously, “They are blasphemers. They are full of lies when they are with the true followers.”

“You mean studying things in the world is regarded as blasphemy?” Lucien pointed at the sky, “Is there a line in Cannon saying that the world should not be explored? Did Lord ever tell the mundane that they shall never approach his realm?”

Richard indeed recalled, and he realized that the young man was not talking nonsense. There were warnings for those false believers, the evil, the bloodthirsty, but nothing strictly prevented the exploration of the world.

Lucien was well aware of what was in Cannon and what was not as he saw Francis transcribing the doctrines multiple times, and there were also books in his spirit library for reference. When Cannon was put together, it was many years before the congress was established. At that time, Douglas was probably still a middle-rank sorcerer, and there was no such thing as world exploration.

Therefore, in the Cannon, only bloody human body experiments were strictly forbidden, but most arcanists were not from the school of Necromancy.

After several minutes of silence, Richard said, “The mundane shall stay away. The mundane shall bow. That means human beings should not approach the realm of God.”

Lucien was, for a moment, a bit speechless. Those priests could always get what they want from a doctrine by reading into it from different perspectives.

Fortunately, Richard added, “Also, in the Doctrines, it says that the mundane shall never step into the forbidden area of God.”

That was the exact topic that Lucien wanted. He hurriedly said, “The Doctrines? But it isn’t for God, but from the popes and some

priests. Is it authoritative?”

Richard slightly frowned, “The Pope is the only speaker of God on the land. His words are words from Lord.”

“But the North Church don’t think so.” said Lucien. He was very grateful that there was the great division in the Saint Truth, or he would never have the weapon to bombard the doctrines in front of Richard, a true theology expert. Also, Lucien wasn’t here for a real discussion, but to guide Richard to figure it out his own thoughts, which was the psychological guidance part in Lucien’s illusion!

When it came to criticize and denounce the North Church, Richard could go on and on. These words made Lucien’s head extremely heavy, but all Lucien was waiting for was one specific sentence.

“... All the lambs shall receive baptism where the shepherds pray for them. Under the shepherd’s guidance and help, they can be saved. The leader of the shepherds speaks my will.” said Richard. The lines which set up the statues of a pope were more than familiar to him.

light flashed through Lucien’s eyes and he instantly cut off Richard, “So justification by faith alone is not possible. No matter how devoted we are, no matter how we behave ourselves according to Cannon, the salvation has to depend on the priests and the pope, right? ”

That was a question that had been bothering Richard for years. This was his first time facing the question thrown at him by someone else. Richard was, for a moment, completely speechless.

“God has love for everyone, but more for shepherds, right? God has love for everyone, but is unwilling to directly connect to an individual’s heart, right? When a man prays, the praying will work better in a church than in his own bedroom, right? A priest can only get divine power when the pope nods, right?” Lucien seized the chance and threw at Richard a series of questions.

Richard tried to say something, but he knew that many priests got their divine power simply when they were reading Cannon or

praying, without any extra guidance, so he remained silent.

Lucien raised his voice,

“If the pope is indeed the only speaker of God, why does he keep misreading Cannon? Why has he made so many changes to the Doctrines?”

“If God does not allow human beings to explore the world, why did the pope rewrite the doctrines and rebuild divine spells according to the arcanists’ findings?”

That was the very reason why Richard’s thinking had been messed up in the past twenty to thirty years. He did not know what to say.

“Therefore, I think, the Church, the pope... They are in fact standing between the followers and their Lord, because of their own desires for power. No matter if an individual has divine power or not, all the mundane should be equal in front of Lord, and those who betray the Cannon, including them, will be thrown into hell for what they’ve done.”

“Those who demand and acclaim sophisticated church rituals and those who say that the Church must be served are the fake believers. They are preventing God from loving everyone of us.”

“And those who keep changing the doctrines based on their will must be demons that are hiding!”

Before Richard could say anything, Lucien kept throwing the words at him, leaving Richard no chance to dispute.

“We should make those get out of the way who keep talking about faith and belief but are in fact blaspheming God’s will.”

“Say farewell to those monopolists who are sucking in power and wealth from common people’s pure faith!”

“Between Lord and followers, there should be no barriers made by any. There should only be faith, and the faithful demeanour!”

Richard stared at Lucien. This young man had spoken out all the

things that he had been thinking to himself but dared not say, and in a more detailed, more structured, and more radical way!

Lucien stopped here. He was waiting for Richard's response.

After a long time, Richard finally put on a bitter smile and said, "The power of the priests should be regulated. Lord gave them divine power to make them protect followers, not to make them rule."

Lucien grinned.

...

When the mist cleared, Richard opened his eyes. He realized that he was still praying in front of the cross.

He sighed, "Fallen Morning Star... He deserves the title."

Outside of the church, Alferris said in surprise with its two big amber-colored eyes open wide, "That's it, Lucien? Countless have failed persuading him!"

"I did not persuade him; He persuaded himself. If there was no root, my language trap would never do him in. He's a theologian, but I'm not," said Lucien calmly, "I was just giving him an idea, and the fact that he agreed with it was the most important part."

Alferris gave Lucien's theory a very general conclusion, "Anyways, you're smart!"

"I'm just good at mental guidance and know something about theology. In other words, among those who are good at illusions, I am the one who knows theology the best; and among those theologians, I'm best at mental suggestion." Lucien grinned.

Also, he had a whole spirit library in his soul.

Lucien felt a bit more relaxed now. If everything went well with Richard, he should be able to bring him to Natasha later. However, when he was about to leave with Alferris, he sensed a dangerous power approaching.

Someone was coming.

Chapter 525: Assassination

Chapter 525: Assassination

The sense only lasted less than a second, like it was just a false hint. But the ring, Congus Ring, that Lucien was wearing was reminding him that it wasn't just an illusion.

“Lucien...” Alferris tried to talk to Lucien, but was stopped by him. Its big amber-colored eyes looked confused.

Who is it? What was the person doing here this late at night, near the small church located in the civilian zone of the city?

But the dangerous power never came back again. So Lucien said to Alferris using secret messaging, which would only produce tiny magic waves, “Someone was nearby, at least senior-rank. Now it seems that the person has gone into the Salvation Church. We gotta wait here for a bit longer to make sure Richard’s safe.”

Alferris all of sudden got excited. An enemy meant a fight; fight meant victory; and victory meant trophy!

Lifting its claw, Alferris wiped off its drool.

.....

Standing in front of the cross, Richard reflected on the conversation he just had with the young man. All the messy thoughts that had been bothering him had now become more organized and consistent, which helped him reform his heart full of faith.

At this moment, he felt great peace. He prayed silently, “My Lord, if you think I’m twisting Cannon, please let the divine light devour me, because I deserve it.”

In the course of time, Richard started to be covered in a layer of divine light, like he was a saint that got blessed by God. He opened his eyes and looked up again at the cross, and then he said in a deep voice, “You are one, and everyone. You are the moment, and

forever... I think I understand why the Church should exist. The existence of the Church should protect faith, not interrupt it. Everyone is entitled to get enlightenment from Cannon, as long as they are devoted."

Richard had never felt more relieved than right now. His heart was full of joy and faith, thudding a bit faster in excitement. He even felt that now he was able to reach level nine although the progress had been rather sluggish for the past decades.

"It's all your blessing. Only truth lives forever." Richard crossed his chest.

In Lucien's eyes, Richard would have already stepped in level nine for a long time if it had not been because of his own confusion and struggling. His true faith and the deep understanding in theology would even bring him to the next level – a saint cardinal, legendary level.

Richard stood up. After all of the priests had left the hall, he headed for the garden. Breathing in the fresh air mixing with the flower aroma, he carefully thought about the reform that he was going to propose and felt truly blessed by his Lord.

No matter how difficult the reform would be, no matter who was going to step out and stop him, Richard was determined to carry it out.

At this time, he sensed someone walking to him.

It was someone with a red robe, wearing a biretta.

"Octave?" Richard recognized him.

Octave once listened to him preaching in Rentato, and he was the previous red robe in charge of the Holm Inquisition.

Octave was a serious-looking, middle-aged man, whose black brows were thick and light blue eyes sharp. He smiled and said, "You must have heard what's been going on recently. I'm a bit confused, so I wonder if I can talk to you."

“You have resentment in heart, so you are closing your eyes?” asked Richard using the lines in Cannon.

The look on his face and his voice was calm and soothing.

Octave crossed before he answered, “Yes, I’m afraid resentment will take charge of me and eventually make me forget my true intention – to serve the Lord. But sir Richard, should we just let the evil free and keep telling ourselves to hold ourselves back because of all the reasons? Isn’t this betrayal to Lord’s message?”

Then Octave cited the Cannon, “... because of faith, he showed no fear facing demons and flame. He threw himself into the crowd of the most dangerous enemies, and there was no retreat...”

He asked himself the question, and also the Church.

Richard shook his head, “What is evil? Why was the killed nobleman evil?”

“He listened to Arcana Voice; He worked with those sorcerers to make money.” Octave raised his voice.

Richard pointed at the Cannon in his hand, “Lord only told us not to be greedy, not to lie, not to indulge, not to disregard lives. Which one did he fail?”

“He lied.” answered Octave.

Richard smiled, “Those who lie will not ascend to Mountain Paradise, but linger on the land and be punished by lightning and flame. The Cannon never says that those who lie deserve death punishment.”

“He worked with a sorcerer! He listened to Arcana Voice!” Octave did not know what else to say.

Richard said peacefully, “As long as the sorcerer is not evil judged by the Cannon. There’s no such thing in the Cannon saying that he was not allowed to work with a sorcerer.”

“How can a sorcerer not be evil? The Doctrines says...” Octave cited

the lines.

Richard just smiled, until Octave's voice gradually lowered his voice.

"Since you're willing to follow the Doctrines, I'd assume that you respect the Church's decision. Why are you angry?"

Octave's face lit up with this new perspective, "I see. I'm not against the Church, not the Doctrines, but the pope and the leading priests who stand high above in divinity but keep misinterpreting the Lord's words. They have strayed away, thus they're no longer capable of delivering the correct messages! Sir Richard, I know that you've been against the revision of the Doctrines. Please step out and awaken the rest of them! We have to propose to resume the original Doctrines."

"What if the pope says 'no'?" asked Richard. He had just been through lobbying, and therefore he immediately noticed the indication in Octave's words.

"If he says no, then we will choose a new one! I believe that many grand cardinals share the same opinion!" said Octave excitedly, "In my mind, sir, you're an ideal candidate!"

"This Isn't what we want. The correct way to do it is to let every devoted follower to interpret the Canon. That's justification by faith!" Richard shook his head.

Octave was a bit surprised. He did not expect that Richard's belief was even more radical than his.

Octave kept trying to persuade Richard, but Richard would not listen. Richard had made up his mind to stick to his reform.

In the end, Octave said in frustration, "Then I should leave you alone now, sir. I hope that one day you'll agree with us, and we always expect you to be one of us."

Us? Richard slightly frowned, but he did not ask.

After Octave had left, Richard went back to improve his reform

proposal.

Meanwhile, at the end of the corridor, Octave suddenly stopped walking. There was a creepy smile on his face, and in his hand, there was a brown scroll which contained formidable power.

It was always much easier to use a dead person because his mouth was forever shut.

A Richard who got killed by a sorcerer was more of a trigger than a Richard who was alive!

The moment after Octave tore the scroll, the formidable power rushed out. Instantly, the grey color climbed onto Richard's body and infected the entire space within a certain radius.

Everything in the area had stopped moving under the power of the ninth circle spell, Time Stop.

Then Octave tore open another black scroll. The surging magic power targeted directly at Richard and removed all the defensive divine spells that Richard had, and the power could also by chance damage the items that Richard was wearing.

The ninth circle spell, Cracking (Advanced)!

However, when Octave took out the last scroll, Orb of Ultimate Destruction, a figure suddenly appeared in front of him.

The figure pointed at him, and then all of the divine items he was wearing instantly broke into pieces, including the red robe, and part of his body!

Octave was totally unprepared. He had lost the ability to take any actions either physically or mentally.

With New Alchemy, Lucien's spell, Elemental Order, had now had even stronger power, close to the ninth circle.

Although the divine circles had covered most of the magic waves from the spell, since Lucien was so close to it, he still sensed it and was now here to save Richard's life. To avoid being noticed by the

legendaries in Rentato, Lucien did not choose to use Congus Ring.

In Lucien's eyes, what Octave just did was such a waste. Senior-rank scrolls were even more scarce than senior-rank items, since they could only be used once and the materials were rather difficult to find.

In other words, basically, Octave was trying to kill Richard using a great sum of money.

Lucien pointed at Octave again. He was going to lower Octave's magic resistance and then take him back using Petrification for further questioning.

At this time, someone suddenly jumped out from the darkness and his sword directly hacked at Lucien's neck!

Octave was not alone. There was another radiant knight, possessing the bloodline of Elimination!

He knew Lucien, and Lucien knew him, too. The radiant knight was the previous night watch leader from Aalto Inquisition, Lend!

Now Lend was already a level six radiant knight, and somehow he recognized Lucien. Driven by the exhilaration and anger, Lend could not hold himself back anymore.

Because of his bloodline, Elimination, Lucien defensive spells would be removed!

The edge of the sword cut in Lucien's body, but the body turned into foam. With a creepy smile, Lucien disappeared gradually.

Illusion! Lend's heart sank. He hurriedly wielded his sword for defence.

However, at this time, a giant creature showed up behind him. It's big, amber-colored eyes looked at Lend attentively. And then its mouth opened, and the freezing and numbing dragon breath came out.

Under the great pressure from the most powerful creature, Lend's

mind blanked for a moment.

Meanwhile, Lucien appeared again beside Octave. And he directly jumped onto the level eight red robe.

Octave realized that Lucien had cast Baler's Transformation. He scoffed in his mind – A sorcerer turning himself into a radiant knight, how stupid was that?

So he laid a divine defensive circle in front of him against Lucien's attack. As long as he could get out of the place later, he could report to the Church that Richard was in collusion with the Fallen Angel!

However, to Octave's great surprise, Lucien's left hand had directly broken through the divine circle. The fist was covered with a layer of moonlight, and a mix of colors black, white and grey.

Octave wondered what it was.

He wondered if he was just in a dream.

Lucien's left fist went right into the side of Octave's face. Instantly, blood burst out and his teeth fell out.

Octave passed out.

Lucien controlled his power, or he would have punched Octave's brain out

Chapter 526: The Great Prophe

Chapter 526: The Great Prophet

Like a shattered kite in the air, Octave's body was fiercely punched backward by Lucien. Blood spurted out of his mouth, and he had totally lost his consciousness.

Suddenly, the look on his face distorted, and from his body, beams of light burst out. The light was shaped into four pairs of white wings behind his back.

Octave's light blue eyes slowly opened, but now they had become colorless. Looking down upon Lucien, the eyes were sheer cold.

"Angels on the Ground?" Lucien murmured.

Octave heard Lucien's exclamation and said triumphantly, "We're the righteous blessed by God, apostles who take Lord's true will. Of course, we have the power of angels. And you, you filthy Fallen Morning Star, should be cleansed by us!"

Octave said his words quickly. The lines came from the Cannon, and the language was from heaven.

However, Octave's mind was rather clear under the angel's power, and he knew that the power would not last long. Also, if the fight between them went on, the Radiance Church, Holm Royal Magic Tower, Nekso Palace could notice the chaos here at any time. Therefore, he flapped his wings, from where scattered light came out. The light spots then joined together, turning into a magnificent lightwave that rushed at Lucien with significant momentum.

Lucien, who was now with radiant knight power, was caught up in fighting against the light wave. Even the power in his left hand could not help him get out of trouble. Seeing that, Octave scoffed, and then, without hesitation, he reached Lend after a flash and grabbed him. Lend was already out of consciousness because of the crystal dragon's breath. Octave's four pairs of wings blocked the dragon's claws, and then Octave forced his way out of Salvation

Church.

The wings closed, the light disappeared. Octave took Lend with him and both of them vanished into the darkness.

He knew that Lucien and his pet couldn't be chasing after them. Given that he was one of the biggest enemies to Sard, Stone, and the leading night watchers, Lucien had to leave the site as quickly as he could.

Octave cast a series of divine spells to remove the trace he left, and after Lend recovered, he made it twice as secure by asking Lend to use his blood power, Elimination, to cover their whereabouts. Then he finally headed for his real destination.

The night had quieted down because the fight stopped just in time. Those who possessed formidable power in the city were left in peace.

"I didn't expect him... Lucien Evans..." said Lend word by word in extremely bitter hatred. He hated himself for not being powerful enough to kill this cunning demon himself.

Octave sneered, "It was a sneak attack, or we wouldn't have been so passive. But his left hand is weird. The power in it is like your blood power, but even better in nature. It felt... It felt like his power had a much higher rank."

"Higher rank? Was Lucien Evans once the archangel, Fallen Morning Star, God's Left Wing?" said Lend out of astonishment. Although Lucien's titles were familiar to many night watchers, they never believed that it was true. They believed that it was the Pope's explanation to eliminate the negative influence.

Octave was afraid of the power in that left hand. He remained silent, as he didn't know the answer either.

In silence, they kept moving ahead. After a while, Octave said in a low voice, "We can ask the great prophet. He's the Angel King who carries the true will of the Lord. His mission is to defeat the corrupt pope, so he should know Lucien's secrets. In the future, we'll be

able to be more prepared.”

Lend slightly nodded, “We’ll also have to confess to the great prophet since we failed our mission. Richard hasn’t been on our side yet, and we also failed to kill him and cast the blame on a sorcerer. By the way, Cardinal Octave, I don’t remember you being this talkative. You know, you didn’t have to say that out loud...”

Octave did not have to say it – the part that mentioned killing the pope. Octave and Lend both knew about it since they were the core members of the secret group.

Octave touched his face. Although all the wounds had healed, he still remembered the unbearable pain he just went through. He said in a bitter emotion, “I got punched on my head. Yes, I talked too much. I feel that I’m still not able to fully control my body and my mind.”

Lend nodded as he understood. Without saying anything further, he and Octave arrived at a small, shabby church.

Although the place looked shabby, the inside decoration was stunning. Its exquisiteness and luxury was a sharp contrast to its outside appearance.

Octave and Lend were very used to it. They quickly walked through the praying hall, heading for the confession room.

“You two are back.” said a young man with sharp facial features who was walking towards them. He was in his early thirties, but was already wearing the red robe.

Octave slightly nodded, “Arthur, we failed.”

The young man was the most promising red robe valued by the great prophet, and also the most talented priest in Holm Parish in the past fifty years. Before thirty-five, he had already become a level nine red robe. The man named Arthur was regarded as one of the most competitive candidates for the saint cardinal position. However, due to his radicalism, he was always excluded from the central power of Holm Parish.

Arthur's eyes slightly squinted considering that he wasn't expecting this answer, "Failed? With three level nine scrolls?"

"We were close, but then we ran into Lucien Evans. I believe that he was there to persuade Richard." said Octave. He did not mention anything about Lucien's left hand to Arthur, as he thought to himself that this should be a secret only accessible to the great prophet.

"He was hiding, so we were not prepared. He even had a dragon! We managed to run away using Angels on the Ground." Octave added.

Arthur's brown eyes lit up for a moment. He then thought to himself and said, "This is our chance. We will keep it a secret for now. Not telling anyone else that Lucien Evans is contacting Richard might be of benefit to our future plans. If we have no solid evidence, because of Richard's prestige, we'd probably be in trouble."

Lend said calmly, "I know what you mean, Arthur, but the decision should be left to the great prophet."

Arthur did not say anything but directly left for the abbey in Rentato.

Octave and Lend continued to walk along the corridor and then they were surprised to find that they had run into seven to eight red robes on their way, which meant that most of the senior-ranks in the secret groups were all here today, and they were all extreme radicals, consisting one fourth of the entire Holm Parish.

"What's going on here?" Octave asked Lend.

Lend had no idea, although he joined the group prior than Octave, "Maybe there's some emergency. We'll know very soon."

They knocked on the door of the confession room. The gentle but clear voice came, "Octave and Lend? Come on in."

Pushing open the door, Octave and Lend walked in. They bowed to the great prophet who had just finished his confession.

Space was limited here. The candle in the room was not capable of lighting up the entire room. Shadows stretching on the ground, the place seemed a bit intimidating.

The great prophet was standing in the darkness, his face was hidden, but his deep eyes had the power to attract anyone's attention, as if they could suck in one's soul.

Octave saw that there was a book in the great prophet's hand, but he could not see the name of the book clearly.

"You failed?" The prophet asked calmly and gently.

"Yes." Octave and Lend lowered their heads deep, and they recounted what happened in detail.

"This isn't your fault. I made a mistake. I did not ask for God's implication before sending you two there." said the prophet sorrowfully, as if it was him who failed the mission.

"But, it has proved the fact that we're on the correct path. If we take actions too late, the priests will fall into the vicious sorcerers' traps one by one! The pope and some of the grand cardinals are in fact helping the evilness!" the great prophet raised his voice.

"You're the great prophet; you lead us to confront the evilness," both Octave and Lend crossed, "only truth lives forever!"

"What do you two think of the Grand Cardinal Sard? Do you think he might join us?" asked the great prophet.

Octave and Lend both looked up at the great prophet in confusion. Why would the prophet be asking this question?

At this time, finally, Octave was able to see the name of the book:

The Interpretation of Dreams.

"The great prophet, why are you reading this strange book?" Octave could not help asking.

At this time, the great prophet's face started twisting and divine

light burst out from his body. The white, light wings stretched out and filled the entire space. Behind the wings there was the bright sky. Suddenly they were up in the air, not in the confession room anymore!

The dignity and divinity made them have the urge to kneel down.

“Six-wing Seraphim... No, wait, this isn’t right...”

Octave stared at the gorgeous-looking angel standing in front of him in astonishment, but somehow the face was quite familiar to him, as if he had just seen it.

Then the beautiful face put on a creepy smile. The answer struck Octave,

“Lucien Evans!”

The surroundings had all disappeared. Octave opened his eyes. Richard, the crystal dragon, and Lucien Evans were staring at him.

What was it? Was it a dream?

Seeing Octave panicking, Lucien grinned,

“The ones you saw in your dream came from your consciousness. I’ve got a rough idea about who the members are.”

“The place looked shabby, but inside it was luxurious and grand enough to be compared to the Bright Hall, which indicates that in your belief, you’re doing something righteous, even though it requires you to hide in the darkness and your hands will be covered in blood. You look upon heaven, however, you’re in hell...”

“You couldn’t see the face of the great prophet. This means that when you talked to him, the great prophet hid his face...”

“The confession room was narrow, dark, and intimidating. This shows that when you first came to the great prophet, you were in the darkest period of your life. Assumably, that confession room was the very one that you were in...”

“At the end, there were light wings. He once showed his great power in front of you, and that was perhaps where you got your power from, Angels on the Ground...”

Lucien’s tone was dull, but Octave’s face was getting pale.

In Octave’s eyes, Lucien was blocking part of the light from the window of the Salvation Church, making it look as if he actually had the six pairs of light wings.

Chapter 527: "Angel King"

Octave opened his mouth and was about to speak, when gentle, holy light suddenly illuminated inside his body, swallowing both his body and his soul.

After the light disappeared in spots, all the traces that suggested Octave's previous existence were gone, just like what had happened to Lend, captain of the night watchers.

"What is this?" Richard frowned, unable to stop Octave's death.

His hands inside the pockets of his long cloak, Lucien said gravely, "For them, 'Angels on the Ground' is not just a 'grace' that can increase their strength for a short while, but also an incurable 'poison' at critical moments. It should be a precaution in case they are captured and confess their secrets."

After knocking out Octave in one punch, Lucien did not feel anything yet, but the battle where Alferris teased with Lend on the other hand had great changes. Suddenly receiving the enhancement from 'Angels on the Ground', Lend had the overwhelming advantage. If Lucien hadn't finished his battle so quickly and offered help in time, Lend would've probably escaped. Even though the man failed to do so, Lucien could only watch him be swallowed by the power of angels without being able to do anything.

It was for that reason that Lucien did not try to move or wake up Octave, so that the guy could be brought back to Allyn for interrogation, but obtained his intelligence directly via Dream Casting while the power of angels was suppressed by the Silver Moon and the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. Otherwise, Lucien would have preferred to ask for the help of Atlant, the Eye of Curse, or Stanis, the King of Nightmares.

Richard found it unacceptable and shook his head. "How could the Lord's envoys do such things to the Lord's servant?"

It was almost the same as what demons and devils did to their worshipers. Also, since even he, a level-eight cardinal, was unable

to do anything about, it was obvious that the enemy was no ordinary angel. The pure holy light just now convinced him of the source of the power.

"Angels are just God's messengers, but they do not necessarily represent God. The pope that Octave described as corrupt is still able to use God's Arrival. Perhaps, this is a test of the God of Truth." Taking advantage of Richard's bewilderment, Lucien directed him to what he wanted the man to think about.

Richard looked at the ground where Octave disappeared with the typical blue eyes of Holm and mumbled, "Was that 'prophet' really 'Angel King'? Could he really accomplish the religious reform through the pope and the Grand Cardinals?"

"At least based on Octave's subconsciousness, he was convinced that the Angel King had arrived through certain things." Lucien was more or less confused about that. When he first heard 'great prophet' from Octave in the dream, he thought that the Lord of Hell, his old friend, had come again, and was certain of God's relationship with Sard. However, Octave's unsuspecting attitude towards the prophet made Lucien doubt himself, because the Lord of Hell could not steal the power of the God of Truth on his own but had to count on the senior-rank believers.

Therefore, the Angel King, who was only second to the God of Truth in Mountain Paradise and had arrived for real, while not as strong as the Lord of Hell, couldn't have been deceived by the Lord of Hell directly.

Perhaps, the great prophet was just a puppet that the Lord of Hell introduced, and there were other masterminds such as Sard?

While thinking about those things, Lucien went on, "Also, Bishop Richard, you have announced that the right to the interpretation of Canon should be returned to the devout believers. Then, why do you have to rely on the pope and the Grand Cardinals to perform a top-down reform? You should encourage your believers, count on your believers, and use their overwhelming strength to crush the obstacles that stand in the way of faith. Perhaps, that is the purpose of the God of Truth's test, and the reason why he did not stop the

schism of the Church."

Richard turned around and looked at Lucien, stunned. He had never considered why the two parts of the Church both had divine powers after their separation from that point of view. Thinking for a moment, he shook his head and said, "The pope and the the Grand Cardinals are in possession of the extraordinary powers that the Lord grants. The reform will be pointless if I count on the weak believers alone, unless the Lord recalls the divine powers and grants every believer enough strength."

"Bishop Richard, your definition of believer is too narrow. Are nobles believers? Are radiant knights, gold knights and legendary knights believers? As long as your reform meets their wish to communicate with the Lord directly, so that you can make them join your cause, plus part of the conscious members among the Grand Cardinals, it will be possible to experiment on your reform on a small scale." Lucien did not elaborate on it but offered a simple tip. "By then, you will be the unique saint in the history of the Church. Chances are that you will be favored by the God of Truth and become his real spokesperson on earth."

Lucien did not have any god-related faith and naturally could not understand a pious bishop like Richard. Therefore, he habitually allured the man with power, fame and a position on Mountain Paradise after death. In Lucien's eyes, it was hard to push forward Richard's reform without the boost of interests.

Hearing what Lucien said, Richard's eyes suddenly shined. "Yes. I have to count on and activate the believers. They are the foundation of Mountain Paradise and the targets of the Lord's grace!"

Lucien couldn't help but wipe his cold sweat. As a non-professional who was mixed up with too many things, he found it impossible to imagine what the guiding principle and roadmap that Richard came up with in the end for his religious reform would be like.

They did not waste any more time. Fearing that the death of Octave and Lend would raise the wariness of the great prophet, Lucien and Alferris asked Richard to turn on the divine power circle and left

the Salvation Church.

Alferris walked next to Lucien, grieved, with the translucent, amber eyes filled with sorrow. It repeated nonstop, "My trophies, my trophies..."

Lend was swallowed by the holy light without leaving anything, and most of the valuable items on Octave were destroyed by Lucien's Elemental Order. Therefore, Alferris caught no treasure at all.

Lucien patted it in a smile. "I'll keep the scroll of 'Orb of Ultimate Destruction'. The rest of Octave's items will be yours."

Alferris immediately turned around and lunged at Lucien. Extending the tongue, it licked his hands enthusiastically, "Boss, sign me up for another hundred years!"

Where else could it find such a rich, generous and prize-winning partner?

Alferris almost wanted to lock Lucien in its house and urge him to write papers every day!

Lucien was amused by the shameless crystal dragon. Tossing the last few items to him, he hurried to retreat his hand.

Alferris opened the storage bag that Lucien kept the items in temporarily. Its eyes glittering, it poured the treasures into its palm and licked them one after another, as if it were leaving its unique mark on them.

After licking, Alferris counted the treasures with great passion while he asked obsequiously, "Lucien, I didn't know that you had such a profound understanding about dreams."

"It's part of my research, but most of the things I said were far-fetched." Replied Lucien unconcernedly.

Alferris looked at Lucien, finding it strange. "Are you not scared that you reached a wrong conclusion?"

"The few key points are alright. Octave's impression on them was too deep. His reactions could've been analyzed in the dream without any tricks. As for the rest, it doesn't matter whether or not I was right. Does his mental faculty have anything to do with me? Am I responsible for his psychological health?" Said Lucien with a smile.

Alferris did not pursue the question any longer. Counting the lovely treasures, it said angrily, "Lucien, it was outrageous of them to say that I was your pet. We are obviously partners!"

"Yes, partners." Replied Lucien casually.

Thinking for a moment, Alferris asked curiously, "Are pets more important for sorcerers? I can tell that most sorcerers have pets."

It only studied the theories that it was interested in. Pets, which might share its treasures, did not interest it at all.

"Sort of. Pets are the extension of a sorcerer's body. They are the eyes and ears of a sorcerer..." Lucien generally introduced the functions of a pet.

Alferris fell silent as he talked. Lucien looked at it in confusion, only to discover that it was eyeing himself with glowing eyes.

Alferris suddenly lunged at Lucien and licked his left hand intimately: "Boss, recruit me as your pet!"

.....

After getting rid of Alferris with a lot of trouble, Lucien returned to his magic tower and turned on the communication with Natasha.

"... After Richard sorts through his ideas, I will summon him and talk to him. If his ideas are in the interest of us and the nobles, I'll propose to Sard that he be appointed as the archbishop of the royal family." Natasha was in a good mood after hearing Lucien's voice, but she did not reach a decision recklessly.

After their test on Sard's reaction, almost everybody knew that she was still a 'friend' to Lucien. Therefore, Natasha was not afraid of

communicating with Allyn anymore, as long as the frequency was not high.

Lucien was thrilled about it. A while back, he still needed to go to the royal magic tower of Holm cautiously, but the reality had changed much faster than he planned.

"Archbishop of the royal family?" Lucien did not quite understand what the job was about.

Natasha explained with a smile, "The archbishop is responsible for the religious problems within the royal family. The castles of the royal family and the private churches within the manors are under his authority, too. However, my grandfather had been in poor health for the longest time and relied on the treatment of the saint cardinal. Therefore, the Grand Cardinal of the parish was also the archbishop of the royal family. But as a matter of fact, the two posts are independent, and I have a say on the candidate of archbishop."

Lucien immediately realized that it should be a post that the Church set up to control the royal family before the Congress of Magic could compete with the Church, but it was something that Natasha could make use of now.

"Natasha, do you have any systematic ideas about the future of Holm? The Congress and I can only cooperate with you if you have a vision." Lucien asked gently.

Natasha chuckled. "I think we should discuss the question face to face. Lucien, I thought of you every time I saw the moonlight over the past few days."

She expressed her feelings boldly and straightforwardly.

While feeling happy and sweet, Lucien was more or less rendered speechless. Shouldn't he be the one doing the sweet talking?

Chapter 528: Manifestation of Influences

Sensing Lucien's silence, Natasha asked rather confusedly, "You don't like me being so straightforward?"

"No, I love your spontaneity and your aggressiveness. You wouldn't be the Natasha that I love if you cringe shyly." Lucien expressed his feelings, too. "However, I feel that what you said was too 'tough', and it was more suitable for a man to say."

That was because the original quote left a deep impression on Lucien.

Natasha snorted and grimaced, "In fact, when I said that, I had imagined a scene in my mind, where I played Moonlight, building a peaceful, slightly sorrowful atmosphere, before I left the piano, walked to your front, fell on one of my knees, grabbed your hand, kissed the back of your hand, looked at you in your eyes, and confessed my love to you emotionally. Haha."

Lucien was amused. Had Natasha duplicated the romantic confession of love that she planned for Sylvia to him?

After laughing for a while, Natasha said delightedly, "I was just kidding. I know that you don't like it. But to be honest, it's quite strange. I used to be a knight who was so good at romance, but why are the topics always diverted to strange courses, ruining the atmosphere, whenever I want to talk sweetly to you?"

"You are good at romance and sweet talk? As I recall, I was the one who taught you that confession." with a smile, Lucien teased Natasha.

Natasha raised her voice and argued solemnly, "That's only one of them. I'm adept at sweet talking. It was exactly based on romance and sweet talks that I won Sylvia! Right, that is not my point. My point is, why does the romantic and sweet atmosphere between us always change weirdly?"

As time went by, she seemed to have forgotten the trauma of the

past and could talk about Sylvia in a regular way.

"In fact, I like the atmosphere. I feel that it is relieving, joyful and warm to be with you, and I don't need to worry about the change of feelings if we continue on like this." Lucien thought for a moment and expressed his feelings frankly, too. However, Lucien felt that his face was flushing when he talked in such a way, and he was certain that Natasha was not.

Natasha chuckled and said emotionally, "Me too. It makes me feel very happy and comfortable, as if we had started since a long time ago and we will continue to the end of our life. When I was with Sylvia before, I was always worried that she might abandon me and choose you. But now that I'm with you, my heart is very peaceful, because I know that you will always be here by my side. It is not about gender or external pressure. Even if you were a girl, I believe that you still wouldn't give up."

"Lucien, although I had romantic experiences, I have never been intimate with a gentleman before. If I do anything wrong or overstep your boundaries, please do tell me so that I'll pay more attention in future. Problems occurred between me and Sylvia exactly because we were not candid enough to each other, and we did not communicate often. I want to protect our love."

Lucien smiled. He was somewhat excited but managed to control his voice and make it gentle, "Natasha, me too. I don't have much love experience. If I do anything terrible or clumsy, please don't despise me and just tell me straightforwardly."

"It is your clumsiness that I like!" Natasha's voice became hoarse, enchanting Lucien's ears. "I am looking forward to my birthday when I realized that we will celebrate it together."

"What gift do you want?" Asked Lucien half-jokingly. It could only be a surprise if he was the one who prepared the gift.

Natasha lowered her voice and chuckled, "You should know what gift I love most."

Lucien was immediately lost for words.

However, Natasha followed with a smile, "I was just kidding. I know it's your boundaries. You never encouraged me to abandon my family and responsibility and elope with you, and I will respect your thoughts, too. I will only imagine it in my heart until the day you are willing to do it yourself. For me, the best birthday gift is that you accompany me to pass the dawn."

"However, there's still more than one month to go before my birthday. There should be chances for us to meet in between. Lucien, I miss your temperature, your smile, your different looks, and... and your 'flavor'."

Lucien had thought that Natasha would be shy in the end, but out of his expectations, she spoke it out so openly. Therefore, to defend a man's dignity, he followed, "I miss you, too. I miss your everything."

"Really?" Natasha said in a slightly hoarse voice, "By then, I will wear your favorite dress and silk stockings. Do you want black or any other colors?"

Her voice was so captivating that Lucien's body became hot. He was about to reply, when Natasha cut off the electromagnetism messaging with an evil laugh. It was quite a bummer for Lucien.

Pacing back and forth in his library, Lucien thought to himself, "Last time, it was Natasha who pushed me over. Next time, I have to be more active and push her over, or I wouldn't deserve to be called a man."

"Huh, what should I do? What distance should I keep so that I can push her over without being pushed over by her?"

"After we enter the room, if she is in the front, I'll hug her from behind and kiss her earlobe, which will weaken her strength..."

"If we walk into the room next to each other, I'll distract her attention with other topics. Right, I can confess my love boldly so that she will be overwhelmed by surprise..."

"Or maybe, I can trigger the softness in her heart with a romantic

atmosphere, so that she will be pushed over by me willingly?

"But what if she is as straightforward as yesterday?"

Without him knowing it, Lucien began his 'meticulous' 'Natasha Push-over Plan'.

.....

While the two of them who were in hot love tried to control the frequency of their communication, they had been talking every other day. Very soon, it was already the Month of Fire (July).

Cleaning his clothes, Lucien spoke to Leo, his butler, "You will audit the accounts of the few companies with a few assistants who are good at numbers. I've already talked to Arthur."

Although he was not in charge of specific affairs, Lucien maintained his interests in the Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company, the Mineral and Harvest Company and the Gift from Elements Company by seasonally auditing them. While those people couldn't have the courage to embezzle his revenues, it would be good for both himself and them if he was more strict.

"Yes, my lord." Replied Leo respectfully.

After seeking his revenge and settling his life, he had a plan of reestablishing a family and was now dating a middle-aged lady who studied magic.

After he left the magic tower, Lucien went to the Atom Institution, intending to continue the analysis on 'Magic Order', the eighth-circle magic, after a brief visit, so that his magic strength could be adapted to his cognitive world sooner.

Hardly had he entered his office when Lucien saw Annick, Sprint, Katrina and other students waiting for him, each holding one copy of Arcana.

"Katrina, Layria, has your paper on superconductivity been published?" Lucien thought that it was the reason for their excitement. After all, they had never published any paper on Arcana

before.

Katrina said with a delightful smile, "Yes, it has, master. It's on the third page of Arcana of this issue."

"Also, many sorcerers of electromagnetics wrote letters to us. Some even visited us in person." Layria was also very happy. She was flattered by such treatment.

Lucien checked the arcana badge of the two girls. Realizing that they had been successfully upgraded to level four, he nodded his head in approval, "You will have to continue on the work. Right, is there anything else?"

Sprint, the most impatient of all, opened Arcana and said, "Master, take a look at the paper on page one. His Excellency Oliver has proposed a solution to the problems in Mr. President's light speed experiment. He has offered a transformation formula on the length reduction of materials in the motion against Ether."

"A solution?" It was not until then that Lucien realized that they were excited about Oliver's paper. Therefore, he took over the journal and browsed through it, checking if it was in accordance with their previous discussion.

His students looked at Lucien expectantly and solemnly, hoping that he could point out the problems of the paper. They were frustrated, however, because Lucien closed the journal calmly after skimming through the article.

"Master?" Heidi couldn't help but ask.

Lucien raised his eyebrow. "What's up?"

"Do you have any... thoughts?" After a brief hesitation, Heidi asked straightly.

Shaking the journal in his hands, Lucien asked back, "What thoughts do I need?"

After a brief silence, Sprint said anxiously, "Master, this is an explanation on Mr. President's light speed experiment with Ether!

It's a strike on the particle theory! Now, all the sorcerers in Allyn who support the particle theory are waiting for the opinions of Mr. President, His Excellency the Lord of Storm, Her Excellency Hathaway and you."

After he broke the silence, other people immediately chimed in.

"The supporters of the wave theory are cocky again. They've found a new weapon!" Said Heidi in dissatisfaction.

"Master, did you find any flaws in this paper?" Annick asked cautiously.

"I feel something is wrong with the paper, but I can't tell what it is." Chelly rubbed her hair.

"It seems to be only an assumption..." Katrina and Layria said simultaneously.

Because their teacher had proposed the light quantum hypothesis, and they belonged to the elemental school, they were all supporters of the particle theory.

But after they wrangled for a long time, Sprint and his lot discovered that Lucien was as tranquil as before, as if the paper they read was just an illusion.

Heidi asked in confusion, "Master, are you not mad? Do you not want to refute them?"

"Why would I be angry?" Pointing at the journal, Lucien smiled, "I just checked it. His Excellency Oliver has only proposed a theoretical explanation that is still an assumption. It only suggests that things can be like this but cannot explain why things are like this. Also, it hasn't been proved by any experiment or phenomenon yet. Why should I be angry?"

Heidi patted her chest in relief and said, "That explains a lot. I thought you betrayed the particle theory, master."

The other students looked more or less the same.

Lucien looked at them and said solemnly, "When did I say that I support the particle theory?"

Huh? Heidi, Sprint, Chelly, Katrina's jaws almost hit the ground. Even Annick and Layria, who were usually calm, were stunned, too. Weren't you the one who came up with the light quantum hypothesis?

"Until the interference and diffraction can be explained from the perspective of particles, my opinion on the particle theory and the wave theory is the same. They are both flawed and cannot explain the nature of light." Lucien took the opportunity to inculcate his ideas into his students.

Dazed, the few young men did not know what to say.

At this moment, Lucien's monocle became hot. Somebody was reaching out to him.

"Lucien?" a loud voice echoed. "Have you read today's 'Arcana'? What's your take?"

After hearing that, Lucien suddenly smiled. No matter how many prizes he won and how many revolutionary theories he came up with in the past, he was never considered a real authority compared with the renowned specialists such as Raventi or Gaston, but only a genius who had earned something through inspiration. Therefore, when there was any problem that they wanted to discuss, they would never talk to him first. However, after the 'new alchemy' was submitted and he had a complete system that belonged to himself, everything had changed subtly.

One's influences in most cases were best manifested in other people's subconscious reaction.

Chapter 529: Busy Lucien

Lucien respected the honorable archmages who were dedicated to arcana studies like Raventi. He smiled and said, "I just got this issue of Arcana and haven't read it yet. However, if that is the paper you would like to discuss with me, it shouldn't be a problem, as I communicated with His Excellency Oliver in my teacher's place a few days ago."

"You discussed with him?" Raventi was slightly surprised. Oliver and Lucien were not associated in his impression, and Lucien should be the last person that Oliver turned to. However, Raventi soon found a reason. The Hand of Annihilation must've been over to discuss with the Lord of Storm, and Lucien happened to be there at the same time. Therefore, he was invited to join the discussion.

After thinking it through, he asked impatiently, "Do you think that the length of materials will be reduced when they move against 'Ether'? Is it necessary to explain His Excellency Douglas' experiment from the perspective of 'Ether'?"

Raventi was one of the Elementalists who was relatively open-minded but had his own persistence. He could accept that atoms could be subdivided, but he could not imagine that materials could be reduced in length during movement on their own without the integration of spiritual power.

"First of all, this is just an assumption, exactly like the assumptions that many supporters of the wave theory came up with before. It shouldn't be treated with bias because it is proposed by a grand arcanist." Lucien repeated what he said to his students earlier. Then he said, "Also, I don't think it's the reduction of the materials. If the reduction is real, I think it is more likely to be the reduction of space..."

Heidi and Annick both realized why their teacher was so calm after hearing the conversation between Lucien and Raventi. It was only because he had read it in advance.

"How cunning of you!" Heidi secretly complained in her heart. Then, the same thought came to Katrina and the rest of them, they listened to the discussion between their teacher and Raventi attentively, referring to the journal in their hands now and then.

After a long time, Raventi finally cut off the communication in great satisfaction. Lucien raised his eyes, only to see six pairs of eager eyes. They seemed rather relaxed, as if their previous anxiety had been cleared after he expressed his opinion.

"Master, I'm still confused about this." Katrina hurried to ask. Their master was on their side after all!

After Lucien explained their questions, Annick frowned and asked in confusion, "Master, you mentioned earlier that you are inclined to neither the particle theory nor the wave theory? Then what is light exactly?"

When he mentioned it, Heidi and the other students recalled the topic that astounded them a moment ago. They all looked at Lucien with confusion and worry.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien retained his serious attitude and said, "If you drop your preconceptions about the wave theory and the particle theory, and if you consider really based on the experiment phenomena and results, you will discover that light shows both the features of particles, as suggested by the photoelectric effect and the Brook scattering experiment, and the features of waves, as suggested by the double-slit experiment, the diffraction experiment and the Brook spots. Therefore, both the wave theory and the particle theory have shortcomings that they cannot overcome, and they cannot depict the light completely. I believe that waves and particles are unified on a higher level, except that they have different projections in reality."

It was the first time that Lucien explained the question in front of everyone. It was more of a psychological warm-up for his students.

Annick and the other students were deep in thought after Lucien's explanation, but they seemed more puzzled.

Lucien did not intend to continue the War between Wave and Particle. So, he shut his mouth in time, planning to return to his office and peruse Arcana of this issue. At night a few days ago, his cognitive world suddenly had hazy, cubic stripes all of a sudden, which were similar to the structure of a new legendary class that Fernando had mentioned repetitively. It made Lucien suspect that somebody had proved a certain prophecy in the 'new alchemy', but it was not about neutrons, the most important of all.

Lucien could've found the neutron on his own after repetitive experiments. However, his magic level was not adapted to his cognitive world yet, and he hadn't learnt a lot of regular magics. Because of his unconsolidated foundation, there might be hidden problems if he allowed for grand changes in his cognitive world. After all, even if the new legendary class was constructed, he couldn't put it into use for now.

Lucien believed that in a year or two, when his knowledge about seventh-circle and eighth-circle magics was abundant enough, and his magic level had been stabilized, it would be the best opportunity for him to 'discover the neutron'.

When he was about to step away, Lucien felt that his monocle became hot again.

"Lucien? Have you read the latest issue of Arcana?" It was Gaston's voice this time.

Lucien sighed with a smile. "I just discussed with His Excellency Raventi about it..."

They discussed for a while. Gaston expressed his ideas and listened to Lucien's opinion. In the end, he said, "I barely discussed arcana questions with you before. You are more distinguished than I expected. What other suggestions do you have regarding His Excellency Oliver's paper?"

"I feel that his transformation matrix can be applied to many other places. It may be worth studying." Lucien mentioned it subtly.

Gaston was certainly unable to capture Lucien's meaning between

the lines yet. He smiled, "I also feel that the matrix can be used in many other research frontiers. Right, Lucien, I don't think you have heard yet. The Arcana Review Board has decided that with your expertise, you should not only be responsible for the revolutionary papers. A well-deserved authority, you should be in charge of the review of your fields."

"What fields?" Lucien grimaced. Ever since the untrained arcanists discovered that they could not make a breakthrough in his place, he hadn't reviewed any paper in a whole year and almost forgot that he was a reviewer. After all, there weren't many revolutionary papers.

However, Lucien did not refuse the Board's decision, because reviewing more papers was also an exercise and a way to obtain inspiration. Even the papers that cannot be passed might bring him a new insight.

Gaston smiled, "All board members agree that you are an authority in elements, alchemy, thermodynamics and mathematics. All the papers in the four domains may be forwarded to you. Also, you will also be responsible for the quantum photon papers in the school of Light-darkness and the papers related to X rays and electrons in electromagnetics. Is there a problem?"

So far, although Lucien had won the Prize of Immortal Throne and the Silver Moon Medal, nobody really considered him an authority in necromancy and electromagnetism, not to mention horoscopes, illusionary, transformation or summoning that he hadn't made any distinguished achievements in them.

"Not at all." Lucien replied.

Gaston praised him, "Lucien, you are the most amiable one of all the gifted arcanists that I've seen. One other thing. I am planning to establish an institute that belongs to myself like you. However, in the microscopic field, the resources of the Congress will surely be invested in the Atom Institution. Therefore, I'm planning to study something else other than the new alchemy. Do you have any suggestions? Is there any field worth paying attention to in the school of elements?"

Lucien could already imagine similar institutions and research centers growing larger and larger in number. Sorcerers were no fools. After the new alchemy was proposed, other than confirming his talents, they must've realized the advancement of such a research methodology — both in terms of results and in terms of funding.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien replied solemnly, "I believe that the studies on synthetic living matter is far behind the current development of arcana. It's a field worth digging into."

"Thank you." Gaston thanked him sincerely.

After the conversation ended, Lucien looked at the students who hadn't left due to curiosity with a smile, until they were almost crept out.

"Master, anything else?" Heidi, the boldest of all, asked in a shivering voices. Were there still quizzes and exams? They were almost middle-rank sorcerers!

Lucien shook his head. "Don't worry. I've found something for you to work on."

That's exactly what we're worried about! Layria and Sprint put on bitter smiles.

"As you may have heard, I will shoulder the full responsibilities as a member of the Arcana Review Board. Therefore, as my student, you have to help me with the review on the papers allotted to me." Said Lucien solemnly.

Sighs echoed. Sprint, Katrina were surprised at first, because it was certainly amazing to review other people's paper, but very soon, they were all frustrated.

Chelly said timidly, "Master, while our arcana level is now three or four, and we are some sort of middle-rank sorcerers, that's because what we are in touch with is the most cutting-edge stuff in the elemental field, and it's easy for us to obtain arcana credits."

"In fact, it's been only four years since we graduated. We haven't

grasped enough knowledge or done in-depth research in many fields. I fear that there will be many problems if we review other people's papers. Even you may be blamed."

Including Sprint, who was often the most confident one, all the students nodded in agreement. One might trip himself if his step was too wide.

"This is exactly the way for you to build up your knowledge. I will re-review every paper you review. Whenever an error is discovered, the reviewer will have to write a report to be about why they made the error and what they can learn to avoid it. For the record, my re-review will be meticulous and rigorous in the first few years until you know what you are doing." Said Lucien solemnly.

"Yes, master." The few students immediately agreed with it.

Heidi, then rubbed her cheek in relief and smiled, "In fact, reviewing papers is not bad. It will help us to build our own knowledge system as soon as possible. I was freaked out a moment ago, because I thought that master was assigning ten knowledge points and exercises to us like before."

"A great proposal. I'll prepare a quiz for you when I have time. Hopefully, you won't be lonely before you become archmages." Lucien had thought to modify the Course of Theoretical Physics directly, but too much knowledge about the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics was in it. After the general acceptance of the two theories improved, his students and more arcanists would definitely 'enjoy' it.

"What?" Heidi's face was pale, as she felt the eyes of Sprint and other students who were going to tear her apart.

If she wasn't lonely before she became an archmage, she would certainly be lonely for the rest of her life...

At this moment, the smile on Lucien's face was like the smile of a devil.

.....

After dismissing the scared students, Lucien began reading the papers. Very soon, he noticed an article which was titled as 'An Analysis On the Spectrum of Hydrogen Lines Based on the New Alchemy'.

"... So, they found the Balmer formula [2. Johann Balmer, a Swiss mathematician, discovered (1885) that the wavelengths of the visible hydrogen lines can be expressed by a simple formula.] based on the theories, which befits the experiment result." Lucien realized the source of his gains. It was different from Earth where the formula first came up based on experience.

When he was about to read the paper more carefully, Lucien's monocle became hot again.

"Who's calling me this time? What a busy day..." Lucien complained, as he hadn't enjoyed a moment of peace in the whole morning. The Course of Theoretical Physics is a ten-volume series of books covering theoretical physics that was initiated by Lev Landau and written in collaboration with his student Evgeny Lifshitz starting in the late 1930s.

Chapter 530: Rock's Suggestion

Chapter 530: Rock's Suggestion

After he activated the communication circle, a mature, pleasant female voice came from his monocle, "Lucien?"

Lucien was stunned for a moment, unable to tell who it was. It was not until the speaker opened her mouth again that he finally realized that she was Lady Florencia, the wife of Grand Arcanist Oliver.

"Lady Florencia, is there anything I can help you with?" Asked Lucien in confusion.

Florencia chuckled, "Do you think I have nothing better to do? I wouldn't have contacted you if there weren't anything. What's your opinion on Oliver's paper? You must've read this issue of Arcana, right?"

Lucien was even more baffled. You and your husband could've discussed it in private. Why do you bother to ask an outsider? However, Lucien recalled that the couple seemed to be in conflict. He smiled and said, "I have read it and discussed it with His Excellency Raventi and Mr. Gaston. If you don't mind, I'll start from the beginning. Is that okay?"

"Yes." Florencia replied quickly.

After exchanging their views on the paper, Florencia was silent for a moment. Then she lowered her pleasant voice and said, "Lucien, did Oliver ask you to work on an opera together with him? You'd better refuse him."

"How did you know?" Oliver's intention to please his wife had been found out by Florencia? That was rather a surprise for Lucien. What a terrible secret-keeper!

Florencia's suppressed voice emitted delight. "He always complained that there were no real musicians in Holm, and that

nobody could adapt his script into an excellent opera. So, if he intends to please me with a new opera, how can he forget you, a grand master who ranks very high even in the entire history of music?"

"Then, how did you know that he would please you with an opera?" Lucien finally understood that Florencia inferred it based on her understanding about her husband and their previous married life. Having just started his own love life, he asked curiously.

Florencia chuckled again, but her laughter seemed to contain complicated feelings. "He's always like this. It's either jewelry or emotional poetry, or a new opera, that he creates in person. The previous two choices were recently used. Considering his personality that he would not use them repetitively, it is easy to infer that he's going to make an opera this time."

"Then, why did you ask me to refuse him? You don't want to forgive him?" Lucien patted his face after the question. How could he have asked it directly? It turned out that he had a gossip side, too.

Florencia laughed without any delight. She teased with bitterness, "After you wrote *For Sylvia*, Sylvia died. If you write another opera that is meant to mend the relationship between a couple, only to separate them in the end, I believe that your love music will become a curse in everybody's mind. It's for your own good that I asked you to refuse him."

Lucien captured Florencia's meaning between the lines keenly. "My lady, are you going to renounce your marriage with His Excellency Oliver?"

"Yes." Florencia responded. Then, she poured her feelings out. "I tolerate him again and again, but he never really regretted. I'm too exhausted and desperate to deal with him any longer. I have my own arcana and magic studies. I have teachers, students and friends. It's not like the value and significance of my life will be gone after I leave him. Sometimes, love can't cover everything. Perhaps I can find new happiness after we are separated."

She spoke rationally without any tears or yelling, which made Lucien hear the resolution in her words. It seemed to be a decision that was made after deliberation, not a spur of the moment decision. Therefore, he did not persuade her but simply smiled, "In that case, I'll wish you a happy new life in advance, my lady."

However, based on Florencia's familiarity and understanding about Oliver that she revealed unconsciously, could their relationship really be cut so easily? Lucien was quite suspicious about it.

Florencia said in a low voice, "Lucien, you are really a good man. I often think that if I hadn't run into Oliver but encountered you who are both more talented and more loyal than him, my marriage would've been so happy that it made other people jealous. I envy young Natasha."

She was Morris' student, and Morris was a member of the royal family of Holm and a junior that Hathaway thought highly of. So, she had a general understanding about Lucien and Hathaway's dialog the other day and learnt how Lucien refused all kinds of temptations over the past years.

"Thank you for your compliment." Although he had received a good-man card, Lucien was not bothered at all because he already had his love. He simply smiled and thanked her.

Florencia suddenly chuckled, "In fact, I once had the idea of retaliating against Oliver, and I planned to have a soulful and physical relationship with another gentleman exactly like what he did to me. At that time, you were one of my targets, but you completely ignored my charm. Also, I couldn't overcome the psychological barrier myself, either."

"Now that you have little Natasha, there's no way that I would do that. I've suffered the pain myself, and I will not let another girl suffer such unforgettable pain again. Lucien, be nice to young Natasha. If you have another woman, I'll seduce her and get her away from you completely. Hehe. She lost her mother when she was still young. She must be very into a mature women like me."

Lucien rubbed his chin in embarrassment and hurried to change the

subject, “My lady, you mentioned that I was one of your targets. Did you have other candidates?”

Florencia felt much more comfortable after the revelation. She held back her laugh and said, “I am very demanding. Few people met my requirements. Also, they had to have strong backgrounds so that they would not be killed by Oliver. Therefore, besides you, I planned to seduce my teacher. However, after careful analysis, I found that the odds of success were not high. Lucien, do you think if my dress is fully embedded with the Wave Stones, the Sun Stones, the Ice Crystals, the Dragon Hide and other precious materials, my teacher will be captivated by me?”

Lucien pointed it out directly, “I believe that His Excellency Morris would take off your dress, push you to the bed, and leave with your dress.”

“Haha! I think so, too!” Florencia was stunned at first. Then she burst into laughter.

Lucien raised his eyebrow. Feeling that it was inappropriate to make fun of the seniors behind their back, he hurried to ask, “It’s been a while since I met His Excellency Morris. What studies is he busy with now?”

“My teacher almost drooled after you proposed new alchemy. That’s a field that controls the changes of materials. If anyone can get to the bottom of it, they would have however many treasures they want. Therefore, my teacher has been completely devoted to it ever since.” Florencia said jokingly. As a matter of fact, for a ninth-circle elementalists such as Morris, Donald and Raventi, new alchemy had shed the light of legendary for them. How could they not devote themselves to it?

Lucien replied equally humorously, “If Alferris were not a dragon, I would’ve suspected that Alferris is His Excellency Morris’ natural son. He truly guards his fortunes like a dragon.”

After some chit chat, Florencia said, “Lucien, you should work harder and try to have a child with Natasha soon. If Oliver and I weren’t that into a childless relationship, we probably wouldn’t be

like this today.”

“The situation today is still too dangerous for us to have children. Also, it’s been less than one month since she was crowned. There are months to go before any urge or pressure.” Lucien had talked with Natasha about that, too. There would be a lot of changes in the coming years, and pregnancy would weaken her and keep her in danger. Therefore, they should consider the question after Holm was stabilized.

Natasha couldn’t have agreed with it more. She wanted to be married to Lucien openly and let their child be born in a complete family.

Regarding the problem that the higher one’s rank was, the more difficult conception would be, the ‘Forced Conception’ on the Pink Book was certainly not developed for nothing. It was a creation of a certain legendary in order to continue his bloodline. When he saw that magic at the beginning, Lucien had the idea that he could establish a clinic in Allyn that specifically treated infertility.

After ending the conversation with Florencia, Lucien more or less hesitated. Considering the closeness, Florencia was Morris’ student, and Morris was Natasha’s senior, so he should refuse to cooperate with Oliver as per her request because they were on the same side. However, he had already promised Oliver, and it was inappropriate to go back on his words.

After thinking for a moment, Lucien made a decision. “I’ll wait until their marriage is waived. If His Excellency Oliver still wants an opera to get back with her, it would be in no conflict with Lady Florencia’s request.”

“... Also, does Lady Florencia’s request that I should not work with her husband suggest that she is still wavering and scared that she may be swayed under the opera?... I hope their relationship would not end in tragedy even if they are discovered...”

Suddenly, the monocle became hot again. Lucien rubbed his eyebrow helplessly and turned on the communication circle.

“Lucien.” Morris’s voice came from the monocle.

Lucien exclaimed and replied somewhat awkwardly, “Good morning, Your Excellency Morris.”

“Why do you sound weird?” Asked Morris in confusion.

Lucien smiled. He couldn’t confess that he had just made fun of the grand arcanist with the grand arcanist’s student just now. So he simply asked, “Is there anything I can help you with, Your Excellency Morris?”

“Have you read the latest issue of Arcana?” Morris’ question was the same.

Just like that, Lucien spent the entire morning discussing with familiar archmages and senior-rank sorcerers. However, the legendary sorcerers such as Douglas did not reach out to him, because their wisdom was enough for them to see the problems in Oliver’s paper.

Lucien was not free again until noon. He planned to continue reading Arcana after lunch. If he did not study and follow the latest papers, he might commit horrible mistakes even though he had the spirit library.

At this moment, Rock, who was wearing a black tuxedo, walked in and knocked on the door of Lucien’s office. “Lucien, do you have a moment?”

“Have you accomplished the mandatory task?” Lucien invited him in with delight.

Rock said relaxedly, “Of course, as a member of the Atom Institution, the mandatory task for me was very simple. Lazar must be returning soon, too. Lucien, the reason why I’m here is to inform you that we are running out of hands and space as our research programs grow larger in number.”

“I’ll file an application to the Magic Research Board, so that we will have the other unoccupied laboratories on the eighteenth floor.” Lucien replied. He was already an unquestionable authority in the

field of atomic research. It was not difficult to do. “As for hands, don’t we have many arcanists?”

Counting himself, there were ten arcanists in total.

Rock opened his hands. “We have too many arcanists. Nobody is willing to run errands anymore. Your students all have their own research programs as they grow up. Therefore, we need to hire a batch of magic apprentices.”

“Then, go to the Task Zone to issue tasks, or contact the magic school and ask them to recommend the best students.” Lucien asked suspiciously, “Why do you care about that?”

Rock did not look like a man who cared about that sort of thing.

Rock chuckled but admitted honestly, “I’m getting anxious seeing that you and Lazar have both found your love. This is the place I spend most of my time in. How can it work out if there is no ‘fresh blood’? The few female students of yours are quite good, but they are all too proud because of you, and they do not think that I’m a big deal at all.”

“No coercion or intimidation.” Lucien reminded him.

Rock rose in satisfaction, “I’m looking for a partner for the purpose of marriage. Why would I do that? I’m going to the Task Zone. Considering the reputation of the Atom Institution, countless apprentices will apply for it. Well, would it be too troublesome?”

“Resume review, written exams, and interviews. You can screen them through three procedures. It’s all yours. I’ll supervise it in person once in a while.” Lucien said rather mischievously, hoping to give the magic apprentices a lesson about job hunting.

Chapter 531: Hot Tide

Chapter 531: Hot Tide

After seeing Rock off, Lucien shook his head and smiled, not having high hopes in him. Then, he focused his attention on Arcana and finished it. He saw the paper that Annick and Sprint submitted for discussion about the differences between the actual effect and the ideal effect of the cyclotron. They vaguely determined that energy was transformed into electricity, but they failed to come up with any formula to deduce the specific data to adjust it.

“I hope more people can begin thinking about this question.” Lucien closed the journal and focused on analyzing the eighth-circle magic.

.....

On July 3, in the morning, the tide of hotness was surging.

Lowi had no idea how many times he had come to the magic tower of Allyn. He only knew that if he couldn't find a task that he was capable of to earn enough rewards for his rent, it would be barely possible for him to survive in Allyn where everything was expensive. He would have to leave the center of arcana and magic tower and look for opportunities elsewhere.

“This is my own fault. I was too sloppy in school and did not work hard enough. I failed to become an elite apprentice, so I can't be recommended to the good posts.” Lowi did not complain but blamed himself for his lack of effort. If he had become an elite apprentice in school, he could've been recommended to the Sorcerer Administrative Department, the Apprentice Assessment Department, the Task Zone or other departments of the Congress, or given an opportunity to work in the major organization and journals' offices in Allyn. That way, he would get in touch with many official sorcerers, and a decent pay that was enough for him to survive in Allyn.

Lowi touched his pocket. There was a recommendation letter in it for the local magic group in the Paphos County.

Although in the eyes of the magic apprentices who went to remote counties or even the Solar Islands, to be recommended to the Paphos Country, one of the top three prosperous places of Holm, was something worth envying, it was entirely meaningless for Lowi who had realized his mistake after graduation because it was not Allyn. If he left the center of arcana and magic, he would be left behind by his classmates who stayed in the place soon enough.

According to the survey made by ‘Allyn Impression’, a collection of tidbits that appeared only a few years ago, every one of ten apprentices who stayed in Allyn for three years after they left the magic school became an official sorcerer. The elite apprentices that were recommended to good positions even had a terrifying ratio of one in three, which was far higher than other branches where the ratio was one in twenty.

In the Solar Islands and the remote counties, it was an astonishing one in thirty. Unless there was absolutely no choice, nobody wanted to go there. But the situation seemed to have improved after the channel of ‘News of the World’ appeared.

After thinking that, Lowi moved his finger away from his pocket, determined not to be left behind by other people at the beginning.

However, his heartburn made him smile bitterly. In order to save costs, it had been a while since he enjoyed breakfast.

His family was not rich in the first place. If he couldn’t find a job that suited himself and paid well, his dream would have to succumb to reality, unless he accepted the tasks that were evidently dangerous.

“Life, or dream? What a hard choice.” Lowi teased himself and swallowed to allay his hunger. Cleaning his apprentice robe that had been worn out, he walked to the Task Zone.

Finding a silver counter that was not occupied yet, Lowi raised his head and read the missions displayed on the green screen.

“Secret mining mission in the southern desert of the Gusta Empire: The pay is one arcana point or a Thale every day, and additional

pay will be calculated according to the quality and quantity of minerals. Please refer to the appendix for the details. Capability Request: Unrestricted. Number: Unrestricted. Danger Level: Very High. You will need to face the monsters in the desert and take care of the night watchers and the clergy. In the meantime, the minerals contain invisible curses.”

The abundant pay dazzled Louis’ eyes, but he was stopped by the final description. It was impossible to accomplish the task without the capabilities of an official sorcerer. Eight out of ten apprentices would be killed.

“... Holning’s store needs an alchemy assistant for three years. Food and accommodation will be reimbursed.”

Lowi was tempted. Despite the lack of pay, which meant that he couldn’t buy materials or borrow books, the reimbursement of food and accommodation could help him avoid the expensive life in Allyn. Also, he could learn a lot by working as an assistant to an alchemist.

“But I’m a sorcerer more inclined to spell-casting than craftsmanship. A delay of three years will make me further behind. I might as well go to the Paphos county and learn the latest research through the magic radio.”

Lowi shook his head and continued reading, but the tasks were either too dangerous or too unrewarding for him to resolve his imminent crisis.

Lowi was frustrated after reading the new tasks in half an hour. Did he really have to leave Allyn?

The sorcerers in different clothes next to him accepted tasks and left, talking and laughing. But in Louis’ eyes, they seemed to be in a different world that was filled with color and brightness, while he was surrounded by gloomy mists.

Louis, unwilling to give in, raised his head again, and planned to find a short, low-paying task to deal with the day, so that he could check if there was any suitable new task for him tomorrow.

Suddenly, the green screen bounced, and a new message jumped on it.

“Apprentice Recruitment: The Atom Institution, located on the eighteenth floor of the Allyn magic tower, is in dire need of ten apprentice-level assistants. Duration: Three years. Capability Request: No lower than senior-rank magic apprentices. Payment: Ten arcana points every month, free elementary books on arcana and magic, free-to-use experimental devices. Deadline: July 10.”

“Apprentice-level assistants?” Lowi repeated in confusion, finding it hard to believe the copious payment.

Suddenly, his eyes were frozen when he saw the dark red words below the introduction: “The Atom Institution?”

“The Atom Institution!”

Lowi immediately felt that a fire was burning all the way from his heart to his head, making him unable to think about anything. The Atom Institution, which belonged to Mr. Lucien Evans who proposed the new alchemy, was a sanctuary for every sorcerer who intended to walk on the path of elements and materials, and a marvelous place where new research achievements appeared on a monthly basis. It represented the highest level in atomic studies.

Such a place is recruiting apprentice-level assistants?

What am I waiting for?

Lowi felt that his dream was right before his eyes, shining splendidly. Panting, he hurried to accept the task and took over a form that was passed on to him by the staff.

“Resume?” Lowi had never heard of such a thing before and was somewhat stunned. Thankfully, the introduction on it was quite detailed. He filled it out according to the conditions requested.

“If your resume passes, you will have the first round of written exams in two days, which will be about the fundamentals of elemental arcana and magic.” The instructor repeated the task description in a weird tone, for she had never heard of resume or

written exams before, either.

Two days? Can I survive in Allyn for two days? Should I take some other task to live through it?

Lowi was confused, but he soon grew ruthless. Looking at his apprentice robe, he thought to himself, “I can’t be distracted by other tasks but have to be focused on reviewing the fundamentals of arcana and magic... It should be enough for me to survive seven days if I sell this robe to the pawn shop!”

After he made the decision, Louis’ eyes became bright, and he walked out determinedly.

After the instructor saw him off, she shook her head. Then, with passion beaming out of her eyes, she picked out a resume and began filling it out, too.

Hardly had Lowi stepped away when he heard exclamations: “The Atom Institution is hiring apprentice-level assistants?”

“The Atom Institution is hiring?”

“Is it true? Is it true? Let me take a look!”

In the ever-rising voices, the whole Task Zone was seething. Many apprentices were so excited that they were blushing, as if they had seen their bright future.

It made Lowi slightly frown. The competition would be rather intense. Then, he laughed in self-mockery. If there weren’t any intense competition for that, it would mean that he had been dreaming all the time.

As he walked firmly, Lowi encountered his teacher in the magic when he passed by the task platform at the edge. The usually mannered middle-aged man was also waving his hands excitedly like apprentices.

“Mr. Balterley, greetings.” Lowi said politely.

Balterley recognized that it was his student that he often thought

highly off. He smiled at Louis, “You’re here for tasks? Go to accept the apprentice assistant task from the Atom Institution! I just took it!”

“Master, aren’t—aren’t you a second-circle sorcerer and a level-two arcanist? This is apprentice assistant!” Lowi asked in shock.

Clenching his fists, Balterley said zealously, “Is that important? As long as I can get into the Atom Institution, what’s the big deal even if I have to be an apprentice as a sorcerer? That’s the cutting edge of the elemental field. Also, I’ll be privileged to hear Mr. Lucien Evans’ tutelage and get in touch with the deepest mysteries of elements and materials.”

Lowi suddenly felt a headache. The competition appeared to be too intense.

However, the fire of dreams and ambitions were burning too wildly to be extinguished, which filled him with expectation and momentum.

.....

After a round of written exams and interviews, Lucien found a frustrated Rock in the Atom Institution.

Regarding that, Lucien asked curiously and correctly, “Rock, what’s up? There’s nobody you’re interested in? Nobody calls to you? As I recall, the institution was almost crushed by crowds recently.”

Rock said regretfully, “Some female apprentices did approach me. Well, a few male apprentices did, too... But I refused all of them. I’m looking for a partner to marry. Do I have the courage to accept those people? Those I was indeed interested in, however, were all self-respective, polite and indifferent. They didn’t give me any chance at all. What’s wrong with this world?”

Lucien burst into laughter and patted Rock’s shoulder. “It’s a good thing to be more social in order to find a partner, but your way is not going to work out. It’s not hard to find a mistress, but it will take you forever for you to find an independent girl who is worth

your respect and love. I intended to persuade you to give up a few days ago, but then I thought a lesson would do you good. Alright, drop your other thoughts and complete the second round of written exams and interviews fairly. I'll supervise the final interviews in person."

Rock sighed and complained jokingly, "You're talking as if you were an expert."

"Of course I am. I have a girlfriend." Lucien replied also jokingly.

Chapter 532: Invitation

Chapter 532: Invitation

In a branch of the Congress of Magic on the Solar Islands in the Boundless Ocean...

While the dark picture where a middle-rank sorcerer's head was blown up in public hadn't been entirely erased from Blake's head, nothing could stop him from listening to 'Arcana Voice' and 'News of the World', which was the entertainment all over the islands that was even more popular than parties and balls.

"Good evening, this is the Weekly News Review of Allyn, and I'm your old friend Lark."

Blake felt that he truly had one more friend when he heard the crisp and calm voice every night, one who told him stories late at night and who made him feel familiar even though he had never met her.

'Lark' reviewed the important news piece by piece, and Blake listened attentively. He was now delighted at the progress in research studies and now was worried by the gloomy situation in Holm.

"... Over the past few days, an unprecedented tide has appeared in Allyn. Countless apprentices and sorcerers sent their resumes to the Atom Institution and surged to the eighteenth floor of the Allyn magic tower for written exams and interviews. According to sources, the Atom Institution was crammed by people during the days, and they had only seen such splendor when the grand arcanists participated in a symposium. The people completely blocked the way."

Lark's cold voice was mixed with a smile, especially when she mentioned 'sources'.

"What resume? written exams, and interviews?" Blake said to himself in confusion. 'Atom Institution' raised his strong interest. It should be Mr. Lucien Evans' Atom Institution, right? Did he come

up with any paradigm-shifting theoretical system again? No, since apprentices and sorcerers were involved, it should be about something else.”

Lark continued, “For the audience outside of Allyn, you may be unaware of what has happened. So, allow me to briefly review the incident. On July 3, the Atom Institution issued an ‘Apprentice Assemblage Task’, planning to hire ten apprentice-level assistants to help the arcanists in the institution with their experiments.”

“What was most surprising, however, was the way of recruitment that the Atom Institution adopted. You would have to obtain a resume form, on which you would write your name, age, school, assessment and your magic image. Then, after screening, they would select distinguished candidates for interviews...”

Blade was already unable to follow Lark. His brain was humming. The previous announcement was crushing his skull like a surging tide.

“The Atom Institution is short of apprentice-level assistants?”

“If I can enter the Atom Institution and get involved in the cutting-edge studies in the microscopic field, maybe it won’t take long before I can improve both my arcana and my magic to the middle rank!”

“No, no, their interviews must be over...”

In Blake’s eyes, if the Atom Institution wanted apprentice-level assistants, the queue outside of the gate would span across Allyn. Of course, that was exactly what happened. But according to his experience, shouldn’t the magic school recommend elite apprentices to them directly instead of issuing a task openly?

“It is said that Mr. Lucien Evans is a man of integrity and strictness. This must be his idea. The best candidates will be chosen fairly and openly...”

Many magic apprentices who were not distinguished in the magic school, because of fortuitous incidents, were sometimes better than

the elite apprentices in terms of arcana and magic abilities. However, due to the gap at the beginning, it was difficult for them to catch up with the latter or get more opportunities.

“This is the shortcoming of being far away from Allyn. How frustrating it is to know things only when they are outdated...” Blake sighed and focused his attention on the news again.

“... It is reported that more than five hundred apprentices submitted their resumes on the first day, and that another eighty official sorcerers and middle-rank sorcerers were willing to join the Atom Institution as apprentices...”

Blake did not mock them, because he had thought the same thing when he heard the news. He was thinking about abandoning the privileges of an official sorcerer and join as an apprentice, even if he would be responsible for the chores.

He heard that Mr. Evans convened a regular meeting every month. He would gain a lot even if he only attended it as a guest.

“... Up until now, the first round of resume screening, written exams and interviews have been over. Mr. Lucien Evans was not involved. Mr. Jerome and Mr. Rock were responsible for the whole process. According to them, they have selected twenty-five eligible candidates, who will participate in the final interview together with the talents selected from the second round of recruitment. Mr. Evans will be in charge of the final interview.”

The second round? Blake almost jumped to his feet. Did that mean that he still had an opportunity?

Lark's crisp voice spread into his ears. “Here, I would like to remind the members in the branches and local magic groups outside of Allyn that today is July 8, and 6 p. m. on July 10 is the deadline of resume submission. The second round of written exams will begin on July 12. If you are interested, please plan for your visit to Allyn.”

“You are all members of the Congress of Magic, and the Congress and the Atom Institution treat you equally. In fact, the second

round of recruitment was added by Mr. Evans for you. He said that the sorcerers and apprentices outside of Allyn must not be left forgotten.”

Blake felt rather moved. The sorcerers and apprentices in Allyn could never feel the pain of being forgotten by the Congress. The reason ‘Arcana Voice’ and ‘News of the World’ became the most popular entertainment was not just because they provided a lot of knowledge but also because they offered a bond to make the islanders feel connected to Allyn.

“Thank you, Mr. Evans. Thank you, Congress...”

“... You can ask your friends in Allyn to help you with the resume. I believe most branches and local organizations should have devices for electromagnetism messaging. If you don’t have any friends in Allyn, you are free to contact the Task Zone. This is their contact... Please stay where you are until you receive the invitation for written exams, so that the branches and the local groups will not be paralyzed.” Lark’s voice had never been more pleasant for Blake.

After he finished ‘News of the World’ in excitement, Blake waited for dawn anxiously.

When the sun was high, Blake hurried to the magic tower of his branch. Although it was partly within his expectation, he still saw a surprisingly long queue.

“What a heated scene...”

It was an ineffable picture for Blake, who waited until the afternoon before it was his turn.

Blake meant to contact the staff in the Task Zone. However, a shadow that he always dreamed about suddenly showed up in his heart, and he somehow changed the target of his communication.

“Hello, who is it?” A common female voice came over.

Taking a deep breath, Blake said, “It’s me, Blake. How are you doing, Alfalia?”

"I'm doing fine. Is there anything wrong?" Asked Alfalia.

Weighing his tone, Blake said, "Are you still in the Paphos County? Is it only three hours away from Allyn?"

"It takes two hours and forty minutes on a magic steam train. Blake, do you want me to fill in and submit your resume for you?" Alfalia's voice was filled with a smile.

Blake said in surprise, "How did you know?"

"Because I'm on the magic steam train to Allyn for the Atom Institution." Alfalia chuckled.

Blake scratched his head. "In that case, I'll have to ask for your help."

"Okay." After Alfalia's reply, the two of them fell into a brief silence.

Then, Blake couldn't help but ask, "Are you not worried of running into those things again?"

Alfalia was born into a magic family and inherited a huge fortune, which was why she could use electromagnetism communication items when she was only a second-circle sorcerer. However, with her wealth, her capability and her outstanding looks, she became a target that certain immoral higher-rank sorcerers coveted. She had refused the deal with those people and returned to the Paphos County, her hometown.

Alfalia smiled, "I can always give up if I run into one again. It's not like I can't experiment on my own without the Atom Institution. Besides, Mr. Evans is an honorable man who never had any rumors. I trust his integrity."

Hearing his love's casual but firm words, Blake smiled. That was exactly the Alfalia that he had always loved. Every time he recalled her, her face was rather fuzzy, but her bright, smiling and determined eyes were always clear.

"May you succeed." Said Blake sincerely.

Alfallia smiled, “You, too.”

.....

Inside the Atom Institution, Lucien was discussing superconductivity with a few students, when he saw Rock wobble in palely as if he were about to collapse.

“Mr. Rock, what’s up?” Annick asked concernedly.

Rock whined, “I’m about to die! Resume reviewing, written exams and interviews were all my job, and I needed to complete my own experiments and magic structures. I feel that I’m stepping into a grave, because I see faces everywhere! That jackass Jerome was always accompanying Vera!”

“You were the one who took over the job happily. That’s nobody else’s fault.” Lucien observed sarcastically. Then, he entrusted the experiment to Katrina and Layria, before he returned to the magic tower casually. After all, many experiments were unsuitable to be performed in front of the people of the Atom Institution.

“Master, today’s ‘Holm Weekly’.” Hardly had Lucien greeted Pinocchio when Leo handed over the newspaper.

Lucien took over and read it. The headline was exactly ‘The Queen Has Appointed A New Royal Archbishop’.

Nodding his head, Lucien was not surprised. Natasha had mentioned it the other night. She appreciated Richard’s religious reform but believed that it should be conducted prudently as it would drive the Church mad.

“Sard passed Natasha’s request without any blockage? Is his purpose really so simple?” Lucien brought the newspaper to the library.

At this moment, Pinocchio announced, “Master, a guest named Arthur Doyle has come to visit you.”

Its voice echoed in the tower.

What is it about? Lucien asked Pinocchio to let Arthur in. Then, he saw the round fatty approach him flatteringly, “Lucien, here’s an invitation. Duke James will hold a party in his personal estate tomorrow, and he hopes that you can join. Her Majesty will also visit his manor.”

The fatty had been in a panic all day after the demise of Prince Patrick and tried to approach Duke James. However, after Natasha acceded to the throne, and especially after she celebrated the birthday for Lucien, Arthur had been revived and rejuvenated. He had been strutting cockily, except that he lost his confidence whenever he ran into Lucien.

Is this an opportunity for us to meet? Lucien’s mood was never better. Although they couldn’t do anything when they were surrounded by the nobles, it would still be enough as long as they could meet.

Therefore, Lucien nodded and promised that he would come.

.....

Late at night, inside a private villa...

Looking at Count Barady, Duke York said gloomily, “Her Majesty will visit James’ estate tomorrow. How’s the thing that you mentioned last time going?”

“It should be hopeful.” Count Barady gave a vague reply.

Chapter 533: Abrupt Change

Chapter 533: Abrupt Change

The east of Rentato was known as ‘Land of a Thousand Lakes’. The lakes large and small were as smooth as a mirror, presenting an entertaining view with the exuberant forest around.

Such a beautiful place had naturally been occupied by the royal family and the great nobles. James, Duke of Paphos, had a personal manor right next to one of the gentle lakes. It was truly enjoyable and pacifying.

A four-wheeled wagon, pulled by a dragon scale horse, slowly stopped at the gate of the manor. Arthur, despite being a fatty, rushed to opened the door of the wagon ahead of Lucien and jumped off, before he made the gesture of supporting Lucien to get off.

Lucien shook his head with a smile. He stepped forward and appeared behind Arthur. Then he murmured, “What’s the point of this? You will leave the best impression on Her Majesty as long as you operate the Holm Mineral and Harvest company and the Holm Mineral Union Bank well.”

The shares of Prince Patrick’s ‘investment’, without a doubt, had been inherited by Natasha. Lucien had been making fun of her about that, too. He had tried his best to invent magic items and save more wealth, and finally, he could declare proudly that he would not be scared of the cost for the magic materials that he needed until he became legendary. However, Natasha’s heritage alone had exceeded all his possessions. He felt rather envious.

Arthur turned around and followed Lucien. He replied without blushing, “I respect you from the bottom of my heart, Lucien. The alchemical and magical items you invented gave me unimaginable wealth and allowed me to join Duke James’ circle. So, my previous gesture was absolutely genuine. However, did you mention that Her Majesty was satisfied about the promotion and development of the

‘Holm Mineral and Harvest company’? What about the Holm Mineral Union Bank? Did she say anything?”

“Her Majesty is from a foreign land. She does not know the bank industry, which only exists in the countries around the Storm Strait, very well. So, she hasn’t offered any remark. You should write a report on the history and future of banks for her.” Lucien understood that, in order to promote magical items and influence the people of Holm, Brianne and other countries, he had to start from three aspects, namely the simplification of magic items, the financial support centered at banks, and the manipulation of public opinions.

Of course, that was based on the premise that the Congress of Magic was strong enough.

“No problem.” Said Arthur delightedly. He was so fat that his face was almost bloated, and his eyes had only a thin line left.

At the gate of the manor were two rows of soldiers in red uniforms, informing that Natasha had arrived.

Passing through them, Lucien and Arthur went to the most eye-catching garden of the manor under the guidance of a squire.

The garden was Duke James’ pride. It was claimed to be only second to the royal family’s villa. All kinds of amazing flowers were blooming in the vast garden, letting out intoxicating scent.

At the center of the garden, it was a rather spacious place for an open-air garden, with both a view of the lakes in the front and gorgeous flowers behind.

Hardly had he joined the party when Lucien noticed Natasha. She was wearing black clothes that looked like a hunting suit. Her purple long hair had been tied, and she appeared to be much calmer. It seemed that after days of adaptation, she had finally changed from the Violet Countess into a real queen.

Looking at Natasha with appreciation and love, Lucien felt quite great. The anxiety in his heart for days seemed to have been eased.

He was already satisfied just looking at her quietly.

As if she sensed Lucien's eyes, Natasha turned around and looked back at her.

Her silver pupils seemed to be glittering, and her lips curled. It appeared that she did not know that Duke James and the rest of them invited Lucien, either.

But very soon, Natasha controlled her face and continued talking to the nobles around.

She was wearing silky black gloves that were in the same style with her clothes. She did not take them off when the nobles kissed her hand.

Lucien had switched back to the double-breasted long tuxedo. Now that they had determined their relationship, he was not worried that his constant style would make her tired of him.

After a while, Natasha said with a polite smile at Lucien who approached. "It's been a while, my knight."

It was not until this moment that the other nobles who were relatively weak noticed Lucien's arrival. Their conversations came to an abrupt end. Including Duke James, Duke Russell and Arthur, everybody glanced at them curiously and expectantly, hoping to find certain traces.

Were they really good friends, music partners, or were they something more intimate?

Lucien took off his top hat and fell on one of his knees. He grabbed Natasha's right hand and kissed the back of her hand against the glove like a knight. "Your Majesty, your knight has never left."

Her right hand slightly shivered, as if she recalled something. Lucien, on the other hand, recalled the scene of moonlight that he described earlier, and put on a smile.

After Lucien stood up again, Natasha smiled, "I saw many creative gadgets in Holm. They have filled the kingdom with vigor and

hope. That's your effort, Lucien."

Arthur was more or less disappointed at their politeness and their normal conversation. They seemed like simple friends. There was not the tiniest detail that suggested a more intimate relationship. He thought that Lucien would eventually become the queen's husband and Prince Nekso, but the reality was not as beautiful as he imagined.

Duke James and the rest of them were rather disappointed, too, but they also felt quite lucky. They feared that the queen truly fell in love with Lucien Evans, which might raise a civil war if she was determined to marry him despite the Church. That was not their purpose.

They hoped that the queen could keep an intimate relationship with Lucien without being enchanted, and that the balance between the Church and the Congress was maintained.

As for whether or not they were lovers in private, that was not their concern.

Trying to control his mood, Lucien talked with Natasha like a good friend and the queen's knight, occasionally interrupted by her conversation with other nobles. It was just like any regular party.

After twenty minutes, having not found anything, Duke James smiled, "Just now, Her Majesty mentioned creative gadgets in the kingdom. I happen to have some in my place. Why don't I give Your Majesty a tour, where you will hear the introduction from their creator, Mr. Lucien Evans, in person?"

"Okay." Natasha agreed quickly, knowing that Duke James had more to say.

Therefore, Duke James and three other leaders of the liberals, Lucien, Camil and a young man with silver grey eyes went to the main house of the manor with Natasha.

"This is Count David, a ferocious knight of the royal family." Duke James introduced him to Lucien.

Lucien nodded his head. "His Excellency Morris mentioned your father before. He was an excellent sorcerer."

David had the typical look of the Hoffenberg family. His face was contoured shenke, but his silver grey eyes emanated certain coldness. He replied with a smile, "Mr. Evans, thank you for your approval of my father."

He was neither cold nor warm, as he recalled his late father.

Very soon, the few of them entered the main house and stepped on the stairs. As the queen's knight, Lucien naturally stayed behind and 'protected' Natasha with Camil, one on the right and the other on the left.

Right when Duke James and the rest of them were about to turn, Lucien suddenly sensed something soft in his left hand.

"Natasha's hand?" Lucien turned his head in surprise, only to catch her delightful eyes.

Natasha's right hand had taken off the silk glove. The warmth of her palm was a major contrast to the courtesy a moment ago.

Lucien understood her heart. He couldn't help but hold it more tightly. Lucien felt indescribably satisfied by the secret movement. The warm feeling seemed to have made his heart peaceful again.

As they held hands, Natasha looked at the front, but the smile on her face couldn't be covered.

After they passed the corner, they loosened the hold on each other's hands as if it were nothing and followed Duke James to enter the chamber.

Inside the secret chamber, a tray with wines, champaign and 'Sky Blue' on it had been placed.

After checking the drinks, they each picked up a cup and looked at Duke James, waiting for him to speak.

"In fact, I only mean to ask Your Majesty's opinion on the

alchemical workshops and the promotion of magic items. Honestly, a lot of our wealth has been invested in it.” Duke James spoke rather straightforwardly, as he felt that he had grasped Natasha’s tendencies.

Natasha kept the solemnity of the queen. “My attitude is the same. All the magic items that benefit the kingdom and the people will be encouraged, and those which are evil and corrupting will be forbidden.”

“You are truly not one of those conservative people, Your Majesty.” Duke Russell said with a smile. “I’m hoping to invest in something, but I don’t know if it could make profits. Mr. Evans, do you have any suggestions?”

“What investment?” Lucien suddenly felt that he was in a business meeting.

Russell sipped the champaign and said, “Radio stations, like ‘Arcana Voice’ or ‘News of the World’, rather than a few simple news programs or music episodes.”

He keenly sensed the value in it, but he did not know how to make money from it.

Natasha looked at Lucien curiously. He seemed to have talked about it before in private.

Lucien smiled. “The main problem is that magic radios are still expensive. Although they have been simplified, only the people above the middle class can afford them. The popularization of the item means that the radio stations wouldn’t have great returns.”

“Do you have any suggestions? Further simplification?” Count Henson was quite interested in it, too.

Lucien looked at them and said thoughtfully, “I suggest that the radio station should also publish newspapers. Whoever subscribes to the newspapers for one year will be given a magic radio. Then, the radios will be popularized soon enough.”

“But there will be heavy losses!” As the Minister of Finance, Count

Henson was very sensitive about losses. One magic radio was much more expensive than a year of subscription.

Lucien looked at Natasha and said, “There will be losses, but it’s a necessary price for promotion. The revenue, however, will come from . I’ll ask my companies to give the radio stations tremendous fees”

“Wouldn’t you lose money?”

Lucien smiled, “ is investment and will pay off later. We can afford the wait.”

Even though he lost money, it would be worthwhile if he could control the public opinion of the radio stations of Holm through .

Duke James was about to talk, when his face was darkened. He crumbled the cup in his hands into pieces. “It’s poisoned!”

It was not until he heard poison that Lucien felt a corrupt, terrifying poison bursting out inside his body, but it was eliminated by the Congus Ring immediately. However, below the poison was a weird curse that made him unable to focus his spiritual power as he were drunk!

Were the wines in the secret chamber all poisoned?

Why did he fail to notice it?

In his anxiety, Lucien looked at Natasha and immediately felt that his heart was heavy, because her face was also dark and her hands were shivering.

Duke James roared, “Who poisoned the wine?”

His voice was so loud that the glass was almost shattered, as he tried to draw the attention of the nobles outside.

He knew very well that, as long as the criminal was not an expert above legendary, they would’ve raised his wariness if they approached him, who was a gold knight, and they poisoned the wines within the range of his consciousness.

That was, of course, if they did not have the cooperation of spies!

Chapter 534: "Poisonous Devil"

Chapter 534: "Poisonous Devil"

Because he was capable of many marvelous magics, Lucien was very confident about the wines he checked, but his confidence turned out to be a fatal mistake today. He had drunk a cup of 'Sky Blue' that was mixed with terrible poisons and weird curses.

No, not just the wine!

Lucien looked at Camil. As a level-eight radiant knight whose responsibility was to protect Natasha, she wouldn't drink or eat anything on such occasions. Still, her face was dark, and her body was quivering uncontrollably. She intended to turn into 'Tide', but the blue ripples disappeared immediately after they surfaced. It was obvious that she had been poisoned and cursed!

Where was the source of the poisons and curses?

Lucien suddenly smelled vague but sweet fragrance of flowers, like that outside, except that it was more sweet and intoxicating.

Something was wrong with the fragrance!

There must be a spy, or something who was manipulated, that brought the item which emitted such fragrance in. When it was mixed with the wines that had also been played tricks on, the wine and the air became unimaginable poisons and curses. No wonder he did not detect anything during the examination!

But it was not the time to look for the spy or the accomplice. Lucien wobbled to Natasha, with everything fuzzy and shaking before him.

Thankfully, Lucien had the Congus Ring which dissolved the poison. He was unlike Camil, James or the rest of them, who were not only dizzy but also weak, even unable to stand on their feet.

Count Henson, who did not activate the strength of a knight, collapsed and fell into 'hangover'.

Lucien's body still had strength. He gradually approached Natasha like a drunk man. If his heavy head and soul still remembered things correctly, 'Sword of Truth', the ultimate bloodline that could cut everything, was immune to curses. Therefore, Natasha should be only poisoned, with strength fading from her body, but her head should still be clear. As long as she put on 'Health Belt' and activated it, the poison in her should be relieved in no time.

The level-eight magic item was also immune to the poisons below legendary!

As for the Congus Ring, even if Lucien wanted to give it to Natasha, she couldn't use it.

Count David, the second weakest of all, collapsed like Count Henson, but he hadn't completely entered 'unconscious' yet, but moved his eyes anxiously.

Power from the curses spread out from his lungs and his stomach and extended upwards, affecting Lucien's brain and soul. It made his head swollen and his heart race. He was unable to cast a single spell or activate any item.

After he staggered to Natasha, Lucien took off the belt and put it on her.

Natasha said in a low voice, as if talking was difficult for her. "I cannot concentrate my will... I can't use any magic item. Go... go now. Their target... should be me..."

As if not hearing anything, Lucien buttoned the Health Belt on the back of her waist, before he said with a numb tongue, "Try to... control yourself... The poison... hasn't been completely activated yet... There should be a chance... to use magic items."

Natasha did not waste time or give up. She tried to get her body under control, while she urged again, "Hurry and leave... You still have strength... Ask for the reinforcement... of the nobles outside..."

At least, Lucien would not die with her.

Then, she would be able to seek the slim chance of survival without concerns.

Applause echoed from the gate. "What a touching couple. I hope that you will stay together after you die."

Lucien raised his head, only to discover a weird, green-haired man at the gate. There were no pupils in his eyes but only the devastating whiteness. His clothes were quite eccentric, too, because he was wearing a black cloak that covered his entire body even though it was a hot day.

The weird man who appeared to be in his thirties bowed and said, "Your Majesty, allow me to introduce myself. I am Primous, 'Poisonous Devil' of the Dark Congress."

'Poisonous Devil' Primous was the expert who ranked 62nd on the Cleansing List, a level-nine dark night, and a descendant of the Demon Lord. He was best known for poisons and curses. While he ranked lower than Lucien, he was definitely stronger than Lucien.

Natasha did not respond to him but tried to focus her attention, and Lucien resisted the power of curses with his spiritual power, too.

Primous, however, did not attack immediately, but chattered on, "You don't know me? That's alright. All you need to know is that I'm here to kill you. It's been a while since the Congress waited for the South Church to declare war on the Congress of Magic. After learning that Your Majesty also chooses balance, the old men sent me here."

He seemed to be affected by his bloodline, or maybe he was confident of his victory, so he appeared rather hysterical.

"As long as I kill Your Majesty, Mr. Lucien Evans, Duke James and the rest of them and pretend that it was done by radical night watchers, the Church and the Congress of Magic will definitely burst into war. Right, I'm good at simulation. I think I'm capable of making the legendary sorcerers and saint cardinals believe that 'Cursed Angel' Grunwell of the night watchers did all this."

Hearing his neurological chatter, both Lucien and Natasha tried to dissolve the power of either the curse or poison in their body, but it seemed that they were stronger and stronger as time went by. Neither of them could stand on their feet anymore.

Primous seemed to be unaware of their efforts, and nor did he care that Duke James and the rest of them could not reply because of lack of strength. He continued on happily, "In order to kill you, I spent tremendous efforts on controlling the servants and gardeners to slightly change the vegetation in the garden. If you were truly a flower lover, Duke James, you would've realized it a long time ago. It's a shame that you are just a show-off. So, when you walked into this chamber with the fragrance of flowers, the previously harmless ingredients in the wine turned violent."

"In order to not alarm you, I did not adopt drastic and fatal poisons and curses but chose weakening and paralyzing ones. They look rather effective and gave me enough time to arrive from beyond the range of your consciousness, Duke James."

His words confirmed Lucien's speculation, and it seemed to have ruled out the possibility of a spy.

However, how could Lucien have trusted a lunatic like him?

"Haha. Do you think that I'm so stupid that I would give you enough time to lift the poisons and curses?" Primous suddenly smiled.

Shocked, Lucien thought of something, but the power of curses that flooded into his head slowed his thinking.

Primous grimaced, "My mix of poisons and curses are named 'Helpless Kiss'. The longer you delay, the less strength you will have. So, in order to be absolutely safe, I let you hear my chatter. I'm happy that you cooperated with me."

As he said, he clapped his hands, "Down! Down! Down!"

Duke Russell and Camil fell first, with desperation and regret in their eyes, followed by Duke James, whose feet could no longer

support his body.

“Wow, as expected of the queen and Mr. Lucien Evans. You have lasted so long. Let me guess. The queen’s bloodline can eliminate the power of curse, and Mr. Evans has equipment that provides immunity to the poisons.” Primous warmed his wrist and seemed about to attack.

Lucien stepped forward. His head was more muddled than ever, and he had only one idea, which was to stand before Natasha. However, the rational, systematic thinking that he had formed still gave him a possibility to reverse the outcome. He could allure Primous to approach and attack with his left hand, hoping that the nullifying ability of the hand could dispel the supernatural powers of the level-nine dark knight and hurt him.

Primous chuckled, “It seems that I’ll have a lot of trophies this time. Mr. Evans, you are rarely-seen moving treasury of magic items.”

He took off his cloak and revealed a nightmarish body. That was a body full of ulcers, from which yellow or green mucus was bubbling and corrupting everything.

“So, would you please die?” Primous took action. Lucien could not capture him at all, much less attack him with the left hand.

He was not careless at all after the real attack began but regarded Lucien as an opponent on the same level as him. Therefore, while his melee abilities were not as good as a regular level-nine, it was still not something that Lucien could resist.

Bam. A yellow and green shadow blinked to Lucien’s side and knocked his chest brutally.

The poison that seemed to be killing the air made Lucien’s head even heavier. He raised his left hand but could not keep up with Primous’ speed. His chest suffered excruciating pain.

Without a sound, Lucien disappeared and appeared in the shadow of the gate.

‘Magic Trigger’, the magic he prepared in advance, saved Lucien’s

life at the critical moment.

“I almost forgot that you are a sorcerer, Mr. Evans, but I don’t think you can dodge again, can you?” Primous mocked Lucien and rushed at Lucien unbelievably fast.

Lucien managed to lift his left hand and blocked his chest, but Primous disappeared before him and blinked to his back, kicking him right on his back. The yellowish curses and the dark green poisons immediately surged forward.

With a dull noise, the three layers of grey skin that suddenly appeared on Lucien’s body were shattered into pieces, and obvious gaps showed up on the robe of the Immortal Throne. Lucien was blown toward Natasha, vomiting blood, with his back almost broken.

If he hadn’t learnt ‘Magic Order’ a few days ago and preset three ‘Stone Skins’, a four-circle magic, Lucien could’ve been killed directly!

“You’re still alive? That’s why I hate sorcerers most!” Primous grew agitated.

Duke James and the rest of them, while wondering how Lucien avoided Primous’ second attack, tried to focus their will, only to little avail.

Primous suddenly turned into a dark green spear and pierced at Lucien who was still on the ground.

Hardly had Lucien turned his body around with his uncontrollably hands and feet when he saw that. He intended to resist the attack with magic, but he couldn’t focus his spiritual power, which was still under the suppression of the curse.

Am I going to die here?

Suddenly, a shadow appeared before Lucien. A longsword was drawn, and the gaps of void appeared out of nowhere, blocking the spear.

However, the spear was so terrifying that it pierced through her body despite the longsword, sprinkling her hot blood on Lucien's abdomen, chest and face.

"Natasha..." Lucien said subconsciously.

Natasha's face was in abnormal red. The wound on her abdomen couldn't recover due to the poison. As she lost tremendous blood, her feet were obviously shaking, as if she could barely stand on her feet, but her voice was still as firm as before: "A knight should never stay behind."

Chapter 535: Lucien's Ruthlessness

The spear that Primous turned into was blocked by Pale Justice. Sensing the power that was equal to legendary for a Demon Lord, he stepped back. With his festered body, he narrowed his eyes and looked at Natasha who was standing unsteadily, before he declared, one word after another, "Your bloodline has mutated? The more heavily wounded you are, the stronger you will be?"

Natasha did not say anything else but stayed before Lucien holding her longsword. It appeared that her bloodline ability had been suppressed by Primous' poison, too, which discharged her newly-received strength incessantly. So, she was unable to attack but could only focus on defense first.

Since the wound on her abdomen that was corrupted by the poison couldn't be healed, the huge blood loss also added to the weakness of her body.

Primous raised his voice, sounding hysterical and brutal. "Magic Trigger, stimulation-induced defense of magic items, and bloodline ability mutation. Can you two just let me kill you? This is too disgusting. What's the use of your resistance? You would still be killed by me eventually, won't you? Wouldn't it be better to save our time?"

Lucien was like a man who drank three bottles of Reis. His brain was too sluggish for him to come up with any solution, much less performing magic. He could only vaguely sense that the power of force was gathering around his neck through his blood and spreading to his brain. Also, the power of the curse had begun to affect his body functions. Except for his left hand, the rest of his body parts were losing strength.

"No, I have to find a way to get rid of this 'intoxication', or we'll be dead for sure!"

"I cannot wait for reinforcements without trying to save myself, or there's a 99.99% chance that I will die before the reinforcements

arrive.”

“Natasha is in great danger!”

Messy ideas popped up in Lucien’s head. He waved his hands helplessly, trying to cling to an inspiration to get him out of trouble.

Primous took out two daggers, which were covered in dark green, decaying liquids that dropped on the ground once and while, darkening and corrupting a whole area.

“You will be punished for your lack of cooperation!” Primous shouted in fury. Then, he launched a storm of attacks at a speed that Lucien could not capture. The area was gradually contaminated by wriggling black, green and yellowish colors. Everybody entering the area would be suppressed by curses, poisons and diseases.

It was the semi-illusory willpower frontier that belonged to a level-nine gold knight.

Fearing ‘Pale Justice’ in Natasha’s hands, Primous did not start a head-on battle. Instead, with the suppression of speed and willpower frontier, he searched for the flaw in Natasha’s sword art and left wounds on her body with the daggers now and then.

While Natasha had the blood power of getting stronger as the wounds grew heavier, she was far weaker than Primous in the first place, and she was affected by the ‘Helpless Kiss’. It was not bad that she could carry out one third of her abilities. Therefore, she could not keep up with Primous at all but could only defend herself with her longsword.

It was good for the first ten seconds. With the flawless defense and Pale Justice’s suppression of evil and devils, Natasha managed to resist the attack of the Poisonous Devil. However, as time went by, the effect of ‘Helpless Kiss’ was more and more obvious. She gradually ran out of her strength, and many flaws appeared in her sword art. Primous took the opportunity to cut her hunting suit, break her skin and leave astounding wounds on her body.

By the stimulation of the wounds, Natasha recovered part of her

strength, but her breathing was heavier and heavier. She was like a tightened bow that might be broken at any moment.

Suddenly, Primous circumvented Pale Justice and approached her with his back against her. Then, he knocked her chest with his right elbow.

Crack, crack, crack. The noise of ribs being broken echoed. Natasha vomited red, silver blood. She only had the time to block Primous' upcoming attack, before she was blown backwards into the wall next to Lucien.

After a bam, the wall of the secret chamber covered in the divine power circle was almost broken.

Fearing that he might be hit by the legendary longsword that obviously suppressed devilish bloodlines, Primous did not finish the enemy immediately after he hit them like before but considered his own safety the top priority. He tried not to be touched by Pale Justice. Had it been otherwise, Natasha would've been killed by him.

"You can't stand up again, can you?" Primous shouted excited and bloodthirsty, but then he roared again, "Why—Why are you still standing? Just lie down and let me kill you!"

Lucien watched Natasha struggle to get back on her feet. Her blood, mixed with sweat, dripped on the ground, and her body was full of decaying wounds, but still, she raised her longsword determinedly in a gesture of protection.

"You shall not pass until I die."

Because of the heavy wounds, Natasha did not sound as weak as before, but her actual weakness was not changed at all.

Lucien loathed his helplessness at this moment. Now that he could not use the spiritual power, he was only half a grand knight at most, and he could not participate in a higher-level battle at all.

"I have to get rid of the dilemma!"

“I have to restore the spiritual power!”

“In order to restore spiritual power, I’ll have to lift the curse.”

“How can I lift the curse?”

His head filled with blood, Lucien thought slowly, sensing the power of the curse surging into his head from his neck.

“I announced that you are what I hate most instead of sorcerers! Your mutated blood power is too disgusting!” Primous was more than infuriated, but it did not affect his capability at all but only made him more bloodthirsty and crazy.

His fury and his chaotic blood powers did not make Primous lose his basic judgment. He still attacked stormily with his speed and agility, taking advantage that Natasha had to protect Lucien and that she was short of strength or alacrity.

When the red blood dripped to the ground, Lucien felt he heard the countdown of Natasha’s life. He was grasped by desperation and self-loathing.

However, for Lucien, what came with such desperation was not surrender but stubbornness that was like a conditional reflex. The spirit of not giving in had been melted into his soul ever since he played ‘Symphony of Fate’.

Anxiety, desperation, self-loathing and all the other feelings were gone. Even though Lucien’s head was still numb and sluggish due to ‘intoxication’, it had regained part of his thinking abilities after the negative emotions were gone.

“The power of curse affects the body and the soul by affecting the brain...”

“After it is melted by the body, it will have incessant support. Then, it will enter my head with my neck as the bridge... My spiritual power will be crushed sooner or later before I enter a ‘drunk dream’... Perhaps that’s why Primous said that the longer it was delayed, the better the effect would be...”

Struggling to analyze the procedure of the curse, Lucien found no way to resolve it, because lifting the curse required magic, and he could not perform magic now that he was suppressed by the curse. So, he was in a predicament.

“Is there any other way?” Lucien reviewed his body and realized that only his left hand still had strength.

“Left hand?”

“It is not affected by the curse!”

Lucien’s pupils suddenly widened!

At this moment, Natasha was blown into the wall by Primous in a huge noise again, but the soundproof chamber that was defended by divine power circles made the nobles outside hear nothing.

Sliding from the wall, Natasha held the ground with her left hand and tried to get back on her feet, but her wrist lost strength, and she fell again helplessly.

But Natasha did not give up. She still tried, even though Primous had already walked closer. She did not give up her persistence. If she was going to die either way, she might as well try one more time before her eyes were really closed!

“Wow, get back on your feet! Why don’t you get back on your feet! Let’s see if you can get back on your feet again!” Primous shouted passionately like a lunatic, mocking Natasha’s helpless struggle.

Then, he turned around and looked at Lucien, bowing with his left hand on his chest. “You two can go to hell now!”

After that, he grabbed the two daggers and pierced them at Lucien’s and Natasha’s heads respectively.

Lucien raised his shivering left hand, but the dagger was right before him. Everything seemed to have come to an end.

At this moment, Natasha’s shadow appeared before Lucien again. The wounds on her body were so devastating, and her feet were so

unsteady, but some sort of mental power seemed to get her back on her feet again and allowed her to block Primous' daggers with Pale Justice.

Natasha's tied purple long hair had been blown apart. It dispersed behind her like waves, covering her bloodstained face and making it impossible to see her eyes.

The picture left a deep impression on Lucien, but he did not have the time to think about so many things. He simply clenched his left hand.

Primous roared in exasperation, "You can still stand!"

"I will not fall until I am shattered!" Natasha seemed to be shouting with her soul, but her strength had faded so much that even her mutated blood power could not make up for it. Pale Justice was gradually dangling down.

At this moment, Primous' eyes were widened, as he saw Lucien opening his left hand and stabbing it into his own neck behind Natasha. His blood spurted out and sprayed on Natasha's back.

"Is he killing himself?"

The unimaginable, nervous pain almost made Lucien writhe on the ground, but thankfully, he did not have any strength for that.

Holding back the pain, and not pursuing accuracy, Lucien closed his left hand and moved it as if it were trying to twist something. The power of curse which was flooding into his brain vanished the moment it ran into the Silver Moon and the mysterious existence of the World of Souls.

'Helpless Kiss' was level nine by itself, but the poison had already been offset. Naturally, the remaining power of the curse could not resist the Left Hand of God at all!

Black air surged out of Lucien's neck like a snake, dispersing into the air.

His central nerves broken, Lucien could not sense any of his body

parts below the head right now, but for a sorcerer, as long as the brain and the soul were still there, everything was there!

His spiritual power surged like the tornado on the ocean. The power of the curse, losing the backup, was soon pressed into a corner and about to be crumbled.

“Something is wrong with his left hand!”

Primous grew wary when he saw the black air gone. Not having the time to finish Natasha, he tried to settle the troublesome sorcerer first.

However, he was not too bothered by it, either. A sorcerer only in the sixth or seventh circle was not necessarily capable of breaking his semi-illusory willpower frontier!

But at his moment, he saw Lucien taking out his left hand and speaking in an obscure accent that did not sound like a human being at all: “Spirit Confinement!”

Chapter 536: Analysis

As the spell was cast, Primous suddenly felt indescribably terrifying magic waves emerging out of nowhere. Illusionary faces suddenly appeared in the dark, green and yellow willpower frontier around him. They lunged at him with their fuzzy, blurry bodies without being affected at all!

“A legendary magic?”

Primous couldn't have been more astounded, but hardly had the idea occurred to him when the ferocious, incomplete souls ignored his defense of poisons and curses and crawled into his body. They entered into his nose and exited from his mouth, before they reentered into his eyes, forming a weird circulation as if they were having a grand ball.

The glamor in his eyes was gone, revealing the dull whiteness. Primous' body seemed to have slightly expanded because of the excessive souls. He stood in wild disbelief like a statue, and his semi-illusionary willpower frontier was instantly gone.

The esoteric spell that did not seem to be cast by the tongue, and the overwhelming magic wells, made Duke James, Duke Russell and other people who could not see the fight both surprised and delighted. If they heard and sensed it correctly, it was a legendary magic! Which Excellency of the Congress of Magic came to their rescue?

No matter who it was, their lives were finally saved!

Therefore, they were more inclined to the Congress of Magic.

After activating the Congus Ring and restricting Primous with 'Spirit Confinement', Lucien immediately felt that his spiritual power was dry and his head was in excruciating pain. The power of the curse that was almost gone seemed to be launching a comeback. However, 'Origin', the Holm crown ring on his right hand, fed his spiritual power that he stored in advance to him.

Having no time to bother anything else, Lucien spread out his spiritual power and took out a bottle of 'Water Song' from his storage bag.

Without any magic waves, the 'Water Song' floated and blew away the cork, pouring itself into Lucien's mouth.

One of the requirements for a sorcerer to advance into the senior rank was that their soul and spiritual power could directly affect reality. That was why Congus and other liches would have spoken and cast spells when they did not have a body. It was based on the privilege that Lucien cast a spell.

In fact, the power of curses differed from poisons in that cutting the central nerves could not stop it. Lucien had planned to stab his left hand into the neck, avoiding the spine and the central nerves, and use the nullifying ability of the hand to block and eliminate the power of curse. However, he did not have such self-control when he was 'intoxicated', and he hurt his spine and central nerves, losing the feelings below his neck.

If it was delayed any longer, his brain would've decayed due to the lack of oxygen. Then, Lucien would have to switch to a new body. Therefore, the moment he tamed Primous, Lucien hurried to recover himself with drugs.

The Water Song flowed into his throat. Emitting watery colors, it twisted and recovered the wound.

Since the spine was not completely broken and the central nerves were not collapsed, such a wound was much easier to treat than broken limbs. For example, Verdi, Natasha's cousin, was cut in the neck by her before, but he was not killed and was even slowly recovering.

Then, Lucien cast 'Remove Curse', the fourth-circle magic, to eliminate the remaining power of curse.

After his wound was recovered, Lucien hurried to take out another bottle of 'Water Song'. Holding Natasha who was still on her feet, he poured the drugs into her mouth and treated her with 'Poison

Neutralization' and other magics. He also added the effect of air filtering on himself.

Seeing that the danger was no more and Lucien was safe, Natasha was relieved and lost the momentum. Her willpower was finally crushed by the 'Helpless Kiss', and she collapsed in her arms.

Once one was hit by 'Spirit Confinement', their soul would be caged forever until it was relieved by a corresponding magic.

Even though the magic effect disappeared eventually, the soul would turn into dust if it took too long.

The black curse on her wound was cured by her blood power. The green and yellowish poisons were soon dissolved by Lucien's magic and drugs. The wound began wriggling, erasing the hideous, devastating traces.

Although 'Helpless Kiss' could not be relieved by a common 'Poison Neutralization' and 'Water Song', Natasha's external wounds were basically recovered. Her life was no longer in danger.

"I will gather my willpower and activate the Health Belt. You go to rescue Aunt Camil, Duke James and Duke Russell first." Due to the loss of blood and Helpless Kiss, Natasha was still extremely weak.

Supposedly, after she gathered her willpower with her blood power which made her stronger when she was wounded, the best solution was to break into the pivot of the Health Belt and use it to eliminate the poison. However, Lucien, the owner of the Health Belt, was in danger and unable to direct her to carry out the performance of the belt. So, she had to fight without it, and the Helpless Kiss was still not relieved yet.

"Alright." Without further ado, Lucien planned to wake up James, who was a gold knight, in case more enemies came.

Therefore, Lucien carried Natasha to a wall and let her gather her willpower gradually. By then, as long as she intended to use the Health Belt, he would sense it and could provide guidance.

As he walked to Duke James, Lucien saw that his eyes were still

clear. It seemed that his level-nine diminished the effect of ‘Helpless Kiss’. Even without his help, he would’ve gradually recovered after Helpless Kiss passed the most active phase.

After ten seconds, ensuring that his spiritual power was good enough for him to use the Sun Staff, Lucien finally performed a magic to suppress Helpless Kiss. At such a moment, he had to be prepared that everybody but Natasha was a spy.

Duke James was more or less recovered, but he still couldn’t gather his willpower, so he said, “Help me activate the ring on my left little finger.”

On his left little finger was a bright blue ring which, according to Lucien’s senses, had the effect of poison resistance. However, ‘Helpless Kiss’ was much higher than its innate effect, and it had to be activated in order to relieve the poison.

Activating magic items was Lucien’s specialty. Soon, the ring began to emanate a layer of watery light.

The watery light soon found its way into Duke James’ body, dissolving Helpless Kiss. After receiving the help, Duke James roared and pressed the green and dark air out of his skin.

He got rid of Helpless Kiss with the strength of a level-nine gold knight.

Getting back on his feet, Duke James looked so awful as if his whole family had died. For a level-nine gold knight, his own strength was the best safety measure for him. He did not expect that he would almost get killed in a trap today.

Suddenly, his eyes were straightened. “Didn’t one of the masters come?”

He thought that the rescuer cast the legendary magic just now, but there was not a second moving person in the room except Lucien.

Lucien smiled, “Your Excellency, let’s save other people first.”

James looked at Lucien in surprise and suspicion. Could it have

been him? When did he enter the eighth circle and boast a legendary item?

It was even more unbelievable than them being assassinated!

However, he concealed his suspicion and surprise soon and gnashed his teeth, “Poisonous Devil... the Dark Congress... Lucien, after you’re done ‘interrogating’ Primous, you must give him to me. I’ll let him regret living in this world.”

It was both because of fear of death as well as the fury of being set up.

“Your Excellency, do you feel ‘Helpless Kiss’ in the air?” Lucien was surrounded by ‘Air Filtering Bubbles’, a magic that temporarily blocked the curses and poisons in the air, but what was odd was that Duke James did not seem affected by Helpless Kiss anymore.

Duke James was also curious. Thinking for a moment, he looked at Primous and said, “Such poisons and curses should be closely concerned with himself. Now that he is caged, the poisons and curses of such a high level couldn’t last after losing his support.”

Lucien raised his eyebrow. His head was clear again after he was detoxicated. After ensuring that everything was alright, he sniffed and walked around Camil, Russell, Henson and David, before he returned to Duke James and said solemnly, “Your Excellency, do you really think this is done by the Dark Congress, and that he is ‘Poisonous Devil’?”

“Is he not?” Duke James was slightly surprised but not entirely unprepared. After all, Primous was the one who said everything. As a murderer, his words were not convincing.

Lucien’s attention had been focused on Natasha. He said in anger, “Duke James, if a gold knight like you can be poisoned so easily, this ‘Primous’ should have achieved tremendous accomplishments, but it is not true.”

“It took several minutes for us to reach the chamber from the garden. There was wind, the sun and the defense of the divine

power circle. I cannot imagine what fragrance could have followed us into this place. After all, our garments are all magic items. We would've sensed it if the fragrance was abnormally dense, wouldn't we? Therefore, Primous lied about how he poisoned us!"

"But I did smell fragrance here, and it did become a curse." Duke James temporarily stopped rescuing Russell.

Lucien did not reply but continued, "If the fragrance would turn into a level-nine 'Helpless Kiss' the moment it touches the wine, like Primous said, wouldn't 'Helpless Kiss' have been generated the moment we entered the chamber? But why didn't we detect anything?"

"If I was the only examiner, 'Helpless Kiss' might've been unique and escaped my attention, but you failed to detect it, too, although you are a gold knight, Duke James. That is rather odd."

Duke James narrowed his eyes. "Are you suspecting me?"

"If you are alright, there is another possibility, which is that 'Helpless Kiss' was generated after our examination. That is the only way to trick a gold knight and a senior-rank sorcerer." Lucien looked at Duke James.

"Primous claimed that the level-nine 'Helpless Kiss' was a mix. That should be true. Based on that, we can reach a simple conclusion, which is that the fragrance outside was only meant to confuse our senses and make us unskeptical when we smelled the fragrance in the room. The real criminal, on the other hand, released the 'real fragrance' after we checked the wine and the room to generate 'Helpless Curse'."

"Also, the poisons and curses of such a level must be closely related to Primous' blood power. They cannot last without the preservation of magic items. How could he have measured the time if he did not know when we entered the room?"

"How could it be so easy to assassinate a gold knight, a senior-rank sorcerer, and three radiant knights?"

Hearing Lucien's analysis, Duke James sniffed and identified the scent in the air. Then, with uncontrollable fury beaming out of his face, he strode to Duke and kicked him in his waist.

After a clang, a glass bottle the size of a fingernail rolled out.

It had been opened, emitting sweet and vague fragrance.

"Why did you do this?" Duke James' demand drew Natasha's attention.

Lucien remained silent despite his confusion. Having been the target of assassination before, he was rather prudent about his safety. He was bold enough to join the party without a Transformation Mask for many reasons. Firstly, he believed that the Church would not send night watchers to kill him in a party held by the liberals, which would make the liberals completely inclined to the Congress. It would also dishearten the neutrals among the conservatives.

Secondly, with the Congus Ring, he was not very scared about assassins below legendary.

Thirdly, in the case of the extreme lunatics, he had asked his 'buddy' Alferris to protect him in secret. With its seventh-circle magic capabilities and its nature as a dragon, it was not difficult for Alferris to fool the experts below legendary. It must've detected a strange level-nine knight approaching.

Lucien's head was too numb because of Helpless Kiss a moment ago for him to think about Alferris. Now that he was awake, he was naturally very confused.

If it felt that the enemy was too strong, it should've been easy for Alferris to save him or inform Fernando.

But where was the little crystal dragon?

Hopefully, everything was still fine...

Chapter 537: Cooperation

Chapter 537: Cooperation

In order to trick everyone, David did not seem to have prepared any items against the poisons or curses. He did not carry any drugs that could relieve ‘Helpless Kiss’, either. At this moment, under Duke James’ roar, he could do nothing except to look back at him in desperation and craziness.

To be honest, even an archmage of the Congress might not have equipment or drugs that could nullify the level-nine ‘Helpless Kiss’. It was needless to mention the nobles.

Gold dragon scales surfaced on Duke James’ skin as he released his supreme dominance. Stomping on David’s abdomen, he slightly suppressed his ‘Helpless Kiss’ and restored David’s language ability. “Tell me! Why did you do this?”

David understood that his scheme had been exposed when the special bottle of ‘honey’ rolled out of his belt. Assassinating one’s liege was an unpardonable crime for the nobles. He burst into laughter crazily and hopelessly, “Why did I do this? You should ask yourselves!”

“Did we ask you to assassinate Her Majesty?” Duke James roared angrily like a dragon.

David took a few deep breaths. “What sweet fragrance, just like the intoxicating hope. Ever since I was born, you had been telling me that Prince Patrick might not live a long time and would certainly have no children, and that I would be the one who acceded to the throne.”

“Therefore, I built myself up all the time. I improved my chivalry. I held myself with noble character. I approached you and the Congress of Magic, not letting any flaw from my future ascendancy. I hoped to control Holm and even echo with ‘Sword of Truth’, touching the mysteries of the legendary knights.”

“My whole life was for the throne, but you abandoned me all of a sudden and chose this uncanny queen instead! How long did she live in Holm? Did she ever strive for the throne? I don’t buy it! I want to take back what is mine!”

James was rather embarrassed as David talked crazily. David was a backup candidate that they groomed because of his identity and his tendencies towards the Congress of Magic. But naturally, when Natasha, who was more suitable, appeared, they abandoned him without any hesitation. They did not expect that he was so covetous about the throne that he would bite the people who raised him.

However, as a senior noble, James did not let his embarrassment last for long. He said angrily, “That’s why you conspired with the Dark Congress to kill Her Majesty and us? I get it. He would’ve left you unkilld for some reason, and you would’ve worked with him, blaming this murder on ‘Cursed Angel’ Grunwell. The Church, to appease the nobles who favor the Congress and the neural nobles, and not to divide the kingdom, would’ve chosen you as the king.”

David was dazed. Then he burst into such crazy laughter as if he had heard the funniest joke. Duke James and Lucien both frowned.

He looked at Duke James, almost unable to catch his breath: “You really bought it?”

“You believe everything he said? How naive!”

“Who do you think would be convinced by my story, if you, a gold knight, were killed but I, a mere gold knight, survived?”

“He is not ‘Poisonous Devil’?” Recalling the fake clues that ‘Primous’ made, Lucien observed calmly.

In the meantime, Lucien took out the crystal ball, testing Alferris’ whereabouts.

Because of ‘Helpless Kiss’, David was out of strength as he laughed. He said both weakly and cockily, “If he were really as hysterical and maniac as ‘Poisonous Devil’, how could he have been sent for this mission, and how could he have trapped rational experts like

you? ‘Poisonous Devil’ is a lunatic, but I am not one!”

“He intentionally mimicked ‘Poisonous Devil’ and confessed his scheme in order to mislead you into thinking about the Dark Congress.”

“Duke, you’re not wrong about one thing. After he killed Natasha and Lucien, he would’ve broken the divine power defense, pretending that it was an accident, so that the other nobles would notice it. Then, in order not to be killed by the legendary experts, he could only flee in panic after killing a few random nobles who were inclined to the Congress. Therefore, only one of you would’ve died, and the rest would’ve survived with me and revealed the scheme of the Dark Congress. That way, the kingdom would be kept intact.”

The crystal ball became dark, and the Host Stars of Destiny showed up. Lucien was too occupied to ask anything, but Duke James inquired earnestly, “Who is he exactly?”

David snorted, “You still haven’t got it? It is so obvious now!”

It was truly impossible to communicate with a lunatic. Duke James stomped and pressed back David’s voice.

“Who is he?”

David cackled crazily, “Didn’t he mention that he would blame it on ‘Cursed Angel’ Grunwell? You think it was just a random talk? It was just a trick. He was exactly ‘Cursed Angel’ Grunwell, a level-nine gold knight of the same Demon Lord bloodline as ‘Poisonous Devil!’”

“Grunwell, the night watchers!” Duke James looked at Grunwell who was standing like a statue in fury. It was a night watcher!

After murdering a baron radically, they were even thinking to kill the bigger nobles!

For a moment, Duke James was full of disgust against the night watchers and the Church. If he did not need them to balance the Congress of Magic, he would’ve advocated banishing the Church

from Holm!

Natasha, Russell and Camil looked more or less the same after hearing David's reply. The only difference was that the latter two did not even have the strength to frown.

Noticing Duke James' awful face, David smiled even more delightedly, "Very angry and very desperate about the Church? Then, let me tell you something even more infuriating."

"What is it?" Duke James demanded.

David laughed very happily, "Think about it. Is it easy for me, a noble who was close to the Congress of Magic, to get in touch and conspire with someone who ranked top ten among the night watchers? Could my fury have burst out so soon? Let me tell you. It was all because of the nobles who were inclined to the Church. They triggered the devil in my heart. Hehe. They did not want the kingdom to fall into a civil war. Therefore, they asked Grunwell to pretend to be 'Poisonous Devil' of the Dark Congress. After everything was over and you elected me as the king, you would find that the most conservative nobles also supported your opinion!"

"By then, you would've thought that they were doing it to appease you and to maintain 'solidarity' in order to live through the difficulties!"

Duke James said gloomily, "Who was it? Any noble who attempts to kill their liege must be hanged!"

It would matter if such a thing was done in secret, but if it was revealed, it would be the most severe crime that challenged the entire noble class.

"Count Barady, Duke York, and perhaps President Rex." David replied with a smile, selling them out without any hesitation, and even adding more.

Now that I'm about to die, what's the point of keeping Holm complete and prosperous? You should die. Let a civil war reduce Holm into ruins. That will be the best offering for me!

Duke James couldn't have looked more awful. He declared, one word after another, "I'll ask sorcerers, knights who are adept at interrogation, and the members of the inquisition to question you in turns. I hope you're not lying."

If it was only Count Barady, it would've been easier. However, behind Duke York had Kritonia, a legendary knight, and Rex was the leader of the conservatives. If they were involved in the matter, it would have to be handled with caution. Also, David was not necessarily speaking the truth.

"You won't be disappointed, Duke. Did you ever wonder why the prince died so coincidentally? Haha!" David burst into laughter, not bothering that they saw through his exaggeration in the end. After all, the seed of suspicion had been planted!

Hearing him pointing out the problems about Prince Patrick's death, Duke James looked so awful that his face seemed to be dripping water. Natasha, however, continued focusing her willpower as if she did not hear anything, but coldness did beam out of her silver eyes.

Lucien was less puzzled after learning that it was done by night watchers. They were 'professionals' to eliminate sorcerers and evil forces. Naturally, they had their ways to avoid the detection of the Host Star of Destiny. Also, he was levels lower than the criminal.

At this moment, the Host Star of Destiny of 'Alferris' glittered on the crystal ball, implying that it was unhurt and not far away.

What surprised Lucien, however, was that two clusters of powerful projections of fate lay next to the Host Star of Destiny of the Little Crystal. They were very fuzzy but they did not cover themselves, allowing Lucien to identify them very easily.

"Master? Your Excellency Hathaway?"

What exactly is going on?

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In midair, Fernando, the Lord of Storm, stared at the void before

him with his red eyes wide open. On his left side was the indifferent Hathaway, and behind him squatted the clever Alferris.

It informed his master the moment it noticed that something was wrong.

“Sard, why did you ask us to watch this? To let me see how my student makes a comeback?” Asked Fernando solemnly.

The air not far away seemed to have been gathered into the shadow of a person, who smiled peacefully, “How would the liberals seek another way of balance, and how would they abandon the Church at the critical moment without any hesitation, if they had not been through life-and-death dangers that made them desperate about the Church first?”

“What do you want exactly?” Fernando squinted.

“Cooperation. I want to cooperate with you.”

Sard’s projection spoke concisely.

Chapter 538: Sard's Plan

Subconsciously, Fernando was about to establish a storm barrier in case other legendary experts were snooping around them, but Sard hurried to say, "Use other spells. I cannot cast my projection into your barrier."

He certainly dared not leave the Radiance Church and talk face to face with the grand arcanists, which would be like feeding himself to the enemy. A saint cardinal was not as unpredictable and unkillable as a legendary sorcerer.

Therefore, Fernando and Hathaway set up multiple magics together to prevent prying. The seemingly empty and peaceful air was full of fatal traps.

After everything was done, Fernando looked at the human-shaped air with his red eyes. "By cooperation, do you mean cooperating with the two of us, or the Congress?"

Hathaway had always been taciturn when somebody else could speak for her. Alferris, on the other hand, had been blocked by Fernando since the beginning, unable to see them or hear their conversation.

It was not because Fernando distrusted it but because it was still too young and might reveal secrets subconsciously. Also, the sense deprivation was a torture for other people but nothing for a dragon. Alferris had already fallen asleep, floating in midair with Fernando's strength.

Sard smiled as warmly as when he was preaching. "The cooperation I want cannot be supported by you two alone. The Congress of Magic is stronger than the Northern Extremists in terms of both the capabilities of their leadership as well as the personnel on the lower levels, but why is it only restrained in the cities such as Allyn, Rentato and Cox? Why can't it control a massive empire as well as its vassal kingdoms and duchies, like the Northern Extremists, who do not need to worry about the Church inside but only need to pay

attention to external defenses? This is highly undeserved for the second strongest force in all the dimensions.”

Fernando calmed down and replied loudly, “That’s because we grew from weak to strong, unlike the North Church which was partly capable of resisting the South Church and had the full support of the northern nobles since the very beginning.”

“The Church has set up one big and four small transmission magic circles in Rentato, Cox kukesi and other cities, ensuring that they can reinforce it in time if we intend to remove the branches of the Church on this side of the Storm Strait, transforming a local war into a total war. In such a case, both parties need to calculate the potential losses prudently. However, I believe that, as the Congress develops, the situation will be greatly changed in ten years.”

“Ten years? You mean the legendary advancement made possible by ‘new alchemy’?” Sard asked about the details unhurriedly.

Hathaway interjected, “Yes. The system will be more or less perfected in ten years, and the errors will be rectified.”

“By then, Hathaway will certainly reach the peak of legendary, as well as Raventi, Morris, Donald, Prado and other archmages who have stayed in the ninth circle for a long time will advance into legendary, too.” Fernando declared confidently and exaggeratedly, leaving the impression that he was bragging.

However, he was even more confident than he appeared. He did not show it because he wanted to mislead Sard. Whatever purpose Sard might have, sending him the wrong intelligence might yield amazing results in the future. For the big shots in their level, a conversation was also a competition.

Sard smiled, “Lucien is truly a genius. Ten years later, the Congress of Magic will be able to make the Church waver between losing half of the Grand Cardinals and evacuating from the few countries on the other side of the Storm Strait. His Holiness the pope estimated that it would take sixty years and therefore is not anxious.”

While God’s Arrival was terrifying, it could only be used once. Even

if Douglas was killed, what could they use to kill Brook and Hathaway?

By then, as long as the two grand arcanists at the peak of legendary stalled the pope, the other legendary sorcerers of the Congress would definitely make the Grand Cardinals pay gravely. After all, the South Church was surrounded by enemies, and it was impossible to summon all the legendary experts to attack the Congress of Magic, unless certain compromises were made to achieve the cooperation of the North Church and the Dark Congress.

Of course, such a possibility was little to none. The conflicts of heretics could not be mediated. Also, they certainly would not wait and watch the Church, which was the strongest of all, to swallow the Congress of Magic without losing anything. In that case, it would be their turn to be swallowed soon.

“Ten years is not too distant. I wonder how you want to cooperate, Sard.” Fernando asked solemnly.

Just now, he described the Congress’ possible improvement following Hathaway’s opinion, but in fact, with the new alchemy, the mass-energy formula, and the reverse-engineering of ‘fission’ and ‘fusion’, he was confident to reach the peak of legendary in one to two years even though he could not grasp all of them due to the lack of knowledge. Hathaway was the same.

If neutrons were discovered in advance, the advancement of Raventi, Donald and other archmages would be sooner, too. It would be a major mistake to predict the change of the Congress of Magic in a time span of ten years.

Sard said calmly, “I can shorten ten years to one year. After one year, you will control Holm, Brianne and other territories like the North Church controls the Schachran Empire. The frequency of sorcerers being killed will be significantly lowered.”

“It would take the pope one year before God’s Arrival could be used again. Therefore, one year later will be a good point. By then, I will shut the transmission magic circle in Rentato, so that you will not

fear reinforcements. It will take at least half an hour to transfer from the Holy City. I believe you are capable enough of pushing the frontline to the Storm Strait in the meantime.”

Storms seemed to be raging in Fernando’s pupils, indicating that he was not calm. While Hathaway was still indifferent, her focused eyes showed her attention, too.

For the Congress of Magic, the Radiance Church had to be removed in order to control this side of the Storm Strait, and the greatest problem for the removal was the super large transmission magic circle inside it. Because of the uniqueness of the divine power barrier, it could not be blocked in advance. However, Sard was implying that he would shut down the lifeline of Holm!

“What do you want from this? What about the Grand Cardinals of the other four parishes and the legendary knights in the countries?” Fernando controlled his anxiety.

Sard chuckled. “You should’ve made some progress on diagnosing the fake gods. I believe you must’ve reported Lucien’s report on Ell’s church, too. Do you not know what I want? I want to establish a church with my own beliefs in order to approach the Almighty Lord.”

“The lands on this side of the Storm Strait is an excellent choice. I will reform the doctrines of the Church and return the interpretation right of the Cannon to the believers. The Saint Truth will be everyone’s Saint Truth. In such a way, my church will be something that you can count on and work with, like the North Church and their nobles.”

“For the legendary knights and nobles, it will be an acceptable balance. Until the South Church is completely destroyed, you cannot abandon them and have to respect them.”

“What I’m doing right now is to make use of the radicals in the Holm parish to transform the opinions of the clergy and to intensify the relationship between the nobles and the Church, so that the liberals will abandon the Church and join my arms when a new balance is available, and the conservatives will make a similar

choice after weighing the pros and cons.”

“I’m confident to attract one of the four Grand Cardinals in other parishes. Based on the secrets I obtained from the World of Souls, I’m confident to attract another one or two in a year. The legendary knights will recognize the situation. Now, I already have ‘Heart of Time’. I don’t think you have no legendary knights on your side after such a long time, do you?”

Sard admitted frankly that he got something from the World of Souls. After all, the Congress of Magic must’ve guessed it.

Fernando acknowledged his speculation with silence. A few legendary knights in every country had been attracted to the Congress, but until the situation changed, they would not revolt but would even attack the Congress under the Church’s lead.

“In such a way, the power of God will plummet. Even if you have three Grand Cardinals, that’s still far from the nobles. You would be overwhelmed by them. Are you not worried about that?” Asked Fernando solemnly.

Sard shook his head. “What I want is faith, the truth, and to be closer to the Lord. Everything else is just false. If you would like to cooperate, you have to stress that when you swear before the Origin of the World, and I will also promise that I will shut down the transmission magic circle with the Heart of Faith.”

“This is too important a matter for us to give you an answer immediately. We have to summon the Highest Council for discussion.” Fernando said seriously.

Sard smiled. “Of course.”

Then, the human-shaped air that he gathered was gone.

Hathaway watched it for a while and said in a low voice, “Do you believe what he said?”

“He sounded rather reasonable. It’s worth a shot, too. However, we have to be prepared that he is up to something else.” His hands behind his back, Fernando looked at the Radiance Church in the

city.

.....

Inside the secret chamber, James kicked David into a coma after hearing his speech. He turned to Lucien and said, "Lucien, you will check his confession with magic first. I'll ask the neutrals and the Church advocates to check it, too. Rest assured, this is only to get more convincing and authentic proof. We will not compromise or attack randomly until the enemy pays."

"Alright, I'll check it later. 'Cursed Angel' Grunwell, on the other hand, has to be given to me. I lack the materials of a level-nine gold knight to work on the steady inheritance and activation of blood power. You can take away part of the tissues and his identity papers from Grunwell, or the conservatives would deny it." Lucien looked at Grunwell casually.

Duke James also looked at Grunwell. To be used by a sorcerer as experiment materials was much more brutal than to be killed. However, he was interested by something else Lucien said. "Steady inheritance and activation of blood power? Has the Congress made breakthroughs in that regard?"

"Not yet, but I believe there will be." Lucien bragged, giving the nobles hope without specifying how long it would take.

His eyes glowing, James said, "Lucien, you are truly a genius in arcana studies. I hope that you can resolve the conundrum someday. Alright, this room has poisons and curses lingering everywhere. It is bad for Her Majesty and other victims. I'll suppress the 'Helpless Kiss' in Russell and Camil first. The mix of poisons and curses will probably fade away very soon after they take a good rest in the other room."

"You will bring Her Majesty to the guest room. I'll 'process' the spot first before I inform 'Heart of Time'."

Lucien discovered that James was more friendly to him. He was not worried about their relationship when Natasha protected him risking her own life, and he even gave them an opportunity to talk

in private. Perhaps, his change of attitude was because of the assassination of the night watchers?

Lucien was about to reply, when his cheeks bounced and he received his master's secret message. Understanding everything, he nodded at Duke James with a weird look and walked to Natasha.

"You still haven't gathered your willpower? I'll suppress the 'Helpless Kiss' with magic first." Lucien held Natasha's shoulder concernedly.

Natasha nodded. "No. Bring me to the guest room. I can use the Health Belt after the willpower is gathered."

Lucien exerted strength and supported her to leave the wall that she leaned against. But he suddenly felt something when he noticed that her feet were unsteady.

Natasha sensed Lucien's pause and looked at him in confusion, but she felt a hand on her leg the moment she turned her head, and she immediately flew up. She waved her arms subconsciously, hoping to catch something, but because of her weak hands, she could only grip Lucien's shoulder in the end.

Calming herself down, Natasha saw Lucien's smiling face as well as the ceiling. It was not until then that she realized that Lucien had swept her off her feet!

Ever since she could remember, counting the incident where Lucien carried her to escape, she had never been hugged by a man in such a way before. Both embarrassed and angered, her bloodstained face emitted suspicious redness.

Lucien felt great after finally leaving the queen swooning. That should be the normal posture!

Natasha's face was slightly red. It was indescribably beautiful even though it was covered in blood. Recalling the female god of war that stood before him a moment ago, Lucien was greatly touched and kissed her in the face.

Sensing the warm touch on her face, Natasha put on a warm smile.

All her embarrassment gone, she said in a low voice, “I’ll hug you in the same way if there’s a chance!”

Chapter 539: Kritonia

Holding Natasha in his arms off her feet, Lucien walked to the guest room at the end of the corridor calmly. With such a posture and such softness in his hands, he was quite satisfied and could not cover his smile even though he could smell nothing but stinky blood and sour poisons.

Natasha, on the other hand, felt rather complicated. Her self-perception and her previous experience both suggested that she was a brave knight, but now that such a brave and firm knight was hugged by Lucien in such a way, she felt indescribably weak and ashamed. However, Lucien was the one who was hugging her. His heartbeat, his smell and his chest were all so familiar and made her feel warm and sweet. Therefore, she was both delighted and embarrassed, and she tried not to reveal her feelings on her face in case Lucien made fun of her.

While she felt uncomfortable and yet she did not want it to end, it did not occur to Natasha that she was also wearing a smile until Lucien stopped at the door of a guest room.

“Duke James’ guest rooms have divine power circles, too?” Lucien was more or less surprised.

Natasha tried to shift her attention from her current awkwardness and looked at the room. “The few guest rooms on this floor are for the entertainment of the royal family and other major nobles. So, the divine power circles are independent from the overall defense of the manor, giving the guests a private, secure space.”

As she explained, she saw that Lucien opened the door with his spiritual power and walked in.

The guest room was rather spacious, with a living room, a bedroom, a library and other facilities such as a piano and a bar. After Lucien closed the door and activated the divine power circle, the whole room was suddenly separated from the manor. Quiet and tranquil, it seemed like a private space that belonged to them.

Natasha knew that Lucien was being cautious. He could not be distracted when he guided her to use the Health Belt. They would be in major trouble if the divine power circle was not activated and an enemy attacked them.

Suddenly, she felt something soft, comfortable on her back and realized that Lucien had put her on the velvet bed and was staring at her attentively with her black eyes.

In a low voice, Lucien said, "Just now, you..."

Before he finished, Natasha interrupted Lucien and smiled, "No thanks are needed between us. It was my faith of protection as a knight and a wife. If it were you, I believe you would've done the same. I was quite shocked when you stabbed your hand into your neck."

Without being shy or retreating, she spoke of the word 'wife' frankly.

While talking, she extended her right hand and grabbed Lucien's, passing the gentle warmth into Lucien's heart.

There was no need to say or do anything. Lucien held Natasha's right hand tightly and sensed the eternal warmth between the two of them. Then, looking at her in the eyes, he lowered his head and kissed her lips.

Natasha blinked and slowly closed her eyes, relishing the kiss and not loosening her right hand.

Everything was slow and gentle, but it was even more exhilarating than passion.

After a while, when their lips were separated, Natasha's eyes were clear again. She said with a smile, "Hurry and suppress 'Helpless Kiss' for me..."

"I'm going to help you suppress 'Helpless Kiss'..." Lucien smiled and said at the same time. Then they both stopped and looked at each other with a smile.

“Hurry. If our recovery is delayed because of romance, and we are killed by subsequent enemies, it will be on the top ten most stupid ways to die in Allyn.” Natasha recognized the situation as keenly as before.

Lucien chuckled, “There shouldn’t be any subsequent enemies.” Had he not received Fernando’s secret message, he would’ve helped Natasha suppress the poisons earlier, but the truth was, it was not easy to come by Her Majesty when she was weak.

Natasha raised her eyebrow. “Granny Hathaway and the Lord of Storm came?”

She believed that Lucien came to the private party with certain preparations. Therefore, she thought of ‘reinforcements’ the moment Lucien said it.

“Let’s talk about the details later. I’ll help you recover first.” Lucien nodded. Considering that Duke James would inform ‘Heart of Time’ to come after processing the spot, he could not stay long. So, he helped Natasha suppress ‘Helpless Kiss’ with magic such as ‘Poison Neutralization’.

Natasha focused her attention and began to gather her willpower. After a minute, a sharp and cold brilliance beamed out of her eyes.

Seeing that, Lucien spread his spiritual power to Natasha through their right hands that were still crossed, guiding her to pass the magic barriers of the Health Belt. Then, he erased his own mark.

Natasha was slightly surprised, but she did not have the time to consider at such a moment. She hurried to leave her own mark in the pivot.

The Health Belt around her waist emitted a gentle glow. As its passive ability was activated, the dark green gas spread out and disappeared.

After a dozen seconds, Natasha waved her left hand and said in complicated feelings. “Being weak is a terrible feeling.”

Then she looked at Lucien. “Why did you erase your mark?”

"I have the Congus Ring with me. The effect of the Health Belt is redundant for me, and you don't have an item that protects you from poisons, diseases and negative energy." Lucien said with a smile.

While the royal family of Holm was rich, and Natasha had a granny who was a grand arcanist, the senior-rank items, especially those with special effects, had always been rare. Therefore, although Natasha had equipment that could prevent poisons, it was not as good as the Health Belt.

Having regained her strength, Natasha cleaned the blood on her and teased him, "What a precious gift. You truly deserve to be called a 'moving treasury', Mr. Evans."

It was what Grunwell said just now.

"You're my wife and my queen. Nothing is more precious than you." Lucien realized that he might be talented at sweet talking after all.

Natasha chuckled and enjoyed what Lucien said, but she intentionally said, "You picked three items from Mr. Rhine's place. Except for the scroll that you used yourself, you offered the other items to me. Your adventure proved to be for nothing."

It was then that Lucien realized that the items he got from Mr. Rhine's treasury had been mostly offered to Natasha. However, it was definitely worthwhile as long as she was happy. Mr. Rhine was really a good man. When could he offer an opportunity to pick another item from his treasury?

"Right, did you have something you want to say?" Natasha was also relieved after knowing that Hathaway was around. She almost forgot to ask.

Lucien cast another spells cautiously in case of snooping. Then, he spoke to Natasha via the telepathic bond. "Sard was the one behind the curtain. He wanted to..."

There was no need to keep it a secret from Natasha. As the queen of

Holm, she would be involved in the matter sooner or later. Besides, her tendencies were rather obvious.

“I don’t trust Sard. He has been too mysterious and unpredictable.” Natasha offered her opinion.

Lucien nodded. “Nobody knows what he got from the World of Souls. It’s not easy to infer his real purpose. We have to be prepared that he has great schemes.”

“His Excellency Kritonia was attracted to him... What’s the result of your necropsy?” Natasha asked solemnly.

Lucien thought for a moment and confessed, “The necromancers of the Hand of Paleness knew a lot about cells. Based on their knowledge system, they found out the age of the prince when he passed away. Although there’s an error of about half a year, it is doubtless that the prince’s actual age when he died was two to three years older than the age he should’ve been. You can ask Hathaway for more details.”

The test result was too important to be delivered through electromagnetism messaging. Lucien joined the party and met Natasha partly to forward the message, too.

Natasha listened and sighed in sorrow, “I find Sard even less trustworthy...”

Then, she calmed down and smiled like a real queen. “Rest assured. I will not be impetuous. It takes tricks and plans to crush the enemy in a head-on clash. I’ll cooperate with them until the lands are separated. Then, I will bring Kritonia to trial for his crime. He will have no support.”

After learning the cause of her family member’s death, she made up her mind. Sard couldn’t have done it on his own. The pope and the Grand Cardinal must’ve given their help.

“The Congress and I will be on your side.” Lucien touched Natasha’s hair, which made her slightly uncomfortable. She intentionally changed the subject, “Right, Lucien, I’ll tell you a secret...”

Hearing the secret in the telepathic bond, Lucien smiled. "This is great. I feel relieved."

Pausing for a moment, Lucien walked to the window and observed the nobles who were almost about to riot. "Kritonia will be informed very soon. It's inappropriate for me to meet him. I'll leave now. Don't be scared when you face him. Her Excellency Hathaway is around and observing everything."

"Okay." Natasha suddenly put on a naughty smile. "There should be a few more minutes. Lucien, my strength is not entirely back yet. Help me take off my clothes and put on new ones."

Her hunting suit was transformed from a senior-rank knight suit. She couldn't have resisted Grunwell as long without it, but under the corrosion of curses and poisons, the suit had been completely ruined, with cracks and holes everywhere. Thankfully, she had a few more senior-rank helmets and knight suits after inheriting the throne, so she opened the storage bag and took out a knight suit that had been transformed into a purple long dress, as well as lingerie, silk stockings, etc.

Lucien's heart raced, and he breathed heavily, "There's no time..."

"You are overthinking. I asked you to change my clothes for me exactly because there is no time." Natasha said in a delightful smile, "This is a 'reward' for you hugging me a moment ago."

Lucien's smile was immediately frozen.

.....

In another chamber where Duke James had turned on the divine power circle, Natasha arrived with her purple long hair tied again. The vague redness on her face still hadn't faded away.

At this moment, Duke James directed a grey-haired old man to enter the room. Inside his azure eyes, an ever-surging river of time seemed to be running.

"Your Majesty." Kritonia bowed in a heavy mood. "Duke York must be severely punished for his involvement in the assassination

against you, but considering that he merely observed but did not participate in planning, and considering the loyalty of the Kritonia family for hundreds of years, please show him some mercy. The Kritonia and me will protect you even more loyally.”

He had already gained the confession from David. Therefore, he had come to Natasha to plead guilty and seek compromises and exchanges.

Natasha said solemnly, “If I compromise and back off about someone who intends to kill me, wouldn’t it be telling everyone that they are free to kill me because they wouldn’t be punished whether they win or lose? I don’t think I can survive for long in such a case.”

Kritonia was about to talk, only to be stopped by Natasha’s gesture: “So, York and Barady must die!”

“As a punishment of treason, the Barady family, who initiated the assassination, will lose their title and their fief lingdi. As for the Kritonia, since only York was mildly involved in it, he will be punished but his family will be unaffected.”

“Kritonia, what do you think of such a decision? I don’t think there is only one grand knight in your household, is there?”

Easy compromises without principles would only make the compromises worthless.

Chapter 540: The Solemn Queen

Kritonia raised his head, only to see Natasha standing straight intimidatingly against the light, making everyone forget her gender and her beauty.

He narrowed his eyes. Even though he did not release any pressure actively, he was still giving off an oppressive air having been a legendary knight for hundreds of years. Duke James, who was protecting Natasha, couldn't help but move his eyes away, but Natasha looked back at him without wavering.

After ten seconds, Kritonia said in a low voice, "That's an excellent decision, Your Majesty. I agree that anyone that violates the basic order of the nobles shall be punished, but I hope that Your Majesty will allow me to take care of York in person. I do not want him to embarrass the family on the gallows."

"That's understandable." Natasha looked gentler, but the exhaustion no less than that of after a fierce battle with a radiant knight of her level rose in her body. "Also, I would like the shift change of legendary knights to be advanced. I hope that Winston can take your shift as soon as possible, so that I can be familiarized with both of you the two excellencies sooner."

Kritonia understood that it was her conditions of the deal. Also, he knew that Natasha wouldn't trust him for the time being after such an incident. He nodded and said, "I'll swap with Winston and watch over the colonies in the alternate dimensions after I escort you back to the Nekso Palace. I will live up to your trust, Your Majesty."

"You are a legendary hero who founded the kingdom, Your Excellency. I'm confident in you." Natasha encouraged and reassured him. "I'll leave Duke York to you. His heir will be your decision."

Kritonia pressed his chest with his left hand and bowed deeply, "Thank you for your trust, Your Majesty. I'll escort you back to the Nekso Palace first."

Now that the Heart of Time had come, the poisons in Camil, Russell and the rest of them were soon relieved. Kritonia also ‘successfully’ found evidence from ‘Primous’, proving that he was the ‘Cursed Angel’, who ranked fifth among the night watchers.

After she returned to the Nekso Palace, Natasha spoke to James and his partners, “Duke James, would you please invite Duke Solefen to come? Also, block the message and convene the Parliament of Nobles an hour later. Duke Russell, please watch over Count Barady in case he runs off and check to see if York is really dead.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Duke James and the rest of them answered sincerely. A distinguished knight was always admirable, especially one who stayed to resist the enemy when she could’ve run away.

.....

Inside the Parliament of Nobles in the Nekso Palace.

Count Barady walked in with Duke Russell gloomily. He merely nodded at the nobles who greeted him warmly, his usual manner gone.

“Russell, can you tell me why Her Majesty is summoning the nobles? As I recall, the one-month mourning period is not over yet. Is she breaking her promise?” Count Barady spoke to Duke Russell.

He knew that Natasha was going to James’ private garden, and that the Duke and Grunwell would take action. Therefore, he had a bad feeling when he was informed that Natasha was convening a meeting of the nobles. However, Duke Russell, a level-eight radiant knight, had come to his house to invite him and was keeping him company. He couldn’t even run even if he wanted to hide or escape, and so he had to come in fear.

He kept telling himself that it was fine. He merely fermented the hatred in David’s heart and introduced Grunwell to him. He never asked him to kill Her Majesty. He couldn’t be blamed for introducing two people to meet each other in a private dinner, right?

Seeing that Duke Rex's eyes moved over, Russell understood that he had fulfilled his responsibility and therefore returned to his seat with a smile.

"Why did you come with Russell? Do you know why the queen convened a meeting? This is in violation of the one-month promise." Rex had a bad feeling, too, as if something horrible had happened.

Count Barady shook his head. "I have no idea. Where is York?"

Duke Rex frowned. "I didn't see him. Isn't he always the earliest? Did something happen to him? In that case, His Excellency Kritonia's fury will burn everything."

Duke York had always come early to the meetings in the Parliament of Nobles to visit 'Heart of Time' first.

Realizing that York did not come, Count Barady looked even more awful, but he also had a plan to save himself.

Since it was a temporary meeting, many nobles who were not in Rentato failed to come. Only two thirds of the members were present.

Sensing that Natasha had arrived, Rex left his seat and walked to the dais up ahead, knocking the mallet.

After the knock, the hall fell quiet.

"Welcome Her Majesty." Rex turned around, his black cape floating.

Natasha walked in slowly in a black long dress, followed by Camil and a team of knights.

The moment they entered the hall, the knights split and 'guarded' the seats in the ground hall.

The one in the lead was a calm gold-haired man. Count Barady recognized that it was John, the knight that Queen Natasha brought from Aalto. The others were the Violent Knights from Aalto and the new knights who pledged loyalty to the queen. More than fifteen of

them were grand knights. Plus Camil, they were much stronger than a medium knight group.

Not knowing what happened, the nobles whispered to each other. Everything suggested that something great was going to happen.

Also, they were shocked that the queen had earned the allegiance of so many grand knights and knights in only one month. The Sword of Truth's Knights had been adjusting under Natasha's command and were most trustworthy.

It meant that she already had the strength to defend her crown.

Natasha knocked the mallet, silencing the hall where hundreds of flies seemed to be humming.

Then, she looked around and declared 'furiously': "This morning, I suffered an assassination attempt."

"What?" The nobles exclaimed. It was a taboo to assassinate one's liege in the first place, not to mention killing the queen in no more than one month after she was crowned. That was challenging the order of the nobles.

Rex was stunned first. Recalling York's absence and Barady's absentmindedness as well as their hints, he immediately burst into fury and glared at Count Barady. Idiots! You can go to hell if your evidence has been found!

At this moment, Count Barady calmed down and turned a blind eye to Duke Rex's fury, considering how to minimize his punishment.

Natasha knocked the mallet again and said, "The assassins were Count David and 'Cursed Angel', who ranks top the fifth among the night watchers. Duke James, Duke Russell and Count Henson can prove that. His Excellency Saint Sard can prove the identity of 'Cursed Angel'."

The hall fell silent again. The nobles found it hard to understand why David, who always favored the Congress of Magic, conspired with the night watchers, but they soon realized that it was all because of desire!

“The night watchers dared to assassinate the queen? The Church is more and more outrageous!”

“I believe that such actions must be contained, or it will be our turn soon.”

“Contained? All the Church ever did was to apologize and then to forget their apology! Perhaps our balance strategy is a mistake!”

The nobles discussed angrily, as Natasha expected. The Church could’ve denied Grunwell’s identity, if somebody other than Sard were the Grand Cardinal of the Holm parish.

“Your Majesty, such a crime must be punished! Hang David, burn Grunwell, and ask the Church to compensate!” The nobles, regardless of their sides, offered similar opinions.

Natasha nodded. “They shall be tried fairly, but I’ve summoned the meeting today because Count David confessed that he was instigated by Count Barady with Duke York’s involvement.”

The noise stopped again. All the nobles were shocked save the few who knew about it in advance. Both Duke York and Count Barady were bit shots in the Parliament of Nobles. There would be a major shock now that they were involved. Also, ‘Heart of Time’ was behind Duke York after all.

Thinking about that, they all looked at Count Barady and prayed that it was not true. The kingdom could not afford a civil war.

Rex, on the other hand, glared at Barady in fury. A reckless fool!

Count Barady slowly stood up. “Your Majesty, I deny the accusation against me. I would like to confront David. I never instigated or hinted him to assassinate you. Duke York is as innocent as me. You can ask him, too.”

He associated himself with York, hoping to minimize his penalty with the influence of ‘Heart of Time’. Besides, indeed no evidence of instigation was left.

“I’ve asked someone to invite Duke York.” Said Natasha calmly,

which made Count Barady ill at ease. “Your Majesty, I would like David to confront me in front of all nobles.”

Natasha waved her hands, and a knight pushed the shackled David in.

“Hahaha, Barady, you still want to deny it? It was you who fermented hatred in my heart. It was you and York who taught me how to kill the queen.” David laughed crazily, causing a great scene.

Count Barady smiled. The crazier, the better. As long as he linked himself to York, there would be a great chance that he could get away with it. “Would you please tell them how we instigated and allured you?”

David was stunned. Unable to think of any convincing speech, he made up a few lines according to the prior confession.

Barady raised his voice, “Your Majesty, he is lying! We never said such things! I would like a cleric to test the veracity of his words!”

He believed that he never said anything that was punishable. He was confident of himself!

Looking at Natasha sincerely, Count Barady said, “Would you please repeat your acquirement of his confession, Your Majesty? I’m angry about David’s setup.”

He put on a smile.

At this moment, another knight walked in and fell on one of his knees, “Your Majesty, Duke York has killed himself. This is his confession letter, which described Count Barady’s doings in details.”

The hall burst into whispers again. It was a totally unexpected change.

What? York killed himself?

What about the Heart of Time?

Why did he confess?

Count Barady collapsed on his seat, his brain too muddled for him to hear any voices or see anything.

It shouldn't be like this! It shouldn't be like this!

Natasha knocked the mallet and announced calmly, "Based on valid proof, Count Barady is found guilty of treason. He will be hanged, his title and his fief lingdi renounced..."

The nobles listened to Natasha sentence in confusion: "... His fief will be divided into five parts. The largest part will go to the royal family, and the other four parts will be bequeathed to Duke James, Duke Russell, Duke Henson and Countess Camil for their successful prevention of the assassination..."

"... All members of the Barady family will be deprived of their titles. The main members will be exiled to the northland..."

"Duke York confessed before he killed himself, and he was not the mastermind. His family shall not be punished..."

The cold and grave voice echoed, soaking the nobles in sweat. That was a real great noble that was backed by a legendary knight!

In the past, Natasha was merely a talented level-seven knight and a lady with unparalleled beauty in their eyes. But after the verdict, as the Heart of Time backed off and the great nobles collapsed, Natasha had truly evolved into an intimidating queen in their minds!

Rex shook his head at Barady's collapse. Now that the queen boldly convened the meeting, it meant that deals and compromises had already been made in private. Your destiny was already fixed. However you defended yourself, any noble with keen eyes could tell that something was not right when David made the confession. As long as the clerics or the neutral nobles interrogated you, they would get more convincing proof, which might involve other people.

However, he found Barady's dying struggle understandable, too.

.....

After Lucien returned to Allyn, he was summoned by Fernando immediately.

“Considering your ability of inviting dangers, I’ve decided to talk to Douglas and ask him to get the improved ‘Life Hiding’. Think about which body part you can get rid of first.” Fernando spoke straightforwardly.

Lucien looked at himself. His left fingers were certainly not an option, as they would nullify ‘Life Hiding’, and a missing right finger would affect his spell-casting and his piano-playing. Therefore, he said, “The little toe on my left foot.”

Then, Lucien thought of a critical question. “Master, do I need to pay for it?”

“Do you want me to pay for it?” Fernando replied, not in a good mood. He had to make other sacrifices just to let the Hand of Paleness agree to offer the ritual magic.

Chapter 541: Felipe's Surprise

Crows seemed to be flying before Lucien's eyes as he envisioned his bankruptcy. Although he had earned copious revenue from the technological investment in the Mineral and Harvest Company, the Gift from Elements Company, etc. he had devoted all his money to the construction of the magic tower three months ago and could barely make ends meet. He found his way back to the community of 'magnates' from the arcana point rewards for the new alchemy, the supplementary rewards for the light quantum hypothesis, and his annuities, but there was still a major gap between it and an improved ninth-circle ritual magic.

The Congress' favor on materials, drugs and magics was barely useful on the matter. The Hand of Paleness would be showing him enough respect if they did not charge him more.

Therefore, Lucien seriously considered applying for loans from his teacher or the Holm Mineral Union Bank.

Then, his monocle suddenly turned hot.

"Lucien, I just ended the meeting in the Parliament of Nobles. I sentenced Count Barady to death and deprived him of his title..." Said Natasha excitedly. She certainly did not have any mercy on the mastermind who caused such injuries to Lucien and herself.

Holding back the pain of imminent bankruptcy, Lucien smiled, "Any noble who plans to assassinate you in the future will have to think of what became of Count Barady before they act."

Natasha told him what happened in the parliament and her talk with Kritonia. Then, he said, "I've divided Count Barady's fief into five parts. One part is for Aunt Camil as 'compensation for shock', three parts will be used to appease Duke James and his lot, and the last part is supposed to be yours. However, since you cannot appear in public right now, I've collected it in the name of the royal family, but I'll give them to you in private. That's your fair share. You are not allowed to refuse it."

Lucien was immediately shocked. With a smile, he blurted out, “Natasha, I love you.”

It was the most unexpected windfall and more than enough to pay for the improved ‘Life Hiding’. There would even be plenty of money left.

“Huh?” Natasha did not expect such an answer at all. She was somewhat lost.

Lucien did not lie to her and told her the things about the improved Life Hiding.

“I’ll be much more relieved... I didn’t know that you were also a ‘money grubber’. Thankfully, I am a queen and the future duchess.” Natasha chuckled and said, “It’s a pity that a knight has to maintain the solidarity of body, blood, soul and willpower before advancing into legendary. I cannot use such a method as the last life-saving measure. A knight’s path is destined to be an arduous and difficult one.”

The Violet family had one legendary knight, and the Hoffenberg family had one too. Natasha was much more experienced than regular knights about their advancement.

Lucien knew a thing or two about that, too. Had it been otherwise, ‘Body Controller’ Ramiro’s ability of massive proliferation wouldn’t have been his unique skill.

Ending the conversation, Lucien discovered that Fernando was looking at him with a smile. He asked, “What’s up, master?”

Fernando smacked his lips. “How great it is to be young, and how great it is to have a queen as your partner.”

Lucien changed the subject rather awkwardly, “Master, does the improved Life Hiding have to require a limb part?”

It was a unique ritual of the Hand of Paleness, and Lucien was unaware of the details. He only knew that the original version of Life Hiding did require it.

Fernando glared at Life Hiding. "If I knew so many details, I would've developed it myself. All I know is that the original Life Hiding can only use one part of the body. You will stay in Allyn for the next few days. After the ritual of Life Hiding is done, you can go wherever you want."

"Starting from the next month, there will probably be more discussions regarding the Oliver transformation. We need to direct them to discover the relativistic effect. Hopefully, we can present your special theory of relativity to Douglas in two to three months."

"As you wish." Lucien had no objection. The most important task right now was to construct magic models to make himself a fairly strong level-eight sorcerer. His next goal would be 'Magic Reverse', a seventh-circle that he had been dreaming about for a long time.

.....

In his office in the Atom Institution, Lucien was reading the papers that his students reviewed and revising the final comment now and then.

Rock walked in exhaustedly with a journal and dozens of resumes. "Lucien, the second round of interviews is over, and the final interviews will be held in three days. See if there's any problem."

Lucien browsed through the resumes and smiled, "Not bad. There are a couple of middle-rank sorcerers. You check them first and ask the Affair Committee to conduct background checks. I'll test them during the final interviews, too, in case of spies from the Church or other organizations try to sneak in."

Since it was a public recruitment, from the smokingly popular Atom Institution, those spies would've been unqualified if they did not try to sneak in one way or another. Lucien dared not be careless at all.

Rock agreed. "The Church's infiltration is too good. After all, there are many sorcerers in the Congress who are not having a thriving life."

Then, he thought of something and, handing the journal to Lucien,

said in a low voice, “Did you know? His Excellency Oliver and Lady Florencia are divorced.”

Lucien picked up the journal, only to discover that it was ‘Allyn Impression’, a journal of gossips. He found the article and shook his head, “In such a case, all the seven grand arcanists of the Congress are now single. How hilarious and heartbreaking.”

After discussing the gossip for a while, Rock rose and walked out in satisfaction. The moment he opened the door, he saw a graceful middle-aged man who was wearing a wig.

“Mr... Mr. Oliver...” Rock’s face turned face, for he had spoken evil of the man a lot just now.

Oliver nodded and passed Rock, closing the door of the office.

“Lucien, this is my play. Check it out.” Oliver glanced at the ‘Allyn Impression’ and said calmly.

Lucien picked up the play and skimmed through it. His lips twitched as he read on, and he almost suspected that Oliver was another buddy from Earth, because it was very similar to Andersen’s The Little Mermaid. Thankfully, the ending was entirely different.

In Oliver’s play, a handsome prince happened upon a mermaid princess on the ocean. The two of them fell in love. The mermaid princess abandoned everything else, swallowed potions to get rid of her tail, and returned to the prince’s country as a beautiful girl. They swore to live together forever, but the prince fell in love with another princess later, which devastated the mermaid and forced her to return to the ocean.

As time went by, the prince recognized his heart and realized that the mermaid girl was the one he loved most. Therefore, he set sail every day and called the mermaid girl’s name, only to get no response. Days passed, and the prince finally died of sorrow. Near his death, his mind made him see the mermaid princess walking toward him, so he put on a sweet smile.

“Very tragic...” Lucien did not know how to comment on it.

Oliver sighed. “Only a tragedy can move a lady and save a marriage.”

Lucien felt a toothache and couldn’t help but observe, “Mr. Oliver, I’m really confused about something. Why did you betray your marriage and hurt Lady Florencia again and again when you were in love with her?”

Oliver said solemnly, “Lucien, you don’t understand. I’m serious about every relationship. I dedicated my soul and my heart to them. My love was as scorching as fire. It was exactly in such love that my inspirations burst out. I achieved many of my results from there.”

“I love every one of them, but I love Florencia most.”

Lucien did not know how to react. After hearing Oliver’s self-analysis, Lucien clapped hands for every lady that left him.

After only several seconds, Lucien overruled his previous decision to adapt the opera for Oliver. If Florencia demeaned herself by forgiving Oliver again, that would be her business, but he shouldn’t be Oliver’s accomplice. His conscience would be guilty if he worked on the opera.

Therefore, weighing his tone, Lucien said, “Mr. Oliver, I’m truly sorry. Her Excellency Hathaway and His Excellency Morris do not want me to write an opera for you, and they...”

Lucien left his sentence unfinished, with a ‘you know what I’m talking about’ look on his face.

Briefly stunned, Oliver heaved a long sigh. “I understand. They are the seniors of the Hoffenberg family. Lucien, I hope that I can cooperate with you on other operas in the future. The best librettos deserve the best musician.”

After seeing Oliver off, Lucien closed the door, not wanting to meddle in the family business at all. After all, Hathaway’s impression of Oliver had been terrible for a long time. She wouldn’t say anything even if Oliver went to ask her.

After pushing it away, Lucien had to learn the creation of operas himself. Thankfully, he had many classics in his head for reference, and he had selected 'The Valkyrie', the second part of 'The Ring of the Nibelung', written by Mr. Wagner.

Of course, in order to make the opera that was based on the folklores in German and north Europe fit for this world and Natasha, Lucien had to make fundamental adaptations, which could almost be called recreation.

.....

The second day after Oliver's visit, Lucien received a message from Fernando and knew that the ritual was good to go.

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, inside an empty hall...

Lucien saw Felipe again, who looked as pale and sick as before.

"This magic is improved based on his studies on cell memories. With his cooperation, my odds of success will be higher." Fernando admitted frankly that he had never performed the improved Life Hiding before, and the Lord of the Undead would certainly supervise the ceremony for Lucian.

Felipe looked at Lucien, finding it hard to believe that his master had failed to kill the guy multiple times and even got killed. However, he would not speak of those things in front of Fernando. Instead, he nodded, "Your magnifying magic based on the nature of light is good, but it's far away from the effect you promised."

His magic level had been improved to the seventh circle, which was rather fast actually but poor compared to Lucien. His arcana level was close to level seven.

Lucien said solemnly, "Improvements have to be made step by step. Rest assured. I will not abandon the studies."

Lucien never had the courage to work on the experiments on the electron diffraction. He planned to wait until he digested the harvests brought by the special theory of relativity and the Silver

Moon.

Then, Lucien asked the question that he cared about, “Felipe, can the improved Life Hiding only use a limb?”

Felipe said coldly, “Hair and teeth do not contain blood and are useless. Don’t try to keep yourself safe without affecting yourself. Are you such a greedy and insane man?”

He never hesitated to mock Lucien when there was a chance.

Lucien frowned. “What about the viscera?”

Felipe sniffed. “They work, but what’s the point? Even the radiant knights cannot sustain themselves a long time when part of their guts are missing. The parts cut by Life Hiding cannot be regrown, not even with Body Transformation. Stop fantasizing about the unrealistic things.”

“So you mean, the viscera do work?” Lucien was relieved. “I request to use my ‘intestine’ in a certain part.”

Felipe looked at Lucien, somewhat stunned, as if he had never seen anyone as stupid before. “Are you sure? I won’t compensate for your losses if the ritual fails.”

“I am sure.” Lucien calculated and realized that he could afford two rituals. Therefore, he might as well have a try.

Half an hour later, Felipe was stunned as he watched Lucien leave with ‘amulet of life’ in a light mood.

“He is absolutely fine when a section of his intestines are gone...”

“He is indeed a monster...”

Chapter 542: Terms of Cooperation

On the 33rd level of the Allyn magic tower, Lucien followed the Lord of Storm to his library.

In the empty corridor, Fernando eyed Lucien thoughtfully, “What intestine did you take out? Why were you not affected at all?”

While he was also good at Necromancy, it was a class where the knowledge of the ancient Magic Empire lingered and therefore had a completely different development from that on Earth. Regarding the inflamed and pathological organs, all that needed to be done was medical skills and magic potions. No surgeries were required at all.

In terms of dissection, the necromancers focused on the relationship between different organs and diseases to develop new magics of curses and diseases, or to lower the requirement of similar magic in the past. As a result, their categorization of internal organs was rather vague. Epityphlon and cecum were both regarded as intestines without being distinguished accurately.

“I have named it epityphlon. I discovered it when I dissected and studied Grunwell’s body recently that even though this section of the intestine was cut off and his recovery ability was suppressed, there was no negative effect at all. That is to say, this part was barely of any use.” Lucien offered a reason that he had decided a long time ago. After all, his teacher knew very well that he recently had a level-nine dark knight as an experiment material.

As for the influence on immunity, it was little to none for a knight.

Fernando croaked, “It is not entirely useless. At least, it can be used as the main material for the improved Life Hiding.”

He showed no objection to Lucien’s dissecting Grunwell but said affirmatively, “It’s high time that you worked on blood powers. That’s a useful supplement for soul studies. Many life-extending rituals in the future will require knowledge in that aspect as the foundation. You wouldn’t want to turn into a lich, would you? Or

do you want Natasha to die much earlier than you?”

“A knight cannot be transformed into a lich. They’ll be scourged by negative energy even though they turn into death knights. Therefore, there are few legendary magics that can extend her life. As far as I know, there are no more than five of them with a remarkable effect of more than a thousand years. Without an excellent understanding of Necromancy, you wouldn’t be able to host the rituals even if you are at the peak of legendary. You couldn’t ask for Vicente’s help by then, can you?”

“Isn’t there still you, master? You hosted the ritual of Life Hiding just now.” Lucien remembered it in his heart and complimented his teacher with his mouth.

Fernando replied impatiently, “That little girl has the potential to advance into legendary. When she needs to extend her life, chances are that I will already have perished while I am exploring the truths of the world. Also, the materials that the five legendary magics require are all extremely precious. For example, ‘Blessing of Dragon’, with which my life was lengthened, requires the blood and bones of a primordial dragon as the main materials for the ceremony. At that time, I worked with Hathaway and asked for Douglas’ help before we finally hunted a primordial red dragon. You barely have any chance to get one.”

“A legendary primordial dragon...” Lucien realized that it was terribly difficult to obtain such materials. Every dragon had horrifying physical defense in the first place, and their magic power grew with their age. A legendary primordial dragon would be as good as a legendary sorcerer in the ancient Magic Empire in terms of magic expertise.

More importantly, there were no more than seven primordial dragons that were still living. They were all important elders in the Dark Congress and certainly not counterfeits such as the Dark Dragon Lord.

Fernando ignored Lucien’s shock as if he were a monster but simply went on, “Therefore, if you can’t find suitable materials, you have to find a way to create a new magic ritual, which requires a

profound knowledge on Necromancy. Do you think that Hathaway didn't try to extend Patrick's life? But he was too weak both physically and spiritually, and none of the existent rituals could help him greatly. Hathaway was not good at Necromancy and could not create a new ritual based on the actual circumstances... I knew no more than she did, either."

He didn't mention the Lord of the Undead, because Vicente was obviously not going to help Hathaway.

"Got it." Lucien nodded solemnly but was not too anxious. Natasha and he were still young. They should focus on improving their levels and advancing into legendary, and they could consider life extension later.

As he spoke, Lucien asked curiously, "Master, how many years of life can your 'Blessing of Dragon' give you?"

Fernando replied cockily, "Depending on the quality of materials, the host's understanding about the soul and the body, and certain unknown factors, the ritual adds two to five thousand years of life, and it can coexist with other life rituals. At that time, Hathaway and I both extended 4,700 years."

That was close to the best one could expect. No wonder he was so satisfied. Lucien thought to himself and continued asking, "What about the other legendary sorcerers? Those who are not transformed into liches?"

"I don't know much about other people because it's sort of a secret. I only know that Douglas made a deal with the Elves and used 'Nature's Gift' with the fruit of an elvish tree that yields once every ten thousand years, and that Brook hasn't extended his life with any legendary rituals yet." Fernando opened his library.

Brook was no more than two hundred years old. With his legendary expertise and the regular magic rituals, his life could already be lengthened to a thousand years, so he was not desperate to increase his longevity. Fernando, on the other hand, was different. Both Douglas and he were sorcerers who grew up in the ancient Magic Empire. They were already more than a thousand years old.

Hathaway shared the ritual materials by the way because she collaborated with them.

His curiosity satisfied, Lucien smiled, “Master, I’ll return to the magic tower and put the ‘amulet of life’ in the key area for protection.”

While the amulet of life was not as critical as a lich’s phylactery, and he wouldn’t be killed when the item was destroyed, Lucien dare not be careless because he traded half of his possessions for it.

Fernando became solemn and hinted Lucien to walk in.

After Lucien entered in confusion, he closed the library, turned on the magic circle and said, “The Highest Council has passed the motion to cooperate with Sard. They also met him in secret yesterday and signed a magic contract with him respectively.”

“Every one of them? What requests did he propose? What’s his promise?” Lucien mentioned how mysterious and queer Sard was to his teacher before. He turned solemn, too.

Fernando invited Lucien in exactly because he wanted to hear Lucien’s opinion. He spoke frankly, “Every member of the Highest Council signed it. As per Sard’s request, we the sorcerers asked for the fairness of the Lord of Hell, and he swore to the God of Truth with his Heart of Faith, before we signed the contract.”

Generally speaking, ordinary magic contracts did not work on legendary sorcerers. After all, the devils and other mysterious creatures who supervised the magic contracts risked being captured by the legendary sorcerers as experiment materials. They were highly incapable of supervising such contracts and punishing the violators. Therefore, the magic contracts of such a level were mostly supervised by the nine dukes of hell, or sworn to the Origin of Magic.

Because the Origin of Magic was unpredictable, the restraint of the latter contracts had been questioned. Some people’s cognitive worlds collapsed because they violated their vows, but some were as healthy as before. Although it was accepted that they used

wordplays in their vows, Sard obviously did not intend to take the risk and therefore demanded the supervision of the Lord of Hell, who was a demigod. His oath based on faith, on the other hand, was an absolutely effective restraint on the clergy.

“The Lord of Hell... Is he going to meddle in this too?” Hearing reference to the terrifying big shot, Lucien couldn’t help but smile bitterly.

Fernando smiled, “If it were before, he might intervene in secret. Schemes are his favorite. However, he was just ambushed by Silver Moon Alterna recently and lost an important projection under your ‘Eternal Blaze’. He might be unwilling to take the risk. The Silver Moon, on the other hand, is basically recovered and watching over us in the sky. He may be unable to defeat Douglas even if he casts a projection here.”

“That great prophet and Angel King are likely to be played by Sard himself to manipulate the radical clerics and night watchers, but he never admitted it.”

‘Watching over us in the sky’ was a common metaphor in the magic world to indicate Alterna’s attention.

“What’s your vow and what’s Sard’s promise?” Lucien asked the key question again.

Fernando nodded slowly, “The contract stipulates that, until Sard breaks his promise or attacks any sorcerer of the Congress of Magic not in self-defense, we cannot attack him. Also, until his new church jeopardizes the Congress, we cannot suppress their development. Furthermore, he will enjoy the priority preaching rights on every colony of our alternate dimension that we will obtain.”

It’s a reasonable summary of Sard’s desire and also seems to imply his sincerity for the cooperation... Lucien thought to himself.

“The promise he made was that today one year later, he would leave the Radiance Church and let the Congress take over the massive transmission magic circles and divine power defenses

inside, which is even better than him shutting down the transmission magic circles himself. Also, he will ask the Grand Cardinals of the other four churches to do the same. Those who are not enchanted by him will be ambushed by us under his cooperation.” Fernando looked at Lucien and said, “With your understanding about Sard, is there a problem with this?”

Lucien shook his head. “I only know that he had been keeping my relationship with Natasha a secret to the pope, which befits his purpose right now. I don’t see any loopholes yet, but none of us know what he got from the World of Souls, and we have to be prepared for other changes.”

Fernando did not say anything more and simply reminded Lucien, “Forward the issue to Natasha and ask her not to mention anything about this in front of Sard. She can give connivance and cooperate in secret, but she must not leave any textual or vocal evidence, so that there will still be chances for us to make a comeback.”

“Master, are you suggesting...?” Lucien was more or less surprised.

Fernando nodded solemnly, “Before you calculate your victory, you have to be prepared for an utter defeat.”

The South Church was very powerful. It had 24 legendary experts and one demigod by itself. As for the countries attached to it, even without Holm and other countries beyond the Storm Strait, there were still thirteen legendary knights. It was the well-deserved greatest force. While the Congress of Magic had been flourishing, there was still a major gap between them, and competing with the Church was definitely full of dangers.

“I’m getting nervous because of you, master.” Lucien breathed heavily, “Then, should we postpone the paper on the special theory of relativity for a year? We cannot afford any accidents in such a critical period.”

Fernando shook his head. “Since we did not foresee that Sard would ask for cooperation so soon, we already raised Oliver’s transformation formulas. Even without our guidance, considering the vogue and the progress of arcana studies, some arcanists will

discover it on their own in half a year at most. So, it is unnecessary for us to keep it a secret. All we need to do is to tread more lightly.”

Chapter 543: Identification

Halfway through the Month of Fire (July), sweltering air had already swept across Rentato and Allyn, making it impossible for many people to go to sleep. They could only enjoy brief peace under the cool breeze in the morning.

However, in the cool morning, some thirty people, strangely, gave up the chance to sleep, and waited outside of the Allyn magic tower.

They were of different genders and ages. Some were wearing double-breasted suits, some were in the most common magic robes with capes, some were covered in well-cut long dresses, and some were simply donned with a white shirt with a regular waistcoat. The only thing that they had in common was the anxiety and hopefulness on their faces.

Having lost the apprentice's robes which could reduce heat, Lowi had passed a few rough days. Since he was also staying late for studies, his face was pale, and he couldn't have looked more haggard.

He observed his 'competitors' around him, greatly pressured. Of the almost forty people, only ten were apprentices. The others were formal sorcerers and level-one arcanists. Some were even middle-rank sorcerers.

"The fact that I passed the previous exams and interviews suggests that I have shining parts, too. I cannot lose my confidence." Lowi encouraged himself. Then, to relieve his anxiety, he asked the few sorcerers and apprentices nearby, "What do you think Mr. Evans' questions be in his interview? Will it involve the new alchemy?"

One male apprentice, who was mumbling something nervously, turned a deaf ear to him and continued his final preparation. Two sorcerers looked at Lowi and, upon noticing the apprentice badge on his chest, turned their heads away, resuming their own conversation.

A female sorcerer whose round face was like an apple was stunned for a moment. Then she smiled, "I don't know. Mr. Evans was not involved in the previous exams and interviews. The questions given happened to be within my research field. I'm rather nervous right now, because I haven't understood many concepts in the new alchemy. What were the questions for you during the interview?"

She wasn't pretty, but her smile was amiable and made whoever saw it feel warm.

Lowi thought for a moment and repeated the few questions about elements and electromagnetism that Jerome asked him. In the end, he asked, "What about yours?"

"Right, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Erica." The round-faced lady repeated her questions during the interview and exchanged their experiences, speculating what Mr. Evans would focus on asking today.

Seeing that, a few sorcerers and apprentices nearby joined their conversation.

Not far away, Blake smiled at Alfalia, who had the typical features of Holm. "Do you want to go over and listen to them? Their experience may be of use soon."

Alfalia replied with a casual smile, "Alright, but I find it odd that the final interview hosted by Mr. Evans is set at nine in the morning. The Allyn magic tower is only just opening at such a time. For the interviewees, we have to wait outside in advance for the meeting."

"Maybe this strange request is meant to test our punctuality and obedience. After all, we are expected to be apprentice-level assistants, not arcanists with independent research programs." Blake thought for a moment and analyzed carefully.

Looking at the magic tower that rose to the sky, Alfalia nodded softly, "I think so, too. Mr. Evans is definitely not one of those people who enjoy torturing the interviewees. His request must have deeper meanings."

On the eighteenth floor of the Allyn magic tower, Lucien, with Rock, Jerome and his students, stood next to the window and looked at the interviewees down below.

Hearing the scene forwarded by Sprint, Rock smiled at Lucien, “Why do I feel that you do have fun torturing the interviewees?”

While talking, he turned his eyes to the poor students such as Annick. Under the torture of Lucien’s ‘Arcana Build-up School’, while their arcana and magic expertise soared, they had always been gnashing their teeth.

Heidi nodded her head quickly. Her teacher was a ‘devil’ who loved tormenting them with abundant exercises and profound knowledge.

Lucien coughed, “This is to observe their real personality and their ability in daily communication. They are here as apprentice-level assistants. Only if they are good at both aspects can they be melted into the institution sooner and take over the chores for you.”

“Fair enough. Those who are too arrogant to communicate with the lesser minds are unsuitable for the institution.” Jerome agreed with Lucien’s opinion. Then he asked curiously, “Will the assistants we recruit also become your students in the future?”

Sprint and the rest of them immediately focused their eyes on Lucien, wondering about their teacher’s answer.

Lucien shook his head. “Six students are already too many. I have my own magic studies, arcana research and daily life. I can’t teach more students. If you find any of them promising, you can direct them yourselves.”

It was a shared attitude of the senior-rank arcanists, who would rather focus their attention on only a fixed number of students, unless some of the students perished, or they encountered a rarely-seen genius. Also, the students of such high-level arcanists enjoyed their halo in the first place, and their behavior represented their teacher. If there were too many of them, there would also be unnecessary incidents.

Katrina and other students were relieved. Although they were kind in nature, they did not really look forward to new classmates, because it meant that the time their teacher spent on them would be reduced.

Nine o'clock soon came, and Lowi as well as other interviewees entered the magic tower with trepidation, reaching the Atom Institution in the lift.

"You can go in together. Before the final interview, there will be a magic contract for you to sign." Rock was waiting for them outside of the Atom Institution with a very genuine smile, because the troubles would be over very soon. There was no way that he would ever take such a mission again!

"A magic contract? What's that?" Asked a middle-aged, slightly-fat sorcerer in confusion.

Lowi recognized that it was Mr. Issac whom he talked to just now.

Rock replied with a smile that he thought to be charming. "The Atom Institution explores the cutting edge of the elemental field. A lot of secrets are kept here. Therefore, I need everyone to sign a confidentiality agreement. Also, since Evans is a grand-arcanist-to-be and a target that the Church and other forces are desperate to get rid of, the other arcanists of the Atom Institution have unfortunately become collateral targets, too. Therefore, to avoid assassins, the new hires have to sign a relatively rigorous magic contract."

"Rigorous..." Alfalia and the rest of them became solemn. Although they could understand the Atom Institution's decision, rigorousness still made them worried.

Issac frowned. "I hope that the magic contract is not outrageously rigorous."

Rock smiled. "Rest assured. You will not be treated as slaves. Only those with ill intentions will feel uncomfortable."

Lowi couldn't care less about the contract. He only wanted to enter

the Atom Institution and study under Mr. Evans. For him, anything was acceptable as long as he did not have to sell his soul or his body.

Under Rock's direction, the interviewees entered the Atom Institution's conference room.

Lowi, Blake, Alfalia and other apprentices and sorcerers, unable to contain their curiosity, peeped respectfully and excitedly at the two sorcerers who were already seated.

That was Mr. Jerome, whom they met before, and... and this should be Mr. Lucien Evans, right?

In Lowi's eyes, it was a young man with a dense black hair and an unbelievably handsome face. However, his black eyes that seemed to contain countless mysteries and his confident, casual smile made everybody completely overlook his face. Lowi had no doubt that he was a formidable sorcerer and a wise arcanist.

"Good morning, Mr. Evans." Led by a few sorcerers who met Lucien before, Lowi and other interviewees greeted him.

Lucien nodded and hinted for them to be seated. Then, with his eyes even deeper, he pointed at the parchment papers on the table and said, "These are the magic contracts you need to sign. They will be guaranteed by the duke of the first level of hell, and violators will be punished by him. Take a look now. We will begin if there isn't any problem."

Hearing Lucien's words, all the sorcerers and apprentices grew nervous for some reason. Then, they picked up the contracts and began to read in silence.

Suddenly, Issac stood up, blushing. "What kind of contract is this? This is purely a one-sided slavery contract!"

"Whoever exposes anything about the Atom Institution or Lucien Evans, intentionally or unintentionally, and in whatever form, will be captured by Agostinho, duke of the first level of hell!"

"... Their mind will be completely opened. Whoever has the

thought to hurt Lucien Evans or other arcanists in the Atom Institution will immediately be detected by Agostinho!”

...

“This contract is more than rigorous. We are not regarded as human beings at all. I will not sign it or participate in the interview!”

While he complained in fury, three sorcerers and apprentices followed him and stood up, despising the contract in excitement.

Issac was about to leave, only to discover that Lowi, Blake and the rest of them were looking at him strangely. He was disappointed, “Do you have any backbones? Are you going to sign such a contract?”

Lowi scratched the back of his head and asked in confusion, “Mr. Issac, that’s not the contract that we are reading.”

“What?” Issac was stunned.

Lucien opened his mouth. “Those magic contracts have been processed with ‘Implicit Words’, a eighth-circle magic. Whoever sees it will be grabbed by ten times of their horror, and the content of the contract will change accordingly. What is it that you are scared of?”

“No, no!” Issac and the rest of them shook their heads palely.

Lucien looked at the door of the conference room. “There’s no need to answer my question. Explain it to the Affair Committee. Thompson, thank you for your trouble.”

Thompson walked in and brought away Issac and his fellow complainers.

Rock asked in the telepathic bond curiously, “Why were they scared? Such unequal contracts do not entail any restraint at all.”

“The hint has been started when you told them the arrangement outside. Also, what I said before stressed that Agostinho will guarantee the contracts but neglected the specific consequences. In

the meantime, I hinted that we would sign the contracts if there was no problem, not after the interview. Through the multiple hints and my 'Image Creation', they were already convinced of the authenticity of the contracts." Lucien explained briefly. "It's easy to identify a sorcerer who believes in the God of Truth, but it's hard to resist a spy who sells secrets and partners for money and materials."

While Lowi and the remaining interviewees looked at him in shock, Lucien smiled, "Now, read the real contracts first. They are not too harsh. If you are willing to take it, we will begin the interview."

After reading the new contract, Lowi and the rest of them all agreed to sign it if they passed the interview. Then, they looked at Lucien with expectation and anxiety, wondering what his questions would be.

Mr. Evans, please don't ask us about the new alchemy. I don't know anything about it. Lowi and other apprentices begged in their hearts, because they only understood the general model and concepts of the new alchemy.

Lucien smiled rather delightedly, "Everybody, tell me why you want to enter the Atom Institution."

"Then, tell me your shining points and your drawbacks, as well as your plan for your life."

Huh? What is that all about?

Alfalia, Blake and all the other interviewees were bewildered.

Chapter 544: Violin

After the interview, Lowi and other interviewees left the conference room with weird looks. The knowledge in the atomic field and the tricks of control magic circles that they prepared in advance proved to be of absolutely no use. Mr. Evans' questions were unimaginably strange. Did they need to confess their life plan? Wasn't it all about advancing from level one to level two, from level two to level three, and so on?

However, such a simple answer was obviously not going to satisfy Mr. Evans. Therefore, every interviewee added certain parts that they believed to be helpful. For example, Alfalia talked about her goals in her knowledge system, and Blake introduced his plan to return from the Solar Islands to Allyn. Many people also put the Atom Institution in their life plan.

The moment he recalled how he introduced himself early on, and that he somehow added finding his love to his life plan, Lowi felt that his face was burning and dared not look at his fellows, fearing that he would be mocked. For him, it was a most shameful interview.

The other people were more or less the same. Just now, many interviewees told their poor pasts in the spur of the moment, hoping that it would earn sympathy, but now that the interview was over, they only regretted that they could not take off their clothes and cover their heads.

Rock said with a rather sunny smile, "Wait ten minutes here. Lucien will make a decision soon."

Such an usual interview was rather fun for him, especially when the interviewees expressed themselves unskillfully.

Hearing Rock's words, Lowi was no longer embarrassed. As Rock entered the conference room and shut the gate, their hearts beat faster and faster and louder.

Dum. Dum. Dum. Lowi felt that he had to say something, or he

would pass out from anxiety. He opened his mouth and asked, "Erica, who do you think Mr. Evans will choose?"

Lowi was scared by himself after he spoke. He never thought that his voice could be that dry and hoarse.

Erica said in a low voice, her nose flapping, "Everything is superfluous right now. We have shown what we have."

Not far away, while Blake was nervous, as a man who advanced into a formal sorcerer on the harsh islands, he remained calm on the surface. He said to Alfalia in a rigid smile, "I think you have a good chance. Your performance was good.'

Alfalia replied with a shallow smile, "Stop talking like that. You'll make me look forward to it more. The more hopeful one is, the more disappointed they tend to be."

She spoke casually, but she clenched her hands at some point.

In the suffocating atmosphere, the gate was opened again. They raised their heads and looked at Mr. Evans both expectantly and anxiously.

Lucien smiled, "You are all very remarkable and full of potential. However, the Atom Institution only needs ten assistants right now. Therefore, I have to make a rather tough pick to select those who better suit our needs. The first candidate, Mr. Balterley."

The middle-aged man, who was Lowi's teacher in school, waved his fists in excitement, but as a second-circle sorcerer, he managed to retain his manners.

"The second candidate, Alfalia." Lucien warm voice found its way into Alfalia's ears.

Not realizing what happened, she raised her head and looked at Lucien in bewilderment, only to see that Lucien nodded at her with a smile.

It was not until then that she realized she had been picked by the Atom Institution. Her blue eyes were suddenly filled with water.

Such a success had been earned fair and square, without bribery of money and materials, without the trading her body and feelings, but solely with her magic and arcana abilities!

For Alfalia, who had to leave Allyn for certain reasons, it was a hard-earned affirmation. She covered her face with her hands, not showing anybody her brief weakness.

Hearing Mr. Evans' announcement and the exclamations around, Lowi became more and more excited. He held his breath subconsciously. Mr. Blake passed, Erica passed, and two apprentices he knew earlier also passed, but why wasn't he chosen?

"The tenth candidate, Lowi."

Lowi felt that stars were floating before his eyes, and he almost tripped over himself. Intense joy and excitement burst out like a volcano, leaving his head swooning and his eyes wet.

"Don't pass out. If you are unwell, I'll consider a refund." Lucien talked with humor that nobody could get.

But in Lowi's eyes, it was as pleasant as an elvish song. He hurried to say, "No, no, Mr. Evans. I'm in perfect health!"

Everything in his eyes became lovely all of a sudden.

After asking Jerome to settle the ten assistants, Lucien left for the Affair Committee, intending to check up on Thompson's interrogation.

"They have confessed. Two are spies of the South Church, one is associated with the North Church, and one was allured by an intelligence worker of the Holy Heilz Empire. They were all promised that they would be heavily rewarded if they sneak into the Atom Institution, and they will be paid for every piece of intelligence they provide about the institution or yourself later." Thompson handed the files to Lucien and asked confusedly, "Why does the Holy Heilz Empire care about you? Isn't the Church the leader in dealing with sorcerers?"

Lucien brushed his eyebrow. He sabotaged Rudolf II's plan in the

alternate dimension, and he was obviously connected to the Silver Moon. How could the guy not pay attention to him? But of course, the top secrets of the Highest Council was not for Thompson to know.

Skimming through the files, Lucien's eyes were finally frozen. The image of the night watcher who hired Issac was so familiar.

"Minsk... Juliana..." Lucien recited the two names.

Lucien knew that something was wrong with Amelton when Rhine was projected into the joker's dream. He also learnt the identities and looks of the few night watchers that hung around with the joker.

That wasn't supposed to be a problem. Lucien had met Lend before, and it was perfectly normal for them to be relocated together with Amelton. However, according to Issac, the two night watchers had been meeting him in turns since three years ago, hoping that he could reach Lucien. That is to say, Sard had been preparing for this three years before he became the Grand Cardinal of the Holm parish.

"No wonder he kept the things between Natasha and me a secret. But it was such a long plan. Was he so confident that he could be deployed here?" Lucien was more or less confused. Then he spoke to Thompson, "Tail the two night watchers but do not get rid of them yet."

"Also, ask the magi to protect John's family in secret. Don't let them know, and don't burst into conflicts with the guards that Natasha deploys."

The two night watchers hated his guts. Lucien was worried that they might go out of control at some point.

"Okay." Thompson was more and more polite to Lucien. Not just his positional change thanks to 'new alchemy', the improvement of his magic capabilities alone had already foreshadowed the next legendary sorcerer.

.....

On July 30, Queen Nekso Palace, having been through an assassination sponsored by the conservatives, reached the royal magic tower of Holm and declared that she would have dinner and celebrate her birthday with the seniors of the royal family here, and that she would not return to the Nekso Palace until the next day.

Considering that Duke James and Duke Russell must be furious after the assassination, the conservatives did not object to the plan.

As night fell, Natasha, who was celebrating her birthday with members of the royal family in the magic tower, left under the excuse that she was going to meet Hathaway.

Lifting her dress, she rushed to Lucien's office like a charging knight.

She was about to knock on the door, but the door opened on its own. In the meantime, the pleasant sounds of a piano echoed inside, rippling out beautifully and refreshingly. The whole room was immediately enshrouded in a dreamy and romantic atmosphere.

Natasha closed the door quietly and looked at Lucien whose fingers were bouncing on the piano. He was wearing the black formal attire that he usually wore in Aalto, and his face was gentle and devoted. His eyes that looked back at her now and then were so deep that it could almost attract souls.

Lucien, on the other hand, suddenly felt amazed. Natasha was not wearing a deep-color dress today, as she usually would, or a knight suit and armor. Instead, she was in a white long dress with simple laces, as well as gloves and silk stockings of the same color. Her tied hair and her broad-edged hat made her look like a bride that had just barged in. There was additional pureness and freshness in her violent glamor.

The room was arranged in a similar way to last time. The only exception was the flute, oboe, cello, brass, violin and other musical instruments around the piano, as if the orchestra had been there but

was gone all of a sudden, leaving their equipment behind.

Looking at Lucien in the eyes and listening to the delicate music, Natasha found her previous agitation all gone. She approached Lucien with a smile and stopped next to the ground table.

She knew that it was 'A Poem For Natasha', the piano verse that Lucien prepared last time. However, they were so passionate after figuring out what was in each other's hearts last time that they completely forgot about it. When they talked about it later, Lucien postponed it to her birthday.

The notes filled the room like flowing water, rising up and down gently and comforting her mind. The romantic tunes and rhythms echoed in their eyes.

After Lucien was done playing, Natasha clapped her hands and was about to hug her knight.

However, Lucien shook his head with a smile, hinting that there was another episode.

"This is the birthday gift for you."

Lucien picked up the flute and played a rhythm that was different from anything in the past and sounded like a bird song.

When the flute song was just ending, the oboe flew to him on its own and presented the scenery of spring.

Natasha looked at Lucien in confusion. That was a music style she had never heard before. Was it his new creation?

Lucien got the violin in his hands at some point. Staring at Natasha, he played a poetic melody.

As the gentle sound from the violin entered Natasha's ears, her mind seemed to have been hit by something. The music was so beautiful and romantic, and yet it seemed to contain vague sorrow that invited empathy.

It was different from any music that Natasha learnt in the past, but

it was so touching and astoundingly beautiful that Lucien seemed to be telling the love in his heart.

The best music had no differences in styles. Looking at Lucien who was playing the violin gracefully, Natasha was captivated by the rhythm.

Chapter 545: One Man's Orchestra

After the gloomy melody, a cello appeared before Lucien, who turned it around delicately and played music that was as profound as a man's voice. The violin, having lost support, simply floated in midair.

Enshrouded in the romantic atmosphere weaved by the conversation of the mellow cello and the soft violin, Natasha recalled her first encounter with Lucien. Because of a Symphony of Fate, the two of them were first connected, and because of their mutual interest in music and Lucien's humor and delightful self-embarrassment now and then, she gradually became his good friend, which allowed her to discover his advantages other than music. He was calm, gentle, smart and fun. There was no pressure to hang around with him, and she could be herself freely.

Those were the days that were as beautiful as the spring of April. Perhaps, it was in their deepening relationship that she gradually forgot Lucien's gender. Their love sprouted for the first time.

In the easy and pleasant melody, musical instruments behind and next to Lucien echoed on their own with his violin.

Those musical instruments seemed to be given their own souls and gathered into the concert of an orchestra. It was also as if many transparent musicians were playing together with Lucien.

Thanks to magic, Lucien's solo performance sounded like a minor orchestra.

The soft violin and the magnificent cello 'stood' together again. The deep feelings and the reluctance to say goodbye surfaced in Natasha's heart clearly. That was the farewell after their life-and-death escape and their support for each other. Lucien was about to leave Aalto for Holm. She believed that they would meet again, and she knew it was in the best interests of Lucien, so she let him go generously, but she still found herself missing him although they hadn't been separated yet.

Perhaps it was at that time, when Lucien carried her through the dark forest determinedly, that their friendship transformed. However, because of the pain that Sylvia brought her and her negligence, she merely regarded their feelings as those between two good friends.

From the brass instrument, a creepy, rigorous melody spread out. Grief, fear, panic, sorrow and other feelings flowed out while the violin was competing with the allegro in the band. Natasha seemed to have sensed Lucien's hesitation and agony after he realized that he fell in love with her. She also recalled her suffering back when she was in the abbey. The sole comfort for her at that time was the letters from Lucien. However, having walked further and further down the path of magic, and having disgraced the Cannon and the Doctrines again and again, he seemed unable to even keep being a good friend to her, a devout believer and the future duchess.

The violin let out resolution and anger. Natasha seemed to have heard Lucien's sigh when he made up his mind, and remembered how she treated Lucien as her best friend just like before, overcoming her psychological barriers. However, the pressure from the Church, the duchy, her father, the Violet family and the citizens cast everything into shadow again. They raged like storms and presaged the possible tragic ending.

In retrospect, Natasha realized that she had regarded Lucien as the most peaceful and gentle part of her mind since then, but her perception was enveloped by the mists of her habits back then.

Lucien continued playing the violin, and the cello began to play itself while nobody was around, as if it were listening to the violin's subtle confession of love. Then, Lucien turned to the cello, and the violin started to play on its own, as if the time had come for the gentlemen to tell his feelings and for the lady to listen.

It reminded Natasha of the beautiful scene when they met again in Holm and finally told each other their feelings towards each other. It was sweet and warm, but the lovely memory did not last when the melody turned hasty and sharp. The situation in Holm, the danger one year later, and her worries for her father who was far away in Orvarit all turned into rapid notes that constituted a

grievous scene. The melody that feathered the wonder of love emanated the sorrow that could make souls cry in such an atmosphere.

Natasha had seen such devastation before, but her emotional experience with Sylvia was not as deep. The moment she thought that Lucien and her would end up like this, she felt that the music whose sadness reached her soul was speaking for herself. She clenched her fists and vowed to break all the obstacles.

But what if her father was the obstacle, and it was a helpless choice for Lucien's safety?

Obstacles were not so easy to be broken!

Natasha's face was somewhat twisted while she struggled in her heart. As her sorrow reached the summit, she finally took a step. Any difficulty could possibly be resolved, and giving up meant that they would never see the dawn. At such a moment, she could only press forward and try to resolve the difficulties until she died!

As if moved by her determination, after the intense grief, the flutes played the soft, splendid melody again together with the harp. Natasha seemed to see the view of Mountain Paradise where all pains were gone and only happiness was left. In the end, the violin began to play the thematic melody in solo again.

This time, there was no more vague sorrow, but only comforting beauty.

Such an atmosphere was like two hands that still held each other after all the vicissitudes of life, the warm eyes of understanding after all the difficulties were overcome, and two butterflies that danced with their dreamy wings around each other after breaking away from the thick cocoons that shackled them.

The music stopped, but the melody still lingered, awing everything into silence with its beauty.

"I have never heard such a music style before, but it is also the most beautiful violin melody I have ever heard. Thank you for your

birthday gift, and thank 'Lucien Orchestra' for their performance." A long time later, Natasha finally said hoarsely, "I like the final part best. It seems to have sublimed the whole music."

Half a month ago, after much deliberation, Lucien selected The Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto ¹, which was composed by Mr. He Zhanhao and Mr. Chen Gang. While it was a tragedy, the 'Turning Into Butterflies' part represented beautiful hope, and he could express his feelings with it after slight adaptation. It was also fit for the conditions between himself and Natasha.

Putting down the violin, Lucien stood and bowed, "I'm honored that you like it."

"I noticed that you used a lot of different tricks when you played the violin. For example, sometimes you only used two strings." Natasha walked to Lucien's side with a smile and pulled him back to the table. Seeing that he was about to explain, she hurried to hint that it was unnecessary and simply went on. "It's not easy to see you play the violin. Its charm is entirely different from that of the piano. However, it is not the time for this right now. The music just now let me scrutinize our relationship in retrospect. I find it hard to hold back my feelings. I only want to have you and feel you."

Lucien smiled, "It's your birthday today. You'll be the queen."

Naughtiness beamed out of Natasha's smile. "Is that so? Excellent. That's what I want, too. Since today is my birthday, I'll take the lead of everything. You can only accept and cannot take any action until I tell you to. Do you understand?"

Lucien was about to reply, when Natasha added, "Rest assured. I won't cross your boundaries. In fact, I tried to transform you into a girl exactly because I wanted to 'care for' you. Your current status will do. There will be even the additional feeling of conquest. Would you like to cooperate with me?"

Lucien smiled. "You are the queen today."

Natasha chuckled, "For me, music is an excellent birthday gift, but there is only one best birthday gift, which is you."

While talking, she picked up a piece of cream from the table and smeared it on Lucien's throat, before she licked it. When Lucien tried to hug her, she stopped him: "Don't move. Follow my commands."

.....

The messy velvet quilts covered their naked bodies, and the air of love filled the room.

Lucien felt lucky that he had changed his bed to a magic bed, which saved him from another collapse experience. Natasha, on the other hand, was like a kid who was occupying her favorite toy. She tied Lucien up with both hands and legs as she breathed steadily sound sleep.

"She had been taking the lead the first couple of hours. She must be exhausted." Lucien's right hand was under Natasha, so he extended his left hand and eased the vague worries on her face.

Suddenly, Natasha opened her eyes and said in a daze, "It's already dawn? I fell asleep."

"Not yet. Sorry for waking you up." Relied Lucien gently.

Natasha put on a brilliant smile. "That's great. I didn't plan to sleep at all. It's probably going to be half or one month later before we meet again. How can we pass the night sleeping? Even random talking is better than that!"

Lucien smiled, "Not a problem. Right, I've been confused about something. Why is Sard not worried that the pope will notice what he is doing?"

Lucien did not find it inappropriate to discuss such matters on such an occasion, and Natasha felt nothing wrong, either. Continuing using Lucien's right hand as her pillow, she said, "Because I am the queen of Holm."

"Huh? What do you mean?" Lucien was puzzled.

Natasha smiled, "That's a secret way that the pope checks the major

parishes. After the schism of the North Church, the pope discovered that some northern nobles had detected anomalies a long time ago but they were killed when they tried to report the issue. Henceforth, emperors, kings and duchies have been given ways to directly contact the pope. Once the Grand Cardinal behaves inappropriately, they can report it to the pope.”

She stopped calling the pope as His Holiness.

“Perhaps, other nobles and night watchers can reach out to the Church in secret, too, but the right to talk to the pope should still be a royal prerogative. I certainly would not report to the pope that something wrong is going on in my kingdom, so Sard is not worried at all.”

“That explains a lot...” Lucien nodded. Then he recalled something else. “Sard’s goal is unclear. In case of accidents, give the structure of the divine power circles in the Nekso Palace to me when you have a chance. I’ll try to improve them. Then, you’ll ask Richard to change them accordingly, so that Sard will not control the defense of the Nekso Palace all of a sudden.”

Natasha was stunned, “You are going to improve the divine power circles?”

Wasn’t it supposed to be the clergy’s job?

Lucien smiled, “You forgot what happened before? For a sorcerer, the greatest difficulty to improve the divine power circles is that they may accidentally cut the power source of such circles. After the incidents with Ell and Francis, I am already able to identify the central part that distributes energy and make unrecognizable changes on other parts.”

Besides, he also had ‘Sun’s Corona’ as a reference.

“You’re more and more capable now. I’ll give the structure to you when there’s a chance to.” Natasha teased Lucien.

.....

After another half night’s lingering, Natasha put on her dress and

left affectionately when it was dawn.

Lucien, slept for another half day, then returned to Allyn in a pleasant mood but unsteady feet.

“Master, Arcana and Magic have been published in advance. The discussion is rather heated.” The next day, when Lucien walked into the Atom Institution, Heidi and other students greeted him with the journal, asking half in confusion and half in excitement, “But why isn’t your paper published? The guys who are in favor of the wave theory all claim that you... you have recognized the reality.”

Chapter 546: Theater of Destruction

Chapter 546: Theater of Destruction

Looking at the infuriated Heidi, Lucien smiled. “What’s to be angry about? So many arcanists of the elemental school share my opinion. Why do I need to waste my time on a worthless paper? Such a hypothesis which uses the result as the premise, until it is proved by experiments, can only be used for mathematical and methodological reference. Did any arcanist write a rebuttal?”

Annick browsed through the journals and shook his head. “None of the five grand arcanists published any papers. Mr. President and the Lord of Storm, on the other hand, discussed the transformation formulas’ application in the Douglas system under different frames of reference.”

“Mr. President published a paper?” Since he did not review it, it was the first time Lucien heard about it. He took over Annick’s ‘Arcana’ and began to read.

Douglas had obviously noticed Oliver’s paper last month but was not as upset as the senior-rank arcanists, because it only offered a theoretical explanation and the corresponding transformation formulas. No experiment results or phenomena could prove the theory and explain the light-speed experiment. Instead, Douglas was more interested in the transformation formulas, as the transformation formulas in the past were rather inept after the Brook electromagnetic system was established.

Reading Douglas’ paper, Lucien nodded his head. This was the best he could expect. After Mr. President studied the major part of the paper, with his understanding of the electromagnetic system, he would soon recognize something and gain certain preliminary insights. Only in such a case would he not be faced with the special theory of relativity without any psychological or knowledge preparation.

As Lucien read the paper in silence, Heidi murmured, “I know that

you are unwilling to demean yourself by discussing such speculative papers, but the arcanists who support the wave theory think otherwise. They believe that you have been hit by the paper and realized your bigotry in the past, and that's why you quietly backed off and did not argue. This is a sign that the wave theory is making a comeback."

By 'comeback', she meant the problem whether or not 'Ether', the medium through which waves were transmitted in the vacuum, existed.

The few students were rather excited about the wave theory advocates' slanders against their teacher. It seemed more insufferable than themselves being humiliated.

"What's their opinion on the photoelectric effect and the Brook scattering experiment?" Lucien was holding 'Arcana' and 'Magic' in his hands. Obviously, the arcanists that they knew and were in touch with couldn't have published any papers in the two journals.

After he blew up a tremendous amount of heads with the light quantum hypothesis and won the Silver Moon Medal, the arcanists who persisted in the wave theory clinging to the classic experiments stayed far away from Lucien in fear. As a result, he could only learn their progress through journals.

Sprint snorted, "They attempted to construct more complicated wave models to explain the photoelectric effect and the scattering experiment, but that's only for discussion and of no actual value. They almost didn't pass the review."

"Then what are you angry about? Besides, can the particle theory explain the classic experiment images?" Lucien smiled, rather amazed by the wave theory supporters' efforts. However, their efforts were destined to be in vain due to the lack of theoretical guidance.

Heidi found her teacher's casualness very perplexing. "But they are vilifying you, aren't they?"

"They'll be slapping my face only when they present detailed

experiment results.” Lucien focused his attention on the two journals. He realized that after he proposed the light quantum hypothesis and Mr. Brook proved it, the supporters of the particle theory were soaring in number. Many arcanists had changed their opinion and believed that light could be a very strange particle.

However, since the classic experiments still could not be explained with particles, the supporters of the traditional wave theory, after the intense shock at the beginning, got back on their feet again. On ‘Arcana’ and ‘Magic’ of this issue, Joaquin, Pesor, Tina-Timos and other senior-rank arcanists all expressed their acknowledgment of Oliver’s paper, but they prudently maintained that experiments should be devised according to the theory in order to prove it, and that they should not trust it too much until then. That was a good lesson that they had learnt after Lucien’s consecutive revolutionary papers.

Based on the experience from Earth, Lucien knew that the War between Wave and Particle would be long and involve the mysteries about the nature of this world. Therefore, he did not find it strange at all.

Her teacher’s attitude calmed Heidi down. She asked curiously, “What’s your paper this month, master? I saw you working on it before.”

“An essay on tensor analysis. It has been published in ‘Nature’. You should read it sometime.” Lucien replied, without bothering to raise his head.

Annick, Katrina and other students all looked awful. It had been three years since ‘Nature’ was established, and it was gradually known as ‘the most abstruse journal in history’. Even the advanced arcanists who were adept at mathematics and logic were often too overwhelmed to understand what the papers on it were talking about. The series of papers that their teacher and Mr. Levski worked on in regard to Evans Geometry, in particular, were the best tools to help them go to sleep at night.

Noticing the silence, Lucien raised his head and looked at him with a vague smile, “Only with a good knowledge in mathematics and

logic will your future studies on arcana and magic be easier. Do you need to be fortified in that aspect?”

“Haha. Master, I just recalled that I still had an unfinished experiment. I’ll be on my way. Take your time reading your paper. I’ll go find Alfalia.” Smiling, Heidi spoke as she backed to the door.

Alfalia had been assigned to her as her assistant.

With Heidi as their example, the excuses such as arcana experiments and magic analysis and construction surged out of the mouths of the students. After only ten seconds, Annick was the only person left in the office.

Lucien looked at Annick, finding it weird, “Do you not have any unfinished experiment? Or do you really want me to give you more lectures on mathematics and logic?”

Annick scratched his head and said in a low voice, “Master, my plan was to read the journals...”

Lucien lowered his eyes, only to discover that Annick’s journals were in his hands.

Lucien was finally able to read and learn the papers after the steel golem delivered his journals from the Review Board. He realized that, because Oliver’s paper was too dazzling, the journals were filled with discussions about it. Other articles were the achievements in other fields or improvement in magic. The heuristic paper that Annick and Sprint proposed about the contradiction between the theoretical performance of the cyclotron and its actual performance received absolutely no attention.

That’s not going to work. Lucien thought for a moment and took out a piece of paper. Picking up the quill, he wrote: On the Problems in the Application of the Cyclotron.

.....

Inside the ‘Theater of Destruction’, collapsing and perishing stars were everywhere.

In the dark, terrible end of the world, certain brightness spread out gently but firmly. It seemed to be the last symbol of civilization.

As one approached it, they would discover that the shimmer was from a high-rising magic tower that was full of artistic air. Every window was ablaze with lights.

In the library, Oliver, whose magic robe had been changed into a sloppy pajama, was holding his quill haggardly and smoking his tobacco pipe, unable to write a single word for a long time.

His eyes were filled with the zealotry typical of artists. He seemed to have ignited and dedicated all the feelings in his heart to this long poem of love.

Suddenly, the tower guard's pleasant voice echoed, "My lord, Mr. President has come to visit."

Oliver put down his quill, frowning. A 'poet' and 'playwright' whose inspiration was disrupted tended to be agitated. He violently pushed the paper on which the love poem was written to a pile of paper on his desk, clearing an empty space. Then, he took a few deep breaths and resumed calmness on the surface. Finally, he rose and greeted Douglas at the door of his magic tower. In terms of both seniority and prestige, Douglas deserved his full respect.

Soon enough, Oliver led Douglas back to his library. Rubbing his eyebrow, he asked, "Mr. President, is there anything I can help you with? I'm not in the best mood recently, and there's something urgent I need to accomplish. I won't be away from Allyn for now."

It was a subtle refusal of being sent out for missions, which was also a privilege for the grand arcanists.

Douglas smiled. "You can stay in Allyn and study the Douglas. There are no missions that require your help. I'm here mainly to discuss the application of transformation formulas with you. Have you seen my paper on 'Arcana' today?"

He, too, was aware of Oliver's recent divorce, and naturally did not assign any mission to him.

Oliver was more or less relieved. “The transformation formulas? I’m glad to discuss it with you. Fernando and I had so many unresolved problems.”

“You discussed it with Fernando?” Douglas found it strange.

Realizing his mistake, Oliver hurried to explain, “You know that Fernando is adept at many fields. He is a great partner to discuss with. I communicated with him before I submitted the paper.”

Douglas nodded in approval and sat on the opposite side of the desk. “Let’s discuss this problem.”

As if he felt that oral description might be too difficult, he took up another quill on the desk, drew a piece of paper, and was about to write the problem down.

On the paper, however, were a few lines of beautiful and affectionate poetry. Douglas shook his head and apologized, “Did I interrupt your creation?”

While talking, he put the paper of poetry back to where it used to be and drew the pile of paper that was below it at the beginning. He thought that the paper down below was blank.

Still in a trance, Oliver was about to say that it was alright because he already had insights and he could continue his work in a right mood later, but all of a sudden, his eyes widened and he turned around like a wild storm, shouting, “Not that paper!”

Douglas avoided Oliver’s robbing out of instincts and looked at the paper in his hands, feeling it strange, only to catch the title on it that was in a very familiar handwriting.

“On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation”

Oliver’s face immediately turned gloomy. The destruction in the cosmic theater out there seemed even more horrifying and dark.

Chapter 547: Ungullible Douglas

“This paper is based on relativity and the constant speed of light. For that, I stipulate that...”

After he skimmed through the paper, Douglas’s smile was replaced by graveness. He raised his head to look at Oliver, only to discover in surprise that the pile of papers before him, including the poem, the play and the papers, had been obliterated into dust and dispersed into the air.

Failing to take over the front page of the paper in Douglas’ hand, Oliver destroyed all the items on the desk in his anxiety when he tried to clean up the traces!

He was now full of regret. Due to the turmoil in his love life recently, he hadn’t been himself. After he took out the paper and studied it, he forgot to put it back before he started the creation of his long poem. Later, he simply forgot everything and did nothing when he directed Douglas into his library.

I should’ve enhanced myself with ‘Mechanical Mind’ when the tower guard informed me! His facial muscles cramping, Oliver couldn’t have regretted it more.

Douglas looked at Oliver, puzzled. “Why did you destroy it and stop me from reading it? Is there a problem that Lucien inferred equations based on two premises?”

The front page of the paper mainly included two postulates and their respective descriptions.

Oliver looked at the bookshelf and, with a self-mocking smile, spoke convincingly, “They were just the ideas that Lucien and I discussed, nothing more than speculations and fantasies. They are full of flaws and errors, so I would rather nobody else reads them. You know that I am a perfectionist. In both the creation of plays, poetry and paintings and the studies of arcana and magic, I would rather destroy the works if I’m not satisfied than present them to anybody.”

Such words would've been ridiculously funny if they were said by somebody else. However, when they were said by a grand arcanist who was brimming with the vibe of a great artist, together with his long beard and his sad face, they sounded particularly true.

Douglas seemed more or less convinced. He smiled. "Speculations and fantasies are not bad, either. They can give me inspirations. Let me guess what you discussed. Huh, the constant speed of light... The popular paper that explained the light speed experiment recently... Did Lucien infer your transformation formulas based on the two premises?"

Oliver held his head. Could you please not be so smart, Mr. President? "No, not exactly..."

Douglas did not seem to hear him at all. He took out a pile of paper from his storage bag and picked up the quill, starting his deduction based on the two premises on Lucien's paper.

"No..." Oliver stepped forward, trying to stop it, but when he saw Douglas writing busily, he suddenly fell silent. Now that Mr. President had the idea, he could deduce it after he returned even though Oliver stopped him right now. Therefore, he might as well supervise him and see if he could offer any guidance in case of a tragedy.

If things are beyond control... Thinking about that, Oliver activated the highest clearances of the magic tower, so that he could jump out of 'Theater of Destruction' at the critical moment.

He could be heavily wounded at most if the demiplane was destroyed. He could always map and produce another one.

Oliver finally showed some responsibility at such a moment and did not inform Fernando and Lucien to come, in case they were affected, too.

Based on the two premises, and since he already had a goal, Douglas soon deduced a series of formulas, but the more he inferred, the slower he became.

Hum... The Theater of Destruction outside of the magic tower whimpered, and the exploding stars seemed to be collapsing under the attraction of a certain force. Although it was shabby and imperfect, it released the air of destruction that was even more horrifying than the doomsday just now.

Oliver was soaked in cold sweat. It was indeed as expected of an expert at the peak of legendary. He was able to cause the change of stars in a demiplane that was not under his control. Would anything really happen?

After enhancing himself with spells, Oliver ruled out all his feelings and stared at Douglas, his black eyes as frozen as ice.

The floating dust became sluggish, and time seemed to have stopped fleeting. The space in the library was vaguely constricted. Veins bulged on Douglas' hand that was grabbing the quill. His skin turned lackluster, as if he had grown old by decades in just one moment.

Finishing the last stroke, Douglas read the paper silently and gloomily.

"Mr. President?" Oliver called him.

Douglas, as still as a statue, did not reply. When Oliver was about to call again, he raised his head with a bitter smile. "Although I had realized that my motion theories were problematic after Brook established the electromagnetic system, I still feel that my past thousand years of life have been denied watching them get overruled and disrupted ruthlessly."

"No, they are just helpful supplements for your theoretical system." As a famous artist/playboy, Oliver told lies without the slightest awkwardness. "Are you alright?"

He heaved a long sigh of relief. Mr. President's head seemed still intact, and his cognitive world was not frozen."

"There's no need to console me. I know very well what I have inferred. Lucien... Lucien is more dangerous than Brook..." Douglas

shook his head with a bitter smile. "What a burden it must've been for Fernando to be his teacher. I feel lucky that I didn't compete for him at the beginning... Thankfully, the paper is still only a hypothetical deduction that is not proved by any experiments or phenomena yet."

"Also, it does not agree with the time error on the artificial planets. According to the deduction, time should be slower, but time is in fact faster..."

Self-obsessed, Douglas asked himself, "What is space and time? Why do they change according to matter? Why are they the functions of speed..."

Oliver was more or less surprised. It seemed that Douglas did not notice the paper that Lucien's students published. That's great! That's great! He would be less shocked later if he spent his time in the world of whys for a while.

Weighing his tones, Oliver expressed his opinion, "In the past, we believe that time and space are absolute, independent, mathematic, but we may have to view it from a different perspective now. If we can figure out the mysteries of time and space, I believe that we won't be too far away from the truth of the world."

He was alluring Douglas, a curious sorcerer, with the bright prospects in the future, hoping that Mr. President would think that it was one step closer to the truth, not that his own system had been disrupted, when he discovered the relativistic, so that his head would not blow up.

Douglas was back to himself from the shock. In an unpredictable voice, he said, "I've accepted a few disruptive theories in a row in only a hundred years. If I hadn't recalled the concepts of relative truth and absolute truth that Lucien mentioned, my cognitive world might've been frozen like Brook. While this paper hasn't been proved it, I did realize some problems during high-speed battles."

Oliver rubbed his forehead, thanking Lucien for finally doing a good deed. He said solemnly, "Lucien said that your motion system is not wrong."

“Huh? Not wrong? Douglas looked at Oliver in confusion.

Oliver nodded carefully, “He said that your motion system is a relative truth, and an approximation of the theory in the low speed. Your path is not wrong; it’s just that you haven’t walked far enough yet.”

As a playwright, it was more than easy for him to make up quotes, but Lucien did use the term ‘low-speed approximation’. As for the rest, they were just ‘descriptors’!

Douglas nodded slowly and accepted the theory. Then he frowned. “Judging from your tone, has it been preliminarily proved by experiments?”

Oliver’s face was immediately frozen. His response could easily betray him when he dealt with a man like Mr. President.

“Not yet. It’s just that Lucien is very confident. You know, his previous success filled him with confidence.” Oliver kept lying and pushing the problem to Lucien, describing him as an egotist.

Douglas stood up. “Alright... My head is a bit messy. I need to go back now. Perhaps, this paper will be the starting point of my future research...”

Instead of waiting for Oliver to reply, he left the magic tower and sighed, “How could Lucien have done that? He wouldn’t have discussed the paper with you without experiments.”

Half overjoyed and half grieved, he felt that his heart was torn apart.

After returning the Land of Truth, Douglas asked the tower guard to bring him Lucien’s papers in the recent issues.

“Tensor analysis... Why isn’t there any?” Douglas knew that what he was doing was dangerous, but his shaking cognitive world made him unable to control himself. He seemed to be reaching the exit of the labyrinth that had trapped him for years. Whether it was a good ending or a bad one, it would be an answer after all. How could he stop?

Not finding anything after a long search, Douglas picked up the issue of Arcana where Oliver published his transformation formulas and perused it. He believed that Lucien must've made preparations before submitting such a revolutionary paper.

Based on his understanding about Lucien and Fernando, Douglas reached the end and suddenly saw two familiar names. "Annick... Sprint... Aren't they Lucien's students?"

Focusing his attention, Douglas began to read the paper carefully. Gradually, he furrowed his brow, and the rug in the magic tower displayed a formula he inferred earlier under the attraction of his spiritual power.

"If we start from the formula where mass increases with speed, there may be an explanation." Douglas calculated nonstop as if something was chasing after him. Obtaining the data in the end, he knew how to change the electrical field now.

He entered the laboratory without running simulations in his cognitive world. Activating the newly-added cyclotron, he adjusted the electric field.

A moment later, the beautiful scenery outside of the magic tower was suddenly enshrouded in darkness. Both space and time seemed to be in chaos.

Douglas left the cyclotron and walked to the window, heaving a deep sigh: "What is time? What is space? What is life?"

The light was restored in the Land of Truth, which seemed undamaged, but Douglas' eyes were still filled with bewilderment. His philosophical opinions in the past hundred years had embraced a drastic change.

"Thankfully, I still have the gravity theory... But what's the source of gravity? Based on what is it generated? How did gravity appear at the very beginning?"

"Does absolute truth mean..."

.....

Lucien did not have the time to submit his heuristic paper yet, when he suddenly received Fernando's message: "Come over now. That stupid idiot Oliver screwed up again!"

Huh? Lucien was stunned and even vaguely heard his teacher roaring at Oliver.

What happened?

Chapter 548: Notorious

“Don’t act as if this is all because of the failure of your love life! It’s because your love life is sh*t that we are caught in such a disaster!”

“Sh*t! Your view about love is pure sh*t! If you truly love Florencia, you wouldn’t have hurt her again and again! You are as filthy and ugly as sh*t!”

By then Lucien reached Fernando’s library on the thirty-third floor of the tower, he could still hear his teacher’s astounding roars. Oliver, on the other hand, kept his body on one side and dared not face the Lord of Storm at all, as miserable as a small boat in a huge storm.

“Master, what happened?” Lucien tried divination while he was on the lift, only to no avail.

It was then that Fernando held back his flying saliva. “This ass*ole whose head has been filled up with libidos and s*it forgot to hide your paper after he read it! He led Douglas into his library just like that!”

His head humming, Lucien asked in shock and concern, “Is Mr. President alright?”

“He’s fine. Douglas’ head did not explode, and his cognitive world was not frozen.” Oliver was wearing a bitter smile, his facial muscles vaguely twitching.

Lucien’s heart fell back to where it was. “That’s good. It fixed the problem that we had been worried about. I wonder if Mr. President could find a path to advance into a demigod.

Fernando glared at Oliver. “Why didn’t you finish? Douglas only read the postulates of your paper and inferred the rest of the contents on his own. He hasn’t discovered the relativistic effect yet. If he happens upon it when he reads the journals and runs experiments, Oliver, you will be the most glorious saint of the Church!”

"I don't think anything will happen. Mr. President left in a steady mood. Also, he had armed his head with Lucien's philosophical notions about absolute truth and relative truth. I believe that, even if he reads the papers and does the experiments, he will accept them after the initial shock." Oliver was rather optimistic about it. Or rather, there was nothing he could do except be optimistic right now.

Fernando contained his fury. "Oliver, one day you will die from your messy love life! Let's go to the Land of Truth first, which I hope still exists..."

The demiplanes of the seven grand arcanists and the ten legendary arcanists were all connected to the Allyn magic tower. Therefore, Fernando opened the gate of the space.

Seeing that the Land of Truth was as beautiful as before, and the lake was rippling in glimmers under the gentle breeze, Fernando felt much less apprehensive. He glared at Oliver and said, "You are quite lucky."

Led by the puppet, the three of them passed the long corridor and reached Douglas' library, only to discover that he was staring at the window.

"Douglas, I'm told that you read Lucien's paper. What's your opinion?" Fernando grabbed Lucien for this visit exactly as an excuse.

Douglas was still wearing a black tailcoat, but the bow-tie had been loosened as if he tried to make it easier for him to breathe. He turned around and looked at the three of them gravely. "In fact, you may be late. I have already done the experiments with the cyclotron."

"Your cognitive world is broken and solidified?" Fernando could deal with such a result.

Since Douglas was still standing, the worst consequence couldn't have been too terrible.

Douglas shook his head, his weary face filled with confusion.

“Thankfully, I was more or less mentally prepared. I ran into similar problems in the past, and I thought of Lucien’s ideas about absolute truth and relative truth. Finally, I constructed the framework of the cognitive world from a higher level and included my previous knowledge in it. Although it was shaken and damaged, my cognitive world is not broken and solidified yet.”

Lucien clicked his tongue in shock. It was indeed as expected of an extraordinary person who built the Congress of Magic from scratch. Few of his peers, juniors and students, after the development of arcana, the theoretical disruptions and the assassinations of the Church, were still alive. He could be called legendary in every aspect. If it were Lucien, he might not have such an open mind to accept it. Chances were that his cognitive world would’ve already been broken and solidified.

“It seems that you can advance further.” Fernando and Oliver’s previous concerns were finally gone.

Douglas shook his head in a bitter smile. “Not yet. I was lucky this time because the greatest shock from Lucien’s paper was not the disruption of the motion system but the new understanding of time and space.”

“During the previous studies and battles, I already had similar ideas about motion, except that I was too bound by my obsolete knowledge to overthrow my own thoughts. However, the understanding of time and space that was beyond imagination truly disrupted my knowledge. The world that was rather clear to me was suddenly blurred. Thankfully, I could tell that your exploration in time and space was still preliminary and flawed. That’s why I could manage to bear it.”

Lucien smiled, “It’s indeed not easy to accept or understand a relativistic time and space. I hope that Mr. President can explore the mysteries of time and space together with me in the future.”

“Wait until this paper is digested.” Douglas smiled gently, his clear eyes more or less rippled. “What is time, and what is space? Those questions are bothering me.”

“You will probably advance into a demigod after you digest Lucien’s paper.” Fernando intentionally changed the subject in case he was mired in the world of whys.

Douglas hinted for them to sit and smiled, “It’s barely possible. The change in motion system can slightly improve my strength, but it is only because casting spells will be easier. In order to advance into a demigod, I have to fully understand the changes of time and space, or to grasp gravity on a much deeper level. It’s like Brook had to truly recognize electromagnetic waves and grasp the electromagnetic power in order to reshape his cognitive world. Only things connected to the origin can help a person ascend into a demigod.”

He had spent long enough at the peak of legendary, and he had profound wisdom. Even though he hadn’t found a right path of advancement, he had indeed found something.

After that, he did not continue the topic but smiled at Lucien. “I inferred Oliver’s transformation formulas, but why did I fail to get the mass-energy equation in your paper?”

Lucien knew that they had come too soon. Otherwise, with Mr. President’s wisdom and arcana expertise, he could’ve figured it out very soon. So, Lucien asked the puppet to bring paper and pen and inferred on the spot.

“Mass, energy... No wonder your atomic fusion could be so powerful.” Douglas observed the formula with his eyes glittering. “Although many key models haven’t been explained yet, I believe it will take much shorter time for me to construct ‘Eternal Blaze’.”

He had been trying to construct it with his spiritual power.

As he spoke, he began throwing out questions again. “Why can energy and mass be turned into each other? What is the nature of matter...”

Fernando sniffed, “Douglas, now that you’ve accepted Lucien’s paper, let’s discuss the things about Sard and be prepared that he circumvents his promise in other ways. Lucien has offered a plan.”

Douglas calmed down and smiled, "I like plans. Nobody is smart and powerful enough to calculate everything. The key is to gather information and simulate all possible scenarios in advance. That's exactly a sorcerers' strong suit."

The four of them discussed for a long time. When he saw Lucien, Fernando and Oliver off, Douglas smiled, "I look forward to the day you start studying gravity, Lucien."

"I hope that I can have your guidance when the day comes, Mr. President." Replied Lucien modestly.

Looking at their back while they left, Douglas suddenly sighed, "I'm confused about gravity myself. Where does it come from? How is it generated..."

.....

One day in April, 824, inside the Allyn branch of the Moonson League.

Two senior-rank sorcerers of electromagnetics happened upon each other and therefore discussed the latest trend of arcana studies.

"Annhora, is there still no rebuttal paper from Lucien Evans regarding the Oliver transformation?" One senior-rank sorcerer asked Annhora, who was a member of the Arcana Review Board.

Annhora was wearing a white wig and looked more like a noble than a sorcerer. He replied with a bitter smile, "No. In the past eight months, except for the few papers on the new alchemy and the cyclotron, all his results are about tensor analysis and Evans Geometry. He wrote ten papers independently and worked with Levski on another six. Together with the contributions of Levski, Neeshka, Milina and Samantha, a new mathematical system is taking shape."

"But I don't understand the mathematics at all." An old middle-rank arcanist was quite upset. "Also, what we are most concerned about is his opinion on the Oliver transformation..."

Another seventh-circle sorcerer sighed. "Exactly. We know that the

Oliver transformation is only mathematically applicable for now, and that it cannot prove the existence of 'Ether', but it can explain the light speed experiment with the Ether theory. It is by far the most perfect hypothesis, and we are all willing to support it. But... But why is Lucien Evans not publishing any paper in that regard? I'll always be ill at ease before I learn his opinion."

Annhora nodded solemnly, "Every time I recall the gore he caused and the disruptive theories he proposed, I find it impossible to trust Mr. Oliver's paper until he offers his opinion. I'm always looking forward to something with worry. It's like I can't be reassured in a thunderstorm until the raindrops do fall."

"I always told other people that Lucien Evans dares not discuss the problem because he recognized his mistake, but I cannot sleep tight at night without his opinion. Sometimes I even have nightmares." The old middle-rank arcanist said in agitation.

The nightmare where brains and blood litter the ground still freaked him out.

Annhora was about to reply, when his pocket suddenly beeped. He immediately took out a fine-looking box and pressed a button on it. "Hello? Mr. Oliver? I'm on my way!"

It's a mobile communication item that the Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company recently developed. It had a lower requirement and would not conflict with other magic items.

Seeing off his partners, Annhora reached Oliver's office on the thirty-fourth floor of the Allyn magic tower, only to discover that a familiar arcanist was already seated there, and Mr. Oliver hadn't come out from his inner library yet.

"Mariana, why has Mr. Oliver summoned us?" Annhora asked the middle-aged lady who had shiny black hair.

Mariana, holding a broad-edged hat in his hands, were equally puzzled. "I have no idea."

At this moment, Oliver walked out with two papers in his hands.

“Mariana, Annhora, no formalities are needed. I asked you to come here because there’s papers for you to review. It should be acceptable for the members of electromagnetics to review it. Take a look at it first. If everything is alright, I’ll give it to the Sorcerer Administrative Department and ask the alchemical life in the Arcana Review Board to assign it to you.”

Mariana and Annhora, both having a premonition, asked simultaneously, “Whose paper is it?”

Oliver rubbed his fingers. “Lucien Evans.”

Boom. Annhora felt that a thunder rumbled in his head. He asked with a pale face, “Mr. Oliver, can I refuse it?”

While talking, he secretly observed Mariana’s head, only to discover that Mariana was also observing him, with her eyes also focused on his head.

Chapter 549: Remark

Chapter 549: Remark

Oliver was rather amused by their reactions. He smiled, “Rest assured. Your head should still be intact after you read it, which is both my estimation and the prophecy of astrology.”

Mariana was still unrelieved. “Mr. Oliver, you know that Mr. Evans’ papers can be quite disruptive and... destructive. Also, you have summoned us in advance for the review. In my heart, I feel that a terrible devil has been projected into my cognitive world, and that my head will explode after one moment of carelessness. Could you tell me why you made such an estimation and why you chose us?”

Coughing to hold back his laughter, Oliver had an even deeper understanding about Lucien’s image in the eyes of most arcanists. His name obviously sounded more distressing than the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss, particularly when his name was associated with a paper. Such an irregular review procedure was exactly like Brook before.

“I chose you for the review because, based on your papers in journals such as ‘Magic’ and ‘Electromagnetism’ in the past three months, you already had a rough idea and started researching it. Therefore, your cognitive world will certainly not be broken.” Oliver spoke of the real reason.

Of course, he did examine their fates with astrology in advance.

“We had a rough idea?” Annhora recalled in suspicion and soon remembered something. “Do you mean the studies on your transformation formulas and the deeper understanding about the relationship between time and space?”

Oliver nodded softly. “That’s right. I believe you will earn a lot after reading this paper.”

Not entirely convinced, and taking over the paper with shivering hands, Annhora and Mariana both saw the title of the paper: On the

Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation.

Huh. The title does not look very disruptive, does it?

Therefore, the two of them began to read carefully, with quills and blank paper next to them for them to calculate with.

As he read on, Annhora's left hand, not occupied by the quill, scratched his hair subconsciously and turned his white wig wryly. He seemed both interested and overwhelmed by the research, and his head was swooning.

Mariana, on the other hand, bit her lip as she often did when she was still a little girl. She mumbled, "Time? Space? How can they be like this?"

His fingers crossed, Oliver looked at them peacefully on the surface, but his eyes were rather solemn because of their reaction. After eight months of preparation, there shouldn't be another incident of massive brain explosions, right?

Also, the view on time and space in the theory of relativity was not perfect yet. They should be able to see the problems. Their worldview might be messed up, but their cognition wouldn't collapse for now.

After a long time, Annhora suddenly raised his head and said both frantically and confusedly, "I find it hard to believe that time is the speed's function, but it is such a charming thought. Also... Also, there are a lot of problems."

"As Lucien said himself, this is just a preliminary, inconclusive paper that hasn't introduced many things beyond the inertial frame of reference. There are also many unanswered problems. However, I think that the view on time and space is very interesting." Said Oliver with a smile. For a man of liberal arts, such a view of time and space better fitted his appetite.

"This paper completely renews our understanding of time and space. Had it not been for the consideration in the past months, perhaps my cognitive world would've been broken and solidified

because the chaos. Well, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Evans must've proposed the paper several months ago, right? The discussion since then was meant to psychologically and intellectually prepare us?" Annhora suddenly realized what happened.

Oliver nodded. "Yes, it was written before my transformation formulas were published. This paper made groundbreaking contributions to the macroscopic and high-speed studies. Perhaps that was part of the reason why some planets are still undiscovered. I believe you can see its worth as well as its imperfect parts."

"Yes. I believe that most of the senior-rank arcanists in the school of electromagnetics and the school of Light-darkness can accept the paper, however reluctantly. It is based on the classic electromagnetic theory and extrapolates it by sweeping the obsolete ideas in it." Annhora said in approval.

Mariana, next to him, murmured to herself in bewilderment, "But what about Ether?"

Annhora frowned. It was not until then that he discovered that, based on the paper, Ether was no longer of any use. It had quietly withdrawn from the stage of history. The foundation of the wave theory probably needed rectifying.

Hearing Mariana's words, Oliver said with a bitter smile, "Ether, waves and particles, we've been arguing about them for nobody knows how many years, but it is more and more difficult to understand them as time goes on."

"It's like two groups of knights in a battle. Both parties are fighting vehemently, but neither of them can crush the enemy and secure the final triumph." Mariana was back to herself. "Mr. Oliver, this paper needs to be proved by experiment phenomena and results in order to be aptly assessed."

Oliver took out another paper and unfolded it before them. "This is Lucien's paper on how to improve the cyclotron, where the relativistic effect has been observed. Also, I have certain problems regarding artificial planets here that involve the changes of time and space.

Oliver only dared to present the paper after seeing that the previous paper was still acceptable.

After reading the paper, Annhora knocked his head hard, “If I had focused more attention on the discussion of this problem in that issue of ‘Arcana’, it probably wouldn’t have taken so long, and I could’ve inferred Mr. Evans’ paper in a couple of months.”

“It means that Mr. Evans’ ideas and direction are right, although the paper is not perfect yet.” Mariana also offered her input and then praised the mass-energy formula.

After the new alchemy was proposed, they began addressing Lucien as Mr. Evans instead of Member Evans, but its meaning was entirely different.

When he returned to his office in the Arcana Review Board, Annhora soon received the paper assigned by the alchemical life. Without further reading, he simply wrote his comment with the quill:

“This is a sublimation on Mr. President’s motion system. It fixes the limitations that the motion system was only accurate in low speed and extrapolates the concept of motion to a macroscopic and high-speed scale. It has also preliminarily resolved many problems in the melting of electric and magnetic theories, giving us the hope of establishing a unified theory in arcana.

“Also, based on Mr. Evans’ proposition that we should infer from as few hypotheses as possible, we discover, to our surprise, that our understanding about time and space seems to have reached a marvelous and chaotic intersection. It is entirely different from the time and space we knew in the past. Not only does the paper disrupt the structure of time and space in our cognitive world, but it also disrupts our concepts in daily life that are founded on absolute time and space. It makes me more bewildered than ever, and I’m even starting to question the value of my life.”

“It’s hard to believe that time slows down, and space constricts, as speed increases. It is in violation of our intuitive perception and our imagination based on that, but the formulas presented by the paper

seem convincing enough and closer to the origin of the world. Also, Mr. Evans has already noticed the theoretical effect of increased mass caused by accelerated speed during an experiment with the cyclotron. At this moment, a hallowed gate in my heart seems to have collapsed, but from the ashes rises a brand-new one.”

“Although the system of relativity that Mr. Evans established is not perfect, and the problem that it is only limited to the inertial frame of reference but not universally applicable remains unresolved, the value of this paper is unquestionable. The mass-energy formula that mark the relationship between mass and energy, in particular, are full of mathematical and magical beauty. It is concise, powerful, and contains unimaginably profound mysteries, just like the poetic Brook formulas. Whoever is not shocked and attracted by them does not have any talents in arcana!”

“Mass and energy, time and space, they are the wonders of this world. Perhaps, we can obtain extremely powerful strength from it. In light of that, here is my assessment on Mr. Evans’ paper: This paper, after perfected, will change the paradigm and give us a wiser understanding about time and space, mass and energy. Also, it is doubtless that a relativistic system will be founded on this paper. Therefore, I suggest a reward of 3,000 arcana credits and 80,000 arcana points.”

Because there were still a lot of insidious problems, and a system was not established yet, Annhora did not offer a remark and reward as impressive as what was given for the new alchemy before, and nor did the Congress grant Lucien the title of grand arcanist. However, Mariana, who had made a similar remark, felt suffocated, because it meant that Lucien Evans seemed to be growing into a real grand arcanist based on either the new alchemy or the special theory of relativity!

.....

On the thirty-third floor of Allyn magic tower...

“It took them eight months before they understood the prelude of the theory of relativity. Those guys are dumber than I thought!” Fernando’s estimation at the beginning was half a year at most.

Lucien, on his opposite, smiled and said, "It is not an easy conversation to break one's own conceptions. However, after such a long time of preparation, probably none of the senior-rank arcanists will have brain explosions."

If another massive brain explosions took place, Lucien would feel that he had picked up an innate magic of clearing everybody on the street wherever he went.

"With the credit reward, your arcana level should be able to improve to level eight, right?" Asked Fernando casually, who did not really care about it.

The higher the level is, the more difficult object enchantment would be. The effects of arcana and magic badges could not be further improved.

Lucien nodded. "The feedback from the new alchemy over the past eight months is truly terrifying. The paper, the innovations on the materials, and the lowered difficulty to craft magic items all brought me abundant revenues. Plus the credit reward, I may be able to upgrade into level eight in another two to three months."

In particular, the discovery of the splitting of spectral lines under strong magnetic field and the theoretical explanation on the new alchemy brought him the Jurisian Silver Moon Medal in the electromagnetic field. It also made Lucien's cognitive world more stable and accelerated his studies on eighth-circle and seventh-circle magics. Up until so far, he had learnt nine of them in each category.

"'Arcana' will be issued tomorrow. If there are no major events, we can focus on the preparation for July." Fernando looked at the window and said solemnly. The upcoming battle would decide the Congress of Magic's fate in the near future.

Chapter 550: Sorrow and Joy

On the first day of the Month of Flowers, inside the Allyn branch of the Moonson League...

Jurisian, in the attire of a battle sorcerer, with a six-star arcana badge, a five-circle magic badge and a badge of crescent moon on his chest, slowly walked into the hall.

“Good morning, Mr. Jurisian.” The few middle-rank arcanists who just got down from the stars greeted Jurisian respectfully the moment they saw him.

Since the Influence Factor was introduced, it was not rare for the arcana level to surpass the magic level, but the senior-rank arcanists were still rare. An insurmountable barrier that many people couldn't cross in their lifetime seemed to lie between level five and level six. With his discovery of the splitting of spectral lines under strong magnetic field and his theoretical explanation four months ago, Jurisian proved the prophecy in the new alchemy and finally earned six silver stars. Had it not been for the fact that his cognitive world was still not substantiated yet, he would've advanced into the sixth circle and become a senior rank.

Jurisian had always been amiable when he was not on a mission. He replied in a smile, “Good morning, are you waiting for today's ‘Arcana’, too?”

“Yes. Debates have remained unabated about Mr. Oliver's transformation formulas recently. We can't wait to see the latest explanation and application. Perhaps somebody has already proved it with experiments.” Bobby, the middle-rank arcanist in the lead, was a tall, muscular man, with narrow and long eyes.

Jurisian chuckled, “Me too, but I'm more worried that I might see Evans' paper on that someday.”

Upon hearing that, the fairly large number of arcanists in the hall suddenly fell silent. The name had been haunting them like a nightmare. They could never trust Mr. Oliver's paper as well as the

papers of other arcanists too deeply until he offered his opinion on the transformation formulas. Waiting and being scared seemed to have become their habit.

After more than ten seconds, Bobby was back to himself, he was about to reply to Jurisian, when a few receptionists carried the journals including 'Arcana' and 'Magic' out and placed them on the counter. So, he dropped the subject and said, "Mr. Jurisian, the papers are here. After you."

Seeing that Bobby was right before the counter, Jurisian shook his head and said jokingly, "Let's respect the queue. You can check if there is Evans' paper first so that the rest of us can be prepared."

He intended to refuse Bobby's generosity subtly and humorously, but after he spoke, all the arcanists who were squeezing forward to purchase the journals stopped.

Their eyes were focused on Bobby, as if they agreed with Jurisian's proposition that he should check if there was Lucien Evans' paper first, and what it was about if there indeed was.

Bobby did not think much at the beginning, but when so many people gazed at him, he immediately recalled the magnificent accomplishments of the Headcrusher. His forehead immediately beaded with sweat, but the arcanists behind him gave him so much pressure that he still picked up a copy of 'Arcana' after a long hesitation.

Realizing that his joke seemed to have been misinterpreted under the special circumstances, Jurisian stepped forward and planned to stop Bobby so that he could 'examine' it himself.

Suddenly, Bobby blurted out, "There is Mr. Evans' paper!"

His voice was uncontrollably high, and it was obviously shaking. The whispers in the hall were entirely gone. The place seemed to have been frozen in time.

"What paper?" Asked Jurisian subconsciously.

Bobby breathed in relief. "It's about the electrodynamics of moving

bodies and the mass-energy equation. It sounds like research on the motion theories in electromagnetics and doesn't appear to be disruptive."

After he was reassured, he simply read the paper that was put on the first page of the journal on the counter in his curiosity. The other arcanists, cleverly, did not interrupt him but focused their eyes on his head. Jurisian, on the other hand, was deep in thought because of the ambiguous title.

After a while, Bobby's facial muscles began to twist, and his sweat was dripping from his cheeks. Then, he raised his left hand and pressed his head, as if he were in agony. His eyes were chaotic and confused.

The hall was caught in a weird silence again. Murmuring something, Bobby turned around, only to discover that all the arcanists around him including Jurisian, regardless of their rank, had retreated to at least ten meters away from him. He was surrounded by emptiness, as if a devil had just taken a bite here.

"What are you doing?" Asked Bobby, puzzled.

All the arcanists eyed him weirdly. Jurisian coughed and said, "We saw that you were in pain and therefore gave you a peaceful environment for you to recover. What is this paper about?"

"Oh? You were afraid that my cognition would collapse and my brain would explode?" Bobby realized what happened and smiled, "How is it possible? Mr. Evans' paper infers Mr. Oliver's transformation formulas based on two hypotheses. There's nothing disruptive."

Upon hearing that, Jurisian and the rest of them took another three steps back. "What? It's an explanation about the Oliver transformation?"

"Then why were you pressing your head so painfully?"

Bobby looked at his feet rather in embarrassment. "I could understand the formulas in it, but the descriptions about time,

space, mass and energy were too bewildering for me. I couldn't think them through and just knocked my head to see if I could get any inspiration."

Hu. Everybody's breath of relief almost gathered into a wind. So, the guy was only thinking hard because he could not understand it. Their worry was for naught.

Knowing that it was Evans' explanation that they had 'long expected', the middle-rank arcanists of the Moonsong League were finally calmed down, but none of them dared to read it carefully.

After a while, thinking that nothing happened to Bobby, Jurisian summoned his courage and read Lucien's paper by the counter.

As time went by, Jurisian became more and more grave. His muscles were tightened, and he was gritting his teeth. His shiny forehead was brimming with cold sweat, his eyes were filled with confusion and shock, and he kept murmuring space and time, mass and energy to himself.

Also, what was most weird that uncanny changes seemed to be happening around him, as if the rays of light were brighter.

Bobby immediately understood their previous fear after seeing Jurisian's status. He hurried to rush into the crowd, while the other arcanists clenched their fists and stared at Jurisian's head in fear.

After a long time, Jurisian suddenly 'screamed', and the uptight arcanists immediately backed off in a flurry, and the hall was in a mess.

After they retreated further and were braced for a headless body, they discovered, however, that Jurisian was standing joyfully, utterly refreshed.

"Mr. Jurisian, are you alright?" Bobby emboldened himself to ask.

Jurisian laughed in wild joy. "While the paper is not exactly perfect, it is a major shock for me and has settled certain problems that bothered me. Therefore, my cognitive world half substantiated just now!"

With his spiritual power that was more than sufficient and his control over magic, it meant that he would become a sixth-circle sorcerer soon.

“Really? Congratulations on you becoming a senior-rank sorcerer in advance. But why did you scream, Mr. Jurisian? We thought that your brain was going to explode...” Said Bobby frankly.

Jurisian replied in a chuckle, “I was ecstatic, so I wanted you to share my joy.”

Witnessing that Jurisian broke the greatest obstacle to the senior rank, the middle-rank arcanists in the hall had no time to condemn his mischief but all surged to the counter to buy ‘Arcana’, hoping that a similar ‘miracle’ could happen to themselves, too.

After a long time, only a few of the dozens of middle-rank arcanists were deep in thought, as if they were both enlightened and confused. The rest of them were just like Bobby. They could understand the deductions, but they couldn’t grasp their specific meaning. They were all at a loss.

However, they all realized that the paper seemed to have overthrown President Douglas’ motion system. Their cognitive world that was founded on that was shaken as a result. Thankfully, Lucien arduously explained that the previous motion system was a low-speed approximation of the new theory in the latter half of his paper with abundant examples, which stabilized their cognitive world again. It was not a disruption but a sublimation!

Even so, the fact that their knowledge was incomplete and unsolid still made them more bewildered than ever.

Right then, a hawk-nosed man walked in, with the badges of a seventh-circle arcanist and a seventh-circle sorcerer on his chest.

Noticing the queer behavior of his fellow arcanists, he broached a few questions.

After hearing their reply, he frowned and picked up a copy of ‘Arcana’ to read the article. As he read on, he observed in disgust,

“Absurd! How can time and space be like this! This is in utter violation of observation and imagination! Has Lucien Evans’ head been muddled because of his impractical mathematic studies?”

“Also, there are still many loopholes in it!”

While talking, he went upstairs with the journal, planning to lambaste it.

“Mr. Alvaro, it’s mine...” The middle-rank arcanist whose journal was taken away eventually gave up trying, because he knew that Mr. Alvaro was a seasoned arcanist who had unimaginable persistence in the three laws of the Force Field, the motion system and the absolute time and space.

.....

Inside the royal magic tower of Holm...

Looking at his teacher mumbling the words such as ‘mass’, ‘energy’, ‘time’ and ‘space’ before him, K suddenly felt indescribable fear and focused his eyes on the ‘Arcana’ in his hands.

Suddenly, Larry breathed heavily and clenched his fists hard. He announced with his eyes glittering, “If perfected, it is going to be a paper that changes the era!”

“Master?” K asked carefully. He was already a level-four arcanist and a fourth-circle sorcerer.

There was no telling the look on Larry’s face, which was covered in his furry, yellow beard, but he spoke in apparent joy, “My cognitive world has half substantiated.”

.....

On the thirteenth floor of the Allyn magic tower...

Lucien sat in the office of the Affair Committee, waiting for Thompson to confirm that none of the sorcerers had cognitive world meltdowns.

“None so far.” Thompson walked in. “That’s because you haven’t presented the improvements on the experiments with the cyclotron yet. Also, after more than eight months of discussions, most arcanists should be mentally and intellectually prepared.”

“However, a few senior-rank senior-ranks of the school of force field did have intense reactions.”

Lucien said helplessly, “I hope that only their cognitive world was broken and solidified. Or maybe, they can indeed find the mistakes in the paper and propose new opinions.”

Thompson was not bothered but consoled him, “Something good also happened. Today, at least six fifth-circle sorcerers’ cognitive world half substantiated because of your paper. Four of them are from the school of electromagnetics and the school of Light-darkness, including Jurisian you know. Two are elemental sorcerers, one of them being Larry. At least in the short run, the good influence of your paper outweighs the bad influence.”

“As far as I know, such scenes only happened when ‘Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy’ and the Brook formulas were proposed. Of course, their influences were even greater. Some people’s cognitive worlds even substantiated on the spot.”

Chapter 551: Tide of Time

After returning to the Atom Institution, Lucien was warmly welcomed by Heidi and other students.

“Master, how spectacular of you! You included the Oliver transformation into your system and completely abolished ‘Ether’!” Said Katrina in excitement. Her teacher had been silent for eight months because he was preparing for such a groundbreaking paper!

Heidi complained, “Master, why didn’t you say anything? In the past eight months, we were frequently mocked by the sorcerers of the sorcerer of electromagnetism and the school of Light-darkness.”

Because their teacher was the one who proposed it, and the theory stressed that Douglas’ motion system was its low-speed approximation, Layria and the other students accepted it without much resistance. Of course, about the new view on time and space, they were still at a loss due to their insufficient arcana knowledge, but they were not too overwhelmed.

Outside of them, Lazar and Rogerio smiled at Lucien, their hands in their pockets, and Jerome was holding a copy of ‘Arcana’ in his hands, as if he were waiting to ask questions. Alfalia, Lowi and the other assistants were further away. They were also excited because they indirectly witnessed a paper that could send someone to the throne of grand arcanist as well as a shocking part of history.

There was also the envy for Heidi, Annick and other students in them. As Mr. Evans’ students, those people could celebrate it around him happily, while they could only stand far away.

“How could I bring out such a paper all of a sudden? Did you not see the months of preparation?” Lucien intentionally pointed it out, so that his students and friends could think more instead of jumping to any conclusions when they encountered other papers in the future.

Sprint had contracted Annick’s head-scratching habit at some point. The arrogance on his face was gone, and only the most sincere

admiration was left. “Master, I don’t understand much of your paper, but the formula where mass grows with speed seems able to explain the inconsistency between the theoretical performance and the actual performance of the cyclotron, right? Just now, Annick and I adjusted the frequency of the electric field after calculation, and we did obtain particles of higher energy than before! Was your paper inspired by the problem?”

Heidi, Alfalia and everybody else pricked their ears, because ‘Allyn Impression’ had offered a high reward for the stories behind the special theory of relativity. However, they were also aware that they must be approved by Lucien before they told anybody else about the matter.

“As a matter of fact, after grasping the classic electromagnetic theories, I had been trying to melt Mr. President motion system into it, but a lot of problems occurred. In the end, the light speed experiment gave me an inspiration. After certain intermediate phases that were similar to the Oliver transformation, I inferred those formulas naturally with as few hypotheses as possible. The relativistic effect that you discovered provided a powerful proof for my theory.” Lucien spoke of the excuse that he thought of a long time ago.

Annick was enlightened. “At that time, you already speculated mass changes in your explanation. Heidi said that it was impossible!”

The freckles on Heidi’s face had mostly gone. Blushing, she glared at Annick in anger and embarrassment. “How could I have known that? That’s a field only the senior-rank arcanists understand!”

“However, as my students, you should know what will happen next.” Said Lucien with a smile.

However, the elegant and reassuring smile, in Heidi’s eyes, was as terrifying as the look of the most brutal devil. Their master was obviously hinting that they needed to understand and grasp the special theory of relativity, which meant classes and classes, exercises and exercises!

Looking at the students who seemed to have just been hit by hail,

Lucien smiled, "The sooner you grasp the basic transformations and the view on time and space, the easier it will be for you to shape your cognitive world from a higher level without being affected by obsolete theories. However, I need to specify in advance that the theory about time and space is still incomplete. You need to bear in mind that other theories may be introduced in the future to modify the current theory."

The students, whom he had been grooming since childhood, were most suitable for new theories because they hadn't understood the old arcana theories well enough. In another couple of years, it would take more time to transform them. They might even be shackled by the obsolete opinions and could not make any creative achievement.

Nodding her head, Heidi calmed down and asked curiously, "Master, are you going to submit the relativistic effect that Annick discovered next time? Many sorcerers in the school of electromagnetics and the school of Light-darkness that I know complain that it is only a hypothetical theory when they cannot fully understand your paper. Hehe, their tongues won't be tough again after they see the evidence!"

Sprint secretly thought to himself that it remained to be seen whether or not they still had a tongue at all.

Lucien did not reply to her but spoke to everyone, "There are still imperfect parts in the paper. You can join the discussion on it later. Let's work together to improve it."

.....

At the beginning of the Month of Passion, on the fifteenth floor of the Allyn magic tower...

Inside an office of the Arcana Review Board, the few members of the Hand of Paleness gathered.

As an authority on cell memories, Felipe was admitted by the Board without a question after he became a level-seven arcanist. His hands in the pockets of his black cloak, he asked the members of the

school of necromancy including Pesor and Tina-Timos while leaning against the wall, “I wonder how Evans will respond to the article ‘On the Mistakes and Paradoxes in the Theory of Relativity’.”

“Alvaro submitted the paper only two days ago. It was very insightful. I don’t think Lucien Evans had any time to come up with a reply. We probably have to wait until next month.” After the shock of light quantum and Brook’s experiments, Pesor had been confused about both the wave theory of light and the particle theory, so he did not show much reaction to Lucien’s paper. If ‘Ether’ was gone, so be it. As for the disruption of the motion system, Lucien had made it clear that it was sublimation and a more comprehensive, unlimited explanation, so he also accepted it without much resistance. After all, for a sorcerer of the school of necromancy, that was not important.

Tina-Timos, on the other hand, frowned. “I heard that Lucien Evans submitted a paper yesterday, but it probably hasn’t been included in the arcana library yet. Although I’m in favor of Alvaro’s opinion, I can only stay neutral until I see Lucien’s response.”

She witnessed the ‘brainstorm’ last year in person.

“He is now a real authority. In the fields he is good at, other people will never feel secure until he replies.” Felipe looked at the badge on his chest. Seven black circles and seven silver stars did not seem far away from Lucien’s allegedly eight silver stars and eight black circles, but for other arcanists, Lucien could already compare to the few grand arcanists and was as notorious as the Lord of Hell. This was not about his level.

Also, he was very close to becoming a grand arcanist. If he perfected or proved either of the two theories, he would immediately be given the ultimate title in arcana and construct his own legendary class.

While they were talking, the latest issue of ‘Arcana’ was sent in. Felipe stood straight and grabbed one copy. Turning to the table of contents, he saw that the first article was not ‘On the Mistakes and Paradoxes in the Theory of Relativity’, or the grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers’ discussion about the special theory of

relativity, but ‘An Analysis and Improvement on the Inconsistency of the Actual and Theoretical Performance of the Cyclotron and a Discussion on the Relativistic Effect’, authored by one Lucien Evans X.

Reading the paper and frowning, Tina-Timos heaved a long sigh. “I don’t think that Alvaro can wait for Lucien’s official reply in the next month.”

Pesor put on a bitter smile, and Felipe clenched his fists hard in his pockets, feeling that their gap was now even greater.

He was not close to the Demigod-lich who was his teacher, but he wouldn’t mind avenging his teacher if there was a chance. However, the reality was simply too cruel.

.....

In the Allyn branch of the Moonsong League, the tower guard took emergency measures after sensing the anomaly in the laboratory.

As a member of the Punishment Department of the Congress, Jurisian arrived at the spot as soon as possible. He saw the headless body in front of the cyclotron, as well as the red-and-white ‘flowers’ that stained the wall, the experiment table and the floor.

“Mr. Alvaro...” Jurisian guessed the identity of the corpse without looking at his badge. He should be the only senior-rank sorcerer whose cognitive world collapsed.

The arcanists who followed him all fell silent.

Right then, Jurisian suddenly had the feeling that space was rippling before him. Then, everything was back to normal, and a laboratory nearby was opened.

Antunes, an eighth-circle arcanist who had lingered for years, walked out with a smile and was slightly stunned by the situation here.

Jurisian understood something. He covered his forehead with his right hand and said, “Congratulates on the substantiation of Mr.

Antunes's cognitive world. You are about to become an archmage."

Antunes nodded and brushed his grey hair. Having complicated feelings, he said, "Bury Alvaro..."

The tide of time was unstoppable. He could only sigh that Alvaro had been eliminated and feel lucky that he followed the trend.

.....

At the beginning of the Month of Fire, every arcanist was waiting for the latest issue of 'Arcana', which purportedly included Mr. Evans' replies to certain questions about the special theory of relativity.

Louise, with her white wolf, got the seventh issue of Arcana of year 824 and saw the title that was more peculiar than she thought: Answers to Certain Questions and the '3 + 1' Dimensional Narration on the Special Theory of Relativity and the Oliver Transformation'.

The paper answered many questions from last month systematically and comprehensively. Admitting that the issues regarding the non-inertial frames of reference hadn't been resolved, it had fixed other parts that were believed to be mistakes and paradoxes. The changing frames of reference and the unintuitive narrations were too dizzying.

"This almost marks the real establishment of the special theory of relativity. When the inertial frame of reference is extrapolated into the universal reference system, Mr. Evans will be acknowledged as a grand arcanist." A level-five arcanist, who could manage to understand the paper, said next to Louise.

His partner nodded in agreement, "However, I think many arcanists who cannot understand the explanations will continue to raise similar doubts. Well, what's the point of the '3 + 1' dimensional narration on the special theory of relativity that Mr. Evans wrote in the end? Just another math model from a different perspective?"

"The three-dimensional axes plus an axis of time agree with our general perception, but of course, the mathematical transformations

are rather complicated. Perhaps, Mr. Evans wanted more people to understand him..." The level-five arcanist was also puzzled.

Louise tried to read the paper. She thought to herself, "Mr. Evans certainly wouldn't do any meaningless things."

.....

Inside the Atom Institution, Lucien was reading 'Arcana', when Thompson 'called' him.

"Lucien, Juliana and Minsk, whom you proposed that we should monitor closely, suddenly went missing." Said Thompson in a low voice.

Lucien was rather surprised. The time of action was about to come. What was the incident about?

Chapter 552: Prelude

“How did they go missing?” Lucien calmed himself down and asked.

Thompson browsed through the reports in his hands for final confirmation, and the noise of paper being turned entered Lucien’s ears. “They were monitored by a senior-rank battle sorcerer and two middle-rank sorcerers. It was discovered that they entered a small church on the west side of Rentato but never left.”

“The senior-rank sorcerer thought that it was just a regular case of Sard’s marginalization on the radical clerics and night watchers and did not think too much. Today, when he saw neither Juliana or Minsk, he was puzzled and entered the church as a mouse, but nobody was inside.”

This place was the Kingdom of Holm, where sorcerers were multiple times more than clerics. That was why Thompson was extravagant enough to deploy a senior-rank sorcerer for surveillance.

“Did they notice the followers and use the church to escape?” Lucien thought of another possibility.

Thompson knocked the table softly. “That’s possible, but the odds can’t be high, because the same surveillance had been conducted in the past several months, during which time they showed no sign that they detected any anomaly. Also, they were acting the same as usual yesterday as they did before.

“What about the clerics and night watchers that have been marginalized by Sard?” Lucien expanded the range.

Thompson chuckled and said gravely, “If they also went missing, I would’ve reported it to the Highest Council because it would suggest that something was wrong with Sard and our plan had to be changed. However, only the two of them are confirmed to be missing.”

Lucien brushed his eyebrow. “There are twelve days to go until our

operation. Let's try to find them without raising Sard's attention."

Thompson did not object to Lucien's advice or reminder. Everybody in the Congress of Magic was guessing when he would become a grand arcanist and enter the Highest Council. Also, his permission was already above the Affair Committee and on par with that of the ninth-circle archmages such as Raventi.

"The extremists are rather steady despite their anger. Sard, as 'the great prophet', is truly good at enchanting people." Thompson briefly described it. As a member of the Affair Committee, the Lord of Storm's student and a senior-rank sorcerer whose faith had been tested, he knew about the cooperation but was unaware of the specific plans.

Lucien played with his quill, not sure what secrets were lying deeper in the matter, but in any case, Minsk and Juliana were the night watchers who hated him most, both for 'public justice' and personal grudge. They could resort to any methods. Therefore, he asked Thompson to increase the protection for Joel's family.

After the communication, Lucien looked at Arcana before him but failed to concentrate his attention after a long time because of anxiety. The upcoming operation was too much pressure for anyone who was aware of the matter. Even though he was good at keeping calm, he still felt highly concerned now that he was faced with unknown dangers and changes. Of course, more important, he was not alone now, and he needed to consider more. He had his love, his teacher, his students, his friends and his family. There would be dire consequences if the plan failed.

"I need to remind my teacher and inform him of that plan." Lucien knew that Thompson would report it to Fernando but still decided to go to the Thunder Hell in person.

He was about to leave his office, when Chelly knocked on the door and entered. She asked uneasily and gloomily, "Master, do you have a minute?"

"What is it?" Lucien asked back peacefully.

Chelly shyly sat on the chair in front of Lucien's desk and crossed her hands. "Master, I have a boyfriend named Jacques. You should know him, right? You signed a magic contract with him before."

"I do. Is he here to claim the drug to activate his blood power?" Lucien nodded his head.

Chelly said with a smile of embarrassment. "He was very talented and could've turned into a knight on his own, but after signing the magic contract, he found it impossible to significantly increase his willpower. His efforts did not pay off after years of work. So, he plans to use the contract as a last resort."

"If he uses the contract, there will be no turning back or hope for him." Having found the love of his life, Lucien was rather sympathetic with Chelly and her boyfriend.

Blushing, Chelly said, "That's why I want to ask for your help, master. I've saved a lot of arcana points in the past few years. My father also gave me abundant Thales and materials. Plus the wealth that Jacques earned through mercenary missions, they should be enough to buy the 'Origin of Blood' of a senior-rank vampire, but I do not have permission to do so."

"That's easy. Also, we signed a magic contract before. I'll buy it for you when I come back later." Said Lucien gently.

Chelly took a long breath in relief. She had been too gentle and proud to ask for it, although it had been on her mind for a while. Now that she got a satisfactory reply after she finally summoned her courage to ask, she was naturally excited. "Thank you very much, master."

Lucien smiled. "Is he going to complete the ceremony himself after he buys the Origin of Blood. Speaking of which, Jacques is not bad at all. He earned his money through mercenary missions instead of only counting on you."

"The ceremony is not complicated. I don't want to add to your trouble, master. I'll go to the Task Zone to issue a task and invite a sorcerer of the school of necromancy to host it." When mentioning

Jacques, she put on a happy and warm smile without her knowing it. "He used to be a flamboyant knight, but he is much more reliable now.'

When she studied under Lucien, she had been hanging around with the most distinguished gentlemen, so she had a new understanding about the old Jacques. Thankfully, he had changed a lot, and that was why their relationship continued.

Lucien did not say anything yet, when Chelly began to praise and complain about Jacques. "The last mercenary mission he took was rather dangerous. It's the investigation on a cult. He did not activate his blood power and almost died inside."

"A cult?" Lucien was rather sensitive about the word.

Chelly nodded. "Although it's a cult, it's deeply connected to the Church. It's an organization founded by certain radical, bottom-class clerics in private. They seem to worship the angel king and have deviated from the doctrine that they could only follow the Lord."

After living several years of magic life, her faith was almost gone, but she still habitually said 'Lord'.

Lucien frowned again. "The angel king..." What does Sard want? Is he thinking to cross the Storm Strait and unite the faith of the Church later?

Hearing Chelly tell the full story, Lucien thought for a moment and said, "As the Church and the Congress gradually get the colonies in the new alternate dimensions under control, Holm will definitely be more and more dangerous. You should remind your father to be prepared in case of a total war."

"Yes, my father has been preparing for that since the family reached the agreement with the Congress." Chelly did not overthink.

After seeing Chelly off, Lucien reached the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, planning to go to the Thunder Hell through the fixed transmission magic circle, only to discover that his teacher

was in the library.

“You’re here.” Fernando seemed to have foreseen Lucien’s arrival.

Lucien nodded. “I learnt about certain anomalies from Thompson.”

“He told it to me, too, but there aren’t other discoveries yet.” A map of Rentato was placed before Fernando. “This map marks the marginalized extremists, the areas that different nobles are in, and the few parts of the divine power circle in Rentato.”

It was the confidential map obtained from Hathaway.

Lucien walked to his teacher and observed the map. He discovered that the extremists had indeed been marginalized by Sard. From the west side, the closer it was to the Radiance Church on the southeast and the Nekso Palace on the northeast, the fewer radical clerics and night watchers there were. In the district where the Radiance Church was at, there was even none of them. Even Stone’s Knights of Grail had been relocated to the abbey on the northwest. It seemed that they were all set for the Congress of Magic to attack.

“Something doesn’t feel right.” Lucien looked at the map and said, but he couldn’t tell exactly what was wrong. Even astrology could not give him an answer.

Fernando frowned. “This is distressingly smooth. Lucien, Hull-Chulia will take care of the parishes on the north coastline, Erica will control the Duchy of Calais, Vicente will go to the Kingdom of Colette, and Brook will finish the Brianne parish, which hasn’t been attracted by Sard, in person with Holt’s cooperation.”

Hull-Chulia was the ‘Monarch of Fate’, the other legendary sorcerer in Cabin of Palmeira. He had a deep control over the north. Erica was the Master of Transformation and the historian in the Family of Sorcerers, which was headquartered in the Duchy of Calais and deeply associated with the local noble. Therefore, she was the most appropriate attacker. By the same logic, it was not hard to notice the closeness of the Duchy of Calais and the Hand of Paleness by the fact that the Immortal Throne prize was co-awarded by them.

The Moonsong League was headquartered in the Brianne kingdom. There shouldn't be a problem if Brook acted in person with the cooperation of Chelsea Holt, the Moon Scholar.

"We have to banish the clerics and control the parishes as soon as possible, so that the nobles in the few countries cannot vacillate anymore, or the situation will escalate because of their legendary knights and the Grand Cardinals." Said Lucien in a low voice.

Fernando nodded his head. "Speed is what matters most in our plan. Hathaway and I will take care of the Holm parish, Douglas will supervise the battle from Allyn, and the other grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers, as backups, will be ready to join different battlefields at any moment."

"By then, you will not stay in Allyn. I will drop you somewhere near the Nekso Palace. That's the place of balance for the multiple powers of the divine barrier, and it is very easy to be opened. If the situation turns very horrible, you will bring Natasha away taking advantage of the chaos. While Allyn is safe, it will be the enemy's primary target should anything go wrong. You are our Secret, and Nekso Palace has the Sword of Truth. It's not easy for you to be tracked if you act alone. You can hide in the depths of the ocean. When you become a legendary sorcerer, you will be the fire that reignite the Congress."

"This is the scroll of 'Night Travel' that I asked for from Stanis... He has connections in the Dark Congress and got it from a vampire prince. It can help you break the space anchors and barriers."

Listening to his master's plan about the worst scenario, Lucien suddenly felt that the air around him was depressing.

Chapter 553: Everything Goes Well

Taking over the scroll of 'Night Travel', Lucien intended to keep his smile, only to discover that his face was too rigid to do so. "Master, it can't be that bad. Even if Sard breaks his promise and the pope arrives and performs God's Arrival, he can only kill one legendary expert at the peak of legendary at most. Since they also need to resist the North Church and the Dark Congress, it's already not bad if they can deploy twenty legendary experts, and we have just as many experts in the Congress."

"If the situation escalates, you would have to take the five saint cardinals including Sard and the seven legendary knights in Holm, Colette, Brianne and Colette into account, too. That means almost thirty legendary experts in total. Together with the pope who's a demigod, I estimate that few legendary sorcerers can survive a head-on clash with them." Fernando would rather be prepared for the worst.

Then, he looked at Lucien with a smile in his red eyes. "Don't underestimate the pope. He is still one of the demigods even without God's Arrival. Except for the experts like Douglas, Dracula and Brook, who have been at the peak of legendary for many years, the other legendary sorcerers might not be able to take one hit from him."

As he spoke, Fernando, who had always been either shameless or grave and agitated, sighed with mixed feelings, "Also, God's Arrival is too terrifying. After it locks onto the expert at the peak of legendary, they will be killed instantly, no matter if they are by themselves or gathered together. In order to improve 'Eternal Blaze' to a similar level, Douglas will have to advance into a demigod. That's why the Congress decided to cooperate with Sard despite the risks before the pope's God's Arrival is recovered."

"Otherwise, who's going to block God's Arrival in ten years? I don't think me, Hathaway, Douglas or Brook has the honorable personality to sacrifice oneself for everybody else, but if we join our hands, we will all be killed. On the other hand, for the seven

legendary knights, whether or not the pope has God's Arrival has a strong influence on their final decision."

"Once they are totally inclined to us, it will be the pope's turn to weigh the pros and cons. After all, the most available forces of the South Church will only be equal to ours by then, and it will no longer have the overwhelming advantage. The pope has to consider the possibility of a brutal victory where he is exhausted after using God's Arrival and half of the saint cardinals and sacred knights are killed. That would be in the best interests of the Dark Congress and the North Church."

Lucien nodded and understood that Congress' strategy was to create a favorable situation so that the seven legendary knights would be turned to their side. Then, even though the pope's God's Arrival was recovered, he would have to face the scenario where a third party would take advantage of the lose-lose war.

"Natasha and I have settled on some things. Together with Sard's stimulation, we should be confident in making the nobles completely inclined to us, and the nobles' tendency will definitely influence the legendary knights' decision. Master, how about this..." Lucien proposed a suggestion, which had been prepared in advance, too.

Fernando nodded solemnly, "Whatever its final result is, it will do as long as it increases our leverage. Of the seven legendary knights, five have been more or less inclined to us. Until the situation is clear, they probably wouldn't refuse to communicate with us even if they decide to sit on the fence first. I'll talk to them."

Then, the two of them inferred Sard's actions and plans for different purposes as well as the corresponding countermeasures.

"If that's Sard's purpose, I'll let you know as soon as possible. Let's hope that your countermeasure proves useful. Also, since you are near the Nekso Palace, you should try to help Natasha with the control of the divine power circles in the whole city. That's a critical step to prevent accidents. Morris and other sorcerers of the royal family of Holm will work with you." The Lord of Storm told him. Deploying Lucien to the place was not just because it was

easier for him to escape, but also because of his special relationship with Natasha, who could cooperate with him without concerns.

While the overall defense of Rentato was not as good as the Radiance Church and the Nekso Palace, it was still better than that of Aalto. After it was activated, the controller would gain a major advantage. The facilities that controlled the defense, on the other hand, were separated into two relatively independent parts, one in the Radiance Church and the other in the Nekso Palace. The former would be taken over by the Congress after Sard left the Radiance Church, and the latter depended on Natasha.

Without saying anything else, Lucien nodded solemnly and then asked in curiosity. “Master, why didn’t we seek the cooperation of other forces?”

“Such a plan must be kept highly confidential. If we asked for the cooperation of the North Church or the Dark Congress, the intelligence might’ve been leaked, and the Church might’ve noticed it. Also, they wouldn’t have many choices. They would either wait to take advantage of us after we fail, or attack the territory of the Church when the defenders are summoned elsewhere. It’s impossible that they would join the battlefield recklessly. What we are seizing is exactly the gap. We are going to threaten the Church to back off from a total war.” Fernando explained, “As for the other allies, those who are willing to come will come after noticing the changes, and those who are unwilling to will not come even if we asked them in advance.”

Even within the Congress of Magic, only the members of the Highest Council and the few sorcerers with high permission such as Lucien were aware of the details. Most of the arcanists and apprentices had no idea that something great was going to take place soon at all. Natasha, on the other side, told nobody of the matter but merely directed the nobles to further misunderstand the Church and look forward to a new balance.

.....

At noon on the fourteenth of the Month of Fire...

On the thirty-fifth floor of the Allyn magic tower, voices echoed nonstop:

“It’s confirmed that Benedict II is preaching in the Holy City and is never away.”

“It’s confirmed that Saints Melmax, Anasta and Maria are around the pope and are never away.”

“It’s confirmed that Auden, leader of the ascetics, is preaching in the new alternate dimension and is never away.”

“It’s confirmed that Varantine, leader of the ascetics, entered a confessional in the Holy City and is never away.”

“It’s confirmed that Vaharall, the Adjudicator, is at the headquarters of the inquisition and is never away.”

“It’s confirmed that Beliel, God’s Glory, is at the North Fortress and is never away.”

...

The intelligence confirmations came in one piece after another, allowing the Highest Council and the sorcerers in the operation such as Lucien to get the situation under control.

“Unable to confirm the whereabouts of Saint Anthony, a giant of the inquisition and a night watcher, and Brentis, the Original Fire who ranks top among the night watchers.”

“Unable to confirm...”

The intelligence was not just about the South Church but also about the North Church as well as the experts of the Dark Mountain Range. The spies that the Congress of Magic sent out all those years had finally proved their value.

After analyzing the intelligence and confirming the situation, Douglas stood up from his seat and walked to the front of the conference room of the Highest Council, before he announced gravely and solemnly: “The operation now begins. Pay attention to

your safety!”

“Arcana Above!” Lucien and the rest of them placed their right hand on their forehead.

.....

At Cocus, the capital of the Duchy of Calais...

Erica, the ‘Master of Transformation’ who had linen-colored short hair, walked out of her black magic tower that looked like an observatory, with the intense vibe of history around her. She was one of the few sorcerers in the Highest Council with ancient heritage. Sometimes, she called herself a historian.

Calculating the time, she walked to the Grand Church of Cocus with a few archmages and senior-rank sorcerers. At this moment, two dragon scale horses galloped by, and the riders shouted intentionally, “His Excellency Yourcenar demands an emergency meeting of nobles.”

Yourcenar was ‘Song of Dusk’, a legendary knight of the Duchy of Calais.

Erica understood that it was part of the plan. Yourcenar wouldn’t do anything until the situation was completely clear.

After only several minutes, Erica and her partners, who seemed rather slow, had already reached the gate of the Grand Church of Cocus which was on the other side of the city. A middle-aged cleric in a white soft hat was staring at her peacefully.

“Torrens, are you ready for delivery?” Erica asked Torrens, the Grand Cardinal of the Calais parish, known as ‘Angel of Wisdom’.

Torrens replied in a smile, “The red robes have been sent by me to inspect the counties. There are only some bishops and reverends inside. Also, the divine power circle has been shut down.”

Erica did not enter recklessly but hinted for an archmage next to her, asking him to summon two senior-rank devils to control the pivots of the divine power circle and the transmission magic circle.

When nothing went wrong, the few archmages and sorcerers all went in and controlled different areas, and Erica stayed in the square, confronting Torrens in silence while waiting for the progress in Rentato.

.....

At Salyvaor, capital of the Kingdom of Brianne...

Brook, the half-old gentleman who was wearing a white wig and a double-breasted suit with a short black staff in his right hand, walked onto the stairs outside of the Grand Church of Brewston together with Chelsea Holt, a short, silver-haired lady. They walked into it without any tricks.

He was confident enough to kill 'Beaver', the 'Astral Light', inside even though all the divine power circles were activated.

When he was about to walk into the Church, he looked back at the palace where the king of Brianne was at and said in a low voice, "I hope that Bedrenka and Basor do not make any injudicious decision."

Bedrenka, 'Hammer of the Void' and Basor, 'Knight of Disasters', were the legendary knights of the Kingdom of Brianne.

"They would only make a decision when the situation is clear." Holt, the Moon Scholar who had lived here for a long time, replied with a smile.

Brook nodded and ambled into the church without further ado. He sat on a seat on the third row before the cross and contemplated like the most pious believer while waiting for the moment to come. The red robe preaching on the podium had no idea that a terrible monster who ranked eighth on the Cleansing List was right before him.

.....

Hull-Chulia in the north coastline and Vicente in Colette experienced more or less the same as Erica did. They took over the grand churches and controlled the teleportation points easily. The

legendary knights in the few regions all demanded an emergency meeting of nobles like Yourcenar did.

In Rentato, outside of the Radiance Church...

Fernando, who temporarily had the help of 'Absolute Defense' Ataman, a legendary sorcerer, waited for the arrival of Sard with more than ten archmages and senior-rank sorcerers.

They did not wait long when Sard, who appeared to be an ordinary old man, left the Radiance Church easily just like he promised.

Chapter 554: God's Guard

The white robe of a regular cleric on his body, and his slightly dirty eyes, made Sard look no different from any old man who was basking in the sun on the streets in Rentato, although the atmosphere around him was indeed profound and gloomy.

He looked around at the empty square of the church and chuckled, "I was worrying that you did not dare to come, Lord of Storm."

With the vibe of a storm, Fernando snorted, "Why would I not dare come? Would the Church wait and watch while we grow all the while doing nothing? I bet that no waiting is needed at all. The moment the pope's God's Arrival is recovered next year, he will launch a total war against us. Therefore, we might as well take the initiative in the battle."

Because of the rapid development in the past hundred years and the achievements that disrupted the Cannon and the Doctrines now and then, the Congress of Magic had become a major target that the Church struck and suppressed. It was impossible for the Congress to grow in secret while taking advantage of the confrontation of the South Church and the North Church.

When one force was developed to a certain level, it was inevitable to have a war with the previous dominator in order to get room, for further development.

The Congress of Magic had been provoking the Church over the past ten years exactly because they intended to fight a controllable local war when the enemy was not prepared.

When the pope was distracted by the North Church and the Dark Congress and not ready for a general mobilization or a negotiation, the Highest Council was confident to control the loss of legendary sorcerers. Then, they would be certain to win the seven legendary knights over. However, the pope had been rationally suppressing the radical tide within the Church while he made preparations one step after another.

In such a case, the Congress of Magic was under tremendous pressure. Had it not been for the consequences from the incident of the scarlet moon, it was possible that the Congress of Magic would've been beleaguered by the Church. That was why Douglas risked tricking the pope's God's Arrival with the artificial planet experiment. It improved the situation and bought more time for their preparation. Even without Sard's attempt of cooperation, the Congress would have tried to raise a war this year or at the beginning of next year.

As for Sard's claim that the pope estimated that the Congress would only be uncontrollable after sixty years and therefore a total war would burst out in ten to twenty years, Fernando and the other members of the Highest Council did not believe it at all. The pope and the Grand Cardinals were not blind. They couldn't have neglected the rapid expansion of arcana theories in the past few years and stuck to their previous estimation. Also, more important, the pope had already announced a total war because of the new alchemy before the new alternate dimension was discovered, except that the war was later delayed by the search for the demigod.

Therefore, Douglas and other grand arcanists had reason to believe that, now that the situation in the new alternate dimension was gradually stabilized, the pope would focus on removing the Congress of Magic after his God's Arrival was recovered. Perhaps at this moment next year, they would be embracing a total war where the Church was fully prepared. With that in mind, they might as well ferment changes and create a more favorable situation to avoid the dreadful scenario where one legendary expert had to be sacrificed to waste God's Arrival as cannon fodder. None of the experts at the peak of legendary were willing to die. It would raise an internal division of the Congress.

Sard's cooperation provided an opportunity. It was also fit for the Congress' idea to activate the plan this year or at the beginning of next year.

Therefore, the Congress' most detailed plan regarding the operation was about the sudden arrival of the pope with a dozen Grand Cardinals.

Sard smiled. “As expected of the young and vigorous Congress of Magic. The Church has been decayed after a thousand years and can only be revived with fire and blood. Go in now. The barrier of divine power has been shut down. Even the neutral clerics have been sent to Richard by me. Few members are left inside, including Vera Amelton, who will supervise the battle on behalf of me.”

He demanded that the other parts of the Radiance Church except for the transmission magic circle be kept intact for his future usage.

His petty and desirable attitude seemed indicative of his sincerity in the cooperation.

Without the barrier of divine power, Fernando’s spiritual field enshrouded the Radiance Church without any trouble. However, he was prudent enough to ask Donald, the chairman of the Will of Elements, and Thompson, his student to walk in and control the barrier of divine power as well as the massive transmission magic circle first.

The archmages and senior-rank sorcerers soon got the Radiance Church under control. The clerics who watched their actions felt rather complicated.

Although they were more inclined to the Congress of Magic, and they had the idea of change like the North Church under Sard’s enchantment, they still felt at a loss as they watched the Radiance Church, the symbol of the Saint Truth’s control on this side of the Storm Strait, fall into the control of the sorcerers. Their eyes were reddening.

Was it the end of an era?

The massive transmission magic circles were too solid to be destroyed by the archmages. So, Fernando walked towards the Radiance Church in his red magic robe.

At this moment, Sard smiled. “I’ll leave Rentato to relieve your concerns. After you completely control this land, I will come back and be crowned as the Radiance Archbishop.”

Fernando looked at him with his stormy eyes. Without saying anything, he walked by him, followed by 'Absolute Defense' Ataman.

Sard chuckled and walked out of the church square in a seemingly slow but actually fast way.

'Allyn' had flown to the sky of Rentato at some point. All the rails were retreated, turning it into a battle fortress.

Supervising on the thirty-fifth floor of the pivotal magic tower, Douglas said, "Atlant, keep an eye on Sard."

The Eye of Curse nodded and opened his closed eyes, in which a bizarrely intoxicating world seemed to be hidden.

The east of the city was the district of nobles. Both the Nekso Palace and the Radiance Church were here. It had a beautiful landscape and a low population.

Before Sard was out, a rider rushed on the broad, unpopulated street quickly on a dragon scale horse. The sun was too fierce at noon, and he barely met anybody before he reached Duke James' villa.

"Her Majesty demands an emergency meeting of nobles?" Asked James in confusion. Also, the time requirement was so strict that only the nobles in Rentato could participate. Those in other places did not have the time to come back at all.

After confirming the authenticity of the command, Duke James left for the Nekso Palace full of questions.

In a remote corner at the northwest of the Nekso Palace, Lucien waited for orders behind a sycamore, hoping that nothing would go wrong.

"Lucien, don't be nervous." Morris flew over with the sorcerers of the royal family of Holm and greeted Lucien on the ground, before they flew in another direction of the Nekso Palace as defenders.

"Mr. Morris, my name is Don't Be Nervous." Watching them going

away, Lucien replied with his cold humor. When he looked at the spacious villas of nobles next to the street, he couldn't help but recall Joel's family, who had been sent to defend a manor at the suburb under Natasha's arrangement in case they were affected by the warfare.

Juliana and Minsk's missing still made Lucien ill at ease.

"I hope that Plan E wouldn't be adopted... It will be best if Plan C is not used, either..." Lucien secretly prayed.

Outside of the Rentato abbey on the west of the city, Hathaway, in a dark red magic robe, stood in the shadow of a tree in silence, waiting for Fernando to destroy the massive transmission magic circles. Then, she would attack and eliminate the entirety of the Knights of the Grail as well as part of the radical clerics in the abbey.

As for Divine Knight Stone, who was only a level-one legendary expert, she was neither careless about him nor too bothered.

.....

On the thirty-fifth floor in the Allyn magic tower, the intelligence from various places were sent back.

"Erica has controlled the Grand Church of Cocus."

"Vicente has controlled the Grand Church of Blanes."

"Hull-Chulia controlled the Church of North Light."

"Brook and Holt are waiting for the order to attack."

"Confirmed. The pope is still preaching..."

"Confirmed. The few saints are still around him..."

Douglas stood in the front peacefully, not too anxious. Having founded the Congress of Magic and developed it under the extremely unfavorable circumstances, he had seen far too many dangers. No matter how terrible the situation was this time, could it

have been worse than when the Congress of Magic was just established?

At that time, some sorcerers were purged by the Church every day, and the organization might collapse any moment!

Suddenly, Atlant said in a gloomy voice, “Sard disappeared...”

Under the watch of the Eye of Curse, Sard vanished into thin air after he left the district of nobles!

Looking at Oliver and the rest of them, Douglas said peacefully, “Inform Brook and Hull-Chulia to attack. Send the few Grand Cardinals to Mountain Paradise or seal and banish them before the legendary knights notice anything wrong. Also, tell Brook that he will return as a reinforcement the moment the battle is over.”

“Hathaway will swap with Davey.”

“We will help Fernando together!”

As the orders were sent, Hathaway disappeared and arrived at the Allyn magic tower. Davey, the ‘Innovator’, took over her mission to stop Stone.

Inside the Radiance Church, the massive transmission magic circles were covered in the holy light.

Standing far away in the atrium, Fernando was about to destroy it with ‘Thunderstorm’.

At this moment, Vera Amelton, who had been supervising the battle from another direction, suddenly put on a smile of sincere delight. Holy light burst out from her body, and her facial muscles twisted and wriggled, turning her into a handsome man that was more beautiful than girls.

The man had long gold hair and a sacred face. White wings were unfolded on his back quickly. One pair, two pairs, three pairs... four pairs... eighteen pairs in total!

He knelt on the ground devoutly, and spots of light were

glimmering among his wings. Behind him, the projection of a seven-floored Mountain Paradise was vaguely appearing, with singing holy spirits and angels, six seraphs and the infinite brilliance on the highest floor.

However, this project was much more blurred than the projection of God's Arrival. Also, on the highest floor, the gigantic angel who held the Cannon next to the feet of the God of Truth was gone!

"Whoever prays in your name shall not be harmed."

The man began to pray in a low voice. His body was rapidly obscured, contaminating everything around him with the ripples that did not seem to belong to this world. The ripples quickly spread out and enshrouded the massive transmission magic circles.

Fernando's red pupils slightly constricted: "Mecantron, the Angel King!"

Instead of attacking the massive transmission magic circles in a hurry, he sent a signal calmly:

"Plan C."

Chapter 555: Paradise On Earth

After the Lord of Storm sent the signal, a black storm that seemed to be the end of the world suddenly burst out with the massive transmission magic circles as the center, collapsing the pillars and the dome of the Radiance Church that had been strengthened by the divine power.

The buildings on the left were melted like glass, and those on the right were frozen into ice. They were translucent and emitting brilliant colors. Then, coldness and heat were switched, turning all of them into powder or gas.

In the meantime, silver lightning struck the massive transmission magic circles in ear splitting sounds like giant serpents. Every lightning strike carried the terrifying air of destruction. The magnificent electromagnetic power twisted everything around. The wind and the thunder let out roars that astounded the mind.

It was ‘Furious Storm’, the fundamental magic of Fernando’s legendary class!

However, ‘God’s Guard’ that Mecantron had cast with the projection of Mountain Paradise seemed to have kept himself and the massive transmission magic circles in the dream land that only the holy spirits and angels could reach. It was the sanctuary where the God of Truth was going to save the world!

The destructive storm, lightning, heat and frigidness, when imposed on ‘God’s Guard’, penetrated through it without causing any interferences. The ripples that did not belong to this world were still spreading out in blur.

It was indeed as expected of ‘God’s Guard’ and ‘The Angel King’, the highest angel that had ever arrived and the being at the peak of legendary!

Also, he seemed to have arrived in person this time!

The Congress of Magic and Lucien had thought that Sard had been

manipulating the extremists, who were claimed to be enchanted by the great prophet and the reincarnation of the Angel King. Therefore, they had been most cautious of him. It never occurred to them that the Angel King, known as 'God of Truth Jr.', was indeed involved.

Perhaps, he was the big shot behind Sard?

Then, what was their relationship with the pope and the other Grand Cardinals? Was it a trap that they set up together, or was it meant to take advantage of both sides?

Fernando thought quickly while continuing his legendary magic. He pondered over Mecatron and Sard's purpose and was prepared to change the plan.

Without the protection of the barrier of divine power, the Radiance Church was reduced into remains under 'Furious Storm'. Donald, Thompson and the other archmages and senior-rank sorcerers, as well as part of the clerics who were inclined to the Congress, hurried to withdraw. This was a battlefield that belonged to the legendary. They could not participate at all.

Such a change turned the worries in their heart into actual anxiety. At this moment, a peaceful and steady voice echoed from midair. "Fall back to Allyn. The other people will attack with me. While God's Guard is the ultimate of defensive spells and claims to be immune to all damage, it does have an upper bound that it can bear. We can easily break it if we join our hands!"

The man who stood and supported the Congress for hundreds of years came. His familiar and gentle voice pacified Thompson and other sorcerers, who were assured that everything was still under control. The Congress would never suffer a destructive strike as long as Mr. President was alive!

In the sky, Douglas floated on one side, with light glowing in his hands as if a new sun was about to rise, while the other legendary sorcerers stood separately on other directions, in case God's Arrival killed them all at once.

The Element Designator, the Hand of Annihilation, the Witch of Iceland, the Prophet, the Eye of Curse, the Light of Stars, the Sun King, the Alchemy Master... Seeing that the eleven legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic had been gathered here, Donald and the rest of them were even more reassured. They flew into Allyn whose locks had been opened.

Allyn had been surrounded by brilliant 'stars'. The City in the Sky that had one of the best locks could be used as an level-three legendary expert at the critical moment. However, its power was not enough to support it for long, unless the 'perpetual furnace', the magnetic-restrained nuclear fusion reactor that Lucien designed, could become a reality.

.....

In the Rentato abbey...

Arthur, tough and aggressive, stood before the radical cardinals, bishops and reverends and declared piously and zealously, "It's time for us to sacrifice ourselves!"

"Only Truth lives forever!" Those cardinals, bishops and reverends kneeled before the cross and began to pray.

Arthur turned around and crossed his arms before his chest. He then lay down on the ground and chanted:

"You are one, and everyone."

"You are the beginning, and the end."

"You are the creator, and master."

"... Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

The other cardinals recited after him:

"... Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Holy light spread out from their bodies gently, dyeing them with bright and clean colors, as if wings were surfacing on their backs. The holy light was connected and expanded into an ocean that surged towards the east of Rentato.

Stone was both surprised and confused at the situation of the Knights of Grail. He asked gravely: "Paradise on Earth?"

It was a divine barrier that was only second to God's Guard and was on par with God's Guard. It could transform the land within a certain range into a 'paradise on earth'. However, it could only be used at a horrifying price. More than twenty cardinals, an equal number of angels, a hundred cardinals and a thousand reverends had to be sacrificed. The ritual also had to be hosted by the experts in the level of seraph.

With the Rentato abbey as the starting point, the ocean of holy light flowed towards the district of nobles on the east of the city quickly. In the next moment, the churches where the radical clerics gathered also yielded holy light. One node after another, the whole area was illuminated.

If somebody were to observe the ground from Allyn in the sky, they would discover that the most massive spots of light were on the east of Rentato, as if many holy spirits and reverends were singing and praying. The more it was to the east, the fewer such light spots there were but the brighter they were. It could be seen with the naked eye that they were divided into six floors.

When the holy light was gathered, it reverberated with the overall divine power array of Rentato. The light was more and more dazzling, until it was connected to the Angel King who performed God's Guard.

"You are one, and everyone..."

"... Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

The enormous, hallowed prayers echoed in the entire Rentato, and the holy light began to twist.

In the sky, Thompson discovered, to his shock, that from the west to the east of the city, the projection of the first floor of Mountain Paradise, the projection of the second floor and so on had appeared. It seemed that paradise had arrived on earth!

Douglas, Fernando and the rest of them felt that they were immersed in the ocean of holy light, and that their spiritual power became inert. Also, they seemed to be separated from the real world. Until they broke 'Paradise on Earth', Rentato could not be damaged at all.

However, 'Paradise on Earth' could only weaken the legendary experts to some extent. The higher level they were in, the less affected they would be. Douglas was soon back to himself and was ready to launch his magic.

At this moment, the massive transmission magic circles suddenly glowed, and thirteen shadows appeared inside.

"Melmax, Anasta, Maria, Augusta, Anthony, Varantine, Arzaro, Astira, Vaharall..."

Five saints, eight saint cardinals or divine knights, and the Angel King, the number and strength of the Church's side immediately surpassed those of the Congress of Magic.

Fernando, however, slightly sighed in relief and dropped the idea of activating 'Plan D'. The fact that only thirteen Grand Cardinals came meant that the pope was caught unprepared, too, and failed to mobilize even more forces in the emergency. It suggested that Sard and the Angel King were not on the same boat as the pope. Even the pope was one of their targets in their scheme.

Therefore, as long as the sorcerers suppressed the attack before more reinforcements came, they would still be able to turn things around. Then, everything would be much easier!

.....

When 'Plan C' entered his ear from his monocle, Lucien immediately dropped his previous fear and worries, not considering

the danger of this plan anymore.

After activating Advanced Acceleration, he turned into a blurred shadow and rushed towards the Nekso Palace to help Nekso Palace control the overall barrier of divine power of Rentato city.

However, Lucien was not in too much of a hurry, as if he were waiting for something before he entered the Nekso Palace.

Hardly had he run for a few steps when the holy light of 'Paradise on Earth' drowned Lucien. The suffocatingly dense brilliance slowed down his spiritual power, and his magic strength seemed to be lowered by one level.

Not far away, a coachman observed everything in bewilderment. He extended his hands and tried to touch the ocean of holy light, only to pass through it directly.

It gave both him and his horse a shock. His horse began to rush at Lucien.

Subconsciously, Lucien cast a 'Deferment' to stop it, but the coachman and the dragon scale horse were not influenced at all. They passed through Lucien's body as if he were nothing more than an illusion, without causing the slightest collision!

"This is..." Looking at the twisted buildings and trees around, Lucien suddenly had the feeling that the World of Souls had arrived. They overlapped with the real world without affecting the people and objects in the real world in exactly the same way, except that one of them was silent and frozen, and the other was pure and fervent.

But why was he trapped in it when the coachman was still in the 'original Rentato'?

"Because only the people who wield supernatural abilities will be pulled into 'Paradise on Earth'. If you dispel your magic, you will return to reality slowly." A hoarse voice came from the front, and a woman whose face was full of hatred walked out from the back of a building twisted in the holy light. "But I won't give you the opportunity to return. The blood of four captains and more than

twenty partners will be paid off today.”

“Captains, do you see this?”

Four pure wings grow from her back and perfectly coexisted with the holy light around. However, her strength was highly unstable. It seemed that it would be beyond her control very soon.

“Juliana?” Asked Lucien in a low voice.

“There’s also me, Mr. Professor, your old friend.” On the other side, Minsk, the ‘Red Dragon’ wearing a white tuxedo, also walked out, with the same four angelic wings on the back.

He chuckled. “In the glory of Paradise on Earth, your magic strength is suppressed, and your legendary ring is no longer usable. We will serve you well and make you regret everything you have done.”

“Right, Grand Cardinal Sard wants your Sun’s Corona, the badge that contains the final coordinates of Maskelyne and his fellows.”

Juliana also smiled and said, “After we kill you, your beloved queen won’t live long, and we will send your Uncle Joel and Aunt Alisa to hell to join your company soon. They will tell you how they were killed in tears. Minsk, be wary of his left hand, which can nullify curses. Do not use the divine powers in the curse category.”

“Nullify curses?” Lucien looked at high left hand. Where did they obtain their intelligence?

Chapter 556: Target

Not caring whether they were intentionally easing his wariness or they were fooled by false intelligence, Lucien simply cast ‘Baler’s Transformation’. His muscles slightly bulged, and his body was covered in vague moonlight, further highlighting the shimmers on his silvery and grey left hand.

Before they went missing, they were only night watchers in the level of bishop and knight. They could not bear the arrival of a supreme angel in any case, whose enormous strength would’ve torn them apart. Therefore, the angels from whom they borrowed strength should be the medium ones, which could be proved by the number of wings on their back. In such a way, their current strength was in the senior rank at best. Even though they were enhanced by the barrier of ‘Paradise on Earth’, they couldn’t be in level nine.

Turning to vague moonlight, Lucien lunged at them in countless shadows. He was so fast that they couldn’t tell which of the shadows was his real self.

The wings on Minsk’s back glittered, and he was covered in crimson scales. Both his eyes emitted gold brilliance, releasing the intimidation of a top creature. He spurted out a thick red pillar that consumed all the shadows. The high temperature even slightly twisted the holy light.

From Juliana’s body, silver longswords with sacred eyes on them suddenly popped up.

They swirled around Juliana, protecting her in the center. Anything that attempted to pass them would be minced into pieces.

It was ‘Edge Barrier’, the most effective defense against knights in level-six divine powers. The blurred moonlight was cut into pieces by them.

Right then, Juliana’s angelic wings were unfolded beyond her control, summoning a pillar of holy light that struck one of the

shadows.

Juliana's eyes were suddenly widened, as she discovered that Lucien raised his left and resisted the light outburst that was thicker than his body. What was most unbelievable was that the pillar of light was shattered and melted into 'Paradise on Earth' around.

What's with his left hand?

Hardly had such shock appeared in Juliana's head when she saw Lucien punch the barrier of swords with his left fist.

The silver longswords were revolving and cutting, but they collapsed the moment they touched Lucien's left hand.

Without meeting any hindrance, the left hand punched Juliana's face when she did not have the time to cast any other divine powers.

Crack, crack, crack. Juliana's right face collapsed deeply, spurting out red and white stuff that stained the ground. The defenses and enhancements she cast on herself were utterly useless.

A cluster of pure brilliance dashed out of Juliana's body, trying to flee, only to be extinguished by another punch from his left hand.

Juliana fell backwards, with fear, panic and unresolvable hatred in her widened, frozen eyes.

It was only at this moment that 'Red Dragon' Minsk approached Lucien's back.

Seeing Juliana's miserable outcome, he was grabbed by both hatred and fear, wondering whether he should continue attacking or flee with 'Paradise on Earth'.

After a brief hesitation, he chose to retreat. He would always have opportunities of revenge after the great Angel King and Grand Cardinal Sard succeeded. Only if he kept himself alive could he torture the professor's wife, students, friends and family so that the professor would ask to be killed!

When he turned around, he found that a long, powerful hand pressed at him, so he opened his mouth and spurted out the dragon breath again.

The fire with a horrifying temperature burnt everything, but it died out like a regular candle under Lucien's left hand.

The left hand grasped Minsk's head quickly, and the solid crimson scales seemed to have encountered the most dreadful enemy and ebbed on their own.

Without any hesitation, Lucien exerted his strength. After a crack, Minsk's neck was twisted into two parts.

While his consciousness was fading, Minsk was filled with regrets:

“His left hand does not just nullify curses!”

After the light in Minsk's body was also destroyed, Lucien searched their bodies but found nothing useful.

“Under the enhancement of ‘Paradise on Earth’, two level-five night watchers carried out the strength of level eights. That's terrifying. However, if the pivot in the Nekso Palace that controls the city barrier is on our side, the influence should be weakened.” Lucien drew a conclusion.

The Nekso Palace had two cores of divine powers. One was for internal defense, so that the queen would not be instantly killed by legendary experts. The other was for external defense, which controls the barrier of divine power citywide. If the core in the Radiance Church had been destroyed, this would be the only pivot that could affect the barrier. It was his mission to grasp the pivot with Natasha and Morris.

When he was about to approach the Nekso Palace, Lucien suddenly stopped, as if he was waiting for something. Because his magic ceased, he gradually exited from Paradise on Earth and returned to the normal Rentato.

.....

In the Grand Church of Brewston in Salyvaor, capital of Brianne...

Since there were only two praying believers, the preaching cardinal was more or less sloppy. Suddenly, he saw a gentleman standing up and walking to the back of the church with his black staff.

“You can’t...” The cardinal tried to stop him, only to discover that his fingers were abnormally twisted, and that his guts, muscles, veins and brains were stretched to different directions by the black, terrible magnetic field.

Without a sound, he was split into countless pieces, where tiny light of electricity was glittering.

After one step, Brook passed the atrium, and the projection of the ‘Kingdom of Electromagnetism’ appeared around him, enshrouding Beaver’s residence.

In shock, Beaver blurted out, “Brook?”

It was beyond his expectation that the Emperor of Control would ambush him. Was the man not scared of a total war?

Inside a palace, a stout knight floated in midair and looked at the Grand Church of Brewston far away, only to discover that devils seemed to be arising inside the building that was defended by divine power. Now and then, silver lightning burst out and struck the sky, as if the sky and the earth had been reversed.

“Brook still has other magics. Beaver can’t survive long. Are we not going to rescue him, Bedrenka?” A muscular knight who looked like a giant bear asked.

Bedrenka, ‘Hammer of the Void’, chuckled. “If Brook does not restrain the range of his magic, we can only turn on the divine barrier of the whole city to prevent Salyvaor from being demolished. Beaver is not even a saint, and he is unprepared. How can he deal with the man? Not to mention that Holt is helping Brook. We should wait and see what happens in Rentato. I do not want to face Brook.”

“Things are already happening. Poor Beaver. Even if he turns on the

transmission magic circle, there won't be any reinforcements. If I were him, I would start running as fast and far away as possible." Basor, 'Knight of Disasters', said coldly, "I'll suppress the nobles and other clerics until the thing that Fernando talked about begins. If it is unconvincing, we'll..."

Bedrenka was about to answer, when his pupils constricted violently. He turned on the divine barrier, covering the city in pure holy light.

After a boom, the Grand Church of Brewston exploded, and the surging flames and light swept across the whole city.

The divine barrier was shattered after a few seconds. The empty land near the church became giant pits.

"The district of nobles would've been destroyed if I were one second late..." Said Bedrenka, feeling lucky. "It's good that we didn't try to stop Brook."

A man at the peak of legendary and on the top ten of the Cleansing List was definitely not a joke.

.....

Yourcenar, 'Song of Dusk', stopped after forcing Erica and Torrens to move their battlefield out of Cocus, helping neither the Church nor the Congress.

After years of persuasion from the Congress, and under the promise that his life would be extended by three hundred years, he made the decision to wait until further changes.

Watching Erica, who had turned into a rainbow dragon, and Torrens, who revealed his image as the Angel of Wisdom, Yourcenar sighed, "It would've been great to just keep the previous situation. Fernando, let's see how you are going to convince me."

Similar things happened in the Kingdom of Colette and the northern coastline. The only difference was that 'Burning Lady' had been waiting on the north coastline, and Colette's 'Life Reaper' was awed by Vicente, the Lord of the Undead. After all, he was not a saint,

and the legendary sorcerers of necromancy was best known for their many 'helpers'.

.....

Outside of the Nekso Palace, Sard gradually showed up.

He was still at first while he watched the Radiance Church. It was not until the massive transmission magic circles glowed that he walked out of the holy light of 'Paradise on Earth'. He couldn't help but put on a smile as he walked to the Nekso Palace:

"It's time!"

"His Holiness should've arrived with the Grand Cardinals. Faced with Douglas and the 'helpful' Angel King, he would either fail or perform God's Arrival at the cost of all his remaining life."

He had only one purpose since the beginning, which was to make the total war burst out before the pope's God's Arrival was restored, and to make the pope die in advance with the help of the Congress of Magic. He was not worried that the Congress of Magic would not cooperate with him, because starting the war early was in their favor, too.

"After the pope perishes and the enemy is slain, it will be the time for me to save the Church with the seven legendary knights. With such contributions and what I have grasped, I will ascend to the throne of pope without any question and truly grasp that secret." Sard walked to the gate of the Nekso Palace. He was not hoping that the Congress of Magic would be destroyed, but he was certain that some of the legendary sorcerers would be killed, which would help the situation to arrive at a new balance.

He smiled, "So, Douglas, Brook and Fernando, work hard and kill Anasta, Maria, Beaver and the rest of them who are loyal to His Holiness. You will have my thanks."

When the day comes, without the few Grand Cardinals that the pope groomed as his heirs, and without the radical red robes and night watchers, it was impossible for his scheme to be exposed.

Who would believe the rumor from the surviving legendary sorcerers?

“Lucien’s left hand does not just nullify curses. It is rather strange. However, Juliana and Minsk should be able to stall him for a while in Paradise on Earth. After I have the time, I’ll take over Maskelyne’s Sun’s Corona.” He did not seem to think that Juliana and Minsk could return alive. Or rather, he did not want them to survive.

“Until then, let’s start gathering the seven legendary knights from the Nekso Palace.”

“Also, I have to find a ‘culprit’ for the easy conquest of the Radiance Church. After I kill her and get the Sword of Truth, everything will be safe.”

Sard knew very well that the legendary sorcerers were exceptional when it came to how to keep themselves alive. For the clerics, they only had few divine powers, including God’s Arrival and Light of Judgment, that could eliminate the sorcerers’ souls and phylacteries. Things would be much easier after he got the Sword of Truth.

“It is time to butcher the livestock that has been fattened.”

While talking, he extended his right hand and pressed the divine defense of the Nekso Palace. The six angelic wings on his back were unfolded slowly.

Different from the common clerics, his wings of light were stretched and graceful, and the light was sacred and boundless.

In the next, he seemed to be melted into the holy light. He walked through the divine defense without any trouble.

Chapter 557: Nonsense?

In Paradise on Earth, not far away from the projection of the Radiance Church...

Led by Saint Melmax, captain of the Temple Knights, the thirteen Grand Cardinals reached Rentato through the massive transmission magic circles.

Because of the supernal attraction in the transmission magic circles, they had been pulled into Paradise on Earth together and felt that their strength had more or less increased. The level-one legendary saint cardinals were improved by about sixty percent.

When the massive transmission magic circles were activated, Mecantron, the Angel King, reported the general situation, claiming that Natasha tricked Sard away and Richard, as a spy, turned off the defense in the Radiance Church. As the fundamental point that supported the Church's control in the area, the church was always guarded by divine power. No enemy could've approached it without causing alarm.

Losing the defense of divine power, the Radiance Church naturally fell into the control of the Congress of Magic quickly. Thankfully, a certain pious cardinal summoned 'Angel King' at the cost of his life. Seeing the emergency, the Angel King preserved the massive transmission magic circles with his unique 'God's Guard'. Therefore, Melmax and his fellows were not entirely unclear of the situation after they were teleported.

The ripples and blurs that did not seem to belong to this world soon vanished. Mecantron and the Grand Cardinals quickly dispersed in case the legendary sorcerers fired upon them.

A natural and harmonious scenery appeared when Douglas' 'Land of Truth' arrived. The brilliant and magnificent stars shone in the sky, twisting the whole space with the enormous gravity.

The thirty-six wings behind Mecantron stretched out, and the projection of Mountain Paradise behind him suppressed 'Gravity

Cage’.

Mecantron spoke in a low voice, “Light of Judgment.”

On his wings and from the projection of Mountain Paradise, orderly and solemn brilliance burst out at the same time as if everything was being weighed.

Sinners, accept the fairest trial!

The darkness was gone. The chaos and extraordinary forces were gone. The Light of Judgment ruled everything like a sharp sword. With the assistance of ‘Paradise on Earth’, even Fernando who was far away felt deeply remorseful.

Douglas did not fear Mecantron at all. Unless he ran into the enemy on Mountain Paradise, the guy would only be at the peak of legendary even if he arrived in person. As a sorcerer, he was confident to deal with any enemy at such a level.

“Spacial Providence.”

The space was twisted, and Mecantron’s ‘Light of Judgment’ was diminished.

The dispersing force raised a furious storm on the ocean of holy light. It seemed that it was going to be destroyed before long!

Seeing that they had advantage both in number and strength, Melmax did not help the Angel King to fight the Emperor of Arcana. Instead, he prepared to concentrate the forces and eliminate the evil sorcerers one by one!

At this moment, Fernando stood before him. Half of the ocean of holy light in Rentato was suddenly darkened, like an ocean with an imminent storm. The terrifying magnetic field had covered everything.

In the sky, the dark, lead clouds gathered, and world-destroying lightning struck Melmax. The terrible heat and the coldness that was close to absolute zero replaced each other around him, shaking everything.

“He has advanced into the peak of legendary?”

Faced with such dominance, Melmax became solemn and dropped the idea of helping anybody else.

Entirely covered in the silver sacred armor, he raised the longsword in his hand.

The longsword that was glowing in sacred brilliant seemed to be suppressing all evils. Under the sword, any unholy creature would be completely eliminated.

The longsword, named after Melmax, was one of the only thirteen level-four legendary items!

The heat and the coldness disappeared around Melmax, but the ice and the burns on his armor implied that it was not as easy as it seemed.

“Die now, evil!”

With the blood power of ‘Morning’, a sun rose behind him, driving away the depression of the upcoming storm and eclipsing the lightning.

The Church had twelve Grand Cardinals left, four of whom were saints: Anasta, Maria, Augusta and Anthony. However, the Congress of Magic only had three grand arcanists, six legendary sorcerers and one city in the sky. It seemed to be losing.

Oliver, the Hand of Annihilation, was fighting Saint Anthony, the ‘Night Watcher’. Hellen, the Witch of Iceland, blocked Saint Maria. The Eye of Curse, the Prophet, the Light of Stars, the Sun King, Absolute Defense and Alchemy Master were fighting six saint cardinals and divine knights in different directions. They were far away from each other for fear that the pope would come and kill them all at the cost of his own life.

The legendary battle shook ‘Paradise on Earth’ violently, which seemed to be collapsing.

The other two saints, Anasta and Augusta, after communicating

with Varantine, decided that Saint Anasta would keep Hathaway occupied and Astira would resist Allyn, while Augusta joined hands with Varantine to deal with the Light of Stars who was the weakest of all, ensuring that the final attack was one of the divine powers like 'Light of Judgment'.

Suddenly, an indifferent voice echoed: "Luxury Cracking."

Crack. Crack. Crack. Crack. The divine items and effects on the four Grand Cardinals were broken and gone, the energy barriers splitting.

After a bam, the charm of 'Wind King' on Astira, the weakest saint cardinal of all, was blown into pieces, and tremendous wind gushed out.

His eyes were immediately bloodshot. It was the only legendary item he had!

Cracking (Advanced), the ninth-circle magic, had a one percent possibility of shattering legendary items, and Luxury Cracking, its advanced version, had the odds of ten percent at most. How could he be so unlucky?

Anasta grew solemn:

"She has also advanced into the peak of legendary!"

"Her strength overpowers yours. That's how it happened. No wonder the Congress of Magic was bold enough to start a war!"

Hathaway's 'Element Paradise' arrived and stalled the two saints. However, she had only just advanced, and it was still troublesome for her to deal with two level-three saint cardinals.

Varantine, who was not attacked, was about to join the battle against the Light of Stars, when he discovered that he was caught in a foggy world. Raventi and other archmages had controlled Allyn to descend and increase the range of the fog, locking him inside.

Astira and Arzaro worked together to deal with the Light of Stars, but the sorcerer had many amazing spells. They couldn't finish him

any time soon.

Raventi and the rest of them waited for Brook, the Emperor of Control, to return anxiously. As an expert at the peak of legendary for years, he would be an important leverage to crush the Church's troops.

Melmax, who had forced the Lord of Storm to the defensive, was protecting the massive transmission magic circles from being sabotaged. By the time the pope mobilized other available Grand Cardinals and legendary knights, the Congress' plan would fail. Also, it was possible that the pope would arrive in advance instead of waiting for everybody else.

Because they were not used for now, the massive transmission magic circles gradually exited from the ocean of holy light. Nobody could hit it before 'Paradise on Earth' was broken, which disrupted Hathaway's plan to suppress the two saints with weird spells first before she found an opportunity to break the transmission magic circles.

.....

After Sard entered the Nekso Palace, his seraphic wings flapped and supported him to pass the barriers, allowing him to reach the central area of the Nekso Palace that was protected by the internal defense.

In the next moment, he changed without any hesitation: "Light of Judgment!"

Different from what Mecantron performed, a seven-floored Mountain Paradise surfaced in his eyes, congregating into a decisive, unquestionable light.

You are guilty when I say you are guilty!

Under the light, the internal defense cracked and did not seem able to last. Also, Sard's faith senses had blocked the surroundings. Once Natasha attempted to flee, he would immediately notice it. Besides, he had blocked outbound teleportation with space anchors, in case

Natasha had the scrolls such as ‘Chaos Teleportation’ or ‘Portal to Alternate Realm’ from the Congress of Magic.

Outside of the Nekso Palace, a thirty-year-old man who had a mustache was shocked and about to stop Sard.

But right then, a tall old man appeared before him. His hair seemed even greyer than before.

“Winston, let’s observe for a while longer before we decide whether to follow the Church or the Congress.” Said Kritonia briefly.

Winston frowned, “What about Her Majesty?”

“Without Her Majesty, there will still be other kings. There’s no need to take the risk recklessly.” Said Kritonia indifferently. “You should know her relationship with the Congress of Magic very well. If you save her, it will mean that you have taken the side of the Congress. Are you sure about that?”

Winston was silent.

Boom. The internal defense finally started collapsing after enduring for more than ten seconds. Sard stepped into Natasha’s palace.

Natasha had already put on the Armor of Holm, whose silver color added to the air of slaughter in her. A silver grey longsword was placed before her, with no decorations on it at all.

The moment she saw Sard, she shouted angrily, “Grand Cardinal Sard, you...”

Sard did not waste any time in talking. He launched another Light of Judgment, not giving her any hope of resurrection.

Under the Light of Judgment, the first half of the palace was obliterated, but Natasha suddenly picked the sword and raised it before her. With determination in her eyes, she slashed it at the Light of Judgment without backing off.

After a crack, the Light of Judgment was dispersed, and the longsword glowed dazzlingly.

Level eight? No, a level-nine gold knight!

Sard was told before that the Sword of Truth contained the secrets for this bloodline to advance into legendary. Whoever grasped it and understood how it worked would have the hope to be a legendary knight. It was obvious that Natasha had reached level eight at least a year ago and grasped the Sword of Truth, which upgraded her to level nine!

“Sard, this is all part of your scheme! You want His Holiness to fight the Congress of Magic in advance, so that he will die of exhaustion after performing God’s Arrival, right? You want to be the next pope!” Natasha stared at Sard, her back slightly hunched like a leopard that was about to lunge forward.

Sard snorted. “What can you do even if you know that? Don’t presume that you can block a real legendary expert with the Sword of Truth. How is your useless speech going to help you?”

While talking, he split into four shadows and cast different divine powers from different directions, including ‘Light of Judgment’, ‘Vengeful Storm’, ‘Energy Drain’ and ‘Earthquake’, trying to kill Natasha as quickly as possible.

“Is it useless?” Natasha chuckled.

“Is it useless?”

At the same time, a gentle voice echoed, and a white-haired old man, with a holy crown, slowly appeared with a gold staff. He seemed to have directly torn the space.

Sard’s divine powers, on the other hand, collapsed on their own under his voice.

Sard’s pupils constricted violently: “Your Holiness!”

According to Plan C, if Sard circumvented his promise in other ways, Natasha would contact Benedict II through her secret channel immediately!

If they were complicit, Plan D would be adopted. They would play

all the trump cards they prepared and see if they could turn things around. If the pope had been tricked but did not trust Natasha, Plan D would also be adopted. If the pope chose to wait, they would determine Sard's whereabouts as soon as possible and reveal the teleportation point that Lucien modified for Natasha's escape to the pope, so that the demigod could observe the situation or even arrive in person through the point!

It was like a Portal to Alternate Realm that had been long deployed, except that it could not break Sard's space anchors without enough power!

Chapter 558: Diplomacy

Blinded by greed, and corrupted by devils, Sard, you have betrayed the teaching of the Lord, and you shall suffer for all eternity because of it.” Said Benedict II solemnly. There was an amazing pace in his rhythm, as if his voice could wake up one’s conscience and make them repent in tears.

He was just as peaceful and calm as before, as if he would baptize and pardon Sard again as long as Sard lowered his head in regret.

Sard, however, knew very well that the attitude was normal in other times, but right now, it suggested that the pope had made up his mind. Rebels were ten thousand times more terrible than heretics, and the rebels who intended to steal his power and murder him were a million times so. Such people must be crushed without any mercy!

There was absolutely no possibility for peace. The reason why the pope spoke with a mixture of language and divine power was to ease his wariness. He had yet to figure out Sard’s secrets and supporters yet.

Sard raised his head, his panic a moment ago entirely gone. His beard and his hair stretched out, making him look like a real saint who was going to be sacrificed for the glory of the Lord. He berated, “The popes have stolen the power and honor of the Lord and falsely claimed to be the spokespersons and embodiments of the Lord on earth, whose rank is closest to the Lord! They are the greatest heretics! I’ve heard the teaching of the Lord and won the support of the Angel King, and I’m going to eliminate the greatest devil that is you today!”

“It seems that your mind has truly been blinded by your so-called secrets.” Benedict II raised his staff.

While they were talking, Natasha had seized every moment to conceal the supernatural abilities in her, leaving Paradise on Earth quietly and solemnly. Although she had ‘Sword of Truth’, a level-

three legendary item, she did not have any confidence to survive the battle between the pope and Sard. She only wished that Paradise on Earth could resist their first wave of attacks.

Sard did not say anything else. His vibe changed, and something else hallowed and supreme appeared in his body, allowing him to get rid of Benedict II's lock and blink to the sky.

That performance was definitely the peak of legendary!

“The devil who steals the power of the Lord, accept your trial!”

Holding his staff, Benedict II tore apart the space and followed Sard to the clouds on his opposite side.

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

“You are the creator, and master.”

As he chanted the quotes from the Cannon, Sard seemed to be in a different world. Overwhelming, sacred brilliance flowed out of his body while he eyed everything from the high sky.

All the believers in Rentato were somehow moved to tears of joy at the same time. They followed him to pray:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

...

The ocean of light in Paradise on Earth settled, and the tides that were shaking in the battle of legends calmed down. Gentle, pacifying hymns spread out:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

...

On Sard's face, wrinkles appeared at a visible speed. His skin became lackluster, making him look like a dry corpse. He raised his right hand, and the projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise appeared in the sky, eclipsing the sun with its holy brilliance. The wonderful, pleasant songs and praises echoed at the same time, and infinite light began to gather on the infinite cluster of light on the seventh floor.

The familiar scene undoubtedly suggested one thing, which was that Sard was also capable of...

“God's Arrival!”

As a qualified schemer, his own strength was always the foundation of all plans!

“So, you accepted his strength and got in touch with that secret, too. You took even one more step further than the heretic in the north. No wonder you are bold enough to try to claim the throne. But are you not worried that you will run out of your life force and die?” The pope suddenly said in the most primitive way, both somewhat surprised and feeling that it was within his expectations. “Did you enchant the Angel King, or were you enchanted by him? What did you run into in the World of Souls?”

Sard looked at Benedict II with his eyes that had turned dirty again. “I may not necessarily die if I use God's Arrival, but I'll be dead for sure if I am captured by you. There can only be one person in this world who can know the secret. As for what I ran into, you can interrogate me after you catch me.”

Their communication was on the mental level, and it was accomplished in only one moment.

Benedict II smiled and raised the staff in his hand again. The sacred brilliance that was even more overwhelming, supreme and majestic spread out and enshrouded him, while he chanted piously and quickly:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

“You are the creator, and master.”

The believers in Rentato, in the entire Holm parish and in the Holy City, as well as all of the clerics in the few places, were even more moved and delighted. They joined the prayer:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

...

Benedict II's deep eyes seemed to contain countless brilliant stars that were connected into a cross. Behind him, the projection of Mountain Paradise arrived in hymns and light. It was even clearer than Sard's. Also, it severely disrupted Sard's God's Arrival. It took Sard a long time to stabilize it again.

“You...” Sard was slightly stunned that Benedict II did not have any worries that he was about to die after his vitality was consumed in the spell. Also, this God's Arrival seemed no different from usual.

Benedict II's lips curled into a mocking smile. “Do you think I haven't studied the secret at all after grasping it for so many years?”

“As for death, it is actually not that horrible.”

He was also rapidly aging, but much less severely than Sard did.

“Heretic, accept the trial of the Lord!” Holy light gathered and surged into the seventh floor on Mountain Paradise above Benedict II. In the next, infinite ivory brilliance drowned the sky.

Sard, on the other hand, also cast his God's Arrival:

“The devil who steals the power of the Lord, accept your trial!”

In the sky, there was absolutely nothing except for the ivory holy light.

It was God's Arrival against God's Arrival!

.....

Outside of Rentato, in the backup contact squad of the Congress of Magic that was not covered by Paradise on Earth...

They activated electromagnetism messaging, connected the artificial planets, and sent intelligence to faraway.

Deep inside the Dark Mountain Range, Stanis, under the cooperation of Grand Duke of Orvarit, brought him away from Aalto and threw him into the magic tower successfully. Then, he opened the Portal to Alternate Realm that was prepared in advance and reached a place that was crammed with volcanoes.

He walked straightforwardly into a palace among the volcanoes. Danisos, the ancient dragon of time who guarded the place, spoke solemnly, "Stanis, where are you doing here? Do you want to join us?"

"Danisos, we can talk about that later. I'm here to inform you of a piece of intelligence. The Church and the Congress of Magic are now at war. The pope, Melmax and the other twelve Grand Cardinals are fighting above Rentato. The Angel King has arrived in person, too."

After a brief silence, Danisos said with deep hatred, "Has he?"

His wife was Aflora, who was killed by the pope with God's Arrival. Through the connections with the werewolf prince, the Demogorgon of Eyes and the sorcerers of ancient heritage, the Congress of Magic had 'adjusted' the order of the guards of the headquarters of the Dark Congress, so that he would 'happen' to be here.

If they had asked for the Dark Congress' help in advance, since many legendary experts in it were also hostile to the Congress of Magic, they might have achieved the opposite of what they sought. Therefore, they might as well attract a top legendary ancient dragon of time first without giving him much time to consider!

“But I think Dracula and the rest of them would rather wait until both the Church and the Congress of Magic suffer heavy losses in their battle.” That was exactly the consequence of the lack of chain of command in the Dark Congress. God’s Arrival was the gravest deterrence.

Stanis smiled. “That’s an excellent idea, but why don’t you have some desserts before the main course? Many places of the Church are now undefended. You will have substantial achievements if you kill one or two saint cardinals or legendary knights.”

Holding back his hatred, Danisos said, “I’ll inform Dracula and Rhine.”

After a while, he said confusedly, “Rhine is gone again...”

.....

Looking at the high sky beyond ‘Paradise on Earth’, and watching the light which seemed to be an ocean that had assumed the sky’s palace, Lucien was rather intimidated. Sard was capable of God’s Arrival, too?

That was beyond all of his expectations!

In the next moment, Lucien stopped worrying about anything but went to Natasha’s palace straightforwardly after passing the external defense of divine power. He didn’t enter a moment ago exactly because he was worried that the pope would wipe him out casually during his arrival.

Since he modified it in person, Lucien was well aware of the weaknesses of the external defense. He saw Natasha, who just withdrew from ‘Paradise on Earth’, rather easily.

Despite her bravery and determination, her right hand that was holding the Sword of Truth was still shivering. She had taken the greatest risks in Plan C!

If the pope was not convinced, she would’ve lost the best opportunity to escape after Sard arrived. If the pope were suspicious that there was something wrong with her, he could’ve killed her

easily. If nothing went wrong at the beginning, but the blast of their battle was stronger than estimated, making it impossible for her to resist or escape with the Sword of Truth, she would've been killed, too. It was simply too dangerous.

However, how could one cherish one's life in a great cause? Victories without risks could only happen when there were overwhelming advantages. Also, Lucien had wasted a legendary item for her. In that case, why shouldn't she confront the danger like a real knight?

Calming herself down, Natasha said, "I'm fine. Now, I'll summon the nobles for a meeting and influence the decision of the legendary knights, and you will go and control the pivot of the divine barrier of Rentato. Winston will stop Kritonia. He won't help me but also won't resist you, or it will be a sign that he is completely inclined to the Church."

Because of the legendary battle, the nobles who had come were too scared to leave. The Nekso Palace, with the defense of divine power, was the safest spot in the whole Rentato city. Of course, they had been trying to escape out of the city. However, unaware of the mysteries of 'Paradise on Earth', the harder they worked, the more impossible it was for them to achieve their purpose.

"Alright." Lucien did not waste any time in talking. Now was not the best opportunity for romance. He turned around and nodded at a silver-haired man who roamed out of a palace nearby. "Thank you in advance, Mr. Rhine."

The handsome man in a black shirt and a red coat was exactly Rhine, the Silver-eyed Count. He chuckled, "According to my promise, I'll let you pick a legendary item after I'm freed. Now that you are willing to abandon the opportunity in exchange for my protection to keep Natasha safe for a while, I certainly don't have a problem with that. I don't have many legendary items."

He could use the power of the Silver Moon. Unless the pope was determined to kill him at the cost of his own life, there was a great chance that he could bring Natasha away.

“However, you didn’t tell me the details earlier. If I had known that the enemy would be Sard...”

Rhine raised his head. Looking at the terrible God’s Arrivals in the sky, he chuckled:

“I have always been a petty man.”

Chapter 559: Dilemma

In the Nekso Palace, at the periphery of the Parliament of Nobles, Richard was waiting with a hundred main supporters for the religious reform.

When two God's Arrivals appeared in the sky and attacked each other, those cardinals and bishops were more confused than ever. They mumbled similar exclamations: "How is this possible?"

"Which of them is the heretic?"

"One of them has to be a heretic, right? Then, why can a heretic use God's Arrival, too?"

"My Lord, is this your test for us?"

God's Arrival, a unique, supreme divine power that solely belong to the pope, proved his identity as the spokesperson of the God of Truth on earth. It was the firmest confidence for the clerics. Even the heretic reverends and cardinals in the north would fall silent when talking about the problem. although the pontiffs had God's Grace, it was not nearly as good as God's Arrival, which could injure and defeat the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell.

But today, Sard, a saint who had betrayed His Holiness, was also using God's Arrival. Did it mean that it was not the Lord's special grace but a regular divine power that everybody could grasp?

If Sard was capable of 'God's Arrival' because of the Lord's grace, then which of them was the Lord's spokesperson on earth? When two of blessed believers destroyed each other with God's Arrival, which of them was the heretic? Why would the Lord allow that?

Chaos and confusion surged in their hearts, and their faith seemed to be shaking. If they were swallowed by the holy light, the Congress of Magic would definitely grant a prize of special contribution to the pope and Sard for their remarkable work in destroying the faith of the clerics.

At this moment, Lucien questions echoed in Richard's head.

"God loves the people but loves the shepard more? God loves the people but is unwilling to communicate with everybody's mind directly? When you pray, God's solemnity is different in your home and in the church? You can only receive divine powers under the guidance of the clerics?"

"If the pope is indeed the only speaker of God, why did he keep misreading Cannon? Why did he make so many changes to the Doctrines?"

"Both the pop and the Church are the barriers between the believers and God. Whether or not you have the divine power, you should be equal in front of the Lord."

At some point, he spoke what was in his mind by quoting the Cannon.

The neutral clerics looked at him in confusion at first, but as they listened on, they recalled the doctrines that Richard introduced – to return the right of interpreting the Cannon to every believer!

"Is this the purpose of the Lord's test?"

"This is the real Paradise on Earth that the Lord wants to create! A heaven where everybody can be saved with a devout mind regardless of their age, gender and wealth!"

Their faces became peaceful. In the end, they all shouted after Richard:

"We should make those get out of the way who keep talking about faith and belief but are in fact blaspheming God's will."

"Say farewell to those monopolists who are sucking power and wealth from common people's pure faith!"

"Between Lord and believers, there should be no barriers made by any; there should only be faith, and the faithful demeanor!"

As they shouted out, ivory, gentle holy light spread out from

countless clerics. The God of Truth seemed delighted that they finally understood the true meaning of 'Paradise on Earth'!

Having thrown the mental burden, Richard delightfully felt that he was closer to the Lord. His divine power finally surpassed the threshold that advanced into level nine.

Around him, many clerics had been improved by one level, too.

"This is the Lord's grace. He's happy about our choice." Said Richard joyfully.

Another cardinal smiled, "Bishop Richard, after your religious reform is achieved, you may become a saint cardinal."

"Our work is not for reward but because of our faith." Richard waved his hands.

Then, he saw Natasha, with a silver armor and a gold crown, striding in magnificently when the legendary battle outside was shaking the Nekso Palace now and then.

When she passed Richard, Natasha nodded slowly and drew a cross on her chest. "The Lord will always be in our hearts."

Her tied purple hair moved with her hair, making other people worry that her crown might fall.

"Only Truth lives forever." Richard understood that they had Natasha's support and bowed back at her with the clerics.

Natasha did not say anything else. The nobles in the Parliament of Nobles must've seen the clergy's shift. Their faith would be shaken, too!

Inside the Parliament of Nobles, Duke James, Duke Russell and Count Henson looked at the high sky gloomily. The ocean of light and the world-destroying vibe could compare to the shock of 'God's Arrival versus God's Arrival'.

Even though they were inclined to the Congress, their faith had been melted into their blood and their heart. The God of Truth was

the unquestionable one true god, except that God created and tolerated everything and did not discriminate against the normal sorcerers.

But now, the self-consistency shook their faith violently. Perhaps, the Lord simply granted the divine powers according to certain rules without caring about anything else like the sorcerers described. Even the schism and the battle of ‘God’s Arrival versus God’s Arrival’ were nothing!

The shift of the clerics including Richard gave them another explanation to the phenomenon. They calmed down and were deep in thought.

“I didn’t know that Sard was capable of God’s Arrival, too...” Duke James spoke to his partner.

Russell replied in a bitter smile, “His Holiness didn’t, either. That’s why he had to use God’s Arrival to resist.”

Without any redundant words and analysis, they understood what each other meant.

Rex, Solefen and other conservatives were even more befuddled, not even knowing what was the Lord, the Pope or the Church.

They were mumbling the same as the clerics, dazzled and overwhelmed.

At this moment, Natasha walked in, followed with Camil. It was the first time she had entered the Parliament of Nobles with the silver Armor of Holm and the crown of Holm. The nobles found someone they could count on and were gradually relaxed.

The Sword of Truth in her right hand made Rex, Solefen, James and other nobles surprised that the queen hid her capabilities!

Now that the Sword of Truth had arrived, the last concerns in their heart were gone.

Ignoring the terrible scene outside where magic and divine powers were flying, Natasha said in a low voice: “The emergency meeting

of nobles commences now.”

Thank you, Pope and Sard. You have added more leverage to my persuasion!

A strange magic item was placed on the podium. It recorded Natasha’s voice and let the sound spread beyond ‘Paradise on Earth’ through a metal tube. Since such a transmission was not supernatural, it left ‘Paradise on Earth’ and reached a manor in the suburbs.

The sorcerers hurried to broadcast the ‘live meeting’ to the Parliaments of Nobles in the Kingdom of Colette, the Kingdom of Brianne, the Duchy of Calais and the north coastline.

.....

After the legendary battle began, everybody flew to the sky. Had it not been for the restraint of ‘Paradise on Earth’, they would have flown to ten thousand meters high like Benedict II and Sard did.

After the air of God’s Arrival against God’s Arrival came, Saint Melmax was more than puzzled and shocked. Then, he felt great pressure.

“Sard is a traitor? He’s capable of God’s Arrival?”

“His His Holiness burnt the remainder of his life to use God’s Arrival...”

“What exactly happened?”

“Sard is indeed brutal. He intentionally fought His Holiness in the high sky. This is to shake the foundation of the Church’s faith! Even if he dies, the Church will be mired in a swamp.”

Of course, Melmax also knew that Sard’s other purpose was to prevent Rentato and Paradise on Earth from being destroyed.

He used ‘Paradise on Earth’ to block the legendary battle partly to protect the believers of Rentato. Otherwise, the whole Rentato would’ve been destroyed just now.

The competition of God's Arrivals twisted time and space. Benedict II and Sard were briefly gone.

Melmax, prepared that His Holiness could not join the battle for now, began to observe the battlefield:

Douglas was on the winning side in the battle against the Angel King. Even the regular magics were as good as legendary magics in his hands. However, the Angel King, with 'God's Guard', had the best defense and kept the enemy occupied. The Emperor of Arcana was unable to prepare more powerful legendary magics.

Hathaway was gradually familiarized with the strength of the peak of legendary. She began to suppress the two saints. As for Oliver and Hellen, they were on par with the enemies.

However, in other places, due to the suppression of 'Paradise on Earth', the saint cardinals and the divine knights of the Church were on the winning side. The Light of Stars, in particular, only survived under Astira and Arzaro's attacks with his legendary items and weird magics, but his death seemed already underway.

The Lord of Storm was also suppressed by him. Although he couldn't finish the guy for the time being, he could still protect the massive transmission magic circles.

They still had the advantage in the battle!

Thinking about that, Melmax looked at the massive transmission magic circles. As long as a few saints or legendary knights came, the seven legendary knights on this side of the Storm Straits would know what to do!

As long as the sign of failure showed up, it would be as unstoppable as a flood!

If Brook returned in advance, it would be more troublesome. More reinforcements would be needed, which would give the Dark Congress and the northern heretics a chance. Of course, if His Holiness returned first, chances were that half of the legendary sorcerers would be wiped out first!

“But why has Fernando never used his ‘Eye of Storm’?” Thought Melmax in confusion.

The Church knew very well that the Lord of Storm had two legendary items, one being ‘Robe of Dominance’ and the other being ‘Eye of Storm’. Since his life was not in danger, it was hard to tell if he was wearing the former, but the latter was a marvelous weapon for attacking. Why did he not use it when he was obviously suppressed?

.....

Inside the Nekso Palace...

When he walked to the control pivot, Lucien did not encounter Kritonia. It seemed that Winston had indeed stopped him. Otherwise, he would have to ask for Rhine’s help. While Rhine was already nowhere to be seen, Lucien believed that he was around waiting for an opportunity. If Sard had left any other plans, he wouldn’t mind sabotaging them by the way. Or rather, it was what he desired to do right now.

The control pivot was right before his eyes, when a silver sword with the terrifying gaps of void emerged out of nowhere and slashed at Lucien.

Under the sword, Lucien’s body was torn in half directly, but they vanished like foam.

“Gordon, the Torn Sword...” Not far away, Lucien popped up and saw the man with silver eyes who attacked him just now.

Gordon also said in a low voice, “Seventh-circle magic, Simulacrum...”

The magic could create a real illusion that was half the level of the caster. The illusion had senses, voice, smell, overlapping fate and could perform magic.

Chapter 560: Livestream

Hardly had Gordon finished his remark when Lucien performed ‘Simulacrum’ and suddenly split into two halves. Then, another two shadows emerged from the two Luciens. Four Luciens surrounded him, far away from each other. That was Lucien’s real self and ‘simulation’ both casting ‘Mirror Shadow’.

It was truly difficult to fight a sorcerer. Not having any item to cast magic or divine powers, Gordon could only grit his teeth and attack with the intuitions of a knight. Also, a radiant knight of his level had plenty of methods and area attacks.

But before he lunged out, he suddenly heard Lucien talking in a low voice:

“I need reinforcement.”

As he talked, his monocle glimmered.

Reinforcement?

Gordon’s heart was heavy. Were there other archmages or senior-rank sorcerers around? He was suspicious that Lucien was only bluffing, but he was in Rentato, and Allyn was nearby. This place had the highest density of sorcerers in the entire world. The Congress of Magic couldn’t be short of hands in their operation.

Recalling Grand Cardinal Sard who was confronting the pope, Gordon suddenly lost his fighting will. He subtly changed the direction of his attack and flew sideways.

The moment he flew out, the colors around him faded away, leaving only the lifeless black and grey. He was frozen in midair like a bug inside amber.

It was ‘Time Stop’, a ninth-circle magic!

Morris appeared from the midair. Since things were going rather well, and there was even a splendid scene of ‘God’s Arrival against

God's Arrival' – which could be appreciated as a classic opera since he was not part of it after all – Morris was in a rather good. He smiled at Lucien and asked, "How did you know that I was around?"

"The pope and Sard were high in the sky, so I figured that the members of the royal family of Holm were probably around." Lucien certainly wouldn't confess that he was just bluffing Gordon.

Although Lucien had no doubt that Morris and other senior-rank sorcerers would come to help him in thirty seconds after he called for reinforcement, he did not think that they could come immediately. However, if Gordon could be scared away, thirty seconds of his time could be saved. If Gordon was not scared away, he still had the strength of the seventh circle after being suppressed, and he could still last half a minute with his left hand.

Even though Gordon reached level-nine gold knight because of 'Angel Arrival' and 'Paradise on Earth', Lucien believed that his magic could help him resist for at least one minute. It was needless to say that he had 'Orb of Ultimate Destruction', a ninth-circle scroll, and two tubes of 'solidified helium' that could perform Snow Goddess' Whip.

He did not expect that Morris would come so fast. It seemed that his primary target was the control pivot of the divine barrier, too.

Seeing that light was blooming inside Gordon's body and weakening the effect of 'Time Stop', Morris spoke to Lucien, "You will go to the control pivot. Let me take care of him. He's a member of the royal family of Holm after all. It will be more acceptable if he dies in my hands."

Without any hesitation, four Luciens rushed at the control pivot, appreciating the thoroughness of the plan. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been as easy for him to suppress Gordon.

Of course, Lucien also knew that Sard couldn't have arranged for Gordon to defend the control pivot. Instead, Gordon should be a candidate to be the new king after he killed Natasha. It should've been Kritonia, 'Heart of Time', who appeared here!

However, now that Sard was confronting the pope, how 'loyal' was Kritonia to him? Not to mention that Winston, 'Night Walker', would stop him.

In a palace not far away, Winston stood next to the window and seemed relaxed. He spoke to Kritonia, "Sard is confronting the pope. Even though he has God's Arrival as his trump card, the best outcome for him is to die together with the enemy. Your Excellency Kritonia, are you going to attack me?" Since Kritonia was the legendary hero who contributed to the establishment of the Kingdom of Holm, Winston, who only became a legend in recent hundred years, was quite respectful.

"Even if you want to change sides and clear your suspicion as a heretic by contributions, you should wait and see how capable His Holiness is after exhausting himself to perform God's Arrival."

It was about the same as what Kritonia said to Winston earlier. He looked outside in silence, watching Lucien crack the defense outside of the control pivot. The modification in this place involved the legendary knights who defended it. Fearing that it might alarm Sard, Lucien did not work on it, but thankfully, Natasha gave him the structure of the entire divine power circle. It would only take him less than one minute to finish the work.

In the next moment, Kritonia sighed and turned around, walking into the room.

Smiling, Winston looked at Lucien again, thinking if he should give him a hand to save each other time.

Suddenly, he found everything around him slowed down, as if he had fallen into a swamp.

A sword slashed by, but it did not hit Winston, who emerged from the darkness nearby, like the shadow of the night.

"Mr. Kritonia, you..." Looking at Kritonia, Winston hesitated. Thankfully, he kept his usual wariness.

Kritonia sighed. "There's no turning back after certain things are

started.”

“Although I haven’t found a way to advance into the third rank, I should still be able to resist you for a fairly long time. Are you sure you don’t want to wait?” Winston believed that the situation outside would be beyond control even if Kritonia could defeat himself, so he tried the last persuasion.

Unless it was absolutely necessary, he was unwilling to fight ‘Heart of Time’ who was much stronger than himself.

Kritonia shook his head. “You and I are both knights. We understand each other’s determination well. I know that hope is slim, but I have to try to seize it instead of waiting for an outcome. Even if I die, I will die on a battlefield!”

An intense battle began between them, and both of them were pulled into ‘Paradise on Earth’.

Because the battle of legendary knights required more space, they soon broke the defense of divine powers and fought in midair.

.....

Wearing the silver armor and the gold crown, Natasha stabbed the Sword of Truth on the dais before her and glanced around the hall, before she announced solemnly and loudly:

“A war has broken out between the Church and the Congress of Magic. It’s time to make a decision.”

“Are we going to follow the Church to eradicate the evils, or are we going to help the Congress of Magic to banish the radical believers and return the faith to the Lord?”

“If we choose the former, the Congress of Magic will probably escape into the ocean after suffering certain losses. By then, we will be the frontline that confronts the Congress of Magic. I believe that the Church will have to count on us. Together with the northern heretics, a new balance will be reached.”

“If we choose the latter, the Congress of Magic will also have to

depend on us and the neutral believers to resist the Church. There will also be a new balance. We don't need to worry about the assassinations of night watchers anymore. Peace will be restored."

"The key to victory is in our hands. What's your decision?"

Natasha halted, and all the nobles understood what the queen meant. The terrible battle outside also reminded them that everything was real.

Also, they knew that, whichever side they chose, their interests would be ensured as long as the side won. So, all they needed to do was not to stand on the losing side.

At this moment, Duke Rex stood and said in a low voice, "Your Majesty, we are all the subjects of the Lord, and our faith is unquestionable. If a new balance is going to be restored and our interests can be ensured either way, why do we not choose the Church, and why do we have to hang around with the evil sorcerers?"

More than half of the conservative nodded. It was exactly what was on their mind. Even many of the liberals would abandon the sorcerers without any hesitation in emergencies, although they could cooperate with the sorcerers to make money.

The hall immediately fell quiet. Duke James clenched his fists and stood up, "Objection! If we follow the Church, will you not be scared of the assassinations from the radical night watchers? Will they tolerate alchemical workshops, telephones, magic crystal maps or radios? Do you want to live as the bumpkins you used to be?"

Although Natasha didn't talk to him before, Duke James' cooperation with the Congress of Magic was too deep for him to get away with it. Also, he knew the queen's real tendency. Therefore, he made a decision rather quickly.

Natasha nodded in satisfaction. It was as expected of the hardcore liberal, who was thought to be trustworthy by both the Congress of Magic and Lucien.

After Duke James' announcement, many liberals expressed their stance. However, they also cleverly implied that they would respect and accept the final decision.

To save time, Natasha pressed his right hand and ended the argument:

"Let me say a few words."

.....

Yourcenar, 'Song of Dusk', stood inside the Parliament of Nobles and listened to the 'livestream' of the meeting in Holm with the king and the nobles. He listened to Natasha's introduction and analyzed the two choices.

"If this is all, we still can't be convinced, and we have to keep observing." Yourcenar spoke to other nobles.

Any noble with a regular head could've come up with the two new balances. For the nobles who were already used to balance, the most important thing was to stand on the victors' side.

A noble nearby nodded and said, "I find clerics more trustworthy than sorcerers. Those sorcerers of ancient heritage have left too horrible an impression on me. I won't choose them unless there are irresistible returns.

In Brianne, Colette, and the north coastline, the Hammer of the Void, the Knight of Disasters, the Burning Lady and the Life Reaper expressed similar opinions.

The Hammer of the Void and the Knight of Disasters, on the other hand, were also observing the situation outside. Brook had finished Beaver and returned to the magic tower of the Moonsong League with Holt, going back to Allyn via the Portal to Alternate Realm deployed earlier.

They were important leverage that could affect the situation!

"Cannot localize Allyn..." Brook frowned. Through prophetic magic, he understood that Allyn was enshrouded by some kind of barrier

and therefore decided to return to the suburb of Rentato through Space Jump.

Because Brianne and Holm were not far away from each other, and it would take Brook only several minutes if he were to fly in full speed, Space Jump would only take less than twenty seconds.

.....

Above the remains of the Radiance Church, Fernando, who was suppressed, and Hathaway and Douglas, who were suppressing the enemy, communicated. It was time! They had to seize the opportunity before the pope returned!

Chapter 561: Shameless Sorcerers

The one who was fighting against Oliver, the Hand of Annihilation, was a third rank divine knight named Saint Anthony who owned the bloodline called Light. He noticed that, under the increasing power of Paradise on Earth, the grand arcanist's legendary spells, including Annihilation Ball and Cage of Destruction, were becoming weaker and weaker as the oppressive power on Oliver had increased. Therefore, Oliver was slowly moving towards Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, who had gained an edge fighting the two saints.

Saint Anthony knew that, through the power of Paradise on Earth, Saint Anasta and Saint Augusta were by no means Hathaway's rivals, as most of their divine items, except those top ones, and even parts of their bodies had all been completely destroyed or at least severely damaged by Luxury Cracking and Elements Resolve – The fight had cost them an arm and a leg. If it had not been for the holy light covering them, they would be shamefully fighting naked right now in front of the followers in Rentato.

Saint Anthony knew that once Oliver went to Hathaway, his edge would be gone.

Anthony had to stop Oliver, but he was afraid of the power of Luxury Cracking and Elements Resolve. It was true that once the grand arcanists gathered together, the Pope could perhaps be able to kill all of them with one strike, however, Anthony knew that he was totally unable to bear the cracking spells. Facing those spells, only few divine spells could resist the power, including the legendary one called Blessed Realm, but he was a divine knight, and he was not able to use it.

Comparatively speaking, Oliver was obviously much more “adorable” as an enemy as he could not cast Luxury Cracking. Anthony was able to barely bear the power of the ninth circle spell, Cracking (Advanced), on his own with his magic resistance.

At this time, Anthony had noticed that, on the other side, Hellen,

the Witch of Iceland, was also approaching Hathaway. Meanwhile, Saint Melmax was pushing the Lord of Storm to move towards Hathaway as well to make the sorcerers gather together.

Anthony thought to himself that since Saint Melmax had been a top legendary for many years. Although he might not yet be as powerful as Douglas, defeating Fernando should just be a matter of time. If he could stay closer to Melmax, Melmax will be able to help them defeat the sorcerers earlier than expected. Also, as all of the sorcerers were now getting closer to each other, Hathaway might be prevented from using Luxury Cracking, as it was a range spell unable to tell enemies. Even if they could not defeat the sorcerers instantly, they would be able to control the situation and wait for the Pope's arrival.

His plan changed, Anthony slowed down his attack and let Oliver get closer to Hathaway.

Four grand arcanists against five saints, the wild war started.

Anthony got the blessing power from Saint Anasta and Saint Maria, so his strength, speed, force, and defence level had been further improved.

Although magic spells were much more spontaneous and unpredictable than divine power, when it came to giving blessing effects, magic spells were nowhere close to divine power. Therefore, the side with a saint cardinal always benefited greatly in a team fight. Both Anthony and Melmax were exerting their power, Light and Morning, to the extreme. The whole area had been lit up. The four grand arcanists were badly disadvantaged.

To Oliver and Hellen, however, the situation had been temporarily eased thanks to the support from Hathaway. However, this had increased the burden on Fernando and Hathaway who were now controlling the situation with great effort.

Fernando's eyes lit up with bolts of lightning and storm. He shouted,

“Storm Barrier!”

The area of the thunder hell suddenly expanded. It sucked the five saints in where there was devastating black storms, thick bolts of lightning, extreme high temperatures and freezing ice and snow.

Under the storm, meanwhile, the space suddenly fell into utter darkness. The horrible power of strong magnetic field had made the space distorted and the fierce wind was blowing like bitter howling – all to prevent the five saints from leaving. Meanwhile, Oliver, Hellen, and Hathaway were flying upwards.

This legendary spell was one of the two most fundamental spells derived from his demiplane!

“What are they doing? Is Fernando trying to kill himself?” Melmax was slightly shocked. Within ten seconds, he and the five saints would be able to kill Fernando completely as he had been left alone using Light of Judgment!

Out of the battlefield, Oliver and Hellen were standing in the air opposite towards each other, casting the short spell,

“Space Shackle.”

Silently, out of the darkness distorted by the great magnetic field, the space started freezing like transparent crystal.

Hathaway was standing a bit higher than Oliver and Hellen. Her cold, silver-grey eyes looked down upon the darkness below without any emotions.

“You break the barrier! Anasta help me kill Fernando!” Melmax sensed something dangerous, and he made the decision immediately.

.....

Inside the Parliament of Nobles in the Nekso Palace.

All the nobles had stopped talking, waiting for Her Majesty’s speech.

Natasha’s clear voice now sounded deeper, delivering the dignity

and prestige of a queen.

“I, Natasha Violet, the queen of Holm Kingdom, the Lord of the Sword of Truth’s Knights, the Lord of Verdict Knights, the Lord of Saint Cross Knights, have decided to cooperate with the Congress of Magic to abandon the radical Church and respect the moderates as the belief of the kingdom!”

Leaving no space for negotiation, Natasha’s decisive tone made many noble members start to feel hesitant. They habitually followed the majesty, and leaning towards the Congress of Magic would do them no harm. A new balance would be able to take shape.

By now, many of the liberals had made their decision: They would follow Natasha.

Meanwhile, Natasha kept going on,

“I don’t want my people to worry day and night that they might be killed by a radical night watcher at any time!”

“I don’t want my people to lose their energy and wealth because their mind is trapped by the Church. Each one of us has the right to interpret Cannon on our own, and each of us shall be able to directly connect to Lord when we pray!”

“I don’t want the Kingdom of Holm to return to the most uncultured, primitive, and darkest period of time. We human beings should, and are totally entitled to enjoy a better life, by illuminating the places we live using magic crystal lights, by making the kingdom smaller when we call each other, when we listen to the radio. Look around, we’re using alchemical items, and the path in front of us has already joined that of the congress!”

“What is your choice, my people?”

All of the nobles remained silent. They were struggling, deep in their minds.

Meanwhile, those nobles who were listening to Natasha’s speech in Colette, Brianne, Colette, and the rest of the kingdoms were still having difficulty making their decision. They had indeed benefited

a lot from the alchemical items in their much more luxurious life, and it was absolutely horrible for them to go back to their previous life. On the other hand, they had never been through the fear of an assassination given by a night watcher, nor were they worrying about offending the majesty – they all had their own king or queen or a lord.

Bedrenka, Hammer of the Void, and Basor, Knight of Disasters, exchanged a look between each other and both slightly shook their heads. Something was still missing in Natasha's speech, something that was powerful enough to persuade most nobles.

In Nekso Palace, Duke Rex, the president of the parliament, first stepped out and said it out loud, "I am against it!"

"Before all nobles reached their agreement, Your Majesty should not make the final decision first!"

"At this moment, the decision is a matter of life and death. A lord who goes against the will of most nobles is a betrayer, and is thus no longer suitable for being a lord!"

Rex was denying the decision-making power of the queen. And he wouldn't stop here,

"The Pope might be coming back very soon. Are we gonna rush so bad to make our decision?"

"You want to fall into hell and forever look up at Mountain Paradise?"

His words instantly won the support of at least one third of the nobles present, while the rest of them remained silent as they were still waiting for the offer.

Duke James stood up to defend, "Look at the outside world, look at Richard. They are still able to use divine power. This means that this is the will of God!"

Seeing that the liberals and the conservatives were starting to argue again, Natasha lifted her arm and stopped the noise,

“I’m not finished yet.”

.....

After casting Storm Barrier, Fernando started casting again,

“Simulacrum.”

Instantly, he divided himself into six and stopped the five saints from chasing the rest of the grand arcanists.

“Light of Judgment!”

“Miracle!”

“Expel Evil!”

It did not cost the saints much effort to eliminate three of them and then they started breaking the barrier. Meanwhile, Melmax and Anasta got rid of the rest three. Fernando was now completely disadvantaged.

In the sky, the bottom of Allyn suddenly split and a huge, dazzling energy ball fell from it. The light covered something watery inside, but the power coming out of it was beyond dreadful.

Once losing the light ball, the mythal of Allyn suddenly became much dimmer, and it was now even having a difficult time flying.

Varantine seized the chance and set himself free, however, a cold female voice came at this time,

“Silent Blue.”

The air and the holy light he was in got frozen, even including time. Everything had fallen into the cold, silent color of blue.

It was Hellen, Witch of Iceland, who used her legendary spell and trapped Varantine, and she then returned to focus on the barrier. She knew that it would not take Varantine long to get out, and also that she could not hurt Varantine in the trap by any chance, but all she needed was that bit of time!

As the watery ball fell, Hathaway's face, which was glamorously-featured but hardly had any facial expressions, rarely put on the look showing some slight thrill. She started casting the long spell,

"The secret from inside of atoms..."

It sounded like the ethereal voice was hymning, but in Melmax's ears, the voice was more than horrific than anything. He hurriedly turned himself into a flash of morning light and rushed at Fernando together with the sword in his hand.

He had to finish the fight as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Anasta did the same thing by casting Light of Judgment.

The three saints finally broke the distorted magnetic field outside of the barrier, but not yet with the space shackle. At this time, two voices came,

"Annihilation Ball."

"Snow Goddess's Anger!"

The black magic ball and the freezing snow and ice stopped them from reaching Fernando.

On the other side, facing Melmax's attack, Fernando did not do anything to defend himself, but keep casting the spell,

"Abrupt Magic Reverse!"

A mirror drawn with sophisticated patterns suddenly appeared in front of him. Behind the mirror, it seemed that there was another world. The spell, Light of Judgment, hit on the mirror but directly reflected back, which almost hit Anasta himself.

Abrupt Magic Reverse was the legendary version of the seventh circle spell, Magic Reverse, which could reflect a single-target spell five times.

However, the mirror could not stop Melmax. The divine power fiercely hacked at Fernando from the other side.

Magic Order, Spell Sequencer, Spell Trigger... A series of defense spells were activated. Fernando disappeared from where he was and then showed up on the opposite side.

It was never easy to kill a sorcerer!

Hathaway's casting had come to the end. The light ball was now very close to the storm barrier and the destructive power within was growing stronger and stronger.

Seventeen legendary sorcerers had been contributing to this light ball in the past entire year! The ball was their material for casting this ultimate spell!

They had reduced the quantity of the material as the full power of the spell would have been too intense for time and space to bear! If that was the case, the entire causal chain in this dimension would be messed with!

This was a strike powerful enough to be compared to that of a demigod!

Somehow Fernando had integrated himself into the storm barrier. He made the barrier burst out the great magnetic power and sucked the saints back in again!

Now the five saints and Melmax were all targeting Fernando. Killing Fernando would be their last chance to break through the barrier.

At this time, a horrible storm formed again in Fernando's red eyes.

What were the advantages that a sorcerer had over a priest?

Long life, unpredictable spells, countless triggers, and well-prepared methods for resurrection!

Before the fight, they had been well-prepared. They were going to defeat their enemies using their greatest strength against their enemies' weaknesses!

"Eternal Blaze was coming. ARE YOU PREPARED?"

“I’ve got my appendix at home. Do you?”

Chapter 562: The New Era

Outside of the city of Rentato, the scenic view was still picturesque in this scorching July.

The space above the Thousand-lake place swirled and formed a gate. Behind the gate there was a kingdom of powerful magnetic field and electric currents.

Brook, wearing a white wig, walked out of the gate with Chelsea Holt, the Moon Scholar. When they saw that the entire city was still covered in the divine light, which meant that the fight among the legendaries was still going on, they released a sigh of relief, as they finally caught up to them.

At this time, as if he just felt something, Brook looked up and was shocked to find that there was a man in the sunlight in the air, wearing the divine crown and holding the platinum staff.

“Benedict II? God’s Arrival?”

Brook’s eyes opened big, but he still decided to go there.

He did not know where the strong, bright light came from, but he knew that it wasn’t supposed to be God’s Arrival. Benedict II had already used it before!

.....

The energy ball was being pulled to the magnetic field, and it was getting faster and faster. Melmax and the rest of the saints started to sense this extreme danger, as if there was a heavy rock sitting on their hearts, preventing them from breathing.

They did not talk to each other, but together they were all targeting at Fernando. They had to kill him to get out of the barrier before the insane energy ball fell on them!

They were all pushing themselves to their limit. All of them had decided to use Light of Judgment. They were furious. If they were

going to die, they needed Fernando to die with them!

Majestic and vast, serious and bright, the three beams of light shot across the sky at Fernando, with the power stirring the holy light like surges and waves.

At this time, no one bothered defending. The remaining divine power was all they had protecting them from being torn apart in the barrier. But killing Fernando was all the hope they had.

Melmax and Anthony had put their power into their swords, ready to wield the legendary-power hack.

However, Fernando was not even slightly deterred. Instead, he flew towards the light!

The mirror with sophisticated patterns appeared again, connecting the two worlds to each other.

Bang, bang, bang!

Three beams of light hit the mirror and then reflected off of it.

The power of Abrupt Magic Reverse still existed!

After Fernando flew towards the light of judgment, the power of the hacking quickly got him.

Blood and flesh spurting, the Lord of Storm was cut into three chunks. Somehow, the magic robe he was wearing was not working at all.

He was not wearing the Robe of Dominance? Melmax realized something. He realized why Fernando never used Eye of Storm.

However, it was too late!

Fine electric currents lit up the three chunks, and they started wriggling! Within a second, they had turned into Fernando again, but three!

Even that could not kill Fernando completely?

Melmax and Anthony had given up the hope that they could finish Fernando within seconds by using Light of Judgment, but killing Fernando was the only way out!

Staring into the distance, Mecantron, the Angel King, looked rather serious. He folded his arms in front of his chest and was about to kneel down to cast God's Guard. Although in this case, he would not be able to launch attacks against the legendaries, he should be able to be safe facing that formidable energy ball – the divine spell would put him into a different dimension temporarily!

However, Douglas, the Emperor of Arcana, would not leave him the chance to escape. The stars pulled the great gravity strong enough for tearing him into pieces. Mecantron therefore had to cast other spells for defense. There was no time at all for him to cast God's Guard.

"I'm not your God. Don't kneel down in front of me." said Douglas.

According to the plan, Douglas's target should have been Benedict II, the Pope, but now it was the Angel King, therefore, it turned out to be quite an easy job for Douglas. In their original plan no. 4, if the pope had been here, and even if the pope was still somehow able to cast God's Arrival one more time, in the current situation, the pope's target of casting must have been the energy ball, or all of them, including the sorcerers and priests, would be killed all together.

In the plan, Douglas's only concern was that he did not know how long he could keep the pope occupied. Ten seconds, twenty seconds, or a minute?

But fortunately, Douglas's concern had now completely disappeared when the saints' wasted their chance casting God's Arrival.

The holy light burst out from Varantine's body, and the light melted down the dark blue ice which kept him frozen. It was smart of him deciding not to approach the storm barrier. Instead, he chose to cast Light of Judgment towards Hathaway to try to distract her from the chanting.

“Aurora Wall!” said a cold, female voice.

A transparent wall instantly rose in front of Hathaway. The wall was covered in colorful aurora, beautiful like a dream.

The light hit on the aurora wall, and both of them disappeared at the same time.

Hellen, Witch of Iceland, was maintaining the space shackle and, meanwhile, also keeping Varantine fully occupied. That was how far an ordinary saint cardinal was away from a grand arcanist.

The five saints were trying their best, and they indeed had obtained the edge. Within seconds, a series of divine spells hit Fernando directly in sequence. Despite all the defense spells that Fernando cast on himself, the last division of him had been devoured by the holy light.

Was Fernando... dead?

The moment when the five saints started to feel the joy, they realized that the barrier was still there.

A puppet with a strange smile on its face suddenly appeared behind their back, and it then turned into Fernando!

At this time, the energy ball had gone into the barrier, and the devastating power had reached the limit of control!

Fernando's body suddenly exploded and then integrated into the storm barrier. The black magnetic field kept compressing the space, encasing the five saints in all directions.

They were out of time!

Melmax had activated God's Shield and held tight Holy Avenger. He believed that he could survive as long as the spell was not as powerful as God's Arrival.

Then the rest of the four saints did the same thing. Although they were more or less panicking, they had all turned on all the protections they knew to face the horrible impact.

By now, Hathaway had finally finished her long, long spell. She sighed the words like it was a piece of tune,

“Eternal Blaze!”

Instantly, Fernando saw the faces of the five saints lighting up under the power of the energy ball. The five faces were as pale as the finest paper sheet. Somehow, he recalled Lucien’s joke,

“Cry, and yell, and then, go to hell!”

The energy ball then exploded, bursting out the brightest light ever that was much more dazzling than anything else in the world.

.....

Inside the Parliament of Nobles in the Nekso Palace.

The nobles, both the Liberal and the Conservative, had all quieted down, waiting for Her Majesty to continue.

Natasha took a deep breath and resumed her determination as a knight. She then pulled out her Sword of Truth and raised it high,

“Here I swear by my soul and my destiny to the Lord of Hell,”

“I’ll return my power to those who follow me. The only things I will keep to myself are the direct royal manors and the power over arranging personnel.”

The nobles were totally shocked.

“I’ll return my legislation and law enforcement power to the Parliament of Nobles, and only retain the power to veto. I’ll never take it back, nor will my offspring!”

“I’ll give the nobles my executive power. The Parliament of Nobles will be able to choose a prime minister every ten years, and the prime minister will form a cabinet to exert the power. I will only, again, retain the power to veto!”

“I’ll give the cabinet the leadership of Verdict Knights and Sword of

Truth's Knights, and only keep the lord titles!"

"The taxation revenue that you gain and the administrative institutes will remain the same, but you'll be able to decide how to spend the tax revenue!"

"Any one of you who leads the knights as frontiers to extend the kingdom's territory will be given one third of the new territory as your own manor, and then, one third for the knights, and one third goes to the kingdom!"

...

"All my words and promises will be written in the Code. I, along with the future kings, and queens will abide by the law just as all you nobles! The Congress of Magic will be the supervisor!"

Natasha's determined words were like strokes to the nobles.

In the past, because of the power of the Church and the Congress of Magic, the nobles had no choice but to unite around the majesty to survive. However, the kingship or queenship had been growing so fast and powerful that the nobles could barely see their own positions. In that circumstance, the nobles could only make constant compromises to keep the balance and to wait for the future change. They never dared to say no.

However, Her Majesty today took the initiative to compromise by greatly reducing the queenship, to the extent that they could never have expected!

Duke James, Duke Solefen, and many of the rest nobles became very excited. The muscles in their faces slightly twitched. The offer was too good for them to reject!

In the noise of electric currents, Natasha's passionate speech got widespread to Colette, Brianne, Calais, and the Northland,

"Here I swear by my soul and my destiny to the Lord of Hell,"

"I'll return my power to those who follow me. The only things I will keep to myself are the direct royal manors and the power over

arranging personnel.”

...

Yourcenar, Song of Dusk, sprang up from his seat out of great excitement, which was shared by all the nobles around him. What a bright future it would be!

The Grand Duke of the Duchy of Calais put on a bitter smile seeing how thrilled the nobles were.

Hammer of the Void, Knight of Disasters, Life Reaper, and Burning Lady also had similar responses as Yourcenar.

.....

While Duke Solefen, Duke James and most of the nobles had all stood up to support Natasha, there were still a few extreme conservatives being quite hesitant, as Duke Rex had not showed his attitude.

“His Holiness?!” Rex suddenly saw the figure high above in the sky through the window.

However, before he could say one more word, the horribly loud explosion overwhelmed his voice, like countless bolts of lightning striking the earth.

A new sun had risen. It was so hot and bright that anyone who saw it would feel intimidated. The sun represented a brand new life, and its power was driving away the holy light!

Boom!

That explosion just completely wakened the nobles in their mind!

“This is Eternal Blaze, from the Congress of Magic!” Natasha stared at the nobles and then burst out the cry,

“In front of us is the new era. Everything old will be abandoned!”

“My decision. Who agrees? Who opposes?”

The imperial aura of the queen made the nobles have to kneel, and also because of the great lures she offered. Seeing that Paradise on Earth was rapidly collapsing and the huge mushroom cloud, the leading dukes started kneeling down one by one, and finally, only Duke Rex remained in his seat.

In the end, Rex released a sigh as he took a glance at the sword in Natasha's hand. He kneeled down and said together with the rest of the nobles,

“We pledge our lifelong allegiance to Your Majesty!”

.....

With the structure drawing, Lucien easily broke the core defense of the divine circle. As soon as he stepped in, he heard the loud, horn-like explosion. Knowing that the plan just worked out, he had now felt much relieved. He pushed the divine power barrier to its limit to make sure that those ordinary people in Rentato would not suffer from the fight. And he started humming a merry little tune,

“The east gets red, and the sun rises...”

Chapter 563: The Surging Waves from the New Era

In the Parliament of Nobles in Cocus, the Duchy of Calais.

“All my words and promises will be written in the Code. I, as well as the future kings, and queens will abide by the law just as all you nobles! The Congress of Magic will be the supervisor!”

When the nobles heard those words from Natasha, none of them could remain calm anymore. However, a second later, after an incredibly loud explosion, the voice had been completely cut off, and there were only electric currents left.

“What happened?”

“What’s going on?”

“Something happened to Nekso Palace?! Was it because of the war among those legendaries?”

“Was it the Church? Or the Congress?”

Yourcenar, Song of Dusk, looked northwest where the city of Rentato was.

As a legendary knight, he could see the picture: There was that burning sun radiating its endless light and power in the sky, and then an eye-catching mushroom cloud rose.

At this time, Joaquin, the president of Moonsong League, walked in the front gate. His face was lit up with the wild joy. He claimed aloud, “The electromagnetic signal has been interrupted. That means Eternal Blaze had been successfully launched!”

“Eternal Blaze?” Yourcenar repeated the words confusedly. He never heard such a powerful legendary spell.

But he did not ask, knowing that the information Joaquin had was also rather limited. He supposed that all the communication in

Rentato had all been cut off.

Joaquin's joy and confidence influenced the nobles. Recalling Natasha's speech, their hearts were thudding like crazy. The drive and excitement they were experiencing were like flames making them feel rather restless. Some of the nobles were now looking at the Grand Duke of Calais, and the rest was looking at Yourcenar, as if they were begging him.

Yourcenar released a sigh and there was no more hesitation. He walked to the Grand Duke and kneeled down on one knee,

"Your Majesty, the old era has ended, and the new one is coming. Please give the order to expel the extreme South Church and only keep the Moderates as the duchy's religion!"

Under his lead, all the nobles stood up and kneeled down together,

"Your Majesty, please give the order to be ready for the new era!"

The voices joined, lingering in the parliament hall like surging waves. No one dared to block it, as the trend was totally inevitable!

The Grand Duke of the Duchy of Calais knew that there was no way that he could reject this. The shackle of the old era had been destroyed, and the new order was forming. At this moment, even the majesties had to obey the trend of the times, or they would be thrown out of their thrones as the nobles would regard them as betrayers who served the Church.

There was no other choice left to the Grand Duke. His family had not yet produced a legendary knight. Therefore, he stood up and announced aloud,

"I, the Grand Duke of the Duchy of Calais, here give the order to expel the South Church but keep the Moderates!"

"Here I swear by my soul and my destiny to the Lord of Hell, I will return the power to you like how the Kingdom of Holm is going to do!"

Yourcenar and the rest of the nobles smiled,

“We pledge our lifelong allegiance to Your Majesty!”

.....

In Salyvaor, the capital of Brianne.

Bedrenka, Hammer of the Void, and Basor, Knight of Disasters, kneeled down in front of the king of Brianne. Behind them were the members of the Parliament of Nobles,

“Your Majesty, this is unstoppable and inevitable. Please make your decision as soon as possible. If the Congress wins the war on its own, we’ll be of no use to them!”

.....

Colette.

No matter how old Life Reaper was, he now looked like a cheerful teenager with light brown hair. However, at this moment, the smile on his face had completely disappeared. And he was kneeling down as the rest of the nobles and said,

“Your Magic, the new era is coming, and we have to get ready. Please give the order to assist the Congress of Magic!”

.....

In Kasvig, the capital of the city union of the coastal Northland.

As the leader, Burning Lady herself was rather inspired by Natasha’s speech, as Natasha’s words had given her the way to strengthen the loose union. Also, she had got the news sent back from Brianne, Colette, and Calais. Like a red rose, she smiled, and then she stood up,

“The new era is right there. So I am going to assist the Congress of Magic and reform the city union. Does everyone agree?”

The nobles all kneeled down out of joy, “All as you wish, my Lord.”

No one dared to say no at this moment.

.....

After the Grand Duke of the Duchy of Calais gave the order, Song of Dusk had left the hall and soared into the sky to find Torrens. He was going to give an extra strike to Torrens, so that the beginning of the new era would mark his name.

However, far before he approached, Torrens, Angel of Wisdom, had quickly dodged to the other side to avoid the breath of the rainbow dragon. After casting the divine spell to make sure that Erica could not lock onto him for a short period of time, Torrens cast something like Chaos Teleportation and ran away from the battlefield.

Yourcenar was quite confused. How did Torrens know that he was not here to help?

Seeing that Yourcenar had no intention of attacking her, Erica returned to her human form. She smiled, "I was about to run away as well, as anyone approaching right now can be an enemy. It doesn't do harm to come back after making sure who are enemies and who are not."

She got a bit distracted by Song of Dusk's arrival, or she would have been able to keep Torrens here.

Yourcenar realized that Erica was right. Running away was the best option for Torrens no matter if he was an enemy or ally. Torrens could always come back later if Yourcenar was here to help.

"There's no time for acting. I'll stay here to protect Calais, in case Torrens will come back. You go to Rentato." said Yourcenar. Although Torrens knew that it would be more direct and of symbolic meaning if he went to Rentato himself, but the Congress of Magic might doubt his true intention. At this point, the last thing he wanted to do was to distract the congress. Erica going back to Rentato and meeting the legendary archmages and grand cardinals would explain everything, as the teleportation circle connecting Cocus and the Holy City had been destroyed.

Erica nodded, although she was still on her full alert facing Yourcenar. Using Teleportation, she left for Rentato. It was not safe

right now using the teleportation circle to go back as the energy storm was too powerful.

In the coastal Northland, the situation was pretty much the same. The Grand Cardinal fighting there also found a chance and sneaked away. But Ines did not get this lucky in Colette, as he was facing Lord of the Undead. Running away had cost him an arm and a leg. The terrible injury had reduced him from level-two legendary to one, and it was going to be extremely difficult for him to recover from it.

.....

When the dazzling light appeared in the sky, Oliver, Hellen, and Hathaway all instantly turned around and flew towards the opposite direction as fast as they could.

They would not have to be in such a mess if Paradise on Earth had not blocked all the teleportation magic spells.

From a distance, then they all cast the defensive legendary spells that they were good at.

The rest of the legendary sorcerers also had no intention to prevent the grand cardinals from running away. Even if the cardinals all managed to run away from the battlefield, it would still cost them hours to recover and come back. And if they were all killed, the Church would definitely send more powerful grand cardinals here who would do much more damage to Allyn and destroy the legends' resurrection tools. In addition, as the Grand Cardinals were not enough close to the central explosion area, the explosion might not be able to kill them but instead, severely hurt them.

Boom!

The "sun" rose, and its light was so bright that it had deprived their eyes of all the colors they could see. Only white was left in their pupils. Then a strange-shaped mushroom cloud slowly rose. After the deafening explosion, the cloud rose in silence but the scene was beyond shocking.

The holy light was dissipated within a second, and then Paradise on Earth started cracking and collapsing like a glass toy.

Mecantron spat out a full gulp of golden blood, and his eighteen pairs of wings suddenly dimmed. The wings were now shaking and swaying like dry tree branches in the horrible storm and high temperature. Paradise on Earth was built based on his power.

When Douglas turned to protect himself from the power of Eternal Blaze, Mecantron seized the chance and kneeled down,

“Whoever prays in your name shall not be harmed.”

The illusionary waves spread out from Mecantron, and his target was the huge-scale transmission circle.

Paradise on Earth kept cracking, as the power of the “sun” extended to every corner of Rentato. The huge-scale transmission circle also started cracking, but at the edge of being completely destroyed, God’s Guard saved it.

Mecantron suffered more from casting God’s Guard. More blood came out from his mouth, and his aura had been greatly weakened.

After completely cracking Paradise on Earth, the remaining energy of the storm kept going. The divine power barrier activated by Lucien had also been severely damaged. In the end, it slowly disappeared.

The west side of the city of Rentato remained almost intact, but the noble district in the east had been razed to the ground. If it had not been that the legendary fight had driven people to the west or close to Nekso Palace, much more severe casualties would surely have ensued.

Nekso Palace was under the core divine power protection. Under the remaining waves of Eternal Blaze, it managed to remain intact.

The nobles looked out from the windows. Their hearts were bleeding – Their houses, treasures, and collections were all gone!

Within the central area of the explosion, the cloud and smoke

slowly scattered and disappeared. Melmax, Holy Avenger, was now in a great mess: His legendary armor was now only left with a few pieces hanging, and half of his body had gone from vaporization. Fortunately, the sword in his right hand had not been completely destroyed. But now his power had been greatly reduced to the lowest level as a legendary.

The two saints behind him were even more severely hurt. Anasta and Maria had been burnt black, and now they were struggling to cure themselves.

The power of faith was draining, and their power had been reduced by one rank. They had to thank Melmax for standing in front of them to take the explosion, or the damage would have remained permanent.

As for Anthony and Augusta, who were standing further from Melmax and who were not as powerful as them, had been completely evaporated. Nothing of them remained.

“My two saints...!”

Melmax’s eyes had tears in them.

At this time, as if he felt something, Melmax looked up in the sky. He saw the pope slowly appearing in the sky, who now looked much older.

Finally, His Holiness came back! Melmax was thrilled.

Seeing the arrival of Benedict II, the grand arcanists and legendary archmages were suddenly all on full alert.

Melmax’s joy did not last long, as he sensed that a series of body explosions started happening. The bodies of twenty red robes, over a hundred cardinals, over a thousand priests and the same number of angels exploded one by one, as if the damage occurred to Paradise on Earth had reflected to them.

However, the creepy explosions did not hurt anyone around. The blood, flesh, and tissues joined each other and rose into the sky. A dark-red gate was formed in the air, on which there were messy

patterns and symbols.

The gate was suddenly pushed open. A monster reached out its palm.

The look of the monster was beyond description of words. It was all messed up: It had over a hundred eyes, a dozen of heads, hands, claws and feet from countless creatures. The flesh ball was even wriggling changing constantly.

As soon as it appeared, the chaotic, evil power spread out. Its power formed a black ball, and the target was the pope!

While the Lord of Hell formed because of the sins from desire, this thing formed for no reason but just for pure slaughter and devastation.

“The Will of Abyss...” Benedict II’s face went pale.

At this time, the sun in the sky suddenly appeared, and a full moon appeared. Its target was also Benedict II!

They would kill you while you are sick and weak!

Chapter 564: Bliss

The unexpected changed stunned the legendary experts in midair. The battle that had been temporarily split because of 'Eternal Blaze' was still on hold. Everybody focused their eyes on the two demigods who were attacking Benedict II, waiting for a final result.

However, the two parties had opposite feelings. The legendary sorcerers were both delighted and worried. The Will of Abyss was known for his fervency and insanity. After the pope was killed by him, he would definitely launch an indiscriminate slaughter and destruction. Then, the area that the Congress was headquartered would suffer heavy losses. Chances were that only Douglas, Brook, Hathaway and the few other grand arcanists could survive.

After all, the pope would consider whether his battle with Douglas would affect the people of his own side. Therefore, it was easy to stall him. The Will of Abyss, on the other hand, did not have such concerns. Even if the devil lords were here, he would still kill them without any hesitation.

"This is something too chaotic to have a real name and cannot be described..." Douglas thought to himself, frowning.

'Will of Abyss' was a nickname that the ancient dragons gave to him so that they could refer to him.

If he was not defeated by the pope, the sorcerers would have to count on the Silver Moon's help.

Silver Moon Alterna, however, was best known for his lack of interest in unimportant affairs. He observed the world like a real world and barely intervened.

"I would have to go up..." Douglas would rather face the pope. At least, the pope would consider his own life cost when he performed God's Arrival, but the Will of Abyss might detonate himself and spent tremendous time recovering in the abyss. He never counted whether it was cost-effective.

The only thing that reassured Douglas was that Melmax and the Angel King had been heavily wounded. By the time Brook came back, everything would be settled.

The Grand Cardinals had nothing but fear and worries. Should His Holiness perish here, he would be the first pope who died in a battlefield, which would be a major blow to the Church's confidence. Also, if the enemy won, it remained to be seen how many of them could make it back.

Seeing the new situation, Mecantron dropped the idea of wasting several more legendary experts of the Church. After all, if another few saint cardinals and divine knights were killed, the Church would be attacked by all the enemies, like what the Magic Empire suffered in the past. His plan could only be carried out based on the Church.

"Gather in the transmission magic circles and return to Lance. I will resist them for now with God's Guard."

Mecantron's voice echoed in every Grand Cardinal's heart, making them less worried. They began to approach the massive transmission magic circles.

Whatever happened to His Holiness, the Church would survive it as long as the Lord's grace was still there! The Angel King had shown his attitude!

In the sky on the east of the city, 'Night Walker' Winston and 'Heart of Time' Kritonia were also split, watching the falling silver moon and the destructive ball hitting the pope unavoidably.

"Mr. Kritonia, do you see this? The result is already destined..." Winston would rather not fight if he could persuade the enemy to give up.

Kritonia seemed to have grown old by many years all of a sudden. He fell into sorrow and silence looking at the high sky.

The full-strength attacks of the two demigods were about to hit the pope, when new changes happened in the high sky. Overwhelming,

sacred ivory light suddenly glowed inside the pope, freezing the time and space around. The silver moon and the chaos could only move forward slowly.

With a peaceful and pious smile on his face, and devoting his body and his soul, Benedict II raised his staff and chanted:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

“You are the creator, and master.”

“After every prayer, his body would become much dimmer. In Rentato, in the cities of Holm and Brentis, in Lance... all the clerics and believers were touched again. They kneeled and followed him to pray in peace and delight:

“You are one, and everyone.”

“you are the moment, and forever.”

...

“His Holiness has used ‘God’s Arrival’ again...” Melmax, Anasta, Maria and other supporters of the pope had obvious grief and pain. They knew the price of God’s Arrival.

With His Holiness’ capability as a demigod, he was not necessarily going to be killed by ‘Silver Moon’ and ‘Abyss’ even if he were heavily wounded, but to banish the two demigods, he still chose ‘God’s Arrival’...

A clear projection of Mountain Paradise appeared behind Benedict II. The holy spirits and angels from the first to the fifth floor chanted, while light flowed out of their body and gathered towards the sixth and seventh floors.

The six seraphs on the sixth floor all crossed their hands and kneeled on the ground, as if they were praying.

In the next, the holy light surged into the top floor, paying tributes

to the boundless, indescribable brilliance.

Looking at ‘Silver Moon’ and ‘Abyss’, Benedict II said solemnly:

“This is the fairest judgment from the Supreme Lord. The undead and the evils shall be purged.”

The holy light in the projection of Mountain Paradise burst out. Silver Moon glittered, and Abyss revealed the deepest and most chaotic darkness.

All colors and voices were seized. The legendary experts could only sense the things within one meter with their spiritual power.

Suddenly, a most miserable scream echoed, and everybody’s lost senses were back. Hathaway saw that the uncanny meatball had many deep cracks. Countless limbs, eyes and heads were bursting out. It flew back into the crimson gate as if it were blown by airwaves. Then, the gate quickly rotted and disappeared.

In the meantime, a silver moon rose again, but it was much more lackluster and gradually eclipsed by the sun.

The aftermath rushed towards Rentato unstoppably. Her silver eyes constricting, Hathaway said in a low voice: “Elemental Protection.”

Gold, silver, white and black spots of light gathered into a sphere and covered the city.

“Magnetic Collapse.”

As the voices echoed, another dark, twisting space was added outside of the shield of elements, which absorbed more than half of the aftermath. The rest of it was blocked by ‘Elemental Protection’.

The previous God’s Arrival had exiled the two demigods?

Although they had seen it coming, such a terrifying combat ability still made Douglas and Melmax look around gravely.

High in the sky, Benedict II was still holding his staff.

“Is His Holiness alright?”

All the Grand Cardinals felt delighted.

The delight of the legendary sorcerers who saw that Brook was back, on the other hand, was replaced by heavy pressure. How many ‘God’s Arrivals’ could Benedict II still perform?

Suddenly, as wind passed by, Benedict II’s clothes turned into broken light. Then, his hands, feet, torso and head were all shattered into spots of light and disappeared into the air, reflecting dreamy and shocking colors under the illumination of the sun.

Unpredictable hymns and music echoed, as if the God of Truth was guiding his spokesperson on earth to return to Mountain Paradise.

“His Holiness has been summoned by the Lord...”

Melmax murmured. It was the first pope who had died in a battle.

“The pope has perished...”

Douglas immediately realized what was going on. Performing a massive telepathic bond, he commanded other legendary sorcerers, “Surround and kill them!”

The Congress of Magic did not have such a huge appetite at the beginning, because Douglas was well aware of their gap with the South Church. They had never thought to fight a life-and-death battle with the Church.

Their target had always been to eliminate two to three Grand Cardinals with ‘Eternal Blaze’ that the Church did not know about. Through such a deterrence and the Dark Congress’ attack in the back, they could coerce the nobles to take their side and force the Church to end the war and evacuate from this side of the Storm Strait.

In short, they attempted to bolster peace through war!

But now that the pope had died on the battlefield, Douglas naturally changed his target accordingly. His new goal was to kill as

many Grand Cardinals of the Church as possible.

.....

On the northeast of the city, Kritonia's face changed greatly after he saw the pope's demise. When Winston was about to persuade him to surrender again, he suddenly unleashed the most intense attacks that almost suffocated Winston.

Then, all the pressure on Winston was gone, as Kritonia flew far away.

"It seems that he doesn't believe he will end well if he surrenders."

"If he wanders out there, the queen will have concerns when she deals with his family members. After all, it's hard to resist the assassinations and sabotage of a legendary expert... This is also sort of a balance..."

"However, Mr. Kritonia, you're almost eight hundred years old. Even though you master the power of time, how much longer can you live? As time goes by..."

Regular legendary knights had a longevity of five hundred years. If they advanced into the third level of legendary, they could live another hundred years.

.....

The gravity around changed and made it impossible for them to move. Melmax immediately understood what Douglas thought. At this moment, only a couple of the Grand Cardinals had entered 'God's Guard' and were about to step into the transmission magic circles. The other people were still far away, including himself and Anasta and Maria behind him.

Suddenly, Benedict II's remaining staff went into a free fall. In a fabulous trace, it passed Douglas' gravitational field and Brook's magnetic field and fell to the ground.

Anasta's eyes became so deep and profound that they were like a bottomless ocean. He somehow extended his right hand and picked

the staff precisely.

The seven-floored Mountain Paradise appeared again, and Anasta was enshrouded in the holy light.

Hymns and praise also surrounded him, modifying the environment to be sacred and indestructible.

“A bliss?”

“The Lord has chosen a new pope?”

Since every pope had died of natural causes, there was always enough time for a new pope to be elected and approved by the Grand Cardinals. Therefore, the case where the God of Truth directly chose a pope through bliss, as recorded on the Cannon, had never happened again after the first pope.

Anasta's blackened skin faded away. He was rejuvenated, his vibe soaring unstopably. Very soon, it was so overwhelming that even Douglas and other experts at the peak of legendary could not compare to him.

“Blessed Realm.”

The holy light spread out, drowning all the Grand Cardinals and blocking the attacks of the legendary sorcerers including Douglas, Brook and Hathaway.

The Blessed Realm was shaking and bordering on being destroyed, but it still survived until all the Grand Cardinals stepped into the massive transmission magic circles. Douglas, Brook and other legendary sorcerers, seeing that a new pope had been born, dared not push too far, either.

Although it might take the new pope ten years before he grasped ‘God's Arrival’, he was an unquestionable demigod!

Witnessing everything, Mecantron became more gloomier than ever

Chapter 565: Aftermath

As the illusionary colors faded away, the new pope, the Angel King and the captain of the Temple Knights inside the massive transmission magic circles disappeared from Rentato.

After the transmission magic circles became dim, Hathaway's usual indifferent voice was mixed with certain complicated feelings as she muttered: "Elements Resolve."

Crack, crack, crack, crack. The massive transmission magic circles that had been seriously damaged under Eternal Blaze were disintegrated into elements, sinking or dispersing, never to be restored.

The facility that supported the South Church's reign was finally gone, marking that the South Church's influence has left the four countries of the straight and the north coastline.

"What a shame. If it weren't for the bliss..." Oliver felt regretful that the result could've been better.

Atlant was barely helpful because illusions and curses that he was good at were useless under 'Eternal Blaze'. However, he couldn't have looked more at ease. Closing his eyes, he smiled, "Oliver, greed is a flaw that other people will make use of. We have secured the control of this side of the Storm Strait without losing any of the seventeen legendary sorcerers, and our strength has been significantly increased after the six legendary knights join us. Are you still dissatisfied?"

His words were not ungrounded, because 'Master of Transformation' Erica, 'Monarch of Fate' Hull-Chulia, 'Lord of the Undead' Vicente, and 'Hammer of the Void' Bedrenka had all returned. 'Night Walker' had approached, too.

As a result, the legendary forces at the Congress' disposal amounted to twenty-three, outnumbering the Dark Congress which had nineteen legendary experts. Also, it was much more united than other forces. Even when it only had eighteen legends, it was

considered to be an organization better than the Dark Congress, because vampires and werewolves hated each other's guts, and the ancient dragons were too proud to bother any species other than vampires.

In the meantime, the North Church only had fifteen legends, and only the pontiff was at the peak of legendary. It was weaker than the Congress of Magic, but there were another twelve legendary knights in the northern kingdoms and duchies. All in all, it was stronger than the Congress of Magic in the past, but because of their lack of experts at the peak of legendary, they were not as good as the Congress now.

Therefore, the Congress of Magic became the well-deserved second most powerful force.

Before Oliver replied, he saw 'Innovator' Davey return with a legion of Golems. He was a slim, sluggish 'young man' that was only enthusiastic when he saw the gadgets he created.

In a bitter smile, Davey said, "Stone escaped."

Then he added, "I was too shocked by the pope's demise. He ran before I came back to myself. Half of the Knights of Grail were controlled by me."

"The Knights of Grail will be transferred to Natasha as per our promise. She'll ask Richard to transform them into royal knights. If they refuse, then..." Douglas had little mercy for the enemy. He turned to the other side, "Oliver, you will hunt Stone with Davey. He may be too far away to be caught now, but you can still add to his pressure so that he doesn't sabotage everything on his way."

"Understood." Oliver was regretting that he did not kill a Grand Cardinal in person just now. Excited, he left with Davey.

The sky of Rentato became quiet, as if God's Arrival and Eternal Blaze just now were only illusions.

Douglas sighed in relief and broke the silence. "I estimated that we would lose one or two legends in the operation, but we have to

thank Sard. If he hadn't consumed Benedict II's first God's Arrival, 'Silver Moon' and 'Abyss' would've waited for us to do so."

"Even though the Dark Congress might not succeed, the Church had lost Anthony, Augusta, Sard and Beaver. After Anasta became the new pope, it remains to be seen if the other three saint cardinals would return to the Holy City. The South Church has suffered heavy losses."

"I hereby announce that Project Mushroom Cloud has succeeded!"

The postwar silence was dispelled by Douglas' announcement. For the sorcerers, it meant that they were no longer worried about the night watchers and the enemy next to their headquarters.

Seeing that the atmosphere was enlivened, Douglas chuckled, "Hathaway, ask the sorcerers in the Holm branch to help Richard include them into the new church. Later, we can study the divine powers with the Holmish Church."

Hathaway nodded and reminded the sorcerers through ancient messaging methods, because the electromagnetic environment was still rather disordered.

Then, Douglas looked at Vicente, Holt, Erica, Atlant, Hellen and Hull-Chulia and said, "Fernando and I tolerated the Hand of Paleness, the Will of Elements, the Moonsong League, the Family of Sorcerers and Cabin of Palmeira within the Congress exactly because we hoped for today to come. Your infiltration in your respective countries was successful. I hope that you can defend your territory in the future and do not let the Church or other enemies get things their way."

"My only requirement is that the chair and the vice-chair of the branches must be appointed by the Highest Council."

Douglas proposed the requirement after the triumph while acknowledging the few organizations. Therefore, Vicente and other legendary sorcerers did not object. They were the members of the Highest Council themselves, too.

“Atlant and I will take turns to watch over the Duchy of Calais.” Erica expressed her attitude first, followed by other legendary sorcerers. They divided different areas, like ‘parishes’ in the past.

At this moment, ‘Night Walker’ Winston received a message from the nobles. Knowing their choice, he said with a smile, “Holm is the safest place. I can foresee that my job will be easy.”

In the new situation, the tradition that sorcerers could not enter the Nekso Palace was naturally abandoned. As a result, Hathaway and Davey could take care of the defense of the Nekso Palace while watching over the Will of Elements and the royal magic tower of Holm.

After the brief meeting, Hathaway and Winston reached the Parliament of Nobles, because certain things were still unresolved.

Sheathing the Sword of Truth, Natasha looked at Winston and said, “Mr. Winston, where is Mr. Kritonia?”

“He refused to cooperate with the Congress and escaped from Rentato.” Admitted Winston honestly.

Duke Kritonia’s face immediately became pale, but he also felt lucky that his ancestor at least did not die.

Natasha turned around and looked at the nobles. “Now, I request a trial on a murder case targeting Patrick, the former prince.”

Most nobles looked at her, stunned, not knowing what happened. Duke James was rather worried. Was it finally coming? But Kritonia was still alive!

With the test reports in her hands, Natasha said, “This is the flesh from my uncle Patrick. According to the examination of his cells, the age of his death was at least two years older than his actual age. So, I have reason to believe that Prince Patrick was murdered by accelerated time!”

The murderer was obvious between her lines. Duke Kritonia shook his head in panic, “I don’t know anything. I really don’t.”

Natasha looked at Duke Rex instead of him. “Three people witnessed everything in the Nekso Palace. One was Sard, one was Kritonia, and the last was you, Duke Rex. So, I propose that Duke Rex is to cooperate with the sorcerers and the clerics in their investigation.”

With a bitter smile, Rex shook his head. “That’s unnecessary. I admit that Kritonia did that under the late king’s command. I was an eyewitness and the perjurer.”

“What? My grandfather?” Natasha found it more or less unacceptable.

The other nobles looked the same.

Duke Rex smiled miserably, “The late king had always wanted to rejoin the embrace of the Saint Truth. The prince and him were...”

He did not go on but sighed, “As a noble, I’ve been suffering because I didn’t do anything when my liege was murdered. I feel relieved after the confession. I will answer for my mistake with my death. Your Majesty, I hope that you lead Holm to prosperity.”

Before the two legends could do anything, Duke Rex’s eyes lost colors, and he collapsed on his seat.

Natasha slightly sighed. “Duke Rex’s crime is not severe, and he has answered for it. So, the punishment for the Frenburg family is that their title will be lowered to count from duke. Is there any objection?”

Rex had already died, and the punishment was not severe. Therefore, both the liberals and the conservatives agreed with it and passed the proposition.

In the next, Natasha looked at Duke Kritonia and said, “There is enough evidence that proves Kritonia’s involvement in the murder. Is there anything you want to say?”

Duke Kritonia swallowed and struggled to say, “He did it on his own. I knew nothing. Nobody in the family did.”

The other nobles suddenly grew anxious, fearing that Kritonia would be on a rampage if the queen was too radical, in which case both she and her friends and subjects would be in great danger.

Natasha smiled, “According to the law, Kritonia will be hanged, all the titles of the Kritonia family will be removed, the fiefs and properties will be recalled, and the main family members will be imprisoned for ten years. What do you think?”

She did not propose an exile, because it would only make them reunite with Kritonia in the northland.

It was the fairest judgment that raised no objection. The only problem that was Kritonia, the culprit, hadn’t been captured yet.

Natasha drew the Sword of Truth and declared: “I will execute Kritonia in person!”

It was a goal she set for herself in front of overwhelming strength.

She could’ve been more rigorous about the Kritonia family, but she understood that she had a father, a partner and a family. Also, as a knight, she did not believe in guilt by association.

At this moment, Richard walked in and said to Natasha, “Your Majesty, cardinals and bishops have been sent to other cities of the realm to gather the clerics. Here are a few bills that I want the parliament to pass. After all, the new church will be highly integrated with the nobles.”

“Copy the files and show them to the nobles.” Natasha nodded.

After receiving the files, the nobles browsed through them and discovered that they were entitled to a lot of religious rights. Therefore, they passed it without much hesitation. Duke Solefen, the new president of the parliament, announced it for them:

“... The queen, our sovereign lord, her heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of Holm; and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof, as all honors, dignities, prominences,

jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity of the supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining ¹ !”

...

After everything was over, rarely-seen fatigue and sorrow appeared on Natasha’s face. It was an unacceptably cruel thing that her grandfather ordered to kill her uncle.

As she walked out of the Parliament of Nobles, Natasha blinked her eyes when she saw the handsome man who was wearing a double-breasted suit. She walked to his front in a hurry and hugged him gently despite the surprised nobles behind her, dissolving her negative feelings with his warmth. Then, she joked in a low voice: “From today on, those who do slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce that the queen should be heretic or question the legitimacy of her marriage will be guilty of high treason.”

.....

On the opposite side of the Stuart, in Stuart, where part of the low-rank clerics gathered, the intense stink of sulfur spread out.

A fuzzy shadow looked at Holm and shook its head. “This monster...”

Since the Angel King used his identity as his cover, he could also develop under the Angel King’s name and give a warning to the guys of the Congress of Magic.

Chapter 566: Holy Name

Chapter 566: Holy Name

Inside ‘Thunder Hell’, in Fernando’s secret chamber...

The amulet of life suddenly turned transparent and glowed, and a section of bloodstained intestines wriggled, split and grew.

It took an entire hour before the Lord of Storm became what he used to be like, and another two hours for him to return to the third level of legendary.

After putting on his usual blood-red magic robe and embedding a weird false eye to his left eye socket, Fernando finally turned on the node of ‘Thunder Hell’ that connected the outside world. It was not because he did not trust Douglas, Hathaway or Lucien, but because of the basic wariness of a legendary sorcerer who had lived a thousand years.

No more than half a minute after the node was opened, the transmission magic circles glowed, and Lucien arrived at ‘Thunder Hell’.

“So soon?” Fernando laughed wickedly. “I thought that you were going to ‘celebrate’ with Natasha.”

Even though Lucien had been quite used to his teacher’s banter, his face was still red. “Prince Patrick was killed under the late king’s order. Natasha was not in the best mood because of that. I comforted her for a while. Then, the King of Nightmare sent Grand Duke of Orvarit over. They hadn’t seen each other for a while, and I was wondering how you were recovering. So I came here.”

“What’s to be worried about? I can fight another battle with the saints.” Fernando revealed his stormy vibe again. Then he shook his head, “Such things are not strange in the royal families. That little girl should’ve seen it coming.”

Seeing that Lucien was casual and could even comfort Natasha

inside the Nekso Palace, he naturally knew that the brief war had been over with a satisfactory result. So, he was not in a hurry to ask.

Lucien, however, still looked at Fernando in worry. “Master, why do I feel that you are even more heavily wounded than the Holy Avenger was? You seem to be one step lower now, right?”

The moment Fernando revealed his vibe, Lucien sensed that something was not right.

“The wound on the soul somehow spread to the physical side, but it’s only temporary. I’ll recover in one to two years.” Fernando suddenly grew angry, “While Melmax was stronger than me, I couldn’t have been more heavily wounded than he was if I were in the complete state! I was only wounded because I didn’t bring my legendary items, and my puppets, mirrors and such were used to deal with the five saints.”

That was why he was confident to escape even when he was faced with the pope. After all, he had many legendary items and life-preserving legendary magics.

According to the demise of many legendary sorcerers, the Magic Empire concluded many things that could not be explained with current arcana theories. For example, the Sword of Truth could directly slay the soul, and the attack of pure energy might affect the pieces of soul inside the resurrection device after it destroyed the original soul. If the energy were even greater, and the sorcerer was not defended, they might even be completely obliterated.

The ancient sorcerers had named it ‘causality damage’, which was similar to part of the curses. As for what the fact was, nobody had figured it out yet.

The Highest Council’s opinion regarding the center of Eternal Blaze’s explosion was that the massive energy would disrupt the causality line. That was why they diminished the energy of the attack, fearing that Fernando would be killed along the way.

Lucien was not convinced by the explanation, but he couldn’t think

of any other reason yet. He was just an amateur in the studies of the soul.

“Yes, of course.” Lucien knew his master to be a proud sorcerer who barely complimented other people. Naturally, he hurried to nod and change the subject, “Speaking of which, the Congress has really used all the stockpiles to trap the five saints. We may not be able to do the same thing again in the future.”

The one-time items such as puppets and mirrors were essentially legendary scrolls. They were much rarer than alchemical items of the same level. Even the Congress of Magic, which was best known for their alchemy, had only three of them, which all belonged to the legendary sorcerers. The puppets were from Douglas, and the mirrors were Fernando’s collection.

“To keep the losses minimal, other than thorough planning, the most important thing is that you must not be petty about items and scrolls. If you don’t want to pay the money, you have to pay your life!” Fernando appeared rather resolute, but the storm in his eyes betrayed him. “If I didn’t have the mirror and the puppets, I would’ve brought the Robe of Dominance and sacrificed it to stall the five stains, but then, the Congress would have to compensate for my loss with a legendary item.”

Basically, only legendary experts had legendary items, but the Congress had organized many operations to explore the demiplanes of the ancient sorcerers, excavating the items of the legendary sorcerers who died in accidents.

The legendary items and those crafted with the rare materials from the relics belonged to the Congress. Whoever made special contributions or gathered enough wealth could trade for them. The members of the Highest Council could also borrow one of them when they were out on an adventure.

There were four such public legendary items, which were too expensive even for the legendary sorcerers. As for special contributions, only two kinds were acknowledged. One was the sacrifice that Fernando described, and the other was a paradigm-shifting theoretical system. That was how Fernando earned his Robe

of Dominance.

A hundred years ago, when a new grand arcanists emerged at the same time, the Congress almost ran out of legendary items. As more and more rare materials were obtained from the alternate dimensions, the Innovator and the Alchemy Master each created one to make up for the gap.

Lucien had a deep understanding about the use of money again. While the Church was much wealthier than the Congress, things were the contrary in the field of alchemy.

Fernando asked about the result of the battle. “How many of the five saints died? What’s the final result?”

Lucien briefly described the result. Fernando listened and snorted, “Had it not been for Melmax, the four saints would’ve all died.”

After Lucien finished, Fernando slightly frowned and said, “We didn’t lose any of the legends, which was great, but it was quite weird that the new pope arrived at the level of demigod all of the sudden. If the pope did receive the favor of the God of Truth, why didn’t he kill all the sorcerers on the spot? Since he already bequeathed a bliss, it shouldn’t have been difficult to launch a punishment.”

In the past, the popes all died of natural causes, and they had plenty of time to select and train their heirs. Even so, it would take the new pope’s one year before they could become demigods.

“Huh, if the pope is really the spokesperson of the God of Truth on earth who can receive the bliss, what about the North Church and the Holmish Church? Why can they also perform divine powers? Why can the pontiff use ‘God’s Grace?’” Lucien also expressed his questions.

Thoughtfully, Fernando said, “I just realized that something was wrong. Since the new popes would only be at the peak of legendary in one year after their inauguration, why did the three demigods never try to seize the opportunity in the past hundreds of years? The defense of the Holy City could resist one demigod but certainly

not two.”

Lucien shook his head. If they asked the Silver Moon such a question, there was definitely not going to be any answer.

.....

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City...

Anasta, who hadn't been officially inaugurated, stood before the remaining Grand Cardinals and said grievously, “The Congress of Magic conspired with abyssal devils and attempted to destroy the world. Thankfully, His Holiness sacrificed himself and crushed the Will of Abyss, saving the pure spirits. I will carry on his last will and eliminate the evils completely!”

That was their official statement on the event. Now that the four countries of the straight and the north coastline had been lost, they had to ensure that their base was steady, and nothing could please the believers more than a pope who sacrificed himself to save the world.

Looking around him, Melmax felt sorrowful. Of the eight saints, two had perished, one had betrayed and died, and one had become the pope. Only half of them were left. As for the regular saint cardinals, one had perished and three went missing, meaning that there were only sixteen Grand Cardinals left now. Thankfully, the Angel King prepared to stay on earth for now to help the Church survive the difficulties.

“We will certainly carry on His Holiness’ last will and eliminate the evils!” The Grand Cardinals drew crosses on their chest and replied at the same time in grief, “Only Truth lives forever.”

Anasta’s voice became slow and solemn, “We have suffered tremendous losses, but we must not lose confidence because of that. This is a test of the Lord, and we will accomplish the final victory with the grace of the Lord. Melmax, you will go find Torrens and other saint cardinals and tell them that, as long as they would like to repent, the Lord will pardon them. They were only on the wrong path because of Sard’s trick, and they can still return to the Lord.

This is the Lord's grace."

Now that he had invoked Lord's grace in front of the Grand Cardinals, it meant that Torrens and other saint cardinals had truly been pardoned. Even if he intended to go back on his words, he had to consider whether or not it would chill all of the Grand Cardinals. Also, Sard's last trump card was 'Will of Abyss'. Those three saint cardinals couldn't have known much about that.

In appreciation, Melmax said in a low voice, "As the Lord wishes and your command."

Only by uniting the majority could the Church recover from the hit.

"I am still not the pope yet." Anasta smiled and walked to the stairs.

There were only seven stairs in total. When Anasta stepped onto the first stair, the hallowed and unpredictable hymns echoed.

When he stepped on the second stair, the vague holy light sprayed down, making the Bright Hall even brighter.

After his third step, countless angels made of light spots appeared and surrounded Anasta.

After his fourth step, the whole Holy City of Lance was enshrouded in holy light. All the clerics and believers knelt on the ground and prayed: "...Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

After his fifth step, the projection of Mountain Paradise seemed to have appeared in the sky.

After his sixth step, a beam of sacred light illuminated Anasta directly.

After his seventh step, Anasta, whose back was towards everybody, had an extremely pale face, and his left hand was shivering beyond his control as if he were too old and weary, but everything was soon back to normal. He turned around and raised his staff high towards the many Grand Cardinals.

At this moment, a grave and sacred voice descended from somewhere high and unknown:

“You will be given the holy name ‘Benedict’!”

Anasta drew a cross respectfully and spoke with a voice echoing inside the entire Holy City:

“Henceforth, I will be Benedict III!”

Chapter 567: Benedict III's Target

Of the Grand Cardinals on the ground inside the Bright Hall, besides the legends such as saint cardinals and divine knights, there were also about ten level-nine clerics. They were also Grand Cardinals, and they were talents that the pope and the legendary experts had the highest hope in. They were either leading a small parish or managing different affairs in the Holy City, like the six ninth-circle archmages in the Highest Council of the Congress of Magic.

After Anasta solemnly announced that he was Benedict III, Philip, a level-nine bishop, felt that his mind was clear and forgot there were any other things in the world, when he heard the beautiful hymns and touched the peaceful light. While feeling moved, he felt that a light illuminated in his heart. Then, the light gradually expanded into a projection of a seven-floored Mountain Paradise.

The shadow of a six-winged angel flew out into Philip's heart of belief, subliming his soul.

Inside the Bright Hall, Philip was surrounded by a layer of flowing, incessant ivory light. His vibe soared exponentially, turning the environment clean and holy.

Witnessing it, Benedict III put on a sincere smile. "This is the Lord's grace. We now have one more brother and one more companion to purge evil!"

Melmax understood that Philip had finally 'seen' the projection of Melmax in his mind when the voice of the Lord arrived, and that he had advanced into a saint cardinal.

Inside the holy light, Philip's soul became clear from inside to outside. He raised his head, his eyes pure and delighted, and he drew a cross on his chest. "Only Truth lives forever."

"Welcome, fellow. Let's work harder to make the Lord's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven." Saint Melmax, Saint Maria, Auden and other Grand Cardinals all congratulated him.

Benedict III's had much more grey hair than a moment ago. He said peacefully and firmly, "The Lord's grace has never diminished. We will survive any crisis eventually."

"Melmax, your mission to search for Torrens is now transferred to Auden, and you will lead one Grand Cardinal and part of the ascetics to Aalto to reinforce Philibell and Beliel. Danisos has been disobedient. Maria, you will go to the north with two Grand Cardinals, in case the heretics invades the south. Kati, you will bring two Grand Cardinals to Stuart and reorganize the defense in the Storm Strait with the assistance of the legendary knights." Kati was another female saint.

Because there was no need to defend the four countries of the strait and the north coastline, and they had the assistance of the legendary knights, the Church still had enough hands and did not have to abandon too much territory in the alternate dimensions.

Melmax agreed with the plan. Although the legendary experts of the Church would be focused in the Duchy of Orvarit, the Holy Heilz Empire, Stuart and a few important alternate dimensions, making the Holy City of Lance and the central area undefended, there was still His Holiness, the Angel King and the newly-advanced Philip. Nobody could attack the city abruptly.

After the situation was settled, they would be able to restore the previous practice. Only one or two legendary Grand Cardinals would be left in those places for defense with local legendary knights. The rest of them would be focused in Lance for timely reinforcement and attacks.

Thinking for a moment, Melmax asked, "Your Holiness, Grand Duke of Orvarit is gone. How are we going to deal with the Violet family?"

Benedict III shook his head. "It's Natasha's personal action. Punishing the Grand Duke of Orvarit is fine, but striking the entire Violet family might anger the nobles and worsen the situation. So, you and Milton will choose someone from the Violet family to succeed the title."

“As you wish.” Melmax did not object. He, too, did not want the family known as ‘Shield of Truth’ to abandon the South Church like the family of ‘Sword of Truth’, which would panic everybody.

As Benedict III sent out orders and the Grand Cardinals were dispatched to local places, the dangerous situation after the South Church lost the territory on the side of the Storm Strait, four legends, three saint cardinals and six legendary knights were gradually stabilized, and the Dark Congress missed the chance to bite the Church hard due to their internal strife yet again.

With Philibell, Milton and Beliel defending the place with the northern fortress and the divine power circles of Aalto, Danisos could not secure a victory on his own even though he was at the peak of legendary. There were also conflicts within dragons, and many of them were sleeping. Dracula, on the other hand, was too busy hunting a werewolf prince to bother the Dark Congress.

After Ines returned to Lance and Torrens, ‘Angel of Wisdom’, joined the North Church, the Congress of Magic’s ‘Mushroom Cloud’ seemed to have died out. With one demigod, two top legends (the Angel King and Melmax), three level-three saints, fifteen legends and thirteen legendary knights in other countries, the South Church remained the strongest force, but its gap between the North Church and the Congress of Magic had significantly been narrowed.

.....

After he returned to the late pope’s library, Benedict III waved his hands, hinting for the few cardinals to leave. He sat on the chair and looked at the new picture: “Benedict II, 602-824.”

Suddenly, his face became pale again, and both of his hands were trembling beyond his control. His vibe dropped and rose many times before it was finally stable, but his hair seemed even greyer and his eyes even dirtier.

“‘Bliss’ is truly hard to bear...” He heaved a sigh.

After he recovered, he looked at the room where Mecantron, the Angel King, was at, as if he could see him through all the divine

power circles and walls.

Mecatron, who was as gorgeous as a female, stood next to the window. His long gold hair had dimmed a lot.

He suffered heavy wounds from Eternal Blaze and the recoil of 'Paradise on Earth'. He coughed every now and then, vomiting gold blood that was as intense as clusters of energy.

However, such wounds were not fatal at all for the Angle King. He was recovering at a visible speed.

Benedict III moved his eyes back and put on an uncanny smile.

Then, he stood up and walked to the cabinet of important files. Finding the column that was named 'Douglas', he drew many files from it and read them again: "The target does not seem to reject my speech..." "He often feels lost..." "He is perhaps vacillating..."

"—By Artil."

Reading those files, Benedict III took out the report of 'latest arcana theories' from the column of 'Congress of Magic', trying to understand the description on the special theory of relativity in it. He said in a low voice:

"Although Artil is not around to influence him, it is evident that his motion system has encountered great problems. Perhaps, he is even more lost right now. I should find a chance to talk to him..."

.....

In Antiffler in the Holy Heilz Empire...

Inside the royal palace, Rudolf II suddenly raised his head in his room of prayers. Eighteen pairs of dreamy wings were unfolded behind him, as he said in both confusion and delight, "Is he wounded?"

Recalling the feeling, Rudolf II closed his eyes, turning unpredictable and hallowed.

.....

In the frozen World of Souls that did not have any sound or additional color, Rhine's red coat was rather eye-catching.

Walking in the disordered shadow of Rentato, he said to himself solemnly, "Where did the thing inside Sard's body run to?"

.....

After he left "Thunder Hell", Lucien returned to the Atom Institution, only to discover that Lazar, Annick and his other students were both scared and happy.

"Master, why did we suddenly declare war on the Church?" Allyn had been spinning like a ball under the energy storm of 'Eternal Blaze' after losing most of the momentum, which was a more terrible experience for Heidi than when she passed the Storm Strait on a boat. Her face was pale because of vomiting, and her voice was weak.

Lucien smiled, "Such a thing certainly needs to be kept confidential. There are a lot of spies in the Congress."

Their families had been moved to Allyn, so the students were all overjoyed after they were back to themselves, announcing that they could finally travel in Rentato and other places. As Lucien's students, they did not even dare to leave Allyn before they reached the third circle.

Then, Heidi, Katrina and other students asked about the legendary battle just now, and Lucien told them the things he knew frankly.

"Master, did you kill many level-nine clerics? Were there Grand Cardinals?" Katrina was rather confident in her teacher, who had escaped from the Demigod-lich when he was only in the sixth circle!

Lucien shook his head. "How could I join a legendary battle? I only helped Nekso Palace in the Nekso Palace."

Because he was too weak, he barely contributed to the plan of

operation, except that he informed the Highest Council that Nekso Palace could directly contact the pope. Therefore, those old foxes soon drafted a Plan C.

Natasha's speech that she used to convince the nobles, on the other hand, was written by him. On the premises that she reserved the veto right and the levy right on the nobles' dominions, she actually did not compromise as much as it seemed.

"Master, you will become a legend soon enough." Chelly, having received Lucien's help, adulated him in a joyful mood.

Lucien did not say anything else. There were many things that needed to be addressed. Therefore, he surpassed them and entered his own office.

"Layria, did you see the additional iron ring on master's left hand? Hehe, perhaps he won't be single any longer any soon." Heidi observed keenly and remarked.

Then, Layria also realized it. "'Element', the Holmish crown ring on master's right hand, is also gone. Great men are always picked first. How I envy her."

The ladies were immediately refreshed. In the spirit of gossip, they chattered nonstop.

.....

Inside the Land of Truth, Douglas received a report from the tower guard, who stated that Francois, a member of the Affair Committee and a ninth-circle archmage, had come to visit him.

Francois was an ancient sorcerer who followed Douglas to establish the Congress of Magic at the beginning. They had been close to each other. Therefore, Douglas asked the tower guard to let him in after examining him.

Chapter 568: Stars Above

In the small living room of the Land of Truth, Douglas met Francois.

Because he failed to advanced into legendary, many magic rituals that could extend the longevity by more than five hundred years were not usable for him. He was rather old, his hair sparse and grey. His skin was full of wrinkles, with spots here and there. But his blue eyes were as deep as an ocean, as if they accommodated the wisdom that had sunk in the passage of time.

“Francois, what brings you here? Are you ready for the lich transformation ritual?” Asked Douglas casually. As a member of the Affair Committee, the man should be occupied in such a moment.

Francois shook his head in a smile, “To be a lich, I will have to abandon the enjoyments and entertainments as a man. I may even become extreme and crazy because of negative energy. It really isn’t the best choice. I haven’t made up my mind yet. I’m still waiting to see if my cognitive world can be half solidified.”

“That’s a great idea. Arcana and magic have been developing at a terrifying speed over the past ten years. Perhaps, new theories or achievements that are suitable for you will be proposed soon, allowing you to solidify your cognitive world after years of accumulation.” Douglas nodded, approving Francois’ decision.

In his mind, the crazy development of arcana began with Felipe’s studies on cell memories and Lucien’s submission of the periodic table. He seemed to have foreseen two new legendary sorcerers. Therefore, when Vicente tried to get Felipe away from the Demigod-lich’s incident, he agreed with it and let it pass.

Francois smiled. “Mr. President, it’s true that new theories or achievements that can break my bottleneck will arise soon, but they are also very likely to break my head, especially if they are from Lucien Evans, the Headcrusher.”

Douglas shook his head with a smile, knowing that Lucien was already ‘notorious’ among the sorcerers. “The advancement he

brought forth hasn't been fully revealed. Perhaps, you will see the value of his new theories in three, five or ten years."

Francois said in a smile, "Like 'On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation'?"

Douglas smile was gradually gone. He said at a loss, "Yes."

Francois continued, "When I saw the paper, I felt that my confidence was destroyed. It was not because I was shocked at Lucien Evans' talents, but because I was suspicious about myself and the arcana system in the past hundreds of years."

"Mr. Douglas, I've been following you since the end of the War of Dawn. We established the Congress under the suppression of the Church. Your gravity theory and your motion system were the lighthouses that guided me. But right now, one of the two lighthouses has been announced 'wrong'. I really don't know what to believe now. I'm like a boat in a storm, with nothing but darkness before my eyes."

Douglas lowered his voice. "It's not wrong but a low-speed approximation of the relativistic system."

The atmosphere became weird, filled with indescribably silence and depression.

Francois looked at Douglas earnestly, "Mr. President, low-speed approximation means that you neglected too many things in your motion system, and there were too many errors. Also, don't you think that 'time is space, and space is time', 'time depends on matter and is speed's function' completely overthrow our understanding?"

"It is indeed different from our intuition. When I saw it, I also felt that my past thousand years were denied." Douglas admitted rather honestly.

Honesty had always been his attitude towards arcana problems.

Francois said with a heavy mind. "Perhaps it was because our studies were too superficial and too far away from the truth.

Perhaps, when we really approach the ‘truth’, we may discover that it is the opposite of what we believe it.”

“That’s true. The more I study arcana, the more ignorant I realize I am, on time, space, mass and energy or even regarding gravity that I’m best at.” Douglas revealed confusion again.

Francois heaved a sigh. “The truth of this world is beyond our imagination. Too many questions can’t be answered, and more and more things point at the same thing. What’s the nature of gravity? How did it appear in the beginning? If your astronomical motion system works, what’s the initial force that made the planets spin?”

“That’s exactly what I’m confused about. Where’s gravity from? How does it spread? How was it created at the beginning? The more I know, the more lost and scared I am. Perhaps I’ve been wrong all this time.” Douglas’ voice was unpredictable.

Francois’ blue eyes turned deep. “Perhaps, we should look for a philosophical explanation. Perhaps, there was indeed a First Cause and a source that created everything. In that case, the system of celestial body motion can be perfected and constructed.”

Douglas did not hide it from his old friend. He said depressed, “Sometimes, I can’t help but think that way. There’s probably really a supreme being and a First Cause, or the whole arcana system cannot be explained from the origin. It’s like a house without the foundation, which will collapse under the gentlest breeze.”

The atmosphere was even more weird. Light flashed in Francois’ eyes as he spoke, “That is to say, your gravity system and your motion system will collapse without the First Cause, right?”

“Yes.” Douglas added, “At least so far, but there may be other arcana explanations in the future.”

Francois said in a low voice, “Then, what’s the origin of this world? Who am I? Where are we from? Where are we going to? Can you find the answers from arcana studies?”

“Not for now. They are still in the category of philosophy.” Douglas

shook his head.

Francois also shook his head. “No, they are in the category of theology. As long as you admit that there is a supreme being and a First Cause, all the questions can be answered.”

Douglas opened his mouth and was about to say something, when his pupils constricted. “Who are you? You are not Francois!”

Something emerged inside Francois’ body, making him sacred and peaceful. “You may call me Benedict III.”

“Pope... Why are you here? Where is Francois?” Douglas was not too panicked. In his own demiplane and his own magic tower, he was confident to fight the pope, the Silver Moon, or the Lord of Hell even if they came in person – on the premise that they did not have God’s Arrival. Therefore, he was not scared of the pope who had been projected into Francois’ body in a strange way.

The mysterious magic circles were activated, turning the Land of Truth outside into dark night with stars in the high sky.

Benedict III showed little reaction. He merely smiled, “Francois willingly let me project. Otherwise, it is impossible for me to be projected into an archmage’s body.”

“So, he has been working for the Church. No wonder there were so many leaks. I had always thought that there were spies in the Affair Committee, but I didn’t know it was him.” Douglas felt sad when he was faced with the spy who was of the highest level. The old friend who established the Congress of Magic with me had betrayed his dream and joined his nemesis in the end?

He also felt lucky that Project Mushroom Cloud was only known by a few trusted members of the Affair Committee, and that Francois was not among them.

Benedict III said peacefully, “Francois recognized arcana’s fundamental problem, so he returned to the arms of the Lord. Douglas, don’t deny it. You are already starting to believe in the First Cause and the supreme being.”

“Yes, I can’t deny that I’m more or less convinced by the First Cause and the supreme being.” Douglas replied expressionlessly.

In delight, Benedict III said, “Very good. If you are willing to be baptized, you will be the First Saint of the Church and the pope later. You will know the secrets of demigods and receive eternal happiness.”

Douglas suddenly chuckled. “Just because I believe that doesn’t mean that I will worship the God of Truth.”

“What? Are you not clear about the power of ‘God’s Arrival’? Did you not see the projection of Mountain Paradise? If you are willing to join the Church, I can reveal part of demigod secrets to you right now.” Benedict III was somewhat surprised.

Douglas pointed at the starry sky outside the window. “Benedict III, you probably have never explored space like we sorcerers have, right?”

“So what?” Benedict III did not understand why Douglas said that.

With extreme zealotry and fascination, Douglas stared at the sky. “Only after you’ve been there will you know how boundless space is, and how insignificant you, I, the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell and the entire world are compared to it.”

“Even if I believe in the First Cause, I don’t believe that such a great being will fight for territory with us and vampires in such a small world.”

“My god perhaps will accept our prayer and pacify our heart, but the ‘God of Truth’, who launches divine power and graces directly and who encourages the Church to compete for resources and territory in this world, is nothing at all compared to the awe-inspiring, infinite space.”

Then, Douglas turned back around and looked at Benedict III.

“So, do you think that he deserves my belief?”

At this moment, the man who built the Congress of Magic from

scratch fully revealed his confidence and pride.

Benedict III looked awful. Douglas was indeed lost, but he was lost in a different way.

“I want to know the secrets of the demigods, but I despise your methodology.” Douglas said with a peaceful smile. “One day, you will realize that sorcerers are not the enemies of faith; it’s just that our eyes are not as limited to this narrow place as yours.”

“The future of sorcerers lies in the boundless space, somewhere close to the ‘truth’!”

Benedict III sighed, “To be a demigod is harder than you think. Sometimes, vastness does not mean the truth; beings of higher levels and forms are. Now that you’ve refused my offer, I’ll take my leave.”

“Let Francois go with you. He contributed to the establishment of the Congress of Magic. I do not want to punish him for his doing, but he must leave the Congress.” Douglas also sighed. Benedict III was obviously only a projection. Killing Francois wouldn’t hurt him at all. In the meantime, he intended to ask Hellen, who guarded Allyn, to watch over Francois in case he sabotaged anything.

Without further ado, Benedict III left the magic tower.

When he stepped into the transmission magic circles, Francois’ body suddenly melted into blood stained with holy light. Then, drawing weird symbols, the blood shut down all the space nodes, as if Douglas had turned off the demiplane on his own.

Douglas frowned and tried to open it again, only to discover that it would take him at least two days. He was more or less surprised. “Is this a demigod spell? My demiplane can be temporarily blocked by sacrificing one projection and one ninth-circle archmage?”

He felt rather lucky again. If they had waited for the Church to attack them, such a method that could cage the top legendary sorcerers in their demiplanes could be very fatal. It meant that they would be divided and conquered. The Congress was far weaker than

the Church in the first place. They would be wiped out for sure if they got even more divided.

“Thankfully, we launched the attack in advance and took the initiative. However, what is Benedict III trying to do?” Douglas did not think that he would start a war at such a moment, unless he intended to join the Congress with the contribution of annihilating the Church. Therefore, Douglas was not very anxious, albeit a bit puzzled.

“Although the previous spell was mixed with holy light, it was more like some of the unique, peculiar magics of the ancient sorcerers. It seems that the Church reaped a lot of classics when the Magic Empire was destroyed.”

Chapter 569: Malicious Purpose (3 in 1)

Chapter 569: Malicious Purpose (3 in 1)

In Allyn, the City in the Sky...

The Atom Institution paid so well that Blake was able to rent a villa with a garden in the suburbs after only one year. However, his habits did not change because he had come to Allyn, and he could not go to sleep without listening to 'Arcana Voice' and 'News of the World'.

"...This concludes the Congress' expansion in the four countries of the strait and the north coastline..."

The brisk voice of Lark spread into Blake's ears, making him, who was leaning against the sofa lazily, feel peaceful and delighted from the bottom of his heart. He was integrated into the tranquil night around his house.

Zi, zi, zi. Electric noises echoed from the magic radio. Blake looked at it in confusion. What happened? 'News of the World' should still have half a program left. Was it because of the disorder of electromagnetic signals again?

Rising from the sofa, Blake walked towards the magic radio. He was about to adjust it with his right hand, when an old voice suddenly came out from the radio:

"Mr. President, it's true that new theories or achievements that can break my bottleneck will arise soon, but they are also very likely to break my head, especially if they are from Lucien Evans, the Headcrusher."

Blake was stunned all of a sudden. Mr. President? Did he mean Mr. Douglas? Had 'News of the World' invited him, too? That would be too exciting.

The arcanists who grew up in the Congress had been taught with the president's deeds of establishing the Congress despite all the

dangerous through arduous work since childhood. His gravity theory and motion system were also the classics that all the sorcerers worshiped and learnt. After hundreds of years, it was still the two pillars that supported the arcana system. 'Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy' was praised to be the most important masterpiece in the history of arcana and magic, and a symbol of civilization that separates darkness and ignorance from the real discovery of the world mysteries.

Therefore, for most arcanists, the president was the mental pillar of the Congress, a mountain that could not be circumvented in the field of magic, and a man who supported the sky of the arcana system. He had been admired by everyone, old and young.

"The advancement he brought forth hasn't been fully revealed. Perhaps, you will see the value of his new theories in three, five or ten years."

Yes. It was exactly the president! Both the voice and the tone suggested so!

Blake suddenly grew excited. He had the privilege of listening to Mr. President's speech indirectly through 'Allyn's Past Week' in 'News of the World', which left him with a deep impression. His easiness, generosity and his unreserved compliments for the new talents were absolutely authentic!

"This is fantastic. They have finally invited Mr. President to 'News of the World'! The only problem is, why is the interviewer an old man with such an unpleasant voice, instead of everybody's old friend, Ms. Lark or Ms. Nightingale? Their voices alone are an entertainment."

Some hilarious thoughts occurred to Blake, but he guessed that the man was Mr. President's old friend, that was why he could invite the president. The two channels had been established for several years, but none of the Highest Council were willing to participate in the talk shows.

"Like 'On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation'?"

“Yes.”

Douglas’ obviously gloomy voice came into Blake’s ears, making the smile on his face disappear.

While he very much admired his boss and the manager of the Atom Institution – Mr. Lucien Evans, it was still only limited in the fields of new alchemy and elements. He had been Mr. President’s follower when it came to the gravity theory and the motion system.

Therefore, he was partly excited when witnessing Mr. Evans disrupt Douglas’ motion system, and partly lost because the mental pillar that supported his arcana ideas suddenly collapsed. The arcana world that was clear and visionary became chaotic and obscure.

Also, the disruption of the relativistic space and time over the absolute time and space, and the mind-boggling descriptions, overwhelmed him, who began to question the whole arcana system.

If Mr. President’s motion system, one of the greatest classics, was wrong, what else couldn’t be?

Thankfully, there was still the awe-inspiring gravity theory!

...

In the broadcast room of ‘News of the World’...

‘Lark’, Samantha, had been reciting her script attentively, prepared to comment on the matter freely a while later, when the door of the broadcast room was suddenly opened.

“Something happened!” The arcanist who walked in spoke palely.

Samantha was both the anchor and the manager whom Lucien entrusted the affairs of ‘News of the World’ to. She hinted that something had happened with her eyes and asked the arcanist responsible for the broadcast to play s.

The arcanist who just entered carried a magic radio with him. He said both in confusion and panic, “Ms. Samantha, your broadcast has been cut off, replaced by a conversation between Mr. President and another sorcerer.”

“What?” Samantha knew very well that Mr. President had never been invited to the show.

She was taken aback by the unprecedented situation for a while.

The new arcanist turned on the radio, allowing everybody in the broadcast room to hear an old voice:

“... suspicious about myself and the arcana system in the past hundreds of years. Mr. Douglas, I’ve been following you since the end of the War of Dawn. We established the Congress under the suppression of the Church. Your gravity theory and your motion system were the lighthouses that guided me. But right now, one of the two lighthouses has been announced ‘wrong’. I really don’t know what to believe now. I’m like a boat in a storm, with nothing but darkness before my eyes.”

His confusion and loss stunned all the arcanists in the broadcast room. That seemed to be the best narration of the questions they had themselves in the past several months. Those who had never experienced mental meltdowns couldn’t have understood the helplessness and hopelessness in the words.

Samantha, of the school of astrology and force field, held her breath and waited for Mr. President’s answer. He had never offered any comment on the issue before.

“”It’s not wrong but a low-speed approximation of the relativistic system.”

Douglas’ voice echoed, just as everybody expected.

Different from the low-level arcanists like Blake, most of the arcanists in the room had the privilege to meet Mr. President when ‘News of the World’ was praised by him, and they could clearly tell that it was exactly Mr. President’s voice and tone. Samantha, who had visited the Land of Truth with her teacher together, was most certain of it.

But Mr. President’s answer was too plain and unconvincing, wasn’t it? It was just Lucien Evans’ quote.

“”Mr. President, low-speed approximation means that you neglected too many things in your motion system, and there were too many errors. Also, don’t you think that ‘time is space, and space is time’, ‘time depends on matter and is speed’s function’ completely overthrows our understanding?”

Yes! That’s the feeling! The arcanists agreed with him in silence. Give us a model or explanation that we can understand, Mr. President!

“It is indeed different from our intuition. When I saw it, I also felt that my past thousand years were denied.” Douglas admitted rather honestly.” Douglas’ old and gloomy voice came out.

Boom!

Most of the people in the broadcast room felt a thunder bursting out in their heart. His life over the past thousand years was denied... Completely denied...

Even Mr. President’s life was completely denied. What about theirs?

Samantha was brooding in a trance first, before she suddenly realized what was going on. “This can’t be Mr. President’s reply! This is the enemy’s scheme!”

“Brian, you go and find Lucien. I’ll ask Ms. Hellen to activate the powerful interference devices to block the electromagnetic signals from Allyn!”

It was an emergency plan that Lucien came up with before. Having been teleported from Earth, he couldn’t have neglected the possibility that the enemy could counter-brainwash the sorcerers with radios and electromagnetic signals. So, he made quite a few emergency plans.

Although only Allyn could be blocked for now, Samantha had no time to bother the branches and the local organizations!

“The truth of this world is beyond our imagination. Too many questions can’t be answered, and more and more things point at the same thing. What’s the nature of gravity? How did it appear at the

beginning? If your astronomical motion system works, what's the initial force that made the planet spin?"

Samantha's hand, which was about to touch her communication earring, was frozen. It was the question that puzzled every sorcerer of the school of astrology.

What was the nature of gravity? How would Mr. President reply?

Inertia let her connect to Hellen's secret frequency while she waited for answers. She said with a voice as predictable as wind, "Ms. Hellen, the enemy's signals have hijacked 'News of the World'..."

Hellen, who was defending Allyn on the thirty-third floor, was a woman who looked like an elf of snow. Her lips were blue, but she was surrounded in a weird charm.

Hearing Samantha's words, she was not in a hurry to activate the powerful interference device in Allyn. Instead, she turned on the radio on her desk, trying to figure out who had infiltrated them in what way, so that they could be better prepared in the future.

"That's exactly what I'm confused about. Where does gravity come from? How does it spread? How was it created at the beginning? The more I know, the more lost and scared I am."

Perhaps I've been wrong all this time."

As she listened, shock and a collapse of faith appeared on Hellen's delicate and cold face beyond her control.

Other people might have suspected that the voice was fabricated via magic or divine powers, but as a grand arcanist, she knew very well that after one became a legendary sorcerer, their cognitive world would gradually melt with their soul, and their words would carry their cognitive world's influence and feedback to the real world. Even when they did not perform any magic, their voice still had a unique air, unless they disguised it on purpose.

Unless they knew the constituents of a legendary sorcerer's cognitive world, it was barely possible to duplicate and fabricate the unique feeling. Every person capable of that was the best in the

fields of illusion and transformation, like the Eye of Curse, the King of Nightmare and the Master of Transformation, but why would they do such a thing when the Congress had just secured a glorious victory?

Also, two of the six grand arcanists were more or less Douglas' students: the 'more' one was Brook, the Emperor of Control, and the 'less' one was Hellen Paris, the Witch of Iceland.

'Cabin of Palmeira' was a magic group that had controlled the northland since ancient Magic Empire. In its heyday, it had three legendary sorcerers. After it was melted into the Congress, it had developed very sluggishly because they were unused to the arcana principles. Since Hellen was exceptionally talented and had unusual understanding in arcana studies, her teacher thought that she was too good for him to teach and asked Douglas to help with the teaching.

For Hellen, Douglas was like a father who supported the sky of the Congress of Magic and illuminated the path of arcana studies, but now, he was saying 'Perhaps I've been wrong all the time'. How could she not feel that her whole world and her whole life was collapsing? She was so shocked that she even forgot to implement the interferences.

"Perhaps, the voice was fabricated by a demigod..." Hellen tried to explain it.

...

Perhaps I've been wrong all the time."

Felipe was also listening to 'News of the World' in his own magic tower inside Heidler city.

At first, he also thought that President Douglas was a special guest, but he soon realized that something was wrong. However, the content of their conversation was so corruptively charming that he listened on uncontrollably.

When the founder of the arcane system, the explorer of arcana

frontiers and the leader of arcanists spoke somewhat in pain that he might have been wrong all the time, even Felipe, who had always been egoistical, felt unbelievably surprised and lost, too, the brilliance in his eyes dispersing.

“Are you going to tell us that you were wrong in the beginning, when we have made it this far after all the hard work?”

Holding the red cup of wine, Felipe looked out the window. The whole Heidler city was enshrouded in the darkness of night. Lights were flickering like stars, like the unsettled mind of all the sorcerers who had heard the conversation.

Even though he was a necromancer, they still had more or less studied gravity, which seemed to contain the deepest mysteries of the world, and they still respected Douglas, who founded the Congress and the arcana system, from the bottom of their heart. His invention of calculus and his studies on geometric models made the advancement of the sorcerers of all schools much easier and less dependent on drugs and materials.

...

In the headquarters of the Will of Elements, Raventi, who was to safeguard the place tonight, looked gloomy, his face tightened, as he listened to ‘News of the World’. It never occurred to him that Mr. President would say such things!

He was in a good relationship with the Tower, and he had profound studies on gravity, too. He understood that the questions like ‘Where’s gravity from? How does it spread? How was it born at the beginning?’ were the ultimate enigma in gravity studies that could not be avoided. He had similar confusion himself.

However, how can you lose confidence and say that you have always been wrong, Mr. President?

It doesn’t matter if there are problems. We can solve them one at a time!

How is it possible to figure out all the mysteries at the very

beginning?

Everybody has witnessed the development of the gravity system over the past years. The success of the artificial planets further convinced everyone of its validity. Was it not progress but retrograde?

We cannot be impatient about the problems that involve the origins. We have to walk on the solid foundation that is our current research achievements!

Mr. President, you must not lose your confidence!

If you lose your confidence, too many arcanists and even legendary sorcerers will be confused, lost and even desperate.

“”Perhaps, we should look for a philosophical explanation. Perhaps, there was indeed a First Cause and a source that created everything. In that case, the system of celestial body motion can be perfected and constructed.”

“Sometimes, I can’t help but think that way. There’s probably really a supreme being and a First Cause, or the whole arcana system cannot be explained from the origin. It’s like a house without the foundation, which will collapse under the gentlest breeze.”

The supreme being, the First Cause, and the arcana system which cannot be established without those concepts... You are not seriously trying to tell us that, Mr. President, are you?

We have been fighting the Church and the believers of the God of Truth for our entire life, only to discover that all our pride and faith depends on the God of Truth after all?

Raventi rose from his chair abruptly, his right hand trembling violently. Finding it impossible to believe that President Douglas said that, he began to identify its veracity with prophecy.

It was true...

Even Raventi, an archmage who had pursued truth and despised hypocrisy for his entire life, looked old and weak. He couldn’t

believe, nor could he accept, that Mr. President would believe that a supreme being had been dominating everything, in which case the arcana system and the Congress of Magic he established would be a joke, and so would be Raventi himself, who was attached to them.

“Annonis, are you listening to News of the World? Hurry and check if Mr. President’s words are true with astrology.” Raventi remembered that he was not good at prophecies, so he hurried to contact his best friend.

...

When Samantha was petrified by Douglas’ questions about the gravity theory, an arcanist of the school of electromagnetism in the broadcast room hurried to inform Lucien, who was the person with the highest clearances that he could reach out to.

After ending the conversation with Natasha and sending his regards to Grand Duke of Orvarit, Lucien stayed in his office in the Atom Institution and continued the studies on his own magic structure and arcana studies. He felt the passion to work for his family now that they had exchanged their rings and settled their relationship.

Suddenly, Lucien’s monocle became hot.

“Mr. Evans, hurry, listen to ‘News of the World’...” A strange male voice echoed in panic, but he could not explain what was going on in his anxiety.

Lucien asked quickly but got no effective answer. He could only turn on the magic radio and set it to the channel of ‘News of the World’.

“That is to say, your gravity system and your motion system will collapse without the First Cause, right?”

“Yes.”

The First Cause? Isn’t it a concept that those theologists invented? Why is Mr. President discussing it with somebody else?

“Then, what’s the origin of this world? Who am I? Where are we

from? Where are we going to? Can you find the answers from arcana studies?"

"Not for now. They are still in the category of philosophy."

Lucien realized that something was wrong as he listened on. He hurried to disconnect the communication and contacted Grand Arcanist Hellen, who was the supervisor tonight.

Beep, beep, beep. The line was busy. He could not reach out to her.

"No, they are in the category of theology. As long as you admit that there is a supreme being and a First Cause, all the questions can be answered."

Hearing that, Lucien felt more and more terrible. There was no time to contact Ms. Hellen. If anything went wrong, his teacher was always there!

"Hello!" Fernando was not in the best mood after his research was interrupted.

"Master, News of the World has been infiltrated. Somebody from the Church may be alluring Mr. President! I can't reach out to Ms. Hellen!" Lucien spoke fast.

"News of the World?" As an impetuous man, Fernando had returned to the Allyn magic tower from his demiplane and left for Hellen's library, fearing that something might happen to her.

As for Douglas, Fernando trusted him as his old friend. It would've been reasonable if his cognitive world collapsed because of the new arcana theories, but they were saying that he would worship the God of Truth and join the Church?

Did the Saint Truth, which had just been hit by one 'Eternal Blaze', really deserve his faith?

After he pushed the door of Hellen's library, he saw her mumbling to herself behind the desk. "What's gravity? What's the nature of gravity..." Fernando felt that his heart was heavy. What exactly had Douglas said that made Hellen so confused?

He believed that Hellen would never mistake somebody else's voice for Douglas'.

"Francois recognized arcana's fundamental problem, so he returned to the arms of the Lord. Douglas, don't deny it. You are already starting to believe in the First Cause and the supreme being."

The storm that surrounded Fernando came to an abrupt halt. He looked at the magic radio, as if he were looking for Douglas' reply, too.

"Yes, I can't deny that I'm more or less convinced by the First Cause and the supreme being."

Douglas' emotionless voice echoed in the library.

Hellen shut her eyes abruptly, and a drop of tear as clear as ice flowed out. The gravest sorrow was spreading out.

Fernando was stunned and then heaved a deep sigh.

"This is a recording of His Holiness' conversation in Douglas' demiplane. The greatest sorcerer also believes in the supreme being."

A peaceful, smiling voice spread out, pacifying everyone.

"If you wonder whether or not it was fake, sorcerers, you are free to check it with your prophecy and astrology."

Zi, zi, zi. The electric noises appeared again, and the regular was restored.

"Jinkela, Jinkela, the best formula! Make your harvest spectacular!"

The room was filled by the hilarious voice, but the atmosphere was more than depressing. Hellen croaked, "I didn't expect that Mr. President, who had been fighting the Church for his entire life, would believe in gods and question his own arcana theories..."

"No, that was not Douglas' style! I absolutely don't believe that someone so close to the truth of the world would believe in the crap

like the God of Truth!” Fernando roared, “Hellen, you go find Douglas in his demiplane and see what happened! I’ll find Bergner and ask him to test the veracity of the conversation. The pope is a demigod. He might have methods that we cannot fathom!”

Fernando’s stormy roars woke Hellen up. Yes, suspecting Mr. President blindly without confirming the conversation was not in the spirit of arcana!

...

“Yes, I can’t deny that I’m more or less convinced by the First Cause and the supreme being.”

Clang. A transparent statue on Raventi’s desk was swept to the ground by him unconsciously, breaking into countless pieces.

Seeing the many pieces, Raventi felt that he saw the collapse of one of the pillars that supported the arcana system. An irrecoverable hole had been torn in the sky of arcana.

The magnificent, exhilarating palace of arcana seemed to have been burnt to ashes. The whole world became dark.

“No, how could Mr. President think in such a way? Why would he introduce a supreme being...”

...

In Heidler city, the wine cup in Felipe’s hands were crumbled into pieces by himself. The ever-rising moans of spectres echoed outside of his room, as if many undead creatures had lost control because of their master’s trance.

Wu!

In their sorrowful and terrifying voices, Felipe put on a self-mocking smile on his pale, sickly face. “The founder and perfecter of arcana theories and the spiritual leader of the Congress of Magic has announced that his arcana theories are wrong, and that he believes in a god that controls everything. If that is true, and if that is proved, I’m very suspicious that somebody’s head will be blown

up. Even if it won't, their confidence of future advancement will definitely be struck. Perhaps, nobody will advance into legendary for a long time, and it will be barely possible for the legendary experts to improve themselves."

I may be one of the victims...

Wu!

The ghosts, zombies and mummies were screaming so desperately and painfully.

...

"If you wonder whether or not it was fake, sorcerers, you are free to check it with your prophecy and astrology."

Frowning, Lucien stepped out of his office and reached the first district on the thirty-first floor, where the Sky Radio Station was located. He had to confirm the situation before he joined his master, or he wouldn't be able to evaluate the influence of the conversation on most of the arcanists.

After he opened the door of the broadcast room of 'News of the World', Lucien saw Samantha clutching her hair and mumbling to herself, "What is gravity? Where was gravity from at the beginning..."

He looked around, only to hear even more voices of confusion:

"Does it suggest that there was really a god who gave everything a push at the beginning..."

"The gravity theory depends on gods..."

"What is gravity? What is the nature of gravity..."

"Gravity cannot be manifested directly at all. In what way is it spread..."

The arcanist of the school of electromagnetism shouted, half overwhelmed and half lost. "Don't panic, everybody. This is perhaps

a recording that the Church fabricated! President Douglas will clarify everything tomorrow!”

Yes, even if Mr. President did say that, we will have to clarify that it was a slander and a lie from the Church! That was the only thing on Lucien’s mind.

“Yes, we will interview Mr. President tomorrow and ask him to clarify it before everyone.” Samantha was back to herself all of a sudden, refusing to believe what she just heard. “Lucien, you’re here? Any news?”

“This is undoubtedly not the truth. I’ll go find Ms. Hellen and visit Mr. President.” Lucien declared resolutely and eased everybody’s anxiety.

Being someone from a different world himself, it was not entirely impossible for Lucien to accept a certain god, but everything had to be founded on repeatable phenomena and experiments. Unproved things were nothing but illusions for him!

In the atmosphere of depression, sorrow, chaos and confusion, Lucien hurried to leave the Sky Radio Station and went to the library of the Witch of Iceland on the thirty-third floor.

The moment he reached the door, Lucien heard his teacher roaring, “Bergner, you’re telling me that it is true?”

“It’s not like your prophecy was never wrong! I’ll find Douglas and ask him in person soon!”

As the terrifying storm rushed to his face, Lucien saw that his teacher was completely on a rampage.

However, Lucien had nothing to worry about other things right now. He asked earnestly, “Master, did Mr. Prophet say that the conversation was true? Did the pope really go to the Land of Truth? Where is Mr. President?”

Holding back his anger, Fernando suppressed his voice and said, “Bergner said that it was something that already happened, and that nobody attempted to disrupt the traces of fate. Therefore, it was

very easy for him to tell that the conversation was true. As for Douglas...” He looked Hellen, who was still an ice beauty but who seemed rather reckless – she was trying to open the portal worriedly and impatiently. “The demiplane has been blocked. There’s still no telling whether he closed it on his own or it was the pope’s doing...”

The more he talked, the more difficult it was for Fernando to hold back his urge of roaring. Nothing else mattered right now except for opening Douglas’ demiplane and finding him! Everything would still be easy as long as he was not really devoted to the Saint Truth!

Fernando was quite confident about that with his years of understanding about his friend. Therefore, he was not as lost and befuddled as Hellen.

“Really?” Lucien felt that his knowledge had been disrupted. Mr. President had always been a wise and generous senior in his heart. How could he possibly abandon his arcana theories all of a sudden?

Thinking quickly, Lucien suddenly thought of two things. “Master, ask the Prophet to run another test! This is perhaps only part of the truth. Sometimes, part of the truth is the opposite of the whole truth!”

Truth, only truth, and the whole truth – that was trustworthy information was made of.

Covering part of the truth in order to contort the fact was a trick that many people on Earth were good at. Lucien was quite familiar with it and thought of the possibility very quickly.

“Maybe, but if Douglas does not clarify it in person, many people would still be suspicious.” Fernando contacted Bergner again, not noticing that Lucien had left the room quietly.

...

Allyn loomed in the sky like a gargantuan monster. Far away from it, a black shadow was staring at it in a smile. If he were any closer, he would be detected by the guarding grand arcanist through the

lock of fog.

“Your Holiness, I seem to have smelled the air of desperation and confusion spreading out from Allyn after their confidence collapsed.” The speaker was a tall, grey-haired old man, who was none other than ‘Heart of Time’ Kritonia. He sensed the reactions of the regular arcanists inside Allyn and Rentato with his special abilities. “Your plan worked out greatly. Perhaps, the Congress of Magic has been crushed without a war. I fear that they will not be able to show the hopefulness and vigorousness they used to have for a long time. This is a major blow on their ideology.”

On his left hand, an ever-changing small person was changing nonstop, in which the minds of people seemed to be gathered. Benedict III said with a smile, “In fact, the best result would be that Douglas became a saint of the Church. In that case, the Congress of Magic would’ve split and dispersed, if it did not collapse immediately. Human beings can be very strange. As soon as their confidence is gone, they will feel that they are approaching the end of the world. By then, countless sorcerers will reconsider their path.”

“It’s a shame that Douglas was too arrogant.”

“But this turns out just as good. Perhaps, a few legendary sorcerers whose cognitive world is founded on the gravity theory will lose their heads.” Kritonia chuckled.

Benedict III said, not cockily at all. “The legendary sorcerers are not so stupid. They will not believe it blindly until they ask Douglas face to face. Even though I have misled them into testing the truthfulness of the conversation instead of the completeness, they will still retain the final consciousness. The worst outcome is that they will lose confidence in the arcana system, which will make their future advancements very difficult.”

“But Douglas will be out in two days. Will he turn things around?” Kritonia was thinking to sneak into Allyn when it was in chaos to sabotage things and kill certain talents of the Congress of Magic, say, Lucien Evans.

Benedict III smiled peacefully, “As I said, human beings are strange. If he clarifies it two days later, the suspicion of most arcanists will be deep to the bones. They will only suspect his belated explanation. They won’t believe it and regard his reasons as excuses.”

“Your Holiness, it seems that you are also good at understanding people.” Kritonia adulated him.

Benedict III smiled, “This is also their fate. Before planets were discovered, Douglas’ suspicion about gravity and his tendencies towards the supreme being wouldn’t have caused such great influence. However, the artificial planet plan that Lucien Evans proposed fully convinced all the arcanists of the gravity theory. Hehe. Perhaps, he is truly the Dawnbringer.”

...

Blake did notice when he collapsed into the sofa. His eyes unfocused, his face confused, he heard nothing but humming in his ears. How could Mr. President do that? What happened to the arcana system?

At such a moment, he only remembered one person, the man who frequently disrupted the understandings in the past and who had just modified the motion system. Did he hear what Mr. President say? How was he going to reply to it?

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, Fernando’s loud voice echoed passionately, “Was there really something hidden?”

“What? You can’t tell what the hidden part is? Then why do I need a Prophet?”

He knew that he was being too hard on Bergner. After all, it was done by the pope who was a demigod. However, he had always been cranky after he was agitated.

“Even if we find the hidden content, so what? Mr. President’s suspicion about gravity was not fake... Those questions do not have answers...” Hellen was still trying to open the Land of Truth.

Hearing what Fernando said, she remarked gloomily.

Fernando held back the urge to roar at her and went to her side to help her. Suddenly, Fernando looked around in confusion. "Where is Lucien?"

...

After he returned to his office in the Atom Institution, Lucien heaved a long sigh when he recalled Ms. Hellen's confusion and the many arcanists in the Sky Radio Station's questions about gravity. He copied his work in recent years from his spirit library as well as the manuscripts of Evans Geometry and tensor analysis based on that. Then, he gathered them together.

I am incapable of participating in a legendary battle, but I can make some contributions when it comes to arcana!

Picking up the pen, Lucien closed his eyes and browsed through his studies on the general theory of relativity in the past years as well as the files in his spirit library that had been unsealed. As the ideas took shape inside his head, his quill fell to the paper and wrote the title:

'A Relativistic Interpretation and Geometric Description of Gravity and a System of Relativity Under a More General Frame of Reference'

Boom! A thunderstorm suddenly burst out near Allyn!

Looking at the weather change that was only limited around Allyn, Kritonia observed rather in shock, "Is a legendary sorcerer's cognitive world shaking?"

Crack! A silver bolt of lightning illuminated the dark night!

Chapter 570: Weather Change

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The three consecutive thunders made Fernando and Hellen, who was on the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, slow down their work to open the Land of Truth. They turned around and looked out of the window, observing the lightning that were illuminating this corner of the world.

“Whose cognitive world is shaking?” Hellen’s skin was as fair as ice in the first place, and it was even paler and bloodless right now. Frowning, she commented on the weather change outside, finding it hard to believe.

It was not because the gravity theory was proved wrong, but because the problems regarding the source and nature of gravity raised the confusion of the founder of the field, who even had the idea that a supreme being was behind everything. That was why people questioned the necessity and correctness of the current arcana studies.

The blow on the arcanists depended on their attitude towards Douglas’ authority. To be more exact, the legendary sorcerers were obviously less dependent on Douglas than the ordinary people were. Brook, for example, was an expert who disrupted her teacher’s particle theory.

That was why Hellen was confused. Of all the legendary sorcerers, she was the one who respected Mr. President’s authority most, but she was not vacillating yet. Which dummy had completely lost his confidence without confirming the actual situation first?

If that was what happened, she would wonder how the guy advanced into legendary at all!

Uncontrollably anger and confusion filled Fernando’s face. “Judging from the scale and the feeling of illusion, it’s truly the cognitive world’s influence on the real world, but it is not necessarily vacillation...”

“In any case, let’s activate the defense of Allyn in case of destructive damages and in case the enemy sneaks in during the mess.” After the initial shock, Hellen gradually calmed down.

.....

In the headquarters of the Will of Elements...

Raventi was speaking to the Astrologer who lived in the Tower. Suddenly, the electromagnetic signals became messy and chaotic. Thunder was rumbling obviously.

“Annonis, what’s going on?” Asked Raventi solemnly.

Annonis replied uncertainly, “The weather two thousand meters within Allyn has suddenly changed. A thunderstorm has come...”

“Is it possible...” Raventi did not finish. Gravely, he looked at where Allyn was at and could vaguely see the silver lightning which looked like long snakes in the sky.

“I don’t think so...” Annonis understood what Raventi mean and replied slowly, his voice going down.

“I hope it’s not like what I thought.”

While watching the electric snakes soaring in the sky, Raventi informed Hathaway.

.....

Inside the Sky Radio Station, the half-panicked arcanists were shocked by the thunder, their eyes filled by the lightning. They were obviously stunned.

“Why is there suddenly a storm?” An arcanist asked in a low voice, feeling that the dark, depressing thunderstorm was exactly what was happening in his mind.

The torrential rain poured on their heart and raised unreasonable panic. Somebody comforted themselves, trying to be calm. “This is the Month of Passion. Isn’t it normal that a storm happens

anytime?”

Boom!

The thunder burst out again, scaring the arcanists. Somebody blurted out, “No, this is not normal. There were no temperature and pressure changes before it!”

If it were not a normal weather change, what caused it?

The arcanists on the spot suddenly saw the lock of Allyn rising, filling all the areas with vague mist.

Together with the huge storm out there, it added to everybody’s ominous feeling.

“Don’t overthink. If there is anything, the Highest Council will take care of everything. We don’t need to be anxious.” Samantha tried to make herself sound calm.

If what happened just now was real, she believed that she would have to reevaluate the Church. It seemed that they were not so violent and reckless that they could only get things done with strength and assassination.

BOOM!

The rumbling thunder entered into Blake’s ears. Looking at the apocalyptic view outside, he said bitterly with a self-mocking smile, “Has the weather sensed the desperation of the arcanists in Allyn, too?”

.....

Inside his office in the Atom Institution...

Lucien wrote beautiful worlds with the quill in his hand:

“This paper is based on two basic premises, the first of which is equivalence principle...”

“...Through the experiments and proofs above, we can see that all

the objects in a gravitational field has the same acceleration, which can be summarized as the equivalence of inertial mass and gravitational mass...”

With the manuscripts he copied and the ideas he accumulated in the past, when Lucien reached a certain paragraph, the paper that was full of words and formulas would fly to him, and he could include them in his article perfectly after the slightest modification.

In such a way, Lucien was extremely fast in writing and connecting his ideas. It didn't take long before he described the equivalence principle and the general theory of relativity. Then, he began the relativistic explanation and the geometric description of gravity.

At this moment, the analysis tools that were completed together with Levski, Milina and other Tower arcanists, including Evans Geometry and tensor, were put into use, making the content esoteric and full of profound mysteries.

In order for the regular arcanists to understand, and to dispel the confusion caused by Mr. President's speech, Lucien added a metaphorical description:

“It can be seen from the geometric model above that space is like an elastic net and the objects in it are like balls that have fallen into the elastic net. Their mass will result to the collapse of the net and the warp of time and space around. Such warping will make other balls of smaller masses on the elastic net to roll towards the ball of greater masses. This is exactly the nature of gravity – warped space-time!”

“Therefore, it is evident that the time and space we are in is not the flat time and space as intuitively described by the Tower Geometry, but a warped space-time founded on the Evans Geometry with a curvature that is greater than zero!”

Boom!

As he wrote on, stars and gravity were changing in Lucien's cognitive world. The luminosity of his Host Star of Destiny was also changing fast!

Gradually, Lucien seemed to see a shadow of a boundless starry sky, which was watching everything from high above. As the starry sky was projected into his cognitive world, countless special and complicated symbols were generated.

His cognitive world flowed fast and interacted with his soul fast, naturally outlining a magic model inside his soul.

The ninth-circle spell, Time Stop!

Boom!

The thunder outside of the window came to an abrupt halt. The lightning stopped, and the rain dispersed in all directions as if it was being blown by winds from different directions.

A layer of profound darkness enshrouded Allyn, twisting the storm, the starlight that darted in, the space and the dark night!

It was a most weird and terrifying scene!

Without any break, after describing his theories with words that common arcanists could understand, Lucien began writing ‘Einstein field equations’, the core of the entire general theory of relativity!

.....

Looking at the appalling view outside of the window where everything seemed to be twisted, Hellen said in disbelief as her eyes widened, “This is the projection of gravity...”

Fernando nodded his head, as if he were much more eased. “This is the half-solidification of the cognitive world based on the gravity theory!”

When the founder of the gravity theory just expressed his confusion, believing that it had been an out-and-out mistake and that a supreme being had been manipulating everything, a sorcerer was half-solidifying his cognitive world based on the gravity theory?

Did he not hear Douglas’ speech?

Or did he find his own path and have even more confidence in gravity?

Inside the Sky Radio Station...

Samantha and other arcanists were all shocked by the creepy scene outside. The dark and twisted space tore the storm apart and spread out vague mist, and black, world-destroying monsters seemed to be lurking in the depths of the mist, waiting for the prey with their mouths wide open.

“What’s going on...” The arcanists murmured.

Samantha thought of something. She said in both shock and delight, “An archmage’s cognitive world is half-solidifying based on the gravity theory!”

Blake, who was inside his suburb manor, was also horrified by what he saw. He had never seen such a mysterious weather before! The twisted dark night, the contorted starlight, and the broken storm – everything was like the end of the world in the bards’ tales!

“What exactly is going on tonight?” Blake said in a low voice, his body shivering slightly.

.....

Far away from Allyn, Kritonia saw that the City in the Sky seemed to be surrounded by a pitch black ball, and that both the starlight outside and the lightnings inside had uncanny contortions. He immediately had a bad feeling.

“This is...” Subconsciously, Kritonia asked Benedict III’s projection.

Slightly coldly, Benedict III said, “This is not a quake of the cognitive world, but the half-solidification of it.”

“Also, it is based on the gravity theory.”

Kritonia asked in surprise, “Did he not hear the conversation between Douglas and you?”

As the quill dropped, the equations of gravitational field was fully demonstrated on Lucien's paper.

Boom!

Lucien was completely trapped in the transcendent shadow of the starry sky. His cognitive world changed drastically, and the special and complicated symbols began to be connected into a whole!

The magic model of 'Time Stop' in his soul, on the other hand, took shape without any trouble as he advanced into the ninth circle!

Boom!

Inside the twisted black storm, illusionary darkness emerged out of nowhere, absorbing the pouring rain, the blowing wind, the striking lightning, the shooting starlight, and the whole ball that caused the weather change. They were collapsed into the horrendous darkness that seemed able to swallow everything and destroy everything!

"This is..."

Fernando and Hellen looked at the scene, slightly shocked.

"This is..."

Samantha and the other arcanists could not understand the ghastly picture at all.

"This is..."

Kritonia was puzzled again.

Although he was trying to contain himself, Benedict III still gnashed his teeth, "This is greatly different from Douglas' gravity theory! Is this the true nature of gravity?"

"Who is he exactly?"

Chapter 571: Constant Changes

Lucien's cognitive world was still changing drastically. The most obvious sign was that the vertical edge of the space began to twist, turning the space from a cube into an oval sphere, as if a twisted barrier had been added to the periphery.

In the starry space, from both the two Host Stars of Destiny and other illusionary stars, the gravity began to twist the rays of light around. The space around them turned transparent and constricted rapidly, giving everybody who saw it an illusion.

The Host Star of Destiny which looked like a black hole was even more horrifying. When it revolved to the front, all the symbols of wind, fire, water, elements, electrons and others surged at it beyond control. It was an utter mess.

The quill in Lucien's hand did not stop at all, and he gave a few prophecies and proofs according to the previous description and the equations of gravitational field:

“Based on the speculation that the mass of the sun causes the twist of space, it is possible to calculate the redundant precession of the perihelion of the Morning Star, which agrees with observation...”

“Based on the time dilation caused by the gravitational field, and subtracting the time-slowness phenomenon caused by the artificial planets, we can conclude that the time on artificial planets are faster than on the ground... which agrees with the adjustment in actual operations...”

“Rays will deviate in the gravitational field. The angle of deviation near the sun is...”

“The redshift of spectral lines...”

After that, his thick paper came to a full stop. Most of the content was from the manuscripts that Lucien accumulated over the past years after some modification.

His eyes half closed, Lucien sensed the stars in his cognitive world. They were connected to the special and complicated symbols and constructed two extremely complicated magic models. He felt that his soul and his spiritual power were entirely absorbed into it after only a quick glance, and he was extremely exhausted and fatigued.

Lucien had the same feeling once when he read ‘Astrology and Elements’ for the first time and witnessed ‘Lord of Elements’ and ‘Prophet’, the two legendary classes.

“A new legendary class...” Not delighted at all, Lucien even frowned. After the half-solidification of the cognitive world, it would be difficult to reconstruct the fundamentals. He had always planned to use quantum mechanics instead of the general theory of relativity as his foundation!

The other legendary sorcerers certainly did not have Lucien’s worries before their advancement. When they reached their level, the constituents of their cognitive world and the path they would like to take were almost fixed. Half-solidification was the last and most difficult step. If he did not have the eighth-circle strength, he might’ve failed due to the insufficient spiritual power.

Of course, after the half solidification, there was one other problem for the archmages, which was to choose a legendary class that matched their cognitive world for easier advancement. Also, constructing basic legendary magics required spiritual power and mathematical knowledge.

That was why every grand arcanist who created a paradigm-shifting theory was easier to advance into legendary than regular archmages. Their legendary class was generated directly inside their cognitive world with the feedback of the real world, and it was an almost 100% match. What they needed was the tremendous spiritual power.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien rose and walked to the cyclotron. Putting a long-prepared metal plate into the magic circle, he placed a paraffin plate behind the metal plate.

Then, while the half-solidification of his cognitive world was not

completed yet, Lucien activated the cyclotron and bombarded the metal plate with Helium atomic nucleus.

BOOM! BOOM!

Due to the half-solidification of his cognitive world, Lucien had the illusion that he heard the sound of the Helium nucleus bombarding the metal plate. It was like an intense explosion.

Suddenly, the device behind the magic circle captured the traces of protons behind the paraffin plate and recorded their range and other data.

After the data was out, Lucien calculated with his powerful soul. Conservation of momentum, conservation of energy... The rays that were shot out by the protons gradually revealed their real appearance.

They were of similar masses with protons and could not be captured in the electromagnetic field.

They were exactly the neutrons that the sorcerers had been seeking since 'new alchemy' was published.

Because they were electric-neutral, they were not under the influence of magnetic field and electric field. Therefore, they could barely be discovered directly, and he had to count on similar, indirect ways!

BOOM!

This time, it was the real sound echoing next to Lucien's ears. The cognitive world had intense reactions again, and the nucleus inside finally revealed its true appearance. The protons and neutrons were combined under a certain unknown force.

The intangible and transcendent space arrived at Lucien's sensation again and interacted with his cognitive world, filling the incomplete magic models of 'atomic fission' and 'atomic fusion' quickly.

.....

Inside the 'Sky radio station'...

Samantha looked out of the window in delight. It was truly motivating that an archmage half-solidified his cognitive world based on gravity at such a moment!

The illusionary, all-absorbing darkness gradually dispersed. The storm was weaker and weaker. The weather change came to an end.

"Which Excellency's cognitive world has half-solidified? We have to interview him tomorrow!" Said Samantha in a rarely-seen smile. Her confidence had been greatly shaken a moment ago.

An archmage whose cognitive world had half-solidified, as long as the match of legendary class was above 50%, was very likely to advance into legendary. That was why she began to address him as Excellency.

Another arcanist said delightedly and in relief, "Also, it seems that the new gravity theory is closer to its true nature than the president's. I, for one, have never seen the all-absorbing darkness in any record."

Samantha was about to answer him, when a deafening explosion burst out and shivered the whole Allyn.

Looking out of the window in a daze, Samantha saw that the dark night turned into an abyss. Electromagnetic waves were on a rampage in the sky as visible light, and a rolling fire ball at their center spread out a terrifying storm of energy.

The fireball soared and rose in a mushroom cloud. However, compared to the mushroom cloud of 'Eternal Blaze' that Samantha witnessed the other day, its head was much smaller. The dark air and the fire were dancing with each other.

"What's this?" All of the arcanists were confused.

BOOM!

An explosion even louder burst out. Samantha felt that her ears were humming, and she couldn't hear anything else.

After the explosion, a sun rose from the outside, driving away the darkness and the curses most dazzlingly!

“This is...” Blake rushed to the window from his sofa. If he remembered correctly, that was exactly ‘Eternal Blaze’ he saw in Allyn the other day!

The only difference was that it was an actual image back then but an illusion right now!

“Is it Mr. Evans? Was he behind the weather change just now?”

Inside the Tower...

Annonis, who was speaking to Raventi, found it hard to close his mouth when he stared at what was before him in stun. How could the half-solidification of the cognitive world based on gravity become based on the ‘new alchemy’?

It was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of magic!

“Annonis, what were the two noises in Allyn about?”

“I seem to see a sun and a mushroom cloud rising in Allyn, right?”

“Hello, hello! Annonis?”

Raventi’s voice echoed, but Annonis was too preoccupied to reply.

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower, Fernando’s eyes widened the moment he saw the mushroom cloud. “It’s Lucien!”

“And I was wondering where he went!”

That was the legendary magic which only Douglas, Hathaway, Lucien and himself were aware of. For the other archmages, even if they could half-solidify their cognitive world with ‘new alchemy’, they would not be able to construct the model of the legendary magic due to the lack of feedback from the real world. Therefore, even if they could cause a similar phenomenon, it couldn’t have been as clear and complete!

“Lucien Evans?” Hellen looked at Fernando, surprised. “He has such a deep understanding about gravity? Also, why is the half-solidification of his cognitive world divided into two phases?”

Fernando gnashed his teeth, “How do I know? He must’ve hidden a lot of papers to himself again!”

In the sky far away from Allyn, Kritonia looked at the familiar mushroom cloud of ‘Eternal Blaze’ and asked in confusion, “How many archmages are half-solidifying their cognitive world?”

Benedict III shook his head and said in surprise, “I thought that it was an achievement when Fernando and Hathaway advanced to the peak of legendary, but it seems that it was invented by somebody else...”

When a legendary sorcerer reached the peak, their cognitive world would be completely melted with their soul. It would also trigger weather changes on an even vaster scale. However, they could hide in their demiplanes or alternate dimensions so that the enemy wouldn’t know it.

.....

In his cognitive world, the space was half-solidifying under the influence of gravity, and the elements like wind, fire and water were also half-solidifying because of the preliminary completeness of the internal structure. They burst into such an intense conflict that Lucien’s cognitive world was shaking!

“The discovery of neutron is not good enough.” Gritting his teeth, Lucien turned on the cyclotron again, except that he took out the metal plate and the paraffin plate this time and replaced them with a clear monocrystal.

Inside the cyclotron, the electrons were powered and darted out.

BOOM! BOOM!

Lucien had the illusion that cannonballs were being shot out again. Also, it was more intense than just now, as if a magnificent palace was collapsing abruptly in the crazy explosion!

For some reason, Lucien suddenly became extremely nervous, as if the simplest and deepest mysteries were about to be revealed.

The electrons hit the monocrystal and revealed a beautiful, dreamy pattern through the alchemical device. It was so shocking and unbelievable!

Looking at that, Lucien closed his eyes full of satisfaction.

It was a classic image of diffraction. As a fundamental particle, electrons revealed a diffraction image that only waves could present!

“Waves and particles, what are you significance if you exist independently without each other ¹ ?”

A quote that Lucien read in his previous life occurred to him. The vast and transcendent starry sky descended again, in a more compatible way with the real world and the cognitive world.

Inside his cognitive world, the electrons outside of the atomic structure spread out. Like a cloud that covered everything, it suppressed the half-solidification caused by gravity.

.....

Kritonia and Benedict III watched the mushroom cloud turn into a dark cloud and enshrouded Allyn with the illusionary, ubiquitous monochrome, finding it impossible to understand it.

“This is a projection of what?” Kritonia expressed his puzzlement again.

Benedict III shook his head but did not reply.

Fernando, Hellen and Samantha watched the same scene from the Allyn magic tower, equally unclear what projected it. However, the cloud was soon gone, and the weather change came to a complete end.

“It should be a regular projection during the half-solidification based on ‘new alchemy’. It may not necessarily be associated with

existing theories.” Samantha muttered to herself, soon dropping the ambiguous and brief phenomenon behind.

Also, she had vaguely guessed who it was!

Seeing that the weather change stopped, Fernando said to Hellen, “I’ll ask Lucien to participate in ‘News of the World’, introduce his gravity theory, and announce the half-solidification of his cognitive world, so that everybody can be stabilized from this incident.”

“You will keep trying to open the Land of Truth.”

Chapter 572: Gratitude

The changes in the cognitive world came to a full stop. Except for the additional special magic models and symbols, it seemed no different from the past. However, if one were to observe it more carefully, they would discover the curves at the edge of the world and around the stars. Also, the light spots of elements everywhere were much clearer. The protons and neutrons were restrained by an uncanny force, and the electrons around them were in the shape of a cloud. When they were observed, however, they were immediately reduced into particles.

As the background, the other three fundamental forces had minor changes, too. The electromagnetic waves and light were connected to ‘wind’, and the uncanny force that restrained the atomic nucleus glimmered with ‘water’.

The internal members of the atom gathered in groups into different magic symbols, turning into the models of ‘Atomic Fission’ and ‘Eternal Blaze’, two legendary spells. The two models joined with even more complicated symbols into a dizzying cubic pattern.

“Is this the legendary class based on ‘new alchemy’?” Lucien observed with interest. Because he hadn’t really entered the realm of quantum mechanics yet, there were no corresponding legendary spells, and it was still the ‘fission’ and ‘fusion’ like before.

The fundamental legendary magic was the most basic skill of a legendary class. They were shorter and easier to release, and they were much more powerful than the non-fundamental legendary magics. For a legendary class, there could only be two fundamental magics at first, but as they dug deeper into the field, the number of such magics might grow.

For example, the advanced fundamental magics of ‘Demigod-lich Howling’ were ‘Demigod-lich Howling’ and ‘Life Ritual’, and those of the Lord of Storm were ‘Furious Storm’ and ‘Storm Barrier’.

Lucien’s legendary class based on ‘new alchemy’ was unique in that

neither of the two fundamental legendary magics depended on his demiplane. However, 'Eternal Blaze' could only be performed at least in the level three of legendary.

Lucien found two pieces of powerful paper made of elvish rinds, the materials to make advanced scrolls. Then, he copied the new legendary class and its two fundamental legendary magics to it.

Bright, refreshing green light appeared, restraining and recording the mysterious cubic pattern. Of course, due to the nature of the materials, they could do nothing more than recording.

"How should I call the new legendary class?" Lucien pushed his monocle. Not bothering to think, he simply picked the most straightforward name.

As his quill fell on the paper, a few more words were added on one side of the paper.

"Atom Controller"!

As for the two fundamental magics, due to the limited time, Lucien still named them as before: "Atomic Fission' and 'Eternal Blaze'

As for the other legendary class based on the general theory of relativity, Lucien decided to keep it as his trump card and only discuss with his teacher about the fundamental magics included in the legendary class.

"This new legendary class will be named as 'Observer of Time and Space'... The two fundamental magics will be named as 'Gravity Collapse' and 'Space Staff'." Lucien named them according to their features. It was a pity that it was not the legendary class he was going to advance into. However, after the quantum system was established, it would have its own view of time and space, too.

After putting the paper into his storage, Lucien finally discovered that he had advanced into the ninth circle without him knowing and that he had an addition spell of 'Time Stop'. Frowning, he thought, "The higher one's level is, the more weird the so-called 'feedback of the real world' feels..."

“Also, the vast and transcendent space was never recorded by any other legendary sorcerers. They also described that something was looking down upon them from somewhere far away and intangible. I also had the feeling, but there was an additional ‘illusionary space’. The feedback of the real world seems to be its interaction...”

Unable to figure out what was going on, Lucien dropped his confusion and opened the door, only to encounter Fernando who had been teleported to his front.

“Let’s talk in ‘News of the World’.” Too impatient to satisfy his curiosity, Fernando brought Lucien to the broadcast room after a blink and asked Samantha, “Get prepared. Continue the livestream of ‘News of the World’. Lucien will be the host!”

“Alright.” Samantha looked at Lucien and the Lord of Storm curiously and turned on the broadcast magic circles without any delay.

The arcanists in the room stared at them in excitement, eager to know the theoretical support of the unusual phenomenon of gravity projection, which could recover their stricken confidence.

Seizing the moment, Fernando asked Lucien, “What new theories have you got?”

Thinking for a moment, he added, “Are they disruptive?”

Lucien’s lips twitched. “Master, I told you before that I was trying to include gravity in the special theory of relativity and extrapolate it to a more general frame of reference. I was still making preparations, but what happened today forced me to finish it in advance. Based on this system, there will be an explanation closer to the truth regarding the nature of gravity.”

“An explanation regarding the nature of gravity...” Fernando seemed relieved. “As long as your explanation is not that a supreme being created gravity, it will be fine. What about the changes that followed?”

Lucien confessed the excuses he prepared. “I stayed in the Atom

Institution to run the experiments in search of neutrons. I was too excited after the half-solidification of my cognitive world and thereby completed the experiments, ascertaining the existence of neutrons. Therefore, the legendary class of 'new alchemy' was fed back, allowing my cognitive world to evolve that way."

"That's too coincidental! You may trick the outsiders, but not me!" Fernando roared in a low voice. He suspected that Lucien had always known how to find neutrons, except that he never did the experiments because he had other purposes, say, obtaining more reference credits with new alchemy. "You completed it at such a moment because you wanted your legendary class to lean towards the new alchemy instead of gravity and the theory of relativity?"

Lucien smiled rather embarrassedly, "Yes. The field of atoms is my foundation and my future direction."

After accepting Lucien's explanation, Fernando held back his urge of roaring. "Give me your paper. You go and prepare your speech."

Lucien nodded and gave his paper to his teacher, before he sat across Samantha.

At this moment, Hellen, in her white magic robe, also arrived at the broadcast room.

"Why are you here?" Fernando glared at Hellen, not caring about the courtesy for a lady at all.

Hellen nodded and greeted him. "Oliver came. He is much better than me in space blockage. So, he is opening the Land of Truth. I'm here to see Evans' paper."

She talked in secret messaging, in case the arcanists in the room were panicked.

Fernando raised the paper that he had yet to open, and they saw the long title:

'A Relativistic Interpretation and Geometric Description of Gravity and a System of Relativity Under a More General Frame of Reference'.

“The theory of relativity...” Hellen recalled that Lucien claimed that gravity would be included in the system. She did not expect that it would be completed so soon.”

The two of them began to read the paper attentively.

Samantha, on the other hand, smiled and spoke to the magic circle before her. “Just now, our radio station was heisted by Benedict III, whose lies may have caused a certain range of panic. We apologize to all the sorcerers for our mistake. In the next moment, Mr. Lucien Evans will clarify what happened earlier to everyone.”

All the arcanists in the room held their breath.

.....

Inside the villa, Blake, who was still dwelling in the consecutive weather changes, suddenly heard the pleasant voice. He then realized that Miss Lark had resumed the livestream.

“What’s the Congress’ explanation on the matter? What will Mr. Evans say?”

Nervous and hopeful, he squatted next to the radio and listened to Lucien’s voice wholeheartedly: “What happened just now was the Church’s scheme. There’s nothing worth talking about.”

Lucien was unaware of what was hidden in the conversation or the president’s actual circumstances. So, he merely dropped the subject.

However, Blake, as well as other arcanists before the radio, found it too unsatisfactory and unacceptable.

Raventi, in the headquarters of the Will of Elements, finally got Annonis’ answer and learnt that somebody’s cognitive world half-solidified. He was immediately relieved. Thankfully, it was not a disaster.

After he learnt the explanation about the matter, the president’s confusion about gravity returned to his head again, making him wonder the true nature of gravity. At this moment, Lucien’s clarification made him frown. It was too ambiguous. Was there

really something wrong?

“There’s nothing worth talking about, because Benedict III’s questions do not necessarily depend on the First Cause. I have my own understanding about the nature of gravity.”

What?

Raventi, Annonis, Blake and other sorcerers listening before the radio looked at the black box in shock, as if they were trying to directly see Lucien through it.

Inside the broadcast room, Samantha and the other arcanists were astounded, too. They only hoped that Lucien had done slightly deeper studies on gravity and did not expect that he would answer the ultimate question that overwhelmed Douglas just now. That was one of the greatest enigmas in the field of gravity!

Hellen furrowed her eyebrows. The equivalence principle and the general theory of relativity were easy to understand for her, but the geometric description later stunned her.

In confusion, she said to Fernando, “I know every word and every symbol, but I don’t know what they mean when they are connected...”

Fernando had trouble understanding it himself. “This is an application of Evans Geometry and the related tools of analysis. If you haven’t studied ‘Nature’ in the past three years, I fear that you will find it hard to understand the paper.”

He had studied ‘Nature’ to check his student’s papers. That was why he could manage to follow the paper.

“You should know that I’ve been trying to melt the theory of gravity into the relativistic system and fix the problem that it cannot be extrapolated to all frames of reference. As a matter of fact, I completed the paper on the special theory of relativity a year ago, and I have been working on the problem since. It was a rather difficult journey, particularly when I realized that the previous geometric system could not describe the theory. It was not until I

accidentally discovered that Evans Geometry and the related tools that I worked on could support the theoretical system perfect that I made a groundbreaking breakthrough.”

Lucien’s unhurried speech eased the nervous arcanists such as Blake, who thought that he might have really found the nature of gravity.

“...When the theory based on the new geometry was about to take shape, I hit the bottleneck again as I couldn’t find the answers to many problems. It was not until I heard the conversation fabricated by Benedict III that I was inspired and perfected the final formulas. I have to thank my teacher Fernando, the Congress of Magic, and Benedict III, for helping me obtain the general theory of relativity and the explanation on the nature of gravity.”

Most of the arcanists in the room were amused by Lucien’s words. Blake and other people smiled, too. Their previous confusion and loss were entirely gone.

Far away from Allyn, Kritonia listened to the electromagnetic signals that Benedict III intercepted and looked at him, who was flickering, in worry.

“Excellent. Well said.” Benedict III said emotionless.

Chapter 573: Dawn of Astrology

Chapter 573: Dawn of Astrology

“This is one of the two premises of this paper, which I have named the equivalence principle...”

Blake did not find it hard to understand or accept that gravitational mass and inertial mass could be described as equal under an appropriate measure system. Some arcanists had done corresponding research and obtained accurate data. However, they all considered the equivalence of the two masses as a coincidence and did not study the deeper things behind the coincidence.

Listening to Lucien’s brief introduction to the experiment and the data, Blake felt that his head was swelling. He simply took out a piece of paper and a quill, recording and calculating on the table where the magic radio was placed, as careful as a student who was attending the class of a master.

Most of the arcanists who were listening to the broadcast were more or less doing the same. They did not usually have the opportunity to receive the guidance of someone who was half a grand arcanist. Also, what was reflected in the weather changes just now made them curious and excited, too.

“...This concludes the general special of relativity. In the next, I will deduce and construct the whole system with tools such as Evans Geometry and tensor analysis. Because many complicated notions will be involved, I will only give a general introduction so that you can know what is going on...”

Blake’s quill stopped after that. He could understand every single word that Mr. Evans said, but he had no idea what they were talking about when the words were connected. Dizziness spread out in his eyes. Weird, complicated words, symbols and formulas entered into his head without denoting any actual meaning.

It made him feel so lightheaded as if he had entered an obscure dream.

“...I thought that my arcana knowledge was good enough, particularly in mathematics, but today I’ve realized that I haven’t even touched the threshold yet...”

“...Are the senior-rank arcanists working on such stuff every day? But why can I understand half of the articles on ‘Arcana’...”

The same questions were echoing inside most of the senior-rank arcanists, too. They had been very confident about their arcana expertise and their intellectual faculty, but they began to suspect themselves after hearing what Lucien Evans said. It was so hard to understand that they could barely follow!

“Conclusion! Give me your conclusion first!”

They shouted in their heart crazily, deciding to listen to the nature of gravity first and study the paper later.

...

In the Tower...

Annonis also heard Lucien’s speech from his magic radio soon after the weather changes. He was solemn and even slightly skeptical.

For a level-nine arcanist and a ninth-circle archmage of the school of astrology, the gravity theory was of paramount importance. If he could grasp the nature of gravity and use it to solve certain problems that had been bothering him, he was confident to become a real ‘Astrologer’!

However, he retained the basic suspicion until he saw the paper and confirmed it. If the nature of gravity could be found so easily, Mr. Douglas wouldn’t have been so lost and confused.

He knew that Lucien Evans could stabilize the storm that Mr. President’s speech caused by proposing a theoretical explanation regarding the nature of gravity, so it was normal that he exaggerated it a bit. But he was still hoping that Lucien Evans could really resolve the nature of gravity.

Annonis merely listened and calculated in his head when the two

basic principles were introduced, but he became more and more attentive when Lucien began the geometric description.

At some point, a pile of paper and a quill floated before him, helping him record and calculate things. Confusion beamed out of his face now and then.

The abstruse mathematical papers on Nature were useless for most arcanists and did not receive their attention, but Annonis was an archmage adept at the field. He had even published a few similar papers. However, even so, he couldn't understand it any better. The paper was much more incomprehensible than he imagined.

Annonis' library was extremely quiet. Nothing could be heard except for Lucien's voice and the noise when the quill brushed the paper.

Suddenly, Annonis sensed something, only to discover Bergner, the Prophet, had walked in at some point. He was also recording and calculating the paper with ancillary magical circles and quills.

Not asking anything, Annonis focused his attention on Lucien's speech again.

In the headquarters of the Will of Elements, Raventi, due to the lack of mathematical knowledge, could only record Lucien's key points for future reference.

...

Inside the Nekso Palace...

Since she had guided her father in his tour after her father arrived, Natasha did not listen to 'Arcana Voice' or 'News of the World' today. Because the thunderstorm in Allyn was too far away, she did not pay much attention to it and merely thought that it was a local rain. After all, it was very typical in the summer.

It was not until the light of 'Eternal Blaze' illuminated the area that Natasha sensed something wrong. She hurried to contact Lucien. After failing to reach out to him, she feared that she might interrupt Lucien and wisely paused, seeking to talk to Hathaway instead.

After confirming that Lucien and Allyn were alright, she was relieved and turned on the magic radio, hoping to find out what exactly happened in Allyn.

Little did she expect that her most familiar voice would spread out from the magic radio, which made her completely relaxed.

The symbols and formulas were too complicated for Natasha to understand, but they could not stop her from listening to Lucien's speech attentively.

As she listened, she held her cheek with her right hand, and her lips curled into a smile with delight beaming out of her eyes.

...

In the broadcast room of the Sky Radio Station...

Including Samantha, all the arcanists looked at Lucien innocently and ignorantly, as if he were speaking a nonexistent language.

Seeing the looks on their faces, Lucien realized that he had gone too deep. He hurried to end the geometric description and the equations of gravitational field and came to the conclusion:

"From above, we can see that mass causes the curve of time and space, which leads to the phenomenon of gravity. The nature of gravity is the curved space-time. We can make such an analogy..."

While the description of an elastic net was not accurate, it made Samantha and the other arcanists beamed with interest. They more or less understood the nature of gravity.

"That explains a lot..."

"Then, is it a force at all?"

"Can it be proved by any phenomena?"

...

Whispers of excitement and suspicion filled the room. Even Hellen

was asking Fernando. That was an interpretation of the nature of gravity from an unprecedented perspective. It seemed to be a problem of the four-dimensional space, about the movement of objects in a curved time and space.

“This is completely beyond my imagination...”

“The model of time and space seems even more perplexing right now...”

Blake and the arcanists who listened to the magic radio were partly amazed by the unbelievable and yet spectacular explanation and partly rather suspicious about it, because the nature of time and space and gravity that Lucien described was too complicated even for people to imagine them!

The Prophet and the Astrologer in the Tower, however, looked gloomy. It was completely in violation of their speculations on the nature of gravity, which was now possibly not even a force.

Thankfully, there had never been an authoritative, well-accepted explanation about the nature of gravity, and they dare not found their cognitive world based on that. That was why it did not shake.

“This has to be confirmed by phenomena!”

“This needs to be proved!”

The two masters of the school of astrology said the same. After Levski Geometry, they had agreed that they must not blindly disapprove something with intuition and experience. However, any theory had to be proved by phenomena and experiments, or they would remain hypotheses.

Every arcanist had similar doubt. They listened to Lucien as he went on, “From the perspective of a curved time and space, it is possible to calculate the redundant precession of the perihelion of the Morning Star...”

The calculation was relatively simple. Many arcanists began to calculate in person as Lucien introduced. The Prophet was so excited that he was almost shivering.

Annonis understood him quite well, because the problem had baffled the school of astrology for a long time. The motion system based on the previous gravity theory did not agree with the observation.

The Prophet was suspicious that the error was caused by other stars there, but no traces of redundant gravity could be found after he explored the place in a space jump.

Many arcanists' hair became white and their face was wrinkled for the question.

The Prophet had got the answer after Lucien introduced the calculation procedures.

"They're the same... It's very close to observation..." The Prophet murmured in excitement, "Is this the true nature of gravity..."

Annonis also got the final data. His eyes were suddenly covered in water, and he lowered his head to cover it, feeling satisfied that their years of hard work finally gained an answer.

The Prophet suddenly spoke loudly, "This is an achievement decades more advanced than the current arcana theories! I have envisioned a great development of the school of astrology!"

"I can now die without regrets after seeing this!"

Annonis held back his excitement and his tears. "Mr. Prophet, how can you die now? I still want to learn and explore the boundless space more deeply!"

After Lucien solved the problem of the artificial planets with gravitational time dilation, Annonis was already convinced of the system. His body shivering, he looked at the Prophet and said, "With Lucien's relativistic system, the road ahead of you seems clear and bright again."

"Is yours not?" The Prophet replied with a smile and remarked with complicated feelings, "In the future, nobody will have the courage to say that Lucien Evans made a wrong decision when he chose the school of astrology at the beginning..."

“I’m going to study the paper!” Said Annonis excitedly. He seemed to have seen the dawn of the half-solidification of his cognitive world!

...

In the sky far away from Allyn...

Kritonia rubbed his eyebrow. “So to speak, my blood power is to control the changes of gravity and matter?” He did not understand much of the paper.

Benedict III’s shadow, on the other hand, mumbled in a low voice, “Lucien Evans...”

Chapter 574: Value

Inside the villa at the suburb of Allyn...

Blake completely devoted himself to the calculation of the redundant precession of the Morning Star at the perihelion according to Lucien's formula.

During Lucien's intentional pauses, he wrote quickly, his quill not stopping at all.

Suddenly, he raised his head, his eyes full of shock and disbelief. Then, he rushed into the library searching the arcana and magic books.

He was not a sorcerer who was good at astrology and force fields, and he did not remember the observation of the redundant precession carefully. However, the impression he had about the number was burning inside his head, making him unable to control himself and his head was swollen.

The result of his calculation seemed very close to the observed value in his impression!

What did it mean?

What did it suggest?

One book after another was drawn out by him, only to be thrown away after his casual look. Finally, he found his childhood book from a long, long time ago – 'Fifteen Conundrums About Astrology'!

His hands shivering, he looked into the table of contents and found 'The problem that the observed precession of the Morning Star at the perihelion does not agree with the prediction of Douglas' motion system – Page 39'.

Turning the pages quickly, Blake saw the eye-catching data at first glance.

After a crack, the hard-covered book fell to the carpet with a dull noise. Blake stood where he was like a statue.

The two values were so close. What did it mean?

At this moment, Lucien's voice spread out of the magic radio again:

"After calculation, we can determine the redundant precession of the Morning Star at the perihelion to be... which basically agrees with observation."

His words were filled with such powerful charm that Blake was suddenly back to himself, whose facial muscles were horribly twisted because of his wild joy.

What did it mean?

It meant that the explanation on the nature of gravity had both the theoretical support and factual confirmation!

It meant that Mr. Lucien Evans' general theory of relativity was the theory closest to the truth of gravity so far!

It meant that the problem that baffled Mr. President and many other arcanists was not unanswerable. It was unnecessary to introduce a supreme being for gravity to be self-consistent! Mr. Lucien Evans had offered an explanation that completely surpassed the age and any imagination!

It meant that the path of arcana was not wrong. There were perhaps a lot of unresolved problems, but everybody was always on the path of working them out!

Although he could hardly understand Lucien's general theory of relativity, it did not prevent Blake from deducing and calculating with part of the conclusions. Based on the result, he believed that the theory could explain the nature of gravity. His previous confusion and loss were entirely gone.

Perhaps, it was exactly because he did not understand it that he had no suspicion and directly went for the answer.

The nature of gravity had been explained, and so would the other baffling arcana problems, as long as they forever pressed forward in exploration and research and never gave up!

“Mr. President, have you heard Mr. Evans’ theory? I believe that your confusion must be gone now...”

.....

“After calculating, we can determine the redundant precession of the Morning Star at the perihelion to be... which basically agrees with observation.”

When Lucien said that, Samantha watched him in shock and excitement in the broadcast room. The problem that bothered the school of astrology for years was resolved in such a way. Also, it proved that Lucien’s explanation on the nature of gravity was closer to the truth.

She had been admiring Lucien’s talents and achievements, but she was very confident in herself when it came to horoscopes. Because Lucien had never made any accomplishments in this field, she never realized that he had such astonishing, profound and innovative understandings about gravity and astrology.

Looking at Lucien who was speaking casually, she had the same feeling when Mr. President answered questions for her teacher and herself. They were both so calm and remarkable.

In a trance, Samantha thought to herself. After Lucien resolved the time error on the artificial planets by introducing the gravitational time dilation, her cognitive world was suddenly seething. Even though she had only just learnt the basic content, her cognitive world was already half-solidifying. Her teacher, Neeshka, was an authority in mathematics and only second to Levski and Levski in geometry and tensor analysis. So, she was quite good at that field, too.

“This is definitely a groundbreaking paper... No, a paper that surpasses the age!”

Around her, most arcanists looked more or less the same, except that their achievement was not as great as Samantha because of their insufficient mathematical expertise.

However, the panic that Douglas' speech brought to them vanished. Confusion was acceptable as long as confidence was still there! Lucien Evans' accomplishment at such a moment showed them the bright prospect of arcana. Even though they could not understand it, the conclusion and the final calculation seemed fine.

Hellen had stopped reading the paper and decided to read 'Nature' of the past four years after she was back. She said to Fernando in a low voice, "I seem to have seen another Mr. President..."

"Sometimes, he is not that stupid." Fernando snorted and intended to criticize his student, but still gave a remark of 'pretty good' – for his standard – in the end. Then, he continued reading the paper.

It was the most intricate and abstruse paper he had ever read. He mumbled, "If Douglas sees this..."

In Allyn, in Rentato, in Salyvaor, in Cocus, in the Solar Islands and the Pearl Islands, the arcanists and apprentices, no matter how much they really understood, became refreshed and confident again.

Lucien cleared his throat and closed his backup paper. "This is my opinion on the nature of gravity. It fits the phenomena observed so far, and I have offered a few prophecies to be prove it. I believe that we will have better understanding about gravity and space after the equations of gravitational field are solved."

Then, Lucien suddenly changed the topic, "However, I can only say that my paper is closer to the truth, but it is not the truth. Flaws about the theory will be found, and it is only applicable in a certain range. Up until so far, what we can grasp is the relative truth but not the absolute truth..."

Seizing the opportunity, Lucien introduced certain notions he talked about earlier again. Samantha, Blake and other arcanists nodded slightly, gaining a deeper understanding about the development of

arcana in the past hundreds of years.

“...I believe that everybody can be confused now and then during studies. I had similar situations myself and I still do. I am often lost and sometimes lose confidence... This is perfectly normal. There’s no need to feel that you can’t find any field of research. Too many things are out there waiting for us to study.”

“‘The more you know, the more ignorant you feel you are.’ That’s a philosophical proverb, but I would like to add something else to it. ‘It is exactly the reason why we should work hard and stop ignorance from becoming our label. Thinking and exploration should be what we are most proud of when we live in this world.’”

Clap, clap, clap. The arcanists in the broadcast room applauded. They were already freed from the incident just now. Even if the conversation was real, so what? Everybody could be lost and unconfident now and then, but they could also resume their journey after their mood got better!

Seeing that Samantha was about to talk, Lucien hinted her to wait and smiled, “As a matter of fact, I finished another experiment just now, which proved the existence of neutrons.”

What?

The arcanists in the broadcast room and other places couldn’t close their mouth. While accomplishing such a paradigm-shifting paper, Lucien Evans discovered neutrons?

Was it a night of miracles tonight?

For the sorcerers who were adept at elements, such as Larry, K, Timothy, Ulysses and Annick, they felt blood surging into their heads, and they almost passed out.

The discovery of neutrons meant the fundamental validity of the new alchemy. It meant the age of grand development for the school of elements!

Controlling his body, Raventi listened to the experiment procedures carefully.

After Lucien finished, he rushed into his laboratory as if he had cast Advanced Speed on himself.

Discovering neutrons from the conservation of momentum and energy after collisions had always been his methodology, but the materials had to be tried again and again. He estimated that it would take him three years to finish the experiment. But right now, everything was different. With Lucien's experiment, he touched the edge of neutrons directly.

Finding the materials and making a plate, Raventi turned on the cyclotron and let the Helium atom nucleus hit the metal plate again and again.

When he captured the traces when protons were blown out, he had the feeling that his hands were shaking beyond his control.

When the data was recorded, he felt that his eyes were blurry.

When he calculated that the rays that blew out protons were neutrons, two suns seemed to be rising inside his grey eyes.

BOOM!

Rentato was suddenly enshrouded in clouds and thunder!

"Is somebody's cognitive world half-solidifying because of Lucien's paper and experiment?" Natasha looked at the sky out of the window delightedly and proudly.

Kritonia, after hearing Lucien's introduction, noticed the weather change in Rentato in shock. "Another archmage's cognitive world is half-solidifying? Is it because of the explanation on the nature of gravity or the discovery of neutrons?"

"Judging from the disorder of elements and the shadow of the atomic nucleus, it's the discovery of neutrons." Benedict III was also watching Rentato.

Kritonia found it hard to accept. "Before, I only knew that the improvement of arcana studies could strengthen the sorcerers, but can a single paper and one experiment result in such astonishing

effects?”

“Does Lucien’s paper and experiment equal five legends?”

“Both the general theory of relativity and the new alchemy are far more valuable than five legends.” Benedict III’s voice became cold. “We did not pay enough attention to Lucien. I will raise his rank on the Cleansing List again and ask ‘Night Executioner’, the top night watcher, to deal with him in person.”

‘Night Executioner’, the top night watcher, was a legendary sorcerer. Therefore, the Church never included him when it announced its power, but only claimed that it had nineteen saint cardinals, five divine knights (Melmax, Anthony, Beliel, Stone and Vaharall). However, when the Congress of Magic and other forces evaluate the strength of the Church, they would still include ‘Night Executioner’ and consider the number of the top experts of the Church to be twenty.

Kritonia found it impossible to understand the consequences of arcana studies, but the consequences had already happened. “Your Holiness, what’s Lucien’s rank going to be?”

“The thirteenth. The Fallen Morning Star will be right after all the top legends.” Replied Benedict III unemotionally.

After the explosion of ‘Eternal Blaze’, the top eleven on the Cleansing List were all experts at the peak of legendary. Ranking from the first to the eleventh were: the pontiff of the northern heretics; ‘Emperor of Arcana’, Danisos; ancient vampire, Dracula; primordial dragon of time, Danisos; the elvish queen; the Prince of Abyss and Duke of Bronze on the first level of hell; Edwyn Brook, the Emperor of Control; Fernando, the Lord of Storm; Hathaway, Master of Infinite Oceans and Lord of Elements; and Rhine, the Silver-eyed Count, who could borrow the power of the Silver Moon and be as strong as the peak of legendary for a short while.

Chapter 575: Reward From the Congress

Hearing what Benedict III said, Kritonia said after a brief silence, “Your Holiness, I will assist ‘Original Fire’ in secret as a way to answer for my sins when I was tricked by Sard. I hope that the Church could send someone to rescue the main members of my family.”

‘Original Fire’ was the legendary class of ‘Night Executioner’. The South Church preferred to address the night watchers by their nicknames, and the outsiders preferred their class name.

“I have already felt your repentance. I believe that the Lord will be happy about that, too. When the situation is less intense, I’ll ask Vaharall to sent night watchers to help your family. By then, I will grant you the title of duke again with a fief near the Holy City.” Said Benedict III peacefully.

Kritonia was a level-three legendary expert, but he was too eye-catching, and Rentato was watched over by Hathaway, Davey, Winston and other legendary experts in turns. Not far away, it was Allyn, the main base of the Congress of Magic. It was more difficult for him to save anyone than it was for the regular night watchers. He even suspected that Natasha imprisoned the main members of his family exactly to allure him to save them. Chances were that the most dangerous traps had been set up there, and he would be collectively attacked by a lot of legendary sorcerers. Therefore, he had to ask for the help of other forces and wait out the enemy’s wariness.

So, having got the pope’s promise, Kritonia smiled. “Your benevolence is remarkable.”

“With you working together with ‘Night Executioner’, I can already see Lucien Evans’ ending. However, he will definitely be thoroughly protected by the Congress of Magic. You must be careful. A living legendary expert is much more important than a dead one.” Benedict III expressed his concerns for Kritonia and then remarked with mixed feelings, “There probably won’t be any greater

achievement in this operation. You will hide in the northland for now. I'll ask the Night Executioner to contact you."

He, on the other hand, intended to return to the Holy City and completely ban magic radios for a while.

Until today, although he had recognized the radio stations' guidance in thinking, he did not expect it to be powerful. If the ordinary believers listened to it all the time, they would deviate from their faith and fall into hell.

However, Benedict III knew that it could not be banned forever. The nobles, after being less restrained, would definitely chase after the luxury entertainment. Therefore, he was thinking to establish the Church's own radio station and set up divine power circles to monitor electromagnetic signals.

Kritonia grew solemn. "Yes, Your Holiness."

The shadow in his hands were gone, replaced by vague spots of light.

Looking at the spots, Kritonia sighed. Before, legendary knights were highly autonomous about missions and commands, and he wouldn't have needed to do anything to eliminate a eighth-circle sorcerer. However, when one step went wrong, all the steps that followed went wrong...

"I have to establish my own brightness on this path..." Kritonia turned around and left.

.....

Inside the villa at the suburb of Allyn...

As a member of the Atom Institution, Blake understood the value of neutrons perfectly. It meant that the internal model of atoms constructed by the new alchemy was fundamentally valid, and that the sorcerers who were good at elements would embrace a golden age. It was like Mr. Blake turned the school of electromagnetics from an insignificant field into one of the four most powerful schools within the Congress of Magic after he founded the classic

electromagnetic system.

“The discovery of neutrons fortifies the existence of particles. After a legendary sorcerer modifies the meditation of photons based on that, my spiritual particle and my soul will soar... As a matter of fact, there’s already hope that I will advance into the third-circle very soon.” Blake thought to himself excitedly.

After Raventi, Gaston, Chloe and Lacie Carter proposed the random molecular movement of liquid and explained the nature of the phenomenon, the question of whether atoms existed had been determined, which made the sorcerers of the school of elements such as Blake improve more or less.

Ding, ding, ding. Something was ringing in his pocket. Blake hurried to take out the mobile communication item and pressed the button at the center.

“Hey, Blake, did you listen to Mr. Evans’ speech just now?” Alfalia asked, her voice shivering.

Blake replied, equally unable to control his feelings. “I did. It’s truly a night of miracles tonight! Two revolutionary theoretical systems have been established!”

“Don’t be so rash. Although the relativistic system can be proved by phenomena, it only means that the conclusion is correct and does not suggest that the procedures to reach the conclusion are so, until the Arcana Review Board examines it. Of course, I personally would like to believe in the explanation about the nature of gravity.” Alfalia tried to make herself sound calm, but she still expressed her admiration in the end.

In his excitement, Blake became straightforward and talkative. He chuckled, “I’m very suspicious that the good sirs of the Arcana Review Board can understand the paper. It may require the grand arcanists to review.”

“I think so, too. Mr. Evans’ basic introduction was already incomprehensible to me... Hu, I can’t wait to confirm the existence of neutrons myself tomorrow...” Alfalia retained the basic rationally

and knew she had to confirm the experiment in person. Because of her level, she did not have the advanced facilities such as cyclotron in her house.

Reminded by her, Blake also looked at the Allyn magic tower passionately. "I don't think I can sleep tonight... After neutrons are proved, there will be three pillars in the field of arcana: Brook's electromagnetism, Evans' relativistic system that includes Mr. President's theories, and the new alchemy..."

"Yes. We need to call him His Excellency Evans now, though." Alfalia smiled.

Blake replied, his voice drifting, "Yes, His Excellency Evans!"

.....

Because they were on a high floor in the magic tower, Lucien and Samantha soon noticed the weather changes in Rentato.

"Disorder of elements, shadow of atom model... Is it Raventi, Donald or Morris?" Fernando dropped the paper and walked to the window.

In Rentato, they were the only three archmages in the field of elements whose cognitive world bordered on half-solidification.

Lucien also stood next to his teacher and smiled, "Whoever it is, it is a success of the Congress."

That being said, Lucien secretly hoped that it was Raventi or Morris.

"It's also your success. The existence of neutrons must've been proved." Hellen's voice was brisk but not indifferent, as if she were embracing a snow in warm clothes.

She believed that whether it was Raventi, Donald or Morris, they must've tested it many times in person before they accepted the existence of neutrons and changed their cognitive world with it.

Now that two grand arcanists were talking, Samantha could only

congratulate him with her eyes. The discovery of neutrons and the confirmation of the new alchemy would mean another Holm Crown Ring, but it did not matter. What mattered was that Lucien Evans would be given the glorious title of grand arcanist after tomorrow!

“Congratulations, Mr. Evans.” Samantha said to herself quietly.

After the weather changes stopped, Fernando said to Lucien, “Come to Hellen’s library with me.”

Lucien nodded and followed the two grand arcanists into Hellen’s library. Then he saw Oliver who was trying to break the blockage.

He nodded in greetings. “Congratulations, Lucien, a new grand arcanist!”

Then, he said with a smile of relief, “Your explanation has ended the panic. Also, I’ve sensed that Mr. President is trying to open the demiplane from inside. It’s obvious that he did not seclude himself voluntarily, and there must’ve been other problems with the conversation. With the assistance of the other few legends, perhaps, it will only take a day and a half to cancel the blockage of the Land of Truth.”

Hearing that the president was alive, and the demiplane was blocked by the Church, Lucien heaved a long sigh in relief. Hellen and Fernando were more or less pacified, too.

“Perhaps, your general theory of relativity will help Douglas find his path to becoming a demigod, but I fear that he’ll have to start reading ‘Nature’.” After Fernando was relaxed, he immediately began to joke around. Then, he said before Lucien replied, “The discovery of neutrons proves the correctness of the new alchemy. Although there may be parts that require modification and improvement, it won’t stop you from being acknowledged as a grand arcanist or obtaining a legendary item of the Congress.”

Every paradigm-shifting theoretical system meant the title of grand arcanist. So, the reward of legendary items seemed to be specifically for the grand arcanists.

“Can I choose one tomorrow?” Lucien revealed his obsession with money.

Fernando shook his head. “The Highest Council reached a consensus a long time ago that you would be given the title of grand arcanist for the new alchemy as long as neutrons were discovered. After Hellen proves your experiment, the treasury of the Congress will be opened for your selection. You sabotaged Benedict III’s scheme and revealed the value of the new alchemy. I fear that he will send legendary experts to deal with you. So, if you get a legendary item sooner, your safety can be better ensured.”

“Okay.” Lucien would certainly not turn down such an offer.

Fernando went on. “Your general theory of relativity will be reviewed by me and other arcanists who can understand it. It will be another paradigm-shifting achievement if there’s nothing wrong, and it can also be traded for a legendary item. However, I suggest you choose the ritual of ‘Origin of Magic’ instead of an item.”

He was thinking to invite the Prophet and other Tower arcanists who were adept at mathematics to review it together with himself and Douglas.

“What’s that ritual?” Lucien had never heard of the ritual before. It seemed to be only limited to the Highest Council.

Fernando nodded his head. “You will naturally enter the Highest Council after you become a grand arcanist. So, it doesn’t hurt to tell you in advance. This ritual of ‘Origin of Magic’ provides assistance for the ritual of legendary advancement. It requires the guidance of spiritual power of six legendary sorcerers, in cooperation with rare materials that are as precious as what legendary items are made of, and it is designed for the ninth-circle archmages whose spiritual power is not enough to make a breakthrough. Every such ritual will reduce the inventory of the Congress by one fifth.”

“Your cognitive world has half solidified, and you have a legendary class that is close to 100% match and legendary magic models that are engraved to your cognitive world. There will be high hopes for you to make an advancement with this ritual after you advance into

the ninth circle. After you become a legendary sorcerer, it will be terribly difficult to kill you, and you won't have to be chained to Allyn or Rentato without being able to go anywhere."

"You can stabilize your achievements with this incident. In two to three years, after you advance into the ninth circle, you will need the magic ritual to help you."

Because Lucien had been advancing fast and did not have a solid foundation, Fernando believed that it wouldn't be safe for his student to try to advance into legendary until at least ten years after he advanced into the ninth circle. Many accidents might happen during such a long period.

Lucien grimaced. "Master, I am already in the ninth circle."

Huh? Fernando thought that his ears had deceived him. Hellen and Oliver turned around and looked at him, too.

Chapter 576: Legendary Item

Lucien smiled rather awkwardly, “I had the feedback from the truth of the world when I wrote the paper on the general theory of relativity, which generated ‘Time Stop’, the space-time magic, directly inside my soul.”

The spells that involved time and space were an intersection of the schools of astrology, force field, transformation, electromagnetics and light-darkness. They were extremely complicated. The sorcerers who were not adept at the five schools could only construct the models with their mathematical expertise and spiritual power. They were much more difficult to learn than were the spells of the same level.

Lucien’s original plan was to build ‘Spell Sequencer’, ‘Raventi’s Flame Hell’, ‘Meteor Swarm’ and other spells he was good at when he advanced into the ninth circle, but out of his expectation, ‘Time Stop’, the ninth-circle magic that was as famous as ‘Cracking (Advanced)’, was generated on its own.

“Feedback from the real world...” After slight surprise, Fernando became solemn. Every grand arcanist was used to such feedback, which were repeatable and provable. That was also the reason why they were eager to figure out the mechanism of the feedback.

For the arcanists, writing a paper was the process of closure, which was accompanied by the confidence in the final result. They would finalize certain things that they considered for a long time and melt their spirits into it.

If the sketch and thinking alone could trigger the changes of the cognitive world, the wrong and flawed ideas at the beginning could be highly dangerous. It was possible that a grand arcanist’s head might be blown up because of an error he had during his calculation despite his amazing ideas.

Regarding the enigma that only received enough attention a hundred years after the Congress of Magic was founded, Fernando

asked for the details and realized that they were the same as before. Therefore, he held back his confusion and said, “Now that you have already advanced into the ninth circle, you can change the reward for your general theory of relativity into the ritual of ‘Origin of Magic’. You will stay in Allyn without going anywhere or telling it to anybody. After Douglas gets out of his demiplane and we decide the value of your paper together, we will hold the ritual of legendary advancement with the assistance of ‘Origin of Magic’ for you.”

For the archmages whose cognitive world had half-solidified, the Congress of Magic would reimburse them for the cost of the ritual of legendary advancement, but the archmages who planned to help their cognitive world half-solidify with magic rituals not only needed to pay for the materials and the legendary sorcerers in the ancillary rituals, but also had to cover half of the cost for the legendary advancement.

It was very realistic but equal. No archmages ever burst into fury because of that.

“Master, would there be any insidious problems?” Naturally, Lucien would love to advance into legendary in advance, which would mean that his safety would be perfectly ensured. Otherwise, even though he had two legendary items, his spiritual power would be drained after he used one or two legendary spells. However, if there were too many insidious problems, Lucien wouldn’t mind staying in Allyn and Rentato for ten years. Natasha could pick up the Sword of Truth while level eight, but she also could only slash it two or three times in a battle.

Fernando cackled. “It’s such an expensive ritual that needs the help of six legendary sorcerers. How can there be any insidious problems? Well, the odds of failure are rather high, though. However, I’ll ask Douglas, Brook, Hathaway, Oliver and Hellen to host the ritual with me. That’s the most luxury lineup in the history of magic. The odds of failure will be greatly reduced. Also, since your foundation is not steady, it will take you more time for you to make advancement after you advance into legendary.”

“You have your own meditation skill, don’t you? In such a way,

after you advance into the level two of legendary, your foundation will be stabilized. Of course, you are only slow compared to other grand arcanists. For example, Douglas and Brook both reached the peak in only decades. It was much faster than the sorcerers whose match rate is low.”

There was no need to hesitate. Lucien nodded, “I’ll ask for the ritual of ‘Origin of Magic’ after the review of the general theory of relativity is completed.”

In the Congress of Magic, except for the seven grand arcanists, the legendary sorcerers were all below level three of level-one legendary. The Prophet, the Eye of Curse, the Master of Transformation and the Alchemy Master were in level two, and the Innovator, the Moon Scholar, Absolute Defense, the Monarch of Fate, the Sun King and the Light of Stars were in level one. Among them, the Light of Stars, who advanced only thirty years ago, was the weakest of all.

Seeing that Lucien had made up his mind, Fernando summoned other legendary sorcerers to help Oliver, and Hellen went to the laboratory to confirm the discovery of neutrons.

Soon, Hathaway and Brook arrived and asked for a copy of the paper from Lucien. Their mathematical abilities were exceptional and much stronger than Hellen, Oliver and Vicente’s. If Fernando hadn’t studied ‘Nature’ earlier, he wouldn’t have understood any more than they did. As for the regular legendary sorcerers, only the Prophet had equal mathematical abilities.

“The subscribers of ‘Nature’ will probably soar tomorrow. At least, I’ll be one of them.” Brook was not upset that Lucien made his cognitive world break and solidified at all but smiled gently.

Praised as the most incomprehensible journal, ‘Nature’ had only one thousandth of the subscribers that ‘Arcana’ did. More people only read it in the library when they needed to.

Even though it was funded by the Tower and Lucien and wouldn’t stop publishing, Levski, Neeshka, Milina and other arcanists were quite upset that their work was not appreciated by the public.

However, after Lucien's broadcast today, the discussion of the general theory of relativity would definitely be a hit. Everybody would get a copy of 'Nature' in case they couldn't follow other people in their conversations.

Lucien smiled. "Mathematics are the tools and foundations of arcana studies and the brightest gem on the crown of arcana. That was why I decided to establish 'Nature'."

"Yes, many arcanists today only have the mathematical ability to analyze magic models and refuse to work harder." Hathaway was rather indifferent about the discovery of neutrons, because she had realized that neutrons must be introduced to the magic models when she reverse engineered 'Eternal Blaze' and 'Atomic Fission'.

However, she did speak a rarely-seen long sentence. She seemed excited for the explanation of the nature of gravity and the talented idea.

Brook nodded and said, "Your idea that the speed of light is a constant reference is very enlightening, and so is your description on time and space. We have to figure out the nature of things."

The two grand arcanists did not say anything else because they had to help Oliver get Douglas out.

Lucien waited for a while patiently. A while later, Hellen walked out of the laboratory and declared, "It's indeed neutron. I'll bring you to the treasury of the Congress."

"Lucien, you may think of a tribute for yourself. If you do not want to waste your time on it, Oliver will be happy to do it for you." Fernando smiled next to the portal.

According to the tradition of the Magic Empire, every legendary sorcerer had their unique tribute. In the age of the Congress, the range had been expanded to all the grand arcanists who hadn't advanced into legendary.

Tributes were deeply associated with the legendary class and the specific fields. For example, Douglas' tribute was 'you are the elect

of magic and dominator of space; your light illuminates the path of arcana.’, Brook’s was ‘you are the master of the kingdom of electromagnetism who writes poems for the goddess’, Oliver’s was ‘you let elements return to where they should be; you travel between time and space’, Hellen’s was ‘you are the spirit of snow who dances the most beautiful changes in the world’, and Vicente’s was ‘your eyes put souls to sleep; you are the dominator of death’.

Hearing his name being mentioned, Oliver smiled, “I already considered it for you. ‘You are the truth of elements and the staff that masters space and time’. How does it sound?”

Lucien discovered that it was surprisingly fitting, so he smiled, “It’s indeed a poetic tribute. So be it.”

After deciding the tribute, Lucien followed Hellen to the end of the thirty-fifth floor of the Allyn magic tower. He saw a black gate that was engraved with creepy stripes.

Hellen opened the gate with a magic key and led Lucien into a small room inside.

The room was empty except for four cabinets that contained four items. There was a magic robe which was so dark that it could almost absorb the soul, a grey staff entangled with weird decorations, a transparent crown embedded with seven alchemical gems, and a pair of silver gloves.

“The Robe of Grand Arcanists and the Grasp of Davey are the two legendary items created later, the former being a level-two and the latter being a level one.” Hellen briefly introduced the magic robe and the gloves. “The staff and the crown are both from the ancient Magic Empire. The former is named ‘Boundary of Souls’. It’s a powerful item of necromancy. The latter is ‘Thorny Crown’. It belongs to the school of transformation and astrology. Both of them are level two. However, if you choose a legendary item in the field you are good at, you may be able to improve its level with precious materials later, like your master and his ‘Robe of Dominance’.”

Lucien nodded. He knew that legendary items differed from regular legendary items in that they could grow, although the odds of

failure could be quite high.

Reading the introduction to the few items carefully, Lucien abandoned the Grasp of Davey first, because it was only level one. Then, he gave up 'Boundary of Souls', because he already had 'Congus Ring'.

In the end, Lucien abandoned the 'Thorny Crown', which could affect gravity, time and space and which was attached with prophetic magic. That was because he intended to craft his own legendary items with 'Observer of Time and Space', the legendary class he did not choose. Many of its functions would be redundant.

"Robe of Grand Arcanists, a level-two legendary item. Only usable for legendary sorcerers or archmages whose cognitive world had half-solidified, or the wearer's head will explode."

"This magic robe created by alchemy masters can reduce the cooldown of the spells below legendary by two seconds and that of the legendary spells by one to 0.5 seconds, depending on their difficulty."

That was the quality most attractive to Lucien. It meant that there would be no cooldown for him when he used the spells below the ninth circle. Even the gap between ninth-circle spells would be reduced to within one second. It would be sometimes even more cost-effective than legendary spells.

"The master of the magic robe would boast the magic resistance of level-two legendary and a defense of level-nine gold knights against the knight-type attacks like longsword. It will double the recovery speed of spiritual power and provide immunity to confusion and chaos. When attacked, 'Magic Absorber' (8th circle) and 'Elemental Skin' (8th circle) will be triggered."

"Terrible legendary force is also entailed in it, allowing it to perform Elemental Protection twice, Space Shackle twice, Grandeur Obliteration twice and Hellish Ball twice every day."

"In the meantime, it will also bring the user a Spell Sequencer (9th circle), two Cracking (Advanced) (9th circle), and three Ruby

Reversing Rays (7th circle).”

“The power of sorcerers is from wisdom!”

“By Veronica Claus.”

Chapter 577: A Sudden Thought

After he obtained the Robe of Grand Arcanists, the robe of ‘Immortal Throne’ was naturally abandoned by Life Hiding. The reward from the Hand of Paleness was never as practical as it appeared, and even less so after he had the ritual of ‘Life Hiding’. As for the seventh-circle magic, ‘Weakening Ray’, that Lucien was interested in, he could totally construct it inside his own soul.

Not holding back at all, and since he had his waistcoat and shirt inside, Lucien put on the magic robe after leaving a signature on the pivot of the Robe of Grand Arcanists for his own safety.

The moment he put on the legendary item, Lucien felt that it absorbed his spiritual power crazily like a gigantic swirl. If his cognitive world had not half-solidified, his head might have really exploded because of the quake of spiritual power.

After a long time, when Lucien’s spiritual power almost ran dry, the absorption finally slowed down, and the dark magic robe shimmered. Then, as Lucien’s wished, it turned into a double-breasted suit, and then the doubled recovery of spiritual power began.

Hellen did not say anything, as if she were dwelling in her own world. Just like Fernando said, she was not nonchalant but rather talkative. However, things other than arcana and magic studies could barely raise her interest, which made her look like an icy goddess.

“You have changed?” She was suddenly back to herself. “Evans, what mathematical knowledge do I need to grasp in order to understand your general theory of relativity? Can you give me a list of books?”

“Not a problem at all, but I don’t know what books you have already grasped, Your Excellency Hellen.” Sensing the flourishing recovery of his spiritual power, Lucien felt that his head was clearer than ever.

Hellen shook her head and smiled, “You are now a grand arcanist, too. There’s no need to address me as Excellency. You can assume that I know nothing at all when you write the book list. That way, I will know your mathematical foundation and can make up for what I missed.”

“Alright, Hellen.” Lucien did not insist on calling her Excellency. Otherwise, how would the legendary sorcerers that were not grand arcanists feel? However, his teacher was his teacher, Mr. President was Mr. President, and Granny Hathaway was always Granny Hathaway. Those were personal relationships and he did not need to consider for anybody else.

Hellen closed the door and led Lucien out of the place. “You will rest in Fernando’s library in the coming days until Mr. President gets out of his demiplane and reviews your paper with the Prophet and the rest of them.”

She had an even higher demand than the Lord of Storm did, not even allowing Lucien to return to his own magic tower or the Atom Institution in case somebody took advantage of the weakness. The accident tonight could be ascribed to her untimely treatment due to her emotional turmoil, so she was even more prudent about Lucien’s safety.

Lazar had no objection. “Then, I’ll tell the butler and Lazar.”

Hellen nodded and walked to the front, indicating that she would not eavesdrop on Lucien’s call.

Leo did not know much about magic, and what happened tonight was a major shock for him. He asked Pinocchio to activate the defense of the magic tower while he tried to reach out to Lucien.

After ensuring that Lazar was fine and everything in Allyn was normal, Leo was finally reassured, and then Lucien contacted Lazar.

“Lucien? Oh, I should call you Your Excellency Evans!” Lazar said excitedly, “Your explanation about the nature of gravity is so cool. How did you connect it with space-time?”

Obviously, he didn't quite understand the first part.

Lucien said jokingly, "A good sir named Albert told me in my dreams."

"Haha, you are humorous." Lazar laughed. "You told me that you wanted to include gravity in the special theory of relativity, but I didn't do any research in that regard. How idiotic I was! If I had made any ancillary tools, my arcana level would be raised now."

His arcana credits were almost level five. The benefits from the new alchemy and other breakthroughs in the elemental field were running out, too.

Lucien patted his suit and said, "I found it strange, too. I asked you to work on the special theory of relativity, but none of you did anything except for Annick and the students whom I supervised."

Lazar tried to smile. "Time, space, energy, mass and transformation of frames of reference are too difficult to understand. However, the special theory of relativity is like a lovely kid compared to the dizzying general theory of relativity. I'll keep working on it."

"Just, your students almost went crazy in excitement. They almost blew up my monocle when they failed to reach out to you. You have completely conquered them."

Lucien's lips curled. "That's not a good thing in arcana. 'Master is dear to me, but dearer still is truth'. Lazar, I will help my teacher review papers in the following days and won't go to the institution. You will be responsible for the daily operation."

Lazar accepted it quickly and then said, "Allow me to forget our friendship for now and pay tribute to your great achievements that have surpassed the age. You have explored the future road of arcana and driven away the clouds that loomed in the sky of arcana. The general theory of relativity and the new alchemy are both the most splendid accomplishments in the history of magic. The former is particularly so."

After the call with Lazar, Lucien contacted Natasha.

“...Your Excellency, you are the master of time and space, the controller of stars, and the doorkeeper of the truth of the microscopic world.” Natasha was delighted when she heard Lucien’s voice.

Although she did not understand the general theory of relativity, she had learnt its great significance from Hathaway, Lucien and Morris. Therefore, she made up a tribute as a joke.

Lucien smiled, “You were listening to ‘News of the World’, too?”

“I already listened to ‘Arcana Voice’ and ‘News of the World’ when I was in Aalto.” While magic radios hadn’t been promoted to the opposite side of the Storm Strait, she was certainly not short of such gadgets. It was a source for her to learn the news about Lucien. “As a matter of fact, I always feel that arcana studies are interesting. I can learn them for fun when I am free, although I am not talented in spiritual power.”

Natasha had the necessary knowledge, and she did feel that the arcana studies and experiments were enjoyable. So, she intended to give it a shot, although she did not expect to make anything out of it, and she did not plan to devote herself to it.

Lucien chuckled. “I can teach you as long as you can control the magic circles and the alchemy devices. Let’s see if you can become an experiment disaster creator.”

The two of them began to chatter aimlessly as they talked. It was not until Hellen looked at him from the end of the corridor that Lucien was back to himself. “Because of the accident, I may not be able to return to Rentato for the time being. Send my apology to the Grand Duke.”

“I know. Granny Hathaway told me everything briefly. You just stay in Allyn and don’t go out recklessly. I will sort out the relationship of the parliament, the cabinet and the nobles in the meantime. Then, I will go to Allyn and visit your institution and magic tower!” Said Natasha. Then she added in secret, you don’t know that I’m already a level-nine gold knight yet, and that will be a huge ‘surprise’.

Lucien chuckled. “My students have always wanted to meet the queen. Alright, I’m going to hang up.”

“Okay.” Natasha replied with her biyin, before she said in a low voice, “My grand arcanist.”

After ending the call, Lucien suddenly remembered something. Natasha, Annick and other people must’ve contacted him many times, but he had neglected the scorch for various reasons. As it turned out, he had no idea who had tried to reach out to him, which might make him miss a lot of things.

“Contact management and ‘Missed Calls’ are needed...” Lucien considered the modules to avoid the problem.

It was not difficult to devise a storage circle, but it would significantly increase the requirement and price for the alchemical communication item. Also, alchemical life was made of melted souls. It was better at intelligent management instead of calculation. Therefore, it was necessary to develop computers based on magic.

Although legendary sorcerers were as capable as the computers at the beginning phase, Lucien was very certain that they could compare to the first generation of Galaxy-level computer even if they were combined. He could not abandon the development of computers just because they were not very useful at the initial phase. After all, the semiconductor elements had already been discovered.

While thinking, Lucien hurried to catch up to Hellen.

Hellen eyed him strangely but did not say anything. For her who was dedicated to arcana and magic studies, Lucien’s previous calls were too much a waste of time. Why couldn’t he just tell them what to do straightforwardly?

.....

In the next day and a half, Lucien seized the moment to construct the second ninth-circle spell in order to stabilize his strength.

A regular ninth-circle spell only took two to three days to be

diagnosed even if the mathematical foundation and the arcana and magic knowledge were good enough. However, Lucien had ‘Snow Goddess’ Whip’ that he created on his own. He had mastered its structure a long time ago. Therefore, before Oliver and other legendary sorcerers opened the Land of Truth, he had already successfully constructed it inside his soul and stabilized his stance in the ninth circle. In the meantime, he became the ninth-circle arcanist who grasped the fewest seventh-circle and eighth-circle spells.

Up until now, Lucien had only constructed nine seventh-circle spells, namely: Evans’ Freezing Ray, Magic Reverse, Antimagic Ray, Finger of Death, Simulacrum, Forcecage, Energy Immunity, Chaos Teleportation, and Lightning Storm; and nine eighth-circle spells, namely: Magic Order, Maze, Elemental Skin, Mental Barrier, Space Lock, Advanced Curse, Advanced Spying, Strong Magnetic Blast, Foresight.

Suddenly, Lucien felt space turbulence spreading out in waves. So, he hurried to go to Hellen’s library.

The moment he entered the room, the fully closed portal of teleportation was opened. Douglas stepped out from inside and nodded at Fernando, Oliver and the other legendary sorcerers. “Thank you for your trouble.”

Lucien smiled. Everything was good as long as the president was alright.

Chapter 578: Ritual

Chapter 578: Ritual

Seeing that the few grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers had been gathered here, Douglas asked concernedly, “Did Benedict III do anything in the past few days? I think he must have a good reason to expose his secret and lock me inside my demiplane. Did he tamper with our conversation to deceive people or allure someone of the Highest Council?”

Lucien secretly raised his thumb after hearing the president’s questions. Even though he had been caged inside his demiplane, he was still able to infer most of the things.

Of all the legendary sorcerers on the spot, Fernando had the most seniority and least concerns. He said loudly, “Douglas, however confused you are about the nature and source of gravity and the initial cause, you can’t lose your confidence and explain everything with a supreme being, can you? It doesn’t matter even if you have ten thousand whys, but it will be horrible if you can’t come up with a single question but get satisfied with explaining everything with gods. The speech that the Church quoted almost deprived all the arcanists in the Congress of their confidence.”

Douglas slightly frowned. “Benedict III hid the latter part of our conversation to disrupt your minds?”

“I admit that there are times when I am confused, lost and can’t see the way ahead, but when I return to reality and find that there are so many problems waiting for me to resolve, I’m full of momentum again. Also, a supreme being does not equal to the God of Truth. It may be a synonym to the truth of the world. The space is so vast and boundless, and our world is nothing at all compared to it. How can I worship a god that fights for believers and resources in such an insignificant place?”

Fernando smiled. “That’s the Douglas I know. I told them that you wouldn’t demean yourself by worshipping the God of Truth.”

Hellen quietly patted her cheeks and heaved a sigh of relief. Brook, Hathaway and Oliver looked more or less relaxed and delighted, too.

In the rising period of an organization, many contradictions would be covered by the thriving appearance.

Not wasting any time, Douglas asked straightforwardly, "The whole Congress was affected? Was it through the Sky Radio Station. I'll clarify it first and announce Benedict III's vileness to everyone."

He wondered if a delay of one and a half days had made the lie unfalsifiable.

"There's no need to rush. The influence has been cleared. Why don't you tell us what exactly happened?" Fernando was eager to know the details.

Douglas looked at everybody in confusion. "Cleared? Didn't you say that almost all the arcanists in the Congress lost confidence, Fernando?"

That was a rather severe situation.

Because of his relationship with his teacher, Brook had been listening quietly without saying anything. Hathaway never talked whenever she could avoid talking. Hellen felt too guilty to talk. Oliver, finally, picked up the topic. "Mr. President, they lost confidence because the arcanists saw that even you, the founder of the gravity theory, were baffled by the nature and source of gravity and looked for philosophical and theological answers. They had suspicions about the road they were on, but after somebody explained the nature of gravity, everybody was refreshed. Naturally, their panic was gone."

"That's good." Douglas didn't realize what he heard first. Then, he turned his head and said, "Wait, Oliver, what did you say? Somebody explained the nature of gravity?"

He looked at the Land of Truth and asked tentatively, "I was locked inside the demiplane for a day and a half, wasn't I? Did the time

flow at a different speed in the outside world, and decades have actually passed?”

There had been absolutely no sign of an explanation on the nature of gravity, so the news was so shocking to him that he suspected it was because of different time speeds. Otherwise, how could a theory have popped up after only one and a half days?

“You were locked away for one and a half days. However, Lucien had worked on it for years. He proposed a theoretical explanation on the nature of gravity. The deductions based on his theory match the observed redundant precession of the Morning Star at the perihelion and the adjustment to synchronize the time in the high sky and on the ground of the artificial planets.

After a brief daze, Douglas asked in a hurry, “Where’s the paper? Let me take a look!”

At this moment, he forgot everything he planned to do.

Hellen gave the copy of the paper and Lucien’s book list to Douglas. “Here you are, Mr. President.”

Taking over the paper, Douglas browsed through it. His calmness was gradually gone, replaced by devotion. Shadows surfaced around him, constructing the ancillary computation circles.

He scratched his head now and then, making his neat hair messy.

Understanding his earnestness about the question, Fernando did not interrupt him despite his usual impatience.

After a long time, Douglas pulled his bow-tie, half confused and half enchanted. “I get basically what it says. The nature of gravity is the curved space-time caused by gravity. I saw the geometry on ‘Nature’ before, too. But is the deduction legitimate?”

As one of the greatest mathematicians, Douglas had already grasped the many new methods including tensor analysis after only browsing through ‘Nature’. However, it was impossible for him to understand the general theory of relativity for the time being.

Fernando answered, "At least, Bergner and I did not find any flaw in the mathematical deduction, except that the methods that Lucien adopted in certain parts are rather clumsy and inconcise."

"Curved space-time... mass... energy-momentum tensor... the curvature of space-time is transmitted as waves..." Douglas mumbled the content in the paper, caught in the state of ten thousand whys again.

Lucien, Hellen and the rest of them kept absolutely quiet and did not interrupt the president. It was not until a long time later that Douglas was finally back to himself. Taking a deep breath, he walked to Lucien and patted his shoulder, "I dare not say immediately that your theory is correct, but you have undoubtedly proposed a paradigm-shifting idea. The greatest achievement of the Congress of Magic in the past ten years is your participation. I regret that I did not insist on my idea and let Fernando become your teacher."

"My everything is based on your foundation, Mr. President." Lucien replied with a smile.

Douglas shook his head. "Oliver, I or somebody else could've come up with the special theory of relativity some time later, but the general theory of relativity is definitely a treasure that depends on an individual's giftedness. Without you, it probably would have taken hundreds of years before the theory was proposed and perfected."

"Personally I thank you very much. I seem to have found my path to advance into demigod. After I confirm the thoroughness of the deduction and obtain part of the solutions, I may be able to touch the gate of demigods. As for how many years it will take for me to pass the gate, that's a different matter."

"So, Douglas, after you confirm the paper, come and help Lucien with the ritual of 'Origin of Magic'." Fernando interjected. He had already invited Brook, Hathaway, Oliver and Hathaway, who were on the spot.

Douglas had never been more surprised in the past thousand years

than today. Shocked, he looked at Fernando and Lucien, “Are you suggesting that Lucien has already entered the ninth circle?”

“What do you think? The truth of the world gives copious feedback to such great achievements.” While Fernando was reluctant to compliment his student himself, he was rather happy when other people did so.

Douglas shook his head with a smile. “Lucien, if your advancement succeeds, you will be the youngest legendary sorcerer in the history of magic. Let’s begin the ritual in a moment. Even if the paper proves wrong later, I’ll cover the additional cost of the ritual to express my thanks for Lucien.”

“What happened with Francois and Benedict III?” Fernando asked.

Douglas briefly introduced it and said with confusion in the end. “Francois was a sorcerer from the ancient Magic Empire. He loathed the Saint Truth and thought what the Church did regarded as blasphemy now and then. That’s why I never suspected that he surrendered to the Church. Also, there was no holy light when he died.”

“Something is wrong. Francois was the oldest member of the Affair Committee. He had high clearances and abundant allowances. He only never made a breakthrough because his cognitive world couldn’t half-solidify and he didn’t dare to take risks. Such an archmage couldn’t have been bribed.” Oliver, as a member of the Highest Council who managed the Affair Committee, frowned and said.

“I found it strange, too. If Francois was unwilling, Benedict III couldn’t have projected himself into Francois’ soul over such a long distance. Also, Benedict III’s spell to block the demiplane in the end is in the style of the ancient Magic Empire...” Douglas said something else that was weird.

Including Lucien, everybody discussed for a moment and paused when they failed to find an answer.

Since it was not night and radio time yet, Douglas proposed that the

ritual of Origin of Magic and the ritual of legendary advancement be started now. Fernando and Hellen agreed with him. Brook, Oliver and Hathaway were worried that it might be too hasty, but they did not strongly object.

...

After half a day of preparation, in the hall on the opposite of the conference room of the Highest Council on the thirty-fifth floor of the Allyn magic tower...

The moment he entered the room, Lucien felt that he had come to the boundless space. The darkness was overwhelming and ceaseless, and the brilliance of the stars raised his deepest reverence.

When he looked more clearly, Lucien felt that the trajectories of the stars were too complicated for him to capture. It was actually a direct projection of the sky of fate!

“Lucien, find your Host Star of Destiny and stand below it.” Douglas’ voice came from the depths of the starry sky.

Lucien closed his eyes, and the projection of the Host Star of Destiny appeared inside his soul. Through the subtle interaction, he stepped forward and stepped below it after several minutes.

The star was dazzling but surrounded by the deepest darkness. Other people might not notice it, but Lucien could clearly sense the terrifying, all-absorbing air of destruction.

After he stopped, the six grand arcanists moved the circle for the ritual of Origin of Magic, each standing in one corner of the biggest hexagram.

“Are you ready?” Douglas asked gently.

Four top legendary and two level-three legendary grand arcanists – Looking at the astonishingly luxurious team, Lucien nodded his head slightly. Holding back his emotions and closing his eyes, he said peacefully:

“I am ready.”

From today on, his fate would enter a new track.

From today on, he would no longer be a target that anybody could plot against.

From today on, his life would be a real legend.

Do you hear fate knocking on the door? Go and take it by the throat!

Chapter 579: Demiplane

Before the complicated feelings in his heart died away, waves of spiritual power, after being adjusted by the ritual of ‘Origin of Magic’, flowed toward him gently at Lucien’s own frequency.

In the meantime, the whole deep, boundless sky quaked slightly. The mysterious force was concentrated on the projection of Lucien’s Host Star of Destiny. Because Fernando hosted the ritual in person, the ‘star of mysteries’, the terrible darkness behind it that seemed able to absorb everything, was not neglected.

The projection of the Host Star of Destiny hummed and shivered with noises that were inaudible to ordinary people. In the meantime, Lucien summoned his cognitive world in meditation, allowing the bright and dark Host Star of Destiny inside shake at the same time. As they were synchronized, Lucien had the feeling that the real world was ebbing, and that his cognitive world was surrounding his body and his soul.

After the half-solidification, Lucien’s cognitive world was already able to influence the real world as he wished. Therefore, Lucien gradually spread out the feeling and changed everything around him.

At the center of the ritual, the stars were vaguely curved. Symbols of elements flashed in different colors, with the internal structure made of protons, neutrons and electrons. They split and gathered, producing the myriad of elements in the material world, before all the elements were gathered into the pure iron universe.

Lucien’s legendary class, ‘Atom Controller’, did not seem to overlap with the path of quantum mechanics that he intended to walk on, but quantum mechanics were based on the exploration of the microworld after all. The studies on the electron alone had produced amazing and unbelievable achievements. Then, the strong nuclear force and the weak nuclear force, the last two of the four fundamental forces, were recognized, before the basic model of particles was developed and the electromagnetic power and the

weak nuclear force were united.

Therefore, the shabby model of atomic nucleus was deepened and developed into a standard model of particles without changing the foundation.

After a while, the pure influence of the cognitive world ‘touched’ Lucien’s body for real, making him feel the tremendous power.

Surpassing his body, his cognitive world and his soul met in the material world. Under their influence, the starry magic models constructed inside his soul all glittered with bright and dreamy brilliance.

Lucien felt that his soul was shaking, and that his ability to think and control the cognitive world plummeted. It was ten times more difficult for him to continue the modification of his soul with the cognitive world.

The magic models were vaguely curved like real stars, which gradually raised Lucien’s viewpoint and gave him a strange feeling that he was looking down at himself from somewhere high.

The quake of the soul was even more intense. The edge became blurry and was connected to the unpredictable cognitive world. Then, it expanded into a fleeting cloud that intended to enshroud the cognitive world from the outside. At this point, Lucien’s spiritual power almost ran dry, but the spiritual power of the six grand arcanists proved by the ritual of Origin of Magic was as incessant as an ocean, ready for him to squander.

With the lofty feeling, Lucien recovered from the shock of melding with his spiritual power. He watched the cognitive world collapse and develop into his soul, containing the magic models.

As a result, three curtains were formed. The soul was at the outermost level, then it was the cognitive world, and there were plenty of magic models inside the cognitive world. He felt that he was in control of everything.

Dwelling in the fabulous feeling, Lucien suddenly felt excruciating

pain. He knew that the most difficult test had come, especially when his soul hadn't reached the standard of legendary yet!

His cognitive world suddenly expanded, tearing holes in the soul at the outermost level.

The pain from his soul almost made Lucien give up, but he gritted his teeth and tried to enjoy it while he repaired his soul with the power transmitted by the ritual of Origin of Magic!

Very soon, the pain arrived at the peak. Lucien felt that his soul was full of wounds. Also, the Origin of Magic could not repair his soul as fast now.

If it were any other time, Lucien would've passed out, because the pain surpassed what his body and his soul could bear. However, his mind and his soul seemed separated right now. There was no sign that he was falling into a coma.

Lucien knew that the pain would be gone if his mind returned to his body, but the ritual would also fail if so.

Having no time to recall his life experiences or curse fate, Lucien had only one thought in his head, which was to persist, persist and persist!

At some point, the unimaginable pain gradually weakened, and the 'resistance' of his cognitive world was gentler and gentler. Although his soul was riddled with holes, it was still powered by the Origin of Magic.

Lucien was about to heave a sigh in relief, when unpredictable colors that did not belong to this world glittered. The spirit library that had accompanied him since his rebirth appeared!

Inside the spirit library, all the books were unsealed. Then, the library was smaller and smaller as if Lucien were flying higher and higher, until it was replaced by a beautiful, dreamy planet that was covered with a blue ocean.

Is it Earth?

Lucien had complicated feelings.

Earth was also smaller and smaller as Lucien flew higher. The sun, the eight planets and poor Pluto were connected into a line like a picture.

Is it the solar system?

Lucien's feeling of looking down at everything did not stop. Even the solar system was reduced in size. Countless stars gathered into a surging river.

"Don't dwell in the illusion. Navigate the power into the cognitive world in your soul." Fernando's strict voice echoed next to Lucien's ears. They couldn't detect the changes inside Lucien's soul, but they could infer Lucien's phase from his apparent behavior.

Illusion? Is it an illusion?

Lucien was very confused, but he directed the overwhelming power of the Origin of Magic into his soul without delay, towards the struggling cognitive world.

The humming stopped, and a terrifying energy storm was raised in his cognitive world. The magic models such as 'Atomic Fission', being irrigated by them, shined one symbol after another and melded with the soul, like the magic models from the first circle to the ninth circle!

Boom!

In the soundless explosion, 'Atomic Fission' was quickly constructed without any additional control. That was the 'privilege' of a grand arcanist who had a legendary class and a fundamental spell!

The energy continued surging, but the shimmer of 'Eternal Blaze' already made his soul about to explode. Then, it fell quiet and showed no more reaction.

Even though it was a basic legendary spell, Lucien needed to be level-three legendary in order to construct it, or his soul would not be able to bear it!

The energy was still flowing. The complicated signals of the legendary class, 'Atom Controller', glowed with the 'Atomic Fission' at the center, until they were gathered and unleashed unimaginable spiritual power, repairing and improving his soul.

Lucien sensed the rapid growth of his soul. It turned from weak to succulent and was even about to explode.

Without panicking, Lucien gathered the energy storm and his spiritual power and released them to the void outside!

Tides rumbled, creating a tiny demiplane in the void before him.

The demiplane quickly expanded, absorbing the materials from the advancement ritual of 'Atom Controller' while changing according to Lucien's cognitive world. This was a boundless space where every star was made of two parts in different colors and surrounded by a certain number of illusionary 'planets'. They seemed to be everywhere, but when one observed more carefully, they would be only in one spot.

Among them, the planet that represented iron was larger and larger, turning into the place where Lucien's magic tower would be located.

The demiplane shivered and gradually stabilized. A space node was directly connected to Lucien's soul, so that he could jump to his own demiplane wherever he was as long as nothing was interrupting teleportation. His life was much safer.

After the demiplane was completely steady, Lucien opened his eyes, only to discover that the illusionary sky of fate was gone, the materials in the advancement ritual were gone, and the materials for the ritual of Origin of Magic became ashes.

Sensing his influence on the real world and the terrifying strength, Lucien asked in delight:

"Is this the power of legendary?"

Fernando asked with a loud voice, "What's the name of your legendary class?"

“Atom Controller.” Replied Lucien with a smile.

“The name of your demiplane?”

Approach Science ¹ ... Lucien almost blurted out. Holding back his amusement, he said, “The internal structure of atoms is somewhat similar to space. The microscopic world is like a fractal universe. So, it will be named as ‘Atomic Universe’.

“An integration of the smallest and the largest. Good.” Oliver praised him.

Douglas smiled, “You’d better be adapted to the changes of your soul and your spiritual power after you’re back. The day after tomorrow, you will participate in the meeting of the Highest Council for the first time.”

“Yes, Mr. President.” Lucien was as respectful as before.

Fernando walked out together with Lucien and suggested solemnly, “You need to choose your legendary spells wisely. The level one of legendary can only support three legendary spells. The capacity will grow to six as your strength increases. So, you need to choose them appropriately with consideration of your needs in attack, defense, escape, control and all the other aspects.”

“Master, I understand. I’ll pick the legendary spells judiciously after I’m stabilized.” Lucien nodded.

It was common sense for legendary sorcerers. As their level advanced, they would be able to pick up more legendary spells, and their demiplane would be more complete. The level two of legendary supported ten legendary spells at most, and the level three, fifteen. For the top legendary experts like the president, they could wield twenty-one spells. Also, every advancement in level involved a better integration of the soul and the cognitive world and a strong solidification of the cognitive world.

Fernando nodded, “Keep your advancement a secret for now. Don’t tell anybody except your queen. We won’t tell it in the Highest Council, either. After all, the title of grand arcanist is enough for

you to enjoy all the privileges. In such a case, the Church will be 'surprised' if they plot against you."

The Lord of the Undead was not invited partly because he was in the alternate dimension and partly because the Hand of Paleness was not very friendly to Lucien. It was for the sake of confidentiality.

.....

Inside Babel...

Seated on the sofa lazily, Lucien turned on the magic radio and listened to the president's speech:

"...I admit that I was very confused about the nature of gravity, but the supreme being I referred to was the truth of the world and the law of the universe, which had nothing to do with gods..."

"...On the path of arcana, I have as many questions as any of you do. I am often lost, and I have to grit my teeth in my exploration and research. The only difference between you and me is that I have walked further than you for now, but it's possible that some of you will exceed me in the future. Therefore, I do not represent the truth of arcana; your logical, flawless deduction and observation, as well as your strict experiment data and results does. Only the arcana studies based on such things are of actual significance, and the other notions are still in the category of philosophy..."

"...The universe is so vast that we have to stumble forward in fear, but we will never give up..."

"...This time, Benedict III has shown his understanding and application of the magic from the ancient Magic Empire. It suggests that he is much more underdeveloped than we are, and that they are in the bloody, primitive phase. It means that we are on the correct path..."

Listening to the president's speech quietly, Lucien put on a smile.

(End of Volume VI)

Chapter 580: The Highest Council

In the morning two days later, Lucien, who had been stabilizing his strength inside Babel, came to the thirty-fifth floor of the Allyn magic tower early and opened the door of the conference room of the Highest Council.

The conference room was no different from any other conference room that Lucien had seen. They were equally spacious, and they all had a common long cherry desk at the center. The only thing special was that the twenty-four chairs were made of precious materials. Their velvet plating was emitting luxury and yet low-profile redness. Different patterns had been engraved on the back of the chairs to indicate the identity of the members. Among them, there were the storm with lightning, the crown of arcana and magic, etc.

“Evans, here.” Klaus, the Alchemy Master who was always wearing a mischievous smile, pointed at the chair on his opposite side.

He was the legendary sorcerer who came earliest, followed by an alchemical puppet in the appearance of a little girl.

Lucien looked over, only to discover that the back of the chair was the pattern of the internal structure of atoms, where electrons surrounded protons and neutrons, like an infinitely reduced version of the celestial bodies motion system.

“The classic model that is soon to be outdated...” Remarked secretly, Lucien nodded at Klaus and sat in his spot.

“Mr. Klaus, you seem to have been here for a while?” Seeing that they were alone in the conference room, Lucien asked in smalltalk.

Klaus smiled casually, “Evans, you are already a grand arcanist. Such courtesies are unnecessary. Just call me Klaus. I’m a person who prefers to arrive early. Every time I wait for other people, I feel that I have additional time, and I can think, idle by and enjoy the luxury of freedom without being disturbed. This is a wondrous feeling, don’t you think? You are an early person, too?”

“Yes. I’ll be anxious when I think that other people are waiting for me, but when I wait for other people, as long as they are not late, my mind is peaceful and my head is full of inspirations after I come early.” Replied Lucien with a smile, not expecting them to share the same feeling in that regard.

Klaus opened his hands. “We understand life and enjoyment better than they do. However, for me, the luxury time is over, because there are so many questions that I would like to discuss with you the moment I see you. The new alchemy is full of intoxicating charm. It is even more addictive than all of my puppets, golems and alchemical lives.”

“If the questions are about the new alchemy, I would be happy to discuss them with you.” Said Lucien with a smile.

Klaus knocked the table. A pair of metal arms suddenly fell from the ceiling with a cup of hot red tea. Then, the creature said respectfully, “Your Excellency Klaus, your favorite ‘Count Red Tea’.”

“Evans, what’s your favorite drink? Ask them to prepare it.” Sipping the red tea, Klaus went on. “As a matter of fact, after reading your deductions based on protons, the periodic table, the relative atomic weight and the equivalent elements, I had absolutely no doubt about the existence of neutrons. Its discovery was only a matter of time. However, I do have a lot of confusion about the tracks, transition and radiation of electrons.”

As I expected... Lucien was not surprised at Klaus’s confusion. After asking for a ‘Sky Blue’, he said, “There are indeed many problems in that regard. We can discuss them together.”

The smile on Klaus’s face was gradually gone. “First of all, the electronic transition you described is a quantum process. That is to say, when it jumps from one orbit to another, there will be no journey in the middle at all. It will simply blink to the destination. Is it some sort of space jump or teleportation? Is it what our space magic is based on?”

Because space jump, teleportation and barrier could never be

explained, the space magic had been developing very slowly and had an extremely high demand. Even the South Church and the Congress of Magic did not have the wealth to deploy too many permanent transmission magic circles. They could only manage to connect their headquarters to the capitals of the countries. As for the local provinces, counties and cities, they had to count on the primitive way. Things were only improved after electromagnetism messaging, wired phones and telegrams were developed.

“Perhaps yes, perhaps no. I haven’t really studied it yet. The transition of energy level is just a preliminary explanation. There may be better theories to describe it in the future. We can only approach the truth step by step but cannot claim that we already have the truth.” Lucien did not expect Klaus to ask such a sophisticated question.

Klaus nodded, knowing that the problem wouldn’t be resolved anytime soon. After all, the energy level and transition of electrons was still a theoretical speculation in Lucien’s new alchemy and had never been observed in an experiment yet. They could only be inferred based on the observed phenomena.

“The question is, why do electrons have orbits, and why would they ‘transit’? Gravity makes the artificial planets spin around the world and creates their orbits, but the electromagnetic power will only make the electrons hit the nucleus.” An indifferent voice echoed at the gate. Hathaway, beautiful but strict, had arrived early, too.

The studies on the new alchemy had been in the phase of searching for neutrons or other anomalies previously. Although there were such problems, it was not the mainstream. However, after the discovery of neutrons, the explanation of the orbits and transition of electrons became a top priority for the grand arcanists and the legendary sorcerers. Also, it could be seen from her fluent description that Hathaway had considered the problem for a while.

Rubbing his eyebrow, Lucien said, “The electromagnetic power probably does not apply to the microscopic realm. Some other forces are playing a role. Orbits and transitions are just a hypothesis for now. We can only confirm whether it is true based on experiments.”

Those grand arcanists and legendary sorcerers were truly smart. Their questions precisely hit the flaw of the new alchemy in the description of the atomic structure.

“The electrons, neutrons and protons must have certain built-in qualities that cause the orbits; we cannot add orbits to the electrons and dictate that they move according to that.” Hathaway observed, not satisfied about Lucien’s explanation.

“Also, the new alchemy can only describe the simple structure of a single electron. It cannot explain the complicated structure where more electrons are involved. Your theory to explain the original alchemical reactions with the exchange of external electrons fits the reality well, but it cannot be included in your model.” The Lord of Storm, as impatient as ever, had also arrived early.

Lucien rose to greet his teacher. Then he shook his head with a smile, “Forgive me, that model is still premature and has to be perfected by more arcanists.”

Fernando nodded. He sat down and said, “I often feel that deeper mysteries are hidden behind the problem.”

The four leading persons in the field of elements and alchemy began a comprehensive discussion on the new alchemy. In the meantime, ‘Absolute Defense’ Ataman, ‘Eye of Curse’ Atlant and other legendary sorcerers also came.

By the time Douglas walked in with his staff and the meeting was about to begin, the discussion about the new alchemy finally died down.

Lucien took the opportunity to ask Hathaway. “Granny, when will Mr. Raventi advance into legendary?”

In the past days, Lucien had been trying to reach out to Raventi, only to no avail. Natasha was too busy dealing with the parliament, the cabinet and himself to learn the details, either.

Hearing Lucien calling herself as granny like Natasha, Hathaway spoke as indifferently as before, although her right index finger

bounced slightly. “Raventi returned to his magic tower and cut off all communication with the outside world. He is devoted to the reorganization of his previous knowledge, hoping to completely grasp ‘Elements Resolve’ that he parsed earlier as soon as possible.”

‘Elements Resolve’ was Hathaway’s unique spell. It was not submitted to the Congress, but the members of the Will of Elements could learn it with their contribution. Lucien planned to exchange the Will of Elements’ reward for him after he became a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer for the spell and improve his ‘Elemental Order’ with its reference, changing the latter into a legendary spell.

As for the legendary class, ‘Atom Controller’, Lucien also planned to submit it to the Congress and the Will of Elements in exchange for more legendary spells. Becoming a grand arcanist would be rewarded by legendary items, and becoming a legendary sorcerer would mean that they could pick a legendary spell from the Congress freely.

“I hope that Mr. Raventi advances successfully.” Lucien prayed for him sincerely.

Both ‘Lord of Elements’ and ‘Atom Controller’ should have a high match rate with Raventi’s cognitive world. For him whose cognitive world had already half-solidified, the higher the match rate was, the more hopeful it would be for him to advance into legendary. As soon as he mastered ‘Elements Resolve’, he would be able to try advancing.

Klaus smiled on the opposite side, “Soon, every meeting of the Highest Council will be the end of the world...”

He was rather ambiguous, but since he was looking at Fernando, Lucien immediately understood what he meant. Before, his master had often kept the meetings of the Highest Council in terrible storms on his own; if Mr. Raventi, who was as much a roarer as his teacher, also joined the meetings, it would definitely be the end of the world.

Fernando glared at Klaus, ‘terrorizing’ him to lower his head and

evade the pressure. Then, the man said in a low voice, “Evans, you are very creative in inventing and simplifying alchemical items. Let’s communicate more often.”

At this moment, Douglas stood up and looked around at the other eighteen members of the Highest Council, before he said:

“The meeting today is mainly to welcome Lucien Evans to join us.”

Clap, clap, clap. Everybody applauded. The Lord of the Undead, the Monarch of Fate, the Sun King, Donald and another ninth-circle member, were out on missions and not present in the assembly of the Highest Council.

After Lucien stood up and greeted everyone, Douglas smiled. “Our first motion is, when will the ceremony for Lucien’s advancement into a grand arcanist be held?”

Chapter 581: Ambitious Lucien

When Douglas asked the question, he was looking at Lucien. Naturally, it was his own thought that mattered in such celebrations.

“The celebrations for the previous few arcanists were all held together with the celebrations for their advancement into legendary. Holding it twice will be too troublesome and waste too much time. Also, I feel inappropriate to celebrate when I am not a legendary sorcerer yet. So, let’s hold the celebration after I advance into legendary.” Lucien expressed his opinion.

Although being congratulated in ceremonies was a delightful experience for most people, and the arcanists in the past were no exceptions, holding celebrations repetitively for the same reason would turn joy into numbness and eventually torture.

Also, during the celebration, the Elf’s Royal Palace, the Elder Council of the Druids and the friends of the Dark Congress would definitely send their legendary experts to come. When he got in touch with them closely, it would be easy to expose the fact that he had already advanced into legendary. Then, the enemy would avoid the major mistake in intelligence and be much better prepared against Lucien.

Fernando leaned against the back of his chair and nodded, “I agree with Lucien. Although grand arcanist is the most appreciated and glorious title within the Congress, only legendary means the fundamental improvement of life. It’s a sublimation that every class acknowledges.”

Now that Lucien himself and his teacher said the same thing, the other members of the Highest Council naturally did not pursue it any further.

Douglas nodded in approval. “I had been worried that Lucien would be arrogant because of the two major achievements during the ‘night of miracles’. I’m happy to see that he is as modest, cautious

and rational as before, and that he understands the importance of his own strength.”

Lucien tightened his facial muscles to prevent himself from laughing out loud. The president was certainly not bad at acting at all!

“However, the fact that Lucien has become a grand arcanist should not be unannounced. Otherwise, the other arcanists in the Congress would be misled into thinking that we do not welcome the growing young people.” Douglas went on, “I propose that ‘News of the World’ and ‘Arcana Voice’ announce the news in their program to make as many arcanists, nobles and ordinary people as possible know.”

“What about the previous methods? Should they be applied?” A thick book, evidently one on the list that Lucien gave to her, was placed before Hellen. She was reading it so carefully that she was only sparing part of her attention to the meeting.

That was her meeting habit. None of the Highest Council felt anything strange about it. Except for the critical subjects and the discussions that involved herself, few things could drag her out of the world of arcana and magic studies. However, since it was her turn to guard Affair Committee in the next five years, she would have to instruct the Affair Committee regarding similar matters, so she had to ask.

The previous methods of the Congress of Magic was to inform the local branches and ask them to forward the news to the sorcerers and apprentices in their jurisdiction. Also, the cover of every journal would be added with a line that specified who was granted the title of grand arcanist for what by the Congress for three issues in a row.

Douglas said affirmatively, “It was my special proposal just now. The previous ways will also be adopted.”

“Part of the sorcerers do not have the habit of listening to the radio. There will be sometime before the journal is released. So, I propose a letter be sent to the magic tower of every senior-rank sorcerer to

tell them Evans has become a grand arcanist.” Said ‘Prophet’ Bergner, who was wearing the typical grey, pointy hat of the Tower.

The Congress of Magic did not have many senior-rank members. According to Lucien’s impression, there were only about five hundred of them. It wouldn’t be too troublesome to send a letter to each of them. So, none of the Highest Council objected to the Prophet’s suggestion.

Douglas announced after a smile, “The first subject is now over. On behalf of the Congress, I now give Lucien the title of grand arcanist.”

While talking, he took out an emblem and handed it over to Lucien. It was rather similar to the arcana badge, except the darkness was more profound, and the background was glittering stars, making it look like a real and vast sky.

It was a unique badge that represented a grand arcanist and included the permissions of the Highest Council. Although it only had the magic effect of ‘Free Movement’, it could mobilize the power of the magic towers in Allyn.

After Lucien put the emblem on his chest, applause echoed again. It marked that he had officially become a grand arcanist and a member of the Highest Council.

“The second subject is how to effectively control the four countries of the strait and how to diminish the foundation of the Church’s faith.” Douglas stopped smiling. “You must’ve witnessed Benedict II’s two God’s Arrivals. It is not hard to say that, even though the power of faith was not why it was so destructive, the prayer of the believers and the clerics were at least a trigger to perform it. If the faith of the general public is diminished, it may be difficult to cast God’s Arrival or other divine powers.”

“Whatever the result is, it is at least what we should work on. What do you think?”

Grant, the Light of Stars, said straightforwardly, “We can strike the

faith in the God of Truth like how the Church hunted sorcerers in the past.”

He was a tall, slim, middle-aged man without a beard. His eyes were like the most brilliant and pure stars, which filled him with amazing charisma.

“We can’t.” Erica, ‘Master of Transformation’, objected, “The clerics in the four countries of the strait and the north coastline are building a mild church. Also, our control is far from flawless. Reckless actions will only result in turmoil and give other enemies opportunities. You should know that the North Church has been keeping distance from us since we controlled this area.”

Having operated in the Duchy of Calais for years, the Eye of Curse and her were deeply associated with local nobles. They were the pro-nobles within the Congress.

The Eye of Curse followed. “If we strike the mild believers, we cannot dissuade other clerics and nobles in the future. We have to achieve our purpose in more approachable ways.”

“I agree with Erica and Atlant.” Crossing his fingers, Brook said solemnly. “I believe that you must’ve noticed that, because of ‘Arcana Voice’, the ordinary people’s faith has reduced a lot in the past years, which can be seen by their frequency of their liturgical sessions and their daily talk. So, I believe that promoting magic radios and increasing the attraction of the programs are by far the most effective methods.”

There were plenty of sorcerers and apprentices in Rentato, which allowed the Congress to detect the changes of the ordinary people quickly.

Hearing Brook’s opinion, Holt and the other members of the Highest Council looked at Lucien. He was the one who invented broadcast and who settled the programs. He was the authority in broadcasting.

Lucien did not back off but said after rolling his quill for a while. “It’s very reasonable to deploy two channels right now. Together

with the two channels that the Hoffenberg family and the Kingdom of Holm are going to establish, we don't need more programs. For the ordinary people, they are busy with life during the day and do not have the time for radio except the night. If there are too many channels in the period, they will be distracted from 'Arcana Voice'."

"The most important thing we should do is to lower the cost of magic radios and promote it to most families."

"In that case, we should ban the personal radio stations." The Moon Scholar added.

Klaus, as the Alchemy Master, offered his professional opinion. "We have received another batch of dwarf artisans, but they are not enough. It will take even longer for us to train our own workers. Therefore, in the foreseeable future, even if the cost of magic radios is lowered, it still cannot meet the demand of popularization."

"If there are more mechanical products that can replace the functions of part of the magic circles, we may be able to make breakthroughs."

"Natasha, James and I had a plan about the popularization." Lucien proposed their discussion last year. In the end, he said, "Apart from that, I have some other thoughts."

"Feel free to speak. You always have new things that amaze us." Douglas hinted Lucien to continue with a smile, and none of the Highest Council objected.

Lucien coughed and said, "The magic radios cannot be popularized partly because of their cost and partly because ordinary people earn too little to afford them. By the same logic, a society based on such a foundation makes it impossible for us to reap more wealth. Although the nobles are rich, there are simply too few of them."

"We should work with Holm, Brianne and other countries and come up with a five-year alchemy industry boosting plan. Through our investment and inventions, the jobs with better pay will increase, so that the ordinary people will earn more, and the overall wealth of the society will grow."

“Lucien, you have the potential to be the prime minister of the kingdom. Your idea of the overall wealth of the society is not bad.” Klaus said half jokingly, “The problem is that most ordinary people are incapable of working in the alchemical workshops.”

The alchemical workshops in the magic society had much a higher demand than the factories in the industrial age, because the ordinary people in the industrial age were already reasonably educated.

Lucien smiled, “Why are they incapable? Because they lack the necessary knowledge and skills, which can be made up by education. I believe that the education in the kingdoms where teachers teach individuals in private is too obsolete. We should promote magic schools and let more people improve themselves by learning. Also, as soon as they know more things and their horizons are widened, they will definitely be less devout.”

It was exactly Lucien tried to do since the beginning: change society and change the fate of the ordinary people!

“Yes, the more knowledgeable someone is, the less likely they will be a pious believer.” Fernando nodded slightly and said, “Before, we couldn’t promote schools because the area was not under our control. It’s about time.”

Lucien added, “I suggest that schools be divided into two kinds. The first kind offers five-year education, where language and common sense in arcana, magic, biology, religion, history and law will be taught. I call it generic education. The Congress of Magic and the kingdoms will cover part of the cost, and the ordinary people will cover the rest. While their fundamental abilities are improved, we can also directly select the people with great arcana talents from schools, which will be easier than the past.”

“The second kind is the professional education designed to provide talents for the major alchemical workshops. The alchemical workshop will cover all the cost, the Congress will provide teachers, and the kingdoms will waive their taxes. The ordinary people will sign an apprentice contract before they enter such schools and have to go to the corresponding alchemical workshop after their

graduation. I have named such schools ‘Lanxiang’¹.”

Chapter 582: Transformation of Identities

Chapter 582: Transformation of Identities

“Lanxiang, what does it mean?” Asked Oliver in confusion. He was familiar with the different languages and cultures in many different countries in the alternate dimensions, but he was helpless in front of Lucien’s made-up words.

Lucien said solemnly and sincerely, “Although such schools are based on the apprentice system, they are undoubtedly a brand-new form on their own. The students do not depend on anybody else, and they will be paid after they enter the alchemical workshops, except that their wages are lower and their contracts are longer. Therefore, I have created a brand-new term for them – Lanxiang ¹ . It’s a name for such schools that contains the meaning of dream.”

“What’s your opinion?”

With his eyes closed, Atlant said with a smile, “I strongly agree with the idea to promote generic schools and vocational schools, but there is one problem. In the apprentice system, as long as you raise an apprentice, the apprentice will have to work for the alchemical workshop for free for ten years. All you need to prove is accommodation and food. However, this Lanxiang... Lanxiang demands the alchemical workshop to pay for the education in advance and for the apprentices’ work after their graduation. I don’t think they will take it willingly unless the Congress and the kingdoms browbeat them.”

“Mr. Atlant, times have changed. The apprentice system in the past can no longer meet the demand of the current alchemical workshops. I don’t think you need me to explain it. It can be seen by the fact that the apprentices of the Congress almost all became students in schools.”

“I’ll talk to the few companies I have shares in and ask them to invest in the first Lanxiang. In a couple of years, when their cost is lowered and their market is expanded under the support of

incessant professional workers, the other alchemical workshops will probably be still short of hands. The early investment from the companies on their education will be retrieved from the profits they make.”

Lucien made the gesture that he was not forcing anybody to do anything. It was always difficult to make other people pay money. Thankfully, he was no longer the young man who lobbied for environmental protection. Right now, he had become a member of the Highest Council who had his own forces and his wealth. He could totally leave other people behind and set an example for them to follow.

Also, the actual cost wouldn't be too much. He could ask Natasha to allocate a redundant abbey to him as the school, and issue tasks with his arcana points to make the sorcerers and the graduated apprentices teach. Also, starting from the second year, he would arrange for the students in the school to work in the alchemical workshops as 'interns' in their spare time, so that part of his early investment could be recovered.

Seeing Lucien's attitude, Atlant and the other sorcerers who were still skeptical were relieved. He nodded in a smile, "Indeed. Time has changed. The old stuff should be buried in the past. I suggest that the Highest Council vote regarding 'Lanxiang'. We will encourage the alchemical workshop to invest but won't force them to. Evans, if you want to build any, count me in."

Douglas clapped his hands softly. "I agree with the idea, too. The Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company and other corporations owned by the Congress will invest first as examples."

Since the investment was not forced, all the members of the Highest Council raised their hands. The atmosphere was rather harmonious.

"There's one other problem. Is the support of the Congress and the governments enough to popularize the generic schools? Will the students be out of jobs after their graduation? It must be noted that the apprentice system can almost meet the demands of everybody except for the alchemical workshops. Also, unlike the students of 'Lanxiang', they won't be built to fit in a certain alchemical

workshop. If they spend a huge fortune only to discover that their life has not improved at all, it's possible that they will hate us and rejoin the embrace of the God of Truth. That's against our wish." Atlant was good at figuring out what people might think.

Lucien smiled, "Mr. Atlant, the change of time is a chain reaction. When the number of alchemical workers grow, the social wealth increases, and the alchemical items that shorten the distance among cities are invented, the whole social structure will definitely go through qualitative changes. Perhaps, one job will be subdivided into many professional jobs, and many things unimaginable in the past will appear. But of course, we will control the scale of the generic education. It will have to suit our wealth and social condition."

"Then, I have no objection. Evans, you are not reckless at all." Atlant did not know much about social development, but his old partner, 'Master of Transformation', was an excellent historian. She agreed with Lucien's prediction that social labor would be further divided. After talking to Atlant silently, she made him drop his suspicion.

The discussion about the generic schools went on for a while. Under the glorious banner of striking the faith of the Church, the Highest Council passed the motion, albeit stressing that it must not overstep the line.

"I would like to say something else." Lucien discovered that he was more and more like a leader. "I suggest we regulate the alchemical workshops in terms of overwork and child labor. The alchemical workshops must not overly exploit the workers, which will push more people to join the Church. It will be best if the working time is limited to ten hours every day. Children can be hired as workers, but their work should be settled according to their age..."

Because of simplification and promotion problems, the alchemical workshops were still underdeveloped, and the workers were in relatively good health. Therefore, Lucien believed that regulations should be made before the alchemical workshops enjoyed the benefit of exploiting workers. It would be much easier this way.

As for child labor, it was only a helpless compromise. Due to the lack of a good charity system, many orphans needed a job in order to survive. He could not pursue his dream without bothering the actual circumstances, which would only hurt them.

“I don’t think we need to talk about such trivia in the Highest Council.” ‘Absolute Defense’ Ataman stopped Lucien from talking on. “Regulating the alchemical workshops and better treatment for workers are suitable for our goal to renovate the image of sorcerers, but all we need to do is to propose the idea. Leave the details to the Affair Committee.”

Oliver also interjected, “Evans, you are now also a member of the Highest Council. You can ask the Affair Committee to draft a law according to your idea first and then show it to everyone. There’s no need to discuss the specific clauses right now. Everybody’s time is precious.”

Lucien nodded slightly, hinting that he was still adapting himself to his new identity. He was no longer a specific executor of orders, but a proposer, reviewer, decision-maker supervisor.

However, after hearing Oliver’s words, Lucien remembered how he lobbied against the pollution problem again. In order for the Affair Committee to pass a similar regulation, he visited and talked to so many big shots. In the end, he had to introduce his opinion in the conference room of the Affair Committee and accept their questions. He was not even involved in their decision-making process but could only wait for a result. However, right now, Oliver asked him to let the Affair Committee draft a regulation as if it were not important at all.

“Is this the feeling of standing on top of all the sorcerers...” Lucien remarked with mixed feelings.

In the Highest Council, the chairman of the Affair Committee was the grand arcanist who supervised Allyn and got changed every five years. The vice-chairmen were Oliver, Ataman and the Sun King, who were good at battles or handling affairs. They would lead the external operations or exploration in the alternate dimensions.

Since the regulation of the alchemical workshop did not involve any immediate loss, the other members of the Highest Council did not object to it. They discussed more about the control of their territory, the construction of the three strongholds and the number of airships.

Lucien did not know much about them and simply listened. After all, even the seemingly clumsy airships were absolutely different from what he imagined. Although they were slow, many magic circles and divine power circles had been established on them, making them air fortresses. General attacks could not damage them at all. They had the advantages that planes did not.

As for the large planes, it was unnecessary for the senior-rank sorcerers, and for those below the senior rank, magic steam trains were a better option to connect more places with railroads.

Without him knowing it, the meeting approached the end. Lucien spoke again, "Everybody, right now, the highest honor in every field of magic belongs to different organizations and countries instead of the Congress, which is highly irregular. Since the most glorious title of arcana and magic is the grand arcanist granted by the Congress, the highest honor should also be a prize issued by the Congress. Also, since the arcana is developing faster and faster with more and more achievements, our standard should be more strict. Not only must the laureates have historic accomplishments, but they also need to have their own theoretical explanation on them."

"If the Congress agrees to set up such a prize, I would like to sponsor it with one third of my dividends to encourage the development of arcana and magic."

After he became a legendary sorcerer, most of the materials he needed were too precious to be bought and had to be exchanged with other items. Therefore, dividends were actually not that important for Lucien. He might as well use them to make up for his notoriety as the head-crushing devil.

"You would like to offer one third of your dividends?" Douglas looked at Lucien, surprised.

Because the Allyn Telephone and Telegram Company was still in the phase of infrastructural construction, Lucien's dividends were more than ten thousand Thales. One third of them were almost a huge sum of sponsorship.

Lucien nodded solemnly. "Yes. That's my wish."

"What about you? Do you have any objection?" Douglas looked at other people, mainly Hathaway, Atlant and Hellen.

Hathaway replied briefly, "It's not bad that the Congress sets up a prize."

They did not need to spend their own money after all, and the standard was so high that probably nobody would win the prize in decades. So, other people did not object to it now that Douglas was tempted.

Douglas chuckled, "Now that everybody agrees, we will set up the prize that contains eleven schools. As for the name, it will be named as Lucien Evans Prize, subdivided into Evans Prize in Elements, Evans Prize in Astrology, etc. The reward will be a level-eight perfect magic item."

Chapter 583: Selection

This is so deja vu... Lucien almost failed to control his facial expression after hearing Douglas' proposal. He blurted out, "Mr. President, there's also pure mathematics!"

"Ah, I almost forgot. Mathematics is the brightest gem on the crown of arcana and magic. How can we forget that? Now, there are prizes in twelve fields in total." Douglas patted his forehead and said humorously, "Lucien, your proposal was a bit late, or you could've won Evans Prize in Elements and Astrology for the discovery of neutrons and the introduction to the general theory of relativity."

Lucien waved his hands unconcernedly, "I have too many magic items for me to use now. So, the rewards are not important. If it's about fame, with the Lucien Evans Prize, I believe I will be remembered together with every prize winner."

'Superconductivity', the Silver Moon Medal, and 'Quanta', the Ice & Snow Medal, had both been issued. However, Lucien had plenty of badges on his chest, and those two did not have special magic effects that could make up his shortcomings. Therefore, he did not wear them in case of interference but kept them in his storage bag.

"Only the arcanists who have won too many awards can be as generous as you." Oliver smiled. Playboy or not, he was one of the few members who were good at talking in the Highest Council. The rest of them all lacked social skills even though they looked normal. For example, Brook, the No. 2 person, was gentle and open-minded, but he was a bit unapproachable.

As for Fernando, Vicente, Hathaway, Hellen and Davey, who did not even look normal, they were naturally even worse.

After teasing Lucien, Oliver turned to Douglas. "Mr. President, I don't think prizes according to schools fit the current situation. It's obvious that the new alchemy will involve electromagnetism, and the general theory of relativity includes many other schools, too. Should we regroup the Evans Prize into a few prizes of larger

ranges?”

Douglas nodded in approval, “Well said. When I read Lucien’s general theory of relativity, I obviously sensed the content of multiple schools. In fact, I think that all the concepts belong to the arcane system, and one Evans Prize in Arcana will be sufficient. But obviously, it will not be very convincing.”

“Why not? Elements, electromagnetism, light-darkness, astrology, force field, alchemy and thermodynamics all study the law of the world. It doesn’t matter to call it Evans Prize in Arcana. Illusion, transformation, summoning and necromancy are more about the specific things made of material and energy. They will be covered by the Evans Prize in Magic.” Brook remarkably, didn’t object to it because of their history.

Lucien thought for a moment. “Why do we have to divide them according to schools? The accomplishments that reveal the laws of the world will be awarded with Evans Prize in Arcana, those which are more practical and applicable will be awarded with the prize in magic, and together with the prize in mathematics that is about more abstract accomplishments, there will be three prizes in total.”

“I suggest the studies in the school of necromancy that benefit the body and the soul and the studies on the mind in the school of illusion be combined into one prize, because they are all in the category of meditation. It will help us reshape the image of the sorcerers.” Atlant proposed.

Lucien scratched his chin. Evans Prize in Medicine? Please don’t come up with any stranger stuff. If there was a prize for peace, he would propose that it be awarded to his teacher and Granny Hathaway for maintaining world peace with ‘Eternal Blaze’ and human bomb.

“Very good, Arcana, Magic, Mathematics and Medicine. Four prizes correspond with four fundamental forces.” Douglas made the decision and received no objection. “Alright, the meeting is now over. You will finish the mission given to you or send them to the Affair Committee.”

Hardly had he completed his sentence when he was gone. Lucien, who hadn't stood up yet, was rather shocked. Mr. President was too fast a runner, wasn't he?

"He's devoted to the review and learning of the general theory of relativity. You'd better be braced for the attacks of ten thousand whys." Fernando said to Lucien, not surprised at all. Then, he left and returned to Thunder Hell directly, as space teleportation was forbidden in the conference room.

Fernando was also trying to understand the general theory of relativity, but the discovery of neutrons distracted his attention. He was busy working on the many problems in the new alchemy.

The other members of the Highest Council left without any delay, proving what Oliver said earlier: everybody's time was precious.

"I suspect that the power that restrains neutrons and protons is one of the two fundamental powers that haven't been confirmed." Hathaway said thoughtfully.

Lucien nodded slightly. "I think so, too."

It was not until he spoke that Lucien realized Hathaway had walked to the door without waiting for him to answer at all.

"So, she was only talking to herself." Lucien scratched his chin.

Oliver walked over. "Do you want me to give you a ride to the Affair Committee?"

"Thank you, but no, Mr. Oliver. Thompson is there." Lucien refused with a smile, knowing that he was looking for an excuse to go to the Affair Committee.

Oliver opened his hands. "It seems that there's nothing I can help you with. Lucien, I'm told that you established Evans Music Prize when you were in Aalto? Are you interested in setting up a prize in arts with me?"

Oscars? Lucien was almost choked by the Sky Blue he was drinking.

“Mr. Oliver, I have just given away one third of my wealth. I fear that I don’t have the ability.” Lucien subtly refused Oliver’s offer.

Oliver smiled, “It seems that I have to work on my own now.”

He merely felt that only a great musician like Lucien was qualified to set up a prize with him, but he was not forcing Lucien to.

After Oliver left, Klaus stood up and said with a smile, “I’m used to arriving first and leaving last. Evans, you said that the Lucien Evans Prize requires more strict standards. Will the candidates only be qualified after their theory and discovery blows up other people’s heads?”

“Mr. Klaus, you are truly humorous.” Lucien smiled awkwardly. He was simply too infamous!

After Klaus left, Lucien intentionally coughed aloud. There were only himself and Hellen, Witch of Iceland, in the room.

Hellen was so devoted to Evans Geometry that she did not catch Lucien’s cough at all.

Having no other choice, Lucien kept coughing.

Hellen still showed no response.

“Ms. Hellen...” Lucien simply called her.

Hellen finally raised her head in confusion. “What’s up?”

Then, she looked around and asked in a daze, “Is the meeting over?”

“Yes.” Lucien was rather embarrassed. He was not nearly focused enough compared to her.

Hellen nodded without any surprise, as if she were used to it, and simply resumed studying.

“Ms. Hellen...” Lucien called her helplessly again.

Looking at Lucien with her bright blue eyes, Hellen asked confusedly, “What’s up? Why are you still here?”

“Didn’t you say that you would bring me to select a legendary spell after the meeting is over?” Lucien tried to keep his smile.

Hellen remembered her promise. She cleaned the books, paper and quill before her and then tapped the ring on her left hand, so that she would know clearly what things she needed to ask the three committees to do.

“Follow me.” Then, without any delay, Hellen brought Lucien to a secret library on the thirty-fifth floor.

“According to the standard, you may choose one spell.” Hellen had always been short with words.

Presenting the advancement graph of the legendary class, ‘Atom Controller’, and the two corresponding basic legendary spells, Lucien asked, “What if I submit them?”

“Two basic spells can be exchanged for two, and the legendary can be exchanged for two. You may choose five in total.” Hellen’s attention was finally attracted after she saw the items, but due to regulations, she could only confirm that they were legendary for now. If she wanted to learn them, she would have to trade for them.

Lucien stepped into the library and saw legendary spells and uncanny rituals on the book shelves.

According to the statistics of the Congress, 156 to 165 legendary spells had appeared so far. Some were racial-specific spells, like the vampires’ ‘Real Dream’, and some were the trump cards of the legendary sorcerers, such as Hathaway’s ‘Elements Resolve’. Those spells were not in the library. As a result, there were only 87 legendary spells for choosing.

Among them, the legendary spells that had little to do with his legendary class could barely be learnt, and the conflicting ones could never be learnt, unless his arcana expertise soared.

In the next few years, Lucien could only construct three legendary

spells in his soul. So, he had to choose widely.

“My Atomic Fission is a ranged attack that includes high temperature, energy storm and curse, so I don’t need to choose a massive-destructive spell. Also, the ‘Space Staff’ that I intent to build can provide acceleration and deceleration, which can help me escape and control. I can drop the spells in that aspect, too...”

Lucien only had a basic understanding about the terrifying spell based on the general theory of relativity. Chances were that it could really manipulate time and space as he advanced.

“Spells about barriers and locks... My teacher promised to teach me ‘Storm Barrier’, and I don’t need to pick them.” Looking at the names and effects of the spells on the shelf, Lucien considered carefully, “What I need most right now is a legendary spell that attacks individuals...”

As he made up his mind, Lucien soon found three candidates: ‘Snow Goddess’s Anger’, ‘Vengeful Gaze’ and ‘Vaporization’.

In light of the fact that he already had freezing spells, Lucien preferred the latter two to increase the diversity of his spells.

‘Vengeful Gaze’ could create terrible, high-energy lasers with an excellent penetration, while ‘Vaporization’ could put the target in high heat. Even a legendary sorcerer could be vaporized if he did not take any defense.

“Vengeful Gaze can penetrate most defenses. Also, it is very fast and hard to avoid...” It didn’t take Lucien much time before he made a choice. It would be the third legendary spell he was going to construct.

Later, Lucien selected four legendary spells he was going to study later, namely ‘Mental Fulmination’ that affected thinking, ‘Mirror of Fate’ that was prophetic, ‘Reunion’ that could save his life and ‘Abrupt Magic Reverse’, the best magic defense.

Lucien had thought to choose ‘Luxury Cracking’, but he had ‘Elemental Order’ that could be exchanged for ‘Elements Resolve’

and ‘Cracking (Advanced)’. So, it appeared redundant. ‘Elements Resolve’ and ‘Cracking (Advanced)’ combined could help him deal with most situations.

‘Reunion’, on the other hand, was a spell that was cast on the user in advance and would be triggered when the user’s life was threatened. It would teleport the user back to the place where Reunion was cast. The effect could last one month, so it did not have to be constructed inside the soul and could be cast before every quest. It made an excellent combination with Space Staff. However, the magic could work on three people at most and could not protect more people.

...

Inside the villa that Heidi and Katrina bought together, they were enjoying the red tea with some of their girlfriends while waiting for ‘Arcana Voice’ to start. Listening to the programs of the two frequencies everyday was their favorite lifestyle.

“...Before our programs begins, allow me to announce a piece of news. Mr. President has granted Mr. Lucien Evans the title of grand arcanist today on behalf of the Highest Council in honor of his paradigm-shifting contributions with the new alchemy. His tribute is...” Nightingale’s exciting, sweet voice echoed.

“Huh? Our master...” Layria, Katrina and Chelly mumbled. After the discovery of neutrons, they already knew that their teacher would become a grand arcanist, but they still found it hard to believe after they really heard it.

Heidi, on the other hand, exclaimed in joy, “A grand arcanist! His Excellency Evans!”

Lenka and their other friends looked at them enviously. “Twenty-six years old... A grand arcanist that is only twenty-six years old...”

Chapter 584: Benefit Society

“He has accomplished two revolutionary achievements and won the title of grand arcanist at only 26. I’m afraid that nobody will ever break Mr. Evans’ record. Mr. Brook was in his forties when he became a grand arcanist...” Patricia, another lady, had blond hair and looked like Katrina’s sister. She spoke as if she were in a dream, her voice full of admiration and compliments.

Katrina was back to herself hearing what her friends said. With a brilliant and excited smile, she said, “In fact, since new alchemy was proposed, we had been speculating when our teacher would become a grand arcanist. Our general opinion was that it would be thirty years old. Hehe. Even so, our teacher’s record would be amazingly tantalizing. Nobody expected that he would win it at only 26...”

Because they met their teacher when they were teenagers, an age gap of five years felt like the gap of a whole generation. So, they always regarded him as a senior. After they became his students, they were naturally even more respectful and scared. Also, because their teacher was too mature, it was hard for them to remember his real age – Lucien had already changed his age back after his identity as a musician was exposed.

Today, after hearing that he won the title of grand arcanist, she suddenly recalled that he was only 26! She was almost 22 herself, and she only had the hope to become a middle-rank sorcerer. They were of the same generation with a gap in age, but their actual gap was so huge that she could only look at his back in admiration!

“Haha, I’m a grand arcanist’s student!” Heidi was more simple and straightforward, not covering her pride at all.

Lenka looked at them with complicated feelings. “Mr. Evans must have his own legendary class now. Perhaps, you will be a legendary sorcerer’s student in ten years.”

“With Mr. Evans’ talents, he will be a top legend in forty years at

most.” Patricia congratulated them. “You will certainly be in the senior rank under his guidance by then. Please don’t forget us.”

In the Congress of Magic, grand arcanists were more important than legendary sorcerers because they could almost always become legendary and it was easier for them to reach the peak.

“In fact, there will be no major difference now. Our teacher’s guidance won’t change...” Layria said in delight while secretly she complained that the only difference would probably be more insane exams.

Patricia held a cup of red tea but forgot to drink it. “How can there be no difference? Things will be much more convenient for you now. For example, there will be no dangerous, mandatory missions. Other sorcerers will prefer to exchange their trophies with you. Your life will be full of such invisible benefits.”

“That does not change our teacher’s strictness. The monthly report on research progress, the mountain of exams, the piles of papers to be reviewed, the prosaic magic exercises... I’m swooning when I just think about it.” Chelly rubbed her forehead. She was admitted by the magic school not because of talents but because of her connections. So, she had to work harder to make up for her shortcoming.

“I would rather suffer that.” Lenka blurted out and then covered her complicated feelings with a smile. “I mean, many sorcerers and apprentices would love to bear the pain in your place. You must cherish the opportunity.”

Heidi nodded solemnly, “Although we complain, we never work less. It’s the luckiest thing in our life to meet our teacher and become his student. We cannot squander our bliss.”

“Well said.” Katrina and Layria looked at Heidi rather in surprise, not expecting her to be so serious.

Then, Heidi put on a ‘creepy’ smile and declared, “Therefore, after I become a senior-rank sorcerer and have my own students, I’ll let them know what ‘lucky’ is. I’ll show them the Evans quiz, tests and

exams. No, not just my students, I'll introduce them to the magic school and make everybody enjoy them!"

Katrina's smile was frozen. Was it 'benefit the society' that their teacher said?

Patricia's eyes shined. "Heidi, can you let me try the exercises that Mr. Evans gave to you? I'm very curious about those fearful tests."

Patricia had been craving for the guidance they accepted, but the private lecture was every teacher's secret. If she asked recklessly, they probably wouldn't be friends anymore. Now that Heidi mentioned it on her own, she naturally did not let go of the chance.

Heidi remembered that her teacher said that the tests would be compiled into a book for popularization later. So, she chuckled, "You want to give it a shot? I'm very strict. You have to finish it on time!"

"Really? I'm willing to try them however strict you are!" Patricia said in delight.

Lenka followed, "Can I try them, too?" Her voice was shivering.

The other few ladies expressed the same wish, and intense sympathy beamed out of Katrina and her fellows' face.

When Heidi sorted the exercises, Lenka said gloomily, "Why did we enter the Alborg magic school at the beginning? If we hadn't know you earlier, our life could've been totally different..."

"Our teacher said that this is a time of changes. Whoever is less restrained by the past and the intuitions will improve rapidly. So, you have plenty of opportunities. The future has only just begun." Layria encouraged them.

Patricia nodded solemnly, "Mr. Evans is right. That's probably why the groundbreaking contributions in the past ten years were all accomplished by young arcanists, like Felipe, Larry, Ulysses, Jurisian, Jerome and you."

"We were just lucky. While young people are less restrained by

experience, it's difficult for them to make great achievements because of their unsolid knowledge foundation." Katrina reminded them. "Those older arcanists may transform their thinking and understanding about the world after digesting the recent achievements. We must not overlook them."

"The Congress has decided to set up a prize that represents the highest honor of arcana and magic. Thanks to Mr. Evans' sponsorship, the prize has been named as Evans Prize. It's subdivided into Evans Prize in Arcana that represented the law of the world and the mysteries about material and energy, as well as..."

"Evans Prize in Arcana, Magic, Mathematics and Medication... I wonder who will win it first..." Heidi, Chelly and the rest of them looked at the radio, yearning for it.

...

"...Mr. President has granted Mr. Lucien Evans the title of grand arcanist today on behalf of the Highest Council in honor of his paradigm-shifting contributions with the new alchemy. His tribute is..."

Inside the radio, Nightingale, Lark and other anchors were all announcing the news in their different tones.

"The youngest grand arcanist in history, and probably the youngest legendary sorcerer later..." Gaston broke the weird silence in the library and heaved a sigh. "Who could've thought that the first-circle sorcerer you met would become a grand arcanist? I only appreciated his potentials when the periodic table was proved and thought that he could become a senior-rank sorcerer one day. As it turned out, after I'm only improved by one level, he's already totally different from the past... The eighth grand arcanist, His Excellency Evans..."

Eight years for a senior-rank sorcerer was like one year for the ordinary people.

Larry, sitting on his opposite side, said in a smile, "A few years ago,

I envied him deeply and was even jealous of him in private, but right now, all the jealousy is gone. I chose a wrong target. We are not competitors of the same level at all. I can't even see his back now."

"It's good to recognize yourself, but there is no need to feel humble. The new alchemy and the theory of relativity have opened the gate to a new epoch. There are certain infinite mysteries up ahead. As long as we explore hard, we will have a lot of achievements, too." Gaston comforted his student in a smile.

Larry nodded in agreement. "I'm going to study the orbits and distribution of electrons in the new alchemy."

"Me, too." Gaston was satisfied about his students' keenness.

...

In Heidler city...

Listening to the radio, Felipe looked out of the window aimlessly like a statue.

"Grand arcanist... Grand arcanist..." The same broadcast raised different feelings. Felipe was lost and frustrated first, but then his pride was rekindled. He could not be left far behind.

"Lucien mentioned that his modification would be based on the diffraction of X rays..." Felipe decided to learn more about electromagnetism and improve the magnifying magic on his own to meet his demand.

...

In a secret cave that was comfortably and splendidly decorated in the wilderness on the north coastline...

Kritonia listened to the radio on the sofa solemnly. "Lucien Evans has become a grand arcanist, and probably a legend in a few years..."

With his level-three legendary, he didn't have to hide. But the

Hoffenberg family had Hathaway who was at the peak of legendary, so he had to be prudent.

At this moment, the fire in the furnace suddenly grew into the shape of a human.

“Original Fire.” Kritonia sensed it the moment the fire changed. He was amazed by the sorcerer with ancient heritage. ‘Original Fire’ was only level-one legendary, but he never discovered the guy until he was near.

Although he wouldn’t be ambushed, it indeed called for wariness.

A hoarse voice echoed from the fire. “He has become a grand arcanist. We need to plan an operation. If we postpone a couple of years, we will be faced with a legendary sorcerer, which will be much more difficult.”

“But we have to wait until the Congress of Magic is less vigilant.” Kritonia nodded in agreement.

...

In Babel, Lucien received Natasha’s electromagnetism messaging.

“I heard the broadcast that you’d been promoted into a grand arcanist. Does it mean that you do not need to participate in the review of papers?” Asked Natasha joyfully.

Lucien smiled. “Do you want me to go to Rentato?”

“Hehe. You disrupted the pope’s scheme only a few days ago. It will be too dangerous for you if you are out of Atom Institution. Also, I’ve been curious about your Atom Institution and your magic tower for a long time. So, I will go to Allyn tomorrow!” Natasha understood the situation quite well.

Lucien chuckled. He was thinking to discuss schools, labor laws and Kritonia with her, and she had decided to come to him on her own so cooperatively.

“Do you not welcome me?” Hearing Lucien’s chuckle, Natasha said

jokingly.

Lucien replied with a smile. “Of course I do. My friends and students have always wanted to meet Her Majesty. There’s something that I want to discuss with you, too.”

Chapter 585: A One-Day Trip in Allyn

After the call with Natasha, Lucien did not clean his room and his laboratory for the visit of ‘Her Majesty’, like any other single gentlemen would, because Leo, the servants, the golems as well as the tower guard were enough to make every part of the magic tower clean and tidy.

Also, Lucien was a very organized man himself. He had kept all the experiment materials in his own way in case of mistakes during his experiment.

Lucien focused his attention on the Sun’s Corona. During the last couple of days, he had already cracked the last two barriers and grasped the level nine item.

The second to last barrier could only allow Lucien to perform a level nine divine power named ‘Bane of the Undead’, but the last barrier contained the coordinates of the mysterious land recorded by Maskelyne.

The mysterious place was inside the World of Souls and seemed related to the senior-rank spectres. It was possible that the greatest secret of the World of Souls that Rhine talked about was hidden there.

The information left by Maskelyne included more than ten parameters that were associated with the actual circumstances. Only after he obtained the environment data of the World of Souls could he calculate the mysterious place whose coordinates changed all the time.

“I’m already a legendary sorcerer. Exploring the secrets of the World of Souls and rescuing Mr. Maskelyne should be put on my agenda right.” Without Maskelyne and his gift, he could’ve died on the journey to Stuart. Also, any arcanist whose goal was to explore the world would have to visit the World of Souls sooner or later.

Of course, Lucien did not intend to go there anytime soon. He would wait until the six legendary spells were engraved into his

soul and go together with others of the Congress of Magic. That would be the safest way.

“I’ll apply to check the intelligence in a couple of days. My permissions should be enough for me to check the information from the senior-rank spectres like Adol...” Lucien began to study Space Staff and analyze ‘Vengeful Gaze’ after making a decision.

.....

The next day in the morning, Lucien waited outside of Hathaway’s library on the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower.

Soon, space-time ripples spread out, and Lucien smelled something familiar.

Soundlessly, the door was opened, and a tall lady walked out. Natasha was wearing a white hunting suit and long pants, which agreed with her vibe and look and made her even more attractive.

Looking at Lucien’s daze, Natasha pressed her chest with her right hand and bowed, “Your Excellency, you are the truth of elements and the staff that masters space and time.”

“My lady, you are my truth.” Lucien tried to be humorous although he was somewhat regretful. He had gotten much taller, but he was still several centimeters shorter than Natasha. Thankfully, it wasn’t too obvious now.

Standing next to Lucien in a smile, Natasha observed the Allyn magic tower. “This place is more beautiful than I remembered. It’s simplistic and magnificent. The mysterious patterns and the silver brilliance constitute a dreamy style.”

“The Allyn magic tower always leaves an ineffable impression on every sorcerer or apprentice after their visit. Your Majesty, your knight will show you the Atom Institution first.” Lucien extended his right hand as an invitation.

Natasha chuckled, “That is a mysterious, forbidden area all nobles and citizens talk about. The deepest secrets of the world seem to be hidden there.”

Under the introduction of 'Arcana Voice', the regular citizens were quite awed by the Atom Institution who had many major discoveries.

Since there wasn't any pressure or danger, Natasha was rather relieved and asked about everything she saw.

Their conversation and laughter caught the attention of Hellen, who opened her library and asked, frowning, "This is..."

Natasha did not have any badge of magic or arcana on her chest.

"She is my fiancée Natasha and the queen of Holm. You must've met her before, Ms. Hellen?" Lucien introduced, although it appeared that Hellen did not know Natasha.

Natasha also said courteously, "Ms. Hellen, I heard a lot about you from Granny Hathaway. You are one of the most admirable ladies to me."

Hellen's eyebrow loosened. "So, you are Natasha. I saw your image and heard your name before, but I never associated them."

Lucien tried to hold back his laughter. It was obviously not something that Ms. Hellen was interested in.

Now that the identity of the guest was confirmed, Hellen shut the door of her library without any smalltalk and continued dwelling in her world.

"Ms. Hellen has the most delicate look among all the females I know." When they stepped into the life, Natasha praised with a smile.

Lucien's lips twitched. "Why do you care about her looks..."

"What else should you care about?" Natasha felt that it was only reasonable. Then she realized what was going on. "Rest assured, I'm absolutely loyal. I won't have any other thoughts during my appreciation."

Lucien touched the hair behind Natasha's knight hat without a

word. What he needed to worry about was truly different from that of common men.

At the edge of life, Natasha pointed at the thirty-first floor. "Isn't the Sky Radio Station. I like Nightingale and Lark's voices. How do they look?"

Natasha asked similar things a few years ago, but Lucien, fearing that he would have more competitors, simply replied to her with excuses. After all, he was not qualified to catch the attention of the Violet Countess back then.

"They are not in the Sky Radio Station during the day." Lucien explained.

"What a shame. But I'll stay in Allyn tonight. Will you show me the Sky Radio Station?" Asked Natasha with great interest.

Now that they had settled their relationship, Lucien naturally did not have his previous worries. He smiled, "That's not a problem. I am still the manager of the Sky Radio Station in name."

.....

Inside the Atom Institution, Lazar, Heidi, Alfalia and other people waited excitedly and anxiously. They had seen the queen's image in the newspaper but never met her in person. Also, it was a sign that Mr. Lucien Evans had officially ended his single life.

In such an atmosphere, the gate of the institution was opened. Heidi keenly saw her teacher walking next to a purple-haired lady.

"She's so gorgeous..."

"How beautiful!"

"No wonder our teacher fell in love with her."

"They are really a match."

Natasha's look fitted the appetite of the ladies on the spot, who believed that she had certain masculine beauty that differed her

from the female sorcerers.

After Lucien's cough, Katrina and the students were back to themselves and bowed respectfully, "Good morning, master. Good morning, Your Majesty."

Alfalia and Lowi pressed their chest and their forehead. "Your Excellency, you are the truth of elements and the staff that masters space and time. Good morning, Your Majesty."

After that, Lucien introduced his friends like Lazar and Jerome and his students like Annick and Layria to Natasha one by one.

After the assistants left, Heidi summoned her courage to ask, "Your Majesty, how did your relationship with our master begin? All the sorcerers in Allyn are curious about it!"

"Just say that you are curious about it, lovely little girl." Natasha looked at Heidi with a vague smile. "Long story short, I pushed your master over."

Heidi and Layria both raised their thumbs. How majestic! Being straightforward seemed the best solution to deal with a mild man like their master!

"You seem quite free today." Lucien interjected. "I'll give you another mission. You can study the mechanism of the ancillary computation circles."

Heidi looked awful. Their teacher had obviously translated his embarrassment into a task.

"If you want to know the details, I'll tell them to you later." Natasha followed Lucien to the laboratory with a smile.

After she entered the laboratory, Natasha saw the sharp, cold and simple alchemical devices inside and the indescribable patterns on the experiment platforms, giving permanent shock.

"This is entirely different from my mother's laboratory. It has more... beauty of the space." Shocked, Natasha tried to express her feeling.

“Such is the charm of arcana and magic. Come here, try this cyclotron.” Lucien shared his studies with Natasha.

After activating the cyclotron, Natasha saw the dreamy traces of electrons in the cloud room. She exclaimed in amazement, “Are they tiny electrons?”

Lucien was about to answer, when the voltage part of the cyclotron suddenly broke down.

“It’s not my fault...” Natasha didn’t think she had made any mistakes with the operation.

Lucien checked it. “It’s regular attrition. Come here and try this magnifying magic circle.”

A moment later, Natasha said innocently again, “This is really not my fault.”

“Of course. It’s also regular attrition...”

After Lucien’s tour with Natasha, three alchemical devices and two magic circles crashed. Although they took up less than one percent, it was still the attrition of almost one month.

“Perhaps they are scared of me?” Scratching her chin, Natasha carefully looked for an excuse for such an anomaly.

Amused, Lucien said, “Soon enough, you will be given the title of ‘Experiment Device Destroyer’.”

“It’s definitely because I was not lucky today!” Declared Natasha resolutely.

.....

Lucien showed Natasha the central area of Allyn and returned to his magic tower at noon.

“This is more whimsical and fantastic than the Atomic Institution... Well designed.” Natasha was shocked by Lucien’s ‘Babel’ again.

“Nice to meet you, masteress.” ‘Pinocchio’ greeted her.

Very interested in the wisdom of alchemical life, Natasha looked at Lucien and asked, “You didn’t teach him?”

“Of course not.” Lucien secretly raised his thumb at Pinocchio.

Pinocchio replied proudly, “I am the smart Pinocchio!”

“I remember that Pinocchio was a puppet whose nose grew long if he told lies in your tale.” Natasha chuckled, “Was it a metaphor that you tricked many people?”

Pinocchio said loudly, “No, I’m not a lying puppet; I’m the honest Pinocchio. Yes, very honest!”

Lucien pulled Natasha into the magic tower with a smile and stopped her from further teasing Pinocchio.

After visiting the magic tower and the magic garden, they returned to the living room and waited for lunch.

When Lucien was about to discuss schools and laws with Natasha, Natasha suddenly rose and closed the door of the living room, before she looked at Lucien with a mischievous smile.

“What’s up?” Asked Lucien in confusion.

Natasha kept her smile. “Let me tell you a piece of good news. By perceiving the rules inside the Sword of Truth, I have already advanced into level nine. I’ve finally surpassed you again.’

Born a knight, she was very happy that her strength would be higher for the time being. She knew that Lucien, whose cognitive world had half-solidified, would surpass her eventually, so she decided to make the best use of the years while she had the ‘dominance’.

Therefore, she rubbed her fists eagerly. “I’ll hug you in exactly the same way you did to me! I’m going to relish it!”

While talking, she sensed Lucien’s mood carefully. She would give

up if he disliked her being too pushy. It was the fundamental principle of their relationship.

Lucien was delighted at Natasha's improvement at first, but then he simply stood there with a smile.

Seeing no objection from Lucien, Natasha intentionally walked to Lucien slowly and extended her hands at him with wicked laughter.

But all of a sudden, Natasha realized that Lucien was as terrifying as a pillar that was deeply rooted in the earth and could not be moved. Then, she sensed an enormous force on her back and her legs, before she was swept off her feet, unable to resist.

She waved her hands and feet crazily, trying to free herself, but his arms were like two unbreakable manacles.

"You have already advanced into legendary?"

Natasha was back to herself and asked in disbelief, her eyes widened. She was both delighted and panicked, both awed and upset.

.....

The dinner was much later than scheduled. Looking at Natasha who was unusually exhausted, Lucien said in a great mood, "I'll entrust the regulation of the alchemical workshops to you."

Blushing, and with persistence burning inside her body, Natasha swore that she would try to become a legend!

She nodded her head. "I'll ask Duke James to propose a bill to the parliament. Right, the intelligence department mentioned that the dwarf craftsmen are worshiping a mysterious God of Steam. Why do I have the feeling that it has something to do with you?"

Chapter 586: Plan

Chapter 586: Plan

Lucien had almost forgotten about the dwarfs. After Natasha asked, he remembered what happened and said with a smile, putting down the caviar next to him. “Didn’t I tell you about the adventure in the Night Highland?”

“Yes, that was very wicked of you. You added an additional layer of defense outside of the vampire count’s defense core to make it even more ‘solid!’” Natasha was chuckling about it even right now. Lucien was full of such bad humor, but she liked it!

Lucien was quite proud of his reactions back then, too. “That time, in order to trick the dwarfs into coming back, I intentionally pretended to be their God of Steam after they mistook me for him, and I even ‘showed’ them an illusionary gods’ realm – Atlantis. Inside of it was my imagination about the future of the alchemical industry. Hehe. At that time, I even imagined that alchemical bombs that looked like rising suns were created by the great development of elements and alchemy. You know what happened later. Reality is always more unbelievable than fantasies. We already have ‘Eternal Blaze’.”

Now that they were talking about dwarfs, Lucien briefly explained what ‘Atlantis’ was to her.

Natasha was stunned first at Lucien’s answer, then she laughed so hard that she lay on the table. “And I was wondering what the dwarfs were worshipping. It turns out that they were worshipping an alchemical bomb. Haha. How hilarious! I have never seen such a funny religion before!”

They’re just nuclear-bomb believers. I’d seen a lot of them when I played games in the past. Lucien smiled at Natasha as she laughed aloud.

Trying to control herself, Natasha said while laughing, “According to the intelligence department, those dwarfs have been devoutly

worshipping silver... Haha, silver iron bombs since 'Eternal Blaze' exploded a while back, crying about god's favor, Atlantis' arrival and such. They also tried to find out who performed 'Eternal Blaze', because they believed that he was the envoy and the saint of the God of Steam."

"If they learn that it's a spell I created, I will be reduced from 'God of Steam' into an ordinary person." Lucien shook his head. A weird idea occurred to him. If the dwarfs perfected their doctrines and rituals, would the power of faith be gathered toward him? Or would it directly be gathered to 'nuclear bombs'?

Lucien had no desire in becoming a god yet. He had learnt a good lesson from Ell. However, he had always wanted to study the congregation of the power of faith. If the gods were unveiled, the deeper mysteries of the world would definitely be revealed.

After talking about the dwarfs' assimilation, Natasha wiped her lips with a napkin. "I'll allocate the additional abbeys to local city halls as the locations of the generic schools."

After the South Church evacuated, the number of believers had reduced a lot. In order to control them, Natasha had confiscated part of the abbeys and real estate of the Church, which built up the queen's treasury. That was why she approved Lucien's plan without any hesitation. She was using her private possessions and did not need the approval of the Parliament of Nobles.

"After the schools you and the Congress establish raise talents after talents, I believe that the royal family will be more steady." Lucien said, smiling.

Natasha put down the napkin and looked at Lucien. "It's your plan, and I definitely support you. Besides, you convinced me."

Lucien nodded solemnly, "If nothing changes, and society remains as ignorant and underdeveloped as it used to be, will there be any joy in accomplishing success? What's the point of becoming the leader of a bunch of pigs? A real arcanist should facilitate the progress of society and make mankind more civilized, giving everybody an opportunity to enjoy the convenience brought by the

alchemical items. That will be the greatest achievement for them...”

Hearing Lucien’s heartfelt speech, Natasha became quiet and focused. He looked more charming than ever.

After Lucien finished, Natasha responded with a brilliant smile, “Yes. Being a queen in a poor, underdeveloped country where most people don’t even know how to write is not nearly as pleasant as seeing the country flourish.”

Looking at Leo and two maids who were serving nearby, Lucien rose with a smile. “Let me show you the scenery of Atlantis.”

Natasha was stunned at first, and then she realized that Lucien had something else he wanted to say. Therefore, she picked up her hat and followed Lucien into the living room unhurriedly.

After Lucien turned on independent magic circle, she asked solemnly, “What’s up?”

“Nothing important. Weren’t you ‘angry’ that I didn’t tell you when I advanced into legendary?” Lucien looked at Natasha with a smile.

Natasha blushed as if she recalled something. Then, she coughed and thought quickly. “Are you planning to hide the fact that you are already legendary in order to deal with the legendary experts that the Church will possibly send to kill you?”

Lucien raised his thumb. Natasha had always been keen about that. “Yes. We have to eliminate as many legends of the Church as possible. If I set it to public, they will probably never take any action. After all, a legendary sorcerer can barely be killed. Besides, you are still being threatened by the shadow of Kritonia. I’m thinking to resolve the two issues at once.”

Knowing that Lucien was doing this mainly to help her deal with Kritonia, Natasha meant to object first, but she abandoned her idea after seeing Lucien’s firmness. She smiled, “The problem is, you can always plan to assassinate somebody else, but you can’t always be braced for assassinations.”

“That’s why we need to attract all of them.” Said Lucien without

any hesitation. As long as they misevaluated his strength, he would be able to stall them until Mr. President, his teacher and Hathaway arrived.

Natasha scratched his chin. “Kritonia and the possible assassins of the Church can’t be fooled so easily. They are very experienced. They will discover our flaws and take advantage of them if we do anything wrong.”

“Yes. We can’t wander about randomly. There has to be a justifiable, unquestionable reason.” Frowning, Lucien said.

Natasha began to consider how to create such an ‘opportunity’, too. Suddenly, her eyes glittered, and she clapped her hands. “Wedding! Our wedding! While Granny Hathaway and the Lord of Storm will be present, the wedding will be rather crowded and messy, which will give the assassins a chance.”

“Everybody knows our relationship. It’s perfectly normal to hold a wedding now that the situation is steady again.” Lucien nodded in approval.

Natasha added. “We can go one step further. For example, you are a grand arcanist, and I am a queen. Our wedding should be equal. We can hold one wedding in the Nekso Palace and another one in Allyn, or you can come to the Nekso Palace to fetch me, my father, Aunt Camil and the other members of the royal family to Allyn. In such a way, Granny Hathaway will be our only protector on the way. There will be a chance for assassination.”

Weddings were supposed to be held in churches, but since Lucien was a sorcerer, churches were naturally not suitable.

“If the Church takes action, it will probably be the Original Fire or one of the other giants of the inquisition. According to their record, they are all bold and careful. The only problem is whether or not Kritonia will work with them. If not, how can they spare enough hands to keep Granny Hathaway busy? We need to make two different plans.” Said Lucien quickly. The two of them soon settled on a framework after their discussion.

In the end, Natasha asked, “How long will it take before you can engrave the remaining two legendary spells in your soul?”

“Half a year at least, and eight months at most.” Lucien said his estimation.

Natasha nodded and smiled, “Then, we will hold the wedding on April 10 next year, the day when we were separated for the first time. I’ll release the news first. Is the time enough?”

“It is.” Lucien believed that the time was enough for him to craft his unique legendary items, but the problem was that he did not have enough precious materials.

As if she guessed what was Lucien’s mind, Natasha chuckled and said, “Now that the wedding date has been settled and you are really my fiancée, the treasury of the royal family will open for you. I hope you can find legendary materials that you need. If not, you can trade the materials inside with other legendary sorcerers, say Granny Hathaway or the Lord of Storm.”

Even though the royal family of Holm had a history of hundreds of years, it boasted no more than five kinds of legendary materials.

“About that...” They were so precious that even such a petty person as Lucien also hesitated. However, after seeing Natasha’s firm, smiling eyes, he immediately let it go and said with a smile, “Okay.”

After they settled on that, Lucien felt something was wrong and scratched his head. “So to speak, we have already agreed on our wedding? Nobody has proposed yet, right?”

Wasn’t it too irregular?

Natasha was briefly stunned. “Huh, do you want me to propose to you?”

After saying that, both she and Lucien were amused. They had unique experiences, unique personalities and a unique relationship. Why did they have to pursue regularity?

Natasha extended her right hand and grabbed Lucien's left hand, before she declared in a low voice:

"If they really dare to come, the blood of legends will dye the carpets of our wedding red!"

"That will perhaps be the most unforgettable wedding." Lucien agreed with a smile. Then he reminded her, "You must be very, very, very careful in the coming months."

...

They spent the afternoon inside the magic tower. At night, when Lucien was about to bring Natasha to the Sky Radio Station for a secret visit, he suddenly received Samantha's message. "We have found a strange channel. It seems to be a radio station that the Church established recently."

"Is that so? I'll come by and see what it is about." Lucien and Natasha looked at each other, both noticing the curiosity in each other's eyes.

Chapter 587: Thanos Demon

On the thirty-first floor of the Allyn magic tower...

Although the magic tower was automatically closed and nobody was allowed to enter at night, Lucien was naturally not bound by the rule as a grand arcanist. Leading Natasha, he jumped from 'Atomic Universe', his demiplane, to his library on the thirty-third floor, before they stepped into the lift.

The magic tower at night was more quiet than usual. As they walked inside the silver corridor, their footsteps echoed loudly, further adding to the quiet and creepy atmosphere.

Hardly had Lucien and Natasha entered the area where the Sky Radio Station was at when a giant white wolf ran out. After realizing that it was Lucien, it immediately crouched and wagged its tail.

"Good morning, Mr. Evans. Good evening, Your Majesty." Louise, who was wearing a daisy-colored dress, saw Lucien and his companion, too, and greeted them.

Hearing her sweet and familiar voice, Natasha asked in delight, "Are you Ms. Nightingale? I love your program. Huh. Aren't you Louise, the missing musician of Aalto?"

She recalled the new musician of Aalto from her delicate face and her symbolic white wolf.

"She is the musician Louise. However, I think you must know her other alias, Mercury, Apprentice Mercury." Lucien introduced her to Natasha.

Natasha tried to say something, but she eventually shook her head. "The Musicians' Association of Aalto should be renamed to the Sorcerers' Association of Aalto. Is it easy for musicians to become sorcerers, or do sorcerers prefer to disguise themselves as musicians?"

She had known Apprentice Mercury through Sylvia before she knew Lucien, but she did not know that Mercury was also a musician who escaped to Allyn!

It's not the Sorcerers' Association of Aalto but a prep school for 'international students'... Lucien secretly remarked.

Louise replied, "That was because a great musician and grand arcanist set an example for me. Your Majesty, you've come to visit the radio station?"

Natasha looked at Lucien with a smile and laughed warmly, "I asked Lucien to bring me here because I like the voices of you and Ms. Lark. I didn't expect that I would run into you. Your real voice is even more pleasant than it is on the radio."

"That's because the radios are not good enough." Lucien defended the radio station.

Louise smiled sweetly and politely, "It's an honor to be appreciated by the queen, but 'Arcana Voice' is about to begin. You'll have to excuse me. Mr. Evans, Samantha is waiting for you at the conference room."

"Sorry for delaying you." Natasha said joyfully, "I've bumped into Ms. Nightingale immediately after coming. It seems that my bad luck is over."

She was talking about the disaster in the laboratory in the morning, and the unexpected counter-dominance from Lucien.

"It's been a while since I saw you so courteous." Lucien made fun of her while he led her to the conference room.

Natasha glanced at Lucien. "My manners are reserved for ladies. Hehe. You will have a chance."

The two of them talked and laughed, but Louise sighed in the broadcast room. "The queen and Mr. Evans knew each other a long time ago. They must've been a couple since they were in Aalto... Now, they are finally together despite all the adversities..."

She saw clearly that Lucien and Natasha were both wearing a ring on the third finger on their left hand. Natasha's ring was even the famous Holm Crown Ring, 'Element'.

...

After he opened the gate, all the arcanists bowed at him. "Your Excellency, you are the truth of elements, and you master the staff of space and time."

"There's no need to be so troublesome. Everybody's time is precious." Lucien raised his objection humorously and then pointed at Natasha. "This is Natasha, my fiancée and the queen of Holm."

All the arcanists were refreshed by the first-hand news. Mr. Evans had acknowledged the engagement with the queen? Also, they secretly complimented Natasha's beauty and vibe, because they had seen few female sorcerers that were charming in such a way.

Briefly stunned, Samantha put on a sincere smile. "I didn't know you were engaged. I wish you happiness forever."

Natasha smiled, "Are you Ms. Lark? Your voice is more pleasant than the sound of a real lark. I am your loyal fan."

"It's my honor." Samantha resumed her calmness and spoke to Lucien, "Mr. Evans, it's indeed the Church's radio station. Its name is 'Sound of Salvation'.

As she talked, the whispers of the arcanists gradually stopped, and the sound from the magic circle came into Lucien and Natasha's ears clearly.

"We believe that there must be something that every race and every occupation can accept. That is the virtues such as benevolence, generosity, honesty and bravery; that is the holy light that the Lord favored; that pacifies our minds and protects us from the sins of this world. The evil sorcerers and dark knights, who violate the common sense, are corrupt and destined to be destroyed..."

"...We are brothers and sisters, and we will be saved when we pray in the name of the Lord. This time, we have invited the believers of

different social classes. They will tell you about beliefs and virtues.”

“...I am a destitute believer. In my place, sickness and injury often mean death, but I survived a major disease because my neighbor, the reverend of my area, treated me and took care of me without asking for any reward. My health and my mental peace were recovered...”

“...I was always anxious in the past, but after the reverends talked to me, I calmed down and enjoyed unprecedented peace...”

...

“The next program is ‘The Cruel Magic You Do Not Now’. In this war of Rentato, the evil sorcerers summoned abyssal demons by sacrificing humans alive, which was atrocious. Allow me to repeat the details for you...”

An arcanist laughed, “The Church is completely copying our creation!”

“That’s the only way for them to establish it so quickly. The anchor is also a female with a pleasant voice.” Another arcanist replied with a smile.

“Don’t underestimate the Church’s understanding about arcana, but the programs are still not lively and attractive enough.” Lucien nodded. “Ask someone to monitor the channel, but don’t be distracted by them.”

“Understood.” All the arcanists replied.

“...Our fate has been preordained by God. Everything is destined. Only by believing in the Lord can we be saved...”

All the arcanists showed obvious despise, which arouse Natasha’s interest. “Guys, this is the Church’s definition of fate. What’s fate in arcana and magic? How accurate is your prophecy?”

Her mother was not good at astrology. Naturally, she did not know much about it.

As a senior-rank sorcerer of the school of astrology, Samantha said solemnly, "Fate is also prearranged according to astrology, but the God of Truth has nothing to do with it."

"Why?" Natasha looked at Lucien and found it hard to accept that fate was unchangeable.

Lucien hinted for her to listen first and ask later.

"I wonder, has Your Majesty ever heard of 'Thanos Demon'?" Samantha tried to explain it as simply as possible.

Natasha shook her head. "No."

Since Lucien just got started with astrology, he was not clear about 'Thanos Demon', either.

"At the last years of the Magic Empire, the sorcerers believed in determinism, which was also known as the law of causality. They believed that as long as all the conditions and parameters that influenced a thing were known, the result of the thing could be inferred deterministically through all kinds of patterns. When there's a result, there's a reason; when there's a reason, there's a result." Samantha basically introduced the law of causality. "As arcana develops, the idea is even more prevalent that as long as conditions and data are given, we will be able to get a definite outcome."

Seeing that Natasha was still confused, another male arcanist added with an example. "Your Majesty, assuming that I have a Thale in my hand, and I toss it out randomly, either side of it could hit the ground, right?"

"Yes." Natasha thought and replied solemnly.

"No, it's not true. After I toss it, as long as I know the force, the quality of the Thale, the moisture, the wind and other conditions, I will be able to calculate which side of it will hit the ground according to Douglas motion system. There's no other possibilities." Declared the arcanist proudly.

Arcanists explored the world, summarized patterns, and then

predicted the world with their discovery. That was exactly the charm of arcana!

Natasha thought for a moment. “I got it. The moment when the Thale is tossed, all the influence factors are determined, so the outcome is destined.”

“That’s good. That’s exactly determinism and the law of causality. ‘Thanos Demon’, on the other hand, was a concept that the Sun King came up with.”

Samantha returned to the original topic. “He considers the current status of the world as a consequence of the past and a cause for the future. So, assuming that there is a very powerful demon who knows the status and patterns of everything, it will be able to infer all the things that happened in the past.”

“Also, it will be able to predict all the things that will happen in the future. The future will be as fixed as the history. That’s exactly ‘Thanos Demon’. It tells us that the fate of this world was destined the moment it was born. We cannot predict the future only because we know too little and grasp too few patterns.”

Natasha found it impossible to accept the law of causality. “But hearts are unpredictable.”

“No. Everybody’s personality is affected by the environment. Or rather, their personality is shaped by many factors, and a fixed personality, together with all the other factors when a decision is made, will yield a destined answer even if hearts are unpredictable. Your Majesty, have you never guessed the enemy’s possible reaction in a battle?” Samantha said calmly.

Natasha nodded her head but shook it later, not knowing how she should argue.

Samantha put on a proud but sad expression. “Every arcanist in the school of astrology is proud that they can see fate and sad that they cannot change it. It is cruel and cold, but it’s also a fact. When there is a cause, there’s a consequence. Everything has been decided by the past.”

The discussion on fate was over, and Natasha fell silent. It was not until they left the Allyn magic tower that she grasped Lucien's hand and asked, "Lucien, do you believe that fate is preordained and unchangeable?"

It was a terrible and devastating feeling!

"No." Lucien replied with a smile. After his spirit library was unsealed, he had been learning quantum mechanics.

Natasha did not expect that Lucien would give a reply so quickly and firmly. Turning around in a daze, she said with a blossoming smile, "Me, too. I believe that we can change our fate to a certain degree. Hehe. I should've foreseen your answer. The soul of resistance that has never changed since the Symphony of Fate is what I appreciate and like most about you."

"Exactly. One has to be take the initiative consciously." Lucien said in a low voice. Then, while Natasha was slightly confused, he stared at the sky solemnly: "The law of causality must die!"

Because we need to live!

Chapter 588: Special Issue

Chapter 588: Special Issue

Although Natasha did not quite understand why Lucien became so serious all of a sudden, his opinion on the law of causality and his firm attitude still made the terrible feelings in her heart melt like snow under the sunlight. A world where everything was predestined and unchangeable was a most desperate and lifeless one.

Sensing the warmth of his hand and hearing his solemn voice, Natasha soon regained her natural-born optimism. Not bothering with the subject anymore, she smiled, “Are you planning to create an opera for me?”

“How did you know?” Lucien was somewhat surprised.

Natasha chuckled and said, “My eyes are very keen. I saw a manuscript, *Valkyrie*, on your bookshelf in your library this afternoon, and I think it’s for me.”

She did not show any modesty about ‘*Valkyrie*’ and thought matter-of-factly that it was for her.

Lucien heaved a sigh. “I planned to hire a troupe to perform it for us in honor of the anniversary of our mutual confession of love on my birthday, but I didn’t have the time of creation because of Sard and the incidents later. Also, the libretto is more difficult to create than I thought, and the music is even more so. I’ve only completed one third so far.”

Although it was based on the work from Earth, it was basically a brand-new masterpiece, which made Lucien run into a lot of difficulties.

Natasha smiled, not bothered at all. “That’s alright. We can wait until next year, or the next year, or the next, and so on. Speaking of opera, I’m planning to sponsor the Musicians’ Association of Rentato and rebuild a capital of music.”

She was a real lover of music. Now that she couldn't return to Aalto for now, she planned to make Rentato a holy land of music, too.

"If I have time, I'll offer guidance to the musicians of Rentato." Lucien was already confident enough to say so. While the creation of Valkyrie was difficult, it allowed him to fully make use of the music knowledge that he had learnt. He was almost as good as Victor now.

His rapid progress benefited from the avant-garde music knowledge in his spirit library, as well as his sharpened mind after his soul became stronger.

Natasha took a deep breath of the gentle breath on the street and said humorously, "Then, on behalf of the musicians of Holm, I thank you in advance, master. If you don't mind, I want your Uncle Joel to enter the association and bring the latest music trends and development of Aalto to this place."

The smuggled Music Review and Herald of Symphonies naturally could only reflect what was on the top and could not let the musicians learn the real fundamental knowledge.

"I certainly wouldn't mind as long as Uncle Joel is willing to." Lucien had already learnt from Natasha that, after the initial excitement of a noble life, Joel began his music learning again. He worked so hard that he did not look like a middle-aged man at all.

Natasha looked at Lucien and said with a vague smile, "In fact, I talked about Joel only because I wanted to ask you when you were going to meet him. There shouldn't be any danger now that the Church has retreated. According to the intelligence personnel who protected them, they had obviously changed their stance regarding sorcerers and clerics, thanks to Arcana Voice and the convenient alchemical items. They probably wouldn't overreact. Also, they must be missing you. To know more about you, they often stay late and listen to 'News of the World' that they do not understand at all."

Lucien's heart was suddenly filled with warmth after hearing Natasha's words. It had been only eight years since he came to this

world, but it felt like an entire life. So, he answered in a low voice, "I'll visit them in a couple of days."

"Be happy. You should feel happy about that." Natasha made a gesture of encouragement and then changed the subject. "Mr. Great Musician, do you have any revolutionary music principles? You have always been best known for your creativity. I find it intolerable that you haven't produced any innovative works in years."

Lucien smiled at her. "Why not? I have associated music creations with mathematics."

"Huh? Music and mathematics? How can they be associated?" Asked Natasha in surprise. Music was a realm where the mind was absolutely free, while mathematics the most rigorous and suffocating. How could they be associated? It was not about the categorical, conceptual stuff like equal temperament but creation!

Lucien chuckled. "That's why it is revolutionary. I have abandoned the traditional structural factors, such as theme, logic, motive, sentences, verses, and sequenced the substantial elements, such as rhythm, pitch, density of notes and timbre, with the permutation and combination in mathematics. Then, I created according to such a rule."

"That sounds cold... but interesting. What's the result?" Natasha knew that it wouldn't be mainstream, but she had always been eager to try everything. Naturally, there wasn't any objection from her.

After that, she added in with mixed feelings, "This is so arcanist!"

"I'll show you some of my works after we are back." They were the sequential music works that Lucien created when he was relaxing his brain. Later, they could also be applied to electronic music.

"Okay. If they are good, you will teach me how to create them tonight!" Said Natasha with great interest.

Lucien intentionally twisted her meaning and made fun of her.

“Tonight? You seem to be avoiding something, don’t you?”

“Really? Do I look like an escapist to you?”

...

On the second day, after he saw Natasha off, Lucien returned to the Atom Institution in delight. There are many experiments he needed to confirm.

“Lucien, looking good!” Lazar was holding a journal, with a ‘I-totally-get-it’ look on his face.

“‘Arcana’ has been issued in advance?” Lucien recognized the cover, but the Highest Council only asked the journal to publish the news that he had been promoted to a grand arcanist on the cover and did not ask it to publish so many days in advance.

Heidi was still upset about the additional mission yesterday. She said gloomily, “Master, this is a special issue of ‘Arcana’. The discovery of neutrons proved the new alchemy. To celebrate the paradigm-shifting theoretical system, they have published the special issue that contains the papers over the past year including the predictions in the new alchemy and part of the experiments.”

“...There are also questions about the imperfect parts of the new alchemy.” Said Annick after a brief silence.

Sprint, on the other hand, was a bit angry. “Master said that the new alchemy was just a framework, and that there were many unresolved problems. So, why did they collect all the problems on the special issue instead of publishing them next month? I feel that they are questioning your new alchemy, master.”

“What’s wrong about that? Every theory is perfected and fortified by suspicion. I would be uneasy if there isn’t any suspicion. Besides, there are indeed many problems that the new alchemy haven’t been resolved yet. For example, it cannot describe the atomic structures with multiple electrons, and it cannot predict the intensity and width of the spectral lines.” Lucien understood the limitations of the new alchemy perfectly and replied without being disturbed at all.

Katrina nodded. “The problems you mentioned are all in the journal.”

Lucien took over the journal, only to discover that the silver lines on the black over were constructed into several lines of words. On the top was ‘Arcana’, and below it was ‘This issue is published in July of 824 to celebrate the establishment of the new alchemy and to congratulate Lucien Evans on becoming a grand arcanist.”

On the next page, it was the comment that Douglas wrote. “The new alchemy has undoubtedly achieved a glorious triumph. It has changed our age and will forever be remembered by the arcanists. I suggest an additional reward of 15,000 arcana credits and 500,000 arcana points.”

After him, it was the opinion of the two reviewers, Raventi and Prado, at the beginning. “Now, we can give all of our compliments in our previous review to Mr. Lucien Evans.”

In the end, Drummond, the general editor of Arcana, wrote on behalf of the journal, “Recently, the new alchemy has swept across the Congress like an unstoppable flood. Every new phenomenon and every experiment result matches its ‘prophecy’ perfectly.”

“it is now the highest law in the field of alchemy and elements and a key to open the gate of the Creator. Alchemy is no longer an illusion without theoretical guidance.”

“Through the new alchemy and the general theory of relativity, I have envisioned the arrival of a golden age. It is not only an age when we can really create gold but also an age when arcana and magic thrive and talents emerge.”

“500,000 arcana points... That’s not bad.” Lucien said satisfactorily. Arcana credits were useless for him now, but arcana points could be traded for legendary spells and legendary rituals (one million arcana points for one legendary spell’. That was an advantage that Thale did not have.

The first half of the journal was made of the published papers, such as Jurisian’s discovery and explanation on the splitting of spectral

lines under strong magnetic field, and the second half included questions about the new alchemy that nobody paid attention to before, such as Fernando's question about the distribution of external electrons, Hathaway's question about the energy level and orbits, and Klaus' question that the system could only explain the single-electron structure... Almost all the leaders of elements and alchemy, after expressing their support and appreciation of the new alchemy, cautiously raised their doubts.

Looking at the myriad of questions, Lucien smiled at Sprint who was rather angry at the beginning. "Does anger help you at all? What you should do is to come up with your own ideas to resolve the questions. I hope you begin your real study on Arcana by answering those questions. It doesn't matter if you make mistakes, but it will be terrible if you don't have the guts to join the discussion. Your minds are more active and less restrained. It's possible that you can fix the problems with ideas that never occurred to us before."

"Understood, mater!" Hearing their teacher's encouragement, Sprint replied first, his disobedient eyes full of fighting will.

Annick, Heidi and the other students also became excited. Joining the discussion and argument of the grand arcanists, legendary sorcerers and senior-rank sorcerers about the new alchemy was exhilarating enough when they just thought about it.

...

At night, Lucien arrived at the district of nobles in Rentato. Looking at John's villa that was ablaze with lights, he took a deep breath and walked to the gate.

Chapter 589: A Magical Life

The spacious villa was surrounded by a high wall, and the black bars made up the gate at the edge, which was guarded by two soldiers in silver hauberks. They were opening the gate for a splendidly-decorated wagon.

“They’re holding some sort of ball?” Lucien was not one of the crazy sorcerers that did not understand the life of nobles. Considering the exuberant lights inside the villa, he realized what was going on inside immediately.

After briefly hesitating if he should come later, Lucien made up his mind. He was already at the door. What’s there to worry about?

Magic waves shimmered on his body, and Lucien walked towards the gate unhurriedly.

Because nobles cared about dignity and manners, they would come on wagon no matter how close the ball was to their house. Therefore, Lucien, who approached like a civilian, was obviously not an invited guest. The two soldiers looked at each other and intended to stop him.

But all of a sudden, they felt that Lucien was full of gravitas and grace, with the badge of the Hoffenberg on his chest. So, they lowered their heads and welcomed the honorable guest.

“A simple spell is enough to pass the guards...” Lucien shook his head as he passed the gate. Those guards could only resist ordinary people. Thankfully, the knights of the intelligence department should be in the dark, but they obviously knew him. “I need to set up some traps in case the Church attacks Uncle Joel.”

Although the Church wouldn’t be as blatant as Argent Horn, it was better to be safe than sorry. The night watchers did not lack lunatics.

It was scorching in July, but Rentato, only several hours away from the ocean, was rather cool at night. Lucien walked on the road in

the evening wind as if he had melted into the window. None of the wagons before and behind him noticed the roamer.

The garden was not huge. Lucien soon reached the villa, in which the magic lamps had all been lit, making the building look splendid.

The common night view on Earth looked particularly eye-catching in this place.

Above the stairs, Alisa, as strong as before, welcomed the guests with a few maids in her choking dress.

“The noble ladies are more than usual...” Lucien spoke to himself in confusion. Then, he took a breath and walked to Alisa.

Alisa was observing the ladies who had come to the ball in delight and greeting them warmly.

After years of noble life, she was no longer as clumsy as before. Her son, John, was a grand knight that Her Majesty brought from Aalto, and had been given important tasks. Naturally, the nobles showed her enough respect and felt honored to be invited to her ball.

“Viscount and Viscountess Trenna, Lady Kalie, welcome to the ball.” Alisa greeted the new guests with a smile, with exceptional warmth towards the tall, gentle girl who had blond hair and blue eyes that were different from the natives of Holm.

Viscount Trenna knew why Alisa held the ball as well. He nodded with a smile, “It’s an honor to be at your ball, my lady.”

Kalie also responded with the courtesy of nobles.

“It’s going to take a while before the ball begins. Bring Viscount Trenna to the guest room so that they can take a rest.” Alisa asked her servant.

After Trenna’s family got in, Alisa put on a smile again, ready to welcome new guests, but the familiar black-haired and black-eyed man on the stairs stunned her. She rubbed her eyes, feeling that she was in a dream.

She had never seen him wearing a double-breasted suit before, but it fit his body and his vibe perfectly. Her emotions surging and her eyes reddening, Alisa mumbled, “Little Evans?”

“Aunt Alisa.” Lucien stabilized his mind and walked to Alisa with a smile.

Alisa shook her head in disbelief again, mired in the ecstasy of reunion and the shame of the previous betrayal. “Little Evans?”

“What’s up, Aunt Alisa? You don’t recognize me?” Lucien smiled.

His friendly attitude made all of Alisa’s feelings except for excitement and joy go away. She forgot the demeanor of nobles that she tried hard to pick up and cried in the same way as when she was in the slums.

Rubbing her eyes, she spoke quickly, “Little Evans, are you really back to see us? I thought you hated me for betraying you.”

“I asked you to do it, didn’t I?” Lucien hugged Aunt Alisa with a smile. “For me, you are my family.”

“Oh, this... this is fabulous.” Alisa observed Lucien in excitement, “Little Evans, you are taller, much taller!”

She measured Lucien’s previous height with her shivering right hand. Now that years of depression and guilt were released, she dragged him into the house, “I... I need to tell Joel and John that Evans is back!”

The servants looked at their hostess weeping with curiosity and dared not remind her to welcome the guests. They had to find the butler to replace her.

On her way, Alisa wept and chattered, believing that Lucien was taller but slimmer and less healthy. Many guests were distracted by them, wondering what had happened.

When they were about to reach the guest room, Alisa finally held back her tears. Then, she patted her forehead, “I... I forgot that John had duty in the Nekso Palace and Joel was invited to the

Musicians' Association!"

"It's alright. I can wait for them..." Before Lucien finished, Alisa already said in excitement, "I need to tell them that you are back. I'm going to tell them right now! Little Evans, take a rest in the guest room. I'll give them a call!"

As she spoke, she rusted to the library, completely forgetting to direct Lucien to the guest room first.

Looking at how overwhelmed Aunt Alisa was, Lucien didn't mind being 'forgotten' by her at all. He shook his head with a smile and thought that he should've come back sooner.

As if it were his own house, Lucien walked into the guest room without getting lost. He saw Viscount Trenna's family and a few other noble guests, who were bonding with each other until the stranger came in.

At the center of the guest room, a weirdly delicate machine was spinning a round plate and playing clear, pleasant music, filling the room with an enjoyable atmosphere.

Nodding at them as a greeting, Lucien walked to the wall and opened the hidden refrigerator. The lights inside immediately illuminated the drinks.

Lucien opened a bottle of champaign unhurriedly and put a piece of ice into his cup. When he was about to close the refrigerator, a male voice in the period of change echoed from his back. "That is a magic refrigerator, alchemical item invented by the great Lucien Evans, who makes coolness readily enjoyable in the hot summer."

Huh? Lucien felt strange that his name was being used in such a way and did not know what to reply.

The boy behind him had the typical look of Holm. His eyes were black and his eyes were blue. Seeing that Lucien did not reply, he thought that Lucien did not know the origins of the refrigerator and therefore introduced warmly, "The productivity of such items is very low. Only the great nobles have the privilege to use them. I

only saw them before at other parties.”

“Well, the popularization of alchemical items is the idea proposed by the great alchemist Lucien Evans. It has fundamentally improved our life, hasn’t it?”

The boy seemed to be Lucien’s great fan. He was rather amiable, too.

“Of course, I like such a life.” Lucien looked at the boy with a smile.

The little boy was very happy after being approved. “Viscount Wesley is one of the queen’s most appreciated knights. So, he has plenty of cutting-edge alchemical items. My cousin, for one, loves the magic gramophone. It allows us to enjoy wonderful music without a band and even to go to sleep in the company of music.”

He pointed at Kalie when he talked. The cousin he mentioned seemed to be referring to her. Wesley, on the other hand, was John’s last name.

Noticing that Lucien was looking at her after the boy pointed at her, Kalie smiled courteously, “The magic gramophone has only just been invented. This is the first time I’ve seen it. I like it very much.”

The boy added delightedly, “That is also a design proposed by Mr. Evans.”

Lucien nodded. He knew about it much better than the boy did. He introduced the idea of magic gramophone to the Will of Elements a few years ago, but it never worked out due to the lack of excellent storage materials, until a few months ago when Gaston’s laboratory accidentally discovered a natural resin that they could use. Then, magic gramophones finally appeared in this world.

“As a matter of fact, Viscount Wesley has another unique alchemical item.” Kalie seemed to be fond of the magical life, too. Suddenly in the mood of talking, she pointed at the silver box hanging high in the room and said, “I saw this at Duke James’ house before. It’s called magic air conditioner. It can make summers cool and drive away coldness together with the furnace during the

winter.”

“Really?” The boy had never noticed the ‘magic air conditioner’ before. Bulging eyes, he observed it with great interest.

Kalie smiled and said, “You can feel the cool breeze from it. It is also a masterpiece of Grand Arcanist Lucien Evans.”

“Oh, really? That’s so awesome!” The boy ran in the room in excitement. “Cousin Kalie, I’m going to study magic in the future. I will be a great sorcerer and a great alchemist!”

Viscount Trenna made fun of his nephew. “Holk, try to win a Holm Crown Prize.”

“Well.” The little boy shook his fingers smartly. “The Holm Crown Prize is not my target; Lucien Evans Prize is! When we join parties later and people ask who I am, you will have the honor to introduce Mr. Holk, the laureate of Evans Prize in Arcana. Uncle, let me tell you something. Cousin Kalie wants to win a Lucien Evans Prize, too, except that her goal is Evans Prize in Medicine.”

“If we have two laureates of Evans Prizes in our family, we will be able to strut around proudly.” Amused, Trenna looked at his daughter.

Kalie was more or less embarrassed now that Holk revealed her goal in front of a stranger. Changing the subject, she ask Lucien, “Mister, how should we call you?”

Lucien scratched his chin with his right hand. “You may call me Lucien Evans.”

Chapter 590: A Common Noble's Hope

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Pu. The boy Holk was drinking the iced Sky Blue, but he spewed it out with a total lack of manners after hearing Lucien's reply. Viscount Trenna and the other nobles, on the other hand, became solemn and eyed Lucien suspiciously, communicating with each other in silence.

Kalie smiled subconsciously and was about to say 'what a coincidence that you are also a Lucien Evans', when something flashed in her head. Her mouth opened, and she was unable to say anything.

Although she had never seen Mr. Lucien Evans or his portrait, the nobles who were inclined to the Congress of Magic had already spread the look of the grand arcanist to all their fellows: black hair, black eyes, medium height, handsome face, and flawless demeanor.

Since there were plenty of young men who fit such a description, Kalie did not notice anything wrong at all when she just met Lucien, but after he introduced himself, the description seemed to be matching the real person perfectly. The same black hair, the same black eyes, and the same gentleness!

Crossing her hands, Kalie asked with a shivering voice, "Is Your Excellency Elemental Order?"

Lucien's legendary class 'Atom Controller' was unknown yet. Therefore, Kalie only asked him with his alias 'Elemental Order', like Douglas and his 'Emperor of Arcana'.

"I don't think anybody would impersonate me." Replied Lucien with a smile.

"Really?" Having no time to wipe his lips, Holk looked at Lucien with such glittering eyes that Lucien was reminded of Alferris, the little crystal dragon.

Lucien nodded with a smile but did not offer any proof. He would not cover his identity on purpose, nor would he prove his identity with some sort of magic if he was suspected. After all, he would not be affected at all whether or not those people believed him.

Kalie was still suspicious, but her father already said with a brilliant smile, “Your Excellency, you are the truth of elements, and you master the staff of space and time. Praise the changes you bring to our life. We lived like barbarians and did not know what civilization was until now.”

Is it really His Excellency Elemental Order? Kalie asked her father with her eyes. As she recalled, her father never met Evans before, either, or he would’ve recognized him just now.

Trenna nodded at his daughter in secret. They knew much more than Holk and Kalie. They knew that His Excellency Elemental Order was from a slum in Aalto, and that the Wesley family was also from a slum in Aalto...

After all the details were connected, they naturally confirmed Lucien’s identity. Also, he saw the two rings on Lucien’s right hand. They were exactly the renowned ‘Holm Crown’.

“I only bolstered the progress. As a matter of fact, such a social change is inevitable as arcana develops.” Lucien added in his heart, [particularly when the Congress needs the support of the nobles and the general public to resist the Church.]

Holk grew excited after the adults confirmed the stranger’s identity. He scratched his head but did not know what to say. In the end, pushed by Kalie, he finally rushed to the desk and picked up a pen and a piece of paper. “Your Excellency, can you give me an autograph? It will encourage me to study magic!”

In recent decades, because of the popular operas, people of Holm were more and more enthusiastic about excellent singers and actors. The trend to give flowers and ask for autographs had already started.

Amused, Lucien took the paper and wrote something on it.

While writing, Lucien secretly complained about the limitation of the age. If he had invented magic cameras or even included the function in the mobile communication item, Holk wouldn't have just asked for an autograph but said, "Your Excellency, can I have a selfie with you?"

Not expecting that his idol was willing to give him an autograph, Holk was exalted. He thanked Lucien non stop when Lucien gave the paper back to him. Kalie also looked at the paper curiously.

On the paper were two curly words: "Good good study, day day up, to Holk."

"From: Lucien Evans."

Huh? Holk and Kalie were both dazed, feeling that the sentence was rather grammatically weird. But the boy was too overjoyed to care about it and simply folded the paper, putting it in his pocket.

Viscount Trenna was also excited, but he retained a casual smile on the surface. "Holk has been asking to study magic since years ago, but we dare not cross the line when the radical believers were still here. Now, we can finally send him to Allyn for studies. Your Excellency Evans, could you tell us which magic school he should go to?"

Most importantly of all, becoming a sorcerer meant losing the right of inheritance back then.

"Really?" Holk was even more excited. He looked at his uncle and his father and became hysterical after receiving an affirmative reply.

Lucien said simply, "It depends on the fields Holk is interested in."

"Elements! Alchemy!" Declared Holk resolutely.

"In that case, Douglas Magic School and Alborg Magic School are both okay." Lucien knew them rather well from his teaching experience.

Kalie summoned her courage and asked, "Your Excellency Evans,

is... is it too late for me to learn magic now? I'm already an adult... If I want to learn medical magic, which school should I go to?"

"It's never too late to learn as long as you have determination and the basic talents, but medical magic requires company with cadavers. You need to think carefully. Allyn Magic School is best in that regard." Lucien said honestly. Then he asked, "I heard you talking about alchemical items just now. You seem to be fans. I wonder, what other products do you need? Feel free to talk. I'm just seeking inspiration."

"I want to fly! I want an alchemical item that enables ordinary people to fly!" Holk always envied sorcerers and radiant knights who could fly.

Well, planes, or Doraemon's bamboo-copters 1? Lucien smiled at other people.

Kalie had been braced to deal with bodies and therefore was not terrified. However, fearing that it was too much for her mother, she focused on the subject of alchemical items, too. "I hope that magic records can be popularized so that we can enjoy music in our own house."

Trenna smiled. "What I want most is naturally the popularization of the alchemical drugs that can prolong longevity, but..."

He didn't think that it could be easily simplified.

"Magic steam trains are not popularized enough. Other transportation devices are needed, too. We nobles can use wagons, but it's too burdensome for ordinary people." Baron Stevens said.

As they talked, rapid footsteps echoed. Alisa appeared at the door and said with reddened eyes. "Evans, John is back!"

When she called, the guards said that John had returned, so she waited at the gate after informing Joel. Thankfully, John returned to his home after only several minutes.

John appeared behind Alisa. He looked rather tall and strong in the silver armor. Seeing Lucien, he stepped forward in excitement and

raised his right fist, as if he were going to punch Lucien's shoulder like how they greeted each other in the past, but he stopped rigidly halfway. The change of identities and the years of separation made him rather overcautious.

Lucien walked to him with a smile. He also raised his right hand and punched John's right shoulder: "It's been a while."

John sincerely smiled and did the same to Lucien's shoulder with his right fist: "It's good to have you back."

He did not say anything else. One simple sentence had melted the alienation between them after years away from each other.

...

The ball had officially begun. Alisa went out to greet the guests, and Lucien, Joel and John stayed in the guest room to catch up.

"Evans, was it your recommendation that got me into the Musicians' Association?" Joel asked, half drunk. His gold hair had turned grey.

John smiled at his joyful father. "Dad, the ball only just began, and you have already had a bottle of golden rum. That can't do."

"I... I am happy that Little Evans is back!" Joel spoke with a thickened tongue.

Lucien chuckled. "Uncle Joel, I think this is only an excuse for you drunk. Aunt Alisa must've been strict on you."

"Little Evans, you didn't understand my question." Joel tried to deviate.

Lucien shook his head. "Natasha felt that you were good enough to teach the musicians of Rentato a 'lesson'."

"Her Majesty has keen eyes." Joel was proud of his progress in music.

"Where is Elvin?" Lucien suddenly remembered Elvin.

Joel smiled. "Elvin didn't want to join the ball and went to the manor out of the city with a few friends. He can't activate his blood power, but he's very interested in alchemical items recently. Can he still learn magic?"

"Send Elvin to Douglas Magic School and have a try. I'll talk to them." Then, Lucien added, "I don't have much time to teach right now. My teaching style is not suitable for him."

"I know. That's why we only want send Elvin to a magic school." John said.

Joel looked at John. "Care about yourself before you care about Elvin. You are one year older than Evans. Go to the ball now. I'll accompany Evans."

John, despite his usual calmness, blushed and did not know how to react.

Seeing that, Lucien tried to resolve the awkward atmosphere by giving a key to Joel. "Uncle Joel, this is the key to my villa in Allyn. You can spend your vacation there... This is the address of my magic tower..."

Joel nodded and did not ask.

Urged by Alisa, John finally stood up and said, "Lucien, talk to you after the ball."

"Go now. I'm almost married, and you don't even have many female friends." Lucien nodded at the door with a smile.

Briefly stunned, Joel said with a smile, "I hope that Her Majesty and you are happy together."

John followed with mixed feelings. "The memories of childhood seemed to have happened only yesterday, but everybody has grown up and has their own families in the blink of an eye. Time gives everyone a different future..."

Yes. Some of the memories in Aalto were clear, as if they just happened, but some were blurry, as if they were from last life. How

treacherous time is!

...

Year 825 came with freeing winds.

With Arcana, Magic and other journals in his hands, Annick walked into his house in deep thought. "There are more and more modifications on the energy level, orbits and quantization of electrons in new alchemy, but they seem more and more aberrant and are even in violation of the original thought."

"Should we look for a different approach? Have you forgotten anything? Sprint, in the hall, also frowned.

Recently, including the grand arcanists and the senior-rank sorcerers who raised doubts, everybody had been modifying the model in the new alchemy. However, as more and more problems were discovered, they all had a feeling that the new alchemy had walked to a dead end, and that certain things had to be abandoned in order to find a way out.

Annick closed the gate and looked at Lucien's magic tower. "Master seems to have noticed the problem, too. He hasn't published a single paper in the past two months."

Chapter 591: The Early Released Monster

Sprint did not quite agree with Annick's theory. "Our teacher must've been devoted to the improvement of his magic level and is trying to advance into the ninth circle. After he reaches the ninth circle, the Congress will have plenty of weird rituals that can help him become a legendary sorcerer."

Improving two major levels consecutively through rituals had a failure rate of more than eighty percent. Therefore, Sprint believed that the best solution for his teacher to become a legend was to advance into the ninth circle on his own first. As for whether or not the further advancement after the ninth circle would succeed, Sprint had absolutely no doubt about that. With a legendary that perfected matched his cognitive world, the legendary magic models that were engraved inside his cognitive world, and the experience and assistance of so many legendary sorcerers, there was no way that their teacher could fail.

"Yes, you're probably right." Annick did not insist on his opinion. "Our teacher did not come by the Atom Institution often. He must've been focused on improving himself."

That was the reason why they were less burdened in the past months. Other than continuing the study on the theory of relatively, they only had the mission of analyzing the mechanism of the ancillary computation arrays. It had been a while since new exams and tests came. They almost missed it.

About the review of papers, since Lucien had become a member of the Highest Council, his job in the Arcana Review Board was automatically canceled, and they no longer needed to review the papers.

Sprint took over the journals Annick bought and browsed through the table of contents. Suddenly, he saw a paper with a particularly long title: 'The Complicated Splitting of Spectral Lines in Weak Magnetic Field and Its Contradiction to the New Alchemy', by Brook.

In the past year, they had been trying to mend the new alchemy. Although most of their ideas had been disapproved by Hathaway, Raventi, Joaquin and the other grand arcanists, the argument still made them achieve a lot.

In such a way, they perfectly integrated the knowledge that Lucien taught, the exercises he gave, the experiments he assigned to them, and the brilliant ideas in his head. They really became young people with the potential to be senior-rank arcanists, instead of vases that were backed by their teacher.

Therefore, Sprint became rather solemn after he saw the title. He turned to the corresponding page on Magic and read it carefully.

“How... How... How can there be such splitting? The quantization model of the new alchemy does not seem to apply to it...” After a long time, Sprint spoke to himself rather gloomily.

Thankfully, everybody knew that the new alchemy was not perfect enough. The sorcerers who built their cognitive world based on it were mainly focused on the simple structure of protons, neutrons and electrons and did not involve the specific energy level. That was why his cognitive world did not shake.

Annick, hearing his murmur, also took over Magic solemnly. In the meantime, Sprint gasped hard and went to the laboratory to confirm the paper. As his teacher said, even the grand arcanists were not to be entirely believed when it came to arcana!

Annick was covered in cold sweat as he read on. His slim space was even more pale, as he realized that his current knowledge could not explain the phenomenon at all.

Did something really happen to the new alchemy?

Holding the journal tightly, Annick also went into the laboratory.

When it was almost dawn, the two of them walked out their laboratories exhaustedly and both saw each other's bitterness.

“The framework of the new alchemy is definitely correct.” Sprint stressed it. Protons, neutrons, electrons, and the fundamental force

that had been named as strong nuclear force by their master had all been proved!

Annick nodded. "However, the energy level and orbits of the quantized electrons seem to be in serious trouble. Perhaps, we should abandon the flawed concept and think from a different perspective."

After half a year of repetitive argument and research, they had learnt that they had to let go of certain things when it was necessary.

That was perhaps the young men's advantage. It was obviously impossible for an arcanist who had been devoted to a theory for decades to suddenly drop their persistence and specialty.

"Let's try to resolve the problem through energy level and orbits without adding more hypotheses. If we can't, we'll try different approaches." Sprint said solemnly. "We'll ask our teacher after the holiday. He definitely has unusual ideas."

They had sensed their significant growth every month in the exploration and argument about the new alchemy, but they also discovered that the gap between them and their teacher was getting greater. Their teacher could answer their every question from a reasonable perspective.

"Alright." Forgetting to sleep, Annick went to the library with a copy of 'Magic'.

The same thing happened in Katrina and Heidi's house, as well as the magic towers of Hathaway, Morris, Raventi, Gaston and other upper-level arcanists.

In Thunder Hell, however, Fernando was obviously agitated, which made Thompson, Chloe and other students who came to wish him happy new year prudent.

"Master, happy new year." Thompson was already level seven and had hope to enter the ninth circle.

Glaring at them, Fernando roared, "I'm not happy at all! I don't

understand Brook's anomalous splitting phenomenon!"

Brook discussed with him after he discovered the phenomenon and wrote the paper later.

Chloe, who had the air of a poet, asked carefully, "What is it about, master?"

As an authority in thermodynamics, he was not as good as such an unreasonable man as Lucien, but he was already level eight and in the eighth circle. However, he hadn't read Brook's paper on the new issue of 'Magic' yet.

"Don't you mention the goddamn paper! I would rather that it be that I'm a poet, a playwright or a playboy, so that I wouldn't need to consider the goddamn paper!" Fernando expressed his fury, and all of his students narrowed their eyes and turned their heads around, like boats that caught a terrible tornado on the ocean.

Thompson hurried to change the subject. "Master, why is Lucien not here?"

"He came with Alferris earlier. They already left." Fernando was more or less composed now.

Chloe asked curiously, "What's his opinion on the paper?"

Hardly had he asked the question when he sensed Thompson's scorching eyes. He immediately realized that he asked the last thing he should've asked.

Fernando's face was twisted again. "He also admitted that something was greatly wrong with the new alchemy. He believed that new quantum numbers had to be introduced to explain it. His original system couldn't do anything about it. I would rather he never proposed the new alchemy!"

Roars attacked him like a storm. Chloe couldn't have regretted it more.

...

In Raventi's magic tower...

After Dieppe left his teacher's library, he remembered nothing but the unusual splitting of spectral lines and how his teacher was running calculations with his eyebrows furrowed.

"My teacher is almost ready to advance into legendary. He shouldn't be distracted by anything else right now." Thought Dieppe worriedly. As the best of Raventi's students, he was already level six and in the seventh circle. Although he was not as young as Lucien, Felipe or Larry, he was obviously still in his prime years compared to other sorcerers.

In the end, Raventi chose Hathaway's class of 'Lord of Elements', which had been partly modified based on the achievements in protons, neutrons, electrons and the strong nuclear force. After all, the new alchemy, on which 'Atom Controller' was founded, was far from mature. Nobody was willing to take the risk except for Lucien who was utterly unreasonable.

Dieppe shook his head as he thought. The discussion on the new alchemy was a temptation that no sorcerers who were devoted to elements, alchemy and matter could overcome. He probably couldn't have resisted it, either, if it were himself.

After he was back to his room, Dieppe was still thinking the unusual phenomenon about the energy level and orbits of electrons and how it could not be extrapolated to more complicated atoms. He couldn't fall asleep after a long time.

Upset, he stood and paced, recalling the discussions in the past half year.

"...Imposed quantization... Imposed electron orbits... Imposed energy levels... Unobservable orbits and energy levels... There are many unresolved problems. We have to find a new way out!"

Hathaway's greatest suspicion about the new alchemy echoed in Dieppe's heart. He calmed himself down and asked himself to abandon the complicated ideas and start from the simplest question. "If we do not impose anything, we should start from the natural,

built-in qualities of electrons. What qualities of electrons have been confirmed? Mass... charge quantity..."

"Mass..." Dieppe suddenly recalled the theory of relativity, which was also quite heated recently. It was said that Mr. President had almost understood the general theory of relativity and was about to give a comment. However, what 'mass' reminded him of was actually the mass-energy formula that seemed to have contained the deepest mysteries of this world!

"If there is mass, there will be intrinsic energy; if there is energy... and electronic transition radiates or absorbs photons... I think they can be connected... Quantization of angular momentum..."

After ruling out a long of wrong thoughts, Dieppe gradually calmed down, and his eyes were opened. He sat behind the desk and wrote on a piece of ordinary paper with his quill. The night was dark and cold outside.

As his ideas flourished, lines of words appeared on the paper. Dieppe's face was gradually frozen, as if he found it hard to believe his deduction. That was a perfectly reasonable and logical deduction, but how could he have possibly achieved such a terrifying and preposterous result?

For the first time in his life, he had the urge of tearing his own paper apart. The dark night outside was like a monster that was about to engulf him, making him feel chilly.

"The premises are not wrong, and the deduction is not wrong, either. I might as well carry on..." The urge in his heart made Dieppe grit his teeth and continued writing. He paused now and then to consider and correct his mistakes.

When it was about midnight, his ideas were completely clear, and he finished the paper without any stop.

But after it was done, he did not feel the slightest light. There was nothing but shock and even tears on his face.

How could electrons be waves?

How could electrons, which had so many undeniable features of particles such as mass, momentum and particle traces, be waves?

A huge snow began to fall outside of his window, enshrouding Dieppe in unprecedented coldness. Would anybody else agree with the conclusion that he found hard to believe himself?

Chapter 592: Waiting

Chapter 592: Waiting

Sitting in the study, Dieppe was overwhelmed by his own endless thoughts from his own deduction, as if he was in a nightmare.

He kept going through the entire process over and over again, trying to find the problem. He could not stop murmuring,

“How is it possible that electrons take the form of wave?”

A while later, he started asking himself,

“How can it be?”

Then his confusion beat all the other thoughts, and Dieppe started studying the implications of his findings,

“Why wave...?”

The heavy snow was silently falling outside of the window. The dim light coming out from Dieppe’s place, however, looked enthusiastic in such bad weather. The frustrated look slowly disappeared from Dieppe’s face and was replaced with the look of contemplating.

“...If that’s the case, it seems that all microscopic particles in motion have their corresponding frequencies and wavelengths. Why is that...” Dieppe’s brows frowned tight. Suddenly, he recalled Mr. Evans’s words from the two separate papers.

“...Perhaps we should be more open-minded facing the argument.”

“...Since it is for certain that light has both a wave nature and particle nature as it is supported by solid experiment results, why don’t we combine the findings together? Perhaps it can be explained by Wave–particle duality.”

The latter showed up in a simple paper, and Lucien Evans was saying this in an uncertain tone. Therefore, the words rarely left a

deep impression on the readers. But the word concept of dualism had deeply stuck in Dieppe's brain, and now everything made sense if the duality theory was applied.

He took a long, deep breath, as if he was going to release a world-shattering monster. He finally put it this way in his script, "So here is the conclusion we can draw: Wave-particle duality does not only exist in quantum photons, but also all the microscopic particles in motion, including protons, neutrons, electrons, etc. They all have their corresponding wavelengths based on the energy they carry. In other words, they all share the duality."

Finishing the sentence, Dieppe had been deprived of all his strength. Even that, he could not help thinking, "If those microscopic particles all share duality, what about those macroscopic objects in motion?"

That was a ridiculous deduction. Dieppe looked at himself and was amused by his own crazy thought.

Then he turned to think about something else: Special relativity could be applied to New Alchemy as well. The two systems were not completely separate from each other. Instead, somehow they could come together. Maybe they would promote each other, like... New Alchemy based on theory of relativity?

Dieppe slowly calmed down, and the strange thoughts began to disappear. But the paper in front of him was still like a huge heavy stone suffocating him.

Standing up behind the desk, Dieppe walked to the window and pushed it open. Coming to him was the freezing cold wind.

Dieppe shivered in the cold wind, but his brain was refreshed. The skyline had lit up. The world was covered in a layer of snow, as if it was a brand new one.

"It's dawn now..."

Dieppe sighed to himself.

...

During breakfast time, Dieppe did not see Raventi, his teacher. After some hesitation, he went directly to Raventi's study.

Dieppe knocked on the door.

"Come in." Raventi knew that it was Dieppe outside from the magic circle.

Pushing open the door, Dieppe walked in quietly. He saw that Raventi was walking out of his magic lab. It seemed like he had been verifying Brook's paper all night.

"What is it?" Raventi asked directly.

Dieppe hesitated. He felt nervous, worried, afraid, and very self-conscious. He did not think that his teacher would accept his findings.

"Speak it out!" Raventi was also used to roaring.

Dieppe gritted his teeth and took out his paper, "Sir, this's my latest paper. Please... have a look."

Without any firm support from a solid experiment, the paper was very unlikely to shake Raventi's cognitive world.

"I don't see where the hesitation comes from." said Raventi in a loud voice, as he took over the paper.

Raventi did not have much experience in this. If it had been Fernando who was going to read the paper, he would have definitely asked whether the paper had anything to do with being subversive, and how subversive it would be.

Dieppe opened his mouth silently but could not say a word, as he had no idea how to respond. He could not simply confess his concerns and worries in front of his teacher.

Raventi started reading this short paper, as he walked back to his desk. Suddenly, he stopped, and the look on his face quickly changed. There was shock, confusion, and even anger.

Dieppe silently took a step back. He could feel the horrible pressure coming out from his teacher, a top sorcerer whose cognitive world could affect the material world.

After a long time, Raventi pulled himself out of the paper and turned to stare at Dieppe,

“You’re telling me electrons are waves?!” roared Raventi.

Raventi’s voice was deep and low, as if there was a horrible storm hiding inside.

“Yes... in fact all microscopic particles...” Dieppe stammered.

“You’re telling me electrons are waves?!” roared Raventi.

“After weighing the mass, catching the track, and making sure that electrons do have momentum and comply with conservation law, you’re telling me this?”

“Then why don’t you tell me those married noble ladies who are also mothers are in fact males?!”

...

Raventi’s roaring made Dieppe keep stepping backward until his back hit against the door. Although Raventi’s analogy sounded correct, it did not seem right to apply the duality to the macro world.

“Some special magic creatures are hermaphrodite. Once gaining the blood power, human beings can also...” murmured Dieppe.

As Raventi’s dark grey eyes stared at Dieppe, the elements in the space rippled chaotically like water.

“Follow me to the lab,” said Raventi.

Dieppe wiped his face and followed his teacher silently. Raventi stopped in front of the cloud chamber invented by Lucien Evans, and he turned on the cyclotron.

“Now you tell me: What are those beautiful tracks left by electrons? You still want to tell me that electrons are waves?!” Raventi shouted at Dieppe again.

Dieppe did not have to take a look at the cloud chamber. He knew how the tracks looked very clearly.

Dieppe took a deep breath. He did not answer his teacher’s question, but instead, he repeated, as if he was assuring himself, “Electrons also show the features of particle. They are both waves and particles.”

In Raventi’s ears, Dieppe’s words were totally ridiculous. Basically, his student was saying that a man could be both male and female, tall and short, live and dead.

The war between particle and wave theory had been going on for ages. How was it possible that both of the viewpoints were in fact correct?

Raventi was about to lash out a few more questions at his student, but when he saw his student’s red, tired, but still determined eyes, Raventi calmed down a little bit. When it came to arcana, he only followed logical reasoning and experiment support.

Raventi recalled the entire deductive reasoning in Dieppe’s paper, and found that there was no problem in it.

“Maybe you mixed a couple of formula. I need some time.” Raventi’s tone softened slightly.

Knowing that the finding was hard to accept to his teacher, Dieppe nodded in frustration, “Take your time, sir.”

As the one who did the deductive reasoning, even Dieppe himself was having a difficult time believing it.

Seeing the run-down look on his student’s face, Raventi took the paper with him and walked out, “This paper isn’t long. I’ll send it to Morris and Gaston to have a look to see what they think. I’m not always correct.”

This was always Raventi's belief. A student should never follow his teacher blindly.

Dieppe had hope in his chest again.

So the entire morning Dieppe was waiting rather nervously for the letters to come back. When the letters were back at noon, he hurriedly rushed to Raventi's study,

"Sir, what did they say?"

Raventi answered expressionlessly, "According to Morris, your deduction is bold and reasonable but it strays away from reality. No experiments or models can support it. There's no way that waves and particles can exist together."

Dieppe's hope collapsed again.

"According to Gaston, your hypothesis is based on imagination, as there's no evidence support from any experiments."

Because it was Raventi who sent the paper, both Morris and Gaston chose to use softer comments.

Dieppe fell back to a chair. And he started doubting himself again.

"Your paper is hardly persuasive, even for those who insist wave theory, as their main argument always focuses on electromagnetic waves and photons, not electrons. They will be happy to see your hypothesis, but they neither could offer you solid support."

"If the gap is narrow enough, we should be able to see electron diffraction, just like waves."

Dieppe was still insisting.

Raventi nodded in his mind, approving the spirit Dieppe showed. However, Raventi also believed that he should not let his student's mind wondering like this. So he said,

"I will send your paper to Lucien, the authority in this field. If even he says no..."

“Then perhaps it is wrong.” Dieppe’s eyes lit up with the flame of hope and expectation.

He added in his mind, “...but I will still wait for the solid experiment result showing disapproval.”

The pet messenger sent away the paper, and Dieppe started waiting restlessly again. The last time he was this nervous was when he was still an apprentice waiting for his spiritual power talent to be checked.

“I don’t need the support from those wave theory believers...” murmured Dieppe.

“If there’s going to be some people agreeing with me, Mr. Evans will definitely be one of them. But what if the paper even seems to be ridiculous to him...?”

“What will he say?” Dieppe kept asking himself.

Chapter 593: Raising the Curtain

In the study of Babel.

Lucien was lying in his armchair with his eyes closed. In front of him, there was a glass of water which had not been touched. In fact, he was reading the quantum mechanics books in his spirit library, especially those regarding matrix mechanics. At the same time, he was also calculating something.

Even for Lucien right now, matrix mechanics was very difficult. It required lots of patience and perseverance to dig in, and its coldness and complexity could easily drive away any beginners.

Lucien could have first thrown out matter waves and then Schrödinger equation. In this way, he could use a much easier way which was more familiar to most arcanists, especially those in the school of electromagnetics and light-darkness, to start introducing wave mechanics. Wave mechanics was also a major branch of quantum mechanics, and it could solve most problems in the current new alchemy system.

In this case, Lucien had to start from wave theory. However, Lucien had been regarded as one of the representatives of particle theory. If Lucien chose to abandon those arcanists who had been believing in him, this might lead to many of his friends and acquaintances having their heads explode. Lucien had to avoid it, of course.

Therefore, Lucien had to refer to matrix mechanics which based on particle theory and discontinuity theory to solve the problems facing new alchemy. After particle theory supporters were totally convinced of their belief, Lucien would throw at them matter waves and electron diffraction to make them gradually ready to accept an extra add-on: wave-particle duality.

Matrix mechanics and wave mechanics sounded like another battlefield launched within the war between wave theory and particle theory. But in fact, they were equivalent to each other in terms of math, different expressions based on the same theory.

Lucien felt the word “matrix” rather fashionable to him, and he believed that it was because of the movie, the Matrix.

Closing the book he was reading, Lucien took a deep breath and started drafting on the paper sheet to clarify his own understanding.

Although the past six-month effort was enough for Lucien to master basic matrix mechanics, he had not yet tried to do the deduction nor the experiment. Therefore, he had not received the feedback from this world. Also, half of his time over the six months had been used on constructing the legendary-level magic models.

Space Staff was relatively easy to him. After his soul recovered, Lucien had only spent less than two weeks on it. The other spell, Vengeful Gaze, was also almost completed, as Lucien used the knowledge on laser and had successfully simplified it.

The room was filled with light scent. Natasha had left. They were not living together, because they were not yet married and they were still working on their big plan for Kritonia. From time to time, Natasha would come and stay in Allyn for several days, and sometimes it was Lucien’s turn to visit the Grand duke in Nekso Palace and stay there.

They were using Hathaway’s demiplane, leaving no chance for Kritonia to take advantage of. They frequently visited the Land of a Thousand Lakes as if they were not worrying about their own safety. And indeed nothing dangerous ever happened to them there.

Taking a deep breath, Lucien was quite cautious about the upcoming wedding in several months. If Kritonia and his people did not jump out on their wedding, Lucien had also made up his mind to show Kritonia his legendary power to intimidate Kritonia. There was no way that they had to live in this extreme caution. And if that was the case, Lucien and Natasha had better just move into his demiplane, where they would definitely be much safer. Lucien could always set up a space jump spot in Nekso Palace and one in the Magic Tower of Allyn.

Lucien pulled himself out of these thoughts and put down the quill-pen. When he was about to return back to his work on analyzing

Vengeful Gaze, someone knocked at his door.

Lucien knew that it was Leo, who was holding a letter standing beside the door on the other side.

“Come in.” said Lucien.

“Master, this’s a letter from Mr. Raventi.” said Leo straightforward, who knew that Lucien never like hearing people gabbling when he was studying arcana and magic.

“Put it on the desk.” Lucien was not surprised. He had been in contact with the top leaders of the Will of Elements and some arcanists he knew. In the past six month, Raventi had been writing to him frequently discussing new Alchemy.

After Leo closed the door, Lucien finally picked the letter up. His Host Star of Destiny was telling him that this letter had brought him something significant, and something bad.

Lucien unfolded the letter and his first glance had instantly seized his full attention. The bold hypothesis looked very similar to matter waves, also known as the de Broglie waves, to him.

Who had released the terrible monster already? Lucien never expected this, but he knew that things like this would always happen. He could not predict everything.

Lucien kept reading further as what happened had already happened. As he was reading, he thought to himself very carefully how to minimize the impact.

Lucien thought to himself that from wave theory, this could be regarded as the standing wave on the track. In this case, the number of fixed tracks could only be an integral multiple of wavelength, and then quantization made sense... As he was thinking, he rubbed his brows.

After a while, Lucien put the letter down on the desk and sighed to himself, “This world also has bold arcanists who are full of imagination. Fortunately, he has not done electron diffraction experiment yet, or I have to use the power of a grand arcanist to

delay the submission of his paper. Countless heads will explode if the time isn't correct."

If Lucien would just directly throw the arcanists this paper, he knew for certain that at least one third of the highest-ranked arcanists would not be able to take it. Some of them would explode their heads, some's cognitive world would be broken and solidified, and the rest would also get lost for a long, long time. After all, all the previous findings and experiments were showing for certain that electrons were particles. No one ever doubted it.

But Lucien decided not to delay the submission of the paper, as there was no solid experiment support yet. He wanted to exert his authority to make arcanists treat this problem seriously. When they were mentally more prepared and after they put enough thought into it, Lucien would introduce electron diffraction experiment.

So he wrote down his response,

"A hypothesis full of amazing imagination..."

.....

Before dinner time, the winter sun already sank below the horizon, and it was now completely dark. Dieppe walked back and forth anxiously in Raventi's magic tower and his mind was full of weird and even completely contradictory thoughts.

"If Mr. Evans agrees with me, then is that saying electrons are indeed waves? That's incredible... but no evidence can support it..."

His finding came from bold deduction, therefore, Dieppe was also suspicious of it. If Mr. Lucien Evans did support him, he would still have a hard time accepting it. Electrons were waves – This was something ridiculous even to the ordinary person, and also to the person who put it forward.

"If Mr. Evans doesn't agree with me, perhaps I am truly wrong."

In this case, the world would go back to normal, and it would be a relief to Dieppe as well. However, he would also be unwilling to

accept it, as this bold paper derived from his years of hard work and the spark of his wisdom.

“Then no matter what, even if Mr. Evans is not on my side, as long as he can’t point out any obvious error in my paper, I’ll stick to my paper and find an experiment to support it. I’m not giving in.”

The conflicting thoughts almost drove Dieppe crazy. He realized that he was still expecting Lucien Evans’s approval, as he kept encouraging himself.

Why did it take so long? Dieppe looked at the window again. He had repeated the action over a hundred times since noon.

Although he understood that Mr. Evans must be very busy with his magic and arcana study, Dieppe could not help waiting expectantly.

At this time, he saw a familiar bird flying towards the magic tower. He was thrilled and dashed to Raventi’s study. He even cast on himself Advanced Speed.

After several seconds, Dieppe was already sitting in front of Raventi, waiting for the messenger’s return.

“You’ve been waiting for this?” Raventi looked at Dieppe seriously.

Dieppe nodded, but could not say a word.

At this time, this cute little messenger finally arrived through the window. Raventi took over the letter it was carrying and opened it slowly.

Dieppe stared at the expression on Raventi’s face. He had to force himself not to cast a spell to probe into Raventi’s brain to know the answer earlier.

Raventi directly turned the paper to the last page and took a glance at it. And then the look on his face changed. There was confusion and solemnity.

“What did Mr. Evans say, sir...?” Dieppe could not wait any longer.

“Hum...” Raventi’s voice was a bit trembling, and he started reading the letter to his student,

“Lucien said: ‘It’s a hypothesis full of amazing imagination, which leads us to the other possible aspect of electrons. The truth of the world has been covered by a heavy, black curtain, preventing us from seeing what is hiding behind. Maybe this paper is pulling up a corner of the curtain and showing us a small part of the truth...’”

Dieppe’s head buzzed. Indeed, he hoped that Mr. Evans would agree with him, but he never expected such an approving comment.

Pulling up a corner of the curtain and showing us a small part of the truth... That was amazing!

The wild joy struck Dieppe fiercely. The approval and support from an authority was terribly important to a hard-working individual. But soon Dieppe calmed down as an arcanist, and he murmured, “But I still need an experiment to support it.”

Raventi nodded, and he kept reading, “... I would like to believe in the fact that wave–particle duality can be applied to all microscopic particles. This is the path to end the long-time war between particle and wave theory. However, no matter how bold and sensible a deduction is, experiment support is always indispensable. I suggest that the paper be submitted immediately to the arcanists in the school of electromagnetics for publication, so that everyone knows the extraordinary work that you’ve been working on and start experimenting.”

“I totally have no problem with it! It’s good!” Dieppe hurriedly said in a trembling voice, his back extremely straight.

Raventi, however, was still confused,

“Electron... waves?”

Chapter 594: Attention

Following Lucien's suggestion, after writing down "electromagnetism" on the front page of the paper, Dieppe had submitted it to Arcana Review Board. It was said that every groundbreaking finding would receive the feedback from the true world, so he wondered when that would happen to him. Perhaps he had to wait until an experiment that supported his finding was available...

In his understanding, the broad application of wave-particle duality was a breakthrough close to general theory of relativity and new alchemy in terms of significance, and as important as the discovery of the periodic table of elements, so the feedback should occur. However, he also understood that without a solid experiment, he would not even believe in it himself. Therefore, the feedback from the true world had not arrived yet.

"Electromagnetism. To Mr. Marcus and Mr. Yana," said the cold, metal-like voice of an alchemical life.

The paper had been sent to the two authorities in the school of electromagnetism. Since it was a paper developed by a high-ranking arcanist, it wasn't sent to their students or editors, but directly to their desks. After they finished their own studies, they finally had the time to pick the paper up.

Marcus looked quite young despite the fact that he was already a high-ranking sorcerer. He had bright red hair and always wore a pair of black gloves like those night watchers. He would not take the gloves off even when doing experiments or practicing magic spells.

"A Hypothesis Based on Light Quantum Theory and the Study..." Marcus read the title of the paper, frowning. His black velvet gloves gently striking the front page of the paper, Marcus was a bit confused and felt a bit reluctant to read further, as the discovery of light quantum had messed up his understanding of electromagnetic wave again.

But he still opened it and took a few glances at it. After knowing the premises that the hypothesis based on, an interested smile appeared on his face, "That's something..."

The paper was dozens of pages long, and the content was not tough for Marcus. It did not take him long to finish reading it.

"Electrons are waves? Interesting. Dieppe applying the duality to a brand new level... Good for him," Marcus grinned, as he could imagine how pissed the supporters of particle theory would be, but he soon released a sigh, "but it's still a hypothesis that is waiting for solid experiment proof. Who knows when such an experiment can come out..."

Honestly speaking, Marcus did not really believe in Dieppe's paper, although the paper did cater for his taste. After verifying the deduction process himself, Marcus wrote down.

"Bold, amazing hypothesis. It's an adventurous attempt to approach the truth of the world and therefore is for certain very subversive. I'll give the paper these comments: Groundbreaking, extremely important, worth broad discussion, and universally-applied in terms of microscopic particles. However, as it remains to be a hypothesis based on deduction, I suggest that, for now, ten arcana credits and two hundred arcana points be given, and further award can be granted when a solid experiment is available."

Marcus did not give the paper the comment of being groundbreaking as the paper was from Lucien's wave-particle duality.

Finishing the writing, Marcus put the paper back in an envelope and started reading other papers. In his eyes, no matter how interesting the paper was and how well it catered to his taste, it was still unworthy of his major attention and time. Maybe in his spare time, he could give some thoughts to the possible experiment, but so far he had no clues at all. And there were still lots of important things waiting for him to do.

Meanwhile, in Yana Aamir's study, the short, brown-haired man was so amused that his back bent forward, "Electrons are waves?"

Good for Dieppe for his imagination. I bet Raventi had given him some good lessons!”

But he had to admit that the paper was indeed interesting, and he was happy to see how those particle theory supporters felt after reading the paper. In the future, if they kept mentioning Mr. Evans’s light quantum theory, they could use this paper to fight back. But then he shook his head: The hypothesis was still waiting for experiment proof, and the experiment might not be able to come out in decades, or there simply was no such an experiment. If that was the case, the paper would be forever forgotten by history.

He had seen some bold hypotheses, especially after Lucien Evans’s a series of successive subversive findings. However, none of them could present any conclusive proof, and therefore, they remained to be bold hypotheses.

Yana had to restrain himself from giving the paper high comments. He finally put it down this way, “Interesting, genius imagination. It is the most inspiring paper that I have read so far this year, as it has broken the restraints from our old belief. However, with out experiment proof, this innovative, extremely important, and universally-applied paper which is worthy of broad discussion still remains as a fancy. At this point, I will give it eight arcana credits and a hundred fifty arcana points. I hope that all arcanists can join for the experimentation.”

Although he was saying that all arcanists should try to develop a valid experiment, Yana himself quickly turned to work on other things. Before he could finish all the tasks that had been piling up, Yana was very unlikely to verify the hypothesis.

The result soon returned to Dieppe. He was not surprised by the poor, nine-credit award. If it had been Dieppe himself reviewing the paper, he might just give one or two credits as the award. Obviously, the two board members loved his hypothesis.

Then Dieppe started thinking which journal he should send his paper to, Electromagnetism? Light-darkness? Or Common Arcana? Dieppe knew that there was no way that he could publish his paper on Arcana and Magic, as in this paper there was only a hypothesis.

As for Element, the editor would definitely tear his paper into pieces if he dared to send it.

When he was thinking, his servant came in and brought him an invitation letter for contribution.

It was from Nature.

Because of the profound influence of general theory of relativity, in the recent half year, the subscription volume had also been increasing rapidly. Now it had been the most authoritative in math, ranking the same level with Element and Astrology, and therefore it was a very good option for the paper.

Dieppe instantly accepted the invitation, and one of the reasons was that Mr. Lucien Evans was this journal's honor editor. It seemed that the journal was trying to gain some influence outside of the realm of mathematics to become a comprehensive journal like Arcana and Magic.

...

Marcus and Yana let the news out on purpose. Therefore, within two weeks, some well-informed arcanists had known that there was such a paper available and bought it.

Staring at the paper in front of him, Larry felt a bit amused. After reading through it, he felt that he was in a dream. He wondered if it was because Dieppe wanted to scare people that he threw at people such a bold and nonsense hypothesis.

Gaston was quite close to Raventi, and therefore, Larry also knew Dieppe relatively well. He grinned and shook his head, and then put aside the paper.

In Department of Battle Sorcerer, sitting in his armchair, Jurisian was also amused by the paper. He kept grinning that the muscles in his face even felt a bit sore. Jurisian did not mind the paper, and in fact, he liked the hypothesis. However, if the paper was proved, a new round of head-explosion would surely ensue, just like what happened after the hypothesis of light quanta was confirmed.

However, this time they did not have another three years to get prepared.

Jurisian put aside the paper. He would try to design an experiment when he got time.

In Atom Institution, Sprint was also reading Dieppe's paper. His status had been improved a lot since Lucien Evans joined the Highest Council. He disapproved of the paper since he did not believe that this subversive hypothesis would come true at all. After all, there was only one Lucien Evans, and not everyone could make overturning but also reasonable hypotheses.

In the students' eyes, the paper was a joke. They were those who first knew of the existence of electrons, and also those who had done most of the experiments on electron. All the experiment results had shown the particle property of electron already. When the hypothesis of light quantum was first put forward, it still more or less made the slightest amount of sense because of Ether theory, but this time, it was totally different.

"Nothing supports it." Heidi agreed.

Annick tried to say something, but he also felt that the hypothesis was indeed ridiculous. So he nodded like the other students. But he finally added,

"I mean... If we've got time, we might still want to work on designing an experiment magic circle based on the electron wavelength given in the paper to see if there is any diffraction or interference. Only experiments explain everything."

Although Sprint disliked this crazy hypothesis, as Lucien's student, his attitude remained cautious, "Yes, we can deny it using an experiment. But so far there's nothing like this matching the given wavelength."

"Doesn't do any harm to give it a try. It's practice." Heidi grinned.

The students had reached the agreement, and they had no intention of telling this to their teacher. In their eyes, the paper did not

deserve too much attention, not to mention their teacher's attention.

However, when the grand arcanists finished reading the paper from Dieppe, they were much more alert and worried than ordinary arcanists, since the hypothesis did stem from light quantum hypothesis, and therefore, it could be possibly correct, but due to the limitation on current research methods, they could only try to improve some existing magic circles in their spare time. After all, they were too occupied by their own studies and arcana research.

...

The beginning of February had arrived, and Lucien had successfully constructed Vengeful Gaze within his soul.

As a member of Arcana Review Board, Marcus had the earliest access to all the latest journals for this month. But he would not read all of them, just simply Arcana, Magic, Electromagnetism, Astrology, Element, and Nature. As for the rest of them, he would first read the digests first to decide if he would dig in further.

Picking up Arcana, without surprise, Marcus saw the headline on the cover:

"Vol.2, 825, to praise the birth of general theory of relativity, a great theory put forward by Mr. Lucien Evans who leads us to the truth of gravity."

This was what an epoch-making arcana find deserved.

Flipping the page, the front page was Douglas' and Bergner's final review result and comments:

"This is an epoch-making theory, which reveals it to us that the nature of gravity is curved space-time. Despite the complexity of the deduction, it is so well-conceived and rigorous that no errors exist. The calculation result based on the theory fits perfectly in the data of morning star precession when it approaches the perihelion and how time elapses faster on an artificial planet. Therefore, we can say it with confidence that the theory offers so far the closest

description of the truth of gravity and thus it is one of the most significant findings in the history of magic!”

“If my objectivity can be ignored here, I will give it the top honor. The general theory of relativity carries unmatched theoretical beauty and it will lead the development of arcana to a brand new level.”

“The system of general relativity had led us into the most basic yet deeply-hidden nature of arcana, where the stunning truth of the world is partially revealed to us. I suggest thirty thousand arcana credits and eight hundred thousand arcana points be given to Mr. Evans for his relativity system!”

“It’s a night of miracles. What happened at this very night will be remembered forever by the upcoming generations and they will picture and praise this very night using their biggest interest and most vivid words.”

Marcus took a deep breath. He was slightly shocked by the reward but he also agreed that it was reasonable. The theoretical system of relativity was the most simplified and beautiful discovery in electromagnetism, and it solved the most difficult problem that had bothered arcanists generation after generation.

Marcus flipped through the pages. All the papers were on or about general theory of relativity. He then put the journal aside because he had to stay fully concentrated when reading general theory of relativity, so he was going to save it until later. The entire theory was still very difficult for him.

After reading Magic, Marcus picked up Nature. He wanted to read the papers on Evans Geometry and tensor analysis.

Taking a glance at the content page, Marcus saw a familiar title, A Hypothesis Based on Light Quantum Theory and the Study.

He slightly frowned, as he never expected that Nature would publish such a sheer hypothesis. He wondered if Dieppe had used any tricks to get the paper published.

Turning the page, Marcus was surprised to see the comment from the editor under the title of the paper,

“...Maybe this paper is pulling up a corner of the curtain and showing us a small part of the truth...”

The contributing editor was Lucien Evans.

Marcus's hands suddenly felt numb. The journal dropped from his hands on the desk.

“... pulling up a corner of the curtain?”

Marcus repeated the comment in low voice. He could not believe his eyes. Although Lucien Evans did not necessarily mean being always correct, such a comment from him was enough to make most arcanists look at this paper again and put more attention to it!

Chapter 595: Unexpected Debate

Chapter 595: Unexpected Debate

Inside his office...

Marcus picked up the issue of 'Nature' that had fallen on his desk and began to read Dieppe's paper carefully from beginning to end.

This time, he was more focused and devoted more attention to it than when he first reviewed it. It was not until a long while that he finally tapped the table with his black gloves. "If electrons are regarded as quasi-waves, it will be possible to explain the energy levels and the orbits of electrons in the new alchemy. No wonder His Excellency Lucien Evans attached such great importance to Dieppe's hypothesis."

It was what he was thinking and nobody could hear it. Even though Marcus, who hated the light quantum theory, was unwilling to call Lucien as Excellency, he couldn't help but recall the great significance of the theory of relativity when it explained the electromagnetic phenomena in the motion system; as well as its awe-inspiring description on the nature of gravity when he thought of the name, and therefore added Excellency subconsciously.

"In any case, this assumption is still too bold. It has to be confirmed by experiments." Marcus put down the journal and left the office, ready to return to his own magic tower. "The authority and pillar of the particle theory actually require the idea that electrons are waves to modify the energy levels and the orbits. This is the best irony. Didn't he see this coming when he proposed the light quantum theory?"

For the arcanists who were often shocked, they wouldn't have survived to this day if they blindly believed other people's opinions without confirming them. Therefore, although Lucien was an absolute authority, Marcus wouldn't believe his opinions easily. Everything must be based on experiment phenomena and data.

The sole influence of Lucien's note was that the attention for the

paper had been raised to the highest. That was the closest path to the reality of the microworld.

If he could devise and complete the experiment, confirming electrons' nature of waves, he would receive unimaginable returns and probably share Evans Prize in Arcana with Dieppe!

His strength, fame, future, and position would all improve significantly!

Inside the magic tower...

Yana looked at 'Nature' before him in amusement. "I didn't see it coming that His Excellency Evans would give such a high remark. Is it an encouragement that we should keep an open mind?"

"Electrons are waves... This is truly an epoch of fantasies. Thirty years ago, whoever claimed that atoms were waves would've been mocked by every arcanist, including even those who believed in the nature of energy. But right now, tsk..."

He was not laughing at anyone but merely expressing his shock. Then, he was in deep thought, searching for the possible ways of devising an experiment.

Even the sorcerers of the school of electromagnetism who were glad about Dieppe's assumption were rather hesitant. It was needless to say that the arcanists found it unacceptable.

In the headquarters of the Will of Elements...

Larry, K, and Gaston were also confused when they read 'Nature' of this issue. After a while, Larry smiled bitterly, "Am I too conservative, or is the world changing too fast for us to follow?"

"I believe that nobody in the Congress could follow it." Gaston shook his head. "Lucien must've seen the dawn of the distribution of electrons in the new alchemy from this hypothesis, but as he said himself, experiments were still vital. Since there are still no experiments, it remains to be seen whether or not electrons are waves."

Said Gaston as Larry and K listened, and it felt extremely weird. Why could such a question as 'are electrons waves?' have possibly been asked?

It was as weird as somebody asking 'are humans made of waves?'.

K nodded and scratched the back of the chain. "If we alter our opinion just because of a hypothesis and Lucien's confirmation, our opinion will be barely an opinion. Also, all the current experiments prove the particle nature of electrons. There's no doubt about that."

"That's the attitude we should hold." Said Gaston approvingly, but he also frowned. If the problems in the new alchemy could be resolved if electrons were regarded as waves, the hypothesis would also be partly true.

Also, it was impossible to perfect the new alchemy based on the hypothesis so soon, and there was no sign that the wave experiments about electrons could be improved. Regardless, Gaston began to worry about which of the two fundamental theories in the field of elements and matter he should abandon; the particle theory, or the new alchemy?

"This is truly an era with so many changes and peculiarities that we can barely adapt to it." Sighing, Gaston decided to depend on experiments. He had to be prepared for the outcome that the particle theory or the current model of the new alchemy was wrong. As a result, his strength would probably halt until he found a new path.

Larry also sighed. "If it is confirmed that electrons are waves, I won't be able to understand this world. What exactly is the wave-particle duality, and why? Am I too stupid, or is this world too crazy?"

...

In Atom Institution...

Lazar, Heidi, Annick and the rest of them were all stunned, with 'Nature' in their hands, not in their working state at all.

At this moment, Lucien, who had just come in, awakened all of them. They surrounded him, and Heidi asked impatiently, "Master, do you agree with Mr. Dieppe's hypothesis that electrons are waves?"

"If we acknowledge the wave-particle duality of light, why can't it be extrapolated to microscopic particles? It can transform the imposed quantization in the new alchemy into an intrinsic quality of electrons." Lucien thought for a moment and decided to explain the obscure notions in Dieppe's paper. "Disperse now. I'll explain it to you."

The arcanists good at electromagnetism and waves would naturally think about the orbit model of electrons after they saw Dieppe's paper and his remarks, and whether or not the quantized energy levels and orbits could be deduced without any imposition.

In confusion, Heidi, Alfalia, and the rest of them dispersed and followed Lucien into the conference room.

"First of all, this is an unconfirmed hypothesis. We have to be highly suspicious about it. I'm very glad that you didn't believe in my remark blindly." Lucien approved their attitude first and eased their anxiety.

Lucien put his hat on the desk. "However, it doesn't mean that we can't try to resolve certain problems with this hypothesis. If the hypothesis can answer certain contradictions perfectly, we will have to pay more attention to the hypothesis. That's the reason why I gave it such a remark.

"...If electrons are regarded as stationary waves, then, bounded around the atomic nucleus, they can only exist with orbits that are multiple times their own wavelength. In such a way, quantized orbits are no longer imposed on electrons but their intrinsic quality.."

After Lucien's speech, Sprint and the other arcanists, who were involved in the perfection of the new alchemy, nodded in agreement. Hathaway's accusation that their quantization was imposed was always an unavoidable issue. Now, there was finally

the dawn to resolve the problem. But why did it have to sacrifice the particle theory?

“Master, all of our experiments undoubtedly confirmed the particle nature of electrons.” Annick expressed his opinion subtly but firmly.

Lucien nodded with a smile. “I never denied the particle nature of electrons.”

“Then, how can they appear as waves?” Encouraged by Annick, Sprint and Katrina both asked.

Lucien smiled, “Why can the light both show the nature of particles and yield the classic image of interference and diffraction?”

“That’s probably because some other reason makes particles show the nature of waves, say, the vibration of their location. It may also be because when many special waves are gathered in nodes, they show the nature of particles.” Annick was not shy when it came to arcana discussion.

Lucien shook his head. “Possibly, but I need to correct you about something. Waves and particles are conceptions that we impose on electrons and light. They never claim that they are particles or they are waves. We can totally call electrons by a different term, say ‘the thing whose form of existence is unimaginable’.”

“Name is just a symbol that people come up with. What can we really grasp? Experiment results and our observation, or rather, the nature they show.”

“Waves and particles are defined based on the previous experience and may not apply to the microworld. In order to explore a new realm, we have to learn not to be restrained by obsolete experience and thinking.”

Seeing that his students and assistants fell silent, Lucien smiled. “I’m here for the meeting of the Highest Council. This is all for now. You can try to confirm or overthrow the hypothesis with experiments. It’s a hypothesis after all.”

“But the wavelength of electrons...” Lazar said in a headache.

Lucien pointed at a book on the shelf. "Read the book on crystals. Jerome, you should know that Mr. Morris discovered the diffraction of crystals when he illuminated them with X rays. The wavelength of X rays is short. We can start from there."

"But electrons' wavelength is even shorter." Complaining, Rock went for the book. The other people also searched for files regarding the diffraction of crystals.

Looking at their back, Lucien shook his head. Unless they were terribly lucky, it would be barely possible for them to discover the diffraction of electrons. That was because the Congress of Magic's study on crystals was abnormal, which boiled down to the slow development of mathematics.

The study on crystals had to be supported by the group theory, and the group theory was based on the development of various fields in mathematics, such as the 'number theory'. The Congress of Magic's studies on 'group theory' and 'number theory', on the other hand, was rather low. So, the study on crystals was mostly based on accidental discoveries and lacked systematic theoretical support.

Thankfully, After Levski Geometry and 'Nature' were established, Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, the Prophet, the Astrologer, Milina, Neeshka, Samantha and many other arcanists had devoted their talents to pure mathematics; boosting the development of the 'group theory', the 'number theory', and other frontiers to different extents. It was a shame that they hadn't fully constructed after such a short time. It would probably be enough if they had another ten years.

Because of the delay in the institution, Lucien was among the last few who entered the conference room of the Highest Council. The first thing he saw was his teacher's terrible eyes were a storm was raging.

"Crap. My master can't be thinking that I've completed the experiment, right?" Lucien felt that it was quite possible. In his teacher's mind, he was always a person who only gave remarks when he was prepared.

“There are no experiments that confirm the wave nature of electrons yet...” Hathaway suddenly spoke and stared at Lucien with her indifferent and solemn eyes. All the other members, including Hellen and Vicente, looked at Lucien, too.

Lucien heaved a sigh. Were they going to discuss Dieppe’s paper before the meeting?

This was truly the ‘regularity’ of the meetings of the Highest Council...

Chapter 596: Unique Landscape (2 in 1)

Chapter 596: Unique Landscape (2 in 1)

“Indeed there aren’t any.” Lucien admitted ‘frankly’.

Hathaway was silent for a while as if she were organizing her thoughts. “I think that your remark was too high and would result in reckless and impractical illusions. Although, it is possible to infer certainly imposed quantizations naturally if the hypothesis that electrons have the nature of waves is applied to the model in the new alchemy; remarking a hypothesis that is not based on any experiment or phenomenon will not help build up a serious and down-to-earth atmosphere.”

Her words were not very organized, but Lucien managed to follow. Since some of the problems in the new alchemy could potentially be resolved if electrons were considered waves, she was not as stubborn about Dieppe’s hypothesis as he imagined, and she was already more or less prepared. After all, the perfection of the new alchemy was more important; it was the direction of her future road.

Also, she described that electrons had the nature of waves instead of saying ‘electrons are waves’. It was clear that she ascribed it to the special quality of certain particles, exactly like the supporters of the particle theory’s explanation on the image of interference and diffraction of light quantum. While those speculations were full of contradictions and received no attention, Hathaway could certainly learn a thing or two from them.

What she really wanted to disapprove was Lucien’s remark, which she believed was too high. It must be noted that any bold, unbelievable hypothesis in the past was based on the discovery of problems and flaws, which prompted the connection in thinking. For example, Lucien’s light quantum hypothesis was based on the fact that the wave theory of light could not explain the photoelectric effect.

Dieppe's hypothesis this time, on the other hand, was purely the product of a broadened mind. The wave-particle duality of light was suddenly extrapolated to all the microscopic particles, but it remained to be seen whether or not light was made of particles, and there was no sign that it was not the unique feature of light. How could the duality be extrapolated in the world of particles so recklessly and blindly?

Most importantly of all, the hypothesis could only resolve the puzzles in the new alchemy so far, unlike the light quantum hypothesis which explained the photoelectric effect clearly and fitted all the existing experiments even though no pertaining experiments were made. Therefore, Hathaway didn't think that Lucien should give such a high remark to the paper. It would encourage other arcanists to propose purely theoretical and imaginary hypotheses about the phenomena that had absolutely no problems before, and the atmosphere of careful exploration, research and application would be completely ruined.

To put it simply, she felt that Lucien's over-compliment on Dieppe's hypothesis would result in a trend of speculative arcana studies.

Everybody in the Highest Council was well aware of Hathaway's language abilities. Fearing that Lucien might not get the point, Oliver even specifically added, "When you remark Dieppe's paper as utterly ungrounded, the other arcanists will feel that it is an opportunity they can take advantage of because they can accuse that a classic theory is wrong without discovering any problem first. Then, based on the hypothesis, they can get a correct deduction in mathematical methods. As for how ludicrous the final result may be, they wouldn't care about it at all."

"For example, I can make accusations about you being a spy of the Church without any proof. When I have that premise, I can explain everything you have done with it. Then, through the rigorous but partial deduction, I prove that you published the disruptive papers with the purpose of blowing up the heads of more sorcerers or even to directly kill us the members of the Highest Council so that the Congress of Magic can be eliminated. Don't you think that it is preposterous? Why did you encourage such an action?"

Lucien said carefully, “I gave the hypothesis that electrons are waves such a high remark because I was inspired by it and saw the dawn of resolving the problems in the new alchemy. If the hypothesis can resolve the problems in the new alchemy, it will be proved at the same time.”

“Also, if photons can boast the nature of waves, why can’t electrons, neutrons, and protons? In the microscopic domain, such a hypothesis has its own logic and is not purely based on imagination.”

Lucien always had his own persistences when it came to arcana discussions. He could not acknowledge that his remark was too reckless, or that Dieppe’s paper was too bold and impractical just because of the accusation of two grand arcanists. That would’ve been unfair to both himself, who wrote a professional and authoritative remark, and to Dieppe who had such hard work.

He insisted on it even though he hadn’t confirmed it with experiments. The theory that deserved his remark must have its merits. However, if its flaws were pointed out, or if it was disapproved by experiments, he would certainly not be too obstinate to change, either.

“Since when has light been acknowledged as particles?” Vicente, the middle-aged pale man wearing a black cloak, said coldly, with crimson fire bouncing fiercely inside his eyes.

Looking at the Lord of the Undead, Hathaway said, “Admit it or not, the photoelectric effect and the Brook scattering experiment are right there indicating everything clearly.”

“But I think the scattering experiment and such can also be explained from the perspective of waves. For example...” Oliver spoke what was on his mind, constructing special waves that could show the nature of particles.

Douglas, on the other hand, frowned and said, “No experiments and theories can support your idea so far.”

“It’s a possible direction to work on.” Said Brook concisely.

...

For a moment, due to the argument of the wave theory and the particle theory, the whole conference room of the Highest Council was filled with noise. Gradually, the argument grew more and more intense, and they even had emotional fluctuations.

“Construct your special composite waves first, Oliver.” When Klaus talked, countless spots of light were appearing on his back and forming the illusions of different alchemical items. There were golems, puppets, floating cities, alchemical fortresses, magic steam trains...

Oliver shook his finger. “However you view it, this is also one way to explain the photoelectric effect and Brook’s scattering experiment. Also, before you discuss my question, you’d better take another look at the particle theory. Perhaps, there have never been any particles. They’re just the special forms of waves.”

Scenes of destruction were created around him one after another, enshrouding the conference room in the air of the end of the world.

“If particles are all waves, are the elements made of those particles waves? Are the lives made of those elements waves? To be more exact, are we waves?” Vicente did not quite agree with Oliver about the conclusion. As an authority in human body and soul, he found it hard to believe that bodies were waves. How could the body, which could be felt so real, be waves?

Peaceful, everlasting black monuments were growing on the carpet in the conference room. The silence of death covered everything.

Oliver waved his hands, hinting that his words were not considerate enough. He said again, “To be honest, although I appreciate Dieppe’s hypothesis, and I want to give him the high remark that he has opened a corner of the captain that covers our world, I am not convinced that electrons are waves up until so far.”

While talking, he used magic to construct the movement of electrons inside the cloud room. The bright white drops of fog constituted the spectacular traces of electrons, filled with the air of

dream and astonishment.

“I am not bold enough to believe that the electrons are waves when they have the distinctive tracks of particles. However, since Lucien agrees with Dieppe’s hypothesis, does it mean that he also agrees that wave is the nature of light?” As he talked, Oliver looked at Lucien.

He was attacking Lucien’s light quantum theory with his own remark.

“As I said, electrons perhaps will behave as waves under special circumstances, like when they are bound around the atomic nucleus.” Hathaway took Lucien’s side this time.

Hellen was one of the few legendary sorcerers whose cognitive world did not surface as projections. She had been listening to the argument of the supporters of the particle theory and the sorcerers of the wave theory in silence. At this moment, she couldn’t help but interject, “As a matter of fact, I have been quite confused ever since the light quantum hypothesis was proved. Why does the light show both the nature of waves and the nature of particles? Should we view the problem from an even higher level as Evans said before?”

“It can be explained from the perspective of waves...” Oliver reiterated his opinion. Nobody could become a grand arcanist without insistence.

Seeing that the two sides were about to start a ‘frank and friendly conversation’ again, Douglas hurried to hint them to shut up with his gesture. The extraordinary views in the conference room were immediately gone, turning it from hell back into the real world.

“The competition of the particle theory and the wave theory has lasted a long time. There’s no need to waste our time on it today. Since Lucien insists that his remark was appropriate, and it is not the result of the paper’s review, after all, I don’t think there is any need to discuss it any further, right?” Douglas looked around at everyone.

Oliver nodded slightly. “I’d like to ask something else. I believe

everybody else is also curious. Lucien, in your mind, is light waves or particles?”

“Also, is electron waves or particles?” Added Vicente coldly.

Hathaway, Hellen, and the other grand arcanists also looked at Lucien, rather curious about his real stance in arcana.

Lucien had been observing the conference room that was completely different from any meeting ever since the extraordinary views appeared. That was the unique landscape that would only appear during the assemblies of the Highest Council.

At this moment, hearing their questions and sensing everybody’s look, Lucien did not refuse to answer. Instead, he looked at his teacher who was slightly abnormal in concerns, before he asked back solemnly, “What is a wave, and what is a particle?”

Huh? The members here were at least ninth-circle arcanists. Not expecting that Lucien would ask about such elementary concepts, they were all more or less stunned.

“Lucien, this is not your teaching moment, although you were nicknamed ‘Professor’.” Said Oliver, who felt he was humorous.

There was nothing but two crimson flames in Vicente’s eye sockets and a thin skin that covered his cheekbones on his face, making it hard to tell his real feelings. “The definition of wave and particle can be found in any introductory books of arcana. Our time is too precious for that. If you don’t want to answer the questions, just remain silent.”

“Wave is a phenomenon. It is definitely based on the summary of the actual waves in nature and applied to arcana studies. The specific definition is...” Hathaway did not bother Vicente and briefly described the definitions of wave and particle.

Smiling, Lucien said, “It is very obvious that the definitions of wave and particle come from us. They come from the empirical conclusions we drew on the world of reality that is readily observable.”

“What’s the problem with that?” Crossing his fingers, Brook stuck his hand to his chin, as if he had guessed something.

Douglas, Bergner, and Hathaway seemed to have remembered something and were deep in thought. However, Hathaway’s face barely changed, and it was unnoticeable if she was not carefully observed. Fernando, the Lord of Storm, remained as silent as before.

Instead of giving a straight answer, Lucien looked at everyone and said, “I would like to tell a story first if you don’t think it’s a waste of your time.”

“Not a problem at all.” Oliver had always been tolerant about stories.

Now that he had spoken, the other members of the Highest Council certainly would not object to such a small matter. Besides, they believed that Lucien was not telling a random story to distract them from the current subject but definitely had his own purpose. Furthermore, the previous arguments and questions were all about arcana but not against Lucien personally. As long as the question could be explained clearly, did one story really matter? It wouldn’t hurt even if he had to tell ten of them!

“A long, long time ago, there was a king who hunted a dragon. Delighted, he put his trophy outside of his palace as a symbol of his bravery so that every noble and civilian who passed by could see it.” Lucien spoke unhurriedly. “One day, a group of blind people, who never knew anything about dragons before, learned of the matter. Curious about what dragons looked like, they came to the palace together and touched the dead body of the dragon.”

Hearing that a group of blind people tried to figure out what dragons looked like by ‘touching’, Oliver, Klaus, and other members of the Highest Council, who were relatively open-minded, all smiled. The rest of them, on the other hand, speculated what might happen.

Lucien went on. “One of them touched the wings of the dragon under the assistance of the guards. He immediately declared joyfully, ‘Dragons are terrible, gigantic bats!’”

“No, dragons are huge lizards!” Another one of them who touched the scales of the dragon argued. Before he became blind, he had once caught a lizard and felt its scales.

Most of the members in the Highest Council were amused after hearing the first guy’s declaration, but they all became solemn after the second guy’s reply. Douglas, Hathaway, and the rest of them who were more or less prepared nodded their heads.

“There’s no need to talk about the answers of the other blind people now. I only want to ask one thing: are dragons bats or lizards?”

“Neither.” Hellen basically understood what Lucien meant but still replied carefully.

Lucien smiled, “Therefore, light and protons are neither waves nor particles for me. The only thing that can be confirmed is that they are matter. Of course, I prefer to call them particles.”

“Neither waves nor particles?” Oliver frowned and asked, “Are you suggesting that they are actually something else?”

Looking around in the conference room, Lucien said, “We cannot see the electromagnetic waves including the invisible light, nor can we see the particles in the microscopic scale. When we study those aspects, we are like blind people. So we can only depend on the phenomena we can observe, instead of imposing the empirical definitions and concepts on them.”

“Take light for example. If we do not consider it as waves or particles in advance, we can describe it in such a way: this matter shows the obvious features of waves as well as the features of particles, its frequency is to a certain degree, and its speed is different in different mediums. It is not important what the matter that boasts such qualities is called. It can be defined as anything. As for why it shows both the features of waves and the features of particles and how the two categories of features are combined on it, that’s what we should study on our next step. Everything must be based on experiments and actual phenomena.”

“We are arguing here before we have applied the conceptions and

definitions of the past to the microscopic domain mechanically, which is the place closest to the truth of the world. I once said that our experience would deceive us. This is one of the examples. On the other hand, such deceptions are not only reflected in our studies but also in our interactions with other people.”

After saying that, Lucien looked around at the members of the Highest Council who had different expressions before he said solemnly:

“Only if we learn to temporarily abandon our previous concepts and depend on the actual phenomena and the experiment results can we ‘see’ the truth of the world in the microscopic domain.”

After Lucien finished his talk, the conference room was caught in a weird silence. Everyone thought about different things.

“But how are we going to study the microscopic domain if we don’t have any concepts? We have to process and construct the experiment phenomena and results into a system.” Oliver agreed with him, but he was still very suspicious about it.

Lucien replied simply. “With mathematical tools.”

“How do we know what mathematical tools to use if we don’t know what it is?” Vicente did not quite agree with him.

“We can apply the previous conceptions and definitions that can be directly observed, to the experiment results, and cannot apply them to those which cannot be observed. However, we can run deductions based on the experiment results, propose speculations and hypotheses, and then testify them with strict experiments later.” Lucien expressed his opinion. He had formed and fortified the idea because of the influence of weird things such as magic, soul, and feedback in reality and his studies in the quantum theory.

“So, you are still guessing that electrons are waves? But there are no experiments that can confirm it.” Vicente went on. After a huge detour, they returned to the original subject.

Douglas nodded his head and said, “I think that Lucien does have a

point. We see an object when the light is reflected into our eyes on its surface. The magnifying magic is based on the same optical mechanism. However, light can interact with electrons and result in their 'transition', which means that their status is altered. Therefore, up until now, there is barely any way for us to directly observe the microworld, and we can only conclude based on the experiment results before we explain the conclusions. It's true that we cannot introduce too many previous concepts when we explain the conclusions, which will restrain and blind our minds."

"However, the assumption that electrons are waves is still too impractical. At least, no experiments so far have any sign to prove it. They show the features of particles without any exception." Oliver shook his head, and Hathaway, as well as the other grand arcanists, agreed with him. At the very least, the nature of particles was the obvious experiment result, and it was difficult to associate waves with the distinctive traces.

However, they also preliminarily accepted that the previous concepts could not be blindly applied to the microworld in arcana studies.

"Can we only see the truth of the world if we abandon the previous concepts?" Said Brook in mixed feelings. "But since we have been learning arcana and receiving conceptions and definitions since childhood, it is possible that we apply the previous concepts to our studies without us knowing it. Besides, it is possible that introducing the previous concepts will make things easier."

Douglas looked at his pocket watch and said, "It's already late. Lucien has also expressed his opinion. You may talk in private."

"Yes, I'll try to reconstruct the model in the new alchemy with the notion of electronic waves and build its wave function to see if I can resolve the problem and confirm the hypothesis." Brook was rather interested in the direction as if he had found a way to reshape his cognitive world.

Oliver also nodded. "I'll also put my thoughts into the concept of electron waves and try to establish their wave function. Let's hope we can get something."

Hathaway didn't say anything. She was always silent if she could.

Vicente smiled at the Lord of Storm in a mocking smile, "Old pervert, why didn't you say anything today? Did you not want to roar at him because he's your student? That's very unlike you, who has been very insistent in truth in the field arcana."

It was not until he said that that the other members of the Highest Council realized that the Lord of Storm hadn't spoken anything so far! In the past, when such arguments took place, the conference room would definitely be swarmed with thunder, lightning, storms, and roars. Why was it so unusual today?

Fernando seemed to be holding something back. After a glance at Vicente, he glared at Lucien, "Bring it out. They should be braced for the blast now."

"Bring what out?" Lucien pretended that he did not know what Fernando was talking about.

"Bring what out?" The other members of the Highest Council were full of suspicion.

Fernando roared aloud all of a sudden, "I knew you completed the experiment when you gave the remark! Bring it out! Show us what the truth of the world is, and how the previous concepts should be abandoned!"

"You think we can't take such a hit from a realm that is full of unknowns?"

The experiment had been completed? Oliver, Klaus, and the rest of them looked at Lucien in shock. Was it really completed? Then, didn't Lucien's attitude suggest... How was it possible?

Even the legendary sorcerers like Hathaway and Hellen, who were usually nonchalant, were more or less surprised, which finally made them look like human beings that were made of flesh and blood.

Douglas looked at Lucien solemnly, "If you have completed it, just bring it out. Nobody here is so narrow-minded and stubborn."

He added in his heart: that is, most of the supporters of the wave theory are not. The rest of them were more or less mentally prepared because the hypothesis seemed able to resolve part of the problems in the new alchemy.

Lucien looked at them in silence. After they all nodded in approval, he took a deep breath, before he brought out a huge monocrystal and established the magic circle casually, so that the image could be directly manifested.

Brook did not say anything. Raising his hands, he launched the electron currents.

Time seemed to be frozen. There was nothing but depression and silence. Soon, the magic circle glowed and displayed the classic image of the diffraction pattern of X rays!

In everybody's eyes, the image was so familiar and beautiful, but also so astounding and unbelievable!

"This is..." Many people exclaimed what was on their mind subconsciously.

BOOM!

Lightning was dancing, and thunders were rumbling. A black storm consumed the sky.

The dark magnetic field around was twisted, and the invisible electromagnetic waves were more disordered than ever.

Stars arose and emitted dazzling brilliance, twisting the space around them and releasing gravity.

White, black, gold, silver... Elements in different colors gathered into a tide that looked like an ocean.

In the peaceful and quiet land of eternal sleep, black tombs rose aslant, brimming with the stink of death.

The dark universe was vast and boundless. One planet perished after another, caught in the infinite waves of destruction.

Snowflakes fell down. The temperature of the whole room dropped by almost a hundred degrees. Transparent ice was everywhere.

All the extraordinary views surfaced and churned the conference room, congregating into a terrifying scene where light in different colors weaved and where destruction and death danced together!

BOOM!

In the illusionary sounds of thunder and destruction, they turned around and looked at Lucien at the same time, only to discover that Lucien was still standing there with his hands in the pockets of his double-breasted suit. He repeated what Brook said in an extremely low voice:

“Only if you abandon your original concepts can you see the truth of the world.”

Chapter 597: A World Beyond Fantasies

The truth of the world?

Although Lucien's voice was very soft, the dozen members of the Highest Council in the meeting were at least ninth-circle archmages, and they caught it perfectly. Also, his voice was more astounding than the rumbling thunder and the destructive collapses in their ears, as if it were exploding directly in their head.

Only by abandoning the original concepts could you see the truth of the world?

Was it the truth of the world?

Electrons, which had been behaving as perfect particles, displayed the most classical pattern of diffraction when they bombarded a crystal!

It was as absurd as a dark, silent and cold night when the sun was high above and sunlight was everywhere!

It was like a sacred and beautiful angel turning out to be a stinky and hideous devil!

Was it the truth of the world?

Was it the truth that was more unbelievable than imagination, weirder than magic, and more unpredictable than gods?

At this moment, including Douglas, all the grand arcanists who had the strongest interest in the mysteries of the world couldn't help but shake their heads. This had completely disrupted and refreshed their understanding of the world. Everything was so bizarre that it was like the strangest monster!

As for the other legendary sorcerers and archmages, some covered their mouth and some held their hands tightly as if they were going to crumble the item in their hands. Somebody bit their lips hard to confirm that it was not their illusion.

They had been pursuing the truth of the world, but when the truth was partly unveiled, showing them parts of it, they ended up backing off out of fear.

Was it the truth of the world?

This was utterly different from their daily experience and intuitions!

It made them feel that they did not recognize the world before them anymore!

Suddenly, thunderstorms, starlight, and snowflakes vanished. Douglas, Brook, Hathaway, and Fernando quickly established their magic circles, preparing to confirm the experiment.

Even though Lucien had set up the magic circle right before their eyes, and even though Brook had launched the electron currents in person, they would not believe it until they had confirmed it in person!

“Use monocrystal...” Lucien suddenly reminded them and briefly described the monocrystal.

Hathaway nodded and prepared according to Lucien’s description. So did the other members of the Highest Council.

Soon, more than ten complex magic circles were set up, and gigantic monocrystals were placed at their centers. Brook, Fernando, and other sorcerers launched electron currents directly or with the assistance of magic items.

Without a sound, the beautiful and intangible image of diffraction appeared in Brook’s magic circle, followed by many others. The conference was so quiet and still that it looked like a weird painting.

BOOM!

Rumbling thunders roared again, and the views of elemental tides and alchemical haven reappeared. The blobs of light were so fuzzy that they seemed to be collapsing soon.

Thankfully, everything became quiet after several seconds. The members of the Highest Council held back their intense emotional turmoil.

For Brook, Oliver and other supporters of the wave theory, it was not a destructive blow at all but a huge benefit. They were only too astounded by the unimaginable situation to keep calm.

Hathaway and the other supporters of the particle theory—thanks to the previous debate—were already prepared that it was the special behavior of particles. Also, it could be used to address the problems in new alchemy. Therefore, their cognitive worlds were not broken and solidified.

Of course, that was also because they were the top experts in the world and had a much greater knowledge and self-control than other arcanists.

“The microworld is eerier than we imagined.” Vague shock still lingered on Hathaway’s face. She looked at the image of diffraction in complicated feelings.

“Yes.” Douglas waved his hands and removed the magic circle he set up, before he remarked, “In the past, we thought that the microworld is just a reduction of scale, a subdivision on atoms, and a realm made of microscopic particles and that we can apply the concepts, equations and motion systems of the macroscopic universe to it, too. Little did we know that the microscopic particles were different from anything we know themselves.”

“Yes, it boasts amazing qualities. The waves that show the features of particles, the particles that show the features of waves, and the matter Lucien said that is neither waves nor particles are all too unbelievable.” Oliver still tried to explain it from the perspective of waves.

Brook heaved a sigh. “It seems that we really have to abandon the previous concepts. This is truly an incredible ‘world’.”

Lucien smiled with his hands in his double-breasted suit. “Only because it is so eerie and incredible that it is the truth we have been

trying to approach, isn't it? It is impossible to introduce the notions we have observed in reality into the microscopic world."

"I have the feeling that the microscopic domain will change our worldview again and again. It will let us know what kind of secrets are buried behind the tangible world we know."

"The wave nature of electrons is enough to shatter my worldview. Evans, you are truly a Destroyer of Outlooks," said Klaus in bitterness.

Lucien smiled and said to Douglas, Hathaway, and Fernando. "The myriad of spells are already incredible for the clerics, the knights, and the ordinary people, but our imagination is even more unbelievable than our magic."

"The mysteries of the microworld, on the other hand, will be more bizarre than our imagination, because our imagination is based on our experience and knowledge, and most of them do not apply to the microworld. Even the most imaginative person cannot figure out what it's like over there."

"But such a domain is closer to the truth and deserves our fascination."

Douglas closed his eyes as if he were dwelling in the image of diffraction just now. "If the truth of the world were not filled with secrets, why would we have explored and researched for hundreds of years, and why would we consider it the greatest pleasure even though we may die because of it?"

"After the initial shock and disbelief, I'm more interested in electrons, light, and the microworld than ever. I can't wait to figure out the imaginable matter." Brook also praised the microworld that was more fantastic than fantasies.

Fernando cursed. "I don't feel good about it. It seems that my previous studies are rendered worthless, but it also fills me with drive because I haven't found or learned anything yet! The truth of the world is like a boundless starry sky, and I'm merely playing on one of the planets picking up random gems by accident."

Vicente, on the other hand, looked at Lucien and asked, "Since microscopic particles behave as waves, why do we not show the features of waves when we are made of particles but exist concretely? Dieppe's paper can be extrapolated to macroscopic matter."

"Perhaps, it's because the wavelength is too short to count." Thinking, Oliver replied.

Lucien said solemnly, "As I said just now, in this microworld, much of our experience and common sense is no longer applicable. Perhaps, a certain change happens between microscope and macroscope that diminishes the feature of waves."

Hathaway pinched her chin with her thumb and her index finger, a similar action of thinking to Natasha's. It seemed to be their family tradition. "An object with mass, electric charge and momentum now behave as waves. We need to review this world. What happens when atoms are combined into elements that stops us from seeing a macroscopic world of wave-particle duality?"

Hellen forgot the books, manuscripts, and quill before her and observed the diffraction experiments that the members of the Highest Council made. Then, she found an alchemical device that could capture electrons and launched electrons to it through a strong magnetic field, creating flashing fluorescent points.

Frowning, she said, "No features of waves can be observed at all in this experiment... If electrons show both the feature of waves and particles, why can we only see one of them at a time?"

In fact, every grand arcanist had a hundred thousand questions. After the quake of their cognitive world, Hathaway and Hellen were soon enthralled and asked a series of questions.

Lucien, on the other hand, secretly clicked his tongue. They had found the most essential, incredible and eccentric problem of the wave-particle duality of electrons so quickly. They truly had extraordinary arcana intuitions!

Thankfully, they did not expect Lucien to answer them right now.

Instead, they considered on their own, utterly secluded from the outside world.

It was not until a long time later that Douglas knocked on the desk and woke them up. “Those problems cannot be resolved any time soon. We will study the nature of electrons after we return.”

“Let’s move on to today’s next subject. It’s about establishing an advanced magic school for the remaining districts on the thirty-first floor of the Allyn magic tower. Right now, arcana is developing faster and faster, and more and more knowledge in mathematics is needed. Since the apprentices and low-rank sorcerers have to learn by themselves after they graduate, they are having more and more trouble at keeping up with the trend. Therefore, we need an advanced school where we can teach distinguished apprentices and low-rank sorcerers on a large scale.”

The issue had been discussed before but was not really resolved. However, after the grand development of arcana in the past ten years, Douglas believed that it was high time.

“Later, a member of the Highest Council will be the principal of the school. Tasks will be issued to the senior-rank senior-rank arcanists and middle-rank arcanists, who will teach in turns. It will be the best if the members of the Arcana Review Board can often hold lectures for them, too.”

Lucien’s lips twitched. *Should I promote my title as Professor?*

Chapter 598: New Mode of Teaching

Chapter 598: New Mode of Teaching

“Indeed. The courses at magic school today can give the apprentices enough fundamental knowledge for them to become official sorcerers, but the arcana and magic knowledge needed for low-rank sorcerers to rise higher is now getting too enormous and complicated for them to learn and grasp on their own. That’s the reason why the population of middle-rank sorcerers hasn’t increased much in the past ten years, despite the sharp increase in senior-rank sorcerers.” Brook nodded and agreed with Douglas’ proposal.

It indicated that the new arcana theories and achievements did not lower the difficulties between the low rank and the middle rank, and the ratio of advancement was the same as before. However, for part of the distinguished low-rank sorcerers, their advancement was much easier after they picked up the new arcana theories, like Annick, Heidi and the other studies who had been taught by Lucien with cutting-edge knowledge.

Oliver, on the other hand, was slightly worried. “Graduated apprentices and low-rank sorcerers are the foundation of Congress. If all of them study in the advanced school, the Congress as a whole will inevitably be paralyzed.”

While the senior-rank sorcerers, archmages, and legendary sorcerers were capable of various spells, they certainly wouldn’t waste their time on chores. The daily operation of Congress was based on tasks that were mostly carried out by the apprentices and the low-rank sorcerers. They allowed Congress to run smoothly.

“Therefore, we are establishing a school with a capacity of no more than a thousand students. We will select the talents in certain ways and consider expanding the school if everything goes well, but it must now affect the operation of Congress. After all, the arcanists of higher levels have their own business, too. Too many advanced schools will be a burden for them.” Douglas spoke of his plan. He had already evaluated the number of possible teachers.

“Select them in certain ways? Like the apprentice test?” Fernando was rather concerned about that. Hellen, on the other hand, was dedicated to her own research again.

Amused, Lucien said, “The College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic? Subdivided into mathematics, language, magic analysis, and theoretical and application of magic of the eleven schools?”

He only joked when he remembered his ‘past’ experience.

“The College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic? Huh, that will be the fairest way. At least, it will be fairer than the recommendation from the middle-rank sorcerers.” Douglas rather agreed with exams.

Cheating would certainly be rare under the supervision of magic. Fairness could be ensured to the largest degree. In comparison, when the candidates were recommended, the middle-rank sorcerers and the administration of schools were often inclined to recommend the students they knew, appreciate or were associated with. The abilities in arcana and magic often came last.

Therefore, Douglas nodded and said, “Let’s set up the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic. The Affair Committee will decide what specific knowledge and practical abilities are to be tested.”

Lucien rubbed his eyebrow and covered his eyes, while he said to himself in amusement, *I was just kidding...* However, it was likely that the tests and quizzes that he compiled would become popular very soon.

“There’s no need to test everybody with the knowledge of the eleven schools, is there?” Vicente asked, “Mathematics, different magic vernaculars, magic analysis, preliminary alchemical abilities, and practical research and battle abilities are mandatory. Then, the test-takers can choose three schools to be tested on their own. After all, everybody has their specialties and interests.”

Fernando argued loudly and vehemently, “The trend is that the schools are more and more closely connected. The wave-particle duality is combining electromagnetism and elements in the

microscopic realm. Those without a broad view of knowledge cannot participate in deeper studies in the future.”

“They can consider it after they are admitted. After all, they will be kicked out of school if their scores are terrible. It will give them enough ‘momentum’ to make up for their foundation.” Oliver smiled.

“But that’s in violation of the original purpose to set up the advanced school. If they can learn well by themselves, there will be no need to establish advanced magic schools,” said Hathaway slowly, her shock gone moments ago.

Lucien had always respected Hathaway. He added, “We can slightly change the mode of teaching. We can ask the Arcana Review Board to list the dependencies of knowledge that is required to dig deeper in a certain domain of a certain school for the students so that they will know what is needed for their future.”

“Also, the curriculum of the advanced school can’t be like the school of apprentices. The students will not be organized into different classes but given enough freedom. For example, the knowledge I mentioned can be combined into different courses and taught by different teachers. Then, the students can choose the teacher according to their progress and their foundation. Those who have spare time and who are more capable can also take more courses to broaden their knowledge.”

“In such a way, they will no longer be restricted by their initial choice. After all, they are not little kids but distinguished apprentices and low-rank sorcerers. Our goal is to let the talented students finish learning as soon as possible, let the students who are not talented but hard-working take their time to learn, and let the lazy and undevoted students have a chance to make up for their mistakes by broadly choosing courses.”

Lucien did not say anything about their test. It would be the best answer if they could advance into middle-rank sorcerers and arcanists after education in the advanced magic school.

After that, Lucien noticed that all the members of the Highest

Council were looking at him. He asked subconsciously, “What’s up?”

“I didn’t know that you were good at teaching. No wonder Katrina, Layria and Annick are so excellent,” said Douglas in a smile.

Fernando also chuckled. “He was already best known for his unique teaching style when he was a teacher in Douglas Magic School, although he was blamed for being unorthodox.”

Lucien’s teaching pattern was now popular in every magic school. After all, he was already a grand arcanist. Mimicking the successors was a fashion in every society.

Douglas nodded. “This plan is excellent. Also, it makes the release of tasks less difficult. Lucien, why don’t you work as the principal of the advanced magic school? I hope you can establish a successful new teaching pattern.”

Lucien looked around, only to discover that they all avoided his eyes. He immediately realized that they were not interested in it at all. That was why they remained silent when they talked. He nodded and said, “I’ll only be responsible for the new pattern. The daily operation should be supervised by another senior-rank arcanist, and the specific affairs can be completed by hired middle-rank sorcerers.”

After that, Lucien began to complain. *Manager of the Atom Institution, leader of the Sky Radio Station, and principal of an advanced magic school.* . . His part-time jobs were truly weird in an unusual manner.

“What should this advanced magic school be named?” Douglas looked at Oliver.

Lucien interjected again. “Since it is different from regular magic schools, why don’t we name it using the word ‘college’?”

“Let’s call it Holt College.” Oliver liked giving names best.

‘Holt’ was the ancient Asso word for ‘arcana’.

The other people were not interested in names, and Lucien was too lazy to propose a name like 'Hogwarts'.

After the name was settled, the discussion went on. Since there was no more argument, the meeting was over very soon.

"When will Evans' experiment be published?" In the end, Hellen was back to herself and simply asked without caring whether or not it had been discussed.

Douglas said solemnly, "I believe that 'arcana' should sort out the debate in the meeting and publish it as a heuristic article. Lucien's narration will help them accept the wonders of the microworld. There shouldn't be a massive collapse of cognitive worlds again. After all, it has only been several years since electrons were discovered."

"However, people who are stunned after their world is shaken will probably be all over Congress. The most extreme of them will probably be very suspicious about themselves and unconfident in arcana and magic, which will also make their strength halt.

Day was night, and particles were waves. Such ideas made people question the reality of the world and the effectiveness of their exploration. It only left them convinced that the universe was dominated by mysteries!

"Alright, we will publish Evans' experience in the April issue." Hellen nodded.

Klaus chuckled. "Evans, it will be the time of your wedding."

Lucien rubbed his lips. Was his wedding going to be inaugurated with blood and brains?

However, it was not exactly his fault. That was all because of Dieppe's paper, and he had only completed the experiment! It's like nobody blamed Brook for the head explosions caused by the light quantum hypothesis!

Of course, Lucien believed that few people, if any, would really suffer such an accident. After all, the debate about the model of the

new alchemy still remained unabated.

“I’m going to return and study the wavefunction of electrons.” Oliver left in a hurry. Despite his marriage failure that inspired him with a series of poignant works, his dedication and passion in arcana studies were not affected at all.

Brook and the rest of them also left. After the wavefunction of electrons was figured out, they would probably be able to truly establish the model of the new alchemy and describe the mysteries of material changes.

Fernando, who left last, asked Lucien to follow him. After they reached his library, he finally looked at Lucien and said, “You must’ve already resolved the problems in the new alchemy to a certain extent, haven’t you?”

Chapter 599: Furnace of Souls

Chapter 599: Furnace of Souls

Lucien replied rather innocently. “I was inspired by the amazing result that electrons had the features of waves. So, I modified and abandoned some thoughts I had in the past.”

“You resolved the orbit problem by regarding them as waves?” Fernando knew that quantized orbits would be inferred naturally if so.

Lucien shook his head. “The problem might be resolved in such a way, but I have some other thoughts. If they don’t walk out, I’ll reconsider from the perspective of waves.”

“You are not comparing electrons to waves?” Fernando had always been serious in arcana discussions. He wondered what Lucien could have possibly come up with from the experiment.

Lucien said rather cautiously, “It’s the epistemology behind the phenomenon. Like I said before, the problems within the atom should only be handled based on the phenomena and results that can be observed. We cannot consider the previous concepts that are not directly observable, such as orbit, as our basis, as we can only describe electrons as matter with the features of waves and particles.”

“Then you inferred it with mathematical tools?” asked Fernando rather interestedly.

Lucien nodded. “Yes. I ignored the arcana significance of certain things and associated problems within the atom with the problems in reality through mathematical tools.”

“Didn’t you say that the microscopic realm could not be associated with the real world?” Fernando was puzzled.

Lucien smiled. “That’s why I used mathematical approaches. The microworld and the real world indeed abide by different laws, but

when the laws of the microworld are extended to the real world, our observation will agree with the classical laws. Otherwise, it will be inexplicable why we exist in reality instead of turning into waves. Therefore, we should not consider the arcana significance of the laws but focus on constructing a model that is similar to classic theories with pure mathematical tools, making the solution identical to the experiment, before we discuss the actual significance of the model.”

“This is the most primitive and classic approach, but we have long forgotten it,” Fernando remarked with mixed feelings. In the beginning, before the concepts took shape, many theories had been constructed based on the explorations and experiments via such means. There were functions first before the actual significance of functions was discussed. However, as there were more and more theories and concepts, while it was easier for the arcanists to explore the world with previous concepts and definitions, they were also restrained by such ideas in the meantime. “Where do you plan to begin?”

Lucien did not hide. “From the sum of the information in the atomic system that we can observe or the general status of the system—if you will—I will introduce a state function and use the observable arcana concepts as operators. By operating and changing the state function with it, I will have corresponding results, which must be a match with the experiment results.”

Fernando was silent for a while as if he were considering what Lucien meant. In the end, he could only compliment, “A very amazing idea. Introducing the state function in thermodynamics into the atomic system, and regarding the observable arcana concepts as the operator, those are inspirations that only the avid lovers of mathematics can come up with. However, cold and complicated math models will never be generally accepted until they reveal their arcana significance.”

He did not ask for more details since Lucien didn’t ask him, because it was Lucien’s work. “You’ve found a new approach. You should be able to construct a theoretical system soon. I look forward to your bringing good news to my studies.”

“Master, what are you working on?” asked Lucien curiously.

Fernando said gravely, “Two directions. The first is the abnormal splitting experiment. I discovered that it could only be resolved by introducing a half quantum number, which doesn’t agree with our understanding that quantum numbers can only be integers. The second is that I was inspired by my previous studies and believed that there can’t be two identical electrons in an atom. That is to say, at least one of their quantum numbers is different.”

So far, three quantum states regarding electrons had been discovered.

“That seems able to resolve the problem of the distribution of electrons, as well as the electronic exchange in the old alchemical reactions. Mr. Gaston’s studies in life synthesis will have certain theoretical support.” Lucien did not expect that his teacher could find out the Pauli exclusion principle ¹ so quickly.

Not too delighted, Fernando nodded his head. “There’s still a long way ahead. As you said, this is a realm that was unimaginable in the past. Also, it will be my turn to supervise the advance base in the World of Souls next year.”

Ever since the Lord of the Undead betrayed the World of Souls, the Congress had established bases near the gaps of the World of Souls in Heidler city to explore the World of Souls. Because they were suspicious that the disappearance of Maskelyne, Viken and some other legendary sorcerers was related to the World of Souls, their exploration had been very prudent. It took them several years before they finally reached the depths of the World of Souls. Also, one legendary sorcerer, usually a grand arcanist, guarded the base all the time, except for special occasions like the time when war was waged against the Church.

“You must be careful, master,” said Lucien in concern. The World of Souls was as dangerous as hell. When he checked Adol’s memories with his permissions in the Highest Council, he saw the most unimaginable and astounding picture.

In Adol’s memories, black, white and grey covered everything in the

world of silence that was devoid of any sound. At the center of this world was a magnificent, splendid palace that was half the size of Holm. The high steeple pierced into the sky and extended into the void, connecting the sky and the earth of the World of Souls.

In the areas that Adol could reach, terrifying specters were everywhere. There were primeval vampires and mummies, there were Wraith Lords, and there were 'Servants of Death', which was the name of a specter and was not about the real God of Death. There were also skeleton kings, dragon liches and 'demigod-liches'. The number of legends was almost close to the sum of all the three biggest groups. Thankfully, most of the specters were unintelligent and acted according to instinct. They could barely be manipulated by the intelligence specters, either. So, they were not as strong as Congress as a whole.

Of course, Congress couldn't devote all the legends to the exploration, which would give the South Church and the North Church an opportunity. Also, nobody knew what kind of monsters were hiding in the areas deep inside the 'Temple of Spirits'.

Among them, what shocked Lucien most of all was the 'Furnace of Souls' inside the Temple of Spirits. Located in the deepest parts that Adol could reach, it was a gray curtain that dangled from the intangible heights of the Temple of Spirits like a wall. Inside it was the frozen faces of souls, which were sometimes peaceful and sometimes twisted. Some of them were even swirling around the white fire of soul.

Those souls were so dense that Lucien suspected that their number surpassed the population of all the intelligent creatures in the world.

Also, except for part of the intelligent, legendary creatures who could touch the Furnace of Souls by the bliss of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, embed their subordinates into it, and burn them with the white fire, the senior-rank specters including Adol could only see it but could not touch it, just like when the sorcerers saw the tantalizing ball of divinity during their advancement. It was high above somewhere that they could never reach.

Adol had scrutinized the Furnace of Souls, only to discover his face somewhere high above. He had already been caged inside the Furnace of Souls!

Even though he was a specter that had few feelings, his spiritual power still shook violently, making it difficult for him to carry on his exploration.

Perhaps, the mysteries of souls are hidden behind that. That was the only idea Lucien had after retrieving and reading the files.

Fernando glared at Lucien rather impatiently. “Up to this point, few of the legendary specters in the periphery are at the third level of legendary. We have also set up communication methods. The mysterious existence in the World of Souls has fallen asleep again. What dangers can I possibly run into? Just focus on the model of your new alchemy!”

After he left his teacher’s place, Lucien went directly to the Affair Committee, and the record of the discussion in the meeting began to spread among a few arcanists.

Chapter 600: Darkness Before Dawn

When he arrived at the Affair Committee, Lucien happened upon Norman, Douglas' student, who was one of the members.

"Your Excellency Evans, you are the truth of elements..." Norman greeted him according to the rules of the Congress.

Lucien smiled. "Such trouble is unnecessary. It's too much a waste of time. When I met the Excellencies before, I only paid tribute to them the first time we encountered."

"Mr. Evans, is there anything you want the Committee to do?" Norman asked, "In fact, you don't have to come in person. You could've contacted any member in the office or asked us to go to your library."

Lucien pointed at the conference room. "Certain things can be better explained with a face-to-face conversation."

Describing the arrangement regarding the Holt Magic College, Lucien looked at Norman and asked, "Is there anything unclear?"

"Your Excellency, this is a wonderful thought. I have never seen such a teaching method before. As a graduate from the magic school myself, I could've saved one year of my time if I had the chance to choose courses and teachers on my own." Norman praised the new pattern. He certainly had astonishing gifts to be picked by Douglas.

Lucien thought to himself. If he proposed the method to anybody else, they might be thinking that it would ruin the atmosphere in schools and sabotage the traditional teacher-student relationship, like the dilemma he encountered when he was in Douglas Magic School. However, Norman gave it a very high remark based on his personal impression almost without any analysis.

"The apprentices are mostly very young. Making choices on their own only means self-indulgence. Different age groups require different ways. It's certainly not the best solution to just let them do

whatever they want.” Lucien rose. “The studying period of the college will be two years. They can graduate in advance or apply to delay one year. You will draft the details.”

“Alright. I’ll summon the members and discuss it with them soon.” Norman had already recorded Lucien’s instruction in the magic circle.

When Lucien was about to leave, a middle-rank arcanist walked in, “Mr. Norman, Her Excellency the Witch of Iceland has sent over a confidential recording stone. She asks the Committee to sort it out into a paper.”

“A recording stone?” Norman looked at Lucien strangely. Was there anything else that the Highest Council wanted them to do?

After Gaston invented magic gramophone, many other arcanists developed similar products. The recording stone was one of them. It was much simpler and more convenient than in the past.

“It’s some of the discussion during the meeting.” Lucien stopped leaving and decided to observe Norman. Although he was certain that the discussion would not result in an earthquake in the sorcerers’ cognitive worlds according to logic and prophecies, he still needed to infer other people’s possible acceptable based on the reaction that Norman had after hearing the recording, so that he would know how to publish his papers.

Seeing that Lucien sat down again, Norman thought that he had other instructions regarding the content in the recording stone. So, he hinted for the middle-rank arcanist to leave first, and he activated the recording stone after turning on the sound-blocking magic circle in the conference room.

“There are no experiments that confirm the wave nature of electrons yet...” Hathaway’s clear and cold voice came over.

Norman immediately realized what it was about. They must be discussing Dieppe’s paper and Mr. Evans’ remark.

As the argument went on, Norman became more and more focused.

Quite a few arcanists expressed their opinions. For example, if the particles were waves, why were humans not waves when they were made of particles? He also agreed with Hathaway's theory that particles' special vibrations showed the feature of waves.

By the time Oliver asked Lucien's opinion, Norman glanced at Lucien who was seated on the chair comfortably, finding it hard to believe that he just asked 'what are waves' and 'what are particles'.

However, after Lucien explained his idea with the motto of 'the blind feeling the dragon', Norman became more solemn than ever, as if he were considering the most complicated problem. He mumbled to himself, "Bats, lizards, waves and particles... This is truly an unprecedented perspective..."

The recording came to a halt before Fernando talked. Norman was still deep in thought, as if he were trying to understand Lucien's opinion.

After a long time, he finally remarked half in delight and half in bitterness. "Mr. Evans, thanks to your perspective and your easy-to-understand metaphor, even if the electrons are proved to be waves in the future, I wouldn't need to worry that my cognitive world would collapse."

Then, he spoke of his own understanding, seeking Lucien's approval. "...We can consider it as something that we haven't completely recognized. We cannot define it with part of its features but can only describe it in a certain range. Day is not night, but the sky can behave in two statuses that are day and night. The different time of observation results in its different appearance."

It was much easier than directly accepting that particles were waves. Sorcerers were always reverential about the unknown. They described it only according to their experiments.

Naturally, Lucien could not say that the 'sky' was actually a superposition state of 'day' and 'night.' Seeing that Norman accepted it rather well, he rose and said, "This is the discussion about certain problems at present. The main purpose is to ask the arcanists to keep an open mind about the unknown. They must not

introduce the previous concepts blindly, or they will never see the big picture.”

“Arcana studies are important, but the methodology of arcana studies seem equally important!” Said Norman with mixed feelings.

Lucien nodded his head with a smile. That was exactly the methodology, to wit, the ways and the attitude with which one observed and processed problems.

Seeing that Lucien was about to leave, Norman led him to the door and remarked somewhat gloomily, “Can the problems in the new alchemy only be resolved if electrons are regarded as waves? It makes me feel that the new alchemy has reached the most difficult moment. There’s barely any hope. The only dawn that can be seen is unacceptable under the system.”

The existence of materials was real. Even Norman, an arcanist who was more inclined to the wave theory, found it more or less unacceptable to introduce the concept of waves to matter. He felt helpless and frustrated about the dilemma surrounding new alchemy.

“You forgot again. It is just a mysterious material that shows the features of waves.” Lucien bid him farewell. It was impossible to change one’s mindset overnight.

After seeing Lucien off, Norman rubbed his cheeks. “They feel so real. I find it hard to believe that they are waves...”

...

As the chairman of ‘Will of Elements’, Morris soon got the heuristic paper after it was published. Browsing through it, he put on a self-mocking smile. “The new alchemy on one side, and electrons as waves on the other side. This is really a tough choice.”

“Master, this is the third time that you have made the same remark, during the one hour that I discussed questions with you.” Florencia said, more or less complaining. “Why are you so concerned about the problem? Just because it can be explained from the perspective

of waves doesn't mean that it can't be explained from the perspective of particles. Instead of worrying about that, you should devote more of your attention to your research. However, you sound less hesitant than the previous two times."

She was a member of the Affair Committee who was better at doing things than research.

Morris smiled. "You are very keen. Lucien explained electrons from a new perspective. It's not unacceptable even if they behave as waves."

"Is that so?" Florencia asked for the paper and read it carefully. In the end, she smiled and said, "The early discussion was truly intense, but Lucien does have a special way of thinking. That must be the reason why he has presented so many revolutionary achievements... I rarely see anybody simplifying the question with only one metaphor."

"Perhaps, this is the true nature of the wave-particle duality." Morris heaved a sigh. "However, judging from Lucien's meaning between the lines, he is more inclined to resolve the problems in the new alchemy with waves, too."

"The cornerstone of elements and the fundamental code to describe particles have to address its problem with waves. What irony." Florencia chuckled but looked rather gloomy.

Morris rose and walked to the window. Looking at the grey sky and the depressing, overwhelming snow that blocked his vision, he remarked, "The new alchemy is exactly experiencing such weather right now. There are huge snowflakes in every direction, and nobody can see a way out. We can only grope while we step forward. Even the unacceptable and nonnegotiable things in the past must be clutched as long as they indicate the way out."

"This is a dilemma for Lucien as well as all the other elements in the field of elements and alchemy. We are like trapped beasts that have to resort to all means possible in order to break out of the siege and see the dawn again."

Florescia also walked to the window and sighed. "I hope that such confusion, depression, coldness and loss end as soon as possible, so that we can pass through the infinite dark night and reach the dawn where everything is dyed red by the sun."

"The darkness before the dawn is the deepest and thickest." Morris observed. It was also the last obstacle before the half-solidification of his cognitive world.

...

Raventi, Gaston, LockLynn, Marcus and other senior-rank arcanists felt more or less the same when they read the heuristic paper. On one hand, Lucien's example made them more open-minded towards particles, allowing for a shift of their mindset; on the other hand, they were all frustrated by the bottleneck of new alchemy.

Were they going to ask for the wave theory's reinforcement after their endeavors in particles proved in vain?

If even waves could not address all the problems, would the model of new alchemy be completely wrong since the very beginning?

In the unknown world of pure darkness, the new alchemy seemed to have reached an intersection that would decide its own fate!

"Perhaps, we are already approaching success, except that there is only one correct way in the darkness around us. If we walk on the correct way, we will ascend to the throne of magic and arcana after one step and master the mysteries of matter, but if we go the wrong way, we will fall into a bottomless abyss and crash into pieces."

Looking at the depressing blizzard out of the window, Raventi suddenly had a feeling: The most critical moment for the new alchemy has come. Would it rise and illuminate everything like the sun, or would it fall like the moon and let the darkness re-embrace the world?

...

At night, having replied to plenty of letters, Lucien re-entered his library and sat on his chair. Then, he brought out the tremendous

experiment data.

Plans could never keep up with changes. Lucien shook his head and picked up his quill, starting to write: On Quantum Mechanics.

Outside of the window, snowflakes were dancing in the coldness and darkness.

Chapter 601: Another Hallucination

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Lucien had only just learnt the matrix mechanics. Also, he intentionally did not refer to the files in his spirit library but inferred it with his memories and understanding. Therefore, it was not as fluent and natural as the papers he wrote before, when he could write more than ten pages without any stop under the assistance of magic. It was quite troublesome this time.

Lucien could've picked Dirac's version of quantum mechanics that was more concise, beautiful and easier for the arcanists to understand, and he could've handled it with the mathematical tools in the previous arcana system. However, the matrix could be applied to a variety of fields in the future. This was the best opportunity to come up with it. After all, he would throw out Dirac's paper in two months and free the arcanists from the maze of matrix.

In the first part of the paper, Lucien spent plenty of time constructing the matrix as a mathematical tool, explaining its definition, rules of calculation, etc. Before he really began the content of quantum mechanics.

Starting from the equations of electron movement, Lucien expanded it mathematically and, through the enormous and intricate calculations of the matrix, based on the observed arcana values, he constructed the whole model into what seemed to be the classic Douglas-Oliver system, except that the means of calculation in the new system was the matrix.

While he wrote with difficulty, Lucien gradually grasped the knowledge about the matrix and had a deeper understanding about the unfriendly, complicated mathematical tool. In the meantime, he had a deeper interest in its arcana significance in quantum mechanics.

Time went by, and the night out of the window was darker and

darker. The ground was covered in a thick layer of snow.

After a long time, the paper before Lucien was already a thick pile, and he wrote faster and faster.

Finally, Lucien raised his hand after drawing to a heavy full stop, which marked the end of the main body of the paper and the establishment of the real quantum mechanics, unlike the half-classic and half-quantum amalgamation in the model of the new alchemy!

Lucien did not stop there. Instead, he continued his deduction with the new theory that was matrix mechanics. The quantization conditions that were imposed on electrons were inferred after the complicated but clear calculation!

Soundlessly, Lucien's cognitive world surfaced. Already half-solidified, it was no longer satisfied by the illusionary changes in the soul but filled up the whole library. The stars high above were like lamps illuminating the floor. The spots of elements were displayed as models of atoms. The electrons which moved around neutrons and protons were like an unreal, unpredictable cloud that now behaved as waves and as particles.

The floating light and shadow in the show was like the most hideous and peculiar hell, in which a lot of devils seemed to be roaring crazily. "Stop! Stop! It's going to be the deepest level of hell if you go down any further!"

"Go on! Just go on! You will release the most terrible and unimaginable monster!" The falling snowflakes were like pure angels.

"It will destroy the entire world! And you, vicious sorcerer, your heart will be dug out and air-dried on the volcano!"

The hallucinatory sounds entered Lucien's ears, but he did not stop. He continued his deduction with the matrix and compared it with the data of the spectral experiments, the empirical equations and the many experiments regarding the new alchemy.

After his cognitive world surfaced, the model of the atom was kept

the same. Until the data was perfectly matched, Lucien was not going to change his cognitive world recklessly.

...

Results were accomplished. They matched the experiment results perfectly!

The equations were deduced naturally and fit the empirical equations!

The dark night reached the deepest and most intense moment. Snowflakes were flying like the paper flowers at a funeral, bringing forth desperation, grief, silence and death.

The roars of the devil were more and more ghastly. "You are peeping at the truth of the world! You will be torn apart!"

"I curse you to eternal pain and suffering!"

Angels also threatened him. "You are not opening the gate to Mountain Paradise but the cage of destruction! Sinner! The world will be the opposite of your imagination!"

"Die now! The truth of the world must not be desecrated and approached! Damn arcanist, you will never find anything you want! I will pluck your soul and burn it in fire for ten thousand years!"

Lucien heard the hallucinatory sounds again. Not knowing whether it was because of the unsteadiness of his mind, or the feedback of the real world, or perhaps both, he shook his head, took a deep breath, and came up with the most pivotal equations in matrix mechanics that were most in violation of general mathematical rules: The multiplication of the momentum and the location was not equal to the multiplication of the location and the momentum!

The moment the equation that did not agree with the commutative property was inferred, the roars of devils and the threatenings of angels all became begging:

"End it! Please tear it apart! This is the key to the gate of destruction!"

“If you stop, you will be the savior of the world that will be remembered forever.”

“As long as you stop, I will satisfy all of your requirements.”

In his cognitive world, the model of the orbit of electrons changed again. The electrons in the form of clouds were separated naturally according to three quantum numbers. After moving randomly for years, they finally had their own distribution patterns. Protons and neutrons had similar changes, too, which immediately condensed Lucien's soul and cognitive world that were not very solid yet. The early version of the meditation method based on the wave-particle duality was finally upgraded!

The boundless, intangible, illusionary starry sky appeared again. Attracted by the strange and yet familiar force, the complicated and esoteric cubic symbols of magic appeared in Lucien's cognitive world and constructed into a weird, unimaginable magic model.

Since his cognitive world had half-solidified, Lucien controlled the range of his influence, making it barely possible for outsiders to notice anything wrong. If they looked at Lucien's 'Babel' from the blizzard, they would only see the weirdly shaking light in one of the windows, as if countless devils were dancing.

“Consider the values that do not agree with the commutative property of multiplication as non-commutation values...” Lucien did not stop at all but went on. “...In the meantime, a pair of non-commutation values cannot be determined at the same time. If you know one of them accurately, the other will definitely be uncertain. For example, if you completely understand the speed and mass of an electron, you will lose track of it and can never discover it again...”

“...After deduction, time and energy are also similar. When time is shortened to a single accurate moment, energy will expand and plummet uncannily, and huge fluctuations of energy will appear in the vacuum... Perhaps, such 'vacuum fluctuations' happens around us all the time.”

“Ahh!” Miserable screams echoed.

“Wu!” Grievous moans echoed.

After the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle was written by Lucien, the ‘devils’ and ‘angels’ became desperate and then vanished into thin air!

The darkness and the snowy land were the same as before, but the snowflakes that had been flying like paper flowers stopped!

In Lucien’s cognitive world, the weird magic model had been successfully constructed. It turned out to be a new legendary magic. Based on his intuition, Lucien could tell that the spell that was based on quantum mechanics and the uncertainty principle was a very weird one that seemed able to sabotage determinism, or the law of causality, which the arcanists of this world believed in.

Looking at the result of his deduction that matched the experiment data and empirical equations perfectly, Lucien closed his eyes. What exactly was the difference between the two worlds?

Why was there spirits and magic in one of them and not in the other one?

He had heard hallucinatory sounds twice. The first time, it was when he came up with the Planck constant, which marked the beginning of quantum mechanics, and the second time, he established quantum mechanics. Was it the reason behind everything? His mood might’ve been unsteady the first time, but he was certainly calm this time.

Lucien had read the introduction to the development of quantum mechanics in the spirit library. After learning a thing or two about the theories that were more magical than magic, more mythic than myths, and more fantastic than fantasies, he believed that he could find an explanation from the path.

“I have to pay a visit to the Furnace of Souls sometime. Perhaps, I can discover the secrets of souls from there and understand why the two worlds are different.” Lucien took a deep breath and made up his mind to visit the World of Souls. He would never be reassured if he couldn’t unravel the secret. He would suspect the reality of this

world and that somebody was manipulating everything. Other people might be satisfied as it was, but he would rather die than to accept it willingly!

Of course, Lucien was not a reckless man. He would never go to the Temple of Spirits unless he became level-two legendary and was led by the grand arcanists such as President Douglas.

Calming himself down, Lucien drew out the part about the uncertainty principle and kept it in the internal pocket of the Robe of Grand Arcanists. Then, he eliminated the proof that matched the experiment data and the empirical formulas in the remaining part, planning to let the arcanists finish them. It would be easier for them to accept the theory if the results of their deduction based on the theory matched the experiment results.

After he sorted out the paper and kept it in his storage bag, Lucien realized that it was already six o'clock in the morning, and it was still the most intense darkness outside.

“The night has passed without me knowing it...” His hands in his pockets, Lucien walked to the window and looked at the cold, gloomy night and the snow that was reflecting shimmers. He observed in a low voice, “The darkness before dawn is truly the deepest and heaviest.”

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when an orange light broke the heavy darkness and drove away the coldness from far away.

The sun rose slowly, spraying brilliance that dyed the snow red, making it look like a furious fire that was burning in dreamy and glamorous colors.

The overwhelming snow began to melt, unfreezing the world, as if the ‘fire’ burnt up the obsolete stuff and brought a new order.

The splendid fire spread from before Lucien’s eyes all the way to the infinite horizon. He couldn’t help but narrow his eyes and said to himself: “Dawn is here.”

Yes, the dawn of the new alchemy had come!

Just like the sun, it would never be stopped again. It would illuminate the era with its light and heat!

Chapter 602: Hand of Uncertainties

After completing 'On Quantum Mechanics', Lucien did not submit it right away. Instead, he studied its applications and analyzed the new legendary spell that was formulated inside his soul. Having received the feedback of the real world, his soul and his cognitive world were both much more steady, and he could already construct the fourth legendary model.

After a month of analysis, Lucien had basically grasped the weird, unpredictable legendary spell. It was an ancillary spell that could map certain features of the microworld to the macroscopic domain. For example, no matter how tough, marvelous or mysterious the enemy's defense was, there would definitely be uncertainties, and it was possible that the attack and weakening spells enhanced by this magic would pierce through it directly.

To be more exact, in that moment, determinism would collapse. No matter how many life-preserving spells the enemy prepared, how many phylacteries they made in advance, and how their life was absolutely ensured by such preparations, there were still odds that they would perish abruptly because of the influence of the magic.

Of course, for Lucien, the stronger the enemy was, the lower the odds would be. There was a 20% possibility that he could destroy determinism when faced with opponents of the same level, but the odds would be lower than one percent if he were faced with Douglas. If he ever encountered Silver Moon Alterna, the chances would be below 1/10000.

"No wonder it gave me such a weird feeling. This legendary spell is truly a marvelous weapon." After the analysis, Lucien scratched his chin with mixed feelings, "But what's the mechanism? Why can part of the features of the microworld be reflected to the macroscopic domain? The interference is ruled out? Why can the interference be ruled out?"

Vaguely, Lucien seemed to have grasped something that concerned the nature of spirits and magic. Also, it was the opposite of his left

hand's ability to nullify magic and divine powers.

However, his inspiration disappeared very quickly. Lucien could only shake his head and reconsider the names that Natasha came up for the legendary spell. In the end, he decided to go with 'Evans' Hand of Uncertainties'. The name might be too long, but it didn't matter. This spell did not need to be cast by chanting but could be added to other spells when he cast them. No extra preparations were needed.

But of course, as a result, it would take one more second to cast the original spell, and the consumption would increase exponentially. Supposedly, Lucien could perform forty legendary spells in a battle, but if those legendary spells were attached with the effect of 'Hand of Uncertainties', his spiritual power would run dry after a couple of casts.

After finishing the analysis of the spell, Lucien decided to devote much of his attention in the next month to its construction. Then, he cleaned his paper and went to the Allyn magic tower, ready to submit it to his teacher.

In the past month, the members of the Highest Council were all studying the wave function of electrons. Because of the deficiencies in mathematics and the lack of the notion of spin, little progress had been made. However, Douglas, Hathaway and Brook, as experts of mathematics, already had ideas and began to modify certain mathematical tools. As for the other arcanists, besides their own studies, they were mostly devoted to the design of the magic circles about electron interference and diffraction. It was a pity that they made little progress, either.

Hathaway, Hellen and Klaus all visited Lucien in the meantime. They were curious about the studies in crystals. Lucien, on the other hand, subtly hinted that he suffered setbacks when he tried to deepen his studies due to the lack of mathematical tools and prerequisite knowledge.

After hearing that, although Hathaway and Hellen did not say anything, it was obvious that they intended to research the mathematical knowledge in that aspect.

Perhaps, they would be remembered by future generations for their enormous contribution to mathematics. Lucien was quite optimistic about them, because they were actually much more talented in mathematics than him. Hathaway was among the top three of all the specialists in mathematics in the whole Congress.

In the meantime, Lucien and Natasha's life was just like before. The pressure from the experts of the Church and Kritonia was gradually forgotten as time went by, which made Lucien's life rather comfortable. Apart from his arcana and magic studies, there was music, love, interesting trivia because of their personalities, the fun when he tortured the students such as Annick and Heidi, and the bad jokes he added during the preparation of the magic tower college, the Lanxiang and the generic schools.

...

Instead of jumping directly to his office, Lucien roamed to the Allyn magic tower with his hands in the pockets of his tuxedo for no other reason other than to watch the red banner hanging outside of the magic tower in person. In the meantime, he considered the things he should work on in March. "Other than constructing 'Hand of Uncertainties', I need to start preparing the craft of legendary items. To pick up the skill, I've wasted quite a few items in the past half year."

Although he was an authority in the field of alchemy, Lucien had always been a theorist and barely crafted any legendary items. He was better at mixing drugs than he was at crafting items. But nobody else could replace him to craft a unique legendary item. Therefore, he spent most of the arcana points he earned through new alchemy and the general theory of relativity to materials, increasing his deftness and confidence by repetitive alchemical experiments.

Over the past half year, Lucien had broken too many items and wasted too many materials. Even though he had sold the items that he successfully crafted, his arcana points had been disappearing quickly with few left right now. However, he was more or less confident to craft a legendary item now.

“It’s true that you can only increase your proficiency by devoting money to it...” Recalling the games he played in the past, Lucien thought in amusement. At this moment, he had already arrived at the Allyn magic tower and saw the cheesy red banner hanging on the gate, which was the polar opposite of the body of the tower that was dreamy and exquisite.

“Designated Fields for the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic.”

Lucien felt like smiling the moment he saw it. It was too warm and familiar!

Below the banner, a lot of sorcerers had gathered. They were reading the introductory board at the gate excitedly:

“The Holt Magic College has a capable faculty. Many of our teachers work for the Arcana Review Board part time...” The sorcerers were rather excited after they understood what it meant. “Is this a college that targets the low-rank arcanists? Wonderful! It’s such a pain to learn without a teacher. I can’t understand most of the papers on the journals at all.”

“Yes. It was better in the past, but the arcana theories today are drastically changing after every year. I can’t keep up with it no matter how hard I work.”

“The deadline for applications is the end of March. The exam period is from April 1 to April 6... Do we have to pass this ‘College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic’?”

“This is great! We are no longer scared that the sorcerers with backgrounds and connections will steal our spots. It will be abilities that matter. Let’s see what will be tested!”

“Yes, that’s right! This is the fairest way!”

Hearing their complements of delight, Lucien felt that his lips were twitching. He only hoped that they could retain the thought and did not curse him or ‘College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic’ in the future.

...

Passing the arcanists at the gate without catching anyone's attention, Lucien reached his teacher's library, only to discover that he was sorting out his paper.

"Master, you've completed your research?" Asked Lucien with a smile.

Fernando looked at him. "Yes, the exclusion principle, but I don't quite understand what the fourth quantum number represents yet. Have you accomplished something in your research, too?"

Lucien took out 'On Quantum Mechanics' and handed it over to Fernando. "It's mathematically resolved, but its actual arcana significance still needs exploring."

Taking over the paper, Fernando asked prudently, "Is it disruptive?"

"No, it is based on the features of particles and the discontinuity." Lucien thought to himself that the most disruptive thing was already hidden inside, but nobody would notice them until its significance was figured out. Also, he had already excised the part regarding the uncertainty principle.

"Particles, non-continuity?" Fernando smiled. "You confirmed the wave feature of electrons, prompting Brook, Oliver and Hathaway to consider from the perspective of waves, but you resolved the problem from the perspective of particles. How interesting."

He opened the paper but frowned at the definition and calculation rules of matrix. The strange and opaque mathematical tool was truly cold and unfriendly. After he read that the multiplication in matrix was not commutative, he suddenly raised his head and looked at the bookshelf on his opposite side. Deep in thought, he said, "The mathematical tool that is not commutative... There seems to be some of those in mathematics in the past, and they were applied to the analysis in the classic system a long time ago. Also, the idea behind your matrix can be traced back to certain things in the past a long time ago, too..."

“Yes.” Lucien did not deny it. There were certain mathematical tools in it which he planned to use to deduce the mathematical tools in Dirac’s paper. The arcanists today were more familiar with them. After all, the magic world had their own unique achievements, but there was something wrong with all of them, which was the reason why the theories about sets and groups developed rather slowly. So, he was perfecting the mathematical foundation.

Since he was unclear of Lucien’s methodology yet, Fernando did not pursue further why he constructed a new mathematical tool instead of using the older ones. He continued reading.

The rest of the paper was extremely difficult to understand. Fernando read it for a long time, calculating and confirming its correctness.

When it was already sunset, Fernando finally raised his head after naturally coming up with the quantization conditions that matched the experiment results based on the new theory. He frowned and asked in confusion, “Everything is good. I’m feeling much better myself, too, but what is the arcana significance in your matrix? What’s the meaning of its calculation? Why is there not a concrete model or image?”

Thinking for a moment, Lucien reiterated what he said in the past:

“Experience is untrustworthy, imagination is untrustworthy, and nor are the models and images we imagine; math reveals everything.”

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“Math reveals everything, but eventually it boils down to their actual significance in arcana. We need to learn what the process is and why through mathematics, and what results we can expect according to similar patterns, instead of purely discussing mathematical questions. That’s why we explore the world and seek after the truth.” Fernando confirmed Lucien’s thought but also expressed his own opinion. “For example, until your Evans Geometry became the space-time model of the general theory of relativity, nobody had ever paid much attention to it except for the arcanists of the Tower.”

Lucien had similar opinions on the matter. “Yes, mathematics is our best tool. It is a replacement for our imagination, but in any case, it’s true that we need an explanation about the new alchemy, the internal structure of atoms and the arcana significance of quantum mechanics. While we can boldly make assumptions when we try to explain them, we must confirm them very carefully. So, I can’t give any answer yet.”

Fernando nodded slightly. “Since your mathematical approach has resolved the problem successfully, they must contain the intrinsic significance that you haven’t discovered yet.”

Then, he rubbed his eyebrow and complained. “I can finally be freed from the problems in the new alchemy such as imposed quantization conditions. They have been flying next to my ears like ten thousand flies, making me want to destroy this world. I can finally calm down and focus on the distribution of electrons. There is so much more to explore behind the exclusion principle and the principle of minimum energy.

Although he did not compliment Lucien’s research explicitly, his attitude showed that he was quite happy about it.

Lucien didn’t quite agreed with his teacher, because his teacher

obviously enjoyed the arguments with other people about those questions.”

“Submit your paper now. The arcanists in the field of elements and alchemy are desperately looking forward to it.” Fernando brought it up. “As a matter of fact, you can totally use the previous mathematical tools, which would be more reader-friendly. If you weren’t my student, I would’ve torn off the first half of your paper and asked you to rewrite them.”

In fact, your student is the one who is barraged by you the most... Lucien thought to himself and smiled, “I remembered that there were similar tools in the previous arcana system after I constructed them, but since I already made them, I decided to submit them at the same time. After the wedding is done, I’ll modify them with the previous mathematical tools.”

Fernando had been quite used to Lucien’s weird habit. “Give it to your students. There’s no need for you to waste your time on such things. Right. How is the preparation for your ‘wedding’ going? That’s very important.”

Lucien nodded solemnly. “I only need to craft the legendary items now.”

“Generally speaking, even if everything is prepared, it will take at least one week to craft a legendary item. If you fail once, there won’t be enough time left for you. Remember to borrow ‘Thorny Crown’ in such a case.” Fernando reminded him. This was certainly not a time to be petty. ‘Thorny Crown’ was not as good as a unique legendary item he made himself, but it would also work.

“Even if I successfully craft one, I will still borrow it.” While Lucien could be money-mad, he knew when he should be generous. Also, Natasha’s safety was at stake.

“Alright. I need to get back to my research. Your paper reignited my passion.” Fernando praised Lucien in the end.

Master, you have always been full of passion and momentum. Every member of the Highest Council and every arcanist you have

barraged can prove that... Lucien copied the paper and left the library.

Pressing his forehead, Fernando said to himself in confusion, "The multiplication of the momentum and the location is not equal to the multiplication of the location and the momentum. What's the arcana significance in that?"

...

Forwarded by the alchemical life, Lucien's paper soon went to Raventi and Gaston.

Raventi, whose legendary advancement had been delayed because of the difficulties in the new alchemy, was considering the wave function of electrons, when he got the paper from the 'messenger'.

As one of the pragmatists who only acknowledged truth and experiment results, he had accepted Lucien's idea that electrons were a matter they did not know yet, instead of particles or waves.

Of course, he hadn't fully accepted it yet. All the experiment images in the past made him strongly resist the notion of electron waves. He felt that the new alchemy had reached a critical stage, and it could be declared wrong at any moment. His research progress was very slow.

Drawing the thickest paper, Raventi was suddenly shocked. "On Quantum Mechanics? By Lucien Evans X?"

Raventi did not associate the title with the new alchemy but thought that Lucien was studying the force field and the theory of relativity. "Quantum mechanics? A quantized theory of relativity?"

However, whatever the paper was about, Lucien's research product was always worth learning. Raventi began to read carefully. The matrixes at the beginning made him highly uncomfortable, not because they were difficult but because they were very confusing for him who had been used to other mathematical tools. He frowned.

But Raventi's eyebrow was stretched as he read on. He was deep in

thought. The matrix was not peculiar, but the idea that Lucien showed in the paper was quite amazing!

As he read, veins bulged on his hands, and his face became rather hollow, because all the brilliance was focused in his eyes.

Suddenly, he put down the paper and calculated according to the content on the paper with his quill.

The white feather shook nonstop, and time flew by. Raventi did not remember how long he had been reading; he only knew that his heart was palpitating in excitement.

Complicated equations were calculated. The moon fell and the sun rose outside of the window.

The conditions and empirical equations of quantization were naturally inferred through the calculation and matched the experiment data perfectly! Crack. Raventi's quill broke in half.

He leaned to the back of his chair, his eyes closed and his face full of excitement and satisfaction.

After a long while, when he opened his eyes again, he discovered that the sunlight of the afternoon was bright and warm, exactly the same as his mood. He picked up his quill and wrote another letter to Morris.

“...At the beginning of this month I remarked that the new alchemy had reached the the most critical moment. It was very close to success, but it was the most dark and dangerous moment. We had to make compromises to a hypothesis that lacked actual proof. Little did I expect that the darkness would fade and the splendid throne of magic and arcana would show up. Lucien is the guy who led us through the dangerous night with mathematics. Like he once said, when we explore the unknown, we can only count on mathematics, which are like lighthouses on the sea...”

The letter that contained his excitement and the copy of the paper were delivered to Morris' magic tower.

Morris was enjoying his dinner when he received the latter. He

praised the medium rare steak and opened Raventi's letter casually.

After a few quick glances, his face suddenly became rigid. Then, he blinked to his library, starting to read, calculate and consider with all of his attention.

His servants were all dumbfounded. As a thrifty person, Mr. Morris never wasted any food. What was wrong today?

It was not until the second day that Morris was liberated from the complicated confirmation. He remarked in a low voice, "After I figure out the arcana significance entailed in Lucien's theory, my cognitive world will half-solidify."

His eyes moved randomly, suddenly catching the growing grass and the spring sunlight out of the window, which made him felt exuberant vigor.

"The winter is over."

...

On April 1, Onore, a low-rank sorcerer, came to the examination field prepared by the Sorcerer Administrative Department early. Because the two invigilators were young and beautiful, he couldn't help but steal a glance at them. Then, he heard their discussion:

"Heidi, you want to apply to be a teacher at the Holt Magic College? Are you not afraid that your work in the institution will be delayed?" The lady with a black ponytail asked in confusion.

Heidi replied with a smile, "I've read the requirements. I only need to teach three classes every week. There will be enough free time. Also, our teacher is the principal. We have to support him one way or another. Layria, you're not coming?"

They were now each doing their own research. Lucien barely gave them any specific tasks now after only offering them a general direction.

"You want to promote things like 'Collection of Evans' Mathematical Quizzes', right?" Layria saw through Heidi's scheme

easily.

Heidi smiled joyfully and did not reply to the question. She changed the subject. “All in all, I will teach the foundation of the new alchemy.”

“The original model?” Layria was slightly stunned.

“Well, I will more or less mention the amendments.”

Well, the college will issue the textbooks about the new alchemy, right? Onore was utterly confused about the discussion in the recent half year.

After he finished the magic analysis test in the morning, he encountered Heidi and Layria again when he left. At this moment, they were full of ecstasy and excitement.

“Haha. Our teacher always has astounding achievements if he doesn’t publish papers for a long time. Now, most of the issues have been resolved.” Said Heidi delightedly and proudly.

Layria also said happily, “Although I don’t understand the specific arcana significance of the paper, it at least means that the path works. Heidi, I fear that your textbook of ‘elementary new alchemy’ has to change now. Can you teach it well? Or rather, have you completely understood the paper?”

“Well...” Heidi was lost for words.

Onore was dumbfounded, too. There were major theoretical changes again?

On his way home, he met a lot of excited arcanists and learnt what happened from them. Then, he wrote in his notebook with quite a lot of mixed feelings:

“...The development of arcanists is like a sweeping torrent that nobody can keep up with. Before the exam this morning, the invigilators, the inspectors and the sorcerers who took the test had been talking about the classic model of the new alchemy. Even the textbook was prepared as such. However, everything became

different when the exam was over at noon. Everybody discussed quantum mechanics, the reconstruction of the classic model in the new alchemy, and the changes in the textbook...”

“...After only one afternoon, such great changes have happened. The original textbook has to be rewritten even before it is handed to the students. This is truly an age of myths. We have to run to keep up with the demanding pace. Thankfully, there’s a magic college that teaches us everything...”

Chapter 604: Stellar Core

Inside the Land of Truth...

Douglas deduced with Lucien's paper in his hands and compared the results with known experiment data. In the end, he put down the paper and pulled his bow-tie, before he asked in confusion, "What do those equations indicate?"

He had read the paper too many times throughout the previous days. He quite appreciated Lucien's ideas that were based on the particle nature and the discontinuity, and he was delighted that the many problems in the new alchemy were resolved. However, as time went by, his delight did not grow into satisfaction and happiness. He was not even as excited as he expected.

That was because for sorcerers, fixing one problem often meant a deeper understanding about a certain arcana field, and more specific models or patterns had been found. Lucien's quantum mechanics, on the other hand, was not so. It was true that results that agreed with actual circumstances could be achieved, and the problems and the quantum numbers recently could be included. However, there was nothing beyond that. It could neither describe the internal structure of atoms accurately nor offer the patterns within. Everybody could only be at a loss after reading it. They knew the results, but they did not know where the results came from.

The matrix was like a gate that guarded the truth of the world. It was mysterious and cold and blocked everybody outside. Although the arcanists in the field of elements and alchemy were overjoyed, nobody else was as excited as they should've been after the many problems in the new alchemy were resolved.

"The matrix is not difficult by itself. There are similar mathematical tools in the past, but the calculation can be quite a headache when it is melted into the complicated system of the new alchemy." Douglas shook his head in amusement. "Everybody has been locked into the maze of matrix by Lucien. He cannot explain the arcana

significance behind it even though he modifies it with the existing mathematical tools.”

“However, in any case, we cannot deny the importance of Lucien’s quantum mechanics. We just need time to figure out what is hidden below.”

Instead of continuing the studies on quantum mechanics, he resumed his effort to get a precise solution to Evans equations of gravitational field. He believed that the solution must contain the mysteries of the sky and the celestial bodies.

Even the grand arcanists of his level needed to be focused on arcana. He probably would spare some of their time to study the new alchemy or the electromagnetic field, but he was still mostly dedicated to the force field and astrology, especially after the general theory of relativity gave him the hope of becoming a demigod.

Same as Douglas, most of the arcanists recognized the complexity and ‘unfriendliness’ of the new system after the initial excitement. It was like the most celibate lady that coldly rejected all the men who approached her, not letting them know what she thought.

More and more arcanists began to have a headache when they tried to imagine the internal model of atoms and give actual significance to Lucien’s quantum mechanics.

However, they would one day regret their attempt to search for the actual significance. They would wish that Lucien had never come up with such a thing, because the truth of the world was also a ‘destructive beast’!

In that regard, only several people were different.

After reading the paper, Hathaway calculated for she didn’t know how long in the clean, tidy library. The red tea and cookies before her did not change at all. Then, she was deep in thought, her eyebrows furrowed, as she looked for the arcana significance of the system and why the two values did not comply with the commutative property .

After she failed to find anything for now, she immediately gave up random thinking and decided to resolve the problem of two-electron atoms based on the new system, partly to confirm the correctness of the new system and partly to find the arcana significance from real practice.

Fernando accepted Lucien's idea and abandoned the attempt to look for a model for the internal structure of atoms. He focused on the exploration of the arcana significance and combined it with his study on the distribution of electrons.

Vicente and Hellen, on the other hand, began their study by exploring the arcana significance of Lucien's quantum mechanics and the feature that electrons behave as waves.

Inside the Kingdom of Electromagnetism...

After confirming Lucien's paper, Brook nodded in approval first and then devoted himself to his work, trying to give electrons a wave function. If the problems in new alchemy could be resolved from the perspective of particles, why couldn't they be resolved from the perspective of waves?

"Did I miss something? Brook asked himself in confusion. The initial wave function was full of problems.

The more he inferred the wave function, the more he felt that Lucien was right that mathematics should be studied first.

In the Theater of Destruction, Oliver was caught in a similar situation.

.....

Because he had to wait for Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway and Raventi to give the proof on the matrix, Lucien's quantum mechanics was in fact published one month late. As a result, the experiment on electron diffraction to be published in April was postponed to May. Otherwise, the arcanists who could not understand the complicated calculations wouldn't be able to tell the value of quantum mechanics at all.

The issue of March prompted the sorcerers to contemplate on the unknown. Amazed by Lucien's amazing creation, they barely had any difficulty in accepting the idea. In the meantime, Fernando's exclusion principle made the sorcerers who were adept at elements and alchemy overjoyed. Lucien, on the other hand, was making preparations to craft a legendary item. He had also constructed 'Evans' Hand of Uncertainties' into his soul.

On April 1, when the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic started, Lucien arrived at the Nekso Palace and was led to the treasury of the royal family by Nekso Palace.

"I almost let Alferris know that I was coming to the treasury." Lucien said to Natasha in amusement. The guy had 'borrowed' his silver moon medal 'Superconductivity' for 'appreciation'.

Natasha had seen Alferris once and learnt of its greediness herself. "Hehe. He definitely wouldn't leave the treasury again! When it saw the Holm Crown Ring on my hand, it asked me whether or not only ladies could receive such a beautiful and precious ring and men like you could only get broken 'iron ring'. I suspect that it would've been married to the wealthy dragons for their wealth if it weren't a male dragon."

After teasing the little crystal dragon, Natasha smiled, "Which legendary material do you need?"

Natasha had told Lucien what was inside the treasury and asked him to talk to other legendary experts. Regarding that, Grand Duke of Orvarit could only shake his head with a smile. Such secrets were usually kept confidential by the king or the queen, who would not even tell their spouse.

Looking at Natasha who was wearing a white long dress, Lucien nodded his head. "The Dragon Marrow Stone. Mr. Oliver wants it in preparation for his life extension ritual in the future. He has a stellar core that is perfect to accommodate the special abilities of 'Observer of Time and Space'."

The Dragon Marrow Stone was from the graveyard of dragons. The essence of their decayed bodies were congregated into brown,

translucent crystals. Together with the scent of death in the graveyard, the stone was given the features of both life and death. It was one of the most precious materials in the school of necromancy.

If the Dragon Marrow Stone came from a primordial dragon, it would be a legendary material and could prolong one's life by around a thousand years. Of course, those below legendary couldn't bear it and would die on the spot.

The Stellar Core was the 'belonging' of certain collapsed planets. They seemed to be of zero mass, but they could unleash powerful gravity under special circumstances. In the entire Congress of Magic, only Oliver had one of them. Douglas had gotten one, but he had already used it for his unique legendary item.

"Alright." Natasha opened the treasury and led Lucien to the Dragon Marrow Stone without any hesitation. Although it was an extremely precious material that could extend life, she did not stop at all.

Playing with the half transparent crystal in his hand, Lucien said jokingly, "Are you not afraid that you can't find a material to extend your longevity?"

Lucien intended to be gentle, but his words somehow became banter when he spoke them out. But of course, Lucien had already grabbed Natasha's right hand to let her know what he felt.

Natasha declared like a knight, "I believe that I will definitely advance into legendary!"

Then, she added in a low voice, "I will definitely be a legend that is better than you!"

The determination in her last sentence somehow carried the air of grief.

Lucien immediately smiled.

.....

On April 8, two days before the wedding...

Inside the Atomic Universe, on the weird planet made of iron, Lucien was crafting his unique legendary inside the magic laboratory that was moved over.

The glittering Stellar Core was placed at the center of the magic circle. It was a clear polyhedron the size of a fist, reflecting dreamy rays on every facet.

At this moment, the Stellar Core had been melted into weird liquids. Magic materials were embedded into it from Lucien's pushing, making it writhe hard as if it were giving birth to something.

Lucien understood that the most critical moment had come. Therefore, he closed his right hand and illuminated the magic circles at the periphery according to the advancement ritual of 'Observer of Time and Space' with his spiritual power.

Everything was enshrouded in vague light. Ripples that emitted the air of time seemed to be spreading out.

Then, the light seemed to be attracted by something and collapsed by the Stellar Core all of a sudden. There was nothing but darkness and depression around.

The complicated structure and the indescribable stripes were fed back to Lucien's brain, which caught him rather unprepared since it was the first time he had crafted any legendary item. Thankfully, he had the complete model of 'Observer of Time and Space' inside his cognitive world, and he could still do something.

With a mechanized mind, Lucien calmly powered the model of his legendary class with his spiritual power, allowing it to influence the process of melting.

After the difficult star was passed, Lucien got the hang of it. The spells, the gesture and the connection of spiritual power were completed one procedure after another. In the end, a cluster of silver brilliance burst out from the center of the magic circle,

driving away the collapsed darkness!

After the light calmed down again, a 'silver pocket watch' appeared inside the broken magic circle. It was the perfect size to be grabbed by ones hand!

Chapter 605: Wedding Gift

Just like what Lucien had in mind, the silver pocket watch was in the most rigorous and mechanical style. At the center was the white dial, where mysterious symbols made of different gems represented different times. The black second hand ticked, making the sound that was echoing in everybody's hearts. Other than that, there was also one thing special about the pocket watch, which was that there was a button on each side of the dial where it was connected to the band. The buttons were emitting metal brilliance.

It also had the cover and the decorations that other pocket watches had.

After he waved his hands, the silver pocket watch flew into Lucien's hands, and the silver chain was clipped to the buttonhole on his waistcoat automatically.

Lucien pressed and closed the cover of the pocket watch. The tick immediately stopped. He raised his thumb and opened the cover again, immediately sensing that he had been surrounded by something mysterious.

Holding the pocket watch with his right hand, Lucien noticed that the black second hand was bouncing merrily inside. He pressed the right side of the button.

After a click, the second hand immediately stopped. The colors around quickly faded away, leaving nothing but monochrome, as if everything had been slowed down except for himself. Nothing could move normally.

It was the legendary spell, 'Advanced Time Stop'!

Crack. Lucien pressed again, and all the vivid colors returned. The world became normal as the second hand moved on.

As Lucien's thumb slid up and down the edge of the pocket watch, the second hand moved faster and then slower, and the speed of the items around followed accordingly.

“This truly fits the characteristics of ‘Observer of Time and Space’.” Lucien then tried the button on the left side. Immediately, he saw the features of ‘black’ on the steady planet made of iron. Space was curved, and the gravity within several thousand meters was extremely chaotic. Other than the spells that directly worked on the body, everything else’s track had been twisted.

‘Gravity Collapse’ could not only deal direct damage to the target but also could be used as a crowd-control spell.

After testing his unique legendary item, Lucien was very satisfied with it. Then, according to the tradition of this world, he engraved the information of the pocket watch into its pivotal magic circle and named it.

“The Moon Timer is a level-one legendary item. Other than the sorcerers who have a deep understanding about time and space, its users must have a half-solidified cognitive world. Even the sorcerers who understand time and space very well must at least have a substantiated cognitive world. Otherwise, their body and their soul would be washed away by time, and they would age and die soon.”

“The Moon Timer is a landmark of ‘Observer of Time and Space’. Whoever wears it will be immune to the extraordinary abilities related to time and space below legendary. Similarly the spells they cast themselves would not be affected. Instead, such spells will be enhanced and more accurate. The users will also gain a certain amount of resistance against the time control above legendary.”

“It is also the lord of time. The aging of its master would be slowed, granting another 520 years of longevity.”

“The buttons on the left and the right side can replace spells. By pressing them, it is possible to perform ‘Gravity Collapse’ (twice every day) and ‘Advanced Time Stop’ (twice every day).”

“Touching the body of the pocket watch will grant the effect that is partly equal to the abilities of ‘Space Staff’ in accelerating and decelerating the time in a certain range. The number of maximal times of such an ability depends solely on the spiritual power of the user.”

“Twelve ninth-circle spells could be stored inside its dial in advance. They can be activated instantly without consuming any spiritual power.”

“Mysterious of time and space are among the deepest truths of this world. Only wisdom can see through them!”

“From: Lucien Evans.”

After a click, Lucien curled his finger and closed the cover of ‘Moon Timer’. Then, he put it inside the pocket of the brown waistcoat inside his double-breasted suit. The narrow, silver chain extended from it and connected with the buttonhole.

“Thankfully, I had the assistance of the model of my legendary class, or my first craft would’ve failed.” Lucien concluded the lessons just now and understood why the legendary sorcerers’ first legendary item often overlapped their own abilities.

After clearing the residue on the ground, Lucien heaved a sigh in relief.

“Hu. Everything is ready. All we need is to wait for the ‘guest’ to arrive now.”

...

Inside a manor at the suburb of Rentato...

A young man, in clean clothes and a top hat, got off the wagon with his companion who had a mustache. Led by the servant, they entered the living room.

There was no fire in the furnace, because it was no longer needed in the flourishing season of spring. The blue-haired and blue-eyed young man, who looked just like any other native of Holm, opened the magic refrigerator on the wall with a smile and took out a bottle of champagne that had the mark of the royal family of Tria, pouring two cups of wine.

“I have to say that the simplification and popularization of alchemical items that Lucien Evans promoted has indeed made

things easier and more convenient. One can enjoy a luxurious and casual life even without magic.” Handsome and warm, he shook the champagne and relished the coolness.

The mustached guy, who was gloomy and solemn, said after a sip of the champagne. “The cabinet is already making plans to work with sorcerers to develop alchemical wagons for short-distance public transportation, which will be complementary with the magic steam train. It will be much simpler to go to most places in the future. The cabinet. Hehe. Prime Minister Russell.”

Many years ago, the sorcerers already had products similar to cement during their alchemy studies. That was why the streets of Allyn were so flat. The roads in major cities in Holm had been gradually replaced with cement ones, too.

“James and his lot are mainly pursuing the advancement on the path of knighthood. They are only interested in returns and do not want to work as a busy Prime Minister... I’m told that Russell is planning to establish a certain mail system based on such a public transportation system, transforming messengers into a department of the kingdom... I can imagine how prosperous and civilized Holm will be. Kritonia, had you foreseen such changes, would you have been inclined to the Congress of Magic in the beginning?” The handsome young man tore Kritonia’s scars unconcernedly.

The mustached young man turned out to be Kritonia, ‘Heart of Time’! He seemed to be under perfect disguise!

Kritonia was not infuriated. He looked at the black-haired young man and said, “It’s pointless to regret what you have done. Banham, I didn’t know that you had a private manor in this place.”

“As a night watcher, I have my own life, too.” Banham, ‘Original Fire’, chuckled.

The name was made up by him so that it would be easier for Kritonia to call him.

After the remarks, the room fell into silence. It was not until a long time later that Kritonia said, “Are we really going to take action

during Lucien Evans' wedding? Even when they are the most heavily guarded, there will still be Hathaway who is at the peak of legendary. Neither of us can stop Hathaway. Why don't we wait a while longer?"

"The most heavily guarded moment is also the moment when people are most likely to be careless. In other words, we don't have to worry about any other legendary sorcerers except Hathaway. Also, I have finished my 'preparations'." Banham looked rather at ease. "In fact, I almost took action when Lucien intentionally lured us to attack him the last couple of times, but I had to wait before my preparations were accomplished. After they were finally done two months ago, he simply stopped coming out."

"Preparations?" Kritonia frowned. He had been contacting Banham remotely and did not meet the guy in person until a couple of days ago.

The Original Fire chuckled. "I'll tell you the details before our operation. Hehe. They will be wary of you, me and the other legendary experts of the Church, but they don't know that somebody else is coming..."

"Who is it?" Asked Kritonia solemnly. He had to ensure his own safety first. Unexpected forces or experts were always worrisome.

"Why do you think I joined the Church?" Instead of giving an answer, the Original Fire asked back.

Kritonia snorted. "Are you going to tell me?"

"No, so you can stop asking." The Original Fire shook the cup in his hands. "Rest assured. They will definitely be separated from the legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic briefly. We will have enough time to take action and retreat."

Kritonia nodded. "Have you eliminated the insidious dangers with prophecy?"

"Lucien and Natasha have been looked after by Fernando and Hathaway. My astrology only tells me that they do not pose a threat

to us. As for the rest, we can only make conclusions based on intelligence and other traces. His Holiness has also asked with prayer. The result is more or less the same. There's no need to worry. We will be able to escape even if there are accidents." The Original Fire was rather confident, although he was only level-one legendary and the best legendary items he had were only level two.

Kritonia looked at Banham in confusion, wondering why he was so confident in his 'preparations'. He secretly made up his mind that if the 'preparations' were not satisfactory enough for him, he would immediately withdraw. So, he was more or less relaxed and said, "It still can be dangerous. Although neither of them is legendary, they have the Congus Ring, the legendary items awarded by the Congress of Magic, the Shield of Truth, and the Sword of Truth. Those can also pose a threat to us. We cannot be careless."

When Grand Duke of Orvarit left Aalto, he took away the Shield of Truth 'by the way'. Although he could not lift it, it was possible for him to put it into a storage bag.

"Yes. Lucien and Natasha always create miracles. They escaped from the pursuit of the Demigod-lich when they were only in the senior rank. We cannot be careless." Banham nodded in approval, his smile gone. "We cannot waste time talking to them, we cannot hesitate, we cannot think about capturing them alive, and we must give a fatal blow to them as soon as possible. Alright, Kritonia, go to take a rest now. I'm going to study arcana."

"You? You study arcana?" Kritonia was more or less stunned.

The Original Fire shook his head with a smile. "My cognitive world was broken and solidified back in the age of the ancient Magic Empire. That's why my strength never grew over the past thousand years. I thought decades ago that the situation couldn't be any worse even if I tried learning arcana, and that I could possibly find a way to reshape my cognitive world. Look, even His Holiness can learn arcana to modify his divine powers. Why can't I?"

Then, Kritonia finally understood why the Original Fire's strength hadn't grown for almost a thousand years. He should've already advanced into level two after such a long time, considering that the

Demigod-lich was also a sorcerer with ancient heritage but it only took him three hundred years to become legendary.

The Original Fire looked out of the window, smiling: "I hope that our 'wedding gift' will satisfy them."

Chapter 606: Wedding

On April 10, the sky was blue and everything was basked in the warm sunlight under the gentle breeze, which made them feel slightly lazy.

The square outside of the Nekso Palace had been surrounded by the Sword of Truth's Knights, who were covered in full silver armor. They blocked the citizens that had swarmed over.

"They're here! They're here!" There was no telling who shouted first, but the crowd suddenly fell quiet and focused their eyes on the central avenue that was defended by the Verdict Knights.

Many black wagons that had been painted with the emblem of fire of arcana, pulled by the selected silver Dragon Scale horses, moved onto the outer square of the Nekso Palace.

Tall gentlemen and ladies got off the wagons, wearing the most popular clothes of Holm. Had it not been for the arcana and magic badges on their chest, they would've convinced anybody that they were mystery sorcerers, but they only left the impression that they were the upper society who led the trend of fashion.

"They're gorgeous. The sorceresses are not nearly as pale and slim as the Church described. They are just like any other lady." A young man was dazzled.

Although there were plenty of sorcerers and apprentices in Rentato, they never revealed their identity in public, so most of the citizens did not know what sorcerers actually looked like at all. Their stereotype that was imbued by the Church had gradually been twisted by Arcana Voice.

A girl nearby, as her eyes widened, also said. "That's right. I always thought that sorcerers were supposed to be pale, dry, stinky, and liked dissecting bodies at night... Now I realize I was wrong."

The intelligence workers of the Congress of Magic chuckled in the crowd. Their reaction was exactly what the Highest Council wanted

to achieve. Evans' wedding had been considered a great occasion to display the new image of sorcerers. That was why the most attractive arcanists had been selected as Evans' guards, and most of the necromancers of the Hand of Paleness had been asked to stay in Heidler city. It was expected that all the ordinary people learn that sorcerers represented civilization.

"But I'm told that the sorceresses in the past are particularly good at alluring people..." Some other men said regretfully.

In the meantime, some girls were feeling pitiful, too. "Don't you think it's very cool that a pale, handsome gentleman dissects a corpse attentively? Like Mr. Felipe..."

Regarding that, the intelligence could only shake their heads. It was true that everybody had a different taste. After they were adapted to the sorcerers' new image, the mysteriousness of sorcerers had to be invoked again.

After the sorcerers all stood on the two sides of the red carpet, the crowd realized that they hadn't seen Lucien Evans, the star of the show today.

When they were confused, roars echoed in the sky, so terrifyingly that everybody shivered in front of the top creature.

Then, the blue sky became dark because a pair of gigantic wings appeared and a translucent shadow fell and landed at the center of the square.

"A dragon!" Somebody shouted.

Living in the capital of the kingdom that was heavily guarded they only knew dragons from tales and news programs.

The dragon held its hideous head high proudly, reflecting the sunlight with its crystal-like scales. Everybody somehow felt that it was beautiful, too!

After the brief shock, somebody pointed at the back of the dragon. "Is there somebody over there?"

“Oh, has Mr. Evans arrived on a dragon? So cool!”

While they uttered their admiration, a kind girl said in a low voice, “Dragons are intelligent creatures. Will they feel humiliated if they are mounted?”

Alferis looked at her and decided that such humiliation should come as often as possible. It drooled when it thought of the glittering gold that it ‘borrowed’, considering whether it should start the business of ‘dragon knight’ in the spare time.

On the back of the crystal dragon, a young man in a black tailcoat flew down and stopped at the front of the red carpet. His face was handsome, and his eyes were deep and dark like a lake that attracted the soul.

“As expected of a great musician!”

“He’s exactly like what the tales described!”

...

The gentlemen and ladies complimented in satisfaction. It was more splendid than they imagined.

Unhurriedly, Lucien walked into the Nekso Palace on the carpet.

The Original Fire, who was hiding in the crowd, nodded at Kritonia. “Hathaway, Winston, and a few other legends are here. We will wait for the opportunity when they are only protected by Hathaway.”

After that, he exited the crowd and vanished.

Kritonia was grim. He had known the Original Fire’s preparations and knew that the odds of success were high, but how did the guy get the connections? Through himself or the Church?

Taking a deep breath, he suppressed his doubts and stared at the Nekso Palace, because there was no turning back now.

...

After passing through the palaces, Lucien reached the queen's bedroom. He was amazed by Natasha who was in a white wedding dress.

She had often worn white dresses or knight suits before, but those clothes were too simple. The hazy laces, the fluffy hemline and the pure gloves made her look like a purple-haired angel that was glowing.

"Am I beautiful?" Natasha chuckled. When she spoke, the sacred feeling was gone, and she was still the resolute knight.

Seeing that Grand Duke of Orvarit, Granny Hathaway and Aunt Camil were eyeing him, Lucien found it impossible to be as casual as usual. He blushed and said, "You are beautiful."

Natasha raised her eyebrow in satisfaction and looked at Grand Duke of Orvarit giving mixed feelings. "Father, you will finally see me married."

Greatly relieved, Grand Duke of Orvarit patted Natasha's hands. "I've finally seen you in a wedding dress. You are as gorgeous as your mother. From today on, you will have your own family. Great, very great."

"I will always be your daughter." Natasha blinked and said in a smile.

Grand Duke of Orvarit turned to Lucien. "You are a warrior who removed my worries. I hope that you will always love and look after her in the future."

Since Natasha was the queen, there was a ritual similar to a wedding inside the Nekso Palace, except that the role of the priest had been replaced by Grand Duke of Orvarit. It would've been too hilarious if the Highest Council let the clerics of the Saint Truth host the wedding.

"I will, in the name of arcana and magic." Lucien said sincerely.

Grand Duke of Orvarit spoke to Natasha again. "You will become his wife. I hope you will always understand and accompany him."

“I will, in the name of the Lord and knighthood.” Natasha nodded heavily, declaring as a knight.

Grand Duke of Orvarit smiled and put Natasha’s left hand in Lucien’s hands. “In the name of her father, I bring her to you. Bless your new family.”

Holding Natasha’s hand, Lucien paid respect to her father, Granny Hathaway and Aunt Camil, and then went out of the Nekso Palace with her.

Passing through the palaces and the garden, they reached the gate of the Nekso Palace.

The man was handsome and steady, and the lady was sacred and glorious. The beautiful couple stunned the two groups of knights and the crowd, who fell quiet to appreciate the view.

Lucien and Natasha raised their crossed hands together!

Exclamations immediately rose:

“Long live the queen!”

“Long live His Excellency Evans!”

The area around the Nekso Palace was immediately roiling with cheers.

...

In the next instant, for safety reasons, Lucien and Natasha went to a platform for the magic steam train instead of riding on the crystal dragon again under the protection of Hathaway. Winston and the rest of them stayed in the company of Grand Duke of Orvarit and other nobles for their security.

Wu! ‘Klaus’ moved. In the most heavily guarded carriage, Lucien, Natasha, Hathaway, Grand Duke of Orvarit and Camil were left alone. Winston and other nobles were in other carriages.

“Very powerful defense circles have been deployed here.” Natasha

was very excited; both for the wedding and for the upcoming battle.

Hathaway preferred to stay quiet whenever possible. She looked at Lucien.

Lucien smiled. "It's only equal to the ninth circle and not nearly as good as the defense of the City in the Sky."

"Is that so?" Natasha looked around and asked curiously when she had questions.

Rentato was not far away from Allyn. The magic steam train finished half of the journey very soon.

Natasha looked at Lucien in confusion. They were already close to Allyn. Had the enemy given up?

After they reached Allyn, Lucien couldn't be killed even if the pope arrived in person.

Lucien was about to respond when a crack appeared inside the carriage. The frozen black, white and grey spread out, blasting Hathaway, Grand Duke of Orvarit, Camil, Lucien and Natasha!

A crack of the World of Souls?

The deadly colors raged like a surging river, expanding the crack quickly, which consumed Lucien and Natasha without giving them any time to react.

Hathaway transferred Grand Duke of Orvarit and Camil to a different carriage without any hesitation. Because she had no time to dodge, and the attack did not contain any damage, she was consumed by the crack, too.

After only one moment, the carriage became empty, and the monochrome crack quickly disappeared.

Inside the World of Souls, a complicated magic circle had been deployed next to the rail. On top of the magic circle were three terrifying experts.

One of them was a tall mummy that was enshrouded in yellowish cloth with a gold crown on the head, and one was a skeleton in a magic robe, whose head was surrounded by spinning stones.

Lucien recognized them the moment he saw them:

“The Primordial Mummy! The Lich King!”

“Is the World of Souls taking part in this, too?”

The third of them was a brilliantly smiling young man. It was exactly the Original Fire!

Looking at Lucien, Natasha, and Hathaway, he sneered, “Have you forgotten that the World of Souls overlaps the main material world? We can bridge them with magic easily!”

Natasha felt that everything around her was slowed down. No. She felt that the Primordial Mummy, the Lich King, and the Original Fire were so fast that she couldn’t capture them at all. In the meantime, a glittering river fell from the sky and slashed at her.

It was Kritonia, Heart of Time!

Seeing that the Primordial Mummy and the Lich King stopped Hathaway, the Original Fire cast spells on Lucien who had been slowed.

Right then, his eyes slightly constricted as he saw that Lucien, who was wearing a black tailcoat and a bow-tie of the same color, had brought out a silver pocket watch at some point. The black second hand was ticking, and the gems in different colors were glittering. The tiny chain of the watch emitted vague, silver brilliance.

It was still colorful? A legendary expert? A legendary item?

In the World of Souls, only legends could retain their original colors! Also, he had never heard of such a legendary item before.

When did Lucien advance into legendary?

Greatly shocked, Banham, ‘Original Fire’, cast the spell:

“Fire of Soul!”

Inside his pupils, Lucien smiled like the most courteous gentleman, before his right thumb pressed the silver pocket watch in his hand.

Crack!

Chapter 607: A Swarm of Spells

Crack!

As the crisp sound echoed, the blackness around quickly faded away. The colors on every legend vanished, leaving the lackluster greyness. The pure Fire of Soul was frozen, and the Original Fire endured the posture of performing magic.

As for the rest of them, Kritonia was slashing much more slowly, but he was still moving, and Hathaway was struggling to approach Natasha, with blue and grey colors lingering on his body.

The experts who were immune to Time Stop were very rare, and still fewer were those who could resist Advanced Time Stop!

That was why Time Stop had always been the most difficult ninth-circle to learn. Those who grasped 'Advanced Time Stop' had to be legends in time and space. In the entire Congress of Magic, Brook was the only one who could perform it until Douglas understood the relationship between gravity and space-time. Oliver had a good chance to pick it up later, too.

Looking at the Original Fire who was covered in greyness, Lucien suddenly summoned his spiritual power.

The enemy would be in a different time and space when they were under 'Time Stop', and he couldn't directly affect them, but the duration was enough for him to cast multiple spells. When the Time Stop was over, the Original Fire would embrace a storm!

In case that the Original Fire was immune to the spells below the ninth circle, Luxury Cracking did not choose them but simply performed 'Cracking (Advanced)', time and time again!

After five times of 'Cracking (Advanced)', the frozen black second hand of the Moon Timer began to tick. However, it was not moving regularly but jumping forward, pointing at the mysterious symbols made of gems.

As a result, Lucien activated eight ninth-circle spells that had been stored inside before much faster than usual. There were Cracking (Advanced) as well as spells among them!

In the end, as a precaution that the Original Fire might have equipment that provided immunity to some of the ninth-circle spells, Lucien chanted:

“Space Staff!”

Unpredictable light rippled and gathered in Lucien’s hands, like the scepter of a king. After he nodded, the space around the Original Fire was frozen. He waited for the effect of ‘Time Stop’ to be over.

He had hardly performed the legendary spell when the fading blackness came back. The eternal black, white and grey covered the World of Souls again.

The colors on the Original Fire were refreshed. The red, green, white and purple flames bouncing on his magic robe were particularly eye-catching.

He didn’t expect that Lucien had already advanced into legendary and would boast a pocket watch that could cast ‘Advanced Time Stop’. His eyes constricting, he was braced for a salvo of spells.

“Three legendary spells are not enough to kill you!”

“The spells below the ninth circle cannot affect me!”

“I am immune to Confinement, too!”

His mind sparkled. The Original Fire was hit by a tide of spells before he had the chance to cast any spell. He could only resist them with the spells that he enhanced himself with in advance. As the final security measure, he still had three life-preserving, innate spells!

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Light glowed on the Original Fire like fireworks, only to be torn into shreds by the swarm of ‘Cracking (Advanced)’.

“He has indeed advanced into legendary!”

If it weren't cast by a legendary sorcerer, most magic effects on his body couldn't be destroyed at all!

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The level-eight and level-nine items broke apart into grey powder under ‘Cracking (Advanced)’.

“Why is he casting so many times of ‘Cracking (Advanced)’?”

Although the spells came at the same time, the Original Fire had thought of a lot of things. He suddenly had a bad feeling, but after Time Stop, the spells that Lucien cast earlier overwhelmed him. He couldn't perform any magic at all!

The magic effects were nullified, and the alchemical items were broken. Suddenly, the Original Fire discovered that the space around him was twisting into a maze, but his last alchemical item blinked and offset the space-time change.

“A Maze attached with magic deferment?”

“He has been trying to trap me in a maze so that he can wait for reinforcements to come?”

“Is his Maze a ninth-circle special skill?”

Hardly had he thought of that when the space around him was twisted again. Lucien had prepared more than one Maze with magic delay!

This time, the Original Fire, having lost all his magic effects and alchemical items, couldn't resist it anymore, and found himself in a spacious temple.

The Original Fire snorted angrily. Maze and Confinement were always most troublesome in a battle. By the time he got out of the maze, it was possible that a bunch of legendary sorcerers would be waiting for him outside.

Creating a time gap was the best effect of such spells!

“I’ve seen too many special mazes. Even the mazes that His Excellency Thanos created himself didn’t take me more than twenty seconds. Let’s see what you’ve got!”

The legendary staff in his hands, that was as red as fire, glimmered as he blasted the framework of the maze trying to set himself free as soon as possible so that he could help Kritonia purge Lucien!

It was a shame that Lucien was already a legendary sorcerer. While the special maze was only a ninth-circle spell, it was as steady as a legendary spell. He couldn’t break through it for the time being.

At this moment, he had captured the whole look of the maze. It was an empty palace, and the exit was the gate. There were no disguises or a second way out.

“Is it a puzzle?” The Original Fire tried to break the structure while he walked to the gate, only to discover that a few lines of words were written on the water screen on the gate.

“Welcome to Evans’ Maze of Quizzes. You can walk out of this place as long as you answer five quizzes correctly. Before you answer any of them, note that you have three ways of asking for help. Firstly, you can ask for another quiz. Secondly, you can consult the mysterious existence with magic. Thirdly, you can ask the audience... Well, sorry, there is no audience here...”

The Original Fire’s veins bulged. It was a humiliation. Was Lucien Evans so confident of his maze?

Having no time to read the long introduction, he began to solve the puzzles.

“The first question. A barber in a town once said that ‘I shave those and only those who do not shave themselves’. So should he shave himself?”

The Original Fire was immediately stunned. He thought quickly but couldn’t find an appropriate answer. His brain almost exploded because of the logical contradiction.

“Change the question.” He said gloomily, while he tried hard to break the maze.

“The second question. Please prove that every even number that is greater than 2 can be written as the summation of two prime numbers.”

...

Not having the slightest clue, the Original Fire hurried to consult the mysterious existences with prophecy, only to be answered with nothing. It made him curse in a low voice. “Change the question!”

“I’m sorry, but you can only change the question once.”

“...” The Original Fire burst into fury. His eyes bloodshot, he destroyed the maze with magic and spared some of his attention to the question.

As time went by, a miserable and angry roar suddenly exploded inside the maze:

“Ass*ole!”

His voice seemed to be containing certain doubts about his intellectual faculties.

...

On the rail between Rentato and Allyn, the magic steam train pressed forward as if nothing had happened. Grand Duke of Orvarit and Camil, who were transferred by Hathaway earlier, did not understand what had happened. They could only contact the Lord of Storm as per Lucien’s instruction before the wedding.

After the line was connected, before Grand Duke of Orvarit said anything, the other side of the line spoke fast. “I got it.”

On the thirty-third floor of the Allyn, Fernando, in his red magic robe, chanted the spell, with a storm surfacing in his eyes:

“Regather!”

Sensing the waves of the magic, Douglas also chanted on the thirty-fourth floor:

“Regather!”

‘Regather’, aside from being triggered passively, could also be cast voluntarily to regather around the target that was set earlier!

However, if the distance was too far, it might not be as fast as a direct space jump. It was only suitable for the scenario where the target’s coordinates were unclear!

Fernando and Douglas were surrounded by swirls of air currents before they vanished.

...

After ‘Advanced Time Stop’ was over, Hathaway recovered first, but the Primordial Mummy and the Lich King weren’t any slower.

One of them was a melee undead creature that was immune to plenty of spells, and the other was a spectral sorcerer that had a myriad of weird spells. They were the dominators of the area outside of the Temple of Spirits.

The Lich King’s spells, in particular, were different from the current arcana system but close to what the ancient sorcerers were capable of. It was a pity that he was faced with a grand arcanist who had profound magic knowledge. She had cracked all his spells easily.

Therefore, Hathaway had suppressed both of them, though she had only become top legendary two years ago.

Also, Hathaway did not seem interested in assisting Natasha, or maybe it was because she was too busy suppressing the two legendary specters. She stopped approaching Natasha.

Kritonia’s longsword slashed Natasha after Time Stop, but it merely passed through her as if she were a shadow.

Countless cracks appeared on Natasha, before she broke apart like a mirror. She then appeared far away, with an additional small and

delicate shield in her hands. There was also a weirdly-shaped crown that seemed to be made of starlight above her veil.

“A real illusion!”

It triggered the effect of the Thorny Crown!

Lucien felt that it was somewhat similar to the gravitational lens. The moment Natasha was consumed by the crack, she immediately activated the Thorny Crown according to the plan.

She was only a gold knight and could take two legendary items at most, so she did not bring out the Sword of Truth.

After the first attack failed, Kritonia noticed that the Original Fire had been trapped by Lucien’s Maze and that Lucien had advanced into legendary. Greatly shocked, the very first idea he had was to flee immediately!

But his battle experience calmed him down. Although the Original Fire was trapped and Lucien had become legendary, the experts of the World of Souls had stalled Hathaway, too. Under such circumstances, should he, a level-three legendary knight, be scared of a newly-advanced legend and a gold knight, even though they both had powerful items?

“I’ll leave if I cannot finish Lucien and Natasha in thirty seconds!”

He set a time limit for himself in case he was surrounded by reinforcements and Hathaway after she got rid of her enemies. Also, he was very confident about his power of time and believed that it could disrupt most of the life-preserving spells.

“Space Staff!” Lucien’s low voice echoed again, as he took action to help Natasha.

The space around Kritonia was immediately frozen as if it were about to cage him inside.

You are dealing with me with the power of time of such a level? In a mocking smile, Kritonia, wearing a black tuxedo, seemed to be wandering in a different time and space and directly walked out of

the frozen space, before he slashed at Lucien with his glistening
longsword!

Chapter 608: Bloody Rose

Wearing the black tuxedo, Kritonia seemed to be a traveler of time that was roaming in different worlds. He ambled through Lucien's frozen space as if the space barrier of such a level was nothing at all for him.

Holding the glistening longsword, he passed the long-distance forged by the monotonous black, white and grey after only one step and blinked at the edge of Lucien's spiritual field, giving the feeling that time was fleeting unstoppably under the silence.

A pure slash was also affecting the mind. That was the strength of a legendary knight!

After he slashed, Lucien felt that everything around him had been slowed down, like slow motion in the movies, except for the sword that was washing and burying the world like a lightning.

Over time, even a planet would walk to the end of its life one day!

Kritonia was very satisfied with the attack. It had been a long time since he launched such a gratifying attack. However, the deterrence of Hathaway, the unexpected advancement of Lucien, and the upcoming reinforcement gave him such enormous pressure that he forgot his body conditions, his family and his remaining longevity. He burnt his life and soul again and resumed his peak status.

He could finish Winston last year partly because the strength gaps between the different levels of legendary were not huge, and partly because he couldn't carry out his full ability due to the aging of his body and his mind. However, he was 'Heart of Time', who executed two legendary sorcerers, one projection of Demon Lord, one legendary sea monster, and one dark legendary knight!

Until the Congress of Magic expanded, 'Heart of Time' Kritonia had been a synonym of legends and epics on this side of the Storm Strait!

The attack seemed to be even more powerful with his gratification.

The mud on the dark ground turned into grey dust.

Tick, tock. Kritonia suddenly heard a sound that was not affected by his power of time. The silver pocket watch in Lucien's hand was still recording time accurately despite his influence.

The black tailcoat, the black bow-tie, the silver pocket watch... Lucien did not seem to be in a battle of legends but in a party of nobles, where he opened his pocket watch casually when a beautiful lady asked the time.

Crack!

Heavy pressure emerged out of nowhere, and the blackness around intensified. The sword that buried everything was attracted by the gravity when it almost hit Lucien, distorted and leaning sideways.

“Hehe!”

The colors in Kritonia's eyes were gone as if a river of time was surging forward inside. He exerted his strength and got free from the collapse of gravity, allowing the sword to slash Lucien again after a curve.

“Elemental Protection!” In the time gap created by gravity collapse, Lucien cast the spell. Countless spots of elements glowed on the Robe of Grand Arcanists, gathering into a translucent shield of light that blocked ‘Heart of Time’.

Hualala. The sound of flowing water echoed. The different parts of ‘Elemental Protection’ suddenly changed, conflicting with each other due to the different speeds and were dissolving quickly under the sword.

However, it fulfilled its destiny to block one of Kritonia's best attacks. Lucien took the opportunity to blink far away and lock onto him.

‘Vengeful Gaze!’ Lucien's voice sounded difficult and prolonged. It was because the spell was attached with ‘Hand of Uncertainties’!

Although he tricked the Original Fire by hiding his abilities and

with his 'Moon Timer', the reinforcement of the Congress would be delayed because of the enemy's cooperation with the World of Souls. It was difficult for him to stop Kritonia from running. Kritonia was immune to the space-time spells below legendary. That was why he chose to trick the Original Fire instead of him earlier.

Also, based on various sources of intelligence, he previously concluded that Kritonia was not as strong as level three of legendary, and it wouldn't be too dangerous for him to stall the enemy. However, it turned out that the guy was as dangerous as when he was young.

Lucien's right hand suddenly turned red like the most beautiful ruby. Then, a bloody, frozen ray of light darted out so fast that there was no time for reaction.

However, the red ray seemed to be reaching a different world after hitting Kritonia. Deviating in the watery time, it bypassed Kritonia and left a huge hole on the mountain behind him!

How incredible was that?

Kritonia sneered, it wouldn't be so easy to break his defense. Were it that simple, he would've perished in the battles of legends in the past!

Also, you have just advanced into legendary, and the power of your magic is still far from enough!

He did not blink again but started to melt with his longsword.

In the gloomy, silent black, white and grey; an unpredictable, clear light rose like the first beam of sunlight in the morning, illuminating the world and slashing at Lucien, not restricted by the distance in between at all.

"Undead Rampart!" Since the Robe of Grand Arcanists was still cooling down, Lucien used the Congus Ring.

Wu! Wu! Wu! The spell seemed to have been enhanced in the World of Souls. Countless ghosts and specters gathered into a wall of limbs, where the faces of the soul showed miserable expressions.

The light of the sword, however, turned into an elegant curve and slashed at Natasha who was on the other side!

Even though he had the power of time, it would take him a lot of time to kill a sorcerer, but killing a gold knight was much more simple!

Even though the Shield of Truth could be used passively, she could not raise it more than three times!

Kritonia, who had tricked Lucien into casting a spell, slashed Natasha who could barely move with the Shield of Truth, his hands steady and not shivering at all.

Natasha slightly bowed and raised the tiny, black shield above. Her face was solemn, mixed with the intense will of fighting.

Clang!

In a dull noise, Natasha seemed to be in a different world under the cover of the Shield of Truth. She was intangible and undamageable!

The shield was known as the best defense. According to Lucien's observation, it seemed to be associated with 'God's Guard'.

After blocking Kritonia's attack, Natasha gritted her teeth, with cold sweat pouring out. It could be seen that both of her legs and her hands were shivering. It was obvious very burdensome for her.

She wouldn't be able to resist it if similar attacks came another two times!

Not giving Lucien a chance to lock onto him, Kritonia changed his direction and continued to attack Natasha after the first slash.

Right then, he heard the tick-tock again.

Inside the complicated silver watch, the black second hand was moving joyfully, pointing at the mysterious symbols made of gems of different colors. Lucien pressed it with his finger, and then the second hand was frozen as if the watch had been broken.

The greyness drove the blackness away again, and the area seemed to have entered a different time and space. Everything was so quiet and colorless, save the bright blue and silver clothes on Hathaway.

The grey Kritonia did not stop but slashed his longsword slowly. It could help him resist the attacks when the effect of Time Stop was over.

His eyes gloomy and dark, Lucien chanted:

“Vengeful Gaze!”

Same as before, ‘Hand of Uncertainties’ was attached to it, and his eye shot out the red ray again like a ruby. However, the ray could not affect Kritonia who was in a different time and space right now.

After he cooled down, Lucien cast his spell once again:

“Vengeful Gaze!”

It was another Hand of Uncertainties and another red ray. Because it took him longer to cast the spells, the effect of Time Stop did not give Lucien enough time to cast a third spell.

Hardly had Kritonia seen the ‘reappearance’ of the monochrome World of Souls when two red rays darted at him at the same time!

However, having slightly dodged it, there was still a chance for him to react. The space around him rippled like water. Then, the two ‘Vengeful Gazes’ traveled to a different world just like before and did not return until they passed Kritonia’s body, leaving holes in the mountains far away.

There’s a gap between two levels. You only just advanced and learned the magic. Why do you think you can break my defense?

You might as well transfer your wife when you have the time to attack!

Kritonia snorted and continued to attack Natasha. He sensed that Natasha should be reaching her limits after the attack!

However, he also felt deeply fatigued. His physical strength was fading away, making it impossible for him to remain the three of level-three legendary anymore.

Although he mastered the power of time, he still couldn't outlive time.

“Elemental Protection!”

Suddenly, Hathaway's cold and clear voice came out.

She took the attacks of the Primordial Mummy and the Lich King the hard way in order to cast defense on Natasha.

The light fluttered, and the two legendary specters took the opportunity to suppress Hathaway. However, the two of them had been heavily wounded, too. Except for the gold crown and the 'gems' around the head, all the other magic items had been broken. Even the cloth on the mummy had been damaged, revealing the rotten flesh that was as dark as iron.

Such a battle was more than painstaking.

Smiling, Kritonia was much more reassured. He had been worried that Hathaway was tricking him to stay, but right now, after his attack towards Natasha, Hathaway had been finally stalled by the enemy for real!

The slowly flowing time turned sharp all of a sudden, showing that it could destroy everything. Taking advantage of Lucien's cooldown, Kritonia continued attacking Natasha.

The sword caused different speeds and changes, and the different spots of light inside the light shield were twisting. It was about to be broken under one more attack.

“Vengeful Gaze!”

The cold voice entered Kritonia's ears and confused him. Was Lucien out of his mind? Why was he still attacking when he had a chance to transfer Natasha?

Lucien's right hand turned crimson, like Silver Moon Alterna's ruby eye in the tales. A ray was shot at Kritonia instantly.

The space around Kritonia rippled like water unpredictably. The familiar feeling of defense made him curl his lips.

But all of a sudden, the smile on his lips was frozen because the red ray was not twisted but had hit his chest precisely!

Zi. After a feeble noise, Kritonia's chest was pierced through by the ray, replaced by a shocking hole, irrecoverable hollow.

How is it possible?

He's only a level-one legend. How can he break my defense?

Even if I have fallen to level two of legendary, I couldn't have been pierced through so easily!

I would have to be 'washed' by Luxury Cracking first because 'Vengeful Gaze' can work on me!

The paralysis effect brought by 'Vengeful Gaze' rigidified Kritonia in midair, his eyes full of shock.

At this moment, Hathaway, who had realized the new situation, abandoned her defense and simply allowed the Primordial Mummy and the Lich King to attack her. Although she was unaware of the effect of Lucien's magic beforehand, she cast a spell calmly:

"Luxury Cracking!"

Crack, crack, crack. The light on Kritonia collapsed, and the longsword had tiny dents, too.

After being hit by three level-three legendary specters, the passive spells on Hathaway such as Magic Order, Spell Trigger and Spell Sequencer were activated, allowing her to disappear and reappear in a different direction.

Because of the influence of 'Luxury Cracking', the paralysis inside Kritonia was gone, but a tall shadow was suddenly reflected in his

eyes.

In the white wedding dress, the sacred and beautiful Natasha, with intense fighting will power, abandoned the Shield of Truth, the Thorny Crown, and all the defense, and dedicated all her attention to the silver longsword in her hands.

After the attack, I will have no more defense!

After the attack, one of us will die!

The determination and courage cast Kritonia into a trance, he felt that he had seen himself years ago.

Yes. He was once so tough, stubborn and full of knighthood, but when did he turn into a rotten old man who was scared of death?

The silver sword flashed, and Kritonia had no time to resist it at all. Then, he saw Natasha's pure wedding dress was stained with red traces that looked like a bloody rose.

"Is this my blood?" Kritonia suddenly had a weird feeling of relief, before he fell into the deepest darkness.

Chapter 609: Resolution

Chapter 609: Resolution

After the silver sword flashed, Natasha appeared behind Kritonia's back, with a long wound on her right abdomen. The blood with certain silver purple colors flowed out. The counterattack of the power of 'Heart of Time' had already hurt her badly.

The wound recovered particularly slowly as if it were corrupted by time. Together with the fatigue after using a legendary item, Natasha found it impossible to stand where she was. She fell on one of her knees and supported herself with her longsword. Her hands that were wearing the transparent silk gloves trembled violently like an old man.

Kritonia, who floated in midair, seemed undamaged, except that his face was frozen, and the previous shock was still lingering there.

Suddenly, an illusionary wound that did not seem to belong to this world appeared and expanded into countless tiny cracks. In the next, blood splashed and left crimson spots on Natasha's white wedding dress, like roses that were blossoming on snow.

As the stink of blood spread out, Kritonia heaved a sigh, and his body fell apart into countless pieces of flesh, furthering dying Natasha's wedding dress red.

A badge hit the ground. At the center of the badge was a long river of time that surrounded a heart. It represented the glory of the Kritonia family.

The badge was enshrouded by blood, as if it were Kritonia's last concern.

The blood glistened and dripped from the badge like flowing water, but it did not seem to be stopping anytime soon.

After another crack, the longsword, 'Heart of Time', fell on the grey sand. The storage bag, having lost the support of the legendary

power, dropped before Natasha in monotonous black and grey.

Natasha was exhausted, and all her wounds were hurting. However, she was so excited that her soul seemed to have been melted into her blood.

“I’ve finally killed Kritonia and avenged my uncle!”

The attack seemed simple, but it weren’t for the paralysis from Lucien’s ‘Vengeful Gaze’ and Granny Hathaway’s ‘Luxury Cracking’, it wouldn’t have been possible for her to hit the enemy. If they attacked each other, she would’ve been killed for sure.

Of course, as a gold knight, Natasha also keenly recognized that she overpowered Kritonia towards the end, which slowed him down when he defended himself. Otherwise, she would’ve suffered much heavier wounds, and since she had lost all her life-preserving methods, she would die for real if she were killed!

What the attack needed to overcome was the fear of death. She had to create a path of survival by confronting it.

Lucien was relieved and did not cast his ‘Elemental Protection’ after all. It was meant to add another layer of defense to Natasha at the critical moment. He certainly wouldn’t watch his wife die.

The Lich King and the Primordial Mummy foresaw Kritonia’s ending when they saw Natasha’s attack. Therefore, instead of pursuing Hathaway who had blinked away, the Lich King chanted a weird spell.

The gems around his head were suddenly gone, and the intense greyness of death spread out, enshrouding the environment.

Then, the greyness was gone, and so were the two legendary spectres.

If they did not flee before Hathaway caught her breath, they would never be able to flee!

They could certainly make such a conclusion!

Lucien had only half of his spiritual power left after casting Vengeful Gaze four times with Hand of Uncertainties. However, he did not waste time in having drugs to recover himself, because Hathaway was no longer occupied. The Original Fire was not a big deal anymore.

In the realm of legends, a gap of two levels was already too huge to be neglected, not to mention three levels!

If Kritonia hadn't been too old, and he had powerful assistants such as the Robe of Grand Arcanists, the Moon Timer and the Hand of Uncertainties, he would have been suppressed by Kritonia even if he attacked with Natasha.

The silence in the World of Souls was restored. The monotonous colors and the chaotic mountains were just like before. Lucien flew to Natasha, helping her get back on her feet and stopped her bleeding.

Hathaway, on the other hand, looked at the spot of Maze, waiting for it to run out.

"Deal with the Original Fire first. I'm fine." Natasha picked up Kritonia's storage bag and badge. Pointing at the Sword of Truth, the Heart of Time and the Shield of Truth not far away, she said, "You turn into a legendary knight and kill him with Granny Hathaway first."

She was no longer capable of picking up any legendary item.

Lucien nodded his head and transformed. His face was now even paler. Then, with the Shield of Truth in his left hand and the Sword of Truth in his right hand, he waited for the Original Fire to break the maze.

If he were to cancel the maze himself, the Original Fire would've realized the new situation and escaped as fast as possible. If the guy were caged too long, he wouldn't stay much longer after concluding that reinforcements had arrived.

Inside the maze, the Original Fire had abandoned answering the

questions. He counted the time in silence while he tried to break the maze with violence.

BOOM. The maze began to shake intensely.

The Original Fire was delighted at first, but he became grim again. Almost one minute had passed. What would he be faced with?

Would he be surrounded by a bunch of legends, or would Kritonia succeed in killing Lucien and Natasha with his help?

“No, Lucien kept the secret that he became legendary. So, they must’ve been prepared. Also, Kritonia is too old to kill Lucien, unless he tricks Lucien by pretending to kill Natasha.”

“In any case, I cannot take the risk. If I were killed by the Sword of Truth, I’ll be really dead.”

Seeing that he had been caged much longer than he anticipated, he looked at the legendary staff, the legendary robe and the legendary ring he had and looked creepy. “I have to sacrifice them now!”

The excruciating pain in his heart made the Original Fire had the urge of killing himself.

Yes, he began to kill himself. A flower of pure white flames rose from his soul and burnt his body. Holding back the unimaginable pain, he controlled the progress of burning and waited for the maze to be over. In the meantime, he activated the marks in three legendary items.

The more painful it was, the more determined he was in killing!

BOOM. Cracks appeared inside the maze as it began to collapse.

The moment, the frozen black, white and grey appeared in the Original Fire’s eyes, he roared and accelerated the burning, making the three legendary items hum and shiver.

After the maze collapsed, Lucien did not see the Original Fire; he only saw a cluster of pure white fire and the expanding staff, ring and robe.

Dangerous!

Lucien blocked Natasha behind his back and extended the Shield of Truth in his left hand. The illusionary colors surfaced, as if the two of them were in a different world.

“Elemental Protection!”

Hathaway’s clear voice echoed, and countless elemental spots of light gathered.

In the next, the legendary robe, staff and ring exploded abruptly. Red, purple and yellow, three clusters of fire swept out and razed everything to the ground. Destruction, death, curse, poison, corruption and immolation destroyed all the things on the way.

Despite the Shield of Truth, Lucien could only keep Natasha safe under such a terrible storm and could not press forward. He was unable to slash the Original Fire who was at the center of explosions.

The white fire that was vaguely in the shape of a human howled painfully and angrily:

“I won’t let go of you!”

“I’ll stuff the quizzes into your mouth!”

Then, an illusionary sound that seemed to be from a different world echoed: “Advanced Time Stop.”

Black, red, purple, green and all the colors were gone. Lucien saw nothing but a frozen world. Only Natasha and him who were behind the Shield of Truth could move slowly, but they could not interact with the outside world.

After the consolidation was gone, a brilliant shooting star hit the center of the explosions brutally.

“NO!”

The Original Fire cried miserably. Then, his voice came to an

abrupt halt with the boom.

The sweeping explosion attacked with the air that could tear apart time and space, but Lucien held the Shield of Truth steadily, preventing himself and Natasha from being hurt. There were only minor cracks on the shield, which could be repaired easily.

It was indeed the best space-time defense!

“Mr. President, has the Original Fire died?” After the explosion, Lucien asked Douglas and Fernando who had blinked to him.

He did not expect the Original Fire to be so decisive. The guy almost escaped.

Douglas nodded his head, but he was still somewhat confused. “His soul should’ve been completely destroyed after it was hit by my ‘Fateful Meteor’, but he seemed to be connected to the World of Souls in a certain way. I’m afraid that he may have other backup plans. However, there’s no way that he can resume his strength as a legend any time soon.”

“The World of Souls has intervened, too... We need to accelerate the exploration in this place in case the scheme worked out.” Fernando feared that part of the members of the Church would collude with the World of Souls.

Hathaway flew over from the other side. She wasn’t really hurt. Looking at Lucien in confusion, she asked, “The questions in the maze?”

The Original Fire recited the questions at the end. It seemed that he had been traumatized.

His lips twitching, Lucien spoke of the few unproven speculations.

Douglas frowned. “Those questions...” He couldn’t think of an answer, either.

“Do you have answers? How can you construct the maze if you don’t have answers?” Asked Fernando in a loud voice.

Lucien smiled. “The answers to part of the questions are that they can’t be proven for now. That the questions can be changed was meant to be misleading.”

If the questions were too complicated or ambiguous, he could’ve got the answers from asking the mysterious existence with magic.

Natasha chuckled. “If he heard the answer, the Original Fire would be infuriated back to life again.”

At this moment, she was holding Kritonia’s storage bag and skimming through the journal inside.

Hathaway, Douglas and Fernando did not say anything, but they were apparently thinking the same thing.

Suddenly, Natasha smiled as she read the journal. “The Original Fire was studying arcana and looking for a way to reshape his cognitive world.”

Lucien was briefly stunned. “Huh? He was studying arcana? I should’ve put the experiment of electron diffraction inside the maze. In that case, his legendary items would be mine, and he would have no chance of resurrection...” Any other disruptive experiments could’ve worked. He felt extremely pitiful that he obtained none of the three legendary items!

“Haha. Evans’ Head-Blowing Maze?” Natasha was greatly amused by the creative idea.

Hathaway looked at Lucien, her eyes flashing. They were obviously saying:

“How insane!”

Chapter 610: Married Couple

Chapter 610: Married Couple

Douglas was not as straightforward as Hathaway, but his chuckle expressed all he wanted to say.

“This Heart of Time is your trophy. Keep it for yourself.” Fernando reminded them.

Since it was partly protected by the Shield of Truth, and it was a level-three legendary item itself, the rippling longsword, ‘Heart of Time’, was not ruined in the final explosions. Although the cracks were deepened, it still gave the profound feeling of the passage of time.

Natasha looked at it and said to Lucien with a smile, “I already have a Sword of Truth. Heart of Time is of no use to me. You can trade it for other things.”

“There’s no need to exchange it. You can improve the Moon Timer using its parts.” Said Hathaway calmly.

Since he kept his state as a legendary knight, Lucien picked up the longsword and nodded after checking it. “After my abilities in time and space grow, I should be able to upgrade the Moon Timer to level two with this.”

The materials of time and space were always rare. With ‘Heart of Time’, Lucien was spared of the worries to search for materials to upgrade his unique legendary item.

Douglas looked around. “Let’s go back to Allyn. The guests are still waiting for you at the wedding. We’ll talk about the World of Souls tomorrow.”

Hearing that, Lucien looked at Natasha and asked, “Do you want to treat your wedding dress and your wounds first?”

Putting back Kritonia’s storage bag, Natasha held the bleeding

badge and chuckled. “No. Blood and wounds are the best wedding decorations for a knight! Nobody has ever worn such a wedding dress before!”

.....

In the depths of the World of Souls, the stretch of black temples rose magnificently like a kingdom. The steeples pierced into the infinite sky.

Inside the palace, the black wall and floor made everything cold and silent. Moving forward along a straight avenue, and passing through the lifeless corridors and gardens, one would reach the largest building. At the center of the building was a borderless grey curtain that did not have an upper bound, in which countless astounding souls were embedded.

Some of the faces in the Furnace of Souls were twisted, and some hideous; some were peaceful, and some were angry. But there was absolutely no sound.

Click, click, click. Weird footsteps echoed behind the curtain and broke the silence.

A ghost moved forward heavily, as if it had weight and a physical body.

When it passed the Furnace of Souls from the back, the ghost suddenly raised its head, revealing a pale face that belonged to ‘Original Fire’ Banham!

A meteor seemed to be lingering in his eyes, making his transparent soul ripple nonstop, as if he would collapse any moment.

The Original Fire extended his right hand and pressed the Furnace of Souls. The ripples were suppressed, and his soul was much more concrete. Then, he gnashed his teeth, “Douglas! Hathaway! Lucien! Natasha!”

He cursed every name angrily.

“My legendary items!”

“Those goddamn questions!”

It was not until a long time later that he turned around to the other side of the temple. His footsteps were still slow, and his feet were still leaving weird sounds on the floor.

Click, click, click. The Original Fire disappeared into the temple.

.....

In the garden behind Allyn, the flowers were all blossoming.

Giant flowers that looked like tulips shook their bodies and sang delightful songs like the best musicians, and the tall trees waved their branches and whipped their trunks, making noise that sounded like timpani. There were also bushes that were playing flutes... The ‘natives’ of the magic garden treated the guests with pleasant songs.

“Oh, this is so dreamy!”

“This is unimaginable!”

“Are they magic plants?”

At the center of the garden was a broad lawn with a red carpet and many pure tables and chairs. All the nobles who attended the wedding were astounded. They all had seen magic plants before, but those plants were all creepy and terrifying. None of them were as joyful as the plants here.

Even the low-rank sorcerers were quite shocked. Those plants could’ve established an orchestra!

As if sensing their surprise and delight, the magic plants worked even harder, spreading the melody of happiness to every corner.

“Fantastic! Magic is so fantastic!” Said Elvin excitedly. He had been admitted by the magic school last year, but he had been more or less frustrated because of his poor performance. What he saw today greatly cheered him. After all, he would grow one step after another!

It was the first time that Joel, Alisa and John had been through this. The contemporary arcanists and the ancient arcanists were indeed different! Their last grudge and shadow against sorcerers faded.

“Why have I never heard of the music before?” Louise appreciated the cheerful melodies with a few noble ladies who were into music.

Julie, granddaughter of Marquis Henson (his title had been promoted by Natasha because of his previous contribution), said reverentially, “His Excellency Evans is one of the greatest musicians, and the queen is talented in music, too. They must’ve composed specifically for their wedding. This feels great. I’m going to play the same songs at my wedding!”

When the girls discussed music lightheartedly, Winston, James and Grand Duke of Orvarit waited anxiously.

“They were swallowed by the World of Souls. Somebody legendary must be behind it...” Said Winston gloomily, regretting that he failed to react sooner.

His conclusion made Grand Duke of Orvarit look even worse. He was unable to speak anything.

Duke James consoled the Grand Duke. “With Her Excellency the Lord of Elements, the queen and His Excellency Evans will be fine.”

“They seem to have taken Granny Hathaway into consideration.” Despite his old age, Grand Duke of Orvarit still called Hathaway as granny. He looked worried.

“I suspect that Kritonia is involved.” Said Winston in a low voice. It was his intuition.

Duke James took a soft breath. “He’s really a problem. However, a level-three legendary knight can barely be killed. Are we really going to wait for him to die of old age?”

They were enshrouded in intense depression despite the joyful music.

Suddenly, two people descended from the sky, with the vague scent

of blood.

“Your Majesty!”

“Your Excellency Evans!”

Exclamations rose nonstop, because Natasha’s white wedding dress had been saturated with blood, and silver-and-purple blood was dripping to the carpet from her abdomen. In the meantime, blood was dripping from her hand, too, but it seemed to be holding something.

Because he embraced Natasha and cooperated with her, Lucien’s black tailcoat was also stained with glistening spots of blood.

“Were they attacked?”

“Are they heavily wounded?”

The sorcerers and nobles whispered to each other concernedly.

Grand Duke of Orvarit, Winston and James, however, were relieved. Everything was good as long as they were back! Also, they noticed Hathaway, Douglas and Fernando on the other side. It seemed that nobody died.

Natasha smiled at her father and nodded. Then, she struggled to walk forward with Lucien towards the end of the red carpet, where there was an arch that represented marriage in the tradition of the sorcerers.

Because of her heavy wounds, Natasha’s every step would make her drip even more blood. She couldn’t help but bite her lips hard to hold back the agony. Redness flowed out of her lips, like a weird gloss. Lucien, on the other hand, was only holding her left hand without supporting her, as per her own wish to finish the symbolic carpet.

The drops of blood blossomed on the carpet, but Natasha’s back was as straight as ever.

The exciting melodies suddenly changed, turning solemn and

sacred.

The scene stunned the guests into silence as they watched them reach the end of the red carpet.

Natasha suddenly turned around and raised her right hand, revealing a bloodstained badge, before she announced:

“I once swore that I would execute Kritonia in person and avenge my uncle.”

“Today, I have received the best wedding gift. With my husband’s help, I killed him in person!”

Blood was still dripping from the badge, and it seemed to be landing on everybody’s heart.

“What? A ninth-circle archmage and a gold knight killed Heart of Time?”

“That’s a legend! A level-three legend!”

The eyes of disbelief were gathered in Natasha’s hands. Many people recognized that it was Kritonia’s unique badge!

“That’s impossible...”

“Did the Congress of Magic helped them?”

Winston looked at Hathaway in surprise. Did she kill the guy?

At this moment, Lucien did not say anything. He raised his left hand and pointed at the sky with a rippling longsword. Then, the environment changed, and a dark, profound cosmos surfaced. However, every planet in the cosmos was made of two different colors according to different ratios, like different elements. They were surrounded by a certain number of illusionary satellites.

It was the tiniest and the greatest. It was one and it was everything. It was exactly the Atomic Universe!

“Is this the longsword, ‘Heart of Time’?”

“His Excellency Evans has already advanced into legendary?”

“What... What kind of speed is this?”

“If they caught the enemy unprepared, together with the Sword of Truth, it’s possible that they could’ve killed him!”

Everybody was shocked. Nobody could foresee that Lucien could advance into legendary so quickly!

Winston, James and Gaston felt that they were going through a dream that was full of the most unbelievable twists and turns.

Natasha waved her right hand again and crumbled the badge into pieces, before she declared solemnly: “The honor and glory of the Hoffenberg family must not be tarnished!”

Nobody questioned her declaration this time. Instead, the bloodstained wedding dress and the tall shadow left a deep impression on everyone. The hideous dress at the beginning had a weird sense of beauty to it now, attracting a lot of ladies.

Sensing that Natasha was running out of strength, Lucien held her hand and walked through the arch, reaching Douglas.

“You’ve been through many dangers, difficulties and unimaginable tests before you finally came to this place. I hereby proclaim that you are a married couple!” Douglas said solemnly and gently.

The marriage in the Congress of Magic was very simple. Now that it was over, the solemn music became exciting and delightful again.

After Lucien and Natasha exchanged their rings again, Douglas smiled and was about to say ‘you may kiss the bride’.

However, Natasha suddenly hugged Lucien at this moment and gave him a deep kiss.

Briefly stunned, Douglas shook his head with a smile.

The vague scent of blood, mixed with the familiar air, came at his face. Lucien was dazed at first, but then he hugged Natasha back

and kissed her, forgetting the guests and everything else around.

They were finally a married couple now, a couple who would help and support each other for the rest of their life!

The beautiful scene made a lot of sorcerers raise their hands and close their thumb and their index finger into a square. Pressing it, they kept the scene of the kiss.

Although the photographic magic hadn't been simplified into any alchemical item yet, it was not a difficult task for them.

Chapter 611: Plan of Exploration

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On April 11, in the conference room of the Highest Council...

The sixteen members, including seven grand arcanists, had already been seated, when Lucien just came in wearing his double-breasted suit. He apologized, "Sorry that I'm late."

"It doesn't matter. Last night was your wedding night. It's perfectly normal to be late." Klaus, the Alchemy Master, said jokingly, "We all understand it."

Hearing his joke, the other people either smiled kindly or showed no emotional change, except for Hathaway who stared at Lucien coldly as if she were blaming him.

Scratching his chin in embarrassment, Lucien specifically explained it for his 'mother-in-law'. "The wound on Natasha's abdomen was corrupted by the power of time. It will take her at least half a month even if she treats herself well. However, she couldn't forget her last attack to execute Kritonia and try to grasp the feeling of burning and melting her will, belief, spirits and bloodline. Fearing that her wounds worsened, I could only try to cooperate with her while stopping her from making drastic movements. She didn't fall asleep from exhaustion until a few minutes ago."

So, I'm definitely not late for the reason you imagine. However, when we were excited discussing and simulating the attack, she expressed her 'gratitude' in other ways.

Hathaway's eyes became gentle. Douglas simply chuckled and said, "There's no need to explain your personal business to us. We are having an emergency meeting today mainly to discuss what happened yesterday. The Original Fire, a night watcher of the Church, was able to invite the legendary spectres of the World of Souls. It makes me wonder whether or not the Church is asking for the cooperation of the World of Souls."

“The South Church, which is determined to purge the undead creatures, is cooperating with the World of Souls? Was it the Original Fire’s personal action? He’s a legendary sorcerer from the Magic Empire. Perhaps he had a deep understanding about the World of Souls.” Hathaway analyzed another possibility.

Solemnly and loudly, Fernando said, “Whatever it is, we have to accelerate the exploration in the World of Souls! Those skeletons and bodies don’t seem satisfied with the World of Souls and intend to touch the main material world, instead of calming down after the mysterious existence of the World of Souls fell asleep like we imagined in the past. Therefore, we cannot react effectively without figuring out their details.”

When they discussed, Vicente, the Lord of the Undead, remained silent. Dark red fire bounced in his eyes, as if he did not care about the things in the World of Souls.

Brook said in a low voice, “It’s true that we need to accelerate our exploration, but we have no idea what dangers are hiding behind the Furnace of Souls. We have to press forward prudently. It must be noted that almost ten ancient legendary sorcerers went missing there. Although none of them were peak, most of them were level three. They were the pillars of the Magic Empire and not weak at all.”

After the Congus incident, Lucien wrote the issues about Maskelyne into a report and submitted it to the Congress, allowing them to know the reason why the legendary sorcerers went missing and how the Grand Cross really collapsed.

“Yes. The goal that I set for now is to explore until the Furnace of Souls without pressing any deeper. After we investigate the Furnace of Souls and the peripheral area, we will return. Then, we will clear the unintelligent undead creatures and make a plan for our second adventure to press deeper.” Douglas said rationally and calmly, but he was so confident as if the strong spectres were mere common skeletons.

“But there are almost ten legendary spectres like the Lich King apart from the unintelligent legendary spectres. They are not so easy to

deal with. It will be a total war.” After a long silence, Vicente began to talk.

Hearing them discuss quietly, Lucien thought for a moment and suddenly raised his hands. “There’s something that I’d like to say.”

“What is it?” Fernando looked at him with his red eyes. What other secrets was he hiding?

Lucien brought out the Sun’s Corona that he didn’t submit earlier. “I found an item of divine power left by Maskelyne in the Grand Cross.”

“An item of divine power?” Asked Oliver and Erica in surprise. The Saint Truth hadn’t surfaced yet when Maskelyne went missing. Where on earth did he get the item?

Not wasting time to say what he had already said, Lucien went to the topic. “Mr. Maskelyne called it a magic item.”

“What?” This time, even Douglas, Brook, Hathaway, Hellen and Davey were shocked.

“I have reason to believe that it is related to the rise of the Saint Truth.” After so many things, and after witnessing the pope’s improvement on the divine powers, Lucien was finally able to talk about his suspicion honestly and confidently. “Perhaps it has something to do with the speculation I mentioned in the report of the changes of Ell’s godhood.”

It came from the adjusted amalgamation of many people’s feeble spiritual power!

“Well...” After a brief silence, Brook took out a white handkerchief to wipe his forehead. “But the projection of Mountain Paradise is real, and so are the angels. The king of angels is in the Holy City right now. Also, we cannot find a way to perform divine powers. We can’t even create a divine item without godhood.”

“That’s why further exploration is needed. At the bottom level of ‘Sun’s Corona’, Mr. Maskelyne has hidden the patterns of the coordinate changes of a certain place in the deepest part of the

World of Souls. That's probably the area where they went missing in the end. There's perhaps an answer to everything." Said Lucien solemnly before he shared the pattern of the changing coordinates.

The World of Souls was too dangerous for him to explore on his own. He had to count on the Congress. In that case, hiding important intelligence would only increase the risk of the adventure that could've been avoided.

After reading the pattern of the coordinates, all the members of the Highest Council fell silent, deep in thought.

Lucien, on the other hand, went on. "There's something else I also need to say."

"What is it?" Fernando glared at Lucien. How many more secrets did the guy have?

"In the beginning, Rhine was not trapped by Prince Dracula; rather, he conspired with Sard to deal with Tiphotidis, the Master of Argent and the Ice Duke, because he wanted to explore the secrets of the World of Souls, only to be betrayed by Sard during the exploration. That was why he was trapped there." Lucien corrected certain false intelligence that he had given to protect himself earlier.

Fernando snorted, as if he had guessed it. Hathaway slightly nodded, finally understanding why Sard chose to cooperate with them at the beginning. "What secret is it?"

The fire bouncing in the eye sockets of the Lord of the Undead suddenly grew intense.

"According to the Silver-eyed Count, the secrets to real immortality lie in the deepest part of the World of Souls, secrets that even the God of Silver Moon seek after!" Lucien finally told the secret that he had concealed for a long time. Now that he was a legendary sorcerer himself with a comprehensive combat ability in the level two, he was no longer a weakling at the mercy of any random enemy. He was now capable of sharing the secret!

The news was so shocking that, except for the Lord of the Undead

who was even grimmer, the members of the Highest Council barely showed any response. They evaluated the accuracy of the message first.

“...The Lord of Hell’s actions indirectly proved the importance of the secret in the World of Souls.” Lucien mentioned the plan that the Lord of Hell had previously. “I am not certain of this piece of information, either. I’m only reminding you that anything may happen after we surpass the Furnace of Souls. Perhaps, we will be faced with the God of Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell in person.”

“If that’s true, they will be happy to see our exploration and even offer help. If they were willing to take the risk, they would have entered it a long time ago.” After he was back to himself, Douglas smiled, not as excited about the mysteries of immortality as when he saw the general theory of relativity for the first time.

As for the other people, even the sorcerers like Hathaway and Hellen who barely had any facial expression revealed certain excitement. They were also breathing fast.

As he spoke, Douglas looked at the Lord of the Undead. “Vicente, did you know the secret?”

His eyes were clear and gentle, but Vicente was silent for a long time before he finally said, “I inferred that there was such a secret from Adol’s memories. Then, I discovered a relic in Viken based many other memories and clues and confirmed the deduction.”

The moment he said that, Fernando gazed at him with his red eyes.

“That’s all the more reason why we should explore the place. It’s possible that the ‘truth’ of this world is hidden there.” Douglas tapped the table, not blaming Vicente for keeping the information to himself early. “Based on the intelligence from the advance base in the World of Souls earlier, we have learnt that there are approximately ten real legendary spectres and forty unintelligent legendary spectres in the area outside of the Furnace of Souls. It means that we have to mobilize more than eight legends in order to press deeper.”

Brook nodded his head. "If two top legends lead the team every time, another four helpers will be enough. That's within what we can bear."

If too many legendary sorcerers were mobilized, the alternate dimensions and the kingdoms would be too weakly defended, which would give the enemies an opportunity to attack.

"Alright. Fernando and I will lead the first adventure, assisted by another four legendary sorcerers. The second adventure will be led by Brook and Hathaway, also followed by four legendary sorcerers. We will explore deeper in turns but do not surpass the limit each time, so that we can press forward steadily until we reach the destination that Lucien described earlier." Douglas expressed his opinion and turned to Lucien. "Lucien, although it has been less than one year since you advanced, you are now already a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer, and you need to shoulder your responsibilities. Of course, you have the right to refuse it."

Lucien took a long breath. "I would like to join the first adventure."

The destination of the first adventure was the Furnace of Souls. As could be confirmed by the exploration of Maskelyne and his partners as well as Adol's memories, the dangers of the journey were still under control. It wouldn't be as mysterious and dangerous as the rest of the quest. Also, his primary target right now was to take a look at the Furnace of Souls and to touch the enigmas of the soul in order to unveil the differences between the two worlds he lived in.

Also, in such a way, there would be no need for him to participate in the second, the third and the fourth adventure. By the time the fifth adventure began, he would probably in level two or level three of legendary, considering that it would already be super effective if such adventures could be carried out once every year, not to mention that the trophies of every adventure had to be digested before the next adventure began.

When that moment came, his plan was to explore the area far behind the Furnace of Souls and find Maskelyne.

Lucien vaguely had the feeling that the answers to everything would be revealed there.

Chapter 612: New Changes Every Day

Chapter 612: New Changes Every Day

“Great.” Douglas nodded in great comfort. “Who else wants to join the first adventure?”

“Since it involves the mysteries of the soul, I have to pay a visit in any case.” Klaus, the Alchemy Master, smiled. Of the two crowns in the field of creation, the mysteries of material changes had been partly unveiled by Lucien, but the secrets about the soul were still hidden in the intense smoke. As a legendary sorcerer who was determined to create an intelligent life, he had long been yearning after the Furnace of Souls.

After Lucien and he talked, Vicente, the Lord of the Undead, also said in a low voice, “The realm of the soul is always my interest. I hope to see the Furnace of Souls as soon as possible.”

Hearing that Vicente intended to join, Fernando chuckled and said loudly, “You purposefully deleted Adol’s memories about Maskelyne and Viken, and you hid the secrets about immortality. How can I entrust my back to you without concerns?”

He had always been bad-tempered and straightforward, not fearing that anybody would be infuriated by him.

The Lord of the Undead snorted. “Your good student also kept it a secret for a long time, didn’t he?”

The guy must’ve known that the secrets of immortality were hidden inside the World of Souls earlier than he did.

“He was only a middle-rank sorcerer at that time, and you were already a grand arcanist when you learnt the secret. How could you compare yourself to him? Why don’t you compete with the magic apprentices to see which of you cast spells faster?” Fernando roared in a low voice, with thunder rumbling around him.

Douglas shook his head in a smile. Fernando had always been

biased, and only he could yell at his student. “Alright, Vicente, because of your trick with Adol’s memories, you need to make a magic oath to join the adventure, and you need to pay a fine with an equally valuable legendary spell or ritual.”

“The complete memories of Adol must be submitted, too.” Fernando was not willing to let it go.

Vicente took a deep breath, and the dark red fire bounced in his eyes. “Alright!”

Supposedly, it was not a big deal that he kept the secret to himself. Nobody could’ve guessed it, and he would be able to reap more in the World of Souls later. Who could’ve foreseen that Lucien knew about it and would even speak about it?

Did he not know what the secrets of immortality meant? That was the highest achievement in the field of soul and matter. Any wish could be fulfilled!

“I would like to participate, too. Sometimes, transformation and illusions can help everybody avoid danger.” Erica, Master of Transformation, said.

Douglas nodded softly. “I’m very glad that you offered to join the adventure, but since a lot of preparation need to be done, we will leave in two months. Lucien, I have deeper understanding about time and space. Let’s work hard together to upgrade your Moon Timer into a level-two legendary item.”

“Thank you, Mr. President.” Lucien did not refuse. It would take him years if he wanted to upgrade the Moon Timer on his own. At this moment, the stronger he was, the safer he would be. For both himself and his family that had just been established, there was no need to hide the legendary class of ‘Observer of Time and Space’ from the president.

“Alright, those who are to join the first adventure can go back and make preparations.” Douglas announced the end of the meeting.

...

In a Portal to Alternate Realm inside the Allyn magic tower...

As the light was on, Nika, in a black robe, walked out. His messy hair was much neater than two years ago, and he was no longer like a weirdo or psycho. The boy, Aki, followed him and observed the empty hall with great interest.

“Welcome to Allyn. I am Thompson, a member of the Affair Committee.” Thompson greeted them with a smile on the opposite side of the Portal to Alternate Realm.

It was said that the sorcerer was unusually talented with remarkable spiritual power. He had become a fifth-circle sorcerer after only two years of learning. Also, Lucien provided guidance to him before. That was why Thompson had come to greet him.

Nika’s countenance was also different from the past. Most of the daze and craziness were gone. He asked with a smile, “Mr. Thompson, is this Allyn, the City in the Sky?”

He reached the oasis after more than a month of journey and then spent half a year passing the ocean before he arrived at the Congress of Magic’s branch in the alternate dimension. Because of his amazing spiritual power, he was appreciated by a senior-rank sorcerer in the magic tower, who kept him and taught him elementary knowledge. After his arcana expertise grew, he was sent to Allyn for further studies.

“The view of the City in the Sky is best from the outside.” Thompson pointed at the door. “I’ll lead you to the Sorcerer Administrative Department.”

“I wonder, is Grand Arcanist Mr. Lucien Evans here?” Nika asked expectantly. He had already known that the title for the Philosopher was grand arcanist.

Thompson shook his head. “His Excellency ‘Atom Controller’ is in Allyn, but he is too busy to meet any outsiders right now. You’ll see him in the future.”

“What a shame.” Nika was rather disappointed. He wanted to thank

Mr. Evans for his guidance, which showed him dawn in the overwhelming darkness. “Mr. Thompson, when can I enter the Holt Magic College?”

Thompson clicked his tongue. “You can only enter the college after you pass the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic. That is to say, you have to wait for the exam to be held on June 7 next year. You’d better find something else to do during the year. However, there are plenty of books on arcana and magic here. You can pick up knowledge everywhere.”

“Well, Mr. Thompson, do you have tasks that have more spare time and are suitable for arcana studies and magic analysis?” Nika intended to pay for his life and his studies on his own.

Thompson also chuckled. “The Congress will offer you certain arcana points according to your magic and arcana level. As for missions, you can be a teacher. Teachers are much needed since there are a lot of schools. They have a lot of spare time, too.”

“Alright.” Nika looked at Aki and felt that working as a teacher would be relatively easy.

Led by Thompson, Nika and Aki stepped into the magic lift and went to the Sorcerer Administrative Department on the first floor.

“Mr. Thompson, is every floor for a special purpose?” Asked Aki curiously. He had already been used to lifts in the Congress of Magic’s branch, no longer the screamer when he took the lift for the first time.

Thompson pointed at the floor on their opposite side. “That happens to be one of the floors that belong to the Affair Committee...”

“Mr. Gaston’s ‘Life Synthesis Laboratory’ is on this floor...”

“Wow, Life Synthesis Laboratory?” The boy Aki was rather excited. Nika also looked at the place with great curiosity.

“Mr. Gaston made groundbreaking contributions to the field of life. He proposed that concept of element structure, maintaining that the

nature of an object is not only concerned with the number and quality of atoms but also their structure.” Thompson had benefited a lot from the theory and elaborated on it.

“Structure...” Nika, who had just picked up the basics, was still confused about the cutting-edge concepts.

Thompson pointed at the opposite side again. “The famous Atom Institution is on this floor.”

“The Atom Institution?” Nika had learnt about the Atom Institution that Mr. Evans created in person had been pulling the whole Congress forward like a locomotive even though he was only in a branch in the alternate dimension.

Plus his fondness for Lucien in the first place, Nika was full of admiration and excitement. Aki even ran to the rail and observed the floor against the light shield.

“In fact, there are also laboratories on hormones and psychology on this floor.” Thompson then introduced the next floor. “The ‘Heredity Laboratory’, recently established by Mr. Felipe and a few sorcerers of the school of necromancy, is on this floor. It’s said that they are hugely sponsored by the nobles, but there are no achievements yet.”

Since the alternate dimension had yet to begin the studies on blood power, Nika was even more confused about that. He could only glance at it in curiosity.

...

“Wow!”

As the magic steam train rode out of Allyn and rushed downwards amidst the clouds in the blue sky, the boy Aki finally couldn’t control himself anymore and screamed hard. His legs trembling, he didn’t dare not watch the small mountains, rivers, forests and manors down below.

It was simply too terrifying and exciting!

Smiling, Nika cast a spell on him to relieve his fear. As for Nika himself, he had been used to the situation after he learnt how to fly.

After they reached the train station, Aki held on to his teacher with a pale face and shaking legs, gagging nonstop.

Nika shook his head and searched for the signs around.
“Lanxiang...” His task was to work as a teacher in the first ‘Lanxiang’ school.

Although he was already a fifth-circle sorcerer, his arcana level hadn’t even reached one yet. By teaching students, it would be easy for him to increase his arcana expertise, so he was quite satisfied about the task. The most satisfying thing of all was that the school provided a magic laboratory for him.

Very soon, he found the wagon that the Lanxiang school sent to pick him up. It brought him to the east of the town.

This Lanxiang school was quiet but not gloomy. The bright buildings, the silver rails and the flourishing gardens built up a cheerful atmosphere.

The wagon was about to ride into the gate, when Nika suddenly hear rumbling noises. He turned around, only to see a gigantic blue box running at him. In the perception of his spiritual power, the box seemed to be entirely made of iron. It was neither pulled by a Dragon Scale horse nor spurting out steam, and it looked like a terrible iron monster.

“Mr. Nika, this is one of the first vehicles for public transportation that the city hall has introduced. They are developed by Mr. Evans and Mr. Klaus together, who modified and simplified the magic steam train, making it able to move without a railway. However, the two experts still think that it is too clumsy and noisy.” As a member of the Lanxiang school, the coachman was rather well-informed.

Watching the blue box park on the other side, and the young, vigorous teenagers and adolescents get off, Nika complimented sincerely, “This is truly a heaven of magic...”

After he walked into the campus, Nika saw red banners before anything else came into his eyes: “Our Sincerest Welcome to Prime Minister Russell!”

“The First Contest of Alchemical Gears Controlling is about to begin!”

.....

Nika, who felt that the banners were rather an eye-sore, found many stone statues in the garden, with certain words engraved on the pedestal.

“They are the great sorcerers who made major contributions to arcana and magic. Below are the quotations that they once said.” The coachman introduced.

Nika walked over curiously and examined the statues one by one.

“Derrick Douglas: Our future lies in the infinite cosmos.”

...

“Lucien Evans: Your eyes will deceive you, your ears will deceive you, your experience will deceive you, and so will your imagination, but math won’t.”

...

“Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg: Achievements speak louder than words.”

Chapter 613: The Small Folk in the Great Age

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Ding. The crisp sound found its way into Andy's ears, waking him up from his wonderful dream about the future. He saw a minuscule magic steam train arriving by him.

It was lead grey in general and more than three meters tall. It had only one long carriage that moved between two rails on the ground. However, there was no steam popping up from the locomotive, but only two thick antennas that rose up and connected the black wires established in midair. It couldn't have looked more bizarre.

"A trolley car..." Andy looked at the monstrosity, so amazed that he almost forgot to get aboard.

It was said that the trolley car did not require spiritual power or willpower. All one needed to do was to press or lever certain switches, so even ordinary people could drive them easily. However, since there were not many streets in Rentato that were broad enough to set up the rails, the vehicle was limited to a few lines. For most of the streets, the buildings on two sides had to back off by one meter to give enough room. The work was unimaginable for the cabinet and the city hall right now. Therefore, they would rather promote the buses despite their heaviness, clumsiness and noise.

Ding. Hearing that the trolley car was about to close, Andy shivered and stepped on it. Today was the day that the Lanxiang school began. If he were late, he would lose his bright future.

Pa. The door of the trolley car closed. Andy patted his chest in relief. The daydreaming smile appeared on his face again.

Before he became an adult, he had been working for the alchemical workshops, but his salary every month could only make ends meet. The gap between his dream of magic radios and lamps and the

reality was as huge as that between Mountain Paradise and abyss. It seemed that he would live in a slum, eat lousy food, and get married with somebody he barely knew, dying to live just like his parents.

The moment he thought of the hopeless future where there were no changes, Andy often felt depressed. If he had never known how wonderful the world was, he could've accepted such a life in numbness, but now that he had gotten in touch with the outside world through the magic radios, his horizons had been broadened, and he had many more dreams. How could he live such a poor life forever?

A month ago, Martin, William and he went to test their spiritual power talent, only to discover that it was extremely feeble. If they had enormous wealth, there would still be hope for them to become magic apprentices, but it was naturally impossible for them. So, they entered the alchemical workshops in misery and desperation, doing the same labor every day without seeing any hope to change.

The painful days lasted until a few months ago, when he learnt the news that the generic schools and the Lanxiang schools were about to be established. He dropped his numbness and was full of momentum again. Between the two kinds of schools, the generic school required the support of certain wealth. Unwilling to ask for more money from his parents, he did not consider it.

The Lanxiang school, on the other hand, met his demands perfectly. If he graduated from there, he wouldn't need to worry about jobs at all. Every alchemical workshop would want him.

After he became a real alchemical worker, he would be like the dwarfs he met before. His salary would be so high that he could buy a magic radio in a couple of years. Also, he would be respected and have the chance to be promoted into an alchemical manager. As for the alchemical consultant, that was a job only for the real sorcerers and arcanists.

After the setback, Andy's dream to become a sorcerer was shattered by the cruel reality, but he let go of his illusions and had a new dream that better suited himself, and he tried his best to achieve it.

“If you dare not dream about the future, living is no different from death, right?” Thinking about that, Andy clenched his fists, feeling proud of himself for the hard work in the past months. He had finally passed the exams and became a member of the Lanxiang school!

In a rising society and an age of great transformation, even the civilians were full of passion and vigor.

“...Prime Minister Russell has announced that a special police department will be established in replacement of the sheriff system in the past. He indicated that it will better control crime and give the citizens of Holm a safer life. Also, he said that, as a precaution against the potentially threatening criminals such as the dark nights who cannot control their lust for killing, part of the Verdict Knights and the Saint Cross Knights will be appointed as officers of the police department, and the regular policemen will also be equipped with burst guns that the dwarves invented.”

The news broadcast of ‘Holm Radio Station’ came from the front of the trolley car. Similar magic radios had been installed into every trolley car and every bus, so that the passengers could hear the news while they were on their way. Because of the changed life style, the channels such as Arcana Voice had also added a rebroadcast in the morning.

“Burst gun?” Inside the trolley car, many passengers repeated what they heard in confusion. They had never heard of such a thing before. What was it about?

Andy smiled. He knew it very well, because it was manufactured by the alchemical workshop he previously worked in. It was invented by the dwarves there and received Mr. Evans’ attention!

Based on the high-pressure steam rifles, and together with the advance alchemical dynamites and simplified magic circles, they had finally created a burst gun that could launch bullets with alchemical dynamite after years of experiments. As long as there were enough bullets, even the ordinary people could use them. Every bullet was as powerful as the ability of a regular knight.

Of course, such weapons were not good enough to deal with the knights, because the shooters could not keep up with their speed. Also, the weapons needed to be reloaded after the bullets were shot out. They could only expect to injure the regular knights if they shot in a row.

However, they were more than enough to deal with the squires of the knights.

Andy also knew that there were advanced burst guns. They were made with better barrels and magic patterns. As alchemical items that were equal to magic bows, they could only be used by magic apprentices and knights, and they would be exhausted after a few shoots. So, until they were simplified, they were only given to the middle-rank and low-rank knights.

Also, Andy was told that Mr. Evans had invented an electromagnetic gun that could launch bullets with electromagnetic power with a terrifying speed and damage. He had named the electromagnetic gun as 'Gauss Rifle'. It was a pity that the weapon was a senior-rank alchemical item that only the sorcerers whose cognitive world had half-solidified and the level-grand knights could use.

According to Mr. Evans, 'Gauss Rifle' could possibly be used by low-rank knights in the future, provided that the research on superconductivity materials made groundbreaking progress, which probably wouldn't happen in the next fifty years.

"By then, the kingdom would be able to organize an enormous group of knights. The regular knights will use Gauss Rifle, and the ordinary soldiers will use the middle-rank burst gun. Only the senior-rank sorcerers or radiant knights can resist their salvo..." Andy shivered in excitement as he imagined that.

He had to work in the workshops that manufactured such weapons in the future!

"...The proposal about mailmen and mail service is being debated in the Parliament of Nobles. Some members believe that it is useless because common citizens do not have many friends far away, and

the nobles, who have their own servants, do not need such a thing, either...”

Andy did not know much about the mail service, but Arcana Voice had repeatedly announced that it would shorten the distance among people and help connect families and friends far away. Also, it would be an amazing experience to get to know more friends through mail. So, he was a supporter of the idea. He mumbled, “Those nobles never consider the civilians, well, except for the few kind nobles.”

Ding. “The Lanxiang school is up ahead.”

Hearing the conductor’s voice, Andy felt that his body tightened and all his hairs were rising. Then, he left the trolley car. When he passed the conductor, he tossed five new copper coins into the iron box before her.

Although the five new copper coins were one fifth of Andy’s daily wage, he felt that the trolley car was worth it.

Also, he had no time to consider the cost, because he was too excited watching the beautiful buildings ahead of him on the cement road.

Basking in the sunlight, the Lanxiang school was dyed gold, giving a sacred and wondrous feeling. Feeling that he would never be able to forget the picture, Andy moaned: “Lanxiang, my dream, I’m here!”

Starting from today, he would step into a new episode of his life, where there was hope and light!

.....

Inside the ‘Atomic Universe’, Lucien and Natasha stood face to face.

“Bring the Shield of Truth. I’m not worried about your attack; I’m only worried about your defense.” Natasha said in a rarely solemn way. “In fact, it will be better if you bring the Sword of Truth.”

Knowing Natasha’s concerns, Lucien nodded. “What about you?”

"I'm looked after by Granny Hathaway, the defense in the Nekso Palace, your demiplane, and Pale Justice. What's there to be scared of?" Natasha smiled, not as sorrowful as a common lady would be.

Lucien chuckled and brought out a crown that seemed to be forged with starlight. "I've borrowed the Thorny Crown for you."

"When did you borrow it?" Her eyes widened, Natasha asked in amusement.

"When I guessed that you will give me both the Shield of Truth and the Sword of Truth. It is not of much use for me." Lucien put the crown on Natasha's head with a smile.

The other two legendary items had been borrowed by Klaus and Erica.

Natasha smiled brilliantly, but then she heaved a sigh. "It's a shame that I still haven't advanced into legendary, or I'd be able to go with you."

She was sensible enough to know that she would only be a burden for Lucien if she joined the adventure when she was not legendary yet.

"It had been only one year since you became a gold knight. You can't be hasty. Even if you grasp the attack with which you executed Kritonia, it would take years before you have a chance of advancement. That's perfectly normal." Lucien rubbed Natasha's hair.

Natasha nodded her head. "The cruel reality that I cannot partake in an adventure with you has filled me with momentum. I'll keep on trying."

Then, she hugged Lucien and kissed him deeply for quite a few minutes. In the end, she spoke in a coarse voice half jokingly, "If you are trapped, just wait for me to save you after I become a legend."

"However, I believe that you will definitely make it back smoothly."

After that, Lucien embarked on the adventure with an unprecedented assortment of five legendary items.

Chapter 614: Familiarity

Heidler city was dim, gloomy and grey, as monotonous and frozen as the World of Souls.

Before the entrance, Douglas, Fernando, Vicente, Klaus and Erica had all arrived. They were waiting for Lucien.

“You’ve brought the Shield of Truth, too?” Looking at Lucien who had finally come, Klaus speculated with a smile, “Together with the Thorny Crown that you borrowed, you have five legendary items with you in total. That’s quite unprecedented. Even I, a sorcerer who specializes in alchemy, cannot compare to you. Even Mr. President only has four.”

“Mr. President’s items are either top legendary or level-three legendary. Mine are not worth mentioning at all.” Lucien said ‘modestly’.

The number of legendary items were rare partly because the main ingredients needed were too precious and partly because the demand on the crafter was very high. Apart from the legendary sorcerers and the saint cardinals, vampires and primordial dragons could only craft items with their racial talents with a high failure rate. The legendary knights had to count on other people’s help. Therefore, few similar objects had been passed on from the Magic Empire, although the number of legendary items had doubled since the last years of the empire.

That was the reason why Hathaway, who was adept at ‘Luxury Cracking’ and ‘Elements Resolve’, was so terrifying. She could ruin somebody’s life collection easily.

Vicente interrupted their conversation. “Now that we are all here, it’s time to go.”

“Yes, it’s time to go.” Said Douglas with a vague smile. He was solemn but not nervous.

After receiving the intelligence about the World of Souls, the

Congress of Magic had resolved the problem that the gap was invisible. At this moment, enshrouded in the special magic circle, the twisted gap could be seen clearly. It emitted the intense stink of death and dullness.

Passing through the gap and the curtains of shadows, Lucien entered the World of Souls. Around him was the messy reflection of Heidler city, where the high magic towers leaned on each other like children's toys. Vague greyness was everywhere.

They could find no additional colors in the whole world except from each other.

"It's been ten years since I first entered the World of Souls, obtained the Sun's Corona, and learnt that Maskelyne was trapped. I've finally begun my quest to explore the World of Souls." Lucien felt complicated. He had just become an official sorcerer back then.

Because teleportation was suppressed in the World of Souls, they jumped through the seven advance bases and approached the frontier, where they saw Bergner, the Prophet.

He was still wearing a grey hat, and his white eyebrows seemed to be longer now.

"My astrology tells me that the mysterious existence of the World of Souls shows no sign of waking, but there are other dangers in the Temple of Spirits. You must not be careless. Remember, if you encounter great danger, don't hurry to retreat, and you will only see hope if you press forward." Bergner spoke of the result of his prophecy that he prepared for two months.

Fernando asked in confusion. "Forward? But our destination is only the Furnace of Souls. We will return after preliminary exploration. I don't think the legendary undead creatures are an actual threat to us."

According to Adol's memories and Viken's files, there were only four level-three legendary spectres in the area: the Lich King, the Servant of Death, the Primordial Mummy and the Wraith Lord. Douglas would be able to suppress three of them on his own. It was

needless to say that there were the Lord of the Undead and 'Millionaire' Lucien. It shouldn't be a problem even if they were surrounded by forty unintelligent legendary spectres.

"Adol was only a senior-rank spectre. He barely knew the area outside of the Temple of Spirits. Also, the rooms, houses and corridors inside the Temple of Spirits are changing all the time. It's like a living maze. There are possibly dangerous rooms and pathways he did not know." Vicente argued cautiously.

After he publicized Adol's memories and Viken's files, Lucien finally understood why Maskelynes pattern of coordinates changed. That was because the buildings inside the Temple of Spirits were in constant changes. Even a senior-rank spectre like Adol only knew the changes at the periphery. He had to be led by the legendary spectres when he visited the Furnace of Souls.

Bergner said solemnly, "I don't know where the danger comes from. Perhaps you won't run into any, but you need to be careful."

Douglas nodded and spoke to the team. "Our exploration is divided into two parts. The first part is to reach the Furnace of Souls without causing much noise, like Maskelyne did, and check if the Church is cooperating with the World of Souls. The second part is to return to the edge and clear the unintelligent spectres."

They had discussed the plan before. The reason why they did not clear the enemies before their investigation was that the noise might terrify the intelligent legendary spectres, who would then turn on the defenses in the Temple of Spirits or ask for the help of other forces. In such a way, they wouldn't be able to finish the exploration.

After confirming the plan, the six legendary sorcerers left the advance base and flew deeper stealthily.

About an hour later, Lucien finally saw a gigantic area of blackness. It was a group of magnificent palaces that were countless times larger than Allyn. Their height was inestimable, because their tops stuck deep into the grey sky.

The battle of legends might destroy a regular city, but for this group of palaces, it would be nothing more than the collapse of a palace or a garden.

“The deeper we go in, the harder the materials of the palace will be. Perhaps, the rooms in the deepest part are all made of ‘Wall of Sighs’.” The Lord of the Undead was unusually talkative, apparently eager to explore the Furnace of Souls.

‘Wall of Sighs’ was one of the strongest defensive spells of the school of necromancy. It could not be broken by any attack except for real sunlight. He was only using it as a metaphor.

Lucien was not very keen about that spell, because ‘Eternal Blaze’ was its bane.

In the wilderness outside of the Temple of Spirits, corpses of humans, elves, dragons and sphinxes were everywhere. Their skin had decayed, revealing the muscles and the white nerves. Weird maggots were wriggling in and out nonstop.

Those corpses moved slowly and aimlessly. Since there were no sound or colors, it was like a black-and-white silent film.

“They are all excellent bodies.” As they lowered their height, the Lord of the Undead observed the corpses in great delight, like a child who saw his favorite toys.

Erica cast a spell of collective illusion. In such a way, every undead creature would feel that Lucien and his team were spectres.

After they approached the Temple of Spirits, the six of them landed and walked among the undead creatures in the stink.

In this area, the wandering undead creatures had senior-rank leaders. Some were intelligent, and some were merely acting with instinct.

Suddenly, a cerberus looked at them, as if it had smelled the disgusting scent of life.

It opened its mouth and was about to roar a soundless roar.

At this moment, Vicente glared at it, the crimson fire in his eyes bouncing. Then, the cerberus suddenly crouched and wagged its tail that was made of white bones, obviously terrified.

Around the cerberus, the other undead creatures stopped their movement, too, and made all kinds of weird gestures, as if they were welcoming the return of their master.

“This is truly as expected of ‘Lord of the Undead’.” Lucien truly understood the meaning of the legendary class.

Thanks to the invisible deterrence and the cover of the illusion, it did not take them long before they saw the infinite wall that was shimmering in coldness.

“Six kilometers to the left after the entrance.” Douglas calculated according to Adol’s memories. This group of palaces seemed highly immune to reconnaissance spells.

Therefore, the six of them changed their direction and moved along the city wall. Then, they found a swarm of mummies on their way. Some of them were humans, and some were sphinxes. Their grey cloths had stinky stains.

The two parties approached each other. Because of the illusion spell, those mummies did not sense anything but kept wandering ignorantly.

They were about to pass by each other, when a sphinx in the mummies suddenly halted. With weird and cold brilliance beaming out of its eyes, it suddenly expanded to almost three times its peers. A gold crown that was full of Sun Stones and Moonlight Stones appeared on its head, too, making it look terrifying.

“The Primordial Mummy?”

There were many primordial mummies, but only one of them was intelligent. This sphinx was clearly not it, because its eyes soon became brutal and bloodthirsty in a demonic haze. However, it was still a legendary creature!

The mummy widened its mouth and was about to send the signal of

alarm.

Suddenly, a low voice echoed: "Advanced Time Stop."

There was nothing but greyness before Lucien's eyes, as if the whole world was frozen. By the time it became normal, he saw quite a few beams of light bouncing on the ancient mummy, before it was destroyed by a brilliant meteor.

Hualala. The sphinx turned to countless pieces. From the broken body, black beetles crawled out.

"Is this the ability of a top legendary? A legendary undead creature has been eliminated instantly, even though it's only level one."

Lucien thought with mixed feelings, but then he sensed that the mummy was familiar. "Huh. Did I see it from somewhere before?"

"Move on." Said Douglas peacefully.

Lucien was about to step forward, when he suddenly recalled a few pictures, so he spoke through the telepathic bond. "Mr. President, wait a moment."

"Is there a problem?" Asked Fernando.

Lucien pointed at the broken body on the ground. "I think I saw it before. I would like to observe it for a while longer."

No legendary sorcerers would let go of the tiniest clues. So, they waited for Lucien.

After a moment, when Lucien almost remembered the pictures, the black beetles crawled back into the decayed corpse, and the pieces of the corpse began to wriggle and gather towards the center!

"It's not dead?" Erica was well aware of the destructiveness of the president's 'Fateful Meteor'. That was a legendary spell which could destroy someone together with their phylactery!

What was exceptional about the mummy?

Douglas also frowned, wondering why 'Fateful Meteor' lost effect. If

Lucien hadn't asked them to stay and observe, he would've probably been deceived by the creature in the World of Souls.

Lucien was briefly stunned. Then, he transformed into a legendary knight and drew the silver longsword, slashing the decayed body that had been regathered.

“Ahhhhhhhh!”

Miserable cries were transmitted into Lucien's soul along the sword, which made Lucien see a peculiar illusion: Inside a monochrome, gloomy mausoleum, countless red and brown 'spider threads' were tying a grey coffin. Above the coffin was a rusty ball of light that was stained with blood. After he slashed his sword, the spider threads were cut apart, and the light ball broke into half after violent trembles, vanishing into thin air. The cover of the coffin was knocked open, and a sphinx mummy sat up, howling in pain. Then, it fell apart, disintegrated into a pool of stinky, yellow mucus.

Was it Finks, the King of Sphinxes?

Chapter 615: Speculation

Seeing the familiar view, Lucien immediately recalled the identity of the sphinx mummy before him. It was exactly Finks, the King of Sphinxes that he encountered when he accomplished Rhine's task.

At that time, it was sealed inside a coffin, and it was executed by him with Pale Justice after his resurrection, falling into dormancy again. When he escaped through the gap of the World of Souls, he saw the shadow of its mausoleum, the bloodstained ball of light, and the weird red 'spider threads', which made him realize that it was actually sealed in the World of Souls.

Right now, its real self had been slain by the Sword of Truth through the projection. There was no need to worry about sealing him anymore, because beings which had completely died could not be sealed.

"Is this a projection? Sacrificing the wisdom to obtain the original strength? No wonder my 'Fateful Meteor' failed to destroy it." Douglas said speculatively. 'Fateful Meteor' could destroy all the life-preserving preparations when it was imposed on the real self, but it could not destroy the real self through projections or clones.

Lucien said solemnly, "Perhaps it's not only because it sacrificed its wisdom. I suspect that it was sealed in the World of Souls because somebody intended to extract the power in the light ball of its godhood. Right. It is Finks, the King of Sphinxes."

"Finks, the legend who died ten thousand years ago?" Douglas was very familiar with ancient civilizations. Also, Finks' mausoleum still lied in the southern desert of the Gusta Empire today.

Fernando, on the other hand, grasped the key point in Lucien's words. "The ball of godhood?"

Lucien nodded and described what he saw in Finks' mausoleum and the reflection of the World of Souls.

If it were a few years ago, they wouldn't have known what the

weird ball that could not be touched or approached was, but right now, they had absolutely no doubt that it was a cluster of godhood.

After a brief silence, Douglas said solemnly, “So to speak, Finks was possibly not really dead ten thousand years ago. It was actually captured by somebody of the World of Souls and sealed in a specific place to gather the ball of godhood. The projection to defend the Temple of Spirits was only a side effect.”

“Hehe. That explains why there were no fake gods in the main material world until the War of Dawn! I checked all the ancient records and discovered no fake gods at all! I was most curious about that. Since there were so many fake gods during the War of Dawn, it meant that the main material world had the conditions to gather the ball of godhood, but why are there so many fake gods in the alternate dimensions but none in the main material world? Because the World of Souls is behind everything.” Fernando sniffed.

Erica frowned. “Are you suggesting that every legend or powerful creature who could possibly gather the ball of godhood was noticed by the World of Souls, and they died ‘naturally’ when they almost succeeded?”

“More or less. According to Evans’ report, the mysterious existence of the World of Souls recovered a lot by absorbing the godhood of the same nature. Perhaps, the legends of the World of Souls captured the King of Sphinxes and transformed his godhood in order to awaken him.” Vicente said gloomily.

For a legend like Finks, although he would not collect godhood actively, the light of godhood would be naturally gathered in him after he was worshiped by all the tribes of sphinxes. Then, he caught the World of Souls’ attention.

Also, since he was not really dead, the spontaneous power of faith would be gathered where he was sealed, making it impossible for future generations to become a ‘god’. It should be the same case for ‘Amboula’, the Lord of Ocean worshiped by the Kuo-toans. Even though the emperor of the Kuo-toans was stronger than him, he could not sense any power of faith at all.

That was why no fake gods had ever appeared after the age of myths. It was not until the War of Dawn that a large group of people began to preach and collect faith.

After a brief conversation, the six legendary sorcerers had basically uncovered the scheme that lingered for tens of thousands of years.

The World of Souls had always been peeping at and threatening the main material world. It was definitely not harmless!

The exploration was much more valuable than anticipated!

“The ritual in the World of Souls is not bad at all. The King of Sphinxes slept for ten thousand years without decaying at all.” Klaus shook his head with a smile, dissolving the temporarily frozen atmosphere with a joke.

Lucien smiled. “When you approach the end of your life, you can send an application to the legends of the World of Souls to be sealed. Then, thousands of years later, when your dream becomes reality, you can be woken up again and enjoy everything.”

“Huh, that’s a great idea.” Klaus smiled. “But I still have a long life that I can enjoy and many puppets that are waiting for me. I cannot be sealed in a gloomy mausoleum and defend the Temple of Spirits with a disgusting look.”

Taking a deep breath, Douglas pointed at the secret entrance up ahead, “More terrible things may be waiting for us. We must be careful.”

The corpse of the King of Sphinxes stopped slithering. The swarm of black beetles lost the feelings of a mixture of life and death. They soon turned into grey mucus and melted into the black mud.

.....

The pure black gate was decorated with the gloomy stripes. Emitting unusual coldness, it invoked awe in everybody who saw it.

The entrance was dozens of meters tall, as if it were designed for giants, but according to Adol’s description, it was the smallest door

in the group of palaces.

Many senior-rank spectres similar to Adol were floating. They were defending the pathway in puffy long robes.

Douglas frowned. "The spiritual power is blocked in the Temple of Spirits. My magic eyes would be disconnected after they are sent in. It seems that we can only sneak in."

"Perhaps, the Temple of Spirits is part of the projection of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls." Vicente suddenly said.

"Very possible." Fernando, unusually, agreed with Vicente.

Therefore, under the protection of illusion, the six legendary sorcerers went to the gate.

It seemed that Finks was the legend who guarded this entrance. Lucien and the team did not encounter any other experts. Under the watch of the dozens of senior-rank spectres, they entered openly and casually as if they were returning to their own home. Those senior-rank spectres all turned a blind eye to them.

All the palaces were pure black, cold and silent. All the gardens had pale faces growing in them. All the corridors were sealed. All the corners were frequented by stinky spectres... After walking for a long time, Douglas said, "The temple up head is no longer the 'Lake of Ghosts' in Adol's memories. It means that the coordinates have changed. We have to count on ourselves now."

Thankfully, there was still the pattern that Maskelyne and Viken left. Since it was confirmed that they went missing behind the Furnace of Souls, they would definitely reach the Furnace of Souls as long as they moved on to the calculated coordinates.

After calculating the coordinates according to environmental parameters, the team pressed on. They repeated the process once in a while.

"I feel that time and space is unusual inside the Temple of Spirits." Douglas suddenly stopped before a temple. "It seems that we have come to a different world."

Lucien took out his silver 'Moon Timer'. "Yes, time and space is different. The second hand, the minute hand and the hour hand are all bouncing randomly. The time and space is changing after our every step."

"Also, the deeper we go in, the slower the time will be. One day here equals five days outside." Douglas wrote it down on his magic notebook. That was a responsibility of the 'pioneers'.

Furnace of Souls calculated the coordinates where Maskelyne went missing and the current coordinates. "It wouldn't be long before we see the Furnace of Souls."

On their way, the team happened upon four unintelligent legendary spectres. Thanks to Vicente and Erica, they were cheated without any trouble.

"Hopefully, we will find our target after we pass this palace." Douglas turned into gas and crawled through the gap on the gate of the palace, not triggering any magic circle.

Inside the palace were rows of bookshelves where yellowish books were kept in the intense air of rotting. On each level of the bookshelf, there were three white candles that emanated pale light, adding to the horrible atmosphere in the room.

"A library?" Klaus was rather surprised. "There's a library in the Temple of Spirits?"

None of those spectres seemed to be interested in books!

His red eyes emitting silver brilliance, Fernando read the books through the covers without causing any change.

"They are the precious books of different ages that have recorded many lost civilizations, including those in the mythological age that we do not know." After a long time, Fernando said in a low voice.

For sorcerers, books were among the best trophies!

Douglas smiled. "Remember the coordinates of this place and let's keep moving. We will take away the books when we return."

It would easily alarm the legendary spectres if they took away the books right now, which would cause unnecessary changes and delay their exploration on the Furnace of Souls. They would have no such concerns when they returned. Also, this place was still in the peripheral area and fitted the pattern of coordinate changes in Adol's memories. No additional puzzles needed to be solved.

In the light of the shivering candles, Vicente's dry cheeks that had only one skin was exceptionally horrible. He said, deep in thought, "Something has changed?"

Fernando became solemn. He immediately sensed something wrong with his spiritual power. "Where is Erica?"

It was not until then that Lucien realized that Erica, 'Master of Transformation' who had always been in the team, was gone! She went missing without any of them realizing it!

In the windless library, the fire of the candles were flickering like weird eyes.

A transparent crystal ball suddenly appeared in Douglas' hands. After it glittered, he extended his right hand and suddenly opened an invisible door.

The space changed, and a secret chamber appeared inside the library.

Inside the secret chamber, a demonic man, who had black hair and red lips, was holding Erica and sticking his sharp teeth deeply into her neck. Erica's flaxen eyes lost their vigor, and her face was frozen.

Sensing that the secret chamber was opened, the weird man in a splendid robe turned around abruptly. His unusually pale face and his mouthful of redness were a major contrast. As blood dripped off from his lips, he laughed crazily: "It's been a long time since I enjoyed such delicious blood!"

He thought that Douglas, Lucien and the rest of them would be shocked and horrified, but he saw nothing but smiles of mockery –

except from Vicente, who barely had any normal facial expression.

In surprise, he held his neck in pain, as if something was burning his soul from inside. The blood on his lips emitted sacred brilliance.

Erica in his hands somehow recovered. Knocking his hands away, she wiped her neck with her handkerchief and sneered, "Has your mom never told you not to drink the blood of any random guy, particularly not that of a Master of Transformation?"

Chapter 616: Coffin

The ancient vampire held his throat, trying to say something but unable to make any sound. Black blood spurted out of his mouth nonstop, and his fair and smooth skin dried as if it were burnt. His crimson eyes were gradually frozen, with regret lingering on, before he collapsed on the ground.

“A Master of Transformation’s blood is the last you try to suck. Tsk.” Klaus clicked his tongue, as if he were sorry for the intellect of this ancient vampire.

Lucien chuckled. “In fact, the Master of Transformation’s blood is the best. If you suck one of them, you will be essentially sucking countless races. But he shouldn’t have sucked Erica’s blood when she became a seraph. He must’ve been desperate about his life.”

“Are you two comedians?” Erica took her handkerchief back and glared at them. Then she said to Douglas, “Mr. President, I suddenly felt a space-time change when I observed the bookshelf just now, and then I entered this chamber and met this vampire. I was worried that he might expose us, but he seemed to be too passionate about my blood, so I simply changed my blood accordingly.”

That was exactly ‘Local Transformation’.

“A space-time change...” Douglas repeated. “We didn’t notice it at all in the beginning. It seems that the Temple of Spirits is truly part of the projection of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. That’s why the legendary spectres could fool our senses. In the next, we need to be more cautious. Consider our enemy as a demigod!”

Vicente nodded and looked at the body of the vampire. “He seemed to be one of the intelligent legendary spectres, but why was he so stupid? The real vampires are all intelligently capable despite their egotism.”

“That’s normal. The ancient vampires were created by Silver Moon Alterna, and the other vampires were transformed through the

embrace. They absolutely obey Silver Moon and shouldn't work for the World of Souls at all." Lucien looked at his left hand. When he met the ancient vampire just now, it showed no reaction at all.

Fernando stepped forward and examined the body with magic. "Then, it's possible that the vampire was synthesized by the mysterious existence of the World of Souls in other ways..."

"In what ways?" Douglas also stepped close and began his investigation.

The Lord of the Undead and Klaus followed them, touching the skin of ancient vampire that was still partly intact.

"The skin is smooth, elastic, with blood running slowly downwards. The most intense vigor can be felt, but there's no power of the Silver Moon." The Lord of the Undead rubbed the skin like a pervert and observed enthusiastically.

Klaus jabbed the flesh. "Perhaps his intellect was compromised exactly because he was synthesized. He did not know the simple lesson that not all food is edible. Was his soul created or melted?"

'Melting' was exactly the way to create alchemical life right now. Many relevant pieces of the soul were used for the combination.

"You do have a point. The vampires like Mr. Rhine would've controlled the enemy first, prepared food and wine, and examined the food carefully, before they enjoyed the dinner." Lucien also walked close.

"Hey, enough!" Erica rubbed his wound that was healing quickly and said angrily, "This is not the time for arcana studies and discussions!"

Huh? The research maniacs finally realized that there were more important things to do.

Seeing that they backed off, Erica smiled, "Besides, this is my trophy. I don't need to tell you how important the dead body of an ancient vampire is to a Master of Transformation, right?"

Furthermore, after she lived half of her life, she could hold a magic ritual with the essence of the vampire's blood to extend her longevity.

The crimson fire in the Lord of the Undead's eyes bounced. It was true that Erica took him down on her own. Although she was only one level above the ancient empire, she killed him more than easily because of the guy's lust for blood.

Why can't I ever meet such a stupid vampire?

"Let's move on." Watching Erica collect the vampire's body, the Lord of the Undead said eagerly, as if he couldn't wait to meet a similar moron.

After they returned to the library from the secret chamber, Lucien and the rest of them carried out all their alert spells in case of another accident.

Without triggering the alarms in the library, the six of them passed thousands of bookshelves and left the palace from the other side.

Behind the palace was a peaceful lake, which was connected to the steeped palace by a black bridge.

Being in the World of Souls, the lake was, undoubtedly, grey and dead. It reflected the coldness around and did not have the slightest waves, making everybody uncomfortable.

"It's not the Lake of Ghosts but has a weird feeling." As one of the best experts of the school of necromancy, the Lord of the Undead identified the differences.

Douglas and Fernando also nodded. "It's like devilized ghosts, similar to Apsis on the Skeleton Land."

Apsis was the master of the Skeleton Land, the Life Reaper and the Lord of Death. He was a level-three legendary Demon Lord who was once locked and sealed by the Grand Cross.

The team was not delayed by their discussion. They stepped on the bridge quickly.

Then, the lake water suddenly surged. Countless pairs of red eyes stared at the bridge. Whoever stared back at them would lose their vitality and soon become undead creatures.

On the bridge, grey hands groped for Lucien and his teammates who were stepped forward. Those hands were thick, colorless, puffy and gross.

But before they reached Lucien's feet, they were already mutating under the green light and had countless more fingers, which made them look like the tentacles of a kraken.

Those hands were stuck together as a result, blocking the red eyes below them.

Lucien was rather surprised at the result. He intended to destroy the curse with 'Professor's Solitude', but the mutation turned out to be exceptional. It must be noted that 'Professor's Solitude' could only cause slight mutation after a long time under normal circumstances.

Feeling the urge of research, Lucien blew apart the mutated grey hands and pluck a dozen that were still normal. Wrapping them up, he tossed them into his storage bag.

Blackness appeared next to Douglas' feet, deviating both the grey hands and the crimson eyes. Those who reached Fernando were faced with a dark storm. Klaus' feet turned into the feet of a puppet at some point, which were absolutely steady when the grey hands scratched them. Erica, on the other hand, had the palest face without the slightest vitality. She had turned into a legendary spectre at some point and was grimacing back at the crimson eyes down below. Come on. I'm already an undead creature. How can you transform me?

Hehe. Vicente snorted. The red flames in his eyes bounced, spreading out vague deterrence that froze all the grey hands and the crimson eyes.

"This should be a trap that is designed against the living people. The undead creatures can pass without being influenced at all, but the non-spectres will definitely be discovered regardless of their

strength.” The Lord of the Undead said in a low voice. The many traps in the Temple of Spirits were a major eye-opener for him. He had never seen such arrangements before.

In the meantime, Erica cast a spell and transformed the team into corresponding undead creatures. They passed the bridge and arrived at the gate of the temple quickly.

The incident did not last long. The Lake of Evil only roiled for a while before it became normal. It did not catch any attention.

.....

The black gate of the steeped palace had uncanny symbols painted on it. They seemed to be representing the sun, or the pale eyeballs.

Douglas performed magic and let his left eye fly out, melting into the grey air and investigating on behalf of him.

They were closer and closer to the Furnace of Souls, and it was easier and easier for them to be discovered!

The left eye snuck into the palace sticking to the ground. Lucien and the team observed everything inside the palace through the picture on the crystal ball while they stayed on alert.

The palace was dark at first, but as the eye moved forward, there was gradually light. However, the light was pale and did not have any temperature.

Then, everything was illuminated. Lucien and the team saw the center of the palace. A pure skeleton in a magic robe seemed to be holding a certain ritual, with a silver cup of red blood on its left side and a creepily-smiling puppet that was enveloped by red spider threads on its left side. There was nothing before him.

“The Lich King.” Lucien recognized the spectre whose head was surrounded by special gems!

He was a level-three legendary spectre, and the master of the peripheral area of the Temple of Spirits.

Hardly had he made the observation in the telepathic bond when the Lich King suddenly raised his head and looked at the eye.

“Not good!”

“We’ve been exposed!”

Similar ideas occurred to Lucien and his partners. Douglas simply cast the spell:

“Advanced Time Stop!”

Crack. The silver cup fell to the ground, the blood was vaporized, and the red spider threads on the puppet were all broken. Countless cracks appeared on the puppet, too. A cluster of flickering light surfaced before the Lich King and was shattered into pieces.

However, they also disrupted the time and space and offset the Advanced Time Stop!

Fernando, Vicente, Lucien and Klaus, in the meantime, surrounded him from different directions.

All the gems on the Lich King’s head were illuminated. He became transparent and disappeared, but there was not the slightest wave caused by teleportation!

“What happened?” Erica was confused. How could the guy have escaped so easily right under our noses?

Douglas looked around. “He hasn’t escaped yet; he’s still hiding somewhere in this palace.”

“Yes.” Lucien agreed with him.

They were the authorities in time and space.

Therefore, the few sorcerers blocked the two gates and began to search carefully, while they tried to sense any waves of messaging.

Soon enough, Lucien discovered a secret door. Above the door was a vertical symbol that looked like a sword.

After checking it, Douglas opened the door and revealed a rather spacious chamber. The chamber seemed to be even brighter than outside.

The chamber was vacant save five black coffins. There were two flat coffins on the left and on the right, in the way they were usually put, but ahead of them was a dark red coffin that had been lifted vertically, as if the master of the coffin wanted to stand forever.

None of the five coffins were longer than the height of a regular person, particularly the vertical one ahead, which was obviously no more than two meters long. In the eyes of Lucien who was wearing the Sun's Corona, a cluster of sacred, intangible light was floating before or above each of them. Every cluster of light was connected to three similar flickering lines. One of the lines was extended from the void down below, one extended into the void above, and the last one dug into each coffin.

“Godhood?” Lucien was not surprised to see that.

“Is he hiding in the coffin?” Asked Klaus in confusion.

Douglas suddenly said solemnly, “Look at the floor, the wall and the ceiling.”

Focusing his attention, Lucien saw vintage crosses through the black and grey dust!

The crosses in the style of the War of Dawn!

Based on their pattern, similar stripes could be found on the five coffins, too!

Dum! Dum! Dum

Dum! Dum! Dum

Lucien's heart was suddenly pounding.

Chapter 617: Changes

After hearing Lucien's declaration that he had found the godhood, Fernando, Douglas and the rest of them all activated their special items, allowing them to also see the five clusters of godhood.

At this moment, the cover of the black coffin that had been placed vertically suddenly hit the ground, raising a mist of dust and revealing the 'owner' of the coffin inside!

Faced with such an accident, Douglas, Fernando and the rest of the team were all set to cast spells, and Lucien had an additional silver pocket watch in his hands.

A gold-haired handsome man in a white robe was standing inside the iron coffin. He was tall, his eyes were closed, and his hands were crossed before his chest.

There was not the slightest hint of life in him. He seemed to be dead for years, but his skin was healthy and smooth without any decay. The greatest feature on his face was the hawk nose that made him look very aggressive.

"Ivan?"

Suddenly, Lucien heard Douglas and Fernando's shock in the telepathic bond at the same time!

Ivan?

It was a very common name in the Schachran Empire, but when it appeared with the vintage crosses around, Lucien could only think of one person:

Saint Ivan, the first pontiff of the North Church!

Saint Ivan, the 'culprit' who caused the schism of the Church!

Saint Ivan, who let the capital of the Schachran Empire named after him!

Why was he here?

After only one brief moment, the 'Ivan' inside the black coffin suddenly opened his eyes. That was a pair of eyes that were bluer than the ocean and clearer than gems. They were so deep that all the light around were absorbed by them, resulting in a temporary darkness.

.....

In the Saint Ivan Church in San Ivansburg, inside a secret confessional...

Belkovsky, the incumbent pontiff of the North Church who had the typical huge nose of Schachran, was praying before the cross, when his eyes suddenly widened. His bright yellow eyes were immediately replaced by azure.

"Who broke into the Room of the Holy Spirit?" He said in anger. In the next, his body turned into illusionary light, as if he were melted into the air.

In the Saint Aleksey, the Saint Felix, the Saint Uriel, and the Saint Geno Churches, four Grand Cardinals in the level of saint also opened their closed eyes in the middle of their prayers.

.....

The ball of godhood before the coffin of 'Ivan' suddenly flew into his body, allowing bright wings of godhood to be opened on his back. They were purer than the sunlight and more brilliant than the stars!

His nose protruded and turned larger, making his looks the most typical style of the Schachran Empire. His eyes were gradually dyed yellow. Behind his head, the brilliance of godhood displayed various illusionary faces, including Saint Ivan that they had just seen and many strangers that Lucien did not know.

Pa, pa, pa. The covers of three of the coffins that were placed flatly were opened, and three men in white long robes flew out and melted into the balls of godhood before them, flapping the wings of

godhood.

The last coffin was still quiet, but something seemed to have flown into the ball of godhood above it, narrowing and lengthening it into an angel of light with yellow eyes.

A record suddenly occurred to Lucien. "...The six grand cardinals—Ivan, Aleksey, Nikon, Uriel, Geno, Felix—launched a surprise attack on Wilfred's Demiplanes Magic Tower. In this intense battle, the six grand cardinals killed the necromancer and destroyed his phylactery... Nikon was killed by Wilfred."

"During the fight against the vicious necromancer Wilfred, the Grand Cardinal Geno, was severely injured by Wilfred's counterattack before his death. Geno's soul was entangled by the power of death. Seven years later, Geno died in Lance, the Holy City..."

"...That day, God stared at the Holy City. Four saints, namely Ivan, Aleksey, Uriel and Felix, and seven saint cardinals, including Salt, Antlers and Siriusius, stood under the illumination of gold light, and accused Gregory of being the living embodiment of the Lord of Hell..."

For a moment, the whole secret chamber was so sacred and dazzling that it was a weird contrast to the silent and monochrome colors in the room a moment ago.

"Advanced Time Stop!"

"Storm Barrier!"

"Torso of Death!"

"Legendary Transformation!"

"Devilish Puppet!"

"Vengeful Gaze!"

Six spells were chanted at the same time. Although they were not sure what was going on yet, it was obviously not something good

and had to be stopped immediately!

At this moment, 'Saint Ivan' suddenly opened his arms, as if he were embracing the people and the filthy world.

Countless tiny angels immediately appeared around him and sang anthems and hymns that sounded like 'hallelujah' that Lucien heard in his previous life.

A giant hole was broken in the monotonous black, white and grey up above. The projection of Mountain Paradise appeared. The light was poured into the body of Saint Ivan through the connection of the ball of godhood, making the wings of godhood even more dazzling and brilliant. His energy soared quickly and soon surpassed that of Fernando and Douglas, reaching the level close to a demigod!

It was God's Grace!

With such changes, time and space shook, and the secret room was enshrouded by holiness. The legendary spells from Douglas, Lucien and the rest of them were dissolved before they were launched!

"Abominations shall be punished." Ivan, whose blue eyes emitted vague yellowness, stepped forward and announcement solemnly, before hallowed light surged out like a tide.

Lucien immediately felt a space-time change, as if he had left the World of Souls and entered the infinite cosmos. He could see the brilliant stars far away, but he could no longer detect Fernando, Erica and the rest of the team who were right next to him.

Right then, Douglas' grave and slow voice echoed. "Gravity Cage."

The darkness of void surfaced, and the vast cosmos was gone. Then, Lucien discovered that he had been teleported. He did not know which palace he was in at all!

"Has Mr. President stopped 'Saint Ivan'?"

.....

Above a certain palace in the Temple of Spirits, the objects and the walls were all twisted and shattered under the terrifying pressure. However, despite the profound and heavy darkness, the transparent wings transformed from godhood did not seem affected.

“I’m told that you found the path to becoming a demigod by the general theory of relativity. I’m very curious about it.” Smiling, ‘Saint Ivan’ opened his right hand and broke the gravity cage more than easily after a single press.

“Paradise of Stars!” A weirdly-shaped celestial globe appeared in Douglas’s hands. As it emitted a brilliant light, it cast the place around him really into a cosmos that was dark and boundless.

It was his unique legendary item that could directly create the lock of ‘Paradise of Stars’ to improve himself and suppress the enemy.

In the meantime, he spread out his spiritual power. “You are not Ivan!”

Since the Congress of Magic had a chance to rise only because Saint Ivan divided the Church, Douglas and Fernando had met Saint Ivan a lot at that time. After a brief identification, he soon realized that something was wrong.

The wings transformed by godhood flapped behind ‘Saint Ivan’, shattering the falling stars in the lock. “Does it really matter? We have been integrated. After we obtain the real immortality, I will be Ivan, and Ivan will be me. We will also be a lot of other people.”

“The inheritance of strength?” Thanks to his experience, Douglas seemed to have grasped something. “No wonder only four coffins are opened. That’s because the last coffin belongs to Geno, who completely perished a few years after he returned to the Holy City. So, he could only be replaced by certain items to pass on his strength!”

“No wonder the ratio of saints is so high in the North Church!”

Saint Ivan smiled. Without any further ado, he carried out his strength close to that of a demigod and suppressed Douglas who

only had the assistance of the lock.

.....

Inside the barrier of storms, black tornadoes were sweeping, and countless gigantic lightning was striking, shattering the intense air of death and the frozen black, white and grey. Heat and coldness took turns to destroy everything around.

“Aleksey, Uriel.” A world of storms seemed to have been born in Fernando’s red eyes. Whoever was seen by him would bear unimaginable horror. His barrier of storms surrounded the two white-robed men and the Lich King who was preparing for an ambush.

The two white-robed saints were no strangers to Fernando. They were two of the three saints who followed Saint Ivan to divide the Church. The last of them was clearly Felix.

‘Uriel’, black-haired and black-eyed, shook his head and did not say anything. He merely chanted: “Light of Judgment!”

The wings made of godhood were closed, blowing up a light that seemed to be from the highest part of Mountain Paradise, judging everything in the world.

It was a pity that he and ‘Aleksey’ were only close to the peak of legendary even though they were melted with the balls of godhood. Together with the assistant of the Lich King, they were only on par with Fernando and were caught in a fierce battle. They were even losing the battle.

The aftermath of their battle destroyed the palaces around, causing the ever-rising terrible howls inside the Temple of Spirits.

In another palace, the Lord of the Undead encountered ‘Felix’ and was slightly overpowered by the enemy who had melted the ball of godhood. The rainbow dragon that Erica transformed into and the angel of light that the ball of godhood before the coffin of ‘Geno’ turned into were fighting now in the sky and now in the Lake of Evils very intensely. Although she was one level lower, she had the

help of legendary items and the enemy had nothing, so she could still resist the enemy for now.

.....

“Even ‘Saint Ivan’ is only close to a demigod under God’s Grace. He cannot kill Mr. President at all. That’s a man who had a head-on clash with a real demigod, the pope, and returned in one piece. Although he may be briefly overpowered, it remains to be seen who the final winner is when the effect of God’s Grace is over.” Lucien was not worried about Douglas, or his teacher Fernando. “My teacher is an out-and-out top legend. He can escape safely even if he is attacked by the four enemies.”

The noises when the balls of godhood were melted were too huge, which informed Lucien of the enemy’s capabilities clearly. The angel of light was a level-three legend, and the other three saints were all close to the peak of legendary. Even if they were to attack his teacher together, they could only suppress his teacher for now. Although it would be dangerous for his teacher when the four level-three legendary spectres came to aid, his teacher was certainly not a fool who would wait for the enemy’s reinforcements to arrive without doing anything.

“For somebody at the top of legendary, they can leave whenever they are in danger, unless they are stalled by somebody in the same level.” Lucien remarked with mixed feelings. It was actually himself, Erica and Klaus who were in danger. Also, even though Vicente was a grand arcanist in the school of necromancy, it remained to be seen whether or not he could be resurrected if he died here.

Thinking of what happened earlier, Lucien basically guessed who were inside the coffins. “Five saints... It seems that the coffin that was not opened belongs to Geno. He died a long time ago, so they made use of him in a different way?”

.....

Inside the secret chamber, because of God’s Grace from ‘Saint Ivan’, the other people had been separated or teleported. The place fell

quiet again.

Suddenly, the coffin of 'Geno' was opened, and a white-robed man with bright red eyes slowly crawled out. The decayed muscles on his body began to drop, replaced by newborn flesh and skin.

Looking at the place where 'Saint Ivan' and Douglas were fighting remotely, he put on a mocking smile and then walked towards the entrance!

Chapter 618: Tycoon Style

Looking around, Lucien saw himself in a round hall with circles of seats like an enlarged Parliament of Nobles. In fact, this place was as big as half of a city. The dome glistened in the pale light, making the cold, black bricks give out creepy colors.

According to the changes of coordinates, Lucien roughly figured out where he was and where the two exits were: To his left, there was a path towards outside, and it would go through the palace that Lich King and the five saints were in; while to his right, the path went deeper, which should be the one leading to Furnace of Souls.

There was no doubt that Lucien would choose to go back. He hoped that he could run into Douglas or Fernando so that he could be safe; and if he wasn't that lucky, he could still leave this place.

After Saint Ivan and the rest of the four saints "resuscitated", the situation had been completely turned around and it was now hundreds of times more dangerous than they thought. Douglas and Fernando might, in their poorest luck, be severely injured, they would at least stay alive. However, for Lucien, Klaus, and Erica, it would be a completely different story. If they got lucky, they would be sealed like Sphinx, and in that case the congress might still be able to save them in the future, but if they were not that lucky, they would be forever gone and only be memorized by history.

Lucien realized that this was the hidden danger in Bergner's prophecy, as he was casting layers of defense magic spells on himself. He warned himself that when the live-or-dead moment came, he should blow himself and destroy all the five legendary items immediately without any hesitation. He had his appendix at home for resurrection anyways!

Under the protection of Elemental Skin, Mental Barrier, and a series of spells, Lucien pushed open the gate on the left. Instantly, the sad and shrill cries went off.

Any existences that could make noise in the World of Souls were

without doubt of legendary level!

There were at least seven around! In the distance, there were even more!

Outside of the palace there were ghouls, spectres, mummies, skeleton dragons, and dragon liches like waves rushing in from all directions. They covered the sky, the corridors and paths, lakes and gardens, and among them there were seven extremely strong and intimidating auras.

In the palace in the distance, the roarings and cries were echoing, as if the horrible dead were having their new year concert.

Seeing this, Lucien felt his blood freeze. Although he was not at all close to them, he was still shocked.

Lucien wondered if he could use Advanced Time Stop so he could seize the chance to go through this area. However, he realized that the range of the spell was not wide enough to cover the entire place.

For the first time, Lucien hated that the bloody temple was this spacious! He wished that all the legendary dead could have gathered together, but now there was no chance for him to freeze them at once. Even with the Moon Timer, Lucien could only cast it three times in succession, but that was still not enough.

Those dead creatures had no wisdom. Lucien was not afraid of them one-on-one, one-on-two, or even one-on-five. However, now the quantitative change had led to qualitative change, not to mention that there might be even primordial mummies and servants of Death hiding.

Then what about fighting using guerrilla tactics? Lucien believed that this place was big enough.

At this time, however, Lucien recalled Bergner's words, "Remember, if you encounter great danger, don't hurry to retreat, and you will only see hope if you press forward."

Following his instinct from his Host Star of Destiny and Astrology

power, Lucien soon made up his mind. Facing the spectre waves, Lucien adjusted his monocle with his left hand and then reached out his right hand,

“Atomic Fission!”

Meanwhile, Lucien cast Hand of Uncertainties using his soul power!

BOOM!

A huge fireball exploded in the waves of the spectres. The horrible blasts spread out fiercely and off white mushroom cloud intertwined with flames soared.

Hoooooooo! Countless bitter cries suddenly stopped. The scene was like a harvested wheat field, or a huge swirl suddenly emerged in an ocean : A good number of spectres were instantly removed, and there was no way that the vacancy left could be filled in within a short period of time.

The roaring from the seven legendary creatures had also been reduced! Two of them had been vaporized!

The earth was booming and shaking, and the blasts and radiation had reached Lucien. But since he was in the air far away from the explosion, and with all the defense spells he had, he was basically not hurt at all.

The combination of the two spells worked definitely very well. The only pity was that the seven legendary creatures were too far away from each other, so this one single strike only killed two of them. Lucien wished that he could cast the combo several times in a row to send all of the spectres back to hell, but obviously that was not going to happen.

Lucien then dived into the air as fast as he could for the gate on the right side of the temple.

When he was flying, Lucien thought to himself that Eternal Blaze would for sure work even better here since spectres were so afraid of daylight.

Entering the gate on the right side, Lucien found an intact path leading to an old, simply-decorated hall. This place looked like a fane, whose dome was supported by the thick, black stone pillars.

There was no time for Lucien to appreciate the design, as he still needed to disperse the spectres waves after him. Therefore, he started dashing along the only corridor in front of him.

The corridor seemed to be endless. Totally different from those places that Lucien went through earlier, the corridor was free of any spectres. The entire space was so quiet and cold as if everything froze here.

Lucien cast Advanced Fly and Advanced Speed at the same time. To avoid those tricky magic traps, sometimes he jumped up and flew in the air, sometimes he bent and kept down to the floor.

Then Lucien heard the giggle.

The giggle lingered in the empty corridor, and the creepy voice would easily make anyone without protection feel dizzy and horrified. But Lucien had Mental Barrier.

Giggling. Clapping.

The voice was laughing at how Lucien was running for his life.

Lucien's eyes reflected his Host Star of Destiny, and the crystal ball in his left hand became very dark. Suddenly, a flash of starlight lit up and pointed at one of the black walls.

Ninth circle unique spell, Maskelyne's Tracking!

Giggling. Giggling.

The voice slowly came out from the black wall. As if it was alive, it was wriggling on the floor, preventing Lucien from moving forward.

The darkness faded, and the wall had turned into a disgusting creature. It was a pile of rotten flesh, in the color of dark grey. The flesh consisted of countless half-rotten arms. In the middle of each palm of the arms, there was a brownish-yellow eyeball. The hands

were those which clapped, and the eyeballs were those which giggled.

Hundred-eye Ghost! Lucien instantly recognized this legendary spectre, as well as its power and how it fought.

Those disgusting, thickly-dotted eyeballs could make its enemies feel desperate and numb.

The giggling and clapping was its language, a language of chaos, powerful enough to dizzy the target and directly influence the target's mind!

Also, this disgusting pile of flesh did have wisdom, the giggling and clapping were showing that it was being sarcastic.

The hundreds of arms extended and came fiercely at Lucien. Meanwhile, the eyeballs had lit up, ready to shoot out different colors of rays.

What was worse, the terrifying roarings were also approaching from behind!

Lucien looked down for a moment and grabbed a fancy silver pocket watch out of his pouch. Then he pressed the small button.

Click.

The hundred-eye ghost's movement suddenly became very stiff. The disgusting arms were now wriggling forward as slow as a snail.

Lucien then cast a series of Cracking (Advanced). Meanwhile, the second hand ticked a couple of times, and a few spells were cast instantly.

Lucien's muscles started bulging, making the double-breasted suit rather tight. His skin had turned fair, and his black eyes were shining moonlight.

His both hands held the silver-grey sword tight. The blade reflected sharp light.

The solidified grey and white started melting and running again, and the black came back. The hundred arms missed their target, and the colorful rays also only hit the floor. Part of the floor had been melted.

Meanwhile, it burst out colorful lights, red, yellow, white, purple... Then, after a sliver flash. The pile of flesh completely stopped moving.

The hundred-eye ghost suddenly split into two and collapsed to the ground. Like it was being torn down by some invisible hands in the air, it was further split into even smaller chunks.

Within a second, Lucien had killed a level-one legendary spectre creature.

Although Lucien did not have the same power compared to that of Mr. Douglas, as he had quite a few legendary items, he was for sure “wealthy” in this way. Therefore, Lucien could fight in a tycoon style.

Such a legendary spectre must have turned the most powerful part of its body into a legendary item, which would not be destroyed by the Sword of Truth.

Among the chunks of white-grey flesh, Lucien found an intact yellow eyeball. It was as big as Lucien’s hand, and it was shining the creepy color.

Lucien could use the eyeball as a good material.

Putting it aside, he then flew towards the other end of the corridor.

After a while, Lucien could finally see the grey gate in front of him.

Hooooooooo!

The horrible roaring came from behind the black wall. A second later, a dark-yellow arm wrapped in bandages had directly gone through the bricks to grab Lucien.

The fingers of Lucien’s right hand quickly stroke the pocket watch

and the elapse of time instantly slowed down. The moment when the arm paused, Lucien had cast Short Distance Teleportation.

Bang! The black wall fell completely, and the tall, dark-yellow figure wearing the gold crown stumbled out.

Primordial Mummy?

Chapter 619: The Insane Defense

In Temple of Spirits, there were many primordial mummies, but there was only one wearing a gold crown.

That was the king of the primordial mummies, a level-three legendary, the dominator of the fringe area of the temple. It was immune to any spells lower than legendary level, and even some legendary ones!

If one did not know any specific spells that worked or have some particular blood powers, facing this thing would be great pain, even worse than facing a top legendary. As no attack would work at all.

Lucien recalled the pages he had read from before, “The King of Primordial Mummy, afraid of divine light, Sun power, and super-high temperature fire; Not immune to Luxury Cracking and Advanced Time Stop; High level of defense against physical weapon hacking...”

Ticking, ticking... the black second hand of the pocket watch ticked again and again. Lucien did not leave the mummy any chance to make a sound or attack.

Then his thumb pressed down.

Click. The black second hand stopped, and then the world lost its color only grey and white were left. The movement of the primordial mummy froze, as if it was in another space.

Lucien could not cast Cracking (Advanced). Although he could try Hand of Uncertainties, he did not believe that was going to do much help. After all, he was two levels lower than the mummy.

He assumed that his Sword of Truth could only break one layer of the mummy’s defense. In other words, the sword could not really hurt the mummy. Although Sword of Truth was very powerful, its power would still fade after breaking layers of defense.

Also, since the mummy was immune to most legendary spells in

Necromancy, Congus Ring could also be quite useless here in terms of attacking.

Immune to death spells and destruction spells, the mummy also would not take Grandeur Obliteration.

...

Lucien quickly ran through the magic spell list to see what he could use here. The moment when he pressed the button, he had been ready to start developing his tactic.

“Elemental Order.”

The spell was cast. In the past several months, Lucien had improved his Elemental Order to legendary level based on Elements Resolve. It was due to the limit that so far only up to four legendary spells could be constructed in his Soul that Lucien had to completely sing the long spell, and also using the complex hand gestures for help. If it had not been that the time had been temporarily stopped, the primordial mummy would have had enough time to kill him twice.

After adding Hand of Uncertainties and Elemental Order, the time-cease effect had approached the end. In the last second, Lucien cast Baler’s Transformation and pulled out Sword of Truth. He then fiercely wielded the sword at the primordial mummy.

Silver light flashed.

Colors resumed. Black of the walls recovered. Pale yellow of the bandages recovered.

Suddenly, countless colorful light spots burst out of the mummy’s body and the tawny-colored bandages quickly resolved. Layer by layer, however, the black rotten flesh was still not yet revealed.

The silver light cut in, and then the primordial mummy released the most bitter howling ever,

“Hoooooooo!”

The awful howling instantly penetrated most of Lucien’s defense

spells, making his head painfully buzzing.

This was the horrible power of this level-three legendary monster!

In front of the mummy's chest, some of the bandages were finally cut into two pieces. The iron-black rotten flesh now had a deep cut in it, and the cut had the power to prevent the rotten flesh from growing back. The tawny dead body oil, giving out the awful, disgusting odour, dropped onto the floor, eating in the floor tiles because of its horrible causticity.

However, the cut was still not deep enough. Lucien speculated that the mummy should be killed with at least another five or six same hacks adding on the existing wound.

But even with the power as a level-one legendary knight after transformation, this one single strike was already Lucien's full strength. There was no way that he could add another five or six to it – He was not fast enough!

Unless... unless he used Advanced Time Stop. But that would make Moon Timer take a whole day to recover. Lucien would lose his most powerful tool to survive in this dark temple.

“Hoooooooo!”

Dark miasma permeated out of the cut and covered it. Layers of defenses were added again.

Lucien felt frustrated, not only by how troublesome the mummy was, but also about his own indecision. If he could not survive here, there would be no more future. If he had seized the chance and continued the attack by using Time Stop, he could have probably killed the monster already! But now, he had to start all over again!

The defense of the monster was totally insane!

At this time, the arms of the primordial mummy suddenly reached out and extended. It was totally an unexpected attack to Lucien.

Fortunately, Lucien's body spontaneously reacted as a legendary knight. His left arm swiftly lifted the small, black shield.

Bang! The colliding powers stirred the air like water rippling. However, the ripples could not hurt Lucien at all, as if he was in a different dimension!

The primordial mummy suddenly accelerated and split into a few streaks of shadows. The black miasma spread out from its gold crown and filled in the space, corroding everything.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Lucien had to keep retreating to confront the power. If it had not been the Shield of Truth, Lucien would have already lost his shield from the beyond-aggressive attacks. However, even so, the shield had had a few fine cracks on the surface, and the waves in the air were becoming increasingly fierce.

Lucien knew that his spiritual power was far from being fast enough to predict the movement of a level-three legendary. His brain worked fast to analyse what he could do right now.

Baler's Transformation was only a sixth circle spell, and therefore, it was now showing many problems in a legendary level fight. The willpower frontier transformed by spiritual power could not reach the level of a legendary knight. Facing the primordial mummy, the disadvantages were fatal.

Hooooooooo!

To make the situation worse, more angry and desperate howling followed from behind. The waves of spectres and the legendaries hiding in them had entered the hall.

Lucien suddenly put aside the Sword of Truth in his right hand and grabbed the pocket watch floating in the air following him. His fingers gently stroked it.

Although during transformation, he could not directly cast some of the spells, Lucien could still use his legendary items.

The stroke activated the black second hand, and time was interfered with in this area, suddenly faster and suddenly slower. The primordial mummy was affected.

Moon Timer was a level-two legendary item. With its specific usage,

its power was close to level-three. Therefore, it worked well on this primordial mummy!

Seizing the chance, Lucien's double-breasted suit lit up. A fist-sized, bright ball was released from the magic robe and it shot out at the mummy!

Boom!

The deafening, horrible blasts carrying rolling flames, white bolts of lightning, and green acid fluid exploded, turning the space into hell.

Hellish Ball! The ancient legendary spell from the school of elements! A spell integrating the power of flame, lightning, acid, and sound waves!

“Hoooooooo!”

The primordial mummy burst out with a painful cry. It was lit on fire, and the invisible electromagnetic waves were also burning its body. However, only one-third of its defense was down.

Its defense was insane!

Seeing that it wasn't really working, Lucien immediately stopped himself from pressing the button. Putting aside the shield and removing the transformation, he cast in a low voice,

“Atomic Universe!”

It wasn't a legendary spell, but a projection of his demiplane, which could interfere with the real world!

In the corridor, a boundless starry sky appeared. Countless elements were following the route of breaking down into pure protons, neutrons, and electrons and then reuniting, from one to a thousand.

The fusion produced a number of huge suns, and the extremely high temperature and dazzling glare was beyond scorching.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!”

The primordial mummy simultaneously lifted its right arm and covered its eyes. Black miasma was being evaporated out of its body.

Atom fusion. Eternal Blaze!

Seeing that, Lucien added a series of instantly-cast spells on himself and flew past the mummy as fast as he could.

The fusion was simulated using the projection of his demiplane, and this was unique to the class, Atom Controller. Its power was thus much, much weaker than the true Eternal Blaze, but it was just for intimidating it and creating a chance for Lucien to run for his life.

Lucien did consider that he could seize the chance to initiate another several rounds of attacks, but he decided that he had better run at this point.

Pushing the gate open, there were two corridors waiting for Lucien to choose. But he did not. Suddenly, he split into two. One for each choice, he kept running.

And then there was another fork in the road. Lucien split again.

After three times, the real Lucien had arrived at a maze-like hall. However, the angry, hoarse cursing had also arrived from behind in some distance,

“You’ll never get away!”

Damn! The primordial mummy’s instinct worked so well! Lucien thought that he had got rid of it because he just cast so many illusionary and astrology spells on his way!

Suddenly, he saw a green beam of light. And there was a gold skull in the air.

It was Demigod-lich!

Lucien had to be ready for another round of tough fight. But before he could do anything, he saw Klaus.

Now Klaus looked rather serious, and in front of him there was a girl puppet having blond hair.

Within a second, the beautiful puppet changed into a gold skull.

Then Klaus cast,

“Grandeur Obliteration!”

Silently, the gold skull was ground into ashes. At the same time, Demigod-lich burst out with a bitter cry and was turned into a pile of ash.

Although he had killed his enemy, Klaus could not cheer up at all. His face was very pale. The spell he just used also consumed most of his power and cost him an arm and a leg.

“Lucien?” Klaus was a bit surprised, and then a bitter smile appeared his face, “I wish you weren’t here, Lucien. The thing that’s chasing after you is much more powerful than Demigod-lich!”

“I’m sorry, Klaus. But there’s nothing I can do,” said Lucien, “but now it’s hard to say if you’re gonna be its new target. I suggest that we work together and put it back to eternal sleep again.”

There was no way that they could keep running and running.

Klaus was a bit speechless, “Do I have a choice?”

Klaus could instantly run away, but just as Lucien said, the primordial mummy might turn to chase after him. After all, Klaus was more powerful than Lucien, and thus he was the more dangerous one.

Chapter 620: The Sarcastic Smile

Before Lucien said anything, the outrageous air had broken in. One of the black walls in the maze was fiercely pushed open a big hole, and the mummy wearing the gold crown walked out,

“Both of you die here!”

The miasma surrounding the primordial mummy filled the entire space, preventing Lucien’s and Klaus’ spiritual power from reaching further. It felt like a long time exposure to the miasma would even drain their spiritual power!

Hooooooooo!

While furiously howling, the primordial mummy suddenly grew ten times bigger until it was as huge as a giant. In comparison, Lucien and Klaus were as tiny as two little ants.

Then the wild wind came.

The fierce wind came from the mummy’s two fists continuously hitting the ground over and over again like two giant hammers! The black stone pillars collapsed one by one – It would take Lucien quite a while to take down one of the pillars using Vengeful Gaze several times!

“Elemental Protection!” Having no time for transformation, Lucien instantly activated the defense spell the Robe of Grand Arcanists contained.

Colorful element light spots congregated in front of him and formed a half-transparent light shield.

Meanwhile, his right hand stroked the pocket watch and disrupted the flow of time.

“Alchemy Barrier!” Klaus said out.

He had just gone through a bitter fight, and thus there was now a

big difference between a level-three legendary and him. Therefore, he also chose to cast the defense spell that he was best at which sheltered him in a iron-black small fortress.

The giant primordial mummy ran through the disturbed time currents. The power of the currents made it slightly deviate from its target, but it still knew what it was heading for!

Bang! The fist as huge as a small hill encircled by fierce blasts hit Lucien and Klaus.

Lucien's elemental protection cracked, and the great power malevolently threw Lucien at the black wall behind him. Blood spilling out from his mouth, Lucien felt his soul was going through a bad concussion.

The iron-black fortress also cracked. Its many magic circles failed to resist the outrageous power.

Klaus's defense lasted a second longer, and then the blast also threw him at the same, half-broken wall.

Then Lucien saw the sky – cloudy and grey, but it was the sky! He was out of the temple now! Beside his hand, he suddenly felt the strange, transcendent power, as if next to him there was another world.

Lucien suddenly felt thrilled. He extended his spiritual power out and he “saw” a magnificent black palace whose top directly reached into the sky.

The gate of the palace opened. In the middle, there were layers of hanging veils. Behind the veils, there were countless pale faces with different looks on them, looking rather horrifying.

“Furnace of Souls!” Klaus exclaimed in the telepathic bond, which confirmed Lucien's guess.

They got lucky here. The punch from the mummy just helped them find the furnace.

Hooooooooo!

The primordial mummy followed them closely, leaving them no chance to catch a breath. The black miasma surrounding it was like the sickle of Death, a sign for their doomed destiny.

It rushed at them at great speed. The last hundred meters was just the mummy's one single stride!

At this time, the pocket watch in Lucien's hand dimly lit up. Lucien's middle finger pressed on it.

Click. A black hemisphere appeared above the primordial mummy and then dropped onto it. It seemed that the hemisphere was in fact incredibly heavy since the giant mummy's back was now slightly bending forward. It started moving slowly, as if it was wearing a set of shackles.

Seizing the chance, Lucien cast transformation. His eyes lit up, his muscles bulging, Lucien raised the small but thick shield using his left hand to protect Klaus and himself.

"Flood Devastator!" Klaus blurted out.

The grey sky suddenly sparkled. Then, a big hole appeared and black water poured out, drowning the mummy.

For most mummies, they could cause extreme droughts and resist water magic. However, if powerful enough, water magic could also be their weaknesses.

When the flood retreated and left everything on the ground in chaos, the primordial mummy remained totally intact, even including the miasma surrounding it.

Its body bulged again. Roaring furiously, the mummy king cracked the black hemisphere and then its right foot stamped on Lucien and Klaus.

Bang! In the deep, deafening noise, Lucien and Klaus were being protected by the invisible waves in the air, and thus they were not hurt at all.

"Burning Waterfall!" Klaus decided to use the legendary flame spell

– If water did not work, then he'd try fire!

The ground cracked with an illusionary, big gap, and the black and white flames surged out all the way up into the sky. The extreme high temperature could even melt the black tiles.

The thick fire pillar caged the primordial mummy and the fire burnt out the monster's bitterest cry. However, when the fire pillar disappeared, although most of the black miasma disappeared and the creepy bandages were burnt black, the mummy was still "alive"!

"At least a dozen more Burning Waterfalls to go... if it's not recovering too fast..." Through Telepathic bond, Klaus asked Lucien, "How long can you stand using that shield?"

Before he could say more, Klaus saw the miasma quickly gathering back.

The defense was insane!

Lucien's arms were already feeling sore, "Like this, maybe three minutes... It's heavy."

The Shield of Truth was also reaching its limit.

"Hellish Ball!"

"The Gloss of the Goddess of Magic!"

...

A series of legendary spells were cast by Klaus, but none of them severely hurt the primordial mummy. Because of the difference between their ranks, the spells did not work very well!

The primordial mummy's punches were like raindrops, making Lucien's arms extremely sore.

The invisible waves protecting them were also going to crack at any time.

Fortunately, the primordial mummy's attacks were quite

predictable. The mummy's horrible defense and fighting power were at the cost of the mysterious and unpredictable fighting tact. Its style was completely straightforward and rough.

Klaus took out a puppet from his pocket and threw it at the primordial mummy.

The puppet quickly ballooned into a gold golem. The golem could release toxic flames and smog, and had the same amazing defense and fighting skills.

Also, Klaus summoned his demiplane, Alchemy Paradise. Thus, after the projection landed, the gold golem got a great support. Countless other golems, puppets, and jackstraws followed the golem and charged down the battlefield.

Bang! Crack! Clap! Klaus closed his eyes for a second as he did not want to see the scene.

A few seconds later, the golem together with its allies had been crushed into pieces by the primordial mummy. They were not at all on the same level.

"I'll take down its defense. Then it'll be your turn." said Klaus to Lucien through the bond.

He took a deep breath, knowing that it would be their last chance. If they did not hurry up, when the undead army caught up, everything would be too late.

Lucien nodded rather seriously. He did not say anything, but Klaus could rely on him.

Klaus took out another puppet from his pouch. The puppet was a fine doll with long, black hair and a beautiful, round face. Suddenly, the doll opened her eyes and they directly looked into the primordial mummy's red eyes.

Somehow, Lucien felt that many invisible threads had fallen onto the primordial mummy and the doll, linking them together by all the joints.

“Replica Puppet!”

This was the old and mysterious spell casting, the black-haired doll started twitching in a creepy way. Then the filthy bandages covered her, and her eyes became bloody red. Within seconds, the puppet had turned into a mini-sized primordial mummy!

Hooooooooo!

Sensing the great danger, the primordial mummy burst out horribly screaming, and its punches went crazy. However, facing the Shield of Truth, the most powerful level-three legendary defense, it would take the mummy a little while to fully break it.

Blood spilled out from the corner of Klaus’s mouth. His right hand now looked extremely pale as if it had died. He lifted his right hand and gently poked at the mummy puppet with one finger.

Silently, the miasma started dissipating, and the filthy bandages started falling.

The mummy cried bitterly, and its right fist punched out with terrible momentum. However, this time the fist’s target was not Lucien’s shield, but Klaus.

The right fist of the mummy punched at Klaus’s chest badly.

Klaus’s body burst out rays of light. A series of magic effects including Spell Trigger, Magic Order, and Spell Sequencer came into effect. They managed to offset most of the power.

Meanwhile, Klaus disappeared from where he was and in the next second showed up again in front of the furnace. The dodge was narrow.

Despite this, Klaus did not slow down his movements. His finger poked at the puppet again, and his blood also spilled on it.

The filthy bandages completely snapped!

The primordial mummy had given up targeting Lucien. With a huge stride, it was coming for Klaus!

At this time, Lucien lifted his right hand, in which a silver pocket watch was shining. Then he pressed on it.

Crack!

The primordial mummy stopped moving. The entire world stopped.

Moon Timer floating in the air following its owner, Lucien pulled out his Sword of Truth and hacked at the mummy using all his strength six to seven times in succession. His target was the wound he left earlier which had not yet fully recovered.

Then the lapse of time resumed. The colors had come back as well.

After the cold flashes from the blade, the primordial mummy screamed in great agony. The scream made the entire space shake. Klaus's eyes and ears started bleeding because of it.

Lucien was under the protection of his shield. Therefore, he was not hurt.

In the primordial mummy's chest, the deep cut had penetrated its iron-black, rotten body. And the cut was growing bigger and bigger.

Its evil red eyes turned to stare at Lucien. Out of bitter rage, the mummy punched at Lucien.

But it never finished this last punch. Before its fist reached Lucien, the mummy's upper body had split into pieces. The rotten pieces of flesh dropped onto the ground and corrupted into piles of pus and blood.

Lucien's heart was filled with wild joy so intense that he could not use any words to describe. This thing was insane! They had tried their best and finally killed it!

The bandages quickly dissolved in the blood and pus piles, but the gold crown was still shining.

Holding the Shield of Truth, Lucien went up and picked the crown up. He was going to talk with Klaus to see how they were going to split the trophy after they got out.

The fight caused Klaus a lot, including the legendary puppet that he had been hiding for many years. Releasing a long sigh, Klaus's nerves finally relaxed a little bit.

Turning around, he saw the veils behind which countless souls were hiding. Klaus reached out his hand, trying to touch it, to understand the mysterious furnace's secret.

"Furnace of Souls..." Klaus murmured in low voice out of fascination.

Lucien reminded him through the telepathic bond, "Watch out. The rest of the undead can catch up at any time. Cast your defenses again first."

Lucien was right. Klaus dropped his hands and started recasting the layers of spells on himself. Meanwhile, he was still staring at the furnace contentedly.

"Light of Judgment!"

Suddenly, the solemn voice arrived. A beam of divine light dropped from the rooftop and directly hit Klaus!

"Sinner! Confess yourself in hell!"

In the divine light, Klaus's body started dissolving. He turned to look in the other direction, and it was sheer shock that was on his face. He could not believe that his spiritual power and searching spells had totally missed him!

Then his consciousness started fading. He had seen the end of his life.

His vision becoming blurry, but Furnace of Souls was still within his sight. He did not regret. He saw the furnace.

In this enthusiasm, Klaus's body and soul dissolved in the air.

This was totally out of Lucien's expectation. Perhaps it was because he had turned himself into a legendary knight, and hence his willpower frontier had become less thorough.

In great shock and fury, Lucien turned around and saw a young man in a white robe. He had short, linen-colored hair, and his light red eyes were filled with great sarcasm. His right hand reached out and was drawing a cross in front of his chest.

The vertical bar was shorter, and the horizontal longer!

Chapter 621: The Familiar Face

The vertical bar shorter, and the horizontal longer...

The great prophet...

The red eyes full of sarcasm...

The familiar dressing from the North Church...

All the details and memories flashed through Lucien's brain quickly but clearly. He grabbed tight his shield and sword and said in a low, furious voice, "Geno? The Lord of Hell?"

No wonder this mysterious denomination hiding in the North Church could also cast divine spells!

No wonder they could deceive a great number of priests into becoming their followers!

No wonder the Lord of Hell knew so much about the Saint Truth!

"Geno? He died a few hundred years ago. Why do you still want to mention his name? Geno was just a tool, a tool for stealing divine power," the young man in a white robe sneered at Lucien, "only those who know nothing about godhood think highly of godhood. The so-called Saint Ivan, Saint Aleksey... They were all stupid idiots, as they all forgot the most important thing. By the way, you sorcerers are also the same."

The last comment was profoundly meaningful.

Lucien's heart had sunken deep after confirming who the white-robed man was. It was very unlikely that Klaus had survived as he had used two substitute puppets in the previous fights and the power of Light of Judgment was just way too immense, not to mention the fact that it was cast by a clone of the man whose power was of demigod level!

That was why neither of them noticed the man's existence earlier!

Lucien had to face him again, but this time he had no help from the God of Silver Moon. What should he do?

The Lord of Hell did not waste his time. He took a step forward and pointed at Lucien using his right hand, "Light of Judgment!"

You evil sorcerer covered in blood and filth, it is time to accept the ultimate sentence!

The look on the young man's face was solemn and serious. Surrounded by the divine aura, a light beam in the air of ultimate justice dropped on Lucien directly!

At this moment, in this world, no one else resembled the God of Truth more than this evil existence!

The holy light hit the small but exquisite shield and sparked countless fine light spots. The invisible waves around Lucien dangerously trembled, and his feet had sunk into the ground.

When the light scattered, the Lord of Hell commented, "The Shield of Truth is indeed impressive."

Lucien also felt a bit relieved. The projection, or clone, was not as powerful as the true Lord of Hell. Therefore, he would not be killed within a second.

"The last time you worked with the silver moon and threw at me a big 'surprise'," said the Lord of Hell casually, as if he was talking to a random, ordinary person, instead of a legendary sorcerer with abundant powerful magic items, "so I've been waiting, waiting for the chance to give the same 'surprise' back to you."

Lucien did not say anything but suddenly wielded the sword in his hands. The blade of the sword burst out bright silver light and the light formed the sharp wind directly hacking at the Lord of Hell.

If necessary, Lucien would rather explode himself to avoid what happened to Klaus!

Klaus only made one mistake, and Lucien could totally understand. Facing the secret of soul and the truth of the world, Klaus had

totally forgotten the great danger he was in because of the most sincere passion in his mind as an arcanist. He was an arcanist, and also a real human being, driven forward by this passion to dig further and deeper into the truth.

If it had been Lucien, he would probably have done the same thing.

The silver sword light cut open the power swirls surrounding the Lord of Hell and cut him!

The projection suddenly turned into bubbles and foam. A second later, a few steps away from where he was earlier, Geno appeared again. The small range of space he was in slightly distorted.

Lucien's eyes opened big from the great shock he felt. That was not a divine power, not teleportation. It was just incredible speed!

Before the sword light located him, Geno had moved to the other side. What remained there was just the shadow he left.

That was the speed that the theory of relativity was based on!

However, the speed of sword light was determined by the one who wielded the sword. It was not real sunlight.

"Is that all, my little friend? Geno's divine power is not compatible with my demigod power. It's dragging me making me slow. But you still can't get me?" The Lord of Hell, Maltimus, was still using the eternal sarcastic tone, and then he lifted his right hand,

"Purging Spear!"

A dazzling piece of spear tip formed in the air and then shot at Lucien at great speed. Its divine power had driven away all the death air left by the mummy and the filthy colors. The space was now as pure as a Paradise on Earth, and there was even hymns sounding in the air.

Clang!

The tip of the spear hit the Shield of Truth and the sound of metal colliding sounded crisp but strange. Lucien's left hand started

shaking out of control, and the invisible waves protecting him somehow started moving much slower. It felt that there were two separate spaces, but one was much colder and slower than the other. And the two spaces were blending into each other!

The Lord of Hell's power was much more formidable than that of the primordial mummy. The Shield of Truth might be able to last for a while, but Lucien would probably collapse within a minute!

Lucien, however, would not give up. He tried for a second time and the sword light fiercely hacked at the Lord of Hell who seemed totally unprepared.

Again, like wandering in his own garden, the Lord of Hell simply walked away from the attack effortlessly.

Lucien tried again and again, but nothing changed. However, taking the series of legendary divine spells cast by the Lord of Hell using the Shield of Truth had numbed Lucien's hand. He had reached his limit.

At this time, the deafening roars arrived again from the main hall behind. The five legendary undead creatures, leading the huge waves of spectres, were almost here. And behind them, there were more legendary spectres coming!

Lucien's brain worked fast. His route of retreat had been blocked by the spectre waves, and if he wanted to move forward, he had to bypass the Lord of Hell, which was very unlikely to happen.

It was a pity that Lucien had to move slower carrying the Shield of Truth, or he would have been able to directly go through the spectre wave under the protection of this extraordinary shield.

Similar to God of Truth, to make the best use of the Shield of Truth, Lucien had to stand still. If he was going to carry the shield around, Lucien had zero confidence that he could break through the countless barriers.

While using the shield to take down the series of divine spells, Lucien kept extending his spiritual power to search around.

Suddenly, he saw the furnace. The many soul faces were looking at him from above. The horrifying faces made the hair on the back of Lucien's neck bristle.

An idea occurred to Lucien after he got rid of the very unfavorable feeling.

According to Adol's memory and Viken's notes, only few legendary undead creatures dared to go through the furnace. If Lucien could run into the furnace, he could temporarily get rid of the threat of the undead scourge. Lucien had to gamble that the Lord of Hell would not follow him deep in the furnace, as the Lord of Hell still needed Geno's body for the bigger plan – Lucien was certain that Maltimus had a bigger plan with Geno's body. Losing Geno's body to kill Lucien by no amount seemed like a good deal to the Lord of Hell, and demons were good at their business.

Then as long as Lucien stayed close to Furnace of Souls, instead of exploring further, Lucien would not run into the great danger that Maskelyne once encountered. After God's Grace expired, Douglas and Fernando would come to look for Lucien, or at least they would lead the waves of spectres away, so that Lucien could get out...

The Prophet also said that, when facing great dangers, he should keep moving forward instead of retreating...

The waves of spectres had gushed in through the big hole in the wall left by the primordial mummy earlier. Among them there were skeleton dragons, liches, spectres, and two more primordial mummies, whose red eyes were extremely vicious and cold.

No wonder Maskelyne mentioned that primordial mummies were common, "lovely" residents here, Lucien thought to himself.

There was no more time for hesitation. Lucien had made up his mind. Putting aside the Sword of Truth in his right hand, Lucien grabbed Moon Timer.

Lucien's finger stroked the surface of the pocket watch and the time flow in the space was disturbed. The bone arrows and the powerful rays shooting at Lucien were now like kites without strings as they

had totally lost their target.

The Lord of Hell was also affected. His movement had become distorted, like a puppet with broken joints.

Seizing the chance, Lucien put aside the Shield of Truth and removed the transformation spell. Then he was going to send himself into the furnace!

In the Temple of Spirits, because of the chaos of time and space, the distance for teleportation was rather limited.

At this time, the Lord of Hell grinned, as if he was watching a comedy. He said to Lucien without being affected by the disturbed time flow,

“Light of Judgment!”

He was just kidding.

The Lord of Hell had always been immune to time manipulation and advanced time stop!

“Elemental Protection” That was the single spell that Lucien could cast.

The flash of light hit Lucien. For a second, Lucien saw many angel figures in the light. His colorful elemental protection shield failed and cracked. And then Elemental Skin was automatically activated responding to the great power. Meanwhile, Magic Absorber started taking in the energy like crazy and Spell Sequencer instantly threw out a number of force field walls as the last lines of defense to protect Lucien.

Against the light of judgment, all of Lucien’s defense layers cracked. Suddenly, Lucien disappeared from where he was and then appeared again on the other side!

Thanks to the series of protection spells, Lucien luckily survived this strike!

In the waves of spectres, one of the undead centaurs shot out a

dark-green arrow at Lucien through the many messy time-space currents.

The arrow instantly arrived right in front of Lucien!

“Undead Rampart!”

Congus Ring became dark and formed a death wall consisting of souls and bodies, and the wall disappeared together with the legendary arrow.

Fortunately, Lucien had many legendary items, or he would have been dead already!

The Lord of Hell was now ready for another round of casting. His light red eyes stared at Lucien coldly as if Lucien was just a joke.

Lucien had to try his best. His middle finger pressed down the button on the pocket watch on the left. The black hemisphere dropped on the Lord of Hell brought Lucien a precious second to run!

Lucien burst out,

“Space Staff!”

The shining staff appeared in Lucien’s left hand. Lucien lifted the staff and then the time and space within a certain range slowed down further. The movement of the horrifying number of undead paused, and the time shackles within this space had also been broken.

Space waves stirred, Lucien had sent himself directly into the furnace. Without any hesitation, Lucien had gone through the veils. He had no time to investigate the furnace itself!

At this moment, Lucien felt something strange. It felt that there was someone watching him from above coldly.

Lucien turned around, and in front of his eyes there was a face.

In the air, the half-transparent face looked very familiar to him.

Black hair, black eyes, and there was also this familiar gentle smile...

Lucien felt that he was looking in a mirror.

A horrifying mirror!

Lucien Evans?

The soul face was Lucien Evans himself!

As if the face sensed Lucien's gaze, the soul face changed slightly, but the new face was still familiar to Lucien!

It was Xiaofeng's face. Lucien Evans's previous life!

The two faces blended into each other in harmony.

Lucien felt the extreme coldness in his brain. He was out of breath.

Chapter 622: Two Pathways

Below the grey curtain was the pale fire that was burning slowly, like a furnace which was needed to pass the winter in every house.

The face inside the Furnace of Souls, on the other hand, displayed the looks of Lucien Evans and Xiafeng at the same time. They seemed to be overlapping and entangling each other. As he stared at them, they were now separated, now integrated, and now showing certain strange parts that he had never seen in a mirror.

Why?

How?

After he learnt about the existence of the Furnace of Souls, Lucien once thought that he would not see the ‘projection of his soul’ inside the Furnace of Souls because he had time-traveled to this world, and that he would have one more trump card than other people did. However, the secret of the Furnace of Souls were more deep and horrendous than he imagined. It was not only showing the soul projection of Lucien Evans but also manifesting the look of Xiafeng, who came from Earth and did not belong to this world.

“Is the Furnace of Souls also in charge of the souls of Earth?”

“Is this why I have a Host Star of Destiny?”

“After this puzzle is solved, perhaps I will understand why I time-traveled, and why I was reincarnated inside Lucien Evans’ body...”

Too many thoughts swirled in his head. Lucien vaguely realized that the soul could be explained from a certain perspective, but he had no time to study of the Furnace of Souls. The Lord of Hell was right outside and about to catch up with him. Therefore, he could only extend his hand and touch the Furnace of Souls softly.

Slight coldness was the ubiquitous feeling in the World of Souls. Lucien did not feel anything but that after his touch, as if it were actually in a different world and what stood here were merely a

projection, which perfectly matched the intangibleness and transcendence that it showed.

In the middle of his touch, Lucien's right eye suddenly turned red and clear:

“Vengeful Gaze!”

A red ray of light, enhanced by ‘Hand of Uncertainties’, shot out of Lucien's right hand at Maltimus, who was still in the cage of ‘Gravity Collapse’, at the speed of light.

Lucien would regret it if he didn't try his luck and attack him when he could!

After he cast the spell, Lucien flew into the temple where the Furnace of Souls was at without looking back. Two pathways appeared in his perception. One of them lost the black and white colors and only had greyness with a certain palpitating sense of danger, and the other was brimming with vague ripples of the void, like something Lucien was quite familiar with. Also it was far more terrifying than the other one, as if a monster that could destroy the world was sleeping there.

“Familiar? Is this where the mysterious existence of the World of Souls is sleeping?” Lucien recalled the poor thing who was tricked by the Lord of Hell and the God of Silver Moon when he was about to wake up. “But the sense of familiarity does not agree with the impression he left earlier...”

Having no time to tell the difference, Lucien subconsciously chose the grey pathway. The danger from the other pathway was too much for him. Even the Lord of Hell and the God of Silver Moon wouldn't have dared to press deep into it.

The pure redness hit Maltimus at the standard speed of light, piercing through the sacred defense of ‘Blessed Realm’.

Finally, he couldn't dodge with his terrifying speed now!

However, the ‘Hand of Uncertainties’ did not work out, and ‘Vengeful Gaze’ disappeared after piercing through only one layer of

defense, not causing any damage to the Lord of Hell.

Inside the hemispherical void, the Lord of Hell suddenly moved his right hand. The cage of 'Gravity Collapse' immediately fell apart.

He watched Lucien disappear behind the Furnace of Souls with his unique mocking smile and shook his head casually, not upset that the guy had escaped at all. He simply mumbled:

"That's weird. Something weird and dangerous seemed to be hidden in that ray spell. Hehe. Lucien Evans, the Secretive, is always up to uncanny things."

Then, he crossed his hands before his chest, and he immediately disappeared.

Hardly had Lucien stepped into the grey pathway when roars of shock and fury burst out from the outside as if he had raised public indignation. However, most of the spectres dared not approach the Furnace of Souls at all. Only a Servant of Death who had a long scythe and a dragon lich from whom mucus was dripping nonstop chased after him in exasperation, surpassing the Furnace of Souls and entering the grey pathway.

"Hoooooooo!"

Roars came from all directions. The few legendary undead creatures seemed to have sensed Lucien's abomination and were approaching crazily.

The bright gems on head of the Lich King, who was dealing with the Lord of Storm with two 'saints', suddenly glittered. He sniffed in anger and suddenly withdrew from the battle, teleporting himself to the Furnace of Souls.

Seeing that, 'Aleksey' and 'Uriel' performed their divine power and escaped in a hurry, not giving Fernando a chance to counterattack. They would be completely overpowered by the Lord of Storm without the help of the Lich King. Also, Ivan's God's Grace was about to be over. The deeper they pressed, the more slowly the time would be flowing. Although it didn't take Lucien long before he ran

into the Furnace of Souls, a long time actually had passed outside. The extraordinary skill to improve one's strength like 'God's Grace' couldn't last for such a long time.

Fernando did not chase after them but took out his magic crystal ball, searching for the other people. This mission was for exploration and not to destroy the foundation of the North Church. The safety of Lucien, Klaus, Erica and the rest of them was more important.

The crystal ball became dark. Four brilliant stars surfaced inside. One of them flickered before it was enshrouded by the grey fog.

"There are only four Host Stars of Destiny... Has Klaus perished?" Lord of Storms roared furiously, and the thunderstorm around him reduced the palaces into remains. "Lucien seems to have reached behind the Furnace of Souls?"

Only if he were there could his astrology be completely nullified. Lucien's Host Star of Destiny was almost frozen in the grey mist.

In another palace, 'Saint Ivan', whose God's Grace was about to end, subtly sensed the changes near the Furnace of Souls and the retreat of Aleksey and Uriel. Seizing the opportunity that he was still suppressing Douglas, he flapped his wings and disappeared into countless spots of light, before he sent a message to 'Felix' and the angel of light not far away.

Therefore, Vicente and Erica watched their enemy to flee. The two legendary sorcerers had been both overpowered in the battle. Erica was even in grave danger.

"Gather in the Furnace of Souls." They received a message from Douglas and Fernando.

Because a few intelligent legendary spectres were reaching the Fernando, there was no need for them to hide themselves anymore. After a short while, they were all teleported before the Furnace of Souls and saw Douglas and Fernando who was obviously infuriated. They also saw the tide of spectres in the square before the Furnace of Souls, who were roaring to scare their enemy but did not dare to

approach the Furnace of Souls.

“Klaus has perished. He was killed by the Light of Judgment. There’s no telling who did it.” Douglas spoke of the prophecy he made based on the situation. It was very close to the truth.”

“What? Klaus has perished?” Erica asked back in disbelief, feeling rather terrified. Although Klaus and she were not best friends, they were partners in the same adventure. His death perhaps represented her future.

Vicente felt the same way, but he keenly realized something else. “Mr. President, Ivan was blocked by you, and Felix was fighting me. It should be easy to tell whether it was Aleksey, Uriel or the angel of light that did it.”

“Aleksey and Uriel were attacking me.” Fernando sounded like a volcano that was about to break out.

Erica said in shock, “I was fighting the angel of light!”

Who did it exactly? Were there other experts who were capable of legendary divine powers in the Temple of Spirits?

Grasped by the heavy questions, they were not in the mood to study the Furnace of Souls anymore.

Hooooooooo!

The legendary spectres moved forward slowly, as if they were trying to overcome their fear.

Douglas was back to himself. He pressed his right hand. “We can’t delay anymore. Remember the feeling of the Furnace of Souls and study it after we are back.”

Fernando shook his head and bulged his red eyes. “You evacuate first. I’ll search for Lucien. As a top legend, I can certainly bring him back safely as long as he doesn’t go any deeper.”

Even if he couldn’t defeat the enemy, he could still escape.

Erica opened her mouth, only to come up with nothing.

After a brief silence, Douglas pulled his bow-tie. "I'll go and find Lucien together with Fernando. That way, we will be able to escape from the gravest danger. You will leave the Temple of Spirits and bring back our exploration and the secrets of the North Church."

"Mr. President..." Erica did not know whether she was trying to stop him or to participate.

Douglas said firmly, "No more talking. Let's move out!"

Vicente had already moved his eyes to the Furnace of Souls, his skinny face filled with controllable passion. Erica also shift her attention and focused on memorizing the feeling and the details of the Furnace of Souls, before she tried many spells on it.

Hooooooooo!

The swarm of spectres led by countless legendary ones approached. The intelligent centaur archer was among them.

Watching the devastating legends and spectres and sensing the enormous pressure, Douglas heaved a sigh, "Go to sleep now."

He flew and pressed both of his hands:

"Eternal Blaze!"

BOOM. A bright sun rose where the centaur archer was at. The spectres around were obliterated before they were able to react.

"Eternal Blaze!"

"Eternal Blaze!"

One sun rose after another. The unimaginable storms of energy rumbled in the square that covered dozens of square kilometers. Even though they were at the edge of the explosions, Fernando, Vicente and Erica had to build up their defense.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!"

Miserable cries echoed but stopped abruptly. Those spectres who hadn't reached level three of legendary couldn't resist 'Eternal Blaze' at all, but their intellect prevented them from fleeing. They rushed at the enemy under their natural instincts.

The whole Temple of Spirits lost the frozen black, white and grey colors. The dazzling brilliant illuminated everything.

After everything died down, the square had become a pit, and the overwhelming spectres had been entirely gone. The roars were no more.

"The world is peaceful again..."

Erica said with mixed feelings. Seizing the opportunity, she and Vicente teleported out of the Temple of Spirits, as it was impossible to directly jump into their own demiplanes from this place.

Observing the Furnace of Souls carefully, Fernando passed it like a storm and entered the grey pathway together with Douglas.

"They have both entered..." "Ivan", who had the typical huge nose of the Schachran Empire, appeared in midair, more serious than ever.

Chapter 623: The Realm of Gates

Chapter 623: The Realm of Gates

Around ‘Saint Ivan’, ‘Aleksy’, ‘Uriel’, ‘Felix’ and the ‘angel of light’ appeared one after another. They had arrived earlier than Douglas, Fernando and the other legendary sorcerers, but they never entered it.

Belkovsky, what are we going to do?” Aleksey addressed ‘Saint Ivan’ with the name of Belkovsky, the current pontiff in the north. He talked as if he were equal to the guy.

The gold eyebrow of ‘Saint Ivan’ was furrowed, and his blue eyes that carried certain yellowness observed the grey pathway behind the Furnace of Souls carefully. He said, “I suspect that the monster is still inside. Also, without the pattern of coordinate changes left by Maskelyne and Viken, there is no telling where to go and where to find them at all. We can only try our luck.”

He was somewhat scared, as if he had encountered certain things when he explored the entrance earlier. He dare not take the risk even though he could perform God’s Grace.

“Then, should we relocate the Room of the Holy Spirit first?” The eyes of ‘Felix’ were also focused on the grey pathway. He did not look at the entrance that was enshrouded in the illusionary ripples at all, as if he were not interested in what was inside.

After a brief silence, ‘Saint Ivan’ said, “However, I suspect that the Congress of Magic dared to explore the Temple of Spirits because they found Maskelyne’s or Viken’s last belongings. After all, Viken’s nest was on the border of Holm, and Hathaway was there when the Grand Cross lock was broken. If they find the items of those legendary sorcerers and learn how to enter the ‘Chamber of Immortality’, the dream of all the saints in history will never be fulfilled.”

As he talked, he glanced at the pathway that was enshrouded by the illusionary ripples.

Before ‘Uriel’ and the rest of them talked, ‘Ivan’ continued, “So, Mikhail and I will go in, and you will relocate the Room of the Holy Spirit. He’s a projection based on Geno’s item of godhood. It won’t be a problem even if he dies inside. As for me, I’m strong enough to return safely.”

Mikhail was the ‘angel of light.’

“Alright, Belkovsky, don’t be careless. We don’t know exactly what Maskelyne and Viken encountered yet and why they never came out.” ‘Uriel’ said in a low voice.

He wasn’t so sure that Maskelyne was already dead. After all, the further one pressed into the Temple of Spirits, the weirder the flow of time would be. One day at the edge equaled five days outside, and one day around the Furnace of Souls equaled to approximately a week. It should be terrible inside. Although those legendary sorcerers had been missing for a thousand years in the world outside, they probably had only lived a hundred years inside the ‘Realm of Gates’.

Ivan smiled. “What happened to them must be beyond our imagination. We cannot determine their status even though we prayed and performed prophecy with their personal items. However, the people of the Congress of Magic are leading the way for me. I’ll be able to exit in time should there be any danger.”

After a brief discussion, ‘Ivan’ and the ‘angel of light’ passed the Furnace of Souls and entered the grey pathways, and the saints including ‘Aleksey’ returned to the Room of the Holy Spirit, in case the reinforcements of the Congress of Magic traced back to them.

The Furnace of Souls resumed the previous silence. At this moment, the Lich King, with the weird gems spinning around his head, appeared from the wall and stared at the entrance that Lucien and the rest of them entered.

After a while, a transparent ghost flew in. He was wearing a black robe that had glamorous, red patterns on it. “You’re not going in?”

Judging from his attitude and his tone, it was not hard to tell that

he was equal to the Lich King. He was exactly the Wraith Lord, another dominator at the peripheral area of the Temple of Spirits.

“I will never make it out if I go in.” Said the Lich King in a hoarse voice. His previous fury after Lucien broke in had died down.

The Wraith Lord said with an unpredictable voice. “Are you not scared that the Lord will punish us after he wakes up?”

By the lord, he was clearly referring to the mysterious existence of the World of Souls.

“Hermes and Crosos are tracing them. We need to stay on alert in case more enemies break into the temple.” The needle-like redness was flashing coldly in the Lich King’s eyes.

The Wraith Lord floated. “Yes. Now that Chilaps has been killed by the enemy, the defense at the periphery will be too weak if we also go in.”

The two legendary specters looked at each other and hid around, waiting for the ‘survivors’ to come out from inside and taking precautions against other experts who might break in.

...

The dome was grey, the floor was grey, the wall was grey, the torches were grey, and the fire on them was also grey. Lucien could not see any other colors except from himself, as if he had come to an unreal world.

Having no time to examine why the fire kept on burning, Lucien flew forward in a hurry. After a few seconds, he saw a closed black gate, which was particularly eye-catching in the world of greyness.

Compared to the magnificence of other parts of the Temple of Spirits, the black gate which was only 2.5 meters tall made Lucien feel very close, as if he were back to Holm.

After examining the gate in a hurry and detecting no traps, Lucien opened it with a spell.

As the black gate was slowly opened, the grey hall inside entered Lucien's eyes. Except for three black gates in the three corners, there was absolutely nothing. It was dim and gloomy.

Having no time to consider, Lucien passed quite a few similar halls in a row. He only slowed down when he sensed the change of time and space.

"Those grey halls are too weird. They are all empty, and they all have four black gates in the four corners. If it weren't for the different decorations and pillars, I would've thought that I had been in the same hall all the time." While casting Magic Order, Spell Trigger and other enhancements on himself, Lucien observed the surroundings. He believed that other people would've thought that the grey halls were false and the black gates were the only things that were 'real'.

Recalling the environmental parameters he collected just now, Lucien discovered, to his surprise, that the pattern left by Mr. Maskelyne also worked in this place, which meant that he could always find his back back.

"But the buildings here are changing too frequently, aren't they? They will change almost every time after I open two gates." Calculating, Lucien thought and felt it rather strange. Although his safety could be better ensured in such a way, because the Lord of Hell or the legendary spectres might enter wrong halls when they opened the gates again behind him, he might also run into unexpected dangers, because the hall behind the gate could be the one that the enemy was in.

In this place, the prophecy and reconnaissance spells were greatly suppressed.

"I have to be more vigilant." Lucien cast another bunch of spells to improve his intuitions. In the previous battle, the three times of 'Advanced Time Stop' in his Moon Timer had been used up, and there was only one 'Gravity Collapse' left. The 'Elemental Protection' from the Robe of Grand Arcanists and the 'Undead Rampart' from the Congus Ring had also been used up. In other words, other than transforming into a legendary knight to pick up

the Shield of Truth, the legendary defense he could use was only the Space Staff. "I need to find a place to crack the crown of the Primordial Mummy. The more legendary items I have, the safer I will be."

The hall was only five 'gates' away from the entrance. Lucien was not very relieved. So, he picked a random black gate and opened it after careful examination.

In the vague greyness, Lucien suddenly captured a flashing silver light. Alarmed, he immediately spread out his spiritual power.

The grey hall was still quiet, but there was the residue on the floor after a magic circle was used.

The materials of the magic circle were already gone, and the only things left were silver, complicated traces. They were both sacred and scary, as if they were the foulest things in the world. The feeling was very similar to how the pathway impressed him.

"A magic circle that Mr. Maskelyne used? One that I've never seen before." Lucien recorded the residue in his spirit library and searched, only to find no relevant information. It seemed that he would have to crack it from scratch if he wanted to know what it was about. Also, since only part of the traces were left behind, reverse analysis could be highly difficult. Lucien did not know when he could complete it.

After recording the residue, Lucien observed it in general and suddenly discovered that the magic circle constituted the corner of a hexagram.

The hexagram was the most fundamental magic pattern that originated from reproductive worship. Then, it was greatly improved by the ancient sorcerers based on the patterns of the magic creatures. It showed the integration of the body and the soul, as well as the interference of spiritual power on the material world.

"Are there six similar magic circles? But what are they for?" Lucien did not want to stay in this room that was exceptionally creepy. Since the residue had been recorded, he flew to a black gate in a

different direction.

Right then, Lucien discovered broken pieces below a grey pillar, so he picked it up carefully with Mage's Hand.

"A fragment of a parchment? A special parchment that has been processed by magic?" Lucien recognized what the broken piece was. Only the parchment processed by magic could've survived years in such an environment without rotting.

There was only one bold word on the grey fragment: "Devil!"

"Devil?" Lucien repeated the word that was written in the language of the ancient Sylvanas Magic Empire. Normally speaking, the word denoted two meanings. Firstly, it referred to the creatures in hell; secondly, it referred to all the dangerous and terrible things in general. "Which does it mean?"

While he considered, Lucien searched the hall carefully again but found nothing else. Therefore, he flew to the black gate as he previously planned and examined it carefully.

The black gate blocked the two halls. Until he opened it, Lucien's spells and magic could not reach the other side of the gate. Therefore, he had to be very prudent. Lucien also made up his mind that he would definitely bring a black gate back for studies when he left, as any arcanists would've done.

After his spell, the black gate moved backwards slowly, and a shadow was suddenly reflected in Lucien's pupils!

Black shirt, red coat, silver long hair and eyes, and a cluster of dark red stain of blood before his chest. He was filled with a weird sense of beauty.

"Mr. Rhine?" Lucien blurted out, slowing down the spells that were ready to be launched.

Rhine, who was leaning against a grey pillar lazily, put on a smile: "Hi, Lucien, we have met again."

Chapter 624: Sealed Time

At the beginning of July of 825, it was as scorching as fire.

On the thirty-first floor of the Allyn magic tower, Onore, who had passed the exam and was admitted by the Holt Magic College, observed the Sky Radio Station in the first district with his classmates with great interest. He said rather regretfully, “What a shame. The radio station only broadcasts at night, but the school will be closed after six. Otherwise, we would be able to ask for the autographs of Ms. Lark and Ms. Nightingale. They must be as beautiful as their sound.”

The remaining districts of the thirty-first floor of the Allyn were reserved as the teaching areas of the Holt Magic College because the advanced laboratories in the magic tower could be directly used. There would be no need to establish new laboratories. The dormitories of the students were in other places.

“You can apply for the magic experiments at night.” Clark, another student, said jokingly.

Onore was rather upset. “It’s only been two months since the semester began. I’m still picking up the basics of arcana and magic, and I’m far from qualified to apply for the night magic experiments.”

The Holt Magic College began in May. Students were allowed to select courses on their own and expected to graduate in two to five years. They had a new year holiday but not a summer holiday.

“Exactly. Mr. Evans’ matrix mechanics still confuses me. I have grasped the matrix, and I know how to calculate it, but I don’t understand how and why it works at all. It’s like a pure mathematical work. If I don’t learn the arcana significance behind it, the whole theory is often dizzying for me.” Said Clark bitterly. The matrix mechanics was truly frigidly unapproachable.

Onore shook his head and tried to ease the atmosphere with a joke. “It’s like what Mr. Evans said before. You know every word and

every equation, but you don't know anything at all when they are connected."

"More or less. The special theory of relativity is the same. I can understand the premises and the deduction, but the space-time relationship that it entails, as well as its application to analyze magic, is too overwhelming for me." Clark sighed. As for the general theory of relativity, there was only a basic introduction but no specific courses. It was said that there were no more than ten people in the entire Congress of Magic who had basically grasped the general theory of relativity. None of the teachers in the college was capable of teaching that.

Onore opened his hands and was about to talk, when he discovered that a teacher had been standing like a statue, with an issue of 'Arcana' in his hand, after he walked out of the lift.

"Mr. Ernesto?" Finding it odd, Onore greeted the teacher.

Pa. The journal in Ernesto's hand hits the ground. He looked at the students, with panic and fear lingering in his eyes. "You don't have classes?"

"No. The courses we selected for this week are over. Mr. Ernesto, is this the latest issue of 'Arcana'?" Asked Onore curiously.

The Holt Magic College had stipulated that the students had to read Arcana, Magic and Nature to learn the cutting edge of arcana and magic studies whether or not they could understand them. Those three journals were ordered by the college and distributed for free.

Ernesto looked at the journal on the ground as if it were a devil and hesitated. "It is, but don't you believe anything on it just yet until you confirm it with your own experiments."

"Disruptive theories and experiments?" Onore also stared at the journal, his eyes widened. The head explosions when the light quantum theory was proposed left quite a deep impression on him.

"An Electron Diffraction Experiment With Monocrystals'..." Clark read the title of the page on the journal that was opened, confused.

“Electron? Diffraction? How can they be associated?”

Because he needed to prepare for the exploration in the World of Souls, Lucien’s electron diffraction experiment was postponed for two months and not submitted to the Arcana Review Board until he was about to leave.

Uncontrollably, Onore picked up the journal and murmured. “Clark, do you remember the earlier issue of Arcana, where the Highest Council discussed Mr. Dieppe’s paper?”

“Mr. Dieppe’s paper...” Clark’s face was twisted as if he were reminded of the most terrible monster.

Onore read the paper greedily and anxiously. He saw the experiment preparations, he saw the experiment process, and the last the final result of the experiment, the familiar and classic pattern of diffraction!

“It’s... It’s true that electrons can behave as waves...” Onore’s eyes lost focus as he spoke what he thought subconsciously.

Thanks to Lucien’s speech and example earlier, he had accepted that the electron was something unknown that was not entirely figured out yet. What he thought was that electrons behaved as waves, not that electrons were waves. That was why his mind was not disrupted yet.

Clark shook his head quickly. “It has to be confirmed with experiments! It has to be!”

Ernesto also nodded hard. He led the students to his laboratory and prepared for the experiment materials according to Mr. Evans’ introduction.

After a long time, when the dreamy image was unveiled before their eyes, Ernesto collapsed on his chair and rubbed his head hard in pain.

It was a major shock for Onore, who suspected that Mr. Ernesto’s head would explode all of a sudden spreading the brains everywhere.

Thankfully, Ernesto was gradually back to normal. He looked around in confusion, “It behaves as both particles and waves. What about the real world? I think I can’t understand any of the things I know.”

Fearing that he wouldn’t let it go, Onore hurried to change the subject. “There’s a paper on ‘Arcana’ written by Mr. Evans and his students. They reprocessed the matrix mechanics with the classic mathematical tools. They seem much more clear and concise.”

“However clear and concise they are, if we cannot figure out the arcana significance behind the math, they will be just like the ‘matrix maze’ we are in right now.” Clark frowned as he read the journal.

The room immediately fell quiet. Onore couldn’t help but recall the uncanny qualities of the electron, which both undeniably behaved as particles and showed the familiar pattern of diffraction. According to Dieppe, protons and neutrons were the same. Then, would the elements, matter and even the world have dual qualities, too?

Looking at the platform, the chair, the floor and the lamp before him, Onore also shook his head. “I don’t know the real world anymore, either.”

Clark finally observed, “The textbooks have to be changed again.”

Onore was amused and recalled what he saw when he took the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic. The textbook on the new alchemy that was determined in the morning had to be revised by the time the exam was over in the afternoon. Now, after only two months, the textbook had to be rectified yet again.

“This is truly a crazy and wonderful age...”

Inside his own laboratory, Dieppe looked at the diffraction pattern in disbelief and remarked in amazement.

After he finished the experiment, he felt the feedback of the real world, which improved his cognitive world. However, he murmured

in confusion, “Why is it much less than I anticipated? Did Mr. Evans take most of it because he completed the diffraction experiment?”

It could only be explained in such a way!

What he didn’t know was that Lucien did the experiment in a hurry to stop the changes in his cognitive world and didn’t finish the theoretical deduction at all. That was why he still received part of the feedback.

.....

In the grey environment, Rhine’s red coat was particularly eye-catching. However, Lucien did not ease his wariness. The Temple of Spirits was full of dangers, and Mr. Rhine had always been acting mysteriously.

“I almost attacked just now if I didn’t sense my Origin of Blood in your body.” Rhine said so casually that he was more like attending a concern than having an adventure in the World of Souls.

Lucien also confirmed Rhine’s identity with his scent and the reaction of the Origin of Blood. He asked in confusion, “Mr. Rhine, why are you here? Are you trapped again?”

Rhine shook his head. “When Sard died in the battle against Benedict II, a mysterious piece from his body escaped into the World of Souls. I traced it and reached this place.”

As he spoke, he pointed at the blood on his chest. “However, I lost clues and encountered a transparent monster. I was heavily wounded and only beat it back with the strength of the Primordial Ancestor.”

“It was not destroyed? What’s the level of the monster?” Asked Lucien in surprise. Rhine was at the peak of legendary when he borrowed the power of the Silver Moon, and yet the monster was not killed.

Rhine retained his easy smile. “I found it quite odd, too. After being caged in the World of Souls, I have reached level three of legendary. When I fought the monster, it only showed the strength

close to the peak. It could wound me but not kill me, but after I borrowed the strength of the Primordial Ancestor, it suddenly became stronger and reached the real peak of legendary. So, it was only temporarily beaten back.”

“It intentionally lured you to use the strength of Alterna?” Lucien analyzed. Rhine’s skill was like Ivan’s God’s Grace. It would take a long time before he could use it again.

Rhine smiled. “Probably, but it isn’t so easy to kill a prince of vampires. Why are you here?”

Lucien introduced what happened earlier and described the residue of the magic circle and the grey piece with the word ‘devil’ on it.

Pondering for a moment, Rhine said, “I met a similar residue before... Let’s check it again. We may find something else.”

Therefore, he reopened the black gate that Lucien came from, but the grey hall behind it had changed. Appearing before the two of them was a grey secret chamber.

Time seemed to be sealed in the chamber. Everything was fresh and real. However, after the gate was opened, time began to flow, and the paper, the desk and the utensils decayed quickly.

Different from the grey hall, this secret chamber only had two black gates.

“An alchemical circle? Is this the remains of a magic laboratory?” Lucien was slightly behind Rhine. He was grasped by curiosity and the desire of exploration.

Two items were still intact in the mud. One of them was a broken notebook that had been processed by magic, and the other was the arm of a puppet with weird patterns.

Rhine picked up the arm of the puppet and examined it carefully. Lucien also opened the notebook with magic, turning the grey, broken pages making crisp sounds.

The beginning of the notebook was the conclusions of some

alchemical experiments. They were perhaps very precious for the ancient sorcerers, but for the arcanists of the Congress today, those things had been simplified and modified far too many times and were not worth mentioning at all. However, Lucien was intrigued by a solution to craft 'stand-in puppet' on the notebook. He recorded it inside his spirit library.

He was about to finish reading the notebook. There were no clues about the current environment. Suddenly, two lines of deep grey words were reflected in his eyes before Lucien had the time to react: "A ghost, an unimaginable ghost, wanders this place!"

"Quite a few partners have gone missing. Perhaps I will be next."

Chapter 625: A Weird Monster

“...An unimaginable ghost...”

Compared to the previous notes, the two lines were written very heavily and hastily. The fear and panic between the lines could be easily felt.

“What monster could’ve possibly terrified a legendary sorcerer to such an extent? Also, why didn’t he leave when he still had time? They should’ve already grasped the pattern of coordinate changes in this place...” Lucien showed no expression on his face, but he analyzed the anomalies in his heart.

Since the guy’s notebook hadn’t decayed at all after so many years without being looked after by anyone, and since the guy established a unique chamber inside the grey hall as his laboratory, Lucien was pretty sure that the writer was a legendary sorcerer. Those people wouldn’t have been terrified even if they had run into a demigod. They might be devastated and defeated, but they shouldn’t have been as scared as a little kid.

What kind of ghost was that?

Somehow, Lucien felt that the creepy feeling caused by the note was familiar, but he didn’t find a corresponding experience in his memories.

With the arm of the puppet in his hands, Rhine observed, as if he were appraising jewelry. “This puppet was made in a unique way. As far as I know, McLeod was the only person capable of that. This should be his last belonging.”

He stressed ‘last belonging’.

“McLeod, the King of Alchemy in the ancient Magic Empire, a level-three legendary sorcerer?” Lucien confirmed with him.

According to Viken and Adol’s files, McLeod was one of the ten or so legendary sorcerers who explored the World of Souls with

Maskelyne. It seemed that they indeed ‘went missing’ in this place.

Lucien did not know the specific number of the teammates because Viken did not record any of them and Adol only knew the famous ones among them. He could only infer the rest of them. Obviously, the legendary sorcerers who ‘went missing’ in the ancient Magic Empire did not all disappear in the World of Souls.

“Based on the files I know, it’s probably him.” Rhine rubbed the bright green arm of the puppet that was painted with weird patterns.

Lucien smiled, “You are the Observer. Your conclusion is definitely more accurate than mine.”

Rhine smiled and tapped the puppet as if he were playing the piano. “This puppet is a rarely-seen one-time legendary item, and it seems that it was not destroyed but dismantled by McLeod purposefully into multiple parts. If we find the parts, we may be able to reassemble it.”

“Dismantled purposefully? Perhaps, we can get the important information that McLeod left behind after it is restored.” Said Lucien, deep in thought. It was a way in the school of astrology to avoid prophecies.

“There’s no telling how many gates and grey halls there are in this place. Since we do not know the specific coordinates of the locations where McLeod stored the parts of his puppet, we may not be able to collect all of them in thousands of years.” Rhine passed the puppet over. “This is not of much use to me. You can keep it to yourself.”

Lucien had been very interested in the way to craft the puppet in the first place. Also, it was now an incomplete and unusable item. Therefore, he took it over straightforwardly.

He placed his right hand on the puppet and exerted his strength, but it did not move at all. Rhine was obviously clutching the puppet.

Lucien raised his head and looked at Rhine. Didn't he say that he would give it to him?

Looking at Rhine's confusion, Rhine smiled and said humorously, "Are you going to take it without a thank you?"

In the meantime, Lucien saw that his silver, bright eyes became blurry, like the cold dreamy moon in a deep night that could captivate everybody's soul.

Lucien suddenly felt such a strong fatigue that he only wanted to go to sleep.

Not good!

The vampire's talented enchantment!

Why did Mr. Rhine suddenly attack him?

The sound of the Mental Barrier being broken echoed inside Lucien's soul and slightly refreshed him, but Rhine's eyes were like a night sky where a silver moon was shining. He couldn't shift his attention at all.

The vague light of 'Short-Distance Teleportation' illuminated, and 'Spell Trigger' was automatically activated since his soul was under attack.

Right then, Rhine moved his right hand, spreading bright black waves toward Lucien's hand through the puppet, which offset the magic waves and stopped Lucien from blinking away.

'Magic Order' and 'Spell Sequencer' were activated one after the other, but they were both negated by Rhine in weird ways. He extended his sharp teeth and bit Lucien as graceful as a gentleman: "It's very impolite to not say thank you."

Suddenly, Lucien's eyes became clear. As the moonlight bloomed, Rhine's teeth bit the illusionary ripples, which slightly stunned him. In the meantime, he felt that the puppet was now lighter, as Lucien had dropped his right hand.

Lucien felt vague coolness from the Congus Ring on his left hand, which significantly diminished the illusion. Also, the effects such as Spell Trigger bought Lucien enough time!

“You are not Mr. Rhine!” Holding the Shield of Truth in his left hand, Lucien drew the silver longsword with his right hand.

Until this moment, even though Lucien had suspected that Rhine would attack him for a certain reason, he never suspected that Rhine was fake. The guy’s scent, reaction to the Origin of Blood, and magic check all indicated that he was the Silver-eyed Count, the Observer. However, Lucien sensed something was wrong when Rhine nullified the spells such as Spell Trigger and Magic Order through weird approaches.

‘Rhine’ suddenly stopped and leapt away, dodging the attack of Lucien’s Sword of Truth. He chuckled, “We have the same memories, the same appearance, the same blood and the same body. Why can’t I be Rhine? Isn’t that everything that matters for an intelligent creature?”

“You are the unimaginable ghost and devil.” Lucien raised his Shield of Truth and blocked the attack of ‘Rhine’ who blinked before him and scratched the shield with the fingernails that were even colder than metal longswords.

Creak. In the blood-freezing sound of scratching, Lucien cut the enemy’s waist. The overwhelming aura from the sword left a gash on the wall of the chamber.

‘Rhine’ did not react at all, but when the sword hit him, a shadow broke apart. Then, he blinked from the ceiling and swooped like an eagle, with his bat wings unfolding and blocking the dome.

“He is almost as fast as the projection of the Lord of Hell. Vampires are indeed a species best known for their agility and speed. However, his attack is not good enough. It seems to be only level two of legendary at best. That’s far from enough to break the Shield of Truth.” Lucien analyzed the situation calmly. After ‘Rhine’ accelerated, his shadows were everywhere, which made it impossible for Lucien to tell which of them was his real self. He

could only resist the enemy with the Shield of Truth but was unable to counterattack with the Sword of Truth.

Clang, clang, clang. The silver auras of the sword cut the grey wall, making pleasant sounds and creating deep cracks one after another.

Looking at those cracks, Lucien was suddenly inspired. “This room is not spacious, but it is very solid...”

“Hellish Ball!” Lucien cast the spell. Then, a ball of light as bright as the sun flew out of the Robe of Grand Arcanists towards ‘Rhine’. As he expected, the ball missed the target and hit the wall!

BOOM!

The soundwaves swept across the entire chamber like an instrument. The greenish acid even corrupted the air. The silver lightning turned the chamber into a forest. Scorching flames burnt everything, making the place look like a real inferno.

No corner in the entire chamber could avoid the massive damage, not even Lucien himself. However, since he was behind the Shield of Truth, he seemed to be in a different world.

Inside the inferno, the illusionary shadows were broken, and the real self of ‘Rhine’ surfaced in the black air.

“Now is the time!” After locking onto his real self, Lucien slashed his long-prepared Sword of Truth.

The silver aura of the sword, in the shape of a crescent moon, broke apart the fire, the lightning and hit ‘Rhine’ who did not have the time to dodge. The black air around him, as well as his body, was immediately cut open.

The gap in the void destroyed every piece of the body, but ‘Rhine’ put on a weird smile. Then, he pressed his chest with his right hand and slightly bowed, as graceful as a musician who was answering the curtain call.

Without a sound, the body of ‘Rhine’ collapsed and disappeared, and the arm of the puppet fell to the ground.

After the terrifying view caused by ‘Hellish Ball’ died down, everything became peaceful and quiet, and ‘Rhine’ never showed up again.

Without being careless at all, Lucien picked up the arm of the puppet cautiously with the Shield of Truth in his hand, but he did not find any information left by McLeod on it. In the meantime, he was greatly puzzled. “This ghost can turn into somebody else that can trick those who are most familiar with them. It is very easy for him to commit assassinations. However, he is only level two of legendary and slightly stronger than me. Why on earth could he have terrified McLeod? How did he make the legendary sorcerers such as Maskelyne go missing?”

“However, there is something wrong with him, too. He was not completely killed after he was hit by the Sword of Truth...”

Shaking his head, Lucien felt that the whole thing was full of enigmas that were too much for him to explore right now.

“The time here flows more slowly than outside. The hunters must’ve already entered this place, and the effect of ‘God’s Grace’ should be over now. I can try to return.” Lucien did not want to take more risks. Calculating the current coordinates and the coordinates of the entrance according to the pattern, he looked for a way to go back.

At this moment, another black gate creaked and was opened.

Lucien looked over warily, holding the Shield of Truth in his hand. He was confident that it could resist the first attack of all the experts who were not a demigod.

The gate was wide open, and a familiar person entered Lucien’s vision. The silver soft long hair, the red coat, the black shirt, the dim red stains of blood on the chest, and the lips that were paler than usual – it was Rhine again!

“Hi, Lucien, we meet again.” He smiled. Then his face changed greatly: “Hey, don’t greet me with the Sword of Truth!”

Chapter 626: Two Puppet Parts

Chapter 626: Two Puppet Parts

As the silver longsword shook slightly, Rhine suddenly blinked to the behind of the gate that hadn't been closed, leaving a slowly disappearing shadow behind. He said in both amusement and anger, "You met the monster that could pretend to be someone else, too?"

He sounded more or less relieved, as if he had confirmed that Lucien was authentic.

Lucien looked at him warily. After enhancing himself with Mechanized Mind and Mental Barrier again, he was rational enough to not directly attack Rhine. "Mr. Rhine, how can I confirm that you are authentic?"

You should at least give me an undeniable fact, or it will be better for the both of us if we go separate ways.

Rhine pulled the gate and prevented it from being closed. He said with a smile, "I understand that you cannot tell if I am impersonated by the monster by scent, blood, body or memories. I was injured because of that just now. However, I believe there's something that the monster absolutely cannot simulate unless he is the God of Truth."

"What is it?" Lucien vaguely guessed Rhine's answer.

A pair of enormous bat wings appeared behind Rhine's red coat, and the vague moonlight glowed, announcing the arrival of the majestic, domineering air of a demigod. A silver moon seemed to be rising in the grey hall. He said, "This is the air of the Primordial Ancestor. That monster cannot fabricate a demigod. The air on your left hand will let me know that you are not fake."

Sensing the familiar air of Alterna, Lucien was finally relieved. He showed the air of the Silver Moon and the mysterious existence of the World of Souls in his left hand without reserve. "Alright, I'm

convinced that you are Mr. Rhine. If the monster can simulate the air of a demigod, I wouldn't be able to escape even if I was not deceived."

Rhine coughed, with blood spreading out on his lips. Although internal bleeding was a serious wound for vampires, he simply smiled as if it were nothing important. "It's a reasonable choice to be cautious. I was hit because I was too reckless."

"The monster I encountered pretended to be you. What about yours?" Lucien retreated the Sword of Truth and kept the Shield of Truth, retaining his wariness.

Rhine coughed again. "He pretended to be another prince among the vampires who's very close to me."

"Oh, so to speak, the monster can simulate both the lives that entered the 'grey maze' and the experts outside of this place?" Asked Lucien in confusion. What was the mechanism behind that?

The 'grey maze' was the name that Lucien came up with for the grey halls and the black gates.

"Grey maze? Hehe, this place is called 'Realm of Gates'. At least, the legendary sorcerers who went missing in this place called it that way." Rhine corrected him. "I suspect that there's something wrong with this 'Realm of Gates'. Perhaps, our memories are open in this place. So, the monster pretended to be the prince according to my memories."

The memories are open? What about the secrets from Earth? What about the spirit library? Lucien considered the problem seriously. Would he see Gundam, Super Saiyans or Starships that are simulated by the monster?

What a spectacular world it would be...

"The Realm of Gates? Mr. Rhine, did you find the things that Viken left behind?" Since he couldn't discuss the spiritual library with Rhine, Lucien asked another important question.

Rhine shook his head. "I came to this place when I followed the

mysterious piece inside Sard's body. I only found a few fragments before I was attacked. There's some information on them."

Instead of keeping it a secret, he tossed a few pieces of grey paper to Lucien.

Picking them up with 'Mage's Hand' carefully, Lucien browsed through them.

"...There are countless black gates in this place. A surprise, and of course, a danger, may be hiding behind every gate. We have named this place 'Realm of Gates'..."

"...We accidentally found certain weird creatures behind the gates. They are somewhat similar to the research that we conducted before. If we hadn't already achieved some results, we probably would never have discovered them..."

"...Maybe, we can find a way to get in there by studying those creatures..."

"...Somebody seemed to be here before..."

Lucien recognized the handwriting on two pieces of paper. One of them belonged to McLeod that he learnt just now, and the other was Maskelyne's.

"Weird creatures? Are there plenty of such creatures?" Lucien said, feeling that his blood was freezing, while he considered the information on the last piece of paper. Somebody was here before Maskelyne and the explorers came?

Rhine closed the black gate and wiped the blood on his lips with a white handkerchief, before he shook his head and said, "That's impossible. If there were plenty of such monsters, Maskelyne and his lot wouldn't have discovered them or written those notes in relief at all."

He meant that Maskelyne and the team should've been wiped out soon after they entered. After all, they were not as strong as him, who could summon the Silver Moon. Also, since the team was rather huge, there would've been plenty of opportunities for the

monsters who were adept at disguise.

“It makes sense. Even you were heavily wounded from the ambush, Mr. Rhine.” Lucien nodded. “Right, Mr. Rhine, how strong was the monster you encountered?”

Rhine folded the handkerchief and put it in his pocket. “He was undoubtedly the peak of legendary. I only beat it back after summoning the power of the Primordial Ancestor. However, if I hadn’t been as carefully, I could’ve escaped even if I could not defeat it.”

After pausing for a moment, he smiled and said, “I am now a level-three legendary vampire.”

“Why was the monster I encountered only level two of legendary?” Lucien was rather puzzled about that. “Did we meet different monsters?”

“If they were different monsters, why did they happen to be one level above ourselves?” Rhine captured the problem keenly. “Apart from the ability to summon the Primordial Ancestor, I am level three of legendary. Without the improvement of your equipment, you should only be level one of legendary, right?”

Being in this place, he didn’t know how much time had passed in the outside world, so he wasn’t so sure whether or not Lucien, who had been advancing crazily, had already advanced into level two of legendary.

Lucien had the weird familiar feeling again, as if he had encountered the situation before, but he couldn’t find the experience that matched. So, he could only ponder for a moment and reply, “Yes, I’m level one of level-one legendary. Perhaps, due to certain special restraints, the monsters can only carry out the strength one level higher than that of the target?”

“That’s a possibility.” Wearing his usual smile, Rhine encouraged Lucien to go on.

An idea suddenly occurred to Lucien. He looked at Mr. Rhine with a

smile, “Mr. Rhine, if my speculation is true, do you think we will run into one monster or two monsters if we move together? Will they be level two of legendary or the peak of legendary?”

“It should be one monster at the peak of legendary.” Pondering for a moment, Rhine answered.

Lucien turned away his head ‘coldly’. “Then, I think we should go separately.”

“Forgive me, but I happen to be going the same way as you all the time.” Rhine replied humorously. “Also, an experienced, well-informed Observer can be very useful in this place. Besides, everything we said was just a speculation.”

Lucien smiled. “I was also worried that I might encounter a top legendary monster when I act alone, so it will be better if Mr. Rhine deals with them with me. I don’t think we will encounter a monster in the level of demigod, right? About that, Mr. Rhine, I’m planning to abort the exploration and return. This place is not too far away from the entrance. There are only a dozen gates in between at most. Are you coming with me?”

“Due to my heavy wound, it’s obviously unsuitable for me to stay any longer.” Rhine took out a bright green arm of a puppet. “I’m quite lucky to meet you who knows the pattern of coordinate changes. It would’ve taken me forever if I tried to find a way out on my own. This is my advance payment. It’s a part of the puppet created by McLeod in his unique ways. You will benefit a lot by analyzing it.”

Observation and summarization were the strong suits of sorcerers, and arcanists among sorcerers were even better at them. Rhine knew what he was and wasn’t capable of very well.

Lucien’s face immediately became awful. Alarmed, he said warily, “Mr. Rhine, put the arm of the puppet on the ground.”

“Why? Were you tricked by the arm of the puppet as a gift just now?” Amused, Rhine threw the arm of the puppet to the ground and watched Lucien pick it up with ‘Mage’s Hand’.

After he picked it up, Lucien recognized that it was the other arm of the puppet, and they made a set perfectly.

Slightly relieved, Lucien opened the black gate behind him. Appearing before his eyes was a familiar grey hall, with the silver residue of magic patterns on the ground.

“No, this isn’t the previous one.” Lucien soon recognized that the complicated magic patterns constituted a different part of the hexagram.

“Huh, a paper fragment?” Rhine discovered a shallow grey piece and showed it to Lucien:

“NO!”

It was similar to the fragment that had ‘devil’ on it. Hysterical craziness and fear could be sensed from it. While memorizing the complicated magic patterns, Lucien found the right leg of the puppet.

Having collected three parts of the puppet, Lucien was not delighted. Instead, he said solemnly in confusion, “Why are the fragments and parts of the puppet waiting to be discovered by us?”

“There are too many halls in the Realm of Gates. The monster might be unable to find all of them.” Rhine speculated.

Lucien shook his head. “Then, why can the monster find us accurately?”

.....

Inside the grey hall, Douglas and Fernando, surrounded by countless alarm spells, walked steadily.

“There’s nothing but halls and gates in this place?” Fernando looked around. There weren’t any dangers or monsters? That only called for more wariness. This was the deepest part of the World of Souls where many legendary sorcerers had gone missing!

Douglas observed the surroundings and said, “The coordinates are

changing fast, but they match the pattern left by Maskelyne. However, as a result, it will be barely possible for us to encounter Lucien. We can only leave marks to tell him to go out on his own and leave the same marks for us.”

“He must be planning to hide for a while before he returns to the entrance. We will return after the time is probably enough.” After discovering that the coordinates of the halls were changing fast, Fernando vaguely guessed what his student had in mind.

As he spoke, he opened a black gate with magic.

.....

“Life sensation?” Rhine speculated again.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when both of them raised their heads and looked at a black gate warily, which was being opened slowly.

Chapter 627: Lucien's Question

As the black gate was slowly opened, Lucien held the Shield of Truth even more tightly. If it was the monster that was coming, he would probably be at the peak of legendary according to Rhine and his speculation.

The red eyes, the short height, the long magic robe that reached the ground, and the handsome but old face... The familiar look made Lucien blurt out. "Master."

Then, he saw the tall old man behind Fernando. It was exactly the gentle but intimidating Douglas. He said, "Mr. President."

Fernando did not give a reply immediately. He remained silent for almost ten seconds, as if he were confirming Lucien's identity in secret. In the end, he seemed relieved. "You didn't encounter any danger, did you?"

...

Fernando opened the black gate with magic and suddenly sensed two people inside. So, he was even more wary, and the Robe of Dominance, the Eye of Storm and Abrupt Magic Reverse were all ready.

Then, he heard Lucien's voice. "Master, Mr. President."

His worries were greatly eased, but he was careful enough to confirm Lucien's identity with multiple magic approaches. Douglas also checked the uniqueness of the Secretive with his astrology.

...

Although the features such as the air and the spiritual power all told Lucien that it was his teacher and the president standing before his eyes, his previous experience made him full of wariness. Still holding the Shield of Truth as before, he said, "Mr. President, master, there's a monster in this place who can transform into anyone with the victim's every feature. I just encountered him when

he pretended to be Mr. Rhine. He even simulated the reaction of the Origin of Blood.”

Fernando glared at him. “Are you implying that we are impersonated by the monster? Can he fabricate the projection of my demiplane, too?”

A dark thunderstorm blew around him, and the Thunder Hell had arrived.

Hearing the familiar roars and storms, Lucien felt that his heart was hot, somewhat believing that it was his master.

Douglas, on the other hand, considered for a moment and asked, “Lucien, since the Silver-eyed Count is with you, it means that you have other ways to confirm each other’s identity. Do we need to do anything to cooperate with you?”

“We confirmed each other’s identity with the air of the Primordial Ancestor. I don’t think it’s possible for you.” Rhine smiled and answered on behalf of Lucien. “However, the solution is very simple. This place is not far from the entrance. We do not need to go with you. Since both of you are at the peak of legendary, I don’t think anything can stop you from returning. Everything will be clear once we’re out.”

In the dangerous ‘Realm of Gates’ where there was a monster that could pretend to be everybody, people tended to be suspicious of each other. Lucien was not entirely reassured about Rhine even to this moment. Therefore, he totally agreed with his proposal.

Fernando roared. “Nonsense! If the monster is so terrifying, will he watch you two leave without doing anything? You can’t confirm my identity?”

Despite his roars, he remained calm and cleared the way without underestimating the monster.

“In that case, you will go to the entrance first, and we will follow you in case the monster chases after you.” Douglas nodded his head and agreed with Rhine’s proposal.

Therefore, the two top legendary sorcerers stood at the corners of the grey hall and cleared the black gate. Lucien and Rhine, on the other hand, moved to the gate that was on the entrance's side carefully, each watching over one side. They were finally more or less relaxed when they were about to enter the gate.

Then, Douglas and Fernando moved and followed them.

Their action was absolutely fine, but Lucien was rather anxious. His transformation was about to be over. In order to perform it again, he would need a few seconds to pacify his blood power. Those few seconds would be highly dangerous. He could not make any mistakes in such an environment.

Should he ask his teacher to follow them one hall away? But in such a case, wouldn't he lose the greatest help if he encountered a top legendary monster?

I have to find a way to confirm their identity... Lucien thought quickly.

Rhine was about to open the black gate up ahead. Fearing that they might encounter a top legendary monster, Fernando and Douglas were closer and closer to them.

Then, they suddenly heard Lucien speak, "Mr. President, master, wait a moment."

"What is it?" Fernando seemed angry about not being trusted.

Rhine, on the other hand, looked at Lucien curiously, wondering what he was going to ask.

Lucien asked rather solemnly, "Mr. President, master, how can the atom model with two electrons be resolved with matrix mechanics?"

"Huh..." Fernando and Douglas were both stunned.

...

"The air, the spiritual power and the blood power are identical..."

“His location is deviated from this place according to my prophecy, but that might not be ‘the Secretive’, because many other ways could create a similar effect...”

In the telepathic bond, Fernando and Douglas exchanged their information. They had to be careful. Their past adventures made them respect all the dangerous places instead of blindly trusting their magic, not to mention that this was the deepest part of the World of Souls where many legendary sorcerers had gone missing!

“He should be Lucien, but we can’t be careless even if he is the real Lucien. There are too many sorcerers who were corrupted and lost, weren’t there?” Fernando was not hasty and impatient at all. He had been nearly killed many times because of his personality in the past adventures, and he had learnt to control himself.

Lucien, holding the Shield of Truth, said delightedly, “Mr. President, master, there’s a terrible monster in this place that is at the peak of legendary. If I hadn’t encountered Mr. Rhine and received his help after he summoned Silver Moon Alterna, I probably would’ve been killed by the monster.”

“Let’s get out of this place!”

“Where is the Silver-eyed Count?” Douglas looked around in confusion.

Fernando, on the other hand, frowned and asked, “Only one top legendary monster?”

The word ‘only’ fully demonstrated his confidence and dominance.

“I don’t know. We were separated after the battle. Also, this is the Realm of Gates. There’s no way to locate him at all without knowing his coordinates.” Lucien said in frustration. “Also, the monster may be even more terrible than what we saw. I found some of the last belongings and notebooks left by Mr. Maskelyne’s team. They were full of desperation and hysteria.”

“Notebooks? Last belongings? Let me take a look.” Said Douglas solemnly.

Lucien took out the grey notebook and the greenish item. Canceling the Shield of Truth, he was about to hand it over to Fernando.

“Wait a moment.” Douglas suddenly stopped him. “Deliver it with magic. Don’t come close.”

“What’s the meaning of this, Mr. President?” Lucien appeared confused.

Douglas said gently, “This is the deepest part of the World of Souls where any accident may happen. So, we can’t be more careful. Well, this place is not far away from the entrance. Let’s read them outside. You will go first. We’ll follow you.”

Lucien nodded. “That is absolutely correct.”

...

After a brief daze, Douglas said in amusement, “Aren’t there no answers or inspirations to the question yet?”

“That’s why I would like to hear your opinion. This is a pure regular arcana communication about the new frontier.” Lucien smiled.

Memories could be obtained via special methods, and the blood power and the spiritual power could be fabricated as if they were real. However, Lucien believed that the ability to comprehensively make use of the knowledge in the memories and the mindset that was a sublimation of memories were the most special parts in everybody. It was barely possible for the monster to mimic them. When it came to a new frontier of arcana where no answers had been raised yet, the two idiosyncrasies would be best revealed.

If it were on Earth, Lucien wouldn’t be so sure, but this world had souls. Mindset was the closest thing to the soul and was one of the most essential nature of a person. If the monster could simulate that perfectly, Lucien would find it hard to imagine what constituted a person.

“Discussing an arcana problem at such a moment? Are you out of your mind?” Fernando burst into fury.

Lucien said, without giving in, “The monster can only obtain memories, but he cannot comprehensively utilize the knowledge in them to resolve new arcana problems. This is the best way of identification.”

Fernando suddenly smiled. “You are such a nuisance. Wouldn’t it be much better if you could just be deceived by me and die? Why do you have to make me attack you?”

His voice was still echoing, when he fell apart like a shadow and melted into Douglas’s body, with a weird smile popping up on his face:

“Advanced Time Stop!”

The grey was frozen, and the vague paleness surfaced. Everything around stopped functioning. Even the alternate space behind the Shield of Truth seemed to be affected and became rather slow, making it impossible for Lucien to wield the Sword of Truth. Besides, the Moon Timer’s weakening of the power of time and space was not as good as he expected. Lucien could only watch ‘Douglas’ in a strange way although his head was still normal.

Was it ‘Advanced Time Stop’ performed by the top legend?

He had been so greatly affected even though he had the Moon Timer and the Shield of Truth!

“Eternal Blaze!”

After the time was stopped, ‘Douglas’ pressed his hands and cast the spell.

If he were to be killed by ‘Advanced Time Stop’ plus ‘Eternal Blaze’, he would definitely die full of regrets!

At this moment, Lucien wondered whether he would be resurrected after he was killed inside this mysterious ‘Realm of Gates’, or would he be forever locked here like a ghost.

...

Lucien nodded. "That is absolutely correct."

As he talked, he stepped forward, ready to walk past Douglas and Fernando.

Right then, the smile on his face became mysterious. He pointed with his right hand and declared, "Light of Judgment!"

A magnificent and intimidating beam of light seemed to have descended directly from Mountain Paradise, with the power that could destroy everything.

"Abrupt Magic Reverse!" Fernando's long-prepared spell was performed.

A mirror full of beautiful, enigmatic patterns appeared, as if it were connected to a different world.

After the Light of Judgment hit the mirror, it was reflected abruptly and hit 'Lucien', but it merely broke an illusion.

The 'Abrupt Magic Reverse', which could reflect five spells that targeted individuals, seemed to have reached the limits of its capacity. It was completely broken after being used only once.

In midair, a shadow slowly appeared. He had a headful of white hair, a sacred crown, and a platinum staff in his hand.

"Benedict III!" Douglas couldn't have been more grave.

Chapter 628: Psalm of Night

Inside the grey effect of Time Stop, a sliver light suddenly glowed as a vintage hourglass that was engraved with the patterns of a full moon, half moon and a crescent moon flew out of Rhine's pocket!

As the silver sand flowed inside, the effect of Time Stop was gone, but the sand was also reduced into powder.

It was indeed as expected of the Observer who had a copious collection.

However, 'Douglas' had already performed 'Eternal Blaze'. Lucien, having only just recovered from the attack, could only focus the will and blood power transformed from his spiritual power on the Shield of Truth, keeping it before himself and Rhine.

Boom!

The most terrifying temperature vaporized the grey bricks and the illusionary ripples created by the Shield of Truth. The energy storm that seemed able to destroy the world blew both the shield and Lucien backwards.

After only several seconds, the amazing feeling that they were in a different world was gone. The ripples around them cracked and fell apart. The surface of the neat and sacred 'Shield of Truth' was also brimming with the miserable traces of a raging storm, as if it would be completely damaged before long.

Lucien's 'Robe of Grand Arcanists', sensing the temperature and the energy that were infiltrating, automatically triggered 'Elemental Skin' and 'Magic Absorber', crazily swallowing and offsetting the damage.

Suddenly, Rhine's red coat emitted vague blackness that appeared like the deepest night, calling for subconscious reference and compliment.

The black light spread out and slightly twisted the direction of the

high temperature, the energy storm and the neutron storm that leaked in. In the meantime, his body became fuzzy like a mist, which enveloped Lucien and brought him into a 'dream'.

In the unimaginable light and heat at the center of the explosion of 'Eternal Blaze', the Shield of Truth, Lucien and Rhine were soon obliterated, but it seemed to be waking them from a dream.

'Real Dream'! 'Night Travel'! The vampires' two talents!

The surging explosion destroyed the whole hall and tore apart the grey wall and the black gate. Bloody liquid dripped from the ceiling and the door, only to be vaporized immediately.

After the explosion died down, the grey wall wriggled as if it were alive, repairing everything on its own. Very soon, the place became exactly the same as before, except that the silver pattern of magic on the floor had been erased.

.....

Inside another grey hall...

Rhine and Lucien suddenly appeared from the void in midair. Unable to control themselves, they fell and hit the ground with a loud noise. Their whole bodies were in pain.

"I'm not dead yet? I weathered through a hydrogen bomb!" The sense of pain made Lucien really feel that he was still alive. In his delight, he did not call it 'Eternal Blaze' but used 'hydrogen bomb', his most familiar name, in his heart.

"Cough." Rhine's hair was a bit of a mess, but he tried to cover his mouth with a white handkerchief. It was not until a long time later that he stopped the intense coughing and regained the ability of talking. "The 'Eternal Blaze' you invented is truly a spell that suppresses the undead creatures. Despite the blockage of the Shield of Truth and 'Psalm of Night', I have been unusually weakened. I probably wouldn't be able to wield much strength in the next hour or so."

That was only because the princes of vampires had strong recovery

abilities. If it were any other vampires, their skin would've been burnt and festered, and it wouldn't be healed until a long time later.

"Psalm of Night?" Lucien glanced at Rhine's red coat, on which the dark and peaceful darkness was still flowing. It seemed to be the legendary armor among the vampires which had uncannily fallen from a level-four, perfect legendary item into a level-three, senior-rank one. Had it not been for its defense, Rhine and he would have suffered much more severe damage.

Thinking about that, Lucien looked at the Shield of Truth in his hands. The delicate, well-decorated surface of the shield was full of bumps and dents. Holes caused by vaporization could be found in many places, too. It was obvious that the shield was no longer usable for now.

Lucien was more or less relieved. The shield did not seem to be completely damaged yet, or he would feel a great heartache. Such a high-level legendary item with special defense like 'Shield of Truth' couldn't be replaced at all!

"As expected of the Shield of Truth. If it were any other level-three legendary item, it would have been completely vaporized." Rhine observed the black gates warily. According to their previous experiences, the monster would not show up in the grey hall out of nowhere but would encounter the target after the gate was opened. Of course, that might just be the monster's hobby.

Touching the uneven surface of the Shield of Truth, Lucien said, "It only survived because the mechanism of its defense is different from that of other objects."

He also added in his heart, "That's why we survived."

'Eternal Blaze' was an area attack. Spell Trigger or other spells might not be able to bring him to the edge.

While talking, Lucien brought a small but complicated alchemical cottage from his storage bag and tossed it in front of himself.

The dark gold cottage grew quickly into a magic laboratory that

had a full alchemical platform.

“A portable alchemical platform?” Regaining his ability of action, Rhine observed the magic laboratory with great interest.

Lucien nodded his head. “We have been prepared for everything that might happen in the adventure in the World of Souls, including what we should do after our equipment is damaged...”

This time, Lucien did not need to spend tremendous time searching for materials to repair his magic items like when he was forced into the alternate dimension last time. Instead, he had prepared all the materials he needed according to his gear.

“But we can’t stop here. The monster may come to us at any moment.” Rhine was not as weak as a moment ago. At least, the big wings on his back could be opened now.

Lucien found the necessary materials to repair the Shield of Truth and threw them into the portable magic laboratory with a smile. Then, he put the damaged ‘Shield of Truth’ on the alchemical platform and sent the repair procedures and requirements into the laboratory through telepathic bond. In the end, he said, “Please work on it, Pittsburgh.”

“Not a problem. Master, it will be repaired in half a day.” The ‘magic laboratory’ said delightfully.

Rhine’s lips twitched. “So, an alchemical life that can help with maintenance.”

“Pittsburgh is the brother of Pinocchio, my tower guard, and an alchemical life that Mr. Klaus and I developed together. Unless he is too severely damaged, he can even repair legendary items, which will save sorcerers a lot of time, particularly during an adventure.” Lucien introduced Pittsburgh. He felt rather gloomy when he mentioned Klaus.

Rhine put his handkerchief into his pocket and asked in confusion, “Pittsburgh is Pinocchio’s brother because they begin with the same letter?”

“Hehe.” Naturally, Lucien wouldn’t say that he named the alchemical life in such a way purely because of his bad humor.

After reducing the magic Lab he put it back into his storage bag, Lucien raised his head and looked at the everlasting grey hall, starting to calculate his current coordinates by collecting the environmental parameters. In the meantime, since the Shield of Truth was no longer usable, he naturally did not transform into a legendary knight again, but put back the Sword of Truth and prepared to deal with the dangers with magic.

Suddenly, Lucien changed his face. “This place is very close to the final spot that Mr. Maskelyne recorded. We pressed so deep into the Realm of Gates?”

“That’s a sad coincidence? I was unable to control the direction of Night Travel in that situation. I hoped to fly to somewhere near the Furnace of Souls, but as it turned out...” Rhine opened his hands gracefully and expressed his apology.

“Do you listen to ‘Arcana Voice’, too?” Lucien sensed the style of ‘Arcana Voice’ from Rhine’s rhetoric.

While he talked, he examined a black gate with magic and was prepared to open it.

Rhine combed his silver long hair and chuckled, “It’s a very interesting program. Lucien, are you going to where Maskelyne left his final coordinates?”

Lucien had shared the formula to calculate coordinates with him.

“Yes. To reach the entrance from here, we have to pass almost fifty grey halls. It’s hard for us to avoid the monster over such a long journey. Considering our status right now, we may be unable to escape from it.” Lucien stared at the black gate before him. “In such a case, we might as well go to the spot that Mr. Maskelyne left behind. Chances are that we will find records or items that will unravel the secrets of the monster and give us hope to win!”

The more difficult, dangerous and devastating the situation was, the

more determined and unwavering Lucien would be. Even if he was to be killed, he would die on the way looking for an opportunity instead of surrendering to fate!

“I am going to take the monster by his throat!” Lucien cheered himself up in a low voice and opened the gate with Mage’s Hand.

A space of greyness was presented before Lucien’s eyes. Behind the gate was not a grey hall but a grey wilderness where monuments of the same color were standing!

The wilderness was so quiet and boundless that it was like a real world of death.

“Pleasant surprises may be behind the gates...” Rhine repeated what the paper fragments said. As a man with the title of ‘Observer’, he was full of interest in the unusual things. “It seems that behind the black gate is not just the grey hall. There are also worlds like alternate dimensions, in which there are probably precious items and unimaginable dangers.”

Lucien felt a strong toothache. “What a weird world. However, this wilderness full of tombstones is somewhat similar to the ‘Resting Place’, Vicente’s demiplane.”

“Perhaps, the worlds behind the gate are all kinds of places of death. Chances are that we will see duplicates of the nine floors of hell.” Rhine speculated.

Lucien was about to step forward, when he suddenly remembered something else. He asked in confusion, “If the monster could easily find us, why is he still not here?”

“When I was hunted by the monster, I did not have the time to catch my breath at all, and I had to summon the power of the Primordial Ancestor. Hehe. Perhaps, he is too busy dealing with other people to come after us... There’s perhaps only one monster.” Rhine recalled.

“Then, let’s find Mr. Maskelyne’s last possessions as soon as possible.” Enhancing himself with a space defense with the Space

Staff, Lucien flew into the world of tombstones.

.....

Inside the grey hall, Douglas and Fernando blinked out. They looked rather hasty, but they were still normal.

“Showing no anomalies or loopholes as both Lucien and Benedict III, it seems that a very uncanny monster is hiding in this place.” Fernando was as aggressive as before, not frustrated because they had to flee in a hurry.

Douglas said, deep in thought, “But the strength he displayed was only slightly higher than that of ‘Ivan’ in God’s Grace. It hadn’t reached Benedict III’s level, or we wouldn’t have escaped in one piece.”

Although he never fought Benedict III before, he had challenged Benedict II once. Without God’s Arrival, the two popes should be on par with each other.

“We were a bit panicked just now. We didn’t have to escape so aimlessly. We could’ve fought the monster and found a chance to retreat towards the entrance.” Fernando evaluated their previous performance and was not satisfied with himself.

Douglas calculated the coordinates and opened a gate with magic. “There’s still time to return right now. You will leave marks for Lucien.”

Although he thought that Lucien could barely survive the attack of a monster who was close to a demigod, he would still try to save him.

After the gate was opened, it was a warm spring behind the gate. However, there was not the slightest sense of life. Seven headless dwarfs were walking towards a forest with a grey coffin on their shoulders.

Chapter 629: Life Traceback

Chapter 629 Life Traceback

“An alternate dimension?” Douglas had thought that this place was made of grey halls that were connected by black gates, and that there would be no other changes. Therefore, he was rather stunned to see this world of exuberant trees.

Fernando flew in first. “It seems that there are many worlds similar to alternate dimensions in the ‘Realm of Gates’ apart from the grey halls. I wonder if intelligent life can be found here.”

“I prefer to think that they are spectres of different kinds, like what we are seeing right now.” Douglas observed the environment and speculated roughly.

At this moment, the seven headless dwarfs, holding the grey coffin that was much longer than their height, reached Fernando and Douglas. They spoke in a dull voice from their stomach, “Are you princes?”

“Huh?” Douglas reviewed his defense and looked at them, interested.

“The princes with heads are bad princes. The princess will blame us.” The headless dwarf in the lead said, his belly fluctuating.

Amused, Douglas said, “Good princes don’t have heads?”

“If you don’t have your head, you will never be upset, you will never be sorrow, and you will never worry about your look...” A coarse female voice suddenly emerged from the grey coffin. The lifelessness around flowed into the coffin through the gaps and congregated into black air that improved the power of death inside to the level of legendary very soon.

Crack. The cover of the grey coffin was moved away, and a headless woman in a pure white court dress stood up, with a weird necklace made of a series of red apples on her chest.

The necklace seemed hilarious, but if one were to observe carefully, they would discover a human face on each of the apples. They were the faces of seven dwarfs and the round face of a girl. It was quite blood-freezing.

ere

“Give me your head! Give me your head!” The headless woman wailed, and the intense air of death began to spread. The soundwaves that could destroy the soul swept out.

Looking at everything without any expression, Fernando suddenly said, “Boring.”

Pa!

As the bolts of lightning hit the ground, the dozens of kilometers around were covered in the forest of thunderstorms. Both the headless prince and the trees were burnt into ashes!

“Headless? I seemed to have seen this custom before.” Douglas recalled the uncanny sense of familiarity. “When we developed the Solar Islands, I encountered the natives of a few clans. They believed that the head of a human was the symbol of life, and that disasters would happen if their head remained after their death. Therefore, the head of the deceased would be cut off and burnt up before they were buried. It’s similar to what we experienced just now.”

Fernando was not involved in the development of the Solar Islands that time. While listening to Douglas’ interpretation, he frowned and asked, “Are we in a dream or an illusion, where the things we are familiar with have been transformed into the weirdest stuff?”

“I am a top legend of the school of astrology. If even I cannot tell whether or not we are in a dream, the enemy can only be someone in the level of the God of Truth. If the ‘gods’ of such a level do exist, do they have to attack us so indirectly?” Said Douglas calmly but confidently. “We are in the World of Souls. The death-related phenomena may be what is unique about it. We need to study the mechanism and the pattern behind it.”

A gloomy wind passed by, and a coarse, miserable female voice screamed behind them again:

“Give me your head! Give me your head!”

The tone of the voice changed, and the ashes on the ground gathered in swirls, refocused into a headless figure!

However, it was not someone in a white dress this time, but a person wearing a white robe and holding a platinum staff!

“This monster...” Fernando bellowed in fury.

Half solemnly and half amused, Douglas said, “Benedict III seems much more handsome without his head.”

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In the grey wilderness that was full of tombstones...

While carrying Rhine to walk forward quickly, Lucien analyzed the crown of the Primordial Mummy. This legendary item seemed to have been specially processed by the Lich King and was not readily crackable like the common items. Lucien estimated that it would take him at least two to three hours.

“Wait a moment.” Rhine suddenly said.

Lucien stopped and let go of Rhine’s arm. “Mr. Rhine, did you notice anything?”

Rhine warmed his arms and legs. Part of his weakness seemed to be already gone. The vampire prince’s ability of self-recovery was truly astonishing. “Have you noticed the patterns on the tombstones?”

“Aren’t they the patterns of the ancient Meshkate Empire?” The Meshkate Empire was one of the three major magic empires. It occupied the area south to where the Gusta Empire was currently located. The magic patterns of the empire were undoubtedly the basics of arcana and were needed in many spells in the school of necromancy. Therefore, Lucien did not feel very strange about that.

Rhine bent down and touched the vintage mysterious patterns on the grey tombstones with his narrow, long fingers. "They are the patterns in the early years of the Meshkate Empire. Because they are similar to the patterns later, and their effect is also more or less the same, only an Observer like me who is a fan of history can tell the difference."

"Is there anything special about them?" Lucien was rather eager to reach the spot marked by Maskelyne, but since Rhine was willing to waste their precious time in this place, he must have a very good reason. So, Lucien asked in the telepathic bond.

Rhine smiled casually, "We are searching for what Meshkate left behind in order to crack the secrets of the 'Realm of Gates' and the monsters. Now that we already find a clue, we cannot let it go easily. Let's not reverse our purpose and our approach. Those patterns are not too special per se, but they indicate that this group of tombstones belong to the Meshkate in the early years."

"However, the 'early years', associated with the tombstones everywhere, reminded me of a most famous custom at the beginning of the Meshkate Empire. It was the ritual of 'Life Traceback'."

"Life Traceback?" Lucien recalled the famous ritual in the history of necromancy.

Rhine wiped his fingers with a handkerchief gracefully. "Yes, the ritual of 'Life Traceback'. The people of the Meshkate Empire generally believed that there was a most powerful intelligent creature at the original point. He was perfect and boasted the vastest light of spirituality. He created the species like humans, elves and dragons with his blood power, which made him disappear in the river of time. If anybody sought after great power, they could reverse the process and melt the intelligent lives of different races to approach the 'Origin'."

"That was the principle of funerals for the early Meshkate people. They made giants with wood and buried them at the certain of the graveyard. Then, only the clothes of the deceased would be buried in their tomb, and their body would be filled into the wood giant,

hoping that they would be melted after their death. Although the custom was gradually gone, many spells of the school of necromancy obvious came from it, such as the stitched body.”

Recalling the spells of the school of necromancy he knew, Lucien nodded his head, “That’s true. Does ‘somebody was here’ on the paper fragment indicate a certain legendary sorcerer of the Meshkate Empire?”

“Possibility, but it’s hard to imagine that a legendary sorcerer would establish such a huge graveyard. Did he have nothing better to do after entering this place through a dangerous adventure? Lucien, you should know that the World of Souls corresponded with the main material world except that the locations are disordered. If we extrapolate the law to the Realm of Gates, can we assume that the Realm of Gates is a mapping for the different customs of death?” Rhine tossed his handkerchief and smashed the cover of a coffin. There was only a black jacket inside, as he expected.

Lucien thought for a moment and said, “That’s a very reasonable deduction, but what does the monster represent? It can’t be the fear of death in every intelligent life’s heart, right? I prefer to think that it’s the mysterious existence of the World of Souls.”

When he said ‘heart’, Lucien suddenly shivered and felt that he remembered something. But still, something was missing for him to see through the mist. He frowned hard. Perhaps, the difference on the surface had disguised the appearance of his memories, which made it impossible for him to find a similar experience.

“The bottom line is, we have clues about the monster.” Rhine smiled and said, “We can only expect the items that Maskelyne left can give us more clues.”

Lucien sighed, “Even if we figure out what the monster is and how it was born, the biggest enigma for me will still be why it can exist in such a way, and the arcana mechanism behind

it.”

“You are showing more and more characteristics of a grand

arcanist.” Rhine was amused.

Suddenly, the earth shook violently, as if some monster was crawling out of the underground world. The tombstones collapsed one after another.

Rhine chuckled, “It seems that the ‘Origin’ in this place has already ‘evolved into a powerful spectre. Lucien, he’s all yours. If you can’t, I’ll lend you a few legendary items.”

Dangerous air spread throughout the place. After a loud noise, the tombstones were scattered, and mud splashed out. An enormous blue-and-black arm extended from below the earth.

Right then, a blue-and-black giant dozens of meters tall stood up abruptly. Intact intelligent lives could be seen on its arms, abdomen and head. Some of them were humans, some dwarfs, some dragons, some elves, and some were murlocs. Together, they constituted the body of the giant.

The giant’s eyes were suddenly opened. Dark red flames bouncing in them, there was no sign of life within its horizons anymore.

Lucien brought Rhine far away from the giant with an ‘Accurate Teleportation’. He was terrified by the lifeless greyness where they stood earlier. That was the deepest fear in every intelligent creature’s heart.

“It’s only a level-one legendary. You can certainly defeat such a slow and unwise creature, Lucien, can’t you? Huh, its heart is made of Fountain of Youth. No wonder Maskelyne said that there were many pleasant surprises in this place.” Rhine’s weakness was not entirely gone yet, but his eyes were still as keen as before.

“Fountain of Youth?” Lucien repeated in the telepathic bond solemnly. That was a material to hold the legendary ritual extend the longevity!

“Atomic Fission!”

BOOM!

A gigantic fireball exploded by the head of the giant, covering it quickly and destroying everything around. A mushroom cloud rolled and soared to the sky.

“Simple and straightforward...” Rhine remarked.

Holding the Space Staff in his hands, Lucien was prepared to control it subsequently. Then, he suddenly recalled something else. “Mr. Rhine, I saw similar tombstones and patterns in the ‘Resting Place’ of the Lord of the Undead. Does it indicate that one of his hidden spells is associated with the ‘Precursor’”

Pondering for a moment, Rhine replied, “Perhaps, he has already built his body into the ‘Original Body’. In that case, he will be much stronger than he appears.”

Chapter 630: Mirror of Fate

The mushroom, mixed with fire, rose to the sky. The dark air dispersed the smoke, revealing the blue-and-black giant whose head was gone and whose body was more than ragged.

Right then, the intelligent lives of different species that made up the body of the giant were suddenly enlivened. They surged toward the head like a tide in haste, and after only a few seconds, a new head had been created.

“It’s truly tough. As expected of a masterpiece of the school of necromancy.” Lucien pointed the brilliant Space Staff in his hands at the corpses of humans, elves and dragons, which were immediately slowed down like puppets. The speed of the giant’s recovery was lowered.

Then, cold moonlight appeared in Lucien’s dark pupils. He turned into a legendary knight and drew the silver longsword. Flying into the sky, he descended and slashed the giant like a shooting star.

It was not because Lucien did not want to finish it with magic, but because the monster might catch up with them any moment and he could not waste his time. Naturally, the best solution was to directly crush the enemy with the Sword of Truth!

After a flash of the silver sword, an illusionary gap appeared on the giant without a sound, cutting the defense, the dark air and the physical body all at once, before it was divided into countless branches and spread to all the body parts of the giant.

Crack, crack, crack. The dead bodies of the intelligent creatures turned into tiny, broken, rotten meat and fell like an abrupt storm.

In the storm of blood, flesh and mucus, Lucien was surrounded by silver moonlight that vaporized the ‘rainwater’ that fell upon him, while he picked up the broken heart of the giant.

The black heart gradually stopped beating. Then, the flesh on the surface took off one layer after another, revealing the pool of bright

green fluids the size of a thumb inside. Intense air of life could be sensed.

Lucien took out a silver teapot that was full of magic patterns and poured the Fountain of Youth into it, before he resealed the container.

“Let’s move on. We are not far away from the spot marked by Maskelyne.” Rhine, more or less recovered, walked over on his own and urged Lucien. For him, the ‘Fountain of Youth’ was of no use at all and even highly poisonous.

Lucien put the magic teapot back and was about to cancel his transformation, when he suddenly heard sobbing that lowered the temperature by dozens of degrees.

Wu, wu, wu. In the blood-freezing cries, tombstones fell, and coffins were opened. The black, grey and white clothes trembled and stood up as if they were alive, before they wobbled to the center.

Their movements seemed abnormal, but they were extremely fast. It didn’t take long before they were integrated into a gigantic doll that was wearing a colorful coat and an uncanny smile, which made Lucien, whose instincts became much keener after he became a legendary knight, sensed a hint of danger.

“What is this?” Asked Lucien subconsciously.

Rhine shook his head. “I don’t know, either. Of all the mysterious customs, I only know one third at most.”

Emitting the air close to level three of legendary, the doll took shape while it chuckled and cried.

“Let’s go!”

Lucien had no intention to fight. Although there would be a chance for him to defeat the creepy doll if he were to carry out all his strength and his items together with Rhine’s abundant collections, it would significantly delay them, and it would be a disaster if the real monster caught them. Also, after they killed the doll, other spectres might appear, and the battle might be prolonged indefinitely.

Having no time to cancel the transformation, Lucien grabbed Rhine by his arm and flew forward into the moonlight, illuminating the grey wilderness.

Very soon, a black gate appeared among the tombstones.

“Wu! Wu! Wu!”

The creepy cries and laughter suddenly echoed next to Lucien’s ears, dissolving the ‘Wall of Space’ around him that he created with the Space Staff. He was also blown out of moonlight.

Lucien trembled hard, feeling that cold wind was pouring into his clothes and that the physical body of the legendary knight was melting. It seemed that only the clothes like the Robe of Grand Arcanists was not affected. But of course, they couldn’t provide any help, either.

Faced with the ‘doll’ that could not be inferred with common sense, Lucien did not turn back but kept on flying at the black gate. In the meantime, he slashed backwards with the Sword of Truth without aiming at the target.

“Wu!”

The silver sword flashed, and the cries countless times more miserable than just now burst out. The freezing wind blowing at his neck came to an abrupt halt.

Having no time to confirm the result or to check the black gate, Lucien simply bumped in.

“Wu! Wu! Wu!”

After he jumped into the grey hall, the cries and laughter came to Lucien’s ears even more loudly. He hurried to summon the moonlight and close the black gate.

Dum! Dum! Dum

The noise of somebody bashing the gate rumbled. The black gate was bent forward, as if it would be knocked open at any moment.

His blood freezing, Lucien calculated the coordinates and traveled among different black gates.

After several grey halls, Lucien and Rhine finally got rid of the mysterious doll.

“The location that Maskelyne left behind is right next to us...” After his calculation, Lucien’s pupils constricted violently. His heart was racing beyond his control despite the pacification of magic.

What would he see there?

Could he find the secrets of the monster?

Would it be something unimaginable, or the omen of horror and desperation?

Rhine, on the other hand, was rather calm. He cleaned his black shirt and his red coat, before he pointed at one of the black gates with a smile. “I believe it’s behind that gate, right?”

“Yes.” Lucien walked over and checked it with magic first. After ensuring that there was no danger, he pushed the gate open slowly.

As the gate moved backwards without a sound, everything behind the gate was revealed before Lucien and Rhine.

“Why?” Lucien tried to control himself to prevent his rationality from being drowned by disappointment.

Behind the black gate was the same grey hall that was exactly like any other halls. There was not even any residue of the silver magic pattern.

“Check it carefully.” Rhine stopped smiling and walked into the grey hall, searching for any traces.

After confirming that the coordinates were correct, Lucien followed him into the hall. Suddenly, he sensed that the Sun’s Corona on his chest rippled, as if it were interacting with a certain object inside the hall.

Following the interaction, Lucien stopped in front of a grey pillar. He examined it with multiple spells.

After a long time, Lucien sighed, “As expected of a level-three prophet. This gate is the best example of hideouts. Without the instruction of the Sun’s Corona, I’m afraid that only the top legends can possibly discover it, and even they will miss it if they are slightly careless.”

As he talked, Lucien activated the secret door and stuck the Sun’s Corona to it. Although Lucien had plenty of ways to crack it, it was the simplest and most time-preserving way to use the Sun’s Corona.

The brilliance of the sun that did not belong to this place glowed inside the grey hall, and a secret door was slowly opened, revealing a messy grey chamber where broken magic tubes, alchemical potions, pots and utensils were everywhere.

It seemed that the master of this place was not in a good mood, or he had left in a hurry, because if a battle of legends had happened in this place, Lucien was very certain that none of them could’ve survived.

The chamber was arranged in the typical look of an ancient magic laboratory. It didn’t take Lucien long before he found a hidden desk, on which there were three items: the torso of a puppet, a magic notebook, and a grey mirror where countless mysterious magic patterns were floating.

“‘Mirror of Fate’. This is truly Maskelyne’s laboratory.” Rhine recognized the mirror after the first look. He explained to Lucien casually, “Maskelyne once worked together with McLeod, hoping to create a legendary item that could reflect the river of fate. However, even a demigod wouldn’t have been capable of that. They only managed to craft an item that could only be used limited times. However, it proved very effective in the first two usages. The first time, it predicted the whereabouts of the Thanos belongings very accurately, and the second time, it predicted that he would be trapped.

“So, a legendary item of the school of prophecy.” Lucien realized

that Rhine knew more than he thought he did. He examined the Mirror of Fate casually.

“‘Mirror of Fate’, a level-three perfect legendary item, can tell what happened in the past rather accurately and predict a future scene less accurately. It is a reflection of the river of fate and shouldn’t exist in this world. It will be broken after five usages.”

“Times used: Four.”

“Everyone’s fate is preordained, but the eyes of mortals cannot see through the heavy fog.”

“By Waldo K Maskelyne.”

“There’s only one time left. It seems that Mr. Maskelyne used it after he was trapped here.” Holding the Mirror of Fate, Lucien said with a heavy mood.

Rhine smiled, “If it were me, I would’ve predicted the secrets of the monster with the Mirror of Fate, too. I wonder if he found anything.”

Not in a hurry to open the notebook, Lucien picked up the greenish torso of the puppet. “Why would a part of McLeod’s puppet appear in Mr. Maskelyne’s laboratory?”

“Perhaps, Maskelyne found it as a clue after McLeod ‘went missing’.” Rhine looked around and suddenly smiled. “This place has been processed by Maskelyne. The time flow is as fast as the outside world. Even if the monster will arrive soon, we will have enough time for our recovery.”

Lucien still did not open the magic notebook. Solemnly, he said, “I have two questions.”

“What are they?” Rhine asked.

“The first question is what I had before. Why did the monster not destroy those remnants? I don’t think they could’ve escaped the monster’s attention, right?” Lucien clenched his right fist and tapped his jaw. “Let’s think reversely. Why did Mr. Maskelyne and

his teammates leave scraps, notes and items in the end as their final attempt? Were they certain that the monster wouldn't destroy them?"

Rhine did not say anything but listened to Lucien's analysis quietly.

"The second question. There are so many grey halls, and yet we found the paper fragments, the puppet parts and the residue of magic so easily. Wasn't it too much of a coincidence?"

"You think that the monster was misleading us on purpose?" Rhine pursed his lips.

"That's possible, but what's the point? Because it can't defeat us?" Lucien suspected that the monster was deepening the illusion or the dream through hints, but he could still open his spirit library.

Taking a breath, Lucien said in a low voice, "There may be clues in the notebook."

Opening the magic notebook, Maskelyne's familiar handwriting appeared:

"...Through the Mirror of Fate, we found one of Mr. Thanos' secret laboratories. The experiment he did there were truly incredible. It was a major inspiration for us..."

Chapter 631: Notes

Chapter 631: Notes

“...The path to ‘immortality’ has been unraveled before us. If our ‘experiment’ goes well, we will surpass the longevity limit of human beings...”

“...During our experiment, I accidentally discovered a strange and interesting world where there are undead creatures everywhere. The messy reflections of everything in the main material world except life can be found... After a few explorations, I discovered magnificent palaces deep inside the World of Souls, which were defended by the spectres that were more than the number of the legends in the three magic empires. Thankfully, most of them were unwise. I was able to sneak in and see the ‘curtain’, or maybe ‘furnace’ if you will, that indicated the true nature of souls...”

“...When I studied the curtain of souls, a primordial mummy in a gold crown discovered me. His defense was truly unbelievable. I was unable to escape and could only hide in the grey pathway behind the curtain of souls. I dared not approach the entrance on the other side because I had a strong sense of danger. A prophet can never survive without believing in his intuitions.”

“...This place is almost a ‘world of gates’. There are infinite grey halls and black gates. Thankfully, many unusual worlds lie behind certain gates, in which there are uncanny monsters and precious materials...”

“...I discovered certain familiar and strange magic patterns, and a world that I cannot believe. I can’t even imagine why it exists here... My research and experiment have made significant breakthroughs, but my sense of danger is stronger and stronger. Perhaps, I should invite a few friends to explore it with me. The primordial mummy outside should be sluggish already...”

“...After a long communication, Viken, McLeod, Solins, Albert, Illinois, Eugenia and some other friends understood the value of the

World of Souls and joined my team. Wilfred, on the other hand, was otherwise occupied and could only wait for the next operation...”

“...The nine of us are from different empires. We are as strong as one third of the whole magic society when we go out together, but I strongly felt uneasy before I left. Therefore, I performed divination with the Mirror of Fate, and I saw my possible fate as well as ‘the non-believer who roams between light and darkness’...”

The content so far was similar to the notebook that Lucien read inside the Grand Cross lock, but it was more elaborate and detailed. Lucien was informed that of the nine legendary sorcerers who explored the World of Souls, five were level-three legends, and four were level-two legends. They perhaps did not amount to one third of the total number of legendary sorcerers, but they were more than one third when it came to strength. No wonder their disappearance collapsed the three magic empires.

“Nine legendary sorcerers went missing here. The Realm of Gates is truly a dangerous place.” Rhine was not far away from Lucien. He stayed on alert against the gate while he read the notebook. “However, they were not as strong as your team in general. There are no more than ten top legendary sorcerers in the entire history of magic.”

Lucien nodded and did not say anything. He kept on browsing through the magic notebook and cracking the crown of the Primordial Mummy.

“On the third day inside the Realm of Gates, we found certain weird ghost creatures that were similar to our experiment results. Had it been otherwise, we could’ve barely discovered them... I believe that our experiment will make more breakthroughs after we study them...”

“On the fifth day inside the Realm of Gates, Viken found certain strange items. Somebody was here!”

“...The ‘Chamber of Immortality’ as mentioned in the items has been determined to be the entrance enshrouded in illusionary ripples, because that’s the only place which matches the

description. The secrets of immortality! I never thought that we could get in touch with the secrets of immortality! I was only trying to break the limit of life and become somewhat undead! Viken, McLeod and Eugenia are too excited to say anything right now, not to mention other people... Has the owner of those items reached the Chamber of Immortality and achieved real immortality?"

"The discovery exalted us. We cannot calm down enough to do the experiments. So, we decided to explore the Chamber of Immortality first..."

"On the ninth day inside the Realm of Gates, we watched Solins and Eugenia disintegrate and disappear in the pathway leading to the Chamber of Immortality which was beyond our imagination... They had been through so many dangers, but they died while confused and helplessness... No! We will not stop! They must've been full of regrets when they died. Perhaps, we need special ways to pass the channel?"

Lucien took a breath. It seemed that two legendary sorcerers died on the other pathway.

"On the tenth day inside the Realm of Gates, we calmed down to study the strange items. After consuming the Mirror of Fate again, we finally discovered the enormous, hidden laboratory..."

"It was actually Mr. Thanos who came, studied the weird ghost creatures, and searched for a way to enter the Chamber of Immortality earlier than we did!"

Lucien's finger bounced. Thanos, the Sun King, was really one of the toughest people during the last years of the ancient magic empires. Even the World of Souls and the Chamber of Immortality were discovered by him at the beginning!

He was known as the strongest sorcerer of the school of astrology, and he was praised to be a demigod, but he perished during the prime years of his life. Everybody who reads history would feel sorry for him.

In history books, the demise of the Sun King was exactly the seen as

the beginning of the decline of the magic society.

“So, the Sun King did not perish but went missing in this place. The Sylvanas Magic Empire must’ve announcement that he died in an experiment to pacify the people.” Lucien had a weird feeling of satisfaction after solving the history puzzle.

The Sun King went missing here... Suddenly, the words struck Lucien’s head like lightning. The sense of familiarity immediately congregated into a crazy tide that broke the dam of memories.

“Right, the Sun King’s ‘Devil’ experiment! Those whom the Devil project will be stronger than themselves! For the people of lower ranks, the improvement brought by the projection may be several levels, but for those in the higher ranks, the improvement will only be two levels, one level or even half a level. The domain of legends should be the same! No wonder I felt it so familiar that the ‘monster’ happened to be one level about the target!”

“However, the ‘Devil’ is projected into one’s own heart and increases one’s own strength, whereas the monster in the Realm of Gates exists in reality and improves its own abilities. That’s why I didn’t think it through at the beginning!”

Noticing Lucien shock, Rhine asked, “What’s up?”

Through the telepathic bond, Lucien talked about his speculation.

Rhine stopped his casual smile and was deep in thought. “The seven primeval devils... I once explored the primeval relics in the deepest part of hell. Now that I think of it, they were rather similar to this monster. They also couldn’t reach the level of demigods, also couldn’t be destroyed easily, and were also good at prying into the mind and memories. However, this monster does not affect our mind and personality or ‘improve’ our strength. Instead, it is weirdly separated from us. They are different in nature.”

“Perhaps, it cannot be projected into the mind of legendary experts and could only deceive and fight externally. From that point of view, I’m beginning to understand why those legendary sorcerers were so crazy and hysterical in the words they left behind. They

must've been affected and compromised by the monster because they were not strong enough, and their personality was twisted." Lucien continued his speculation.

Rhine nodded his head. "Fair enough, but why did the monster not destroy the notebook and the scraps, and why could we find them so easily?"

He asked the question that Lucien had before.

"To create panic?" Frowning, Lucien ventured. "Let's keep reading. Perhaps, the answer to the puzzle is behind."

"On the eleventh day inside the Realm of Gates, Viken proposed that we delete everything about this experiment on our own notebook in case of any careless exposure, and that we should only read the files in the laboratory. I couldn't agree more. So, I deleted certain things that I wrote before, and I may have to skip them in my future recording... In the end, allow me to pay respect to Mr. Thanos. Although he failed, he has illuminated the path forward for us. He deserves to be called the greatest sorcerer ever, and his demise is the greatest loss in the history of magic..."

"On the fifteenth day inside the Realm of Gates, we collected the 'weird shots' and began to create a medium according to Mr. Thanos' approach, exploring how it could work on us to transform our 'status' in order to enter the Chamber of Immortality..."

"On the twenty-sixth day inside the Realm of Gates, something went wrong in the experiment. The 'medium' we created became a terrifying monster, an apparition that wandered inside the Realm of Gates! We only managed to beat it back by joining our hands..."

"On the twenty-ninth day inside the Realm of Gates, Viken was horrified and wanted to leave. He kept telling us crazily that the devil was more terrible than we thought..."

"On the thirtieth day inside the Realm of Gates, Viken 'went missing'. What a coward..."

"On the thirty-first day inside the Realm of Gates, Albert went

missing. Has he also deserted?”

“On the thirty-second day inside the Realm of Gates, Illinois also went missing. Things may be trickier than we thought. I suggest we leave the Realm of Gates first...”

“In the afternoon of the thirty-second day inside the Realm of Gates, we were deceived by the monster... It is really terrifying, and it can mimic any other person... McLeod went missing, too...”

“On the thirty-fourth day inside the Realm of Gates, we have been blocked by the monster. Also, we accidentally discovered the puppet parts that McLeod left behind. Perhaps, he is trying to say something... I think I can predict the monster’s weakness with the Mirror of Fate, right?”

“...The two of them went missing, too. The Mirror of Fate gave me a fuzzy hint. Based on the things that I already know, I think I’m onto something. It is not a monster, not a ghost, not a primeval devil that we feared, but a...”

Maskelyne’s journal came to an end. The most critical part had a long trail of ink, as if something happened and he had to leave the secret chamber in a hurry, never to return again.

The most critical sentence was not finished! Lucien almost tossed the magic notebook to the ground. Why couldn’t you just write a few more words, Mr. Maskelyne?

Chapter 632: Unexpected Encounter

Rhine was amused by the situation. “Maskelyne must’ve thought of something of paramount importance when he wrote to this part, to the extent that he ruined the chamber in his emotional turmoil. He didn’t finish his speculation and simply left in a hurry, not bothering how it would upset the future readers.”

“I think so, too. Considering that no battle of legends happened here and nothing was intentionally damaged, it’s not hard to tell that Mr. Maskelyne left voluntarily but hurriedly.” Lucien calmed down and restored the battle from the traces.

Rhine looked around and said, “It means that what Maskelyne was eager to do was more important than finishing the clue. It’s perhaps the key to destroying the monster.”

“However, how much time would it have taken him to finish the name with the help of magic?” Lucien answered his own question. “No more than one second.”

Rhine examined the long ink mark left by Maskelyne so carefully that he almost brought out the magnifying glass. “The mark is indicative enough of Maskelyne’s shock. By logic, he couldn’t have been too stunned to finish the name when he already finished the deduction, unless something happened outside, or a new clue suddenly occurred to him...”

Lucien thought of something. “Perhaps, Mr. Maskelyne thought of an important detail that he neglected, which entirely disapproved his speculation. So, he left in a hurry to search for other clues to confirm it. He was so shocked towards the end because his new speculation was beyond his imagination. He didn’t finish his previous speculation because it was wrong.”

“A very bold hypothesis and a very reasonable explanation.” Rhine complimented. “However, I believe that the monster is related to Thanos in any case, because the guy was a monster himself, just like you.”

He acted as if he was Thanos' best friend.

"I suspect so, too. I found Thanos' incomplete journal in the underground palace of the Sun King. I speculated that the Sun King found a way to transform himself into the seven primeval devils and eliminated the negative influences of such transformation in the way that the fake gods gathered godhood. Such products should probably be able to transform into anybody according to memories or negative feelings other than being projected into someone's body."

The more Lucien talked, the faster he became, as if Thanos were already the culprit. However, Lucien was chilled when he thought that someone close to a demigod a thousand years ago was the murderer.

Rhine asked in confusion. "I know that he studied the primeval devils. I even provided some of the files for him. I know how godhood is gathered, too. But what do you mean by negative feelings?"

"It's about the other secret chamber that you didn't discover, Mr. Rhine..." Lucien explained the temple where the Sun Staff was discovered.

Rhine chuckled, "He kept a lot of his discoveries to himself. Judging from Rudolf II's projection, he might've found ways to break the previous limit by transforming into the seven primeval ghosts. Well, do you think the monster matches the features of 'Thanos Demon'? If you know everything at present, you will completely grasp the past and the future..."

"...Theoretically speaking, I don't think 'Thanos Demon' can exist in reality. If it exists for real, the computation load and the energy required will be unimaginable." Lucien answered Rhine's question from the perspective of arcana. In the meantime, he thought to himself, if it was 'Thanos Demon', I'll release 'Schrodinger's cat'!

Rhine clicked his tongue. "Perhaps, it's only a simplified version. Alright, what are we going to do?"

“Mr. Maskelyne’s journal was cut at the critical part, but the files about how the monster was created must be still in the laboratory left by Thanos that they mentioned, if they are not destroyed by the monster yet...” Thinking for a moment, Lucien was full of momentum again. “The ancient sorcerers such as Mr. Maskelyne perhaps couldn’t tell anything wrong from the experiment records, but we the modern arcanists certain can!”

Seeing Lucien’s determined face, Rhine chuckled, “You could’ve activated your blood power with your resolution even if you failed to become a sorcerer. Hehe. With everything coming to this point, we can only go to Thanos’ laboratory now. The problem is, where can we find it?”

Lucien brought out the Mirror of Fate. “It can tell the past accurately, at least much more accurately than the prediction of the monster’s weakness.”

Since Maskelyne only got fuzzy hints, Lucien dropped the idea of predicting the monster with the Mirror of Fate.

Holding the magic crystal ball in his left hand, Lucien swiped the Mirror of Fate with his right hand and cast the intricate spell.

The grey Mirror of Fate rippled, and a pair of numbers appeared among the waves.

“We have the coordinates of Thanos’ laboratory now.” Lucien smiled.

After a crack, the Mirror of Fate fell apart, but it disappeared into light instead of hitting the ground in pieces.

“We’re going now?” Asked Rhine.

Lucien shook his head. “Time here flows as fast as the outside world. We must seize the chance to recover the legendary items.”

While speaking, he picked up the torso of the puppet and stabbed the two arms and the leg back into it.

“I’ll eliminate my weakness, too.” Rhine nodded, leaning against a

bookshelf.

After a few hours, the gold crown on Lucien's right hand emitted vague black air.

"The Primordial Mummy's crown? What's the effect?" Rhine opened his silver eyes, which were already back to normal.

Lucien clicked his tongue. "The Primordial Mummy did not leave any information. I can only tell that it can be transformed into gloves, armor or boots. It offers a physical defense that is close to the peak of legendary, as well as immunity to many negative legendary spells. However, one's head would be more or less slowed if they wear it."

The habit to leave information inside the magic items began from the Magic Empire, so that it would be easier for the future generations to take over the items. For example, Lucien picked up the Mirror of Fate after examination more than easily. The Primordial Mummy and the Lich King, as undead creatures, obviously did not have such a habit.

"It's a nice match for the Sword of Truth. After all, a knight does not need to think in a battle. As a matter of fact, the standard barbarian legendary warrior is also very strong." Rhine joked. "Should we wait until the Shield of Truth is repaired?"

"That's unnecessary. Now that we have super gear for defense, there's no need to wait for the Shield of Truth to be repaired." Lucien made up his mind. The Moon Timer and the Robe of Grand Arcanists wouldn't be restored in another half day. He couldn't afford waiting any longer.

While talking, he turned into a legendary knight and put on the crown as a pair of gloves.

Rhine stood straight and said, "Let's go!"

The heavy wounds caused by the monster hadn't feel healed, and he hadn't eliminated the weakness caused by Eternal Blaze yet. He could only carry out the strength around level three of legendary.

He couldn't summon the Silver Moon for now, either.

After leaving Maskelyne's secret laboratory, Lucien and Rhine passed the grey halls and black gates as quickly as possible, ignoring the unusual worlds that showed up once in a while.

When they pushed one of the black gates, Lucien's Host Star of Destiny suddenly shivered, and he felt a strong sense of danger. So, he raised the Mummy Gloves without any hesitation.

From the other side of the gate, a solemn voice echoed. "Light of Judgment!"

Through the gap of the gate, Lucien saw 'Saint Ivan' and 'the angel of light'!

They had launched the attack the moment they saw that the gate was being opened!

An overwhelming beam of light descended from the heights, judging all the evils!

It was the second time that Lucien came across 'Light of Judgment'. Last time, it was performed by 'Geno', the reincarnation of the Lord of Hell, but it was carried out by the pontiff of the North Church right now!

In the surging sacredness, Lucien's metal gloves spread out intense black air, but it melted quickly.

The light hit the gloves, raising the most splendid fireworks.

The gloves cracked in huge noises. The 'angel of light' on the opposite side also performed the divine power: "Purging Spear!"

The brilliant and cold spear of light was thrown at Lucien who was resisting the Light of Judgment. At this moment, ten fair and long fingers appeared before Lucien and grabbed the spear of light, extinguishing it.

Rhine had come to Lucien's rescue in time!

As the Light of Judgment disappeared, Lucien felt that his hands were soft and knew that the gloves were too seriously damaged to be used again anytime soon. After all, the Light of Judgment countered the items of the school of necromancy.

“We have to escape as soon as possible, or we will die for sure!”

Countless thoughts occurred to Lucien, but his action was not affected. A silver pocket watch appeared in his right hand, and its ticking sound echoed inside the grey hall.

Crack. Lucien pressed the watch with his middle finger, and a hemisphere of void immediately appeared next to Ivan, slowing down his subsequent attack.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Lucien performed ‘Accurate Teleportation’. As a portal of space was opened and closed, he blinked to another black gate, followed by Rhine.

Right when Lucien pushed the black gate, the wings on Ivan’s back got rid of Gravity Collapse, flapping arrows of light at Lucien.

Before him was the unopened gate, and behind him was the scorching horror. Lucien gritted his teeth and knocked the black gate without dodging, lunging through it.

Pa. ‘Elemental Skin’ was damaged, ‘Magic Absorber’ reached the limits, and the effects brought by ‘Magic Order’ and ‘Spell Sequencer’ all collapsed!

Eventually, Lucien got rid of the remaining power of the arrows of light through ‘Short-Distance Blink’ in ‘Spell Trigger. Together with Rhine, he opened the black gates and escaped aimlessly and unstoppably!

“Go after them!” ‘Ivan’ was rather infuriated after failing to kill a level-one legendary sorcerer in an ambush.

As he fled crazily, Lucien opened black gates one after another. Thanks to the rapid locational changes of the halls, they finally got away from ‘Ivan’ and ‘the angel of light’.

“This gate looks somewhat weird. There are vague black-and-white patterns on it.” After they were slightly eased, Rhine noticed a rather strange black gate.”

Lucien calculated the coordinates and realized that it was not the spot of the laboratory. So, he speculated, “Perhaps there’s a special world behind it. Let’s run a few more grey halls. The distance is not long enough yet. ‘Ivan’ may still catch up with us.”

His life was truly at stake just now. Even someone as calm as Lucien was rather scared when he thought of it.

Rhine opened the weird black gate with a smile. “Let’s go to the world behind it.”

As the gate was opened, infinite holy light leaped into their eyes, and they were surrounded by the beautiful hymns.

In the middle of the overwhelming holy light, a seven-floored, mountain-like world was vaguely appearing, with countless angels flying around it.

Lucien’s mouth was widened, and he forgot how to close it.

Rhine’s smile was frozen on his face. He murmured to himself in self-mockery:

“This is getting serious now...”

Chapter 633: Horns of Paradise

In the middle of the vast holy light and the pleasant hymns, the hallowed angels danced. Lucien believed that he would never forget such a shocking scene, if he could make it out alive at all.

Subconsciously, Lucien only wanted to say I'm sorry and this mail is for the next door... While all kinds of bizarre thoughts occurred to him, Lucien's actions were not affected. He turned around and shouted in the telepathic bond, "Run!"

In the meantime, the power of moonlight burst out, as he tried to shut the gate that was engraved with white patterns.

At this moment, a solemn voice echoed inside the mountain-like world of holy light.

"Evil invaders!"

On the sixth floor, an angel with six luminescent wings flew out and stared at Lucien and Rhine with his gold and blue eyes from far away. He then took out of a gold horn and put it next to his mouth.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

The magnificent sound of the horn immediately resonated throughout Mountain Paradise. The angels that were playing instruments and praising the true god were alarmed and swarmed out with their weapons.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

Hearing the horn that was both refreshing and full of determination to fight, Lucien secretly said 'crap'!

It an exact scene depicted in the Cannon of the Church. It was the horn of judgment and salvation, followed by the final ruling. It was the real 'Light of Paradise'!

Wu! Wu! Wu!

Along with the sacred horn, the seven-floored Mountain Paradise emitted clear brightness that spread out quickly, turning the whole world into an ocean of holy light and joyful paradise!

The speed of light was so high that Lucien and Rhine were drowned by the tide before they had the time to cast 'Accurate Teleportation' or 'Night Travel'.

The holy light was not concrete, but Lucien had the feeling that he had sunk into a deep ocean without any magic. It seemed that he would be drowned by the thick light any moment.

The transformation of legendary knight was canceled, the many magic effects on Lucien were canceled, and his spiritual power was suppressed. His lungs seemed to be filled with 'seawater', making him feel heavy and have trouble breathing. He was inhaling and exhaling 'holy light' through his nose, his mouth and his pores nonstop.

Thankfully, the light of paradise merely canceled the magic effects and suppressed his spiritual power but did not deprive Lucien the ability to cast spells or move his body. Stumbling, he opened the black gate and rushed away with Rhine.

Rhine was much poorer than Lucien. Black air was popping up from his body, making him more and more transparent. Had it not been for the protection of moonlight on his body, he would've dispersed in the light of paradise like any other vampire princes. However, he had basically lost his combat ability, and he was now changing into the shape of a human and that of a bat!

It was like the Congus Ring on Lucien's left hand, which had lost all the color and could not be put into use any time soon.

The spells of acceleration and flight were activated thanks to the ability to save spells in the Robe of Grand Arcanists. Dragging Rhine with him, Lucien passed the grey halls in a fuzzy shadow, opening the black gates nonstop.

This time, Lucien did not bother with what weird worlds were behind those gates at all. However weird and creepy they might be,

could they compare to Mountain Paradise?

The horn stopped. The angel with gold and blue eyes looked at his five partners on the sixth floor and announced, "Chase after the evil!"

According to the Cannon, he was the Child of Light, the Angel of Judgment, the Angel of Justice, and the leader of all the angels except for the Angel King. He was close to the top legendary, and his strength would be improved by half a level if he were to fight within the influence range of Mountain Paradise.

Four of the five seraphs stood up and drew crosses on their chest. "Only Truth lives forever. Evil shall be purged!"

According to the Church's files, every seraph was in the third level of legendary, and three of them were almost at the peak.

The sacred wings behind the four seraphs flapped, allowing them to blink from Mountain Paradise to the grey halls. Immediately, the ocean of light seemed to have encountered someone it deeply loved. It turned into countless spots of light that surrounded them. Every spot of light was a tiny angel that was praising them wholeheartedly.

"The light of paradise lingers in the evils. They cannot get away. All that matters is which of us will catch them. Arvin, which direction are you going in?" A seraph with burning eyes and a red-cross sword in his hands asked.

He was Clement, the Angel of Fire. He was also known as the Godly Fire and the Purging Angel. He was at the peak of legendary.

A seraph whose eyes seemed to be a starry sky pointed at one of the black gates. "I'll go in this direction."

He was Arvin, known as the Godly Eye, the Angel of Inspiration and the Angel of Wind. He was also close to the peak of legendary.

"Why?" Clement asked subconsciously. They seemed well aware of the pattern of change in the Realm of Gates and not scared that they could catch up with Lucien and Rhine.

Arvin, gentle and handsome, smiled, "It's my intuition."

As he spoke, he flapped his wings and appeared before the black gate, but he did not open it until a few seconds later.

Clement did not ask anymore. Arvin was the Godly Eye, the Angel of Inspiration and the 'Acolyte' who was closest to the river of fate. His intuition was obviously a most convincing reason. Therefore, they went after the enemy from different directions.

The ocean of light ebbed, and peace and quietness were restored in the grey hall.

.....

Breathing was more and more difficult. Watery holy light seemed to have filled the air, his blood and his internal organs, giving Lucien the feeling of the drowned that he would rather forget.

Vicente's medical box, Advanced Treatment, Air Filtering Bubbles and other spells were performed, but Lucien only felt that part of his symptoms were eliminated, and it would take forever long before he completely got rid of the illness. However, in this dangerous Realm of Gates, the creepy monsters, the powerful seraphs and the horrifying pontiff might be after them in the next second.

Time was very precious and was what Lucien needed badly right now!

As he cast his spells, Lucien also discovered that the light of paradise was corrupting and suppressing his spiritual power, making it difficult for him to carry them out.

"As expected of a demigod-level divine power supported by Mountain Paradise." Lucien looked at Rhine who had turned into an unconscious bat. None of the legendary items on him were activated, and he did not tell Lucien how to use them, either.

Holding the moonlight bat that Rhine turned into, Lucien rushed and treated himself with magic. Ten minutes. Ten minutes was all he needed to get rid of the light of paradise! After all, it was not

backed by Mountain Paradise anymore!

The black gate was opened, and Lucien's pupils constricted abruptly. Inside the grey hall stood a sacred and handsome seraph whose six wings were flapping slowly with a touch of sunlight and a gentle breeze. A vast cosmos seemed to be lying in his eyes.

He stood here at such ease as if he had seen through Lucien's route and was waiting for him on purpose.

"The Angle of Wind!" Lucien recognized him and cast a spell without any hesitation:

"Vengeful Gaze!"

At such a moment, even the delay of one second would've killed him. He had to attack while looking for an opportunity to escape!

'Hand of Uncertainties' and 'Vengeful Gaze' were activated at the same time. Lucien's left eye became clear and bright like the most beautiful ruby, shooting out a red ray that hit the Angel of Wind!

After he launched the attack, Lucien suppressed the remaining holy light inside his body and activated 'Chaos Teleportation' on the Holm Crown Ring.

A gentle breeze whirled, covering and dissolving the red ray, which was soon gone before Arvin, the Godly Eye.

He sniffed softly, as if he sensed something weird in the spell that did not work. Then, he pointed at the enemy, "Confinement!"

Countless gentle breezes blew between the two grey halls, disrupting the space and eliminating waves. Lucien was unable to escape through teleportation!

"Space Staff!" At such a critical moment, Lucien could only react accordingly without thinking about anything else!

The ripples were gathered into the staff of a king. As Lucien tapped, all the gentle breezes were shattered. Then, he activated 'Grandeur Obliteration' on the Robe of Grand Arcanists!

Tiny black spots that contained the intense power of destruction appeared before the Godly Eye, but his face did not change at all. His six wings were fully unfolded, and the light of the sun filled the hall, neutralizing the Grandeur Obliteration.

“Regather!”

Lucien activated the life-preserving spell on him!

It was a legendary spell that was cast on his soul in advance, so it was not nullified by the light of paradise!

Disappearing from where he was, Lucien was ready to ‘regather’ with Natasha.

However, when he appeared again, he was still inside the hall, except that he was before another black gate.

There was indeed no space-time connection between this place and the outside world!

The disappointment did not crush Lucien, because he had got away from the Angel of Wind at least. His figure suddenly split into many Luciens who ran towards different gates.

Arvin sniffed. Playing Illusions in front of the Godly Eye?

“Godly Eye!”

Countless brilliant stars glowed in his eyes, breaking the images of Lucien and revealing the real Lucien who was about to open the black gate and escape.

Lucien had a silver, delicate pocket watch in his right hand. Sliding his thumb on the dial quickly, he slowed down the black second hand, and the time around was decelerated accordingly.

Hehe. Arvin snorted again. The sunlight and the gentle breeze that covered the whole hall burst out simultaneously, blowing away the change of time and space.

The Angel of Fate was naturally good at space and time!

“Sigh of Wind!” Arvin seized the opportunity and attacked with divine power.

A bluish wind rushed over with the air of judgment.

“Space Staff!” A dreamy staff was gathered before Lucien again, building a space barrier for him.

As the Sigh of Wind hit the space barrier, cracking sounds echoed nonstop, and it was broken after only one moment. Because of the gap of almost three levels, Lucien’s Space Staff could not entirely resist the attack even though it was quite powerful.

Lucien did not give up in such a desperate situation. He planned to transform into a legendary knight and sought for a chance of survival with the Sword of Truth!

Cough. At the critical moment, the holy light that filled his lungs like water played their role. Lucien had trouble breathing, and his magic was halted.

Seizing the opportunity, Arvin announced solemnly, “Pacification of Wind.”

Heavy. His soul became so heavy that Lucien found it barely possible to keep his eyes open.

I can’t sleep! I can’t sleep!

Clinging to the last bit of consciousness, Lucien made up his mind that he had to blow himself up in order not to be hit by the Light of Judgment!

Would he be resurrected in his magic tower if he detonated himself inside the Realm of Gates?

“You are very tough. I’m respectful of you even though you are evil. Few people have fought so long under the influence of the light of paradise.” Arvin walked toward Lucien and extended his long and fair right hand. “Purging you will be my respect for you.”

.....

Inside the mysterious world of death...

Douglas and Fernando were suppressed by Benedict III who was transformed from the 'monster'.

Chapter 634: Twisted Face

The two top legendary sorcerers and one monster which was close to the level of demigod were engaged in such a fierce battle that the whole world behind the gate was shaking in its aftermath. The air of destruction spread out everywhere, and the space seemed to be collapsing at any moment. The weird and lifeless forest of death had become a real place of doom.

Similar to many legendary sorcerers from the ancient Magic Empire, Douglas' head was surrounded by brilliant gems that looked like artificial planets. Some of them were gold, some azure, and some were the purest red.

Those gems glittered and established terrifying 'domains' as he chanted and cast different spells.

His tailcoat turned into a black, grave long robe in the classic style of the ancient Magic Empire. Deep and dark brilliant flowed on the surface, blocking the ocean of holy light created by 'Monster Benedict III'.

Two things were floating before him. One of them was 'Lackluster Celestial Globe', his unique legendary item, and the other was a thick book that had a black background and silver patterns. As the pages were turned, legendary spells were cast nonstop.

Faced with the monster that could not be inferred with common sense, Douglas put all his legendary items into use. Two of them were top legendary, and two were level-three legendary!

Fernando's right eye left the redness and turned dark and gloomy, like a vortex at the bottom of the ocean and a source of destruction. It blew out high-energy storms and cast the weird curses in the cosmos.

That was exactly what turned the forest of death into a land of doom!

The red magic robe on his controlled everything around. He fought

for the control of the environment with Benedict III that was transformed from Benedict III as if he were a master of the place. In his right hand was a dark scepter that Lucien had never seen before.

The scepter wriggled as if it were alive, but its movement was devoid of any pattern, leaving the impression of chaos as if a bottomless abyss was arriving. After every time Fernando used it, it would create a huge area of chaos in which everything including space itself would be destroyed.

The two top legendary sorcerers used all their trump cards, but they still could not defeat the ‘headless pope’. Blessed Realm, Light of Judgment, Purging Spear, Horn of Paradise, Cleansing Fire, Saint Cross, Sigh of Wind, Godly Eye... He cast the most powerful divine powers casually and even suppressed Douglas and Fernando.

Douglas was slightly scared, not because of the monster’s ability – even if it were the real pope, he would still be confident to return in one piece as long as the enemy did not perform God’s Arrival – but because he did not understand the status of the monster! Generally speaking, such evil and creepy monsters were suppressed by the divine power by nature, but this monster could perform divine power like the real pope!

“This is truly a monster beyond imagination.” Douglas observed in mixed feelings inside the telepathic bond.

Fernando had even more trouble dealing with the enemy, but he was not very anxious. “Let’s find a chance to retreat towards the entrance. It cannot stop us!”

“Okay!” Douglas couldn’t agree more. The plan of the adventure this time ended at the Furnace of Souls. There was no need to waste time on an unimaginably weird monster. Also, if Lucien hadn’t been killed by the monster yet, he must be approaching the entrance while the monster was stalled by the two of them!

.....

At the beginning of August, even the wind was scorching.

Inside the conference room of the Highest Council, Douglas, Fernando and Lucien, who hadn't returned yet, were discussed again.

"I believe we must organize another team to rescue them." Brook, the Emperor of Control, crossed his fingers and looked at other members. "I'll lead the team this time. What do you think?"

He was both exhausted and unusually excited. In the past few months, from the perspective that electrons were waves, he had vaguely touched another path to resolve the problems in the new alchemy. Had it not been for certain mathematical issues and part of the inexplicable experiments, he probably would've achieved something. However, at the moment of life and death for the Congress of Magic, he still dropped his experiment resolutely and decided to organize a rescue team.

Considering that the legendary spectres at the peripheral area of the Temple of Spirits had been mostly cleared by Douglas and his team, Brook believed that the Congress of Magic was strong enough to crush the rest of them now. What they needed to pay attention to was the people of the North Church, but that problem could be settled through communication and negotiation. After all, the Congress never intended to destroy the secret chamber where they were based. If they were also interested in the secrets behind the Furnace of Souls, it was possible that the two parties could even cooperate.

There are no eternal friends or foes but only eternal pursuit of interests. Brook believed that Lucien's remark was applicable for the North Church which was rather close to them in the first place.

"I suggest we wait for another month." Vicente, the Lord of the Undead, said coarsely. "The time flows particularly slow near the Furnace of Souls. I suspect that it's been only one day inside. Mr. President, Fernando and Lucien may be on their way to the entrance. Organizing a rescue team recklessly is actually a major risk for the Congress."

He craved the secrets behind the Furnace of Souls, but he was also scared of the unknown great danger.

"I agree with Vicente. We'll wait for another month. Then, I'll go with you, Brook." Oliver nodded his head and showed his attitude. It was not because he was a coward but because the operation was not necessary yet. Two top legendary sorcerers couldn't have been lost inside so easily, particularly not when the mysterious existence of the World of Souls had fallen asleep again.

Also, similar to Brook, he was at the critical moment of making a breakthrough on the wave function of the electron.

Hathaway looked behind at Natasha, who had been specifically invited for the meeting of the Highest Council this time, and said emotionlessly, "The Prophet does not have the vision that Lucien is in danger of death. If they do not return in one month, we must go to rescue them immediately. I'll join the team, too."

A consensus was soon made. Brook heaved a soft sigh and said to Hathaway, "You provided a genius idea about the atom model with two electrons. This is a victory of matrix mechanics. I don't doubt its value now, but I still don't understand the arcana significance behind it."

"It's not a big deal." Said Hathaway taciturnly.

Brook looked at Natasha again. "I hope you can understand our decision, because it's hard to confirm that they are in danger. Of course, I'll stay in the peripheral area of the Temple of Spirits in case they need reinforcements."

An adventure team could play a bigger role in a rescue operation, but an individual at the peak of legendary would find it easier to escape from dangers if they were alone. That was why Brook decided to pick them up on his own instead of organizing a team immediately.

"I understand." Natasha's face was resolute, and there was not the slightest waves in her silver eyes. She rose and said, "Mr. Brook, forgive me, but I have to leave now. I have to practice my blood power and my skills. Complaints can never solve any problem. I have to use what I am good at."

In Atom Institution...

Holding the latest issue of 'Arcana' in her hand, Katrina said to Annick in delight, "Ms. Hathaway has pointed out the path to resolve the atom model with two electrons. That's the brilliance of a genius. Haha. It also proves that correctness of our teacher's matrix mechanics."

"I thought about the problem before, but I didn't have the faintest clue. Is this an example of the gap between a grand arcanist and me?" Katrina remarked.

Annick, Layria and the other students had also read paper. They were amazed, too.

"Although our teacher's matrix mechanics is complicated and lacks actual significance, it is without a doubt the correct path from the perspective of the particle nature and the discontinuity." Said Sprint, his eyes glowing.

"We will find the actual significance someday." As she spoke, Heidi suddenly chuckled, "The textbooks of the Holt Magic College on the new alchemy have to be changed again!"

As per Principal and Professor Lucien Evans, she was now a glorious teacher of the college.

"Right, Annick, what are you and Sprint working on that is so mysterious?" Since they were close to each other, Layria asked curiously without holding her question back.

Annick did not keep it a secret. "We may have found an explanation to Brooks unusual splitting phenomenon by introducing the concept of electron spin whose quantum number is one half. However, there will be weird problems if we infer it based on that. The spinning speed of the electron surface will be much higher than the speed of light..."

"Huh?" Chelly and the other students were all confused.

"We have to ask our teacher after he is back." Sprint said, not very confident about his discovery.

Heidi, on the other hand, looked at the blue sky out of the window.

“When is our teacher coming back?”

.....

Lance, the Holy City.

When Rhine opened ‘the gate of Mountain Paradise’, Mecantron, the Angel King who was inside a prayer room, suddenly opened his eyes. Gold fire seemed to be burning inside his pupils.

“Who is it?” He bellowed in fury. Thirty-six pure wings were unfolded one after another, filling the entire room. Then, spots of light emerged from his wings, making the room hazy and blurry like a dream.

Gradually, the dream was gone, and so was the Angel King.

Benedict III, in his library, did not do anything. He simply watched the void before him with a gloomy face, half amused and half infuriated.

.....

“...Purging you will be my respect for you.”

When he heard that from Arvin, Lucien, whose soul and head were both dizzy, had the illusion that the guy’s voice came from a different world. It seemed that his life wasn’t real anymore and was about to fall apart.

He could not delay anymore and had to blow up himself immediately!

Arvin walked to Lucien slowly and said in a low voice, “Are you planning to detonate yourself? But I’m afraid that it’s barely possible for you to do that under the influence of ‘Light of Paradise’ and ‘Pacification of Wind’.”

“Sleep and rest. All your sins will be expiated.”

He was very certain that Lucien had no ability to resist anymore.

Lucien tried his best to perform a suicide spell, but his spiritual power, corrupted by the light of paradise, like rusty gears and could not function at all.

No! I can't give up like this!

When Lucien was about to try again, he sensed heat on his chest as the Angel of Wind approached him. Then, the waves of 'Light of Judgment' before him were suddenly gone!

In his shock and suspicion, Lucien saw Arvin's twisting face with his blurry and shaking eyes. The guy struggled hard and pressed his head hard with both hands, while he spoke with an old and pained voice that was entirely different from the sacred and gentle tone a moment ago:

"The... Sun's... Corona?"

Chapter 635: Manufacture

Lucien was half asleep and half awake right now. He felt that everything around him was floating, and all the sounds were extremely far away, as if they had reached his ears after passing through countless worlds.

Therefore, after the unusual and pained voice of 'Arvin' entered Lucien's ears, it took him several seconds before he realized what was going on.

"The Sun's Corona?"

"Arvin, the Godly Eye, knows the Sun's Corona?"

"Also, he is acting so abnormal and creepy!"

Countless spells seemed to be bursting out inside Lucien's sluggish head. A quake from the deepest part of his soul spread out and restored his consciousness briefly. He asked in a shivering, feeble voice of disbelief: "Mr... Maskelyne?"

"Ahhhhhhh!" The moment he heard the name Maskelyne, Arvin covered his head and screamed miserably, as if he were struggling in the greatest agony.

The breeze and the scorching sunlight around him went out of control, sweeping across the whole hall as blades of wind and arrows of light.

Lucien's brief consciousness was suppressed by 'Pacification of Wind' again, he seemed to have understood something in his heart, but he found it impossible to think. At this moment, the blades of wind and the arrows of light hit him without any exception. Some even broke through the defense of the Robe of Grand Arcanists and injured his body.

Wounds opened on his body, but no blood flowed out, because it was either vaporized by the light or dried by the wind. The excruciating pain helped Lucien to suppress Pacification of Wind

and Light of Paradise again. He was ready to knock into the black gate behind him and fight for a chance of survival. Arvin was clearly not in the best state for communication right now.

It was a pity that the Light of Paradise was a suppression in the level of demigod. Although it was not powered anymore and mostly resolved by the previous magic, Lucien still had no hope to eliminate its negative effects when he was severely affected by Pacification of Wind. Therefore, hardly had he opened the gate behind him when his spiritual power and his soul became slow again.

Pa. When the sound that Lucien knocked into the black gate entered Arvin's ears, his pained struggles came to an abrupt halt as if a crazy ringing clock had been closed. The wind blades and the light arrows in the whole hall were immediately gone.

Arvin raised his head. Arvin's face was still twisted, and his eyes that were as profound as cosmos were extremely hollow. Gold tears dripped from the corner of his eyes in vague sacred brilliance. He mumbled, "Don't come close to me! Don't come close to me!"

"What's the meaning of this?" Lucien thought with a slowed mind.

Arvin seemed to be trying to control himself and did not talk anymore. He flapped the six holy wings on his back, and the ivory holy light bathed Lucien like the love of a mother, warm and peaceful.

The drowsy feeling was instantly gone. Lucien was as refreshed as if he had just finished meditation. Arvin had canceled the effect of 'Pacification of Wind'!

Without its suppression, Lucien was able to overpower 'Light of Paradise' quickly. Although the influence was not entirely soothed, he was back to the state before he fought 'Arvin'. He was now capable of casting legendary spells or picking up the Sword of Truth as a legendary knight.

During only one minute, Lucien had been through hope, struggles and dawn again. He was fatigued after taking a turn at the edge of

the precipice of death, but he had learned a lot of things, too.

“Arvin is probably Mr. Maskelyne, but judging from his appearance, he seemed to have been crafted by someone into a seraph alive. His shallow consciousness and memories were erased, and a brand-new personality was built with many curses and restraints. That’s why he is in such conflict and such pain when his subconsciousness is awakened!”

After his head became clear, the thinking ability of a grand arcanist was also back, allowing Lucien to analyze the status of Arvin, or Maskelyne.

Lucien was chilled the moment he thought of what might’ve happened to the guy. His outcome wouldn’t be any better if he were also captured by the ‘monster’! He would rather die than embrace such a miserable ending. What could be more brutal than one’s self-consciousness being wiped out, leaving the physical body to live as an empty shell?

He was certainly not Mr. Maskelyne, who had predicted that something might happen to him with the Mirror of Fate and therefore left the Sun’s Corona behind, hoping to awaken the deepest consciousness at the root of his soul with it somebody. If Lucien ended like him, it would probably never be possible for him to recover.

“It seems that the Sun’s Corona is associated with a lot of valuable memories for Mr. Maskelyne. That’s why his deep consciousness was recovered the moment he sensed it.” Lucien had carefully examined the Sun’s Corona after he became a legendary sorcerer, and as far as he could tell, he was pretty sure that nothing else was hidden inside the Sun’s Corona. That was why he made such a deduction.

It was like the props in a hypnotization session, and the hypnotized would be woken up the moment they saw the devices. “It seems that Mr. Maskelyne planted a lot of psychological hints in himself when he was crafted into a seraph.”

“When he said don’t come close to him, he was probably being

literal. If a stranger comes too close, the defensive instincts of his body will be triggered, and the personality of 'Arvin' will overpower 'Maskelyne' again. In that case, I will be in grave danger again." Lucien analyzed the previous situations and decided that he must not stimulate 'Arvin' with his words. Weighing his tone, he said, "I got the Sun's Corona and the note from the Grand Cross lock, and I've come after I become a legendary sorcerer as I promised."

Arvin's eyes were hollow and unfocused, but his lips vaguely curled into a miserable smile. "You have finally come, the non-believer who roams between light and darkness."

His voice was as weary and poignant as before.

Hu. Lucien heaved a sigh in relief. He was finally confirmed that the guy was Maskelyne from his answer! By the same logic, the other five seraphs and the Angel King must be the other six legendary sorcerers. The number matched perfectly.

"Is there anything I can help you with?" Lucien tried not to mention the monster, the Sun King or Thanos.

Maskelyne spoke, as if he were in a dream. "I only predicted what might happen, but I didn't know that it would be so strong. I can barely escape now that my real self is restored, and neither can you. Leave now. Come back again after you become a demigod."

"But I have already been stranded in this place by the monster. I have to know its secrets if I want to leave." While he talked, Lucien was prepared that Maskelyne might lose control of himself.

He must've been crafted into a seraph by the monster of the Sun King at the beginning, didn't he?

While Lucien observed seriously and attentively, Maskelyne pressed his head again as he expected. His face was hideously twisted, and he didn't calm down until a long time later. Then, he cast a divine power, "God's Gift!"

Vague holy light fell into Lucien's body with the pleasant hymn. The intense air of life convinced Lucien that it was a divine power

to eliminate negative states and treat wounds. So, he did not resist it with the Space Staff.

Other than the legendary Art of Resurrection, God's Gift was the best divine power for treatment. Lucien felt that his wounds were healed at an unimaginable speed. The light of paradise that saturated his body faded quickly. Although its level was above 'God's Gift', it was not powered anymore, and it was being dissolved by a seraph who understood its features very well. Therefore, Lucien was completely out of its influence after only twenty seconds.

The divine power was so marvelous that even Rhine was cured, too. The effects of the Light of Paradise was gone, and he was not further wounded at all as the common divine powers of recovery would've done to him.

"I'm restrained by many powerful methods, and I cannot discuss certain things, or I will immediately be self-destroyed." Maskelyne spoke to Lucien's speculation. "Go to the laboratory. I left the Mirror of Fate exactly to navigate you to the laboratory. If you find enough notebooks and items, you should be able to resolve certain secrets and understand the way to escape."

Hu. Lucien took a breath in relief again. There was indeed a way to deceive or circumvent the monster!

"It's a pity that the critical part on your notebook is missing, or the whole thing wouldn't be as enigmatic as it is right now." Lucien observed with mixed feelings.

Maskelyne's lips moved, and his eyes glittered in fear again, as if he had recalled the most terrible nightmare. He shouted devastatingly, "It's not him; it's him! It's not him; it's him!"

He appeared to be out of control, and wind blades and light arrows were all over the hall again. However, Lucien was not as helpless as a moment ago. He forged a space wall with the Space Staff to defend himself.

It's not him; it's him? That was truly ambiguous... They were both

the pronouns for males in the ancient language of the Sylvanas Magic Empire. That was not helpful for Lucien's analysis at all, because he did not know who Mr. Maskelyne's first suspect was.

A moment later, Maskelyne defeated 'himself' again. Taking out the leg of a puppet, he tossed it at Lucien. "Go to the laboratory. Go to the laboratory. One day, you will understand everything from the experiment log."

"Why do you believe that there are experiment logs in the laboratory? Aren't they destroyed yet?" Lucien picked up the leg of the puppet. It was indeed another part that McLeod left behind.

Maskelyne's lips curled, and he put on a miserable smile again. "The fact that you found my Mirror of Fate and my magic notebook suggests that part of the experiment logs are still left in the laboratory."

In the end, he added, "Sometimes, the enemy you think may turn out to be your best ally."

It was still intricate and perplexing. Lucien had absolutely no idea what to make out of Maskelyne final advice.

Maskelyne did not wait for Lucien to ask questions again. It seemed that he could barely suppress the personality of 'Arvin' anymore. He unfolded the angelic wings on his back and spoke solemnly, "God's Hourglass!"

A pure and sacred hourglass popped up in midair, in which brilliant sand fell from the top. The space-time around was immediately changed and became as fast as the outside world.

"Hurry to recover yourself. This only equals to several minutes in other places of the Realm of Gates. I am not strong enough yet and can only make the changes based on the main material world." Maskelyne struggled to open the black gate and walk out, obviously giving Lucien the time to recover himself. Perhaps, he would be Arvin, the Godly Eye, when he returned!

Several minutes in the Realm of Gates... were enough for the Moon

Timer, the Robe of Grand Arcanists and the Shield of Truth to be restored!

Lucien was refreshed with hope and ambitions again. Thanos' laboratory, I'm coming!

Chapter 636: Threat

Perhaps because Maskelyne covered for them, nobody disturbed Lucien and Rhine's recovery, which helped them survive the most difficult moment smoothly.

"Although the Mummy's Gloves are not usable, the Shield of Truth will do. Sometimes, the Shield of Truth provides even better defense." Lucien took out the Shield of Truth from the alchemical cottage and inserted the Mummy's Gloves into it.

In terms of pure physical defense, the Mummy's Gloves were better, but the Shield of Truth's defense was based on time and space and was less likely to be breached. Also, it wouldn't slow down his mind as the Mummy's Gloves would, which was definitely not an enjoyable feeling for an arcanist who couldn't survive without his brain.

Rhine regained the look of a human. He cleaned his collar and his silver long hair, as if he were about to go to a dinner. "I'm mostly recovered save the wounds caused by the monster at the beginning. Even if we run into Ivan, there's still a chance that we can flee in one piece."

"Then, let's get out of here fast. It will probably be Arvin who returns later." Lucien checked the Robe of Grand Arcanists, the Moon Timer and the Congus Ring again to confirm that they were in perfect condition.

Rhine nodded his head. "Although I'm not scared of fighting Arvin right now, we may be attacked by the six seraphs together after we are stalled by one of them, considering that they have a deep understanding of the Realm of Gates. Also, with Mountain Paradise nearby, it is much easier for them to summon projections. Almost every one of them is half a level stronger here."

"I didn't know that Mountain Paradise lies inside the Realm of Gates..." Lucien opened the black gate. Sensing the slowed time, he stepped out.

Rhine followed him. “Essentially speaking, Mountain Paradise is a beautiful wish of most human beings about their afterlife. It’s sort of a death custom, too. Hehe. From the deepest and heaviest death and darkness, the most sacred and exuberant life and brightness are born...”

“But the question remains whether Mountain Paradise came into being naturally or had to do with Thanos and Mr. Maskelyne’s experiment...” Lucien spoke of his speculation. In the meantime, inside his cognitive world, the Host Star of Destiny began to spin, and the black swirl that seemed able to swallow all rays of light moved to the front, absorbing, deviating and disrupting all the traces.

Rhine seemed to have sensed something. He moved faster and walked next to Lucien. Turning his head to the side, he said, “I feel that your track of destiny became fuzzy and disordered...”

“Mr. Maskelyne is one of the greatest prophets of the school of astrology, and he is now empowered by the ‘God of Truth’ and ‘Mountain Paradise’. We have to be prudent, or we may see Arvin waiting for us in the hall behind this black gate after we open it.” Lucien smiled but did not explain the things about the Secretive.

Passing through the grey halls, Lucien and Rhine approached the place as hinted by the Mirror of Fate.

.....

Successfully getting rid of the ‘headless pope’, Douglas and Fernando returned to the entrance according to the pattern of coordinate changes, leaving a lot of secret marks for Lucien on their way.

After they opened a black gate, Douglas suddenly looked around in confusion, “I’ve sensed a familiar smell.”

“Not Lucien’s...” Fernando identified it carefully, before he suddenly remarked, “It’s Mecantron, the Angel King!”

“Why was he here?” Douglas found it hard to believe. “Was he

fabricated by the monster?”

He examined the owner of the smell with his ‘Lackluster Celestial Globe’, adding the monster as a variable this time.

After a while, Douglas said in a self-mocking smile. “There’s an 80% chance that it was the Angel King, and a 20% chance that the monster fabricated him. Does astrology help at all? My conclusion would have been the same without it.”

He knew that his prophecy had been severely affected because the monster was too powerful. It was also partly because he hadn’t prepared enough.

Looking at the black gate where the smell disappeared, Fernando proposed, “Should we try to trace him?”

Having encountered the monster twice, he was now more confident in escaping from the danger. Also, he was still worried about Lucien.

“Are you not worried that you will see Mountain Paradise and meet the God of Truth in this place?” Douglas said jokingly. “The Angel King must’ve only just crossed this hall. We can try to trace him, but we must not be delayed too long. If we don’t find anything in ten minutes, we will return immediately. Perhaps, Lucien is waiting for us at the entrance.”

“Alright.” Fernando knew that he was only using tracing the Angel King as an excuse to continue the search for Lucien.

.....

“It’s not far away from Thanos’ laboratory now, and we haven’t met a single enemy on our way. I’m starting to think that we are not so unlucky after all.” Rhine was more and more skilled in calculating the changing coordinates. He made fun of himself and Lucien.

Remember how ‘speak of the devil’ worked, Lucien chuckled, “Mr. Rhine, you must not make such a statement when we haven’t arrived yet, or we may encounter an enemy after we open this black gate.”

Rhine's lips twitched. "I can't be so unfortunate, can I?"

As he spoke, he opened the black gate.

Suddenly, his face changed, and his body collapsed into countless little bats that flew in the hall.

A long black scythe, mixed with a mysterious air, passed space and time and slashed where he stood just now, and pale flames arose on the ground, melting the grey bricks into weird, transparent liquids.

"An enemy is really here..." Lucien did not know what he should say about Rhine and his luck. Two legendary spectres were drifting in the grey hall. One of them was wearing a black cloak, with surging black air on the surface and a pair of eyes that looked like red fire, and the other was a rotten dragon dozens of meters long that was spewing out grey fire. "The Servant of Death, the Dragon Lich..."

The former was a level-three legendary spectre and a Life Reaper who specialized in head-on battles but had the assistance of many quasi-magic abilities. The latter was a standard mage but was also not bad at melee fighting.

Without any hesitation, a delicate silver pocket watch appeared in Lucien's right hand, whose thin chain was connected to the button on Lucien's clothes with vague metal colors.

Crack. Before the Servant of Death and the Dragon Lich cast any spell, Lucien already pressed the button with his thumb.

Pure paleness infiltrated the greyness in the hall. The dancing bats in the hall seemed to have been confined by invisible shackles, and the giant scythe wielded by the Servant of Death moved forward one frame after another as if it were in slow motion like in a movie. The Dragon Lich and the grey fire next to its mouth were frozen where they were.

Cracking (Advanced)! Cracking (Advanced)! Lucien did not bother with the Dragon Lich but cast Cracking (Advanced) on his own and with what was stored inside the Moon Timer after attaching 'Hand

of Uncertainties' to them. Then, he performed 'Evans' Maze of Quizzes' that was enhanced with magic delay and Hand of Uncertainties!

After doing everything, Lucien transformed into a legendary knight, picked up the Sword of Truth, and slashed at the Servant of Death!

At such a moment, he could not consider saving his trump cards but had to defeat the enemy and finish the battle as quickly as possible!

The frozen paleness soon dispersed. The swarm of bats was recovered first. They flew to the Dragon Lich and bit its body and soul from all directions.

Rhine seemed to have guessed that Lucien would deal with the Servant of Death first, so he stopped the Dragon Lich for him in cooperation.

The weird scythe hit Lucien, only to cut an illusionary shadow apart. When the effect of Advanced Time Stop was about to be over, Lucien had already changed his location with the Shield of Truth in hand.

The darkness flowed from the black cloak of the Servant of Death, nullifying the spells of Cracking (Advanced) that Luxury Cracking cast. Suddenly, the darkness burst out like fireworks. One of the many 'Hands of Uncertainties' finally worked and destroyed the defense of the Servant of Death!

Crack, crack, crack. The sound of items being broken echoed around the Servant of Death, which almost made Lucien feel sorry. In the meantime, he regretted that he hadn't learnt 'Luxury Cracking', or it would have been dissolved into nudity and only had the legendary scythe left!

Then, the silver sword flashed, and a terrifying crack appeared on the black cape, tearing apart the last defense.

Because the cloak blocked the attack for a moment, right when the Sword of Truth was about to chop the Servant of Death, its body suddenly turned transparent, before it became smoke and fled

away, dodging the fatal attack.

“Ahhhhh!” The Servant of Death’s most regretful cry of his losses burst out. The pale smoke was gathered. Holding the gigantic scythe, it slashed down unpredictably in an even more mysterious atmosphere.

Pu. When the scythe hit Lucien’s Shield of Truth, only a dull noise was raised.

Lucien, who seemed to be in a different world, felt that a cold breeze was blowing at him. It passed the Robe of Grand Arcanists and his physical body and blew directly at his soul. He couldn’t help but tremble in the coldness.

“According to Adol’s files, the scythe of the Servant of Death purely attacks the soul and is extremely difficult to resist. Had it not been for the Shield of Truth, I probably would’ve been injured.” Lucien thought to himself.

Now that the scythe missed the target, the Servant of Death became a pale fire that surrounded Lucien in the waves of void. It also dispersed now and then to dodge the attack of the Sword of Truth.

The Moon Timer’s cooldown was over. Lucien put back the Sword of Truth and held the ticking pocket watch with his right hand again.

At this moment, the Servant of Death suddenly turned into smoke and rushed to where Rhine and the Dragon Lich was fighting, before it went to the black gate and left with the Dragon Lich in panic.

“He’s gone?” Lucien hadn’t even pressed the button of ‘Advanced Time Stop’ yet when he discovered that the Servant of Death had disappeared. As a level-three legendary expert, it was surely a fast escaper!

Rhine landed and chuckled, “‘Advanced Time Stop’ plus ‘Sword of Truth’ is truly an unreasonable way of fighting. Also, your ‘Advanced Time Stop’ was launched by the Moon Timer, your

unique level-two legendary item, which had the power of almost level three. The Servant of Death was greatly affected by it and would've been killed completely if it stayed any longer."

He thought that the Servant of Death was reduced to 'nudity' because Lucien brought certain gear that had the ability of Luxury Cracking with it, or it wouldn't have been scared of the Sword of Truth's attack as much and would have resisted it with its own defense.

"I'm very satisfied that I can scare a level-three legend away." Lucien put his Sword of Truth back with a smile. It was certainly for the best not to waste the ability in his Moon Timer. Who could tell what other dangers were lurking inside the laboratory?

Rhine looked around in the grey hall. "When we discovered them, they seemed to be examining something, didn't they?"

He checked the environment with his abilities. Lucien also canceled his transformed and helped him with magic.

"The smell of Sard, and the marks of the mysterious trace..." Rhine suddenly stopped.

Chapter 637: Hello My Old Friend

“Sard...” Lucien confirmed Rhine’s judgment from the feedback of his magic.

Although the former Grand Cardinal of the Orvarit parish and the ambitious schemer had lost his body and his soul under God’s Arrival and only had a mysterious piece left, there were still plenty of secrets surrounding him. For example, why could he use God’s Arrival, what did he obtain from the Realm of Gates, why could he escape from the monster, how he cooperated with the Angel King, and what the mysterious piece was exactly.

Rhine smiled, “I came to the Realm of Gates to track him but lost clues after I encountered the monster. However, now that I’ve given up and I’m devoted to the mysteries of the monster, his traces have unexpectedly shown up again. What a treacherous thing fate is.”

“I believe that the most important thing for us right now is to go to Thanos’ laboratory and figure out the secrets of the monster.” Lucien was interested in Sard’s piece, too, but they had to stay focused in this dangerous Realm of Gates without being distracted easily.

Rhine did not object. He smiled in self-mockery. “You open the gate. I’m worried that I’m still haunted by bad luck.”

Lucien meant to say that they were the same, because it was he who opened the gate when they encountered Ivan. However, he remembered that what lay behind the gate Rhine opened was ‘Mountain Paradise’, which was definitely much more severe. So, he nodded his head and said, “Alright. At the very least, the enemy that we encountered after I opened the gate could still be gotten rid of.”

The rest of their journey was peaceful and quiet. The terrifying monster seemed to have forgotten them. As they approached Thanos’ laboratory, Rhine suddenly halted and said in confusion, “The traces left by the mysterious piece again...”

Sard had only a mysterious piece left and was incapable of covering his traces. It was only reasonable that he was sensed by the people who entered the same hall. However, the odds were few to none for them to enter the same hall in the Realm of Gates!

“Is Sard’s destination Thanos’ laboratory, too?” Their first encounter might’ve been coincidental, but now that they’d met again, Lucien couldn’t help but wonder if they were going the same way, and the only reason why they were going the same way was that they had the same destination!

Rhine maintained his graceful smile. “Possibly. I’m very curious about his past. How did he pick up God’s Arrival? Perhaps the secret lies within Thanos’ laboratory.”

After three grey halls, they discovered Sard’s smell and traces again, which further assured them of their speculation.

Several minutes later, Lucien and Rhine stopped before a black gate that seemed no different from others.

“Is Thanos’ laboratory behind this gate?” Not confident about his calculation ability, Rhine asked for confirmation from the specialist.

Lucien nodded his head solemnly. “Mr. Rhine, be prepared. Great dangers might be looming inside. My Host Star of Destiny keeps giving me premonitions.”

“Of course. The laboratory of a top sorcerer must be carefully defended.” Known as the ‘Observer’, Rhine had abundant adventure experiences.

Hardly had he finished his sentence when a black gate nearby shivered and creaked.

Lucien and Rhine had been wary that somebody might break in. They almost attacked with their instinct, but the gate remained closed after the creak, showing no sign that anybody was coming, as if it was just their hallucination a moment ago.

“I smell Sard.” As a vampire prince, Rhine had a particularly keen smell about living creatures.

“He wanted to come in?” Lucien corrected himself subconsciously. “No, he just left.”

In the final hall that led to Thanos’ laboratory, Lucien and Rhine also discovered Sard’s traces and inferred that he had already entered the laboratory, but as it turned out, he went to a different place and intentionally made a noise?

“Is he tricking in order to ambush us?” Rhine speculated Sard’s purpose.

Lucien shook his head. “Is it necessary? He could’ve ambushed us inside Thanos’ laboratory. It’s the place that we have to go to.”

Suddenly, Lucien had an uncanny intuition. So, he brought out his crystal ball and performed astrology. Out of his expectation, he got a fuzzy result. “Follow Sard...”

“Well?” Lucien and Rhine looked at each other, equally surprised.

“Should we try following him? We will return in three minutes whatever happens. It will not delay our exploration in Thanos’ laboratory.” The sorcerers of the school of astrology all pay enough attention to their prophecy. That was why Lucien made the proposal.

After completing the general theory of relativity, his ability of astrology had greatly improved and was as good as the level-one ‘Prophet’.

Thinking for a moment, Rhine fell into a weird silence and nodded his head. “Alright.”

Therefore, the two of them opened the door where the noise came from and, within their expectations, found the remaining scent of Sard. Then, following the scent, they passed two grey halls and stopped before a black gate that showed no anomalies.

Having been calculating the coordinates all the time, Lucien suddenly said in surprise, “Behind this gate is also Thanos’ laboratory!”

“We’re back after a detour?” Said Rhine in amusement. Had they been tricked by Sard?

Lucien shook his head. “This should be another entrance.”

“Sard wants us to enter through this entrance?” Rhine stopped smiling and opened the black gate warily, his legendary items all prepared.

As the gate was moved backwards, a magnificent and splendid laboratory was unfolded before them. Mysterious patterns, cubic models, weird magic circles, and broken mirrors that were embedded on the grey hall could be found everywhere.

The laboratory was as huge as the entire Nekso Palace, with many pathways that led to different rooms. Broken pieces were scattered on the ground.

The laboratory gave a feeling of devastation because almost everything was damaged, as if a legend of battles once broke out in this place, and the laboratory was not destroyed as a whole only because the strong defense. Even so, most of the patterns, magic circles and divine power circles had been wiped out. The alchemical platforms had been razed to the ground, too.

Pure and scorching brilliance flowed around the laboratory. It was the boundary of the defense, but there was a path before Lucien and Rhine through the defense. It seemed to be a secret channel that somebody established before.

“Sard wanted to save our time in destroying the defense?” Rhine walked into the laboratory.

Lucien followed him and observed the surroundings. “But his scent is gone from here.”

“Leave him alone. There should be experiment logs in the rooms that weren’t destroyed.” Said Rhine calmly.

At this moment, the door of one of the grey rooms was opened.

Similar to other places in the Realm of Gates, the doors here

blocked the spread of spiritual power. Unable to identify who was coming out, the two of them split and prepared their attack.

Inside the grey room...

Banham, the Original Fire, heaved a long sigh in relief. He gnashed his teeth half in joy and half in fury, "I've finally recovered... Lucien Evans? Natasha Orvarit? I won't let go of you. You made me lose all my legendary items. I count on the last thing I would like to use to avoid the utter demise!"

As for Derrick Douglas who gave him the final death blow, he subconsciously chose to forget it, because their gap was too huge.

"After I return to the Holy City, I'll apply to His Holiness for a legendary item." Thinking of his future arrangements, the Original Fire opened the door and was ready to leave.

The Church had collected many legendary items after killing many legendary experts. Since the Original Fire lost his possessions during a mission, he certainly should be compensated.

Hardly had he opened the door when the projection of the Original Fire's Host Star of Destiny trembled, giving him a strong sense of danger. In the meantime, his pupils constricted violently, as he saw the handsome man in double-breasted long suit standing inside the 'main laboratory'. The guy was smiling at him warmly with a monocle on his face.

Such an attire and such gentleness did not befit this place but a lively dinner hall!

"Lucien Evans..." The Original Fire moaned to himself. He almost thought that he was hallucinating because he hated and 'missed' the guy too hard.

In the next, with his abundant battle experience, he split into five shadows and fled without any hesitation, casting 'Chaos Teleportation' to every shadow.

"Space Staff." The broken brilliance was gathered in Lucien's hand into a rippling staff. As he pointed the staff, all the space ripples in

the laboratory were calmed down, forcing the Original Fire to withdraw from the void. He hurried to chant, "Fire of Clones!"

Suddenly, his body turned into a pale fire that surrounded Lucien.

His original body, in the meantime, blinked to the entrance of the laboratory and opened the gate in delight.

However, his face was frozen after the gate was opened, because it was another Thanos' laboratory behind the gate, except that it was not Lucien Evans but a handsome man in a black shirt and a red coat who stood at the center. Smiling, he bowed gracefully, with vague moonlight spreading out of his silver pupils.

"Are you satisfied with my Real Dream?"

The Original Fire stopped in shock. Lucien's voice echoed behind him. "I'm very curious why you are here. If you choose to accept my magic restraint, maybe I'll consider letting you live."

Before him was Thanos' laboratory, and behind him was still Thanos' laboratory. The Original Fire did not know which side was reality and which was a dream at all.

Hearing Lucien's words and looking at the delicate pocket watch in his hands, the Original Fire changed his face gloomily. In the end, he finally nodded his head and said, "Alright, you can use magic..."

Hardly had he finished his sentence when his face was twisted and his eyes were bloodshot. He clutched his own neck brutally and roared in disbelief, "W-Why?"

Sensing the drastic changes in him, as if a powerful being was about to arrive, Lucien knew that it was not good and simply cast the spell, "Vengeful Gaze!"

Lucien's left eye was crimson and clear. A ray of light shot out. Enhanced by 'Hand of Uncertainties', it hit the Original Fire who hadn't been completely transformed.

They were on the same level, and the enemy was just recovered. The Hand of Uncertainties worked out, allowing the red ray to

pierce through the defense and transfixed the forehead of the Original Fire who was still struggling.

Rhine also splashed into countless bats that swooped at the Original Fire who had collapsed, covering him completely.

By the time the black bats dispersed and regathered into Rhine, there was nothing left on the ground anymore, and the power that intended to arrive failed.

“Who could it have been?” Lucien looked at Rhine in confusion.

Before Rhine replied, noises echoed in Thanos’ laboratory again, and a familiar scent spread out.

“Sard? The mysterious piece?”

Chapter 638: Peculiar Magic Circle

Chapter 638: Peculiar Magic Circle

Lucien and Rhine looked at each other, both noticing the surprise on each others faces. Sard was intentionally exposing himself? Where was he leading them to?

Although he hadn't recovered the ability to summon Silver Moon Alterna because of his wound, Rhine felt that he was still in good shape, and 'tycoon' Lucien was rather confident about himself now that he had all his equipment. Therefore, the two of them split and approached the corridor where Sard's scent spread out in full wariness.

Sard's scent began to move among the pathways, until it reached an inconspicuous grey room that could've been easily neglected.

The door of the room was not closed, allowing Lucien and Rhine to see clearly what was inside from the outside. At the center of the room was a deep pit. There were countless unimaginably eerie magic patterns, mixed with the symbols and divine power, at the bottom of and near the pit.

Those patterns and symbols were not superficial but extended below the floor, beyond the wall, and into the void, spreading nonstop. The whole room seemed to be covered in a magic model, giving both a sacred and weird feeling.

At the bottom of the pit, the fuzzy, translucent grey piece was pulled into the shape of a human, who toddled towards the center.

"This is the most complicated and incomprehensible magic model that I have ever seen." Lucien had 'Eternal Blaze' that only level-three legends could learn, the 'Hand of Uncertainties' that was beyond the imagination of the arcanists today, and he had witnessed the defense of Allyn. However, this magic circle eclipsed all of them in terms of complexity. Also, it was only the tip of the iceberg. Lucien believed that the patterns that disappeared into the void, the floor and the wall were not really gone but connected to

the whole Realm of Gates and World of Souls in a certain way. They were of the same structure!

Lucien was confident to make such a statement as a grand arcanist.

Rhine looked rather weird, as if he had remembered something. In the end, he said, "I once saw part of the pattern from Thanos. I didn't know that he had already begun the studies on such things back then."

Sard walked very slowly at the bottom of the pit, not nearly as swift as just now. So, Lucien had the time to consider whether or not to stop him, as well as the time to ask curiously, "Mr. Rhine, you and Thanos were good friends?"

"I like to make friends with talented young men and watch them grow. I will even transform my favorites into vampires. So, I have a lot of good friends, and Thanos was one of them. Of course, he was also the most monstrously brilliant one. Hehe. You are already better than him in terms of arcana." Said Rhine in a smile.

Lucien thought for a moment and said with mixed feelings. "As expected of the Observer. When you open the history book and point at a random name, you can say that you knew him and watched his growth. That must be a special and enjoyable feeling."

"That's one of my few hobbies now." Rhine said, "It's a pity that I didn't witness the growth of Douglas, a great person who can compare to Thanos, if not even better. After all, he established the path of arcana through the greatest difficulties and rescued magic. After only four hundred years of development, his group has reached the level that the ancient Magic Empire achieved after thousands of years, and it has an equal number of top legends to that in the prime days of the Magic Empire."

"Why? I admired Mr. President the first time I read his inspiring questions and believed that he was one of the greatest people. I don't think that you didn't see it, Mr. Rhine?" Asked Lucien in confusion. That was an Observer who supported many young men.

Rhine shook his head. "Douglas was not very distinguished in the

last years of the Magic Empire and in the beginning of the War of Dawn. Perhaps because of his habit of asking questions and his unusual mindset, he was not appreciated by any other sorcerers in Antiffler. Also, he was not very strong himself and only advanced regularly. Naturally, he was eclipsed by the many geniuses at that time. That's why I overlooked him and didn't get to know him at all."

"The arcana system he established, on the other hand, is the domain that I don't have the slightest clue about. So, the grand arcanists and the legendary sorcerers who were raised in the Congress of Magic were not witnessed by me at all, except you."

Lucien's curiosity was satisfied. Seeing that Sard was about to reach the center of the pit, he asked, "Should we stop him?"

"Can you identify its function? I believe that this magic circle is the pivot of the laboratory, but we cannot test it ourselves. However, if the magic circle transforms subjects into monsters, Sard will definitely attack us after his transformation..." Rhine seemed eager to find out what Sard wanted.

Lucien shook his head. "I can only tell that it is associated with resurrection, as can be seen how the Original Fire came back to life after he was smashed by 'Fateful Meteor'. As a matter of fact, it is common sense in magic that the more delicate, complicated and powerful a magic circle is, the more easily it can be sabotaged during the operation. We can see what Sard is up to first. If anything goes wrong, we will interrupt it at the critical moment. If the magic circle is defended the moment it begins, we will destroy it immediately!"

"Alright." Rhine hated Sard in the first place. He couldn't agree more after hearing Lucien's explanation.

The shape of the human transformed from the grey piece that lay inside the hexagram at the center of the pit. The magic lines around him glowed one after another, emitting pure silver brilliance.

After all the magic lines were illuminated, the intense, frozen air of death surged in along the patterns on the floor and the wall,

bringing in silence and coldness.

“It indeed takes advantage of the power of the World of Souls.” Lucien took the opportunity to record and analyze the magic circle.

Right then, the patterns that stretched out to the void was painted with sacred and overwhelming light. A holy and vast tide also flooded into the pit.

“The power of Mountain Paradise...” Lucien couldn’t have been more surprised. Death and life? Evil and holy?

He was not bold enough before. That was why he failed to infer that the magic circle would extract power from Mountain Paradise!

The monotonous black, white and grey and the pure brightness were melted with Sard’s translucent figure as the center. Then, they entangled in an unimaginably weird state. As Lucien’s observed, they now revealed the frozen black, white and grey, and now revealed the lively and agile ivory brightness.

Enshrouded by them, Sard’s body changed quickly. It was now extremely dim and now seemed to be blessed with flesh and blood. Gradually, the feeling of flesh and blood was stronger and stronger.

“It’s really resurrection?” In the telepathic bond, Rhine asked.

Suddenly, the most overwhelming and supreme light surfaced inside Sard’s body, and the pleasant hymns resonated in the room. The entanglement of life and death was immediately disrupted, and the line between evil and holiness was drawn.

Sard’s body was reduced into a grey piece again, which seemed to be made of infinite regrets and desperation.

“I deserve better...”

In the vague, miserable cries, the grey pieces collapsed all of a sudden, and Sard completely disappeared from this world.

Both Rhine and Lucien were rather taken aback by such a change. It was not until a long time later that Lucien finally remarked, half in

mockery and half in shock, “Sard attracted us to come to this place with so many efforts, just so that he could die in front of us?”

Rhine hated Sard’s guts in the first place and was only puzzled by his sudden death. He was immediately amused by Lucien’s words. “He was probably really trying to die before us.”

After the mockery, Lucien reviewed what he saw and took a deep breath. “At least, I have a basic speculation about the effect of the magic circle. It should be more than resurrection... Was Sard trying to tell us the function of the magic circle with his resurrection?”

“What a pity. He didn’t know that God’s Arrival was so powerful that it lingered to this moment. He was such an ambitious, brilliant and stealthy schemer, but he could only cry that he deserved better in the end.” Rhine felt rather complicated that the schemer who once deceived him ended up like that.

Lucien shook his head. “His biggest problem was that he did not recognize the trend of history. The Congress is developing faster than he imagined, but he went against the trend. If he had truly decided to divide the South Church, it’s possible that he’d already be a top legendary pontiff right now. The trend of history is unstoppable. Whoever stands in its way will be crushed.”

After the observation, Lucien suddenly sensed something wrong. “Mr. Rhine, if Sard were confident about his resurrection, there wouldn’t have been no need for him to attract us to come. He could’ve got in touch with us after he was resurrected, because either of us might’ve killed him when we lose control of ourselves. If he were not confident about his resurrection, he could’ve told us what he wanted to tell us in advance.”

Reminded by Lucien, Rhine was deep in thought, “Are you implying that he attracted us to come under somebody else’s instruction for the purpose of letting us see this magic circle, and that it didn’t really matter whether Sard survived or died in the end?”

“Yes. The guy who instructed him must be the guy who enabled him to use God’s Arrival.” Lucien nodded his head. “But I can’t figure out who it can be. The Angel King is incapable of God’s

Arrival himself...”

Looking at the magic circle that had stopped, Rhine said, “What’s your opinion about the function of this magic circle?”

“Let’s find the experiment logs first. I need to confirm my thoughts.” Contemplating, Lucien left the grey room and opened the other ancillary laboratories and libraries, searching for all the files that remained.

Just like Maskelyne suggested, although the main laboratory had been destroyed, some of the experiment logs were preserved. They were arranged by Lucien and Rhine in the order of time.

On the intact mirror in one of the rooms, Lucien and Rhine’s image was reflected. They began to read the intermittent experiment logs, because many of the logs had been ruined, from the beginning.

Some of the experiments were Thanos’, some were left by Maskelyne and the other legendary sorcerers earlier, and only the last of them were written after the explorers entered the Realm of Gates.

“Phase of Preliminary Preparation: We accidentally captured a strange creature in the alternate dimension that was similar to the gods in the tales. Perhaps we can call it ‘fake god’.”

Chapter 639: There's Only One Truth

“...Based on our research, the fake god's extraordinary abilities and the way such abilities are used are entirely different from magic or blood power. It is different from magic creatures, as well, and calls for more studies...”

“...After locating one of Mr. Thanos' relics with 'Mirror of Fate', we discovered that he had also conducted research on gods and was much more advanced than us. He had secretly preached for a hundred years and gathered the power of faith through special items... By grasping his research files, we made groundbreaking developments in our research, and we established certain religions on our own. Also, we separated and recruited Mr. Thanos' believers...”

Here, the experiment logs that described the way to make the special items had been entirely destroyed. Frowning, Lucien kept on reading. The record matched his conclusion before. After all, for religions that required time and population to accumulate the power of faith, it was impossible for them to suddenly soar. It was unreasonable that the Saint Truth and many other religions of fake gods emerged out of nowhere during the War of Dawn and became very powerful. There must've been a period of development that took decades if not hundreds of years.

Also, in the main material world, all the creatures that had hoped to gather godhood would be coveted and captured by the World of Souls, which would then fake their natural death. To dig out the mysteries of faith, one had to begin by discovering the fake gods in the alternate dimensions, exactly like how he encountered God Ell and the like. It also matched the history that Thanos conquered all the known alternate dimensions except hell and the abyss and led the magic society to the pinnacle and answered the question as to why so many underdeveloped alternate dimensions were conquered but no fake gods were ever discovered. It was because they were all intercepted by the Sun King who kept them a secret.

“...During my research, we found the World of Souls, and I also

created the first special magic item with the gathered godhood – the Sun’s Corona. It’s a mark that I’ve embarked on the path to be a real god. I’ve made the first step towards the mysteries of this world and the dream of an everlasting life...”

It was indeed created by the gathered godhood. Lucien tapped the paper on which the experiment logs were recorded. It meant that, if the sorcerers could not find a way to steal the godhood of the God of Truth but try to create a divine item by establishing a religion to gather godhood, it would take a very long time. It would be impossible to shake the foundation of the Church using the fact that sorcerers could also create divine items.

“...I found a world that is beyond my imagination in this place. In the deepest and most quiet death, there was a sacred and overwhelming world of light, in which the brightness was twisted into a seven-floored mountain. Countless angels with pure wings on their backs and transparent holy spirits were dancing and singing... Was it angels, holy spirits and Mountain Paradise that Mr. Thanos envisioned? The worlds behind the black gates are a natural reflection of the death customs in different cultures. Then, could it be just like them, and it is derived from the collective consciousness of the believers of the Sun God? But it’s still a surprise to see it here...”

“...The exploration on the Chamber of Immortality failed. I think I understand why the existence of the World of Souls sleeps near the chamber, and why there is so much concrete evidence suggesting that the secret of immortality lies there. Those things couldn’t have been spread out without the exploration of the pioneers... Even the demigods suffered severe wounds in the pathway of immortality and had to recover from the river of fate over a long time?

“...We used the Mirror of Fate again and discovered Mr. Thanos’ remaining laboratory. We read his experiment record...”

In the next, it was some notes that Thanos left behind:

“I’ve found a way to surpass the pathway of immortality, which is to transform myself into a weird status that is similar to ghosts and the primeval devils. Only by doing so will I be immune to the

overwhelming power of disintegration and collapse inside the pathway. This happens to be what I've been working on. Chamber of Immortality, I'm coming!"

"...After many unimaginable dangers, I finally opened the door of the Chamber of Immortality, but was it the secret of immortality behind it? Why couldn't I be convinced at all? What did it mean exactly? Was the God of Death tricking me? But the traces of immortality everywhere and all the things around proved that the secret of immortality must be behind the door!"

'God of Death' was a random name that Thanos came up with for the mysterious existence of the World of Souls. As for the way of transformation and the dangers to be faced, the former was destroyed, and the latter had never been recorded by Thanos. At that time, he must've thought of another possibility and began his attempt to surpass the level of demigod.

"...Is it because I'm not strong enough that I cannot see the secret of immortality? Also, there are many insidious problems if I turn into a demigod by transforming into something similar to the primeval devils through gathering the power of emotions. Something may go terribly wrong! It's time to make another attempt. As long as I surpass this test and become the real Sun God, everything will be better. By then, I will surely be able to see the secret of immortality as a real god, won't I?"

"...I'm all set to become a real god. My approach is to completely melt myself with Mountain Paradise where godhood is gathered and solidified. This is a very dangerous step. Thankfully, I've made all the preparations. I created a perfect body and projected a bit of my essence into the body. If the melting fails and I am swallowed by Mountain Paradise, will I be reincarnated in him?"

No more notes from Thanos could be found again. It was back to the experiment logs of Maskelyne and his partners.

"...We didn't know that Mountain Paradise was created by Mr Thanos. He found a world of death that had angels. Then, he melted the special item with which he collected godhood into that world, thereby creating a Mountain Paradise that was much more powerful

than he thought! Its magnificent power reached the peak of demigod, and as the power of faith increased and many holy spirits arrived, it gradually broke the limits of demigod...”

“...Mr. Thanos must’ve lost all his self-awareness when he melted himself into Mountain Paradise. To be more exact, he was dissolved and completely perished... He became a real god, exceeded the limits of demigod, and reached the apex of this world, but he does not know how strong he is. He can only function according to the preset rules like the most accurate magic circle. He does not have consciousness or a soul. No, it isn’t correct to say that he does not have consciousness. He has consciousness that is hidden inside everybody’s heart, a result of the influence of the power of faith...”

“...Mr. Thanos only left a platinum staff behind, in which are the rules that he set for Mountain Paradise. Because his real self has become a real god, his staff is enshrouded by the most powerful will. We can only crack it and grasp it gradually. By the time we can use it freely, we will be wielding the power of a real god!”

“...Mr. Thanos’ preparation for his resurrection seemed to have failed, too. After the perfect body was woken up by us, he does have any memories or self-awareness about the Sun King anymore. He is a brand-new intelligent life. Of course, thanks to the projection of the Sun King, he is making crazy improvements in strength. Perhaps, he will reach the peak of legendary earlier than all of us. According to McLeod’s proposal, we have given him a new name: Mecantron, which means the deputy sovereign of paradise and the young Sun God. It matches his real identity perfectly...”

Reading that, Rhine couldn’t help but chuckle, “So, Mecantron is Thanos. No wonder I always feel that he is familiar. I thought it was because every pure beauty looked familiar to me...”

“Mecantron is not technically the Sun King. His soul, his consciousness and his memories, everything he has is different.” Lucien believed that even Mecantron wouldn’t think that he was Thanos, the Sun King and the ‘God of Truth’!

Hardly had he finished his sentence when Lucien’s head hummed as if it had been hit by a gigantic hammer. Seizing the key to the

problem, he mumbled, “Mecantron is Thanos’ reincarnation, Mecantron...”

“What’s wrong?” Rhine was somewhat puzzled. Wasn’t it what the Sun King acknowledged in his notes himself and what Maskelyne and the other sorcerers recorded in their experiment logs? Could somebody have fabricated it?

Lucien said, in both shock and confusion, “If Mecantron, the Angel King, is a reincarnation of Thanos, the Sun King, then only the six seraphs were actually made out of legendary sorcerers. However, seven legendary sorcerers went missing!”

It was simple math!

“Perhaps, the first product failed during the production?” Rhine became solemn, too.

“No...” Lucien murmured. Countless memories flashed in his head.

The puppet that was divided into ‘six parts’ by McLeod...

The residues of the magic circle in the grey hall that represented the different components of a hexagram...

Maskelyne left his secret laboratory in a hurry when he almost finished his conclusion, leaving only a mark of ink that indicated his shock...

‘Maskelyne’ shouted miserably, “It’s not him; it’s him!”

Viken took away the most important part of the files in the Sun King’s underground palace, which was a relic that Maskelyne and the other sorcerers did not discover...

Viken’s most weird ‘Special Summoning Ritual’...

It was Viken who proposed to erase the experiment descriptions in their magic notebooks, and it was Viken who went missing first...

The monster shared a lot of similarities with the primeval devils. It seemed to know everybody’s memories and feel the deepest feelings

in their heart, and it was one or half a level stronger than the target...

“Viken...” Lucien seemed to see a grey-haired old man sneering at him. He said fuzzily.

Rhine’s ears were keen enough for him to catch it. He repeated, “Viken? It was him?”

Lucien had connected all the clues and made many deductions. His shock was gradually gone. His eyes dark and profound, he pushed his monocle and said solemnly and confidently:

“Although there are many things that we haven’t figured out yet, there is only one possible truth!”

The grey mirror on their back suddenly became clear, and a blurry shadow protruded.

Chapter 640: The Monster's Real Strength

Lucien had a strong sense of danger, and the shadow of his Host Star of Destiny shook his soul violently. Therefore, while shouting 'watch out' in the telepathic bond, he performed the fastest short-distance teleportation.

His body disappearing where it was, Lucien blinked to the door of the ancillary laboratory, only to discover that the dusty mirror had become clear, and a blurry, twisted shadow was protruding and walking out of it!

It demonstrated its dominance without any reserve, upsetting Lucien and nullifying the Mechanized Mind, Mental Barrier and other spells on him.

It was the air of that monster!

It was the pressure of the demigod level!

"It's finally here?" During their two skirmishes, the monster had shown its air when it failed eventually and when its two shadows were melted. Therefore, Lucien recognized that the grey blurry shadow was the monster that guarded the 'Realm of Gates'!

Rhine's figure broke like a dream, and the dark shadow at the door of the laboratory was regathered into him.

In the telepathic bond, he said with unprecedented solemnity, "Demigod. This is the pressure of a real demigod..."

His conclusion had always been that the monster was not as strong as a demigod, or it would've already killed him. However, it seemed that the monster had merely been tricking the people who intruded in the Realm of Gates, letting them approach the end of their life in desperation and pain.

Having witnessed 'God's Arrival' and welcomed Alterna to possess him, Lucien understood the pressure of demigods very well. He did not need Rhine to remind him but simply cast his spell. "Space

Staff!"

Time flowed much faster around him. His body split into many identical Luciens, who fled to different directions of Thanos' laboratory at full speed.

The monster snorted. "You are trying to deceive me with illusions that are not even legendary?"

The transcendent, overwhelming air arrived with its voice, making time and space back to normal. All the real illusions were shattered.

From the void, Lucien's real self appeared. He did not give up even though he was faced with a demigod. A delicate and exquisite pocket watch appeared in his right hand, whose black second hand ticked forward.

Crack. As Lucien pressed his thumb, paleness arose from the greyness around, and everything was slowed down.

The monster, whose face was changing all the time, was utterly unaffected. It completely left the mirror and approached the two of them, its voice of mockery entering Lucien's ears across the different time and space.

"If you were a top legend, your 'Advanced Time Stop' might have influenced me a bit. Alas, you are not. Do you believe that I can completely kill you with a random attack? That's the gap between a demigod and the non-top-legends."

Rhine's legendary items to resist 'Advanced Time Stop' had been consumed, and he was now caught in the effect of time stop and stood like a statue. Lucien's head was an utter mess. He was grasped by deep desperation. The monster was beyond what he was capable of dealing with. If he had met the top legends who were not immune to 'Advanced Time Stop' and 'Gravity Collapse', there would be a chance for him to escape with the special features of the Realm of Gates, but it was not going to happen now that he had run into a demigod!

The monster had abandoned the feature that it was only one level

or half a level stronger than the target and simply attacked with full strength. Now that he thought of it, the Moon Timer only worked because it played by the 'game rules' when he encountered the Rhine that the monster faked!

In his desperation, the toughness in Lucien's heart and his never-to-give-up belief made him grit his teeth. "Nothing is absolutely certain! I'm going to fight the odds! What about demigods? Can they be more horrifying than fate?"

"Vengeful Gaze!"

"Vengeful Gaze!"

"Vengeful Gaze!"

In the effect of time stop, three crimson rays that were attached with 'Hand of Uncertainties' shot out of Lucien's ruby left eye.

...

Dum! Dum! Dum! Dum!

In the magic tower inside 'Atomic Universe', Natasha, in a black knight suit, stood before the piano and pressed her narrow, long fingers hard, as if she were venting her emotional turmoil and encouraging herself to fight.

Dum! Dum! Dum! Dum!

Natasha's eyes were slightly red, and her face with brimming with determination. The rhythm of the Symphony of Fate swept over astoundingly, panicking the servants around and making them feel like swallows in a thunderstorm that could not resist the horror of nature.

Why did I waver? Why am I not confident in advanced into legendary? Why do I feel that I'm utterly useless? While playing the piano, Natasha asked herself, gnashing her teeth.

...

The effect of 'Advanced Time Stop' was over, and the crimson rays hit the defenseless monster at the speed of light. Then, it penetrated through the monster as if it had hit a cluster of smoke and reached the wall, raising a swirl of scorching light.

"This is..." The monster suddenly sounded rather scared, as if it had sensed something, but then it laughed. "If you were a top legend, the weird spell that you secretly added might've hurt me for real. I've never seen, nor am I capable of simulating, such weird stuff. However, it's a pity that you are not."

"Alright, let me show you 5% of my capabilities."

The overwhelming, terrifying storm of energy suddenly burst out. The monster waved its hands and launched an attack in the way of a knight.

"Elemental Protection!" Lucien activated the Robe of Grand Arcanists in a hurry.

The colorful spots of light were gathered into a translucent layer of defense and protected Lucien's body.

Crack. The energy storm was blown at the shield of 'Elemental Protection', breaking it apart and hitting Lucien heavily.

Elemental Skin, Magic Absorber, Stone Skin, Energy Immunity and other spells were activated one after another, finally weakening the energy storm to the point that it could not stop Lucien from blinking.

Even so, Lucien, who had blinked to door of another room, felt like vomiting blood. He had been heavily wounded!

"How about it? Are you desperate now? I love the taste of desperation most. Haha. This is merely 5% of my capabilities." The monster laughed aloud and approached Lucien and Rhine like a cat playing with mice, while it controlled the defense of Thanos' laboratory, forbidding teleportation inside.

Suddenly, it stepped forward, shattering the platforms, tables and other things like a dream. Rhine, who was at the door, stepped

back, with blood flowing out of his mouth.

“Real Dream? It’s a shame that you are not Dracula. I can wake you up from your dream by the sheer suppression of my overwhelming strength.” The monster laughed gloatingly. “Come on. Bring out all your spells and naturally-endowed talents. I like tricking with people most. I will cast you into the deepest desperation.”

Lucien struggled to suppress his wounds with magic. Then, he turned into a legendary knight, raising the Shield of Truth and slashing the silver longsword!

Desperation?

I’ll never be desperate or give up as long as I have the slightest consciousness!

...

The exciting music made everybody shiver uncontrollably, but Natasha suddenly pressed the keys hard, resulting in an unharmonious noise. Then, she picked up ‘Pale Justice’ and walked out of the magic tower firmly.

I don’t need to finish it to know what I should do!

Until it is over, I should practice, practice, and practice! Even though the chances are one thousandth, I should still strive for it! Weakness and desperation are pointless!

...

The silver longsword cut the monster like a crescent moon. The gaps of void soon tore it apart, but very soon, the pieces were regathered into a twisted shape of a human, who mocked wickedly, “As expected of the Sword of Truth. It’s a shame that you are only a level-three. If it were a knight with the blood power of ‘Sword of Truth’ at the peak of legendary who attacked me, I might have perished just now. It’s a shame that you are not.”

At some point, a small, neat black bow appeared in Rhine’s hands, and a bloody broken arrow had been placed on it.

After he drew the bow, the bloody broken arrow was shot out with the intense air of destruction.

The monster stopped laughing and said in a low voice, “Space Protection!”

Many overlapping spaces seemed to have appeared next to the monster. After passing a lot of them, the broken arrow finally disappeared into the void.

“Not bad. As expected of the Observe with an abundant collection. I didn’t know that Malhanu’s destructive bow was in your hands.” The monster praised. “However, you forgot that I only said that top legends might’ve hurt me. I didn’t say that they could certainly hurt me. Hahaha. How about it? Isn’t it very fun?”

Malhanu’s Bow was a top legendary item known as ‘Godslayer’, but it had a high requirement on the user. After Rhine shot the arrow, the blood all over his body seemed to have been drained. He became dry and slim.

“Godslayer’s Arrow, I’m capable of that, too!” The monster launched another attack. A bloody broken arrow flew out of its hands and shot at Lucien who was protecting Rhine with the Shield of Truth.

When the bloody broken array hit the Shield of Truth, it dissolved the illusionary waves immediately, as if it had knocked down a whole world!

As the unimaginable pressure came at him, Lucien could not hold the Shield of Truth anymore. He was blown away into one of the grey rooms.

...

Inside ‘Atomic Universe’, Natasha, holing ‘Pale Justice’, was fighting in the cosmos with the planets of elements as her imaginary enemies. Beads of sweat dripped off her forehead, reached her eyes, and fell from her cheeks.

As she slashed her swords out, terrifying gaps appeared on the

planets.

Natasha did not shout to vent her fury after her every attack. Instead, all of her feelings, determination and blood power were melted into her attacks.

You ask me if I will waver?

You ask me if I will give up?

You ask me if I am desperate?

My longsword will give you answers!

...

“If your Shield of Truth had reached the level of ‘God’s Guard’, my previous attack would’ve been in vain, but it’s a pity that you are not Mecantron. Now, have you gained a full understanding about your insignificance and uselessness?” The monster mocked.

Lucien fell on the floor. Before him was the pit where Sard died just now. He almost slid and dropped to the bottom of it.

The magic circles around emitted cold brilliance and circulated just like before, as if no battles were going on at all.

“Sard died here just now. Are we also going to...” Lucien had a terrible feeling. The monster’s intentional heavy thudding seemed to be reminding them of the arrival of death.

“It’s great that the monster likes talking and tricking people, or we would’ve died after the first attack.” Lucien held back his ominous feeling and looked for a chance of survival from that aspect.

If you want to play, we will play with you!

Thinking hard, Lucien’s eyes were suddenly frozen. At the bottom of the pit where Sard died, the head of a puppet had appeared at some point.

“It wasn’t here before...”

Sard's death...

The paper scraps and the puppet parts that they had obtained easily...

Maskelyne's undestroyed notebook...

The coincidental encounter with 'Mountain Paradise'...

The experiment logs in the laboratory...

After he saw the puppet head, all of Lucien's questions surged out and got connected. A lightning struck in his head and illuminated everything.

Laughing, the monster walked to Lucien and Rhine. "What now? You've given up resisting? You're desperate now?"

Lucien stood up. As if he were faced with not a demigod but a dog, he cleaned his bow-tie and his suit while he smiled, "Why would I resist?"

Rhine looked at him curiously. The monster also stopped and sneered, "Where's your fighting will and your resolution a moment ago?"

Pressing his chest with his right hand, Lucien bowed:

"Sometimes, the enemy we think may turn out to be our best ally."

"Thank you for preserving the experiment logs, the magic notebook and the puppet parts."

The monster's laughter stopped.

Chapter 641: Your Show and Mine

Chapter 641: Your Show and Mine

“What are you talking about?” The monster did not attack after it stopped laughing but looked at Lucien solemnly.

Lucien pushed his monocle and said, “Mecantron, the Angel King, is an incarnation of Thanos, and the six seraphs are made from six legendary sorcerers at the beginning. Based on all the clues, we can conclude that the mastermind behind the curtain is Viken, the Sovereign of Disasters, who was the first to go missing.”

‘King of Calamities’ was both Viken’s legendary class and his nickname, meaning that he caused disasters to the world, life and people.

“And?” The monster seemed really interested in Lucien’s deduction.

“Since the platinum staff, an important item that Thanos left behind, is in the hands of the pope instead of the Realm of Gates, it suggests that somebody did leave this place with the platinum staff that can master the power of Mountain Paradise.” Rhine helped Lucien go on.

Lucien nodded. “Therefore, without other clues, we may consider the pope as the schemer Viken. However, there is a paradox in our deduction.”

“Oh, what is it?” The monster asked very cooperatively, showing no sign of launching an attack.

“As the victor at the beginning who crafted six legendary sorcerers into seraphs, he was actually betrayed by the Angel King and Sard. What does it indicate? It indicates that he could not control Mountain Paradise and the Realm of Gates effectively.” Lucien had no doubt that Viken was an out-and-out demigod now.

“Viken lost control over Mountain Paradise when the situation was entirely manipulated by him, which means that something else had

happened back then, and that a certain being here which was strong enough to resist him prevented him from coming to the Realm of Gates often. However, if he didn't come often, his control over the Angel King and the seraphs would be gradually weakened. Also, the being that resisted him would surely try to influence the Angel King. As a result, betrayals were inevitable."

Lucien talked casually, as if he were not in a life-and-death battlefield but on a podium giving a speech.

"Are you implying the existence of the World of Souls?" The monster chuckled.

Lucien looked at the monster with a smile. No. Waiting for his resurrection and return in the pathway of immortality, he was obviously unable to shoulder such an important responsibility. I was talking about you. It was you who scared Viken, making him dare not to come to the Realm of Gates often."

Before the monster replied, Lucien raised his left hand despite Rhine's surprise and pointed at the monster. "If it weren't for you, why would the paper scraps, puppet parts, magic notebooks and experiment logs been kept intact without being destroyed by Viken?"

"If it weren't for you, why would we have run into so many clues so easily and coincidentally?"

"If it weren't for you, why would Sard have happened upon the Angel King?"

"If it weren't for you, why could he have left the Realm of Gates safe and sound?"

"If it weren't for you, where would the mysterious piece inside Sard have been from? Why would he have intentionally directed us to this place, allowing us to watch the magic circle?"

"If it weren't for you, why would you have wasted so much time talking, giving us the chance to escape, in our previous battles?"

One coincidence was acceptable, but there must be other reasons if

there were too many of them!

Rhine realized what was going on and looked at the monster. “You did that in order to reveal Viken’s real face and look for helpers to deal with him?”

The monster fell into unusual silence and did not talk.

Lucien looked at the monster solemnly. “I don’t think you are guarding the Realm of Gates willingly. In fact, you are controlled by Viken and implanted with many restraints. That’s why you cannot leave and why you need external help.”

“I think the experiment did not go wrong when Mr. Maskelyne and his partners created you with ghosts. In fact, it was Viken who tricked them with the devil transformation methods that he inherited from the Sun King. So, you had to follow his instruction after you were born and help him capture the other six legendary sorcerers.”

“I think you would’ve been another method of resurrection that Thanos left behind if Viken hadn’t seen through it. That’s why you are a demigod-level being and why you could ‘help’ Sard to perform God’s Arrival!”

“I think that Viken’s restraints must’ve been flawed since you are also a demigod. That’s how you got out of his control when he left the Realm of Gates to develop the Saint Truth. However, the restraints do exist, forcing you to kill every creature that enters the Realm of Gates and forbidding you from telling everything to us. That’s why you remind us in different ways and give us a way of survival by useless talks.”

Staring at the monster, Lucien declared, his words shooting like cannonballs:

“I think that the battle in Thanos’ laboratory was between Viken and you. You didn’t fail, and he didn’t win. You got to preserve part of the experiment logs!”

“That’s why Mr. Maskelyne and McLeod were reminded by you in

the end and recognized who the real culprit was. That's why he told me that the enemy we think may turn out to be our best ally!"

"Am I right, Mr. Monster?"

After a brief silence, the monster suddenly chuckled, "You're wrong in some parts. For example, until you found Thanos' laboratory and identified Viken, I could only demonstrate the strength one or half a level higher than the target's, or I would lose the ability or memory retrieval and mimicry. That's a natural limit."

"So, you have admitted the rest of my theory, Mr. Monster?" Lucien smiled.

The monster laughed, "You are very smart, but it's a pity that I still have to kill you."

The monster didn't really have a choice.

As if he did not hear his death sentence, Lucien said casually and gracefully, "It's alright. You don't need to kill me. I'll die on my own."

"Will you?" The monster sounded rather strange.

Lucien pressed his chest with his right hand and bowed again as a gentleman.

"I won't waste your time, Mr. Monster?"

As he spoke, he stretched his arms into a human-shaped cross. His suit was unbuttoned, and the thin chain of his watch extended all the way to the pocket of his waistcoat.

Then, he fell backwards, his hair dancing crazily in the wind.

Behind Lucien was the gigantic pit full of magic patterns, and the destination of his free-fall was the center of the bottom of the pity!

Suddenly, a cluster of black bats flew over and pulled Lucien. Rhine had finally understood what Lucien was trying to do.

Surrounded by the countless bats like a cloud, Lucien fell to the center of the magic circle with his arms opened.

“Mr. Monster, I wonder how should I call you?” The patterns in the magic circle around Lucien glittered one after another, and he asked the final question.

As it watched Lucien fall backwards, the monster put on a smile of satisfaction, its face getting clearer and clearer.

Then, he looked at Lucien who lied at the bottom of the pit. His appearance became entirely clear inside Lucien’s monocle. He was a gloomy-looking old man with grey hair.

“A long time ago, my name was also Viken...”

What? Lucien looked at him in surprise. Suddenly, the broken puppet occurred to him.

The magic pattern was entirely illuminated. The monotonous, silence black, white and grey and the clear, flourishing ivory power surged and gathered again. Death and life, evil and holiness, darkness and light, they entangled Lucien and Rhine weirdly.

.....

Inside a grey hall in the Realm of Gates, traces of destruction were everywhere. Even the wall and the black gates of several halls nearby were also ruined. Liquids were dripping out and repairing them.

“This ‘Realm of Gates’ is alive?” Fernando looked around and said in surprise.

Douglas also observed the wall and the gate in curiosity. “Why is the Realm of Gates alive? What exactly is such a life form?”

“Stop asking questions. Let’s track the Angel King. It’s not easy to wound him so heavily. We cannot let go of the opportunity. After we catch him, we will know why he appeared in the World of Souls and the Realm of Gates.” Fernando urged him. If they could learn the secrets about the Realm of Gates from the Angel King, it would

help them to locate Lucien.

Douglas moved his eyes back and said solemnly, "Alright."

Just now, they entered deep into the Realm of Gates by tracing the Angel King and caught up to him in this grey hall. Joining their hands, they heavily wounded the Angel King who hadn't reached the influence of Mountain Paradise yet. If it weren't for the powerful 'God's Guard', Mecantron could've barely escaped. After all, Douglas was on his way to becoming a demigod, and the two of them were well prepared for the attack.

The prepared sorcerers were always the most terrible enemy!

.....

Inside one grey hall, seeing that he had gotten rid of his pursuers, Mecantron stopped and planned to stabilize his wounds with the divine power.

Many feathers on the thirty-six wings on his back had fallen. Gold blood was all over his lips. Obvious and devastating wounds were everywhere on his body. Even the recovery ability of the Angel King could not heal them immediately. He had apparently been hurt deeply.

"I'll let you know my wrath after I enter the influence of Mountain Paradise!" The Angel King gnashed his teeth. His strength would be half a level higher when he was around Mountain Paradise, and the enhancement did not have a time limit.

Just when he performed the divine power, his face was suddenly twisted. His gold pupils were now bright and now dim. Holding his head tightly, he cried, "Who is it? Who's projecting into my body?"

He was surrounded by holy light, as he tried to resist the unknown attacker who was attempting to occupy his body.

A solemn and grave voice echoed. "It's not easy to wait for an opportunity so that you can be wounded again. You may call me Rudolf II, or Thanos, my previous name!"

“What?” Mecantron was totally surprised. He immediately lost control of his mind. After brief chaos, his gold pupils became clear again, and the wounds on his body were quickly healed.

Shaking his head and getting used to his body, ‘Mecantron’ sneered, “Who would’ve written the real method of resurrection on a notebook? I only had to grope for the path of advancement again because of my incomplete memories, or I wouldn’t have waited for such a long time at all.”

Chapter 642: Status Transformation

The Lich King and the Wraith Lord, who were hiding near the Furnace of Souls, kept an eye on the Realm of Gates, ready to attack anyone who had escaped out of there.

Suddenly, they saw that the Servant of Death flew out with the Dragon Lich in a cluster of smoke.

“Did you kill them?” The Lich King appeared from the void. Although he knew that the Servant of Death could not kill Douglas, he still couldn’t help but ask.

The Servant of Death put down the Dragon Lich who had been heavily wounded by Rhine. Two red spots were gathered in the smoke, as he spoke casually, “We didn’t, but we could not linger any longer, or the monster would’ve killed us.”

He secretly gnashed his teeth. A while before, he thought that he was the hunter, but he found that the prey inside were all terribly brutal. Even the two young ‘gentlemen’ who looked weak could’ve killed him with their equipment. He probably would’ve completely perished if he hadn’t reacted quickly enough. It was all thanks to the protection of the ‘Lord’ that he was not killed!

“We have fulfilled our responsibility. The ‘Lord’ will not blame us.” The Lich King comforted the Servant of Death as well as himself.

...

Enshrouded by the two opposite, incompatible powers, Lucien felt that his soul, body, spiritual power, clothes, rings, badges and pocket watch were all caught in an amazing state.

The transcendental feeling of looking down at everything from high above that he had when Alterna arrived occurred to him again, allowing Lucien to transform towards that direction. He seemed to be away from the material world as well as the spiritual world and was observing himself from a very high perspective in a state where the two worlds coexisted.

It was an indescribable thing, because his soul, his physical body, his spiritual power, and his consciousness were all inside the magic circle. It was impossible for him to see himself from the outside world!

But the feeling was so real, and it was similar to the feeling that somebody looked at him from the high cosmos when his cognitive world received the feedback. The only difference was that his perspective had been moved to the 'guy' who observed him from the high cosmos indifferently.

His soul and his physical body had uncanny, unimaginable changes. They were now ubiquitous like clouds in the sky, and now compressed into concrete matter.

"This is..." Lucien, who observed himself transcendently, vaguely realized what was going on, the real ability of the magic circle, and its relationship with the Furnace of Souls... Those were perhaps things that even the Sun King did not know even though he was the one who established the magic circle.

"Comparing such a transformation with Silver Moon's arrival, I can tell that they have major differences despite the apparent similarities. Also, they are both short of something critical. Is that why they are only demigods and why Alterna and the others cannot pass the pathway of immortality?" Nobody had more experience than Lucien did in this world. He had abundant theories and hypotheses that he could verify with.

After being used too many times, vague cracks had appeared on the patterns in the magic circle. It seemed to be breaking after several usages. Only the Sun King was capable of renewing it, and other people must spend a tremendously long time on cracking it first.

Suddenly, Lucien's body and soul seemed to be melted. Generating an enormous attraction force, they pulled 'Lucien' who was observing himself indifferently from high above into his body.

The transcendental perspective was immediately gone. After a brief dizziness, Lucien resumed his consciousness. He opened his eyes and saw the monster who was looking at him.

“Very good. You are already ‘dead’.” The monster put a smile on his gloomy, slim face. “As a matter of fact, I was worried that you could not be transformed by the magic circle, because there are too many things in your soul that I cannot perceive and pry into. It seems that you have many enigmas in your body.”

“That’s a different matter.” Lucien stood up with a smile. He discovered that he was in a weird ghost state. He could be dispersed and regathered at any point, and he was still level-one legendary. All his items were still on him. He even had a perfect ‘substitution puppet’.

Rhine had also been transformed into a similar state. He chuckled, “This magic circle gives me a similar feeling to the Primordial Ancestor’s. It seems that the mystery of Thanos’ advancement is in it. Hehe. I thought that I could be promoted into a demigod after the transformation.”

“How could it be so easy to become a demigod? I am a demigod because Viken and I are the two sides of the same entity. We are the different forms of the same demigod. That’s also a problem of this path. Thanos experienced the same. That’s why he tried to become a real god despite the risks. However, Mountain Paradise was merely a combination of world energy and the power of faith. It was powerful but not of a high level, and it only had the qualities of a real god when Thanos’ consciousness was melted into it.” The monster did not dive into the details. It seemed that he was forbidden from telling the secrets even though his listeners were ‘dead’.

Lucien did not pursue any further, fearing that the monster would kill him if he triggered a certain restraint. However, he could guess what happened. Viken must’ve been a top legend before he entered the World of Souls and was looking for a way to become a demigod. What was left in Thanos’ laboratory gave him a complete approach. So, when the monster was being created, he separated part of his soul and melted it into the monster with his virtual personality, transforming it into his clone. He let the monster deal with Maskelyne while he took the chance to become a demigod using the Sun King’s possessions.

Something must've gone wrong during the process. As a result, the monster gained certain self-awareness, and Viken got rid of all the other problems, turning into a more perfect demigod than Thanos. Otherwise, it would be unexplainable why Thanos had problems all the time whereas Viken led the development of the Saint Truth for a thousand years.

"Did Viken separate himself and create a 'monster' as a way to eliminate most of the insidious problems because his research was better than Thanos', or was it a coincidence?" Lucien preferred the first guess. Viken couldn't have seen it coming that the monster also became a demigod after he became a demigod, which made it impossible for him to melt the monster.

The monster was rather talkative, perhaps because he had been suffocated for too long. "In order to become a demigod on this path, you first need an alternate dimension or a world behind the gate that high matches you. Then, you have to boast enormous power of faith. After that, you have to find a way to melt them. In the end, you transform the two things with the force of feelings that have been gathered earlier. The odds of failure are very high. There can be many insidious problems. The strength may be higher than the natural-born demigods, but it is not as good as their strength in nature."

"Hehe, but we can all use 'God's Arrival'. Maltimus and Alterna wandered outside several times but dared not come in. Only the brainless Abyss barged in without thinking."

Lucien became rather solemn. He was capable of 'God's Arrival', too? It was not entirely impossible based on the fact that Sard could use 'God's Arrival' with the mysterious piece. Therefore, he asked in a low voice, "Mr. Monster, neither you nor Viken easily used 'God's Arrival'. It couldn't have been because you feared that you might die. Was it because you were wary of each other?"

Demigods, to some extent, boasted an external life. The recoil on the soul and the body was certainly not a big deal. Therefore, Lucien speculated that the more 'God's Arrival' was used, the weaker the soul would be and the more likely that they would be swallowed by 'themselves'.

In that case, Viken, or the pope, would be even more terrifying than he thought. He was probably the strongest of all demigods if he had his platinum staff.

The monster smiled but did not reply. There was no telling whether he would rather not say it or he had been restrained. "So, you'd better not try to become a demigod in this way. You don't want to fight yourself every day, do you?"

Lucien smiled. "I have my own direction. I will not walk on the path that is possibly wrong."

He was not certain that it was wrong because his research hadn't proved so. He was merely rephrasing Silver Moon Alterna's narration.

Also, based on his knowledge and his feelings just now, Lucien vaguely thought that Thanos and Viken had both regarded assistances as the key but ignored what was really critical to becoming a demigod, exactly like what the Lord of Hell mocked before.

"You seem very confident. Then, I wouldn't project myself into your body and help you perform 'God's Arrival', which will make your soul corrupted by me. Alright, such a status can last ten minutes. When you turn back, you will no longer be the intruder now, and I won't kill you. However, you'd better not touch other things, or my restraints may be activated and get you into serious trouble." The monster reminded him. For him, it was already a success if Lucien could learn Viken's secrets and make it out alive.

He didn't find Douglas and the rest of them because they were too strong and tended to be greedy. The monster knew desires very well.

Lucien nodded his head. "Alright."

He was truly confident about himself. Just now, the status transformation gave him the hope of improving to level-two legendary very soon. More importantly, he vaguely understood and grasped something through the ritual, which shed light on his

future development.

"I suggest you take a look at the Chamber of Immortality." The monster suddenly said, "Most of the dangers on the way have been eliminated by Thanos, Viken and me. You should be able to reach it safely. It's a shame that none of us understood what we saw. That's why Viken has been eager to capture the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell, hoping to find a way to make up for the insidious problems from them."

Rhine smiled. "Are you resorting to the strategy of numbers, wagering on the possibility that some of them could see through the mysteries of immortality?"

"Don't be so blunt." The monster turned into Rhine's look and teased him, showing no sign that he was a murderous monster. However, Lucien was still quite wary of him. He understood people very well, was born from an assortment of feelings, and melted part of Viken's negative personalities. He was a natural 'devil'. He was only so convivial because he was stranded in this place. If he made it out alive...

Lucien nodded. "In fact, I would pay a visit to the Chamber of Immortality even if you didn't mention it, Mr. Monster. It's not easy to be transformed into such a state."

Rhine naturally had no objection. That was his purpose when he explored the World of Souls for the first time.

When Lucien and Rhine went to the pathway of immortality through the Realm of Gates, the monster smiled and said to himself, "I have to fight other people now..."

Thanos' laboratory became quiet again. From the pure, scorching light of the defense, a shadow suddenly crept out. In a white long robe with scarlet eyes and an eternal mocking smile on his lips, he was exactly 'Geno', the embodiment of the Lord of Hell!

"Had I known this, I would have come in directly instead of covering my trace with the air of Silver Moon on Lucien." The Lord of Hell shrugged with a smile and jumped into the pit, activating

the magic circle again.

Obvious cracks appeared as the magic circle began to function. After this time, the magic circle probably could never be used again.

...

Recovering from his wounds, 'Mecantron' snorted, "Hehe. That monster Viken wanted the emperor with the blood power of 'Angel King' to stall Mecantron? That's really the greatest joke!"

As he spoke, his wounds were recovered, and his body was twisted into unpredictable transparency.

"What's inside the Chamber of Immortality? I can't remember it at all..."

"However, I do remember that this is the way to go into the Chamber of Immortality..."

Chapter 643: Pathway of Immortality

To go from the Realm of Gates to the Pathway of Immortality, one did not need to leave from the exit and enter the other side, as a certain black gate was already connected to the Pathway of Immortality. Thanos and Maskelyne suspected that the weird ghosts entered the Realm of Gates from this place, because they obviously carried the feature of the Pathway of Immortality.

After the monster intentionally changed the pattern of changes in the Realm of Gates, Lucien and Rhine saw a world of surging grey dust the moment they opened the black gate. There was a straight road leading to the depths of it.

It was not until this moment that Lucien and Rhine realized why McLeod, Maskelyne and the other legendary sorcerers failed to escape. It was because the monster boasted the ability to manipulate the changes in the Realm of Gates. When they reached the coordinates of the entrance that they calculated, they would discover that it was the laboratory that they just left. How devastating it must've been!

Lucien was rather scared of such a future. If the monster hadn't been against Viken, even a demigod couldn't have escaped from the Realm of Gates and could only return from the void after their demise over a long time.

That was probably why the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell dared not explore Thanos' laboratory in the Realm of Gates.

"I didn't know that the pope was Viken, the King of Calamities who dominated Holm and Brianne..." Lucien said with mixed feelings. Gregory I, Charlie II or Benedict III had been possessed by Viken either before or after they became the pope. "Also, the restraint of his 'God's Arrival' was only 'himself'..."

The grey dust was blown away by Lucien with his spiritual power before it hit him.

Rhine narrowed his eyes against the sand. "Everything is still under

control as long as he doesn't find an opportunity to swallow the monster. Your 'Arcana Voice' should work hard on disseminating 'secrets of the pope' in order to deal with Viken."

"We've smeared the pope too hard before, claiming that he was the embodiment of the Lord of Hell, a villain who loved little boys, or a disguised evil sorcerer. Those 'secrets of the pope' do not sound very astonishing without undeniable proof." Lucien finally knew how the boy in The Boy Who Cried Wolf felt.

Rhine couldn't help but laugh at Lucien's remark. "That's only because your programs pursue nothing but novelty. At the very least, you have a complete story chain this time. Those Grand Cardinals will certainly be more or less suspicious."

Then, he said rather relaxedly, "With the general theory of relativity, Douglas will be likely to become a demigod. Then, it will be impossible for Viken to destroy the Congress of Magic. So, time is on your side. The more you delay it, the better. There's no need to bring it out even if you have proof, in case Viken counterattacks desperately."

"Yes, a prolonged battle is in our favor..." Lucien then shook his head. "There are many obstacles for Mr. President to become a demigod. For example, although many solutions to the gravitational equations in the general theory of relativity are pointless, I believe that some of them correspond with the astronomical phenomena in the cosmos. Mr. President will not become a demigod until those phenomena are found."

Not hearing Rhine's reply, Lucien turned around, only to discover that he was confused.

"Mr. Rhine?" Lucien asked in the telepathic bond.

Rhine gasped. "What are gravitational equations? What are astronomical phenomena?"

Lucien suddenly realized that there was no astronomy but only astrology in this world. He was about to explain, when Rhine shook his hands in fear, "We will still be good friends if you don't talk

about arcana.”

It was a line in a certain tale that Lucien made up in Arcana Voice. He had borrowed it for his own use.

Lucien was immediately amused. At this moment, a black gate enshrouded in illusionary ripples appeared.

The two of them moved fast and reached the entrance of the Pathway of Immortality in only one minute.

“The Chamber of Immortality...” Rhine heaved a sigh.

Lucien was excited, too. What was hidden inside the Chamber of Immortality? Why was everybody who opened it so disappointed? Where was the weird feeling of familiarity from?

Holding back his excitement, Lucien checked the gate and opened it.

The gate moved backwards slowly. An ancient path appeared before their eyes. It had no decorations or traces of bricks, as if it were in an intangible other world.

“Perhaps, ‘God’s Guard’ is a divine power that Thanos created with the Pathway of Immortality as the model...” Lucien somehow recalled the Angel King’s ‘God’s Guard’.

Rhine nodded with his symbolic smile. “They are very similar.”

As he spoke, he made the first step. Surrounded by the illusionary ripples, he walked on the Pathway of Immortality as if he were sinking in water.

Confirming that they would not be disintegrated in their current states, Lucien also stepped in.

The high, profound, cold and indifferent feelings came from where his body touched the ripples. Lucien had the illusion that he was about to be melted.

Suddenly, Lucien discovered that the Pathway of Immortality was

gone, dispersing into a boundless cloud. As a result, even he could not maintain the appearance of a human being. He was expanded into a form that existed everywhere but could also be determined in one location.

Then, the spread collapsed. The Pathway of Immortality appeared again, and Lucien's body was compressed, too. At this moment, he had reached the turn of the Pathway of Immortality next to Rhine.

The telepathic bond was already gone. Controlling himself, Rhine struggled to say, "You felt the changes, too? Do I look different?"

"No, I don't see any changes, but I assume we would've been disintegrated if our states weren't transformed." Lucien realized that they could talk via the purest waves.

Rhine cleaned his clothes habitually and said, "Let's continue."

After they took the turn, they saw a palace that had all kinds of eerie patterns engraved on the wall. They confounded whoever saw them.

Thankfully, most of them were already destroyed. That was why Lucien and Rhine could bear it. They passed the palace quickly.

"They must've been destroyed by the demigods like Thanos and Viken." Lucien was rather scared of those weird patterns, which seemed to be designed to swallow the creatures in their current states.

Rhine nodded. "Since Monster Viken allowed us to come here, it means that he believed we wouldn't be in great danger. So, let's not panic whatever we may run into."

After opening the gate, Lucien and Rhine were spread and collapsed again, passing through the Pathway of Immortality and reached the second palace.

The second palace was utterly empty. Right when Lucien thought that the place had also been sabotaged, he heard vague noises.

Who is it? Lucien turned around, only to discover that a man in a

double-breasted suit was smiling at him warmly. It was exactly himself!

An illusion?

Surprised, Lucien decided to ignore it and simply went at the exit of the temple.

‘Lucien’ smiled casually. His muscles bulged, and he slashed with a silver longsword!

Lucien almost couldn’t stop himself from using the Moon Timer or teleportation spells, but then he remembered Rhine’s reminder and decided to wait. After all, he still had the passive magic effects!

After the sword flashed, ‘Lucien’ and Lucien passed each other without any contact.

It was indeed an illusion! Had he attacked, would the illusion become real, and the real become the illusion and stay here forever?

Rhine encountered the same, except that his enemy was a monster that he thought to be a guard of this place. Thankfully, he also held his defense and took the attack the hard way.

After they left the temple, Lucien and Rhine passed four Pathways of Immortality and reached four different temples, in which the traces of ruins could be found.

They were rather astounded. If they encountered a real enemy, and they took the attack without any defense, they would probably be in danger. Illusions were really tricky!

Opening the gate before him, Lucien suddenly widened his eyes. It was a forest with tall trees and vigorous animals?

It was totally unlike the World of Souls or the Pathway of Immortality!

Another illusion?

Lucien observed the surroundings and looked for an exit, when he heard ‘meow’.

A cat? Lucien turned around, only to discover that a black, silver-eyed kitty was looking at him attentively.

“Where’s Mr. Rhine?” It was then that Lucien realized that Rhine was gone!

“Meow!” The cat made another sound.

Lucien said, deep in thought, “You know where Mr. Rhine is?”

As he spoke, Lucien only heard the same ‘meow’.

What’s going on? Lucien immediately reviewed himself, only to discover that he had become a yellow-and-white cat, too!

“The other cat is Mr. Rhine?” Lucien looked at where he came, planning to retreat first, only to sadly discover that the entrance was gone!

He was about to write on the ground to communicate, when he felt that his neck was grabbed. He struggled with both hands and feet, only to no avail. Rhine was the same!

A mean woman laughed aloud, “You two food-stealing thieves have been caught! You’ll be my dinner tonight!”

An illusion?

Lucien began to think. Such weird things should happen here.

Calm down! Calm down! Lucien told himself.

Brought to a cabin by the women, Lucien and Rhine were cut in the neck before they had a chance to escape.

Lucien almost passed out from the excruciating pain. He saw blood dripping from ‘his’ body.

Such pain should be an illusion!

Lucien tried to resist, but it seemed too late. ‘Cat Lucien’ died helplessly after a struggle.

Lucien, however, discovered that his consciousness did not disappear. It was still undergoing the agony and could pass out any moment.

What’s going on? Lucien did not have the habit of passing out. He would rather stay conscious as long as he could!

The cat was skinned and chopped. Every cut seemed to be on Lucien’s body. The pain was like nothing he had ever experienced.

Not having a spell to eliminate the pain, Lucien could only hold it back, unless he chose to pass out.

The meat of the two cats were mixed up and thrown into a pot that was full of potatoes, before it was placed on the fire.

Lucien’s consciousness seemed to be attached to one piece of the meat. He felt that he was being scorched and boiled. The pain was truly indescribable!

Lucien felt that he could pass out every second, but he managed to make it to the next.

After a long time, a spoon appeared in the pot, fetching the peculiar food of cat meat with potatoes onto a wood plate.

Holding his pain, Lucien observed the cabin, trying to find a ‘gate’ to leave, but there was absolutely nothing abnormal.

Where’s the opportunity? Can I only find it if I choose to pass out?

At this moment, the hostess picked up a fork and stabbed into ‘Lucien’, chewing him up into pieces.

Every bite seemed to be on Lucien’s soul.

Lucien did not know how he weathered through it. By the time he was more or less clear, he was already ‘flowing’ towards the hostess’s gullet pushed by the tongue.

Suddenly, Lucien discovered that the throat of the hostess was a red gate!

That was the exit!

The gate was opened, and everything became normal. Lucien found himself standing before the Pathway of Immortality he entered the first time. Before him was a grey stone door.

There was another Pathway of Immortality from another direction, where the Furnace of Souls outside could be seen. On this Pathway of Immortality was a cluster of frozen black, white and grey that was now dispersing and now gathering. One seemed to be seeing infinite death the moment they saw it. Even a legendary expert like Lucien could not free himself.

A swarm of black bats flew over and blocked Lucien's vision, breaking him away from the attraction of the mysterious existence of the World of Souls.

Rhine was regathered and said solemnly, "Don't approach any 'demigod' that cannot control themselves."

Nodding his head, Lucien recalled what happened and had a deeper understanding about the creepiness of the Pathway of Immortality. "If we passed out, we might've really died before the Chamber of Immortality."

Rhine observed the surroundings, noticing deep grey traces that carried the transcendental, intangible and unapproachable air of demigods, but they also had the additional sense of immortality.

"Are they the traces of immortality?" Rhine spoke in a low voice.

Looking at the Chamber of Immortality before him, Lucien had an unusual sense of familiarity. He extended his right hand and pressed the gate.

What was behind the gate?

Chapter 644: Mysteries of Immortality?

What was behind the gate?

‘Mecantron’, the Angel King who was standing on the other end of the Pathway of Immortality, also asked himself. What exactly was the mysteries of immortality that so many experts tried to touch?

Rudolf II, who had already turned into ‘Mecantron’, did not bother with his current form. He narrowed his eyes and thought to himself, “After I learn the mysteries of immortality, I’ll find a chance to kill Lucien Evans and Rhine Carendia. I don’t think that the Silver Moon can arrive at this place.”

The mysteries of immortality obviously could not be shared!

As for why he did not attack the two of them immediately, Rudolf II was certainly glad that somebody eliminated dangers ahead of them. Who knew what was behind the gate of immortality?

What was behind the gate?

The Lord of Hell, hiding inside the Pathway of Immortality in a weird form, looked at Lucien and Rhine up ahead and the ‘Angel King’ nearby, and asked himself.

The World of Souls had always been inconspicuous. Even in the age of myths, he only detected that there was such a secret world but failed to find the entrance. He never really got in touch with the World of Souls for real until the Master of Argent discovered the place by accident. At that time, the mysterious existence of the World of Souls was almost recovered and showed the traces of immortality to the Lich King and his other subordinates.

Therefore, he also learnt about the Chamber of Immortality and part of the secrets of the Saint Truth. Their thousand years of planning and failures were all for this moment!

As long as the gate was opened, the mysteries of immortality would be unfolded before him!

Although they were natural-born demigods, the Lord of Hell believed that Silver Moon, Abyss and himself gained the initial self-awareness only when the age of myths began. They were not part of the creation of the world and life. So, they did not know much about how and why the world came into being.

Also, he had the vision that, even though he would not die as long as hell existed, the hell would rot and be destroyed with the entire world someday. Nothing was really everlasting. That was why he was so passionate about the mysteries of immortality.

As for the mysterious existence of the World of Souls, the Lord of Hell believed that he gained his consciousness in the same period, but he perished inside the Pathway of Immortality that he found in his hometown before he had the chance to share the glory of the age of myths. He could only return after a long time. However, trapped by himself and the Silver Moon, he fell into dormancy again. His life was truly miserable.

“The mysteries are only for me, Maltimus, the Lord of Hell! I have already understood the mysteries of transformation. I’ll arrive in person and erase Rhine Carendia, Lucien Evans and Mecantron before the Silver Moon reacts!”

By sacrificing the body of Geno, the Lord of Hell was confident to arrive in person at a non-main-material world!

What was behind the gate?

Lucien and Rhine were so enthralled by the question that their soul was almost suffocated. Why were Thanos, Viken and the monster disappointed? Would he see something different?

The grey door seemed to be as heavy as a whole palace. Lucien used a lot of strength to open a tiny gap.

The moment the gap appeared, the door suddenly lost weight and moved backwards, revealing what was inside the Chamber of Immortality to Lucien and the rest of them!

There were no walls, bricks or any object inside the Chamber of

Immortality; behind the door was the most vast cosmos that was emitting a supernatural, condescending air.

Profound darkness was all over the cosmos. Stars radiate their brilliance and gathered into bright constellations, which only added to the coldness and boundless feeling of the cosmos.

Lucien was stunned at first. He extended his right hand subconsciously and penetrated through the stars without meeting any hindrance. They seemed to be here but were not here, just like the Furnace of Souls.

However, it had a weird sense of compatibility with this world.

The galaxies inside the cosmos changed like a movie, zooming in nonstop until a familiar star appeared before Lucien. Familiar still was the blue planet next to it!

“This is...” Lucien’s pupils constricted abruptly, and a weird sense of familiarity surged.

Is it Earth?

It is Earth!

This is the cosmos I was in before I transmigrated!

“Is this the mystery of immortality?” Lucien blurted out, with intense shock and confusion.

“Is this the mystery of immortality?” Rhine sounded apparently surprised, disappointed and confused. A silver moon suddenly rose from his back, and the air of Silver Moon in Lucien’s left hand jumped out, accepting the illumination of moonlight.

Everything about Lucien had been transformed into the weird ghost state. The cluster of air was no exception. It grew into Alterna very soon.

“A projection has arrived...” When they encountered the monster, Lucien speculated that Alterna would help him deal with the monster through Rhine, but it did not happen. He did not know that

Alterna would arrive with a projection by Rhine's summoning and the air in his left hand.

So, that was why Alterna left air in his left hand. That was really 'visionary'!

Alterna appeared as innocent as before. Looking at the cosmos inside the Chamber of Immortality, she said in a daze, "Where's it mean? Is this the mysteries of immortality?"

"Is this the mysteries of immortality?" The Angel King asked uncontrollably in his surprise and disappointment, his voice reaching Lucien's ears.

"Is this the mysteries of immortality?" the Lord of Hell's smile of mockery was frozen on his face.

If he intended to appreciate the cosmos, he would have enjoyed it after a space jump! What mysteries of immortality was that?

He did not try to contain himself. Such 'mysteries of immortality' were not enough for him to sacrifice the body of Geno!

As the Lord of Hell, he had always been a standard merchant who considered costs and returns.

It was only when he spoke that Lucien realized that he had been tailed by a series of enemies. However, since the Silver Moon was here, his life was definitely not in danger.

Turning around, he looked at the cosmos and the blue planet that he couldn't have been more familiar with. He frowned and thought for a moment, before he was relaxed. "Is this the mysteries of immortality?"

"What do you see?" Asked Rhine.

Do they have to become real gods in order to see the mysteries of immortality like Thanos said?

Lucien admitted frankly, "A vast cosmos, many stars that shine like the sun, and many planets that do not glow."

“We’re the same. Is this the mysteries of immortality?” Rhine said in a self-mocking smile.

Alterna moved her eyes away and looked at Lucien. “Thank you for your trouble so far.”

Rudolf II, seeing that the mysteries of immortality were just that, and the projections of the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell were both here, dropped the idea of killing the two enemies. He snorted, “The mysteries of immortality are just a scam!”

While talking, he hurried to retreat to the Realm of Gates.

The Lord of Hell naturally lost the interest of fighting, too. Such mysteries would’ve been overpriced even if they were exchanged for one of his attacks. Although it was an acceptable business to control the Angel King, the Silver Moon was watching and the guy was already vigilant. There was a good chance that he would escape with God’s Guard.

As for killing Lucien for ‘revenge’, the Lord of Hell had the idea until the Silver Moon arrived. He could only hold the thought back and mocked, “Is this the mysteries of immortality? Thanos was a dummy! How long are you going to keep watching it? Do you think you can see through it?”

Until they saw the truth, everybody tended to think that they were the most special one.

In his laughter, the Lord of Hell left the Pathway of Immortality.

After the Lord of Hell left, Rhine calculated the time. “Let’s go out, too. If we turn back in this place, we may be killed directly.”

Lucien moved his eyes away from the cosmos. Closing his eyes, he said, “Alright.”

Alterna brought Lucien and Rhine out of the Pathway of Immortality. Confirming that the Lord of Hell had left, she nodded at Lucien as a gesture of ‘gratitude’ again. Then, she dispersed and recalled the power of projection.

At this moment, Fernando and Douglas also went out of the entrance of the Realm of Gates. They saw Lucien and Rhine.

Fernando was secretly relieved. Then he roared, “How did you come out from that way?”

Hearing the familiar roar, Lucien suddenly had many complicated feelings. Was the adventure going to end just like that?

Looking at the Furnace of Souls and the chamber at the end of the ‘Pathway of Immortality’, Lucien thought to himself, “Mysteries of immortality...?”

.....

On their way towards the advance base, Lucien told his experiences to Douglas and Fernando.

Solemnly, Fernando considered the things about Viken, while he yelled at Lucien, “You didn’t know that the Lord of Hell was following you? If the Silver Moon didn’t arrive, you would have been in serious trouble!”

“If the Silver Moon didn’t arrive and we fought there...” Lucien murmured.

“What are you suggesting?” Fernando didn’t quite understand what he meant.

Lucien shook his head, hinting that he did not mean anything, but he thought to himself, “...I might not have been the one who was in trouble.”

“Inside the vast cosmos, other than stars and planets, there are also black holes...”

In his cognitive world, the locations of black holes and enormous stars swapped nonstop.

.....

Inside the Chamber of Immortality, the infinite cosmos changed

without a moment of rest. Suddenly, a cluster of darkness that did not reveal any light surfaced. As the unimaginably terrifying force of attraction spread out, the door of the chamber was closed after a huge noise.

The Pathway of Immortality resumed eternal peace again.

Chapter 645: Return (2 in 1)

In the monotonous world of black, white and grey, Douglas, Fernando and Lucien did not perform a direct space jump but flew with intimidating pressure. Even the least unintelligent spectres knew better than to mess with them.

“Gather the power of feelings to transform himself into a status similar to the primeval devils, and then become a demigod by combining the power of faith and the energy of space... Mr. Thanos truly deserves to be one of the greatest sorcerers in the school of astrology. He’s the first expert who has ever advanced into such a level other than the natural-born demigods...” Although Douglas was born in the last years of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, a period that was far away from Thanos’ reign, he had learnt a lot about him in his life and his research. Therefore, he showed Thanos enough respect.

He had a lot of mixed feelings about the matter. The road to becoming a demigod had been presented before him clearly. It would be hypocritical to say that he was not tempted. Actually, few people could control their feelings well under such circumstances.

Fernando took it relatively well. It hadn’t been long since he reached the peak of legendary, and he was still far from qualified to make the step. Douglas differed from him in that Douglas had been a top legend for hundreds of years and he was praised to be on par with the Sun King before the Sun King’s demise. If he was willing to, he could gather the power of feelings and restore the magic circle in a decade, so that he could ‘borrow’ the power of Mountain Paradise to become a demigod with the help of the monster – that is, if his transformation did not fail.

However, the problems that Thanos and Viken had after they became demigods had been shown to him obviously. In his own cognitive world, the road from the general theory of relativity, although not very clear yet, had shown a bright and promising prospect. In decades, it was possible that he would be able to become a demigod without any concerns. Therefore, it was not

difficult for him to overcome his greediness, particularly when his original path just showed the light of dawn and was far from devastating.

“In my opinion, they were simply overwhelmed by their desires, and what they did was purely stupid. The primeval devils were not demigods themselves. What’s the point of transforming into their status except for the convenience to accept the power of faith?” Fernando did not hesitate at all but berated Thanos, a predecessor in the Magic Empire, straightforwardly. “Of course, the work has its own value, which is to give us the examples of failure!”

“However, Viken who can actually use ‘God’s Arrival’ many times is an absolute danger. We do not have the ability to resist him yet. Therefore, besides working hard to also turn ourselves into demigods, we need to study the path on which he became a demigod in order to find his weakness.” Douglas said prudently. Nobody except the monster knew how many times Viken could use ‘God’s Arrival’ in a row. “We cannot give up thinking on this path altogether just because it failed. It’s high time that we included the primeval devils into our research.”

Lucien nodded his head. Studying the primeval devils would help him grasp the mysteries and essence of the status transformation and the reality of the world. “One day, I will explore the primordial relics in the deepest level of hell.”

Since the Lord of Hell was very interested in him, Lucien certainly did not have the courage to go to hell until he became a top legend.

“As long as you can provide enough benefits, the Lord of Hell wouldn’t mind even if you killed a certain duke of hell, much less ‘trivial’ things such as breaking his projection. However, we must be cautious that he may be preparing schemes in secret for greater benefits.” The Lord of Hell was no stranger to Douglas, who had explored hell many times. “After this thing is over, I’ll go to the primordial relics in the deepest level of hell to collect ‘resources’ for our research. You needn’t take the risk.”

“Mr. President, rest assured. What we achieved from the adventure is enough for me to digest for a long time. Also, until I become a

top legend, I would rather go to the abyss than the hell.” Said Lucien sincerely.

When Fernando heard ‘what we achieved’, he remembered the Chamber of Immortality and murmured, “The mysteries of immortality is a picture of the cosmos? What kind of mystery is that? Is it true that only if you are stronger than demigods can you see through it?”

“I don’t think so. The picture of the cosmos, as well as its intangible and unapproachable nature, perhaps contains a certain secret that is related to immortality.”

“Fernando, have you forgotten that we haven’t discovered any planet in space to this day? We cannot see anything even if we look down at the worlds below, as if they are covered by something. However, the picture of the cosmos is hidden inside the Chamber of Immortality. Those two things may be related. If we solve the puzzle, we may be able to touch the mysteries of immortality.” Douglas analyzed the situation in the Chamber of Immortality from purely the perspective of arcana.

Lucien said thoughtfully, “The picture of cosmos inside the Chamber of Immortality perhaps really has something to do with the failed discovery of planets.”

However, their relationship might be the opposite of what people imagined. Lucien had certain guesses and considerations, but he needed more theories and phenomena to confirm and modify them.

Exploring the truth of the world required both bold assumptions and careful confirmations. Neither of them could be missing!

Fernando argued habitually. “That’s not necessary. Doesn’t the general theory of relativity specify that light will be curved in the gravitational field? Perhaps, the locations of the planets that we calculated based on starlight have huge errors from actuality.”

“That’s very possible.” Douglas and Lucien both nodded in approval. Lucien, for one, knew for sure that the phenomenon of ‘gravitational lens’ existed. Of course, it still needed the verification

of astronomical phenomena and ‘field tests’.

Receiving no objection from them, Fernando immediately lost the interest in further discussion on the matter, so he changed the subject. “There’s also a related phenomenon. When we explore the end of the Boundless Ocean, we should reach the other side of the Dark Mountain Range according to Douglas’ theory. However, when the legendary sorcerers explored the Boundless Ocean or the Moonlight Ocean on the other side of the Dark Mountain Range, they would eventually return to a certain area on their way no matter how they navigated themselves. It is impossible to confirm that our world is a sphere by circling around it.”

It was one of the most famous enigmas after Douglas proposed the motion theory of celestial bodies. Lucien knew about it before and suspected that it was because of space folding, but he had always been puzzled by the reason. However, after he opened the Chamber of Immortality and saw the picture of the familiar cosmos, he had certain speculations. He thought to himself that it was time for him to explore the end of the Boundless Ocean after he digested what he earned in this adventure.

As he spoke, Fernando mocked the Lord of Hell ruthlessly yet again. “Maltimus has always considered himself as the smartest creature, but in my opinion, he is just as brainless as Abyss. How can the mysteries of immortality be just there for everybody to see and learn? The mysteries of immortality should be a phenomenon, one that is the same as quality of elements, nature, geography or biography, except that the puzzles regarding immortality are contained inside. One can only learn what they are through research!”

“Maltimus laughed in disappointment without asking any questions after he saw the picture of the cosmos, which suggests that he is only slightly smarter than Abyss, and he cannot get rid of his nature as a low-IQ creature!”

Master, you are so mean. That’s the classic arcanists’ way of thinking. How can the Lord of Hell boast that? Lucien shook his head with a smile.

Douglas looked more or less the same. You criticize me for asking too many questions and laugh at Maltimus for not asking questions. It seems that one can never be right.

He shook his head in amusement. “Alright, let’s drop the picture of the cosmos inside the Chamber of Immortality for now. We still have to focus on the current arcana theories. Perhaps, after we figure out the mysteries of the microworld and the macroscopic space, the mysteries of immortality hidden inside the picture of the cosmos will be naturally answered.”

“That is the most correct approach.” Lucien agreed. Then, he thought of something else. “Mr. President, regarding Thanos and Viken, should we spread the secrets on a large scale to shake the foundation of the Saint Truth’s faith and raise the suspicion of the Grand Cardinals, or should we keep the secrets to attract and talk part of the clerics into taking our side?”

“Spread them on a large scale? It’s been years since ‘Arcana Voice’ was founded. The believers are already used to the rumors of the Church. A lot of them are even more unbelievable than what we have. The result probably won’t be very good.” Douglas said thoughtfully.

That was for the few countries on this side of the Storm Strait and the north coastline, because every block had a few magic radios in those areas. The owners of the radios were either members of the Congress of Magic or had the habit of listening to it with the crowd. As a result, the coverage of ‘Arcana Voice’ was greatly expanded. Also, after the Kingdom of Holm and the other countries were inclined to the Congress, the ‘manor broadcaster’ and ‘square broadcaster’ that Lucien invented played the role of popularization very well, giving most civilians a chance to listen to ‘Arcana Voice’.

As for the countries across the ocean such as the Holy Heilz Empire, except for the big nobles who were not restricted, magic radios were barely be found in the common households. It was neither capable nor necessary for the Church to popularize a divine item of similar functions. They had only been broadcasting from the churches to attract the believers to pray. Therefore, ‘Arcana Voice’ had barely any coverage in those areas. The spies sent by the

Congress of Magic still had a lot of work to do.

In Lucien's eyes, that was almost a spy drama.

Fernando added, "The Angel King was in the Holy City before. His return suggests that Viken might know that his secrets have been revealed. He will certainly be ready that we may try to influence certain clerics. We cannot be careless."

"Why don't we do both? We will disseminate the half-real stories through 'Arcana Voice', shaking the foundation of their relief and leaving Viken the impression that we haven't figured out all the secrets, while we keep the central intelligence to ourselves, looking for opportunities to convince the clerics to take our side."

Pondering, Douglas said, "This is a matter of paramount importance. Let's discuss and decide later in the meeting of the Highest Council."

As they talked, the three of them had reached the advance base.

Inside the defense magic circle, Brook, in his white wig, looked at the three of them and pushed his gold-edged glasses. Heaving a sigh of relief, he said, "It's good that you are back..."

Bergner, the Prophet who was still wearing his grey pointy hat, also smiled, "Two top legends couldn't have perished so easily."

...

Inside 'Atomic Universe', Natasha was still practicing arduously every day, leaving only a tiny proportion of time for her recovery.

'Pale Justice' flashed, and a terrifying gap appeared on a planet of elements, spreading out countless tiny cracks. The little planet that had been sabotaged by her seemed unable to take it any longer and was about to collapse.

Clap, clap, clap. From the airless darkness, applause came over.

Natasha turned around in surprise, only to discover a young man in a black top hat walking out of the profound space. With a smile of relaxation on his handsome face, he said, "You seem to have made

progress again while we were separated.”

Rubbing her eyes, Natasha became solemn. “Devil, take this!”

The sword was slashed at him. Lucien was rather scared. Had Natasha been enchanted by something?

Before he figured out whether he should take the attack or knock her out, the light of the sword was suddenly gone. Natasha flew to his front and hugged Lucien, sticking their faces to each other. Her breath was slightly hasty, and her voice was brimming with intense happiness. “Exactly the smell I’m familiar with!”

And exactly the formula that I’m familiar with¹? Lucien thought to himself and felt very warm and happy about Natasha’s passionate welcome. He exerted his strength and held her tightly, before he said in a low voice, “Were you worried that I might run into danger?”

“Of course, you are my husband and my love. How could I not be worried after you went missing behind the Furnace of Souls?” In a good mood, Natasha admitted frankly without any hesitation. She leaned backwards and observed Lucien very carefully. In the end, she said with a brilliant smile, “You were not hurt, were you?”

“Not at all. I even obtained many great things.” Lucien smiled and kissed Natasha’s lips. “I got the Fountain of Youth, the Mummy Gloves, the main eye of a legendary Hundred-eye Ghost, a substitution puppet, and several hands of curses.”

Then, Lucien looked around and teased, “You’ve been practicing hard to save me after you become a legend? Since you are still not legendary yet, have you been vulnerable, unconfident and loathing yourself recently?”

Lucien only made such jokes with Natasha.

Natasha tried to smile. “Am I that kind of person? I’ve been very confident. I would become a legendary knight if you were missing for another month!”

“Then, who played ‘Fate’ in the magic tower?” Lucien revealed her

‘ruthlessly’.

Natasha moved her beautiful eyes away and held Lucien’s head with both hands, giving him a long kiss.

“How about it? Do you feel my confidence?” After their mouths were separated, Natasha said while trying to catch her breath.

Lucien’s breath was also unsteady. He chuckled, “I do. With such progress, you will become a legendary knight in a few years.”

In a few years, there should be a chance for him to reach level three of legendary.

“I’ll be able to explore with you by then.” Said Natasha firmly, “In order to make advancements in the realm of legendary, let’s not consider children for now, shall we?”

Lucien nodded softly. “You have my full support.”

Then, he leaned his head forward and exhaled next to Natasha’s ear before he chuckled. “However, you need to make it up to me.”

The itch on her ear reminded her of certain things that she would rather forget, resulting in the hectic flush to Natasha’s cheeks.

...

Inside the Atom Institution, Sprint and the other arcanists were busy with their respective experiments. Suddenly, they heard a familiar, smiling voice. “I’m delighted at your diligence.”

Oh, our teacher is back? Heidi turned around and said happily, “Master, welcome back! There are so many questions that we would like to ask you.”

Because the exploration in the World of Souls had been kept highly confidential, they had no idea about the dangers that Lucien had been through and merely thought that it was a common business trip. Therefore, they were not particularly thrilled and excited after seeing him back.

Observing Heidi with a smile, Lucien said to Annick and the other students. “Has the original Heidi been taken down and replaced by a devil? It’s unbelievable that she is asking questions on her own initiative!”

“That’s because we made a major breakthrough in the research program that you gave Chelly and me.” Declared Heidi proudly.

Lucien raised his eyebrow. “The analysis on the mechanism of the ancillary computation magic circles?”

“Yes!” It seemed that Heidi could not wait to present her works.

At this moment, Sprint turned around and said to Heidi, “Our teacher is only just back. We have to report the important issues to him.”

“What important issues?” Asked Lucien in confusion. Natasha didn’t mention anything about it. However, she had been purely dedicated to her own practice and improvement of late. It was perfectly normal that she did not know what had happened.

With a brilliant smile, Katrina said, “Congratulations on winning the first Evans Prize in Arcana with Mr. Dieppe, master, for the remarkable contributions you made to the wave-particle duality and the electron diffraction. The name of the medal is exactly ‘Duality’.”

While she spoke, she displayed the appearance of the Evans Prize in Arcana with the manifestation magic. The medal had a black background on the upper half, which was embedded with a silver planet that represented the macroscopic world, and a silver background on the lower half, where the black symbols of atom were painted to indicate the microscopic real. It had a certain charming air with it.

That was the basic appearance of the Evans Prize in Arcana that Lucien designed based on ‘Tai Chi’. The word ‘Duality’ had been embedded at the center.

“Why is there image? Who accepted the award on behalf of me?” Lucien speculated that the Congress of Magic held the award

ceremony in advance in order to cover the fact that he and some major legendary arcanists had gone missing.

Layria couldn't help but grimace when she recalled it. "It was the little crystal dragon who accepted it for you."

They were already rather familiar with Alferris, the little crystal dragon.

I'm sure that he brought the medal straightly back to his own home. It's like feeding a goat to a tiger... Lucien shook his head with a smile. He was not particularly interested in the medal, but in order to restrain Alferris' greediness and to build up a healthy dragon-ality, he had to demand that the dragon return the medal to him at some point.

The students reported the important matters that happened in the Congress of Magic to him, as well as the research achievements recently that were worth paying attention to and the operation of the Holt Magic College.

After hearing their report, Lucien asked Blake, Lowi, Alfalia and the other assistances about their updates, before he finally went to the meeting room and convened the regular meeting. After Annick and the other students became middle-rank arcanists and sorcerers, there was no need for one of Lazar and his partners to stay in the institution all the time. Therefore, they had been away to accomplish the mandatory mission this year together.

Heidi was not in a rush at all anymore. She spoke frankly, "Master, Sprint and Annick proposed a hypothesis regarding the unusual splitting phenomenon of the spectral lines."

"What hypothesis?" Lucien vaguely guessed what it was. He looked at the two of them with a smile.

Annick replied, somewhat embarrassed, "It's because of the electron spin. However, according to the result of our calculation..."

The more he spoke, the lower his voice became. Sprint simply helped him to finish. "The speed of the electron spin on the surface

that we calculated was ten times the speed of sound...”

His voice was loud at first, but he also lost his confidence as he approached the end.

“Give me your manuscript.” Lucien asked for their manuscript and read it carefully.

Heidi spoke for them, “Not just now, many arcanists who work on the new alchemy feel that something is wrong with the concept of electron spin. Also, hasn’t the model of the new alchemy presented by matrix mechanics abandoned the notions that are not readily observable such as orbits? Where is this spin from? This is almost identical to the astrophysical system again.”

“However, this spin model explains the splitting phenomenon perfectly and matches the other experiments. As for the classic image that it corresponds to, it is not necessarily the same as the spin of planets that we think. In the microscopic domain, we can only understand things based on math and experiment data. Since it is not necessarily the spin as we know, it’s possible that the speed in the spin does not carry signals and energy, just like the wave speed of electrons in Dieppe’s paper. This is not in violation of the theory of relativity.” Lucien said roughly and inaccurately. “You may submit the paper to the Arcana Review Board.”

“However, you may encounter a lot of suspicions later. I suggest you deal with the spin problem with matrix mechanics first and see what you can get. I’ll work on this aspect, too.”

“Alright, master.” Annick was more confident after receiving the approval of his teacher. Sprint, on the other, was greatly relieved. He was going to submit the paper even if his teacher did not agree with him.

After resolving their question, Lucien looked at Heidi and asked, “What about you? What’s the major breakthrough that you have achieved?”

Heidi suddenly became shy. “It’s not exactly a great breakthrough. When we analyzed the ancillary computation circles, we discovered

that they could help with calculations because the results of different functions had been stored inside them in advance. After we gave the information, they searched for the answers in their storage, and ran simple calculations with the answers... In fact, we reached the conclusion by reading the relevant papers. However, we have gone one step further and described every specific procedure in the whole process.”

“There are too many functions and almost infinite results after they are calculated. It seems that the ancillary computation circles can only play a role in regular problems. Huh. Do you have any ideas on how to improve them? We can try to make them accomplish such a process in most of the problems: we give data and instructions, and we receive a result very soon. That way, it will be easier to popularize them among the magic apprentices.” Lucien said solemnly.

Heidi asked in confusion. “In order to fix most of the problems, we have to store more functions and more results for their calculation, which will have a higher demand on the magic circles and make them even more expensive, just like how the ancillary magic circles we use are different from those you use. This is the opposite of the purpose of popularization.”

Chelly nodded her head in agreement. They seemed to be two different directions of development.

“That’s why I said that you needed an idea. Has it occurred to you that the mechanism of the ancillary computation circles is different from the logic order of our regular thinking and calculation? Have you considered reconstructing the ancillary computation circles according to that and replace most of the functions of our brain with alchemical materials and electronic circuits?” Lucien tried to give them more inspirations.

Developing portable, diverse terminals of magic was one of Lucien’s goals in this direction.

Chapter 646: The High-End, Sophisticated New Project

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Lowi, who was listening nearby as an assistant, repeated curiously, “Reconstructing the ancillary computation circles according to the logic of regular thinking and calculation? Mr. Evans, thinking can be a really complicated process, which does not meet the demand of popularization, either.”

During the regular meetings, Lucien allowed everyone to speak freely as long as they raised their hands. This was meant to build an atmosphere of brainstorming where everybody could be inspired. It was also a way to improve himself. After all, Lucien knew very well what research achievements really belonged to himself so far. He could not slack off about improving his arcana expertise. As for the improvement on spells and alchemical items, Lucien believed that he had done quite an excellent job.

“Complicated procedures can be simplified. We finish every calculation by subdividing it into many steps. The thinking process is also the same. Here’s my idea. We can break down the processes of our daily thinking, control and calculation and look for the simplest procedures they have in common. Then, we can store them inside the ancillary computation circles as instructions. When we need to use them, they will be invoked and reassembled into a whole process. In such a way, most of the situations can be simulated.” Lucien did not direct his students but proposed the idea himself, because the idea was rather ahead of the current knowledge and trends.

Chelly was rather interested. “It sounds interesting. If the ancillary computation circles can simulate most scenarios, will they be able to mimic intelligent life in a rather convincing way? Is it possible that we cannot tell that it is a machine if we talk to it without being informed?”

“Mimicking an intelligent life without a soul? Sprint felt that Chelly

was overthinking.

Heidi glared at him and defended her research partner. “What’s impossible? It’s just a simulation. As long as enough reactions are stored in advance, it will be barely possible to tell the difference.”

Layria frowned. “However, many complicated factors decide how someone will react to a certain issue. I don’t think it can be simulated.”

At this moment, Lucien nodded his head. “That’s an interesting thought. If you are interested in it, you can work on it later. If the ancillary computation circles are improved to the point of artificial intelligence, what will happen if the alchemical life is melted into it?”

As he spoke, passion flashed in Lucien’s black pupils under the monocle. Would it be Skynet?

Listening quietly nearby, Katrina raised a question. “Master, isn’t it too troublesome to break down a complicated process into many procedures and reassemble them according to a specific order? We could’ve done the same thing many times when the ancillary computation circles finished it once.”

As for the phrase ‘artificial intelligence’, they could understand its meaning literally and were not confused.

“This will be the research project for you.” Lucien smiled. “I have a preliminary idea. Since we can control the lights by designing different circuits, can we also apply them to the improvement of magic circles? The circuits have two states: on and off. Can we represent information with only the two states, like the esoteric passwords that many sorcerers made before?”

Ever since the school of electromagnetics was separated from the school of elements, circuit design was no longer new to everybody. Many sorcerers had applied them to improve the electric channels in their magic circles. Also, as more and more magic circles that could transform hydroenergy into electricity were established, the infrastructure of electric wires began on a large scale. The invention

of magic circle lamps as well as electricity-powered alchemical items even informed the common civilians of what they were. Many new professions that based on the new inventions had been born, like 'circuit maintainer'.

The rapid development of electromagnetism messaging also allowed for more and more encryption methods.

Heidi said in delight. "Electricity is much faster. It's possible that a complicated process can be finished very quickly. However, how are we going to turn on and off the circuits?"

"Represent all the information with on-or-off states..." Chelly began to consider the binary system.

Heidi shook his head at Heidi's question. "How can we control them? That's what you need to work on. I think you can start from two aspects, namely magic and alchemical materials. Some elements we discovered recently show special conducting features. You can find them and see if they are helpful. Katrina and Layria are the authorities in that regard."

The two girls had been working on superconducting materials and material changes in the extremely low temperature. They had also discovered many new features of elements by the way.

Hearing their teacher's compliment, both Katrina and Layria shook their head, blushing. "We are no authorities yet. It was only because we had plenty of experiment materials..."

"Modesty is good, but you also need to be confident about yourself. Who's willing to participate in this project of artificial intelligence?" Asked Lucien with a smile.

After the study on the improvement of ancillary computation circles was changed into the study on artificial intelligence, it immediately sounded high-end and sophisticated. That was exactly the ultimate skill that every specialist who was good at tricking funding must grasp.

Heidi and Chelly had been working on the direction besides the

field of elements and atoms. Interested by the sound of ‘artificial intelligence’, they raised their hands. Katrina and Layria also wanted to join, but the projects in their hands all required abundant, repetitive experiments in order to yield results. Also, they had to study the new alchemy and the theory of relativity. They simply did not have the energy for a new project.

Sprint and Annick were uninterested. They had been completely enthralled by the microscopic new alchemy and the macroscopic theory of relativity, which were closest to the truth of the world. What could be more fun than exploring the mysteries of the world?

“Mr. Evans, I am interested. Can I participate in the project other than working as an assistant?” Lowi summoned his courage and asked.

Lucien nodded his head, giving his approval.

Alfalia had been Heidi’s assistant in the first place and was close to the delightful innocent girl. So, she also applied to join the project. Blake naturally followed her.

The meeting went on, and the subject returned to the new alchemy, on which the Atom Institution was founded. Everybody reported their experiment data and conclusions.

.....

‘Mecantron’, the ‘Angel King’, walked inside the Realm of Gates gloomily. Suddenly, greyness gathered before him into a white-haired old man, who smiled at him. “You’re back from the Holy City?”

‘Mecantron’ looked at ‘Monster Viken’ and said, “How could anyone have barged into Mountain Paradise? Have you picked a good candidate, instead of knocking them out, transforming them, projecting into them and throwing them to me like you did to Sard?”

“Sard couldn’t infer the whole thing from the clues. Naturally, I could only throw him to you for you to ‘guide’ him. This time, it’s

different. Lucien Evans has the Sun's Corona. He could easily connect the clues after I directed Maskelyne to meet him. He didn't disappoint me, either." 'Monster Viken' grimaced. "Isn't it good? This partner is much more promising than Sard. The force behind him is also much more powerful."

"That's why I am concerned. Will the Congress of Magic retain the Saint Truth and allow us to spread faith after they remove Viken? I fear that they will covet Mountain Paradise, too..." 'Mecantron' was also gloomy. "Why didn't you project into his body to control him in secret?"

'Monster Viken' kept the mysterious smile. "I cannot see through Lucien Evans. There's something in him that scared me. That's why I didn't dare to project. Also, he has the Silver Moon's air. My projection would be removed when she arrives."

"The Silver Moon?" Asked 'Mecantron' in surprise.

The monster nodded his head. "How could the Silver Moon not peep at the mysteries of immortality when there was a chance to? The guy from hell was behind, too! It was because I hoped that as many people could see the mysteries of immortality as possible that I didn't bother them."

'Mecantron' was even more surprised. "The Lord of Hell was here, too?"

"Mecantron, do you think Lucien Evans came here on his own? Do you think that the legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic were so unlucky? Even Maskelyne managed to reach the Furnace of Souls in secret, but they ran into the Room of the Holy Spirit 'by accident'... Too many coincidences always suggest inevitability." The monster sneered. He knew a thing or two about what happened in the Temple of Spirits although he could not leave the Realm of Gates.

After a brief silence, Mecantron said coldly, "It seems that the legendary spectres in the World of Souls are not only related to the North Church but also conspiring with the Lord of Hell..."

“They have too many partners. ‘My’ student the Original Fire, the Hand of Paleness in the Congress of Magic, the Dark Congress, the Vladimir family in the Schachran Empire, the Mother God of the Earth Cult...” The monster said unconcernedly. “There’s no need to worry about the Congress of Magic. When Viken is weakened, I’ll be stronger!”

“Let’s wait and see. I’ll heal my wounds in Mountain Paradise first.” ‘Mecantron’ nodded and passed through the grey halls, pushing open the gate of Mountain Paradise.

Looking at the world of overwhelming holy light, and thinking about the monster out there, ‘Mecantron’ put on a vague smile of mockery.

Then, his thirty-six white wings were unfolded, and he flew back to the seventh floor under the welcome of the angels and the holy spirits. Kneeling next to the foot of the ‘God of Truth’, he fell asleep peacefully.

In his palace in Antiffler, Rudolf II opened his eyes, and the air around him changed. He remarked with mixed feelings, “I’m finally back to the peak of legendary now.”

Inside the Temple of Spirits, ‘Ivan’, the northern pontiff returned to the Room of the Holy Spirit in frustration, even more impressed by the horror of the monster. He walked into the coffin while he asked in confusion, “What exactly is it protecting? Mountain Paradise, like the Lich King said?”

The cover of the coffin was moved back, and the Room of the Holy Spirit resumed peacefulness. However, nobody discovered that the coffin of ‘Geno’ was empty.

After a while, a cluster of smoke snuck in without a sound and crawled into the coffin of ‘Geno’ without alarming anyone.

In the Holy City, after confirming that the Angel King would not return for now, Benedict III spoke to the red robe who was waiting inside his library. “Inform the Grand Cardinals that we are going to have an emergency meeting.”

Chapter 647: A Corner of the Age

At the end of the Month of Scorch (August), in the civilian district of Rentato...

After his parents went to work in a seafood company and a workshop of lamps respectively, Longman read the books that he bought recently alone at home, while he thanked the God of Truth and the arcanists from the bottom of his heart.

Ever since the wicked, radical clerics were banished by the Congress of Magic and the moderates came into power, the previously expensive books were much cheaper. Even the boy of a common household like himself could afford one or two books every couple of months. That was an unimaginable luxury in the past. As a lover of books, he felt that even the sun was brilliant and warm nowadays.

From Arcana Voice, Longman learnt that paper had been invented hundreds of years ago. After a long time of modifications, their price had been significantly lowered, and so was the printing technology. However, to monopolize knowledge and the channel of communication with the Lord, the radical clerics blocked the printing technology and encouraged hand-written copies, thereby keeping books at an extremely high price. Apart from the nobles and the great merchants, it was terribly difficult for the common civilians to learn words and knowledge. It was thanks to the secret dissemination of the Congress of Magic that the average knowledge level of Rentato reached this standard.

Now, times had changed. While knowledge was precious, it was not entirely unaffordable anymore, because the workshops and the major nobles are in dire need of laborers who had basic knowledge.

He browsed his books. It was a book that described the common creatures in nature with life-like illustrations. Longman, who had learnt to read from his father, was quite interested. His father had been promoted to be a middle-level manager of his company from a common worker. After that, his father had been taught how to read

as well as the knowledge about the fishing industry.

“Werewolves, kobolds, goblins, giants, barbarians, Dudu birds...” Reading the book, Longman felt that he was now in the great outdoors appreciating different creatures who shared similar parts but had their own fascinating idiosyncrasies. “It’s totally worth it to buy this book with my months of savings!”

Dum, dum, dum. Somebody knocked on the door, waking Longman up from the ocean of knowledge.

“Who is it?” He asked loudly, sitting straight and feeling rather anxious. I’m a boy alone at home. If it was a burglar, a thief, or a brutal ‘night watcher’ as described by ‘Arcana Voice’...

Dum, dum, dum. A male voice echoed as he continued knocking the door. “Open the door. I’m a mailman of the kingdom. You have a letter!”

Longman was immediately relieved, laughing at himself for listening to so many horror stories from Arcana Voice that he was apprehensive even during the day. Didn’t burglars, thieves and night watchers only appear at night?

Opening the gate, Longman saw a young man who was smiling gently. He was wearing a dark green suit and carrying a heavy bag. There were two letters in his hands.

“Your letters.” The mailman said with a smile.

Longman took the letters. He saw the delicate stamp on the envelope first. Those were among the first batch of stamps that the kingdom issued, on which the images of Her Majesty and Mr. Evans, as well as the amount, were painted.

“This stamp is beautiful. I need to cut it out for collection...” Thought Longman subconsciously. Then, he saw the sender, realizing that the letter was written by his aunt who was married in Paphos County. He immediately felt very happy. His aunt had always been closest to him before she was married. However, her husband worked in Paphos County. Although it was not very far

away from Rentato, correspondence hadn't been easy because they had few trustworthy friends who were willing to carry the letters for them. They often communicated on a yearly basis.

Now, everything was different. Longman saw the amount on the stamp on the envelope and discovered that he could afford one letter every month with his allowance.

Thank the Lord, thank Her Majesty, thank Mr. Evans, thank Prime Minister Russell, and thank the postal department of the kingdom... He drew crosses on his chest and read the second letter. His eyes were immediately widened. "Admission notification? The First Generic School of Rentato?"

Ah? Ah! I've been admitted!

Longman felt such enormous ecstasy that something seemed to have exploded inside his heart. He kept saying thank you to the mailman, his eyes turning blurry.

Since it was only experimental, the royal family and the Congress of Magic had established merely two generic schools in Rentato, which were named as 'First' and 'Second'. Therefore, since the tuition fees were affordable for civilians, too many people were dreaming to go to the two schools. The rate of enrollment was probably less than one percent!

Thankfully, Her Majesty had set up the fairest way of admission: the College Entrance Exam. That was how he could distinguish himself.

"I can finally study the real knowledge and learn the real arcana and magic..." Stunned, Longman found it impossible to calm himself down. Too many thoughts were rolling inside his head.

"Please sign here as confirmation. Leave your fingerprint if you can't write." Having delivered many admission letters today, the mailman had already been used to the situation.

Longman was finally back to himself. He took over the fountain pen, which was said to have been invented for the general public, from the mailman's hands and signed his name on the receipt

solemnly.

“Thank you, uncle, for bringing such a great surprise today.” Longman thanked the mailman sincerely when he returned the fountain pen.

The mailman smiled. “I feel happy that you are happy. After I have enough savings, I would like to go to the general schools, too. Chances are that we will be schoolmates in the future.”

His face flushing in excitement, Longman asked, “May the Lord grant your wish. Uncle, is it a tiresome job to be a mailman? You need to carry many letters and packages every day.”

The mailman replied with a smile, “It is a bit exhausting, but things will be better soon. We’re told that we will be given a vehicle named bicycle.”

“Bicycle?” Longman frowned in confusion.

After seeing the mailman off, he opened the admission letter eagerly and read it while referring to his father’s dictionary.

“The common tongue, basic mathematics, introduction to history, introduction to nature, common sense of magic, logic basics, emblem identification, body exercise... Those are the most elemental courses and are mandatory. Music, fencing, painting, documentation, introduction to electromagnetism, introduction to elements, psychological common sense, medical basics, semiotics, ancient magic languages, politics, economy... Those courses are for selection. I can choose the elemental knowledge of different directions according to my own situation in the third year of my generic education...” Longman read the contents of the courses and read their introductions carefully, envisioning his future.

“Am I going to be a secretary, a politician, a musician, a painter, a squire, a doctor, or an arcanist...?” Longman knew that he did not have the best magic talents. So, he considered arcanist as his last choice.

Without him knowing it, the day was already over. His parents

came home and saw the admission letter.

After reading the admission letter, Longman's father nodded slightly. "It's still too early for you to consider. You will only know what you are good at and what you are not after you start learning for real. Of course, I suggest you start learning riding, fencing, music, economy and fishing knowledge in the fourth year. After you join my company in the future, you will be able to become a manager very quickly with such knowledge and make friends with the nobles and big merchants. As for magic, you should know your talents very well."

He naturally hoped that his son could grow under his protection.

Longman's mother, however, didn't quite agree with him. "Alchemical workshops are the trend. Even though Longman is not talented in magic, he should learn more about magic and alchemy. It will be much more rewarding to be a manager of an alchemical workshop than to be one of a seafood company."

The two of them had a heated debate on the issue until Arcana Voice began.

Longman, who had been silent the whole time, sat in the square and listened to the program of 'Church Revelation', both excited and somewhat at a loss..."

"...After the exploration in the World of Souls, the legendary sorcerers have confirmed the existence of Mountain Paradise. They have reasons to believe that the God of Truth has fallen asleep, and that His power has been stolen by the pope!"

"...Speaking of the pope, we have to say something about his real identity. He is in fact Viken, the bloody, brutal legendary sorcerer from the ancient Magic Empire. He blended into the Saint of Truth and stole the God of Truth's power..."

"...Viken once trapped a city and cut the food supply so that the people inside would brutalize each other in one of his experiments. It is said that the cries and screams did not die out until half a month later. To this day, many ghosts are still lingering there..."

In a daze, Longman thought to himself, “Is the pope really an ancient sorcerer? There seemed to be similar theories in the past, but there are also other rumors...”

As more and more programs were broadcast, Longman gradually got rid of his concerns and focused on his favorite shows.

“...The Holt Magic College held the first ‘Flight Contest’ today. It’s a competition of speed and style. Some of the contestants are experts who count on their strength, and some are low-rank sorcerers who are good at controlling their staffs...”

A flight contest? Longman listened to the new program with great interest. It was a news channel that introduced the fun incidents in the Congress of Magic.

Hearing those interesting events, Longman was suddenly stunned. A voice seemed to be roaring inside his heart.

It’s true that I’m not talented in magic, but it does not mean that I’m not gifted at arcana! Mr. Evans said that one is capable of studying arcana as long as his spiritual power is enough to control the simplified alchemical items! The field that studies the truth of the world is just like mathematics. Magic talents are not a threshold!

The voice in his heart gradually became clear:

“My dream is to be an arcanist!”

.....

Inside the Kingdom of Electromagnetism, Brook had a paper in his hands. It was the paper on electron spin, which was submitted by Sprint and Annick. He was greatly inspired. When he constructed the wave function of the electron, he seemed to have overlooked the problems.

The quill in his hands moving nonstop, he found the correct path to build a new function.

The silver electric currents and dark magnetic field seemed to be

simmering impatiently.

Inside the Theater of Destruction, the collapse and destruction of the stars were suddenly frozen. Inside his magic tower, Oliver couldn't help but show untamable excitement, because he seemed to have found the correct wave function of the electron through mathematical approach.

The 'real world' surfaced, resulting in the changes in his cognitive world...

Lucien, on the other hand, was working on the integration of quantum mechanics and the special theory of relativity in his library.

Chapter 648: Problem

Inside the Kingdom of Electromagnetism, Brook had already stopped writing. Looking at the wave function on the paper attentively, he found it so elegant and concise, as if all the mysteries in the microworld were contained in it.

He did not suspect that his deduction was wrong, because the wave function, if solved, would yield a series of discontinuous solutions, or quantized solutions, which matched the data of a few experiments. Besides, he had the feedback from the real world. His broken and solidified cognitive world was rejuvenated, as if it would sprout and grow again very soon.

“Matrix mechanics, based on the perspective of particles and discontinuity, can solve many problems in the new alchemy. The wave function that is based on the perspective of waves and continuity looks promising, too. Are particles and waves unified on a higher level, like Lucien said? The microscopic particles such as electrons and photons are objects whose specific image we cannot construct accurately yet. We can only describe them with their qualities that can be determined, even though the qualities are so self-contradictory.”

Looking at the formulas on his paper, Brook thought about the question that was of paramount importance for him. To really grasp the wave-particle duality and resolve the nature of electromagnetic waves with it was his hope to reshape his cognitive world or even make one step further.

After the twists and turns and the mind-boggling experiment of electron diffraction, he more or less agreed Lucien’s explanation on the nature of the electron from a higher level, not sticking to the wave theory anymore.

Ding. The bell rang from his desk. Brook was suddenly back to himself. After a flash of light in his eyes, he heard Oliver’s voice. “Brook, you have finished the construction of the wave function of the electron, too?”

“Yes. Have you?” Brook guessed Oliver’s achievement from his tone of excitement and confusion.

Hearing Brook’s reply, Oliver smiled, “So, we completed it almost at the same time. That explains why the feedback of the real world was not as much as I imagined. A classic equation that definitely ranks on the top in the microworld did not help me break the current obstacles and touch the gate of top legendary. How is it possible?”

He sounded apparently relieved. The feedback from the real world almost made him suspicious of the importance, or completeness, of the equation.

Generally speaking, it was hard to decide if a theory was absolutely correct based on the feedback of the real world, because there would be feedback as long as it was closer to the truth than previously. Also, when confirming the correctness of a theory with the feedback of the real world, the cognitive world would also change accordingly. Therefore, when one tried a few contradictory theories, their head might be blown up if their attempt was closest to the truth the first time.

Oliver was suspicious this time because the feedback was much less than what he experienced in the past.

“Perhaps it is weakened for other reasons, too... We both have made an analogy based on the classic theories, before we simply construct an equation of electron waves without bothering the arcana significance and logic. It’s not until then that we turn back to confirm the correctness and look for the specific arcana significance. Therefore, before we give a full arcana explanation on the wave function, the feedback of the real world is probably reduced accordingly.” Brook analyzed the reason. He was rather satisfied about the wave function, but he was also very calm.

Oliver chuckled. “What more arcana significance can it have? Electrons are waves. Orbits and energy levels are just changes of vibrations. But of course, we cannot rush into any conclusion when we do not have any proof. We have to resolve the problems in the new alchemy as well as those about the hydrogen model with the

wave function, and we have to find out what quality of the electron wave function represents.”

He was very excited, but he did not immediately claim that his wave equation was more correct and closer to the truth than Lucien’s matrix mechanics.

“Since we inferred it independently almost at the same time, should we call the equation the Oliver-Brook equation?” Oliver proposed.

Brook frowned but then replied, “That’s not a problem.”

It was mainly because he remembered what ‘News of the World’ teased about such a way of naming: your name is my first name, and my name is your last name. He somehow felt that it was weird.

After the conversation was over, Brook tapped the table. “Matrix mechanics from the perspective of particles can also solve the problems in the new alchemy. It has also been extrapolated to a broader domain... Does it mean that the arcana significance of the wave function is different from that of regular waves?...”

“Regarding the wave function, I should write a letter to Fernando, Hathaway, Hellen, Vicente and, well, Lucien.”

He did not mention Douglas because he believed that Oliver would definitely write to him. He also believed that Lucien, who had proposed ‘wave-particle duality’, wouldn’t find the wave function unacceptable.

.....

Even though he had seen the picture of the cosmos, Lucien stuck to his original attitude in arcana studies and based everything on experiment data and observations. Since he had a broader vision than the other arcanists did, why should he take risks recklessly? Also, more importantly, such studies were also a process of learning and grasping. Lucien did not want to be at a loss if he did not have any references in the future.

His pocket watch ticked, reminding him that the dinner time had come. Natasha looked very vigorous now that her concerns were

gone. She walked in with two letters. "Lucien, letters from Mr. Brook and Mr. Oliver. It seems that they have made new progress."

After her job as a queen was over, Natasha often worked as Lucien's 'secretary' by helping him deliver letters and fetch experiment materials. Therefore, she could conclude many things based on the thickness of the envelope. However, Lucien often forbade her from entering the laboratory when he did the exacting experiments, because the accidents she caused were still fresh to him!

After opening the letter, Lucien smiled when he read the beginning.

"What's up? Is there something wrong with Mr. Brook's achievement?" Natasha scratched her chin and asked curiously. She hadn't reached the level to understand the paper on the wave function yet and merely made the deduction based on Lucien's countenance.

Lucien leaned back against the chair. Natasha put her hands on his forehead and massaged him, helping him to relax.

"Gold knights are truly strong." Lucien made fun of her.

Natasha raised her eyebrow. "I'm not using my full strength yet, or your brain would've been crumbled, spraying red blood and white brains everywhere."

"...Can we not talk about such a tasty subject in such a warm moment?" Lucien's lips twitched.

Natasha laughed. "As the wife of the Headcrusher, I believe that it is a regular subject. Right, you didn't answer my question. Is there something wrong with Mr. Brook's result?"

"No. It's a real great achievement." Said Lucien sincerely.

.....

A while after the exploration in the World of Souls, Douglas summoned the Highest Council for a meeting, ready to discuss the relevant issues.

Earlier, the reports that Fernando, Lucien and he submitted all intentionally left out the specific way that Thanos and Viken became a demigod. They merely said that Thanos and Viken turned into demigods by gathering faith and transforming into primeval devils through special magic circles without describing the details that they knew.

It was because they were worried that somebody in the Highest Council would walk on the disastrous path of primeval devils again. Therefore, the secret was kept to the three of them and would not be publicized to the Highest Council until Douglas or somebody else became a demigod on the path of arcana. By then, a bright road would be ahead of everyone. It was believed that few people would choose such a problematic approach. Even if they did, a demigod would be able to suppress them easily.

Lucien came early out of his habit, but the conference was empty and Klaus was nowhere to be seen. Generally speaking, he was the one who came earliest.

Watching that, Lucien sighed and felt gloomy.

After he sat for a while, grey-haired Raventi walked in. After Lucien proposed matrix mechanics and resolved many problems in the new alchemy, he finally became the new Lord of Elements through a ritual without any delay. Since the legendary class overlapped Hathaway's, he had a similar legendary title, 'Element Tide'.

"Congratulates, Mr. Raventi." Lucien rose and said.

Raventi nodded in greetings. "Without the changes you brought forth, I couldn't have become a legend so soon."

"Nobody can help a sorcerer who is unwilling to work and study to become legendary." Lucien subtly expressed his admiration.

Raventi shook his head. "I'm more glad at the microscopic world and the mysteries of matter that you bring than my own advancement."

As the members of the Highest Council came, the focus of the

discussion was moved on to the Oliver-Brook Wave Equation.

At this moment, Brook and Oliver, who had been talking on their way, walked in.

Douglas rose with a smile. "Congratulations on your groundbreaking achievement."

Brook said as calmly as before. "There's still a lot of work to do. Until we construct with the wave equation a new alchemy system that is different from what matrix mechanics presents, it is not exactly groundbreaking."

"In any case, it is a landmark in the studies of the microworld." Chelsea, the Moon Scholar, said excitedly. Having been tortured by the monstrous matrix mechanics for months, she couldn't have been more excited to get an answer from the wave equation that she was familiar with. "I've been studying the equation for days, hoping to figure out its everything."

Fernando also murmured. "Your research results are not half bad."

"Hehe. I also believe that it will provide a familiar, classic, concise and easy-to-understand system of new alchemy for the arcanists, as opposed to the complicated, enormous and abstruse matrix mechanics." Said Oliver with a smile. "Lucien, I'm not saying that your matrix mechanics is wrong, but it is too close to pure mathematics. It lacks real arcana significance and cannot let people learn it easily. It is said that 99% of the sorcerers in the Holt Magic College are cursing matrix mechanics."

"Also, the nature of everything is waves."

After the wave function appeared, the wave theory and the particle theory seemed to be at loggerheads again, but thanks to the idea that Lucien proposed earlier, the debate did not immediately begin. Hathaway and the rest of them did not say anything.

Sensing the look from a lot of people, Lucien smiled. "I have one question about the wave function. What exactly is its arcana significance?"

“It is the distribution function of electrons, as waves, in space. As for why electrons behave as particles, I have an idea and I will illustrate it with a paper later.” Said Oliver confidently and optimistically. “Lucien, do you have any other questions?”

Lucien smiled and said, “Not for now.”

Chapter 649: Premonition

Chapter 649: Premonition

Inside the conference room of the Highest Council...

After Lucien stopped, Vicente said, “Arcana has to be founded on the basis of comprehensible images. The things that are unimaginable and not understandable will only be complicated mathematics. So, Brook and Oliver, congratulations. This is the real foundation of the new alchemy and the best theory in the microscopic domain. Your work has let us return to the concrete ground again from the maze of matrix that wanders in midair without a foundation.”

“Nonsense. The real foundation of arcana is observability. The things that cannot be observed are pointless for us. Naturally, it is unnecessary to impose an image on them.” Fernando spoke of his new opinion with the dominance of a storm.

Lucien also added, “Applying the images in the macroscopic world to the microscopic domain recklessly violates the fundamental logic. Something seriously wrong may happen.”

“But in any case, electrons do behave as waves.” Oliver joined the debate.

The unusual view of many arriving demiplanes was about to happen again, when Douglas knocked the table slightly. “Let’s discuss the wave equation when the meeting is over and have a five-minute silence for Klaus first. We are going to let the Lord of Hell pay.”

Lucien closed his eyes and began to mourn in silence, hoping that his speculation on the nature of soul was correct. In that case...

Later, the Highest Council discussed the issues about the Saint Truth, Thanos and Viken and agreed with Douglas, Fernando and Lucien’s proposal to shake the foundation of faith and mislead Viken into thinking that the Congress of Magic hadn’t found his

secrets by broadcasting the half-real and half-false stories. In the meantime, the central intelligence would be kept a secret in order to persuade part of the Grand Cardinals, who might play a critical role at the right moment.

Because few issues could be submitted to the Highest Council, the meeting was over after less than one hour. Hellen, who had been studying all the time, suddenly raised her head. "If the new alchemy system based on the Oliver-Brook Wave Equation matches all the experiments we have so far and can address the problems we had, what will it indicate?"

It was rare for her to ask questions during the meeting. When they discussed Viken, she had unusually spared part of her attention to listen to it.

"If different theories can explain the same thing, it means that they should be equivalent on a certain level." Hathaway seemed to have considered it for a long time. "Since waves and particles are both the features and qualities of electrons, matrix mechanics and wave mechanics may be equivalent."

Douglas, Fernando, Chelsea and Erica all nodded. "We can try to prove it."

"I think mathematical approaches will be enough." Brook thought for a moment and also nodded.

Although Oliver thought it was possible, he was not very enthusiastic about it. In his eyes, matrix mechanics should be a special case of the particle nature in wave mechanics.

After a while, the members of the Highest Council left one another. Lucien and Fernando were the last.

"I think that Oliver's explanation on the arcana significance of the wave function has certain issues. There will be self-contradictions when he tries to address the atom model. Let's see how Oliver is going to explain the details." Said Fernando solemnly and thoughtfully.

Lucien nodded his head. "The explanation on the arcana significance of the wave function has to be based on experiment phenomena."

.....

At the beginning of the Month of Harvest (September), inside a classroom in the Holt Magic College...

Onore, Clark and their classmates waited for Mr. Ernesto to distribute the journals such as Arcana, Magic and Nature. On the podium stood Ms. Heidi, who taught 'Basics of the New Alchemy'. She did not look very well, and she looked down at her feet that were moving all the time, as if she were about to step on a bunch of ants.

"Ms. Heidi doesn't look very happy?" Clark said to Onore carefully. It was not because his eyes were keen but because Heidi was too obvious.

Onore shook his head. "How do I know? Perhaps she was criticized by Mr. Evans in the Atom Institution, or perhaps she had a fight with a friend. It's hard to say. It's not like we are changing new textbooks again, right?"

"Hehe. How is it possible? We should all be careful not to piss off Ms. Heidi." Clark reminded Onore.

Although Heidi had been trying to copy Lucien's teaching style, everybody had their unique characteristics. Gradually, she became known as the 'Smiling Devil'.

At this moment, Ernesto walked with a magic pouch of journals. Looking unusually weird, he said rigidly, "Claim your journals in order."

Having been familiarized with Ernesto after the electron diffraction experiment last time, Onore immediately guessed something after seeing his face. "Is there another disruptive theory or experiment?"

After taking over the journals, Oliver began to browse through them before he returned to his seat, and the very first paper on 'Arcana'

gave him the answer. It was ‘The Wave Equation of Microscopic Particles and the Nature of Quantum Mechanics’, written by Edwyn Brook and Oliver Constantine.

“The wave equation and the wave function...” Onore had no doubt that the wave function of electrons would appear after confirming the electron diffraction experiment, but he was still shocked when he really saw it. The concrete microscopic particles had a wave function! That was unbelievable!

No wonder Ms. Heidi doesn’t look well! He suddenly understood the reason.

After he was seated again, Onore sensed that the atmosphere was filled with quietness and vague depression, exactly like what he felt himself. The development in the past months was truly full of twists and turns. Everybody had been stumbling and could barely keep up with the changes.

Reading the paper in silence, Onore was gradually fascinated by it. The familiar, classic wave equation, the readily understandable calculations and concepts... They were so much simpler than the stunning matrix mechanics!

As he read on, Onore was so greatly touched that he almost shed tears. This is arcana! This is the foundation of the new alchemy! Mr. Brook and Mr. Oliver are so great! They have genius brains!

“What a classic and great wave equation! It’s much more vivid and easy to learn than matrix mechanics!” Somebody exclaimed subconsciously.

“Is it?” Heidi’s gloomy voice echoed in the spacious classroom.

The sorcerer who talked hurried to shut up, but he still said to himself, “Of course it is!”

.....

In the Moonsong League, in the Hand of Paleness, and in all the other places where sorcerers gathered, the atmosphere of being touched was spreading.

“Arcana is finally back to what it should be!” Having been savaged by the general theory of relativity and matrix mechanics, the sorcerers of the Moonson League almost thought to throw a party to celebrate it.

“Mr. Brook and Mr. Oliver have made time-changing contributions!”

“I hate that I cannot devote all my time to understanding it!”

Joaquin, their chairman, rubbed his eyebrow and said in mixed feelings, “Waves are exactly the basis of existence.”

Before, they were merely arguing whether or not light and electromagnetic waves were waves, but out of their expectation, even the fundamental particles that constitute matter were now waves. They had secured an unanticipated triumph.

“However, the particle nature of electrons and photons is also very obvious...” Jurisian poured a bucket of cold water on the chairman. “Also, it requires confirmations and deductions to see if a new alchemy system can be established based on the wave equation.”

Joaquin and the other sorcerers also knew it very well, because most arcanists who did not bear such an attitude had withdrawn from the stage of arcana, if not the stage of life, during the past ten years.

“In particular, Lucien Evans hasn’t offered any opinion on it.” Said Joaquin in a low voice.

His words immediately raised approval. Many sorcerer sorcerers mumbled in vague fear, “That head-crushing monster...”

Jurisian could only shook his head with a bitter smile at their trauma that was almost a conditional reflex now. “Let’s confirm whether or not the wave equation can explain the model of the new alchemy first.”

.....

Inside the Tower...

Bergner, the Prophet, was explaining certain questions about the general theory of relativity to Neeshka and Samantha.

Among the famous geniuses in Lucien's generation, Jurisian, Larry and Ulysses advanced into the senior rank after the special theory of relativity, Rachel made a breakthrough with her accumulations in the field of astrology and illusion, and Samantha also secured an advancement after applying the general theory of relativity to certain questions that she had in astrology.

Therefore, she attached great importance to the general theory of relativity. However, she had to consult her teacher a lot since she did not understand it very well. Neeshka, her teacher, hadn't understood the general theory of relativity fully, either. So, they often had to ask the help of Douglas and the Prophet or even write letters to Lucien.

"The Oliver-Brook Equation... Recently, a major change is happening in the microscopic domain every three months." The Prophet remarked in mixed feelings.

After the meeting of the Highest Council, the advance base for the exploration in the World of Souls had been moved back to Heidler city. It was now 'Absolute Defense' Ataman's turn to supervise the base.

Neeshka smiled. "The school of astrology should be focused on the general theory of relativity. Their heated argument has little to do with us."

"How so? Planets are made of microscopic particles, too." Samantha didn't quite agree with her teacher.

Bergner smiled and said, "I agree with Lucien's perspective of consideration. We cannot say that electrons are waves, and we can only say that they have the features of waves. Also, in the transition from the microscope to the macroscope, some weird factors seem to be preventing the uncanny status in the microscopic domain from being mapped to the macroscopic world. Therefore, the debate cannot affect the foundation of the school of astrology yet."

As he spoke, he was suddenly stunned. Something heavy seemed to have blocked the starry sky of destiny. It was certainly a premonition!

Could the debate in the microscopic domain really affect the macroscopic cosmos?

Why was his feeling even stronger than that?

Was something important going to be ‘destroyed’?

Chapter 650: Popularity

After Neeshka and Samantha left, Bergner, after a long preparation, began to perform divination on the matter.

Crack. The crystal ball in his hands fell to the ground with a crisp sound. Thankfully, as an item forged with magic, it was not destroyed.

Frowning hard, he looked at the crystal ball on the ground in disbelief, while he murmured to himself, “Why is this happening? Why is this happening?”

For the first time ever, he did not see any result from his prophecy. There was nothing but a mist, as if the future cannot be decided at all.

“What disrupted my prophecy?” After he calmed down, he began to consider other possibilities.

According to the theory of the school of astrology, the future was decided by all the statuses at present, and the inaccuracy of prophecies was because the prophets were limited and not as all-knowing as ‘Thanos Demon’. As a result, their prophecy could be blurry. However, in any case, as long as they were not giving a prophecy when they did not know anything at all, they would more or less see a corner of the future. He had never seen nothing but an obscure mist before!

Bergner believed that he had enough understanding about the debate in the microscopic realm to get certain fuzzy hints. However, things turned out to be out of his expectation. He couldn’t help but begin to consider other reasons.

.....

The Month of Gold (October) came as the hot weather faded away. The sorcerers in the Holt Magic College began to wait for the new issues of Arcana, Magic, Nature and other journals. After the few months, the magic apprentices who passed the College Entrance

Exam of Advanced Magic had mostly become sorcerers successfully. The ratio of advancement had reached a remarkable $\frac{2}{3}$.

It also increased the temptation of the Holt Magic College for the magic apprentices and the mysteriousness of the 'College Entrance Exam', as if it had become a standard to test if an apprentice could become a sorcerer.

Therefore, in the Douglas Magic School, in the magic schools of the branches, and among the magic apprentices, the books such as 'Simulated College Entrance Exams of Advanced Magic' and 'Evans' Secret Tests' became popular. Heidi, Layria, Alfalia and the girls made a huge fortune out of it.

Before the class of the special theory of relativity, Ernesto went into the classroom again and distributed the journals to the sorcerers. This time, he looked quite normal, if not vaguely delighted, because he finally did not have to study the painstaking matrix mechanics anymore!

His attitude of easiness informed the students that there was no disruptive content on the journals. Therefore, they opened them and began to read randomly. However, as they read on, Onore, Clark and the other students became excited and learnt what was on them greedily.

Two of the first three papers on this issue of 'Arcana' were Brook's, and the last one was written by Oliver. From the perspective of the wave equation, they resolved the problem of the hydrogen model, and their results matched various experiment data. They had established a new alchemy system that seemed entirely different than matrix mechanics. It was more simple, straightforward and easy to understand. Arcana was filled with charm again!

"This is real arcana..." Onore observed in a low voice. "Even in the entire realm of elements and electromagnetism, the Oliver-Brook Wave Equation will still be one of the top three classic equations. That's a really great accomplishment!"

Clark followed him. "I feel like crying when I see the wave equation. This is arcana, instead of a complicated mathematical

monster! In the past months, I only managed to preliminarily apply matrix mechanics but could not understand it at all. However, after studying the wave equation for only one month, I seem to have understood the internal structure of atoms and learnt that everything in the microscopic domain could be so fascinating!”

“Also, the wave mechanics that they established are based on the classic arcana theories instead of completely abandoning them. Math is only used as a way of thinking. Mr. Evans’ achievement is brilliant, but it is too brilliant for us the ‘normal people’ to imagine and understand.” His classmate next to him agreed.

Onore kept reading the paper while he said sincerely, “I’ll devote myself to that in the next year. I will study its mysteries every day. Huh. Mr. Oliver has proposed a theory to explain why electrons behave as particles. It’s called a ‘wave packet’?”

The theory was not very complicated. It claimed that many lines (waves) were jumbled in a certain way into a ball. Since those lines decayed fast when they spread out, they looked like balls in general. The bulging packets made the waves behave as particles.

Accepting such an explanation, Clark, as a supporter of the wave theory, was even more cheered up. He believed that it was the real truth of the microscopic domain that revealed the deepest law of the quantum world.

He was about to exclaim that the particle nature was included in waves, when he saw the papers of Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway and Hellen. They roughly proved that wave mechanics was mathematically equivalent with matrix mechanics, and they offered certain arcana changes that did not agree with the commutative law.

“...The two new alchemy systems are equivalent...” Clark couldn’t help but blurt out.

Onore had reached the part, too. “Douglas’ proof is the easiest to understand, but I don’t think it is very strict mathematically... If they are equivalent, are the wave feature and the particle feature also equivalent? Are the microscopic particles really a new object

that we haven't really recognized yet like Mr. Evans said, and we have to describe them based on the actual results instead of applying the previous concepts?"

It was not because he had understood the few papers, but because they all admitted that they were short of a strict mathematical method to prove the equivalence.

"Maybe." Clark said, somewhat in frustration. However, after the electron diffraction experiment, he was already okay with such an explanation, so he exclaimed cheerfully again, "Since they are equivalent, we only need to learn wave mechanics in the future and don't have to bother with the wretched mathematical monster anymore, right?"

"Of course!" The sorcerers around replied at the same time.

Clark smiled at Onore. "Last month, you said that the textbooks for the new alchemy would be changed, and I said that it was impossible. I need to apologize to you now. I was wrong, but I'm also very happy that I was wrong!"

"How many times have the textbooks changed?" Although delighted, Onore had the sense of suffocation when the changes were coming like a storm. In such an age, not working hard would mean being abandoned. They would never have a chance to catch up again.

Seizing the time before the class, they browsed through the journals, their eyes widened again. "The hypothetical model of electron spin?"

"Well, it explains the unusual splitting phenomenon very well, but the speed of spin on the surface is ten times the speed of light. That's in violation of the special theory of relativity!" Clark skipped the content and focused on the conclusion.

Exclamations echoed in the classroom. They found it hard to imagine that such a paper was published on 'Arcana' which was best known for its rigorousness. However, as they read on, they found another paper from Annick and Sprint. It handled the spin

problem with matrix mechanics, and the result was unquestionable. In the meantime, they saw Mr. Evans' paper on matrix mechanics regarding the spin problem. He predicted that a certain calculated value in an experiment was wrong based on the model and confirmed the correctness of spin by the way.

Of course, he also managed to explain the spin speed on the surface, so that people wouldn't be so against the spin theory.

Annick and Sprint's spin model was not lambasted partly because they only submitted it for review until it was handled with matrix mechanics, and it was supported by Lucien's paper; and partly because the focus of the arcanists' attention was wave mechanics that was glowing brilliantly immediately after it was born!

"In such a case, the four quantum numbers in Fernando's theory of incompatibility have all been found." Onore discovered that every paper in the journals in the past months could've ranked top in Arcana a decade ago. However, they were either behind or could only go to Magic or Nature right now.

Clark, however, thought of something else. "Mr. Evans has two papers. One of them is about spin, and the other is a complementation to Chloe statistics. Neither of them is about wave mechanics. Does it mean..."

They recalled what happened again and again in the past. Such silence seemed to be foretelling a horrible storm. When Mr. Evans published a paper on wave mechanics, would there be a torrential red-and-white rain again?

"Now that the two new alchemy systems have proved equivalent, I don't think it's a big deal..." Onore comforted himself optimistically, before he took a deep breath. "The correctness of wave mechanics is without a doubt right now, and the explanation of the wave function has been proposed by Mr. Oliver. It seems that the second Evans Prize in Arcana will go to them."

"They will also win the Silver Moon Medal and the Holm Crown Ring." Said Clark in admiration. "But why do you sound so jealousy, Onore? That's an achievement that only the grand

arcanists can accomplish!”

Onore shook his head. “I’m jealous of Mr. Annick and Sprint. Their hypothesis of electron spin has improved the current model of new alchemy. Even though they cannot get Evans Prize in Arcana, they will surely win a Silver Moon Medal and a Holm Crown Ring. To think that they are of similar ages to us...”

“That’s true...” Clark was at a loss for words. They were about the same age, but the students were still working hard to become middle-rank sorcerers in the Holt Magic College, whereas they already had hope to claim the highest honor of their field, not to mention that they had become middle-rank arcanists and sorcerers a long time ago.

If only I had a great teacher like theirs... He couldn’t help but thought to himself.

After the day of classes was over, Onore returned to his dormitory and picked up his journal, writing down what he felt after the day:

“...I’m getting a deeper and deeper feeling about the urgency and fast pace of the development of arcana. It’s like the mysteries of the world are suddenly surging out like a tide, dying the whole world of arcana and magic a glorious gold. One can never see enough of it... In such a gold and insane age, even a second-rate arcanist can achieve first-rate accomplishments!”

“...Wave mechanics is the most sparkling gem of the year, and the preliminary proof of the equivalence of the two systems of new alchemy seems to suggest that this year is going to end in peace.”

Chapter 651: The Open Stratagem

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In the Golden Cathedral in Aalto, Violet.

It was close to early evening. Led by Philibell, Gossett and the rest of the priests finished their Sunday pray. Without saying a word, Philibell stood up and went back to his living room. In the past, he would stay to preach or guide the priests.

“What happened?” asked a red robe confusedly.

Gossett shook his head, “No idea. It’s been a month that His Excellency’s been acting weird.”

“A month? Does this have anything to do with Arcana Voice? They say that His Holiness is Viken, the disaster sorcerer...” the red robe was rather apprehensive.

The low and middle-rank priests were already callous to the repeatedly playing rumor, as there was no solid evidence for support and the story even seemed a bit lame to them. However, for those senior-ranks who knew some of the hidden history and secrets of the Church, they had found that a series of details in this rumor in fact conformed to the history. Maybe there was truth to it.

Of course, there were all kinds of possibilities in history, and it was not difficult to make up a seemingly sensible story. Therefore, they did not treat it very seriously. However, when it was mentioned again, the red robe still felt quite concerned.

Gossett looked up and said seriously, “Yes... I remember that this has started after His Excellency attending the emergency meeting held by His Holiness...”

“I don’t see the relation...” said the red robe with the gloomy look on his face. It seemed that there were some bad associations going through his mind.

Gossett forced a smile, “Me neither. I mean... Any devout believer would feel upset hearing such slander.”

In Philibell’s living room.

Philibell, the Bright Angel, was sitting behind his desk lost in his thoughts while staring at the flickering candle. As the day was getting darker, his beard had been lit up by the candlelight.

Suddenly, the burning candle made a slight noise and then violently grew taller, reflecting the redlight onto Philibell’s face.

“Are you ready, Philibell?” The candle started “talking” in a hoarse voice, “This can help you recover the faith you’ve lost and send you a further step closer to the God of Truth. We don’t need you to do much, but just give us the key information when the key moment has arrived.”

Philibell looked gloomy. He slightly squinted his eyes and said to the candle, “There’s no way that you can ascend to Mountain Paradise. How can you know he’s the ultimate Lord just because of Sun King’s notes? I won’t believe you. And I will neither do what the Northern Extremist once did! This is unforgiven betrayal to Lord’s blessing!

The candle giggled, the candlelight flickering, “You called him his title, not his name, Philibell. You can’t lie in front of me. No matter what kind of past His Excellency once had and no matter where he came from, after he integrated himself into Mountain Paradise, he has become the true god, the ultimate existence that transcends all the demigods, the ‘Lord’ as you priests call him. Now he’s just in a temporary sleep, and the more followers he has, the quicker he’ll wake up. Philibell, are you going to betray the God of Truth like Benedict III?”

“Atlant, I know you play with people’s minds. But it won’t work on me. You shall go now, or I’ll turn on the divine circles here.” After a while of silence, Philibell said with determination.

The candle insisted, “Philibell, I can feel what you’re truly thinking. If you will, we’ll always wait for you to join. You will see. The

priests, including Richard, in Holmish Church will grow very fast in a short period of time, as our discovery in the Realm of Gates is beyond your imagination. We're now even a step further than those in the north. They haven't even approached Mountain Paradise."

Then the candle flickered, and the voice disappeared.

Philibell turned on the defensive divine circles in the Golden Cathedral silently, and his face looked rather gloomy. After the divine circles had all been activated and after he cast Blessed Realm, Philibell finally put on a mysterious smile. His pupils had pure light shining in them.

"Our bright future comes from the prosperity of the Church. His Holiness has made his generous offer, and we're not idiots to split on our own. Atlant, you have underestimated His Holiness so much..."

In a manor outside of Aalto.

Atlant closed his eyes. In front of him, there was a silver candlestick. At this time, the candlelight suddenly twisted and projected an unidentifiable figure on the wall.

"Who is it?!" Atlant suddenly opened his eyes and stared at the figure on the wall with great alert.

The candlelight flickered, twisting the figure, and the old voice came from it, "It doesn't matter who I am. What matters is the information that I am bringing to you."

"What?" Atlant was rather cautious, trying to figure out the intention of the unexpected "visitor".

The flame said, "I have a lot. I can tell you how to become a demigod, including how to ascend the legendary ranks, how to agglomerate the power of emotions, how to transform a body, what the specific magic circle is, and the secrets of forging the special divine items..."

"You're Benedict III... No, you're Viken..." Atlant's voice rose up. Fortunately, Atlant wasn't really here. In this room there was only

his golem clone.

The flame laughed, “I said it already that it doesn’t matter. What matters is if you want to ascend to top legendary and become a demigod!”

Atlant sneered, “So you think I’m an idiot? I will use the method given by my enemy?”

The flame twitched, “It’s okay if you don’t trust it, but I think you wouldn’t mind reading the complete material in this regard. You can always verify the method on your own, and I don’t need you to do anything for me.”

“What do you mean by you don’t need anything from me?” Atlant was a bit surprised.

The flame was a bit amused by Atlant’s reaction, “What do you have, Atlant? I’m just showing my mercy to you. Douglas, Fernando and Lucien Evans have found most of the secrets to become demigods, but they never decided to share them with you. I am different. I’ll tell you all.”

“So an internal conflict is what you want...” Atlant finally realized what Viken was doing, but he did not resist. It was just a golem clone here, so any conspiracy would not hurt him.

A fine string of flame reached Atlant’s head and started sending him the knowledge.

After a while, when Atlant finished reading the material, the fine flame string appeared. The candle also went off after leaving Atlant a low giggle. As it said, the candle never asked Atlant to make a promise to do anything!

“King of Calamities is indeed very generous...” Atlant finally released a long sigh. Benedict III had directly shared the secret of becoming a demigod with him completely without charge! It was supposed to be a great lure that could easily trigger legendary wars. However, now the secret had been dumped onto him like free potatoes in the field!

Although Atlant had known the secret, the chance for him to become a demigod was still very slim as there were still countless difficulties and dangers waiting for him in the front. But at least for now, he knows the only way to ascend to a demigod level!

Atlant had a rough idea what Benedict III wanted to do. Closing his eyes, Atlant could not help but read the secret over and over again, although he was well aware of the fact that what it meant. The secret was just too captivating for him to say no.

Just like Evans once said, this was an open stratagem, so no promise or contract was needed.

...

In the Month of Winter, the theory of wave mechanics had been added into Basics of the New Alchemy despite Heidi's great reluctance.

Mr. Ernesto from the dean's office walked in and announced two things: One was that the academy was going to take all the students to the northland for a practicum course to improve their adventure skills and comprehensive competency, and the other was that the latest issue of Arcana had been available.

The look on his face was rather cheerful. He had just got rid of the heavy rock bearing in his mind for a long time.

"Quite a thick one, isn't it?" Onore said to his colleagues. He had been obsessed with studying wave mechanics recently, and thus he believed that he had gained a deeper understanding of new alchemy.

Leafing through the journal, Onore realized why this month's Arcana had added extra volume. His Excellency Mr. Evans published a paper on it, which demonstrated the relationship between wave mechanics and matrix mechanics using strict math. The demonstration had proved that they were two different presentations of the same theory. Since the mathematical tool he used in this paper was quite rare in the previous studies, Mr. Lucien Evans further explained it. The method was from applying Tower

Geometry in three-dimension situation to more dimensions and even infinite dimensions. To differentiate it from Evans Geometric Space, it was called Evans-Levski Geometric Space.

In fact, if it had not been the effort made by Levski and other Tower arcanists in the previous years after Nature was established on Evans Geometry, Lucien's paper would have been much, much thicker. Because of their earlier stage studies, Lucien could use a good number of references instead of explaining everything.

But still, called Hilbert space on the earth, it was still this paper which officially established the status of it.

In the past years, the general theory of relativity had confirmed the value of Evans Geometry which was earlier deemed "totally useless", and Lucien's ideas had freed the Tower arcanists from the limitations from their own imagination and knowledge. Therefore, the development of mathematics had been rapid, and many arcanists had made their great contribution. They had stopped seeking for the practical significance of a mathematical model, as they were not able to and also they did not want to bother, instead, they were pursuing mathematics for its own sake.

Meanwhile, the progress in mathematics also helped them better understand the cutting-edge arcana theories. Their progress in magic was much faster than they had expected. Now, Levski had come close to the senior-rank!

"Mr. Evans's paper makes me dizzy." Clark rubbed his eyes.

Onore grinned, "Yeah, I know. But this paper had finally confirmed wave mechanics. We have nothing to worry about now."

He was in a very cheerful mood.

This cheerfulness was shared by most arcanists who had read this paper. Even those who preferred matrix mechanics and the feature of discontinuity had to admit the success of wave mechanics.

Chapter 652: Atlant's Struggle

At Cocus, the capital of the Duchy of Calais.

In the demiplane called Mind Garden connecting to the headquarters of Family of Sorcerers, daylight was constantly changing in a mysterious pattern, as sophisticated as the human mind.

Atlant, the Eye of Curse, walked on the path through the garden, in which the flowers were half blooming and half dying. His eyes closed tight, and the look on his face constantly changed just like the light in this space.

He kept asking himself the question: Whether he should go and find Douglas to ask him directly why they were hiding the secret of ascending from him.

Atlant knew that Viken was the master of fiddling with human mind, and he knew what Viken was trying to do. The most powerful toxin in this whole thing was not anything superficial, but hiding in the secret itself. As long as Atlant chose to follow the secret, sooner or later, he would stray away from the Congress of Magic because of the difference in their beliefs and paths. At that time, Viken, with his powerful resource of faith, would be the only one who Atlant could turn to.

After all, the Congress of Magic believed in the power of arcana and using arcana they would overthrow the Church. There was no chance that they would support a powerful religion. The moderators that had been split multiple times and were retained as state religions were the most they could stand.

Viken had sent Atlant poison, and directly told him so, but Atlant could not say no. Through the countless years that he had been living, Viken had the vicious wisdom which had made many legends fall and produced the Saint Truth.

In fact, from the conversation once he had with them, Atlant knew why Douglas, Fernando, and Lucien Evans chose to hide the secret.

The path was full of unpredictable dangers and potential risks, and could very easily turn one into a demon whose emotions were totally out of control. Also, the secret would encourage the development of a new religion or even many religions, which would be a great harm to the spirit of arcana.

Broad-minded and visionary as Douglas, he would not hide this secret for his own interest, especially when the general theory of relativity had brought him hope to ascend to the demigod level.

Fernando was known for his short temper, but also for his passion for arcana and for the truth of the world. Even though Fernando had known the way, he probably would not want to try it at all.

As for Lucien Evans, it was only a matter of time for him to reach the level of demigod, and his general theory of relativity had given him a great boost. He was now already a level-two legendary in his late twenties, and he was the one who had put forward a series of subversive theories which had formed the two major pillars of the current arcana system – the theory of relativity and new alchemy. A promising young man like him would not care about using this method.

A few weeks after Lucien came back from his adventure, Lucien had reached level-two legendary. The status that Viken had once put him in and the thoughts triggered by the Mysteries of Immortality had been a great help to him. This had also set a new record in the history of the congress – Before Lucien, it only took Lucien a year to reach this level.

Lucien was not planning on reporting this to the congress. However, since this time their findings in the World of Souls were incredible, they had all been awarded with the different legendary magic rituals. According to their wish, Erica and Vicente could pick two, Fernando and Douglas five, and Lucien ten. When he was there to choose the legendary rituals he wanted, Lucien on the way told Hellen his progress.

Atlant had run through his analysis of Douglas, Fernando, and Lucien Evans's intention. He released a sigh as he had decided not to ask. The answers would be the same just as what he expected,

but in turn, they would ask him where he got the information and suspect his betrayal.

He could not help thinking that greed was indeed the origin of all the sins.

If it had not been his greed, if he had not been controlled by his desire, he would have confessed in front of Douglas and suggested them to make the access requirement clear among the Highest Council. But now...

At this time, Erica, the Master of Transformation, came to visit him to ask how things had been going with Philibell.

“It’s a bit complicated. It seems that Viken has told him something or made a good offer to him, so he refused me.” said Atlant honestly. As the authority in illusion and mentality, he was always the leader in these kinds of tasks.

Erica said seriously, “Such an old monster... We didn’t expect this.”

“You can’t kill such a monster, so his vision is much, much longer than ours. He sees through time.” said Atlant, a bit absent-minded.

So far, the secret had brought him so many concerns and worries, so Atlant dared not to hurry. He had decided to do some secret experiments first to get some more information for this.

.....

On the seventeenth floor of the magic tower of Allyn, in Heredity Laboratory, Felipe, wearing his long, black coat, was reading the latest issue of Arcana with a cup of hot water in his hand. His face still had the same sick look as usual.

Felipe took a sip of the hot water. It seemed that Lucien-Levski geometric space had been confirmed in the microscopic domain, and the two alchemical systems were the different aspects of the same model. He had been closely watching the development of the micro-world, as many of the research topics related were electromagnetic waves, electromagnetic fields, and special elements. These all had to do with the constitution of the human

body. Therefore, he had also been working hard on it.

However, after matrix mechanics was born, the microscopic domain seemed to be getting more and more unfriendly. Although the arrival of wave mechanics more or less helped, but the great challenge from mathematics would still bring bad headaches to those arcanists who weren't as good at it. Felipe had to admit that the paper was even a bit tough to him.

Among necromancers, Felipe was known for being good at mathematics, and this was why he was making progress so fast. However, in the recent two years, his pride had been through a bad setback. The papers published on Nature talking about the general theory of relativity, matrix mechanics, and Lucien-Levski geometric space started appearing to be so abstruse.

"I can't stop here. Mathematics and the microscopic domains are of great importance to cell and heredity study in the future... or I'd fall behind." Felipe murmured with a concerned look on his face, reminding himself.

He once thought that once a good magnification spell became available, the secret in cells and heredity would reveal themselves in front of him. However, it had been a long time but Felipe was not making much progress. He indeed had found chromosomes and guessed that they were related to heredity, but that was it.

He knew it clearly that without the support from mathematics and other arcana findings in the school of element and electromagnetism, his study was not going anywhere. To find what he had been seeking for, he had to either wait for other people to do the preliminary studies, or do them on his own.

Therefore, while his cell research was not bringing him much, the other two studies on the integration of spirits and undead creatures had improved his magic level by one circle to the eighth.

After reading Lucien's paper, Felipe turned to read the studies done by Hathaway and Hellen on crystals, which had more or less inspired him before.

A while later, he stood up and walked in his own exclusive lab. He saw the many plants, red-eyed rats, and the moth boxes.

Magnification spells not working, Felipe had to work more on the observation of plants, animals, and insects. However, observation took a long time.

Sensing the noise, the rats in the lab started screaming, and the moths flying up and down in the boxes. Only the plants remained silent.

Felipe rubbed his forehead, trying his best to stop himself from destroying them all. The anger burnt his guts.

Why he had to deal with them all day long?

He was neither a farmer nor a butcher!

.....

In Atomic Universe, after the everyday practice, Natasha went back home and saw Lucien in the chair, just sitting there.

“Not working on your spells?” Natasha asked.

She knew that after reaching level-two legendary, Lucien had been working on constructing the three legendary spells in his soul: Luxury Cracking, Abrupt Magic Reverse, and Mental Fulmination.

Lucien smiled, “Nope, just thinking.”

“So what is it? You seem to be struggling.” Natasha pulled a chair and sat down. Her eyes looked into Lucien’s eyes.

Lucien paused a second and then said, “I was trying to figure out the arcana theory supporting Thanos’ and Viken’s demigod power, how their power could be explained. If I can figure this out, their weaknesses will be exposed, and then we can truly kill them!”

“When they became demigods, there was no arcana, so the only clues might be the magic circles and rituals...” said Natasha hesitantly. She wanted to help, but she did not understand the

theories in the world of arcana. “Can demigods be truly killed though?”

Lucien shook his head, “They have their own limits. Nothing is truly eternal. So I’m thinking. If we cannot find the way, even if we kill Viken, he will always be able to come back from the river of fate. At that time, such a shameless demigod will become a great threat to the congress, to the kingdom, and to those we love and care about. It’ll be a sheer disaster.”

“This is indeed a problem, but the South Church is still going to last for a while... a long, long time, I should say.” Natasha comforted him. After knowing that their Lord was in fact Thanos, her belief had become totally abstract. She had the respect to the ultimate existence in the universe, but not to a specific god.

Lucien suddenly said, “Maybe one day, my ‘theory’ will turn my friends into enemies and disappoint my teacher and students...”

Although Natasha did not understand why Lucien would say so, she still grinned, “It’s okay. I’ll be there with you, as long as you’re okay that I don’t even understand your theory.”

Lucien smiled. His hand was on Natasha’s hand, fingers crossed.

.....

Holding his paper, in the early morning, Lucien was walking along the corridor in the magic tower of Allyn. It was still a bit dark when he pushed open the door of Fernando’s study.

It was bright in the study. In comparison, the study and the corridor seemed to be two different worlds.

Chapter 653: Determinism

Dum, dum, dum. In his library, Fernando heard the slow door knocks.

“You’ve come so early?” Fernando gazed at Lucien with his slightly dirty, red eyes, with subconscious vigilance about his abnormality.

Lucien lowered his head and smiled. “When I finished the paper, it happened to be sunrise, so I went here straight away.”

“What paper?” Fernando had an even stronger sense of danger, which did not come from his Host Star of Destiny but from the multiple lessons in the past. “Is it disruptive?”

Lucien thought for a moment and nodded his head. “Yes. However, it is only based on the observation of tremendous experiment results and not strictly proved. The possibility can’t be ruled out that it will be disapproved or included by other theories that include those phenomena in the future.”

“Bring it here.” Fernando was relieved. In such a case, until decisive proofs appeared, even the most revolutionary theory could not blow up his head.

Lucien presented his paper, and Fernando looked awful after merely reading the title.

“‘A Probabilistic Explanation of the Wave Function’.” He read the title of the paper aloud one word after another and vaguely guessed what it was about. He somehow understood what the electron diffusion and diffraction experiments he worked on recently indicated, and why Oliver’s explanation of the wave function did not match certain experiment results.

Opening the paper, Fernando read on without a word. The atmosphere around was more and more depressing, as if a real storm was about to arrive.

Suddenly, he raised his head when he hadn’t finished the paper yet.

With electricity flashing in his red eyes, he said dangerously, "Are you suggesting that the wave function is not a wave in the regular sense, but a wave of probabilities probability wave?"

Lucien looked back at his teacher's dangerous eyes fearlessly. "Yes. By observing tremendous experiment results and introducing Chloe statistics in molecular movement, we can describe the wave function in such a way: it is an indication of the probability that the electron appears in a certain location."

Fernando seemed to be holding his fury back. "But its location is fixed on the receiving screen. The probability is 100%!"

That was without a doubt. Every arcanist had seen the fluorescent points on the screen that were stimulated by the electrons. The undeniable experiment phenomenon suggested that the location of the electrons was absolutely certain.

Understanding his teacher's mood very well, Lucien said solemnly, "It's like when we toss a coin without knowing any external circumstances. During the whole process, we can say that the result may be heads and tails. However, by the time it hit the ground, the result will be determined, never to change anymore. Naturally, the probability is 100%. What we are discussing is the electron before observation, not the electron whose result has been determined after observation."

Fernando found it easier to understand now. More or less eased, he grasped the key point. "Before observation? After observation? Then, according to your explanation, until we observe them, the electrons may appear in any location in space, except that the probability that it appears in some locations is higher than in others?"

He couldn't imagine the electron's form of existence at all now!

Fernando could accept the coin without any resistance, because it rolled in midair all the time, which entailed the different results when it hit the ground, but what about the electron? If the wave function described probabilities of location, the electron might appear anywhere. Did it mean that the electron might be in two

places, or even all the places, at the same time?

That was more preposterous and unbelievable than any magic!

Up until so far, except for the demigods that he was unaware of, nobody could create such magic and let themselves exist in a similar form!

Lucien made an analogy. “Until we observe it, the electron is like an illusionary cloud that does not have any entity. It spreads throughout space and exists everywhere as a superposition of all possibilities. The thicker part of the cloud is the location where it is more likely to appear, but it doesn’t mean that the electron will surely appear there after observation.”

“Until we observe it, the electron is something we cannot imagine. It is a self-contradictory but unified monster with the wave-particle duality. Therefore, we cannot imagine its status with our original concepts, which is utterly meaningless. We can only describe it with the experiments that can be strictly verified.”

Fernando kept his mouth shut, as if he wouldn’t stop himself from roaring if he were to open it.

Lucien went further. “As a matter of fact, master, you must’ve observed that, after we modified the magic circles and reduced the number of electrons launched at one time, the first thing we would see was not the image of diffraction, but an assortment of messy fluorescent points. The image of diffraction only came into being when the number of electrons grew. Why was that?”

“It was because the destination of a single electron after it was diffracted was absolutely undeterminable; it was only a probability. Therefore, when electrons were too few, they would be disordered, but when there were enough of them, they would show the probabilistic distribution in general. There would be more electrons in some places and fewer in others. That’s how the image of diffraction was formed.”

“It’s like when we toss coins ten times, it’s impossible for us to predict how many times they are going to show heads, but if we

toss coins hundreds and thousands of times, the times that they show heads should be half of the whole!”

“If one day we can modify the magic circle to the point that it can shoot only one electron at a time, the result will be even clearer.”

“Probability, probability!” Fernando’s face was so twisted as if he were going to eat probability.

He did not need Lucien to lecture him on the common sense of probability, which was one of the fields he was best at as an authority of thermodynamics. He remembered the electron diffraction experiments he did recently. It was true that the spots of light were messy until there were enough electrons.

Such a clear picture shivered his hands. A wind blew around him, turning the pages in the library with multiple loud noises. “Until they are observed, electrons are a cloud of probabilities spreading throughout space? After they are observed, they are matter with a fixed location? What happened during the observation?”

Lucien ignored the wind and spoke as calmly as if he were giving a death sentence. “The wave function collapsed. The overwhelming cloud of probabilities collapsed into a tiny spot with a fixed location. Observation caused the collapse of the wave function. As to what form the electron existed before the observation, it has nothing to do with us and is pointless!”

“Observation caused the collapse of the wave function?” Crack. A lightning struck the library and destroyed a statue. Fernando rose abruptly and glared at Lucien. “Our observation made the electrons change their form?”

Lucien nodded his head. “Master, what is our observation based on? We see things because of the reflected light, and we hear things because of the vibrations in the air. In the microscopic realm, even the slightest means of observation, like photons, will interfere with the electrons. That is to say, our observations on the microscopic particles will inevitably cause them to change.”

“The interaction of microscopic particles?” Fernando looked better

and basically understood why observation caused the collapse of the wave function. As for the incomprehensible and unimaginable 'cloud of probabilities', he decided to leave it alone and focused on the key of Lucien's explanation. "When we toss coins, we can predict the result correctly after learning all the external conditions, so it is not the real probability but a false probability. When there's a cause, there's a consequence. All the initial statues strictly and solely determine the final outcome. This is the foundation of the school of astrology and the foundation of magic!"

"Is the probability of the electrons also a false probability, because they are under the influence of the external conditions that we haven't discovered yet?"

His voice was somewhat trembly, and more and more signs of a storm appeared in the library.

Lucien shook his head firmly. "At least so far, there are no phenomena that indicate the influence of external conditions. We can only say that probability wave is an intrinsic nature and quality of electrons!"

"Say again!" Fernando finally roared with a thunderstorm that created what appeared to be doomsday in the library.

Arcana and magic were so fascinating, and so many generations of sorcerers and arcanists devoted their talents and life to the exploration of the truth of the world, because they believed in the fundamental law of this world, under which everything operated strictly, like how the sun rose and set, how the celestial bodies moved, how it rained, and how elements reacted with each other. As long as they figured out the fundamental law, they would be able to grasp all the phenomena!

However, Lucien's probabilistic explanation seemed to be laughing at their exploration, because the nature of the law of the world was 'probabilities'? No matter how many rules and patterns they found, they could only predict that the odds that electrons appeared in this place were greatest but could not accurately describe where they would appear.

It had denied the foundation of the prophecy in the school of astrology, as well as the foundation of arcana and magic that explored the law of the world!

Pointing at the paper, Lucien looked at his roaring teacher solemnly. His Elemental Skin had been automatically triggered by the lightnings. "I have already put the conclusion in my paper."

Fernando lowered his head and saw one part of the paper:

"In the past, everybody believed that, as long as all the factors at present were known, it would be able to rigorously infer, or determine, the result of an event. When there's a cause, there will be a corresponding consequence, and vice versa. The arcanists respected the rule as determinism, or the law of causality."

"I prefer a more strict definition. The real law of causality is the law of causality on the timeline. The cause must be before the consequence. Therefore, the previous law of causality should only be called determinism."

"Now, what I want to say is that something may be wrong with determinism, because certain processes are probabilistic and irreversible..."

"Something is wrong with determinism and the law of causality?" Fernando glared at Lucien with his stormy eyes and roared amidst the thunders. "Are you telling me that the trajectory of the sun is probabilistic?"

BOOM!

"Are you telling me that our very existence is probabilistic?"

BOOM!

"Are you telling me that, even though we have constructed a magic model inside our soul and grasps its every detail, it will still be a probabilistic process when we perform magic?"

"Absurd! Ludicrous!"

BOOM!

In the rumbling thunderstorm, a vast universe appeared behind Lucien, in which the planets were made of protons and neutrons in different colors. The satellites around them, on the other hand, spread throughout the cosmos and existed everywhere, but when observed closely, they were fixed in one point.

BOOM!

The Thunder Hell mixed with the Atomic Universe, Lucien looked back at Fernando without wavering, before he said gravely:

“At the very least, determinism must die when it comes to the microscope!”

Crack. A thick bolt of lightning pierced out of the window and spread to the sky outside.

Chapter 654: Dice

The projection of the Atomic Universe was deep and profound. Elements were dissecting and particles were gathering all the time, presenting a superposition of destruction and creation. It did not collapse even when it was faced with the Thunder Hell but created a bizarre view inside the narrow library together with it.”

Fernando was briefly stunned. “You’re almost level-three legendary... The feedback of the real world because of the probabilistic explanation of the wave function?”

He still remembered Lucien’s solemn face when he declared that ‘determinism must die’.

“Yes.” Lucien nodded his head and took out two papers. “Together with ‘A Probabilistic Explanation of the Wave Function’, they constitute the foundation of quantum mechanics. That is the basic law of the microworld.”

“‘A Heuristic Narration on the Uncertainty Principle’, ‘The Commutative Principle of Waves and Particles’...” Veins bulged out of Fernando’s forehead when he read ‘uncertainty’, which reminded him of ‘probability’, a concept that should be sent to hell!

“...A pair of non-commutation values cannot be determined at the same time. If you know one of them accurately, the other will definitely be uncertain. For example, if you completely grasp the speed and mass of an electron, you will lose track of it and cannot discover it at any location...”

The first paper was on matrix mechanics that Fernando was familiar with. However, apart from a mathematical interpretation, Lucien also gave specific arcane significance as a response to the arcanists who had been criticizing matrix mechanics for its lack of actual significance.

However, Fernando would rather the arcana significance did not exist!

That was because it denied their effort to explore the world again. In the end, we will never learn the specific information of an electron no matter how hard we try? Grasping one's quality accurately will inevitably result in the uncertainties of the other quality?

The uncertain, probabilistic microscopic particles were the cornerstones of the matter that constructed the whole world. So, matter was also uncertain and probabilistic? Made of matter, were people uncertain and probabilistic, too?

It was almost the most absurd and hilarious theory?

Thinking for a moment, Fernando said gloomily, "It is caused by observation? Microscopic particles are too small and can easily be disturbed, so all our observation will cause them to change. That's why we cannot grasp the value changed by the other value when we determine it?"

He could more or less accept such an explanation, because it would mean that the two values could still be measured, and the world would still be observable, not full of probabilities as Lucien described!

Thinking for a moment, Lucien sighed, "My conclusion is inferred through mathematical approaches based on the premises. That is to say, nothing else is involved. So, the uncertainty principle is an intrinsic quality of the microscopic particles that has nothing to do with observation methods. As for why they show such a quality, we will still need to work on it."

Fernando's face had blushed a long time ago. The veins on his forehead were protruding, and the wind blew even faster. The dark and depressing atmosphere had completely blocked the bright rays of light.

Finally, he managed to contain himself and began to read Lucien's last paper. The first part of the paper made him feel better, because it was the tale that Lucien described before, about the blind who touched the dragon! Since the microscopic particles could not be perceived for real, they could only be described by the experiment

results, even though the results were contradictory to each other.

However, Lucien then described the uncertainty principle as a fundamental law caused by the wave-particle duality with the notion: when the particle feature was more obvious, the wave feature would be gone, and vice versa. They were also a pair of non-commutation values.

The three papers constructed a self-consistent logic explanation that revealed the law of matrix mechanics and the microscopic domain, but such a law was definitely not something Fernando would like to see!

Boom!

Thunder that was countless times louder than just now burst out. Fernando stared at Lucien in the eyes, with electric arcs bouncing in his pupils. The terrible view of arriving chaos even appeared in his left eye.

Lightning struck the library and destroyed the bookshelves.

“If the initial statuses cannot strictly determine the subsequent development of matters, and if the microscopic domain is full of uncertainties, our world will be even more chaotic and disordered than Abyssal Maw. It’s impossible for us to live and consider!”

A torrential rain poured down, but it was eclipsed after it entered the vast universe.

Lucien seemed to be standing at the center of the boundless Atomic Universe. He said in a low voice, “The determinism in a broader sense met difficulties in the N-body problem a long time ago. As for the microscopic domain, it’s a place where the original concepts have to be abandoned. The uncertainties in the microscopic domain do not mean the uncertainties of the macroscopic world.”

The N-body problem was an astrophysical notion. Its simplified version was the three-body problem. To wit, in a system made of three planets, because of their complicated influences on each other, it was in fact impossible to calculate their accurate

trajectories. One could only get the solutions of certain moments in certain parts, which was in violation of determinism. However, in the school of astrology most believed that it was only because the current mathematics were not developed enough yet.

“Why are there so many differences between microscope and macroscope?” Fernando roared even more terrifying than the thunder.

Surrounded by the elemental planets, Lucien replied, “That’s exactly what we need to work on.”

“You don’t know anything, and everything needs to be worked on, and you are bold enough to raise such a theory?” Fernando was even more infuriated, which had caused the weather changes around. Hellen, who was supervising the Allyn magic tower, had noticed the anomaly and informed Douglas and the other grand arcanists, fearing that she might not be able to get things under control on her own.

Lucien stepped forward in the profound projection of the universe. “This conclusion is based on the experiments so far. It matches the other theories and phenomena in the microscopic domain most!”

“Even if it is wrong, it should not be disapproved by the obsolete theories but by the new experiments!”

As he spoke, Lucien pushed his monocle.

“Master, calm down first. Devise an experiment to falsify it.”

Fernando understood that it was only Lucien’s explanation, in which only the uncertainty principle was inferred rigorously. Therefore, he managed to get his emotions back under control after a few breaths, before he declared aloud.

“I can’t and I will never accept your theory. I can’t agree that our world is built on dice!”

The thunderstorm stopped, but the wind was still blowing, exactly like what was on Fernando’s mind. It was even more depressing for Lucien than the previous doomsday view. “Has my teacher, who

always supported and protected me, taken the other side on this 'path', too?"

At this moment, Hellen walked in and asked in suspicion, "What happened here?"

Douglas, Brook, Hathaway, Oliver and Vicente arrived in one minute. If Fernando and Lucien had a fight, the whole Allyn would probably be destroyed.

Fernando snorted and pointed at the paper on the desk. "Copy them and read them for yourself. Remember, it's still only Lucien's dream talking and must not be taken seriously!"

Even Douglas was more or less scared when they saw the papers on the desk. After hearing Fernando's explanation, and seeing that he was still standing in one piece, they finally copied the papers and browsed through them.

After a long time, the library became dark again, and a cosmos where planets collapsed and destruction enshrouded everything. Oliver said coldly, "Absurd. This is utter nonsense! This is entirely different from the world in reality! It can only exist in dreams!"

The magnetic field twisting the surroundings with the dancing electric currents, Brook also said solemnly, "We cannot observe the uncertainties of matter in reality. It is safe to say that, if we can observe them, it will mean that our very existence is ridiculous and contradictory to it!"

Boom!

The noise of collapsing were even more horrifying than thunder!

In the library, more and more complicated, unbelievable views surfaced.

Clear, delicate and translucent snowflakes dropped, bringing in unimaginable frigidness, mixed with Hellen's intermittent murmur, "Experiment results... Determinism... Prophecies are probabilistic... Matters are probabilistic... The world is also probabilistic?" Even she could barely control her own feelings and emotional changes

anymore.

Spots of elements blossomed like colorful flowers, which gathered into a torrent. Indifferently, Hathaway read the paper, her eyes unfocused, as if she were looking at the experiment data in her laboratory far, far away. “Probabilistic? Then, all the laws will be wrong...”

A cold and silent desert, with monuments standing everywhere, arrived. The two needle-like spots of redness jumped intensely on Vicente’s face, as he said, “If the wave function of electrons is probability wave and a superposition of all their possible locations, something terrible will happen. It will result in the loss of objectivity and actuality, and we have never observed such terrible things in reality yet. At the very least, we exist here for real.”

A hazy mountain and a rippling lake that were as beautiful as the real world’s appeared, pacifying all the weird views except for the electric currents.

Under countless brilliant stars, Douglas was unusually rigorous. “We believe in arcana instead of gods because it encourages us to observe and consider things with the law of causality. We believe that a unified law is behind all the natural phenomena, which influences different things with its variations. The foundation of everything I said is the reasonableness and comprehensibility of the world.”

“Even though all the observations so far are probabilistic, I still maintain that a definite cause, not an intrinsic quality, leads to such probabilities.

“Lucien, the truth of the world is no dice!”

As the starlight dangled down, the dark shadow of gravity caused heavy depression, resulting in the reduction of space.

“That’s right! The truth of the world is no dice!” Oliver shouted, almost losing his cool and turning into ‘roaring Fernando’.

Brook also nodded in approval. “The truth of the world is not dice!”

“Do you hear that? The truth of the world is not dice!” Fernando roared again.

Together with their declaration, the destructive storm, the collapsing planets, the twisted magnetic field, the lighting bolts and the curved space burst out again.

BOOM!

“...The truth of the world is not dice!”

In the roars, the sentence came at him like Light of Judgment.

The Atomic Universe appeared again, and Eternal Blaze generated by fusions in the infinite space drove away the depression and darkness.

Standing at the center of the illusionary universe, Lucien shook his head. “Mr. President, master, Mr. Brook, Oliver...”

After a brief pause, he fought back with an even firmer voice:

“Don’t stipulate what the truth of the world is and what it is not!”

Chapter 655: New and Old

Chapter 655: New and Old

“Don’t stipulate what the truth of the world is and what it is not?”

Hearing Lucien’s firm declaration, Douglas, Fernando and Brook fell into brief silence. It was true that just because they believed the truth of the world was not dice did not mean that it was certainly not. Their thoughts were only their own ideas. They were not the spokespeople of nature after all.

After ten seconds, Douglas heaved a sigh. “I’ll prove that the truth of the world is not dice with experiments. In fact, has it ever occurred to you that the cloud of probabilities does not exist at all? What the wave function indicates is the community of electrons that matches such probabilities, but a single electron. They do not exist everywhere but have a fixed route that is closely related to the probabilistic distribution. They are only in a disordered state after passing through the monocrystal because we cannot observe and confirm them.”

He reflected on himself although he was unwilling to admit Lucien’s probabilistic explanation and uncertainty principle. It was inappropriate to mistake the truth he believed in for the real nature of the world. Instead, he should prove that Lucien’s theory was wrong by finding its self-contradictions or with strict experiments. That was the right arcana attitude.

Therefore, he proposed his opinion based on his impression after reading the paper.

The Land of Truth was gone, and so were the other unusual views. Lucien also canceled the Atomic Universe and replied solemnly, “Mr. President, ignoring the contradictions of your speculation to many deductions, we can find out whether it is correct by the double-slit experiment.”

“If the electron has its own trajectory like the real particles, it will only be able to pass one slit at a time and cannot appear in both,

and whether or not the interferometric fringe will show solely depends on the distance between the two splits. So, if the double-slit experiment with electrons works, how will the electron know exactly the distance between the slit it goes through and the other slit, thereby asking itself to land in one area instead of the other?"

It's like a maze which had seven entrances that were marked in different colors but only one exit that was in blue. For 'waves' that could extend in space, it would essentially be opening the entrance and the exit at the same time, and it naturally knew that the blue path was the correct one. However, for particles that had fixed trajectories, they would not know the status of the exit after they opened the entrance. How could they make themselves walk on the correct path every time instead of any wrong channels?

For Douglas, Brook and the other legendary sorcerers, the double-slit experiment was the hotspot in the War between Wave and Particle. Easily understanding what Lucien tried to say, they nodded and agreed that the experiment could confirm whether or not electrons were ubiquitous like ghosts before they were observed.

Lucien went on. "In fact, the experiment can confirm many other things. If the interferometric fringe does appear, what will happen if we shut the other slit when the electron passes through one of the slits? Will it go to the screen according to the route of interference, or will it 'immediately' go to the other slit that has been shut, thereby reaching its destination in the way of diffraction?"

For Douglas, Fernando and Hathaway who favored the particle theory, such an experiment made electrons even more astonishing and weird. If the electron changed its state, it would either suggest that it was the real wave that did not have any feature of particles, which was why it could pass two slits simultaneously, or that Lucien's explanation was true that it was probability wave that existed everywhere in space. Or maybe, there would be another even more unbelievable possibility, which was that electrons were intelligent and had their own self-awareness. That was why it could 'perceive' and 'know' what happened to the other slit and change itself accordingly.

Although the last possibility fit the status of the magic world, it did

not agree with the very existence of human beings. If the foundation of matters was conscious, did it mean that every human had countless thoughts that did not belong to themselves?

Seeing that the president and his teacher thought in silence, Lucien nodded and said, "I know that the double-slit experiment's requirement cannot be met yet, but I also know that many legendary spells are applied before they are explained. I have no doubt that you will complete devices that can accomplish the experiment. Everything will be clear after that."

At this moment, Oliver looked at Lucien solemnly, no longer like a playboy. "Even if the double-slit experiment works out, it will not prove that your probabilistic wave is correct. It will only further prove my theory that electrons are real waves that only behave as particles as wave packets in special statuses."

Lucien smiled. "Oliver, your idea contradicts many experiments, as can be seen by the messy spots of light. Also, your explanation has certain problems even in your own paper that deals with the atomic structure. I believe somebody must've pointed it out for you. The particle nature of electrons is undeniable, as proved by the experiments with mass, electric charge and momentum."

"Problems can be rectified. It is at least more trustworthy than your probabilistic explanation. That's like the dream talk of a lunatic." Oliver expressed his hatred of the probabilistic explanation. "I will find a way to prove that it is wrong!"

He turned around and left. He needed a quiet environment to find the critical flaws in Lucien's papers.

Seeing that Oliver left, Douglas looked at Lucien solemnly, "I will try the double-slit experiment with electrons. I will also devise thought experiments."

Thought experiments were experiments that were purely imagined. All the other factors and restraints were eliminated, and they purely discussed whether or not the result could be achieved in perfect conditions. It was a common approach that the arcanists adopted.

Brook nodded slightly. "Let's discuss when the experiment is done."

"I believe that many experiments agree with your probabilistic explanation, but I also believe that your explanation and your quantum mechanics are not complete. You must've ignored many things." Douglas said gently but firmly before he left with Brook and Vicente, leaving Fernando, Hathaway and Hellen stunned in the library.

Fernando stared at Lucien with his red eyes, and Lucien looked back at him fearlessly. After a long time, he finally waved his arms. "I need to calm down and think how to prove that your probabilistic explanation is wrong."

It was a disruption of the whole arcana and magic system. Even someone as open-minded and caring as him had to choose the side of truth in his mind. That was the glorious belief that had been passed on from the Magic Empire to the Congress of Magic for too many years!

Lucien nodded slightly and sighed, before he left Fernando's library with Hathaway and Hellen.

Hathaway had basically resumed her calmness. Thinking for a moment, she said, "Electrons as clouds of probabilities are more unacceptable than electrons as waves, but if all the results prove so, we have to accept it despite our resistance. The world is not based on our thinking. However, you cannot persuade us yet."

She also expressed her objection, but she was not as determined as Douglas, Brook and Oliver.

It was not because her attitude was better, or her mind was more open, but because the fields she were best at were atoms, elements, particles and the new alchemy!

Hellen was back to herself from her daze. Looking at Lucien, she asked dizzily. "In the report you submitted, the Pathway of Immortality appears very similar to your description of the cloud of probabilities. Were you inspired from there? But how could the quantum state of microscopic particles appear in the macroscopic

world? Is that the mysteries of immortality? The real secrets do not lie in the Chamber of Immortality but the Pathway of Immortality?”

As Douglas' half student, she did have keen instincts. Not participating in the debate, she rationally remembered the report on the Pathway of Immortality that Lucien submitted.

“It's true that I was inspired by that, but I drew most of my conclusions from the experiments. As for why the Pathway of Immortality manifested the weirdness of the microworld in the macroscopic domain, that's what we still need to work on. Perhaps, the mysteries of immortality are truly contained there.” Lucien had guessed that somebody would associate his probabilistic explanation with that, so he 'admitted' it frankly.

Now that it was endorsed by the Pathway of Immortality, Hellen was deep in thought, and Hathaway scratched her chin, too.

“I will devise experiments to check whether or not the probabilistic explanation and the uncertainty principle are correct.” Said Hellen honestly. “Just because it is the case for the Pathway of Immortality doesn't mean it is the case for electrons. What if it represents something else?”

However, she sounded much more neutral than Brook, Oliver and Vicente.

.....

Because proof of the probabilistic explanation and the uncertainty principle hadn't appeared, Lucien did not have to build the atmosphere for the arcanists to accept it gradually like he did before. He simply combined the three papers into 'Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy' and submitted it to the Arcana Review Board.

Without a question, the paper was transferred to the members in the field of elements. As a newly-promoted member, Larry saw the papers at his home.

“Mr. Evans' papers?” Those papers certainly could not be given to

his students for review. Larry read them himself with great interest.

As he read on, the round face on his beard was completely frozen, as if he were confronting the most terrible and ferocious monster that was about to break free and swallow the whole arcana system!

“How could it be so... This explanation is too absurd...” Murmured Larry. But he soon recalled the results of his many experiments. Frowning, he said, “Perhaps, such an explanation is not entirely unacceptable. There must be other factors between the microscope and the macroscope that extinguish the probabilities. At the very least, the world we live in is concrete, objective and material.”

He had grown in the tide brought by the new alchemy in the past few years. Therefore, he acknowledged the new alchemy and the uncanniness of the microscopic particles from the bottom of his heart. The influence of the previous experience and theories had greatly dwindled, and he did not resist such a preposterous theoretical explanation too much, particularly when it matched many experiment results and could resolve a lot of problems.

Chapter 656: Different Attitudes

Larry had been perusing Lucien's papers until the night fell. After the resistance in his heart was gone, he realized that the paper had brought him tremendous enlightenment.

"...Now, what I want to say is that something may be wrong with determinism, because certain processes are probabilistic and irreversible..." Repeating the sentence, Larry rubbed his eyebrow and murmured, "How chaotic and disordered the world will be without strict patterns? It is actually not so. No, sometimes, certain things are in utter chaos and cannot be predicted at all."

"Damn it. I should leave the problem alone now. The fantasy theory in the microscopic domain should not be introduced into the macroscopic world. Even though it works in the microscopic domain, I believe that some other factors will collapse the wave function and determine the result during the extrapolation." Larry cursed in a low voice and decided to comment on the paper only from the microscopic perspective in case his head explodes.

That was because the theory seemed to contradict the reality. It couldn't be probabilistic waves that existed everywhere, right? Could they appear in his laboratory, the headquarters of the Will of Elements, and the Allyn magic tower at the same time?

After a long time, Larry brought out all his experiment records and research papers in the microscopic domain, analyzing them from the perspective of probabilities, the uncertainty principle and the commutative principle. The result was within his expectation, but he found it more or less unacceptable. It was the most self-consistent theoretical explanation so far that could resolve certain problems that hadn't been resolved yet!

Without him knowing it, it was already dawn. Larry picked up his quill and wrote after pondering for a moment, "...At least in the microscopic domain, no experiments so far can prove that Mr. Evans' probabilistic explanation is wrong. Also, it resolves the problems that occurred in Mr. Oliver's explanation of the wave

function...”

“...The commutative principle has also unified the particle feature and the wave feature of electrons from the philosophical perspective, allowing us to ‘see’ the wonders in the microscopic domain more clearly... As to whether the uncertainty principle is an intrinsic quality of particles or a phenomenon caused by observation, it will require our investigation with magic experiments.”

He hasn’t quite figured out why the probabilities and the uncertainties of the microworld could not affect the macroscopic domain. It probably involved the conditions that were never considered or discovered before!

“Perhaps, those factors or conditions are the nature of the soul and magic, and the reason why magic patterns can achieve magic effects...” After finishing the review, Larry began to think unrestrainedly.

Without anybody realizing it, the new-generation arcanists who grew in the tide of the new alchemy had stood on the opposite side of the earlier sorcerers including the many grand arcanists. The torrent of changes forced them to move forward with their arcana instincts.

In the meantime, Dieppe, who had been admitted by the Arcana Review Board by the Evans Prize in Arcana, had similar reactions when he read ‘Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy’.

He thought that, having come up with the wave-particle duality of the microscopic particles, he was an open-minded arcanist with wondrous thoughts. However, he found that his imagination was not enough when he read the paper. The probabilistic explanation of the wave function, the unacceptable, ubiquitous cloud of probabilities, and the two arcane values that could not be determined simultaneously... Everything was beyond his imagination and recognition!

“This is a disruptive challenge against determinism, at least in the

microscopic domain!” In his shock and subconscious resistance, Dieppe was more or less exalted, feeling like he was a warrior who was charging at the obsolete order, like one of the epic heroes who buried the Magic Empire!

The roars of charge resonated with the poignant collapse of an old age and the sound of hope in the rise of a new one!

Such a vision made his blood boil. He was both scared and captivated, like when he proposed the wave-particle duality.

“Will it result in the reconstruction of the whole arcana system? Will it turn the Congress on a new page?” He mumbled and read somewhat zealously, hoping to understand Lucien’s papers from every perspective.

Having lost his resistance, he found that Mr. Evans’ paper explained the many experiment phenomena perfectly and set up the theoretical foundation for matrix mechanics and wave mechanics, even though it appeared so absurd and self-contradictory on the macroscopic scale!

“If we don’t consider the transition from the microscope to the macroscope, Mr. Evans’ paper that contains the three theories is the ‘relative truth’ that is best and most apt for the microscopic domain so far. However absurd it may appear, I have to admit that it correlates with many experiment data. I suggest that all the arcanists study the new alchemy according to the explanation until it is falsified. However, don’t rush to construct your cognitive world with it...”

“I believe that the falsification of the three fundamental theories will lead to exuberant developments in the microscopic domain. Whatever is proven in the end, and whether or the explanations are wrong, the process will be one of sowing and harvest in itself...”

As he wrote the review, Dieppe felt the trend of time for the first time. He almost couldn’t wait to jump into it and leave a mark of his own on the age to deserve the path of arcana that he had chosen!

.....

In Tower, Neeshka and Samantha, who had come to ask the Prophet questions for days, were stunned by the paper in their hands. Bergner, on the other hand, walked to the window. Looking at the buildings that were as small as ants and the brilliant stars in the sky, he sighed, "It's finally here..."

Just like his vision, the blast that disrupted the foundation of astrology came! After ruining one old theory after another, Lucien Evans had finally focused his eyes on determinism, one of the foundations of the current arcana and magic system!

Also, he in a way denied the value and significance of exploration, because it was impossible to determine the location and the momentum of an electron simultaneously however hard they tried!

Woken up by the Prophet's sigh, Neeshka said solemnly, "This is ridiculous and hilarious. It's just an explanation without any theoretical reference and utterly in violation of the macroscopic world! I believe in the fundamental law of the world that strictly dominates everything. It's the goal and the momentum for us to press our arcana studies."

"I have my own persistence about determinism, too. However, we cannot reflect such persistences to our arcana attitude. Perhaps, Lucien will prove his explanation with experiments at some point. Therefore, what we should do is to falsify it with experiments. Until then, blind belief and obstinateness won't be helpful."

The Prophet corrected Neeshka's attitude. "Of course, I also believe that, even though Lucien could explain the probabilistic explanation, the cloud of probabilities, the quantum superposition and the uncertainty principle, he must've ignored the other influential factors. Otherwise, our world wouldn't be what it looks like right now."

Samantha nodded, her eyes losing focus. "I cannot imagine a world of probabilities where the very existence of myself is uncertain..."

She had been firmly on Lucien's side when it came to the wave-

particle duality of light, but she chose the side of opposition this time as firmly. It was nothing personal but solely about her own worldview and her belief in arcana and magic!

After Neeshka and Samantha left, Bergner looked at the vast starry sky again.

He seemed to have an illusion, where the brilliant, splendid old age collapsed unstopably, and from its ashes arose a new epoch that was even more magnificent.

“Uncertainties?”

He asked himself in a low voice.

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Inside the Mind Garden...

When he saw Lucien’s paper for the first time, Atlant, the Eye of Curse, found it unacceptable just like others did. In his eyes, the world was obviously reasonable, understandable and predictable with the law of causality.

However, during his resistance, his face gradually changed, because Lucien’s detailed description of the cloud of probabilities and the superposition state were somewhat familiar to him!

Suddenly, the way to become a demigod offered by Benedict III stuck in his head!

“Isn’t... Isn’t this the form of existence after the transformation? Was Lucien inspired by the Pathway of Immortality?” Lights were flickering inside his eyes as he was more shocked than ever.

“Is this what Lucien Evans got after studying the way to become demigod and the mysteries of immortality? He is laying the theoretical foundation for his path to become a demigod?”

The more he thought, the more shocked he became. Atlant began to read it in a different attitude, his resistance gone. He discovered that the theory could not only resolve the problems in the

microscopic domain right now but also shed light on the path for him to become a demigod. That was the status of the real beings!

.....

Inside the pope's library in the Holy City...

'Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy' was already placed on Benedict III's desk.

"Denying determinism and Thanos Demon?" He snorted first, but he fell into utter silence as he read on, as if he were completely fascinated by the paper.

Ripples suddenly spread out inside the library. They seemed to be everywhere all of a sudden!

Suddenly, the feeling was gone, and everything was back to normal. Shocked, Benedict III said, "Quantum superposition?"

He fetched a file from the void. The handwriting on the book was still fresh. The title of the book was 'About the Nature of the Power of Faith and How to Control and Absorb it Effectively'.

Inside the Realm of Gates, when Benedict III was too shocked to control himself, 'Monster Viken' also appeared and said with a half smile and half surprise. "Quantum superposition?"

Chapter 657: Incompleteness

Inside the royal palace of the Holy Heilz Empire...

Rudolf II also saw 'Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy' that the Congress of Magic did not keep confidential through his intelligence channels.

Ever since the 'incident' in the underground palace of the Sun King, he had been paying attention to the studies of the Congress of Magic and benefited a lot from it. Naturally, he wouldn't let go of the paper which described the most fundamental law of the microscopic domain, even though it was merely an explanation so far. After all, as a knight caster, he did not have a cognitive world and was not scared of its collapse and destruction, but of course, the side effect was that the research products of the Congress of Magic could not improve him directly. He could only seek inspiration from them to figure out his own path.

"Absurd! Is the nature of the world a die? Determinism does not work, and all the initial statues cannot lead to a unique result? Many processes are irreversible?" However incomplete his memories were, Rudolf II believed in 'determinism' from the bottom of his heart. That was the essence of his experience and wisdom in the past. He couldn't help but criticize it angrily.

However, as he read on, his face became rather interesting. Suddenly, his body was twisted and spread out, as if he existed everywhere.

The spreading cloud collapsed, and Rudolf II became normal. He talked to himself half in delight and half in confusion, "Quantum superposition?"

Although he had found a way to transform into such a state by studying the mysteries of the primeval devils and gods when he was still Thanos, he knew only the application but never knew what the state was and on which theory it was based. Therefore, his path entailed a lot of dangers, and one needed a bit of luck in order to

succeed.

“Lucien Evans was inspired by the Pathway of Immortality, which allowed him to associate the mysteries of demigods with the mysteries of the microworld?” Rudolf II thought to himself. The paper was exactly what he was most desperate to know, but he was more or less anxious since it did not have any convincing proof or subsequent developments. “Is Lucien Evans keeping more information about the quantum superposition to himself, considering that it is about the demigods after all?”

At this moment, the determinism in his head was already very dim, because his own status had suggested a lot of things. “It seems that determinism is a nature of the macroscopic world. By transforming oneself into the state of quantum superposition, one would be entering the microscopic domain and getting rid of determinism, thereby turning into a demigod who could return from the river of fate?”

He tried to understand Lucien’s paper according to his experience. In the end, he sighed and said, “I need more experiments and phenomena to prove it instead of believing it blindly, or it will be very troublesome if it is proven wrong later.”

...

Inside the Atomic Universe, Lucien was gazing at the vast starry sky out of the window. A thick pile of papers were placed on his desk, with words and symbols such as ‘power of mind?’, ‘power of faith?’ and ‘congregation of special electromagnetic waves?’.

They were the vague thoughts that he came up with after studying the fake gods.

Pinocchio’s voice suddenly echoed. “Master, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Fernando have come.”

Lucien was suddenly back to himself. Hiding the papers on his desk, he went out to greet the guests.

Fernando was still wearing his bright red magic robe. He asked

loudly the moment they met, “The quantum superposition you described was inspired by the Pathway of Immortality and the status inside?”

They had obviously found the connection after they calmed down.

In Lucien’s papers, not only was the cloud of probabilities described, but he had also proposed the notion of quantum superposition and even explained certain experiments with it.

“It’s true that I was partly inspired by that.” Lucien admitted ‘frankly’.

While walking to the drawing room under Lucien’s lead, Douglas said, “But it’s a status close to the demigods. How can a microscopic particle like the electron boast that? Simple analogies and comparisons are inappropriate.”

He sounded as firm and determined as before. The mysteries of demigods and immortality made him more considerate, but his beliefs could not be changed so easily. That was his understanding about the world throughout his life.

“When I processed the experiment data and considered the explanation of the wave function, I discovered that it would be easier to solve the problems after introducing the status, so I did it. It was merely a bold hypothesis, and what we should do next is to verify it with rigorous experiments.” Said Lucien gently.

Fernando nodded. “I checked my experiment record. Perhaps, the probabilistic explanation is one way to go, but probabilities and uncertainties shouldn’t be an intrinsic nature of the electron but are caused by external reasons. There must be a certain situation that leads to the electron’s uncertainties and probabilities. As a result, the quantum state is gone when the micro scope transitions to the macro scope. As long as we find the reasons, we will be able to transform and become demigods with fewer flaws and insidious problems than Thanos and Viken did.”

The probabilistic explanation was obviously the best theory so far from the perspective of experimentalism. However, Fernando had

reached a conclusion from the classic law of causality. Now that the result of probabilities and uncertainties had appeared, there must've been a reason that caused it.

“Up until now, no signs have indicated that. They can only be described as the intrinsic nature of the electron.” Lucien said gently but persistently, “Or rather, in our current studies, there are still experiments that support external reasons. Do not multiply entities without necessity.”

Fernando glared at him, unable to understand his doggedness. “We can boldly assume a theory that includes a broader range, before we verify it carefully. Have you even forgotten that? How are you going to explain the differences between the micro scope and the macro scope? How can you describe the transition? How can you explain the collapse of the wave function?”

“Also, I have my own ideas about uncertainties, and I’ve devised a thought experiment to falsify it.” Douglas suddenly interjected when he listened to their debate. Then, he took out paper and a pen, drawing a picture to illustrate his experiment where an indirect approach was adopted to calculate an electron’s momentum while determining its location.

Fernando had obviously seen the experiment before. He looked at Lucien attentively and intimidatingly, waiting for his answer.

Lucien picked up the paper and considered. It was slightly different from the classic examples in his spirit library, but the mechanism was more or less the same. After reading carefully for a while, he said, “Mr. President, the change of mass will result in other changes in the gravitational field. You didn’t take that factor into consideration...”

Douglas and Fernando had been looking at Lucien. After hearing that, they focused their eyes on the paper.

After a long time, Douglas finally said, somewhat bitterly, “I’ve forgotten the general theory of relativity that I’ve been studying recently.”

After that, his bitterness was gone, and he said as firmly as before, "I still believe that your quantum mechanics is incomplete. At the very least, you haven't considered how the microworld can be transitioned to the macroscopic scale. Perhaps, that's the mysteries of demigods and immortality."

The conclusion was obvious. There must be an internal reason why the bizarre phenomena of the microworld were not reflected to the macroscopic domain."

Holding back his temper, Fernando spoke in a low voice, "I'll propose a hypothesis to explain the collapse of the wave function..."

The experiment result and the Pathway of Immortality reduced their resistance against the probabilistic explanation and the wave-particle duality. Instead, they began to look for the incompleteness in Lucien's theory and hope to explain everything from a higher level.

After their conversation, Douglas and Fernando both left. One of them was tall and at ease, and the other was short and hasty, but they seemed equally relentless.

Natasha walked into the drawing room and sighed. "Mr. President and Mr. Fernando are truly persistent, or even obstinate, one might say..."

"Not exactly obstinate. Perhaps, they are persisting in the truth..."
Remarked Lucien with mixed feelings, which confused Natasha.

Because of the report on the Pathway of Immortality, Brook, Hathaway and Oliver slighted changed their attitude and were less rejective about the quantum superposition and the cloud of probabilities. Instead, they began to try to prove the incompleteness of Lucien's current theory, and that the world would be in serious trouble if Lucien's explanation worked!

...

Over the past year, Annick and Sprint had often been to the library

to read the recently submitted papers that were not published yet. Their arcane expertise had been soaring, and they had what it took to participate in the cutting-edge studies now. Reading the papers was no pressure for them, provided that they were not as complicated as the general theory of relativity or matrix mechanics.

When they read the papers, they always checked if their teacher had any new product of research. This time, they found 'Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy' as they wished. So, they began to read it on their way back to the institution.

Annick tripped over a box in the corridor, forgetting to cast his spell, but he still held the paper tightly, with his eyes fixed on it.

"A probabilistic explanation... The uncertainty principle..." He kept mumbling similar words, and so did Sprint, who showed no intention of helping Annick to be back on his feet.

Hearing the noise, Heidi walked out of the institution, only to see them standing and lying like statues. She was stunned. "Are you some sort of performance artist now?"

Because of the economic development, the pace of society had been hastened. Many bards had adapted the light music into popular music that could be sung and spread more easily. As a result, a bunch of peculiar artists had emerged in Rentato. Lucien had nicknamed them 'performance artists'.

"Cloud of probabilities... Quantum superposition..." The two of them simply ignored Heidi.

Heidi frowned and robbed Sprint of his paper, starting to read it herself. It didn't take long before she also became a statue.

Then, the same change happened to Katrina, Layria, Chelly, Lowi, Blake and Alfalia. It was not until a long time later that Heidi finally took a long breath and said, "According to our teacher, the microworld is more weird than magic and more unbelievable than imagination... Have we entered the age of fantasies?"

"However, I think it explains the current experiments very well.

There's no reason why we shouldn't use it from the perspective of pragmatism." Sprint expressed his opinion.

Katrina also nodded. "Our teacher's theoretical explanation is basically self-consistent. Determinism only works in the macroscopic world..."

They were as good as senior-rank arcanists in the fields of new alchemy and quantum mechanics. Also, having been lectured by Lucien for a long time, they focused more on experiment results and were less bound by the previous experience and theories.

Annick rose to his feet. "I think that our teacher's theory explains the wonders of the microworld, but I also believe that such wonders must have their own fundamental reasons."

With their dissemination, Lucien's paper had been learnt by most people before the new year. Therefore, while Onore, Clark and the other students of the Holt Magic College cried that the textbook of new alchemy had to be rectified again and that the three papers were so deeply perplexing and unacceptable, they did feel that their hearts were trembling violently.

"If the theory is proven by any experiment... so many people wouldn't make any progress for the rest of their life, if their heads are still intact above their neck at all..."

Chapter 658: Fleeting Time

In April of 827, it was warm in Rentato with a gentle breeze.

Wearing a neat female knight suit like how her idol, Queen Natasha, was dressed, Heidi sat in a tea shop on Rose Avenue, appreciating the piano song while reading ‘Herald of Arcana and Magic’ on the table.

Ever since the South Church was banished, the terms such as arcana, magic and alchemy were known by more and more people, who were full of curiosity about the charming, mysterious fields even though they could not understand the sophisticated theories and did not have excellent talents.

Also, as more and more generic schools and Landings were established, more and more ordinary people had learnt how to read. ‘Arcana Voice’ was no longer enough to satisfy the citizens who wanted to know more. As fans of ‘News of the World’, they were very familiar with the anecdotes in the world of arcana and magic, and they adored the famous arcanists and sorcerers as much as they adored musicians and playwrights.

In their community, it was considered cool and fashionable if anybody could discuss the cutting-edge concepts in arcana, even though they did not understand the meaning of the dizzying words at all.

Therefore, ‘Herald of Arcana and Magic’, a popular version of ‘Allyn Impression’, was created, and the circulation was surprisingly good. According to Heidi’s noble friends, quite a few nobles were thinking of setting up similar newspapers.

Sipping the Count Red Tea, Heidi read the newspaper casually:

“After Prince Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans proposed to solve the radiation problem by quantizing the electromagnetic field, Mr. Annick and Sprint respected it as ‘second quantization’ and applied it to the electronic system, achieving excellent results. The two arcanists who won the Holm Crown Ring and the Silver Moon

Medal for the model of electron spin at such a young age have shown their talents again.”

Reading the news that did not involve any specific theories, Heidi couldn't help but click her lips. Although she could keep up with Annick and Sprint in microscopic studies, and she could understand the sophisticated theories, she was not as distinguished as them and merely had a few products that were far from astonishing. However, in the field of 'artificial intelligence', she had made remarkable progress.

After her conversations with her teacher, and after too many thoughts and experiments, Chelly, Lowi, Alfalia and she had a general plan for the design of 'artificial intelligence', which had been named by their teacher as 'Heidi-Chelly A. I. System'.

As for the alchemical products needed, thanks to Katrina and Layria's material knowledge and Hathaway and Hellen's magic crystals, and thanks to the joint research of hundreds of arcanists who worked in a similar field, they already had the fundamental parts they needed after more than a year of work. They had transformed the electronic tubes they designed before into the smaller and more convenient transistors.

“However, the current arcana theory cannot completely explain the mechanism of the transistors. They can only be roughly manufactured and applied with magic, which means that their demand is high and cannot be popularized. Are we obliged to use the electronic tubes for a long time in the future?” Heidi raised her hand and combed her hair, deeply upset by the problem.

Recalling that she had come to Rentato exactly to get away from the problem, Heidi decided not to dwell on it anymore. Therefore, she focused her mind on the newspaper again.

“Mr. Douglas, the Emperor of Arcana, has published two solutions of Evans' equation of gravitational field. He believes that one of the solutions describes the special celestial body when tremendous matters are focused on one point in space. They will establish a 'horizon' around the celestial body. Even the light wouldn't be able to escape it. It's the most terrifying body that can swallow

everything. It has been named ‘black hole’.”

“The other solution is a complement to the first solution. It describes the electric black hole formed by charged matter, whereas the first ‘black hole’ neither carries electricity nor spins...”

“A black hole...” Heidi thought to herself. As a sorcerer close to the senior rank, and as a student of a grand arcanist, she knew more than what was reported. “Mr. President also believes that the Host Star of Destiny that the black hole corresponds to is the reason why the people whose fate does not have a track appear. It’s not true to say that their face doesn’t have a track, but the track can only be observed and determined by intermittent phenomena... My teacher’s conditions seem to be similar. Does he have a dual-body system made of a general Host Star of Destiny and a black hole?”

Shaking her head, Heidi thought to herself. “After Mr. President observes the black hole in space and confirms the arcana significance of the two solutions, his gravity magic will be even more terrifying. Well, so will my teacher’s.”

Although it was impossible to create a real black hole, Douglas could certainly simulate one in his cognitive world and project it out. The effect would be extraordinary. As the constructor of the field equation, Lucien would certainly earn similar benefits.

At this moment, a few young men, who appeared to be from the No. 5 generic school nearby, read the newspaper in a low voice. “Mr. Fernando, the Lord of Storm, has published his discoveries. The rays of electric curse in element decay show a sign of energy non-conservation. Also, the spectrum is continuous and non-quantized...”

“Based on that, he speculates that a tiny particle that does not carry electricity is released together with the rays of electric curse. It’s a new particle that is different from the other fundamental particles. He has named it ‘neutrino’. He has also proposed the possible situation when the atomic nucleus decays and pointed out that the undiscovered Force of Water in the four fundamental forces may be contained in the process...”

“How awesome. They can boldly predict a new matter just based on certain experiment phenomena! Arcanists are so cool...” The students discussed it in a low voice. Arcanists in their eyes seemed to be gods that mastered the law of the world and predicted everything according to it.

Heidi smiled at them as if she were looking at herself when she was still a teenager. At that time, she also felt that sorcerers were mysterious and powerful. That’s why she was fascinated and dedicated to the infinite ocean of arcana studies.”

Turning her head around, she checked her watch and realized that there was still time, so she kept reading ‘Herald of Arcana and Magic’.

“Ms. Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, and Mr. Fernando, have published their preliminary theories on element decay based on reverse engineering and the current studies in the micro scope. Of course, the theory is still rough and does not contain detailed magic structures... They have shared the third Evans Prize in Arcana and the Holm Crown prize for the remarkable contribution... It has offered us a new source of energy and a glimpse at the mysteries of things.”

“Ms. Hellen, the Witch of Iceland and Ms. Hathaway, the Lord of Elements, have published their research on crystals again. They have established a superb system after two years of in-depth studies in the field... Hopefully, they will win the fourth Evans Prize in Arcana...”

“Mr. Raventi, Mr. Morris and Mr. Gaston have made both theoretical and practical breakthroughs in the synthesis of life matter...”

“Mr. Dieppe, Mr. Larry and Mr. Jurisian have independently processed the Oliver-Brook Wave Equation with the theory of relativity, but they also admit that their attempts have failed. They do not agree with certain experiments and will lead to strange results where the energy is negative...”

“Mr. Felipe has submitted a standard textbook on anatomy, which

lays a solid foundation on the emerging hospital system...”

Almost all the introductions on ‘Herald of Arcana and Magic’ were about the research in the cutting edge, but even so, they had taken up quite a few columns dazzlingly. It suggested that the golden age of arcana had come after years of development. The products were surging out so crazily that even the sorcerers found it hard to catch their breath.

“Twenty legendary sorcerers. Finally more than before...” Heidi somehow thought of that after reading the paper. The grand development in the microscopic domain and the research on the general theory of relativity have yielded results. Morris, the Silver Miser, and Annonis, the Astrologer, had both advanced.

Heidi folded the newspaper and put it before her. She shook her head. “Only good news? In the past year, many arcanists halted because of the probabilistic explanation and the uncertainty principle, just like Mr. Donald...”

Just like how they did not consider the meaning behind ‘quantum’ before, most arcanists treated Lucien’s ‘Basics of Quantum Mechanics and the New Alchemy’ with a pragmatic attitude, but the result was surprisingly good, because it explained most of the experiments in the past and bolstered the development in the microworld by accurately predicting many things. Therefore, a lot of arcanists had changed their attitude.

The debate about the three principles remained unabated in all journals and symposiums. Douglas, Brook, Fernando and Oliver proposed many thought experiments to falsify it, only to be corrected by Lucien who pointed out their mistakes and inconsiderations. Later, the arcanists who supported Lucien’s principles joined the debate, too.

The debate did not gradually die down until Lucien submitted another paper. When he studied the particle exchange with the wave equation, he realized that the particles followed Chloe statistics when they were symmetric, and they followed Hellen-Fernando statistics when they were asymmetric. Therefore, the probabilistic explanation went one step further.

“Such peace is only temporary. I can feel that a terrible storm is now brewing...” Looking at the empty teacup before her in a daze, Heidi had a sense of suffocation. “All the achievements in the microscopic domain in the past years will be completely unified by the storm...”

At this moment, a square iron monster stopped next to the teashop after a squeak. Then, a middle-aged man in black suit got off and approached Heidi. With a warm if not adulating smile, he asked, “If I may ask, are you Ms. Heidi?”

“Yes. Are you Mr. Buck from the police department?” Heidi rose with a smile.

Buck took off his hat and bowed. “It’s an honor to meet you, my lady. With the help of such a distinguished sorcerer as yourself, I’m sure that the serial murder case will be cracked soon.”

Because sorcerers were capable of many weird spells, the police department also requested the Congress of Magic’s help when they had problems in their investigation by issuing tasks. However, Buck did not expect that Ms. Heidi of the Atom Institution would come this time! Why would the arcanist who had been dedicated to the arcane frontier be interested in such a small task?

After they sat down, Buck took out photos of the crime scene and gave them to Heidi. After the magic cameras were simplified, they were at least affordable for the police department now.

Heidi took them over and checked. She immediately frowned. Although she had done many autopsies herself, she still subconsciously found the brutal and bloody pictures repulsive.

In the first photo, the abdomen of an ordinary person was cut, and all the viscera were taken. Around the dead body was the dirty, filthy slum of the city.

Chapter 659: The Hospital

Chapter 659: The Hospital

The pile of photos were taken from five victims. Some had rotted. Buck explained to Heidi,

“Three days ago, some workers took off earlier in the evening because some magic circles in Claire broke. On their way back to Sardni through Egret, they heard a bitter scream from the victim in the first picture. They checked on it. One of them was a magic apprentice. The murderer had left. They only found the body, not even any footprints. Later, we found four more bodies hidden around in the sewers. All the organs were gone, and no clues were left.”

Heidi nodded, “The body was badly rotten. The case might have happened even earlier than we think, and I’m sure there are more bodies to be found. But I wonder why the murderer did not simply destroy the bodies.”

“It’s not easy to destroy the bodies. There are no piranhas in the rivers in Rentato. The bodies had to be moved to the black forest.” said Buck. He had been assuming that the murderer was not a powerful sorcerer or knight, but maybe just an ordinary man. He saw no point in a sorcerer or a knight attacking those poor people.

Heidi shuffled the photos and asked, “Any missing people reports from the recent months?”

Buck looked a bit embarrassed, “Egret is a poor district, and is full of people who come to Rentato seeking opportunities. The population is constantly changing, so even the gang leaders can’t figure out who have gone missing...”

Heidi put down the photos, “I’ll take a look at the bodies and the scenes where the bodies were found. It’s hard to tell from the black and white pictures.”

She had a bad feeling about these cases. All the victims’ organs had

gone missing. There was definitely something going on.

Heidi's words were exactly what Buck had been expecting. He hurriedly stood up and said, "Please come this way."

He walked to his police car and opened the door for Heidi. After Heidi got in, Buck walked around the car and got in the driver's seat.

Turning on the engine, the steel machine monster started roaring.

"The size of a car has been greatly reduced..." Heidi made this heartfelt comment when she saw the comfortable interior of the vehicle.

Buck grinned, "That's true. In the past, a car was too big to run on the streets. Those sorcerers simplified the magic circles for producing cars and also lowered the requirement for materials. Part of the magic steam engine has also been replaced by the new energy resource..."

An older-version vehicle would take up all the space of a street in Rentato. After the improvements, however, now at least two cars could run through the streets in opposite directions and the sidewalks could still be retained. But still, cars were very expensive and only the nobles and national departments could afford them. Although Buck was one of the leaders in the police department, if he had not been picking up Heidi, he would not have access to this car.

Heidi gave the metal door of the car a gentle stroke and felt the texture. She knew that it was because of Layria and Katrina's contribution to materials science that the requirements of alchemical circles could finally be lowered to such a degree.

She knew how difficult the simplification was. Thanks to the guidance and development of new alchemy and element research, material synthesis had also made good progress.

Apart from Layria and Katrina, those sorcerers from Atom Institution like Lazar and Rock, as well as Larry, Ulysses, Timothy

and K... Thousands of sorcerers were doing their best.

Material science required countless experiments to gather experience. Even prophecy could only do a little to help. There was no luck in this field!

Those ideas that the dwarves brought from their own steam culture also had inspired the sorcerers who tried to simplify the production of cars. They had thus extracted the energy-intensive resource: coal burning element. Also, they had started looking for new alternative energies such as solar power, which was once only used in magic towers.

The sorcerer's knowledge was profound. Their old ally, the elves, were also a great help.

Thinking of the great changes that had been taking place in the congress and in the four countries along the strait, Heidi felt very encouraged. She was proud living in such an era.

Heidi thought to herself that although she was not as talented as Annick and Sprint in the microscopic realm, and not as patient and sensitive to the properties of materials, she believed that she would make her own achievement in artificial intelligence, and one day she would win the Holm Crown prize.

Her fists clenching, Heidi encouraged herself. She was rather thrilled thinking of the future that, once soul pieces were added in, those cold machines could also think and deal with most problems like human beings and even faster than many arcanists. Among the six students of Lucien Evans, only Heidi and Chelly had not yet won a top prize.

Very attentively Buck drove the car. He said to Heidi, "Lady, we're first heading for the mortuary in Violet Hospital."

"No problem." said Heidi. She would like to take the chance to visit the hospital, which had made many followers of the Church realize that the Saint Truth was not the only power that could cure diseases. The Congress of Magic could also do the job!

Although Buck was feeling a bit nervous driving, he still did not want to leave his important guest alone, so he tried to start a conversation, “Cars are not yet fast enough. In the future, the speed should be further improved by advancing power magic circles and finding new resources. Herald of Arcana and Magic said that the Lord of Storm, Atom Controller, the Lord of Elements have finished the initial theoretical research on radioactive element decay. Does that mean that the decay energy can be used to power cars in the future?”

“Nuclear you mean...” Heidi was a bit amused. Obviously, Buck was piling up the terms that he saw in the newspaper.

Nuclear power was a major focus in Atom Institution, and the research was led by Mr. Lucien Evans in person, with his closest friends and students as supporters. This most cutting-edge energy was even too powerful and precious for most senior-ranks, not to mention using it in powering cars.

Heidi joked, “When we finish the study on the miniaturization and popularization of controllable nuclear fusion using magnetic confinement we should be able to increase the speed to the next level...”

She shot out the long sentence within only a couple of seconds.

Controllable nuclear fusion was the ultimate goal of the project, which would provide the most powerful energy ever to Allyn, the city floating in the sky. However, they were still far away from it. In fact, they were still looking for ways to control the process of nuclear decay.

“Controllable nuclear fusion using magnetic confinement...” Buck chewed the mysterious words well, trying to remember them. When he got back, he could use the words to show off. This was the most cutting-edge arcana study, not the outdated information from the newspapers – Ms. Heidi said it!

At this time, a beautiful white building appeared at the end of the road. Buck gently put on the brake and stopped in front of the hospital. Then he hurriedly got off and pulled open the door for

Heidi,

“Here we are.”

Heidi got out and looked at the hospital building from outside. She slightly nodded as the building looked in fact quite clean and even sacred. She never expected that those necromancers would run a place like this.

Pushing open the glass door, Buck led Heidi to the mortuary. On their way they ran into many doctors and nurses wearing white gowns. They were apprentices, low and middle-rank sorcerers selected who studied necromancy. This place was not only a place for treating patients, but also a place for their experiments. Therefore, many of them were volunteers here.

Of course, all the experiments had to be permitted by the Congress of Magic. Any illegal experiments would lead to severe punishments.

So far, Violet Hospital had been running for a year. Because of the free magic potions and alchemical facilities provided by the sorcerers and the Congress of Magic, the treatments here were relatively cheap. People had good words about this place. Therefore, the doctors and nurses were given a strange title – Magic Angel.

On their way, they saw an excited crowd in front of them. Some nurses and doctors were surrounding a tall and thin man in black coat, all trying to ask questions.

Heidi recognized the man who always looked sick.

“It seems that Mr. Felipe is quite popular here.”

“Mr. Felipe is here today to have a lecture on human anatomy and cell memory for the doctors and nurses.” Buck explained. The way he looked at Mr. Felipe was full of reverence. He was told that he could turn a pile of flesh into a human.

Heidi and Buck kept walking to the mortuary. After they turned around, they could still hear the conversation.

“Mr. Felipe, so in anatomy...”

“Prof. Felipe, in terms of cell memory...”

At this time, Felipe said gloomily, “Don’t call me prof.”

The nurses were all very surprised. Why? Professor was a title to show great respect in Holt Magic College.

Heidi burst out laughing. Buck turned to look at her, wondering why.

“Nothing.” Heidi waved her hands.

Around the corner, the mortuary was at the end of the corridor. Buck pulled open the gate and they both walked in this cold place.

Juxtaposing the five corpses, Heidi studied them carefully. At this moment, she was no longer a lady but an arcanist.

After a long time, Heidi frowned and said, “Judging from the wound and the way that the guts were taken, it was four murderers who killed the five victims. They did not care about possible damages on the guts, either.”

“A gang crime?” Asked Buck solemnly.

Instead of giving a reply, Heidi cut five pieces of flesh from the five corpses and said, “Bring me to the crime scene.”

She vaguely had an idea.

Chapter 660: Summoning

In the Egret District...

Passing through the low and shabby cottages, Buck led Heidi to a quiet, dilapidated place that was dominated by grass. It was creepy even during the day.

“This place is occupied by some homeless guys, but they are busy with their lives during the day. That’s why they are not here.” Buck pointed at the shaking wall and said.

Zigzagging by a few muddy rooms that could collapse at any point, Heidi saw the crime scene in the photo. Filthy water was flowing, and flies were flying everywhere in the stench.

“The homeless have absolutely no sense of house maintenance. The entrance of the sewer is very close, but they still litter randomly.” Buck cursed. Even an experienced police officer such as himself was frowning in such an environment, not to mention an arcanist from the Atom Institution like Ms. Heidi!

Although it was not the field that Heidi was best at, she had abundant adventure experiences thanks to the Congress of Magic’s mandatory missions. Compared to the nests of trolls and giants, this place was as clean and comfortable as a noble lady’s garden. So, she walked over without frowning and looked for clues with spells.

“The storm last time destroyed a lot of traces...” Heidi confirmed her guess from the magic feedback.

Buck looked at her hopefully. “Yes. That’s why we asked the Congress’ help. Is there anything you can do to help us?”

He did not use the full name, ‘Congress of Magic’, showing that he was one of the pro-sorcerers.

Heidi was not as naughty and playful as she usually was in the murder scene. Instead, she solemnly brought out the remains of the victim and performed a localization spell of the school of astrology.

The flesh in her hands suddenly melted and dropped on the ground, pointing at somewhere far away.

“Originally, the spell can only localize living creatures, but after modification, it can also trace the dead. As long as the murderer still has the guts, we will be led there.” A layer of blood wriggled on Heidi’s left hand.

Buck was amazed by the extraordinary magic and more determined to send his son to the generic school for elemental magic education.

This time, it was Heidi who led Buck. They traversed the Egret District and searched for the murderer.

After they reached an intersection, however, the blood in Heidi’s hands stopped boiling. As if the last vitality had been worn out, it began to emit stink.

“My lady, what’s up?” Buck asked concernedly.

Heidi looked around gravely. “The connection of the ‘kindred’ was cut off, which is something that only magic, divine power or the strength of a knight can achieve.”

“What?” Buck was rather surprised. A sorcerer or a knight was involved in a murder case against the poor? What were they up to?”

Heidi sniffed. “I asked before why the murderer did not destroy the body. It seems that it was not because they were incapable but because they had other purposes.”

“Other purposes?” Buck knew many secret files, but he still lacked ‘common sense’ compared to Heidi, an experienced sorcerer.

Heidi looked around and said casually, “Generally speaking, this is related to evil rituals or cults. They have to ensure that the original body still exists when they use the guts...”

“Then, I’ll submit your conclusion, my lady.” Buck wavered. This was something that was too much for himself. Let the higher-level knights of the police department, or maybe a senior-rank sorcerer, handle this!

He looked at the intersection. One road led out of the city, and the other led to the other side of the Egret District. He said, “The murderers must’ve escaped out of the city. It’s hard to find them now.”

Heidi was rather excited to encounter evil cultists. She brought out her crystal ball eagerly and said, “I don’t know about that. Let’s confirm it first.”

In Rentato, she was not scared that she would encounter an enemy that was too strong for her. Battles that were too intense would surely be discovered by the expert who guarded the Nekso Palace.

The transparent crystal ball was darkened by the magic power. Then, brilliant stars glowed, connecting to a belt of light that pointed in a direction.

“They went to the other side of the Egret District...” That was everything Heidi got from her astrology. “Let’s go over and take a look.”

Buck was slightly upset, but not having the courage to object, he could only follow.

“Ms. Heidi is a sorcerer close to the senior rank and a student of a legend. She must have powerful items. It won’t be a big deal even if we encounter evil sorcerers or cultists...” Thinking about that, he gradually calmed down.

At this moment, he saw that Heidi had been playing with a silver badge that was engraved with symbols of elements. It seemed to be a mini version of the periodic table. Even many civilians were aware of it and thought that it boasted the magic power to resist evilness.

Heidi chuckled. “It’s the medium for a magic ritual.”

“A magic ritual...” With Buck’s knowledge about magic, shouldn’t that be something that had to be prepared in advance?

As they spoke, they reached a corner of the slum along the road. It was a crowded and lively place.

"If they are cultists, there must be a lot of them. So, we can ask the locals whose house is frequented by strangers or has weird noises at night. That way, we should be able to find some clues." Buck offered suggestions based on his experience.

Heidi smiled. "Thank you for your trouble, Detective Buck."

Before a rickety hut stood a wrinkled old lady who was hanging her washed clothes.

"Greetings, my lady. I'm Buck from the police department. I would like to ask you a few questions." Buck showed his badge courteously.

The old lady wiped her hands, somewhat stunned. "Mr. Detective, please ask."

That was the normal reaction when the poor people met police officers. Buck nodded and asked, "You must be familiar with the neighborhood, right? Is there any household that is frequented by strangers or has obstreperous noises at night?"

The old lady thought for a moment and said, "No, I didn't notice anything. I hardly go to other places in the neighborhood."

Buck put his badge back. "Do you know anybody who knows the neighborhood better?"

"Yes, Mr. Monroe of the Black Brotherhood." Said the lady in a low voice, as if she were scared of this Mr. Monroe.

Buck nodded. "Bring us to him."

"No, please, officer, ask somebody else." The old lady waved her hands in panic.

How could Buck compromise? Under his demand, the lady shut her door and led him and Heidi to walk on.

Below the low houses, women were washing clothes, men were chopping wood, and kids were watching the strangers curiously.

“How lively.” Remarked Buck.

Frowning, Heidi looked around and did not talk.

At this moment, the lady stopped before the most eye-catching two-floored house in the slum. “Sir and madam, Mr. Monroe is inside.”

She knocked on the gate while she spoke.

Heidi suddenly said, “We’ll visit Mr. Monroe another way. Duty calls.”

“What?” Asked Buck in confusion, but Heidi’s voice echoed in his mind. “Back off. Let me handle this, or I may be unable to take care of you.”

“Why?” Buck grew anxious. Was this the legendary telepathic bond?

Heidi chuckled. “The poor in the slums have to work for ten hours in order to survive, so only kids and some women can be found in such areas during the day. Look. How many men are at home? How do they feed their families?”

Buck was saturated with cold sweat. He did not have much down-to-earth experience. If it were the common police officers under his lead, they might’ve noticed something wrong a long time ago. He simply said, “Right, we have to return to the police department. We’ll visit Mr. Monroe tomorrow.”

“Hehe. You want to leave when you have already noticed things?” A cold and hoarse voice resonated with the intense stink of blood.

Inside the spacious hall, hearts, intestines, livers and other organs were placed in a weird pattern. Not only were they as red as if alive, but they were even fluctuating in rhythm.

All the men, women, and children stood up, their mouths splitting apart and revealing their thorny teeth. Their eyes became crimson and cold, with the air of evilness and paralysis.

The old woman next to them was suddenly dried, like a broken

balloon, but then she suddenly expanded and spoke with a male voice. “Are you leaving?”

She raised her finger. Buck immediately felt that he was unable to move anymore.

“Finger of Death?” Buck heard Heidi’s voice in the telepathic bond.

When the black air pierced at him like a needle, Buck thought numbly, “Am I going to die?”

At this moment, he felt that his body became illusionary, before it became steady again and appeared on the other side of the street.

“This is...?” In shock, he realized that Heidi brought him away with a blink under the attack.

In the meantime, ‘Douglas’s Absorbing Wall’ appeared and blocked the crimson rays from the monster.

“You’re not in the senior rank. How can you perform Spell Trigger?” The male voice blurted in surprise, his old-lady body collapsing all of a sudden.

At this moment, the man organs inside the hall began to wriggle and gather into the weird shape of a human.

Heidi chuckled. “I am not in the senior rank, but who says that Spell Trigger is limited to the senior rank? The magic where spells are stored in advance and triggered by different conditions happen to my specialty. It’s a comprehensive application of storage, control, computation, input and output. I cannot simplify all of them, but I can simplify some of the modules... Maybe, the fifth circle will be the threshold for the senior-rank sorcerers later!”

She did not seem in a hurry at all, but her left hand pressed the silver badge nonstop, as if she were casting a complicated spell.

The monster jumbled by organs roared furiously, “I don’t understand, but you are not going to survive! Are you capable of any other senior-rank spells?”

He was about to complete his body. Those mouth-split monsters, on the other hand, blocked the street and disrupted flight.

Watching the red eyes, Buck felt that his legs were shaking. He could only place his hope on Heidi.

After her left hand was done, Heidi suddenly tossed out the silver badge, before she made a weird chant, “The roars from space summons the Atomic Universe...”

The monster lunged out the moment he heard the spell. His body was stretched into a long curtain of blood, corrupting everything around.

He knew very well that the legends were almost as powerful as gods. So, a lot of magic rituals had to be performed by summoning and communicating with different legendary demiplanes. For example, many rituals of the Hand of Paleness required the enhancement of ‘Silent Hell’, ‘Skeleton Land’ and ‘Resting Place’. Generally speaking, one would be able to borrow the strength of the legends as long as their rules were met, unless they intentionally blocked their demiplanes.

What he found hard to believe, however, was how short the magic ritual was.

It was also stored in advance?

The chant stopped, and it became extremely quiet. A black sky descended with many illusionary planets of elements.

‘Arcana Light’ illuminated in Heidi’s hands, and the projection inside the Atomic Universe expanded abruptly. The fusing planets showed up like suns.

Under their assistance, the overwhelming and scorching light swept across the whole slum, melting those red-eyed monsters whose mouth was split.

“Nooooo!” The monster of guts cried miserably.

Chapter 661: Bird of Death

Chapter 661: Bird of Death

In such pure light, Buck couldn't help but close his eyes, but the dark red eyes of the monster of guts which contained infinite hatred and desperation still lingered in his head. His back was also soaked with cold sweat.

Then, he felt that an overwhelming, terrifying will brush his body, paralyzing both his mind and his body. He wasn't back to himself until a long time later, but the will was already long gone. The brilliance before him that looked like an arriving sun had also disappeared, and so did the monster of guts and his many child monsters.

Looking at the street around that had been basically ruined, Buck trembled. If he had investigated the area with a common officer, they would have certainly been among the people who went missing.

"My lady, has the monster been destroyed by you?" Asked Buck carefully, not just because he was worried about the monster making a come back, but also because he was deeply awed by the lady before him who smiled all the time.

Looking at the pieces of the silver badge on the ground regretfully, Heidi replied, "Theoretically speaking, it is impossible for the monster to come back to life."

Nor was it impossible to restore the silver badge...

Summoning the power of a legendary demiplane required complicated and expensive magic rituals. Even though she asked for the help of her teacher's 'Atomic Universe', the necessary process of communication was still mandatory. Therefore, in order to prepare most of the procedures of the ritual that could be modularized, one would need extremely expensive materials to make the special alchemical items. Even though she had worked for years in the Atom Institution and published a lot of papers, and she had a part-

time job in the Holt Magic College, she could only afford one or two of such items.

She was simply crushing the enemy with money!

Hearing Heidi's reply, Buck took a long breath in relief. He reminded himself that he must not get involved in similar incidents in the future, or he wouldn't know how he got killed after he died!

Looking at the shaking two-floored house, he proposed, "There should be clues inside."

Heidi nodded in agreement. She was about to walk in, when she suddenly had a strong feeling of dizziness. It was obvious that her spiritual power had been exhausted. She evaluated his status and thought to himself, "Even if 'Spell Trigger' can be simplified into a fifth-circle spell later, I'm afraid that the standard for the senior-rank sorcerers will still be the sixth circle. The people whose cognitive world is not substantiated cannot be called senior-rank, because they can only afford one quasi-advanced spell under the help of external devices."

Seeing that Heidi was pale and breathing fast, Buck asked concernedly, "My lady, are you alright?"

"I'll be fine after a rest." Heidi took out a dosage of 'Water Song' and drank it. She immediately felt coolness in her stomach.

Heidi needed to rest. Not having the courage to enter the shabby building on his own, Buck thought of random topics. "My lady, was the spell you used just now a simplified version of 'Eternal Blaze'?"

The battle in the sky of Rentato between the Congress of Magic and the South Church were witnessed by most of the ordinary people because of 'Paradise on Earth'. As a result, 'Eternal Blaze' became a synonym of the most powerful magic for people like Buck.

Heidi smiled. "Not exactly. I simply borrowed the power of fusion simulated in my teacher's 'Atomic Universe' in order to build up my 'Arcana Light'. It sort of contains the qualities of 'Eternal Blaze'."

If it were really a simplified and minimized version of 'Eternal

Blaze', it would've been impossible for them to resist the explosion which took place not far away. They would've been burnt up by the storm energy and the high temperature.

After a while, Heidi's face was back to normal. She enhanced herself and Buck with plenty of magic effects, before the two of them entered the second floor prudently.

The scorched interior of the hall was the last evidence that proved the existence of the monster of guts. At the center of the hall was a weird, illogical magic circle. Even though it had been destroyed, Heidi felt obvious dizziness when she saw it, like the recoil of a failed hypnotization. Buck, on the other hand, was so enthralled that he almost failed to come back to himself.

"Don't stare at it. Something is wrong with this magic circle." Heidi patted Buck's shoulder.

Buck trembled hard and moved his eyes away. He thought in fear, "Magic is really terrifying..."

He was even more determined to let his son study magic, because those who did not know magic would certainly suffer setbacks in a magic society!

The two of them searched every room in the building carefully and found a middle-aged man in a black robe inside a secret chamber. His body was intact, but his bulging eyes were utterly lifeless, as if even his soul had been completely annihilated by Heidi's magic attack just now.

Heidi examined the body with magic. She suddenly exclaimed in astonishment and opened the black robe of the leader of murderers, before she cut the abdomen of the body.

Inside the abdomen was utterly empty. There were no entrails at all!

"This is...?" Buck stepped back in shock. The man was alive without guts and could even perform magic? Was he one of the liches in the tales? Or maybe, was he a victim himself?

Heidi frowned and searched for all experiment records. However, the black-robed, middle-aged man was very prudent. Few clues were left behind.

“It seems that he was a fifth-circle sorcerer who couldn’t keep up with the development of arcana. Due to the fear of being abandoned by the age and the hate for being surpassed by his peers, he embarked on the path of improving his strength through foul magic rituals under the enchantment of a mysterious person named ‘Bird of Death’. The beginning of the ritual seems to be transforming himself into a living corpse that does not have guts, after which he will be able to extend his life by depriving others of their internal organs...”

“Since then, his magic strength had advanced into the senior rank, and he was capable of the talented quasi-spell abilities such as devils and other magic creatures, like ‘Finger of Death’...”

Examining the clues she had found comprehensively, Heidi restored the black-robed, middle-aged man’s experience.

Buck’s forehead was soaked with cold sweat as he listened on. When Heidi looked at him and asked for his opinion, he blurted out, “The Bird of Death must be a night watcher. They corrupt the few undetermined sorcerers in order to undermine the Congress’ image among the people. We have to strike their crime and clarify the misunderstanding!”

If such a case of evil magic rituals spread out, the ordinary people would inevitably associate sorcerers with gore and ferocity. Although it was only a bias, nobody would be able to consider carefully now that such a terrible thing had happened. Therefore, they had to find a scapegoat to shoulder the criticism!

“It is possible...” Heidi did not say anything, because that was indeed a possible answer. Then, she comforted Buck, trying to relieve his concerns. “Don’t be scared. Those sorcerers are the minority. Most of the sorcerers are normal. It’s like there are murderers and thieves among the citizens of Rentato, but you cannot consider the citizens of Rentato to be murderers and thieves. It is not mathematically correct.”

Buck nodded his head quickly, not having any objection at all.

“I’m going to bring the files and items in this place back to the Congress and ask the senior-rank astrologers to deal with them. I’ll try to find more clues and find out who the Bird of Death is.” Heidi pointed at the crime spot and said.

“Thank you for your trouble, my lady. Even if you hadn’t mentioned it, we would still send the files and items to the Congress. Nobody is better than dealing with such problems than the sorcerers of the school of astrology are.” Buck rubbed his hands and said eagerly.

After collecting the files and items, Heidi and Buck left the two-floored building. When they passed the hall, she looked back at the second floor and frowned, before she said in a low voice, “Is it the Church?”

Chapter 662: Preparations

After she returned to Allyn, Heidi did not go to the Task Zone to report the case, or to the Sorcerer Administrative Department to ask the senior-rank astrologers to deal with the files and items involved in the case of evil magic rituals, but to the external part of ‘Babel’ and enter the ‘Atomic Universe’ under the lead of the servant.

She felt that there were many weird things in the matter, and that she had to report it to her teacher.

Inside the Atomic Universe, the real Babel Tower rose into space from the planet of iron, releasing a fantastic sense of beauty.

“Good afternoon, Your Majesty.” Heidi saw Natasha the moment she entered and hurried to greet her, somewhat in a panic. She admired Natasha’s character and lifestyle, so she was rather nervous when she was faced with her.

Amused by Heidi’s awkwardness, Natasha scratched her chin and asked, “I’m not a monster who feeds on human flesh. Why are you scared of me?”

“No, I’m just...” Heidi hurried to explain.

Natasha waved her hands and interrupted her. “Your teacher is waiting for you.”

“How, did my teacher know that I was coming?” Heidi’s anxiety was relieved now that they were talking about business. Before Natasha replied, she talked to herself, deep in thought. “I summoned the power of master’s demiplane. Perhaps, Master paid attention to what happened around me at that time.”

While thinking, she came to the library under Natasha’s lead and saw her teacher smiling at her on the chair behind the desk.

Lucien was still wearing the double-breasted suit. His hair was slightly longer, and his monocle was glimmering under the illumination of the sunlight from the window. “I basically know

what happened before. Give me the files and items.”

“Master, I don’t think that it’s as simple as that. There seems to be something deeper and weirder to this magic ritual...” Heidi handed the files and items over to Lucien.

“I know. I will discuss with Mr. President, my teacher and Granny Hathaway. You were very keen. It’s true that the appearance of such evil magic rituals can be misleading.” Lucien browsed through the files. “You will submit your mission later. The rest of this incident will be too much for you to participate in.”

Heidi nodded solemnly. “Alright, master.”

As the queen of Holm, Natasha naturally paid enough attention to the matter, too. It was not until Heidi left that she looked at Lucien gravely and said, “I feel that it’s related to the seven primeval devils. Cutting the guts was only a superficial procedure, and what they really wanted was the feeling of pain... Viken knew that you discovered his identity and therefore exposed the way of transformation through primeval devils without bothering anything, so that internal conflicts would burst out in the kingdom and the Congress first?”

“Greed, the source of all troubles.” Lucien sighed. “It’s impossible to investigate whether Viken asked the night watchers to disseminate it or somebody else was behind it. We can only fight back in other ways while we focus on our own business in secret.”

Natasha nodded and slightly frowned. “The primeval devils are very tricky and can hardly be completely purged. Thankfully, the blood power of ‘Sword of Truth’ is a bane for them. Lucien, have you finished the analysis of your legendary spells? Are you ready to advance into level three of legendary?”

For the grand arcanists, there were barely any obstacles in the first three levels. Since Lucien had published enough important papers in the past two years, he was only half a step away from level three. However, it was a major challenge to reach the peak from level three. Until Lucien published the new alchemy, there had only been two peak legends among the Congress! Also, Oliver, Hellen and

Vicente hadn't made the breakthrough even in the age of the grand development of arcana.

As for the leap from peak to demigod, of so many top legends after so many years, only Thanos and Viken achieved a flawed success. It's not hard to imagine how difficult the process was!

"I've already analyzed 'Snow Goddess's Anger' and 'Silent Blue' and obtained the information I wanted. I'm now improving 'Snow Goddess's Anger' with my new discoveries and turning it into a new legendary spell." Lucien did not keep anything from Natasha and introduced his work.

As a matter of fact, it was easier for him to advance than it was for other grand arcanists, because 'Eternal Blaze' was already shaped in Lucien's cognitive world although it was a spell that only level-three legends could learn. He could make a breakthrough under the assistance of magic rituals easily.

Right now, Lucien had constructed nine legendary spells inside his soul, namely 'Atomic Fission', 'Vengeful Gaze', 'Space Staff', 'Evans' Hand of Uncertainties', 'Luxury Cracking', 'Abrupt Magic Reverse', 'Mental Fulmination', 'Storm Barrier' and 'Mirror of Fate'. After the improvement of 'Snow Goddess's Anger' was completed and the spell was successfully constructed, he would reach the summit of level two of legendary and advance with 'Eternal Blaze'.

Natasha looked at Lucien curiously. "Improve? You've learnt a lot from the two ice-type legendary spells?"

"Temperature manifests the thermal movement of molecules. The more intense their activity is, the higher the temperature will be, and vice versa. When it comes to the legendary level, the regular temperature-reducing methods can only achieve poor results. So, I need to analyze the two ice-type legendary spells, find the part on their models that reduces the temperature, and relate it to actual arcana significance..."

"The result is similar to my anticipation. My time to reconstruct the model can be saved, and I only need to make improvements to some degree. Also, such a method will play an important role in the

studies in the microscopic domain.” Lucien pointed at the files on the desk and said.

Natasha was somewhat interested by what Lucien said. “I’m told that the legendary sorcerers of Cabin of Palmeira have been relatively weak because they do not understand the arcana significance of the ice-type legendary spells and can only construct them brutally with their spiritual power and shallow understanding. As a result, those spells are hard to learn and cannot achieve the best effect.”

“Ms. Hellen is almost one of the best arcanists, but she had to construct ‘Snow Goddess’s Anger’ by force when she learnt it, too.”

She grew even more curious as she talked. “What exactly have you obtained?”

“...” Lucien thought for a moment and tried to describe the idea of restraining molecular movements by the magnetic field or the laser as simply as possible. That would make the ice-type legendary spells even closer to absolute zero.

Natasha’s eyes lost focus as she listened on. She rose abruptly and tried to smile, “I need to practice my blood power now. I’m feeling that I’m closer and closer to the realm of legendary!”

Watching Natasha flee in amusement, Lucien shook his head and picked up an invitation from his drawer, on which it wrote:

“Dear Mr. Principal: The sorcerers of the college are full of confusion and frustrations regarding the development in the microscopic domain and the new alchemy. Even the faculty can barely understand them. We wonder if we can invite you to hold an open class for us, so that the mist on the teachers’ and students’ path forward can be cleared...”

Lucien was deep in thought. Suddenly, he tapped the invitation and opened his mouth. “Pinocchio, ask Leo to go to the Holt Magic College and tell them that I will hold an open class about the microscopic world in one week.”

As he spoke, he looked at his magic laboratory. The materials that he exchanged 'Hundred-eye Ghost' for and the countless improvements and modifications could finally be put into use now...

"Understood, my lord." Pinocchio replied merrily, as carefree as ever.

.....

Inside the conference room of the Highest Council...

Lucien introduced Heidi's mission report and concluded, "Obviously, this is very similar to 'Viken's Special Summoning Ritual'. The ritual to cut the guts and transform into a living corpse was meant to fill the sorcerer with pain. He was strengthened not because of the ritual but because the devil of pain had been projected into his heart."

Douglas picked up the topic. Looking around at the members of the Highest Council, he said solemnly, "The detailed files about the primeval devils are reserved to the senior-rank sorcerers, and the sorcerers of such a level wouldn't mess with the treacherous devils unless they have special reasons. Therefore, I suspect that Viken intentionally leaked the real way to become a demigod, which tempted certain sorcerers..."

"From the incomplete files we grasped, we know that it's enough to become a demigod by transforming into primeval devils. They also need to gather the power of faith. Therefore, we have to investigate cults. I'll ask the Holmish Church to cooperate with us. I hope that we do not overlook the problem."

All the members fell into a brief silence except for Fernando and Hathaway who heard about it earlier. However, there was no telling whether it was because they were shocked or for other reasons.

After a minute, Brook broke the silence. "Such cults are highly hazardous and must be curbed. We must not show any mercy even if anyone of the Highest Council is involved."

He seemed suspicious that some legendary sorcerers or archmages were behind it and therefore warned them in advance.

After giving everyone a reminder, Douglas added, “Based on the Pathway of Immortality and Lucien’s transformation experience, the mysteries of demigods are related to quantum superposition. We can find safer ways by studying the microscopic world. There’s no need to march forward at the risk of being corrupted by the primeval devils.”

Vicente, Atlant and the other members of the Highest Council all nodded in approval. After more than a year, they respected the experiment results and acknowledged the probabilistic explanation, but just like Douglas and Fernando, they believed that probabilities and uncertainties were not the nature of microscopic particles but because of other hidden factors. As long as the ‘external conditions’ were found, it would be able to introduce the microscopic status into the macroscopic world, thereby embarking on the path of demigods.

With dawn and hope ahead, naturally, nobody was willing to walk on the dangerous sideway.

After the meeting, Lucien, Douglas, Fernando and Hathaway discussed the earlier problems. Suddenly, Douglas said, “I’ve constructed the model of ‘Gravitational Lens’ and realized that the distance of the planets we calculated before is wrong. So, I plan to prepare for another super-remote space jump in the next two years to search for planets.”

Lucien looked at Douglas without being surprised. “Mr. President, I believe that planets exist, but I don’t think your attempt will succeed. If it’s purely the problem of the gravitational lens, the enigmas at the end of the Boundless Ocean wouldn’t exist, and we would see our planet after we jump into space.”

Lucien had a few guesses about the matter, but he had to confirm many things first.

Douglas nodded his head. “I know, but I have to give it a shot. Perhaps, I’ll find something interesting there that will offer clues for

us to solve the puzzle.”

As he spoke, his voice became lower. “I’ve improved a few legendary spells and almost created a legendary alchemical device that can support the double-slit experiment with electrons. I believe that there will be a conclusion about the microscopic domain very soon.”

“Of course.” Lucien took a deep breath.

Chapter 663: Open Class

On the last Friday of April in 827, the thirty-first floor of the Allyn magic tower was crowded with noisy people.

“This is probably the place with the highest density of official sorcerers...” In the crowd, Heidi spoke to her friends, including Katrina and Annick, jokingly.

Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans was about to have an open class about the microscopic world this morning. Most of the sorcerers had been captivated and searched for every opportunity to attend it. As a result, the leadership of the Holt Magic College had to issue a restraint: the teachers and students of the college were free to choose whether or not to attend it, but for the external sorcerers, it all depended on the time of their application whether or not they had the privilege to attend it whatever rank they were at.

Sprint frowned at Heidi. “Why did you drag us here? If you have any questions, you can ask our teacher in private.”

Heidi chuckled. “It’s been a long time since we saw our teacher on the podium. How could we miss the opportunity?”

With her as the example, most of the arcanists in the Atom Institution had a part-time job in the Holt Magic College, returning the ‘privileges’ they enjoyed from their teacher to society.

“That’s right. How I miss the carefree life when I studied in the magic school.” Layria followed Heidi into the classroom.

Prospell, the tower guard, had temporarily turned on a space-folding magic circle, allowing the classroom to accommodate thousands of people.

Unable to consider questions in such an environment, Annick defended Heidi’s sudden idea. “It’s indeed a rare opportunity. Our teacher wouldn’t hold the lecture systematically from the beginning on other occasions. This will help us pick up what we missed and what we were wrong about. Look. Mr. Gaston, Ms. Isabella, Mr.

Larry, Mr. Dieppe, Mr. K, Mr. Samantha and Ms. Rachel... They're all here."

He intended to speak the names of all the sorcerers he knew, but he soon discovered that it was even more troublesome than the studies of the microscopic world.

"Yes, exactly. What Annick said is my key point." Heidi borrowed Annick's theory unashamed and led everybody to their spots.

Katrina took a breath. "What is our teacher going to lecture on today?"

Even Layria and she were almost dazzled by the development in the microscopic world today and had to work very hard to keep up with the trend. Had it not been for the solid mathematical foundation that Lucien laid for them, they would've been left behind by the best arcanists in the microscopic domain.

"This is an open class towards all teachers and students. Mr. Evans certainly won't dive too deeply. It will probably be an overall analysis for everybody's understanding." Alfalia had made remarkable progress after staying in the Atom Institution for four years, but she was still rather ignorant about the microworld and needed such a general review to help herself understand it.

Sprint, on the other hand, said hopefully. "Will our teacher propose a new theory that answers why the microscopic particles have uncertainties?"

"Probably not... That's the greatest puzzle in the microscopic domain and perhaps represents the truth of the world." Annick shook his head. "According to the idea that our teacher persisted in, probabilities and uncertainties are the intrinsic qualities of the microscopic particles, not the unavoidable interferences caused by observation. So, if we find why the microscopic particles have such intrinsic qualities, it will mean that we have a full understanding about the microscopic domain."

Heidi sniffed. "Our teacher's explanation is at loggerheads with determinism. No wonder the arcanists of the school of astrology

such as Isabella and Samantha have come.”

In everybody’s whispers, Thompson, the vice principal of the Holt Magic College and a member of the Affair Committee, walked in. Pushing the gold-edged glasses on his nose, he said, “Silence.”

Under the assistance of the broadcast rune array, the crowded classroom immediately fell quiet.

“The rest of the time will be given to Mr. Lucien Evans, who will interpret the mysteries of the microworld for us.” Knowing that he would be barraged with any further ado, he finished the introduction quickly.

Then, Lucien, in a double-breasted suit and wearing a bow-tie of the same color, walked in from a side door. He dropped the top hat on the desk.

“Everybody’s time is precious. Let’s get down to our business right now. The studies on the microworld dated back to the War between Wave and Particle about light. That’s how we began to understand the specialty of the microscopic particles...” Lucien peacefully began with the classic wave experiment of the light and continued with the confirmation of the particle nature of light.

It was the information that the sorcerers were very familiar with. They understood it very well and soon submerged in Lucien’s pace.

...The discovery of the cathode ray, the confirmation of electrons, the revelation of the internal structure of atoms, the verification of protons, the proposition of the new alchemy... The wave-particle duality that was extrapolated from light to all the microscopic particles, the disagreement between many experiments in the microscopic domain with reality, the design of matrix mechanics, the explanation of the wave function, and the debate caused by the explanation and the wave-particle duality, as well as the opinions that different grand arcanists and senior-rank arcanists held. All the information was introduced to the attendees clearly by Lucien.

There wasn’t any difficult calculation or knowledge. Having a general understanding about the microscopic domain, they were

fascinated and forgot the passage of time.

“Mr. Evans has introduced all the explanations unbiasedly. He even analyzes why there is disagreement. He never says that his theory is absolutely correct and the other theories are worthless.” Dieppe nodded in admiration. Mr. Evans’ arcana attitude was absolutely healthy, considering that he had accomplished so many achievements at such a young age.

Very soon, Lucien finished the general introduction. He smiled at everyone. “This concludes the first part of my lecture. Here, I would like to remind you that, although I tried to avoid the intricate mathematics in my previous narration, what we can and only can depend on is mathematics and experiments in the microscopic domain.”

Heidi and her friends of the Atom Institution were not surprised at Lucien’s speech, because it was what their teacher had repetitively told them. As for the arcanists who were not taught by Lucien, they understood the importance of mathematics, but they did not understand why it was so important.

Looking around, Lucien said solemnly, “The microscopic domain is a world that we cannot directly observe with the naked eye. All methods of observation we have so far will inevitably influence it and result in the most peculiar phenomena, which will be answered by different explanations and theoretical models. At first look, all of them seem to make sense.”

“However, I’d like to point out that, in the microscopic domain, where our experience in the past is no longer applicable and where the methodology we are used to errs, all the explanations and theoretical models must be strictly built on mathematics. Otherwise, there will be no explanations or hypotheses, but illusions and fantasies!”

“Math doesn’t lie...” Neeshka said in a low voice. Lucien’s confidence and his words at that time left him an unforgettable impression.

Lucien’s solemn attitude woke up most of the arcanists, who gained

a deeper understanding about the importance of mathematics in the microscopic domain.

“I believe that you are all somewhat suspicious about the wave-particle duality of the electron, about the cloud of probabilities that is ubiquitous in space, and about whether or not the electron can pass two slits simultaneously...” Lucien suddenly brought up the question.

Most of the arcanists nodded their heads quickly. It was the most difficult and controversial problem so far. Annick and Lucien’s other students, however, all widened their eyes. They knew their teacher too well. Things were certainly not as simple as that!

“Has our teacher finished the preparation of the double-slit experiment with electrons?” After a brief silence, Heidi quickly recalled the project that their teacher had been busy with. It would be an important confirmation of the electron’s wave-particle duality!

Annick and Sprint had lost interest in talking with her. They focused their eyes on the podium, waiting for their teacher’s next sentence with pounding hearts.

After a long pause, Lucien said, “We will have a five-minute break. Then, I will present to you the double-slit experiment with electrons.”

“What”? Exclamations of shock echoed in the classroom. Such an important experiment was to be presented on such an occasion?

After the initial shock, they soon grew excited. Would they be witnesses of history and miracles?

Lucien did not talk to them anymore. He simply brought out a common metal plate which did not seem to have any slit. Or rather, the slits were too small to be observed.

“Such tiny slits need months of engraving even with legendary magic.” The arcanists whispered to each other. Some of them hurried to inform their teachers to join the gala. They believed that

archmages wouldn't be stopped.

Alchemical devices were brought out by Lucien one after another. Very soon, a platform to confirm the double-slit interference of electrons was established. In the meantime, Lucien extracted the image of the sensor screen with other magic circles and projected it to a wall after magnification.

At this moment, Brook and Oliver, two grand arcanists, arrived. They were not surprised that Lucien had completed the metal plate that the double-slit experiment needed earlier than they did. After all, he was an expert close to level three of legendary himself and the unquestionable No. 1 authority in the microscopic domain.

They could've waited for the final result of the experiment, but the pursuit for arcana and truth had prompted them to stand in the classroom to witness it in person without bothering about their own identity.

After a minute, Douglas was there, Fernando was there, Hellen was there, Hathaway was there, and so were the other legendary sorcerers and archmages.

Lowering his head and hiding his eyes, Lucien let out an inaudible bitter chuckle. Then, he opened his eyes and walked to the experiment device. "In the next, we are going to have the double-slit experiment with electrons."

Chapter 664: Observation Changes the World

Chapter 664: Observation Changes the World

In the big classroom, it was so quiet that even a single breath would be heard.

Once Lucien turned on the device, within the projection on the wall, many light spots appeared. They followed no order, No one could predict where the next light spot would show up.

There were more and more light spots. Heidi's mouth opened big out of surprise. In her eyes, there was this classic and beautiful interference image!

The arcanists took a deep breath from their surprise. There was no more doubt about an electron's wave properties. No pure particle theory could explain this.

"Double-slit interference of electrons..." said Douglas in a low voice at the back of the classroom. The experiment result was still bearable to him.

In the past year, the secret of Pathway of Immortality, the rapid development of microscopic domain, and the results of many experiments had made Douglas, Fernando, and the rest of the leading arcanists mentally prepared for the idea of electronic cloud and they had also gained a deeper understanding of wave-particle duality. However, what they disagreed with Lucien was that they believed in a further explanation behind the properties, and thus Lucien's quantum mechanics was not perfect yet.

Even though, when seeing this interference image, the grand arcanists were still deeply thrilled – They had never expected it that an electron could perform such pure wave properties!

Using the dream-like image of bright and dark streaks, Lucien slightly turned aside and pointed at it, "Many of you might be

doubting your own eyes, or my alchemical device. If it's the latter, you can feel free to check it later, but if it's the former, I will tell you that you're seeing exactly what you're supposed to see!"

"If an electron only has wave properties, it would only go through one slit at a time, and thus we'll see the two diffraction images simply overlapping. But the experiment has proved that it isn't true. This is a standard, typical diffraction image, which means that an electron was either influenced by another of its peers from behind or the electron itself went through two slits at the same time and thus self-interference was achieved. Therefore, as a result, the image on the screen was produced."

"No matter which one is the correct explanation, both of the possibilities have proved pure wave properties."

Lucien's voice was serious and solemn, and the pace of his talking was well-controlled. Those arcanists who were listening were going through veils of mysteries but they knew that they were approaching the sacred truth, despite its ambiguity.

"In fact, I have done further experiments. After reducing the power of the emitter, only one electron could be produced at a time, and the next electron would only be emitted after the one before it has gone through the two slits to rule out the possibility that there was interference between electrons. As I expected, after a while, the interferometric fringes were the same!"

"To be more precise, electrons are probability waves. They are everywhere in space and can interfere with themselves and go through two slits at the same time!" Lucien announced.

Isabella and Samantha were totally shocked, as well as the many arcanists present. They did not know how to take it. Electrons had mass, electric charge and trace, but they could also be everywhere in space! How was that possible?! Did electrons still belong to matter?

If electrons were still matter and they carried such properties, then what about human beings? Human beings consist of microscopic particles, then can human beings be everywhere in space? If that

was the case, then they should be able to get to Lance and Aalto at the same time in one step!

Microscopic domain was part of this world. Arcanists were for sure connecting the microscopic domain to the macro!

Hellen stared at the image attentively, her fingers pressing against her cheek. She had fallen into deep thoughts. With some difficulties, the members of the Highest Council could accept the idea of an electronic cloud as they had seen Lucien's experience and the Pathway of Immortality. Their heads were temporarily safe.

As for other arcanists, they did not even have an understanding of the microscopic domain deep enough to make their heads explode. They never tried to use any theories in the microscopic domain to construct their cognitive worlds, and thus their heads were also safe as well.

However, when the description of the electronic cloud came out, more than a hundred arcanists suffered. They could not imagine how electrons should exist in their cognitive worlds.

Their cognitive worlds had reached the limit. They could take no more.

"Electronic clouds do exist, but probability isn't necessarily the most essential property..." Samantha murmured in a low voice in pain. If they were going to admit that probability was the intrinsic nature of an electron, they were to accept that probability was the intrinsic nature of the world. Then determinism would become largely problematic. She had to stick to a reason to secure the baseline.

However, she was also well aware of the fact that this kind of insistence would never help her reach legendary level, not even the archmage level!

Those arcanists from the school of astrology were also suffering. Fortunately, Lucien did not bring the experiment he just mentioned here today.

Lucien dropped his hand and looked around in the big classroom. He said calmly, "Since the experiment that electrons are emitted one by one takes a long time, I am not going to show it to you. You may apply to the Atom Institution for the permit of using the devices and conduct the experiment on your own."

"If you want to skip the waiting line, you may also use the experiment on light inference as an analogy. The device requirement is much lower, and you all are able to do the experiment in your own lab."

Lucien then repeated the experiment in detail.

Then he concluded, "After a long period of time, you should be able to see the fringes. That means a single photon also has the property of interfering with itself."

Some arcanists remained completely silent as they were afraid, while some were slightly trembling because of the great excitement.

At this time, Oliver asked, "Lucien, so far all of your theories are built on wave-particle duality. If it is only pure waves, then its particle properties are no more than wave packets, then neither double-slit experiment nor the self-interference feature is worth our surprise, as they both conform to wave properties. Also, I've got a question here: Under what circumstance can a quantum superposition state exist? Why doesn't it apply to the macro-world?"

"Then why would your probability waves suddenly collapse into a certain spot when reaching the screen and lose its probability?" Oliver added.

His explanation made sense to those arcanists who followed wave theory. From this perspective, this experiment seemed to be less shocking and incredible.

Fernando responded before Lucien, "Oliver, if electrons and other microscopic particles are pure waves, why don't they show wave properties? We are made up of those particles! Your question also involves how we transit our theory from microscopic domain to the

macro. You don't need me to remind you that waves do 'die' without the support of particle properties!"

Although Fernando did not totally agree with Lucien, he respected the power of mathematics and results of solid experiments.

Fernando's response made many arcanists frown tight. When it came to the connection to the macro-world, the real trouble came.

Seeing that an intense debate was about to take place at any time, Lucien raised his hand and smiled, "In terms of double-slit experiment with electrons, I have another follow up experiment, an altered version, to show to you."

What?! There were more experiments coming?

Lucien pointed at the alchemical device and said, "We can add a recording magic item to each slit to see whether it is one electron passing through two slits at the same time or it is just one. I'll set up different alarms so we can know whether it is through the slit on the right, on the left, or both."

Lucien took out the magic items for recording and showed them around to have the arcanists present make sure that he did nothing to them.

When he was setting up the items, the arcanists present could not help discussing.

"Annick, so according to our teacher's description, we're supposed to expect that the two alarms will go on at the same time in different sounds, right?" Heidi asked Annick, who was rather talented in the microscopic domain.

Oliver cut in, "I don't understand why Mr. Evans wants to do this. If both of the alarms go off at the same time, that means an electron can pass through two slits at the same time, and then pure wave properties will be proved, just as I said. If they don't, the concept of self-interference that Mr. Evans just mentioned would become invalid..."

In other words, such an experiment would do no good to Mr. Evans!

Annick heard the discussion silently. After a while, he finally responded, “My guess is that only one alarm would go off. Mr. Evans is trying to verify the particle properties of electrons...”

“Then what about self-interference?” Layria asked. She had some feelings and started being very concerned.

Neither Annick nor Sprint made more comments. Both of them had turned to look at the device in the front, waiting for the result.

Lucien said to his audience and said in a soft tone, “I’ll slow down the speed of emitting so you can tell the alarms better.”

Then the patterns on the magic circle lit up. The different alarms both went off, but never together!

“So one slit at a time?” Heidi murmured, “...Then what about self-interference?”

At this time, someone gasped. Then many could not help asking aloud in great confusion, “Where are the interferometric fringes?!”

Heidi turned to look at the wall but was shocked to find that the light spots congregating were not forming any interferometric fringes that they saw earlier, but the properties of particles only!

Staring at the wall, Douglas’s eyes slightly opened wide, “The attempt to observe the particle properties of electrons made the wave properties disappear...?”

Just like how uncertainty principle described momentum and position...?

Oliver was slightly shaking his head. Somehow, it seemed that there was some dark air surrounding him.

Standing in the front, Lucien pointed at the experiment image with his right hand,

“When we are not observing, electrons are in the superposition state and this can be described using a model of electron cloud. However, when we want to see its wave properties and conduct an

experiment for it, electrons will show us their pure wave properties and the feature of self-interference...”

“...When we want to see an electron’s particle properties, it will follow our wish and show us pure particle properties...”

“...Therefore, its state and nature depend on our observation, on what result we want!”

How creepy that was! The arcanists present were even more confused now! One’s observation can change the world?!

That was even more magical than magic!

Chapter 665: The Explanation

When we wanted to see wave properties in an electron using double-slit experiment, we would see the more distinct wave features – interferometric fringes, while when we wanted to see particle properties by adding the devices for recording, only pure particle properties would be left...

Was that the truth of the world? Electrons would show us what we want, and thus our observation changed the world?

Their heads were in such a mess that their entire understanding of the world and even of themselves had become beyond their recognition! They thought that the world would only be strange when magic spells were cast. However, they had now realized that the microscopic domain was even stranger and creepier than magic!

Larry felt very shocked, but also thrilled. He started thinking of the arcana principle behind this experiment. Was this how the principle of complementarity was applied to wave-particle duality? Wave properties and particle properties could not show up at the same time – When one appeared, the other would disappear. Was this how it worked?

He kept telling himself that he should avoid connecting the microscopic domain to the macro at this point, or his cognitive world would be totally messed up, and lots of things in this world would appear totally contradictory to him.

Meanwhile, Annick, Sprint, Dieppe, Timothy and many other arcanists were also telling themselves that there must be other reasons affecting this during the transition from the microscopic domain to the macro, other reasons that collapsed wave function and made particle properties fixed. They had to warn themselves this all the time or their cognition would be shaken by the experiment at any time!

This was the only way that they could try to accept the experiment results shown by Lucien Evans.

This perhaps was the most incredible and unimaginably queer domain in the history of arcana and magic!

Although the low and middle-rank arcanists were still starters in the microscopic domain and they never tried to use the knowledge to build their own cognitive world, the experiment results had still greatly impacted their outlook on the world, on life, and on their values. This was their first time tasting the pain that an arcanist had to face when his or her cognitive world had to shift.

Lucien was indeed the Destroyer of Three Outlooks. Many arcanists, honestly speaking, disliked Lucien Evans.

When the initial shock gradually calmed down, many good arcanists including Larry, Dieppe, Annick, and Sprint started to feel the thrill. The experiment had made them have a deeper understanding of wave-particle duality and the principle of complementarity, and now their hearts were full of the drive to explore further.

“I’ve got a question.”

At this time, Oliver asked. The look on his face was a bit distorted, but the dark air surrounding him had disappeared. A moment earlier, his cognitive world was almost shaken, but fortunately, he handled it trying his best.

Lucien slightly nodded, “Go ahead, please.”

Larry and Dieppe turned to look at Mr. Oliver with curiosity.

Oliver slightly took a breath and then asked, “You said that ‘observation changes result’...Then how do you define ‘observation’? This has to do with the transition from microscopic domain to the macro.”

“It refers to all the means that we take to study electrons.” answered Lucien calmly. He slightly looked down, so no one could tell the emotions in his eyes.

Oliver had totally calmed down. Some light smile appeared on his face and he said in the poetic tone, “So we are the ones that matter. Then I’ve got a thought experiment here. All of us know the decay

of the nucleus, right?”

The arcanists present all nodded. Studying the decay of elements was one of the several major branches in the microscopic domain, and the Lord of Storm and the Lord of Elements had just won the Evans Prize in Arcana with their research on it. This also represented a new direction for using alternative energy, a new legendary lethal spell with massive power. Therefore, all of them knew it!

Oliver continued, “So if we assume that a nucleus has a chance of fifty percent to decay, and then we design such an experiment device...”

Oliver then described a fine and exquisite device. In this device, when a nucleus decayed and emitted neutrons, a series reactions would be activated and finally break a glass bottle containing a fatal curse.

“...So if we put a poor cat in the device, logically speaking, we can say that there is a chance of fifty percent that the cat will be killed,” said Oliver.

When Oliver was describing the device, Sprint’s and Annick’s face turned pale. They had a feeling of what was coming.

Dieppe, Larry, Jurisian and other arcanists good at the microscopic domain also looked very apprehensive. They knew what Oliver was trying to do!

– He was using this device to connect the microscopic world and the macro!

This was the part of the problem that they had been running away from all the time!

Under the gaze of the many arcanists present, Oliver’s volume slightly increased, “If we close the device and do not observe it, according to Lucien’s theory, the atomic nucleus would be in the quantum superposition state and thus in the quantum superposition of both decaying and not decaying, and this amazing state would

only collapse to settle when we peek at it.”

“But my question is,” said Oliver, “what about that poor cat? If the nucleus decays, it will be killed; if it doesn’t, it will stay alive; then during the superposition state, can we say that the cat will be both alive and dead in the inclosed device?”

“Is that possible?”

“Or are you saying that our observation of the cat will also lead to the collapse of wave function and thus settle down the result?” Oliver asked aloud.

Many arcanist’s hearts missed a beat. Their faces had turned completely pale. Both alive and not alive? Both dead and not dead? There was no such magic spell that could lead to this state. The fine experiment design had sent the creepy strangeness of the microscopic domain to the macro-world!

They could ignore this problem no more. They had to face such a huge conflict and give thoughts to this transition.

Sprint wished that he could just take the cat by the throat!

They felt that they just got a good slap in the face for agreeing with Lucien.

Oliver asked again, and his target was Lucien Evans who remained silent in the front, “What state is this cat in?”

Oliver wasn’t averse to the idea of quantum superposition state, since he had seen what happened in Pathway of Immortality and what happened to Lucien Evans. However, what was the premise of this state? What was the boundary? Was it only for microscopic particles? Or could this extend all the way to molecules, cells, and even creatures and intelligent lives? Only by figuring out this boundary could they find the reason behind the disappearance of quantum superposition state and thus a solid theoretical foundation could be set up for ascending to the demigod level!

Therefore, he was not very happy with Lucien’s general conclusion. If a human being’s observation can cause the collapse, then what

about observing other intelligent creatures? What about a cat? A molecule?

Everyone was waiting for Lucien's answer.

Lucien still looked down, but he answered, "Yes, the cat is in the quantum superposition state, between life and death."

"What?!" Some arcanists burst out.

Then what about human beings? What if a human was in that device?

The rest of the grand arcanists remained silent, listening to their conversation.

Oliver asked in a low voice, "Then what if a human being was in there? Is that the same?"

"No. At this time, the wave function would collapse, and the result would have settled," said Lucien fast, "either alive or dead, There's no overlapping."

Oliver took a step forward, "Then what is the difference between a human being and a cat? Why can the former make the function collapse, but the latter can't?"

Lucien slightly twitched the corner of his mouth but still answered, "Because of the involvement of consciousness. Only a conscious observer with intelligence can collapse the wave function."

All of the arcanists were deeply shocked. They had never expected such a response. Following Lucien's theory, many terrible and unimaginable facts might be emerging!

Fernando had been remaining silent for a long time, but he had reached his limit. He yelled in the classroom, "So you are saying that before a conscious observer showed up, the entire world, universe was in the state of wave function, in the substance-less state of electron cloud? After a very long time, the first observer was born, and at that moment, the universe and world collapsed and became what we see right now?"

The billions of years of chaos and uncertainty of the universe was all waiting for a loving glimpse?

That was beyond ridiculous! That was a joke from a lunatic!

“Why not? We don’t know what the world was like before the first observer was born.” Lucien avoided looking into Fernando’s eyes.

Douglas also said seriously, “So you’re saying that the first observer was the first supreme observer? Is that what you mean?”

Not only Brook and Oliver, even Hellen and Hathaway who were more open-minded to Lucien’s explanation were shaking their heads in disapproval.

Lucien suddenly looked up at all the arcanists, “Have you ever thought of why there is supreme power? Why is there magic?”

“If we start from the existence of consciousness, from the effect of the observer, we might be able to find the explanation.” said Lucien.

Lucien’s voice lingered in the big classroom, and his question hit all the arcanist’s minds. Yes, what was the nature of magic? That was the question that the Congress of Magic had been pursuing since its establishment? That was the problem for sure to be asked after human beings seeing all kinds of extraordinary phenomena! The problem would only be ignored if human beings stopped thinking and decided to waste their lives like animals!

The arcanists were getting more and more confused on their way approaching the truth of the world. The relationship between the world and magic was just like the uncertainty principle put forward by Lucien which was so hard to capture. It seemed that the truth of the world never left a space for magic!

Was consciousness the explanation? Was it the effect of the observer?

Annick stared at his teacher in the front. His heart was struggling. His teacher was always so elegant and well-mannered, authoritative and determined that people could not help following him. He was

the master in the microscopic domain and the macro star sky!

In Annick's heart, Mr. Lucien Evans was as magnificent as a mountain peak that he had to look upon for his entire life.

But why would his teacher make such an explanation for such a transition? Why would he say that the collapse of the wave function decided the world today?

Was he wrong? Was the past experience and his imagination wrong?

Was Mr. Lucien Evans wrong?

Annick turned around and saw that his friends were all looking very confused. Sprint looked a bit pissed, as his teeth were slightly grinding against each other.

In the weird silence, Lucien said in his low voice again, "The first observer was not necessarily an extraordinary existence. Maybe it's just like us."

"We don't have to care about the supreme observer, the god which tossed the dice. We don't have to."

"Let's recall the experiment. My observation led to the change in nature of the electrons, and yours also can!"

"There's this so-called god which tossed the dice, but it is not existing somewhere outside. Instead, it is in our mind. We are all our own supreme gods!"

The grand arcanists looked at Lucien in astonishment, just like the other arcanists. No one said anything.

After a while, suddenly, someone directly stood up from his seat.

"Annick?" Lucien looked at his student.

"Sir..." Annick's throat was a bit dry, but in the end he still said in great determination.

“I don’t think your explanation is correct.”

This time, he did not shy away. His eyes were looking into Lucien’s eyes.

“Sir, I agree with Annick.” At this time, Sprint also stood up and said aloud to Lucien, which surprised many arcanists present, including his friends, Heidi, Katrina, and Layria.

His fists clenched tight.

Chapter 666: The Correct Attitude towards Arcana

Annick looked at his teacher nervously, but also in great determination. Shy as he was, opposing his teacher was basically like jumping down to the ground from the edge of Allyn without any magic protection. However, his own understanding of microscopic domain was urging him to step out and speak out his own opinion!

Would Mr. Evans be angry at him? Or disappointed?

However, when Annick looked into Mr. Evans's eyes, to his great surprise, there was no look of anger or disappointment at all. It was a very calm, peaceful face.

"What's the problem that you think?" Under the arcanists' gaze, Lucien asked in a calm tone.

Annick took a deep breath and said, "Observation indeed can change results, but we can't say that it's conscious. Observation should be objective, and any life forms or even lifeless things could do. It still requires further exploration and research for us to know when a quantum superposition state is formed."

He only had some rough thoughts. He could not make it any clearer.

"I think so as well." Sprint said aloud, who was a bit surprised that Annick had successfully expressed himself under such huge pressure.

Douglas agreed, "Although there is no mathematical model to support it yet, this sounds more objective. Lucien, your theory is too subjective."

Fernando did not say anything, but the look on his face showed that he was on Annick's side. Although it did not mean that he believed Annick was right, it still appeared that Lucien's theory was too

ridiculous.

The rest of the grand arcanists also showed the same attitude.

“I see. But in this case, how can we explain magic? How can we explain divine power and the power of faith? Annick, your words did not leave a space for supernatural power.” Lucien’s tone remained gentle.

Annick’s mouth slightly opened as he tried to explain, but he did not know how.

“Lucien, don’t connect two irrelevant things to each other. The fact that there is no space for magic in the microscopic domain doesn’t mean that there is also no space in other domains.” Fernando cut in.

Lucien smiled, “My theory is still a guess, a guess that can contain the rationality of all the supernatural powers. Neither of us have a solid argument so far, so let’s take our time to explore further and do more experiments. I hope that we can find the truth of the world.”

The arcanists were a bit surprised. For the first time, Mr. Evans did not throw out a series of rigorous experiment designs and theories to claim his victory as he always did. However, they also felt relieved.

After all, this should be the result that one would expect.

At this time, Lucien smiled and looked at the grand arcanists and his students. He switched the topic, “So far I have some ideas on the three experiments which I haven’t been able to carry out. I hope that with our joint effort, we can achieve them, which will provide great support to our explanation of the microscopic domain.”

“We all know that different temperatures come from the thermal motion of molecules to different extents. Therefore, in the first experiment, if we can restrain microscopic particles from moving around, we will be able to be even one step closer to the absolute zero. Under this circumstance, also, microscopic particles might be in the same quantum state, so we can test many of our thoughts...”

He roughly described how to make “traps” to catch microscopic particles using strong magnetic fields or laser, and he “speculated” how to observe the quantum superposition state using appropriate research steps within an extremely short moment, although they were all theoretical guesses like fantasies.

Every arcanist present was familiar with the idea of strong magnetic fields, and Lucien had put forward the explanation of lasers after learning Vengeful Gaze. Rubies and many magic crystals and gems could amplify a sorcerer’s ray spells and produce very high temperature. But of course, there was a limit on distance.

Therefore, it wasn’t difficult for the audience to understand the concept that the first experiment was based on. Hellen was listening with special attention, as this idea seemed to be reasonable for explaining many of the questions that she had when studying her legendary ice and snow spells. However, as for how the traps should be set up, even if Lucien had had some ideas, he was not going to share them with his audience, as he would save it for himself.

But still, for grand arcanists, direction was always more important than any specific steps!

Oliver did not look too happy, but there was also excitement on his face. If they could see the real superposition state, they would become certain that the secret of the demigods indeed existed in the microscopic domain. However, there were so many great obstacles that had to be overcome first for setting up the experiment, which could not be done within a short period of time.

“But this is not going to explain how this state transits from microscopic domain to the macro, as this experiment only proves that the superposition does exist...” said Annick.

Both Annick and Sprint believed that the experiment mentioned by their teacher was of great significance, but they also believed that there was more coming.

Lucien nodded and continued, “In this experiment, we can make another two changes.”

“The first change is that after an electron passes the double slits and self-interference happens, we make our decision whether we want to see wave properties or particle properties. Then before it hits the screen, we make the corresponding changes to the screen. In this case, what experiment image will it show?”

“Of course we’ll see wave properties. At that time the electron will have passed the slits and interference has happened...” an arcanist spoke out the thought shared by many. However, he quickly stopped himself – They had learned their lesson in the microscopic domain, which was a domain that was totally unpredictable. No one knew for sure whether our observation would change a fact that already happened. In that case, the law of cause and effect in chronological order would no longer exist all the time!

Lucien purposefully twisted the experiment design a little bit in case that the answer would be found too early and the person who found it would definitely explode his or her head. Then he continued, “The second change is that we observe which slit an electron passes using a method that interferes with the motion even less, but after the record, our alarm will not make any noise or signals to let us know. Instead, the device would delete the record immediately. Then will we see wave properties or particle properties?”

Annick’s face turned pale again. The purpose of the change was to tell whether it was the observation of the device that played the role, or “their” observation.

That was the three experiments that Lucien wanted to share. After that, he released a sigh and asked, “That’s all for today’s sharing. Any questions and ideas?”

For a while, no one answered, as they were still reflecting the three experiments that Lucien shared.

Douglas thought for a while and then said in his calm but also determined tone, “I’ve also got a thought experiment: According to your explanation, before observation happens, a microscopic particle is in the form of an electron cloud where many possible states overlap. And you assume that some changes will happen to the particle and make it divide into two even smaller particles

heading for different directions. During this process, without the involvement of an observer, the two smaller particles will still be in the state of superposition and stick to its conservativeness...”

“When there is enough distance, an observer’s investigation into one particle leads to the particle’s state settling down, and thus the other particle follows and collapses immediately. Is that right? Does this action at a distance go against the special theory of relativity?”

Douglas’s words made most arcanists’ heads dizzy. They had gone through a lot today from Oliver’s cat to Lucien’s experiments to Douglas’s entangled particles. Those were all thought experiments complicated and shocking enough to explode their heads. They did not quite understand, and thus they were afraid of them.

“I think that will happen, but this does not go against special relativity. Before observation, microscopic particles spread out everywhere in the space following wave function. The two particles are still one unit that cannot be further divided.” Lucien said roughly, as he dared not to be too accurate and specific.

Douglas nodded, “I’ll try to carry the experiment out to see if it’s true.”

Finally, the lecture bound to be remembered by the history of magic had come to an end. Walking out of the classroom, Lucien felt tired. He rubbed his brows and then walked back to his study.

Soon his students came to visit him, using the excuse of asking him questions.

After asking the several obviously not carefully-prepared questions, Heidi took courage and asked, “Aren’t you angry at us, sir?”

“For what?” asked Lucien.

Heidi pointed at the door of the study and said, “Annick and Sprint dared not to come and see you sir. They are worried that you are angry at them for challenging you, for not being on your side.”

Lucien smiled and shook his head, “No, not at all. Instead, I was happy to see that.”

“What?” The students were confused.

“In arcana, we believe in results of experiments and observation, and the theories based on this foundation, not a specific person as authority.” said Lucien seriously, “Although since I joined the congress I have always been correct and I indeed overturned many theories, this does not mean that people should blindly follow me and say nothing when I put forward ridiculous guesses that contradict basic mathematical logic.”

“...That is the most horrible attitude towards arcana! When I was putting forward a probabilistic explanation, the uncertainty principle, and the effect of the observer, I got scolded by my teacher and the opposite opinion from the president. This was not because they were stubborn, but because they had their own beliefs in arcana, which are built upon the many experiment results and phenomena. It doesn't matter that they don't agree with me as long as they have their beliefs...”

“If they had agreed with me easily, they would never have become grand arcanists. Sprint and Annick were right for insisting on themselves before I can provide any solid support to my theories.” Lucien smiled, seizing the chance to give the students a lesson about correct attitude.

“What if I was wrong?” Lucien asked.

Heidi forced a smile on her face and said, “I have become totally confused with microscopic domain, so currently I am going to focus only on formulas and experiments to study artificial intelligence. I'll not follow the overturning theories for now.”

Layria, Katrina, and Chelly also nodded. To some extent, their heads had exploded.

Chapter 667: Golden Age (End of Volume VII)

Chapter 667: Golden Age (End of Volume VII)

Inside the Atomic Universe...

After Natasha fell asleep, Lucien rose and walked to his desk. He took out a thick pile of papers from his magic pouch and turned to a certain page. While considering, he drew seven lines under the word 'self-awareness', which were connected to 'Greed', 'Arrogance', 'Pain' and the other emotional expressions that represented the seven primeval devils.

Then, he left a big question mark behind the seven words and wrote: "The quantum transformation of the soul requires the superposition of more possibilities? The superposition of other feelings and self-awarenesses?"

"On the other hand, the pure congregation of faith and self-awarenesses will offset one's own self-awareness, thereby preventing one from collapsing from the quantum superposition state? However, one's self-awareness will also be greatly affected as a result, which may lead to other problems?"

"How should the problem be resolved?"

Lucien put on a smile as he wrote on. He tapped the paper with his fingers, as if he were inferring and guessing something.

Shaking his hands with a half smile, Lucien collected the paper and took out a piece of blank paper, on which he wrote:

"The Relativistic Wave Equation of a Single Electron."

Natasha, exhausted, was sleeping and recovering, when she suddenly sensed the terrifying force of obliteration and destruction. She opened her eyes warily, only to discover that the magnetic field around Lucien who was in his pajamas had been twisted. A dreamy

spectrum appeared like a picture, and the most overwhelming power was descending from the infinite heights!

Half of the colors nearby were black, and the other were white. When they collided, they were destroyed in an unimaginable state, before they were born from the void again.

“Feedback from the real world...” Looking at the constantly-changing, black-and-white scene, and feedback of the World she realized what was going on. Also, she somewhat sensed that it was the cycle of the creation and destruction of matter.

The experiences she had when she tried to become a legendary knight, and the problems that occurred to the blood power of Sword of Truth that was purely destructive, were all answered at this moment.

She pulled on her pajamas and walked to Lucien’s side quietly, watching him finish the paper.

“...I once tried to avoid the negative energy result that Dieppe, Larry and Jurisian concluded. However, after constructing the equation and theoretically explaining all the current experiments, I have realized that negative energy is unavoidable. With that in mind, however unreasonable it is, we can only include it in our arcana theories and build a new system that can accommodate it. I hereby predict that there is an antielectron whose electric charge is positive. When it encounters an electron, they will immediately be destroyed by each other and yield tremendous energy...”

“If we think more broadly, there may be other antiparticles, and the matter made of such antiparticles can be called antimatter...”

As he wrote on, Lucien remembered certain concepts in the quantum field theory that he confirmed before. Therefore, the vacuum surged, from which the positive and negative electrons were born, before they obliterated each other and released energy.

Inside his cognitive world, the universe background became hazy, as if matter was being generated and destroyed all the time. The infinite starry sky arrived from far away again, bringing in

tremendous feedback from the real world. The objects inside the cognitive environment were changed as a result, and an incomplete new legendary spell was constructed!

Also, 'Eternal Blaze' in Lucien's cognitive world was naturally engraved into his soul, allowing him to step into level three of legendary directly, even though he had only ten legendary spells.

"Positron Cannon" Lucien wrote a full stop for his paper and closed his eyes, feeling the incomplete, new legendary spell. He knew that he had to find 'antielectrons' in reality in order to complete it.

"It's really hard to make advancements simply by practicing and perceiving the blood power without understanding the mysteries of the world..." Natasha sighed with mixed feelings. That was the reason why legendary knights of higher levels were fewer than sorcerers of the same level. However, as an optimistic girl, she soon cheered herself up and declared, full of ambition, "It's still not too bad. Although I don't understand the specific arcana theories, I think I will be able to become a legendary knight with your interpretation and illustration..."

Lucien smiled at her. "All the classes will reach the same direction when they arrive at the top level. It's about understanding the mysteries of the world. However, the arcanists have the best and most effective approach to explore the world's mysteries."

All the different roads led to the same destination.

.....

After Lucien's open class, the Congress of Magic was caught in a weird state of 'silence' in general. Everybody discussed the double-slit experiment with electrons, Oliver's cat, Douglas's entangling particles, Lucien's experiment of deferred choice, etc., but nobody discussed the influence of a conscious, considerate and intelligent observer on the microworld. They subconsciously evaded the most horrifying explanation.

However, just because they avoided it did not mean that the distinguished arcanists and the grand arcanists would. The papers

on that aspect had been submitted to the Arcana Review Board.

Larry sat inside the dark library like a statue, as if he hadn't moved at all for hundreds of years. Oliver's cat panicked him, and Lucien's observer theory terrified him, making it impossible for him to calm down for his own research and adventure. His head was swarmed by questions in that regard.

Suddenly, he sighed and picked up the pile of papers before him that needed reviewing.

“‘What Exactly Is Consciousness?’... by Mr. Vicente...”

“‘The Boundary Between Spirit and Flesh... by Mr. President...”

“‘Differences Between Soul and Self-Awareness: A Problem of the Observer Effect... by Mr. Fernando...”

“‘What Is Observation?’... by Ms. Hathaway...”

Reading those papers, Larry felt that his head was unusually swollen and chaotic. After Mr. Evans introduced consciousness into the microworld, the objective, concrete domain of elements were suddenly filled with colorful fantasies. The incredible speculations were about to destroy his worldview.

He pressed his temples and put those papers on self-awareness, soul and observation aside, deciding to leave them alone for now. Suddenly, he saw a paper that was rather thick.

“‘The Relativistic Wave Equation of Single Electron’, by Lucien Evans...”

He wrote similar papers about that before, so he was refreshed and devoted himself to it.

As he read on, he became so excited that he kept pulling his bow-tie with his left hand, as if he were trying to spread out the heat in his heart. “He has come up with an equation by speculation and then explained it.”

“Also, this equation is full of mathematical and arcane beauty. It is

short, beautiful and seems to contain the deepest and most fundamental laws and mysteries!”

Then, his eyes were suddenly widened, because all the problems that occurred to the microscopic domain in the past years had been explained by Lucien with the equation rigorously and self-consistently. Brook’s scattering experiment, the unusual splitting of magnetic fields, the accurate structure of the spectrum... Everything was perfectly unified by the equation. Even the hypothesis of electron spin that Annick and Sprint proposed had been inferred by Lucien with the equation, showing that it was the relativistic effect when the electrons abide by the law of conservation.

When he read such a paper, Larry felt that one achievement after another was flying at his face. Dazzling, Larry thought to himself, “This is a perfect summary of the grand development in the microscopic domain for a long time in the past. The brilliant and dazzling golden age has been compressed into one paper!”

“When we studied the microscopic domain before, it’s like ordinary people picking apples. They must spend a lot of time before they can get one of the apples from a tree. However, Mr. Evans’ equation and paper show that the apples are all ripe, and they are falling like rain...”

After the remark and shock, he noticed what was in the latter half of the paper. He was more or less upset after he saw Lucien’s speculation on antiparticles and antimatter, “...Why did I never have the courage to make such bold predictions?”

Of course, he also knew that his previous equation had many other problems. It was not just about negative energy.

“Are there really positive electrons...” Larry murmured to himself and began to write the review.

“This is without a doubt the most deep, shocking and classic equation of the microscopic domain that surpasses everything else. To distinguish it from the Evans field equation, I call it the Lucien equation. With this equation, all the problems that have taken place recently are answered. This is a sublimation of the age of the great

arcana development! Of course, I don't think that it is the end of the golden era of the microscopic domain. It is only the conclusion of the overture, and the first movement is about to begin for real!"

...

Nobody anticipated that, Lucien did not dedicate himself to the problems concerning self-awareness and the observer effect after he proposed them. Instead, he announced the integration of the special theory of relativity and quantum mechanics with an astounding equation that drove away the mist in the microscopic domain. It was like lightning piercing the sky and illuminating the darkness. Nobody ever doubted the promising future of quantum mechanics and the new alchemy again.

"If we don't consider why the probabilistic explanation and the uncertainty principle exist, and why the wave function would collapse, this is absolutely a golden age in the history of arcana..."

Almost all the arcanists sighed as such, but they too knew that they would have to face the uncanny phenomenon if arcana and magic were to be developed any further. They had to figure out the arcana significance behind them and settle the problems about soul, magic and quantum state. When that day came, they would have to make a choice for arcana and magic:

To live, or to die?

Or maybe, to live AND to die?

(End of Volume VII)

Chapter 668: A Letter from the Forest

Inside the magic hall on the top floor of Babel...

The deep black, heavy bricks, reflecting the light of the elemental planets outside, presented a layer of weird, flowing colors. The silver lines made of unknown materials the center gave off a cubic feeling, as if quite a few planes were changing nonstop there, disrupting the normal flow of time and space.

Standing at the center of the magic circle, Lucien took out his delicate, complicated pocket watch and checked the time, before he turned around and looked at the flashing sword in the Atomic Universe outside of the window.

It had been a month since he submitted 'Lucien equation' that integrated the special theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. He had stabilized himself on level three of legendary. Thanks to him, Natasha was able to see the mysteries of the generation and destruction of matters, and she was now closer and closer to the legendary domain. She was making her final preparations for her breakthrough.

Therefore, Lucien did not tell Natasha when he set up the magic circle for space jump in case she got distracted. He simply prepared it himself in silence.

"Thankfully, I only went to the space nearby, instead of searching for planets through super-remote space jumps or reaching the fixed orbits. Otherwise, it would've taken much longer for me to finish the preparation..." Lucien put the pocket watch inside the pocket of his waistcoat behind his double-breasted suit, while he remarked with mixed feelings.

It was the first time he had prepared for a space jump aiming for outer space instead of somewhere within this world. He had met a lot of difficulties, but thankfully, his purpose was different from that of regular space jumps. He did not have a high demand on precision, and the distance was within one year. He merely

intended to complete a certain experiment in space. That was why he had finished the preparations so quickly.

It must be noted that Douglas and Oliver often had to spend two to three times that on the preparation for a super-remote space jump when they searched for planets. As for an orbit jump that demanded a high precision, it was not a big deal for Douglas, but he would have to spend months practicing it.

“However, after the experience this time, I have a deeper understanding about time and space. It will be much easier for me to establish similar space jump circles in the future...” Lucien cleaned his bow-tie. The silver lines around him were enshrouded by the dazzling brilliance, and the whole magic tower began to absorb the power of the demiplane.

Light was gathered into a clear, vast shield, before it collapsed abruptly with Lucien as the center.

Lucien felt sometimes heavy and sometimes light. Curves of space were changing all the time. The defense he cast on himself with ‘Space Staff’ was barraged and destroyed again and again.

After a long time, Lucien suddenly felt that he completely lost his weight. Floating in the dark void, he found countless rays with fatal curses surging at himself.

“Elemental Protection” As Lucien’s strange and abstruse voice vibrated and influenced the space around him, colorful spots of light immediately surfaced. They were gathered into a translucent layer of defense in mysterious trajectories, blocking the dangerous rays in time.

Taking a breath in relief, Lucien knew that he had successfully reached space. He was now exposed to the cosmic rays that contained many amazing particles.

Suddenly, Lucien’s face changed. He chanted again inside the shield of ‘Elemental Protection’, “Space Staff!”

Some of the cosmic rays had ignored ‘Elemental Protection’ and

penetrated through it!

Ripples of light gathered into a watery staff in Lucien's hands. He pointed it slightly, and the space around it was twisted. The few strange cosmic rays brushed past him at a close distance.

"This place is really full of dangers..." Lucien was unclear whether or not those rays would damage his body and his soul, but he dared not be careless.

He came to the vast space not to search for the traces that implied the existence of planets, but to complete the discovery of 'positron' (antielectron), so that his legendary spell, 'Positive Electron Cannon', would be intact and carry out the maximal power.

antiparticles were opposed to particles, and the antimatter they were made of were opposed to matters. When they encountered each other, they would collide and obliterate each other, releasing horrifying energy. According to the mass-energy formula, the efficiency of energy release in such a reaction far exceeded that in a fusion. As a result, the antimatter of a moderate weight was enough to trigger an unbelievably destructive effect. It wouldn't take a lot of antimatter for the whole world to be destroyed by them.

Therefore, the 'Positive Electron Cannon' (or the antimatter cannon, to be more exact) based on such a mechanism was absolutely Lucien's most powerful attack spell targeting individuals. When it was faced with most defenses, it could 'obliterate' both the defenses and the people behind them.

Since it would take a while longer for him to complete 'Snow Goddess's Forgiveness' based on 'Snow Goddess's Anger', Lucien would certainly not disrespect his life security. Therefore, he had come to space searching for 'antielectrons' as early as possible!

After throwing out the alchemical device, Lucien performed magic, allowing the cosmic rays to pass through the electromagnetic field in it, while he observed the deviation.

It was a mission where patience was tested, because he had to find the trace he wanted from its millions of peers. Also, it was possible

that ‘antielectrons’ were not around at all.

Days went by, and Lucien changed quite a few different locations.

The traces of deviation appeared inside the cloud room. Lucien identified and calculated them attentively. Suddenly, he felt something and blinked after clutching his alchemical device. Then, a stone the size of a hill crashed into the spot he had been at from the darkness at an unimaginably high speed.

“An asteroid...” Lucien thought to himself. What Mr. President and the other arcanists could not find was the regular planets. Such asteroids which wandered the universe, on the other hand, had been discovered now and then. They were one of the hazards in space.

Shaking his hands, Lucien did not pay any more attention to it. He brought out his crystal ball and confirmed the situation with astrology, before he continued his experiment.

A beautiful trajectory was gathered inside the cloud room, whose familiar arc and opposite direction were so warm and lovely in Lucien’s eyes!

It was a positive electron!

The starry sky that represented the real world arrived illusionary again, adding more complicated magic patterns to Lucien’s cognitive world. They were soon connected into a whole.

After a long time, Lucien, who was floating in the vacuum, extended his right hand after chanting the long, esoteric spell:

“Positive Electron Cannon!”

Countless inexplicable things were gathered. A pillar of light that was mixed with the colors of illusionary fire suddenly expanded and surged out, hitting another asteroid that was passing by.

The asteroid was even more intimidating and behemothic than the one just now, but it burst out the brilliance as dazzling as that of stars after it was hit by Lucien’s ‘Positive Electron Cannon’. The

terrifying rays surged out.

After a short while, everything died down. There wasn't the slightest trace of any asteroid on the spot. It had been completely obliterated in space.

Lucien nodded at such great power. He activated the space-time landmark on himself. With brilliant stars glowing around him, he disappeared.

After another long time, the sight before Lucien's eyes became clear. He had returned to the top floor of Babel!

Taking out the Moon Timer, Lucien thought deeply, "A curvature voyage? A wormhole? A journey through the higher dimensions?"

Subtracting the twenty days he spent on his experiment, he calculated the time cost during the space jump, hoping to figure out its mysteries.

Suddenly, Lucien sensed something. He turned his eyes out of the window, only to discover that a silver sword flashed with the illusionary air that could chop everything.

After the flash, an elemental planet fell into two halves abruptly, before it was reduced into countless pieces by the spreading gaps.

An intense quake suddenly happened inside the Atomic Universe. As if a source of destruction was emitting infinite powerful flashes at the center, the elemental planets split one after another, and the stars were all extinguished. It seemed that the end of this universe had come!

Lucien curled his lips, genuinely delighted. He summoned his spiritual power and restored everything inside the Atomic Universe back to normal.

A tall figure in silver armor stepped in from the window, with uncontrollable excitement on her face. "Lucien, I am now a legend!"

"I knew that this day would come, but I didn't know that it would come so soon." Lucien smiled at Natasha.

Natasha paced back and forth happily, but she chuckled mischievously in her good mood. “So, you will listen to me tonight.”

Lucien raised his eyebrow. “You said before that I should encourage and comfort you by listening to you because it was difficult to become a legend, and since it made sense to me, I didn’t object to it. But why am I still listening to you now that you’ve already made the breakthrough?”

Natasha said solemnly, “Are you not happy for me after my successful breakthrough? This is much more meaningful than birthdays and calls for celebration!”

“...You are always ‘reasonable’.” Lucien shook his head in amusement.

Natasha held her head high proudly. “Of course, I am the fairest of all!”

.....

A few days later, an emergency meeting was held in the Highest Council.

Inside the conference, the ambiance did not become weird because of Lucien’s explanation with the observer effect. Both Douglas and Fernando were seniors who had seen too many debates, and Lucien was also a considerate gentleman. The academic argument would not be extended into their regular relation, particularly when they had only speculations, unlike what happened when Brook conclusively proved the wave theory and overthrew the particle theory with the double-slit experiment, laying a solid foundation for the victory of the second War between Wave and Particle.

Solemnly, Douglas said, “The elvish queen of the Stroop forest wrote me a letter.”

“A letter?” Asked Oliver, finding it strange. A top legend wrote a letter for communication? It was not like she couldn’t hear Fernando’s roar!

Douglas nodded. "Because it's an official letter asking for help."

Hearing his words, all the members of the Highest Council in the meeting became serious, because the elves were among the most important allies of the Congress.

Douglas went on. "Aglaea, the elvish queen, discovered that part of the elves had been corrupted. Even the Elvish Tree had been polluted for unknown reasons. As for the druid elders, some of the members went missing, too. Since she needed to control the elvish tree, and the whole thing was rather weird, she asked us for help, hoping that we could dispatch one or two legendary sorcerers to aid her. After all, magic can be very useful in certain aspects."

He looked around. "Who is willing to go?"

After a brief silence, Lucien raised his hand. "I happen to be free."

He had already advanced into level three of legendary, but the Moon Timer, his unique legendary item, required more materials to catch up with his current level. The space-time legendary materials were so rare that one could hardly meet them. Therefore, he might as well try his luck among the elves who had a history of hundreds of thousands of years.

Chapter 669: Delegation

The elves had a proud and glorious history. They once ruled the whole continent and many alternate dimensions. However, when a few apertures appeared and connected Abyssal Maw to the main material world, and the Demon Lords arrived with their subordinates in a scourge, bringing forth slaughter and destruction, everything became their memories.

In the war, the Elvish Court finally crushed the demonic army and sealed the channels, but the elves suffered brutal casualties, too. Their population plummeted. Because of their low birth rate, they never recovered from the disaster, and they were gradually replaced by other races. They had retreated to the 'Nature's Inhabitation sss' where the few elvish trees were located. One of their habitants was the Stroop forest that was one third the size of Holm.

During the long time, the other forests that had elvish trees were destroyed, occupied and melted into human society one after another, but the Stroop forest, where the court was located, was still dominated by elves thanks to their experts and the Elvish Royal Tree. It was the sanctuary for the Sun Elves, the Moon Elves, the Wood Elves, the Sea Elves and all the other types of elves.

According to the file of the Congress of Magic, more than a hundred thousand elves lived in the Stroop forest. Also, their territory extended all the way into the Boundless Ocean, where they reigned a fairly large area together with the tribe of the Sea Elves. It was hard for them to expand, but they could easily protect themselves.

"The Elvish Court has six legends. The strongest of them is Queen Aglaea who has half melted with the Elvish Royal Tree. She is at the peak of legendary and good at natural spells."

Now that Lucien had volunteered to go, Douglas introduced the situation of the Elvish Court for him. "Of the other five legends, three are druids. Grand Druid Malfurion, who came to the Congress before, is one of them. Together with another two non-elvish

legendary druids, they established 'Elder Council of the Druids' to coordinate the relationship between the non-elvish druids and elves."

"That is to say, there are only eight legends in the Stroop forest?" Lucien did not know much about elves and druids.

Holding his chin, Brook added for Douglas, "Yes, the remaining two elves are legends similar to legendary knights. They can perform natural spells with the tattoos on their body. They will be half a level stronger when they fight in a forest. The details will be given to you later."

"As a matter of fact, we planned to ask for their help when we fought the South Church last time. Although they needed to defend themselves, it shouldn't be a problem for them to spare two to three legends. However, the total war had already ended before we did so..." Said Oliver regretfully. He was interested in the elves who were good at art and history, particularly those who were females. "It's a shame that I have to go to the World of Souls..."

Knowing that Monster Viken and Pope Viken were mortal enemies, quite a few legendary sorcerers had decided to study the Furnace of Souls and observe the Pathway of Immortality from closer. For them, it wouldn't be too dangerous as long as they did not encounter the pontiff of the North Church.

That was because the legendary creatures in the World of Souls had suffered heavy losses in the Congress' first adventure. Even the Primordial Mummy had been killed by Lucien. Half of the intelligent legendary spectres had perished, too!

As for the Realm of Gates, although Monster Viken wouldn't attack the strangers with full strength, one could easily happen upon the Angel King and the six seraphs. None of the legendary experts except for Douglas, Brook, Fernando and Hathaway were willing to take the risk.

Pondering for a moment, Douglas said, "This will only be a preliminary investigation. Our main purpose is to figure out why the gap of Abyss, which was steady for tens of thousands of years,

suddenly went out of control and even corrupted the Elvish Royal Tree... Erica, Atlant, you are demon experts. Which of you will go with Lucien?"

"I'll go. I happen to need some demons for my research." Atlant nodded, his eyes closed, but his voice seemed to be echoing in everybody's heart.

After the candidates were decided, the emergency meeting ended. Most of the members of the Highest Council left in a hurry.

They had some ideas about the future of quantum mechanics after reading Lucien's recent papers, but they met a lot of difficulties in their actual research, because they needed the support of powerful mathematical tools!

Although mathematics had been flourishing since Nature was established, the improvement was not as significant as the leap in the microscopic domain. Therefore, they had to stop for now and focus on mathematics to build up the foundation.

Due to the limitation of mathematics, the surging tide in the microscopic domain was slowed down, waiting for the next rise.

Douglas led Lucien and Atlant to a room on the thirty-fifth floor. Two blond elves rose and asked earnestly, "Mr. Douglas, have you settled on your candidates? Will the two gentlemen come with us? Well, Lu..."

They were exactly Princess Iristine and Prince Arcelion, Lucien's old acquaintances, so they blurted out after they saw him. But they soon remembered Lucien's identity and changed their attitude, "... Mr. Evans."

After the greeting, Arcelion and Iristine both had complicated feelings. When they met Lucien ten years ago, he was merely a second-circle sorcerer, but after only ten years, he had become a level-two legendary sorcerer. In comparison, they were almost on the same level as they had been ten years before!

For elves, ten years was not a long time, but when they met Lucien

again, they suddenly had a feeling that time really flies, which transformed forests into oceans and dried oceans into continents.

“No wonder Lucien Evans stressed that time manifests itself by changes...” Iristine only had a basic understanding about arcana.

They looked almost the same as ten years ago, albeit a bit more mature, and they were still wearing the clean, natural attires. Therefore, Lucien also recognized them. He nodded at them with a smile as a greeting.

“Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans and Atlant ‘Eye of Curse’ Forman will lead part of the senior-rank and middle-rank sorcerers to the forest and provide help for you.” Douglas introduced them officially.

Taking a breath to ease her anxiety, Iristine said, “Your Excellencies, I’ll explain the situation to you briefly...”

According to her, there was a gap that leads to Abyss in the Stroop forest. It was attacked by demons now and now, but since the gap was not large enough, the Will of Abyss and the Prince of Abyss could not arrive. Without their leadership, the Demon Lords tended to attack each other. Therefore, the Elvish Court and the Elder Council of the Druids could defend the place easily.

However, the supposedly stable gap suddenly went out of control and expanded a few months back. Many demons surged in with their lords. Thankfully, it was Malfurion who defended the place back then, and the worst outcomes were avoided.

After a battle, the demons were banished back to Abyss, and the gap was sealed. However, the elvish queen discovered that the elvish tree was contaminated by the air of chaos and slaughter. After that, part of the elves were corrupted and demonized.

“I hope that you can help us find out why the gap went out of control and figure out a way to stabilize it. That’s the only way for us to eliminate the air of Abyss and prevent the spread of corruption. However, whatever happens in the end, you will have the sincerest thanks from the elves.” Iristine was much more polite

and better at talking than before.

However, whether or not the contamination and the corruption were related to the gap of Abyss required investigation.

Lucien nodded. "I need to make preparations and summon my assistants."

Many things could be investigated by the senior-rank or middle-rank sorcerers. It was a way to improve the talents of the Congress, too.

"Alright, Your Excellency." Arcelion held back his anxiety and said.

He was as brilliant as the sun previously, but what happened recently had upset and exhausted him, making him as lackluster as the sunset.

.....

Inside the Atomic Universe...

After asking the Affair Committee to recruit personnel, Lucien went home and told Natasha the situation.

"The Elvish Court? The Stroop forest? Demon invasion?" Natasha's eyes immediately glittered. Having just become a legendary knight, she seemed to be in dire need of a target to practice her skills.

Seeing her face, Lucien immediately scratched his chin and chuckled, "You want to go?"

Natasha 'solemnly' said, "The system of parliament, cabinet and prime minister ensures that nothing will go wrong in the kingdom even if I'm away for a couple of months. You always took adventures on your own, and now I can finally accompany you. This is my wedding vow for you!"

"But I feel that accompanying me is only a secondary reason for you. Well, I can hear your roaring blood and pulse right now." Lucien made fun of her.

Not embarrassed at all, Natasha declared, “Our minds are truly connected! It’s officially decided then!”

Lucien could only shake his head, smiling in indulgence.

.....

At noon the next day, in a room next to the conference room of the Highest Council, Lucien met the sorcerers who had been summoned to join the trip with him.

“Annick? Sprint? Why are you here?” Lucien discovered that his four students were among them.

Heidi smiled, “They have been quite taciturn recently, so I’ve dragged them for a walk. Is it not good for them to complete their mandatory mission under your watch? It’s a pity that it’s Chelly and Layria’s turn to supervise the institution.”

“Alright, this is not bad.” Lucien nodded approvingly. His students could not be weaklings in battles. Nobody knew whether or not a major war would break out later. As for what was on Heidi’s mind, Lucien knew it very clearly, but there was no need to point it out, because she certainly meant well.

Annick and Sprint stood next to them awkwardly, not knowing what they should say.

The member of the Affair Committee to follow Lucien on the grip was also an old friend. He was Jurisian, from the Moonsong League, but he was accompanied by an unexpected member.

“Felipe?” Lucien looked at the sickly-looking man who walked in.

The Eye of Curse, standing next to Felipe, smiled. He is very interested in natural genetics and applied to join us on the journey to the Stroop forest, and I happen to need an assistant. So, I accepted his application.”

“That’s your right.” Lucien did not say anything. Felipe was no longer someone he needed to be cautious about, and Felipe obviously thought so, too. The guy was simply standing next to

them, not nearly as aggressive as before, because the gap between them was simply too wide.

.....

Hourly news from 'Arcana Voice':

"Today, Mr. Lucien Evans, a grand arcanist, a member of the Highest Council and a legendary sorcerer, has left Allyn with Her Majesty Natasha 'Righteous Sword' Orvarit for a one-month visit to the elves in the Stroop forest. The delegation also includes Mr. Atlant Forman and Jurisian..."

That was the excuse on the surface.

Chapter 670: Nature's Residence

Chapter 670: Nature's Residence

"Alright, everybody is here." Jurisian, black-haired and brown-eyed, checked the names on the roster.

Hearing his words, Arcelion put on a smile and turned around towards Lucien. "Mr. Evans, Mr. Forman, are we ready to go?"

He was too anxious when he thought of the contaminated elvish tree and his corrupted compatriots to control his feelings and manners.

Lucien meant to look at Atlant and see his attitude, but he only saw a pair of closed eyes after he turned his head. He immediately shook his head in amusement. Natasha's chuckle also entered his eyes. She had obviously noticed his awkwardness. Habits and experiences tended to lead people to mistakes.

"Mr. Atlant, is there anything else you need to do?" asked Lucien.

Atlant smiled amiably. "No, there isn't. I'm supposed to be your assistant in the investigation."

Relieved, Iristine was about to speak, when her head became dizzy, and all the colors around her faded away, leaving only the densest darkness behind. Then, she saw a boundless cosmos where stars did not shine but emanated various colors like elements. Some of them were silver, some gold; some were green, and some were vermilion...

"Atomic Universe..." The name somehow popped up in her heart. The middle-rank and senior-rank sorcerers except for Heidi and Lucien's students all said it out in a low voice.

Felipe was as pale as before. His eyebrows were furrowed, as if he was holding back the dizziness caused by the space jump. He stood straight with his hands in the pockets of his coat, raising his head high to observe the elemental planets around him thoughtfully.

There was no telling what was on his mind.

Iristine's sickness hadn't been relieved yet, when she saw that the planets were suddenly accelerating and connecting into weird symbols, leaving arcane trajectories behind them.

When she saw the symbols, her eyes were blurry again, making it impossible for her to perceive the sight around. She had the strange illusion that she was traveling inside a long, dark tunnel.

In her ignorance, Iristine did not know how long it passed, but light suddenly glowed before her eyes, so dazzlingly that she squinted. Her head was extremely heavy, and she felt like throwing up.

"We're in the Stroop forest now. Please lead us to Nature's Residence." Lucien's pleasant voice seemed to have passed countless worlds before it finally reached Iristine's voice obscurely.

'Nature's Residence' was a powerful defense of the elves. It was also a reference to the habitat of the elves within the Stroop forest.

Iristine shook her head, trying to get rid of the dizziness, but she suddenly saw a beautiful and energetic face whose silver eyes contained a vague smile. There was a finger-sized fruit on the lady's opened hand. She said with a delighted voice, "Chirga, a special fruit of Holm, grows only next to the Chirga River and can remove the dizziness caused by space transfer quickly."

Iristine took the fruit and put it into her mouth. Feeling the sweet sourness, she was immediately refreshed. "Thank you, Your Majesty."

As a diplomat, she certainly knew the queen of Holm, Mr. Evans's wife.

Natasha smiled. "In fact, you will be better after you are used to it. Space jump isn't that terrible."

She turned back and walked to Lucien, chuckling in the telepathic bond that had been preset. "Even princesses of elves are so weak, too? I am truly one of a kind among princesses."

“Do you not know what level she is at?” Lucien was rather satisfied that his wife did not keep talking with Iristine.

Natasha said gloatingly, “I came to Holm through ‘Element Paradise’ when I was little. I didn’t find it as unbearable as she did.”

“Of course, you are unique.” Lucien sensibly ended the conversation with a compliment.

Taking a few deep breaths, Iristine was completely recovered and found that the sorcerers of the Congress of Magic had all been woken up one way or another. Therefore, she said with a graceful and polite smile, “Everybody, please follow me to ‘Nature’s Residence’.”

They left the place earlier through Malfurion’s natural power, and the dizziness was less severe. Not all legends had a demiplane. The saint cardinals did not, most legendary knights did not, and nor did the druids. Only the legendary sorcerers and the experts who occupied a certain demiplane or alternate dimension of special qualities had such a thing, like Apsis with his ‘Skeleton Land’ and Tiphotidis with his ‘Silent Hell’.

Of course, it was generally accepted that their demiplanes were granted by the Lord of Hell or the Will of Abyss. Their strength would be improved by half a level if they fought in those areas.

“Is this a space jump based on demiplanes?” Arcelion was behind his sister. He felt that he had only been giddy for a while before the familiar Stroop forest appeared again before his eyes.

The heat of June couldn’t be felt at all inside the Stroop forest. The breeze passed the leaves with the unique fragrance of coolness of the woods, bringing the pleasant bird songs to them.

Alferris, whose body size had been reduced, walked at the front of the team like a dog. He observed the environment so attentively that even Jurisian, a battle sorcerer, felt ashamed of himself. The dragon was simply too meticulous!

“Alferris, what are you looking for?” Heidi was particularly close to

the lovely pet.

Alferris coveted the forest like a detective, terrifying all the creatures within thousands of meters with his dragon air, but he said childishly and carefully, “I remember that a sorcerer found a gem mine in this forest!”

“But it’s obviously not here...” Katrina couldn’t help but remind him of the natural geography.

Alferris was not frustrated at all. “There are many gifts of nature in places where elves live!”

That was the biggest reason why he begged Lucien to go with him. Considering that elves did not hate dragons although some of them might be biased against humans, he accepted the dragon’s plea in the end.

Iristine looked at the little guy with translucent crystal scales on his body, not surprised at his dragon nature, but she couldn’t help but shake her head at the dragon’s tycoon garments.

The foreclaws of the dragon were adorned with glittering rings, and quite a few medals, including the Silver Moon Medal that represented the highest honor, were hanging on his chest. There were also the items that he borrowed from Lucien. Since he had to return them to somebody, he wore them all the time and seized every second to ‘bond’ with them, acting as if they could not be separated. Naturally, the gesture was all for Lucien to watch.

Lucien’s destination in the space jump was not far away from Nature’s Residence. Led by the two elves, the ‘Delegation of the Congress of Magic and the Kingdom of Holm’ soon saw a place that was enshrouded in a mist. In a haze, all the trees rose high exuberantly. Under the direction of the magic power, their branches constituted cottages in midair. The lake at the center was as smooth as a gem. The flowers and fruits around were peculiar and colorful. It was both a residence and nature!

“How beautiful...” Heidi, Katrina and the other girls complimented the beautiful environment. Even the gloomy sorcerers such as Felipe

felt that their mind had been pacified and cleansed after witnessing Nature's Residence that seemed to be in a fairy tale.

At this moment, Malfurion, an old elf with dark green skin, walked out from the mist with an undecorated wood staff in his hands, followed by many elves whose skin and hair colors varied.

"Welcome, honorable guests." Malfurion spoke on behalf of the Elvish Court. "Forgive me for my lack of manners, but all the elves are in pain because of the damage that the Elvish Tree suffered. Evans, Forman and Natasha, please come to the center of the lake with me."

"That's our purpose." Lucien appreciated the importance of the elvish tree for elves, and he was thinking whether or not he could take a valuable fruit back with him. That way, he would be able to hold the best life-extending legendary ritual for himself and Natasha together with the Fountain of Youth.

In the meantime, Lucien asked Jurisian, Sprint, Heidi and the other sorcerers. "Walk around and talk to the elves. Figure out the details of the incident, particularly the signs of the dozens of corrupted elves before their corruption."

"As your wish, Your Excellency." Jurisian had always been serious on missions. His usual humor was nowhere to be found.

Therefore, the three legends flew towards the Elf's Royal Palace at the center of the lake under the lead of Malfurion who was a Dark Elf. The elvish tree was at the pivot of the palace.

Halfway through their flight, Lucien and Natasha had already seen a gigantic tree whose diameter was the distance between one end of the Nekso Palace and the other. The crown of the tree was so high into the clouds that they could barely see it. The rind was a weird color of brown and green, fluctuating as if it were vigorously alive.

The elvish tree emitted a feeling of transcendence. It was clearly located in this place, but it seemed to be in a different world. Lucien was no stranger to such feelings, because the Furnace of Souls was even more intangible than it.

“It has indeed been polluted...” Natasha’s eyes were keener when Lucien hadn’t performed his magic. She saw quite a few dense black spots on the trunk, which corrupted the rind around and were spreading slowly.

At this moment, a shadow flew out of a naturally-formed house on the elvish tree. It was a black-haired, silver-skinned and tall elf with pointy ears, who had a vintage bow on his back.

“This is Lankshear, ‘Vengeful Hunter’, our chief of guards.” Malfurion introduced him to Lucien, Natasha and Atlant.

The other level-three elf... Lucien nodded. The male elf who had a lot of mysterious tattoos on his neck was a legend who grew with his own elvish talents, not a druid.

“This is Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans, this is his wife, Natasha ‘Sword of Adjudication’ Orvarit, and this is Atlant ‘Eye of Curse’ Forman. I believe you are familiar with him.’ Malfurion talked to Lankshear. Then he frowned, “Where is Ferragond?”

Lankshear easily struck everybody as a melee warrior, but his body figure was smooth and there were barely any bulging muscles. He snorted, “Ferragond does not want to welcome guests. You know that he is the leader of Nature’s Abhorrence.”

He did not seem to be Ferragond’s best friend, and he intentionally pointed it out.

Chapter 671: Nature's Heart

Malfurion looked at Lankshear and did not say anything. He turned around and said to Lucien, Natasha and Atlant. "I'm very sorry about that. Ferragond has placed his personal attitude above the life and death of all elves. Also, I do not agree with his opinion. Human beings are undoubtedly part of nature."

He did not criticize Nature's Abhorrence, nor did he ignore the matter. Instead, he subtly expressed his opinion and his apology, letting them know that Ferragond could not represent all elves. On the contrary, he was among the minority. Otherwise, they wouldn't have asked for the Congress of Magic's help at all.

"I believe our investigation will be easier if there isn't anyone stirring things up next to us." Lucien accepted Malfurion's apology and smiled back.

Lankshear, the Vengeful Hunter, had a pair of silver, deep eyes. He said, "Thank you for forgiving Ferragond's lack of manners. I'll bring you to Her Majesty the queen."

He did not say anything about the conflict between Nature's Abhorrence and Nature's Balance which was represented by Malfurion.

Led by him, Lucien and his partners passed the lake that looked like a blue gem and flew towards the elvish tree whose one branch was enough to form a forest. In midair, the dense twigs were shaped into houses that were as delicate as artwork.

Yellow and white flowers blossomed on the houses, emitting refreshing fragrance.

"I do feel that my mind is cleansed here. My inspirations are surging..." Natasha complimented the natural view sincerely. "When the night comes, the silver moon will raise ripples of light when it shines above the lake. That will be the most vivid representation of your 'Moonlight'."

Lucien nodded with a smile. "My whole heart is calmed down in such an environment. If you like it here, we can live here in the future."

Natasha chuckled drily, "If I live a couple of weeks here, my soul of musician will be gone, and my cheesy and knightly side will surface. This place is beautiful, but I'm not cut to live here for long."

Lucien was merely joking. Allyn, which was full of discussions and disputes about arcana, was obviously more suitable for himself than Nature's Residence.

Malfurion said next to them. "Although we tried to keep the incident a secret, the Kuo-toans in the ocean seemed to have sensed something and raised conflicts nonstop. Therefore, Yantis has gone to the Boundless Ocean to help with the defense with Jarde, and Selinda and Lodell are defending the abyssal gap on the other side of the forest."

"Therefore, only the queen and the three of us are left here."

Jarde was a legendary druid of the Sea Elves. Thanks to his longevity, he had reached level two of legendary. Yantis, on the other hand, was 'Wind of Moonfall', a legend among the Moon Elves. She had advanced with her talents like Lankshear did. She was still in level one right now.

Selinda and Lodell were the other two members of the Elder Council of the Druids. The former was a nymph and in level two of legendary, and the latter was a human being, known as 'Hand of Balance'. He was in level one of legendary.

"Elder, it's alright. After examining the elvish tree and the corrupted elves, we will go to the abyssal gap and ask Selinda and Lodell for updates as soon as possible." Lucien said as he stepped into the tree house.

Natasha moved her right foot, sensing the status of the elvish tree carefully. Atlant also opened his eyes, observing the surroundings deep in thought.

Led by the Vengeful Hunter, Lucien, Natasha and Atlant went through the tree houses and entered the elvish tree through a natural gap.

The colors turned from brown green to dark green, and when the color became mostly dark, ivory and hallowed brilliance appeared. The purest power of life seemed to be contained inside.

Those spots of light surrounded a green object that looked like heart, bringing vigor and exuberance.

The heart was vague and fickle. Green tubes that looked like veins extended from it and connected the trunk around. Translucent liquids and light flowed in and out, but they were now mixed with blackness.

“Nature’s Heart...” Lucien and Natasha observed in the telepathic bond at the same time.

It was the most fundamental thing for the elves. As long as Nature’s Heart existed, they would be able to regrow the elvish tree after they were relocated.

There were five Nature’s Hearts at the beginning, but as the time went by, four of them had been wasted. Only the one in the Stroop forest still retained the glory of the elves.

Also, it was the most powerful ‘Nature’s Heart’. After melting into it, Aglaea, the elvish queen, broke the limits and became a top legend. That was the reason why the elves always had a top legend!

Of course, only the level-three legendary experts could reach the peak by melting with Nature’s Heart.

Inside Nature’s Heart stood a fuzzy, blond shadow, who was trying to eliminate the black spots. But for some reason, the progress was remarkably slow despite her strength.

“Thank you for your aid.” The shadow became clear. There was maturity and solemnity in her innocent beauty. She looked more like Iristine’s sister than her mother.

“How gorgeous...” It was not Lucien but Natasha who remarked, but she was soon back to herself and chuckled to Lucien. “Rest assured. This is only appreciation.”

Malfurion introduced them to Aglaea. She nodded softly. “Please investigate as soon as possible. Whatever the final result is, you will have the gratitude of the elves.”

She did not specify what the gratitude would be.

Lucien had come mainly to maintain the alliance. Trade was only his personal purpose, and he certainly wouldn't take the elves' items without giving anything in return. So, he simply said to Aglaea, “Your Majesty, we will begin our investigation.”

“Alright. I can prevent the elvish tree from being further contaminated, but I fear that the Will of Abyss will arrive if the gap is expanded. That will be a disaster.” She was worried about the abyssal gap most.

Lucien walked to Nature's Heart and chanted with a mysterious voice. “Mirror of Fate.”

The environment suddenly dimmed, but many firefly-like spots popped up from the dimness and gathered before Lucien into a mirror that was full of sophisticated patterns.

The Mirror of Fate that Maskelyne and McLeod crafted was exactly based on this legendary spell!

The mirror was hazy, but when Lucien tossed the crystal ball on his left hand into it, ripples spread out and manifested black spots everywhere. They were also getting larger and larger.

In the meantime, the black spots wriggled hideously, as if they contained all the chaos and slaughter in the world. With immense hatred, they wanted to destroy everything.

Crack. The mirror of light let out a noise as if it were a real mirror, dispersing into dancing butterflies again.

Frowning, Lucien seemed to have grasped something and continued

his examination with other spells. Atlant also investigated with his own magic.

After a while, Lucien stopped and said to Natasha. "Attack the black spots with your sword. Don't cut the life channel of Nature's Heart."

What he didn't say was 'this is an exercise on your ability of control', or Aglaea and Malfurion wouldn't look very good.

Natasha, on the other hand, understood Lucien's meaning. She immediately narrowed her eyes and drew the Sword of Truth, melting her body and her heart into it.

She saw that Lucien held the Moon Timer in his right hand and knew that he would prevent her from harming Nature's Heart if she made a mistake.

After a blink, Natasha reappeared, and a black spot on the green tube was suddenly chopped into half. It was not until one minute later that it was finally dissolved.

Lucien secretly raised his thumb for Natasha. Then he said seriously, "The nature of the power is close to the level of a demigod. Therefore, spells such as 'Mirror of Fate' can only offer ambiguous hints. I suspect that it is the air of the Will of Abyss, but I'm not certain, because other ways can also achieve the result, an example of which is to use the power of Nature's Heart itself."

"Yes, there are other possibilities!" Before Atlant, Aglaea, Malfurion and Lankshear talked, an angry voice echoed from their back.

His spiritual power spreading out, Lucien 'saw' a green-haired male elf walking into the room. He looked young, but he had a myriad of beautiful stripes on his neck and his hand. He glared at Lucien and the other strangers. "This is nature's punishment!"

He shouted, "You human beings have set up alchemical workshops one after another, polluting the sky and the water and hurting nature. Your greed cannot be curbed, either. You destroyed forests and murdered animals. So, I sensed that nature became full of hate, and the hate was reflected in Nature's Heart, hence the corruption

and contamination!”

“This is all your fault!”

“Ferragond, shut up.” Malfurion spoke in a low voice.

This elf was exactly Ferragond, a grand druid and a Wood Elf, known as ‘Nature’s Avenger’.

Lucien believed that most of the alchemical workshops did not have terrible pollution. Although it was their instinct to make profits, none of the workshop owners wanted to pay an environmental tax for that. After he became a grand arcanist, the Affair Committee had paid special attention to that. The sorcerers also knew his tough attitude and were unwilling to piss off a grand arcanist on such trivia, or they would be dead for sure when the mandatory missions were issued to them.

They were perhaps unwilling to follow the regulations, but since most of the fees collected were given back to them through tax returns, few of the workshop owners had asked for trouble.

Faced with such a situation, Lucien could only say that power worked better than reasoning.

The only problem was the minor workshops that the nobles built themselves. Those in Holm were better thanks to Natasha’s pressure on the cabinet, but the workshops in the other three kingdoms had more pollution.

However, it was not the time to debate with Ferragond on the problem yet. Lucien turned around and looked at Aglaea, “Your Majesty, does this mean that we are not welcomed here?”

After a brief silence, Aglaea demanded, “Ferragond, get out!”

“Your Majesty...” Ferragond still wanted to say something, but he sensed the pressure of the top legend as Nature’s Heart beat faster. Therefore, he simply sniffed and left.

In the telepathic bond, Natasha asked in confusion, “I don’t think he can’t control his hate. Was he trying to piss off us and get us to

leave? Or was he trying to sabotage the relationship between the Congress and the elves?”

They had come a long way to aid the elves, only to be accused of the cause of the problem. Normal people would've stormed off in fury.

Lucien said calmly, “I know. That's why I didn't argue with him and simply kicked the question to the queen to see their attitude.”

At this moment, Atlant said, “A very mature, rational and graceful approach...”

Chapter 672: Daily Life of Elves

Chapter 672: Daily Life of Elves

The sunlight illuminated the mist, leaving a gold spot where the rays were vaguely changing between the different shades of greenness. Nature's Residence was made even more dreamy and exuberant.

"Everyone, you will live here for the time being. Don't go to random places. Some elves are not friendly with human beings." Iristine pointed at a forest that was made of dozens of trees. There were plenty of houses on them.

Hearing her words, Alferris shook his tail and said solemnly, "No problem."

He heard it very clearly that some elves were only unfriendly to human beings. It seemed that he could wander around and collect souvenirs for himself.

Jurisian smiled at Iristine. "Your Highness, please give me the list of the corrupted elves."

"They are caged in a prison near the elvish tree. Are you going to investigate them now?" Arcelion acknowledged the sorcerers' activeness.

Jurisian shook his head. "In that case, I'm sure that Mr. Evans will check them later. We'll simply walk around in the forest and ask the friends of those corrupted elves for more details, so..."

Smiling, he left his intention unfinished.

Iristine nodded. "I'll give the files of the corrupted elves and their friends to you."

"You'd better mark those who were close to them before their corruption." Felipe added. Although it did seem to be the corruption caused by the abyssal air, no possibilities should be

ruled out until things were investigated, or they might be misled.

Arcelion's face slightly changed, before he nodded in acknowledgment.

It was not because he had any secret but a normal reaction that every leader of the elves should have when they heard Felipe's words, which obviously stated that something went wrong within the elves.

Under the sunlight, Felipe looked no different from vampires who hadn't been out for years. However, he did not explain that it was a regular procedure of investigation but simply let Arcelion and Iristine guess. What if some of them jumped out under the pressure?

After ten minutes, Annick and Sprint walked to the southeast of the forest with the list and the marked location.

"Ulmer, the best friend of the corrupt elf Kalette..." Annick read the list.

Watched by the elves who were beautiful regardless of their gender, his face flushed beyond his control. He hurried to cast 'Mechanized Mind' onto himself.

Sprint looked at him. "What's to be shy about? We're investigators, and we take the natural initiative. It should be them who are nervous!"

"I'm always anxious and unable to control my feelings when I'm faced with strangers." The redness on Annick's face was gone, and he became as cold as an iron golem.

Sprint sniffed. "Anxious? You are too unconfident. It's perfectly normal to say or do wrong things."

"Are you afraid that you will leave them with a bad impression? Hilarious. There's no telling whether or not we will ever be back to the Stroop forest. Even if you may do something downright humiliating, so what? Also, your awkwardness will leave a more terrible impression than any humiliating thing ever will."

He had always been criticizing Annick's personality. This time, he had accepted Heidi's mission to help Annick to be more confident and bold, so that he could face his teacher with a better attitude without caring about the argument about arcana.

"Why? I like the shy boys most. It means that they have a pure and simple heart!" Suddenly, a mild voice joined their conversation.

That is not necessarily true. Some people don't talk much simply because their heart is too filthy. Sprint thought to himself while he looked at the source of the voice, only to see a beautiful elf walking toward them. She had black hair, silver skin and was wearing simple clothes made of tree leaves, with a harp in her hands.

Eyeing the stranger up and down, Sprint secretly said to Annick, "This elf is interested in you. Don't let go of this opportunity, or you will live the rest of your life alone."

Clearing his throat, he asked on behalf of his best friend, "My lady, may we know your name?"

"I'm a male." The pointy and soft ears of the beautiful elf waved. He did not seem surprised at the situation.

Despite the 'Mechanized Mind', Annick's face couldn't have looked more awful. Sprint asked, his facial muscles cramping, "You are a male? And you said you like boys most?"

The beautiful elf shook his harp and spoke like a poet. "Love is genderless."

Pulling Sprint, Annick held back his discomfort and turned around.

"No wonder the files in the library said that elves have all kinds of quirks because of their long and casual life..." Sprint regretfully thought to himself. He had almost pushed his friend into an abyss.

Before Annick was able to reply, the beautiful elf behind them already spoke with a smile. "Right, I haven't introduced myself yet. I am Ulmer. I heard you mentioning my name just now."

As a Moon Elf, he had exceptional hearing abilities, particularly

when the wind was in his favor.

“Ulmer?” Sprint and Annick stopped. They turned around, neither of them looking too good.

“Mr. Ulmer, there’s something that we’d like to ask you.”
Eventually, Annick, with ‘Mechanized Mind’, summoned his courage and asked.

Ulmer replied with a smile, “What’s your opinion on the heptachord? Has the human beings’ modification on the harp lost its essence?”

“...” Annick and Sprint were immediately rendered speechless. While their teacher was a great musician, they had been learning arcana and magic after him, not music! They did not even know what the professional music question was about at all!

Ulmer sighed, “We can’t be friends if you don’t know art, and we can’t have a pleasant conversation if we are not friends. Do you have any opinion on wax figures? I bought one of them recently and I feel that they are very interesting. Do you like them?”

“...” Sprint and Annick were lost for words again, suddenly feeling that their life lacked a profile.

“You don’t know wax figures, either? Well, what about the lost civilizations? I’m told that the Congress of Magic found a relic of a steam civilization?” Said Ulmer in disappointment.

Hu. Annick and Sprint both heaved a sigh of relief. History and lost civilizations were the specialties of every arcanist, or they wouldn’t be able to explore and identify things. Also, their teacher was the discoverer of the relic.

After a pleasant exchange of opinions, Ulmer finally changed his attitude. “You have come to ask about Kalette?”

“Yes, we would like to know if he showed any anomalies before his corruption.” Said Annick, greatly relieved.

Ulmer moved his long and beautiful hand on the strings, producing

cheerful music, but he said sadly, "Everything was good. Kalette even mentioned that he learnt a special dance and was going to perform it for you. However, he was corrupted and demonized later..."

His voice lowered and was barely audible.

"A special dance?" Despite his shyness, Annick had always been scrupulous and wouldn't let go of any clue.

"It's our deal. We write poems, songs and create special dances according to the records of different civilizations to entertain each other." Ulmer explained gloomily.

There doesn't seem to be anything wrong about that... Sprint continued asking, "Who else was Kalette intimate with except for you? Or rather, which faction of elves did he prefer?"

"We are both believers of Nature's Balance. We both love the music, statues, painting and other artworks of human beings." Ulmer did not keep it a secret. Suddenly, he remembered something. "He did have a few friends who believed in Nature's Abhorrence. However, the society in Nature's Residence is small. Everybody has a few friends who believe otherwise. Right, before his corruption, he just served in the abyssal gap. That was probably the reason why he was demonized..."

It was a major clue provided by the Elvish Court. Both Annick and Sprint knew it very well. Seeing that no other valuable intelligence could be obtained, they bid Ulmer farewell and looked for the next elf on the list.

.....

Heidi and Katrina traveled in the woods protected by Nature's Residence. Now and then, they saw the elves making statues with the dry roots of trees, or painting with special natural pigment on the rind paper. Their life couldn't have looked more peaceful.

"Everyone..."

A hundred elves had been gathered on the empty ground up ahead.

A medium-height female elf was giving a speech on the tree. Heidi was certain that she was a female because she was wearing a long skirt woven with fresh tree leaves. The male elves, on the other hand, wore two-piece suits made of leaves that were covered by beast hide.

If they wore the same clothes, Heidi and Katrina would have to observe them more carefully to decide their gender. After all, both the males and the females of the elves were slim and gorgeous, and it would be too rude to examine them with magic.

Stopping next to the empty ground, Katrina pulled Heidi's clothes and pointed at the other side. "Mr. Felipe is there..."

Felipe was standing below a tree quietly with his hands in his pocket, listening to the speech of the elvish girl.

"...I am Nodanielle. I'm here to call for you to capture more deer." The elvish girl spoke in a high but not unpleasant voice.

"What?"

"Why do you want to kill such a docile animal?"

The elves down below were all confused.

Nodanielle? Heidi and Katrina looked at each other. That's the target that the two of them were looking for.

Nodanielle said earnestly, "The previous incident made the predators in the forest more crazy and bloodthirsty. Their number has greatly reduced after many of them were killed by us. Under such circumstances, the number of deer will grow exponentially after their nemeses are gone, because they are as fertile as mice."

"Once the number of deer surpasses a certain threshold, they will cause irrecoverable damage to the forest because they feed on the roots and stems of the plants."

"We have to maintain the balance of nature!"

Was she a member of Nature's Balance? Heidi and Katrina joined

the crowd and listened to her with great interest.

After Nodanielle finished her speech and most elves accepted, the two of them went forward to greet her.

Chapter 673: Every Elf is a Tree

“Dear guests, are you looking for me?” Seeing that Heidi and Katrina were walking towards her, she pointed at herself in confusion.

With a warm smile, Heidi said, “Nodanielle, your speech on the balance of nature is fantastic and intriguing!”

She had sensed that Nodanielle was relatively sunny, so she simply greeted her as if she were her old friend instead of calling her lady or miss.

Hearing Heidi’s sincere and straightforward compliment, Nodanielle was immediately more or less shy. She waved her hands awkwardly. “I was merely talking about the doctrines that the elders taught us.”

“My name is Heidi. This is my partner, Katrina. We’ve only just arrived at the forest today. It’s great to make your acquaintance.” Heidi was even warmer.

She was not nearly as introverted as Annick, and she introduced the two of them to Nodanielle openly.

The anxiety in Nodanielle’s heart was soon gone when she found that the guest was friendly and unimposing. Their conversation became natural.

“Well, we are here to investigate the corruption of elves at the request of Her Majesty. We have some questions for you regarding Tracy.” After the smalltalk, Heidi went directly to the topic.

After a brief silence, Nodanielle said gloomily, “Heidi, Katrina, feel free to ask whatever you want to know. I do hope you can find the source of corruption and restore Tracy. Even if they cannot be recovered, they should at least be freed from such suffering.”

“Did Tracy show any anomaly before her corruption?” Katrina asked the standard question that they had agreed upon.

As a Sun Elf, Nodanielle had fair skin and brilliant gold hair, which made her look gorgeous under the sun, but there was not the slightest smile on her face. She said, "At least for me, nothing too strange happened before that. My friends and I hunted, picked fruits, fixed the places in the forest where balance could be broken, perceived nature, and read the classics that were composed after the age of myth..."

"Everything was so calm and peaceful, as if the beautiful life would last forever. However, that day in the morning, I suddenly noticed that the tattoos on Tracy's skin were full of the sense of hate and slaughter... But everything was fine the day earlier. We danced the special dance she learnt and bid each other goodnight."

"A special dance?" Heidi wrote Nodanielle's reply on the notebook, her interest piqued by the dance which was described as 'special'.

Nodanielle nodded. "She said that Ms. Marsha taught her. Should I show it to you?"

Heidi and Katrina replied at the same time, half for their investigation and half for their curiosity, "Okay!"

Nodanielle stepped back and started dancing although there was no music.

The dance had many peculiar movements that were almost in violation of biophysics. Only elves who had soft and tensile bodies could manage it.

"Although the movements are strange, the dance is truly beautiful..." Heidi moved her left hand and her legs, feeling the urge to learn the dance, but she soon patted her cheeks regretfully and considered applying for drugs to stimulate her blood power, or it would've been impossible for her to learn the dance.

Katrina tapped the beat for Nodanielle and spoke in the telepathic bond. "This dance gives me a weird feeling. Let's bring it up in the meeting at night."

In the dance, Nodanielle became grievous as if she recalled her

friend. She wasn't back to herself until a long time later and asked in a low voice, "Is this dance alright?"

"There are no magic waves, no scent of divine power, and no peeping from weird existences, but it doesn't mean that the dance is alright. You'd better not dance it until the investigation is done." Heidi reminded her new elf friend whom she liked.

After Nodanielle nodded, Katrina continued asking, "Did Tracy have any emotional fluctuations or opinion changes before the corruption?"

Recalling her memories, Nodanielle said, "She was a bit down because she hadn't made any significant breakthroughs for a long time. So, she told me that she wanted to become a druid to better maintain the balance of nature."

To better maintain the balance of nature... Frowning, Heidi wrote down Nodanielle's narration and asked, "Are you a druid?"

"Yes, I just became a Nature's Protector, or a middle-rank druid in your words." Nodanielle was obviously very proud of her identity as the Nature's Protector.

Elves did not classify their levels by middle, low, high, and level one, level two and level three like humans did, but the categories were similar. 'Nature's Guard' was the druid apprentice, 'Nature's Friend' was the low-rank druid, 'Nature's Protector' was the middle-rank druid, and 'Staff Bearer' was the senior-rank druid (including level nine).

Heidi was rather interested in druids and investigated them earlier.

"...Every elf can perceive the grace of nature, so they can become Nature's Guards without any difficulty. Then, we need to turn our understanding about nature into our beliefs and practice the beliefs in our life. As our beliefs are melted with nature, we will form 'Nature's Heart' that is similar to your cognitive world. Named after the core of the elvish tree, it is the foundation to carry out our power..." Nodanielle did not keep it a secret.

They were separated after chitchatting for a while longer.

In the evening, Heidi and Katrina returned with their notebook full and met with Jurisian, Felipe, Annick and Sprint.

“Special dance... Ms. Martha...” Jurisian recited. “More than 70% of the corruptions are related to the special dance. 30% of them learnt it from Ms. Martha, and the others picked it up in places we do not know.”

Felipe said in a low voice, “It may be a custom of elves. They are all avid dancers.”

“In any case, we will meet this Ms. Martha tomorrow.” Said Jurisian.

At this moment, Annick said shyly and solemnly, “Is it possible that the dance is like ‘Viken’s Special Summoning Ritual’, which has nothing strange on the surface but inculcates ideas into the learners when they learn it?”

Having just cracked such a case, Heidi was very sensitive about it. She nodded carefully. “It’s possible. Nature’s Abhorrence. I remember that one of the primeval devils is named ‘Abhorrence’!”

“The problem is that 80% of the corrupted elves followed Nature’s Balance, and the other 20% wavered between the two factions. Few of the elves of Nature’s Abhorrence were corrupted, or the Elvish Court would’ve noticed something wrong...” Jurisian looked at the data and rubbed his temples.

.....

After examining Nature’s Heart, Lucien, Natasha and Atlant went to the prison under Malfurion and Lankshear’s lead, hoping to find clues from the corrupted elves.

The prison of the elves was still made of huts of trunks. However, those trunks were in lead grey and as tough as iron.

Lankshear asked two elves who watched over the prison to open the gate. Miserable and terrifying howls immediately came out, like the

cries of beasts at night.

The two guards couldn't have looked more sorrowful. It was their companions inside, not beasts!

Lucien, Natasha and Atlant stood out of a prison cell, observing the corrupted elf inside through the bars.

It was a pretty elvish girl, but her tattoos had proliferated from her neck and arm to all over her body. Also, it was not in the color of fresh green as the tattoos of general elves but emitted abnormal, intimidating redness from it.

"It's like the pattern on the back of human-faced spiders..." Natasha said in the telepathic bond.

It was true that the tattoos and skin of this elf showed that she was turning into a spider!

"I'm going to kill you!"

"For a green and peaceful world!"

"All intelligent creatures must die!"

The corrupted elvish girl jumped at the bars and gazed at Lucien, his eyes widened. There was no sign of wisdom inside her pupils but only frozen redness with the deepest feeling of brutality and destruction. Also, she opened her mouth and bit the trunk. That seemed to be her only way to attack now that she could not use her talented abilities.

Her neat and pure teeth were like bones at this moment.

"She was a follower of Nature's Balance..." Malfurion introduced the elvish girl to Lucien.

Both Lucien and Atlant had seen worse. Unaffected, they examined the elvish girl's conditions with magic.

Time went by. Lucien suppressed the corruption of the elvish girl and said, "I am certain that this is related to the contamination of

the elvish tree, but there's still no telling this is the cause or the consequence. Also, my prophecy told me that all the corrupted elves shared similarities below the surface. That's the key to solving our problem."

"I'll ask Iristine to investigate with the sorcerers. Would you like to take a look at the abyssal gap with me?" Lankshear proposed.

Without any objection, Lucien nodded.

At this moment, the elvish girl's eyes suddenly became clear when the power of corruption was suppressed by Lucien. She held her head in pain, "Why did this happen?"

"Why did this happen?"

Greenish brilliance emanated from her body with a vague feeling of tranquility.

Lucien's face changed. He meant to stop her, but Malfurion sighed. "She's miserable. Let her free herself. There are still other corrupted elves that we can investigate..."

The elvish girl sang a beautiful melody:

"Every elf is a tree. We come from nature and we return to nature..."

"We are born from the combination of love, and we return in peace and serenity. We sing for the forest. We praise life...."

As the hollow song spread out, the green light on her body became dense. Then, Malfurion opened the door of the prison cell.

The elvish girl stepped out as if she were dancing, before she bowed deeply at Lucien, Natasha and Atlant.

"Every elf is a tree. We are rooted in the ground and breathe the sky..."

"We defend nature and maintain the balance..."

She struggled to fly out. The green light on her body consumed her, and she slowly descended on the ground. At this moment, the eyes of the two guards of the prison were already red.

“Every elf is a tree...”

The song was less and less audible, but it still echoed in the forest. When the green light was gone, a tall and graceful tree had been added to the forest.

Every elf would turn into a tree after their death. That was why they loved green so much.

“We have to find out the cause of the corruption!” Witnessing such a scene, Natasha clenched her right hand and said to herself.

Lucien closed her eyes and turned to Lankshear. “Let’s take a look at the abyssal gap.”

Chapter 674: Intimidation

Chapter 674: Intimidation

The abyssal gap was northeast to the Stroop forest and far away from Nature's Residence. There was also the space disorder caused by the unsteady gap. Therefore, they were not teleported over but flew towards the destination.

Looking at the ocean of trees below and hearing the singing birds, Natasha suddenly asked as if her soul of a musician had been awakened. "What is nature?"

It was one thing to learn from books that elves would turn into trees after they died, and it was a whole different thing to observe it in person. She had a lot of mixed feelings.

"Yes, what is nature?" Lucien repeated and looked at Malfurion and Lankshear.

What is nature?

Malfurion suddenly had no idea how to answer the question. Every elf and every druid had their own definition of nature. Whether they followed Abhorrence or Balance, they all considered themselves to be nature's guards. Also, it was exactly because their definitions and opinions on nature varied that the 'Nature's Hearts' that druids formed and the powers they were capable of were different.

"Nature is the world, including both plants, animals, humans, elves and other lives and volcanoes, swamps, fog and other phenomena. All those things constitute a balance system where everybody is interdependent with each other. Once the balance is lost, nature will decline into a lifeless wasteland." Considering for a moment, Malfurion spoke of his understanding about nature, in which balance and life were the core.

Lankshear had the unique pride of the elves. Although he was not exactly a follower of Nature's Abhorrence, he was not interested in

discussing the question with humans. He merely stressed, “Nature must include life; a lifeless desert cannot be called nature.”

His eyes closed, Atlant said with a smile, “We’re arriving at the abyssal gap.”

The five of them were all legends. Even though they had intentionally lowered their speed in case of dangers, it did not take them long to finish the journey.

At the center of the forest down below, the bloodstained dust enshrouded a fairly large territory. A giant crack that was as hideous as a centipede could be found at the center. Through the crack, the bumpy, Scarlet Plain could be vaguely seen on the opposite side, spreading out the intense air of blood and slaughter.

In the middle of the dust, a rather prosperous town stood at the edge of the crack.

It was exactly Town of the Anonymous.

.....

During the long history when the abyssal gap was steady, demons which were chaotic and bloodthirsty in nature had been attacking the gap and hoping to arrive at the main material world to transform this world into a land of mayhem and destruction like abyss.

As for the human adventurers, although demons were horrible, their body parts were precious materials. It was not a bad choice to capture demons without entering the abyss. Therefore, many adventurers had gathered in this place and set up a town.

After that, the grand knights and the radiant knights realized that it was a perfect battlefield to improve themselves. They had often come from thousands of kilometers away to gain battle experience. For the senior-rank knights, unless they had extraordinary blood powers and gifts, they could only find opportunities of breakthrough in fighting.

The situation on the continent was relatively steady, and

adventuring in the Dark Mountain Range or the Swamp of Dragons, where level-nine magic creatures were frequent, could prove very dangerous. The gap in the Stroop forest, on the other hand, capped the strength of the invading demons, relieving the senior-rank knights of their concern that they might run into Demon Lords or Demon Dukes. Therefore, the town was more and more prosperous and became one of the places with the highest population of senior-rank experts.

Of course, the battles here were not entirely risk-free. Many radiant knights and senior-rank sorcerers had died here. The adventures below the senior rank often had huge casualties, too. Therefore, the town had been named as ‘the Anonymous’:

“You will leave with glory, or die without a name!”

Mason, the Azure Dragon, looked at the wood plate that had stood in Town of the Anonymous for hundreds of years. He sighed yet again and said anxiously, “When can we leave?”

The elves who watched over the gap had always been indifferent to the adventures, but the strangers’ operation did save a lot of their work. Therefore, they had been turning a blind eye to Town of the Anonymous.

The young, brown-haired man next to Mason took out a special cigar made in Brianne and lit it. Taking a deep breath, he said, “Brother, stop upsetting yourself. Until they figure out why the gap is expanded, the elves won’t let us go.”

“I feel that my lungs are full of sand and filth.” Mason accepted his friend Fred’s cigar. “You know that I promised my family that I would return in half a year, but I’m now already two weeks late. If they come to look for me, they will be hurt in this crazy place.”

Fred exhaled smoke and smiled bitterly, “We should’ve left earlier... Elves forbid us from leaving because they fear that we will expose the change in the abyssal gap to the sea clans. Until they figure out a way to resolve the problem, or the sea clans obtain intelligence through other channels, we will have to stay here.”

“If the abyssal gap loses control again...” As a level-six radiant knight, Mason couldn’t help but feel scared when he remembered the swarming army of demons and the frightening Demon Lords and Dukes. They were the nightmare that he would never forget. If it were not Malfurion, Mentor of Night, who guarded the place at that time, many radiant knights including himself would’ve died!

Hearing his words, Fred couldn’t help but tremble, too. He remembered the ‘Sovereign of Blood’ who had two heads, crimson scales, and gold and cold eyes. “I hope that elves ask for reinforcements as soon as possible...”

“Elves are a proud people. They will never ask for help unless they really can’t handle it on their own.” Mason often praised elves’ pride, but he couldn’t have hated it more at this moment.

Then, he moved his eyes back and looked at the half-burnt cigar in his hand. “Something is wrong in the town...”

Fred squinted. “Yes, something is indeed wrong...”

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Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion descended and approached the abyssal gap. At this moment, two figures, one green and the other brown, flew over from down below and stopped before them.

“Honorable guests, thank you for coming to help us.” The brown figure was a tall, middle-aged human male, who was holding a wood staff with a symbol of balance in his hands. It was exactly Lodell, Hand of Balance.

On their altitude, the view of the abyss behind the crack was very obvious. It was a bloodstained plateau, with weird white rocks standing everywhere.

On the plain, there was nothing but red mud and sand except for a few plants that were full of scales. A sandstorm was raging whenever there was a wind.

In the sky, Lucien saw a pale sun that was half blocked by the dust. It was enshrouded in a weird red halo because of the bloodiness.

Everything was so dim and depressing. It was the best announcement of slaughter and destruction.

“Elder.” The green person was a mini lady who was only the size of a head. She had deep green hair and a beautiful face. She was slim, with a pair of transparent wings on her back. She was surrounded by the dense air of the forest.

She was exactly Selinda, a nymph known as the Green Guardian.

After greeting Malfurion, Selinda did not say anything. For nymphs, human beings, who destroyed forests, were unpardonable villains.

“Selinda, what is nature?” Lankshear suddenly asked.

Selinda looked at Lankshear angrily, not too friendly with the elf. “Nature is the greenness that represents life and allows all creatures to flourish. It is vulnerable and calls for our protection. Anyone who sabotages nature is our enemy.”

Lankshear smiled, “Evans, what is nature? Do you have an answer to the question you asked us?”

Lucien looked at him. Although he did not know what was on the elf’s mind, the elf obviously had his own purpose. Perhaps, he was trying to reach a certain purpose by instigating conflicts at this moment?

Malfurion seemed too absent-minded to stop Lankshear from asking. Perhaps, he was interested in Lucien’s and Atlant’s answers, too.

Lodell opened his mouth and tried to say something, but he eventually fell silent.

Lucien smiled and pointed at the Scarlet Plain. “Is this not nature? There are lives that are demons, and there is mud, wind and the sun...”

“It’s a polluted and damaged nature that is escalating into destruction.” Replied Selinda solemnly.

Lucien shook his head. “Nature in my mind is a cycle.”

“As long as its constituents can make up a cycle from life to death and from death to life, it will be nature. Therefore, swamp is nature, volcano is nature, abyss is nature and nature is abyss, too...”

Before Selinda refuted him, Lucien went on, “Nature has a myriad of meanings. The nature we see and get in touch with are different from one another. Therefore, the nature in our mind is a unique nature that is based on our own experience and knowledge. It’s nature from our own perspective. Just like the microscopic particles, we will see different results when we choose different methods of observation. As to exactly what they originally look like, that is a meaningless question.”

“Therefore, my nature is nature from the perspective of human beings. The nature that is suitable for us and facilitates our development is good nature. The purpose of our environmental protection is also simple, which is to build a better nature where we can live more comfortably. In that regard, we recognize nature with ourselves as the center, and I think that elves are the same!”

Malfurion and Selinda were about to speak, when roars of slaughter and destruction suddenly burst out from down below. An army of demons surged out of the gap again.

Those demons were in an assortment of appearances. The one thing that they had in common was their aggressiveness.

“The Sovereign of Blood has driven his army of demons to attack again...” Lodell was greatly relieved and hurried to change the topic.

Looking at what was inside the gap and calculating the distance, Lucien suddenly extended his right hand and chanted a long spell:

“Eternal Blaze!”

Boom!

A scorching sun suddenly rose from the center of the Scarlet Plain. The terrifyingly high temperature could be felt clearly even though

it was in a different world.

An unimaginable energy storm swept out, drowning everything with the glow.

Watching the rolling mushroom cloud and the shaking abyssal gap, and sensing the world-destroying power, Lankshear and Selinda fell silent.

Whatever you are trying to manipulate us to do, you'd better consider if you are strong enough first!

Lucien moved his right hand back into the pockets of his double-breasted suit.

Chapter 675: Integration

Even though the translucent spacial gap reduced the light, the brilliance that felt like a rising sun still made Malfurion, Lankshear and the other unprepared elves, nymphs and humans close their eyes to resist the glare. Even so, they still felt that they were faced with an overwhelming, dazzling ocean of light!

When the light was gradually gone, Lankshear and Selinda opened their eyes and looked at the Scarlet Plain, only to discover that a weird mushroom cloud was rising from the center. The demon experts at the core had already been obliterated. The edge of the giant pit looked like melted and reconsolidated glass, which reflected the bloody sunlight and presented a spectrum of colors.

As for the demon army further away, no intact body could be found at all. Broken limbs, heads and wings were everywhere, irrigating the earth with their red and green blood and spreading out a weird, bloody sense of beauty, as if a gigantic crimson flower was blooming.

The demons further away were already dispersed. Some had turned into dead bodies, and some were writhing on the ground with their eyes covered. The scales on their bodies had been destroyed. No naturally-endowed defense could be found anymore, either.

Because it was a plain where many frail rocks were standing, the tide-like army of demons were dried like a torrent whose source was cut off under the attack of 'Eternal Blaze'.

As for the demons at the edge that were not harmed at all, because Lucien's attack had been aimed at the experts who led the army, they were frightened and fled in a flurry now that their commanders were gone. After only one minute, nothing could be heard from the Scarlet Plain except moans, and not a single demon was standing.

What was even more weird was that the air that was full of curses seemed to have been purged after the explosion of 'Eternal Blaze'. It

became very pure and not corrosive at all.

At this moment, the Scarlet Plain had been temporarily upgraded from a chaotic, bloody, stinky abyss into a clean and tidy paradise on earth – that is, not counting the blood and bodies all over the ground.

The Sovereign of Blood, master of this layer of abyss, showed no reaction to that, nor did he stop the fleeing demons. In his silence, the overwhelming attack stopped.

The translucent space gap quaked under the terrifying energy storm, significantly weakening the seal. It was a shame that no demons dared to seize the opportunity before Malfurion and the other druids enhanced it again.

Inside Town of the Anonymous...

Mason was discussing things with Fred worriedly, when he heard the cries of demons. He frowned, “Demons are attacking again. They are truly slaves to the desire of slaughter.”

“It’s said that there are 666 floors in the abyss, but nobody has ever confirmed it. Infinite demons live inside. The losses in the daily attack are not a big deal for the Demon Lords.” Fred had a deeper understanding about the population of demons recently.

Demons were creatures that were chaotic in nature and could not control their bloodthirst, but they also preferred living to death. If they were not coerced by the senior-rank demons, they certainly wouldn’t have attacked every day, particularly when their invasions suffered heavy losses each time.

Mason was about to complain about such a life, when an unimaginable explosion broke out and deafened the two radiant knights briefly.

They looked at the abyssal gap subconsciously, only to be dazzled by the brightest brilliance as if the sun in the sky had burst out right before them!

The two of them shut their eyes abruptly, their tears dropping

nonstop. They could barely keep their feet steady.

“What extraordinary ability is this?” Mason blurted out after he stabilized himself, but his exclamation of shock was drowned in the explosion.

In the meantime, he found that his skin was vaguely burnt and got even more shocked. The explosion took place on the Scarlet Plain, but the temperature had been spread to this place from so far away with an abyssal gap in between?

How powerful would it be on the site?

After a moment, thanks to the radiant knights’ exceptional recovery abilities, Mason’s eyes were back to normal, and the feeling of earthquake was also gone.

Weird blue scales grew out of the corner of his eyes, and his pupils were constricted and pricked, before he looked at the abyssal gap again, only to discover a mushroom cloud with a particularly huge head.

Mason felt shock from the bottom of his heart when he remembered his experiences just now.

“...The beauty of destruction...” Fred’s cigar had already hit the ground when he appreciated the picture far away in admiration.

Mason was back to himself. “Mushroom cloud... Eternal Blaze? The reinforcements of the Congress of Magic have come?”

During the battle between the Congress of Magic and the South Church, ‘Eternal Blaze’ was performed in front of the whole Rentato city. It was so terrifyingly powerful that the leadership of all countries paid attention to it. Also, according to what the Congress of Magic revealed to the nobles of those countries in private, the power of such a spell did not have an upper bound...

As radiant knights, Mason and Fred were undoubtedly the leadership of Colette. The mushroom cloud described in the intelligence had left a deep impression on them.

“Has the Emperor of Arcana, the Lord of Storm, or the Lord of Elements come?” Fred speculated, before he said in relief, “It seems that we can get out of here now...”

Yes, now that the reinforcements are here, the elves wouldn't need to worry about the sea clans possible attacks.

Mason seemed also pacified. He looked at the town and said in a low voice, “I do not want to spend one second longer in this place, or I may lose control of myself...”

After that, the two of them looked at the hazy, bloody plateau behind the gap, before they remarked at the same time, “What a horrifying spell...”

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“The army of demons has retreated. We can now discuss and examine the abyssal gap.” Lucien said, with his hands in the pockets of his double-breasted suit.

Observing the silent reaction of Lankshear, Selinda and the other elves, Natasha chuckled to herself and said in the telepathic bond. “Well done!”

She liked the feeling of intimidating everything with pure strength. After watching ‘Eternal Blaze’ destroy the army of demons, her blood was boiling, and she almost couldn't stop herself from chasing after the demons.

Moving his eyes back, Malfurion said in a low voice, “I was the supervisor in this place when the abyssal gap had changed. Everything was normal until dawn, when I suddenly sensed the arrival of chaos and slaughter from the abyss as well as a space-time change. By the time I realized what was going on, I discovered that the gap, which had been ten meters long and two meters wide previously, had been stretched to thirty meters long and almost four meters tall. It was almost a natural portal...”

He introduced what happened at that time with the actual situation of the gap, trying to inform Lucien and Atlant of every detail so that

they could ascertain the cause with their special knowledge.

After hearing him out, Lucien and Atlant did not offer any comment but began to examine the gap with spells. It was not until a long time later that they finally asked, “Elder Malfurion, did the arrival of abyss and the space-time change happen simultaneously, or did they happen one after the other?”

Recalling it carefully, Malfurion replied, “I think they happened simultaneously, but after two seconds, the space-time change overpowered the air of abyss. By the time I was back to myself, the air of abyss intensified and covered all the other changes.”

Lucien and Atlant asked a few critical questions, and Malfurion, Lodell and Selinda answered them dutifully. Their description was the same. None of them seemed to be lying.

“Evans, do you have any conclusion?” Asked Malfurion concernedly.

Lucien nodded. “It looks like integration of space. Near a space gap, when the environmental parameters of the space on two sides become similar, the space will gradually melt, resulting in the expansion of the gap. If we don’t stop it, the assimilation of the abyss will result in shocks in this world. The volcano eruptions, tsunamis and earthquakes will destroy most lives and most places.

Lucien and Atlant reached the conclusion based on a similar case in the Magic Empire, but nobody knew whether or not the space could be truly melted. Lucien could not offer any detailed arcana theories until he knew more about the truth of the world.

“Similar environmental parameters?” Asked Malfurion in confusion. “But I didn’t feel that the territory around Town of the Anonymous changed towards the abyss at all...”

Lankshear squinted. “Perhaps, it was a scheme...”

“Why did it happen on this side instead of on the Scarlet Plain?” Natasha reminded them.

Malfurion frowned. “Were the demons patient enough to establish a

gargantuan magic circle or resort to other complicated approaches?”

It was well-acknowledged that demons were as intelligent as human beings. They had tried to conspire like devils, but they were chaotic in nature and would often forget the very plan they came up with last second. So, they tended to take random actions.

“It’s not entirely impossible. Two of the Demon Lords are less chaotic. One of them is Apsis, the Lord of Spectres on ‘Skeleton Land’, and the other is Gonheim in ‘Frozen Fortress’. They are both more like devils than demons.” Atlant corrected Malfurion. Both of them were level-three Demon Lords, who were equal to top legends in their domain.

“Do we have to investigate inside the abyss?” Asked Lodell worriedly. “Also, the problem may be on our side.”

Atlant looked at the town below and discovered that the elves had already blocked it. So, he asked, “Are you suspicious that something is wrong with those adventurers? Or are you worried that they will expose the intelligence?”

Malfurion explained. “It was Ferragond who proposed it at the beginning to prevent the sea clans from learning the news and keep the possible schemers here. We will continue the blockage and identify them one after another.”

“I can help you with that.” Said Atlant with a smile.

Lankshear and Selinda did not suspect that. The Eye of Curse was definitely the authority in that.

Hearing their conversation, Lucien nodded, “We do need a legend to stay here. Natasha and I will pay a visit to the abyss.”

Naturally, not all the legends should enter the abyss. It would be troublesome if the sorcerers in Nature’s Residence were left alone and the believers of Nature’s Abhorrence went mad.

“You’re going into the abyss?” Malfurion was concerned.

Lucien smiled. "The Will of Abyss is still recovering from the heavy wounds caused by God's Arrival. It's hardly likely that he will attack directly. Even if he is insane enough to do so, now that he is not as strong as before, we can always flee if we cannot defeat him, can't we? The other Demon Lords are the same. I won't be silly enough to be surrounded by them."

That was the confidence of a grand arcanist, like how Fernando believed that he could escape from the pope as long as he could not perform God's Arrival.

Malfurion was still worried. "I'll go with you."

Chapter 676: : Lucien's Reminder

Chapter 676: Lucien's Reminder

A brutal wind raged, blowing the sand on the Scarlet Plain into the sky. The sun, which had illuminated the earth through the thick dust temporarily, was reduced to the previous dim redness.

Three-headed dogs came, feasting upon the dead demons. Scales gradually grew on their body. Their eyes were bloodshot, and they gulped the corpses as if it were a contest, not even leaving the body parts that were burning. Even the bones had been chewed and swallowed.

That was what Atlant saw when he opened his eyes. He said gently and warmly, "Are you entering the abyss right now?"

He was asking Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion's operation plan.

Malfurion simply offered to assist Lucien in case of accidents in the abyss, which would've worsened the relation between the Congress of Magic and the elves. So, he did not reply and simply looked at Lucien with his green eyes.

Lucien shook his head. "We'll enter the abyss tomorrow. Let's stay in Town of the Anonymous today and see if we can notice anything wrong."

He smiled. "Investigating inside the abyss is one of our final choices. We should consider the abyss as our target without searching the surroundings first. What if the source of the problem is here? I do not want to waste my time. Let's do things one step at a time."

"Very well. Then, let's search for the anomalies in the Town of the Anonymous and the area nearby." Atlant rather agreed with Lucien.

Malfurion naturally did not have any objection. Having sensed the power of 'Eternal Blaze' just now, Lankshear and Selinda fell silent.

As they flew towards Town of the Anonymous, Natasha asked in the telepathic bond, “Why do you want to go to the abyss? Such an adventure is unnecessary... If you are looking for battle opportunities for me, we can wait in Town of the Anonymous for the Demon Lords to attack. It will definitely suffice.”

She knew that Lucien wouldn’t do it for no good reason, so she was rather puzzled.

“The integration of space here is rather similar to one of my thoughts. Therefore, I’m hoping to study it more. Chances are that I will be able to find certain things.” Lucien explained. Looking back at the abyssal gap, he shook his head and said in the telepathic bond. “Integration of space?”

Seeing that Lucien had his own purpose, Natasha nodded her head and did not say anything. She felt that all her cells were refreshed, craving for a battle.

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Inside Town of the Anonymous.

Mason and Fred paced back and forth on the street, surrounded by adventures who were also waiting anxiously and desperate to leave. None of them intended to become sacrifices of the abyss.

“Boy, stop! You hit me!” In such an ambiance, a brawny man suddenly roared. He had a tattoo of entangled leaves on his bald head. That was the totem of the barbarians from the Dark Mountain Range.

The young man whom he yelled at carried a short bow and held a cold, blue dagger. He raised the dagger angrily and shouted, “Barbarian, shut your mouth, or I wouldn’t mind letting you know how it feels to be frozen.”

Due to the aftermath of ‘Eternal Blaze’ just now, the small street had been crowded with adventures. It was inevitable that they might bump into each other.

“Ass*ole! Apologize, or I will make you one of the anonymous!”

The barbarian was so infuriated that his veins and his muscles on his two-meter-tall body were all bulging in a thick, bronze layer of light.

The two of them were about to fight, when a radiant knight's right hand turned into fire and slashed between them from the sky, resulting in a blackened crack on the earth.

"Quiet!" The radiant knight glared at the two knight-level adventures coldly.

Looking at the trace on the ground, the barbarian and the young man both stepped back and looked at each other angrily, before they turned around and left.

Mason, observing everything from nearby, observed with mixed feelings, "Having been blocked for such a long time, and due to the tide of demons and the death of so many adventures, it seems that everybody is getting agitated. Even the most unimportant thing may lead to a bloody fight."

Even he had similar feelings that he would like to vent out on someone.

Taking a breath, Fred took a breath and intended to criticize the elves for their low efficiency, because the blockage hadn't been canceled for such a long time after 'Eternal Blaze'.

Then, he sensed something and raised his head, only to discover that the sky of the town changed weirdly. The sky which was brimming with bloody dust suddenly 'fell'. It was low, and dim!

Then, half of the sky became bright, in which erratic light changed all the time and was now and then replaced by obscure darkness, and the other half became dimmer and darker, until all the bloodiness faded away, leaving the deepest, heaviest and most boundless darkness behind!

Inside the darkness, however, stars were shining brilliantly showing weird colors.

Looking at the sight that was as profound as the cosmos and the

luminescence fluctuations, Fred was immediately lost. His soul floated away, and he couldn't sense anything for a long time.

After a long time, when a breeze with the air of blood brushed him, Fred suddenly shivered, only to discover that the sky was back to normal, and the overwhelming dust still blocked the sunlight. No, it was not sunlight but the silver moonlight!

"Was it my illusion..." Fred turned around, only to discover that Mason and the rest of them all stood like statues. The whole Town of the Anonymous was unusually quiet. Even the ferocious dog at the bar did not bark at all.

"No, it's the projection of a demiplane of a legendary sorcerer..." Mason was also back to himself.

Some rituals that helped knights practice their blood power required communicating with and summoning the power of the demiplanes of legends, like how the 'Lord' had to be summoned for the promotion of the clerics in the Saint Truth.

Fred said in a self-mocking smile. "This is the first time that I have seen a legendary demiplane, not counting the Scarlet Plain."

'Sovereign of Blood', the lord of the Scarlet Plain, was a level-two legendary demon. If sorcerers, cultists and knights with special blood powers wanted to hold rituals in terms of blood and slaughter, it was possible that they would summon the power of the Scarlet Plain. Therefore, it was also a legendary demiplane.

"The two Excellencies of the Congress are finally done with their examination." Mason felt exhausted from the bottom of his head. It was already late at night at this point.

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In the polluted forest outside of Town of the Anonymous, irregular trees were growing. They were twisted to such a point as if certain kids had made mischief to them. On the rind grew tremendous lumps from which bloody fluids were flowing out hideously and disgustingly.

“This is a forest that was polluted because it was too close to the abyssal gap, but the influence diminished a hundred meters away, and it’s almost normal two hundred meters from here. The requirement that integration of space is required can barely be satisfied.” Lodell, ‘Hand of Balance’ introduced the only place that possibly matched the parameters of the abyss nearby.

Lucien observed carefully and examined the trees with magic. He then nodded his head. “It can be confirmed that this place has nothing to do with the expansion of the abyssal gap.”

Atlant gave a similar conclusion.

“It seems that we do need to pay a visit to the abyss.” Malfurion was not super interested in the trip. The Will of Abyss was an out-and-out lunatic. Nobody knew what he would do next, not even himself! What if he suddenly decided to blow himself up in front of them? What could they do?

The brainless Will of Abyss scared him more than the Lord of Hell did although the latter was full of schemes.

“The integration of space only just begun. It’s only between the Scarlet Plain and the Stroop forest. Therefore, while this place is affected by the abyss, the abyss will be influenced by the main material world. Having been wounded, it’s impossible for the Will of Abyss to arrive at the Scarlet Plain, no more than he could directly arrive at the main material world.” Lucien explained it to Malfurion based on the ancient sorcerers’ experience.

As he spoke, Lucien turned to Lankshear, Lodell and Selinda and said solemnly. “Some progress has been made regarding the investigation on the corrupted elves. Therefore, I’m obliged to remind you of something.”

The ‘investigation report of day one’, written by Jurisian, Felipe and Heidi, had been delivered to Lucien through electromagnetism messaging. So, he was aware of their suspicion.

“What is it?” Lankshear became solemn, not as egoistic as before.

Lucien briefly introduced it. “There are seven uncanny primeval devils, named after abhorrence, pain and other feelings, in the deepest relic in hell. As long as the corresponding feelings are stifled to a certain point, and a seemingly harmless ritual stimulates them, making them believe in the primeval devil from the bottom of their heart, the seed of devil in everyone’s heart will be awakened and germinate, navigating the said primeval devil to project...”

“...The sorcerers that came with us suspect that the elves were corrupted by the primeval devils...”

“The primeval devils...” The elves had a perfect collection of ancient classics. Therefore, Malfurion soon remembered the tale that was told by different bards after Lucien’s reminder.

He was very grave. If such a monster did exist, it would be much more tricky to deal with than all the Devil Dukes and Devil Counts were.

Lodell, Selinda and Lankshear all repeated the names of the primeval devils. They had never thought that such monsters existed before!

Lucien went on. “When I examined the Town of the Anonymous earlier, I realized that the adventures in the town were rather anxious, pained and uneasy after being stranded here for a long time under the threat of demons. They are already on the tipping point. If this is truly associated with the primeval devils, such an atmosphere can be easily taken advantage of. You must pay attention to it and set them free as soon as possible.”

“Leave this complicated issue to me,” said Atlant.

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The next day, Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion entered the Scarlet Plain through the abyssal gap.

In Town of the Anonymous, Mason and Fred just got up when they heard the scream down below. A grand knight had been heavily

wounded by a radiant knight who lost control of himself. Blood spilled on the ground.

Looking at the dazzlingly red fluids, Mason felt that his eyes had been occupied by them. The veins on his forehead bouncing, he found it impossible to endure the weird and depressing environment anymore.

“No, we can’t stay here any longer!”

He rose abruptly and charged at the elvish guards with Fred.

Back in Nature’s Residence, Jurisian, Felipe and the rest of the investigators looked for Martha under the direction of Iristine.

Chapter 677: Dance of Revenge

Enshrouded in the azure light, Mason and Fred flew out of the hotel and rushed at the edge of the town where the elvish guards were stationed.

Sudden, dark red fire erupted from the ground into the sky, as ferociously as if from a volcano, and blocked Mason and Fred.

“Mattwe, what are you doing?” Mason stopped his flight in time and did not run into the fire and smoke. He glared at the tall, slender man who stopped them. It was Mattwe, ‘Anger of Earth’, a level-seven radiant knight.

Mattwe’s hair was short and the color of seaweed. He raised his head and looked at Mason and Fred, before he said unhurriedly, “Have you forgotten that flight is prohibited in the town?”

The ban was not realized by magic circles but ensured by a few ‘townkeepers’ who were strong radiant knights. After the initial disorder and blood when Town of the Anonymous was established, a few radiant knights who often came to the place forged an alliance and set up an order for the town to restrain each other and maintain the peace of the town.

Mattwe, on the other hand, was one of the ‘townkeepers’.

“What’s the point of forbidding flying under such circumstances?” As radiant knights themselves, Fred and Mason were not scared of Mattwe, but they were worried that they might raise the elves’ attack. “We are only hoping to receive the investigation of the elves. Are you going to stop us?”

Mason and Fred were vaguely wary of Mattwe, because the weirdness they sensed was exactly from him and his partners.

Mattwe and his fellows did not do anything strange, except that they often expressed their desperation, pain and anxiety after the first assault of demons. They believed that it was impossible for the elves to defend the abyssal gap, because the Will of Abyss might

arrive directly as the gap was gradually expanded. Therefore, staying in Town of the Anonymous meant waiting for death. There was absolutely no hope to escape at all.

Such anxiety, desperation, frustration and agony quickly spread throughout the people under the influence. Since such feelings were normal reactions, Mason and Fred did not suspect anything. They simply did not want to get in touch with Mattwe and his partners, because the more they met those people, the more gloomy and painful it would be.

“We have to receive the inquiry of elves and sorcerers, too, but we are in no rush, and we do not violate the order of the town.”

Mattwe’s green eyes were as steady as before. “Mason, Fred, you should be very clear that times of anxiety and impatience like right now call for order. Only by keeping a reliable and strict order can we ensure that the situation will not escalate and that we will be safe. Therefore, I will not spare you just because you are radiant knights. Please follow me to the Townkeepers’ House for punishment.”

Mason had to admit that Mattwe did have a point, but the strange depression haunted him and prevented him from moving. Fred did not take any action, either.

Mattwe raised his right hand. “Mason, Fred, are you trying to resist seven radiant knights, high-rank elves and legendary experts?”

The adventures on the street slowed down and became prudent, sensing the danger that might burst out at any point.

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On the east side of Nature’s Residence was a forest so dense that it was almost sunless.

“Ms. Martha lives inside. She is a representative of Nature’s Abhorrence. Try not to infuriate her. In case she says anything inappropriate, I’ll apologize on behalf of her first.” Iristine, wearing a green dress of tree leaves, spoke to Jurisian, Felipe, Heidi and Annick.

Because several directions required further investigation, the sorcerers were divided into different groups. Heidi, believing that Sprint's lecture on Annick yesterday showed barely any effect, had rearranged the team and decided to work on it in person. She planned to lead Annick to get to know a few more elf friends. Yesterday, she already became good friends with Nodanielle and made acquaintances with many other elves.

Since Martha was the strongest of all the elves to be investigated, Jurisian and Felipe, who hadn't really seen eye to eye with each other, had to act together.

Jurisian smiled courteously. "It's alright. Everyone has their own beliefs. It's not a big deal as long as we are not really harmed."

Even the princess of elves had apologized in advance. What else could he have said?

Felipe nodded his head with his hands in his pocket, but his eyes surpassed the woods and looked somewhere far away. The communication with elves and the investigation on Nature's Residence yesterday were obviously fruitful.

Since two members of the Affair Committee were ahead of them, Heidi inevitably got absent-minded. She said to Annick in the telepathic bond, "When the investigation is over, I'll bring you to the elves' 'Ball of Nature'."

"B... Ball? I... I can't dance." Annick was so shocked that he stuttered.

Heidi gazed at him. "Who's born to dance? Well, maybe elves are... But I'm not asking you to date an elf. It will help you keep a good mood by getting to know more friends and things. I do not want my good friend to suffer severe psychological diseases because of arcana and magic studies."

Being a close friend to Rachel, she did know a lot about psychology.

Annick meant to say that he was very happy just studying arcana and magic, and that solving a problem was much more satisfying

than dancing and making new friends, but he was a person who appreciated friendship, too. Seeing that Heidi, Layria, Sprint and Katrina had been worried about his shyness, he more or less decided to change a bit. After all, he would be devoted to arcana and magic again, and so would Heidi and the rest of them.

Like a deer, Iristine traveled in the forest agilely. Very soon, they saw a green, undecorated house under her lead. On the empty ground below the house, a dozen elves were receiving dance lessons.

Martha was a famous musician and dancer among elves.

Before the dozen elves stood a Night Elf whose hair was tied and whose dark green skin gave a weird sense of beauty. She had such a mature vibe that she felt like a fruit that had come to the sweetest season.

“Bend backwards more... What’s this pain compared to the pain when forests are cut by human beings and when green is reduced to deserts?” Martha was rather rigorous in her teaching and did not hesitate to show her attitude as a follower of Nature’s Abhorrence.

“This dance is called Dance of Revenge. Every movement has a special meaning and expresses the anger of nature. You can never dance the dance well without understanding the feeling. For example, in this movement, you need to recall the extinct animals. They are completely gone from this world just because of the greed of human beings, because their fur, flesh, meat and bones are useful...”

“Because of their selfishness, human beings blatantly hurt nature, and one day, nature will burst out her fury and cleanse all sins...”

Hearing Martha’s tutelage, Jurisian frowned and thought to himself. “Such a narration and such a dance are truly similar to the Special Summoning Ritual. It will work out as long as they are convinced that ‘revenge of nature’ does exist... But why were the elves of Nature’s Balance more corrupted? Why is Martha still teaching Dance of Revenge knowing that the Congress has helped with the investigation? Does she think that we can never find that it’s her, or

was it not done by her at all?”

Iristine stepped forward and said, “Ms. Martha, excuse us. A few guests would like to ask you some questions.”

Martha had long noticed the approaching strangers but turned a blind eye to them. It was not until Iristine opened her mouth that she finally bowed with an awful face. “Your Highness, I do not want human beings whose minds are filthy to trespass on my place, and I don’t know what questions I can possibly answer.”

“Madam, we only wish to know where you learnt Dance of Revenge.” Not infuriated at all, Jurisian asked calmly.

Martha scorned. “I was inspired by human beings’ damage on nature and reorganized the fete movements that I found in the ancient classics. It’s my own creation. Are you satisfied with my answer?”

“What ancient classics?” Felipe asked the core of the question.

Martha sneered. “Are sorcerers supposed to be knowledgeable? You can’t tell? It’s from ‘Moon Rite of Werewolves’, ‘Book of Rituals’...”

She said a series of titles. Obviously, her previous statement was not a lie.

Answering another few questions, Martha asked them to leave. “My patience has run out. I do not want to answer any other questions. If you want to blame the accident on me, be my guest.”

After that, she went back to the tree house and continued her lesson on Dance of Revenge.

Returning in silence, Iristine said again, “I apologize to you on behalf of Ms. Martha...”

“Wait a moment.” Felipe interrupted her. “I would like to search Martha’s tree house and the area nearby.”

“Why?” Asked Iristine in surprise.

Felipe said coldly, “Are we supposed to believe whatever she says?”

Jurisian nodded with a smile. With such a guy in the team, he was saved from the trouble of saying things he would rather not say.

Iristine struggled hesitatingly. It was an important issue to search the house of a ‘Staff Bearer’.

.....

The bloody dust pervaded the air, blocking the sunlight from the sky. The environment that had been cleansed by ‘Eternal Blaze’ previously was full of curses and poisons again.

Lucien’s spiritual power spread out. Seizing the power of the projection of his demiplane, he blurred the environment around, making it impossible for the curses and poisons to leak in. Wearing her silver armor, Natasha looked no different from before, but the curses and poisons somehow collapsed and disintegrated when they approached her without any exception.

“Have you found anything?” Malfurion asked Lucien, who was standing next to a mirror with complicated stripes. He was casting ‘Mirror of Fate’ to decide the origin of the ‘integration of spaces’.

Lucien put the crystal ball in his left hand at the center of the Mirror of Fate. The picture immediately became clear. The crystal ball also glowed, and the stars in it were connected into a straight line.

“It’s in that direction.” Lucien said to Natasha and Malfurion. “Did the accident really originate from here?”

Chapter 678: Clues

Chapter 678: Clues

The sun that was shining through the bloody dust seemed dim and cold, but it was in fact even more scorching than the sun in the main material world. The river of lava that flowed at the bottom of the plain added to the heat of the area, making the temperature above sixty degrees all year around. Normal human beings could not survive in such an environment at all even without the many curses and toxins.

A silver light flashed and slashed out in the shape of a crescent moon, before it vanished into thin air, leaving the illusionary and terrifying gap that seemed to be piercing through the abyss on this level.

The hundreds of demons, led by a six-armed snake-like monster, came to an abrupt halt, as if somebody had cast ‘Time Stop’ upon them. One second later, their bodies suddenly exploded into a spring of blood. The pieces of their bodies hit the ground like raindrops, tiny and neat.

“Your control over the power of the legendary ‘Sword of Truth’ is better and better.” Witnessing the scene, Lucien did not hesitate to compliment. Natasha was not holding the legendary longsword ‘Sword of Truth’ but ‘Pale Justice’. She was practicing the delicate control over her blood power by executing demons.

Natasha was in a high mood. “I am not a knight with only brawn. I have always been a great controller of my strength. During the three years I spent in the abbey after I became a radiant knight, I was able to really grasp my will and my body...”

She accepted Lucien’s praise without any embarrassment. Then she said regretfully, “It’s a pity that we’ve met nothing more than senior-rank demons on our way. We didn’t even see Demon Dukes, not to mention Demon Lords. I cannot carry out my full strength and look for places where I can make improvement.”

“Each level of the abyss can support only one Demon Lord at most. That is to say, if a Demon Duke cannot control most of the territory in his plane, he cannot receive the feedback of the abyss and be promoted into a legendary lord at all.” Lucien explained it to Natasha with a smile. Although she had picked up a lot of knowledge about abyss before the mission, it was still far from Lucien’s expertise. The studies on demons were a basic subject for every sorcerer. “Therefore, unless there is any joint operation, we can see nothing but the Sovereign of Blood at most on the Scarlet Plain.”

In the abyss, except for the Lord of Spectres, the Demogorgon of Darkness and few other special demons, most of the demon monarchs did not have names but only the titles that the experts of the main material world made up for them.

A lot of monarchs of the abyss had been known. There were eighteen of them, three times more than the nine-floored hell. However, just like nobody knew how many floors the abyss had, nobody could tell how many legendary demons there were exactly. Even Rhine, as a vampire prince who had lived tens of thousands of years, wasn’t sure about the answer. It certainly deserved to be called ‘Abyssal Maw’.

However, because of the chaotic slaughter amongst themselves, and since they had to advance by defeating and absorbing other monarchs, the abyss was not even as powerful as the hell where there were only nine Devil Dukes in general. After Tiphodis, the Ice Duke and the Master of Argent, completely perished, a new legendary devil had grown up in the Silent Hell in recent years and was appointed by the Lord of Hell as the ‘New Ice Duke’.

Having been approved by the Lord of Hell, he had received the feedback and enhancement of the demiplane, thereby improving from level one of legendary to level two quickly.

It was said that the new ‘Ice Duke’ was particularly cunning and deceptive. He was known as ‘Lord of Mysteries’.

“Hehe. It will be good enough if we can encounter the Sovereign of Blood!” Although she craved battle, Natasha did not want herself

and her husband to be caught in the danger of a joint operation of the demon monarchs.

Malfurion was enshrouded in green light, as if countless plants were growing from him. Refreshing and enjoyable, it was a major contrast to the terrible environment. He observed the environment attentively in case of an ambush from the demon monarchs, overlooking Natasha and Lucien's jolly talk as if they were on a trip in the suburb.

According to the feedback of his astrology and the Mirror of Fate, Lucien altered his direction now and then. Suddenly, the picture inside the crystal ball became clear!

Inside a gigantic circle of white rocks, bloody mud rose weirdly into what seemed to be a mysterious altar!

The bloody wall around the altar was fully engraved with complicated, cubic patterns. Whoever saw them would immediately be grasped by the lust for killing. Those patterns spread out from the top of the altar and seemed to be connected to the whole Scarlet Plain. Above the altar, however, vigorous green was oozing, as if the world inside was a natural environment like the Stroop forest.

Outside of the circle of rocks was a bloody fortress whose tough wall was piled up by the corpses of different races. Hearts, intestines, heads and other body parts could be vaguely found.

It was exactly the Sovereign of Blood's 'Fortress of Flesh'!

"This truly seems to be the source of things..." Looking at the crystal ball, Lucien was more or less surprised. "Things are going on too well, aren't they?"

After locating the source of the expansion of the abyssal gap, Malfurion was no longer as silent as when he entered the land hesitantly. He looked at the crystal ball thoughtfully and said, "Let's go over and investigate it first. We'll try to take care of them if we can, but if the enemy is too formidable for us, we will retreat and summon enough legends."

“They may be ambushing us. It’s too simple and smooth...”
Natasha’s delightful smile after the battle was gone as she said very solemnly.

However, it did befit the demons’ characteristic that they weren’t capable of complicated schemes.

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The muddy mound that seemed to be an altar was very spacious inside. The dense, flourishing forest was letting out fresh air. At the center of the trees was a green object surrounded by green spots of light, which fluctuated and brought a strong sense of vigor.

Next to the green object, a giant demon who had tiny bloody scales all over his body was pacing back and forth anxiously, with bloody, scorching brilliance emanating from the wings on his back.

The most special thing about the demon was that he had two heads. One of them looked like a dog’s head, except that it had two horns like those of a sheep, whereas the other head looked like a human-faced goat.

“I said that I hate such environments most! Damn it, I’m going to destroy it!” The dog head roared, its gold eyes full of chaos and destruction.

The human-faced goat head chuckled. “You cannot even endure such a short moment without losing the ability of thinking. No wonder you are suppressed by me all the time.”

“One day, I will take you down!” The dog head jerked forward and opened its mouth, baring the creepy tusks and biting the other head.

The goat head turned around and dodged it, as if it had already been used to such ‘self-brutalization’. “You brainless moron, are you trying to sabotage our plan? Do you want to be punished?”

The dog head suddenly stopped. Fuming, it roared, “How does a plan help anything? We might as well press forward directly!”

It did not create any further mess. Obedience to those who were more powerful was a common behavior of the demons. If the powerful were unable to suppress the demons lesser to them, those demons wouldn't mind betrayals and assassinations at all. As a matter of fact, when they were most befuddled, they often attempted to overthrow those more powerful than them without considering the gap of their strength.

"Why would I bother to explain the plan to you? Can you understand it?" The human-faced goat scorned. "All in all, we have to wait here for the investigators of the Congress of Magic and the elves. Then, we will have a 'fierce battle' with them, before we 'fail' and flee, leaving this place as well as the 'clues' to them."

"We don't kill them?" The dog head found it impossible to understand. "What's the point?"

On the Scarlet Plain, it felt that it was capable of dealing with Malfurion. As to exactly whom the Congress of Magic had sent, it simply did not care!

"The bottom line is, we have to fail!" The human-faced goat was too lazy to argue with the idiot. It had been tens of thousands of years that it could not make any progress because of the idiot.

But it also believed that on the Scarlet Plain, where they were enhanced and the enemy was weakened, they would be able to escape even if Douglas or Aglaea arrived in person. Nobody except the few minorities in the abyss was fond of intelligence collection. Their demigod had set up a good example for them and they certainly had followed him well.

Chapter 679: Progress

Chapter 679: Progress

Inside Town of the Anonymous.

Mason, the ‘Azure Dragon’, and Fred, ‘the Knight of Frost’, slowly landed in front of Mattwe who was known as ‘Anger of Earth’.

“It seems that you’ve both picked the right way. Following me to the Townkeepers’ House for punishment is a smart choice.” said Mattwe in the rising tone, showing his sarcasm.

This tone was quite annoying but it would not be a big problem in peacetime. However, as now the adventurers in Town of the Anonymous were under great pressure and anxiety, this tone sounded very offensive and could easily set them on fire.

Mason’s fists clenched tight and it took him great effort to control his fury, “...Mattwe, I hope that I can go through the joint questioning of the elves and the sorcerer’s first and then go to the house. You can follow me all the time in case I decide to run away. Does that sound okay to you?”

There was no way that a knight squire or a knight below senior-rank could bargain with a town keeper like this. But as Mason and Fred were radiant knights, as long as they were willing to take the punishment, some extra requests should be granted.

Mason was ready that he would emphasize the strangeness of Mattwe and his people when he was going through the sorcerers and elves’ investigation. In this way, even if Mattwe had got other plans, he would not be able to do anything to them as they would be under close watch.

Mattwe, however, burst out the dry laughter, “No, that doesn’t sound okay to me. You’re wasting my time! You’re a radiant knight, and so am I! Every second of my time is precious. You two better follow me to the house right now, or I’d show no mercy.”

His voice was cold, and that was his final warning.

Mason and Fred exchanged a look between each other and started talking to each other secretly using the blood power of the Azure Dragon.

“Is there any personal enmity between Mattwe and us?” Mason asked confusedly. He wondered why Mattwe had to be so harsh. There were two possibilities: One was that they had pissed him off badly somehow earlier, or Mattwe had got other plans.”

Fred’s eyes were ice-blue, and they now looked very serious, “No, we barely talked to him. Therefore, the reason that he’s behaving like this must be something deeper. We cannot go to that house!”

As a radiant knight, his instinct told him that if they were going to follow Mattwe to the Townkeepers’ House, they would be in great danger. This feeling had been piling up on his heart, and it was going to explode at any time.

Mason very slightly nodded and he turned to look at ‘Anger of Earth’, “Mattwe, you’re not the one who decides. We need to see those senior elves and sorcerers. They’ll be judging!”

His voice was very loud and determined. He was trying to make every adventurer nearby hear, as well as the elves.

The elves who closed the town looked back. But when they found that it was Mattwe who was doing his business, they all turned back.

Mason did not care but kept going. He roared like a dragon, “Do you have the guts to see the sorcerers with us!”

The positions in the conversation had been exchanged.

Then he turned around and walked to the other side of the town, followed by Fred. The muscles in the back were in full alert.

Mattwe sneered and said out aloud, “The sorcerers and senior elves have commissioned us for this!”

Before his words faded, the land that Mason and Fred were standing on started waving. The waving was also shaking the houses and cabins along the street. They were going to collapse at any time.

On full alert, Mason quickly reacted. A thick bolt of lightning was summoned and fiercely launched the strike at Mattwe.

Within a second, his body had grown two times bigger. His skin was covered in azure scales and between the scales there were jumping electric arcs.

Fred's sword cut into the wind and the temperature in the small town suddenly dropped. In the cold wind, pieces of ice as sharp as sword blades swirled at Mattwe in the strong wind.

On the way, the blue blade light formed sharp icicles and a thick layer of ice on the ground.

At this time, the place where Mattwe was standing cracked and the scorching red lava gushed out. The extreme temperature resisted the frost and ice. Meanwhile, Mattwe's hand grabbed a brownish-yellow huge hammer energized by bolts of lightning.

"Senior-rank elves and sorcerers... They have helped Mattwe?" Mason quickly talked to Fred using the special blood power.

Fred jumped up and hacked downwards. The thick ice brought by the sword blocked the lava.

"Even if they have, it is only a small part of them. We make this big to let all of them know!"

As a radiant knight, he was very decisive.

When he was about to launch his storm attack, he suddenly felt that their small battlefield had been separated from the town and entered a piece of shadow.

All the roarings, storms, and bolts of lightning had all been trapped within the shadow. There was no way that these could get out and attract the elves and sorcerers' attention.

It was Shadow Baron! Mason's heart missed a beat. Shadow Baron was another townkeeper. How could he come so fast? There must be something wrong!

In the shadow, there was a figure jumping around. The figure had taken total control of Fred, as it was so fast jumping around that it could jump out and launch its attack at any time.

Mattwe dragged the heavy hammer and jumped at Mason, "They're coming very soon. Stop being stupid! The punishment won't kill you!"

He was using words to weaken Mason and Fred's fighting wills.

Mason was getting more and more angry by Mattwe's words, and he knew that the situation was getting even more dangerous. Making up his mind, he suddenly turned himself to a azure dragon in the sky.

In the blue sky, the azure sky did not look very clear. Wrapped in electric currents, the dragon suddenly exploded like fireworks!

The silver-white electric snakes filled in the entire space in the shadow, turning this place into an ocean of lightning.

The shadow was being penetrated by the lightning power!

This was the maximum of Mason's blood power and the forbidden power in his blood. All this was to break the shadow and make the elves and sorcerers know.

This was the struggle between life and death!

.....

In Nature's Residence, after a long time hesitation, Iristine finally said, "I'm not against it, but searching Ms. Martha's treehouse will infuriate all the elves from Nature's Abhorrence. We have to be cautious. I have another plan. We can sneak in and see if we can find any strong evidence, and then the thorough investigation can be carried out without any problems. If no evidence could be found, it would not cause any big trouble."

His hands in pockets, Felipe said in the cold tone, “So we’re going to sneak in like thieves? What if Martha finds out? Who’s to take the risk?”

“Your Highness,” Felipe added, “there’s one thing that you have to figure out. We’re invited here to investigate what has caused the abyssal gap and pollution. We are not the one asking. We have doubts, and we ask. You try your best to support us. We don’t take any risk. Because if we cannot find the reason, we are not the one worrying. You understand?”

Jurisian tried to make this situation easier, “You Highness, it’s in fact quite simple. All elves have to contribute to this to stop the pollution of the elvish tree. So please, your highness, please report this to Her Highness so that we can search Ms. Martha’s treehouse without any concerns. I know it’s hard, but we need your help.”

One playing the good person, the other bad, Felipe and Jurisian made the princess have nothing else to say.

Heidi said to Annick through the telepathic bond, “Her Highness is still too inexperienced, but we do have good reasons.”

When Heidi was talking, she turned to look at Iristine. Suddenly, she saw a dog-sized dragon behind Iristine. The little dragon had half-transparent scales, and it was busy enjoying the many colorful berries held in its paws.

“Alferris, why are you here?” Heidi was surprised. No one could predict where and when the Little Crystal wanted to show up.

Alferris said seriously, “I was playing with my elf friends in the nearby forest, but I heard that you need someone to sneak into Martha’s treehouse, so I am here. I’m good at illusion spells. I am in the seventh circle. No one’s more suitable than me!”

Treehouse. Searching. Staff Bearer. Alferris could see that piles of treasure were waving hands at it!

The corner of Heidi’s mouth twitched a bit. How sharp Alferris’s instinct was!

“Alright. I’ll talk to my mom.” Iristine finally agreed.

Alferris, however, was a bit disappointed, “So there’s no need to sneak in?”

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On Scarlet Plain, Lucien, Natasha, and Malfurion had approached the Fortress of Flesh. However, the demons in it were totally quiet. No one came out of the castle, from a little demon minion to a senior-rank demon. That was because all the three of them had totally released the stressful air from their legendary power!

The sky was bloody red. The red was dark, like the universe was close enough to touch. The light of different elements was dazzling. From the soil soaked in blood, strange green plants grew out, stopping and extinguishing the sand and curses in the air. However, the fine electric arcs in space contained horrible power strong enough to destroy everything.

To those demons which were used to bullying the weak and fearing the strong, facing these three people, they would never take the initiative to step out of the fortress.

“Sovereign of Blood isn’t in.” Lucien had expected this. “We restrain the air and approach the altar in the array of rocks.”

At this time, a horrible roaring burst from the array of rocks and made the entire plain shake. The angry voice arrived and filled in the space.

“The smell of human beings! I’m going to kill you all!”

Chapter 680: The Suspect

Inside Nature's Residence.

Seeing that Iristine and the sorcerers were coming back again, Martha said in a sharp tone, "I've nothing else to say. If you don't believe it, go to report to Her Royal Highness and the Elder. They will decide. But before this, please stay away from me as far as you can. The stink from your mind disgusts me!"

Felipe and Jurisian looked rather peaceful and relaxed, as if the sharp words never came into their ears. Instead, they turned to look at Iristine.

Iristine took a deep breath and got up the courage. She said to her, feeling displeased, "Ms. Martha, the sorcerers believe that you're still a suspect, so they need to search the treehouse and the tree bags..."

"What? They think I'm a suspect?!" Martha cut Iristine off and questioned in the sharp tone. Her fury was brewing.

Those elves who viewed her as their instructor also felt very offended and angry.

Iristine hurriedly added, "Mother has agreed."

Martha could not believe her ears, and she took a step backwards out of astonishment. The elves beside were also shocked: How could Her Royal Highness support those unreasonable human beings!?

After telling Martha this, Iristine finally felt a bit more relaxed and her expression had become more fluent, "Ms. Martha, I hope you can understand this. The elvish tree is what we elves rely on and every one of us wants to find out why it is polluted to fix it. In this process, we make mistakes. If anyone's wronged, I apologize here. But the investigation will keep going. If there are always elves refusing investigation, it'll be impossible to make much progress."

She had put all the blame on the royal elf family and on herself,

without mentioning one single word about sorcerers and human beings. Although her tone was soft, she showed great determination as a leader.

What had been going on recently had taught her the more precious lesson.

The other elves started nodding. No matter what, the elvish tree was their top priority. Although they were very unhappy about this, stopping this investigation was destroying the future of the elf race! They should make some concessions as long as no elves were wronged by those bloody human beings.

However, when they looked at the sorcerers, they became even more furious, as if they had put all the blame on those human beings.

The dark green skin of Martha's face made it hard to tell the look on her face. After a minute, when everyone thought that she had accepted the searching, she suddenly said.

"I don't allow this! Her Royal Highness must have been fooled by those filthy human sorcerers!"

"This is an attack against my dignity and mind. I will resist it with my life!"

Her attitude was to the elves' great surprise, which also made them feel suspicious. If she was indeed innocent, after the searching was done and nothing was found, a protest in front of Her Royal Highness, the Elder, and the princess would be totally reasonable. But now it was not at all a good chance to show her temper, unless...

"Ms. Martha, if you're concerned that the sorcerers might make fake proof against you, we can be there all the time. Our power gifted by nature is of no inferior to magic." said a female elf, trying to persuade Martha.

Another male elf nodded, "Even if they somehow have some fake proof, showing your innocence and righteousness is not difficult at

all. This is about the pollution of the elvish tree, so we can see if the black spots on the elvish tree will disappear or not.”

Heidi took a glance at Annick and then nodded to Jurisian. They had made sure that Martha was hiding something, and it was just too obvious.

Facing the persuasion, Martha’s attitude softened a bit. She said coldly to them, “Go ahead. If you find nothing, remember that I won’t accept your apology. I just hope that you can leave the forest in shame on your own.”

Felipe walked in the tree house at a leisure pace with his hands in pockets. Step by step, he stepped onto the transparent stairs made of air and walked directly onto the tree. The elves hurriedly followed in fear that he would make any fake proof against Martha.

Jurisian, Heidi, and Annick followed Iristine and Martha. They behaved themselves as they did not want to further piss off the elves.

The treehouse wasn’t big, but it was very organized and clean, and the house was filled with the pleasant scent of trees and flowers. Apart from books, some musical instruments, and some paintings, there were only some small decorations made of some dried flower petals, strange-shaped stones and leaves.

Under the instruction of Jurisian, Annick and the rest of the sorcerers started searching every corner of the two treehouses. Among them, Alferris was the most motivated one, which kept running back and forth among the elves. Its eyes were shining like gems as it was remembering everything shining in this place. From time to time, its little paws from time to time picked up some shining items and were reluctant to put them down.

At this time, Felipe picked up a notebook and started leafing through it.

“These are notes on music and dance. Can you read it?” said Martha sarcastically.

Hearing the word “music” in elf language, Felipe’s right hand slightly twitched a bit and then he talked back at her coldly, “Take it easy. My art talent isn’t as bad as you think.”

“Oh is that right? Are you good at using a dead body’s femur as your clarinet or its ribs as heptachord?” said Martha bitterly, knowing that Felipe was a necromancer.

Felipe went on reading the notes, completely ignoring the words.

After a while, the sorcerers had all done with their searching, but nothing was found.

Felipe looked up, and his sick-looking face was totally expressionless, “Ms. Martha, I’d like to ask one question: Why did you put these comments beside each of the pictures recording Dance of Revenge? All of the comments are about nature’s abhorrence and human’s sins. They look like some special rites or ritual language to me.”

The rest of the sorcerers’ eyes lit up. But soon they started slightly frowning. It seemed that the finding was too easy.

Martha explained gloomily, “To explain the essentials of each movement. What do they have to do with rites?”

“If they’re only about some essentials, as a dancer like you, there’s no need to write down so much. You’re turning them into lectures and vows.” said Felipe coldly.

When the elf standing beside Martha was about to explain, Felipe took out a book, “This is the special rite for summoning demons. You all can take a look at it to see if they are the same.”

Iristine took a glance at the book and saw the book name: Viken’s Special Summoning Ritual.

“I knew it. You’re all prepared.” Martha looked away and sneered.

The other elves took over the book in confusion and started reading.

Soon after they just started, Martha suddenly took a step backward and came to the edge of the tree house. Then she threw her wood staff into the air and the staff quickly grew into a dark-green monster about two meters tall.

At this time, black waves of insects were summoned by her and they were now surging toward the sorcerers.

This was the level seven divine power of Druids, called Boundless Insects, which consisted of countless insects that could cause itch, paralysis, and trance. Once a sorcerer was trapped by the bugs, his or her casting would all be disrupted, even including those spells that had been imprinted in his or her soul. Thus it was a Druid's great weapon against casters.

The rest of the elves were totally shocked by this unexpected fight, but the sorcerers were well-prepared.

Alferris never viewed itself as a frog, so it disliked those bugs very much. It looked up and released its angry roaring, and the power in the roaring made the insects in the air flinched a little.

Then, a strong magnetic field covered the tree house and distorted everything in it.

Under the power of the strong magnetic field, the magic bugs were pulled away as they were still forms of matter.

Martha jumped backward into the air and the trees around her had all come to life. Those treants were a few meters tall and they had encircled the treehouse from all directions.

"You filthy sorcerers are framing me! I'll go to see Mr. Ferragond!" Martha said aloud purposefully.

Felipe's hands were still in his pockets, but black miasma was aggregating around him like waves.

As soon as the dark-green monster formed by Martha's staff touched the miasma waves, it instantly lost the gloss on its skin. And the treants had all become very weak as if all their strength had been taken away.

Dying Waves, the seventh circle necromancy range spell!

The black miasma did not affect the sorcerers at all as if it had its own intelligence, which showed Felipe's great control of this seventh circle spell. For most senior-rank sorcerers who cast the spell, they could not make the miasma tell the difference between allies and enemies.

Heidi said to Annick through the telepathic bond, "Use the rite. We can't let her go!"

Heidi could not afford a rite like that a second time. But Annick was quite affluent, so she made him one.

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Inside Town of the Anonymous.

In the show there was a very powerful source of electricity, and the electric arcs visible to naked eyes emitted by it were formidably dangerous which were also making this terrifying buzzing noise.

Mason started losing his vision, and he realized that he had reached his limit. All he was left was his willpower.

At this time, warm and soft sunlight cast on him which relaxed him immediately. And within a second, the electric arcs had all gone.

"Who is it...?" asked Mason in a hoarse voice.

The soft and friendly voice came, "I'm Atlant from the Congress of Magic. I am here. No one can hurt you."

Mason finally fully relaxed and turned back to his human look in sheer feebleness.

After an hour, in the air above Town of the Anonymous, Atlant said to Lankshear, Selinda, and Lodell, "It has been confirmed that Mattwe and the several senior-rank elves were all involved in this. They were trying to use the town and a great number of senior-ranks to summon the real devil of abhorrence. But the projection of the devil exploded them all. We don't know who's behind it."

“It was Ferragond’s proposal to block the town.” said Lankshear gloomily.

Selinda nodded, “Those elves were from Nature’s Abhorrence. They knew Mattwe well.”

Lodell was still in shock, “So was it Ferragond? But he did this for what?”

“He’s the leader of Nature’s Abhorrence. Maybe that’s the reason! Anyways, I have to go back to Nature’s Residence right now no matter if he’s suspicious or not. Please take care of this place.” said Lankshear anxiously.

Atlant had closed his eyes, “I’m also heading back. We can’t leave Jurisian and the rest of them in danger.”

The elf queen was trying her best to stop the elvish tree from being further polluted. Although she would be okay fighting against common elves, when facing Ferragond, “Nature’s Avenger”, her power would be badly restrained.

“We’ll stay here and safeguard the gap until the Elder and Mr. Evans come back.” nodded Lodell.

Neither he nor Selinda were elves, so they would like to stay away from the internal conflict among the elves.

.....

Felipe lifted his right hand. Then suddenly a spectre appeared behind Martha’s back. The spectre was transparent but covered in a black robe. It kept going back and forth between the main material world and the World of Souls and was using all kinds of necromancy spells to prevent Martha from running away.

This was a new summoning spell put forward by the Hand of Paleness after many years of study on the World of Souls. The caster could summon a spectre like a voidwalker which was able to go back and forth between the two spaces. Such a spectre was thus very hard to kill and very powerful.

Martha was unprepared for this and was trapped by this senior-rank spectre. Meanwhile, there was now a ruby in Jurisian's hand which made Alferri's eyes light up. The ruby shot out a bright ray at Martha so fast before anyone could do anything.

The ray directly hit Martha and removed her defense shield.

Annick quickly used the gestures to prepare the rite for summoning the demiplane, while Heidi was patiently waiting for the chance to join the fight. She saw that Felipe lifted his right hand again.

But this time, Felipe's right wrist suddenly snapped! The broken hand rocketed into the air and grabbed Martha's face.

Then the creepy veins grew out of the broken hand and trapped Martha inside.

When Martha was about to launch her desperate strike, the furious voice arrived, "You damned human beings! How dare you start a fight in Nature's Residence?"

"Your Excellency Mr. Ferragond, I am framed by them! They said I summoned a devil!"

Chapter 681: A Plan that Worked

Above the green trees, a cluster of dark green clouds arrived, within it there were flashing electric arcs, showing the fury of nature.

Then the cloud shrank into a young Wood Elf. His neck and hands were covered with mysterious patterns, just like those shamans who were in charge of the sacrifice rites.

“Martha, repeat your words. You said you were framed by them? They said you had summoned the devil?” Ferragond asked Martha, and he had completely ignored the sorcerers.

As he was asking, the right hand on Martha’s face and the creepy veins had all withered like fallen leaves in autumn to the ground and turned into mud.

Martha said in great grievance, “They see Dance of Revenge as a summoning rite! That’s ridiculous!”

Obviously, Ferragond knew Dance of Revenge. His eyes lit up with lightning, and the air of his power was integrating into the surroundings. Then, under his gaze, the sorcerers felt that the trees were shaking, air compacting, and dark cloud gathering, as if the entire world was being resentful toward them!

Even the little crystal dragon, Alferris, had felt the pressure. Annick’s hand had been cut off in the middle of the gestures; Heidi could not help taking a step back and her back against the wall of the tree house; Jurisian had sweat on his forehead, and although he tried to smile and say something, he could not.

A new right hand had grown out of Felipe’s snapped wrist, and it was covered with a layer of moisture as if it was just born from a mother’s womb. In the strong wind, Felipe’s hair streamed and his body was very tense. However, he would not lower his head. Instead, Felipe said with great effort, “There’s... a book.”

Iristine was not influenced by the great pressure, so she hurriedly added, “The congress’s shown us a book called Viken’s Special

Summoning Ritual. It's about using simple and absurd rites for summoning those primeval devils. The book was written by Viken, 'King of Calamities', a legendary sorcerer in the past and today's pope!"

Although Stroop forest was located on the west coast of the Boundless Ocean and was away from Viken, to Ferragond, a legendary Druid, this distance was nothing to him. Viken wasn't a strange name to Ferragond, and since the congress had been informed that Viken was the pope, he had been putting even more attention to him.

Ferragond's eyes slightly squinted. As he lifted his hand, the book held by the elf automatically flew toward him.

The biggest enemy for Nature's Abhorrence was those human beings who destroyed nature, and the followers of the South Church were also human beings. Therefore, Nature's Abhorrence also regarded the Church as an enemy. Since the South Church had been trying to steal Nature's Heart and have the elves bend down in front of the glory of the God of Truth, for Nature's Abhorrence, the South Church was even more hateful than the congress.

Martha said at the top of her lungs, "Your Excellency, don't listen to them! We don't know if this was written by Viken! We don't know if Viken is the pope!"

Ferragond leafed through it and his brows frowned, "It indeed looks ridiculous, but it's ridiculous in the way that appears creepy and mysterious. I've read Pain Fable. In the fables, all the stories aim at twisting the good emotions and feelings to make one's heart full of pain and hatred."

Elves could live very long, and therefore, many of them had read lots of books. However, as Viken's Special Summoning Ritual was so childishly absurd, they had never paid much attention to it.

Seeing Ferragond's attitude, Iristine gave him the notes, "Your Excellency, please take a look at it."

"Mr. Ferragond, they're lying! They're lying!" Martha kept

repeating herself, her lips trembling.

“They do resemble a bit, but this cannot be the solid proof that Martha was the one who summoned the devil. A further investigation must be conducted.” said Ferragond after reading the notes, who was still on Martha’s side.

“Yes, sir. We’re just being suspicious, and we hope that Ms. Martha can show us her willingness to cooperate.” Iristine released a sigh of relief.

Martha shook her head, “Mr. Ferragond! They’re faking it! They’re sent by Nature’s Balance!”

The look on Ferragond’s face changed. Weighing the situation, he finally said, “Iristine, I don’t trust humans. I’m going to question Martha myself.”

A smile appeared on Martha’s face.

The sorcerers did not think it was fair. No one knew if Ferragond was totally on Martha’s side.

Iristine felt that she could not take it anymore. She did not trust Ferragond, while Ferragond did not trust humans and Nature’s Balance. It would keep going like this and nothing convincing enough could be found.

“I’ll take Martha to the elven tree.” said Ferragond who had made his own decision. Iristine wanted to stop him, but had no idea what to say.

“Wait a second.”

At this time, Lankshear and Atlant had arrived! It was just in time!

Holding a simple wood bow in his hand, Lankshear landed between Ferragond and Martha.

“Ferragond, you’re the leader of Nature’s Abhorrence. You shouldn’t be interrogating Martha. I highly doubt it if you could find anything.”

Heidi and Annick were greatly relieved when they saw Atlant had come back. Facing a legendary on their own was so stressful and scary for them, as they felt that they could be devoured by nature at any time if they were not careful enough. Visit web novel. live If You like manga , comics

Alferris finally had the chance to take out a light green fruit and fed it into its mouth. The little dragon needed some sweetness to comfort its nerves.

Ferragond stared at Lankshear, "You're suspecting me?"

"It's not about suspecting but avoiding suspicion. Don't tell me you don't get this, Ferragond." Lankshear talked back to Ferragond sharply.

They never got along with each other.

Ferragond remained silent for a while and finally said, "Then let Her Royal Highness do this herself. I don't trust you."

Lankshear nodded, "I'll take her to the elven tree."

He did not mention anything about Town of the Anonymous.

Ferragond did not say anything but sneered. He had accepted the decision, but obviously he was not happy.

Lankshear turned to Martha, "You'll be treated fairly."

Hearing that, Martha suddenly burst out with crazy laughter. Devil patterns quickly covered her dark-green skin. Meanwhile, her eyes became red and creepy, and scales started growing out under her eyes.

Martha had been corrupted! The elves were all shocked.

"Is she possessed by the devil of abhorrence?" Felipe said in a low voice.

"Sir Ferragond, run!" Martha burst out with a bitter scream, "They know the secret of Dance of Revenge!"

Then her body exploded.

At this time, thick, dark green vines rose straight from the ground within a second and trapped the flesh and blood inside the cage formed by them.

When the vines split, Lankshear had put an arrow on his bow at Ferragond.

“It is you.” said Lankshear word by word.

“Me?!” Ferragond was shocked, and when he realized what was going on, now his guts were burning with fury, “How dare you, Lankshear!”

Behind Lankshear’s back, there was an illusionary picture of forest, and then the forest formed into a green ray of light which was the power of his arrow, “Martha’s words have revealed it! Also, it was you who ordered to close the town. In the town, those possessed elves were also from Nature’s Abhorrence! We’re here just because of this!”

“Those human sorcerers have given us enough proof. What else can you say, Ferragond?” Lankshear scolded him, “Why did you do this?”

The elves could not believe what was going on.

Hearing the words, Ferragond took a bitter and hostile glance at the sorcerers and his fury burst out, “It’s you bloody human beings! I’m seeing Her Royal...”

However, before the words finished, dark-green scales started growing out of Ferragond’s skin, as if the hatred was taking its physical form.

“No!” Ferragond burst out bitterly.

Iristine and the rest of the elves were totally shocked. Seeing it with their own eyes, they were still having a hard time accepting the fact that it was Ferragond who did all these.

Lankshear said coldly, “Ferragond, be ready for the sentence!”

And then the green light shot out.

The great power of the cycle of nature consisted of incubating, nurturing, spreading, thriving, decaying, burying and again incubating was contained in this one single shoot. The gloss of the trees and plants nearby had all gone within the second.

At this moment, Ferragond had been abandoned by nature!

Totally unprepared, Ferragond was not able to do anything. The arrow directly went through his chest and green tree branches were now growing out of the hole in his flesh.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Ferragond’s bitter crying was full of hatred. His body started becoming transparent and it bulged fast. The tree branches went crazy by the polluted flesh and blood and were now turning to attack the elves and the sorcerers.

The forest had suddenly turned into the forest of flesh and blood!

Under the protection of Atlant’s legendary-level shield, the sorcerers and elves remained safe. However, when the blood and flesh were all gone, Ferragond and Lankshear had also disappeared.

“Sir Lankshear can for sure catch Ferragond...” Iristine tried to comfort the rest of the elves, although she was in bad spirit, “He’s Vengeful Hunter. He’s good at tracking...”

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Badly injured, Ferragond had run into this forest close to the abyssal gap. In a secret cave, he was trying to cure himself and get rid of the devil projection within his body.

“Why is it...” he couldn’t help murmuring. He did not understand the situation.

“Why? Why!” He roared.

Under the influence of the devil power, he could not control his feelings.

“Because you learned Dance of Revenge. Because your heart’s full of hatred.” the cold voice arrived.

“Lankshear!” Ferragond was about to stand up and fight, but found that he had no spare power to use since he was resisting the devil projection. To gain the power again, he had to give up his mind and let the devil take control.

Leaning against the rock, Ferragond saw Lankshear walking in step by step. Lankshear’s long, golden hair shone in the sunlight.

“Why?” Ferragond kept asking in great frustration.

Lankshear smiled and checked the position of the sun in the sky, “It still needs a bit longer. When that plan works, it’ll be a success.”

“That?” Ferragond was confused. Meanwhile, he kept working on getting rid of the projection. For a legendary, a devil projection could not make him or her yield immediately until they decided to give up their mind.

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“When the plan works, everything will be going perfectly.” grinned the human-faced goat.

At this time, he saw Malfurion and another two legendaries coming.

The dog head roared in low volume, “I wish I could eat them up. But we have to pretend and run...”

“Get ready!” said the human-faced goat.

Facing a fight, the human-faced goat would never argue with the dog head, which would prevent them from exerting all their power.

At this time, he saw that there was a silver pocket watch in the young man’s hand who was wearing the black double-breasted suit. Somehow, although the young man was still far away from them,

they could already hear the pocket watch ticking.

“What is it?” The human-faced goat was very concerned.

“Whatever it is!” The dog head started roaring and the entire Scarlet Plain started boiling. Blood gushed out from the soil. The filthy raindrops hit the ground mixing with dark red dust. Their body bulged quickly and grew as tall as the red sun in the sky!

But then, they heard the clear “click”.

Chapter 682: The Desired Failure

“That side?” Lankshear repeated Ferragond’s question and stood at the entrance of the cave, blocking the sunlight and making it dim inside. Then he smiled, “Of course it is the Scarlet Plain’s side.”

Shocked, Ferragond demanded angrily, “It was you who conspired with the Sovereign of Blood and polluted the elvish tree? Why did you do that?”

He had more and more sensed the dangerous situation he was in and seized every opportunity to postpone, hoping to get rid of the influence of the projection of the devil. However, his abhorrence had accumulated for hundreds of years, and he did not begin to learn ‘Dance of Revenge’ a short while ago. The ‘seed’ was too deeply rooted to be dissolved any time soon.

As if he did not sense Ferragond’s intention, Lankshear said with a cooperative smile, “Sovereign of Blood? How is that schizophrenic psycho qualified to cooperate with me? As for the pollution of the elvish tree, I couldn’t have achieved it without you and Nature’s Abhorrence.”

‘Schizophrenia’ was a term that Lucien coined to describe a certain psychological disease. Since it was very close to the case of the double-headed, triple-headed and quadruple-headed demons, it was often used by the adventurers near the abyssal gap. The elves were no strangers to it.

“Why?” Asked Ferragond cooperatively. However, it was indeed beyond his expectation that the pollution of the elvish tree was really related to him.

Lankshear behaved like a supervillain in the tales of the bards, who always bragged about their plans gloatingly when they were about to succeed, only to give their enemy a chance of comeback because of their talkativeness. “‘Nature’s Heart’ is an item close to the level of demigods. Even if I had separated part of it from the abyss, it would’ve been barely possible for me to pollute it unless the Will of

Abyss recovered from his heavy wounds. However, the original elves were born by Nature's Heart. Nature's blood flows in every elf's veins. It is deeply associated with the elvish tree."

"Under such circumstances, when enough elves were possessed and corrupted by the primeval elves, and together with the symmetric magic circle we deployed on the Scarlet Plain, the elvish tree was naturally polluted."

When talking about that, Lankshear chuckled, "It could've been a complicated issue to let the elves who adored nature to be haunted by negative feelings for a long time without Nature's Abhorrence. Many of you were so hostile against human beings that you hated everything about them including their regular activities. Your sanity was blinded by your negative emotions, which perfectly met the requirement to summon the projection of devils. Therefore, I must thank you, Ferragond!"

Inside the illusionary 'Nature's Heart' of Ferragond appeared a face that was eighty percent like him, but the face was full of hatred, dissatisfaction and anger, which made the face twisted and hideous.

"Is this me?" Ferragond saw the face when he diminished the influence of the primeval devils. Although he knew that it was a representation of his negative feelings being possessed by the devils, he was still rather shocked. Did he always look like that when Nature's Abhorrence was mentioned?

He calmed down and suppressed his fury caused by Lankshear's words. He asked in confusion, "But why are few followers of Nature's Abhorrence among the corrupted elves?"

"The elves who have really been possessed by the devil of abhorrence, unless they are willing to and they reach a certain threshold, will show no sign of corruption on the outside. Only those who struggle against the feelings of abhorrence will lose control of themselves. Their difference is like the difference between Martha and you." Lankshear explained the reason to Ferragond 'dutifully'.

Hearing the last remark, Ferragond felt his surging fury again. "So,

Martha has been possessed by the devils a long time ago and became your 'subordinate'. No wonder she slandered me. However, why did you target me? What's your purpose?"

"Why did I target you, you ask? My target has always been you! How can I make further advancements without corrupting you and turning you into a legendary body that contains the devil of abhorrence?"

"What? Your target has always been me?" Ferragond found it hard to believe his ears. Although Lankshear and he were not close to each other, they were certainly no enemies. Then, he suddenly realized something. "It was you who requested the aid of the Congress of Magic? Just so that they would investigate me? Then, taking advantage of my hatred against human beings and my anger after being vilified, you ignited my negative feelings. Together with the long-term influence of 'Dance of Revenge', the devil was successfully projected into my heart..."

"You understood it too late. Also, it's not caused by the projection of devils, but by the transformed negative feelings that have been gathered in you." Lankshear explained with a smile. "Turning oneself into something similar to the primeval devils is highly risky and may result in loss of control. Therefore, I chose you. You are the perfect 'container' with your hundreds of years of hate."

"You!" Hearing that, Ferragond was so overwhelmed by fury that he almost launched an attack without caring about anything. "Did you not fear that the sorcerers would find out the mastermind behind everything?"

"Hehe. Setting up magic circles on the Scarlet Plain could not only take advantage of the conflicts between the abyss and the main material world but also lure Lucien Evans and his team to investigate. When they visit the abyss, Malfurion will certainly be following them, or the Congress of Magic wouldn't be pleased. As a result, I can do whatever I want without concerns. By the time they return from the Scarlet Plain with 'evidence', the 'eyewitnesses' and the 'masterminds' will have died or fled. He can predict nothing however powerful his astrology is!" Said Lankshear, raising his head.

“Were you not worried that Lucien Evans wouldn’t go to the abyss? There was still Atlant!” Ferragond was refreshed after the projection of devils was slightly driven away.

Lankshear raised his bow and aimed the arrow at Ferragond, smiling. “He definitely would, because he is Lucien Evans who studied quantum superposition and proposed the observer effect.”

In fact, due to his lack of strength, Lucien always made plans according to the enemy’s personality and style, but now, he had been analyzed!

“As for Atlant, he was happy to see my plan. He dared not try it and was waiting for a safer path, but it doesn’t mean that he didn’t want to collect files through this incident. For a certain reason, I learnt of his stance and therefore dropped him a secret message asking him to join the team.” Lankshear mocked Ferragond. “How could a sorcerer who studied the mind like him have found no anomalies?”

Ferragond shouted angrily, “What is it that you want?”

“We the elves have been sinking for so long that we have forgotten the glories in our past. I do not want to be trapped in this tiny forest forever; I want to conquer the continent, the ocean and the whole world like our ancestors did!” Lankshear’s graceful face was now more or less zealous. “That can’t be achieved without experts in the level of demigods! Now that I have a chance of advancement, I have to seize it. Ferragond, I will always remember your ‘contributions’ to elves!”

Ferragond glared at Lankshear. “You...!”

It was simply too shameless and disgusting!

Lankshear looked at the sun outside and laughed aloud. “Ferragond, don’t be mad. Do you know why I said so many things to you?”

Instead of waiting for Ferragond to reply, he stepped forward and said jokingly, “To maintain your hatred, fury and pain until the right moment!”

“Lucien Evans and his team should’ve arrived at the altar now. That

is the source of Nature's Heart's pollution. However, the Sovereign of Blood would intentionally trigger the magic circle when he flees in 'failure', forcing Malfurion to repair it with his natural power. It's a pity that he doesn't know that the harder he works, the more I would benefit from him. Nature in the abyss and negative feelings, and the fallen legend in nature and the forest – the two factors will be connected into an enormous ceremony that helps me to transform my status perfectly!"

The risks about the negative feelings would only go to Ferragond, the 'container'!

"Besides, the Sovereign of Blood left some clues so that Malfurion and Lucien Evans would figure out that you are the mastermind!" Seeing that the time had come, Lankshear said in delight and solemnity. "Ferragond, don't resist. You have no chance!" Read comics on our webnovel.[live](#)

Ferragond bit his teeth so hard that his lips were broken and blood flowed out. He glared at Lankshear, his eyes bulged and bloodshot.

.....

Crack.

The dog head and the goat head of the Sovereign of Blood felt that everything around them turned monochrome. The color of blood faded, the raindrops were frozen, and the earth became as steady as the most perfect statue.

All the noise and slaughter were far away. All the blood and stink were gone. The world became quiet and fresh again.

Seeing that things were a bit tricky, Lucien simply used 'Advanced Time Stop' on the Moon Timer without leaving a battle opportunity for Natasha!

Then, he chanted in the monochrome, frozen time and space:

"Luxury Cracking!"

Then, Lucien's left eye became red and clear, like the most beautiful

gem, before a ray was shot out with the voice of 'Vengeful Gaze'. It was unnecessary to use 'Positron Cannon' to deal with the Sovereign of Blood, and 'Eternal Blaze' was unsuitable for the occasion because it would destroy the altar and the clues indiscriminately.

The ray was shot again. Because the three legendary spells were all attached with 'Hand of Uncertainties', and 'Vengeful Gaze' also used 'Magic Delay', 'Advanced Time Stop' stopped at this moment, and the blood on the ground sprang.

At this moment, a silver sword flashed, breaking the rain drops, the blood and everything that couldn't have been broken.

Colors splashed out on the Sovereign of Blood as the layers of defense on his body were opened. Obvious cracks could be found on the bloody scales, too.

'Luxury Cracking' was something that only the legendary sorcerers who were particularly good at elements and force fields could have picked up. In the Congress, none other than Hathaway was able to cast it before Lucien. Even Douglas had to use prolonged spells and complicated gestures in order to cast it!

Crack, crack, rack. The items on the surface of the Sovereign of Blood exploded. After only a while, he had been reduced to nudity by Lucien, turning defenseless!

Then, two bloody rays shot his body, one from the front and the other from behind.

Being only a level-two legend, the Sovereign of Blood immediately sensed the charm of probabilities. His chest was pierced through, and he was paralyzed on the spot!

Malfurion certainly wouldn't let go of such an opportunity. He threw out his staff:

"Nature Cage!"

The human-faced goat and the dog head watched the green 'plants' to spread and grow in their paralysis, while they thought sluggishly:

“We have failed?”

“How were we caught?”

.....

“Ferragond, rage and loathe! That will be more perfect!” Laughing aloud, Lankshear approached Ferragond who was glaring at him.

Suddenly, he saw a layer of shallow light glimmering on Ferragond’s body. The illusionary hideous face was now vaporized, and there was no sign that the ritual he had in mind was activated!

“This is...” His smile was suddenly frozen.

Chapter 683: Entrance

On the Scarlet Plain...

The double-headed, whose body was as long and narrow as a lizard, stood inside the array of rocks, absolutely still. Its dark red scales reflected eccentric brilliance under the sunlight. From the gaps of the scales, sprouts were growing as if seeds had been planted into its flesh, donning the demon with a green 'uniform'.

The gloating and cunning smile, mixed with some shock, was frozen on the goat head of the Sovereign of Blood, whereas the dog head was simply overwhelmed. They could not understand why they were caught so easily when they equaled to level-three legends in their 'legendary demiplane'. Even if they could not defeat the enemy, why couldn't they run away? This was their own 'home field'!

'Advanced Time Stop' was the most powerful spell in space-time magic. Nobody except for the magic creatures such as the God of Silver Moon could even understand it without a deep understanding about time and space. They couldn't perform it even though they had the spell and the gesture needed!

However, Lucien was able to perform it. His unique legendary item could release 'Advanced Time Stop'! Wasn't his class 'Atom Controller'? Did it have anything to do with time and space?

The inert brains of the Sovereign of Blood felt that they forgot something, but it was too chaotic to have any understanding about arcana, much less the details of the general theory of relativity. As a matter of fact, the human-faced goat head, who pursued progress, intended to learn the basic concepts of arcana, but the dog head got agitated whenever it picked up a book to read. Then, the two heads would carry out their long tradition of mutual biting again.

As for 'Luxury Cracking', neither the demon nor Malfurion was too surprised. If Lucien Evans wasn't capable of that, he wouldn't have deserved to be called an authority in the field of elements and force

field. It was only natural that he became the second legend in the Congress who grasped the spell after Hathaway.

About the penetrative attack of 'Vengeful Gaze' which ignored the defense of scales, Malfurion didn't quite catch it and thought that 'Luxury Cracking' had deprived the demon of its defense. However, the two heads of the Sovereign of Blood were confused. That was their natural defense. 'Luxury Cracking' could have only sabotaged part of it but couldn't have nullified it, but why did they feel that they were standing there nakedly?

It was beyond their understanding with their 'knowledge' of arcana.

"We have truly failed... How can he possess so many powerful spells..."

"Not only have we failed, but we have also been caught. Should we consider the plan accomplished in excess...?"

Different ideas occurred to the two demon heads. Flesh wriggled crazily on their chest where 'Vengeful Gaze' pierced through, but it could not be recovered. The dark red blood dripped on the ground, corroding the stone plate and the mud.

"Are there more items on the Sovereign of Blood?" Malfurion approached the Sovereign of Blood, only to discover that its waist was enshrouded in a black mist. Did any item survive 'Luxury Cracking'? A legendary item?

He believed that a schizophrenia patient like the Sovereign of Blood was incapable of crafting a legendary item on its own. The best it could've done was to transform its body parts into weapons, like how it broke the bloody tail and turned it into two red blades.

So, was it a trophy after the demon killed adventurers or other enemies?

"Be careful." Lucien reminded him. "I sense that it is evil and negative."

Natasha stood on alert with the Sword of Truth in her hands. She did not question Lucien for launching a full-strength attack, albeit

more or less regretful that the Sovereign of Blood did not put up any resistance or give her a chance to fight.

Malfurion raised his head, and a twig grew out of the flesh of the Sovereign of Blood, lifting the item.

“This is...” Malfurion couldn’t have looked more awful.

The item was a lifelike dark figurine. There was no telling what it was made of, but it was radiating blackness.

The face of the figurine was very clear. It was exactly Ferragond, Nature’s Avenger!

The figurine of Ferragond had a twisted and hideous face that was full of hate, rejection and fury. From the void around it, vague black air was popping up and melting into its body. The black air seemed to be the infinite feelings of hate at the bottom of every intelligent creature!

“An attempt to transform into the status of primeval devils with the power of emotions.” Lucien interpreted the situation calmly.

Malfurion said in disappointment and fury. “It was Ferragond! Nature’s Abhorrence is too outrageous!”

“Not necessarily so. Why is the Sovereign of Blood holding the special item with which Ferragond gathers the power of feelings?” Lucien looked at the stunned Sovereign of Blood.

“Perhaps, it is a term of their cooperation. Perhaps, the special item has to be placed near the altar.” Malfurion speculated.

Lucien smiled. “I don’t think any legend who is not deranged would cooperate with this double-headed demon which may burst into conflict with itself any moment. Since we have caught it, we can invade its brain and check later.”

Lucien paused after that. “However, until then, this figurine must not be left. It is a critical item for the status transformation whether or not Ferragond is the culprit. The sooner we destroy it, the sooner we will be relieved.”

In case Malfurion played tricks after he was attracted by the value of the statue, Lucien, who was not interested in the figurine at all, decided to eliminate the disaster as soon as possible.

“Okay.” Malfurion was too obsessed with the traitor among elves to covet the item for now.

Natasha raised the Sword of Truth and gazed at the figurine of Ferragond that Malfurion tossed over, whereas Lucien held the Moon Timer tightly although he seemed casual, prepared that Malfurion might attack suddenly.

At this moment, the effect of paralysis was already gone. The human-faced goat head of the Sovereign of Blood looked at the statue in anger and frustration. According to the plan, he would throw the figurine to the center of the altar and pretend that he was destroying the evidence when he faked his defeat. Then, the figure couldn't be destroyed normally after it entangled the air of Nature's Heart, and Malfurion could only separate it with his nature power. In such a way, the ritual would be activated, and his mission would be accomplished.

But why did he fail for real?

He still couldn't figure it out!

Malfurion moved his eyes to the altar while Natasha destroyed the figurine with the Sword of Truth. He discovered that mysterious patterns extended out of the altar and entered deep into the earth and the void on the Scarlet Plain, constituting an enormous and cubic magic circle.

“This is very similar to the status transformation circle in the Realm of Gates...” Lucien thought to himself.

As expected, a green, exuberant air mass was placed at the center of the altar. The vitality it emitted had yielded green seedlings inside the altar.

Black spots could be found in the air mass. It had obviously been partly infiltrated by the negative and chaotic air of abyss.

Natasha's body suddenly blurred and melted with the silver sword, before she slashed at the dark figurine in midair.

To prevent the congregation of negative feelings, the most convenient and effective approach was definitely 'Sword of Truth'!

Malfurion threw out a few wood statues and turned them into dark green monsters, which rushed to the center of the altar, trying to take out the air of Nature's Heart.

The sky was suddenly darkened, and a baboon-like head surfaced from the darkness, with its eyes closed and its face full of scales.

In the meantime, a gigantic hand descended from the sky and snatched the figurine, ignoring Natasha's sword!

The mud on the plain that was saturated with blood collapsed, as if it could not handle the pressure. Chaotic, evil songs echoed from the void. They seemed to be hymns of darkness and profanity that were paying tributes to the leader of demons!

From the darkness around, dark tentacles moved close densely. Whatever they touched withered and decayed into mud.

The Moon Timer was still ticking in Lucien's right hand. Wary of the situation, he moved his thumb.

After a crack, the black tentacles stopped where they were, their colors fading away. The collapsing plain kept their current status. The decaying stones and wood monsters showed a certain art of destruction in their own way.

The dark hymns were gone, and the gigantic, scaled palm was frozen in midair.

In the effect of 'Advanced Time Stop', the baboon head in the sky suddenly opened its eyes!

In its eyes, green, red and gold colors changed rapidly, giving the feeling of havoc and wickedness.

Crack. The monochrome was gone, and all colors returned.

Everything was restored to what it used to be before the Moon Timer was pressed!

It had broken 'Advanced Time Stop'!

"Prince of demons..." Malfurion and Lucien had both recognized the demon's identity!

.....

"Damn it. I knew that the Sovereign of Blood was unreliable! What did it do wrong this time?" After his smile froze, Lankshear cursed.

Ferragond was rather frustrated. He had only banished part of the projection of devils, and he was immobile due to the heavy wounds. Such a great opportunity to escape had been wasted!

Lankshear didn't dare be careless after the accident. He trapped Ferragond before he paced back and forth anxiously, waiting for the altar on the Scarlet Plain to be activated.

Suddenly, dark greenness surfaced in the void, and the green lines enshrouded by the negative air spread out, constructing an extremely complicated magic circle with Ferragond as the center.

Taking a breath in relief, Lankshear smiled in delight. "Finally!"

Ferragond's body was blurred. Ugly faces appeared below the green, flourishing light on the surface.

Lankshear took out various items from his magic pouch, finishing the last procedure of the ritual. He did not intend to become a demigod immediately but hoped to reach the peak of legendary. He was certainly not reckless enough to resort to a method that had yet to be confirmed.

Green, dark and dirty lines were illuminated one after another, forming another mysterious and complicated circle with himself as the center.

"Lankshear, curse you!" Shouted Ferragond miserably.

Lankshear smiled. “Very good. Keep that status.”

He extended his right hand and pressed the center of the magic circle, connecting the two magic circles. Light and shadow interwoven with flowing energy.

Suddenly, the air around glowed in greenness, and the magic patterns around Ferragond’s body were removed and melted into the magic circle around Lankshear!

Halos glittered, trapping Lankshear at the center of the magic circle.

“What’s going on?” Lankshear was completely confused, not understanding what the changes were about.

Ferragond was also overwhelmed by the new change, equally puzzled why he had been saved!

The magic circle suddenly radiated, and the energy seemed to be spreading far away. The green colors soon became transparent, displaying the situation on the other heart.

That was a green, beating heart, in which a gorgeous lady in a dress of leaves was standing. Her blond hair was shining, and her skin was also covered in shallow greenness. She had profound, deep eyes and a hallowed face.

“Your Majesty!”

“Your Majesty!”

Lankshear and Ferragond shouted in astonishment.

Chapter 684: A World of Competitions

Inside Nature's Residence.

Annick, Heidi, Jurisian and the rest of the team had returned to the tree houses, and Katrina, Sprint and the other sorcerers had also come back in a hurry, because it would be easy for Atlant to protect them when they were gathered.

The corruption and demonization of a legendary druid was the most severe matter for elves in the past hundreds of years. It was even more astounding than the partial pollution of the elvish tree. Therefore, they had to be braced for all kinds of scenarios.

"I didn't know that Mr. Ferragond, a level-two legendary druid, could be possessed by the devils, too. Didn't our teacher say that the seven primeval devils couldn't have been stronger than top legendary?" Pacing back and forth in her tree house, Heidi said in shock and excitement.

Annick analyzed calmly. "Our teacher drew the conclusion from files and the incidents of devil projections. He never met any of the seven primeval devils in person. Also, it remains to be seen whether or not the primeval devils exist. Perhaps, they are only the representations of the negative feelings in everyone's heart, and they differ among people. It may be an abstract reference that does not indicate any real existence."

"Legendary druids are also intelligent creatures. They have their own joy, sorrow, hate and pain. It's perfectly normal that the devils projected into him. Also, as the leader of Nature's Abhorrence, Ferragond has gathered hate for hundreds of years. It's not strange that such a thing happened to him." Sprint did not witness what happened and therefore didn't feel anything wrong.

Katrina and the other sorcerers also thought so. They nodded in agreement.

"The problem is that the investigation went too well and the result came too easily. It's really not like the planning of a legend." Heidi

spoke with her hands in her back, as if she were a senior officer in the police department of Holm.

Alferris examined the 'sparkling stones' that he 'borrowed' from Martha's tree house and said casually, "Even if she had been possessed by the devil of abhorrence, Martha's performance could hardly be called qualified. Unless her intellect was congenitally deficient, she must've had other purposes."

He was the senior-rank sorcerer in the Congress that dealt with the primeval devils earliest, and he had a deep understanding about their cunningness.

"Alferris, are you suggesting that Martha slandered Ferragond on the purpose? Then who's the real mastermind?" His eyes glittering, Annick looked at Ferragond.

The little crystal dragon counted the 'sparkling gems' in his paws and replied unconcernedly. "How can I know who the mastermind is now that Martha has died in self-detonation? However, it is possibly true that Ferragond was corrupted in public. After the pollution of the elvish tree is cured and Lankshear kills him, our mission will be accomplished successfully."

My journey will also come to a perfect, fruitful end!

As for what the truth is, that is only the concern of Lucien and the other sorcerers!

At this moment, Iristine, who didn't look too well, flew in and said in a low voice, "Thank you for figuring out who the mastermind is. If the escalation weren't stopped, all the elves would've been at risk. I have reported the issue to my mother. She asked me to forward her gratitude to you."

"You're welcome, Your Highness. There's no need to worry. Ferragond was heavily wounded and certainly cannot escape from Mr. Lankshear. After his death, the pollution of the elvish tree will be purged. Yes. Everything will be fine." Heidi comforted Iristine

Hardly had she concluded her sentence when green light emitted

from the wood wall of the tree houses. Firefly-like spots flew out and decorated the room as if it were a dreamland, making everybody feel peace and tranquility from the bottom of their heart. All their negative feelings seemed to have been removed.

“Well...”

“What happened?”

Exclamations of surprise echoed. Heidi and Katrina looked out of the tree house in surprise, only to discover that bright green ‘ripples’ were flowing in the whole forest. While bringing peace and tranquility to the place, they had added to the haziness and holiness of Nature’s Residence.

In the meantime, hollow, jolly songs came from leaves, trunks, roots and bushes, making everybody forget their worries.

In such a dreamy scene, Alferris waved his claws, hoping to capture and collect the firefly-like spots. Iristine, on the other hand, looked at the rising pure greenness at the center of the lake and said in delight, her worries gone, “The pollution of the elvish tree has been removed!”

Inside Nature’s Residence, the elves forgot their worries and danced amidst the light spots and greenness. Among them, the followers of Nature’s Residence seemed to be struggling, and dark hair emerged from their soul and moved far away into the void.

After the air was completely eliminated, they all put on a smile of relief and easiness, as if a rock that burdened their heart for a long time had finally been moved away!

Inside the prison, the elves who had been screaming hatefully and miserably gradually calmed down. Black air surged, and scales dropped. Their tattoos also constricted, not as devastating as before.

They felt the inner peace that they hadn’t felt for a long time. Leaning against the wall, they sobbed in silence, overjoyed about their new life.

The elvish tree that rose into the clouds stretched out the leaves and

glowed. Black spots protruded from the trunk, withering and disappearing into nothingness.

Atlant, who was sitting inside the tree house, suddenly opened his eyes and looked at the elvish tree. His pupils that reflected the changes of heart were full of shock.

.....

Inside the secret cave...

Lankshear was confined where he was by the reversely-melted magic circle. He looked at the other end of the 'lines' in bewilderment. It was supposed to be the Scarlet Plain, but why was it now Nature's Heart?

Then, dark air popped up from the void and gathered inside the magic circle into fluids.

The fluids were deep and dark, invoking the heaviest feelings of hate in whoever saw it and making it impossible for them to control their heart.

The fluids soon constituted a dark shadow whose head turned into a hideous face. No, the face could almost be called handsome by itself, but it had been contorted by the intense greed, hate and other feelings!

"No..." Lankshear screamed in disbelief after seeing the face. Why was his preparation to deal with Ferragond now used against himself?

The dark shadow was exactly the primeval devils made of the negative feelings of many elves, 'Abhorrence' and 'Greedy', exact that Lankshear was used as the carrier and container this time!

The mixed primeval devils lunged at Lankshear, making him cry miserably.

"Why?"

"Your Majesty, why?"

Regretfully, he moaned and asked.

From somewhere far away, Aglaea said calmly, “I have already been half melted with Nature’s Heart. How could I have not sensed that some of its air was stolen?”

“It’s impossible! It’s impossible! The way I used avoided your senses!” Lankshear cried, unwilling to accept it, while the dark shadow tried to melt into him!

Ferragond was back to himself. Looking at Aglaea’s vague figure, he asked, “Your Majesty, you knew Lankshear’s scheme in advance? Then why did you...”

He didn’t finish the sentence, because any creature with regular intelligence could tell that the queen was taking advantage of the magic circle that Lankshear set up!

Hearing Ferragond’s doubt, Lankshear also shook his head anxiously. “Why... why didn’t you stop me? Why did you allow me to hurt the elvish tree and the clan? Were you blinded by greed, too?”

It never occurred to him that the queen was going to use him as the container of negative feelings!

Aglaea did not answer Lankshear’s question but said with mixed feelings. “Ever since Viken and the mysterious person spread the way to become a demigod in secret, this world has changed.”

What way to become a demigod? Ferragond was confused.

Lankshear, however, fell silent.

Aglaea went on. “Ever since the age of myths, it has been impossible for the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss to arrive at the main material world in person, and the God of Silver Moon hardly showed up, too, for various reasons. Therefore, one top legend was enough to maintain the survival and continuity of elves.”

“From the Sun King’s studies on ways to become demigods, to Viken’s advancement into a pope, the Saint Truth suppressed many

demiplanes. After that, Viken actively disseminated the way to become a demigod, and Lucien Evans began to study the arcana support of demigods. The endeavors of intelligent lives to reach the level of demigod have finally yielded glowing fruits. The boundary of natural-born demigods will be crossed soon, and the age when everyone can be a demigod will come!”

Looking at Lankshear and Ferragond with her green eyes, she said, “In the process, due to the insufficiency of the power of faith, Nature’s Heart and other resources, the number of demigods will be limited.”

“In the process, legends will fall, and new demigods will rise.”

“In the process, certain races will decline, and certain races will flourish.”

“This is exactly the tide of time that nobody can avoid!”

Ferragond exclaimed in shock. “Your Majesty...”

Thoughtfully, Aglaea stared at Lankshear. “I thought that I could stay away from the turmoil, and that our people would not be consumed as long as we hid in the Stroop forest. However, your cooperation with the Prince of Demons made me realize that I was wrong. In such an age, both the regular legends and the top legends have to strive for their survival and fight for the continuity of their people!”

“Regular legends have to march towards the peak of legendary despite risks, and the top legends have to devote their life to the path of demigods. Nobody can stay out of the vortex unless they are willing to give up and wait for catastrophes to knock your door someday!”

“Although this path is dangerous and unknown, I’m very clear that only by becoming a demigod will elves be forever continued without being eliminated by the tide of time!”

Lankshear watched the dark shadow attaching itself to him, his eyes hollow. “Therefore, you took advantage of my plan and completed

the status transformation with me as the container?”

“Yes. Your crimes are punished in such a way. The continuity of elves is what matters most.” Said Aglaea peacefully but firmly, revealing her majestic air. “The development of this age is faster than anyone could possibly imagine. You must make plans and take off in advance if you want to fight for the qualification to survive. If you are left behind, you will be hit!”

“A phrase that Lucien Evans mentioned in Arcana Voice fits the current situation very well.”

“This is a world of competitions, and nobody can ever jump out of it!”

Chapter 685: Arrow of Nature

Chapter 685: Arrow of Nature

The monochrome was gone, and the sky was still pitch dark. The demons that were seen by the eyes of the Prince of Demons were all grasped by the utmost insanity. They howled like the most ferocious beasts.

The crimson land continued to collapse, and the springing blood was bent into flowing underground rivers. The tentacles from the darkness that brought decadence and corruption were back to life, stretching at Lucien, Malfurion and the altar from all directions.

The gigantic hand with dark scales and disgusting furs snatched at the blurred figurine of Ferragond under the cover of the corrosive, wriggling liquids.

Everything had been recovered from the frozen state created by 'Advanced Time Stop'.

"Space Staff!"

Right when the gigantic hand of the Prince of Demons was about to reach the figurine, Lucien cast a spell with an unpredictable voice. Ripples of light gathered into a dreamy staff.

As the staff was pointed, vague waves surged out between the gigantic hand and the dark figurine. After only a moment, they turned from next to each other to countless worlds away!

After Lucien advanced into level three of legendary, the power of 'Space Staff' was maximized. The fickleness of time and space was not just about the acceleration and deceleration of time and the consolidation of space but also about many delicate applications, like the effect that mimicked 'God's Guard'. Of course, for some reasons, The effect of world separation still lacked the transcendental and intangible feelings that God's Guard and the Shield of Truth had.

The gigantic hand of the Prince of Demons was only one meter away from the dark statue, but it could not press forward anymore. The illusionary waves created many overlapping spaces, making it impossible for the hand to reach the destination without passing the different worlds in between!

Seeing the new situation, Natasha kept slashing at the dark figurine as determinedly as before. The terrifying illusionary gaps seemed to be already cutting everything, shattering and extinguishing the black air that was popping up from the void nonstop.

The baboon head in the sky opened its mouth in exasperation, in which four fangs glimmered.

“Howl!”

The Prince of Demons suddenly cried like a beast!

The word that he cried out seemed to be meaningless, but the most wicked and chaotic air in it boiled the darkness around and manifested different views in the void. The Seething Ocean, the Skeleton Land, the Castle of Hypocrisies, the Swamp of Souls, the Abyssal Stomach, the Dark Forest and all the other evil demiplanes showed up.

A Dark Dialect? Lucien had barely any time to think when his head hummed as if somebody had hit his soul and his skull with a huge hammer brutally. His negative feelings and his bloodthirst surged out. The magic effects that he cast on himself like ‘Mental Barrier’ were broken one after another. The wall of space produced by the Space Staff was contaminated by the darkness, too.

“Abrupt Magic Reverse!”

During the moment when the magic effects offset the howl of the Prince of Demons, Lucien seized the opportunity to chant the spell. A translucent mirror was immediately gathered, vintage and mysterious. It was not as fuzzy as the Mirror of Fate but seemed to be connecting a different world.

Crack, crack, crack. The mirror of reflection that Abrupt Magic

Reverse created had deep and creepy cracks. Since Dark Dialect was not a spell that targeted individuals, it was not parried but only weakened, preventing Lucien from falling into a coma.

The Dark Dialect was not the language of abyss or hell but a legendary spell that represented the nature of abyss and hell. Only the Will of Abyss, the Lord of Hell, the Prince of Demons and the master of the first level of hell were capable of it. The Lord of Hell's 'Life Deprivation' was exactly a variation of Dark Dialect.

"Howl!"

When the Prince of Demons let out 'Dark Dialect', the silver light that was the integration of Natasha and the Sword of Truth suddenly became heavy and descended, as she had been awed, too. Then, illusionary waves rippled out slowly. It was obvious that her willpower was strong enough for her to use the Shield of Truth!

The worlds between the gigantic hand and the figurine were frozen, no longer vague and unpredictable!

Malfurion was about to perform the body transformation of druids and turn into a terrifying rock giant to destroy the altar, when he suffered the shock brought by 'Dark Dialect'. As a result, his natural power was disrupted, and his head became dizzy. He could only retreat the green staff with which he trapped the Sovereign of Blood for self-defense.

The twigs and leaves from its flesh gone, the dog head and the human-faced goat head both howled ferociously and echoed with the Prince of Demons.

The fur on the giant hand of the Prince of Demons erected, releasing the intense air of evilness and chaos from the black, corrosive fluids, as it suddenly grabbed the illusionary worlds before it which were frozen like ambers.

Crack, crack, crack. Cracks appeared on those illusionary worlds, spreading out and falling apart.

The giant hand pierced through them and approached Ferragond's

figurine!

Inside the abyss, the Prince of Demons would have extraordinary strength. If it were in its own demiplane, it would be as strong as a demigod, like the pontiff of the North Church after performing 'God's Grace'.

However, Lucien was not nervous or terrified, because the Prince of Demons seemed only interested in taking the figurine away and activating the altar. It did not block the space or focus all of its attention on him, Natasha and Malfurion. If they intended to leave, they could leave immediately. Also, even if the Prince of Demons were to attack them with full strength, he was still confident enough to escape when he was on the Scarlet Plain.

From the darkness, long tails emerged and darted at Lucien, their pointy ends brimming with black, negative air. It seemed that they could significantly weaken the enemy like the deteriorating rays or the sword of darkness.

It was the main way of attack for the Prince of Demons!

Crack. After a crisp sound, a tail that was enshrouded in black scales pierced at the mirror of abrupt reverse before Lucien. The mirror was completely broken, but the tail was also blown backwards at the baboon head in the sky.

"Nature's Wrath!" Malfurion was faced with the Sovereign of Blood who pounced at him.

At this moment, the gigantic hand of the Prince of Demons had already touched Ferragond's figurine.

"Create a vacuum with 'Storm Barrier' first, and then obliterate the figurine as well as the Prince of Demons' body with 'Positron Cannon'..." Lucien thought to himself calmly, preparing to give the Prince of Demons a brutal attack before it shifted its attention to himself and Natasha. Even though the attack couldn't kill the enemy, the enemy wouldn't be able to achieve its purpose.

Suddenly, the Nature's Heart on the altar became bright and even

more vigorous, blurring the space around and presenting a natural, harmonious world where the birth, growth, exuberance, decline, death and rebirth were manifested!

Then, the world was melted in the air of Nature's Heart, turning it into a bright green streak of brilliance which shot out of the altar like an arrow.

The altar withered and collapsed, as if all its vitality had been gone.

The arrow of light made by 'Nature's Heart' took off late but arrived early. It hit the dark figurine and the gigantic hand of the Prince of Demons after only one moment.

The dark figurine fell apart, and the illusionary faces of elves, mixed with intense negative emotions, were melted into the bright green light and pierced into the gigantic hand with it!

"Ahhhhhhhhh!"

The Prince of Demons cried miserably, and a torrential rain poured down, corrupting and destroying everything.

Green and vigorous branches grew from its palm, and sprouts were also extending from its arm, its baboon head, and its eyes where all kinds of colors were changing.

Therefore, it could not keep the remote presence anymore, and its enormous body completely appeared in the sky.

It was a body that was narrow, long like a snake but as hideous as a mixture of a baboon and a gorilla. The demonic patterns made of scales and furs were full of wickedness and foulness, too. Anyone who was not a legend would've suffered irrecoverable craziness as long as they looked at the body!

Faced with such an unexpected change, Malfurion narrowed his eyes quickly:

"Her Majesty?"

He suddenly realized that things were much more complicated than

he thought!

Natasha was shocked by Dark Dialect and could barely control herself. Even her battle desire had been replaced by slaughter and other negative thoughts. Thankfully, she was a legitimate knight and an expert who had reached her current stage with her willpower. So, she managed to control her body and resisted the subsequent corruption with the Shield of Truth.

Then, she watched the Prince of Demons be heavily wounded by Nature's Heart and deprived of mobility.

So, with a fire burning in her heart, the desire for battle and the subconscious reaction melted her with the Sword of Truth again. The silver sword swirled in the sky and chopped the surfacing body of the Prince of Demons indifferently and arrogantly.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!”

After the flash of the sword, an illusionary and hideous crack appeared, and the Prince of Demons cried miserably again. However, having been corrupted by Nature's Heart, it could only fight back with the dark fluids on its body without being able to perform Dark Dialect.

Although Natasha was full of battle desire, she was certainly not a reckless warrior. After hitting the target, she immediately descended and directly landed on the heads of the Sovereign of Blood, covering the distance in a blink, before she aimed at the two heads and slashed her sword!

A top legend like the Prince of Demons must have desperate counterattacks!

After slashing her sword, Natasha did not check the result but raised the Sword of Truth.

At this moment, the Prince of Demons' body that was thousands of meters long loomed in the sky, but it was temporarily restrained by Nature's Heart and stood there like a target.

“This is such a great pose. I can't hold myself back anymore...”

Lucien certainly wouldn't let go of such an opportunity. After Natasha's sword hit the target, he extended his left hand and aimed at the Prince of Demons.

Then, his monocle glittered, as he pointed at the wound caused by the Sword of Truth on the underbelly of the Prince of Demons and announced:

“Eternal Blaze!”

Lucien intended to use ‘Positron Cannon’ at the beginning, but the anomalies of the elvish queen made him drop the idea for now.

Then unimaginable light broke out!

Chapter 686: Prince of Demons

An illusionary but deep wound lay on the abdomen of the Prince of Demons, tearing and cutting its scales, ‘muscles’ and bones, resulting in a huge loss of black, corrosive blood. The internal organs that were wriggling all the time inside like little demons were presented before Lucien.

Screaming in a voice that shocked the whole demiplane, the Prince of Demons suddenly opened its mouth and spat out a human-shaped object that was enshrouded in mucus. It had the unique horns of demons and was spreading out the terrifying air of top legendary. Only the intangible vibe was enough to cause cracks, where the rivers of lava could be seen, on the Scarlet Plain.

The demon had such a form?

It would not reveal its true self without being greatly damaged?

Whatever the situation was, it was too late.

“Eternal Blaze!”

As Lucien extended his left hand, unimaginably scorching and dazzling brilliance suddenly burst out from the wound at the abdomen of the Prince of Demons, as if ten thousand suns had arrived at the same time!

Malfurion couldn’t help but shut his eyes despite the protection of his green staff. He suspected that his eyes would’ve been blinded if he hadn’t cast additional defense on himself.

Raising the Shield of Truth, Natasha closed her eyes. Without the blockage of the abyssal gap, she did not dare to gaze at the momentary glare when ‘Eternal Blaze’ was performed, either!

Vague, illusionary ripples spread from the Shield of Truth and completely separated her from the real world, placing her in an intangible world.

Having lost most of the magic items and effects, the human-faced goat head of the Sovereign of Blood stuck out its snake-like crimson tongue to resist the scourge of the silver sword together with the two giant swords. However, since the Prince of Demons controlled the Sovereign of Blood, it could not receive the feedback and enhancement of the demiplane. The tongue and the giant swords cracked one bit after another, and the illusionary gaps began to spread towards its body.

“Idiot, work harder!” In their mind, it roared at the other head.

The dog head was about to perform abilities, when it suddenly noticed the glare. Therefore, he subconsciously looked at its ‘liege’, only to be dazzled by the burning, terrifying brilliance.

“My eyes!” The dog head screamed.

Then, it felt infinite, pure light surging over with an extremely horrifying temperature, drowning everything.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

The abdomen of the Prince of Demons was entirely vaporized. The bursting light and the super high temperature that could melt everything swallowed the mucus-covered person, as well as its tail and its head.

A brilliant sun rose in the sky, driving away the darkness and overshadowing the original darkness.

Then, the energy storm that equaled the outburst of too many volcanoes erupting swept out, destroying everything on the way. The forest was destroyed, the altar was destroyed, the array of rocks were destroyed, and the Fortress of Flesh far away began to break and collapse as if it had been through a horrifying earthquake.

The scorching energy storm destroyed everything and ignited anything inflammable on the plain.

Demons were torn to pieces. Flames of various colors were raised on their bodies.

BOOM!

After the light, the deafening explosion finally broke out like thunder. The whole demiplane of 'Scarlet Plain' shook violently, as if it were the end of the world.

In the sky, a rolling mushroom cloud rose, whose circular, weird head gave an astounding feeling and the beauty of destruction. It drew a perfect conclusion to the previous explosion and left a symbol that was worth remembering.

Looking at the gigantic circle of clouds, Malfurion finally understood why 'Eternal Blaze' was regarded as the spell of purest violence. Natasha, on the other hand, wondered when her damage could reach such a level.

Crack, crack, crack. Pieces of bodies hit the ground mixed with blackened scales and dark blood. However, without the terrifying ability of recovery of the Demon Lord, they were nothing more than lifeless remains.

Lucien pushed his monocle and looked at the mushroom cloud. The Prince of Demons' enormous body had been shattered. However, there was an extremely weird and chaotic black hole at its center, from which one could see a pond that was bubbling nonstop.

The darkness in the hole faded, and the scene inside became clear. It was an ocean of green light where white bubbles were popping nonstop. There were reefs and islands on the ocean, but they were all dissolving because of the spreading scarlet space around it.

"The Abyssal Stomach and the Ocean of Acids..." The names that Lucien said in a low voice was exactly the title of the abyss of that level and the real home field of the Prince of Demons. It would be close to a demigod when fighting there. "It seems that the previous attack didn't finish the demon..."

Lucien was not regretful. After all, he was only a level-three legend, and he hadn't prepared any materials in advance. Besides, the battlefield was the abyss.

White bubbles surfaced on the ocean of 'Abyssal Stomach'. A dark, gloomy castle could be vaguely seen from down below. That was the palace of the Prince of Demons.

The bubbles became more and more intense. Suddenly, a baboon face appeared and looked at Lucien through the window of the two demiplanes that hadn't vanished yet. With utmost hatred, the demon declared:

"Mortal, you are going to pay for this!"

It sounded weak obviously, which was utterly understandable. Having been ambushed by Arrow of Nature, and since 'Eternal Blaze' broke out inside its body, the demon had almost completely perished.

However, even though it did manage to escape in the end, it had to abandon its body to be reborn with the demon core that it deployed in the palace earlier.

When the Prince of Demons just finished its sentence, Lucien suddenly bulged his eyes, because he saw a shadow emerging from the underwater castle and enshrouding it quickly!

The dark shadow, like a carnivorous flower that was digesting food, wriggled, expanded and fluctuated.

"Who is it?"

"Gonheim, what are you doing?"

"Leave me alone!"

"I'm going to kill you..."

The evil and chaotic voice of the Prince of Demons came from the dark shadow, but it was weaker and weaker.

"Gonheim? The Demogorgon of Darkness?" Malfurion realized something after hearing the name.

Lucien and Natasha also knew what Gonheim was doing even

though they hadn't figured out what the elvish queen was up to!

It was advancing with the best way of evolution for demons: to win the happiness of abyss by swallowing the Prince of Demons!

Subconsciously, Lucien stepped forward and planned to stop it. It wouldn't matter if any other demon were to become 'Prince of Demons', a top legend, because there was no difference between them, but 'Demogorgon of Darkness' and 'Lord of Spectres' were the worst candidates, because they were very like devils in that they could suppress their nature of killing and they were capable of drafting and carrying out complicated schemes.

“NOOOOOOOOO!”

The Prince of Demons suddenly burst out a miserable cry, before its voice came to an abrupt end.

Bubbles suddenly increased in the Ocean of Acids, as if it had been boiled. The wriggling red space around was suddenly frozen, and it was connected to a dark, cold glacier.

On the glacier was a high, dark castle that was frozen in ice.

The castle suddenly became blurred, revealing a black throne whose back was against Lucien. It could be vaguely seen that somebody tall was ensconced on it.

The sky in the Scarlet Plain, the Seething Ocean, the Skeleton Land, the Castle of Hypocrisies and other planes suddenly dimmed. The sun was gone, and darkness emerged. Rain of void poured from the sky.

Roars that were filled with the desire of slaughter resonated throughout the abyss, like a melody that was composed with the Dark Dialect.

The demons lower than lords fell on their knees, even including the spectres created by Apsis, the Lord of Spectres.

The Will of Abyss was expressing his happiness for betrayal, slaughter, swallowing and mayhem!

.....

Inside the cave, the magic circle was gone, and so was the projection of the elvish queen and Lankshear.

After the dark figurine was penetrated by Arrow of Nature, Ferragond immediately claimed overwhelming advantages in the battle against the projection of devils in his body. He soon banished it and began to treat his wounds. For some reason, he suddenly recalled the conversation between the queen and Lankshear just now.

“Why did my plan fail? How did you learn it...” Before the transformation was completed, Lankshear was still asking regretfully.

Aglaea, the elvish queen, sighed. “The Prince of Demons was never a specialist who was good at making and carrying out plans. Where did your scheme come from?”

“The Demogorgon of Darkness betrayed the Prince of Demons. Does he not fear that he will be killed by the infuriated Prince of Demons with other Demon Lords?” Lankshear seemed to have understood something.

Aglaea shook her head. “As I said, this is a world of competitions, where top legends strive to become demigods and the other legends risk to be top legends. For Gonheim, this is the most dangerous but also the best opportunity. This time, he will either die or swallow the Prince of Demons!”

“Perhaps, the demise of a top legend will be the real harbinger of the world of competitions...”

Ferragond calmed down and thought to himself. “Although Her Majesty has completed the status transformation, I’m afraid that there’s still a long way to go before she reaches the level of demigod... I do hope that she can succeed in the end...”

.....

The Ocean of Acids became cold, with a shallow layer of ice on the

top, whereas the glacier beyond the Frozen Fortress embraced acidic rivers.

The two demiplanes were superposed and melted in such a way!

Deep darkness surged below the throne, and the terrifying air suddenly burst out, marching from level one, level two, level three all the way to the peak of legendary!

In the songs of submission, the throne was turned around. Sitting on the throne was a handsome male, who was wearing a black tailcoat and had icy long hair. His skin was fairly dark. Except for the pair of tiny black demonic horns on his forehead, he looked no different from human beings.

His eyes were black at first, before they changed into different colors which replaced one another.

Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, looked at Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion, as well as the damaged altar, with such air. Then, he rose from the throne and bowed with a mocking smile, pressing his chest with his right hand:

“Thank you for your help.”

It was the new ‘Prince of Demons’!

Chapter 687: Aglaea's Attitude

Chapter 687: Aglaea's Attitude

The densest darkness fell upon the Frozen Fortress and the Ocean of Acids, serving as the curtain of a stage for the new Prince of Demons. Roars of pain, wrath, hate and bloodthirst were still echoing in the void. They sounded like a melody of chaos and slaughter that was written in the Dark Dialect to pay tributes to Gonheim for ascending the throne.

On another level of abyss, at the certain of the desert where countless strange spectres had died, stood an enormous palace that was made of many gigantic bones. On the top of the palace, an illusionary monster in black cloak was floating and looking in the direction of the ocean of acids. Its face was so dry and withered that there was only the skin left, but flames were vaguely burning inside the pale, hollow eyes.

The interaction between the Scarlet Plain and the Abyssal Stomach was over, and Gonheim did not do anything else. For him, fighting Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion at this moment was meaningless. Having just swallowed the 'core' of the former Prince of Demons, he had received the grace and 'feedback' of the abyss and successfully reached the peak of legendary. Now was the time for him to stabilize himself. Starting a reckless battle would only give an opportunity to the other Demon Lords who were covetous.

Seeing that he had already advanced, Lucien did not intend to break into the Frozen Fortress, either, partly because the Demogorgon of Darkness was close to demigod, and partly because what was behind the scheme forced him to be prudent. Also, the change of Prince of Demons was not a threat to the Congress for now, unless the elvish queen had been completely inclined to the abyss, which was absolutely impossible. It wasn't a problem to work with and take advantage of those people, but nobody would ever forge a long-term alliance with the murderous and treacherous demons.

The cold, dark ocean and the iced fortress disappeared in the sky,

and the Scarlet Plain was back to normal, except for the broken and burning corpses of demons on the ground.

Looking at what was left of the Sovereign of Blood, who failed to carry out effective defense due to the affection of the Sword of Truth, Malfurion was lost for words for a long time. The Arrow of Nature that suddenly shot out of the altar made him understand a lot of things. He felt very complicated.

“So, the Demogorgon of Darkness was behind everything. I wonder how he won the trust of the Prince of Demons...” Putting back the Shield of Truth which had cracks on the surface, Natasha looked at the sky which had turned blue after the dust was cleared by ‘Eternal Blaze’. The pure sunlight was particularly comfortable.

Lucien shook his head in amusement. “There’s no way I can tell what’s on the chaotic demons’ mind. Perhaps, Gonheim found the weakness in the heart of the Prince of Demons. However, what we should be wary of is the clue behind this incident. It seems that Viken had really secretly spread the way to become a demigod to the legends that he carefully selected. As a result, it’s not hard to imagine that the situation will be extremely complicated due to the intense competitions. Countless schemes and slaughter must be brewing at this moment.”

Perhaps, some legendary sorcerers within the Congress had received it!

Their conversation was not conducted through telepathic bond but openly, informing Malfurion of the information.

“Yes. The arrangement of the altar, the pollution of the elvish tree, and the corruption of elves are similar to the transformation circles inside the Realm of Gates. However, what if it wasn’t done by Pope Viken but by Monster Viken?” Said Natasha with a smile. She had learnt everything about the Realm of Gates from Lucien.

After a long silence, Malfurion suddenly opened his mouth. “Are you suggesting that the queen cooperated with the Demogorgon of Darkness, conspired against the Prince of Demons, and transformed her status with his scheme?”

“That should be the case.” Lucien nodded without offering any comment. He looked around, only to discover that most of the remains of the Sovereign of Blood and the Prince of Demons had lost activity under ‘Eternal Blaze’. He could only pick a few pieces that could be used as experiment materials.

On their way back to the abyssal gap, Natasha said in the telepathic bond, “The elvish queen must be planning to become a demigod. Would she pose a threat to the Congress and the kingdom?”

If she was a potential danger, she should be dealt with as soon as possible!

“The elvish queen must’ve transformed her status and grasped the tricks in it. However, to become a demigod in Viken’s way, one has to reap the power of faith. Considering the population of elves, her only choice is to expand. However, it is easier for her to succeed through nature’s feedback and natural divine powers, which are closer to her essence. Also, the Congress is more powerful than the sea clans. It’s not hard to predict which direction of expansion she will choose.” Lucien analyzed.

Natasha nodded. “The sea clans have only one top legend, and the Congress has four. As long as the elvish queen’s mind is not blinded by negative feelings, she will certainly make the right choice. Besides, the ocean is a part of nature, and a very large one, for that matter. However, after the elvish queen does become a demigod, would she still retain the partnership with us?”

“Even though the odds of success and the potential dangers of this path are ignored, by the time she gathers enough power of faith for her advancement, arcana must’ve been developed to the point that it can afford a real path to the demigod level which carries no risks!” Lucien sounded calm and confident.

Natasha smiled and did not ask more. Then, she became solemn. “In such an age of conflict and rapid development, I cannot be content with turning into a legendary knight. I need to work harder!”

Then, she clenched her fist. “I’ll certainly catch up to you and restore our roles back to normal!”

Lucien smiled back at her with obvious 'provocation'.

.....

Hardly had they returned to Nature's Residence when Lucien, Natasha and Malfurion heard the beautiful and clear voice of the elvish queen. Two honorable guests, thank you for your contributions to the elves. You've found the real culprit, Lankshear, and vindicated Ferragond. Please come to meet me in the Royal Palace."

Lucien and Natasha looked at each other and both sensed the elvish queen's kindness. In the meantime, they paid close attention to the defense of the place, ready to return to 'Atomic Universe' at the first anomaly.

Malfurion flew in the lead in silence. It was not until they reached the palaces on the top of the elvish tree that he looked better.

The palaces were exquisite but not extravagant. Atlant, Jurisian, Felipe, Heidi and the other sorcerers had been seated.

Ferragond did not join in, using his wound as an excuse. However, after his feelings of hate were unveiled and eliminated, his hostility against humans had been weakened. 'Nature's Abhorrence' would probably turn into 'Nature's Protection'.

Aglaea, the elvish queen, was still wearing the dress made of green leaves. She rose with a smile, "Allow me to express my gratitude on behalf of all elves."

Seeing that her slim figure was more or less blurry, Lucien and Natasha secretly nodded. She had indeed completed the status transformation. Since she was unable to control the new status perfectly, she looked somewhat abnormal. However, the fact that she revealed the abnormality openly suggested her attitude of honesty and cooperation.

"Mr. Evans, Mr. Forman, here are two fruits of the elvish tree. You must take them. Even the most precious gift cannot compare to the gratitude in our heart." Said the elvish queen to Lucien and Atlant,

before she brought out two green boxes made of twigs. Vague fragrance could be smelled from inside. After only one sniff, Lucien already felt that all the pores on his body had been opened.

Arcelion and Malfurion opened their mouth, subconsciously trying to stop it, because it took a very long time for the elvish tree to yield fruits, and it could yield few at a time. Also, the fruits had a lot of usages. There were only three of them left in the royal treasury, and two of them had been given away!

However, both of them contained their urge. Whatever was behind the incident, it was true that the sorcerers of the Congress 'saved' the elves.

Lucien politely accepted the box and thanked the queen. With the fruits of the elvish tree as well as the Fountain of Youth, it would be possible for him to establish a ritual that Natasha and he could use at the same time!

After the two legendary sorcerers accepted their gifts, and the other sorcerers received different gifts from Iristine, the elvish queen smiled again, "Mr. Evans, we were never able to learn the updates of arcana development until the Stroop forest was covered by 'Arcana Voice'. Many elves are quite interested in it."

The innovative program that did not disagree with the elves' daily life was quite popular among them.

"It's my honor." Replied Lucien with a smile, who had guessed where the elvish queen was getting at.

Aglaea nodded her head. "We the elves are never a stubborn, conservative people, and we have been learning the advantages of other civilizations. Therefore, I will not forbid their interest in arcana and magic. On the contrary, I would like them to study in Allyn. In doing so, we will really learn arcana and eliminate our misunderstanding about human beings."

"Your Majesty, we can learn from each other. You can select a party of elves to come to study arcana or magic in Allyn, and we can choose some humans to study natural divine powers in the Stroop

forest, or let the sorcerers who are interested in elves' naturally-endowed abilities to live in the forest." Lucien thought for a moment and proposed in amusement. Was it some sort of exchange of international students?

Thinking for a moment, Aglaea said with a delightful smile. "What an excellent suggestion. Iristine, you will go to study in Allyn on behalf of the Elvish Court."

"Me?" Iristine was more or less stunned.

Aglaea's smile was gone. She said solemnly, "Although you are a druid, it's not a bad thing for you to learn arcana. It will help you better understand the secrets of nature."

In the telepathic bond, Natasha smiled. "It seems that the elvish queen intends to deepen the cooperation with the Congress."

A hostage to us. Lucien was quite satisfied with that. He rose and asked, "Your Majesty, the elves boast a long history and much knowledge. So, I would like to ask you if you know any place where I can obtain legendary space-time materials?"

It was the second purpose of his trip.

Chapter 688: Four Choices

Hearing Lucien's question, Aglaea thought for a moment and replied, "Legendary space-time materials are very rare. It's true that our people collected some in the past, but they were all dedicated to the craft of legendary items and the defense of our territory. There's nothing left. If you want similar materials, as far as I know, they can be found in four places. Firstly, the 'Blue Key', owned by the emperor of the Kuo-toans."

The emperor of the Kuo-toans was the Lord of the Boundless Ocean and a top legend. All water was his domain. Therefore, Lucien merely nodded after hearing that without giving any comment.

Aglaea went on. "Other than that, 'Danisos', the primordial time dragon of the Dark Congress, is the best space-time material by himself. Other remains of the primordial time dragons in the tomb in the Swamp of Dragons, if there are any, should probably be usable, too. However, the population of dragons has always been small, and time dragons are the rarest of all. Since the elves began to record, there have been no more than five primordial time dragons. So, it will also be very difficult."

Lucien frowned at the elvish queen's introduction. It was not exactly what he had in mind.

Aglaea changed the topic. "The remaining two choices are easier than the first two. There's a hidden level in the abyss that our ancestors named 'Chaotic Cosmos'. At the center of the Chaotic Cosmos, 'Time Plate' will be naturally condensed. Once it is taken away, the whole plane will constrict, nowhere to be found again. It will not reappear until a long time later when the core is formed again."

"The elves once obtained a 'Time Plate' and built an important part of our defense with it. If the demons in the Chaotic Cosmos haven't become lords, the 'Time Plate' will certainly be there."

The advancement of demons was different from sorcerers, knights,

druids and other professions. On the surface, they made advancements by swallowing opponents of the same level, but in fact, they were simply trying to earn the feedback and reward of the abyss. Therefore, after uniting a certain level in the abyss, the demon would be given the power of the core of the level, which would improve its strength and turn it into a Demon Lord.

For the Chaotic Cosmos, if a demon had become a Demon Lord, it would mean that ‘Time Plate’ would have definitely been melted with it!

“‘Chaotic Cosmos’?” Lucien chewed on the name. The Congress of Magic had never recorded this level before, and nor did the Magic Empire!

Atlant was also a bit confused. It was obvious that he had never heard about ‘Chaotic Cosmos’ before.

The elvish queen smiled. “That’s because the Chaotic Cosmos can constrict and hide itself. Nobody knows about it except for our ancestors who discovered it by accident. If you are interested in it, Evans, I’ll tell you the way to locate it.”

“You have my gratitude.” Lucien immediately said.

After giving the intelligence to Lucien through secret messaging, Aglaea said, “The fourth place is the Silent Hell. Before the former Ice Duke went missing, he found a very unique Stellar Core from the Stars’ Grave. It is doubtless that this Stellar Core is still hidden somewhere in the Silent Hell. Perhaps, Tiphotidis hopes that he can be resurrected with it. The incumbent Ice Duke is still trying to find it.”

The Congress of Magic hadn’t told the elves that Tiphotidis had been killed by the joint attack of Rhine and Sard, because it was not too important a message.

“Resurrection...” Lucien clicked his tongue. Considering the style of the Master of Argent, he might’ve been really prepared for that. However, he was unlucky enough to encounter Rhine, who could summon the power of the Silver Moon, and Sard, who was capable

of 'Light of Judgment'. Nobody except the demigods could've been resurrected after their dual attacks.

The cunning and sophisticated devil had been haunted by bad luck ever since Maskelyne sealed his reflection in Aalto in the World of Souls. At first, his many plans were sabotaged by Lucien. Then, he became a victim of somebody else's victim, and he didn't figure out what was going on even to his death. His life was truly a tragedy.

Focusing his attention, Lucien rose and expressed his gratitude again, stating that he would make a wise choice. The primordial time dragons had never wronged him, and it was not his style to just kill them for their materials. The Lord of the Boundless Ocean was the same. It was obvious that the emperor would not be happy to give him the Blue Key the moment they met. Therefore, he had only two choices, 'Chaotic Cosmos' and 'Silent Hell'.

He might encounter Maltimus in the Silent Hell, which was the demigod's home field. Therefore, Lucien was more inclined to the Chaotic Cosmos. However, in any case, he had to make pertaining preparations first. A reckless adventure was not expected of sorcerers.

After the dinner, Lucien, Natasha and the rest of them left the elvish tree and flew out of the elves' territory, ready to jump back to Allyn through the Atomic Universe.

"Master, I feel that the whole thing was weird. I believe that Mr. Ferragond was innocent, because Martha's behavior before her self-detonation was too strange, but why was Mr. Lankshear the criminal? Why did the elvish queen show up in time and stop him? She claimed that you discovered clues and informed her at the critical moment?" After her investigation with the police department, the soul of a detective had been awakened in Heidi. She asked the question that Annick and Katrina both wanted to ask.

Lucien chuckled and looked at them. "Lankshear was truly the mastermind behind the curtain. As for the truth of the matter, does it have anything to do with us? As long as the elves can live with it, there's no need for us to do anything redundant."

“So, something was really wrong?” Heidi was quite excited, feeling that her deduction had been proven.

Lucien, however, didn’t offer any response but simply smiled.

That was the intelligence that only the Highest Council could know.

.....

In Lance, the Holy City.

Benedict III’s body changed nonstop. It spread out and then constricted, as if he were testing something.

Suddenly, his changes stopped, and his eyes somewhat squinted. He raised his platinum staff and performed divination.

“Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, has killed and swallowed the former Prince of Demons?” The demise of a top legend was an important thing, and Gonheim did not try to hide it. Therefore, Benedict III got a clear and accurate result. As for the transformation of the elvish queen, he got vague hints about it, too.

Benedict III put down his staff and paced back and forth, while he thought to himself, “Who told the way to become demigods to them?”

He suspected that a legend who obtained the way to become demigods from him intentionally leaked it to the Demogorgon of Darkness and the elvish queen. He intended to find out who it was and confirm his real purpose, although he would’ve spread the way to become demigods to the Stroop forest himself according to the original plan.

After considering for a moment, a red robe came in with the intelligence on the changes of the abyss. The Church always had experts who monitored the situation in the abyss and hell.

“Your Holiness, the Demogorgon of Darkness successfully ambushed the heavily wounded ‘Prince of Demons’ in the Abyssal Stomach and assimilated ‘Ocean of Acids’ into ‘Frozen Fortress’. He is now the new Prince of Demons!”

Such a phase change caused the shock of the abyss. It was impossible to cover the traces. Therefore, similar reports quickly spread out in all forces and organizations.

.....

Inside the Kingdom of Holm, in the forest next to a railway.

A kobold, who had dragon scales on his body, cockily looked at the other kobolds in ragged clothes around him and asked, “A convoy that is fully loaded with treasures will pass by later?”

“Yes, boss.” A weaselly kobold replied obsequiously. That was the new leader of their tribe, who had come from the northland. Because he was very strong and could release the might of dragons, he killed their previous leader and ate him up easily.

Holding a stick that was fully embedded with nails, the kobold leader announced, “The blood power of dragons has been awakened in my body. I’m to become the great king of kobolds. You will serve me respectfully. That’s your honor!”

Kobolds were a sub-dragon species with vague blood power of dragons.

“Of course, boss.” The weaselly kobold, as well as his peers, kneeled on the ground.

Wu! Wu! Wu! Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sound of sirens and the wheels crashing the railway came from far away.

The kobold leader sniffed. “There’s no smell of any powerful sorcerers. Very good. You didn’t lie to me. After we loot the treasures, we will get a lot of weapons, armor and food.”

“Boss, you can stand before the iron monster and intimidate it with your dragon might. Then, we will attack it together, like how we rob other business teams.” The weaselly kobold said, his eyes rolling.

The kobold leader was very confident in his dragon might. “That’s not a problem. Even if the iron monster is not scared, whoever controls it will be. Dragons are the greatest species and above all the other creatures!”

He was very confident in his agility, too.

Clang, clang. The magic steam train approached, and the kobold leader jumped in the middle of the railway. Waving his nailed stick, he roared, “STOP!”

Horrifying pressure spread out, and all the little animals around were frozen in fear.

The kobold leader was about to smile in satisfaction, when he discovered that the iron monster did not decelerate at all but came at him straightforwardly at such a high speed that he didn’t even have a chance to jump away.

BAM!

After a huge noise, the magic steam train went forward like before.

After the train was away, the weaselly kobold who was hiding nearby finally craned his head and looked at the railway, where there was nothing but a pulp of broken meat left.

“You wanted to enslave us?” The weaselly kobold spat at the remains.

“How hilarious! A bumpkin that didn’t know anything wanted to enslave us!” The other kobolds all exclaimed in joy. That was the lesson that their tribe had learnt after wasting many lives. The Iron monster cannot be robbed!

They packed their things and went another way. Suddenly, they found a small business team. They waved their arms and charged forward.

The weaselly kobold was glad that they were finally earning something today, when an iron-box like monster drove from behind the business team. It rushed at the kobolds without slowing down at

all.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The kobolds were blown away or crushed over one after another.

The weaselly kobold tried to look for the railway on the ground, but he didn't find anything. He shook his head in fear. "Human beings are truly terrifying..."

Inside the magic steam train, an elvish girl looked out of the window in confusion. "Your Highness, what was the noise about?"

Iristine smiled. "That was an outdated kobold. Leave him alone."

"Your Highness, have you really decided to go to a generic school instead of a magic school?" The elvish girl moved her eyes back and continued their topic just now.

Iristine nodded her head. "I'm a druid. I'm learning arcana just to expand my knowledge. It will be the same in either the magic school or the generic school. I can't follow the curriculum in the Holt Magic College at all. Also, I can observe the changes brought by arcana in generic schools. Rest assured. I'll often visit Allyn and meet Heidi and the rest of them."

The students in the First Generic School of Rentato, however, grew excited, because they heard that they would have an elvish princess classmate when the new semester began!

Chapter 689: Backup Power

Clang, clang. The magic steam train ran quickly on the railway, and the beautiful view out of the windows moved backwards equally fast, dazzling Nodanielle, an elvish girl who had never taken such a vehicle before.

Wu! Wu! Wu! The siren echoed, and the magic steam train came to a stop.

“What happened?” Although it was the first time that Nodanielle had been on a magic steam strain, she had a basic understanding about the train as a girl who enjoyed listening to Arcana Voice. She knew that not stopping at railway stations usually meant accidents.

Iristine had been to the Congress of Magic a few times before. She immediately sensed the anomaly. Therefore, she cast a spell to her eyes and looked at the edge of the forest far away.

In the narrow area between the forest and the railway, hordes of crazy wildlife were attacking the human beings on the opposite side.

There were about a hundred human beings, who were in standard silver chain mail and solid helmets. They were standing in three rows, with black ‘metal sticks’ in their hands.

The animals that were attacking them were originally normal creatures, including tigers, wolves, rabbits and goats, but right now, bloodred scales had grown out of their bodies, with yellowish mucus flowing among the scales. Their eyes were bloodshot and full of the lust for killing.

“Demonization? A senior-rank demon snuck out of the Stroop forest?” Observed Iristine in astonishment. For her, such a scene was all too familiar. The same had happened to the animals in the Stroop forest a while before!

Nodanielle said in deep thought, “When the abyssal gap was suddenly expanded, the elders were busy dealing with the

Sovereign of Blood and the Demon Dukes. The other demons were resisted by common warriors and the adventurers in Town of the Anonymous. It's perfectly normal that some of them ran loose..."

"Those demonized animals are very dangerous. How can Holm send the soldiers only at the level of knight squires to deal with them?" Iristine blamed herself after seeing the situation. The accident could've been avoided if Lankshear's sanity weren't consumed by his greed.

She stood up and was about to open the window of the VIP carriage, ready to assist the human soldiers to deal with the demonized animals.

BAM! BAM! BAM! After a series of noises, the overwhelming bloodthirsty animals seemed to be hit by invisible hammers, collapsing and bleeding.

"What's that?" It was not until then that Iristine really paid attention to the almost identical 'black metal sticks' in the human soldiers' hands.

Nodanielle observed carefully and suddenly remembered something. "It's very similar to the high-pressure steam rifles of the dwarfs!"

The dwarfs' steam civilization was a lost civilization, but the elves had a deep understanding about it thanks to the abundant collection of classics that had been gathered since the age of myths.

"No high-pressure steam backpacks... No smoke... Both hurt the enemy by high-speed bullets. The attack is as good as regular knights'..." Iristine identified the difference between the weapon and the high-pressure steam rifles carefully.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Of the three rows of human soldiers, two squatted and one stood straight, shooting in turns and loading bronze bullets into their guns from their pockets now and then.

Iristine discovered that those bullets were engraved with simple magic pattern patterns. The vague air of alchemical matter could be

felt.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Although the demonized animals were very fast, they saw nothing but the enemies in their bloodshot eyes, and they thought nothing but to tear the enemies into pieces and ate them alive. Therefore, it was easy to lock onto them. Also, the range of shooting was very wide. They could avoid one bullet but not a whole sector of bullets. So, their numbers plummeted, and dead bodies dropped everywhere.

“The bottom level of Holm has been significantly fortified by such weapons.” Iristine said in a low voice, “They can organize more legions, and the legions that may hurt the real knights.”

Nodanielle shook her head. “What’s the point? They will be butchered irresistibly when they encounter high-level warriors, like the steam civilization in the past. They will suffer an equally heavy loss when they meet the sorcerers and knights who are capable of remote attacks.”

“High levels advance from low levels.” Watching the battle far away, Iristine said, “If such weapons and armors can be manufactured, like the popularized alchemical items have been, the Kingdom of Holm and the Congress of Magic will have great advantages in the battles below the senior rank.”

In the past, a knight legion had five hundred knights at most, and a kingdom had only three to four such knight legions. The squires were basically useless, but if the weapons and armors could be popularized, it would mean that there were more knights. Knights were few, but knight squires were plenty. Still more were the ordinary people who could become squires!

Iristine went on. “Also, who knows whether or not the Congress of Magic has developed weapons with higher power and precision for the middle-rank and low-rank knights?”

“If they have weapons with longer range and higher speeds, together with anti-prophecy arrangements, wouldn’t they be able to

blow up the head of a sorcerer who doesn't have a passive defense from somewhere far away?" Having heard 'Arcana Voice' a lot, Nodanielle was particularly fascinated by head explosions.

At this moment, the conductor who was responsible for them walked in, intending to explain the sudden stop to them.

Hearing their conversation, the conductor smiled, "By the time such a weapon is developed, the defensive magic against it will certainly have been created. Also, it's possible that Spell Trigger and similar spells will become middle-rank spells."

His tone was full of the unique confidence of the sorcerers in the Congress in the past decades, about the Highest Council and the prospect of arcana!

"I believe in the research abilities of the Congress." Iristine expressed her friendliness.

Nodanielle, on the other hand, asked curiously, "I'm told that the Congress' research in the microscopic domain has stagnated since Mr. Evans proposed the observer effect, right?"

To satisfy the curiosity of the ordinary people, 'Arcana Voice' had added new programs that were similar to Herald of Arcana and Magic.

The conductor replied with apparent embarrassment. "There is indeed an argument regarding why microscopic particles show such uncanny properties, without a conclusion that convinces most people. However, it doesn't mean that the studies in the microscopic domain have stagnated. For example, the in-depth studies about fission made by the Lord of Storm and the Lord of Elements may give us a better source of power."

"Isn't fission very pollutive?" Asked Iristine, frowning.

The battle far away suddenly changed. From the few mutated animals left, a goat leaped out abruptly.

Its appearance changed drastically, with a pair of bat-like wings growing on the back. It was obviously a demon close to the senior

rank!

Iristine became grave. A strong demon had indeed snuck out of the Stroop forest.

Right when she was about to aid the soldiers, when silver bolts of lightning struck glowingly.

Even the air seemed to be repelled during the glow. The demon did not even have the opportunity to dodge when its upper half body was bent backwards and blown up. Blackened pieces of its body fell like raindrops.

“This is...” Iristine saw a knight in silver armor at the edge of the forest. He had gold hair and a handsome, determined face, with a complicated, streamlined rifle in his hands.

Observing that, the conductor took a soft breath. “It’s the Gauss Rifle that Mr. Evans developed. Only the experts close radiant knights and senior-rank sorcerers are capable of using it. Since it cannot be manufactured, there are only three of them right now. He seems to be Grand Knight John, from the Sword of Truth’s Knights.”

Nodanielle was relieved. If such a weapon could be manufactured without any user restraint, the senior-rank experts would be more or less threatened by them!

Wu, wu, wu. Clang! Clang! Clang! After the battlefield was cleaned up, the magic steam train was reactivated.

.....

Inside the Atom Institution in Allyn.

Heidi was showing her new friends, Iristine and Nodanielle, around in the famous place.

The elves couldn’t stop complimenting the institution that was full of fantasies and mysteries, but they did feel that it did not quite agree with nature and was more like a symbol of the sorcerers’ conquest over nature.

“A few days ago, Mr. Lazar created a new element when he bombarded the atomic nucleus with the cyclotron. The new element exists stably and can be placed in the periodic table.” Heidi pointed at the cyclotron before her proudly.

It was the first step that the sorcerers achieved in the field of creation under the guidance of the new alchemy. Nobody would ever doubt the new alchemy’s correctness in that regard. It could really allow the sorcerers to transform other elements into gold that could steadily exist even after the magic effect was over! Although the ways hadn’t been found out yet, it was only a matter of time now that theoretical foundation had been found.

Looking at the cyclotron before her, Iristine was lost for words for a long time. Had the sorcerers started to steal the power of nature under the glow of Mr. Evans’ new alchemy?

Seeing that, Nodanielle changed the subject. “Heidi, how is your artificial intelligence going?”

Heidi said, not entirely satisfied. “Our research team is assembling a prototype with vacuum tubes and magic circles. Our teacher said that trying is always better than thinking, and that’s the way we can find the problems. Since the final product was too large and heavy, and the computation speed was not high enough, many sorcerers said that it was probably good for nothing... But everything has to be improved gradually! After the studies on crystals go deeper, I believe that artificial intelligence will be a great complement for golems and alchemical lives!”

That was her best hope right now.

Hearing Heidi’s complaint, Iristine and Nodanielle smiled at each other and comforted her.

.....

Inside the Allyn magic tower, before the secret gate to the core of the City in the Sky...

“Master, have you finished the construction of the fission reactor?”

Lucien guessed something after they reached their destination.

Despite their disagreement on the observer effect, Fernando was not hostile to Lucien because of that, and they kept their friendly teacher-student relationship. He nodded his head and said, "We modified some of the models according to your suggestion and completed a prototype reactor that can be used as the backup power source of Allyn."

After they reverse engineered fission, they had begun the studies in that aspect. However, because their analysis was not detailed enough and did not show them the function of neutrons, their progress was not fast. It was not until recently that they completely a fission reactor whose output was more powerful than the input.

.....

In Rentato, in the district of workers where dwarfs gathered...

Augustus, the senior elder, was worshipping a silver, iron item devoutly, when Harold ran in. He covered his eyes and paid tributes first, "Supreme Steam."

Then, he put down his right hand and said to Augustus. "Senior elder, there's a compatriot outside who claims to be from the Kingdom of Dwarfs. He says that he is an emissary of the great God of Steam."

Chapter 690: A Minor Experiment Accident

Augustus continued his prayer after hearing Harold's report. Unless it was something very important, he would never interrupt the tributes to 'God of Steam', 'Lord of Life and Death' and 'Glowing Morning Star'.

After several minutes, Augustus stood up agilely and said, covering his eyes with his right hand. "Supreme Steam!"

That was a symbolic movement of prayer that he had designed after witnessing the explosion of Eternal Blaze in Rentato with consideration of the view of 'Atlantis' in his dream. It was like how the believers of the Saint Truth drew crosses!

"The Kingdom of Dwarfs?" Augustus finished his prayer and asked in confusion.

His face was healthily red, and he was wearing a special silver armor whose parts were connected through complicated mechanical craft. Filled with a delicate but cold sense of beauty, it was the ritual suit that he had designed for the God of Steam.

As the leader of dwarfs, Augustus was the honorary manager of many alchemical workshops. He did not have a lot to do, and the miserable life on the Night Highland was long gone. He was quite grateful and spent most of his time preaching and praising the God of Steam.

Because Rentato was not secluded, Augusta had a basic understanding of the continent. He knew that the surviving dwarfs had been gathered in the northwest of the Dark Mountain Range, where they established a kingdom named 'Dumute'. In the language of dwarfs, 'dumute' meant 'glory'. However, what they worshiped was Okun, the God of Valiance and Heit, the God of Craftsmen, instead of the God of Steam, the Lord of Life and Death, and the Great Existence Whose Name Must Not Be Invoked.

Therefore, Augustus was rather confused that an emissary of the God of Steam came from the kingdom of dwarfs.

Harold scratched his head. "I found it odd, too. The Lord has never issued any oracle asking us to go to Dumute. They do not worship the Great Lord, either..."

Puzzled as he might be, he had to be prudent since it concerned the Lord, and he dared not kick the guy away.

Cleaning his armor, Augustus picked up the steam hammer and said, "Bring him here."

Harold turned around and left. Very soon, he returned with a dwarf in leather armor.

The dwarf's face was covered in a gold beard, making it impossible to infer his age from his face.

He was rather polite in the way he spoke. "Honorable elder of the Night Tribe, I am Ham from Dumute. I am a temple warrior who serves the great God of Steam. I received an oracle a while ago, which asked me to contact you in Rentato so that you could really be embraced by the Lord."

"The God of Steam?" Augustus expressed his confusion, not entirely sincerely.

Ham nodded solemnly. "Yes. Not a long time ago, the great Lord Heit announced his real identity. As it turns out, he is not just the God of Craftsmen but also the God of Steam who has been looking after dwarfs for generations. It was only because he was sleeping that his incarnation walked the earth..."

He introduced what happened in the kingdom of dwarfs. "...The dusk of gods is about to come. Therefore, the Lord has been woken up from his sleep and arrived again. That's why you were freed from the Night Highland..."

"The God of Craftsmen..." Augustus recited the name quietly.

Seeing no apparent objection from him and Harold, Ham said

solemnly, “The Lord hopes that you can spread His glory in Holm and let everybody praise His name.”

While talking, he took out a dwarf figurine from his storage bag. It was holding a hammer, with its beard and hair stretching out, giving the feeling of sacredness and profundity.

“You must feel very strange that the reverends and cardinals of the Saint Truth can perform divine powers while you can’t. That’s because you have never passed the test of the Lord until right now! Just place the Lord’s figurine on the altar and worship it according to this ritual, and the pious will be granted divine powers very soon, just like me!” Ham brought out a ritual book and announced. In the meantime, he stepped forward, his body glowing in ivory brilliant that called for reverence.

He was a ‘Saint Warrior’, a fake reverend who was more inclined to face-to-face battles. That was why he could perform the spell of God’s Grant.

“A divine power...” Harold and Augustus both beamed with interest. It had been their greatest worry that the God of Steam never gave them any divine power.

Ham laughed and transferred the figurine and the ritual book to Augustus. “In the future, we will be fellows!”

After seeing Ham off, Harold came back. He looked at the stunned Augustus and asked, “Senior elder, do you believe what he said?”

“I don’t.” Augustus looked gloomily, “We are the dwarfs who left the Night Highland thanks to the grace of the great God of Steam. We are His favored people. Even if He has any oracle, it shouldn’t be forwarded by an external dwarf; the Lord would’ve given it to us directly!”

The issue made him feel that his position as the senior elder was threatened. Always considering himself as a spokesperson of the God of Steam on the earth, he did not receive any oracle and had to wait for a common dwarf to inform him!

Therefore, after a brief contemplation, he firmly denied the possibility that the God of Craftsmen was an incarnation of the God of Steam, unless the Lord said otherwise to himself directly!

Until then, he would not waver at all but would continue his devotion. If words and divine power were enough to confirm that a being was the great God of Steam, all the fake gods would be Glowing Morning Stars!

Harold thought the same, but he was less determined. “What about divine power...”

If the God of Steam never granted divine powers to them, part of their compatriots would definitely be attracted by this. Also, he was personally fascinated by the divine power, too.

“Divine power? Can the common divine powers be compared to Eternal Blaze and Atlantis? Can they compare to the burst guns we manufacture?” Although Augusta was also tempted by divine powers, he was not intimidated at all. “The oracle of the Lord asked us to construct the Atlantis on earth. The development of Rentato fit the vision we saw perfectly. As for Dumute, you must know that everything there is underdeveloped and against what is expected of Atlantis!”

“By the time we can create a weapon of Eternal Blaze, will divine power deserve any attention?”

Harold nodded heavily. “The life in Rentato is the life that I always dreamed about. I feel that my every effort makes me closer to Atlantis!”

But it will be even better if there are divine powers! he thought to himself.

“Senior elder, what do we do?” He looked at where Ham left just now.

Augustus shook his head. “It’s not a problem that we wait for the oracle instead of acknowledging Ham, but we cannot deal with him recklessly. What if this is a test of the Lord? We need to figure out a

way to prevent him from getting in touch with other dwarfs...”

“But is there any way we can achieve that?” Asked Harold, upset.

.....

In Allyn.

After opening the secret gate towards the core of the City in the Sky, Lucien and Fernando walked in, ready to observe the operation of the reactor and locate the possible flaws.

“...Introducing consciousness into the microscopic domain is pointless. The observer effect is more likely to be a reaction of the observing movement. It’s not as subjective as you described.” In the quiet channel, Fernando talked about Lucien’s weird explanation on the microscopic particles again. “Hypotheses that are not based on mathematics are just poppycock.”

He firmly believed in that, but he couldn’t find a better explanation for now due to the limitation of mathematics, or he would’ve roared a long time ago.

Lucien smiled, “However, whatever the explanation is, we have to reserve a place for magic in it. I believe that the secrets of magic must lie in the microscopic domain.”

Fernando rather agreed with that. If the source of magic couldn’t be found in the most peculiar microscopic domain, it would be impossible to find it in other fields. “Interpreting the spiritual power and the power of faith as special electromagnetic waves is not bad, but the problem is, why would godhood be gathered, and why could magic be performed, when the special electromagnetic waves are gathered?”

Their conversation was not as intense as last time.

After opening another gate that had complicated magic patterns, Lucien saw the fission reactor inside. Different from Earth, a lot of parts were not needed on the reactor thanks to magic. The nuclear energy was even directly transformed into electricity and other forms of power. It looked less gargantuan and more delicate and

mysterious.

Glittering streams of energy flowed to different parts of the City in the Sky through different channels, sustaining its operation as a backup source of power. In this room that had a coverage of several dozen square meters, the flickering light added an air of profundity and mysteriousness to everything.

At the center of the room was black-and-white magic circles, which were connected into the complicated fission reactor.

“It looks normal.” Lucien approached and looked around.

Suddenly, the rows of red lights on the wall all shined, and a terrible storm spread out of the center of the reactor.

“Danger! Magic circles out of control! Top protection activated!”

Prospell’s voice echoed.

Complicated magic patterns glittered, and the defense of Allyn blocked the place where the reactor was at!

Because teleportation was forbidden here, Lucien could only seize the time to perform ‘Space Staff’.

Ripples of light glittered, and many different spaces were added to Lucien, making him seem to be in a different world.

BOOM!

An intense explosion took place at the center of the reactor. The dazzling light and the super-high temperature melted everything they could. Then, the terrible tempest of energy blew at the space-time barrier and gradually disappeared in different worlds.

After the explosion, Lucien opened his eyes and discovered that only several layers of the defense were broken. He was not greatly affected.

“What went wrong?” Fernando looked at the traces of meltdown with obvious confusion and reflected on the design of the reactor.

Lucien was more or less anxious just now, but after experiencing a reactor explosion in person, he came to the understanding that this was not Earth, and reactor explosions might cause no damage at all.

Fernando walked out of the barrier after enhancing himself with magic. Exposed to the overwhelming radiation, he began to examine the remains carefully.

“This place is enshrouded in curses. They must be cleared.” He said casually.

“Yes. Let’s clean them with Eternal Blaze.” Lucien also replied casually. Then he saw his teacher glaring at him.

.....

Staying in a room in a small hotel, Ham walked back and forth in delight. That ‘God of Steam’ hadn’t granted the believers any divine power. It seemed that his mission could be accomplished easily now! Even if the senior elder had other plans, it would be easy for him to steal the guy’s power!

Dum, dum, dum. Somebody knocked on the door.

“Who is it?” Asked Ham warily. He also checked the stranger with the few divine powers he knew.

“Dear guest, please open the door. The roasted fish with honey you ordered is ready.”

Chapter 691: God of Craftsmen

“Roasted fish?” Ham subconsciously repeated. He finally remembered that he specifically ordered the famous local specialty as a reward for himself just now.

Although the food of Holm was too dull and tasteless for the gourmets, the roasted fish of different flavors was still a nice entertainment for the short-time visitors of the place. For example, the roasted fish with honey on Landel Avenue was famous worldwide, and every visitor in Rentato would go there to enjoy it. Ham was no exception. However, since it was inconvenient for him to go out with his mission, he could only order the food with the wired phone in the hotel.

Ham was much more relieved after ascertaining the door knocker. He scanned with his divine power and saw that it was a young waiter outside. So, he went to the door and was ready to open it.

“Mister, please open the door. The roasted fish with honey you ordered is here.” Bam, bam, bam. The waiter outside seemed to feel that he lacked manners in the way he addressed the customer just now and knocked on the door again.

“Why the rush?” It was something unique to Holm. Ham had never experienced similar things in Dumute. He shook his head in amusement. Phone orders were only available in Rentato where phones were most promoted.

The moment he opened the door, the fragrance of roasted fish entered Ham’s nose. Right when he was drooling hard, two shadows suddenly lunged out of a corner. One of them tied Ham’s legs, and the other covered Ham’s upper half body, making it impossible to see or hear what was around him.

“Enemy!” Ham was both shocked and infuriated. He only opened his door to accept his roasted fish with honey, and he was attacked!

His muscles bulged, and his eyes were covered in vague berserker redness. Darkness flashed on his skin that was exposed to the air,

while he jerked away from the boundary of the shadows.

The blood power of dwarfs was the intimacy with machinery. Their physical strength was relatively higher, but there was nothing special about it. That was why the dwarfs from the Night Highland could not activate their blood power like human beings. However, the dwarfs who failed to migrate to the Night Highland became experiment subjects in the Magic Empire. After melting the blood of the barbarians and the swamp gnomes, the blood power of dwarfs mutated into a somewhat strong blood power.

After their blood power was activated, the dwarfs would have a physical strength and defense that was as good as barbarians of the same level. They would also be given the ability of berserkers. Ham, on the other hand, was exactly a warrior whose blood power had been activated.

His strength burst out and dispersed the shadows. Ham blinked away to avoid the subsequent attacks, before he drove away the darkness that had enshrouded him with divine powers.

At this moment, the young waiter standing on his opposite side raised the tray that contained the roasted fish and knocked Ham's head so fast that he couldn't dodge at all!

There was no telling what the tray was made of, but Ham was dizzy and saw countless gold stars shining before his eyes. The soft meat of the fish, on the other hand, dripped past Ham's eyes, nose and entered his nose with the fragrance.

Under such circumstances, Ham finally got a taste of the roasted fish with honey that he had long expected.

It tasted not bad at all!

While his brain was still sluggish, the shadows came back again. The ambushers launched marvelous spells again and soon broke Ham's defense.

At the turn of the stairs, Buck, the senior policeman of Rentato, watched the intense but limited battle. After the three experts of the

intelligence department pressed Ham to the ground and tied him with the armband and necklace that could restrain blood powers and divine powers, he said to himself in amusement. “Interested in dwarfs? Do you not know that the kingdom has been paying attention to them closely? The intelligence personnel got their eyes on you immediately after you reached out to Harold. Tsk. Roasted fish with honey?”

He was ordered to cooperate with the intelligence personnel in case the ordinary people around were hurt.

Nobody knew exactly who the God of Steam was, but the leadership of the Congress and the grand nobles of the kingdom had basically guessed. It couldn't have been anybody other than Lucien Evans. Arthur Doyle could prove that Lucien navigated the dwarfs out of the Night Highland, and the dwarfs regarded Eternal Blaze as a symbol of the God of Steam after witnessing it, claiming that they saw it in Atlantis in their dream. Therefore, everybody considered dwarfs as Lucien's 'territory'.

For the Congress, it was merely a misunderstanding of the dwarfs and not about the dissemination of faith. In the kingdom, on the other hand, having been confirmed by Lucien about his association with them, Natasha had instructed the intelligence department to watch them closely.

Buck retreated after Ham was taken away. The operation ended quickly without causing any major fuzz. The traveler next door even did not notice that a secret arrest happened just now. He was still mumbling to himself, “Roasted fish with honey... does smell good. Should I order one, too?”

.....

In the secret intelligence apartment of Holm...

In the basement, having received the report, Natasha decided to interrogate him in person. She suspected that it had something to do with the secrets of demigods that Viken spread in secret.

In a simple cream-colored hunting suit, she stood before Ham, her

arms crossed, and repeated the information she just obtained. "Heit, the God of Craftsmen, defeated Okun, the God of Valiance, in the annual summer ritual. Afterwards, Okun admitted that Heit was an incarnation of the God of Steam and respected him as the overlord of the dwarf gods. Heit took the chance to announce his identity and sent envoys to contact the dwarfs of other tribes in the continent."

"So, he got his eyes on the pious dwarfs of Rentato and intended to take advantage of the God of Steam who could not grant divine powers... Hehe, I'm afraid that Okun is no longer the Okun he used to be."

She did not sound solemn but rather amused, as if it were not an important matter but just a folly.

The religions of fake gods which rose at the beginning of the War of Dawn were not weak. Different from the fake gods like Ell in the alternate dimensions, the gods of such religions were usually legendary, like the mother God of the earth, the Master of Darkness, the God of Valiance and the God of Craftsmen. There were about eight legendary fake gods.

As to why they were not restrained by godhood or affected by the gathered power of faith like Ell did, whose self-awareness and soul were disrupted by the invading consciousnesses, the Congress of Magic did not understand the reason at the beginning, but after discovering the secrets of the ancient sorcerers in the World of Souls, they basically understood what it was about.

They must've been the products of the ancient sorcerers during the studies of gods. Instead of melting themselves with the power of faith directly, they had replaced themselves with special divine items first and finished the melting at the end. The problems were less severe this way.

Ham was only one meter tall. Shaking his dizzy head, he was full of ire when faced with Natasha before. He had been faithful and refused to say anything until the lady who was more terrifying than gods and dragons came in. After her silver and purple eyes glared at him, he was so overwhelmed that his soul seemed to be cut and

minced by knives, and he confessed everything he knew.

Natasha was so tall that Ham had to crane his head in order to see her face. He shouted angrily, “You have desecrated the great God of Steam. You shall be punished!”

“I do not like other people calling themselves God of Steam. Please ask Heit to change his name, or he might have no name anymore, because dead people, no, dead gods do not need names.” Said Natasha half jokingly.

Suddenly, bright gold light burst out of Ham’s body, and the heart of faith consumed him, turning him into a swirl of gold brilliance.

A voice of exasperation echoed from the swirl. “I am very mad at your disrespect!”

And the consequences would be dire... Influenced by Lucien, Natasha finished the sentence for him, while she thought to herself in amusement that the guy had indeed arrived.

The swirl immediately turned transparent. A dwarf wearing a gold, hallowed armor could be vaguely seen. He was holding a heavy silver hammer that was fully loaded with patterns.

“Accept your judgment!” Heit waited the silver hammer angrily, turning the gold swirl into the same shape before smashing it at Natasha.

A silver sword suddenly glittered. After a flash, the gold swirl was shattered into pieces, and the illusionary, hideous cracks cut the many obstacles in between through obscure connections and slashed Heit unstoppably!

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Heit’s painful roar came through the last bit of gold light and echoed in the chamber for a long time.

Looking at the disappearing gold swirl, Natasha shook her head. “I still cannot carry out the power of the Sword of Truth under such circumstances...”

As a matter of fact, she could carry out the power of the Sword of Truth more because of her blood power and her hard work. If the common level-one legends were as strong as her, Heit wouldn't have arrived recklessly to teach her a lesson at all.

Heit was a level-two legendary god. He thought that in a remote battle through the heart of faith, Natasha's Sword of Truth couldn't be so horrifying without really hitting the target, and he could deal with the general attacks. As a result, he suffered a major setback.

.....

Inside the Atomic Universe...

Natasha looked at Lucien in amusement. "Ever since Viken secretly spread the way to become demigods, the competition of faith has become heated. Your steam dwarfs will definitely be coveted. I don't think you can maintain them without granting them divine power. Hehe. How are you going to deal with them?"

"I don't think it's a big deal. That is not my path." Lucien scratched his chin and smiled. "However, I am happy to do what certain people want me to do. As for Heit, I need to find a chance to 'talk' with him properly."

Natasha chuckled and found it interesting. It was not until they discussed it for a long time that she finally changed the subject with great interest. "What's the paper on your desk?"

"Basics of Mathematics. The mathematical development in the Congress is uncoordinated and unsystematic. I'm planning to sort through the knowledge such as sets and topology and establish a whole system. Well, it also includes certain mathematical conundrums and paradoxes that I haven't figured out yet. I hope that the development of mathematics can be bolstered by working on those questions."

Chapter 692: Divine Power

Chapter 692: Divine Power

“Mathematical conundrums that even you can’t fix?” Natasha was immediately full of interest after hearing Lucien’s words. She picked up the paper before Lucien in the spirit that the ignorant are fearless. Turning the pages quickly, she found the ten conundrums listed at the end of it.

“The four-color theorem... Lucien Conjecture... barber paradox” Natasha read the questions softly, before she was caught in a long silence.

Amused, Lucien looked at her. “How about it? Any thoughts?”

Natasha was suddenly woken up, as if she had been in a nightmare. She scratched her chin habitually and said, “Tricky questions. Yes, they are very tricky questions that require the efforts of all the arcanists in the Congress. Right, Lucien, what do you think of the current situation?”

“I remember you asking me the question not a long time ago.” With a smile, Lucien tapped the table softly.

Raising her head, Natasha said solemnly, “Don’t you always say that things are permanently changing, that stillness is relative and motion and changes are absolute? It’s been many days since I last asked you, during which time many events, such as the explosion in the fission reaction and the transformation of godhood, have occurred. Of course our opinion on the situation must be updated!”

“It has occurred to me that you are getting more and more colloquial.” Lucien teased her.

Natasha pressed her left chest with her right hand and bowed in the manner of a gentleman. Smiling, she said, “I have to thank you for your guidance, professor. Your extraordinary understanding in so many aspects have opened a new gate for me. Hahaha.”

As she approached the end, she seemed to recall a hilarious joke and laughed so hard that she could barely stand straight.

Lucien's lips twitched, somewhat regretting that he had told too many meaningful jokes to Natasha. "...In fact, the current situation is both clear and complicated. Ever since Viken spread the way to become demigod, we have entered the age of rivalry: top legends hope to become demigods, common legends try to reach the peak, and the non-legends attempt to advance into legends."

"The rivalry is not just between individuals but also among races, forces and organizations. If you are slightly behind, you may get killed. Even if you survive it, you will still be weakened, and you have to work a hundred times harder to catch up. Also, Viken's way requires faith, which means cruel competition. Everybody can be a friend, and everybody can be a foe."

Natasha's smile was gone after hearing Lucien's interpretation. "I never thought that Thanos and Viken's way is normal. It is too problematic and cruel. Perhaps, this will be an age of fierce competitions, but I will not surrender because of that. I'll find my own path."

"Me, too." Lucien did not talk much.

Natasha patted Lucien's shoulder. "It's relatively easy for me to make progress from level one of legendary, but it's difficult for you to reach the peak. Whatever you really think, and whether or not you will walk on Viken's path, many people will consider you their competitor."

Lucien understood what Natasha was trying to say. He nodded solemnly. "For both myself and you, I will not stop pressing forward. No obstacles can stop my advancement!"

After seeing the mysteries of immortality, Lucien had a guess about the differences and similarities of the two worlds, but it still required the confirmation of more phenomena. Therefore, he dared not make advancements by proposing the quantum field theory and the standard particle model. After all, his head might explode if there were any disagreement!

“Dozens of level-three legends, and a dozen of top legends. Your ‘opponents’ are not weak at all.” That being said, Natasha’s eyes were glittering with confidence in Lucien.

As they looked at each other, the atmosphere gradually became warm. Lucien pulled Natasha and was ready to kiss her, when Natasha suddenly said, “Right, what about the pollution caused by the fission reactor? How are you going to deal with it?”

Lucien looked at her, amused. “You are truly an expert of ruining atmospheres...”

Natasha chuckled proudly. “I’m caring about the grave pollution problem as a qualified ruler!”

“So, it was on purpose...” Lucien rubbed his temples and said with a vague smile. “I proposed that it be cleaned with a lesser Eternal Blaze, but my teacher rejected it. So, he’s the one taking care of it now.”

.....

BOOM!

Inside the Atom Institution, Heidi, who was dedicated to the production of vacuum tubes with magic circles and alchemical items, almost fell under the earthquake. Thankfully, she stabilized her body in time by casting instant spells.

“What’s going on? Why is the City in the Sky shaking again?” Caught unprepared, Iristine and Nodanielle could only clutch the metal tubes on the wall.

The new semester was still more than half a month away. Iristine took the opportunity to visit Allyn with Nodanielle and make friends with the distinguished sorcerers through Heidi.

Looking at Chelly and the assistants like Lowi and Alfalia who fell due to untimely reaction, Heidi shook her head helplessly. “How do I know? This is the City in the Sky. There shouldn’t be any earthquakes. The wind in the sky cannot pass the half-activated defense at all.”

Then, she suddenly realized something. “The shake we experienced last time was caused by the explosion in the fission reaction according to our teacher. Is it another accident? That’s not right. The other reactor was shut off after the previous accident.”

Having not experienced the horror of the fission reaction, she talked about the meltdown of the reactor as if it were nothing more than an accidental damage of a certain magic circle in her laboratory.

“The fission reactor... I hope that no major pollutants are caused...” Iristine said in a low voice worriedly.

At the core of the City in the Sky...

Looking at the chamber where the pollution had been basically cleared, and the wall and the floor which were even more melted and damaged, Fernando nodded in satisfaction. “Eternal Blaze is most effective after all...”

He refused Lucien’s suggestion and looked for other ways to clear the curses and pollutions, but they would’ve all taken at least a month. Better ways were not invented yet. Therefore, too impetuous and too busy studying why the reactor went out of control, he went on a rampage and released an Eternal Blaze whose power was reduced in the spacious room, which prompted the highest defense of Allyn to be activated again.

After the boom, the whole world was clean...

.....

A month later, in the district of workers where dwarfs gathered in Rentato...

Augustus, leading Harold, Myrna and the central people of his clan, kneeled before the silver ‘nuclear bomb’, holding their weekly ritual of prayer.

Although Ham, the emissary of ‘God of Craftsmen’, went missing mysteriously, and what Augustus and Harold worried did not happen, such things might happen again now that they had already happened. The fat and defenseless prey would only catch incessant

predators. Therefore, with the severe sense of crisis, they fortified their people's faith in the real God of Steam through various rituals and activities to be better united, in case they were dazzled by other people's divine powers and attracted to them.

They were not worried about the other fake gods, but the God of Craftsmen, who was also a dwarf, would definitely crush their seemingly tough foundation easily. After all, for the dwarfs from the Night Highland, it would not be a change of faith when they discovered 'the incarnation of the God of Steam on earth'! Such bragging was barely resistible without the oracle from the Lord!

"You dominate everything. You master the boundary between life and death. You're the King of the kings, the God above the gods."

Augustus covered his eyes with his right hand and kneeled deeply. Eclipsed by his solemn voice were his anxious and expectant thoughts, "Great God of Steam, please grant your devout believers divine powers, so that we can defend your honor, practice your doctrines, and construct Atlantis on earth."

No matter how the Congress of Magic revealed the 'real appearance' of the God of Truth and the other fake gods to the intelligent creatures convincingly, as long as divine powers still existed, the foundation of faith would be unshakable. Countless believers would still believe in the existence of the true god!

In a religion without divine powers, the bond among each other was so weak that it would crumble under the first wind! After they left the Night Highland and reached Rentato, too many dwarfs had been fascinated by the marvelous world, corrupted by entertainment and violence, and addicted to the Holmish Church and the Congress of Magic.

"My Lord, we are not impious, but even the deepest faith has to be maintained by power..."

Augustus prayed earnestly and hopefully in his heart again.

The ritual reached the end. Exactly like every time before, the God of Steam did not reveal any miracle.

Harold was more or less disappointed, but what happened to the Night Highland made him dare not to complain.

Augustus was equally frustrated, but when he was about to rise, his head suddenly hummed, and he felt that colors faded around him, leaving only the ivory brilliance and the silver ‘nuclear bomb’ before him!

Then, he felt the most overwhelming power rising from the nuclear bomb and connecting to his soul.

His soul somehow trembled, as if he were faced with a high and mighty being, like the boundary starry night he looked up to every day!

“What I grant you are the mysteries of steam and the essence of machinery. After you grasp them, they will be as intimidating as divine powers...”

Augustus felt that his soul was floating and melting into the ivory light nearby, turning into a sacred and pure cluster of light!

“...I grant you divine powers for you to survive in the ‘dusk of gods’ to happen soon, and for you to learn what steam really represents and what Atlantis really means through comparison...”

“...Whoever leaks the secrets of the divine power will lose the power and be punished!”

The hollow and profound sound echoed next to Augustus’ ears, filling his heart with delight.

Harold, Myrna and the other dwarfs looked ahead, confused and shocked. The silver sacred item released gentle and holy brilliance.

The pure and holy brilliance enshrouded the senior elder on the ground, making him hallowed and rise nonstop!

Suddenly, Augustus stood up, and the ivory light around him rippled out layer after layer, which made Harold, Myrna and the other dwarfs feel lighthearted, vigorous and peaceful!

Is... Is this divine power?

Shedding tears, Augustus raised his right hand and covered his eyes, before he shouted:

“You are one, and everyone!”

Harold, Myrna and the rest of them kneeled on the ground again and prayed in overjoy and astonishment:

“We shall defend your doctrines, so that the holy name of steam will reach the pinnacle again!”

Chapter 693: Holy Name of the God of Steam

Augustus put down his right hand and covered his eyes and said solemnly, “The Lord has heard our prayer and granted us divine powers, so that we can disseminate his glory and preach his doctrines.”

“This is the best compliment for our devotion!”

As he spoke aloud, the ivory brilliance around him surged into gold sunlight and surged towards all directions, drowning Harold, Myrna and the other dwarfs.

Harold immediately sensed another improvement of his strength. He became excited and filled with desire for battle, fearless of desperation or pain!

That was the feeling of the real warriors!

That was ‘Warrior Tide’, a level-five divine power, and the best that Augustus could achieve so far!

At this moment, the concerns and sense of crisis in Augustus’ heart were gone. It was not true that the great God of Steam could not grant divine powers, He simply preferred steam and machinery. Therefore, the senior elder smiled solemnly. “I listened to the lecture of the Lord and understood that the greatest secrets of the world lie in steam and machinery. If we grasp them, we will boast the strength that is beyond divine power, such as weapons which can produce Eternal Blaze.”

“The Lord told us that divine power is just a temporary weapon that we can protect ourselves in a certain phase of our journey but not the thing that we should depend on and preach His doctrines with. After we live through the phase, we will naturally drop the divine power and devote ourselves to steam and machinery, so that we can dig out their mysteries and possess the real power of ourselves with our own work. Only in such a way will we be able to establish

Atlantis on earth.

Harold, Myrna and the other dwarfs all prayed, “Great God of Steam, you look after us and master the supreme power. May we reestablish a glorious steam civilization under your protection!”

Augustus hesitated for a moment, but when he thought of the hallowed air and the marvelous divine power, he still said solemnly, “You will pray before the divine item in turns. The Lord will grant divine power to those who are pious.”

What?

Really?

Harold, Myrna and the other dwarfs were hit by wild joy again. After witnessing what happened just now, they thought that it was a special favor from the Lord to their senior elder, and that the believers who more or less wavered in their heart like themselves had to wait longer before they received divine power with their actions.

It never occurred to them that the great God of Steam would grant them divine power without holding any grudge!

“You are the embodiment of virtues, and you teach us the truth of benevolence.”

Harold and the other dwarfs covered their eyes with their right hand again and prayed sincerely. They felt that their mind was empty and their faith was even purer. Tears of joy were even flowing out of their eyes.

Then, Harold reached before the silver ‘nuclear bomb’ and recited the content of ‘Mechanical Apocalypse’.

The noise was suddenly gone. Myrna and the other dwarfs looked at Harold attentively and hopefully. Would the Lord show favor?

Suddenly, another pure and brilliant light shot out of the silver sacred item. It illuminated Harold as if it covered him with a holy overcoat, making him look like an ‘angel’ in the Saint Truth.

A divine power had truly been granted!

Myrna and the other dwarfs were thrilled. They had witnessed a miracle and the Lord's favor over the dwarfs in person!

Harold's vibe grew exponentially and did not stop until he reached the level of bishop.

Augustus was more or less relieved after that. According to the standard of divine power, he was a level-five bishop, and Harold was a level-three one. He was still the leader of the night dwarfs and the archbishop of the Steam Church!

After that, the dwarfs prayed before the divine item in order, but not all of them got the seed of faith and grew the heart of faith. Only ten or so dwarfs, including Myrna, were given divine power. Correspondingly, only Myrna and Aquinas became level-three bishops like Harold.

However, the other dwarfs did not complain, because those who were given divine powers were the most pious believers and who became leaders for their 'devotion'. After they became leaders, they had to pretend to be pious even if they were not so, or they wouldn't be able to command their subordinates at all.

After the ritual was over, Archbishop Augustus stood before the divine item and said solemnly, "The divine power contradicts our purpose to construct Atlantis on earth. Therefore, the Lord asks us not to brag about it, or we may be lost in power. He reminds us to keep it a secret and only show it in front of the believers. Whoever tells it to outsiders or performs divine power before outsiders without necessity will be deprived of the power and punished!"

As a matter of fact, he didn't quite understand why the great God of Steam gave such an oracle, but after experiencing the miracle, he dared not suspect it at all.

Even less courageous to question it were Harold, Myrna, Aquinas and the other dwarfs, who covered their eyes with their right hand:

"Your instruction will be obeyed. You are the Lord of Life and

Death, the King of the kings, the God above the gods.”

The ivory brilliance inside the silver ‘divine item’ became dim. If an archmage or a legend were here, they would see a vast universe inside the brilliance, in which the stars were releasing light of different colors.

Inside the Atomic Universe...

Lucien was floating above a relatively stable planet of silicon. Before him was an altar of complicated magic patterns, and on the altar was the effigy of a bad dwarf.

The effigy was made of manually-polished metal parts and emitted a cold, mysterious vibe. The dark green tattoo engraved on the head seemed to be releasing metal electromagnetic waves nonstop.

Sacred and solemn light was gathered on the statue from the void, flying in and out, until they were gradually melted, presenting the feeling of vastness and transcendence.

The unmelted spots of light danced like little angels. If one were to listen attentively, they would hear different prayers and compliments, which turned the space pure and holy.

Divine power flowed from the effigy into the altar and absorbed the power of magic from the altar. They were never more harmonious in such a situation!

“It’s a pity that the heart of faith contradicts the cognitive world, or we will be able to perform divine power without the assistance of items.” Four other people floated next to Lucien. They were Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway and Natasha. It was exactly Douglas who made the remark.

Although sorcerers could partly construct their cognitive world with faith, like Artil did, who did not have a brain explosion but was swallowed by the holy light when his cognitive world collapsed, it did not mean that he could perform divine power, unless he completely modified his cognitive world into the heart of faith. By the same logic, no clerics except for demigods in the superposition

state could construct their cognitive world and perform magic with the heart of faith.

Lucien nodded. "The two of them are based on different things. One of them is founded on the nature and secrets of the world with one's own knowledge, and the other is obtained by changing one's ideas into the god he believes. In this experiment, I would like to find out the details of the secrets of the demigods."

This was a path to gods that Thanos and Viken improved. It was different from the primitive ways that the fake gods like Dark Dragon Lord used for their advancement.

"Existence justifies itself. Whether or not we admit it or walk on it, the very existence of 'gods' suggest another facet of the nature of the world. Therefore, we must study them instead of running away. Lucien, your studies on them are very valuable." Douglas was rather open-minded about that.

Lucien smiled. "I hope Mr. President, master and Granny Hathaway can keep it a secret for me. Since we concealed the way to become demigods earlier, I fear that this thing will make the other members of the Highest Council suspicious of me. Let's keep silent until we have some results."

He was merely notifying the few grand arcanists of his new work.

"Acting so mysterious. I don't know what you are up to at all." Fernando glared at Lucien. In his eyes, such a reason was too far-fetched, but he did not point it out and decided to see what his student was really planning to do.

Taking out her notebook, Hathaway studied the previous questions with the altar and the special divine item. "You can only grant ten dwarfs divine power?"

"A lot of the power of faith that the effigy gathered in the past is gone due to the lack of dependence. The power left is not enough to grant five people at all. Thankfully, I exchanged a few advanced divine items of the Saint Truth, which gave the power a high divine power. I can't do any better than that right now." Lucien explained

in great detail.

After Douglas, Fernando and Hathaway left with the firsthand data, Natasha looked at the effigy of dwarf with great interest. "I never knew that you had such a queer taste. You like tattooed baldies..."

As for it being a dwarf, she found it more or less understandable. After all, it was a God of Steam designed for dwarfs.

Lucien chuckled. "This effigy of dwarf is named 'Yuri'."

"Yuri... What's the connection?" Asked Natasha in confusion.

...

In the Tower...

Sitting inside her unique library, Samantha looked at the air before her. She seemed to be hearing low or loud voices echoing in the room.

"Now, what I want to say is that something may be wrong with determinism, because certain processes are probabilistic and irreversible..."

"Determinism must die..."

For a long time, those words had been haunting her like a nightmare, making her lost, overwhelmed and frustrated. What was most horrifying was that the experiments completed so far all indicated the uncertainties and probabilities of microscopic particles.

Pressing her forehead, she said in a low voice, "Arcana needs to live, so determinism must die?"

Her voice was full of bitterness and resistance.

Dum, dum, dum. She heard rapid footsteps outside, and they did not seem to come from one person. She opened the door, only to discover that the Tower sorcerers were gathering in a certain room.

“What happened?” Samantha saw her good friend, Rachel.

Rachel looked lost and painful. “Havin killed himself...”

“He did?” Asked Samantha in surprise. Suicide? Not died of a brain explosion but killed himself?

No important experiments could confirm uncertainties and probabilities yet, and the only problem was that the thought experiments could not deny them. Therefore, even though Havin was a hardcore supporter of determinism, the stability of his cognitive world shouldn't have been affected.

It also left enough buffer for the rest of them.

“Perhaps, he was devastated by the development of arcana...” Said Rachel in a low voice.

Chapter 694: Book of Demons

Chapter 694: Book of Demons

Under the help of the tower guard, the sorcerers who arrived early opened the closed gate, revealing what was inside the room to Samantha and Rachel clearly.

It was a clean and tidy library, where every book had been placed in order. The paper on the desk had been divided into several piles in an organized way, even including the scribbles. Every detail and every corner suggested the strict if not obsessive-compulsive personality of its owner, Havin.

Havin was seated in the chair behind the desk, with a layer of clear ice frozen on his body. The ice was not melted even in the scorching July. Instead, it turned the air around into frost.

Havin sat straight in the ice. He was wearing the standard attire of the Tower sorcerers. Together with the badges on his chest, he dressed so formally as if he were going to the award ceremony of ‘Evans Prize in Arcana’ or ‘Arcana Scepter’.

His face was pale, frozen with vague hopelessness and relief. There was a cup of wine in his hands, as if he would stand up and greet everyone any moment, if it weren’t for his hollow and lifeless eyes.

“This is truly the way of death that Havin would choose. Clean and graceful...” Said Rachel to Samantha in a low voice.

Both of them knew Havin. As the arcanists in the Tower who had hope to advance to the sixth circle, they had been both competing with and encouraging each other. The two of them knew Havin rather well. However, while the two of them had become senior-rank arcanists and sorcerers, Havin ended his life with an ice spell. It was truly two examples of the age.

Thinking about her frustration recently, Samantha said in deep thought. “As a matter of fact, Havin would’ve advanced in another ten years... One shouldn’t give up easily however desperate they

are. If I were him, I would live on and live well to see how the world of arcana would develop, and if our defeat was worthwhile...”

“Havin had severe obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression in the first place. I’d been meaning to help him with corresponding spells. It’s a shame...” Rachel mentioned the concepts that were proposed recently.

In the past, such psychological problems could be dealt with magic, such as Mechanized Mind and other spells, but their effect was short. No sorcerers could completely resolve the problems unless they were willing to abandon their normal feelings. Therefore, it was not rare for the ancient sorcerers to go extreme or crazy!

As her good friend, Samantha was not ignorant of the development of psychology. She nodded, “Other than the help of magic, daily comfort is also required. However, psychological therapies always lack a fundamental theory. The research results cannot be gathered into a complete system.”

As they talked, they walked into Havin’s room. As Havin’s friends and senior-rank sorcerers, they were acknowledged that they were suitable to deal with the issue.

Thanks to Havin’s ‘good habit’, Rachel and Samantha didn’t spend much time searching when they found an unsealed letter on the desk.

The paper inside the envelope carried the aroma of books. It had been folded squarely.

After careful examination, Rachel opened the letter and read its contents:

“...The debate recently exhausted me. I cannot imagine that the foundation of the whole school of astrology would be disrupted, or the certainties of the material world would be lost... I kept arguing with other people, but things were developing the exact opposite way...”

“...I’m deeply lost when I recall the rapid development of arcana in the past years. What we fear and resist today is the product of the theories that delighted and satisfied us previously. How absurd...”

“...My brain is haunted by the irresolvable and even self-contradictory problems without one moment of peace, but my consideration cannot answer any dilemma. I’m tired, and I want to end such a life...”

“...I’ve made a cowardly decision. I don’t think I can catch up with the development of arcana, and nor I can live with it. I hope that I can return to the golden age of determinism in my dream...”

Reading the letter that was brimming with exhaustion, desperation and confusion, Rachel suddenly felt sympathetic. In fact, most of the arcanists in the Congress shared similar feelings.

“Havin...” She meant to say something, but it eventually became a sigh.

All the sorcerers who came fell into silence, as if they were mourning for both Havin and themselves.

Samantha moved her eyes back from Havin and looked out of the window. The sunlight at the noon of July was so brilliant and dazzling.

Time went by one second after another. Rachel cleared her throat and planned to arrange the funeral, when a Tower sorcerer came from the lift with a thick book in his hands. “‘Nature’ has published a special issue, ‘Basics of Mathematics!’”

He sounded so delighted as if a quick glance had already shown him a strict temple of mathematics.

“Basics of Mathematics?” Asked Samantha subconsciously.

The Tower sorcerer replied joyfully in a loud voice. “Yes. It contains Mr. Evans’ answers to many mathematical problems. Through the answers, he has constructed a broad and valid mathematical system!”

He could only describe it in general, because he hadn't read it carefully yet. Suddenly, he noticed the situation in the library. "What... What happened to Havin?"

The other sorcerers told him what happened and Havin's last words to him. He said regretfully, "I should've come earlier. If Havin had seen 'Basics of Mathematics', his passion in mathematics would've been rekindled. I was similarly confused and frustrated before, but those feelings cannot extinguish my enthusiasm for mathematics now. It turns out that there are still so many things we can work on!"

After hearing his declaration, Samantha and Rachel couldn't help but ask for the copies of the book that he bought for other people. They read the books in Havin's library.

Although they did not have the time to read the specific deductions, Lucien's proposition and redefinition of certain mathematical concepts in the fields of numbers, set, group, field and topology already refreshed them. It felt that the scattered, random studies in the past had been gathered into an unbreakable whole.

The content in the book was not beyond their knowledge. It was based on the current mathematical studies and dived deeper into them. The new concepts it proposed were not incomprehensible. Not only were they deduced strictly and logically, but they also met the difficulties that the Tower arcanists had.

Browsing through the book, Samantha and Rachel envisioned a particularly broad world in the realm of mathematics!

"Before, Mr. Evans always said that mathematics must not depend on arcana, that it should not only be used to provide answers for their problems, and that it should be an independent theory based on deductions and reasoning." Rachel suddenly said with mixed feelings. "I remember what he said clearly and feel that it is very reasonable, but I tend to neglect a lot of questions in the actual research. Now, I have fully understood what Mr. Evans meant."

Her previous grief and confusion were gone. She seemed to have been reinvigorated.

Samantha also said in deep thought. “Before, when we applied unsystematic mathematical knowledge to solve problems, although we achieved our purpose in the end, the process always felt obscure and difficult, as if certain invisible walls thwarted our efforts. Now, those walls are gone...”

“Yes, Mr. Evans has also further illustrated axiomatization and given a complete axiom system of Tower Geometry.” An arcanist mentioned what was in the latter half of the book. Although Lucien had come up with the notion of axiomatization a long time ago, and the arcanists had certain studies and applications in their work, he still vaguely felt that the fundamental opinion of mathematics seemed to have changed after he saw the axiom system of Tower Geometry.”

In the heated discussion, Samantha suddenly rose. She copied the book in her hand and put it before Havin. Then, she ignited it.

“Your afterworld will be full of color with the company of Basics of Mathematics.” She said in a low voice.

The other arcanists also felt quiet, feeling lucky that Basics of Mathematics was published at such a moment.

After Havin’s body was moved away, Samantha, Rachel and the other arcanists left the room one after another. In the meantime, those arcanists seized the time to read the book. “Current conundrums in mathematical studies?”

“...Is it possible to write any even number greater than 2 as the summation of two prime numbers?...” He was stunned after he read the question.

“The four-color theorem?” Another arcanist turned to the next page.

Hearing their words, Samantha and Rachel looked at each other and hurried to read the content behind.

After a while, all the arcanists were standing in the hallway like statues. They mumbled nonstop, looking now lost and now crazy.

After a long time, Samantha and Rachel were suddenly woken up

by footsteps. They saw the shock in each other's eyes.

Rachel said in amusement. "Those questions are really terrible. They seem easy but turn out to be extremely difficult if you think deeper..."

"That's why even Mr. Evans is puzzled." Samantha put on a rare smile.

"The last question, the barber paradox?" Rachel reached the end of the book, "A barber in a town, after a certain incident, announced that 'I shave those and only those who do not shave themselves'. Then, should he shave himself? What's the source of the paradox?"

"Well..." Samantha thought for a moment, and the book in her hands hit the floor.

Dum, dum, dum. The other arcanists who heard Rachel's words dropped their book in shock, too.

It was a famous paradox about the set theory. At present, it meant that the set theory had been shaken, and since the set theory was the foundation of mathematics, one might say that the paradox made people doubt the legitimacy of the fundamental structure of the whole mathematics!

"We have to face the horror and desperation brought by the perfection of the set theory when we were just overjoyed by it..." One of the arcanists said what was similar to Havin's last words.

.....

Iristine and Nodanielle roamed inside the city of Allyn. They saw that many arcanists were working hard in the shadow of trees.

"They are truly hardworking. No wonder the Congress of Magic has been developing so fast." Observed Iristine in mixed feelings. Then, she looked at one of the young sorcerers curiously. "What's the book he's reading?"

"Basics... of... Mathematics..." Thanks to her exceptional sight, Nodanielle identified the words one after another.

“Mathematics...” Iristine nodded her head and was about to leave, when Nodanielle added in confusion, “Those few words have been scrapped, and there are some handwritten words below it...”

Iristine was even more curious. “What are they?”

Nodanielle identified them carefully again. “Book... of... Demons...”

“Book of Demons?” Repeated Iristine in confusion.

Chapter 695: Test

On the top floor of the Tower that rose into the clouds...

Before Bergner, one copy of 'Basics of Mathematics' was opened. Long before the special issue of 'Nature' was published, he had already learnt the news and asked for a copy of the manuscript from Levski.

"I have to say that, although there are no groundbreaking insights and mathematical achievements in Evans' book, he has delicately integrated the scattered studies in mathematics so far by proposing certain new concepts and redefining certain old concepts. A complete system with clear branches, a strict architecture and a solid foundation has been established..."

"...His in-depth illustration of the system has completely driven away the mist around mathematics, so that the whole palace of mathematics is finally bathing under the brilliant sun and showing the glorious gold..."

Although Bergner had already made similar remarks when he read it for the first time, he couldn't help but compliment it again and again every time he read it. Ever since calculus was created and defined, nobody had ever made such great contributions to mathematics with a single book.

"...The age of calculus has passed; this is modern mathematics..."

Bergner envisioned that new branches were taking shape in the palace of mathematics, and they all originated from this 'Basics of Mathematics'!

For him, the greatest significance of the book lied in two aspects. Firstly, the geometrical axiom system that Lucien completed filled him with infinite passion about the related mathematical questions. He felt that everything in the world could be axiomatized into a rigorous, self-consistent and flawless system.

Secondly, Lucien's studies on topology, group and set theory gave

him inspiration. It seemed that they were not pure, independent and abstract mathematical achievements but could be directly applied to solve many problems in current arcana studies, like the studies of crystals or the cutting edge of the microworld.

“...This is without a doubt the most remarkable book in mathematics over the past hundred years. It will be worshiped by the future arcanists in the temple of mathematics right next to ‘Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy’. However, it would be perfect if the ten questions in the appendix did not exist...” There was a vague, bitter smile on Bergner’s face. The book on him had been turned to ‘Current conundrums in mathematical studies’.

For a legendary sorcerer adept at mathematics, he could not resist those questions at all. After browsing through the main part, he devoted himself to the consideration and calculation of the questions.

However, a week had passed since he got ‘Basics of Mathematics’, but no progress had been made. He failed to solve any of the questions, which rather frustrated him who had always been proud of his expertise in mathematics, particularly when some of the questions seemed easy to prove but were actually full of difficulties.

Of course, none of those mattered compared to the barber paradox in the end, which stunned Bergner for a whole hour.

“Until determinism is completely denied, there can’t be a more painful and humiliating question. When we cheer for the final establishment of the temple of mathematics, its foundation has collapsed. It seems that mathematics itself will be denied as long as we apply the set theory and acknowledge the concepts in the past.”

Bergner heaved a long sigh. He almost couldn’t stop himself from destroying Basics of Mathematics and killing every barber the moment he saw the barber paradox, because he knew that infinite disasters would be caused!

He moved his eyes down and saw Lucien’s conclusion after the

paradox. “Similar paradoxes can be frustrating, but it only means that our studies are not meticulous, and that our understanding about mathematics is more or less wrong. Therefore, instead of feeling desperate and lost, we should dig deeper into the set theory. There is one and only one solution to all mathematical questions, which is to continue studying mathematics itself.”

“...Evans’ arcana attitude is what supported him to make so many accomplishments.” Bergner praised him and turned back to the set theory, starting to rethink. It was obvious that a set paradox could only be resolved with the set theory.

.....

“...I am your old friend Nightingale. Coming next is ‘Arcana News’...”

It was still the holiday in the generic school. Longman could only learn the latest development of arcana through programs such as ‘Arcana Voice’ and ‘News of the World’.

“...Mr. Evans has finished his masterpiece, ‘Basics of Mathematics’. It has solved many problems in mathematics and cleared the obstacles that block the way forward. However, the most eye-catching part of the book is not the main part but the ten conundrums proposed in the end. They have fascinated all the arcanists...”

“...It is obvious that the conundrums which even puzzled Mr. Evans are truly extraordinary. Up until now, no arcanists have announced that they know how to solve them. Even Mr. President and Mr. Brook openly admitted that it was not easy to solve those seemingly easy questions...”

“...It appears that whoever solves the ten questions will be given abundant arcana credits and respected as an authority of mathematics. Those questions are as follows...”

The boy Longman’s eyes were widened after he heard that the questions puzzled Mr. Evans. Apart from disbelief, he suddenly had the urge to try. If he could solve the questions that even Mr. Evans

couldn't...

The conundrums that Lucien selected were highly representative, but they all looked simple on the surface. Therefore, even Longman could understand them. He took out his pen and paper and calculated.

“...Mr. Evans told us that, while those questions are not concerned with actual arcana studies, and solving them will not bring any substantial results, studying them will itself boost the development of mathematics, and the development of mathematics will support the arcana studies... The same logic applies to the other mathematics domains. In this pure world, one should not blindly pursue applicativeness...”

Very soon, Longman couldn't calculate any further, but his heart was burning with fire after hearing those words, and his cheeks were flushing. “Mathematics is so important? Also, it doesn't seem to need the support of magic... Although I'm not gifted at spiritual power, it doesn't mean that I don't have talents in mathematics...”

“I will certainly be an arcanist! An arcanist that is good at mathematics!”

.....

After reading Basics of Mathematics, most arcanists tried solving the conundrums that Lucien proposed curiously and hopefully. Just because Mr. Evans cannot resolve them doesn't mean we can't! If they could solve one of them, they would earn unimaginable glory and benefits!

As a result, Iristine and Nodanielle often saw lost, unsteady arcanists who seemed to be dwelling in their own world when the two of them traveled in Allyn recently.

However, as time went by, such arcanists were fewer and fewer, and stricken faces were more and more. The copies of Basics of Mathematics in their hands were often marked with different symbols. Some represented demons, some nightmares, and some were mazes without exits. In the end, even though the ten questions

had been placed on the permanent screen in the Task Zone, the trend about them came to an inevitable end.

Among them, the Tower arcanists felt most complicated. On one hand, such questions were truly their interest; on the other hand, they had been so gravely stricken by the paradox that they felt the confusion and desperation when determinism was shaken again. Also, while the uncertainties hadn't been proved by any important experiment, the paradox had shown self-contradiction in the most clear way. There was no way to evade it.

"If Havin were alive, he would've done the same after he saw this paradox..." Samantha looked out of the window gloomily.

Rachel's lips twitched. "To think that you burnt 'Basics of Mathematics' for him... Do you want him to have nightmares even after he is dead... You must know that the book has been publicly acknowledged as 'book of demons'. For the arcanists who are not good at mathematics, the number theory and the knowledge on set and group are more dreadful than demons, but for us, the questions and paradoxes at the end are most horrible of all..."

"In any case, mathematics will continue, and we will find a way to resolve the problems..." Samantha encouraged herself.

Therefore, the other arcanists discovered that the Tower arcanists and the other arcanists who were good at mathematics fell silent. In their silence, an outburst was brewing.

.....

In Atom Institution...

Lucien, Natasha, Lazar, Annick and some other people were gathered in Heidi's personal laboratory to observe the first prototype of artificial intelligence that she and Chelly assembled.

At the center of the room, countless enormous glass tubes were connected to each other delicately. At their center were simple magic patterns and relatively complicated alchemical parts. Also, there was a curtain standing on the top, rippling like a curtain of

water.

“This is huge...” Iristine had been invited to observe it. Although she had guessed its final shape based on her daily observation, the size of the artificial intelligence was still much greater than she thought.

The prototype occupied the better part of the room and equaled to almost ten golems.

Lucien nodded. Thanks to magic, this was much smaller than the first computer on Earth. “Well done. Turn it on and demonstrate it.”

Nervously, Heidi pressed the switch of power. The glass tubes glittered one after another, emitting in red or green colors and changing nonstop. It made the room look like the field of a ball. Since different colors had been developed for magic crystal lamps, there were already balls which attempted to control the change of lights.

“Input the data...” Thanks to the assistance of magic, Heidi did not make things like punched tape but simply inputted with voice and keys.

After she inputted a rather complicated formula, the red and green lights glittered even more intensely, and the electric noises could be heard. In the end, the result was printed on the ‘curtain’.

“The result is correct.” Sprint interjected. “But I have already got the answer a few seconds ago with the ancillary computation circles.”

So, what’s the point?

Heidi secretly snorted and looked at her teacher, hoping to be praised. That was only the first prototype of artificial intelligence, and there was still plenty of room for improvement!

Chapter 696: The Use of Artificial Intelligence

Chapter 696: The Use of Artificial Intelligence

Looking at Heidi's hopeful eyes, Lucien smiled and said, "It's indeed a shabby and highly-impractical artificial intelligence..."

Huh? Heidi immediately pulled a long face after hearing her teacher's remark. Chelly, Alfalia, Lowi, Blake and the other sorcerers who contributed to the creation were frustrated, too.

Sprint, however, did not hesitate to mock Heidi who always seemed carefree. "Do you see? Our teacher also thinks that this is basically a toy. A toy so clumsy and enormous that the ordinary people cannot use it at all, no less."

In his eyes, the artificial intelligence had nothing worth complimenting at all except for the advantage that it could be powered with electricity without a sorcerer. Therefore, an ordinary person could complete the computations as long as he could understand the user manual. However, the problem was that the machine was too big, heavy, delicate and expensive to be promoted.

"My ancillary computation circles are only the level of middle-rank sorcerers. Your artificial intelligence would explode in embarrassment if it were the advanced computation circles or our teacher's legendary ancillary circles in the laboratory. Hehe. Our teacher can beat it even by calculating with his brain..." Sprint did not intend to let Heidi go easily.

It was not because he was hostile towards Heidi. Instead, he felt that Annick, Heidi and the other classmates were his few real friends. He merely felt that the more he frustrated Heidi, the more momentum Heidi would have to improve the artificial intelligence. If it were himself, he would've been full of battle desire under the mockery and wouldn't give in after all!

He had always been like this, but he sounded much less disobedient

than before.

Heidi glared at him, swearing to herself that she would create a perfect artificial intelligence which would crush Sprint's ancillary computation circles so hard that his mouth would never be closed and his jaw would hit the ground!

Iristine and Nodanielle intended to comfort Heidi, but they did not know what to say due to their lack of knowledge about artificial intelligence. Katrina and Layria, on the other hand, raised their thumb encouragingly, hinting to Heidi that it was already an incredible result for a first try!

Natasha, who was standing not far away, however, put on a meaningful smile. With her understanding about Lucien, straightforward criticism was usually the harbinger of praise, and if he complimented someone at the beginning, it would usually be followed by rebuttals and indirect accusations later. To quote himself, it was called 'subtlety'.

"...Despite the many drawbacks of this artificial intelligence, the spirit and the direction that it presents deserves an Arcana Prize." As she expected, Lucien went on.

Huh?

What?

Heidi rubbed her ears subconsciously, suspecting that she had hallucinations. The crude and impractical artificial intelligence deserved an Evans Prize in Arcana? Was it a joke?

Lucien chuckled. "This machine is undoubtedly primitive and impractical, but the original spells that our ancestors constructed based on the patterns on the magic creatures in the primeval age of magic were also primitive and impractical. In our eyes, they may be so hilarious and pitiful, and they had to perform a spell which has been simplified to the level of apprentices today with the spiritual power of the fifth circle, but can we deny their contribution just because of that?"

“No, we can’t...” Lazar replied cooperatively.

Sprint and Annick also nodded. Without the seemingly hilarious and impractical efforts of the sorcerers at the beginning, there wouldn’t have been the magic civilization today!

“All achievements in arcana and magic are made step by step. Heidi, Chelly, Lowi, Blake and Alfalia have built the first prototype from scratch without any knowledge in artificial intelligence. It’s not easy. Although it is shabby, huge and clumsy, its idea and direction are very valuable.” Said Lucien solemnly.

Heidi finally confirmed that her teacher was praising her. She raised her head proudly, before she somewhat blushed. “Master, we couldn’t have designed it without your guidance.”

“I offered little guidance except for the notion. Most of the details were completed by yourselves.” Lucien looked at Heidi and Chelly. “Without considering the size, weight and power supply, how much faster can the computation speed of this artificial intelligence be improved?”

“...Approximately five times. If the research on crystals have groundbreaking developments, it’s possible to improve the computation speed by dozens of times without increasing the size and the weight.” Heidi’s eyes became hazy when she described the prospect of artificial intelligence. “By then, it will be as powerful as the brain of senior-rank sorcerers and the middle-rank ancillary circles!”

Sprint was rather surprised. Could the performance be improved so greatly?

Lucien nodded and, looking at Natasha, Lazar, Katrina and the rest of them who were confused, said, “According to their design, the bottleneck of the artificial intelligence lies in materials and parts, and the development of materials and parts is highly dependent on arcana studies.”

“This is an age where different fields depend on and facilitate each other. Without great ancillary circles, many experiments in the

microscopic domain cannot be fulfilled, and its development will be slowed.”

“Perhaps, when we apply the quantum superposition state to artificial intelligence, its computation speed will be higher than that of any sorcerer, including Mr. President and me.” Lucien depicted the future of artificial intelligence, before he added in silence, quantum computers are not needed, and the large artificial intelligence will be stronger than himself and the president in terms of computation when the integrated circuit grows mature.

However, in the world of magic, certain procedures could be skipped!

“The computation ability beyond legendary sorcerers...” Said Heidi, stunned. She had never thought that artificial intelligence could reach such an extent!

In their eyes, legendary sorcerers had the most terrifying mental arithmetic abilities even without the help of ancillary computation circles. They were almost ‘inhuman’!

Listening quietly, Iristine repeated the terms she heard. “Quantum superposition... artificial intelligence...”

Observing the flashing red and green lights, Natasha asked curiously, “This artificial intelligence seems controllable even for ordinary people... How can its size, weight and cost be reduced? How many years will it take for the machine to be promoted and popularized?”

Having lived with Lucien for a long time, she had contracted the quirk of popularization, too. After all, she felt proud to see good changes happening in her kingdom and her subjects enjoying a more and more convenient and civilized life.

“After crystal tubes are invented, it should be only the size of golems and ready for the use of major nobles. Further reduction will depend on the development of alchemical materials.” Heidi made a rough estimation. “Although the alchemical items and magic patterns in the artificial intelligence are simple enough to be

completed by common sorcerers, the number of the parts is huge. Since the parts cannot be manufactured, their cost equals a level-five magic item.”

“It seems that many years are needed, and I don’t think the nobles and civilians really need an artificial intelligence which features the computational ability.” Natasha was not very disappointed.

Lucien smiled. He intended to list the ‘possible’ applications of a computer in daily life, but none of them, like TV, had been invented. So, it was inconvenient for him to speak it out aloud. He could only say, “After the computation ability is improved, many things will be doable, and the world will be more colorful!”

Huh? Natasha looked at Lucien curiously, and so did Heidi and Chelly, who hoped to get inspirations about artificial intelligence from their teacher.

“For example, we can draw cubic magic patterns with artificial intelligence, which will be more accurate and steady than us because it is entirely digitally made.” Lucien intentionally brought up a subject that would captivate the sorcerers. “Then, we can let the artificial intelligence construct a magic model with those patterns!”

“Then what? Can artificial intelligence cast spells?” Heidi was indeed interested.

Lucien smiled. “Magic models can only turn into spells with the irrigation of energy. We can use them with our own spiritual power, and artificial intelligence may use electricity. However, the problem is that if it’s magic models are the same as ours in our soul that do not have real entities, it can only interfere with the outside world with spiritual power. Since we haven’t grasped the special electromagnetic waves yet, we cannot give artificial intelligence spiritual power.”

“Without real entities...” Annick seemed to have recalled something. All the simplified alchemical items had real entities, which was why they could be powered by electricity to trigger corresponding spells.

“That’s right. So, we can print the magic models that the artificial intelligence constructs with corresponding materials or scrolls. If we design the modules well, alchemical items or magic scrolls will be created perfectly and accurately in the process. Then, we can activate the products with our spiritual power.” Lucien introduced the concept of 3D printing to the manufacture of magic scrolls and alchemical items.

As he spoke, a few bizarre pictures popped up in Lucien’s head. Perhaps, the future sorcerers could turn on their computers, search for the magic models they needed, download them, and create magic scrolls with the ‘3D printing’ of the artificial intelligence. It wouldn’t be half as troublesome and complicated as right now.

Casting spells is costless... That probably would be a slogan for artificial intelligence in the future. But of course, the prerequisites for 3D printing were not so easy to be met.

Heidi, Iristine and the rest of them were all shocked by the prospect that Lucien’s described. What a future that was! Could sorcerers be stopped at all? Wait, that did not seem to be limited to sorcerers. All creatures who were capable of activating scrolls and items would be able to perform magic with artificial intelligence! It didn’t seem to be a good thing for the sorcerers, did it?

Whether or not such a development would benefit the sorcerers, Heidi, Chelly and the rest of the team were even more enthusiastic about artificial intelligence. They were doing something incredible!

Layria, Sprint, Rock and the others had similar thoughts. If they weren’t occupied in their own arcana and magic studies, they probably would’ve joined Heidi’s research team.

Natasha looked at Lucien, full of interest. That world seemed to be a lot of fun. Magic was truly interesting!

Chapter 697: Nature's Gift

On the top floor of Babel in the Atomic Universe...

The whole hall was filled with silver, green and transparent lines. They extended from the wall, the floor, the ceiling and the void, constituting a dense, complicated magic circle.

The center where the lines were gathered presented fluids that were brimming with intense vitality. Like the source of a fountain, it flowed out and filled all the round altars.

Looking at the exuberant greenness in the altars, Lucien smiled at Natasha. "The ritual of 'Nature's Gift' is ready."

"Why is this different from what I heard from Granny Hathaway?" Natasha observed the constituents of the legendary ritual around with great interest.

She had learnt the basic look of 'Nature's Gift' from Hathaway a long time ago, because it was Fernando and Hathaway who hosted the ritual for Douglas at the beginning. This life-extending legendary ritual used the fruit of the elvish tree as the core. Through the transformation of magic circles and complicated procedures, the power inside the fruit would be extracted and integrated into the body and soul of the receiver, thereby extending their life.

It was the state-of-the-art life ritual. According to the quality of the fruit and the ritual materials, the smoothness of the ritual, and the strength of the receiver, their longevity could be extended by three to six thousand years.

The view in the hall, however, was so different. Natasha saw neither the fruit of the elvish tree nor the constituents of the corresponding magic circle. Although she did not know much about magic circles, the ritual of Nature's Gift had a distinctive appearance that couldn't be mistaken at all.

Most importantly of all, there wouldn't be a pool that looked like a

fountain at the center of the ritual of 'Nature's Gift'!

Lucien kept smiling. "You forgot that we still have 'Fountain of Youth'. I have modified the ritual of 'Nature's Gift' with its features. Although the Fountain of Youth is not as good as the fruit of the elvish tree in terms of quality and cannot improve the upper bound, it can significantly improve the lower bound. Therefore, the ritual of 'Nature's Gift' can extend the longevity by five to six thousand years for two people."

"'Fountain of Youth'?" Natasha finally recalled Lucien's trophies in the World of Souls. She looked at the fountain-like pool at the center of the ritual and immediately realized that it was what the Fountain of Youth should look like. "Do we not need Hathaway or the Lord of Storm to host the ritual?"

Most of the legendary rituals had to be supervised by legendary experts.

Looking at the 'pool' at the center that had melted the power of the fruit of the elvish tree and the Fountain of Youth, Lucien smiled. "We don't. The ritual that I have modified does not need more legends. As long as one of the receivers is a legendary sorcerer, it will be enough to navigate the ritual. Nothing will go wrong. It will be an easy, convenient, efficient and comfortable life-extending ritual."

Natasha couldn't help but laugh aloud hearing Lucien's description. "Haha. I'm now convinced that the strange advertisements in 'Arcana Voice' and 'News of the World' were invented by you..."

"Did I ever deny it?" Lucien opened his hands.

Natasha stopped laughing and became serious. "What are we going to do next?"

"Well, we only need to submerge ourselves in the pool like taking a bath in a hot spring. The ritual will drive the integrated power of the fruit of the elvish tree and the Fountain of Youth into our body." Said Lucien solemnly. "To ensure the effect, we must not wear any magical items."

“What?” Natasha was stunned and then said in a half smile. “A ritual that requires a naked bath? You designed it on purpose, didn’t you?”

“Am I that kind of person? It’s all because of the features of the Fountain of Youth.” Said Lucien hypocritically.

“Is that so?” Natasha chuckled. “As a matter of fact, I like such a creation.”

As she spoke, the bright purple court dress that she wore dropped like a dancing butterfly, and the remaining clothes flew off one piece after another, slowly and charmingly, revealing her enthralling body.

Like every time she took a bath, Natasha pointed at the water with the tip of her toe, before she walked towards the center of the green pool one step after another, her body gradually was submerged under the fluids. Suddenly, she turned back and said to Lucien who was still floating outside of the altar, “Come on. Don’t be shy.”

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Time went by fast, and the green ‘water’ was less and less. Both Lucien and Natasha felt that the fluids were melted into their body and their souls, bringing a clean and comfortable feeling. They were entirely relaxed.

“The ritual has been finished. It will be a complete success as long as it is not interrupted. I can already feel that my longevity has improved a lot. Four thousand years, probably.” Lucien suddenly opened his mouth, breaking the silence. He sounded lazy when his soul had been deeply relaxed.

Leaning on Lucien’s body, Natasha said equally lazily, “I feel that my pressure, anxieties and worries about many things have been cleansed by the water. Well, I’m thinking of holding a music festival in Rentato.”

Under such circumstances, she spoke whatever came to her mind.

“A music festival?” Lucien asked back, his voice far away.

“Yes, I’ve been planning to hold a ‘Rentato Music Festival’ so that I’ll miss Aalto less. However, there were few distinguished musicians in Rentato until this year, when a batch of remarkable musicians emerged. So, I decided to get it done. Hehe. Thanks to you, light music and unconventional symphonies are popular in Rentato. I hope that it will mark the difference between Aalto music and Rentato music.”

Although she loved Aalto, Natasha did not intend to turn Rentato into another Aalto. She respected the culture and customs of this place. “By then, I hope that I can use your ‘Valkyrie’ as the opening for the music festival.”

Lucien underestimated the difficulties to create an opera. Also, he had a high demand for himself in the original work. Therefore, it was not until the double-slit experiment with electrons that he finally finished the work that took almost four years. He was looking for opera singers and orchestras to rehearse it.

“It’s a gift for you. You can watch it whenever you want to.” Lucien had no objection. “However, I fear that we’ll have to take the Time Plate from the Chaotic Cosmos first.”

He had made all the preparations and was ready to go to the 555th level of Abyssal Maw, the ‘Chaotic Cosmos’.

“Of course, all my attention is devoted to Abyssal Maw and the Chaotic Cosmos right now...” Natasha took a long breath in satisfaction.

Ten minutes later, the green ‘water’ was completely gone, and Lucien and Natasha were enshrouded in bright green, translucent halos.

All the parts of the magic ritual glittered, and the energy was gathered into an enormous and special pressure.

The transparent light constricted violently and crawled into Lucien and Natasha. Vague fragrance of nature spread out of their bodies.

“Our longevity has been extended by about 5,600 years.” Said

Lucien according to the feedback of the ritual and his own status.

Natasha chuckled, "Therefore, it will be a long race for me to catch up with you. I will not be frustrated and give up just because I'm behind for now! I will certainly catch up to you!"

She clenched her fists, her competitiveness surging out.

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In San Ivansburg, the capital of the Schachran Empire in the north...

"Your Holiness, Lucien Evans has published only one paper, no, one book, recently. It's 'Basics of Mathematics', which addresses the development of mathematics and proposes certain conundrums." 'Saint' Clement reported to Belkovsky, the pontiff.

Belkovsky, who had the typical big nose of the Schachran Empire, nodded. "That's alright. Thank you, Clement."

In the North Church, the pontiff was only half a level higher than the Grand Cardinals and was not as powerful and authoritative as the pope. Therefore, he was rather courteous in the way he talked.

"Your Holiness, why did you ask us to pay attention to Lucien? How does Lucien's research concern us?" Asked Clement in confusion.

Belkovsky said solemnly. "Lucien Evans went to the Pathway of Immortality and opened the Chamber of Immortality, which may be reflected in his research. For example, his ideas about quantum superposition gave me inspiration."

"That explains a lot." Clement rose and left the Saint Ivan Church for his own Saint Geno Church.

The moment he entered the room of prayers, the peace on his face was replaced by gloom and hatred. He murmured to himself, "Lucien Evans..."

In the meantime, he drew crosses on his chest, shorter vertically and longer horizontally!

The Horizontal Cross Sect within the North Church was made by him and the Lord of Hell together. Otherwise, even the Lord of Hell couldn't have infiltrated the North Church so astonishingly.

Although Lucien's operation to sabotage their plan was rather secretive, Clement still knew the person guilty for the death of Ivanovszki thanks to the Lord of Hell. Therefore, he sent subordinates to teach the guy a lesson and let him repent what he did in hell.

However, Lucien's speed of advancement was beyond his imagination. Every time he sent a subordinate over, he would discover that Lucien had grown too strong for his subordinate, and he was forced to send another one. Since such a secret group could not deploy assassins as easily as the South Church did, the process simply repeated itself. After Clement was less busy and intended to find an opportunity himself, he learnt the news that Lucien had become a legend.

There couldn't have been a more infuriating message. Before he put his plan of revenge into action, the enemy's strength had been improving by leaps until he could barely be dealt with in regular ways, and it had only been a few years!

Therefore, Clement judiciously aborted his plan. Nobody would retaliate against a legend for such trivial things, unless he was as crazy as the Will of Abyss!

"It's true that strength is the foundation of everything..." Clement prayed before the cross.

In the middle of his prayer, he suddenly sensed that sacred, uncanny air was gathering before the cross, and the ivory holy light spread out bit by bit.

Then, the projection of an angel who was as beautiful as a girl appeared before him, with thirty-six wings unfolding slowly on the back.

"The Angel King?"

Clement blurted out in shock. He did not understand how the Angel King's projection could've arrived in spite of the heavy defense of the church, and nor did he know why the Angel King, who had been cooperating with the South Church, would visit him!

Chapter 698: I Have High Hopes For You

Mecantron, the Angel King, opened his hands, turning into the shape of a cross, before he said solemnly, “Pope Viken stole the Lord’s power when the Lord was asleep. Therefore, I’m looking for pious saints to judge the greatest blasphemer!”

He was surrounded in holy light, and his eighteen pairs of wings filled up the whole room after they were unfolded, building a hallowed image.

“Viken?” Clement stepped back from the embrace of the thirty-six angelic wings. Was the Angel King finally convinced that the Church was led by Viken, the King of Calamities?

When Ivan, Felix, Geno and the other saints surrounded Wilfred, the Great Master of Paleness, they accidentally discovered a gap to the World of Souls and learnt part of the secrets of the God of Truth and the pope from the legendary spectres such as the Lich King. They also looted a lot from the Temple of Spirits and learnt how to steal the power of gods.

Therefore, they secretly forged an alliance and betrayed the pope during the Highest Theology Conference, accusing him of being the embodiment of the Lord of Hell. After that, they successfully divided the Church. Viken sent Ivan and the rest of them to hunt Wilfred only because he was convinced that Wilfred, who did not partake in the trip to the World of Souls, had only the preliminary knowledge of fake gods and was unaware of his secret. Otherwise, he would’ve decided to kill the enemy in person.

However, at some point, the Great Master of Paleness, the legendary sorcerer of the school of necromancy, made friends with the legendary spectres of the World of Souls at some point. As a result, Viken’s perfect plan became flawed, and the Church was divided, which also gave an opportunity for Douglas to establish the Congress of Magic.

During their attempt, Ivan and Felix tried to reach out to the Angel

King, hoping to persuade the Angel King to take their side. In such a way, the authority of the pope would be completely shaken. However, Mecantron refused to acknowledge that the pope was Viken and continued to support the South Church firmly.

Therefore, while the North Church was as good as the South Church in terms of the divine power granted by 'God of Truth', they could not summon the angels in the level of seraphs or use their strength!

"Yes, I was once fooled by him, but the Congress of Magic's exploration of the World of Souls completely exposed his secrets. I have to defend the Lord's glory when He is asleep." Mecantron announced pitifully and gravely.

"The Congress of Magic's exploration of the World of Souls..." Clement was shocked. He had learnt the story of 'God of Truth Thanos and Pope Viken' that the Congress of Magic fabricated through various channels.

While the story was a joke for many people, as a person who inherited the power and knowledge of Saint Geno and who cooperated with the Lord of Hell in secret, Clement was very shocked when he heard it because it agreed with the information he knew and had more convincing details. Therefore, he had to accept that the Congress of Magic did earn a lot from the adventure!

Now, the Angel King also admitted that the Congress of Magic's exploration touched the core secrets?

Most importantly, according to the Congress of Magic's story, Mecantron was an incarnation of 'God of Truth' and the dependency for Him to be revived. Therefore, Mecantron was the out-and-out deputy of paradise and a 'Junior God of Truth'!

Was it the real reason why he believed that the pope was Viken?

Too many thoughts popped up in Clement's heart. In the end, grasped by greed, he ventured, "Honorable Angel King, does your arrival mean that you acknowledge my devotion and my contribution to the Lord?"

“Yes, you are a much more qualified believer than Belkovsky is.” Mecantron’s benevolent face was full of praise. “I have a copy of ‘Book of Virtues’ which records the mysteries of demigods. I can tell that you have a noble mind and your deeds match the Lord’s teaching. You are also determined and willing to sacrifice. Therefore, I plan to give it to you, so that you will be strong enough to defend the glory of the Lord and punish the sinner Viken!”

After a brief pause, a gold book appeared in his hands. “Clement, do you want it? Do you want to take this extremely difficult mission?”

Mysteries of demigods? Mysteries that were better than the ways to pass on power that they knew? Clement felt that his breath had turned heavy. He only cooperated with the Lord of Hell in order to obtain the secrets of demigods from him. However, the Lord of Hell was a natural-born demigod. He did not know why he was a demigod. Thanos and Viken, on the other hand, had grown into demigods from ordinary people with obvious tracks!

In that case, were the mysteries of demigods contained in the Book of Virtues?

Thinking about that, Clement held back his excitement and greed. Weighing his words, he said, “I am willing to defend the glory of the Lord, but Viken has become a demigod after stealing the Lord’s power and is too strong for me. Sacrifice is important, but unnecessary sacrifice is meaningless. I can promise with the heart of faith that when I am almost as strong as Viken, I will defend the honor of the Lord and punish the sinner Viken with my life.”

If you want me to cooperate with you, let me become a demigod with your Book of Virtues first!

An old fox like him would never do anything without a reward.

Mecantron tossed the gold book to Clement. “I’m satisfied with your answer.”

Picking up the book, Clement quickly browsed through it, not bothering that Mecantron was still around. The more he read, the more excited he became. Due to the difficulties in stealing the

power of faith and passing on the power, the rate of transformation had been very low, and the saints of the North Church had been trying to modify the methods. But the moment he saw the Book of Virtues, those difficulties seemed no more, because the book had pointed out their origin!

The more he read, the more thrilled he became. Clement did feel that the Book of Virtues contained the mysteries of demigods.

“Before you deal with Viken, I have a few missions for you.” Mecantron said in a low voice, “At the core of the ‘Chaotic Cosmos’, the 555th floor of the abyss, there is a legendary material named ‘Time Plate’. You will fetch it for me. I will reward you accordingly afterwards.”

“The Chaotic Cosmos?” Asked Clement in confusion. He was worried that the Angel King would give him a dangerous mission, but it did not seem so bad at all. A trip to the abyss for a legendary material?

Mecantron introduced the Chaotic Cosmos to him and said in the end, “My prophecy told me that Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans needs a legendary space-time material and learnt of ‘Time Plate’ from the elves. So, be careful that he may go to the Chaotic Cosmos, too.”

“Of course, Your Excellency.” Clement was more or less relieved. Lucien Evans was on par with him. Even if he couldn’t defeat the guy, he could always escape. There was no grudge between them. If he were caught in danger, he could always throw the Time Plate out. Lucien Evans certainly wouldn’t chase after him.

More importantly, as long as he seized the time, he could claim the Time Plate earlier than Lucien Evans, and they wouldn’t meet at all.

The Angel King put on a smile of satisfaction. His body in the projection dispersed into countless tiny angels, singing, praising and praying. It was not until a long time later that they finally disappeared.

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On the 666th floor of the abyss, inside the Frozen Fortress.

Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, looked at the void before him with a vague smile and held the black throne with his right hand.

On the throne were dim and illusionary gems. Gonheim's long fingers danced among them, as if he were playing music. Chaos was flashing on his dark fingernails.

After a while, he chuckled, and the void before him split into a boundless ocean of magma, which was surging and bubbling nonstop!

"Little Fire..." Gonheim called in a mocking tone.

Hooo. A vortex appeared above the magma, and a gigantic flame demon stood up. "Gonheim, don't test my tolerance."

Terrifying heat spread out and seemed to be melting everything!

He was the Primeval Firelord and the dominator of 'Seething Ocean', the 554th level of abyss. He was a level-three legendary Demon Lord.

"How should I call you when you are too chaotic to have a name? As the new Prince of Demons, do you expect me to call you 'Lord of Fire'?" The Demogorgon of Darkness smiled. "If you don't like me calling you Little Fire, how about Little Red, Little Flame, or Little Demon?"

Hooooo. Magma erupted from the ocean, turning the demiplane into a world of fire. The Primeval Firelord seemed to be exasperated!

"Alright, I'm calling you merely to tell you that a legendary sorcerer will enter the Chaotic Cosmos through your 'Seething Ocean'. I hope that you can stop him for a while." Without stimulating the Primeval Firelord anymore, Gonheim began to talk about 'business'.

The 'firelord' roared, "Do I need you to remind me? I will not let a single living creature pass 'Seething Ocean'!"

There were only two ways to enter the Chaotic Cosmos, which was a hidden plane. The first way was to reach the end of the Seething Ocean, and the other was to ask for the Prince of Demons' help.

After the void was closed, Gonheim shook his head with a smile.

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Inside the Atom Institution, Katrina was standing before Lucien.

“Master, I have accepted a mandatory mission to go to the Schachran Empire. I have entrusted my work in the institution to my assistants. With Layria here, nothing will go wrong.” Katrina ‘asked for leave’.

As a member of the Highest Council, Lucien did not have the habit of breaking rules. Therefore, his students had always been carrying out mandatory missions.

“The Schachran Empire?” Asked Lucien, deep in thought.

“Yes. An incident caused by demon worship happened in a northern province in the Schachran Empire. A low-rank sorcerer of the Congress was involved and killed. Therefore, the Affair Committee asked me to investigate.” Katrina lowered her head, her gold hair drifting. “In fact, I am a native of the Schachran Empire. I only came to the south when I grew older. I thought that I could take a look at my hometown with the opportunity.”

In her family, only her parents came with her.

Lucien nodded. “Pay attention to your safety. As it happens, there’s something I need you to do for me. After you accomplish your mission, you will go to Dumute and put this outside of the temple of Heit, ‘God of Craftsmen’. I’ll give you the coordinates of the specific location later.”

“No problem, master.” Katrina accepted her teacher’s mission very happily. Ever since they knew their teacher, the students had barely offered any help to him. Even though they had research products that were helpful for their teacher, those products couldn’t have been achieved without their teacher’s arrangement and guidance.

After Katrina left, Lucien nodded his head and returned to the Atomic Universe, ready to go to the Chaotic Cosmos.

Chapter 699: Cooperation

Chapter 699: Cooperation

A scorching tornado passed by, igniting everything on its way. Alas, this place was full of fire and magma and there was nothing that hadn't been ignited at all.

Because the air changes caused by the different temperatures in different locations, the sunlight that came from nobody knew where diffused in different degrees, resulting in the illusion-like haziness in the midair.

The Primeval Firelord stayed at the center of the Seething Ocean and paced back and forth anxiously, grasped by the lust of destruction, slaughter and burning. He badly wanted an enemy to appear so that his lust could be satisfied.

The fire masters, senior fire spirits and giant flame elements had been left far away from him, fearing that they might get accidentally killed!

If it were any other moment, the Primeval Firelord, who was as impetuous as fire, would have summoned his legion of demons and launched a new round of attack towards his nemesis, the Lady of Snow, in order to soothe his fury.

The Lady of Snow was the liege of the Aurora Plateau, the 328th level of the abyss, and another level-three 'Demon Lord'. Because of their conflict between the powers that they were good at, she was a sworn nemesis to the Primeval Firelord. The two of them had often waged war upon one another, hoping to eliminate the enemy. In the abyss, except for the hidden 'Chaotic Cosmos' and the few special planes, the other levels were connected to each other without any hindrance. It was unnecessary to pass the planes in between.

"If Gonheim hadn't asked me to stay here to stop the goddamn sorcerer, I would have destroyed that cold, heatless monster!" The Primeval Firelord held a longsword made of fire in his hands. Every time he waved it, a terrifying tsunami of lava and fire would be

raised.

He felt that he was running out of his patience, even though he had no patience at all to begin with. Therefore, he looked at the fire masters who were hiding far away. “Why are you so far away?”

“Because we fear you and respect you!” The thirteen fire masters, all having a bad feeling, replied at the same time.

The Primeval Firelord was satisfied with their answer, but he burst into a rampage again. “You gave an answer from so far away because you are scared of me, loathe me and want to betray me!”

The fire masters were so terrified that the flames on them were flickering. It was truly a tragedy for them to come upon an unreasonable and temperamental lord, but of course, such lords were most common in the abyss. The Demon Lords such as Demogorgon of Darkness and the Lord of Death (Lord of Spectres) who did not randomly kill their subordinates were extremely rare.

Suddenly, a frigid wind passed, and the fire elements in the sky were frozen into red ice and fell into the magma.

The surface of the boiling, bubbling Seething Ocean seemed to have been consolidated into a delicate picture. Even the half broken bubbles were so fascinating.

The most terrible blizzard rose at the entrance of the abyss. A freezing tornado swept out, and strange snow mixed with ice fell nonstop. From the overwhelming blizzard, a female face could be vaguely seen. Her facial organs were deep and delicate but did not carry any air of life, like a statue that was completed by a human artist, beautiful but dead.

“Hooooooo! You’ve come to get killed!” The firelord was both infuriated and excited about the visitor. After he finally curbed his urge to attack her, she was bold enough to attack the Seething Ocean! In such a way, he would have a place to vent his fury!

The expert who raised the blizzard was exactly the Lady of Snow, master of the Aurora Plateau!

The Primeval Firelord raised his enormous fiery longsword. His nose fumed, and his sparkling wings suddenly flapped.

Boom!

The whole ocean of magma was completely boiled, as if too many volcanoes at the bottom of the ocean erupted. Tides arose, and pillars of fire sprang to the sky, improving the temperature and thawing the snow. The blizzard had been contaminated by the color of fire.

Such a change was enough to vaporize any sorcerer and knight below legendary.

While the pillars of fire 'welcomed' the guest, the Primeval Firelord approached the Lady of Snow and slashed his sword.

With the temperature that could burn everything and an unimaginable force, the enormous longsword broke the mist caused by low temperature as well as the spreading snowflakes and ice.

At this moment, the female voice opened her mouth and let out chaotic spells of demons. An azure ray was shot out and hit the fiery longsword precisely.

The flame on the longsword immediately became blue, before it died down.

The blizzard spread out again. The demons from the Aurora Plateau such as ice masters, frost giants and snow elves (who were not exactly elves) were engaged in battle with the local demons.

Inside the Frozen Fortress, Gonheim, who had been watching over the Seething Ocean, tapped his throne with his right index finger. "I thought that the battle would be avoided if I restrained the firelord, so that he would not be distracted from stalling Lucien Evans. I didn't know that the Lady of Snow would launch an active attack... Who instigated her?"

For many years in the past, the battle between snow and fire had mostly been raised by the Primeval Firelord. Because of the influence of their power on their personality, the Lady of Snow had

seldom attacked promptly. Therefore, the Demogorgon of Darkness did not foresee this. Even if he had, there would've been nothing he could do, because the Lady of Snow was also an enemy to him who was in the 'Frozen Fortress'. She would not listen to him.

Although Gonheim had become a top legend after turning into the Prince of Demons, he did not have overwhelming advantages when faced against the level-three legendary Demon Lords. Only half of them were willing to listen to him, and they would betray him at any moment. For those Demon Lords, they were capable of protecting themselves with their abilities that were close to top legendary.

"Was it Lucien Evans? He delayed his trip because he was making preparations?" Gonheim smelled a scheme. He made up his mind to reign all the Demon Lords with wisdom and strength as soon as possible. Only by doing so would he be able to pry into the secrets of demigods.

The Seething Ocean was now frozen and now on fire. In the intense battle, the Lady of Snow was gradually overpowered by the Primeval Firelord. After all, this was his home field!

At this moment, the heavy snowstorm spread out into a quiet, cold wind that blew at the Primeval Firelord.

The cold wind contained an imaginable air of death in its fridity. The fire on its way all died out. Even the Primeval Firelord, a natural-born fire spirit, couldn't help but tremble hard, as if the cold wind was blown from the deepest part of his soul!

So, his movement was slowed down, and the Seething Ocean was caught in an everlasting silence!

"It's not Lucien Evans but the Ice Duke! This is the power of the Silent Hell!" The Demogorgon of Darkness' finger stopped moving. He squinted. "What can he get by meddling in this?"

The eternal silence and coldness puzzled him, he never anticipated that the Ice Duke would participate. Although that demon was only level-two legendary, the Lady of Snow was able to improve the

essence of her power after melting the power of the Silent Hell. She was now extremely terrifying.

The Primeval Firelord roared. The blue-and-white fire around turned orange, like the lamps in the cities of humans, warm but not scorching!

Such warm fire drove away the cold and silence as well as the sense of death quickly!

Suddenly, inside the blizzard that the Lady of Snow turned into, countless snow elves opened their mouths and sang, breaking the silence and covering the area with sound!

“Not good! It’s not the Ice Duke but still Lucien Evans!” The Demogorgon of Darkness stood up. If he hadn’t been suspicious at the beginning, he wouldn’t have noticed the anomaly at all.

The low voice was obviously made by Lucien Evans!

A translucent pillar of light was shot out of the blizzard. It was in a very subtle state and seemed able to turn everything on its way into a similar energy form.

The Primeval Firelord had just driven away the deadly coldness with a warm fire. He did not have any time to turn it into a high temperature again when he was hit by the pillar of light.

“The spell that Lucien Evans chanted was...” Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, identified the spell that Lucien just used carefully.

Suddenly, his pupils constricted violently.

“Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness?”

Chapter 700: The Real Goal?

The orange flame which covered the primeval firelord instantly lost color after the transparent pillar of light hit it and had turned into the darkest black, which seemed to be able to suck in all warmth and light.

The pillar of light dismissed into countless streams of rays and silver electric currents. They were everywhere. They were also so close to each other that they flowed unpredictably together and formed a creepy net, trapping the lord of fire within.

In such a dreamlike big net, everything had been frozen and been put into an incredible static state. It seemed that even the microscopic particles were no exception.

Once it started touching the surface flame surrounding the primeval firelord, the strange power had instantly snuck into its body by going underneath its demon scales.

The firelord had been put into a sheer static state as if someone had cast Advanced Time Stop. Suddenly, its body became transparent and its demon core was revealed – a cluster of fire that seemingly could burn forever.

The cluster of fire tried to resist the strange power. However, within a second, it had been totally frozen.

Meanwhile, the ocean of lava had lost its temperature although the fire was still raging. And a second later, the ocean had also been frozen and now looked mysteriously black.

Everything happened so fast that even Gonheim, “the Demogorgon of Darkness”, who had been watching the battlefield, was not able to help the firelord. It was already too late to do anything when Gonheim saw the pillar of ice hit the firelord. At that time, this level-three legendary demon lord had already fallen. The legendary spell that Lucien cast called Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness was totally strange to it. But the power of the spell even deeply thrilled him, although he was far away in Frozen Fortress!

The coldness had reached the limit of the world. Even Gonheim itself was in awe of the super low temperature! Having the power of frost and darkness and the gift from the abyss, it wasn't until Gonheim became a top legendary that it finally approached the temperature limit.

Therefore, when it saw how the spell hit the primeval firelord and just removed the flames defense, Gonheim had given up any plans on saving the firelord.

The temperature which was above the absolute zero only by less than one degree could not exist any longer, as the whole world resisted it. In the Seething Ocean, everything started melting and soon the ice had all disappeared.

The firelord's transparent body was still in the middle of the air, and its feet were on the flame ocean which just recovered. At this time, the scorching wind from the Seething Ocean blew the firelord's body into fine particles and made them forever disappear in the world.

The primeval firelord's life had finally come to its end, after so many years beyond counting!

BOOM!

In the middle of the Seething Ocean, a lava pillar gushed out and rose right into the air. The flame instantly boiled the entire demiplane!

Then the horrible lava pillar formed a new throne of flame in the air. All the senior fire spirits who were fighting against the senior ice spirits, snow elves, and frost giants looked back with their red eyes. The throne to them was the summoning from the abyss and the desire for killing. Whichever could defeat all the rivals at this time would become the new firelord and win the throne! The new firelord would also gain the entire power of the demiplane and be awarded by the Will of Abyss, although it would have to start from level-one legendary again.

In the storm, there were two figures. One was wearing a black

double-breasted suit and a top hat with a silver pocket watch in his right hand, as if he was checking if it was too late for a party; the other had long, purple hair, and the silver armor she was wearing was shining in the cold gloss. In her right hand, there was an ordinary-looking sword, and in her left hand, there was a small black shield.

It was Lucien Evans and Natasha Violet!

In Frozen Fortress, sitting on the darkness throne, Gonheim's eyes slightly squinted. And then it fiercely reached out its right hand as if it was trying to grab something in the front!

The air split because of this fierce grasp, and the Seething Ocean of flame appeared right in the front!

Although the firelord's falling was totally unexpected, Gonheim's plan would still carry on. At the very beginning, Gonheim never expected that the primeval firelord could stop Lucien Evans who was fully prepared. As there were only two paths after entering Chaotic Cosmos, Lucien must have been prepared for this, or he would have been a big idiot!

In Demogorgon of Darkness's heart, the firelord's falling was just an excuse. It needed an excuse to get involved to keep Lucien Evans busy for a while, and helping its subordinate was for sure one of the best, so its plan which required strict time order could be carried out successfully.

It was totally logical that the primeval firelord would stop any creatures from passing through the Seething Ocean because of its short temper, and as the firelord's lord, Gonheim should be here to help. In this case, Lucien would take the difficulties for granted and would not be able to realize that these were all for preventing him from getting the Time Plate.

When Gonheim reached out its right hand, in the outer hall of Frozen Fortress, its good-looking face appeared on the crystal ice wall. Its two small demon horns were able to suck in all the light.

"I've given it some thought. Your offer isn't great, but it's better

than nothing. The Time Plate isn't of much help to me." Gonheim said to the figure in the light.

Clement had come here this time in person. Although he made some preparations, in the hall of Frozen Fortress, when he was surrounded by the ice walls from all directions, he still felt very unsafe, and thus he kept hoping that he could leave this place as soon as possible. However, it took the Demogorgon of Darkness a total of ten minutes to reply!

Hearing the answer, Clement released a sigh of relief, "Your Excellency Demogorgon of Darkness, your decision is brilliant."

If he had not been told that the new Demogorgon of Darkness was open to negotiation and trading, Clement would have never come to Desperate World. After all, this was home to this top legendary, and he might be killed at any time. It was known that the previous prince of demons was a bigger fan of killing and destroying than negotiation.

He had also prepared another plan if Gonheim did not agree. Then he would need to go through the Seething Ocean.

With the help of Gonheim, Clement jumped into Chaotic Cosmos.

.....

The five hundred and fifty-fourth level of the abyss, the Seething Ocean.

The red sky split. A long and thin right hand with dark nails reached out, and boundless darkness followed.

The darkness was totally different from what Lucien had experienced before, even including the darkness from the previous prince of demons. This time the darkness was from the deepest place in the universe. It was the ultimate, sheer darkness. It was the ultimate coldness.

In some legends, when the entire world including the sky had come to its end, it was no volcanic eruption nor earth cracking nor flooding, but the land gradually losing its light and temperature and

falling into the eternal darkness and coldness.

Later those who fancied the legends found their so-called theoretical support from the Congress of Magic's thermodynamics study – heat death. Some orthodox arcanists were once concerned about this but then they found that the increase of entropy was obviously more troublesome, which seemingly indicated that the universe would finally reach its end.

In the darkness and coldness, the heavy storm was infuriated. It suddenly condensed into a small ball like the purest heart of ice and snow.

And then the small heart rushed at the boundless darkness with great momentum as if it was trying to freeze the darkness!

Gonheim sneered. No one could rival his control over super low temperature. It was not surprised by Ice and Snow Lady's attack, who had been wanting its Frozen Fortress and the demon core for a very long time!

In the dark dialect, Gonheim cast the spell. In the deepest darkness, flashes of light lit up, and then the super low temperature beyond imagination was summoned. It seemed that the temperature could freeze anything from macro to micro.

This was a facility spell of Demogorgon of Darkness, and its power could only be fully used after the demogorgon reached top legendary. It was called Doomsday Cold.

At this time, Natasha fiercely slashed at the cold darkness with her Sword of Truth. And the silver sword light had arrived before the darkness could spread out further.

The light cut in the darkness, but soon it was frozen in it like a beautiful silver fish.

“Storm Barrier!” Lucien cast. His eye which was covered by the monocle reflected the storm and lightning.

Snow Goddess's Forgiveness would not work very well on Demogorgon of Darkness which also had the same power, while the

range of Eternal Blaze's power was hard to control. Therefore, Lucien chose this legendary spell which could also create extreme high temperature.

BOOM!

The deafening thunder roared in the darkness and the lightning lit up the space. The formidable high temperature rose fiercely within the core of the extreme cold and absorbed the cold and darkness.

Gonheim sneered again, as any spells lower than top legendary level could not do much harm to him. Gonheim spoke the dark dialect again and the extreme cold had resumed its advantage.

At this time, the ice crystal suddenly exploded and the Ice and Snow Lady turned herself into the heavy storm again, which filled in the entire darkness. With all the power, the storm launched an onslaught against Demogorgon of Darkness!

Gonheim was a bit surprised by such a fierce attack. It seemed that Ice and Snow Lady was now exerting all the power because there were people helping. Suddenly, Gonheim felt that the darkness embracing Frozen Fortress started turning pale, and from the pale cloud appeared a monster in a black cloak. Any creatures which saw it would die, as it was death itself!

The monster, dragging the huge sickle, slashed at the Frozen Fortress. It was Apsis, "the Lord of Death", "the Lord of Spectres". It had been waiting for this chance to kill Demogorgon of Darkness and get the throne of prince of demons!

Gonheim had expected this. When feeling the extreme cold cast by Ice and Snow Lady, it had realized that the power of this extreme cold was not the real power from Silent Hell. Instead, someone had lent her the power of death and she had taken in the power into her own power of aurora. So the external silence and cold could be faked!

Therefore, Gonheim was well prepared for the arrival of Apsis, "the Lord of Death"!

At this time, however, at the edge of the Seething Ocean and the dark sky, a storm carrying flashes of lightning arrived. Within the storm, both extreme heat and severe cold existed!

Then countless light spots of elements appeared along with a song of praise, as if they were welcoming their own paradise. A gorgeous lady landed within the embrace of the light spots, but the look on her face was cold. She lifted her right hand and pointed, “Luxury Cracking!”

On the other side, the Seething Ocean was suddenly turned into an ordinary sea, and the surroundings had all been turned into real nature. Meanwhile, in the darkness, stars lit up and the almighty power fell onto the sea.

Gonheim was now totally shocked. It was Douglas, Hathaway, and Fernando!

Gonheim saw that Lucien, who was standing in front of him, bowed slightly at it as if he was bidding a farewell.

“Vengeful Gaze!” cast Lucien.

Gonheim’s mind went blank for a second and then it realized –

Lucien Evans’s aim was never Time Plate, but itself!

Chapter 701: Lucien's Plan

In the Seething Ocean.

Gonheim's mind had instantly made it take actions. The darkness contracted and an invisible net of dark and ice started forming on the outside to protect itself.

During the process, the Ice and Snow Lady was fighting against the darkness at full attack to prevent it from retreating back into the darkness.

The falling snowflakes had frozen the boiling lava and everything they had touched. The Ice and Snow Lady had used the power from its demon core, as this was a perfect chance for her to kill her biggest enemy and ascend to the throne of prince of demons! Now she had totally been controlled by the desire of devouring and killing!

Such great effort from the Ice and Snow Lady prevented Gonheim's power from contracting further, while the voice of casting the top legendary spells was already sounding in the air above the Seething Ocean.

Gonheim was furious, but it still managed to make the correct choice. The real Gonheim in Frozen Fortress suddenly looked half-transparent as most of its power had been infused into its projection which was facing the great danger in the Seething Ocean. Gonheim did so because both the legendary sorcerers and Natasha were able to kill his real self in the fortress by tracing the projection back!

In the sky, the right hand with dark nails suddenly turned totally black. The black was like from the deepest, horrifying night. The super low temperature it brought to the battlefield even had instantly frozen Ice and Snow Lady in the air and turned her into a crystal statue!

Gonheim could have severely hurt the Ice and Snow Lady at this time, but it had to defend itself! Gonheim had to make its choice!

The entire freezing world started cracking because of the spell, and meanwhile, the universe could keep growing back.

Luxury Cracking managed to penetrate the dark and ice net by several layers, but not all of them. Gonheim remained safe under the net, together with its many legendary extraordinary items!

It was one of the rare occasions that Luxury Cracking failed to sweep over the entire battlefield. In the abyss, Gonheim had very strong resistance to magic and it could even be partially immune to Luxury Cracking!

The roaring storm drew the black right hand in and then bolts of lightning lit up within. Stars rose up into the air and they had turned the sky above the Seething Ocean into a magnificent starry sky!

The dazzling stars then shot at the right hand of Demogorgon of Darkness with great momentum, and they hit the black right hand almost at the same time!

Boom!

The storm exploded. Flame and sparks were everywhere. It looked like the black huge hand was “bleeding”, but it wasn’t blood coming out. Instead, it was the intimidating black drops of liquid which were of extremely low temperature. Anything that the black drops touched could be turned into solid ice.

Under the joint attack launched by the three top legends, and with the distraction by the other two demon lords, the layers of defense of Demogorgon of Darkness had finally been broken. Gonheim was injured!

If it had not managed to pull back most of the power from its true self, the demogorgon would have been much more severely injured, or even have fallen!

In the pale sky above Frozen Fortress, the Lord of Spectres wielded its Sickle of Death. The power in the sickle could wither everything in space. And with this endless power of death, the sickle hacked all

the way into the fortress!

It did not take an illusionary form, so now Apsis, which was a few hundred meters tall, was even bigger than the fortress! Frozen Fortress appeared like a small miniature in comparison to the huge Sickle of Death which was even bigger than Apsis!

This one single hack filled with desperation, agony, struggling and cursing had directly gone through the outside defense of the fortress. Because Gonheim had just taken the power away, this one single layer of defense was now all the fortress was left!

The huge left hand with dark nails had to reach out from the fortress to block the blade!

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

When the sickle cut the left hand, the bitter and furious crying burst out from within the fortress. There was now a deep cut in the palm, and the dark blue blood gushed out. Wherever the blue blood was, everything was covered by a layer of ice.

Losing most of its power, although Frozen Fortress was its home, Demogorgon of Darkness was still extremely weak. It was already a very bitter fight for it to keep the Lord of Death out.

Apsis had no facial expression. However, a cluster of white flames appeared in each of its eye sockets. Its demon nature had been triggered, and thus the following rounds of attack were getting more and more violent.

Lucien's left eye was as pure and red as a ruby. A ray shot out from his left eye and hit Gonheim's right hand which just reached out from the darkness at unrivalled speed.

The darkness could not stop or freeze the ray. The red ray went through the darkness directly through the hand!

The crisp penetrating sound was very clear in the space. In Gonheim's right hand, there was a deep hole. The heat of the ray had burned the skin and flesh black!

When Gonheim's defense had been completely removed, Lucien's Vengeful Gaze plus Hand of Uncertainties worked very well!

This wasn't the end. The paralysis in the right hand did not slow it down from blocking Natasha's hacking. The tiny fine electric currents together with the extremely cold ice prevented the blade of Sword of Truth from cutting deeper!

Then another round of attacks had been launched by the Ice and Snow Lady and the Lord of Spectres on both sides.

In this situation, even Gonheim started feeling a bit disadvantaged.

Gonheim knew that it should not let the situation get any worse. Even at some cost, it had to return to Frozen Fortress. As the most cunning demon ever, Gonheim had made its decision. The joint effort of Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, Natasha Violet, Lucien Evans, and Ice and Snow Lady could rival a demigod in its away battlefield!

However, at this time, to its great shock, Gonheim saw the starry sky disappearing, the lightning storm dying, and the gorgeous figure fading away.

Were those all fake?

No... That was the power from top legendary...

Were those summoned demiplanes? But why did the summoning take such a short time?

There were so many thoughts flashing through Gonheim's mind. But it knew one thing for certain – It had been fooled by Lucien Evans!

This one-second distraction had a cost. Apsis had cut in the left palm further and the right hand had been trapped by Ice and Snow Lady.

Gonheim saw Lucien and Natasha smiling at itself, as they gradually looked more and more transparent. Lucien took off his top hat and put it on his chest to show his appreciation, while Natasha had a big smile on her face and saluted in the manner of knight.

The two figures then disappeared. When they appeared again, they had directly entered Chaotic Cosmos!

“Damn it!” Gonheim’s was outraged by Lucien’s slyness, but was prevented from chasing them by Ice and Snow Lady and the Lord of Death. It would not be able to get rid of them within thirty seconds, but thirty seconds were already enough for the two legends to find the core of one of the demiplanes!

Also, its entire plan would be in danger when Lucien was free in Chaotic Cosmos!

The presence of Demogorgon of Darkness was the reason why Lucien had prepared so long before entering Chaotic Cosmos.

Although the presence of Chaotic Cosmos was a big secret to sorcerers and saint cardinals, a few demon lords in the abyss knew it, not to mention the second leader of the abyss, the prince of demons.

The previous prince of demons was too obsessed with slaughtering to pay much attention to some legendary material like Time Plate, therefore, Lucien believed that the plate would always be there when it was under the control of the previous prince. However, the new demon prince was Gonheim, “Demogorgon of Darkness”, the most demonized demon ever. Even if it did not need the plate, Lucien believed that it would take the plate away for trading and exchange of interests. Gonheim would not leave such a good thing idle.

Therefore, after making sure that the plate was still in Chaotic Cosmos using astrology, Lucien assumed that Demogorgon of Darkness had come up with such a plan. Then Lucien contacted his “allies” and prepared the summoning rites for legendary demiplanes, which was the research result from his student, Heidi.

While most sorcerers could only use a small part of the summoned demiplane’s power, since Lucien had told Douglas, Fernando, and Hathaway his plan, all of them had agreed to lend him the top legendary power through the summoning rites.

Of course, the summoned demiplanes could only afford launching one single round of attacks. After that, they would all disappear. But that was all Lucien asked for – to hold Gonheim back so that he and Natasha could have enough time to get Time Plate and then leave.

Lucien did not mind using the borrowed power to kill Gonheim, however, the last thing he wanted to do was to piss off the Will of Abyss. In the abyss, if he had asked the three legends to come here and kill the prince, the Will of Abyss would probably have arrived!

Also, if Lucien had wanted to have the three legends here in person, he would have to use other methods instead of the summoning rite, and then very likely Gonheim, the extremely cunning top legend, would have noticed it!

Therefore, after weighing the situation, Lucien had made this decision, although he personally did prefer to kill the prince to save future troubles.

As for if the Lord of Spectres and Ice and Snow Lady could achieve their targets, Lucien did not care. He had helped them kill the firelord and severely hurt Demogorgon of Darkness, so he had kept his promise.

Chapter 702: An Unavoidable Confrontation

Chapter 702: An Unavoidable Confrontation

In the boundless night sky, the stars were shining dazzlingly. However, their orbits were totally contradictory to the arcana theories. As if some unknown power was pulling them away and thus they had been placed in sheer chaos. Some stars would suddenly deviate and then desperately ran into another. Explosions with enormous power would happen, and the energy storms that were caused would be able to kill anything under legendary level.

Therefore, Chaotic Cosmos was deserted and lonely. No demon could survive here. This was the very reason why this place could produce the Time Plate but not a single demon lord. The Will of Abyss was an exception, as it was born as the ultimate will. The rest of the demons had to kill and devour each other from the bottom to finally ascend to the higher levels.

As soon as they stepped into Chaotic Cosmos, another dark universe appeared behind Lucien's back. It was the same boundless and mysterious universe, but the only difference was that the stars in Lucien's universe were colorful and they represented different elements. That was Lucien's legendary demiplane – Atomic Universe!

The Atomic Universe quickly spread out and overlapped with Chaotic Cosmos. And then every single element planet started shaking as if they were those microscopic particles.

The shaking made the entire atomic universe thrilled, which also rippled Chaotic Cosmos. This was a normal phenomenon when two demiplanes overlapped.

Lucien was the center of the ripples, and the ripples spread out very fast all the way to the farthest end of the starry sky.

Natasha watched Lucien doing all these things and she looked at

this chaotic starry sky with great interest. She knew that the small planets did not have their own light but were just reflecting light, as they were not fixed stars, just like those stars in Lucien's Atomic Universe.

She had learned basic astrology under the guidance of Lucien, and her use of words was from the terms used on the earth. She often practiced in the Atomic Universe, and thus her analysis was basically correct.

The abyss was similar to a demiplane, and therefore the starry sky here was not a "real" one. By contrast, a starry sky in an alternate dimension was different, which better resembled the night sky of the main material world. Stars in the sky in an alternate dimension also followed the basic laws in cosmology.

Lucien got the feedback he wanted from the fierce shaking. He opened his eyes, where there was still shining starlight, and looked to his left, "Time Plate is over there. The coordinate is..."

The core of this place shook in a different scope, and this was how Lucien figured out the coordinates of the plate. It was risky to do so because his demiplane could possibly be contaminated by the air of the abyss. Although Lucien could always clean it up, it was still a problem.

"Wow... It was less than five seconds..." Natasha was very impressed, her purple eyes shining in admiration. In front of Lucien, she never hid her feelings.

Besides the Will of Abyss and the prince of demons, only a legendary sorcerer could do so. Other legends would take much longer.

Lucien's demiplane slightly disappeared to avoid the contamination from the abyss. Before that, Lucien grabbed Natasha's arm and did a space jump using the demiplane as a transfer station.

Chaotic Cosmos was only one of the levels in the abyss. It only took them a couple of seconds to come to this creepy space.

It looked similar to Chaotic Cosmos, but with closer observation Lucien had noticed the hiding black swirls in the space. The entire place was like a dangerous ocean filled with unpredictable fatal whirlpools.

Lucien was not afraid of any oceans, but this place was different.

The swirls were naturally from the power of the plate, which had changed the time and space in this place, preventing Natasha and Lucien from reaching the plate easily.

However, this had also confirmed that Lucien was correct. Time Plate was right here!

“Careful.” Lucien reminded.

He started casting defense spells on both of them and then summoned his Space Staff.

Natasha also lifted the Shield of Truth in her left hand. Although their movement would lower the defense of the shield, its power was still enough for them to pass through this space.

With great caution, they walked into the space. Guided by Mirror of Fate, Lucien led Natasha and they marched forward at fast speed.

Although this space looked boundless, it was just an illusion. After all, the plate was just a piece of material of legendary level, and the power emitted from it could only be of level-two legendary.

Therefore, within ten seconds, Lucien and Natasha had found their target. It looked like a strange small planet made of diamond. The small planet looked very pure and beautiful as it was covered in the dazzling gloss.

The dazzling gloss came from a black plate within its core. The plate had shining light on its surface like ripples. Lucien could see the many mysterious patterns on its surface, which resembled that of Moon Timer. The power it had made him feel in awe of the elapse of time.

This was Time Plate, the legendary material! Lucien came all the

way here just for this!

However, there was a man in his early thirties standing beside the plate. He was tall and had light blond short hair. The features of his face resembled men in the Schachran Empire. Although he looked quite unruly and careless, somehow looking at him would make one feel rather peaceful and calm.

However, his chin slightly stuck out, which gave him a more serious and resolute look.

Clement! Lucien and Natasha recognized him at the same time.

He was the saint from the North Church. His look and the air of his power had all been recorded in the intelligence report of the congress and kingdom!

But neither of them could figure out why Clement was also here.

Meanwhile, when seeing Lucien and Natasha, Clement, the level-three saint cardinal, was even more shocked. In fact, his feeling of nervousness was much stronger.

Earlier he had known that Lucien had not yet obtained the plate, and Clement believed that he was a step ahead. Thus he thought that things would get much easier. With the help of the prince of demons, Clement thought that he could take away the plate before Lucien got here. After all, passing through the Seething Ocean and fighting with the firelord would cost Lucien Evans lots of time.

He even thought that Lucien was still preparing himself in Allyn!

However, things turned out to be that they were now standing face to face. Clement never prepared to have a do-or-die fight against Lucien. So he had a moment of panic.

He was hesitant. The plate was just by his side, but Lucien and Natasha had come within the range of attack. He wondered if he should grab the plate first or cast on himself several layers of defense power.

But soon he had made his decision. It took him so much planning

and preparation to come all the way here, and for sure he would not give the plate up at this moment!

Unfortunately, Lucien never planned on giving him the chance to decide!

Clement heard the clear ticking sound.

There was a fine silver pocket watch in Lucien's right hand. The gem constellations on the surface were symbols of time.

Like the monocle Lucien was wearing, the pocket watch had the same pure light in reflection. Then Lucien pressed the button.

Click.

All the colors that Clement could see had all gone, only grey, white and black were left.

Then Lucien started enchanting, singing the strange spell,

“Luxury Cracking!”

“Snow Goddess's Forgiveness!”

Luxury Cracking was a very difficult legendary spell, and Snow Goddess's Forgiveness was a top legendary ice and snow spell, so the casting time required was quite long. Within the given time, Lucien also added Hand of Uncertainties and Magic Delay.

Then the colors resumed.

Lucien was certain that such a combination could for sure kill a level-three legendary, as long as he or she was not immune to the spells!

The shocked look was still on Clement's face, and light burst out from within his body. The extreme cold, crystal clear pillar of light waited a little bit for Luxury Cracking to come into force first!

That was the end!

That was just too many unbelievable spells that Lucien Evans knew!

When Clement was in total desperation, holy light covered him and pulled it to the left by a few hundred meters, which made him barely miss the spell of Snow Goddess's Forgiveness.

With his own eyes, he saw the power of the spell turned a small planet into ice dust within half a second!

At this time, the wonderful sound of singing arrived. Small light spots danced like little angels in the air, and amid them, a blond haired figure emerged.

The eighteen pairs of holy wings gradually extended out, and the divine air he had had driven away the filthy air of the abyss.

“The Angel King!”

“Mecantron...!”

Natasha and Lucien blurted out.

Chapter 703: Mecantron's Arrogance

Although the Angel King had just landed, he lifted his right hand as if he was already well-prepared.

The eighteen pairs of angel wings bloomed in the holy glory and the illusionary image of the magnificent Mountain Paradise was behind his wings. As he lifted his hand, all the divine spirits and angels were singing and praising because of the upcoming sentence of justice.

Unlike the light of judgment cast by other saint cardinals and seraphims, or the light of judgment cast using the divine book, there was a small scale in front of Mecantron's chest. The left side of the scale was white and the right side black. It measured whether the person being sentenced should be sent to Mountain Paradise, to hell, or just be permanently destroyed.

The scale of sentence had also brought great order to the chaotic cosmos, turning the entire space into a "real" one!

The Scale of Justice was Mecantron's other legendary divine spell apart from God's Guard. The divine scale in the Holy Heilz Empire was a replica of it. The royal family of Holy Heilz Empire was very close to the Saint Truth, and the family members all had the blood power of seraphim.

The small scale weighed something invisible and made a deep, hollow sound. The scale had made the judgement: Natasha and Lucien were sinful!

Then the light of judgment directly shot out from the projection of the paradise!

The darkness had been driven away. Anything that was incompatible with this holy light had been driven away. This was the ultimate sentence of life and death!

Lucien was on full alert.

“Abrupt Magic Reverse!” He instantly cast.

A mirror drawn with countless complex and sophisticated patterns formed between them and the Angel King. It seemed that the mirror was connected to a different world!

The light of judgment hit the mirror and left a deep crack, and then it was reflected back.

This one single strike had almost completely defeated Lucien’s mirror. That was the difference between a level-three legendary and a top legendary!

But that was already to Lucien’s surprise. He expected that the Angel King’s power was in the top ranks even among the top legendaries, so he was quite encouraged to see that his mirror could not only take this one strike but also reflect the power back!

Lucien wondered why this happened. Maybe it was because the power of the abyss had influenced him, or the landing was in a hurry so that he could not take all the power with him.

However, at this time, Clement had seized the chance and cracked the small diamond-like planet into pieces using Saint Cross. Now the Time Plate had been completely revealed in front of them!

The Angel King was here. Clement was going to take the plate away!

Suddenly, a streak of silver-grey sword light had reached in front of him through the time and space swirls. The formidable power of destruction had prevented him from grabbing the plate as Clement had subconsciously used Blessed Realm. It was no joke to be hacked at by the Sword of Truth!

There were ferocious blades hiding in the sword light, and they silently cracked the realm. Clement had no choice but to blink away from the plate and almost got devoured by a swirl.

The sword light was from Natasha. Lucien had sent the mirror closer to the Angel King and blocked the second light pillar. Meanwhile, his left eye shot a scorching red ray, which forced

Mecantron to fold his bright wings, and thus Natasha's sword light could reach Clement without any barriers.

However, now the mirror had completely cracked.

Although the spell was very powerful, and within the same level, the mirror could reflect a spell five times, it also had some disadvantages. One of them was that the cool-down time for casting was too long. Although Lucien was wearing the robe of Grand Arcanists, he would not be able to cast the spell a second time within a couple of rounds.

Clement was encouraged, knowing that Lucien had fallen into a disadvantageous position. He would have enough time to take away the plate.

Natasha knew what he was thinking. She had instantly blinked to Clement.

Clement was a level three legendary. He believed that Natasha would not be his true rival by simply relying on two level three legendary items.

“Light of Judgment!”

Although the divine spells he knew were diverse, they were never as mysterious and unpredictable as magic spells. Therefore, using Light of Judgment was in most cases the best option for saint cardinals as it suited most occasions.

A light pillar shot at Natasha from the projection of Mountain Paradise.

Natasha stayed where she was and lifted the Shield of Truth. The ripples in the air covered her and put her into a separate dimension for protection.

After hitting the shield, the light of judgment burst out dazzling glory. However, it could not go through the shield.

Only some fine cracks appeared on the very surface of the black shield.

Seizing the chance, Natasha slashed at Clement with the long sword in her hand. The blade of the sword was covered in cold light.

Clement was torn into pieces by the sword light, but his face showed no pain or suffering at all.

It was just a fake replica of him! The real Clement had blinked to the plate to take away the plate using his divine power.

Clement knew that to use the most of the power of the shield, Natasha had to stay where she was. He was not such a fool to slowly consume the power of the shield.

Seeing that, Natasha frowned. Then without any hesitation, she jumped out of the protection at Clement to stop him.

That was exactly what Clement had expected. He cast Light of Judgment again, forcing Natasha to stop and defend herself with the shield.

In this way, Clement had come close enough to the plate. If it had been something ordinary, Clement would have been able to take it away from a great distance. However, since Time Plate was of legendary level and it had the power to resist to some degree, Clement had to get close enough to it.

Seeing that the plate was almost there, Clement was quite complacent about it. Relying on legendary items did not always work, obviously.

Natasha was very pissed and frustrated. But this had also triggered her fighting spirit. Her cold purple eyes were now filled with determination.

Natasha was frustrated at the situation and at the fact that she did not have enough power to fully use the power of the shield. If she had reached level-three legendary, she would have been able to extend the protection range much wider so that Lucien would have been able to get the plate.

Was she going to see Clement taking away the plate right in front of her? Natasha would not let that happen!

She started reflecting on how she had been fighting.

Her blood power was the Sword of Truth, and her knight faith was to charge, charge, and charge. She believed in defeating her enemies head-on, which contradicted the strategy of using the Shield of Truth.

Natasha asked herself why she would use something that she was not good at to fight? Was it because that was safer? Or because she was a coward?

The Sword of Truth was also a level-three legendary item!

If the Shield of Truth was pulling her back, then she'd better just leave it!

Natasha realized that owning the two legendary items was in fact a burden to her. She had been trying to combine them together, but now she had decided to drop one.

To get one must first be willing to give! That was what Lucien once said.

The best defense was a good offense!

The best shield was the good sword!

Her purple eyes were now filled with fighting spirit!

When Clement was feeling excited that he was finally getting the plate, he suddenly felt the formidable pressure.

He felt the sword light that was powerful enough to cut one's soul into pieces!

Clement never planned to die for the Angel King, so, of course, he would protect himself first. Using the legendary divine spell, he blinked to the other side.

He felt the cold sword light, but that was it. There was nothing else.

Clement sneered, for Natasha had put aside her shield.

“Light of Judgment!”

The sword light went head-on against the divine light and they crashed.

The light of judgment was shattered into fine pieces and then Natasha’s figure flew out from it. Her face looked a bit pale.

Without hesitation, she launched an array of attacks with her Sword of Truth!

Clement was thus forced to keep running from the blade with no time to fight back.

“Are you crazy? It can’t last long! I’ll just wait a bit more before I kill you!” Clement yelled.

The silver sword light kept flashing around and that had become the only thing that Clement could see in the cosmos.

On the other side, Lucien was now slightly advantageous facing Mecantron. However, it seemed that Mecantron was not interested in a protracted war, who had directly cast Blessed Realm.

The projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise had become very clear, together with the figures of the six seraphim. Holy pillars of light hung down to him and provided him the wide protection of which the range was close to a hundred kilometers.

In the beautiful hymn, the milky light had lit up the entire cosmos and turned it into a “paradise”. Lucien was thus prevented from getting close to the plate, while Mecantron had almost come close enough to get it.

Small light spots had gathered around the plate like little angels and lifted it. Together they were bringing it to Mecantron.

Time Plate’s power thus contracted and the swirls in space were rapidly disappearing.

Mecantron believed that he was more powerful than Lucien. So he had given up the chance for defense to take away the plate. This

meant that he had been ready to take Lucien's attack head-on.

Lucien was a bit confused. He wondered if Mecantron had ever watched his fight and seen his legendary spell, Snow Goddess's Forgiveness. The power of the spell would even severely hurt a top legendary, not to mention that Mecantron was now only using part of his power. Lucien was also wondering why Mecantron needed the plate.

However, Lucien still reached out his right hand. His monocle flashed the cold light,

"Snow Goddess's Forgiveness!"

Chapter 704: Chaotic Serpent

Chapter 704: Chaotic Serpent

“Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness!”

The thin and dense streams of electricity and lasers gathered on Lucien’s right hand unpredictably, enshrouding it in dancing snowflakes and ice, before they were entangled with each other in unique and mysterious ways and eventually triggered a transparent pillar of light that seemed to have been launched out of the deepest part of the dark, cold cosmos!

The power in this ‘Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness’ was so compressed that none of it leaked out, but if one were to perceive it carefully, they would sense the coldness from the bottom of their heart, as if they had witnessed the lifeless end of the universe.

Shock appeared on Mecantron’s face. He had never anticipated that Lucien could perform a legendary spell that was so close to Gonheim’s ‘Doomsday Cold’.

Since he was sustaining ‘Blessed Realm’ and holding ‘Time Plate’ with his extraordinary power, he was hit by Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness without being able to react.

The Chaotic Cosmos was frozen, the holy light of order was frozen, the starry light of angels was frozen, and so were the beautiful hymns.

The ivory color of the Blessed Realm soon faded into blackness which was absorbing all rays and heat. Such a feeling quickly spread out into the Blessed Realm!

The legendary divine power was also frozen lifelessly under the terrifying coldness. An eternal silence where nothing was alive seemed to have been created.

In such a state, the realm was so vulnerable that it could not stop the low temperature caused by electricity and laser from slowing

down the vibration of the microscopic particles nearby, which was the nature of ‘temperature’ in the microscopic scale!

The Angel King had never thought that his Blessed Realm would be fundamentally frozen. Therefore, when the dark coldness surged at him unstoppably, he was more or less panicked. Crossing his arms, he unfolded his thirty-six holy wings that were enshrouded in brilliance.

The seven-floored projection of ‘Mountain Paradise’ was even clearer. The most horrifying waves spread out of the highest floor.

“Whoever prays in your name shall not be harmed.”

In front of the unparalleled coldness, Mecantron forgot the outside world and recited the scripture of the Cannon devoutly.

Ha!

All the angels and holy spirits on Mountain Paradise sang the hymn that was similar to this sound, distantly and sacredly. The infinite light on the seventh floor was even brighter, spraying the purest and most flawless brilliance.

Praying inside the brilliance, Mecantron was quickly blurred. The colors and waves which did not belong to this world spread out, turning the space around into a different universe.

The coldness created by Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness could not affect another world. Any spell had its own range of application. No magic could finish enemies in all scenarios, unless it was purely the infinite amalgamation of violence!

Witnessing that, Clement, who was temporarily suppressed by Natasha’s crazy attacks, was covered in cold sweat. Lucien Evans’ creepy spells were each tougher than the last. If the Angel King hadn’t arrived, he wouldn’t even know how he was killed!

The Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness which hit a passing asteroid did not leave a deep impression on him, because plenty of legendary spells could’ve caused a similar effect. However, the terrible coldness created by Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness against the Angel

King, a top legend, scared him, who began to consider Lucien as dangerous as a top legend.

“Thankfully, I have the Angel King who has God’s Guard!” He sincerely felt lucky.

However, Lucien was given an opportunity. Mecantron who had performed God’s Guard was as immobile as Natasha when she used the Shield of Truth! God’s Guard even forbade the receiver from launching any attack!

It was a genetic deficiency of such ultimate defense. How could they attack the enemy if the enemy was in a different universe? From that point of view, the Shield of Truth was truly not as good as God of Truth in terms of defense.

Therefore, the moment Lucien saw that the Angel King used God’s Guard, he immediately activated Precise Transfer and reached the Time Plate!

Since Mecantron had curbed the power of the Time Plate by holding it previously, the space-time abnormalities were already gone. That’s why Lucien could blink to it instead of reaching it by flight.

“I have to thank Mecantron for paving the path to the Time Plate for me...” Such an idea somehow occurred to Lucien.

Mage’s Hand was condensed and snatched the Time Plate. Mecantron, who was still resisting Snow Goddess’s Forgiveness, however, put on a smile, as if he was hoping that Lucien would take the Time Plate!

The frigidity that did not belong to the normal world was rejected. As the magic power that sustained it was gone, the cold and dark ‘ocean’ soon vanished, and God’s Guard remained unaffected.

At this moment, Lucien’s Mage’s Hand already picked up the Time Plate, when a streak of mysterious darkness protruded inside the Time Plate like the most vicious serpent!

With the unimaginable power of curse, it spread towards Lucien’s

body along Mage's Hand faster than any creature could possibly react. Since Lucien was right next to it, it lunged on his body easily.

Spell Trigger, Magic Order, Elemental Skin and the other innate spells were activated, but none of them could stop the snake of curse. As if it were invisible, it crawled into Lucien's body!

"It worked..." Mecantron canceled God's Guard and prayed. Glowing light was gathered into a holy, intimidating book.

As the book was turned, godly runes flew out and constituted a web that seemed to be from Mountain Paradise, attempting to capture Lucien.

It was Seal of Judgment!

That was the legendary divine power in the Saint Truth which could seal the enemy's power. Once it worked on the enemy, the enemy's strength would halt or even decline. Also, it was a permanent effect and could hardly be expelled.

The curse of the snake previously, on the other hand, was from Gonheim. It was the reward from abyss, named 'Chaotic Serpent', when he became the Prince of Demons, and it had a similar effect to Seal of Judgment.

After the two effects were combined, the Congress of Magic's method to lift the curses would be nullified. Lucien could only find a solution on his own. His strength would halt in the next decades even if he had the help of demigods!

For Mecantron and Gonheim, they were glad to see Lucien Evans' research in the microscopic domain, which would provide theoretical foundations for the way to become demigods. Then, they would be able to make advancements and see the dawn of true gods. They wouldn't agree to kill Lucien Evans at all.

However, Lucien's growth also terrified them. They feared that Lucien would have already become a demigod or a true god before they picked up his theory. After all, the sorcerers sometimes had the feedback of the real world when they created groundbreaking

theories. Would he allow them to become demigods or true gods? Of course not! He would certainly try to eliminate them!

Both eager and scared, they had made such a plan. Seizing the opportunity that Lucien needed space-time materials, they would curse and seal him so that his strength would halt, and it wouldn't hinder his arcana studies at all!

In this plan, the elvish queen was merely a pawn who did not know anything. She merely informed Lucien of the locations of the space-time materials that she knew according to the terms of cooperation. She didn't even know that the Angel King was behind the curtain. Also, in her eyes, nothing was strange about that. Lucien wouldn't necessarily choose the Time Plate after all.

Then, according to Lucien's style and personality that the Demogorgon of Darkness knew, they reached the conclusion that Lucien would come to the Chaotic Cosmos. As to when it would be exactly, they could only learn it after he approached the abyss.

When he approached the abyss, Gonheim would immediately inform the Angel King and asked him to send his subordinates to steal the Time Plate.

That was because there was still a critical problem. With Lucien Evans' cautiousness, he definitely wouldn't pick up the Time Plate without examining it carefully first. In such a case, the power of the Chaotic Snake would be clearly revealed, and they couldn't achieve their purpose at all.

Therefore, they had to create an environment where Lucien had to grab the Time Plate immediately and flee, so that he wouldn't have the time or the opportunity to examine it. For that, they needed a competitor who fought for the Time Plate, as well as the pressure from the Demogorgon of Darkness from the back.

Seeing that nothing happened to Clement when he held the Time Plate, and since the Demogorgon of Darkness was coming 'furiously', Lucien Evans certainly wouldn't check it carefully again if he had a chance to flee with the Time Plate.

Therefore, the plan required a strict order of events, or Lucien Evans' wariness couldn't be erased. Also, they needed to consider the possibility that Lucien Evans stalled the enemy and Natasha Violet went to take it.

As it turned out, Lucien's capabilities were far beyond their expectation, and his preparations were terrifying. Even the firelord and the Demogorgon of Darkness combined didn't stop him for long, and Natasha and he reached the Chaotic Cosmos before Clement confirmed the 'safety' of the Time Plate. Therefore, the Angel King had to expose himself in advance and arrived at the abyss!

Although Clement was too useless to even deal with Natasha, his involvement had completely eased Lucien's wariness after all! Mecantron thought as such while he watched the web of seal made of the divine runes fell upon Lucien's head.

"Despite the twists and turns, we have achieved our purpose successfully after all..."

The moment such an idea occurred to Mecantron, Lucien, who was suffering from 'Chaotic Serpent' and 'Seal of Judgment' suddenly glowed with a green light and was reduced into a bright green puppet that was painted with weird patterns.

It looked at Mecantron with its hollow eyes, and a creepy smile on its face.

"A substitution puppet!"

A substitution puppet created by McLeod, the legendary alchemy master!

"Not good!" Mecantron was immediately shocked after seeing the puppet that was enshrouded in dark air and holy light. The Time Plate, in the meantime, had fallen into the hands of a shadow that was slowly surfacing. He wore a double-breasted suit and had a handsome face where the pupils were deep and dark and the monocle was glimmering. It was exactly Lucien Evans!

“The Chaotic Cosmos is still a cosmos. There’s no need to create a vacuum...” Lucien thought to himself and raised his left hand, aiming at Mecantron who had just cast ‘Seal of Judgment’. Looking at the guy’s shocked face, he chanted the weird and profound voice that sounded from the vibration of particles:

“Positron Cannon!”

Chapter 705: Terrifying Obliteration

Chapter 705: Terrifying Obliteration

“Positron Cannon?”

Mecantron was slightly shocked. Although he had been paying attention to the Congress of Magic’s studies in the microscopic domain, his main focus lay in the domain of astrology and quantum superposition. He only had a basic understanding about antimatter and positrons. Therefore, he had no idea what the magic was about.

More importantly, since the quantum field theory hadn’t been developed and the notion of ‘vacuum fluctuation’ had been proposed, nobody had thought of the collision of positive and negative electrons. Even the vision of the vacuum ocean of negative energy hadn’t been described by any arcanist. Therefore, the arcanists other than Lucien only knew that antimatter could barely exist in the main material world because it would offset the ordinary matter. They were unaware of the terrible obliteration that antimatter might cause. They did not know that the energy release efficiency of the reaction was higher than fusion, or that they could destroy a whole world when a tiny amount was gathered!

Since even the arcanists other than Lucien hadn’t figured out much about positrons, how could Mecantron know it?

In the dangerous moment, he knew that he had been tricked by the substitution puppet, and that he had only one chance to react. Therefore, he opened his arms without any hesitation, and his pure bright wings embraced the ivory holy light from the projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise!

“Blessed Realm!”

If he were to use God’s Guard, he wouldn’t be able to move for a while. Then, having already obtained the Time Plate, Lucien Evans could leave the abyss at ease with Natasha now that the Demogorgon of Darkness still hadn’t got rid of the Lady of Snow and the Lord of Death. That useless guy Clement was still being

suppressed by Natasha and couldn't stop them from leaving at all!

Therefore, he chose to perform 'Blessed Realm' to maintain his attack abilities in order to stall and suppress Lucien until Gonheim defeated the two Demon Lords and joined him. Twenty seconds had already passed, and Gonheim should be able to turn things around soon.

Ivory light descended and stood around Mecantron like the pillars of a temple. The light blossomed, transforming the cosmos around into an ocean of light. Together with the distant, delightful hymns from the projection of Mountain Paradise, Mecantron seemed to be inside the Paradise on Earth.

"Positron Cannon!"

Outside of Lucien's left hand, a dark magnetic field was appearing and twisting under restraint, which resulted in the uncanny waves in the space.

Countless indescribable things were gathered. They were no longer silver electric currents but those which looked like fire. Entangling each other, they turned into a long electric snake enveloped in fire, which darted out like a thick laser light.

If the Angel King hadn't arrived so weirdly, and if his preparations hadn't prevented the Demogorgon of Darkness and the firelord from stalling him for long, he might have not sensed any danger in the hasty situation just now when two top legends were intentionally covering it, and he might have not used a substitution puppet to take it at all.

Therefore, in the vacuum, Lucien used 'Positron Cannon' without any hesitation!

The gigantic pillar of light where illusionary fire was surging out bombarded Mecantron overwhelmingly. Under the restraint of the magnetic field, it did not raise any change in the Chaotic Cosmos, as if it were just a regular blast of fire.

At this moment, Mecantron's 'Blessed Realm' was just constructed.

He was sheltered by the ‘temple’ perfectly!

The angelic wings on his back were closed, and the spots of holy light floated and gathered into a delicate horn before him. He was going to perform the real ‘Light of Paradise’ as the deputy of paradise. Now that his plan didn’t work out, he would still achieve his purpose with his own strength!

The flashing and flowing pillar of electricity, with the glow of fire, hit the Blessed Realm brutally.

Then, disbelief beamed out of Mecantron’s gold eyes. In the point of impact, the brilliance as dazzling as a rising sun burst out. Not only did the Blessed Realm fail to offer any defense, but it also exploded itself as the light glittered.

Boom!

The terrible explosion couldn’t be heard in the vacuum, but after only one brief moment, everything around was enshrouded in the world-destroying obliteration. Mecantron did not have any time to react before the energy storm raised by the Blessed Realm consumed him.

“What’s this spell?”

“Why is the effect so weird and terrifying?”

“It seems unstoppable!”

At this moment, Mecantron suddenly sensed that the world would be destroyed, and that if the spell was further improved, it would be even more powerful than ‘God’s Arrival’ for destructive purposes!

However, the sudden epiphany couldn’t extricate him from the ocean of energy that surrounded him. Little time was left for him to perform ‘God’s Guard’, too!

“NOOOOOOOOO!”

Roaring from the bottom of his heart, Mecantron felt that he was being destroyed irreversibly from the inside out and from outside

in. His gold eyes were filled with intense disbelief and fear, and terrible explosions broke out in both his body and his soul, creating an unimaginable energy storm!

The face that was beautiful as a girl and the thirty-six pure wings were obliterated at the same time!

Clement gradually stabilized himself against Natasha's crazy attacks. When he was ready to counterattack, he suddenly felt that the pressure was gone. Natasha had fled away without bothering anymore. Cutting the cosmos with the Sword of Truth, she appeared in a different direction very quickly!

"Why is she running?"

"Is she scared?"

"She's not stopping me from taking the Time Plate anymore?"

The subconscious idea had only just occurred to him, when he 'heard' the weird and overwhelming spell that Lucien cast from Lucien's vibrating and leaking spiritual power.

"Positron Cannon!"

Then, he saw the pillar of fiery electric light that was different from regular electric currents hit the Blessed Realm, sensed the outburst of the sun before his eyes, and felt the pure destruction!

"Why?"

"How did it happen?"

"Even the Blessed Realm joined the explosion reaction?"

"The defense itself added to the power of the spell!"

"This spell is too unbelievable!"

Similar ideas had just popped up in Clement's heart, when he was grasped by unprecedented desperation!

Because he was too close to the ‘paradise’ created by the Blessed Realm, and nothing was in between to block the attack, the energy storm swept over at him, not giving him a chance to escape with divine power at all!

“No wonder Natasha Violet escaped like a bunny that has been shot by an arrow...”

He finally understood why Natasha suddenly abandoned the attack and ran away without caring about anything!

It was a pity that his understanding came too late!

Lucien had informed Natasha through the telepathic bond when he got the Time Plate and was ready to perform ‘Positron Cannon’. Having heard the effect of the magic from Lucien previously, she naturally fled as early and far away as possible. Although the space-time defense provided by the Shield of Truth could protect her from the obliteration when matter and antimatter collided, the Shield of Truth might be broken in the energy storm that was more powerful than ‘Eternal Blaze’ after the obliteration appeared.

Watching the scorching light and the pure energy storm, Clement was somewhat in a trance. There was no way that the defense he cast upon himself could resist them, could it?

Right when he was desperate, the void behind him was suddenly opened, and a hand with green scales, with black thorns that emitted coldness from the knuckles, reached in.

With the air of transcendence and condescension, the hand ‘grabbed’ Clement and pulled him into the space gap!

The terrifying energy storm swept over but could not cross the boundary of spaces!

“The Lord of Hell?” Lucien felt that the hand was particularly familiar. It was exactly from his old friend Maltimus, the Lord of Hell. It never occurred to Lucien that he had been paying attention to this thing all the time! It was truly as expected of the Lord of Hell!

After Clement ‘dodged’ the attack, there was nothing but vacuum left, and the obliteration reaction came to an end.

At this moment, the Chaotic Cosmos suddenly shook. The boundless darkness became even darker, and angry roars echoed from all directions:

“Goddamn devils! Go to hell!”

“The Will of Abyss?” Lucien and Natasha were no strangers to the voice, either.

Demons and devils always despised each other. The former thought that the latter were brainless, and the latter felt that the former were too weak and couldn’t achieve anything without tricks and ploys. Also, since the abyss and the hell were connected on one level, wars often burst out between them. The bloody feud had been accumulated for hundreds of thousands of years.

That was why the Will of Abyss was so angry when the Lord of Hell arrived at the abyss and attacked despite his wounds!

Before the two parties collided, Lucien blinked to Natasha. The projection of the deep, fascinating Atomic Universe appeared behind them, illuminating a corner of the space with the colorful starlight.

Then, as the projection of the Atomic Universe was gone, Lucien and Natasha disappeared from the Chaotic Cosmos, too.

Now that they got the Time Plate, why would they stay here for the Will of Abyss to vent his fury on them? Also, the Demogorgon of Darkness might arrive at any point. Unless his magic caught the enemy unprepared, his overall abilities were still far away from the top legendary.

After all, ‘Positron Cannon’ could be both resisted by space-time defense and deviated by magnetic extraordinary powers because it carried electricity. Therefore, to deal with the enemy who had already learnt the features of ‘Positron Cannon’, Lucien had to create an opportunity where they could not resist ‘Positron Cannon’

with appropriate methods with other spells, and such spells were exactly the gap between Lucien and top legends!

Lucien had always known himself very well!

.....

In the royal palace of the Holy Heilz Empire...

Rudolf II, who had been leaning against the chair, suddenly stood straight and vomited a mouthful of gold blood. He muttered somewhat in fear, "Thank god that I was behind him, otherwise..."

he was too prudent to finish the sentence. Closing his eyes again, he perceived the sacred seven-floored 'Mountain Paradise'. Then, a part of the boundless light on the seventh floor was separated and landed at the edge, turning into an angel who held a book. The thirty-six wings on his back were slowly closed, but the angel was so blurry that nobody could tell how long it would take before he was condensed.

Chapter 706: Calcate City

Chapter 706: Calcate City

Inside the Atomic Universe, the various-colored stars in the boundless space constituted a unique and colorful view.

Lucien and Natasha gradually appeared, cutting the space-time connection with the abyss.

“We got it in the end after all, or we would have to search for the special Silent Hell.” Natasha was rather amazed by the beautiful, complicated patterns on the dark plate in Lucien’s hands. They were protruding and glittering in turns like a ticking second hand. Also, every pattern was spreading the vague, dreamy sense of ripples. Not just ladies, even Lucien as a male felt that the Time Plate was a piece of delicate artwork.

“If the Demogorgon of Darkness and the Angel King hadn’t conspired to kill me, this Time Plate would’ve become Gonheim’s collection after he became the Prince of Demons. It would’ve been millions of times more difficult to get it.” Touching the Time Plate with his right hand, Lucien sensed the flow of time in it.

In the Desperate World after the Frozen Fortress and the Abyssal Stomach were melted, Gonheim was close to a demigod. If he had left most of his power in the place, Lucien could’ve only suppressed him even if he had asked Douglas, Fernando and Hathaway to attack with him. In that case, Lucien would rather look for help to go to the Silent Hell.

Natasha also extended her right hand and touched the surface of the Time Plate curiously, enjoying the unique feeling. Then, she became more or less solemn. “You’ve really been targeted by the top legendary, and two of them, no less...”

She had always believed that even though Lucien did not compete for anything or walk on Viken’s path, his arcana studies and his soaring magic abilities would still invite hostility and schemes. Now, her ‘prophecy’ had come true!

However, she did not look scared but only concerned. She was filled with intense determination and desire for battle. It was partly because she was very confident in Lucien and partly because she felt that it was a test for her who regarded protection as her knightly principle.

Lucien curled his finger and knocked the Time Plate, but there was no sound but only dull, spreading ripples. "In such an age, any expert who wants to rise higher cannot avoid the vortex of conflicts, unless they hide in the depths of the Boundless Ocean or a secretive alternate dimension to be abandoned by the age. However, as a result, it's possible that other legends would think of him first when they intend to transform their status. It's certainly most easy to deal with lone individuals."

"As long as the Congress continues the momentum of development, I believe that the final victory will definitely be ours."

"As for me, I'm ready to embrace the challenges and maliciousness."

Lucien spoke casually but determinedly.

Natasha chuckled. "You would've become a distinguished knight if you hadn't chosen to be a sorcerer. Right, has the Angel King completely perished? Your 'Positron Cannon' is truly a world-blighting spell!"

Having spent a long time together with Lucien, she had become rather creative in words, too.

"After the other antimatters are studied and manufactured, it wouldn't be a dream for a level-three legendary sorcerer to destroy the world individually. All they need is a boom." Lucien said half-jokingly. The power of the Positron Cannon could be further improved, depending on his own magic strength and the materials he prepared in advance. Such preparations, on the other hand, were much more terrifying than what was needed for 'Eternal Blaze'. Only a tiny amount of antimatter was enough to annihilate a star. But of course, antimatter couldn't be synthesized in the laboratory yet.

While talking, Lucien took out the crystal ball and chanted a spell:

“Mirror of Fate!”

In the dark universe, illusionary spots of light appeared. They were like butterflies, or the stars in the night sky. That was the cosmos of fate!

Those spots of light were gathered into a hazy, mysterious mirror. After the glittering crystal ball on Lucien’s left hand flew in, the mirror began to shake violently, like a peaceful pond to which a stone had been thrown into. Ripples were spreading out.

Ripples died down, and the haze was gone. A crouching angel with thirty-six wings on the back appeared. Suddenly, infinite light glowed from the mirror and surged out like a torrent.

Natasha, who was observing nearby, realized it first. She dragged Lucien who was slightly stunned by the power and reached another corner of the Atomic Universe after a blink. Then, they saw that the Mirror of Fate was consumed by a cluster of pure, clean brilliance. The space around was also devoured, leaving a lifeless void. It was not until the ‘universe’ shook and the power nearby flowed over that the void gradually disappeared.

“That’s the power of the God of Truth...” Natasha muttered with mixed feelings. Was it the true god that she used to worship? Also, even though faith had backed to the spiritual domain for her, that was still ‘God of Truth’. So, she still felt complicated when she was faced with the ‘god’ who had lost rationality and had only power and rules left.

Recovering from the blast after the Mirror of Fate was destroyed by the power of the God of Truth, Lucien scratched his chin. “If you grasp the rules of Mountain Paradise and the God of Truth, would we be able to use his power at the critical moment? Also, why is the power so high? Is it a qualitative advancement or a quantitative accumulation?”

Natasha’s lips curled as she watched Lucien to think. Her indifferent eyes became gentle, and she said with a smile, “Grand Arcanist, you

are a real researcher.”

“Ha. It’s just my occupational disease...” Lucien replied humorously after he was back to himself. “It seems that Mecantron did not completely perish. There’s no telling whether it was because he did not project all his power, or because he was connected to the God of Truth with a special bond. Is it possible that he will never really die as long as the God of Truth exists, and that he will surely be resurrected on the seventh floor of Mountain Paradise when he dies?”

Lucien speculated the reasons why Mecantron did not completely perish. While ‘Positron Cannon’ could not track the original body like the Sword of Truth, it contained the purest destruction. Lucien believed that if Mecantron had arrived with his full strength, he would’ve been obliterated whatever resurrection methods he had!

“I think it’s the latter possibility. To deal with a grand arcanist who possesses a handful of top legendary spells in the abyss where the power of Mountain Paradise is greatly weakened, the Angel King would barely have any chance of success if he hadn’t arrived with all his strength. I don’t think he would underestimate his enemy.” Scratching her chin, Natasha offered her opinion.

Under normal circumstances, Mecantron was among the top-tier experts and was as strong as a demigod near Mountain Paradise. However, in the abyss, even if he arrived in person, he would only be as strong as the weakest top legend under the affection of the abyss. If he did not try his best, he would only be in level three of legendary and on par with Lucien.

In that regard, sorcerers, with their unpredictable, miscellaneous spells, were much stronger. They were almost adapted to all battle environments and wouldn’t be greatly weakened.

“That makes sense. His ‘God’s Guard’ was as powerful as his performance in Rentato.” However, even though he is the body of resurrection prepared by Thanos and an incarnation of the ‘God of Truth’, he is only a new-born angel right now. It will take at least five years before he resumes legendary strength.”

Although the Mirror of Fate could determine if Mecantron was still alive, it could not state his status clearly. Therefore, Lucien could only make a vague prediction based on the signs.

Hearing Lucien's speculation, Natasha suddenly chuckled. She pointed at the planet of iron not far away and said, "I think we should discuss it after we are back home. Do you not feel that the cold and dark universe is not as comfortable as a warm, cozy room? There is also tea and music, and we are not far away from the door..."

Lucien replied, "Of course. I need to be prepared for the improvement of the Moon Timer, too."

.....

Inside the Frozen Fortress, Gonheim, the Demogorgon of Darkness, returned to the dark throne. Wounds deep to the bone appeared on his right hand that was tapping the gems, but no blood was flowing out at all.

Blue, cold light emitted from the wounds, freezing everything inside. Even Gonheim's terrifying ability of recovery could not eliminate them any time soon.

There was also a scratch that carried the air of death on Gonheim's face. Although it was shallow, his face still cramped now and then.

Touching his face with his left hand, Gonheim mumbled to himself, his eyes whose colors changed all the time turning chaotic and cold, "Lucien Evans, Apsis, ice statue..."

As a cunning Prince of Demons, he had other preparations, so he beat the Lady of Snow and the Lord of Death after paying a certain prince. However, Lucien was even faster. He had already left with the Time Plate.

.....

In the Month of Harvest (September), most places were still warm and full of the delight of harvest and festivals, but freezing wind was already blowing in the northern province of the Schachran

Empire, making people feel that winter had come.

A team of mercenaries walked on the desolate plain, guarding a few business convoys. The Schachran Empire was most famous for its vast territory, abundant resources and copious magic creatures.

Amidst the mercenaries, Katrina had tied her gold long hair. She touched the bald figurine of a dwarf in her bock and thought absentmindedly, "Why did my teacher ask me to put this statue out in front of the temple in Dumute? Why is this statue unfinished?"

She was very curious about that.

"We're arriving at Calcate City!" The scout up ahead shouted. At the border of the plain and a forest, right next to a river, a magnificent but somewhat old city appeared before their eyes.

It was Calcate, the third largest city in the province, only second to Nanoki, the capital, and Kirf, where Marquis Furtado was at.

Katrina was back to herself. She moved her left hand out of the pocket and thought to herself. "The most important thing right now is the mandatory mission. I can work on my teacher's request later."

This place was the destination of her mandatory mission as well as her hometown.

Looking at the familiar architectural style and the unique view, she was somewhat fascinated.

Chapter 707: The Student of a Legendary Knight

Chapter 707: The Student of a Legendary Knight

A glistening wide river ran in the middle of the desolate plain and mountains. Glamorous ships that were fully loaded with cargo were sailing towards Calcate City. Whenever they reached the places where the waves were too turbulent for them to sail against the current, many stevedores would gather and pull the rope together, hauling the ships over the obstacles.

Despite the wind that would chill any normal person, those workers were all half naked, with vague steam rising from their skin.

“If I hadn’t left home to be a mercenary, it’s possible that I may have become one of them, a worker on the Niegening River...” Katrina was listening to the familiar work song, when she suddenly heard a coarse male voice.

The river was the ‘main artery’ for the Schachran Empire, which had bred many prosperous cities as their mother river. It originated from the snowy mountains that were controlled by the Vladimir family in the northwest province, flowing past the northern province, and meandering all the way to the southeast, until it entered the Schachran Empire at the border of the Schachran Empire and the northland.

Katrina turned around and looked at the young male next to her with a smile. “Everybody has a chance to change their fate. It depends on themselves whether or not they can seize it. It’s obvious that you are an expert who defeated your weakness. If you hadn’t made up your mind to press forward with waves, Yakov, you would never live beyond 35 like most of the workers.”

Yakov was a mercenary with yellow, short hair. He wasn’t thirty yet, but his beard made him look old. Tall and brawny, he was nicknamed by his fellows as ‘Brown Bear’.

“Was it also your motivation to become a mercenary?” His eyes moving away, Yakov asked back.

Because the Schachran Empire was unpopulated and frequented by magic creatures and bandits, long trips could be dangerous, particularly in the north. Therefore, it was quite eye-catching for a beautiful girl to be on a trip by herself. By the same logic, she would receive a lot of attention if she joined a business team without any partner.

In order not to be suspected by the clerics of the North Church and the nobles, Katrina prudently chose to pretend to be a mercenary. With fake certificates, she joined a team that was to protect some businessmen on their way to Calcate City. Yakov was the leader of the team, a knight who had triggered the blood power of frost giants by himself.

Katrina was about to reply, when a pleasant female voice interjected, “Let me guess. Are you trying to run away from your marriage? A girl as gorgeous as you must be from a noble family. Has a powerful scoundrel got his eyes on you and forced you to marry him, and you had to flee as a mercenary?”

“Anna, you’ve heard too many tales from the bards...” Amused, Katrina looked at the female archer next to her who was wearing leather armor.

Anna was a mercenary no more than twenty. She had blond hair, green eyes and a pretty face. She was as convivial as Heidi, so Katrina made friends with her easily after they met. She was also very curious about Katrina who was tall and elegant. Having grown up in the tales of the bards, she instinctively believed that Katrina must have a complicated past.

Little did she know that it was also the speculation of most mercenaries in the team. Although Katrina was good at swords, and some female mercenaries were as beautiful as her, she was very graceful and emanated the obscure air of knowledge when she considered questions. That was rare for mercenaries.

Yakov had once worked with an official sorcerer best known for his

insights, but he did not feel such a vibe from the guy.

Anna chuckled. Looking at Calcate City that was getting close, she asked expectantly, “Sister Katrina, we will settle in this place with Boss Yakov. What about you, are you going to leave?”

Yakov had activated his blood power in an adventure earlier. He had returned to be knighted. After that, he would be given a manor and a fief on the desolate plain. Those in his team who were willing to stay would become his squires or butlers.

For most mercenaries, such an opportunity was not easy to come by. Naturally, they agreed to stay without any hesitation. With the support of a noble, it would be easier for them to activate their blood power.

Yakov and the few mercenaries pricked their ears as they waited for Katrina’s answer.

Katrina smiled and rubbed Anna’s gold hair. “I’ve come to Calcate City for fortune. Maybe, I will get what I want in a few months. After that, I will return to the place I belong to, where my family and my friends live. I will always cherish the memory of my adventure with you.”

Many resources and magic creatures were hidden in the forest and the desert near Calcate City. That’s why so many business teams and mercenaries were active here.

Many adventurers had come in search of gold mines or other undiscovered treasures to be rich overnight. Most of them left in disappointment or lay forever in the depths of the forest, but there were still lucky dogs who returned with trophies. They motivated more and more adventurers to come.

Many local specialties were important for sorcerers’ studies and alchemy. That’s why the official sorcerer came to explore. However, he was involved in a demon worship case and killed in Calcate City. If he hadn’t come with partners, the Congress wouldn’t have known that such a sorcerer went missing at all, much less sending investigators.

“Family... friends...” Anna muttered gloomily, “Sister Katrina, you must come to see me often while you are still in Calcate City.”

Yakov said in a low voice, “Katrina, whenever you need help, don’t hesitate to find me. We’re partners.”

Katrina nodded. Seeing that the atmosphere was turning heavy, she hurried to change the topic by asking Anna about Calcate City. She was only ten when she left this place and only had a vague memory about it.

In the middle of discussion, the business convoy reached the city gate. At this moment, a team of cavalymen rode out of the city fast and neatly. They had obviously been trained for a long time.

Those cavalymen were in black, full armor, their faces covered by the masks of their helmets. They looked as cold and cruel as if they were from a bloodstained battlefield.

Their left arm had a blood red emblem, in which a red bear was holding a head with its left paw.

“Count Vladimir’s Blood Bear Legion...” In an extremely low voice, Yakov introduced them to Katrina.

Katrina was actually no stranger to them. Although the Vladimir’s family was based in the northwest province, they had certain influence on the neighboring north province, too. For example, Calcate City was the hereditary dominion of the Vladimir family, whose liege was known as ‘Count Calcate’. The emblem of blood bear that represented strength and honor was their unique sigil.

Anna said enviously, “The Blood Bear Legion? They must be going to welcome Viscount Andree!”

“Viscount Andree?” Katrina did not know what the name represented, although he did sound like the next Count Calcate.

“Yes, Viscount Andree became an official knight at twenty, a grand knight at twenty-five, and a top grand knight two months ago. He was recruited by the legendary knight ‘Nicolle’ as his student! He will certainly become a radiant knight and the strongest Count

Calcate!” Anna spoke as if he were the prince charming for her.

Nicolle, the Storm of Death? Katrina was more or less surprised. This level-one legendary knight was the current leader of the Furtado family and the de facto governor of the north province. However, wasn't the Furtado family in disagreement with the Vladimir family and dissatisfied with them meddling in the affairs of the north province?

If Andree Vladimir did need a legendary knight as his teacher, Vladimir had their own. Thom Vladimir, the Ice Age, was already old, but he was still alive and he was a legendary knight who had the hope to reach level three of legendary!

Are there any secrets? Is the information important for the Congress? Thought Katrina in confusion.

Seeing her apparent shock, Anna appeared even more envious. “It's very fortuitous to be the student of a legendary knight even for radiant knights, not to mention the grand knights. Viscount Andree must have something special about him!”

“Not just legendary knights, I would be satisfied if a radiant knight agrees to be my teacher, but it will never happen without the grace of the Lord.” Yakov sighed bitterly and hopefully.

The other mercenaries said in self-mockery. “We would like to go to Mountain Paradise in advance if we can be given a grand knight, or an official knight, as our teacher.”

In their conversation, they entered the city with the business convoy and checked in at a hotel.

While Yakov went to register in the city hall, Katrina went to a tavern nearby with Anna.

The moment she stepped in, Katrina was immediately ‘welcomed’ by the mercenaries and adventures with whistles, who made dirty jokes nonstop.

Anna glared at them and drew her dagger. Without being shy, Katrina also raised her longsword and glanced around indifferently.

On such occasions, the weaker they behaved, the more they would be bullied.

As expected, their toughness intimidated the drunkards, and they managed to reach the bar.

“Hi, young Anna, welcome come. Who is this beautiful lady?” The owner of the tavern was a lecherous-looking middle-aged man.

Anna chuckled. “Uncle Gulf, do you plan to enjoy the thugs of brown bears? Right, has anything important happened in the past few months?”

“You certainly know the most important thing. Viscount Andree became the student of His Excellency the Storm of Death. As for the lesser incidents, a demon worship case happened in the district of nobles, and dozens were killed uncannily.” Gulf’s smile was gone.

“A demon worship case?” Asked Anna curiously.

Katrina was more or less relieved. It was indeed easier to investigate with a local mercenary as a partner, and it would not raise any suspicion. Otherwise, somebody would’ve noticed her if she had asked about the case recklessly as a ‘foreigner’.

Chapter 708: A Weird Case

“A demon worship case?” Anna was very curious when she asked the question. Other than killers and perverts who craved blood all the time, only the real lunatics would worship the chaotic demons!

If they had any wish, they might as well worship the Demon Dukes, who were at least much more ‘trustworthy’. Therefore, while it was not strange that several individuals might worship demons, it was rather creepy that so many people died in the incident at the same time.

Katrina had the same opinion. The Congress of Magic issued the mandatory mission exactly because of ‘demon worship’, too. If the victims had died in an accident during their ritual to worship devils, the Congress wouldn’t have paid as much attention to the case.

Few powerful demons had ever attempted to develop religions that worshiped themselves. They might have considered it, but they soon dropped the ideas because of their natural chaos and lust for slaughter and blood. Therefore, such a massive demon worship case was itself weird and inexplicable.

Gulf, the boss of the tavern, wiped the cups before him carefully with a piece of clean cloth, not leaving any dirt out. He smiled, “It’s indeed a demon worship case, or it’s at least what the Church says after thorough investigation.”

“But the Church might’ve covered the truth to avoid panic. It happened before, didn’t it?” Anna was rather dissatisfied with Gulf’s answer. It had been a couple years since she became a mercenary, and she had seen and been through a lot. She knew better than to accept the conclusion of the Church’s investigation without any suspicion.

As a ten-year mercenary and eight-year tavern manager, Gulf was willing to believe the conclusion only because his own secret sources could confirm it.

Seeing that the two girls were looking at him with their eyes that

were as green as lake water, Gulf knocked the table softly. "This piece of intelligence has a price, but..."

He paused and looked at the mercenaries who were flooding in his tavern. "But you two ladies seem to have boosted the business of my tavern. So, this is on the house."

Anna looked back and smiled. "You have to thank Sister Katrina. I've been a regular customer at your place, but I never saw so many 'wild wolves'."

"So, your name is Katrina. That's a common female name in Calcate City. Are you also a local?" Asked Gulf with a smile.

Before Katrina replied, Anna said in advance, "No, she is not. Sister Katrina is from a noble family in another province."

"From a noble family? That explains your rare elegance among mercenaries." Gulf was in deep thought. "As a matter of fact, I do feel that you look familiar, Katrina. I think I saw you somewhere before..."

Katrina looked more or less gloomy. Her family had been passed on for three hundred years. As their bloodline, she must've inherited part of the looks of her ancestors. She thought to herself, "After the Congress controls the Schachran Empire, and when remote communication and discuss are easier, I will establish my magic tower in this place..."

"Uncle Gulf, every beautiful lady is familiar to you. Tell me the intelligence!" Anna pointed out the truth straightforwardly.

Gulf put down the cloth and rubbed his forehead, before he said in a low voice. "The incident was first discovered by one Ivan, who was the servant of the villa. He saw a hall of blood and bodies when he went for cleaning. There were nobles, knights, ordinary people, artists, and even... a sorcerer..."

In honor of Saint Ivan, the most common name in the Schachran Empire was Ivan.

"A sorcerer?" Anna exclaimed. Official sorcerers were hard to come

by in the Schachran Empire.

Katrina moved her eyes back and focused her attention.

“Yes. According to Ivan, the sorcerer was wearing a level-one arcana badge and a second-circle magic badge. I’ve asked other people about him with his appearance. It hadn’t been long since he came to Calcate City, and he had been searching for and purchasing the materials that sorcerers needed.” Gulf described the look of the sorcerer, mentioning that he had a black mole next to his left eye.

Katrina nodded in her heart. It was indeed the sorcerer who died.

Gulf continued. “It’s already weird enough that dozens of people of different identities died in the same hall, but what was even more weird was that there was an altar at the center of the hall. Although nothing was left on the altar, the vibe of slaughter and destruction could be sensed.”

“How did those people die? Was it suicide or homicide?” Katrina carefully asked a question that befitted her current identity, one which a curious and experienced female mercenary should ask. She could tell that Anna meant to ask the question, too.

In an even lower voice, Gulf said, “That’s the third weird part. Those people brutalized each other to death. Also, it was not a one-versus-one battle but a chaotic gang slaughter. Many victims had fatal wounds on every side of their body.”

“A sorcerer was killed by ordinary people and artists?” Even Anna found it unacceptable. “Did you mention knights?”

“There was a knight, but he was also killed.” Gulf was apparently scared when he described it. “There was no sign that the knight used his blood power, or residue of any magic. It suggests... It suggests that they held a ‘festival of killing’ as ordinary people, and... and based on the position of bodies, none of them attempted to escape.”

That was much more detailed than the information the Congress of Magic gave to Katrina. Considering for a moment, she asked, “Could

they have been affected by illusion? I'm told that the altars of certain cults may influence the mind and make the believers do the most unbelievable things."

"You are truly a noble lady. You know cults rather well." Gulf's fear was gone and said with a smile, "That's a possibility, which is why the case is described as demon worship. At least, devils wouldn't let their believers attack each other. Even though they were to gather the pure power of faith through slaughter, they wouldn't have chosen their followers as the targets. Of course, I don't know how the Church ascertained that the victims were all demon believers. Perhaps, they were just 'ordinary people'..."

"It sounds really weird and much more terrible than the bards' stories." Anna patted her chest. "Uncle Gulf, is there anything else that is strange?"

"Strange?" Gulf recalled carefully. "The victims all looked peaceful after their death, as if they were freed but not killed by each other. Right, Ivan felt cold when he entered the hall, but it was still warm in May."

Anna's curiosity was fully activated. She kept asking for more details, but that was as much as Gulf knew. He couldn't help but sigh, "There may have been anomalies, but Ivan was too horrified to notice them. After the Church's investigation, the villa was cleansed by holy light for fear that the demonic air would affect Calcate City. So, we'll never know the anomalies even if there were any."

"The Church cleansed the villa with holy light..." Katrina repeated it. That was a major setback for her investigation. It meant that few valuable traces could be found on the spot.

Then, pretending to be curious, she asked, "Did Ivan remember anything else later? It's been several months."

"That's right. Did he?" Anna nodded. She was upset by the 'broken' story.

Gulf tried to put on a smile, but the smile only gave away his panic

and fear. “Ivan had nightmares every day from witnessing the bloody scene. Also, the Church gave him a huge reward. So, he came to my place to drink every day, and he could only go to sleep when he was too drunk to remember anything. However, one week after the case, he accidentally fell into the river when he was drunk, and he drowned.”

“Well...” Anna felt coldness surging into her heart, and she did not dare ask any further.

Katrina felt more or less the same, but she was more wary and frustrated than scared. Although the mission would be considered accomplished if she brought back the files she collected so far now that all the leads were gone, she still wanted to investigate more as an excellent arcanist who had intense curiosity and desire of exploration. “Do I need to sneak into the inquisition in Calcate City and peep at their files of investigation?”

She was not very confident about that, because such a major city must’ve been under the watch of a red robe.

Having been scared by the demon worship case, Anna had a few cups of wine to suppress her shock, before she returned to the hotel with Katrina. At this moment, Yakov, who reported the activation of his blood power to the city hall, had come back.

He was sharing the news that he would be officially knighted one week later with other mercenaries in ecstasy, when he saw that Anna and Katrina walked in pale. His smile was gone, and he asked concernedly, “What’s wrong?”

Seeing no strangers around, Anna told him the intelligence they obtained from the tavern.

“An official sorcerer... What did he look like?” After hearing her introduction attentively, Yakov asked after a brief hesitation.

Anna pointed at her eye. “He had a black mole next to his left eye.”

“A black mole...” Yakov repeated and did not say anything more.

Katrina looked at him and went back to her room, claiming that she

was tired.

When the night was dark and quiet, a shadow flashed out of Katrina's room like a cold window and snuck towards the district of nobles.

Before her journey, she had exchanged for a bottle of potion that could activate her blood power, considering that it might be inconvenient to perform magic in the Schachran Empire. After the long-time modifications of the Congress of Magic, the power triggered by the potion was already as good as the power triggered by oneself. However, its effect was still limited, and the receiver could not reach the level of grand knights.

In the hustling wind, Katrina, who had activated the blood power of 'Snowstorm', seemed to have been melted into the environment. Although the Church had cleansed the villa with holy light, she was still going to investigate it in person. This was similar to experiments. One could only believe it after they confirmed it personally. Furthermore, it was highly unreasonable that an official sorcerer would worship a demon soon after he came to Calcate City.

Chapter 709: Unexpected Encounter

In a corner of the district of nobles, the blowing wind swept the evergreens.

Under the cover of the trees was a two-floored villa with a round dome. It had the characteristic style of the Schachran Empire, but the villa looked particularly creepy in the darkness for some reason, as if a monster was looming in the place.

Observing the villa from far away, Katrina could not tell whether it was a real premonition of her Host Star of Destiny, or it was merely her psychological effect. Her figure that seemed to have melted into the wind grew more and more vague until it completely disappeared.

Although a few months had passed and the defense should've been canceled after the villa was cleansed with holy light, Katrina dared not be careless. She still used spells such as 'Advanced Stealth' to sneak in instead using only the blood power. She trusted and loved magic more than blood power!

The silver moon, not covered by the clouds, illuminated the ground with watery light, leaving long shadows that looked like twisted monsters behind the trees. At such a bright night, Katrina approached the villa without a sound. The effect of 'Advanced Stealth' prevented her from leaving any trace behind. Even though a wagon rode past her, nobody sensed that a lady was walking right next to them.

Katrina walked into the villa easily. Then, she vaporized her form to get into the hall, before she performed a thorough examination on the 'crime scene'.

The hall had a floor of stone bricks which had smooth surfaces. They were enormous and consistent with the Schachran Empire's style. One of them was as huge as five of the same bricks in Allyn.

Looking at the reflection of the ceiling on the bricks, Katrina had a feeling that mirrors had been embedded on the floor. She thought

to herself, “Even the floor in Count Calcate’s residence wouldn’t be so smooth. This serves no purpose other than tripping over the guests and making it easy to see what is inside the ladies’ skirts. Did the owner of the villa design it for that? Or was it for something else?”

The nobles of the Schachran Empire were always more extravagant than their ‘peers’ in the south. Katrina would not rule out such a possibility just yet.

Under Advanced Stealth, her body was revealed every time she cast a spell, but she was invisible again after it was done. Therefore, Katrina’s appearance that had been changed blinked on the floor all the time. Her long blond hair and her green eyes were all clear.

“It’s been a few months since this place was cleansed by holy light. Even the most weird magical spell seems useless...” Katrina performed all the investigation magic she could think of but to little avail.

Of course, her efforts were not entirely in vain. At least, she could tell from the marks on the floor that nobody performed any extraordinary power back then, or the marks wouldn’t have been as shallow.

“No usage of extraordinary power suggests only two possibilities: the official sorcerer was completely controlled by demons, or his power was sealed in advance. If the former is true, he would have used the most destructive magic when he was grasped by the desire of slaughter. Therefore, his power must’ve been sealed whether or not he worshiped demons.” Katrina reached a conclusion.

If the sorcerer joined the killing festival for his own purpose and prevented himself from using magic, any purpose wouldn’t have been more important than his life at the critical moment. He would’ve used magic subconsciously.

“That is to say, I can understand how the sorcerer’s magic was sealed from his body...” Katrina thought of a clue but waved her hand regretfully. “However, the Church has blamed the demon worship on him and burnt his body. Bloody Church.”

She cursed despite her usual manners. The North Church certainly needed a scapegoat to appease the nobles and the people, and nobody suited it better than a wicked sorcerer who died on the spot.

The hall was empty because the furniture and altar had been cleansed. Katrina paced for a while and thought of something else. “Gulf mentioned that a knight was also killed there. His blood power was obviously sealed, too. While his body couldn’t be placed in his family graveyard, it should be in an advanced public graveyard. After all, nobles must not be disgraced...”

She was refreshed after seizing the clue. Examining the upper floor and the basement, she found nothing of value. When she was about to leave, she sensed that her alarm spell was triggered, so she looked at the window in the garden.

Then, Katrina noticed that the will of a familiar knight spread in through the window gap, investigating the situation inside coldly and carefully.

When the will reached Katrina, her ‘Advanced Stealth’ produced ripples and feigned her nonexistence perfectly.

Crack, crack, crack. The window was slowly opened by a piece of thin ice, and the ‘criminal’ who opened the window disappeared.

A shadow crawled in. He was tall and brawny, with snowflake patterns appearing on his hands.

“Yakov, he’s really here...” Standing at the center of the hall, Katrina watched the stranger walk around and check. It was easy for her to tell who he was from the familiar air.

However, she was not surprised at Yakov’s arrival. His reaction was weird when Anna mentioned the dead sorcerer.

Yakov was relieved after confirming that there were no items or suspicious traces, but he never noticed Katrina who stood behind him all the time so openly.

“I was considering how to interrogate him. Now that we’ve met, I

should seize the opportunity...” Katrina made a decision.

Yakov stood straight and was going to check the upstairs, when he suddenly sensed uneasiness. Without any delay, his body began huge and was covered in frost, while he thought to himself, “Am I being ambushed?”

Hardly had the idea occurred to him when his head hummed and everything became blurry.

“I have a question for you.” Then, he heard an unpredictable, genderless voice.

Although the voice sounded weird, Yakov felt that the voice was so familiar and soft that it sounded both from the Lord he worshiped and the girl he secretly loved. Therefore, without any resistance, he replied in adulation, “What question?”

“What’s your relationship with the sorcerer who died here? Why did you investigate this place?” The voice came again.

Yakov subconsciously wanted to refuse to answer, but the uncanny state of submission and admiration made him admit frankly, “In may, I happened upon an official sorcerer and cooperated with him for a while.”

“I provided intelligence for him and led him to search for resources, and he offered me files about blood power in return. Thanks to those files, I corrected my mistakes and found the way to become a knight. Then, I went to the frozen land on another mission. When I returned, I was told that the sorcerer was involved in demon worship.”

“Fearing that I might be involved, and since this is a critical moment of my knighthood, I came here to search, hoping to destroy all the clues that may still exist.”

Katrina was stunned. “Why would you be involved? Was he alone when he worked with you?”

The sorcerer was already dead, and he certainly did not have Yakov’s items, or Yakov would be interrogated the moment he was

back. What was he concerned about?

“Yes, he was alone.” Yakov replied honestly as if she were his liege whom he pledged loyalty to.

Alone? He came to Calcate City with a few partners, but he left them and worked with Yakov... Katrina crossed her arms and asked, “What about the other question?”

“Because... Because our cooperation was facilitated by Duke Duda. Before I went to the frozen land, that sorcerer gladly told me that Duke Duda invited him for a private party, and that it was a great chance for him to join their circle.” After a brief hesitation, Yakov admitted honestly, “I don’t know what circle it is exactly, but Duke Duda has always been strong and mysterious as the master of Calcate City’s underworld. I fear that the sorcerer’s death was related to him...”

“If the Church found out about him, the mercenaries who were in touch with the sorcerer like me would certainly be killed. I happen to know that the sorcerer had the habit of leaving secret marks. So, I came and planned to destroy the marks.”

Pondering for a moment, Katrina asked, “Is Duke Duda still alive?”

“Yes, as alive as ever. I saw him in the city hall this morning.” Yakov said, his body trembling, as if he was very scared of this Duke Duda.

Katrina inquired again but didn’t get any other valuable information. Therefore, she asked Yakov to tell her the secret marks of the sorcerer. Then, she vaporized her body and left the hall, returning to the hotel.

In the hall, Yakov ‘accepted’ Katrina’s order and stood there in a daze, until a chilly wind from the window shivered him and woke him up. He felt that he just had a dream in which he told someone else his deepest secrets.

“This... This is terrifying... Was it the fifth-circle spell, ‘Dominate Humans?’” Yakov speculated what happened to him. “Has the

Congress of Magic sent investigators?”

“Thankfully, the powerful sorcerer only needed clues and did not want to kill anyone. Otherwise...” Yakov thought in fear. His life could’ve been taken away easily.

“I thought that I was finally an expert after I activated my blood power and became a knight. I didn’t know until right now that knighthood is just the beginning. There are too many dangerous people above me. The fifth-circle sorcerer just now was already way stronger than me, not to mention those sorcerers and radiant knights...”

Calming himself time, Yakov hurried to leave. Under the freezing wind, he realized that his clothes had been wet by the cold sweat on his back.

.....

On the second day, Yakov, pretending to be normal, went to the guild of adventurers for his business, and Katrina asked about the dead knight and the place where he was buried with Anna.

When the night fell, Katrina entered the clean but creepy graveyard according to her intelligence and found the tomb of the dead knight.

Right when she was about to open the tomb with magic, a magnetic male laughed from the crown of the tree on her back. “An investigator from the Congress of Magic?”

“Who is it?” Katrina turned around warily. She didn’t notice anything wrong when she checked the surroundings just now, which suggested that the man was better at hiding than she was.

A gold-haired handsome man, wearing a black shirt and a red coat, stood on the top of the tree. Holding a cup of wine that did not quite agree with the atmosphere, he greeted, “Good evening, beautiful lady. You may call me Viscount Carendia.”

“Viscount Carendia? You’re Mr. Rhine’s grandson?” Katrina associated the male before him with the vampire viscount that her

teacher described before.

“Huh?” Viscount Carendia rubbed his face and appeared rather surprised. “Am I a celebrity now? Who’s your teacher?”

“My teacher is Mr. Atom Controller.” Katrina was more or less relieved since it was someone she knew.

“That monster... No, I mean...” Viscount Carendia blurted out. Chuckling to cover himself, he said, “Your teacher is a real genius that I admire very much. Right, I’m here to investigate the unusual death of my descendants. I believe that we share the same purpose.”

Chapter 710: Stalkers

“One of your descendants died in the demon worship case, too? Why didn’t the Church say anything about it?” Asked Katrina in surprise.

Vampires were as ‘evil’ as sorcerers. The Church could’ve totally blamed the whole thing on them, too.

Viscount Carendia shook the wine cup in his hands. “He was a descendant that I had from one of my trips to the Schachran Empire before. He was a distinguished noble. Therefore, after his identity as a vampire was confirmed with his body, the nobles pressured the Church to hide it in case the image of nobles was tarnished. After all, there were ‘evil’ sorcerers who could take the blame.”

“That explains a lot. Then, have you found any leads, Mr. Viscount?” Katrina nodded and asked expectantly, hoping that the vampire viscount who had also located the graveyard could provide more clues.

Leaning against the tree lazily, Viscount Carendia did not seem to care as much about his personal image as other vampires would. “Although I can sense the death of a descendant remotely, I cannot confirm who it is exactly. So, by the time I came here with enough intelligence, most of the valuable clues were already gone. Chances are that I don’t even know as much as you do.”

“Have you checked the knight’s body? What sealed his blood power?” Asking, Katrina opened the tomb with magic, not entirely letting go of her wariness. Just because the guy was an ‘old acquaintance’ didn’t mean that he was not dangerous.

“It’s true that I’m good at identifying the marks on bodies.” Viscount Carendia hinted that Katrina had asked the right person, but then he shook his head. “But you’ve got to have a body that I can examine.”

Katrina was stunned. “Are you suggesting that there are no bodies in the tomb?”

The coffin was pulled out by magic after the tomb was opened. Then, when the cover was moved away, the coffin revealed nothing but clothes and an urn.

“If we know that something must be wrong with the body, how could the people who organized the demon worship party have neglected it? According to what I learnt, the nobles dare not be careless about this vampire plus demon worshiper, so they cleansed the body with fire before they buried him.” Viscount Carendia looked rather gloomy under the silver moonlight.

Vampire plus demon worshiper? It seems that this knight is Viscount Carendia’s descendant... Katrina thought to herself.

“I investigated his family and found nothing suspicious. His close friends are also in the circle of nobles. It’s not easy for us to investigate each and every one of them. We might as well sneak into the inquisition for the Church files.” Said Viscount Carendia with a bitter plan.

It’s very similar to my ‘plan’, Katrina thought to herself. “I can apply to the Congress for the aid of senior-rank sorcerers.”

And you can ask your father to come to help. They should be powerful vampires in the level of duke or count.

“He was my descendant. Until real danger emerges, I have to find out the criminal myself as his ‘parent’.” Viscount Carendia said with unusual solemnity.

Parent... Looking at Viscount Carendia’s handsome face and charming gold hair, Katrina suddenly had a feeling of absurdity. Such a long-life species could see the grandsons of the grandsons of the grandsons of their grandsons if nothing went wrong, which was impossible for her to imagine.

“I’ve investigated the sorcerer who died and looked for the people he was in touch with, but nobody ever saw him except during the deals. They do not know whom he acted with. He must’ve changed his appearance. Do you have any leads about that?” Viscount Carendia revealed his purpose.

Katrina thought for a moment. She was alone in this place. There were plenty of experts in Carendia City, which was the third largest city in the north province. It would be safer for her if she had someone to help her. Therefore, she informed Viscount Carendia of the intelligence she obtained from Yakov.

“Duke Duda was one of my descendants close associates. It seems that he is truly a suspect.” Viscount Carendia said that with the rhythm of a poem. The laziness on his face was gone, and his gold eyes were glittering.

Most importantly, this Duke Duda was rather mysterious, and Viscount Carendia suspected him in the first place.

“Most of the leads are broken right now, but the existing ones all point at Duke Duda. Perhaps, we should ‘visit’ him sometime. Katrina, would you like to come with me?” Viscount Carendia called Katrina by her name as if they were close friends.

With a vague smile, Katrina said, “I was going to invite you, Mr. Viscount. However, Duke Duda lives in the district nobles right now. I fear that we have to wait for other opportunities.”

“He has to go out of the city at some point.” Viscount Carendia drank up his wine and unfolded the black cape on his back. “I’ll come to you when the day comes.”

He seemed to have been melted into the darkness, leaving a chuckle and a humorous remark, “He thinks that some big shot is backing him up, but do we not have one as well? Perhaps, ours is even bigger and more monstrous...”

“More monstrous...” Katrina subconsciously repeated. Then, she looked around and patted her chest. “I almost described my teacher as a monster just like him. Thank god my teacher is not here...”

Time flew. Both worried and expectant, Yakov was knighted and given a manor out of the city. So, he packed up his stuff and led his subordinates to his fief.

“Sister Katrina, are you really not coming with us?” Anna seemed to

be sobbing, unwilling to be separated from her sister-like friend. Her mother had died when she was little, and she always yearned for the caring of older females.

Yakov coughed and stammered, "As a matter of fact, you always need a place to live in, and hotels are costly."

Katrina shook her head with a smile. "I've found a few partners to go to the desert with me, so I'll act with them. I appreciate your kindness. I'll visit you after the adventure is over."

Then, it was the official farewell.

"Sister Katrina, you've found new partners? How come I didn't know?" Asked Anna in confusion.

"You've been as busy as a bee recently. How could you know?" Katrina and Layria were both patient and meticulous. That was why they distinguished themselves in material studies.

"Actually, with your conditions, Sister Katrina, you don't have to make a fortune through adventures; plenty of people are willing to offer it to you." Said Anna half-jokingly.

Katrina rubbed her gold hair with a smile, "That is an easy way but not the way I want. Only the things that you truly grasp belong to you. They are more steady and can help you walk further."

She subtly rejected the hint in Anna's words with the attitude of arcana studies.

"Sister Katrina, you sound so philosophical..." Anna sniffed.

You don't know the first thing about philosophy... Katrina had mixed feelings when she recalled the Evans field equation and the unknown features of the microscopic particles. Even her teacher said that he was often puzzled. Whoever was not confused by the microscopic domain and quantum mechanics hadn't really studied them at all.

Thinking about that, she suddenly sensed a deep chasm between her and her friends. She cannot join their life, and they cannot

understand anything she worked on.

Seeing Yakov, Anna and the rest of them off, Katrina packed up and checked out, melting into the crowd on the street.

As she walked on, Katrina suddenly combed her hair and zigzagged in the alleys of Calcate in a hurry.

When she attempted to pass an empty alley, a crazy-looking man suddenly appeared before her and cackled, "You are very keen, but it is not enough to get rid of us!"

His nose sniffed, and he said lasciviously, "Your perfume betrayed you."

At this moment, another brawny man approached Katrina from behind, blocking her way of escape. "My lady, are you luring us by choosing this empty alley?"

"Why did you stalk me?" Asked Katrina, her voice 'shivering'.

"Because you hung around with them..." The man before her suddenly stopped and laughed. "Do it. We have plenty of time to get to know this beautiful lady."

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when he saw Katrina raising her head. Her blue eyes were ripping and captivating, like the clearest lake in a forest.

The man behind her grabbed Katrina's neck, but suddenly, his face hurt and his teeth flew out as he was entirely blown back into the wall.

Looking at his partner who attacked him, he asked in shock, "What are you doing?"

A green light glittered, and his eyes also lost vigor. He stood there in a daze.

Clap, clap, clap. Somebody applauded. A gold-haired male appeared at the corner of the alley and smiled, "Sometimes, magic is truly a time-saver."

“Mr. Viscount, I didn’t expect to run into you here.” Katrina bowed courteously.

“No, I came specifically to meet you, because Duke Duda left the city for his manor.” Viscount Carendia went to Katrina.

When he passed the brawny men, his nose suddenly twitched, and he said in disgust, “What a filthy smell. They are savage werewolves. Damn it. They are involved in this, too?”

“Werewolves?” Looking at the two brawny men who had grey hair, Katrina identified them with magic.

...

The night was dark.

Yakov suddenly woke up from a nightmare, only to discover that his body did not have the slightest strength. He looked around in shock and saw Anna and the other mercenaries who were also kept in the prison.

“This is...” It was not until then that he remembered that the previous battle was not a nightmare but what happened in reality. It was impossible for him to resist the grand knight, so he was knocked out.

“Boss...” Anna’s tearful voice echoed. She did not understand why they were ambushed in the manor by a bunch of enemies that they could not resist when they had already got rid of the dangerous mercenary life! She was chilled and horrified just thinking about it.

Would they be killed this time?

Taking a deep breath, Yakov held back his fear with his knightly willpower. He pacified his partners, “Don’t worry. Since they didn’t directly kill us, it means that we are still useful. There’s still a chance.”

“Hehe. You were not killed only because the ritual demands living creatures.” A creepy voice came from out of the prison cell.

Yakov's pupils constricted. "Duke Duda!"

Chapter 711: Demon Worship Ritual

The voice which sounded like cold wind chuckled. "Is there any point in recognizing me? You will eventually die here. I was going to kill you to eliminate all the leads, but you went to the frozen land on a mission and could not be localized. That's why it has been postponed to this moment."

Before Yakov replied, he burst into laughter. "You should hate your Boss Yakov instead of me. If he hadn't got involved in this, you would be enjoying your life, but right now, even if you don't know anything, I will not let you go. Cry, tremble, and be devastated while you enjoy the last episode of your life!"

After the cocky laughter, the prison cell fell into utter silence again. Yakov's curses, mockery and begging had no replies at all.

"...I will escape out of this place. I will tear your heads off and feed them to bears!" Yakov did not stutter at all at this moment, but gradually, his was the only voice in the whole prison cell. The mercenaries who cursed with him became quiet.

Under their weird eyes, Yakov stopped 'taunting' and looked around at the mercenaries, only to see their indifferent if not hateful faces.

Chilled, his voice became low. "Do you hate me for involving you in Duke Duda's matter?"

"We didn't do anything, but we've been caught and may be killed any moment. Boss Yakov, do you not think we should be angry? You should at least let us know what it's about?" Hack, Yakov's right-hand man, asked bitterly.

"Why didn't you mention that you pissed off Duke Duda? I wouldn't have stayed if you said that!"

"Ass*ole, you should answer for what you did alone!"

"Enough! That's enough!" Anna suddenly shrieked in fury. "What did you say when Boss Yakov became knight? Boss Yakov never

wanted to get us involved. It's only because Duda is too vicious a villain!"

In tears of anger, she could not accept that the peaceful and happy team became this!

"Is Sister Katrina right that one's real personalities will never be revealed until the most dangerous and desperate moment?" She somehow recalled something that Katrina said to her earlier.

Anna's shriek and accusation silenced the prison cell. Then, Yakov's dull voice echoed again. "It's alright if you resent me, but are you going to abandon the hope of survival by fighting amongst ourselves?"

"But there's a grand knight..."

"Duke Duda hasn't taken action yet. He must be even more horrifying!"

"It's hopeless!"

Yakov said calmly but firmly, "Only after you try will you know if there's a chance of escape. Duke Duda said that obviously to stoke discord. As far as I know, he revels in the pain and desperation of other people. So, I wouldn't let him get what he wants even if I die. What about you? Are you going to die being mocked?"

"Well said!" Somebody applauded outside. Duke Duda said with a smile, "Yakov, I remember that there was a very beautiful lady in your team. She was more gorgeous than most noble ladies, and you seem to like her very much, don't you?"

"What do you want?" Yakov clutched the bars.

Anna shouted in anger and fear, "It has nothing to do with Sister Katrina! She joined us halfway and doesn't know anything!"

"I love destroying what people like bit by bit in front of them while I enjoy their countenance and reactions. That reason is good enough." Duda laughed even more crazily. "Two adult werewolves have been sent to capture her. They are both very strong. Maybe,

she wouldn't be able to bear them. Hahaha.”

“Ass*ole!” Yakov shook the iron cage hard, his eyes bloodshot.

Anna shook her head in horror. “You are a demon! A real demon!”

In tales, demons loved slaughter and destruction most.

“That’s the greatest compliment for me.” Duda was not infuriated at all but laughed in satisfaction. “Right, I’m in a good mood, but I’ve decided to advance your time of death to right now. In such a way, you will never have the chance to escape.”

Hearing that, the mercenaries all lost their momentum. The morale that was just boosted by Yakov turned into desperation.

...

Thanks to the sparse population of the Schachran Empire, the manors here were much larger than Rentato’s, and the quiet manor before them was even more so.

“This is Duke Duda’s manor.” On an evergreen, Viscount Carendia stood on the end of a branch as if he were weightless, his black cape shivering with the twigs.

Katrina floated next to him without saying a word. She summoned her spiritual power, and a black-and-white eye appeared before her. It looked mysterious and creepy.

She followed the sorcerers’ code of conduct and tried to avoid unprepared battles.

“Secret Eye?” Viscount raised his head and looked at it. A few illusionary bats flew out of his body and snuck into the manor with the Secret Eye.

A moment later, most of the view in the manor was unfolded in their ‘eyes’. The open and secret sentries, the traps, the number of enemies, their distribution, and their average ability were all manifested.

“Several places are protected by mysterious powers. We have to approach them for reconnaissance.” Katrina had always been concise in battles. Then, her body turned transparent, and she disappeared into the night sky.

“The patrols and guards outside cannot discover us at all...” Viscount Carendia said lazily and casually, his body melting into the darkness. “Right, take care of the savage werewolves’ senses.”

The defenders and traps in the manor were knights and reverends at most, nothing worth mentioning for the two experts. It was actually the few wandering werewolves that called for wariness.

They soon entered the manor. As if they were walking among a bunch of puppets, they reached the main hall of the manor!

Feeble waves flashed, and Katrina performed the Secret Eye again, letting it enter the main house through the gap.

...

An altar made of unknown materials appeared before the mercenaries, while swords, daggers and other weapons were placed randomly on the ground.

The altar was completely black, engraved with hideous faces in all directions. They had horns on their head and twisted faces. From their protruding teeth, red blood was dripping nonstop.

After the blood reached the complicated runes at the bottom of the altar, a vague bloody mist was raised, spreading a stinky but sweet smile.

At the center of the altar, a fuzzy human-shaped statue was placed, but it had two pointy demon horns on the forehead.

Its crimson eyes were extremely creepy in the darkness. One glimpse at it was enough to fill a person with the desire to destroy everything in disgust.

Yakov, Anna and the other mercenaries were shoved to the empty ground before the altar. They were more or less agitated after

seeing the statue and smelling the scent.

Duda, who appeared gloomy and arrogant even with his beard, put on a cruel smile. “Those are your weapons, and your partners are your foes. Whoever survives in the end will be set free.”

“Who will believe you? You are a demon-worshipping lunatic!” Anna sniffed, but she did step on a short sword. After all, they needed weapons to escape.

Duda patted his hands, and werewolves and knights walked out of the corner.

He chuckled. “You are free to not believe me, but as a result, your opponents will be them, twelve knight-level experts. Right, one of them is a grand knight. Do you think it is more hopeful to beat them?”

Looking at the strong man who had a giant sword in both hands, Yakov felt that his heart was heavy. That was the grand knight who captured him alive. They both had the blood power of frost giants, but he was completely overpowered.

Was it possible to defeat them? Now that even Yakov and Anna were somewhat desperate, the other mercenaries were even worse. Somebody shouted, “Duke Duda, Yakov is a knight. We can’t defeat him even if we are combined!”

“Hank!” Anna stared at the deputy of the mercenary team angrily.

Yakov looked pale. Was one of his brothers going to kill him for a chance of survival?

“Rest assured. Yakov’s blood power has been confined.” Duda smiled.

The vague mist became more and more intense, and many mercenaries’ eyes were bloodshot. Yes, Yakov was the one who got them into this. They would be freed as soon as he was killed!

“Yakov, this is all your fault. If you feel guilty, don’t resist, and give the hope of survival to us.” Breathing heavily, Hank took up a long

sword.

with clinks, the other mercenaries picked up their weapons.

“No!” Anna shrieked desperately at their ugliness.

Looking at the mercenaries who stood on their opposite side, Yakov fell into awkward silence.

“Yakov, don’t try to be a good guy. If you are killed, I’ll give your Ms. Katrina to my werewolf friends. They like pretty girls best.”
Said Duda.

His noise making obscure noises, Yakov struggled to pick up a longsword.

Duda smiled in satisfaction, and the statue on the altar seemed clearer.

...

“As a matter of fact, I don’t think the brainless werewolves really appreciate beauty. For them, females are the same.” Viscount Carendia refuted Duda’s words casually.

Katrina cast Mechanized Mind upon herself to hold back her fury. Indifferently, she said, “It seems that Duda is the host of the demon worship ritual. We’ll have leads after we capture him.”

“Yes. There are no other experts around except two grand knights.” Viscount Carendia sorted his bow tie as if he were going to a dinner.

...

In tears of pain of desperation, Anna held her short sword and intended to fight until death.

Her head was dizzy because of the stink of blood, and she seemed unable to control her hate. She hoped to kill all the hideous fellows.

Duda stepped back and stopped before a gate that had weird

patterns. Then, he raised his hands and announced, “Let the feast of slaughter and betrayal begin!”

Bloody light arose, and the mercenaries’ lost strength was back.

Raising her short sword, Anna slashed it at Hank painfully.

No. We cannot brutalize each other!

Kill him! He is a wicked traitor!

No, no!

While she struggled in desperation, she heard a deafening explosion and sensed the scorching heat. The gate of the hall was broken by an enormous fireball!

“Lucien’s Fireball?” Everyone’s eyes were frozen.

Due to the explosion, the mercenaries stopped the battle that hadn’t started yet. They saw a handsome man walking into the hall from the dark night outside, followed by a gorgeous lady who had blond hair and green eyes. They roamed so casually as if they were joining a ball.

“Sister Katrina?” Thought Anna in her dizziness.

Yakov and the other mercenaries could not believe their eyes, either.

At this moment, dark shadows of wolves charged at the two intruders. The werewolves were the first to be back to themselves and performed ‘Unholy Blight’, because they smelled the disgusting scent of vampires!

The ‘Unholy Blight’ hit Viscount Carendia and Katrina, but they broke like mirrors.

“Hehe.” A chuckle echoed, and the broken shadows turned into illusionary black bats that carried the intense air of sleep!

“Crap!”

“It’s a trap!”

1

Their eyelids turning heavy, the werewolves collapsed one after another.

Chapter 712: Dazzling Magic

The illusions were broken, and countless black bats spluttered out, filling the whole hall. All the knights and werewolves felt so tired that they simply wanted to lie down and have a good sleep. Those illusionary bats were mostly gathered around the grand knight with the blood power of frost giants and Duda Duda.

Right when Katrina broke the gate with ‘Lucien’s Fireball’, Duda’s body started to change. His brawny body that was almost 1.9 meters tall was further stretched, and his muscles bulged out with black scales. His eyes turned entirely bloodshot, as if he had lost all his sanity and had the purest dire of slaughter and destruction left.

“Demon bloodline!” Enshrouded in the intense bloody mist from the altar, Yakov, Anna and the other mercenaries saw the scene in their dizziness. Alarmed, they were more or less refreshed.

The bloody air around Duda blocked the illusionary bats. Two wounds that reached the bones appeared on his back, from which a pair of black wings grew out. As the wings flapped, he ascended from the ground and looked down at the hall and the altar.

That was exactly the advantages of the demon and devil bloodlines. They could fly and claim the commanding heights even though they were mere grand knights!

Suddenly, a crazy wind was blown at the intense bloody mist and soon cleared it up. The mercenaries felt that their heads were clear, as if they were never woken up from the nightmare until right now. They couldn’t have been more afraid by the feelings of slaughter and hate they had just now. If it had continued, they would’ve turned into demons who killed their partners!

“Sister Katrina!” Anna exclaimed in shock, because it was exactly Katrina who was confronting Duda in the hall. She stood in midair on nothing, and her long gold hair danced crazily in the wind. She was also holding a staff with translucent gems in her right hand, from which a vague fog was spreading out.

The fog quickly spread out, unaffected by the wind.

After seeing the incredible scene, Anna felt that she was still in a dream, which had been visited by the powerful sorcerers in the bards' tales. They could fly with nothing, they could control the weather, and they could create fire and ice. They were the mysterious and horrifying sorcerers!

As the fog spread out, except for where the mercenaries were, the hall was soon drowned in the haze.

The werewolves and knights who lunged at Katrina were stunned. Their eyes lost color, and they let out meaningless syllables, while they drooled beyond their control.

They seemed to have been deprived of the ability to think, and they only had a shell left.

The horrifying werewolves and knights in her eyes had been reduced into idiots by nothing but the fog. Anna raised her head and looked at the ceiling in shock, "Sister Katrina is a sorcerer? And a very powerful one?"

Katrina's current appearance fit her imagination of sorcerers, except that she was not as cunning and vicious.

"Mind Mist? A middle-rank sorcerer... Katrina was the terrifying sorcerer I met the other night..." As an experienced mercenary, Yakov had learnt many things about magic through various channels. After he became an official knight, he also received more files from Count Calcate, which gave him a new, more detailed understanding about sorcery. Furthermore, he had collaborated with an official sorcerer before, so he was able to tell what the magic was based on its performance. But of course, his knowledge was limited to the common spells.

Looking at Katrina's gold hair in midair, the transparent magic runes that surrounded and protected her, and the black fireballs launched by Duke Duda to be absorbed by the runes instead of causing explosions, Yakov felt that his head was completely blank. He was both shocked and frustrated, and he could barely sense

anything.

Hooooooooo!

The grand knight who had the blood power of frost giants expanded. Surrounded by snowflakes, a frigid halo spread out and exiled the 'Mind Mist' around. However, a shadow emerged behind his back, who had a pair of fair and long hands as well as coldly-glittering fingernails. Then, as if he were playing the heptachord, the shadow extended the hand and cut the throat of the 'frost giant'.

Vague black air flashed, and the thick ice at the throat of the 'frost giant' melted without a sound.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!!”

The 'frost giant' screamed in pain, and blood poured out of his throat. He waved his giant swords back, only to break an illusion. Viscount Carendia had appeared in another direction. He licked his right hand and said, “The blood tastes not bad at all, and it is not toxic.”

Such perverted behavior was performed so gracefully and naturally as if he were really tasting the cuisines that the host treated him with.

The frost giants had terrifying strength and were good at ice spells, but those were only useful if they could hit the enemy. Faced with Viscount Carendia whose speed and agility far exceeded level-five grand knights, he was like a helpless kid who got scratched now and then. Viscount Carendia even had the time to take down the werewolves who had been stunned, because he truly detested their smiles.

Looking at the handsome, strong man below and Katrina who was casting the most brilliant spells up above, Anna thought to herself, her fear and concerns gone, “Sorcerers and vampires truly deserve to be the eternal combination of villains in the bards' tales. They are so awesome!”

“Thank god Sister Katrina is here, otherwise...”

She patted her chest, feeling lucky. She also admired Katrina's performance.

While Duda was a level-five grand knight and had demon blood power, he was unable to carry out his strength at all in front of a well-prepared sorcerer. He was affected by the spells and closer and closer to failure. His every attack was either deviated by illusions or blocked by Douglas's Absorbing Wall and Stone Skin, achieving no results.

"This cannot go on..." Because he only had the demon blood power, Duda managed to keep the ability of thought in the battle. Seeing that the frost giant was about to be taken down by the vampire, he began to consider ways to get out of the situation.

Anna, who was slightly relieved, Yakov, who had complicated feelings, and the other mercenaries, who did not know what was going on, observed the battle. Suddenly, they saw that Duda snatched his left arm with his right hand, tearing it off and roaring astoundingly.

"What's he doing?"

"Demons' special ability?"

In their shock, they saw that Duda's left arm exploded into splashing flesh and blood, which neutralized the vague mist and dispersed them.

The Mind Mist was gone, and the remaining werewolves and knights were back to normal. Some of them attacked Katrina with bows or semi-spells, and some charged at the mercenaries with swords, hammers and sticks, hoping to distract Katrina and Viscount Carendia.

The mercenaries were horrified by the ferocious werewolves and knights. They could barely hold their weapons tightly.

While Duda had no time to bother with him, Yakov managed to recover part of his knightly strength. He stood before everyone, holding his longsword, while he calmed the other mercenaries who

were panicked. “Don’t be nervous. I’ll block them. As long as we can persist for one minute, Katrina will finish the battle.”

“Boss, I’ll help you.” Said Anna, even though her legs were shaking.

Right then, a photon of light appeared before her eyes. It seemed to be made of freezing ice, and the werewolves and knights in its range were all transformed into ice sculptures.

“How powerful...” Anna complimented in a low voice.

Yakov felt similarly, but his abundant experience stopped him from standing still. Instead, he jumped out and hit the ice sculptures.

Crack, crack, crack. The few knights and werewolves were broken into glittering pieces that looked like diamonds on the ground!

“Be careful!” Anna suddenly saw that a werewolf approached Katrina stealthily and leaped, trying to catch Katrina’s ankle. She reminded her anxiously.

Her voice was still echoing when the werewolf’s shadow moved. It suddenly hugged the werewolf and dragged the werewolf into a dark well that appeared out of nowhere. Then, the werewolf was nowhere to be seen.

“What a marvelous spell...” Anna was so fascinated by the view that she almost began to worship magic.

Duda who was in midair took the chance to flap his wings and flew downwards. His target was the door which had weird patterns.

The door was right next to him, when he suddenly felt that his guts were rolling and his blood was surging into his head. From dizziness, he hit the ground.

“Professor’s Infrasound Resonance?” He thought in panic.

Then, before he realized what was going on, the scales and armor that covered his body, after Katrina pointed her finger, turned into red, white, black and gold items, some solid, some gaseous and some yeti!

“Elemental Order?”

“Why can she cast spells so quickly? Does she not need to cool down at all?”

In disbelief, Duda watched his armor and his natural scales vanish into thin air. He knew that it was a unique spell of Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans, and it was not strange that his student was capable of it. What was strange was that there was no cooldown between the two spells at all. There was no way that he could’ve avoided it!

What escaped his attention was that the beautiful and cold badge of silver moon on Katrina’s left chest flashed as if it were electric.

Having no time to think any further, he crashed the gate behind him, his body shivering.

In Anna’s eyes, Katrina’s hair stopped moving after the wind died down. She extended her right hand, and a fireball that was much larger and hotter than usual flew out, hitting Duda in his back.

BOOM!

Duda was almost blown into pieces, but he did manage to open the gate. On the other side, Viscount Carendia wiped his hands with a white handkerchief. The frost giant had collapsed before him, with the eyes still widened.

After the gate was opened, an identical altar appeared, except that the statue in the new altar was clearer. It was a human-shaped handsome demon with dark skin.

Right below the demon stood a young man who appeared rather flabbergasted. He had all the distinctive features of the Vladimir family.

“Viscount Andree?” Anna blurted out, sensing strong horror.

Andree shook his head, as if he were devastated. “You shouldn’t have come in. You forced me to do this. You forced me...”

“We’ve caught the culprit behind the curtain so quickly?” Viscount Carendia tossed the dirtied handkerchief to the ground and said to Katrina in amusement.

Chapter 713: The Old After The Young

“Viscount Andree...” Anna repeated the name in a low voice, with uncontrollable fear in her voice.

The young man standing before the altar was exactly Viscount Andree, their future liege. He had a chiseled face, which looked tough and gloomy. Just like the other members of the Vladimir family, he had gold hair, blue eyes and a unique strongman style. It's a pity that his eyes were brimming with indescribable panic at this moment. There was no telling whether it was because Duda and the knight failed so easily, or it was because he was caught on the spot of demon worship.

However, Anna did not notice Viscount Andree's face. Her mind was full of the intelligence, tales and legends of the guy: a talented knight, the future Count Calcate, a member of the Vladimir family, a grand knight at such a young age, and a student of a legendary knight...

Any one of those feats would've scared a common mercenary like Anna. After they were combined, even though Viscount Andree hadn't attacked yet, and even though a powerful sorcerer and a vampire were floating next to her, she felt that her heart was trembling.

“There must be something unique about him. He's certainly one of the most distinguished level-five grand knights, or he wouldn't have been picked by a legendary knight...”

“He's the future Count Calcate. If our battle is discovered, the radiant knights to come will certainly kill us to keep our mouths shut...”

“Also... Also, he is a legendary knight's student. There's no telling if Nicolle, the Storm of Death, has given him any senior-rank items and special abilities... Would Sister Katrina be hunted by legendary knights if she kills him?”

Too many ideas occurred to Anna. Putting the question whether or

not Sister Katrina and the handsome vampire could beat Viscount Andree, his identity was enough to stop them from trying their best. Nicolle would feel that somebody slapped him in the face if Andree was killed two months after becoming his student. Who could escape from the hunting of a legendary knight?

The same fear spread among the mercenaries, and Yakov was no exception. But he soon calmed down. This was Viscount Andree trying to kill them. If they did not resist, they would die now; if they resisted, they might survive. After all, for a legendary knight and Count Calcate, they were just ants. If they ran away, it was possible that those people would be too lazy to chase them.

So, it was not difficult to choose!

“You shouldn’t have come in. You forced me to do this. You forced me...” Before the altar, Andree simply repeated his words, and the bloody mist spreading from the altar got more and more intense.

“What’s wrong with him?” Viscount Carendia always considered himself knowledgeable, but he could not understand Andree’s current status, so he asked through the telepathic bond.

Katrina looked at the abnormal Viscount Andree indifferently and concluded, “He was probably corrupted by the power of demons and is in temporary derangement because we disrupted the ritual. Let’s seize the chance to take him down.”

While she talked, pure, brilliant colors glowed on her body, releasing dazzling light like fireworks towards the mist, the statue and the altar.

When she performed ‘Arcana Light’, she seemed to be wearing a feathered cloak of light and looked fabulous and sacred. For Anna and Yakov, she was like an angel walking on the earth. Such spells had been created by the Congress of Magic referring to divine power. They looked very similar except for the lack of special waves of the divine power.

As the light hit the bloody mist, dazzling brilliance burst out. However, the bloody mist around this altar was apparently more

powerful. It was only less heavy after being hit by Arcana Light.

Katrina's 'Arcana Light', on the other hand, woke up Viscount Andree. The fear in his eyes gone, he said gloomily, "Like I said, you forced me to do this!"

With his words and his gesture, dark lines glittered on the floor. They spread over from all directions and crawled into the altar, forming a cubic magic circle. Dark fog surged out of the altar, turning the statue hazy and cold.

"Hurry up! The ritual is almost finished!" Katrina attacked the altar and Viscount Andree with 'Lucien's Fireball' and other spells while she urged Viscount Carendia to attack.

She sensed great danger when the ritual was activated. This ritual had almost been completed and was only waiting for the last trigger!

Viscount Carendia sniffed. "And I thought that things were going well..."

The cape behind him flapped and turned into the deepest darkness, enshrouding both himself and the altar and corroding the magic patterns.

Protected by the magic circle, Viscount Andree watched the collapse of the bloody mist and shook his head brutally, "You forced me to do this!"

He took out a dark dagger from his storage bag. It was ivory but carried the intense air of death.

"This is 'Nicolle's Invitation', a senior-rank dagger that my teacher gave me. Now, I'm going to use it as the sacrifice for the ritual. It will turn into the purest and most complete death storm that will consume all of you!" Andree laughed crazily and threw 'Nicolle's Invitation' into the altar.

"You are the master of darkness and the embodiment of desperation. You will freeze the world in the doomsday..." Andree chanted more like a cultist priest than a knight.

“It’s Gonheim that they worship!” Having heard a lot about the Demogorgon of Darkness, Katrina was no stranger to him. She reminded Viscount Carendia.

Darkness surged out of the altar and froze the environment in frost. Suddenly, there was an earthquake, a deep, devastating air mass popped up. Anna felt that she was on the verge of death again the moment she saw it.

All the mercenaries including Yakov were attracted by the air mass. They felt that their souls were fighting their fight beyond their control.

After a collision, the darkness out of the altar was raised by the air mass. Many black bats were blown into the wall and died.

“Death storm...” Viscount Carendia reached Katrina, paler than before. He grimaced, “I hate the battles where senior-rank items are involved most...”

As he talked, he took out a frame from his pocket. Inside the frame was a painting of the silver-haired and silver-eyed Rhine. He looked more formal in the painting than he actually was.

Sensing the near-death feeling, Anna thought in desperation and fear, “Is this the power of legends? A senior-rank item that only contains a slice of the air of a legendary knight is already so powerful?”

She struggled to turn to Katrina, trying to ask her to flee. However, under the deterrence of death, she couldn’t make a sound after she opened her mouth!

“Huh. What’s Sister Katrina doing...” When her head was almost black, Anna saw Katrina pressing a silver badge on which there were all kinds of mysterious symbols with her left hand.

“Haha. You will taste the death storm very soon.” Not caring about the shivering mist and magic circle, Andree laughed crazily.

Anna closed her eyes in pain. The pressure of death was so insufferable. However, she heard the high and distant voice of

Katrina that was different from the way she usually talked.

“The roars from space summons the Atomic Universe...”

In shock, Anna saw a boundless cosmos surfacing behind Katrina. It was deep and dark, and the stars were releasing various colors.

“Space arrival?”

“Cosmos arrival?”

All the mercenaries had similar questions.

Then, they sensed the profundity of the cosmos and the subtlety of stars, as if endless mysteries were contained inside.

The feeling of boundlessness immediately eased their mind that was pressured by death. They could no longer sense any desperation or pain.

“What... What is this power?”

“Is it the legend level, too?”

In their widened eyes, a gaseous form changed into the all-freezing blue, and Katrina tossed out of a tube of colorless liquids.

Enhanced by ‘Atomic Universe’, the tube was broken without any spell, and the liquids hit the collapsing magic circle after being condensed into a weird ray.

The steam was frozen, the mist was frozen, the air was frozen, and so was the bursting black storm of death, which was turned into black snowflakes.

Amidst them, Viscount Andree was frozen, too. His items were broken, and his blood became solid. His shock was frozen on his face.

Then, the coldness was gone, and everything began to melt, turning into drops of water.

Looking at the incredible scene, Anna and the other mercenaries felt that they were still in a dream.

“Had I known that you prepared the ritual, I wouldn’t have brought out the frame...” Viscount Carendia put Rhine’s painting back.

“Evans’ Freezing Ray?”

“Yes.” Katrina looked rather pale. “It seems that Andree held the ritual to worship ‘Demogorgon of Darkness’ to increase his strength and potential.”

“That’s probably right. It explains why he became the student of ‘Storm of Death’ soon after the ritual. Also, the Demogorgon of Darkness is the most devil-like Demon Lord. It’s perfectly normal for him to develop believers.” Said Viscount Carendia, deep in thought.

...

Inside a castle, a mirror-like screen manifested everything that happened in Duda’s manor.

“Master, you could’ve killed them easily.” A beautiful and sexy woman was kneeling next to a young man and feeding wine to him with her own mouth. She had a pair of cute horns on her forehead.

The young man touched the woman’s hair and moved his eyes away from the screen. He had the exact face of Viscount Andree’s!

“Hehe. Even if I did, so what? One of them is a grand arcanist’s student, and the other is a vampire prince’s close descendant. Do you think that things will stop?” ‘Andree’ smiled. “If it were other sorcerers and vampires, I could’ve killed them and blamed it on somebody else. The Congress of Magic and the vampires wouldn’t pay much attention to it. However, since they were the ones who came, I could only give them an ‘answer’. After all, our plan has worked out, and the identity of Andree is no longer useful.”

The sexy woman nodded. “Yes. If the Congress of Magic and the vampires keep investigating, our future operations will be a lot more troublesome. However, how did you know that the Congress of Magic would send Katrina, the Atom Controller’s student?”

Otherwise, Duda would've killed Yakov and the other mercenaries while they were on their way."

"Andree' smiled but did not give a straight answer. "All in all, this is the end of everything. I do not want anything to happen to them, or Lucien Evans and Rhine might come in person. I hate the old who settle scores for the young after the young are defeated..."

Most importantly of all, he was unable to defeat the old yet...

He stood up. His facial muscles twisted, and his height reduced. He turned into an indifferent-looking, black-haired, middle-aged man.

Chapter 714: Farewell

In the north province close to the frozen land, the weather in the Month of Harvest was already turning cold, but today was unusually cozy and comfortable.

A team of cavalrymen rushed on the desert. The sunlight illuminated their black armor and dyed the emblem of bloody bear gold.

They seemed to be searching for something, but they turned a blind eye to the mercenaries not far away from them as if the mercenaries were transparent.

“As I recall, Collective Stealth is a seventh-circle spell, isn’t it?” There was a mister among the mercenaries who did not look like a mercenary at all. He leaned against the horse lazily in a red tuxedo with a cup of wine in his hands, as if he feared that other people did not know that he was a debonair ‘noble’.

Katrina replied to Viscount Carendia’s question proudly. “The study of light has been going on throughout the history of the Congress. Therefore, we have a profound understanding about stealth. Individual stealth and collective stealth are essentially the same.”

“It is not very difficult to create a fifth-circle spell that boasts a partly collective stealth effect. As a matter of fact, you’ve never seen this spell because it can only trick the common knights, Mr. Viscount.”

“Sometimes I envy arcanists. You seem enthusiastic in exploration all the time, and you are never bored, unlike us who spend most of time rotting in gloomy castles. I sometimes feel that life is monotonous and nothing is interesting, and that living is no different from death.” Viscount Carendia sipped the wine, pretending that he was a melancholy artist.

Katrina smiled. “Mr. Vampire, are vampires not spirits? Why are you under the illusion that you are still alive?”

“It does make sense...” Viscount Carendia was suddenly lost for words faced with the lady who grew up under ‘Arcana Voice’ and Lucien’s education.

Anna looked at them with a smile. She delightedly discovered that the mysterious, powerful sorcerer, Sister Katrina, and the indescribably handsome vampire, Viscount Carendia, still had their normal side. They were not as arrogant and condescending as she feared that they would be.

After the cavalrymen were away, Katrina turned around to Anna and Yakov. “Have you decided where to go?”

Since Viscount Andree was Count Calcate’s only heir, the mercenaries feared possible retaliations even though the man should be executed as the culprit for the demon worship case. It was impossible for the Church to protect unimportant people like them all the time.

Therefore, after the incident was over, they seized the time to find their family. Pretending that they had been killed in the feast of slaughter, they left Calcate City with Katrina and Viscount Carendia.

“Sister Katrina, you left the symbol of the investigators of the Congress of Magic in the manor. I don’t think Count Calcate would pay much attention to us. Things will be the same as long as we don’t stay in the north province. So, we’ll choose a place we’re familiar with.” After surviving the crisis, Anna was less apprehensive about the lesser dangers. “What about you? Are you returning to the Congress of Magic?”

Having grown up in the Schachran Empire, they were far away from the knowledge of the world. Except for Yakov who worked temporarily with official sorcerers, the mercenaries never heard of the Congress of Magic or Allyn before. They only knew Holm, which was famous for clothing, unique jewelry and mines, and they often needed to protect the merchants who smuggled such goods.

Although Katrina had turned into a high and mighty sorcerer, the mercenaries couldn’t help but look at her after hearing Anna’s

question, hoping to spend some more time with her.

“Other missions are still awaiting me. I won’t return to Allyn any time soon. Actually, you can go to Holm. It’s freer there and there are plenty of opportunities for practice. You will reach East Haven if you go north to the frozen land and then turn east. From there, it will be easy to go to Holm, especially when you are a knight, Yakov.” Suggested Katrina sincerely.

Anna’s eyes glittered in excitement, but she soon turned gloomy. “Sister Katrina, I actually thought of that before, but... but I’ve been born and raised on this land, and I love it from the bottom of my heart. The food, the architecture, the poems, the stories, the customs, and the way people live with each other are already etched to my heart. I don’t want to leave this place unless I have to. Perhaps, we will go to the few provinces in the east. There are plenty of resources and opportunities, too.”

“I’m thinking the same. Rest assured, I’m a knight. No noble will reject the allegiance of a knight. This is not one of those countries in the south which haven’t fought any war for centuries.” After a brief silence, Yakov said firmly. Maybe he would go to Allyn some day, but that would be when he was already a level-five grand knight, so that he could look at Katrina equally.

Without saying anything else, Katrina simply reminded Anna and Yakov in secret. “You’d better split with the mercenaries like Hank who betrayed you and not let them know your real destination, or they might betray you again in exchange for Count Calcate’s reward.”

Although she was not vicious enough to kill them, she did have the prudence of arcanists.

“...Alright.” Yakov and Anna were reluctant to accept the suggestion, but they finally nodded ruthlessly after recalling what happened in the prison. As experienced mercenaries, they had been used to death and slaughter, and they were certainly not emotional.

Assisted by magic, the team soon reached the frozen land in the north. Anna held Katrina’s hand affectionately, her eyes rippling

with mist. “Sister Katrina, I’ll visit you in Holm sometime if there’s a chance.”

“You are welcome to come anytime. If possible, I may return to the empire again. When that day comes, you will be able to return to your hometown without concerns.” Katrina’s voice became gentle. In the Schachran Empire where there were no electromagnetism messaging, telegrams, wired phones, postal service and mailmen, since Yakov and Anna hadn’t decided which city to settle in, they probably would never get in touch again after their farewell.

Thinking about that, Katrina better recognized the significance of her teacher’s popularization of alchemical items.

Anna suddenly remembered something else. She asked in a low voice, “Sister Katrina, was the cosmos you summoned a legendary power? Was it from your teacher, your father, or...”

“It’s the ‘Atomic Universe’, the demiplane of my teacher ‘Atom Controller’. He’s a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer.” Katrina admitted frankly. Her teacher was certainly not an embarrassment for her. On the contrary, she felt proud to be her teacher’s student.

“Legendary sorcerer! Just like I thought! Is he as strong as the seraphs?” Anna appeared both shocked and curious. She did not know what a grand arcanist or Atom Controller was, but nobody dared underestimate a legendary sorcerer. The former governor of the north province was a female legendary sorcerer named Fitia, ‘Empress of Snow’. Therefore, marvelous stories about her had been left here. They were so unbelievable that people might think legendary sorcerers were only slightly weaker than real gods.

Katrina was good at snow spells partly because of her teacher and partly because of the horror stories of this sorcerer that she grew up with. She was naturally no stranger to the ruler. This ‘Empress of snow’, on the other hand, disappeared after the Magic Empire was destroyed. Nobody knew whether or not she was still alive.

“Seraphs...” Katrina smiled but did not reply. For her, her teacher was certainly stronger than common seraphs and very close to the Angel King.

After Anna, Yakov and the rest of the mercenaries embarked on their journey on the frozen land, Viscount Carendia finally said with a smile, “Evans is still not famous enough in the Schachran Empire. I believe they would’ve been more shocked if you compared him to ‘Observer’, ‘Silver-eyed Count’ or ‘Rhine Carendia’.”

That was because Rhine was on the execution list of the North Church, too. Lucien, having grown too fast and barely dealt with the North Church, on the other hand, was not wanted. The North Church understood its abilities very well and did not list all the leadership of the enemy forces. They’d only chosen the enemies who ‘committed crimes’ in their jurisdiction.

“The execution list of the North Church is not authoritative enough; the Cleansing List is much more-acknowledged...” Katrina talked as if it were arcanist study. For a sorcerer, to be included in the Cleansing List was an honor.

After a little chit chat, Viscount Carendia became solemn. “I still feel that there are a lot of enigmas in the demon worship case. The truth might not be what we guessed. Perhaps, Viscount Andree was also merely a chess piece...”

His suspicion came from the coincidences in the event. He did not have any proof or speculation so far.

“Yes. That’s why I simply listed the incidents we’d been through in the report that I submitted through the artificial planet. I didn’t draw any conclusion so that the misters of the Affair Committee wouldn’t be influenced. Perhaps, they have intelligence that we are unaware of...” Katrina nodded approvingly.

With the artificial planet, she submitted the mission report easily that night. Sometimes, the world seemed small to her, because there was absolutely no problem in communication when Allyn was so far away. It was not until when she saw Anna off just now that she realized that the world was still big, so big that two people might never see each other again after they said goodbye to each other.

“I’ve found my father’s traces around, so I need to hunt him. I have to step away from your next mission.” Viscount Carendia said with

a smile, but his eyes were cold.

Father? Hunt? Are you not going to take care of that, Mr. Rhine? Katrina was very curious, but she was rational enough to not pursue any further. She left for Dumute on her own.

.....

In Allyn, inside the Atom Institution...

Having just upgraded the Moon Timer, Lucien saw Heidi walking towards him with a journal in her hand the moment he entered the library. His student said passionately, "Master, this paper on 'Elements' has constructed a possible model for your speculation on negative energy and antiparticles."

"A possible model?" Lucien had guessed what it was about based on the current studies. He asked back with a smile.

"Yes, the negative energy is the ocean in the vacuum. Perhaps, that is the source of our magic? Vacuums are not necessarily empty." Heidi was quite interested in that. Annick and Sprint, also interested in the article, joined them.

Lucien smiled thoughtfully, "Yes. Vacuums are not empty."

Chapter 715: Ocean of Negative Energy

As they spoke, Lucien picked up this issue of 'Elements' and glanced at the title, only to discover that the author was one Telaviv that he did not know. He was a level-four arcanist and fifth-circle sorcerer.

"He's perhaps a newly-promoted sorcerer. Only such young people could've proposed the model without being burdened by experience..." Lucien thought to himself.

It was not because Douglas, Brook, Fernando and Hathaway would not consider the possibility of negative-energy state and antiparticles, and in what form they should coexist with the regular matter if they did belong to this world. However, even if they had such speculations, they wouldn't propose it recklessly but would wait until antiparticles were proved.

If they ever proposed a similar model, the only reason would be that the model would contribute to the discovery and confirmation of antiparticles and negative energy; it's obvious that 'vacuum ocean of negative energy' would not.

In his paper, Telaviv, the strange arcanist, proposed a ubiquitous, all-pervasive 'ocean of negative energy' based on the properties of the microscopic particles.

According to Fernando, electrons would always fill the 'orbit' whose energy level was the lowest. Since negative energy was lower than all existing energy levels, it was obvious that electrons would leap towards that direction. It's like a building's foundation would always be built first, and then it was the basement, the first floor, the second floor, etc.

Not only would the energy caused by such massive transitions destroy the whole universe, but all the observed phenomena so far had convincingly disapproved of the possibility. That was why Dieppe, Larry and other people who concluded negative energy at the beginning thought that their result was mistaken due to their inconsiderations.

After Lucien proposed his quantum equation and foretold the existence of antiparticles, many arcanists began to consider why electrons did not have such changes if negative energy did exist. Therefore, Telaviv reached the bold conclusion that electrons did not ‘advance’ towards the negative level according to their ‘natural instincts’ because the negative energy level had been occupied by the other electrons and they could not press any further.

Also, he inferred based on such a distribution of electrons that negative electrons could not be observed by the arcanists, at least not so far. Therefore, in his model, every place in the whole world was filled with negative electrons. They were so dense that humans were essentially living in an ‘ocean of negative energy’. Even the vacuum was the same. There were no real vacuums!

Therefore, it was a ‘negative ocean’ that ‘drowned’ the universe and boasted ‘infinite energy’.

However, negative electrons could be activated. After they transitioned into observable, regular electrons after absorbing energy, a hollow would be left inside the ‘negative ocean’. This hollow had the opposite electric charges and the same mass of the negative electrons, and the hollow would be the positive electrons (aka antielectrons and positrons).

After reaching that part, Telaviv continued his guess with the imagination of sorcerers, which was beyond the ‘Dirac sea¹⁴’ from Earth. He believed that the ubiquitous ocean of negative energy was the reason why extraordinary powers such as magic could exist. Spiritual power, willpower and magic patterns were essentially communicating with this ocean of energy in special ways, thereby acquiring unimaginable power that could change the world. Therefore, it was the origin of magic and other supernatural powers and provided an explanation of the conservation of energy in magic.

Hellen, the Witch of Iceland, had tested the conservation of energy between spiritual power and magic a long time ago. The spiritual power consumed equaled the energy that a spell contained at the beginning. The reason why certain spells were much more destructive than the spiritual power consumed was that the spells

interacted with the environment and triggered a chain reaction. The most typical example would be 'Eternal Blaze'. However, the question remained, how was the spiritual power refilled after it was consumed?

Replenishing spiritual power with magic potions was normal. Nobody questioned the source of the energy. However, the natural increase of spiritual power was rather strange. Neither the slow recovery in daily life nor the rapid recovery in meditation had a convincing energy source. It was not like the spiritual power was recovered based on nothing, right? When something was increased, something else should be decreased, but no decrease had been observed so far.

There were two mainstream explanations regarding the question before. The first one believed that the recovery of spiritual power boiled down to the reactions within the soul. To put it simply, the soul was like a controllable fusion reactor that provided steady energy for oneself. However, this explanation was faced with the same problem: even reactors needed raw materials; what did the soul consume to generate energy?

In response to that, the most 'romantic' grand arcanist, Oliver, proposed a model that looked legitimate: what the soul consumed was 'itself'. When 'itself' was entirely consumed, it would be the end of one's life. That was why the increase of magic abilities could extend the longevity after the soul was fortified. Longevity could be expanded through rituals also because they filled up the attrition of the soul.

However, this model had its own flaws, and even Oliver did not entirely agree with it. According to his theory, if one were to use less or even no magic, their longevity would be significantly improved, but in reality, the life gap between the arcanists who used magic less often and those who used magic frequently was not distinctive.

The other explanation on the recovery of spiritual power was that the energy came from the 'truth of the world', and 'meditation' was a way to connect the soul to the 'truth of the world'. It could be confirmed by the fact that sorcerers could receive feedback from the

truth of the world while the other classes couldn't.

As to where the truth of the world was and how the energy was transmitted, it would be a different problem.

However, it could not explain why knights and magic creatures could also recover on their own, unless they were also connected to the 'truth of the world' but somehow could not receive the feedback of the 'truth of the world'.

Because little progress had been made on what the soul and the 'truth of the world' were, the two mainstream explanations were mere hypotheses that were not supported by any theory or formula.

Telaviv's model of negative energy, on the other hand, described a ubiquitous ocean of energy and explained the recovery of spiritual particles in the most straightforward way based on the Lucien equation as well as the verifiable negative energy and antiparticles.

'Meditation' was the communication between the soul and the ocean of negative energy. Because it was ubiquitous and boasted almost infinite energy, the soul could absorb energy from it to recover the spiritual power. The feedback of the 'truth of the world' would cause certain changes in the cognitive world that intensified the communication with the ocean of negative energy.

By the same logic, the model of negative ocean explained why certain polymorph spells required enormous energy to sustain but little energy to be triggered at the beginning. After Lucien proposed the mass-energy formula, the studies on those spells resulted in suspicion of the conservation of energy. However, Hellen devised a spectacular experiment that the non-conservation of energy in the general sense did not exist.

The model was so significant that Telaviv appreciated the Congress of Magic, Mr. Atom Controller, Lucien equation and the hypothesis of antiparticles emotionally after finishing the main part of the paper. He also nicknamed his model of negative energy as 'spring of magic' and 'supernatural ocean'.

"This is a paper of great significance. It marks that we have a whole

new direction to study the nature of magic...” Lucien browsed through the paper and remarked unbiasedly.

Under the magic lamp, Heidi asked, her eyes glittering like crystals. “Master, do you acknowledge the model?”

“Acknowledge? How can I acknowledge a paper that does not have experiments and phenomena? His ideas are very innovative and have given us a new path that may explain the nature of magic, but it remains to be seen whether or not it is a wrong path. Everything has to be based on math and experiments.” Said Lucien with a smile.

Although he knew that the model had been abandoned on Earth, he was not in a hurry to disapprove it.

On one hand, Lucien was exploring in the mist himself. The more he studied the microscopic domain, the more he realized that it must be the fundamental reason for the differences between the two worlds. As for which specific part caused the differences, it still required future explorations. Therefore, he could not disapprove it just because the theory was proven wrong on Earth but had to do so with his own experiments and deductions.

On the other hand, Lucien also hoped that the model could inspire the arcanists to consider more about the essence of magic. For a long time, the studies on the essence of magic had been mired in difficulties. Most arcanists had lost their interest in that. Instead of considering why there was magic, they simply devoted themselves to the creation of new spells and the modification of existing spells, hoping that the reason would reveal itself as they went deeper on their respective path. After Lucien proposed the observer effect in the microscopic domain, their methodology seemed correct.

“Our teacher is right. It’s only a possible model, but with the model, the quantum state, the quantum superposition and the observer effect do not seem necessary to explain the essence of magic.” Deep in thought, Layria said in a daze, which made Heidi chuckle. Was she implying that their teacher’s ‘observer effect’ was wrong right in his face? Well, Annick and Sprint must be happy about it. Their appreciation of the paper was all over their faces.

Lucien smiled. "This can only explain the recovery of spiritual power. It cannot explain why the ocean of negative energy is communicable or why there are a myriad of different spells. That's probably the category of the observer effect, the quantum state and the quantum superposition.

Annick and Sprint did not have any theory to explain those questions. Therefore, even though Lucien could tell that they did not agree with him, they did not propose any argument.

"Are there any other papers?" Asked Lucien casually while he kept browsing the journal.

Chapter 716: The Casual Walk Before Dinner

Chapter 716: The Casual Walk Before Dinner

Layria pulled two of them out from the pile of journals. “Basics of Mathematics has been a heated discussion topic this month, and the barber paradox has been drawing the most attention. People call it the big crisis in mathematics.”

Although Layria was also good at mathematics, she was still an arcanist who was more into element and alchemy studies, and her interest in mathematics was more for its application. Therefore, she was not at all as anxious as those arcanists from Tower. Instead, she was quite excited.

Taking over Arcana and Nature, Lucien saw the papers written by the president, his teacher, and Hathaway on Basics of Mathematics. On the one hand, they had confirmed the significance of Basics of Mathematics as it helped promote the many studies in mathematics; on the other hand, they also believed that the solution to the barber paradox had to rely on the further development of set theory and its more strict definition.

Before the Basics of Mathematics was born, there was no solid concept of set theory in the Congress. Many mathematician arcanists had realized that set theory could help build the entire palace of mathematics, and thus, it was the foundation of all mathematical findings. Therefore, all the grand arcanists and other arcanists from Tower hoped that they could make the most of the value of set theory while strictly avoiding the possible paradoxes.

However, they did have different beliefs even though they agreed upon the significance of set theory. Some arcanists, for example, Douglas and Hathaway, believed that mathematics should also follow logic, while others, for example, Fernando and Lucien’s concept of the axiomatization of math, believed that mathematics consisted of pure symbols and carried no substantial content, and as long as two mathematical theories were not contradictory to each

other, studies on both of them could always proceed. Meanwhile, there were still some other trends.

Of course, it was very hard to tell which was correct and which was wrong. All of them could facilitate the development of math, although to different degrees.

“It seems that we haven’t been frightened by the paradox. Arcanists are full of passion to solve the problem.” Lucien grinned.

His students were a bit speechless. The way their teacher was talking was like he wasn’t the one putting forward the paradox.

Lucien leafed through the journal and saw Bergner’s paper on “Goldbach’s conjecture”. Bergner admitted that the conjecture could not be proved at the moment, but it could be approached step by step. That could be done first by proving that even numbers could be written in the sum of the product of M prime numbers and the product of N prime numbers. In other words, they had to prove “ $M + N$ ” first, and when they could reduce M and N to one, the problem would be solved.

“Sir, they’ve given your conjecture an interesting name, ‘ $1 + 1$ ’. But Mr. Bergner is still on his way to prove ‘ $9 + 9$ ’.” Heidi grinned. “But sir, you haven’t solved it, have you? Did you throw the conjecture at us on purpose?”

“I have not...” Lucien shook his head, feeling amused. He expected that Nature would publish many papers on proving “ $M + N$ ” in the following years, and he hoped that a few decades later, someone could reach “ $1 + 2$ ”.

After their discussion on the latest journals was done, when Lucien was about to go back to his own office, Heidi asked, “Sir, I heard that the kingdom is going to hold a Rentato Music Festival, and your opera *The Valkyrie* will be on the opening ceremony?”

“It should be, if everything goes well,” Lucien admitted.

These students’ eyes lit up as they looked forward to this opera. In the past years, Lucien had put much of his effort on studying magic

and arcana, so he only produced some short piano pieces and light music pieces, which quite disappointed his fans. It was said that the opera was from Lucien's years of effort, and thus, it must be perfect and would become a classic.

Sprint was not one of them. He curled his lip as he did not understand their passion. He did not have a specific preference for music.

Later, Lucien walked back to his own office and started staring at the parchment roll in front of him.

After a while, he finally picked up his quill-pen and dipped it into the ink bottle. He then wrote down a title—"Determinism, Free Will, and the Source of Magic".

Although the title resembled Mr. Schrödinger's famous paper named Indeterminism and Free Will, the contents were only similar to a very limited extent. After analyzing the inherent contradictoriness of determinism, Lucien introduced self-awareness and led the discussion to the relationship between the effect of the observer and the origin of magic. Like the model of the ocean in the vacuum, there was no theoretical evidence for this.

"Since awareness has its influence on microscopic particles, the material basis in our world seems to be less firm, so things around us change when we add spiritual power or corresponding magic patterns to them, and magic spells are thus produced. For example, some of our transformation spells work in the way that they reform our bodies on the microscopic particle level. Most magic spells that are not cast with permanent effects have limited lifespans. In the past, we believed that this was because magic effects were 'rejected' by nature, but now, I prefer to use the effect of an observer to explain it. Once the 'observer' appeared, the magic effect would collapse...

"The change in blood powers might come from the instability on the micro-level, for example, the transition of quanta...

"... Some magics require large quantities of energy, which exceeds our spiritual power. But the question is, where does the energy

come from?

“... In some transformation spells, materials can be added or removed. As for reduction, we can understand it in the way that the reduced part of the material is temporarily stored in the time and space created by the magic and will resume after the spell’s time is up. While this reduction process is understandable, what about the addition of materials? Do those additional materials grow out of nothing? Even if they are formed in this way, according to the law of conservation of mass and energy, the energy required is great. Then where does the energy come from?

“So my assumption is that when casting a transformation spell, what we get from the surroundings is not energy, but basic substances. But where do these basic substances come from?

“...Maybe the existence of the ‘real world’ can solve our problem, but how does the ‘real world’ exist? Does it exist in every corner of the universe, which means that real vacuums never exist? What is the nature of the ‘real world’? Why can it provide basic substances?

“...Can meditation be described as a process of increasing self-awareness? In other words, the growth of a sorcerer is the process of a weaker observer to a stronger one...”

Lucien wrote the paper all the way to the end without a stop. Finally, Lucien picked it up and released a sigh of relief. He had to make sure that the paper was logically-sufficient, and thus, he had to make others believe that he was inspired by the model of the ocean in the vacuum.

Lucien then put down the paper and turned to ask himself, “Then how should I explain transformation spells... How do they actually work?”

In the afternoon, after submitting the paper to the Sorcerer Administrative Department, Lucien returned to the Atomic Universe and saw Natasha sitting on the couch, absent-minded.

Lucien wondered why both of them were in such an absentminded state today. He walked to Natasha and waved his hand in front of

her eyes.

“What is it?”

Natasha, in her long, purple dress, was woken up from her thinking with a start.

She smiled. “It’s close to Rentato Music Festival now, so I think I’m missing Aalto.”

“I see. I sometimes do, too.” Lucien smiled and pulled Natasha up from the couch. “If you want to, let’s go and take a walk in Aalto right now.”

“What?” Natasha was a bit surprised. Since when did Lucien start taking actions without any plans?

But she still grinned and said, “Alright. We’ll enjoy dinner in Aalto.”

There was no need to plan for a casual walk!

Chapter 717: A Day in Aalto

Aalto in October was like a piece of fruit on top of a cake, sweet but slightly cold. The broad countryside was covered with golden crop fields that formed a sharp contrast to the yellow Laval trees in the city. Together, they formed a picturesque view. Music, which was produced by diverse musical instruments, could be heard from some distance, which added the beautiful background music to the picture. Aalto deserved its title, the City of Music.

“Melzer Black Forest always looks this dark...” said Natasha. She was standing by the Belem River and staring at the trees on the other side of the water. Autumn wind brushed her long, purple hair in the air.

The black forest was full of memories of her earlier years. There was hard work, pain, and joy in the forest. And she would never forget what once happened to her in it.

“Black fir trees, unique to the area surrounding the Dark Mountain Range. Their color can come from the contamination of a specific alternate dimension...” said Lucien in the tone of a professor.

Natasha was amused. “I don’t care why they’re black. What really matters to me is that I was once chased by cynocephaluses, suffered bad pain from eating wrong fruits, banged my head to the ground from paralysis due to poison, got stabbed in my lower abdomen and then someone had to put me on his back to run for our lives...”

She knew that Lucien wanted her to cheer up.

“You got chased by cynocephaluses? I thought they’ve never been a problem to you.” Lucien was quite interested. In his eyes, Natasha must have been a little Valkyrie since she was a little girl.

Natasha curled her lips. “Less than ten of them, yes, I could nail it. But the problem was that there were hundreds of them, and one of them could even cast spells!”

“What on earth did you do to make several tribes of cynocephaluses

chase after you?” Lucien laughed.

Natasha hesitated a bit and waved her arm in the air. “Can’t remember!”

“But you’ve been saying that you never forget anything...”

“Not all the time. I just can’t remember!”

Chatting cheerfully, they walked along the river and enjoyed the soft breeze.

At this time, Natasha stopped and pointed at the riverside where lots of garbage piled up. “Is this the place you dug your first bucket of money?”

“Yeah... Many thanks to the princess who dropped the Nightingale veil that helped me take the first step out of the slum.” Lucien saw the garbage piles and got a bit emotional.

On the garbage piles, a couple of poor folks were enduring the stink to look for anything that might still worth something. On the river bank stood a stocky man who was supervising them with his arms folded. Even in October, he was only wearing a thin, brown coat.

Natasha sighed, “This place is still under the control of the gangsters.”

“New gangsters after Aaron Gang.” Lucien was not surprised. The birth of a new gang was no surprise in Aalto. It was just a matter of time.

The stocky man noticed Lucien and Natasha. He was about to warn them and make them walk away, but he turned to look away after seeing the fancy clothes they were wearing. In his eyes, they could be nobles, so he had to be careful.

To his great relief, the couple did nothing but kept walking toward the gate of the market zone.

It was time for high-tea, and the guards standing by the gate were feeling very fatigued. After taking a glance at Lucien and Natasha,

who had slightly changed their looks, one of the guards waved his hand and let them in because both of them looked quite decent.

The market zone was still the same kind of busy, and the common tongue in Aalto accent and how people dressed instantly pulled them back to their early memories.

“It feels like we have never left here...” said Natasha. She had many times ridden through the gate and come to the market wearing a veil to find interesting gadgets, so she was very familiar with this place.

Lucien nodded and then took a deep breath. The air mixed with the smell of barbecue, assorted spices, dyes, tobacco, liquor, and stinks pulled him back to the very beginning when he had to bend his back to feed himself.

“I was once a laborer here,” Lucien pointed at one of the shops and said, “but I wasn’t strong enough. A single sandbag could make me fall to the ground.”

Natasha smiled and listened. From time to time, she pointed at a store and said, “This grocery store is like fifty years old. When I first visited it, it was the grandpa who was running the place, but now, it looks like the grandson has taken over...”

“...The owner of that place recognized me when I was buying a heptachord there, and he almost passed out...”

Lucien also shared his experience. “... On this street, John and I taught the gangsters a good lesson...”

That was the first step for Lucien to start accepting the world.

The passersby noticed the couple dressing in fancy clothes walking through the market, but Lucien and Natasha did not care.

Lucien and Natasha walked out of the market and entered the administrative district. The street started getting quieter. Only some street musicians and bards were playing wonderful and soothing music.

Serenade for strings in G major, Moonlight, the second movement of New Country Symphony, Pathetique, For Silvia...

As Natasha listened to the music pieces, they triggered lots of her memories. She said to Lucien, "You left Aalto a long time ago, but your music works are still remembered by people. They're classic."

"Listen, your march is also being played," said Lucien.

Natasha was quite proud, but she also said, "If we compare it to a few years ago, I have to say that your music pieces are less popular now. There are many new pieces coming out."

Both of them paid close attention to the development of music in Aalto, so they were familiar with the new music works.

"It's good. Things are always under development and progressing. If there are no new pieces coming out, Aalto's music will have been dead. Fortunately, it's not." Lucien did not mind it.

Natasha and Lucien came to a restaurant where in front of the door there was a street musician playing Pathetique. It was very challenging to most musicians, but he was very good at playing it. Many people were gathering because they could appreciate his skills and talent.

The first part of the music was played very well, as the depression, pain, and tragedy in it were all fully presented, and the last movement was even better. The exquisite skills had fully gripped the listeners' hearts.

Loud applause followed.

The young piano player was a bit surprised by the applause. He was just sitting behind the piano, looking a bit lost.

He was from a small town and came to Aalto a few months ago. He was talented, and he had been practicing very hard since he was a kid. However, the things that he experienced in the past several months had started to make him doubt himself, and the poverty he suffered from had forced him to take such a job playing in front of the restaurant. The warm round of applause was totally out of his

expectation.

“Good. There are true feelings in it, not just showing skills and playing.” Natasha also applauded and took out a coin.

Smiling, Lucien stopped her. “Are you gonna give him a queen coin?”

After driving away the South Church, the Kingdom of Holm was also minting new coins. A queen coin was equal to a Thale, but there was the queen portrait on it.

Natasha was a bit embarrassed. “Didn’t notice. You’ve got a Thale?”

Lucien took over the coin and gave it a gentle stroke. The queen coin instantly turned into a Thale.

The young players started bowing to the listeners to show his gratefulness. At this moment, he saw a shining coin falling in front of him.

A Thale? He was shocked. That was too generous.

A soft voice spoke, “You played very well, and there were your feelings in it. Your feelings turned this music piece into your own version. That’s very good. But your understanding of the music piece and some skills are still a bit problematic...”

The young player was very surprised, but the gentleman’s analysis was right. He had been feeling bothered by some problems in his playing but could not find a way to solve them, and the words from the gentleman had taught him a great lesson.

After a while, when he realized what just happened, he found that the gentleman and his wife had left. He could only see them walking away from behind.

He wanted to chase after them to say thank you, but the owner of the restaurant was still watching him.

“Thank you!” he said out aloud from behind.

Such a profound and well-mannered gentleman must be a musician!

Lucien did not look back, but he raised his hand.

“You like being a teacher.” Natasha smiled.

Lucien said, “It’s not really about being a teacher. It was out of appreciation. If it had not been Mr. Victor and his instruction, I wouldn’t have had such accomplishment now. So when I see someone who needs help, if I can, I’ll give them some help. Perhaps some help is the last thing they need to be successful. I’m giving back to society.”

“Giving back to society... Ummm...” Natasha was a bit amused.

Now they had walked to the Musicians’ Association in Aalto and saw the unique-shaped building, which was known for its unbalanced beauty.

In their eyes, the building looked the same to them, as if they just saw it yesterday. But shortly after, Natasha shook her head and looked around. “I’m not sure if it’s a good thing though, that Aalto isn’t changing at all. By contrast, Rentato is under constant change.”

Rentato was during its most rapid development period, just like how Lucien had expected. The entire city was going through great changes.

“If we don’t consider ordinary people’s life, maybe Aalto is more suitable for the current music style...” said Lucien objectively.

“You’re right. I don’t think Rentato’s atmosphere really fits the symphony. I think it should be something else.” Natasha nodded seriously.

“Different cultures and different ages give birth to different kinds of music,” said Lucien honestly. He believed that one day, Rentato would even produce rock music.

Natasha was about to say something, but a surprised look appeared on her face. “Mr. Victor...”

Mr. Victor was walking out of the association building. Surrounded by many musicians, he got on the coach and headed for the Psalm Hall.

Lucien watched Mr. Victor getting on the coach, but he did not do anything.

“Don’t you want to meet him?” asked Natasha.

Lucien shook his head and said in a low voice, “It’s not necessary...”

Showing up in front of him would disturb his peaceful life. It wasn’t easy for Lucien to make the Church forget about Victor.

Natasha grinned and changed the topic. “Then let’s go to the Psalm Hall. I wonder who’s playing there.”

“Sure,” Lucien agreed. The anti-magic circle was of no use to a legendary.

Chapter 718: The Wrong Person

Years later, the Psalm Hall looked the same luxury and magnificent. The architecture style was very different from that of Rentato.

In the hall, the waiter was welcoming the nobles and musicians here for tonight's concert. When it was getting closer to the time for the concert to begin, he was getting less busy, so he could finally feel a bit relieved.

For an ordinary citizen like him, being a waiter in the Psalm Hall was a rare opportunity. If he did a good job, he might get a better job offer from a noble or a musician. Therefore, he was very careful with every single word he said and every single movement he did tonight.

Seeing that some young popular musicians were adjusting their bow ties and walking toward the backstage, he was feeling even more relaxed now. Every week, there was a concert in the Psalm Hall, and rarely were there spare seats left. However, the crazy, grand occasions that he once saw seven or eight years ago never happened again.

Seven or eight years ago, he was only a teenage boy, but he could never forget how the young musician's music works made the entire city crazy.

He wondered if people in other countries were as crazy about music. His elder brother kept telling him that people in Aalto loved music because they had nothing else to do.

The waiter thought to himself, *But for ordinary people, what else could they do for entertainment?*

Suddenly, he heard the bell ringing. A pumpkin coach arrived in front of the gate.

The waiter was surprised to see a pumpkin coach, but somehow, he felt that it was okay for a pumpkin coach to be here.

Before he could think much, a gentleman in a black tuxedo got off the coach. He then helped a lady in a long, purple dress to get off.

“Madam and sir, are you here for Mr. Francisco’s concert?” asked the waiter respectfully.

“Yes, please. We need two seats,” said Lucien calmly.

The waiter turned around and led them into the hall. He felt that he had forgotten something important. For example, did they have tickets? For example, why could they just ask for two seats in front of the concert hall?

“Why pumpkin coach?” Natasha was amused by how Lucien took her here.

Lucien rubbed his chin. “Don’t you feel it’s like a fairy tale?”

Then he turned to look at the Psalm Hall and sighed. “In fact, I’m more familiar with the stage than the audience seats.”

“... I never performed here.” Natasha also felt a bit regretful. As a princess, she could not.

The waiter found two armchairs and put them in the last row. The musicians sitting in the last row did not care.

As soon as Lucien and Natasha sat down, the concert started. The musician tonight was Mr. Francisco. He was wearing a fine black tuxedo tonight. He first bowed to the VIP seats, and after that, the rest of the audience.

He had straight nose and thin lips, and his cheekbones were a bit high. He had the very typical look of people from the Holy Heilz Empire. And he was still quite young.

“I was always there. See, that’s Mr. Victor, Mr. Othello, Franz...” said Natasha.

Lucien also recognized Elena, Grace, and Felicia. He smiled and said, “They could never imagine that I would be here in the same hall with them for the same concert.”

Again, Lucien had no plan to meet them.

Francisco picked up his baton. Lucien and Natasha instantly stopped chatting and started enjoying the music. According to the list, this was a piece of symphony called Growth.

Starting from the music scores that were full of suspicion and questions, the melody slowly turned more and more cheerful, which presented the audience a picture of youth and love.

In the melody, every listener revisited their childhood, adolescence, and first love, and then the music scores and musical instruments started getting sharper and more intense. As the pitch rose, the music was like a storm that dragged every single listener back into their most depressing and painful memories.

However, after the storm, the sky had become more clear and blue, and the sun had become even brighter. It was telling the audience that the pain and sufferings would finally go away, and one's life could only become richer with these sufferings and pain.

When the peaceful life reached its limit, the playing of flute was replaced by the confident march, indicating the upcoming challenge.

"Very good, but different from a traditional symphony," Natasha applauded and commented.

Lucien smiled. Such a branch in the symphony in Aalto had finally come into being.

"Single movement symphony. It's more like a poem. While traditional symphony values structure, it is free and focuses on its central idea..."

The musician sitting in front of them heard their conversation and turned around. "You don't know the symphonic poem? Mr. Francisco created it! Did you two just come from somewhere else? This is the most heated music topic in Aalto recently."

Lucien and Natasha exchanged a look between each other, and both of them shook their heads. Lucien was always busy with studying

arcana and magic, and Natasha kept focusing on the kingdom stuff and improving herself as a knight. Even though they followed the development of music in Aalto, they did not always know the most up-to-date information.

The musician continued, “But even though you don’t know much about symphonic poems, sir, your comment was very accurate. It’s obvious that you have a good understanding of music. May I ask if you’re a musician from another country?”

“I’m not a member of any Musicians’ Associations. I just... love music,” said Lucien rather ambiguously.

A dead person would not be a member of the Musicians’ Association of Aalto.

The musician did not insist on asking. The musician explained the symphonic poem and Mr. Francisco to them during the break time. “He’s a musician from the Holy Heilz Empire, and he was a student of Mr. Christopher for two years. Recently, he is known for his passionate piano playing and bold innovation. The symphony you just heard is named Growth, and it’s one of his most famous pieces.”

It seemed that Mr. Christopher had another student after Silvia’s death, which was a piece of good news to both Lucien and Natasha.

“He’s very talented, for sure. You’ve heard him play. It’s a masterpiece! After Mr. Evans passed away, people in other countries said that music in Aalto would gradually die, but now, they should realize they’re wrong! Aalto’s music is in its blood. In the atmosphere of the entire city, with all the legacies left by all the masters, great new musicians will always come out. Mr. Francisco is an example!”

The musician was a bit excited. His eyes were shining as he looked at Lucien and Natasha, waiting for their support.

Lucien smiled. He said in a solemn and casual tone, “That’s right.”

“Yes.” Natasha nodded, feeling encouraged.

After the concert, when the musician turned around again to talk to the noble couple, he realized that they were gone. Only two empty armchairs were left.

Since when did the Psalm Hall accept adding seats? Somehow, he started feeling a bit creepy.

And somehow, he realized that the noble couple looked a bit familiar to him. He started thinking hard.

.....

In Ratacia Palace, Paradise Corridor.

Standing behind the arch window, Lucien and Natasha enjoyed the sunset glow together as the garden was dyed in red. The twenty-four huge mirrors reflected the view like a dream.

Natasha told Lucien the stories that once happened to her here. She was known for her physical strength when she was young, and she once almost destroyed this place.

“We already enjoyed the dinner. It’s sunset. It’s time to go back now. Such a nice walk,” said Natasha while stretching her arms.

Lucien nodded, and he looked at the other end of the palace. “I don’t even know who’s the current grand duke. Isn’t he being rather low-key in the family?”

“It never occurred to him that he could ascend to the throne, but I believe that this is just temporary. Our children, grandchildren, and their offsprings will finally come back to the throne,” said Natasha confidently.

After leaving Ratacia Palace, Lucien and Natasha headed for the city wall. At this time, a person in a red robe walked out of the nearby noble manor. It was their acquaintance, Gossett.

Since they were ready to leave, Lucien and Natasha only slightly changed their looks and did not hide their air.

Gossett saw them, and his eyes suddenly opened big!

“Lucien Evans... Natasha Violet?!” Gossett felt his body totally numb, and he could not breathe. He wanted to run away, but he was unable to; he wanted to cast divine spells, but he was unable to.

His legs were shaking uncontrollably.

Suddenly, he saw Lucien turning around and looking at him, smiling. His black pupils were as deep as a lake. Cold sweat covered his forehead.

After a long time, when Lucien and Natasha walked out of his sight, he could finally breathe again. Gossett hurriedly contacted Philibell, the Grand Cardinal.

“Your Excellency, I just ran into Lucien Evans and Natasha Violet! We can still catch them if we turn on the defense circles!”

It wasn't until he started speaking again that he realized that his voice had completely become dry and hoarse, as if he had not talked for a hundred years.

Philibell was astonished, and he soon found Lucien and Natasha using the divine circle. They were slowly walking toward the city wall. In front of them, there was a boundless universe.

Then Philibell's eyes squinted slightly, and he said to Gossett seriously, “You got the wrong person!”

Chapter 719: Model

The weather was cool and refreshing, and the sky was high with vast clouds. That was exactly the sight of the Month of Gold in Allyn.

“That’s why I love October in Allyn the most...” Thompson, a member of the Affair Committee, stood next to the window with his teacup in his hands while appreciating the scenery outside.

While remarking, he turned around and pushed the gold-edged glasses on his nose, before he asked Conden, his student, “You walked in without asking for my permission after only one door knock. Is there anything urgent?”

Thompson had been amiable to his friends, students, and subordinates and cared little about protocols. Therefore, he did not blame Conden too much for barging in.

As they spoke, he closed the mission report on the desk. That was a rule of the Affair Committee. Those who should not see it must not see it even if they were his students.

This mission report was exactly the one submitted by Katrina. Because she had investigated the demon worship case clearly, the report did not receive much attention in the Task Zone. The senior-rank sorcerer who was supervising the Task Zone browsed through it and believed that the case was already evident. He determined that Katrina’s mission had been accomplished. Naturally, her report went to the file room.

Thompson, however, paid much more attention to the demon worship case, because it had something similar to the several cases in Rentato, Cocus, and the northland where primeval devils were summoned or worshiped, and yet it was fundamentally different.

Therefore, after finishing his work, he retrieved the report and prepared to analyze it carefully, seeing if any Demon Lords had also started to develop the power of faith. More importantly, he wanted to figure out whether the incident was independent, or if it was part

of the series of cases that took place within the jurisdiction of the Congress of Magic so that he could find the Bird of Death behind the curtain.

It was a pity that he saw nothing but the fact that a grand knight increased his strength by worshiping demons from the report.

“However, some of the details are too coincidental. The people involved are already dead, and a long time has passed. It’s barely possible to continue the investigation. It’s not like I can go to the abyss to ask the Demogorgon of Darkness whether or not Viscount Andree worshiped him, or capture Nicolle, the Storm of Death, to let him confess why he recruited Viscount Andree as his student, right?” Putting his right hand on the report, Thompson tapped it softly.

Condén, who stood on his opposite side, was a slim and tall young man. His cheeks were hollowed, and his skin had been “burnt” into redness as if he had taken too much sunbath. There was also a fashionable monocle on his right eye. He apologized quickly, “I’m sorry, Master. After I knocked, the door was opened with a gap. I thought that it was a hint that you were asking me to come in...”

Thompson knew his student’s impatience and honesty very well. He asked in confusion, “The door opened on its own? I forgot to shut it?”

“I don’t know. Well, I ran into Alferris in the hallway. He seemed satisfied...” Condén suddenly remembered something else.

Thompson grimaced regretfully. “Leave him alone... Can I help you with anything?”

A while back, he made a bet with Alferris, thinking that it was impossible for him to be tricked by Alferris’ illusion since he was close to the ninth circle, particularly in the Allyn magic tower. Therefore, if Alferris could take away any items from his office without anybody’s help, he would open the treasury and allow the dragon to pick a lot of gems. It seemed that he had already failed the bet. However, it did not seem entirely bad. At the very least, he didn’t have to be on alert all the time anymore.

“Master, Mr. Evans has submitted a paper entitled ‘Determinism, Free Will, and the Source of Magic’, in which he constructed a model regarding the essence of magic. Although many questions remain unanswered, such as why magic patterns could help us communicate with the truth of the world and what the mechanism behind them is, the paper has indeed opened a new gate for our studies on magic and supernatural powers... After somebody discovered the paper in the library by accident today, it immediately became a hit...”

Condén seemed excited. Plus his impatient character, he talked as fast as a storm, and Thompson could barely understand what he was saying. “Wait, wait, wait. Give me the paper first!”

For a senior-rank arcanist, reading a paper was much easier than listening to the excited narration.

Taking over the paper that Condén borrowed, Thompson glanced at the date. He said both in surprise and in relief, “It was submitted three days ago? No wonder it was not published on Arcana or Magic...”

Generally speaking, no journals would refuse the paper of a grand arcanist as long as it was of some value. They would even compete for such papers. However, Lucien’s works were almost exclusively published on Arcana, Nature, and Elements, although he sometimes wrote for the “Monthly Journal for General Arcanists” when asked to. There was no way that Arcana would have let go of such an important paper, and since it was about the essence of magic, Magic wouldn’t allow other people to publish it easily, either.

He kept reading, and he frowned at the part at the beginning of the paper. It seemed that determinism was truly in peril!

However, as Lucien’s narration went on, his eyebrows relaxed again. He pushed his glasses now and then and remarked in a low voice, “The observer effect is not entirely absurd... The ‘unsteadiness’ of the material foundation... That’s new, but if it’s true, everything behaves so normally when magic and supernatural powers are not involved. Should it be attributed to the mysterious transition between the microscopic scale and the macroscopic scale?

Huh, Lucien had also thought about that... Weak observers and strong observers..."

His attention was completely on the paper. Even though the paper hadn't been confirmed by any experiment or phenomena, and the observer effect was rejected by the mainstream of the Congress, it was logically self-consistent and seemed legitimate.

Conden was not surprised by his teacher's reaction. He picked up a quill and wrote his teacher's questions and opinions on a piece of paper.

"... The energy that replenishes the spiritual power comes from the truth of the world? The additional matter caused by magic comes from the truth of the world? Huh..." In his suspicion, Thompson remembered something. He hurried to turn around and drag an issue of "Elements" out of his bookshelf. Then, holding his glasses, he said in shock, "Is it a problem that the ocean of negative-energy state can solve?"

"Yes. The arcanists who read the paper were all reminded of the ocean of a negative-energy state. It happens to have resolved a few critical questions in Mr. Evans' paper on the essence of magic!"

Conden's ears were keen enough to capture his teacher's murmur.

He said excitedly, "The two of them are connected. One is focused on the source of magic energy, and the other offers a hypothesis on the essence of magic. Together, they've established a complete magic system!"

When he said a "magic system", he did not mean a system of spells.

"I'm afraid that this is the first legitimate model on the essence of magic, no, of all supernatural powers, that has theoretical support." Thompson also grew excited.

In the history of magic, the earliest sorcerers had already asked what magic was essentially and proposed their own answers, such as the system of four elements, namely earth, fire, wind, and water. The ancient sorcerers established a piece of speculation on the

foundation of the world, where they believed that there were energy planes made of purely the same elements. Such planes had been named “Country of Fire”, “Ocean of Water”, etc. Their answers also included the root system, which believed that magic had a root, which was part of the truth of the world.

Such vision on magic had been affecting generations of sorcerers even to this day, as could be confirmed by the term such as fire element. However, due to the lack of exploration by the ancient sorcerers, their visions of magic were purely imaginary and did not have any theoretical reference. It was more like a fantasy than a model defined with arcana.

During the heyday of the Magic Empire, the sorcerers paid more attention to regular research and application. No one bothered to consider the essence of magic. All they needed to know was that spiritual power was the prerequisite to cast spells. Therefore, even someone as great as the Sun King, Thanos, did not come up with a model on the essence of magic.

After the Congress of Magic, studies on the essence of magic were continued. However, due to the insufficiency of other theories, little progress had been made. Therefore, Douglas and the other grand arcanists did not propose their model of magic essence recklessly, in case their whimsical ideas affected other arcanists.

It was not until today that Thompson finally saw a model that described magic from the essence and the origin, and it was also based on the cutting-edge research in the microscopic domain!

Whether or not the model was correct, it was definitely historically significant... Thompson was somewhat in a trance. He had witnessed history again, which happened a lot in the past ten years.

Conden said excitedly, “Somebody described the result of the two papers as ‘Evans-Telaviv Model’. It’s the first model on the essence of magic!”

After a while of discussion, Conden bid him farewell, claiming that he needed to read it more carefully after he was back.

Thompson was somewhat amused seeing his student folding the scribbled paper and putting it inside the magic pouch carefully. Then, his student walked to the door.

Suddenly, Thompson realized something and shouted, “Stop!”

However, Conden had already stepped into the corridor at this moment!

He turned around abruptly, with a mist surging around him. After the mist died away, he turned into a little crystal dragon with beautiful scales.

He dragged a huge ice cream from his underbelly and licked it with great satisfaction. He then said with a childish and gloating voice, “Thompson, you’ve lost!”

The dragon had come when he was considering questions, distracted him by saying that the door was not closed and “Alferis” passed by, gave him a paper to captivate him, behaved exactly like Conden, and only took away the scribbled paper where their discussion was recorded... Recalling those things, Thompson had to admit that Alferis had new breakthroughs in illusion, but he was the one who suffered losses!

Seeing Alferis off with an awful face, Thompson couldn’t help but continue studying Lucien’s paper. “Weak observers... Strong observers...”

He was suddenly stunned. Thinking of the recent investigation, he thought, somewhat in fear, “The accumulation of the power of faith seems to be the gathering of special electromagnetic waves, but it is actually the gathering of weak observers to evolve into a strong observer?

“Well...”

How would the experts who were good at playing with the power of faith view the paper?

Chapter 720: Brook's Expectations

Chapter 720: Brook's Expectations

In the Thunder Hell, Fernando's magic tower...

As long as he was in Allyn and not occupied by other things, Lucien would communicate with his teacher on arcana and magic once a week. When he walked into his teacher's library today, he discovered, to his surprise, the old-school gentleman Brook who was wearing his white wig.

Didn't they "dislike" communicating with teachers face to face and prefer letters? Lucien secretly thought to himself.

Before Lucien greeted him, Brook had already raised his glasses and smiled. "Your paper on the source of magic has been a hit in Allyn in the past few days. I've gotten a lot of inspiration from it too. Congratulations on proposing the first official model on the essence of magic."

Fernando complained not far away, "The observer effect is not a good thing. It will make the world unreal..."

Lucien smiled. His teacher's persistence in the objectiveness of the world could barely make his teacher think highly of the observer effect, particularly since the explanation did not have any convincing proof or meticulous deduction yet. It was nothing more than a scary "prophecy" that a grand arcanist randomly proposed.

"Thank you. To be honest, I'm just getting started about that. There are many parts in the paper that still need discussing, and so does the ocean of negative-energy state," said Lucien sincerely. He believed that his teacher and Mr. Brook could tell that, too. Then, he intentionally changed the subject. "Master, Mr. Brook, what were you discussing?"

He would rather not face his teacher's roar if he could avoid it.

"I was inspired by your quantization of the electromagnetic field

when you studied spontaneous radiations. Also, Annick and Sprint's similar works on electrons have shown remarkable value too. Therefore, I'm hoping to introduce the quantum theory into the classic electromagnetic theory to establish a quantum field theory so that electrons and photons can be better studied and the essence of the electromagnetic force may be figured out."

When he mentioned the essence of the electromagnetic force, Brook's old, slim face seemed to be glowing. That was his cognitive world subconsciously influencing the reality.

On the other hand, when he mentioned the studies in the microscopic domain, he cautiously used photons instead of electromagnetic waves. It was obvious that he found the wave-particle duality of light much more acceptable now. He did not reject the theory that made his cognitive world broken and solidified at the beginning at all. Instead, he was full of momentum to study it.

Fernando, whose hair seemed to be always messy, added in a bad mood, "Then, he dragged me into his studies to solve his problems, completely ignoring that I was busy studying the reason why the reactor lost control and the theories on the weak interaction..."

"Weak interaction" had been named by Fernando with reference to "strong interaction", the nuclear force that Lucien and Hathaway proposed.

He looked reluctant and unwilling, but his red eyes were glittering. Lucien secretly chuckled about it. If his teacher was unwilling to, nobody could or dare force him to study the quantum field theory. It seemed that he had fun in it and was passionate and motivated to establish such a system.

But of course, Lucien knew very well that the establishment of the quantum field theory would go through a long and difficult process from "second quantization" because of the unavoidable problems that loomed in calculation right now, such as the infinite greatness caused by divergence, which had to be resolved through new mathematical approaches. Also, it was only one of the obvious problems.

“After recent studies, we have basically established a general quantum field theory, but it is so flawed that we plan to publish it in advance so that more arcanists could discuss it.” Brook’s delighted and thoughtful reply was within Lucien’s expectation. “It’s great that you’ve come. There are some questions that I would like to discuss with you.”

He sent an invitation straightforwardly.

Fernando’s expression slightly collapsed. He cursed in a low voice, “Goddamn infinity!”

Lucien did not refuse it. He was always happy to join such arcana discussions, which could help him transform the knowledge inside his spirit library into the knowledge that he grasped himself.

Taking over their manuscript, Lucien browsed through it quickly and asked, “Is it not a relativistic quantum field theory?”

“That’s the future plan. Now, we are focused on solving the general problems. If you are interested, we can discuss more often.” Brook did not keep it a secret. The discussion he said was clearly one that entailed paternity right.

It seemed that his teacher did not invite Mr. President to join the discussion. Perhaps because he was worried about the relationship between Mr. Brook and him? Lucien concluded. However, Mr. Brook was not wrong that research should be conducted one step at a time.

“Douglas is too busy preparing for his super-remote space jumps and working on his own projects to pay attention to any more fields. Otherwise, he would be happy to join our work. But right now, discovering a planet may be more important than living for him...” Fernando said, as if he knew what was on Lucien’s mind, not caring that Brook was right next to them at all.

Lucien had studied the problems before. Therefore, he successfully joined Fernando and Brook’s discussion and proposed many insightful ideas.

Fernando and Brook were not surprised at it. They would never believe that Lucien, who proposed the quantization of the electromagnetic field first, had never done any research in that respect.

Time flew fast while they were discussing. In the end, Brook stood in satisfaction and picked up his staff. "While the most critical problem still stands before us like the Saint Truth, we have finally made some progress. Fernando, let's publish the paper by the end of the month and let more arcanists see it. Hopefully, they can come up with more creative and useful ideas."

After the previous communication, he understood that Lucien did not have solutions to the few primary problems either. Of course, he was already prepared that such difficult conundrums might not be resolved in years. He had been through a lot of similar cases.

"I don't think there are more than a hundred arcanists in the Congress who can understand and are interested in the quantum field theory..." Fernando had always been famous for his vicious tongue. "Perhaps they prefer the ocean of negative-energy state and the source of magic caused by the weird features of microscopic particles. That fits all their fantasies."

"Ocean of negative-energy state. That's truly a bit unrealistic. It's hard for me to imagine that I am living inside an ocean of negative-energy particles but cannot sense it at all, but it's not entirely impossible. Hehe. Maybe vacuums are truly not empty," he remarked. "Lucien, what's your opinion on the ocean of negative-energy state? It resolves the energy and matter in your magic design."

"As a matter of fact, I believe otherwise," replied Lucien cautiously.

Brook was clearly interested. "You have other ideas? It's not about the truth of the world that we cannot study just yet, right?"

"My ideas are based on the uncertainty principle. Mr. Brook, do you remember the short enormous rise and fall of energy that I described in my paper?" Lucien admitted his direction of studies honestly, which couldn't be kept a secret from his teacher.

“Vacuum fluctuation?” As he expected, Fernando simply asked back.

After a brief pause, Brook remembered what it was about. “Because time and energy are a pair of values that fit the uncertainty principle, the more certain time is, the more uncertain energy will be... In a very short time range, because of the uncertainty principle, enormous energy will flow out and suddenly disappear even in the vacuum. On average, it still agrees with the law of conservation and can barely be perceived...”

It was even more unrealistic than the ocean of negative-energy state. Tides of energy were rising and ebbing around people all the time, but none of them sensed anything or got affected!

“It can be described as an unsteady ocean of energy.” Lucien compared it to the ocean of negative-energy state so that it could be understood easier.

Fernando never objected to the uncertainty principle. What he objected to was Lucien’s proposition on the intrinsic qualities of matter that it entailed. Therefore, instead of roaring at the “rising and ebbing ocean of energy”, he said carefully, “It can also explain the source of energy. Also, it has something to do with the field theory that we are working on. I think if we work on it, we will come up with a new model that contains antiparticles.”

“In our studies, the intensity of the electric field and the intensity of the magnetic field are a pair of values that fit the uncertainty principle, which means that they cannot be zero at the same time. So, electromagnetic fluctuations happen around us all the time too?” Brook recalled their recent studies.

Lucien nodded his head. “Theoretically, yes.”

Brook said both solemnly and excitedly, “Perhaps we can devise an experiment to observe such electromagnetic fluctuations... If it’s true, vacuums will be truly marvelous!”

After he left in excitement, Fernando finally said to Lucien, “I don’t think you said everything you wanted to say in the previous

discussion, did you?"

You've seen through me again? Lucien smiled. "It's mainly about the definition of matter. Since we regarded the electromagnetic field as a matter a long time ago, why can't we take one more step? Perhaps the field is a fundamental form of matter..."

"Let me think about it." Fernando pinched his forehead.

Seeing that his teacher was tired, Lucien said goodbye to him. At this moment, Fernando said rigorously, "The observer effect is not a decent theory. You'd better not get addicted to it."

Then, after a brief silence, he said, "However, your speculations on the 'unsteadiness' of the material foundation, on the source of energy and matter, and on the fluctuating ocean of energy in the vacuum are all significant areas of research."

Lucien was immediately amused. *Master, you could've been more straightforward if you wanted to praise me.*

1...

"Weak observers... The ocean of negative-energy state..." Inside the Holy City, Benedict III remarked in a low voice while looking at the sunset out of the window.

Chapter 721: Live Stream

Chapter 721: Live Stream

In Samara, a small city in Paphos of Holm...

At the end of the Month of Gold, nightfall had been advanced. The time when sunset dyed everything red was now dim and dark. However, since Paphos was one of the top three prosperous cities of Holm, road lamps and poles were raised everywhere on the streets of Samara. Connected by the electric wires, the magic lamps began to glow with warm and brilliant light, driving the darkness away from their range.

The citizens of the town walked on the street toward the Baron Bechig Square, the only square in town. The magic radio of the city hall had been installed there. Every day, when the night fell, it would deliver the programs such as “Arcana Voice” to everyone aloud.

Since there were more and more channels, the citizens now had trouble choosing. While “Arcana Voice” was excellent and was their primary choice, no program could fit everyone’s appetite. There was always a program in “Arcana Voice” that some citizens disliked. It was a pity that the magic radio was not their property, and they could not switch channels in such cases.

“I have to work harder and save money to buy a magic radio from ‘Gift from Elements’!” Banus, a young man wearing a shirt, clenched his fists and declared.

His friend next to him said jealously and hopefully, “I’m told that in the major cities such as Rentato, whoever subscribes newspaper for a whole year will be given a magic radio for free!”

“Really? That’s much cheaper, isn’t it? Do the newspaper sellers not fear that they’ll be bankrupted?” asked Banus in disbelief. He had never heard such a good thing before.

His friend was a freckled big boy, who combed his hair and said,

"I'm told that those newspapers are all issued by the radio stations for the purpose of increasing the coverage of magic radios. Her Majesty even signed and released the 'Broadcast Encouragement Act' that the Congress submitted. For every magic radio that the radio stations give away, they will receive certain subsidies and tax reductions. Furthermore..."

He lowered his voice and said mysteriously, "I was told that the Congress of Magic is boosting it, too. They give enormous subsidies to the radio stations by way of s. Therefore, the radio stations barely suffer any losses..."

"Sorcerers?" Banus grew excited. Then, he suddenly realized it. "Right, magic radios were developed by them in the first place. The more it is sold, the more they will earn!"

"Of course, you think that the sorcerers who study the nature of the world are fools? They're much smarter than you!" the big boy mocked him.

As for the magic radio's political significance, they did not understand it at all.

Banus suddenly snorted. "Ali, how did you learn it? That's not something that 'Arcana Voice' said!"

He only just began to feel strange. How did his friend, who grew up with him in the same place, become a savant overnight?

The big boy Ali curled his finger and said in a low but proud voice, "Somebody else told me. It's a noble lady from Rentato!"

"A noble lady from Rentato? How did you make acquaintance with a noble lady from Rentato?" Banus was shocked. For the people who dwelt in small cities like them, even though "Arcana Voice" had broadened their horizon, they still revered the nobles of their city from the bottom of their hearts. They thought that those nobles lived a luxury and enjoyable life that was entirely different from the way they lived.

However, the nobles in their city were not worth mentioning

compared to the nobles in Rentato, the capital! If the nobles in Rentato were swans, the nobles in the capital of Paphos would be geese, and the nobles in their town would be ugly ducklings at most—ugly duckling being a term from “Arcana Voice”. The greatest hobby of their nobles was to follow the fashion in Rentato and mimic the nobles of the capital in how they dressed and entertained themselves.

Their nobles were already humble enough, and the civilians like Banus were even more so. They subconsciously believed that they were truly “bumpkins”.

Ali chuckled. “A pen pal. She’s my pen pal!”

“Pen pal? What’s that?” Banus’ long face was full of confusion.

“I asked you to learn words, but you never listened to me. After the postal department was established, activities were introduced by several newspapers to allow people in different cities to become friends by writing letters to each other. Because the communication is entirely based on words, it’s called pen pal.”

Ali explained it to Banus in a great passion. “Think about it. Maybe we cannot get out of this town our entire life, but we can still have sincere friends in Rentato, Paphos, and other major cities; friends who are both strange and familiar and who we can talk to without meeting them in person. What a beautiful thing it is...”

He was obviously fascinated by friend-making through letters.

“It sounds great!” Banus opened his mouth. He was also attracted to it.

It was not until then that he learned the importance of literacy. The greatest difference between him and Ali was that Ali’s father used to be the servant of a certain secretary and learned how to read by the way before he taught it to his son. Banus, on the other hand, had only picked up a few words thanks to Ali’s occasional lectures. He could not read a newspaper at all!

“Such communication does not involve conflicts, lust, faces, or

identities. It's the sincerest way for people to talk to each other." Ali acted as if he were the host of a psychological program in "Arcana Voice". "I learned everything I said from my pen pal. She's a noble from Rentato and has her own magic radio, which allows her to listen to other channels. She can also learn from other nobles. She certainly wouldn't lie about that."

"Good boy, you've hooked up with a noble lady!" Banus bashed Ali in the back.

Ali protested, "What do you mean by hooked up? We are pure pen pals!"

"Dare you say that you never fantasize about her? What kind of noble lady is she?" Banus glimpsed at Ali. He knew his friend too well.

Ali became gentle. "Her tone in the letter is always soft. She must be a well-educated girl. Also, she did not hold any bias after learning my identity. She answered my every question and shared the funny incidents in her life. Her words are slim and beautiful, just like herself..."

Looking at Ali's face and hearing his description, Banus couldn't help but suggest, "Ali, you must remember that she is a noble and you're just a common civilian."

"I know. We're pure pen pals!" Ali waved his hands, hinting that he understood it. Then, he changed the subject and talked about the view of Rentato that his "pen pal" told him, further exaggerating the changes that were already unbelievable by themselves.

"Big cities are really great. There are such kindhearted noble ladies and such astonishing, life-changing stories..." Banus was shocked. Although "Arcana Voice" mentioned similar changes, it was not nearly as detailed as what Ali described. "Also, only the city dwellers will be given a magic radio if they subscribe to newspapers for a year!"

"Yes, I have to visit Rentato someday!" Ali looked fascinated.

Thinking quickly, Banus suddenly proposed in excitement, "Let's go and subscribe to newspapers in big cities! The train tickets and the annual subscription of newspapers will only cost half as much as a magic radio does! A lot of our money can be saved!"

"It's impossible. Similar things happened before. So, only people with the citizenship of the big cities enjoy the free-radio privilege." Ali sighed bitterly.

"This... this is discrimination!" Banus completely forgot his compliment and expectancy for the big cities just now and blurted out, "F*ck the big cities!"

They walked forth as they discussed. Soon, they reached the Baron Bechig Square.

"It's the opening ceremony of the Rentato Music Festival today. Will there be any special program on 'Arcana Voice'?" asked Ali hopefully.

Banus nodded. He was about to speak when his eyes suddenly widened. "S-Sorcerers!"

Above the square, a young sorcerer wearing a black long tuxedo was floating. Silver light spread out from his hands and was connected to the weird "curtain" at the center of the square. Around the curtain, there was another couple who were taking out items and finishing the arrangement. They were obviously also sorcerers!

"They... They're really sorcerers!" Ali stuttered in surprise.

Then, the two of them grew excited. It was rare to see the performance of sorcerers so closely other than street magic. Therefore, they squeezed through the crowd and tried to approach the center of the square. Alas, they could barely move one inch further. Every citizen who had come to the square thought exactly the same as they did!

"What happened? Why are there sorcerers here?" Seeing that it was impossible to cram in, Ali hurried to ask the citizens before him.

One of the citizens, who was nosy and liked to brag, replied loudly,

“It’s said that the opening opera of the Rentato Music Festival will be live-streamed!”

“Live... Live-streamed?” Banus and Ali opened their mouths in shock. They had heard the term “live stream” from Arcana Voice before, but they never thought that they could experience it in their little town!

A screen and the magic circles around gradually took shape. The sorcerer who floated in midair began to connect the “artificial planet” on the orbit for the final debugging.

“Sir, is everything alright?” a sorcerer down below asked.

The middle-rank sorcerer nodded and replied, “You’ve done a great job. This is the best opportunity to demonstrate the new image of sorcerers.”

“Hehe. The Aalto Music Festival can only be seen in the town square of Aalto. That’s too petty!”

The goal of the Congress of Magic was to allow every city that had a local branch of Congress to be able to view the live stream through satellites!

Chapter 722: Transition From Listeners to Viewers

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Thanks to the broadcast of “Arcana Voice” a few days ago, Banus and Ali were both aware that the “Rentato Music Festival” was scheduled on the last Saturday of the Month of Gold every three years for a duration of three days. They had come to the Baron Bechig Square today to learn the splendor of the Rentato Music Festival from “Arcana Voice” as soon as possible and to indirectly listen to the most touching and classic melody of Mr. Evans’ “Valkyrie” from interviews and other problems.

They did not foresee this at all. Looking at the floating sorcerer in midair and the dark “screen” that was taking shape with the combination of complicated silver patterns, they weren’t back to themselves for a long time.

It was not until the silver lines glittered one after another, letting out a gentle but warm light, that Banus and Ali were finally woken up from their shock. They craned their heads and looked ahead excitedly and confusedly.

“Live stream? Is the teletorium of ‘Arcana Voice’ set in the Rentato Royal Grand Theater today?” Although Ali had learned about “live stream” from “Arcana Voice”, he did not really know what it was about.

“Teletorium”, on the other hand, was learned from his pen pal’s letter. “Allyn Impression”, the weekly newspaper, had a special issue that introduced radio stations and interviewed famous anchors. As a gossip newspaper that came late but was most famous of all, Allyn Impression was not only loved by the arcanists but also pursued by the citizens of Rentato who were curious about the daily life of sorcerers and the affairs of the big shots. The circulation of the newspaper had already surpassed “Arcana” and “Magic”, making it an unusual case of getting rich for the sorcerers.

Banus did not quite understand what “teletorium” was about, but he was astonished by the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. He asked in excitement, “Can we hear the entirety of ‘Valkyrie’ today?”

Holm was a country where plays, oratorios, and operas were popular. Even though the average music level was not as good as Aalto’s, it was still rather distinguished in those aspects.

In Stuart, the Pearl on the Ocean on the opposite side of the Storm Strait, the citizens generally believed that the operas from Holm were much better than those from other countries in terms of plot, content, and meaningfulness. To put it more frankly, Rentato’s operas were indeed better than Aalto’s. After all, pure music was so brilliant in Aalto that the other fields were all eclipsed. Its playwrights and singers were not as good as Rentato’s.

Therefore, even though he was a common civilian, Banus had an unusual interest in operas. He had been longing for the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, known as a holy land of operas, for a long time. Of course, due to his economic status, he and Ali could only watch plays in most cases. They mostly listened to operas on special occasions.

“If ‘live stream’ has the same meaning as what ‘Arcana Voice’ said, we will definitely hear ‘Valkyrie’ today!” Ali was very excited.

With the duration of “Arcana Voice”, it could only play parts of the classic operas, but never the whole piece, and the opera singers that the baron of the town could invite were only mediocre. Therefore, even though they could not see the performers whom they had adored for a long time, it was still a most gratifying experience to appreciate a state-of-the-art opera at the earliest chance.

The best musician, the best singers and opera performers, and the best theater. It never occurred to them that they could enjoy the “luxury” of the nobles as civilians!

Banus rubbed his hands in excitement. “Hehe. We’re also lords this time! However, what’s that curtain about? They could’ve simply broadcast it. It’s all about listening after all.”

“It should be a wall, right? Huh, it’s probably meant to enhance the effect. Ms. Nightingale mentioned in Arcana Voice that some listeners might hear noises due to signal problems...” Ali tried to find a reasonable explanation.

Banus waved his hands hard. “I forgot that. Ali, you do have a great brain!”

Ali raised his chin proudly. *I told you that I’m smarter than you!*

After the silver lines all glowed, illusionary and delicate patterns appeared around the “curtain”. They combined in an amazing structure that dazzled Banus, Ali, and the other citizens into silence.

The middle-rank sorcerer who floated in midair finished the final debugging. As weird aria-like sounds came out of his mouth, a star in the sky glowed and sprayed a cluster of brilliance.

“Well...” Banus opened his mouth again. Could sorcerers command the stars in the sky? Wasn’t it the power of the gods?

In the dreamy and astonishing scene, the black “curtain” was enshrouded in pure, flawless light that resonated with the stars in the sky, building the most beautiful painting with the flying fireflies.

The star in the sky was less dazzling and became normal and steady, and the black “curtain” seemed to be turning transparent. A silver moon slowly rose inside, driving the darkness away.

A slow and peaceful melody floated out, so beautiful that it sounded like a clear lake that was rippling under the moonlight. It pacified everybody’s heart, bringing them vague sweetness, peace, and sorrow. They felt both somewhat gloomy and at ease.

Both Banus and Ali were intoxicated by the light of the silver moon that was gradually spreading out and the dreamy melody. The whole square fell quiet.

They were no strangers to “Moonlight”, the most beautiful piano song. Not only would the elegant restaurants hire musicians to play it, but Arcana Voice also often used “Moonlight” as the background

music for the program. However, this performance of “Moonlight” was still better than any time they heard before, thus allowing them to appreciate the most wondrous side of the music. How could they not be fascinated?

The cold moon grew brighter, and a white piano appeared in the darkness behind the “curtain”. Next to the piano, a woman whose long hair reached her waist was seated, with one side facing the audience. She was wearing a black evening dress, revealing half of her fair shoulders. Her face was delicate and peaceful.

The moonlight seemed to have donned her in a silver gauze. Her long and agile hands bounced and danced in the brightness, creating the most beautiful notes.

“How beautiful...”

“How touching...”

Banus and Ali were so enthralled by the performance that they could think of nothing else.

In such an atmosphere, even a mediocre face would have been 100% mind-blowing.

In the quietness, the first movement of Moonlight came to the end. The lady turned around, showing everybody her beautiful and tranquil face.

“Welcome to ‘Arcana Voice’. I’m your old friend, Nightingale.” A sweet and familiar voice came out of the lady’s mouth.

“Ms. Nightingale?” Banus stammered.

“It’s... It’s a real person?” Ali’s eyes were almost popping out. How did the curtain, no, the wall, just turn into a living person who could play “Moonlight”?

Everybody who witnessed the act in the square was similarly stunned, including the middle-rank sorcerer who floated in midair. He almost forgot that he was still in midair. Although he knew and got involved in the Congress’ “stream plan”, such an opening was

still a major shock for him.

“As a matter of fact, I am as surprised as you that the image signal transmission through the artificial planets can achieve such a result. This should be the most ‘real-time stream’ in history. Friends who are listening to ‘Arcana Voice’ at home, if you feel that I’m talking strangely, go to the nearest square and check it out. In fact, I already announced it last night...” Louise’s sweet voice came over, solving the question of the “viewers”.

“A real-time stream?”

“We can see Ms. Nightingale in Allyn from Samara?”

“Magic is too... marvelous!”

“Incredible! Incredible!”

Noises burst out in the square. The excited audience began to talk to each other about how they felt, even if they did not know those standing next to them.

Louise smiled. “‘Valkyrie’ is about to begin in the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. I’ll stop wasting your time. Now, the sorcerers in the theater will take over.”

The moonlight dimmed, like spreading ripples that blurred everything. By the time it was clear again, Louise was already gone from the “curtain”, replaced by a splendidly-decorated theater that was full of gentlemen who wore tailcoats or long tuxedos and ladies in gorgeous dresses that dazzled the audience in the square.

“The Rentato Royal Grand Theater!” said Ali in amazement.

Banus was both happy and sad. “But I still want to watch Ms. Nightingale play the piano...”

.....

Inside the teletorium of the Sky Radio Station in Allyn...

Seeing that the signal had been switched to the Royal Grand

Theater, Louise finally patted her chest, greatly relieved. “I was so anxious just now.”

“Louise, weren’t you a musician before? You’ve already held concerts. Why were you anxious about a solo performance in a teleorium that nobody watched?” Samantha, who was supervising the program nearby, said half in comfort and half in confusion.

Louise shook her head. “Nobody watched? There must’ve been more than a hundred thousand people who watched the live stream. I felt anxious when I thought I was performing before so many people. Also, in concerts, people mostly listen to music, and they can barely see the musician on the stage. Such a live stream is the opposite. Everybody can see my every movement clearly. If it weren’t for your encouragement, I would’ve tried to record it in advance as Mr. Evans suggested...”

“Understandable. Everybody will be nervous in their first ‘real-time stream’. Mr. Evans only proposed the idea. We planned and carried out the details on our own. However, well played, Louise.” Samantha nodded in approval.

Louise gradually relaxed. She complained, “Mr. Evans should’ve guided us more on such an important issue.”

If he could hear her, Lucien could only open his hands and suggest that he had zero experience in that. Holding a satellite stream before TV was invented was not a case that had ever happened on Earth. It could’ve only been achieved in a world of magic.

Chapter 723: Panic of the Night Watchers

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In Kasvig, the capital of the city union of the coastal Northland.

In Rose Square, the most famous landmark of the city, the roses of snow that blossomed in the coldness were as dazzling as burning fire.

However, the night seemed gone tonight, and nobody appreciated their beauty. In the square, on the street, and in the houses nearby, any places that could see the gigantic black “curtain” at the center had been jam-packed with people, who craned their heads while they watched the changes of the “curtain” with almost the same shock and listened to the poignant melody of “Moonlight”.

It was not until “Nightingale” Louise talked that they were back to themselves and exclaimed in amazement. Were there living people inside the “curtain”? Or was it something more magical than the magic radio, something that could deliver both voice and picture?

Ms. Nightingale answered their confusion, only to raise a greater tide of excitement. They had never seen such a thing before, nor had their ancestors. Was it a facet of the “magic civilization” that “Arcana Voice” had always talked about?

In the crowd, a man in a leather hat looked at Louise in fear and shook his head in disbelief. Had the Congress of Magic made progress again in broadcasting, and anybody anywhere could watch “Valkyrie” that was played in Rentato Royal Grand Theater?

Other people might not know what it meant, but as an elite night watcher, he couldn’t understand it better!

Since the magic radio was invented by Lucien Evans and “Arcana Voice” was established, people in many prosperous cities on the north coastline had changed their preconceptions and their attitudes toward the Church. He was not bothered much at the beginning, but by the time he felt that the atmosphere was not

right, all the details were already frightening.

After the Church's failure in the battle of Rentato, he turned from a hunter into prey that hid everywhere in a panic.

Now, not only could the magic radio deliver voice, but it could also display images. What terrible changes it could bring about!

However, after witnessing the preparations in advance, he knew that it would take years for the new magic radio to be popularized. It was doubtless that the Congress of Magic was contriving the purpose step by step. Yet, the Church had no reaction at all.

"No, I have to report it to the Executor!" He lowered his head and backed off from the crowd. It took him quite a while before he finally squeezed out.

As he stepped away from the square, it immediately became quiet. The night watcher quickly found a corner and took out a divine item that looked like a breastpin, trying to report the issue to the Church.

In his anxiety, he contacted the headquarters of the Inquisition in the Holy City. However, nothing came from his "breastpin" except for background noises.

"Damn it! The Congress of Magic's 'Arcana Voice' can be received everywhere and can even deliver images, but I can't even reach out to the Holy City. How can we deal with the sorcerers?" He became frustrated and nervous.

He knew that it was less convenient for the night watchers on this side of the Storm Strait to contact each other after Kasvig was controlled by the Congress of Magic and the grand church was occupied, and it was just his subconscious movement. However, the sorcerers of the Congress could still communicate with Allyn through "artificial planet" in the territory that the Church controlled!

Such a gap was the real reason why he was frustrated!

The artificial planets, which were merely invented to challenge the

authority of the gods, were now releasing more and more unbelievable brightness. It was definitely one of the most influential alchemical items!

He took out a local cigarette and picked it up with his mouth before he rubbed his right hand and created a fire.

Igniting the cigarette, he took a deep breath and calmed himself down. Then, he reactivated his breastpin, reaching out to his superior who was also staying in Kasvig.

The night watcher gritted his teeth and made up his mind to propose to the Church to develop their own artificial planets!

However, he too knew that such cutting-edge products could barely be duplicated by the Church. Therefore, they might as well capture one of the Congress of Magic's artificial planets if they had a chance!

The intelligence regarding "satellite stream" was sent to the Holy City one level after another and one section after another. Perhaps Benedict III wouldn't even receive it even when "Valkyrie" was done playing.

...

The splendid gold was the main color of the Rentato Royal Grand Theater. The magic lamps hanging on the ceiling or the wall sprayed pure brightness that added to the magnificence of the place.

Sitting inside their box, Lucien and Natasha waited for Valkyrie to be performed.

"I've been looking forward to the opera for years. Tonight, my wish is fulfilled." Oliver walked in courteously and shook Lucien's hand with a smile.

Despite their disagreements in the microscopic domain, he was never angry about Lucien in daily life, particularly when it came to his favorite dramas and operas.

"I hope you will like it," Lucien replied with a smile and invited Oliver to sit down.

Few legendary sorcerers came to the opening ceremony other than him. Douglas was busy in his preparations, and he did not have any particular interest in operas, so he did not come. Brook's reasons were more or less the same. Vicente, on the other hand, didn't come because the relationship between him and Lucien was rather tense. Hellen was even less likely to come since she would rather devote all her time to arcana and magic studies.

As for the other legendary sorcerers, some were deployed and some were busy doing their research. They were not here either.

"Operas aren't so interesting." Fernando, who was sitting next to Lucien, watched the stage attentively in his crimson magic robe.

Seeing that Valkyrie was about to begin, Lucien asked Natasha in the telepathic bond. "Is Granny Hathaway not coming?"

"She probably doesn't like so many people. I remember that she's very interested in music and opera," Natasha speculated.

Lucien nodded and did not say anything. Russell, the Prime Minister of Holm, already began to give his speech and announced the opening of the music festival.

...

"Prime minister! This is the first time I've seen the prime minister!" Banus shouted in joy and surprise.

Ali pulled and hushed him. "Watch your manners, or you will be scolded by the police. If it were before, disrespecting the nobles is punishable by lashes."

"I know, I know. But look at them. They're just like me. If the policemen scold each and every one of us, their throat will definitely be broken." Banus was obviously excited.

After Russell's announcement, the final preparations were conducted behind the curtain.

During the brief moment before the opera began, the sorcerer who was responsible for the broadcast adjusted the camera so that the audience could see the full picture of the theater.

“This is spectacular. If I could listen to the best opera once in such a theater, I would die without regrets!” Banus and the other members of the audience complimented.

Soon, the attention was shifted from the building to the nobles on the picture, and they heard Louise’s sweet introduction. “This is Lord James, Duke of Paphos, and this is his wife, Lady Stephine...”

“Oh!”

Exclamations echoed on the square like a tide.

“So, that’s what a major noble is like. His wife and daughters are very beautiful too...” Ali complimented softly with obscure passion in his eyes. *She mentioned that she would come to the opening ceremony...*

His description was not exactly the reality, but it was undeniable that thanks to the succession of active blood power, the ratio of good-looking nobles was much higher than that of ordinary people.

When Ali examined the noble ladies, the picture was changed again and aimed at the box.

“Here are Her Majesty Queen Natasha, ‘Atom Controller’ Evans—” Louise’s introduction suddenly stopped, because she saw the same scene that Banus and the audience saw. Inside the box was the silver sword that cut the environment, the boundless and colorful universe, the surging thunderstorm, and the doomsday view where stars were collapsing...

“What... What is that?” It seemed that Ali could not cure his stammer today.

After a brief pause, Louise spoke again unhurriedly, “The vibe of the legendary experts can influence the world around them. Therefore, unless they repress it on purpose, this will be what the camera can record. However, things will be different if you look at

them with the naked eye...”

“Marvelous. As expected of the legendary experts!”

“This is truly an incredible view...”

It left a deep impression on Banus and the other audience.

The brief preparation was soon over, and the prelude began. Gloom and intensity were hidden below the jolly and easy melody on the surface, foreshadowing the plot of the opera and making everyone emotionally prepared.

“Replacing overture with prelude is a popular way to create operas recently. It can be used before every act of the opera and directly followed by the songs...” Ali spoke of the knowledge he learned from his pen pal.

Inside the theater, nobody talked anymore. They appreciated the opera in silence.

When the prelude was about to be over, the curtain was raised, and a female voice gave a soliloquy in recitative. Then, a girl who was tall but showed no sign of strength ascended the stage.

“Is she the Valkyrie?”

The audience felt that it did not quite agree with the theme. The story was not exactly what they had in mind either. In the merry and pleasant melodies, Princess Amansa and the king, the queen, the maids, and the governess had a wonderful life.

However, the good days didn’t last. The king’s nephew conspired with the prime minister and the chief of guards and murdered the king and the queen in a scheme. The queen only managed to escape to a forest under her maids’ help.

The gloom and intensity that were hidden under the beautiful melody burst out. The attention of the audience was immediately grasped as they worried about the princess’ safety and loathed the villains.

When the first act was over, during the intermezzo, Oliver looked at Lucien in surprise. "Is this an opera? Right, I admit that it is an excellent opera, but where are the numbers? Why do I feel that it's more like a symphony?"

Until then, the operas in Rentato had been divided into numbers. A series of numbers, including solo, duo, trio, quartet, and chorus, would constitute an opera. To put it more simply, music and singing were the main points, and the plot was at their service.

Lucien's opera, in comparison, was more like a play. The music was at the service of the plot, and there were no distinctive numbers. Every act was a whole by itself, like a themed symphony.

Chapter 724: The Most Expensive Opera Actor in History

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Inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, the nobles and sorcerers who appreciated the intermezzo whispered to each other about the opera form that was entirely different from the past.

Ever since opera became popular, the number opera had always been the unquestionable mainstream. Even though somebody had modified it, no one ever had the courage to abandon the exceptionally successful pattern. The nobles and civilians of Holm were also used to the opera. They were fond of the touching aria. As for the plot that the opera intended to represent, they generally did no more than enough for them to perceive the feelings behind the music.

As for the more detailed storyline and the specific dialogs, they often learned and picked it up by appreciating same-title plays later.

That was not a problem in the past when the plot was relatively simple. They could appreciate the music, the singing, and the basic story when they watched an opera. However, as the playwrights like Oliver created stories that were more captivating, people often had the feeling that singing was independent of the plot when they listened to opera. Music and story were separated.

However, the conflicts had not reached the tipping point for a change yet. Therefore, after listening to the first act of “Valkyrie” created by Lucien Evans, they were rather unused to it and had a heated discussion, forgetting the manners of opera appreciation.

“The whole act is just a huge number?” Stephine, Duke James’ wife, talked to Jane, her daughter next to her.

Jane’s black hair was naturally curled on her shoulder, just like the feeling that she gave. Among the nobles, she had been known as the

“quiet doll”.

“It’s more like a symphony than a number for me. The theme is exactly the content in the prelude. Besides, the boundary between the recitative and the aria seems blurred...” Jane introduced it to Stephine in a low voice.

In the previous opera, she felt that the plot and the melody were so integrated that she was devoted to the atmosphere that they built despite the strangeness. She was worried about the princess, hated the brutal new king and the shrewd prime minister, and sympathized with the loyal maids. Every sentence and every melody seemed to be echoing inside her heart.

It was not until the intermezzo echoed that Jane finally recalled the opera just now. Part of the recitative had the features of singing, and the aria sounded somewhat like recitation, too...

Stephine said in amusement. “One act equals a symphony? As expected of Master Evans from Aalto.”

In Aalto, the brilliance of symphony eclipsed everything else, and they preferred to call Lucien master when they discussed music.

After a heated discussion, the nobles had their own opinions. Most of them believed that the first act of Valkyrie was above average despite the alienness.

A master was truly a master!

Inside the box, faced with Oliver’s doubt, Lucien told him his idea of creation with a smile, feeling quite proud of it. Although the modification was based on Mr. Wagner’s reform of opera on Earth, the plot, melody, songs, and structural design of the opera had all been created by himself independently.

Hearing Lucien’s reply, Oliver was briefly stunned. He then said with a smile, “I like the idea. Music and singing should serve the plot. The musicians who adopted my plays into opera did not understand the simple reason. That’s why they couldn’t create an opera that everybody liked. If only I had cooperated with you

sooner.”

Lucien had thought that Oliver would be conservative about the reform. Not expecting him to accept it so easily, he was surprised at first but then relieved. As a playwright, Oliver certainly attached more importance to the plot.

Natasha whistled the monologue of the princess just now, and Fernando knocked the rail, as if he were looking for the next scene.

.....

In the square in the small city Samara...

The citizens were silenced by such a disruptive form. They were completely moved by the story, the characters, the melody, and the singing just now during the first act, but they somehow felt weird and thought that opera should be like that.

“This must be the new trend in opera. Mr. Atom Controller is a music master. He is certainly much more visionary than us!” a passionate symphony fan suddenly shouted.

Her voice broke the temporary silence. The citizens echoed with him.

“Yes, the master musician certainly knows better than us!”

“The opera just now truly sounded better than the past. Well, it looked much better, too!”

“So, that’s what the top singer and actor are like. Those things we listened to in the past were incomparable to them!”

“The money they earn in one performance is your wages for an entire year!”

...

Looking at the splendid theater on the “curtain”, Banus said thoughtfully, “Until today, I never thought that I could watch and listen to the best opera performance, but everything seems so easy

right now. We can see an opera in the Royal Grand Theater in Samara. Magic is too marvelous!”

“Yes, I’m looking more and more forward to the ‘magic civilization’ that Arcana Voice introduced. Perhaps we will be able to see Rentato without going outdoors...” Ali was fascinated by the ever-changing images and sounds on the “curtain”. That was the power of gods that the Church preached in the past!

Thinking about the changes that happened to his life, Ali felt more or less depressed. Everything was moving fast, but what about him? Staying in the town and growing old, like his father and grandfather?

The prelude of the second act of Valkyrie echoed, giving an intense and agitating feeling that was mixed with warmth.

In this scene, Princess Amansa encountered many dangers in the forest and gradually grew into a real knight. Then, in a one-sided battle, she fell off from a cliff and almost died, but she was eventually saved by a strong knight who passed by.

The knight was a young, handsome man. He stayed out of sympathy for the princess and dealt with the king’s hounds together with her. Their hearts approached, and the sparks of love burst out. The audience seemed to have found momentum and support, and they were starting to look forward to a beautiful future.

In a love song, the second act reached the end.

Ali listened to the opera and looked at the nobles in the hall of the theater that were partly revealed in the live stream. In a smile, he wondered whether or not she was also listening to the opera and taking comfort in the love story between the princess and the knight...

He fantasized about so many things that he whispered the song just now even after the second act was over.

The third act began in a prelude that was exciting but carried a dangerous air. The princess and the knight embarked on the quest

to reclaim her country. On their journey, they met new partners and found knights who were still loyal to the late king. Naturally, dangers were inevitable. During the journey, another gold-haired knight fell in love with the princess. His left arm was also broken for her.

“Love makes me lose control of myself...” The gold-haired knight confessed his love with a touching aria.

When the audience was worried that her love would turn sour, the princess replied with an aria, “You are as perfect as the sun, but you are not what I like and look forward to...”

After the test of love, the princess seemed more mature. She led her knights to attack the new king and the prime minister with her lover. Growing more and more determined, the princess crushed her enemies and sent the bad guys whom the audience had hated for three scenes to guillotines in the melody of triumph.

Right then, the hidden storm arrived. The curse before the new king died revealed the real identity of the princess’ love. He was actually the prince of her neighboring country, who was trying to occupy the country with the princess’ restoration!

However, love was uncontrollable. He fell in love with the princess. However, he chose his country in the end. In the rumbling, drumming, and the horns simulated by trumpets, they drew their weapons.

“Why is this happening...”

“Their love was so sweet...”

The audience felt the heartbreaking pain when the third act reached the end. Ali was in such a trance that he looked at the theater with a pale face. He could almost feel what the princess felt; the chasm that couldn’t be crossed, and the bond that had to be cut off in person.

The prelude of the fourth act burst out intense power in the depression and gloom, as if it were foretelling the princess’

relentless attack.

The music was the most classic part since Valkyrie was played. The passion and enthusiasm of the audience were raised.

“This opera can be called classic just by the music in this section...”
Oliver nodded approvingly.

The battle between the princess and the prince was over. The prince collapsed and sang a miserable monologue, and the princess raised her longsword.

“Is she going to kill him?”

“She wouldn’t be so cruel, would she?”

In the whispers of discussion, Natasha, sitting inside the box, suddenly heaved a long sigh.

The sword fell, and the prince died. Under the sorrowful and loud melody, the princess sang a heartbreaking aria.

After witnessing the attack and hearing the melody, Ali was as pale as a dead man. That seemed to be the ending of the fantasy in his heart. The distance between him and her was even longer than that between the prince and the princess. The story had ended before it even began. Also, she did not even have to draw the sword herself, because he did not even have the chance to go to the battlefield...

A love tragedy was always most devastating, but the princess left a deep impression on everyone when she waved her sword in the end. At this moment, the following knights of the neighboring country had arrived. As it turned out, they had been captured by darkness and became servants of a vicious dragon. They wanted to occupy the princess’ country just to steal treasures for the dragon!

Holding back her grief, the princess led the knights to counterattack. Right when they were about to win, the wind simulated by instruments began to blow, and an enormous monster descended on the stage.

It had a lizard-like head and a strong body that was covered in

transparent scales. A pair of equally beautiful wings were opened on its back. Under the light, they were all emitting the cold and dreamy brilliance.

The unimaginable intimidation from the dragon caused the legs of all the opera performers to tremble. Their singing became intermittent as if it were a real scene.

“A real... real dragon?” The nobles in the theater felt that their eyes were popping out.

Banus and Ali could barely close their eyes in their shock. Was the dragon part of the performance?

The dragon’s fingers and toes were wearing different gem rings. There were also a crown on its head and a gold cape on its back. It seemed that the dragon had just ransacked a treasury.

“Hand over your treasures!” the dragon said as if it were singing.

Inside the box, Lucien smiled. “I paid a huge fortune for Little Crystal to join the performance. He must be the most expensive opera actor in history...”

Chapter 725: Heroes Monument

Inside the Rose Square in Kasvig...

When Little Crystal suddenly arrived and released the dominance of a top creature, exclamations and shrieks immediately burst out of the crowd. They backed off as if they were being blown by a tide. Their panic and fear were almost concrete.

“Monster!”

“D-Dragon!”

“Screwed... We’re screwed...”

“It’s so terrifying!”

In only one moment, a large room was cleared around the “curtain”. Although they knew that it was happening inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater, their subconscious reaction of fear came from their natural instincts. No “special effects” worked better than a real-life dragon!

In the cities of Cocus, Salyvaor, Paphos, and Samara, similar cases were happening. Somebody backed off in fear, some were stunned, and some felt that they were dreaming.

Human beings living in the non-remote areas had barely seen any dragons since the heyday of the Magic Empire, but as the eternal supervillain in stories, people’s impression of dragons did not decline with the passage of time. Also, “Human and Nature”, a program on “Arcana Voice”, had introduced the epic creature many times. It was not difficult for Banus and Ali to identify a dragon.

Holding their breath, they found their legs shivering. Despite the long distance, Banus and Ali were still horrified by the dragon on the curtain. They would’ve turned around and fled if they were not too stunned to move.

Suddenly, Ali was back to himself. “She’s in the theater near the

dragon!”

What do I do? What do I do?

Right when his fear almost drove him mad, Princess Amansa, the only standing actress on the stage, spoke in recitative that carried the characteristics of singing. “My most precious treasure is my courage and my knightly faith. Nobody can take them away. Vicious dragon, kill me, or be killed by me. There isn’t a third option!”

Huh?

Everybody who did not know what was going on was puzzled. *Lady, you are an opera actress, not a real knight! Dragon-slaying is best left to the “professionals”!*

Huh, could it be... Finally, Banus and Ali sensed something.

When the princess sang, the “unaffected” orchestra was also playing. The agitating, uneasy, rapid, and poignant melody made everybody share her feeling!

The singer and actress who played the princess “glared” at the dragon before her as her heart pounded. Because they rehearsed before and the dragon intentionally curbed his deterrence, she managed to control her body and her voice and continued her performance.

Also, the subconscious fear resulted in the secretion of her adrenaline and made her feel that she had never performed better. The shivering nobles down there proved that her feeling was true.

The orchestra was not affected by the dragon either. That was why they could continue the performance.

Hearing the princess’ trilling aria, Banus and Ali shivered and recovered from the influence of the dragon.

“They’ve invited a dragon to play the greedy vicious dragon?” Banus felt that his question was inappropriate, but he was too excited to consider calmly right now due to the subconscious fear.

His worries gone, Ali began to observe Little Crystal carefully. After all, the opportunities to see a real dragon were rare. The arrival of Mr. Atom Controller on a dragon during his wedding with the queen had been sung over by the bards, who all claimed that they participated in the gala in order to increase the credibility of their stories.

“Perhaps... it’s an illusion of the sorcerers?” Looking at Little Crystal’s thick neck and half-transparent scales, he asked in great curiosity.

The audience around replied in excitement, “It can’t be an illusion. Her Majesty, Prince Evans, and the other sorcerers in the box are all legendary experts. How can they not see through an illusion? As a result, they would only see the ‘princess’ singing by herself, which would be a disrespect for them. Therefore, it has to be a real dragon...”

He too had been affected by adrenaline and could barely stop after he began talking.

“Fair enough. Oh, a real dragon...”

“The kingdom and the Congress of Magic let a dragon become an opera actor!”

In their amazement, Little Crystal responded to the princess’ challenge. He bent backward and raised his claws, bashing his chest and “roaring” in fury.

“Howl!”

Wow! The audience below the senior rank was intimidated by the “terrifying roars” of the dragon and took a step back again.

“How horrifying!” Banus announced, his fists clenched, but he sounded more thrilled than scared.

“It’s so terrifying...” Jane, Duke James’ daughter, patted her chest as if she had been scared, but her eyes were focused on the stage with unprecedented excitement that was partly mixed with fear.

In all the squares where a live stream was going on, the audience looked more or less the same. They had never known such a kind of opera before. It was so amazing and attractive!

Ali swallowed. “The ‘princess’ is really strong. She’s still standing before the dragon. Look at the people around her...”

“She’s the Valkyrie...” Banus looked at the “curtain” without blinking and fully understood what Valkyrie meant.

Inside the box, Natasha looked at Lucien in confusion. “Why is Little Crystal acting and roaring so funnily? What exactly did you think when you designed the actions?”

Fernando also glared at Lucien. How could he let Little Crystal do that and roar like that? He’s a dragon, not anything else, although the little guy was rather suitable for that...

“I designed quite a few sets of actions and roars. However, Little Crystal picked this one on his own. He believed that it presented his ‘gravitas’ most.” Lucien chuckled.

Natasha raised her eyebrows and scratched her chin. “I seem to have understood something from your laughter. The other few sets were certainly even worse than this one. After comparing them, Little Crystal felt that this was the best.”

Lucien smiled. “The result of choosing is solely dependent on the design of options. Hehe. Isn’t this good? Does it not suit Little Crystal?”

“It suits him very well!” Natasha also chuckled.

On the stage, the final battle was about to break out, and the princess’ knights had recovered from their fear. They gathered around her and were about to charge with her.

The princess began to sing; her face both determined and gentle. A sweet and touching song hit everybody’s mind with the music from the orchestra.

Most people would recall the beautiful things in the past when they

were about to do something of critical importance, and when their lives were in danger, what they would recall were definitely the most wonderful pictures that they remembered best. It was obvious that the princess remembered the prince and their sweet and painful love.

As she sang on, most people who had similar experiences or looked forward to loving someone were captivated by the song. Ali looked at the curtain, his eyes hazy, as he pictured the girl in his heart and thought of the chasm between them. For a moment, he felt both sweet and miserable.

After one song was over, it was another piece. It was the chorus of the knights, warm and everlasting. It made the audience understand the meaning of “protection”.

In the end, the princess sang loudly again and broke the warmth. There was a resolution in the breathtaking melody. They were determined to kill the dragon or to be killed by it.

A real dragon was lurking ahead, and the prince and knights fighting for their homeland were right next to them. Hearing the music from the orchestra that melted perfectly with the atmosphere, the audience shared the fury toward the common enemy. They had the sacred feeling to sacrifice for those who loved.

Such a feeling touched themselves and made Ali clench his fists. What was to be scared of if death could not scare them? Even the longest distance could be covered as long as one took the first step!

Wu!

The horn of charge echoed again, and the melody became intense and hasty, which made the nobles and the ordinary people who couldn't activate their blood powers clutch everything around them. Everybody felt that valiance and determination in a real charge.

Such music was something that they would never regret. The melody of charge echoed in their heart. In every act, they had discovered music that was more classic than the previous ones, but they finally realized that “Charge” was the most central and

classical part of the opera!

An intense battle began, and in the horns of charge, one knight fell another, and fewer and fewer people were left by the princess' side.

Finally, paying one arm as the price, the princess stabbed the dragon in his heart.

Little Dragon held his stomach and writhed on the floor in "pain", making the stage scrunch.

Clinging to her longsword, the princess looked around, only to discover that all her partners had collapsed and stopped breathing.

The melody changed again—wistful and miserable.

The princess raised her head slightly, and her mouth opened. A song that sounded like it came from the depths of the soul echoed.

"Heroes never die;

"They will only wither in people's memories."

Banus shivered and sensed the shiver from his soul to his body. The sad but determined melody hit his soul precisely.

He couldn't describe the feeling. He only knew that the song astounded him so much that he completely forgot everything around him and was completely devoted to the world that the song built.

...

"Bury my bones, but do not set any monument..."

"... For this prosperous city is the best monument for us!"

Tears quietly dropped from the corners of most people's eyes. The princess plucked her longsword and struggled to walk backward, leaving an unwavering and unbent back.

The curtain slowly fell.

“This is the best opera that I’ve ever heard. Nothing can be more amazing than it!” After a long time, Oliver congratulated Lucien in excitement.

Natasha blinked her eyes. “I think so too. Lucien, thank you for your gift.”

“Right, what’s the name of the last aria?” Oliver asked in haste.

Lucien replied with a smile, “Heroes’ Monument.”

It was not until then that most of the audience was finally really back to themselves. Intense and enthusiastic applause burst out in the Royal Grand Theater, in the squares of the cities large and small in Holm, and in the major cities in the other three countries on this side of the strait and on the north coastline.

Inside a library on the top floor of the Holm Royal Magic Tower, Hathaway was sitting at her desk. Before her was a water screen that displayed the scene inside the Rentato Royal Grand Theater.

Her whistle echoed in the room, but her singing sounded rather poor...

Chapter 726: Difference Choices in the Great Age

Inside the Baron Bechig Square in Samara in Paphos County...

People were still dwelling in the song that seemed to have burst out from their souls. The whole square was quiet. Even the innocent kids were awed by the atmosphere and did not dare make any noises at all. The place seemed to have been caged in time.

They had never experienced the feelings that touched their souls before. For the operas in the past, music and plot were independent of each other and could not build up each other. Therefore, even though many classic arias had appeared in the history of opera, most of the audience found it impossible to resonate with the music when their emotion hadn't been activated. Naturally, it was impossible for them to have a wonderful feeling that their soul was touched.

“Valkyrie” this time was an exception. The plot was built one step after another, and the melody that sounded like a whole orchestra was fully rendered. The effect when they were combined was much better than either of them could've achieved independently. As a result, the audience completely melted into the story and the music, feeling the same as the characters felt.

That was why when “Charge” was played, they felt that they were following the princess as she charged into the battlefield. That was why they could personally feel the sorrow, regret, and determination when the princess sang “Heroes' Monument”, to the point that their blood was freezing.

Lucien dare not say that the story of the plot was perfect and better than any playwrights' works, but he could announce proudly that its blast on the audience was unprecedented.

It was not until a long time later that low voices echoed in the square.

“Heroes never die;

“They will only wither in people’s memories.”

A girl couldn’t prevent herself from singing the aria in the end. Although she did not have the pleasant voice of the singer who played the princess, and her imitation was hardly accurate due to the high difficulties, she sang with such devotion and such love as if she had witnessed her comrades and friends collapsing next to her.

The vague song broke the silence in the square and raised a chain reaction. Banus, Ali, and the other members of the audience all opened their mouths and whistled.

“Bury my bones, but do not set any monument...

“... For this prosperous city is the best monument for us!”

The song echoed in the Baron Bechig Square again and again, as if the heroes’ souls were staring at their beloved home, reluctant to leave!

It was not until a long time later that the citizens finally got rid of the atmosphere and discussed passionately with each other about “Valkyrie”, about Master Evans’ changes on the opera, about the classical music pieces such as “Dawn” and “Charge”, about the exceptional arias such as “Heroes’ Monument”, about the state-of-the-art actors and actresses and the terrifying dragon, and about the visual and acoustic feast of “live stream”.

In the middle of their discussion, Ali changed his expression and suddenly turned around.

“Ali, where are you going?” Banus was sharing his feelings tonight with a stranger nearby in excitement when he noticed Ali’s action. He was puzzled. Did his friend not like liveliness most? Was there any place more lively than the square at present? Did he not feel any urge to share his feelings after listening to the opera?

Solemnly and somewhat excitedly, Ali replied, “I’m going home!”

“Going home for what?” Banus abandoned the communication with

the stranger and caught up with Ali, before he asked in confusion.

Ali clenched his right hand subconsciously. "I'll pack up and go to Rentato!"

"Huh? Rentato? Ali, have you lost your mind?" Banus thought that he was hallucinating. Why on earth was his friend going to Rentato? That was the capital of the kingdom, not a small rural town!

Ali shook his head. "My mind isn't lost. I've given it a lot of thought. I'm going to Rentato instead of spending the rest of my life in such a small city like Samara."

"But... But what's bad about a small city?" Banus asked in shock.

Taking a deep breath, Ali pointed at the "curtain" in the square behind them. "Banus, do you see the alchemical item that can let us see and hear things far away? It allowed us to appreciate an opera that was performed in Rentato."

"Yes. Why do you want to go to Rentato when we can appreciate it in our town?" Banus was even more confused.

Ali slowly sighed. "Banus, what does such an alchemical item represent? And what does the fact that a small city has such an alchemical item indicate?"

Then, he answered his own question, "It indicates that changes that have never been seen in the past hundreds of years are happening to our country and our age. New things are born and thriving every day."

Banus nodded. He could sense it based on the changes around him even though he was in a small city.

"Such changes are unstoppable, just like a flood. The only thing we can do is adapt to it. However, I would rather not stagnate at such a great age. Banus, think about it. Aren't such great changes full of opportunities? As long as we seize any of them, our life will be entirely different.

“I’m unwilling to live a dead life in the small city, where I will inherit my father’s position as the servant to the secretary, marry a girl of the same status as mine, have children, get busy, and grow old. I’m scared of a life that can be foreseen so clearly. Has my life been predestined? So, I’m going to Rentato to follow my dreams and find a place of mine in the great development that would change the world. I’ll do my best to move forward.”

Ali’s regret was obvious.

“But Samara is also changing. Also, getting married, having children, getting busy, and growing old... Everybody will experience these. It will happen to you even if you find your dream.” Banus tried to calm him down.

“That’s truly a process that everybody will experience, but the process can be full of wonders too. Banus, it’s true that Samara is changing, but it is too slow. Only in Rentato can you feel the powerful pulse of our age and find an opportunity to change your life.

“Therefore, I’m going to Rentato. Whether to study in a generic school or a Lanxiang, or to find a job in the newly developed industry, I think I’ll pick up things that will change my life.”

Ali’s tone became peaceful but determined. He used the “pulse of the age” that he heard from “Arcana Voice” to describe the necessity to go to Rentato.

Looking at Ali’s eyes and sensing his insistence, Banus fell quiet. He then attempted the final persuasion. “Uncle Balsa will not agree. Although there are plenty of opportunities in Rentato, they are too tantalizing for ordinary people like us. It’s possible that you will die in a shabby house, poor and cold, without anybody knowing it.”

“I know that I may fail and return to Samara without achieving anything, but it is the most hilarious and meaningless thing to admit your failure without trying. Compared to the past and the future when the development stagnates, now is the time that the opportunities are closest to ordinary people like us. If we don’t fight for them now, are we going to wait for the future when it is even

more difficult?”

His correspondences with his “pen pal” had allowed Ali to learn a lot of things and had a new understanding of the world. “As for my father, I will explain it to him. Even if he doesn’t support me, I will not change my mind. I’m already an adult. It’s my own responsibility to feed myself. Whatever becomes of me in the end, it will be my own choice. Banus, come with me. We’ll create a bright future together in Rentato!”

Banus felt that his heart was hot after hearing Ali’s words. Metropolis, capital, what beautiful worlds. It had the most prosperous boulevards, the greatest changes, the most numerous opportunities, and the brightest prospects. It was possible that he might be spotted by a sorcerer on the street and became his student, which was certainly not an impossible dream but a case reported by “Arcana Voice” before.

But very soon, he thought of himself, who had absolutely no advantages except for his physical strength. He thought of the strange city, strange streets, strange citizens, and strange maliciousness. His heart was immediately chilled. Looking at everything around that he was familiar with, he shook his head and said, “Ali, I prefer Samara. I think that I’m more suitable for a small town...”

Ali tried to convince him, but Banus was still scared of the unknown dangers and reluctant to leave Samara.

A few days later.

On the platform of Samara, Ali was wearing a black gown and a top hat that his father Balsa had specifically prepared for him. He had turned from a big boy into a vigorous young gentleman.

Holding his large suitcase, he said goodbye to his parents and strode toward the door of the magic steam train. He then looked back at the platform with mixed feelings. On one hand, he couldn’t bear to leave his hometown, and on the other hand, he was puzzled why Banus didn’t come to see him off.

“Did I hurt his feelings the other day?

“Or maybe, does he think that I’ve betrayed our friendship by not staying in the town?”

Ali felt complicated, worried that he had lost his best friend.

He looked back after every step, but Banus never showed up, so he grew more and more frustrated.

After boarding on the carriage and finding his own seat, Ali craned his head out of the window and waved his hands at his parents again. His eyes grew moist, as it was the first time that he had left his parents.

“Ali!” Banus’ voice suddenly came from far away. He waved his hands fast and ran over in a hurry, with a blue-and-purple fruit in his left hand.

Banus squeezed through the crowd to below the window and said loudly, “Damn it. I remembered the time wrong! Here, this is your favorite Samara Fruit. I don’t think you will get to enjoy them again after you reach Rentato.”

The Samara Fruit was a local specialty of the town, which matured at the end of October and the beginning of November every year.

Ali’s eyes became wet. Banus was truly as rash and careless as ever!

Wu!

He picked up the fruit. Before he was able to say anything, a deafening siren suddenly echoed.

Covering his eyes, Ali shouted, “Banus, I’ll bring you to Rentato after I succeed!”

Banus waved his hands. “Alright! Don’t forget Samara!”

Wu! Clang! Clang!

“I’ll come back after I am successful!” Ali secretly clenched his fists.

The magic steam train was activated and became faster and faster, gradually getting away from the platform.

Ali's eyes became misty, and he could barely see anything clearly. He kept waving his arms, but Banus and his parents were further and further away...

Chapter 727: The Church's Thoughts

Inside the pope's library in the Holy City...

"The Rentato Music Festival was live streamed?" Looking at the red robe before him, Benedict III repeated the message that he reported. He was obviously puzzled why such trivia had also been delivered to him. If he had to deal with such insignificant matters in person, why would he need so many red robes?

Sensing Benedict III's apparent anger, the red robe sweated hard, regretting that he forgot the most critical remark. "Your Holiness, the live stream was not held in the town square like the case in the Aalto Music Festival, but it was held in all the four countries as well as part of the cities in the north coastline, which means that millions of people might've watched the music festival."

"Super remote image transmission... Was it conducted through the artificial planets?" Benedict III naturally knew that the live stream that the red robe mentioned was not the broadcast that only had sound. Knowing arcana rather well, he remembered artificial planets immediately. Only they could satisfy such a need right now, unless the Congress of Magic deployed sound and image transmission circles without caring about the cost like the Church did in the past.

With his head lowered, the red robe said, "Yes. According to the night watchers, the Congress of Magic did use artificial planets as transfer stations."

The middle-rank sorcerer who set up the "curtain" illuminated the "artificial planets" during the final debugging and created a rather bizarre view. It was unavoidable with their strength. Therefore, it was easy for the night watchers to conclude that the live stream of the music festival couldn't have been conducted without "artificial planets".

Benedict III became solemn. He picked up the emergent intelligence and read it carefully.

Worrying about the development of the Church, the red robe suggested boldly, “Your Holiness, although the magic circle for the live stream is not permanent or an alchemical item, it will certainly result in the vacillation of the believers in the four countries and the northern coastline. It is bad for our future attacks.”

Benedict III put down the report. His expression was as deep as an ocean. “The vacillation of the believers? The music festival was live-streamed in different cities simultaneously, with both sound and image, to both civilians and the nobles... This is of much greater significance than the pure shake of faith.”

“I am too idiotic to understand the hint of the Lord.” The red robe shivered in fear. He was so desperate to win the pope’s appreciation that he opened his mouth when he shouldn’t.

Benedict III nodded his head and continued, “Of course, for us, the greatest influence is truly the vacillation of believers. Sorcerers are corrupt people with extravagances and entertainment. The world is now full of filthy dirt. But that’s all the more reason why we should save every lamb who still has kindness in his heart.

“This will be a difficult and dangerous path, and every cleric must be prepared to sacrifice. Are you ready?”

Having been approved, the red robe was so excited that he drew a cross on his chest. “Only Truth lives forever!”

“Give my order. Summon the Grand Cardinals for an emergency meeting.” Benedict III sighed.

Half an hour later, all the Grand Cardinals except for those who were on missions gathered in the Bright Hall.

Before Benedict III brought out the platinum staff, they had already learned about the meeting from the red robe.

“Your Holiness, artificial planets are highly dangerous. We have to destroy them completely,” Melmax, the captain of the Temple Knights, offered a suggestion straightforwardly. He did not know much about arcana as the Grand Cardinals did, but he could see the

hazard of artificial planets even more clearly as an observer. They had given eyes and wings to the sorcerers from the sky!

After the second artificial planet was launched, the Church had tried many ways of attack and counterattack. Their achievement was that two artificial planets were destroyed. However, after Lucien proposed the general theory of relativity, the Congress of Magic had been launching artificial planets every year, so such losses were affordable.

Saint Maria was a brown-haired girl, but she was at least three hundred years old. She suggested in a soft voice, "For the Congress of Magic, creating and launching artificial planets is not very difficult. Even if we shoot down one of them, they will only launch more in a few years.

"Also, the Congress of Magic is almost on par with us except for the lack of demigod. Can we afford a total war right now? The heretics in the north and the evil creatures in the Dark Mountain Range are looking forward to our mistakes."

Astira, the Angel of Wind, continued, "The Congress of Magic couldn't have neglected our reaction when they decided to live stream Lucien Evans' 'Valkyrie', could they? This is perhaps another trap. They're perhaps waiting for us to destroy the planets!"

"Then, what do we do? Can you launch similar items and resist the sorcerers 'artificial planets' with our 'Godly Eye'?" Beliel was dissatisfied with their complaints. They needed a viable suggestion!

Philip, the newly-promoted Grand Cardinal, said, "It's not our strong suit to directly create a similar item. However, we can try to capture an artificial planet. With enough time, we should be able to duplicate them. By then, with the grace of the Lord, the item we create will be more creative and destructive on the orbit than artificial planets!"

The past experience had suggested that divine power was more convenient than magic, because "God" was ubiquitous, even on the orbit. The sorcerers had to use the help of magic circles to utilize the power of gravity or solar energy, which reduced the

aggressiveness of artificial planets.

That was why the Congress of Magic attached such importance to fission reactors and controllable fusion. If they could be minimized, the gap between magic and divine power in that regard would be no more.

“We need a complete and safe plan. We must not fall into the trap of the Congress of Magic.” Melmax acknowledged Philip’s opinion and became less radical.

“Alright, you’ve all shown your loyalty to the Lord.” Benedict III made the final decision and asked Maria, Melmax, and Philip to draft plans.

Ines, another Grand Cardinal, added, “However, we cannot slow down the destruction of artificial planets, or the whole sky will be consumed by artificial planets one day. We’ll never see the sun!”

Although it was a hilarious vision, every Grand Cardinal still gasped hard.

.....

In San Ivansburg, Belkovsky and Romanov, the emperor of the Schachran Empire, both received the message from their spies. Then, they almost raised their heads and looked at the blue sky out of the window at the same time, as if they saw the artificial planets through the white clouds.

They did not have any doubt about the strategic significance of artificial planets, but they both sighed because they could not manufacture them. They wanted to capture one, but they feared that they would fall into a trap. They certainly could not afford a war against the Congress of Magic under the pressure of the South Church.

Therefore, they had to wait for an opportunity to capture one without causing a massive war, in which case the Congress of Magic could only swallow their anger because they also could not afford a war against them while resisting the South Church.

Inside the Dark Mountain Range, a luxury castle that was mostly made of gold stood next to a cliff.

A strange male leaned against the chair with a cigar on his mouth. Looking at his butler, he said, "What you said is very interesting. If only the live stream item of the Congress of Magic were smaller... In that case, I can have a lot of fun inside the castle. That's the best invention for a vampire who is too lazy to go out like me."

"Mr. Prince, even if you have such a thing, you would have to count on the Congress of Magic's radio station if you want to see anything," the butler replied solemnly.

"Rest assured. The Congress of Magic will certainly work on it now that they already achieved such a level. I can sponsor them if they lack resources. Isn't Rhine very close to Lucien Evans? The old man can't be angry at me if I sponsor through him." The vampire prince waved his hands.

"I'm told that Mr. Observer went to the Temple of Spirits with the Primordial Ancestor," the butler said something else.

After a brief silence, the vampire prince scoffed, "The old man will burst into fury again."

.....

Inside the Sky Radio Station in Allyn...

After the Rentato Music Festival was over, Lucien came to thank the arcanists who were responsible for the broadcast. Heidi, who was interested in "live stream", arrived with him.

"Mr. Evans, this is our job, and you don't need to thank us. However, the members of the audience have been sending us letters, asking us to keep the live stream going on in the future instead of only broadcasting sound. What should we do?" said Louise, upset.

Lucien smiled. "Prime Minister Russell, Duke James, and the other nobles expressed similar wishes, but it's not a problem that can be solved with additional radios and loudspeakers. According to the

current standard, the magic circles that can display images and receive signals permanently equal to a senior-rank item. Neither the Congress of Magic nor the kingdom can afford that.

“Therefore, we need time to complete and simplify the alchemical items. You may repeat my words to the audience. In the near future, they will not only be enjoying the live stream in the square but also at their homes.”

“In the near future?” Samantha asked in confusion. She couldn’t recall any studies in that aspect.

Lucien pointed at Heidi who was standing next to him. “Part of her studies on artificial intelligence can be directly applied to this, such as electronic tubes and monitors. Therefore, whether or not similar alchemical items can be produced depends on the efforts of her research team.”

“Mine?” Heidi pointed at her nose, lost. She was too dedicated to artificial intelligence to realize that it could also be applied to other aspects.

.....

In Hamina, the capital of Dumute...

Katrina was walking on the crowded street. Most of the passersby were dwarfs who only reached her waist, but there were still plenty of merchants who came to do business. Therefore, she did not catch much attention.

“It’s not suitable at night. I should install the item that my teacher gave to me at night...” Looking at the pilgrims outside of the temple, Katrina made a judicious decision. Although she didn’t quite understand why her teacher asked her to do this, she still spared no efforts to see that it was done perfectly.

Chapter 728: Behind the Back

Clang, clang, clang.

After three consecutive bell knocks, the dwarfs outside of the temple of “God of Craftsmen” all stopped. Clenching their right hands into fists, they bashed and prayed at the same time.

“Great God of Steam, you are the master of machines. You control the arts of craft and grant us strength and courage...”

Katrina, who was about to leave, was slightly shocked. Since when had the God of Craftsmen become the God of Steam? It seemed that the Congress hadn’t paid enough attention to this country of dwarfs.

“However, this ‘God of Steam’ looks slightly different from the ‘God of Steam’ that the alchemical dwarfs in Rentato worship. The gesture and words in their prayers are apparently not the same.” Katrina had encountered the dwarfs from the Night Highland when she and her friends wandered in Rentato and visited the alchemical workshops. Their weird gesture of eye-covering during their prayer left a deep impression on her.

She looked around, only to discover that humans, werewolves, elves, and the other non-dwarf races stopped walking. Although they did not join the prayer, it was obvious that they did not want to disturb the dwarfs’ ritual at noon. She thought to herself, *Judging from their reaction, it must’ve been a while since the God of Craftsmen turned into the God of Steam.*

The sound of prayer, which was gradually synchronized, created a strange resonance, letting the creatures who did not pray sense the magnificent sacredness, too. The air was filled with the intoxicating fragrance of alcohol.

That was the greatest feature of Dumute. The dwarfs loved not only ale but also any kind of wonderful liquor. The merchants who visited this place had mostly come to exchange their wine for minerals and the alchemical items created by dwarfs.

The dwarfs, whose bloodline had been modified by sorcerers, boasted basic spiritual powers. Together with their deftness and their talents, it was not hard for them to build apprentice-level items, but the low-rank and the middle-rank items had to be built by the dwarfs whose blood powers had been activated. The ancient sorcerers had modified them for the main purpose of crafting the lesser alchemical items to save their own time.

As for the senior-rank items, few dwarfs could forge them, and their success rate was much lower than the sorcerers'. The legendary items, on the other hand, could only be created by Heit, the God of Craftsmen, through divine power and his own talents. Even Okun, the God of Valiance, was incapable of that.

The fragrance of wine spread out from different houses. Mixed, they seemed enough to put down the passersby who could not drink much. However, Katrina had a remarkable capacity for drinks since she was born in the Schachran Empire. She was not disgusted at all. Instead, she even took a deep breath and narrowed her eyes.

After the noon prayer, Katrina returned to her hotel with the crowd. She closed the window and began to meditate, preparing herself for the operation at night. Although dwarfs had limited height, they loved beautiful and magnificent buildings from the bottom of their hearts. Therefore, nobody would feel restrained in Dumute as long as they were not giants. The stone houses in this place had an average height of four meters.

Midnight soon came. Teams of dwarf soldiers patrolled on the street loyally and warily. Because the God of Craftsmen suddenly turned into the God of Steam and subverted the God of Valiance, Dumute was actually not as peaceful as it appeared, and emergencies caused by the "heretics" who opposed the great God of Steam happened now and then. Therefore, Hamina City was in fact under close watch.

Katrina deployed a magic circle to eliminate magic waves first. She then enhanced herself with the spells such as Advanced Stealth. Although Dumute was not biased against sorcerers, what she was going to do concerned the God of Craftsmen, their highest spiritual leader. She couldn't be more prudent.

Landing on the ground as soft as a feather, Katrina snuck toward the temple of the God of Steam. On her way, she raised her head to observe the stars and the environment while calculating the coordinates where she should put the statue according to the formula that her teacher provided.

“Why does this formula need the specific coordinates of the few major temples as well as the types of the buildings around?” Katrina recited the many parameters she needed. She was puzzled by the patterns of the coordinate changes. What was the result of the calculation exactly, and why did it need so many weird parameters?

However, since it was her teacher’s request, she did not think much about it. Taking a long detour, she finally came up with the specific coordinates. Then, she quietly walked toward a white sculpture on the southeast side of the God of Steam.

“Is this Heit’s statue?” Katrina observed it carefully.

The dwarf was wearing an armor that was engraved with sacred patterns and holding a gigantic hammer in his hand. His long beard dangled to his chest and covered his face. Inside his eye sockets were two glittering rubies.

“The statue that my teacher gave to me is an eyesore compared to this...” Bringing out the figurine that Lucien gave her, Katrina was amused. “My teacher’s sense of beauty always fluctuates.”

Lucien’s taste in music, architecture, and his design of the Moon Timer were unquestionable. His ideas such as “Arcana Voice” had amazed many people too. However, in most cases, his thoughts and creations were of such a unique aesthetic that nobody else could accept them. Take the figurine of a dwarf made of many metal parts for example. It looked good and emitted coldness on the surface, but it had a big bald head that was full of creepy patterns, scaring everybody who saw it.

Her smile gone, Katrina focused her attention and let the figurine of the bald dwarf float at the heart of Heit, the God of Craftsmen, according to Lucien’s request, before she chanted the long and sophisticated spell.

The spell was written in the language of the ancient Magic Empire, but it carried a strange feeling of holiness. Gradually, a silver light protruded from the dwarf's body. It spread out like a gigantic web that controlled human hearts.

"You are the master of mind, the emperor of gods, the great God of Steam... Allow me to summon your name. Supreme Yuri, please grant me the power to control everything..."

In her spell, the silver glittering lines stretched into the heart of Heit statue, and the rest of them integrated with the void, raising quakes.

In the quakes, the pure and holy light showed up like tiny angels. Singing, praising, and praying in pleasant sounds, they danced up and down around the Yuri statue.

The noises seemed to have been frozen. There was no reaction from the temple far away.

The quakes in the void suddenly grew intense, and the tiny spots of light were melted into the Yuri statue. Then, the Yuri statue was gradually blurred on the spot, until it was nowhere to be seen again!

"It has melted with time and space?" Katrina was deeply astounded by the scene, which she had never seen before. "Is this the subtlety of legendary power? But why does it carry a tiny hint of divine power?"

She shook her head and calmed herself down. Erasing the traces around carefully, she returned to the hotel.

When Katrina's back disappeared at the end of the street, a bird that was absolutely black, with a cluster of hilarious and cold feathers on the head, swooped from the dark night.

Hovering, the bird stopped on the head of the God of Craftsmen and let out an obscure voice that nobody could hear. "Lucien Evans is truly gathering faith in secret. It seems that he is very confident about his theory... He's bold enough to steal Heit's power of faith..."

“... And he sent a student for the mission. It would have fooled everyone if it weren’t for me...

“No, I have to find a way to remind Heit. Lucien Evans cannot be allowed to collect the power of faith smoothly, or he will step into the level of demigods faster than everybody else...”

The bird flew down from the statue and circled it while uttering weird, appalling tweets as if it were informing every living creature of their time of death.

...

On the third day after Katrina left Hamina City...

A team of dwarf soldiers discovered “cultists” who slandered the God of Steam during their patrol and were engaged in a fierce battle.

As it happened, there were senior-rank casters among the cultists. The dwarf soldiers suffered heavy losses. Thankfully, the temple of Heit was around, and a few priests soon arrived, surrounding those cultists in a square not far away.

Divine power burst out everywhere, raising the most extraordinary views in the square. One cultist fell after another, and the square was on the verge of destruction.

BOOM!

The priest and the senior-rank caster among the cultists launched Sunstrike at each other. The aftermath of their battle swept across the square, shaking and shattering the statue of Heit. The holy light and the silver lines on it flashed.

During the flash, Heit, who was deep inside the temple, opened his eyes. Two clusters of gold fire were burning in them, which reflected his furious heart.

He extended his hand, and the statue of the bald Yuri appeared in his palm.

“Who is stealing my power of faith?” In fury, Heit gnashed his teeth. “The God of Steam? Lucien Evans!”

The wind of fury swept across the whole temple, and a gold fire descended from the sky, burning the senior-rank caster into ashes.

After examining the survivors’ memories carefully, Heit was silent for a moment, before he shouted in exasperation, “You can steal my power of faith, and I can steal yours!”

His eyes were focused on the statue of Yuri in his hand. Then, he enveloped it carefully with a golden flame, so that he would not alert anyone.

...

Inside the Atomic Universe, a vague gold light appeared on the statue of “God of Steam” Yuri. Nobody would’ve discovered it if they hadn’t been watching it all the time.

Inside the magic tower, Lucien was briefly stunned. He turned around and looked out, his lips curling into a smile.

Chapter 729: Aircraft

The streets of Rentato were crammed with people.

“Look, what’s that?” Suddenly, someone exclaimed in the crowd. Everybody looked at where he was pointing at.

“What is that?”

“Can alchemical cars fly now?”

They burst out with equally shocked expressions when they saw that a silver object was flying at the altitude of the third floor. It looked similar to the alchemical cars on the street, in that it also had a head, a carriage, doors, wheels, and lamps, although it did seem too light to be made of regular metals. Of course, the greatest difference about the vehicle was that the weird alchemical car could fly! Wasn’t it an ability that only the sorcerers above the third circle and the radiant knights were capable of?

With their exclamations, more and more citizens looked at the sky. After a while, Rentato had a thousand statues that craned their heads at the sky.

Things were better in Rentato. If it were in any other place, the ordinary people would have escaped in a panic while shouting “monster”. Chances were that there would even be a stampede.

On the “flying car”, Viscount Leebel looked at the crowd below in satisfaction, with a cigar in his mouth. He felt that their exclamations were the best compliment for him.

“What’s to be surprised at? A bunch of bumpkins,” Viscount Leebel snorted. “This is just a perpetuated floating skill plus the engine device of the alchemical cars.”

He was the son of a certain count, and he had activated his blood power with drugs. It was impossible for him to fly on his own. Also, he felt that flying with common alchemical items was too ugly and made him feel that he was naked. Nobles should have the

“etiquette” for flying. They had to be unhurried and graceful.

He had the dream for a long time, but he never had the chance to realize it until alchemical cars were invented. He finally understood what he really wanted. A real noble should fly in midair with such a vehicle so that the lowly citizens could only look up to him without seeing his real face. Of course, if this weren't his first test, he would've hired a “coachman”. A noble should not drive a car in person!

Therefore, he found a few sorcerers who were highly interested in money and materials. Based on “alchemical cars”, they chose new metal materials that significantly reduced the weight as well as the safety performance. Then, the floating skill was perpetuated on that basis so that the alchemical car could float under the maneuver. That was because the flying skill could only be perpetuated by the senior rank, and the middle-rank sorcerers could only activate their flying skills several times every day at best, which could not meet Viscount Leebel's demand.

Eventually, they modified the engine device of the alchemical car so that it could jet gas, thus allowing the controller to change the direction freely. In such a way, they enabled the alchemical car to fly without using the flying skill, and it could also drive on the ground.

Of course, such “flying cars” had its own deficiencies. Firstly, floating was not exactly flying, and the take-off and landing could be terribly slow. Secondly, it consumed a great amount of energy. Even though the floating skill had been perpetuated, it required the refill of magic gems that were unaffordable for ordinary people.

Viscount Leebel, however, was quite satisfied with that. It was his purpose to make the “flying cars” unaffordable for the bumpkins. That was the way to highlight the grace of nobles!

Looking at the alchemical cars on the ground that were driving slowly in case of collision as well as the shocked faces in them, Viscount Leebel extended his left hand and snapped the cigar ash off, before he said proudly, “What a bunch of bumpkins.”

Showing his “nobility”, he hit the accelerator in excitement, trying to pass through the air channel among a few tall buildings so that the bumpkins down below could only see the back of himself and his flying car!

Hardly had he passed the “channel” when his eyes were frozen, because an identical vehicle flew right at him on the opposite side. Inside the vehicle was a man who was at a loss in panic. He was equally fast and at the same altitude!

“Damn it. Those sorcerers sold my idea to other people!”

At this moment, of all the things he could’ve thought of, that was what popped up in his head. Then, he pulled the lever “skillfully”, hoping to ascend and avoid the possible collision.

However, the greatest problem with the floating skill was the slow rising and landing. Being a non-sorcerer, he neglected the problem.

The two equally shocked and terrified faces looked at each other in bewilderment, before the two flying cars ran into each other brutally.

“I shouldn’t have flown at such a low altitude just for other people to see me...” Viscount Leebel’s pupils constricted violently. Since his blood power was not normally activated, he did not have the willpower to remind himself of his knightly capabilities during the emergency.

Boom!

An enormous fireball burst out in midair, and the remains of the alchemical cars hit the ground like raindrops.

“Well...” All the craning citizens were utterly dumbfounded this time. What was this all about?

Bam.

An object that was burning intensely fell right before Ali who was carrying a black suitcase. He backed off in fear and almost stepped into the manhole next to the street.

“What a terrible explosion...

“It almost hit me...

“Rentato is really a dangerous place...”

Many ideas occurred to Ali. Having just arrived at the place, he had deeply recognized the “dangerousness” of Rentato. At this moment, he suddenly had the epiphany that his path would never be short of obstacles if he wanted to make a name for himself. If he was not careful enough, it was possible that he would be killed in the tiniest accident.

His uneasiness was soon suppressed by the strange experience.

“Hurry! Call the police!” The citizens were back to themselves.

They were already used to the police department of Holm.

.....

Inside the Atomic Universe...

“What are you smiling at?” Natasha flew back with her longsword. Having just finished the afternoon sword practice, she saw Lucien’s weird smile.

Instead of giving a direct reply, Lucien nodded and said, “Somebody is indeed spying on me.”

“Did you find anything with the statue of Yuri?” Natasha was keen enough to remember the incident. Lucien had asked Katrina to install the statue in Dumute for two purposes. One of them was exactly a test!

Lucien chuckled. “If ‘he’ did not do anything, I would have to figure out a way to let Heit discover it, but thankfully, he jumped out promptly.”

“Do you know who it was?” Natasha asked solemnly.

Lucien shook his head. “I made the prophecy based on the event, so

I don't know who exactly it was. I only know that such a guy exists. After all, adding unnecessary magic circles to the statue would've placed Katrina in danger."

Lucien certainly did not intend to involve his student who hadn't even reached the senior rank in such peril.

"You don't seem worried." Natasha was relaxed seeing how easy Lucien was. She sheathed the Sword of Truth.

"Wary, I am; worried, I am not. Why do I need to worry about a guy who attempts to become a demigod by keeping an eye on what I do all the time?" Lucien began to joke with his wife. "Look at me. I always research and explore on my own and never care about what other people do. That's the demeanor of an expert."

"Tsk. If you are an expert, turn into a legendary knight and have a sword exercise with me!" Natasha raised her eyebrow.

Lucien replied "fearlessly", "Not a problem, as long as you don't use the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Truth."

After joking with each other for a while, they discussed the mysterious guy and the God of Craftsmen again. At this moment, Butler Leo walked in. "Madam, a maid from the Nekso Palace asked for you."

He always addressed her as madam instead of Your Majesty.

"Me? Is there anything important?" Natasha walked to the library in confusion. There shouldn't be any emergency that the queen had to deal with in person recently.

After a while, Natasha was back. She said to Lucien with a weird face, "The 'car accident' you mentioned constantly has happened, but it's in the sky..."

"In the sky?" Having come from Earth, Lucien knew very well about the danger of car accidents. After the alchemical cars were invented, he specifically advised speed limits and other safety measures in the city. No car accidents had taken place yet because alchemical cars were still rare. He never expected that the first car

accident would happen in the sky!

Natasha explained what had happened. "The dead Viscount Leebel was certainly a creative man."

A naughty kid who liked playing and got killed because of it... Lucien secretly remarked. The nobles and sorcerers of this world were truly "practical". They had even created "flying cars" that he had never thought of.

Natasha patted her hand. "I have to host a meeting in the Parliament of Nobles. The deaths of two nobles have prompted the conservative old men to propose a ban on flying cars. If their reason stands, wagons should've been thrown into the ocean a long time ago."

As the wife of an arcanist who was good at inventing all kinds of bizarre items, she was rather interested in the idea of flying cars.

"That's right. It's better to regulate the things that will eventually appear than to ban them. We should establish rules on aircraft and road safety. It will be better if the police department can set up special units to enforce the rules," Lucien suggested.

"Haha. Should we forbid sorcerers from flying in the city like Allyn? Well, the Bill of Flight Management of Sorcerers?" Natasha joked and returned to the Nekso Palace through the portal in the hall.

Lucien shook his head with a smile and walked to the Thunder Hall, ready to discuss arcana with his teacher and Mr. Brook.

He had barely entered the Thunder Hell when he heard an intense explosion. Fernando's magic tower glowed, and an energy swept out while consuming everything as if it were the end of the world. Then, everything was curbed by the magic tower.

"Damn it. Another explosion!" Fernando appeared before Lucien, with his hair in a mess.

Lucien said helplessly, "Master, you'd better be careful. If it were any other arcanists, they would've been long dead."

Chapter 730: The Investigator

“What exactly was wrong that caused the series of explosions in the fission reactor?” Fernando paid absolutely no heed to Lucien’s reminder. As long as no other top legends or third-rank sorcerers were behind it, even if he did not have the time to take any reaction, the trigger and passive magic effects on him would’ve been enough to ensure that he survived the fission explosions without being affected by the curses.

His hair was so messy that a huge wind seemed to have just blown it. His red magic robe was also full of wrinkles, which was an indication of the catastrophe just now, but he noticed none of it. All his attention was devoted to the possible problems of the fission reactor, and he sounded agitated and extremely puzzled. According to his studies on fission and his reverse engineering on “Atomic Fission”, the legendary spell, there shouldn’t be a problem at all. However, it was indeed a fission reactor that was going on when the uncontrollable explosion took place!

“How many times has it exploded?” Lucien gasped hard. Judging from his teacher’s tone, it was not the second meltdown, but the third, the fourth, the fifth, or even the sixth. No wonder he ran into the explosion by “accident”; it was no accident at all.

It was not until then that Lucien finally realized why his teacher hardly let him and the other students do experiments. The only experiments that they did were the simple ones, such as black-body radiation. As it turned out, it was very dangerous to be involved in his teacher’s experiments, and any researchers who were not legendary could be obliterated any time!

Fernando frowned. “It doesn’t matter how many times it has exploded; what matters is why. It has no contradictions whatsoever with the model and mechanism of fission.”

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “‘Atomic Fission’ is an uncontrollable, massively-destructive spell, and the reactor demands steadiness and controllability. That’s probably the source

of the problem.”

“Do you think I am a fool who simply made arrangements according to the model of ‘Atomic Fission’?” Fernando said. It was apparent that he wasn’t in a good mood. “You saw our reactor model and the detailed arrangements yourself. You should know that we added a lot of magic circles to facilitate the utilization and control of energy.”

“However, it doesn’t mean real steadiness and controllability. I think we have to study fission better in order to solve the problem. We have to figure out the role that neutrons and the other particles play and their possible reactions under different circumstances.” Lucien had considered the reactor accidents himself and suspected that it was because the current research was too crude. The design of the reactor mostly depended on “reverse engineering”. The different roles of slow neutrons and fast neutrons hadn’t been discovered, not to mention their different effects in different fission reactions.

Fernando never ignored the helpful advice, but he never gave in verbally either. “Do you think I never considered those problems? But it will take a long time to experiment on neutrons by hitting different elements with them. Well, Hathaway and I are already on it.”

Neutrons couldn’t be accelerated by a magnetic field, so the experiments were much more complicated.

“I’ll also try to work on those experiments.” Lucien smiled. “The sooner we develop portable fission devices, the more useful our artificial planets will be. It will be impossible for the Church and the other enemies to imitate us.”

The mechanisms of the artificial planets, such as their orbits and their relay of electromagnetic waves, were not complicated and could be mimicked. But when it came to fission reactors, if they did not have a profound study on fission, the enemies would only encounter the explosion accidents that were happening to his teacher recently if they tried to duplicate the devices. If they did not understand which magic pattern functioned and how, it would

be impossible for them to combine or abandon the patterns when they transformed the patterns into symbols of divine power. Any error in the procedure could lead to a serious accident.

That was exactly the difference between the cutting edge and the bleeding edge of arcana. After all, “launch” was too simple in this world.

Fernando nodded. “As long as a steady fission reactor is developed, minimization shouldn’t be a problem.”

In this magic world, many technical problems on Earth were no longer problems. For example, the fission reactor that Fernando and Hathaway built directly used magic circles to transform the released energy into electricity. No external components were needed at all. But of course, the cost of minimization would still be very high. Unless the Congress paid to install them on the artificial planets, only the archmages and the legendary sorcerers would be able to afford them.

Also, the Highest Council did not have a consensus on the promotion of minimized fission devices, because it might be a safety hazard. It could cause huge casualties and pollution that would take forever to be cleaned.

Seeing the confidence in his teacher, Lucien smiled. “Fission reactors and minimization is just our first step. Controllable fusion is our real goal. When the goal is achieved, we will be able to proudly declare that we are the Sun Kings.”

“Controllable fusion...” Fernando repeated hopefully but frowningly. That was significantly more difficult than fission reactors. He, Douglas, and Hathaway had absolutely no clue where to get started, and Lucien could barely offer any useful suggestions. “Let’s focus on the fission reactor for now...”

He paused and mocked habitually, “All the distinguished arcanists in the microscopic domain are bombarding particles with other particles every day right now, hoping to find the group that contains the enigmas from the infinite experimental data. They are more like hard laborers than arcanists.”

“It’s not just the distinguished arcanists. Most sorcerers know that hitting the microscopic particles is most likely to lead to new discoveries.” Lucien chuckled. “They are terrified by the uncanny feature of electrons as if it could destroy the world. Also, they know little about quantum mechanics and cannot make any theoretical or experimental contributions. So, they can only walk on the path that cannot be wrong.”

It was the same on Earth. The bombardment and collision experiments of particles were the most viable approach to discover the mysteries of the microscopic domain. The only difference was that the senior-rank sorcerers of the Congress of Magic were already capable of setting up experiment devices of their own, unlike the researchers on Earth who had to wait in line to run the experiments in order to confirm their speculations or deductions from the data.

Of course, when the phase of Large Hadron Collider came, the scenarios would be more and more familiar. For example, the middle-rank sorcerers right now could only walk on several paths if they intended to run similar magic experiments.

Firstly, they could become the students or friends of a certain senior-rank sorcerer. Secondly, they could work in places like the Atom Institution. Thirdly, they could pay for the senior-rank sorcerers to make the arrangements for them.

Fourthly, they could file an application to the Magic Research Board and join a queue while they waited for the chance to use the open massive laboratory of the Allyn magic tower for free. That was an idea that Lucien proposed in a session of the Highest Council so that the lesser sorcerers could do their research without paying.

Fernando glared at him. “Their fear and panic come exactly from the observer effect that you raised.”

Lucien hurried to change the subject. “Master, you didn’t work on the field theory today? Is Mr. Brook not here?”

“Why on earth would I work on that? My head is full of infinity, infinity, and infinity! I don’t know the point of my research at all!” Lucien asked the perfect question, which detonated Fernando like a

stick of dynamite that had been ignited.

Lucien meant to comfort his teacher. Every person who worked on the field theory had millions of infinities in their room. That was unavoidable when the studies in the microscopic domain were pressed on.

For example, Mr. Dirac, who proposed the Dirac equation, as one of the founders of the quantum field theory, was one of the top ten if not the top five physicists in Lucien's eyes. He held different opinions on infinity. He believed that there were an inevitable reason and a deeper meaning behind infinity and that the classical theories were wrong. Therefore, he opposed reorganizing it through mathematical approaches. As a result, he was gradually left behind. Or maybe, his cognitive world was broken and solidified?

After roaring for a while, Fernando also fell quiet. "Brook will come later. However, even if infinite appears in the calculation of higher approximation, the field theory we've established has indeed described the interaction of charged particles, which is the essence of the electromagnetic force..."

He was rather satisfied with the joint study of himself, Brook, and Lucien, except for the goddamn infinity.

Based on the field theory they established, Fernando and Brook maintained that the electromagnetic force was realized when charged particles exchanged photons in many different processes. However, the photons were different from the photons that people usually studied. They could not be observed and were only a mathematical conclusion. The two of them had called such photons virtual photons.

After discussing the quantum field theory for a while, Fernando suddenly said, "Stanis told me that the Dark Mountain Range hadn't been quiet lately. Those gloomy guys seem to have re-recognized us after the battle of Rentato and begin to consider whether they should cooperate with or fight against us."

"Aren't they a bit too slow?" Lucien said in amusement.

Fernando snorted. "Those guys are all species with extremely long lives. Our decade might only be ten days in their eyes. Plus, they are no more interested in arcana than the Church is. That is why they've reacted so sluggishly. Tell Natasha to pay attention to the safety of Rentato, which will probably be frequented by many dark creatures."

"Alright." Lucien nodded solemnly.

...

Inside the Dark Mountain Range, a young man with silver hair and gold eyes said solemnly, "Nasdell, you will sneak into Rentato and Allyn as soon as possible and take a look at the changes that the Congress of Magic has brought forth. Your observation will be the basis on which we make a decision later."

"Yes, sir." The werewolf before him retracted his fur and turned into a brawny man with the same silver hair.

Chapter 731: Nasedell in Rentato

Night fell rather early in this cold winter. Rentato, the city in the north, was shivering in the freezing cold wind. Every pedestrian walking on the street had pulled up their collars and accelerated their pace.

To them, the biggest difference was that the streets in Rentato now had been lined with bright magic crystal light. In the past, only the busiest streets had arched lamps. At that time, most citizens would walk back home in thick darkness, and the only light source might be the moon, stars, or a dim lantern.

Nasedell got off the last train following the stream and stepped onto the smooth floor of Hexagram Station. Rentato City still had the city gates and walls for the purpose of defense.

Therefore, magic steam trains could not drive into the city after nightfall. After the gate closed, the trains could only stop at the temporary station outside of the city.

Nasedell enjoyed his trip very much. Like the books said, magic steam trains were indeed very fast and comfortable. He exhaled and saw a cluster of white fog rising.

He was wearing a white shirt, a brown sweater, a black top hat, and a double-breasted suit. In his hand, there was also a walking stick. It was a typical Holm dressing style.

His muscles bulged the shirt. Obviously, he was a man of great strength.

Nasedell looked around at the station and felt it a pity that magic steam trains could not drive through the Dark Mountain Range. Maybe Silver Moon Wasteland could be an option.

The Dark Mountain Range was full of dangerous space gaps and magic creatures. Very likely a magic train would never come back once it entered the mountains.

Silver Moon Wasteland was a dimension under the control of werewolves. Unlike what the name suggested, it was a rich and prosperous wasteland. The werewolves insisted the name a few thousand years ago, and the original name had been long forgotten.

There was nothing else special about the station. Nasedell pulled his suit and walked out of the station.

Nasedell felt very proud that Prince Dubenal chose him to be the one who carried out this mission, which required a clear way of thinking and very strong observation skills. His pace was accelerating.

Prince Dubenal was an idol of Nasedell because of his intelligence and strategic talent. Nasedell tried to follow how the prince behaved and thought. Although other princes and vampires often laughed at Dubenal for his recklessness and simple mind, Nasedell never believed them. They did this simply out of jealousy!

As soon as he stepped out of the station, Nasedell's eyes suddenly lit up by the lamps on the street, as if they were stars shining in the city.

All the lights connected with each other—street lamps, household lamps, car lights, and coach lights. All of them looked so bright and warm. The joint lights were even brighter than the stars in the sky.

In one direction, two high towers rose up from the ground and overlooked the entire Rentato. The two towers were decorated with pure and bright crystal lamps. Nasedell was deeply impressed by the sheer beauty.

Nasedell stood there. The brightness seized his heart. His heart was thudding.

“Your first time here in Rentato? The higher one is Holm Royal Magic Tower, and the lower one is Holm Broadcasting Station and National Council of Electromagnetic Waves...” A passerby took a glance at Nasedell and explained.

A council? Wasn't that something only existed in the Congress of

Magic? Were there even councils higher than the national council? What about the headquarters? Nasedell had lots of questions in his mind, but he did not ask. He felt hurt by the amused look on the passerby's face.

That was the look staring at a countryman! Nasedell had to control his anger to complete the mission. He had to know more about this city to pretend that this was not his first time here.

He had very strong self-esteem that was rare even among werewolves.

Taking the baggage, Nasedell hired a coach and headed for the busy street.

Passing by a square, Nasedell saw hundreds of people gathering. He was very surprised as it was very cold outside. How could they stand the cold wind?

Nasedell asked the coach to stop, and he got off. Standing on the margin of the square, he saw the huge speakers in the middle of the square. A sweet voice was coming out from the speakers.

"The next part is Body Secret, the part that is loved by everyone! Tonight we're lucky to have Viscount John Wellesley who is a grand knight and is very experienced in exercising. He's going to share with us how teenagers should work out when their bodies are not yet fully grown and the best way to work out."

Nasedell's eyes lit up. He took out a pile of material and started looking for something.

He was leafing through the booklet while listening to the broadcasting carefully. Finally, a big smile appeared on his face.

That was Arcana Voice! The information was correct!

Nasedell then got very surprised by the viscount's sharing. What the viscount was saying was how a knight would exercise. Wasn't that supposed to be a secret?!

He was shocked as this never happened even in the most open-

minded Aalto. One would have to become a knight squire first to access such secrets.

Nasdell wondered to himself if the nobles here ever protested this kind of broadcasting, or they were allowing this to confront the Church. But soon, he became totally obsessed with Arcana Voice. He had never experienced such a way of entertainment!

In the Dark Mountain Range, because of the harsh conditions, it was very hard to receive the signal of Arcana Voice.

Nasdell listened to the radio attentively. He was glad that he had this opportunity to listen to Arcana Voice here. Obviously, the radio program was very interesting to him.

After the crowd dispersed, Nasdell sneaked up on the big speaker but found nothing special other than some wires and simple devices.

Following the wires, Nasdell walked around the corner and came to the other side of the wall. He saw that there were over ten strange holes in the wall, three in each group, one above and two below.

Nasdell had a close look at them but could not figure out the usage of the holes. He wanted to ask someone, but he did not want to be looked down upon. So he decided to figure it out on his own.

Growing up in the Dark Mountain Range, Nasdell knew that he had to be cautious with everything he did not know well even if that thing looked very ordinary. Therefore, in great alert, he took out a steel stick from his luggage to use it as the extension of his fingers.

The holes were right in the wall without any covers or protection. Thus, Nasdell believed that they wouldn't be too dangerous.

Looking around, after making sure that there was no one around, Nasdell poked the holes with the steel stick.

Buzz!

Electric currents shot out along the needle stick and hit Nasdell right away. There was no chance for him to avoid it.

Nasdell's body was covered with electric currents and was shaking fiercely. Something smelled burned. He tried to pull the stick out, but he just could not.

After a while, Nasdell had half returned to his werewolf look. His muscles bulged, and a mist of black air surrounded him. He suddenly used his strength and finally got rid of the steel stick.

Lightning... Magic circle...

How could the nobles and sorcerers in Rentato allow such dangerous things to be here in the wall in a public square?! Nasdell could not even speak, and he felt extremely annoyed. If he had not been an adult werewolf, he would have been killed!

Just after he returned to his human look, a young man in fancy clothes walked to him. He took out something connecting to a wire from his pouch and plugged in the holes, and then he plugged the other end in a fine alchemical item in the shape of a rectangle.

Seeing that there was a man lying on the ground and looking at him in great confusion, the young man grinned and explained, "This is the latest mobile communication device. It no longer requires a permanent magic circle for electricity because it can now save the energy. The price has been greatly lowered because of it. I'm not super rich, but now I can afford it."

Then he smelled something burned in the air. He took a glance at the man on the ground again, and the man's face also looked burned black.

"My friend, you don't look very well. Did you just touch the electric current magic circles?"

"No, no..." Nasdell hurriedly denied.

The young man grinned. "Good. Arcana Voice and the council have been promoting people's awareness of using electricity safely. Even kids in Rentato now understand how important this is, unless it's someone who has never used electricity before."

Even kids knew it? Nasdell was glad that he instantly denied

himself earlier.

Nasdell decided to leave the square as soon as possible out of the feeling of embarrassment. Dragging his half numb body, Nasdell walked slowly to the quiet street.

As he was walking, somehow, he suddenly lost his footing and fell into a hole!

Bang!

On the square, the young man heard something. He turned around but saw nothing.

After the charging was done, he recalled something—the broadcasting had been warning citizens that they should avoid remote and quiet streets and use extra caution when walking as recently some thieves were stealing sewer lids.

Chapter 732: Misfortunes Never Come Singly

In Rentato, on a dark street.

Carrying something heavy, two small men were moving stealthily on the street. Suddenly, a couple of people jumped out and fiercely pushed them down to the ground.

Bang!

That heavy thing fell to the ground.

“Black dogs on Granlin Street!” the small man blurted out.

Then he got a crispy slap on his face because of what he just said. A man in uniform walked out of the darkness and squatted down in front of the man.

“I prefer policeman or sir.”

Since the headquarters of the Holm Police Agency was located on Granlin Street, the gangsters had been used to calling the agency Granlin Street.

The slap made the small man afraid. “Yes, sir...”

He was told that the black dogs on Granlin Street had some kind of special alchemical item that could torture them with horrible paralysis and pain. So never be reckless in front of a cop.

“Caught right on spot... stealing the lid. You’ll be sent to the court for your sentence and you will face the charge of endangering public security. If nothing else, you two will be spending the rest of your lives in the mines. Of course, if you two are willing to become some experiment subjects, you might be able to come back to Rentato after a year,” said the senior policeman while smacking the small man’s face.

The small man was totally shocked. “En... endangering public

security...? Sir, we didn't mean it! We were... We did it just for money!"

The charge sounded very serious to him.

"I've told you jerks multiple times to listen to the radio to know the rules and laws. You don't know laws, you don't know rules, you're not even qualified to be a thief!" The senior officer stood up.

The charge of endangering public security came from the Parliament of Nobles and was suggested by Natasha. When they were discussing the regulations on aircraft and road safety, Natasha suggested that there should be a law preventing people from using aircraft or cars for murder.

"It was a lid! Only a lid!" The two thieves almost burst into tears. They could not imagine how it would be like laboring in the mines.

As for becoming a sorcerer's experiment subject, this option would never happen! That would be even more horrible than death!

The senior officer sneered, "You stole the lid. You would make other people fall into the sewers. That's how you two endangered public security. Repent when you're in the mines!"

"No, please, sir! This is the last time! We wouldn't have done it if we knew it!" they two hurriedly begged.

"Sir! I've got... big information. Big!" one of them cried out loud.

They would do whatever they could do to save their lives!

The senior officer nodded with satisfaction and said to the other cop, "Take them back for interrogation. Give me the confession first before submitting it."

The two thieves were now in tears. After they left following the cop, one of his subordinates flattered him, "Sir, good for you. They were scared to death! It was so easy for you to get a big piece of information!"

"It was their fault for not listening to the radio. Honestly speaking, I

wish I could make them face the charge! Damn it! Lots of people this morning saw how I was tripped over!” said the senior angrily.

No wonder the leader was hobbling earlier today...

The senior officer had given the order, “Put the lid back to where it was and lock it tight.”

And he could not help complaining, “It’s such a pain in the a*s... Why are we doing all these? We’ve got plenty of stuff to do. We shouldn’t be the one doing it!”

After the rest of the several policemen put back the sewer lid, one of them said to the others, “I wonder if anyone’s down there... The lid went missing for at least a couple of minutes...”

“Impossible! It’s already very late, and it was only a few minutes,” said his colleague lightheartedly. Then he pulled out a tube of apprentice-level alchemical potion and poured it into the edge between the lid and the ground. The potion would glue the lid tight in the cold night and gradually melt in the daytime.

Some sorcerers helped them with this potion.

The policemen then hurriedly went back to the office on Granlin Street. They needed some hot tea.

After a while, someone started knocking at the lid from below. However, the lid would not move because of the special glue.

In the dark sewer, the veins in Nasdell’s head were pounding. He was furious, and he could not figure out why there was such a big hole in the middle of the street. What was wrong with this city? When he fell in the sewer, he still wasn’t able to control his body very well from the paralysis. Now he was covered with blood down here, and somehow he could not even get out!

Fury, annoyance, and confusion were mixing in his guts. He wished that he could return to his werewolf form and punch the sewer lid away with a single strike!

However, he had to force himself to calm down. Once someone saw

him as a werewolf, he would have great trouble in carrying out the task given by the prince.

He tried to take a deep breath, but the stink under here almost made him throw up.

“Nasdell, you gotta calm down. You shall never let the prince down. Don’t act like those reckless idiots,” he said to himself while hobbling along the sewers.

After a while, an angry roar burst out again from down in the sewers, “Damn it! It won’t open!”

Nasdell totally had no idea why people in Rentato would do so.

After walking for a long distance, when Nasdell had reached his limit, he finally found a lid that was not glued.

He pushed open the lid and climbed out. The cold, fresh air never tasted so sweet to him in his life.

Even as an adult werewolf, Nasdell felt very exhausted after all these. So he walked to an old, abandoned house and sat down against the wall. He needed some time to heal and take a rest.

The wounds from falling into the sewers had healed, but the deep pain left in his bones by the electric shock was still there. He could do nothing else but to wait.

Nasdell murmured to himself, “There are good things about Rentato, but also very dangerous things. How could they dig such a huge hole in the middle of the street and place lightning magic circles right on the square without any protection?”

He would not admit that he did not know how to use electricity safely, as he believed that those sorcerers were too reckless.

The night was quiet. Nasdell gradually calmed down. He comforted himself that things would get better soon.

However, as soon as the thought emerged, his sharp intuition made him sense the great danger. Without a second thought, he jumped

forward with all his strength.

However, his body had yet to fully recover from the electric shock, so his movement was a bit slower.

Boom!

The abandoned house suddenly exploded and then completely collapsed!

“Are you guys nuts?! You even f**king blow your own house?!” Nasdell was totally clueless about what was going on.

What just happened was totally beyond his expectation. And obviously, the explosion wasn’t coming for him. Nasdell would have sensed it way earlier if it had been.

BOOM!

The explosion blast hit Nasdell fiercely, and he was instantly buried by bricks and dust.

“Wh... Why...” murmured the werewolf.

On the other side of the street, the crowd was watching the explosion.

“Sir, the new explosive offered by the sorcerers worked very well!” said a brown-haired man excitedly. A few houses had been torn down within seconds!

“Good. This will save us lots of work and time. Soon, we’ll be able to widen the pavement so that this whole area in Rentato would become much more comfortable.” The director nodded with satisfaction.

To get the new explosive, their boss had paid a special visit to Allyn to have a specialist come over to guide the work.

One of his workers asked, “Why are we here at midnight though? People are sleeping...”

“So you mean we should block the street during the daytime? This street connects the market zone to the city gate! You know how much money would be wasted if we did so? Get those lazy workers to move. The street has to be cleaned by dawn!” said the director aloud.

The workers started their work. One of them said apprehensively, “Sir, we didn’t check before the explosion to make sure no one was in it...”

“There was no one in it! We’ve blocked the street in all directions and used magic crystal lamps as signs. We’ve been watching all the time, unless someone just popped out from the ground!” the director yelled at him.

...

In the early morning, Ali walked out of his rented place and headed for the noble district along a busy street.

He wasn’t in his best spirit since the explosions last night deprived him of his sleep.

Fortunately, the team which did the demolition had informed the residents well ahead with notifications. He could read, so he was not scared last night at all.

Beside the entrance of the noble district, there was once an abbey that had now been turned into a school. Students were reading aloud in the classrooms. Fine coaches kept driving to the school gate successively to send the noble kids here.

Mills Generic School on Kining Street in Noble district, Rentato... That was where his pen pal friend studied.

Jane from class one grade two. Ali thought to himself.

The second year after generic schools came into being, those nobles had decided to set up a noble school to make sure that only the privileged kids could study here. After seeing how those generic schools worked, the nobles had to admit that putting their kids in the school environment could better spark off the kids’ passions to

study and help them build up their social circles at a young age.

Ali watched the fine coaches and cars driving into the school, as well as the different aircraft including airships and aircars in the sky, and he felt that there was an invisible wall in front of him.

He sighed. Like the past few days, he turned around and left. His mind was full of all kinds of thoughts—depression, inferiority, and desires.

Now he had come back to the street where a couple of houses got torn down last night. He then heard some strange whimpering.

Ali followed the whimpering and was surprised to see that there was a big dog lying in the tall grass. Its eyes were tightly shut, and its silver fur was covered with blood and dust.

To Ali, the dog resembled a wolf very much. From the books, he knew that there was a kind of dog that looked like wolves very much.

Out of kindness, Ali walked to it and noticed that there were many wounds on the dog.

“You got lucky, pal.” Ali grinned.

He learned how to bind up wounds from working temporarily in the Congress of Magic’s hospital recently. He dragged the big dog home and wrapped it like a mummy.

After a while, he saw that the big dog had woken. Somehow, two lines of tears fell down from its dull eyes.

It was the first time that Ali saw something like this. He hurriedly comforted the big dog like he was talking to a human being, “It will get better. There’s no need to be this emotional. I just did what I should. Don’t cry. Our lives will get better in Rentato.”

Hearing the word Rentato, the big dog cried even harder.

Chapter 733: Rentato, Such a Dangerous Place!

In the early morning, the cold wind kept thudding the windows. Anyone would feel very lucky if he or she was now in their warm beds.

But Ali could not fall asleep. He had a night shift in the hospital and just came back home an hour ago. His head was full of all kinds of thoughts. How could he make his life better? What would be the best way to make achievements? Would he ever have a chance to own his own aircraft? He could not stop these thoughts.

Ali released a long sigh and sat up on his bed. Putting on his coat, he walked to the small table in his narrow room and pulled himself a couple of tasteless ale. Ali would not call the liquor good, but that was still the only enjoyment he had in life.

Holding the cup, Ali walked to the window and sat right down on the floor—the table was the only piece of furniture he had in his room except for the bed.

Watching the leaves shivering in the wind outside of the window, Ali's heart also felt cold.

His rented place faced a quiet street. Rarely was there a coach or a car passing by, and the sound of wheels grinding the road made the atmosphere even colder. There was no garden, as this place was located in the worst area in the district.

But Ali knew it well that the owners of these buildings were in fact quite wealthy, and their lives were much more leisure than most people. They had good insight into investment. So when more and more people flowed into Rentato for job opportunities in those alchemical workshops, they had altered their houses by cutting them into more rooms. Even though they were renting out the many rooms at a relatively low price, they were still making a lot.

After the alchemical workshops made lots of achievements, the

textile industry finally felt the crisis and started inviting sorcerers who were good at using golems to improve their spinners. After two to three years, the productivity of the spinners had been greatly improved and more jobs were created. Meanwhile, people in Holm could finally afford more clothes as the prices of fabrics had become much lower!

Gulping down the ale, Ali pushed the window open. The freezing cold wind made him feel the chill down his spine, but he also felt better because of the refreshing wind.

The beautiful, cold moon was still in the sky. At this time, Ali saw that the big dog he saved was also attentively staring at something out of the window in the direction of the city gate. He was amused and said, "You also feel lost? Do you know which way to go in the future?"

He was talking to himself. He never expected that a dog could understand.

The dog gave him a cold glance but then kept staring at the city gate. The dog had its own plan. It would leave this dangerous city as soon as it recovered!

Ali also turned to look in the same direction. He could see the tall city wall, which appeared white under the moonlight. He released a sigh, "That wall's indeed tall, but not as tall as the wall between nobles and ordinary people. The latter was so cold and formidable. No one could climb over..."

His listener was just a dog, but he did not care.

"Why ordinary people could never step into the world of nobles? Everyone's got eyes, nose, and brain, but they're born to be noble and privileged. So one's birth should determine his entire life... Is that right?" Ali murmured to himself. Despite the many thoughts, he still had to accept the truth that he belonged to the inferior social status. However, obviously, he did not want to be like this for his whole life.

The dog whimpered and took a glance at Ali. How childish he was!

The social status of nobles came from the power they mastered, like those powerful leaders among werewolves. That was a fact, and no one could change it until he or she gained enough power. At that time, those nobles would welcome the person to join their circle, and thus one would wish to retain the power forever.

“You agree with me?” Ali grinned upon seeing that the big dog had finally given him some reaction. He continued, “I do understand that to overcome this invisible wall I have to make great enough achievement, but with so many options in Rentato, I can’t make up my mind cause I’m afraid of missing the true opportunity. When I saw the fancy vehicles in front of the school, I felt that I probably could never break the wall, you know?”

He confessed to himself in front of the big dog, and his spirit had been lifted once again. He was not even twenty, so energy resumed very quickly.

“I’ve made my decision. I know how to read, but I don’t know much. Maybe I can still study in the hospital or an alchemical workshop while working. I wouldn’t be having a solid foundation for what I want to learn. So... I’m going to save money to go to a generic school!” Ali stood up and announced to the silver moon.

“I do know it’s hard, very hard, but it doesn’t mean I can’t do it. Mr. Evans was so poor that he could barely feed himself, but he’s the top arcanist now. It was all because of his own hard work! I am better off with the several queen coins given by my parents, and it wouldn’t take long for me to save enough money!” Ali clenched his fists and encouraged himself.

Lucien Evans’ story was like a legend that had been turned into a variety of stories by the bards and was popular among both nobles and common citizens.

“Although I am not as talented as Mr. Evans, and I cannot become a musician or a great sorcerer, as long as I work hard, I’ll definitely make some achievement in my own field!” Ali’s chest was full of hope.

From Jane’s letter, Ali knew that the society was looking forward to

being more well-educated as there was still a very small percentage of people who could read, not to mention those who know well about a certain field. As long as one was willing to and had the chance to learn, his or her future would be bright.

If Ali could learn well, perhaps he could become a sorcerer, a knight, or enter other professions that could share the same high social status with the nobles.

In this age, knowledge would never become useless. Although the process of learning would take up lots of time, every second would be worth it!

After making the decision, Ali was now in a good mood. Staring at the silver moon, Ali said to the big dog, "If I am also to be the main character in the bards' stories in the future, I would get a chance to study in the generic school and have my talent in magic and arcana awakened. I would know lots of friends and become a legendary sorcerer to change the world! I would also defeat devils and demons planning on destroying the world! In that case, you'd be remembered by history as well! You'd be the early friend of a great person!"

Then he took a glance at the big dog. "In most cases, in a bard's story, you should be a magical creature. You know, a dog with a mysterious background and very powerful. The moment when we met would change both our lives..."

As he was saying, he checked the big dog enthusiastically, but in the end, he sighed. "Nop, you're nothing special."

At this time, he saw upset in the big dog's eyes. But why?

The second day was Ali's day off. He took the big dog with him and was seeking some odd jobs in the city to save more money. Somehow, the big dog's recovery was much faster than he expected.

"A new alchemical workshop? Producing vacuum tubes?" Ali saw the notice on the wall.

Out of curiosity, as he had no idea what a vacuum tube was, he and

the big dog headed for the workshop.

When they almost arrived at the workshop that was located close to the city gate, the big dog lowered its head and stayed closer to Ali.

“What is it?” Ali asked casually, “Are there too many people for you?”

Nasdell was seeking every possible chance to escape from Rentato, but his reaction came from something else.

He just saw a nasty vampire in Rentato! He looked back and believed that the filthy vampire would have himself killed in this dangerous city!

They walked further, and Nasdell’s eyes suddenly lit up. The city gate was just over there!

As long as he could go through the gate, he would be safe!

Nasdell thought that he should give this young man some recompense for his help, if there was a chance.

The desire for freedom had filled up Nasdell’s heart. Although he had yet to fully recover, he suddenly jumped out and started making a dash for the city gate like a fish trying to jump back to water!

Fifty meters, twenty meters, ten meters, five... Nasdell’s heart was beating faster and faster as he was getting closer to the city gate.

Bang!

A car that was speeding ran right into Nasdell. When the car stopped, the owner of the car got off and asked purposefully, “Whose dog is it?! It suddenly jumped out! For what? Murder?!”

When Ali realized what happened, blood had gushed out from the big dog’s mouth. After several twitches, the big dog then completely stopped moving.

Ali hurriedly went up and apologized. The car owner was, in fact,

the one at fault, so he just asked Ali to pull the dog away after a short complaint.

Seeing the body of the big dog, Ali sighed. “It looks like we’re not partners who can change each other’s life. But thank you. Because of your company in the past two days, I’ve regained my confidence. I shall bury you well.”

He dragged the body of the big dog to the wood outside of the city and buried it very carefully. He stayed there for a while to adjust his mood and then left.

After a while, the tomb suddenly split open, and a half-dead dog climbed out.

“Luckily I know how to play dead...” Nasedell murmured in low voice. He looked back at Rentato at a distance. It was such a dangerous place!

He was going to report these all to the prince!

...

In Lance, the Holy City, Benedict III said to Philip, “There’s no response from the Angel King?”

Chapter 734: The Pope's Senses

“Yes, we tried to summon the Angel King through a ritual to ensure that the artificial planets of the Congress of Magic could be captured, but he gave absolutely no response, not even the symbolic light of refusal in the past. Your Holiness, did anything happen to the Angel King?” Philip told everything that had happened. He couldn’t have sounded more worried.

After the battle of Rentato, the strength of the South Church had greatly declined. As a result, the influence of the Angel King became of paramount importance for them, helping them to stabilize the panicked and suspicious clerics. Also, an expert at the peak of legendary who could command three level-three legendary seraphs of Mountain Paradise was himself a great weight that could change the balance of the situation.

Of course, for Philip, the most important question was whether or not the Angel King’s lack of response had anything to do with His Holiness. Was it because of the secret dissemination of the way to gather the power of faith? Did an accident happen when the Angel King tried it?

After hearing Philip’s reply, Benedict III did not show any emotional change. He slowly closed his eyes, and the holy light emerged behind him. The ivory light spread out, building up the sacredness and vastness.

Then, embraced by the light, a gate seemed to have been opened in midair leading to Mountain Paradise. The hollow and unpredictable hymns echoed, and infinite brilliance surged out, constituting a projection of “Mountain Paradise” that was almost concrete.

The angels and holy spirits inside the projection seemed to have sensed something. They all bowed at Benedict III solemnly with respect.

He was the Lord’s spokesperson and embodiment on earth. Until he returned to Mountain Paradise, he was even more honorable and

closer to the Lord than the Angel King was!

After he returned to Mountain Paradise, he would be directly melted into the light of the Lord as part of the Lord!

After the greeting, the angels and holy spirits began to pray, praise, and sing. The projection of the seventh floor was clearer than at any time in the past.

The seventh floor of Mountain Paradise was the infinite, transcendental pure light that was devoid of impurities. It gave so much pressure that the god inside seemed truly capable of destroying the entire world!

Even Benedict III could see exactly what was inside as a demigod. He could only vaguely notice that a lofty angel with thirty-six wings on the back crouched at the periphery of the light with a vintage and divine book in his hands.

“Nothing is wrong with the Angel King. He has simply fallen asleep for some reason.” Benedict III smiled at Philip. “Although his God’s Guard is very suitable for such operations, can’t we achieve our goal without him?”

He looked peaceful, but his eyes squinted. How could Mecantron have been so weak? What terrible wounds had he suffered? What was he doing exactly? Had his ambitions sprouted yet again after the Sard incident? Who caused it?

Even though the Angel King was surrounded by the power of the God of Truth, Benedict III, as an unquestionable demigod, keenly sensed the weakness of Mecantron, since Mecantron only dared to crouch at the edge without pressing any deeper. He felt anomalies from the uncanny status.

If the Congress of Magic hadn’t demonstrated the importance of artificial planets through live stream, the Church certainly wouldn’t try to summon the Angel King when the situation was relatively peaceful, like the hundred years in the past. In such a case, he wouldn’t have noticed the Angel King’s weakness at all. In half a year at most, Mecantron would regain a part of his strength and

cover his weakness. Because of his relationship with the God of Truth, it would be impossible for him to detect any problem.

“I have to thank the Congress of Magic, Lucien Evans, and Natasha Violet...” Benedict III looked rather gloomy.

After hearing the pope’s question, Philip replied respectfully, “Your Holiness, summoning the Angel King is only meant to increase the odds of success and eliminate the unexpected factors. It’s not true that we cannot achieve our purpose without him. If you are willing to take action in person, things will be much easier.”

“Although I cannot use God’s Arrival yet because it’s only been several years since I was crowned, I am still the embodiment of the Lord and a demigod who stands on the top of the mortal world. Why dare I not go out of the Holy City and take action in person?” Viken, who appeared as Benedict III right now, spoke in such a casual tone as if he were discussing what would be suitable as the dinner tonight. “If the evil fake god Alterna weren’t staring at the ground from the sky all the time, I could’ve stopped all the top legends of the Congress on my own.”

It was a sublimation of life advancing from top legends to demigods. Even though it was barely possible for Benedict III to eliminate any top legend when he was unable to use “God’s Arrival”, his enemy still couldn’t defeat him no matter how many top legends they had.

Philip said in delight, “If Your Holiness takes action in person, our plan is already 90% successful.”

“However, I can only attack once. The Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, the Will of Abyss, and the other evil fake gods must be waiting for an opportunity to heavily wound me before I could perform God’s Arrival. For that purpose, the enemies might even let go of their grudge and detestation against each other and collaborate,” said Benedict III peacefully.

He was not sure if Lucien and the other sorcerers detected the real secrets of the monster and Mountain Paradise in the Realm of Gates, but there was no doubt that they must have found something. While

the story in “Arcana Voice” was exaggerated, it was still partly true. If they looked through the phenomena on the surface, they would vaguely notice the connection between him and the monster and realize that God’s Arrival could not be used frequently not only because it was too much for the physical body.

Therefore, he set up his plans on the premise that Douglas, Fernando, Lucien, the God of Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell already knew the two big secrets.

“Once will be enough.” Philip was delighted. “As a matter of fact, we could’ve captured it through our method to destroy artificial planets in the past, but since the Congress of Magic revealed it actively, we have to be careful that they may have set up traps. Therefore, we have to revise our plan.”

A few years back, since the Church was unable to establish similar items on the orbit, their attacks had always been conducted through the legendary experts alone. The measures through which the artificial planets protected themselves, such as hiding and orbit-changing, were barely useful for the well-prepared legends. The main concern was that magic circles had been established on the artificial planets to facilitate legendary sorcerers’ reinforcement and to feed the situation back to Allyn.

Therefore, their plan had always been simple. They would confirm that the legends of the Congress of Magic were out on missions first and wait for an opportunity to outnumber the enemy. Even though the surveillance magic circles delivered the intelligence back to Allyn, and the legendary sorcerers in Allyn could reach the artificial planets to join the battle, they still wouldn’t be able to stop the destruction. By the time the other legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic came to aid, the artificial planet would’ve been destroyed.

The plan seemed simple, but there were actually a lot of difficulties. First of all, they needed to make sure that the legendary sorcerers were really out. Their lives would be at risk if they gave a wrong estimation about the enemy’s number and strength. When legendary sorcerers were prepared, it was difficult for the non-legendary night watchers to determine their whereabouts. That was

why the Church had only destroyed two artificial planets so far.

It was also the reason why Philip was worried that they might fall into the Congress of Magic's trap in their operation. After all, it certainly wouldn't be the most pleasant experience if they reached the orbit through the preinstalled transmission circles only to discover that Douglas, Brook, Fernando, Hathaway, Lucien Evans, and other people were waiting for them. Plus, there were no divine defense circles on the orbit, and the legendary sorcerers could block the space easily to prevent the reinforcements from being teleported. Then, things would be the most dreadful.

"The legendary sorcerers who focus on the microscopic domain are less and less interested in the outside world. They are dedicated to the collision of particles..." When he heard Philip mention the plan in the past, Benedict III shook his head and sighed.

In the microscopic domain, magic experiments were more important than field explorations. Therefore, the legendary sorcerers had been going out much less frequently. Thankfully, they needed to conduct microscopic experiments in different environments and explore if there were any particles that hadn't been discovered, such as positrons, in the weird environments. That was why they did not stay in Allyn all the time, in which case they could've established a terrifying legendary squad at any moment.

Of course, the legendary sorcerers were not only focused on the microscopic domain. They also needed to watch over the alternate dimensions, the four countries on this side of the strait, and the north coastline.

"They disagree with each other so hard in the microscopic domain that they are almost fighting among themselves..." Philip mocked and continued, "To prevent the evil gods from seizing a chance to attack you, we do not need you to capture the artificial planets on the orbit directly. Instead..."

He introduced his whole plan.

Listening without showing any emotion, Benedict III replied in the same tone, "Alright."

After Philip bid farewell, Benedict III walked to the window and looked at the blooming flowers outside that did not seem to be living in winter at all. He nodded, "We have to be more careful."

...

On the Silver Moon Wasteland...

Nasdell, who had returned in a haste, stood before Dubenal, his head lowered, not having the courage to look at the prince in the eyes.

"So, Rentato is already such a dangerous place..." said Dubenal in a rough voice.

Nasdell immediately felt like bursting into tears. Everything that happened to him was not entirely worthless. It helped the prince to see the dangerousness of the Congress of Magic and Rentato. Those guys who laughed at him the moment they saw his wounds couldn't understand his enormous contributions at all!

"Therefore, working with the Congress of Magic is an option that is worth considering." Among the werewolves, some princes were close to the Congress of Magic, and some, including Dubenal, were hostile. Therefore, Nasdell thought that he could change the prince's attitude with his investigation.

"No," said Dubenal firmly.

Huh? Nasdell looked at his prince in surprise.

"We should attack the Congress of Magic. Since they are already so powerful and dangerous, working with them will only result in a new Saint Truth," declared Dubenal confidently and proudly.

Stunned for a moment, Nasdell said with much admiration, "Your Highness, you are truly the smartest expert among the werewolves. Your wise eyes have seen through the nature of things. I didn't realize that at all."

"Hahaha." Dubenal laughed aloud in a great mood. He had always thought highly of Nasdell because the guy was very honest and not

clever enough, which made the guy a good contrast for himself.

Chapter 735: Arrival of Chaos

The north of the north coastline was a bleak land. The hardy trees and the bizarre terrains had turned the place into a paradise for werewolves and ice bears. There were even powerful magic creatures that wandered in the depths of the vast land, such as silver dragons, white dragons, or frost giants.

Therefore, although the path to the East Haven had been built bit by bit by the adventurers of many generations who avoided the most dangerous areas, the business teams and passersby who walked on the roads suffered all kinds of attacks now and then, which dyed the northland in bloody, chaotic colors. It had been known as a heaven of desperadoes.

In the Month of Ice, the area had already been covered in white. Even the evergreens had been donned in pure gauzes. One could not see any color as far as their eyes could reach. If they stared at the snow all the time, they might not be able to open their eyes again.

However, on the road where tracks had been covered by the snowflakes, devastating blood was spreading out. The randomly-thrown swords, spears, hammers, and other weapons indicated a fierce battle in this place.

Leaving the main road and heading north along with the footprints on the road, one would see a boundless old-growth forest. In the center of the forest, there was an inconspicuous gap that led to a rather spacious underground cave.

The torches on the wall of the underground cave illuminated the place. However, the fire on those torches was in the most bizarre, pale color as if it did not carry any heat at all. There was nothing but dead silence.

Pale light emanated from the torches and sprayed on the black-robed guys who were crouching inside the cave, making them look even more creepy.

Those black-robed guys stuck their foreheads to the ground. Judging from their bodies and their faces, it was obvious that they were not entirely humans. Some were werewolves with hair on their cheeks, some had the distinctive marks of beasts, and some were frost giants who occupied a large area...

They were absolutely still as if they were dead, and they were praying toward an altar that was piled with bones. One black-robed priest, in whose eyes pale fire seemed to be bouncing, stared at the mysterious patterns that were emitting the intense air of death, as well as the enormous scythe on the altar that represented life reaped.

“Birth is the beginning of death, our unavoidable destiny...”

The black-robed priest suddenly raised his hands and chanted the obscure prayer. A cluster of pale fire suddenly rose on the altar in quietness.

“Birth is the beginning of death...”

The black-robed followers who were like corpses that finally moved. Their bodies were shivering under their coarse voices.

The priest up ahead couldn't have sounded more creepy. His zeal appeared as the most extreme coldness. “Compared to the eternity after death, life is too short to mean anything. Darkness, coldness, and death are the everlasting themes of life...”

“We will eventually decay. Only if our soul enters the realm of death and sleep will it never decline gradually...”

The priest's eyes became hollow. “Today, we offer sacrifices, as well as our lives, to our Lord, so that our souls will have a place to rest in for all eternity!”

“We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls...” Those black-robed guys seemed to have been hypnotized and simply replied numbly.

Hearing their reply, the priest was greatly relieved. He had delivered yet another batch of devout believers to the Lord after preaching on the true meaning of death. According to the “Soul

Rite” that the Lord gave to him, he would be closer and closer to the Lord in such a way, and he would get rid of the body and soul of a mortal and grow into a real bringer of death.

By then, his life and his soul would soar. He would be as magnificent as legendary knights and sorcerers!

Thinking about that, he felt that the pale fire of death in his heart was burning even more intensely and weirdly. It seemed to be creating a vague world of death inside his brain and around, a world of extreme peace that was brimming with undead creatures.

“This is truly a sign that I’m closer to the Lord. I can already sense the great and sacred paradise of death. By the time I can sense it clearly, it will be the time for my ultimate advancement!”

At this moment, the human beings who were in a coma around the altar were back to themselves. Some of them were in fancy clothes, and some were wearing leather armor. They looked no different from any merchant team on the northland.

“What... What are you doing?” somebody accused in panic.

“Damn you, bandits. You’ll pay for your assault today!” Somebody was still enraged.

“Please, let us go. You can have all the goods and money. Killing us is useless for you.” Somebody else was shaking in fear after sensing the anomaly in the environment.

The priest raised his head. From his gloomy and dark eyes, a really pale fire jumped out. The moment they saw the fire, those human beings were paralyzed and could not utter a word anymore.

“Go to the center of the altar and off your life to the Lord,” the priest let out a dull, unemotional command.

The merchants and mercenaries looked pale and terrified, but they could not resist the priest’s order at all. They stood up as if they were possessed, and they walked to the center of the altar beyond their control.

The man who walked to the pale fire first picked up the black scythe, his hands shivering. His eyes were brimming with fear, desperation, and madness, but his hands still cut his own throat firmly with the scythe that did not seem to carry any weight.

A scary wound appeared on his throat, but not a single drop of blood spurted out. His whole body withered into a dry corpse very soon. Something transparent seemed to be floating out of his body into the pale fire.

The pale fire immediately rose higher, and a mark, which was so red that it was almost black, could be found on the edge of the black scythe.

The priest felt the delight from the bottom of his heart. It was an experience that was beyond any entertainment. Even without the improvement of his strength or the reward from the Lord, the delight alone was enough to motivate him to proceed with the ritual.

The world of death in his head and around himself was clearer.

“My sublimation is higher, and I’m closer to the Lord...” the priest moaned, but nobody noticed his lack of self-control.

The sacrificial offerings reaped their own lives one after another. The pale fire was more and more exuberant, until it was almost jumping out of the altar.

“Come on. Show your devotion. Life is short, and death is eternal!” the priest turned around and announced most sacredly.

The black-robed believers all changed their voices and shouted zealously, “We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls...”

The scythe of death seemed to have sensed the zealous atmosphere. Humming, it rose from the shelter and hovered at the ceiling of the underground cave.

“We would like to offer our lives to the Lord for a shelter of our souls!”

The black-robed believers echoed their prayer again, but it was no longer a response but a sincere request.

The gigantic scythe whose edge was in deep red absorbed all the light and reduced the whole underground cave into darkness. Only the pale fire at the center remained unaffected.

The gigantic scythe suddenly fell into the pale fire. At this moment, all the black-robed believers shook hard, their eyes losing all the colors, as if something important was absorbed from them into the fire.

The pale fire expanded and drowned the whole underground cave again. The skin of those black-robed believers began to decay, and dark red fire leaped out of their eyes. They had turned into undead creatures all of a sudden!

The priest was even more delighted. He could no longer tell the material world from the paradise of death and simply felt that his soul had been greatly purified.

“Great Lord of Death, please enjoy your sacrifices!” he shouted in a high voice. The undead creatures in the cave also raised their arms, which made the cave look like a dense forest.

The pale fire was reduced and condensed into the size of one person, but an illusionary gate appeared at the center.

The gate was opened, and a monster in black cape showed up in the fire. Behind the monster was a plain where countless specters wandered, and below its feet were the temples made of bones.

The monster seemed to be an embodiment of death that nobody could look at, because whoever saw it would immediately lose their life. Thankfully, it could not step out of the pale fire and enshroud the world with death.

The priest felt that his soul was weightless. He was even more addicted to it.

“My strength has been increased again! My soul has been further sublimed!”

The black-caped monster looked out; its hollow eyes suddenly emitting unusual waves. Then, its body split into two identical selves as if it were looking at a mirror, although the strength of the two halves were both halved.

A pale fire arose on the new self of the monster of death, which consumed it and connected it to the fire and altar around it.

Then, as the other self of the monster chanted weird spells, the fire rolled fiercely and gathered into what appeared to be a gate. Then, the gate was gradually dyed in red.

Boom!

When the gate gradually took shape, an unimaginable air of chaos and slaughter spread out. As a result, unusual winter thunders burst out in the sky, and the cave began to shake so hard that the whole northland was trembling.

The priest suddenly realized that his soul had been improved to the highest point, and the world of death around him and that in his head were fully integrated.

“Have I succeeded?”

In ecstasy, he was ready to melt himself into the world of death to acquire the legendary power. However, the world of death disappeared all of a sudden, and a meatball that was jumbled by countless eyes, heads, and limbs showed up before him.

After he saw the meatball, the priest felt that his soul had completely mutated, and his thinking ability vanished rapidly.

“NOOOOOOOOO!”

He let out a scream of surprise and fear in the end, before his body was twisted, with black, thick tentacles popping up.

In Kasvig, the capital of the north coastline, the Burning Lady stood up abruptly and looked far away. She sensed the extreme foulness and chaos were surging out from there!

“Hull-Chulia, what happened?” She hurried to contact Hull-Chulia, the Monarch of Fate.

Hull-Chulia, who was floating on the top of the magic tower, said solemnly, “The Will of Abyss is attempting to arrive. We must stop him immediately. I’ve already informed the Congress of Magic.”

Such a thing could only be handled by at least one grand arcanist, and Hellen, from the Cabin of Palmeira, was now watching over Allyn. If the Will of Abyss did arrive, even though he hadn’t entirely recovered from his wounds yet, it would still be most terrifying. There was no God’s Arrival to beat him back this time! Besides, nobody could tell if he would suddenly decide to blow himself up and destroy the whole northland.

Chapter 736: Meteor Shower

In the City in the Sky, on the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower...

After receiving the report of Hull-Chulia, the Monarch of Fate, Hellen directly activated the dark red magic circle in a corner of her desk. The lines on the circle zigzagged like earthworms.

Dark red glowed out, and the usual merry and delightful voice of Prospell, the tower guard of the Allyn magic tower, became low and solemn. "Emergence Plan C has been activated. Contacting all demiplanes..."

Two seconds later, a dark red curtain of light was unfolded around Hellen into fifteen pictures. There was a land that was different from the real world, a kingdom where electricity and magnetism raged, a garden that was glowing and dimming like a human's heart, and a vast and bright universe.

"Not counting the few Excellencies who are out on missions, fifteen demiplanes have opened and responded," Prospell said in an equally solemn voice.

Her face in peace, Hellen said briefly, "The Will of Abyss attempts to arrive at the northland. There's still time to stop. I suggest that at least three grand arcanists come with me."

Such a suggestion was to avoid accidents. Even if they were trapped or could not stop the arrival of the Will of Abyss, they would still be strong enough to flee. It had to be noted that the Will of Abyss remained a demigod however wounded he was. He could kill anyone below level three of legendary instantly.

If he were in perfect condition, Hellen wouldn't have suggested for the grand arcanists to go but simply asked the top legends to go. With unusual spells or equipment, there was still hope for level-three legends to escape from a demigod. However, it was still rather risky. Who would ever try that unless it was absolutely necessary?

Furthermore, as the legend behind the Cabin of Palmeira, Hellen Paris did not back off but announced that she was willing to handle it in person. After all, if the de facto ruler of the northland was unwilling to take the risks, the other grand arcanists would certainly have to consider if they should go.

Hellen's decisiveness prevented the possible debate of responsibility in the emergency meeting of the Highest Council. Douglas said peacefully, "Since the enemy is the Will of Abyss, we need at least two top legends. Also, I fear that there are schemes behind the abrupt incident. So, Fernando, Hathaway, Hellen, and I will go to the northland to stop him, Brook and Hathaway will replace Hellen to watch over Allyn, and the rest of you will stay where you are on alert. Keep in touch with each other."

"Alright." Lucien did not hesitate, and Fernando had already reached Hellen's library. He had always been impatient.

Because the north coastline was far away from Allyn, the transmission magic circle was faster than space jump. Therefore, Douglas, Lucien, and the other reinforcements were directly teleported to the branch of the Congress of Magic in Kasvig.

On the top of the Tower...

Bergner looked at the darkening sky and thought to himself, *Does the meteor shower tonight indicate anything?*

The meteor shower landed into the depths of the Boundless Ocean, so Bergner did not pay much attention to the horoscope at the beginning. He threw it away after interpreting the symbolic meaning behind it for a while. However, now that he recalled it again, he felt that his heart was somewhat uneasy.

.....

The Burning Lady had a very female name, "Elaine". She looked as gorgeous as a rose, but after she put on the armor that seemed to be made of rose petals and picked up the fiery short swords, all her frailty and femininity were gone. She was like a bouncing fire that released the scorch that could keep anybody away. Nobody could

look at him in the eyes.

“The air of chaos is still increasing. It means that the Will of Abyss hasn’t really arrived. There’s still time for us to stop him. We cannot wait for and depend on the reinforcements from Allyn. Perhaps the opportunities will be gone while we wait. I do not wish to see my hometown turning into an abyss of chaos and blood.” She and Hull-Chulia had already approached the old-growth forest.

Since the distance was not long, the space transfer and rapid travel that the legendary knights’ talents brought were as fast as the legendary sorcerers’ demiplane jumps.

She made the speech mainly to express her determination. In terms of protecting their homeland, legendary knights were much firmer than legendary sorcerers, because it was their creed.

The Monarch of Fate had a hairstyle that looked like the rolling clouds in the sky. He was slightly fat and looked rather friendly. Smiling, he said, “It’s been a long time, but he hasn’t entirely arrived yet. It seems that the Will of Abyss has chosen a not-so-brilliant way that is a major contrast to his attempt in Rentato.”

In the battle of Rentato, thanks to the blood sacrifice after Paradise on Earth was destroyed, the Will of Abyss was able to arrive completely in a very short time, not giving Benedict II any opportunity to react. His arrival this time, on the other hand, had taken almost three times longer than last time, and it seemed that he hadn’t finished half of the process yet. It was clear that he had chosen a relatively underdeveloped and unpowerful approach.

Hull-Chulia was not very suspicious about that. If the Will of Abyss knew how to weigh the pros and cons, choose the timing cautiously, and take action only after he had recovered, he would be no “Will of Abyss” but “Lord of Hell”!

Hull-Chulia did not bother to consider why he would take such an approach at all. If he could guess it, he would’ve suspected that he had been contaminated by the air of abyss and lost the wisdom and rationality that he had always been proud of. It was impossible for a normal person to understand the abyss.

At the center of the forest, a cluster of darkness that was as black as ink covered the land. All the trees in the range had been contaminated by the disgusting and unbelievable blackness. Red eyes were opened on the trunks, and the branches were as active as tentacles.

“A forest of monsters...” the Burning Lady remarked with her impression. Then, she noticed a bloody gate at the darkest place. On the gate was the patterns that were enough to dizzy even a legend.

Around the bloody gate, a pale and crimson fire was rising unpredictably and could not fully take shape.

“Not bad. We can avoid the tragedy if we can destroy the Portal to Alternate Realm that can allow the demigod to arrive while it hasn’t been built yet.” Hardly had the Monarch of Fate’s voice died down when an evil and chaotic roar burst out behind the gate.

Hooooooooo!

Crack, crack, crack.

Hull-Chulia’s passive spells were triggered. Clouds with flashing lightning surrounded him and stabilized him who almost fell from the sky.

The Burning Lady dropped almost ten meters before she managed to stop. So much fire bounced out of her body that she looked like a real flame element.

Drops of fire landed from her body onto the ground, igniting the darkness and the trees. She had obviously been hurt.

Hull-Chulia and she looked at each other in shock. Was it the power of demigods? They had been wounded by a chaotic roar even though the enemy had not completely arrived? If he did arrive, would they lose their mind and become Demon Lords?

Having been through many battles, the two of them held back their fear. One of them began to cast legendary spells, and the other turned into a fire that burnt everything around them. The fire enveloped the bloody gate and made it burn in cracking noises.

A few thick black tentacles suddenly extended from the underground world and whipped at the fire. They were surrounded by the corrupt and chaotic black air.

However, Hull-Chulia's esoteric spell echoed at the best moment. A wind rose in the forest. The air masses in both high and low pressure created a tempest and resulted in glittering bolts of lightning.

Crack.

The tentacles were destroyed, and the soil was plucked, revealing the monster inside the cave. He had absolutely no sign of a human being right now. There was nothing but protruding lumps, wriggling tentacles, and countless eyes on his body.

BOOM!

The clouds were tightened, and the monster whose soul and life had been "sublimed" was obliterated in the lightning.

Hoooooooo!

The extremely chaotic and foul roar echoed like a spell behind the bloody gate. Fire immediately surged out, blowing the Burning Lady back to midair and reducing her to her original appearance. She couldn't have looked paler.

Right when she gnashed her teeth and was ready to charge forward again, she heard a gentle voice.

"Paradise of Stars!"

A weirdly-shaped celestial globe flew to the top of the bloody gate. Brilliant and pure light drifted out like the dust of stars, and a deep and dark cosmos arrived, enshrouding the whole area.

In the infinite coldness, the bright stars were joined into different magic circles according to the horoscope. The wriggling darkness stopped, and the trees full of eyes and lumps withered. The roars that came from behind the bloody gate were suppressed to the minimum.

“The Emperor of Arcana has come...” The Burning Lady was greatly relieved. She knew that Douglas and the reinforcements of the Congress of Magic had arrived. It was certainly impossible for the Will of Abyss, who hadn’t completely arrived, to fight a top legend who was closest to a demigod from a different realm. Whatever his purpose was, he was destined to fail.

When her concerns were gone, she heard another gentle voice.

“Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness!”

A transparent pillar of light brushed past her eyes. Thanks to the help of “Paradise of Stars”, it hit the bloody gate that was mired in pale and crimson flames.

Electric currents and lasers that were barely visible for the naked eye appeared, constructing a web of snow and ice whose grids were too dense to be seen. The air within the web was frozen, the trees were frozen, the burning pale and crimson fire was frozen, and so was the bloody gate. Everything was reduced to the lifeless coldness and darkness.

Witnessing the scene, the Burning Lady and the Monarch of Fate felt that their eyes were frozen, too. The extreme, unparalleled coldness made them shiver from the bottom of their hearts.

“Lucien Evans has such a terrifying snow spell?”

Hellen slowed down the casting of her spell. She looked at the area that had been caught in a frighteningly low temperature with the passion that she only had when she studied arcana and magic.

.....

Outside of the orbit of the planet, an ivory holy light slowly glowed, and Benedict III appeared in the dark vacuum.

He raised his platinum staff high. Looking at the enormous remnants that were running at him, he spoke mercifully and pitifully, “When the world is dirty and filthy, you will cleanse everything with your fury!”

In the airless universe, his voice spread out in weird ways.

Those meteorites came to a halt miraculously. Then, they turned their direction and left a burning, bright path in the atmosphere. Their remains collapsed toward Allyn like a torrential storm!

Chapter 737: Punishment of the God

The burning furnace in the hall drove the freezing coldness of the Month of Ice away. Heidi and her friends leaned against their chairs lazily with different books in their hands. They read the books while they enjoyed the special sweet food.

Although magic air conditioners had been installed in their rooms, making the winter warm and the summer cool, Heidi preferred furnaces, because the fire in the furnace brought warmth to her heart. It was the symbol of a real family for her.

“Magic is truly great. I don’t worry about getting fat no matter how much sweet food I take...” Heidi patted her stomach in satisfaction. “Fat Burning” did not only work on the enemy. It was rather popular among the sorceresses when it was controlled well.

Sensing something, she blinked to the side of the window and looked at the high sky, only to discover that shooting stars were passing the sky and falling like rain. It was truly beautiful.

“Look, a meteor shower!” Heidi could never resist such a wonderful view. She exclaimed at her companions.

However, her eyes were suddenly frozen at this moment. According to her knowledge in the horoscope and force field, the landing spot of the meteor shower would be...

“Allyn!” she blurted out.

The sorcerers who observed the stars on the Tower also opened their mouths. Shouldn’t the meteor shower land in the Boundless Ocean according to the previous observation and prophecy? After that, a lot of sorcerers would go out and search for the meteorites as materials for their studies and alchemy. Why had the trajectory of the shooting stars been changed, making them attack Allyn like a storm?

“Allyn...” Brook and Hathaway, who watched over the City in the Sky in replacement of Hellen, noticed it earlier than they did.

Brook intended to fly over and shatter the meteorites while they were still in the sky, but the meteor shower was unimaginably huge. Also, since the landing point of the meteor shower had been weirdly changed, he had a terrible feeling and did not recklessly go out to block it.

“Level-one alarm. The defense of Allyn is fully activated.” Hathaway activated the corresponding magic circles calmly. “We will focus on defense and destroy any shooting stars that might hit Rentato or any populated areas nearby with rays and lasers.”

The weirdness of the matter prompted her to increase the level of alarm. Otherwise, such a natural accident only deserved a level-two alarm at most.

Brook, on the other hand, spoke to his demiplane that remained connected. “Fully activate the defense circles of the magic towers in the local branches. The supervising legends will expand the range of alarm. The other legends will return to Allyn immediately and be prepared for attack and reinforcement.”

“Try to notify the legends who are out on missions and gather all our forces...” Hathaway added.

The two of them calmly carried out the countermeasures and informed Douglas, Lucien, and the other sorcerers in the northland of the matter.

Gigantic “raindrops”, in glowing light and leaving a bright trail behind, rushed and smashed at Allyn.

At the same time, an intense fog spread throughout Allyn, making the City in the Sky appear to be in a dream instead of reality.

Glimmering stars rose from the fog and connected each other into a vast starry sky around Allyn. Each of them took up a certain spot and circulated according to specific trajectories, forming different magic circles. Those magic circles then overlapped and integrated into a greater magic circle which boasted terrifying power.

That was the ultimate form of the defense of Allyn.

The “raindrops” were brighter and brighter as the burning, gigantic meteorites hit the foggy, starry sky brutally.

The stars were even more brilliant, and ripples spread out in the fog, but the meteorite was nowhere to be found.

The raindrops of stars fell nonstop with the world-destroying air. The fog in the defense of Allyn fluctuated, and part of the stars even died out!

Faced with such a pure natural accident, Brook and Hathaway could’ve adopted another magic effect—anti-gravity and deviation. In such a way, the meteor shower wouldn’t be able to cause any harm to Allyn at all. However, such a way of processing would transfer the harm of the meteor shower to the ground, and since the populated Rentato was not far away, they decided to resist it the hard way.

At the edge of the torrential storm, the meteors flew past the defense of Allyn, falling on the villages around and Rentato!

At this moment, in the foggy starry sky around Allyn, a pillar of crimson, thick light suddenly darted out and hit one of the meteors precisely.

Without a sound, the meteor was nowhere to be seen as if it had been burnt up.

Crimson lasers and greenish rays shot out of the defense, destroying all the meteors that might hit the ground.

At this moment, the citizens in Rentato had already discovered that the defense circles of the city had been activated. They looked at the sky in astonishment, only to catch the scene where shooting stars were falling and lasers were darting at them. They were too astounded to say anything. That was ten thousand times more spectacular than the magic battles as described by the bards and the plays!

Even the greatest number of meteors could not power a long-lasting storm. After the first wave, the meteors became sparser. Right when

the sorcerers in Allyn were slightly relieved, a shooting star that seemed to be burning its life passed through the atmosphere. The ivory, holy light on the shooting star illuminated more than half of the sky.

The power contained in the shooting star was greater than all the shooting stars before combined. It was like a punishment of heaven and the god!

“Benedict III!”

“Viken...”

Brook, Hathaway, Brook, and Oliver called out different names. Such a powerful attack could have only been launched by a demigod. Even the pontiff of the North Church, who was capable of God’s Grace, couldn’t have achieved that!

“Elemental Protection!”

“Magnetic Collapse!”

“Annihilation Ball!”

“Anti-gravity Field!”

...

Shocked as they might have been, their reactions were not slowed at all. They performed their legendary spells and activated the defensive magic circles, focusing everything available in Allyn to resist Demigod Viken’s “Punishment of God”!

Suddenly, a magic circle before Brook and Hathaway was triggered and manifested a screen. Inside the screen was the scene on the planetary orbit. Points of ivory light appeared and turned into Melmax, Philip, and the other Grand Cardinals. They were flying toward Brook and Hathaway quickly!

That was the perspective of the artificial planet. Therefore, their target was not “Brook and Hathaway” but the artificial planet!

Create chaos to distract and disperse the enemy's forces, and then attack the enemy quickly so that there would be no time for reinforcement when they realized what was going on. That was exactly Philip's plan, simple but effective. Nobody could ignore a demigod's attack!

Of course, the emergency of the Will of Abyss in the northland made him even more delighted and confident of his victory.

The shooting star seemed to be carrying the will of the god. It arrived unstoppably, swearing to destroy everything. Brook and Hathaway were completely occupied and could not get out of the defense at all.

Boom!

The shooting star hit Allyn, raising an enormous explosion. The colorful layer of Elemental Protection was immediately shattered, and Anti-Gravity Field vanished into thin air under the ivory holy light.

The dark, twisting magnetic field was broken; so were the brilliant stars and magic circles. Even the fog had been separated into several parts.

Although no significant damage was caused to the defense of Allyn and the two top legends, their reactions were indeed limited. Brook looked at the sky, as if he could see the pope who was standing at the periphery of the planet through the atmosphere and the darkness. The man walked slowly with the platinum staff in his hands, disappearing before the silver moon glowed.

"Inform Douglas and the legendary sorcerers who are watching over the branches..." As indifferent as before, Hathaway asked Prospell without the slightest frustration.

Inside the old-growth forest in the northland...

After Lucien cast the super-freezing ice spell and consolidated the bloody gate, the whole forest fell quiet, as if even the sturdy northland creatures had also sensed the coldness that did not

belong to the normal world. They dare not act recklessly at all, fearing that the coldness might spread out.

It was difficult to maintain such an extremely low temperature. The frozen darkness gradually thawed and vaporized into a pure mist.

The mutated trees, the underground cave, and the pale and crimson fire near the bloody gate all became mist and disappeared, and the bloody gate was so narrow that it was barely visible. It was about to completely disappear, too.

At this moment, the most evil and chaotic roar echoed behind the gate again, turning the snow into a bloody mist. The bloody gate, on the other hand, was contaminated by the disgusting, wriggling blackness. It expanded quickly and exploded all of a sudden!

Boom!

As if a whole abyss collapsed in this place, the rolling chaos and blood buried the surroundings. The gate was completely obliterated, but it still created a daunting attack in the end.

“This lunatic!” Lucien and the other sorcerers cursed. The Will of Abyss was truly unreasonable. He had truly “detonated” a layer of abyss, not considering how much power it had left after crossing the realm and how much damage there was left!

“Space Staff!” Ripples of light gathered next to Lucien’s hand into ripples, placing himself and the Monarch of Fate next to him in many universes away.

Chaotic evilness devoured the place, announcing the arrival of the most dreadful silence.

.....

On the orbit, the few Grand Cardinals dispersed and stayed on alert, in case anybody blocked the space and attacked them, while Philip and Saint Melmax flew toward a silver artificial planet.

The artificial planet was fully engraved with complicated, obscure magic patterns, which seemed to have reached the central part.

“Let’s bring it away.” Delighted as Philip was, he still took out a Truth Cross prudently.

The cross did not glitter, and it looked as unattractive as if it were made of random stones. The emblem of the Saint Truth and the stars that represented angels had been carved on it.

“Elimination!” Philip raised the cross. Vague blackness glittered on it with a certain air of sacredness.

The darkness, which was entirely different from the darkness around, sprayed on the artificial planet, immediately eliminating the magic waves and putting out the silver magic circles.

It was a legendary item that corresponded with the blood power of “Elimination”! Philip feared that other traps were installed on the artificial planet and decided to get rid of them all at once.

However, as the last magic circle died out, something seemed to have been activated. Its core was not affected by “Elimination” at all and began to react on its own, resulting in an instant explosion.

Boom!

Dazzling light that felt like the sun glowed, and a storm of energy consumed the environment!

“Well...” Philip had no time to react at all when he saw Melmax blinked to his front to resist the attack.

.....

In the forest of the northland, Lucien and the sorcerers finally cleansed the chaotic power of the abyss. At this moment, something glittered in the night sky.

Looking at the unusual light, Lucien smiled at Fernando. “A nuclear reactor that loses control every time it is activated has its own usage. The only problem is that the artificial planet was not large enough...”

With his expression remaining graceful, Fernando did not offer any

remark.

Chapter 738: In Vain

In San Ivansburg...

When the shooting stars passed the sky and hit Allyn like a storm, Belkovsky, the pontiff of the North Church who was inside the cathedral, sensed something although he did not see anything. Looking at the ceiling, which had beautiful embossments, he said to himself in shock, “Has Viken taken action? They’re planning to capture an artificial planet?”

He and the Grand Cardinals of the North Church had already made a plan to “claim” one of the artificial planets when the South Church was capturing them. They were even scheming to bolster the progress behind the curtain in case the South Church procrastinated and gave the artificial planets a better opportunity of performance. However, when it really happened, he remained absolutely still and did not even summon the saints and the other Grand Cardinals.

That was because the South Church took action too fast for the Congress of Magic to react. Naturally, the huge battle that they envisaged did not take place at all. If they were to jump to the orbit through the preinstalled transmission circles at this moment, they would see nothing but the back of the Grand Cardinals of the South Church who were leaving, encounter the reinforcements of the Congress of Magic who had come late, and bear the fury of the Congress of Magic instead of the South Church!

Who would ever take somebody else’s blame without earning any benefits from it?

“The Congress of Magic cannot so inert, can they? However strong Viken is, he cannot stay out of Lance for long, or how can he suppress so many top legends and grand arcanists?” Belkovsky frowned as he sensed the anomaly in the matter.

Under normal circumstances, Viken should’ve attacked Allyn to stall a few top legends and most grand arcanists, but since he could not

block all of them, the remaining arcanists would lead the other legendary sorcerers into the orbit and fight the Grand Cardinals such as Melmax. Although they could not stop the South Church from taking away the artificial planet because they had been slowed, a huge battle that the North Church looked forward to would inevitably break out. However, as it turned out, the sky was absolutely quiet at this moment! Where were the grand arcanists of the Congress of Magic?

Without the navigation of grand arcanists, it was impossible for the other legends to arrive at the orbit through projections because they were two levels away from Melmax and would be crushed. If Melmax had “Purge Cross” with him, they would probably be killed!

A prophecy divine power was performed immediately. Since the thing was happening, and nobody tried to interfere with or cover the trajectory of fate, Belkovsky immediately understood what was going on. The Will of Abyss had arrived at the northland without a sign!

“He’s working with Viken?” Belkovsky felt as hilarious as if he had seen his own death notification. Not believing it at all, he knew that there was only one way to cooperate with the Will of Abyss, which was to establish a ritual that could summon him and open the barrier of planes, and if the ritual happened to be near the enemies that needed to be dealt with, the Will of Abyss would not hesitate to kill them.

Therefore, Belkovsky would rather believe that Viken took advantage of the brainlessness of the Will of Abyss, but how exactly did he summon him? Allowing a demigod that did not belong to the main material world to arrive had a great cost. However, there was no sign before the incident, and there were no disguises such as “Paradise on Earth” on the surface...

Belkovsky considered Viken’s approach in case he was dealt with in the same way in the future. Suddenly, his heart of faith rippled again. The strange feeling prompted him to blink to the window and look at the sky.

In the gloomy afternoon of a winter day, a glittering light seemed to have flashed in the high sky.

It might've escaped everybody else's attention, but Belkovsky, as the strongest top legend, certainly had no trouble distinguishing it. He squinted and said, "Has the artificial planet exploded?"

"Also, the explosion is as powerful as legendary!"

"Those heretics of the South Church did not even cast any divine power to eliminate the effects? They couldn't have been that dumb, could they?"

He suddenly felt lucky that they did not take action just now. Otherwise, not only would their effort have been in vain, but they would have also exposed their intention and pissed off the Congress of Magic.

Although other interests would still maintain their cooperation, it was possible that the Congress of Magic would return the "favor" someday.

.....

On the empty orbit, Saint Kati, Astira, and the other people, who stayed on alert far away, sensed the anomaly of the artificial planet when they sensed the overwhelming heat coming at them. The surging energy storm swept out like a torrent.

"Damn it!"

"How could this happen?"

Their divine items were triggered as they exclaimed to themselves, before they were all drowned by the storm of energy.

Fernando and Hathaway's fission reactor was mostly based on reverse engineering on "Atomic Fission" and their own studies on the fission reaction. They had a rough idea about the role that neutrons played, but they were still far away from utilizing it steadily. To quote Lucien, the core of their fission reactor was essentially an atomic bomb, whose energy was slowly released by

magic. That was why accidents happened all the time and legendary explosions were generated.

When the Purge Cross eliminated the magic circles outside and stopped magic from blocking the reactions, the “failed reactor” inside the artificial planet began to function. At this moment, the elimination effect hadn’t reached the core and could not eliminate the reactor magic circle inside.

By the time the fission reaction began, it was already a natural course and therefore could not be eliminated. The magic circles that could be eliminated, on the other hand, were the parts that eased the release of energy so that it could be utilized. Therefore, the explosion after the loss of control was even greater and more powerful!

Dazzling light swept across everything around them with overwhelming energy. The artificial planet at the center was completely vaporized, and the area was savaged by the trickiest “curses”.

When the light died down, Melmax, Philip, and the other Grand Cardinals reappeared. Some of them were fully enshrouded in the Blessed Realm, and some had six white wings covering their back.

Melmax, who stood at the front, held the longsword, “Holy Avenger”, with both hands and nullified the invisible curses covered in light.

“Thankfully, it is not Eternal Blaze...” he said to Philip and the rest of them in a low voice. It was hard to tell how he felt. “Beware of the curse. Don’t be careless. Although they seem not too harmful, their consequences may be dire.”

Although “Atomic Fission” could reach level three of legendary if the caster and the materials were good enough, the previous explosion was only level-one legendary because the artificial planet could only accommodate limited magic circles and materials. It could not hurt Melmax, a top legendary knight, at all.

However, it did not mean that Melmax was not scared. If it were

“Eternal Blaze” that happened in the explosion accident just now, he would’ve been heavily wounded again after having just recovered from the harm. It was even possible that irrecoverable diseases could be caused due to the consecutive injuries.

Behind him, Philip had messy hair and looked rather frustrated. If Melmax hadn’t blocked it for him, he probably would’ve been heavily wounded. He said in fury and disbelief, “Why did the magic circles detonate themselves after they were eliminated by the Purge Cross?”

He could not think through it at all!

If they hadn’t eliminated the effects with the Purge Cross, it would’ve taken a long time to suppress the peripheral magic circles of the artificial planet and haul it back, and the odds of encountering legendary sorcerers would’ve been higher. However, little did they foresee such an unbelievable situation after they used the Purge Cross!

“Perhaps, a legendary spell that had been cast earlier was sealed inside. After you eliminated the seal, it naturally burst out,” Melmax speculated based on his experience.

“That’s impossible. We’re talking about a legendary spell. The artificial planet is not a legendary item. Also, under the elimination, whether or not it has started, all the legendary powers should’ve been removed.” Philip shook his head in confusion and fear.

“Stop!” In the channel of communication that was similar to the telepathic bond, Saint Kati spoke solemnly, “Let’s not bother why it happened for now. The most important thing at present is what to do next. Are you going to capture the other artificial planet nearby, or should we simply evacuate? We don’t have much time. I do not want to fight the grand arcanists!”

They had chosen this artificial planet because there was another candidate not far away.

Philip calmed down. He puckered for a while before shaking his head and said, “Let’s evacuate. The time that the Congress of Magic

cannot react has passed, unless His Holiness is willing to continue his suppression. However, that will give the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell an opportunity to attack His Holiness. If His Holiness is heavily wounded because of that, we will be caught in a subtle situation since the Angle King does not respond to us now.”

It was obvious that the pope was more important than the artificial planet!

Frustration and anger consumed the Grand Cardinals, but there was little they could do. Such operations verged on failure once the abruptness and the time gap were broken, unless they were willing to turn a temporary operation into a total war.

Ivory light glittered, and the Grand Cardinals disappeared from the orbit as fast as they came but with additional helplessness.

On the other artificial planet not far away, silver lines glowed and constructed a weird magic circle, which blurred the surroundings as if it was connected to different worlds. Some of the worlds had furious storms, and some were the harmonious nature.

Through the magic circle, Douglas, Fernando, and the rest of them arrived with their projections. Then, connecting their own demiplanes, they transformed the projections into their real bodies.

“They did not come here. What a bunch of fast runners.” Seeing that the artificial planet was as quiet as before, Fernando did not hesitate to mock the enemies.

Douglas smiled. “They are not possessed by the devil of greed. How could they not have reached the conclusion that it was dangerous to come here? If they did come, at least one of them would be killed.”

“I, for one, wished that they had come. We can let them ‘loot’ the remains of the artificial planet after a huge battle,” said Lucien, not without regrets.

“Why?” It was impossible for Hellen to be devoted to her arcana and magic studies right now, so she showed an unusual interest in Lucien’s remark.

Chapter 739: The Future Is Bright

Chapter 739: The Future Is Bright

Without the blockage of air, it was even easier for a sorcerer to spread out their spiritual power. Therefore, the range of the force field of their spiritual power was dozens of times wider than on the ground. However, in such a huge range, Lucien and the other sorcerers couldn't feel anything except for a lone artificial planet that was operating in a fixed pattern. The whole environment was bleak and gloomy. That was exactly the feeling of the real universe beyond the atmosphere.

On such an orbit, Lucien, Douglas, Fernando, and Hellen were so small compared to the artificial planets, but they were filled with such intimidating air that they looked like small suns. They were the natural land, the hell of thunder, the universe inside the atom, and the illusion built with snow.

When a legendary sorcerer fully spread out their spiritual power, their half-solidified cognitive world would interfere with the reality together with their demiplane!

In such a quiet and gloomy environment, Lucien replied to Hellen's question with a smile, "Because I prefer the Church to imitate us, chase us, and compete with us in the domain that we are good at, than to focus their attention on their theological studies, in which case they might find a way to fully apply 'Mountain Paradise' at some point."

Hellen nodded her head. She was deep in thought. "Therefore, you demonstrated the importance of artificial planets in order to distract the Church from their strong suit, so that they would compete with us in a domain that they know nothing at all but we are very good at?"

"That's right. Although they might be unable to unravel the mysteries of Mountain Paradise, we'd better avoid accidents as best as we can until we have overwhelming advantages." Lucien nodded.

“Are you not worried that the situation would escalate quickly after the Church grasps the secrets of artificial planets? They play an important role. As strategic weapons, they have turned the common commanding heights into a planetary-level orbit control,” asked Douglas with a gentle smile.

“Commanding height” was not a difficult term for the Congress of Magic to understand. The City in the Sky was a product to command the height, except that nobody summarized it in such a way before.

Lucien said unhurriedly, “It’s true that artificial planets are very important, but we have only developed part of their possible usages. Until the power problem is addressed, they can only help with signal transmission, surveillance, and prospecting. They are not the key to victory. The most important of their usages is the signal transmission.

“For the Church, since image transmission circles have been widely established, the middle-level clerics can already achieve the effect that is similar to what artificial planets can present in the territory on the opposite side of the Storm Strait. In the places that are occupied by us and the North Church, they could in the past but not now. As for the live stream and other media, how could they let ordinary people enjoy that? For them, the less the people know, the better.

“What they value is the potential value behind the signal transmission of artificial planets. However, the parts that are currently usable can help them recover to the status before the battle of Rentato at best. For us, that is not too bad a change. Also, knowing the mechanisms and details of artificial planets so well, do we not have ways to restrain the artificial planets of the Church? Can we not hack them and steal the secret communications? That is the domain that we are familiar with and good at!”

Talking about that, Lucien suddenly remembered something. He smiled and said, “To put it simply, we are dragging the enemy into the field that we are familiar with before we beat them with our abundant experience and profound studies.”

“Divine power is based on the power of Thanos and more convenient on the orbit. If they successfully duplicate artificial planets, their attack and defense will be much better than ours. Are you not afraid that they will surpass us?” Fernando had been looking awful ever since Lucien made fun of his “uncontrollable reactor”.

Lucien chuckled. “If the Church were another Congress that has its own arcana system, its own arcana credits, arcana points, etc. to encourage studies, its own hundreds of years of knowledge, its own profound studies in the macroscopic and microscopic domains, I wouldn’t have proposed the suggestion at all.”

Of course, that was not absolute. If they had similar arcana foundations, such a “planetary war” could also transform their battle into a competition of the overall economics. The bottom line was that they should compete with the enemy in whichever aspect they were better at, and not the opposite.

“As for right now, considering the foundations I said, I’m not worried at all that the Church will surpass us regarding artificial planets, not in ten years, not in a hundred years, and not in a thousand years,” Lucien added. “Unless the Church starts to build its own arcana system. But in that case, there will be no irreconcilable conflicts between them and us when they stop relying on belief entirely. We can be combined.

“Their artificial planets may be more aggressive, but until ‘Mountain Paradise’ can really play a role, those planets cannot serve as orbit cannons to bombard the ground. Our nuclear reactors, on the other hand, will probably succeed in a year or two. After they are minimized, they will be as good as the artificial planets.”

“You are talking as if the Church can do nothing but wait for its death, and our future is nothing but bright.” Douglas chuckled.

Lucien replied, “Our future is bright, but the road ahead of us is difficult. As a matter of fact, I’m sure you must have similar ideas, Mr. President, except that you have never proposed them specifically. For example, all the papers on arcana studies are

publicly published, and the Church and the other countries can read them as long as they want to. As for magic, there are only principles and guidelines, and the specific structures can only be read and exchanged with enough permissions. As a result, they feel that they know arcana and can catch up with us, but they will never be able to do so.”

“I didn’t think as much at that time and simply made the system under the impression that they wouldn’t understand it at all,” Douglas admitted frankly with a self-mocking smile. “In my eyes, without their own research and exploration, and without a long-time accumulation, it was pointless to directly read the papers, so most of the clerics and experts in other countries couldn’t have obtained much from our public arcana papers. I didn’t know that the pope was Viken, and he maintained a vigorous attitude in learning.”

Hellen suddenly interjected, “Evans, you’ve set up ‘uncontrollable reactors’ on every artificial planet at enormous costs, just so that the Church cannot acquire them easily?”

“Yes. You will cherish the things that you can’t get easily. They would’ve suspected our real purpose if it were too easy. Therefore, we have to put them through difficulties and force them to pay a high price. Only in such a way will they spend more time on imitation and modification.” Lucien shook his head as if he were greatly disappointed. “I did not know that they had no spirits to fight at all. I was hoping that they would exchange the life of a saint cardinal for the secrets of artificial planets.”

Douglas also sighed. “It seems that we have to figure out a way to give such an ‘opportunity’ to the Church again...”

It seemed that he agreed with Lucien’s idea.

“How can we ensure that the Church is willing to obtain the artificial planets despite the risks and that they will dedicate themselves to imitating and modifying it?” asked Fernando cautiously.

“If they do not capture the artificial planets and study their secrets,

there will be nothing they can do when we carry out all the usages of the artificial planets and control the orbit and the planet. Then, they will be eliminated by time. However, such a process will take longer and may have unexpected changes. If they choose such an option, everything will be exactly the same as before,” said Lucien solemnly.

Douglas smiled again. “Our future is indeed bright. Whatever the Church chooses, its failure is inevitable. That is the choice of our era. However...”

He suddenly sighed, and so did Lucien. They exhaled a mouthful of nonexistent air in the airless space and said almost at the same time with mixed feelings, “Demigods.”

Yes. If the demigods who were in possession of the mysteries of the undead were no more, the Congress wouldn’t need to plot against the Church at all. It could develop as fast as possible to eliminate the Church!

“That is why the road ahead of us is difficult. Chances are that the Congress may be destroyed by a few demigods when they collaborate. Chances are that some of us will be killed by the demigods before we can see the final victory,” Lucien said gravely but without fear.

Looking at the stars, Douglas remarked, “Although it is important for us to have our own demigods, the development of the Congress of Magic has to be focused on arcana studies and magic applications, because our path of demigod must and can only be built on them.”

Agreeing with Douglas’ point of view, Fernando and Hellen nodded at the same time.

“Alright, what’s the next plan then?” Douglas looked at Lucien and asked for his opinion.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “Perhaps, we can troll for the insidious problems within the Congress in our plan. Before the South Church retreated from the four countries on this side of the

strait and the north coastline, there were plenty of spies of the Church in the Congress. Later, the situation was better, and a few new spies came. However, after Viken secretly released the secrets to becoming a demigod, I suspect that somebody within the Congress is working tacitly with the Church.”

Some of the phrases were “invented” by Lucien in Arcana Voice before. It was not difficult for Fernando and the other sorcerers to understand him. Furthermore, Hellen and Brook had been included in Douglas, Fernando, Hathaway, and Lucien’s studies on the path of a demigod and the secrets of immortality.

“That’s great.” Fernando hated spies more than anything else. He only hated that he could not bathe them with his storms.

Chapter 740: The Original Meeting of the Grand Cardinals

In Lance, the Holy City.

The whole Bright Hall was caught in awkward silence as if it had been frozen. Whether or not they were involved in the operation to capture artificial planets, all the Grand Cardinals lowered their proud heads, ready to embrace the fury of His Holiness.

The operation this time was too great a fiasco. It had been destined to be a failure since the very beginning. The risks that His Holiness took were pointless. Somebody had to be held responsible for that!

Compared to the legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic, the saint cardinals and divine knights of the Church enjoyed less immunity. Their positions and the powers under their control restrained the increase of their strength. The higher their position was and the greater power they had, the closer they would be to the Lord and the faster their strength would grow. The dependency was fundamental. Therefore, the punishment that they suffered was not insignificant and simply symbolic.

Also, before they grasped the mysteries of faith, the previous popes had the “divine method” to cut off the connection between the punished saint cardinals and Mountain Paradise. They could only use their own heart of faith without being able to replenish it. Very soon, they would turn into the legends who were in a high level but lacked the corresponding strength.

The legendary sorcerers, on the other hand, were purely based on their own strength. Even if they lost their identity as a member of the Highest Council, nothing would be changed. They relied on the Congress of Magic for the combination of resources and an environment of arcana and magic studies. Therefore, they enjoyed much more impunity, and their punishment wouldn't really hurt them.

That was also one of the reasons why the Congress had been

divided into many factions, and the internal conflicts could never be completely ignored. The supremacy of legends had both advantages and drawbacks.

Of all the Grand Cardinals, Philip was the most uneasy one. He was the one who came up with the plan. Benedict III gave him the greatest freedom and even personally took part in it, but he had screwed it up!

The intense explosion when the artificial planet detonated itself sounded like the mocking and malicious laughter of the Congress of Magic, which echoed on in Philip's heart, making it impossible for him to relax.

Even though he was a newly-promoted saint cardinal and a "young man" who had the potentials to be a Saint, he had to consider how he should bear the fury of the pope and avoid "losses" as much as possible.

After Pope Viken had united and stabilized the Church by introducing the ways to transform the body status via the feelings of believers and the ways to make use of the power of faith, they had all achieved a thing or two. They were able to steal the power of faith on their own, and their strength had been greatly increased. They no longer feared the disconnection from Mountain Paradise. However, it also meant that they were more dependent on the Church right now!

With the Saint Truth behind them, they were much happier than the experts who had to gather the power of feelings and disseminate faith on their own stealthily and arduously. They could openly steal the power of faith from the parish under their control according to a certain ratio without doing any extra things. If they were punished and dispatched to a remote parish, it would be a severe loss for them!

With the holy crown on his gray head and a platinum staff in his hands, Benedict III looked at the Grand Cardinals indifferently and did not say anything for five minutes.

He did not release the intimidation of a demigod, but the invisible

pressure from him still froze the hall. None of the Grand Cardinals dared to speak.

Suddenly, he heaved a sigh. “The accident this time had nothing to do with you. It was not your fault. Your plan was almost perfect, and the grand arcanists were distracted and stalled. Our only mistake was that we did not foresee that the evil sorcerers were so cunning that they set up such weird self-detonation devices on the artificial planet.”

His peaceful tone and his interpretation of the matter immediately thawed the grave atmosphere. Philip heaved a long sigh of relief from the bottom of his heart in sincere gratitude. His Holiness was indeed broadminded, farsighted, and reasonable.

“Your Holiness, what are we going to do now then? Plan a similar operation?” Philip intentionally asked a question with an answer he knew in order to shift the focus of the discussion from the previous failure.

As if he did not know what was on Philip’s mind, Benedict III said with an equally peaceful voice, “Until we figure out the weirdness of the self-detonation device, no similar plans will ever work out.”

“His Holiness is right. When the magic effect is eliminated, it may result in such a powerful explosion. That’s not something to be underestimated. If we cannot figure out the reason, it’s possible that somebody will be killed next time,” Astira, the Angel of Wind, said somewhat in fear. If the power of the explosion was close to “Eternal Blaze”, they probably wouldn’t be obliterated. Since an artificial planet, which was not a legendary item, could generate an explosion on the same level of “Atomic Fission”, there was certainly a small chance that it could give an “Eternal Blaze”.

Melmax also nodded his head. “Unless the Godly Eye arrives in person and controls it with the divine power such as ‘Sacred Hourglass’, I cannot think of another way to capture it by brute force. Also, capturing them by force will take too long, and the operation will escalate into a total battle.”

“Godly Eye” Arvin, one of the six seraphs, was one of the only two

experts who were capable of time-stop divine powers in the Saint Truth. The other expert was, naturally, Pope Viken.

His ability to control time and space seemed to be a gift from the God of Truth. Therefore, even the knights who inherited his blood power and Astira, who had the power of the Angel of Wind, could not create the real Time Stop. The best they could do was to slow down or accelerate time.

“We can choose ways that are more indirect and inconspicuous.” Philip looked at Benedict III. “Your Holiness, the ways to become a demigod that you released in secret must’ve shaken some of the high-level sorcerers, right? We can make use of them...”

He did not finish, but every Grand Cardinal on the spot knew what he meant. It was no different from stealing secrets and carrying out assassinations through spies as they did in the past.

In the emergency meeting at the beginning, Benedict III “informed” them of the origin of the Saint Truth. He described Thanos, the Sun King, as the holy son of the God of Truth on earth. He was a holy son who was in trinity with the God of Truth and the pope and a holy son who tried to eliminate the evil Magic Empire and save the people. Thanos’ studies on the mysteries of gods were described as an experience where his memories were awakened after being summoned by the God of Truth. The failure of his experiment in the end, his integration with Mountain Paradise, and his loss of self-awareness were described as a self-sacrifice to save the world by opening the Chamber of Immortality and awaken human beings.

Such a “story” could only half convince the Grand Cardinals, but Viken’s key point was not the story itself but to make them realize that the God of Truth was truly a real god who mastered the supreme power although he was asleep. That was evident from the overwhelming power of Mountain Paradise that they perceived. Also, since Viken released the mysteries of demigods and faith voluntarily, they were naturally “fully convinced”.

Viken did not keep it a secret that he had been secretly disseminating the ways to become a demigod, and the Grand Cardinals were not too reluctant about that. After all, they had a

huge territory of faith that was under their control, and they did not have to compete with anybody else. They could watch other people fight each other as bystanders and even intensify the competitions by aiding different forces that would be in their favor. If other people joined their hands, they still had a pope who could perform God's Arrival on their side!

Benedict III shook his head. "I did not propose any demand when I offered the ways to become a demigod to them, and they would not do anything that is against their own interests for us. As a matter of fact, I'm more glad to see this. When they are close to success, it will be the fragrant bloom of flowers. Things will become very interesting, and we will have greater trophies. Therefore, I don't want their 'endeavors' to be sensed just for artificial planets."

"Are we going to give up just like that?" Philip was a bit disappointed.

Benedict III smiled. "It will be a different matter if they reveal the secrets on their way in exchange for other things. I know that the Bird of Death is in desperate need of some power of faith. Also, he has been hiding very well. Even if he is exposed, there will be scapegoats who will die for him. On the other hand, I need to meet another person. It's possible that we can obtain the secrets of artificial planets directly from him..."

He paused there and announced the end of the meeting of the Grand Cardinals.

Melmax, Maria, Kati, Astira, and the other Grand Cardinals were very confused, wondering who the person that the Bird of Death and His Holiness were trying to meet was, but they had to drop all their thoughts and left the Bright Hall without a sound.

Chapter 741: The Way to Polish the Blood Power

A beautiful melody echoed in the restaurant. The peaceful and tranquilizing notes calmed everybody down. However, no band could be seen in the room. There was only one magic gramophone that was slowly spinning a resin disc on a table next to the wall.

After several minutes, the music was over, and the disc had reached the end. The servant nearby hurried to change a new one.

As the music echoed again, John put down his fork and said to Lucien in mixed feelings, "The common resin disc can only record several minutes of music. It can barely accommodate a complete symphony unless the pure-magic discs of higher levels are adopted, but they will be unaffordable for ordinary people in such a case."

He did not forget his past and therefore paid much attention to the life of the ordinary people.

"The problem is that ordinary people cannot even afford the magic gramophone." Lucien cut the foie gras while he joked. "But of course, the pure-magic discs are indeed expensive. They are almost equal to the level-two alchemical items. The small nobles can only buy one of them occasionally and use the resin discs most of the time. However, it shouldn't be a problem in Viscount Wesley's house."

Because the simplification was based on magic, Lucien did not have a mature plan and could only redesign the magic circles from scratch. He had to achieve his purpose step by step.

After being nominated as a manager of the Musicians' Association in Rentato, Joel was so rejuvenated that he seemed to have stopped aging. "However, the small nobles are much greater in number. Also, since most restaurants are using them, the resin discs are the unquestionable mainstream nowadays. It is an important source of income for most musicians. Therefore, it appears to me that they are more and more inclined to create simple songs with only a

duration of several minutes. It is both easy and pays well.”

Unlike in Aalto, the musicians of Rentato did not have many concert opportunities. Their income mostly came from the service for the nobles in the past as the music consultants or teachers for the nobles. After the magic gramophone was invented, they got another important source of income, which was song royalties. According to the sales of the resin discs and magic discs that recorded their music, they would earn a certain ratio of money.

Thanks to the “patent fee” that was applied to magic exchange and usage earlier, and since Mr. Atom Controller was himself a great musician, the sorcerers did not quite reject the royalties. Besides separating the musicians into different levels, which were given different ratios, the Bill of Intellectual Property that the Parliament of Nobles passed and the queen signed was regularly carried out.

Although the magic gramophone was only an entertainment for nobles right now, it was quite expensive and added significantly to the musicians’ revenues. So, stimulated by money and under the influence of “light music”, most musicians were more and more inclined to the simple verses that lasted only several minutes. Such simple, unsophisticated “recreational music” was popular among the citizens, too. As a result, the music in Rentato was developing in quite a different direction from that of Aalto.

According to Lucien, Rentato would become a place where pop music and songs were born sooner or later.

Hearing Uncle Joel’s concerns, Lucien smiled. “Sometimes, the reform of instruments, means of communication, and means of carriers will all change the course of music, just like how music was changed in the age of the heptachord, after the violin and the piano were invented. Only in such reforms can music be forever invigorated instead of getting dry. So, Uncle Joel, there’s no need to worry that the capacity of the resin discs will be a bad influence on the development of music. It will show us even more different types of music that is beyond what we can imagine right now.”

The most famous musician today had expressed his opinion firmly. Joel, as a bard and a street performer, had a natural fondness for

short music. So, he had no more concerns and directed the topic to the food. "I didn't know that you were also talented at cooking, Evans. This sweet and sour meat is truly delicious!"

"Yes." Aunt Alisa nodded her head, her mouth occupied all the time. Instead of being talkative as usual, her attention was completely on the food.

On the table, except for foie gras and some other cuisines in the Tria style, she had never seen most of the food before. They were different from the cuisines of other countries. She found it barely possible to stop eating.

"Thank you. Natasha loves the food, too." Lucien accepted their compliment straightforwardly. There were many Chinese foods, but not all of them were attractive to the people of an alternate world. The dishes on the table were selected after Natasha tasted them as "experimental mice". Naturally, Joel, Alisa, and John enjoyed them so much that they were almost biting their own tongue.

Lucien, on the other hand, was adept at magic and identifying animals and planets, and since many bizarre items that did not exist on Earth could be found here, the range of the Chinese cuisines was further expanded, and the number had been increased by at least three times.

Now that Lucien mentioned Natasha, Joel asked, feeling it strange, "Why did Her Majesty not come tonight?"

Normally speaking, as long as Lucien was in Allyn, he would come to visit Joel at least twice every month, and Natasha came with him most of the time.

Before Lucien replied, John answered for him, "Recently, Rentato is being modified and expanded. The divine power circles and the magic circles have to be rearranged. Since the villas, manors, and other real estates of many nobles are involved, the Parliament of Nobles wrangles all the time. So, the queen is quite busy mediating in the matter."

"Rentato is changing too fast. All the changes in my twenty years of

residence in Aalto were not as many as what happened to Rentato during only a couple of months. I truly wonder what Rentato will be like in the future,” said Joel with mixed feelings.

After dinner, Lucien and John stood next to the window in the small drawing room on the second floor, each holding a cup of wine.

Looking at the lights in the district of nobles that were as brilliant as a river of stars, John suddenly sighed. “Ever since you were implicated by the witches, I have been feeling that I’m in a dream that I never woke up from. All my hopes for the future have come true, but the future is not exactly what I had in mind.”

“Me too.” Looking out of the window, Lucien’s eyes became thoughtful and deep. He spoke calmly, but he did mean it. It was not entirely impossible that his current life was a dream.

Although Lucien had basically ruled out the possibility of a dream during his exploration and research on the world, he was still short of the conclusive proof to disprove it. Even though he already had basic speculation about this world, it was impossible for him to declare that “brain in a vat”, “virtual world”, or “experimental facility” was impossible.

John naturally could not tell what was on Lucien’s mind. After a sip of the wine, he said, “My original dream was to become a real knight so that my father, my mother, Elvin, and you could live an opulent noble life, but you realized the dream earlier than I did by turning into a musician...

“After I became a knight, I was ready to be sacrificed in the North Fortress or the Dark Mountain Range as was destined for every knight. However, you told me that you were a sorcerer, which cast me into confusion for a long time...

“When I thought that we would never meet again, and after I began to serve the duchy and the Church wholeheartedly, Her Majesty brought me to Rentato...”

As he spoke, he smiled, “When I was used to the peaceful life that

was defended by many experts who prevented me from meeting real dangers, incidents of demon worship, devil worship, and abyss corruption happened in the kingdom frequently, which kept me occupied in battles again.”

He was not complaining. Instead, he was more or less excited. A peaceful, risk-free life would stagnate him and stop him from turning into a radiant knight.

“Life is full of surprises. It never goes as you planned.” Lucien clinked with John’s wine cup. “Also, it is very difficult for you to become a radiant knight with your blood power of ‘Elimination’. There are not enough files in the kingdom for you to learn.”

The bloodline nobles, after their generations of inheritance, or thanks to the tests of a certain legendary knight, had their own ways to polish their blood powers and improve their willpower. Therefore, the nobles with heritages were more likely to advance than the newly-promoted nobles even though they were all knights. They allowed the Congress of Magic to publicize the training methods before knighthood in order to raise more talents to deal with the Church and develop more alternate dimensions because the methods to hone their blood powers were their real capital and the secrets that they had to keep.

The people of the blood power of “Elimination” were few, and they had mostly been absorbed into the Church as divine knights or night watchers. None of the nobles of Holm were of such a bloodline. Naturally, there was no corresponding method of polishing that they could offer to John.

Before this, Lucien did not think that it was a big deal since blood power was the creation of the ancient sorcerers and the files of different bloodlines had been preserved in the Congress of Magic. He believed that he would devise an appropriate way of polishing for John by studying the cases of the “Elimination” blood power. However, none of the files that the Congress of Magic collected were about the “Elimination” blood power, which made Lucien suspicious of the origin of the bloodline. He wondered if it was a product of Viken’s research.

John smiled, not thinking that it was a big deal. “All the previous methods of polishing were figured out by knights too. I am no more stupid, lazy, or cowardly as they were. Can’t I figure it out on my own? Also, didn’t you always say that we should not be restrained by our experience? It is possible that this is actually a good thing for me.”

He made a joke humorously.

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After he left Joel’s house, Lucien roamed inside Rentato City casually with his hands in his pockets and his black top hat lowered. Watching a city evolve according to his ideas filled him with a sense of achievement.

When he passed the quarters of the alchemical works, Lucien suddenly saw a dwarf walking to him. The stranger covered his eyes with his right hand and paid respect. “Steam Above.”

Then, he smiled. “Mister, would you like to join our steam church?”

Preaching in daylight? That was completely against his instruction given to the dwarfs! His eyes turned grave as Lucien asked solemnly, “Who are you?”

“Hehe.” The dwarf smiled. “Although we never really met, we sort of met before.”

He spoke in a strange way, but Lucien narrowed his eyes all of a sudden. “Viken?”

Chapter 742: Righteous Lucien

The dwarf had a thick beard, which made him look manly and barbaric, like most adult dwarfs did. However, he did not have the slightest shortage of manners. Instead, he smiled sophisticatedly like an erudite human scholar. “I’ve been meaning to meet you since a long time ago, but I couldn’t determine your traces.”

It was an indirect admittance that he was Viken. Or at least, it was Viken who dominated the body of the dwarf right now.

As he spoke in such a casual tone, Lucien felt that his heart was heavy and chilled. When did Viken have the idea of killing him in person? Was it when he proposed the general theory of relativity and became a legend? Or was it after he met with Monster Viken in the Realm of Gates?

Fortunately, he had been advancing fast in the past few years. It barely took him any time for him to reach level three of legendary from the entrance. Also, the places he went to were either the Elven Court, where he had a top legendary ally, or the abyss, where Viken’s demigod nemesis resided. As for the other places, he only stayed for no more than half a day while covering his traces with the uniqueness of the Secretive. That was how he avoided the encounter with the well-acknowledged strongest demigod.

After understanding the specific restraints of God’s Arrival, the Congress of Magic had a new conclusion about Viken’s real capabilities. If he found a way to melt Monster Viken without any problems, he would probably be close to the level of real gods and become even more powerful than Thanos.

But of course, after he reached level three of legendary, Lucien was less worried about Viken. At the very least, he could manage to escape. The only problem was whether or not Viken had considered him to be such a great enemy that he had to eliminate Lucien with “God’s Arrival” even though Monster Viken might take control.

Thinking quickly, Lucien soon restored his calmness. This was

Rentato. Should anything happen, the top legends such as Hathaway would arrive in no time. Also, Viken had only arrived as a projection. It still remained to be seen whether or not he could beat Lucien. "To what do I owe the King of Calamities' visit?"

"The King of Calamities... It's been a long time since anyone called me by my legendary title." Viken seemed to be in mixed feelings. Then he smiled and said, "Don't bother me. Old guys like me are always reminiscent. As for the reason why I am here, do you really not know, God of Steam Yuri?"

If you were an old man who dwelt in the memories of the past, I would be a pure, innocent good guy who does not know any schemes. Lucien secretly thought to himself. Viken's personalities were not hard to guess considering that he had mercilessly erased the memories of his best friends and crafted them into seraphs.

"What God of Steam? What Yuri? I have no idea what you are talking about at all?" Lucien pretended to be innocent.

Viken chuckled. "You can fool other people but certainly not me. I can sense the heart of faith inside this dwarf. I sense that his power of faith finally has a center where it can be gathered. You wouldn't think that I've arrived after selecting a random body, would you?"

Lucien's eyes froze. Viken had retained the remote projection abilities of the primeval devils after he became a demigod. As a result, even if he were not a demigod who was aware of the secrets of immortality, it would be barely possible to completely destroy him. It was indeed as expected of the best expert who overpowered the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, the Will of Abyss, and Monster Viken on his own.

Of course, it was also mostly because it was inconvenient for the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss to arrive and the fact that their strength would be restricted in the main material world. Also, there would be no cooperation where the Will of Abyss was involved.

Lucien's stunt could not escape the attention of Viken. He smiled peacefully. "I think you don't need me to say anything after you see this dwarf who has been personally given divine power by you.

Facts speak louder than words.”

Even though he could not be directly projected to the senior-rank experts who did not have too many negative feelings, his senses on emotional changes were still keen.

“It’s just a secret research program. The mysteries of gods and the nature of the power of faith have always been a focus of the legendary sorcerers. Oliver, for example, has been studying the Dark Dragon Lord.” Lucien wanted to know what exactly Viken was trying to do, so instead of playing innocent, he admitted frankly without telling any lie.

“You are very cautious. It seems that the conversation with Douglas has made you wary. You wouldn’t say anything that would strike arcana and magic studies.”

Viken seemed unconvinced of Lucien’s confession. “Right. The creator of the new alchemy and the general theory of relativity, the most authoritative arcanist in the microscopic domain, and the main founder of the current arcana and magic system has stopped the exploration on the truth of the world and focused on the dissemination of faith. It will be a major strike on the confidence of every arcanist in the Congress of Magic after it is spread out.”

“It’s simply a study, which proves my arcana attitude better than anything. For me, disseminating faith and gathering the power of faith are meaningless. My focus is their place in the current arcana system.” Lucien still admitted frankly. After all, the congregation of special electromagnetic waves was just a hypothesis.

Viken chuckled. “Alright, enough of your lofty excuses. I do not need to use your words to strike the Congress of Magic. I only want to ask you if you need the complete ways to steal and utilize the power of faith? That monster cannot tell the secrets of demigods in violation of my rules. So, I’m sure that you only know how to transform into the status of primeval devils with the power of feelings, which is not the best method that I’ve improved on.

“You should know that many critical procedures on your path to demigod are missing. You cannot reach the destination if you are

one-legged. I can help you solve the problem with a minimal price that nobody will suspect you. After all, almost twenty high-level sorcerers know the complete structure of artificial planets.”

“Absurd! Why do I want the way to steal and utilize the power of faith? Can they help me unravel the nature of the power of faith at all?” Lucien refused determinedly.

His determination, however, sounded like a vacillation to Viken. Lucien did not mock at him for trying to allure a grand arcanist but stressed the uselessness of his offer. It was not hard to imagine what he thought.

Viken said unhurriedly, “Useless? Then, why did you steal the power of faith of the God of Craftsmen? Your way of stealing and utilization was well-hidden, but that is the only remarkable part about it. There’s no way for you to succeed unless Heit turns into the God of Steam himself. How can you figure out three thousand years of studies in only two years?”

He was quite confident about that.

“You...” Lucien was slightly stunned. The guy who was spying on him was indeed complicit with Viken.

From Lucien’s face and emotional fluctuations, Viken noticed his shock. Thinking that Lucien was surprised because the successful and unattractive thing had been learned by him, Viken smiled. “Don’t worry. With my teaching, you will be able to steal Heit’s power of faith from your own altar. How does it sound?”

He was not truly bothered by the disproportion of cost and return. It was already the greatest success of the Congress of Magic that could be divided.

“As I have said many times, I am not interested in stealing and utilizing the power of faith. After I figure out its essence and arcana significance, I will create a flawless method, instead of turning into a half human and half monster like you.” Lucien smiled and scorned Viken’s way, showing his “confidence” and “vision”.

Viken was briefly silent, as if he did not expect that Lucien would really refuse it. Had he made any breakthroughs in his research? Was the observer effect really the nature of the power of faith?

“Two demigods have emerged on this path, and they are the only two demigods who are not natural-born demigods. So, you will eventually return to this path at some point. If you miss the opportunity today, you will barely get the files in the future.” Viken sighed, as if he were feeling sorry for Lucien.

Lucien smiled warmly, but he still said firmly, “I believe in myself.”

That was the confidence as expected of a distinguished arcanist at such a young age. So, Viken was not surprised at all.

He smiled, and the dwarf narrowed his eyes. “I hope that you will not regret it in the future.”

The strange air was gone, and the dwarf collapsed as if he had lost all his strength.

Looking at the air before him, Lucien smiled casually. “I was speaking nothing but the truth. Why couldn’t you believe me? Do you only believe me when I tell you lies?”

Seeing that the dwarf was gradually back to himself, Lucien disappeared from Rentato after one step.

...

“Viken came to you?” In the Land of Truth, Douglas frowned at Lucien.

Lucien did not hide the matter and told it to his teacher and Mr. President quickly.

“He allured me with the way to become a demigod in exchange for the complete structure of artificial planets,” said Lucien briefly.

Thinking about what they discussed before, Douglas asked, “Did you agree?”

That was a good thing. They were planning to give the Church the intelligence in that regard in the first place so that they would compete with the Congress in the field that the Congress was best at. As it turned out, the pope had personally delivered the mysteries of demigods here for the intelligence. That was an unexpected trophy! Although Douglas, Fernando, and Lucien did not need such a path, it would serve well as a reference and research materials. After all, it was the only successful path of demigods right now.

“I turned him down.” Lucien acted as if it were not a big deal.

“It also makes sense. If you agreed with the exchange, Viken might take advantage of it whatever reasons you had. Even if we are going to make the deal, you shouldn’t take part in it in person.” Douglas immediately understood why Lucien refused it.

Lucien nodded. That was indeed one of the reasons. More importantly, it was an opportunity as he had always wanted to show Viken his attitude. Supposedly, he could only look for indirect opportunities to do so, but Viken had come to tempt him in person out of his expectation. He would’ve regretted it if he did not make use of the great chance.

“We were also planning to fish up the sorcerers that were associating with Viken. But Viken’s operation...” Douglas wondered which they should choose.

Lucien smiled. “There are twenty sorcerers who know the secrets of the artificial planets, and dozens more who can construct it on their own with the mechanism. Together with Viken’s devil projection, it is barely possible for us to decide who it is exactly. We can only narrow the range. Therefore, I have temporarily added certain special structures to the files of artificial planets. In such a way, we will be able to tell whether they reached out to each other before or later.”

“Are we not going to carry out the exchange?” asked Douglas.

Lucien pointed at the north. “What we are missing is just the part to steal and utilize the power of faith, and we don’t have to ask Viken for that. Since he has secretly released the ways to become a

demigod to sorcerers, elves, demons, devils, and other races to mess up the situation and divide us, we can also make the situation even more chaotic.”

Chapter 743: : Irresistible Temptation

In San Ivansburg...

Belkovsky, the pontiff of the North Church, was walking toward the room of prayer slowly. He was tall and muscular, nothing like how Benedict III was. As a matter of fact, he was indeed a level-two knight who activated his own blood power through his own work. Even though he chose the path of divine power later, he had paid special attention to the exercise and maintenance of his body. After all, performing “God’s Grace” was a heavy burden for the body too.

He extended his right hand and pressed the door of the room of prayer with his eyes focused. He did not have the habit of considering problems while walking, like what the other high-level managers did. For him, one thing had to be done with full attention when he did it. Only if he was not distracted could he expect the best result. Therefore, when it was time for dinner, he would have dinner; when it was time to walk, he would walk; and when it was time to consider, consider. He never let go of the tiniest detail.

Suddenly, his right hand that was about to open the room of prayer stopped on the bronze doorknob. His eyes squinted, and a holy light vaguely rose around him, connecting to the barrier of the divine power of the whole cathedral.

“Who’s here?” Although Belkovsky would not perceive everything in the whole Saint Ivan Church all the time, he maintained the basic alert. If a certain expert approached the cathedral without him knowing it at all, it would be too great a humiliation for the pontiff of the North Church. Also, most importantly of all, the expert just now briefly revealed himself as if he were announcing his arrival!

Belkovsky was actually more puzzled than scared about the mysterious expert. Even if Benedict III arrived in person with his “God’s Arrival” recovered, it was not entirely impossible for him to survive in the cathedral of Saint Ivan Church. “God’s Grace” plus the core of the defense that the North Church had been working on for hundreds of years was enough to offset God’s Arrival, preventing

it from causing fatal wounds.

It was just like why the “previous popes” never attempted to bombard Allyn with God’s Arrival. That could’ve knocked down the City in the Sky but wouldn’t have been able to heavily wound the legends inside. Without including the attacks of other people, at least Douglas and Brook, who were at the peak of legendary, wouldn’t worry about getting killed.

The legendary wave appeared and disappeared again, at exactly the same spot as just now, which slightly confused Belkovsky who was ready to attack. He smelled something unusual. Then, the holy light on his back turned from a hollow into concrete, giving birth to an angel who had six wings on the back. Then, the angel lunged into the void and disappeared before Belkovsky.

Outside of the Saint Ivan Church was a spacious square that was in the wild and primitive style that was adored in the Schachran Empire. In an alley near the square, the darkness before dawn had completely shrouded the place, making it appallingly quiet. It was a major contrast to the magnificent cathedral nearby.

Holy light arose in the alley, and the angel whose eyes were closed showed up and turned into the appearance of Belkovsky.

“Hehe.” Creepy laughter came from the darkness in the alley. It did not sound to be from a human being at all and carried the intense air of death.

There were few experts that Belkovsky was scared of, and Douglas was the only one among them who was not a demigod. Therefore, he showed no courtesy to the stranger who was pretending to be mysterious. “If you don’t have a good reason to attract me here, you’d better think of a better one after you reach hell.”

In the laughter, a little bird that was purely black flew out. There were pale and hilarious feathers above its head, and the bird’s body seemed to be made of the purest death. It had come with the worst news.

Belkovsky observed it carefully, only to discover that the mysterious

bird had disguised it so well that his projection could not see through it at all. He could, if he arrived in person and examined with divine power, but in such a case, the bird would probably collapse and disappear, not leaving any clues for him.

“You may call me Bird of Death, but I brought you a piece of good news this time.” The bird perched in midair as if it were on a branch.

Belkovsky snorted, not taking it seriously. “Good news? There’s little good news for me nowadays.”

“Is that so? Is the discounted bundle of the ways to transform into primeval devils through the power of feelings not good news for you?” The Bird of Death cackled creepily.

“What?” Belkovsky’s eyes constricted as he stared at the weird little bird for the first time. Even his nonexistent breath seemed to become heavy now.

After a brief silence, he looked at the Bird of Death and asked, “Do you know the ways?”

Over the past two years, many uncanny accidents had taken place in the territory of the North Church, and the results of the investigation all pointed at the primeval devils. Together with the intelligence that Belkovsky acquired from the Dark Congress and the Boundless Ocean, he had more or less guessed that somebody was trying to collect the power of feelings in order to transform into primeval devils.

Furthermore, the Congress of Magic made it clear in their broadcast that transformation into primeval devils was Thanos’ creation, and that he had successfully become a demigod in such a way. Although Belkovsky was not entirely convinced by the open broadcast, he did have a theory after hearing it. The pontiffs and saints in the past could not find a way to be demigods and were only able to steal and make use of the power of faith because they were missing a critical procedure. Therefore, he was quite tempted by the method as described by the Bird of Death.

“Do you not know that Viken secretly announced the way to become a demigod?” said the Bird of Death in mockery.

“What?” Belkovsky exclaimed again. He was surprised more times today than he was many years before. It was not because he was not calm and focused enough but because the Bird of Death’s message was too shocking!

The Bird of Death let out horrible laughter again. “The elven queen knows it, and that’s why Lankshear went missing. The Demogorgon of Darkness knows it, and that’s why the former Prince of Demons went missing. Legends who hardly perished except in major battles in the past have gone missing one after another. Have you sensed nothing wrong?”

“That explains a lot...” Belkovsky was not blindly believing the Bird of Death’s words; he had been suspicious about those cases all the time and vaguely inferred a terrifying fact based on his secret intelligence. Today, the truth of the cases had been offered to him. “What can Viken get from doing this?”

It was what confused him most.

“What can he get? Let the enemies brutalize each other, stabilize the internal situation, and buy more time for his recovery. Do they not count? Also, those people are sort of Viken’s experiment subjects. Their experience will help Viken find the problems of his method and the ways to solve them so that he can see the gate to a real god. After all, he is a demigod, and his life can be preserved in the worst scenario. There’s still a chance for him to start all over again.” The Bird of Death chuckled. “Besides, the candidates he chose are all the legends who do not have a stable source of faith.”

“No wonder he didn’t tell us...” Belkovsky nodded softly. As the pontiff of the North Church, he had a stable source of faith and had been stealing power from it. If he had the way to become a demigod, he would make significant progress very quickly. Since the North Church and the South Church were of the same origin, it was more than easy for them to steal each other’s power of faith. Viken certainly would not reveal it to his mortal enemy unless his brain was broken.

Calming himself down, he asked straightforwardly, “What do you want?”

For a big shot like him, the decisiveness at the critical moments was indispensable. Therefore, instead of rambling on, he went to the center of the problem. Besides, he was not worried that the Bird of Death would trick him with fake information. Such a clandestine deal certainly had to be completed part after part. With his knowledge, he could easily tell if the information was true and could cancel the deal any time if he determined that it was false.

“I only have the way of status transformation, but not the way to steal and utilize the power of faith, or the secrets to combining them to break into the level of demigods. However, I know for a fact that you have acquired the way to steal and make use of the power of faith from the World of Souls, and it has been improved by many generations of pontiffs. So, let’s make an exchange,” the Bird of Death said coarsely in a low voice.

Belkovsky’s eyes turned cold. He knew the secrets of the pontiff? Who was he? Did Viken tell him?

Holding back his confusion, Belkovsky said, pretending to be disappointed, “There’s no complete information?”

“No, but this is your last chance. Other people certainly would not expose it. Nobody wants to have more competitors. If you are unwilling to accept the exchange, I’ll go and look for your saints. I don’t think they will turn it down.” The Bird of Death’s pale and hollow eyes were full of mockery.

Belkovsky was a bit angry, but the temptation was much greater. Weighing the pros and cons, he nodded. “If we are only talking about the way to steal and make use of the power of faith, that’s not a problem.”

The most important secret of the North Church was still the way to pass on strength via “godhood”.

“Right. You also need to give me the files of the bloodline of Elimination. I’m quite interested in that.” The Bird of Death

mentioned it casually, as if it were just an unimportant issue.

2After the schism, the night watchers of the North Church had plenty of knights with the bloodline of Elimination. They had plenty of files.

Belkovsky thought that it was an unimportant issue as well. The files regarding the Elimination blood power were not confidential, but he still believed that it was necessary to show his attitude. “No other requirements, unless you can offer other valuable things.”

The Bird of Death chuckled. “Alright.”

The two of them quickly exchanged their files before they bid each other farewell, both in satisfaction.

Looking at the statues of the previous pontiffs and saints in the room of prayer, Belkovsky was suddenly full of ambitions. Although he did not have the last and the most critical files, he had made much more progress. Also, he had picked up a source of files. The experts who were aware of the secrets such as the Demogorgon of Darkness had to be careful later!

Inside the Atomic Universe, Lucien opened his eyes, and the black Bird of Death suddenly collapsed.

He pretended to be the Bird of Death this time partly to acquire the files and partly to set a new enemy for Viken to mess up the situation. After all, the last and the most critical method hadn't been offered to Belkovsky yet, and there was still a long way to go before he became a demigod! Lucien certainly did not want there to be more demigod enemies for the Congress in the future.

“Aren't you trying to make the situation chaotic? I'll help you make it even more so! However, the messing up of such a level is still not good enough...” Lucien put on an expression that was called by his students as the demon's smile.

Chapter 744: A Standard Villain

In the dim underground palace, the pillars of light mixed with fire fell nonstop. The deep darkness melted quickly like the snow that had met the sunlight. The peculiar worms were rigidified, and the foul shadows screamed miserably.

A glimmer flashed, and the priests floating in midair suddenly collapsed, as if somebody dragged their ankles brutally. The defense on them did not work at all. Most of the evil arts came to an abrupt halt.

Before they were able to react, the intimidating gold-haired middle-aged man before them had opened his right hand. On his every finger was a little eye, and at the center of his palm was a brownish giant eye that was stained by blood.

The five horrible little eyes were in different colors and shooting different rays, but the yellowish giant eye glistened and made everybody feel heavy. The gravity in this place seemed to have been intensified.

Rays in green, blue, and other colors hit those black-robed priests, slowing, paralyzing, or even simply reducing them into countless spots of light. The formidable enemies that the reverends, bishops, knights, and common night watchers could not take care of were immediately suppressed. Victory was near at hand.

Some of the cultists screamed in panic. They had never seen such a weird and strong enemy before!

“Where... Where is the Chief Priest?”

“Shouldn’t the Chief Priest be stopping him?”

At the critical moment, they remembered their leader, an envoy of the supreme “Heir of Chaos”. Wasn’t he fighting the intimidating middle-aged man just now?

The middle-aged man who was dressed in a white overall attacked

even harder after hearing their remarks. Creepy little eyes grew out of his face and his other hand, shooting out defensive or aggressive rays of light. He sneered, "Do you think a level-seven cultist priest can stop me? I've killed dozens of priests who were stronger than him."

What? After confirming the death of their Chief Priest, the remaining cultists and priests immediately collapsed. They had even forgotten the prayer for power from "Heir of Chaos" when the rays came at them. Panicked, they soon lost their combat ability, getting killed or captured by the night watchers, the reverends, and the knights. None of them escaped at all.

"Hehe. There are too many uncanny cults recently. We have to dig out their source!" The terrifying eyes on the face and hands of the middle-aged man were closed without leaving any mark.

One of the night watchers said gratefully, "Thank god you were around, my lord, or those priests of 'Heir of Chaos' might have escaped."

As a matter of fact, not only would they have escaped, but they would have also killed all the night watchers. Fortunately, the dire consequences had been avoided as Winchell, "Eyes of Radiance", who ranked the third among the night watchers, had come when he pursued another lead.

"It's my responsibility to deal with the cultists." Winchell nodded. "You will search for the place in groups. Do not let go of any cultist."

"Yes, my lord," the captain of the night watchers answered respectfully.

Winchell paced in the hall. He looked at the messy altar, which was engraved with naked men and women, and searched for clues worth investigating.

Looking at the magnificent but somewhat old underground palace, the dim environment that was full of bodies, and the ancient stone gates and rooms, Winchell suddenly had a lot of mixed feelings. He

had encountered such a scene far too many times. In both his careers as an adventurer and during the operations to purge cultists where he became a night watcher, he seemed to have always been visiting and fighting in underground establishments.

“Those goddamn ancient sorcerers always like to dig holes...”
Winchell cursed.

Suddenly, he sensed something. His eyes turned into rubies and shot out two rays of light, breaking one of the walls nearby and revealing the hidden door inside.

Having no time to call the other clerics, he flew into the narrow channel and chased after the enemy.

After taking a turn, Winchell found himself before a bunch of astonished cultists who were crawling into a secret chamber in turns.

Hehe. Winchell chuckled. *Are you trying to get away from me?*

The dense eyes were opened again, and the cultists fell one after another. Winchell broke into the chamber and pressed forward, chasing after the enemy in the lead. Those behind who had been immobilized would be taken care of by the following clerics.

As he pursued on, fewer and fewer cultists were before him, until he could see none. However, Winchell did not stop. His intuitions told him that a big fish was up ahead, one that was as important as the “envoy” just now.

BAM.

A stone gate that was full of patterns was broken by the rays, and Winchell entered the deepest part of the chamber. He looked around warily, but there was nothing in the place except for the statue of “Queen of Chaos” who was holding a burning torch.

Why isn't there any enemy? Winchell looked around, slightly dazed. As a gold knight, he was quite confident about his guts.

Suddenly, a cold wind passed him, and Winchell shivered even

though he was a gold knight. He sensed danger for the first time.

The feeling was not too strong. Winchell did not run away immediately but cast out defensive rays, surrounding himself with an iron wall.

Looking around, Winchell saw the lifeless wall, the quiet and empty room, the ordinary and crude statue, but no source of danger at all.

However, the chilling feeling still terrified him. He couldn't help but step backward. Exactly at this moment, the fire on the torch that the Queen of Chaos held suddenly rose high and burnt fervently in evil laughter.

Instantly, Winchell sensed the indescribable danger that was hundreds if not thousands of times more intense than previous. Even though he had been wandering on the verge of precipices before as a night watcher, he still couldn't help but tremble. He understood that his previous intuition had obviously been affected, and that someone who could affect his intuition so effectively was absolutely not someone he could resist, just like the priest just now who could not resist him.

In his shiver, Winchell's magnificent willpower stabilized his mind, and his abundant experience allowed him to notice the anomaly. It was more than easy for such a strong being to kill him, but the being had spent a lot of time alluring him away from his team and tempting him to enter the chamber. It was obvious that there were other purposes.

"Who is it?" he asked tentatively, with dirty fluids flowing out of the eyes on his hand.

The fire rose into the shape of a human and said in a coarse voice, "It doesn't matter who I am; it's what I can offer that matters."

"Hehe. I am the Lord's defender in the darkness. I would rather die before I deal with demons." Winchell ruled out the possibility that the enemy was a devil from the rational speech.

In the empty chamber, the laughter of the fire echoed. "What if it

will make you closer to your Lord so that you can contribute to Him more easily?”

“What do you mean?” Winchell felt absurdly hilarious, but he was also deeply puzzled.

The tone of the fire became grave. “Have you never found it odd? As the devout believers and defenders of the God of Truth, reverends, bishops, ascetics, and part of the knights are granted divine powers, but most of the night watchers who were not reverends at the beginning can only fight with your blood powers. Also, most of the knights are far weaker than reverends of the same level in terms of divine powers. Why is that? Why does the fair and selfless God of Truth treat His defenders so partially?”

“Nonsense! There are original sins on our backs. We can only win the Lord’s blessing through selfless devotion!” Winchell’s anger was not entirely authentic.

“Is that so?” the fire mocked. “Considering your contributions to the God of Truth, your knight level should’ve been increased even though you are never given divine power, right?”

Right when Winchell was about to refute in fury again, the fire continued, “As a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with the God of Truth. His blessings to you have been intercepted by the pope and the Grand Cardinals. Since He is still asleep, He is absolutely unaware of that.”

“What?” Winchell was less angry now that the Lord was not guilty of that.

“You may take a look at this file. This is a reward from the God of Truth. You’ve earned it.” Words jumped out of the fire and constituted an article that was full of sophisticated symbols.

Winchell was rather wary that it might be a temptation of demons, but his confusion still prompted him to read the article. After all, he would never betray the Church! That was his stance!

The moment he saw it, he found it impossible to move his eyes

away and was completely fascinated by it.

“This is...” He shook his head in both fear and excitement.

“As the Almighty God, why would the God of Truth demand the dissemination of faith? Is it necessary for Him? The power of faith is actually a reward for loyal defenders like you so that you can polish yourselves with it and be closer to Him. However, the pope and the Grand Cardinals have intercepted all of it without leaving any for you. Now, you understand why they are so strong, don’t you?” The fire’s voice became gentle, but Winchell was shivering under every word.

“I don’t believe it.” He shook his head hard before asking in disbelief, “You’ve shown me such an important method just like that?”

The way to “steal” and make use of the power of faith had been etched in his brain.

“Now that you have sincerely asked, I’ll give you a candid answer. I am the embodiment of justice, and I hate unfair things like this most.” The fire chuckled and went on despite the suspicion in Winchell’s eyes. “I’ll occasionally ask for some information from you. Rest assured, nobody will suspect you. I have many other sources of intelligence, including several red robes.”

Red robes? Winchell’s pupils constricted abruptly. For hundreds of years, due to the uniqueness of the heart of faith, the Church had never had spies in the level of red robes, or at the very least, no external spies, since the North Church and the South Church had sent plenty of spies of such a level to each other.

Was he from the North Church?

“Are you scared that your heart of faith will be shaken after you get this? So, don’t guess who I am. You only need to remember my codename, the Red Burier.” The fire gradually died down.

Winchell stood where he was and looked at the empty room, unable to say anything for a long time. He felt that he had the most bizarre

dream. Had he obtained a most precious and useful approach by paying nothing at all?

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Inside the Land of Truth, Lucien said to Douglas with a smile, "Viken secretly released the ways to become a demigod to let the legendary experts compete with each other, and now, we are doing exactly the same thing. We'll spread the secrets to steal and make use of the power of faith among part of the red robes, thus allowing them to steal the power of faith. In such a way, the foundation of the South Church will be messed up, too. After all, the dissemination of faith cannot be conducted alone like sorcerers' exploration of arcana and the world. A hierarchical organization is indispensable for them. Unless he can project a seed to the mind of every cleric, this is not something that Viken can avoid.

"If it weren't for the fear that Viken might discover it, I would've publicized the way to steal the power of faith through 'Arcana Voice'."

"If Viken knows how you are using such a valuable method, his expression will certainly be very spectacular." Douglas chuckled. After all, who could've thought that somebody would spread out the method? Were they worried that they had too few competitors? Only Lucien and the other grand arcanists who never considered the approach were determined enough to do that.

Lucien opened his hands. "Perhaps he would curse that I am a lunatic.

Chapter 745: Quick Solution

Chapter 745: Quick Solution

Douglas patted the sofa and said, “Ever since the Congress of Magic was founded, because the heart of faith has to be constructed on the devotion to and the faith in the God of Truth, sorcerers have been secretly worshiping the God of Truth or compromised by the Church with money and materials, and the bishop-level clerics have never become the spies of the Congress before. Finally, we do not need to take the hit passively all the time in terms of intelligence. Viken would never believe that some of the red robes are secretly serving the Congress.”

He had a lot of mixed feelings. In the past hundreds of years, the Congress of Magic had been infiltrated by many spies of the Saint Truth. In many cases, the Highest Council knew that certain people were conspiring with the Church, but they did not arrest or punish them just so that those spies could deliver the wrong intelligence that would offset the influence of the undiscovered spies. Although the Lord of the Undead was an authority to invade the brain and check the memories, there were too many people in the Congress and most sorcerers had their own secrets. It was impossible to scrutinize them one by one.

Of course, the disruptive theories that challenged the Cannon and the Doctrines had also partly purged the spies who believed in the God of Truth. However, it was not until after the battle of Rentato and the exodus of the South Church that the spies within the Congress were finally no longer influential.

Correspondingly, no matter how many clerics lived a corrupt life, and no matter how they hated their “superiors” or “colleagues”, they would be betraying the God of Truth whenever they cooperated with the sorcerers. Their heart of faith would inevitably shake, and they would be swallowed by the holy light. Therefore, the Congress of Magic could only set up spies that were in the level of reverends. Those spies could not be promoted to bishops because of their impure faith. In most of the cases, they had to collect

intelligence through brain infiltration and other spells.

“I was very curious before why Sard and the pontiff and saints of the North Church could cooperate with us without being affected, and why they liked to swear with the heart of faith.” Lucien had vaguely guessed it when he knew that the power of faith could be stolen, and he completely understood it after he acquired the real method. The connection between the heart of faith and Mountain Paradise was partly under their own control thanks to the help of “godhood”, which allowed them to change the rules partly. When they believed that they did not break their faith, they would not be breaking their faith!

Douglas nodded. “We have to set up certain cardinal-level spies in the North Church too.”

Pondering for a moment, he said, “Our control over them will be reduced if we offer the way to steal and make use of the power of faith to them without asking for equivalent things in return, but they certainly wouldn’t believe us if we do not do that. Only when they obtain substantial benefits from it will they be mired deeper and deeper on this path, never to return. That’s exactly what we hope.

“As for our control of them, the first method is a threat. At the very least, until they become legends, they are not qualified to steal and make use of the power of faith. Once they are exposed, they will certainly be burnt by the Grand Cardinals for corruption. Although those Grand Cardinals have the big picture in their mind, this is something that concerns their own strength. They certainly do not want more people to share the power of faith.”

For the people who had become saint cardinals or divine knights honestly step by step, the Grand Cardinals would not give them a hard time but share the methods with them. After all, they were quite alarmed about the rapid rise of the Congress of Magic, and they knew that they had to increase the strength of legends and restore their number.

As he spoke, Douglas looked at Lucien. “The second way of control is allurement. We have controlled the four countries on this side of

the strait and the north coastline. A huge number of believers live in our territory. As long as they are willing to work with us, we can help them steal the power of faith of the Holmish Church and other religions. That is a safe and copious resource that will certainly tempt them. After all, when they steal from their own people, they have to be very prudent in case they are discovered by the Grand Cardinals.”

The Holmish Church was closely dependent on the Kingdom of Holm. Therefore, Douglas asked Lucien’s opinion when he proposed the suggestion without using an affirmative tone.

“That’s not a problem. The Holmish Church is only a tool for us to stabilize the believers. It will not be in our favor or the favor of Holm if it grows too strong. One or two saint cardinals and divine knights should be enough. Also, I fear that Viken has secretly told the archbishops of such branched churches the ways to become a demigod,” Lucien nodded and said. There were only two legendary knights in Holm right now. It certainly wouldn’t be a good thing if the Holmish Church outnumbered the state in terms of legends.

Douglas agreed with Lucien’s judgment. “Viken fears that the North Church will surpass him, but he is certainly not scared of the branched churches like the Holmish Church that do not even have a legend. As a matter of fact, the power of faith in your steam church can also be transformed and provided to those red robes. Hehe. Your ‘research project’ does have a lot of purposes. You didn’t plan it beforehand, did you?”

He suddenly mentioned the steam church, as if he had understood another purpose of Lucien’s research.

“I had a rough idea about that, but I could only explore on my own due to the lack of files. It was actually Viken’s operation that inspired me.” Lucien chuckled. He was not entirely so visionary. Otherwise, he would have exchanged the files with the North Church a long time ago.

Suddenly, Lucien was stunned. He brought out a green non-legendary puppet that he built, only to discover that a hue of redness had been dyed on it.

“A red robe is contacting me? Already?” Lucien was surprised.

Douglas reacted rather normally. “Perhaps it’s important intelligence.”

“Maybe. I’ll project myself over and take a look,” Lucien said to Douglas. This was his demiplane, and he had to ask for permission in order to project himself to somewhere near the Holy City.

...

A wagon moved on the broad road at the suburb of the Holy City stably and did not stop until it reached a manor at the edge of the forest.

“Bishop Myers, thank you for hosting our baptism ritual in our house.” The owner of the manor, a viscount, bowed at the red robe who was getting off the wagon with respect and apparent excitement.

His late father was very close to the red robe, but he knew that the position between him and the red robe was too huge. He did not expect that Myers would really come to baptize his little son. However, his invitation was accepted!

“Your father and I were good friends who grew up together. There’s no need to thank me. I’ll clean myself in the church first and perform the ritual tomorrow.” Myers was a gray-haired old man, gentle but fearsome.

After entering the little church, Myers kneeled before the cross and began his prayer.

Late at night, he raised his head and looked at the cross as well as the Saint Badge embedded on it with complicated feelings. Then, he brought out a delicate puppet and activated it.

The puppet suddenly glowed in redness and waved its arms as if it were alive, before it leaped forward and looked at Myers with a hilarious face. “Did you summon me?”

Myers was deeply disgusted by the puppet, which was only the size

of his thumb. He took a deep breath and said, "We've already obtained the secrets of artificial planets. This is the file you need."

While the duplication of artificial planets was supervised by the saint cardinals, it could not be achieved without the participation of red robes. However, they were not like the grand arcanists who equaled to a whole team of researchers and who could do everything on their own. Therefore, the targets that Lucien allured with the power of faith included Myers, who was from the Highest School of Theology.

"Okay. Job well done. I think very highly of you." The red glow from the puppet swallowed the file that Myers presented.

Gloomily, Myers said, "I've fulfilled your request. You can stop bothering me in the future."

"Is that so? Then, should I bother Philip, Astira, Maria, or Vaharall?" The puppet chuckled. The first three names were the Grand Cardinals who were responsible for theology, and the last was the giant of the Inquisition.

Myers shouted angrily, "Devil, didn't you say that you would not threaten me?"

"And you believed everything I said? I know that you are well aware that I will never be able to threaten you if you do not use the method, but if you do, it will be your connivance that I can threaten you." The puppet's face was even more hilarious as it continued, "Don't blame me for the choice you made yourself."

"Devil, goddamn devil." Myers gnashed his teeth, but he did not put up any resistance. After he tried the method and succeeded, he already realized the price that he was willing to pay. "I warn you, don't propose requests that are too outrageous, or I would rather confess everything to His Holiness!"

After he became a saint cardinal, he would be able to get rid of the devil. By then, everything he did would be forgiven by the Church!

"That's right. I like to cooperate with the people who know exactly

what they want best. Rest assured. Threatening is the last thing that I would like to do. I have always been a friendly man who believes in reciprocity,” the puppet chattered on. “If the intelligence that you provide in the future satisfies me, I will consider offering you additional power of faith.”

“What?” Myers’ breath turned heavy. Then, he saw the spots of divine hair around the puppet that seemed to be different from the holy light.

“Do you need to ask me what this is?” The puppet chuckled.

Myers fell silent. He finally understood why the allurements of devils could even corrupt the angels according to the Cannon!

...

“The files of artificial planets that the Church has acquired do not have the special parts that I added later, which means that the traitor exchanged the information beforehand. Of course, it is also possible that he has constructed the information on his own according to the mechanism. After all, the style of the magic circles on the artificial planet in the file is highly different from what we are used to,” Lucien said to Douglas and Fernando with the files in his hand.

Chapter 746: Lucien's Mysterious Experiment

Browsing through the files in his hands, Douglas remarked while turning the pages, "It's true that the style of the combination of different magic patterns is highly different from that of our version, but it is also possible that he modified it on purpose after exchanging for it. The sorcerers who have the qualifications and clearances to acquire the full structure of artificial planets can't be stupid."

The structure model of a spell or a magic circle was not unique. As long as it agreed with the corresponding mechanism and process, the eventual magic model or magic circle would achieve the desired effect. Therefore, the spells that different sorcerers built based on the same arcana principle often turned out to be models whose core was the same but whose details were different from their personal styles.

Sometimes, when the details in their design were perfect and close enough to the mechanism, their model would have a better effect than other models did. That was also one source of unique magic. However, a better effect was not essentially better. It was still limited by the core and could not surpass its maximum.

Therefore, most spells that were open to the public had been united as the magic models with the best result. They were known in the Magic Empire as "standard spells". That was even more obvious in the Congress of Magic where the research was open. In many cases, the improvement in spells had to depend on the deeper understanding of the mechanism.

However, during the recent hundred years, it had occurred to the arcanists of the Congress of Magic that perhaps "standard spells" did not really exist. That was to say, the magic model with the best effect was not universal. Different sorcerers had their own different models to achieve the best effect.

The weird phenomenon raised a lot of attention at that time.

Further research indicated that it was because of the different cognitive worlds of different sorcerers. The magic models that best matched their cognitive worlds would achieve the best effect.

After that, many sorcerers would both analyze the standard spells and adjust the details after they exchanged for them so that the standard spells would better suit themselves. But of course, the cognitive world would only be stabilized after the middle rank. There was no need for the magic apprentices and the regular sorcerers to do that.

“Hehe. It’s good enough that the range is narrowed down. I don’t believe that he would lay low in the future. We will figure out who he is if he does a few more similar things!” Fernando drew circles on the list, loathing the traitor so much that he almost wanted to grab him and let him taste the feeling of a storm.

After the discussion on the matter, Douglas suddenly asked Fernando, Brook, and Lucien their research progress on the quantum field theory, “There’s still no solution to the problem of infinity? I think that your idea about the field theory is correct. If you walk down the path, you will figure out the essence of the electromagnetic force sooner or later. At the very least, the current explanation is much more advanced than the past. Maybe after the theory takes shape, Brook’s broken and solidified cognitive world will be restored, and he’ll find his own path to demigod.”

Judging from his tone and his choice of words, he was still rather concerned about Brook, his “insubordinate” student. However, finding the path did not mean advancement. Leaving the odds of success aside, the perfection of the details on the path would probably take many years. For example, Douglas had “seen” the path to demigod through the general theory of relativity for many years, but he was still far away from “finding” his path. He would have to wait for the feedback of the truth of the world based on planets or black holes.

“Infinity...” Fernando repeated in a low voice as if he were trying to swallow it.

Lucien replied with a smile, “We’ve decided to submit the papers

recently so that more arcanists could work on them. It's possible that their ideas will give us the inspiration to solve the problem."

"Yes. Arcana studies are not like magic. With enough fundamental knowledge and talents, the middle-rank and senior-rank arcanists can also make enormous contributions. Over the past decade, many achievements in the new microscopic domain have been accomplished by the young arcanists whose arcana level is not very high. This is an era of the young. You are the most distinguished representative of them," Douglas said in mixed feelings.

Lucien smiled. "A major part of the studies were completed by Mr. President and master. Mr. President, how is your preparation to search for planets going?"

"Better than I thought. Probably in one to two months, I'll be able to conduct a super-remote space jump. I hope I can find the little guys who have been giving me a headache for hundreds of years," Douglas replied with unusual humor.

"One to two months?" Lucien was rather surprised. Didn't the president estimate that it would take one to two years?

Douglas chuckled. "I've changed my plan. I have postponed searching for the planets that are far away because it may be easier to find the sun which is closer to us, although no one has ever succeeded before."

During the Magic Empire, the legendary sorcerers had tried searching for the sun through space jump, to no avail. Therefore, they believed that the sun was the "symbol" of a certain demigod and could not be located without his permission. Also, based on the comparison between the sun and the silver moon, it was possible that the God of Sun was not a demigod but a real one!

After all, until Douglas proposed the system of celestial body motion, the sun that illuminated the earth and radiated light and heat was generally worshiped. Great significance had been attached to it by the sorcerers, making it one of the special, influential celestial bodies in the school of astrology just like the silver moon.

Guided by such ideas, no legendary sorcerers attempted to locate the sun until Douglas became legendary, but he failed to find the sun, too. So, he acknowledged the theory that the sun was a demigod and aimed for the stars further away in his cosmic exploration later.

“Mr. President, you have to be careful. Our calculation might not have taken all the factors into consideration. It could be quite dangerous if you land on the surface of the sun after the teleportation,” Lucien reminded concernedly.

Lucien never considered the possibility of teleporting onto the sun because the terrifying heat and the enormous gravity would stop the space-time gate from being opened.

“That will be a good thing. I would die without regrets even if I’m killed on the spot,” said Douglas with a smile, as if it were really a good thing.

Fernando did not say much. It was not so easy to kill a top legendary sorcerer. He looked at Lucien with his red eyes. “What have you been busy working on in the last half of the year except for the field theory?”

“Analyzing legendary spells, improving my magic capabilities, and trying to reach the peak of level three so that I can try to advance to level four.” Lucien seemed unclear about what his teacher meant and answered “frankly”. However, he was not lying about the focus of his life recently. After “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness” and “Elemental Protection”, thirteen legendary spells had been engraved into his soul, and the number would probably reach fifteen in a year. He would be qualified to sprint at the peak of legendary.

Fernando said in a bad mood, “I know that you are making remarkable progress. What I asked was the application you filed to the Magic Research Board. What are you planning to build inside the Atom Institution? The expensive materials you need are enough to build a level-nine magic item.”

Somebody mentioned it before he came here, and he did not know the details.

"I've devoted more ancillary materials to it than what I applied for." Lucien shook his head with a smile. "The main reason is that many areas with lousy environments could only be visited by high-level sorcerers. Some places even demand archmages. Therefore, the common sorcerers with arcana gifts do not have a choice to explore and study such areas, which is a major restraint for the development of arcana. After all, many of our achievements today depend on the collision of particles, the unusual tracks during the experiments, and the screening of abundant data. It would take dozens if not hundreds of times longer if the legendary sorcerers and the archmages are doing the work alone."

Douglas nodded. "That's a fantastic idea. Do you have any product yet?"

"I'm close to success. After it works out, I'll open it to all the arcanists, but they have to file an application in advance and receive thorough vetting." Lucien briefly described his "alchemical item" and won the approval of Douglas and Fernando.

.....

In Atom Institution...

Heidi and the other students looked at the door of a small laboratory. It was absolutely quiet, without any sound coming out.

"You said that our teacher has often locked himself in this small laboratory during the past few months, and that magic waves spread out now and then?" Although they had been away from each other for several months, Katrina did not feel alienated from Heidi and her other friends in the Atom Institution. Instead, she had a sense of familiarity and warmth now that she had finally come home.

Heidi nodded her head fast like a little chicken. "Yes. We don't know what our teacher is working on. He is rather mysterious and locks the laboratory tightly every single time."

Hardly had she concluded her sentence when the door of the small laboratory was opened, and Lucien walked out in his double-

breasted suit.

“Good morning, Master!” Heidi and the other students greeted him at the same time. Their eyes were rolling nonstop as they tried to see what was inside the laboratory from the gap that Lucien was blocking.

“You are very curious?” Lucien said with a smile.

“Huh? Yes! I’m very curious!” After a brief daze, Heidi hurried to nod.

Lucien looked around at them. “If you are curious, do you want to give it a shot? However, only four people can take it at one time.”

“Me! I would like to take it!” Heidi had always been a girl of curiosity, and she believed that her teacher would not harm her.

With her as the example, Sprint, Katrina, and Annick raised their hands earlier than other people did.

“Alright. Come in with me.” Lucien turned around and showed everyone what was inside the laboratory.

Chapter 747: Romance of Arcana Studies

It was not exactly a spacious laboratory. The alchemical platforms and the magic items that should've been here were nowhere to be found, but the room was not empty at all. On the wall, the floor, and the ceiling, silver and black magic patterns were protruding nonstop. Spreading out the light that felt like flowing water, they connected with each other and formed a three-dimensional model.

Then, they stretched toward the center and weaved into a layered illusionary web, which integrated with the complicated magic circle deployed at the center of the laboratory, constituting a deep and mysterious picture.

"A magic circle?" Heidi looked at the laboratory rather in shock. Their teacher had been busy and mysterious in the past couple of months just in order to set up the magic circle? It did not seem so complicated that a grand arcanist had to spend a few months on it.

She had thought that their teacher was setting up new experiment devices, such as the particle colliders that were better and more powerful. What she saw puzzled her.

Stunned for a moment, Annick recognized the basic purpose of the magic circle. "A space-time magic circle? A Portal to Alternate Realm?"

It made him and the other visitors even more surprised and confused. Seeing that it was not an experiment device, they had guessed that the magic circle had special usages. For example, it might be able to complete certain special experiments in the microscopic domain or help the arcanists find the mysteries of electrons and the other microscopic particles. Little did they expect it to be a teleportation circle like a Portal to Alternate Realm! Was it of any use for the Atom Institution? Could they be teleported into an atom?

Lucien, whose back was against them, did not bother with their shock and curiosity. He walked into the laboratory unhurriedly and

stood at the center of the magic circle. Then, he turned around and smiled at Katrina, Sprint, Annick, and Heidi. “You’ll know what it is for after you try it.”

“Master, you are so mean. My heart is exploding with curiosity!” Heidi said in an exaggerated manner. In the meantime, she hopped into the laboratory and stood next to her teacher. Sprint and the other visitors were full of questions, but they dare not delay, fearing that other people might steal their opportunity. So, they followed her into the laboratory.

“Heidi, you must tell me everything you see and feel later!” Layria raised her voice in admiration. She had raised her hand too slowly just now.

Lazar, Rock, and Jerome stood not far away and stared at them. Although they were rather curious themselves, they felt that it would be too embarrassing if they were to compete with the students since they were Lucien’s friends and sort of “uncles” for Heidi and the other students. Even though the students had caught up to them in terms of arcana level and magic level, the feeling in the heart was difficult to change, unless they became a legendary sorcerer or a grand arcanist in only ten years just like Lucien did.

Lucien snapped his right hand, and all the magic patterns around them glittered. The light, which felt like ripples of water, at the beginning became as dazzling as the sunlight at noon.

The light gathered, and a small sun seemed to be rising at the center of the magic circle. It was incandescent but not scorching.

Gradually, the cluster of pure light was stretched into a gate that was two persons tall. Magic symbols were floating inside the flowing light.

Lucien extended his right hand. As if he had put on a silver glove, he pressed the gate of light hard, and the gate was immediately opened. Infinite brightness surged in, drowning Lucien, Heidi, Annick, and Sprint.

After the light was gone, Lucien and his students had already

vanished, and the gate of light seemed to have lost all its vigor. It was lifeless and lackluster, as if it were made of pale rocks.

“I wonder what Heidi and the rest of them will see...” Chelly crossed her hands subconsciously.

...

The dizziness caused by the change of time and space came just as expected. Fortunately, the students, who were fifth-circle sorcerers right now, had abundant experience and already enhanced themselves with the spells that could resist the feeling. Therefore, they felt better very soon.

Heidi looked at the front eagerly before she completely got rid of the dizziness. She was too curious!

In front of her was transparent glass. Outside of the glass was the heaviest and deepest darkness that Heidi had ever seen. Boundless and endless darkness.

In the depths of the darkness, pale spots of light were shining brightly, pure and clear without any flash, which gave Heidi an inexperienced feeling of vastness and emptiness, as if her mind had been entirely calmed down. She felt that she was so insignificant and that the world was so enormous.

“This is...” Heidi completely forgot her dizziness. Her voice was as unpredictable as dream talk.

Sprint, Annick, and Katrina also looked at the endless darkness and light spots around, lost. They vaguely guessed something, but it was impossible for them to grasp it clearly.

Standing behind them, Lucien raised his right hand and pointed at the deep darkness and the light spots as he said with a sigh, “This is space.”

“Space? The universe?” Heidi and the other students were suddenly back to themselves and hurried to look down.

It was still transparent glass under their feet. On the glass were

layers of tiny magic patterns that were rippling now and then, as if they were offsetting and resisting something. Beneath the glass, on the other hand, was no longer a solid ground, an azure sky, or a blue ocean, but the darkness that was exactly the same as the surroundings. In the middle of the deepest and heaviest darkness, white and pure spots of light were embedded.

Surrounded by identical vastness and darkness in all directions, and looking at the clear, unblinking stars far away, every human being here found it impossible to hold back the loneliness and the sense of insignificance in their heart. They felt the deepest awe.

“This is the most beautiful space I have ever seen...” Heidi had been on adventures before. However, neither the night sky on the plateaus nor that on the ocean could compare to what she was seeing right now. This was an everlasting painting and the splendid cosmos that most arcanists dreamed about!

Katrina was as fascinated as Heidi. Who said that arcana studies did not tolerate romance? This was the greatest romance!

Sprint and Annick paid more attention to the significance of space. Therefore, after a brief fascination, they were back to themselves very quickly. Looking around carefully, they found that they were in a “glass room” that was the size of a regular laboratory. It was floating in the cosmos, with countless magic patterns shimmering on its surface and constructing magic circles.

What was inside the glass room was even more unbelievable. Sophisticated magic circles were everywhere. Some provided gravity, and some created air, turning the place exactly like on the ground. Of course, a fairly large proportion of magic circles had nothing to do with that at all. Instead, together with the alchemical platforms and the cyclotrons, they constituted a laboratory with full functions.

“Master, this is?” Sprint opened his mouth and asked, although he had basically guessed the purpose of the glass room.

Nodding, Lucien said with a gentle smile, “This is a cosmic observatory.”

“A cosmic observatory?” Heidi and Katrina were woken up by their dialog and captured the term precisely.

Lucien pointed out. “It is universally known that the cosmos is full of weird rays of curses and other great dangers, such as extremely low temperatures and extremely high temperatures. Therefore, only archmages and those above dare to come here, but in fact, considering the unknown dangers in space, few archmages ever explored this place, leaving the vast universe to the legends.

“Our previous study indicated that the rays of curses are particles and electromagnetic radiations of different frequencies. Then, what about the curses of the rays in space? We searched for all kinds of materials and collided the particles again and again in order to find new things, didn’t we? Cosmic rays are something we have barely studied before. It is possible that we can find something new out of it, which will help us unveil the next level of the microworld.

“In the past, the exploration and study work was mostly done by the legendary sorcerers. However, to find suitable rays in such a vast cosmos and to capture the unusual tracks during the countless experiments would take a long time and many experiments. Therefore, the legends haven’t achieved much so far in that aspect.

“With that in mind, I filed an application to the Magic Research Board to build a ‘cosmic observatory’ that can resist the cosmic rays and support teleportation, so that the common arcanists can also be involved in the studies on the cosmic rays and the vast space. We will reduce the time cost by increasing the number of participants and the frequency of experiments.”

Lucien introduced the background and guided his students to use the special experiment devices in the cosmic observatory to introduce the cosmic rays outside.

Heidi, Katrina, and the other students were all thrilled. Could they study the cosmos and roam space, too?

In the meantime, Heidi and Katrina had a weird feeling. A moment ago, they were still imagining what a great and romantic feeling it would be if they were sitting inside the cosmic observatory by

themselves in the company of nobody except for the numerous stars outside of the window!

However, as their teacher introduced the cosmic observatory, as well as the magic circles and alchemical items in it, objectively with the jargon of arcana studies, the feeling of romance was immediately shattered without a sound. All they could notice was how to use this magic circle and how to process the data that they collected...

Lucien noticed that Heidi and Katrina did not look quite right, so he asked in confusion, “What’s wrong? There shouldn’t be any leak of cosmic rays in this place. Well, you must pay attention to the energy consumption of the cosmic observatory and change the magic gems in time. Solar energy cannot sustain for long...”

Heidi sniffed and interrupted Lucien, almost crying, “Master, give the romance of arcana studies back to me!”

Huh? Lucien raised an eyebrow, having absolutely no idea what was on the minds of his two female students.

Chapter 748: Rise of Space Exploration

Layria, Chelly, and the other students stood outside of the small laboratory and watched the portal as well as the magic patterns that had dimmed. They were too reluctant to leave. They felt that a cat was scratching their hearts with its paw, and they could barely contain their curiosity.

After a long time, Alfalia finally said, “There’s nothing we can do by standing here, and there’s no telling when they will be back. Let’s focus on our own business for now. After all, they will certainly tell us what they have experienced after they are back.”

Heidi had always been willing to share as long as it was not anything confidential.

“Yes. There are a lot of scheduled experiments that we need to work on, a lot of data to be analyzed, new experiments to be designed, and new spells to be analyzed...” Layria only meant to agree with Alfalia at the beginning, but the more she talked, the more “hopeless” she felt her life was.

Lazar nodded his head and clapped his hands. After everybody’s attention was attracted by him, he said with a brilliant smile, “Let’s not stick here waiting. Nobody knows where Evans and the rest of them went, and how long will it take before they come back. Go back and finish your experiments first.”

When he talked to Lucien and the friends they were familiar with, he mostly called him “Lucien” directly. However, in the Atom Institution, to show respect for the manager of the institution, he always called him “Evans” when he talked to the apprentice-level assistants.

“Yes, Mr. Lazar.” Lowi and the other assistants looked back at the small laboratory, reluctant to leave. But they managed to hold back their curiosity and went back to their respective laboratory.

“I wonder where our teacher has been teleported to,” Chelly said to Layria in confusion.

Layria thought for a moment and said, "It must be related to the studies in the microscopic domain, or our teacher wouldn't have put it inside the institution at all instead of applying for a new magic research program."

They talked and turned around as they enthusiastically speculated the destination of their teacher's magic circle. Although they would certainly learn the answer after Heidi was back, wasn't the greatest fun in such a curious thing all about guessing?

Layria and Chelly had taken only a few steps when they suddenly felt the outburst of magic waves behind them. Under the perception of their spiritual powers, the magic patterns inside the small laboratory glowed one after another, extracting energy from the Alyn magic tower and emanating silver and pure brilliance.

In the dreamy, brilliant view, the dimmed portal glowed transparently and dazzlingly again.

"They're back?"

"Has Mr. Evans come back?"

In their exclamations of confusion and excitement, Alfalia, Lowi, and the rest of them who were slowly pacing back to their laboratories jumped back like rabbits. They reacted so agilely and quickly that they seemed to have been waiting for this moment.

The gate of light suddenly burst out, and the pure, flawless light drowned the whole laboratory.

When it was gone, the portal also disappeared, but five new figures showed up at the center of the magic circle. They were Lucien and his students.

"Heidi, where did you go?"

"Heidi, what did you see?"

Layria and Chelly blurted out, asking Heidi at the same time, as if she had been a blabbermouth all the time!

Heidi heard her friends' questions before she recovered from the dizziness. She rubbed her head and chuckled. "You have absolutely no idea where we went. It was such a 'romantic' place."

"Romantic?" Lazar couldn't help but repeat. That was not the keyword he had in mind.

"Romantic..." Layria and Chelly found it impossible to imagine. They guessed many places, but none of them was even remotely associated with "romantic". This was the Atom Institution!

Heidi smiled gloatingly. "Yes, it's a very romantic place, more romantic than any romantic scene that I've ever seen!"

Seeing the surprise and confusion on her friends' faces, she felt a lot better.

"Well... Did you go to space?" Alfalia asked, not very confident about her guess.

After a brief daze, Heidi asked in surprise, "How did you know?"

"Did you really go to space?" Layria asked in shock.

Seeing that everybody was looking at her, Alfalia said shyly, "I just remembered a survey on an issue of 'Allyn Impression'. It's about the most romantic scene for sorcerers. The one ranked top was the starry sky at night, which could make one feel the vastness of the universe, the insignificance of human beings, and the transcendence of the river of fate. That's why I boldly guessed that you went to space..."

"It must've been the sorcerers of the school of astrology who took the survey!" Heidi grumbled. "Fine, Alfalia, your guess is correct. We did pay a visit to space. Our teacher has established a cosmic observatory there for us to study the cosmic rays and observe the passing-by asteroids. Layria, Chelly, you can't possibly imagine the feeling of standing in space. That is the boundless and endless darkness, where stars are embedded like dazzling white spots. They do not flash at all, like an everlasting painting."

The more she talked, the more excited she became. "Only after I

came to space did I realize the insignificance of ourselves, the enormity of the whole universe, and the deepest awe from the bottom of my heart. The universe is more sacred than any gods in any propaganda! It was not until then that I truly understood what Mr. President said when he refused Pope Viken's temptation. For those who have seen the sea of stars and regard the stars as their goals, how can they be impressed by a 'god' that stays on a tiny planet?"

Heidi's description made the eyes of Layria, Chelly, Alfalia, and the other female sorcerers lose their focus, as if they were also standing in space and sharing the indescribable feeling. Layria, Jerome, and the sorcerers of the school of elements were also touched.

Lucien shook his head in amusement. Was the cosmic observatory of such educational significance? It could help the sorcerers establish healthy outlooks without being deceived by the Saint Truth?

"Master, when... when can we go to the cosmic observatory?" After hearing Heidi's description, Layria looked at Lucien, her eyes sparkling. Both her face and her movement suggested that she couldn't wait anymore.

Chelly, Alfalia, and the other ladies were the same. Lazar, Rock, Lowi, and the other gentlemen did not say anything and were trying to control themselves, but their passionate eyes still "betrayed" them.

Lucien chuckled. "This is meant for you to run experiments. Also, to save the cost of commutation, you have to stay for a whole week up there every time. One or two hours in space can be quite romantic, but what if the duration is longer? The overwhelming darkness, the absolute nothingness, and the everlasting loneliness will drive you mad even if you have five partners. It is not a feeling that can be offset by romance. You can only be slowly adapted to it. Also, you have to be mentally prepared for the adventure, or I will not allow you to go up there."

"Master, rest assured, I can stay silent for a whole month." Annick showed his attitude first.

Heidi, who was usually the perky one, frowned, but she still said, "Master, while we are up there, we will devote most of our attention to the experiments. However empty, dark, and isolated the place is, it will not affect us."

"In that case, you will draft your own research plan. I'll choose those who have the most thorough preparations." Lucien smiled.

Heidi said to Katrina and her friends quietly, "It's truly the demon's smile..."

For the romance of arcana studies, they dispersed quickly and began to work on the experiment plans to study the cosmic rays and the vast space.

"Layria, you won't truly understand what I felt until you really come to the cosmic observatory... I have already imagined a scene. I am sitting cross-legged inside the cosmic observatory by myself, surrounded by the empty and boundless darkness as well as the pure and shining stars in all directions. There are absolutely no creatures except for me... If only we could see the planet we're on. That feeling of looking down upon everything from above will be even more fantastic!" Heidi said to Layria without stopping. Everybody had their own description of romance.

Layria did not feel that Heidi was a chatterbox. Instead, she listened attentively and remarked with mixed feelings, "Even without the scene that you imagined, standing in space is already an experience that can make most arcanists jealous."

"Haha, particularly those guys from the Tower and the school of astrology. They would be bumping their heads into the wall in envy. If only they also had such a great teacher!" Heidi thought of certain friends she knew and laughed even more happily.

.....

In the Tower...

Samantha was focused on the study of the newly-painted horoscope when she heard rapid footsteps coming near, before somebody

knocked on her door.

“Rachel, why the haste?” When Samantha raised her head, the door opened and backed off on its own.

Rachel said excitedly and earnestly, “Mr. Evans has established an observatory in space for the studies of cosmic rays and horoscopes!”

“A cosmic observation?” Samantha repeated in shock.

“Yes. Heidi already went to this cosmic observatory and had a real journey in space. The experience she described was really... really...” Rachel hesitated for a long time but could not come up with an appropriate description, but the envy on her face couldn’t be disguised.

Samantha stood up abruptly and mumbled, “A journey in space?”

The boundless cosmos was the most sacred and great place for every sorcerer in the school of astrology. Roaming in space was one of the momentums for them to try to become legendary sorcerers. But right now, they had a chance to go there in advance?

“Yes! The arcanists of the Tower are all seething! Somebody proposed that we should build one of our own, and somebody has applied to the Research Board, hoping to borrow the Atom Institution’s cosmic observatory!” said Rachel in excitement. “Hurry up, let’s draft a research plan of our own!”

Although Lucien’s “cosmic observatory” was a gigantic level-nine objection that was very close to legendary and cost tremendous materials, it was not a legendary item after all. The Tower was still able to afford a couple of them.

Samantha remarked in confusion, “Have we begun the expedition toward the sea of stars already...”

Chapter 749: The More Essential, the Simpler?

In the Month of Beginning (January), Holm, being close to the north, was still cold. Snowflakes were flying, and the freezing wind was blowing like knives.

The magic tower of the Allyn branch of the Moonsong League, however, was as warm as spring, making every sorcerer who walked in feel comfortable from the bottom of their heart. Although they were protected by the magic effects, it was still not the best experience to be blown by the wind.

“Hi, Julie, Happy New Year. Has today’s ‘Arcana’ arrived?” That was the only thing that could motivate the arcanists to come to the magic tower against the cold wind at the beginning of a new year.

Julie, a female apprentice who was working as the receptionist, had a flushing face. There was no telling whether it was because of the different temperature or for other reasons. She said, “Neither ‘Arcana’ nor ‘Magic’ is here yet.”

After that, she asked with her voice lowered and her eyes glittering, “Gentlemen, did you hear anything about the cosmic observatory?”

“What cosmic observatory?” the few arcanists asked at a loss. Had they been outdated after only spending a new year holiday?

Julie said in excitement, “Words came from the Atom Institution that Mr. Evans established a cosmic observatory in space so that the arcanists who are not magically capable enough can also study the cosmic rays and the unknown mysteries in the vast space.”

“What?” One of the middle-rank arcanists failed to control himself. His voice echoed in the hall as if it had been enhanced with sound spells.

“Is it really possible to go to space for studies?” Another arcanist sounded suspicious and unconvinced.

Julie nodded her head hard. “Ms. Heidi and some other people have already been there!”

The loud arcanist believed that Julie would not lie to him about that, so he raised his head and looked at the ceiling in a daze, as if he could see the boundless cosmos through it and the magic tower.

“The cosmos...” He was almost sighing because most arcanists barely had any opportunity to visit the cosmos in their entire life even though they all craved to do so. Little did he expect that they would have such a privilege now. The grand development of arcana had indeed presented miracles one after another!

Another arcanist asked anxiously and eagerly, “Can we apply to use the cosmic observatory? Or is it only reserved for the arcanists of the Atom Institution?”

Before Julie replied, a clear and steady male voice had come from the entrance of the magic tower. “Of course you can. Mr. Evans has made it clear to the Magic Research Board in his reply that there will be two openings for arcanists who are not associated with the Atom Institution every time the cosmic observatory is opened. However, the candidates must submit their experiment plans first and be strictly vetted. The resources of the Congress of Magic are not to be wasted by arcanists who are merely going up there to experience the cosmos.”

The arcanists in the hall turned around. Some asked in excitement, “Is it true, Mr. Jurisian?” The others bowed dutifully. “Happy New Year, Mr. Jurisian.”

It was exactly Jurisian, who had reached the seventh circle, who walked into the magic tower.

“If you don’t trust me, you can ask the Magic Research Board yourself.” Jurisian smiled.

At this moment, the arcanists were already back to themselves. Someone asked concernedly, “Our experiment plans will be closely related to our own arcana studies. Will other people be inspired by those?”

He spoke very subtly, but his actual meaning was very clear. He was worried that other people would see through their studies from the experiment plans they submitted and steal their achievements by completing their experiments earlier than they did.

“Rest assured. All the experiment plans have copies like papers. They will also be reviewed by the members of the Magic Research Board. There’s no need to worry that somebody else will steal your achievements,” Jurisian replied with a smile. He was one of the senior-rank sorcerers of the Moonson League with the most friends. That was why he had been admitted by the Affair Committee.

Phew. The few arcanists were relaxed, their worries gone. Some of them began to consider what kind of experiment plan could win the approval of the reviewers, and some others continued asking, “Mr. Jurisian, does the League have any intention to build our own ‘cosmic observatory’?”

Jurisian smiled. “I’m not very sure. Such things can never be decided so quickly. However, it is absolutely certain that some legendary sorcerers and archmages believe that ‘cosmic observatories’ are useless because they can work on the space themselves. Some others believe that it is inappropriate to build too many of them all at once, which would be a huge burden on the Congress of Magic’s stock of resources. Unless Mr. Evans’ ‘cosmic observatory’ reveals its value, it should not be blindly promoted.

“Therefore, although Mr. President, the Lord of Storm, and the Lord of Elements support the cosmic observatory, probably only another one will be built by the Tower for the time being.”

“The other Excellencies’ concerns are valid. After all, nobody knows if the cosmic observatory is useful. Recklessness is not the Congress’ style.” One of the arcanists nodded in approval.

Right when they were about to bid Jurisian farewell, something beeped on the reception desk before Julie.

“Hello?” Julie picked up the phone. “Huh, have ‘Arcana’ and ‘Magic’ been delivered?”

The arcanists who were about to leave stopped and waited for another ten minutes patiently, before they bought the journals from Julie.

“This issue of ‘Arcana’ is really thick.” one of the arcanists said to his friend in confusion.

Instead of going to his office to claim his copy, Jurisian began to read the unsold journals on the reception desk.

“Quantum field theory? A series of papers from Mr. Brook, the Lord of Storm, and Mr. Evans?” An arcanist read the table of contents and found the key phrase, “quantum field theory”.

Hearing that, the other arcanists were even more puzzled. They knew quantum, and they knew the field theory, but what did it mean when they were combined? Was it what they thought it meant?

The papers on the quantum field theory were intricate and brimming with dizzying equations. Those arcanists sensed the confusion when they encountered the general theory of relativity and matrix mechanics again. Some of them even skipped the deduction and looked for the conclusions.

“The essence of the electromagnetic force?” one of the arcanists blurted out in shock; his voice was full of intense shock. As one of the two most studied fundamental forces, the electromagnetic force had always been the foundation of the world and something closest to the “truth” for the sorcerers of the Moonsong League. How did anybody come up with an explanation about the essence of the electromagnetic force? Wasn’t it like someone who was unable to walk suddenly learned how to run?

Of the four fundamental forces, the strong interaction force had been specified but lacked further research. Even its basic features hadn’t been grasped yet, much less systematic theories about it. The weak interaction force, on the other hand, was merely Fernando’s speculation and had not been verified by any experiment. There was still no telling when it would be specified. Therefore, after the nature of gravity was partly explained by the general theory of

relativity, the essence of the electromagnetic force became very symbolic.

For a long time, the arcanists who were adept at electromagnetism had proposed many hypotheses on the nature of the electromagnetic force, but they never had a complete theory. The series of papers on this issue of “Arcana”, on the other hand, seemed to be suggesting a brain-blowing possibility!

Jurisian was reading the paper slowly. The introduction at the beginning was what he was good at, so he had no trouble understanding it. But after he heard the exclamation, he turned to the end and read the part about the nature of the electromagnetic force.

“The electromagnetic force is the interaction realized by the reactions among charged objects through the exchange of photons? Virtual photons...” The hall fell quiet until Jurisian murmured to himself a long time later. The conclusion had a thorough theoretical support and mathematical descriptions of the complicated processes. Whether or not it was correct, it would be one of the greatest breakthroughs after the electromagnetic force was discovered, second only to the Brook equation.

The other arcanists could only manage to understand the conclusion, but even so, their eyes were full of shock and delight. “Is this the electromagnetic force?”

If the electromagnetic force could be understood perfectly, the sorcerers who were adept at electromagnetism like them would receive unimaginable returns!

“Well, the three Excellencies have proposed the questions about quantum field theory. How should the infinity problem brought by divergence be addressed?” An arcanist reached the end. It seemed that the quantum field theory was not perfect and had many unresolved problems.

For some reason, he was more or less relieved after seeing that. Understanding the nature of the electromagnetic force exalted him and made him feel that he was in a dream. It was more acceptable

to him right now.

All the arcanists on the spot were feeling the same. One theory that surpassed the age, like the general theory of relativity, was enough. It would be too unreal if there were many of them.

They heaved a sigh in relief and smiled. "If the problem of infinity can be resolved by anyone, he will certainly win the Evans Prize in Arcana and the Silver Moon Medal."

They did not have much hope in that, but it was not too unusual for the middle-rank and senior-rank arcanists to solve the problems that the grand arcanists couldn't. Similar cases had happened in the past hundreds of years. After all, the grand arcanists had too much knowledge and experience, which might turn out to be shackles. The lesser arcanists were less likely to be affected.

"Huh? 'A Hypothesis on Protons and Neutrons According to the Diffusion Experiment', by Yaroran Hathaway Hoffenberg..." An arcanist turned to another paper.

The diffusion experiment on the title was quite familiar to them. Ever since neutrons were discovered, the diffusion experiments of protons and protons and those of neutrons and protons had been going on all the time, and a lot of data had been accumulated. A few months ago, Mr. Raventi and Morris discovered that in such experiments, the nuclear force, or the strong interaction force right now, wouldn't change at all whether charged protons or uncharged neutrons were used. The result had nothing to do with the electric charge, which was against the common understanding. Many arcanists had proposed their hypotheses to explain the phenomenon.

"Perhaps we can consider protons and neutrons as the same particle, which I'd like to call a nucleon. Just like some electrons spin leftwards and some spin rightwards, some nucleons are charged and some are not. They cannot be regarded as different particles because of the apparent disparity..." The same arcanist read a sentence of the paper and felt deeply shocked.

In her paper, Hathaway introduced a new quantum number to

indicate the state.

“What? Protons and neutrons are the same particle?” Including Jurisian, all the arcanists and magic apprentices on the spot were shocked.

It was not because they found it incomprehensible. It was because they were overwhelmed with disbelief and awed by the nature of the world. Was it true that the deeper they went, the simpler things would be?

“So to speak, there are only three kinds of basic particles: nucleon, electron, and photon. Also, the interaction between the charged particles and the photons behaves as the electromagnetic force?”

“This makes sense. The fundamental things cannot have so many complicated categories!”

“Is this the truth of the world?”

Sometimes, complications did not necessarily result in astonishment, and it could be the extreme simplicity that brought an astounding sense of beauty. Therefore, although the arcanists hadn't finished reading the paper, they were already inclined to Hathaway's speculation.

Chapter 750: Special Prize

In the hall of the Allyn branch of the Moonson League, the arcanists expressed their praise and astonishment about the simplicity of the components of the microscopic domain.

“I remember that Mr. Haynes once said that the nature of arcana was simplicity and straightforwardness and that the beauty of arcana came from determinism and the awe-inspiring symmetry. Although straightforwardness has been disapproved by Levski Geometry, Evans Geometry, the general theory of relativity and matrix mechanics, and determinism bordering on bankruptcy as the probabilistic explanation of the wave function and the uncertainty principle that are being verified in experiments, it seems that simplicity and symmetry still govern our world. That’s why the Brook equation can be praised as the poem of the goddess, and the mass-energy formula boasts such extreme beauty.”

An arcanist remarked so touchingly as if he were giving a speech.

Haynes was a legendary sorcerer of the Congress a century ago who made great contributions to arcana and magic. He claimed the highest honors of many fields. Many formulas on the changes of force field and astrology were his achievements. If everything had gone well, he probably would’ve become a grand arcanist. It was a shame that he encountered a saint of the South Church during an exploration, and they died with each other.

Jurisian put down his journal and smile. “So, according to symmetry, the nucleon and the electron should both have their corresponding antiparticles. The category of microscopic particles is not as short as we imagine.”

“That’s normal. There is only a night when there is a day. The existence of antiparticles is philosophically acceptable. It does not reduce the beauty of the simplicity of the fundamental particles,” another arcanist said while feeling full of confidence.

Jurisian nodded and intentionally said, “Of course, while the

category is simple, the intrinsic properties of microscopic particles are not simple at all.”

The moment he said that, all the arcanists on the spot changed their faces. Some smiled bitterly, some were helpless, some grew agitated, and some were stunned.

While the wave-particle duality hadn't been unanimously agreed upon, it was basically the mainstream explanation right now and was accepted by most arcanists. However, the uncertainty principle and the probabilistic explanation challenged their nerves and their souls, as if the whole world could turn illusionary and surreal at any moment. As for the double-slit experiment with electrons, the quantum superposition, and the ensuing “observer effect”, the arcanists had no choice except to flee from those tricky questions. Whenever they thought of the problems, they felt that their brains were exploding.

“Mr. Jurisian, I have to say goodbye now. The questions of the quantum field theory are prompting my every cell for a careful reading.” One of the arcanists stopped his bitter smile and left under the excuse of studying quantum field theory.

Jurisian smiled. “I hope that your work will inspire the Excellencies.”

“I hope so,” the arcanist replied with a rigid smile. How could he inspire the Excellencies when he could barely understand the paper?

Although there was still hope for him to understand the quantum field theory on this issue of “Arcana” if he spent a year or two on it as a level-five arcanist, it would still be one to two years later. By then, chances were that the quantum field theory had been developed to the point that he could not understand at all!

He sensed the gap between his knowledge and the cutting edge of the microworld widening. Without fortuitous incidents, better guidance, and harder work, the gap would only further expand inevitably, until he could only study other people's papers that were published years ago. He could only follow the tail of this age, if he

were not eliminated at all.

Of course, he was not too terrified about that, because he could tell from the journals such as “Arcana”, “Magic”, “Nature”, “Elements”, and “Electromagnetics” that there were no more than a hundred arcanists who were really discussing and studying the cutting edge of the microworld, and that the other people could only verify or give opposite examples to their theories. That is to say, people like him were the mainstream of the age.

“Perhaps every age is led by the minority, particularly when it comes to arcana. For most of the arcanists, all we need to do is to digest their work.” The arcanist shook his head and abandoned his previous self-consolation.

...

The Third Generic School of Rentato had been established by the Kingdom of Holm and the Congress of Magic after the two generic schools operated well and the students were well-acknowledged by the citizens of Rentato with their performance in daily life. Since the first batch of students hadn’t finished their five-year curriculum and graduated, and their real performance hadn’t been revealed yet, the generic schools were still only founded in Rentato and not introduced to other major cities yet.

Under the freezing wind, Ali trembled hard. His wool vest, his thick shirt, and his even-thicker double-breasted suit did not make him feel any warmth.

He kept his hands in his pocket and lowered his head into the collar as he walked forward quickly.

“Rentato is really much colder than Samara.” He had never experienced such bitter coldness before because Samara was located on the south side of a high mountain, which blocked the cold air from the north.

Supposedly, Ali had to wait for the entrance exam next June in order to be admitted by the generic school, and he had to take the prep classes that were hosted by various scholars and magic

apprentices until then. However, the establishment of the third generic school gave him a chance.

Because of the increased number of magic apprentices, the unclaimed missions in the past were now taken. Also, many workers had flooded into Rentato. As a result, the third generic school was established half a year earlier than it should've been. The city hall of Rentato, which was having financial difficulties during the expansion of the city, was unwilling to see the new school left unused for half a year. Therefore, a special entrance exam was held in advance, and a batch of new students was admitted before the new year.

“Grandpa Shaw, is there any letter for me?” Ali stopped at the gate of the school and asked the muscular, gray-haired old man. It was said that he used to be a squire to a senior-rank knight until he was wounded in a battle against demon-corrupted creatures. He had been recommended to work as the janitor of the third generic school.

Shaw shook his head. “Ali, there is no letter for anybody today.”

“Thank you, Grandpa Shaw.” Ali left in disappointment. After he came to Rentato, he felt humbled and stopped writing to his pen pal, Jane. It was not until he was admitted by the third generic school and settled his life that he finally wrote a letter to her about his updates and his new mailing address. He had been waiting for her response since.

After he returned to the classroom, he was immediately greeted by the warm air. The coldness was gone, and Ali felt unprecedented coziness.

“Every classroom has the ventilations of the magic air conditioner. It's so much warmer than furnaces.” Ali found that he loved his life in Rentato more and more.

At this moment. Mr. Brian, who taught “Basics of Arcana”, walked in. He knocked the table softly, hinting everyone to lower their voices.

Brian was a medium-height man with a shy smile. It was said that he was a student of the Douglas Magic School and senior-rank magic apprentice. He taught “Basics of Arcana” as a part-time job to fulfill his mission and to earn arcana points.

“You are all very hard-working. There are still ten minutes until the first class, but you are already all present.” Brian nodded in approval.

There were no kids who hated books and learning in any generic schools at present. Their enthusiasm was unquestionable. Also, the school retained the right to kick out any students who violated the rules of the school more than three times.

“Mr. Brian, why have you come so early?” Ali knew that Mr. Brian was approachable and therefore boldly asked.

Brian replied with a smile, “I’m here to announce a piece of great news. The proposal of the education department of the city hall of Rentato has been approved by the Affair Committee of the Congress. The top twenty students of your grade in the next monthly exam will be invited to visit Allyn.”

“Allyn? The City in the Sky? The headquarters of the Congress?”

“Will we really get to visit the City in the Sky?”

“Can we visit the Atom Institution?”

The students immediately seethed. Thanks to “Arcana Voice” and all kinds of newspapers, the names such as Allyn and Atom Institution had been deeply etched to their heart. Now that they heard that they had a chance to visit them, how could they not turn thrilled and obstreperous?

Although Ali had been living independently since a young age, he found it impossible to control his feelings. He clenched his fists. Too many pictures that he dreamed about in the past popped up in his head. *Do I have a chance to go to the City in the Sky and to take a lot of at the world-famous “Atom Institution”?*

“Yes, you may visit the City in the Sky and the Allyn magic tower,

talk to Prospell, and take a look at the Heredity Laboratory, the Laboratory of Life Matter Synthesis, the Research Center of Psychology, the Library of Arcana and..." Brian paused with a smile and continued, "... and the Atom Institution."

"Great!"

"Hooray!"

Exclamations of excitement burst out in the classroom. All the students were blushing.

Brian knocked on the table to quiet them. "Therefore, you have to study hard. Only by making your way to the top twenty of your grade will you receive the invitation. By then, the top twenties of the first generic school, the second generic school, Mills Noble School, and many other schools will go with you."

"Mills Noble School?" Ali's face was frozen from his excitement. Too many thoughts were rolling in his head, but they were all about a simple name—Jane!

Will she go there? She always says that she's one of the top three students of her grade!

Should I introduce myself? How should I talk to her?

Ali thought further and further until the bell rang and announced the beginning of "Basics of Arcana".

Brian's smile was gone. He said solemnly, "Today, we will focus on the basic concepts in the microscopic domain."

It was not a detailed interpretation but only meant to let them know the basic ideas.

"Ever since Mr. Evans discovered the electron and opened the gate to the microworld, we have discovered four fundamental particles up until now, namely proton, neutron, electron, and photon... Protons, neutrons, and photons cannot be further divided and are the most basic structure for any matter... Also, there shouldn't be too many other fundamental particles. The foundation of the matter

is definitely simplistic...” Brian taught fluently.

“The most basic structure for any matter... cannot be further divided...” Ali wrote notes carefully.

Chapter 751: Prophecy of New Particles

In Atom Institution...

Heidi, Annick, and the other students were all waiting for the latest issue of “Arcana” and “Magic”. The series of papers on the quantum field theory published in January was a major enlightenment for the arcanists who had a deep understanding of the microscopic domain. They sensed the next breakthrough in the aspect, so they picked up the knowledge on the quantum field theory with their own work and Lucien’s guidance. They had each completed a relevant paper and began the discussion with the grand arcanists and the senior-rank sorcerers.

Among them, Annick and Sprint were the founders of the quantum field theory. The application of second quantization to the electron system came exactly from the paper that they wrote together. Therefore, it was not too difficult for them to understand and grasp the new concept. Very soon, they kept up the pace with Lucien, Brook, Fernando, and the other grand arcanists, getting so dizzy because of “infinity” that they almost wanted to die with it.

“The quantum field theory is excellent in low-level approximation, but when it comes to the high-level approximation...” Katrina remarked with mixed feelings, without saying the word “infinity” out aloud. Otherwise, Sprint would’ve gone mad before Annick said anything.

Heidi, on the other hand, was barely haunted by worries. She grimaced and said, “In any case, it’s a realm where we can find out the nature of the electromagnetic force and the secrets of electrons!”

She paused for a moment. “Well, not exactly. At the very least, there’s no hope for an explanation of the quantum superposition state or the observer effect based on the quantum field theory.”

“Besides, the different processes in which the charged particles generate the electromagnetic force by exchanging photons have

given me inspirations. We seem to have grasped the ‘occasions’ where positrons might show up. We need to devise some collision experiments,” Chelly added for Heidi.

In many cases, the discovery of particles was not as simple as finding the appropriate rays and observing their traces. It was necessary to collide different particles in different locations with different energy with the “rays” in order to result in different reactions, either diffusion or others. Only then would it be possible to locate the unusual track from the complicated reactions.

Grouping in experiments without theoretical guidance would be like a headless fly. One could only expect to achieve something after a long time of searching. That was why the legendary sorcerers and the archmages hadn’t found anything of value from the cosmic rays.

Heidi chuckled gloatingly. “Therefore, this will be the main content of our experiments in the cosmic observatory. Considering our teacher’s attention on the positron, you can never defeat us!”

Sprint snorted. “I’m devoted to the quantum field theory right now after all. There’s still plenty of knowledge for me to study and learn. I don’t plan to go to the cosmic observatory any time soon.”

“As a matter of fact, I think Ms. Hathaway’s paper is also very enlightening and beautiful. When protons and neutrons are considered as the same fundamental particle, I have truly felt the simplistic beauty in the essence of things.” Layria’s daily research was to decide the qualities of different materials under different temperatures and to synthesize new materials with those qualities. Then, she had to experiment repetitively to figure out the cause of superconductivity. It was boring and complicated. Therefore, she appreciated the opinion that the essence of all the complicated matters was simple.

Annick said calmly, “We cannot jump to that conclusion so easily. The research on nuclear decay in the past years seems to suggest that protons and neutrons are not as simple as we imagined. Or rather, the situation inside the atomic nucleus is not as simple as we thought. When it decays, it will release electrons and ‘neutrinos’

that the Lord of Storm speculated. Mr. Oliver even guessed that neutrons can be transformed into protons. The secrets and implications behind it are still hard to say.”

Layria understood what he meant. She nodded her head and said, “I know, but according to some arcanists, it is barely possible to discover neutrinos.”

Neutrinos were not charged and had little mass. They also barely interacted with any matter. Therefore, they had been called by the arcanists as “invisible particles”, meaning that it was almost impossible to observe them.

“As long as they exist, we will observe them through experiments!” Sprint was quite confident about that. Then, he shook his head. “However, the most important thing right now is that many experiments cannot be conducted without a stable reactor.”

“Yes. Without a large fission reactor, there will be no stable source of particles, and it’s impossible to complete the experiments that are needed in the microscopic domain.” Katrina sighed. “Now, the desperate need for the fission reactor comes not only from the energy domain but also from the deeper research in the microscopic domain. It is what most arcanists desire right now.”

Heidi chuckled in amusement. “Most arcanists don’t desire it at all. They can barely keep up with the developments in the microscopic domain nowadays.”

After she said that, she immediately stood up and bowed with a smile. “Good morning, Master.”

She had found Lucien who reached the door.

Lucien took out a pile of journals from his magic pouch and smiled. “I happened upon the apprentice who was delivering the journals for you, so I brought them over by the way.”

Heidi and the other students were not panicked or surprised by their teacher’s behavior. After all, they knew their teacher’s personality very well. They knew that it was really just by the way

and did not carry any deeper meaning.

“Thank you, Master.” Katrina and Heidi took over the journals with brilliant smiles.

Lucien shook the last journal in his hands and said, “The most interesting article on this issue is Granny Hathaway’s new paper.”

“The most interesting?” Sprint and the students were briefly stunned. It was certainly not easy to be remarked by their teacher as interesting. It meant that he appreciated the ideas in the paper and believed that the paper was of great heuristic value!

Heidi went to the table of contents and found the title of Hathaway’s new paper—A Hypothesis on the Strong Interaction Force.

After reading the title, Annick and the other students looked at each other and vaguely guessed something. After all, great progress had just been made on the nature of the electromagnetic force, and a paper on strong interaction immediately showed up. They could not believe that the two of them were not related at all.

As they expected, Hathaway had introduced the “model” established by the quantum field theory into the nuclear force, the strong interaction force. If the nature of the electromagnetic force was a complicated process where charged particles exchanged protons, could the strong interaction force be perceived as the result of the exchange of certain particles among nucleons (neutrons and protons)?

Hathaway’s idea was not hard to understand as long as one had to draw the analogy without being bound by restraints. Therefore, it was not difficult for Annick, Katrina, Heidi, and the other students to accept the premise of the hypothesis and read on.

Although the studies on the strong interaction force were still too shallow, it was enough to support Hathaway to build a general model. Then, according to the data that were measured in the experiment, the particle was a new particle that hadn’t been discovered yet. Its mass when it was still was approximately three

hundred times that of the electron.

“If we can discover the particle, the nature of the strong interaction force will be unveiled before us...” Annick said in a low voice, somewhat shocked.

“Is this the prophecy on a new particle?” Katrina had a weird feeling.

Layria frowned and said, “If it is indeed discovered, will it be possible to construct the weak interaction force with such a model with another new particle? Then, how many kinds of particles are out there exactly?”

It seemed that the number of fundamental particles had doubled after only a moment. Although it was still just a hypothesis, Layria and the other students still paid great attention to it. Was it possible that the fundamental particles were not simple in the microscopic domain but a complicated and enormous system?

Sprint, on the other hand, was refreshed. “It will be great if we can discover the particle. It will mean that the strong interaction force has no secrets before us. All we need to do is to explore the details!

“If all the three fundamental forces except for gravity can be attributed to the exchange of particles with a corresponding model, it will mean that there are no secrets in the whole world before our eyes!”

He had always been confident and passionate, and it was certainly not an exception right now. As to how many fundamental particles were out there exactly, he couldn’t care less about it. After all, everything was just a speculation.

“It’s a shame that the studies on the weak interaction force are too few to even support the construction of such a model. Otherwise, I’m going to predict a new particle too,” Heidi said rather regretfully, but then she became happy. “It’s possible that those particles are hidden in the cosmic rays!”

Sprint was stunned. Then, he declared rather abruptly, “I’m going

to apply to use the cosmic observatory too!”

Seeing that his students were full of passion for research, Lucien nodded his head in satisfaction and walked to his office. Then, his monocle suddenly became hot.

“Lucien, do you have a minute?” Douglas’ gentle and calm voice came into his ears.

Lucien smiled. “Always, Mr. President. What’s the matter?”

“My transmission circle for space jump has been set up. Do you want to chase after the sun with me?” Douglas chuckled.

Lucien was silent for a moment. He then replied, “That’s exactly what I hope.”

Chapter 752: A Millennial Pursuit

Inside the Land of Truth...

Douglas, who usually wore a tailcoat, put on a black long robe, which made him look solemn and intimidating.

The black magic robe was the classic style of the ancient Magic Empire. It was deep and dark without emitting the slightest light. However, under the darkness, countless magic patterns were vaguely showing up, adding to the mysterious vibe of Douglas.

At this moment, Douglas did not look like an old gentleman but more like his title, the Emperor of Arcana!

His hands in his back, he stood before the magic circle that was made of countless silver lines and transparent gems. There was no telling what was behind his profound eyes.

That was exactly what Lucien saw after he got out of the “elevator”. He smiled and said, “It seems that I have seen not the president of the Congress of Magic but the consul of the ancient Magic Empire.”

Douglas coughed and turned his head. He smiled. “When I was little, I envied the sorcerers in such a style, and I worshiped the Light of Stars, who was the consul of the Sylvanas Magic Empire back then. So, I’d been mimicking them since I became an official sorcerer until the Magic Empire fell and I had to struggle to survive in the darkness. In order to attract less attention, I began to follow the fashion of clothes and changed to gentleman attire. Later, it became a habit, and I was too lazy to change anymore.”

His reminiscences were full of mixed feelings, indicating that his mind was not as peaceful as it seemed. At this critical moment where the sun might be found, it was difficult for him to keep calm despite his thousand years of experience. After all, it was the goal that he had pursued half of his life and the dream of all the sorcerers of the school of astrology ever since it was established!

“The garment of the previous sorcerers was indeed mysterious and

solemn, but it was also too gloomy, depressing, and frightening,” replied Lucien casually. After all, he preferred a double-breasted suit, tailcoat, and similar clothes. “Why are my teacher and Mr. Bergner not here?”

Fernando and Bergner were one of Douglas’ few remaining friends. Why did they not come to witness such an important moment?

Douglas chuckled. “The urgent need to stabilize the reactor has agitated Fernando. He and Hathaway are busy running the experiments on neutrons, hoping that they can find out its mysteries as soon as possible. Also, he does not have high hope in my search for the sun this time. Therefore, he has decided to cool my expectant mind with his inaction in case I am too disappointed later.”

“That’s right. When there is no expectation, there won’t be any hope,” said Lucien humorously. Then, he nodded his head. “My teacher always thought that the reason why planets cannot be found is related to the weirdness deep inside the Boundless Ocean and that it is impossible to find any planet until we can answer why we cannot finish a ‘round-the-world flight’. It is not something that can be explained by ‘gravity lens’.”

After Lucien repeated Fernando’s opinions, Douglas looked at him with his sharp eyes. “You think so, too?”

If Lucien did not agree with those opinions, he wouldn’t have wasted his time repeating them.

“I share similar opinions with my teacher, but...” Lucien admitted honestly.

“But how can you understand the source of the problem if you don’t have a try?” Douglas was not infuriated at all but expressed his attitude along Lucien’s tone.

Lucien nodded his head. “That’s what I believe, too. Sometimes, we have to finish an experiment even if we know that it has been wrongly designed, because the experience of failure is even more precious under special circumstances. It can help us find the correct

path.”

Douglas nodded his head with a smile. “Your arcana ideas and attitude will help you grow all the time.”

Then, he mentioned the Prophet. “Bergner has been at a loss after the uncertainty principle was proposed. Supposedly, there was a good chance that he could become a level-three legend with the general theory of relativity, but he has halted again exactly like Donald and the rest of them. His cognitive world probably would’ve collapsed if it were verified by conclusive experiments or phenomena.”

“But the probabilistic explanation and the uncertainty principle are given more and more attention in the microscopic experiments in the past few years,” Lucien stressed.

Douglas said with a sigh, “Yes.”

He did not say anything more, because he also found Lucien’s probabilistic explanation and uncertainty principle unacceptable. Of course, his nonacceptance did not mean that he ignored the experiment results. He merely disagreed with Lucien about regarding it as the fundamental properties of the microscopic particles, just like Fernando did. He believed that certain hidden factors or variables that hadn’t been discovered yet resulted in the probabilistic feature and the uncertainties. If those factors and variables were taken into consideration, the result would still fit determinism.

“Therefore, Mr. Bergner does not want to see me?” Lucien said humorously.

Douglas shook his head. “Not exactly. The real reason is that he is busy building the cosmic observatory. Alright, let’s go.”

He took a deep breath and extended his right hand, pressing the transparent gate that was fully embedded with magic gems.

Silver lines glittered and emanated the most splendid brilliance. Enormous energy flooded in from every corner of the magic tower

and the Land of Truth.

The blue and sunny sky out of the window suddenly turned so dark that not a single star could be seen. After the enormous energy surged into the portal, it was like rivers combining into an ocean. There was not the slightest ripple.

After a long time, the magic gems on the portal in different colors glowed dazzlingly at the same time, and the hollow at the center of the portal was also covered in unpredictable light in which countless magic runes were flowing.

Bright “stones” flew out of Douglas’ magic pouch. Some were gold, some blue, and some were pure red. They hovered around Douglas’ head like artificial planets circling the world.

Covered by those stones, Douglas nodded at Lucien and stepped into the twisted brilliance first.

Lucien had been observing the function of the magic circle and learning the space-time knowledge in it. That was the personal understanding that came from countless firsthand experiences. It was far better than what Lucien had exchanged from the Advanced Arcana Library.

Douglas had invited him to look for the sun together partly to offer him guidance on super-remote space jump. It was a rather short journey when Lucien was teleported to space last time.

After Douglas’ figure turned transparent in the light, Lucien did not delay. The Robe of Grand Arcanists was shielded by colorful elements as he followed Douglas into the portal.

Time and space were changing, and the whole world was swirling in the profound darkness. Even though Lucien was already a level-three legendary sorcerer, he still had the illusion that his body and his soul were being separated. He was like a flickering candle in a wind that might die out at any moment. If it were any archmage, they probably would’ve been completely “lost” in the super-remote space jump for all eternity.

Suddenly, Lucien's soul trembled, and his physical body was condensed again. He saw the clear, changing light before his eyes.

As the light disappeared layer by layer, Lucien sensed that he was in the middle of the space, and countless cosmic rays of curses were coming at all. Therefore, he summoned his spiritual power and let out the intricate and inaudible spell.

“Space Staff!”

Ripples of light rose and gathered into a dreamy staff of light, which constructed many different spaces around Lucien.

After he resisted the dangerous rays, Lucien finally had the time to unfold his field of spiritual power to observe the surroundings.

There was not a gigantic fireball that was so scorching that everything would be burnt by it. Instead of the insufferable heat, this place was still nothing but coldness and the endless darkness. From the darkness, transparent and clear spots of light were embedded in it quietly.

Before Lucien, Douglas' back was against him. The bright “stones” above his head hovered around him, covering him with different legendary spells.

In the soundless space, Douglas did not attempt to communicate with Lucien via the telepathic bond. He just floated on the spot quietly and looked at the spot where the “sun” should be at as rigidly as a statue.

He was a tall man. Although he was far from brawny, he was certainly not slim. However, looking at his straight back, Lucien somehow felt an unusual gloom and pity. Even though he had foreseen such a result, he still did not feel too well.

Suddenly, the telepathic bond came over, and Lucien did not stop it.

“It seems that I've failed again...” Douglas sounded peaceful and calm, albeit with a bitter smile.

Lucien was about to comfort him when Douglas went on and said, "It seems that there are still many more factors that I failed to take into consideration. The mysteries of the universe are truly fascinating. Alright, let's go back. I hope that we can find their traces next time."

The bitterness was gone, and the only things left were his confusion and his genuine hope for the future. He was not frustrated, and he did not lose his momentum at all.

"Alright." Lucien couldn't help but smile. Then, he looked thoughtfully at the place where the sun should've appeared. There, it was dark and cold, as if a hideous and ferocious beast was lurking.

It was perhaps time for him to pay a visit to the end of the Boundless Ocean or the Moonlight Ocean in the Dark Mountain Range...

...

Inside the Third Generic School...

After leaving his dormitory, Ali went to the gate of the school despite the coldness of the early spring. His heart felt rather heavy. Today would be the day for the release of the monthly examination result. Would his efforts be properly rewarded?

His heart that was both full of hope and worries made it impossible for him to calm down or consider any other questions. He had merely come to the gate of the school to ask if there was his letter out of his habit.

"Ali, your letter." Shaw had already recognized the lad who had been coming to check for his letter once every day.

"What?" Ali immediately forgot his worries, and his heart was filled by ecstasy.

Chapter 753: The City in the Sky in the Letter

The white envelope was so neat and smooth that petals seemed to be in the middle of the texture. It was entirely different from the standard model of the postal department and was more like a piece of artwork. However, Ali did not pay attention to any of those details. His eyes were completely frozen on the elegant handwriting on the envelope. They were so familiar and beautiful that Ali's heart was immediately filled with heat. He could not feel the coldness of the early spring anymore.

Too eager to wait until he returned to his classroom, Ali walked in the cold wind while opening the letter, drawing out the thick pile of paper inside. He then unfolded the letter carefully.

"I was quite worried when I did not receive any letter from you during the previous few months. I thought that you had an accident, or that I hurt your feelings in our early correspondences, but I didn't know how I could reach out to you. Fortunately, the truth is not what I imagined...

"... Our school has a two-month holiday for the new year. By the time I saw your letters, there were already quite a few of them. I'm sorry for the long wait. Please forgive me... I'm glad that you've come to Rentato. Whether or not you succeed in the future, I believe that this is going to be the most precious wealth of your life. It's like what Mr. Farham wrote in his famous play, 'Land of a Thousand Lakes'—failures are tolerable for the young. So, you should read more, experience more, and see more of this beautiful and cruel world in your golden years.

"... In this ever-changing age, there are plenty of opportunities. As long as you are bold and determined, you can certainly seize some of them, but if you are too scared of failure to bear and face anything, the opportunities will only slip through your fingers...

"... You must've lived in Rentato for a few months now. Is your life comfortable here? What's your impression on the new things and

new changes that I described in my letters? When I reread the letters I wrote, I always feel that my face is burning, because I was full of hope and passion at that time. I couldn't help but describe them in the most splendid and romantic way. Now that I can hold back my feelings, it appears to me that I have overly exaggerated their beauty, and it is not quite the reality. Ali, what do you think? How do they appear to you?

"... I've always thought that the generic schools are perhaps not as good as Lanxiangs when it comes to job-hunting in workshops and incomes in the first few years. However, if you want to make greater achievements and create a better future, only the generic schools can provide the knowledge that you need. Don't be impatient in the first three years. Everything you learn is to help you figure out what you are good at and what you like. Then, you will be able to absorb the 'nutrition' that is necessary for you in the last two years...

"... Besides your studies, don't forget to 'melt' into Rentato. Only by melting into it will you completely recognize every astounding detail in this time of changes, which will give you opportunities. Therefore, I suggest you go out often during weekends or get a part-time job for yourself...

"... There's a red tea shop on Rose Boulevard. The environment is comfortable, and the tea is delicious. Also, they have replaced the band with a magic gramophone and only keep two musicians... The Clown Theater in the administrative district also presents hilarious comedies... Although the Egret District is a poor neighborhood, you may encounter many adventures with abundant experiences. Their words may be exaggerated, but their knowledge can be a major eye-opener nonetheless... When the night falls, in the administrative district, the district of nobles, and Queen Avenue, you can enjoy sceneries that look like stars on earth..."

Jane introduced Rentato that she knew in an honest tone and avoided the luxury places, giving Ali a vivid feeling.

The letter had no subtleties of love at all and was purely a talk between friends. It was not too formal but paid attention to every detail, warm and considerate like every letter in the past. Ali

couldn't have been more excited. He read the letter many times and did not put it back until he almost approached the classroom.

"... I got second place in the 'new year exam' after the holiday, and I'll be invited to visit the Allyn magic tower and the Atom Institution... I've been to Allyn before, but I was not allowed to visit the magic tower. Now, I finally have the opportunity to do so. I hope that the Atom Institution is even dreamier than I thought..."

Ali recalled the third paragraph to the last in Jane's letter. Although she tried not to brag about her achievement, her ecstasy could be clearly felt between the lines.

Thinking about that, Ali's heart began to pound. The result of the monthly exam would be published soon. Was there any hope for him to go to Allyn?

Sitting on his chair uneasily, Ali found it impossible to calm himself down, until Mr. Brian, who taught "Basics of Arcana", came in.

"The rank of the monthly exam will be announced now. The top twenty are the lucky dogs who will be invited to visit the City in the Sky," Brian said with a smile. The classroom was so quiet that it was almost frozen.

"Donne..." Brian began to read the names. After his every pause, somebody would exclaim uncontrollably.

As the familiar names were read out and the delightful exclamations echoed, Ali grew more and more anxious. Why was there not his name? Did he really fail to make it to the top twenty?

"Ricardo," Brian read the twentieth name.

There isn't me. There really isn't me. Ali was consumed by huge frustration. He had never tasted the bitterness of failure better. In his hometown in the past, he had failed before, but he never had such great hope at that time as he did here.

Ali did not hear his name until it came to the thirties. The frustrating experience made him realize the fact that his foundation was still too weak. There was still a major gap between him and his

classmates who had lived in Rentato for a long time or who had been guided by scholars and magic apprentices for a year or two. Although he had been working hard, he would have to keep such an attitude for at least a year in order to catch up to them.

Many people would choose to give up under such circumstances. How could you compete with other people when your starting points were different? However, Ali thought of Jane's encouragement and his parents' expectations. He clenched his fists and swore to catch up to them. While other people were working, he would work ten times harder!

At the end of March, Ali, who was dedicated to schoolwork, went to the gate of the school every couple of days habitually. Finally, he got a letter from Jane again.

"... Last time, you mentioned that you were interested in alchemical items and had been learning them fast. I think it's because we are both attracted to magic radios, magic lamps, wired phones, and telegrams, as well as the content on 'Arcana Voice'. However, there are still major differences between those simplified items and real alchemy...

"... If you are really interested, you can go to the library of your school or the library of Rentato and borrow the books such as 'Magic Structure', 'Alchemical Elements', '128 Facts About Simplified Magic Items', and 'A History of Alchemical Items'. 'Ten Thousand Whys: Volume of Alchemy', compiled by Prince Evans, in particular, is both informative and entertaining...

"... We went to the City in the Sky in the middle of this month. Although this may bring back your bad memories, I still would like to share my experiences with you. I hope that you can somewhat soothe your regrets in such a way...

"I've been to the City in the Sky many times, but whenever the rail left the ground and rose, I always felt a shiver from the bottom of my heart. It was both fear and excitement. I was afraid because of the ant-like things below me and the decline of fantasies, and I was excited because I probably could never enjoy the feeling of running in the sky if there weren't magic steam trains and the City in the

Sky. After all, not everybody could become an official sorcerer. I've learned arcana and magic for years, but I am still just an apprentice...

"... On the way, the long bus that carried us to the Allyn magic tower met a problem. A golem came out of the magic tower. Its eyes were red, and it pushed both the bus and us to the Allyn magic tower. Sometimes, golems are not just for battles...

"... The Allyn magic tower is in a totally different architectural style from that of the buildings in Rentato, but it oddly agrees with alchemical cars, aircraft, magic steam trains, blast guns, magic air conditioners, and magic lamps. I feel that they have established the unique air and style of this age together...

"... We did not meet Mr. Felipe in the Hereditary Laboratory. We were told that he went to the Dark Mountain Range to collect samples. It was not a big deal to me, but my good friend was very sad, because she admired Mr. Felipe and wanted to be a 'doctor' who mastered magic and anatomical skills...

"... The Hereditary Laboratory was not exactly what I imagined. Many common plants and unusual animals were raised there. Well, the only thing in the laboratory that made me feel creepy was the partly-mutated creatures. In one of the labs that are filled with mucus, I saw bloody and terrible views. Certain animals that we see all the time turned into hideous and gross monsters. Can you imagine a rabbit with two heads or a dog without furs?

"... Thankfully, since most of my classmates were horrified by such a scene, we immediately left for the Atom Institution.

"Mr. Lazar and Ms. Heidi received us and showed us most of the places in the institution. It's just like what I imagined. There were all kinds of complicated and mysterious magic circles as well as alchemical platforms that glowed in different colors...

"... When Ms. Heidi turned on the particle collider, the magic circles on the entire wall, floor, and ceiling glittered at the same time, before they partly turned orange and transparent. I was so shocked that I felt I was in a dream. The picture and the overall

style of the Atom Institution made me feel that I arrived at the 'future'. I don't know why I felt that way, but I truly sensed that it would be the future.

"... Ali, did you know that there's a transmission magic circle inside the Atom Institution that leads to a cosmic observatory where you can observe the space?"

Ali sensed the excitement in her words. He was quite excited himself. The scenes in the Atom Institution were vivid before his eyes. He almost wanted to go there immediately.

"Cosmic observatory? Observe the space?" It was something that was even beyond his dreams!

"... Ali, Ms. Heidi told me that 'Arcana Voice' would give more introductions to the cosmos in the future and even simulate the space with illusion skills for us to sense it in person. Also, if we could get the first place in our grade during the finals in June, we would have a chance to go to the cosmic observatory for real!

"Let's work hard together, shall we?"

"Of course!" Ali clenched his fists in such excitement that he seemed to be in the middle of the boundless cosmos already while sensing the overwhelming time of his age.

.....

In Lance, the Holy City.

Benedict III looked out of the window and considered the piece of intelligence he just received.

"Lucien Evans has borrowed a lot of files about the Boundless Ocean recently."

Chapter 754: The Blue Gate

“... The deeper you go into the Boundless Ocean, the more you will feel that you are mired in a fog, although there’s no fog at all...

“... The sunlight from the sky is so pale and dim that the environment is somewhat dizzy. You feel that you are in a different world and cannot communicate with the outside world at all...

“... If you go backward trying to find the start point of such anomalies, you can’t find it at all. It seems to be a gradual process of tiny quantity changes that eventually lead to a qualitative change. It’s difficult to decide the threshold...

“... No matter how you navigate yourself with the sun, the stars, or the environment, you will eventually reach somewhere that you passed before. That is entirely different from the flight from the earth to the universe...”

Inside the Atomic Universe, Lucien was reading the files in his hands wholeheartedly. That was the experience of the previous generations of sorcerers when they explored the Boundless Ocean, which was as valuable as the legendary sorcerers and archmages’ attempts to fly from the earth to the orbit instead of using a space jump.

According to them, starting from a certain altitude, the sky would give a misty feeling exactly like the depths of the Boundless Ocean. Also, because of the atmosphere, the feeling was even more vivid and could barely be noticed. Therefore, it was more difficult to fly from the earth to the desired orbit than expected. So, even legends would prefer space jump. However, in any case, such a flight would not trap people in the same place. They would fly out sooner or later as long as they navigated according to the stars.

However, because of the restraint of external and internal conditions, the legendary sorcerers such as Douglas were unable to specify the tipping point of the feeling clearly. It was impossible for them to tell from which altitude their observation on the ground

was completely caught in the “mist”. Naturally, it was impossible for them to figure out the mysteries behind it.

After the failed attempt to pursue the sun, Douglas had shifted his focus on that. He had been thinking hard, hoping to find a way to decide the threshold. Recently, he seemed to be considering the alchemical items with artificial intelligence, because they did not carry any subjective interferences. Therefore, he had been supporting Heidi’s research.

In her silver armor and with the Sword of Truth in her hand, Natasha walked in excitedly and asked, “When are we leaving?”

The expansion of Rentato had been set on track, and the knight blood in her veins was boiling and calling for battle. If Lucien did not want to go out, she would’ve taken adventures in the abyssal gap in the Stroop Forest. Chaotic demons who were like lunatics were the best targets for battles, because they were not so scared of death after they went mad. The Scarlet Plain had been occupied by the Demon Lord of another floor of the abyss.

Also, Lucien’s exploration of the Boundless Ocean did require a partner so that he could focus his attention on experimenting, data recording, and investigating. Furthermore, the intuitions of a legendary knight sometimes were more useful than those of a legendary sorcerer, particularly when it came to the tiny changes on the body.

Lucien put down his files with a smile. “It seems that you are the one who has been occupied by other things, not me. I can go at any time.”

It was already the end of April in 828. To wait for Natasha to finish the business in her hand, Lucien had read the files about the Boundless Ocean many times.

Natasha chuckled dryly and declared solemnly, “As a queen, I cannot do whatever I want. Also, that was the most troublesome phase of Rentato’s expansion, which was why I was delayed for a month.”

Then, instead of waiting for Lucien's reply, she waved her hands and said, "Let's go!"

Lucien shook his head with a smile while looking at her running away quickly with her back straight.

...

The sky was a pure and flawless blue, and the ocean was the gloomy and surging blue. There was absolutely nothing but blue in the spacious environment.

The wind was blowing unpredictably, indicated only by the waves on the surging ocean. Suddenly, in the middle of the invisible wind, two figures slowly appeared. One of them was wearing a black double-breasted suit and a top hat of the same color, with a silver pocket watch in his hand, as if he were checking the time for the dinner. The other figure was a beautiful lady whose purple long hair was flying in the wind. Her silver armor added to her indifference and toughness.

"There's still some distance to go until the Boundless Ocean. Let's fly over." Lucien raised his head to check the sun. His eyes were so deep that they were reflecting the stars that were eclipsed by the sunlight.

Natasha understood Lucien's plan. Now that they were exploring the secrets of the Boundless Ocean, they certainly could not be teleported directly to the destination.

In such a case, they might be missing the place where the anomalies first showed up. Therefore, the first solution was to approach from a relatively distant place bit by bit.

Before she nodded her head, Lucien reminded her again, "Remember to control your body changes and do not let go of the tiniest anomaly."

"Of course." She nodded her head with a mischievous smile on her face that made her look like a cat that had just stolen food. "I'm truly 'flattered' that I can contribute to your important

experiment...”

Lucien was immediately amused after hearing her reply. It seemed that she wasn't too happy about being called a “laboratory vandal”.

“Of course, this is not a laboratory.” Lucien certainly wouldn't let go of any opportunity to make fun of Natasha.

Natasha looked at Lucien with a feigned smile. “Be careful. I might not work with you in your ‘experiment’. After all, I am an experiment saboteur.”

Lucien coughed and wondered when the “experiment” would succeed.

The two of them flew above the ocean slowly. All the sea creatures swimming by looked at the sky curiously, wondering why somebody could fly even more slowly than they swam.

They flew for two days in a row. Thanks to Lucien's magic, no sea creatures that were good at jumping or ferocious birds disturbed them.

Suddenly, Natasha stopped. She looked at the silver moon in the sky and the sparse stars. Feeling a little bit weird, she asked with uncertainty, “Is it a bit heavier now?”

The gentle smile on Lucien's face was immediate. He took out a small and neat metal cabin from his magic pouch.

Magic waves spread out, and the metal cabin grew larger and larger, turning into a laboratory with full facilities in midair. Then, Lucien extended both hands, his fingers moving up and down. As if he were playing the piano, he controlled different magic circles and alchemical devices to determine the important factors in this place, such as gravity, humidity, wind level, temperature, locations of stars, etc.

With the longsword in her hand, Natasha stood in midair and stayed on alert.

Time went by one second after another. Nothing could be heard in

the quiet night except for the flowing undercurrents. Natasha looked around, and her eyes fell upon Lucien's face. From the location where she was standing, she could only see one side of Lucien's face. The handsome face that she was most familiar with had lost the gentle smile that she was used to. Now that he was not looking at her, his face was nothing but attentiveness and thoughtfulness.

In such a silent atmosphere, Natasha did not feel bored or lonely at all. Instead, she had a sense of tranquility and warmth. She looked at the side of Lucien's face and put on a smile.

Suddenly, the water down below splashed, and an enormous shadow appeared on the surface of the ocean.

Hualala. A sea monster dozens of meters long emerged, as overwhelming as a mountain. It had the appearance of a freshwater crocodile, but it was so gargantuan and so weird. Its scales were emitting mottled brilliance under the silver moon, spreading out the magnificent and horrifying air.

It was a sea monster that governed the waters around. It had sensed intruders!

Natasha turned around and narrowed her eyes. Inside her silver pupils, swords seemed to be flashing.

The sea monster was suddenly frozen. Then, it dived back as fast as it could, as if it had been scared out of its wits.

They were more like monsters than it was!

"It has keen instincts." Lucien's smiling voice entered Natasha's ears.

Natasha said, somewhat embarrassed, "Were you disturbed?"

Although such formalities were unnecessary between a couple, Natasha felt that she failed to fulfill her responsibility as a knight due to her negligence.

"Not at all. The data have been collected." Lucien took back his

portable laboratory.

Natasha finally asked in joy, “Did you notice anything wrong?”

“It’s barely possible to tell anything from one group of data.” Lucien talked as if he had figured out where he was getting at.

...

In the depths of the Boundless Ocean, Natasha looked at the island that was covered in red weird plants and said solemnly, “We’ve returned to where we passed just now.”

“Yes.” Over the past month, Lucien had collected a lot of data, but he still failed to avoid such a situation.

“What have you found?” Natasha sensed no anomaly at all except for the tiny body changes that she occasionally felt. She could only ask Lucien if he got anything from the data.

Lucien responded without answering her question, “According to the files I read, there’s a mysterious ‘Blue Gate’ deep inside the Boundless Ocean.”

“Yes, the Blue Key is exactly a legendary material born by the Blue Gate. It has been modified by the strongest experts of the sea clans generation after generation before it becomes one of the thirteen level-four legendary items today. However, the Blue Gate is just like the Chaotic Cosmos. Only the strongest experts of the sea clans who control the Blue Key, or those who are lucky, can discover it.” Natasha recalled the files that she had read. “Also, many legendary experts suspect that the Blue Gate does not exist at all and that it’s a myth that the sea clans created based on the legendary item, the Blue Key.”

“In any case, we have to search for it.” It seemed that Lucien was trying to determine something.

Suddenly, an unpredictable song came from far away. Lucien’s head was dizzy for a moment even though he was a level-three legendary expert. His soul seemed to have been shaken and attracted.

“Watch out.” Lucien cast spells and helped Natasha who was struggling to resist it to get rid of the effect.

“The song of a mermaid? A legendary one?” Natasha looked at where the song came from.

Chapter 755: The Song of Mermaids

Harex, the emperor of the Kuo-toans, was known as the Master of the Boundless Ocean who had seven legendary sea generals under his command. However, the explored part of the Boundless Ocean was already twice the size of the continent, not to mention the waters that seemed to be forever enshrouded in the mist. How could such a spacious “territory” be governed by only eight legends?

Of course, without external foes, one top legend was enough to control the Boundless Ocean. However, the sea elves backed by the Elvish Court, the Congress of Magic that controlled many islands, the South Church that had raised several agents in the south side of the ocean, the Moonlight forces that were very close to the Dark Congress, and the Gipps murlocs who were as tough as stones forced Harex to take actions prudently. The Elvish Court, which had burst into direct conflicts with him, had attracted most of his forces.

Under such circumstances, at least one-third of the Boundless Ocean that did not have a ruler was in the chaotic state, and it was impossible for the sorcerers to explore such a vast ocean without leaving out any detail. Therefore, the legendary sorcerers of the Congress of Magic were not certain about the number of legendary creatures in the Boundless Ocean. After all, some of the sea creatures lived at the bottom of the ocean thousands of meters deep and would only emerge once every few hundred years. It was absolutely normal that they were not known by the outsiders.

Therefore, when they heard the mermaid’s song that could make one lose their sanity and soul, Lucien and Natasha’s first reaction was to wonder whether she was the “Mermaid Princess” under the command of the Master of the Boundless Ocean, or if she was another legendary mermaid.

“Whoever she is, now that we have run into her, let’s go over and ask her the way. I wonder if she knows anything about the Blue Gate since she lives deep inside the Boundless Ocean.” Lucien held back his confusion and put on a gentle smile again.

Natasha nodded her head and suddenly complimented, “Everybody says that the mermaid’s song is the best music in the world and too beautiful for any intelligent creatures to appreciate. Once they hear it, their souls will be lost in the song, and they cannot pay attention to anything else until they die. I have always been suspicious about the theory, but after I heard it with my own ears today, I finally realized that it is even better than rumors. If we hadn’t already become legends, our souls would’ve been completely lost just now.”

Thanks to the protection of “Mental Barrier” and “Space Staff”, the pleasant and soul-penetrating song could not enter her ears anymore. That was why she could remember the shock she sensed just now clearly.

Listening carefully, Lucien chuckled in the telepathic bond. “This is a legendary mermaid after all. Hehe. I tried to restore her song with my music knowledge, but without the assistance of magic and spiritual power, it is impossible to achieve such an effect, just as it is impossible to play the melodies that have magic effects with a common piano. Also, without learning her specialties, it will be barely possible to mimic her even if I use spiritual power and magic.”

Lucien had a level-three legendary soul, and he was faced with a mermaid who must have just become a legend. Therefore, he did not need to resist the song with additional spells and could keep on “appreciating it”.

All the sorcerers whose souls were not lost after they saw mermaids had been trying to construct illusion spells by duplicating their songs. However, for all kinds of reasons, their final products were not nearly as wondrous and astounding as the songs. So, none of them had the courage to name their illusion “Mermaid’s Song”.

“If anybody in this world can mimic the song of mermaids, it would be you, a combination of a grand arcanist and a great musician. I remember that the spells that certain sorcerers constructed by duplication were too far away from the authentic version because they did not understand music very well,” said Natasha half-jokingly. “After that, you can write a piece of music that does not contain the magic effect according to the spell you create so that

everybody else will get to enjoy the wonder of mermaid songs. Well, I've already thought of a name for you. It will be Twelve Movements of Requiem."

While the two of them talked and laughed, Lucien's reconnaissance spell had already given a result. It was a cluster of reefs over there. A mermaid whose blue hair reached her waist was floating on the surface of the ocean and singing aloud against the reefs, surrounded by other mermaids who were joining her and the sea creatures who had lost their sanity and souls, including enormous octopi, weird sharks that were dozens of meters long, and monsters with human heads and crab bodies...

"There are no dangers except for the mermaid. We can approach her directly." Although Lucien believed that he was strong enough to crush the legendary mermaid, he still activated the reconnaissance spells according to the habits of sorcerers in case he fell into any trap.

"Great. I'm told that mermaids are all very beautiful. They seem to be made of the purest water, and they carry unimaginable, astounding beauty..." Natasha's silver eyes were sparkling with curiosity and expectations.

Lucien shook his head with a smile. By logic, it should have been him who was more curious about the "mermaid princess".

The two of them flew as fast as two streaks of light in the sky. Very soon, they arrived above the reefs and saw the legendary mermaid whose upper half body was a human being and whose lower half body was a fish tail.

Her scales were as shiny as gold, unlike other mermaids, but they also gave the feeling of being transparent, exuding a dreamy vibe under the sunlight.

The upper half body of the legendary mermaid was naked, and her skin was as fair as milk. Her blue long hair dangled and covered her rising bosoms perfectly. Her face was delicate, innocent, and full of charm. Her water and blue eyes were as soul-attracting as her song.

“Ha. She’s even prettier than rumors have it.” Natasha smiled like a gentleman, but the Sword of Truth in her hands did not shake at all, and she could launch an attack at any moment. Inside her silver eyes, there was nothing but attention and caution now that her curiosity had been satisfied.

The mermaid had sensed them when the two of them approached. She waved her gold tail and slapped the surface of the ocean, raising a tsunami that could have destroyed the ocean. However, at this moment, she saw that the environment around Lucien changed. The blue sky suddenly turned dark, as if the night had arrived early, and the ocean was enshrouded in the infinite darkness. In the middle of the darkness, gold, silver, white, and other colorful stars were glittering. Among those stars, there were the most terrifying fireballs that were emanating unimaginable heat like the sun.

Her captivating blue eyes constricted abruptly. She stopped slapping her tail and singing the song and asked in a gentle and clear voice, “Are you here for me, my dear guests?”

She used the peculiar tongue of mermaids first, but she soon switched to the common tongue of the sea clans. However, for the knowledgeable Lucien, both were the languages that he was quite fluent with. Although Natasha did not have a deep understanding of arcana, language study was a compulsory course for any nobles, and Lucien had “taught” her a lot, so she was able to understand it too.

“We’re wondering if you are one of the seven sea generals under the Master of the Boundless Ocean, my lady.” Lucien nodded in satisfaction. Although he had a lot of battle experience, he disliked meaningless battle and slaughter. That’s why he demonstrated his strength just now so that the legendary mermaid could see the gap and make a sensible choice. Deterrence was sometimes more useful than fighting.

The mermaid replied with a pleasant voice, “Yes. I am Doris. Can I help you?”

Doris was the name of the Mermaid Princess.

Seeing that the Mermaid Princess was highly wary but too scared to attack, Lucien smiled and said, “My lady, I would like to know if there is anything about the Blue Gate that you can tell us.”

“How did you...” Doris was so surprised that she blurted out her question, but she immediately stopped it, as if her secret had just been seen through.

Natasha and Lucien looked at each other. It couldn't be so coincidental, could it?

Chapter 756: The Battle Half a Month Ago

Doris knew that she had made a horrible mistake the moment she said it. She slapped her golden fish tail on the surface of the ocean, raising a splash of waves and water.

In the middle of the splash, her body was suddenly blurred. Even though Lucien's spiritual power and Natasha's willpower had been fixated on her, they both felt that they had suddenly lost their target. They watched her turn transparent and melt without a sign, like snow that had met the sun of July!

Doris completely melted after only one moment. She joined the ocean, and white foams surged up on the ocean, reflecting the dim and pale sunlight.

Lucien could not sense Doris with his spiritual power anymore, as if she had truly melted into the ocean. Or rather, every tiniest foam was her!

Foams were broken one after another, and the whiteness on the surface of the blue ocean was about to vanish when Lucien used the unpredictable and intricate voice that sounded from a different world.

“Space Staff!”

The environment shook hard, and a brilliant but dark staff was condensed in Lucien's hand. As he pointed with the staff, the whole ocean spread out ripples of light, like a lake at night!

Those ripples separated the waters within the dozens of square meters from around. If one were to calm down and sense carefully, they would find it impossible to perceive the ocean hundreds of meters below, because it was in a different time and space!

In the space-time cage, the ocean trembled with blueness. Suddenly, the water in a certain area surged and consolidated into a translucent “statue” that looked like a sapphire. Then, the face of the statue became clear. It was Doris. Her gold tail leaped out of the

ocean too.

Doris looked at Lucien and Natasha with her blue eyes while biting her lips without saying anything, as if she were weighing the consequences.

“I am a friendly good guy, and I don’t like fighting and unnecessary slaughter. I hope that you won’t let me do the things that I don’t like,” Lucien said with a gentle smile, but his eyes were not gentle at all.

Doris was not a sorcerer, and she did not have other strange methods of escape. She was unwilling to fight Lucien who was apparently much stronger than her either, in which case she would only have a ten percent chance of survival. It was a risk that a mermaid who loved singing and swimming freely like her could not accept. Therefore, she nodded her head. “If you want to know about the Blue Gate, I can tell you.”

She blamed herself for singing too devotedly just now. If she had noticed the two human beings sooner, she would’ve had enough time to escape instead of ending up like this.

“To make sure that you are telling the truth, please sign a magic contract with me, Ms. Doris.” Lucien was still wearing his standard smile of courtesy.

“Contract! Demon, I would rather die before I accept a slavery contract!” A storm of fury raged in Doris’ blue eyes and dimmed the environment around her. The sky was gloomy and depressing, and the water in the ocean stopped moving, as if a horrifying outbreak was underway.

She had heard before that certain quirky human beings had an unusual interest in mermaids, even though most mermaids could not turn into humans and lose their fish tails. Therefore, she would rather die in self-detonation than submitting herself, hoping that her final attack could heavily wound the wicked sorcerer!

Lucien chuckled. “This contract has no clauses of slavery. It only ensures that I will sense it immediately if you lie or if you tell other

people my whereabouts and destination afterward.”

Under normal circumstances, nobody would sign such a contract, and it was obviously unfair. Also, the devils and fake gods who served as notary might refuse to provide a better guarantee because of that. However, Doris did not really have a choice right now.

She struggled to open her mouth. “Let me take a look at the contract.”

Lucien took out a contract that was made of the rind of an elven tree. He pressed his right hand on it and touched it. The paper immediately spread out a silver light.

After his right hand moved away, dozens of sophisticated clauses had been added to the contract.

Doris picked up the contract that Lucien tossed over and read carefully. She realized that the contract would have zero effect if she did not lie or reveal that they were going to the Blue Gate, but of course, if she violated that, she would receive the punishment from the Atomic Universe, which would mean her death.

“Atomic Universe...” Doris looked at Lucien. Why was he the notary of the contract?

As one of the seven sea generals under the command of the Master of the Boundless Ocean, and as the Mermaid Princess who was active in the territory of sea elves, she had the basic knowledge about the Congress of Magic.

Lucien said with a smile, “It’s my wife that you’ll be signing the magic contract with. As for me, as a legendary sorcerer who has my own demiplane, I am certainly qualified to be the notary of the contract. I’m even more professional than most devils. My punishment won’t have any delay.”

That was why the word “legendary” was used to describe the experts of such a level. They were capable of what other people couldn’t do!

Looking at the pitiful look on Doris’ frowning face, Natasha sighed

in the telepathic bond. “I almost cannot watch this anymore. You are really not a gentleman.”

“If I were a ‘gentleman’, the consequences would be much more severe...” Lucien teased.

In her helplessness, Doris could only sign the contract. After Natasha also signed it, the contract suddenly ignited itself, burning so furiously that even the water around seemed to be on fire.

The pale fire suddenly turned dark, profound, and dim, and stars in different colors seemed to be glittering. It was quite similar to the projection of the Atomic Universe with which Lucien changed the environment around him.

A handsome face was condensed by the starry light in the fire, who then declared solemnly, “In the name of Atom Controller, I hereby announce that the contract is in effect.”

Looking at the identical faces in the fire and in the sky, Doris said with seething wrath, “The contract has already been signed. Just ask whatever you want to know fast.”

It was simply too shameless that the guy was both the player and the judge!

“Why were you so surprised after hearing the Blue Gate?” Natasha asked.

Doris heaved a sigh. “Because I’m here exactly for the Blue Gate.”

Seeing that Lucien and Natasha did not pursue in surprise, she simply went on and said, “By the order of His Majesty Harex, I have come to the intersection of the undercurrents of the Lost Land to navigate the sea creatures who come after me to go to the Blue Gate. Because there are many other intersections, I sang a song to summon my people, asking them to provide navigation in other places in case the sea creatures lost their direction.”

The Lost Land was how the sea clans called the depths of the Boundless Ocean.

“Undercurrents...” Lucien repeated in a low voice.

It was undeniable that the Congress of Magic’s natural research on the ocean was still shallow. After all, every part of the Boundless Ocean had been occupied by the sea clans. The furthest place that human fleets reached was the few islands that the Congress of Magic occupied. As for the sorcerers who could submerge into the ocean without fearing the sea creatures, they were at least in the sixth circle, and they paid more attention to the mines, treasures, and special animals at the bottom of the ocean than to the ocean itself. Therefore, Lucien flew here to record the environmental data. He had completely forgotten about the situation at the bottom of the ocean.

Seeing that Lucien was in his thoughts, Natasha stopped asking and waited for two minutes. Lucien then opened his mouth and asked, “Does the Blue Gate really exist? Why did Harex ask the other sea creatures to go there?”

“I’ve been to the bottom of the Lost Land with His Majesty Harex before. There was indeed a Blue Gate. However, His Majesty Harex forbade me from approaching it. I only stole a glimpse at it from far away. It felt both real and illusory. Although it was right there, I somehow felt that it was far away in the Moonlight Ocean. That was quite amazing.”

Doris replied honestly. However, as a mermaid who loved singing, she couldn’t help but add artistic descriptions, “It is said that we can only touch it when the legendary material growing inside the Blue Gate is about to take shape.”

“Harex summoned the sea creatures because the legendary material inside was about to take shape? No, in that case, he should’ve come in person.” Natasha held her longsword tightly without any relief.

After hearing Doris’ description, Lucien nodded his head. The Blue Key was a space-time object, and the Blue Gate should be exactly like that.

Doris shook her head. “I don’t know, but His Majesty Harex has ordered the few trustworthy sea creatures to deliver the captives in

the battle to the Blue Gate.”

“Captives?” Lucien looked at Natasha, but Natasha shook her head, hinting that Doris was not lying.

“Yes, half a month ago, His Majesty Harex gathered his forces and fought the sea elves and the Gipps. Many captives were caught,” Doris replied honestly.

Lucien became solemn. The sea clans had another battle with the elves, and it seemed rather intense. However, he did not receive any message about it since he was in the “Lost Land”.

In the Lost Land deep inside the Boundless Ocean, all the communication methods were disordered. That was why Harex asked the Mermaid Princess to lead the way through the most primitive of roaring.

“Captives...” Natasha repeated and couldn’t help but look at Lucien. Both of them had smelled the air of “blood sacrifice”.

Doris did not know what was on their minds. She explained the details about how to go to the Blue Gate along the undercurrents and their changing patterns. In the end, she said pitifully, “That’s all I know about the Blue Gate.”

Lucien nodded. “What’s the result of the battles with the elves and the Gipps?”

“We assaulted the territory controlled by the sea elves and captured a lot of them, but they were defended by two legends and had a thorough defense. They managed to resist us until the elven queen came to their aid.” Fear suddenly popped up on Doris’ face. “The elven queen was much stronger than before and was almost on par with Belkovsky. She heavily wounded His Majesty Harex who did not see it coming, forcing us to flee with the captives. On the other side, the ambush on the Gipps was also affected. Not too many casualties above the senior rank were caused.”

Under the pale sunlight, both Lucien and Natasha looked somewhat gloomy. Had Aglaea, the elven queen, improved herself so quickly?

Chapter 757: Bottom of the Ocean

Shaking water was everywhere, and bizarre-shaped fish swam in it slowly and casually. The deep blue had gradually turned into pitch dark. The sunlight from up above could barely extend any further. However, this place was not in complete darkness. Once in a while, scaleless fish with bodies that glowed and crab-like sea monsters that seemed to be holding two-color lanterns could be seen. Their lights further added to the haziness and creepiness of the deep ocean.

After Lucien and Natasha left Doris, they dived into the depths of the ocean and moved along a strange current that was entirely different from the surroundings. They saw the amazing view that was entirely different from the shallow ocean and sensed the water pressure that was getting greater and greater and was about to crush them.

Therefore, shimmers of light were added around Lucien's body, blocking the seawater and the pressure. He seemed to be in a different world.

Small, terrifying swords of light raged around Natasha and cut out a territory that was absolutely under her control and exchanged the necessities with the water around.

After sinking for another hundred meters, Lucien suddenly stopped and spoke through the telepathic bond, "I'm going to measure the environmental factors of this place. You keep an eye on the surroundings."

Natasha nodded. As a silver and plain longsword was raised, all the waves and quakes around immediately stopped.

At their depths, there were already no special ocean creatures that could emit their own lights. It was absolutely dark and soundless.

In such an environment, any intelligent life with a normal mind would be grasped by inexplicable fear, as if monsters were lurking in the dark water that brought immense pressure. They were

watching the strangers indifferently and waiting for an opportunity to devour them.

“Aren’t we in a hurry to go to the Blue Gate?” Natasha was rather puzzled that Lucien was still doing experiments at such a moment. “Whether or not it is associated with the anomalies deep inside the Boundless Ocean, it is by far our most important lead.”

Lucien tossed out his “experiment cabin” and let it grow into a complete laboratory. He then covered it with a layer of silver light so that it would not be corroded by the seawater.

“For me, collecting the environmental factors is equally important to the exploration of the Blue Gate, if not more. In arcana studies, comparing abundant data is the key to many mysteries,” Lucien replied casually and focused his eyes on the experiment cabin. His attention was immediately gathered on it.

Natasha stopped asking. After all, it was not a field that she was good at. Believing in authorities and “professors” was her only choice now.

Holding the Sword of Truth, she swam around like a mermaid, keeping an eye on the unexpected attack of the deep-sea monsters.

Although she had strong willpower and keen senses as a legendary knight, her perception of the environment had been greatly lowered in the deep sea where the pressure was horrifying and the light was gone. She might be missing something if she was careless for one second. Even if Lucien enhanced her with spells that turned a certain range in the ocean into the equivalent of a continent, it could not reach any further.

In the quiet ocean, Lucien was completely devoted to his experiment. Now and then, the sea monsters that had sensed intruders would come at him while waving their tentacles and clamps, but most of them slipped away when Natasha stared at them. Those whose minds were overwhelmed by the lust for slaughter, on the other hand, were cut into countless tiny meat pieces with just a flash of sword, thus allowing the weaker fish around to take the advantage.

Just like that, Lucien pressed forward along the undercurrents that went deep into the ocean. He stopped for experiments and collected data every now and then.

Gulu. Gulu.

Natasha, who was staying on alert next to Lucien, suddenly sensed certain noises. Many creatures seemed to be surging over from a different undercurrent.

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The monsters with fish heads and human bodies traveled fast amidst the undercurrents, holding the elves whose skin was deep and whose ears were pointy. With their strength, the pressure at such depths should've been too much, but the priests in the team who held the staff created an enormous bubble together and transferred the pressure on it.

“How long will it take before we arrive at the Blue Gate?” one of the Kuo-toan warriors asked the priest impatiently.

As the land of miracles for the sea clans, the Blue Gate had been praised by the Kuo-toans, the Gipps, the sea clans, the sea drakes, the mutated seahorses for generations after generations. It was their dreamland that they had always looked forward to. Therefore, when they heard that they could go to the Blue Gate that had never been confirmed before, those sea creatures were so excited that they could barely contain themselves.

The priest nearby was also obviously excited. “According to Doris, it will take about another half a day.”

The Kuo-toan who asked bared his glittering eyes and poked the elven captive that he was escorting with his trident. “Swim faster!”

The sea elf glared at the Kuo-toan with her eyes, from which fire seemed to be spurting out, as if she were about to launch a desperate attack.

“What are you looking at? You are captives. I can eat you immediately!” Sea elves were certainly among the foods of the Kuo-

toans.

The female sea wolf said with a clear and angry voice, “Her Majesty will come to save us!”

“Hehe. If your queen could save you, she would’ve already saved you. Although she blocked His Majesty with her filthy scheme, there is nothing she can do to save you!” The Kuo-toan couldn’t feel more regretful when he recalled the battle. How did the elven queen become so tough?

The female sea elf’s eyes became dim. She said in self-consolation, “Her Majesty is merely using you to find the Blue Gate. That’s why she didn’t save us. Chances are that she is following you right now!”

Recently, she had been listening to those goddamn murlocs discussing the Blue Gate all the time. She was quite curious about it too. If she weren’t going there as a captive, she would’ve been very excited about the journey.

“Haha. Do you believe what you said? How could she have known that we were coming to the Blue Gate?” The Kuo-toan destroyed the hope of the sea elf, who was now forced to think of the miserable ending that was waiting for her. Would she be used by Harex as the material to open the Blue Gate?

In the middle of her desperation, a silver light suddenly popped up in the dark water up ahead.

It was so clear and pure that it seemed to be Mountain Paradise at the dark bottom of the ocean thousands of meters deep.

“That’s...” The sea elf was shocked. She looked there in confusion. Vaguely, she saw that it was a metal cabin in the middle of the light.

Huh. A metal cabin?

Why was there a metal cabin in the deep, dark ocean?

Her heart was suddenly filled with hope. Was it Harex’s enemy?

Suddenly, her widened eyes reflected a tiny glittering sword. It grew large quickly and occupied her whole horizon.

The female sea elf felt that soundless sword that could cut everything filled the environment, but she could see nothing except for one cold and indifferent light. The bubble was broken, and so were the Kuo-toans, the mutated seahorses, the jellyfish, and other sea creatures.

By the time the light of the sword was gone, the female sea elf discovered that the other sea creatures except for the captives and one priest had all been reduced into tiny pieces of meat, with illusionary, terrifying light wandering on their remains.

“Are you alright?” A pleasant voice that carried both care and intimidation came into the sea elves’ ears.

The female sea elf was back to herself from her shock, only to discover that an elegant purple-haired lady was floating before her with a smiling and gentle face.

For some reason, her heart was suddenly warm. The frustration and desperation that she suffered recently all surged up, as she sobbed and asked, “Are you here to save us?”

She felt that the female knight touched her head with her left hand that was not holding the sword, so her tears ran even faster. Had it not been for her other concerns, she would’ve jumped into her arms and cried out aloud.

“I am Natasha from the Kingdom of Holm. I am an ally of the Elven Court. We met you by accident.” Natasha briefly introduced her identity. “Can you tell us what happened?”

“That day, the big villain Harex launched an assault at our territory...” The female sea elf explained what had happened while sobbing.

After hearing her out, Natasha said to Lucien in the telepathic bond. “It’s basically the same as what Doris said, with much more details. It seems that Harex has really been heavily wounded. Perhaps he’s

bringing the captives to the Blue Gate for a quick recovery?”

Lucien was reminded by Natasha when the Kuo-toans approached, not because they were dangerous, but because they might be carrying important intelligence. At this moment, having enhanced the captured sea elves with protective bubbles, he nodded. “That’s a possibility. Let’s ask the priest again.”

It was not until then that the female sea elf realized that a man was standing in the water further away. His black double-breasted suit, under the contrast of the darkness of the deep ocean and the silver light, emitted a mysterious and creepy air, and his handsome face was particularly familiar.

“M... Master Evans?” The female sea elf suddenly remembered who he was. Although she did not know much about the things on the continent, every music-loving elf had heard the name Lucien Evans and seen his picture before.

“A grand arcanist of the Congress of Magic...” She was completely relaxed because she was now safe. So, she cried even harder.

After asking the priest, Lucien said to those sea elves, “We’ll take a look at the Blue Gate. If possible, we will try to rescue your compatriots.”

Those sea elves were about to express their gratitude in delight when Lucien said, “However, until then, I would like you to forget about us.”

“What?” Those sea elves raised their heads, all having the illusion that Mr. Evans had suddenly reached before them. They could see his eyes clearly, the eyes that were deep and peaceful like an ocean...

The sea elves left ignorantly. Lucien said to Natasha, “My data collection is almost done, and the Blue Gate is not far away from here. Let’s go over and take a look.”

“Alright. Take care.” Although Natasha was a knight who preferred to lead the charge, she had always been prudent before any battle.

The two of them went deeper and deeper and closer and closer to the bottom of the ocean. Suddenly, a weird huge hollow appeared before them; one that did not have a single drop of water in the hundreds of square kilometers nearby.

Centered at a vague blue gate far away, the water around seemed to have been pumped away, and the water further away could not enter the area at all. Only the strange reefs and the loose sand proved that it was still the bottom of an ocean.

“I was thinking of turning into a fish to sneak over for reconnaissance. It seems that we have to try a different approach now.” Lucien became rather solemn.

Chapter 758: Underground Master

With the hazy blue light far away, Natasha observed the surroundings carefully. On one side, it was a spherical hollow, and on the other side, it was the deep, depressing water and all kinds of bizarre monsters. The two sides were so distinctly separated that there was no mix-up at all.

“That part of water seems to have been squeezed out by the qualities of the Blue Gate. There is not the slightest air inside. It will be barely possible to avoid Harex’s detection.” She drew her conclusion.

With Lucien’s assortment of amazing spells, it should’ve been easy to sneak to somewhere near the Blue Gate without catching any attention. However, according to Doris and the previous priest, Harex was exactly before the Blue Gate. Considering his strength at the peak of legendary and the corresponding intuitions, it would be barely possible to approach him without the cover of water, fish, sea monsters, microorganisms, and plants.

Lucien nodded and checked the environment again. Then, his body turned heavy, allowing him to sink to the bottom of the ocean and on the “ground” that contained abundant minerals.

“You stay here. I’ll take a look inside first.” Lucien had an idea.

Without any hesitation, Natasha nodded her head. “Alright. If anything happens, I’ll fly over immediately.”

She knew very well that there was a major gap between her and legendary sorcerers in terms of reconnaissance and stealth. Those unimaginable spells were the perfect choice at a moment like this. Therefore, if she insisted on going together, she would be a liability for Lucien in case of an emergency. For example, he would have to cast two spells in order to cover their traces.

Of course, it did not mean that sorcerers were necessarily better at stealth and reconnaissance than knights. It was just that the blood power of “Sword of Truth”, which highlighted charging and

pressing the assault, was not up for such a delicate job. Other bloodlines that were adept at those were as good as sorcerers.

Now that Natasha agreed, Lucien activated the magic models inside his soul with a smile. He had fallen in love with her probably because she was always decisive and never too emotional.

Tawny colors arose on the surface of Lucien's body and enshrouded him. Thanks to his advanced skills, the magic waves were barely perceivable.

In the tawny brightness, Lucien's body was suddenly softened. All the items including the Robe of Grand Arcanists and his body turned into a pile of mud!

"A mud monster?" In the telepathic bond, Natasha asked in slight confusion. She had never seen such a strange spell before and could only propose the most approximate guess.

Lucien's mud-like body wriggled and melted into the soil at the bottom of the ocean. His spiritual power seemed to have turned into countless tentacles that spread out into a gigantic web of spiritual power, getting the land around under his control.

"Not exactly. This is a rarely-seen ninth-circle spell named 'Underground Master'. The Blue Gate has merely squeezed out the water without collapsing the bottom of the ocean, so the spell is still usable," Lucien explained to Natasha. "In any case, this is still part of the underground world."

Natasha stopped asking. Holding the Sword of Truth tightly, she was ready for battle, and Lucien sank further deeper into the bottom of the ocean before he snuck toward the Blue Gate without a sound.

The darkness below the bottom of the ocean was even more depressing than that in the ocean, giving the feeling that one could be buried here at any moment. Although Lucien could perceive the environment through the tentacles of spiritual power that were extended to the surface, he still felt that space and time were so chaotic that he did not know which year it was at all.

After moving for almost three hundred kilometers, the projection of Lucien's Host Star of Destiny in his soul suddenly sensed something. The spiritual power that was extended to the surface was recalled, and his movement came to an abrupt halt. He crouched below the soil quietly in a weird posture.

He could not move forward any further, or he would be in the range of Harex's "Absolute Defense"!

The so-called "Absolute Defense" was the area around a top legend that was almost absolutely under their control. The size of the area varied according to the strength and specialties of the legend, but nobody could possibly enter the area without alerting them, not even demigods.

Therefore, the cases where top legends were ambushed were all launched outside of the area, or under the cover of other targets. When the elven queen ambushed the last Prince of Demons, she took advantage of the altar that he set up in person. When the Demogorgon of Darkness devoured the previous Prince of Demons, he had been serving him dutifully and loyally. That was why Lucien thought that he could blend into a school of fish if there were any in the area. There was a chance that he could escape the detection of Harex's "Absolute Defense" if he were distracted by other matters.

Although Lucien's tentacle-like spiritual power had been significantly reduced, there were still many tiny hollows in the middle of the soil and rocks. They were like the secondary eyes of "Underground Master", thus allowing Lucien to catch a fuzzy view of what was outside.

Not far away ahead of him, there was a magnificent palace, one that did not have any walls but was entirely supported by stone pillars.

The palace was not nearly as magnificent as the Temple of Spirits. It was only the size of a Nekso Palace. Also, the stone pillars were mottled and old. Some of them were breaking and collapsing all the time, exactly like other ancient cities that had been drowned by seawater.

The palace was circular. At its center was an open-air altar. There was a vague blue gate above the altar, which gave Lucien an unusually familiar feeling because it was as transcendental, intangible, and unapproachable as the Furnace of Souls.

“They are indeed somewhat similar...” From Doris’ narration, Lucien already sensed that the Blue Gate shared certain similarities with the Furnace of Souls. Also, it had something identical to the ever-changing, lofty “God’s Glory”. “Perhaps... they are the different reflections of the truth of the world. That’s why they give a similar feeling.

“The Blue Gate is rather out of the place compared to the altar and the palace. I cannot sense the passage of time on it at all, but the altar and the palace have both been corroded by the passing years. The Chamber of Immortality and the Pathway of Immortality, as well as the Furnace of Souls and the Temple of Spirits, are much more matched than they are...” Lucien identified the unusual environment and drew a preliminary deduction. “The palace must’ve been built by a certain expert of the sea clans after the Blue Gate was discovered in order to highlight the Blue Gate’s status. However, future generations paid little attention to the extra stuff. That’s why it is dilapidated right now.”

The altar was much more intact than the palace that was full of bricks and fallen pillars. Also, near the Blue Gate and on the eight sides of the altar, new and complicated symbols had been added. Even an erudite arcanist like Lucien could barely tell what they meant. He only sensed that every symbol and every part was simple and time-tested. Infinite mysteries seemed to have been contained in them.

“Are these the words that the experts controlling the Blue Gate like Harex created based on the specialties of the Blue Gate, like the Dark Dialect?” Lucien speculated the reason. In any case, those fundamental “extraordinary words” revealed their function through their influence on the environment, thus giving Lucien a chance to analyze their meaning as well as the effect of the whole magic circle.

Below the eight sides of the altar were the magic circles of blood

sacrifice that Lucien was quite familiar with. There were plenty of sea elves, Gipps, more Kuo-toans, mutated seahorses, venomous jellyfish, and deep-sea drakes.

By the time Lucien noticed them, the magic circle of blood sacrifice had been activated. Those poor creatures completely lost their lives and were rigidified like dry corpses. Intense bloodiness and ivory light were condensed around them, brimming with pain, hate, desperation, and other negative feelings.

Above the altar, before the Blue Gate, two strange creatures were standing. One of them was a murloc that was as tall and brawny as a frost giant. The scales on his body were not silver or in the color of blood, but they emitted a brightness that was as blue and clear as gems.

The blue crown on his head covered his upper face with a strange shadow and revealed only a pair of crimson, cold eyes. Together with the tough lips on the lower half of his face, they left a deep impression on whoever saw him. Also, his limbs were not as shrunk as the other murlocs but healthy and strong. He was holding a gold trident in his right hand, and at the head of the trident, a gem that was as blue as an eye released a vague feeling of space-time ripples.

He was Harex, the emperor of the Kuo-toans and the Master of the Boundless Ocean.

Next to him was a creature that was even stranger. His whole body seemed to be made of soft, transparent materials and was wriggling and floating all the time. One moment, it blossomed like a flower, and the next, it stretched out like tentacles. In the meantime, the creature did not have eyes, nose, or lips. He was like a transparent bag that was filled with water.

“The Dark Jellyfish, who ranks the second among the seven sea generals?” Lucien thought to himself.

While watching the magic circle of blood sacrifice to be activated, Harex spoke, “After we open the Blue Gate, we will be rewarded by the ocean. I will regain my strongest status, and you will obtain a legendary material that is as good as the Blue Key.”

“Can you really open the Blue Gate in advance by sacrificing tens of thousands of lives?” Dark Jellyfish Tyers vibrated in the air and made a sound.

“Of course, but we still need to join our hands to activate the remaining circles. Otherwise, the power of the blood sacrifice wouldn’t be enough.” Harex stepped into the magic circle on the left side of the Blue Gate, and Tyers entered the right one.

Lucien was more or less puzzled by that, so he kept on observing.

The weird symbols and patterns glittered at the same time. Their deep blue resonated with the blue gate.

Very soon, a mysterious, complicated magic circle took shape, like a palace of water that covered the altar. From the magic circles on the eight sides, the blood that was mixed with the feelings of desperation, pain, and hate surged toward Tyers!

“You!”

Tyers sensed that something was not right. He unfolded his body in shock and anger, temporarily resisting the surging negative feelings and blood with dark bubbles.

Harex raised his trident and said indifferently, “Don’t blame me. You’ve seen how strong Aglaea was. If I don’t find out a way to improve myself, I’ll be left behind by her, and that will be the end of the sea clans.”

“Hehe. Why don’t you sacrifice yourself to fortify me then?” The Dark Jellyfish squeezed out tremendous black liquids.

“It’s the old stuff again...” Lucien thought to himself from far away, but he immediately got excited. This was the first time that he had witnessed such a scene in person. They were the rarely-seen “experiment materials”!

Therefore, the magic notebook in his spirit library was opened. He then began recording symbols, patterns, the process of activation, and every other detail.

Chapter 759: Ocean Emperor

Chapter 759: Ocean Emperor

The seemingly plain but actually highly corrosive black liquids were gradually enshrouded by redness. No matter how the Dark Jellyfish performed his naturally-endowed talents and abilities, it was impossible for him to break out of the magic circles that could transform anyone into the status of primeval devils because of the corrosion of the eight magic circles of blood sacrifice.

At this moment, Harex, who was holding the gold trident, uttered the intricate, unpredictable words in a language that was different from the languages that Lucien knew. The water seemed to be surging out of the void around.

Centered at the Blue Key, which appeared like a gem, the gold trident emitted a brilliant blue light. At every pointy end, an illusionary swirl that was so blue that it was almost black protruded and spun, raising a flow of brightness that was like seawater.

Like the saltwater intrusion, the light flowed back to the magic circle, nullifying the natural-born talents of Dark Jellyfish Tyers. The black liquids that corroded the magic circle stopped wriggling.

“Water’s Tolerance!” How could Tyers not recognize Harex’s famous quasi-magic ability? He was both shocked and infuriated, but it was impossible for him to escape from the range of the effect because of the many magic circles. He could only try to resist it.

“Water’s Tolerance...” Lucien wrote down the ability of the emperor of the sea clans that the Congress of Magic always wanted to duplicate but never succeeded. It could neutralize, nullify, and melt most supernatural powers, and it could tell friends from foes. It was a supernatural power that was as good as “Advanced Time Stop”, “Luxury Cracking”, “Paradise of Stars”, and other special legendary spells.

Only by becoming the emperor of the sea clans and controlling the trident, “Emperor’s Grasp”, could they perform the complete

version of “Water’s Tolerance” by activating the power of the Blue Key on it. The core of the Emperor’s Grasp was crafted with the legendary material, “Blue Key”.

The watery light cleansed everything, rendering Tyers’ resistance useless. His blue liquids had turned red. Unable to escape, he found it impossible to suppress the desperation, pain, and anger in his heart.

His status had subtle reverberations with the negative feelings around that were almost concrete. Therefore, he was no longer as transparent and fluid as a bag that was full of water. Instead, deep black and red were added to the thickness, devastating anyone who saw it.

Lucien carefully recorded every tiny change and all the functions of all the weird runes. Although he had experienced a similar status transformation before, he had been through it as a recipient. He knew what happened to him very well, but he lacked the overall knowledge and did not know the changes in the outside world. He did not know the specific function of magic circles either. Therefore, Harex’s transformation of the Dark Jellyfish gave Lucien a chance to complete his files. It was a rare “real experiment”.

At this moment, seeing that the Dark Jellyfish already lost the ability to resist, Harex suddenly turned around and uttered a word that sounded like waves slapping the shoreline. His crimson and cold eyes immediately filled Lucien’s horizon.

“Crap. I’ve been caught!” The projection of the Host Star of Destiny inside Lucien’s soul immediately sensed something.

The blue brightness on the gold trident in Harex’s hands immediately turned dark. The swirls on every pointy end were even more intense, and the same swirls were appearing in the void around Lucien. They revolved so fast that they seemed to be absorbing everything.

Hualala.

The seawater outside of the hollow, which was affected by the

swirls, surged in and filled the swirls, making them concrete all of a sudden. Lucien's body and soul were torn.

"Death Swirl..." The elven queen and Harex had fought many times. As her ally, the Congress of Magic certainly had abundant files about the Master of the Boundless Ocean. Therefore, Lord of Mysteries recognized that it was one of Harex's five most powerful abilities. It might not be as weird and unique as "Water's Tolerance", but it was much more explosive and ferocious.

Torn by the illusionary and solid swirls, Lucien, who had removed the special status of "Underground Master", sensed the horror of the top legends again. Also, Harex was apparently not as heavily wounded as what Doris and the sea elves thought. His control over the environment was much stronger than what Lucien had expected!

A delicate silver pocket watch appeared in Lucien's right hand, and the second hand on it was ticking. It was filled with the feeling of the eternal flow of time.

Crack.

Lucien pressed his right hand, and the deep blueness around him faded into devastating grayness. The rapidly-revolving swirls came to an abrupt halt. Frozen around Lucien densely, they were like special embossments.

After being improved with the Time Plate, Lucien's Moon Timer had reached level three of legendary. Also, since it was a unique legendary item that was closely connected to his own cognitive world, the effect of the Moon Timer was close to the peak of legendary!

In the frozen time and space, Lucien stepped back and blinked away from the Death Swirl. In the meantime, he extended his left hand and let out a spell that sounded like a raging wind.

"Storm Barrier!"

This time, there was no tornado, no storm, no heat, and no freezing

coldness, but only a vacuum, where electric arcs were bouncing.

The bolts of lightning struck the pillars in the palace, collapsing them all of a sudden and surrounding Harex who was affected by Time Stop on the altar.

However, it was not Lucien's purpose to trap Harex with the Storm Barrier. He was only trying to create a vacuum. The intense air of destruction suddenly spread out of his extended left hand.

Right when Lucien was about to launch his spell, the Blue Key from Harex's trident suddenly glowed in the grayness. The vague blueness got Harex out of the space-time restraint immediately.

Under the watch of his cold and indifferent eyes, the Death Swirl revolved again, and the seawater melted into the Storm Barrier.

The electric arcs struck his body along the seawater, but they could not shake his blue scales at all.

Under such circumstances, it was naturally impossible for Lucien to launch Positron Cannon. He could only swallow the recoil and disrupt the cast, or it would explode right in front of him, which would be dangerous even though he had "Space Staff"!

Lucien had used "Advanced Time Stop" in order to get rid of "Death Swirl". It did not occur to him that Harex would be affected despite the Blue Key. Now that Harex was indeed affected by the effect of Time Stop, how could Lucien let go of such a rare opportunity!

However, out of his expectation, it was only Harex's trap. He intentionally got caught in "Advanced Time Stop" and activated the Blue Key that he prepared in advance at the critical moment, thus disrupting the performance of Lucien's spell!

Although he couldn't have known the specialness of Lucien's "Positron Cannon", his boldness, decisiveness, and sordidness still taught Lucien a lesson about the horror of top legends.

Suddenly, Harex's right hand exerted strength as he threw out the gold trident at Lucien as if it were a javelin. At the same time, a deep dark ocean of death appeared behind his back.

BOOM!

The ocean of death behind Harex burst out a terrifying tsunami. Wherever the gold trident enshrouded in blueness reached, real or illusionary tsunamis were on a rampage too. The ground at the bottom of the ocean protruded, and magma was erupting, blocking Lucien's escape.

Also, the swirls were disappearing and the water was separating where the gold trident pointed. It was the most depressing calmness before the storm.

It was exactly one of Harex's strongest abilities, "Emperor's Fury"!

The gold trident was as fast as Natasha's "Sword of Truth". Lucien, who had just recovered from the recoil of his magic, had no time to dodge it or jump away from the siege. He could only perform the defensive legendary spell that he was best at.

"Space Staff!"

As the light gathered and the staff took shape, different spaces seemed to be appearing around Lucien.

After the gold trident hit the layers of space, the blackish swirls appeared on its three pointy ends again and surrounded the Blue Key. As a result, the spaces and the defenses were melted one after another. There seemed to be nothing that could stop it from pressing forward!

However, it did give Lucien an opportunity to use legendary items. Light spots in countless different colors popped up on the Robe of Grand Arcanists, establishing a translucent shield of colors.

Crack!

Countless holes appeared in Elemental Protection under Emperor's Fury. However, at this moment, thanks to the offset, the blockage of "magma" around was not as impenetrable as just now. Therefore, Lucien activated "Magic Order" in advance and disappeared where he was, blinking away.

Hualala.

As Harex uttered, the place where Lucien just disappeared from was filled by countless new tiny swirls!

Since Lucien had performed so many spells just now, Harex naturally had enough time to cast a “Death Swirl” again. If Lucien hadn’t run as fast, even if he wouldn’t be killed on the spot, he wouldn’t have felt too good about it either!

It was the first time that Lucien fought a top legend for real, unlike the past when he relied on castle defense or when the enemy arrived only as projections. Therefore, he had truly sensed the gap between himself and those at the peak of the legendary level. He was perhaps as good as Harex in terms of the power of attack and Time Effect, but there was still a major gap when all things were considered.

The gold trident had returned to Harex’s hand at some point. He said solemnly, “You’re very strong. At the very least, I regard you as an opponent of the same level as me. However, in any case, I am a top legend, and you are not. If we were in any other place, I would be able to defeat you, but I could never kill you. I couldn’t even stop you from escaping. However, of all the places, you have come to the Blue Gate.”

He spoke so casually as if everything was under his control.

Chapter 760: Greed Is the Sin

On the golden trident, the color of the Blue Key was much gentler, as if another ocean was contained inside. The vague sound of flowing water gave the feeling that it would run eternally.

The Blue Gate behind the altar had slightly lost the transcendental, intangible sacredness too. The vague light flowed and reverberated with the key.

Immediately, the hollow created by the Blue Gate was covered in the hazy, illusionary blueness.

Lucien's spiritual power, which was spread out, was bounced back the moment it touched the blueness. As a result, his connection with the outside world was cut out.

Lucien's heart became heavy, and he was more solemn than ever. Harex had truly controlled the timing perfectly. He had only just triggered "Magic Order" in advance and hadn't escaped from the range of the Blue Gate yet with other spells when he was trapped by the weird barrier. If the enemy were one second late, he would've reached Natasha's side through Precise Transfer.

Solemn as he might have been, Lucien was not in the least desperate or frustrated. After all, although there was still a major gap between his strength and the peak of legendary, it shouldn't be a problem for him to resist the enemy for a while. As long as he could diminish the barrier while resisting it, together with Natasha's attack from the outside, it wouldn't be difficult for him to get out of the trouble. After all, he didn't come alone. Also, he would have finished the barrier with one attack of "Positron Cannon" if it weren't a space-time one!

However, since he could slightly make use of the power of the Blue Gate, this 'barrier' is not to be underestimated, Lucien thought to himself. He took out a crystal ball and activated his prophecy, looking for the weakness on the barrier. In the meantime, he let out a complicated spell. "Abrupt Magic Reverse!"

Now that he had to deal with the barrier, he had to consider his own defense first.

A weird mirror full of weird patterns appeared before Lucien, like a channel that connected a different world.

Harex did not attack immediately. Instead, he frowned and looked at Tyers who was in the status transformation circle. His body had already been contaminated by the utter darkness and was wriggling nonstop, like an amalgamation of negative emotions that were corrupting the environment nonstop.

Black lines that were barely visible extended into the vacuum from the amalgamation and connected all the negative feelings around. It was impossible to tell who was the main body and who was the projection. They were like the ubiquitous “cloud of probabilities”, whose information could only be determined after the eventual collapse. The only difference was that the object transformed from the Dark Jellyfish was interacting with the surroundings and showing no sign of collapse.

Of course, it did not have the unique feeling of spreading collapse inside the Pathway of Immortality or the sense of supremacy and transcendence that came with it. There was still a major gap from the level of demigods.

“The transformation has been completed so quickly?” Harex was slightly surprised. However, he did not have any experience and could only make conclusions with his keen instincts.

“If I don’t control Tyers, it will be a major problem after he gets used to such a status...” Harex decided to focus his attention on the status transformation circle. It was not because he was scared of Tyers who had been transformed into the status of primeval devils. He was instead worried that the guy would escape or kill himself with such a weird form of existence, in which case his flawless plan of status transformation would be in vain.

He stared at Lucien, who had just performed Abrupt Magic Reverse, with his crimson and cold eyes, before he waved the gold trident. Hazy blueness appeared before him, completely blocking him from

Lucien.

“This is your opportunity. If you can open the Blue Restraint and escape before I succeed, it will mean that today is your lucky day and you won’t be killed by me, but if you are still here after my status transformation is completed, don’t blame me for being too cruel.” Harex’s sentence was long, but because of the weird quakes in his voice, Lucien understood what he meant immediately.

Lucien was not exasperated or influenced by Harex’s provocation at all. His attention was not fully focused on breaking the blockage between them and stopping the status transformation. He also cast his spell.

“Luxury Cracking!”

As long as he could get out of the range of the Blue Gate, even though Harex successfully transformed his status, he could still retreat with Natasha easily. Also, even if Harex’s transformation worked out, there would still be a long way to go before he became a demigod. He would only be on par with Mr. President at best. It was not a life-blighting crisis. So, why should he try to stop the guy and waste his precious time in this place?

Crack, crack, crack.

The hazy blueness let out crisp explosions under “Luxury Cracking”, and the ripples shook violently. However, the Blue Gate was absolutely still. As a result, the barrier was not broken at all even though it was weakened.

“It will take at least five times of ‘Luxury Cracking’ to break it with violence. The time may be enough for Harex to complete the status transformation of the Dark Jellyfish...” Lucien concluded based on the feedback of the attack. Therefore, he was ready to launch the Luxury Crack that was attached with Hand of Uncertainties!

Although his spiritual power would be severely exhausted in such a way, his current capabilities could already support him to perform a dozen times. He did not need to worry about too many things now that he was in a hurry.

Right then, Harex suddenly burst out a roar, and the seawater around was surging fast.

Lucien's cast was slowed down, and he noticed unexpected changes on the altar.

Harex had been standing in the other magic circle to complete the status transformation through "Dark Jellyfish" Tyers. In such a way, he could both achieve his purpose and restrain the negative feelings inside the puppet without affecting himself. However, at this moment, the runes and lines that connected the two magic circles were covered in pain, desperation, and greed.

The ever-wriggling amalgamation, on the other hand, had passed through the restraint of magic circles at some point and jumped on Harex's body!

Such a change was utterly unexpected. Not only was Harex shocked and infuriated, but Lucien, who was quite familiar with the status transformation circle, also felt that it was uncanny. Although he did not know the unique symbols and patterns of the sea clans, it was not hard for him to tell that the amalgamation of primeval devils could have easily escaped from the magic circle.

What went wrong?

Though surprised, Harex was not panicked. The golden trident in his hands glittered again, and tides surged out and about to block the amalgamation of primeval devils that was almost kissing his body.

"Haha. Harex, it's useless. Your reaction is not bad, albeit a bit late, because you are fundamentally wrong. I always tell everybody that greed will lower the IQ of an expert, but nobody believes me. Hehe. Such idiots appear every day." The black, wriggling amalgamation of primeval devils suddenly mocked.

The familiar voice and mockery stunned Lucien.

"The Lord of Hell?"

"Maltimus!" Harex was no stranger to the voice either. He roared in

both shock and fury, and his previous calmness had a hint of panic now.

Even though he was a top legend who dominated the ocean, he would still be panicked and scared when he learned that he had fallen into a trap of a demigod who had existed for who knew how many years!

Maltimus revealed his identity without any disguise exactly for the momentary panic. He seized the flaw on Harex's mind as the black, wriggling shadow crawled into his body, thus finishing the preliminary integration!

"Hahaha. Ever since the end of the Age of Myths, I've been looking for a shell in which I could arrive at the main material world stably. It's a pity that nothing except the top legends can bear my strength, not even the body of a dragon. So, I never found an opportunity. Thankfully, Viken secretly released the ways to transform into primeval devils, and thankfully, you people who are blinded by greed have been trying relentlessly. I can barely miss the opportunities even if I want to. Who knows the primeval devils better than I do?" Maltimus continued to mock Harex with his words and laughter, hoping to finish the possession as soon as possible.

"No!" Harex held back the fluctuations of his emotions and activated the Blue Key on his golden trident without any hesitation, which then emanated an unimaginable brilliance.

The Blue Gate shivered slightly as the hazy blueness was compressed and concentrated on the Blue Key. Then, infinite blueness surged out of the Blue Key, like an overwhelming and dangerous tide.

The tide galloped like horses with the brilliance that was as thick as oil, brushing the amalgamation of primeval devils that had partly melted into Harex's body, dismembering the creeping blackness layer by layer.

At the dangerous moment, Harex did not attempt to control his strength but simply allowed the surging seawater to overflow. As a

result, Lucien, who had just gotten rid of the Blue Restraint, was immobilized by the thick light again.

“Idiot, why are you stopping me?” Lucien cursed angrily. *When faced with the Lord of Hell, shouldn't all the creatures of the main material world who are sane take the same side? I'm about to stop him from occupying your body!*

However, Lucien knew very well that Harex had little time to distinguish friends from foes at such a moment and would only rule out all the possible dangers. It was not unusual for sorcerers to work with devils!

“Luxury Cracking!”

The Luxury Cracking enhanced with Hand of Uncertainties that he prepared before was launched, and the thick seawater around Lucien was immediately gone. However, because of the influence of the Blue Gate, there was still a tiny bit left up ahead.

Lucien was about to continue with Grandeur Obliteration on the Robe of Grand Arcanists when a silver sword suddenly flashed in his pupils. The tiny bit of blueness immediately fell apart and collapsed.

Natasha had arrived in time after the Blue Restraint was gone!

Chapter 761: Medium of Cast (2 in 1)

The thickness flowing around the Blue Key was like the tide in an ocean that brushed the amalgamation of primeval devils nonstop, melting the disgusting, twisted blackness. The negative feelings around that were almost concrete were gradually resolved.

Harex's indiscriminate outburst at the critical moment seemed truly effective. The amalgamation of primeval devils where the Lord of Hell's will was hiding was suddenly slowed down and could not really melt into his body. However, their parts that had already been melted were only shivering in the Blue Torrent, showing no sign of dismemberment at all.

Everything seemed to be indicating Maltimus' plan perfectly. He was waiting for the stop of Harex's outburst to completely melt with him before he went on a rampage again!

"It's useless, Harex. If you had realized it sooner, there was a chance that you could've avoided it. However, the negative feelings in your mind have been integrated with me right now. You will either die or become the shell that accommodates my arrival," the Lord of Hell continued with his symbolic tone of mockery. It was not because he was talkative, arrogant, or stupid, but because in a mental battle, the more badly the enemy was grasped by negative feelings, the more easily he could control him. Therefore, necessary verbal abuse was an effective method.

At this moment, Lucien and Natasha were still separated from him by the thick, blue ocean that was running outward. They couldn't break the obstacle at all for the time being. If the Blue Torrent could be resolved so easily, then Maltimus, as a demigod, would've penetrated through it and ended Harex's struggle.

Lucien and Natasha did not look at each other or talk in the telepathic bond, but they made a similar move almost at the same time. One of them uttered weird and incomprehensible voices, casting the Luxury Cracking that was attached with Hand of Uncertainties toward the thick ocean. The other held the Sword of

Truth tightly and turned into a streak of light that never retreated, slashing at the Blue Torrent before Lucien!

Their mutual thought was to top the Lord of Hell from stealing the Ocean Emperor's body before the melting process was completed so that he would not be able to arrive at the main material world at any moment, or there would be infinite trouble. But of course, if there was nothing they could do to reverse it, they would turn around and flee immediately. They couldn't risk exposing themselves in the eyes of a hostile demigod.

Crack, crack, crack.

The blueness that was not real seawater exploded and died out layer after layer. Then, illusionary and terrifying gaps that seemed to be slashing everything appeared on them!

The gaps that shouldn't have existed in this world spread out into countless branches, reducing the thick ocean that was on the verge of collapse under Luxury Cracking into broken pieces.

Crack.

The Blue Ocean was separated into a few larger lakes first. Then, the lakes broke again into tiny ponds.

However, the thick light from the Blue Key was flowing incessantly. Hardly had Lucien and Natasha destroyed the blockage before them when the overwhelming torrent came at them and blocked them again.

Harex tried his best but still couldn't get the amalgamation of primeval devils away from him. In his desperation, he suddenly had the idea of dying together with the enemy. *If you want to steal my body, you won't be able to reach the main material world in the next decades!*

By then, his self-detonation would be powerful enough to turn the ocean within several hundred kilometers into the remains of death. The Lord of Hell's will of arrival would be shattered, and he would suffer heavy wounds. Lucien and Natasha would be buried with

him!

He had dominated the Boundless Ocean for a thousand years and controlled the supreme power of the sea clans. He was too proud to allow himself to lose his self-awareness and become a container for the Lord of Hell to arrive!

Sometimes, death was not the worst option!

The moment it occurred to him that he would rather die with the enemy, Harex felt the deepest coldness surging inside his soul, and he was somehow stiffened for no good reason. At this moment, the amalgamation of primeval devils made of countless tiny black bugs was reflected in his crimson pupils. The Lord of Hell had somehow got rid of the blast of the Blue Torrent and was wriggling toward his body and his soul!

The amorphous object wriggled into what appeared to be a human face. In a mocking smile, it said, "It is a 'desperate' thought to detonate yourself. So, I have sensed your heart's invitation, which has reduced the barrier of 'communication' between us."

Fear popped up in Harex's indifferent eyes for the first time, and his feeling further integrated with the dark shadow.

The Lord of Hell's understanding of the primeval devils and his abilities to manipulate them were truly remarkable. No wonder he used to laugh at Pope Viken!

Solemnly, Lucien cast Luxury Cracking that was attached with Hand of Uncertainties nonstop, destroying the thick ocean before him with the cooperation of Natasha's Sword of Truth. However, the blue torrent showed no sign of drying at all. As a result, the two of them only pressed forward for several kilometers.

It was in fact only a river dozens of meters wide between Lucien and Harex, but it seemed to be a whole insurmountable Boundless Ocean.

"Hehe. You are actually a victim of your own wariness. Lucien obviously meant to banish me, but right now..." Maltimus

chuckled, and the wriggling darkness seemed to somehow spread toward Lucien and Natasha. “It’s impossible for you to outrun me. If your ‘Luxury Cracking’ were as good as Hathaway’s, and if your ‘Sword of Truth’ were one of the thirteen level-four legendary items, there might be a slim chance. It’s a pity that they are not. Run now. If you don’t, I won’t show you any more courtesy.”

Desperation. Deep desperation. Maltimus’ words made Harex, who had already been partly possessed by the primeval devils, foresee his ending. How did he make consecutive mistakes at a critical moment? Was his sanity really blinded by his greed?

The deep, gloomy darkness stuck to Harex’s face, filling his crimson pupils with infinite gloom and desperation.

“Let’s get out of here.” Seeing that Harex was gradually devoured by Maltimus, Lucien hurried to tell Natasha in the telepathic bond. If they did not go now, they would never be able to go!

Although they were reluctant to admit their defeat, it was still necessary to weigh the advantages and disadvantages. The Lord of Hell who arrived as “Harex” would obviously be able to utilize the power of the Blue Gate to block the area. After he was deprived of his strongest suit, escaping, he would be crushed by a demigod and probably killed. Even though he did not arrive in person, Maltimus would still be as strong as a beginning-level demigod when he was active inside the body of Harex.

Without any hesitation, Natasha sheathed her longsword and flew out of the hollow. At this moment, Harex and the amalgamation of primeval devils had already been highly integrated. It wouldn’t take long before the status transformation and the possession were completed.

Lucien blinked outward following Natasha. He began to consider a trip to the Night Highland. In order to take care of the Lord of Hell who had arrived, the four top legends of the Congress were apparently capable of defending but not enough to attack. Also, they needed to be wary of the ambush of Pope Viken and other experts. Therefore, Lucien had to visit Rhine and ask for the help of “Silver Moon” Alterna.

At this moment, an unpredictable and distant “song” suddenly echoed, and the thick ocean centered at the Blue Key produced green, vigorous seeds.

“The elven tongue? ‘Life Stimulation’?” Lucien immediately stopped. His spiritual power that was spread out with the ninth-circle spells were instantly cast, allowing him to see a gorgeous lady at the edge of the hollow who was wearing a dress made from tree leaves. She seemed to have been floating for a long time. Her blond hair was tied, and she was the amazing integration of innocence and maturity, making it hard to describe her beauty. “Elven queen, Aglaea? She’s here, too?”

Behind Aglaea was the shadow of a tall tree, which seemed both real and illusion. Vigorous air was spreading from the greenness, and at the center of the tree, a transparent heart made of light spots was beating powerfully.

Her mouth had been closed, but her beautiful and enticing song was still echoing. In the meantime, the green illusionary seeds inside the blue ocean absorbed the water around them in thirst like regular plants, before they rooted, sprouted, and branched. After only one moment, the illusionary seeds grew into tall trees that were entangled into a shadow that was very similar to the elven tree.

Under the crazy absorption, the Blue Key, which already approached its limits, could not sustain any longer. Therefore, the thick ocean soon turned dry, revealing Harex on the altar and the shadow that had overlapped him.

Maltimus seemed to have foreseen the change. He accelerated the integration with Harex the moment the song echoed. The body of the murloc became blurred, and the dark shadow was turning concrete.

Having no time to consider why Aglaea came at such perfect timing, Lucien made the decision quickly. He raised his hands, and with a voice as freezing as the blowing wind, he said, “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness!”

There was no time to create a vacuum. Maltimus was about to

succeed!

Therefore, Lucien did not choose “Positron Cannon”, or his “Eternal Blaze”, which was slightly weaker than Mr. President’s version.

A translucent, glittering pillar of light shot out casually. It seemed to be restrained by countless tiny electric currents and lasers that could barely be seen. Wherever it passed, it brought tranquility from inside to outside.

Natasha stopped before Lucien with the Sword of Truth in her hand instead of attacking Maltimus with him, because the frigidity was indiscriminate and she could attack the enemy when the melting started. Also, she needed to be wary of the elven queen who had popped up out of nowhere.

That was the calmness that a knight who considered protection her doctrine had to learn.

The black shadow, which had almost entirely consumed Harex, suddenly spewed out illusionary, stinky fluids. They seemed to be an olfactory representation of negative feelings!

Those thick fluids opened an illusionary film on the altar, trying to block “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness”.

At this moment, a delicate and beautiful longbow appeared in Aglaea’s hands. She drew the bow very skillfully and aimed at Maltimus.

The Nature’s Heart behind her suddenly glowed, creating a peaceful and harmonious nature.

That “nature” was gathered into an illusionary long arrow with a strength that contained the whole cycle of nature. Then, after Aglaea’s hands that did not seem to belong to a hunter at all released it, the greenish long arrow was shot out and disappeared into the void.

The air before the altar trembled hard, and a prolonged hum began. Then, the void was shattered, and the greenish arrow that represented fertilization, growth, maturity, decay, and burial

pierced out. It was shot out late but arrived early, hitting the thick black film before Snow Goddess' Forgiveness did.

The shallow greenness blossomed, as if a forest were growing out. Any unnatural things were broken without a sound. They vanished, or rather, they entered into the "cycle of nature".

It was exactly one of the thirteen level-four legendary items—Nature's Punishment!

Although there were many top legends in history, it did not mean that the legendary items they used were necessarily level-four legendary. The dragons and demons who counted on their talents clearly couldn't create such advanced items. Even the sorcerers could not upgrade their unique legendary items without appropriate legendary materials. For example, up until so far, Fernando's and Hathaway's legendary items hadn't been upgraded yet. Subtracting the items that had disappeared or were destroyed for various reasons, there were only thirteen top legendary items that people were familiar with.

It meant that Douglas, who boasted two level-four legendary items, was the minority of the minorities. The underdogs such as the Prince of Demons, the master of the first floor of hell, the Lord of Storm, and the Lord of Elements were all coveting the items. The master of the first floor of hell, whose "Book of Warlocks" was stolen by him, hated him in particular. But of course, as long as there was any chance, Fernando and Hathaway both had great hope to increase the number of level-four legendary items to fifteen.

Under Nature's Punishment, the external defense of the Lord of Hell was dissolved, and the transparent, colorless pillar of light from Snow Goddess' Forgiveness hit him precisely.

The whole world fell quiet. Not any noise could be heard anymore. The wind was frozen, the water was frozen, and so was the light.

Harex stood at the center of the frozen world, and his body was still holding the gold trident high. Confusion and desperation were frozen on his face.

As a top legend, even though he could've taken "Snow Goddess' Forgiveness" from Lucien the hard way without being hurt, that would only happen when his defense was intact. However, his defense had been broken by Maltimus, Aglaea, Lucien, and Natasha. Even his original soul had been heavily wounded and was on the verge of collapse. He could not control his body to resist the attack. Therefore, he had been directly frozen by "Snow Goddess' Forgiveness".

The amalgamation of primeval devils where the Lord of Hell was residing, on the other hand, hadn't reached level four of legendary yet, and it was not famous for its defense. Therefore, it was also frozen in the extremely low temperature, like a cluster of black glue.

Water splashed out, and the unnatural coldness quickly thawed. Harex's body and the black glue melted and vaporized with it.

Pa.

Emperor's Grasp, one of the thirteen top legendary items, fell next to the Blue Gate. It was a weapon that could attack a longsword with its strong defense in the first place. Therefore, it was only slightly damaged.

The gold trident emanated enticing light under the ripples. Even Lucien felt that his heart was beating faster. However, that was not the focus of his attention. He vibrated the air and asked his question, "Is that all?"

They were a top legend and an arriving demigod after all. Also, it was not a "flawed arrival" like the last time but almost a perfect integration that could accommodate most of the strength.

"... The melting was not completed. Maltimus could only carry out limited strength, and Harex had been in a weak state after the consecutive strikes." Aglaea hesitated and proposed her opinion from the other direction.

Lucien nodded his head. That was rather reasonable. The moment the idea popped up, another idea occurred to him. "Aglaea must've

come a long time ago. She did not attack because she was waiting for the best opportunity. If she had attacked sooner, Harex, her nemesis, would've gotten away from the danger and would only be wounded. If she attacked late, she would have to face a demigod who understood the mysteries of the primeval devils very well. There would've been nothing she could do except to defend herself and look for a chance to escape.

"Therefore, she needed to wait for an opportunity to destroy both Harex and the amalgamation of primeval devils. She had to wait even though something went wrong."

Although he knew very well that it was Aglaea's most rational choice based on her interests, Lucien still burst into fury when he thought that it had significantly increased the odds of the Lord of Hell's arrival at the main material world. "Also, she found the Blue Gate. I'm afraid that she planned this a long time ago and knew Harex would come here. In order to get the Blue Gate, she let those sea elves become the offerings in the blood sacrifice.

"Emperor's Grasp must not be given to those ambitious schemers who don't have boundaries."

The fury was so intense that Lucien could barely control himself. Suddenly, he was alarmed. He couldn't control himself?

Without any hesitation, Lucien pressed his chest and cast a legendary spell to himself.

"Mental Fulmination!"

BOOM!

The noise that sounded from the deepest part of his heart echoed, like the bell knock in a church or the sound when the grass deep below the ground was finding its way to the surface.

Lucien's whole soul was shaken, and his mind was in such a storm that he could barely control his body. At this moment, together with the soul-stirring fulmination, a black shadow appeared on Lucien's body.

Then, having experienced the extreme circumstances such as spread and collapse, Lucien managed to get his soul back under control. Then, the Arcana Light was on. In the pure and warm brilliant, the flickering shadow quickly dissolved.

Lucien's mind was immediately cleared. His unreasonable fury just now was completely soothed. Aglaea could have come to save her people by following the enemy and happened to run into them. She might not be as vicious as he thought.

He had been possessed by the primeval devils despite his Mental Barrier. The Lord of Hell's control over negative feelings and the status of primeval devils were truly terrifying. If he hadn't been through status transformation before and had a deep understanding of primeval devils, he probably couldn't have escaped just now!

It was true that the Lord of Hell plus the primeval devils were not so easy to destroy!

Right when Lucien cast Mental Fulmination, where the damage had been lowered to himself, Natasha also changed her face color and slashed herself with the Sword of Truth without any hesitation!

When the silver sword hit her body, her body twisted and turned into the same sword. Then, the sword was separated, and a shadow inside was burnt into ashes in miserable screams.

In the next second, the sword that Natasha's body turned into melted with the light of the Sword of Truth, avoiding the tearing of the illusionary gaps.

After she resumed the shape of a human, her face was much paler. Among the three of them, she was the weakest, and she did not bring out the Shield of Truth. She had only managed to get rid of the shadow by his familiarity with the Sword of Truth and her own blood power.

Seeing that, Lucien secretly sighed. He was too careless and emotional just now. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been as easy for the primeval devils to possess the legendary experts such as himself and Natasha.

Emperor's Grasp was clearly a medium that the Lord of Hell intentionally left to cast his spell!

Aglaea was much easier than Lucien and Natasha. Her body turned blurry into an illusionary shadow of nature. It seemed that she was in every place where nature was adored. In the hazy greenness, a black spot was very obvious.

Green brightness rose on Aglaea's body, quickly melting the dark shadow. She said solemnly, "Let's go. We were a bit late. He has already completed the integration!"

"Haha. If you hadn't been waiting for an opportunity, would I have the time to melt him at all?" The laughter of mockery seemed to be coming from all directions.

Magma started to erupt from the ground, and the intense stench of sulfur spread out.

Aglaea had come to rescue her people who had been captured. On her way here, she luckily encountered a bunch of Kuo-toans who were escorting the captives. She learned the situation of the Blue Gate and came here as soon as possible.

When she arrived, it was exactly the time when Harex burst out of the Blue Torrent. After balancing the pros and cons, she decided to wait based on her experience. It was a shame that her choice of timing had a tiny error since Maltimus sensed her arrival in advance.

Despite her regrets, Aglaea, who had been in the status of primeval devils herself, managed to suppress her feelings. She raised her right hand, untouched, allowing new trees to grow inside the magma and slowing down its flow.

Lucien and Natasha, blinking and flying backward, approached the edge of the hollow at the same time.

Chapter 762: Cunningness

The altar had been frozen and melted in “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness”, and a thin layer of bricks before the Blue Gate was all that was left. The gold trident, Emperor’s Grasp, lay there quietly. The blueness of the key and the gold on the trident resonated with each other.

Suddenly, the gold trident flew up, as if somebody was holding it. Then, a hand that was full of black scales appeared on the body of the trident, covered in a fire that was releasing the stench of sulfur.

The knuckles of the hand, which seemed to be wearing a glove of flames each, had a pale bone spur. On every spur, evil and complicated patterns had been engraved. In the meantime, the long, pale fingernails were like swords of death and destruction, giving the feeling that they could destroy everything to whoever saw it.

As the hand appeared, a fuzzy shadow gradually appeared in the air behind. It was dozens of meters tall, and the black wings behind it completely enshrouded where the palace was at. The gloom of death emerged.

It had two horns on its head, which looked like those of a goat. Emitting the most evil, horrifying, and formidable air, it made the hollow around both real and illusionary. Countless volcanoes were rising, magma was bursting out, dark smoke was popping up, and tsunamis that could’ve destroyed countries were raised inside the blue ocean one wave after another.

In the meantime, the ever-burning world, the gigantic chasm whose bottom could not be seen, the silent plain that was covered in snow, the stinky rotten swamp, and the other planes of hell became clear. It seemed that all nine floors of hell had arrived here.

Evil, cold, and distant songs came from the top of the dark river that meandered across the nine floors of hell, making Aglaea, Lucien, and Natasha feeling so empty that their lives seemed to have approached the end. They couldn’t wait to join the army of

death.

The nine floors of hell, a graveyard of the dead that was entirely different from the World of Souls and an evil land controlled by the devils!

Except for the believers of devils, no creature would like to fall into hell after death, because they would either end up as the food for the devils or disperse into nothingness, leaving the evilness in their heart to integrate with the “origin” of the hell to give birth to new devils.

Since the War of Dawn, it had been the first time that the Lord of Hell arrived almost completely without being suppressed by the main material world!

However, his head was still obscure, and the only thing clear was his crimson eyes, which seemed to contain eternal mockery. His legs weren't real either, and they were, in fact, two strong legs of a murloc, with deep blue films among the toes. It seemed that although most of his strength had arrived, he would not be able to arrive completely in person if he intended to reach steadily. Otherwise, the body of Harex couldn't support him too many times. Therefore, although the Lord of Hell was as strong as a demigod right now, he was not in his strongest state.

Raising his gold trident, he let out the most evil and desecrating voice. Immediately, the Blue Key on Emperor's Grasp shivered and became much gentler. Vague splashes of water could be heard. Influenced by that, the Blue Gate lost the feeling of supremacy and released the hazy blueness, covering the enormous hollow.

Right at this moment, Lucien and Natasha suddenly let out a distant and obscure voice. “Regather!”

The two of them did not choose to “Regather” just now because they feared that the Lord of Hell was still around and that he would suppress them or disrupt them with the supernatural powers when they performed “Regather”. Therefore, Lucien and Natasha chose to blink and fly backward, which was safer, while they observed and waited for the opportunity to escape.

When Maltimus showed up on the altar and raised the gold trident, both of them realized the danger and the opportunity. They activated “Regather” that was cast to themselves beforehand without any hesitation, attempting to reunite at home!

Two clusters of light glowed, and both of them disappeared. It was not until this moment that the hazy blueness began to spread out.

Neither of them paid any attention to Aglaea. Compared to the two of them who were only in level three and level one of legendary, she was not entirely helpless when faced with a demigod. Also, she had been standing at the edge of the hollow and could back off at any moment.

In front of a demigod who did not have an ultimate weapon like “God’s Arrival”, as long as a top legend was not stupid enough to fight the enemy the hard way, there would still be a good chance for them to resist a few minutes and look for an opportunity to escape. Also, after the status transformation, Aglaea was much stronger than before. She was almost as good as Douglas right now.

After activating “Regather”, Lucien felt that he was trapped in a weird world that was both dark and bright. He lost all the senses on the outside world and felt that his body was piercing through a strange curtain in a strange way. After only one moment, fuzzy shadows of a magic tower seemed to have appeared before him. Some were horizontal, some were vertical, and some were twisted. They occupied his whole horizon.

Having used Regather many times, Lucien knew that it was the destiny of his journey. It was his Babel.

He was about to enter the magic tower when a gigantic hand that seemed to be wearing a fiery glove extended out of the background that was both dark and bright. The intense smell of sulfur surged into his nose, and the pale fingernails seemed to be cutting his body and his soul!

“He can do that?” In shock, Lucien felt that the magic power around had been completely shattered under the torment of the Lord of Hell’s giant hand, and he was kicked out of the status of Regather!

Regather could be disrupted in such a way? No wonder the Lord of Hell did not prevent them from escaping through the legendary spells such as “Regather”, but focused on activating the Blue Gate with Emperor’s Grasp!

It was the first time that Lucien faced a real demigod. He was astounded by their level and their incredibleness that was way above legends.

The time and space around them changed, and blue water trembled below their feet. Hardly had Lucien and Natasha appeared when the fiery hand that was full of black scales extended out of nowhere and snatched the two of them. The terrifying air twisted the environment and gave the feeling that hell had arrived!

The pale fingers that represented death and destruction suddenly lengthened, and they cut Lucien’s body like sharp swords.

The fingernails seemed plain, but Lucien had no doubt that as long as he was hit, both his body and his soul would return to the eternal silence. That was exactly the domination of demigods against those who were below the peak of legendary!

Right then, a mirror of complicated patterns appeared next to Lucien and blocked the pale fingernails precisely.

Crack.

The mirror, which seemed to contain a different world, broke without any struggle, but the pale fingernails were blown back a little bit!

The Abrupt Magic Reverse that Lucien cast earlier had never been consumed. So, it couldn’t be more helpful at this moment. As the best reflection defense, even though it could only slightly stop the enemy, it was still powerful enough to send back the fingernails of the Lord of Hell.

Seizing the opportunity, Lucien solemnly said in the telepathic bond, “Shield of Truth!”

In the meantime, Lucien snapped his right hand and chanted,

“Storm Barrier!”

The sky immediately turned dark, and the tides were surging. However, there was absolutely no sound in the thunderstorm. A lifeless vacuum covered the area and trapped the devilish hand as well as Lucien and Natasha.

Natasha had a tiny and neat black shield in her left hand. Her face was calm, and her eyes were focused. She did not consider anything beyond the battle, like what would happen if they failed or if the Shield of Truth was destroyed.

Ice appeared on the fiery hand, but it melted quickly before the hand snatched the Shield of Truth all of a sudden!

Illusionary ripples spread out on the black shield, blocking Lucien and Natasha in a different time and space.

Crack, crack, crack.

The surface of the shield that had beautiful patterns had deep dents one after another. The illusionary ripples were broken too.

That was exactly the might of demigods!

Lucien, who had passed the cooldown period during the short time, raised his right hand and declared solemnly, “Positron Cannon!”

The voice seemed to be from the foundation of matter and the quake of particles. It was strange but magnificent.

Cooperating with Lucien, Natasha recalled the Shield of Truth that was on the verge of destruction and flew backward the moment he cast the spell, running away from the center of the explosion. Then, she clutched Lucien’s “Robe of Grand Arcanists” and pulled him backward.

Lucien did not really have a choice when he performed Positron Cannon from such a distance. It would be fine as long as he could resist the most intense wave of energy storm. After all, his appendix was still at home...

As Lucien flew backward with Natasha, darkness appeared outside of his right hand. As if a magnetic field was twisting the scene, countless nameless objects surged out of the void and gathered into fire-like electric currents, before they entangled into red pillars of light.

BAM!

In a soundless explosion, the pillar of light where fiery electricity was flowing was launched and hit the devilish hand, which had broken the defense of the Shield of Truth!

The scales on the gigantic hand were opened. Dark and cold, it seemed to be able to resist any attack.

When the Positron Cannon hit the dark scales, the world suddenly changed its color, turning from darkness to daylight.

Boom!

Unimaginable explosions echoed. Even the waves and the space beyond the vacuum shivered. The scales, which should've blocked the attack, reacted with the fiery pillar of light. So, the obliteration began, and their structure was destroyed.

The energy that was released was even more complete than a nuclear fusion that unleashed a hurricane that could destroy everything. The Storm Barrier was immediately destroyed.

The innate effects on Lucien's Robe of Grand Arcanists were activated one after another. "Magic Trigger", "Spell Sequencer", and other passive spells were all triggered.

Crack, crack, crack.

Lucien and Natasha blinked away in a series of cracks. Their faces were equally pale, and blood was flowing out of both of their mouths. Their clothes had been severely damaged too.

Having no time to remark on anything, Lucien dragged Natasha and jumped into his Atomic Universe. That was exactly the advantage of legendary sorcerers, who always had a shelter as long as they were

not in places like near the Blue Gate or in the Realm of Gates.

After he reached Babel, Lucien simply activated the defense of the whole demiplane. It was entirely blocked.

It was not until this moment that they finally took a breath in relief. They were finally out of danger now. Demigods were indeed the best fighters.

“If we hadn’t backed off in advance, and the legendary armor and the Robe of Grand Arcanists failed to block it...” Natasha was not entirely scared but remarked in fascination. She seemed to be quite curious about the level of demigods.

Lucien coughed and wiped the blood on his lips. “Let’s inform Mr. President, Master, and Granny Hathaway. It is an important matter that the Lord of Hell has arrived. If the elven queen is not out of danger yet, we can go and save her. As a matter of fact, I feel that our escape was easier than I expected. I thought that we would have to use all our life-saving methods. However, as it turned out...”

Natasha nodded her head and said while being deep in thought, “I think that the Lord of Hell did not try his best. Maybe he was too busy dealing with the elven queen?”

Chapter 763: Eternal Interests

Chapter 763: Eternal Interests

Before the Blue Gate, Maltimus grabbed the gold trident in his right hand and extended his left hand into the void.

Illusionary ripples surrounded the blackened arm where a sulfuric fire was burning. The closer it was to the palm, the more it was like a lake where intense ripples were surging out.

The front end of the palm was completely blurred, as if the core of the ripples was connected to a different world.

Gentle light spread out of the gold trident in Maltimus' right hand, resulting in the shiver of the Blue Gate. Hazy blueness sprayed out and attempted to cover the whole hollow.

Aglaea took one step back. The shadow of the elven tree behind her suddenly became concrete, and weird limbs grew out of the fuzzy root of the tree one after another. They entangled with each other into a monster and penetrated into the hazy blue light.

As a result, the ripples of light were soothed, like an ocean where the tornado had come to an end.

In the space around Aglaea that seemed to have been brushed by flood, the “mud” that was tightly clutched by the root was not blown away.

Therefore, she exited the range of the Blue Gate at ease without being locked at all.

However, after half melting with the elven tree, her face was rather pale. It was obvious that she had paid a high price.

The moment she exited the range of the Blue Gate, Aglaea raised her bow and aimed it at the Lord of Hell.

Fleeing in panic would give the enemy an opportunity to attack

from the back. Therefore, she planned to use an attack to defend herself so that Maltimus would have to focus on self-protection for now. That way, she would be able to escape safely.

Spots of green light glowed on Aglaea's fingertips, and Nature's Heart glowed behind her. In the meantime, Maltimus also aimed the gold trident at her. It seemed that he was ready to use one of the five strongest abilities of this body.

Right then, Maltimus' left hand that extended into the void suddenly glittered, as if a tiny sun had just broken out in his hands.

BOOM!

The illusionary ripples were broken, and his left hand was obliterated. However, the all-consuming storm of energy did not stop at all but continued surging at Maltimus.

Maltimus' body suddenly blurred. He seemed to have entered a different time and space, and he seemed to be spreading throughout the world, living in the heart of every intelligent creature that had negative feelings.

The unpredictable and intangible feelings emerged. The essence of demigods was quite similar to the Blue Gate, the elven tree, and God's Glory, but it lacked something of critical importance compared with the Furnace of Souls.

The energy storm drowned Maltimus, but the most evil "voice" continued to echo inside.

"Sinful Rebirth!"

Seeing that it was impossible to hit Maltimus who was in a storm of energy, Aglaea dropped her bow. Then, her body blurred and disappeared.

Could there be a better moment of escape than right now?

The remnant shadow of the elven tree slowly faded in the dark ocean. The energy storm finally died down, and the illusionary body became concrete. His right hand was still holding the gold

trident, and his left hand was still intact.

“What spell was that?” Maltimus, who did not seem to have been hurt, stared at the void before him.

A level-three legendary sorcerer had hurt him, who had almost arrived in person without the help of anybody else, forcing him to recover with extraordinary powers. That was something that never happened even in the Age of Myths! If the attack were a bit more powerful, it wouldn't have been so easy for him to recover.

The Lord of Hell stood quietly before the Blue Gate just like that, neither chasing after the elven queen nor trying to break into Lucien's Atomic Universe.

His body changed and resumed the appearance of Harex, with sapphire scales around the body and a blue crown above the head.

However, the crimson eyes were much redder, and the indifferent gaze in them became a mockery.

He seemed to be staring at the deep black water up above, with the same mocking smile on the corners of his lips.

On the ocean, the sunset raised the most beautiful gold waves.

In the middle of a cluster of reefs, “Mermaid Princess” Doris patted the water with her gold tail softly.

She suddenly sensed the most extreme and evil air erupting from the bottom of the ocean. Then, she saw that the regular fish in the ocean was blackened, their eyes bloodshot.

Such an unexpected change did not surprise her. She merely spoke to herself, “Why did they not stop him from arriving at the main material world? Nobody would benefit from this.”

Then, her face was twisted for a moment, and her voice became old and coarse as she said, “The Silver Moon is glad to see him arrive at the main material world steadily to share the pressure of dealing with me. As a matter of fact, Maltimus would never forget his real opponent. However, they don't know at all how much I have earned

recently. When I succeed, they will only be clowns in the circus.”

The voice was exactly from Benedict III, or “King of Calamities” Viken!

Doris’ beautiful voice came out again. “Was the Silver Moon around?”

“Probably. My Host Star of Destiny sensed something. After all, Lucien Evans has known the location of the Blue Gate, and he has plenty of chances to explore it in the future. Maltimus cannot stay here forever. I’ll never be reassured until I figure out the oddities of this world.” The old and coarse voice came out of her mouth. She seemed to have accommodated Viken’s projection willingly.

As a brutal but definitely distinguished sorcerer, pursuing the truth of the world still flowed in Viken’s veins. He believed that individuals could not be separated from the world, particularly for demigods.

It could be seen from the fact that demigods had to count on hell, abyss, the Silver Moon, or Mountain Paradise in order not to be killed. Therefore, it could be quite risky if one were to improve himself without figuring out the mysteries of the world. He certainly would not do such a thing unless he absolutely had no other choices.

The weirdest thing about this world that all the legendary experts felt was that planets could not be discovered and the Boundless Ocean had no end. Therefore, even though Lucien and the Congress of Magic were his nemeses, he was still glad to see them explore and study the problems.

Doris’ gentle voice came over. “The Silver Moon might be waiting for you to attack...”

She looked at the surging waves far away with blurry eyes, her voice as unpredictable as dream talk.

In the ocean in another direction, a handsome man wearing a red shirt and a black high-collar coat was walking on the ocean, but

there was forever a thin layer of blankness between his glittering shoes and the blue water.

His head slightly lowered as he stared at his reflection in the ocean and the setting sun.

The last light of the sun floated along with the wave, covering his reflection in a gold cape.

Behind his reflection, in the middle of the sunset, a silver moon that was not in the sky emitted a cold brilliance. It seemed to be there as it had always been.

.....

In the Allyn magic tower in the City in the Sky...

“Aglaea has returned to the Elven Court. The Lord of Hell did not pursue him.” In Hathaway’s library, Douglas, who had dropped his research and arrived, reported the result of his communication with the elven queen.

It had already been five years since Hellen started to supervise Allyn. It was Hathaway’s turn to watch over the City in the Sky now.

“I’m glad to hear that.” Although Aglaea had her own ambitions and was not entirely on the Congress’ side, it was definitely better to have one more top legendary ally now that the Lord of Hell had arrived.

Hathaway controlled the magic circle unhurriedly and said, “All the legendary sorcerers have been informed of the Lord of Hell’s possible ambush.”

Except for the few top legends, even the grand arcanists had to treat the matter prudently. If they were attacked by the Lord of Hell without any preparation, it was possible that they would be killed immediately. Therefore, after Hathaway and Natasha submitted the intelligence to Hathaway, her first decision was to inform the legendary sorcerers who were not out and to contact the legendary sorcerers who were out on missions in an emergency.

Although the emergency devices could not contact the sorcerers in alternate dimensions, they would know that another hostile demigod had reached the main material world the moment they returned.

“I thought that the stable situation would go on. I did not expect such a great change.” Oliver, who had just returned, shook his head in a bitter smile.

Vicente, looking at the half-opened defense outside, said coldly, “It’s not necessarily a bad thing. Maltimus almost considers his interests to be most important, and his greatest enemies are Viken and the South Church. It’s possible that there will be opportunities for cooperation.”

Fernando was devoted to the studies of neutrons and fission, so he had half closed the Thunder Hell. He hadn’t received the message yet.

“However, devils have no boundaries. With enough returns, he will sell us and work with Viken without any hesitation. So, the best choice is to banish him out of the main material world,” Lucien said firmly.

“With us alone? There’s only a one percent chance if all the legendary sorcerers join their hands. But what about the other enemies?” The voice of Erica, Master of Transformation, came from the projection of her demiplanes. She was watching over the branch in Calais in case of the Lord of Hell’s attack.

COMMENT

Lucien nodded his head. “The mission certainly cannot be done by ourselves. I’m planning to go to the Night Highland and visit the Silver-Eyed Count to ask for the help of the God of Silver Moon.”

Everybody in the Highest Council knew his friendship with Rhine and Alterna. So, nobody felt anything wrong about the proposal. However, Douglas shook his head and sighed. “The possibility is not very high. For the Silver Moon, it’s a wonderful thing that Maltimus has reached the main material world.”

Lucien had been rather anxious after the Lord of Hell's unexpected arrival and never considered the overall situation. After hearing what the president said, he was briefly stunned and realized that it was true.

"Although the odds are not high, I would like to give it a shot." Never to give up and never to give in was Lucien's motto.

Douglas nodded. "Let Fernando do it. You've been terribly wounded, and the Robe of Grand Arcanists and the Shield of Truth have to be fixed immediately while they can still be fixed. It's inappropriate for you to go out right now."

"Alright. I'll write a letter and ask my teacher to bring it over." Lucien remembered his teacher's connection with the King of Nightmare as well as the King of Nightmare's relationship with the Dark Congress. So, he did not insist.

After he returned to the Atomic Universe, Lucien heaved a sigh. It was true that there were no eternal allies.

Calming himself down, Lucien did not immediately fix the two legendary items. Instead, he brought out a pen and a paper to sort out the data of his exploration.

COMMENT

"Are they still helpful when we didn't explore the Blue Gate?" Natasha, who was treating her wounds, looked at Lucien curiously.

Lucien smiled. "For other people, they may be useless, but I had a speculation before. Therefore, those data are just for confirmation. It's not entirely impossible for me to find out the secrets behind it."

"Are there mathematical models where one presses forward all the time only to reach the original point in the end?" Knowing that Lucien had been stressing that mathematics should be the foundation of analysis and research, Natasha asked casually.

Lucien nodded solemnly. "There is. However, the problem is why it behaves like that."

Chapter 764: Prepare the Confirmation

Chapter 764: Prepare the Confirmation

In the Month of Passion (June), Allyn was brimming with the fragrance from the new, unusual flowers.

“Stanis and I didn’t find the Silver-Eyed Count in the Observer’s Castle or the Night Highland. It’s said that he is still out. The other princes cannot reach out to the Silver Moon. Therefore, the plan to deal with Maltimus has to be put on hold.”

In the conference room of the Highest Council, the Lord of Storm reported his visit to the Dark Mountain Range unhappily.

As for the grand arcanist who was reckless, it was quite annoying to be disrupted from the critical moments in the middle of the research. Also, after he went to the Dark Mountain Range for the big picture only to find that the trip was futile, he was certainly not too happy about it.

Douglas nodded and said peacefully, “Perhaps, his outing itself suggests a certain subtle attitude. It is at least better than a direct no. In the meantime, Harex, whose body has been occupied by the Lord of Hell, has devoted most of his attention to dealing with the forces at the south end of the ocean. They are supported by the South Church. It means that his primary enemy is still Viken.”

Although their purpose was not achieved, now that Douglas and the other grand arcanists were calm and not panicked, the members of the Highest Council did not feel too alarmed. Lucien, however, secretly sighed. What mattered most was still their strength, not their allies. Those who were not too strong themselves and who dreamed about dragging a bunch of allies to work with them would only find them ending up on somebody else’s dinner table.

“According to the intelligence, Melmax, the Holy Avenger, has already gone to the south of the Boundless Ocean, in case the forces that belong to the Church are completely destroyed. However, a demigod is still too strong for him to resist. I estimate that most of

the territory will have to be abandoned. Only the divine power defense at the core can resist it,” Oliver, who was in charge of the Affair Committee, said.

A pile of papers on the field theory was placed before Brook. They were just retrieved from the Arcana Review Board and belonged to the creative ones. Therefore, he had exchanged them to see if he could learn anything from it. However, the meeting of the Highest Council had begun just after he exchanged it, giving him little time to read it. “After the issues in the south of the Boundless Ocean are settled, Maltimus’ other intentions will be revealed. We cannot be careless. With the help of the Elven Court, while it is impossible for us to drive him back into hell for now, it is still fairly easy to hold the positions at the edge of the ocean.”

“Then, one top legend is needed at the islands for the defense to reinforce the elven queen.” Faced with such an important issue, Hellen joined the discussion too.

Douglas looked around at the members of the Highest Council at the meeting. Seeing that Lucien, Erica, Brook, and Ataman all agreed with Hellen, he said solemnly, “It’s better to be safe than sorry. Brook and I will go to the islands for defense. After the period when we are most likely to be ambushed passed, one top legend will stay there.”

“I’m fine with that. My experiments can be conducted anywhere,” Brook replied without any hesitation.

Douglas turned to Fernando. “You shouldn’t go out for the time being. Stay and watch over Allyn together with Hathaway in case of the South Church’s ambush.”

With the defense of Allyn and the top legends, he was not concerned about the North Church at all.

“I have no time to go out anyway,” Fernando complained, remembering the uncontrollable fission reactor and the many experiments concerning neutrons.

“You should try not to wander the main material world, in case

Maltimus gets his eyes on you. He has melted the weirdness of primeval devils and is hard to resist.” Douglas reminded them in the end.

Lucien did not say much during the whole meeting, as if he were considering other issues. The other members of the Highest Council did not find it strange. After all, he hadn’t healed from his wounds. There was little he could do to deal with the Lord of Hell. It was only reasonable that he was upset.

.....

After he returned to the Atomic Universe, Lucien went straight to the top floor to continue the arrangement of his magic circle.

“A super-remote space jump circle?” Without anybody knowing it, it was already night. Natasha, who had finished her state affairs, returned to Babel. She observed for a while and found things that were similar to Lucien’s arrangement in her memories. She had lived with Lucien for many years, and her family had educated her well. So, although it was still impossible for her to understand and grasp the complicated magic patterns, she was much better at identifying circles and spells than before.

Lucien’s spiritual power was on the verge of exhaustion. So, he stopped the preparation and swallowed a dosage of “Light of Life”. In the meantime, he nodded and said, “Yes.”

“Are you going to look for planets again? Have you figured out the secrets deep inside the Boundless Ocean? What exactly are they about, and what are their causes?” When Natasha remembered the key points of Lucien’s recent studies, her silver purple eyes were full of surprise and curiosity.

Lucien walked over with a smile. “I obtained something from the data and confirmed certain ideas I had in the past, allowing me to have a basic speculation about what is inside the Boundless Ocean. Now, I have applied my confirmed ideas to the problem that planets and stars cannot be found. I have adjusted the coordinates of my jump. Hopefully, my ideas will be confirmed again.”

“If they are confirmed again, does it mean that planets and stars will be found soon?” Natasha looked at Lucien with a smile. Her voice was full of excitement as she spoke.

Since her childhood, she had been hearing about the mysteries that planets and stars could not be found from her mother, her seniors, and her husband. She had the genuine nice feelings about that just as any common arcanists did, hoping that the puzzle could be resolved someday.

A kitten seemed to be scratching her heart inside her body. She wanted Lucien to tell her what ideas he had confirmed and what his speculations were. However, Lucien was quite ambiguous right now. It was obvious that he did not intend to reveal it right now. So, always respecting other people, she could only hold back her curiosity.

“I hope that I can find them.” Lucien seemed to be having a lot of mixed feelings. “As a matter of fact, with the facts that the ground is illuminated by the sunlight and that the space is full of radiations and asteroids, I have never suspected the existence of planets...”

It was not just the simple discovery of planets and the perfect confirmation of Douglas’ celestial bodies’ motion system, thereby unveiling the macroscopic world in front of everyone. It also meant that a great puzzle about the truth of the world would be unraveled, so the arcanists could further approach the truth through the answer to the puzzle.

“Are you going to look for the sun?” Natasha asked again. Since it was meant for confirmation, the sun was clearly more important and would take less time.

Looking at the dark and boundless Atomic Universe outside of the window, Lucien said, “Yes. That can be confirmed with the minimal time cost. If it doesn’t work out, I’ll be able to change my methodology or switch to other guesses.”

Natasha walked to Lucien. Looking at the universe outside where colorful spots of light were glittering, she said regretfully, “If we can find planets, maybe you will earn the greatest feedback. You’ll

probably reach the peak of legendary before I become a level-two legendary knight.”

It was relatively easy for a level-one legendary to make an advancement. Therefore, Natasha believed that it would only take her another year for her to become a level-two legendary knight. However, it was much more difficult for her to reach level three and the peak than it was for legendary sorcerers, which could be seen by the fact that the whole world had five level-three legendary knights and one peak legendary knight. (After “Heart of Time” perished, another one had advanced recently.)

“Let’s say that I can find it and solve the puzzle that planets can never be found, it will be in the favor of legendary knights too. You must’ve sensed that by polishing your blood power and harnessing your supernatural powers, it will be barely possible to make further advancements. That’s because every class is inevitably connected to the truth of the world. You have to make yourself part of the ‘truth’ and reflect the ‘patterns’ in which the world operates. How can you know where to go next if you do not know the truth of the world, and how can you change and sublimate your life?”

Lucien’s answer was out of Natasha’s expectation. He had a deep understanding of the growth of legendary knights. Also, he seemed to be viewing the problem from a higher level.

Natasha felt warm in her heart. Then, she chuckled as usual. “Then, I’ll wait for Your Excellency to pave a brilliant way for all the legendary knights. Well, will it work out?”

“You will know the answer by then. However, it may take a long time before I tell you the real answer.” Lucien looked out of the window with a smile; his voice was mysterious.

.....

At the beginning of July, in the third generic school of Rentato...

“The first place of our monthly exam has surprised both me and all the teachers. It is evident from the previous monthly exams and his questions in the class that his foundation is not very good.

However, we've all seen his hard work recently. His name is..." Brian, who taught Basics of Arcana, looked at the students down below with a smile.

Those students were all rather nervous because the rank this time would decide whether or not they could go to the cosmic observatory and see the space in person!

Ali couldn't help but clench his hands tightly. Recently, he had forgotten all about sleeping and eating and was completely devoted to his studies, because he knew that his foundation was weak and that he had to make up for it with his hard work.

"... His name is Ali!"

BOOM!

Brian's voice burst out in Ali's head like a clap of thunder. His head became fuzzy, and he could not hear what his teacher said next.

"... Because there is a queue up ahead, the time of the visit has been scheduled at the end of August or the beginning of April..."

Have I really made it?

That was the only ecstatic idea in Ali's head.

Chapter 765: The New Vacuum Model

Chapter 765: The New Vacuum Model

In the classroom, all the students focused their eyes on Ali, but he sensed none of it and simply stared at his teacher Brian, as if he were trying to confirm that what he heard just now was not his hallucination or a dream.

Brian was mostly interested in illusion and psychoanalysis in the magic school. Therefore, he nodded with a smile and repeated what he said just now, “Yes, you are the most distinguished student in your grade in the monthly exam. Congratulations. You won the special prize.”

It's true!

It's true!

Ali's mind suddenly burst out. His clenched hands shivered softly, and his head was filled with only a few words.

The cosmic observatory!

The Atom Institution!

Jane!

The boundless space!

“Ali, are you not going to share your joy and your experience in learning with everybody?” Brian's voice made Ali back to himself.

“Yes, Ali. None of us has ever touched the basics of arcana and magic before. How can we learn it well?” Some of the students who were born as common civilians just like Ali opened their mouths.

It had only been half a year since they came to school. They hadn't suffered major setbacks or given up on themselves yet. Therefore, they were more curious about Ali's miraculous rise in rank than

they were jealous.

Ali stood up and was about to say something, but he suddenly remembered the difficult journey recently and how he had been toiling. Immediately, his eyes became sour, and it was impossible for him to see what was clear around him.

“I... I was only thinking that my father is not a sorcerer, not a noble, not a banker, not a merchant, and my talents are not nearly as good as those geniuses who have been admitted by the magic school, so I can only work harder than them if I want to keep up with them...” Ali said, half sobbing. He wanted to express something, but he did so rather poorly.

...

The Month of Harvest (September) came again. None of the islands controlled by the Congress was attacked by Maltimus. It seemed that all his attention had been dedicated to uniting the sea clans. Therefore, Brook returned to Allyn in advance.

Inside the Atomic Universe, the complicated magic circles on the top floor of Babel were now gradually perfected. The ripples of space and time were spreading out in the hall.

“Are you prepared?” Natasha sensed the strangeness after she returned from the Nekso Palace.

Lucien collected the materials for the magic circle and smiled. “I still need to modify the details. They will be completed in probably a few days.”

“It’s a shame that the Shield of Truth hasn’t been totally restored yet, or I would like to jump over with you and see what the real sun is like...” Natasha scratched her chin, apparently enticed. She sounded rather regretful.

Without the protection of the Shield of Truth, it was impossible for her to resist the ultra-high temperature near the sun. Therefore, she decisively held back the thought of trying, or it would’ve been irresponsible for her family, her father, and her subjects. After all,

even Lucien could not tell whether he would reach an appropriate distance away from the sun or simply land on the sun after his teleportation.

Lucien smiled. "You have to hold Maltimus responsible for that."

He paused and continued, "If I can really find the sun, you can take a look at it whenever you want to. Right now, I have a paper that I would like you to submit in Allyn for me tomorrow."

Natasha chuckled. "You still have time for papers?"

To seize every moment to set up the magic circles, it had been a couple of months since Lucien went to the Atom Institution.

"It's a paper that I wrote earlier." Lucien took out a paper from the magic pouch and handed it over to Natasha.

Natasha picked it up and glanced at it, reading the title aloud. "Positive Electrons Discovered in Cosmic Radiations and Some Heuristic Thoughts on the Model of Positive and Negative Particles', you are ready to submit the paper?"

"Yes." Lucien nodded softly. "After the cosmic observatory is established, it will only be a matter of time for positive electrons to be discovered. Also, I already used 'Positron Cannon' in the battle against the Lord of Hell. It might've been caught by the elven queen... After all, the magic model cannot be built so easily."

For a very long time, it was his unique spell.

...

At the beginning of the Month of Harvest, a group of vigorous boys and girls arrived at the gate of the Atom Institution.

"What will the Atom Institution be like?" Ali took a deep breath and said to Anderson, whom he just met. The guy was the top student of the second grade in the generic school.

While Ali was speaking, he was actually glimpsing at the girl who was wearing a daisy dress not far away. She had a delicate face, and

her curled black hair dangled on her shoulder gently.

The students from all the schools had introduced themselves just now. Therefore, Ali knew that it was his pen pal, Jane.

However, under the watch of the teachers of the noble school, Ali dare not speak with Jane in case the teachers got suspicious and informed Jane's parents. In such a case, they wouldn't even be pen pals anymore. In the tales and plays of the bards, most of the relationships between the noble lady and the poor boy would be highly rejected by the noble families.

Sensing that Ali was looking at her, Jane turned around and put on a gentle smile, which excited Ali and made his blood boil.

"It definitely won't disappoint you." Anderson had visited the Atom Institution before, but he was still nervous and excited. "What will the real cosmos be like?"

How would the place that carried so many tales and so many beautiful wishes present itself?

"What did you see last time?" Ali intentionally asked, in case his knowledge caught suspicion.

Anderson was a rather flamboyant boy, so he said proudly, "Last time, we completed the particle collision experiment under the guidance of Mr. Lazar and Ms. Heidi..."

During the last visit, most arcanists in the Atom Institution were busy with their own experiments. Also, they were not allowed to draw close for the sake of confidentiality. Only arcanists like Lazar, Rock, and Heidi, who were better at dealing with people, showed them around and did the famous experiments.

"... They're very knowledgeable... The whole laboratory is absolutely quiet save the noises..."

The picture of the Atom Institution in Ali's head was more and more clear thanks to Anderson's introduction. The only thing that dissatisfied him was that Anderson's narration did not reflect the cutting edge of the microscopic domain.

At this moment, the gate of the institution was opened, and noises came out of the room.

“Alfalia, read this issue of ‘Arcana’!”

“What?”

“Mr. Evans has discovered positive electrons. Antiparticles do exist!”

“This world is too amazing...”

The exclamations came into the ears of Ali and the other students. They were rather confused. What were positive electrons and what were antiparticles? Why did they sound familiar?

As hypotheses that hadn’t been proven, the notions of positive electrons and antiparticles were not introduced in their textbook. That was why those students were confused.

However, Lucien was best famous for his disruptive theories. His speculations often piqued people’s attention and curiosity. They were mentioned a lot in the newspapers and by the radio stations.

In other places, they might have remembered it soon, but this was the cutting edge of the microscopic domain. How could the terms in stories show up here?

“After Ms. Hellen and Mr. Oliver extrapolated the Lucien equation to the microscopic particles whose spin is not integral, enshrouding the whole microscopic particles with its splendor, I knew that Mr. Evans’ speculation on antiparticles would be proved sooner or later.” Lowi said excitedly, “Then, the odds that the vacuum ocean of negative energy exists have increased too!”

Layria and Alfalia were reading the same copy of “Arcana”. They understood Lowi’s excitement well because they were also very thrilled. Suddenly, they exclaimed as they read the following paper.

“Our teacher did not mention the vacuum ocean of negative energy and abandoned the description of negative energy. He gave a new model, where positive particles and negative particles would appear

and perish in pairs in the vacuum.” Chelly raised her head and hoped to see the same amazement on Lazar and Alfalia’s faces.

Layria read part of the content on the paper. “... According to the field theory and the new material point, all the particles could be seen as different fields. They’re the activated status of fields, and the base of fields is the vacuum. Therefore, different fields that are in the base status can overlap... There is no absolute vacuum in our world... Vacuums are not empty...

“... According to the uncertainty principle, there will be great energy fluctuations in a small, fixed time range... Therefore, the vacuum is itself an ever-surging ocean of energy. The conservation of energy is maintained in general... During the process, the fields enter the activated status from the base status, yielding a pair of positive and negative particles. Then, the pair of particles perish with each other, release energy, and the total is the same...

“... Because the process is too short to be investigated, the positive and negative particles are virtual particles. However, under special circumstances, those virtual particles might be separated because of external force and become the real positive and negative particles. That is perhaps one of the sources of materials. It has been generated from ‘nothing’ because of the uncertainty principle...”

The whole Atom Institution was quiet as she read the content. Lazar, Chelly, and the others tried to understand the model. They were still too shocked.

The ever-surging ocean of energy in the vacuum, the appearance and disappearance of particles, and the generation of matter disrupted their understandings in the past, raising a storm in their brains.

Also, the ever-surging ocean of energy seemed able to explain the source of magic energy!

Alfalia, who was rather good at astrology, suddenly mumbled to herself, “The uncertainty principle that is regarded as a demon because it might disrupt determinism is actually the source of matter...”

Ali was so dizzy at the gate that he turned to Anderson. “Do you have any idea what they are talking about?”

Anderson shook his head quickly. “Not a clue... What about you?”

Not far from them, Jane also shook her head.

“Me neither...” Ali looked more than confused. “Perhaps... this is the landscape at the bleeding edge of the microscopic domain...”

“That’s right.” Anderson couldn’t have agreed more.

Lazar managed to get back to himself from his shock. He turned to Ali and the other students and said, “You’re here? You will be divided into groups of four. Each group will spend half an hour in the cosmic observatory. Heidi and Annick are waiting for you up there.”

Five people could be teleported at one time, but they had to be accompanied by a middle-rank sorcerer. In the cosmic observatory, even though the laboratory was only big enough for five experimenters to work in, there was enough place for more visitors. Besides, the magic gems and energy consumed would be covered by the Congress of Magic.

Ali and the other students were no longer confused. Their hearts were racing again.

...

Inside the Atomic Universe...

Lucien walked to the center and was ready to activate the magic circle.

Natasha, who came to see him off, scratched her chin and said, “To be honest, it has only been three months since we explored the Boundless Ocean and confirmed the ideas with data. I feel that this is too easy, like a child’s game.”

“It did not begin from the exploration of the Boundless Ocean...”
Lucien blinked his eyes and smiled rather cunningly.

Then, the light was on, and the gate of space and time was opened.

Chapter 766: The Discovery

Chapter 766: The Discovery

The silver lines lit up one by one and outlined the space-time gate. Lucien walked into the gate in one stride.

A dazzling light burst out, and Lucien's figure gradually disappeared. After the light was gone, Natasha could only see the empty magic circle and the pale space-time gate.

.....

"The transmission to the cosmic observatory is ready. Please make sure you have finished the potion in your hand," said Layria to the four students, Ali, Anderson, Jane, and Philomena.

Ali took a glance at the light blue tube in his hand and could still feel the spicy taste. However, after taking the potion, he did feel a strange feeling, as if his soul, brain, and his body had been put into a magic freezer.

Earlier, when signing up to be the volunteers, he saw Jane stepping out first, so he hurriedly followed. Luckily, he was the fourth.

He looked to the side and into Jane's eyes. He saw that Jane's black eyes, which were always quiet and peaceful, were now shining with excitement and exhilaration. The light in her eyes came from the most sincere passion that a human being had toward the mysterious and boundless universe.

One would never be able to realize how small and insignificant an individual was until one saw the starry expanse.

Looking around and seeing the look on the students' faces, Layria smiled. The Congress was obviously very generous to these students. The magic potion called Strong Chirga that was given to each student was very expensive, and it was used to help with nausea. Most sorcerers who entered the cosmos would endure this themselves.

Chirga was a fruit of Holm, but its annual yield was very low. Chirga could be used as the main material for some senior-rank magic potions.

But Layria knew that there was a reason behind the Congress' generosity. When the students saw the cosmos, they would understand that the so-called God of Truth on the small planet, which strived to gather more followers and resources, was in fact not that almighty at all.

Then the students would go back to their schools and promote the idea among more students. The Congress would then introduce more projects, including cosmos museums, experience centers, and more radio programs, to widen people's horizons as much as possible.

"Attention. The transmission has been activated," said Layria.

Ali suddenly became very nervous. Before this space jump, he never even tried flying!

But his heart was also full of expectation and excitement.

The dazzling light streaks blurred Ali's eyes.

.....

Tower.

"There are positive electrons... It's true..." said Rachel to Samantha. In her hand, there was the latest issue of Arcana. Rubbing her forehead, she felt both excited and frustrated.

"We can't see it before we do the experiment on our own," said Samantha with a meaningful look on her face.

Although she said so, she did believe that Lucien had found positive electrons. The Lucien equation had gained great significance in the field of microscopic domain study, and its validity had been proven many times. Lucien was also well-known for his rigorous attitude, and he had never published a paper unless he was a hundred percent certain. Perhaps this was the power of authority.

“The world is so wonderful! In the past thousands of years, not a single intelligent creature has ever realized the existence of antimatter. But now, arcana will lead us to the truth of the world.” Rachel’s eyes were shining with excitement. No arcanist could resist the charm of arcana.

Although most arcanists started their studies for power, for money, for treasures, or for material enjoyment, and they could easily forget their most sincere passion because of the tedious, repetitive experiments and wealth, but every time when there was a major finding, they could still recall the passion and pure joy from exploring the truth of the world.

Samantha nodded. “Actually, according to symmetry, the existence of antiparticles shouldn’t be something too surprising. When there are particles, there must be their antiparticles. Mr. Evans has also abandoned the most doubtful concept of negative energy and chosen to replace it with the pair production of particles and annihilation.”

“I wonder how those supporters of the model of the ocean in the vacuum are feeling right now. The grand arcanist who was supposed to be the one most likely to support it has given it up,” said Rachel. Although the model thrilled every sorcerer, as it provided a possible insight into the nature of magic, many leading arcanists found it unreliable because of the experiments on some particles with integer spins.

Samantha finally smiled. “No matter what, the falsifiability of the model hasn’t been proved yet, nor has the validity of Mr. Evans’ model.”

Then the smile on her face disappeared, and she murmured a bit confusedly, “Does the uncertainty principle apply to how matters come into being...?”

Then what about determinism? Should it be dumped?

“At the end of the paper, Mr. Evans discussed a possible experiment for verifying the uncertainty principle...” said Rachel in low voice. “According to the principle of field theory, there are tiny

electromagnetic pulses in a vacuum space...”

Staring at the paper on the desk, Samantha remained silent. Lucien’s fame and past glory had proved that he was by no means a daydreamer. As he had specified the experiment in his paper, he must have been quite certain about it.

After the uncertainty principle was put forward, although many microscopic domain experiments had shown great conformity to it, no solid experiments could directly prove it yet, which provided arcanists in the school of astrology precious time to slowly adjust themselves to adopt the new concept safely.

“If Mr. Evans had come up with this idea two years earlier, only low-rank sorcerers would have survived,” said Rachel.

Samantha sighed. After the recent two to three years, the many setbacks she had gone through had forced her to start accepting the falling of determinism, and she believed that this was also true for other countless arcanists. The world showed no mercy to any individual and would never change itself because of an individual’s unacceptance.

She looked out of the window and the bright sunlight made her squint. She felt that she could see a bright but a bit sad future.

“Anyway, the discovery of antiparticles will be forever remembered by the history of arcana. We’ve stepped out of the world that had been trapping us. Now we’re even closer to the truth.”

“Maybe nothing bigger than this will show up for a very, very long time,” said Rachel, who also turned to look at the blue sky outside. “After the past ten years of rapid development, it seems that arcana has hit the plateau. The next groundbreaking finding has to keep brewing for a long time.”

.....

Traveling through the layers of space and time, Lucien saw the countless shadowy and overlapping sections in front of him, just like when he cast Regather.

.....

When the dazzling light retreated, Ali felt very uncomfortable, but the refreshing feeling brought by the potion gave him the energy to look around eagerly.

Ali did not take a glance at the mysterious magic circles or the cold alchemy facilities, and he did not even greet the arcanists on-site. Instead, he directly looked out of the window.

The incredible darkness and endless deep space had instantly struck Ali's mind.

Against the darkness, the white light spots were pure. They were not shining, but just hanging there quietly, as if nothing in the past millions of years ever changed them.

He turned to look down, and there were the same boundless darkness and pure stars. The students were deeply shocked by the loneliness and the realization of their own insignificance.

Was this cosmos?

Nothing mattered when compared to it...

Layria walked to her friends and handed them the journal, "Our teacher has found positive electrons! From cosmic rays!"

"That's awesome!" Annick said very cheerfully.

Katrina also had a big smile on her face. "There will be more observatories in the future as more people will want to use them!"

"Heidi, you don't want to take a look at it?" Layria asked.

Heidi muttered, "The experiment is in the key stage... I believe that Mr. Evans has actually founded positive electrons a long time ago, or he wouldn't all of a sudden want to set up a cosmic observatory... Ahh!"

However, her muttering was cut off by her shout.

The rest of them turned around and asked in surprise, “What is it?”

“A new track... different from that of an electron or a proton...”
Heidi muttered in a low voice while calculating fast in her mind.

Then she sprang up from her seat and exclaimed, “Its mass is more than two hundred times heavier than that of an electron! It’s a new particle! Very likely to be the one predicted by Her Excellency Hathaway!”

“What? A new particle?!” They were all very surprised.

Ali looked at them with confusion. He saw the boundless cosmic, the pure stars, and Heidi, whose hands were still on the alchemy device.

New particle?

Why wasn’t it mentioned in the textbooks?

Did he just witness a historic moment?

.....

COMMENT

Lucien could see better now. But then the blinding glare came at him.

Even though Lucien had cast the special spell to protect his eyes, he still could not help squinting. A huge fireball was burning in the air. Although Lucien had the protection from Space Staff and he was still far away from the fireball, the incredible and extremely high temperature was still formidable.

The fireball looked a bit blurry and distant.

Lucien closed his eyes and gently sighed.

“Sun...”

The space and time around him suddenly started to change, and it

began to project a starry sky.

Chapter 767: Two Suns in the Sky

Lucien's eyes closed tight, and he could feel the arrival of the boundless cosmos. The starry sky that was so almighty and detached looked down upon everything coldly from above.

The projection of the starry sky cast in Lucien's half-substantialized cognitive world made the entire cognitive world more and more clear, like a real one. Meanwhile, the cosmos had also set Lucien's Host Star of Destiny ablaze. The host star was now going through a series of fusion reactions like a real star. The black hole was sucking in some of the power to form the new balance.

The electron cloud drifting in the air, the charged particles exchanging virtual photons, and the electromagnetic force in the space had also become much more real.

In the strange boom, Lucien's cognitive world was further substantializing and transforming to the top legendary status.

At this time, Lucien was supposed to carefully observe what was going on in his cognitive world. However, he suddenly opened his eyes.

He wanted to see the true world, the world that offered all the feedback but was never discovered by anyone.

If any legendary sorcerers or knights had known what Lucien just did, they would have made a mockery of Lucien. Ever since the most powerful men in the world first knew the existence of this feedback from the true world, they had tried everything they could to find it and to master it, since it would, for sure, contain the deepest and ultimate truth as well as the secrets of the world. However, none of them did it, no matter if it was those top legends or even Thanos and Viken. None of them managed to capture the existence of the real cosmos in the real world. The only thing they could find was the powerful feedback.

Therefore, it was believed that only gods could touch the secret.

When Lucien opened his eyes, he saw that something was blocking the blinding light. Then, the clear vision of a starry cosmos appeared around him. However, it was beyond his touch!

The “real world” had revealed itself right in front of Lucien for the first time! No one ever did this before!

If it had been another legendary and demigod standing here, they would have been totally shocked. However, as if he had expected this, there was a faint smile on Lucien’s face.

He reached forward with his right hand and the cosmos suddenly started responding. Galaxies rapidly flashed backward until Lucien’s hand finally touched the familiar blue planet, behind which the huge fireball was burning indistinctly.

Boom!

The substantializing process had been boosted, and Lucien’s Host Star of Destiny suddenly burst out the dazzling and mighty glare. The glare had partially blended into the starry sky to enhance the glory of the big fireball!

Boom!

The blue planet had disappeared. The big fireball had occupied the entire “real cosmos”. It looked so huge and bright with its tremendous momentum, but at the same time, it also looked very illusory!

.....

After coming back to Atom Institution from the observatory, Ali, Jane, and Anderson had always been absent-minded. They were deeply shocked by the cosmos and the discovery of the new particle and thus realized the almighty power of nature in person. Now they were totally in awe of arcana as it could explore the deepest secret of the starry sky.

Ali had stopped peeking at Jane. Instead, his eyes had lost their focus as his mind was lost in his many thoughts. Meanwhile, the next group of students was walking toward the transmission magic

circle.

Suddenly, he felt that the light coming in from the window somehow had become much brighter. He looked up.

The autumn sky was high and blue, but in the sky, there were two bright suns.

“Two... suns?”

Ali murmured out of confusion, but then, he suddenly realized what it meant.

“Look! Two suns!” Ali’s voice suddenly became sharp.

All the people in the institution turned to look at him, having no idea what he was talking about, although they did understand every single word Ali said.

“Someone’s cognitive world has half substantialized?” Chelly suddenly came up with the possibility. She was dressed like a married lady.

Lazar quickly walked to the window and shook his head.

“Impossible... There are no other changes in the environment. No thunder, no lightning... but two suns...”

His voice suddenly became very low. He stared at the sky, at the two suns.

No matter if it was the half-substantialization or substantialization of one’s cognitive world, according to all the records, they could only change the environment within a couple of hundred meters. The dimension discovered before was a very rare exception since almost everyone over the world saw it. However, the two suns in the sky were almost identical. It was impossible to be something unusual within the atmosphere!

If it was because something was going on just beside the sun, then the influence range was just too wide!

Lazar was definitely much more trustworthy than Ali. The rest of

them had all flowed to the window and let out a gasp. There were indeed two suns in the sky!

“What is going on...?” Ali asked the famous arcanists around confusedly.

Lazar, Jerome, and the rest of the arcanists all remained silent.

At this time, they could finally tell the difference between the two suns. The one on the left was dazzlingly bright, giving out light and heat. The one on the right, however, was an illusion, but a very real illusion.

“Something big happened...” Alfalia murmured. She had never seen this before even in the textbooks.

The two suns in the sky brought no change to the world other than the brighter sunlight. Although more and more people had started noticing the wonder, no one knew what was going on.

.....

In Lance, the Holy City.

Viken, the pope, was listening to Melmax’s report and thinking about how to stop Maltimus. At this time, the host star of destiny in his soul suddenly flashed a bit. In the next second, he had blinked to the window and looked up.

In the early morning sky, two big fireballs were rising, dyeing the entire sky orange!

“This is...”

Even for someone as profound as Viken, he had never seen anything like this. For a moment, he had no idea what it was, until he picked up his platinum staff.

“Lucien Evans has found the sun? But he hasn’t studied Blue Gate...”

Viken knew that Lucien had found the sun and got the feedback

from the “real world”. What was going on in the sky came from the top legendary power that Lucien just gained. However, Viken could not help but frown. “But two suns... Impossible...”

Normally, it should be a really bright star beside the sun. The light of the star should be easily covered by the sunlight.

At the moment, Viken felt both excited about the discovery of the sun but also the apprehension from the unknown.

.....

In Observer’s Castle, the Dark Mountain Range.

Holding the wine glass, Rhine was waiting for a descendant’s visit. Suddenly, he spread out his big bat wings and filled the entire hall.

In space, an illusion moon quickly rose in the air and transformed into a blond young girl. Her red eyes looked out of the window. In the darkness, the radiance of the silver moon had been overwhelmed by the dazzling sunlight.

Rhine stopped his movement. The glass wine pressed against his lips.

Alterna stared at the sun until it slowly disappeared. When the night sky resumed, Alterna said seriously, “He has found the sun.”

“I wonder if he can explain this.” Rhine smiled.

Neither Alterna nor Rhine looked very surprised.

After a while, Alterna sighed. “But it was just too big...”

.....

In the Blue Ocean, Maltimus was sitting on his throne, holding the gold trident in his hand. Suddenly, he looked up at the sky through the body of seawater, and a sarcastic-looking smile appeared on his face.

But soon, the smile was replaced by a shocked expression.

.....

On the Pearl Islands.

Douglas was still studying his project using alchemical items to replace space jump in order to reach the sun. Suddenly, his eyes opened big when he felt that a starry sky just appeared around him, which had caused a series of great changes in his cognitive world.

After a while, his cognitive world was fully substantialized. His cognitive world had just gained some direct connection to the real cosmos.

Douglas was a bit confused but also amused. He was just sitting in his place, but all of a sudden, the feedback from the real world had come to him.

It was basically a million arcana credits hitting him while he was just sitting on his couch.

However, he quickly figured this out. Douglas knew that his many theories were built upon the assumption that those planets and stars did exist. Therefore, the sudden change must have come from someone's discovery of the planets. Was it Lucien?

So far, only Lucien and Douglas himself were still exploring planets.

Douglas then immediately asked Brook to take over the shift for him and headed for the Atomic Universe.

He had so many questions to ask Lucien in person.

.....

The "real world" had disappeared. Lucien squinted at the huge fireball from a distance and thought to himself out of pity, *It was almost there. Something that hasn't been proved. Or I could've...*

Meanwhile, the two host stars of destiny started spinning around each other and affecting each other. His body suddenly went illusionary and ethereal, but he recovered within a second.

It turned out that this transformation could, in fact, be achieved by an individual, and the belief that only a primeval devil could do so had been proven wrong. Lucien put on an ironic smile, which was quite rare. He was now a real top legendary, and he had mastered the method of status transformation, which differed from that of Viken. It was a magic model integrated into his soul, like blood power.

Chapter 768: Douglas Decision

Chapter 768: Douglas' Decision

Babel, in the Atomic Universe.

A cluster of dazzling light flew out of the space-time gate. Like a water ball rippling, it instantly lit up the magic circle, and the complicated lines and patterns in the air were now shimmering.

Meanwhile, the gate no longer looked gray and pale. Instead, it was now covered with a layer of dreamlike gloss.

The layer of light, which was like rubber, then protruded all of a sudden. A vague figure walked out. As the figure was becoming more and more clear, it turned out to be Lucien.

As soon as Lucien stepped out of the gate, its gloss was instantly taken off, and the gate collapsed to the ground into ashes. One by one, the shining lines in the air had also broken and became a pile of trash.

At this time, Lucien finally realized that Natasha was not the only one standing in the hall waiting for his return. The president was also waiting. Douglas looked quite anxious, which was rare for him, but not in a bad way. The anxiety was from his eagerness to find the answer.

However, Lucien was not surprised by Douglas' presence at all. After what he just did, it would have been more perplexing if the president had not been here.

As for Natasha, her waiting was out of her care for Lucien and her own curiosity.

“How did you find it?” asked Douglas straightforwardly.

Natasha opened her mouth, but she did not want to cut Douglas off. She also had lots of questions to ask, like how far the sun was and how it existed. Compared to Douglas, she had plenty of chances to

ask.

Lucien smiled, as it was so rare to see Douglas being so solicitous that he had forgotten the most immediate thing that he should have done after reaching top legendary. It looked just like a Fernando was living within him.

“A second, please,” Lucien said calmly.

A starry sky then unfolded behind Lucien, where a huge fireball was burning. The stars surrounding the big fireball formed the many mysterious patterns, while behind the fireball, there was a cluster of deepest darkness.

Against the sky, there were protons and neutrons forming into atomic nuclei. From time to time, they would drift, and sometimes, they would collapse. Together with the electrons, they formed elements. In the different sections where the elements gathered, there were different beautiful wonders, like the extremely cold liquid and crystals.

Light was flowing among the charged matters, and it was divided into portions, which reflected the nature of electromagnetic force, and it joined the “wind power” in the illusionary space harmoniously.

The edges of the entire world bent slightly, and beyond the edges, it seemed that there was something else that was connected to them, which enabled the changes in the cognitive world to affect the material world.

Seeing that, Douglas realized what he had forgotten, and he was a bit amused by himself. How could he forget this? After reaching the top legendary level, one should reflect the changes in his or her cognitive world to one’s own demiplane as soon as possible to make the demiplane resemble the dimension better.

As soon as Lucien unfolded his cognitive world, Babel tower started shaking fiercely, and the shaking was from the planet it was on.

The stars in the dark cosmos in the dimension suddenly burst out

splendid light and became very real. And the star, which resembled the sun, was now on fire, and the intimidating and extreme temperature was also close to that of the real sun.

When the projection of Lucien's cognitive world disappeared, Douglas finally asked, "How did you do this...?"

Lucien answered briefly, "Since it seems that our planet was insulated by something like a 'fog', the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean would go around and around. When we fly out of the atmosphere, we lose the observation of the planet at some point until we enter the universe. After that, we have to consider two things. One, does light also bend when casting through the atmosphere? Second, are other planets also being 'trapped'?

"... So I combined the data obtained from the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean and an idea I once had, and thus revised the calculation of the coordinate of the sun. In the end, I finally found it..." said Lucien after a short pause.

"Long time ago, we did think of the possibility that the atmosphere might have changed the transmission of light and considered it a possible reason why we could not find the planets. However, after so many years, we still haven't got a full idea about the secrets of the Boundless Ocean and the 'fog'," said Douglas.

The previous generations of arcanists were no fools. What Lucien just said had already been put forward years ago. However, they all failed to find the problems among the data and records. If it had been as easy as Lucien's narration, those arcanists would have found the sun a dozen hundred years ago!

Therefore, the key question Douglas had to ask was how Lucien managed to find the problem in the data and figured out the accurate coordinate.

Lucien's right hand climbed onto his chin and rubbed it. He responded with some hesitation, "I can't be very clear right now. I think the 'fog' and the abnormality of the Boundless Ocean should both have something to do with the unusual abnormality in the space."

Seeing Lucien's unconscious movement, Natasha knew that Lucien was not hiding anything. Instead, his mind was indeed filled with questions.

"Something unusual in space... The bending of space shows gravity, and the gravity there does look strange... but..." Douglas murmured.

But he suddenly realized why Lucien was being so ambiguous. "You're afraid my head is going to explode? It's something contradictory to the general theory of relativity?"

Lucien rubbed his forehead out of a bit of embarrassment. "...Yes, there are some conflicts between the general theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. I'm more on the side of the latter, but I can't be sure that I'm a hundred percent correct. My bold guess might mislead you, sir. So I cannot just burst out my own thinking recklessly."

"You're now sure about it. So I'd like to listen to it as I won't let something uncertain shake my cognitive world," said Douglas with a smile. "If you don't want to be very clear, you can give me some hint, and I'll explore it on my own. During the process, I can keep adjusting myself. So even if the final result does go against the general theory of relativity, my cognitive world wouldn't collapse."

Lucien nodded slightly. "A long time ago, I started thinking about why the planets can't be spotted, but I was totally clueless until I opened the chamber and saw the mysteries."

"The mysteries of immortality?" Douglas and Natasha both asked at the same time. They had never expected that this would have anything to do with the mysteries of immortality.

Lucien said seriously, "The missing of planets, the strange things about the atmosphere and the ocean, the gravity-less stars in Stars' Grave, Furnace of Souls, and even the 'real world'... They are all around the same question, so we have to see them all together."

"Make sense," Douglas agreed, but he soon got confused again. "If it's like what you said, then the atmosphere should share the same

peculiarity with the ocean, as their surroundings are not different by nature. But why when we were heading for the atmosphere, there was nothing preventing us from flying into the cosmos, yet when we were in the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean, we couldn't go any further?"

Lucien answered seriously, "This is why I'm confused as well. I've built up a special math model for it, but it turned out that it was almost impossible for the math model to form naturally, although it did go into the strange dimension."

"Impossible to form naturally... You're saying... someone did it?" Douglas also became very serious.

Natasha also looked very astonished for a moment as her big silver-purple eyes opened big. Lucien's words might mean something very terrible.

"Possibly. There might be someone really, really powerful there that we don't know, who created the peculiarity deep in the ocean, but this is very unlikely because there's no point, as we can always find planets with the data. Therefore, I suspect that it has something to do with the age of mythology. After all, we know very little about the age. The only one," said Lucien.

The last time when Lucien risked his life entering the Temple of Spirits, he saw a library where lots of books from the age of mythology were stored there. However, at that time, he did not have enough time to copy them, and when he came back, the spirits had removed them.

Douglas nodded slightly. "Possible. Perhaps it's preventing Maltimus and the abyss from coming to the main material world."

"After the age of mythology, Silver Moon has also started pulling away from influencing the 'ground'," said Lucien. Then he took a deep breath and said, "To verify my guess, I'll visit the Dark Mountain Range soon to see Mr. Rhine and see what he could get from the 'Silver Moon'."

"Make sure you're ready," Douglas agreed. "If the 'Silver Moon'

doesn't want to say anything, we'll go back to the library in the temple again."

Douglas smiled. "Give me the coordinate of the sun so that I can see it with my own eyes. After that, I'll get ready to reach the demigod level."

"Demigod?!" Both Lucien and Natasha were slightly shocked. Obviously, Lucien did not agree with Douglas' plan.

"My cognitive world is basically complete once planets are found, and from my previous studies, I've figured out how to transform my status and reach the level of demigod," said Douglas with the same facial expression. "I'll replace the power of feelings with my own cognitive world and replace the power of faith with the corresponding real environment. I will overlap them and combine them together. In this way, I should be able to achieve the transformation and open the gate to become a demigod."

Lucien knew that this was the most orthodox path for a sorcerer to become a demigod, but he insisted, "But sir, we can wait until we figure out why this method works and what a demigod is. We can probably find the answers within decades."

"I know your confidence, but we can wait no more. Maltimus' arrival and Viken's power are big threats to the Congress. If the Congress can't produce a demigod in the upcoming five years, we'll all be in trouble. I'm not sure if I can do this, but I'll still give it a shot." Douglas smiled, as if it were someone else's business.

"But..." Lucien kept on trying.

Douglas stopped him. "If you come up with a better method, I can still improve my foundation after becoming a demigod, and also..."

He looked out at the universe outside and said in the peaceful tone, "Also to me, the most intriguing thing in this world is to solve its mysteries one by one. The power that comes with it is just a complimentary gift.

COMMENT

“Even if I’ll forever stop at the demigod level, I’ll never regret it as I will have done my contribution to figuring out the truth of the world. I think I’ll be more than happy.”

“Sir...” Lucien did not know what to say.

Chapter 769: The Birth of a Custom

The square near the Rose Boulevard was jam-packed with people after the lights were on.

It was the habit of many citizens of Rentato to take a walk to the nearest square after dinner and wait for “Arcana Voice”. However, after the promotion of offering a magic radio with enough subscriptions, it was no longer as crowded as before. But of course, the people here were not few at all in terms of absolute number.

“Hello, everyone. This is FM 592.6M, ‘Arcana Voice’. I am your old friend, Nightingale. Thank you for listening to our program...” As the sweet voice that sounded like their family member came out of the trumpet, all the audience focused their attention and stopped talking with their partners. Also, after the live stream last time, they were already able to picture Ms. Nightingale’s look with her voice.

After many programs, “Magic Room”, a session that people couldn’t quite follow but were very interested in, started.

“Dear audience, I’ll teach you how to resist the shallow hypnotization spells... Zi. Zi. Zi...” Before the magnetic male voice finished his sentence, shrilling noises came out of the loudspeaker. Then, the noises were replaced by messy sounds of electricity. However, everything was back to normal soon, except that the low, magnetic male voice went back to Nightingale’s sweet but exciting voice.

“Dear audience, dear audience, this is ‘Arcana Voice’. Now, I would like to announce a piece of breaking news...”

“What’s going on?” The audience looked at each other in bewilderment. They had experienced signal interruptions before, but it had never been restored so quickly, and even the program had been changed!

Breaking news?

That was something that they had never been through. Therefore,

they could barely realize what was going on.

In the noble villas, the civil houses, and the schools, the members of the audience who were listening to “Arcana Voice” looked similar. They had no idea what had happened that called for a piece of breaking news.

...

Inside the Atom Institution, after Layria, who brought the students up above, told Heidi and Annick about the unusual phenomenon of two suns in the sky, they decided to return to the ground by paying the cost themselves so that they could know what had happened as soon as possible.

It was both because of their curiosity and because they hoped to brace for the worst situations as quickly as possible. After all, if they stayed in space, they probably couldn’t return if anything happened on the ground. After the energy ran out, they would become floating corpses in space. For similar reasons, most of the researchers who were unmarried did not leave the Allyn magic tower.

“Heidi, you’ve discovered a new particle?” The discussion about the two suns had been going on for a whole afternoon and a dinner. So, Layria couldn’t help but change the subject, asking about Heidi’s discovery.

Looking at her friends’ sparkling eyes, Heidi smiled in satisfaction. “After repetitive confirmation, it’s a new particle that is different from any known particles. Its mass is about two hundred times that of electrons, and it is very fast.”

“A new particle? Does the number of fundamental particles not agree with the principle of simplicity?” Many arcanists believed in the philosophy that the more fundamental, the more simplistic, just like the amazing “symmetry” that existed everywhere. Rock took off his black top hat and asked in confusion.

“We can only respect the experiment results for now. Maybe, fundamental principles are not fundamental?” Heidi spoke while

she looked at the clock on the wall of the laboratory. She exclaimed, "It's the time for Arcana Voice!"

She seemed to prefer Arcana Voice to News of the World.

Rock said with mixed feelings, "Possibly. Right, did you receive feedback from the truth of the world after the discovery of the new particle?"

"Very abundant feedback." Having always been straightforward, Heidi replied with a brilliant smile.

"Hehe. Heidi, haven't you been complaining that you never won the prizes like the Holm Crown Prize? The discovery of the new particle will probably fulfill your wish." Katrina was happy for her friend.

Heidi shook her head and said, not too expectantly, "I don't think the discovery of a new particle deserves any, unless it's a very important one, like what Ms. Hathaway predicted, or if the particle is discovered through a new approach. I'd better wait for the breakthrough in artificial intelligence."

"Is it not the particle that Ms. Hathaway predicted?" Both Annick and Katrina were surprised. From the properties measured so far, the new particle was quite similar to the meson that Ms. Hathaway predicted.

Heidi sniffed. "We can only know the result by testing if it participates in the strong interaction. For now, we can only assume that it is not."

She was certainly not entirely unaffected after her friends won the highest prizes in different fields, but it did not stop her from making the rational choice. She was more and more confident about the future of artificial intelligence, and she believed that she would win a certain highest prize, and maybe even an Evans Prize in Arcana, for that.

In the middle of their discussion, weird noises came out of the magic radio and caught their attention.

"Dear audience, dear audience, this is 'Arcana Voice'. Now, I would

like to announce a piece of breaking news...”

Heidi and her friends immediately became solemn after Nightingale’s voice came out. The only thing that deserved such interruption could be the special phenomenon of two suns during the day!

The whole Atom Institution fell into silence, and a sweet voice spread out of the magic radio.

“According to the announcement given by the Highest Council, at 11:37 a.m. today, Lucien ‘Atom Controller’ Evans, a grand arcanist, a legendary sorcerer, and a member of the Highest Council, discovered the sun at the coordinates of... in the standard universe location, proving the existence of planets and stars. It raised unprecedented feedback from the truth of the world and resulted in the unusual phenomenon of two suns in the sky.

“Dear audience who witnessed the phenomenon, there is no need to panic. This is not the end of the world. On the very contrary, it marks the most solid first step for intelligent creatures to explore the universe. We will no longer be bothered by whether or not planets exist.

“Although Mr. Evans must’ve garnered abundant returns, they cannot compare to the great significance of his discovery for all the intelligent creatures and the confirmation of the existence of planets for all the arcanists. This is a small step for Mr. Evans, but this is also a great leap for all the intelligent creatures. It’s a major monument of our exploration in the world and the universe...”

The announcement used all sorts of words of compliment, but Heidi did not feel that it was exaggerated at all. They would’ve been thrilled and offered their sincere congratulation even if it were any other legendary sorcerer who discovered it. Those who did not study arcana and never read the history of the Congress of Magic would never know how important and significant the discovery was for the arcanists.

“It’s about time. The sun has been hiding for so long...” Alfalia suddenly said with mixed feelings. It had been so long that some

arcanists suspected that they were not in a real world but a “laboratory” of a certain almighty god.

Heidi and Annick looked out of the window. It was pitch dark outside except for the lights from the lamps down below. However, the darkness was gone in their eyes, and the whole world had been illuminated.

The heavy darkness that had covered magic since the Magic Empire was finally driven away by the sun at this moment!

Heidi stood up in excitement, as if she were trying to do something, but she eventually got scared and stopped.

“Heidi, what do you want?” Layria held back her shiver and asked in curiosity.

Heidi raised her arms. “I want to cheer. I want to launch a fireball at the sky. The explosion will be the horn of our triumph!”

“I want that too.” Sprint, who had always been a rogue, apparently loved the idea, but Allyn had strict regulations.

Annick, who was relatively rational, suddenly realized that, if Allyn did not have so many regulations, it was possible that many gigantic fireballs would have been shot at the sky, and fire would be spluttering out everywhere. Sorcerers tended to express their happiness through the most violent approaches in their excitement, and what they were best at was certain magic.

“What a splendid view it would’ve been...”

...

In the square, in the villas, in the houses, and in the schools, all the listeners were stunned by Nightingale’s announcement.

The Church had been attacking the sorcerers because they couldn’t find any planets to prove the correctness of their celestial bodies’ motion system and their gravity theory. Some clerics preached that the Lord covered the space because of their blasphemy, preventing them from seeing the truth of the world. Some mocked that their

arcana studies were buildings without foundations and would collapse at any moment.

Although arcana had been proven correct one step after another, winning the support of most of the people of the four countries on this side of the Storm Strait and filling them with curiosity and awe in arcana, those people would never be entirely convinced until the stars in the sky were discovered.

After the South Church was exiled, the people who acknowledged the reign of the Congress of Magic began to hope for the discovery of planets as desperately as the arcanists did, trying to prove that it was not a punishment of the Lord and that their betrayal was not blasphemy.

However, now that the good news came and hit their mind just like that, they felt that they were caught in a dream.

“Great!”

A roar broke the silence. An elegant-looking gentleman took off his black top hat in excitement and threw it high into the sky, as if he could not find another way to unleash his excitement.

After the silence was broken, exclamations burst out like a tsunami. Under the influence of the first gentleman, the people all took off their hats and tossed it into the sky.

Wearing hats was a fashion in Rentato. So, the whole sky was occupied with hats. Some were the black top hats, some were round, some were soft, some were the broad-edged hats with beautiful ribbons, some were convenient hats embedded with feathers and flowers, and some carried hazy veils...

“Great!”

Looking at the thrown hats and hearing the tide of roars, a reporter from “Rentato Weekly” wrote subconsciously, “Perhaps, from today onward, there will be a new custom in the kingdom for celebrations in the kingdom, which is hat-throwing.”

All kinds of hats fell like rain.

Chapter 770: Revisit

Chapter 770: Revisit

Inside the Atom Institution, Annick, who had more or less calmed down after hearing the exclamations that were vaguely coming from all directions, hurried to switch the magic radio to the channel of “News of the World”. He believed that the channel, whose target listeners were arcanists, would have more detailed reports, including how his teacher adjusted the location of the sun.

They did not directly ask Lucien because Butler Leo told them that their teacher had closed the top floor of his magic tower and probably wouldn’t open it until a long time later. They had been trying to reach out to him to report Heidi’s discovery of new particles ever since they returned to Allyn from the cosmic observatory.

“... According to the report of Mr. Evans, he discovered the weird deviation of light and the unusualness of space when he conducted the following experiments, and he adjusted the standard coordinates of the sun according to his conclusion...” “Lark” Samantha, as Annick predicted, read Lucien’s report in detail and interpreted the whole process so that the senior-rank sorcerers could redo the experiment and the middle-rank sorcerers could understand the theoretical foundation of the adjustment of the solar coordinates.

The report undoubtedly convinced every arcanist who listened to it that Mr. Evans had indeed found the sun with reasons. Otherwise, his report wouldn’t have been so detailed and copyable. Reproducibility was a symbol of arcana!

“... What... What a complicated experiment.” Although her particle collision experiments and her modifications on artificial intelligence were rather complicated themselves, Heidi was still rather stunned, because the experiment was so intricate that no common arcanists could have devised it.

Even Sprint, who had always been proud and confident, had to admit in a low voice, “I’m afraid that only our teacher could’ve designed such a complicated but effective experiment...” He, for one, couldn’t have achieved it.

Despite his fundamental disagreement with Lucien regarding the observer effect, Annick still admired his teacher, who was the pioneer of many new domains, the proposer of many revolutionary theories, and the main booster of the great development of arcana studies and social development in the past decade. There was still a major gap between them.

“Yes, I don’t think that there can be more than ten experts who have such amazing ideas and such a solid arcana foundation. However, I still think that it is too complicated. Perhaps our teacher partly counted on luck, or perhaps he was doing some other experiments...” Hesitating, he proposed his guess.

Such a guess did not raise the anger of Heidi, Katrina, or other people. Having been engaged in arcana and magic studies for a long time, they knew very well that certain discoveries needed a bit of luck. For example, back when they were in the cosmic observatory, the experiments that everybody devised were identical, but Heidi discovered the new particle ahead of everybody else. The reason was that she made a minor mistake during the design... But of course, only the arcanists who had been doing experiments for a long time with a solid knowledge foundation could have grasped the gift of the goddess of fortune.

“In any case, the sun has finally been discovered! The chronicle of magic has been turned to a new page!” Heidi declared; her eyes glittering.

...

On the thirty-first floor of the Allyn magic tower, all the arcanists in the Sky Radio Station listened to Samantha’s broadcast in excitement. Louise’s news was for the ordinary people and contained nothing that they did not know.

Also, different from before, Samantha was no longer as nonchalant

as usual when she read the report. The insuppressible smile on her face suggested her good mood and quite surprised the arcanists who were used to her previous style.

For years, the continual defeat of determinism had made most arcanists of the school of astrology, but they had to gradually change their paradigm slowly. So, they had always been rather sad. Many poets of Rentato had praised them for their excellent poetic vibe and thought that they deserved to be the arcanists who studied space. However, the discovery of the sun ignited the long-buried passion in their hearts, which burnt up all their miseries and melancholy. At least for now, they were delighted and exalted from the bottom of their hearts.

The puzzle that bothered the school of astrology for thousands of years had been solved today!

After reading the last word, Samantha put down the document in her hand and hinted to the host of the next program to begin with a smile. Then, she left her seat, walked out of the room, and took a deep breath of the refreshing air at night.

“I thought that the discovery of positive electrons was shocking enough. I did not expect that Mr. Evans also found the sun.” A few arcanists who were familiar with her joined her.

Looking at the cold, dreamy moon in the sky, Samantha said with a tone of delight, “If it weren’t for this... this grand arcanist, I’m afraid that nobody could’ve devised such a complicated and unimaginable experiment. This is perhaps the kindness of the goddess of fortune and her acknowledgment for the school of astrology’s thousands of years of pursuit. That’s why she gave us him.”

Although no names were mentioned, all the arcanists around knew that she was referring to “Atom Controller” Mr. Evans and that she was not saying “grand arcanist” at first but “monster”.

It was one of the nicknames for Lucien that many arcanists used in private because most of his achievements couldn’t have been accomplished by any other arcanists in their entire life. However,

the guy had been proposing one every once in a while. What could possibly be a monster if he wasn't?

It was for that reason that they did not suspect why Lucien could've devised the unbelievably complicated experiment. He was the synonym of a miracle.

"From today on, the school of astrology will no longer be an ungrounded school anymore..." Another astrology arcanist observed with mixed feelings.

For the arcanists of the school of astrology, they wouldn't suspect the foundation of their prophecies just because planets were real material existences, because the Host Stars of Destiny were indeed right there.

Samantha nodded. "In the next, the focus of our studies will be divided into two directions. The first is to study the black holes, the stars, and the star systems, in order to unravel the mysteries of the real universe, search for its origin, and predict its future development. The other is to explore the connection between the real universe and the host stars, in order to figure out why the operation of stars affects our fate."

"That's right." The eyes of the first arcanist seemed to be burning with fire. Just because something went wrong with determinism did not mean that astrology was dead!

Staring at the silver moon out of the window, Samantha thought to herself. "As a matter of fact, the background that the Church made up for him suits him well. He's both an angel and a devil..."

...

Inside the Theater of Destruction, Oliver did not listen to the broadcast but perused Lucien's report carefully.

He pushed his gold-edged glasses and frowned. "This experiment is too complicated to be devised. It's more like a product of inferring the process after you have known the result. Is this Lucien's reverse engineering?"

As a grand arcanist who had a profound understanding of the universe and who explored the space many times, he noticed something wrong after the first glance. However, he thought that it was because Lucien accidentally got a magic model through the feedback when he researched other things before he reverse-engineered the magic model.

Inside Thunder Hell, on the other hand, Fernando threw the report in his hands onto the table and roared, "This boy must've devised the experiment after he discovered the sun! Don't take me for an idiot!"

With his understanding of Lucien, he had every reason to believe that Lucien must've decided the location of the sun according to other knowledge. Chances were that he even had complete theoretical supports.

After throwing away the report, Fernando saw the words on the latter pages of the report, which were in a different format from the first half. So, he picked up the report again and read carefully.

"It can only be published after verification?" Fernando repeated in a low voice. The few pieces of papers contained a complete record of Lucien and Douglas' conversation, which had only been provided to Fernando and Hathaway, two trustworthy grand arcanists.

Fernando thought for a long time and tried to solve the puzzle in Lucien's words, but he barely made any progress due to the lack of files.

"Why do you give me a record? Just come here and talk to me!" Fernando snorted in fury and activated electromagnetism messaging.

After background noises of electric currents, Fernando heard Natasha's voice.

"Lucien has gone to the Dark Mountain Range?" Fernando repeated what Natasha said and cursed, "This boy is really a fast runner!"

...

The sunlight was blocked by the tall trees. Together with the dangerous space gaps in midair and on the ground, the whole mountain seemed to be forever covered in darkness, giving a devastating and ominous feeling.

It was not Lucien's first trip to the Dark Mountain Range, but he still had no good feelings about this place that reeked of decay and corruption. However, he was not as paranoid, fearing that he might run into any powerful dark creatures, as he used to be in his previous visits. Unknown to him, it was those dark creatures who were so intimidated that they only wanted to keep as far away from this "monster" as possible.

The cold moonlight illuminated the cliff, donning it in a silver gauze. However, the lonely castle standing at the edge of the cliff was nowhere to be seen.

"The Observer's Castle has been moved away?" Lucien looked around in confusion. The forest, which was shattered into a gigantic pit, during the attack of Prince Dracula had been filled up by rainwater and turned into a peaceful lake that was rippling under the moonlight. The reflection of moonlight in the lake was beautiful and agreed with the landscape around. It shouldn't have made Rhine feel that the place lost the grace of nobles and forced him to move his house away.

"What exactly is the reason?" Lucien brought out his crystal ball and began his prophecy, and the result was rather ambiguous, which was within his expectation. It was not an easy thing to predict the whereabouts of Rhine who was supported by the power of the Silver Moon.

Therefore, Lucien took back his crystal ball and planned to ask a local of this place who lived nearby in order to empower his prophecy.

"Well, there's a dark castle over there..." Lucien spread out his spiritual power and discovered intelligent creatures. He blinked and disappeared from where he was.

Chapter 771: Daily Life of the Dark Mountain Range

The castle of the Magic Empire seemed to be enshrouded in the dark fog. Terrifying roars of beasts were coming out, mixed with devastating and miserable moans.

If it were any other places, such a situation would've caused all kinds of horror stories. The kids would've been too scared to cry at night, the clerics or the battle sorcerers would've been attracted to cleanse them, and the adventurers would've come to explore the place. However, in the Dark Mountain Range, it was just a regular situation, and chances were that even more spooky castles were somewhere else.

In a glamorously-decorated room, the carpet from the southern desert of the Gusta Empire lay on the ground, next to the artworks that reflected the passage of time. A big window, which had only gone popular in the recent hundred years, was installed in the room. Everything emanated the air of nobles except for the man and woman on the carpet, who were wearing chain mails that made their action easier and holding longswords in their hands.

Before them stood a thirty-year-old man in a classic robe. His cheek and his body were extremely slim, but his head was much bigger than usual.

The smile on his lips was particularly creepy under the contrast of the dark fog outside. His eyes were filled with passion as he observed the man and the woman greedily. It seemed that he could barely control his desire.

“Both the mind and the body are so delicious. My trophies this time are really delightful...” The man squatted and extended his slim right hand, touching the lady's pretty face and the man's chiseled cheek as if he were appreciating two pieces of thrilling artwork.

Such a touch immediately raised reactions on the two sleepers, whose eyes rolled as if they were about to wake up. However, the

big-headed man showed no wariness at all but kept on touching every inch of their skin.

Half-awake, Sharon sensed something cold and smooth wandering on her face and her body like a wriggling long snake. As someone who loathed such a creature, she was immediately woken up and opened her eyes abruptly.

She saw nothing but a gold ceiling where crystal lamps were descending, as well as a familiar face. The face was much closer to her than she thought.

“Brother Finn, you... my strength!” Sharon called his name subconsciously, but halfway through her sentence, it suddenly occurred to her that she was unable to activate her blood power. Her blood power of the grand knight had vanished!

“Finn, what are you doing?!” The man next to Sharon woke up a few seconds earlier and therefore noticed Finn’s anomaly.

Finn burst into laughter. “Constantine, what do you think I am doing?”

“You captured us here? Why?” As a battle-tested knight, Sharon soon held back her panic and realized that the reason she could not activate her blood power was because of the shackles and manacles on her.

However, her question was still filled with an intense shock. Constantine and she had known Finn ever since they were little kids. They had been going for adventures and growing together. They were knighted by the kingdom and were no strangers to the Dark Mountain Range. This time, Finn announced that he found a relic in one of his solo adventures. He believed that there should be a lot of good stuff inside, so they had come together.

Little did they anticipate that the castle was not as simple as Finn claimed. They were attacked by many powerful dark creatures. After a bloody battle, they encountered a weird mist and passed out. By the time they woke up, they found that Finn had become a stranger.

“Finn has been my slave ever since a long time ago.” “Finn” laughed crazily. All of a sudden, his eyes bulged, as if they would burst out soon. Then, from his nostrils, his mouth, and his ears, tentacles that looked like those of an octopus grew out. His skin became crimson.

“A Mind Stealer!” Constantine screamed in desperation. Such monsters were good at controlling the mind and the relevant spells. Now that they had been captured, their lives would be more miserable than death. It was possible that they would become his loyal slaves while maintaining most of their memories and personalities.

“Finn” shook his head. “I am not a Mind Stealer; I’m just a radiant knight who has the blood power of Mind Stealers. I was heavily wounded and could not heal myself, but the message of relics that I spread out earlier attracted many adventures to come. Their brains became the source of my revival. Finn was one of them. Hehe. Greed is truly the harbinger of doom. For nothing but rumors of treasure, they would come to my castle one group after another.

“By the time I absorb your brains and modify you into my slaves, my wounds will basically be recovered.”

Finn couldn’t have looked more hideous under the black fog when he said that. Sharon shivered even though she was a determined grand knight. It was even scarier than death.

The raging tentacles next to Finn’s head spread out to Sharon and Constantine, aiming directly at their heads.

Unable to make use of their blood powers, Sharon and Constantine could only back off by holding their bodies with their hands, until their backs stuck to the cold wall.

“It’s useless. I did not let you obey me by mind control exactly because I want to enjoy your fear.” “Finn” laughed cockily.

Dark knights and regular knights were basically the same, except that the dark knights often had bloodlines that were associated with demons and devils, which would affect their personality and mental

status. If their willpower was not good enough, it was possible that their blood powers would be out of control, turning them into real demons.

Sensing that the cold and smooth tentacles already touched her mouth, even the strongest willpower could not stop Sharon from screaming in desperation and fear.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

“It’s useless. This is the Dark Mountain Range and my castle. There are no living creatures around except my slaves. Nobody can hear you however loudly you scream. Hahahaha.” “Finn” obviously enjoyed Sharon’s fear and stopped touching her, giving them even more desperation.

Dum, dum, dum.

Somebody knocked on the door at a fixed pace, and the three persons in the room were frozen as if someone had hit a pause button.

Who was it? Why would someone knock the door at such a time and place? Finn was the most scared one of all. Nobody knew the neighborhood better than him. There might not be one intelligent creature who had the courtesy of knocking the door passing by in a whole year. Also, this was his own castle, and the “dark fog”, which he asked the elder Mind Stealers to set up for him, was out there!

At this moment, he seemed to be back to his childhood when he pestered his parents to tell him horror stories only to be too scared to go to sleep at night. Whenever he heard any noise, he would have goosebumps all over his body, and coldness would then rise in his heart.

Dum, dum, dum.

The door knock was neither too quiet nor too loud, suggesting the manners of the visitor.

“Who is it?” Finn recalled his tentacles and asked warily. As a radiant knight, he controlled himself well enough to not take action

recklessly.

Sharon and Constantine were surprised, panicked, and somewhat hopeful. Even though their miserable fate had been avoided for now, they did not feel relieved. Whoever visited the castle of “Finn” couldn’t have come to specifically save the two of them but was more likely to be the enemy of “Finn”. If they were the experts of the Dark Mountain Range, they wouldn’t go easy on the captives more than Finn would’ve.

“It’s me.” A gentle male voice came from outside. “Since somebody is at home, I’ll let myself in.”

Who the hell is “me”?

Unclear about the stranger’s strength, “Finn” secretly cursed and stayed where he was without opening the door. This place was the core of the castle surrounded by multiple defense circles. It was not so easy to break in!

At this moment, he saw that the doorknob turned on its own, and the door of the room was opened.

No! The eyes of “Finn” bulged even more widely. Where are my extraordinary circles? Where are my defenses? This is the most heavily defended place of my castle, but why does it look like a common hotel room right now? Why are those defenses gone?

“Finn” stood there like a stone statue as the door was completely opened and a handsome man in a double-breasted suit walked in slowly.

“I... I surrender! Don’t kill me!” “Finn” did not need to think to realize the gap between them, so he begged for mercy without any hesitation or self-esteem.

Then, he added, “I’m very close to the tribe of Mind Stealers nearby, and I once visited the Elder Mind. Whatever you need me to do, I can get it done for you.”

He was introducing his supporters so that the stranger wouldn’t think too little of him.

Lucien was amused. "I'm only here to ask directions. There's no need to be so serious."

If he couldn't find any information, he would have to go to the King of Nightmare.

"To ask directions..." "Finn" felt that he was about to vomit blood.

Suddenly, clings echoed nonstop as Sharon and Constantine's manacles and shackles broke off one after another, but there were no unusual waves in the whole room at all.

This... This is even more unbelievable than the Elimination blood power... "Finn" had witnessed many bloodlines, but he had never been through this before. He did not know what the power was at all.

Right when Sharon and Constantine were about to express their gratitude in excitement, Lucien smiled and said, "So, I was meaning to ask why the Observer's Castle nearby was moved away."

.....

Ten minutes later, Lucien left the castle in satisfaction.

According to "Finn", the Observer's Castle was still here yesterday, but the headquarters of the Dark Congress sent a message and called for all the legendary members.

It seemed to be a motion from Danisos, the primordial dragon of time, and Dracula, the vampire prince. They wanted to truly unite the Dark Congress. After all, the Congress of Magic, the Church, the Elven Court, and the Boundless Ocean were more and more powerful nowadays, and the Dark Congress could not remain as divided as before.

It was what "Finn" learned from the Elder Mind. He was rather panicked about the sudden disappearance of the Observer's Castle.

Considering that "Finn" provided satisfactory intelligence, Lucien did not kill him but simply put the shackles and manacles on him. Generally, those tools worked only on people below the senior rank,

but Finn hadn't entirely recovered.

As for what would happen later, it would be none of his concerns.

"It can be rather difficult to stop the division and the internal strife of the Dark Congress. Is Dracula willing to contain himself and live in peace with the werewolves?" Lucien shook his head with a smile and planned to join the meeting while he was visiting Mr. Rhine. "I hope that brains will not be flowing everywhere on the ground by then..."

Chapter 772: Confrontation

Chapter 772: Confrontation

After making it through the difficulties, the tiny bit of sunlight finally penetrated through the clouds and the fog in the sky that was full of gaps, as well as the dense crown and the leaves of the tree, leaving gold spots of light on the dark and cold mountain.

Crack.

A thick foot wearing a knight's boot stomped on one of the gold spots, collapsing the rotten leaves piled on it and breaking a branch that was hidden among it.

Nasdell, the werewolf who was following him, thought to himself in surprise, *Why did the prince fail to control his foot? Was he considering something important?*

It was Dubenal, the werewolf prince, who was walking in the front. He had silver-gray short hair and a brawny body, with arrogance all over his face. One could easily tell that he was a legendary knight who was adept at melee battles.

Dubenal was wearing a strange black armor. It was not as clumsy as the full-body armor, and it did not have the small pieces. It was more like a leather armor that was crafted with the materials and skills for full-body armor. He played with many stones in his hands as he said in an unpredictable tone, "Nasdell, are you surprised?"

"My prince, how did you know?" Nasdell blurted out in shock. The prince was able to tell what was on his mind without resorting to the supernatural powers at all? He truly deserved to be the smartest of werewolves and the most cunning schemer!

Dubenal squinted and looked at the pillars of light that leaked in through the dense leaves. It was so clear and brilliant that he saw grains of dust flying in the air.

"I know that you must be wondering why I did not go to the Valley

of Fiery Stone through the Portal to Alternate Realm but decided to walk slowly in the forest.”

The Valley of Fiery Stone was where the Dark Congress was headquartered.

Well, I was only wondering why you failed to control the force of your foot. Wait, I did not find it strange that the prince chose walking at all. It would take us hours before we could reach the Valley of Fiery Stone! I'm still too far away from the wisdom of the prince that is as boundless as an ocean. I did not notice the most obvious anomaly, and the prince had to enlighten me in person!

Nasdell, who always considered himself smart, was stunned at first. Then, he understood the “thoughtfulness” of the prince. Half ashamed and half touched, he couldn’t have admired the prince more. “Yes, my prince. I was indeed surprised.”

Haha. Dubenal chuckled without a sound. Your mind is too easy to read. As the most clever prince of werewolves, I can easily know what you are thinking.

“This meeting is summoned by Danisos and Dracula together. They’re hoping to unite the Dark Congress into a well-organized group, instead of a loose organization where nobody is under any restraint, in which case internal strife might burst out when everybody has their own thoughts.

“It’s a good thing in general, but not necessarily so for us the werewolves, because only I and Sonite are legendary. Compared to the seven primordial dragons and the four first-generation vampires, our legends are too few. Also, Sonite and I have been lingering on level three of legendary, and Danisos and Dracula are both at the peak. If we are united, it’s possible that we will become slaves to those goddamn vampires.”

As his prince analyzed the situation and prospect of werewolves clearly and elaborately, Nasdell’s eyes were shining. He was shocked, worried, and awed. Prince Sonite and the other princes always mocked that his prince had nothing but muscles in his head and that he was too bloodthirsty and brutal to think. However,

could they have been so visionary?

There were several princes among the werewolves, but only two were legendary.

Dubenal looked rather solemn. "So, I chose to walk so that I would have time to think about how the werewolves could get away from the dilemma and earn enough benefits from the matter..."

Looking at the tall and strong shadow of his prince, Nasdell felt that his eyes were wet. It was so touching. Even a tough werewolf such as himself could not control his feelings anymore. His prince was truly the conscience and the hope of werewolves. He was their savior...

"Have you come up with any solution, my prince?" Nasdell asked anxiously.

"... It's a complicated and difficult problem that cannot be addressed so easily..." Dubenal's tone became heavy. Then, he suddenly sniffed and said solemnly, "There's a strange smell."

A strange smell? A stranger who has successfully reached such depths of the Dark Mountain Range? Nasdell felt that his wolf hair was rising, but he was reassured after seeing the magnificent back of his prince.

Dubenal suddenly turned around and pounced forward. The enormous wind blew apart the trees, revealing the glistening lake far away.

At the edge of the lake where the wild wind was blowing, time and space rippled, and a shadow slowly popped out. He was wearing a black double-breasted suit and a top hat of the same color, with a delicate silver pocket watch in his right hand. It was Lucien.

Lucien was neither surprised nor panicked but simply nodded his head in approval. The legendary werewolves did have keen senses about the changes in the environment around them. It was even more unbelievable than what the Congress recorded.

Hooooooooo!

Dubenal's silver short hair rose, and his mouth was opened. Sharp fangs protruded out, and his gold eyes were dyed silver.

His body half bent, he was like a longbow that was full of power, with dozens of shadows surrounding him.

His eyes suddenly glittered, and the silver in them was gone.

However, in the dark forest, a cold moon was rising on the top of the trees!

Under the silver moon, the hundred shadows dispersed and lunged at Lucien from all directions. Some slithered on the ground like real shadows, some swooped like black ravens, and some waved their paws like real werewolves.

After the shadows dispersed, Dubenal lost his traces, as if any of the shadows could've been him!

"Luxury Cracking!" Lucien pointed his finger and cast his spell.

Crack, crack, crack, crack.

The shadows were broken without any resistance, melting in the darkness where the moonlight could not reach.

Suddenly, the shadow next to Lucien's feet was enlivened and turned into an exceptionally brawny werewolf, who snatched Lucien's body with its silver, glittering claws!

Dubenal's previous shadows were all disguises, and this was his fatal attack!

Crack.

By the time he saw the beautiful and mysterious pocket watch, he heard a crisp sound. Then, he could not see anything anymore, as if he had been locked in a different world.

Crack.

Something on Dubenal's body was broken. It released silver rays,

resonating with the cold moon in the sky.

So, the grayness around faded away, and all the colors returned. However, Dubenal could not see the stranger anymore, although the distant noise of “Mental Fulmination” surged into his ears.

Boom!

Dubenal felt that somebody just threw an alchemical bomb into his head. The gigantic noise made him dizzy. He could barely keep himself balanced. In the meantime, his mind became slow, and his soul trembled uncontrollably.

As a legendary knight, he fell to the ground without considering his image thanks to his natural instincts, before he rolled and jumped in the shadow, dodging the subsequent attacks.

“Hehe.” A gentle chuckle came from the forest nearby. “Dubenal, I never thought that you could look so terrible. If Mr. Evans had intended to kill you, you would not be in one piece right now. Neither ‘Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness’ nor the antimatter spell that heavily wounded the Lord of Hell is something that you can resist.”

As she talked, a little cat whose body was pitch black but whose paws were white crawled out of the forest and lay on the ground lazily, playing with its own belly. Behind the cat, a seemingly weak and sick girl was floating in midair. She had a pretty and delicate face, and she was wearing a long robe in the style of the Magic Empire, which was full of complicated and mysterious patterns.

Just like the cat, the girl had a pair of green and deep eyes. Her honey-colored long hair was curled behind her back.

Although she was trying to cover her air, Lucien, who had reached the peak of legendary, keenly sensed that she was a vampire, and a legendary one. However, she was not any of the vampire princes that he knew, and she did not have the unique vibe of the first-generation vampires.

After making fun of Dubenal, she turned her eyes to Lucien, who was standing not far away. “Mr. Evans, I am Fitia, Prince Dracula’s

subordinate. He sensed your battle and asked me to inquire about the reason for your visit to the Valley of Fiery Stone.”

Although she admitted that she was Dracula’s subordinate, her tone lacked respect. She spoke so casually as if he were just a common friend.

“Am I not allowed to come to the Valley of Fiery Stone?” Lucien asked back with a smile. “I’m told that Mr. Rhine is around?”

Fitia? That name sounds familiar...

“The Silver-Eyed Count has always been mysterious, but I’m sure that he will participate in the following meeting,” Fitia told Lucien the things about Rhine with a smile, not obeying Dracula’s order at all.

Hehe!

A sniff echoed. Intense darkness rose and covered the forest. The deterrence of the top legend bent all the dark creatures in the forest.

His face unchanged, Lucien stepped forward, and the time and space around him were immediately changed. Stars in different colors rose from the darkness. The one at the center emitted such strong heat and light, illuminating the darkness like the sun.

Soundlessly, darkness faded and stars were gone. Everything was back to normal. The two top legends had given each other a test remotely.

Mr. Evans, who had just stepped onto the peak of legendary, was as good as Prince Dracula...

The smile on Fitia’s face was gone.

Chapter 773: Weird Invitation

After the pitch dark where one could not see one's own fingers was gone, the forest seemed to have been caught in extreme quietness. Even the slithering bugs below the rotten leaves stopped making any noise.

“Lucien Evans...” The low gnashing sound came over from the dark clouds in the sky and the dispersing smoke, and it was mixed with intense fury.

For Dracula, Lucien represented a memory that was the opposite of pleasant. As a vampire prince who had lived tens of thousands of years, and an expert who ranked among the top ten in the whole world even including demigods, he was actually tricked by a bug who had just reached the sixth circle and suffered a failure that his capabilities did not deserve at all. He could have smashed the guy into pieces just with his intimidating air, but he could only watch the guy summon the Primordial Ancestor and wound him.

Whenever he recalled that, Dracula felt that his face was burning and his heart was full of humiliation. He intended to find an opportunity to kill Lucien, but the guy was devoted to arcana studies and barely went out. When he was indeed out, it was impossible to determine his location through the Host Stars of Destiny. Also, as a vampire prince with self-esteem, Dracula could not do things like lurking around Allyn for a long time. Even if he were to abandon his pride, he might not be able to fool the grand arcanist who watched over Allyn. So, the thing had been postponed until this day.

Of course, for vampires who had long lifespans, it was not so much as procrastination, even less so for Prince Dracula, a top legendary expert who could create a prosperous city in his dream that might easily last a hundred years. For him, ten years could be as short as a dinner. It was not procrastination at all. Who could've thought that Lucien would grow from a sixth-circle sorcerer into a top legend in only ten years and reach the same level as him?

It was a miracle that he had never seen before!

Considering that her “boss” was quite moody, just like everything when he just woke up, Fitia sighed and said courteously, “Mr. Evans, the Valley of Fiery Stone is the headquarters of the Dark Congress, and an important meeting is to be held soon. So, unless invited, no outsiders are allowed to approach. Do you want to fight against the entire Dark Congress?”

She was both polite and reasonable, so Lucien smiled and said, “I’m only here to visit Mr. Rhine. I can wait for him here.”

To be honest, Lucien would rather not enter the Valley of Fiery Stone even if he were invited. The place had a powerful defense and a top legend who was hostile to him. Danisos, the primordial dragon of time, was not particularly fond of human beings either. Entering the place recklessly was like entering the Holy City. His life would be at somebody else’s mercy.

Suddenly, Dubenal, who had gotten back on his feet again, spoke loudly, “What if Mr. Evans is invited? We, the werewolves, invite him to attend the meeting as a witness of the justice and impartiality of the meeting.”

Nasdell was shocked. *Why is the prince, who fought a life-and-death battle against Lucien Evans just now, suddenly inviting the legendary sorcerer of the Congress of Magic? Is the moon rising from the west?*

For a moment, he felt that his brain was in a mess, and he could not understand what was going on at all. He couldn’t help but realize that although he was smart, he was a clown compared to the wise prince. It was impossible for him to comprehend his mysterious plans!

“Dubenal, do you have any idea what you are doing, you hideous monster whose head is full of hair?” Dracula, who was hiding in the high darkness, said arrogantly and bluntly.

Under normal circumstances, Prince Dracula was a gentleman who appreciated manners, but manners were unneeded when he was faced with a filthy werewolf and a cunning reptile.

Dubenal laughed loudly. "This is the right of werewolves acknowledged by all the members of the Dark Congress..."

"I did not say that I want to attend the meeting," Lucien interrupted him at a leisurely pace.

Crack.

Dubenal's smile was frozen on his face. He said both in shock and in fury, "Then, what are you doing here?"

Why are you here if you haven't come to attend the meeting and disrupt Danisos and Dracula's scheme?

"I'm here to visit Mr. Rhine." Lucien did not know the werewolf prince very well, but according to the files of the Congress, he was a legend whose mind was a simple straight line. So, Lucien repeated himself again.

"Why didn't you say it early?" Dubenal's roar shocked the bizarre-looking birds in the forest, which fluttered out in fear. *Aren't such reasons all excuses? Do you not know what excuse is?*

"I already said it before..." Lucien couldn't help but rub his forehead. *What were you thinking?*

Dracula fell into silence while listening to their conversation. Nasdell found it even more impossible to keep up with the pace. Fitia, on the other hand, blinked her green eyes, and her lips were cramping slightly.

Fitia couldn't bear to watch the conversation continue anymore and said in a gentle voice, "As a matter of fact, Mr. Evans, you can attend the meeting."

In the meantime, she waved her hands at the black cat that was moving toward Dubenal and said, "Skoy, come back."

"Fitia, what are you doing?" Dracula said in surprise.

Completely ignoring her "boss", Fitia went on to say, "Because the content of the meeting was exposed in advance, at the request of

most members, the meeting will be held outside of the Valley of Fiery Stone, in case certain ambitious schemers silence the oppositions with the defense. Therefore, attending the meeting is not dangerous.”

“Fitia!” Dracula already sounded angry.

“Skoy”, the little black cat, disregarded its master’s summoning and went on to Nasdell. It liked playing with big dogs the most!

“About that...” Lucien thought for a moment.

Fitia chuckled. “Stanis will attend the meeting too.”

“I’m very curious about the result of the meeting.” Hearing that the King of Nightmare was coming and that the meeting was not to be held inside the Valley of Fiery Stone, Lucien naturally wouldn’t refuse to attend it. This way, he could know what was going on as early as possible.

Hearing that Lucien was willing to attend, Dubenal burst into laughter. *It was indeed an excuse! I’d seen through you!*

Nasdell admired his prince even more, feeling that his prince was truly visionary.

The darkness in the sky was much shallower, suggesting that Dracula might have left. Fitia gestured and said, “Mr. Evans, I’ll show you to the entrance of the Valley of Fiery Stone.”

Then, she blinked and said with a smile, “It’s really a great thing that the sun is discovered.”

Ever since she appeared, vague sorrow and melancholy seemed to have been hidden in her smile, as if she had complicated feelings about the whole world. However, her smile was pure and brilliant this time, like the flower blooming in the northern ice field.

Her attitude reminded Lucien of the files he saw before. Wasn’t Fitia the Empress of Snow, the legendary sorcerer of the Schachran Empire in the north? She went missing in the War of Dawn!

“The Empress of Snow?” Lucien recited the legendary title in confusion. How did she become a vampire?

Fitia smiled. “It’s actually a long and monotonous story. All in all, because of the problems of my own body and my soul, I could only succeed in my life by transforming into a vampire. Right, don’t discuss too much arcana with me. I fear that my brain might explode.”

“Am I that infamous?” Lucien said in self-mockery. When he walked into the forest with Fitia, he remembered that she was allegedly good at many ancient mysterious rituals.

Most of the legendary sorcerers today had little to do with the Magic Empire. The few of them were merely senior-rank sorcerers or archmages during the last years of the Magic Empire and were far from the center. Therefore, the legendary sorcerers who knew the weird rituals in the past well were only the ones in the Dark Mountain Range and Pope Viken. Fitia was apparently much more important than the former.

During the last few years of the Magic Empire, there were only two top legends in the three empires. Other than them, it was the almost twenty level-three legendary sorcerers such as Fitia.

Seeing that its master had left without bothering him, the little cat Skoy hurried to turn around and follow her.

Following Dubenal to walk in the forest, Nasedell held himself back for a long time and finally asked, “My prince, why did you invite Lucien Evans?”

“Because Dracula opposed it,” Dubenal replied. Then, feeling that it was not enough to reflect his wisdom, he added, “Lucien Evans has already reached the peak of legendary, and he has the special, powerful legendary spells such as Advanced Time Stop, Eternal Blaze, Luxury Cracking, and Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness. It’s barely possible for me to defeat him in a head-on battle. So, I can only carry out my strong suit and crush him with wisdom.”

“This meeting is very complicated and will be a perfect place for my

scheme. Lucien Evans cannot attend it safely at all.”

Nasdell was thrilled. It was truly as expected of his prince. He had come up with a solution to deal with Lucien Evans so quickly!

.....

Inside the Valley of Fiery Stone, volcanoes were erupting, covering the sky with thick dust that looked like lead clouds. However, the place was not dark at all. The overflowing magma illuminated everything around.

Outside of the valley, black chairs that looked like thrones had been placed in the open air.

The chairs had been occupied by the experts who were in different attires and appearances. There was a legendary knight with six arms, a Spirit Absorber—the formal name coined by the Magic Empire, but they were more commonly known as the Mind Stealers because they were good at controlling the mind—who had an octopus head, a legendary sorcerer covered in a black cloak, a middle-aged man who spread out the aura of a dragon, and a brown eye that spread out many tiny tentacles that had little eyes in different eyes.

Now that Fitia brought Lucien over, the six-armed knight among them suddenly burst out, “Lucien Evans?”

He was apparently both shocked and suspicious.

“Lucien Evans?” The other legendary experts had recognized Lucien’s identity too. The atmosphere was suddenly frozen.

Although they had hardly been away from the Dark Mountain Range, it would be an insult to their wisdom if they did not know the most dangerous person in the world.

Chapter 774: Disaster Bringer

Chapter 774: Disaster Bringer

Every legendary expert had the ability to influence the environment around them. When they were shocked and suspicious, the atmosphere was naturally as frozen as the ocean before a storm, depressing and gloomy. An unimaginable storm might burst out at any moment.

The six arms of the dark legendary knight emitted cold, sharp brilliance, as if they were six legendary longswords themselves. The octopus head of the Spirit Absorber raised its tentacles, as if it were playing the piano of mind in the sky. The middle-aged man who looked more like a necromancer and a vampire than a dragon squinted, with crimson scales growing on the forehead, the face, and the hands. The Demogorgon of Eyes stared at Lucien with its every eye.

It was not because they were making a fuss and lost the calmness as expected of legendary experts. It was because the seemingly handsome and harmless young man before them was too famous. The legendary experts that he killed in the past few years were perhaps more than what most people killed in their entire lifetimes. None of the unintelligent specters, the manipulative spirits, or the Demon Lords and the legendary knights were weak creatures at somebody else's mercy. They also blamed the death of Congus on Lucien.

Also, more importantly, even though Lucien Evans was not the one who gave a fatal final blow, his appearance often meant the death or decline of legendary experts, such as Lankshear, the former Prince of Demons, Harex, or the incarnation of the Lord of Hell in one of his arrivals. The names that were more astounding than those killed by himself made the intelligent creatures in the Dark Mountain Range respect Lucien Evans as "Embodiment of Misfortunes" and "Disaster Bringer".

Therefore, after seeing Lucien Evans in such an important meeting

where everybody might burst into a fight, they couldn't help but feel that their blood was running fast. Who would be the unlucky guy?

Lucien pushed his monocle in confusion under the eyes that could've collapsed a radiant knight. Even though they were vigilant of a strange top legend, they shouldn't have behaved so obviously, should they? If they did not want any outsider to attend, they could've said it out aloud. Why were they glaring at him so angrily? Did they still want to talk to him nicely in the future?

With a shallow smile, Fitia said, "Everybody, this is Mr. Lucien 'Atom Controller' Evans. He happened to be in the Dark Mountain Range visiting a friend. After he learned that we are about to hold an important meeting, he decided to come to attend in order to learn firsthand information."

Seeing Fitia's attitude, the legendary experts on the spot contained themselves and did not ask who invited Lucien.

The sorcerer whose whole body was covered in a black cloak said with a hoarse voice, "Are you here on behalf of the Congress of Magic?"

"Although it's my personal decision, I represent the will of the Congress as a grand arcanist," Lucien said ambiguously.

"Hehe. A grand arcanist..." The sorcerer of ancient heritages did not seem fond of the term "grand arcanist".

Fitia chuckled. "Ogre, admit it or not, every sorcerer who has obtained the title of grand arcanist can't be any worse than you."

The sorcerer of ancient heritages was Ogre, the Umbral King, who was adept at shadow, darkness, curse, illusion, and other spells. He was merely a level-two legendary sorcerer when the Magic Empire collapsed. Therefore, Fitia, who was senior to him, mocked him rather straightforwardly.

Lucien glanced at Fitia in surprise. She did not seem to reject arcana too much, but she had unmistakably expressed her dislike of

arcana... No wonder she always gave a contradictory feeling.

“Hehe.” Ogre stopped talking. Although he was of the same rank as Fitia now, he was still rather scared of Fitia, who knew more mysterious spells and rituals and who had transformed into a vampire.

Fitia pointed at a glamorous chair that looked like a black throne. “Mr. Evans, you will be seated here.”

That chair was at the last row of the legendary members of the Dark Congress. Further behind were the followers of the legendary experts.

Lucien nodded and did not object. From their early conversation, he knew that Fitia was not a member of the Dark Congress; she was attending the meeting as Dracula’s “subordinate”.

At this moment, the experts of the dark world moved their eyes back and looked at each other. Cracking sounds immediately burst out in the air, and tiny sparks leaped out. They seemed to be engaged in undisguised communication of the mind.

Ogre said angrily, “Perhaps Dracula is conspiring with the Congress of Magic. That explains why he is so confident in trying to unite us.”

“Dracula works with the Congress of Magic?” The Demogorgon of Eyes waved the tentacles of little eyes. Of all the legendary members of the Dark Congress, other than Ogre, Dubenal, and the few primordial dragons who loathed the Congress of Magic, Dracula and Danisos were among the people who disliked arcanists most. After all, they had been suppressed by the sorcerers because of their internal strife in the Magic Empire.

The Elder Mind sneered with a mysterious voice, “With enough interests, why wouldn’t Dracula work with the Congress of Magic? If he is indeed working with the Congress of Magic, and Douglas and the top legends are hiding in the dark, what are you going to do? Do you oppose or concur?”

The Elder Mind was not a real legend but merely a representative of the “Mastermind” of the Spirit Absorber. That monster who was hiding in the deepest part of the Dark Mountain Range never left his lair, and most of the experts who fought him had been either killed or enslaved. Therefore, even Dracula and Danisos would not piss him off easily. They had no idea how strong he was exactly.

Every time the Dark Congress had important issues, or it was the turn of the “Mastermind” to watch over the Valley of Fiery Stone, he would send out an “Elder Mind”. By controlling the mind, soul, and body of the subordinate, he would make his puppet legendary.

Therefore, the Elder Mind spoke for the mysterious “Mastermind”. The legendary experts on the spot fell silent. If that were true, what should they choose?

Thinking about that, they shifted their focus to Lucien again, as if they were trying to obtain something from him.

Black short hair, handsome face, deep eyes, and fashionable clothes. The more the experts like Ogre watched, the angrier they became. A boy whose age was only a fraction of theirs was not a top legend!

Although most of them kept their appearances young, the vigor in Lucien’s soul was not something that they could simulate. It clearly indicated his youthfulness.

Sensing the concentration of spiritual power and consciousness domain, Lucien chuckled unhurriedly and snorted as a way of greeting.

The snort came at such a perfect moment that thanks to his demiplane, a scorching, dazzling fireball suddenly appeared in Ogre’s senses. It shined before them like the sun!

In grunts of pain, Ogre and the rest of them moved their senses away from Lucien’s body. However, they were not infuriated but clearly realized that the young man was indeed a top legend. No matter how young he appeared, he was still a top legend who was much stronger than them. He was one of the strongest regular powers of this world!

In the meantime, they thought of the legendary spells that Lucien revealed; Advanced Time Stop, Luxury Cracking, Eternal Blaze, and Snow Goddess' Forgiveness... When those legendary spells were combined, if they did not have the supernatural abilities or items to resist "Time Stop", even a level-three legend would've been instantly killed!

Which legendary experts on the spot dare say that they could resist one round of Lucien's attacks?

Except for the mysterious and terrifying "Mastermind", Ogre probably would've been the only lucky dog, because Lucien Evans did not seem to have spells that could directly destroy the phylacteries like "Light of Judgment" or "Fateful Meteor". But of course, things would be different if he carried his wife's "Sword of Truth".

After slightly awing the experts of the dark world, Lucien waited patiently for the meeting to begin and for Mr. Rhine to arrive.

"Evans?" Stanis, the King of Nightmare, saw Lucien the moment he was teleported to the valley. "Why are you here?"

"I'm here to greet Mr. Rhine and see how the meeting goes." Lucien did not cover his purpose.

The King of Nightmare still looked like a common middle-aged man, but he was covered in a mist under the perception of Lucien's top legendary spiritual power, as if he were a dream that nobody could see through.

Casting "Whispering Wind", the King of Nightmare asked solemnly, "What's the intention of the Congress? Do you want to see Dracula succeed in uniting them, or do you want him to fail?"

He asked the Congress of Magic's stance.

Lucien smiled. "Either is fine. For the Congress, there is barely any difference."

Of course, Lucien personally did not have high hope in that.

The King of Nightmare nodded and stopped asking about that. Instead, he discussed “psychology”, which had only grown popular in the Congress during the past decade, with Lucien. “I believe that the analysis of dreams is also a kind of psychology. You’ve paid too much attention to the results of actions...”

“Dreams are prone to the interference of too many irrelevant factors...” Lucien was rather interested in psychology too.

During their discussion, the legendary experts of the dark world came one after another. Except for Dubenal, they were all shocked to see Lucien sitting in the rear.

After a while, Natravos, a legendary sorcerer known as “Lord of Abyss”, and the Silver-Eyed Count were the only two participants who hadn’t arrived. At this moment, the bright sky of the Valley of Fiery Stone became dark due to an enormous creature that was flying above the area.

It was an elegantly-shaped dragon, whose whole body was in gray. Scales covered his body, including the eyes, like hourglasses. Circles of blackness that resembled annual rings could be found on his body, marking the passage of time.

Cold, indifferent, and slow, but never to stop. That was exactly the feeling that Danisos, the primordial dragon of time, gave. If one were to observe more carefully, they would discover that although his scales seemed lackluster, a layer of light seemed to be floating on them all the time.

Around Danisos, time and space overlapped naturally. When rays of light illuminated it, the sky seemed to be snowing.

“The meeting begins now. Those who are late will be informed of the result.” Danisos opened his wings and looked down.

His voice was more solemn than ever.

Chapter 775: The First

Danisos' appearance as a dragon instead of a human suggested his deepest hate against mankind. After all, the pope who killed his wife, Aflora, was a human, and most members of the Saint Truth were human beings too.

As he talked, an invisible wind seemed to be blowing across the field, bringing the feeling of aging and distance. His eyes that were covered in gray scales did not have pupils, and there were only layers of transparent ripples that looked like the ever-running river of time. It also made Danisos a high and mighty witness of history, who observed the changes of worlds and lived indifferently without ever being involved.

For a moment, Lucien sensed that Danisos was staring at him coldly. He had a subtle, uncontrollable shiver, as if he had been paralyzed because of the changing time and space. The Moon Timer in the pocket of his waistcoat had also been dimmed by the ruler of time.

Right when Lucien was about to unleash his air and resist Danisos by melting the projection of his demiplane, Danisos suddenly moved his eyes away. Instead of questioning why Lucien was invited to come here, he looked at the dozen legendary experts in the dark world and repeated, "The meeting now begins."

"Dragon of Time and Luminosity, the Silver-Eyed Count and the Lord of Abyss haven't arrived yet. Both of them are very influential among their people or in their territories, and they may have different opinions. I believe we should wait a bit longer." Few members of the Dark Congress dared to argue with Danisos, and the Elder Mind was one of them because he was the representative of the mysterious "Mastermind".

The Silver-Eyed Count, Rhine, was a first-generation legend, and the only legend who could directly summon the Silver Moon. His influence among vampires was as good as that of Dracula. If he was absent, it was estimable that the decision of the meeting would not

necessarily be carried out among vampires. The Lord of Abyss, Natravos, was only a level-two legendary sorcerer, but he was the greatest collector of the bloodline experiments in the Magic Empire. After transforming his body into a Demon Lord's, his real combat ability was as good as that of level-three legendary sorcerers. He was sort of a central member of the Dark Congress.

Of course, after being transformed into a Demon Lord, Natravos seemed even more brutal and bloodthirsty, with additional masochism.

Before Danisos replied, a low voice came from outside of the valley. "Rhine's absence will not change the decision of vampires. If Natravos is late, it means that he has abstained. All he needs to do is to choose whether or not to accept our final decision."

A male in a tailcoat walked to the front of the meeting field in a seemingly slow way but covering hundreds of meters in every step. He was a mature, charismatic middle-aged gentleman, with a well-trimmed mustache. He looked around at the meeting field with his crimson eyes.

After he appeared, the whole meeting field became dark again, as if the light had been absorbed by him. Around his cape, which was red inside and black outside, humans, dragons, elves, villas, towers, and other objects seemed to be hidden.

It was exactly Dracula, the vampire prince known as "Night Dominator".

Dracula looked around at all the experts of the dark world and stopped briefly on Lucien's face, before he raised his head proudly and announced, "The vampires have reached an agreement with the dragons. We will establish a new Dark Congress, which will not be a loose alliance but an association against common foes. It's time for you to make a decision whether or not to join it. If you are unwilling to, please leave."

He was so arrogant that it was more like a notification than a discussion, and the attendees could only choose to accept it or not to accept it. Also, he seemed not worried that it would push the

other legendary experts of the Dark Congress away. Perhaps they were not significant in his eyes at all.

However, Dracula had indeed been well-prepared about this despite his arrogance. When the vampires and the dragons were united, he already boasted an overwhelming advantage, and he could totally establish a new force without being restrained by the Dark Congress. Also, although he had only one-half of the legendary experts, there were two top legends, multiple level-three legends, and absolute solidarity among them. Without internal strife, their combat ability would be much higher than that of the Dark Congress right now!

Hearing Dracula's announcement, all the legendary experts on the spot fell into silence. They had expected a debate on the matter. After all, every legend's opinion should be appreciated. Little did they know that Danisos and Dracula would be so dominating and arrogant that they did not give the other legends a chance to speak at all. They could only reply with yes or no.

Dracula looked at them coldly with his crimson eyes. "After the new Dark Congress is established, the Dark Mountain Range will be our main territory. Whoever doesn't belong to us will be attacked, if they are not hiding too well." There were too many dangerous places in the Dark Mountain Range, and even Dracula could not promise that he knew every secret hideout.

The atmosphere was frozen again after his speech. The tension that Lucien felt upon his arrival reappeared.

Arrogant! That's too arrogant! We're legendary experts, not vampires under your command!

We can always leave the Dark Mountain Range for the north to join other forces that are willing to take us in! Will there be any place that does not welcome a legendary expert?

Stanis was the calmest of all. He had been conspiring with the Congress of Magic since a long time ago. Had it not been for his remaining fear for arcana, he would've gone to Allyn.

Lucien looked at the King of Nightmare with a smile, feeling that he should thank Dracula for helping Stanis make up his mind and helping the Congress of Magic to secure yet another legendary sorcerer.

Previously, Lucien told the King of Nightmare that the Congress of Magic did not really care whether or not the Dark Congress was successfully united because there would be no difference. However, Lucien admitted that he was wrong and felt genuinely delighted. Based on what Dracula and Danisos were doing, the thing was definitely in favor of the Congress.

Well, should we try to win the two legendary knights over? The Congress of Magic has plenty of prosperous islands, and we are short of hands to defend our territory in the ocean. We can reach out to the Spirit Absorbers, the Eye Demons, and the werewolves too, and see if they are willing to participate in the research work, or rather, to be researched on in the territory of the Congress...

Of course, the odds of success couldn't be too high, because the Spirit Absorbers and the Eye Demons were probably unwilling to leave the Dark Mountain Range that was most suitable for their survival and development.

When Lucien considered that, the legendary experts of the dark world considered their future.

We don't know if the Congress of Magic is fully supporting Dracula. In that case, we will be in a very disadvantageous position...

Also, there will be much fewer choices...

The minds communicated with each other remotely, and Fitia had achieved her purpose. As long as she brought Lucien to the field, whatever Lucien said, it would be considered an excuse because his arrival suggested that he was on Dracula's side, unless Lucien simply attacked Dracula.

Under normal circumstances, Lucien would hardly attack with his prudence. As a result, the legendary experts might be mistaken and make the wrong decision.

Sensing the changing atmosphere in the shabby meeting field, Lucien suddenly understood Fitia's intention. He couldn't help but thought that every legendary sorcerer had remarkable wisdom as long as they were not corrupted by the negative air of death or abyss. Dubenal, on the other hand, was an idiot to invite him here. Even if Dubenal told everyone that he had invited Lucien, nobody would believe that the Congress of Magic was working with werewolves, because they knew exactly what a fool Dubenal was...

Right when Lucien was about to speak while disregarding the rules, the Elder Mind stood up. His eight tentacles were drifting in the wind as he said, "Prince Dracula, is the Silver-Eyed Count aware of the decision that you have made on behalf of all vampires?"

If the Observer did not know, it would mean that half of the vampires might be unwilling to work with dragons, and that the God of Silver Moon's attitude was obscure.

"Rhine has gone missing and is out of reach. We cannot wait for him due to the urgency of the matter. Now, the three first-generation princes of vampires, as well as all the members of the Council of Elders, have agreed with my decision." Dracula's face was so pale that he seemed to have been away from the sun for decades, but his lips were in the weird sanguine color.

The "Mastermind" behind the Elder Mind was slightly surprised. Even Sate, the prince who was closest to the Observer, had agreed with Dracula's proposal?

The two enormous eyes on his octopus head looked at the unusually handsome man, only to discover that the vampire prince had closed his red eyes slowly, giving connivance to what Dracula said.

The atmosphere was frozen again. Suddenly, ripples of time and space spread out, and an illusionary gate appeared. A "young man" in a black magic robe stumbled out, with a loud voice that was enhanced by magic. "Mr. Danisos, Prince Dracula, my teacher has perished!"

He couldn't have sounded more panicked.

“What?” Everybody was shocked. All the legendary experts knew that the young man was a student of Natravos, the Lord of Abyss. He claimed that the Lord of Abyss had perished!

How could a sorcerer close to level three of legendary, who mastered all kinds of weird spells, have died so easily?

“What happened to Natravos? Give me the details...” said Danisos solemnly. The invisible wind blew again, appeasing the young man.

As a legendary sorcerer’s student, the young man hadn’t even reached the senior rank yet. However, all the experts on the spot knew that it was very normal. Natravos was a demon-like lunatic, and his students had a surprisingly low survival rate.

The young man took a few deep breaths and said, “Your Excellencies, I received the notification of gathering yesterday, but my teacher was engaged in his experiment and had been locking the top floor of his magic tower, making it impossible for me to inform him. This morning, I gave it another try and activated the reminder magic circle, only to discover that the defenses of the laboratory had collapsed.

“... The whole top floor of the magic tower was absolutely destroyed except for the outer wall. I searched for a long time and found my teacher’s phylactery in the remains, but it was already broken. It might’ve even been the source of the destruction...”

Has Natravos really died?

The legendary experts were both vigilant and surprised. Was it done by Danisos and Dracula in secret to eliminate their toughest opposition? Or was it the reason why Lucien Evans came to the Dark Mountain Range?

Ogre brought out his crystal ball and performed astrology to determine the life status of the Lord of Abyss.

Chapter 776: Investigators

Chapter 776: Investigators

Not just Ogre, every expert on the spot who was capable of astrology or who had similar prophecy powers began to predict the life status of Natravos, the Lord of Abyss.

They trusted their own judgment on such important matters, particularly when they were faced with “partners” that they couldn’t really trust.

Lucien was no exception. The crystal ball in his hands soon lost the colors and became dark, with stars emerging in uncanny trajectories.

Since nobody was interfering with or covering Natravos’ life condition, Lucien reached a result soon. The legendary sorcerer with the title of “Lord of Abyss” had indeed completely perished.

“Natravos is really dead...” After a dozen seconds, Ogre spoke of the result with his coarse, rusty voice, somewhat at a loss.

Following him, the other legendary sorcerers reached similar conclusions. The atmosphere was even more frigid, and a storm seemed to be brewing.

All of a sudden, Danisos, the Dragon of Time and Luminosity, said in his indifferent but intimidating tone, “I examined the traces of time but failed to find the cause of Natravos’ death or the murderer. Perhaps an expert intentionally destroyed the traces, or perhaps all the traces were destroyed in the destructive storm that caused Natravos’ death.”

Danisos could not travel back in time. However, every matter would leave traces in the river of time more or less. Only the experts who had grasped the mysteries of time could examine them.

The longer it was delayed, the more such traces would be worn out. Even Danisos would not examine the landscape that was too distant

unless it left too deep a mark on the river of time. Of course, purposefully or inadvertently, there were always cases where things could not be examined clearly even though they had just happened.

The Demogorgon of Eyes, Sonite, Dubenal, Cervantes who was the legendary knight known as “Six-Armed Inquisitor”, Sterling, Sate, the King of Nightmare and the other experts were not entirely convinced by Danisos’ words. They looked at Ogre, the Elder Mind, and Lucien. After all, it was very possible that Danisos and Dracula were behind it.

Lucien put his crystal ball back and nodded at the King of Nightmare and Sate, the vampire prince, solemnly, hinting that his result with the Moon Timer, the crystal ball, and the Mirror of Fate was the same. In the meantime, Ogre, the Umbral King, had also confirmed Danisos’ words through other prophecy spells.

The Elder Mind stiffened, his body so empty that the soul seemed gone. The two eyes on his octopus head, however, turned dirty and old but showed no senility. Every expert who looked at him in the eyes felt that their mind had been slowed.

“The ‘Mastermind’ has completely taken over the body...” Lucien nodded his head slightly. How the “Mastermind” could control the Elder Mind over such a long distance in the Dark Mountain Range that was brimming with space gaps was certainly something worth studying.

The Elder Mind’s voice became extremely coarse. “I only ‘saw’ that Natravos’ mind was full of pain and delight before his death...”

Pain and delight? The former was easier to understand. Most of the ways of death were usually very painful, but what was the delight about?

All the legendary experts on the spot subconsciously asked the question, but they soon realized that Natravos was a masochist. The more pain he was in, the more delighted he would be. It was exactly like when normal human beings had a taste of wonderful food or wine or met certain satisfactory things.

“Did Natravos go a bit too far when he ‘played’ with himself? But blowing up his phylactery was still too much... Or maybe the pain that did not cause his real death was not enough to bring him any pleasure?” The same idea that everybody was thinking of popped up in Lucien’s head. For some people, they would never be gratified without the pressure of death. “It seems that Natravos had severe psychological conditions. It’s a pity that he did not go through any therapy in time.”

However, it was only the judgment of the “Mastermind”, and it was not backed by any proof. Also, even if the conclusion was true, the possibility that Natravos was killed could not be ruled out. It was possible that he was both in pain and delight when somebody brutalized him.

When all kinds of thoughts were popping up in Lucien’s heart, Ogre, Cervantes, and the rest of them already began their mental communications.

“Whether or not Natravos was really murdered, we have to seize the opportunity and postpone the meeting!” Ogre said in a hurry. He seemed strongly opposed to Danisos and Dracula’s reorganization plan.

Sterling said solemnly, “Yes, we have to figure out the cause of Natravos’ death first. Otherwise, we will not end well even if we agree with Danisos and Dracula’s demand. It’s possible that we will die a mysterious death exactly like Natravos in the future!”

He also objected to the reorganization and wouldn’t let go of the opportunity.

“However, if we agree with the reorganization, as legendary experts, we are too influential for Danisos and Dracula to ignore us. Why would they kill us?” Cervantes, the Six-Armed Inquisitor, asked confusedly. He was rather neutral about the reorganization.

“Hehe. What if their real purpose is not reorganization? We do not know why so many legendary experts perished in the past few years yet...” Sonite, another werewolf prince, detested vampires from the bottom of his heart.

Seeing that everybody fell silent, Dubenal held his head high and controlled his tone in the mental communication. "This thing happened quite unexpectedly. Although somebody leaked the message in advance, little time was left for us, and many ways cannot be put into use."

The Demogorgon of Eyes, the Elder Mind, and the other experts were all shocked at his eloquence. Since when had Dubenal become such a philosophical thinker?

"I haven't come up with any good solution on my way here. I believe you are the same, right?" Dubenal looked at the other experts, looking for acknowledgment.

So, it's the same old Dubenal!

However, Dubenal seemed to have inspired Ogre, who sneered and said, "Therefore, Natravos' death gave us an opportunity to postpone it. With enough time, it is possible to disrupt Danisos and Dracula's scheme."

"That's right. The Silver-Eyed Count is not present. Things would've been different if he objected on behalf of some of the vampires. After all, he is not scared of fighting Dracula since he can summon the Silver Moon," the Demogorgon of Eyes and Cervantes said at the same time.

The Elder Mind pondered and said, "The dragons are not absolutely united either. Milereas and Danisos have been rivals in love for ages. Their relationship hasn't gone better at all even though Aflora perished. As long as we can convince him, it will be possible to divide the dragons.

"Also, Danisos and Dracula are both very arrogant. Even if they are working together for now, I don't think that they really respect each other. If we have reached a consensus, we can pretend to agree first and instigate them to fight against each other for the leadership of the new organization. Then, the new Dark Congress will be the same as the one right now.

"Even if it is not destroyed, we will win enough benefits and

positions in the new Dark Congress.”

Most of the legendary experts were wise and sophisticated. The situation was only one-sided because it came too unexpectedly, and Danisos and Dracula were more tough and arrogant than they expected. Now that they had an opportunity and plenty of time, they were naturally able to come up with a sabotage plan with high odds of success.

Dubenal nodded in satisfaction at their discussion. Just as he expected, everybody’s wisdom couldn’t be activated without him.

The mental communication moved fast, and they finished the discussion very quickly. Before Danisos and Dracula spoke, Ogre stood up and said, “Dragon of Time and Luminosity, Prince Dracula, Natravos has abruptly died, and the murderer is unknown. A great scheme might be looming over the Dark Mountain Range. We have to put down our prejudices and leave other problems alone in order to focus our attention on the cause of Natravos’ death and the potential dangers. I believe that this is also a great opportunity for you to demonstrate that the new Dark Congress is better than the one right now.”

“That’s right. How can we join the new Dark Congress relaxedly if we do not figure out the reason behind Natravos’ death?” The Elder Mind agreed with Ogre.

Natravos’ sudden death was a major shock for dragons and vampires too. Even the hardcore supporters of Danisos and Dracula couldn’t help but agree. After all, it concerned their own safety.

At this moment, the King of Nightmare suddenly said to Lucien in a low voice, “If the Lord of Abyss was really killed by someone, I can’t think of a murderer who could’ve done it in the victim’s own demiplane and magic tower. Even a demigod couldn’t have done it so quickly and secretly.”

“Perhaps he took advantage of the Lord of Abyss’ hobby of auto-sadism, and perhaps he was not in his demiplane when he died. The destructive effect was actually caused by the connection between the soul and the phylactery through weird spells. About that, Viken

is an ancient sorcerer who possesses many unusual spells. He can transform into the status of primeval devils, and he is much stronger than the Lord of Abyss. So, he is the greatest suspect.” Lucien guessed the intention of the King of Nightmare and purposefully pointed the matter at Viken.

As he expected, all the legendary experts on the spot changed their faces. Was it really Viken who had come to sabotage it when he heard that the Dark Congress was to be reorganized? Was he still around?

“For our own safety, we have to investigate Natravos’ death,” the rigid middle-aged man who looked like a necromancer said in a low voice. He was Maier, the primordial red dragon.

Under such circumstances, it was impossible for Danisos and Dracula to insist. So, Danisos said, “Then, we will go to Natravos’ magic tower for investigation together, in case anyone suspects that Dracula and I destroy the clues and fake the conclusion.”

“Alright,” Ogre agreed. “Evans, Stanis, I invite you as witnesses of the investigation on behalf of the Dark Congress.”

“That’s not a problem,” Stanis replied with a smile.

There had to be undestroyed magic files and notes in Natravos’ magic tower. As a great collector of the ancient bloodlines, his stuff would be very valuable. Ogre had proposed the invitation exactly because he wanted to exchange the knowledge for their witness service. Therefore, Lucien also nodded his head with a half-smile.

Chapter 777: Jungle of Demons

The space-time gate toward “Jungle of Demons” was still near the valley. Bizarre-looking trees could be vaguely seen.

The young man wearing a black magic robe was directing Danisos, Dracula, Lucien, and the other legends to approach it in panic.

“After Natravos closed the top floor of his magic tower, did anything unusual happen, or was there any visitor?” Ogre asked Natravos’ student while he walked.

The young man recalled carefully and shook his head. “It was the same as usual. There were neither guests nor weird stuff.”

Pausing for a moment, he gnashed his teeth. “In fact... In fact, because my teacher was too ‘rigorous’, I often kept as far away from his magic tower as possible after it was closed...”

A student speaking evil of his teacher behind his teacher’s back was punishable by death in the Magic Empire. Even in the Congress of Magic today, it was still not a likable behavior. However, it was of great significance and might concern the real cause of his teacher’s death. Therefore, the student still confessed about the real conditions truthfully.

The black cape covered Ogre’s face in the shadow, revealing only two spots of greet light that seemed to be from his eyes.

He observed the young man with his green, emotionless eyes, making the young man sweat in panic, before he opened his mouth. “Natravos was a lunatic. He could’ve modified himself into anything that was better than the senseless and brainless demons.”

It was because his legendary class was “Lord of Abyss” and modifying his body into a Demon Lord had the best prospect. The young man defended his teacher in his heart, but he did not object to the conclusion that Natravos was insane.

On their way toward the space-time gate, Ogre, the Elder Mind,

Dubenal, Danisos, and the other experts asked the young man every once in a while to confirm the results that they achieved by astrology, prophecy, superpowers, and deduction. Fitia was left behind in the Valley of Fiery Stone to watch over the headquarters of the Dark Congress.

The short journey took such a long time for the experts, who could arrive in a blink, because it was a process of communication, but however slow they were, they reached the space-time gate very soon. Danisos, who was flying in midair, flapped his gigantic gray wings and raised his skull while roaring.

The time and space around immediately quaked, and the illusionary gate was suddenly expanded. Then, Danisos' enormous body dived into it as if he were swimming in the ocean.

At this moment, Lucien, who had been quiet the whole time, suddenly asked, "What's your name?"

"Me?" The young man pointed at himself and replied respectfully, "You can call me David, Your Excellency."

It was a common name that could be heard anywhere.

The other legendary experts looked at Lucien in confusion, wondering why he raised the unimportant question. Was it the courtesy before the real question? After all, the Atom Controller used to be a musician, and he was the queen's husband. It was not strange that he appreciated manners.

Lucien, however, merely nodded his head and said, "David, lead the way." Then, he became as silent as before.

The unusual question was only a brief episode, but most experts on the spot were too sophisticated to let it go. Their magnificent willpower and weird spells all fell upon David to make sure that there was nothing wrong with him. Otherwise, it would be the greatest humiliation if they were tricked by the sorcerer who hadn't even reached the senior rank yet.

After a few seconds, they looked at each other and slightly nodded,

suggesting that there was nothing wrong. Then, they stepped into the space-time gate with David, reaching the Jungle of Demons.

Space and time changed, and the fuzzy scene before him turned clear. A weird jungle was unfolded before Lucien.

The trees in the jungle were only in two colors. Some were as dark as ink, and the others were as red as blood. However, they were in an assortment of appearances. Some were in the shape of humans, some had eyes all over the trunk, some had mouths baring the sharp fangs as their leaves, and some were upside down, with the crown at the bottom and the root extending into the dark clouds. There was even a gigantic leaf floating in the wind, with veins stretching out to all directions as the trunk, branches, and fruits...

Natravos' demiplane was even more chaotic than the abyss. All the creatures seemed to have been randomly jumbled together.

However, those creatures were only relatively terrible. In the eyes of the investigators, they were too weak to be bothered. The real things that called for attention were the "chaos" spreading in the mud, the air, and the water. They were the cores of the demiplane and the origin that caused everything. Even a legendary expert might be affected if they did not pay enough attention.

David cast a spell and paved a broad path in the jungle. At the end of the jungle was a pointy magic tower with a top that rose into the clouds. It was pitch black and twisted, exactly like the trees in the jungle.

Danisos swooped at the magic tower from the sky, blowing invisible wind that scattered all the chaos. The other legendary experts were not stopped either, and they entered the magic tower in their own ways.

The hall at the bottom floor of the magic tower had a black carpet but not any lamps. The only sources of light were the silver candlesticks on the wall. The red fire in them did not drive away the darkness in the room at all.

Every candlestick was surrounded by different things, including

thorny whips, sticks with rising steel stings, and little creepy silver needles. All in all, everything that shouldn't have appeared in the house of a legendary sorcerer was there.

"Those were the tools that Natravos used for his self-brutalization a long time ago. They cannot satisfy him right now..." Ogre, who was relatively familiar with Natravos, introduced them to the legends who had never been here with a coarse and helpless voice.

Nobody said anything, because they really did not know how they should comment on it.

Lucien shook his head in amusement and turned to the front side of the hall where a painting was hanging. On the painting was a middle-aged man with a special look.

The man had a solemn face, with a pair of demon horns full of patterns on his forehead. His pupils were crimson, his nose collapsed, and his cheekbones were rising, full of the feeling of disunity.

"It's Natravos' self-portrait..." Noticing Lucien's eyes, Stanis introduced it for him.

As I expected... Lucien guessed that it was Natravos. He chuckled and thought that it was probably his last picture...

"Dear sirs, the four destroyed levels in this magic tower start from level nine." David directed the legends to the top. "We'll go to the scene now."

Although this magic tower did not have many levels, every level was extremely broad and high. Danisos had only reduced the size of his body, and it was already spacious enough for him to pass.

"There's no need to rush. Let's investigate floor by floor. We may find other leads," Ogre interrupted David. That way, they might be able to find a lot of good stuff.

The other legendary experts, particularly Stanis who had come for Natravos' books and notes, certainly wouldn't let go of the opportunity either. So, the investigators pressed forward rather

slowly and only approached the “crime scene” after several hours.

In the process, Lucien and Stanis had both obtained a lot of trophies. They copied and recorded many useful files. Although they were not the core of Natravos’ current research, they were still the distinguished results of the bloodline synthesis studies in the Magic Empire.

“It will be the ninth level in the next...” David stood on the stairs, and it was a chaotic, gray stone gate before him.

Dracula covered his nose with a pair of white gloves and said, “Open it.”

As the stone gate was slowly opened, the gory view inside was exposed before everyone. All the floors and ceilings from the ninth level to the thirteenth level had little left now.

Halls, anatomy rooms, synthesis rooms, alchemy rooms, binding rooms, and libraries were no longer distinguishable. Dilapidated walls were everywhere. The central part had been completely shattered and almost vaporized.

“I’m afraid that the files have been destroyed...” Stanis sighed with a low voice.

Thanks to the protection of the magic tower, the window on the outer wall was still intact. However, different from the fashion nowadays, it was narrow and emitted the feeling of rigidity.

Through the window, the Jungle of Demons outside could be clearly seen. The clouds corrupted by the air of the abyss seemed even dimmer and darker now.

“Let’s walk together in case anyone destroys the clues,” Ogre said, as if he were not scared of Danisos and Dracula.

Danisos said emotionlessly, “Then, we should examine Natravos’ phylactery first.”

Nobody objected to the proposal, because it was indeed the object that most likely contained clues.

Natravos' phylactery was kept in a hidden interlayer between the twelfth level and the thirteen level, but it had completely collapsed under the storm of destruction and was no longer hidden.

"The explosion took place from inside to outside..." The Elder Mind's withered hands picked up a deep black object, on which gems seemed to have been embedded. However, the gems couldn't be found anywhere now. "This is also the place of the initial destruction."

It was not hard to imagine how hard the phylactery of a legendary sorcerer could be. So, there were still remains in this place even though it was the center of the explosion.

"Either Natravos blew it up himself, or somebody affected the phylactery with weird spells through the soul..." Dubenal reached a conclusion.

Nothing that we do not know. The other legendary experts secretly thought to themselves. Among them, Danisos and Dracula kept away from the place where the pieces of the phylactery were gathered, as if they were trying to avoid suspicion.

Lucien looked out of the window. Chaotic and dark clouds were surging there.

Chapter 778: Revelation

Chapter 778: Revelation

Crack.

A bloodred bolt of lightning struck in the rolling clouds. It did not seem real but more like an illusion caused by the chaotic air, which was similar to many floors in the abyss.

The rolling clouds and the falling bloodred bolts of lightning didn't raise the attention of Ogre, the Elder Mind, the Demogorgon of Eyes, and the other legendary experts because the weather was normal in the Jungle of Demons. As a matter of fact, it would be unusual if such phenomena did not exist.

Suddenly, a bolt of enormous lightning glowed in the sky and spread out like a gigantic tree. Half of the demiplane was illuminated by the bloodred light.

Even though the magic tower had no windows on this level and only a few narrow ones on the upper level and the lower level, it was still illuminated into redness by the lightning.

BOOM!

After the lightning, it was naturally the deafening thunder, which was so terrifying that the whole magic tower was clattering as if it were trembling in fear. Even the legendary experts were somewhat stunned.

Right then, Danisos, the Dragon of Time and Luminosity, who had been squatting at the edge with his eyes half-closed, suddenly opened his eyes. Lucien's reflection was clearly displayed in the shaking invisible waves in it.

He then opened his mouth. The gray scales on his body somehow showed the air of passing time, and the twelve black circles on his body that looked like annual rings slowly revolved. He spewed out a mouthful of transparent dragon breath, which seemed both real

and illusionary.

The time around Lucien was immediately slowed down. It was so thick that he seemed to have fallen from the sky into the ocean. None of the defenses seemed to be working before the breath of the primordial dragon of time.

Danisos had attacked Lucien without any hesitation!

A silver item glowed in the pocket of Lucien's waistcoat, cold and dreamy as it ticked nonstop.

The slowed "water" immediately resumed normalcy after the ticking, and the thickness was no more. It was exactly the passive effect of the Moon Timer after it was upgraded into a level-three legendary item—Real Vision!

After the Moon Timer was improved to a level-three legendary item, the maximal usage of "Advanced Time Stop" and "Gravity Collapse" had been increased to five times, significantly enhancing Lucien's control over time and space. Also, its anti-interference abilities against space-time effects had been transformed into an innate quality. Once space and time were controlled and had unnatural abnormalities, the Moon Timer would be automatically triggered, keeping the time and space in the zone around it relatively regular.

Danisos did not hope to restrain Lucien, who was an authority when it came to space and time, with only a breath. After the ticking broke the thickened time, the black circles on his body revolved even faster, and he began to chant dragon roars to perform his magic.

Supposedly, the short duration of the passive effect was not enough for a complete spell, not even extraordinary items were employed. However, the case was different for Danisos. He seemed to have been enshrouded in hastened time, or he might have "stolen" time from the future. He had indeed performed a mysterious and powerful spell in the dragon tongue!

Generally speaking, any legendary sorcerer or powerful magic

creature could only speed up their cast but could not change the legendary spells, which had specific requirements, no matter how many acceleration abilities they enhanced themselves with. However, the Dragon of Time and Luminosity was not within the range of normal. His “Time Acceleration” could double the speed of his spell-casting!

It was the most terrible part of the primordial dragon of time. After all, no matter how many extraordinary abilities he had grasped to attack or affect other people, his opponents could deal with it as long as they were strong enough, but this “Time Acceleration” was influencing himself as well. During the same time, there would be two Danisoses that would attack Lucien at the same time!

The scales that constituted Danisoses’ black rings opened, and his hair stood erect. Spots of light emerged out of the void and gathered into an invisible, glistening river that surged toward Lucien.

At this moment, Lucien had just got rid of his breath!

The shadow of the river of time washed away the heavy defense around Lucien and constructed a cage of frozen time outside of Real Vision. It was impossible for those inside to get out, and it was impossible for those outside to break in. It appeared that he intended to imprison Lucien.

However, Dracula was thinking of something else!

When Danisoses cast the dragon-tongued spell, he extended his right hand that was wearing a white glove and snatched into the void.

His right hand seemed to be enshrouded by the night. Layers of shadows blurred the real entity, and the cage-like frozen time did not seem to exist at all. Dracula’s right hand passed through it and caught Lucien’s chest!

It was “Night Travel”, the vampires’ natural endowed ability, which could break any space-time barriers!

The other vampires mostly performed “Night Travel” to run away, but different from them, Dracula had such amazing control over the

ability that he could allow part of his body to travel. So, “Night Travel” became an attack method that could break most defenses!

In the meantime, Danisos, who was still in “Time Acceleration”, began to cast the second dragon-tongued spell to offset Lucien’s triggered spells.

The red lips on Dracula’s pale face were particularly eye-catching. His eyes were filled with vague passion, as if he had been looking forward to avenging himself.

In his crimson pupils, Lucien, who was wearing the black double-breasted suit, seemed rather stunned, but it was quite normal. Whoever was not immune to space-time magic would have no time to take any reaction when faced with the serial attacks from Danisos and him.

Now that you have fed yourself to me, don’t blame me for settling the scores!

Right when Danisos and Dracula went on a rampage and attacked Lucien, the six primordial dragons and the two vampire princes, who backed off a moment ago to prove their innocence, launched attacks toward the Demogorgon of Eyes, “Six-Armed Inquisitor” Cervantes, and the King of Nightmare. The gigantic bloodred lightning seemed to be their signal.

Although it was quite unexpected, the legends like the Demogorgon of Eyes had been through blood and death too. They realized what was going on immediately. Rays shot out randomly, and the six arms span like a tornado, mincing everything that they touched into pieces... They managed to resist the first round of attacks.

Stanis was covered in elemental halos. He did not find it too difficult to resist the attacks of Milereas, the primordial red dragon. Suddenly, the shadow below his feet and the shadow of the dilapidated walls were enlivened and gathered into a longsword that cut his body from the floor!

Crack.

Stanis' body was broken like glass, but a vague mist emerged from it and enshrouded the area, creating what appeared to be a dreamland.

"Ogre?" Stanis' voice echoed in every corner of the mist, fuzzy and obscure, like a mental communication in the wind, but he was apparently shocked. It was neither the primordial dragons nor the vampire princes who ambushed him just now, but Ogre, the Umbral King!

Ogre's body appeared in the dreamland of mist. He stood right next to Milereas and chuckled in the mental communication with a hoarse voice. "What about me? Do you still not see what is going on?"

"Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!"

A miserable roar suddenly burst out. Sterling, who had been suppressed by a primordial silver dragon, had one tentacle on his head. It was extended from the head of the Elder Mind and pierced into Sterling's brain!

Sterling's face suddenly lost all the organs, as if he had put on a mask. Then, his body also turned blurry. He got rid of the control of the Elder Mind.

"You're on their side too?!" Sterling wandered in the mist angrily. Had the "Mastermind" been conspiring with Danisos, Dracula, and Ogre?

"You killed Natravos? It was Danisos himself who buried the traces of time?" The Demogorgon of Eyes raised dozens of tentacles and shot out different rays, suppressing the two primordial dragons.

How could they have not seen the truth of the whole matter? This meeting had been a scam since the very beginning!

The inside information that Danisos and Dracula intended to unite the Dark Congress was leaked, but it was leaked at such perfect timing that the legends who were reluctant to accept it had to focus all their attention on it without considering anything else. Also, the

time left was too little for them to sow discord among the members of the Dark Congress. Everything was obvious now. Dracula and his accomplices leaked it on purpose in order to distract everyone's attention from their real scheme!

Danisos and Dracula's arrogance and toughness were perhaps their nature, but they did help build up the tension at the meeting. The other legends were so focused on resisting them that they tried to seize every opportunity. So, the death of Natravos, the trap that they had prepared in advance, was offered at the most appropriate timing.

In the following discussion, some legendary experts might be worried. However, as "spies", Ogre and the Elder Mind misled everybody into thinking about how to sabotage Danisos and Dracula's plan of reorganization without considering if there were any other schemes. Also, they made the victims under the impression that the trip was not dangerous. Therefore, the victims fell into the trap one step after another.

This place, on the other hand, was Natravos' demiplane that was blocked from the outside world. It was the perfect place for a battle!

The whole plan was well devised based on the perfect control of the mind. It couldn't have been drafted by Danisos and Dracula as they were too arrogant. Was it the proposal of the "Mastermind", or was it the wisdom of the ancient legends like Fitia and Ogre?

"Ever since the beginning, we have never thought to include you. It's better to eliminate you in advance than to keep you, the cancer of our group. That way, you can still make contributions by increasing our strength!" Ogre's voice was coarse and cold.

Everybody could tell that the takeaway point of the sentence was in the latter half. It was because they believed that their strength that would be improved after the operation was enough to compensate for the lost legends that Danisos, Dracula, the Mastermind, and Ogre attacked blatantly.

Lucien's participation was an unexpected factor in the plan, who made their power less overwhelming than before. However, Danisos

and his teammates still had absolute advantages. Other than Danisos and Dracula, who were dealing with Lucien, they had six primordial dragons, two vampire princes, one level-three legendary sorcerer, and one representative of the mysterious “Mastermind”. They had ten top legends and three level-three ones.

On the other side, Sonite and Dubenal, the werewolf princes, were level-three legends, the Demogorgon of Eyes was level-three, and the Six-Armed Inquisitor, Sterling, and the King of Nightmare were level-two. Although the top experts were of similar levels, their number was almost half their enemy’s!

Chapter 779: Attack

However, Stanis, the Demogorgon of Eyes, the Six-Armed Inquisitor, and the other legends were not too devastated. Now that the top experts were on par with each other, although they were outnumbered, they would still have a chance to escape, especially when people like the King of Nightmare had plenty of ways to preserve their lives. After all, when they were on the same level, they would be overwhelmed in a battle against twice as many people, but they would not be killed instantly, and as long as they were not killed instantly, there would always be a chance for them to escape with their life-preserving approaches.

Therefore, for the experts of the dark world who had plenty of battle experience, they were far from desperate and scared.

In the mist created by the King of Nightmare, their minds communicated with each other via their respective extraordinary abilities. They decided to concentrate their strength to break the siege. At this moment, they both hated and felt lucky about Lucien. This wretched “Disaster Bringer” and “Embodiment of Misfortunes” had indeed brought death and disasters, but it was also a fortune for them to have him here. Otherwise, few of them would have survived if Danisos and Dracula, two top legends, joined the battle!

For a moment, Stanis had considered abandoning the Demogorgon of Eyes and everybody else and escaping on his own. After all, he had been enhanced with legendary spells similar to “Regather”, and he could return to his own demiplane after they were activated. However, he decided to stay in the end. Both Ogre and Fitia were very familiar with the legendary sorcerers’ ways of running. They must have prepared for his escape. If he were to run off recklessly, it was possible that he would be trapped. So, he might as well stay with the team while looking for a better opportunity.

Therefore, he affected the primordial dragons, the vampire princes, and the other enemies with the mist as the real King of Nightmare, traveling in their minds, creating illusions, and reflecting reality, while he secretly performed prophecy spells to determine the safest

path of escape.

In the meantime, he paid attention to Lucien's status. Although Lucien was rather stunned before Dracula and was under the ambush of Danisos' breath and space-time spells, Stanis believed that he had created too many miracles and defeated too many enemies stronger than himself to not be prepared for emergencies.

Suddenly, the crimson bolts of lightning outside fell densely from the dark clouds, and these bolts of lightning were almost at the same level as this floor of the magic tower. So, with the hazy mist blackened, the chaotic "dreamland" was even more chaotic and illogical now that some of the psychological reflections were lost!

The six primordial dragons including Milereas also abandoned their human forms and revealed their real appearances to carry out 100% of their strength!

The red dragon, which was hundreds of meters long, spurted out fire, and horrifying heat spread out. In the dazzling fire, the ruby scales emanated brutality. The piton-shaped breath, which carried freezing coldness and deepest paralysis, came out of the elegant-looking dragon, consolidating the mist into ice that blocked the storm of blades from the Six-Armed Inquisitor...

When the primordial dragons unfolded their bodies, even the shortest of them was a hundred meters long. Although Natravos' magic tower was rather tall and spacious in every level, it shouldn't have been huge enough to accommodate such gargantuan creatures at all. However, things were out of the expectation of the legendary expert. The destroyed magic tower seemed to have been connected to the Jungle of Demons, deep and boundless. Even though all the seven primordial dragons were rolling and breathing blatantly, they were not restrained at all.

"What's going on?" Such an anomaly made the experts like Stanis who knew legendary sorcerers well feel strange.

To carry out the overlapping effect of the magic tower and the demiplane, it would either require the control of the tower guard when the magic tower was not too severely damaged, or the control

of the master in order to summon the power of the demiplane when the magic tower was almost destroyed. Since the tower guard of the magic tower had obviously perished in the storm of destruction, who was controlling the magic tower, and who was summoning the power of the Jungle of Demons?

Had Natravos not died yet?

Was he Danisos and Dracula's ally, too?

No. Natravos could've prevented Lucien Evans from getting a certain conclusion from covering his life status, but he couldn't have feigned his death under a top legend's astrology. Therefore, the "Lord of Abyss" must have died!

Then, who could it be?

While they were shocked and suspicious, a chuckle came from the clouds outside of the window. "I was waiting for someone to escape through a teleportation spell. The greatest ability of the chaotic 'Jungle of Demons' is to mess up such spells."

The clouds dispersed, and illuminated by the bloody bolts of lightning, a handsome man who had crystal long hair and a dark skin stepped close in midair. He was wearing a black tailcoat, elegant and handsome.

"Demogorgon of Darkness!"

"Gonheim!"

The different titles confirmed the identity of the stranger. He was exactly Gonheim, the new Prince of Demons!

Stanis, Sonite, and the Demogorgon of Eyes suddenly realized something. The terrible scheme that manipulated everyone accurately must have been created by the Prince of Demons!

Just like the devil dukes in hell, he was best famous for his cunningness and schemes!

However, how could he have arrived at the main material world so

easily? And how could he control Natravos' demiplane?

As if he knew their question, and in order to create desperation, Gonheim smiled. "As a matter of fact, you may also call me 'Natravos', because he is a part of me now."

As his words dawned upon them, his body suddenly turned illusionary, as if it existed in everyone's mind, and his handsome face became hideous, with three eyes, high cheekbones, and protruding lips. It was 'Natravos'!

Stanis, who knew a thing or two about the situation, felt that his heart was heavy. The Demogorgon of Darkness had completed the status transformation with Natravos as the container. Also, through his demiplane and his body, the Demogorgon of Darkness could arrive at the main material world steadily!

Stanis' heart was sinking not just because of that, but also because they now had one more top legendary enemy. The previous situation, which was not too devastating, was now sliding into the abyss. Also, the top legends who fought in their own demiplanes were close to demigods. Even though this was only "Jungle of Demons" that belonged to a level-two legend, it was still enough to let the Demogorgon of Darkness carry out 130% of his strength.

For him, it was almost a death sentence. It was impossible for him to resist the Demogorgon of Darkness' attack. He must and had to flee immediately!

The Demogorgon of Eyes, the werewolf princes, and the dark knight, regardless of whether they knew the secrets of status transformation or not, were secretly cursing, "Damn you, Natravos! Why do you love tormenting yourself? You've got yourself killed, haven't you? But why do you have to drag us to death with you?"

In the meantime, due to the slowed time, the other side where changes happened more slowly had new situations.

When Dracula, the Night Dominator, extended his right hand that was wearing the white glove through the space-time that was as frozen as a cage, he snatched Lucien's chest steadily, accurately and

rapidly.

The defenses around Lucien collapsed under the blast of Danisos' previous dragon-tongued spells and could not resist Dracula's attack at all. Also, he seemed to be reacting more inertly, and he was hit by Danisos precisely!

Hehe. I'll humiliate you a hundred times more than what you did to me!

Hardly had delight rose in Dracula's heart when his right hand that was covered in dark shadows felt empty.

Empty?

Dracula's crimson pupils constricted. He saw that Lucien suddenly turned illusionary and seemed to be spreading out in midair without any real entity. Therefore, his attack that was not attached to any extraordinary abilities completely missed the target!

"He has finished the status transformation?"

"Doesn't he always despise the primeval devils' status transformation?"

Shock and confusion proliferated in Dracula's heart uncontrollably, but he soon had a fixed answer. Lucien Evans' despise was a mere disguise, and he was actually no different from the Demogorgon of Darkness, the elven queen, the Master of the Boundless Ocean, Danisos, and himself!

The overwhelming and illusionary mist seemed everywhere, but it immediately collapsed and gathered into Lucien's body somewhere far away.

The moment he was gathered, Lucien summoned the projection of his demiplane before Danisos could perform the dragon-tongued spells and before Dracula could reach him through Night Travel, so that his cognitive world could affect the environment in reality.

The dark and boundless cosmos scattered the chaos of the Jungle of Demons. From the stars in different colors, an enormous fireball emitted intense light and heat. The dazzling light couldn't seem

more real!

“No!”

Dracula screamed and avoided the enormous fireball subconsciously, with black smoke popping up from his body.

After he discovered the sun and the real cosmos, one of Lucien's Host Stars of Destiny was more and more like the real sun, and the sun was the bane of all vampires. Therefore, although it could not really hurt Dracula, it could weaken him and scare him off at the critical moment!

When Dracula was scared off, Lucien made an intricate, weird sound.

“Luxury Cracking!”

Crack, crack, crack, crack.

The defenses around Danisos were immediately broken. “Luxury Cracking” at the peak of legendary was truly intimidating!

However, Danisos wasn't panicking. His scales and his physical body alone were enough to block a top legend's attack. Therefore, he continued casting the dragon-tongued spell, hoping to trap Lucien and settle the labile factor as soon as possible.

Thanks to the acceleration of his spell-casting, his spells were completed quickly. At this time, he saw that Lucien, who was holding the silver pocket watch, was not solemn or vigilant at all. Instead, the guy put on a smile and looked at him in a rather pitiful way.

This is not right!

Hardly had the idea occurred to Danisos when a cold, hazy beam of moonlight found its way through the narrow windows, leaving a whole ground of dreamy silver on the floor.

Chapter 780: The Silver Moon's Announcement

The windows in Natravos' magic tower were in the classic style of the ancient Magic Empire. They were on the upper part of every level, narrow and unframed, as if they were directly embedded into the wall. The complicated panes formed all kinds of mysterious magic patterns.

Even during the day, the sun could barely reach into the magic tower because of the location and size of the windows and the blockage of the panes. As a result, the inside of the magic tower was always dim, dark, and horrifying, exactly like the impression of the ancient sorcerers in ordinary people's minds.

However, at this moment, the cold moonlight broke the everlasting dimness inside the magic tower, spraying pure and peaceful silver brightness on the fallen walls, the remains of the floor, and everyone's body.

The moonlight fell exactly on the place where Danisos was at. Having unfolded his body which was hundreds of meters long, he was flapping his enormous wings, spinning the rings of black scales, and opening his mouth to cast the unbelievably fast spells, when his back that was close to his head emitted a silver light under the moon.

Hooooooooo!

The primordial dragon of time's dragon-tongued magic was directly disrupted. His thick neck raised high, and he roared in extreme pain.

On his back, where the silver moonlight gathered, a beautiful "girl", whose blond long hair was tied on one side, appeared. Half squatting, she held a silver longsword and stabbed it into Danisos' back brutally, without the slightest emotion in her crimson eyes.

Where the silver longsword stabbed into, a cluster of transparent

blood erupted, exactly like the famous spring in Rentato City Square.

When the blood dropped on the floor, it did not mix with the dust at all. Instead, it rolled on the ground like mercury, uncontaminated!

Hooooooooo!

Danisos' painful roar was his dying struggle. His body shook violently, and all his gray scales emanated ripples of light. The black circles that looked like rings expanded and stood up. Immediately, the space and time around him were slowed to the minimum. All the legends were slowed down as if they were performing a play. The mist and the bolts of lightning were frozen to a consistency like gel.

However, no matter how Danisos struggled and resisted, the light of the silver moon was still shining on his back, and the hazy, beautiful shadow was still squatting; her hands that were holding the silver longsword did not move at all. A black fire started to appear on the longsword, and unimaginably complicated symbols began to flow in it and inject into Danisos' body!

It was Alterna, the God of Silver Moon!

The Demogorgon of Darkness' eyes that were constantly changing colors were frozen. He was a top legend and the "master" of a demiplane, and he was far away from the battle. Therefore, he was not affected by Danisos' dying outbursts, but he could sense the condescending indifference directly. Even though Alterna did not look at him, a pair of crimson eyes popped up in his head coldly.

Goddamn Dracula, didn't you say that the Silver Moon was somewhere around the Boundless Ocean? Wasn't she conspiring with the Lord of Hell to deal with Pope Viken?

Also, why is the Silver Moon helping the Demogorgon of Eyes and the Six-Armed Inquisitor? I have three vampire princes on my side, who are her loyal supporters. Killing the enemy will not influence her at all! Even though she wants to save the werewolves, she doesn't have to be so

intense, does she?

Judging from the timing of her attack, she seems to have been taking advantage of it all the time!

Gonheim had no doubt that the Silver Moon had arrived in person at this moment!

What should he do?

Ask Dracula to keep Lucien Evans occupied so that he could save Danisos and resist the Silver Moon together with him? As long as they could stop her for a couple of minutes, it would be enough for the “Mastermind” to arrive in the body of the Elder Mind and kill all the other legends.

However, Danisos had been directly hit by the Silver Moon’s Sword of Origin and Destiny. He would be disabled if not dead. How long could he stall the Silver Moon after he was saved? If Gonheim was mired here, he might be unable to escape!

So, should he give up the chance and run away immediately?

As the demon who was most similar to devils, Gonheim certainly had the nature of devils. He liked to consider the pros and cons. When there were greater dangers or temptations, he would abandon or betray his partners without any hesitation. As for contracts and oaths, he was certainly cunning enough to keep loopholes for himself. Besides, there were few witnesses who could guarantee such contracts. There might be no losses at all even if he betrayed him.

Thinking quickly, Gonheim weighed the risks and returns. Of course, he knew that it was an urgent matter and that he had to make up his mind quickly whether to run or to save his ally.

However, at this moment, below another narrow window, David, who had passed out because of the battle of legends, floated up. His hair became as silver as the moon, and he smiled at the Demogorgon of Darkness.

It was Rhine, the Observer!

Gonheim saw that David's face turned handsome and weird, with two enormous black bat wings unfolded on his back. He was exactly the Silver-Eyed Count!

"When did you replace him?" Gonheim asked solemnly.

David was an important part of his plan. So, he had corrupted the guy a long time ago. He stopped paying attention to him after Natravos was killed and asked him to deliver the message. Little did he anticipate that David would turn into Rhine at some point.

Rhine smiled but did not say anything. He raised his right hand, as if he were the conductor of a concert. Together with his movement, a tall and cold moon rose out of the narrow window behind him.

This time, instead of summoning the Silver Moon, he had created a moon of his own with his strength.

His strength had been greatly improved too... The Demogorgon of Darkness made a decision after seeing that. He had decided to surpass Rhine and escape back into the abyss.

Therefore, the darkness arrived. Weak, barely perceivable light raged inside, creating the frigidity that felt like the end of the universe. It was the lonely and lifeless darkness that did not have any temperature. It was the purest and most devastating darkness!

Rhine waved his right hand, and the symphony burst out. The moon collapsed from the sky into the darkness, releasing infinite brightness that filled up everybody's horizon.

When Gonheim fought Rhine, Lucien looked at Prince Dracula with a smile. "How could I have come if I had not smelled the Silver Moon?"

Dracula was both jealous and loath. Why did he not smell the air of the Primordial Ancestor when a human sorcerer could?

What have I done wrong?

In his fury, his body collapsed into countless bats that flew toward Lucien overwhelmingly.

Those bats were the size of the skull, with pointy, narrow, and bloody mouths. They looked hideous and terrifying.

Knowing that the bats that Dracula turned into could directly absorb energy, Lucien did not activate “Elemental Protection” but simply pressed the Moon Timer.

The Moon Timer was ticking when Lucien pressed it. Then, it immediately came to a stop after a crack. As a result, the colors around faded away, and everything was covered in lifeless grayness. Those bats became the bugs in ambers, frozen in midair.

Lucien did not perform “Luxury Cracking”, which was what he usually did, but he simply cast “Vengeful Gaze” that was attached with “Hand of Uncertainties”. His right eye became clear, reflecting the beauty of rubies before a ray of light shot out from it.

Lucien did so because Dracula was particularly good at “Night Travel” and resisting space-time consolidation. Even though he was not immune to “Advanced Time Stop”, the effect would be broken many seconds in advance.

Suddenly, the frozen bats were covered in shadows and collapsed where they were. In the lifeless grayness, the shadow of a sundial forged out of gold appeared. Every mark of time was a symbol made of different gems, and at the center was a narrow, long gold stick.

The shadow of the gold stick spun quickly on the surface of the sundial, and the frozen time and space were immediately back to normal. Dracula, in his black tailcoat and his red-and-black cape, appeared again. At this moment, “Vengeful Gaze” had already reached him.

Dracula’s face was livid, and his crimson eyes contained the deepest fury. He simply allowed the Vengeful Gaze to hit him.

However, the moment “Vengeful Gaze” touched his body, a lackluster fog rose. After a moment, the crimson rays vanished into thin air.

Was it the power of “Elimination”?

Lucien was rather shocked. Even though he knew that Prince Dracula was capable of depriving and robbing someone of one of their supernatural powers, he did not expect that he would steal “Elimination” too. The “sundial” with which he broke “Time Stop” just now was perhaps not an extraordinary item but a unique ability.

Although the stolen abilities would be one level lower than his actual level, it was not hard to imagine how terrifying Prince Dracula was when all of them were combined. No wonder he had always been among the top three on the Cleansing List.

However, Lucien was not scared at all. Faced with the enormous shadow that Prince Dracula turned into, he raised his hands with a smile.

“Eternal Blaze!”

Using Eternal Blaze in such an enclosed environment? Does he not worry that he might kill himself? Gonheim, who was attempting to flee, was greatly shocked.

He knew very clearly that Douglas’ “Eternal Blaze”, when performed with full strength, was as powerful as an attack of demigods. Since Lucien was not very far away from Douglas right now, and “Eternal Blaze” came from his legendary class and was deeply associated with his cognitive world, his “Eternal Blaze” would be no weaker than Douglas’. It was possible that it was as powerful as a real demigod attack!

The most dazzling light burst out like a small sun, but it was much less powerful than Gonheim imagined.

“No!”

Dracula screamed miserably under the pure and overwhelming sunlight. The shadow he turned into was gone, and terrible blisters appeared on his face!

After he reached the peak of legendary, Lucien’s control over

“Eternal Blaze” had reached a very accurate level. He could control its power precisely. Just now, he only caused a minor “fusion” to make use of the high temperature, the rays of particles, and the damage of the sunlight. As long as the enemy was not at the center and not entirely defenseless, even a level-three legend could’ve resisted it. However, Dracula was different. As a primordial vampire, he hated “sunlight” more than anything else!

Hooooooooo!

Danisos roared in regrets. The black fire of void on the Sword of Origin and Destiny had already consumed him, drawing “symbols” one after another on his body.

Suddenly, Alterna drew the longsword out. Black fire spurted out of the fire as well as the void, igniting the magic tower, the chaotic jungle, and the whole demiplane!

The chaotic and corrupted air of the abyss was gone, and a bright moon showed up in the sky. Danisos, on the other hand, shrank his body and crouched next to Alterna’s feet.

Seizing the opportunity, the Demogorgon of Darkness took one of Rhine’s attacks the hard way and escaped back to the abyss.

Looking at the Demogorgon of Eyes, the Six-Armed Inquisitor, and the other legendary experts with her crimson eyes, Alterna announced solemnly, “I am your president.”

Huh?

All the legendary experts were stunned.

Chapter 781: Sending Away Politely

In the Jungle of Demons, the bright silver moon had driven the dark clouds in the sky away, but the moonlight had resumed to normal.

However, as the blond figure became clearer, the cold and lonely moonlight had cast over the entire magic tower and looked rather peaceful and quiet.

Beside Alterna's feet, Danisos had become as small as the size of Alferris, the Little Crystal, and there was a horrible lesion in his back. Chunks of flesh covered in black flames were falling to the ground, and thus the transparent and shapeless organs and the spine had been revealed. What was even worse was that half of his wings had been cut off and the bones were now visible.

If the unreal flame kept burning, Danisos, Dragon of Time and Luminosity, would for sure die soon, but the flame was now slowly dying. It would take him a long, long time to recover from such a horrible injury by Sword of Origin and Destiny.

At this time, he was lying beside Alterna's feet. Although well-known for his great life force, Danisos still had no idea how long it would take for him to recover.

Around him, drops of blood came together and formed a transparent lake in which his flesh and half wing were floating.

Watching the scene, hearing Alterna's serious announcement, none of them present, including Elder Mind and Dracula, could figure out what just happened.

Alterna had no intention to repeat, but her scarlet eyes stared at them who were all stupefied by the situation, as if she believed that they would understand somehow.

The air suddenly became somewhat weird.

At this time, Rhine had folded back his giant bat wings and smiled. "So what the Primordial Ancestor means is that our era is the most

chaotic, dangerous, and lively one since the age of mythology. So here the Primordial Ancestor is, to lead us out of the thick fog...

“... All of you should have felt the imposing dangers surrounding us in this era. A legendary could fall at any time if he or she lowers her guard. No one could stay away from it even if you don’t want to be involved at all. Therefore, this is the worst era ever for you all...”

“... But the revolution of the world and power will also bring unprecedented opportunities. I believe that in the upcoming decades, we’ll have the most precious chance ever, which exceeds any opportunities in the past to further improve ourselves and to even transcend our own lives! But it all depends on if you can seize it...”

His silver eyes looked around at the extremely powerful legends and smiled. “... Therefore, this is also the best era ever for you all, and this completely depends on your choice. Facing the current situation, the disparate groups will for sure die, and the united groups will grow. We have to reform the Dark Congress just like what those sorcerers did to their own congress to secure our survival and more opportunities...”

He walked to the legends and asked in a cheerful tone, “Any ideas?”

Rhine’s lecture finally made them understand what Alterna’s announcement meant. Somehow, the “Silver Moon” had started wanting to reform and consolidate the Dark Congress and to be the president.

Therefore, taking advantage of the Danisos, Dracula, Demogorgon of Darkness, and Ogre’s plot, Alterna had defeated the primordial dragon and thus ruled out the legendary who was most likely to stand against her.

Dracula felt both disappointed and excited. What made him feel disappointed was that obviously, the Primordial Ancestor did not trust him enough; but what made him excited was that once the Primordial Ancestor became the president of the congress, he would be able to skip Rhine to summon her.

He touched the blisters on his face and took a deep breath. Then he lowered his head and said, “Your leading of the congress is our great honor.”

“We werewolves are always ready to serve you,” Dubenal said hurriedly before Sonite to show his loyalty.

Lucien was a bit amused. The werewolves were nothing more than big dogs.

The vampires and werewolves were the fastest to show their attitude. The rest of them needed a bit of time to think about it. The primordial dragons did agree on reforming the congress but on the premise that they should be the leader. And those Demogorgon of Eyes also had their own reasons to refuse.

They were weighing Rhine’s words. Indeed, this world was getting too dangerous. In the past, becoming a legendary basically meant endless life. However, the situation had totally changed now. Even if they just did nothing, they would still have to be careful not to be killed by someone else.

But this was just a beginning. When the powers were all ready after their plots worked out, to collect followers and resources, another War of Dawn might happen. At that time, anyone could fall!

Demogorgon of Eyes and the rest of the legends were never on full alert even after the death of the demon prince and what happened to the Master of the Boundless Ocean. They believed that in the Dark Mountain Range, they could always avoid any dangers in time. However, the siege that happened just now had finally warned them. Maybe coming together wasn’t something bad.

What was more important was that their president would be a demigod. They needed that strong power!

Rhine saw through the struggles in their mind, so he smiled and added, “What’s passed belongs to the past.”

Then they finally made up their mind, including Ogre and the six primordial dragons, because of the reasons above, and also because

they did not dare to say no in front of the “Silver Moon”.

They could not take the risk no matter how many mysterious spells they knew.

They looked up at their president, trying to see the “Silver Moon” better and to show their loyalties.

At this time, Alterna turned to look at Lucien and pointed at the remains of the primordial time dragon, including some blood, flesh, and a wing.

“Your food,” Alterna said seriously.

Then she quickly turned around as if staring at the blood for too long would be too much of a temptation to her.

Somehow, the president doesn't appear to be very reliable, the legendaries thought to themselves. But soon, they realized that it was the president who defeated the primordial time dragon and did all the plotting, and those who believed that Alterna was unreliable perhaps had all been eaten by Alterna.

“We’re all very confident and much encouraged to have you, the ‘Silver Moon’, to be our president,” said one of the legendaries, and they saluted in great respect, with only Elder Mind hesitating a bit.

The pair of scarlet eyes stared at Elder Mind.

After a while, Elder Mind finally lowered his head and said, “Your wish is our will.”

If Danisos still got his back, Elder Mind would not have given in. However, there were now two top vampire legendaries, the congress had been united, and the “Silver Moon” had become the president.

Meanwhile, on the other side, the King of Nightmare had made up his mind heading for Allyn.

Lucien thought that the problem had been solved in a perfect way, but when he was collecting the time dragon flesh and about to

leave, he realized that others did not think so at all.

“Mr. Evans, when are you leaving the Dark Mountain Range?” asked Cervantes seriously.

Lucien thought for a while and said, “I’ll pay a short visit to Mr. Rhine and then I’ll leave.”

Then Lucien heard many sighs of relief. Cervantes finally gave Lucien a sincere smile. “Then, take care.”

“I hope you don’t come here often,” said Ogre a bit resentfully.

Lucien did not think it was fear. They made the plot themselves, and it turned out that only Natravos was killed. He shouldn’t be the one taking all the blame and thus be called the “Embodiment of Misfortunes”!

...

In the Valley of Fiery Stone, Fitia, wearing the black magic robe of the ancient magic empire, saw Dracula coming back in a great rage.

“It failed?” Fitia asked, lifting an eyebrow.

Dracula told the whole story to Fitia and asked angrily, “You said the congress would be reorganized!”

Fitia grinned. “Am I wrong?”

“You!” Dracula’s dark red eyes were furious.

Fitia shrugged a bit and then squatted down to stroke the cat, Skoy.

Dracula stared at her for a while but finally managed to control himself. He complained in great frustration, “Why the Primordial Ancestor always, always trusts that b*stard more! Even a sorcerer is more trustworthy than me!”

The same cheerful smile remained on Fitia’s face. She had been used to this since a long time ago.

The black cat Skoy turned around proudly and swept Fitia's hand with its tail.

Chapter 782: The Age of Mythology

In Observer's Castle, Lucien stood in front of a row of bookshelves and was reading a book about the era ruled by dragons, in which different traditions and customs of the time were recorded.

The elegant study was well decorated, and the books on the shelves were well-organized. Except for the Age of Mythology, the books covered the rest of the past ages, even including the lost ones.

The study was not strange to Lucien, as this was the place where he took away Transformation Mask, but this time, the creepy garden and the magic plants could not intimidate him anymore.

Lucien read the book very fast because he had a spiritual library. Meanwhile, he was waiting for Rhine and the "Silver Moon" to come back. To reorganize and unite the congress, they would need to sign a formal agreement, and the witness would be their leader, the president.

Only the most innocent and inexperienced would expect that these top legendaries would bend their knees forever only because of the prestige and power of the "Silver Moon", as the power of the "Silver Moon" could not easily beat all the top legendaries if they should come all together. Therefore, a good way would be securing what they had for now and seek cooperation with those who were not resolute. Then they would eat away the opposite power bit by bit and gradually absorb their power, or the congress would still fall apart eventually.

The top legendaries were for sure still pissed, but they still chose to follow the "Silver Moon" because of their best interests. The fits of anger in their minds were not intense enough for them to risk all they had to fight against Alterna. Therefore, the reassembly of the Dark Congress had finally got a pretty good start.

After half an hour, Rhine, wearing a red vest and a black long coat, took his time and walked in the study.

"Where's the Hon. 'Silver Moon'?" asked Lucien, who was going to

ask her about the Age of Mythology.

Rhine sighed. "She felt bored and then disappeared again. Maybe she needed to resist her gluttony. After all, there are quite some lovely 'desserts' in her eyes..."

Lucien did not know what to say. After all, a president who kept going missing wasn't a piece of good news to the Dark Congress...

Rhine smiled. "Don't worry. She'll be back when something big happens. You can count on her on that."

"Sir, can you please summon her? I've got some questions..." said Lucien.

Rhine walked to the desk and sat down. "We knew what you wanted to ask, so Alterna has told me all, and I'll be telling you."

"You knew?" Lucien was a bit surprised.

Rhine's silver eyes looked at Lucien, and there was a meaningful smile on his face. "The moment when you found the sun, Alterna knew you were coming. It's about the strange things in the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean, right?"

"Yeah... Normally speaking, the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean should be like the atmosphere in the way that it should never go around and around in the same place. Based on my model, it's almost impossible that this was naturally formed, so I guess that this has to do with the Age of Mythology. But I'm not sure..."

Rhine asked out of curiosity, "What model is it? How did you find it out? Viken even ignored it, as a demigod."

"... Sir, are you interested in Arcana?" Lucien said after a short pause.

Rhine made a fake cough and picked up the quill-pen on the desk. "Never mind..."

Rhine started looking serious as he said, "At the very beginning, Alterna's consciousness was only half-woken, so her sense of the

world was rather blurry, like a dream. In Alterna's dream, the soul did not have to depend on a body but could be like some spirits, or like light walking over the surface of a dark lake. At that time, some magic creatures that owned some extraordinary powers started to grow stronger and stranger, but the initial intelligence did not yet take place."

Lucien listened very attentively. The progress of this world might not be identical to the evolving process of the earth, and this might be one of the most important clues for exploring the nature of this magic world. Lucien also believed that although the processes might be different, the rules hiding behind might still be the same. Perhaps the oddness of this world was caused by some other unexpected factors.

"When the Primordial Ancestor fully woke up and started walking on the land, many magic creatures emerged, and so did the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss. Out of their instinct, they launched bitter fights." Rhine did not directly explain the oddness of the Boundless Ocean but started from the general background of that era.

The ancestors of the magic creatures nowadays were born a long, long time ago, but at that time, they already had some extraordinary powers...

Lucien frowned slightly, but he then relaxed. Based on the studies conducted by the congress on the origin of the world, soil, and some fossils, it seemed that this kind of initial stage of power only had to do with soul power but not with the environment.

Lucien then noticed something strange. "At that time, there were only three demigods and there was no conflict in their interests. Except for the Will of Abyss, which would launch random attacks, it seems that the Lord of Hell and Her Hon. had no reason for fighting. And why were there only three demigods? How does this match the Age of Mythology?"

"When they were first born, the two demigods only had endless lives, but they had not mastered their own wills and powers, and they were greatly influenced by their instincts. The Primordial

Ancestor once told me that there were many, many potential ones that could grow into demigods, but in the end, only three made it. The rest of them all failed, like the ancient elven tree, like Blue Gate. They were only half awake but never made it further.”

Rhine then added, “Then, when more intelligent creatures were born, some powerful ones started collecting their followers and became fake gods like what you saw in the dimension.

“... So in the entire Age of Mythology, the Will of Abyss kept killing and slaughtering, the Lord of Hell kept seeking for ways to grow more power, while the half-awake ‘wills’ were joining the Primordial Ancestor to fight against them. The fake gods were all trying to grow stronger and stronger by eating each other, and they thus were lured by the Lord of Hell and became its experiment subjects. The Lord of Hell could figure out why there were fake gods and what their powers were. In fact, the Lord of Hell gave it the name—the power of faith...”

Lucien rubbed his chin. “The Lord of Hell named it?”

“Yes, but in the end, the Lord of Hell got nothing, until the genius, Thanos, figured out a way to produce demigods by combining the ancient devil power and the power of faith and even the way of becoming a true god. I’ve been thinking that it was the Lord of Hell who purposefully released the information to Thanos in the first place,” Rhine said with his fingers crossed.

“Then how were the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss trapped out of the main material world?” Lucien did not rush into asking the oddness about the Boundless Ocean, as he believed that it should be about the same thing.

Rhine grinned. “The climax of this whole thing was a big-scale fight among those gods. In the fight, almost all of them fell. The ancient elven trees lost their wills, completely, and became part of the world. The Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss were sent into exile, and the Primordial Ancestor could no more walk on the land at her wish anymore.”

Even if very few of them survived, they must have all been killed by

the World of Souls.

“Like how?” Lucien did not understand how they were restricted.

Rhine pointed at the sky above the Dark Mountain Range and said, “In the Age of Mythology, the Dark Mountain Range didn’t look the same as what we could see today. There weren’t that many space gaps. Instead, there were many stable channels heading for the other dimensions, and there was a demigod-to-be sleeping there, as well as in the deepest part of the Boundless Ocean. However, at that time, the depths of the Boundless Ocean and the Moonlight Ocean were like the atmosphere. You could keep walking further and further, but you just couldn’t ‘see’ how you came all the way.”

“Does this oddness start from the very beginning?” asked Lucien thoughtfully.

Rhine looked a bit confused. “At least since the Primordial Ancestor woke up. But earlier in the Primordial Ancestor’s dream, that place was less odd compared to the time after. Land could be faintly seen through the atmosphere. However, it was just one of the Primordial Ancestor’s dreams, and many of them have been proved wrong or twisted. Don’t take it seriously.”

Lucien slightly nodded and waited for Rhine to continue.

“At the end of the war, those half-awake existences including Blue Gate sacrificed their wills and helped the Primordial Ancestor twist the time and space, and thus the direct connection between the main material world and the dimensions were cut off. Only those space nodes were left for traveling. And the Boundless Ocean and the Dark Mountain Range became what we see today.

“... Also, because of this disconnection, the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss were kept away from the main material world as there were no stable channels, and it was the same for the Primordial Ancestor. Therefore, the Primordial Ancestor created the vampires and werewolves in advance and left me with the power to summon her. This way she can land at some key moments by breaking the limit,” said Rhine, who felt it totally fine with being used as a tool.

Lucien asked, "Then why were time and space twisted into this model? How did Alterna do this? Was there something... like a hint?"

"At that time, they fought and cast out their instincts. So out of instinct, the Primordial Ancestor felt that worked the best..." Rhine was sure that the Silver Moon wouldn't have been a mathematician there to solve the problem.

Lucien smiled. One of the biggest problems in his mind had been solved, and that had ruled out a possible hidden danger.

Chapter 783: A Year Later

In the Year of 829, the Month of Fire, in an alchemy lab in Babel.

On the walls, ceilings, and floor, there were magic patterns in different colors, shining, and together they formed a complicated magic circle that covered the entire lab, thus preventing any noise from sneaking in and reducing the blazing light.

The Robe of Grand Arcanists that Lucien was wearing still looked like a long, black suit, instead of the style of the ancient magic empire. Right now, the suit was slightly bulging to prevent the last remaining amount of harmful substances away from Lucien. While in the space, Lucien's cognitive world was affecting reality and a starry sky where element spots were floating, eating, and blending in anything tangible or intangible around.

Although Lucien had always been cautious about his experiments, with this one, he was even more cautious. It was because of his failure to upgrade Moon Timer using the materials he got from Danisos. Moon Timer remained at the same level. Lucien was also badly injured. It took him half a year to fully recover.

At this time, Lucien was confident that neither he nor Moon Timer would get hurt or damaged, but he was not confident that he could improve Moon Timer to level four and make it his fourteenth top legendary item. What was more important was that since the materials he had were very limited, if he failed a second time, he had to go to another dimension to find another space-time legendary item.

There was another option that Lucien could persuade. The "silver moon" could raise the ancient time dragon in a pen and turned it into an endless source for providing legendary blood, flesh, and bones. But Lucien never considered it as it would take the dragon too long to recover from it.

According to what Lucien knew, so far, Danisos still had not recovered back to the top legendary level from the fight a year ago.

It might take Danisos a few more years to recover from the fight, and Danisos probably had to spend another two to three hundred years to fully recover.

Therefore, Lucien was being extremely cautious about this experiment to upgrade Moon Timer. He did not even allow Natasha to stay in, as her destructive power in this lab had been quite considerable.

On the alchemy operation desk, the drops of pure blood were drawing a strange magic circle driven by Lucien's spiritual power.

At first glance, it looked very complicated. Even looking at it would make a sorcerer below the legendary level feel extremely dizzy, and the sorcerer would lose his or her spiritual power fast. However, for a sorcerer who had enough spiritual power, with careful observation, the special but simple pattern within could be identified.

It was just like those complicated words. When one understood the roots, remembering the words was no more complicated.

Lucien had sweat beads on his forehead. But in this fancy lab, the beads of sweat immediately disappeared in the air.

After a long time, Lucien finally finished drawing the last line. Instantly, the magic circle trembled slightly, together with the entire lab, as if there was something disturbing the space and time.

After this calmed down, Lucien processed the remaining wings and flesh and then put them on the tips of the magic circle.

After that, Moon Timer flew out of Lucien's pocket and then fell in the middle of the magic circle, covered in water-like light.

Influenced by it, the lines of the magic circle started wriggling onto the timer as if they were alive. The lines then connected to the hands of the timer and the constellation symbols on it.

During the process, Lucien's eyes did not even blink. Using all his spiritual power, he was still doing some minor adjustment.

Lucien released a sigh of relief. The first two steps going well meant that he could be more confident about the result. The previous failure came from a minor mistake that Lucien ignored, but in the end, it was amplified into a horrible result.

Staying focused, Lucien turned on the alchemy desk again. Immediately, all the energy of the entire magic tower gushed into the magic circle in the middle and overwhelmed it with the silver light, from which some light “fog” rose up.

It was using so much energy that all the crystal lights had gone off and the defense of the tower had been switched off. Pinocchio, the tower guard, had to turn on the backup energy pool.

The backup energy pool only lasted less than a minute, and the timer still needed a bit more time. At this time, Lucien reached out his right hand and pressed it against the operation desk. Using his own body, he was pouring his own spiritual power in.

Suddenly, splendid light burst out and filled the entire lab.

Tick, tick...

All the clocks in the magic tower started running fast like they were in a race. In Atomic Universe, Natasha, who was practicing sword using the element planets, also felt the extremely rapid elapse of time as if time were rushing to its end.

It worked? Natasha looked up at Babel tower. Since she became a level two legendary knight, it was the first time she felt such great changes in the environment.

Then, with a gentle click, the passage of time went back to normal. It just felt that time had passed a long time in the lab.

Lucien stared at the timer on the operational desk and believed that it now looked a bit different. Its light had become more conservative, and a new button appeared beside the original one for Advanced Time Stop.

Worked? Lucien was not sure.

Picking up Moon Timer, Lucien felt it with his spiritual power. It still felt familiar to him.

After a while, Lucien put the timer back into his pocket and finally smiled. His own legendary item had finally become the fourteenth top legendary item, and a new function had been added—Faster Cast!

Like Danisos' talent, it could double his speed for casting legendary spells!

However, Danisos could use the power without limit, while Lucien could only use it three times a day. But Lucien's casting time had been cut half, which made it equivalent to casting a common legendary spell.

Advanced Time Stop and Gravity Collapse had reached the top legendary level. Although Lucien could only use them five times a day, he was still very satisfied with the result, as he knew that with smart strategies, the power would be the key for him to win a fight!

Natasha also grinned, and she shared the joy with Lucien through electromagnetism messaging. She then returned to her practice, although such practice might not be able to bring much difference to a level two legendary knight.

What was going on recently made her feel extremely alert, so she had to seize every second to improve herself.

In the past year, it seemed that the entire situation of the world remained relatively peaceful, but this opinion was only shared by the common folks. In the eyes of the top legendaries, they knew something big was coming underneath the calm ocean surface.

The Dark Congress, the South Church, and the North Church never initiated a war in the past months. Instead, they were all targeting the countries ruled by fake gods north to the Dark Mountain Range. They were slowly eating in those countries and made them shrink further and further. A legendary level fake god could fall at any time.

The Lord of Hell had also done some achievements in uniting the powers in the Boundless Ocean despite the interference from the Congress of Magic and Elven Court.

.....

The sky was blue when Lucien walked toward Atom Institution. Today, his students, Heidi, Chelly, Lowi, and Alfalia, would be reporting their progress in “artificial intelligence”.

In the past year, most sorcerers were still working on digesting quantum theory, while the arcanists in the institution had already started converting the knowledge into their own powers. Among them, Annick was the first one who managed to make the breakthrough in his cognitive world and thus became a senior-rank, while Sprint, Heidi, and Lazar were also almost there.

Even those apprentices, including Lowi, had reached the fourth or fifth circle.

Suddenly, Lucien felt that the floor was slightly trembling. He knew that it wasn't from an explosion, but the “joy” of City in the Sky.

Lucien blinked to the core part of the city and saw the big smile on Fernando's face.

“Haha, finally! The stable nuclear fission reactor!” said Fernando in triumph, whose gray hair looked a bit messy.

Chapter 784: Commencement of the Revolution of Energy and Information

The magic circle where silver and black brightness entangled raised electric light, enveloping the matter at the center that was in the middle of fission. The overwhelming energy generated was transformed by the magic circles nearby into the energy that the City in the Sky could make use of.

The fission reactor this time was no longer fierce and untameable like before. Although it still contained grave dangers, it was now steady and controllable.

“Master, congratulations to Granny Hathaway, Mr. Raventi, and President Morris,” Lucien said sincerely. He had barely made any contribution to the achievement except for proposing the fission reaction and helping with the analysis of the self-explosion. It was the product of the wisdom of the four legends.

Such a fission reactor was designed in different ways from that on Earth. Since it was a combination of reverse engineering and regular research, many unknown dangers might be lurking in the middle, and one might suffer explosions and curses after one moment of carelessness. Therefore, no personnel below legendary were involved in the project. Because of the shortage of hands, Fernando and Hathaway dragged Raventi and Morris, two legends in the school of elements, into the project.

Fernando was smiling, but he snorted and said, “It should’ve been completed a long time ago. I was too idiotic and made many unnecessary mistakes.”

He did not even let go of himself when it came to rigorously demanding and habitually despising products.

“In any case, with a stable, enormous fission reactor, the City in the Sky will have a regular source of energy. It’s safe to say that this is a major breakthrough in our research on the energy well. The energy problem that shackled us before will be solved effectively.”

Lucien was rather glad to see the product.

Combing his messy hair, Fernando stared at the fission reactor with his slightly cloudy eyes. "Next, we will focus on the minimization of fission reactors. By then, artificial planets, airships, cosmic observatories, and the steam trains that are in need of powerful defense and attack magic circles will be given a powerful 'heart'."

By then, artificial planets and airships would be able to conduct attacks that consumed a great amount of energy, like electromagnetic cannons or laser beams. In a war, blockade would not only include the ground, the sky, and the space around, but also the cosmos... Lucien subconsciously thought of the paradigm shift of war. It would not be a dream to launch "meteorites" on the enemy's head without resorting to any sort of magic.

Also, for a magic world, minimization was much simpler than stabilization!

"However, the energy of the fission reactor was still not good enough. If we can achieve the controllability, stabilization, and minimization of nuclear fusion, all of us will be the Sun King," Lucien said humorously. "Also, many particle experiments in the microscopic domain can be put on the agenda right now. The super large collider that I proposed in the meeting of the Highest Council can be included in the secret projects of the Magic Research Board too."

In many projects of the microscopic domain, fission reactors were indispensable. They could provide many particles that could be found under normal circumstances, and they could directly participate in the experiments. Therefore, the stable fission reactor was the achievement that many researchers were in dire need of.

Lucien proposed the super large collider because the regular cyclotrons and colliding magic circles could not meet the demand of the senior-rank sorcerers.

"That's right. When we studied the nature of neutrons, I already discovered the importance of a stable reactor." The moment arcane studies were mentioned, Fernando became solemn and grave. Then,

he said self-mockingly, “I didn’t know that neutrons of different speeds could result in such great differences...”

As he spoke, he was deep in thought. “The experiments on neutrons and protons give me the feeling that they are not necessarily fundamental particles. For example, the super heavy particle that can participate in the nuclear force is rather weird to me.”

In the past year, thanks to the new particle—muon—that Heidi discovered, more and more arcanists had devoted themselves to the study of cosmic rays. There were too many applicants in either the Atom Institution or the Tower, and it was anything but unusual to wait in line for three months. Among them, Annick discovered muons with a positive charge and those without charge, and Annonis of the Tower discovered a particle that was heavier than neutrons and protons. The new particle could also participate in the strong interaction—or to wit, nuclear force—and it had been named as “hyperon”.

“I never said that neutrons and protons are necessarily fundamental particles. At the very least, no theory so far can naturally lead to the conclusion. I’ve always described them as the internal structure of the atomic nucleus.” Lucien understood that his teacher was merely reminding him based on his keen instincts, in case the founder and pioneer of the microscopic domain would lose his head when the more fundamental particles were discovered.

He had to admit that as time went by, the grand arcanists and the legendary sorcerers were no longer following him blindly in microscopic research but had their own expansion after the digestion.

Seeing that Lucien was open-minded, Fernando stopped saying anything else. There were no experiments or phenomena that could directly lead to the question after all. It was only his arcana institution.

“Alright. I have to seize the day to discuss minimization with Hathaway.” Now that everything was settled, Fernando left the core of the City in the Sky in a hurry, as impatient as before.

“Minimization... That’s beyond the Earth level...” Lucien shook his head with a smile. It was both a beautiful and dangerous path. For example, would the minimized fission devices be easily damaged, and would there be ways to deal with the possible nuclear leakage? In that aspect, fusion devices were much safer. The explosion could only cause damages within a certain range. There wouldn’t be any long-term problems. It was clean and safe.

.....

The moment he returned to the Atom Institution, Lucien saw Heidi’s complaining eyes.

“Master, you’re late...” Heidi had been preparing her presentation in uneasiness for a long time, but her teacher, who usually arrived early, was late.

Lucien said in a good mood, “I was delayed by something unexpected. Let’s begin.”

Heidi removed her pretended complaint and walked into her own laboratory with Chelly, Lowi, and Alfalia. Lazar, Annick, Sprint, and the other arcanists who were in the institution followed them. For them, the monthly presentations always gave them something new, particularly in the fields that they were not good at. Therefore, even though Lucien did not demand them to participate, they still volunteered to join every time.

This time, Heidi and Chelly’s “artificial intelligence” was half the size previously. Although it was still huge, it was more or less acceptable right now.

Heidi turned on the power. Vague sounds of electric currents echoed, and the red and green lights flashed.

“After the test run last time, we found many problems and made the following improvements...” Naturally, the presentation was conducted by Heidi who was best at public speaking. She controlled “artificial intelligence” while she introduced the theory, the specific design, the modularized applications, the storage of programs, etc.

Although there was still a long way from real arcana studies, all of the audience could tell the mathematical ideas behind it and the simulation of human thinking thanks to Lucien's "torture". Also, the system where 0 and 1 represented everything gave them the deepest astonishment. It seemed to be a representation of the simplistic beauty and the nature of the world.

After Heidi's introduction, she looked at Sprint "provocatively". "Didn't you say that your mind calculated faster than our 'artificial intelligence'?"

Sprint had always been strongly confident, if not arrogant. So, he snorted and said, "Fine, if you lose, you will work as my assistant for one month, and if I lose, I'll do the same for you. However, you cannot give the tests."

As he spoke, he looked at Lucien. "Please give us a test, Master."

Lucien nodded and picked a difficult question that required the calculation of massive data. Then, he announced the beginning of the test with a smile.

The red and green lights flashed nonstop, so fast that nobody could distinguish them. The whole laboratory was turned into a ball. After four seconds, Heidi declared delightedly, "Here's the result!"

She had inputted with her spiritual power, so the input did not take much time.

Sprint raised his head and looked at Heidi in disbelief. After ten seconds, he finally said in a low voice, "I've got the result too. It's correct... Let's try one more."

It was not because he was a sore loser, but more like he was testing the limits of artificial intelligence.

Annick and Katrina gave tests this time, but Sprint failed even though he used the ancillary computation circles.

"Haha. Our artificial intelligence this time equals the computational ability of the senior-rank sorcerers. Also, it is better at processing massive data and long-term calculations than the senior-rank

sorcerers are. Annick, you can give it a shot.” Heidi laughed gloatingly.

Annick did not bet but still joined the competition in curiosity. With the help of ancillary computational circles, when given tests that did not require the calculation of massive data, he had some wins against the “artificial intelligence”, but when it came to the massive data that had to be processed after a long time, he had to admit that the “artificial intelligence” was stronger than him.

“Very good. Congratulations on making a solid first step. You may submit the paper now. This should help you win a prize,” Lucien said with a smile.

The discovery of the new particle did not bring any honor to Heidi. Although she proved that the particle was not involved in the strong interaction and was not the predicted meson but a new particle, she was not given the Holm Crown Prize because the standard for the prize was much higher.

Heidi and Chelly both put on a brilliant smile and soon looked forward to the future. “Hathaway, Hellen, and Oliver are introducing part of the knowledge in the quantum field into the studies of magic crystals. Hopefully, there will be a major breakthrough. By then, ‘artificial intelligence’ will no longer be heavy and clumsy.”

At this moment, Sprint was keen enough to notice a weird icon on the screen, so he activated it with his spiritual power curiously. As a result, the picture on the screen changed, and a simple process where squares fell on each other showed up.

“What’s this?” Lucien raised his eyes with a half-smile.

Heidi and Chelly blushed. In the end, it was Heidi who stammered, “Master, it’s a little game to test the modules. We... We didn’t...”

“Okay, that’s good,” Lucien said without waiting for her to finish. He did not sound angry at all.

Huh? Heidi was immediately stunned.

Chapter 785: Distant View

Seeing how stunned and confused Heidi was, Lucien said with a smile, “I like to listen to and write music when I am free, and Mr. Oliver likes to watch and create plays. That’s essentially the same as you playing games. It’s just a form of recreation. As long as you are not addicted to it and your arcana studies and magic abilities are not affected, there will be no problems at all.”

Whether a thing was good or bad highly depended on one’s attitude toward it.

Heidi and the students were not exactly scared of being criticized by their teacher. It was just that Lucien’s criticism often came with a lot of “homework”, such as the studies on the quantum field theory and the exercises about the new products in mathematics. It was a nightmare that they could not forget for the rest of their lives.

“Rest assured, Master. We have only devised the game to test certain modules. We won’t be addicted to it.” Heidi promised Lucien on behalf of her team.

Looking at the game on the screen, Lucien had a lot of mixed feelings. Although it was rather shabby, it already had the looks of the game that he was familiar with. “Let’s call it Ally Tetris. As a matter of fact, game design is a good thing.”

Huh? Even the shy, introvert guys like Annick were surprised.

“Sorcerers need relaxation and entertainment too. Do you not feel that the regular ways of entertainment, like opera, play, concert, ball, and Arcana Voice, are too few?” Lucien said half-jokingly. As for hunting and the other activities that nobles liked, they were not very popular among sorcerers. “Also, it will help build up the image of arcanists and sorcerers. Think about it. If there is a game that simulates adventures so that ordinary people can play as sorcerers and sense how marvelous magic is when it is used to deal with monsters and in daily applications, they will be more and more into magic.”

Heidi's eyes beamed with interest, but she immediately frowned and said, "Even though the ordinary people can afford such games right now, the 'artificial intelligence' at present cannot support such a complicated game at all. Also, we are too busy with all the research programs in hand to design any other games. We have to continue the studies on magic crystals, and we need to try to melt alchemical life and artificial intelligence..."

"I'm not asking you to design it in person. There must be a hundred arcanists who are studying 'artificial intelligence' with you, aren't there? You can let them play a part. Also, the design of a game can be separated from magic. It's like writing a 'play' in the language of 'artificial intelligence'. In such a way, the job can be outsourced to the ordinary people who do not have talents in magic. You'll be creating new jobs for the kingdom," Lucien suggested casually.

"Outsource?" It was the first time that Heidi heard the notion, but she understood her teacher's meaning well. After all, her teacher was most famous for the terms that he invented. "In such a case, the simple modules can be outsourced too, but we have to devise courses... However, the most important thing right now is to improve the performance of 'artificial intelligence'."

Speaking of games, she suddenly remembered something else and asked in confusion and curiosity, "Master, the massive live stream screen was ready to be manufactured half a year ago, but why hasn't 'Arcana Voice' been live-streamed yet?"

Thanks to their studies on "artificial intelligence", the screen that could display images was invented very soon. Although a lot of efforts were spent on lowering the cost, maintaining the color, and reducing the size, and there were no products available for even the nobles yet, the large live-stream screens could already be manufactured and deployed in the squares of important cities. Thankfully, there weren't many such squares, so the Congress of Magic could still afford it. Heidi had also obtained abundant revenue through the patent from it.

"'Arcana Voice' is a radio channel. All the programs have been designed for the sound-only feature. Now that the screen displays images, many programs are no longer appropriate. So, we have to

devise new programs. The interviews, interpretations, and music shows can be live-streamed, but not the others. Otherwise, why would we bother to use images? To see what the storyteller looks like?" Lucien had been teaching the Sky Radio Station new concepts and recruiting new workers.

Some of the new recruits were even ordinary people without any magic talents, but they were smart and had the most creative ideas.

Heidi understood what her teacher meant and nodded with mixed feelings. "I wonder when we can see the first real live stream..."

"Perhaps, it will be sooner than you expected..." Lucien smiled subtly.

...

A few days later, at the beginning of the Month of Scorch (August), in the city square of Rentato...

A white pillar of water erupted to the sky from the pool made of stones and fell to all directions like a waterfall, raising spindrifts on the clear water. It was noisy and loud, but no one around was upset. They even approached it, trying to drive away the heat on them.

On the opposite side of the famous spring was a weird enormous screen. It was transparent and complicated, and unique parts could be vaguely seen inside.

"Why do you think there have been no live streams when the screen has been established for five months?" A citizen asked Longman, his child.

Longman was much taller than before. As a student of the fourth grade in the first generic school, he was already a knowledgeable scholar in the eyes of neighbors and friends. Although he lacked extraordinary talents in magic, he was praised by his teacher for distinguished mathematical aptitude. Longman's parents were very proud of him and subconsciously considered their kid as a scholar, asking him whenever they had a question.

“‘Live stream’ is not an activity, but more like a program like ‘Arcana Voice’...” Longman explained according to what he learned in school.

Right then, the enormous screen suddenly emanated gentle brightness.

“It’s glittering! It’s glittering!”

“There’s a live show?”

“Why didn’t ‘Arcana Voice’ announce it?”

In the square, everybody became noisy as the place was filled with confusion and excitement.

Longman and his parents ended the discussion and focused their eyes on the screen.

What would the live show be? They really looked forward to it!

After the enormous changes brought by the development of arcana and magic, the citizens of Rentato lived every day in shock and delight, so they all looked forward to the unexpected live show.

As the light stabilized, two figures appeared on the screen, one male and the other female.

The female had long hair and was wearing a long dress. The citizens who still remembered the last live stream well recognized that she was Ms. Nightingale. The male, on the other hand, was a typical Holmish man, with black hair, blue eyes, and a mustache that represented his manhood. He was wearing a neat tuxedo as if he were going for dinner.

“Hello, everyone, I am your old friend Nightingale. This is an experiment on live streaming, so it was not announced in advance in ‘Arcana Voice’. Now, you will witness the first live stream from the satellite television channel of Allyn.” Fearing that she was too nervous, Louise had cast a ‘Mechanized Mind’ on herself. She said with a sweet smile but was not really smiling, “The gentleman sitting next to me is also your old friend. He is Mr. Caron, who is

the host of 'Man and Nature'."

"Man and Nature?" Longman and the other citizens watched the screen enthusiastically, wondering why Mr. Caron was asked to co-host with Ms. Nightingale.

Caron said with a smile, "I'm too nervous to say anything right now. So, let's start today's 'Man and Nature' immediately."

The moment his voice fell down, the transparent "glass" behind them released a gentle light that filled the screen.

As the light gradually faded, a green, refreshing meadow appeared before the eyes of the audience.

The meadow seemed boundless. Wherever their eyes could reach, everything was green, and a hideous monster with three horns was lurking in the grasses, having no idea that it was being observed by hundreds of thousands of humans.

"This is..." Longman looked at the screen, shocked at the unimaginable meadow. He had never seen such a broad meadow and such refreshing greenness.

The shock spread out in the hearts of everybody in the square. Jane, Ali, and Banus, wherever they were, were shocked from the bottom of their hearts after seeing the view of the meadow. It was more magnificent and beautiful than they could ever imagine.

"This is the prairie south to the desert in the Gusta Empire..." Caron interpreted it with his magnetic voice.

Was this a prairie?

Was it the south of the Gusta Empire?

For most people in the four kingdoms of the strait and the north coastline, the furthest places that they went to in their whole lifetimes were the cities next to them. The Gusta Empire was almost a different world for them. So, they never thought that they could witness a prairie in person.

So, that was what it looked like!

The three-horned monster lurked in the grasses carefully under public observation, before it lunged out and bit a lone goat in its neck!

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!” The clear image made everybody exclaim in shock!

Longman, on the other hand, had only one idea in his head. That was arcana... That was magic... They turned the impossible things possible and allowed ordinary people to see the faraway scenery without leaving their hometowns!

Chapter 786: Journey of Discovery

Chapter 786: Journey of Discovery

The prairie that looked entirely different from the four kingdoms of the strait and the north coastline and the creatures on the prairie with every detail manifested were demonstrated in the eyes of the audience, leading the audience to enjoy the exotic view and the unprecedented dinner for the eye.

For the people who probably had never left their own city or kingdom, such a view fascinated them, as if their souls were truly placed on the prairie. They were overwhelmed by the vast, refreshing view, shrieking and roaring at the predation on it.

In the Mills School of Nobles, the same screen stood at the central square. The noble students who had just finished their night classes were attracted to it. Then, their feet seemed to have been glued on the ground, making it impossible for them to move.

“Is this the prairie?” Jane, who had always been calm and quiet, looked at the greenness on the screen, which befitted all her romantic fantasies about the prairie in her reading. So, she mumbled uncontrollably. However, the experience this time was much lesser than that during her visit to space.

The noble friends next to her expressed their shock too. Even though their families had villas, manors, forests, and hunting grounds, there weren’t any such boundless prairies in Holm. That was the unique enticing view in the south of the Gusta Empire on the opposite side of the Storm Strait.

However, since they had enjoyed many beautiful views, their horizons were much broader than the common citizens. They were not entirely overwhelmed or lost, and they were still communicating with each other in a low voice.

“The live show this time is too surprising. Before, I only felt that ‘Man and Nature’ was fun. I never knew that it was so astounding until today.” The noble ladies were more or less romantics.

“This is not a live show. As Ms. Nightingale said before, it’s a satellite television.” Jane’s friend corrected her opinion and pressed her face, feeling that her cheeks were burningly hot. She said with a dreamy tone, “How I wish to go to the prairies, sit on the wild horses, and watch the setting sun dye the green grasses red. Jane, was the view in space even more splendid than this?”

Although they had repeated the topic many times, the boundless space was the forever romance.

“Yes. Stars were much more beautiful than on the ground. They were pure, clear, and some of them had beautiful halos...” Jane tirelessly described the scene again. What she saw and heard was deeply etched into her brain.

Without them knowing it, “Man and Nature” was over, and the picture was back to the studio. Nightingale smiled and said, “Starting from next Monday, ‘Man and Nature’ on ‘Arcana Voice’ will be stopped, and it will be aired in the Sky Channel of the Allyn Television Station. Correspondingly, we will have significant improvements and adjustments on other programs so that broadcast and satellite streams can carry out their own advantages. In the next show, you will see a brand new show that solely belongs to the Sky Channel and is different from any shows in the past. It will bring you a new and marvelous experience.

“My friends, are you ready?”

Ms. Nightingale’s sweet voice entered the ears of every member of the audience, waking them up from the shock brought by the world of grasses and animals. Even the most experienced adventurers had barely been to the Gusta Empire and the southern prairie. Naturally, they were fascinated too.

“What brand new show?”

“Can there be any show that is more exciting than the prairie?”

Nightingale’s words filled Longman, Jane, and Ali with curiosity and expectation.

Nightingale continued, “If you are ready, let’s begin a journey of exploration!”

The gentle light appeared and slowly disappeared. A blue ocean showed up on the ocean. The waves were surging, and the seabirds were flying up and down.

“Ocean!” It was still a major shock for the ordinary people who had never been to port cities, but having just appreciated a prairie, they were much less shocked than just now. It seemed no different from “Man and Nature” just now although the scene was different.

For the noble descendants like Jane, even if they had never traveled on a ship, they had visited the coastal cities like Padrey Port and enjoyed the freshness of the ocean. So, they were relatively calm. They talked to each other in confusion, “Is this really as good as Ms. Nightingale described?”

“No, I don’t think it’s a brand-new experience either.”

Looking at the screen, Jane was rather confident. For all these years, “Arcana Voice” never disappointed her. She trusted that “Sky Satellite TV Station” wouldn’t either!

At this moment, the camera drew close, revealing a steamship before everyone’s eyes. Eight magic cannons that were attached with the effect of Lucien’s Fireball pointed at all directions magnificently. Then, the camera drew even closer so that the audience could see the two males and two females on the deck.

“This is the ocean near the Sinel Island. We have accepted a contract with the islanders to investigate the floating dead fish that often occurred in the ocean recently...”

“In the Sinel Island, there’s a story that goes like this. Many, many years ago, this place used to be the territory of a sorcerer, but he never appeared again after a certain day. From that day on, the islanders have been hearing appalling cries and seeing green fire floating on the ocean all the time. Sometimes, they are lost for days when they go out fishing. It is said that when the fishermen are lost, they will see a ‘lighthouse’ that they have never seen before in the

event of a storm...”

As the magnetic male voice continued, Longman, who was still a teenager, had goosebumps all over his body. Was it a horror show?

“This ‘Journey of Discovery’ will be conducted by two middle-rank sorcerers and two grand knights. They will unravel the possible cause of the mysterious incident and look for the treasures behind it...”

After the narrator was done, the tough-looking middle-aged man on the deck cleaned his classic magic robe and said, “I’m Grilles, and I’m good at illusion, necromancy, and elements. I am the captain of this Journey of Discovery. We are about to reach the Sinel Island.”

Investigate a mysterious incident, explore the magic tower that possibly lingered, and search for the possible treasures... Longman, Jane, Ali, and the other ordinary people who never had any adventure before felt that their hearts were bursting. Their eyes were focused and excited, and they were completely focused on the program. What could the cause have been? Could they find it out? Would they run into any danger?

As for the adventurers, the noble knights, and the sorcerers, although they had similar experiences before, they had never been through a journey from such a perspective. So, they were also enthralled.

As the steamship reached the Sinel Island, the sorcerers, knights, apprentices, and squires dispersed and asked the islanders for clues. Those scenes were displayed to the audience in an orderly fashion. They were more and more devoted and even began their own analysis in a low voice, proposing possible answers and pointing out the self-contradictions in the islanders’ testimony now and then.

In their investigation, Grilles and the other sorcerers used magic to help themselves, solving the problems that the audience thought tricky easily. They were so astounded that they couldn’t have admired magic more.

Half an hour into the program, and “three days” later in local time,

the investigation reached a preliminary conclusion. All clues led to certain waters.

“Therefore, we need to explore the bottom of this part of the ocean...” While talking, Grilles cast ancillary spells such as “Underwater Breathing”, leading the other three middle-rank professionals into the ocean.

“They... They are really going into the water...”

“Are they really going to explore it?”

Exclamations of shock echoed now and then. None of the audience could believe that they would witness a real adventure.

The water around shook softly, and both common and bizarre fish swam by quickly, dazzling the audience. Occasionally, fierce sea monsters came at them, only to be finished by the knights and sorcerers easily.

Even a serene girl like Jane couldn't help but feel that she was palpitating. Although she lived a peaceful life and disliked changes, she more or less had adventure fantasies, and since such fantasies could be experienced without her taking any real action, she was naturally attracted by it. She was amazed by the splendid spells and scared by the sea monsters that popped up out of nowhere. Her feelings were fluctuating more intensely than ever.

It was exactly the feeling that more members of the audience shared. So, when the shabby, broken magic tower at the bottom of the ocean appeared, all the squares were filled with cheers after gasps.

The magic tower was opened, but the golems at the gate suddenly lunged at the strangers, raising rounds of exclamations...

Slow, Ice, Fireball, and the other spells were cast, leading to praises and compliments...

Ghosts, secret chambers, treasure boxes, and traps appeared one after another. The atmospheres on the squares were almost frozen. Everybody was looking forward to what would happen next.

After Grilles finished the last monster and destroyed the magic tower, a wind suddenly blew on the square, causing everybody to gasp at the same time. Their palms were sweating, and their expressions were twisted. Excited and scared, they learned what the “new and wonderful experience” was through the unprecedented journey and exploration.

“‘Arcana Voice’ is too boring compared to satellite TV...” Longman’s father said sincerely.

Longman agreed with him, but he was reluctant to admit it. “Some programs are more suitable as radios, like those which you have to listen to with full attention...”

“This is much more thrilling than plays, operas, and the bards’ stories!” The common audience in the city square and the noble students in the Mills school remarked in the same way in excitement. It was an authentic “adventure” without any disguise!

“Even Earth does not have such reality shows...” In the Atomic Universe, Lucien, who was watching the “TV show” with Natasha, Grand Duke of Orvarit, Joel, Alisa, and John, had a lot of mixed feelings. “Even though broadcast hasn’t been popularized here... Should I invent a ‘Wilderness Survival’ or ‘A Bite of Holm’?”

Chapter 787: Incessant

After the Journey of Discovery, the picture on the screen was not switched back to the studio like just now. Instead, a pure and blue sky appeared together with the melody that everybody was familiar with.

In the center of the sky, a shuttle-shaped metal object was floating. It was streamlined and bright-colored, giving a strong visual blast.

“What is this program?”

“Are they going to let us experience flying?”

Having just been through the “prairie” and the “ocean” just now, the audience talked to each other in confusion and speculated the possible outcomes excitedly.

“Creative appearance design, state-of-the-air energy transformation circles, unparalleled speed, and indestructible life defense...” A magnetic male voice introduced the aircraft with great passion, while the aircraft in the sky changed its posture nonstop according to his words, demonstrating its unique magic effects.

All the audience was stunned. The world of aircraft was too far away from them. Also, the gentleman described it so perfectly that even the small nobles did not seem able to afford it.

The aircraft in the sky descended and descended, until a city appeared down below. The view of the city was getting clearer and clearer, and the square that was jam-packed with people could be clearly seen.

The square was as full as if a black torrent were flooding in, whereas the sky where the aircraft was at was spacious and empty. It was a major contrast.

The aircraft stopped above the square and looked down upon the crowd that looked like ants, which made the viewers who were sharing the vision of the aircraft somehow feel that they were high

and mighty. However, when they realized that they were actually the people who were being looked down upon in the square, they felt rather complicated.

Was it the perspective and perception of those grand nobles?

The picture was frozen there, and the magnetic male voice roared, “‘Reton’ Model III is the aircraft most worth buying in 829. Call XXX to place an order anytime...”

It was not until then that the audience, who had listened to “Arcana Voice” and other radio programs for years, finally realized that it was a commercial. Even commercials could be so entertaining!

When they recalled how it felt like to fly an aircraft, and when they realized its price, which must have been extremely high, many young people were both frustrated and ambitious. *One day, I will be successful, and I will look down upon everybody on an aircraft at the peak of my life!*

Clenching their fists, they somehow remembered the grand nobles who already had all kinds of aircraft and the privileges of nobles that had existed all the time. They suddenly had a lot of complicated feelings.

“Coming next is ‘Sports Time’. We are going to present to you a flight contest between Allyn Magic School and Paphos Owl Magic School. In the contest, flight skills, aircraft, magic brooms, magic pets, and other regular methods to assist flying are allowed. The judge designated by the Arcana Review Board will score the contestants according to their performances in their flight, which will have a lot of obstacles, as well as the time it takes for them to finish the trip...” This time, it was another host doing the interpretation.

Thanks to the popularization of newspapers and radio stations, none of the audience was a stranger to flight contests, which had been held in magic schools for a long time. However, all their understanding was based on words and voices. They never knew what such games really looked like. Therefore, they were greatly attracted by the program, even secretly blaming the sorcerers,

whom they dare not slander on other occasions, for not being fair enough.

Time went by fast in the new and amazing programs. When “Nightingale” announced that the satellite stream this time was over, the crowd in the square was reluctant to leave for a long time. They stared at the screen greedily, hoping that the next release would be aired right now miraculously.

“Why is it only aired once a week...” Longman’s parents and all the other ordinary people around remarked. They were full of regrets and desires.

“Journey of Discovery” and “Chronicles” were Longman’s favorite programs. Mesmerized, he said pitifully, “Didn’t Ms. Nightingale say that the programs today are not enough for everyday streaming? When there are enough shows, we will be able to watch them every night...”

Today, “Chronicles” was a black-and-white documentary named “War between Wave and Particle”.

It faithfully recorded the “war” that lingered for hundreds of years. Starting from the question “are light and spiritual power waves and particles?”, the documentary introduced the beginning of the debate during the Magic Empire, the arcanists’ pursuit of truth, the classic and marvelous experiments, and the miserable arcanists who fell before the problem.

The big shots whose heads exploded and the pitiful experts who were never heard again after their cognitive worlds were broken and solidified highlighted the difficulties and devotion in the development of arcana.

This documentary made the general people realize the wonder of arcana itself after it was separated from magic. They couldn’t have admired the arcanists who explored the nature of the world more.

I wonder what happened after the first War between Wave and Particle, and how everything ended as it is today... Longman thought in a trance. It was much more magnificent than “A Brief History on

Magic and Arcana” that he read at school. He looked forward to the following episodes of the documentary...

Longman’s father suddenly burst into laughter. “Harriton spent all his money on a magic radio so that he could listen to ‘Arcana Voice’ at home, only to miss ‘satellite streaming’ as a result.”

He laughed rather happily. Because of Longman’s mathematical talents, he had always tried to save money for Longman’s further education in the future. Even though his son had no extraordinary magic talents, there would still be improvements as long as he could distinguish himself in arcana. He did not hold the wish that Longman could become a senior-rank sorcerer and a real big shot, but he did hope that his son could become an official sorcerer.

So, after his neighbors and friends bought magic radios and stopped coming to the square, he always felt bad about himself.

“Really? I feel sorry for them. It’s such a marvelous program and such a new and wondrous entertainment...” The audience nearby repeated what Ms. Nightingale said. Then, they sighed. “This screen must be much more expensive than the magic radio. Only the real nobles can afford them. Perhaps we will have to be gathered in the square for a long time in the future...”

.....

“Even Mountain Paradise can’t be more incredible...”

“Can it be aired every day?”

It was what Joel, Alisa, and Grand Duke of Orvarit said before they left. They were deeply captivated when they watched the satellite TV. Joel even felt the urge to create songs after “Journey of Discovery”.

“Appreciating the social changes brought by arcana has become a hobby that’s as important as music for me...” Natasha was also quite interested in some of the programs on satellite TV. Then, she went to the room of seclusion to practice in quietness. It was a way of exercise that Lucien proposed. Since the three lonesome years at

the bottom level of the abbey helped her really grasp the melted blood power, it meant that the way of training was as good as fighting. He suggested for her to seclude herself for three days every month.

Lucien walked into the library and picked up the journals on the desk, finishing the parts that he failed to earlier.

Then, Lucien took over “January Arcana Review”. Through the excerpt journal, he briefly learned the research progress in all the magic schools in the past month. It was because other than the mainstream journals such as Arcana, Magic, Nature, Elements, Astrology, etc., most of the journals contained papers that were of some value for other people but useless for Lucien. Reading them carefully would be a waste of his time. Therefore, he browsed through them through the excerpt, and if he found any paper he was interested in, he would find the original journal and read it more carefully.

“January Arcana Review” was in a unique force. On every page, the left side was the title, abstract, and keywords of the article, and the right side was the comment from the Arcana Review Board so that the readers would understand the basic content and value of the paper as soon as possible.

“Some Points on the Gauge Field?” Lucien suddenly found a title that he was interested in. He read the abstract and the comment, before he found out from the journal where it was published and read it more completely.

To put it unprofessionally, the gauge field was a theory that hoped that physical laws did not change because of the different measurement standards in every space-time point. Somebody had studied it in the classic electromagnetic stage. After Lucien, Fernando, and Brook established the quantum field theory, some arcanists naturally followed up.

Lucien appreciated the theory because of its future brilliance. The standard particle model was exactly founded on it, and the marvelous “God particle” was only meant to resolve the problem that certain particles in the model did not carry mass when they

were still like photons.

After reading the paper and finding no groundbreaking achievements, Lucien continued reading January Arcana Review.

“On the Symmetry of Microscopic Particles and Its Confirmation?” Lucien found another paper he was interested in. It was the product of a middle-rank arcanist, who believed that microscopic particles and their “mirror” particles corresponded with each other according to symmetry except that their spins were opposite. He proposed detailed mathematical and arcana standards, which he had named “conservation of parity”. He also proved that such symmetry did exist through a series of experiments.

The comments of the two members of the Arcana Review Board were basically the same. “Symmetry is a representation of the beauty of arcana and the fundamental law of the universe. This paper has little practical value, but his experiments and new concepts can help us learn more. So, he will be rewarded with four arcana credits and thirty arcana points.”

The author of the paper seemed satisfied with the comment. He also divided the paper into two parts in order to claim more rewards from the journal.

“Conservation of parity...” Lucien suddenly felt that he was in the wrong time and space. He tapped the journal softly.

At this moment, Pinocchio announced that Douglas had come to visit him.

“Mr. President, what brings you here at such a late hour?” Lucien greeted him in confusion.

Smiling, Douglas said, “I’m ready for the advancement right now.”

Chapter 788: Entrusting and Scheming

“Advancement into the demigod stage?” Lucien was truly surprised this time. It had been only slightly more than a year, and the president was all set?

Douglas said with a smile, “When you discovered the sun, my preparation was almost done. I spent most of the last year confirming the existence of the sun and melting the feedback of the truth of the world with my own research products to deploy ancillary magic circles. Opening the gate of demigods actually does not need any special legendary materials. It’s the accumulations in the past that matter, like the solidification of the cognitive world, the real connection with the Host Star of Destiny, etc.

“Therefore, as long as the nature and the key of the ancillary magic circle are found, the deployment will be relatively simple. I estimated that it would take three to four years, but it’s much shorter than that.”

It was similar to the magic circle with which Thanos and Viken became demigods. No special legendary materials were required. As long as they completed the status transformation and accumulated enough power of feelings and faith, the preparations could be accomplished rather easily. The long time to gather the power of faith and the feelings could be saved.

As he spoke, Douglas smiled peacefully and gently, not having the excitement and anxiety of someone who was about to try to break into the demigod level. He was not even as thrilled as he had been when he learned of Lucien’s discovery of the sun a year ago.

“But wouldn’t it be too hasty?” Although Lucien was proud of his rationality and decisiveness at the critical moments, he couldn’t help but hesitate at such a moment.

Douglas shook his head with a smile. “All the preparations that should be done have been done. Making the attempt right now and doing so ten years later will be no different. You should remember

that it's been almost three hundred years since I reached the peak of legendary. I've come to you because I am not entirely reassured. Brook is smart, cautious, and open-minded, but he prefers to be devoted to his own studies. He is not very suitable to lead the Congress. Fernando and Hathaway, on the other hand, have major deficiencies in their personalities and are even less suitable. So, if the attempt fails and I don't survive, I hope that you can lead the Congress, Lucien."

He roughly analyzed the other three top legends and looked at Lucien earnestly.

"Mr. President... You'll certainly be fine," Lucien said subconsciously. Then, he said solemnly and sincerely, "The Congress will never die as long as I am alive."

Douglas smiled in satisfaction and patted Lucien's shoulder. "Then, I'll have to ask all of you to protect me during my attempt."

"Protect you? That's not a problem. Mr. President, are you going to make the attempt in an alternate dimension?" Although there were no records about the unusual phenomena when somebody broke into the demigod level, Lucien had no doubt that it would be quite noisy, considering how the advancements of the previous major levels behaved. Also, he had concluded that Thanos must have accomplished the advancement in an alternate dimension or his own demiplane.

That was why the legends of the Magic Empire did not sense anything. Behind every door of the Realm of Gates was an independent alternate dimension. Viken could have fooled Maskelyne and the rest of them.

However, Douglas' advancement was different from them. He needed the cognitive world and the demiplane, the real environment that corresponded with his cognitive world. It was obvious that he could not complete it in his demiplane. So, he could only go to alternate dimensions or places like the World of Souls. Also, if it was too eye-catching and took too long, Pope Viken, Maltimus, and the pontiff would certainly come to hinder him.

Douglas said rather helplessly, “My advancement is based on my cognitive world and my own demiplane, and I have to grasp the Host Star of Destiny in order to melt its projection in the soul completely with the soul, the cognitive world, and the demiplane. This process will be much more difficult in alternate dimensions and the World of Souls. So, I can only choose the main material world and count on the defense of Allyn.”

“How long will it take? If it’s short, there will be no time for Viken to come, and we only need to take care of the Lord of Hell. Three top legends should be able to stop him with the defense in Allyn.” Lucien became rather solemn. Faced with demigods, the Congress of Magic had no problem in defending itself, but it was unable to put up any counterattack.

Douglas sighed and said in a self-mocking smile, “As the legend who tries this path for the first time, I can only roughly estimate that it will take ten to forty minutes. It’s hard for me to predict what will be caused in which phase.”

The Congress of Magic didn’t have any systematic research on the unusual phenomena yet.

“We can only assume that it will take forty minutes... I believe that the Silver Moon will be happy to have one more reliable ally. After all, Viken has the platinum staff and the key to master the power of ‘Mountain Paradise’. I’ll pay another visit to the Dark Mountain Range,” Lucien analyzed the situation. “However, we need to be prepared that somebody would release the Will of Abyss during the mess...”

Alternia would stop Pope Viken, and the three top legends would stop the Lord of Hell. It should be enough provided that there were no other emergencies.

Douglas became rather solemn. “I’ll go to the Dark Mountain Range with you and talk to the Silver Moon face to face.”

Having carried the Congress of Magic to move forward for hundreds of years, he was not a person who considered his pride to be above everything, and he knew that he had to show his own sincerity if he

wanted to ask for somebody else's help.

"Alright." Lucien nodded his head but hesitated for a moment. "Although it's been only five years since Viken turned into 'Benedict III', and he hasn't entirely recovered, we know that the real reason that he hardly uses 'God's Arrival' is the irrecoverable physical exhaustion and the fear for Monster Viken. When the critical moment comes, he certainly will not hesitate to use anything. So, we should be braced for 'God's Arrival'."

"Do we have to find a way to distract Viken so that he cannot arrive in time to stop us?" With Douglas' wisdom, he naturally had plenty of plans, such as attacking the alternate dimensions that were under the control of the Church, acting as if they could save Monster Viken.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien hesitated and said, "Perhaps there's a better way..."

...

In the praying room of the Saint Geno Church...

"Saint" Clement was repenting before the cross quietly. Last time, he went to the Chaotic Cosmos to take the Time Plate under the instruction of Mecantron, only to run into Lucien and almost get consumed by the high-energy storm created by the Positron Cannon. Thankfully, the Lord of Hell, who had been conspiring with him, saved him from the disaster. He was terrified for a long time after he learned from the Lord of Hell that even Mecantron was almost killed.

Unlike Mecantron, who was a container that The Angel King prepared for himself and who would be reborn in the light of the Lord as long as Mountain Paradise existed, he would've been completely killed if he had been touched by Lucien's terrifying legendary spell!

He learned the truth of Mecantron's resurrection from the Lord of Hell.

“I have gathered almost enough ‘Power of Virtues’, but I still need a ‘container’...” The Book of Virtues, which Clement acquired from the Angel King, replaced the power of negative feelings with positive symbols such as honesty, so there were not as many problems. He did not need to capture another legend as his container and could use the utensils made of special materials.

Those were the two branches that Thanos and Viken created while they perfected the path to the demigod level. The difference was because Thanos started from scratch and was, therefore, not restrained by negative feelings and primeval devils.

“But the materials I need are difficult to collect.” Clement thought rather regretfully and said, “I could’ve used Geno’s body as the ‘container’ if he hadn’t died a long time ago and only left his power and godhood behind... Why have I inherited the power of Geno, instead of that of Saint Ivan or Saint Felix?”

When he was sorry about himself, the suburb of San Ivansburg was enshrouded in darkness.

San Ivansburg in the late autumn was already as cold as the winter in Allyn. It was particularly freezing at night.

On a wide but not steep hill, a wagon was riding toward the manor at the foot of the hill.

The slim coachman had a red nose and wore a coat that wasn’t very thick. He spurred the horse and poured hard liquor into his mouth, as if it was the only thing that could prevent him from the coldness.

Suddenly, the coachman shivered. Even the hard liquor seemed not enough to stop the coldness from rising in his heart.

He looked at the sky. Seeing that the silver moon had been blocked by the clouds and everything was dark, he subconsciously felt deserted and creepy. So, he waved his whip and accelerated the wagon.

The horse ran quickly for a while, but it slipped during a turn, and the wagon flew out, falling off the slope that was not too high.

“Damn it. How should I tell my lord...” The coachman was not heavily hurt. He stood up, upset, blaming himself for not reining the horse well.

He was about to check the wounds of the horse when he suddenly saw a cave, which was at a corner of the slope that could never be found under normal circumstances. There was a glittering coin at the entrance of the cave.

“A coin...” The coachman’s eyes became passionate. He observed the surroundings carefully and walked to the cave, speculating in excitement whether or not there were treasures inside.

He was too drunk to consider whether or not there were dangers in the cave. He simply walked over and picked up the coin, not realizing that he passed through a transparent shield of light that was about to disappear.

He was about to examine the coin, but his pupils suddenly widened, because the cave was full of weird symbols that denoted pain, desperation, and hate.

The coachman went stiff and stood where he was while watching the symbols decompose and disappear in a couple of minutes together with the light shield that he did not notice.

Then, he shook his head and burped. “Did... Did I fall asleep just now?”

When the coachman walked into the cave, Clement, who was still in the Saint Geno Church, suddenly sensed something. He disrupted his “repentance” and really closed his eyes. Then, he saw a pair of mocking red eyes in the darkness.

“Somebody transformed into the status of primeval devils in San Ivansburg through the power of negative feelings. I sensed the strong pain, desperation, and hate...” Maltimus said affirmatively. “Find out who he is as soon as possible.”

Clement squinted. Did anyone else in San Ivansburg know the status transformation?

Chapter 789: Discovery

Chapter 789: Discovery

Clement floated in the darkness outside of the cave and observed the situation inside emotionlessly. Both the strange patterns and the intense hate and desperation were gone. Had it not been for the supernatural vibe that was still lingering in the place, nobody could have guessed that a minor magic ritual had been held in this place. Even so, nobody could speculate the specific content of the ritual and whether or not it was part of another greater ritual.

After an hour, after the supernatural air was dissolved in nature, everything that happened would be completely buried in the river of history.

Clement performed prophecy with divine powers, hoping to be inspired by the god. However, he did not learn anything that he had not already known.

“The guy is no weaker than me, and he was well-prepared in advance. Therefore, it’s impossible for me to predict the real situation. Even the Lord of Hell cannot do that...” Clement frowned. If the Lord of Hell had been in this place when it happened, he must have been able to tell the truth. However, he was in the distant Boundless Ocean and the ninth level of hell that was even more distant. When he sensed the abnormal power of feelings, the opportunity was already gone.

Clement disrupted his divine powers and analyzed the possible suspects on his own. “He’s no weaker than me... There are only a few people in San Ivensburg who meet that requirement, unless they come from outside. However, in that case, they couldn’t have made such full preparations in San Ivensburg that’s strictly under our watch... Right, the power of negative feelings needs a ‘container’ that is only one rank lower at most. I have to check who has gone missing...”

Now that the suspect had finished the status transformation,

Clement was not in too much a hurry to determine the life and death of the saint cardinals and divine knights in the major churches. Instead, he waited patiently until the morning and visited the Grand Cardinals one by one.

“Your opinions are very important. I’ll certainly take them into account...” Outside of the Saint Felix Church, Clement bid farewell to another saint who had inherited his power. He was full of confusion.

None of the seven saints including himself had gone missing. They were either in the main churches in Saint Ivan Church or in the critical areas that they were defending. After he reached out to them, he also confirmed it with divine powers. It was also the case for the other saint cardinals, divine knights, and legendary knights of the empire too. Only a few of them who were out on secret missions were out of touch, but there was no sign that they had perished.

In such a case, there would be no “containers” available. Had the suspect who completed the status transformation captured a legend of other forces or one who lived in isolation? Before he realized it, he found himself stopping before the Saint Ivan Church.

The pontiff has not been occupied as a container, hasn’t he? Such an idea suddenly popped up in Clement’s head. No normal people could have been so bold, but what if it were a lunatic who did the job?

With that in mind, Clement walked into the Saint Ivan Church and asked to meet Pontiff Belkovsky.

Several minutes later, he met Belkovsky who was as brawny as a bear in the library. His voice was still loud, his eyes were yellow, and his nose was high.

“Clement, do you have any thoughts?” Belkovsky hinted that he already knew that Clement had visited a lot of Grand Cardinals and legendary knights of the empire today.

Clement was rather shocked. He had been too anxious and

should've finished it in a few days. Had it not been for the Lord of Hell's perception of the primeval devils and the power of feelings, he wouldn't have known what happened at all, and his frequent visits might have betrayed him.

Therefore, he said in a panic, "The monsters in the Dark Congress swallowed the few countries on the north side of the Dark Mountain Range and threatened the Mother God of the Earth. I fear that the Mother God of the Earth will join them and have been trying to stop it in secret. So, I talked with the Grand Cardinals and the legendary knights, hoping to propose a suggestion after we reach a consensus."

"You should talk to me first if you have any questions." Belkovsky did not say anything else, because they were the North Church, unlike the South Church where the pope had absolute authority, and such massive, private communication would've been regarded as disrespect for the spokesperson of the Lord on the ground.

In the North Church, the power belonged to all the Grand Cardinals, and the pontiff only had the power to convene meetings. His voice was only louder than others' because he was stronger.

Of course, no saints would challenge the authority of the pontiff under normal circumstances either.

Relieved, Clement said respectfully, "I'm here to ask for your advice."

After they discussed the current situation, Clement returned to the Saint Geno Church and looked for where he had neglected. However, he couldn't figure out what the mysterious status transform used as "container" at all. After all, there was only a fixed number of legends!

He then thought to himself, *I'm still in need of several special materials to build my container. Should I borrow some from the Lord of Hell... No, he doesn't know that I am not using the power of negative feelings but relying on the Book of Virtues... If only Saint Geno's body can be used. A divine body and the power accumulated for hundreds of years will be enough for me to reach the peak of legendary and make a*

breakthrough. Body! The saints' bodies!

Clement suddenly thought of a possibility. His facial muscles were somewhat twisted under the shock. Was it really one of them?

He knelt on the ground and drew the horizontal cross on his chest. Closing his eyes, the brilliance of godhood appeared on his body, gathering into a cluster of light and turning into a light angel with a gold eye. Then, the silent, freezing, and monotonous black, white, and gray filled the area.

In the Temple of Spirits inside the World of Souls...

Five black iron coffins were placed with a cluster of erratic, intangible balls of godhood before or above them. Suddenly, something seemed to have flown into one of the balls, making it grow longer and bigger into an angel of light with six wings on the back.

Clement's consciousness was attached to the radiance of godhood, and he observed the Room of the Holy Spirit, which was as quiet as a grave, sensing the passage of time in it.

"Who could it have been?" Looking at the other four coffins, Clement hesitated. If he opened the wrong one, the corresponding saint would definitely sense it, and it would be hard for him to explain why he did that. Although he wouldn't be executed, he would certainly be regarded as an ambitious schemer by his fellows and ostracized.

He performed divine powers, hoping to give himself some hints, but the results of his prophecies varied and included every coffin.

Shaking his head, Clement remembered that the Lord of Hell was behind him and therefore made up his mind, ready to check the target that he was most suspicious about!

He walked to the front and stopped before the coffin of Saint Ivan, which was standing vertically. With the angelic wings flapping, he extended his right hand and moved away from the cover of the coffin.

Creak.

The coarse, heavy friction interrupted the dead silence in the Room of the Holy Spirit. The coffin behind the cover was empty, showing nothing but the cold reflection from the iron.

Clement's gold eye was immediately frozen. It was indeed empty!

Saint Ivan, who betrayed the Holy City and established the North Church, was gone! His divine body and his generations of power were all gone!

"It's indeed Belkovsky. He has completed the status transformation!" Clement could barely hold back his fury. He was angry at Belkovsky's betrayal of their ideal.

It was not until this moment that he finally realized why Pope Viken never considered the saints in the North Church when he secretly released the ways to become a demigod, because he must've known that, with the divine bodies of the few saints and the power that they accumulated, all they needed for status transformation was to collect the power of feelings, which was relatively easy. Together with the power of faith that the North Church stole, the preparations to become a demigod were already done. The resources were enough to support a demigod.

If this path did not involve the understanding of divinity and faith, and the odds of failure were not as high, Belkovsky might have already tried to make the advancement... Clement thought angrily and enviously. He hadn't even completed status transformation yet. However, he did not know that Belkovsky was unaware of the secret to combine them to break into the demigod level.

Suddenly, he frowned. "Belkovsky couldn't have fooled everyone when he collected the power of feelings in San Ivensburg. It's normal that I didn't know it, but it's rather strange that none of the saints sensed anything. Does he have any special ways?"

Thinking about that, he suddenly came to a horrible conclusion, which forced him to turn around and open another coffin without any concerns.

In squeaks, the cover of the coffin was opened, revealing the empty hollow. Felix's divine body was also gone!

The coffins were opened one after another. The divine bodies of Uriel and Aleksey had disappeared too!

Belkovsky was not the only one who had completed the status transformation!

"So, I was the only one who did not know it..." Clement laughed in his utmost fury. As it turned out, he had been exiled from the central circle since a long time ago.

After cleaning up the Room of the Holy Spirit, his consciousness returned to the Saint Geno Church, and he reached out to Maltimus.

"Belkovsky and the other three saints have all completed the status transformation with the divine bodies as 'containers'... Where did they learn the mysteries of negative feelings and primeval devils? Viken couldn't have leaked it to them. The other legends who learned it certainly wouldn't want to disseminate it either..." Maltimus considered.

He once had a plan to reveal the secret to Belkovsky at a critical moment to disrupt the situation, but he dropped the plan after he successfully arrived.

Before Clement proposed any speculation, Maltimus suddenly laughed mockingly. "I'm afraid that it was done by the guys from the Congress of Magic. They only have the secrets about negative feelings and primeval devils, and they need the way to steal and utilize the power of faith that you know. You guys are perfect partners. Hehe. To think that Douglas and Lucien Evans still insist that they will walk on the path of arcana..."

"What do we do now?" Clement asked thoughtfully.

Maltimus chuckled. "Release the message. Make sure that Viken learns it."

.....

A few days later, in the Holy City...

Benedict III looked unusually awful as he read the intelligence before him. He gnashed his teeth as he hissed, “Lucien Evans...”

Chapter 790: Snooping

If it were anybody else, they probably could've only vaguely guessed the range of suspects, but Benedict III clearly knew that Lucien only grasped the secrets about negative feelings and primeval devils but was unaware of the ways to steal and utilize the power of faith, and that Lucien was developing the Church of Steam in secret, intending to intercept the power of faith for Heit, the God of Craftsmen. Therefore, it was very likely that Lucien Evans and the North Church exchanged their bits of knowledge to make up for what they were short of.

Of course, with his smartness, Pope Viken knew better than to jump to any conclusion. The possibility could not be ruled out that somebody was doing it on purpose to mess up the situation.

"If it's really you, your acting skill will be better than all the professional actors..." The anger on Benedict III's face was gone, but he was still gnashing his teeth.

When he tempted Lucien before, he was solemnly refused. The guy declared that it was only an experiment and that he was seeking the mysteries of nature in it but not really interested in the path. Because of his despise on the way to become a demigod created by Thanos and himself, and his firm arcana attitude in the past decade, Viken was actually convinced by him...

"First of all, I have to find out whether or not Belkovsky and his people have the part of the secret that can combine the power of feelings and the power of faith... If they do, I will have to speed up. I have to take action before they break into the demigod level..." All of Benedict III's negative feelings were gone and thrown to Monster Viken through the uncanny connection. He was no longer upset by Lucien's possible "deception" but began to consider what he should be doing at present.

Although the way to become a demigod that was created by Thanos and himself helped them turn into demigods, there were a lot of coincidences and changes that he could not understand at all during

the process. Therefore, the odds of success were actually much lower than it seemed. Despite the godhood and the power of faith that had been accumulated for multiple generations, it was still barely possible for Belkovsky and his people to become demigods, and if they failed, they would either be too heavily wounded to have another try in the next hundred years, or be directly killed.

But no matter how low the odds were, it could still happen. So, he had to confirm their knowledge and modify his plan accordingly.

Benedict III touched the platinum staff next to him and looked out of the window thoughtfully. "... On the other hand, I have to get a list of all the materials that Lucien Evans asked for in the past two years. Maybe I'll be able to find something... 'Bird of Death', it's time for you to play your role. This is not a threat or a command, which is in violation of the terms of our cooperation, but a matter that concerns your own future too. You should know what's best for you..."

.....

A week later, the list of all the materials that Lucien Evans exchanged for during the past three years was put on Benedict III's desk.

Every sorcerer had to conduct incessant experiments and build appropriate items and devices. Therefore, the list had hundreds of pages. One would feel that his head was dizzy when he read it and could not find anything of value at all.

"If it were anybody else, they couldn't have discovered your real purpose..." Benedict III's face was as gloomy as a swamp as he turned the pages and marked certain materials on them.

He was checking Lucien's list and marking the materials that his way to becoming a demigod needed. If there were only a few matches, it meant that they were just coincidences, but if the list contained most of the materials, the answer would be obvious. As a legendary sorcerer, Lucien undoubtedly had his own treasury and source of materials, and he did not have to exchange for everything from the Congress of Magic.

Black circles were drawn on the paper one after another, and Benedict III's face was more and more sullen. After the hundreds of pages were all checked, he finally stared at the blankness in the end solemnly. "Eighty-seven materials that the way to become a demigod needs are included here. They take up 73% of all the materials needed..."

Suddenly, he raised his head slightly. "The eighty-seven materials also include the materials for the ritual to combine the power of feelings and the power of faith in order to break into the demigod level! Has Lucien Evans got the last step from the other legends? Or has he figured it out on his own?"

If it were any other legendary sorcerers, even including Douglas, Benedict III wouldn't have speculated as such, but Lucien had been studying the power of faith and the power of feelings for years. He had also opened the Chamber of Immortality, seen the mysteries of immortality, and proposed unimaginable, miraculous theories. So, it might've been possible for him to complete the way to become a demigod in his hands with the knowledge that he already grasped!

"... I cannot let him turn into a demigod in any case. Otherwise, he may be advanced into a real god before I have the confidence to do so..." Benedict III narrowed his eyes.

Thinking about that, he suddenly stood up. "Words came from the Dark Mountain Range earlier that Lucien Evans had completed the status transformation. Considering his preparation of materials, it's possible that he will try to make the advancement in one or two years..."

"... I have to ask the Bird of Death and the other legends who are willing to cooperate to pay attention to his whereabouts and his Church of Steam..."

.....

In the Month of Ice (December), when every drop of water outdoors would immediately be frozen into ice, Rentato was covered in white snow.

Augustus, leading Harold, Myrna, and the central priests of the Church of Steam, paid tributes to the silver nuclear bomb that they believed to be the embodiment of the power of the God of Steam, expressing their gratitude to their Almighty Lord and praying for His protection in the next year.

They covered their eyes with their right hands and knelt on the ground, praising and singing for the God of Steam in their hearts.

Right then, the silver “nuclear bomb” emanated gentle brilliance, and their bodies were covered in the hazy light.

Shivering, they sensed that a sacred, almighty power eased the anxiety deep inside their hearts. Immediately, they were more peaceful and tranquil. They prayed at the same time.

“You dominate everything. You master the boundary between life and death. You’re the king of the kings, the god above the gods.”

Silver rays shot out of the “nuclear bomb” and fell upon Archbishop Augustus’ head. Then, everything was back to normal.

Augustus slowly stood up. He said both solemnly and excitedly, “The Lord has just changed part of the prayer and decreed that we should hold a grand session at the last weekend in every month so that His glory would illuminate the dwarfs beside us, and they could be saved from the fake gods!”

“Your kingdom comes, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” the other dwarfs echoed at the same time.

Having stayed in Rentato for a long time, they were inevitably influenced by the Saint Truth, whose prayer had been partly melted into their “Mechanical Apocalypse”.

After the liturgy was over, after Augustus led the central priests to preach for the other dwarfs, a cluster of blackness suddenly appeared on the top of the silver nuclear bomb, and a bird that carried the strong stink of death perched on it, examining the residues in the silver nuclear bomb carefully.

“A grand gathering every month, and a change of prayer. Hehe, you

can't wait any longer, can you?" The bird made strange sounds.

After the weird sounds, the bird vanished quietly. At this moment, the most evil air somehow erupted out of nowhere and hovered inside the room.

.....

"Recent changes of the Church of Steam..." Quite a few pieces of intelligence about that had been gathered in Benedict III's hands.

Expressionlessly, he tapped the table and thought to himself, *It seems that his progress is faster than I expected. He's already doing the final preparations. If it weren't for the mistake in the North Church, he might've really tricked me, and he would've already become a demigod by the time I discovered it.*

Leaning back against the back of the chair, Benedict III asked himself, "Where are you going to hide for your advancement, Lucien?"

Thinking about that, he suddenly snorted. "Wherever you hide, I will find you. Other people might be unable to do so, but as long as you are walking on the path of the power of faith, you will never hide from me!"

He took out a delicate figurine from a drawer. It was a bald dwarf, with weird and creepy patterns all over his head.

Viken closed his eyes and touched the figurine of the bald dwarf with his right hand. Spots of godly brightness that were barely visible for other people appeared and surrounded it like little angels.

The erratic, intangible brightness of godhood surfaced on the figurine of the bald dwarf too. Countless illusionary lines extended over from the void.

"The power of faith is gathered in... in..." Viken suddenly opened his eyes and blurted out, "...in the projection of the Dark Mountain Range inside the World of Souls!"

Chapter 791: Saboteurs

Chapter 791: Saboteurs

The sky that was always pale and lifeless, the black, white, and gray environment that was dead and quiet, and the rotten undead creatures that wandered everywhere, were the greatest features of the World of Souls.

In this place, the Dark Mountain Range that stretched from the southwest to the northeast was somehow broken into three sections. Some mountains were on top of other mountains, overlapping each other as if they were doing acrobatics. The dark and gray trees also existed, but they were utterly lifeless and looked like coffins.

The famous space gaps of the Dark Mountain Range had also been reflected, but they were joined in the sky and stabbed into the ground, serving as the “end of the world” on the other side of the mountains. As Silver Moon Alterna twisted the space, the World of Souls was affected too.

At a certain corner of the chaotic reflection of the Dark Mountain Range, where enormous trees enshrouded everything, a complicated and strange magic circle had appeared at some point. The silver magic patterns that extended toward the underground world and the void were mixed with some symbols of divine powers. Together, they constituted the magic circle that was flowing nonstop like a ball.

Watching those magic patterns and divine symbols wander in the void in a strange but rhythmic way, Lucien felt that his head was as dizzy as when he read legendary classes on “Astrology and Elements”, except that he calmed himself down and stabilized his soul easily this time.

Fernando, whose red magic robe dangled on the ground, stared at the magic circle with lightning bouncing in his eyes. He said in a low voice, “Is it really fine?”

He did not specify what he was asking, but his focus and the

current environment undoubtedly suggested that he was asking about the magic circle for demigod advancement.

“There shouldn’t be a problem.” Lucien did not give an affirmative reply, because nobody was 100% confident about such things. “If things do not go as we planned, we will immediately abort the operation and return to Allyn.”

Fernando lowered his eyes and covered the silver arcs of light in it. “We’ve spent a long time in the World of Souls preparing for the magic circle. Now that all the preparations are done, let’s begin.”

“Alright.” Lucien nodded his head and cleaned his black bow-tie. He then took out the silver Moon Timer, which was full of mechanical beauty. After the cover of the watch was opened, the environment was immediately covered in the mysterious and unpredictable changes of time.

After checking the time, Lucien closed the Moon Timer, but this time, instead of putting the Moon Timer in the pocket of his waistcoat, he simply stuffed it into his black double-breasted suit with the silver chain.

Then, Lucien took off the black double-breasted suit that the Robe of Grand Arcanists turned into, the Congus Ring, the Holm Crown Ring, the Snow Medal, the monocle, and all the other magic items, before he slowly walked to the center of the magic circle “nakedly”.

After helping Lucien to gather those magic items, Fernando looked at him in a white shirt and a yellow waistcoat and said in a low voice, “Watch out.”

Lucien nodded. He took out many magic gems and filled them into the empty holes in the magic circle as the power source for the initialization. Then, he would make use of the power of the World of Souls, as well as the power generated by the power of faith and the power of feelings.

The brilliant or quiet magic gems were embedded into the holes of the magic circle, making the spherical circle that was mysterious and amazing in the first place even more colorful and dreamy.

Lucien extended his right hand and pressed the rising stone platform at the center. He then opened his mouth and let out the remote voices that carried the air of the passage of time.

Then, the stone platform burst out the brightest brilliant that flowed to every location in the magic circle along the lines. The magic gems were lit one after another, and all the mysterious symbols arose.

The whole magic circle was brighter and brighter. At this moment, from the magic patterns that stretched into the ground, illusionary and dark water slowly flowed out.

The hundreds of square kilometers around were immediately contaminated by the aura of arrogance, greed, hate, jealousy, pain, lust, and hypocrisy, exactly like the most desperate and negative feelings in everybody's heart. Even though their bodies were still alive, their souls had already sunk into hell!

Right when the negative feelings that represented the primeval devils emerged, sacred and hollow songs and hymns echoed in midair, and the pure light that looked like little angels poured along the symbols of divine power that extended into the void. They were so solemn and lofty that the sky within hundreds of kilometers was like paradise on earth!

If one were to listen more carefully, they would hear that what was being praised was the great God of Steam, the dominator who mastered the boundaries of life and death and Atlantis on earth.

Those spots of light gradually turned into an image in midair. It was a bald dwarf; a bald dwarf with admirable air and creepy patterns on his head.

Bolts of lightning were launched from the head of this "Yuri" like mental waves and crawled into the void.

In Dumute, Heit, the God of Craftsmen, suddenly froze into a statue. He was covered in the brightness of godhood that other people could not see, and the statue of a bald Yuri surfaced inside his body!

He had thought that he could steal the power of faith from Lucien, the “God of Steam”, after learning the secrets of Yuri’s statue, but at the critical moment, he became an energy source and provided the power of faith of a whole country of dwarfs!

Inside the World of Souls, the “paradise” in the sky and the “hell” on the ground surged toward each other the moment they appeared as if they were sworn enemies. As a result, half of the spherical magic circle was covered in holy and overwhelming white, and the other turned into the corrupt, devastating blackness.

Entangling each other, they rushed toward Lucien who was at the center!

Lucien was about to be penetrated by the power of faith and the power of feelings when a hollow and distant hymn suddenly came over from the sky. A sacred, magnificent pillar of light hit the center of the spherical magic circle where Lucien was at!

In the high sky, a seven-floored mountain of light almost appeared concretely, and the faces of the angels were clearly visible. Standing before the projection of Mountain Paradise was a gray-haired old man, who looked gentle and peaceful and was holding a platinum staff.

Pope Viken, the strongest demigod, had come in person to stop Lucien from breaking into the demigod level!

Also, he launched “Light of Judgment” neither sooner nor later, but exactly at the moment when the magic circle was activated but had not taken effect. It was to stop Lucien and let him suffer the recoil of the magic circle as well as the powers of faith and feelings. He wouldn’t be able to become a demigod in such a way in the next decade!

Other people may be unable to find you, but having become a demigod with the power of faith, I can naturally capture the flow and gathering of the power of faith. I’ve been waiting for days exactly for this moment!

Fernando sensed something and looked at the sky the moment the hymn echoed. He chanted the sophisticated spell, “Abrupt Magic

Reverse!”

A mirror full of patterns appeared on the top of the spherical magic circle. Inside the mirror, it seemed to be a channel leading to another world.

Pa!

The Light of Judgment hit the mirror of Abrupt Magic Reverse and shattered it into pieces!

The best spell for individual defense could only resist one of the demigods’ attacks!

Viken raised his platinum staff, and all the angels in Mountain Paradise flapped their wings and let out spots of light, condensing another “Light of Judgment” almost without any delay. It was his unique ability. He could launch another round of attack directly with the power of faith without exhausting himself or taking any rest.

Fernando had no time to perform any magic. His left eye suddenly turned black, with silver flashes of lightning striking inside. It seemed to be a world of storms.

It was “Eye of Storm”, his unique legendary item.

It was a shame that Fernando used the legendary item too slowly. Hardly had the Storm Barrier was set up when it was pierced through by the Light of Judgment directly.

The light that was judging everything in the world penetrated the Storm Barrier one layer after another and hit the spherical magic circle.

The spherical magic circle immediately shook violently. If the Light of Judgment hadn’t been mostly consumed and that it boasted certain defense abilities after utilizing the power of the World of Souls, it would’ve been broken!

However, Viken pointed his platinum staff at Lucien again!

Suddenly, a bright moon rose in the pale and dim sky, driving away the monotonous black, white, and gray as well as the lifelessness in the Dark Mountain Range.

The silver moon fell abruptly toward Viken.

Emitting cold and dreamy brilliance, and leaving a long tail of light, it seemed to be burning intensely due to the intense friction with the air, but if one were to identify more carefully, it was not a silver moon at all, but a young girl whose blond hair was tied on one side holding a longsword that was covered in black fire and slashing it toward Viken!

She stared at Viken with her crimson eyes attentively and carefully, as if he were the most delicious food on earth.

Faced with the full-strength attack from the Silver Moon, Viken had to change his direction and did not further attack Fernando who could barely put up any more resistance.

However, the fire that spread out the intense stench of sulfur was ignited on the ground. The bottomless canyon, the smelly swamp, the frosty plain, the bronze castle, and the other views of hell appeared all of a sudden.

An enormous volcano rose, and a magnificent shadow jumped out of the crater that was spewing out flames and smoke. There was vague mockery in his red eyes.

It was Maltimus, the Lord of Hell!

Viken smiled at the Silver Moon. *I already foresaw that Lucien Evans would ask for your help! This is against his conduct and the ideology of the Congress of Magic after all, and he certainly dare not do it in Allyn or ask for any other legendary sorcerers' help except for his teacher Fernando. Naturally, Rhine and you are the only people he can turn to. So, do you think I haven't been prepared for that?*

Although Maltimus was your ally before, he certainly does not wish to see Lucien Evans turning into a demigod. Therefore, he's my ally on this matter!

There are no eternal foes but only the eternal pursuit of interests. That's the motto of devils!

.....

On the top floor of the Allyn magic tower, Douglas checked his pocket watch and the weather outside of the window. Then, he stood up slowly and said with a firm voice. "Let's begin. Activate the defense of Allyn."

Next to him stood Brook and Hathaway.

Chapter 792: Nightfall

At the beginning of the new year, the weather in Holm was still gloomy and cold. It seemed to have been a long time since anyone saw the sun. In Allyn, on the other hand, vague mist spread out into a blurry world around it. In the darkness caused by the mist, stars rose in sophisticated trajectories, constructing dense and thick magic circles.

All the steam magic trains bound for Allyn were instructed to stand by, and all the sorcerers who returned from the outside world and who were about to leave the City in the Sky, after witnessing the mist, realized that the defense of Allyn had been activated and knew better to barge into it based on their common sense.

Some of the sorcerers who happened to be trapped in the mist found themselves teleported to the streets of Allyn after a while of dizziness.

“Why has the defense of Allyn been activated?”

Both the members of the Highest Council, such as Atlant and Erica, and the grand arcanists, such as Oliver and Vicente, were rather surprised and confused after they perceived the changes of the City in the Sky.

However, they had received a message that was sent out by Hathaway, who was watching over the City in the Sky, as well as Douglas and Brook. It stated that for a certain important and urgent reason, the defense of Allyn would be temporarily activated for forty minutes at most. Then, everything would be back to normal, and they would report the reason and receive the investigation of the Highest Council.

The members of the Highest Council were not infuriated by that, because according to the regulations of the Congress of Magic, in case of emergencies that could not be reported to the other experts in time, the grand arcanist who was watching over the City in the Sky could take expedencies after being approved by the president

or the vice president. It was obvious that neither Douglas nor Brook objected to it.

What they were confused about was actually the urgency of the matter, which did not even give Hathaway enough time to inform them. Such a thing never happened before. After all, the legendary sorcerers all had their own demiplanes that were connected to the Allyn magic tower. It was very convenient to reach out to them.

Concerns and speculations brewed in their heart. Suddenly, they saw a run rising in the mist and illuminating everything around!

Under the sun, continuous and highly-rising mountains, exuberant forests, clear lakes that were as peaceful as mirrors, and meadows that looked like carpets appeared inside the mist in turns, as if the whole City in the Sky had been teleported into a different world.

“Linsorde?”

“The Land of Truth?”

“The World in Mirror?”

The different references that flashed in the mind of the experts had the same meaning. It was the demiplane of Douglas, the Emperor of Arcana and the president of the Congress of Magic!

Had it been manifested in the main material world?

It was not entirely unachievable. With the assistance of magic circles, Oliver and the other grand arcanists were all capable of that. However, it was pointless. Same as the alternate dimensions, demiplanes were rejected by the main material world. Even though it was manifested in this place, it would be no different from arriving through projection or borrowing the power of the demiplane. It was a complete waste of time and materials.

Before they figured out what was going on, astonishing changes happened in the Land of Truth again!

The blue sky where the sun was shining suddenly turned dark, and the sun became smaller and smaller, until it was only slightly

brighter than common stars.

A boundless cosmos arrived. Stars, planets, asteroids, comets, and everything else functioned according to the motion law of celestial bodies connected into systems and nebulae. Some of the places did not have the slightest light, as if even the rays had been entirely absorbed.

“The celestial bodies motion system... Is this part of Mr. President’s cognitive world?”

Because of the blockage of the defense of Allyn, Oliver could only see the appearance. He made a conclusion based on that.

“The demiplane and the cognitive world are combining in such a way. Maybe...” Vicente considered possibilities without any cases that he could refer to. He had a vague guess.

After the unexpected incident, the few legendary sorcerers who were not far away from each other had already talked through their demiplanes and exchanged their opinions.

Such an unusual phenomenon had never happened before, and so, it was particularly thrilling. Considering that Lucien Evans discovered the sun a few months ago, how could those legendary not have any speculation?

At this moment, the real sky suddenly turned dark. The citizens of Rentato immediately had the feeling that the noon sky had turned into the late-night sky.

“The sky in my place has turned dark, too...” In the capital of the Duchy of Calais, Erica stared at the sky that was as dark as ink and spoke with a shivering voice of disbelief.

“What? The sky in Cocus is darkened too?” Oliver repeated, finding it hard to believe.

They had personally experienced and witnessed many unusual phenomena caused by the half-solidification and solidification of cognitive worlds. It was not unusual that the advancement into the peak of legendary could affect a country, but such a massive

darkening was too unbelievable.

Very soon, they received feedback from the local branches of the Congress of Magic.

The sky in Brianne was darkened!

The sky in the Solar Islands, the Pearl Islands, and the ocean around was darkened!

The sky in the north coastline and the neighboring area was also darkened!

In the meantime, in the Holy Heilz Empire, the Schachran Empire, the Duchy of Orvarit, the Dark Mountain Range, the Boundless Ocean, and every other place, regardless of whether it was day or night, the sky had been reduced into pitch darkness, as if the sunlight had been blocked and absorbed by something!

In the Holy City, Melmax was obviously stunned for a moment. At first, he thought that a certain saint reached the peak of legendary, but he denied the idea very soon. With his capabilities at the peak of legendary and his control over the defense of the Holy City, it was impossible for him to have neglected the godly power that was supposed to arrive overwhelmingly. On the contrary, he sensed no anomalies at all in the range under his watch!

“What happened?” Melmax looked at the sky, hoping to find some clues. In the meantime, he activated the divine power circle of the Holy City in case of unexpected attacks. Whether or not Benedict III gave any order, he had to do that. It was the responsibility of the captain of Temple Knights who was stationed in Lance.

In the dark and sunless sky, stars that felt both real and illusionary shined brilliantly, with indescribable mysteriousness.

They were moving in the sky slowly, as they had always been and would always be.

“This... This is the starry sky of destiny!” Although Melmax was a knight, he had fought sorcerers for many years and had a deep understanding of them. So, he realized what the starry sky was

without any trouble.

Suddenly, his pupils constricted violently, and one of the illusionary stars in the sky glowed, eclipsing all the other stars of destiny. Then, the star launched down a brilliant but flashing light, which landed on the ground somewhere far away like a laser.

Melmax turned around abruptly and appeared out of Benedict III's residence in a blink. He had a terrible feeling!

"What? His Holiness is praying and not to be disturbed?" Faced with the red robes that guarded Benedict III's residence, even Melmax, an expert who had the manners of a knight, could barely control himself.

Did the pope not notice the astonishing phenomenon outside?

The red robes shook their heads. "His Holiness did not give any instruction on that."

"Then, go in and report it immediately. I believe you've seen the changes in the sky," Melmax urged while he searched for the source of the anomaly with divine power items.

"The City in the Sky? Douglas is trying to break into the demigod level?" Melmax clutched his longsword tightly.

At this moment, the trajectory of destiny that had been covered by Douglas and Brook was already clear. After all, everybody had seen the unusual phenomenon!

"Lord Melmax, I have used the way of contact for emergencies, but His Holiness did not give any reply..." The red robe looked rather scared.

Melmax calmed down. "I'll go to Allyn now. Perhaps His Holiness has gone there to stop them when the sky was darkened without having the time to inform us."

He could only comfort himself in such a way. How could the pope be out of reach at such a critical moment? He couldn't have been in an alternate dimension, could he?

Inside the Dark Mountain Range...

“What? The Primordial Ancestor cannot be found?” Dracula glared at Danisos with his crimson eyes. They were shocked by the unusual phenomenon even though they were in the Dark Mountain Range.

The wounds on Danisos’ back hadn’t even recovered yet. He replied, not in a good mood, “We can’t find her or reach out to her. The Observer is gone too.”

The legendary experts like the Demogorgon of Eyes and the Elder Mind all felt a headache coming on. They knew that their president wasn’t too reliable, and they had been prepared that all of them had to search for her through hard work, but they did not know that it would happen so quickly...

The Elder Mind thought for a moment and said, “Perhaps, she’s already gone to Allyn. The president is close to the Congress of Magic. Douglas must’ve asked for her protection before he made the attempt.”

“That should be the case... We ought to take a look at it too. Perhaps we can learn a thing or two from the process.” Ogre, the Umbral King, was both frustrated and delighted.

Similar things were happening in the depths of the Boundless Ocean and the ninth level of hell. As for the abyss, the Demogorgon of Darkness could not allow the Will of Abyss to arrive at the main material world without preparations.

...

One of the stars of destiny left a narrow, long, and brilliant path behind, which fell at the center of the cognitive world and the Land of Truth precisely.

“Mr. President is trying to break into the demigod level...”

Oliver and the other legendary sorcerers realized what was going on. They looked at the process in both shock and wariness.

...

Inside the World of Souls, in the projection of the Dark Mountain Range...

After the Lord of Hell leaped out of the crater, the burning fire of hell on the ground surged toward the spherical magic circle. From the projection of hell, huge devils arrived in legions that looked like tides.

Caught unprepared, Fernando only had the time to stop Maltimus with the Storm Barrier, but he was unable to block the other devils and the fire of hell.

At this moment, a cold wind that felt like it came from the darkest and filthiest place blew out of the power of the World of Souls that was absorbed by the spherical magic circle. Immediately, the fire of hell died out, and the devils attacked their companions or brutalized themselves crazily...

The strong sense of familiarity stunned Viken who was fighting the Silver Moon in the sky. Had he come, too?

It was exactly Monster Viken, his other self!

Although he still couldn't leave the Realm of Gates, he could briefly spread out his power in the World of Souls through special arrangements!

Chapter 793: Rise and Decline

In the dirty and cold wind, the shape of a human was soon outlined. He had exactly the same look as Benedict III and was wearing a similar robe, except that the color of his clothes was pure black, and the crown above his head did not carry any sacredness but looked more like the extreme of corruption and pain.

He was holding a black staff in his hands that was mixed with the air of the God of Truth, and the reversed projection of the seven-floored Mountain Paradise floated behind his back. It looked like a pyramid with the tip pointed downward.

In the strange projection of Mountain Paradise, the creatures and the angels were not playing music, praising the god, or sharing joy. Instead, every floor displayed a different view.

On the topmost and the most spacious floor, holy spirits and angels were smiling at each other, but they were intentionally stretching out their arms and legs, blocking each other and even ambushing their companions from the back.

On the next floor, the angels and holy spirits seemed to be full of desires. With intense lust on their delicate faces, they were having sex everywhere.

On every floor, jealousy, arrogance, hate, and other different negative feelings corrupted the angels and holy spirits. Even the floor at the bottom was no exception. The infinite light looked like endless pain and desperation!

Monster Viken intentionally revealed his appearance, attire, and power in the exact opposite way that Pope Viken was showing, so that those who were smart enough could figure out a way to deal with Pope Viken!

Maltimus' real body seemed to be always enshrouded in the invisible mist. Only the two sharp devilish horns and the crimson eyes could be clearly seen.

In the meantime, his eyes which carried vague mockery did not change at all, as if he had foreseen the arrival of Monster Viken. Also, he intentionally slowed down the destruction of the spherical magic circle and surrounded Monster Viken with the projection of hell. The smoking volcano and the soul-freezing plain were more and more real.

As long as they were not in the Realm of Gates, Maltimus wouldn't be scared of "Monster Viken" at all. His features of primeval devils could not affect the Lord of Devils!

For Maltimus, it was a rarely-seen opportunity to fight with "Monster Viken", which could help him find Pope Viken's weakness or learn lessons to deal with him. So, it wouldn't matter even if he was more or less slow. As far as he knew, the last step for Viken and Thanos to become a demigod took more than ten minutes. There wouldn't be a problem as long as he disrupted the process before Lucien Evans' complete success.

Hehe. Viken, who was fighting the Silver Moon in the sky, sensed Maltimus' "sluggishness". He did not have any good feelings about the big devil who was cunning and treacherous.

The black fire on the sword of the Silver Moon seemed to be burning everything. Every time it hit the Blessed Realm, the fire would be stuck to it and melt a few cracks on it, resulting in the collapse of the Blessed Realm.

"Light of Paradise!" Viken raised his platinum staff.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

In the projection of Mountain Paradise behind Viken's back, a seraph blew the horn in the paradise.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

The solemn and distant horn echoed in the sky, and the project of Mountain Paradise emitted a clear and brilliant light. Angels flew out of their illusionary incarnations and congregated into an overwhelming, sacred tide of holy light, which ran toward all

directions and turned the whole sky into an ivory ocean.

In the ocean of holy light, the bright moon floated, and the brilliant light cut the waves.

Taking advantage of the brief window, Viken's body suddenly became illusionary, as if it were about to spread out. Influenced by that, the body that Monster Viken turned into had the same dispersion.

Then, the projection of Mountain Paradise in the sky and the corrupt Mountain Paradise on the ground became magnets that attracted and approached each other. However, the spherical magic circle with which Lucien was trying to break into the demigod level was in between!

Squeak, squeak.

Due to the attraction of the two demigods that were of the same origin but opposite to each other, the spherical magic circle operated in much greater difficulties. The reaction that could've taken one minute would take two minutes now!

Pope Viken looked down at Monster Viken indifferently and coldly. *I am the actual Viken, and you are just a "vine" that is attached to me. Do you think I cannot suppress you even though I cannot get rid of you?*

After confirming that Lucien would hide in the World of Souls to complete the ritual, I already foresaw that you wouldn't let go of the opportunity!

Now, it would take Lucien at least half an hour to complete the ritual. How long can your power that's leaking from the Realm of Gates last?

As long as Monster Viken's power was suppressed, the ground would be more and more like hell, and the extraction of the power of the World of Souls would be weaker and weaker. In no more than half an hour, the spherical magic circle would collapse on its own due to the lack of energy!

Maltimus intentionally held the generation of hell and continued

attacking Monster Viken.

Monster Viken had to spare half of his attention to resist the influence of Pope Viken. Had it not been for the help of Fernando, it would've been barely possible for him to persist. Pope Viken in the sky, on the other hand, had plenty of uncanny divine powers and spells. While suppressing Monster Viken through their weird connection, he was not entirely on the losing side against the Silver Moon. He truly deserved to be the strongest demigod. Besides, he hadn't performed God's Arrival yet!

After he became a demigod through the power of faith, Viken no longer had a cognitive world, but he could indirectly cast spells through the power of his demiplane. After all, the magic models engraved in his soul were never gone.

After more than ten minutes, even though the Lord of Hell was not trying his best, Monster Viken was on the verge of collapse because he had to overcome the boundary of the Realm of Gates.

Suddenly, his gloomy and skinny face put on a mocking smile. "You were too careless. I've stalled you for such a long time!"

The voice echoed, breaking the solidification of the black, white, and gray.

Right when Maltimus had a bad feeling, Monster Viken suddenly crumbled into the air that was as dark as ink and descended. In the meantime, the Lord of Storm threw out a strange alchemical item that melted with the black air into a chaotic, upside-down gate.

On the gate, red and bloodthirsty eyes were popping out crazily, before the gate was opened after a boom. A monster that was randomly jumbled by countless pieces of meat, limbs, and eyes flew out.

It was the Will of Abyss!

Since it was the World of Souls, it was not as difficult for the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss to arrive. So, with part of his power as the sacrificial offering and the preparations that the Congress of

Magic made in advance, Monster Viken summoned the Will of Abyss!

Since the Will of Abyss was an uncontrollable factor, they should be the one directing his arrival!

Monster Viken was merely a distraction and a trap to tempt Maltimus!

The mocking smile on the corners of Maltimus' lips was frozen. Although the lunatic hadn't fully recovered from his wounds, he was too insane to care about his own life. It was barely possible to beat him back in ten minutes!

Was he going to watch Lucien Evans reach the demigod level without being able to do anything?

Hardly had the Will of Abyss arrived when he smelled the most disgusting and annoying air of devils, so he simply shot out the disruptive rays toward Maltimus.

In the sky, Viken was angry. If Maltimus hadn't been too selfish, Monster Viken would've been finished more than ten minutes ago. Even though he summoned the Will of Abyss, the additional time should've been enough to crush the subsequent attacks.

Instead of considering the things on the Lord of Hell's side, he focused his attention on dealing with the Silver Moon and launching "divine punishments" on the spherical magic circle down below. It was a pity that Maltimus was stalled by the Will of Abyss and Fernando was spared. They resolved his attacks again and again.

On the other hand, since Monster Viken returned to the Realm of Gates, the pope did not need to devote part of his attention to affect him. So, he gradually suppressed the Silver Moon, but it was impossible for him to beat Alterna back any time soon.

Time went by. Seeing that the spherical magic circle down below was more and more condensed, as if a terrifying blast was being prepared inside, Pope Viken narrowed his eyes.

Then, he raised his platinum staff, and he seemed to be in a different world. Holy, superior, overwhelming, and hollow air spread out.

“You are one, and everyone.”

“You are the moment, and forever.”

“You are the creator, and master.”

The pious prayers and praises echoed from the mouths of the holy spirits and the angels. In the projection of Mountain Paradise behind Pope Viken’s back, layers of holy light were gathered into the infinite light on the seventh floor.

It was God’s Arrival!

Pope Viken had directly used God’s Arrival!

Viken put on a gentle and kind smile again. *It’s both your wisdom and your weakness in letting the monster summon the Will of Abyss with part of his power. Now that his essence and power declined, it means that I am capable of performing “God’s Arrival” again, as long as my physical body pays a minor price!*

His hair became white, and he waved his hands, bursting out all of the brilliance.

Chapter 794: Proud

Chapter 794: Proud

The overwhelming, superior light on the seventh floor of Mountain Paradise broke out, and the purest and most flawless light swept out, transforming the sky into a glowing ocean and removing all sounds, colors, and feelings.

The extraordinarily bright moon surged toward the spherical magic circle down below overwhelmingly. At this moment, space and time did not seem to exist anymore, and the light of God's Arrival was simply flowing unstoppably. The spherical circle and Lucien in it seemed to have been frozen in the decayed page of a history book.

Even Fernando, who was outside of the range of God's Arrival, could only sense the things within one meter from him. Beyond it, there was nothing but the magnificent and divine brilliance in his eyes and the field of his spiritual power.

Right then, a silver moon rose in the vast holy light that purged everything in the world, dreamy and freezing.

After the silver moon appeared, God's Arrival seemed to have been delayed briefly, and the spherical magic circle, as well as Lucien inside, were enlivened.

Pope Viken was not surprised at Alterna's blockage. She was not the target of this "God's Arrival", which had been focused on the spherical magic circle, and she was only slightly affected. So, it was only reasonable that she helped to delay it briefly so that Lucien Evans would have an opportunity to escape.

It was a pity that she was a little bit late. Lucien Evans had reached the most critical moment to break into the demigod level, and he was inseparable from the spherical magic circle. He was destined to be killed by God's Arrival.

Pope Viken was quite sorry about that too. He had never intended to kill Lucien Evans so easily. The road ahead was too perilous, and

such an excellent explorer was inestimably valuable. If only the guy had been not so ambitious and adept at planning that he had to kill him.

The silver moon quickly dimmed, and even though the light of God's Arrival was slightly delayed, it was about to reach above the spherical magic circle.

Suddenly, Lucien, who had been refreshed inside the spherical magic circle, raised his head and looked at the holy light thoughtfully.

Then, his lips curled into a gentle smile.

This is... Pope Viken could perceive what was inside the spherical magic circle through God's Arrival. He was rather stunned that Lucien was neither frustrated nor desperate but was smiling at him as if he was bidding farewell. He suddenly had an ominous feeling.

Boom!

Lucien's body that was in the white shirt and yellow waistcoat exploded entirely, like a watermelon that was thrown to the ground from ten thousand meters high!

Flesh and blood splashed out, and the light of God's Arrival completely drowned the place!

Inside a secret chamber in Babel in the Atomic Universe...

A weirdly-shaped silver amulet, which looked like part of twisted intestines, released bright but not dazzling light in a long box that was fully embedded with gems. The feeling of exuberance and vitality immediately filled the room.

Natasha, who was guarding the place with her longsword in her hands, became solemn after seeing that. She grasped the Sword of Truth tightly, ready to chop any attack that followed!

The energy of the magic gems flowed into the silver amulet, and the other materials in the long box were dismembered and melted. The silver amulet lost its beautiful appearance and was reduced to a

messy, bloody cluster that dissected and grew.

The internal organs grew out, the bones grew out, the muscles grew out, and so did the skin and the hair.

Natasha's solemnness was gone. She looked at the scene with a smile, not disgusted at all but scratching her chin with great interest. "So, the body that hasn't taken shape is so hideous..."

Lucien's naked body was finally full. His skin was clean, his muscles were tough and smooth, and he looked like a statue.

Then, he slowly opened his eyes. The glittering holy light seemed to be still lingering in his deep and dark eyes.

"God's Arrival?" Natasha observed him up and down like a naughty boy and asked curiously.

The residues in Lucien's eyes were gone, and he nodded softly. "Thankfully, my appendix was waiting for me at home. Otherwise, I couldn't have avoided God's Arrival even though the Silver Moon delayed it."

Since the very beginning, Lucien had planned to dodge Pope Viken's critical strike with self-explosion!

He was proud that he had an appendix!

"What does it feel to confront 'God's Arrival'? How terrible was it?" Natasha asked quickly. She was always interested and curious about battles.

Lucien's lips twitched. "Do you want me to talk to you naked?"

"It's not like you've never talked to me naked," Natasha said, not fearing that her eyes would be blinded by the nudity at all. Of course, she also tossed the clothes that she prepared in advance to Lucien.

Then, she asked intentionally, "Where are your gears? They were not destroyed in the self-explosion or God's Arrival, were they?"

She made fun of him because she knew very well that her husband was a miser in nature, and that his heart would've been broken if the few legendary items were lost.

Lucien put on his clothes and chuckled. "They're kept by my teacher, of course!"

.....

In the ocean of holy light, the spherical magic circle disassembled and melted quickly.

Fernando, who had been intentionally keeping away from God's Arrival, simply cast a spell and opened a space-time gate, jumping toward his demiplane. The Will of Abyss, who was right next to the spherical magic circle, had no time to dodge it. Due to the influence of God's Arrival, his eyes were broken and his arms were falling. Black and chaotic water was springing from the ground under his cries.

"He was not melted with the demigod circle?" Pope Viken was not surprised that Lucien blew himself up at all. As a legendary sorcerer in the past, he knew very well about the escape and resurrection methods of sorcerers. What was beyond his expectation was that Lucien Evans could've detonated himself so easily at the last moment without being affected by the spherical magic circle at all.

Had he avoided the blast and replaced his body with an alchemical item before that?

That would have suggested that he was not trying to break into the demigod level at all. Then, why was he doing all this?

Thinking about that, Pope Viken squinted. Not bothering the Will of Abyss and the Lord of Hell down below, he simply tore apart the space and returned to the corresponding location in the main material world.

The Lord of Hell realized the anomaly too. He burst out all his strength and drove the Will of Abyss, who hadn't recovered from his wounds and was hit by God's Arrival again, back into the abyss.

Then, he also tore apart the space and returned.

The dim silver moon was long gone, and the sky of the World of Souls was gray again. However, a silver-haired man in a red shirt and a black coat slowly paced out of the woods and chuckled. "I didn't even have a chance to make an entrance. How sad."

.....

Outside of Allyn, the white mist grew dense, covering the "natural views" that were no different from the real landscape as well as the cognitive world that looked like a vast cosmos. The only thing that could be clearly seen was the brilliant starlight from the sky.

It took Melmax twenty minutes to reach Allyn before he saw the thickening mist. Taking a deep breath, he raised his longsword and charged toward the City in the Sky. Douglas had to be stopped from reaching the demigod level!

Although he knew very well that it was barely possible for him to break the defense of Allyn without the help of a demigod, he had no choice except to charge at such a moment as a knight!

The longsword of the Holy Avenger passed the sky and hit the ivory mist. On the other side, Belkovsky, the brawny pontiff of the North Church, had flown over too. He was surrounded by holy light, with a pair of glorious wings that were purely made of godhood on his back. It was obvious that he had performed "God's Grace".

However, the moment he showed up, a green arrow that carried the air of the natural cycle traveled through space and reached before him, forcing him to drop the plan of attacking Allyn and focus his attention on dealing with this "Nature's Punishment".

In the high sky, the elven queen, who was wearing a refreshing, green dress, had decided to help her ally.

Dracula, the Night Dominator, and Danisos, the Dragon of Time and Luminosity, were both hiding in the dark without taking any action because they were in a dilemma. On one hand, they were happy to see Douglas' advancement, but on the other hand, they were fearful

about the future. Also, since the few legends of the Congress of Magic hadn't taken action, they had to consider carefully whether or not they had advantages.

At this moment, the "starry sky" suddenly constricted toward Allyn, and all the stars fell like rain, presenting a brilliant and dreamy view.

Then, the dark night fell again. Not the slightest light could be perceived. Even the senses of top legends could only cover a dozen square kilometers around them.

In the pitch darkness, Melmax suddenly had a terrible feeling and retreated toward the Holy City without thinking. Belkovsky did the same.

In the meantime, Viken, who was still in the depths of the Dark Mountain Range with his pope robe and his holy crown, was staring at the inky sky gloomily.

At such a moment, how could he not realize what had happened?

Right when he was about to raise the platinum staff, on the horizon of the dark sky, a scorching sun suddenly leaped out, dyeing half of the sky vermillion!

.....

"You stalled them for twenty minutes and wasted a 'God's Arrival'?" Natasha became rather confident after hearing Lucien's unhurried introduction. "It seems that Viken and the Lord of Hell will miss the end of the show."

Lucien chuckled. "The corresponding location after they leave the World of Souls is the Dark Mountain Range. It will take a lot of time for them to reach Allyn from there, unless they have deployed teleportation circles in advance. Otherwise, even a demigod will have to spend at least twenty minutes on the way. Also, Allyn is not as easy to locate as the artificial planets in the high sky. It will be barely possible for Viken to lock onto the City in the Sky from somewhere far away."

“Hehe. Are you not scared that Viken and the Lord of Hell did set up teleportation circles in advance?” Natasha intentionally argued with him.

Lucien put on his waistcoat and smiled. “Why do you think Mr. Rhine never showed up?”

“Well...” Natasha thought of something else and suddenly asked, “If the Congress were faced with such a situation, what would you do?”

“Orbit strikes from the artificial planets, of course.” Lucien warmed his body. “However, the current orbit attacks cannot break through the defense of Allyn.”

Chapter 795: Outburst

On the top floor of the Allyn magic tower, the spot where Douglas was standing had turned into a swirl that was spinning and absorbing everything around. This was because even though the rays had been absorbed by it, it was deep and dark with the world-destroying horror.

Brook and Hathaway controlled the defense of Allyn, ready to resist the attacks of demigods, while they observed the changes carefully and gathered experience for themselves, hoping to figure out the mechanism of the process.

They saw that the materials in the magic circle that were prepared in advance floated crazily and got absorbed by the swirl almost at the same time. They saw that the Land of Truth, which had been manifested in the main material world, and Douglas' cognitive world were broken under the enormous attraction force and pulled into the vortex overwhelmingly. They saw that the lines and patterns of the magic circle were removed from the ground and gathered into a ball, melting into the darkness...

The unimaginable changes made Brook rather anxious, particularly when Allyn, Hathaway, and himself seemed about to be absorbed when the attraction force came to the strongest point. He almost performed a legendary magic spell to resist it.

At this moment, Hathaway stopped before him and shook her head slightly, hinting him to wait longer.

The starry sky of destiny collapsed, and stars fell like a heavy rain into the dangerous and dark swirl.

The swirl came to an abrupt halt and stopped moving. Even the time and space around seemed frozen.

Brook and Hathaway both sensed the overwhelming energy inside the swirl and the strange feeling that was still developing. However, everything was blocked within the swirl, and they wondered if it could break out.

The atmosphere was more and more depressing, and all the clocks in Allyn were ticking more slowly. Having noticed the anomaly, Heidi and the other arcanists looked at the dark sky where there was absolutely no light both anxiously and hopefully, hoping that dawn would soon arrive.

Right at this moment, the center of the swirl began to fluctuate more and more intensely. Then, it began to spin again, in exactly the opposite way like just now!

From the center of the swirl, scorching glows were spewed out fiercely. In the end, a “sun” that was as red as fire burst out and rose to the sky!

The brilliance of the sun sprayed out and drove the deep darkness away, proclaiming the return of light.

Stars burst out from the swirl and flew toward the sky, occupying their own location and not eclipsed by the sun at all. The starry sky of destiny was established again!

Melmax tore apart the air and flew back toward the Holy City, not bothering Allyn on his back at all.

Suddenly, the darkness before his eyes was illuminated, and the clouds around turned gold. He also felt that terrifying heat that seemed to be melting his armor and his body from his back.

Not good! Melmax secretly exclaimed and tried his best to accelerate and get out of the range of the influence. At this moment, the illusion of the all-melting heat was suddenly gone, and his back was cool again.

However, Melmax did not feel lucky at all, because he had a much stronger sense of danger than a moment ago!

Without any hesitation, he used the power of the Holy Avenger and burned his blood power, even though he might be joining the arms of the Lord a hundred years earlier than he should have as a consequence.

Melmax was consumed by sunlight, as if he were the incarnation of

the Sun God. The light escaped quickly.

At this moment, Brook and Hathaway saw the darkness that also gave the feeling of absorbing everything jumping out of the swirl. It did not affect the environment but ascended into the sky directly.

A reflection of the black hole? Both of them understood something.

Hardly had Melmax ignited his blood power when he sensed an unprecedented enormous attraction force from his back. A gigantic hand seemed to have grabbed his waistband and was dragging him back brutally.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

His armor was broken into countless tiny pieces and thrown backward in a metal storm.

Thanks to her decision just now, he finally got rid of the most dangerous attraction force.

It was not until this moment that Melmax realized he was only one meter away from the place where he attacked Allyn a moment ago. The people who were observing in secret seemed astounded by his humiliation.

Having no time to observe it more carefully, Melmax turned into a beam of sunlight that shot toward the Holy City.

...

Deep inside the Dark Mountain Range...

Pope Viken saw the rising sun and the stars jumping into the sky. He quietly put down the platinum staff that he just raised. It was too late...

His face was gloomy, but he did not burst into a fury. Instead, he calmed down and observed the whole process.

After the stars, the dark swirl flew into the sky, the brilliant constellations in different images flew into the sky, the nebulae that

looked like a series of glorious gems flew into the sky, and so did the galaxies that looked like glittering long rivers...

“This is a simulation of the real cosmos...” Viken realized something.

...

The elven queen, Dracula, Danisos, and the other experts, as well as the ordinary people in Rentato, Cocus, Antiffler, and other places, all stared at the real cosmos that had arrived on earth, feeling that everything was a magnificent and astoundingly beautiful dream.

Suddenly, the spreading cosmos collapsed toward the top floor in the Allyn magic tower.

Brook and Hathaway watched the starry sky gather at the center of the magic circle that had disappeared into Douglas, except that he had an additional casualness and everlasting transcendence compared to the “Emperor of Arcana” before. He seemed to be the high and mighty cosmos that surrounded the planet now.

He had turned into a demigod!

“Congratulations, Mr. President.” Hathaway, who hardly ever smiled, beamed with joy.

In complicated feelings, Brook said, his eyes slightly wet, “Congratulations on becoming a demigod, Master.”

Although he had always been an old-school gentleman, he couldn’t hold back his real feelings.

Douglas meant to say something, but he only shook his head with a smile in the end. He patted Brook’s shoulder and said to them, “One day, you will explore this level on your way, because this is a path of demigods for all sorcerers.”

“Master, what spiritual and physical changes do you experience after turning into a demigod?” Brook meant to offer more congratulations, but it still eventually became an arcana question. That was what he was used to.

Pondering for a moment, Douglas said, “My body is melted into my soul, and my soul has been transformed into a different state, like the unification of the duality of particles and waves. However, if I want to appear in reality, I have to collapse in one of the directions. That is to say, you are not seeing the complete me right now, but only one of my possibilities. If I want to carry out all my strength as a demigod, I will not be able to sustain for long. Otherwise, I will either be unable to influence the world or be forced by the world to collapse...

“That’s perhaps the real reason why the natural-born demigods like the Silver Moon are restrained and why their performances are only steady in their own alternate dimensions or through other ways... Viken’s way to become a demigod is based on the power of faith, so the flaw is avoided. However, it’s another proof that their demigod states have a lot of insidious problems and does not have the properties of real demigods.”

Considering Douglas’ description, Hathaway pursued further, “Then, what’s the real state of demigods?”

“It’s a state that cannot be seen, heard, smelled, or touched. In such a state, you cannot sense anything even if I am standing right before me. You can even pass me, and the magic you perform will not affect me. It’s like we’re in two overlapping but independent worlds. That’s probably the reason why the Silver Moon is never discovered.” Douglas was happy to share his findings. “Therefore, such a status is flawed and incomplete. Once we figure out those problems, we should be able to touch the secrets of real gods.”

Then, he paused and smiled. “Let’s hold that thought and cancel the blockage of Allyn first. I need to thank Lucien for his help, without which I couldn’t have succeeded. As for the friends who are watching the show, you’ll invite them to visit and see if they have the courage to come.”

...

In and out of Allyn, when they saw that the cosmos collapsed and the air of transcendence spread out, all the extraordinary people with remarkable visions understood that Douglas had successfully

reached the demigod level. He had become the third demigod after Thanos and Viken in the Magic Empire who made the advancement step by step on their own!

The three of them had one thing in common, which was that they were all sorcerers!

However, Douglas was the only one who used a standard approach that did not require the dissemination of faith and could be repeated by any sorcerer after studies!

“A demigod... The Congress of Magic has a demigod now. Yet another unknown field of arcana has been conquered.” In ecstasy, Oliver was ready to go to the Allyn magic tower. He was in such a high mood that he almost couldn’t wait to write a long poem.

Atlant and the other sorcerers stared at Allyn in a daze, unable to say anything for a long time.

The elven queen, Dracula, Danisos, and the other legends also looked at the City in the Sky with complicated feelings.

In the Dark Mountain Range, Pope Viken suddenly said in a self-mocking smile, “The path of sorcerers...”

“Are you going to ask the Bird of Death to provide the approach?” The Lord of Hell’s laughter came from the other side.

Viken did not reply, because both he and Maltimus were clear that “Bird of Death” died the moment Douglas successfully became a demigod. He would never show up again. Even if Viken revealed to the Congress of Magic who he was, it would only be considered slander.

Now that Douglas had succeeded, which ambitious legendary sorcerer would choose the path that relied on primeval devils and faith?

“For the past ten years, Lucien Evans has overshadowed Douglas and made us neglect him. All our attention was fixed on Lucien Evans at the critical moment,” Viken said with a coarse voice. It was the sequela caused by God’s Arrival.

He had been completely tricked by Lucien this time!

Suddenly, he remembered a detail. “Lucien Evans began the preparation of materials three years ago. He exchanged knowledge with the North Church a long time ago too. He couldn’t have started to plan for this at that time, because even the sun hadn’t been discovered yet back then. Who could tell when Douglas could break into the demigod level?

“... So, he was probably preparing the materials for real. He helped Douglas to distract our attention partly to deceive us too. He’s misleading us into thinking that this is a trap and he will not walk on this path...” Viken slightly raised his head and stared at the everlasting black fog above the Dark Mountain Range. “Is he really so confident about the observer effect?”

Chapter 796: Congratulation and Proposal

Chapter 796: Congratulation and Proposal

Around the City in the Sky, the bright sun dyed the white clouds gold. The pitch darkness a moment ago was gone. It seemed that the world had turned from an abyss back into a normal one.

Deep in the clouds, the magnificent-looking Rudolf II stared at Allyn in silence for a long time, before he heaved a sigh and disappeared from the sky.

Although he had regained the strength of the peak of legendary, he would need more accumulation and great opportunities in order to become a demigod. It wouldn't be easy and natural at all. Also, the way to become a demigod that he modified was one based on faith after all. Even though he had recovered the memories of Thanos during his first advancement, the odds of success were still not high, and he could die in the process with one moment of carelessness.

Therefore, after witnessing Douglas successfully become a demigod based on the sorcerers' traditional "cognitive world", the Sun King, who used to be the brilliant consul of the Magic Empire, felt that he couldn't keep up with the wheel of history any longer and that he had been drowned in the river of time, obsolete and outdated. Faced with the new "sun" in the new era, he found it so dazzling that he only wanted to run away.

But eventually, the proud and confident side in his heart still won him over again.

"We're invited to visit?" Ogre, the Umbral King, saw that the defense of Allyn was canceled, and the loud and magnificent voice of the alchemical life echoed in the high sky.

Dracula floated in the sky and looked down at the clean, modern Allyn, before he snorted, "Do you want to go?"

"Hehe." Ogre chuckled in embarrassment and simply opened the gate to his own demiplane. Douglas had become a demigod, and he

was also an authentic sorcerer. How could Ogre have the courage to visit his place? If anything happened, he wouldn't be able to escape at all!

After Ogre left, Dracula, Danisos, Belkovsky, and the other experts all returned. Although the City in the Sky was like a vulnerable and alluring lamb that had been skinned now that the defense had been canceled, it was a place no less dangerous than the Holy City in their eyes.

The elven queen thought for a moment and lowered the altitude, landing on the Allyn magic tower.

.....

The moment the defense of the City in the Sky was canceled, space-time waves spread out from the 33rd and the 34th floors of the Allyn magic tower. All the members of the Highest Council who were in the main material world and who were not mired in relics had come in a hurry, partly to send their congratulations and partly to learn the mysteries of the demigod level as soon as possible.

By the time Lucien and Natasha, who were also curious about the demigod state, arrived, more than half of the Highest Council had been gathered in the conference room.

Douglas, who was receiving congratulations from Oliver, Hellen, and Vicente, stood up immediately after Lucien walked in and greeted him with a smile.

"Arcana Above..." Before Lucien offered his congratulations, Douglas had approached him and given him a warm gentleman hug.

"Without your help, it couldn't have been as easy for me to reach the demigod level, if I could even find the path to the demigod level at all." Douglas patted Lucien's shoulder and loosened his arms, expressing his gratitude sincerely.

Lucien smiled rather shyly. "I only offered the dessert; what filled the belly was the main course before it."

“Huh?” Douglas knew well what Lucien was trying to say, but Hathaway was rather confused about the metaphor. She had never been good at literature.

Lucien explained with a smile, “Mr. President’s studies on the celestial bodies’ motion system and gravity are like the main course, and my discovery of the sun is like the dessert. You cannot neglect the main course just because you feel full after eating the dessert in dinner. As a matter of fact, the main course is the most important reason to stop your hunger.”

Hathaway frowned indifferently, as if she were confused why it was expressed so subtly when it could’ve been expressed straightforwardly.

“Lucien, it’s not good to be too modest. Your arcana studies in the past decade are the most brilliant and important part of the history of magic.” Douglas was in a lot of mixed feelings.

“My modesty is not the issue at hand right now. I think the most important thing right now is to satisfy our curiosity. I believe that everybody cannot wait to hear the mysteries of demigods from you now, Mr. President.” Lucien directed the topic back to track.

Fernando, who had arrived as quickly as possible, returned Lucien’s equipment to him and said loudly, “You can express your gratitude in private. All I am interested in is the specialness of the demigod state, the things that we need to pay attention to during the advancement, and the corresponding arcana mechanisms.”

Douglas clapped his hands with a smile. “Before I answer your questions, I have to ask one thing. Where are our guests?”

“None except Aglaea dares to visit Allyn,” Hathaway replied coldly.

“Then, let Aglaea attend our meeting in case she chooses a wrong path in the future.” As he spoke, Douglas became solemn and said to the members of the Highest Council who were present, “I hope that you won’t choose the wrong path either.

“In the past, the road ahead of us is covered in a mist, and it’s

understandable that we made mistakes during our exploration. However, the mist is now cleared, and a straight path is lying right before us. There's no reason to walk in any other direction. The Congress of Magic will not tolerate such deviated sorcerers."

The atmosphere was slightly frozen, but none of the Highest Council showed any emotional change.

"After watching you successfully become a demigod through the cognitive world and the demiplane, I don't think any sorcerer will make an irrational choice," Oliver replied with a smile. Vicente, Hellen, Atlant, and the other legendary sorcerers expressed their attitude too.

After Aglaea came in, Douglas began to answer everybody's questions about demigod. It was basically the same as what he described to Brook and Hellen.

"... Up until so far, demigod does not have a corresponding arcana mechanism, and there is no place for demigod in the arcana system either. That's something we need to work on in the future, like how we studied the nature of magic," Douglas concluded in the end.

Lucien listened attentively. When Douglas mentioned that he had to "collapse" in order to appear in the main material world, he scratched his chin, deep in thought.

"Do legendary knights have to go through such status transformation too?" Natasha asked. She had been particularly persistent and passionate about that.

Douglas nodded his head. "All the demigods should be in a similar state. So, changing with the aim toward such a state should be the main theme for every growing legendary knight. I think you should associate it with training and fighting."

The first legendary knight was born under the "direction" and "experiment" of sorcerers. So, Douglas, who was from the Magic Empire, had a lot of understanding of the subject.

Including the elven queen, all the experts present had asked the

things they wanted to know. They were still digesting the new knowledge, and nobody asked any more questions.

Seeing that, Douglas stood up and said, "Is this all? Then, I'll have to explore myself now."

Chewing on Douglas' descriptions just now, Aglaea suddenly realized with mixed feelings that the Congress of Magic was the most powerful force on par with the South Church right now. With one demigod and four top legends, it was even stronger than the South Church to some extent!

Of course, considering that it was easy for Viken to carry out his full strength in the main material world, and Viken could perform "God's Arrival" with "Mountain Paradise", the two forces were still equal.

Right when Douglas was about to "run", Fernando suddenly opened his mouth. "I remember that you devised the delayed choice experiment and the quantum eraser experiment before, except that they could not be conducted due to the high requirements. What about now? Can you accomplish them?"

Most sorcerers looked at Fernando in shock. The two experiments were likely to shake the current arcana system. If the result turned out to be bad, everybody's worldview and outlook would be completely subverted, and they had to seriously consider Lucien's observer theory.

Do we have to be so fast? Give us more time to be mentally prepared!

Douglas' gentle smile was gone. He said in hesitation, "The requirements are indeed met now, but I can only know whether or not the experiments can be conducted after I confirm it. I'll tell you the result later."

Fernando said solemnly, "If an arcanist is too scared of a certain result to run an experiment, he doesn't deserve to be called an arcanist. Exploring the unknown and the truth is the fundamental reason why I chose the path of arcana. I will not betray that. So, I would like to know the results of the two experiments, and whether

or not they reveal the truth of the world.”

“As a matter of fact, it is not a serious problem. The microscopic domain is a new field with many debatable issues. Nobody has constructed their cognitive world based on that. So, even if the two experiments disrupt our understanding, it will only shake our worldview and outlook but will not blow up our heads. Our cognitive world won’t be broken and solidified either.” Pondering for a moment, Oliver agreed with the proposal. His eyes behind his gold-edged glasses were full of the earnestness for exploration.

Hellen was not distracted at this moment. She said calmly, “The shake of understanding of the world will also cause the arcanists to feel frustrated. Their cognitive worlds won’t be steady, and their strength will stagnate as a result.”

She did not offer any example, but there were a handful of members of the Highest Council who could not advance into the legendary level because their worldviews had been disrupted by the achievements in the microworld.

“However, even if my strength might stagnate, I still would like to know what the result is,” Hellen added and looked at Douglas firmly.

For arcanists, the desire for knowledge and exploration was their specialty. If they knew that the answer was up ahead but could not reach for it, they would rather be killed. As for whether or not the answer was acceptable, it would be a different matter.

Douglas looked around and saw that everybody had similar countenances on their faces. So, he sighed half in relief and half in concern, “At the very least, I have to get the experiment devices prepared first.”

“In that case, let’s live stream the experiment,” Lucien suddenly interjected, making everybody look at him in shock.

Chapter 797: Audience

“Have you lost your mind?” Vicente, in a bag of bones, looked at Lucien in shock. His low voice was full of surprise, and a fire was jumping fiercely in his eye sockets.

Blood and brains would not be spilled this time, and no skulls would explode, but what benefits could there be if most arcanists stagnated because of their collapsed worldviews? Wasn't it too perverted?

Although the other members of the Highest Council did not say anything, their eyes and their faces suggested that they thought the same as the Lord of the Undead. It was too insane. Live streaming the experiments that even terrified them to all the arcanists? *You are really the Fallen Morning Star, aren't you?*

Maintaining a gentleman's smile, Lucien said, “A long stagnation does not mean no hope for advancement. As long as they view and explore the world based on experiments and mathematics, they will be able to reshape their worldviews and find their own paths sooner or later. There won't be too many insidious problems.

“If they do not have the courage to face such experiments that do not threaten their lives, how will they explore the fields where common sense makes no sense? If we do not educate them on the mysteries of the microscopic domain with experiments before the opinions about the microworld are built into the components of their cognitive worlds, are we going to offer them the results after they transform such opinions into parts of their cognitive worlds during their advancements subconsciously? By then, however subtle we are and however the experiment results agree with the common sense of most people, some people would have lost their heads, and their cognitive worlds might be broken and solidified.”

Douglas rather agreed with Lucien's words, but he was still not concerned. “Isn't a live stream too hasty? We should confirm the experiences first before we consider in what way we should inform the other arcanists.”

“This is another lesson for them. In the past, they were almost protected by us, and they do not understand the ‘cruelty’ of arcana studies. Since there is no life-threatening danger this time, just let them face the blast. With such an experience, when they are faced with other revolutionary theories in the future, they will be able to treat such theories more objectively, and the danger of brain explosion will be minimized.” Lucien retained his gentle smile, but Natasha and the other people who were familiar with him somehow sensed his bad humor in it.

“It sounds reasonable...” Hathaway and Hellen nodded and agreed with Lucien, but they somehow felt that something was not right.

Lucien went on. “On the other hand, I believe other forces will be tempted to watch the live stream too. The experiments this time are simple, clear, and consist of the truth of the world. It will be a major shock for them too. So, let them feel the torrent of arcana again.”

“If Viken perishes after seeing the experiment result, the two experiments you devised will be the most classic experiments in history.” Oliver had a very creative mind as a playwright. He was full of passion for creation when he pictured the scene that he described.

Up until so far, the most well-accepted classic arcana and magic experiment was the double-slit experiment with electrons that Lucien conducted. Its design was simple and clear, and although it was difficult to create the experiment device, it was not too complicated. However, the result of the experiment was utterly unbelievable.

Douglas couldn’t help but put on a smile too. “Most arcanists have grown under the strikes of your repetitive disruptive theories. They’ll be far more resistant to the two experiments than those who watch them for the first time. Perhaps somebody will be really overwhelmed and start to question their lives and themselves, unable to make any further advancement in the future.”

By you, he was not just referring to Lucien but all the grand arcanists and part of the legendary sorcerers present.

In his usual meanness, Fernando said, “That’s because the arcanists who cannot stand the strikes would have either been killed or eliminated.”

Douglas’ smile was gone. He said very solemnly, “I’m very curious about the two experiments myself. My very first thought after I became a demigod was that I could find out their results, which must contain the fundamental secrets of our world. I don’t know if you felt it just now, but the demigod state I described matches the duality of waves and particles very well. Particles and waves are unified on a higher level, but only one side of them can be observed by us. Therefore, to explore the mysteries of quanta is to explore the mysteries of demigod.”

“Then, let’s live stream it.” Brook leaned against the back of his chair and closed his eyes. He seemed to be looking forward to the results of the two experiments too.

After the quantum field theory that described the electromagnetic force was established, his broken and solidified cognitive world had already started to revive. As long as the problem of infinity was resolved, he would be fully recovered, and he would be able to find his own path to the demigod level.

“Then, let’s live stream it.” Douglas nodded his head.

.....

Half a month later, the students of the third generic school, who had just returned from the new year holiday of 830, were suddenly notified that the morning classes were canceled. They were asked to gather in the square where a stream screen had been established to watch an experiment live stream.

“An experiment live stream? What experiment?” After living together for more than two years, Ali had grown familiar with his classmates.

Charlot, the class monitor that he asked, shrugged, implying that he did not know either. “Perhaps, the satellite TV channel invited a certain senior-rank arcanist to perform live experiments, and the

school is organizing us to watch it so that we can learn the standard experiment procedures and understand the significance of arcana experiments...”

Talking so much so eloquently even though he does not know anything... He truly deserves to be our monitor. Ali was secretly impressed. He was both curious and confused about the live stream. For an ordinary person who hadn't even become a magic apprentice yet, he did not think that he would have a second chance to watch the experiment of a senior-rank arcanist again in his life.

Thanks to the development of arcana, thanks to the arcana planets that Mr. President and Mr. Evans invented, thanks to the rapid development of electromagnetism messaging, and thanks to Ms. Heidi for her unforgettable contributions to the creation of stream screens... Otherwise, he wouldn't even have one chance to watch it, much less “again”.

Arcana Above, that's the charm of arcana and magic, and these are the changes that they have brought. Ali drew a cross out of habit and expressed his gratitude.

In Allyn, Rentato, Cocus, and every city that had a branch of the Congress of Magic, the sorcerers who had spare time all watched the stream screens in confusion, wondering what arcana experiment it could be.

Inside the Atom Institution, the smaller-sized stream screen that Heidi made in person was rippling and waiting for the signal.

“What experiment can it be?” Annick had always been interested in arcana.

Heidi sniffed. “I have a bad feeling. If we see our teacher in the live stream later, we should blow up the screen as soon as possible, or else it will be our heads that would be blown up.”

Everybody burst into laughter, knowing that Heidi was merely expressing her speculation and uneasiness in an exaggerated way.

At this moment, the noises of electric currents echoed, and the

screen became clear. A room full of experiment devices, as well as a kind old man in a tailcoat and a handsome and gentle young man, was displayed.

“It’s really our teacher!” Heidi clenched her fists, but she did not blow up the stream screen as she said before. Instead, she focused her attention on the picture, waiting for the experiment to begin.

The experiment must be very important, or their teacher wouldn’t have chosen to stream it at all.

The instinct of the arcanists’ exploration of the world made her overcome her fear and look forward to the experiment. Around her, Annick, Sprint, Katrina, and her other friends were the same.

“Mr. President?”

“Mr. Evans?”

Exclamations burst out in the Allyn magic tower, in the Tower, in the headquarters of the Will of Elements, and in every place that could watch the live stream. *It was a live stream of Mr. President and Mr. Evans’ experiment?*

Their hearts were immediately palpitating in curiosity and expectation as well as fear and panic. Mr. President was alright, but Mr. Evans’ “remarkable” accomplishments chilled and horrified them to the bones. For example, one of the most famous lines in a play that described arcanists was exactly “Is my head still intact?”.

It was needless to mention his nicknames such as “Headcrusher” and “Brain Eater”.

“Mr... Mr. President...”

“Mr. Atom Controller...”

“The Fallen Morning Star...”

In the squares and schools, the ordinary people saw Douglas and Lucien, who intentionally refrained their vibes, and these ordinary people only recognized their identities through the subtitle.

“An experiment conducted by grand arcanists in person?” Ali’s eyes were almost popping out. It was already beyond his wildest imagination. Not just in the Magic Empire, but even in the Congress of Magic where the hierarchy was not too rigorous, the senior-rank sorcerers barely had a chance to watch the experiments of the Excellencies if they were not the students of the grand arcanists.

In places like Holm, “grand arcanist” was almost a synonym to “god”.

COMMENT

What were the experiments that the two grand arcanists were about to stream?

.....

“What? Douglas and Lucien Evans are about to stream arcana experiments?” In the Holy City, Pope Viken, who had just finished the daily treatment for Melmax, received the report from a red robe.

The red robe said in a panic, “Yes, but I don’t know what the experiments are. I was worried that I would be swallowed by the holy light, so...”

“As long as you are pious and determined, you won’t be swallowed by the holy light whatever you are faced with,” Viken said solemnly. Then, he performed divine power and received the signal.

In Antiffler, Rudolf II began to watch the show too.

Chapter 798: The Quantum Eraser Experiment

Chapter 798: The Quantum Eraser Experiment

On the top floor of the Allyn magic tower, in the studio that had temporarily been arranged into a laboratory, other than Douglas and Lucien, who was working as his assistant this time, all the members of the Highest Council who could come were gathered. Samantha, Louise, and the other personnel of the Sky Television Channel were also waiting attentively and uneasily.

Although they were not clear about the experiment that was to be publicly streamed, they had guessed a thing or two seeing that the big shots of the Highest Council were both wary and tempted, and that “Brain Eater” Lucien Evans was personally involved in the experiment. Was it a decisive and disruptive experiment in the microscopic domain? Was it one of the thought experiments that the Excellencies proposed earlier?

Faced with the camera, Douglas tried to make himself look less grave. He said kindly and peacefully, “Everyone, I believe that you’ve already known that I became a demigod.”

In the generic schools and the noble school, Ali, Longman, Jane, and all the other students nodded in excitement, as if they were communicating with the Emperor of Arcana face to face. The unusual phenomenon that day was too eye-catching and glorious. Nobody could’ve missed it!

In the Holy City, Viken thought to himself, *Is he using the experiment as an excuse to officially announce his advancement into the demigod level, in order to increase the morale and confidence of the supporters of the Congress of Magic?*

He did not think that any experiment was a threat to himself. After all, he did not have a cognitive world anymore, and the heart of faith was completely under his control and would not be shaken. Therefore, he received the signals without worries and drew a wall

in his library to display the image.

After learning the way to steal the power of faith and gather godhood from Viken, the Grand Cardinals had a deeper understanding of the “God of Truth” too. They believed that nothing could shake their heart of faith easily. Therefore, they were also watching the stream in various ways, hoping to figure out the Congress of Magic’s purpose as soon as possible so that they could take countermeasures.

The red robes, on the other hand, were mostly in a dilemma. They were curious about what the experiment was and why it was streamed, but they were too scared to watch it directly. They could still see their partners who were swallowed by the holy light and turned into torches or fireworks!

“The celestial bodies’ motion system... Advancing because of the sun... Perhaps you are the real ‘Sun King’...” After hearing Douglas’ announcement, Rudolf II looked at the screen in self-mockery. “I should focus on the path of the ‘God of Truth’.”

His talk to himself seemed to be a full stop for his identity as a sorcerer in the past.

On the stream screen, Douglas said with a smile, “It’s indeed important to have become a demigod, but for me, the most delightful thing is that I am now able to explore the realms that I couldn’t with the capabilities of a demigod. For example, I would like to know if there’s another planet that has intelligent lives in this boundless universe. Another example, the two thought experiments that Evans, I, and other arcanists devised can be accomplished now.”

Ali was so captivated that he really felt the heart of exploration that was full of passion about the unknown and the faith in arcana that did not change because of one’s strength.

Now that a demigod talked so calmly and casually, he had an even deeper understanding of the charm and the vision of grand arcanists!

As for the other arcanists, knights, and ordinary people who admired the demigod, they also somehow felt that the universe was too vast for any demigod under Douglas' casual narration.

"Two thought experiments?" Viken knocked on the table, speculating which two thought experiments they might have been. It was not because he was not smart and keen enough, but because the grand arcanists like Lucien had proposed far too many thought experiments.

Douglas pointed at Lucien who was next to him. "The stream experiment this time will be completed by Evans and me together so that you will truly see the wonder of the microscopic domain. Honestly speaking, I do not know what the results will be like either. We will face any possible situation together with all of you."

"The microscopic domain?"

"The microscopic domain!"

The demigods like Viken, Rudolf II, and the Lord of Hell all became solemn. After Lucien proposed the quantum superposition state and the notions like dispersion and collapse, they realized that it had a lot of similarities to their own existence and dedicated all their attention to the microscopic domain. It was also the reason why they neglected Douglas previously.

They looked at the screen carefully and confirmed whether or not the experiments were affected by other factors through various methods. They vaguely guessed what the thought experiments would be.

"Firstly, Evans will demonstrate the double-slit experiment with electrons." Douglas slightly backed off and gave the stage to Lucien.

Lucien took off his top hat and put it on the shelf, as casual as if he were at home. Such an attitude gradually calmed the scared and anxious arcanists.

Then, Lucien began to repeat the double-slit experiment with electrons that he did a few years ago.

When the electrons passed through the two slits and formed the classic interferometric fringes on the screen behind, both the ordinary people like Ali, Longman, and Jane, as well as the arcanists like Heidi and Annick, exclaimed in amazement. Although they had known the result through personal experiments or newspapers, they were still shocked that the electron, which had a mass, momentum, and trajectory, could behave as pure waves.

After Lucien installed an alarm next to the slits, confirming exactly which slit the electrons passed through, the interferometric fringes on the screen were gone, and the electrons behaved as pure particles.

“Well...” Even though they had read the record about the double-slit experiment from Arcana Voice and newspapers, ordinary people like Ali, Longman, and Jane never had the opportunity to witness the experiment in person. The experiment was so simple and easy to understand, but the result was too unbelievable. So, they all shook their heads in confusion and disbelief, unconvinced that the interferometric fringes were gone just because they observed which slit the electrons passed through!

Was the electron more marvelous than magic?

Inside the Atom Institution, Heidi, Katrina and the other arcanists watched their teacher conduct the experiment solemnly. What was most scary about the experiment was not the phenomenon but how to explain it!

Annick grabbed a cup nervously, trying to calm him down by drinking water. Sprint, on the other hand, held his hands tightly and stuck them to the experiment table before him, not revealing his feelings. They had both guessed which two thought experiments would be done next!

What would the result be like?

After interpreting and demonstrating the double-slit experiment, Lucien said with a smile, “Next, we are going to transform the experiment to minimize the interferences while keeping the mechanism the same.”

Then, Lucien deployed a new experiment. Through a demonstration, he proved that it was equal to the double-slit experiment just now.

“They’re indeed equal. There’s no problem at all...” Fernando nodded.

The demigods like Viken and Rudolf II did not have a profound understanding of arcana, but as demigods, it was fairly easy for them to decide whether or not the two experiments were equal.

“Next, we will conduct the quantum eraser experiment, which is a variant of the experiment just now. Just now, you must’ve seen that when the two ‘alarms’ next to the slits recorded the electrons as they passed through the slits and sent out alarms, the interferometric fringes were gone, and the particle properties were manifested.

“Now, we will only make the alarms record but not let them send out any alarms, and they will erase the records immediately after they record the information. What will we see then? Will the interferometric fringes be gone?”

Lucien lucidly explained the mechanism of the experiment instead of the real experiment process.

“Of course, the interferometric fringes will be gone, and the particle properties will be revealed. It’s essentially the same as the previous experiment. The only difference is that we cannot know which slit the electrons used to pass through the alarms now, but can our knowledge affect the experiment result at all?” Having studied the basics of arcana for years, Longman had a few guesses about the experiment, which seemed rather “simple”.

The ordinary students like Ali and Jane and most magic apprentices and arcanists thought the same. The only difference between this experiment and the previous one was whether or not the “experimenter” knew the trajectory of the electrons. However, whether or not the experimenter knew it shouldn’t affect the objectivity of an actual experiment.

Annick did not put down his cup because he had been completely devoted to the experiment. Sprint, Heidi, and the others also held their breath and waited for the result, which would either suggest that the world was normal or prove that the world was so unbelievable and illusionary. Which would it be?

Would it be normal or abnormal?

Viken, Maltimus, and the other demigods were even more solemn because it also concerned their understanding of the world. Did Douglas and Lucien really not know the result?

Douglas walked to the experiment table. He demonstrated the “erosion” effect with the newly-added experiment devices. After everybody saw it clearly, he chuckled. “I’m rather curious about the result myself. Let’s begin now.”

All the people who watched the live stream held their breath and focused their eyes on the screen, waiting for the result of the experiment.

Douglas activated the experiment. At first, it was the regular procedure, and the interferometric fringes appeared. Then, the quantum eraser experiment was begun.

Would the interferometric fringes disappear, and would the particle features be displayed this time?

COMMENT

The alarms had caused such a result previously!

Time went by one second after another, but the interferometric fringes on the screen were still so clear, so beautiful, and so classic!

The ordinary people like Ali and Longman and most of the magic apprentices and arcanists could barely close their mouths, and they couldn’t have looked more hilarious. The only difference between the current experiment and the previous one was whether or not they knew the trajectory of the electrons, but how could their knowledge affect the result of the experiment?

This was too illogical!

There was nothing but quietness in the studio, except for the heavy and hasty breath.

Crack!

The cup in Annick's hands fell on the ground and broke into pieces, and water splashed everywhere. He kept murmuring to himself, "The observer effect..."

Boom!

Before he knew it, Sprint pushed down the experiment table before him.

Pope Viken seemed to be both delighted and surprised by the result. He said to himself in a low voice, "The observer effect!"

Chapter 799: The Worldview Destroyer

“The observer effect!” At the same time, in the Maple Palace in Antiffler, the previous Sun King, as well as the current Rudolf II of the empire, stood upon his throne and blinked to before the screen. His eyes were deep and solemn but also filled with delight.

At this moment, he seemed to have grasped the key to return to the demigod level!

Although the current experiment did not have double slits and the beeping alarms and that it adopted a brand-new design, through which the purpose of recording and erasing was cleverly achieved, Douglas and Lucien had demonstrated the equivalence of the two experiments a moment ago. According to Lucien, the current experiment had ruled out many unnecessary “interferences” so that the subtle “effect” would not be sabotaged. That was the reason why the experiment could only be conducted after Douglas became a demigod.

Therefore, all the intelligent lives with the slightest knowledge felt that their whole bodies were shaking. Was their observation the key to the disappearance of wave features and the appearance of particle properties?

Then, was the world still objective and actual?

Was it the observer effect that Lucien Evans proposed?

Before the experiment table, Douglas’ raised hands were obviously shaking. It was obvious that he found the result unacceptable. However, everything had been designed and conducted by him in person, without any negligence or other influences. The result was real and trustworthy.

Lucien proposed the thought experiment at the beginning exactly to prove the observer effect!

Although the reasons other than the observer effect could not be excluded just yet, all the arcanists were forced to consider the

possibility that the observer effect did exist. At the very least, until they found another theoretical explanation, they could not neglect the observer effect anymore!

Douglas stabilized his hands that seemed to be dispersing and repeated the experiment, but the transformed interferometric fringes were as clear as before.

Once, twice, thrice... After five times, Douglas raised his head and said solemnly in a low voice, "The duplicability suggests that the result of the experiment is legitimate. After today, all the arcanists can apply to repeat the experiment with those devices."

The studio was in dead silence. Samantha, Louise, and some members of the Highest Council were still in confusion, disbelief, and resistance. Brook, Fernando, Hathaway, Hellen, Oliver, Vicente, and the other legendary sorcerers were deep in thought. After the great shock, they began to consider alternative explanations other than the observer effect.

Inside the Atom Institution, Annick shook his head and paced back and forth, not bothering that he was walking on pieces of glass. His mouth opened and closed, as if he wanted to propose another reason. Sprint, on the other hand, was stunned. There was no telling what he was thinking.

"The observer effect... Is there really an observer effect?" Heidi murmured.

The experiment was designed to confirm the observer effect, and the result undoubtedly showed that it was working.

Inside the generic school, Ali looked at his classmates and asked both them and himself, "It's impossible. If our senses are the reason for everything, will our world still be objective and actual? This does not agree with arcana at all..."

The comparison of the two experiments had manifested a horrifying conclusion.

"At the very least, it's our own observation, not gods, that caused it.

Our fate is still in our hands,” Charlot, the monitor, replied subconsciously.

“Well... Well...” The students next to them were so overwhelmed that they felt the arcana they learned had been entirely overturned. What was right?

On the stream screen, Douglas no longer looked as grave as before. Gently and solemnly, he said, “This is the end of the quantum eraser experiment. In the next, we will run the second and the last experiment, which is Lucien’s experiment of deferred choice. We are going to transform the classic double-slit experiment again to better highlight the result.”

He replaced the double-slit experiment with another experiment and demonstrated the equivalence.

“The previous double-slit experiment let us know that, if we choose the wave features and design an experiment accordingly, we will eventually see the diffraction patterns, but if we want to see the particle properties and add alarms, it will be the pure overlapping spots of light on the screen.

“In such cases, our choice and the corresponding arrangement lead to different results.”

Douglas was cautious enough to not speak of the observer effect but said “choices” and “corresponding arrangement”.

The arcanists who watched the live stream nodded. Whatever the theoretical explanation was, Mr. President had just described the objective facts of the experiment. There couldn’t be anything wrong about that.

Douglas went on. “What if we delay the choice? In the previous experiments, the electrons had obviously passed two slits and two routes, thereby engaged in self-entanglement, when they behaved as waves; and when they behaved as particles, they must’ve passed only one of the slits. Then, what will happen if we make a choice after the electrons choose a route but haven’t reached the screen? Will we see the electrons coming from two routes or from one?”

Since the double-slit experiment had been transformed, Douglas used routes instead of slits to refer to the process in between.

“Whatever the choice is, the route of the electrons has been fixed before the choice, and it cannot change...” The ordinary people like Ali had recovered from the shock of the quantum eraser experiment just now. They began to speculate what might happen with their shallow knowledge of arcana.

Annick shook his head to keep himself away from other explanations of the quantum eraser experiment and focus his attention on this experiment.

The new experiment that his teacher proposed was also related to the observer effect, but Annick did not think that the result would be in favor of the observer hypothesis. After all, whether the electrons walked on two routes or on one had been fixed before the choice was made. “Observation” couldn’t change what had already happened, could it?

Pope Viken in the Holy City held back his delight and watched Douglas prepare the experiment expressionlessly.

What was the experiment trying to prove?

He did not think anything unexpected would happen after the major shock just now. The new experiment was more likely meant to prove a certain bold hypothesis wrong.

Rudolf II sat on the throne in the Maple Palace and watched the experiment in silence. He somehow had a bad feeling.

The members of the Highest Council in the studio and Samantha, Louise, and the other staff were also slightly confused. Was Lucien Evans trying to prove that the current observation could change the past? It was a thought that was even more unbelievable than reversing the time!

The past had been fixed. How could it be changed?

Douglas activated the experiment. The detector sent out a signal, suggesting that the electrons came on one route.

The experiment was repeated and repeated, proving again and again that the electrons were only coming on one route after the preliminary procedures.

Suddenly, when the electrons finished the preliminary procedures and hadn't reached the detector, Douglas quickly added a new experimental device that showed that he chose the wave properties.

At this time, the detector in the other direction and the current detector beeped at the same time nonstop.

Douglas' face was pale because he knew exactly what it meant!

It meant that, after he made a choice, the electrons, which had undoubtedly been traveling on one route, came from two directions. The past had been changed!

Their "observation" had changed the past of the electrons!

Thud, thud, thud.

Samantha stepped backward until she hit the wall. Her face was gloomy, and her eyes were widened and filled with tears. Did it mean that the strict law of causality did not work in the timeline? A cause could happen after the consequence? The present could change the past?

Crack, crack, crack.

The notebooks and quills in the hands of most members of the Highest Council fell to the ground. The coldness and shiver from the depths of their soul made them unable to say anything. It was even more unbelievable and incredible than any magic!

Even the grand arcanists like Brook and Fernando were slightly confused at this moment. How was it possible? The choices at present decided what happened in the past?

The noises of items being broken echoed in the entire Allyn nonstop, but nobody said anything. It was like a city of silence.

No arcanists wouldn't be overwhelmed by such an experiment.

They felt that the world was collapsing and everything was an illusion!

Many of them rubbed their heads so hard that they almost wanted to crumble it so that they wouldn't be as painful and desperate. Had it not been for the fact that it did not concern the components of their cognitive world, corpses, blood, and brains would've been all over the ground everywhere. Few arcanists above the middle rank could've survived it.

Even so, they had sensed the collapse of beliefs. They felt that they did not recognize this world anymore. There was nothing but grayness in their eyes.

The students who were watching the stream like Ali and Longman found it even more unacceptable. They swallowed hard, finding it hard to believe that the consequence actually decided the process. It was the opposite of their common sense and natural instincts!

Nobody could say anything as they watched Douglas repeat the experiment.

Boom!

The Maple Palace in Antiffler had such an intense explosion that the most splendid and magnificent palace was reduced into ruins. Covered in wounds, Rudolf II murmured to himself as if he had gone mad, "Determinism, law of causality... Determinism, law of causality..."

He did not calm down again until a long time later, but he knew very well that he could only count on a miracle, or "Mountain Paradise" that was under the control of Viken, in order to return to the demigod level, because his worldview had been completely destroyed.

Thanos, the most distinguished genius in the Magic Empire and the first expert in history who found the path to the demigod level, truly understood what "Worldview Destroyer" meant!

In the Holy City, Viken was equally lost and overwhelmed at first,

but then, he burst into crazy laughter. “The observer, the law of causality on the reversed timeline, and the present changing the past. I got it now! I got it now!”

Chapter 800: Notoriety

Chapter 800: Notoriety

Viken's laughter was undisguised. The two red robes that stayed out of the library looked at each other in bewilderment, wondering why His Holiness was laughing so crazily when the Congress of Magic was streaming. Had Douglas' head been broken after he became a demigod, and he publicly announced that he would surrender to the Church in the stream?

Other than that, they really could not think of a second reason why the Congress of Magic's stream made His Holiness delighted instead of angry.

Of course, they knew very well that it would never happen.

After a good laugh, Viken resumed calmness and held back his feelings. It was Douglas' experiment after all and could not be entirely trusted. What if the guy was intentionally deceiving him? He had to repeat the experiment a few times himself to confirm the result before he made any further plans.

The experiment this time was not too complicated, and the difficult parts were the delicate control and craft of devices. For Pope Viken who had profound alchemical knowledge and who had been focusing on and studying arcana, it wasn't too intricate. The greatest difference between him and the grand arcanists was not the practical abilities but the way of thinking under the arcana system. Therefore, it was impossible for him to design such an experiment, and he could only follow the research progress of Douglas and Lucien.

...

In the square, as Douglas repeated the experiment, "This is impossible!" burst out nonstop. The ordinary people who had been listening and watching the Congress' programs were more or less taught with common sense and logic. How could they not be appalled by the fact that the result decided the process? Also, it was

completely in violation of their daily experience and their natural instincts as intelligent creatures!

However, as the result of the experiment was confirmed again and again, their fear was gradually diminished. After all, magic was itself something beyond their imagination. The reason why the fallout of the law of causality did not disrupt their minds was that it had already been destroyed by magic a long time ago.

“Magic is so marvelous!” A senior gentleman announced excitedly, “It can extend your life and change the past!”

A sorcerer, who had happened to pass by and therefore watched the stream in the square by the way, looked at him “poignantly”. Could the two things even be compared?

This sorcerer’s head and eyes were swollen with blood. He felt that his understanding of the world and his life had been turned upside down. Everything had turned illusionary and did not mean anything anymore. After all, the decisions at present would change the past!

Before, all the sorcerers believed that the past was as unchangeable as the future was unpredictable. However, the past turned out to be changeable right now?

His ears were humming as if there were a rumble of thunder. He turned his head at a loss, wondering if he were in a dream.

Another old man who was wearing a soft hat also exclaimed in excitement, “Yes. Magic is so marvelous. I’m told that the senior-rank sorcerers could extend their lives by hundreds of years and remain as vigorous as when they were young!”

They focused more attention on that than they did on the dreamy experiment result where the present changed the past.

Many bards and playwrights around, after recovering from the shock, were thrilled. Such a fantastic experiment had inspired them. They couldn’t wait to create spectacular and astounding stories. For example, when a “strong observer” killed someone, all his traces in the past would be erased and replaced by other people and things.

Therefore, nobody would remember him anymore, and nobody would even know that such a person once lived in this world...

The more they thought, the more excited they became. Some of them even squatted and recorded their inspirations with their pens and paper.

It was foreseeable that the mysteriousness of the microscopic domain would feed a bunch of playwrights and bards.

Not as simple and happy as them, the students in the generic schools and the noble schools were in excruciating pain. The experiments that Mr. President and Mr. Evans conducted in person overthrew their most basic common sense and violated the most fundamental logic. They held their heads that were almost splitting apart. On one side, it was a regular world with regular knowledge, and on the other side, it was the unbelievable world revealed by the experiments just now. They fought intensely inside their brains like angels and devils.

At this moment, they experienced what pain and disruption were. For the first time in their lives, they regretted picking up so much arcana knowledge!

Why... Why did I come to watch an experiment where Mr. Evans was involved?

Why did I want to kill myself?

Ali thought in a daze. Am I real right now? Is my every thought right now changing my previous self?

“No, no, there has to be another explanation. No mathematics can describe this...” Longman tried to calm himself down, but he could not stop himself from murmuring.

While they were in pain and feeling lost, the magic apprentices and the arcanists were dead silent, as if they were not even breathing. The other people couldn't help but worry that their heads would explode at the same time.

In the studio, Douglas repeated the experiment and got the same

result, but he did not stop and simply continued mechanically without any expression on his face.

It was not until Lucien coughed that he heaved a long sigh and stopped the experiment. He spoke to all the audience solemnly, “I believe that the most fundamental stance for the arcanists is to respect experiments, phenomena, and mathematics.”

His words sounded like an announcement. Samantha, Louise, and the other arcanists who were involved in the stream could barely keep standing on their feet. They collapsed on the floor, just like how their previous knowledge, common sense, and natural instincts could no longer support their worldviews.

In Allyn, Rentato, and every place that the stream was available, the arcanists had similar reactions. The sorcerers who were good at astrology, in particular, were sobbing silently, as if they were mourning for the dying determinism and the law of causality that might have been sabotaged.

Over the past few years, determinism had reached the verge of destruction, but they were always reluctant to admit it and did not face the reality until they suffered such a powerful and disruptive blast. They were more vulnerable than ever.

Indescribable sorrow, loss, confusion, and desperation enshrouded the City in the Sky and the major branches of the Congress of Magic.

Douglas looked around at the studio. He saw that except for Brook, Fernando, and the other few legendary sorcerers who were considering questions solemnly, the other arcanists all seemed weak and overwhelmed. Thinking for a moment, he said, “The most important thing for us right now is to figure out why such a result appears. It must be noted that microscopic particles are a matter that can disperse everywhere. Maybe we can find an explanation in other ways, instead of forcing us to believe that the present can change the past.”

His words rejuvenated the shocked arcanists and gradually recovered them.

After the stream was over, Douglas sighed softly as he watched Samantha and the other arcanists leaving in sadness. “In any case, it’s high time that they pay enough attention to the problems of determinism. In the age of the grand development of arcana, there are as much glory, splendor, delight, excitement, and ecstasy, and there are sorrow, pain, and desperation. This is an epoch of smiles and tears.”

“But after today, without theoretical breakthroughs, most arcanists in the Congress will stagnate for ten years because of the instability of their cognitive world caused by the disruption of their fundamental principles.” Brook, who had the experience of being broken and solidified, walked over with mixed feelings.

Fernando stared at the experimental device but was as mean as before. “It’s better to stagnate right now than to stagnate in the future, at which time their lives would stagnate for good. Right now, we have one demigod and four top legends. It’s enough to protect them while they reshape their worldviews.”

Footsteps echoed outside. Annick, Sprint, Heidi, and Lucien’s other students reached the studio. After they watched the experiment, they could not control themselves anymore and wanted to ask their teacher as soon as possible.

Looking at that, Douglas smiled bitterly. “It was you who proposed both of the two thought experiments, Evans. So, I believe that most arcanists, magic apprentices, and ordinary people with basic arcana common sense will be terrified the moment your name is mentioned after this stream.”

“How notorious I am...” Lucien scratched his chin and smiled helplessly.

“Master, is this really contradictory to the law of causality? I don’t really think so...” Though introvert and shy, Annick had been unusually persistent about arcana questions. So, after greeting the Excellencies, he asked his teacher without any delay and expressed his opinion.

Hearing his question, Douglas, Hathaway, Oliver, and other people

moved their eyes on Lucien's face too. They were also interested in Lucien's opinion on the experiment.

Lucien seemed to have foreseen Annick's question. Without thinking, he answered, "It's possible that Mr. President's opinion is true. The electrons disperse in space and come from all routes, and only after we choose a result we want to see will they collapse on one or two routes. It's not because the present changes the past, but because the electrons haven't collapsed before the choice is made, and the routes were never decided until then."

Before the choice is made... Annick's eyes widened. "The observer effect?"

Such an explanation resolved the contradictions about the law of causality, but it also highlighted the observer effect!

Lucien's lips pursed. He smiled at Annick but did not say anything else.

Fernando and the rest of them shook their heads, still reluctant to accept the observer effect. Therefore, they all left and returned to their own homes, contemplating and trying to figure out an explanation that neither stressed the observer effect nor violated the law of causality.

Chapter 801: New Messenger

Chapter 801: New Messenger

In Babel inside the Atomic Universe...

By the time Lucien returned, Natasha was still in a daze before the minor screen. She looked ahead while turning the Sword of Truth in her hand.

“What’s up?” Lucien asked, finding it strange. Considering her arcana expertise, she shouldn’t have been shocked for such a long time, should she?

Hearing Lucien’s voice, Natasha seemed to be woken up from a dream. Her silver eyes glittering, she said, “Although the delayed choice experiment cannot conclusively prove that the law of causality can be destroyed, I am thinking whether or not the Sword of Truth is crafted based on such a mechanism. Are all the methods of resurrection nullified because the law of causality has been sabotaged?”

Lucien looked at her solemnly up and down. Despite her usual confidence and firmness, she was somewhat stunned. Could she be right?

The atmosphere was frozen for several minutes just like that. Right when Natasha couldn’t stand it any longer and was about to speak again, Lucien suddenly smiled in great delight. “You are thinking too much.”

“Really? I don’t do that very often,” Natasha said in a matter-of-fact, showing no frustration at all.

Lucien’s smile was gone. He nodded and said, “It’s a major progress to consider the arcana mechanism behind the blood power of the Sword of Truth. Only figuring out what it is exactly will you know how to walk on. Although I am still not certain, I have a vague speculation about your blood power. By the time I return from the primeval hell, perhaps I’ll be able to tell you what it is.”

“Really?” Natasha was both surprised and delighted at Lucien’s words. The knight path up ahead was an important focus of her life. The seclusion every month had made her realize that understanding her blood power was an indispensable prerequisite for her to find out her own path of a knight. Otherwise, she could only become a level-three legendary knight after several hundred years like “Heart of Time”, and she wouldn’t be able to make any further progression.

For a knight who was better at fighting and persistence, exploring and studying her blood power was not her advantage. Chances were that she would have to spend a fairly long time on that. Thankfully, she had a grand arcanist by her side, one who was famous for his studies!

After she blurted out, Natasha noticed another point. “You’re going to the primeval hell?”

She did not pursue the previous topic any further because she was certain that Lucien would not lie to her about such an important question. If he said that he had a theory, he definitely had a theory, and everything would be clear after he returned from the primeval hell.

“I have benefited a lot from the two experiments. After I construct another few spells, it will be time for you to pay a visit to the primeval hell to confirm one of my ideas. By then, everything will have an answer,” Lucien said ambiguously. “Although the Lord of Hell has steadily arrived at the main material world, his real body must still be in the depths of hell. So, I have to go alone this time. Also, the situation is rather dangerous today. It’s better to deal with the emergencies if you stay in Rentato.”

Biting her lips, Natasha nodded slowly. “Alright.”

She knew very well that, although she had the Shield of Truth and the Sword of Truth, which gave her an actual combat ability of level three of legendary, she would still be crushed when faced with a demigod. Also, she did not have as many peculiar life-saving spells as sorcerers did, and she would only be a liability if she were to follow Lucien to hell. As a top legend, he could fight or flee freely. There would be ways for him to escape even if he were faced

with a demigod.

“I’m going to develop a new legendary spell which will help us communicate across dimensions. Should there be any emergency, we would be able to reach out to each other.” Lucien tried to be prepared, but he was not really too worried. With Mr. President in Allyn, unless Viken performed God’s Arrival without caring about his own life, or all the other demigods joined their hands, there wouldn’t be anything that was worth a cross-dimension call. As a matter of fact, he was probably the one who would encounter strange things after he went to the primeval hell.

“Communicate across dimensions?” Natasha repeated those words. She had never heard of any way to communicate across dimensions except through the Portal to Alternate Realms. So, she was rather confused and curious.

Lucien nodded and smiled. “This legendary method of communication indeed supports communication across different alternate dimensions. However, it can only be used once and deliver limited information. Also, the code of the communication has to be settled in advance. Basically, when you settle a state on your side, a corresponding state will collapse on my side. Information can be delivered by combining such states, like the binary system.”

“It feels like another application of the weird features of microscopic particles...” Having been taught for a long time, Natasha made the conclusion very confidently. Then, she adjusted her mood and chuckled. “You said that you benefited a lot from the two experiments today. What have you earned exactly? The confirmation of the observer effect, or the disruption of the law of causality?”

Lucien could sense her curiosity that she had been hiding. He replied with a smile, “For me, the most important lesson is that electrons can be used to complete the two experiments under such designs and circumstances. Mr. President and I planned to use photons.”

“Is there any difference?” Natasha was confused. She understood the experiment perfectly, but the sophisticated questions where

theories were involved were too much for amateurs like her to comprehend.

“You want to know the difference? It involves quantum field theory, wave mechanics, the matrix mechanics...” Lucien intentionally proposed a bunch of theories.

“Stop, stop, stop.” Her head swelling, Natasha hurried to stop him and change the topic. “In the first experiment, the trajectory mark of electrons was erased by the design, thereby preventing the experimenter from obtaining the information. Therefore, the interferometric fringes still existed, and the observer effect was still sensible. However, it cannot prove the conclusion perfectly. If the trajectory mark is not erased, but the experimenter’s eyes, ears, and all other senses are all blocked, will the interferometric fringes still exist? Will there be any ‘observer’ under such circumstances?”

Lucien looked at Natasha in surprise. Perhaps it was exactly because she did not know very much that she could ask such creative questions.

Thinking for a moment, he chuckled in a low voice. “Who knows? Nobody can know the result, because when anybody observes it, there will be an ‘observer’, but if nobody observes it, does the result really matter? It cannot be confirmed anyway.”

“Then, let’s assume that a mysterious existence that doesn’t cause the observer effect is watching it...” Natasha made use of her imagination. “Why don’t you take a guess from the theoretical point of view?”

“My guess?” Lucien smiled and said, “My guess is that there may be interferometric fringes, and there may be not. Hahahaha.”

Natasha raised her head and looked at the ceiling, making up her mind never to discuss arcana questions with him again.

...

In June of 830, everything was being burned by the fiery weather.

In the Salvation Cathedral of Anhadur, a famous city in the

Syracuse Kingdom...

An archbishop was pacing back and forth outside the praying room, waiting for the red robes.

“Why is the praying still not finished? Another cult has been discovered in a manor nearby...” The archbishop paced and sighed while scratching his head. In the past few years, cults had been emerging incessantly. After one was destroyed, another would pop up immediately. Although he was in his prime years, his hair had all turned white as he dealt with them. “Also, the cult this time seems able to summon senior-rank evil creatures. I don’t think the people in the inquisition can take care of it.”

Thinking about the ongoing battle over there, the archbishop grew more and more anxious. He decided to summon his courage and knock on the door.

Dum, dum, dum.

The archbishop knocked on the door, but the moment he exerted his strength, the door squeaked and backed off, leaving a gap.

“It’s not closed?” The archbishop had a bad feeling. He hurried to open the door and looked in.

Then, his eyes were frozen.

Before the cross in the praying room, a broken red robe lay on the ground with strange burn marks on his body.

“Has... Has he been swallowed by the holy light?” the archbishop said at a loss.

It was not because he was particularly keen. It was because ever since Evans’ two thought experiments were spread out, dozens of red robes had been swallowed by the holy light while they were praying. As a result, everybody was terrified whenever Lucien Evans was mentioned.

...

The sky was dim and gray, and nothing could be heard at all. The World of Souls was as monotonous as ever.

His hands in the pockets of his black double-breasted suit, Lucien wandered among the undead creatures. There were raging ghouls, slow and hideous zombies, floating ghosts, mummies that were covered in bandages, but none of them detected him, because he seemed to have dispersed in space.

Just like that, Lucien passed through the plain of death quietly and reached the Temple of Spirits. The legendary specters who guarded the place failed to detect him too, and they simply allowed him to visit and press further like a tourist.

On his way, Lucien did not meet any intelligent specter. It seemed that they had smelled danger and were too scared to approach.

Lucien observed the new changes in the Temple of Spirits as he walked, only to discover nothing. It was not until he reached the Furnace of Souls and was about to enter the Realm of Gates that he sensed the legendary specters like the Lich King. However, they did not feel the necessity to attack. After all, Lucien had come twice. There wouldn't be any losses if he came a few more times. Did they really need to fight at the risk of their lives?

They had been too heavily beaten up!

Lucien came to this place for the second time when he contacted Monster Viken for cooperation.

Looking up at the Furnace of Souls and watching Lucien and Xiaofeng's overlapping faces, Lucien chuckled and walked to the entrance of the Realm of Gates.

"Why are you here again?" Monster Viken's coarse voice echoed. What he did last time made his situation much worse.

Lucien chuckled. "I'm here to tell you that I am going to pay a visit to the primeval hell."

"You've come for nothing better than that?" Monster Viken raised his voice, feeling that Lucien was the crazy one here.

Lucien took out his Moon Timer and opened the cover to check the time. “Can’t I? Well, now that you’ve known it, I’d better be on my way.”

Monster Viken was already rendered speechless.

Lucien turned around and left. He thought to himself that no changes happened after all.

After he was far away from the Temple of Spirits, from the garden near the entrance, an old man slowly walked out. Wearing a sacred crown and holding a planetarium staff, he stared at the place where Lucien disappeared. It was Pope Viken

Chapter 802: The Afterworld

Chapter 802: The Afterworld

Navathe, the third floor of hell, was known by the sorcerers of the main material world as “Burning Metropolis”.

On this floor of hell that did not seem to have an edge, there were no plains, mountains, rivers, hill, or deserts, but only a magnificent city made of iron. However, since the underground fire was burning incessantly the whole time, even iron could be scorched. As a result, most of the iron buildings were in heated redness. Every pale ghost that approached was sizzling with black smoke, as if they would be vaporized into nothingness at any point.

The suffocating smoke enshrouded the sky, and all kinds of devils wandered in the iron city. They were quite in order themselves, but they treated every soul that entered the hell and the demons that had been captured cruelly.

It was said that at the bottom of the Burning Metropolis, in the middle of the infinite fire, there was an enormous prison where different intelligent creatures were caged. The most direct proof was that when somebody walked on the burning ground, they would often hear moans and cries that came from nowhere.

A squad of little devils escorted a group of fuzzy, pale souls toward the tower at the center of the Burning Metropolis. Now and then, they waved their special whips, making the souls that had entered the hell scream in pain. The more painful the captives were, the more excited the little devils were.

“No wonder so many posthumous customs are popular, and no wonder the Saint Truth was spread so fast...” In a huge business team, Lucien, who did not change his appearance and clothes, sighed in interest and pity. It was the first time that he had entered the hell.

According to the studies of the Congress of Magic in the past, after a human died, their soul would perish on the spot if they did not have

special techniques, but in the river that flowed between the hell and the abyss, souls would pop up without their former memories and looks. It was impossible to tell their identities. Such souls would either degenerate into demons and devils in abyss and hell, or be crafted into “soul gems” that could cast special spells or abilities. Such gems were the hard currency in hell.

As for the nature of the soul and how it was generated, it was a conundrum in current arcana studies.

However, after the World of Souls was discovered, the arcanists had reasons to believe that one of the destinies of a soul was the World of Souls. If the posthumous customs could form corresponding spaces in the Realm of Gates, the souls who had strong willpower could certainly enter it too.

Perhaps because of his empathy, the idea occurred to Lucien that, after the Congress suppressed the Saint Truth in the main material world and while it explored the vast cosmos and other dimensions, it would also be necessary to get hell under control. Of course, considering the Congress’ capabilities right now and the enemies it was faced with, there would be a long time before the goal was fulfilled.

“Get the hell under the government of the Congress of Magic... That’s something that the Magic Empire dare not even think about.” Lucien floated on the street. All the stones on it were red. If one were to put an egg on the street, it would immediately be boiled. Other than devils who were born in fire, even knights could not stand such heat for a long time. That was why the souls and captives were in such pain.

The business team Lucien was with was an “Alternate Dimension Trade Group” that the Congress of Magic organized. It had come openly for business. After all, devils were not virtuous saints who did not need food, resources, and entertainment. They too needed the resources that the hell did not have to craft weapons and improve their strength, and their luxury lives had to be maintained. So, they would ask the devil followers to gather resources for them in the main material world and then exchange for such resources fairly.

Such trade certainly couldn't have been done without sorcerers who were good at collection and alchemy. On the other hand, the Congress of Magic needed the special materials of hell. Also, monopolizing such trade could help curb the devils, in case certain greedy people provided strategic resources for treasure, strength, and peace of their souls after their death.

Of course, it was also because of such trade that sorcerers were considered more evil in the past.

Two devils with dark red skins walked to them from another street. Kicking away the soul of a human, they said to the leaders of the "trade group" respectfully, "Esteemed sorcerers, the duke is waiting for your goods."

The devils dare not show any disrespect for the guests of the Iron Duke, or they were likely to become the items that the duke offered to the sorcerers as part of the trade. Every part of a devil was a material, and they could be used as servants. Under such a threat, they behaved differently when they were faced with general humans and when they faced with the trade group.

Seit, the leader of the trade group, nodded proudly and turned to look at Lucien. "Your Excellency, are you going to the Iron Tower?"

As a senior-rank sorcerer, how could he not know the famous grand arcanist Lucien "Atom Controller" Evans?

Raising his head and looking at the red tower at the center of the Burning Metropolis, Lucien smiled and said, "I'm not going. I don't think the Iron Duke wants to see me."

On the top floor of the Iron Tower, the Iron Duke, who was in utter black, looked down solemnly. A top legend who had caused the demise of many other legends was certainly not the best "guest", particularly so for himself who was only level-two legendary and who could only resist level-three legends with the Burning Metropolis.

"If you ever need us, you can contact Colin in 'Balance of Souls'." Seit did not pursue any further. It was not wise to ask about the

plan of a grand arcanist recklessly.

The Balance of Souls was the “alchemical cabin” that the Congress of Magic established in the Burning Metropolis.

Lucien nodded and soon melted into the crowd of devils and few “merchants” in the iron city.

“The Lord of Hell must’ve known that I have come to hell. Will he stop me?” Lucien knew very well that the hell was to some extent an incarnation of the Lord of Hell. No matter how he snuck in hell hiding his traces, it would’ve been barely possible to deceive Maltimus. So, he might as well come openly. “Now, I’ll go to the Silent Hell on the eighth floor first and see if I can find the special Stellar Core. It will also be an indirect test of Maltimus’ attitude. Then, I’ll go to the primeval hell below the ninth floor.”

The moment he made his plan, Lucien suddenly sensed something and looked at the other side of the street, only to see a young man walking toward the edge of the Burning Metropolis with a bag of materials and a smile of satisfaction on his face.

The only living people here were the sorcerers and the few devil followers who came for the trade. So, the young man was undoubtedly a soul, as could be seen from his floating state and his transparent body.

However, the souls in hell were either ignorant and stupid or full of hate and regrets. None of them kept their sanity. The young man’s soul, however, was sunny and brilliant, giving Lucien a feeling that he was still alive.

“I also ‘smelled’ the air of the Silent Hell. Has he come from there to the Burning Metropolis for business?” Lucien speculated.

The Burning Metropolis was the center of trade in hell. On the other floors of hell, for various reasons, only secret deals were conducted.

Realizing that the weird young man’s soul came from the Silent Hell, Lucien, whose curiosity had been triggered, tailed him and tried to figure out where he was going.

“Grandpa, Grandpa, the ‘Stone of Poltergeists’, ‘Elven Leaves’, and ‘Steel of Burning Volcano’ that you asked for have been bought.” The young man reached a remote corner in the Burning Metropolis that was barely frequented by devils.

Outside of an iron building enshrouded in a fire, a haggard old man was standing there holding his stick. Before him were bottles of the “Fire Liquor” that devils liked most. He seemed to be the boss of a tavern who had come to the Burning Metropolis to shop for goods.

A human being? Lucien was slightly stunned. Was there any human being living in hell without being torn apart and eaten up by devils?

Right when Lucien was about to spread out his spiritual power and check if the old man had any magic cover, he suddenly raised his head. “Maman, why didn’t you say that you brought a guest here?”

The “young man” Maman turned back in shock and saw Lucien who did not hide his traces. “I... I don’t know him...”

“Forgive me. It’s just that I wanted to get to know your grandpa, so I followed you here,” Lucien said casually.

Maman scratched his head in confusion and shyness. “My grandpa is just an ordinary tavern tender. There’s nothing special about him. You might have mistaken him for someone else, my dear guest.”

“An ordinary tavern tender?” Lucien was amused. It would’ve been ordinary in the main material world, but this was hell.

The skinny old man stooped and sorted his liquors, before he looked at the “young man” with his cloudy eyes and said, “Maman, go buy another hundred bottles of ‘Water Soul Wine’ and deliver them to the old place.”

Maman nodded and ran off merrily.

“A very special soul...” Lucien said softly.

The old man’s eyes suddenly glittered. “What do you want?”

“Nothing. I’m just a bit curious.” Lucien smiled. “I don’t mean you any harm. If you’re from the Silent Hell, I would like to ask you about something.”

The old man eyed Lucien up and down. “Are you a sorcerer? Judging from your attire, you should be from the Congress of Magic. Has Douglas ever taught you not to enter the hell without a good reason?”

“Do you know Mr. President?” Lucien raised his eyebrows. Judging from his tone, he seemed unaware that Mr. President had advanced into the demigod level.

Chapter 803: The Town in Hell

The haggard old man sighed rather regretfully. “I know his teacher.”

“Mister, are you a legendary of the ancient Magic Empires?” Lucien was not too surprised. Even though the three ancient magic empires were destroyed, many legendary sorcerers survived. After all, they were experts who knew plenty of unusual spells. Some of them hid in the depths of the Dark Mountain Range, and some hid in alternate dimensions and other areas, like the Empress of Snow. So, it was not too strange that he ran into a legendary in hell.

Mr. President’s teacher perished in the Battle of Antiffler during the War of Dawn. Whoever knew him was obviously an expert in ancient times.

The old man was dry and skinny, like a mummy without bandages. He said with mixed feelings, “The ancient sorcerers like us cannot keep up with the age anymore. Look at Douglas. How long did it take for him to become a top legend and surpass me? What are you doing in hell?”

“I’m planning to explore the primeval relics deep in hell and search for the special Stellar Core that the former Ice Duke hid.” Lucien did not hide his attention. Now that the legendary sorcerer had been hiding in hell, it was possible that he knew a thing or two about the matter. “Right, mister. I don’t know how I should call you yet.”

Lucien remembered the records of ancient legendary sorcerers, hoping to confirm the old man’s identity.

“Hehe. I am just an old man who’s waiting to die in hell. Why do you want my name and title?” The old man touched his head, and a strand of white hair immediately fell. “The primeval relics in hell? The Stellar Core that the former Ice Duke hid? Young man, you must be a legendary sorcerer in the Congress of Magic who made the advancement recently, aren’t you? I suggest that you don’t be

too adventurous.

“I’ve been to the primeval relics twice, and twice I was almost lost and turned into phantoms that forever wandered there. More than six legends of the empire were confirmed to be dead during the exploration of the place. Those who could enter and return safely were mostly only the top legends like Thanos and Douglas. That is, when the Lord of Hell did not attack him.

“As for the Stellar Core that the former Ice Duke hid, it was something from thousands of years ago. I suspect that somebody has already taken it away. Otherwise, the current Ice Duke wouldn’t be as clueless as he is right now.”

Lucien listened to the old man and checked what he heard with the files he acquired from the president and Mr. Rhine. He felt rather odd. Generally speaking, the ancient legendary sorcerers were more or less gloomy and mysterious due to their cruel experiments and weird spells. Few of them were as kind and talkative as the old man here.

“Do you think I’m a chatterbox?” The old man smiled. “If it were in the past, I wouldn’t have wasted my time talking to you at all. You are free to die if you want to. However, after spending thirty years with her in hell, I have become soft and sympathetic. Otherwise, special souls like Maman would’ve become my experiment subjects a long time ago.”

“Thirty years? Her?” Lucien did not give a reply but asked in great interest. It would be easier to obtain intelligence if they were closer.

The old man’s face that was full of wrinkles suddenly turned gentle. “Now that you’ve come to hell, why don’t you visit my tavern, the Paradise of Souls? It’s right in the Silent Hell.”

“Alright.” Lucien nodded with a smile. He had to go to the Silent Hell after all.

The old man stopped talking, and Lucien enjoyed the burning fire and the splendid iron building in it casually.

After a long wait, Maman ran back delightedly. “Grandpa, the Water Soul Wine has been delivered to the old place. They’ll ship it to the Paradise of Souls today.”

“Let’s go home.” The old man touched Maman’s head affectionately.

Lucien followed them through the river to pass through the first few levels of hell before reaching a snowy plain.

Freezing wind was blowing on the plain, so fiercely that souls could be directly torn apart. However, there was no sound at all. Also, the ice land was spacious and covered in snow. Other souls and devils could not be seen at all. So, one could not help but feel the everlasting quietness and tranquility.

Lucien did not need to look to know that souls had been frozen in the ice below the snow. Consolidated, senseless, and unconscious, they forever slept in coldness and darkness.

The wind of peace and death hovered around Lucien and the old man, only to be ejected by uncanny forces. Maman was not frozen by the wind either.

After a long time, a town appeared up ahead. At the periphery was a wall made of ice, and inside the wall were rows of houses made of “Blood Warming Stones”, which was a local specialty of the Silent Hell that could effectively resist the soul-freezing coldness.

In the main material world, due to the rarity, a Blood Warming Stone of mediocre quality was already worth fifty Thales, but it was used to build a town in this place.

The residents of the town were floating souls, whose genders and ages varied. Their bodies were transparent and similar to Maman, they had their regular wisdom, except that they did not have a sunny and warm feeling.

“Old man, you’re finally back. I was waiting for the Fire Liquor.” A brawny man who had a mustache floated over and stared at the storage bag in Maman and the old man’s hands thirstily.

In the Silent Hell, even souls could enjoy the Fire Liquor.

The old man chuckled. “You drunkard, I won’t take any responsibility if you are frozen again outside after you’re drunk.”

Lucien glimpsed at the old man, feeling it odd. The legendary sorcerer was not bothered at all to be called by the ordinary souls as an old man. It seemed that he did not stress the hierarchy of the ancient Magic Empire.

The old man talked to the souls and walked to the tavern at the center of the town with his storage bag. Maman followed him and asked Lucien curiously, “Mister, are you not a human? I’ve never seen a human like you before. You have a warm body and muscles, just like the devils.”

“Human? What do you think a human should look like?” Lucien asked in amusement.

Maman raised his chin and declared, like a proud kid, “Humans are people who look like me.”

“Who told you that?” Lucien had guessed the answer.

Maman bulged his eyes in confusion. “My grandpa, of course.”

He became frustrated when they talked about his grandpa. Finally finding someone he could talk to, he said, “But grandpa doesn’t allow me to practice with uncles. He only asks me to do useless meditation.”

“Your grandpa is an awesome man. There can be nothing wrong listening to him.” Lucien patted his head with a smile.

“How so? Uncles and aunts all say that grandpa is just a common old man and that he does not have any capabilities other than cooking food and making wine.” Maman disagreed with Lucien.

Well, a special soul who has a legendary sorcerer grandpa with a concealed identity. It’s like a tale of the bards. Lucien thought in amusement but was too lazy to explain to Maman. He followed the old man and entered the tavern.

The arrangement of the tavern was more or less the same as those

in the main material world. However, behind the bar counter was a female soul who was fuzzy and slow.

“I’m back. I’ve bought a hundred bottles of Water Soul Wine this time...” The old man walked behind the bar counter and reported it to the female soul. Although it was just daily talk, he seemed gentle and satisfied.

However, the female soul remained stunned as she washed the cups mechanically.

The old man spoke for a long time before he finally turned around and looked at Lucien who had been seated before the bar. He introduced, “This is my wife. Do you want a bottle of Fire Liquor?”

Lucien shook his head and asked curiously, “How did you find her?”

Generally speaking, the souls who entered the hell would be beyond recognition.

“She died because of a certain mistake of mine. So, I was able to make preparations in advance and mark the soul in special ways.” The old man opened a bottle of Fire Liquor and had a mouthful of it. “However, despite my profound understanding of the soul, I cannot find out its true nature and its transformation. So, by the time I found her, she was only slightly better than common souls. Perhaps she will completely disperse in another hundred years.”

Lucien nodded his head. From the description, he had basically guessed which legendary sorcerer the old man was. After all, few of them who were adept at soul studies had survived.

The old man went on. “After I found her, I accompanied her and watched her quietly to make up for what I did. Hehe. How time flies. It’s been thirty years in the blink of an eye.”

“The souls outside are the products of your experiments?” Lucien did not believe that a legendary sorcerer would give up so easily.

“Yes.” The old man nodded and had another mouthful of wine. “I tried to awaken their memories, but in the end, I only recovered

their abilities to think. They are totally different persons from the past. Also, as time goes by, they will also completely disperse or be frozen in the ice, caught in the everlasting quietness.”

“What a shame.” After a brief silence, Lucien said, “It’s too bad that there’s still a gap for the Congress to make groundbreaking progress on the study of the soul.”

Lucien was actually not referring to the Congress of Magic but himself.

The old man looked at Lucien’s face. “The soul is the most intangible domain. It is in fundamental contradiction with arcana, which highlights proof and mathematics. Even Vicente, a one-in-a-thousand-years genius in necromancy, only made a minor breakthrough. Although I haven’t been out of hell for thirty years, and I don’t know the updates of the outside world, thirty years is still a very short time for magic studies. I remember that I spent a hundred and twenty-seven years near the Styx to study a certain feature of the soul.”

Before Lucien said anything, a gentle, refreshing male voice suddenly echoed at the door, “Hehe. Although it’s hard to believe, I can say confidently that the development of arcana and magic in the past thirty years is greater than thirty thousand years in the Magic Empire.”

Without turning around, Lucien already sensed a person with his spiritual power. The stranger was wearing a white tight suit, and he had pale and sickly skin. His eyes were red, and he had a pair of delicate silver horns that were full of dense patterns on his forehead.

Based on his undisguised air, Lucien could conclude very easily that he was exactly Memphiste, the incumbent Ice Duke and the Lord of Mysteries!

Chapter 804: Let's Take What We Need

Chapter 804: Let's Take What We Need

As Memphiste, the Ice Duke, strode into the tavern, the place immediately became lifelessly quiet, like the frozen plain covered by the blizzard; cold, silent, and never to change.

“Thirty years is better than thirty thousand years?” The old man, who was likely to be a legendary sorcerer in the field of souls, chuckled. It was obvious that he thought the Lord of Mysteries was carrying out his specialties as a devil and bluffing other people with the exaggerated truth that was not to be believed. “In the past ten years, you barely walked out of the Silent Glacier. I almost suspected that you had quietly arrived at the main material world. To what do I owe your visit to my little tavern today?”

He was reminding Lucien that the Lord of Mysteries might be concocting a great scheme that involved the main material world during the past ten years so that Lucien wouldn't be tricked.

Memphiste laughed aloud and sat next to Lucien. He took a bottle of “Fire Liquor” and a bottle of “Water Soul Wine”, blending them into his favorite mix. “You can ask Evans whether or not it was an overstatement. In fact, he is the best evidence himself.”

He acted as if he were Lucien's best friend.

Of the three legends, one was mixing the wine behind the bar counter, and two were sitting on the high chairs before the bar. On the bar counter were delicious wine, cups, and dim candles, exactly like any other tavern looked like. Who could've thought that they were three legends?

“Huh?” The old man paid attention to his statement after hearing Memphiste's repetition. “In the first thirty thousand years of the Magic Empire, many legendary spells were invented, different schools were classified, a preliminary magic system was established, the fundamental knowledge of mathematics and astrology was concluded, the attempts of alchemical items were made, and blood

power was synthesized. Could they have been done in thirty years?”

Having been born in the last glorious phase of the Magic Empire, he was like an old noble who clung to the former glories. Therefore, although he paid attention to the Congress of Magic and the development of arcana, he did not really join it. Also, he could not accept that “arcana” could accomplish what the Magic Empire achieved in thirty thousand years with only thirty years.

The Ice Duke looked at Lucien, who had been listening quietly as if it were none of his business, and chuckled. “During the thirty years, the major achievements include the discovery of the mysteries of gravity and the localization of the sun...”

He was not an arcanist, and naturally, his words were not too accurate. If it were Lucien, he would’ve only said that there were preliminary achievements on the nature of gravity.

“What? The sun has been found?” The old man dropped the cloth with which he was wiping the cup. He interrupted Memphiste and looked at him and Lucien in shock.

The location and the very existence of the sun had been a conundrum that bothered the Magic Empire for tens of thousands of years. There were no sorcerers who did not want to unravel the secret. He was not an exception either. However, even the brilliant geniuses like the Sun King, the prophets like Mr. Maskelyne, and the experts who were as strong as demigods like the Stellar Mentor—he was the first top legend of the Magic Empire—had to lower their proud heads before the problem and admit that there was still a long way to go for them to reach the truth of the world.

Now, the sun had been discovered?

The Ice Duke did not mention why he came at all, as if he was here specifically to enjoy the old man’s shock. He pointed at Lucien with a smile and said, “Naturally, you are looking at the discoverer of the sun and the founder of the relativistic system.”

“You discovered the sun? The relativistic system?” the old man asked in a hurry. *What is the relativistic system?*

When he left the main material world, there hadn't been such a term in the Congress of Magic. After only a brief thirty years, the world had become so strange?

Lucien did not give a straight answer but answered with the rigorousness of arcanists, "Technically speaking, the main reason for the discovery of the sun was not the relativistic system. It was only a secondary factor."

I don't know much about arcana. You must be fooling me... The old man couldn't help but feel overwhelmed. He hurried to take out his crystal ball that had been covered in dust for years.

Because he was in the Silent Hell, the effect of his prophecy was limited. However, the Ice Duke knocked on the table and released the suppression of his demiplane. So, the old man drew the conclusion. "The sun has really been discovered... What's wrong with this world?"

The sun had a special position in astrology. It was also a special symbol in the spiritual domain.

"I don't know what's wrong with this world either, but now that a top legend has come to the Silent Hell, I have to check on him, in case the Silent Glacier is attacked someday in the future and I don't know what's going on at all," the Lord of Hell said merrily, as if he were not checking on the enemy but closing a deal with Lucien.

"A top legend?" The old man stared at Lucien again. Although he did not know all the senior-rank sorcerers and archmages of the Congress, he did know most of the Highest Council. Thirty years ago, the young man couldn't have been a legend, and after thirty years, he had reached the peak of legendary? It was even more unbelievable than Brook!

"As far as I know, it's only been a dozen years since Evans began to study magic. Well, he did not become an official sorcerer until the year when the former Ice Duke died," the current Ice Duke added. In the old man's shock, he observed, "Now is not the ancient times, when the big shots could hide for decades but still retain the ability to change the situation. Today, whoever lives in seclusion and does

not pay attention to the development of arcana, he'll be completely outdated in ten years. Instead of being a mastermind or a key force, he will be crushed by the wheel of time."

He seemed to be mocking the old man for his confusion after living in isolation for thirty years.

"A dozen years..." The old man could not express anything with language now. What could be achieved in a dozen years? After he began to learn magic, it took him a dozen years to become a fifth-circle sorcerer.

Confirming the information that Lucien did not cover with his crystal ball again, the old man heaved a long sigh. "The very existence of you has suggested the terrifying development of arcana in the past decades."

After his remark, his eyes suddenly turned passionate, and he stared at Lucien. "Just now, you mentioned that the Congress of Magic almost made a breakthrough on the studies of the soul, didn't you?"

"Theoretically, yes." Lucien did not understand why the Ice Duke was helping him to convince the old man, so he was rather prudent. "Mister, what's your opinion on the nature of the soul? For example, if a soul loses the past memories and can never regain them, and it does not have the way of thinking and the personality before, with the waves and vibe of its spiritual power changed too, can we still say that this soul is identical to the soul in the past?"

"Well..." The old man hesitated. He had considered the question before. His wife next to him was a vivid but not extreme case. His special mark had prevented the soul waves from changing.

It was both a philosophical question and one that touched the nature of the soul. Obviously, it was not easy to answer. After a long time, the old man finally replied, "I don't think so. After the five main features of the soul are changed, it will be a new soul."

"Then, if we give the soul memories of the past, raise the previous way of thinking and personality, and forever change its spiritual power and vibe with magic, will it become the previous soul? Is the

soul natural-born and above society, or is it social and can be artificially ‘raised’?” Lucien proposed a sharp question. “A different case. If another soul is melted with this soul and inherits its memories, thinking, personality, and wave frequencies while retaining its previous memories, will it equal to the current soul?”

“For example, if Duke Memphiste occupies your wife’s soul and simulates her memories and other features, will he be equal to your wife? What’s the most fundamental quality of the soul?”

Looking at his “wife” next to him, the old man looked gloomy and could hardly give an answer. The Ice Duke intentionally enlivened the atmosphere. “As a matter of fact, the most fundamental quality of a soul for me is the devilish core.”

“I wonder, what’s your opinion on the question, Mr. Evans?” The old man looked at Lucien both earnestly and expectantly.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “I have been to the World of Souls, where I saw the Furnace of Souls.”

“The World of Souls? The Furnace of Souls?” The old man further felt that he had been abandoned by the passing of time.

Lucien briefly introduced the World of Souls and the Furnace of Souls, and instead of telling his central studies, he said more abstractly, “I believe that the soul should have a quality that is of a higher level and more fundamental. It is deeply associated with the Furnace of Souls. As for the specific conditions, I’m afraid that I can only discuss with the arcanists with papers after I return from the primeval hell.”

Looking at the Fire Liquor before him in silence, the old man did not say anything until a long time later. “I have some studies about the soul myself. I would like to exchange our works.”

As expected of a legendary sorcerer. He knows what I am implying clearly. Lucien smiled in satisfaction and had a fair and square exchange with the old man with his current understanding about the soul, excluding the parts that involved other arcana knowledge and a certain model that was to be confirmed on this trip.

The old man's files on the soul were very detailed, including his works on the soul and two legendary spells about the soul. Some of the experiments were too cruel for Lucien to complete himself. He had been looking for other ways to confirm the results until he got the information here. Also, the old man provided his knowledge about the primeval relics in the depths of hell, which added to Lucien's confidence.

The old man also thought hard as he read the files that Lucien provided. He rubbed his forehead nonstop, as if it disrupted something that he always believed in. He said to himself, "... In such a case, resurrection, phylactery, and the effect of the Sword of Truth can all be explained self-consistently..."

Next to him, the Ice Duke put on a solemn expression as he looked at Lucien and said, "I'm here today to ask for your favor, Lucien. I'll provide more detailed files about the primeval hell."

Crossing his hands, Lucien did not give a reply immediately. Was it his attitude, or the Lord of Hell's?

Chapter 805: The Primeval Hell

Memphiste, the Lord of Mysteries, was not bothered by Lucien's silence. He simply went on, "The favor I ask is probably also your purpose, Evans."

"You know my purpose?" Lucien raised his eyebrows and asked back.

The Ice Duke chuckled. "You have specifically come to the Silent Hell before you go to the primeval hell because you want the special Stellar Core, don't you? As a matter of fact, based on the clues I've found, the Stellar Core is not on this level but has been hidden by Tiphotidis into a certain relic in the primeval hell as hope for his resurrection."

"I would like you to go to the relics, find that Stellar Core, and erase all the possibilities of Tiphotidis' return, Evans. The Stellar Core and the detailed files of the primeval hell that I provide will be the reward for you."

"Why don't you go there yourself? If you know the primeval hell so well, why don't you erase the hope of the Master of Argent's revival in person? You can never relax unless you are the one doing it," Lucien said without giving an answer.

Memphiste looked like a pale and sickly man. Had it not been for his silver devilish horns and his evil red eyes, he would've been neglected very easily. In a self-mocking smile, he said, "I dare not enter it exactly because I know it too well. I fear that I'll become a carrier for the primeval devils to arrive. At the very least, I would rather not take the risk until I reach level three of legendary. Sometimes, ignorance means courage."

As he spoke, he glanced at the old man, as if he were mocking the guy for exploring the primeval hell after he just became a legend years ago. Had it not been for luck, he would've been melted by the primeval devils and wandered in the broken relics henceforth.

"Do the primeval devils really exist?" Lucien suddenly opened his

mouth and asked.

Memphiste smiled. He knew that Lucien had accepted his request but did not want to set up a contract, in case he would have to worry about the enforcement of the contract if he ran into emergencies in the primeval hell. After all, when the mission was fulfilled, the Stellar Core would be his, and nobody could steal it away.

“If you believe that the primeval devils exist, they will indeed exist. They wander in the relics in the primeval hell and receive the summoning from the main material world and all the alternate dimensions. However, if you don’t think they exist, they will no longer exist. They’re more like an exterior projection of the negative feelings in yourself. Everybody sees different things according to their memories and strength, but the intense negative feelings are the same.” Thinking for a moment, the Ice Duke told his knowledge about the primeval devils in his own way. “Therefore, the most important thing is the control over feelings and desires.”

“It shouldn’t be dangerous for you. Your title is ‘Lord of Mysteries’. Since you are best at manipulation, you can certainly control your own feelings and desires well. Also, you have the help of extraordinary abilities like ‘everlasting peace’.” Lucien did not know the real name of the extraordinary ability, so he simply referred to it with its image.

Memphiste sighed and said, “However, when the primeval devils appear with the wandering souls inside, they can be as strong as top legends. Although it cannot last, that’s enough to crush me. Also, the primeval hell is different from other places in that the slightest negative feelings will be magnified tenfold, a hundred times, and a thousand times. The primeval devils will take advantage of the weakness and plant seeds in your mind. So, you must stop all the negative feelings from appearing in the primeval hell, or you wouldn’t be able to free yourself.”

“Magnified tenfold, a hundred times, and a thousand times?” Lucien’s black pupils in his deep eyes seemed to be glittering.

The files on primeval devils that Lucien had before came from

Douglas and Rhine. Their explorations of the primeval hell were relatively smooth, and they were never possessed by the primeval devils. The old man was almost lost and only made his way out with a special legendary item. He was unable to tell exactly what happened. Therefore, it was the first time that Lucien heard such a theory. It matched his speculation very well!

Memphiste put down his special mix and nodded solemnly. "In hell, a lot of devils went to the primeval hell for adventures and enormous strength. Therefore, I have millions of cases as the foundation of my analysis."

The number had been accumulated for tens of thousands of years.

"Hehe. However orderly devils may see, their hearts are always evil and full of desire. When they are not strong enough, it's barely possible for them to stay out of the influence of the primeval devils." Lucien smiled casually, not bothered at all that he was faced with a great devil.

Memphiste laughed aloud. "That's very correct. Therefore, knowing myself very well, I dare not go in personally. Frankly speaking, the devils will suffer no losses after they are possessed by the primeval devils. At worst, their desires will be stronger, and their lives will be much shorter, but their strength will grow significantly. Such desire matches our ambitions and our way of thinking very well. It will not influence other thinking abilities, but will only make us smarter."

That's what we say "ever since I suffered mental diseases, my mental state has been much better"... Lucien chuckled to himself.

After his laughter, the Ice Duke went on, "After you enter the primeval hell, except for the few fixed relics, the environment that every intelligent creature sees is different. In such an environment, the wandering souls will turn into the family, friends, teachers, and students that you value, as well as the enemies that you hate, under the domination of primeval devils. They will play the scenes of betrayals, slaughters, pain, and lust before you.

"We all know that such simple illusions cannot affect the judgment

of legendary sorcerers, but for the primeval devils, they do not hope that the people who enter the relics can be bewildered by the illusions so easily but aim for the emotional fluctuation that is from natural instincts. After all, there's a gap between natural reactions and the sensible judgment of oneself."

Lucien nodded his head. "The problem can be avoided by casting spells such as 'Mechanized Mind' in advance."

"Therefore, for top legends, the most important thing is to take care of the sudden attacks from the primeval devils who hide in such illusions. In the primeval hell, they will never be killed. They will be reborn and attack the enemy incessantly. If there weren't a time gap, and if more than three primeval devils could show up simultaneously, even the top legends would not be able to resist the fearless attacks of the seven primeval devils," the Ice Duke mentioned something that Lucien did not know.

Lucien frowned. "Why would there only be three primeval devils at most every time?"

That was his greatest question.

"That I do not know. However, I know that 'Arrogance' always acts alone, because he is an embodiment of arrogance. Also, 'Hypocrisy' never joins the attack but is more used to attacking in secret. If 'Jealousy' takes action with the other primeval devils, he will be your 'helper'. The other four devils often appear in pairs, but they never take action together," Memphiste said in his opinion.

Lucien was rather interested. *It's rather creative to consider the problem from such a perspective.*

Also, as long as the seven primeval devils were not attacking him at the same time, he would be confident to leave safely even though the other four devils were to join their hands. After all, they could only behave as top legends for a short while.

"Sometimes, the primeval devils wouldn't show up, and the explorers could go into the relics normally and find the ways to summon them..." Memphiste told Lucien the files of the primeval

hell that he knew.

...

On the ninth level of hell, Lucien walked deep into the core of the sphere through a bottomless crack.

After descending for a long time, Lucien's feet finally stepped on soft, weird mud, which shivered all the time as if beating hearts had been buried below.

Lucien was holding a piece of time-worn paper in his hands. On the paper that was made from the skin of grand devils, eerie patterns that Lucien had never seen before were drawn. The moment he saw the paper, he felt that he saw greed, arrogance, pain, and other deep negative feelings.

It was the "map" that Memphiste provided for Lucien. As a belonging of Tiphodidis, the Master of Argent, it marked the relic where he hid the Stellar Core. On the other hand, the old man who was good at spirits packed up his stuff, ready to return to the main material world with his wife and Maman to go to Allyn.

Zigzagging forward, Lucien unleashed his air and scared off a bunch of strong hellish devils before he reached the gate hidden at the deepest part of the canyon.

The gate was old and did not have any decorations. Revealing a bronze color, it gave the air of transcendence.

"There is the Gate of Immortality and the Blue Gate. Perhaps this one should be called 'Gate of Desires'." Lucien extended his right hand and pressed the gate.

Feeling the coldness, he found that the gate was opened, revealing the splendid corridor behind it.

"The corridor of a castle?" Lucien, who had been enhanced with multiple spells, walked in slowly.

Different rooms were on the two sides of the corridor. The dark red wood on the doors implied their state-of-the-art quality. Their lower

edges were covered in what appeared to be golden foils.

After a few steps forward, alluring moans suddenly entered Lucien's ears.

"Is 'Lust' the first to come?" Lucien looked in through the half-opened door. "It sounds rather familiar..."

Inside the room was a big bed with a red sheet, on which two naked bodies were rolling. The one on the top had purple long hair and a graceful curve, as well as a vigorous face with the beauty that Lucien couldn't be more familiar with.

Natasha?

Natasha's eyes were blurry as she looked down at the girl below affectionately, who was also naked.

Huh. A girl?

It was not until then that Lucien realized that the girl was Sylvia, who was already dead. Her beautiful face that was as pure as a lily was flushing, and her eyes were half-closed, as soul-stirring moans burst out of her lips. Her small but firm breasts were rubbing against Natasha's tightly...

It seemed to be a scene from when Natasha and Sylvia were still together.

Lucien's lips curled, and he chuckled without being affected.

"Jealousy?"

...

In Duchy of Orvarit, Aalto...

Hardly had Gossett, a red robe, entered Philibell's library when he saw that the Grand Cardinal rose in a hurry.

"His Holiness has summoned the Grand Cardinals for an emergency meeting. You will supervise the divine power circle of Aalto for

now.” Philibell gave the instruction while he walked to the teleportation circle.

“An emergency meeting? Did something happen?” Gossett immediately became grave.

Chapter 806: Secret Mission

Chapter 806: Secret Mission

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City...

By the time Philibell arrived, all the Grand Cardinals who were free had been gathered. Benedict III stood above the stairs with a platinum staff in his hands. Behind him was an enormous, sacred cross.

“I’ve summoned you today because I have a secret mission for you, which concerns the glory of the Lord, the survival of the Church, and your future,” Benedict III said solemnly; his slightly cloudy eyes were as thoughtful and peaceful as ever.

Melmax, the Holy Avenger, stepped forward and said, “Your Holiness, what mission is it exactly that requires half of the Grand Cardinals to accomplish?”

He hadn’t recovered from the wounds he suffered during Douglas’ advancement into the demigod level. Therefore, he was rather prudent about missions.

Instead of giving a straight answer, Benedict III looked at the glass window near the dome of the Bright Hall. As the brilliant sunlight penetrated through the colorful glass, dreamy shadows were left on the ground.

“Douglas’ advancement gave confidence to the sorcerers and showed them the bright future of arcana and magic. As long as the path is not proved to be a dead-end, they can hardly be tempted. Also, the situation in the world has been greatly changed. Our estimation of the future has to change accordingly.” Benedict III repeated the current situation with a low voice, “Admit it or not, one demigod, four top legends, and an equal number of legendary experts are out there, and the Congress of Magic is already as strong as us.

“In the meantime, we have to face the northern heretics, the great

devil Maltimus in the Boundless Ocean, and the evil god ‘Silver Moon’ in the Dark Mountain Range. The situation is very rough.”

None of the Grand Cardinals said anything because it was an obvious fact. Although the Congress of Magic had to take care of the Lord of Hell and the northern heathens too, the Dark Congress and the Elven Court were at least their allies for now. The Church, on the other hand, was almost helpless.

It seemed to be an inevitable process during the decline of every reigning force. Because their power had left too deep an impression on other forces, and an irresolvable feud had been struck between them, the other forces were likely to reach an agreement to overthrow the reigning force first before they fought each other. It was exactly like what happened to the Magic Empire!

Benedict III’s old and heavy voice echoed in the Bright Hall, “Although I have informed you of the status transformation and the method to gather godhood through the power of faith granted by the Lord, and your strength must’ve increased over the past few years, we still have to face one problem after twenty years of arcana development and the subsequent expansion of the Congress of Magic.”

He paused and looked around at all the Grand Cardinals present.

Saint Maria, Saint Kati, Philibell, Astira, and the other Grand Cardinals all lowered their heads and avoided the pope’s eyes. Over the past years, they had made great contributions to the ever-surging cults under the territory of the Church.

Moving his eyes back, Benedict III went on, “Considering the current trend, until your strength has fundamental improvements and the number of new legends catches up with that of the Congress of Magic, the Congress of Magic will certainly divide and conquer us with its overwhelming strength, exactly like how the Congress of Magic was destroyed by us in the past.

“This is not a threat with the worst possibility. You should know well that most sorcerers in the Congress of Magic haven’t really digested the products of arcana development during the recent two

decades. After all, it's normal that the expansion of strength is ten years behind theoretical development. You should know very well how strong they will be in another ten years."

After Benedict III finished, Astira asked in confusion, "Your Holiness, it's very visionary of you to describe the comparison of our strengths in the future. You've analyzed our dilemma too. However, the greatest and most fundamental difference between us and the Magic Empire is that we have you, the Lord's spokesperson on the ground and the strongest demigod. The Magic Empire, on the other hand, only had top legends.

"Demigods are a deterrence and a balance. As long as the demigod is not destroyed, it will be barely possible to eliminate his force, because it will make the demigod fearless and wreak havoc on his enemy. Therefore, demigods who can mutually destroy each other's forces are the best guarantee of peace, exactly like our strike on vampires. I believe that the Congress of Magic will take that into consideration too. Perhaps the situation where we confront each other with the Storm Strait in between will go on, while we gradually carve up the forces that do not have demigods."

Saint Kati also stood up. "Astira is right. The unkillable demigods will keep the current situation. Also, more importantly, as the strongest demigod, Your Holiness can perform God's Arrival. Neither the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, nor Douglas can resist it. That's the best guarantee for the Church's position. They will not dare to attack us easily.

"By the time our strength is increased, we will be able to wake up the Lord. Under the brilliance of the true god, all evilness will be melted."

He was only talking about his hope, as to whether or not the God of Truth could be awakened, and in exactly what way it should be done, that was a whole different matter.

Benedict III heaved a sigh. "Demigods are not really immortal. At the very least, I have a lot of problems myself. If they can grasp those problems, even if they cannot completely kill me, they will be able to imprison me like I imprison the monster. Since I have God's

Arrival, I must be the primary target for Douglas, the Silver Moon, and Maltimus. It is possible that they will join their hands. How are we going to deal with that?"

No Grand Cardinals were able to give an answer in the Bright Hall. The atmosphere became depressive and frozen. Although the danger was still far away, the worst possibility seemed to be happening sooner or later based on His Holiness' analysis.

"Your Holiness, what is the mission that you want to give us?" Melmax suddenly broke the silence. "Is it about our future disaster?"

Benedict III slowly raised his platinum staff. He looked solemn and grave.

Seeing that, all the Grand Cardinals immediately kneeled and drew crosses on their chests while praying devoutly, "Only Truth lives forever!"

It was the gesture to proclaim the Lord's oracle!

"The Lord has given me an oracle, telling me how the problems can be resolved." Benedict III's voice was filled with "sincere gratitude". "The reason why negative feelings cannot be controlled or separated even though 'containers' are used is that the power of negative feelings and the power of faith are not equal during the last step before turning into a demigod."

Saint Maria frowned subconsciously. "Not equal? They're both the surreal power of the mind. How can they not be equal?"

She suddenly realized what she just said. "Your Holiness, I am not questioning the Lord. I'm only hoping that you can fulfill my ignorance."

"Because Mountain Paradise is behind the power of faith, the projection of Mountain Paradise will appear when one tries to become a demigod. The power of negative feelings, on the other hand, can only gather the seven primeval devils. How can they be equal to Mountain Paradise? As a result, the balance is lost, the

problems are left,” Benedict III explained expressionlessly.

“How can they be equal?” Philibell asked. It was a question that they really cared about because they believed that they would reach the step sooner or later.

Benedict III put down the platinum staff and nodded his head. “We need more ‘primeval devils’. We need to gather them into a primeval hell, which requires your cooperation because I cannot accomplish it myself. Actually, it completely matches the core of our path to the demigod level; gathering the power of the people and turning the weak into the strong.”

For some reason, when they heard Benedict III’s announcement, the first thing that the Grand Cardinals remembered was Lucien’s paper and the prediction in it; the evolution from a weak observer to a strong observer!

“Your Holiness, what should we do?” Saint Kati asked. They certainly had to ask every detail clearly. After all, it concerned their own safety. What if their attempts failed, and the primeval devils in their bodies lost control?

“Based on my speculation, such ‘gathering’ will result in subsequent changes in the primeval hell. After that...” Benedict III spoke of his whole plan without hiding anything.

After identifying the key of the plan, the Grand Cardinals accepted the mission, each thinking about their own business. They left the Bright Hall for the final preparations.

After they all disappeared from the Bright Hall, Benedict III still stood where he was and looked at the gate with thoughtful eyes.

.....

“Jealousy?” The moment Lucien opened his mouth, “Natasha” and “Sylvia”, who had been entangling with each other in bed, stood up. One of them stood in the front, and the other clutched her timidly.

“I’m sorry. You are great, but I still love her.” “Natasha” stared at

Lucien fearlessly.

Lucien's lips twitched, only because the line was too familiar. Then, he smiled. "It's useless. If I do not have such confidence, how do I deserve to say love? It's time for a new trick, Jealousy."

As he talked, Lucien was already prepared for an attack because Lust might be hiding in the dark. It might be dangerous if they attacked together.

"Haha." "Natasha" and "Sylvia" both giggled in a voice that was completely different from their own. "What a boring man."

In their laughter, their bodies crumbled into dust.

Lucien had thought that the two primeval devils would attack together, but out of his expectation, they simply left.

Turning his head, Lucien saw the dressing mirror on one side of the bed and his reflection in it. It was wearing the same black double-breasted suit, top hat, and black shoes, but on the familiar handsome face, it was not a smile but disdain.

"Lucien" in the mirror suddenly sneered and said, "Do you know that you have been too arrogant? Because of your top legendary strength and your powerful, weird spells, you despise the seven primeval devils and think that they cannot cause you any harm. You laugh at them for their every attempt to manipulate your feelings.

"Your idea is the purest arrogance. Arrogance is never a feeling. So, I have been born in your heart for you to look at yourself. You can never kill me or defeat me, because I am you!"

It walked out of the mirror one step after another, and its black shoes stomped on the tawny carpet.

Chapter 807: The Stellar Core

The Lucien that Arrogance turned into walked out of the mirror gracefully and slowly; its black shoes glittering.

“If you call the most fundamental conclusion that is based on facts arrogance, then arrogance will not be the name of a devil but that of an angel.” Lucien did not attack immediately but observed Arrogance who looked identical to himself except for the countenance in great interest.

Arrogance was still as disdainful as a moment ago. “You dare say that there is not the slightest condescension and mockery in your heart? Arrogance is not a feeling but comes from your mind. It’s the bias caused by your experiences of success. If you say it is a devil, it will be a devil, and if you say it is an angel, it will be an angel. Therefore, it cannot be blocked by your spells. Were you not arrogant when faced with the wrong arcana theories, or when those weaker than you challenged you? Just admit it. Arrogance is not bad at all. It’s a symbol that distinguishes the victors from the losers, like...”

It paused and suddenly raised its right hand while letting out an intricate spell from its mouth.

“Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness!”

...Like when you created ‘Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness’, the legendary spell which was close to absolute zero. Were you not proud of it? Did you not feel subtly jubilant when you dealt with the enemy with the spell?

That was arrogance!

With the indescribable gesture, Arrogance performed the ice-type legendary spell on Lucien, as if it were a real but arrogant Lucien!

Its attack came without any warning. The translucent pillars of light, under the restraint of invisible light and grids of darkness, surged toward Lucien.

Lucien, who had been staying on alert, was prepared for the attack. The moment Arrogance raised its right hand, a dark and profound universe appeared on his back, and in the middle of the colorful stars, an enormous fireball emitted terrifying heat.

It influenced the environment as if it were real, immediately vaporizing the red bed and the tawny carpet in the room.

Snow Goddess' Forgiveness was blown into this Atomic Universe. However, under the heat of the sun and the magnificent storm of energy, the magnetic field and the lasers that bound it were contorted and affected. Therefore, the unimaginable frigidty burst out in advance. Stars were frozen one after another, making the dark cosmos even more desolate.

When the light was finally frozen by the darkness, Lucien had already disappeared from the spot.

Before Arrogance was able to take action, the jolly ticking sounds echoed next to its ears, before everything was ended by a crack.

All the glamorous colors of the exquisite castle were gone, leaving nothing but the monotonous monochrome, where the "Lucien" that Arrogance turned into looked like a puppet from an old picture.

Outside of the window, Lucien's figure appeared. Holding the silver and delicate pocket watch, he chanted the spell that led to unusual waves.

"Luxury Cracking!"

"Luxury Cracking!"

"Soul Smite!"

All the three legendary spells had been attached with "Hand of Uncertainties". The last one was one of the few legendary spells that Lucien picked up recently specifically to deal with spirits, primeval devils, and other enemies who did not have real entities.

Since his destination was the primeval hell, he naturally had to be prepared. Lucien never looked down upon any opponent. Unless he

had other purposes, he always tried his best however weak the enemy seemed!

After the three legendary spells were cast, the feeling of frozen time was broken, and the extravagant colors like red and yellow returned. Inside the “old picture”, Arrogance cracked nonstop as the magic effects were gone.

All the effects on its body, including “Spell Trigger”, had completely collapsed under two rounds of “Luxury Cracking”.

Then, after a thud, its body became blurry, and black gas jetted out of its eyes, neck, ears, mouth, and pores, as if a water ball had been smashed by an invisible hammer, with juice splashing everywhere.

“Soul Smite” had heavily wounded and rigidified Arrogance. Lucien certainly wouldn’t let go of such an opportunity. He blew out “Silent Blue”, which he exchanged with Hellen using “Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness”.

The black air around Arrogance and Arrogance itself was frozen and caught in the silent and freezing blueness, losing all the activity.

Right when Lucien was about to impose all kinds of seals so that he could bring Arrogance back for further studies, it suddenly put on a weird smile inside the Silent Blue before destroying itself!

Even the Silent Blue could not completely trap it!

BOOM!

A fireball rolled and rose, and the powerful blast swept across the whole castle. The valuable building collapsed as if it were a sand statue on the beach that embraced a tide.

Lucien blinked to the sky outside of the castle. Looking at the burning remains below him, he considered the features of Arrogance.

“It seems that the devil can simulate all my spells and magic effects including the legendary ones, which makes it look like my duplicate. It’s very similar to Monster Viken in the Realm of Gates,

except that it is not half a level higher than me...

“... It does not have a Moon Timer, so it could not get rid of ‘Advanced Time Stop’... Does it mean that the devil cannot simulate the effects of my items?

“... It could not transform its status in my unique way. It’s obvious that the nature of the world on such a level is beyond what the primeval devils can touch and duplicate. It can only do it in a similar way to the primeval devils. That’s why it could not avoid ‘Silent Blue’...”

While Lucien analyzed the situation of Arrogance, laughter burst out in the debris and the wilderness at the same time. “It’s useless. You can’t kill me, because I am you!

“It’s also a behavior of arrogance that you cannot treat yourself fairly!”

The laughter gradually died down. Out of Lucien’s expectation, Arrogance did not attack and consume his spiritual power with a protracted battle. Instead, it melted into the darkness without giving any more sounds, like a ferocious predator that tailed the prey quietly and held itself back from a fierce attack until the prey was exhausted.

Staying on alert, Lucien observed the environment. It was a wasteland where nothing grew. The dim red blood seemed saturated with blood, giving a painful and miserable feeling.

“The Desert of Pain...” Lucien heaved a sigh. It was almost a “landmark” that every legendary sorcerer who came to the primeval hell had seen before. As the greatest feature of the primeval hell, it had been named by a certain ancient legendary sorcerer as “Desert of Pain”.

Lucien continued to fly in the previous direction. After all, if he were scared off by Arrogance just like that, he would never be able to explore the primeval hell.

After flying for a while, the “map” in Lucien’s arms suddenly

unleashed intense waves.

Taking out the map that the Lord of Mysteries gave him, Lucien saw that the eerie symbols on it wriggled as if alive and pointed at a certain direction.

The special Stellar Core that the Master of Argent hid is around? Lucien thought to himself. Considering for a moment, Lucien decided to take a look at it since there were no other emergencies.

Navigated by the map, Lucien flew in the dim, dark sky for a while until he saw a shaking temple below.

The old temple was very similar to the temple outside of the Blue Gate and carried the style of the primordial times. The dome was supported by enormous stone pillars.

However, the stone pillars of this temple had half collapsed, and the air of aging and rotting was spreading out.

Lucien observed for a long time with magic, before he finally descended and landed. He then walked into the temple.

The wall of the temple was painted with simple but vivid illustrations. They were the pictures of cruel punishments, including whipping, beheading, hanging, mincing, and drowning, as well as the sacrificial rituals that a bunch of human-like creatures conducted with those punishments.

Looking at the shabby paintings, Lucien almost failed to control his feelings of pain and hate.

“Is this the beginning of the summoning of primeval devils? Have the primeval devils drawn them to allure the adventurers?” Thanks to the help of magic, Lucien kept calm. He recorded the paintings while he pressed further in the temple.

Although the temple was enormous, it was nothing but a minor library for a legendary sorcerer like Lucien. Very soon, he saw the brilliant Stellar Core that was placed on the altar of the temple.

The Stellar Core was smaller and brighter than the one Lucien used

to make “Moon Timer”. The space around was curved inwardly because of its attraction, giving the feeling that it was extremely heavy.

The most unique feature of the item was that it carried certain transcendental air. Through the brilliant core, one seemed able to see the shadow of an enormous planet.

COMMENT

Lucien put on a sincere smile after seeing the Stellar Core, not because the material was precious, but because the specialness of it had allowed him to further approach the truth.

Despite his delight, Lucien was not careless. He began to inspect the Stellar Core and the environment with all kinds of spells, in case it was another trap like the Time Plate, or it was part of the Master of Argent’s scheme.

Hardly had Lucien cast his magic when the brilliance of the Stellar Core on the ground suddenly constricted and stretched out into a male in a tight suit. It was exactly Memphiste, the Lord of Mysteries.

“Pleased to meet you, I am Greed.” The devil introduced itself with a smile. Then, pointing at its face, it said, “You must’ve fallen into this guy’s scheme.”

It was obviously referring to Memphiste.

“Huh?” Lucien sniffed with a smile.

Greed chuckled. “Although the guy is not strong, he is exceptional at plotting, and he likes to hurt other people for no reason. You already fell into his trap when you agreed to help him fetch the Stellar Core.

“I know that you did not sign a contract with him, but when you think that you need to come and fetch the Stellar Core, you have essentially handed over the knife to us, the primeval devils.”

Lucien’s smile was gone, and he listened quietly.

Greed was even more satisfied. “Normally speaking, if a top legend like you enhanced yourself with all kinds of spells and entered the primeval hell without any emotional fluctuations, you would’ve only encountered some illusions and the wandering phantoms that were possessed by us, and you wouldn’t have encountered so many of us in a row. However, because you already had the greedy thought that you had to fetch the Stellar Core, there was a gap in your defense that we could make use of very easily!”

Lucien listened quietly but did not give a reply.

“What about it? Isn’t his scheme barely noticeable?” Greed said with an exaggerated tone.

Lucien was still silent.

After waiting for a while, Greed asked with a smile, still pretending to be casual, “Are you not mad? Do you not want to take him down?”

“Whether or not what you said is true, will anger help anything? It will only give your old partner, ‘Abhorrence’, a chance to project into my heart.” Lucien finally opened his mouth. His smile was gentle and peaceful, like the tender light from the bright moon.

Chapter 808: The Devils

Chapter 808: The Devils

Memphiste, or Greed, was stunned for a moment and then grinned. “I just wanted things to be easier. No matter how you feel, what would happen had already happened. I’ve told you. The moment since you wanted Stellar Core, your defense cracked.

“... Then you’ll see the true primeval hell and all the primeval devils there!”

It was not hiding its greed at all.

Every facet of the pure Stellar Core suddenly reflected a figure; a humanlike monster with goat horns!

The many figures then jumped out and joined together in the air, until they formed a huge monster. Its eyes were scarlet, skin pale, with big wings on its back. On the top of its head, there were two silver goat horns. It was Tiphotidis, the Master of Argent, which fell many years ago!

Its scarlet eyes were burning with fury as it hated everything in this world so badly. Coming from the deepest death, it wanted to burn every living thing down.

“It’s all your fault! All of you! My plan was perfect!” it cried in a bitter tone.

Obviously, the resurrection method saved by the Master of Argent had been used by the devil of abhorrence. It was now only a container of the devil!

Speaking of which, the white halos surrounding it spread out in all directions. That was the biggest difference between it and Memphiste. Only the Lord of Silent Hell and a great level three legendary devil could own the power of Ice Death Halo!

The silver-white halos like waves reached further and froze the gray

bricks, broken stone pillars, dark-red soil, and even the air.

The freezing was not from extremely low temperature, but the power of corrosion from death. Even the lifeless buildings had been infected by the dead air, and the entire place now felt like a cold tomb.

The devil of abhorrence was the devil with the worst temper. It was used to launch a direct attack to let out the hatred within!

The moment the halos spread out, Greed had started using Memphiste's extraordinary power, Ice Duke, to launch its attack.

At this time, they heard a gentle, remote clicking sound.

In the cold and silent space, the sound seemed to be so cheerful that it was almost creepy.

Click.

Lucien pressed the button and everything instantly came into a pause.

The world had become even quieter now. Lucien then gave Luxury Cracking to each one of them.

He then blinked to a place far away from the temple. He lifted his right hand and the Atomic Universe appeared behind his back. The raging, huge fireball was right beside his right hand, and the extremely high temperature was twisting the air, creating unrecognizable illusionary images.

“Eternal Blaze!”

At this time, Lucien did not care if the Stellar Core would be ruined in the explosion. Just seeing it with his own eyes had made his journey worthwhile!

Lucien could not let greed blind him at this crucial moment.

BOOM!

When time resumed, the power of Eternal Blaze took over!

The entire space was ablaze with the dazzling light, as if a sun god had arrived.

The temple in the middle and the two primeval devils were vaporized within a second before they could even release a bitter cry.

After the extremely high temperature and the blinding light, the powerful energy storm had come to Lucien. However, the almighty power could not hurt Lucien at all, what with the layers of twisted air shielding him.

Because of the special environment in this primeval hell, the mushroom cloud, while shockingly gorgeous, now appeared to be even more beautiful, but in a creepy way, like a huge red straw hat.

After everything calmed down, there was only a huge pit in the ground left. The devils were now gone forever.

Lucien was surprised to see something at the bottom of the pit. It was a shining “gem”.

It was the Stellar Core. The great power of the spell did not destroy it. Lucien started casting the spells to rule out any possible danger from it.

The gravity pulling time and space in from the core had disappeared, and maybe this was the reason why it could stand the horrible power. Although the stellar core had temporarily lost its power to affect its surroundings, its power was still slowly recovering.

Lucien picked it up and put it into his pouch.

At this time, when Lucien was about to leave this place, he suddenly heard the high-pitched, exaggerated laughter.

“There’s no use! You can’t kill us!”

“The defense of your heart has cracked. Then you’ll see the true

primeval hell and all the primeval devils there!”

In the roaring and laughter, Lucien was stunned for a second as he did not expect that they also liked the term “primeval devils”.

Lucien ignored the mocking but headed for the relic in the depth of the primeval hell.

After quite a while, Lucien finally saw the magnificent palace at the tip of the peak, which was built from gold, shining in the remaining glory against the dusk sky.

After carefully checking around, Lucien landed in front of the palace and pushed open the heavy gate. He then walked into the boundless darkness.

According to the information provided by Douglas and Rhine, once he stepped in, things that every single individual would face would vary depending on what they believed was the most dreadful.

In the dark corridor, there was only dim candlelight providing the last touch of brightness, like lamps in a tomb.

As Lucien walked in deeper, the numbers of candles increased. Then, he saw a hall in front of him. In the hall, there were lots of silver candlesticks, and there were also crystal lamps hanging down from the ceiling. The entire hall was thus very well-lit, to the point that Lucien could see everything here.

It was a library!

A library that was full of bookshelves and books!

The arrangement looked very, very similar to that of Lucien’s spirit library!

Lucien was a bit amused and speechless. Was this the place he was afraid of?

He walked in the library silently and went toward the biggest bookshelf.

“The Periodic Relation between the Nature of Elements and Prediction of New Elements”

...

“The Energy Distribution of Black-Body Radiation”

...

“New Alchemy”

...

“On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies and Mass-energy Equation”

...

“A Relativistic Interpretation and Geometric Description of Gravity and a System of Relativity Under a More General Frame of Reference”

...

“On Quantum Mechanics”

...

Those were all papers that Lucien once published, and all of them triggered all his memories. However, there was only one difference. The author of the papers all remained unknown. The big, scarlet question marks were sharp and intimidating!

Lucien reached out his hand and gave the papers and books a gentle stroke as he smiled. “Several years ago, I would definitely feel extremely shameful seeing this, but now, I can say proudly that, by standing on the giants’ shoulders, I’ve got something valuable of my own, and I finally have some of my own understanding of the world.”

Then he bowed solemnly. “Your exploration and study have led to us approaching the truth of the world. Without you, the great

minds, all the human beings here in this world, and I would have lived in ignorance and darkness much longer...

“... I will keep going while bearing your will.”

Suddenly, all the books fell from the shelves as the entire library started shaking fiercely.

Lucien just stood there silently and let the books fall on him. Of course, none of the books could break the protection from Space Staff.

After the library was gone, there was a dark, black gate in front of Lucien.

Lucien realized that he was in a place that looked like a civil court in Holm.

There was a handsome, young man who was wearing a top hat and a double-breasted suit sitting up there. The smile on his face was warm and gentle. The judge was Lucien himself!

He smiled. “Welcome to the real primeval hell!”

On the one side sat six plaintiffs. And they were all Lucien!

One looked extremely arrogant; one kept checking his treasure; one looked rather pissed with everything; one was soaked in agony; one was burning in the flame of envy; and the last one's eyes were full of lust.

They were all shouting, “He's sinful! We accuse him! We're witnesses!”

Lucien was a bit speechless. Without a doubt, the primeval devils were fans of roleplay. However, he was a bit surprised that the seven primeval devils were all here, which was completely different from the information he got from the president and Mr. Rhine.

Facing the seven top legendaries, even if their powers did not last, even if Lucien was also a leading top legendary, he would not be able to handle it. He had better retreat for now.

Chapter 809: Cunning

“Silent! No shouting in the court!” The “judge” picked up the gavel and brought attention back to the bench, looking rather unbiased.

It was Hypocrisy!

Looking at Lucien, Hypocrisy announced, “With regard to the accusation against you, a fair sentence will be given to you. Please go in the dock. Don’t worry. I am the most upright and impartial judge in the primeval hell.”

As soon as Hypocrisy finished the words, Abhorrence sprang up from the chair and said aloud, “I accuse him of the violent desire for killing! Anyone who pissed him off was killed! He killed the followers of Argent Horn, the night watchers, and so many! Even a hundred sheets of paper is not enough for the list!”

“I accuse him of being jealous all the time although you can tell nothing from the outside,” Jealousy said. “His guts are on fire with envy, all the time! He was jealous of the gangs’ life when he was poor. He was jealous of Natasha’s love toward Silvia. He hated Felipe’s reputation, the Hand of Paleness, and even all the great sorcerers in arcana! His body is only a hollow container of acidity as his soul has gone forever because of envy. Disgusting!”

Greed joined and said, “His heart is full of the desire for treasure and reputation. He put his name on his students’ papers and attacked those who didn’t agree with him. He wants everything, leaving nothing to anyone else!

“Those are just on the surface! The deepest reason is that he’s more than arrogant! He looks down upon all the arcanists in the Congress, including Douglas and Fernando. He despises the Saint Truth, including the popes and grand cardinals. He laughs at all the intelligent creatures in the world and believes that he is the only one knowing the truth of the world and the only lighthouse in this dark age!”

“In his mind, all other creatures are savage and silly, and he’s the

only one standing above while watching everything with full awareness. Therefore, he's cold, he doesn't care about other people's lives, and he is full of jealousy! All because he's arrogant!" said Arrogance excitedly, waving its arms, as if it was the true judge in the court.

When Indulgence and Pain were about to join, when Hypocrisy was lifting the gavel again, Lucien suddenly smiled, and there a silver pocket watch appeared in his right hand.

Click.

The court suddenly came to a pause, and everything in the space now looked very pale.

Hypocrisy's gavel remained in the air, while Arrogance had become a solid statue, which looked like it was giving a long speech.

And the rest of them had all frozen into statues.

Like an old painting in gray and white.

Without hesitation, Lucien was about to blink to the other side. After all, the devils were too many, and he could not manage to give each of them a Luxury Cracking within the time range given.

Lucien's plan was that after there was a distance between them, he would use Space Shackle to trap them all and then throw Eternal Blaze at him. He knew that this one single strike could not kill them all, but it would earn him time.

At this time, he heard a mix of sounds!

The seven pocket watches and the clicking sound were mixing together. Faster and faster, as if it was going to blow at any time!

Lucien saw that each of the seven "Lucien" had a silver pocket watch in their hand! Exactly the same pocket watch!

There was a sarcastic smile on their faces, as if they were saying, *We were all lying! We could even copy your legendary items!*

Hypocrisy reached out its right hand.

“Luxury Cracking!”

The previous fights were for Lucien to lower his alert. Arrogance, Greed, and Abhorrence purposefully made Lucien believe that he could run away because of Moon Timer at any time so that he could be confident enough to come to this place where the seven of them could show up together!

Meanwhile, Arrogance grinned at Lucien and said, “Storm Barrier!”

The devils were grinning in triumph. Lucien had to pay for underestimating them!

Lucien had to pay for his own arrogance!

Without his arrogance, Lucien wouldn’t have fallen into such a trap.

Abhorrence reached out its right hand and was thrilled as if it had seen Lucien’s death.

“Positron Cannon!”

We were devils! Known for our cunning tricks of playing with human minds!

So cry, shout, and die!

Jealousy took a gloomy glance at the rest of the devils and said in low voice, “Eternal Blaze!”

You shall all die!

Meanwhile, Soul Smite from Greed, Space Staff from Indulgence, and Snow Goddess’ Forgiveness from Pain were all shooting toward Lucien.

This was totally out of Lucien’s expectation. For a second, he was stunned. Facing the seven most powerful spells, for a moment, Lucien understood how his enemies felt.

No one could take the seven top legendary spells all together, including any top legends!

Earlier, Arrogance, Greed, and Abhorrence were just pretending that they could not copy extraordinary items!

But how could they? How was this possible?

Where did the substance come from?

Like all the classic villains who did not want to accept their fate, Lucien kept asking the same questions...

However, as an arcanist, Lucien's thinking went much deeper. There was something wrong.

If it had been someone else, it would have taken the arcanist much longer to realize what was wrong here, and within seconds, the spells would have destroyed everything. But Lucien was different, as he was here for a reason. He was here to verify an idea!

Seeing that Lucien had given up on defending himself, the devils were gloating wildly.

At this time, a meaningful smile emerged on Lucien's face.

From another perspective, this had verified Lucien's guess!

Hypocrisy and Arrogance first realized what was going on, and they looked totally shocked, as Lucien's body suddenly collapsed inward.

Meanwhile, the stars in the Atomic Universe behind Lucien were orbiting in the mysterious tracks. The huge fireball had revolved to the other side and left a black hole there. The black hole looked rather intimidating as even light could not escape from its power of pulling in!

The dark hole and Lucien's collapsed body started linking with each other in a creepy way. Then, Lucien himself had become the cluster of darkness, and the horrible attraction was twisting the surrounding time and space.

Luxury Cracking hit it, but then nothing happened!

Storm Barrier had disappeared!

When Positron Cannon hit the dark hole, it only shrank slightly!

None of the seven legendary spells worked, and the darkness still existed. It then stretched and pulled and converted into Lucien again.

“This isn’t arcana...” Greed took a step back.

Arrogance cried out of great shock, “How is this possible?! This thing can destroy the entire world!”

Hypocrisy looked at Lucien and murmured, “How...”

“As long as you dare to imagine, the world can be anything, isn’t it?” Lucien smiled, having no intention to launch his strike right away.

Hypocrisy’s eyes suddenly went wide. “You’ve known about it?”

“Of course. Do you wanna see Gamma-Ray Burst, God-Killing Swords, or Eternal Return?” Lucien joked.

He then closed his eyes, and his consciousness soared!

Chapter 810: Heart and Trace

Chapter 810: Heart and Trace

Closing his eyes, Lucien felt that his consciousness suddenly soared like a little bird that finally got rid of the cage and was embracing the blue sky. It kept rising higher and higher, and finally, it could look down upon the entire earth.

Facing the seven top legends, like a poet full of romantic thoughts, Lucien did not cast any defense on himself. However, none of the devils seized the chance to launch an attack. Instead, they stared at Lucien, frowning, as if Lucien was not even in the same dimension as them!

Lucien's consciousness started getting blurry as it kept soaring. When Lucien felt that it had hit his limit, he felt his consciousness ran into something soft and intangible.

Boom!

Instantly, Lucien felt his soul tremble, and his spiritual power had just broken some kind of shackles and then spread out like waves.

The dark sky, the red soil, the gold palace, the court, and even the primeval devils cracked like a mirror falling onto the ground.

Crack...

The entire hell had split into countless tiny pieces, and behind the pieces, it was this primeval chaos that comprised of colorful light.

The illusionary light was like lines, sketching and outlining the figures of human beings, dragons, and devils as they kept changing. There was no order at all, and some faces on the figures looked furious, some looked greedy, some looked painful, and some had apparent desires.

Such a colorful but illusionary world of “negative emotions” was boundless. However, around Lucien, the part of the world had

collapsed into a very vivid and real scene.

Beneath Lucien's feet, there was an amusingly tiny planet. It was blue and was covered in something blurry. Underneath the planet, there was a city flying in the air. The magic tower built in the city was so tall that the tip of it could almost touch the blue planet.

Underneath the city in the sky, it was the chaotic reflection of Aalto, the City of Psalm.

All of these were under constant changes, like a human mind that was full of all kinds of thoughts.

Lucien did not try to see what was at the end of the world. He opened his eyes and looked back. He saw that behind the gate, it was the very bottomless canyon that he saw when he came in!

In the canyon, the old bronze door now looked rather gauzy and dimly discernible.

In front of the gate stood a young man wearing a black, double-breasted suit. He had a good-looking face, but his eyes had lost focus, and his expression was blank. His right hand pressed against the bronze door as if it was firmly glued on it!

It was Lucien himself!

But this Lucien now seemed to be part of the bronze gate, and thus, his figure also looked illusionary and blurry.

As he expected, this was the place where all negative emotions gathered, and the bronze gate was in fact the gate of his mind!

Lucien looked around and saw the seven primeval devils. They no longer looked like Lucien. They looked like figures made of light spots. However, the negative feelings coming out were still rather intense.

This place was, of course, not only Lucien's mind. To be more accurate, through touching the gate, Lucien's mind had mixed with the countless negative emotions together in this dimension, and thus, a creepy and mysterious primeval hell was reflected.

Therefore, the hell looked different to each individual!

But now, Lucien had seen the true primeval hell. His body was standing outside, and his soul had entered in to explore his mind.

The so-called primeval devils were also reflections of one's own negative emotions amplified by this dimension, and therefore, they could not be destroyed. Due to the unusual nature of the Stellar Core, it could hide here.

In most cases, top legendaries usually had great control of their minds, and therefore, most of them could see up to four primeval devils. However, something went wrong, or perhaps there was a conspiracy behind it, but all seven of them showed up at the same time.

Therefore, as long as one could imagine, the dimension could be anything, even if it went against the rules of arcana!

Hypocrisy, which had lost its shape and was now a cluster of white light, asked again, "How did you know?"

Underneath the white light, there was dark miasma churning.

Lucien smiled. "You can copy my spells. I don't think that's strange. After all, this place can amplify all the negative emotions, and perhaps you can connect to my mind..."

"... Although I don't understand how you did it and what are the rules behind it, it's still within my comprehension, and I've seen it somewhere else. But now, you can even copy a top legendary item and its power. I can't even do this. I'm a top legendary specializing in time and space, and I can't do this, then how can you?"

"... The only possibility is that there were another seven similar space-time legendary items in this dimension, which means among those souls that got lost here, there were seven as powerful as me.

"... If it had been just one or two, possible, but all of you were too greedy. That's the biggest commonality shared by all devils!"

In fact, Lucien knew it well because he got this idea a long time

ago.

“You’re too arrogant. Why can’t we?” Arrogance shouted. It was now only a golden light ball. “You just got lucky!”

Jealousy, the green light ball, sneered, “Don’t celebrate too early. What can you do after this? You’ve triggered the true power of the primeval hell, and sooner or later, you’ll be infected and become another lost soul!”

Hypocrisy also said coldly, “There are a primeval hell and seven primeval devils in everyone’s mind. You can never get rid of us! Even if you can get out this time, after what had happened, we live forever in your mind, and we’ll torture you, and we’ll corrupt you every second of your life. How long can you resist that? The final victory is ours!”

“I’ll now turn you into a monster so full of hatred that you won’t even be able to recognize yourself!” roared the devil of abhorrence.

The seven primeval devils joined again, but this time, they had changed their way of fighting. From each of them, a fine line had reached all the way to Lucien. The seven lines were in different colors!

Lucien, however, started clapping while facing the threat. “Good point. There are a primeval hell and seven primeval devils in everyone’s mind. Ever since I was born, I’ve been dealing with you all.”

The seven primeval devils had no idea what Lucien meant.

“I’ve heard a saying before. It tells us that we can only look at a person’s specific motivation when he does something, but not all the thoughts he has. If not, then all the human beings in this world are corrupt...”

“If we probe into a person’s mind, true, it is always full of bad and filthy ideas.” Lucien smiled in a half self-mocking tone. “I admit that I do have some shameful thoughts from time to time, but in the end, the thoughts would never come true because I’ve conquered

them!

“Every time when I did something, I did have more or less some bad thoughts, but in the end, I defeated all of them, so I can stick to the good things that I believe in.”

Lucien looked more serious, and he said to the seven devils, “The way I think and the belief I have all come from the many fights with you, devils. And I have always been the winner. Now, do you think I’d be afraid of you, losers?”

As he was speaking, Lucien took a step out, and his figure suddenly looked extremely tall and big. In fact, it was because the seven devils had suddenly become much smaller and shorter as they bent their backs low.

Arrogance finally realized what was going on and said furiously, “You’re arrogant, too arrogant. You’ve defeated us before, but that doesn’t mean you always do. Your attitude will lead to your final failure!”

Hypocrisy’s body started shaking fiercely after hearing Arrogance’s words. Such an idiot!

Arrogance was basically telling Lucien how to defeat them!

The rest of the five devils remained silent.

...

In Lance, in a spacious underground hall at the bottom of the Bright Hall.

There was an old cross in front of the hall that had witnessed the passage of time. Apart from this, there was only a rusted candlestick.

This was the first sanctuary that the Saint Truth had during its development.

At this time, the candles suddenly lit up. The twelve grand cardinals including Saint Kati, Saint Maria, Philibell, and Astira were

standing there, each in one corner.

In the middle of the hall, there was a strange three-dimensional structure that looked very different from those normal divine circles and magic circles. It was like a collection of childish scrawling.

Around the strange structure, Benedict III kept walking back and forth and checking. The rest of the grand cardinals also did the same to make sure that they wouldn't be sacrificed or devoured by it like Harex, the Lord of the Boundless Ocean.

"Ready?" Benedict III asked in the weak tone.

After multiple confirmations, the grand cardinals responded together, "Your Holiness, we're ready!"

Chapter 811: The Real Viken

Chapter 811: The “Real” Viken

Benedict III turned around abruptly. With his back against the old cross, he said solemnly, “Let’s begin.”

After a brief hesitation, Saint Kati suggested, “Your Holiness, should we wait for a while longer? Such an attempt is very dangerous. You may be heavily wounded and fall into dormancy even though you are a demigod. Why don’t we have another few minimal simulations? Or we can wait until the Angel King wakes up. He’ll be able to separate you from Monster Viken with God’s Guard at the critical moment.”

What he did not say out aloud was that, if the ritual to gather negative feelings and primeval devils to summon the primeval hell failed, His Holiness might be unable to control Monster Viken anymore after being heavily wounded and that he would even be swallowed. By then, with Monster Viken’s personality, which was close to that of primeval devils, they wouldn’t end well at all. The South Church would definitely fall apart, and even the Congress of Magic and the Dark Congress would suffer destructive strikes.

That was because Monster Viken did not have boundaries or anything that he needed to protect. His sole interest was destruction and corrupting other people. With that in mind, he might attack the magic apprentices, bishops, and arcanists alike without considering the consequences.

Faced with a demigod, only the experts above level three of legendary had a chance to save their lives or stall the enemy. Therefore, unless the other people stayed in Allyn or the Holy City forever, their destiny would be unavoidable. After all, there were few experts who could protect them.

Kati’s concerns were exactly what was on the mind of most Grand Cardinals. However, before they said anything, Benedict III already said slowly but peacefully, “I’m very confident about it, and I have

to thank Lucien Evans for his remarkable contributions to the studies of the observer effect.

“Let’s begin. After I overcome the insidious problems and I’m no longer restrained by Monster Viken, I’ll be the strongest demigod under the Lord. With the help of God’s Arrival, all the enemy forces will bend before us!”

He did not mention destroying the Congress of Magic or the Dark Congress because all the Grand Cardinals knew that the organizations protected by demigods would never really die until the demigods perished. Their worst outcome was to change their appearance and exist in a different form. Another cruel and cold fact was that demigods never died. They could always return from the river of fate.

Of course, after Lucien discovered the sun and confirmed the existence of planets, the Grand Cardinals were much more open-minded now. After all, there were so many more planets and resources. All they needed to do was to drive the Congress of Magic out of this world rather than seeking to eliminate them.

Hearing the pope’s confident declaration, the saints calmed down too. They believed that His Holiness would certainly not joke with his own life.

They left the corners and reached the twelve pillars that supported the weird cubic circle. Then, their bodies blurred into mists, and intense negative feelings flowed out.

Pope Viken stepped into the center and stuck his platinum staff against the hole at the top. Then, with his eyes half-closed, he chanted an evil, weird, and eccentric spell that was entirely different from the sacred and solemn divine power.

A wind started to blow. The feelings of gloom, darkness, corruption, and pain immediately filled this ancient sanctuary.

Centered at the platinum staff and Pope Viken, lines and symbols glittered. Some were silver, some crimson, some pure gold, and some dimly green. They changed nonstop exactly like the erratic

mind of human beings.

The light and symbols flowed toward the twelve pillars, dyeing the misty shadows of the Grand Cardinals in different colors. They floated fuzzily like phantoms made of the light that represented different negative feelings.

As the shadows that looked like the primeval devils took shape, screams, moans, and roars suddenly echoed inside the ancient sanctuary, making the place look like the most horrifying and brutal hell.

As if he had heard the summoning of the devils and corrupt souls, a deep dark shadow suddenly appeared behind Pope Viken, also with intense hate and fury. It was exactly Monster Viken.

Boom!

The moment Monster Viken appeared, dark air emerged from the void of the circle and exploded. Then, colorful light was condensed in the black air and stretched out boundlessly.

In the cluster of light, the faces of miserable human beings, devils, dragons, and vampires appeared. For a moment, all the crazy faces were moving in a mess. It truly felt like the primeval hell!

His eyes half-closed, Viken made another step forward and uttered obscure words, as if he were a god berating the devils.

The platinum staff glowed, and the primeval hell simulated at the center of the circle rose. After it gradually left the ground, the floor was no longer as vintage and gray as a while before. The strange symbols were gone, replaced by a deep, dark, and bottomless abyss.

The simulated primeval hell kept rising, and spots of light glittered in the abyssal darkness down below. Lights in different colors were emerging, and the faces of countless intelligent creatures were also showing up, exactly like the reflection of the fake primeval hell up above. The only difference was that the darkness here was high, mighty, manipulative, and intangible.

Viken had indeed summoned the primeval hell!

.....

Inside the primeval hell, as Lucien pressed forward, making Arrogance, Greed, Hypocrisy, and the other primeval devils smaller and smaller, the void and the rays of light in it suddenly began to tremble!

In the meantime, twelve shadows similar to the primeval devils were generated nearby, and the seven primeval devils expanded as if they had drunk tonics. They all laughed gloatingly and terrifyingly.

“Haha. Somebody summoned the primeval hell!” Hypocrisy looked at Lucien mockingly. “How unlucky of you. In such a case, it won’t be just a battle of your heart!”

Abhorrence gnashed its teeth. “Too many negative feelings and too many lost souls have been gathered in this place. The power when they are combined will be unforgettable for you! Face my fury and hate, and cry!”

“This is already the power of demigods, and your body is still outside, making it impossible for you to carry out all your strength!” Arrogance looked down at Lucien. “Kneel and beg. Perhaps I’ll give you a quick death!”

“Summoning the primeval hell...” Lucien looked at the void, stunned. So fast?

.....

Seeing that the primeval hell was summoned, Philibell, Philip, and the other Grand Cardinals were all relieved. They had survived one of the two dangers. Then, they would summon the projection of Mountain Paradise to balance the projection of the primeval hell so that the pope could complete the melting.

They thought and struggled to resist because the primeval hell had a strong attraction force on them in their current state. They might be lost and swallowed by the primeval hell if they were careless.

Right when they waited for Pope Viken to summon the projection

of Mountain Paradise with the platinum staff, Viken suddenly opened his eyes, which glowed like two suns.

In the meantime, the dark and corrupt Monster Viken behind him stepped forward and melted into his body.

As a result, Viken's left eye dimmed like the darkest night, which was a major contrast to the bright right eye. However, a strange balance seemed to have been maintained. He put on a mocking smile.

“What exactly has happened?”

“They have melted so easily?”

“Damn it!”

Different thoughts occurred to the Grand Cardinals, who subconsciously wanted to get out of the circle. However, the powerful force of assimilation from the primeval hell stalled them.

Viken laughed blatantly and pointed his platinum staff ahead. “You are fortunate and favored, and you will receive the greatest glory, which is to melt with me, the incarnation of the Lord, to wake up the one true god and become part of Him.”

As he pointed his platinum staff and uttered his crazy declaration that contained supernatural powers, the simulated primeval hell dispersed and tied up the Grand Cardinals. All of a sudden, they felt that Pope Viken was their destiny, and they sincerely wanted to melt into him!

“Why is this happening?” Saint Kati exclaimed in shock.

Viken, both the pope and the monster, sneered, “Because I am the greatest primeval devil, and you are equal to my clones! This is decided by the feature of primeval devils. I'm sorry that I neglected that in the files I gave to you. Those who did not become a demigod based on this path can never sense it.”

“No wonder you were willing to share it!” Philip cried desperately.

“Are you out of your mind? You are dissolving the foundation of the Church!” Philibell roared, stressing that the dissemination of faith couldn’t be done without them.

The colorful lights of negative feelings jumped among the Grand Cardinals, causing them to assimilate with Viken faster and faster.

In a warm smile, Viken said, “That cannot be helped. Although I appreciate Lucien Evans’ contributions to the observer theory and the two thought experiments, it is not a perfect theory after all. Our integration is not temporary, and we will be separated again.

“Of course, the most important reason is that I am not strong enough as an observer. So, I need you to melt into me in order to really summon the primeval hell. Only after I become a true god that everything can be perfectly solved.

“If I succeed, the Church will never collapse with me as the true god, and it doesn’t matter if you are here; if I fail, I’ll fall into a long dormancy and even get swallowed by Monster Viken, in which case the Church matters little to me! I don’t care if the world will be destroyed after my death!”

The Grand Cardinals couldn’t have been more regretful, but they were not devastated yet. They talked in private before and predicted possible changes. At this moment, if they were to take action together according to the emergency plan, and since Viken could not be distracted, there was a good chance that they could escape!

They were certainly no fools that would believe everything that the pope said!

Right when they mobilized all their strength and attacked together, Saint Maria and Grand Cardinal Philip suddenly lost focus and fell into madness, melting into the simulated primeval hell voluntarily!

Had they been controlled by Viken already?

Desperation, regrets, pain, and other feelings rose in the hearts of the other Grand Cardinals, making it even less possible for them to

resist the assimilation. As a result, they were melted and reflected in the real primeval hell!

Boom!

The darkness on the floor rose and embraced the fake primeval hell in the sky, gathering into a world that was full of betrayals, slaughters, jealousy, and lust!

Boom!

Behind Viken, the space was torn apart, and the hallowed, wondrous hymns came out. The glorious and brilliant Mountain Paradise had arrived!

The two of them moved toward each other, raising an uncanny air that surged toward the sky. In every corner in the entire world, the unusual view of half night and half day was showing up.

In the City in the Sky, Douglas sensed something when the primeval hell was gathered. He blinked to the midair and looked at the direction of the Holy City in a daze. Stars emerged in his eyes and moved in mysterious trajectories, as if he were performing astrology with them as the crystal balls.

“What is Viken trying to do?”

Chapter 812: Blockage

Chapter 812: Blockage

“What is Viken trying to do?”

At the bottom of the Boundless Ocean, in a magnificent black palace, the Lord of Hell, who was holding the gold trident, suddenly stood up from the throne. His red eyes that were always filled with mockery stared at the sky in shock. Through the blue water and the surging waves, he “saw” the unusual phenomenon where one half of it was evil and dark and the other half was sacred and bright.

At the same time, his real self deep inside the hell suddenly felt palpitation, as if something very close to him had gone out of control.

“The primeval hell?”

Maltimus’ voice of confusion echoed in the palace of the sea emperor. It was safe to say that the primeval hell and him were in a relationship of duality. However, he was not a representation of the primeval hell, and the primeval hell was not a part of him. They were only connected to some degree.

Even so, the primeval hell was of paramount importance for him!

Suddenly, his lips, which had been wearing a mocking smile, were frozen as he thought of a possibility. “Viken intends to become a true god? Has he lost his mind? Does he not fear that he will lose all his consciousness and get melted by ‘Mountain Paradise’ or the primeval hell?”

“Now that he balances Mountain Paradise with the primeval hell, it’s possible that he can really grasp the tiny chance of hope...”

Although Maltimus would love to observe whether or not it was viable, he knew very well that Viken had to be stopped. If Viken really surpassed the limits, the demigods like him would probably perish for real!

No demigods other than him could make the advancement!

.....

In the Valley of Fiery Stone in the Dark Mountain Range...

Alterna, whose long blond hair was tied up and dangled on her shoulder, pressed her hands on the Sword of Origin and Destiny on the ground and stared at her pet, Danisos the Dragon of Time and Luminosity, carefully, with her mouth moving vaguely, as if she were trying to hold back her saliva.

Danisos kept his head low and dared not look at Alterna, fearing that he might be eaten if he looked at her again.

Suddenly, he had uncanny fear and couldn't help but raise his head, and Silver Moon Alterna before him had vanished at some point!

The high sky that was full of space gaps and dark mists had been completely covered by the half darkness and half brilliance.

"Is it caused by demigod advancement? No! What's Viken trying to do?" With the preliminary control over time. Danisos had a basic perception of fate. So, he realized what was going on very quickly.

.....

In the Maple Palace in Antiffler in the Holy Heilz Empire...

Rudolf II clenched his right hand hard, with both mockery and fury.

"Viken is crazy enough to lay fingers on Mountain Paradise? Does he hate that his life is too long and he can never really die?

"Soon, although he will not really perish, it will definitely be more miserable than the real demise!"

Many thoughts occurred to him, but they eventually gathered into a concern.

"Will Viken succeed?"

.....

In the ancient sanctuary below the ground of the Holy City, when the Desperate World gathered by the projection of the primeval hell encountered the projection of Mountain Paradise summoned by the platinum staff, a storm of energy swept out in circles, blowing down the wall of the hall and knocking up the dome!

BOOM!

The clerics in the Holy City heard a dull but extremely loud explosion. Their ears hummed first, and soon, they lost their hearing.

The ground rolled up and down like a gigantic snake. The churches, ashrams, and abbeys protected by the divine power collapsed abruptly.

BOOM!

Stunned, the clerics watched the Bright Hall, which was a symbol of the center of the Church, being blown away, while a blurry, colorful world that was full of pain and desperation entangled with the glorious Mountain Paradise where hymns were resonating, before they rose into the clouds like a blast!

Immediately, from the evil and dark knight, intelligent creatures appeared. There were humans, dwarfs, elves, dragons, and many ancient species that had been extinct for a long time. In a sacred and bright day, the angels with pure wings on the back and the holy spirits sang and praised in the infinite light.

In the place where they were gathered, an old man who was wearing a sacred crown stood straight despite the pain on his face. His whole body was both illusionary and real, and it was as transcendental and intangible as the pictures next to him. It seemed that he was really in a different world; a marvelous world that was higher than the earth and the sky!

“His Holiness?”

“What’s he doing?”

The clerics were shocked. In their eyes, the pope extended the platinum staff in his right hand, illuminating a corner of the dark and corrupt world, and the dark and evil shadow on the left side stepped forward, contaminating the bright and sacred heaven.

Such a view could not only be seen in the Holy City but in every place, including Allyn, Rentato, Antiffler, Syracuse, and Aalto!

“Isn’t it Benedict III?” Having just played a game, Heidi was stretching her arms to relax when she suddenly stiffened. She just saw the astonishing sky outside the window.

Annick, who had been well-tortured by the eraser experiment and the delayed choice experiment, also raised his head and looked at the pope in a daze, not knowing what was happening.

Was the unusual phenomenon caused by demigod advancement? But he was already a demigod!

In the marvelous world where he could be seen in every place, Viken couldn’t have looked more twisted. He maintained his sanity with the power of the primeval hell and prevented himself from being melted by Mountain Paradise while avoiding the corruption and assimilation of the primeval hell with the enhancement of Mountain Paradise. He tried to seize the point of balance and seek the gate of breakthrough with the enormous power!

As a result, he shouldered excruciating pain, but he still mumbled to himself, “Not enough! Not enough!”

The brightness that the projection of Mountain Paradise let out was even more dazzling. The clerics and believers in the Holy City suddenly felt something. They all knelt on the ground.

“Almighty Lord, you are one, and everyone.”

In every place that worshiped the God of Truth, the devout believers and clerics, regardless of their locations and ages, were all caught in a certain holy, touching atmosphere. They all knelt on the ground and prayed at the same time.

“You are the beginning, and the end.”

“You are the moment, and forever.”

From them, brilliant, pure, and sacred light flew out into the midair and melted into the day!

The dark world was immediately suppressed. It was almost purged, but it still managed to deal with it.

Viken kept on murmuring as if he had gone mad, “Not enough! Not enough!”

Suddenly, a cold and bright moon appeared in the sky. Driving away part of the darkness as well as the brightness, the pure and dreamy moonlight enshrouded Viken at the center.

On the other side, noises of tide burst out, and a gold trident rose to the sky with overwhelming blueness. In the seawater, there were no fish or seaweeds, but erupting volcanoes, bottomless canyons, silent battlefields, and other sceneries of hell!

“Life Deprivation!” The Lord of Hell pointed the gold trident at Pope Viken!

.....

Above the City in the Sky, Douglas said solemnly, “Brook will stay in Allyn. Hathaway and Fernando will come with you. The other members of the Highest Council except for the legends who are supervising the branches will all return to Allyn.”

At such a moment, only top legends could play a role on the battlefield. Therefore, Douglas did not ask the other legendary sorcerers to join him.

Douglas’ voice was not loud, but every sorcerer in the City in the Sky heard it clearly. They immediately panicked.

“Master, why am I the one who stays here? It should be Hathaway.” Brook flew into the sky and expressed his confusion.

Douglas said solemnly, “You are the person most likely to reach the demigod level other than Lucien. Bear the big picture in mind and

don't be stubborn.”

He was not subtle at all.

“Master...” Brook fell silent.

At this moment, Fernando and Hathaway had already joined Douglas. The Lord of the Undead had also teleported himself over.

“Vicente, don't play tough.” Fernando glared at him.

Vicente sneered with his skinny cheek that did not have any muscles. “Old pervert, I am a top legend as well! If you fail, there is no place that I can hide in!”

The Resting Place appeared in his back. From the black tombstones, roars echoed from the depths of hell. It was the first call and the initial cry of life!

Chapter 813: Mayhem

“The Original Body?” Douglas, Fernando, and Hathaway were all knowledgeable sorcerers. Based on the black tombstones, the screams of death, and the initial cry, they recognized that Vicente’s real body was indeed the legendary Original Body of the school of necromancy!

However, at such a critical moment, they did not have the time to ask about the details. After Douglas enhanced themselves with a legendary spell that was similar to the telepathic bond, the four of them blinked to the unusual view of half hell and half heaven in the high sky.

Although Viken’s real body was above the Holy City, his attempt seemed to have placed him in a strange domain that was marvelously connected to every corner of the main material world. He was in the middle of this world but somewhat beyond it.

It was truly an unimaginable state. That was why the unusual phenomenon created by Viken was seen by all intelligent creatures, and that was why Silver Moon Alterna, the Lord of Hell, Douglas, Fernando, and the rest of them could enter the strange domain and attack Viken directly without spending time on space jump!

The Silver Moon fell in cold light, and the tide surged crazily with the life-depriving air of hell. However, the moment they approached Viken, the intimidating heaven on one side where angels and holy spirits gathered unleashed sacred and ivory light that filled up the space next to Viken, creating a shelter where there was nothing but the holy light. Chaos, darkness, evilness, and pain were gone.

Viken was now able to perform the legendary divine powers like the Blessed Realm without chanting!

Even though he hadn’t succeeded yet, such a change seemed to be indicating something!

The bright moonlight from the falling moon hit the Blessed Realm,

making a light splash out. A layer of black fire was raised, and the holy light was burnt into nothingness.

The moment the tide hit the Blessed Realm, it lost all the splendor and became gray and dim, as if most of its vitality had flowed away. It was exactly “Life Deprivation”, the Lord of Hell’s best skill!

Under the collective attack of two demigods, a crack echoed in everybody’s heart. The Blessed Realm had collapsed.

The remaining black fire and the black water spread out to Viken, but he showed no reaction at all because illusionary ripples were spreading out of his body as if he were in the middle of “God’s Guard”. He was placed in a different world that was more marvelous and strange. He was higher and more intangible than demigods. Therefore, the remaining power of the two demigods after being blocked by Blessed Realm could not break the gap and really touch Viken’s body.

It meant that Silver Moon Alterna and the Lord of Hell’s strongest attacks had been blocked! Even though Viken was focused on his breakthrough and could not spare his attention, he was not on the losing side at all!

“Is this really the correct path?” The Lord of Hell habitually thought of retreating first and solving the problem with schemes later, but he got control of himself quickly. If Viken was not stopped and taken care of now, there wouldn’t be another opportunity in the future however many plots and schemes he had.

Not overestimating the power of true gods while inferring based on existent levels, true gods could definitely crush the general demigods exactly like demigods could crush general legends. Perhaps only Viken could’ve survived the attack of a true god with “God’s Arrival”. No other demigods could achieve the same.

“Eternal Blaze!”

Suddenly, Douglas’ solemn and intimidating voice echoed next to the ears of Maltimus and the Silver Moon.

The Silver Moon rose again and got away from the center. The tide ebbed crazily, revealing the empty “beach”. Viken seemed to have sensed danger. He drove the scared kingdom that was formed by the power of Mountain Paradise to spew out thick and divine light again, letting the Blessed Realm reappear.

He was now really able to perform divine powers freely without any chanting!

However, it was the end of it. The dim, desperate, and devastating “incarnation” of the primeval hell spurted out streaks of light in different colors, which moved as unpredictably as the treacherous human mind. They had interwoven into a gigantic and transparent heart that covered Viken and the Blessed Realm.

At the same time, the half illusionary and half real holy light flew from all directions in places like the Holy City, San Ivansburg, Aalto, and Rentato. Except in the Dark Mountain Range, the City in the Sky, and the dozen regimes of fake gods, almost every place had pious believers or clerics who kneeled on the ground, touched as they offered their power of faith.

BOOM!

The most dazzling light burst out, eclipsing the brilliant heaven and the dark hell. If it were not in the marvelous domain, the creatures who raised their head and looked at the sky at this moment would have been blinded.

The high temperature at the center twisted everything, but nobody could see it. They could only sense part of the secrets from the crazily raging storm of energy and the heat that seemed to be igniting all matters.

The ebbing tide manifested the views of hell at the edge of the marvelous domain, blocking the energy storm, which was already far away from the center.

“This is almost as powerful as ‘God’s Arrival!’” Although Maltimus hated to admit it, he had to draw the conclusion that Douglas’ Eternal Blaze was no weaker than God’s Arrival after he became a

demigod. “However, this is a ranged spell and the power is not concentrated enough. Its damage on demigods is not as good as that of God’s Arrival. Also, it cannot erase all the traces. But of course, it has certainly reached the maximum of pure violence.”

As the energy storm rushed over nonstop, Maltimus frowned slightly. “It’s exactly because the energy is not focused that I and the glutton cannot cooperate with his attack. I only hope that this ‘Eternal Blaze’ can blow up Viken’s defense and prevent him from recovering for now.”

Under such circumstances, it was impossible for the Lord of Hell and the Silver Moon to give Viken more attacks, which would have been “drowned” by the energy storm and the super-high temperature. If they had attacked in advance, they couldn’t have avoided the Eternal Blaze themselves, because if they left enough time for themselves to dodge, Viken, who could perform legendary divine powers directly, could also set up defenses. It would have only been a waste of time!

After the energy storm was more or less pacified, Maltimus and Alterna hurried to sense Viken through the barriers, ready to seize the opportunity to completely shatter his defenses.

At this moment, the corrupt mind made of the power of the primeval hell next to Viken had already been vaporized, and the Blessed Realm, where hallowed hymns were echoing, had been broken as well. Even his body that was transforming between illusionary and real was dimmed, as if the marvelous domain that separated the reality from him could not take such massive energy and such terrifying heat.

Of course, the Lord of Hell believed that it was because the marvelous state was not perfect enough and had not touched the essence. Otherwise, it could never have been broken by pure violence.

Maltimus was delighted at Viken’s situation. Eternal Blaze was indeed almost as powerful as God’s Arrival.

However, before he had the opportunity to attack, the divine

kingdom and the primeval hell on Viken's two sides spurted out their powers again, and the Blessed Realm and the Corrupt Mind reappeared, protecting Viken at the center.

His cooldown seemed to have been reduced to the minimum, and he had infinite and incessant energy.

Under such circumstances, the Lord of Hell and the Silver Moon naturally failed to seize the momentary opportunity!

Viken was not bothered by the collective attacks of three demigods and multiple top legends at all. He continued roaring crazily, "Not enough! Not enough!"

Together with his roar, the whole world seemed dimmed. In the primeval hell that was jumbled with various colors, the faces of humans and dragons were more vivid than ever. The twelve figures were even leaking out actively.

Inside the Holy City...

A priest who prayed piously was dwelling in the touching atmosphere that was devoid of pain and sadness when he suddenly sensed excruciating pain on his back. A red heart appeared on the ground before him and kept beating in inertia.

He looked at his chest, only to see a gigantic, bleeding hole.

"It's... It's my heart?" He used the last bit of his strength to turn back, only to see a priest that he knew.

The priest's facial muscles were twisted, and infinite hate beamed out of his eyes. He put his right hand on his mouth and licked the blood on it.

He did not look like a human being any longer, but more like a hateful devil!

Why? Since when had he been paying tributes to the primeval devils?

The pious priest collapsed; his question unanswered.

“Ahhh! Ahhh! Ahhh!”

Screams echoed in the Holy City, Aalto, Ifai, Rentato, and many other small cities and towns. Dark, twisted, and illusionary shadows that were brimming with negative feelings flew into the sky and embraced the corrupt and desperate mind that the primeval hell turned into!

The evil and dark world spread out and reached another balance with the divine kingdom. The twelve figures in it kept flying to the ground and then flying back in cycles.

The City in the Sky was already covered in a mist, with a starry sky popping up.

After Douglas and the rest of them left, Brook fully activated the defense without the slightest carelessness.

However, the sorcerers in Allyn were still more or less panicked. Mr. President's order and the uncanny view of the sky that they could see had given them uncanny fear.

Suddenly, an explosion burst out, attracting the attention of all the sorcerers around. They saw that a sorcerer had been blown into two halves by an enormous fireball, and his body was still burning in the flame. On his opposite side was a young sorcerer whose face was full of jealousy. He was attacking everyone around him crazily.

What's going on?

The sorcerers in Allyn were even more panicked.

On the top floor of the headquarters, Brook sensed the accident and gave the order calmly. “With the help of the city defense, the Punishment Department will execute the sorcerers who have been corrupted by primeval devils before. The other sorcerers are allowed to defend themselves with magic without being restrained by the rules of the Congress of Magic. Everyone, there is no need to panic. No more people will be corrupted under the blockage of the city defense.”

At this moment, an archmage came to his library and reported, “Mr.

Brook, something strange has happened!”

Chapter 814: Plan of the Devils

Chapter 814: Plan of the Devils

Brook's spiritual power spread out in the whole library, controlling the pivot of the magic circles, commanding the tower guard, supervising the defense of Allyn, and watching over the big picture of the whole City in the Sky. He could not spare much of his attention to the archmage. So, he asked from far away, "What happened?"

How could he have neglected any accident in the City in the Sky when he controlled the city defense?

The archmage said quickly, "A few members of the Highest Council who should've returned did not return!"

While saying, he walked into the library in a panic, but Brook was too occupied to remove the defense circle. He simply asked, "Who didn't come back?"

"There are..." The archmage spoke something, but suddenly, he lunged forward. His body became blurry and twisted, as if it was jumbled by streaks of light in different colors.

Zi, Zi, Zi.

In weird noises, the devil-like phantom passed the first magic circle, but it was soon condensed between the two magic circles.

Then, it traveled through the magic circles and lunged at Brook who was at the center.

Every time the magic circle took effect, it would turn from real into illusionary, as if it were in a different world, in order to pass them. However, such a status could not last. So, it had to sense the fluctuations of the magic circle keenly in order to find places for it to step on.

It was not until then that Brook realized that the guy had been

corrupted and possessed by a powerful primeval devil through the seed that was planted into his heart a very long time ago.

He stared at the primeval devil. His eyes were filled with electricity as he tried to identify the person.

The devil's face changed all the time, now old and now young, now handsome and now hideous. It was quite dazzling.

Brook, however, recognized one of the faces. He asked in shock, "Melmax?"

He was the only top legendary knight at present!

"Melmax" laughed crazily. "Melmax is already dead. Standing before you is an incarnation of the True God Viken!"

Brook sighed, as if he realized something. "You're the most determined and devout knight that I know. I didn't know that you would also choose the path of primeval devils, and by using the primitive way without sharing the negative feelings with a container, no less."

Not every Grand Cardinal could find a legendary fake god or Demon Lord as their container. Therefore, many of them chose Thanos' version, which had a lot of problems. Melmax, who felt that he was determined enough to overcome the negative feelings, was the one who accomplished it first. Also, there wasn't really any influence after he completed it, at least none he could see.

However, after he was utilized and possessed by Viken, the negative feelings in his heart completely burst out.

Manipulated by Viken, the primeval devils that the twelve Grand Cardinals turned into possessed different people through the seeds of corruption that they planted earlier, attempting to raise havoc and create more negative feelings for Viken to absorb.

Of course, the seeds of corruption that could avoid the blockage of city defense had high requirements. The targets had to voluntarily allow the devils to enter, and they had to have abundant negative feelings in the first place.

The more inconspicuous projects were the projections with which Viken controlled Saint Maria and Philip. It had been made when they resonated with Mountain Paradise and received the grace of the God of Truth. The target would feel none of it until it was possessed at the critical moment.

“This is my offering to the Lord. You faithless sorcerers would never understand it.” Melmax suddenly became solemn. Then, a sun rose slowly behind him, illuminating the horizon and driving the darkness away.

The devil was capable of using his “Morning” blood power!

It seemed that his knowledge of the blood power was beyond that of all the legends. No wonder he was the only top legendary knight at present.

Brook sighed again and asked Prospell to lock the top three levels of the magic tower. Electric currents burst out of his body, and magnetic fields appeared, twisting the darkness. The Kingdom of Electromagnetism had arrived.

He tried to drag “Melmax” into his own demiplane for the battle, in case the other sorcerers of Allyn were affected.

However, “Melmax” had come to create chaos and more negative feelings. How could he drop the opportunity? Although the body and soul of an archmage could only carry out the strength of top legendary briefly, it was enough to resist the magnificent attraction from the Kingdom of Electromagnetism.

He's George, Atlant's student. Where's Atlant? When they were about to fight, Brook suddenly thought of that.

.....

In Nekso Palace in Rentato City...

After a silver sword flashed, a knight in a solid, delicate full armor watched his body cut into halves in shock. His face was still twisted with jealousy and hate.

Crack, crack, crack.

The two parts of his body were separated into countless pieces and bones and fell on the ground like raindrops.

Looking at the tall figure before them as well as her purple long hair and silver armor, the nobles who were hiding in the Nekso Palace heaved a long sigh in relief. It was too dreadful! A radiant knight turned into a devil and killed plenty of nobles. If the queen hadn't arrived in time, they would have been brutalized!

Winston, the other legendary knight of Holm, was watching over the colony in the alternate dimensions. So, they placed all their hope on Queen Natasha.

"Rest assured. The Congress of Magic has remarkable studies on primeval devils. Few powerful knights were possessed, or they couldn't have escaped our attention. As for the knights of lower ranks, they do not have enough negative feelings to be corrupted. I've asked the Sword of Truth's Knights to eliminate the corrupted with the police. The peace of Rentato will be restored," Natasha said calmly.

He knew that the corrupted could only cause limited chaos and damage. What would decide everybody's fate was the battle of demigods and top legends that was going on in the sky.

The queen's unhurried tone and steady attitude tranquilized the trembling nobles. All their negative feelings began to disperse.

At this moment, John walked out of a secret room within the palace with Joel, Alisa, and Grand Duke of Orvarit. He carried a thick-barreled gun that emitted silver metal colors on his back. It was a Gauss Rifle that Lucien created for him in person. Every shot equaled an attack of a radiant knight.

"Go to the Atomic Universe," Natasha said to her father, Joel, and John, not bothering that many other nobles were around. They would be absolutely safe over there.

John nodded and walked into the portal on Natasha's left side with

Grand Duke of Orvarit who looked rather complicated.

Looking at that, the nobles were suddenly enlivened and filled with hope and expectations. If they could also enter the Atomic Universe, wouldn't they be able to avoid the havoc outside and the unpredictable attacks?

"Your Majesty, could you also allow us to enter the Atomic Universe? We'll only add to your trouble in your place," an earl said first.

"Yes! We'll be safe if we hide in the Atomic Universe!"

"Your Majesty, we are all your loyal subjects. Please protect us!"

All the nobles echoed excitedly. For a moment, the idea seemed to be supported by everyone.

Natasha stepped forward and stopped before the portal. She looked around at the nobles and said solemnly, "You can hide here. There's no need to go to the Atomic Universe."

"Why? Your Majesty, are we not your subjects?"

"Your Majesty, are you going to renounce the contract between the sovereign and the nobles and stop protecting us?"

"You don't deserve to be the queen!"

Suspensions and criticisms came out of the nobles. The near-death experience just now had filled them with fear, which burst out after Natasha turned them down.

"My father, Aunt Camil, and Lucien's Uncle Joel and Aunt Alisa have been under the protection of Lucien and me. I'm very certain that they are not corrupted or possessed, but I'm not very sure about you. So, for the safety of the Atomic Universe..." Natasha said as calmly as if she were ordering the food for tonight. "Whoever approaches the portal will die."

"Don't bother her. Let's go over and enter the Atomic Universe. She dare not kill us unless she doesn't want to be the queen anymore!" a

noble shouted in the crowd and was cheered by everyone. All the nobles swarmed toward the portal.

A cold and indifferent sword flashed, and the few nobles in the lead watched each other's upper half bodies leaving their lower half bodies. Their blood sprang and sprayed on the people behind them.

"She... She really dares to kill us..." The nobles were stunned, not having the courage to move further.

Natasha then said indifferently, "As I said, whoever approaches the portal will die."

She pointed the Sword of Truth at the ground, and the nobles backed off subconsciously.

Right then, an old voice echoed in the crowd, "When did you discover me?"

The nobles dispersed in fear, revealing the old man who had been hiding at the center since nobody knew when. His face changed between an earl that everybody was familiar with and an old man. The only thing they had in common was that their eyes were all closed.

"Atlant, it's you..." Natasha raised the Sword of Truth and chuckled. "There were indeed some flaws. For example, the nobles were too moody, and the radiant knight somehow drove them to this place just now. However, it mattered little to me, because even without your manipulation, I would've killed anyone who approached the portal.

"At a moment like this, the safety of the Atomic Universe must be guaranteed. After all, all of Lucien's resurrection methods are kept in Babel. I cannot be careless about that."

Suddenly, the portal glittered, and John walked out.

"Why are you here?" Natasha asked in confusion.

John said solemnly, "I am your knight and the captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights. At such a moment, I have to stay with my

teammates and protect the peace of Holm.”

Natasha was silent for a moment. Then, she nodded her head. “Go now.”

Atlant quietly watched John leave and the nobles run out of the palace before he said with a bitter smile, “A real knight... I wanted to be someone like him, but I didn’t know until today that you people would be controlled by Viken after turning into the status of primeval devils.

“Although you have the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Truth, you cannot stop me from destroying all of Lucien’s resurrection facilities, because I am an authentic level-three legend now.”

After Lucien left, the portal from the Allyn magic tower to the Atomic Universe had been half-closed. Nobody could enter without the permission of the people inside. Therefore, the “gate” in the Nekso Palace became Atlant’s target.

Natasha listened quietly before she suddenly slashed backward.

The silver light flashed, and the portal dimmed before it collapsed in a crack in the end.

Looking at Atlant’s shock and disbelief, Natasha put on a smile of satisfaction that was as beautiful as a rising sun.

“Now, I cannot go in either.”

Chapter 815: Get the Situation Under Control

Chapter 815: Get the Situation Under Control

In the City in the Sky...

A senior-rank sorcerer shot out Dissociation crazily, making the common and middle-rank sorcerers as grim as the dead. Desperation was spreading out.

Suddenly, a mist fell and imprisoned the senior-rank sorcerer, covering and dissolving “Dissociation”. Then, a deep and dark ray pierced out of the mist and hit the senior-rank sorcerer.

Immediately, his magic effects were gone, and he could no longer cast any spell. Even though he was despising other people in arrogance, he was briefly stunned. After all, magic was already his instinct!

That was the reaction that most sorcerers had after they were hit by Antimagic Ray.

At this moment, spells came from all directions, completely taming the senior-rank sorcerer in neat cooperation.

The order that Brook gave the sorcerers of the Punishment Department was that they should try to control and seal the targets if their safety could be guaranteed, but if they felt it was dangerous based on their abundant battle experience, they could execute the targets without fearing investigations or penalties in the future.

It was not until the crazy sorcerer up ahead was shackled that the middle-rank and low-rank sorcerers who were desperate and anguished finally woke up from the nightmare. They saw people walking out of the white mist. The badge of black staff on the strangers’ chests suggested that they worked for the Punishment Department. The young man leading them smiled at the sorcerers who hadn’t entirely recovered from their shock yet and said, “Don’t

worry. Few people are corrupted, and we have basically cleared them. However, you'd better not run about on the street, in case my subordinates accidentally hurt you."

Hearing the reliable, comforting voice, the middle-rank and low-rank sorcerers around were finally relieved. They looked ahead, only to discover that the fire in the burning magic tower had been extinguished. Although smoke was still popping up, the explosions and cries were dying down.

After the young man left, a low-rank sorcerer finally confirmed with other people. "Is he Mr. Jurisian?"

"Yes, that's him. It seems that the corrupted have indeed been curbed!" The middle-rank sorcerer next to him heaved a long sigh.

Jurisian was a weirdo among sorcerers for choosing to join the Affair Committee instead of the Arcana Review Board after he won the highest honors including the Silver Moon Medal. However, it was for the same reason that he was one of the most powerful and influential persons in the Affair Committee. His intelligence couldn't have been false.

The low-rank sorcerer who asked at the beginning was obviously relieved. "That's only natural. Except for the legends who are watching over the major branches, all the legends have returned. The corrupted cannot cause much harm."

He did not believe that legendary sorcerers could be affected.

The middle-rank sorcerer who answered his question nodded, but then he remembered something and pointed at the sky with a bitter smile. "What we have here is just some minor trouble. The real danger is out there.

"If Mr. President cannot stop Viken, we..."

For a moment, the atmosphere, which had been getting better, became quiet and depressing again. All the sorcerers on the spot raised their heads and looked at the battle in the sky, where the fate of the whole world would be decided, but there was nothing they

could do about it.

It was cruel yet undeniable that several people could decide the future of the majority. The differences in capabilities were too obvious. This was not arcana, where a certain genius might be able to “defeat” a legend because of certain inspirations. Even someone as talented as Mr. Evans spent more than ten years practicing before he finally caught up to the few guys in the sky.

As the chaos was settled, more and more sorcerers in the City in the Sky paid attention to the battle in the sky. Heidi, Annick, Samantha, Felipe, Ataman... There was no exception.

Only Oliver, Hand of Annihilation, and Bergner, the Prophet, were teleporting themselves to the thirty-fourth floor of the Allyn magic tower, ready to assist Brook to deal with the devilized Melmax.

It was not because they did not trust Brook. Even if he were to duel with Melmax’s original self, Brook wouldn’t be on the losing side. Right now, Melmax arrived as a projection in a body, and he could only briefly carry out the top legendary capabilities, so it wouldn’t be too hard for Brook to defeat him with the help of Allyn’s defense.

The only thing that was tricky was that the battle had to be finished quickly or transferred to a demiplane, in case great losses were caused to Allyn. Although the city was well-defended, it might not be able to take an explosion that burst out from within.

.....

Inside the third generic school...

Shivering, Ali and his classmates hid in the classroom while they watched a devil, whose body had turned enormous, chasing after the teachers and janitors who were organized to defend the school. Some of them were sorcerers or magic apprentices, some were retired soldiers, and some were knight teachers who taught fighting and knight’s code of conduct. Although they were not of high levels, they were still able to resist the enemy for a while.

Looking at the twisted face and the burning eyes on the devil, Ali

felt fear from the bottom of his heart. *What's going on? How is this happening?*

Terrorized, he couldn't have admired the teachers who protected them with magic or blood power more. That was the "essential ability" after all the fancy exteriors were gone, like the knowledge he had picked up.

Scary roars echoed in the school building nonstop, building up the tension in the atmosphere. The whole classroom was like a warehouse full of alchemical dynamites that were waiting for a tiny spark to blow up.

Bang!

A huge noise of collision came over. Stunned, Ali saw that the devil, which was getting stronger and stronger and suppressing his teachers, fell on the ground and cramped before it split apart.

"What attack was that?"

"Have the knights come to our aid?"

In their exclamations, Ali saw that a team of fully-armored knights came from far away on an aircraft, and the golden-haired man standing in the lead of the massive aircraft was holding a thick rifle in his hand. Obvious electric arcs were still dancing out of the barrel.

"Dear students, I am John Wesley, captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights. There's no need to panic. The situation is already under control. We will take over the defense in this area and clear the rest who are corrupted. Please don't panic and don't run amok."

John's voice was shivering as he spoke. It could not be helped. In order to stabilize the situation and everybody's mind to stop the negative feelings from gathering, he made use of the senior-rank electromagnetic gun just now. As a result, he could barely control his body at this moment.

However, even his shivering voice sounded like "hymn" for Ali and the other students. Many of them were crying; their fear and hate

flowing out with their tears.

Ali collapsed against the wall. It was too dangerous just now. A dead body was lying in his classroom! If it were a music class or one on noble etiquette today, instead of a magic-related class where the teacher killed the corrupted student as soon as possible, there might have been dire consequences.

Noble etiquette, noble... He suddenly remembered Jane and grew nervous. How was the Mills School? Was Jane alright?

The more he thought, the more worried he was. Although he knew that the Mills School was much better defended than his school, he still could not stop himself from worrying.

It's dangerous to run out. It's dangerous on the street... Hesitating and struggling, Ali suddenly stood up and was about to run to the Mills School.

Suddenly, a shadow jumped before him and stopped him with a sword. "Where are you going?"

Obviously, he had been treated as a corrupted.

Looking at the knight before him, Ali decided to confess the truth after hesitating for a moment. "Mr. Knight, I have a friend in the Mills School. I want to confirm her safety."

The knight frowned. "Those who were corrupted in the Mills School had been cleared out. Since none of the teachers were weak, no innocent people were hurt."

Ali almost collapsed again after hearing that, feeling fortunate after the disaster. He never believed that a kind girl like Jane would be corrupted anyway.

At this moment, John went into the office and turned on the loudspeaker.

"Dear friends, this is 'Arcana Voice'. I will broadcast to you the updates in Allyn, Rentato, and other places..." "Nightingale" Louise was given the important task of calming everybody down.

“... Mr. Raventi is watching over the Holm Royal Magic Tower, and Mr. Morris is going to the Nekso Palace to activate the defense circle and help the queen...”

“... The report of the Mills School is provided by Jane, an intern at our radio station. She would like to tell all her friends that she is safe and there is no need to worry about her. Also, she would like her friends to call XXXXXX...”

Ali was completely relaxed now. He turned his eyes at the sky and looked at the battle scene that was beyond his imagination while praying silently in his heart, *Great God of Truth, Emperor of Arcana, and Atom Controller, please help us make things better...*

Similar prayers and hope were everywhere in Rentato City.

.....

Inside the primeval hell...

The lost souls and the streaks of light in different colors joined into the bodies of Arrogance, Greed, and Hypocrisy, making them larger, taller, and more and more concrete.

“You are dead for sure!” Abhorrence grinned hideously at Lucien.

Lucien, who was considering what had happened, suddenly raised his head. His deep and bottomless eyes made the cranky devil shut its mouth.

Chapter 816: Confirmation

Chapter 816: Confirmation

Sensing that it could not be daunted by Lucien who hadn't even said anything yet, Hypocrisy raised its head and laughed. "Seven authentic top legends, twelve incarnations that are formed through the reverse summoning of the main material world, and countless more lost souls. Lucien Evans, there is no way that you can resist it. No top legend can resist them. Also, you have no escape in this place because your body is still connected to the Gate of Desire!"

Its words sounded half true and half false. There was no telling whether it was shaking Lucien's confidence or creating a desperate atmosphere, but since it was an external reflection of the mind, such communication did not delay their attack at all. Therefore, together with the laughter of Hypocrisy and the roars of Abhorrence, the transparent, illusionary souls, which were mixed with black, gold, or green negative feelings, lunged at Lucien from various directions.

In the meantime, the primeval devils like Arrogance and Greed also changed their forms, appearing as Fernando, Hathaway, Brook, Lucien, Danisos, and other top legends as they tried to replicate their abilities to attack Lucien. For the primeval devils that did not have real bodies, the top legends who were more like spell casters were more suitable for them to carry out their supernatural powers to affect the mind.

As a result, Lucien was faced with Fernando's "Furious Storm", Hathaway's "Luxury Cracking", Brook's "Electromagnetic Decline", Danisos' breath of time, Harex's "Death Vortex", and his own "Positron Cannon". Also, such attacks were not simple illusions but carried actual damage!

.....

In the high sky, inside the marvelous realm that the whole world could see.

When Viken absorbed negative feelings and the corrupt souls crazily, making the Desperate World projected by the primeval hell darker and more obvious, Vicente's body suddenly trembled at the edge, and the dim fire in his eye sockets was blackened. However, his face was dead and his muscles had withered a long time ago, making it impossible for him to show any additional expression.

Hehe. Vicente snorted. His body burst out into a cluster of grayness that was full of the scent of death. It revolved in the sky nonstop and opened a black gate that seemed to be made of pure death.

Hu!

The gate let out a long and distant sigh because it was opened all of a sudden. A black body taller than all giants walked out like a mountain.

Enveloped in the black air, the body seemed to be wearing a misty coat. Through the black air, it could be vaguely seen that it was made of dragons, humans, elves, dwarfs, werewolves, demons, devils, and other intelligent creatures. It emitted enormous and astounding pressure.

The moment it appeared, the intelligent lives in the black air opened their eyes at the same time. As a result, black, transparent shadows appeared in the void, only to be swallowed by the intelligent lives that constituted the Original Body, before they screamed and became part of it. The intense pain and abhorrence were dwarfed by the everlasting death.

Fernando, Hathaway, the elven queen, and the other top legends cleared the ambush of the primeval devils in their own ways. Douglas, the Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell were having a relatively easy time because the dark shadows could not approach them at all.

At this moment, Vicente's "Original Body" suddenly opened its eyes, and two dim red flames bounced out. Wherever his eyes reached, everything became a dead and cold void. Even the Corrupt Mind and the Desperate World around Viken were gradually stiffened into eternal peace. Only the Blessed Realm was barely affected.

It was the most special ability of the Original Body, known as “Original Stare” or “Stare of the Death”. It was similar to Apsis’ Life Removal but was more powerful, and it was almost on par with the Lord of Hell’s Life Deprivation.

Under the “Stare of the Death”, one of the defense layers around Viken was immediately dissolved. Only the Blessed Realm was left there standing.

It did not mean that Vicente was as strong as demigods. It was only because the legendary product of necromancy plus alchemy was unique and suppressed the corrupt phantoms that did not have real entities.

That was also the specialty of magic. By choosing the right magic, it would be possible to resist an enemy that was much more formidable than oneself.

Seeing what the Original Body had achieved, the Lord of Hell seized the opportunity. He did not say anything but simply raised his gold trident as he commanded the ocean to attack the Blessed Realm.

“Passage of the Styx!”

Maltimus did not discuss with Alterna and Demartes because he believed that they would definitely see and grasp the opportunity!

The blue water immediately turned gray. Floating in it were the translucent, dull souls. It flowed from the void and into the void, as if it had penetrated the whole process from life to death.

It was the mysterious Styx, the center of hell and abyss! Naturally, the attack was also one of the Lord of Hell’s most powerful attacks.

At this moment, Douglas seemed to sense that the origin and destiny of the Styx was the Furnace of Souls that he was already very familiar with.

The gray Styx surged to the front of the Blessed Realm without a sound. In the blink of an eye, the ivory, holy light of the Blessed Realm became gray and dim. The exuberant vitality began to fade and collapse.

After the Styx broke the Blessed Realm and reached Viken, and when Viken hadn't reestablished defense with the power of the sacred paradise and the primeval hell, the high moon that observed everything fell abruptly toward Viken, leaving a chilling tail behind. Around its course, a black fire of the void was vaguely burning.

Pa!

A clear and somewhat inaudible crack echoed, which deprived Viken of the feeling that he was in a different world. He was no longer a unique existence that nobody could touch or attack!

After the marvelous domain was broken, the silver moon rose rapidly while a boundless cosmos appeared above Viken's head. The clear and brilliant stars in it denoted everyone's fate.

It was the starry star of destiny!

In the illusionary starry sky of destiny, the star that represented Viken suddenly glowed and fell like a meteorite, hitting Viken brutally.

It was exactly Douglas' "Fateful Meteor"!

After he became a demigod and his Host Star of Destiny was connected to the starry sky of destiny, the legendary spell went through drastic changes and was a real demigod-level attack now!

"Positron Cannon!"

"Grandeur Obliteration!"

"Nature's Punishment!"

...

When the "Fateful Meteor" landed, Hathaway, Fernando, the elven queen, and the other legendary experts also took the opportunity to attack, swearing to disrupt Viken's breakthrough.

Hardly had the brilliance spread out when the explosions, which were loud enough to kill everyone, burst out.

BOOM!

Dazzling brightness raged out, and the energy storm was sweeping, eclipsing the dark evil world and the hallowed paradise.

The Lord of Hell thought to himself, *After this attack, Viken must be heavily wounded and disrupted from the breakthrough even if he is not dead...* The guy had been smashed by a demigod's "Fateful Meteor", "Positron Cannon", and many other supernatural powers without even the slightest protection. Even he would've been heavily wounded. Even though his life wouldn't be in danger, he certainly wouldn't be able to finish what he was doing.

Due to the energy storm, Douglas and Fernando could not see clearly the situation inside, but they had guessed a thing or two based on their experience.

In the City in the Sky, except for Brook and those involved in the battle, all the sorcerers who were looking at the sky felt intense hope and joy. Had the crisis been resolved? Was Viken stopped before he became a true god?

A disaster seemed over now!

In the third generic school of Rentato...

Ali listened to the broadcast and looked at the sky. Although the scene was changing too fast for them to see clearly, the final picture that had been frozen gave them expectations and delight.

Was the nightmare over?

It had to be. Now that three demigods and more top legends had joined their hands, they could even kill a true god!

The energy storm gradually died down, and the scene at the center was revealed. The incarnation of the primeval hell that was full of negative feelings and the most sacred Mountain Paradise was still there, but Viken, who was supposed to be in between them, was nowhere to be seen.

"Is he dead?"

“Can he only return from the river of fate a very long time later?”

The attackers were both delighted and suspicious. Suddenly, Douglas saw a black spot there.

Right when he was about to cast another Fateful Meteor, the black spot expanded and wriggled, turning into Viken again, and the Desperate World that was full of faces of intelligent creatures and the sacred kingdom where angels and holy spirits sang nonstop slowly descended, gradually melting into his body!

“Hahaha.” Darkness and light replaced each other incessantly in Viken’s eyes as he burst into laughter. “If I did not have any confidence, why would I have decided to make the advancement in the main material world instead of a secret alternate dimension?”

“Thanks to your help, I have broken the most difficult barrier. After I melt Mountain Paradise and the primeval hell, you will receive the audience of a true god!”

At this moment, he was placed in a marvelous state where he could not be attacked again. Also, it seemed even more perfect and unbreakable than just now!

Even such attacks did not kill him? The demigods and top legends calmed down after the slight shock and continued their attacks. For them, they would never give up until the last moment.

The sorcerers and civilians in Allyn and Rentato, on the other hand, did not have such great self-control. After Viken’s crazy announcement, their faces were grim and full of desperation.

If the super-luxury lineup of three demigods and multiple top legends failed to stop Viken at the beginning, what could possibly stop Viken right now?

Done. Everything was done.

They stared at the sky with their faces stiff and dull, as if they had been caught in an eternal nightmare of desperation.

.....

Inside the primeval hell and faced with the attacks of Arrogance, Lucien suddenly sighed and put on his symbolic smile before he said in a low voice, "I'm here to confirm something, and your presence helped me to confirm it. Therefore..."

Before he finished his sentence, he stepped forward. Although his body did not turn taller or bigger, his aura became extremely horrifying all of a sudden. The phantoms that lunged at him backed off quickly in screams, and the seven primeval devils that were ready to cast "spells" could barely stand steadily on their feet.

What's going on?

What has he confirmed?

What's he trying to do?

The moment the questions popped up in the minds of the primeval devils, Lucien's body dispersed and became illusionary, and his face was solemn and grave!

A vast, fascinating cosmos slowly appeared in hell.

Chapter 817: Back Against Back

Chapter 817: Back Against Back

The boundless cosmos in hell was profound and dark, with brilliant and dreamy stars in it. It looked like the starry sky of destiny, but there were some indescribable differences between them.

The cosmos slowly surfaced in every corner of hell, but it did not collide with the Death Swamp, the Silent Hell, the Burning Metropolis, or the Endless Canyon, and the devils were not affected at all. It looked like a supermassive hologram.

A heavy, thick, boundless vibe that dwarfed everything appeared with the cosmos, giving everybody the feeling that they were looking at the stars at night. Even the most evil and brutal devils felt that their minds were empty and the universe was too magnificent for them. Their busy lives were so hilarious, and the only thing worth respecting and embracing was the vast cosmos.

For a moment, the schemes, betrayals, slaughters, fire, and blood that filled the whole hell stagnated, replaced by quietness. The primeval hell that was made of the streaks of lights in different colors seemed to have been caught in a slowed time and space, in which pain, hate, and all the other negative feelings were much thinner.

The seven primeval devils stayed where they were and stared at Lucien in a daze. Their minds were too overwhelmed for them to launch an attack or to stop him from taking the unusual action.

Lucien, on the other hand, did not consider the attacks of the seven primeval devils at all because he was now in a marvelous state similar to that of Viken in the main material world. He could both affect this world and remain untouchable and unattackable because he was in a different time and space.

His eyes half closed, Lucien suddenly opened his arms, making the gesture that he was about to embrace the cosmos. At this moment, a shadow suddenly crawled out of the back of his pure soul.

The moment the shadow crawled out, Lucien's face had minor changes. It kept the original handsomeness but emitted a strange ordinariness. He became someone that the primeval devils wouldn't mistake for Lucien based on both the air and other features!

Lucien, however, did not find it strange at all, because it was still himself. It was him from his previous life, Xiaofeng!

It was Xiaofeng, whose face was entangled with Lucien's on the Furnace of Souls!

The shadow that crawled out of Lucien's back just now stuck its back against his back. Getting more and more clear, it turned out to be another Lucien with distinctive features and qualities that the primeval devils couldn't have failed to recognize. However, this Lucien did not have a gentle and stubborn vibe.

"What is this?"

"Why has Lucien been divided into two parts?"

The primeval devils stared at that in confusion, having no idea what was going on at all.

Suddenly, a void split in the gap, and an enormous and terrifying attraction force came over, dragging the whole primeval hell into the world that was both dark and bright.

"Viken is summoning the primeval hell and trying to melt us!" Arrogance roared in shock and fury. Changes and more dreadful things were happening on two sides at the same time. Which side should they focus their attention on?

The primeval hell and the primeval devils were two sides of the same coin in the first place. If the primeval hell was swallowed and melted, there would be no more primeval devils. Or rather, a stronger primeval devil would show up, but it would only be one side of Viken!

While the primeval hell moved toward the world which was both evil and sacred slowly but surely, Lucien showed absolutely no reaction and remained the same. The Lucien on his back opened his

arms and made exactly the same gesture.

Pa!

The moment Lucien's two souls leaned against each other with their hands open, Lucien's body outside of the Gate of Desire collapsed and spread out into the world of the mind and the soul, crawling into both Luciens.

Wu!

In the soundless roar, the souls of the two Luciens were vaguely concrete, and their backs were connected to each other due to a certain special relationship.

Boom!

As a real explosion burst out, Lucien's soul that had the features of Xiaofeng suddenly opened its eyes. The reflection of the vast universe that showed up everywhere in hell was immediately zoomed in. It was no longer a river of brilliant stars, and an enormous fireball, as well as many planets of different sizes, could be seen clearly. Among them, a blue planet was particularly beautiful!

Boom!

The soul that carried the features of Lucien opened its eyes at the same time. However, what his arms were embracing was the colorful cosmos of elements. Then, the stars from the Atomic Universe spread out and got more and more real. Also, the perspective rose higher and higher, revealing a planet that was shrouded in mist.

Then, the views of two different universes constricted quickly. They were clearly separated from each other, with the two Luciens at the center as the boundary!

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

The scene was barely completed when the whole primeval hell collapsed and let out the noises, which suggested that it was on the

brink of destruction, as if it could not shoulder the invisible pressure anymore.

Arrogance, Hypocrisy, and the other primeval devils looked at each other in bewilderment and realized the same thing.

“Lucien Evans is attempting to break into the demigod level!”

But his way was different from that of Thanos, Viken, or Douglas!

Was it because their cognitive worlds were different?

.....

In the City in the Sky and Rentato, most sorcerers and civilians looked at the sky in desperation. Even the joint attack of three demigods and multiple top legends did not stop Viken's advancement. Who could possibly stop him now?

Under normal circumstances, some sorcerers and ordinary people would've told themselves that Viken's advancement was not the end of the world. Chances were that Viken would become benevolent after he turned into a true god. However, the madness of the corrupted and the blood and chaos they created were still fresh. Nobody expected that Viken, who was known as King of Calamities, would suddenly change his personality.

Seeing that Viken was gradually melting the primeval hell and Mountain Paradise, and seeing that the attacks of Douglas, the Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell achieved no result except for breaking Viken's defense and blowing him out of the intangible marvelous statue, the sorcerers, nobles, and civilians got more and more desperate.

Under the pressure of doom, many experts tried to fly into the marvelous domain, ready to offer their strength. It was better to be killed in a battle than to be killed in waiting!

However, Viken's melting was not as slow as it seemed. Before they approached, the melting had already approached the end.

Inside the Atom Institution, Heidi said with a self-mocking smile, “I

wonder if the curse worked at all...”

Because of the defense of Allyn, it was impossible for the sorcerers to attack.

Annick comforted her by saying, “It doesn’t mean that the breakthrough is successful. At the very least, Viken’s form of existence has no substantial changes yet.”

Of course, that was only for now.

In the third generic school, although none of the students could understand such a sophisticated battle, the fact that Viken remained undestroyed and was even laughing out loud informed them of the situation. Their hearts were heavier and heavier.

Suddenly, Ali narrowed his eyes and blurted out, “There seems to be a cosmos in the primeval hell!”

“Primeval hell” was a term that they just picked up from the broadcast.

There’s a cosmos in the primeval hell? The other students all looked over, finding it hard to believe Ali’s words.

However, their eyes told them that, in the primeval hell that was gradually being pulled into the main material world, there was indeed one, no, two separated cosmoses. One of them had a gigantic fireball and a blue planet, and the other was the same as what Ali saw in the cosmic observatory, albeit with an additional planet that was enshrouded in a fog!

“Is this the planet that we are in?” Douglas, as a demigod of the school of astrology, felt that the planet enshrouded in the fog was so familiar, and that the other cosmos was so strange!

Suddenly, his eyes were frozen. “That is the real cosmos!”

...

“Mr. Evans!”

“It’s Mr. Evans that is at the center of the cosmoses! Two Mr. Evanses!”

Exclamations echoed near Ali in Rentato, Allyn, and every place that could see the anomaly in the sky. Suspicion and shock were flowing everywhere.

“It’s really our teacher!” Heidi was immediately cheered up.

Although she did not quite understand why her teacher appeared in the primeval hell at such a critical moment, it was always a delight that something interrupted Viken’s breakthrough.

Sprint said in a low voice, “The melting seems to have been slowed!”

Before he finished his sentence, they saw that both Luciens leaned backward. Their backs gradually melted with each other, and an overlapping boundary appeared.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Cracking sounds burst out in the primeval hell as it shook violently. All the negative feelings, lost souls, and primeval devils appeared to be dispersing.

Although the melting cosmoses did not have the dreamy and hazy sound and visual effects, the slow, determined, and soundless approach gave everyone a shock from the bottom of their heart!

“The melting has been slowed!”

“Mr. Evans slowed down Viken’s melting!”

“Is he trying to break into the demigod level?”

Exclamations of surprise, happiness, and gratitude burst out in Allyn, Rentato, and many other places. Intense hope had emerged out of desperation!

Heidi said excitedly, “If our teacher breaks into the demigod level successfully, the primeval hell that Viken intends to melt will

probably be dissolved directly!”

“Haha. It’s really fortunate of us that our teacher is making the advancement in the primeval hell at such a moment!”

The depression and desperation were entirely gone. Other than the people who were still fighting, all the sorcerers, knights, and ordinary people looked at their sky nervously, praying for Mr. Evans’ successful breakthrough.

The Lord of Hell was stunned for a moment, before he laughed, “Viken, today is not your lucky day. Lucien is trying to make a breakthrough at such a time in such a place!”

Viken stopped laughing crazily and said as cold as ice, “It’s just a minor accident and will not change the final outcome.” He couldn’t have appeared more confident.

Maltimus smiled in mockery. “In any case, Lucien has delayed your advancement, which has given me time and an opportunity!”

Then, he tore off his left arm, and his real body that was hidden deep inside the hell broke its left arm too.

Without making a sound, the left arm exploded into a spring of blood, which then turned into an evil and chaotic “gate”.

Chapter 818: Screams

The “gate” was full of evil eyes that were yellow and white. They were dense and did not blink at all. Despite the blockage of the marvelous domain, the sorcerers, knights, and ordinary people who looked up from the ground felt that their minds were in chaos. They could barely control the madness of their souls and their surging desire for slaughter.

The left arm of Maltimus’ real body did not recover as quickly as before and remained missing, but the chaotic and bloody gate took shape rather slowly. Of course, it was only slow compared to how Viken melted the primeval hell earlier. It actually only took several seconds.

During the few seconds, the two reflections of the cosmoses surpassed the boundary slowly but surely. Their edges overlapped but did not affect each other. Even two asteroids that seemed to be colliding passed each other and flew away. They seemed next to each other, but at the same time, they seemed to be in two completely different worlds, not knowing each other’s existence at all!

As the edges of the two cosmoses overlapped, Lucien’s soul with the features of Xiafeng and the soul that was half Lucien leaned more and more into each other, starting to melt miraculously!

Just now, they were like two independent persons holding the cosmos before them with their backs against each other, but right now, they were like conjoined twins who shared the back!

There was no dazzling brilliance, violent noises, or other unimaginable phenomena. The two Luciens began to melt in a strange and unique way just now. The more they melted, the more obvious the feeling that they did not belong to this world was.

For some reason, the lost souls and primeval devils began to tremble in fear. Even though they no longer had concrete bodies and were entirely made of negative feelings, they couldn’t help but

feel intimidated.

Gold, green, black, red, and all the other colors began to shiver. The lost souls and the primeval devils were dismembered, releasing the powerful attraction force that only negative feelings and primeval devils could perceive.

The elven queen was just pulling the Bow of Nature's Punishment when her body became blurry and a shadow was about to crawl out.

Aglaea had to stop and melt her body into the reflection of the elven tree behind her, restraining the shadow with its root.

On the thirty-fourth floor of the Allyn magic tower...

Although Brook was stronger than Melmax and had the help of Oliver and Bergner, he had to focus most of his attention on controlling the aftermath to prevent Allyn from being ruined. The three legendary sorcerers were engaged with Devil Melmax in such a fierce battle that Brook's library was razed to the ground.

Had it not been for the deep, dark magnetic field and the cage made of silver, terrifying electric snakes, the battle of top legends would've definitely destroyed the magic tower and half of Allyn.

However, even though the battle was difficult, Brook was not anxious, because he knew very well that Melmax's project could not last. The real key was still the battle of demigods and top legends in the sky.

Suddenly, Melmax froze, and shadows and negative light spurted out of his body into the sky. Due to the changes caused by Lucien, it was impossible for him to resist the attraction force now that he did not have a real body or his longsword.

Although Brook, Oliver, and Bergner had no idea what was happening in the sky, Melmax's changes were certainly no secrets for them. Seizing the opportunity, Brook's Kingdom of Electromagnetism constricted and confined Melmax, and Oliver and Bergner pushed him into the demiplane with their legendary spells.

Zi, Zi, Zi.

Melmax was shoved into the Kingdom of Electromagnetism. Brook was immediately relieved. He would be fearless in his demiplane. After all, the students and servants had already evacuated. Also, in his demiplane, he was as strong as a demigod.

“I’ll finish him. You go to control Allyn’s defense circle,” Brook said in the telepathic bond as he entered the Kingdom of Electromagnetism.

Although the control pivots on this floor had all been destroyed, there were other control pivots in Fernando, Hellen, and Hathaway’s libraries on the thirty-third floor.

Under the help of Prospell, Oliver entered Fernando’s library, which was unlocked, and controlled the defense of Allyn.

It was not until this moment that they had the time to observe the battle in the sky.

“Lucien is trying to break into the demigod level...” Slightly frowning, Oliver said, “However, it is entirely different from Mr. President’s. It’s not demiplane versus the cognitive world plus the starry star of destiny, but the real cosmos¹ versus the actual cosmos².”

The primeval devils might have neglected it, but Oliver, as a legendary sorcerer, keenly sensed the fundamental difference between the two breakthroughs. During Lucien’s advancement, his demiplane was merely a medium and not an important part.

Bergner asked in confusion, “Is it based on the observer effect? Is the feedback of the real world an observer effect?”

“Maybe...” Oliver hesitated. “In any case, if he can advance successfully, there will be no way for Viken to make the breakthrough.”

.....

In Rentato, in Nekso Palace.

A silver sword that carried hideous cracks of the void broke Atlant's defense and hit him, but he put on a weird smile and collapsed quickly like a broken mirror.

Another illusion? Natasha, who was holding her Sword of Truth, slightly changed her expression and blinked. Exactly at this moment, an ancient and distant sound echoed at the perfect timing.

“Visual Deprivation!”

Natasha's body was immediately bent as if she had been smashed by a hammer. Blood flowed out of her eyes, and she went through a lot of trouble to get back on her feet. However, her silver eyes lost their splendor. It seemed that she couldn't see anything anymore.

Having been transformed into the status of primeval devils, Atlant was truly mysterious and unpredictable. Since the battle began, Natasha had hit him seventeen times, but he was an illusion ten times, and some noble or knight outside died on behalf of him the other seven times!

Despite the help of Morris, Natasha could not tell whether or not the Atlant before her was real or fake. So, as she attacked with her full strength, she gradually lost her hearing, touch, smell, and vision.

Closing her eyes, Natasha sensed the environment with her willpower. Suddenly, she slashed out again; her sword flashing coldly and indifferently.

The cracking sound of the void echoed, and Atlant's body was hit by the light of the sword.

However, the body broke again like a mirror, not giving any sense of reality.

“Sense Deprivation!” Atlant's voice came from all directions, and everything became dim all of a sudden in Natasha's eyes. She seemed to be left alone standing where she was in the whole world.

Seeing that, Atlant's images appeared everywhere around her. He smiled and said, “I said that you cannot stop me. I'll ask for

somebody inside the Allyn magic tower to turn on the portal in exchange for yourself.”

Faced with such a tough and strong legendary knight, Atlant could not deprive her of her senses and intuitions once and for all. He could only do it step by step.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when his eyes were opened, and a silver sword glittered.

Crack.

All the images were broken, and a body made of twisted colorful light showed up, falling apart under the hideous illusionary gaps.

“How... How could you find me?” Atlant struggled to say, filled with disbelief. How could Natasha find him right now when she failed to with all her senses and intuitions?

Cling.

A unique-shaped necklace appeared in Natasha’s hands, which emitted the crisp sound of metal collisions.

Although Atlant did not recognize the item, he could tell that it could help Natasha resist multiple attacks that were based on illusions. However, just now...

“You...” His body was even closer to destruction.

As if she heard his question, Natasha’s lackluster eyes gradually recovered. She chuckled and replied, “It was on purpose.

“This is a legendary item that Lucien crafted with the materials in the treasury of Holm, but it cannot help me find you. I intentionally let you deprive me of my senses and intuitions because my eyes, ears, and intuitions would deceive me... Only by eliminating their interferences and sensing with the mind could I really ‘see’ this world and you who were hiding in the dark.

“Well, since a long time ago, I’ve been practicing in seclusion where it’s quiet and I can’t sense anything.”

She changed Lucien's words so that Atlant understood what had happened.

At this moment, the enormous attraction force from the primeval hell came over, and the negative feelings inside Atlant's body flew out. His eyes became clear again. He coughed and said in regrets, "Why... Why couldn't it happen sooner? In that case, I wouldn't have been manipulated by Viken."

Natasha stepped forward. Her war boot let out crisp sounds on the ground as she said solemnly, "Although I hate to speak to someone dying so bluntly, I have to say that instead of complaining that the changes in the primeval hell are too late, you should complain that you made a decision too early. You should've waited to choose your path until Mr. President became a demigod."

Atlant heaved a long sigh, and his body collapsed completely.

Under the Sword of Truth, there was absolutely no chance for him to be resurrected.

Natasha raised her head and looked at the changes in the high sky with her half-recovered vision. She said with a smile, "Why didn't you do it sooner? That way, I wouldn't have taken such a risk..."

She could've hidden in the Atomic Universe with the Grand Duke of Orvarit as it would be impossible for Atlant to break in. However, she felt obliged to stick with her subjects at such a moment.

.....

The foul and chaotic gate was opened in a loud noise, and a meatball with countless eyes and the limbs of countless species rolled out, spreading out the air of blood, slaughter, and craziness.

Exactly at this moment, the breakthrough of the two Luciens approached the end. Their bodies below the head had been completely melted, but their faces were still facing their respective cosmos.

The two Luciens suddenly put on a miserable expression. They leaned backward at the same time and began the final melting. The

two cosmoses with a blue planet and a misty planet did not seem as independent from each other. A strange, cracking sound of rubbing came out!

BOOM!

The volcanoes inside the hell erupted at the same time. Every devil sensed that the void next to them was trembling and creaking, as if the world was about to fall apart, and from the places they could not see, another enormous cosmos was running over!

“No!”

The illusionary feeling made all the devils cry and scream from the bottom of their hearts. For a moment, the whole hell was filled with such noises. Even the few devil dukes were trembling, having no idea where their fear came from.

In Allyn and Rentato, Heidi, Annick, Ali, and the other people also heard the squeaking sound from the void next to them, as if something was crushing it from the other side, and it was on the verge of destruction under the enormous pressure.

What was going on?

Shock, panic, fear, delight, and all the other feelings burst out!

Some were scared, some trembled, some kneeled, and some cheered!

Chapter 819: Return

Suddenly, the light of the whole world was gone. Allyn, Rentato, hell, and abyss were all caught in the deepest and heaviest darkness. The weird squeaking noises had vanished too. Every sorcerer, every knight, every noble, every civilian, every demon, and every devil sensed unprecedented peace. They could even hear their own heartbeats or blood flows.

Dum! Dum! Dum! Dum!

Their hearts beat faster and faster and more and more intensely. Right when they could not stand the extreme peace and were about to shout, darkness suddenly faded, and brightness was back again!

Nothing seemed to have changed. In the high sky, the Will of Abyss, who had been summoned by Maltimus at a great price, smelled the air of hell, which he hated most, and the air of Maltimus, which he was the next thing he hated most. He abandoned his old nemesis and charged at Viken, and the other demigods and the top legends cooperated with him, “helping” him dissolve Viken’s defense.

In the primeval hell, it was already barely possible to distinguish the two Luciens, although their faces were still changing, as if they were seeking the most fundamental similarities.

In the cosmos that had an enormous fireball, the picture zoomed in, and the blue planet grew larger and larger. The picture of the cosmos with the misty planet also zoomed in.

As the two planets grew larger and larger, the devils and lost souls in the primeval hell burst out their final and loudest screams.

Bang!

In the crack that echoed at the bottom of every intelligent creature’s heart, the primeval hell fell apart!

The primeval devils and lost souls were reduced into negative feelings in different colors, loosening and ebbing.

At the same time, the two cosmoses and Luciens vanished!

“Where is our teacher...” Heidi was at a loss. Such a situation did not happen when Mr. President became a demigod.

Suddenly, her eyes froze because she saw a lot more people in the Atom Institution! There was also an enormous tunnel that was similar to the super large collider that her teacher designed!

The dreamy tunnel of the collider overlapped the many magic circles of the Atom Institution, but they did not affect each other at all, as if somebody had created an illusion here.

“This is...” Heidi and Annick forgot about the battle in the sky. They looked at the enormous tunnel in shock. Many people in white suits walked before them anxiously as if they were preparing an important experiment.

In shock, Heidi subconsciously extended her right hand, trying to touch a man.

Her fingers slowly reached the man’s face, but it penetrated through it as if it were made of air. The man showed no reaction either.

Katrina looked at that in shock. “Is this phenomenon caused by our teacher’s advancement?”

Taking a deep breath, Heidi looked at the street out of the window, only to discover that not only sorcerers and wagons but many iron monsters were crammed and moving forward slowly on the broad road before the Allyn magic tower!

Far away, many skyscrapers that looked like magic towers overlapped the original buildings. Thanks to their glass windows, they were like palaces made of gold under the sunlight.

In the high sky, a bird-like monster flew by quietly and looked down on the ground.

Everything was so real but so quiet. There was not the slightest sound or anything that could be touched!

Compared to the sorcerers who could still observe the environment, the nobles and civilians were completely lost. Their mouths were open and their eyes were hollowed as they stared at the additional world that was not the same as theirs but had certain weird similarities. They felt that they were in a dream!

“Is this a mirage...” somebody murmured subconsciously, but their eyes were frozen. It was obvious that they could not think anymore.

Gradually, the skyscrapers, the iron torrents, the tunnel, and the crowd on the street blurred.

Soon, they completely vanished, as if everything just now was really a dream!

“Is this the phenomenon caused by our teacher’s advancement...” Heidi repeated what Katrina said.

BOOM!

The explosion in the high sky woke them up, reminding them that there was still a battle that concerned their own fate over theirs. Therefore, they raised their heads and looked over again while wondering what happened just now and if Mr. Evans had become a demigod.

After Lucien and the two cosmoses disappeared, Viken seized the opportunity to swallow and absorb the broken primeval hell, not bothering that it would cause his imbalance, because he did not really have a choice. The primeval hell would be gone in a few more seconds!

Perhaps decades or hundreds of years later, the primeval hell would be gathered again, but it would be pointless for Viken.

This time, without Lucien’s blockage and the resistance of the primeval devils, Viken’s melting was very smooth, but at the same time, he was rejected by Mountain Paradise.

Thanks to the help of Douglas, the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, Fernando, and Vicente, the Will of Abyss broke the strange state that Viken was in and created explosions, slaughter, and blood,

hoping to kill Viken who was focused on melting the primeval hell.

Viken's body became illusionary and more and more dim under the Will of Abyss' attacks.

At this moment, Viken suddenly chuckled mysteriously.

In his eyes, darkness and light replaced each other, and the remainder of the primeval hell and the still powerful Mountain Paradise swapped places. As a result, the Will of Abyss was placed in the range of Mountain Paradise.

The Will of Abyss was even angrier. For some reason, he suddenly roared and expanded. All his limbs were falling off, and the eyes were protruding out!

“Back off! He's going to self-explode!” Maltimus roared and retreated quickly.

He paid a great price to summon the Will of Abyss exactly to get an attacker who was not scared of death, but the Will of Abyss turned out to be even more hardworking than he expected. In order to perform the attack, he had chosen to self-explode!

Of course, Maltimus could easily tell that the guy was definitely befuddled just now.

Boom!

An explosion that was multiple times more powerful than all the attacks previously burst out. The sky was colored by the boundless brilliance of blood. The defense of Mountain Paradise was broken as angels perished. Only the seraphs managed to retreat to the Realm of Gates in time and survive the disaster.

Light and energy surged out, and the demigods including Douglas were pushed to the edge of the marvelous domain.

The sorcerers who observed the battle were surprised and delighted. The self-explosion of a demigod could certainly stop Viken, if it didn't kill him!

“Sometimes, the Will of Abyss can be quite lovely even though he is a wild card...” Many arcanists “thanked” the Will of Abyss in their hearts.

.....

Above the ninth level of hell, Lucien slowly appeared from the void, turning from the status of dispersion to collapse. He was still wearing the black double-breasted suit, the top hat, the bow-tie, and the monocle, and he was still holding the staff. However, he had an additional feeling that he did not belong to this world. It was exactly the transcendental, changing, and intangible feeling of demigods!

“What I saw in the end... It’s exactly like what I suspected...” Lucien woke up from the uncanny state.

.....

The bloodiness and the energy storm were gone, and the center of the marvelous domain was blank, as if it had been wiped off by an eraser.

“Has Viken died with the Will of Abyss?” Aglaea asked delightedly.

Although Viken wouldn’t really perish, he wouldn’t return from the river of fate until millions of years later, and his fatal threat, Mountain Paradise, was already gone.

The Silver Moon was still in the sky, and Maltimus looked at the center solemnly and confusedly. After a brief daze, Douglas shouted, “Keep attacking! The domain is not gone! Viken is not dead yet!”

The marvelous domain appeared because of Viken’s advancement. Its existence suggested that Viken was not dead, and his attempt was not entirely disrupted yet!

Hardly had Douglas given a warning when an invisible window blew from the marvelous domain and water secreted from the void, giving the feeling of both light and darkness. It was completely in violation of common sense!

The water gathered into a tide and surged at the center, drowning the demigods and the top legends.

At the center, an illusionary heart that was both dark and bright showed up and beat nonstop. In the left atrium was the dark, evil, and corrupt Desperate World, and in the right atrium was the sacred, bright, and vast Mountain Paradise.

“We’re close to success, but so is Viken. As long as we destroy this ‘heart’ and prevent it from absorbing the water, we will really stop him!” Douglas was ready to cast an “Eternal Blaze”.

However, he found that he was unable to cast any spell in the tide that was both dark and bright.

Similarly, the Lord of Hell and the Silver Moon could not make use of their supernatural powers either.

Thinking for a moment, Douglas dispersed into a world with mountains, lakes, forests, and grasslands. It was exactly his demigod image.

This world tied the tide nearby, slowing it down. Viken’s “heart” beat more slowly too.

Seeing that, the Lord of Hell also dispersed his body, presenting the view of the hell and dragging the tide around.

A cold and dreamy silver moon fell, freezing the tide, and the shadow of the elven tree showed up, extending its roots to grab the water.

The projections of the Thunder Hell, the Element Paradise, and the Resting Place came too, but the force of boundary was much smaller than that of demigods.

Under their joint attacks, the tide almost stagnated. Viken and his enemies were in an impasse, but he was still absorbing the water one drop after another.

Looking at that, the legendary experts down below could not hold it anymore. Natasha was the first to flash to the sky and slash Viken’s

heart with the Sword of Truth.

The aura of the silver sword broke the sky and entered the marvelous domain, but it soon disappeared.

Here, without the power of top legendary, one could not even raise ripples!

The attacks of the other legendary experts were the same. The sorcerers, nobles, and civilians down below couldn't be more anxious.

Damn it. A few more top legends would be able to turn the balance!

Damn it. Why are all the top legends except Mr. Brook and the devil dukes who cannot come to the main material world all up there?

They almost couldn't stop themselves from joining the battle, but the effort of Natasha and the other legendary experts let them drop the idea.

.....

After Lucien recovered from the uncanny state, he jumped into his own Atomic Universe without any delay. Then, instead of entering Babel, he teleported himself to the thirty-third floor of the Allyn magic tower.

"Turn off the blockage," Lucien said in a low voice.

Oliver and Bergner were looking at the sky anxiously. Hearing Lucien's calm and steady voice, they were surprised and relieved. Turning off the blockage in the city defense, they allowed Lucien to go to the sky and said in a hurry, "It's great that you're back!"

The sorcerers who looked at the sky so nervously that their hearts almost stopped beating suddenly discovered that the vague mist before them was disappearing, and a person appeared at the edge.

The familiar black hair, the handsome face, and the dreamy ring... They all held their breath.

“Master!”

“Mr. Evans!”

Exclamations followed. The sorcerers’ anxieties were immediately more or less eased. The man who had always created miracles was back!

Suddenly, a sorcerer bowed in confidence and gratitude.

“Your Excellency, it’s great that you’re back!”

Influenced by him, more and more sorcerers paid respect to him.

“Your Excellency, it’s great that you’re back!”

In their greetings, the blockage was completely gone. Lucien nodded at them and blinked to the high sky.

Chapter 820: The Boundary Between God and Men (2 in 1)

Chapter 820: The Boundary Between God and Men (2 in 1)

In a half-empty marvelous domain, Viken's heart that was both bright and dark beat nonstop, but it could only struggle to absorb the sap from the boundary of the demigods and top legends, including Douglas, the Silver Moon, the Lord of Hell, and the elven queen.

At this moment, the change in the blockage of Allyn was reflected in his mind that seemed to be everywhere.

There couldn't be a better opportunity! He wouldn't stand a chance after Lucien joined the battle!

A dark and illusionary vein suddenly extended from Viken's heart, which passed through the tide made of the water as if there were no resistance and pierced into Aglaea, the elven queen.

Aglaea did not pay much attention to it. With the protection of the elven tree, Viken's attempt that only carried one percent of his power could not penetrate through nature at all.

However, at this moment, a shadow mixed with strong hate and pain suddenly emerged out of her body, which stretched out beyond her control and grabbed that "vein"!

No!

Aglaea exclaimed in her heart when she realized that the "container" with which she completed the status transformation had gone out of control. As her primeval-devil half went out of control, she could not control herself anymore!

Did Viken hold such a powerful control over all primeval devils?

At this moment, she felt that the Viken before her was so lofty and sacred that she only wanted to worship him!

In the meantime, quite a few black veins extended out of Viken's heart and penetrated into the bodies of top legends including Belkovsky, crazily absorbing their primeval-devil halves. Only Fernando, Hathaway, and a few other exceptions managed to avoid it.

For a moment, negative feelings and pieces of black shadows flowed into Viken's heart along the veins. Douglas, the Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell intended to assist them, but they were mired in the tide and couldn't do anything except to watch it happen.

The way to become a demigod that Viken released before had such severe deficiencies!

It was the complete way to become a demigod without any traps, and its deficiencies and flaws were inevitable even for Viken himself. That was probably why other people believed him. However, at this moment, he was the most powerful primeval devil, and that was why he was fearless. He was reluctant to reveal the secret to the North Church, because Belkovsky, who had the accumulation of the power of faith and godhood, could very likely break into the demigod level soon and be on par with him. In such a case, he wouldn't be able to control other people like he could right now.

As his power rose, the tide was propelled and moved to Viken's heart, allowing him to absorb crazily. After every drop he absorbed, he would be more powerful than before. After only a few moments, the "heart" already lengthened and changed, vaguely showing Viken's appearance. At this moment, Lucien had just flashed to the sky and was about to go into the marvelous domain to stop Viken.

At this moment, Viken suddenly laughed crazily. "You should come too!"

Glittering veins stretched out of the heart and pierced into the body of Rudolf II who was also working hard at the edge.

Rudolf II watched Viken in shock as lofty, bright, and golden shadows flashed in his body nonstop with the obvious air of Mountain Paradise!

“Thanos, I did not expect you to revive and return, but you can only serve as my nutrition now!” Viken’s crazy voice echoed in the clouds. “You hid rather well, but I got suspicious during Mecantron’s resurrection! I did not point it out exactly because I was waiting for this moment!”

Thanos? The sorcerers down below were shocked.

Rudolf II could not say anything anymore. His body quickly dimmed, and his hair grew white. The golden shadows broke into pieces and flowed into Viken’s body through the veins.

Boom!

A soundless explosion and infinite brightness burst out. Lucien, who had just reached the marvelous domain and was about to attack, was forced to step back. In the perception of his spiritual power, Viken had vanished!

As the light gradually dispersed, the elven queen, Belkovsky, Rudolf II, and some other top legends could not maintain themselves anymore. They fell out of the marvelous domain to the ground. For a moment, they had even lost the basic ability to fly themselves.

Thankfully, there were plenty of other legendary experts outside. Some were elves, some were from the North Church, and some were from the Holy Heilz Empire. Those legendary experts prevented their leaders from becoming the first top legends who were killed in a crash, because their leaders were not legendary knights and their bodies could not stand the collision.

As the light faded, the center of the marvelous domain could be sensed by Lucien, Douglas, the Silver Moon, and other demigods. Viken’s hair had turned black, and his wrinkles were gone. His eyes were profound and dark, as if he were only in his thirties. However, his nose was slightly protruded, making him look rather scary.

Lucien, Douglas, and the other experts had all seen him in such a form before. It was the image of the King of Calamities on many magic classics.

Next to Viken, the holy angels and the evil devils entangled each other, worshiping and praising him. A realm where heaven and hell coexisted in peace was created.

The realm did not seem to be in this world. Although Lucien, Douglas, and the other demigods could see the view and hear the songs and praises, they could not perceive it or the air of Viken inside. It seemed that they were facing a hologram, and the angels and devils were far away in a different world.

Viken adapted himself to his new status and smiled. “Evans, what a shame. You’re one step late. Are you very surprised?”

He sounded gentle and calm, but it was as astounding as a clap of thunder when the legendary experts and the sorcerers, nobles, and civilians down below heard it. Their bodies were trembling in shock!

One step late?

Had he become a true god?

Done. Everything was done...

Desperation spread out, but people still had hope, because there were four demigods on their side. Even if they could not defeat Viken, they should be able to hold the situation and stop him from doing whatever he wanted.

Douglas, Alterna, and Maltimus, as demigods, were much more grave, because they found that they could not even tell how strong Viken was. Of course, they did not give up and simply kept attacking Viken.

The bright and dreamy moon, the corrupt and evil hell, and the flashing fateful meteor ran toward Viken at the same time.

Lucien, on the other hand, seemed too shocked to perform any attack. He merely nodded his head and said, “I’m quite surprised that your way of demigod has such severe deficiencies. That’s why I’m one step late.”

“This step is exactly the boundary between life and death. Now, I am already a true god. You cannot defeat me at all. No, it is impossible for you to even reach me!” Viken smiled kindly as the light of the silver moon, the outburst of the hell, and the fateful meteor passed through him as if he did not exist at all.

The songs and praises of angels and devils went on without being disrupted. The sorcerers were even more desperate. They could not even reach the enemy? Such a capability gap was almost the distance between heaven and abyss!

“Do you see? This is the true god. I can appear at any place at any time and attack anyone, but you cannot break the boundary between god and mortals. You cannot touch my real body at all.” Viken turned his head, as if he had finally got the status under control. “Even if I stand here and let you attack me, you cannot hit me at all. Your attacks will have no effects.”

True god. He's really a true god... The sorcerers, nobles, and civilians felt that their bodies turned soft as they looked at that. It seemed that their feet could no longer bear the weight of their bodies. That was truly a devastating opponent!

How is he going to deal with us?

Will he kill us or domesticate us into lambs?

Viken smiled and said, “I don’t need you anymore. You can disappear altogether...”

When Viken finished his declaration and was about to attack, the muscles on his face suddenly bounced, as if something down below was trying to crawl out.

Such protrusions were so dense that all his skin that was exposed to the air was occupied. Then, lumps were jumping even on the long robe that was transformed by his strength. They couldn’t be more hideous and disgusting.

“This is...” In shock, Viken tried harder to control himself. Douglas, the Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell did not know what was going

on exactly, but they did know that it was a rarely-seen opportunity and immediately began their attacks.

However, their attacks still could not break the boundary between god and mortals!

Viken's body gradually became transparent, both bright and dark. The faces of intelligent creatures emerged from it.

The faces, some pious and some in pain, surged out nonstop and created the protrusions!

"Why is this happening? Why is this happening?" Viken roared crazily, shocked and infuriated. The legendary experts and the sorcerers down below were all astounded. What happened to the true god?

Viken gazed at Lucien, who had been quiet and did not attack, as he murmured to himself, "I have already turned into a strong observer and a true god by gathering everyone's power! Why is this still happening? Why is this still happening?"

Annick and Heidi became pale. Had the Congress' "observer hypothesis" raised such an invincible opponent for them?

Looking at Viken, Lucien repeated expressionlessly but with a higher voice, "The observer effect?"

Then, his lips curled, and he smiled somewhat mischievously.

"It was a trick!"

It was a trick? Annick and the other sorcerers opened their mouths, completely unable to close them.

It was a trick? Douglas, the Silver Moon, Fernando, and the rest of them couldn't help but look at Lucien.

It was a trick? Viken's body trembled so hard that the faces seemed to be tearing apart his skin and running out. His eyes were filled with confusion first, before infinite fury surged out.

Keeping the smile, Lucien said, "The truth of the world and the nature of magic is..."

His face suddenly became solemn, and the void behind him began to tremble, manifesting a boundless cosmos. The cosmos zoomed in, with a lower and lower perspective, allowing everybody to see the gigantic fireball and the blue planet that they had seen previously.

"This is the secret of immortality, the truth of the world, and the essence of magic!" Lucien announced solemnly.

Then, he extended his right hand and waved it in the air. A series of complicated equations were immediately displayed, as if there was a cubic stream screen around. Even Douglas felt that his head was dizzy as he read it.

"This is a math model that describes space." Instead of seizing the opportunity that Viken could not control himself to attack him, Lucien began to introduce the equations, making the arcanists of the Congress of Magic feel extremely weird. *Why is Mr. Evans doing this in the middle of such an intense battle? Is he trying to blow up Viken's head when he saw that the boundary of god and men was unbreakable? If his plan works out, it will probably be an unprecedented and unrepeatable battle case...*

"The previous theory of relativity describes a '3 + 1' dimension, and this is a model that describes more dimensions." Lucien did not give more details because the premises and hypotheses of the math model alone could've taken him half a day to illustrate, and few people on the battlefield could understand it.

In the sky, Lucien slowly and casually walked toward Viken who was trying to control himself with the boundary of god and men.

"In this model, we can assume that the universe we live in is a high-dimensional universe, whose projections in different three-dimensional spaces form many parallel universes," Lucien spoke lucidly as if he were teaching Heidi and the students a class. "Math tells us that in the three-dimensional state or four-dimensional state, parallel universes can barely meet each other. In that case, we may overlap, but we cannot touch or sense each other.

“However, just as two random straight lines on a piece of paper have much higher chances to intersect than to parallel, in lower dimensions, our microscopic particles and our fundamental world incessantly entangle with their counterparts in other universes. That is exactly superimposition and entanglement. However, as we, the real world, and the macroscopic universe kick in and the dimension increases to a higher level, the entanglement and intersection are gone, and only one state is fixed. That’s why the mysteries of the microscopic domain cannot be reflected in the macroscopic world!”

Lucien spoke very slowly as if he were teaching a class or engaged in small talk, but the sky suddenly turned dark, and a crazy wind blew out from the ground into the marvelous domain.

Douglas and the rest of them kept attacking Viken while they listened to Lucien’s words, which seemed to have really explained a lot of experiment phenomena as well as the transition between the microscopic domain and the macroscopic world.

The world next to Viken where angels and devils mixed and sang together was unaffected, allowing him to focus on self-control. He tried to get rid of the embarrassment as countless faces were conflicting and squeezing out of him. He did not entirely understand what Lucien was saying, but he did not stop glaring at Lucien’s eyes at all. *Even if I have been tricked, I still have the strength of a true god. After I get control of myself, I will kill you!*

Lucien’s voice grew louder and louder. “This model explains the transition between the microscopic domain and the macroscopic world, but we will easily discover that there is no place for magic and supernatural abilities.

“Therefore, in this model, we have to add two premises. The first is that the soul does exist. It is essentially a high-dimensional object that can spread out special electromagnetic waves...”

BOOM!

A thunder rumbled in the sky, but no lightning struck down, as if the world was stopping Lucien from talking.

“As high-dimensional objects, souls are projected into different parallel universes, except that the projections are different due to the different coordinates of the dimensions. For example, in some universes, the souls are so weak that they are barely detectable, and in some universes, souls can directly walk on the earth. The electromagnetic waves they emit are very powerful.”

BOOM!

Another thunder rumbled, and the sky was completely dark, as if a storm was coming. But still, no bolts of lightning occurred!

Lucien turned a deaf ear to the thunder and simply kept on walking to Viken. “Of course, if that is the only premise, the best we can expect is that certain creatures with powerful souls will have simple abilities such as setting fire, moving objects, or telecommunication. There will only be the most unattractive extraordinary powers, and there won’t be the weird yet brilliant magic, or any of the unusual animals.

“Therefore, my other premise is that, for reasons that we haven’t quite figured out, another universe has some sort of entanglement or intersection with our universe!”

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

Bolts of lightning danced like clusters of silver snakes and illuminated the sky and the world. The angels and devils around Viken that praised and sang for him lowered their voices, and Viken appeared to be stunned again.

In the middle of the bursting bolts of lightning, a universe that was very similar to the one behind Lucien was displayed. The strange feeling that everybody sensed during Lucien’s advancement just now spread out again.

Lucien suddenly raised his voice and announced magnificently, “Therefore, the entanglement of the microscopic particles and the fundamental world is much more powerful than usual!

“Therefore, in the quantum eraser experiment and the delayed

choice experiment, the state of entanglement is more difficult to destroy than expected!”

In the sky that was brimming with bolts of lightning, a torrential storm poured down. The whole world seemed to be drowned!

“The stronger coherence belongs to the microscopic domain. It is insignificant compared to the macroscopic world. When macroscopic factors are involved, it will be destroyed easily.

“Therefore, the macroscopic world is real and material, without any dispersion or illusion. However, the foundation at the bottom level of the macroscopic world is not so steady!” Lucien moved another step forward as his voice got louder and louder.

COMMENT

The angels and devils next to Viken had all fallen into silence. There were no more songs or praises!

“Under normal circumstances, such unsteadiness will not cause any consequences, but on special occasions, say, during the reproduction of creatures, it will lead to many more mutations. That’s why we have so many species and so many tricky monsters!”

In the pouring rain, the glittering lightning, and the rumbling thunders, the universe Lucien displayed zoomed in, allowing everybody to see the familiar fireball and the blue planet again!

Lucien said aloud as he stepped forward, “That’s why the ‘spiritual power’ of our souls can develop an assortment of strange spells beyond the monotonous abilities! That’s why reshaping and the elemental changes on the material level are relatively easy!”

The angels and devils around Viken looked afraid. Douglas, on the other hand, abandoned the futile attacks and focused on listening to Lucien’s narration. In the meantime, Viken seemed more and more desperate and crazy.

“It’s true that the source of our energy is the fluctuation of the ocean of energy in our void, but the ocean is not in our universe because we cannot grasp its momentary rise at all!

“Since the two parallel universes intersect and have different space-time changes, it gives us a chance to make use of their ocean of energy and the bottom-level matter like virtual particles!

“The conservation of energy is that of two universes, not just our own!”

As Lucien talked on, the ordinary people and the nobles on the ground were completely confused. They had absolutely no idea what he was talking about. Even the legendary experts in the sky were also mostly in such a state. Only the arcanists were listening to him half confused and half enlightened. Some were ecstatic, and some were trembling!

“Our souls exist in a high dimension and are projected to all the parallel dimensions. Our own souls are only part of the essence. Therefore, our meditation is actually to perceive another universe through the connection between the two soul projections. The environment of meditation that we establish—or our cognitive world—is the instrument of our communication. Therefore, the more similar and the more entangled it is to another universe, the more powerful it will be. That’s exactly the feedback of the real world!

“Therefore, most of our magic models are essentially the different variants of such a math model of space-time communication. Naturally, the more accurate they are, the more powerful they will be!”

BOOM!

A noise that could almost be compared to the self-explosion of the Will of Abyss just now echoed. The darkness in the sky co-existed with the gigantic fireball!

The boundary of god and mortals around Viken seemed to be under enormous pressure and was squeaking!

“In this model, gravity is quantized and exists as a relatively low-dimensional notion. When two universes intersect, it will entangle the gravity of our world, hence the mist that covers the planets and

the sun, the star graves where there is no gravity, and the many alternate dimensions. Therefore, we cannot locate any planet at all without considering the influence of other universes!

“That’s the reason why planets were never found before!”

When he said that, Lucien suddenly thought of the moment when he read “Arcana” for the first time. At that time, Oliver and Mr. President were deeply upset that planets could not be discovered!

Quantized gravity... Douglas calmed down and thought hard!

“Wu! Wu! Wu! Wu!”

Miserable cries burst out. The angels and devils around Viken shed bright or dark tears in fear. The boundary of god and men trembled more and more violently, and it was squeaking louder and louder.

Inside Viken’s body, faces flew out and vaporized into dust, and he looked more and more crazy and hateful.

“The soul is in a high dimension. So, our death only means the elimination of a soul’s projection and the loss of current memories and special waves. However, our actual soul is never gone, and the projection will reappear after a while!”

As Lucien made the statement, faces of souls appeared in the storm, crying, cursing, and threatening. The ordinary people down below all shivered as they looked at them.

“Therefore, part of our spells and supernatural powers actually carry the features of high dimensions too. We can be resurrected through methods like the phylactery immediately after the death, we can perform space jump, the Sword of Truth can eliminate all traces of existence, and the Elimination blood power can destroy the source of the supernatural powers by blocking the connection of two universes!

“Therefore, our real path to the demigod level is the arcana approach: to let the projection of the soul reach the nature of the soul in the high dimension!

“Therefore, after the two universes have a slight intersection, there will be creatures that are closer to the high dimension but not perfect, like the Silver Moon and the Lord of Hell! That’s why the Furnace of Souls and the Styx that represent the essence of the high-dimensional souls show up! That’s why there are the primeval hell and the World of Souls where souls and feelings gather!

“Therefore, the mysteries of immortality that we saw in the Chamber of Immortality were actually another universe! It represents our other self!”

His magnificent voice put an end to the cries, curses, and beg for mercy. The storm stopped, the lightning and thunder were gone, and the angels and devils dispersed into the light. Viken’s body began to quiver, and after his every movement, some faces of souls were flying out!

Lucien had already reached before Viken. He looked down at him pitifully. “Your path to reach the high dimension by gathering many souls seems correct, but it is actually wrong. Those are not the projection of the same soul, and you cannot get the essence of your own soul in the high dimension. Therefore, while nothing wrong happened before your success, you will lose your undead quality after your success because it is impossible for you to be revived through somebody else’s soul.

“Of course, it was exactly because of the correctness of your path on the surface that I was able to fool you with the ‘observer effect’. Otherwise, I wouldn’t know how I can ‘really’ kill you at all.”

In his black double-breasted suit, Lucien put on his gentle smile again. He pressed his chest with his right hand and bowed slightly. “Now, I would like to repeat that, in the microscopic domain, where our experience in the past is no longer applicable and where the methodology we are used to errs, all the explanations and theoretical models must be strictly built on mathematics. Otherwise, explanations and hypotheses would only be illusions and fantasies!

“To put it simply, any hypothesis that is not based on math models is pure nonsense!”

Pa!

In Viken's shock and devastation, the boundary of god and men next to him was broken even though Lucien did not perform any attack at all!

In the sky, the darkness and the gigantic fireball faded, and the clear blueness was restored!

Chapter 821: Level and Power

Chapter 821: Level and Power

The sky was blue and cloudless. The bright sunlight sprayed on Allyn whose blockage had been activated again, adding a golden layer out of the pale mist.

The legendary sorcerers like Oliver and Bergner and the common arcanists like Heidi, Annick, and Sprint were all so shocked that they could barely close their mouths. Lucien Evans' solemn description just now outlined a clear, meticulous, and self-consistent system and answered the problems that had bothered the sorcerers for tens of thousands of years, including the essence of magic, the essence of the soul, and the feedback of the real world.

Although he only proposed concepts and hypotheses and reached a logical conclusion based on them without any detailed research, its agreement with the phenomena and experiments had suggested its correctness. It was a brainstorm that gave them an unprecedented shock. The nature of the world seemed to have been vaguely presented before them!

That was the eternal pursuit of every arcanist!

Multiverse, high-dimension space, indestructible soul, and other notions that were as unbelievable as dream talk refreshed their view on the world again.

So, the "space" that represented the real world was actually another parallel universe!

So, one's death was only the dispersion of the projection of the soul's nature!

So, some posthumous customs were not entirely wrong when they stated that one would be judged by the God of Death after death, and some of the souls would turn into intelligent creatures like humans, dragons, and elves, some would turn into common animals, and some would be confined in hell for good.

However, if they did not have current memories and personalities, and if they lost their unique waves and air, would they still be themselves?

“As expected of the Worldview Destroyer...” Other than the ordinary people and the nobles who couldn’t follow him, all the intelligent creatures who had a slight understanding of the world repeated the nickname subconsciously in their mind. The skyscrapers, the iron torrents, and the intelligent creatures with human faces and features that were right before their eyes but could not be touched forced them to treat the theoretical model fairly despite their subconscious resistance. At the very least, it was easier to accept than the observer effect was.

On the other hand, Lucien had triggered the feedback of the real world and broken Viken’s boundary between god and men only by the interpretation of his arcana system that was closer to the nature of the world. It was even more astounding and made them barely able to believe their eyes!

It was possible to blow up a sorcerer’s head with arcana theories, as could be seen from many examples. However, Viken hadn’t been a sorcerer since a long time ago. He did not have a cognitive world, and his heart of faith was absolutely under his control. Despite that, his defense had been broken when Mr. Evans did nothing but elaborate on the new arcana system with his mouth. They couldn’t help but feel that they were in a dream.

Of course, if we are not in a dream, then...

For some reason, they looked at Viken now with slight pity instead of fear and desperation. Such a fact was too brutal and merciless!

Watching the boundary next to him where light and darkness coexisted collapse inch by inch, Viken seemed to have been stunned. He wasn’t doing anything for a moment.

Lucien stopped further approaching. He put down his right hand and said with mixed feelings, “Therefore, I always believe in ‘god’; every one of us is our own god!

“Instead of pursuing the nature of your soul, you try to melt other people’s soul waves, hoping to find the path toward the high dimension with a number. That’s the opposite approach. It’s like in mathematics. We are trying to increase equations and solve the unknowns, whereas you are increasing the equations and the unknowns at the same time. How can you get an answer in such a way?

“Sometimes, the changes in quantity do not necessarily lead to a change in quality, or rather, the change in quality is not necessarily what you desired.”

When he said that, Lucien thought of himself. He couldn’t have reached the demigod level as fast if he hadn’t been transmigrated for a certain reason and carried the soul features of both universes, which allowed him to find things in common through comparison and research. Lucien’s soul had already dispersed, but the remaining pieces still gave Xiaofeng the language ability.

The transmigration when Xiaofeng died resulted in the amazing changes in the burning library and formed something that connected the two universes like the cognitive world. It was Xiaofeng’s cognitive world and connected his original universe. That was why Lucien succeeded so easily when he tried to sense the real world through meditation for the first time.

At that time, Lucien thought that it was because of his breakthrough in spiritual power in the crisis. Now, he finally realized that although it was part of the reason, that was not all of it. It must be noted that there had been many geniuses whose spiritual power was much greater than Lucien at his age in the history of magic, but their first attempt at meditation was never so easy and fast!

Therefore, it was impossible for other people to detect the spiritual library no matter how they tried, just like how they could not destroy the cognitive world directly. It was already the sophisticated knowledge that involved the changes in the intersection of universes. Even Lucien did not know much about it right now except for the basic concepts and the few formulas.

The content preservation of the spiritual library was obviously the protection of his instincts. Otherwise, the feedback of the real world would be too strong, and the connection with the original universe would be intensified. It was possible that the transmigrator couldn't take it and would be pulled back to the original universe.

As for the reason for his transmigration, Lucien did not waste his time thinking about it, because it was very likely to be a coincidence. For example, Lucien lost his soul on this side, and Xiaofeng lost his body on the other side, so they had weird synchronizations now that the two universes had preliminarily entangled. There were also many other guesses. Their odds were all extremely low.

However, Lucien wasn't too astonished. Even the events with the lowest odds could happen when there were infinite repetitions. From that point of view, everybody could be a lucky dog!

Hearing Lucien's words, Viken burst into fury, and the faces of souls in his body cried. After most of the powers of negative feelings and faith dispersed, it seemed that he could basically control his body right now.

"In any case, I have melted the powers of Mountain Paradise and the primeval hell. Even though I have not reached the level of a true god, I still have the power of true gods. Let's see if you can handle that!" Viken suddenly raised his right hand. Although he did not have his platinum staff with him, illusionary angels surfaced around him and prayed on the ground.

"Almighty Lord, you are one, and everyone."

...

Viken's vibe soon became high, unpredictable, and sacred. Ivory holy light was gathered in his hands. Then, centered at his body, infinite brilliance burst out and locked onto Lucien!

He was now able to cast "God's Arrival" instantly!

His God's Arrival did not carry any sequelae now!

Obviously, he was the power source of God's Arrival himself right now!

The ivory and holy light seemed to have frozen the time far away. The top legends further away showed no reaction. Only a silver moon, a nine-floored hell, and a lifelike world appeared and floated in the ocean of holy light, but they couldn't stop much.

God's Arrival hit Lucien who was not far away before Viken. The ivory light glittered and drowned everything.

"Is he dead?" Viken thought in delight and confusion. He had performed "God's Arrival" with the power of the true god. No demigods could withstand a head-on clash without dodging!

The brilliance of God's Arrival faded, and the frozen time melted and pressed forward. Before Viken, a man wearing a black double-breasted suit slowly surfaced, as handsome, gentle, and graceful as before. He even had a delicate silver watch in his hands, and he snapped the cover to watch the time.

How was it possible? How could he remain intact without being damaged at all after being hit by God's Arrival with the power of the true god?

Not just Viken, but Douglas, Maltimus, and the legendary experts around them, as well as the sorcerers and knights on the ground, had the same thought.

Lucien's body turned concrete very soon. He said with a peaceful smile, "The nature of 'God's Arrival' is to find the connection between the high-dimensional soul and its projection and destroy everything along the connection. That's why it can lock onto the soul and cannot be avoided. That's why it can attack a target from a long distance away. That's why it can prevent the experts other than demigods from being resurrected."

As he spoke, he smiled again. "Now that I have learned its nature and mechanism clearly, and now that I am also a demigod who can perceive the 'connection', I can leave this 'dimension' temporarily through the connection, before I come back by reestablishing a

projection. Naturally, you cannot hit me.”

“No, it’s impossible!” God’s Arrival was the source of Viken’s confidence, and God’s Arrival at the level of the true god was even more so. How could he not get mad? His eyes were bloodshot as holy light continued to gather in his hands!

“You are one, and everyone.”

...

“You are the moment, and forever.”

...

“You are the creator, and master.”

...

God’s Arrival was blown out again and again, but Lucien’s body flashed through the infinite light and reached Viken’s side.

“I know who I am, what status I am in, what God’s Arrival is, and how I should evade it, so I am a real demigod. You, on the other hand, only have the power of the true god, and you do not have the knowledge of the true god and the demigod. You do not know anything at all. What makes you think that you can hit me?”

Lucien looked solemn and pitiful. He extended his right hand and said solemnly, “Under normal circumstances, a similar spell in the level of the true god can attack the nature of the soul in the high dimension, which will completely kill the soul.”

The vast cosmos appeared behind his back as the gigantic fireball and the blue planet revolved slowly.

Chapter 822: The Poorest Villain in History

The moment he finished his sentence, spots of peaceful light popped up like a lake that was reflecting the moon at night. Under the gentle breeze, tiny ripples were spreading out.

The spots of light were instantly gathered in Lucien's hands into a glistening staff.

Douglas, Maltimus, and the other demigods were all more or less stunned. Was Lucien capable of casting Space Staff, a legendary spell, without chanting just like Viken who broke into the level of true gods?

However, they soon thought it through. Now that Lucien had basically figured out the essence of magic, chanting or not chanting did not really have any difference!

The Space Staff in Lucien's hands was waved, and the spacious area up ahead was suddenly caught in an extremely slow state that was similar to the effect of Advanced Time Stop. Even another "God's Arrival" in Viken's hands had been frozen in the ivory light.

Viken, who claimed to be the only one who grasped the mysteries of time and space except for the God of Truth, had brilliant spots rising inside his body, exactly like the light of the legendary river of time. It helped Viken to get rid of the slowed state.

Maltimus became grave when he watched Lucien's "Space Staff" to be gathered, because he discovered that even though he was immune to Time Stop effects, he did not seem capable of resisting such slowness. Such a state was not directly cast upon the recipient but changed the environment in a certain unusual way. Naturally, it was impossible for him to be immune to that!

Was it Lucien's real demigod attack after he advanced into the demigod level? Like Douglas' "Fateful Meteor"?

Douglas frowned slightly. He realized that the Space Staff had not just “slowed” the environment around Viken but also placed it in a demigod state that both belonged to and did not belong to this world. It was similar to the condition of the “cognitive world”.

Viken’s overwhelming power of the true god was unleashed, allowing him to get rid of the influence of Lucien’s Space Staff. At this moment, the perspective of the vast cosmos behind Lucien’s back rose, and the gigantic fireball and the blue planet were gone. A cluster of darkness where there was not the slightest light appeared.

Boom!

From the darkness, the unimaginably horrible energy surged and quickly died down. Rising and ebbing, it was truly an unpredictable ocean of energy. This was too fast a change to be observed for the other universe, but when it was viewed from this side, due to the different speeds of time, the demigod experts could manage to sense the fluctuations!

Boom!

The terrifying energy that surged out leaned outward and ran into the slowed world next to Viken!

It became another channel that connected to the other universe like the cognitive world! Also, because it was slow, it had “borrowed” the fluctuations of energy!

Boom!

Energy ran out as if it had been generated out of nothing, drowning Viken who was emanating dazzling brilliance immediately!

Particles appeared and disappeared in pairs. The slowed world was nullified very soon. At the center of the energy tide’s rampage, a cluster of fluids where light and darkness entangled twisted and grew larger, turning back into Viken. However, he seemed much dimmer and weaker than before!

After suffering the heavy wounds, Viken was finally recovered and

refreshed from the madness caused by the blast of negative feelings and the sacred faith. He gnashed his teeth and said, “Just because my ‘God’s Arrival’ cannot hit you does not mean that it cannot hit other people. I don’t believe that you will watch them be killed without doing anything!”

Lucien was amused. “Why don’t you take a look around yourself first?”

Viken’s senses, which had been suppressed by the energy tide, spread out. He felt that he was in midair and the Holy City was below him. As for Allyn and Rentato, as well as the legendary experts around him, they were nowhere to be seen.

“Previously, you were connected to every corner of the world and could even directly influence them only because of the marvelous domain when you broke into the true god level.

“It’s a high-dimensional state, in which the long distance in the lower dimensions is much shorter. However, after you failed to break into the true god state, and the boundary between god and men was broken, the marvelous domain naturally started to disappear. Your usage of God’s Arrival further accelerated the process and made it disappear fast. Right now, you can only affect the Holy City and attack us who are in the marvelous domain.”

Lucien said with a smile. On the other side, Douglas, the Silver Moon, and the Lord of Hell gathered and defended Fernando, Hathaway, and the rest of them. Although they could not resist God’s Arrival in the true god level individually, they were still able to resist the attack after joining their hands.

Their communication was purely conducted through spiritual power. The long talk actually only took a brief moment. His body trembling violently, Viken cast another God’s Arrival, and the projection of the parallel universe behind Lucien had perspective changes again!

.....

After Viken attacked Lucien with God’s Arrival for the first time

only to miss the target, the legendary experts who attacked outside of the marvelous domain, as well as the sorcerers, nobles, and ordinary people on the ground, watched them turn vague and quickly disappear in the bright and blue sky.

“Why have they disappeared?”

It was their subconscious question, but very soon, every intelligent creature with the slightest knowledge came up with the reason. Viken’s attempt at advancement was over. Naturally, the unusual phenomenon that the whole world could see and reach came to an end.

“I wonder how it will end on the other side...” Heidi looked at the sky in concern.

Sprint snorted. “Viken has only the power but not the knowledge. I don’t see how he can win the battle when he cannot hit our teacher. Let’s drop the question and remember the equations and models that our teacher just gave to study them.”

“Yes, that’s what matters!” Annick shivered and returned from his shock, agreeing with Sprint’s suggestion.

Heidi thought for a moment and nodded very carefully. “That’s right. Our teacher is a cunning person—no, clever grand arcanist—who has both the knowledge and the power. He will only let Viken reach the end in desperation. There won’t be any hope for him. The arcana system and the essence of magic and soul that our teacher just gave are of greater significance.”

Therefore, the arcanists of the Atom Institution were gathered, trying to recall and study the equations that Lucien gave earlier.

Such a scene happened in every corner of Allyn. Everybody was diligent and hardworking. That was exactly what stimulated minds needed!

As for who Viken was exactly?

Well, he would be killed by Mr. Evans soon. There was no need to waste time on him. Learning and studying were more important!

Natasha, who was descending from the sky, said to Hellen next to her with a smile after realizing the situation, “I’ve seen plenty of plays and operas, but Viken is probably the first regretful and desperate supervillain who has been forgotten even before the final battle.”

Hellen’s eyes lost the focus. She turned a deaf ear to Natasha’s words and murmured to herself, “It was a trick... It was a trick...”

Rendered speechless, Natasha raised her head and looked at the sky. Even the Witch of Iceland had forgotten Viken, too.

As a matter of fact, the fact that she was talking and laughing here instead of going to the Holy City in a hurry to help her husband had suggested her own attitude toward the final battle.

.....

“You are one, and everyone...”

In the distant and holy prayers, infinite ivory holy light burst out and surged at Lucien, but Viken did not check the result of this “God’s Arrival” at all. He simply turned around and left the range of God’s Arrival, tearing apart the space.

He could not hit the enemy, and he no longer had any hostages. How could he win the battle?

After coming back to himself, Viken naturally chose to strategically relocate, or in other words, to run!

Boom!

An enormous and terrifying explosion echoed, and a world-destroying energy storm broke out!

Boom!

The energy storm collided with the light of God’s Arrival and resulted in another astonishing explosion.

The sky was filled by the brightness that the sun could not be seen

until a long time later.

The sweeping energy storm disrupted Viken's attempt to escape, making his body even dimmer.

Lucien has directly resisted God's Arrival? Viken thought in shock.

"Your God's Arrival is exactly your 'true god'. It has only the power but not the corresponding level. It's easy to resist it as long as there is enough energy." Lucien slowly appeared up above.

Just now, he extracted and created anti-protons and other matters, transforming "Positron Cannon" into an authentic "Antimatter Cannon". Through the energy storm caused by its obliteration with common matters, it offset the ocean of light caused by God's Arrival.

Although God's Arrival had other special effects, such as slowing time and locking the soul, they could barely work on Lucien who was in the demigod level right now.

"Also, have you sensed that your power is weaker and weaker every time you use God's Arrival?" Lucien smiled and gathered Space Staff again. "It's because the source of your power of faith and your negative feelings has been ruined by yourself and cannot be restored anytime soon. Therefore, your power cannot be refilled after it is used up."

As he spoke, Lucien pointed the Space Staff and locked the space around, slowing the changes and sabotaging Viken's efforts to escape.

Another energy time surged over, and Viken's body was already on the verge of collapse.

At this moment, a bright and beautiful moon descended from the sky. Life Deprivation was cast out, and a shooting star with a long tail of light fell without a sound.

After the beautiful view emerged, Viken struggled with madness beaming out of his eyes. He appeared to be transcendental and dispersive again.

“You will die with me even if I must die!”

After suffering consecutive attacks, he was already on the verge of death. Having been a brutal man all the time, he naturally had the idea of self-explosion. So, he transformed his status and lunged at Lucien.

Seeing that, Lucien smiled, and his body grew illusionary again, as if he were about to disappear from this world.

Chapter 823: Path of Immortality (End of the Main Storyline)

Seeing that, Viken grinned hideously in his heart. His body that was flashing and twisting erratically suddenly collapsed, turning into two worlds where light and darkness overlapped. One of the worlds was evil and corrupt, brimming with pain and desperation, and the other was lofty and sacred, with singing angels everywhere.

The remainders of the primeval hell and Mountain Paradise reappeared, forming the previous balance again. Viken was briefly given the feeling that he belonged to and did not belong to this world again.

Such a transformation suggested that Viken had completely abandoned himself. He would rather retrograde and perish in order to find an opportunity to deal a critical blow on Lucien so that he could only “return” millions of years later like the mysterious existence of the World of Souls!

Such a feeling was already close to the vibe that Lucien gave other people. The two of them seemed to be in the same world!

Gotcha!

Viken grasped Lucien’s air instantly!

However, at this moment, he realized that the space around him became dark and deep, with brilliant stars scattered everywhere. The edge of the space far away vaguely constricted, and the power of the wind that represented electromagnetism was divided into parts, as if it was exchanging something. Below him were elements in different colors that were similar to planets. Electrons surrounded the atomic nucleus and dispersed into a cloud. Above his head, there was an enormous fireball.

It was Lucien’s “cognitive world”?

I could actually break into his “cognitive world”?

No, it's because our current state is similar to the status of the cognitive world, which does not entirely belong to this world but is connected to it in a certain way.

Viken thought quickly and basically understood what was going on.

Of course, he also knew that there was still a major difference between their state and the cognitive world. He was able to break in obviously because Lucien intentionally adjusted the status of his cognitive world.

Why is he doing this?

In any case, now that he dares to let me in, I will completely ruin his cognitive world. It will be even more difficult for him to recover and return!

When countless thoughts flashed in Viken's heart in the blink of an eye, he made a decision quickly. The primeval hell and Mountain Paradise began to expand.

Suddenly, he saw the Lucien who was in the "cosmos" far away putting on a gentle and graceful smile again. In the meantime, the enormous fireball above his head was turned to the back of a cluster of intense darkness.

The darkness that even rays of light could not leak out of released an unimaginable and most horrifying attraction force. Immediately, Viken, including his primeval hell and Mountain Paradise, was attracted to it!

In the normal space, any of Lucien's Host Stars of Destiny couldn't have influenced the material world effectively. However, Viken's status was synchronized with the cognitive world at this moment.

Under the all-absorbing attraction force, the expansion of the primeval hell and Mountain Paradise was stopped, and Viken was devoured by the darkness before he was able to let out a scream.

Lucien, however, was not relaxed. He was even more solemn than before. His cognitive world quickly faded. The perspective of the shadow universe behind his back changed, displaying indescribable

darkness instead of the gigantic fireball and the blue planet.

The darkness was even more intimidating than that inside Lucien's cognitive world. Even though it was in a different universe, the demigods like Douglas and Maltimus still realized that it was powerful enough to tear them apart easily.

Then, the darkness in the cognitive world had minor "communication" with the darkness!

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The stars in Lucien's cognitive world were absorbed into the darkness. Everything was trembling. However, the items inside the darkness also flowed into the other darkness through the channel of communication.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!"

A soundless scream burst out. Lucien hurried to abort the connection and turn the darkness backward, redisplaying the gigantic fireball. However, even though he had done everything perfectly, his cognitive world was already an utter mess. His body slightly dimmed. It was obvious that he had been badly hurt.

2Viken had been completely done for!

Maltimus was feeling rather sympathetic after witnessing the scene. Lucien was too strong right now!

At first, he thought of helping Viken flee in order to maintain the balance of the situation. However, neither Douglas nor the Silver Moon loosened their wariness of him. Therefore, he could only choose to submit in the future...

The shadow universe and the projection of the cognitive world were slowly gone. Lucien's body quickly turned concrete. He slightly nodded at Douglas, Silver Moon Alterna, Fernando, and the rest of them.

The darkness in the sky was gone, and the bright sunlight sprayed on his body, covering him in gold.

In Allyn and Rentato, although nobody cared about the battle any longer, many people were still mumbling to themselves, “It was a trick... It was a trick...”

.....

One day later, in Babel in the Atomic Universe...

Hardly had Lucien come out of his laboratory when he saw Natasha appreciating the cosmos outside of the window, which was entirely different from that in the main material world, with a glass of red wine in her hands.

“Have you found a way to recover Mr. Maskelyne?” Natasha asked in concern.

Lucien nodded but shook his head. “I’ve found something, but more research is still necessary. Even though I am a demigod, I am not omnipotent.”

When Viken melted Mountain Paradise, the seraphs who were capable of fleeing like Maskelyne hid in the Realm of Gates. After all, unlike the primeval devils, they were not deeply connected to the primeval hell.

“A demigod...” Natasha grimaced, indicating that she would work hard herself. “What exactly is the high-dimensional soul you talked about? Do they have self-consciousness? Can they control their respective projections?”

She was quite interested in Lucien’s model. Although most of it was too confusing, she finally understood the key to her advancement. However, she had her concerns, fearing that the soul essence in the high dimension could control her. She did not feel quite comfortable when she thought that something mysterious could control her and wanted to slay it, even though it was another “her”.

“I don’t know. If I could completely understand the nature and status of the high-dimensional souls, I would already be a ‘true god’. For now, I can only make speculations based on the phenomena as well as the things that I’ve felt after I became a demigod. For

example, it is possible that the high-dimensional souls are in chaos, and only after they are projected to different parallel universes and combined with matters will the unique self-consciousness be generated. That's why one's memories and ways of thinking will be gone after death. They do not belong to the soul essence in the high dimension." Lucien spoke of his thoughts which he wasn't quite confident about.

"There won't be any self-consciousness until it is combined with matters? But there are a lot of souls that are separated from their physical forms, like ghosts, aren't there?" Natasha said like a curious arcanist.

Lucien thought for a moment and said, "The souls that I often talk about are more like shells that are made of electromagnetic fields and the special isotopes of certain elements. They're matters, too. At least, I think that the projection of high-dimensional souls has to be based on matter in our universe."

Natasha scratched her chin. "What about the starry sky of destiny? There isn't any matter in that. Also, why do the stars that exist in reality indicate our fate?"

"You've answered your own question." Lucien was amused and took over the champagne that Natasha poured for him. "Through the connection between the high-dimensional souls and their projections in a material world, we can grasp all the traces of the souls in the material world. The mechanism is the same as that of God's Arrival, except that God's Arrival is used for destruction purposes. In the high-dimensional state, all the traces of all lives must be overlapping or entangling. That's the real appearance of the starry sky of destiny. So, when there are changes on one side, the other side will sense it.

"When there are all the traces, we will be able to infer some of the future changes. It's like all questions can be answered when there are enough equations. However, since the 'future' involves too many factors and unknowns, there can only be rough, indefinite predictions.

"Such overlapping or entanglement in the high-dimensional state

can only be seen when we meditate through the cognitive world or when we perform astrology. Its projection is also based on matters. So, it is manifested through the stars, and the information is hidden in the law and status of different Host Stars of Destiny.

“Therefore, the starry sky of destiny shares the same law as the starry sky in reality, but it runs in very different ways. Mr. President successfully advanced into the demigod level mainly by grasping his Host Star of Destiny, or the traces of his own soul.”

Hearing Lucien’s brief description, Natasha nodded thoughtfully. “Therefore, the starry sky of destiny reflects most of the laws of the stars in reality, but the stars in reality have barely anything to do with fate?”

“Yes.” Lucien did not think that Natasha could understand any further interpretations right now. So, he nodded his head in approval.

Natasha seemed to be in a better mood. “You’ve touched the essence of high-dimensional souls through the connection of two souls. How are you going to become a true god and realize immortality?”

She had already learned from Lucien that he melted a soul of his own from another universe. That was why he could advance into the demigod level so quickly. However, Natasha did not have many complaints. After all, she did not even know Lucien back then. The Lucien she knew had always been the one after the melting.

Thinking for a moment, Lucien said, “It is impossible to calculate the essence of the original soul in reverse with the answer and part of the laws of projection because equations are not enough and there are too many unknowns. Therefore, in order to realize immortality, we can only find ways to go to other parallel universes to search for our other ‘selves’ and learn more answers and laws. Then, we will be able to solve the simultaneous equation and find out the math model about the essence of the soul.

“So, find more ‘selves’, obtain more information, and advance through meticulous math models. That’s an arcanist’s path of

immortality!”

Natasha said enviously, “The direction is very clear... What about knights?”

“The further you go down on the path of immortality, the more similar things you will see. After all, it is already close to the essence of the world. Therefore, the path of knights and the path of arcanists should be basically the same except for some of the details.” Lucien chuckled. “The advancement cannot be made based on natural instincts anymore. You have to figure out the corresponding things and compare yourself with more of yourselves.”

Natasha’s lips twitched and decided not to consider such a troublesome question for now. “Why do you think there is magic on our side but there isn’t on the other universe?”

“The power of soul projections has different influences on fundamental matters. Also, time flows faster on our side and more slowly on their side. So, we can make use of the rising and ebbing ocean of energy on their side, but they cannot use ours.” Lucien’s voice became low.

“However, since there is an intersection, there should be corresponding changes on that side too, shouldn’t there?” Natasha asked in confusion.

Lucien put down the cup and walked to the window before he replied with a smile, “Perhaps there are like macro electrons¹ and ball lightning...”

“What?”

“I was just kidding.”

(End of Volume VIII and the main storyline)

Chapter 824: 61 Days to Go (Side Story: Year 24 of the Arcana Calendar)

The lights on the Triumph Avenue of Rentato were just on. The wind at the late spring was still somewhat chilly as the night fell, forcing the passersby on the street to cover themselves more tightly.

Donnie pressed his black top hat and got off from the bright yellow bus. Roaming on the street that was as bright as day, he walked toward the “Knowledge Bookstore” near the Triumph Square.

“Has Herald of Arcana and Magic for this week come?” Donnie asked the bearded boss.

The boss, who had deep yellow hair, replied without raising his head, “No, and it will never come again.”

“Is that so...” Donnie did not sound surprised. He simply heaved a sigh, as if he had seen it coming, with complicated feelings.

The boss finally raised his head and observed him with a pair of owl eyes. “What’s to be sorry about? After the magic stream screens were popularized into home televisions, and Ms. Heidi made major breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, it was only a matter of time for such a poorly-poised newspaper to disappear.”

His weird pupils reflected a handsome young man who was no more than twenty years old. It was supposed to be the most vigorous years of his life, but his blue eyes were full of exhaustion and depression.

Donnie said with a bitter smile, “I grew up reading the Herald of Arcana and Magic. It guided me to embark on the arcana path and pursue the truth of the world. For me, it is a beautiful memory and a part of my life that I will never forget.”

Thanks to the popularization of magic radios and TVs and the application of artificial intelligence, the citizens now had plenty more sources of information. They were much less dependent on

the newspaper. Now that the basic knowledge of arcana had been disseminated, most ordinary people were not interested in the more sophisticated arcana theories anymore because they seemed unrelated to life. After all, they could learn the introductions from the mainstream newspapers, the radios, and the home TVs. Therefore, Herald of Arcana and Magic, as a newspaper that introduced arcana and magic, was no longer necessary, and the circulation had plummeted.

The magic apprentices and arcanists were not likely to buy the newspaper either, because they had more professional academic journals such as “Allyn Impression” that better met their appetites and News of the World. So, since three years ago, or year 21 of the arcana calendar, a lot of such newspapers had gone bankrupt. Finally, it was Herald of Arcana and Magic’s turn despite its fame and the fact that it represented the golden years of arcana.

The boss of the bookstore pointed at the bookshelves. “If you want to learn the basics of arcana, there are many professional books here. If you want to learn the latest trend of arcana studies, you can subscribe to Allyn Impression or watch the News of the World TV Channel every day. There really isn’t any need to read Herald of Arcana and Magic.”

Under the bright magic lamps, the rows of blue or black books emitted weird colors and made Donnie felt dizzy. His veins bulging, he said, “That will be unnecessary. I haven’t grasped my own books yet.”

He had come to the Triumph Square on the bus because Herald of Arcana and Magic was already unavailable near his school, but the Knowledge Bookstore still had it. Little did he expect that Herald of Arcana and Magic could not sustain any longer after only one month.

The boss chuckled. He looked at the badges of magic apprentice and intern arcanist on the chest of Donnie’s black robe, as well as an emblem that was seven bright leaves on a black background, before he remarked, “You’re a fifth-grader of ‘Nature’s Heart School’, aren’t you? There are only 61 days to go until the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic, and you’re still buying Herald of Arcana and

Magic? You should focus on your studies.”

The moment he heard the “College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic”, Donnie’s facial muscles cramped, and he looked confused, agitated, and depressed. “It’s the weekend today. There are no classes until eight at night...”

He explained subconsciously before he smiled in self-mockery. *Why do I bother to explain that to him?*

After twenty years of evolution, under the lead of the Congress of Magic, a three-tier school system, namely generic schools, alchemical and vocational schools, and advanced magic colleges, had been established on the whole continent.

The generic schools were mainly open to children and adults who did not know how to read. The education would take five years. Then, after passing the exams that included measurement of spiritual power and tests of basic arcana theories, the graduates would go to the preliminary magic schools, where they would become magic apprentices, professional alchemy workers, or take part in other occupations.

The preliminary magic schools had a five-year curriculum too. Through the real basic education of magic and arcana, qualified magic apprentices and intern arcanists were raised. Eventually, they would take the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic and be admitted to the major magic colleges.

In the College Entrance Exam, those who had already become official sorcerers would receive bonus scores.

Donnie was about to leave when the boss smiled and said, “I can see that you have no magic items with you except for the three badges that the school gave you. I don’t think you’re from a rich family. You’d better focus on your studies.”

Under such a school system, the magic items and potions that could relieve fatigue, keep the mind sharp, and increase memory abilities were favored by most students.

Although such accessories and potions were forbidden in the real College Entrance Exam, they were of great help for the students to improve their learning efficiency. So, nobody would refuse them, unless they couldn't afford them.

Donnie blushed immediately. Shy and awkward, he was about to flee from the embarrassing bookstore.

"I have a 'Lucidity Necklace' here that I can rent you for two months..." The boss' unemotional voice came into Donnie's ears and made him stop.

Then, he turned around abruptly and looked at the boss. "Why?"

He was both excited and suspicious. However, his eyes caught a book named "Recognizing Different Deceptive Magic Contracts", which was written by Lucien Evans, on the bookshelf. He thought to himself, *Do I have to pay my soul as the price?*

The boss chuckled. "I am a loyal reader of the Herald of Arcana and Magic too. Otherwise, I wouldn't have bought it in the end. So, when I see you, I feel that I see myself from a long time ago... Why, are you scared that I have other purposes? You are free to bring the contract to the city hall for assessment."

"I... Do I need to pay anything?" More or less relaxed, Donnie asked earnestly.

The boss thought for a moment. "A down payment of ten coins, and working for me for two months after your College Entrance Exam."

Donnie nodded quickly after he heard the terms. "Alright! No problem! Sir, when are we going to sign the contract?"

One "Lucidity Necklace" was worth two to five queen gold coins. Having rented one at such a low price, Donnie was naturally excited.

"The necklace is not with me. You can come again tomorrow at this time." The boss nodded.

Donnie thanked him and left the bookstore for the bus station. All

he could think of was the amazing experience and the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic that was to come in 61 days.

As he waited for the bus, Donnie looked at the Triumph Square, where a bronze statue that was wearing a double-breasted suit and a top hat with a staff in his left hand and a pocket watch in his right hand, stood.

“Mr. Evans...” Donnie mumbled with both admiration and certain “hate”.

“Bus No. 36, bound for ‘Land of Thousand Lakes’...” As a cold, mechanical female voice echoed, a dim red bus stopped before Donnie.

Donnie woke up from his thoughts and stepped on the bus, placing his school badge in the sensor area.

“From the No. 7 Magic School of Rentato. Eight free rides left...” The mechanical voice echoed again without any feelings.

“Nature’s Heart” was a magic school co-established by the Congress of Magic, the Elven Court, and the Kingdom of Holm. It was the seventh preliminary magic school in Rentato.

“Artificial intelligence is truly convenient...” Donnie thought subconsciously. “It’s a shame that I don’t have a chance to witness the combination of artificial intelligence and alchemical life as what Ms. Heidi described...”

Thinking about random things, Donnie returned to his school, which was outside the city, right on time for the evening class.

“Today, I’ll introduce to you the special theory of relativity.” Mr. Slington, who had a long white beard, said hoarsely, “This is Mr. Evans’ profound description of space and time. With your current expertise, it is impossible for you to understand it. All you need to do is to grasp the key points.”

Donnie’s facial muscles were cramped again. He looked at the banner of “61 Days Left Until the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic” at the back of the classroom and became focused.

After the evening class, Donnie returned to his dormitory dizzily. He lit the small magic lamp and prepared for exercises.

“‘Evans Instructions’, ‘Lucien’s Guidance’, ‘Detailed Explanations of the Questions in the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic by Lucien Evans’...” Donnie read the collection of tests one word after another, feeling a stronger and stronger headache. “Evans, Lucien, Lucien, Evans...”

Although he knew that those books were published by other people under Mr. Evans’ name, he still gnashed his teeth at the two words that frequently showed up.

Calming himself down, he opened one of the books and decided to review and consolidate “History of Arcana and Magic” first.

“... In which year did Mr. Lucien Evans propose matrix mechanics? What’s the significance?”

“... How many times has Mr. Evans won the highest honors including the Arcana Prize and the Holm Crown Prize?”

...

“Lucien, Evans, Evans, Lucien...” Donnie rubbed his forehead and closed the book in agitation, opening another collection of tests.

“... Please recite in full the periodic table that Mr. Evans proposed and perfected.”

“... What is the Lucien Constant? What equations are related to it?”

Pa.

Donnie closed the book quickly and drank water to calm himself down. He decided to go for another one.

“... What is the Evans Field Equation about? What’s your understanding of it?”

“... Could the Lucien Equation describe all the microscopic particles?”

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

A miserable, painful, and furious scream burst out of Donnie’s mouth and spread far away in the night, echoed by similar sounds in other dormitories.

Chapter 825: Shadow

Chapter 825: Shadow

"You're screaming as if you've run into a ghost." As a low and unpredictable voice echoed, the door of his dormitory was opened, and a young man with messy hair walked in. His eyelids were bloated, and his blue eyes were bloodshot, as if he hadn't slept for a long time.

On his back, a pale and fuzzy shadow was stuck to him and floated forward with the feet away from the ground. After it showed up, the whole dormitory suddenly became cold, as if the night of spring turned into a dawn in winter.

Donnie quivered and hurried to put on the long coat that he just took off. "Sammy, I see the ghost on your back every day. Why would I be scared of ghosts? Besides, if there are really any evil spirits, those teachers of the school of necromancy would be capturing them with great delight."

Such was the disadvantage of the magic schools, where there was no place for ghost stories. Things were different in the generic schools. For example, after a girl hanged herself in a laboratory, the other students often found that their experiment materials would go missing, or that the materials they badly in need of would appear right next to their hands when they worked alone in the place at night.

Of course, there were other stories in magic schools. For example, rumors had it that the grim old sorcerer who watched over the autopsy room often dissected living people for studies, and it was why he barely came out and always refused everyone who approached his room.

Sammy yawned. "In that case, why were you screaming so miserably? You are a top twenty apprentice of our grade."

The ghost hands behind him suddenly stretched like it was made of elastic material. Then, they grabbed the kettle and the cup, poured

water, and fed it to Sammy's mouth.

"Even the best apprentices would feel that their brains are exploding when they are faced with all those equations, conceptions, mechanisms, and magic models, even though we're only working on the basics," Donnie rubbed his temples and complained. It was particularly so when so many theories and equations had Lucien or Evans in them. He only hoped that somebody could travel back in time and kill that guy so that those torturing things wouldn't have been invented.

Thinking about that, Donnie sighed. "Also, I do not have a Lucidity Necklace or a Stamina Ring. I'm not like you. You have a natural-born Back Spirit, and you have been admitted by the Heidler Magic College in advance for your excellent necromancy skills. For me, I can only count myself, and I cannot fail. It's only natural that I get exhausted and anxious as time goes on."

He knew his mental status rather well.

Sammy drank a mouthful of water and yawned again. "Your psychoanalysis is pretty good. It will be better after you unleash your depression."

Then, he lay on his bed lazily and closed his eyes. "The Back Spirit can be quite tricky. It absorbs your vitality, affects your status, and... prevents girls from getting close to you. I would've been burnt if I were born during the reign of the Saint Truth..."

As he spoke, he fell asleep, and his breath was barely audible. His Back Spirit lay below him and hugged him tightly.

Donnie looked at his roommate and sighed. *What you despise is what I envy and cannot get.* After all, if he could become an official sorcerer, none of the female sorcerers would be scared of his Back Spirit.

Sammy mentioned it before that he had a twin brother. However, since his mother's body was damaged near a gap of the World of Souls, one of her babies was already dead before being born.

Calming himself down, Donnie threw aside “Introduction to Arcana” and “History of Arcana and Magic” and focused on the exercises to analyze magic models.

Tomorrow, I will have my own Lucidity Necklace!

...

As the intricate and weird spell echoed and the clusters of cold powder slid off, a transparent ray mixed with freezing air was shot out, resulting in thick frost on the throat of the target.

Donnie looked at his work in satisfaction and appreciated Mr. Evans in his heart. After he basically figured out the essence of magic, the functions of many spells had been analyzed and simplified. Otherwise, it would’ve been impossible for him to shoot out a freezing ray so easily.

“Alright, that’s all for today’s magic exercise.” The teacher responsible for real-battle magic guidance clapped his hands and dismissed the students.

Donnie hurried to stop and pack his materials. After saying goodbye to Sammy who seemed to be half asleep all the time, he hurried to go to the station outside of the school.

Today was Sunday. There were no classes in the afternoon.

After forty minutes, Bus No. 36 reached Triumph Avenue, and Donnie walked into the Knowledge Bookstore quickly.

“Good afternoon, sir.” Donnie greeted and was too shy to say anything else.

The boss, who had a pair of owl eyes and a deep yellow beard, laughed. “Good afternoon. You’re right on time. I’ve already had the Lucidity Necklace and the contract prepared.”

As he spoke, he brought out a bright gold necklace. On the necklace were five bright blue gems the size of grit. They emitted vague coolness as if a spring was hidden in them. Together, they constituted a strangely-shaped star.

“It’s a ‘Lucidity Necklace’ that is in the level of official magic items...” Donnie had taken basic appraisal classes in school, so he could tell the real level of the necklace easily from the obvious wave features. He was both excited and confused. As Mr. Evans said before, inexplicable gifts often contained schemes, no matter the schemes were good or bad.

The boss touched his beard and smiled. “It’s rented to you, not given to you.

“Actually, I am a very materialistic man. I do things for returns. Although I’m renting it to you very cheaply, will you turn down my request for help after you become an official sorcerer? This is essentially a long-term investment that does not jeopardize my own interests at all.”

As the infrastructure such as roads and rails was perfected, and after the magic cars, magic steam trains, steamships, aircraft, and other vehicles were popularized, the communication among places was more and more convenient. The banking industry had made a lot of innovations too.

Donnie was more relaxed after hearing the boss’ answer. Although he was still puzzled why the guy had high hopes in him, he was not too bothered by it. After all, it was his investment. So, Donnie picked up the contract and read it carefully.

Donnie reviewed every clause on the contract according to what he learned in school. The contract was very simple and did not have any ambiguities. So, Donnie reached a conclusion very quickly. Gritting his teeth, he signed his real name with his quill.

A bright fire popped up, burning up the contract and yielding two copies at the same time.

“The contract is now in effect. You can take away the necklace now.” The boss gave the necklace back to Donnie.

After seizing the necklace according to the standard procedure, Donnie put it on his neck and immediately sensed coolness circulating in his body. His days of anxiety and depression were

gone. He was never more refreshed and comfortable.

“Donnie.” The boss suddenly asked, “Which school are you going to apply for in the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic? Holt? The Tower? Heidler? Or any others?”

There were nine advanced magic colleges in the Congress of Magic today. Among them, the Holt Magic College was best at the microscopic domain and elements, the Tower College was best at astrology and cosmology, and the Heidler College was best at necromancy, genes, and medics. Every college had additional tests for the applicants. Therefore, a month before the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic, each student would choose the college of their choice.

Subconsciously, Donnie was about to say Holt Magic College, because it was the first college of the Congress. The faculty was strong and knowledgeable, and they were best at the microscopic domain that involved the nature of the world and magic. Who wouldn't be attracted by that?

However, when he saw the boss' owl eyes, he suddenly remembered the pain from last night. The equations and formulas whose rough interpretations were already complicated enough, the dizzying math models, and the “curses” that had Lucien or Evans as the prefix made him feel agitated from the bottom of his heart.

The moment he thought that he would step deeper into the Evans domain, he felt that his life was dark and sunless.

“I... I haven't made up my mind yet. I was thinking of applying for the Holt Magic College, but the other colleges seem quite good too. I'm good at most of my classes,” Donnie said ambiguously.

The boss smiled and then sighed. “Actually, I am a sorcerer, and I entered the world of magic under the influence of the Herald of Arcana and Magic.

“I once had the ambition to make huge achievements that I could be proud of in the microscopic domain. After all, Mr. Evans only established the framework, and many details and foundations still

required studying. Alas, after deeper studies, I realized that only the real talented arcanists could press forward in this domain and that a mediocre man like me could barely keep up with them.

“To make things worse, to dedicate myself to theoretical studies, I completely ignored the magic application, which led to the stagnation of my capabilities. I was left out from the team that was aiming for the tip of the pyramid. I could only kill my time by opening such a bookstore.”

Donnie was stunned. “Sir, why didn’t you try to switch to a different field of studies?”

“I am trying to study necromancy, but my foundations are not good and my mind is already shaped. Everything is difficult.” The boss did not say anything more and simply hinted Donnie to leave.

Donnie walked on the street ignorantly. His head was filled with the boss’ words and his previous thoughts. Gradually, they gathered into the same idea. *I will not be covered in Mr. Evans’ halo. I will not be haunted by the complicated equations and formulas for the rest of my life. I will not talk about Lucien blah blah blah and Evans blah blah blah in my dream every night...*

But... which field did not have the shadow of Mr. Evans?

Chapter 826: Reach

When Donnie returned to school, there was still a long time to go before the evening class. So, he hobbled back to his dormitory, trying to think about the problem more carefully.

“Where did you go?” Sammy was watching the home TV that was embedded on the wall on his bed with a fried chicken in his hands. Amused by the shows, he was unusually enlivened. The ghost behind him, on the other hand, crouched lazily, unwilling to move at all.

Donnie replied casually, “Didn’t I tell you? I went to the Triumph Square to get the Lucidity Necklace.”

Sammy scratched his messy hair and said, unbothered, “The sun at noon is too strong for me to keep myself awake. How could I remember what you said?”

As he spoke, the young man suddenly turned around and looked at Donnie. “Wait, did you say ‘Lucidity Necklace’? Have you saved enough money for a Lucidity Necklace?”

He finally noticed the key point.

Donnie said in a self-mocking smile, “How can I save enough money? There are few subsidies for apprentices and intern arcanists. We do not have many scholarships either. I only ran into a kindhearted bookstore owner this time...”

He told his friend what happened.

Sammy nodded and did not have any questions for Donnie’s experience. He barely considered anything deeply except arcana and magic.

After talking with Donnie, Sammy turned around and kept watching the TV. At this moment, the show was already over and replaced by a commercial, where a beautiful girl was displaying the convenient and beautiful clothes on her. Because of the increase of alchemical

workshops and the change of social structure centered at the alchemy center Rentato, the fashion of clothes had greatly changed. They either became more simple and convenient for daily life or more complicated and exotic.

Being no stranger to Sammy's state, Donnie stood up, sat down, and lay on the bed, and repeated the process again and again anxiously, as he thought about his choice.

Donnie hadn't made up his mind after a long time. So, he coughed and said, "Sammy, there's something that I would like to ask you."

Sammy turned around again, and there was already tiredness on his face. "What is it?"

"I'm considering which magic college I should choose," Donnie said in a low voice.

Sammy frowned in confusion. "Haven't you decided to go to Holt a long time ago? You are not going to study the marvelous and profound microworld anymore?"

"I... probably won't. In the microscopic domain, almost half of the equations and formulas are prefixed with Evans or Lucien. They are so complicated that I am physically repulsed every time I see them..." Donnie said his thoughts frankly. In the end, he said, "I want to study something simpler, with fewer equations and formulas. I do not want to live in a nightmare called 'Lucien Evans' forever... What do you suggest?"

Sammy took a bite of the fried chicken. Not offering any comment on Donnie's idea of escaping from Lucien Evans, he simply said, "The microscopic domain today includes elements, electromagnetism, alchemy, light-darkness, and force fields. That's Mr. Evans' main battlefield. If you don't want to study it, I think you can only study macroscopic astrology..."

When he spoke "astrology", he turned his eyes to the bookshelf in a corner of their dormitory, where the books that they borrowed from the library and their textbooks in the past five years were piled.

“A Brief Review of the Special and the General Theories of Relativity”, “Evans Analysis of the Starry Sky of Destiny”, “Divinity and Evans Essence Model”, “Lucien Astrology”... The names of those books jumped into Sammy’s eyes and choked him. “Not the school of astrology... It’s also Mr. Evans’ territory. Although it’s not as bad as the microscopic domain, I’m told that the Evans field equation alone has driven many astrologers mad.”

“Yes. The school of thermodynamics is similar...” Donnie rubbed his forehead in pain. “Now, necromancy, illusion, transformation, and summoning are the only fields that Mr. Evans hasn’t really influenced. Since I’m not a fan of summoning, I think I can only choose from necromancy, illusion, and transformation.”

Sammy’s eyes glittered. He stopped sending the fried chicken into his mouth and said, “Aren’t you very good at psychoanalysis in the field of illusion? Apply for the Tower of Wizards.”

“Psychoanalysis...” Donnie was delighted at first. Then, as if he remembered something, he turned to the bookshelf.

Interpretation of Dreams, by Lannister Stanis and Lucien Evans...

Behavioral Psychology, by Lucien Evans, Erica Lavinie, Isabella...

Sixteen Countermeasures to Deal with Personality Deficiencies, Psychological Shadows, and Real Illusions, by Lucien Evans...

Application of Lucien’s Personality Analysis in Illusion...

...

Donnie moved his eyes back and patted the bed hard, before he lowered his head in frustration. “It doesn’t work either. Although there aren’t so many equations and formulas, Lucien and Evans are still everywhere. Many definitions in this domain have been completed by Mr. Evans...”

Why is he everywhere?

Although it was much better than the microscopic and macroscopic domains, Donnie, who was subconsciously running away from it,

was still too astounded to look at them again.

The ghost behind Sammy grew active, picking up and playing with the gadgets around him. Sammy, on the other hand, turned lackluster and said, "Then, only the schools of necromancy and transformation are left. Mr. Evans barely has any achievements in those two categories, except for the soul nature theory that does not have details and the life origin experiment that is more inclined to the school of elements.

"Also, necromancy and illusion require a profound understanding of the body structures of different creatures. So, apply for the Heidler College. The anatomy and biology here are the best in the Congress of Magic. Sometimes, Mr. Felipe would even come to teach in person. Besides, we will still be classmates."

He was already drowsy, but his eyes were full of passion when he said that. Because of the Back Spirit, he had been feared and hated by most people. The four-man dormitory now had only Donnie left. So, he cherished his rare friend.

"Necromancy... Transformation... Anatomy... Biology..." Donnie repeated the words and suddenly beamed with interest. "Although we have basically learned the truth of magic and the world, we actually do not know much about it yet. Even our own body structure and inheritance factors haven't been figured out yet. This is a field full of hope and passion!"

He grew excited.

Sammy smiled with obvious sleepiness. "Then, just apply for the Heidler College. There are dozens of founders and authorities of the field of anatomy and genetics, including Felipe, who will come to guide us from time to time."

Pausing for a moment, he said, "Also, since Mr. Felipe won an Evans Prize in Arcana and the Prize of Immortal Throne for the discovery of chromosomes a decade ago, there haven't been any groundbreaking achievements in this domain. So, it's getting less and less popular each year. With fewer applicants, the competition will be less intense."

Donnie nodded his head as he listened, growing more and more excited, as if he had found a path that he would stick to for the rest of his life.

He stood up and paced back and forth. Now and then, he clenched his fist and waved it, with his face sometimes delighted and sometimes twisted. It was not until a long time later that he finally took a deep breath and said with a shivering but firm voice, “Sammy, I’ve decided to apply for the Heidler College and study body structure and genetics factors in the school of necromancy!”

He felt that he no longer had any hesitation after saying that. The gloomy mist before him was cleared. He turned around to Sammy, only to discover that he had fallen asleep with his eyes closed. The ghost behind his back, on the other hand, was waving its arms, as if it was cheering for Donnie’s decision.

...

A week later, Mr. Slington gave everybody a form that was cast with magic power. He looked at all the students and said solemnly, “Please write the college and the fields that you are interested in for the additional tests. You must think carefully before you write anything down! You can ask for another form if you misspell a word, but after you finish it, the contract will be in effect, and there will be no regretting it unless you are willing to wait and take part in the College Entrance Exam next year.”

Donnie, who had figured everything out, took over the form calmly and looked around at his classmates. He saw that the beautiful elves with two pointy ears, the werewolves who were brawny and densely-haired, and the regular humans were all deep in thought. It was obvious that they hadn’t made up their mind yet.

Smiling, he picked up the special quill, dipped it in the ink, and wrote down the college and field he was interested in.

Seeing that Donnie wrote quickly and filled in the form so soon, Slington grew curious and stopped next to him to read his form.

“The Heidler College, school of necromancy, and body structure and

genetics factors...” Slington scratched his beard and asked in confusion, “Donnie, have you learned something? Didn’t you prefer the microscopic domain? Why have you suddenly changed to the school of necromancy?”

“What have I learned...?” Donnie shook his head in confusion.

Slington chuckled. “Over the past year, a manuscript has raised extensive and heated discussions in Allyn, making many arcanists in the microscopic domain interested in genetics in the school of necromancy. I thought that it would take a year before the trend spread to magic schools and ordinary people.”

Thanks to the social development and the soaring radio stations, TV channels, and newspapers, entertainment shows and programs had completely dominated people’s life, and the contents that introduced arcana knowledge and current research trends were getting lesser and lesser. For most people, they did not need to learn the sophisticated arcana knowledge at all until it was transformed into the corresponding alchemical products that they could use.

The nobles and part of the sorcerers were quite satisfied with the situation, and they even secretly boosted it. After all, it was a good thing to reduce competitors, particularly when interstellar travels were still only limited to legends.

“Mr. Slington, what manuscript?” Donnie was still at a loss.

Slington smiled while holding his white beard. “It’s a manuscript that analyzes the body and genetics by an authority of the microscopic domain. It has abandoned the traditional methodology of the school of necromancy and regards the whole body and the genes as a whole arcana system. Then, based on the theories in the microscopic domain, many bold and genius speculations have been proposed, like the quantum explanation of genetics and the code of genetics. It raises the arcanists’ interest in the body structure on the microscopic level.”

Authority... An authority of the microscopic domain... Donnie suddenly felt that the magic lamp was dimmed, and an enormous shadow was rising from his back. He asked uneasily, “Master, what

is the name of the manuscript? Who wrote it?"

"The name of the manuscript is 'What Is Life?'. " Slington smiled.
"As for its author, it's naturally Mr. Evans."

Boom.

Donnie's head hummed as if it had just been smacked by a hammer.

Why? Why is this field now within his reach too?

Chapter 827: Test Field

The cold wind of the night chilled the heart. Under the bright moon, Sammy felt that his head was much clearer than during the day when the sun was high.

However... He yawned again. He thought to himself that such a beautiful night should be left for sleeping, which was the greatest entertainment of life.

The ghost behind him extended its right hand. Before he reached the door, it had already been opened.

“Donnie, have you filled the form?” Sammy walked into the dormitory and asked casually, but he already knew the answer. Donnie would never have cold feet as long as he had made up his mind.

“Yes.” A depressed, lost, and lethargic voice came from a corner. Sammy could tell that something was not right despite his drowsiness. So, he looked over in surprise, only to discover that the light of the dormitory was still off. The bright moon shined through the glass window on the desk and the bookshelf, covering them in silver brilliance. Donnie, on the other hand, sat on his bed, with half of his face basked in the moonlight and the other half hidden in the deep darkness. He couldn’t have looked more depressive.

“What happened?” Sammy asked in surprise. Countless thoughts turned over in his head, only to be ruled out by him one after another.

In a low voice, Donnie said, “Mr. Evans has introduced quantum theory into body structure and genetics by regarding life as a whole arcana system. He believes that there is a most fundamental genetic unit that passes the information on to the next generation through duplication...”

His description was slow and stunned, as if it were his dream talk.

“Well...” As a talent of the school of necromancy, Sammy keenly

sensed exciting content from the brief and inaccurate narration. That was an innovative and groundbreaking hypothesis. Arcanists would be filled with the passion to study life. After his excitement, he also frowned and said, “Does it mean that we have to study quantum theory as well as the formulas and equations?”

Was it still the school of necromancy that played with... no, studied the body and the soul?

Donnie seemed to be crying. “What you said will undoubtedly become a reality.”

“That explains why you...” Greatly enlightened, Sammy looked at Donnie sympathetically. “You must’ve learned it after you filled out the form, right?”

Donnie heaved a sigh. “Yes.”

If he wanted to make another choice, he would have to wait for the application next year, and his family conditions obviously did not allow him to do so.

“As a matter of fact, you can think from an alternative perspective. Since even Mr. Evans has started paying attention to the realm, it means that the realm boasts extremely high exploration and research value. With Mr. Evans’ guidance, there are bound to be plenty of creative and groundbreaking achievements. If we join the realm at such a time, we will earn copious returns. It’s just like the Atom Institution. Thanks to the crazy development of the microscopic domain, of the few major arcanists, two have become archmages, and the rest of them are all senior-rank sorcerers above the seventh circle.” Sammy comforted Donnie.

Donnie’s face was rather gloomy, and he opened his mouth many times only to come up with nothing. In the end, he could only smile bitterly.

“Hehe.”

.....

The sunlight in June was as enthusiastic as fire, and the test field of

the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic was even hotter, like boiling oil.

Although apprentices who were admitted by the preliminary magic schools and successfully reached the fifth grade were considered elites decades ago, thanks to the development of arcana and magic, the ratio of such elites was getting higher and higher. If they went to study in magic colleges, the odds that they became official sorcerers were above fifty percent. They would turn from ordinary people into someone of the upper class with knowledge and power. Therefore, not only had the apprentices come to the test field in advance, but their parents, relatives, and friends had also gathered outside of the test field to cheer for them.

Since only a limited number of test fields had been set up, the place was jam-packed with people.

“For me, such an environment is like a grave.” Sammy looked around lethargically. This place was the Mills Noble School. It was one of the test fields for the College Entrance Exam.

Donnie intended to smile, only to discover that his facial muscles were rigid. “No, for you, graves are great places. They’re cold, quiet, and undisturbed. This place can hardly compare to that.”

“You seem a bit nervous?” Sammy raised his bloated eyes and looked at Donnie. He had been admitted by the Heidler College and therefore was not worried about the exam that was only part of the formalities. Of course, he could not give too bad a performance either, or his application wouldn’t pass the Committee of Arcana and Magic Education, which was a new committee established twenty years ago and led by both the Affair Committee and the Magic Research Board.

Donnie licked his dry lips and said, “Now that I’ve made a choice, I’ll have to do my best. Since it is unavoidable, I have to face the shadow bravely...”

He did not answer the question. Suddenly, the sunlight became dim, and the obstreperous crowd fell silent.

“What’s that?” Donnie raised his head subconsciously, only to see a silver aircraft floating in midair. It was as huge as dozens of common aircraft, blocking the sun and emitting a cold and dreamy sheen. Long and graceful, it slowly descended without any shaking.

“Such a huge aircraft? Also, it completely ignores the restraints of floating and flight skills. Its engine system must be a minimized fission device!” Sammy’s eyes bulged as he observed the aircraft with great interest, making a “professional” judgment.

For the children who grew up after the beginning of the arcana calendar, which was 830 of the divine calendar as well as the year of Viken’s demise, it was their common wish to have their own aircraft. The alchemical cars that ran on the ground were simply too crude and hideous!

Therefore, the journal “Aircraft” had always been a bestseller.

Donnie shared his passion for aircraft. With his anxiety soothed, he looked at the sky and said in amazement, “It must be a minimal fission device. At the very least, there’s no news about the success of controllable fusion devices yet... Mr. President, Mr. Evans, Mr. Fernando, Ms. Hathaway, Mr. Raventi, and Mr. Morris haven’t broken the obstacle yet...”

“Those who can afford the minimized fission devices can’t be general nobles. Even the common grand nobles can’t think about it either...” Sammy squinted under the sunlight. “Huh. Why is there no sigil? Is it blocked on purpose?”

Donnie looked carefully. “Indeed, there isn’t any, but a big shot must be inside nonetheless.”

The aircraft moved forward slowly and lowered its altitude, until it was parked on the unmanned square behind the teaching building, leaving everyone’s sight.

“Which sir has come to inspect the exam? Or has a big shot of extraordinary background come to take the exam?” Sammy moved his eyes back and became as pale as before. The ghost behind him, on the other hand, seemed to have melted into his body. It could

barely be seen now.

Donnie was about to say that he did not know when the crowd was separated and a team of knights in silver armor, carrying weird black backpacks and cylindrical metal guns, walked by neatly. They were expressionless and intimidating. The people were so scared that none of them made any sound.

“It’s the Sword of Truth’s Knights!” Donnie noticed that the knights all had red and purple emblems on their chests. It was a crown made of cloud-like lines, next to a scepter that represented the ultimate power and a cold longsword. That was the badge of the Hoffenberg family.

Even more surprised, Sammy said, “It’s the Guardian Squad! They’re carrying the super-mini fission devices!”

The crowd was even quieter after they heard his words. The Guardian Squad was an elite team of the Sword of Truth’s Knights. They were dedicated to protection missions. Although not all the members were radiant knights, they were all equipped with super-mini fission backpacks and Gauss Rifles. The former could provide abundant electricity and triggering medium for the latter, thereby significantly lowering the demand to use a senior-rank item like the Gauss Rifle. So, in the Guardian Squad, even a level-four grand knight could use the Gauss Rifle many times.

“It seems that a certain big shot with a terrifying background has indeed come to participate in the College Entrance Exam...” Donnie said with complicated feelings.

The students here had all applied for the Heidler College. After the regular subjects were finished in the first three days, the additional tests on necromancy would be held here.

Clang!

A bell rang, urging the apprentices to enter the classrooms.

Donnie took a deep breath and looked at Sammy before he slowly walked into another teaching building.

.....

Inside a library where the sun was shining brightly...

A young man in a magic robe turned on the strange alchemical device the size of a desk with a smile. On the screen that looked like a water beam, the words "You're welcome to use artificial intelligence" appeared. Then, another interface was displayed, with many icons that were marked with different words.

The young man picked up a pair of metal plates that were connected to the artificial intelligence device and stuck them to his forehead before he clicked on the icon that read "Virtual Adventure".

Then, the young man felt that the bookshelf, the desk, and the sunlight around him faded off and was replaced by a green and refreshing grassland, on which there were plenty of bizarre-looking magic creatures.

"Developing games by combining illusion with artificial intelligence is the most thrilling achievement in the past five years!" The young man complimented again, "It's a pity that the network hasn't been established, and the artificial intelligence device is too expensive. There are too few players in the game. Otherwise, it would be exponentially more interesting."

The moment he finished his remark, he suddenly felt enormous pressure. He saw that a giant dragon whose whole body was in red flew by and glimpsed at him with its gold eyes as if he were an ant. Both his mind and his legs were trembling.

"Is... Is this the might of dragons?" The young man felt that his heart was beating particularly fast. He was very excited. That was how the might of dragons felt!

Right when his body was still frozen, a bull-like monster full of thorns passed by and looked at him greedily. Then, its body shook and launched dozens of sharp black thorns.

"Crap. I'm ambushed by the Anarchi Bull. My level is going to be

lowered again..." the young man cried before he was hit in the heart by the thorns.

Unimaginable pain came over, making him think subconsciously, "The pain of the illusion is so real. It hurts!"

He suddenly felt that his body was cold and paralyzed. His heart seemed to have stopped beating. His head was in a mess, and he could see nothing but darkness.

Chapter 828: A Small Accident

Chapter 828: A Small Accident

After the examinations, which were held over three days in a row, the sky started getting cloudy, and now, it was drizzling, bringing a slightly cold feeling to the students.

“Donnie, how were the tests?” asked Sammy on the square of Mills Noble School. They were waiting for the sorcerers. In the past several days, Sammy finished all his tests, including for Magic Structure and Arcana Basics, in about half the given time, as he was always determined to go back to get more sleep.

Donnie looked at the busts on the square—they were the busts of all the most outstanding graduates from this school. He answered while pretending to be in a peace of mind, “I did okay. I checked with other students, and I think I should be qualified for Heidler Magic Academy. I’ll see how well I can do with this additional exam on Necromancy. You?”

In the early morning, Sammy was in a relatively good spirit. He yawned and stretched a bit. “No major mistakes. Not bad for me.”

He didn’t ask Donnie more about the exam, because when they were in school, even in Necromancy, Donnie was always more competitive than him in terms of magic theories and spell analysis. He only had the edge over Donnie in terms of casting speed, the power of casting, skipping-level casting, and some special abilities, and that was because of the specter behind his back.

In the drizzle, none of the apprentices left for the building to keep themselves warm and dry. In their minds, necromancers were known for their gloomy and unpredictable tempers as depicted by television channels, radio, and newspapers. It did not matter if they studied how to cure diseases or anatomy, they would still be the same. They were mysterious, and they also made people stand in awe of them.

“Jane Heinrich Hunt, countess, famous mathematician,

astrologer...” Sammy read the words inscribed below one of the busts. “Nothing about this lady’s arcana or magic level. Maybe she’s below middle-rank. Maybe she’s a pure mathematician.”

“Nothing special. Mr. Longman just became a sorcerer the year before last, but he’s now already in the top twenty as a mathematician as he has solved a couple of mathematical problems put forward by His Excellency Mr. Evans,” said Donnie in great respect. “Although Mr. Longman isn’t very talented in magic, his great contribution to math is important. And now, he has lots of support and resources, and he’s catching up. We’re more gifted than him, so we should never easily give up. I think the lady is similar to Mr. Longman, and it looks like she’s a noble, a big one, from Heinrich family...”

Sammy nodded. “Also, with the development of ‘artificial intelligence’, many mathematicians who lack magic talent are already catching up because of their powerful calculation abilities.”

“I wish I also had one, to avoid those trivial and time-consuming math questions...” Donnie sighed.

“Wait, the surname, Hunt...” Donnie suddenly recalled something.

His tone suddenly rose a bit as he said, “Yes, that lady should be Mr. Ali Hunt’s wife.”

Ali Hunt, an encouraging name for both the ordinary and magic apprentices, was so far only a level one arcanist and a second-circle sorcerer.

However, when artificial intelligence first developed, he dug his first bucket of gold because of his sharp instinct. Later on, he even won the support of some werewolves and became their spokesperson. His original small company had now grown into a business empire, under which the subsidiary companies had covered magic communication, telephone communication, radio, satellite application, werewolf guards, and even mercenary hiring. Now, he was already one of the leading tycoons in Holm.

What made people even more jealous of him was the fact that he

had married Jane from the Heinrich family. Since then, he was no longer just a lucky upstart but had won the support of the major noble family plus the werewolves.

For many ordinary people, it was like the most beautiful dream they could have. Although Mr. Evans' experience was, of course, more fascinating, it was too far away from them! However, in comparison, Ali's story seemed more likely to be copied, as he got all he had today because he caught the opportunity of this era. That could happen to anyone!

Then, with enough money, they could also learn magic!

"I see. No wonder..." Sammy commented with a sigh, and he took a glance at the clock on the magic tower and said in confusion, "It's almost eight. Why are we still waiting?"

Donnie also felt that it was a bit strange. The examinations for entering senior magic schools were under the supervision of the royal family of Holm, the cabinet, and the Committee of Arcana and Magic Education. So it was a pretty big deal.

At this time, several gloomy-looking sorcerers flew out of the building. Some of them were wearing Holm-style suits while others were wearing long, magic robes.

"Here they are." Donnie felt a bit more relaxed.

The leading sorcerer in a long, black suit said to them in a voice that was loud and clear enough for everyone to hear, "Those whose candidate numbers are of even numbers, please follow the sorcerer on the left to take the additional subject on specters, ghouls, and souls, and the rest of you follow your examiner on the right to take the exam on body structure, corpse combination, and summoning specters. And you'll switch in the afternoon. Don't even try to exchange information, as the tests will be different."

Donnie patted Sammy's shoulder. "I'll see you around."

He knew that they were in different groups.

"You're gonna nail it!" There was finally a big smile on Sammy's

sleepy face as he wielded his right fist.

Donnie also grinned and responded with an encouraging gesture.

After walking past the first building, the apprentices started leaving the queue while following different sorcerers. In the end, Donnie started feeling the surroundings to be very quiet, and he could even hear the little birds chirping in the trees.

At this time, he saw the magic tower in front of them surrounded by a group of people in black uniform coats. They were blocking this place using alchemy barriers.

Cops on Granlin Street? Donnie's heart missed a beat. Did anything really happen?

Granlin Street was where the headquarters of the Holm Empire Police was located.

Then he saw two middle-aged men wearing the special badge walking out. On the badge, there was a black staff.

Donnie recognized them. They were sorcerers from the Punishment Department. He started getting a bit nervous, as sorcerers from this department were known for their investigation skills.

The necromancer walking in the front asked the apprentices to make way for the two sorcerers from the Punishment Department.

“... Asystole is the cause of death. The person who died had heart disease, pretty bad...” The sorcerer with brown hair was talking to his colleague as they were walking past the apprentices.

The other sorcerers nodded slightly. “He was off the leash playing virtual adventure and the illusion had triggered the dangerous amount of adrenaline secretion. Never saw people die like this before Ms. Heidi's artificial intelligence joined illusion. I guess Affair Committee and Magic Research Board now have a good excuse to pause such projects...”

“Having no idea about his own health condition... He had no one else to blame...” said the brown hair.

Donnie basically figured out what happened. He was quite surprised that a game based on artificial intelligence could kill a sorcerer.

But was there a conspiracy behind?

As a big fan of adventure and crime shows, Donnie was a typical conspiracist.

But this little accident did not bug Donnie for long, as he was facing this very important exam, and he should give the top priority to it.

They then walked in a cold, gloomy magic tower. At this time, a black-haired teenage girl walked in from the side door.

She was absolutely gorgeous. Although Donnie was worried about the exam, his attention was still caught by the girl's beauty. Although she had short hair, her face looked stunning, and her manner was also beyond elegant.

At this time, the girl's gentle silver-purple eyes suddenly became very sharp. The apprentices all looked down to avoid her eyes.

Donnie finally realized that the girl was wearing a simple black suit and a pair of trousers, as well as a black bow.

Wait, why was she dressed like this? And why did she have an Adam's apple?!

Boom!

Donnie felt his head buzzing. The "girl", who was much more beautiful than all the ladies he had ever seen, was a male!

Someone coughed, and there was more coughing that followed that. Donnie knew that he was not the only one who got shocked.

"Go into your test room following your own candidate number," said the necromancer with gray hair. "You'll have to identify the materials and which part it is. Then, you'll design and make a stitched body. You may leave spare materials if you don't need them, but don't take them with you."

Donnie sobered up as a sudden chill ran over him. He quickly found his room, and the teenage boy was right in the room beside his.

Chapter 829: Dangerous Exam

Chapter 829: Dangerous Exam

The magic crystal lights hung down from the ceiling and made this gloomy room look even paler. A chill ran over Donnie's body, and he felt that he had entered some haunted old castle.

But this also helped him stay concentrated and forget about the teenage boy he just saw. Donnie started looking around.

To the left side of this room, there was a long table that was loaded with all kinds of materials. Some were in magic containers, some were in vacuum magic circles, and some were wrapped in green leaves. However, there was nothing to the right side, not even a carpet.

"Mercury, low-rank Repose Stone powder..." Donnie gently closed the door and walked to the table. He instantly recognized the basic materials for building a magic circle.

He sprinkled sunflower powder over the silver candlestick and lit the candles up carefully. In the same great caution, he picked up a glass bottle full of black liquid and put it closer to the candlelight.

Lit by the candle, the patterns on the surface of the glass bottle appeared, and in the black liquid, a creepy eyeball without a pupil emerged.

After carefully looking at the shape of the eyeball and the magic patterns on the glass bottle, he picked up the quill-pen and wrote down.

"A mutant ghoul's eyeball..."

Putting down this glass bottle, Donnie turned to look at the vacuum magic circle and saw an arm wrapped in greasy, light brown bandages.

Donnie's eyes slightly lit up as a mummy's arm was very precious.

Heidler Magic Academy was indeed very well-off. To make a mummy, there should be a mysterious burying ritual that had been passed down since the Age of Mythology. Therefore, a mummy was often very strong among all undead creatures in terms of magic resistance and defense. Even a real sorcerer rarely had the chance to have a mummy to be his specter servant.

Donnie wrote down the answer, but he couldn't help but stare at the mummy arm. It was his first time seeing a real one.

From the bandages and exposed skin, the mummy didn't look like a very powerful one, but it was still a mummy! Also, the materials for producing a stitched body could be recycled... Maybe that was why the academy was being this generous.

Like this, Donnie identified the parts of different magical creatures one by one,

“Stinky murloc lymph...”

“The front claw of a werewolf...”

“The skull of a goblin...”

“The back hoof of a demonized goat...”

It took Donnie half an hour to finish the work and then he started working on his own stitched body following the instructions.

He kept changing the design, so it took him a long time to finish the stitching. Swallowing, he took a glance at the clock on the wall. He knew that he had to hurry up, or he wouldn't have any spare time for correcting the design if anything went wrong...

He started drawing the magic circle using mercury.

As an apprentice, his spiritual power was not enough to complete this magic circle from the very beginning all the way toward the end, and the exam would not allow them to take potions. He had to do this part by part.

After an hour, Donnie was gasping hard on the floor, waiting for his

spiritual power to recover again after over a dozen times of exhaustion. He then stood up and put the materials he picked in the magic circle in the right spots. He picked the mummy arm, the mutant ghoul's eyeball, a little demon's wings, and specter dust.

Donnie checked multiple times before activating the magic circle, in case he made any mistakes.

This was the key moment of his life. If he did it, he would enter Heidler Academy, the most authoritative magic school for necromancy, and his future would be beyond promising. However, if he failed, he could end up becoming one of those countless common magic apprentices who would become a consultant for a businessman or the police force. Indeed, those weren't bad jobs, but they wouldn't be able to provide him with high social status.

He was only seventeen, and he did not want a plain life.

Great desire seized Donnie's heart like fire. He had all those desires for knowledge, for life, and for a better future.

And it all depended on this exam!

He knelt down in front of the magic circle and pressed his hands against the core section. His blue eyes lit up slightly from using all of his spiritual power.

The magic circle lit up, and the black magic symbols started sucking in the Repose Stone powder like crazy. The magic circle was then overwhelmed by the pale light, and the magic gems cracked one by one.

He felt great pain after activating the magic circle in his brain, and he was pushed away by the power. However, he did not care, and his eyes kept staring at the magic circle.

The pale light slowly faded away, and in the middle of the magic circle, there was an intimidating monster with wings. It had a lion head, and its left arm was wrapped with greasy, light brown bandages. Its body consisted of chunks of flesh stitched together.

The monster stood up, although it had not found its full balance. Its

pupil-less eyeball took a glance at Donnie, which immediately took all his strength away.

Fortunately, the monster then lowered its head and just stood there in great respect.

Yes! Donnie wielded his arm, and his heart was full of wild joy.

However, he suddenly sensed the air of death. A chill ran over his body.

Out of his consciousness, Donnie dodged to the side and commanded his stitched body to go in front of him.

Bang!

The wall was collapsed by a fierce punch, and he felt the blood and flesh everywhere.

He was so stunned that his eyes opened wide. In the flying dust, a monster about two to three meters tall ran in and had punched his stitched body into pieces.

The body from next door was not even like a proper stitched body. All the parts were just put together without any order. Eyes were on its arms, and head in the belly. The monster had thick black miasma surrounding it.

Meanwhile, its intimidating, horrible air made Donnie's stitched body keep trembling even though it could not think and had no intelligence.

Donnie felt that he was in an ice hole. He tried to defend himself using spells, but he did not have any spare spiritual power after making the stitched body.

What was going on?

What did she, no, he, make?! That was dreadful!

He had to depend on himself until an examiner came.

Although he knew it, knowing it did not do much help. Facing the intimidating air, Donnie could not even move his single finger. His heart sank, as it was full of desperation.

He once met a level two knight, but even the knight's power was nowhere close to the monster's power.

It took him lots of work to make this stitched body, and he was this close to entering the magic school. And now, he was going to die here!

Donnie could smell the stink from the monster's mouth.

At this time, an arm wrapped in light brown bandages came between them and stuck into the mouth in the monster's belly.

Donnie was a bit touched by what his stitched body did. He then seized the chance and dodged aside. He took a deep breath and tried his very best.

“Help!!!”

Yes, that was all he could do; a bitter cry at the top of his lungs to catch the attention of the examiner.

He saw the monster's mouth chewing the mummy arm.

Donnie's mouth was wide open due to great shock. The monster could even chew a mummy arm!

When the eyes on the monster's arm opened again, Donnie saw the dark red pupils. He felt totally numb in his body, and he couldn't even talk now.

This is the end of me, Donnie thought to himself.

At this time, a beautiful face popped out in front of him,

“Sorry, my experiments always go wrong somehow. My father said that it's because of my talent and also because I'm not able to control it yet...”

It was a charming, male voice; a standard male voice.

That was Donnie's first thought when faced with this great danger. He believed there was something wrong with this world.

"I tried to make it fly, you know. But who knows... Ha..." The teenage boy scratched his head with a big smile on his face as he said, "But this is actually not a big deal. You know last time when I..."

Donnie's brain was in a total mess. With great effort, Donnie stammered, "Be... care... ful..."

At this time, the monster in black miasma had come behind the teenager!

Donnie could not imagine why this guy could just talk so much when faced with such danger!

"I know, I know... I'll be more careful next time with my experiment. Thank you very much. I promise I'll be more careful in the future. I'm very sorry for putting you into this. By the way, I haven't introduced myself..." The beautiful teenage boy wouldn't stop talking.

Donnie stammered again; his tongue was already out of his control. "Mon... monster..."

The teenage boy's sleepy silver-purple eyes suddenly looked rather sharp. Turning around, he faced the monster right in its face. He then suddenly dropped down his shoulders and hit the monster with his own body violently.

A light somehow burst out. The monster took a few steps backward, and all its parts started falling onto the ground and rotted away into a pile of mud.

What... Donnie's mouth dropped open again. He wondered why this guy did not choose to be a knight.

"Problem solved." The teenager turned around and said in embarrassment, "I'm sorry to put you through this. My name's

Brades. My father gave me the name with the hope that I can be happy, but I prefer people to call me 'Karl', which means a real man...

"I've also got a brother whose name's Barzel. He looks nice, but he's full of mischievous ideas. Other people say that that's because he resembles my father, but I don't think so..."

Donnie wished that Karl could first help pull him up from the floor before making such a long introduction.

Chapter 830: Karl

Chapter 830: “Karl”

While Donnie was still struggling to stand up, the sudden knock interrupted them, and they both turned to look at the door.

The door was half open, as half of the wall it was in had collapsed. The examiner wearing the ancient magic robe was looking at them with an expressionless face.

Donnie’s face also felt numb, but he really wanted to ask him what took him so long to arrive, just like what often happened in those TV series that cops and knights always came so late after all the problems had been solved.

The gray-haired necromancer held a black notebook in his hand, and the way he looked at them was rather cold. He started writing on his notebook as he said, “Mutant stitched body, made from mostly low-rank materials... Power close to grand knight level. Best among these years. But the body was out of control, so some scores should be taken away...

“Common stitched body, fully used the mummy arm... Power equivalent to a knight... Stopped the mutant stitched body twice. Very good for an apprentice, and the body was under the absolute control of the maker...”

Donnie was shocked. So the examiner was just looking? Why didn’t he help? Did he trust Karl that much? Or was it also a test?

“So, that means we passed?” Brades, who preferred to be called Karl, asked in surprise, “In fact, I tried out ‘the Original Body’ when I was making it, to make it fly, but it turned out...”

He kept talking and talking, which made Donnie feel totally speechless. Basically, he admitted that he did not plan on making a mutant stitched body and that this whole thing was just an accident. It turned out that the thing was a twisted, weird dead body with unusual strength! How could he confess that?

The necromancer had amber-colored eyes, and they looked a bit muddy. He looked down at his notes and said in a rather peaceful tone, “You two could make them, which means both of you know the materials well.”

Donnie finally realized that his answer paper had been destroyed by the miasma of the monster, but fortunately, the examiner could tell it.

“The result will be available with the rest of the subjects. Check them on your own later,” said the necromancer who had put away his notebook as he had zero interest in sharing Karl’s fascination.

After the necromancer turned around, he paused and said, “It does work better shouting out ‘help’ than relying on yourself...”

Donnie’s face flushed instantly. His cries were so anguished that they were much worse than the cries of those girls who saw ghosts in school. And he had always considered himself fairly calm most of the time.

But it also relaxed his body. He could finally stand up.

“Sorry I didn’t help you there. I was so caught up in my self-introduction. How do you feel? Move your arms and legs. See if there’s anything wrong,” said Karl.

His silver-purple eyes looked gentle again, and they were like two shining ponds in the sunlight. Donnie had to look away. The world had been confusing to him.

“It seems that you’re mentally traumatized. It shouldn’t be like this... A mutant stitched body shouldn’t be able to hurt you mentally, apart from the deterrence of death... Did I miss anything?” Karl murmured.

But he soon grinned and said, “I know. You’re just startled. Sorry. The examiner just interrupted my self-introduction. I’m Brades, and my father gave me the name, which means ‘a happy person’ in the common tongue, but I actually prefer...”

Donnie hurriedly cut him off, “‘Karl’. You prefer people to call you

Karl. I know.”

“Very good! You’re the first one who remembers my name so fast!” Karl smiled, and his eyes were like two crescents. “So, my biggest target right now is to become a real man. I don’t know your name yet, but I suppose you’re a student from Nature’s Heart, right? Look at the magic robe on you. Are there many elves in your school? Last time, when I visited Stroop Forest, the Elder told me that more and more elves started to accept human beings and that they were willing to seek a sustainable way of living with human beings...”

“I’m Donnie,” Donnie answered straightaway. Karl’s face and his charming male voice bugged him. He wished that Karl could just stand there and remain silent.

“We should go now. The exam has ended,” said Donnie.

Karl clapped his hands and nodded. “You’re right. We can talk on our way. Your stitched body was good, but you can use some theories at a higher level, say, the Original Body. I used it.”

“What is it?” Donnie asked out of curiosity.

“The Original Body came from the rite called ‘Life Traceback’ and the concept of ‘Origin’ in the ancient Meshkate Empire. They believed that...” Karl went on and on and still had not finished when they walked out of the magic tower. “His Excellency Thanatos became a top legendary because of his success in making ‘the Original Body’...”

That wasn’t something that Donnie could get to know from the radio, Tv programs, or even his teachers. Although the many concepts made his head dizzy, he was still showing great interest. The only thing he wished was that Karl could be briefer.

At this time, he suddenly realized that this wasn’t some kind of information that an apprentice should know. Was Karl someone important? Were there knights or guards secretly protecting him nearby?

He looked around, as if those guards were staring at him behind the

trees along the street and that they were pointing their Gauss rifles toward him.

Fine beads of sweat began to form on his forehead, and he felt a bit cold in his back.

“Donnie, you got it?” Karl asked him.

Donnie stammered, “What... What?”

“You didn’t get it? Fine. I’ll start all over, no worries.” Karl looked even more excited now.

Donnie’s head buzzed. “I think I’ve got a general picture.”

“I see.” Karl stopped himself, feeling a bit disappointed. When he was not happy, he looked much more serious and dignified.

Donnie was even more nervous now. He wondered if the guards would pull their triggers anytime. Would he be left with a complete body?

“You know... Actually, I think you’re more like a knight. I think your strength can compete with that of a grand knight.” Donnie tried to switch the topic. In his mind, he believed that Karl was as strong as a dragon.

Karl looked a bit shy. “I’m okay.”

He then wielded his right hand and casually hit a tree beside them.

Bang!

The tree snapped right in the middle and collapsed to the ground.

Donnie almost dropped his chin.

“That’s my best, you see? Only a tree.” Karl laughed and patted Donnie’s shoulder.

Donnie felt that his guts almost came out.

Karl looked more serious now as he said, “A knight always has to

face the ultimate problem sooner or later, which is to face himself and explore himself. Therefore, arcana and magic are the most important. Also, what makes me want to go to the Heidler Magic Academy is that I'm trying to change my look by modifying my 'genes'. Well, you know 'gene', right? It's a concept put forward in the manuscript called 'What Is Life'. Have you ever read it? It's a masterpiece in the microscopic domain as..."

The muscles in Donnie's face twitched slightly when Karl did not leave him a chance to answer anger. He hurriedly asked before Karl went even further, "Change your look? I know many magic potions that can do this. I think you can afford these kinds of potions. They're permanent."

"Well, don't you think I'm actually quite good-looking?" Karl smiled.

The smile made Karl's face look even more gorgeous. Donnie could only nod, feeling stunned.

Karl continued, "Those kinds of magic potions will do too much to my perfect face. What I'm trying to do is to make myself look more like a man, but not doing any fundamental changes! Then I'll be a very good-looking man! I've always had this wish. My mother wished that she would have a daughter when she was pregnant..."

"What does that have to do with your mom?" Donnie was feeling less nervous now that he realized he basically didn't have to do anything as long as he was willing to listen. Karl was willing to share everything, and in this perspective, he was very easy-going.

Karl looked at Donnie and said, "Like spiritual power, willpower can also change matters, and thus, change genes..."

He was about to give a lecture again.

"That's quite a powerful and horrible willpower..." Donnie blurted out.

Karl chuckled dryly and said, "I gotta leave now. I'll see you at the Heidler Magic Academy. I'm sure you'll get in because of your

stitched body...”

Karl walked away, leaving Donnie there alone.

Donnie felt that Karl was in fact very easy to get along with.

At this time, Donnie suddenly recalled something. Karl told him that a mutant stitched body shouldn't be able to hurt him mentally, apart from the deterrence of death... But how did Karl get to know that?

Donnie was totally lost.

Behind one of the biggest trees along the street, a knight had put away his rifle and said in low voice to someone else via an alchemical item, “Find his information. Don't miss anything. We gotta be cautious.”

Chapter 831: Casually Confessed Secret

Chapter 831: Casually Confessed Secret

The cool rain drizzled on Donnie's face, making him gradually come back to himself. He shook his head. "It can't be what I thought. His behavior showed anomalies. Such a gentle and friendly man can't be..."

Donnie slowly turned around and walked out of the Mills Noble School. He intended to take a good rest in the dormitory to get himself prepared for the additional tests on ghosts, spirits, and souls in the afternoon.

He did not wait for Sammy because he knew very well that Sammy must've left an hour ago after he finished the exam. This was the field that Sammy was best at, and it was also the most mentally exhausting one. He wouldn't be able to control his desire for sleep.

As he expected, after Donnie returned to his dormitory, he found Sammy snoring on the bed. The ghost on his back was also rather lazy and unenergetic since it was noon.

Donnie couldn't help but smile at the familiar Sammy. His anxiety and concerns were greatly soothed. Pouring himself a glass of water and drinking it up, he lay on his own bed and stared at the ceiling. "He rode on an aircraft that was equipped with minor fission devices, and he was protected by the Guardian Squad of the Sword of Truth's Knights. Karl definitely has a special identity. Is he the heir of a certain grand noble? No. He has a brother..."

"Thanks to Karl, the stitched body I crafted today was highly praised by the teacher. As long as my performance isn't too bad in the afternoon, I will probably be admitted by the Heidler Magic College. With Karl's background, he will probably be admitted by the college..."

Donnie sighed in the middle of his fantasies. "If he were a girl, everything would be perfect. None of the commercial girls between TV programs can compare to him..."

The world was truly malicious!

He took a deep breath and eliminated his messy thoughts, allowing him to enter a deep-level sleep with meditation tricks so that he could be revitalized for the afternoon tests.

In the afternoon, Donnie came to the Mills Noble School on the special bus again. Led by the gray-haired necromancer in the morning, he entered a graveyard nearby.

He looked around, hoping to find Karl. However, many students were taking the exam, and they were scattered in the spacious graveyard and blocked by tombstones and trees. It was barely possible to locate a specific person. However, when he summoned and drove ghosts, Donnie suddenly heard a distant and scary scream that sounded like it came from a terrifying wrath. Together with the scream were cries for help.

Hehe. Karl is here for the exam after all. Who's so unlucky? However, since the teacher is here, there shouldn't be any problem, Donnie thought with a gloating smile on his face. Not to mention that there are still Karl's "Guardians"...

As he expected, the terrifying scream of spirits soon died down.

Since souls and spirits were not Donnie's best field, he calmed himself down and was devoted to his own tests. He modified, commanded, and adjusted the ghosts prudently until he felt that it was perfect before asking the necromancer to review his works. As a result, by the time he left the cemetery, Karl was long gone, which slightly upset him. Although Karl was a man, it was always a pleasant experience to see him.

"Donnie, how is your work?" The moment Donnie returned to the Mills Noble School from the cemetery, he heard Sammy calling him. The evening of a gloomy day was particularly dim, so Sammy was in high spirits. His ghost no longer hid in the shadows anymore. It was waving its fuzzy arms and creaking.

Donnie smiled. "I'm 90% confident."

He was talking about his confidence to be admitted by the Heidler Magic College.

Sammy rubbed his messy hair and chuckled. "I am 100%. Right, Donnie, now that the exam is over, our dormitory will be reclaimed. I will return to Wolfburg. What about you? Are you going home or staying in Rentato for now to wait for the final result?"

He was a native of Wolfburg, a southern city.

Hearing Sammy's words, Donnie immediately thought of his parents and his sister. He couldn't have missed them more, but he quickly shook his head and pointed at his neck where there were no accessories with a bitter smile. "I have to work in Rentato for two months to pay for the Lucidity Necklace that I borrowed."

He signed a contract with the bookstore owner.

"Is that so?" Sammy asked in surprise. He had obviously forgotten what Donnie told him earlier. However, he quickly dropped it and went on, "I'm here to tell you that you can apply for a dormitory, as long as you move out before September so that the new apprentices can move in."

"Really?" Donnie had been wondering where he could find a cheap residence. He was both surprised and delighted, and his sorrow was gone.

"So, you've saved a great amount of money. You have to buy me dinner!" Sammy said jokingly.

He did not feel that sad that they were graduating and departing from each other because he believed that he would see Donnie again in the Heidler Magic College.

.....

The next morning, Donnie went to the office of his school to apply for a dormitory. After he listed his poor conditions and his excellent study performance, the sympathetic elf teacher quickly granted his request. Then, without any rest, he went to the Triumph Square and entered the Knowledge Bookstore.

Dollos, the owner of the bookstore who had owl eyes, glanced at Donnie. “I thought you were going to break the contract.”

“I was delayed by something in school. Here is your Lucidity Necklace.” Donnie handed the Lucidity Necklace back to the boss. Without the Lucidity Necklace, his review and consolidation in the last three months couldn’t have been so effective.

Dollos nodded. “You will wipe all the bookshelves and spines today.”

After that, he hurried to greet a new guest who just came in.

Donnie was not a spoiled child. He found a piece of cloth in a corner and began to work.

As he wiped, he read the titles of the books. Reading was his greatest hobby.

“‘Evans Instructions’, ‘Lucien’s Guidance’, ‘Detailed Explanations of the Questions in the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic by Lucien Evans’...” Looking at the row of books, Donnie felt that the veins on his forehead were suddenly bulging. He was so agitated and nauseated that he almost burned them up.

Donnie had the same feelings when he saw the tests on his own bookshelf in his dormitory. Had it not been for the fact that he could earn a lot by selling those books as well as his solutions, he would’ve set them on fire.

“Why is the nightmare still haunting me here?”

Thankfully, the Knowledge Bookstore only had one row that was about tests, or Donnie suspected that he would go crazy.

It was already noon after he cleaned half of the bookshelves. Dollos turned on the home TV embedded on the wall and watched “Noon of the Empire”, a news program.

“Considering the two cases of sudden death when the sorcerer was playing virtual adventure games, Master Karu, most famous for his fraternity, has filed an application to the Affair Committee and the

Magic Research Board, asking them to abort the funding for the project of ‘Virtual Magic Exercise’. He believes that the project has serious safety problems and that the combination of artificial intelligence, alchemical life, and illusion will definitely go wrong. The project should not be activated until the arcanists behind the project propose practical precautions.”

The anchor was a black-haired and blue-eyed Holmish lady, pretty with a pleasant voice.

“Ms. Heidi, the arcanist who is responsible for the ‘Virtual Magic Exercise’ project publicly states that the two sudden death cases do not contradict the principle of ‘virtual reality’, and what is needed is a body examination before the stimulation with illusion. She believes that Master Karu’s attack is absurd and illogical. It’s like when somebody drives off a cliff in an alchemical car after getting drunk, he is calling for a total ban on alchemical cars instead of forbidding drunk driving.

“The arcanists have been debating fiercely on the matter. Right now, the Affair Committee is more inclined to control the promotion of the ‘Virtual Magic Exercise...”

Donnie heard the news in the middle of his work. Finding it odd, he blurted out, “How is this happening?”

Under normal circumstances, as Mr. Evans’ student, Ms. Heidi’s project shouldn’t have been attacked so hard.

As if he guessed Donnie’s confusion, the boss chuckled. “After writing ‘What Is Life?’, it is said that Mr. Evans left our world with the empress and went to another universe for adventure to seek the path of immortality. Right now, the prince is the regent of the country. After certain things are figured out in the adventure, it is possible that the empress will return and give away the throne.”

In the first year of the arcana calendar, the Kingdom of Holm obtained the Holy City as well as all the papal states. So, “empress” was added to Natasha’s titles.

“Wow... We can go to a parallel universe for adventures now?”

Donnie asked in confusion and shock.

“What do you think Mr. Evans has been working on in the past twenty years besides quantum field theory?” Dollos seemed to be rather informed.

Donnie was suddenly reinvigorated. “Are they going to the universe that intersects with ours?”

“How is it possible? When we go to that universe, the ocean of energy we count on will be no longer usable because of the quick fluctuations. Other than the demigods who partly grasp the secrets of high dimensions, the other demigods wouldn’t have much strength left after they go there.” The boss chuckled. “However, even if they go to other parallel universes, their strength will also be greatly reduced. I wonder if Mr. Evans has solved the problem in his research. After all, I’m told that only the top legends can be taken away by the demigods.”

“Alright...” Donnie suddenly felt that his horizon was broadened. This world included not just the Rentato he lived in, but also the vast cosmos and the countless parallel universes. There were too many places he could explore.

So, there was no telling when Mr. Evans or Her Majesty would return from their exploration? That could explain the situation. For the grand arcanists, it was very common for them to be engaged in field research. They wouldn’t tell anyone on purpose, and naturally, the TV channels, radio stations, and newspapers did not know anything about it.

Shaking his head, Donnie went on wiping, and he reached a corner, where a row of books on the theories of the school of necromancy was placed.

“It’s a shame that none of the books are about specific applications. Otherwise, I can try to analyze them right now.” Donnie sighed regretfully. Under the government of the Congress of Magic, arcana theories were not confidential, and everybody was welcome to study and discuss them. However, the specific magic application and alchemical tricks could only be exchanged when they had

clearances, like when they became students of a certain magic college.

As he wiped, Donnie suddenly saw a book with a black spine. On the cover of the book, written in the language of the ancient Magic Empire was...

Parchment of Death.

This is... Donnie's heart beat fast. It seemed to be a magic book about an application?

Chapter 832: A Dense Net

A magic book on an application?

How could it be publicly sold in a bookstore?

Donnie seemed able to hear his own heart beating intensely and crazily. As per the regulations of the Congress of Magic, other than exchanging for such knowledge in magic colleges and arcana libraries, there were only two ways to obtain the applications that exceeded their own levels—to gain it from adventures or family heritage, or to become a personal student of a certain sorcerer. There had never been a common bookstore that publicly sold magic books!

It was the Congress' control measure on magic to maintain the social order, which was greatly supported by the nobles.

“If... If I can analyze a first-circle spell in advance or become an official sorcerer, my future in the Heidler Magic College will be even brighter...” Donnie felt that his heart was jumping out of his chest.

He was not born in a magic family, and he did not go through any fortuitous incidents. He had reached where he was purely with his hard work. He did not have as many resources as his classmates did, but he believed that it wouldn't be difficult for him to analyze the official spells with his talents.

Donnie quietly looked at the counter, only to discover that Dollos was fixated on the TV. So, his heart beat even faster.

“With my ability in memorizing, I can remember a complete model in one minute...” Donnie touched the back of the book.

The cover of the magic book was made of special materials, giving a cold and paralyzing feeling as if it were a bolt of frozen lightning.

The itchy feeling stunned Donnie. Then, he breathed heavily.

After that, he opened his mouth and breathed hard, moving his hand back as if his arm was being cut off.

In another three months, I'll be learning the first-circle spells and the applications legitimately in the Heidler Magic College. Why do I have to read the book stealthily and cowardly right now?

If I am caught, I will be thrown into a prison, and my future will be ruined.

The returns are absolutely disproportionate to the risks. Is there any need to hesitate?

The more Donnie thought, the more he felt that he was overwhelmed by a desire just now. This Parchment of Death was perhaps an ancient book that was only of reference value in the Congress today!

After all, magic had been soaring since the establishment of the Congress, and particularly during the past fifty years. Most of the achievements in the Magic Empire had already become antiques. It was barely possible for anyone to pick up an ancient classic and beat the contemporary sorcerers with the knowledge in the book as his trump card.

Getting rid of his desire, Donnie subconsciously wiped his forehead, only to feel coldness. He raised his head in shock, only to discover that he still had the piece of cloth, which was used to wipe bookshelves, in his hand.

“It’s like somebody cast Chaos on me...” Donnie shook his head in self-mockery. Then, he looked at the Parchment of Death, hesitating. Selling an applied magic book seemed to be a violation of the rules of the Congress and the law of the empire. What should he do?

Report it to the Punishment Department or the police department?

What if it wasn’t an applied magic book?

Donnie hesitated for a long time and gnashed his teeth. He then walked to his boss, Dollos. From the corner of his eye, he glimpsed

at the few guests in the bookstore, ready to stop anyone who would approach the bookshelf where the Parchment of Death was placed. If somebody else reported it, he would be in trouble. Thankfully, the few guests all turned a blind eye to the row. Donnie was greatly relieved.

“Boss,” Donnie said next to Dollos in a low voice.

Dollos turned around expressionlessly. “What’s up?”

“There’s a ‘Parchment of Death’ on that bookshelf. Did you forget to bring it away?” Donnie had practiced saying it many times in his heart, but it still sounded dry and dumb when he actually said it.

Dollos’ face suddenly became enlivened. He said in a feigned smile, “Yes. That’s my trophy from one of my adventures. I forgot to take it away when I rearranged the bookshelves last night. Donnie, thank you for your reminder. I’ll take it back right now.”

Donnie was greatly relieved that Dollos solved the matter with the excuse he offered instead of denying it and describing the Parchment of Death as a history book. In such a case, the boss wouldn’t need to kill him to keep his mouth shut because he knew too much. He had to be cautious because there were many similar plots in the TV dramas.

Dollos slowly rose, took out the Parchment of Death, and put it on the counter, before he smiled gently and said, “It’s noon. Go take care of your lunch. I will not offer you free food and accommodation, but of course, your reminder is worth additional reward at the end of the month.”

“It’s my responsibility. That... that is unnecessary!” Donnie hurried to wave his hands, but Dollos did not say anything more. He could only walk out of the bookstore as he searched for the cheapest food in the alleys near the Triumph Square.

Watching him disappear in the crowd in the square, Dollos touched the Parchment of Death and put on an interesting smile.

Under Dollos’ touch, the Parchment of Death suddenly emitted a

cold and evil flash.

One of the guests in the Knowledge Bookstore pressed his soft hat and glanced at Dollos before he walked out.

...

It was not evening yet, but Donnie asked to get off work early from the Knowledge Bookstore because he intended to send a letter to his family in the post office.

Although wired phones and telegrams had been popularized in major cities, Donnie's family was in a small town and wasn't rich enough. So, they still had to count on the postal services that were cheaper.

Considering that his family did not know too many words—most of which had been taught by himself—Donnie's letter was very simple. He told them how his exam went, the magic college he chose, the arrangements for the coming months, and asked about the situation in the family. So, when he gave the letter to the staff in the post office, he did not need extra stamps.

"How many days will it take before the letter arrives? When can I get a letter back?" Donnie had sent a few letters during the past years, and he had sent letters at different times every time. So, he had to ask about the information.

The staff looked at the address on the envelope without a smile. "Normally, it will take five days. As for when you can get a letter back, that is not something we can control."

Although it was sarcasm, Donnie was still amused. It was rare for him to encounter such a humorous clerk. This bald man was much more fun than he appeared.

After Donnie left, the bald man suddenly picked up Donnie's letter and walked backward. Soon after he left, a middle-aged man came back, rubbing his belly and complaining, "Why is my stomach so funny today? Aya, no, I need to go to the toilet again! Somebody fill in my place!"

In the storage room behind the post office, the bald man wiped the envelope with his right hand, and the sealed envelope was opened, revealing the letter inside.

“Nothing special...” The bald man unfolded the letter as he muttered to himself. He then wrote something down on a notebook quickly.

After recording it, he folded the letter again and put it back into the envelope flawlessly. Then, he took out a seal and sealed the envelope casually.

...

In a town near the Stroop Forest...

Dum, dum, dum.

Somebody knocked on the door.

“Who is it?” A girl with flaxen hair was busy preparing the dinner.

“Postman. There’s a letter addressed to your family.” A strange male voice came over.

The girl was briefly stunned. She looked out of the window, and since it was dusk, there were still plenty of people on the street. So, she opened the gate without concerns. “A letter addressed to my family? From where?”

“Rentato.” The postman was a plain-looking man whose face would be easily forgotten.

“Rentato? It’s from my brother!” Refreshed, the girl immediately opened the letter after she took it over.

The postman did not stop her but secretly observed the room. A beetle crawled out of his pants into a gap on the wood floor.

...

At the mayor’s house...

A stranger looked at the old man on his opposite side solemnly and said, "I need to check the files of everybody in this town."

"Yes, sir." The old mayor did not know what was going on, but he recognized the identification and the sigil.

...

In the city hall of Rentato...

A few clerks were standing before a renowned big shot respectfully.

"I need the files of all the bookstores in Rentato," the big shot, who headed an important department in the empire, said seriously.

"Yes, my lord," the clerks answered at the same time.

...

In the Allyn magic tower in the City in the Sky...

"Good afternoon, mister." The arcanist who supervised the library of sorcerers' files rose and bowed in respect. The visitor was a member of the Affair Committee with an emblem of black fire on his chest.

"I'm here to retrieve Dollos' files that are available according to my permissions..." the member said casually.

"Yes, of course."

...

Inside a palace with dim lights...

"Your Highness, this is Donnie's letter..."

"Your Highness, these are the files from Pico Town..."

"Your Highness, these are the register files of the Knowledge Bookstore in the city hall..."

"Your Highness, these are Dollos' files..."

Many documents were placed on the desk made of red wood. Five long, narrow, fair, but manly fingers tapped on them softly and gracefully, as if they were playing music.

“He’s born in a poor family with mediocre talents, but he is determined and hardworking. Also, he is a man of integrity and is not tempted by Dollos’ ‘Parchment of Death’...” As he tapped his fingers, a low and magnetic male voice echoed, with strange gentleness and peacefulness in it.

“There’s nothing wrong with his family background. His father is the owner of a grocery store, and his mother helps with the business. His sister is not in a school... None of their relatives, neighbors, or friends have anything wrong either...”

“Dollos, don’t presume that I do not know who is behind you. I don’t bother you about other things, but if you surpass the limits and are captivated by greed...” The five fingers clenched into a fist and bashed the documents.

In the palace, the ticking sounds of a strange second hand echoed. Behind the desk of red wood was a chair that had been moved sideways. A black-haired man was sitting on the chair, with his left hand scratching his chin.

His face was obviously chiseled despite the dim light. His eyebrow was thick and long, reaching his temples and making his black pupils sharp and deep. In the meantime, his long legs stretched forward lazily. Even though he did not stand up, it was not hard to imagine his height.

He pushed the files aside and pulled a drawer. Looking at the letter inside, he immediately looked upset.

On the letter, it wrote,

[Lu Xiaoen, protect Lu Xiaoxi. Your loving father and mother.]

“Why is my gentle and graceful father always fond of giving us such weird nicknames and calling us that all the time?!” the young man complained incessantly, and his previous casualness and

peacefulness were gone.

Chapter 833: Enrollment

In the morning, the brilliant yet not scorching sun illuminated Donnie's dormitory through the window, covering everything with gold.

Donnie was pacing back and forth with a pair of panda eyes. It seemed that he did not sleep at all last night.

Today was the day that the result of the College Entrance Exam of Advanced Magic would be announced. Even though he was quite confident about his performance, he was still ill at ease and could not go to sleep because there would be no way out for him if he failed.

"It's alright. I've done the theoretical tests, the practical tests, and the additional tests well, unless all the distinguished apprentices applied for the Heidler Magic College this year..." Donnie comforted himself in a low voice.

At this moment, the bell rang with a pleasant voice. Donnie came to an abrupt halt and hurried to turn on the home TV embedded on the wall. He saw that the snowflake-like spots spread out ripples on the screen. Gradually, a beautiful elf with pointy ears showed up.

"Welcome to 'Morning, Nature'. I believe you must be running out of patience. Hehe. I have in my hands the list of students admitted by the major magic colleges." The elf on the TV waved the paper before her. It was covered in a red band with a magic seal.

It was the school channel of "Nature's Heart School". There was a one-hour program in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. They mostly reported the major events in school or "shared" the bad or hilarious mistakes that the apprentices made.

Looking at the paper that was unbelievably thick, Donnie felt that his heart was beating faster and faster. Even though he was holding his breath, he could still sense its pounding.

The elf dropped the paper and smiled. "Our apprentices have

performed well this year. The ratio of admittance is higher than before. But of course, somebody must be very close to success too. However, those people need not be upset. You can choose to go to the Stroop Forest and learn after the druids. After the arcanists' years of work, the magic apprentices can be transformed into 'Nature's Guards' or druid apprentices easily..."

Donnie felt that his veins were bulging. The most important thing right now was to announce the list. Why was she talking so much? To make everybody more anxious and uneasy?

Thankfully, the elven lady quickly removed the seal without further ado. She broke the band and unfolded the paper. "Now, I will announce the students admitted by the Holt Magic College. The apprentices whose names are on the list should go to the president's office after nine to get your notice of enrollment and your rewards."

Right now, there were only nine magic colleges, but there were almost four hundred magic schools worldwide. It was a glorious thing for both the apprentice and the school to be admitted. That was why the president of the magic school was giving the notices of enrollment in person. As long as the apprentices who were admitted by the magic colleges did not slack off and give up, they all had good chances to become official sorcerers.

"The Holt Magic College..." The more Donnie listened, the more anxious he became. The names that he was very familiar with made him feel even worse. As it happened, the elven anchor did not announce the list of the students admitted by the Heidler Magic College until the end.

Donnie held his breath and put his right hand on his left chest again, sensing the intense fluctuations that almost broke out of his chest.

"Gordian... Caroline... David..." The elven anchor read the names that Donnie was very familiar with. Right when he almost couldn't handle his heartbeat and the terrible pressure anymore, the word "Donnie" finally came out of the loudspeaker of the home TV. It was so pleasant!

As if struck by lightning, Donnie felt numb and rigid. Then, he waved his arms hard, but his body collapsed without any strength.

He finally made it!

His life, as well as the lives of his family members, would be changed from today!

.....

Inside the Knowledge Bookstore, Dollos looked at Donnie who had come late and observed the lingering excitement on his face. He smiled. "You've been admitted?"

"Yes, by the Heidler Magic College, on the studies of body structure and genetics." Donnie smiled brilliantly at whomever he met today.

As the studies in the microscopic domain went deeper and more detailed, as the models on the nature of the world and magic were basically established, and as the influences spread out to all the major fields, the arcanists had discovered that the knowledge was too enormous for them to learn. They could not study the basics of every school before they chose their favorite field like before. They had to specify the direction that they would like to work on in order to build the foundation well. Those who were not geniuses could hardly learn anything more than the fundamental knowledge of their own fields.

Of course, after they became middle-rank or senior-rank sorcerers and their longevity was extended, the arcanists still had to go back and study the basics of astrology, elements, and necromancy because astrology involved prophecy and fate, and the microscopic domain in the school of elements reflected the essence of the world. If they did not know it at all, their future studies might be greatly affected.

The school of necromancy, on the other hand, was a necessity for life extension. They did not have to learn it well, but they had to grasp the basics.

Dollos nodded his head and closed the book before him.

“Congratulations, Donnie. I hope that you will make remarkable achievements in the school of necromancy.”

“Thank you, Mr. Dollos,” Dollos replied with a smile.

Dollos looked around, and seeing that there was no guest at this moment, he said, “Donnie, the three greatest problems in necromancy that need addressing are the model of the soul structure, the model of genetic factors, and the real mechanism of the ‘Original Body’. If you can unveil the mysteries of genetics, you will definitely win an Evans Prize in Arcana and the Prize of Immortal Throne, and you may become a grand arcanist and a legendary sorcerer in the future. That’s what you should work on.”

Donnie scratched his head and felt rather embarrassed upon hearing Dollos’ encouragement. “They are not something that I can take care of. I do not know the first thing about them. Well, are you aware of the Original Body?”

He keenly sensed the unusual term and asked rather curiously.

Dollos lowered his eyes and looked at the book before him. “Have you heard about the Original Body before? Even in the school of necromancy, there are few arcanists who understand it and study it. I only happen to know it because one of my old friends has been working on it.”

“I learned it from a fellow student during the College Entrance Exam...” Donnie suddenly felt that his question could be dangerous, but he had no choice except to answer it.

Dollos nodded and smiled. “Since you have heard it before, I can talk to you about the details. It’s from the ancient Meshkate Empire...”

He introduced the beginning and evolution of the Original Body. Donnie listened very attentively. Although Karl had introduced it to him before in a much more detailed way, he wasn’t in the mood to listen to it at all at that time.

“The Life Traceback ritual features slanted tombstones and coffins

that only have clothes but not bodies... All the bodies are filled in the wood puppet buried at the center..." As he talked, Dollos suddenly sighed. "I'm told that the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep outside of the Heidler Magic College contains the secret. It's a shame that I'm not qualified to visit the most mysterious and unique magic college..."

Was the secret hidden right outside of the Heidler Magic College?

Donnie looked forward to his college life even more now. If he could find some files and cracked some of the mysteries from the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep, it was possible that his capabilities would soar.

Dollos coughed. Not talking about the Original Body anymore, he simply introduced the school of necromancy in general and asked Donnie to go to work.

.....

Wu!

Clang! Clang!

The long magic steam train stopped at a dark and gloomy station. Donnie got off the train eagerly with his old black suitcase.

"So, is this Heidler?" Donnie looked around excitedly and curiously. He saw that the sky was gray and lackluster as if it were frozen, and that a vague mist was everywhere. Far away, the high, spiky magic towers that were in pitch black indicated the city's style that was different from any other cities on the continent.

As expected of the camp of necromancy... Donnie was not intimidated. Having braced himself for this, he felt that only such an appearance befitted Heidler's fame.

It was the middle of August, and the sunlight was burning hot outside. However, there was nothing but paleness and heartfelt chill when the sunlight got into Heidler.

Donnie moved his eyes back and searched for the signs in the

station. After he finished Dollos' contract, there was no time for him to go home. After all, Heidler was the college whose semester began earliest.

"The freshmen of the magic college will gather in 152, Ghoul Street..." Donnie soon found the announcement and read the content on it.

"How to reach Ghoul Street?" Donnie frowned at the map of Heidler that he bought from a small dealer on the train. It was full of zigzagging and dizzying twists and turns.

Looking around, Donnie picked up his suitcase and walked to a worker who was busy cleaning the station. "Hello, could I ask you the way? I am a freshman at the Heidler Magic College."

The cleaner suddenly raised his head, only to reveal his rotten face, dim bones, and the two deep black holes in his eye sockets. Donnie was so scared that he almost cried out loud.

Although he had dissected cadavers, summoned zombies, and crafted stitched bodies before, it was still a horrifying experience to run into a decayed corpse in the middle of a day without any warning.

The "cleaner" struggled to shake his head. He then lowered his head as he continued to clean the station.

So, this is Heidler... Donnie's tone had changed greatly.

"Donnie!" A familiar voice came from far away. Donnie turned around in surprise, only to discover that somebody was waving his arms at the entrance of the state. The ghost on his back was also waving its fuzzy hands. It was Sammy.

Chapter 834: The Silent College

The streets of Heidler City were not messy, filthy, or filled with rotten pieces of bodies everywhere, which was what Donnie expected to see. Instead, they were rather clean and broad, with a lot of passersby on them.

However, the crowded streets, which were supposed to be lively and obstreperous, were awfully quiet. Nobody talked loudly at all. They communicated with each other in the voice of mosquitoes. There seemed to be a strange force that forbade noises in this place.

With a closer look, Donnie finally realized that most of the passersby were actually undead creatures. Some were corpse dogs with weird redness beaming out of their eyes, some were skinned men whose flesh was exposed to the air, and some were the commonly seen ghosts, zombies, and skeletons.

Naturally, necromancers in black magic robes were among the undead creatures too. Most of them were not as grim and rigid as Donnie imagined. They talked and laughed with their friends, except that their voices were kept down.

“It’s a pity that there aren’t any liches...” Donnie remarked in a low voice.

Sammy seemed to be in great spirits after he came to Heidler City. Although he still seemed drowsy, at the very least, he was not yawning frequently. Rubbing his hair that was as messy as a bird nest, he smiled and said, “I don’t think liches are fond of walking on the street...”

I don’t think they are fond of anything... Donnie leaned aside to give the way to a three-headed hell hound. It was tall and strong, with burning fire drooling from its mouth, but it had a ring on its neck and was pulled by a petite female sorcerer, running ahead of her slowly.

“This hell hound is the size of a bull...” After the female sorcerer left, Donnie couldn’t help but observe. The difference in their sizes

was too glaring.

Sammy chuckled. "I saw a lich walking his bone dragon in the sky yesterday. It's about the size of a hundred hellhounds."

He arrived in Heidler City yesterday and lived at 152, Ghoul Street. He was waiting for the students who were to come the next day so that they could go to the college together.

"That's great." Donnie looked at the sky in admiration. At this moment, they already reached Ghoul Street. The high-rising magic tower made it impossible for them to lose their way.

Suddenly, a pale skull drifted out, with two needle-like red lights in the eye sockets. The teeth of the skull clattered and let out a harsh voice as it said, "All freshmen will gather and go to the college. Those who come later will be shuttled the day after tomorrow."

The voice was so unpleasant, as if somebody were rubbing a bone with rusty iron. Donnie shivered and walked into the hall with Sammy.

"Give me your notice of enrollment and your identification mark inside." An expressionless man approached them before Donnie got steady. The stranger had an emaciated face, with the same needle-like redness in his eyes.

Donnie hurried to take out his notice of enrollment and a black beetle. "Yes, sir."

"Call me Mr. Robert." The man's voice was strangely gentle and comforting. When he looked at the black beetle, the bug seemed to be illuminated by the redness too. "Well, Donnie, there is no need to apply for accommodation. You will come to the college with us."

Then, he returned the notice of enrollment and the beetle back to Donnie. Pausing for a moment, he said, "As it happens, I am an instructor in the field of body structure and genetics. I hope that you can keep up your current performance."

After a moment, Sammy looked at Robert, who had walked to the other side of the hall, and said in a low voice, "It is said that Mr.

Robert is very close to the senior rank now. His body has been modified by him for so many times that nobody knows what special abilities it has.”

“Well, Mr. Robert gave me a lot of pressure...” Donnie had cold sweat while walking in the gloomy environment of Heidler City. He looked at Robert, only to discover that the man stopped before the stream screen in the hall and watched the amusing program on it, with what could almost be called a smile on his face.

“I didn’t know that a dead-looking man like Mr. Robert would like to watch TV...” Donnie said in shock.

Sammy looked at him confusedly. “Why can’t a dead man watch TV?”

“Well...” Donnie was rendered speechless by Sammy. He hurried to change the subject. “We’re about to go to the college. I’m told that it’s not in the city but in a mysterious place, isn’t it?”

Sammy nodded solemnly. “I’m told that it’s a great place for necromancy.”

Both of them were rather curious about that, and they tried to guess where their destination was. Could it be in an enormous tomb?

After a while, the pale lich flew back and continued with the nasty voice, “Follow me closely and don’t get lost. Once you are lost, I will assume that you are already dead, and I will not bother searching for you.”

Donnie’s heart was palpitating. Even a drowsy and inert man like Sammy suddenly widened his eyes too. The whole team became extremely silent.

Following the lich, Donnie and his fellows passed the Ghoul Street, the Soul Avenue, and the Square of Brains before reaching a building that seemed no different from any other magic towers.

“Is this our college?” Donnie looked at the magic tower before him in disappointment.

The lich stopped and floated before the gate of the magic tower while chanting coarse, intricate, and gruesome spells.

A shadow emerged from the rocks on the ground. Spreading and growing, it soon covered the gate, making it shiver softly in the darkness.

“Follow me,” the lich said coldly, and instead of opening the gate, the lich disappeared into the shadow.

Donnie and Sammy held their breath again because of the weirdness. They slowly moved forward with the apprentices before them, wondering where the shadow would lead.

It was a pity that, however slow they were, they still reached the shadow gate. Gritting his teeth, Donnie stepped in.

As if his body were in a lake, Donnie felt depressed and suffocated, exactly like when he was almost drowned when he was a little kid. Then, Donnie felt that his body was light again, and he got rid of the “water”. He was now facing a black, white, and gray environment.

It was a messy and corrupt city, without the slightest color except for the monotonous black, white, and gray. Even the wind had been frozen in the air, like a peaceful and weird portrait.

Donnie looked at the sky in shock. It was as pale and dime as that of Heidler City, but the sun was nowhere to be seen!

The basic knowledge about alternate dimensions popped up in Donnie’s head. He shouted at Sammy who was stunned next to him, “It’s the World of Souls!”

However, after he blurted out, Donnie did not hear any sound at all. Everything was so quiet as if they were in eternal sleep.

As expected of the World of Souls. Donnie took a breath, having the illusion that his body was decaying. This place was definitely the best place for the school of necromancy. However, he was told that this place was very dangerous for even the senior-rank sorcerers. After all, the unintelligent specters did not care for one’s

background or whether or not they were rich. They only desired fresh flesh and blood.

“Follow me. Let me repeat myself. Don’t get lost.” With a spell that they did not know, the lich spoke into everyone’s heart.

Donnie patted Sammy, who was still in a daze, and followed the lich warily and attentively, fearing that he might be left out and faced with the tide of specters alone.

Passing through the silent city, the team walked into a desolate wilderness. There were wandering ghouls with rotten and hideous faces everywhere. They could almost smell the indescribable stench.

Further away, many fuzzy ghosts were floating in the sky, with black long robes on their body.

Such an environment and such a scene refreshed the ghost on Sammy’s back. It craned its head and let out soundless shrills, waving its hands back and forth hard.

Hehe. Donnie looked at the scene in amusement, while Sammy shook his head helplessly.

Suddenly, the gray sky became dark, as if it had been dyed black. No, the sky did not turn dark, but instead, the phenomenon was caused by ghosts that were gathering from all directions!

Also letting out soundless shrills, they flew toward Sammy overwhelmingly. The terrible pressure and scent of death almost made a lot of apprentices wet their pants. Had they run into a scourge of the undead?

His body shivering, Donnie pulled Sammy, hinting him to stop the ghost on his back.

At this moment, the lich before them sniffed, and a black curtain appeared out of nowhere, covering all of them.

After the black curtain disappeared, Donnie realized that they had already pressed deep into the wilderness and were far away from the army of ghosts.

“Get your ghost under control,” the lich said coldly.

“Yes, sir,” Sammy replied; his voice shaking. The ghost behind him, on the other hand, held its own legs like a scared kid who was crying soundlessly.

Donnie looked at the ghost in amusement. *Are you terrified by the army of ghosts too? You almost turned us into ghouls.*

Dragging Sammy, whose legs were too unsteady to support him, to move forward, Donnie suddenly saw a magnificent city in the frozen black, white, and gray world. There were black, silver, and white pointy magic towers in the city that displayed different colors. Among the magic towers were rarely-seen overpasses that connected different directions delicately.

Around the city was a quiet cemetery with tombs everywhere, which were packed densely. Slanted black tombstones were before them.

“Slanted tombstones...” Donnie was briefly stunned.

After passing the cemetery, Donnie and his fellows reached the edge of the city under the leadership of the lich. After they passed the city gate that was dozens of meters tall, the feeling of consolidation and depression was immediately gone. They heard the familiar sound of talking again, as if they had suddenly returned from the realm of the dead to that of the living.

“Everyone, as you have seen, there is no way that you can leave this place without the guidance of senior-rank mentors. Therefore, you have to work and study really hard, because those who slack off will not be able to go home. Alright, welcome to the Heidler Magic College. Please claim your school robe and badge with your identification mark and your notice of enrollment. Then, you can go to your dormitory with the mark on the badge.” The lich disappeared after giving the announcement.

Dragging Sammy, who had not fully recovered, and his ghost, Donnie got the black robe and the emblem of pale fire from a magic tower nearby. He asked the way and walked to his dormitory.

When they were near their dormitory, Sammy finally took a long breath and rubbed his hair. “The World of Souls is really horrible. I was so scared just now...”

As he spoke, he opened the door of the dormitory, only to be stunned. He blocked Donnie’s sight.

“I... I’m sorry. We... We’ve come to the wrong dormitory!” Sammy stammered and apologized.

Donnie looked at the door plate. “Room 202 of the Life Tower in the Origin Zone. It can’t be wrong.”

Chapter 835: Roommates

Sammy, in the lead, hurried to turn around, but his head seemed to be attracted by what was inside the room. Donnie, who was behind him, was busy reading the number on the door. As a result, the two of them bumped into each other.

“Wait. How do you know that you’re in the wrong dormitory when you haven’t seen the number yet? Have you already been to your dormitory, and you realize that you’re in the wrong one because of the different arrangements in the room? But you still have your luggage in your hands! Huh, you have a twin ghost on your back! That’s a very special spiritual phenomenon. It will be very helpful for us to unravel the specific structure of the soul...” A magnetic and pleasant male voice came from the room.

The familiar voice and the talking that never seemed to finish struck Donnie like a lightning. He was completely stunned.

Karl?

How is it possible?

The guy turned out to be his roommate!

A picture suddenly popped up in his head. He was surrounded by dozens of knights at gunpoint, and in the sky were the views of tides, suns, and bolts of lightning made by the radiant knights who could be elementized.

The horrible picture made Donnie’s body shiver. While Karl was warm and amiable, it did not mean that the knights who were protecting him were the same. Perhaps, his innocent mistake would lead to overreactions. Also, Karl might not be as simple-headed as he seemed!

“M... Miss, how can I not know I am in the wrong dormitory after I see you?” Sammy said, blushing. Because of the Back Spirit, few girls were ever interested in him. Whenever he faced his female classmates, he was either in dire need of sleep or he became

extremely awkward and clumsy.

“Who’s a miss? I am, without any questions, a man, a knight who protects ladies, and an arcanist who pursues the truth. What makes you think I am a girl?” Karl sounded angry.

Fuzzy and anxious, Sammy blurted out, “What makes you think you are not a girl...”

Before he finished his sentence, his mouth had been stifled by Donnie, who feared that he would infuriate Karl and let them be fired upon by electromagnetic cannons.

With a flattering smile, Donnie moved his head aside and looked at Karl through the gap between Sammy and the door frame. “Karl, it’s been a long...”

His voice came to an abrupt halt, and he forgot to close his mouth. Staring at Karl inside, he looked like a statue.

Today, Karl was wearing the standard long robe of the Heidler Magic College, which further highlighted his fair skin. The sloppy clothes covered the body curve that he did not have. Together with his pretty face and his glittering silver eyes, he would make everyone think that he was a flawless and beautiful girl.

The greatest feature of the robe of the college in classic style was that it was genderless! The manly air that Karl added to himself with male clothes, bow-ties, etc. was gone, and he looked no different from any other female students. No wonder Sammy was in a hurry to apologize.

Suddenly, an idea occurred to him. If he spent a lot of time with Karl, would he find the other girls too ordinary when he hung around with them?

“You... You... You... You are Donnie?” Karl finally remembered Donnie’s name. He was briefly stunned. “You’re my roommate too?”

The slight blush on his fair face suddenly reddened, and his glittering eyes became sharp. The intimidating vibe made the ghost on Sammy’s back crouch again.

Donnie took half a step back and looked at Karl in shock, with messy ideas like “it’s dangerous”, “I should take cover”, and “why is he angry?” in his head. However, after looking around, Karl immediately lost the threatening gaze and said with a blooming smile, “We’re now roommates! How coincidental is that! Is this your friend? Is he our roommate too? I planned to buy you dinner to apologize after the exam is over, but I had to leave early because of a minor accident in the afternoon exam. I didn’t expect to meet you again on the first day of college. Are you majoring in body structure and genetics too? Then, we will probably be classmates...”

Karl’s eloquence woke Sammy up from his embarrassment. He looked around and read the sign on the door again. “You are really a guy?”

It was truly unbelievable!

“Of course, I am an authentic man!” Karl said proudly and waved his arms. “Do you want to try my strength? Donnie knows it. I am very strong. I can crush five people of your body size in one punch. Well, it’s just a joke. My strength is only mediocre...”

With a bitter face, Sammy said, “I believe you. I do.”

He already saw the Adam’s apple on Karl. Now that he was no longer in a panic, he also sensed the maliciousness of the world exactly as Donnie did.

“Come on in. As roommates, we need to help and encourage each other in the future in order to make progress together so that we can walk further in the journey to explore the mysteries of genetics and souls...” Karl bowed slightly and extended his left hand, like a graceful gentleman.

Why is he so talkative? Also, he is as formal as a news anchor... Donnie wiped his sweat and stopped looking at Karl’s face that could be compared to the most beautiful girl’s as he feared that his expectations would be raised too high.

The dormitory of the Heidler Magic College was not splendid, but it was clean and tidy. Four beds made of black metal had been placed

next to the walls. Before the beds were everybody's desk.

The desk was made of bright yellow wood and divided into two floors. On the upper floor, there was a bookshelf. Behind the closet in the back, it was a door that seemed to lead to the balcony and the bathroom.

"There's a home TV by the door. Everybody has their own magic refrigerator on their nightstand. Right, the two pieces of metal on the bed are magic radios that you can stuff in your ears so that you will not affect other people when you listen to Arcana Voice at night. However, there are no magic air conditioners in this place because the whole Heidler Magic College is covered in magic circles and set at a permanent temperature that is neither too cold nor too hot. And such, magic air conditioners are not necessary..."

The moment Donnie dragged the suitcase to an empty bed, he heard Karl's magnetic voice. The guy introduced the items in the room thoroughly and enthusiastically.

Does he not have many chances to talk on other occasions? That's unlikely. Who can stop such a big shot like him from talking? A weird thought occurred to Donnie.

"It's a shame that there's no room for pianos, violins, or flutes here, and magic gramophones and players are forbidden too. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of music that I would like to share with you. I have created some works myself too..." Karl said in disappointment.

The magic players were the improved version of gramophones. They could store more music as well as more convenient to use.

"Behind that door is the balcony. On the left side of the balcony is the bathroom. There is no kitchen, no living room..."

At this moment, Sammy, whose bed was next to Donnie's, could not stand such a "pretty girl" making male voice anymore. So, he combed his messy hair and said, "Donnie, put on your magic robe. We have to pick our courses and mentor."

"Haha. I just did it yesterday," Karl interjected without any self-

awareness. “How about it? Do you want me to introduce it to you?”

He seemed to be asking, but he immediately said without waiting, “The most distinguished mentor on body structure and genetics is naturally Mr. Felipe. However, he is also the director of the Laboratory of Heretics, and since he works on the cutting edge of necromancy, he does not have much time except for the occasional open classes. The other teachers each have their own specialties. For example...”

Donnie felt that his head had grown huge. “We came late, and we don’t want to miss the course selection today. Karl, how about we talk later while we are on the way?”

He was told that all the classes of the magic college were to be selected publicly. If they were late, the classes with great teachers would be full.

He couldn’t help but complain about the Heidler Magic College. It was said that the other colleges would ask the students to select the courses after they all arrived, but here, the students who came early got to select early. However, it did agree with the habit of coldness and indifference of the school of necromancy.

“Alright, I’ll tell you the details on the way. You must not select the teachers who are too busy doing their own research to teach classes or those who are not professionals themselves...” Karl said with a brilliant smile.

Donnie and Sammy looked at each other with a bitter smile, both felt that there was no way they could stop Karl from talking.

Putting down the suitcase, Sammy picked up the magic robe to distinguish the front side from the back. Then, he unbuttoned his clothes. However, he had a very uncomfortable feeling while unbuttoning his clothes, although the ghost on his back showed no reaction as if nothing was wrong.

He looked at Donnie, only to discover that Donnie was also stunned after he took off half of his old school uniform.

“Why have you stopped?” Karl said at the perfect moment.

Both Sammy and Donnie turned around, only to discover that Karl was looking at the two of them with his big, beautiful silver eyes.

Immediately, they understood why they felt uneasy. It was the same as taking off clothes in front of a girl!

“Well, Karl, do you mind turning around?” Donnie said awkwardly.

Karl was stunned. “Why? We are all guys.”

Donnie thought for a moment and replied with what he learned from the noble etiquette class, “Even guys should also respect each other’s privacy.”

Karl nodded and did not say anything else. He walked out of the dormitory.

Donnie and Sammy seized the moment to take off their old clothes and put on the magic robes and the corresponding shirts. In the end, they clipped the emblem of pale fire and their badges of apprentice and intern arcanist on their clothes.

“Let’s go.” Donnie was greatly relieved after he changed his clothes.

“Alright!” At this moment, a strange voice suddenly echoed, giving both of them a shock.

Looking at the source of the voice, they discovered a plain-looking, fat young man, who had black hair and blue eyes before another bed.

“When did you come in?” Sammy asked in confusion.

The young man replied with a smile, “I’ve been here all the time. I came to this dormitory earlier than you did, but you didn’t notice me.

“Hehe. My name is Jones. I am your roommate, and I will major in the soul.”

“How is it possible?” Donnie blurted out. He had carefully observed everything when he came in. Also, Sammy’s ghost had powerful instincts.

Jones opened his hands. “There’s nothing I can do about it. Wherever I stand, it seems that I am under the stealth skill. The guy who informed me to take part in the College Entrance Exam almost couldn’t find me.”

“Then... Let’s go select the courses together.” Donnie gritted his teeth, and seeing that it was getting late, sent a friendly invitation.

This was definitely a room of weirdos!

Chapter 836: Ubiquitous Shadow

The Heidler Magic College was at a magic tower with pointy tops. Walking among them, one would feel that they were walking in a strange forest. Man-made lights shined from the sky, creating a magnificent view.

“Mr. Robert is Mr. Felipe’s student. He has remarkable expertise in genetic factors, cell memories, and application of necromancy. Also, it is said that he had just exchanged for the files of blood power studies left by Natravos and modified his blood and body deeply based on that. For example, his left eye has been replaced with the Eye Demon’s, allowing him to cast certain ray-type spells quickly with a combat ability close to the senior-rank sorcerers. His right hand contains the tentacles of the Mind Stealer, allowing him to disrupt the mental skills and absorb the enemy’s brains and memories...”

“If you are interested in the few fields above, you may consider selecting Mr. Robert’s classes. He is definitely one of the most distinguished middle-rank mentors, and he is as good as the senior-rank mentors in knowledge and practice...”

Karl introduced the mentors excitedly, like a blooming tulip attracting the attention of the students and teachers passing by. However, they were immediately shocked by his voice, leaving a road of statues wherever he went.

Is it really okay to describe Mr. Robert’s special abilities just like that? Donnie’s lips twitched. He subconsciously imagined what Mr. Robert would be like. From the expressionless dead-looking face, a brown eyeball protruded from the left eye socket and was connected to the eye socket by clear veins. His right hand opened, and many scarlet tentacles crawled out to all directions...

“It’s the typical look of a monster... Necromancers are truly terrifying!”

“However, on second thought, they are also very cool and

threatening, aren't they?"

Weird thoughts bubbled up in Donnie's heart and broke apart. Suddenly, he felt that his right sleeve was tightened, and he was refreshed, only to realize that Sammy was pulling it.

"Donnie, aren't Mr. Robert special abilities supposed to be a secret? Why is Karl talking as if everybody knows it?" Even a drowsy and fuzzy young man like Sammy realized that something was not right and asked Donnie in a low voice.

Seeing that Karl was still talking too excitedly to notice their anomaly, Donnie said also in a low voice, "Karl is the descendant of a big shot..."

It was his speculation. After all, if Karl was a big shot himself and had done something great, he must have seen it from the news before.

Sammy nodded his head and stopped asking, not wondering which big shot's son Karl was at all, because he was too sleepy at this moment to care about anything else. All he needed to know was that it was a big shot that he could not piss off. Also, Karl was introducing the mentors on body structure and genetic factors, not the field of souls and spirits, which he was interested in.

The ghost behind him, having been intimidated twice in a row, leaned to him wearily, as if it were also in need of sleep.

Listening to Karl and looking at Sammy's trance-like expression, Donnie thought to himself, *A man who can compare to an elven princess and a Back Spirit guy who likes to sleep more than anything. How weird my roommates are...*

Iristine, the elven princess, had once given a speech in his school.

"Yes. Only you are normal." An unexpected voice entered Donnie's ears. He subconsciously nodded his head. *Yes. I am the only normal person in this dormitory. Wait, who's talking to me? How does he know what's on my mind?*

He turned around abruptly, only to discover that Fatty Jones was

looking at him with a smile. He asked in shock, “When... When did you come?”

“Didn’t you invite me to select the courses with you?” Jones answered peacefully without being infuriated at all.

“Yes.” Donnie scratched his head like Sammy. *But I’ve completely forgotten that! He’s indeed another...*

“Indeed another weirdo roommate,” Jones continued with a smile.

Donnie’s face was frozen. “You can read my mind?”

“No. The bridge we are walking on is named ‘Path of Serenity’. When your emotions are too intense, your thoughts will echo in the corridor. This is a way that the mentors remind the students of the importance of tranquility in the research of necromancy. Otherwise, you will hurt both other people and yourself. Did you not hear the voice in your heart?” Jones pointed at the black and white bridge.

The branches up ahead led to the teaching tower and the experiment tower respectively. There were no windows. Vague light emanated from the bricks on the wall and the floor, giving a cold and chilling feeling.

Donnie listened carefully. There was indeed a distant voice of “indeed another...” in the air. He looked at Karl and Sammy embarrassedly, only to discover that one of them was too busy talking and the other was simply nodding his head. Neither of them noticed anything else.

“Thank god they did not hear that...” Donnie was relieved.

“Are you not worried about me?” A plain but strange voice echoed again.

Taken aback, Donnie turned around and looked at Jones, realizing that he had forgotten the guy again!

“I... I’m sorry.” As an honest, normal young man with boundaries, Donnie hurried to apologize.

Jones waved his hands and smiled. "It's alright. I actually quite like my specialty. At the very least, even the enemies will forget about me when I am in danger. I once encountered the scorpion men when I traveled in the southern desert with my friends. After a fierce battle, both parties retreated, and I was forgotten and left at the center of the battlefield..."

"But as a result, I don't think any girls can remember you, can they? If you are married in the future, will your wife forget that she has a husband?" Donnie asked curiously.

Jones' face became rigid. He smiled bitterly. "Let's not talk about such a poignant subject..."

"That's why I chose necromancy. I hope to study blood powers and modify my body. I have to transform the special talent into an ability that I can control."

"Good luck," Donnie said sincerely. "By the way, what's your name?"

"Jones. I have introduced myself to you many times..." Jones' voice was as predictable as a ghost.

"Have you? Why do I only remember the time in the dormitory? But I only remember that you introduced yourself but cannot remember the specific content..." Donnie more and more felt that everybody in his dormitory was a freak except himself!

The four of them entered the teaching tower along the Path of Serenity and found the place where the courses were selected.

"Aya, the distance is too short. I've only introduced half of the mentors, and I haven't talked about any of the classes yet. That's not my fault. It's only because certain mentors have too many files..." Karl said regretfully.

That's because you rambled too much. You have told us everything about Mr. Robert's brother's neighbor's boss's wife... Donnie thought to himself. Then, his eyes glittered, and he found himself in a room that was full of strange devices. Such devices were the size of desks

and covered in silver or black metal shells. Before them, two flickering lights were flashing. Above them was a metal plate similar to the stream screen.

“What is this?” Donnie looked at Karl. *He must know the answer and would be glad to offer it!*

Karl’s face was full of excitement again, making him as glowing and attractive as the sun. “This is an artificial intelligence that has mixed certain soul pieces. It is so much more fun than those which are being popularized...”

“Artificial intelligence?” Sammy’s body shivered. His eyes were wide open, and his sleepiness was gone.

Donnie was also excited. Was it the legendary artificial intelligence?

“How do I use it?” Donnie interrupted Karl’s interpretation.

Karl did not go mad. He stopped before one of the machines, took off the badge of pale fire on his chest, and placed it on a dent above the “artificial intelligence”.

Then, the red and green lights flashed much more intensely, and an unemotional voice echoed, “Welcome to use artificial intelligence. How can I help you, Mr. Karl?”

“Give me the menu.” Karl turned back and smiled at Donnie and Sammy, who were dazzled again.

“Alright.” This time, the metal plate similar to the stream screen unleashed colorful brilliant lights and gathered into a hologram in the air. There were many icons that were marked with different words on it.

“There are the course selection system, the game system, the test system, and many others in it. You can have a try yourself...” Karl said quickly while he extended his right hand to point at an icon in the air with his narrow, long forefinger. Immediately, the light and shadow on the hologram changed, and cubes in different colors and shapes fell from the top like toys.

Watching Karl move his fingers quickly on the hologram as if he were casting spells and hearing his uninterrupted introduction, Donnie somehow felt that he had been caught in an illusion.

“Is this the game of ‘artificial intelligence’? It seems rather interesting, isn’t it?” Sammy focused his eyes on the hologram.

Shaking his head, Donnie walked to another “artificial intelligence” and put the college badge in the slot like Karl did, asking the alchemical life to display the menu.

However, instead of playing the game, he went straight into the course selection system and found the field of “body structure and genetic factors”.

“Prerequisite courses?” Donnie clicked the option in confusion and saw a bunch of classes that he had to take.

“Electromagnetics, Magic Crystals, Application of X-Rays in the Observation of the Microworld, Basics of Quantum mechanics, Atoms, Molecules, and Cells: A Brief Introduction, Composition of Human Body, Dragons’ Body Structure...”

Reading the names of some of the classes, Donnie was so stunned that he could clearly sense the signature of Lucien Evans on them.

Why? Why did he have to learn those things even in the school of necromancy?

Chapter 837: Nightmare

Chapter 837: Nightmare

“Studies on genetics have dived deep into the microscopic domain and thus gone beyond the capability of traditional magic spells. Observation methods based on the knowledge of the microscopic domain shall take over here, say, the combination of X-ray and some magic crystals. Therefore, we also have to understand relevant arcana schools apart from necromancy. Of course, it’s pretty much a brand new area that just started a couple of years ago, so nothing major has been found yet.”

The male voice sounded both strange but somehow also familiar to Donnie. He hurriedly looked back and saw a chubby teenage boy with black hair also operating an “artificial intelligence”.

“Jones?” Donnie asked, “How did you know?”

Jones answered while still working on his project, “I noticed you were staring at the schedule. I know you don’t understand such an arrangement.”

“Besides observation methods, as our bodies also consist of atoms and molecules, we have to learn about the microscopic domain to understand life matters,” Karl responded while playing his game. “Also, there is mathematics. If you don’t know math, you’re going nowhere in arcana.

“As you’ve seen, there’s a course called Advanced Mathematics in necromancy, and it’s very systematic. The course comprises calculus, matrix, analytic geometry, complex variables functions, real analysis, and mathematical analysis, and it goes all the way through our next five-year study.” Karl added, “It’s as important as the rest of our compulsory courses like Genetics and Body Structure.”

As long as Karl started talking, very rarely would he be brief. He tended to be very specific, and his words were often very informative.

Hearing the terms, Donnie felt dizzy, and he even had the impulse to crack the “artificial intelligence” in front of him. Although he revered the leading characters in mathematics very much and he was not bad at math, he was not a genius, so learning math definitely was full of pain!

Turning to the next page, Donnie saw the course named Advanced Mathematics in Necromancy. He plucked up his courage and chose a good mentor under Karl’s suggestion.

He then finished his registrations for all courses, including those lab courses.

Because they were here relatively early, and they followed many suggestions from Karl on choosing mentors, both Donnie and Sammy had successfully found their ideal mentors for each of their courses. They were lucky to have Robert as their mentor on the Composition of Human Body because they would then automatically enroll on his Body Reform, which was an advanced course in the school of necromancy.

After this, Donnie’s timetable was ready. He had lots of courses during the day except for Sunday. One would easily suppose that most necromancy courses should be delivered during night time, but this place was the World of Souls, so the trouble could be saved. Donnie had to review all the stuff he learned during the day as there was no way that he could remember everything right away.

Seeing that more and more students were waiting, Karl forced himself to leave the “artificial intelligence”, and he took a glance at Donnie’s timetable. “We’ll have many courses together, so we can go together. Many magic towers here look identical, and there are also some illusion mazes that act as defense. You can easily get lost if you don’t have a guide. Last time I ran into several girls who got lost nearby a magic tower, and they were almost in tears...”

Donnie hurriedly asked, “You know this place well?”

Sammy was being rather sleepy again. Donnie was the only one who could stop Karl’s lecture.

"I've seen the map. I'm a genius at finding directions!" Karl was full of confidence. If someone did not believe him, he'd keep talking until the person believed.

Donnie hurriedly nodded. "Then we'll count on you next Monday morning."

"No problem." Karl patted on his chest, but his beautiful face made his movement look cute. "I like these courses, for we can do magic experiments!"

Experiment? Karl?

Donnie turned to look at Karl's chipper face. He became very nervous. He wondered if it was still okay to choose another mentor, or if he could apply for sick leaves during lab sections to avoid doing experiments with Karl together.

Karl kept going on and on, as if his mouth never dried from giving lectures. His speech, however, did help Donnie and Sammy remember where to find the library, Magic Exchange Office, Dean's office, Paper office, the tower where specters were sealed, burying place, restaurants, and the dining hall. Like how the TV and radio programs were introduced, in the academy, cuisines from different countries all gathered here, which fed Donnie and Sammy very well.

Heidler Magic College was big. It already passed midnight when they came back to their dorm. Sammy leaned against Donnie as he could fall into sleep at any time. Donnie also felt exhausted. However, Karl still looked very excited and energetic.

"What a tiring day. We should get some sleep now." Walking to his bed, Karl gave himself a long stretch elegantly.

Donnie looked at Sammy who had fallen into deep sleep in his bed and believed that they should be the right people calling themselves exhausted.

At this time, he saw that Karl was slowly taking off his black magic robe. His long, beautiful neck had been revealed and then... his

curved waist.

“Karl!” Donnie blurted out, feeling his nose a bit hot and his heart beating fast. “Can you... go to the changing room?”

“What? I’m a man!” Karl was a bit confused, but he smiled later on. “You value privacy, I see. You emphasize on this even more than some nobles!”

Karl followed Donnie’s words and walked to the changing room. When he came out wearing a loose white shirt and a pair of pajama pants, Donnie looked away again.

Donnie took a shower and then finally lay down. In bed, he could not fall asleep. The schoolwork was even more difficult than he thought, and some courses even made him feel very concerned. In this dorm, there was also such an “important character” living with them. He wondered how his life in the academy would be in the close future.

Donnie wished that Karl could figure out how to modify his body genetically as soon as possible so that he could feel more relaxed living with him.

Wait... Did they forget someone on their way back? The student called... J...?

“Karl? Are we all here? I think we forgot someone!” Donnie hurriedly asked.

“Thank you for asking. I was always with you all.” The unique voice came to Donnie in the darkness before Karl responded. “By the way, my name’s Jones, and I think you have perhaps forgotten about it.”

Donnie buried his head under his pillow and released a sigh in his mind. What kind of dorm it was!

...

The dark night sky was solemn and quiet, but its edge looked rather gray and pale. The World of Souls was always like this. No change took place here.

In the color of black, white, and gray, Heidler Magic College, surrounded by the countless tombs, looked rather creepy and also very mysterious.

The gravestones were engraved with the names of the dead, the date they were born, the day they passed away, as well as the honors that they once earned. Some of the epitaphs were amusing, and some were rather serious and solemn.

Standing in the graveyard, watching the names and the black fog rising, Donnie recalled what Mr. Dollos once mentioned—the rite of Life Traceback and the “Original Body”.

His heart beat faster and faster, as if something in the middle of the graveyard was summoning him.

Although he had sensed the danger, Donnie could not help walking further toward the center of the graveyard.

There was a huge tomb in front of him. The gate of the tomb chamber was only half closed.

Donnie walked through the gate and came to the main chamber along the passage. The dim light in this space made the atmosphere beyond dreadful.

Pushing open the gate of the main chamber, Donnie was shocked. There was a huge body, which consisted of a different intelligent creature, lying in the coffin. And the black miasma filled in the entire space.

Suddenly, the body sprang up and opened its eyes. They were just two dark red spots, and the air of death poured out from them.

Donnie felt this great paralysis in his body. He wished that he could cry out loud, but he could not. He could do nothing but watch his own body corrupting and soul dissipating. In the end, there was the eternal, silent darkness.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Donnie jumped up in his bed and gasped hard. It was sunny

outside, a crisp, promising morning.

“Nightmare again?” asked Sammy in concern.

Donnie nodded, but then shook his head. “Maybe I’m just not used to this new place...”

But why this dream again?

Was it because he wanted this secret so bad?

“If it keeps happening,” Karl popped his head out from the washroom with a toothbrush in his mouth and said, “you have to go and see some mentors to make sure you’re not cursed. I once saw...”

Obviously, the toothbrush in his mouth was not going to stop him from talking.

Donnie nodded seriously and said, “Thanks, Karl. But you’d better hurry up. It’s time for the ceremony.”

The ceremony in Heidler Magic College for a new term was always very simple. Schokola, the president, only gave a short speech. Then Donnie and Karl followed the crowd and went to the classroom for electromagnetics.

“I’m your mentor for electromagnetics, and my name’s Ginton,” said a middle-aged man who looked rather well-educated, who was wearing a pair of wire-rimmed glasses and looked a bit thin. “This is our first class, and I’ll lead you to the lab to do some experiments. From the experiments, you’ll see with your own eyes some classic electromagnetic phenomena, which we’ll explain later in our upcoming classes.”

“Yeah!” Karl said cheerfully.

Donnie wondered if he could stay here...

Chapter 838: The Strange Lightning

Chapter 838: The Strange Lightning

The experiment magic tower was silver-white, and its architectural style was not really in accordance with the overall atmosphere in Heidler Magic College.

It wasn't far away from the main tower and was connected to the main tower by eight gray bridges. Students wearing black magic robes were walking on the bridges.

Following Ginton, Donnie and the rest of the students had come to a big lab that occupied the entire floor.

"There're many fascinating experiments in electromagnetics, say, those showing electromagnetic induction and electromagnetic waves. I did one with my elder brother, and we were above the ocean beyond the Pearl Islands..." Karl shared his experience with Donnie, and his eyes were shining with passion.

However, Donnie was on full alert. "How was it?"

He did not care what Karl did, but what consequence that caused.

"It was perfect! Even more perfect than we expected!" Karl slightly lifted his chin out of pride.

"What else did you get? What was the consequence?" asked Donnie in great caution.

Karl chuckled dryly. "There was no consequence. Our experiment even created a new research field for arcanists in electromagnetics, to conduct lightning high above in the sky using electromagnetic waves, which can greatly improve the power of many senior-rank electromagnetic spells..."

"Really?" Donnie was very surprised. As a good student from Nature's Heart, he was quite familiar with this field.

“Of course!” Karl answered in a bit of a rush, as he disliked the suspicion. “We conducted countless flashes of lightning, like a forest of lightning. A couple of deserted islands nearby were also on fire...”

He suddenly stopped himself here and smiled with embarrassment. “My father said that there’s theoretical support, but you’d better use the...”

Donnie completely ignored the rest of the words. Instead, he murmured, “Lightning forest... Islands on fire...”

He had decided to stay away from Karl as far away as he could. Obviously, Karl’s experiment just strayed away so much from his original intention—an experiment for testing electromagnetic wave communication.

Glinton said to them seriously, “If you want to learn about electromagnetism, electromagnetic induction is something you can never avoid. Today, I’ll show you a few small experiments on this so that you all can see it with your own eyes.

“But I have to remind you that a magic lab does have very strict rules. Failing to obey them will lead to bad consequences, for yourself and also for other people. And you’ll be punished. I won’t repeat myself here on what the rules are as they should have become a part of your soul since grade five.”

He turned around, and his eyes were shining with a red light. Then two red rays shot out from his eyes and hit the gate of the lab. The gate rippled like there was a layer of water on it.

He then took out his badge on which there was a white skull. When the badge was pressed against the central part of the gate, the gate slowly opened.

“Lots of experiments can be done here. But you can’t enter this one without the permission and help of an instructor. If you want to do some experiments on your own, go and apply for the access to the common labs on floor one to seven,” said Glinton.

Donnie murmured in a low voice, “But what if things still go wrong even if the rules are strictly followed...”

He was, obviously, not talking about himself.

As a fifth-circle sorcerer, Glinton could hear Donnie’s words. He looked a bit pissed and said, “Nothing can go wrong if you stick to the rules. If it is my fault, none of you will be hurt because I’m here. Also, Heidler Magic College is already twenty-one years old, and the accidents that have ever happened cannot even fill up a piece of parchment. The worst accident ever only destroyed an operation desk.

“This is what we all feel proud of as instructors of this college. This comes from what we gained from building the ‘Path of Serenity’.”

“Yes, sir,” answered Donnie hurriedly. He did not want to leave any bad impression on his mentor.

The arrangement of the lab was very similar to that of those less advanced labs. The only difference was that there were more alchemy facilities that they did not recognize. The students could still identify a couple of the facilities and devices though, for example, the famous Cyclotron.

Seizing the chance that Karl was looking around, Donnie secretly went to the other side to stay closer to the gate.

After a couple of minutes, Donnie finally felt more relaxed when seeing that Karl had gone to the corner, instead of looking for him. However, he was then concerned that a big accident might happen at any time because of Karl.

His nervousness caught the attention of a few students close to him. A green-eyed girl with brown hair smiled. “Don’t worry. It’s just like what we did in our schools. Mr. Glinton would allow us to use Cyclotron today anyway.”

She was not a gorgeous girl, but the habitual smile on her face made the girl look rather easygoing and kind.

“Thanks. I’m Donnie, you?” Donnie answered politely. But he knew

that it was sensible for him to feel very concerned.

The girl grinned. "Call me Shirley. I'm from the Duchy of Orvarit. I hope you see me as a good guest."

Donnie had the typical look of a Holmish, so Shirley was joking.

Natasha had regained control over the Duchy of Orvarit, and she was now the Grand Duchess. There were rumors saying that she was giving the title to her youngest child. Natasha and Lucien Evans kept their children away from public attention, and the children's names were even replaced by their titles in TV or radio programs.

"No matter where we come from, we're all members of the Congress and followers of knowledge. There's no host and guest," said Donnie politely.

In the magic school, Sammy was totally devoted to his study, and he rarely talked to the girls, but Shirley made him feel quite relaxed.

Shirley nodded and pointed at their mentor. The class was going to start.

Worried as Donnie was, he still stayed focused.

In the front, Glinton was explaining the discovery and development of electromagnetic induction. From time to time, he would use experiments for demonstration, and he would occasionally pause so that the students could repeat the experiments.

Glinton definitely deserved the compliment given by Karl. Serious as he was, his lecture was rather interesting and engaging. Soon, Donnie had forgotten about his worries.

Somehow, Donnie felt that the sky outside had become very dark as if thick dark clouds were gathering over the building. Also, the atmosphere in the classroom had become rather oppressive from some invisible energy wobbled in the space following a certain frequency.

Donnie wondered if it was going to rain.

It was not. When he looked out the window, he saw fine flashes of lightning jumping in the dark clouds!

But they were in the World of Souls! There were neither storms nor dark clouds here!

They were under the protection of the mythical of Heidler Magic College! The weather would remain the same here.

He recalled Karl's beautiful face and blurted out, "Sir, look!"

Glinton instantly realized the approaching danger. He quickly cast a spell and a few force field swirls appeared in front of the windows. He then commanded decisively, "Leave the lab!"

While the apprentices were panicking, Donnie, who was mentally prepared, was acting calmly. "No rush. Follow the rules and get out one after one!"

Glinton took a look at Donnie and nodded his approval. "The alchemical life will soon activate the defense magic circles."

Under the guidance, the apprentices were leaving the lab in great order and good efficiency. Soon, only the mentor was left in the lab.

Glinton released a sigh of relief. When he was about to leave, he heard this deafening boom.

A flash of lightning as thick as an old tree hit right on the outer layer of the magic tower's defense and broke it into pieces, while the force field swirls for absorbing energy were doing no help at all.

Glinton was startled. Looking a bit awkward, he quickly left the lab with a blink.

With the help of the alchemical life, the apprentices had been sent to an open area in the distance. They saw thick flashes of lightning, which looked like huge snakes, striking the lab, which they just left.

The deafening booms would not stop. The students could hear the defense shield of the magic tower cracking and snapping. The lab soon went on fire, and the thick smoke had overwhelmed the entire

place.

Donnie had never seen anything like this before. His eyes opened big, and his hands were trembling slightly. If it had not been their mentor and the protection of the magic tower, and if he didn't notice it early, he could have been dead already!

"This is the most horrible accident ever in the past twenty-one years..." said a hoarse voice.

Donnie turned around in surprise and saw the fatty squatting down to the ground. He was watching the tower on fire through the strange pair of glasses on his nose. The glasses kept flashing, but it wasn't catching anyone's attention in such a situation.

Donnie remembered that the fatty was indeed one of his classmates in the program of Body Structure and Genetics, and they were in the tower earlier together.

"What are you doing?" asked Donnie.

The fatty was holding a pile of paper with his left hand, and his right hand was moving fast with a pen. He answered without even looking back, "I'm writing to Allyn Impression. They appreciate my talent and have made me their special correspondent. This is going to hit the headline! I'm also going to make good money out of it!"

Donnie took a glance at the paper and saw the news title given by the fatty.

[Horrible! The Most Severe Accident in Twenty-one Years; Pain! Consequences of Heidler College's Negligence!]

"Good, huh?" said the fatty proudly.

"Not bad..." Donnie paused a second and asked, "By the way, what's your name?"

"..." The fatty went silent.

At this time, someone was murmuring by their side, "That's the end of me... Am I gonna be kicked out? Lu Xiaoen's gonna be in a rage

if he knows...”

Chapter 839: Handling the Results

Chapter 839: Handling the Results

The magnetic male voice and straightforward worry made both Donnie and the fatty felt slightly startled. When they turned around, they saw that Karl was watching the tower that was on fire with his good-looking eyebrows curved in a frown, which made Donnie and the fatty want to iron them out.

The fatty did not know the reason behind it, but Donnie clearly knew that such a beautiful “girl” who could catch people’s attention at any time was, in fact, the one who caused this whole accident. He weighed his words a bit and said, “Karl, the college won’t punish you as long as you are sure that you stuck to the rules. Did you break any?”

“No, I didn’t.” Karl shook his head hard and then lowered it. “I thought the senior-rank magic tower would prevent this from happening. The college would know it was me for sure...”

Donnie released a sigh of relief. At least, Karl never broke any rules.

He could use this to comfort Karl, although he was not sure if the college was going to kick Karl out or not.

“So what? You did nothing wrong, and... Ummm... they wouldn’t dare to treat you unfairly...” Donnie was being quite ambiguous. He was referring to Karl’s powerful background. Kicking such a student out without a proper reason would bring great pressure to Heidler Magic College.

Although Donnie could not identify the magic items that Karl was wearing, he could sense the horrible power within them. Donnie believed that even some major nobles or senior-rank sorcerers could not afford them.

Karl nodded slightly as Donnie’s comforting words more or less worked. He said to himself, “Lu Xiaoen taught me so many lessons; one more isn’t a big deal...”

Lu Xiaoen? That was a very strange name that went against the grammar of the common tongue. Donnie wondered if Lu Xiaoen was Karl's father or elder brother.

"You did it?!" the fatty asked in great surprise. He was just listening to their conversation like he was invisible.

Karl took a glance at the fatty, and his silver-purple eyes suddenly became sharp. Donnie wasn't affected, but the fatty felt the great pressure as there was already sweat on his forehead.

He dared not to ask anymore.

At this time, Shirley from the Duchy of Orvarit walked to them and smiled as she just survived a disaster.

"Donnie, thanks to you, we're all saved!"

"I was... was lucky..." Donnie suddenly stammered when facing such a compliment from a girl.

Karl murmured in a low voice, "I'd also remind you all if he hadn't seen it..."

Shirley did not hear him because of the lightning and thunder. She smiled at Donnie and said, "Yes, you were lucky that you saw it. But you helped us get out. Compared to how you look now, you looked very different when you were giving commands."

Donnie's face flushed slightly. Like Sammy, he scratched his head a bit and said, "I was also saving myself."

Suddenly, the deafening clap of thunder was cut off, and everything had fallen into a great silence.

The apprentices all looked up and saw the gray fog pouring out from the sky, which had taken away all the horrible power from the dark clouds.

"They used mythal... Finally..." said the fatty thoughtfully.

As for what the mythal was in Heidler Magic College, the

apprentices did not have a clear clue. They heard that it had something to do with some necromancy circles, including the one named Miranda 12 Circles.

Shirley took a strange glance at the fatty, having no idea of when he arrived, but she also didn't care.

"It's safe now. I have to go find my roommate," Shirley said to Donnie.

After Shirley left, Donnie turned around and found himself staring into a pair of blue eyes.

"What're you looking at?" Donnie was a bit startled.

The fatty said with a bit of jealousy, "I think the girl likes you..."

"We did not even know each other until an hour ago!" Donnie hurriedly explained.

"That's right. It only took you an hour... Ummm..." The fatty sighed.

Donnie was a bit pissed but also feeling rather shy. "I didn't mean it. We're just classmates!"

The fatty looked away. "You will know her roommates. Don't forget me."

Donnie was totally speechless. He didn't even know the fatty!

"So, both of you are completely inexperienced, right?" said Karl, who had already forgotten about his worries. "I can tell."

His left arm supported his right arm, and his right hand was rubbing his chin.

"I..." Donnie tried to disagree, but he somehow could not lie.

The fatty was surprised. "How do you know?"

Karl smiled gently and said, "When the girl was thanking Donnie,

Donnie was acting like a brand new baby in a relationship. He should've asked the girl to buy him lunch so that he could buy it back next time. Back and forth like this, and one day, grabbing the girl's hand won't be difficult."

"Ask the girl to buy him lunch?" the fatty asked sincerely.

Karl said proudly, "For sure! Do not feel afraid to lose your face. My father once told me a story of a farmer waiting beside a tree trunk day after day for a dead rabbit. The result is just like how you imagine it to be. To win love, you have to take the initiative. Are you telling me that you're going to wait for a girl to run into your arms?"

Donnie felt that it was a beautiful girl in front of him who was lecturing him on how to pursue a girl, and he did not feel very comfortable with it. He hurriedly cut Karl off, "So, you're... experienced?"

Karl looked up at the sky and said, "Of course!"

He paused a bit when no one said anything, "You want me to show you?"

The fatty nodded excitedly, but they were stopped by the fatty. "No, no. An accident just happened. We'd better behave ourselves before a decision is made on this."

"Yeah..." Karl looked upset again, as he lowered his head.

The fatty also recalled his mission. "I'll send out the news report first, and we'll continue after going back to the dorm..."

"Which dorm are you in? What's your name?" Donnie asked confusedly.

The fatty did not know what to say.

Finally, he released a loud sigh. "Never mind... Before this problem is solved, I won't have a chance..."

.....

In the Allyn magic tower in the City in the Sky.

Heidi looked pretty much the same as twenty years ago. She still had the same round face, a few freckles, and long, linen-color hair. The only difference was that she was now wearing an eight-star arcana badge and a ninth-circle magic badge. Also, she was wearing a few dazzling rings. There was one from the Holm Crown Prize and one from Evans Prize in Arcana. She found or made the rest of the rings herself.

“Madam, today’s Allyn Impression is available. You want to have a look?”

It was the ring on her left little finger that talked.

Heidi sipped her black tea and said, “Sure.”

The ring then lit up with red light, and a light beam projected an illusionary pile of newspaper in front of Heidi.

Heidi held the teacup with her left hand and touched the light screen to turn the pages with her right hand.

When Heidi saw the title, “Horrible! The Most Severe Accident in Twenty-One Years; Pain! Consequences of Heidler College’s Negligence”, she was amused and quickly turned to the corresponding page.

After reading the news, she was laughing too hard to sit up straight.

Fortunately, she had always been developing Lu Xiaoxi’s interest in body structure and genetics on purpose, or Lu Xiaoxi would now be studying at the Atom Institution. Her teacher should be thankful because of it!

.....

In the main magic tower of Heidler Magic College.

Schokola, the president, picked up a gold speaker and said in the typical cold and hoarse voice of a lich, “We’ve decided to discontinue Brades’ study in the college. He brings dangers to other

students.”

The calm and serious male voice came out of the speaker, “I do not agree.”

Schokola paused a bit and said, “This is the most terrible accident ever since the establishment of the college.”

The male voice remained the same tone as he said, “Before this, didn’t I ever tell you all about Brades’ situation? Didn’t I ever tell you all that a senior-rank sorcerer must be there to supervise him?”

“But they were in a senior-rank magic tower,” Schokola explained.

“It’s your problem,” said the male voice.

“So you’re showing your attitude?” Schokola’s voice became even colder. As an archmage, he felt very disrespected by the young man in the speaker.

The male voice sounded a bit amused, but it then became serious again. “Yes, this is my attitude. Of course, I’ll be responsible for the college’s loss. But it is impossible if you want to expel Brades.”

“I’ll do a quote list,” Schokola said. He had to stop insisting. After all, the man in the speaker had made his compromise.

“Alright. Send the list to Brades,” said the male voice, which sounded slightly annoyed.

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“This much?!” Karl looked at the list and almost burst out into tears.

Schokola said gloomily, “Yes, you pay or you leave. Up to you. Of course, your elder brother will pay for it first. He asked me to tell you that the money will come from your own treasury from your future fiefs. This is the first step to grow up, and it’s called ‘take your responsibility’.”

Karl’s voice trembled as he said, “I... I’ll pay...”

Karl kept his head very low as he walked back to his dorm, as if the world was going to collapse. He went directly to bed without saying anything, which made Donnie and Sammy quite unused to it.

But they were also glad that the college was not kicking Karl out.

“Get some sleep. We have Mr. Felipe’s open class tomorrow,” Donnie said excitedly to Sammy.

Sammy nodded. Recently, he was getting more and more dispirited.

.....

Dark red eyes, the air of death...

Donnie sprang up in his bed and gasped very hard. It was this nightmare again!

Suddenly, he felt something not right. He turned to look at the window, and he saw Sammy standing there with his eyes tightly closed. The specter behind his back had completely overlapped with his body.

Sammy started walking out in a creepy manner.

Donnie was about to stop him, but his mouth was suddenly covered.

“Don’t wake him up, or Sammy’s soul will perhaps disappear forever. Let’s go and follow him,” Karl said in a very low voice.

Donnie was startled, but he could tell from Karl’s voice that he was excited.

Chapter 840: A Creepy Adventure

Chapter 840: A Creepy Adventure

Sammy was moving like a rusted piece of machine. His arms and legs looked rather clumsy, but he wasn't slow at all. He had come to the door of their dorm and pulled it open. Then he walked out into the dark corridor, which was only partially lit up by some dim lamps.

"Let's go," said Karl one more time. Like a black panther, Karl jumped out of his bed.

Karl had many thoughts in his mind. He did not know what to do, but he wouldn't let his friend just go like this. He had no other choice but to go with Karl.

Sammy, still with his eyes closed tight, then walked to and jumped down the stairs. However, his jumping did not make any noise, as if each step had been turned into a pile of cotton.

Donnie was scared stiff upon seeing this. He said to Karl in a low voice, "I don't think he's conscious. He's following some kind of instinct, or he would have taken the elevator."

Their dorm was located on the second floor of the Life Tower, and this place was equipped with elevators to all the floors. Rarely would anyone take the stairs. Therefore, many magic lamps had stopped working, but no one cared.

Karl watched Sammy jumping down the stairs around the corner.

"Perhaps he doesn't want to take the elevator..."

It was Karl's voice, but Donnie heard his voice directly from his own head.

Donnie was a bit startled.

"We can do mind communication. You don't have to speak out..."

said Karl.

Donnie guessed that it was because of some kind of magic item that Karl was wearing. Without a doubt, Karl had some very unusual background.

“Wait a sec,” said Donnie. He was confused as he asked, “You said he didn’t want to. So you mean Sammy is under someone’s control?”

“Not sure. Maybe something is calling him, or maybe like you said, he’s just following his instinct.” Karl’s eyes slightly squinted, and he made his movements as gentle as he could.

At the staircase, there were two magic lamps. However, one had completely broken, while the other only had its half side working in a rather unstable way. With the light flashing, Donnie said in a panic, “We should tell our supervisors. They’ll handle this.”

Donnie was talking about the guarding sorcerers in this tower.

Under the flashing light, Karl’s good-looking face now appeared to be a bit gloomy. “There’s no need. If Sammy is just doing a special sleepwalk caused by the specter, we two should be able to handle this. Calling the supervisors will startle him. But if someone’s really controlling him, in Heidler Magic College, a place completely covered by the mythal, we’re not going to be hurt as the supervisors could always arrive in time as long as the mythal is triggered by any spells.”

After many years of development, the medical system in necromancy had given many diseases-specific names that were regarded as evil in the past.

He turned to look at Donnie, and his silver-purple eyes looked both a bit nervous and excited. “Don’t you want an adventure? Don’t you want to handle this on your own? Maybe Sammy is heading for a great treasure or someplace where great power is hiding...”

His magnetic voice lingered in Donnie’s mind. Long and redundant as it sounded, what Karl said to Donnie seemed to have this

irresistible power that managed to trigger the desire in Donnie's heart. He nodded subconsciously and kept going further with Karl.

Someone was summoning Sammy?

Like me?

Donnie thought to himself but had no clear clue. As if he was being controlled by Karl, the two of them walked out of the Life Tower.

Although there was no difference between day and night in the World of Souls, as there was only black, white, and gray in this space, there were some places that were brighter and darker so that apprentices could sleep better at night. After walking out of the Life Tower, Donnie felt it was rather dark and quiet around, and he could only see the bottom of many magic towers. He looked up, and the sky bridges were like spider nets crossing each other. The sky was "dead", as there was neither the silver moon nor any stars.

The night was cold. The breeze chilled Donnie. He looked around, but other than themselves, he saw nothing alive.

"Don't lose him," Karl reminded.

Donnie nodded nervously, but he could tell the excitement in Karl's voice.

In the silence and darkness, the three of them, one in the front and two following behind, had walked past a few magic towers and finally came to the front gate of the college.

The entire Heidler Magic College was like a city consisting of tall magic towers and was cut off from the outside by the tall and long walls. The so-called front gate was, in fact, a light screen with the height of dozens of meters and the width of more than ten meters, on which countless magic patterns were flowing like water, giving out the strong air of death.

"Is he leaving?" Donnie asked Karl through mind communication. Sammy was now standing in front of the gate.

"Maybe, perhaps, probably... We'll see something interesting as

long as we keep following him. Once, I asked my elder brother to explore an ancient tomb with me at midnight..." Karl said excitedly. However, his long-winded story did not distract him from staring at Sammy attentively.

Feeling it rather strange, Donnie said, "But Sammy can't go through the gate. It has been closed. We'd better try to wake him up or wait until he goes back to the dorm himself..."

Before Donnie could finish his words, to his great surprise, he saw Sammy reaching out his right hand and pressing his hand against the light gate. Then, the surface of the gate rippled around Sammy's hand. A second later, Sammy had been devoured by the light.

"He... He's out!" Donnie stammered.

What happened to the defense mythal? Where were the senior-rank mentors watching the control center?

"Go! Or we're gonna lose him!" Karl jumped out as he grabbed Donnie's right hand.

Like a magic steam train, Karl rushed at the gate. The energy swirl on it was shrinking!

Donnie was pulled by Karl, and he was basically "flying" to the gate. He found the feeling a bit familiar to him as he once got bumped away by an ox when he was younger.

Karl was even more full of strength than he thought!

Donnie suddenly had this wet and cold feeling as if he were soaked in water, but that feeling only lasted less than a second. Then all the colors he could see had quickly faded away, and only black, white, and gray were left.

Donnie saw graves; lots of them. The black gravestones were all sloping.

Come!

Come!

Come!

Donnie's heart was thudding fast. It was exactly like in his nightmare, and he was being uncontrollably pulled forward into the graveyard by something, while Sammy was also walking to the center of the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep.

Danger!

That place was the core of the rite, Life Traceback. It must be dangerous there!

They had stepped out of the gate and entered the true World of Souls. Their mentors wouldn't know in time if anything bad happened to them!

They could not keep following Sammy like this!

Donnie's instinct made him cry out, trying to catch the attention of the college.

However, his crying for help turned out to be totally silent. Even air was dead here.

This place was the World of Souls. Anyone below the legendary level could not make any sound at all.

He tried to cast some spells to make some noise, but facing the summoning power, Donnie could not stay concentrated at all. He was listening to his own heart thudding crazily, and the desire in his heart grew more and more intense.

"Karl. It's dangerous in the front. Find our mentors!" He reminded Karl through mind communication.

Karl did not even look at him. He was staring at Sammy walking ahead of them attentively.

"What are you afraid of? The cemetery is also part of the mythal..." said Karl.

Donnie kept telling Karl about his nightmare, but Karl wouldn't

listen.

Donnie kept trying until he finally saw the familiar huge grave. He had given in to the desire in his heart and decided to move on.

Sammy had no hesitation at all, and he had walked through the half-closed gate of the grave. Karl paused a bit, but he still followed up.

The gate, the corridor, and the bricks... They were identical to what Donnie saw in his nightmare. However, as soon as they walked around the corner, they were shocked to see that a group of mummies was coming!

He didn't see any guards in his nightmare!

Donnie's heart was beating so fast that it could jump out of his chest at any time, and he felt very desperate. Mummies were powerful, and those ones coming were not even common mummies. Donnie could tell from their greasy bandages.

He took a step back, and his back was against Karl, whose silver-purple eyes now looked rather sharp and the look on his face was beyond serious.

Donnie hoped that the many powerful magic items that Karl was wearing could protect them, as well as Karl's incredible strength.

However, to his great surprise, the group of mummies ignored them and walked past them.

"Why?" Donnie murmured confusedly. He was straining every nerve to get ready to cast the most powerful spell he knew. But the mummies just passed by as if they did not exist!

"Weird," Karl said briefly, which was rare.

"Yeah... Strange. Usually, you two catch lots of attention," said a coarse, quacking voice.

"Who?!"

The voice almost startled Donnie out of his wits. He never even noticed that someone was following him!

The fatty said, "I was with you two the whole time..."

Donnie took out his small notebook, which he carried around with himself, and saw what he wrote to himself.

[If you see a fatty pretending that you two know each other well, that fatty is your roommate, Jones.]

Donnie put on an awkward smile and said, "Don't follow us silently like this again..."

The fatty felt aggrieved. He was the one who always got ignored.

"Let's go," Karl reminded them. His voice sounded nervous, but he was actually even more excited.

Along the corridor, they walked further. On their way, they had run into floating specters, dragon-liches, and strange undead made of flesh pieces, but none of those did anything to the apprentices, as if they were in two different dimensions!

At the front was the main chamber. Donnie knew it. He wondered if the dreadful undead creature he saw in the nightmare was behind the gate. Would it be able to see them?

At this stage, he had completely gone out of control because of the summoning power, and Karl and Jones were also being driven further by their great curiosity.

Pushing open the gate of the chamber, Donnie's eyes suddenly opened big!

Sammy was standing in front of a huge, black coffin and was facing them. His eyes still closed tight, but the smile on his face looked rather blood-curdling.

"Sammy!" Donnie blurted out, but he could not make any sound.

At this time, the lid of the huge black coffin was suddenly pushed

open. Black miasma gushed out, and from the coffin, the familiar terrible undead creature climbed out!

Even taller than a giant, even eerier than a stitched body, even duller than the World of Souls... This thing's eyes opened sharply and were now kindled with dark-red fire. The air of death filled in the space.

Donnie felt cold and numb, and he knew that Karl and Jones felt the same way. However, Sammy was totally out of the influence and jumped into the coffin.

The chamber started shaking fiercely. There was a bottomless black pit. Something beyond touch and indescribable was hiding in it.

The black miasma bulged, but the coffin and the undead creature were firmly preventing it from coming out.

What was in there?

Donnie's consciousness gradually faded.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Donnie jumped up in his bed, gasping with all his effort. Badly shaken, he looked around and was glad to find out that he was still in the dorm. Luckily, it was just a dream!

But suddenly, he gave a gasp of horror, as he found that Sammy, Karl, and Jones were all gasping hard with their foreheads covered in sweat!

Chapter 841: Karl's Idea

Chapter 841: Karl's Idea

It can't be such a coincidence, can it? Donnie felt that the uncanny fear grabbed his heart tightly like a giant hand, making it difficult for him to breathe.

"You... had a nightmare too?" he asked uneasily. Even though he tried to keep his voice steady and normal, it still came out like the smoke at night.

"Yes." Karl was the first to catch his breath and answer Donnie's question. Then, he looked around at Sammy and the rest of them with his beautiful silver eyes and said rather solemnly, "I dreamed that Sammy was possessed by his ghost and lost his self-awareness before he walked to the center of the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep. In order to find out the reason, Donnie, Jones, and I followed him..."

"Me too!" Before Karl finished, Donnie and Jones blurted out, equally appalled. The few people in the dormitory had the same nightmare?

Could it be any weirder?

Was there really a ghost that was haunting the dormitory and influencing everywhere in secret? Or had all of them been cursed?

Donnie swallowed hard. Cold sweat gathered on his forehead and slipped off his face one drop after another. He sensed a fear that he had never felt before.

"You're the same? You followed Sammy into the tomb, saw the Original Body, and found a certain item that was sealed below it?" Karl raised his voice. He seemed shocked and scared, but he was also excited.

At a loss, Jones replied, "Yes. When we passed the tomb, the mummies, the dragon liches, and the other undead creatures turned a blind eye to all of us. So, it was because we were having a

dream... I was rather puzzled back then because not everybody had my talent of 'stealth'. However... However, why was I noticed and affected? Why did I have the same dream as yours?"

In apprehension, he kept mumbling to himself, unconvinced that he had been involved in such a weird matter when he had always escaped everyone's attention. Only at such a moment was he really behaving like a teenager.

The more he listened to it, the more certain Donnie was that everybody had the same nightmare but from different perspectives. Or rather, it seemed that the few of them were manipulated to perform an opera.

How did such a weird thing happen?

"What about you, Sammy? What did you dream?" Karl jumped off his bed and stared at Sammy. He was standing next to his bed in a thin shirt.

Sammy was on his bed. The ghost on his back seemed to have lost all the vitality and was wandering lazily. He did not say anything, as if he were still dwelling in the nightmare.

Hearing Karl's question, Sammy shivered hard, and the remaining confusion on his face all turned into fear. "I... I dreamed that I was summoned by something and walked forward uncontrollably. There was nothing but darkness and silence on my way, as if it were the legendary last destiny. Then... Then, the enormous body made of countless intelligent creatures appeared and woke me up, making me realize that I was in a dream. I struggled and tried to free myself, only to no avail. In the end, I sensed death..."

His voice was not clear and sounded like dream talk, but it was enough to let his roommates know that Sammy had the same nightmare! However, he sensed the nightmare from the perspective of the possessed ghost.

"Karl, this is too weird for us to resolve on our own. Should we report it to the college tomorrow morning?"

Fatty Jones and Sammy immediately agreed. Although they were all talented and proud, they were teenagers and not even official sorcerers yet. Now that they ran into such an unimaginable incidence, it was only natural that they were panicked and looked for targets they could rely on. Without any doubt, the college, which had plenty of senior-rank sorcerers and archmages, was their pillar.

Donnie asked Karl first because he sensed from his dream that Karl had the curiosity of a cat and might encourage them to investigate in secret. Therefore, he hoped to strike his eagerness by asking him the question. Also, with the guy's background, it was possible that he could see something and offer valuable suggestions.

Karl paced back and forth in the dormitory. Suddenly, he said in a low voice, "What if it's a secret experiment of the college?"

"What? The college's experiment?" Voices of shock echoed with intense disbelief.

"I am just saying a possibility that cannot be ruled out. Maybe a certain mentor was studying the relationship between the soul and the dream, right? Because it seemed to be different from the regular dreams that are based on brain structure. If it's a confidential experiment that he does not wish anyone else to know, after we report it to the college recklessly, it's possible that..." Karl made a throat-cutting movement.

Greatly alarmed, Donnie said with his shaky voice, "It's just a possibility..."

His voice gradually lowered, because he discovered that it was indeed very possible! In Heidler, there was barely anyone that could avoid the sensors of the defense if they tried to influence them in secret, unless the alarm was not dealt with at all...

The roommates suddenly fell into extreme silence. Only the vague sound of breath suggested that there were still living creatures.

"However, we are only magic apprentices..." Frowning, Sammy said while clenching his velvet quilt so hard that veins were bulging on

his head.

Jones sat on the bed like a ghost, as if he was pretending that he did not exist. "Let's not scare ourselves. If it's the college's secret experiment, there is no way that we can get away from it. So, why don't we take our chances? I do not want to have the same nightmare and wait for the final outcome every day, hoping that whoever behind the curtain is not malicious! I don't want that!"

Having worked as a secret reporter for two years, he managed to remain sane, but hysteria still got the better of him toward the end.

"Everybody had the same nightmare... Whoever did it is too strong for us to investigate in secret..." Donnie tried to remain calm.

Out of everyone's expectation, Karl smiled, which bloomed in the dark dormitory like starlight. "I know. What I'm saying is that we should not report the matter to the college in a rush. I have secret channels to contact the outside world. I'll send the incident out and ask the professionals to analyze the causes and offer suggestions. After all, there are plenty of ways to let a few people have the same nightmare, and we are incapable of determining which one it was. Then, we will decide whether we wait for rescue or report it to the college.

"It's just one more day of waiting. It shouldn't be too dangerous."

Secret channels? Professionals? Donnie suddenly recalled Karl's background. As if he saw the dawn in the middle of a night, he asked excitedly, "Is it really okay? Thank you in advance!"

With Karl's identity, it shouldn't be difficult to deal with such a stealthy schemer.

If he really had the most terrifying strength, he need not hide in the shadow at all, and he could've overthrown the Congress to do whatever he wanted!

Jones and Sammy were equally excited. They looked at Karl at the same time and were finally relieved after Karl nodded. Then, one of them further moved back into the corner, and the other began to

observe the surroundings sleepily.

“I thought that you would encourage us to investigate on our own...” Relieved, Donnie said casually.

Karl chuckled. “Do I look like such a reckless and inconsiderate man?”

Yes! Donnie, Sammy, and Jones thought to themselves.

“I have the keen intuitions that come from my parents. When I sense that something is too tricky for me, I’ll ask for help,” Karl said proudly. “I’ll send the message first thing in the morning. Then, we’ll go to Mr. Felipe’s open class.”

He seemed to have forgotten his previous fright and become “carefree” again.

“Yes, there’s Mr. Felipe’s open class. I have to get some sleep.” Sammy nodded, so eager to sleep that he did not seem to have had any nightmare.

Although Felipe did not specialize in ghosts, he was the most famous necromancer in the past three decades. Therefore, Sammy admired him and wanted to attend his open class.

As he spoke, Sammy lay down again. In no more than one minute, his roommates heard the familiar breath after he was sound asleep.

Karl raised his eyebrow. “I envy him so much. He can fall asleep whenever he wants. Insomnia is not a problem for him at all.”

“That’s a whole wrong way to interpret it...” Jones said in a low voice. How inert and befuddled one’s brain must be if they could still sleep after such a nightmare? “My roommates are truly all monsters...”

Donnie glanced at him. *So are you, and I am the only normal person here!*

However, according to Karl, the enormous undead creature I saw was the Original Body?

.....

Outside of the Heidler Magic College, the slanted tombstones rose from the ground, and the graves behind them were scattered around a gigantic room in a rather mysterious way.

Two people descended from the dim, pale sky of the World of Souls. A young man with golden hair and a child's face smiled at the man next to him. "Mr. Felipe, are you planning to establish a branch of the Heredity Laboratory?"

It seemed that he made use of the power of the defense, which allowed him to utter in the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep.

Felipe was still tall, slim, and handsome, with a sickly face. With his hands in the pockets of his black coat, he looked around and said briefly, "Many factors that affect my research can be avoided here."

He was only wearing two badges on his chest. One of them was the badge that was a hand holding a quill, suggesting that he was a member of the Arcana Review Board, and the other badge looked like a pale hand. There were neither arcana badges nor magic ones.

Seeing that Felipe had no desire for communication, the man with a child's face smiled and accompanied him through the Cemetery of Eternal Sleep to the gate of the college. He did not dare to say anything else.

Suddenly, Felipe stopped and stared at the dark tomb at the center, squinting.

His face did not seem to change, but it was grimmer than before.

"Mr. Felipe?" the man with a child's face asked in confusion.

Felipe moved his right hand, which was wearing a white glove, out of his pocket and pointed at the center. "The scent of death there seems more intense now."

"What about it?" The man with a child's face did not feel anything wrong at all.

Felipe snorted but did not bother to explain himself. He simply gave an order, “After the open class, give me the records of the defense in the last three days.”

Chapter 842: Open Class

After the adjustment of the environment, it was brighter and brighter, and a new day began in the Heidler Magic College.

Donnie, who could not sleep, jumped from his bed and rushed into the bathroom the moment he heard the echo of the Skull Bell. He shouted, “Sammy, Karl, rise and shine! Mr. Felipe has an open class today! We won’t be able to get into the room if we are late!”

The open class, as its name suggested, was open to all apprentices, provided that they could find a spot in the hall.

Since he was woken up in the night, Donnie had considered seizing the opportunity and going to the teaching tower where the lecture was to be held in advance. However, he knew that during the period between midnight and when the Skull Bell was rung, nobody except certain senior-rank mentors with permissions was allowed to approach the three central magic towers of the college—the teaching tower, the experiment tower, and the office tower.

From the seniors that he talked to in the past few days, Donnie had heard a lot of stories where sorcerers broke into the three magic towers at night only to become zombie guards.

“So, it was indeed only a nightmare that we passed through the whole college without raising any alarm...” Donnie thought to himself.

Karl, who had fallen asleep at some point, sat up in confusion. After he combed his hair, his gem-like eyes finally glittered again. Then, he jumped off his bed and knocked on the metal rail of Sammy’s bed, urging him to get up.

Sammy rubbed his head and yawned, as if he had forgotten what happened yesterday. Then, he was suddenly dazed and said nervously, “Karl, don’t forget to send the message out.”

“Rest assured. I always have the best memories,” Karl said with a toothbrush in his mouth and foams all over his lips.

After Donnie was done washing his face and brushing his teeth, he browsed his notebook and patted his head. “Jones, let’s go.”

“You finally remember me.” Fatty Jones seemed rather moved. “Only after you wrote me down in your notebook.”

“Of course.” Karl cleaned his shirt before the mirror, grimacing in dissatisfaction. However, whatever strange expression he made, he still looked like a pretty girl. “My father once said that below the senior rank, the best memories cannot compare with a short note.”

He put on his magic robe and was about to walk out of the room. Opening the door, he said, “Remember to save a place for me.”

“Not a problem.” Donnie put on his magic robe.

After seeing Karl off, the three of them were suddenly caught in awkward silence. They were yet to fully recover from the nightmare last night. If it weren’t for Karl’s astonishing background, they wouldn’t have been able to stay calm at all.

“Let’s go. We will miss Mr. Felipe’s speech if we are late.” In the end, it was Donnie who broke the weird silence.

“Alright,” Sammy said with bloated eyes.

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“So many people are already here?” Donnie was blasted by the heat and the noises the moment he walked into the lobby on the first floor of the teaching tower. There were one and a half hours to go before the open class, and almost three hundred people were already waiting in lines!

Looking at the jam-packed lobby ahead of them, Sammy shook his head in surprise. “We got up immediately after the Skull Bell was rung. How could they be faster than us?”

“Perhaps they did not brush their teeth or wash their face. Perhaps they finished everything before the bell was rung and rushed here the moment they heard the knock.” As a secret reporter, Jones was rather knowledgeable and experienced.

Sammy looked at him strangely. “Who are you?”

Having been struck too many times, Jones was already numb. He shrugged and said, “I am your—”

Before he concluded his sentence, Sammy had already turned around unconcernedly and talked to the ghost on his back. He did not care about who he was at all! Or rather, he felt that the question was not important.

“We aren’t too late either.” Noticing Jones’ “fury”, Donnie interjected, “The speech hall can accommodate five hundred people. We can definitely go in.”

“Yes,” Jones said in relief. That was the reward of a nightmare!

After half an hour, more and more queues had been lined up outside of the speech hall without leaving any empty ground. The apprentices and sorcerers who came late could only look at the crowd in regrets and leave reluctantly.

At this moment, Karl walked in from the outside. He was obviously shocked by the massive crowd, but he was agile enough to swim among the people like a little fish and approached his roommates.

The apprentices behind Donnie were all infuriated when they saw Karl cutting the line, but before they lashed out, Karl raised his head and smiled. “Forgive me, my friends have been keeping a place for me.”

His smile was mixed with apology, shame, pitifulness, and gentleness. The apprentices’ eyes bulged immediately as they said, “It... It doesn’t matter.”

It was not until then that Karl turned around and said to Donnie, Sammy, and Jones in a low voice, “I’ve already sent the message. We will receive the analysis and suggestions of professionals by tomorrow.”

“Thank you, Karl,” Donnie said honestly.

The four of them stopped talking and started to think about their

own business until the gate of the speech hall was opened and the people before them moved forward in order.

Because they were not too late, Karl and the rest of them were at the center of the hall and could see the podium ahead rather clearly. Outside the gate, many magic apprentices and sorcerers who did not have a seat were standing and listening.

At this moment, a smaller gate on the other side squeaked, and a tall, slim man in a black coat walked in. He coughed with extreme indifference on his sickly face.

“Mr. Felipe is exactly like what’s described in the paper,” Donnie said in a low voice.

Felipe did not like being exposed to the public, so he rarely accepted the invitations of TV interviews and preferred newspapers or radio stations.

Karl smiled in a low voice. “I wonder if his arcana expertise is as what the newspapers described...”

“You don’t know that?” Donnie asked, finding it odd. Such a renowned archmage who had good chances to become legendary should’ve received much attention in his family. *Huh. Why is Mr. Felipe only wearing the badges of the Arcana Review Board and the Hand of Paleness, instead of arcana and magic badges like regular sorcerers would?*

Karl shook his head. “I do not have enough arcana knowledge to decide his papers and his research, and my brother does not like to discuss him. However, he must be awesome to have won so many honors.”

From the podium, Felipe looked around at the apprentices and sorcerers down below. Wherever his eyes reached, everybody fell silent. Then, he spoke with his special gloomy voice, “I am Felipe. You may call me mister or mentor. I’m here today to show you the bleeding-edge theories and achievements in genetics. It’s possible that you do not understand them, but you must know them, or you will rot like the bodies in coffins without being able to present any

valuable works...”

Donnie listened attentively. However, he keenly sensed that Mr. Felipe’s eyes seemed to have stopped for a while on the few of them. Of course, the pause was so short that Donnie thought it was his illusion.

“Mr. Felipe is entirely different from the other mentors. The other mentors all said that they were here to share the latest knowledge with us, but he...” Sammy asked the ghost on his back to rub his forehead to keep himself calm.

Jones also nodded. “Yes, he is very blunt and straightforward, completely ignoring our feelings...”

As Felipe’s speech went deeper, everybody was captivated by the marvelous genetics, which included chromosomes, genetic models based on alchemical reactions, and the speculations and experiments on heredity.

Most of the information was too much for the sorcerers and apprentices to understand, but they were indeed amazed by the wonders of the field that involved the secrets of life.

“That is all my speech. Do you have any questions?” Without them knowing it, it was already noon, and Felipe put his right hand back into his pocket.

The apprentices and sorcerers were just back to themselves and hadn’t even raised their hands when a magnetic male voice said, “I have a question!”

Donnie looked at Karl, only to see his highly-raised hand and his fully-written notebook.

Felipe nodded and said casually, “What is your question?”

Karl stood up excitedly and bowed. “Hello, Mr. Felipe, I am Brades. I would like to ask your opinion on the current genetic model. Personally, I don’t...”

Donnie held his forehead helplessly and moved his eyes away,

pretending that he did not know Karl. Based on his experience, Karl would certainly ramble on.

However, instead of waiting for Karl to finish, Felipe answered the question, “It’s obvious that the abundances and wondrousness of this world cannot be described and inherited by this simple model.”

Everybody gasped hard. Was Mr. Felipe openly expressing his dissatisfaction regarding the current genetic model?

COMMENT

Karl seemed rather uncomfortable when his long speech was cut. So, he asked again, “Then, Mr. Felipe, do you think it is possible to change one’s look by controlling genes? Is it possible to—”

Felipe interrupted him again, “That’s not a problem at all. As a matter of fact, the blood power research in the Magic Empire is exactly a practice in that regard, except that they did not have any theoretical guidance and could only summarize the pattern by abundant human experiments.”

Karl’s face was so twisted as if he were being suffocated. “I have one more question...”

“Please give other people a chance. You’ve already asked two questions,” Felipe said straightforwardly.

Karl could only sit down gloomily, but his lips were still moving up and down, as if he were talking to himself.

Donnie couldn’t help but feel amused. Normally, there was no way that he could stop Karl from rambling. It was quite enjoyable to see the guy choked.

In the meantime, he raised his own hand, waiting to be picked.

.....

After the open class, Felipe sat in a secret chamber in the teaching tower by himself. The artificial intelligence before him was playing all the pictures recorded in the college in the past three days. After

the development of artificial intelligence and alchemical storage materials, it was much easier to save things now.

In the dim pictures, the whole college was in order, and when it came to night, everything was quiet without the slightest anomaly. Felipe stared at the pictures with a cup of red wine in his hand, not leaving out any detail. However, after half a day, he still did not find anything that deserved his attention.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door lightly.

“What is it?” Felipe asked.

“Mr. Felipe, somebody sent a note to you.” It was a servant.

Felipe nodded, and the door of the room was opened. The servant walked in and handed a plain-looking note to him.

“Donnie?” Felipe saw the handwriting that he was rather familiar with on the note and read the word on it.

.....

In Room 202 of the Life Tower...

“Hu. It’s not dangerous. My brother asks us not to worry about it and just leave it alone.” Karl jogged in from the outside and waved the note in his hands in great delight.

Chapter 843: The Heredity Laboratory

Chapter 843: The Heredity Laboratory

“Really?” Donnie, Sammy, and Jones stood up at the same time, with delight and disbelief beaming out of their faces.

Karl nodded heavily. “Of course. I’m too familiar with my brother’s handwriting and seal.”

“I mean, is he really confident about that? Did he specify the cause or tell you who was behind it?” Although Donnie knew that Karl’s brother was probably a strong and influential big shot, he did not know the guy in person after all. Also, it was a matter that concerned his own safety. So, he couldn’t help but ask again, refusing to believe it so easily.

Karl tossed the note in his hands to Donnie. “He couldn’t have made the statement without a 90% confidence. Well, he only said that it was not a common dream in the domain of illusion but involved something more sophisticated. He did not point out who the mastermind was. I estimate that he must be still investigating and hasn’t drawn any conclusion yet. The only thing certain is that the enemy is not as formidable as we thought. So, we’ll pretend that we have forgotten the matter while we secretly observe and wait...”

Donnie looked at the note in his hands. The content was basically what Karl said, but of course, in a much more concise way. At the end of the note was a seal in the shape of a black hat, which seemed common but carried distinctive air.

“But I really don’t think it’s very safe...” Jones muttered. However, there was nothing he could do. Reporting it to the college recklessly might put himself in danger.

Sammy took a breath in relief. He extended his right hand to his left shoulder to pat the ghost, which had been rather lethargic recently. Then, he yawned and said obscurely, “Since Karl’s brother put it that way, there is no need for us to be worried about the matter. I’m so sleepy.”

Donnie's facial muscles twitched. "Sammy, I don't think you are taking it seriously. So far, the real cause of the matter and the mastermind haven't been found out. How can we not be worried?"

"So what? What else can we do except to be more careful?" Sammy was rather carefree. He took off his clothes and got on his bed.

Karl smiled, and his eyes were twinkling. "There's really nothing to be scared of now that my brother is on it. If that nightmare happens to us again, we are going to explore it well..."

He was obviously eager again.

Donnie couldn't help thinking to himself that the guy seemed rather confident in his brother.

.....

The next day in the morning, the four people of Room 202 were busy washing up and brushing their teeth when they heard heavy door knocks.

Donnie put on his magic robe and walked over, opening the door. "Come on... Mr. Robert?"

It was the dead-looking Mr. Robert who stood outside of the door. The red needle-like brilliance in his eyes and the clear veins on his emaciated face chilled Donnie.

Why was he here in person?

Despite his horrible look, Robert had a gentle and comforting voice. "I happened to be passing the Life Tower, and I dropped by and came to ask you if you are willing to join the Heidler Branch of the Heredity Laboratory as apprentice-level assistants?"

"What Heidler Branch of the Heredity Laboratory? Is it an institution that Mr. Felipe has established in the college? Does 'you' include Donnie, me, Sammy, and Jones, or only some of us? Mr. Robert, I am really interested in genetic factors, and I have a reasonably good understanding of that..." Karl charged out with a toothbrush in his hands and white foams flowing from his mouth as

he blurted out his questions and self-introductions.

At this moment, the apprentices who were going to the teaching tower noticed Robert who had a special appearance. They stopped and looked at Donnie and his roommates in shock.

The Heidler Branch of the Heredity Laboratory? Is it true?

Donnie, Sammy, and Jones were too shocked to speak anything. They were crammed at the door and looked at Robert earnestly, waiting for his answer.

“Because it is convenient to conduct certain experiments with high requirements in the World of Souls thanks to its special conditions, Mr. Felipe has been planning to set up a branch of the Heredity Laboratory here. A few days ago, the basic arrangements were settled, and the recruitment began. I was the first arcanist to be picked by Mr. Felipe,” Robert explained the reasons unhurriedly. “Because of your questions in the open class, you left some impression on Mr. Felipe, so he asked me about you when he decided to hire apprentice-level assistants. Since I was very satisfied with your efforts, I recommended you to him seriously.”

Pausing for a moment, he added, “It includes Karl, Donnie, and Jones.”

The apprentices around were finally back to themselves as they gasped hard. It was really the Heidler Branch of the Heredity Laboratory! They were really going to study under Mr. Felipe! Why were they chosen instead of other people?

Shocked and jealous, many apprentices couldn't have regretted more. Had they known it in advance, they would have raced to ask questions like Karl did to leave a good impression on Mr. Felipe. Everybody in the Life Tower knew Karl's name because of his special appearance.

“Really?” Donnie and Jones asked in disbelief again. Sammy, on the other hand, lowered his head in frustration. He was an apprentice who majored in the soul, after all, and the Heredity Laboratory certainly wouldn't pick him.

Robert nodded. “Why would I lie to you about that? Mr. Felipe remembers you because he has always believed that the arcanists who do not ask whys are not qualified arcanists.”

It was something President Douglas said before. All the apprentices knew it very well, but now that they heard it again, they felt that their remorse was biting their hearts like rats. They shouldn’t have been restrained by shyness, fear, or other feelings! They must be bolder to ask whys in the future!

“It’s... It’s fantastic! Thank you, Mr. Robert...” Donnie expressed his gratitude excitedly. Although Mr. Felipe had asked about them, they wouldn’t have been picked without their mentor’s recommendation.

Jones was stunned. He had an ignorant smile on his face, as if he had entered his “domain”. The surprise came too unexpectedly. He wasn’t prepared at all!

Robert nodded and said expressionlessly, “It seems that you are all willing to accept the offer. Then, you can come to my office later. I’ll bring you to the branch of the laboratory to check in.”

“Mr. Robert, what will we mostly do as apprentice-level assistants? Help with experiment materials? Observe and feed the creatures we cultivate? Or will we analyze them with the knowledge in the studies of magic crystals?” Seeing that plenty of people were watching, Karl quietly put down the toothbrush and got rid of the foams in his mouth. He was a graceful gentleman who valued manners!

“Somebody will tell you what to do.” Robert’s lips twitched as he ignored Karl’s storm of questions.

“How marvelous!” Jones wasn’t back to himself until Robert was far away. He then waved his arms excitedly.

.....

After the lift descended to the hall, it did not stop. Instead, it emitted a pale brightness that was connected to the mentor’s badge

on Robert's chest, before it continued descending into the darkness.

"Well, is the laboratory below the ground?" Karl looked around in excitement and curiosity.

Donnie turned around, pretending that he did not know the guy. Although his roommate looked as quiet and peaceful as a lake, the guy was actually like an energetic cat.

Robert simply turned a deaf ear to Karl's incessant questions.

After a while, the lift stopped, and the pale curtain of light was opened. A silver metal shuttle-shaped object appeared up ahead. Robert stepped on it first.

"We need to take an underground shuttle?" Karl asked joyfully.

Neither Donnie nor Jones had seen it before, and they were rather ill at ease. They were grateful for Karl's introduction.

"Yes." Robert nodded.

The underground shuttle was closed and moved forward along the tunnel quickly. After three minutes, it came to a stop slowly. On its left side were two silver metal gates that were cold and splendid.

Robert waved a strange badge at it, and the gate backed off from two directions, revealing a pathway with walls that were like an orange beehive. It was shaped in such an astounding style that even Karl subconsciously stopped talking.

After they passed the channel in silence, many different roads stretched out before them. At the end of every road was a different metal gate.

"I'll lead you to apply for the entrance badge first," Robert said briefly.

As he spoke, the metal gate on one of the roads was opened, and Felipe walked out with his hands in the pockets of his black long coat.

“Good morning, Mr. Felipe!” Donnie and Jones greeted him in excitement. Karl was late, but he also paid his respects.

Felipe glanced at them and briefly stopped on everyone’s face. Then, he said casually, “This place is not your playground. I hope that you can remember that.”

“Of course, Mr. Felipe.” While Donnie and his roommates replied, Felipe had already moved past them and walked to the other side.

Suddenly, he stopped and said without turning around, “Do not ask Karl to run any experiment yet. Let him be familiarized with the work of the research groups first.”

Donnie was secretly amused. Had Karl’s notoriety as the “laboratory vandal” spread to the ears of Mr. Felipe too?

Karl pursed his lips and couldn’t have looked more wronged.

At this moment, Donnie’s heart suddenly raced, as if something deep inside the laboratory or further into the ground was summoning him.

What’s that? Donnie stared at the wall in a daze, uncertain whether or not it was his illusion, because the feeling of being summoned flashed fast.

He observed Karl and Jones, whom he almost ignored, only to discover that they sensed nothing. He was even more confused. Did he really have an illusion because he was too worried?

“It’s inconvenient to ask right now. We can discuss after we are back in the dormitory...” Donnie held back his anxiety.

.....

At night, in Room 202 of the Life Tower...

Because Karl and Jones did not have the feeling, and neither did Sammy who was having a class, Donnie’s strange feeling did not raise much attention. After all, they believed that somebody was taking care of it for him.

In his sleepiness, Donnie's heart raced again, and he seemed to see the color of fire in the darkness.

He opened his eyes quickly, only to find himself lying before a tombstone. Sammy, Karl, and Jones were not far away from him, and they were observing the environment with confusion.

Chapter 844: Action

“How did it happen?” Donnie blurted out in shock and fear, but after his voice spread out, it seemed to be melted in the air and did not raise the slightest ripples. There was still nothing but quietness and serenity among the black and white tombstones.

Jones looked at him, frightened, and then at Karl. *Didn't you say that we need not be worried? Then, why are we having the same nightmare?*

They were very familiar with the experience, which was absolutely the same as the last nightmare!

Karl looked around, slightly confused. He then smiled gently. “It’s just a nightmare. What’s to be worried about?”

His voice echoed in Donnie’s heart like some sort of spell. On his peaceful and gorgeous face, silver eyes were glittering like two beautiful stars. There wasn’t the slightest fear but curiosity and the desire for exploration.

.....

In the control pivot of the office tower of the Heidler Magic College...

The stream screens were displayed in every corner of the college. Light and shadows were altering all the time.

Some of the screens showed the same dormitory from quite a few perspectives. The plate on the door read “Life Tower 202”.

In the darkness of night, the dormitory was as quiet as any other place without the tiniest anomaly. Under the illumination of the tender lamps, it emanated unusual coldness.

Standing before the screens, Felipe stared at them with his hands in the pockets of his long coat. They were not just manifesting the pictures but also playing the sounds and the simulated waves that were perceived, making one feel that they were on the spot.

However, Room 202 was still quiet and usual.

“Hehe.” Felipe suddenly snorted.

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“How can we not be worried? If our dream can be manipulated in the heavily defended college, who knows what will happen next?” In the “dream”, Donnie seemed more temperamental than usual, because he sensed the summoning from far away again. His heart beat faster and faster.

Sammy was both scared and puzzled when he looked at Karl. “Didn’t your brother say that we should leave it alone? But why are we entering the same nightmare again? I really thought that there was no need to worry about it...”

The ghost on his back, energized, was stretching its arms in great delight.

And you really stopped worrying about it? Jones secretly mocked Sammy.

Karl waved his hands. “When my brother says that there is no need to worry about it, there is no need to worry about it.”

He seemed rather confident, but Donnie, Sammy, and Jones were not convinced. *Does anybody know your brother? Who knows whether his promise is valid? After all, the one thing that is certain is that we have come into the same nightmare!*

Blinking, Karl did not explain why he trusted his brother. Instead, he simply grimaced and said, “As a matter of fact, we weren’t really harmed in the previous nightmares, were we?”

Well... Donnie was dazed. It was indeed true. The previous nightmares, though vivid and intimidating, did not really hurt them before they withdrew from the dreams under the watch of the Original Body. Not just that, but it seemed that the increase of their spiritual powers had also been greatly accelerated. Was it a benefit of such “dreaming”?

“However, the harmlessness of the previous nightmares does not mean that we won’t be harmed in this one.” Jones tried to cover his existence, fearing that a ferocious specter would suddenly emerge from the darkness.

Sammy nodded slightly. “It happens often in the field of soul and illusion that the victims could be killed when their dreams are controlled. The King of Nightmare is particularly good at that.”

“That’s right.” Karl nodded solemnly and said with a peculiar smile, “However, now that we have already entered the dream, why don’t we explore actively and find out the reason? After all, if danger awaits us, we will run into it in any case if we are being manipulated, and if there is no danger, we will not be harmed no matter how we explore. Besides, this is our dream. If we believe that we are strong, we will really be strong.”

Donnie, Sammy, and Jones were all stunned. On second thought, Karl’s words did make sense, because they all sensed that the summoning from far away was getting stronger and stronger. Even if they did not take any action, they would be attracted to it sooner or later!

Meanwhile, they vaguely felt that something was wrong with Karl’s statement.

“However, before that, we need to see if we can break out of the dream!” Fatty Jones gnashed his teeth.

Huh, break out of the dream? Donnie and Sammy both looked at Jones, astounded. Neither of them had much adventure experience. They had no idea what Jones was planning to do at all.

Jones raised his left hand, put it in front of his mouth, and bit it hard.

“Ahh!!!”

A miserable cry burst out in everybody’s heart and did not break the silence of the cemetery.

Putting his left hand right, and looking at the bleeding tooth marks

on it, Jones said to the surprised Donnie and Sammy in self-mockery, "I'm told that pain can help people get away from dreams, but it seems that whoever controls our dream is very powerful."

"As I said, this is a very special 'dream'..." Karl mumbled before he continued with a smile, "The ordinary pain wouldn't do. Jones, why don't you knock the tombstone with your head? Maybe you will get away from the dream after you pass out."

In a bitter smile, Jones looked at the tough black tombstone, on which a pale epitaph was written in the ancient magic language—"He thought that he wouldn't die, but he did."

"Forget it. I don't think it will work." Jones compared the hardness of his head and that of the tombstone and backed off without a word. He tried to summon his "talent" and prevented himself from being watched.

Karl chuckled. "Then, should we set off to the central tomb?"

"Alright!" Donnie did not hesitate this time, because he could barely control his body right now. Therefore, they might as well seize the day and explore actively!

Now that Donnie had reached a decision, Sammy certainly wouldn't object to it. To be honest, he hadn't quite figured out the situation yet.

Now that there was no object, the four of them pressed toward the central tomb under Karl's lead.

The cemetery was covered in a vague black mist. The sky was as gray and dim as before. The enormous tomb loomed there quietly like a dark monster, and its half-open gate resembled the mouth of the creature.

Swallowing, Donnie suppressed his fear and walked into the monster's mouth behind Karl.

The moment they entered the pathway, they encountered the mummies that they were rather familiar with. However, they were not panicked this time thanks to their experience. They moved

slightly to the side and avoided the route of the mummies' march so that they could react in time in case of an emergency.

With their gray cloths saturated with oil and their eyes full of pale fire, the mummies passed before Donnie and his roommates without a sound. Perhaps they were also releasing the stench of decay, but none of the intruders could smell it.

"So, they really cannot see us," Donnie said in a low voice.

The ghost behind Sammy stretched out as he asked, "Was it the same last time?"

In the previous nightmare, he was possessed by the ghost and did not sense much. He could only listen to Donnie's description.

"Yes. It's exactly like last time." Karl was even more excited as if he had remembered something.

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Outside of the enormous tomb, the vague black mist seemed to be frozen. The place was in utter silence as it had always been.

Suddenly, in the middle of the black mist, ripples spread out, and a figure was gathered out of nothing!

He was wearing a black long coat with his hands in his pockets. With a tall nose, thin lips, and a sickly face... It was Felipe who watched the screens in the control pivot!

He had entered the dreams of Karl, Donnie, and the rest of them!

Looking around, Felipe nodded slightly with a grim face. In the monotonous gloom, he walked toward the gate of the tomb unhurriedly.

Suddenly, he stopped and looked at the back of the tombstones sharply, before he demanded, "Get out."

Behind the tombstone, many other ripples spread out and gathered into a human being.

He was wearing a black double-breasted suit with a top hat. He was very tall but not slender. He had black hair and black eyes, with a chiseled face. His eyebrows were dense and extended to his temples in a slant. He was a handsome and masculine man.

“You’re here too.” Felipe did not seem surprised.

The man said with a lazy smile, “Having discovered me so easily, Mr. Felipe, you are truly out of my expectation.”

Felipe turned around and kept walking toward the gate of the tomb before he asked casually and indifferently, “I came here because I used the special help of the college’s defense. Why could you?”

“As the child of a demigod and a top legend, I certainly have my own special abilities.” The man also walked to the gate of the tomb at ease. However, from what Felipe could tell, his answer did not provide any information.

Felipe opened the tomb and walked in like a king who was inspecting his territory. “You didn’t ask for anyone’s help? Are you not scared that it may be dangerous?”

The man chuckled and was not nervous at all, as if he were on a vacation in the Land of Thousand Lakes. “As the child of a demigod and a top legend, I certainly have my own special abilities.”

The same words meant different things. Felipe stopped talking and walked into the pathway.

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After they opened the gate of the main vault, Donnie and his roommates immediately saw the dark coffin.

Their “harmony” with the powerful undead creatures on the way did not ease their anxiety at all. They all stared at the coffin in tension, fearing that the terrifying “Original Body” inside would suddenly sit up and banish them from the dream with its eyes that represented death, or even simply deprive them of their lives!

Of course, they were also more or less thinking of escaping from the

dream with the Original Body.

The vague scent of death started circulating, and a dark abyss appeared below the dark coffin, as if something intangible had been hidden below.

In the meantime, screeches echoed inside the coffin, and the Original Body that was beyond the imagination of Donnie was about to sit up.

Donnie, Sammy, and Jones all had intense desires. The abyss was summoning them!

It made them unable to control themselves. Before the cover of the coffin was moved away, they threw themselves into the coffin “fluently”.

Karl was briefly stunned. Then, gritting his teeth and touching an accessory on his chest, he stepped forward and lunged into the abyss too.

Chapter 845: The Eighth Research Institution of the Congress of Magic

Chapter 845: The Eighth Research Institution of the Congress of Magic

The dark mist spread out so densely that one could not see his own fingers or hear his own voice. They felt that they were caught in the purest and quietest death. Even their soul was befuddled, without the slightest idea occurring to them.

Suddenly, something gray penetrated through the intense black mist. Donnie shivered and got away from the mind fridity. He found himself standing in the middle of a desert that was full of black sand. The sky was pale and gray, the same as any part of the World of Souls. Not far away up ahead, a black, ragged palace was standing. It was ancient and splendid, releasing the infinite air of death.

Dum, dum, dum.

Donnie's heart was beating fast again, as if something was summoning him inside that dilapidated palace. The call was so strong, so clear, and so irresistible.

"Is there something summoning me in the palace?" somebody asked, and the voice appeared in Donnie's mind.

Donnie turned back in confusion, only to discover that Sammy, Karl, and a fatty were standing behind him looking at the same palace not far away.

Well, who is this fatty?

Donnie did not ask it out. Since the guy had a nightmare together with them and was included in Karl's mind communication, he had to be very close to them. It was a shame that he did not carry his notebook...

The ghost behind Sammy trembled nonstop and buried its face on Sammy's neck, as if it were intimidated by the black palace and what was in it. However, in the meantime, its hands pulled Sammy's body, as if it were urging him to enter the palace and approach the thing.

"It's a dream of such a level?" Karl said to himself, half lost and half refreshed. Then, he announced as if he were giving an order, "Let's go in and take a look!"

Donnie and Sammy did not reply. Under the strong summoning, they had already walked off.

Passing the desolate wilderness, the four of them drew close to the black palace and saw the gate that was carved with pale patterns.

The patterns were weird, twisted, mysterious, and vintage. They seemed to be in a certain intangible rhythm.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

Suddenly, a loud and miserable cry came over. Donnie and Sammy almost tripped themselves over.

In a defense posture, Karl looked at the source of the sound eagerly. The "attacker" must be either strong or special to make sounds in the dream that was similar to the World of Souls!

They saw a half-rotten owl on the top of a broken pillar near the gate. Pale bones protruded from its body made of black, rotten meat, and its two wings were gray and slim. On its head, one of the eyes had decayed into a black hole, but the other retained the strange brownish colors and was staring at the strangers indifferently. It kept letting out miserable cries, which made Donnie, Sammy, and Jones tremble in intimidation. Was it the envoy of death? Was the sound here to claim their lives?

"An owl that can keep its original appearance in the palace shouldn't be surprising. Have you not seen any undead creatures? I must've dissected dozens of such owls..." Karl said in disappointment.

Donnie couldn't have thanked Karl's talkativeness more at such a moment, which relieved him from the devastating and strange cries of the owl. Otherwise, he feared that his soul would be broken one bit after another and transformed into part of the palace. Although he did not know why Karl was not affected, his feeling was definitely unmistakable!

"Let's go in." After an elaborate talk, Karl opened the gate with mysterious patterns.

The gate opened without a sound. It was nothing but pitch darkness inside, as if countless monsters were hiding.

Dum, dum, dum.

The moment the gate was opened, Donnie, Sammy, and Jones all clearly sensed something. It was right there in front of the palace!

"Come on!"

"Come on!"

The summoning had already turned into a concrete voice. Donnie and his other two roommates stepped forwardly subconsciously, but Karl looked around and observed the environment in great curiosity.

The more they stepped forward, the clearer the voices of summoning became.

"Come on! You will receive power and a long life!"

"Come on! Strength, wealth, glory, and beauties are waiting for you!"

"Come on! You need not study or research arduously anymore. You will grasp the unparalleled power immediately!"

"Pu." In the mind communication, Karl laughed in amusement, which slightly woke up Donnie, Sammy, and Jones whose heads were already swollen with blood.

“What are you laughing for?” Donnie asked subconsciously.

Unable to hold back his laughter, Karl said, “The temptation is glaringly inconsistent. The first two statements are formal and grandeur, but the last one is too specific. Haha. You need not study or research hard to grasp power. It seems to be specifically prepared for the students who have taken the College Entrance Exam. It’s like a weaselly man holding a donut and saying to a little girl, ‘You should come with me. You will have wonderful food every day, and you don’t have to go to school or finish your homework’. Haha. Don’t you find it petty and amusing?”

“No...” Sammy blurted out.

Donnie and Jones also nodded. Karl truly had strange humor.

“You can hear the summoning?” Donnie suddenly realized something. Didn’t he say that he could not hear the summoning?

Karl chuckled. “I have certain special abilities...”

He did not explain much. Intense curiosity beamed out of his face, as if he could not wait to meet this tasteless tempter.

After they passed the hall, it was seven stairs before them. Above the stairs was a grave and intimidating throne.

Sitting on the throne was a unique black full armor that was glimmering in coldness. It was poised as if a real person were seated there.

It sat there quietly, but it seemed to have filled the whole universe and dominated everything. Before the mask of the helmet was the impenetrable darkness, exactly like death that nobody could escape or see through.

The moment they saw the full armor, Donnie, Sammy, and Jones’ heartbeats were slowed. At a loss and enthralled, they extended their right hands and were about to touch it.

The overwhelming power was right before their eyes, and the ecstasy of controlling everything was so clear. As long as they took

parts of the full armor and put it on themselves, they would obtain it easily!

How could Donnie, Sammy, and Jones, who were still magic apprentices, resist it?

Even Karl who had been conscious the whole time frowned, his face changing all the time. He simply watched Donnie and the rest of them acquire the black armor without doing anything.

In the black desert that was full of sand, two people were gazing at the enormous palace quietly. It was exactly Felipe and the vigorous handsome young man earlier.

“Just as I expected...” The young man chuckled, the laziness on his face unchanged at all.

Right when Donnie, Sammy, and Jones were about to touch the weird armor, he suddenly extended his right hand and pressed the void before him.

All of a sudden, he became illusionary, as if he had dispersed and existed everywhere. The whole black desert immediately shook violently, with the earth falling apart.

His hands in his pockets, Felipe observed the changes in silence without any expression on his face.

Power, fortune, and glory were near at hand. Donnie was so passionate that substantial desire oozed from his eyes. His palm was almost reaching the cold armor.

Right at this moment, the earth shook so violently that Donnie, Sammy, and Jones fell on the ground.

Donnie, who was slightly awakened, realized in surprise that cracks were appearing on the captivating armor. Then, it broke apart without a sound and turned into a cluster of dispersive black, white, and gray.

The moment he saw the indescribable and intangible black, white, and gray, Donnie felt that his mind was frozen in eternal quietness.

Even his body started to rot.

Crack.

Something clearly broke.

Donnie opened his eyes abruptly and observed the environment, but his face was frozen again. He thought that he had got rid of the dream, but the scene around him was still strange.

It was infinite darkness, with silver or gold magic runes glittering like stars. They were joined into different constellations and brilliant nebulae.

In the middle of the flowing magic symbols, the cluster of black, white, and gray couldn't have been quiet. Donnie did not have the feeling that he would die the moment he saw it anymore.

"What is this place?" Donnie asked subconsciously, not expecting an answer.

However, Karl's voice echoed. He replied in confusion, "A very familiar place..."

It was not until then that Donnie realized Karl, Sammy, and the fatty were still next to him.

Squeak.

A door seemed to be opened. Donnie looked over in shock, only to discover that a silver gate appeared in the starry cosmos. From out of the gate, a graceful old man in a red, glamorous magic robe came in. He seemed as energetic as ever.

"Ah..." Karl sighed in surprise and delight.

The old man seemed to have sensed something and suddenly turned his eyes at them. In the slightly dirty red eyes, electricity was glittering.

Donnie trembled and was paralyzed as if he had an electric shock. He then lost consciousness and fell into the darkness.

The darkness ebbed, and Donnie rolled over and sat up, breathing heavily nonstop. He looked around again and was finally relieved.

The rays out of the window were dim, and it was quiet and peaceful in the room. It was his own dormitory. He had finally got rid of his nightmare!

However, that old man was truly intimidating. After only one glimpse from the guy, he had been completely woken up.

“Finally awake...” He heard the voices of Sammy and the fatty.

Karl, however, chuckled in a low voice without any stop as if he had been deranged. Donnie was rather intimidated and feared that something was still not right.

“Karl, are you alright?” He ventured to ask.

.....

After the dream was broken, Felipe and the mysterious young man did not appear in the place where they entered the dream. Instead, they emerged in a metal tunnel whose wall was full of decorations in the shape of hives.

The two of them walked forward in silence for a while until they reached a grim gate. Next to the gate were several words written in the common tongue.

[The Eighth Research Institution of the Congress of Magic: Lab of Demigods.]

Chapter 846: Seals

Chapter 846: Seals

An invisible light passed Felipe and the mysterious man, and the silver gate was immediately opened, revealing a honeycomb-shaped pathway in splendid colors.

On the pathway, an old man in a red magic robe was staring at them with lightning bouncing out of his eyes. He lambasted, “Was Brades here just now? Otherwise, Hathaway’s experiment couldn’t have had such an accident! Also, I sensed him!”

The young man secretly grimaced. “Maybe...”

Then, he asked innocently, “What exactly has happened?”

.....

Clang!

The Skull Bell of the office tower let out a long and freezing echo.

Donnie happened to be drawing the last line in his soul. So, the magic model collapsed and absorbed the ocean of energy crazily. Life and death entangled, and “power” kept branching, resulting in fierce changes.

After everything died down, a complicated “crystal” was added into Donnie’s soul. It flowed mysteriously as the vivid representation of a certain law. It also showed that Donnie had crossed the phase of apprentice and become an official sorcerer!

It was the breakthrough that countless magic apprentices had dreamed about, but most of the apprentices could barely fulfill their wish.

After they became official sorcerers, not only would they be given the power that could kill apprentices and ordinary people easily, but they would also automatically become the members of their

hometown's parliament, same as the nobles. For the children of civilians, it meant that they had stepped into the upper society!

Donnie, who was not of a noble background, reviewed himself in delight. After he almost touched the black armor several months ago, Karl, Sammy, and he never had similar nightmares. Their lives and studies were rather peaceful, and it was much easier for him to make breakthroughs in spiritual power. So, after Karl and Sammy, he became an official sorcerer before the new year! It was a reasonably good achievement even considering all the apprentices of the Heidler Magic College.

Although some people had become official sorcerers before they were admitted by the Heidler Magic College, most apprentices were never qualified to fight for the rank until the end of their freshman year. Few of them made the breakthrough before the new year.

"I feel that the few nightmares polished my soul. That's why my spiritual power increased faster and more steadily..." Donnie had a lot of random thoughts. "The nightmares are enough to cause such changes. What could have happened if I touched the black full armor in the end?

"That's not right. Perhaps I would have been controlled by the black armor. I can't be too greedy... Well, I should visit home during the new year holiday and thank Mr. Dollos by the way. Without his generous help, it would've taken forever for me to become an official sorcerer..."

.....

In year 24 of the arcana calendar, at the end of the Month of Ice, any drop of water would be frozen in the blowing wind immediately. The passersby on the street covered themselves in thick clothes and lowered their hats under the coldness.

"It's already so cold..." On the Hexagram Station, Karl pulled his man suit and intentionally exhaled, raising a white mist from his mouth.

Although Donnie had become an official sorcerer, he hadn't cast

any spell that could resist the coldness. Therefore, he was also shivering. Holding back his black magic robe, he said, "Yes. Winter only feels like winter in Rentato."

The Heidler Magic College was in the World of Souls with a permanent temperature adjusted by the shield of the college, making it impossible for the students to perceive seasonal changes. After they were out of the World of Souls, Heidler City had been corrupted by the air of the World of Souls for too long and therefore looked more or less the same. On the magic steam trains, there were air conditioners that provided heat. So, although they had seen snow all their way here, Donnie and Karl did not feel that it was winter until this moment.

"I need to go home. See you after the holiday," Karl said in a sweet smile. Then, he waved his hands. "By the way, Happy New Year!"

Sammy and Jones were separated from them in the station in Heidler. After all, their destinations were different.

Watching Karl disappear into the crowd in the station, Donnie sighed faintly. It had been half a year, but he was still not used to Karl's look yet.

Shaking his head, he got rid of the thought and walked out of the station. He had booked a train ticket to return to his hometown tomorrow, and he could only visit and thank Mr. Dollos as well as the teachers who took care of him while he was in school today.

Near the Triumph Square, Donnie walked toward the Knowledge Bookstore in joy, eager to tell Mr. Dollos the good news that he had been promoted into an official sorcerer. It was a simple, understandable show-off that Donnie couldn't stop himself from doing.

"How did this happen?" Donnie stood before the Knowledge Bookstore in a daze, not understanding what happened.

He saw that the gate of the Knowledge Bookstore was closed, with quite a few pieces of dim and fuzzy paper stuck to it.

“How is it closed?” Donnie approached in surprise and identified the words on the paper carefully.

“This store has been closed for tax evasion by the Tax Office of Holm.”

“This store has been co-closed by the Punishment Department of the Congress of Magic and the Police Department of Holm for selling banned books.”

“This store has been co-closed by the Punishment Department of the Congress of Magic and the City Hall of Rentato for selling fake and unqualified magic items.”

...

Donnie read the orders and mumbled to himself, “What exactly did Mr. Dollos do?”

Ten years ago, thanks to the further popularization of magic items and the growing number of alchemical workshops of different categories, the life in Holm changed greatly. One of the greatest new features was the division of labor. Therefore, Heinrich, the prime minister back then, separated the government departments that used to be combined, in order to deal with the new situation.

Although Mr. Dollos did seem to have committed crimes, Donnie remembered his help and was reluctant to leave. So, he looked for the owners of the nearby stores and asked them carefully.

“A few months back, people of the tax office summoned Dollos first, claiming that he committed tax evasion.”

“Dollos never came back after he was summoned. In the days that followed, more and more people came to stick those seals. There were quite plenty of them.”

“I’m told that Dollos has already been sentenced to prison and that he won’t be released for another five years.”

Faced with Donnie who had the badge of an official sorcerer on his chest, none of the store owners dared to lie or use the nicknames

that they gave to the tax collectors and the police officers.

“Sentenced to prison...” Donnie murmured in a low voice and struggled for a moment, but he still decided to visit Mr. Dollos. After all, the man had offered tremendous help to him.

However, Donnie was soon disappointed, because the staff of the Congress told him that Dollos was kept in a prison far away, and that his whole holiday was only enough for a round trip. So, taking the suggestion of the staff, he wrote a letter to Dollos and left his own mailing address.

.....

Wu!

Clang! Clang!

The noise when the train came into the station scared off the kids who were playing around. Even the adults were more or less intimidated. It hadn't been long since the railway was extended to the town, and the folks were not used to the gigantic creature that could run on its own yet.

Donnie slowly walked out of the magic steam train. Seeing the familiar buildings and mountains, he had a lot of complicated feelings.

“Huh, isn't it Donnie White?” There were not many residents in the town. They were quite familiar with each other.

“That's right. It's Donnie. He seems much taller and bigger now. Wait, has the badge on his magic robe changed?”

“One black circle on the silver background. He... He is an honorable Mr. Sorcerer now!”

In the blink of an eye, the town residents whom Donnie was quite familiar with changed their expressions to one that was full of admiration and fear, as if he were no longer the Donnie they knew but a strange Mr. Sorcerer that was even more esteemed than the mayor!

Although they hadn't met an official sorcerer many times, the generous treatment that their petty mayor offered every time had left them a deep impression. Without them knowing it, had their neighbor's naughty kid become a high and mighty sorcerer too?

The residents' change of attitudes couldn't have escaped Donnie's senses, which were now keener and keener. He was both somewhat uncomfortable and somewhat delighted. No wonder everybody wanted to be a sorcerer and a noble. At the very least, until he could really explore the world, the feeling of being respected could motivate him to work hard.

After a brief silence, somebody left the station and shouted, "White, White, your little Donnie is back! He is now a Mr. Sorcerer!"

Donnie hurried to move forward to the exit.

Very soon, a middle-aged man whose face seemed to have been whetted by frostbite appeared on the street near the station. He was old and had gray hair. Had it not been for his lack of wrinkles, he would've convinced everyone that he was in his fifties. Behind him was a plump woman and a young and vigorous girl.

The three of them were equally excited and delighted. The two ladies were weeping already.

"Father, Mother, Lily..." Donnie walked to them. His voice was choked with tears.

His father held his hand tightly and patted it hard. "Great, great, so great..."

At this moment, Donnie felt that all his previous ordeals were worth it!

.....

Passing the new year in easiness and delight, Donnie was quite satisfied with his new life. The only unpleasant thing was that the town was still very underdeveloped. Lamps were only set up near the station, and there weren't any home TVs. The only entertainment was Arcana Voice on the empty ground to the east of

the town.

On that day, when Donnie, his parents, and his sister were about to go out to listen to Arcana Voice, a wagon with the sigil of a noble suddenly stopped before their house.

“Greetings, esteemed Mr. White. My lord, Baron Herdos, would like to invite you to his manor. He’s hoping that you could help him resolve a problem that has bothered him for a long time.” A butler-looking man got off the wagon.

Knowing that Baron Herdos was the lord of the few towns around, Donnie dare not disrespect him. “What is the nature of the problem? I would be happy if I can offer any help.”

The butler did not lie. “My lord has an ancient castle that seems to be haunted by ghosts. We asked for the help of several magic apprentices and sorcerers before, but it did not work. Two magic apprentices even died inside. We’re told that you have already become an official sorcerer, and you are a student of the Heidler Magic College. So, my lord sincerely asks for your help. You are a professional.”

Donnie had a conditional reflex of fear about such things. However, before he declined the request, the butler already said, “Whether or not you can take care of the problem, my lord will offer you ten queen gold coins as a reward. If the matter is resolved, there will be even more!”

Chapter 847: The Minor Negligence

847 The Minor Negligence

Ten queen gold coins? Donnie's breath suddenly turned heavy. He knew that he would earn a lot of money after he became an official sorcerer, but he had been barely engaged in any deals in cash since most of the subsidies in school were exchanged to arcana points. Therefore, after he heard the offer of ten queen gold coins, his heart beat fast, and he swallowed hard.

Ten queen gold coins were nothing for nobles, wealthy merchants, and sorcerers. However, having been brought up poor in a civilian family in a small town, Donnie had never seen one gold coin in his entire life. Also, he could earn the tremendous wealth that could significantly improve his family conditions without promising that he could solve the problem. How could he not be tempted?

If he wished to continue on the path of sorcerers, materials, recipes, books, and extraordinary items were unavoidable. All of them needed the support of wealth!

If he could really take care of the problem, how much would Baron Herdos pay him?

Donnie thought about so many things that even his voice became slightly coarse. "If I can fix the issue, how much would the baron pay me?"

The butler's face was unchanged, and he did not mock Donnie's overconfidence even though a third-circle sorcerer had been hired before but failed. He said respectfully, "My lord said that, if Mr. White could restore the peace of the castle, you will be given an additional 'Magic Glove', which is a level-two extraordinary item, besides the ten queen gold coins."

An extraordinary item? Donnie felt that hot blood was surging into his head. He almost accepted the request immediately.

Thankfully, the meditation and casting exercises that he had been

doing helped him maintain his last consciousness. He said calmly, "Baron Herdos is the lord of this town. I am very happy to help him. However, I need the records about how the previous sorcerers and apprentices handled the anomaly in the castle. If I am confident enough to solve it, I'll go to the castle in person."

He couldn't be more prudent about such a matter.

A smile appeared on the butler's respectful face. He took out a thick pile of documents from his suitcase and said, "These are the records you need."

Sensing Donnie's surprise, he explained with a smile, "My lord is no stranger to sorcerers, so he knew that you would need those."

Donnie's puzzle was answered. He took over the records and examined them with magic. Finding no sign of tampering, he read them carefully.

After a long time, he turned the pages and said peacefully, "Two apprentices were so surprised that they jumped out of the window of the castle, which got themselves killed. There is no death record of sorcerers. Well, it shouldn't be too dangerous for me. Mr. Butler, please lead me to the baron."

The first half of the sentences weren't meant for the butler. They were for his parents and his sister in case they were worried.

As he expected, after hearing his explanation, Lily and Mrs. White, who were concerned and about to stop him, were both relieved. It was an honor of their family that their son (brother) was appreciated by the lord. It was really the right decision to let him go to the generic school!

As civilians, they were more revered by their lord than the regular sorcerers were.

Donnie's father nodded in excitement, telling Donnie to go without concerns about the family.

.....

Near the town were the rising and falling hills that were covered in evergreens. A deep, dark castle stood next to a beautiful peaceful lake and added to the magnificence of the scenery.

Inside the castle, Donnie and Baron Herdos, who was coughing all the time with an emaciated face, sat face to face on the couch.

“This castle has been in our family for nine hundred years. It’s a symbol of the Herdos family. However, the haunting in the past decades has been bothering us. I hope that you can help fix the problem, Mr. White, as a professional of the school of necromancy,” Baron Herdos said in a weak voice.

He had been living in his villa in the city and barely returned to the castle. Today, he had specifically come back to wait for Donnie. After the establishment of the electric system and the popularization of alchemical items, more and more nobles preferred to live in the city or the suburbs. Castles were gradually being abandoned unless the infrastructure could be extended deep into the woods in the future.

While Donnie was a necromancer majoring in body structure and genetic factors, the knowledge on ghosts and evil spirits was among the compulsory courses of the Heidler Magic College. So, he was no stranger to them. He asked solemnly, “I wonder what happened decades ago that caused the haunting ghost. I hope that you can tell me everything without neglecting any detail.”

A ghost certainly could not have come out of nowhere.

“Nothing really happened. The previous sorcerers asked the same thing,” Baron Herdos replied with a bitter smile.

The sorcerers he hired before were not the professionals of the school of necromancy, but since they were here to address the problem, they had certainly done their investigations. Unless they were out of their minds, no sorcerers would act recklessly.

“It seemed to have appeared all of a sudden. Maybe somebody did something in secret, but it’s been too long, and the leads must be gone already,” Baron Herdos added.

Donnie nodded his head. "I hope that you can give your family files during that period to me. All the files. I'll stay here tonight and kill my time with them."

"Thank you for your help in advance, Mr. Donnie." Baron Herdos nodded. Then, he left ten queen gold coins on the table, before he left the castle with his butler and returned to the city.

The servants of the castle all came during the day and left by the evening. None dared to spend the night here. Therefore, after Baron Herdos left, the castle resumed its peace and gloom. Fire was burning furiously inside the furnace, but it could not drive off the deep coldness.

Donnie examined the castle and found nothing. Then, he got into a bedroom and began to meditate to stay sharp, waiting for the night to come.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

After three bell knocks, the old clock suggested the arrival of ten o'clock. According to Donnie's files, all the ghost-related phenomena happened after this hour.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The moment the bell stopped, Donnie heard a dull and strange voice. He frowned. Was it the sound of the wind blowing at the window frame? However, he had checked a moment ago, and all the windows were closed!

Touching the sorcerer's badge on his chest, Donnie opened the door and entered the corridor, walking toward the source of the sound.

Bang!

An enormous and dull collision echoed behind Donnie. He was so scared that he hurried to turn back, only to discover that the room that he just left was closed automatically!

Wu! Wu! Wu!

Weeping noise that was as feeble as an illusion found its way into Donnie's ears. He had goosebumps all over his body. Had it not been for his nightmare experiences, he probably couldn't have remained calm.

Wu!

The sobbing wind suddenly blew in the corridor.

Candles died out one after another, and the castle was completely enshrouded in darkness.

Donnie hurried to cast a "Luminosity". His glove immediately glowed like a torch and illuminated the environment.

However, all of a sudden, a cold and gloomy breath blew at Donnie's neck, making his hair erect. Then, "Luminosity" ended without a sound!

"This evil spirit is even more horrible than described!"

Having seen all kinds of undead creatures in his nightmares, Donnie felt the power of the evil spirit more clearly than regular sorcerers would. He accelerated to the gate of the castle in uneasiness. "It interrupted my spell without alarming me at all! How could the previous sorcerers have survived?"

Generally speaking, such evil spirits were all stranded in a place. As long as he left the castle, he would be safe!

"Ge! Ge! Ge!"

A white fuzzy shadow floated before him and laughed devastatingly.

"If I didn't let them leave, would they have delivered food to me again and again?"

Donnie was greatly alarmed. It knew what was on his mind? Or maybe... was it shaking his determination with the illusion and the words?

“Rest assured. I will not simply eat you; I will suck your soul slowly and gradually.” The shadow flashed here and there, not giving Donnie any chance to lock onto it. “Ever since I was woken up, I have been very abstemious. I will only suck half of your soul, which will make you forget what happened and come here once every few months.”

Donnie moved forward warily, unaffected by the words. The evil spirit did not stop him either.

He was more or less relieved, feeling that the evil spirit was only bragging. At this moment, he had reached the gate of the castle.

All he needed to do was to run out!

Donnie pulled the gate, but it was the hall of the castle out of the gate!

Shock and coldness rose from his feet, paralyzing his whole body quickly.

“Haha. I like fear more than anything else.” A pale, illusionary face appeared before Donnie. It opened its mouth and spewed stench out at Donnie’s face brutally. He was so dizzy that he could not focus his attention to cast any spell again.

Looking at the face at a loss, Donnie felt colder and colder. His soul seemed almost frozen.

He survived those nightmares, only to be killed by this not-so-powerful evil spirit in the end?

Suddenly, Donnie sensed that something cold surged in his right hand. Then, it lifted beyond his control and snatched the face before him.

Is this my right hand?

A palm in the monotonous black, white, and gray appeared in Donnie’s pupils. He felt that he saw the never-fading death the moment he saw this hand!

“No!” The evil spirit cried miserably, as if it had seen what it was most scared of.

Then, it was stiffened as if it were waiting for Donnie’s right hand.

The right hand passed through it, and the evil spirit was dismembered and thrown into the black, white, and gray, vanishing into nothingness.

Donnie was back to himself. He hurried to cast Luminosity, only to discover that everything was the same as before although the candles were put out.

“An illusion? No, it must be real!” Donnie raised his right hand. Looking at the hand that showed no anomalies now, he mumbled, “What happened? Why did my right hand turn into that?”

In the previous moment, he felt that he was the dominator of death!

“It... It feels a lot like the black, white, and gray and the black armor in the nightmares!” Donnie suddenly raised his head, and his face was covered in a cold sweat.

.....

Outside of the castle, a magnificent person stood quietly and smiled. “As I expected, all the problems cannot be resolved so easily.”

Chapter 848: Trump Card or Insidious Problem?

848 Trump Card or Insidious Problem?

Cold wind passed by, and the sweat on his forehead was almost frozen into ice. Donnie trembled hard because of the coldness. However, he was not woken up but merely looked at his right hand half in delight and half in fear, recalling the picture from just now.

The monotonous black, white, and gray, the eternal silence that seemed to affect the environment and completely overwhelmed the evil spirit, and the snatch that could directly penetrate the defense of the evil spirit. His right hand was so strange and so powerful!

It felt very similar to the black full armor that he met in his nightmares and the black, white, and gray that was sealed at the center of the illusionary cosmos!

Did something go wrong during the nightmares, and he was corrupted by the “monster” without him knowing it?

Donnie felt scared from the bottom of his heart when he thought of the monster that could manipulate their dreams and that resembled the purest death when he looked at it. So, he shook his head violently, waking himself from the trance. He roared in his heart, I need to find Karl immediately! Only he and the big shots behind him can help me fix the problem! They must be very interested in the monster!

The roars in his heart drove Donnie to walk forward toward the gate of the real castle. At this moment, he saw the glimmering powder on the carpet.

Powder of the evil spirit?

Donnie came to an abrupt halt. Was it left by the evil spirit after it died?

The powder of the evil spirit was a middle-rank material that was very rare and precious. It was something that Donnie never thought he could have before!

However, Donnie was stunned. Before stooping to pick it up or retrieving it with a spell, he heard a clear voice in his heart.

“The evil spirit just now must’ve been as strong as a fifth-circle sorcerer. Chances were that it was close to the senior rank. Killing me should’ve been as easy as killing an ordinary person for it, but it could not resist my right hand at all under the weird black, white, and gray. It broke like a bubble after I poked it...

“Is my right hand so powerful?

“The contamination of the monster alone has already turned me so powerful?”

Sensing the power of his right hand for real, Donnie hesitated. For a civilian who had grown from an ordinary person to a magic apprentice to an official sorcerer through hard work, such capabilities were beyond his imagination before.

“With the hand, I will have the power to suppress the specters below the senior rank. It’s possible that I can even affect the senior-rank ones...

“Also, it seems able to eliminate the extraordinary abilities below the senior rank like the ‘Elimination’ blood power. It may be even stronger than that...

“In such a case, I’ll be able to take adventures in the World of Souls and explore the mausoleums that are considered dangerous. I will acquire all kinds of materials and astronomical wealth, which will significantly improve my strength...

“Strength means position. I will be treated respectfully even if I am faced with a grand noble...

“My father and my mother wouldn’t need to worry about the grocery store anymore. They can enjoy the convenience brought by the alchemical items... Lily will have a chance to go to the generic

school instead of helping with the family chores and waiting to be married without having a life of her own...”

Donnie’s facial muscles were unprecedentedly twisted in horrifying hideousness.

“After all, nobody could tell that something is wrong with my right hand! At least, Karl and the big shots behind him did not notice it!”

Gradually, Donnie put his right hand back into the pocket of his magic robe.

Bang!

The cold wind blew, and a window that was opened at some point bashed into the frame brutally.

Donnie was suddenly woken up. Sensing the freezing coldness, he was suddenly refreshed, and his desires were overwhelmed by his fear again.

“What happened to me just now? The monstrous air in my right hand makes me powerful, but who knows if it will corrupt me and turn me into an unconscious zombie one step after another?

“The power that is beyond control and of unknown sources must be studied carefully... Too many senior-rank sorcerers have been killed in reckless attempts...

“As long as I am alive, there will always be opportunities!”

Donnie finally made up his mind and decided to call Karl, who had left his personal number to him, immediately after he was back to the town. Then, the outcome couldn’t be more severe than losing a right hand. Also, with any luck, there would be some power that was controllable and did not have insidious problems left.

Outside of the castle, the tall person chuckled. “It’s good that the guy has a remarkable control over his desires. Otherwise, he would not just be corrupted by the air of death, and it’s possible that ‘Greed’ would be triggered.”

Primeval devils could never be extinguished as long as intelligent creatures existed. They would reappear and regather in a dozen years at most, except that they would not be as powerful as before for a while.

...

Donnie traveled in the quiet and dark forest by himself. Roars of beasts burst out now and then intimidatingly, but for Donnie, it was much easier and safer than the castle. Those beasts and ghosts combined could not compare to one “Paralyzing Breath” from the evil spirit.

He had left a note to Baron Herdos, indicating that he had fixed the problem of the evil spirit. Then, he returned to his town without any delay.

Enhanced by magic, Donnie saw the familiar town after only two hours. Except for the station of the magic steam train that was illuminated by the bright lamps, the other places were utterly dark and quiet.

Donnie chose to go to the station. He walked to the office and knocked on the closed door heavily.

“Who is it?” the cleric inside asked in fear. Could it be a bandit?

Many magic steam trains that shipped cargoes passed during the night, so somebody had to stay in the station for coordination. However, in such a small town, barely any of the staff had the power of the magic apprentice, and they could only deal with dangers with the burst guns, but the bandits had already learned their lessons. They knew how to dodge the weapon and wouldn’t wait to be shot like what they did in the past.

If the bandits were as strong as knight squires or magic apprentices, it would be even more dangerous. After all, burst guns required human aiming and could not lock onto the target with spiritual power.

Donnie took off his sorcerer’s badge and waved it at the window. “I

am Donnie. I need to use the phone in the station. This is the right of the sorcerers.”

According to the agreement of the Congress of Magic and many countries, the official sorcerers could use the communication facilities in public places with their badges in emergencies.

The cleric inside was greatly relieved. After confirming the authenticity of the badge, he opened the gate. “Come on in, Mr. Donnie. The phone is on the desk.”

Donnie nodded. Having no time to thank the guy, he hurried to go to the desk and dialed Karl’s number.

After three beeps, Karl’s lazy and vague voice came over. “Who’s calling me in the middle of a night? Do you not know that this is a very inhuman and brutal thing to do?”

He seemed to be rather angry to be woken up from sleeping.

Donnie was briefly stunned. Karl’s voice sounded less magnetic on the phone. “Karl, this is Donnie. I have run into something weird.”

“Donnie? What weird thing?” Karl seemed refreshed. Then, he said habitually, “If it is not weird, you will have to apologize to me. Interrupting other people’s sweet dream is punishable by sentencing into prison. I have to stay energized to listen to Grandpa Victor’s concert tomorrow, which is probably going to be his last one. I cannot miss it, and I cannot yawn during it...”

“The black armor monster in the nightmares is attached to my right hand,” Donnie said straightforwardly. That was the only way to stop Karl’s rambling.

In fact, he also knew that Victor’s concert would be held in Rentato tomorrow, as had been introduced by Arcana Voice.

As Mr. Evans’ music teacher, he was too old to hold concerts anymore even though he had been taking magic potions. It was said that he would hold a farewell concert in both Aalto and Rentato to show that he treated classic music and pop music equally.

Although Victor was known for his good student, all music lovers knew that Mr. Victor's achievements in music were enough to make him a master. His other few students had also distinguished themselves with their music even though they were not as good as himself or Mr. Evans. So, he had been praised to be the best music mentor.

Karl suddenly raised his voice. "The black armor monster in the nightmares? Does your right hand demonstrate frozen black, white, and gray, suppress the undead creatures, and eliminate spells?"

"How did you know?" Donnie was quite surprised.

Karl smiled. "Of course I know it. My father saw it and told me before. Hehe. It's great that you told me, or your vitality would fade away quickly. Perhaps in a couple of years, your body will start to rot..."

"Then, what should I do?" Donnie was glad that he made the right choice.

Hesitating for a moment, Karl said, "It's going to be fine for the time being. I'll come to find you after Grandpa Victor's concert. Alternatively, you can take the earliest train to Rentato tomorrow morning. I'll have someone pick you up."

"I'll come tomorrow!" Donnie dared not delay at all and decided to go to Rentato the next morning. "Thank you, Karl. I'll stop bothering you. I need to take a rest."

Karl chuckled. "You've woken me up, and you want to go to sleep? No, you have to chat with me!"

"But you have a concert tomorrow..." Donnie could not refuse it. He felt that he was exhausted.

Although Karl was talkative, he was certainly not insensitive. Noticing Donnie's reluctance, he ended the call.

Donnie went home quietly. He dared not go to sleep, fearing that he would have nightmares again. So, he began to meditate.

...

In the middle of the fuzzy and hazy meditation, Donnie's body suddenly trembled. He felt that the scene before his eyes changed greatly. Around him was the frozen, dull black, white, and gray, where mountains, rivers, cities, and villages were reflected and countless undead creatures were wandering everywhere without the slightest sound or color.

"The World of Souls? I'm having a nightmare again?" Donnie thought in shock. He had entered a dream without sleeping?

"This city is a mess, but it looks somewhat familiar... It's Aalto, 'Capital of Music', that the documentary of the Sky TV Station mentioned!"

Donnie had never thought that he would come to a city on the other side of the continent.

Outside of the city, two persons that seemed both real and illusionary looked at everything quietly. One of them said in a low voice, "Brother, aren't we going to do something?"

It was Karl's voice. As it turned out, he could speak in the World of Souls, except that he was also in black, white, and gray right now!

Chapter 849: News End of Side Story: Year 24 of the Arcana Calendar

849 News End of Side Story: Year 24 of the Arcana Calendar

The pale and dim sky, the topsy-turvy city, and the colorlessness and soundlessness covered the World of Souls in the eternal coldness and silence.

The taller of the two persons who were observing Donnie from outside of the city said in a low magnetic voice, “Rest assured. It’s going to be fine. I’m only trying to figure out what he is trying to do and where he is going after releasing some of his air through such hard work.”

“Alright.” Karl trusted his brother very much and did not say anything else. “He must be looking for a way to get out of his quagmire. Hehe. If he seeks cooperation, we wouldn’t seal and study him all the time. Grandpa Fernando has plenty of experiment materials, and Father has established a demigod path of arcanists. We’re researching him just to figure out what ‘death’ is, how it can be included in the current arcana system, what extraordinary abilities it has, and whether they can be modified into the legendary spells of the school of necromancy...”

The taller person rubbed his temples. “You’re not strong enough and can only count on your talents right now. So, you should not talk much in the World of Souls.”

...

Donnie looked at everything around him in a daze. Staring at the Psalm Hall, which had appeared in the district of the poor for a long time, he was finally back to himself and thought bitterly, I’ve always hoped to visit the Capital of Music, but I did not plan to come under such circumstances.

He was rather ill at ease, not knowing why the mysterious existence dragged him into the World of Souls. So, he did not even have the

interest to visit the Psalm Hall before him.

Suddenly, he felt that his right hand was cold. A distant, old, and hoarse voice echoed in his heart. "Go back! Go back to where you belong!"

The voice was both magnificent and cold, numbing Donnie's soul and making him feel the most earnest summoning from far away and from the bottom of his heart!

It deprived him of his resistance. Just like it was his own wish, he strode forward and pressed toward the deepest part of the World of Souls.

At this moment, Donnie hadn't lost the ability to think. He was puzzled about the source of the summoning and his own destination. However, he did not find it strange that he accepted the summoning, as though it were his own thought and the only reasonable action.

As he walked on, the cold, monotonous black, white, and gray surfaced on Donnie's right hand, before it covered Donnie's whole body. His blue eyes, the silver background of his magic badge, and the silver spots on his arcana badge were all highlighted. He flashed forward, and every step seemed to be covering a long distance.

After a long time, Donnie's eyes glittered. A group of magnificent, boundless palaces was reflected in his pupils. Many of the palaces rose into the pale sky, their tips beyond the eye, as if they led to the residence of the true god.

It was a splendid and magnificent view that Donnie had never seen before and could never imagine. So, he was stunned there like a vivid statue.

However, Donnie trembled hard and woke up from his shock, because he sensed the horrifying vibes that could collapse his soul. They were only secondary to the black armor in his nightmares and much more powerful than his mentor Robert, shaking both his body and his heart!

Looking at the mummy that was covered in brown, oily cloths, the monster in a black cape with a long scythe and a misty face, the gold skull that drifted up and down, and the enormous dragon of bones, Donnie hated that he had taken the creature identification class so carefully that he recognized what they were the moment he saw them.

The Primordial Mummy, the Servant of Death, the Demigod-lich, and the Dragon of the Death. They were all legendary undead creatures!

Further away, from the horde of the dense undead creatures, a lot of similar air was coming over.

“L... Legendary...” Donnie’s eyes widened. He would’ve been covered in a cold sweat if he weren’t in the World of Souls. He had never seen or got in touch with a legend in his entire life!

Despite the rapid development of arcana and magic, and even though telegrams, phones, satellite stream, and radio programs had made the world much smaller, “legendary” was still something that most intelligent creatures feared and admired. It represented the sublimation of life and absolute domination.

The fear in Donnie’s heart made him back off subconsciously, but the ancient and overwhelming voice was still roaring, “Come back! Come back!”

It forced Donnie to step forward instead of backing off. He was about to approach the evil and horrifying Primordial Mummy.

Donnie’s legs were shaking, and his teeth were chattering. He would love to pass out right now to avoid being torn apart and swallowed by the legendary undead creatures.

However, at this moment, the Primordial Mummy collapsed forward like a mountain and knelt on the ground, placing its head next to Donnie’s feet.

Without a sound, countless undead creatures fell on their knees, raising an enormous wave, as if they were embracing their

dominator and their king!

Donnie looked at the scene in shock. Too many thoughts rolled in his heart. He was both shocked and somewhat satisfied. The feeling of being respected was so marvelous that no wonder so many people sought after it.

“It’s a pity that those legendary undead creatures are not kneeling for me...” Donnie managed to stay awake and flew forward following his heart. Wherever he reached, both the legendary undead creatures and the small festered zombies that even Donnie could’ve killed easily kneeled before him.

After the undead creatures fell on their knees, Donnie was able to see further. Then, his eyes encountered a pair of transparent amber eyes!

It was a monster in the myths, but Donnie, who had been watching stream shows all the time, was no stranger to it. It was a dragon! It was a crystal dragon that was fully covered in transparent scales!

The crystal dragon seemed to be wearing something, which allowed its scales to emit cold and dreamy brilliance even in the World of Souls. However, it was in an extremely weird state. It was crouching among the undead creatures and picking something with its claws. Many gray, bulging bags were hanging on its back, and a black cloth that could only cover its nose was on its face.

The might of the dragon surged at him, and Donnie lost his calmness and shouted, “Monster!”

“Monster!” The crystal dragon was scared too, and its slightly juvenile voice turned sharp.

Then, the person and the dragon both turned around and fled, as if they were both scared of each other.

Observing it from far away, Karl said in amusement, “Why is he collecting garbage here again?”

“With the item that Father gave him, he cannot be perceived by the legendary undead creatures. Naturally, he has to come here to

search for valuable materials and gems.” The tall shadow chuckled. “Many materials here are very precious.”

“That’s so filthy!” Karl pinched his nose and raised his voice as he said, “I won’t acknowledge him as my friend anymore!”

The taller person turned his eyes to Donnie. “Is there any secret in the Temple of Spirits that’s worth his return?”

“Maybe something here can help him get out of the trap.” Karl snorted at the crystal dragon’s back, which was disappearing far away.

...

After he escaped from the dragon, Donnie entered the group of enormous black palaces from a side door. The roar in his heart was higher and higher, and the feeling of being summoned was stronger and stronger!

It made him move faster and faster, as if the greatest benefits were awaiting him up ahead!

Passing through the temples, Donnie suddenly beamed with interest, because one of the palaces was full of bookshelves on which countless yellow books were covered with an intense stench.

The instincts of an arcanist made Donnie stop and observe the surroundings.

“Those books must be very precious. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have been preserved so thoroughly and emitted colors in the World of Souls...” Donnie thought in delight. He held the deepest love for books because they changed his fate!

Although he had the strong urge of drawing a book out and taking a look at it, the strong sense of summoning prompted Donnie to surpass the bookshelves and run to the exit.

After he left, a young male walked out of a corner that was blocked by the bookshelves. He had silver hair and silver pupils, with an eccentrically handsome face. In a red shirt and a black coat, he was

holding an opened book in his hands.

“Hehe. You’re back again? Interesting...” He closed the book and followed Donnie casually.

“Immortality!”

“Come back!”

Similar roars echoed in Donnie’s heart. The black, white, and gray on his right hand gradually covered his whole body.

It slowed and paralyzed his mind. His body seemed to have been occupied and controlled by someone invisible.

Pale and dim fire was ignited inside his pupils. Then, he flew toward the exit up ahead earnestly.

Donnie, who managed to retain part of his consciousness, could only see the things ahead of him and lost the ability to control his body.

Karl, who was tailing him far away, said in amusement, “Is he trying to return to the Path of Immortality?”

“Maybe he has found something in his research, and he is confident to get out of his trouble through the Path of Immortality,” the taller person said casually and did not hurry to stop them at all.

...

The wall where countless faces of souls were gathered, the channel that released the air of immortality, and the landscape that was dispersing and collapsing all the time... The weird pictures popped up in Donnie’s head. Although he had seen none of them before, he had the clear vision that he was about to see them in a minute!

After he left the exit, Donnie saw a “familiar” square, and the wall where the soul faces were frozen stood at the entrance of the palace at the end.

However, there were plenty of other things that Donnie wasn’t

familiar with!

Above the palace hanged red banners that read:

[We sincerely welcome the God of Silver Moon to inspect our work...]

[By all the members of the Ninth Research Institution of the Congress of Magic...]

[Portal of All Realms!]

The cheesy decorations made the voice that echoed in Donnie's head burst out a miserable cry.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

At this moment, a tall and kind-looking old man walked out of the back of the Furnace of Souls. In a tailcoat, he smiled gently and waved his hands, extracting the black, white, and gray inside Donnie's body and recovering him!

“Mr... Mr. President!”

How could Donnie not know the president of the Congress of Magic!

“This is one of the most advanced research institutions of the Congress. It was founded by Lucien in person for the travel and exploration between parallel universes. Now that you are here, you can visit it by the way.” Douglas did not mention anything that happened just now.

Donnie bulged his mouth widely and forgot to close it. Why could he hear the name of Lucien Evans in such an uncanny place too?

Far away, Karl laughed rather delightedly.

(End of Side Story: Year 24 of the Arcana Calendar)

Chapter 850: Side Story: John

850 Side Story: John

“Hey! Ha!”

A little boy no older than ten was holding a wooden sword high and striking it forward.

Bang!

The boy on his opposite side, who was of a similar age, waved his sword to block it. The two swords collided in a dull noise.

Under the scorching sun, the two boys were sweating hard. Their cheeks and their necks were all wet. Even so, they were still gritting their teeth and focused on the sword practice.

On the stairs nearby, a golden-haired and brown-eyed man slightly nodded, expressing his satisfaction with the boys' sword practice. He looked young and handsome, but his manners were mature and trustworthy, making it impossible to tell his accurate age.

However, he was in an obvious trance right now, as if he had seen somewhere far away through the child before him.

“John, what’s on your mind?” A slim, tall, and beautiful woman walked over from his back. She felt gentle and had blond hair and blue eyes, different from the common look of Holm.

John’s eyes were focused again. He turned around with a smile and said to Kalie, his wife. “When I watched the children practicing with their swords so hard, I remembered that Lucien and I practiced in exactly the same way when we were little in the empty places in the slums of Aalto. However, he was not as strong as I was, and he was never satisfied. His sword was knocked away every time...”

Kalie held his waist from the back and smiled gently, “Who could’ve thought that one of the two kids in the slums of Aalto would turn into an earl of the empire, a radiant knight, and the deputy captain

of the Sword of Truth's Knights, while the other one would turn into a demigod, a grand arcanist, a prince of the empire, and a great musician?"

"Yes. Life is like a play." John patted his wife's arms and said with mixed feelings, "At first, I only thought to be an official knight to change my family's life, protect them, and protect the duchy. I never dreamed that I could become a radiant knight or have a wife as beautiful as you."

Kalie was taller than John, so she was able to lean her jaw on John's shoulder. Hearing his words, she couldn't help but smile.

Looking ahead, John became tranced again. He said with a smile, "Lucien couldn't have expected his achievements today either. At that time, his greatest wish was to become a civilian who had a regular income. Fate is truly a wonder that even the astrologists cannot predict. I remember that Lucien and I used to stand outside of the Psalm Hall fantasizing that we could listen to a concert someday. Hehe. I have almost forgotten what the Psalm Hall looked like now..."

"Do you miss Aalto?" Kalie asked keenly.

John smiled steadily. "Yes. I do miss the Psalm Hall, my old house, the black forest where I had my knight training, and the bards and performers on the street. Hehe. Those who are old always tend to miss their hometowns and their childhoods."

"Old? Are you suggesting that I am old too? I'm only a few years younger than you." Kalie pretended to be angry. "Do you regret choosing to stay in Rentato instead of a fief near Aalto?"

When he became an earl, John had a chance to choose his hereditary fief. At that time, Natasha had already become the Grand Duchess of Orvarit and could give him the land near Aalto. However, John eventually decided to stay on this side of the Storm Strait.

John did not give an answer. He patted his hands, hinting the children to stop. He then gave them a few reminders before he

returned to the villa with Kalie.

“It’s time for my regular patrol,” John said unhurriedly.

Kalie nodded. “I’ve already prepared your knight suit and your armor.”

When he passed the hall, John stopped Kalie and pointed inside. “Listen to the beautiful music. My mother is holding yet another salon.”

“Yes.” Kalie did not quite understand what John meant. His mother often invited the noble ladies to her salon. What was to be surprised at?

John pointed at the study upstairs. “My father must’ve been to the Musicians’ Association.”

“Yes.” Kalie was still confused.

John said with a smile, “Rentato has magic gramophones, air conditioners, home TVs, refrigerators, alchemical cars, and many other items that have changed our life. It is the place with the best magic popularization. My father and my mother are used to them, and they enjoy them. Asking them to go back to Aalto would be a torture for them. Besides, with the airships available now, we can reach Aalto in a couple of days for holidays without transmission magic circles. So, I never regretted my choice.”

In the end, he added, “For me, home is where you are. I will always choose the place that you love. What I miss is my childhood and the time passed rather than Aalto.”

Kalie blushed and did not talk. She dragged John back to the main bedroom on the second floor and helped him get changed.

Bang!

When John was cleaning his clothes before the mirror, a dull explosion echoed from the other end of the corridor.

Neither John nor Kalie showed any unusual reaction, as if it were as

common as door opening and closing.

“Something went wrong in Elvin’s experiment again...” John listened carefully, catching the footsteps in the laboratory and sensing that Elvin was still alive. Then, he sighed rather regretfully. “He became a second-circle sorcerer only with the help of potions, but he is never devoted to arcana.”

Elvin was a free spirit. He disliked the boring arcana and magic studies, and he preferred the popularized alchemical items. In Lucien’s words, he was more like an inventor than an arcanist.

Kalie comforted him, “Elvin is very smart, but his interest is fixated on the popularized alchemical items right now. After he knows that it is impossible to conduct his modifications effectively without profound arcana and magic knowledge, he will work hard.”

Kalie was a level-two arcanist and a fourth-circle sorcerer herself.

“Alright.” John nodded and put on the last part of his armor.

.....

Above the Stroop Forest, John asked his subordinates to scatter and patrol on aircraft. He roamed in the air and observed the forest carefully.

Since many elves had been introduced into the human society, the responsibility to defend the abyssal gap had been shouldered by the Elven Court, the Elder Council of the Druids, and the Congress of Magic together, and the major knight associations of the empire were asked to deal with the demonized creatures or missing demons around the forest.

Debates had always remained unabated regarding how to deal with the abyssal gap. The elves wished to seal it completely, and so did the nobles and civilians in the few counties around. After all, even the thorough protection couldn’t be perfect. Not only was the forest being polluted more and more severely, but certain creatures and demons had also entered villages, towns, and cities. Although they were all taken care of in time, some people were still killed or

crippled.

However, most sorcerers and knights hoped to keep the gap and the Town of the Anonymous. The place had limited the strength of the invading demons. They did not need to worry about the formidable beings like Demon Lords or Dukes, and they could obtain many senior-rank materials. It was certainly much better than going into the abyss for adventures.

As far as John knew, the Highest Council had reached a decision and established a research squad. The target was to separate the two realms and to keep a buffer area on the first floor of the abyss for the convenience of adventures and exercises.

“Ahh!!!”

A grunt echoed in John’s earpieces. He immediately became grave and swooped like an eagle.

In the forest, a few knights were resisting the attack of a beautiful girl back to back. She had delicate and lovely demon horns on the forehead, and part of her body was covered in bright black armor. With the most tempting body curve and face, she was every inch a powerful succubus.

The few knights were all wounded. Caught unprepared, some of them were dying and were in dire need of rescue.

Holding a thorny whip, the succubus attacked quickly, spreading out pink and dark mist with her naturally-endowed spells.

Suddenly, a longsword enshrouded in darkness slashed from the sky and drove the mist away. All the spells that the succubus cast were nullified.

John did not turn into elements or light. He looked as plain as a common grand knight. However, wherever his longsword pointed at, all the extraordinary abilities were reduced into nothingness!

“The Elimination blood power!” Greatly shocked, the succubus flapped her wings and tried to flee.

However, her speed had been greatly weakened. John caught up to her and cut her to the ground.

“Don’t... Don’t kill me! I can acknowledge you as my master and serve you well!” The succubus twisted her enticing body, hoping to exchange for a chance of survival!

“You weren’t such a peace-lover when you assaulted my teammates, were you?” His face unchanged, John slashed his longsword and executed the succubus directly.

The succubus’ shock was frozen on her face. The few knights attacked by her seemed rather regretful too.

BOOM!

The earth suddenly shook so violently that the knights could barely stand on their feet.

“What’s going on?” John looked at the source of the earthquake in shock, only to discover that a bloody plain appeared on the horizon vaguely. The space before it was twisted and weaved into an unbelievable, hideous crack. Behind it was the view of the abyss on different floors.

Before the protruding abyssal gap, a young man in a black double-breasted suit was floating. He had a black bow-tie with a monocle on his right eye, handsome and gentle. The darkness that surrounded him was as contorted as the abyss itself.

“Lucien?” Seeing the familiar back, John blurted out.

At this moment, Lucien pressed his hands forward. His body became so fuzzy that he seemed to be in an intangible and unapproachable world. A boundless cosmos showed up behind his back with stars glittering in it.

BOOM!

The fog near the gap was too thick for John to see the changes clearly. He only saw that the space collapsed, and the Scarlet Plain, as well as the abyss behind it, slowly broke away from the gap!

In the meantime, an enormous storm swept across the Scarlet Plain and completely consumed it. The thick, long bolts of lightning separated it from the second floor of the abyss that it was connected to!

The “abyss” had been shoved away?

Looking at Lucien who appeared like a god in the high sky, John was rendered speechless. He was suddenly grasped by vague sorrow.

Chapter 851: Side Story: Viscount Carendia

851 Side Story: Viscount Carendia

Crack.

The sound of the door lock being opened was particularly loud at the quiet night.

A golden-haired and golden-eyed little boy had been lying on the couch, half asleep, but he sat up the moment he heard the noise and ran to the door in excitement.

After the door was opened, a golden-haired woman, wearing a purple court dress, walked in. She was pretty and tall, with a blush that was not so obvious on her face. There was a certain charm in her formal smile.

“Edward, you haven’t slept yet?” The beautiful and mature lady was obviously surprised when the little boy ran to her.

The boy smiled shyly. “Mom, I wanted to wait for you to come back...”

He suddenly stopped talking because he saw a tall man behind his mother. The man had a sculpted, handsome face that looked like a glacier that would never unfreeze. He also had very special silver short hair.

The man suddenly put on a gentle smile, like spring melting the snow. He picked up the golden-haired lady’s hand and kissed it. “It’s an honor to have met you. I wish you a sweet dream tonight.”

“I’m happy to make your acquaintance too, Viscount,” the gold-haired lady responded with a smile and saw the formally-suited man off.

“Mom, who is he?” For reasons he did not know, Edward disliked the man just now.

“Well, it’s a foreign viscount that I met at the ball today. His name is Carendia.” The golden-haired lady tried to answer calmly, but her lips were still curling. Then, she suddenly became solemn. “Edward, it’s almost twelve o’clock. You’re two hours late for bed. Where is Adelin? I’m going to ask her why she allowed you to wait for me! You are the only descendant of this family, and you should never be self-willed.”

“I... I slipped out of my room. It has nothing to do with Adelin...” Edward pretended to be scared. He knew that his mother would not really punish him.

...

“Young master, it’s possible that you will have a new father soon,” a maid said to Edward, who had grown much taller, in a low voice.

Edward, who was still not old enough, was gloomy and agitated. During the past two years, her mother and that Viscount Carendia were closer and closer and were really like a couple now. As a result, he had less time to talk or play with his mother. What an awful man!

“Although it has been difficult for Her Ladyship to support the family after His Lordship was summoned by the Lord, and she should be blessed for pursuing her own happiness, you must remember that you are the only heir to the title and the heritage. You cannot allow Viscount Carendia to transfer the wealth bit by bit.” The maid who was loyal to the family reminded Edward of the potential crisis.

Edward, however, blurted out, “He approached my mother for money and the title? No, I have to stop him!”

After that, the boy ran to the lobby, leaving the maid stunned. It... It was only a reminder. I certainly did not mean that.

“Wu, wu, Mom, I was wrong. I shouldn’t have been so impolite to the viscount!” Soon enough, Edward’s cries came from the living room. He had been pressed down on the couch and spanked hard by his mother, and he wept really hard.

The golden-haired lady snorted and said to Viscount Carendia in apologies, "Forgive me for not teaching the child well."

"It's nothing. Children of his age are all naughty," Viscount Carendia said; his eyes gentle.

"Edward, apologize to the viscount," the golden-haired lady asked him.

Sobbing, Edward apologized. Then, while his mother was not looking at him, he pretended to be tough and said in an extremely low voice, "I won't let you steal my mother!"

Viscount Carendia looked the same as before, as if he were looking at an angry but not-at-all threatening kitten.

...

"You will call the viscount dad in the future," the golden-haired lady said to Edward rather shyly.

Edward pursed his lips and tried to make himself look normal. "Yes, madam."

Viscount Carendia, who sat on the opposite side of the table, cut the bloodstained steak and said to Edward seriously as if he were his real father, "Your current knight teacher is not good enough. Starting from tomorrow, I will teach you in person."

"I will certainly work hard." Edward clenched his fists, swearing to vent his fury on the goddamn man during the training.

...

Pa.

Edward was thrown to the ground and cried in pain.

"Why do you need a sword if tears help?" Viscount Carendia said without the slightest pitifulness. "So, you are only a boy, not a man. A real man sheds blood, not tears."

Edward stood up and glared at him.

Viscount Carendia waved his wooden sword. “Don’t you hate me the most? Don’t you want to kick me away? Accomplish it with the sword in your hand! Or maybe you are a coward who loves failure?”

Edward roared brutally and charged at Viscount Carendia with the wooden sword in his hands. He was knocked again and again but stood up every time.

He thought, I will not compromise!

...

In the church square, a cross had been established, and a mature, beautiful golden-haired lady was tied to it.

“Mom! Mom!” Despite the restraint of a few knight squires, Edward struggled to move toward the cross, with tears and panic all over his face.

With the Saint Badge of Truth in his hands, the bishop drew a cross on his chest and pointed at the golden-haired lady. “She is a noble, but she is corrupted by the darkness and degenerated into a vampire’s servant, trying to turn the Lord’s lambs into the vampire’s food.”

The golden-haired lady seemed to have lost her soul. She stared at the bishop without saying a word, but Edward refuted in a loud voice, “No! No! My mother never hurt anyone!”

The bishop completely ignored Edward and continued, “You are evil and filthy, but the Lord is merciful and benevolent. Purge is His grace and your path to paradise. Let me ask you. Would you like to repent and kneel before the Lord’s feet again?”

“If... If I repent, will Edward be pardoned? He’s just a child. He knows nothing!” The golden-haired lady seemed back to life all of a sudden.

The bishop kept drawing the cross. “The Lord is the fairest of all. As

long as Edward survives the fire, it will prove his innocence.”

The golden-haired lady laughed miserably. “Hahaha. Then, let me answer you. I would rather fumble in hell than lose myself in paradise!”

“Sinner, go to hell and repent there.” Coldly, the bishop let out a holy light and ignited the stand.

“No!” Edward cried earsplittingly. He seemed to see the gentle eyes that were looking at him through the burning fire.

After a long time, Edward passed out in tears. Suddenly, a voice echoed next to his ears, “Sorry that I was late.”

Edward tried to open his eyes. He saw the man who caused his mother to be burnt. He gnashed his teeth and snapped, “It was all your fault! If it weren’t for you, my mother wouldn’t have been burnt at all!”

“I’m sorry. I was late.” Viscount Carendia looked as gloomy as a mountain that just had an avalanche.

“You were late?” Edward said with a sneer that was beyond his age. “What a perfect reason!”

Then, he spat out, one word after another, “You murdered my mother!”

Viscount Carendia sighed. “Whatever you say, I will take good care of you.”

He lowered his head and approached Edward’s neck, his four teeth suddenly grew. “From today on, you will be Viscount Carendia.”

Sting came from his neck, and Edward’s face was numbed, but his eyes were still full of sparks of hate.

...

The chilly and dreamy silver moon hung high in the sky, creating silver ripples on the lake that was as smooth as a mirror.

Golden-haired and golden-eyed, Viscount Carendia stood before the window with a cup of wine in his hand, appreciating the view.

“My lord, do you remember your past again?” Nied, his old butler, walked in from the outside.

Viscount Carendia nodded expressionlessly. “You can never forget hate.”

The old butler did not know what to say. He could only speak from a practical point of view. “My lord, you are just a grand knight, and the old viscount is close to a level-eight radiant knight.”

“What’s to be scared of if even death cannot intimidate you?” The handsome and muscular Viscount Carendia suddenly smiled. “Such an irresponsible man will be killed sooner or later. In the meantime, I will practice myself to be a radiant knight sooner.”

“However, as his descendant, you cannot resist him at all when you are facing him,” Nied said again.

Viscount Carendia sighed and did not pursue the topic. He turned around and went into a secret chamber. Looking at the silver-haired and silver-eyed man in the painting, he said, “Grandpa, although I haven’t seen you much, I can sense your love. I hope that I can follow you and receive your instructions...”

After his “prayer”, Viscount Carendia’s eyes suddenly focused, because he saw another cup on the table. Thick red fluids were floating inside, and countless illusionary symbols were drifting up and down inside.

“What’s this?” he asked in shock.

Nied’s eyes almost popped out. “This... This is the Origin of Blood of the first-generation vampires. Was... Was the old earl here?”

“Grandpa?” Viscount Carendia looked around, only to find nothing, but he soon burst into laughter. “As long as I melt this blood, I will no longer be scared of the bloodline suppression from that man.”

The old butler said helplessly, “The old earl hasn’t changed his

hobby and habit one bit. How can such a tragedy be fun?”

“Camoray Cuke, did you notice anything?” Viscount Carendia asked.

A dull noise hummed, leading the whole castle to shake. “No. It’s just that... my nose is itchy. Achiu!”

It sneezed so heavily that the window glass was all ringing.

After a brief silence, Viscount Carendia said half-teasingly, “The greatest impression that grandpa has left on me is that he likes to observe everything in secret. He’s like a voyeur.”

“Achiu!”

Somebody on the mountain far away suddenly sneezed hard.

Chapter 852: Side Story: Hellen

852 Side Story: Hellen

In the Allyn magic tower in the City in the Sky...

Berkley was already used to the magnificent building. No longer amazed by its appearance that was entirely different from other magic towers, he only felt that fondness and appreciation from the bottom of his heart.

Also, the moment he saw the magic tower, Berkley felt firm and steady. He was no longer as scared as he used to be in the past, when he was often woken up in the middle of a dream, fearing that the night watchers would find him, capture him, and send him to the fire.

“This place is the heaven of the sorcerers...” Berkley closed his eyes and remarked. Then, a fire seemed to be ignited in his heart. Would she still be there today?

He moved faster and passed through the lobby of the magic tower, entering the first zone on the first level of the magic tower where the General Arcana Library had been established.

Many arcanists had the habit of reading and studying the books immediately after they borrowed them, in order to figure out the files that they were missing. Therefore, the Congress of Magic had established a reading room on the empty ground in the first zone so that the arcanists would have a place where they could read quietly.

Later, many arcanists realized that the environment here was very suitable for them to read books that did not require experiments. Therefore, they came to the place to study as well.

Berkley took out two thick books with black covers from his magic pouch. Taking a few deep breaths and pretending that he had come here as a hardworking researcher, he slowly walked into the reading room, although no books were on his mind at all.

The moment he entered the reading room, he looked at a place next to the window, hoping that he could see the beautiful girl there again.

“She’s really here!” Berkley couldn’t have been more delighted. A brilliant smile popped up on his face completely beyond his control.

The sun shined into the room through the window and illuminated a beautiful girl who was sitting in the silence. She was focused and indifferent. Her face was delicate. Her lips were blue, but they emitted a certain weird charm. Together with the halo caused by the sunlight, she looked like a snow elf that could not be described.

She was the most beautiful and attractive female that Berkley had ever met during his escape all over the continent. As a result, he had spent the better half of his last week in the reading room appreciating the girl quietly, unable to get himself away from her.

“No. I can’t be like this anymore...” Berkley said to himself, as if he were making up his mind to work harder. “Who knows whether or not she’s coming to the reading room next week? After all, she barely came to this place before. I have to get to know her. This opportunity is too great to be missed out on. Otherwise, I will be regretful for the rest of my life!”

Encouraging himself and summoning his courage, he finally made up his mind after a minute and walked over to the girl with his books in his hand, hoping to use them as a conversation starter.

“There’s no need to fret! This is just regular friend-making! I am not forbidden from making friends in the Congress of Magic, am I?”

“Bring out the courage when you date with the noble ladies in the past! Don’t be a coward!”

Too many thoughts popped up in Berkley’s head. He felt that his feet were as unsteady and strengthless as his own heart.

The girl was too focused on the book in her hand, calculating on the paper now and then, to notice that Berkley had approached her.

Her hair seemed to be made of ice, which was clear and glittering

under the sunlight, reflecting vague rainbows. Berkley was dazzled and completely forgot what he had in mind previously.

“Honorable lady, may I sit here?” Berkley asked; his lips dry. He felt that his voice was shaking beyond his control.

The sound of quill running on the paper never stopped. The girl with an unparalleled face did not even bother to raise her head. She was as focused as before.

“Honorable lady, may I sit here?” Berkley held back his cowardliness, which was urging him to turn around and flee, and asked again.

Hualala.

The pages of the book were turned, but the elf-like girl seemed to have nodded her head, or so Berkley thought that was what he saw.

Was it my illusion? Berkley thought unconfidently. However, he immediately told himself that he should leave it alone. As long as she did not openly refuse him to sit here, it meant that she was okay with that!

He sat on the girl’s opposite side carefully and stole a glimpse at her again, only to be astounded by her surreally delicate face again. In the meantime, he noticed that the girl had two badges on her magic robe. One of them was a four-star arcanist’s badge, and the other was a sorcerer’s badge with two black circles.

She’s already a middle-rank arcanist at such a young age? Berkley was shocked because he had barely seen any girls with such a remarkable achievement. Then, he thought hard about how to get to know her.

“My lady, I’ve been to the Congress for years, but I’ve never met anyone whose arcana level is so much higher than their magic level. You are really an arcana genius.” Berkley tried to make his smile elegant and handsome.

The girl kept writing with her quill, not even bothering to nod her head or give any reply that indicated her awareness of his remark.

Berkley's face was frozen on his face. Did she not like the subject?

So, he went on and said again, "My lady, you seem to be of the bloodline of the snow elves? That's an extremely rare bloodline. As I recall, it only exists in the northland."

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when the girl suddenly raised her left hand. Berkley couldn't have been more delighted. There was finally some reaction!

The girl's tiny eyebrows were furrowed. She held her cheek with her left hand, and her index finger was extended to her mouth and touched her lips without her realizing it at all. However, she still did not look at Berkley at all or said anything back to him.

Berkley was attracted by the most beautiful picture at first. Then, immense frustration of failure emerged and bit his heart deeply.

I can't... I can't give up just like that!

If I miss this opportunity, there wouldn't be any in the future. Who knows if she is from the northland? Who knows if she will return very soon?

After several minutes, Berkley summoned his courage again. Trying to soften his smile that had already been rigidified, he said, "My lady, I'm impressed by your concentration. I can't help but wonder what you are working on."

The moment he spoke it out, Berkley almost slapped himself in the face brutally because he had seen the familiar mathematical symbols all over the book before the girl. It was not difficult for him to guess what category the book belonged to at all.

The girl's left forefinger seemed to have already been extended into his lips. Her eyes were fixed on the paper, and the quill in her right hand kept moving, as if the whole world had nothing but herself as well as the book, the paper, and the ink left, and no other people existed in that world at all. Whoever sat on her opposite side would be treated as air equally.

Berkley was silent for another couple of minutes. The passion in his

heart was unstoppable. Therefore, he pulled himself back together and said again, "My lady, according to my quick glance, you seem to be studying the knowledge about calculus. I don't know what problem you have run into, but if you don't mind, you can speak it out so that we can discuss it together. Although I've only come to the Congress for several years, I do know calculus rather well. After all, the solutions to many magic models cannot be achieved without calculus..."

He tried to start with the part that the girl was obviously most interested in.

Before Berkley finished his sentence, the girl had raised her head abruptly. She stared at him carefully with her transparent, ice-like eyes. Berkley felt that his mind was shaking so hard that he almost lost control of himself.

"How should a limit be strictly defined to avoid the previous problems? What about continuity, derivative, and infinitesimal? How can they be mathematically defined in a self-consistent way?" The girl's voice was chilling and refreshing, like the floating snowflakes in the winter. There was nothing but solemnity in her tone.

Dazed, Berkley opened his mouth and could barely close it. What... What were those questions? What was she working on exactly? It was... It was too terrifying!

His brain seemed to have just been savaged by "Mental Storm", a legendary spell, and nothing could be found at all in it. However, the girl was still staring at him attentively and carefully. Subconsciously, he replied, "I... I haven't really given any thought to those questions before..."

The girl nodded her head. With no despise, albeit some disappointment, she lowered her head again and continued writing her own ideas.

Looking at the chilling girl who basked in the brilliant sunlight, Berkley felt that his heart had been so destroyed that he could not fight any longer. She was a goddess in arcana that other people

could only appreciate and admire from far away but could not approach.

Chapter 853: The Unannounced Guest

Side Story: Rise of the Congress

The Unannounced Guest Side Story: Rise of the Congress

“My lord.” The farmers who were busy working in the land greeted their liege humbly and obediently. Most of them did not quite see the face of the earl, but they knew that the only person who could have been surrounded by so many knights, who could have ridden the magnificent Dragon Scale horse, who could have worn the fancy clothes, and whose necklace was above the back of his head and covered his ears, was the distinguished Lord Earl. Also, the guys before them were also paying respects.

With the Dragon Scale horse between his legs and a whip in his hands, Earl Paphos heard nothing of the farmers’ greetings. It was a privilege that any noble deserved, and there was no need to feel surprised.

After he left his manor and reached the highroad, Earl Paphos slapped his horse hard to let it run faster, surpassing the wagons and the passersby on his way.

Earl Paphos had always despised the nobles who took wagons. The nobles who had been knighted for eliminating sorcerers and the other heresies should not abandon their pride and their knightly instincts! Vanity was also an original sin!

The Paphos family was one of the earliest knight families who resisted the Magic Empire with the Church and the king. The title of the earl had been earned by the magnificent strength of every generation and the remarkable achievements they made. Earl Paphos himself was among them. He had become a radiant knight before forty, winning the nickname “Dragon of Protection”. His hands were stained with the blood of evil sorcerers and other heresies.

Dozens of Dragon Scale horses galloped fast all the way into the city. The guards of the city cleared the path when they saw the

emblem of the Paphos family far away, not daring to stop or examine them at all.

Hooooooooo!

Earl Paphos pulled his bridle, and the Dragon Scale horse rose like a human and roared as if it were a dragon.

The knights that followed him did the same. All the horses were stopped simultaneously.

“Good evening, my lord.” At the entrance of the villa, two nobles were already standing.

They were wearing the fashionable two-layered shirt inside, whose many buttons were all made of gems. Outside, they were wearing a high-collared coat that was decorated with many accessories.

Earl Paphos got off the horse and nodded. “Thank you for your trouble.”

They were the two barons on his land. Today, they helped him summon the nobles that were close to him for a private meeting.

“It’s our pleasure,” the barons answered respectfully and directed him into the villa.

Earl Paphos did not smile or say anything, but he was quite satisfied with the two barons’ attitudes, which made him feel the honor and power of a senior noble.

Several long tables were placed in the hall, and steaks, roasted chicken, and the likes were on them. Many nobles were already gathered in small groups with their wine cups.

“Good evening, my lord.” All the nobles greeted Earl Paphos as soon as possible.

Earl Paphos raised his right hand and waved it. “Everyone, good evening.”

He enjoyed such occasions. Power was always most fascinating at

these moments.

Handing over his horsewhip to a knight who came with him, Earl Paphos was ready to host the meeting when the guard at the gate led in a cleric who was in a sacred white robe.

“Esteemed earl, the bishop invites you to the church.” The young cleric was very polite, but his facial skin was tightened without the slightest smile, giving an arrogant feeling. However, none of the nobles felt inappropriate. He was the Lord’s shepherd. Even though they were dissatisfied with his attitude, they could not reveal it, or the night watchers of the Inquisition would come.

“Is there anything urgent?” Earl Paphos asked slowly.

The cleric seemed to be looking at the ceiling. “I’m not sure about that. You will know it after you come to the church.”

Earl Paphos was secretly infuriated by the guy’s attitude. Did the clerics of the Church not have the basic manners now?

However, he got his feelings under control and said expressionlessly, “Alright.”

“Right, earl, it’s past six in the evening. None is allowed to ride a horse except for the knights on watch,” the cleric added in a rough tone.

Earl Paphos clenched his fists, feeling that fury was surging into his head. As an earl and the lord of this city, he did not even have the privilege to ride a horse?

After delivering the information, the cleric drew a cross on his chest. “I hope that you will come to the church as soon as possible. Only Truth lives forever!”

“Only Truth lives forever...” Earl Paphos drew a cross; his eyes deep and dark. He decided to hold it back. What else could he do? Defy the Church? How could he resist one demigod, fifty legendary Grand Cardinals and divine knights, and seraphs who can arrive at any moment? That was a force even more terrifying than the three Magic Empires in the past!

Also, as the remaining forces of the Magic Empire were gradually cleared, the Church was less and less dependent on the nobles, with a worse and worse attitude.

The wagon slowly reached the city church. The sky was dark and full of clouds, suggesting an upcoming storm.

Boom!

Thunders rumbled, and the silver snakes of lightning illuminated the sky. Earl Paphos looked at the sky, got off the wagon, and entered the church.

“Good evening, Your Highness. Please allow me to pray to the Lord first,” Earl Paphos said politely. The dissatisfaction and fury in his heart were already gone.

The city was the capital of the county. It was at an important location and was relatively prosperous. So, the bishop here was Field, a newly promoted red robe. He nodded. “It’s very pious of you.”

After praying before the cross, Earl Paphos smiled. “Why did you summon me, Your Highness?”

Field said in a seemingly gentle way, “According to the report of the night watchers, sorcerers seem to be active in this area recently. I hope that you can devote more attention to hunting them.”

“It’s my responsibility,” Earl Paphos replied casually, waiting for the bishop to discuss more important things with him.

“Very good. Please see that it is done after you are back.” Field smiled.

“There’s nothing else?” Earl Paphos blurted out in shock.

Field raised an eyebrow. “Do we need other things?”

Fury burst out in Earl Paphos’ heart. You’ve asked me to come here for such trivia? You could’ve sent someone to deliver a message! What do you think I am? A dog of the Church that you can

command freely?

“Or maybe, you think the issue is not important enough?” Field’s smile was gradually gone.

Earl Paphos tried to hold back his fury. “I was just about to make more contributions to the Lord. Your Highness, since there’s nothing here, I’ll return and investigate the sorcerers immediately.”

He went out of the church and got into the wagon without changing his expression. Sitting like a stone statue with golden scales growing on the back of his hand, he did not turn gloomy until the wagon was some distance away and thunder broke out nonstop.

“Damn it! They do not regard us, the nobles, as their equal at all!” Paphos gnashed his teeth.

A torrential rain poured down. The night was even darker. Under the blowing wind, the trees and branches were flying crazily. Now and then, leaves and dust were thrown into the wagon.

Pa, pa, pa.

The raindrops hit the top of the wagon as if they were playing an instrument. Looking at the dark night out of the window, Earl Paphos couldn’t calm down after a long time. Was it the real position of the nobles?

Dum, dum, dum.

Three rhythmed knocks echoed near the window. Earl Paphos was so shocked that he turned around in shock and roared, “Who is it?”

Having arrived soundlessly without being perceived by a level-six radiant knight, the person was definitely terrifyingly strong.

“An unannounced guest.” A low female chuckle echoed out of the window, but the coachman and the knights behind sensed nothing.

“Who are you exactly?” Earl Paphos squinted. Golden dragon scales surfaced on his skin that was exposed to the air, and his pupils became gold and vertical too.

The magnetic female voice chuckled again. "Are you too worried to invite me to come in, my lord? If I intended to ambush you, I wouldn't have warned you at all just now. For the experts like you and me, does the blockage of a wagon really matter?"

A proud woman who likes to mock other people... Earl Paphos reached a conclusion. Considering for a moment, he opened the window carefully.

A red shadow blinked in and sat on Earl Paphos' opposite side.

A senior-rank sorcerer... Earl Paphos raised his wariness again and was ready to attack. However, his eyes suddenly glittered, because it was a young and beautiful girl who was as bright as fire. She was petite with a blood-red magic robe and a delicate face. Her pupils were as red as blood, making her extremely vigorous.

The rumors are true that female sorcerers like to modify their look, but don't they say that the senior-rank sorcerers often turn hideous because of their bloodline modifications and the experiment pollutions? Earl Paphos thought subconsciously. Why did he not know such a senior-rank sorcerer at all? Was she from a different country?

"Absentmindedness won't help solve any problem." The gorgeous beauty on his opposite side seemed rather impatient. She said directly, "My lord, do you not want to change the current situation?"

"The current situation?" Earl Paphos repeated in a low voice and then sneered, "Discussing the current situation with sorcerers who are no better than stray dogs? My lady, we are not on the same level. Right, how should I call you?"

The pretty girl's expression turned grave. "You may call me 'Storm'. As for the current situation, I believe that even pet dogs have to worry about their position nowadays."

Is it the right attitude for communication? Earl Paphos was rather amused by the lady that the sorcerers sent over. She did not seem willing to give in at all.

However, his face became much more solemn. Despite her rudeness, the lady's words were exactly his concerns.

"We don't have much time. Your villa is not far away. Let's talk straightforwardly." Ms. Storm wasn't bothered by Earl Paphos' attitude change and said quickly, "The responsibility of the nobles is to help the Church resist sorcerers, elves, dragons, and other rogues. When you lose your value, you will be no different from the ordinary people, and the Church will treat you however they see fit."

She slightly squinted. "Besides, the Church is more wary of the nobles than the ordinary people. So, you need to know where your responsibility lies and do not lose it."

After that, instead of waiting for Earl Paphos to reply, she turned into a shadow and disappeared from the wagon. It was impossible to make a deal after only one negotiation. More communications were still needed.

Looking at the dark night where she disappeared into, Earl Paphos was deep in thought.

The storm was pouring outside with astounding thunders, and it was as dark as the doomsday.

Chapter 854: Difficult Situation

854 Difficult Situation

The torrential rain poured from the sky like a waterfall and raised vague mist when it hit the ground. It was completely dark except for the occasional bolts of lightning in the sky, like a place of ghosts.

Nobody dared to come out at such a night. The storm had separated every house, giving people both the panic of upcoming doom and the strange sense of safety that nobody would break in. The curtain of water from the room was like a rampart for every house.

Inside a common two-floored house in the city, a young man in a blood-red magic robe was staring at the rain thoughtfully. He appeared to be in his twenties. His pupils were red, and his face was handsome, with bright electric arcs bursting out vigorously now and then. Also, the vague air of books on him added to his gentleness and made him look quite special.

“Fernando, did you forward those words to Earl Paphos?” The door of the room was opened, and another young man in fashionable clothes came in. He was wearing a popular black high-collared jacket that reached his head and completely covered his ears.

His face was slim and long with a mustache. He left the impression that he was a knowledgeable scholar too.

“Of course! Have I ever screwed up anything?” The young man who was called Fernando turned around and said, almost roaring. Then, he waved his hands to stop the guy from approaching him. “Lauren, like I told you, don’t get too close to me!”

Holding back his laughter, Lauren dared not say anything else and kept his distance. It was because he was significantly taller than the short Fernando.

“How did Earl Paphos react?” Lauren touched his mustache and became serious.

Fernando said angrily, "How could he have reacted? It's the first time we met! He did not even know what the situation was! If he had promised anything, I would've suspected that it was a trap!"

His voice was loud and confident. Infinite strength seemed to be stored in his stout body.

"It makes sense. We have to take it slowly. However, we need to relocate tomorrow in case those black-clawed dogs catch us." Lauren nodded. The black-clawed dog was the nickname for the night watchers who had killed many sorcerers, because of the black gloves they wore.

Fernando was fine with that. Although he was impatient and strict, and he was even bold enough to argue with his teacher about a certain mistake in the magic knowledge, not considering the rigorous teacher-student relationship in the ancient Magic Empire at all, he had little arrogance left after being hunted by the night watchers for such a long time.

"It's best that we hide in the caves outside of the city first," Fernando said calmly. Then, he turned his eyes to the table, where a plain-looking belt was placed. Immediately, he burst into a fury again. "Lauren, why did you ask me to meet Paphos in this belt? Is it fun to turn into a female?"

Lauren lowered his head in case he laughed aloud. It was not until a long time later that he finally raised his head and said "solemnly", "You are a young senior-rank sorcerer and the hope of the Magic Empire. Also, having killed a red robe before, you already caught the attention of the black-clawed dogs and made it to the Cleansing List. How could Earl Paphos not know you? If he had other thoughts, chances were that Grand Cardinals or legendary knights would've come after you. It's better if he couldn't tell who you were."

"I could've changed my appearance with other spells!" Fernando was not tricked at all. His red eyes seemed full of storms.

Lauren took a step back subconsciously. "However, isn't it less likely for you to be recognized if you change your gender? Also,

you are reckless and mean. You may have infuriated Earl Paphos as a male, but if you are a pretty lady, communication and negotiation would be easier.”

“We are not short of female sorcerers,” Fernando mumbled, although he found the explanation acceptable.

Lauren opened his hands. “But none of them are in the senior rank, and they might be caught easily. Besides, you did not object when I proposed it. You did not even ask for an explanation.”

“Fine.” Fernando’s fury was gone as fast as it came. He did not seem to be as angry as Lauren expected. “I was just curious about the feelings as a female...”

Lauren seemed interested. He asked curiously, “How does it feel to be a lady? Was anyone attracted by you?”

“How does it feel? It’s rather strange. It’s certainly pleasant to see other people enthralled by you. However, this belt is not perfect. The conditions after the change are all illusionary, and I cannot experience the body feelings of a female for real...” Fernando said, as if he were conducting magic research. “I need to find a way to create a perfect one...”

He looked at Lauren, only to discover that his friend was so astounded that he did not say anything until a long time later.

“What a pervert!”

“Huh?” Fernando snorted, and the air pressure around was soaring.

Lauren chuckled. “It was just a joke. Right, Fernando, we need to go to the Patray Port. A sorcerer is coming from the other side of the strait on a boat. It’s an archmage!”

“An archmage?” Fernando asked in surprise.

“Yes, a fairly young archmage. He will significantly build up our strength!” Lauren said in excitement. “If Gallos hadn’t met him before on the other side of the strait, we couldn’t have got in touch with him at all, and the other magic associations would’ve got

him.”

This place had been divided into three kingdoms, one duchy, and one group of cities on the north coastline. The Magic Empire in the past had been shattered, and many magic organizations had emerged. Among them, there were large organizations with a long history, like “Cabin of Palmeira”, and there were smaller ones that were newly found, like “Union of Sorcerers” where Fernando was at. The one thing they had in common was that they all could only hide in the dark and struggle to survive.

Fernando nodded. “An archmage who knows the ninth-circle spells will really help us unite with other organizations.”

They had named their group “Union of Sorcerers” because they hoped to unite with the major magic associations to resist the Church together. However, they were not strong enough to convince other groups at all.

Lauren sighed. “Exactly. The legends can hide in their demiplanes and close the entrance, and they can run into the Dark Mountain Range. We, on the other hand, can only struggle to survive. An archmage will be the most important leverage for us.”

“That’s not fair. If the legends hadn’t distracted the Grand Cardinals and the legendary knights, we probably would’ve been eliminated.” Unusually, Fernando did not describe those legendary sorcerers as rats in the gutter.

Lauren sighed again. “There are still important cities like Aalto. It’s said that the Truth Cult has focused most of its men on attacking them. Well, many legends have been gathered there. It seems that the glory of the empire hasn’t died after the fall of Antiffler. Instead, people are even more united. Honestly though, if it weren’t for the missing legends, the Truth Cult wouldn’t have developed so fast at all...”

“It’s already a fact. Don’t regret and remorse. Focus on the present and the future!” Fernando interrupted Lauren rudely. “What’s the name of the archmage? How old is he?”

He subconsciously compared the guy to himself.

Lauren shook his head. "I am not sure. He can't be too young. Every archmage is hundreds of years old."

"I won't be!" Fernando declared proudly.

He was born after the Divine Calendar was announced, but the War of Dawn was still in an impasse back then, and most of the places on this side of the strait were still controlled by the Magic Empire.

Lauren held back his smile. "Right, his name is Derrick Douglas. He has fled to our place due to the fall of Antiffler."

"Derrick Douglas," Fernando repeated and remembered the name for his future comparison. "Why doesn't he just fly over?"

"It's said that he is too wounded to fly. After all, there is barely any examination if you take the boat," Lauren said unconcernedly.

BOOM!

A thunder burst out.

Fernando looked out of the window and turned to Lauren. "It's time to rest. We have to move tomorrow and then go to the Patray Port."

Lauren nodded and raised his eyebrows. "Got it. You want Ingrid here."

"Get lost!" Fernando roared impolitely.

Lauren laughed aloud. He shouted on his way out, "Ingrid, Fernando wants to see you."

The fury on Fernando's face was gone, replaced by vague helplessness and mixed feelings. There weren't that many deep feelings between him and Ingrid, a female sorcerer. They were just desperately in need of the comfort of each other's body in such a dark and depressing environment.

Suddenly, his face changed, and a mirror with countless mysterious

symbols appeared before him.

A holy light that seemed to have descended from the sky hit the mirror with overwhelming magnificence, shattering it. However, the holy light was blown black and pierced through the rain and darkness outside. Several people were consumed.

“Enemy incoming!” Fernando shouted in a high voice. He pointed his finger, and a figure that jumped out of the shadow immediately glittered. It was frozen and fell on the ground into countless pieces.

“No...” A female cry came to an abrupt halt. Fernando’s eyebrows bounced. Was it Ingrid?

He left the room and entered the corridor, only to discover that a man in black gloves was passing by a body.

He was so familiar with the body, but it was completely lifeless now!

“Damn it!” Fernando’s eyes were bloodshot. Cracking noises burst out, and silver bolts of lightning surrounded the night watcher like giant serpents. A forest of lightning seemed to have arrived.

BOOM!

The electricity attracted the bolts of lightning outside, which fell from the sky and penetrated through the ceiling.

The place became an ocean of lightning and blocked the enemy. Fernando did not delay at all. Having been used to death, he held back his fury and covered the other sorcerers to evacuate from a secret channel.

Then, he cast a spell to ignite Ingrid’s body as a way of burial.

Chapter 855: Weirdo

855 Weirdo

The storm was still pouring, but lightning and thunder were getting rare. So, the night was even darker than before.

In the basement of a manor at the suburb, Fernando sat in a corner with a grim face, and Lauren paced back and forth anxiously, sneaking out now and then for investigation.

As a matter of fact, even the owner of the manor did not know that the evil sorcerers had turned his basement into their bureau.

“The night watchers were deceived by our arrangements and chased after the wrong direction.” After a while, Lauren reentered the basement. Avoiding several traps, he told Fernando what he learned. “Like how we rehearsed before, the other people went to the other bureaus in different groups. As for the loss of sorcerers and apprentices, we can’t calculate until this thing is over.”

Fernando did not nod or shake his head. “What I want to know is why the black-clawed dogs can find the place.”

A horrifying storm seemed to be brewing in his red eyes. Even Lauren, as a friend who was most familiar with him, couldn’t help but step back unconsciously.

Lauren said gloomily, “That’s exactly my question too. That bureau was very inconspicuous. We had never used it before. Also, we found no sign of being followed by the black-clawed dogs. I think that some of us might’ve joined the black-clawed dogs.”

He did not sound shocked at all. Betrayal, slaughter, and escape were the themes at the end of the War of Dawn.

“Investigate in secret but do not make a fuss. A good traitor might even ‘help’ us. Also, everybody has been separated to avoid the enemy now. Nobody knows the location of the other groups except us. The traitor cannot cause any greater losses.” Fernando was

surprisingly calm. Lauren had thought that he would burst into fury and torture the traitor to avenge Ingrid.

Lauren nodded. "I know what to do. Honestly speaking, Fernando, I thought that you would lose control of your temper."

There was no smile on Fernando's face. "My fury is waiting to burst out at an appropriate moment."

He secretly sighed to himself. Although Lauren and he had known each other for years as old friends, the guy did not really know him. It was true that he was picky, impatient, and downright a roarer, but he could control himself and understand the situation. Although he barely admitted it, he was never stubborn in front of unquestionable facts and reasons. He knew what to do very well at such a moment. His fury would be gradually accumulated until the day it was unleashed.

"Judging from the signs during the attack, it's 'vulture' who commanded the squad of night watchers tonight." Lauren shifted the topic to their ambusher. "He has been after us for a long time."

"Vulture" was their scornful nickname for a senior-rank night watcher. The guy was a level-eight radiant knight, ranking top thirty among the night watchers. His codename was "Predator".

"Yes. At the end of our evacuation, he was hit by my 'Shadow Arrow' but also broke my defense. Had it not been for Spell Trigger, perhaps I would've needed to find a way to transform into a lich." Fernando confirmed Lauren's speculation before he said with insuppressible anger, "We need to make a plan to secretly kill him so that the night watchers, reverend, and knights who are after us will be scared and work less hard!"

"Assassinating a ranked night watcher will raise the retaliation of the Church. Chances are that legends will be deployed to chase us. Are you willing to abandon everything here?" Lauren did not quite agree with Fernando's idea. The Union of Sorcerers was still too weak. It needed to avoid attention and grew up quietly.

"Because we are weak, we need to do something big so that the

sorcerers will know that it is hopeful to follow us. After all, now that a traitor has appeared, we have to give up most of Paphos County. Also, our next target is very clear, which is to attract the nobles who are dissatisfied with the Church and hide behind them,” Fernando said, as if he knew what was on his friend’s mind. His hair was rather messy, suggesting that the previous battle with the Predator was not so easy.

Lauren hesitated. “Let me think about it. We should discuss it again after we pick Douglas up.”

“Alright,” Fernando replied briefly.

When he watched Fernando who fell quiet, Lauren seemed to see a human-shaped storm.

...

The bright sun, the clear sky, and the vague stink of the sea delivered by the wind filled the Patray Port with a charm that was different from any other places.

Fernando and Lauren, pretending to be merchants who had come to fetch their goods, paced back and forth in a fixed area in the port, glancing at where the boats were docked. According to Gallos and Douglas’ deal, it was their rendezvous, and the white gloves and the red handkerchiefs marked their identity.

A classic boat slowly approached. Both Fernando and Lauren beamed with interest. It was exactly the boat that Douglas was on, but it was one day late. However, they were not very surprised, as the weather in the Storm Strait was terrible, and it was very normal for boats to be late.

“Black-clawed dogs!” Suddenly, Fernando’s expression changed. He saw a few men, covered in capes, walk to the place where the boat was being docked with dozens of knights and squires. Their unique black gloves indicated their identities.

Lauren was rather grim. “Is it a regular examination, or is it specifically against Douglas?”

Ever since the fall of Antiffler, more and more sorcerers had come to Holm, and the Church paid more attention to the examination of boats. However, since their personnel and attention were not enough, most sorcerers could still successfully hide their identities. As long as it was not specific, an archmage wouldn't fear such examinations at all.

"How would I know?" Fernando roared in a low voice. "We have to see how strong the night watchers are."

At this moment, a merchant in clean clothes walked in from outside of the port. The two of them immediately stopped talking, pretending that they were waiting for their goods.

"Good day, sirs, have your goods arrived?" The merchant was tall and strong, probably in his thirties. His nose was high, his black hair was thick, and his face was square but not exactly handsome. However, his deep blue eyes gave him a unique vibe that Fernando was quite familiar with.

Lauren chuckled. "Not yet. Our cargo must've been blocked by the storm. What about yours?"

He talked as enthusiastically as a real merchant.

"My goods have arrived. It's right here," the merchant said with a smile. His voice was as comforting as a spring breeze.

"What?" Lauren was dazed.

Fernando, however, immediately realized it. He asked in a low voice, "Douglas?"

Lauren looked at the guy, stunned. He finally noticed that the young merchant was also wearing white gloves with a red handkerchief in his pocket.

"Yes. Are you Gallos' friends?" The young merchant admitted his identity frankly and asked warmly, not fearing that they were night watchers at all.

"Yes. Why... Why did you come from the outside?" Lauren was

rather confused.

Douglas chuckled. "I got off the boat in advance and came from the bottom of the ocean. I've waited for you at the port for a day."

His smile was as clean as an innocent kid.

No wonder he's not afraid of night watchers or ambushes. He must've examined the environment carefully. Lauren was immediately enlightened.

"Our goods have been delayed. We should come again tomorrow. Let's have some drinks and talk to each other," Fernando said like a businessman, slightly disgusted by Douglas, because the guy was also one foot taller than him, and he was not nearly as skinny as Lauren was!

When the night watchers examined the boat, the three sorcerers did not attract any attention and left the place like any other merchants on the port. They took a wagon and returned to the capital of Paphos County.

After changing a few wagons, they finally had a member of the Union of Sorcerers as the coachman. It was not until this moment that Fernando and Lauren finally formally introduced themselves.

"I am Fernando Brastar, the leader of the Union's branch in Paphos County. You can call me Fernando. I do not like my last name." Fernando secretly sniffed.

"Fernando Brastar?" Douglas repeated, raising his voice before he smiled. "The 'Dark Storm', ranking the 296th on the Cleansing List?"

Lauren nodded on behalf of Fernando, implying that it was exactly him.

"You made it to the Cleansing List just after you arrived at the senior rank, and you reached the top 300 after you advanced into the seventh circle. Fernando, you must be significantly stronger than the regular senior-rank sorcerers," Douglas complimented with a smile.

In this period, most of the archmages and senior-rank sorcerers of the Magic Empire still lived. There were almost eight hundred people on the Cleansing List.

Fernando chuckled. “I’ve only grasped and modified some spells and killed a red robe. I am certainly not as good as you, a ninth-circle archmage.”

Not bothered by Fernando’s subconscious tone of comparison, Douglas said with a peaceful smile, “Me? I am not even on the Cleansing List.”

“I’ve been quite curious about that too. You are an archmage. How come you are not on the Cleansing List?” Lauren had learned the Cleansing List from the night watchers they killed, but the name of Derrick Douglas was not on it.

Douglas chuckled in a low voice. “I was always considered a weirdo who did not have any prospect in magic when I was in Antiffler. I became an archmage because of the long-time accumulation, my teacher’s heritage, the training in the War of Dawn, the fortuitous incidents, and some of my own little ideas. It’s perfectly normal that the Church does not pay much attention to me. After all, the sorcerers who joined the Church will tell them that Douglas will never become a legend or achieve any ambitions. He will only ask his questions while he waits to die. It is unnecessary to waste time and energy on him.”

He made fun of himself, not angry at all that other people thought little of him.

“A weirdo?” Lauren and Fernando asked at the same time. In their conversation so far, Douglas had shown no weirdness at all. Instead, he was fun, warm, and attractive. He seemed to have natural-born leadership.

In the meantime, Fernando’s impression of Douglas was much better after he admitted that he had become an archmage because of the long-time accumulation.

Douglas smiled. “Yes, I am good at asking questions.”

“What’s weird about that?” Fernando said in confusion before he went on with his self-introduction.

Douglas suddenly interrupted him, “You must be good at the spells of storms and lightning in the school of elements, right?”

“Of course, night watchers rarely give wrong nicknames.” Fernando nodded.

Caught in silence, Douglas mumbled to himself, “Why can lightning kill people... How is lightning generated...”

Fernando and Lauren looked at him in shock and confusion. Wasn’t it natural that lightning could kill people? Was it necessary to ask why? He was really a weirdo...

Chapter 856: Talk in the Wagon

856 Talk in the Wagon

The atmosphere on the wagon became extremely weird. Douglas seemed to have forgotten the two sorcerers next to him. He kept asking strange questions one after another, and neither Fernando nor Lauren knew how to respond. Weren't they all as matter-of-fact as the sun rising from the east and the fruit falling to the ground after they were ripe?

However, Douglas soon came back to himself. He said apologetically, "Excuse me. I tend to be absentminded once in a while."

"It's nothing. It happens to me when I encounter magic problems," Lauren replied with a smile, as if he were not interested in Douglas' strange questions at all. Fernando opened his mouth but did not say anything in the end.

After a brief silence, Fernando and Lauren introduced the situation on this side of the Storm Strait.

"Both the Sylvanas Magic Empire and the Asso Empire have been dismembered into scattered organizations that do not obey each other. Some of them have even escaped to the Boundless Ocean. It is safe to say that the situation here is even worse than the other side of the strait. At least, the western territory including Aalto is still in the hands of sorcerers..." Lauren sighed.

Fernando added, "The territory that used to belong to the Asso Empire has been divided into two parts, the Kingdom of Brianne and the Duchy of Calais. From what used to be the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the Kingdom of Holm and the Kingdom of Colette have been born. Our organization is mainly active in Holm, which is where we are in right now..."

Having investigated the situation before he passed the Storm Strait, Douglas was no stranger to the information. With a tranquilizing smile, he said, "As a matter of fact, I chose to pass the Storm Strait

instead of running to Aalto, because I had more hopes in this place.”

“Is that so?” Fernando tried to be indifferent and narrowed his eyes, preventing his eyes from betraying himself.

The Union had always been analyzing the situation, and their final conclusion was similar to Douglas’. That was why they risked making attempts and changes.

Douglas said peacefully, “Because the nobles here are more powerful than the Church in general.”

His words struck Lauren like lightning. He finally understood why his organization changed its policy and asked Fernando to meet the greatest noble at the capital of Paphos County.

Lauren knew that it was meant to attract the nobles and sow discord between them and the Church. However, he had never known why they were doing in, and what they were contriving to do.

Fernando said nothing and simply looked at Douglas, waiting for what he was about to say.

“We did not know the specific conditions here, but according to my observation, after the fall of Antiffler, the clerics were more and more arrogant toward the nobles, and most Grand Cardinals and divine knights have been concentrated in Antiffler and Lance, ready to march west,” Douglas spoke of what he knew.

“In western cities such as Aalto, many legends have been gathered, and they even have the help of some vampires and dragons. However, they have serious internal contradictions, and the gap between them and the Church and nobles will be wider and wider. Unless the Silver Moon arrives, they will be swallowed step by step. On the other side, while we are weak in this place, the gap between us and the Church is not as huge.”

He compared with the overall strength of the Church and the nobles in the first time but only the Church in the second time. Both

Fernando and Lauren knew his meaning well.

Fernando spoke in a weird accent that suggested he wasn't a native of Holm, "After most of the senior-rank sorcerers were eliminated, the Truth Cult has mobilized more than half of the legendary clerics. Now, there is only one saint cardinal in Rentato and Cocus respectively."

"Some of the legendary knights have been moved away too, but there are still five left. After all, this place is their hometown, and they are unwilling to attack Aalto far away even though they are devout believers. Also, they believe that the Church does not need their help. Obviously, the Church thinks so too."

"But what's the point?" Lauren frowned and asked in confusion. "As long as the Church destroys the legends in the west and sends most of the experts over, all our efforts will be in vain."

Fernando glared at him. "Time. The time for us to develop, look for allies, sow discord, and seek balance."

Douglas also smiled. "We aren't the Church's only enemy."

"Right, if Aalto is lost, the Church will reach the Dark Mountain Range. Perhaps the Silver Moon will really arrive." Lauren nodded.

Douglas suddenly seemed tranced. "Even if the Silver Moon does arrive, I think the pope will remain undefeated."

"Is God's Arrival really so powerful?" Fernando asked in shock and curiosity. Their intelligence was too untrustworthy on this side of the strait, and now they were faced with a living sorcerer who went through the Battle of Antiffler.

"His Excellency the Light of Stars perished without any resistance. Even the city defense of Antiffler was mostly destroyed. I don't know how powerful a real demigod is, but I know that the Light of Stars was beyond top legendary when he fought in Antiffler..." Douglas recalled; his peaceful smile replaced by panic.

Both Fernando and Lauren fell silent. Neither of them had been to Antiffler before. Although Fernando was a native of the Asso

Empire, Antiffler had been “Crown of Arcana” for all the time thanks to the lessons of their teachers and seniors. It was known as the strongest fortress on earth where the most powerful legendary sorcerers were gathered, but after only one attack of God’s Arrival, the consul and the capital of the Sylvanas Magic Empire were demolished.

Was God’s Arrival so powerful?

For a moment, they were grasped by intense desperation. What was the point of their work? It would be finished by one God’s Arrival after all.

Douglas put on a warm smile again. “There’s no need to be too worried. I don’t think it’s so easy for the pope to perform God’s Arrival.”

“How do you know?” The intelligence was too important and Lauren had never heard it before. He was even suspicious that Douglas was merely comforting him.

Douglas did not have any beard, which made him younger than he actually was. He smiled. “It’s been almost ten years since the fall of Antiffler, but the Church never marched west on a large scale. The pope has never attacked again, even though people are regathering and picking up their confidence. I think there’s a reason for that.

“Besides, the pope was surrounded by legends before, but he never used God’s Arrival. If it is so easy to perform, he could’ve used it to finish the battle quickly.”

He proposed his guess honestly, not bothering at all that the two sorcerers kept a lot of stuff to themselves.

“Well...” Douglas was deep in thought. The more he thought, the more reasonable it appeared to him, and the more wary he was of Douglas. They had known the facts for a long time, but nobody had ever connected them or pointed out the problem. Was it because Douglas always asked strange questions?

They stopped further communication. After all, they hadn’t really

established trust yet.

The wagon stopped at the suburb. Fernando and Lauren led Douglas in the woods and approached a shelter.

In this forest, the Union of Sorcerers had three secret bureaus. One was still unactivated, one had been given to the three sorcerers as a shelter, and the last one was their destination.

“Let’s go there and take a look first,” Lauren said to Fernando in the telepathic bond.

Fernando nodded and knew that he wanted to observe the shelter where the three sorcerers were hiding because one of the traitors they suspected was there.

Douglas did not talk but followed them in silence. Fernando and Lauren, on the other hand, did not intend to show him the bureau. For all they knew, he could still be a spy of the night watchers.

Now that the Church had dominating advantages, more and more sorcerers who struggled in darkness and depression joined the Church and became night watchers who hunted their companions. Nobody could tell if their close comrades yesterday would become the enemy who ended their life the next day.

Several big magic organizations had been infiltrated by the night watchers and suffered destructive strikes. The other organizations learned their lessons and gave strict tests on every newcomer even if the newcomer was an archmage. It had to be noted that there were plenty of archmages among the top thirty night watchers!

Fernando and Lauren only intended to glimpse at the place from far away in case the secret bureau was exposed. However, after only one glance, Fernando’s face became so gloomy that a storm seemed to come.

The cave was half open, and the intense stink of blood had attracted three wolves.

“We’re one step late!” Lauren patted his head in regrets. He already knew what happened. They had the correct suspect, but he did not

keep lurking, hoping that he was not discovered. The guy had killed two sorcerers and left immediately. He had to be under the protection of the night watchers now.

Douglas watched them examine the surroundings and followed them to the cave in silence. He saw the two bitten, incomplete bodies, as well as their faces that were overwhelmed with fear and confusion.

“Gary is dead, Prince is dead...” Lauren spoke to himself, “Gary’s little girl asked me to take care of her father, and Prince hadn’t even told his girl that he loved her yet... Damn it, Benson, they were your good friends! Gary even saved you before! I came too late...”

“They’re dead for at least a day and a half. It’s obvious they were soaked in the rain,” Douglas said in a low voice, suggesting that Benson attacked immediately after they arrived. Nobody could have helped them.

Fernando’s face was blue and red. He vaguely recalled that Gary’s daughter was a lovely kid. After a long time, he finally roared in a low voice, “I’ll let Benson regret this!”

A fifth-circle sorcerer and an elite who was very likely to be a senior-rank sorcerer had joined the night watchers just like that!

Lauren took a deep breath. “Let’s get out of here first.”

The two of them hurried to burn the bodies into ashes and kept them in their magic pouches.

The rest of the journey to their secret shelter was even more depressing. Douglas suddenly opened his mouth. “Actually, I am a sorcerer who prefers figuring out the reasons behind things to killing and fighting.”

Fernando was about to roar, but what Douglas said next left a deep impression on him.

Douglas looked at the sky and heaved a soft sigh. “However, only in a safe and steady environment and with the support of other people

will it be possible to explore and research. Now, there isn't even a place where we can install an alchemical platform stably, and the partners we explore the world together with are all dying.

“When a person is cornered, it will be time for him to change.”

Chapter 857: Tes

857 Tes

As they traveled in the forest again, the three of them were even quieter. Fernando was like a human-shaped storm that was about to burst out. The more he held himself back, the more terrifying he was.

The shelter provided to Douglas was an inconspicuous cave, with only the traces of magic circles in the deepest part. The cover was most natural.

“Mr. Douglas, you can stay here for a couple of days. We’ll find you again after things are sorted out.” Even though Douglas had been warm and friendly, Lauren still chose to show him enough respect when they said goodbye to each other. He was an archmage after all.

Douglas did not appear to be angered by their treatment. He knocked on the wall of the cave and nodded with the same smile. “I’m already satisfied that there is a place for me to do my research.”

He was not bothered that they were wary of him. Instead, he was very glad to see that, because most organizations that were not wary of the sorcerers who joined them had been eliminated. He did not wish that the one he was joining was among them, in which case it would be no different from suicide.

Before the fall of Antiffler, he had already learned the cruelties of the situation through his keen observation. Under the temptation and coercion of the Church, it was not unusual for parents to abandon their children, the apprentices to kill their masters, and friends to attack each other. It was even more brutal after the collapse of the Magic Empire. This was because, for most sorcerers, they could not afford any more hesitation. It was either betrayal or death.

“You’d better not run magic experiments. The black-clawed dogs

have sharp noses,” Fernando reminded him solemnly, fearing that the archmage from Antiffler would be overconfident.

Douglas took out a thick paper from his magic pouch and put it on a stone table in the cave. “Rest assured. I have mathematical studies that are enough to drain me.”

“Mathematical research... Are you from the Tower?” Fernando was in a better mood now that the subject at hand was magic. The Tower Geometry was his first frustration when he learned magic. Also, the sorcerers of the Tower were as zealous about mathematics as Douglas.

The sorcerers of the Magic Empire had attached great importance to mathematics since a long time ago because it was closely related to the construction of magic models. However, they still devoted most of their attention to the studies of spells and blood powers. After all, the results of mathematical studies barely proved useful, and few sorcerers were really interested in it. Most of them were members of the Tower.

After the War of Dawn broke out and the Church was winning, fewer and fewer sorcerers had the leisure to study mathematics. At least, Fernando had never seen any guy who was so passionate about mathematics.

Douglas raised his head and said with a self-mocking smile, “As a matter of fact, I would love to join the Tower, but they did not want someone as queer as me. After the fall of Antiffler, I never saw them again.”

“I’m glad that you are fully aware of your queerness. If you ask fewer questions, you will be a great friend.” Fernando had always been fond of striking other people, even if the guy was an archmage.

Douglas smiled and did not respond to Fernando.

Lauren looked at Fernando and complained to himself. Why do I have to make up for someone else’s mistake? Does the guy not know how to talk without sarcasm? His pretty and appealing face is

such a waste!

He coughed and said, “Mr. Douglas, don’t mind Fernando. He is a descendant of the savage empire of Aaso, as is evident by his accent. Right, you can make a list of what you need in the next couple of days. If you need anything urgently, you can tell me right now.”

“I don’t need anything.” Douglas shook his head and saw Fernando and Lauren off, knowing well that it would be time for his test when they returned.

What would the test be?

...

When they left the woods in silence, Fernando and Lauren did not talk to each other. However, they both changed their route and walked into the city, reaching Viscount Elrealcan’s villa. That was their safest shelter that only the leadership of their organization knew. It was also the last place that the night watchers would be suspicious of.

The noble reached out to a senior-rank sorcerer of the Union of Sorcerers in a certain operation before he inherited his title. Then, with the sorcerer’s help, he eliminated powerful enemies and earned his title. After that, he made many contributions by the intelligence provided by the Union of Sorcerers and was promoted to be a viscount. He was the first influential noble that the Union of Sorcerers acquired after the new strategy was implemented.

Fernando and Lauren had changed their appearances into those of the valets that everybody was familiar with. When they passed the gate, nobody suspected them because of their identities on the surface.

The old butler remained silent, not asking anything about the guys who often accepted the viscount’s special orders.

After he returned to his room, Lauren had just washed his face when he heard Fernando’s violent door knocks.

“What’s up? Do you want to discuss how to test Douglas?” Lauren asked in confusion. All he wanted was a good rest after a few intense days.

Fernando’s spiritual power spread out. He closed the door and roared in a low voice, “Lauren, we must counterattack!”

“Assassinate Vulture?” Since they discussed it before, Lauren realized it after a brief daze. He said cautiously, “We need a thorough plan. Should we tempt Vulture with the traces of other people and surround him?”

“No.” Fernando’s red eyes were full of solemnity and fury. “Benson has defected. The black-clawed dogs know very well how many men we have. Maybe before we even surround Vulture, they would surround us first. Also, I’m thinking of taking down Benson at the same time!”

“How is it possible? Benson must be hiding inside the Inquisition. There’s no way that we can get him out!” Lauren refused Fernando’s proposal without any hesitation. “Should we wait for more reinforcements from the headquarters?”

Holding his fury, Fernando shook his head. “Vulture has a keen nose. He will not attack recklessly a few days later. He may even go to other areas.”

“What are you planning to do then?” Lauren asked in confusion. What did Fernando mean exactly?

Fernando said, almost roaring, “We attack the Inquisition and kill Vulture and Benson! They have to be there!”

“You’re out of your mind!” Lauren felt that either Fernando was crazy or he himself was the crazy one.

When the Magic Empire still existed, there were cases where the Inquisitions and even the cathedrals were conquered, but no sorcerers dared to attack the Inquisitions anymore in the past hundred years. They were the lairs of the black-clawed dogs, with powerful divine power circles and senior-rank night watchers.

There were better ways of suicide!

A gentle breeze blew at Fernando's hair, like the prelude to a storm. "Since it's beyond your imagination, the Church and the black-clawed dogs won't be able to see it coming either! The Inquisitions have never been attacked in a hundred years. Their reactions must be slow. As long as we kill Vulture and Benson quickly, we will be able to leave easily!"

"But... But... We are too weak..." Lauren thought that his mind was in a mess. For a moment, he thought that it was certainly beyond Vulture's wildest dreams, but then, he also thought that it was too crazy and ridiculous.

Fernando said without any smile, "We have an archmage."

"Douglas?" Lauren was immediately back to himself. "Vulture, as a level-eight radiant knight, is the strongest enemy in the city. The others are all newly-promoted red robes or radiant knights. Perhaps there will be a few senior-rank sorcerers who have betrayed us, but there can't be any archmage; otherwise, we couldn't have escaped so easily."

He paced back and forth. "The ninth-circle spells are eccentric and powerful, and the archmages are far stronger than the senior-rank sorcerers. It shouldn't be difficult to break into the Inquisition. It will be better if he is capable of 'Time Stop'. Benson had no idea that we were picking up an archmage. Yes, our strength is not a problem. However, Douglas hasn't been tested yet. Will he betray us?"

Fernando was still rigid. "This will be the test. If he kills Vulture, he will be one of us."

"Alright..." Lauren felt that the odds of success were not slim, but he was still not determined. "But it will infuriate the Church. I'm afraid that 'Heart of Time' will be sent over."

His fear was so strong that he did not even realize when he mentioned "Heart of Time". The legendary knight had forged his glory with the corpses and blood of sorcerers. He had even killed a

legend. He was the nightmare for countless sorcerers.

He suddenly realized that he had been tricked by Fernando. “We have Douglas with us. It is totally possible to kill Vulture with distraction. Even if they pretend that they are tricked, they can’t see it coming that we have an archmage. Why do we have to attack the Inquisition directly? Fernando, don’t be blinded by fury. We can eliminate Benson in the future.”

Fernando snorted. “Ask the other people to evacuate from Paphos County first. You need to leave in advance, too. If the Church wants to retaliate, they need to find us first.”

He became more solemn. “We have to take down the traitor immediately. Only by proving that we are capable of eliminating traitors and causing trouble to the Church will the nobles be willing to work with us in secret, support us to create greater trouble, and not betray us easily!

“Lauren, you know very well how urgent the current situation is. If we are unwilling to take the risks, we will gradually be choked. We have to demonstrate our value in order to get help. Backing off will make us lose all the opportunities for cooperation.”

Gritting his teeth, Lauren thought for a moment before saying, “Fernando, be safe. Pay attention to Douglas in case he’s a spy.”

It was an indirect agreement with Fernando’s suggestion. According to the rules of the Union of Sorcerers, as long as the two leaders of the branch both agreed, the operation would be ready to go.

Fernando was not delighted because Lauren accepted his suggestion. He clenched his fists and suppressed his fury, preparing to unleash it at the appropriate moment.

...

In the forest, near the shelter...

“I’ll keep watch on the outside,” Lauren said to Fernando, fearing that the night watchers had already set up an ambush in the place.

Fernando nodded and entered the hidden cave.

Hardly had he passed the last barrier when he stepped on a piece of paper. Such paper was all over the ground.

Looking at Douglas who was busy writing, and seeing that his well-combed hair was now already a mess, Fernando picked up a piece of paper curiously and read the content on it.

Fernando was stunned the moment he started reading. He had been a well-acknowledged magic genius, and he was quite talented at mathematics, but the equations, words, and symbols on the paper made him feel that he had never learned mathematics!

What exactly was Douglas working on?

Chapter 858: Pearl on the Crown of Magic

858 Pearl on the Crown of Magic

After being stunned for almost a minute, Fernando asked in a hurry, “Douglas, what mathematical problem are you working on?”

He had never been embarrassed when it came to asking other people what he did not know, and he was most earnest when it came to the things he was interested in. Magic knowledge and mathematical problems were certainly among them.

Having set up alarm magic circles around, Douglas had known about it when Fernando entered the place, but instead of greeting the visitor, he continued dwelling in the ocean of mathematics. It was not until Fernando opened his mouth that he finally raised his head and answered, “The calculation of the area and volume of irregular objects, as well as the corresponding problems.”

The quill in his hands did not stop when he answered the question. So, his words were quite literal.

Fernando immediately looked shocked after he heard the reply. His red eyes were like two scorching suns. “The calculation of the area and volume of irregular objects? Are you studying the curves?”

It was a fundamental problem in analyzing the complicated magic models that had upset generations of sorcerers. It was the most brilliant pearl on the crown of magic. However, the research so far could only be applied to special conditions but could not be extrapolated. Many sorcerers were so frustrated that they even questioned the possibility of a solution. They stated that it was better to devote their attention to the studies on the improvement of spiritual power. The progress wouldn’t be fast either, but at least the returns would be obvious.

That was the reason why Fernando was so shocked. From the paper, the strange symbols, and the graphs of curves, he could tell that Douglas went further than anybody else in that regard!

If the problem could really be solved, the difficulties in analyzing and engraving magic models for the low rank, the middle rank, and the high rank would all be significantly lowered, and the sorcerers would be much stronger in twenty years!

Douglas was woken up from his research and smiled. "Yes. Although I've always been mocked for being impractical, I couldn't stop myself from studying it. I feel that it contains the most beautiful view in the world."

"What's your perspective?" Fernando blurted out. He then realized it was inappropriate. "If you do not want to answer, you are free not to. I'm just curious."

He had always been respectful of other people's secrets and would never snoop on them, which was a serious issue that might cause sorcerers to kill each other. However, "please tell me" was clearly written on his face.

Douglas chuckled. "It's not a big deal. I've been troubled by some problems too, and I need someone to talk to me and inspire me. Well, I'm working from the perspective of infinite division and recombination..."

Not intending to keep it to himself, he went on eloquently. Although Fernando couldn't understand most of it, he managed to follow with his basic understanding of mathematics. Now and then, he asked about the parts that he did not understand, which made Douglas even more enthused.

"What does this symbol mean?" Fernando had already approached Douglas. He pointed at a certain symbol on the manuscript.

His eyes glittering, Douglas said, "It's a symbol that I defined. It denotes infinity..."

Just like that, the two of them were so dedicated to the discussion of mathematics that they forgot about Lauren who was outside.

It seemed that few people had ever talked with Douglas about the problem that he was most proud of. So, he was extremely thrilled.

His previous warmth and gentleness were replaced by the excitement on his face. He went on talking like the most talkative old man.

“What are you doing?” Lauren waited for a long time outside, only to receive nothing, but he did not find any sign of a battle. The Secret Eye reported that Fernando was alive too. Therefore, he emboldened himself and walked in full of suspicion, only to discover what appeared to be a scene from when he studied in the magic tower before.

Douglas’ cheeks were particularly red. “We’re discussing mathematics.”

“I can see that.” Lauren smiled. “But don’t we have more important matters to discuss?”

“What is it?” Douglas calmed himself down from the heated discussion.

After a brief silence, Fernando said, “We are going to attack the Inquisition in this place to kill a high-ranked night watcher and a traitor. However, safety matters most. We should not take any risks. We would evacuate in case of an anomaly.”

Lauren looked at him in surprise. That was not what Fernando said during their discussion. He did not mention the latter half of the sentence.

“I need detailed information including the comparison of our strengths, the distribution of the divine power circles, etc. before I decide to join you or not,” Douglas said prudently.

Lauren hurried to introduce the situation in the city and spoke of their conclusion.

Douglas nodded. “Based on your intelligence, the odds of success are rather high, because the night watchers couldn’t expect that we are audacious enough to attack them at all. However, it is also very dangerous. If we are slow, and the Church activates the divine power circles and the transmission circles in reaction, we will be in

serious trouble.”

The Church had set up plenty of facilities to defeat the Magic Empire. The churches of such a big city must have transmission circles that led to the capitals of the major countries. Heart of Time, the Sword of Truth, the Grand Cardinals, and the other legendary experts could arrive in several minutes. If they were stopped by the divine power circles, they would be in grave danger.

“Lauren will interfere with the church with magic items, but he will only buy two to three seconds for us. We have to seize the opportunity to escape.” Fernando introduced their plan.

“That will do. Even if we run into a gold knight, I’ll still be confident enough to get away from the battle, unless he is immune to Time Stop.” Douglas revealed that he was capable of “Time Stop”, one of the trickiest ninth-circle spells.

“I’m going to attack the Inquisition with you.” Fernando released some suppressed fury.

After they made the detailed plans and the backup ways to escape, Lauren asked Fernando in a low voice, “Why did you stress that safety matters most and we should not take risks?”

Fernando was very solemn. “Because I believe that Douglas is much more valuable than the Inquisition, this city, and even the whole Union. Of course, that is not including me.”

Lauren looked at his friend in shock again. The guy had always preferred sarcasm to compliments, but he had given Douglas such a high remark! Even though his compliment at the end exposed his nature, it was still rather unbelievable. Was the Sun rising from the west today?

What happened before he came in? Had Fernando been controlled?

Holding back his surprise, Lauren asked carefully, “Where do you see that?”

Fernando replied angrily, “Everywhere! Here, here, and here!”

He pointed at the papers on the ground and told Lauren about Douglas' research in a low voice.

"If he succeeds, wouldn't it be much easier for me to become a senior-rank sorcerer?" Lauren observed in excitement. He had always admired and trusted his friend's judgment.

"Who knows? There are still plenty of problems. Chances are that it will be unfinished by the time he meets the Goddess of Magic." Fernando couldn't help but mock Douglas.

...

The horizon was crimson at sunset, and the city gate was about to be closed.

On a hill nearby, Fernando prepared his spell in a temporarily-established ancillary magic circle.

"Has he really improved the spell?" Douglas asked Lauren curiously.

Lauren said proudly, "Yes. In the entire Union and the other organizations that I'm familiar with, nobody controls the spell so perfectly that it's almost natural."

Fernando was suddenly covered in electricity. The sky within dozens of kilometers became dark, with clouds slowly appearing.

"Let's go into the city. A storm is coming in three hours." Fernando walked out of the magic circle. At this moment, the clouds were still not too many.

It was "Weather Manipulation", a seventh-circle spell!

A thunderstorm would cover most of the traces of magic waves!

After they snuck into the Inquisition, since the sorcerers who had betrayed them often practiced magic, they wouldn't fear that they might be sensed by the defense circle of the whole city.

Douglas looked at the sky, somewhat shocked. The regular

“Weather Manipulation” should have created thunderstorms or blizzards very quickly under appropriate weather conditions. Everybody could tell that those phenomena were caused by magic. Nobody had ever changed it bit by bit, as if it were a regular weather change, like what Fernando did.

Only in such a way would it escape the attention of the keen night watchers and red robes.

Lauren stayed out of the city to watch over the magic circle. He would also fly to the top of the city after the storm arrived, monitor the church, and disrupt it with magic items and bolts of lightning whenever it was necessary. On the other hand, Fernando and Douglas went into the city before the gate was closed. They hid in a fairly clean tavern.

More and more clouds were gathered, and the air was getting damper and damper. Everybody sensed an upcoming storm. So, few people were on the street. Even the patrolling soldiers were considering where they should hide from the rain.

Pa!

A bolt of lightning struck in the dark sky, raising intense thunders.

Douglas and Fernando looked at each other and nodded. They left the tavern and strolled toward the Inquisition.

BOOM!

The bolts of lightning and thunder broke out nonstop. By the time they reached the Inquisition, torrential rain was already pouring.

The Inquisition was an inconspicuous two-floored tower. It seemed plain, but it gave a gloomy and horrifying feeling. It was the nightmare of sorcerers and ordinary people.

“Based on our previous files, the main part of the Inquisition is below the tower,” Fernando reminded him.

Hualala.

As the rain poured down, everything became dark, and all their senses were blocked.

Douglas and Fernando moved faster as if they were in a hurry.

“What are you doing?” asked a night watcher who was pretending to be the janitor.

“Sir, we have important leads about the sorcerers!” said Douglas in a panic.

The night watcher was not surprised. He observed the strangers carefully. Recently, many people had come to the Inquisition at night to confess their secrets.

The moment his eyes met Douglas’ eyes, he seemed to have sunk into a boundless cosmos. He appeared rather agitated. “Why didn’t you come sooner? I’ll lead you to the captain!”

The vague magic waves were drowned in the storm.

Chapter 859: A Tour in the Inquisition

859 A Tour in the Inquisition

Thick, dark-yellow carpet, crystal light hanging up in the ceiling, fine statues, vivid wall paintings and relief sculptures, and the bright and warm atmosphere made the small, black building look like a nobleman's private property instead of a notorious "hell".

That was the first impression that the Inquisition gave to Fernando and Douglas. The gatekeeper led them through the tree-shaded path and now they had come to the most horrible place known to every sorcerer.

In the main hall stood Fernando, Douglas, and the gatekeeper. Although they did not see anyone else, their sharp instincts were telling them that a few night watchers were hiding in the darkness. Fernando and Douglas believed that those who were hiding were the first set of vigilance of the Inquisition.

The gatekeeper was slightly panicking. Walking, he said to them with annoyance, "I doubt your devoutness. You should've reported this right away. If this causes big trouble, you two will be sent to the gallows!"

After taking a short pause, his tone softened slightly as he said, "But if things go well, you'll be rewarded generously."

"Yes, yes, sir..." Douglas hurriedly nodded, pretending to be rather obedient. Fernando remained silent with his head low. He looked afraid.

The gatekeeper's words made the hiding night watchers stay where they were. They only scanned Fernando and Douglas using their intuition or spiritual power fields. But the two were well-prepared in advance. The night watchers could find nothing.

Of course, Douglas and Fernando were not acting as ordinary people since magic waves were hard to hide among the divine circles. What they were playing were two low-rank sorcerers who

were selling out their friends. Half true and half fake as their roles were, they could well hide without catching unnecessary attention. After the fall of Antiffler, such betrayals were more than common.

Therefore, the night watchers hiding were just being curious, wondering what kind of important information the two had, but they were not qualified to know.

Walking through the main hall, there was an east-west corridor, along both sides there were many rooms. Some doors were open, some closed.

Through the half-opened doors, Fernando saw many common clerics doing paperwork. Most of them were not even priests.

He finally exchanged a look with Douglas, and they had understood each other through their slightly relaxed facial expressions. Although the Inquisition was still sticking to all the regulations and was equipped with layers of guards and alerts like an unbreakable fortress, this place was still run by human beings, and human beings could get careless and lazy.

The gatekeeper suddenly stopped halfway. He turned to the side and opened one of the doors. The room behind the door had no decoration and the floor was bare. In the middle of the room, there were stairs leading to the underground basement.

At the end of the stairs, there was a gray stone gate that was engraved with simple but meaningful divine symbols, representing ten different crowns that connected to each other.

The great power coming out from the gate made both Fernando and Douglas slightly squint their eyes. The gate was the direct display of the defense circle in the Inquisition, and its power was almost equal to that of a level nine red robe. At this time, the Church was so powerful that only a legendary could become a Grand Cardinal.

Fernando knew that the symbol of the ten crowns was called “Tree of Blessing”.

The gatekeeper gently knocked on the fourth crown while following

a special pace. Soon, an indifferent voice asked, “Who? What for?”

“Team no. 2. The ‘Hand of Dusk’, today’s gatekeeper. We have two low-rank sorcerers here for some very important information. I’m afraid they will hide something or lie, so I believe it’s better to have our team leader investigate them,” said the gatekeeper clearly, and his eyes looked sharp and sober. However, if taken a closer look, there was this very indistinct dilation in his pupils.

In most cases, a gatekeeper was only responsible for reporting this to the team leader, who would be the one deciding where and when to investigate the sorcerers. But the gatekeeper’s request was also reasonable. After all, some special divine circles capable of identifying lies were only available in the interrogation room. Also, it was not the first time something like this happened. The night watchers had lowered their alert and decided to ignore some of the detailed rules set up by their predecessors because of the successive victories they enjoyed.

The night watcher guarding this stone gate did not respond immediately, as he was checking them using the core of the divine circle. About thirty minutes later, he said in the cold tone, “Come in.”

The ten divine crowns lit up, and the gate slowly opened.

Douglas was a bit relieved. Although they did have a plan B, which was to mentally control the team leader if he decided to come to the gate to check them himself, this was not ideal as the magic waves would be hard to hide. Once they entered, the situation would be different. As there were many sorcerers in the underground room, their magic spells would not be easily identified.

Behind the gate, there was an endless corridor. In the darkness, there were also night watchers hiding.

Along the winding corridor, there were two lines of candlesticks, but the light came from the divine power.

However, the divine light made the dark and gloomy corridor even

more unpleasant by comparison.

Through the corridor, it suddenly became noisy. Many who were wearing black gloves were walking through the spacious hall. Some were wearing red gloves, as they were interrogators, whereas some were wearing big gray cloaks, and these were the executioners.

At the end of the main hall, there were many corridors. Douglas and Fernando could feel the magic or divine power waves. Obviously, some interrogations were going on, or it might be because some of them were practicing.

They did not draw much attention from those people, as they were led by a night watcher, and they had passed the many security checks already.

The gatekeeper led them to one of the corridors and then knocked on a door drawn with a black skull.

“Come in,” said the solemn voice.

Pushing the gate, Fernando saw a middle-aged man whose face was as thin and narrow as a serpent.

“Who are they?” asked the night watcher team leader with a bit of annoyance.

The gatekeeper closed the door first and then repeated the reason.

“Don’t be so reckless next time. Basic interrogation must be done first above the ground,” said the leader, whose tone wasn’t very strict.

He then looked at Douglas and Fernando before asking, “You know where Dark Storm is? And the headquarters of the Union of Sorcerers?”

His eyes now looked watery, and the divine light on the wall started flowing. As Fernando and Douglas had expected, he was using the power of the special divine circle to find the answer.

The night watcher leader was confident even though he was only a

level-five grand knight. With the help of this divine circle, even a senior-rank sorcerer would be affected by this power if he was not prepared, so these two low-rank sorcerers would have no chance to resist at all.

Suddenly, Fernando saw a pair of dark eyes, in which there were countless tiny light spots like charming stars.

The team leader suddenly sprang up from his seat and said out loud, “You two do know it!”

The weak magic waves were so hard to notice when the entire space was filled with the flowing divine light and when all kinds of power were mixing together in this underground place.

The night watcher leader walked back and forth. “This is very important. I have to report this to the Executor... and also the Predator.”

The Executor was the leader of this county’s Inquisition, and he was also a senior-rank sorcerer.

The team leader pulled open the door and said to a night watcher, “Go and find the Predator and the Executor. We have important information about the Dark Storm and the Union of Sorcerers!”

The night watcher hurriedly nodded and trotted away. The Predator was here to catch Dark Storm, and he had to be informed of this immediately.

The Predator was “Griffon Vulture”, which was how Douglas and Fernando called him.

The team leader and the gatekeeper led Douglas and Fernando out of the room and walked to the Executor’s room. On their way, both Douglas and Fernando were secretly observing the divine circles, and they came to the same conclusion—this place was like a solid fortress designed to restrain sorcerers.

However, they were already here.

Douglas and Fernando had found their way in. The over a hundred

years of victory and peace had made them greatly lower their alert.

At this time, the team leader suddenly stopped and murmured to himself, "Gotta bring the sorcerers who surrendered there as well, so that they can confront each other."

Therefore, he changed the direction and walked to another corridor. Douglas and Fernando followed behind him.

This was Douglas' will. He had mentally controlled the team leader. He had to make sure that the Predator would be in the Executor's room before them so that they could kill them all. After all, the Executor would very likely notice the fact that the team leader and the gatekeeper had been mentally controlled, and if that happened, they had to give up on killing the Predator. Their time for the mission was very limited, so they had to make the most use of it.

In the room, Benson was drinking a glass of strong liquor, and the look on his face was very relaxed. The worry and fear on his face were gone.

Of course, only when he was drunk could he forget his friend's eyes the last second before his friend died.

"Follow me to the Executor. There are sorcerers offering information. Please help us with the identification," asked the team leader politely.

Benson was a young man with a red face. He was quite good looking.

"That's what I should do." Benson smiled.

He took a glance at Douglas standing behind the team leader and did not recognize him at all. After all, he did not know that many sorcerers.

Fernando had changed himself into a rather short man. Benson was even a bit amused by the male sorcerer's height.

It never occurred to Benson that Fernando would dare to come here in person, to the Inquisition!

On their way, Benson did not pay much attention to the two sorcerers, as he was busy talking to the team leader to better get along with him.

The team leader was then told that the Predator had gone to the Executor's room. He accelerated his pace for arriving there late might piss off his superiors.

In the Executor's room, the Predator, who was wearing a set of black leather armor and shadow helmet, was sitting in the dark red armchair.

"They found Dark Storm?" he asked the Executor, who was wearing a set of silver armor.

"They are not here yet. I'm not sure. But Lion must have a reason asking you to come," said the Executor.

Lion was the codename for the night watcher team leader.

Sitting in the darkness, the Predator nodded and went back to waiting quietly.

The footsteps came. Someone knocked on the door.

"Come in." The Executor knew that it was Lion.

The gate opened slowly. The Predator's heart suddenly started beating very fast. He got his current status from countless slaughters, and he had just sensed the great danger and death coming.

"Stop!"

The Predator rushed to the door. His rich experience told him that only by interrupting this could he survive.

However, all he could see suddenly looked very pale, and the world had been deprived of all sounds.

Chapter 860: The Outraged Cardinal

860 The Outraged Cardinal

Time Stop! It was too late!

Before his brain came to a pause, the idea occurred to the Predator. But he had been turned into an insect in a piece of amber in this static world. He was now frozen by time in the air.

The whole world looked like an old painting drawn only in the color of gray, black, and white. Then, he saw that the colors were returning; gold, green, black, and red... and his body was able to move again.

Move?

The Predator could not figure this out? How could he see himself moving?

In fact, he thought that he would be lucky to survive the three to four rounds of attack during the timespan of Time Stop because of the many extraordinary items he had.

But why was he now watching his body falling onto the floor heavily? The colorful light burst out, but it failed to prevent his body from hitting the carpet and making the dull, banging sound.

How?

To his great shock, the Predator looked back and realized that he had turned transparent and was grabbed in the hand of the tall sorcerer.

His soul was pulled out?

Ninth-circle spell?

The Predator realized what was going on. Experienced as he was, although he did not understand what kind of spell it was, the

Predator once heard about it and knew that it could pull out one's soul!

None of his extraordinary items could resist such a creepy spell!

That was the end!

He knew that he wasn't able to fight back anymore.

Douglas showed no mercy and no hesitation. The pale flame in his hand burned the Predator's soul and made him give out a blood-curdling scream. The Predator felt that there were countless fine needles in his body and kept churning!

Meanwhile, he saw divine light burst out on the Executer and helped him resist a spell. However, the short sorcerer had also gotten rid of Time Stop and then turned the Executer into a stone statue before the Executer could do anything with a single pointing!

Although Fernando was also affected by Time Stop, he had prepared in advance. Therefore, he took action much faster than Executer.

According to their plan, Douglas' Time Stop was primarily for the Executer, who was level eight. Meanwhile, Douglas would destroy one of his extraordinary items to weaken his magic resistance, while Fernando, after he recovered, would focus on attacking the Executer.

Knights and clerics did not have as abundant methods as sorcerers for keeping themselves alive. Therefore, Fernando was confident that he could kill the Executer within two to three spells!

The most challenging thing in the plan was that Douglas and Fernando had to trust each other without any reservation and had confidence in each other that they could both do their tasks. So far, they worked pretty well with each other, and Fernando started believing that Douglas was quite trustworthy.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Five silver-black magic missiles flew out of Fernando's hand and hit

the Executer, which was now a stone statue. The stone statue then cracked, and the gaps extended inward. Soon, the statue had collapsed to the ground, stirring and raising lots of dust.

It had only been two to three seconds since the door was pushed open, and two senior-ranks had been killed. One of them had his soul pulled out, and the other had been turned into a pile of rubble.

When sorcerers were prepared, they could be extremely horrific!

At this time, Benson had not even realized what just happened. He could only see the colorful light sparkling in front of him. Lion and the gatekeeper were still frozen to the spot by Douglas.

A dim light beam shot out from the tip of Douglas' finger and hit Benson. Instantly, all his spell effects had disappeared, and he could not cast any spells now.

“Antimagic Ray!”

Fernando looked around and roared, “Benson!”

He had abandoned the disguise, and his imposing manner was like the fiercest storm over the ocean.

Benson could not believe his eyes, and his heart was filled with fear and confusion. He kept murmuring, “I don’t... I don’t want to...”

Fernando would not even waste half a second at this time. He summoned flashes of lightning and wrapped Benson into a lightning ball.

When the lightning and sparks disappeared, Benson’s body, which had been burned black, hit the ground. Fernando purposefully kept Benson’s face intact so that those who came later could see the great shock and fear on Benson’s face.

At this time, the night watchers guarding the entire building finally noticed the fight through the divine circle.

“Attack!”

“Attack! Tell the Executer!”

“Report it to the Executer! Activate all the divine circles!”

“The Executer is under attack!”

The night watchers, interrogators, and executioners were all in a great panic and had no clue what they should do as they had never encountered this before. Following their experience, most of them chose to hide first, waiting for a chance to fight back. A few who were relatively calm were also anxiously seeking help as they could not get into contact with the Executer, who had full access to the divine circle.

“The Executer was assassinated! Go find the Predator!”

“The Predator is missing!”

“Who comes next after the Executer?!”

The chaos went on. The entire Inquisition failed to respond effectively after losing its leader. After a while, the Executer’s assistant finally recalled that it was he who had the access.

However, by this time, Douglas and Fernando had already left the Inquisition and were now standing in the air, holding the Predator and Benson’s bodies in their hands.

“Throw them to the entrance of the square,” said Fernando coldly, which still sounded like roaring.

The two bodies were thrown down to the ground like two sacks. Fernando moved his fingers in the air, and the Predator’s blood became the scarlet ink for him to write on the ground.

“Betrayers, die!”

“Predators, die!”

Meanwhile, in the cold rain, Douglas raised his hand, and four meteors in fire fiercely dropped from the sky and hit the two-storey building of the Inquisition.

BOOM!

A horrible explosion took place, and a powerful blast swept across the surroundings. The building as well as its underground constructions had mostly collapsed, and most of the night watchers were forever buried down there. Only a few of them survived.

Since the Inquisition was built underground, and it was separated by the divine circle, in the stormy night, when Douglas cast Time Stop and the spells, the red robe in the church did not notice it. Only when the Executer died did he finally feel something bad.

The red robe was shocked when he saw the meteors falling. For a second, he forgot what he should do. But he soon calmed down. He was going to activate the defense circles in the city, and at the same time, he was about to inform the Radiance Church.

The meteors flew across the sky and fell into the city. Hiding in the rain and darkness in the air, Lauren saw the meteors as the signal. A ring on his finger started releasing electric sparks, which had a strange connection to Fernando's magic circle.

Then the flashes of lightning in the air suddenly joined into one and hit the Inquisition building. Its light lit up the entire city.

Pa!

The thick lightning hit the light shield, which had just been activated. Countless electric snakes were wriggling, which made the functioning of the divine circle slow down by a few seconds.

Lauren didn't even look at the lightning but instantly flew away, heading for the place they previously agreed on. He was flying in the air as fast as he could, and eventually, he started flying lower and lower. In the end, he disappeared in the forest.

Meanwhile, Douglas and Fernando had disappeared as soon as the meteors were summoned.

The rain was still pouring heavily, erasing almost all their traces.

A minute later, another senior-rank in the city, Paphos, arrived at

the Inquisition building. He was a radiant knight. Staring at the pit in the ground left by the destroyed Inquisition building, the look on his face kept changing. He was deeply shocked.

“Betrayers, die... Predators, die...”

Count Paphos murmured the words and talked to himself in low voice, “They’re surely crazy, those sorcerers. The Church is going to be outraged. The Church used me like a dog. I’d like to see how they respond to this!”

He took a deep breath and tried hard to control the impulse to laugh. It wasn’t bad being crazy sometimes.

The red robe then arrived. His face had turned pale with rage, as if Count Paphos owed him a hundred thousand Thale.

“Bloody Sorcerers! I’m gonna burn you all!” the red robe kept cursing.

Many nobles had also arrived. They saw the scene, but no one dared to say anything.

“What are you looking at?! Go and find the bloody sorcerers!” roared the red robe.

The nobles all looked down, for they were hiding their emotions in the darkness and pouring rain.

After two minutes, divine light soared high in the church, which was the waves from the transmission magic circle.

A black-haired young man flew out of the church. He was tall and strong, and he had dark blue eyes in which the light and radiance was like a flowing river. He was not wearing any armor, and there was a longsword in his hand.

The look on the red robe’s face slightly changed. He then flew to the man and said in awe, “Your Excellency Kritonia.”

“I’ll find them.” Kritonia looked up at the night sky, and somehow, the falling raindrops suddenly moved much more slowly.

...

When they met each other at the place that they previously agreed on, Lauren said in excitement, "We did it!"

"I didn't expect the Inquisition was on such a weak alert..." Douglas was quite surprised as well.

Fernando grinned, as he was in a very good mood. "The looks on those idiots' faces are gonna be so funny! Those stupid black-clawed dogs!"

Then he became more serious and said to Douglas, "We'll take you to the Union's headquarters."

"I heard that the Union has a damaged floating city?" asked Douglas out of curiosity.

Chapter 861: League, the Deputy Presiden

861 League, the Deputy Presiden

Fernando waved his hands and snorted, “We do, but it’s useless. It falls, so it’s a sheer failure. A failure which will only lead us to the wrong path!”

He obviously wasn’t a big fan of the legendary sorcerer who first built the floating city, as Fernando believed that the sorcerer was just bragging.

A floating city was the shared research object among the three Magic Empires. They tried to put themselves in a city flying in the air and looked down upon ordinary people like gods. However, creating such a city was extremely difficult, especially when it came to how to maintain the floating status. Countless sorcerers had tried.

In the past years, a few legendary sorcerers had claimed that they had successfully built a floating city, but so far, none of them survived. One was involved in the War of Dawn and was shot down by the Church and nobles, while others were quite problematic. The best one floated for more than a decade but finally still crashed.

Douglas had shown his power, so Lauren smiled and said, “We found its wreck. It’s called Allyn, you know, the pretty famous ‘City in the Sky’. But we don’t have the core magic circle structure, so we can’t fix it. It’s just our secret base right now.”

Douglas didn’t care, and he smiled mildly. “We learn things from failures, for they remind us of the mistakes and errors that could’ve been avoided. I’ve always been interested in floating and flying magic and trying to figure the principles out. I hope the Union can give me a chance to take a look.”

“No problem! We’ll talk to the deputy president!” Lauren was very confident.

Lauren knew that the Union only had one archmage who knew

Time Stop so far, and so, having an extra powerful archmage meant a lot to the Union. Also, proud as Fernando was, even he respected Douglas' talent in mathematics, so Lauren also believed that Douglas would become a leader of the Union in the future.

Douglas nodded. "Thanks. So where should we go now?"

"To go to the headquarters, we go to Rentato first." Lauren had a meaningful smile on his face.

Douglas was surprised. "Rentato? The city where Holm Parish is located?"

"Yes, also the capital of the kingdom." Lauren nodded and grinned.

.....

The evening glow of the setting sun was as red as blood. A coach arrived in Rentato before the city gate closed.

Driving through the streets smelling like fish, the coach stopped in front of an ordinary-looking hotel.

"Roasted Fish Hotel..." Douglas got off the coach and read the strange name, feeling a bit amused.

Fernando's voice sounded a bit sharp as he said, "He's good at making roasted fish and only knows how to roast a fish. I'd recommend you to have one, or he'd be pissed. He'll say you don't understand what good food is."

While speaking, Fernando directly jumped off the coach and stepped in a puddle.

After the rain, there were puddles everywhere in Rentato. But different from a small city, streets in Rentato were paved with rocks, so they still looked quite clean.

Seeing this, Douglas was a bit emotional. "Rentato was an important city across the strait to the empire, and the empire indeed had a good job here, but it's now taken by the Church..."

He was born in Antiffler, and he believed that he was from Sylvanas Magic Empire.

“We’ll be back one day!” said Fernando in a low but confident voice.

Lauren, who was the coachman, looked back and said, “Don’t just stand here like statues. Go in there first.”

On their way, he found that Douglas was in fact quite easygoing, for he wasn’t as proud as an archmage usually could be. The only thing was that Douglas kept asking questions, but this was not a big deal.

The hotel was rather small and old. Few tables and few guests were in the lobby.

Behind the counter stood a gray-haired man, who was wiping cups attentively.

“You can’t even see your own fingers! Light the candles!” Fernando said to the hotel owner loudly, “Among all your shortcomings, being cheap is the nastiest one!”

It was already evening. The windows of the hotel were rather narrow. Darkness had seized this place.

The hotel owner looked up. He had a square face, and his dull-green left eye looked completely dead and creepy.

“Being cheap is an attitude toward life that you’ll never understand, you are such a little puppy made of Flame Gel,” the hotel owner, whose right eye was in the color of jade-green and looked very mysterious, said in return.

Fernando didn’t care. He turned around and said to Douglas, “Old Green, the owner of the place, an old knight. His left eye is the result of a failure to melt bloodline.”

In this hotel, there was no taboo on talking about magic or bloodline. The few guests in the lobby completely ignored Fernando’s voice and enjoyed their liquor and fish as if nothing happened.

Fernando pointed at Douglas. "You can call him Douglas. He's a guest from the other side of the strait. He hopes to join us, and he has passed my test. This is the detailed information for League."

He threw a piece of dark-yellow parchment at Old Green.

Old Green was still wiping the cups and mugs, but the speed at which the piece of parchment flying toward him became lower and lower as if it had fallen into a marsh.

Old Green put down a mug on the parchment on the counter and said without any facial expressions, "Young lad, you want honey-roasted fish? This is the best cuisine in the entire Rentato, Great Holm, and even along the strait! You'll regret it if you say no!"

He was pretty eager.

Douglas was warned earlier by Fernando, so he smiled and said, "I'd love to."

"Good, lad. Not many young men know how to appreciate good food now," said Old Green meaningfully before he walked to the kitchen.

"He's a knight from an experiment previously conducted by Fernando's teacher. He has a close relationship with the Hoffenberg family. After the fall of his teacher, Old Green didn't want to surrender to the Church, so he opened this hotel in Rentato as a secret station for the Union." Lauren hurriedly came and added the information for Douglas after he pulled the horses into the stable. "Old Green is gonna report the mission to League, our deputy president. They have to discuss it before you enter the headquarters. But don't worry. There's no way that they will reject you. You'll hear the good news tomorrow."

"Thanks." Douglas smiled and nodded. "I'm actually not in a hurry. Although I'm very interested in floating and flying, I'm still trying to figure out many things."

Fernando looked at Douglas with his scarlet eyes and asked hurriedly, "What else are you working on?"

On their way, Fernando had been discussing with Douglas mainly about mathematics. Although he seemed to despise Douglas' study, he valued Douglas' talent a lot. Fernando wished to know more about Douglas' research interest and hear more inspiring and profound insights.

"Something trivial," said Douglas, who had no intention to keep these as secrets. He pulled out a chair and sat down with Fernando. They started to have a long conversation on various research topics.

The conversation went on for hours. When it was already completely dark outside, Fernando still felt reluctant to leave. They didn't eat the honey-roasted fish, which made Old Green quite unhappy.

When it was midnight, Fernando finally went back to his room to get some sleep, but his mind was full of questions. Douglas entered his room and saw a few stars among the clouds. He suddenly felt a strange but familiar peace.

He should be able to settle down for a while and concentrate on his studies.

He thought so to himself.

.....

When the sky was barely bright, Douglas heard the familiar footsteps that came from Lauren. Lauren knocked on his door.

"Douglas, the deputy president is here. He's an archmage." Lauren was excited about how much Douglas was valued by the Union.

Douglas felt a bit excited as well. "Lauren, please lead me to see the deputy president."

Lauren led Douglas to the secret chamber on the first floor of the hotel's basement. Douglas then saw an old man wearing a black, soft hat. He had black hair and blue eyes. The old man's facial features were sharp, and his nose was slightly hooked. The blue eyes were calm but deep, for lots of secrets were hiding in them.

“Welcome, Douglas,” said League, who was wearing a high-collar coat that was popular in Rentato. He looked like an old and decent noble.

Douglas greeted, “My pleasure, Mr. League.”

Lauren looked around and said, “Fernando’s not here? I’ll go and find him.”

“Don’t bother. I’m here to see Douglas.” League shook his head slowly. “Douglas, you’ve proved yourself by what you did to the Inquisition with Fernando. But your action has brought us huge trouble. Led by Heart of Time, the clerics, night watchers, and nobles have killed more than thirty sorcerers in the Union.”

“The action was to prove to the nobles our true value! I think the killed sorcerers were spotted by the Church a long time ago, but the Church just didn’t take any actions earlier!” Lauren defended loudly.

League took a gloomy glance at Lauren and cut him off, “This isn’t your business.”

Then he turned back to Douglas. “So, although the Union has granted your application for joining, we have decided to give you some punishment. You’ll be sent to Allyn for three years to study the wreck. If you make no mistakes there, three years later, you’ll become the deputy president of the Union!”

Douglas was a bit amused. The deputy president first suppressed him and then threw some hope at him. But Douglas didn’t care. The most important thing was that he could go and study Allyn, the wreck of the floating city.

“I’m okay with it.” Douglas nodded slightly.

Lauren tried to say something, but he failed. His face flushed a bit.

League finally smiled. “Hope you can figure out how to make it fly again.”

Douglas and Lauren left the basement. On their way back, they saw

Fernando walking to them furiously.

Chapter 862: The Meeting Destined to Happen

862 The Meeting Destined to Happen

Lauren said, somewhat a little silly, “Fernando, you weren’t here, Mr. League...”

Fernando directly ignored him and rushed past Lauren and Douglas like a furious cluster of storms. His red eyes opened big. Obviously, he was outraged.

Douglas slightly frowned but soon unknotted his eyebrows. He watched Fernando rushing downstairs to the secret chamber.

“Fernando!” Lauren finally realized, and he hurriedly yelled, “Don’t argue with Mr. League!”

Bang!

Fernando slammed the door of the secret chamber shut and kept the conversation within.

“What shall we do? Fernando will piss off Mr. League!” Lauren asked Douglas for help. Only Douglas, who carried both good manners and power, could stop this argument right now.

Douglas nodded. “If anything goes wrong, I’ll stop it. But expressing himself is Fernando’s right.”

“But he’s challenging the deputy president!” Lauren could not understand Douglas’ attitude. In Lauren’s eyes, Douglas was very powerful, knowledgeable, and especially talented in mathematics, but Douglas’ way of thinking could be quite strange. Douglas was a big fan of asking why, and some of his opinions were quite hard for him to accept. For example, hierarchy, a system which was respected and followed by all sorcerers, seemed to be quite insignificant to Douglas.

Douglas was just smiling but said nothing. At this time, they heard

Fernando's roaring from the secret chamber. The door wasn't enough to keep his fury within. And it was louder and louder, which made Lauren start feeling concerned that the walls might collapse at any time.

He listened carefully, trying to figure out what Fernando was saying. At this time, the door of the secret chamber was pushed open fiercely, and League walked out. His face looked rather unhappy as he walked on the stairs.

"I'm the branch president in Paphos County, so I have the right! I don't need you, old man!" Fernando chased League out and yelled.

League stopped walking and turned around. His voice was as cold as ice as he said, "You're no more."

"So what? When I made the decision, I still was!" Fernando looked right into League's eyes angrily.

"Crazy dog..." League murmured and then kept walking.

Fernando waved his arms and yelled, "You old antique! Even if I'm wrong, this has nothing to do with Douglas! He was only obeying my words! He knew nothing from the headquarters!"

Lauren was shocked as he watched them arguing. Although he knew Fernando's bad temper, it never occurred to him that Fernando would yell at the deputy president! There were only three deputy presidents in the Union, and even the president had to act quite politely to them!

He was about to stop them, but as they kept arguing, Lauren realized Fernando's intention. He wasn't arguing with League for himself, as he had already been mentally prepared for the punishment when he proposed; instead, he was arguing for Douglas, for he did not understand why Douglas should be responsible for this.

At this time, League walked past Douglas. He caught his breath and then said, "Douglas, I forgot to tell you. As a ninth-circle archmage, you're qualified to attend the core meeting that is to be held five

days later. So you won't be heading for Allyn until next week."

"Sure," Douglas said. He did not ask anything else and just nodded politely.

"You old thing! If you have guts, you just kick Douglas out right now! Tons of organizations want to have an archmage!" Fernando wouldn't stop.

Those legendary sorcerers were busy protecting themselves, so a ninth-circle archmage should be considered as a top force for every organization, except for Cabin of Palmeira, which was a legendary group. So far, the entire Union of Sorcerers only had two ninth circles. One of them was the president, Arnold, and the other was League. The two deputy presidents were only senior-ranks working on hitting the eighth circle.

League snorted, unwilling to argue with Fernando. He hurriedly walked past Lauren and headed for Old Green's room.

"You old man! You're still thinking about your power and resources when facing such great danger! I joined the Union because of the concept you promoted—to push aside suspicion and bias and accept all groups and sorcerers! Shame on you! A senior-rank sorcerer can go anywhere!" Fernando roared at League's back.

Lauren had cold sweat on his back. He wondered if Fernando had ever worried about a possible vengeance on himself in the future if he kept acting like this.

He would pretend that he never heard such words from Fernando!

League paused a bit, and then he accelerated his pace and disappeared around the corner.

"Fernando, how could you talk like that?" Lauren was rather anxious. "He can just give you a seemingly simple but actually dangerous mission!"

"Unless he can kill me with one strike, or I'll let him know how dangerous a storm can be!" Fernando snorted, "Also, he doesn't get along that well with the president."

Lauren was shocked. He didn't expect that there was a reason behind his friend's angry roaring. Then was the roaring real? Or he was just pretending?

"No wonder you're not afraid of Mr. League..." Lauren murmured.

Fernando paused a bit and said, "This has nothing to do with fear. If it had been the president standing in front of me, I'd have done the same!"

Alright, he was still that Fernando Lauren knew. Lauren felt a bit relaxed, but also a bit sad.

Fernando took a deep breath and combed his hair with his hand. "In such an era, we might die anytime because of the black-clawed dogs or clerics. So we mustn't be afraid of death, as death is our destiny and doomed ending. And if we are not afraid of death, why should we be afraid of a president or deputy president?"

Douglas had been listening to their conversation quietly. At this time, he smiled and said, "Thanks."

"I just don't like how they treat people unfairly!" Fernando looked up at the mottled ceiling.

.....

In the next three days, while Lauren was busy with the tasks allocated to him as a liaison, Douglas and Fernando stayed idle.

Douglas and Fernando, however, didn't mind it. They even enjoyed themselves in the three days that they kept talking and exchanging ideas. And they both agreed that the current magic system did have its fatal problems, which were impossible to be fixed.

Although Fernando spent most of the time listening to and learning from Douglas, his talent in mathematics and magic made his comments rather inspiring to Douglas. Therefore, Douglas was not only teaching Fernando. Together, they had a pretty good time.

Even though it was almost evening, they were still working on a math problem. It was already very dim in the hotel lobby. However,

both of them had cast a spell on their eyes so that they could see through complete darkness. They had a honey roasted fish beside them, but the fish was not their focus at all.

A middle-rank sorcerer stayed beside them to listen to their conversation out of curiosity, but the sorcerer soon walked away, feeling rather dizzy.

At this time, the half-closed gate of the hotel was pushed open, and the cool evening breeze had instantly driven away the humid and warm air in the lobby.

“Green, two roasted fish!” The hoarse and deep voice came in first before the person showed himself.

Coming back after finishing his mission, Lauren just sat down. He believed that Fernando now finally had a competitor in terms of roaring.

Douglas and Fernando looked up at the same time because they had sensed that the man was a knight. Was he Green’s friend?

Because of Green, many knights liked coming here, which made the sorcerers here feel quite insecure, but this had also effectively helped them hide from the Church’s search. Also, Green would pick his guests. If a knight was rather hostile to sorcerers or sensitive to topics related to magic, he would find an excuse to get angry and kick the knight out of the hotel forever. If there was a knight in the hotel, Old Green would put a secret sign outside of the hotel so that the sorcerers coming in could be prepared. When Fernando and Douglas arrived, there was no knight in the hotel.

No one would ever expect that a gathering place for knights was in fact a secret liaison station for sorcerers!

Bang!

Hearing the voice, the wood mug that Green was wiping fell from his hands onto the counter.

He stared at the entrance, and his dead green eye released circles of waves that could affect the physical surroundings!

“What brings you here?” asked Old Green.

Meanwhile, he took a warning glance at Douglas and Fernando. They understood immediately and hid their draft paper sheets.

“You want neither title nor treasure. All you want is such a hotel selling honey-roasted fish? Are you going to give up your title as a knight, Fatal Left Eye?” A tall and strong man, who was wearing a tight gray knight suit, walked in. His eyebrows were thick, and his nose was rather high. He looked quite young, but if one took a closer look, the fine wrinkles would be spotted. Only his blue eyes were full of energy, like a teenage boy’s cheerful eyes.

Following him was a young girl, about eleven or twelve years old. She had a pretty face but pretended to be rather serious.

She had a tidy fringe of hair on her forehead, which made her look like a delicate doll. The heavy sword she was carrying was even taller than herself. Right now, she was struggling with dragging the sword with her.

Her eyes were also very impressive. She had silver-gray eyes, and they were cold and sharp.

“So, she is?” asked Old Green confusedly.

The man whose blue eyes looked rather young smiled. “I’m her teacher now, training her to be a knight.”

The little girl squared her shoulder a bit. But her right foot tripped over her left foot, and she then had a bad fall.

“Haha, she can’t even walk. How can she be a squire?” Fernando grinned and commented.

The girl was still dragging the heavy sword. On the ground, she looked up, and her nice-looking eyebrows furrowed angrily. “No one knows how to walk before they learn it!”

Umm? Fernando didn’t get it immediately.

“So she is the descendant of ...” The look on Old Green’s face had

become quite strange. It looked both serious and funny.

The man with beautiful eyes smiled. “Yes, I didn’t expect this at all.”

He then turned and said to the young girl, “Alright, slowly get up, Hathaway. You’ll become strong one day.”

Chapter 863: Everyone Has Something They Are Confident In

863 Everyone Has Something They Are Confident In

“Yes!” The little girl named Hathaway wriggled and tried to get back on her feet, but she still did not let go of the giant sword in her hands, as if it were the most important thing for her today. Therefore, it was impossible for her to stand up with only her elbows. After she finally lifted herself from the ground, she fell down again.

Again and again, Hathaway failed to get up, and her knight teacher simply watched without saying anything, as if he were telling her that she could count on nobody else except for herself to become a knight. Gradually, Hathaway’s cold but beautiful eyes seemed to be covered in mist, but she bit her red lips and furrowed her eyebrows hard, not letting out any sound of pain or distress.

Even Old Green found it unbearable to keep watching. He said in a coarse voice, “Sharp...”

Hardly had he called the man when Douglas, who had been observing quietly, opened his mouth and said gently, “Sometimes, you drop things temporarily to better hold them in the future. Do not impose too much pressure on yourself.”

Hathaway raised her head and stared at Douglas with her misty gray eyes, as if she were considering what he meant.

Fernando chuckled. “If you cling to your giant sword, of course you can never get back on your feet. I’ve never seen any kid as silly as you!”

“This is a mission!” Hathaway spewed out her words one after another. She was too angry and did not know how to speak logically yet.

Fernando said, not in a good mood, “Throw the sword on the

ground and pick it up again after you stand up. Otherwise, with your body coordination, it's impossible for you to get back on your feet!"

He had seen Hathaway's real problem but pointed it out in the bluntest way. In the meantime, he added to himself, "Your language ability also needs improvement!"

Hathaway's face turned dim and grim again. Nothing could be seen except indifference and stubbornness. Also, she did not follow the subtle suggestion behind Fernando's mockery but kept on trying. She supported herself and fell again and again. Finally, after countless failures, she sat up on her knees and raised the giant sword, slowly rising to her feet while relying on it.

Looking at that scene, Old Green seemed excited. "Besides the color of his eyes, she has the determination in his blood!"

"Yes. Otherwise, I wouldn't have accepted the mission, even though it was given by that big shot in person." Her knight teacher who was called Sharp smiled in consolation and mixed feelings. His blue eyes were as peaceful as a windless ocean.

Hathaway's little face had been contaminated by the dirt, and her hair turned messy. Holding the giant sword, she turned her head and looked at Fernando. She did not say anything or make a snort, but her indifferent eyes alone were enough to darken Fernando's face. He mumbled, "There's a chance to succeed by trying repetitively when it comes to such little things. If it were anything else, such an idiotic approach would've caused a person to be killed in the first few attempts. It's impossible to start all over again."

Her face unchanged, Hathaway turned to Douglas and bowed in respect. "Thank you."

Her voice was both gentle and chilly.

"Determination is a great quality." Douglas praised her before he continued, "However, you need to learn to recognize your mistakes. Persistence does not mean that you have to persist in mistakes. You should always think and handle problems based on facts."

Hathaway nodded her head, half confused. She stumbled to her teacher with the giant sword.

Sharp smiled and said to Old Green, "I'm surprised to see such a philosopher in your place. I've only heard similar things from the cardinal theologians. However, he said the opposite, claiming that persistence means persisting in the truth, and that the truth is the Lord's teaching."

In the past, due to the long lives of many intelligent creatures, they had the spare time to consider the metaphysical questions, and that was how philosophy was born. Then, many common scholars joined them, not giving up thinking just because their life spans were short. They were known as philosophers or thinkers. However, as the War of Dawn went on and the Church dominated the world, the philosophers that they disliked were going extinct.

"As a matter of fact, everyone thinks as long as he lives. That is, if he is not an inferior creature," Fernando interrupted again with his mean mouth.

Sharp turned around and looked at him; the smile on his face was suddenly gone. The atmosphere in the lobby of the small hotel was suddenly frozen, and the sound of seawater surging vaguely came out. Hathaway's face suddenly softened, as if she were looking forward to what might happen next.

"Cough." Old Green coughed and broke the silence. "Sharp, don't be petty with kids. He's always like this. It's nothing personal."

Although Fernando could not reveal his vibe as a senior-rank sorcerer, he still glared back at Sharp impolitely without backing off.

"Hahaha, hahaha." Sharp suddenly burst into laughter. "Interesting. He's very like me when I was young. I used to despise and mock other people; pigheaded and unlikable."

Fernando sniffed and turned around, ignoring the guy. He did not sense anything similar between them.

Sharp sat on a high chair before the wood counter, and Old Green poured him a glass of hard liquor without him saying anything.

“Hu! Only you still have this recipe! It’s been a long time since I tasted such hard liquor!” Sharp drank and chuckled. “I became civilized after I was almost beaten to death by him several times.”

It seemed that he was really of a mind to teach Fernando a lesson just now.

Fernando sniffed but was not mean again, because he knew very well that it was best not to expose his magic capabilities in Rentato unless he had absolute confidence. Otherwise, both himself and his partner might be killed!

Sharp finished the glass of liquor and turned to the little girl, Hathaway. “You can find a seat and wait for your roasted fish with honey. Well, you may put down the giant sword now.”

Hathaway nodded and put the sword on the table. Then, she pulled a chair as deftly as a deer and sat down, before she took out a blue-covered book from her magic pouch.

Turning the pages, she began to read carefully. The indifference on her face was gradually gone, and she curled her lips and frowned now and then.

It enlivened her and made her more like a regular quiet kid of her age instead of a unique one a moment ago.

“Chronicles of Antiffler?” With a pair of sharp eyes, Fernando couldn’t help but read the title of Hathaway’s book. “You’ll get dumber and dumber if you read such kind of books at such a young age.”

Hathaway raised her head and looked at him. Then, without saying anything, she was buried in the book again.

Douglas was amused by that, finding it impossible to understand Fernando’s behavior.

Lauren chuckled and sat next to Douglas. He said in a low voice,

“Do you feel that it is unlike Fernando? Actually, he has always been like this. He’s mean and sarcastic and impatient when it comes to important issues, but he also likes playing with kids and making inappropriate jokes with other people. You’ll understand it better after you get to know him.”

He completely ignored Fernando’s glare.

“It means that he has a young state of mind.” Douglas chuckled. “However, I think kids are better to be encouraged...”

Lauren went on to say with a low voice, “Fernando used to have a sister who ‘accidentally’ died at twelve. So, he has always been fond of little kids, although he never admits it and would rather tease them...”

Pa.

Fernando patted the table hard and interrupted Lauren’s betrayal.

“Hehe.” Sharp seemed to have perfect hearing although he was drinking nonstop. He chuckled in time, suggesting that he heard everything.

Hathaway turned the pages much more slowly, as if she heard Lauren’s words too. Her tightened face was greatly relaxed.

Lauren smiled in satisfaction. It was exactly what he hoped. He hoped that the two parties wouldn’t burst into a fight, and their identities as sorcerers would not be exposed.

Fernando stared at Lauren without blinking, as if he were considering how to deal with the guy tonight.

After reading *Chronicles of Antiffler* for a while, Hathaway put it back and took out another thick book with a black power, several sheaves of paper, a quill, and a delicate bottle of ink.

Opening the book, Hathaway wrote and drew attentively, emanating the most eye-catching glow of confidence, which was exactly what she lacked most previously!

“Basics of Mathematics...” Fernando saw the title on it.

He was not surprised. Mathematics was the only magic-related knowledge that the Church allowed to learn in public. It was because some nobles wanted to make sure that they were not deceived by their accountants. But of course, most nobles were still proud of their inability to calculate.

Douglas could also see clearly in the dimness. He smiled. “As a matter of fact, there are simpler ways.”

He was too delighted to control himself.

“Really?” Hathaway pursued bluntly, as if she found it hard to believe.

Now that he already said it, Douglas did not back off. He walked to her and sat down. Picking up the quill, he offered her another solution that was creative and convenient.

Hathaway stared at the paper before her in a daze. After a dozen seconds, her indifferent silver eyes were revitalized, and she nodded affirmatively. “It’s real.”

As she spoke, she repeated the method and considered it for a while. Then, she quickly turned the book to a certain page and pushed the book to Douglas. Her face was still nonchalant, but she said with expectations in her eyes, “What about this one?”

Douglas read it. Before he said anything, Fernando, who had approached at some point, already mocked, “You don’t know how to solve such a simple question?”

He introduced the solution quickly.

Hathaway furrowed her beautiful eyebrows first, but after her calculation, her eyebrows gradually relaxed. Then, she quickly turned the book to another page. Without saying anything, she simply looked at Douglas and Fernando.

Chapter 864: A Difficult Mission

864 A “Difficult” Mission

Although the mathematical knowledge that Hathaway was learning was already sophisticated enough for children of her age, it was not really tricky for either Douglas or Fernando. So, Hathaway turned the pages and pointed at the questions on it with her narrow finger without saying a word, waiting for the standard, simple answers. She was not disappointed once.

Sharp, her knight teacher who was enjoying the roasted fish with honey and the hard liquor, was gradually attracted by the situation on this side. He forgot to chat with Old Green anymore. Frowning, he observed Douglas and Fernando carefully.

Perhaps because of her excitement, Hathaway’s face was redder than before. After a long time, she finally closed her books and said in a low voice, “Thank you.”

Fernando was about to mock her when Sharp suddenly put down his glass and stood up from the high chair. He chuckled. “Old Green, I did not know that your guest was not only a philosopher but also a mathematician. I think he is even more knowledgeable than the court teachers...”

His words were directed at Old Green, but his blue eyes were focused on Douglas and Fernando.

Old Green picked up Sharp’s glass and washed it in the sink while he mumbled, “What’s wrong with that? Most guys who are good at mathematics are philosophers to some extent.”

“Yes. Mathematics is the ultimate representation of philosophy.” Douglas agreed with Old Green.

Fernando, on the other hand, sniffed and turned his head, showing that he was unwilling to talk to the barbarian.

Sharp chuckled. Instead of staring at Douglas and Fernando, he

strolled to Hathaway and watched her eat the roasted fish, which was getting cold. "Hathaway, how does the roast fish taste?"

"Not bad." Hathaway was taciturn even though he was her knight teacher.

"We need to leave after you taste it. You have to have dinner at home. I cannot let them know that I allow you to eat random food," Sharp said with a smile.

Hathaway took off the handkerchief on the left side of her knight suit and wiped her lips gently. Then, she nodded her head.

"Alright."

"Hold your sword well and never drop it easily, but remember not to let it affect you. The life of a knight lies in their creed, their spirit, and their will, not in their sword." Sharp finally taught Hathaway something about what happened earlier.

Holding the enormous sword that was even taller than herself, Hathaway frowned, as if she still did not agree with the theory. However, instead of arguing, she simply followed Sharp out of the hotel thoughtfully.

The moment she got out of the door, she suddenly turned around. Her face was still expressionless, but her silver eyes seemed gentler than before. Then, she nodded at Douglas and Fernando, as if she was thanking them for their mathematical guidance again.

After they were far away, Fernando said, "Silver pupils and cold eyes. She must be a descendant of the Hoffenberg family, isn't she? What's her relationship with the Sword of Truth?"

He looked at Old Green, waiting for his answer.

The Sword of Truth was the title for Williamson Hoffenberg, who was a legend even more powerful than "Heart of Time" Kritonia, and a knight who rose against the tyranny of the Magic Empire earliest with the Saint Truth. Therefore, the God of Truth had blessed him with a legendary longsword that matched his blood power. It was known as the "Sword of Truth".

“You don’t need to know,” Old Green replied without raising his eyes.

Fernando sniffed. “It’s very easy to investigate. Not everybody thinks that it is a secret like you do.”

Old Green turned a deaf ear to his mockery and focused on wiping the glass.

...

The next morning, Fernando knocked on Douglas’ door. He had new ideas about a certain magic problem after he woke up and came to talk with Douglas in excitement.

“I admit that there were some minor mistakes in my opinion yesterday...” The moment the door was opened, Fernando said sincerely, but he saw somebody else other than Douglas in the room. “Deputy, why are you here?”

Seated in the chair before the desk was Deputy President League, who had been pissed off by him and stormed off a few days ago!

“Am I not allowed to be here?” League touched his hawk nose and asked gloomily.

Fernando chuckled. He was about to mock League’s thick face when Douglas said, “League is here to give me a mission.”

“A mission? What mission requires a ninth-circle archmage? Study Allyn?” Fernando looked serious.

Douglas said peacefully, “I’m asked to become Hathaway’s mathematics teacher in private and measure her magic gifts. If possible, I will direct her to embark on the path of magic.”

“Is her place high in the Hoffenberg family?” Fernando knew the Union’s strategy to attract nobles.

“Her father was Ludwig, the youngest and most loved child of the Sword of Truth, as well as the knight who was likely to become the second legend of the Hoffenberg family. It’s a pity that he died by

accident in a certain relic. So, the Sword of Truth has shifted his love to Ludwig's only daughter, Hathaway. He loves her so much that he doesn't care that she lacks knight talents at all." League introduced the situation roughly. After all, Fernando was involved in the "lesson" yesterday too.

Fernando sniffed. "Why didn't you ask me to do that? I think I'll be a great teacher."

He was just saying it. He never really thought of teaching any student right now.

"You? Hehe," League replied without a smile.

Douglas also shook his head faintly. He did not think that the impatient and mean Fernando could be a good teacher.

Fernando snorted. Dissatisfied with their attitudes, he said, "Sharp may be the gold knight. If he recognizes us, the whole Union may be destroyed. Also, the Sword of Truth is a devout believer. I doubt that he will support us even if Hathaway walks on the path of magic."

"A devout believer is always contradictory to a qualified king. It appears to me that the Sword of Truth is more and more like the latter," League said thoughtfully and walked out of the door.

After a brief stun, Fernando said after the guy left, "He's not as stupid as I thought..."

...

The best breakfast of the "Roasted Fish Hotel" was a piece of white bread, a cluster of butter, and a roasted fish. Fernando complained that the menu never changed, but he still devoured the food in the meantime. He always had a great appetite.

After swallowing some of the food, Fernando finally had the energy to ask, "How do you plan to become Hathaway's private mathematics teacher? Since she is so important, I don't believe that Sharp, the 'Blue Demon', will allow her to spend time with a stranger and walk on the path of magic."

He had already figured out Sharp's identity. The man was "Blue Grace", a level-nine gold knight and the deputy captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights. However, he was known as "Blue Demon" among the sorcerers for killing too many of them.

"I need to meet Hathaway first." Douglas smiled after he swallowed the food gracefully. "I don't know the routine of Sharp and her yet, so I cannot make any plan."

Fernando poured ale into his mouth. "You are not as reckless as I thought."

At this moment, the half-closed hotel door was knocked on, and Hathaway, dressed like a little princess, walked in with a blue-covered book. Behind her, Sharp followed with a vague smile.

Hathaway ran to Douglas and Fernando's "table" quickly.

"Same hand and foot..." Fernando was as mean as before.

Hathaway subconsciously slowed down. She reached them, put the book on the table, and turned to a page that she folded before.

She pointed at one of the questions and stared at Douglas and Fernando with her silver eyes, not saying a word.

"About this question..." Fernando opened his mouth first and exchanged a glance with Douglas. Look, you don't need to figure out a way to meet Hathaway. She has brought herself to you!

Sharp asked for a glass of hard liquor from Old Green. Enjoying the drink, he watched the teaching and learning.

The whole morning, Douglas and Fernando answered Hathaway's questions dutifully. She was no longer restrained by the book but dug much deeper. Of course, those questions were not enough to puzzle Douglas and Fernando.

When it was almost noon, Hathaway put back her book, paper, quill, and ink bottle. She thanked them courteously as if they were her real teachers.

"I'll stay here for another month. Feel free to ask questions if you have any. I've rarely seen any child so passionate about mathematics." When they bid each other farewell, Douglas said intentionally.

Hathaway nodded, indicating that she got it.

Sharp, on the other hand, laughed. "Why don't you work as Hathaway's home teacher? I think it will be better than any of your previous jobs."

Instead of waiting for Douglas to answer, he turned around and left as if it were a joke.

After seeing them off, Fernando chuckled. "It's easier than I think. She truly loves mathematics!"

Douglas looked at the corner where Sharp and Hathaway disappeared, deep in thought, not responding to Fernando's comment.

Then, the two of them returned to Douglas' room to continue their communication and learning. They never left the room again except for lunch and dinner.

Fernando did not say goodbye until it was late at night. Douglas finally rubbed his temples in exhaustion and looked at the starry sky out of the window. Even though he was already an archmage, the thinking and communication of such a high intensity were still too much for him.

Looking at the glittering stars in the night sky, Douglas said in a low voice, "It seems that tomorrow will be another sunny day..."

Suddenly, all the stars were covered in hazy blueness as if they were the reflections in an ocean. Then, the noise of a surging tide came from the sky. The ocean was poured over, and a flood descended from the sky!

Douglas reacted quickly enough. An enormous transparent palm suddenly appeared before him and blocked the tide. Then, rings of silver lightning rose from the surface of his body and rushed into

the raging ocean.

In the meantime, Douglas had disappeared.

Suddenly, the blue ocean ebbed like an illusion, and Sharp's chuckle came from all directions.

"You are indeed a sorcerer..."

Chapter 865: A Lesson

865 A Lesson

The voice was distant and unpredictable, making it impossible to locate Sharp. In the hotel, Fernando and the other sorcerers who had been alarmed by the collision just now flashed and disappeared.

“Find a way to escape. We’ll meet in Lake Ramrouge!” The moment Douglas appeared in a corner, Fernando’s telepathic bond already stretched over carefully and quickly and informed him of the rendezvous after they split up.

It was not because he was scared of “Blue Grace” Sharp. Now that Douglas, a ninth-circle archmage, was here, he believed that it was possible for them to kill the enemy if they joined their hands. After all, Douglas knew “Time Stop” and was an excellent archmage, and he was capable of many senior-rank unusual spells himself, which could weaken and limit the enemy.

However, they were in Rentato, which was watched over by many experts. Any great noise would have caught attention. If either of the two persons in the Nekso Palace or the Radiance Church came, they wouldn’t make it out alive at all. The “Sword of Truth” Williamson Hoffenberg had gone to the frontline in Aalto at the behest of the Church, and it was Kritonia, the “Heart of Time”, who was guarding the Nekso Palace. It was a name that caused the legendary sorcerers to tremble!

Ever since he distinguished himself, he had followed Williamson Hoffenberg as a young, strong, and vigorous man, killing powerful sorcerers, elves, vampires, demons, and devils one after another and paving a path to legendary with their bodies and blood. Later, he even killed Osseris, a legendary sorcerer known as “Master of Shadows”, and the Faceless, a dark legendary knight. He rose to level two of legendary on their skulls, intimidating all his enemies!

One of the battles happened no more than ten years after he

became a legendary knight. In a regular operation, he happened upon Osseris, the Master of Shadows and the Sylvanas Magic Empire's governor in Holm.

He was a powerful sorcerer who had lived at least four thousand years. He was so close to level three of legendary but never made the breakthrough. As a result, he was forced to leave Antiffler and replace Viken, the King of Calamities, as the governor of Holm. Later, he was ambushed by Hoffenberg, the Sword of Truth and a saint in the War of Dawn. He was heavily wounded and went missing.

Therefore, the Sylvanas Magic Empire's territory on this side of the Storm Strait lost the leadership. The few lesser legendary sorcerers did not obey each other. Separated and attacked by the Church and the noble knights, they were killed one after another and contributed to the glory of the Sword of Truth, making him one of the nine level-three legendary knights.

However, after Holm fell apart and the new-generation noble knights grew up, Osseris was back to life and ran into Kritonia.

The aftermath of the battle destroyed most eyewitnesses. According to the few survivors, after the Heart of Time destroyed the phylactery of the Master of Shadows, he announced proudly, "You are too old. Both your soul and your magic are rotten..."

It also answered the confusion of some sorcerers. Generally speaking, sorcerers could suppress knights of the same level. It had never been known that a legendary knight could kill a legendary sorcerer that was above their level in a duel. At first, the sorcerers suspected that it was because the Master of Shadows hadn't completely recovered from the fatal wounds. Right now, they had an even more convincing reason.

Yes. Osseris was simply too old. He was close to the limits of his life. Even his soul had started to decay. Of course, the intensity of his spiritual power had plummeted!

Although it made the sorcerers feel better, they were forced to take the problem seriously, which was that not only was the Master of

Shadows old, but even the Magic Empire seemed antiquated and decayed.

During the hundreds of years of war, many young grand cardinals and legendary knights had been born. Many of them were as excellent as “Heart of Time”, such as Rudolf, the Ruling Angel, and the few grand cardinals before they became the pope. In the Magic Empire, a few new legendary sorcerers had appeared. The air of aging and decaying could be clearly sensed.

As a matter of fact, the speed of advancement was the same as before the War of Dawn. However, nobody cared about the slow advancement during peacetime since legendary sorcerers lived long enough. Right now, many people compared the situation to the sunset, which would inevitably disappear and sink into the darkness despite its lingering splendor at present.

Many old sorcerers even sighed. “The old will eventually be replaced by the young. That is the destiny that cannot be reversed. In front of the young and vigorous Saint Truth and nobles, the sorcerers and the Magic Empires are like rotten bodies that will collapse under the first poke.”

For some reason, the thoughts flashed in Douglas’ heart quickly, making him feel unusually sad. Then, he controlled his feelings and planned to jump away from Sharp’s aim with the shadow and help other sorcerers to escape.

“You go first! Don’t mind them!” Old Green suddenly floated in midair and blocked the falling water drops.

His frozen and lifeless left eye became deep, as if a bottomless hole that could absorb all lives was hidden inside.

Douglas knew exactly what Old Green meant. The other sorcerers who hadn’t even reached the senior rank could be sacrificed, but if he, a ninth-circle archmage, was killed, there would be no hope for the renaissance of the Magic Empire. However, he still hesitated for a moment. He also sensed that the previous battle did not catch the attention of the church nearby.

In midair, Sharp's voice came in like the sound of running water. "I've blocked the area before I attacked. Nobody will sense anything. There's something I would like to say to you."

Then, he suddenly appeared in the lobby of the hotel. He walked into the bar and poured himself a glass of hard liquor.

Douglas did not attack. Old Green, Fernando, and he looked at each other as they covered the other people who were leaving. They were filled with intense surprise as well as vague hope.

Sharp had voluntarily revealed the matter and kept it a secret from the Church. Was he planning to cooperate with the Union? Had his operation been approved by the Sword of Truth who was far away in Aalto?

"Remember to pay for the liquor and the house damages." Old Green fell down, resuming the previous stun and depression.

Fernando stepped into the hall and said to Sharp, who was drinking with his eyes closed, "What would you like to talk about?"

Sharp chuckled. "I want to kill someone, but it's inconvenient for me to do it in person. I'm told that sorcerers accept such contracts."

"Who is it?" Douglas pressed his hands, hinting Fernando not to be rash.

His calmness and easiness made Fernando swallow his mockery about Sharp's cowardice and listen to his reply.

Sharp had another mouthful of his drink and smiled again. "Alfonsol. The person I want dead is Alfonsol."

Alfonsol?

There were plenty of people with such a name, but most of them lived in the countries near the Holy City. In Rentato, few people carried such a name, and only one of them was a nuisance for Sharp to attack!

"Alfonsol, the red robe?" Old Green's frozen eyes emitted deep and

dark brilliance.

Fernando was also quite surprised. The deputy captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights, as well as the gold knight, was asking the "evil" sorcerers to assassinate a level-nine red robe? That was too weird!

"Yes. He is an extreme worshipper of the Lord. He believes that all the powers go to the Lord, and that nobles are also lambs. So, we haven't gotten along very well." Sharp looked at the three of them with a vague smile.

"Alfonsol is a level-nine cleric, the main assistant to 'Graceful Angel' Francois, and a real giant of the Inquisition of the Holm parish..." Douglas had collected enough intelligence about Rentato recently. "Graceful Angel" Francois was one of the two saint cardinals who was left by the Saint Truth to defend the territory on this side of the Storm Strait. He was an expert whose name could be prefixed with "Saint"!

Old Green lowered his eyes. "Alfonsol barely leaves Rentato. Who can assassinate him under Francois' protection? Unless they do not want to survive..."

The previous attack on the Inquisition had raised too much turmoil. Kritonia had taken over the investigation in person. If they allured Alfonsol to leave Rentato by exposing their tracks, "Heart of Time" would possibly come! He wasn't any easier to deal with than "Graceful Angel" was. Kritonia was known as the legendary knight who was closest to level three!

Even a man as proud and impatient as Fernando dared not accept the contract outrightly. The mission might not be accomplishable even if the whole Union was devoted to it.

"Haha." Sharp raised his head and laughed aloud, as if he were very delighted. Then, he lowered his head and looked at Douglas and Fernando without the slightest smile in his eyes. "Why? Are you scared?"

He rose and looked down at them. "Your strategy is not bad to attract the nobles to resist the Church. However, you've forgotten

one thing. This is a game that only experts can play!

“If you cannot kill a level-nine red robe, are you even qualified to play the game of balance? How many legendary sorcerers do you have? How capable are you to resist the Church?”

“If you do not have the capabilities, however many things you do, as long as the legendary sorcerers of Aalto are defeated and the Church is spared, your doom will still be inevitable. No nobles will dare to work with you at all.”

He sniffed. “Keep away from Hathaway. If Green weren’t hanging around with you, I would have...”

Pausing for a moment, he walked to the door with his hands behind his back. “Don’t meddle in the battle of giants if you are just a group of rats!”

Fernando blushed. A terrible storm seemed to be rising in his eyes. If Douglas hadn’t been suppressing him in secret, he would’ve burst out long ago.

Chapter 866: Old Fox

866 Old Fox

After he stepped out of the inn, Sharp broke like a bubble and disappeared into the dark night. Not moving his eyes back, Old Green asked coarsely, “Are you going to accept his contract?”

“Whether we accept it or not, the most important issue right now is that this place is no longer safe. We have to transfer immediately.” Douglas looked rather solemn.

Fernando was also back to himself. He mumbled, “It’s up to those old men whether or not to accept the contract. What we need to do is to get out of here and set up another relay station.”

It was obvious that, even if the Union was to accept the mission to assassinate Alfonsol and build up a good relationship with the nobles such as Sharp, they wouldn’t want to expose the relay station that was very important for the organization to any strangers. If they wanted to communicate with the nobles, a smaller, one-way channel would be better, say, through Old Green.

Carelessness in such matters would mean the doom of an organization!

Then, fearing that somebody might be eavesdropping, Fernando said to Douglas and Old Green in the telepathic bond, “I’ll see you in the underwater relic of Lake Ramrouge.”

“Alright, you go first. I have to leave certain marks to warn the sorcerers to come.” Old Green looked around at the lobby with obvious regrets.

Fernando mocked, “You should be happy to get rid of this eyesore. What’s to be sorry about?”

“As a matter of fact, this is my family business that my great grandfather started,” Old Green said peacefully without the slightest anger, as if he were talking about somebody else.

Fernando was briefly stunned. Looking at his feet and raising his head, he looked at the wine cabinet behind Old Green with his red, vigorous eyes and said, "Maybe this hotel will be preserved. You are a radiant knight, and you are close to many nobles. It may be put into good use, except that not many sorcerers would frequent this place anymore..."

He rambled on without a theme.

"Get lost already, boy! I do not need your sympathy!" Old Green suddenly lashed out and interrupted Fernando.

Fernando blushed and snorted, "I'll sympathize with the black-clawed dogs before I sympathize with a half-dead old man like you!"

He left immediately after that.

Old Green raised his jaw, hinting Douglas to follow him. He then chuckled. "Don't the necromancers always say that your life begins when you are dead?"

"What do those smelly, rotten bodies know about life?" Fernando said without looking back.

"Even my hair is older than you, boy. What do you know about life?" Old Green did not give in at all.

Helpless, Douglas watched the two of them fight until Fernando was out of the gate and into the darkness of the night.

...

Under the starlight, the lakes were glimmering peacefully. Since there were many such lakes, they were scattered on the ground like pearls and connected into dreamy necklaces.

"This place deserves to be called 'Land of Thousand Lakes'..." Douglas complimented while he floated above the lake and took a deep breath of the fresh air.

Fernando asked in surprise, "You know 'Land of Thousand Lakes'?"

“Of course, its fame has been brought to Antiffler by the traveling sorcerers,” Douglas replied.

“Is it beautiful at all?” Fernando murmured in a low voice. Then, he said, “This is Lake Ramrouge. Follow me.”

Douglas looked at the lake, only to discover that it wasn’t huge. One might have thought that it was just a swamp. Could there be any underwater relic in it?

The two of them cast spells and jump into the water, sinking to the bottom of the lake quickly.

Noticing Douglas’ surprise, Fernando explained in a telepathic bond, “Some idiotic sorcerer built this. Perhaps he intended to connect all the Land of Thousand Lakes. However, it is thanks to his idiocy that this relic hasn’t been discovered. The Church would never imagine that such a small and unresourceful lake has a relic.”

A cave was hidden below the cave. It did not seem to be established for human beings but was more like the nest of certain aquatic creatures.

Fernando vaporized his body and crawled in. Douglas followed him without any hesitation.

After passing through a zigzagging “tunnel”, Douglas found himself in the middle of a palace that was crowded with sorcerers. They were quite alarmed about the newcomers, but after they saw Fernando’s familiar face, they turned around and focused on their own business again.

One of the senior-rank sorcerers performed magic to examine whether or not Fernando was authentic. In that aspect, sorcerers, known as “rats in the gutter”, were much more vigilant than the Inquisition, because those who were not vigilant enough were already dead.

“Now, this is more like a place where sorcerers gather...” Douglas said in both relief and comfort.

“Douglas, Fernando, you’ve come at the perfect moment. The

president has learned what happened just now and wants you to meet him.” Lauren, who escaped early under Fernando’s cover, came to them.

“Is this the headquarters of the Union?” Douglas found it odd. Fernando did not mention it before.

Fernando also found it odd. “Is the president here?”

“Yes.” Lauren nodded and observed Fernando up and down. “It’s good that you are fine. Mr. President planned to meet Douglas here and hold a meeting if it weren’t for the accident in the Roasted Fish Hotel...”

It seems that they are still wary of me and were reluctant to let me know their headquarters so soon... Douglas thought. However, he was not bothered and simply nodded his head. “Lauren, please lead us to Mr. President...”

“It’s only because the mission they gave was too dumb...” Following Douglas, Fernando cursed.

After they passed a channel made of stone bricks, they reached a palace that was decorated with weird patterns. An old man whose hair was all white but whose spirits were high strode out and greeted them, “Welcome to the Union of Sorcerers, Douglas. You are a distinguished sorcerer, and your studies on curves and irregular shapes are better than ours. I hope I can learn from you sometime.”

Douglas was slightly stunned. Did Arnold, the president of the Union of Sorcerers, also know that he was studying fluxion?

Fluxion was the name that he gave to the mathematical problems he worked on, although he was thinking to change the name at some point.

Douglas was soon back to himself from his surprise. Arnold must have been paying attention to his communication with Fernando. The guy postponed the meeting perhaps to give himself enough time for observation.

As a leader of a fairly-large magic organization, he was certainly not a simple person!

“The research of many great sorcerers in the past inspired me,” Douglas said modestly.

Arnold had a few wrinkles, and his face was still red. He pointed at Douglas and smiled as he said, “Don’t be modest. If your research works out, it will be easier to learn and construct all spells! What a bright future it will be! Alright, let’s focus on the contract of the Blue Demon first. Right, this is League. You’ve met before. This is Ramon, this is Veronica. They are both the deputy presidents of the Union.”

He introduced the few people who came with him. League had plenty of wrinkles and a hawk nose, Ramon was tall and slender with a long face, and Veronica had green eyes that looked like emeralds. They were all in the classic robes of the Magic Empire.

Douglas greeted them and smiled at a brown-haired young man next to Arnold. “Gallos, it’s been a long time.”

With a playful smile, the young man replied, “I did not expect you to do something like attacking the Inquisition. It’s more like Fernando’s style.”

Gallos was the person who introduced Douglas to the Union of Sorcerers. He was Fernando and Lauren’s friend, Arnold’s student, and a sixth-circle senior-rank sorcerer.

“Hehe. Do you envy me?” Fernando certainly would not give in.

Gallos chuckled and looked at his feet without continuing the conversation, but President Arnold asked a question, “What’s your opinion on the Blue Demon’s contract?”

Lauren, who led them here, quietly exited the palace and closed the gate.

League said gloomily, “He’s only warning us with the mission. There’s no need to take it seriously.”

“What if we accomplish it for real? Will he see our value and decide to work with us?” Ramon pulled a long face and objected to League.

“First of all, we need to be capable of accomplishing it!” League and Veronica said at the same time.

The meeting immediately fell silent. Even Fernando did not dare to brag that Alfonsol was not difficult to kill. After all, Kritonia had his eyes on the Union.

Arnold seemed satisfied with the situation. With his smile unchanged, he coughed for a moment and said, “It’s not entirely impossible for us to accomplish the mission.”

“President, you must be kidding!” League said seriously.

“It’s indeed impossible if we count on only our own strength, but what if the other magic organizations cooperate with us? They do not have the attention of the Heart of Time.” Arnold smiled; he was in a good temper. Then, before anyone opened their mouth, he went on and said, “I’ve been busy contacting the other magic associations. As it happens, I’ve invited many magic organizations to visit Arnold and discuss cooperation. That’s why I set the meeting in this place instead of our headquarters, because ‘Allyn’ is also near Rentato.”

He sort of explained why they did not bring Douglas to the headquarters.

“President, are you confident to convince those organizations to cooperate with us?” Veronica brought up the key issue.

Arnold smiled as cunningly as an old fox. “If they know that we are working with the Blue Demon, deputy captain of the Sword of Truth’s Knights, they will be glad to cooperate with us in the mission. It’s not just our strategy to attract the nobles to resist the Church.”

“Since when have we been working with the Blue Demon?” Even Ramon was confused.

Arnold chuckled. “Since after we accomplish the mission to

assassinate Arnold with other groups, when he attaches more importance to our strength.”

Fernando’s lips twitched. The president was too sleazy!

“Which organizations will come to Allyn?” League thought for a moment and asked cautiously.

Arnold nodded his head. “Rest assured. The organizations I’ve invited are all slightly weaker than us. They are not the legendary associations such as ‘Cabin of Palmeira’, ‘Scythe of Death’, or ‘Hysterical Dance’. What deserves our attention are ‘Red Eye’, ‘Supreme Soul’, ‘Shadow Singers’, and ‘Tower of Destroyers’, which have one or two ninth-circle archmages. There are also a dozen common organizations that do not have ninth-circle sorcerers.

“Douglas, Fernando, and I will attend the meeting later.”

Chapter 867: The City in the Sky

867 The City in the Sky

“Why them?”

The person who raised the question was Veronica, a blond gorgeous beauty. The sorcerers who were adept at body modifications were often on two extremities. Some of them did not care about their images at all, and they transformed them in the most powerful way.

For example, they could replace their left eye with “Stub of the Eye Demon”, their right eye with the eye of the Servant of Death, and their beard with the tentacles of the Mind Stealer. As a result, their looks could be most horrifying, making them the synonym of “creepy” for the ordinary people. In the meantime, they were also the image of all sorcerers in the Saint Truth’s propaganda. Of course, in the current phase, those sorcerers had to change their appearances before they went out, or they would be moving targets for the night watchers.

The other sorcerers, on the other hand, paid great attention to their looks during their self-modification, so their faces would be more and more delicate and pretty. Veronica was such an eighth-circle sorcerer who was good at bloodline integration and physical modification. For example, her pointy ears added cuteness to her glamor. It was exactly a feature of the elves’ bloodline.

President Arnold chuckled. “The meeting to be held in Allyn is mainly to facilitate communication and eliminate misunderstandings...”

It was obviously the “formalities” that he spoke to the other magic associations. Then, he suddenly changed the topic and said, “Therefore, as the host, we have to refrain ourselves in the meeting. Otherwise, they will be too wary of us to come, and the cooperation will be sabotaged.

“Of the three representatives, I am the president and the main convener. I have to host the meeting. It’s basic courtesy. Douglas is

our archmage who recently joined. His presence will let other people sense the attraction and the real capabilities of the Union. Fernando is our most distinguished young sorcerer and the most hopeful candidate to become an archmage. He will show the other groups the bright prospects of the Union...”

Unlike the usual, Fernando did not throw out mockery. The other groups would be awed by the simple, refrained demonstration of strength. The president had completely justified himself. He truly deserved to be the president!

League and Veronica both accepted the explanation. Without any argument, they asked about the details of “Red Eye”, “Supreme Soul”, and the other groups. Although they knew a lot of things about such groups from before, Arnold, who had just visited their leaders, certainly knew better.

Arnold seized the opportunity to introduce those organizations to Douglas. “The greatest feature of the people of the Asso Empire is their red eyes, as can be seen on Fernando. Of course, the redness of his pupils is rare even in the Asso Empire. ‘Red Eye’ is an organization set up by some surviving sorcerers of the Asso Empire, who hope that they can restore their country...”

“‘Supreme Soul’ is an organization of necromancers. It is said that it has something to do with ‘Scythe of Death’...”

“‘Shadow Singers’ is a secret organization that Osseris, the Master of Shadows, prepared for his return. However, it has been too badly struck by the Heart of Time and is not even as strong as us...”

“‘Tower of Destroyers is mostly made of sorcerers of the school of elements. It’s one of the few major branches of the Will of Elements left after it was destroyed by the Sword of Truth and the clerics a hundred years ago...”

Douglas was no stranger to the Will of Elements. After the Master of Shadows was heavily wounded and went missing, the legendary sorcerers in Holm were divided and fought on their own. Some of them founded their own organizations. The Will of Elements was a legendary group that was very active in the period. In its heyday, it

could be compared to the “Cabin of Palmeira” which had a long history. However, it was still destroyed in the end. Most of the sorcerers were killed, and the valuable files and items were carved up by the Hoffenberg family and the Saint Truth.

Arnold explained the history, members, and leaders of the four magic organizations in detail. In the end, he sighed and said, “I hope that the cooperation will go well. As long as we kill Alfonsol and intimidate the Blue Demon, I will be able to establish a partnership with the few Excellencies.”

He looked at Douglas solemnly. “The Blue Demon is quite right that we are not strong enough to join a battle of ‘giants’. However, this side of the strait is not entirely devoid of legends!”

He did not mention the possibility that the Church would burst into a fury after Alfonsol was killed and that Sharp would work harder to strike the magic organizations instead of softening his attitude, a possibility that he, League, Ramon, and Veronica knew very well. However, in such a situation, they could only take risks. If they waited until they were confident, there would be no chance for them to take risks!

“Mr. President, how many legends are on this side of the strait?” As a native of Antiffler, Douglas did not know the situation in Holm very well.

Arnold smiled. “Other than those who went to Aalto to join the defense, there are only three legendary sorcerers on this side of the strait. Of course, the legends all have strange ways to preserve their lives. Perhaps some of them were not really killed by the Saint Truth but have only been hiding somewhere.

“There are two legends in Cabin of Palmeira, namely the Witch of Iceland and the Lord of Frigidity. Between them, the Lord of Frigidity is stronger, so he went to reinforce Aalto, and the Witch of Iceland, who is younger, is left to defend the organization...

“‘Scythe of Death’ has a terrible ‘Liege of Death’. He’s a seasoned legend of the Asso Empire, but he is not close to the legends of Aalto, so he did not reinforce them...

“The legends of ‘Hysterical Dance’ had mostly perished, but decades ago, a remarkable ninth-circle sorcerer among them made an advancement successfully. His legendary class is ‘Eye of Curse’, and his name is Atlant Forman. He’s very young...”

Douglas listened carefully and repeated the things that he should pay special attention to in a low voice, “Witch of Iceland... Liege of Death... Eye of Curse...”

“That’s basically everything. Douglas, Fernando, prepare yourselves. We’ll go to Allyn tomorrow.” Arnold nodded his head.

...

The sky seemed to have been burnt up by a fire, and the earth was red but dim. Arnold, Douglas, and Fernando had transformed into fat rats that were common on this plain, running among plants and rocks.

This was a plain northwest of Rentato. It was surrounded by mountains, with a lot of villages scattered on it. It did not look like a place where the stealthy sorcerers would hide at all.

“When the City in the Sky collapsed, it caused a huge hole at the foot of the mountain and an earthquake that buried itself. Therefore, it’s actually below the ground at the edge of the plain.” Arnold introduced the location of Allyn to Douglas.

Douglas, who was currently a chubby gray-haired mouse, said through the telepathic bond, “It must’ve been badly ruined, hasn’t it?”

“Yes. The central alchemical lives are all gone. There is no intact building in it right now...” Fernando spoke instead of Arnold. He was now a red-eyed delicate mouse.

The three rats went deep into the ground along with the real mouse nests. Surpassing many obstacles, they reached the underground channel that the Union of Sorcerers established earlier.

Thereafter, they turned back into human beings and walked down the road that was made of giant stones. There were no commonly-

seen murals and patterns on the wall but only uneven rocks.

As he walked, Douglas came to a sudden stop and looked ahead in fascination. He saw something magnificent that was squeezed by mud and rocks.

It was very enormous and made up an upside-down mountain, with a pointy bottom and a flat top. Many symbols were embedded in it in the most astounding way.

However, the magic towers above its surface had all collapsed. Even the best preserved ones had only three to four floors left. Also, deep cracks could be found on the main body, almost penetrating through it.

“Is this the City in the Sky...” His eyes full of passion, Douglas remarked in mixed feelings.

Arnold allowed him to watch for a while and said, “I’ll talk to the leaders of the other magic organizations first and try to reach a common understanding before the meeting. You can go around and make acquaintance with the sorcerers of other groups.”

At this moment, the members of the other magic organizations had come, which kept the sorcerers of the Union and their families who lived in this base rather busy. Of course, the sorcerers in the senior rank and above were all hiding around and entered the place with simulated images in case it was the Union’s trap. It was already their habit to be cautious.

“Alright.” Douglas nodded his head and flew to the City in the Sky that had fallen to the bottom of the ground with Fernando.

After he landed on it, Douglas realized that the sorcerers of the Union had already established and repaired some of the uncomplicated buildings. Also, since plenty of sorcerers from other organizations had come, a market had spontaneously formed at the central square, where everybody exchanged their magic models, knowledge, materials, resources, potions, and recipes.

“Hello, gentlemen, would you like the modified Malzman that I

invented recently? It can stimulate the soul effectively and increase the speed of the spiritual power's recovery." Because Douglas and Fernando were standing at the edge of the market, a plain-looking young sorcerer stood up and promoted his alchemical product with a smile.

Malzman was a legendary sorcerer who invented a potion that could help with the growth of spiritual power.

Hearing that, Douglas turned around curiously and stared at the bubbling blue drug. "How much can it increase?"

"It varies between 1% and 5% for different people. I'd tried hundreds of different ratios before I finally came up with this improved recipe by accident," the young sorcerer said proudly.

Nodding his head, Douglas asked cautiously, "Then why is your modification able to improve the effect? What's the mechanism behind it?"

The young sorcerer's expression immediately darkened. "Only real customers are welcome here!"

Chapter 868: Quarrel

868 Quarrel

“I’m not being unreasonable. If you don’t figure out those questions, you will be relying on nothing but experience, instincts, and luck when you modify your drug. It was already fortunate of you to have found out a beneficial change after several hundred tries, but what about later? Are you going to try every possibility and every combination? In such a case, you will never succeed without thousands of experiments...” Douglas replied very carefully.

Solemnly, the young sorcerer pointed at his product and said, “The magic book says that the Crimson Grass plus the Fish Eye Fruit plus the stem of the Soul Wood can stimulate one’s spiritual power. My product is a combination of their natural effects, a summary of the sorcerers’ generations of research, a law of nature, and a truth that is beyond any doubts! I won’t sell my drug to you. Please go somewhere else!”

Perhaps because he was just freed from teachers and magic books, the young sorcerer told him the mechanism of his recipe even though he hated the unreasonable guy. Of course, the specific ratio of the ingredients was his business secret.

Douglas nodded. Right when the young sorcerer held his head high again, he suddenly said, “I know that the Crimson Grass plus the Fish Eye Fruit plus the stem of the Soul Wood can stimulate the spiritual power. It’s an empirical law, but why?”

Fernando tried to hold back his smile and almost blew a whistle. It was very fun for him to watch other people be driven crazy by Douglas’ whys.

The young sorcerer’s face was the best example of “astounded”. Uttering some meaningless sounds, he turned around at the sorcerers nearby and murmured, “What a freak!”

Actually, the sorcerers had summarized the synergy among most materials and gave explanations of different schools. For example,

some claimed that it was a representative of the four-element theory, and some said that it was because of the cycle of life.

The young sorcerer knew quite a lot, and he was more inclined to the four-element explanation. However, he did not want to talk to the weirdo at all, fearing that he would be faced with a bunch more whys. It reminded him of the feeling when he could not provide satisfactory answers to a rigorous teacher.

The sorcerers around watched in either gloom or amusement. None of them were interested in meddling with someone they were not familiar with.

Not caring at all that he was called a freak, Douglas said sincerely, "Have you ever read 'Elemental Crown of Magic Potions'? It may explain part of the reasons, and it may be applied in practice, but there is still plenty of self-consistency. I don't think it really answers the questions."

Gritting his teeth, the young sorcerer murmured, "Ignore him! Ignore him!"

He had the feeling that he was surrounded by hundreds of mosquitoes, which made him rather agitated.

Douglas was quite a reasonable man when he didn't ask whys. He shook his head with a smile and said, "I know a thing or two about this field. If you are interested in the question just now, you are free to communicate with me. I am Douglas, and I'm with the Union of Sorcerers. What about you?"

The young man was very handsome and scholarly. He did not intend to talk to Douglas, but something his teacher said to him popped up in his mind.

"You are the most gifted young sorcerer in our organization, but you've been too devoted to books to know how to communicate with other people. We represent the Shadow Singers in the meeting in Allyn. So, I must remind you that you must not be too weak or too arrogant. Courtesy is very important..."

Courtesy, courtesy... The young sorcerer struggled to reply. He said, "I am Owen, from the Shadow Singers."

"I just took a look. Your potion must be very good." Douglas knew better than continuing to pester Owen and left his stand. Owen was greatly relieved.

"You can totally develop a spell named 'Douglas' Whys'. It will definitely stun the enemy." Fernando followed him and made fun of him.

Douglas smiled and did not say anything. He carefully observed the sorcerers who had been gathered in the square. They were from different organizations, and their strengths, genders, looks, and personalities varied. The only thing they had in common was that they were all slightly depressed and overwhelmed.

It was not because something bad was happening, but because their living conditions had brought irreversible psychological changes that had been reflected in their aura.

"Skin of the Blue Dragon! It contains the patterns of dozens of spells and can significantly improve the corresponding magic!" On their way, they suddenly heard a girl peddling "Skin of the Blue Dragon".

The blue dragons were most famous for their supernatural abilities in lightning and water. Their skin was not only an alchemical material but an important focus of the sorcerers' studies.

Therefore, when Douglas and Fernando looked over, the girl's stand had been crowded by sorcerers, who were all observing the incomplete skin of the blue dragon in silence.

For Fernando who was good at lightning and storms, the skin of the blue dragon was most precious. So, he walked to the girl's stand. After confirming the authenticity of the material, he asked, "What do you want in exchange for the skin of the blue dragon?"

The other sorcerers were angry about Fernando who squeezed through the crowd, but nobody said anything. They all wanted to hear the girl's needs.

The girl had flaxen hair and pupils in a similar color. Both pretty and vigorous, she smiled and said, "I want to exchange for the destruction of the Church. Can you do that?"

Before Fernando roared out, she ended the joke in time. "I need all the middle-rank magic books on transformation, body modification, and bloodline melting. Do you have any?"

Her answer was rather vague. It was obvious that she intended to pick a favorite book from the sorcerers.

"I do!" Fernando had always been impatient. He immediately took out many books and floated them in the air, before he looked at the sorcerers around with a "This material is mine and bite me if you are not cool with that" look on his face.

The sorcerers were somewhat angry at first, but somebody said in a low voice, "He's Fernando of the Union."

"The Fernando who attacked the Inquisition?"

"The Fernando who took down the Predator?"

The sorcerers immediately whispered among themselves. Many people who planned to compete with Fernando backed off. That was a brutal and strong man!

Fernando did not realize that he was so famous. He wasn't even as respected as now when he made it to the Cleansing List. He was rather puzzled.

"How about it? Are you satisfied with my books?" Fernando decided to ignore other people and simply asked the girl.

At this moment, another sorcerer stood out. "You may be Fernando, but so what? All the organizations are gathering today. Is he going to steal an item that is being regularly traded?"

Fernando was about to roar at the sorcerer when the girl suddenly said, "I would like to give it to Mr. Fernando! He's my hero! Over the past century, he is the first sorcerer who has the courage to attack the Inquisition and kill the traitors!"

Fernando was stunned. Since when could “reputation” contribute to business-making? Was the girl still so innocent?

The competitive sorcerer dared not argue anymore and left in a hurry.

“As a matter of fact, it was Douglas, the ninth-circle archmage next to me, who killed the Predator.” Fernando would never steal other people’s credit.

An archmage?

The sorcerers around looked at Douglas, feeling even luckier that they did not conflict with Fernando.

“You’re both my heroes! I am Erica. I am a third-circle sorcerer from a small organization,” the girl said with a sweet smile, which was soon replaced by melancholy. “It’s a shame that there are fewer and fewer heroes like you. Everybody is too used to failure and hiding to dream for a victory.”

Her bluntness made all the sorcerers fall into silence. They thought of the immense pressure and the boundless darkness before their eyes.

“What can we do? The Church has so many legendary experts, and the pope is well beyond the peak of legendary. What can we do...” In the crowd, someone said angrily and desperately, “If only Mr. Viken, Mr. Maskelyne, and the rest of them hadn’t gone missing... With so many level-three legends, the Church wouldn’t have developed at all...”

“I hardly think so!” Somebody argued loudly, “The pope is as strong as a demigod. The Light of Stars was killed by him, and the Liege of Death was ‘reincarnated’ with a strength less than level three. Even the two top legends could not stop the pope. Why do you think Maskelyne and Viken could?”

The words that praised the Church immediately invoked curses. People of Red Eye cursed the Sylvanas Magic Empire for being too devoted to internal conflicts at the critical moment, which caused

the destruction of the Asso Empire first. The Liege of Death only returned through the forbidden approach, but he was so weakened that he dared not even challenge the Sword of Truth.

The people of Shadow Singers also cursed other sorcerers for not being united. Otherwise, the Church wouldn't have developed at all, and the pope wouldn't have become so strong!

The necromancers of the Supreme Soul were not good at quarreling, but their gloomy eyes were nonetheless chilly. They seemed to believe that the main reason for their failure was that so many sorcerers were unwilling to offer their soul and body. Otherwise, they would've raised an enormous and tough army of servants that would sweep across the Church. The divine power of the Church was most effective on the necromancers, so they hated and were scared of the Church the most.

The elementalists of Tower of Destroyers joined the fight, maintaining that the three magic empires made too many mistakes at the beginning and gave too much room for the Church to develop. Otherwise, the situation today would have been different.

"Perhaps our magic has already fallen behind..." In the middle of their argument, a desperate sorcerer blurted out without thinking, "How many legendary experts have emerged in the Church in the past three hundred years? What about our side? Perhaps the divine power is the future..."

They all fell silent as the moment poked everyone's wound. Then, curses broke out.

"Traitor! You are a traitor!"

"Our magic is much more abundant and mysterious than the divine power!"

"Does the divine power have so many ways to save your life?"

Erica, who was selling the skin of the blue dragon, did not say anything under the noises. She backed off and heaved a sigh before saying to Fernando and Douglas, "How devastating... It's great that

we have heroes like you.”

“Desperation calls for changes...” Looking at the remains of the magic towers at the center of Allyn, Douglas’ eyes were deep and thoughtful.

Clang!

A bell was knocked, appeasing the fight in the square, because the joint meeting of dozens of magic organizations was about to begin.

Chapter 869: Cooperators

869 Cooperators

It had been many years since the Union of Sorcerers started to dig the City in the Sky. The central area had been cleaned, and a lot of magic towers and houses had been set up. If it weren't for the research value of the other debris, the first scene Douglas saw would have definitely not been as dilapidated as this. Right now, a magic tower near the relic of the central magic tower sent out the sound of a bell being hit. According to the deal, it marked the beginning of the meeting.

The sorcerers who were having a huge fight in the square reluctantly shut their mouths, unsatisfied that the rare opportunity to unleash their complaints was over. They slowly surged to the five-story tall magic tower.

"Those old men must've exchanged their opinions in private..." Fernando mumbled. The real agreements had almost always been reached before the meeting, and the meeting was only an occasion for announcements.

Douglas watched the sorcerers come from all directions; his eyes deep and thoughtful. It was not until the square was cleared that he finally sighed. "Let's go in."

"Do you feel helpless about their argument? In such a time of peril and despair, they still refuse to let go of their biases and selfishness. To be honest, I have zero confidence in their future after seeing the fight just now." Fernando moved forward while complaining.

Douglas shook his head and said in a low voice, "Everybody is selfish. So, a sincere cooperation is not based on the complete abandonment of selfishness, but on the demonstration of your strength, so that everybody understands that it is in their best interest to fight by your side.

"I don't mean the strength in the regular sense. It means so much more. For example, even if we are not strong enough yet, as long as

we can convince other people that our path is hopeful and we can lead them on it, it will also be our ‘strength’.”

He was solemn and did not have the slightest desperation or anger.

“Isn’t it the process to build up their confidence in us through various approaches? It’s a sophisticated skill in the school of illusion,” Fernando derided Douglas out of habit.

Douglas turned around to look at Fernando. “You know the school of illusion very well?”

Personally, he was not good at the theories of the school of illusion. He was capable of a lot of illusions, but he never studied them deeply.

“My teacher was a great scholar. Before he was killed, he had been in touch with many archmages of the school of illusion. So, I know a lot of sorcerers who specialize in that.” Fernando mentioned his teacher but did not seem to be close to him.

Douglas did not keep asking because they had reached the magic tower. A middle-aged man who was wearing the arcana badge of the Union of Sorcerers was waiting by the door. “Are you Mr. Douglas? Mr. President asked you to go to the living room in the wing on arrival.”

He recognized Douglas through Fernando.

“Alright,” Douglas replied politely.

It slightly surprised the middle-aged man, because archmages were mostly very arrogant in his impression, even including someone as kind and amiable as President Arnold.

Many stone chairs had been raised in the hall. Douglas and Fernando stepped into the living room.

“Douglas, let me introduce you,” Arnold greeted him with a smile like a kind old man.

Douglas was as steady as before, but Fernando chuckled in a low

voice. Judging from the old fox's good mood, the negotiation must have gone really well.

Hearing Douglas' name, the dozen sorcerers in the living room all looked over. Some were wary, some curious, and some were hostile. Was he the archmage who was capable of "Time Stop" and who killed the Predator?

Arnold put his hands on Douglas' shoulder and pointed at a fat old man. "This is Nielson, leader of Red Eye and an archmage. Even though he looks fat, his body is as sturdy as that of a gold knight."

Douglas immediately understood what Nielson was good at. Perhaps his every body part had been fixed with a certain special ability. His current appearance was nothing but camouflage.

Besides his body figure that left a deep impression, Nielson's ruby eyes were also very attractive. When he smiled, the fat on his cheeks jiggled. "I've always looked forward to Antiffler. The archmages from there are truly remarkable."

He said that he looked forward to it, but there wasn't any earnestness in his tone.

Understanding the feud of the two empires very well, Douglas nodded with a smile, not bothered by Nielson's attitude.

Pretending that he did not hear Nielson's indication, Arnold continued, "This is Amanata, a student to the Master of Shadows and one of the leaders of Shadow Singers."

Amanata, covered in a black magic robe, sat in a shadow in the corner. He merely nodded as a greeting after Arnold's introduction. If it weren't for his male name, Douglas couldn't have even told his gender.

Arnold joked, "Shadow Singers always favor shadows."

Not far away from Amanata, there was a sorcerer whose air was cold and gloomy. He was wearing a black glamorous robe, and his head only had the white skull left, with needle-like dim red fire bouncing in his eyes. He was a classic lich.

“This is Congus, the archmage who single handedly created ‘Supreme Soul’. He was praised by the Master of Shadows in person, who said that he is very likely to become a legendary sorcerer.” Arnold introduced the lich who was no weaker than Nielson or Amanata.

Congus opened his mouth. His voice was so unpleasant that it sounded like someone whetting a rusty sword. “My friends in Antiffler never mentioned you.”

He seemed very close to Antiffler.

“Because there were too many sorcerers stronger than me in Antiffler,” Douglas replied modestly. “Also, I was a weirdo.”

“Still, Antiffler was destroyed by the pope,” Nielson interrupted.

Congus looked at him and said coldly, “At least the empire hasn’t perished yet, but as for Asso...”

“Cough, cough, cough.” Arnold stopped the upcoming quarrel with coughs and introduced the lady who was playing with her red hair in boredom. “This is our beautiful Ms. Priscilla, the controller of Tower of Destroyers and an elementalist who is good at Cracking (Advanced).”

“Hey, Arnold, do you want me to give you one?” Priscilla made fun of Arnold with a vague smile before she extended her fair hand. “‘Time Stop’ and ‘Cracking (Advanced)’ are the best match. It’s a shame that I am incapable of the former. I hope that I can learn from you sometime.”

She was probably the most friendly responder.

“I always look forward to Cracking (Advanced), my lady.” Naturally, Douglas shook her hands courteously.

Fernando followed him and murmured to himself, “Is it really possible to work with those guys who were all minding their own business?”

Arnold then introduced Douglas and Fernando to the leaders of the

other organizations, but he did not mention anything about cooperation, as if it were just trivia that had been decided.

Arnold was friendly and humorous throughout the whole process. That was probably why he was the convener instead of any other leader.

“Alright. It’s time for us to join the meeting. Let’s tell everybody the refreshing news.” In the end, he pointed at the gate.

All the experts stood up and walked out while following Arnold.

Because the safety of the meeting was not guaranteed, they had come with clones and simulated images, and they did not bring many sorcerers with them. The hall was not full.

After the leaders came out, the whispers in the hall were gone.

“Everybody, the War of Dawn, as named by the Church, has been going on for more than three hundred years. Many of you probably never lived life when magic was supreme. You were born in panic and depression, you grew in darkness and desperation, and you will probably die in the fire.” After the leaders sat down, Arnold began his speech.

His heavy opening further silenced the hall. The older sorcerers remembered the last glory of the empire, and the younger sorcerers remembered their own experiences, but they shared the common dread against the nightmarish Church.

After a brief pause, Arnold went on and said, “The power of individuals is so weak in the darkness. Only if we help each other can we cut the thorns and embrace the dawn. This meeting is to inform everybody that the organizations present will abandon our internal conflicts and fight together for our living space.”

In such a devastating environment, any good news could be pictured into a wonderful future. Therefore, everybody was excited by what Arnold said. If so many organizations were united, they would probably be able to resist a parish without legends...

Fernando snorted in despise but did not say anything.

Arnold did not say anything about a coalition. He knew that it was not realistic. Without enough power, uniting so many self-involved organizations would only collapse his own organization.

After describing the beautiful future, Arnold ended his speech. At this moment, a sorcerer stood up and asked, “What living space are we going to obtain in the future?”

Now that the excitement died down, the sorcerers were more suspicious and worried. Their experience told them that prudence meant a long life because they barely had any chance to start over if they made the wrong choice.

“Hey, you are not as stupid as I thought,” Fernando mocked in a low voice.

It was impossible for Arnold to speak of the terms of cooperation. So, he merely said, “Our successful cooperation will be an example for other people. More and more sorcerers will join us, even the legendary ones... The Church is definitely not invincible. Many legends have been gathered in Aalto. Also, the Church’s enemies include vampires, dragons, sea clans, elves, demons, and devils...”

The audience’s hope dwarfed their suspicion for now. Also, as elites of their respective groups, they could tell that the leaders had secretly reached an agreement, so they simply narcotized themselves with the beautiful future.

“Yes. We can cooperate with the supernatural creatures and absorb magic elements from them.”

“But can magic really compare to the divine power? At least when it comes to yielding legendary experts...”

After Arnold’s speech, the sorcerers had a lot of random thoughts. Some remembered the benefits of working with supernatural creatures and the development of magic, and some remembered the frustration of magic since the beginning of the War of Dawn... Hope, fear, desperation, and expectation overwhelmed them.

Nielson, Congus, Priscilla, Amanata, and the rest of them gave a

brief speech to show support, but none of them revealed the terms of cooperation.

“Since we are partners, allow me to introduce the sorcerer next to me, Douglas from Antiffler. He’s good with ‘Time Stop’, and he attacked an Inquisition with Fernando.” Arnold showed the power of his Union in satisfaction.

People whispered in exclamations. Arnold nodded at their reaction and said to Douglas with a smile, “Why don’t you say something to everyone?”

Douglas stood up gravely. Arnold was rather stunned. Why did he look like that? What was he going to say?

Fernando also noticed Douglas’ strange expression; the man he was not wearing his usual warm and comforting smile. He also did not know why Douglas was like this. As for Nielson and the rest of them who were not familiar with Douglas, they sensed no anomaly at all.

Douglas looked around at the hall, silencing the whispers of the sorcerers, before he spoke in a low but clear voice.

“Ladies and gentlemen, many years ago, the esteemed ancestors of mankind learned how to make use of spiritual powers from dragons, elves, giants, demons, devils, and the other magical creatures. Then, by analyzing their body structures and blood qualities, we melted their bloodlines, modified our bodies, and came up with many meditation methods to build up our spiritual powers. We also created various kinds of magic by copying the magic patterns on their bodies, thereby gaining enormous powers. We drove the demons back into the abyss and kicked the devils back into hell. The giants, elves, and dragons either retreated to the uninhabited mountains, wilderness, and alternate dimensions, or bent before our feet.”

His opening, which was a brief review of the origin and glory of the age of magic, did not make Arnold and Fernando feel easy because Douglas was certainly not someone who would bring it up for nothing. The sorcerers, on the other hand, seemed to have sensed the glory at the beginning. They all looked rather refreshed.

Chapter 870: Speech

870 Speech

While the sorcerers dwelt in the glory of the past, Douglas' voice was even more solemn. "The glorious triumphs made the ancient sorcerers even more determined to pursue power. They initiated conquests in the abyss, the hell, and all the alternate dimensions. After the Saint Truth rose, the three Magic Empires collapsed in just three hundred years. The glory in the past has turned into the bitterness, confusion, and desperation today."

The glory of the past was shattered, replaced by the cruelty of the reality. Owen, Erica, and the sorcerers from different organizations felt that a bucket of cold water was poured on their heads. Although they were somewhat prepared, they could help but sigh in gloom and frustration. They speculated that Douglas meant the same as Arnold and the other archmages by drawing a comparison of the splendid past and the miserable reality so that all the sorcerers would be more hopeful about the cooperation and a bright future.

"But the Church is really too powerful! And they do have angels!"

"The time it takes for sorcerers to grow strong is not lengthened, but it is too long compared to what it takes for the clerics..."

"Will the cooperation really work? We are more likely to be annihilated if we are too big a target! It's possible that we will be safer if we split apart!"

"Only by surviving first can we hope to cooperate with the supernatural creatures, study them, and surpass the limits of magic..."

All kinds of thoughts rolled in the hearts of the seemingly silent sorcerers. Even leaders such as Nielson and Priscilla had similar feelings.

Although they were working hard to develop their organizations,

seeking for a chance of survival and cooperating for a beautiful future, it would definitely be a lie if they claimed that they were absolutely confident without the slightest fear!

They were pressing forward with reasonable passion and confidence because there wasn't a second path. People were always more determined when they were left with no choice.

Of course, it was one way out to join the Church and become a night watcher, but for the leaders of those organizations, they were unwilling to give up themselves and become a dog of the Church before the war in the west was settled. What if Aalto beat the enemy back? On the other hand, if Aalto fell and most of the legends were killed, whether they surrendered or not would make little difference.

Arnold thought the same. He nodded at Douglas' speech in satisfaction. Fernando, on the other hand, secretly mumbled, "Was the empty talk all he wanted to say?"

Douglas pressed his right hand to stress his tone. "Dear ladies and gentlemen, it is time for us to calm down. Instead of being bewitched by power, we should calm down and consider certain questions." In the ancient Magic Empire, sorcerer was the only gender. They did not start addressing the audience in different genders until the modern day.

Well? What questions?

All the sorcerers, including the experts like Congus, were briefly stunned. Questions about the coalition? How radical the guy is! But does it have anything to do with being bewitched by power? Is he going to stress that solidarity is power? That must be a joke. All the people here combined are not enough for the Heart of Time to kill!

While they were confused, Douglas' voice suddenly became loud and echoed throughout the hall, "There are certain things that we need to figure out.

"What is the nature of magic?

“Why do creatures have spiritual power?”

“What is the nature of spiritual power?”

“In what form does it exist?”

Huh?

Even Fernando looked at Douglas in shock with his mouth half open. What questions were these?

The ancient sorcerers had always been considering the nature of magic, so the experts like Congus were not surprised. However, wasn't a spiritual power born naturally? Wasn't it a unique feature of the soul? What were those questions about?

They found it absurd and ridiculous when they just heard the questions. If it were a middle-rank or a low-rank sorcerer who asked the question, they would've interrupted the guy rudely, but the speaker now was an archmage who was capable of “Time Stop”. Since the legends were all hiding, that was the strongest power!

So, they listened patiently. Gradually, they discovered in shock that it was impossible for them to answer those questions! Also, after considering carefully, they realized that it seemed really necessary to work on those questions!

The middle-rank and senior-rank sorcerers down below, including Erica, looked at each other in amusement. If they could answer those fundamental questions, they would have become legendary sorcerers a long time ago. Would they need Douglas' reminder at all?

However, the series of questions did slightly shock them. They subconsciously sat straight and stared at Douglas attentively. After all, as an archmage, he might not be a big deal in Antiffler, but he was definitely one of the strongest persons here.

Frowning, Fernando considered the answers to those questions, only to discover that he did not have the slightest clue. He then realized that Douglas unleashed an indescribable vibe. He was no longer as warm as usual but much more intimidating and solemn!

In an even louder voice, Douglas continued his speech magnificently, “Are earth, fire, wind, and water really the most basic elements in the world? If they are, how do they stick together to form everything we know? And if not, what are the real magic elements?”

“What is the nature of the soul?”

“Is the soul different from consciousness? If so, in what form does consciousness exist?”

“Do we need any ‘tools’ to illustrate and build magic models?”

“Does God exist? If God exists, what is His nature and form of existence? In what form does Alterna, the ancestor of vampires, exist? Why can they remain undead?”

“Why do the sun and the moon exist in this world? Why do they rise and set every day? What power motivates them in their operations? Those phenomena seem natural in the material world, but if we ask more whys, we will realize that we haven’t figured out the reasons behind them yet. Are those reasons, laws, and knowledge concerned with magic? Can we combine them with magic and help us explore the nature of the magic world?”

As he raised his questions, both the experts on the stage and the sorcerers down below changed their faces, switching from disdain and amusement to concentrated consideration. The questions about the rise and setting of the sun and moon hit them like lightning. They trembled and did not know how to express their feelings.

Yes. Why are they like that?

Why have I never considered those questions before?

What secrets do those phenomena, which seem to be the unquestionable law and nature of this world, contain?

Fernando clenched his fists; his red pupils full of excitement. He looked at Douglas’ shadow and never felt that the guy was taller!

Similar questions had occurred in the studies of every sorcerer now

and then, but having been used to such phenomena, they never considered those questions as something worth paying attention to, and they never asked the questions so deeply. At this moment, when they listened to Douglas' enlightening speech, they all felt that the mist before their eyes was driven away by sunlight. So, our studies on magic and this world are still so shallow! There are still so many whys that need addressing!

They felt that a new gate had been opened before him, vaguely revealing what appeared to be a new field of magic. More and more people were shivering in contemplation. Even Owen, who had been angry about Douglas earlier, no longer found the guy nefarious anymore. He felt that the guy's whys were extremely charming!

More and more questions popped up in his head. What is lightning? Why can't metal stop it when wood can? Why is mankind divided into different genders? Why can't human beings float in the sky instead of being stuck to the ground?

Erica covered her mouth, believing that Mr. Douglas had surpassed Mr. Fernando and become the greatest hero in her mind! So, the magic research beyond battles could also be so attractive and astounding!

"What is up? What is down? Why is the sky? What is the earth..." Fernando murmured, full of doubts about the things that he thought he had understood perfectly.

Holding his forehead, Douglas slightly bowed. "As long as we can figure out those questions, I believe that magic will develop much faster. The mysteries that we figure out will work on us and fortify us. Perhaps our development will be no slower than the Church's!"

After he backed off, the hall was still in utter silence. It was not until one minute later that the warmest welcome that never appeared even when the leaders of the magic organizations spoke burst out!

Douglas could see clearly that the sorcerers down below were excited, if not demented. The ubiquitous despair and depression just now were dissolved. He could only sigh about that. It was the first

time he had introduced his opinions publicly and systematically and raised the questions that he had considered for a long time. Back when he was in Antiffler, even his teacher and his classmates were unwilling to pay attention to his thoughts in that aspect, much less other people.

It seems not bad... As a regular human being, Douglas felt delighted.

Owen, Erica, and the other sorcerers started to feel that the darkness around them was fading. They were desperate earlier because they thought that magic had been developed to the maximum but still could not compare to the divine power and the Church. They were hopeless because they could not see the light. Now, Mr. Douglas' questions had opened a boundless world. The development of magic had just begun and was far away from the limits! The future was not entirely hopeless!

Arnold and the rest of them had placed their hope on the Silver Moon, the vampires, the dragons, and the other exterior forces, which more or less boosted the morale, but it was not nearly as inspiring as giving the future to themselves.

However, was it really possible to answer those questions?

After the excitement, worries and suspicions surged in the hearts of the sorcerers, as could be seen from their faces. Douglas was not surprised at them. He never thought that everybody could be gathered after a speech. That would have been a fantasy!

The meeting ended in such an atmosphere. Amanata, Congus, Nielson, Priscilla, and the other archmages looked at Douglas in a slightly different way now.

Douglas rose with a smile and said to Arnold, "Mr. President, I would like to take part in the mission to assassinate Alfonsol. After that, I hope that I can spend some time in Allyn."

Chapter 871: Arrangemen

871 Arrangemen

“That’s not a problem. You are free to do what you want.” Arnold observed Douglas up and down again, not covering his surprise. He seemed to have never known the archmage who was hundreds of years younger than him until now.

At this moment, Priscilla walked over as attractively as a blooming tulip. She said to Douglas with a smile, “You... How should I put it? You have an amazing perspective in the way you think. It’s true that we are as used to certain phenomena in our life as we are to our hands and eyes, to the extent that we forget to ask why.

“After five hundred years, I’ve sensed the shock when I first touched magic again.”

Douglas could not nod at the warm lady’s praise. “One can never cease to explore magic or the world.”

“Alright, let’s not delay.” Without further ado, Priscilla looked at everybody else with a smile. “The most important thing right now is to kill Alfonsol. Let’s stick to our plan after we are back.”

Plan? Fernando’s lips twitched. Those old guys already made a plan when they talked in private?

Nielson, who was morbidly fat, looked at Douglas with his ruby eyes and sniffed. “Are those the questions that the sorcerers of Antiffler have been working on? No wonder the Church vanquished you...”

Douglas did not argue with him. He remembered clearly that the remnant of the Asso Empire was best at bloodline melting and body modification.

“Sometimes, I wonder what the power of shadows is, and where it is from...” Amanata said in an unpredictable voice, before he vanished in the shadow of the room.

Congus, on the other hand, stared at Arnold and spoke in his usual creepy and coarse tone. “Old fox, I’ll do what you asked, but if anything goes wrong with your plan, hehe...”

After seeing the leaders of the organizations off, Arnold picked his nose, not caring about his image. “It’s much more exhausting to communicate with those guys than to fight them.”

“There isn’t any foundation of trust. We can only go one step at a time.” Douglas smiled.

“This operation will be the first step to build trust. We must thank the Blue Demon. Regardless of whether or not he really wants Alfonsol dead, he’s giving us a chance for a joint operation. It will be much easier to plan more operations if there’s a first one.” Arnold resumed his look of a kind old man.

Fernando said, not in a good mood, “But we have to succeed! If we fail, there won’t be a second operation, unless one party is close to doom! Old man, what exactly is your plan?”

Only Arnold and Douglas were here, so he simply called the president old man.

Arnold did not criticize Fernando’s lack of respect. He replied with a smile, “It’s simple. As I said before, Tower of Destroyers will attract Alfonsol, and the other organizations will cover and cooperate with us in the attack. The Church does not know that we have reached an agreement.”

“How is he going to be attracted? Are you not scared that the Church would see through it and send out ‘Heart of Time’? He has been capturing sorcerers of late.” Fernando was not satisfied with the plan. Even if the Church did not know that so many magic organizations had secretly forged an alliance, the decoy might be easily seen through.

Arnold looked at Fernando with a smile. “You are only a seventh-circle sorcerer, and you are of little value in such a battle. Why do you care about the plan?”

As Arnold expected, Fernando, who had been overlooked, said angrily, "I... I will become an archmage very soon!"

"Haha." Arnold chuckled. "It's good to be young. However, this operation does need you. Nobody controls storms better than you do. Rest assured. Alfonsol will see nothing wrong."

Fernando glared at the president, feeling that he had been teased. "How exactly are we going to allure Alfonsol to leave Rentato? I won't take part in the operation if I'm not certain about it!"

"Hehe. That's what I've been expecting you to say. Then, you'd better not take part in it. I was scared that you would want to join in your rashness," Arnold said with a cunning smile. He then went on before Fernando roared, "Alright, it's just a joke. The specific way of allurement can only be decided after we figure out Alfonsol's personality, hobbies, styles, and habits, but the core will be the same. The traitor within the Tower of Destroyers will tell the secret to the Inquisition."

"Traitor within? They are aware of the traitor?" Fernando asked in shock. In the meantime, he thought to himself that the old man was truly a natural-born old fox!

Arnold shook his head. "Fernando, you are too young and too naive. We dare not say that we know all the hiding traitors, but we do know some of them, and we have put them in positions that will not cause great losses. Now, it's time for them to make contributions."

He then added, "Sometimes, the traitors are more valuable to us than they are to our enemy."

Douglas listened with a smile, finding it odd that the president explained it in such great detail. Had he always communicated with Fernando in such a way?

Fernando thought for a moment and basically understood what Arnold meant. He cursed again, old fox!

"As a matter of fact, after Sharp proposed the 'contract', you were

automatically involved in the operation, and there's no need to sign up for it." Arnold chuckled. "Right, Douglas, I'm very curious about the questions you talked about. Are you interested in a discussion?"

"With pleasure," Douglas replied without any hesitation.

The three of them returned to the Land of Thousand Lakes and communicated on the questions that Douglas raised, expressing their unconfirmed ideas.

After they entered the underwater relic and revealed their real bodies, Arnold's smile was already gone. He frowned while being deep in thought. "Odd. Your opinions are very odd. It's not right... It's not right..."

While he mumbled, he did not forget to ask Lauren, who came to greet them, to gather the deputy presidents for a meeting.

By the time League, Ramon, and Veronica came in, Arnold had become normal again. He informed them of the discussion during the meeting and concluded, "We are responsible for the two most important procedures in the operation. If we succeed, we will be leading the future cooperation. Between the two procedures, the second procedure is the actual attack. Douglas and I will be in charge of it, and Fernando, Congus, Nielson, Amanata, and other people will cover us. It's already decided."

He spoke of the second procedure and then looked at League. "The first procedure is to distract Kritonia, so that he won't be following us in secret."

Fernando was greatly enlightened. He was worried that the Heart of Time would also come out when Alfonsol was allured. After all, nobody was certain that the guy was only interested in the sorcerers of the Union. The old fox was truly considerate!

"If we take action alone, two consecutive allurements will definitely be seen as part of a scheme. So, we must count on the help of other organizations. Also, if the gap between the two allurements is too short, it will be seen through too. League, I need you to go south and keep Kritonia occupied for a week. As a deputy president, you

deserve his attention.”

Arnold stared at League solemnly. “I know that it’s very dangerous. One may be killed by Kritonia after a moment of carelessness. Only an archmage who is good at escaping and hiding like you is qualified for the task. Also, you need to pay attention to the way you expose your traces so that Kritonia won’t be suspicious. You must mislead him into thinking that he is chasing after you.”

The task was so dangerous that even Fernando was more or less scared. He suspected that League would refuse it, but League simply said calmly, “That’s not a problem. It’s my responsibility.”

Douglas knew League too little to feel anything, but Fernando suddenly widened his eyes. This old guy had always been mean and obsessed with power, but he turned out to be reliable and trustworthy at such a critical moment!

For a moment, even League’s hawk nose was not as hideous as before.

Arnold sighed. “We can only march in danger. League, do you want to switch our roles so that I’ll distract Kritonia and you will work together with Douglas to kill Alfonsol? As the president, I should take the most dangerous task.”

League put on a smile. “I don’t think so. Your procedure is even more dangerous. If anything happens, it will be barely possible for you to escape. As for my task, at least everything will be under my control.”

“It’s decided then.” Arnold turned around and looked at Fernando. “Fernando, you have one other mission. You will return to Rentato and collect Alfonsol’s files, including but not limited to his hobbies, personalities, style, and relationships.”

They had never considered assassinating Alfonsol before. So, they only collected the files such as the divine powers that Alfonsol was good at and his previous battle cases. That was certainly not enough for an assassination mission.

“Will a few days be enough?” Fernando asked. League was about to go south and would take action in a couple of days, which gave him five days at most to gather the intelligence.

Arnold smiled. “All you need to do is to collect the side information to confirm the main intelligence that you obtain from the Blue Demon.”

“Huh?” Fernando was stunned again.

“He’s the one who gave the task. He must have a deep understanding of Alfonsol. Do you have a better source?” Arnold asked in a vague smile.

“B-But...” Fernando was full of concerns. At this moment, Douglas interjected, “Go now. There won’t be a problem.”

He seems to understand the president’s meaning between the lines? Fernando looked at Douglas and then at President Arnold. But why did he not understand?

Suddenly, he felt that he was somewhat silly before the two of them...

Before he left, Douglas went to Fernando with a few black books and notebooks. “A kid so interested in mathematics is hard to come by. Here are some files of mine from the past. Please give them to Sharp and ask him to forward them to Hathaway. There isn’t anything about magic in them.”

Fernando nodded. “Right, I need to offer her a few mathematical books too.”

Chapter 872: Intelligence

872 Intelligence

The Roasted Fish Hotel was as old and unpopulated as before in the late night. It seemed unchanged, but Fernando did not have the courage to approach. After leaving a mark in the agreed-upon area, he went into a slum not far away and hid on a tree, staring at the ragged houses down below.

When the moon rose to the apex, a person approached the ragged houses by stepping on the silver brilliance on the ground.

Confirming that nobody followed the guy, Fernando drifted down from the tree and said with a low voice, "Old man, you are not dead yet!"

"I'll be alive even after you are dead!" The newcomer was Old Green.

As per President Arnold's order, he stayed in the Roasted Fish Hotel and kept in touch with "Blue Grace" Sharp, but he was no longer involved in the relay and communication of the sorcerers within the Union.

Fernando snorted. "Old man, tell Sharp that we have decided to accept the mission to assassinate Alfonsol. We would like him to provide all the files he has on Alfonsol."

"What? You've truly decided to kill Alfonsol? Has the president contracted your madness?" Old Green couldn't be more surprised. In his eyes, it would only infuriate the Church, and there was not the slightest chance of success. If anything, the whole Union might be destroyed!

Fernando looked at Old Green in mockery. "Cowards do not understand the significance of risks."

"You seem confident." Having lived for almost two hundred years, Old Green had plenty of experience. He noticed the change in the

situation from Fernando's mockery.

"Cowards are also sensitive." Fernando did not have the virtue of respecting the old at all. However, as a sorcerer who made it out of death and blood alive too many times, he did not forget to remind Old Green. "Don't let Sharp know that we are kind of confident."

He stressed "kind of", not telling the whole truth even though it was Old Green he was speaking to.

Old Green scorned. "Do you think I am as reckless as you? However, why are you asking Sharp for the files? Are you not scared that he'll set you up or secretly report you to the Church?"

"By the time we allure Alfonsol out, Sharp will have noticed that we've accepted the mission and are taking action. He can still report it to the Church by then. So, we might as well show him some trust right now. It is the foundation of cooperation and will save our time in intelligence collection." At first, Fernando was quite bothered by that himself. He only decided to come because President Arnold and Douglas said it was okay. However, after considering carefully, he felt that he had found the key, although he was still not as confident as the old fox.

Perhaps the old fox kept something to himself, and that was why he trusted Sharp?

Old Green nodded. "Sharp has been staying in the Roasted Fish Hotel recently. He seems to be waiting for your reply. I'll forward your words to him right now."

"Right, those mathematical books and notes are the gifts of Douglas and me for Hathaway." Fernando handed over a dozen books with black covers to Old Green.

"Do you really want Hathaway to embark on the dangerous path of magic?" Because of his relationship with Hathaway's father, Old Green had never been glad about that.

Fernando chuckled. "Hey, is that something we can control? Old man, just drop your concerns. You should find a lady and have your

own children while you are not dead. Don't devote your redundant love to someone who doesn't need it."

He hid his vague caring in mockery.

Old Green was silent at first. He then heaved a long sigh. "I remember that you were such a lovely, vigorous, and stubborn kid when you just came to the magic tower. You even secretly cried when your teacher criticized you. Why is your tongue so rotten nowadays?"

Fernando blushed when his dark history was revealed. A terrible storm brewed in his eyes, but before he roared, Old Green had already vanished into the dark and returned to the Roasted Fish Hotel.

"What a wretched old man!" Eventually, Fernando could only curse in a low voice, fearing that somebody in the neighborhood would be woken up.

About ten minutes later, Old Green returned and said to Fernando solemnly, "Sharp agreed to provide Alfonsol's files. They will be given to you tomorrow at this hour."

"What's his reaction when he learns that we've accepted the task?" Fernando asked cautiously.

Old Green couldn't have neglected such details. He answered quickly without thinking, "He was a little bit surprised, but then he kept a smile of relief. Well, he also cursed, 'What a bunch of arrogant rats who do not know how weak you are. I'll watch how you get yourselves killed!'"

Fernando pictured the scene in his mind and noticed no anomaly in Sharp. So, he nodded his head. "I'll hide in your hotel and secretly observe how he delivers the files."

One couldn't be more careful at such a moment. Fernando was not an inexperienced young man.

"Right. Here's a letter from Hathaway to you and Douglas. It must've been written a couple of days ago. Sharp has been carrying

it.” Old Green took out a thick envelope from his pocket.

“A letter to us? What did she write?” Fernando did not believe that Douglas and he had become Hathaway’s best friends after only talking with her twice. He was rather stunned.

After examining the letter with magic, he unfolded it carefully. The handwriting was enjoyable and feminine, but there was not a single word other than the copied mathematical questions!

“Hehe...” Fernando could only chuckle dryly about that.

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The next day before sunset, Fernando snuck into the Roasted Fish Hotel and hid in the kitchen behind the counter.

About half an hour after dinnertime, Sharp, who seemed to have a lump on his nose, came alone and threw a sheaf of crinkled paper to Old Green. “All the details I’m aware of are on it.”

He was no stranger to assassinations, and he knew what files were useful. After all, it was not uncommon for the knights to work with the clerics to kill sorcerers during the rise of the Church.

He snorted heavily when Old Green stared at him without saying anything. “If you question the veracity of the files, you can test them yourself. I am a customer, not a servant.”

Then, he opened his hand. “Where’s the letter?”

“What letter?” Old Green was briefly stunned.

“The letter to Hathaway. The odds that they fail are very high. If I don’t get a letter back from him one of these days, I will never get a letter from him.” Sharp despised Fernando and his colleagues’ capabilities just like before. Fernando, who was peeping from the kitchen, clenched his fists in fury.

Old Green took out the letter that was full of answers and gave it to Sharp solemnly. “You really want to kill Alfonsol?”

He keenly sensed the earnestness and the pretended I-don't-care in Sharp's attitude because they had known each other for years. Fernando, for one, couldn't notice it at all.

"What do you think?" Sharp asked back without giving a straight answer. Then, he took out another letter from his pocket. "These are Hathaway's questions after yesterday's learning."

Fernando did not need to read the letter to know what was on it.

After Sharp had a glass of liquor and a roasted fish and was about to leave, he suddenly winked at the wall of the kitchen.

"He discovered me..." After a while, Fernando walked out of the kitchen and said at the darkness where Sharp disappeared.

Old Green chuckled. "When we were on adventures in the past, he was always best at discovering the hiders. Or maybe he has special tricks. I forgot to tell you earlier."

Fernando had no time to roar at him. He read the intelligence provided by Sharp carefully.

.....

"Based on Sharp's files and other sources of intelligence, it can be seen that Alfonsol is a very tough man who loathes sorcerers. He is rigorous if not ferocious. He's good at battles, with many famous cases. He's very unfriendly to the nobles. It is because of his contradictions with the Violet family that the pope dispatched him to our place..." Two days later, in the underwater relic, Fernando briefed Alfonsol's situation to President Arnold.

Besides them, Douglas was the only person in the heavily guarded chamber. Ramon and Veronica, who were not involved in the operation, had been kept out for the sake of confidentiality.

Arnold browsed through the files and listened to Fernando. In the end, he nodded. "The intelligence is very valuable. The operation will begin probably in a day or two. You should not go out anymore. Optimize your status and wait for my message."

“Alright. I haven’t noticed anything wrong about Sharp so far.” Fernando tailed and observed Sharp in the past two days. He was rather proud that he was not discovered.

In the next two days, Douglas and Fernando exchanged knowledge and items with other people in the underwater relic like the other sorcerers did, showing no sign that they would take part in an important operation soon. However, when they were free, they did not discuss the exhausting questions anymore but kept themselves ready for battle.

After midnight of the third day, Fernando and Douglas received Arnold’s order through Whispering Wind. They left the relic and entered the woods nearby.

“Mr. President is here.” Douglas discovered Arnold earlier than Fernando did.

Before his voice died down, Arnold walked out of the darkness with a grave face; his usual smile gone. “Alfonsol has left Rentato with at least seven senior-rank red robes and divine knights. He did not ask for the cooperation of the nobles.”

Douglas nodded first, but then he slightly changed his expression. “This is...?”

It was not until then that he realized that a man covered in a black cloak was standing in the shadow next to Arnold. Vague black mist surrounded the man, making him look creepy, and he was holding a long scythe in his hands. Douglas did not sense the man at all previously!

Fernando was even more surprised. He did not realize the mysterious man with the intense air of death until Douglas reminded him!

“It’s my servant of death, a supernatural creature that equals to level nine. It is best at stealth. To be honest, I barely used it before, and few people in the Union know it. However, this operation is too important. I can only bring out my trump card first, hoping that we can finish Alfonsol in one battle...” Arnold’s graveness was gone,

and he introduced it with a smile. He also told Douglas and Fernando how to cooperate with himself and the servant of death.

Douglas and Fernando both nodded in relief, glad that the president was trying his best without any reserve.

“Let’s go to Sherwell County in the north.” Arnold turned his eyes to the north.

Chapter 873: Everybody's Trick

873 Everybody's Trick

In a forest on the border between Sherwell County and Rentato, the bright fog had covered the vast territory, suppressing the sorcerers' spiritual powers and the knights' instincts.

In the last years of the elves' reign, because of the "scheme" of the Will of Abyss, many space gaps appeared on the ground. Some were tiny and disappeared on their own before long, but some further collapsed and connected different floors of the abyss, turning into the channels for the demons' invasion. Later, thanks to the help of the elven tree, the elves sealed most of the similar cracks. However, space disorder still lingered in some places, and this forest was one of such places. So, it became a good shelter for the sorcerers to hide in.

In a valley deep inside the forest, an "invisible" magic tower was enshrouded in the thick fog. This was a very important base of "Tower of Destroyers". Thanks to the environment and its mobility, even though the Church knew that plenty of sorcerers were hiding in the forest and sent many people to search, nobody had ever discovered it.

Of course, it was also because the Church was not doing its best. Right when they were tired of searching and was about to erase the forest, the war in the west broke out, and the main forces were mobilized to the front line in Aalto. So, the plan had to be put on hold.

"Cracking (Advanced), plus your 'Time Stop', will finish the battle quickly." At the edge of the valley, Priscilla, who was in a red magic robe, gave Douglas a scroll and looked at Arnold. She said with a faint smile, "It's very difficult and costly to create the scroll even for me. Old fox, I get to pick the trophies first after the battle."

Then, she paused and said, "Also, I have offered my 'Tower of Destroyers'. If the plan fails and it's destroyed by the Church,

hehe...” She had a “you know what I would do” look on her face.

The magic tower, which could move and become invisible, was exactly what Tower of Destroyers was named after. After their headquarters was changed to someplace better and it was no longer useful, it was relocated here.

Fernando couldn't have seconded the way Priscilla called Arnold more. To this moment, he hadn't figured out why President Arnold was confident that Sharp would not betray them. Was it only a wild gamble? What an old fox!

Arnold said with a smile, “Although it's been almost three hundred years since you became an archmage, I am still a senior who watched you grow up. Please show me some respect.”

His evasive answer certainly did not satisfy Priscilla, who snorted heavily. “A senior? Who proposed to me at the beginning only to be refused?”

Ha.

Fernando burst into laughter when he learned the president's dark history that he did not know. He knew that Priscilla had a husband who was killed by the Church, but he did not know that she was with someone else before!

Blushing, Arnold said, “I was in my prime years back then, not nearly as old as I am right now...”

Priscilla had prepared her own way of escape. So, instead of further pursuing the question, she looked at the servant of death next to Arnold gravely and asked, “Who is this? I can tell that he is strong, but something is not right...”

“He's my servant of death, a supernatural creature equal to level nine...” Arnold explained again.

“A servant of death. No wonder it gives me the feeling of the dead.” Priscilla nodded in relief. Congus, who was behind them, said coarsely, “Old fox, after the operation succeeds, you have to lend your servant of death to me for a while. It is not normal. Perhaps it

contains the mysteries of death.”

Led by Priscilla, everybody called Arnold “old fox”.

“I’ve noticed it too, but I never know why.” Arnold opened his eyes, neither declining nor accepting Congus’ request.

Congus’ eyes flashed. When he was about to continue asking, fat Nielson opened his mouth and said coldly, “Alfonsol is probably coming, and you are still in the mood of chitchatting? Are all the sorcerers of Sylvanas as unreliable as you? In that case, I would have to reconsider the dangerousness of our cooperation.”

“Hehe.” Congus shut his mouth.

Looking at Amanata who stayed in shadow quietly, Priscilla nodded. “According to the news from the south, Kritonia is still after League. So, we will stick to our plan.”

She turned around and flew back to the Tower of Destroyers. After all, Alfonsol would notice something wrong if no sorcerers were inside it.

Nielson and Congus flew in different directions, so far that it was beyond what Alfonsol could search and notice. It was also out of the range for them to reinforce the Tower of Destroyers immediately.

Amanata had long disappeared from the shadow too.

“Fernando, you set up the magic circle and keep this place in a storm, preferably for two hours.” Arnold led Douglas and Fernando into a crypt nearby and completely melted into the shadow with a weird spell.

He speculated that Alfonsol would arrive in one hour because the traitor was given a wrong location, which would mislead the enemy but eventually bring them to this place.

Boom!

Thanks to Fernando’s arrangement, bolts of lightning struck the trees, setting them on fire.

Hualala.

Clouds were gathered, and rain poured, making the place look like the end of the world. Nobody could sense anything.

Arnold was not scared that Alfonsol might discover that the storm was manipulated. After all, this place was an important base of the Tower of Destroyers. It was perfectly normal that such stealth and interference circles had been established.

Time went by one second after another. The Tower of Destroyers, in the storm and the darkness, was more and more like a monster that was about to swallow the world. Arnold and Douglas both remained absolutely calm with the spells such as Mechanized Mind.

Fernando, who did not need to attack, looked at the dark forest anxiously. If anything went wrong in the operation, half of the magic organizations in Holm would be paralyzed.

“The target is here...” The blowing wind brought Amanata’s gloomy, unemotional voice.

Even Douglas couldn’t help but stand straight, clutching the scroll of Cracking (Advanced) in his hands.

BOOM!

Several minutes later, a pillar of light enshrouded in fire descended from the sky, illuminated the darkness, and hit the Tower of Destroyers overwhelmingly.

Symbols and patterns glittered around the transparent magic tower, constructing defense magic circles that blocked the pillar of light.

At this moment, an old man in a red robe appeared in the sky. His wrinkled face was full of hate and satisfaction. Around him, several red robes and divine knights were providing protection in battle formation.

In the forest nearby, bishops, reverends, and night watchers in black gloves emerged, blocking the way and killing the hiding sorcerers.

Arnold and Douglas did not attack immediately but waited for the feedback of the other archmages.

“Hiding gold knights detected...” Congus’ voice came first from the storm.

Nielson gave a feedback very soon too. “Several senior-rank night watchers have set up a divine power circle and are ready to activate it at critical moments.”

“There are enemies in the shadow...” Amanata said simply.

“Alfonsol is rather cautious. He has brought more men than we thought. He must’ve planned to counter-ambush the enemy in case of an accident,” Arnold said to Douglas in the telepathic bond.
“Let’s do it!”

Far away, Congus, in his glamorous black robe, suddenly flew out from below the ground. The skull glistened in coldness under the bolts of lightning, and his teeth opened, letting out invisible howls.

Wu!

Above the trees, behind the rocks, and in the bushes, clerics and night watchers dashed out, screaming. Their skin began to fester, and their eyes were flashing in redness. They lunged at their companions who were struggling to resist!

After only a brief moment, they had been turned into specters!

In the meantime, skulls rose from the softened mud. Zombies and ghouls declared the arrival of the kingdom of death.

Before the hiding gold knight was able to react, he was already surrounded by the undead!

Congus did not decide to fight with his life. Naturally, he chose his spells accordingly.

On the other side, Nielson also flew out of his shelter, but his appearance had greatly changed. His fat was now tightened, filled with the patterns unique to the frost giants; his left eye popped out,

turning into a brown Eye Demon with stubs floating around it; his right eye was gray and dim, and whatever it saw became a stone quickly; and pale tentacles grew out of his head and his body, as if he were a dehydrated octopus.

His mouth collapsed, baring his tusks; his right hand was full of maggots, and the incomplete fingers carried the intense stink of death; his left hand was covered in fish scales, which were mixed with electric arcs; his back had a pair of bat wings that were similar to vampires'; and the lower half of his body turned into four furry horse legs...

He looked like a monster from the worst nightmare!

Dragon breath, bolts of lightning, petrification, freezing, death summoning, ray shooting, mind stealing... Even though he was by himself, Nielson charged like a whole army of sorcerers, bringing unimaginable trouble to the night watchers, reverends, bishops, and divine knights. The divine power circle they established in secret was immediately sabotaged.

The clerics and night watchers on other directions were even more intimidated. They heard their companions scream and saw them disappearing into the darkness, but they could not find any enemy!

After Arnold gave the order, Douglas immediately tore apart the scroll of Cracking (Advanced) toward Alfonsol!

Generally speaking, Cracking (Advanced) should be performed after "Time Stop". However, since Alfonsol was confident to come and destroy the Tower of Destroyers, he was very likely to have brought extraordinary items that could resist the effect of Time Stop. Therefore, Douglas intentionally changed the order.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Under the sudden attack, different lights burst out of Alfonsol's body, as splendid as fireworks.

He does have items that can resist Time Stop! Douglas keenly sensed it.

At this moment, an enormous shadow appeared before Alfonsol. Arnold's servant of death, dragging the long scythe, slashed at Alfonsol, forcing him to defend himself with divine power.

The intense fog of death around the servant of death blocked the subconscious attacks of the other red robes and divine knights.

Without any delay, Douglas cast "Time Stop" after the cooldown.

The spell was cast successfully. However, he discovered, to his surprise, that it was not anxiety or panic on Alfonsol's face, but a casual smile!

Chapter 874: Unexpected

874 Unexpected

Time Stop took effect. The brightness of the moon faded, the darkness was gone, the bolts of lightning were frozen in the sky, and the rainwater crystallized into peace. The whole world had nothing but vague grayness left. Alfonsol was like a bug frozen in ice when he was in the range of the spell, keeping the weird posture.

Right then, a crack passed through the stopped time and entered Douglas' ears. Then, the grayness broke inch by inch like shattered glass. The world immediately fell apart.

“Who is it?” Ever since he picked up the ninth-circle spell, Douglas had never met such a situation when he performed Time Stop. An external force had broken the effect of the spell! Even though he was good at controlling himself and had enhanced himself with many spells, he was still quite shocked.

The pieces of ice flew away, and Alfonsol was back to normal. However, the bolts of lightning were still slowed down, and the rainwater was still almost stopped. The only thing new was a glittering river from the sky that ran as unstoppably as time.

The overwhelming river of time woke everyone in the effect of Time Stop and broke the ultimate silence. Covering the forest within dozens of kilometers, the ripples made everything hazy as if they were below the water.

Arnold, Douglas, and Fernando, who were near, and Nielson, Congus, and Amanata, who were further away, all seemed to have been thrown into a transparent amber. They moved toward the river of time at the center slowly but surely. Their faces were different, with some angry and some shocked, but none of them could control themselves, just like no intelligent creature could resist the passage of time!

“Kritonia!”

Priscilla, who was in the Tower of Destroyers, was in better condition. She discovered, to her shock, that the source of the river of time was a fuzzy young man. His black hair danced crazily, his hands and his longsword were all watery, and he was looking down below with his blue eyes in mockery and pride. It was exactly “Heart of Time” Kritonia!

But according to the intelligence, Kritonia was still being distracted in the south!

After his sword slashed, the servant of death ahead of the river of time was cut from the middle without a sound, and the rotten pieces of flesh turned into ashes. His skull, hands, and ribs fell apart.

One attack of his sword was already so intimidating!

“Heart of Time?”

“Kritonia!”

“How could this happen?”

“How could he be here?”

Congus, Nielson, Douglas, and the rest of them all looked at Arnold. Hadn't he sent League to distract the man in the south? Wasn't he confirmed to be in the south from various sources?

While they looked at Arnold, they were also performing magic to free themselves. However, under the influence of the river of time, their movements and their minds had been slowed. They couldn't cast any spell quickly!

For a moment, everybody was grasped by fear, confusion, shock, and desperation.

“It's you?” Priscilla almost heard a long sigh from Arnold.

“It's me.” Someone showed up behind Kritonia. He was wrinkled with a hawk nose. It was League, the deputy president of the Union of Sorcerers, and the archmage who was dispatched to distract

Kritonia!

His face was as gloomy as before, but he now put on a vicious and delightful smile. His voice echoed inside every soul. "I only sold some intelligence for my benefits, and I never thought to destroy the organization. However, you sent me on such a dangerous mission. You are to blame for your situation right now!"

"Haha. Thanks to League's intelligence, there's finally a chance to completely destroy your organizations!" Alfonsol laughed cruelly and gloatingly. The red robes and divine knights nearby quickly approached and protected him.

"Goddamn traitor!" It was the first idea that Priscilla, Nielson, Congus, and Amanata had in mind.

Fernando even roared aloud, "Old man, filthy traitor!"

Time saturated the valley and the forest like water. All the sorcerers within the range had so many mistakes casting their spells that they could not escape at all. They were devastated and frustrated. The senior-rank sorcerers like Congus began to prepare to destroy themselves in order to be resurrected in other places.

After chopping Arnold's servant of death and limiting everyone's operation, Kritonia raised his long sword again, and everybody heard his clear voice. "It's a pity that there are only a few archmages..."

Faint pride could be felt in his tone. He did not consider Arnold, Douglas, or any of them to be important at all.

Everybody looked gloomy as if death was at hand, except the lich who only had bones. The intimidation of a level-two legendary knight was not to be underestimated!

Hardly had Kritonia finished his remark when a face suddenly erupted from the darkness behind him. The face was enormous and covered in a black hood. His eyes were two pale fires, and he opened his mouth letting out syllables that nobody else could hear, as if he were the God of Death reincarnated!

A black swirl emerged from the bottom of Kritonia's feet and enshrouded him and League.

The swirl was as blurry as smoke. Dozens of clerics and night watchers below the senior rank did nothing except to watch it, but their bodies quickly decayed into skeletons at a loss!

The bones of the servant of death that Kritonia minced just now exploded and released pale smoke that instantly consumed the forest and the valley. The skull, on the other hand, sprang and fell at the center of the enormous face, forcing a tall, slim figure with a long black robe behind in midair. The faces of souls surrounded him and cried miserably, as if they were praising and singing for him!

The figure was very similar to the servant of death just now, except that the black scythe had been raised, as if it was ready to reap lives.

“Ahh!!!”

In the pale smoke, a red robe suddenly screamed. His soul was extracted from his shell and melted into the smoke.

The souls of many other reverends, bishops, night watchers, and divine knights also flew out and joined the carnival of spirits in the smoke. Trees withered, and creatures decayed. Except for the sorcerers and few clerics, the place was already a lifeless realm of the dead!

The pale smoke began to constrict, and the fuzzy faces of pain and fear drifted in it, constructing a cage that trapped the black swirl.

A crack suddenly appeared on the black swirl, and the watery ripples spread out. In the meantime, a red robe and a divine knight behind Alfonsol suddenly went on a rampage. One of them summoned a firestorm, and the other destroyed himself. Alfonsol, caught unprepared, was shattered into pieces.

“You?” Alfonsol, who was still gloating, did not see it coming at all. Vague shock was left behind even though he was dead.

Kritonia, with the longsword of time, broke out of the black swirl

and happened to catch the scene. League, however, had been transformed into a dry corpse that did not have any water. He fell from the sky, and none of his life-preserving spells proved useful. Disbelief and fright were frozen on his face.

“Brain Scourge, Memory Meddling, Death Storm, Fog of Spirits...” Kritonia mumbled something first before he looked at the mysterious person outside of the mist in solemnity and surprise who was being “admired” by the souls. “Tannanois...”

While he talked, his body became fuzzy, and he flashed forward unpredictably with his longsword, as if he were traveling in different spaces, to avoid the blockage of the Fog of Spirits.

The changes happened so fast that Priscilla, Nielson, and the rest of them did not realize what was happening at all until they heard Kritonia’s words.

“The Liege of Death!”

Nielson couldn’t have sounded more delighted.

“The Liege of Death!”

Congus, Priscilla, and Amanata, on the other hand, were so surprised that they found it hard to believe.

Douglas was the first to come back to himself, but he did not intervene a moment ago because he realized he wasn’t capable enough to be involved at all!

At this moment, he looked at Arnold in confusion, amusement, and shock. How did his servant of death turn into “Liege of Death” Tannanois, who was the top legend in the past and the last consul of the Asso Empire? How many things had the guy kept a secret?

“Old fox, what is this all about?” Fernando roared, feeling that he had been tricked. His participation in the operation mattered little!

Arnold did not seem surprised at all. He coughed and said, “Let’s get out of here first. Or maybe, do you want to be involved in a battle of legends?”

As he spoke, a colorful rainbow flew out of his hands and exploded into brilliant fireworks in the sky.

Having no time to inquire and “beat” Arnold, Priscilla glared at him and let the Tower of Destroyers run. Congus, Nielson, and Amanata turned around and left on their own for the rendezvous that they agreed upon earlier.

Douglas and Fernando followed Arnold to escape through the forest. Suddenly, they sensed something and raised their hands, only to discover that a gap was ripped in the sky of the battle, and a slim old man walked out with his eyes closed. From the north, a cold and beautiful girl who looked like an ice sculpture was also approaching.

“Mental Storm!”

“Aurora Wall!”

Two sophisticated voices came from far away. Fernando glared at Arnold. “So, the real target of the operation is actually ‘Heart of Time’? What was League all about? Has the Liege of Death been restored to level three?”

“Cough. As I said before, sometimes, the traitors are more valuable to us than they are to our enemy.” Arnold looked at him with a smile.

Chapter 875: 875 Arnold's Wish

875 Arnold's Wish

Fernando felt that he was almost choked and could barely breathe at all. The old fox had deceived them all! To make things worse, he even gave a clue in advance. It seemed that the guy was watching them to be misled as if he were enjoying a play!

No wonder he was not worried at all that "Blue Grace" Sharp would regret and turn them in!

Holding back his fury, Fernando flew out of the forest with Arnold. The aftermath of a battle of legends could very likely destroy this place!

"Has the Liege of Death recovered the strength of level three?" Douglas repeated one of Fernando's questions. At this moment, he cared about the strengths of the two parties more than anything else, and the details could be left for discussion when it was over.

Light and shadows were changing deep inside the forest, as if countless phantoms were wandering inside. It was most intimidating. Arnold narrowed his eyes and looked back, smiling like a real fox. "The Liege of Death was heavily wounded by the pope. His body, his soul, and his phylactery were all broken, and he almost completely perished. Fortunately, it was not God's Arrival that the pope used.

"Later, the Liege of Death was revived as an alchemical life through the soul core that he preserved through legendary arts and by melting the soul pieces of other people. Then, he reshaped his body."

In the telepathic bond, he told them about the Liege of Death unhurriedly, as if he did not have any doubt about the outcome of the battle at all. After all, the Liege of Death used to be a top legend who commanded a legion of the undead. Even though he was not as strong as before, it shouldn't be a problem for him to deal with the Heart of Time who hadn't reached level three yet.

“However, the main consciousness was prone to the conflicts of the soul pieces. Most of the magic models were incomplete. As a result, he failed to recover his peak strength for a long time.

“A dozen years ago, based on his research and understanding of the soul, Tannanois finally absorbed the other pieces and regained the strength of level-three legendary. Perhaps he will return to the peak in a few decades.”

“Then the battle shouldn’t be a problem...” Fernando said subconsciously.

The conclusion was based on reality. After the prolonged War of Dawn, everybody knew clearly that sorcerers were stronger than knights and clerics of the same level. However, the time it took for sorcerers to grow was much longer. That was why they were left behind.

Also, necromancers, who represented death, resurrection, and life, were among the sorcerers with the highest combat abilities thanks to their profound understanding of the soul. They were also more fatal and unpredictable!

Therefore, even though Kritonia had the mutated bloodline of the dragons of time, there was no chance for him to defeat a necromancer who was one level higher than him. All it remained to be seen was whether or not he could seize the momentary opportunity to flee.

Arnold smiled and did not respond to Fernando. Instead, he offered to explain the operation to them. “As a matter of fact, when I contacted Red Eye, Supreme Soul, and the other groups, I attempted to greet the three legends and received a satisfactory answer.”

They had already reached the edge of the black forest. So, they turned around and looked at the battlefield of the top legends again.

At this moment, in the middle of the fog where countless souls were struggling, a hazy flickering light dashed out. All the obstacles on its way seemed illusory and could not stop it at all, as if they

were in different spaces.

“The power of space and time is indeed remarkable...” Douglas remarked in the telepathic bond.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when the sky, which was slightly brightened by the snow, dimmed again. An enormous dragon hovered and descended. All its muscles were rotten, and pus was flowing everywhere. He was also breathing pale fire.

It was a “dragon lich”, a legendary undead creature!

The dragon of death unfolded its wings and covered half of the forest in absolute darkness. The fading light of time was consumed. It could only be vaguely seen that the light was still struggling and falling apart.

In the sky around, two gigantic shadows emerged again. One of them was a mummy that was covered in brown cloth. It was so strong that Douglas and Fernando could perceive it clearly from far away. The other was a monster that had only skeletons left. It was even more gargantuan than the dragon lich, like the bones left by the legendary monsters in the Boundless Ocean.

The two undead creatures that were undoubtedly legendary joined the deep darkness that the dragon lich created. Therefore, the last haziness of the light was eclipsed.

In the forest, zombies, mummies, ghosts, spirits, skinless dogs, and other undead creatures climbed and covered the darkness like a surging tide.

“A legendary necromancer is truly horrifying, particularly one who grasps the tough legion of the undead. Kritonia is doomed...” Knowing a lot about necromancy, Fernando was quite astounded by what he saw.

For the other legendary classes of the school of necromancy, like the Great Master of Paleness or Demigod-lich, although they also had plenty of “helpers”, they could not compare to the Liege of Death. Those two classes were more focused on mysterious skills

and soul attacks.

If the pope hadn't destroyed the Liege of Death's main legion, he would have resisted most legends of Holm on his own. It must be noted that he had two level-three servants of death in his prime days!

The forest was absolutely quiet without any noise. It was both weird and terrifying, making it impossible for them to know the progress of the battle. Therefore, Fernando could only move his eyes back and continue, "A satisfactory answer?"

Did the old fox not mention that only by winning the support of nobles could the organizations that had three legendary sorcerers be convinced to join? Was it another lie?

Arnold looked at him and Douglas and said calmly, "Although His Excellency Tannanois is unsatisfied with the empire's decision and unwilling to go to Aalto to help, as one of the top experts in the world, he understands the situation very well and knows that this is the final chance to save himself!

"While the main force of the Church is stalled by Abel, Dracula, Danisos, and the other legends in the west, he has to save himself! After everything is settled, he will be no better than a rat in the gutter!

"This is the last chance. It is either death or a better life. Everybody knows it very well. Even if I did not greet them, they would've taken some action recently."

Then, Arnold chuckled. "They did not pay much attention to us at the beginning, but Sharp's contract inspired me to plan this operation. The real target has always been Kritonia since the very beginning."

"No wonder you were so enthusiastic about Sharp's random contract without much confirmation!" Fernando felt even more frustrated that he did not see that. In retrospect, he realized that the old fox was too passionate!

Arnold smiled and did not say anything. Douglas, on the other hand, nodded his head. “Even we were convinced that it was meant to kill Alfonsol. How could Kritonia have suspected us?”

“But what if League was not a traitor, and the Heart of Time did not come?” Fernando already knew that Sharp’s contract was only a disguise to cover the real target, but he still had doubts.

Arnold grimaced like a fox that had just stolen a chicken. “Then, our real target would’ve been Alfonsol. By killing him, we will raise the contradictions between the nobles and the Church to win a living space for ourselves.”

Huh? Fernando looked at Arnold in shock, having trouble following his explanation.

Arnold chuckled. “First of all, you need to remember our path— attract the nobles and sow discord between them and the Church. Therefore, either attacking the Heart of Time or killing Alfonsol is for the purpose, although the former is more effective than the latter.

“If the former cannot be accomplished, the latter will be our Plan B. It’s much more than a disguise.”

Fernando listened attentively and felt that he grasped something essential. For the first time, he wanted the old fox to talk.

Arnold turned his eyes to Douglas and smiled. “In order to achieve a purpose, you cannot create a plan that is so delicate that any accident in any procedure will result in failure because there are too many accidents in actual operations.

“The key to any operation is hiding, pretending, and lying. Hide your real purpose and pretend it to be something else that will actually help you accomplish your real purpose. That’s the only way to avoid your failure because the enemy’s sabotage will only indirectly help you. Both pretending and lying will require the support of detailed intelligence...”

Flying out of the forest, he talked eloquently with his hands behind

his back with the utmost ease. Fernando was so stunned that he cursed to himself, This is truly an old fox!

However, why was he not so elaborate before?

Douglas listened carefully and shared similar feelings as Fernando. Until the battle of Antiffler, he had been focused on research and rejected by other sorcerers. He barely had any experience of making plans and arranging operations. He picked up something during his escape, but he was still immature. After hearing Arnold's interpretation, he immediately felt that he understood a lot of new things.

Realizing something, he asked, "Mr. President, are you teaching me a lesson?"

He called the man respectfully.

Arnold turned around and looked at the forest that was still covered in absolute darkness, before he said with mixed feelings. "However strange your questions are, you are the sorcerer with the greatest potential of leadership in the Union. Fernando is smart enough, but he is too impatient and reckless. So, I need to tell you some of my experience before I die."

"Old fox!"

"Old fox!"

"Mr. President..."

Arnold raised his hands and stopped them before he went on, "In the war that devastates the sorcerers, so many legends have passed away. Why do you think I am safe? Maybe I'll be killed by grand cardinals, legendary knights, or night watchers at some point. I am not any luckier than other people. Or maybe in another hundred years, I will die of old age. This is a natural law that cannot be broken unless I become a legendary sorcerer.

"My greatest wish right now is to see the sorcerers back to the supreme place of this world and reestablish a glorious magic empire."

His eyes did not leave the battlefield of legends, and he said in a low voice, “I wonder if I can live long enough to see that...”

My only wish is to watch you return to supremacy when I am still alive!

His back was slightly hunched, and his white hair was so obvious.

At this moment, an unimaginably dazzling light burst out in the darkness and illuminated the world.

Chapter 876: Cooperation

876 Cooperation The dark curtain was dissolved, and brightness leaked through the sky. Surging ripples spread out as if they came from the ancient times, wiping all the dust on the way.

In front of time, everything was dust!

In the middle of the ripples, a person passed through the wall made of aurora like a slippery fish and broke out of the heavy siege before the fog of spirits regathered.

The power of time was everywhere!

The person was much dimmer than before, and the pride and confidence could no longer be felt. The moment he left the absolute darkness, he hurried to turn into many hazy rays of light and opened the barrier of space and time, teleporting far away.

Right then, a black enormous scythe, carrying the deepest and heaviest death, slashed from the sky abruptly, as if it had been waiting for the opportunity all the time. It hit the hazy light in the center brutally.

“Ahh!!!”

The miserable screams echoed on everybody’s heart as if they were from the future, making their body tremble.

The light was cut from the middle into two parts.

The former half leaped into the space-time gap that was just torn open without considering anything, and the latter half exploded violently, miring the scythe of death in the thick ocean of time. It was slowed to the minimum.

“Hooooooooo!”

A dragon roared, and a pale fire followed the light and shadow into the gap. Then, the gap was closed, and the space and time were

back to normal, except that painful moans were still echoing in the sky.

“He’s not dead?” In the place that they agreed upon, Priscilla found it impossible to close her mouth.

During her escape, she had been paying attention to the battle of top legends. She knew what great powers were trying to kill Kritonia. There were one level-three legendary sorcerer, two level-one legendary sorcerers, one undead creature that equaled level-two legendary, and two undead creatures equaled level-one legendary. Even if the saint in the Radiance Church were here, he would’ve also perished. However, Kritonia had successfully escaped!

Even though he was heavily wounded, he should be proud of himself for being able to escape!

Not far away from her, the needle-like redness in Congus’ hollow eye sockets was bouncing intensely. “Is the power of time so remarkable?”

He ascribed the result to the space-time tower that was in the highest place in magic. It had to be noted that the former pope did not use God of Truth when he “killed” the Liege of Death. At that time, nobody knew that the Saint Truth had such a terrifying divine power. It was not until Aflora and her partner, Danisos, two primordial dragons of time, attacked Lance at the invitation of the consul of the Sylvanas Magic Empire that the world finally witnessed the godly power that surpassed everything.

The result was that Aflora, who only backed off to the Dark Mountain Range and never gave in even during the heyday of the Magic Empires, completely perished, and Danisos was heavily wounded even though he only took to the aftermath.

The battle demonstrated the power of God’s Arrival, but it also proved the formidableness of the power of space and time, which had forced the former pope to perform God’s Arrival.

After that, the former pope and the current pope had each used

God's Arrival once, and their opponents were the god of the Sun Church and the Light of Stars. Both of them were the experts of space and time. The Light of Stars, in particular, had the help of the defense of Antiffler that was perfected for almost ten thousand years. He was believed to be the most likely person to resist God's Arrival. However, after one attack, he was killed, and the city was destroyed. All the living sorcerers were intimidated from the bottom of their hearts.

Looking at the closed space-time gap in the sky, Amanata suddenly appeared from the shadow, unable to hide perfectly anymore.

"This... This doesn't make any sense..." Nielson, who was from the Asso Empire, could not believe that the Liege of Death failed to kill a level-two legendary knight with the help of another two legendary sorcerers!

Besides their shock, they were also disappointed. They thought that Kritonia, a nightmare for the sorcerers of Holm, would end here today, but his capabilities were truly beyond imagination!

Douglas, who was not far away from the meeting place, looked at the sky in slight confusion. He also found it more or less unacceptable. Although he was prepared that Kritonia might escape after the battle, he felt that it was rather unreal after it did happen.

Fernando even exclaimed in shock, "He escaped? Which legend started the research on the space-time bloodline?"

He couldn't have admired the legend more for developing such a cheating blood power.

"It's said to be Viken, the King of Calamities. He was definitely among the top three legendary sorcerers who studied bloodline melting. Of course, rumors have it that he was not very good at the power of space and time, and it was co-developed by him and Maskelyne. However, the space-time bloodline never distinguished itself until the mutations in Kritonia, which let people know the preciousness of the space-time blood power..." Arnold explained. He was as casual as before. He was not surprised at all that Kritonia broke out of the siege.

“So, it was Viken and Maskelyne...” Fernando repeated. Before he invoked their titles, he looked at Arnold suspiciously. “Old fox, you don’t seem nervous and disappointed, right?”

“I am very disappointed and nervous,” Arnold replied with a smile.

“I don’t see it.” Fernando glared at Arnold and speculated, “Actually, you intentionally let go of him, didn’t you? Or maybe, did something else happen in the darkness?”

“Haha. How would I know? I wasn’t there,” Arnold said with an innocent look on his face.

Douglas nodded, deep in thought. “In any case, Kritonia also belongs to the nobles, and killing him will raise the panic and counterattack of nobles. It may be better to...”

“Hehe.” Arnold smiled but did not say anything. Pointing at Priscilla who was at the entrance of the cave far away, he said, “Let’s go and talk to them first.”

At this moment, Priscilla also saw Arnold. Immediately, scorching fireballs emerged and flew around her before she grimaced. “Old fox, come here and explain what happened. I promise I won’t beat you!”

“We can already talk well over such a distance.” Arnold scratched his beard and took a step back.

“You owe us an explanation.” Congus flew over. Since he only had bones, it was difficult to tell what was on his mind.

Arnold’s smile was gone. He told everybody what he said to Douglas and Fernando earlier solemnly and sincerely.

“Do you mean that the few legends are willing to work with us? To what extent?” As the leader of an organization, Priscilla had already recovered from the fury of being deceived and began to consider the situation carefully.

Arnold looked at them. “It depends on our negotiation and the countermeasures of the Church. However, it shouldn’t be a problem

to reach a preliminary agreement.”

“Yes. Now that a level-nine bishop is killed, the Church will definitely hunt harder. The two grand cardinals and the few legendary knights will all be deployed. We have to stay away for now.” For the first time since he came to the party in Allyn, Nielson spoke in a rather friendly tone and attitude.

Since even the Liege of Death was willing to cooperate and forget the unpleasant experience in the past for now, it seemed unnecessary for him to cling to it.

The moment he finished his sentence, the darkness around suddenly split, and a necromancer with an enormous black scythe floating on his head walked out. He was entirely covered in a black robe. The only thing that could be seen was the two red spots in the shadow of his hood.

Behind him, fuzzy souls were screaming, moaning, and crying around him, as if they were expressing fear and submission.

“You are the dominator of death and the will of immortality.” Arnold, Nielson, Priscilla, Douglas, and the other sorcerers all held their chests and their foreheads while they recited the tributes for the Liege of Death.

Remembering the tributes for every legendary sorcerer was a mandatory subject for every magic apprentice. Thankfully, there weren’t too many legendary sorcerers.

“‘Escape’ is better than death...” The voice of the Liege of Death sounded like from a distant past—weary, gloomy, and lifeless. However, before he finished his sentence, he raised his head abruptly and looked at the sky before he vaguely said, “It has begun...”

It has begun? Including old fox Arnold, all the sorcerers looked at the sky after him.

They saw that the sky, which had been dim and starless previously, turned clear and bright at some point. A dazzling, dreamy silver

moon struck the sky with a chilly brilliance.

Then, it was drowned by an infinite light.

“That was...?” All the illusions were gone, and the sky became dark and gloomy again. Having vaguely sensed something, Arnold asked half in panic and half in expectation.

Douglas seemed to have returned to the nightmare in the past. He asked at a loss, “God’s Arrival?”

As far as he knew, God’s Arrival couldn’t be seen by people in other places unless it attacked a target who was at very high altitudes. According to the records, the demigods such as the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss could not attack across the continent. However, there was one exception. The battle with the demigod could be seen wherever the silver moon could be seen. That was Alterna, the God of Silver Moon.

“Have the demigods finally been involved?” Priscilla felt that so many things had happened tonight that they did not seem like a coincidence at all!

Fat Nielson asked in a hurry, “Mr. Tannanois, has the Silver Moon blocked God’s Arrival?”

The Liege of Death heaved a long and soft sigh. “The moon has fallen...”

Chapter 877: Reaction

Chapter 877 Reaction

“The moon has fallen?” Both Arnold and Douglas were greatly surprised by the Liege of Death’s sigh. They both raised their heads and looked at the dark sky. Their eyes glittered in different colors with magic, which allowed them to see through the clouds and catch the chilly, hazy moon!

The moon hadn’t really fallen!

The sorcerers were greatly relieved and canceled the vision effect provided by magic. If Demigod Alterna, who allegedly would never die as long as the moon was high, was killed by God’s Arrival, they would not stand a chance at all!

However, according to what the Liege of Death said just now, even the Silver Moon failed to block God’s Arrival?

Even a demigod could not resist an attack of God’s Arrival?

After feeling lucky briefly, they were grasped by intense disappointment and confusion. Priscilla, Nielson, Congus, and the other sorcerers were very frustrated. Was the pope so powerful? Was it possible at all to defeat him? Did the Liege of Death feel frustrated too? In his prime years, the pope never bothered to perform “God’s Arrival” on him, not to mention right now!

“Let’s go back now and discuss other things after the Church’s counterattack is over.” A hazy mist rose before the Liege of Death. After the mist faded, he vanished.

Arnold calmed down and resumed his smile. “Whatever the pope does, we have to do what we have to do. Maybe he has to pay a high price to use God’s Arrival... Doesn’t he? We must lie low and do not take any action for a while. However, we must pay attention to the relationship changes between the nobles and the Church.”

“We aren’t that stupid although we have indeed been fooled once,”

Priscilla snorted. "You said that the grand nobles such as the Blue Demon would be inclined to help us. I hope that we can see something soon!"

She was bewildered by the beautiful prospect before!

Looking at the other people who obviously wanted to beat him up, Arnold smiled dryly. "Rest assured. There won't be a problem. We will observe and contact Sharp closely."

"We will be on our way." Priscilla held herself back from throwing a giant fireball at the man. She raised her head and looked at the sky while sighing gloomily. "I don't know when we can see the dawn..."

"After the dawn, there will be a surging tide..." Nielson's ruby eyes carried vague depression and sadness. His tone was different from Priscilla's, as he was concerned about the Church's retaliation.

Arnold chuckled. "Even Mr. Tannanois is not anxious. Why should we be? He will be the primary target for the Church after all this."

The Liege of Death's attitude just now made him feel that things might change, and the Church's counterattack might not be too strong.

"I hope you are not lying this time," Priscilla said casually and flew back into the Tower of Destroyers that had already turned transparent.

After the other sorcerers left, Douglas finally opened his mouth. "Could League have revealed the place where Allyn is buried?"

"No!" Arnold replied without any hesitation, as if he had been following League and knew everything.

Sensing his confidence, Fernando was greatly enlightened. "Brain Scourge and Memory Meddling... Since a long time ago, League has... Old fox, you lied to me again!"

He was too young and inexperienced, and his smartness could not make up for his personality flaws yet. So, he could not help but feel

he was too naive to believe the old fox's explanation!

"If you still get tricked by me more often now, few people will be able to trick you in the future." Arnold looked at him gently. "Look at Douglas. He sensed something earlier, but he pretended that he did not know it because it did not affect him at all. Instead of unveiling me, he asked questions when he needed to."

After Fernando's teacher passed away, he had been learning on his own, but he also received a lot of guidance from his teacher's good friend, President Arnold. Otherwise, he wouldn't have become a seventh-circle sorcerer at such a young age at all!

Of course, he was only young compared to other senior-rank sorcerers.

"The day will come when I listen to your lies and enjoy them as jokes," Fernando admitted that the old fox had a point, but he was reluctant to openly acknowledge it.

Douglas smiled warmly. "I'm relieved after confirming that. Mr. President, I will stay in Allyn for the time being. If you have magic questions or any experience in plan-making that you would like to teach me, please come to Allyn. Of course, if I have questions, I will also write to you."

He had basically figured out Arnold's personalities. Not as restrained as before, he made fun of the guy.

"The youngsters nowadays have fewer and fewer manners. I have to come to Allyn in person?" Arnold intentionally sighed. Although Douglas was rather old, he was still a young man compared to Arnold who had lived almost a thousand years. "Fine. Just don't tear Allyn down. I'm planning to study it when I have time."

Then, he turned around and looked at Fernando. "You keep in touch with Old Green and watch over Sharp. Whether the Church kills him or not, the situation will still be in our favor. Hehe, Fernando, if there's a chance, you should turn into a girl with that belt and work as Hathaway's governess."

“Get lost!” Fernando roared angrily. He vaguely understood why Kritonia was let go of. However, he couldn’t have gotten out of this so easily, could he?

...

In the forest where the fog was lingering, the Liege of Death roamed with the black scythe floating above his head. He had returned to the place.

“How is the Silver Moon?” He suddenly spoke to the dark, rotten forest where nobody was around with his usual voice that sounded like from a grave.

“Based on the blood ties, I sense that the wounds are not fatal, but the recovery will take a long time.” The empty darkness suddenly rolled and gathered into a person. He wore a red shirt and a black jacket with a collar that reached his head. His silver hair dangled to his shoulder. His eyes were as attractive as the moon in the sky. His face was flawless and even more beautiful than the ladies’. One might even say that it was eccentric.

He looked at the Liege of Death with a smile and said regretfully, “Why does every legendary sorcerer of the school of necromancy make themselves so creepy and hideous? What a pure and innocent young man you were when I just met you...”

“How is the pope?” The Liege of Death had long learned to ignore the guy’s meaningless topic.

“After Tria was occupied, he returned to Lance. Maybe we can look forward to certain situations.” The silver-haired man shook his head. “Abel is dead, and I am very sad, but I am even sadder about your current look. What a shame...”

“Abel is dead? Dracula must be very happy...” The Liege of Death was briefly stunned.

...

In the Radiance Church in Rentato...

“The Liege of Death joined hands with the Witch of Iceland and the Eye of Curse? He has recovered to level three?” Same as all the other men of the Gusta Empire, ‘Graceful Angel’ Francois had a thick beard. His face had been worn out by time, but his green eyes did not age at all and remained profound and sacred.

He seized the key of Kritonia’s report very quickly.

Kritonia coughed. “Yes. Without him, neither the Witch of Iceland nor the Eye of Curse would’ve caused any trouble. Most of my current wounds were made by him.”

His body had been cut from the waist, with only half left. The flesh was wriggling and growing, trying to recuperate, but it only decayed into stinky, yellowish pus nonstop.

Francois performed ‘God’s Healing’ while he asked about the details of the battle. In the end, he nodded his head. “You were the only one who could’ve escaped by bursting out the power of space and time. If it were me, I must’ve died already.”

The red robes who were summoned were astounded first and then infuriated. The sorcerers, who were being chased after like stray dogs, were bold enough to set up Alfonsol and attack the Heart of Time?

They were outraged now that their sense of superiority was broken. They shouted, “Lord Francois, we must let the sorcerers know that the world belongs to the Lord now!”

“My lord, order the legendary knights in all countries to take action! All the sorcerers involved in this must be judged!”

“Let’s restore the previous rules. Nobles or not, all the suspects should be captured and burnt!”

“Sharp must be sentenced for betraying the Lord and conspiring with the sorcerers to kill Alfonsol!”

“Lord Francois, please send me to capture Sharp!”

They urged, trying to vent their fury and judge the blasphemous

nobles and sorcerers.

Looking at them calmly, Francois did not open his mouth until they all calmed down. "It was only Sharp's random contract. He hoped that the sorcerers would leave after realizing the gap between them and us. There's no evidence that he was directly involved in the operation to assassinate Alfonsol."

"But in any case, it was blasphemy and betrayal that he did not kill the sorcerers on the spot! He deserves to be burnt!" A giant of the Inquisition shouted.

"He's a noble and one of the Sword of Truth's most trusted subordinates," Francois said at ease.

Another red robe said regretfully, "So what? Without us, they would've been the sorcerers' dogs. It is the Lord who gives them a new life and their current position, and this is how they are repaying the Lord? We must let the nobles know that the Lord is supreme and that they have no privileges before the Lord! Lord Francois, ask for the help of His Holiness. Since some of the nobles are untrustworthy, we should purge them at the same time."

He also knew that they were short of hands to accomplish the mission, so he encouraged Francois to ask for the reinforcement of saints from the pope.

"I can absolutely understand your fury. I want to judge the Liege of Death and Sharp as much as you do," Francois said peacefully before he suddenly changed the topic. "However, there is something that I have to tell you. Last night, Abel and Dracula, two top legendary vampires, attacked the pope together, and the Silver Moon took action, too..."

Huh?

Everybody was shocked. They looked at Francois in confusion. Had His Holiness died?

His face unchanged, Francois said, "Having no choice, His Holiness used God's Arrival twice in a row. He killed Abel and heavily

wounded the Silver Moon. However, due to his poor conditions, he has returned to Lance, and the war westwards has been stuck in Tria.”

Then, he sighed. “It’s possible that we will have a new pope very soon.”

Chapter 878: The Change of the Nobles Attitude

Chapter 878 The Change of the Nobles“ Attitude

Rentato's night was no different from any other cities'. Except for the cathedrals and the district of nobles that were illuminated by the everlasting light, the other places only had the light of the moon or the stars. Therefore, at such a pitch-dark night, Rentato was particularly cold and gloomy. The only thing that could be seen was the occasional lanterns.

“Blue Grace” Sharp stood next to the window in his bedroom and looked at the darkness outside attentively, as if the darkness that had nothing worth appreciating was the greatest significance of his life.

He raised his right hand and touched the lump on his nose. His vigorous blue eyes carried slight uneasiness. Other people might not know that Alfonsol, a giant of the Inquisition, had already left to hunt the sorcerers of the Tower of Destroyers. However, as the deputy captain of the Sword of Truth's Knights and one of the king's most trusted subordinates, he had enough sources for him to learn the fact. Therefore, he was waiting for an outcome.

Dum, dum, dum.

Somebody rushed close fast, with the thudding noises of iron boots and the clinking noises of his armor.

“Captain...” The knight who came to deliver the message breathed heavily. It took him only one minute to reach Lord Sharp's villa. “The Heart of Time is back, heavily wounded. Alfonsol and all the clerics and night watchers he brought were killed!”

“The Heart of Time?” Unusually, Sharp failed to control his face. He was puzzled why Kritonia was involved in all this.

“The message is from the Radiance Church, but the details are

unknown.” The knight said in a hurry, “Captain, Kritonia accuses you of conspiring with the sorcerers to kill Alfonsol. He said that he came late and could only save his own life. He apparently wants you dead!”

The royal family had bribed a lot of bishops of the Holm parish, who were not strong or prominent but could deliver intelligence at the critical moments.

“Alfonsol saw through it. Or maybe somebody sold the operation plan to Kritonia. However, if he was involved, why is Alfonsol still dead, and why was he heavily wounded...” Sharp was in such confusion that he forgot he was in danger himself. He could not figure out the reason at all.

The knight suddenly fell on his knees; his armor bashing into the floor heavily. He cried, “Captain, you should run! The Church won’t let go of you! They need a scapegoat for their failure! They will set you on fire! As long as you hide until His Majesty is back, you will be innocent again!”

After a brief silence, Sharp held back his confusion and worries and said to his subordinate with his usual leadership, “If I run, it will mean that I admit my crimes. I don’t believe that the Church will sentence a duke to death with no evidence except for the jibber-jabber of the sorcerers, which would chill and terrify all the nobles.”

It was one of the scenarios he had in mind in case the operation failed and a sorcerer confessed after being captured. He had been prepared for that and believed nothing would happen to him under the king’s protection. The only thing that bothered him was that the accusation was from Kritonia, another duke and a legendary knight. It was much more powerful than he imagined!

Clang!

The window quivered, and a cluster of fire penetrated through, turning into a brawny, tough-looking man in short hair.

“Captain, run now! Some red robe proposed to capture you!” He

was “Demon Igniter” Gourcuff.

Sharp clenched his right fist, but he was still calm. “Don’t worry. It’s just regular capture and interrogation. They have no evidence. I’ll be fine. If I run now, I will never be able to explain myself.”

“My lord, you cannot trust the Church. In the past, they judged many nobles that they were only suspicious of and sentenced them to death!” While Gourcuff admired the deputy captain for being so calm and steady in such a dangerous moment, he was still quite anxious because Francois might be on his way!

Sharp shook his head and grabbed the hilt of his longsword. “They are all nobles below the rank of an earl, and I am a duke accoladed by His Majesty in person.”

“My lord...” Gourcuff almost decided to drag the deputy captain to flee, but Sharp’s determined attitude made him hesitate. “Why don’t you hide in the Nekso Palace for now? I don’t think the Church dares to break in. You can wait until His Majesty returns.”

“About that...” Sharp was tempted.

At this moment, a bolt of lightning struck in the sky, and a young man who had few strands of hair, which were all standing, appeared in his bedroom. He was surrounded by silver electric arcs, and his pupils and his skin were in the unusual silver colors. “My lord, the Radiance Church has decided not to capture you. Instead, a red robe is sent to appease you.”

He was another one of Sharp’s deputies, “Argent Punishment” Cesc.

“What?” It was Gourcuff and the knight who came earliest who exclaimed in shock.

“Did something happen?” Sharp, as their leader, was equally astonished, but he still pretended to be cool on the surface.

Cesc shrugged. “I don’t know. We haven’t received any updates yet. Maybe they just decided to respect the nobles...”

His words were full of intense sarcasm.

Very soon, a red robe indeed came and forwarded Francois' comfort to Sharp. He was told that the Liege of Death set up a trap, heavily wounding Kritonia and killing the clerics including Alfonsol, and that the evil sorcerer intentionally disseminated that the two of them were in cooperation. It was an attempt to sabotage the relationship between the Church and the nobles, but the Graceful Angel was a saint favored by the Lord. Smart and righteous, he was not affected by the rumors at all. Sharp was asked to trust the justice of the Lord.

After seeing the red robe off with a smile, Sharp went into the bedroom, his face graver than ever. He said to his subordinates, "Something else must've happened! Find out what it is!"

He had basically understood that the operation was the sorcerers' trap and that their target was not Alfonsol at all but the Heart of Time. Even the Liege of Death, a top legend in the past, was involved. It was dozens of times more serious than he anticipated! So, he couldn't have passed it so easily without the other factors. There must have been something great that was much more important than what happened here last night.

After the three subordinates left, Sharp paced back and forth, not even in the mood to appreciate the dark night anymore. His vague anxiety spread out beyond his control.

The sky suddenly flashed with a flash of lightning, and Cesc appeared in the bedroom.

Holding back his agitation, Sharp tried to maintain his image as a leader. "What have you got?"

"A great battle took place in Tria. His Holiness used God's Arrival twice in a row. 'Silver Moon' Alterna was beaten back and heavily wounded, and Abel was killed..." Cesc said in shock.

"What?" Sharp exclaimed aloud, unable to retain his image. The Silver Moon took action and got defeated?

Having no time to repeat himself, Cesc went on, "However, the pope returned to Lance due to poor conditions. Legendary sorcerers,

vampire princes, and primordial dragons flew past Tria and directly launched an attack at Lance. The battle was quite intense.”

It was more detailed than what Francois said because new intelligence had come from Lance.

“That explains a lot...” Sharp said in a low voice. He then comforted Cesc who was in a panic. “Unless a demigod takes action, it is not so easy to break into Lance. After the Excellencies in Tria return, the situation will be steady again, except that it remains to be seen how badly hurt His Holiness is...”

Very soon, Gourcuff also returned. “Captain, The Angel King arrived in the Holy City and resisted the attacks of Danisos, Dracula, the elven queen, the Sun King, and the other legendary experts with... with God’s Guard.”

This “Sun King” was only a level-three legendary expert and wasn’t Thanos.

“Captain, His Majesty, Saint Griffith, Saint Ivan, the Shield of Truth, Rudolf and other people have returned from Tria and beat the sorcerers’ attack.” The first knight came last with the latest news.

“His Holiness did not take action. It seems that he is really in bad condition...” Sharp analyzed in a low voice. Suddenly, he burst into laughter. “No wonder they let go of me so easily. At this moment, this side of the strait is in desperate need of the aid of nobles, and so is the war in the west!”

“Yes, congratulations, captain,” the first knight said in delight.

In a great mood, Sharp looked at his trusted subordinates and said, “Not having to be judged is not the happiest thing for me. Do you know what I’m happiest about?”

“The dilemma in the war of the west?” Gourcuff replied in uncertainty.

“The Silver Moon is heavily wounded?” The first knight still admired the Church, the pope, and God’s Arrival.

After a brief silence, Cesc said, “Captain, are you happy because the two incidents demonstrated the power of nobles that even the grand cardinals have to be wary of and treat carefully?”

“Yes.” Sharp turned back and looked out of the window. Too many secrets were hidden in the darkness. “It is not until today that I know how strong we are. Even though I am really to blame for Alfonsol’s death, there is nothing they can do about me.”

Now that their deputy captain had openly stated his attitude and confessed his crime, the three knights looked at each other and all fell on one of their knees. “Nobles are supreme!”

...

“Abel and Dracula set up a trap and attacked the pope. Then, she used herself as the bait to consume the pope’s ‘God’s Arrival’. In the end, she asked Abel and Dracula to kill the pope who had been weakened. It was a sound plan. However, the Silver Moon’s heart is much softer than I thought. Was she not scared that she would be erased by ‘God’s Arrival’? Or maybe, was she so confident about the demigods’ immortality? Also, why was she so certain that the pope could not perform God’s Arrival twice in a row?” After hearing the simple but effective plan from the Silver-Eyed Count, the Liege of Death asked tentatively with mixed feelings.

The gorgeous vampire known as the Silver-Eyed Count replied with a smile, “Because she knows a thing or two about the power and the sequela of God’s Arrival. The Primordial Ancestor observed the battle of Antiffler the whole time even though she was not involved, and she spent a lot of time there afterward. It’s a pity that she still misjudged a bit.”

Chapter 879: Arnold's Arrangemen

Chapter 879 Arnold's Arrangemen

In the underwater relic in the Land of Thousand Lakes...

After he returned from the forest, Douglas did not immediately go to where Allyn was buried but stayed with Arnold and Fernando for news from Rentato. Only after he learned the intensity of the Church's counterattack and the ending of Sharp could he study the City in the Sky in peace, knowing that none of the sorcerers who were in the meeting was captured and revealed the location of Allyn. Since the city had crashed, it was barely possible to move it away without causing great noises.

"Mr. President, the Heart of Time has left the Radiance Church and returned to his villa in the city. The Church did not arrest the Blue Demon." A sorcerer reported to Arnold about the situation in Rentato. They had no spies in the Church and among the big nobles, so they could only learn the surface.

Scratching his beard, Arnold nodded. "Kritonia learned everything from League. He must've told it to Francois. However, it is quite weird that the Church did not arrest and interrogate Sharp, or even execute him directly. Something must've happened. Perhaps it's a ramification of the battle between the pope and the Silver Moon..."

He tried to figure out the reason, but this place was too far away from Aalto, Tria, and Lance. Unlike the Church, which had deployed divine power circles that could transmit voices among the important cities, the sorcerers had limited intelligence. So, they could only propose speculations.

"Whatever the reason is, the Church at least made a compromise to the nobles this time. It is important to help their ambitions grow," Douglas said peacefully and delightedly.

"That's why I said that we would be benefited whether or not the Church kills Sharp," Arnold said with a smile. Then, he turned to Fernando. "You should stop going to Old Green's for now. Sharp

must've known that we took advantage of him. It's better to leave him alone while he is angry."

Then, he grimaced and said, "Fernando, Earl Paphos happens to be in Rentato. You can go ask him if he has figured out where the nobles' position comes from and how strong they are. Also, you can ask him about the situation in Aalto and figure out the outcome of the battle between the pope and the Silver Moon."

At such moments, the nobles had much more abundant sources of intelligence. Who could have provided more information than them?

"Earl Paphos?" After a brief stun, Fernando frowned. "Do I need to put on that belt again?"

Arnold laughed. "Why? You don't like it? I think you were quite interested in it before. You were even studying how to improve the belt."

Fernando cackled dryly. "Life is so short compared to death. So, why not try different experiences in the finite life?"

"However, even the most interesting experiences will become boring in the end. Only the mysteries of the world and magic are always attractive." Douglas did not know anything about the gender-transitioning belt and therefore simply offered his view.

Arnold laughed aloud and did not say anything else.

.....

It was the middle of a night, but Earl Paphos' villa was as lively as during the day.

Many knights came and left, taking advantage of the darkness of the night. They exchanged their intelligence and confirmed each other's attitude, not resting at all. It was only because what happened tonight was too appalling for them to take any break. Who could've thought that Duke Sharp would assassinate Alfonsol with sorcerers? Who could've known that Kritonia learned it in advance and attempted to kill all the sorcerers? And who could've foreseen that

the formidable “Heart of Time” would be caught in a trap and suffered the most brutal failure since he distinguished himself?

A tornado would definitely be raised after such an incident, and the common nobles like them risked losing everything. So, how could they not be panicked and ask for the attitudes of their lieges and higher nobles?

That was the reason why Earl Paphos’ house was so lively.

Fatigue appeared on Earl Paphos’ face as he watched a few subordinate nobles leave. For a radiant knight like him, it was nothing to deal with a few sleepless nights. What exhausted him was his mind. He had to adjust his stance according to the latest intelligence, the Church’s attitude, and the other grand nobles’ response, in case things went bad in the emergency.

“My lord, since the Church sent a red robe to appease Lord Sharp, I don’t think anything bad will happen. This is the grace of the Lord. The scheme of the evils won’t work out.” The last noble in the living room bowed and was ready to leave. He was Earl Paphos’ trusted subordinate.

Earl Paphos did not hide his exhaustion before his subordinate. “The outcome would’ve been different if it weren’t for the battles in Tria and Lance. We are strong, but we are also weak.”

The noble, who felt exactly the same, sighed. “Yes, my lord. The Church’s compromise makes us feel strong, but the real reason for their compromise only makes us feel weak. If... If His Majesty and the rest of them indeed crush the army of sorcerers, vampires, dragons, and elves, we...”

He stopped, fearing that night watchers might be hiding around, and bid his farewell.

Looking at the slowly closed gate, Earl Paphos had a lot of mixed feelings. Without the enemies such as sorcerers and vampires, was it necessary for the Church to respect or keep the nobles? The changed attitude of the clerics in the past hundred years had proved everything! It was just like what the hot beautiful sorceress said.

Sorcerers were the nobles' enemy, but the nobles' status also boiled down to sorcerers!

Suddenly, he turned around and looked at the darkness out of the window. "Come in now that you are here."

"I can't without the host's permission." A magnetic female voice echoed, and the glass on the window protruded inward, as if someone invisible were crawling out of the bubble.

But very soon, a petite girl in a red magic robe walked out, and the glass was back to normal.

Earl Paphos was not in a great mood, but the girl was as bright as fire. He said solemnly, "Why are you here?"

"Hey, do you not know why I am here? I don't remember that you are such an idiot, are you?" Fernando felt that his sarcasm had turned milder after he transformed into a female. "We talked before. Now, I would like to know if you have figured out the source of the nobles' status and how strong you are."

Earl Paphos' eyes had the unique gold vertical pupils resembling those of dragons. He looked at Fernando and said slowly, "My answer is not important. What matters is that you are too weak. Even though the Liege of Death recovers, you will still be weak. I will not go after anything that will inevitably fail."

What happened today completely showed him the position and power of the nobles. However, although he had realized it, he was unwilling to share his answer with the sorcerers, and he pointed out the central issue straightforwardly.

Fernando was quite satisfied with his attitude. It at least showed the Earl Paphos was willing to communicate with him, which was a good sign for cooperation. He smiled. "We are weak, but the coalition army of sorcerers, vampires, dragons, and elves is not. If the nobles drift away, the Church will only be able to preserve itself. Of course, we do not need you to risk working with us for now. We only hope to get a bit of help so that we will have time to grow until you realize that we are not too weak to cooperate with

you.”

“It takes much more time for sorcerers to grow than it does for clerics,” Earl Paphos said without giving an answer.

Sensing Earl Paphos’ concerns, Fernando did not pursue the topic further but asked, “I’m told that battles took place in Tria and Lance?”

“Yes, the Silver Moon, Abel, and Dracula attacked the pope together...” After considering briefly, Earl Paphos told him everything he knew.

Fernando was surprised and excited while he mocked in silence. Providing intelligence was exactly what he meant by “a bit of help”. Although the earl did not agree to the cooperation openly, his action showed that he already did.

.....

“The pope did not take action, but the coalition army was still unable to break into Lance. Only one grand cardinal and one legendary knight were killed before they were completely suppressed. The Church is truly appallingly powerful...” Arnold received some intelligence through other sources and confirmed what Fernando had learned. Even so, he was still very shocked, finding it hard to believe that the Church was already so strong!

Except for clerics and nobles, most of the legends in the world had been gathered, but they still could not defeat the Church that had lost the pope, even though the Church had left plenty of grand cardinals and legendary knights in Holm, the Boundless Ocean, and other places in case the remaining sorcerers and ocean legends stir trouble.

It was truly a devastating fact!

“If the pope recovers, or if the new pope is crowned, the coalition army will probably collapse when God’s Arrival is available again,” Douglas said in concern. The Church was insurmountable right now, and the situation would only be worse when the pope was

involved.

Arnold nodded. "We can only hope that the Silver Moon recovers before the pope does or the new pope becomes a demigod. Then, a balance will be forged again."

"It's not something we can control," Douglas said with a self-mocking smile. "It seems that the counterattack this time won't be too strong. Only the remaining legendary knights and grand cardinals will be gathered at most. Mr. President, I'll go to Allyn now."

"Alright. Don't be lazy. Try to figure out something!" Arnold told him as if they had known each other for a long time. Then, he looked at Fernando. "I hope that you can go to Aalto and Tria to figure out the situation and who between Griffith and Ivan is more likely to be the new pope. Also, I would like you to find some talented young sorcerers and convince them to join us. After all, they are not qualified to participate in a war of legends."

Chapter 880: Different People

Chapter 880 Different People

The half mountain full of cracks was squeezed by rocks and mud, and almost none of the circuits and symbols on it were complete. The buildings were also broken except for those that were constructed later on.

A dozen sorcerers lived inside the city that seemed to have completely been destroyed. They were so few that they did not bring any liveliness to the place, which was still as quiet and grim as a graveyard.

“Allyn...” Floating in the middle of the mountain, Douglas called it using the Sylvanasian tongue. Even though he had seen it once, he still felt the insuppressible shock, excitement, and eagerness.

He flew to the ground of Allyn. Under the direction of a few respectful sorcerers, he walked to the central magic tower, where only one third of the building still stood now. Through the long pathway, he went deep into the City in the Sky, where the cores of all mysteries and the power source of the flight lay. Of course, they were all too seriously destroyed to show what they looked like at the beginning.

“My research has begun.”

Douglas said to himself when he went to the underground world. One of the important reasons why he came to Holm instead of Aalto was the floating city that he always dreamed about.

The questions that haunted him for years both when he was awake and in his dreams would be best answered here.

Stepping on the gray stone stairs, he went down slowly, and his back disappeared into the darkness at the entrance. Everything fell silent again.

.....

The night before the dawn was particularly dark. There did not seem to be any light.

Kritonia sat in the hall of his villa with the longsword flashing on his legs.

After being treated by Francois, he had already got rid of the lingering curse and recovered his body. However, his blood power was so weak that even the common knights could see it. It would take some time before he returned to his peak state.

“Kritonia, isn’t the Liege of Death old?” A wind passed by, and a mocking voice echoed.

The invisible wind landed and gathered into a tall, slim man. His hair, his skin, and every line on his body gave the feeling of the blowing wind. Both his hair and his pupils were in weird transparency.

“Raymond, he is old, but do you dare to fight him again?” Kritonia replied casually.

The legendary knight was “Ceaseless Wind” Raymond, the grand duke of the Duchy of Calais, which used to be part of the Asso Empire. Therefore, he had the deepest reverence for the Liege of Death. When he was told that the Heart of Time, who hadn’t been close to him, was heavily wounded by the sorcerer, he mocked him on purpose.

“Hehe.” Raymond sat on the couch. “Francois asked us to take action and teach the hiding rats a lesson that they will never forget.”

He came under the instruction of the Graceful Angel. The other few legendary knights were on their way over too.

“He did not ask you to take action; he asked you to work for me.” Kritonia raised his head proudly while a vague disdain appeared on his young face. “I am the one most favored by the Lord and the strongest knight on this side of the straight other than the king. That’s why the Lord adores me and the Church trusts and lets me

command you.”

“Are we not favored by the Lord?” Raymond said back. He knew that Kritonia was arrogant, but he never knew that the guy could be so unfriendly.

“This is the Graceful Angel’s order. You have no choice except to obey!” Kritonia was completely on the Church’s side, treating the other legendary knights as his subordinates.

Raymond always considered himself a knight of manners, but he still said angrily, “Who do you think we are? Puppies under your command?”

“Not puppies, but lambs of the Lord. We, the servants, will rein you however we see fit,” Kritonia responded as arrogantly as before.

“Good, very good! Don’t forget that you are a noble knight too!” Enraged, Raymond almost wanted to kill the jackass.

Kritonia scorned at him. “I can become a divine knight at any moment.”

“You!” Raymond decided to defend his dignity and honor with battle.

At this moment, the gate was opened again, and a cluster of darkness that seemed to contain infinite disasters surged in.

“Hehe.” Raymond held back the urge to fight again.

.....

Inside the Radiance Church where the transmission circle was deployed...

Francois had been staying in the place to get the messages from Lance as soon as possible. He was also ready to return to the Holy City.

“They will definitely hide after they kill Alfonsol and heavily wound Kritonia. Therefore, as long as we don’t mess up, the

situation will be steady for the time being,” Francois said to Kanunell, the red robe who took over the Inquisition recently.

Kanunell lowered his head and said respectfully, “Yes, your prediction is very accurate. I just received the intelligence from someone important. The order from the Liege of Death to the Union of Sorcerers, the Tower of Destroyers, the Supreme Soul, and the other magic organizations is to lie low until the counterattack of the Church is over.”

“Very good.” Francois nodded his head and kept looking at the transmission circle where holy light was surging out.

.....

Amid a tall magic tower was the black fog where transparent, hideous faces were emerging. The magic tower was pitch black like a tombstone. There was only shimmering light on the top floor.

The light came from a silver candlestick. Tannanois, the Liege of Death who was covered in a cloak, looked at the unopened book before him quietly. The words on the cover suggested that it might be from the Meshkate Empire.

“The Secret Research of Previous Sorcerers on the Original Body”.

.....

After a long journey, Fernando finally landed. He was close to Tria in the northwest of the Holy City. It was the area with the most legendary experts. Therefore, he dared not fly in the sky carelessly.

This was a narrow, long territory. The Holy City lay in the southeast, the North Province of the Holy Heilz Empire lay in the northeast, Aalto—the last camp of the Magic Empire—lay in the southwest, the battlefield of Tria lay in the northwest, and the heresies who worshiped the Mother God of the Earth lay in the north. Further north, it was the Schachran Empire that was completely controlled by the Saint Truth.

“The Angel King, Griffith, Ivan, and Rudolf are four top legends. Plus the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Truth that are as good as

top legends, as well as five seraphs and more than eight level-three saints, the Church is terrifyingly powerful to resist all the other forces combined, not to mention that they have the aid of the allies...” Fernando traveled in the area in the form of a mouse and recalled the intelligence he obtained recently, both frustrated and somewhat angry.

He didn’t even count the saints, the grand cardinals, and the legendary knights that did not participate in the war!

“Is it impossible to defeat the Church without letting in the devils from hell and the demons from the abyss?” Fernando thought. His heart was in a mess.

Suddenly, he discovered that the tallest building in the city up ahead was trembling violently. In the places governed by the Church, the tallest building could only be the cathedral!

“What’s going on? Have the legends launched another attack?” The coalition army had been driven back to Tria by the forces of the Church after they were gathered. That was why Fernando speculated as such.

.....

“You have the intelligence on the headquarters of Red Eye?” Kritonia looked at the night watcher before him solemnly.

The night watcher lowered his head. “Yes. It’s from reliable sources.”

He knew that the legendary knight before him had just been trapped. So, he introduced his sources and the specific content carefully.

Kritonia picked up his longsword and said in a hurry, “They must be evacuating. I’ll go and block them now. Inform Raymond to come with me.”

“Yes, Your Excellency,” the night watcher replied, not surprised at all.

The hazy light moved among the clouds and soon reached a plain-looking city.

Kritonia shouted, "Evil sorcerers, die now!"

He turned into an overwhelming river of time and fell at the center of the city.

Nielson, who had yet to evacuate, thought that he was doomed when he saw the light.

However, after the time washed him like water, he was still living in this world, and so were the senior-rank sorcerers next to him. Only an eighth-circle sorcerer was killed. Of course, the Red Eye sorcerers further away from him had all collapsed to the ground. They seemed to have been dead for years!

"Has the Heart of Time been weakened into a non-legend now?" It was Nielson's first thought, but very soon, he saw that Kritonia turned around and shouted at the outside of the city, "You can never run away!"

What? Nielson suddenly realized what was going on. He dragged the senior-rank sorcerers next to him to escape in a different direction. That was the Plan B of their evacuation.

Soon after they left, Raymond and the other legendary knights arrived. Kritonia said to them expressionlessly, "We're late. The leaders have run away. Only the dozens or so low-rank sorcerers failed to escape."

.....

The Liege of Death put down the thick book in his hands and took out a mirror that was covered in deep darkness from his magic pouch.

He touched the mirror, and it gradually became clear. The scene on it was a room that had a cross.

In the Radiance Church, where Kritonia was treated, the shadow in the corner was suddenly enlivened. It was dark and twisted, just

like the curse on Kritonia's wounds back then.

The Liege of Death extended his right hand and pressed the mirror. His body blurred and melted into it.

The shadow wriggled and stood up. It became the Liege of Death that was fully covered in the cloak.

Red lights flashed on his fuzzy face, and he locked onto Francois who was near the transmission circle.

.....

After the end of a session of research, Douglas returned to the ground and sat on a rock while watching the sky turn dark.

"The sun rises in the east and sets in the west, but why?" Douglas was still murmuring. He was too fascinated by everything.

In the west, the setting sun dyed the horizon red.

Chapter 881: Hades Right Hand

Chapter 881 Hades“ Right Hand

Inside the Radiance Church...

The Liege of Death, having turned into a shadow, did not attack immediately. After finding out Francois' location, he backed off to a dark corner outside of the room while waiting for the shift of night to day and the moment when the gate of the cathedral was opened. That would be the moment when Francois was most relaxed and careless.

If he were to cast a spell right now, Francois could possibly sense danger and defense in time.

Since they were going to fight in a cathedral, he was not confident that he could defeat Francois when he hadn't recovered to his peak status yet.

Even though the cathedral was protected by the God of Truth, and lights were on all night, there was still darkness where the lights could not reach. The Liege of Death stood in it as if it had been melted into the darkness.

In the hall where the transmission circle was deployed, Francois stood up and waited for the message impatiently. Other people might be unaware of it, but he knew very clearly that a result concerning his future, if not the situation of the world, would take place tonight!

Holy light suddenly surged and glowed in the circle, illuminating the whole room and making it as bright as day. The air of divine power covered everything.

"Is there a result?" Francois immediately stared at the circle.

At this moment, two red spots suddenly emerged in the darkness. The Liege of Death had sensed the best opportunity to attack. The waves created by the transmission circle could cover all the traces

before a spell was cast, particularly when Francois' attention was fixed on the message.

He raised his right hand, and the black long sleeve of his magic robe moved backward naturally, revealing a pale hand that was completely dry. Every inch of skin and every streak on the hand was different and brimming with death. As they gathered into the runes of immortality, vague black air popped up, and intense desolation was manifested. It seemed that the realm of the dead had been recreated by the palm.

Tannanois curled four fingers and left only the index finger. The withered fingernail glittered in the mysterious black and gray.

As he let out the rough sounds that other people could not hear, spiritual faces appeared around him, writhing and raging, but they were all thrown into the desolate darkness at the tip of the index finger, dying it pale.

The Liege of Death's body gradually turned transparent and was no different from the spiritual faces. Then, he was absorbed by his own index finger, leaving nothing but a pale and gray finger on the spot.

“Ahh!!!”

A miserable cry suddenly burst out, and a fuzzy face flew out of the tip of the finger with its mouth wide open. It covered the distance instantly and lunged at Francois' back!

“Assassination?” Francois looked at the transmission circle in confusion. He did not understand why he would suffer an assassination in the heavily-guarded Radiance Church.

Brilliant light burst out of his body. Extraordinary items were triggered and tried to stop the face from leaking in.

However, the finger, which had already turned black, white, and gray, suddenly emerged before Francois. Passing through the defense that was almost broken, it tapped his forehead softly.

The initial attack was the Liege of Death's most powerful and unique spell that he had named “Death Resonance”. The other

sorcerers had given it a nickname—God of Death’s Call. His “finger” in the second wave of attack was the only legendary item the Liege of Death had—”Hades’ Right Hand”—which could only be used once!

Francois’ confused and shocked face was frozen, and his body quickly turned black and gray.

...

Fernando quietly flew to midair, only to discover that the cathedral in the city trembled violently as if it had an earthquake. After only one moment, the earth cracked, and a gap where red magma was flowing consumed the cathedral like the mouth of a monster.

The air of a legendary divine power burst out in the cathedral, and a holy light rose to the sky. However, it was enshrouded in a black ball and pulled downward. Flying more and more slowly, it began to descend instead of rising after only three seconds, falling right into the boiling magma.

Then, the crack of the earth closed, and there was no sign of an earthquake except for the missing cathedral as well as the clerics inside.

“The earth control of such an extent...” Fernando felt that it was the most unbelievable superpower of the earth class he had seen. Of course, the best he had seen was only the similar spells of the ninth-circle sorcerers. “Also, the attack is directed at the Church...”

From that, he concluded that it was done by a friend instead of an enemy. So, he slowly landed and waited for dawn so that he could sneak into the city and find out what happened.

...

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City...

The old pope’s beard and hair were entirely white, and his wrinkles seemed to be falling from his face. He was too old to be a living human being. Wearing a sacred crown and holding the platinum staff, he looked at the grand cardinals and the divine knights down

below with eyes that were as clear as before. “Except for the members who are obliged to watch over the fortresses, all the grand cardinals are here.”

His voice was solemn but benevolent. After a pause, he raised the platinum staff and announced seriously, “The Lord has appointed a new pope in an oracle. As for me, I will return to the Lord’s arms in Mountain Paradise tonight.”

All the grand cardinals lowered their head and said respectfully, “That is the Lord’s grace. Your contributions to the Church are as vast as the Boundless Ocean.”

The old pope nodded softly. “Our contributions are exactly our gains. I hereby announce the Lord’s oracle. The new pope will be...”

His eyes passed on the faces of a few grand cardinals. Satisfied with their tranquility and devotion, he raised his voice and said, “Griffith!”

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” A middle-aged man in a clean robe walked out and fell on his knees piously. His skin was dark, and his face was plain. The only thing that differed him from peasants was that he did not have as many wrinkles, and his every movement was full of charm.

“Only Truth lives forever!” All the other grand cardinals fell on their knees and drew crosses on their chests.

Then, everybody stood up and watched Griffith walk on the seven stairs.

As Griffith took each step, the holy and everlasting songs, the ivory and sacred light, and the sand-like angels appeared one after another, making Griffith seem to be walking in the realm of the God of Truth.

Lance was covered in overwhelming holy light. All the clerics and believers knelt and prayed.

The projection of Mountain Paradise appeared in midair, casting a streak of holy light on Griffith, which looked like a halo.

Griffith walked up to the last stair and took over the platinum staff from the old pope solemnly and respectfully. Then, he turned around to the grand cardinals and raised the staff high.

At this moment, a sacred and intimidating voice descended from the infinite heights.

“Your holy name will be ‘Gregory!’”

The old pope smiled. His body suddenly turned transparent, as if he were the purest holy spirit. Then, he crumbled into countless holy spots of light that flew into the projection of Mountain Paradise.

Griffith drew a cross on his chest and declared with a voice that echoed throughout Lance as all popes did when they were crowned, “From today on, I will be Gregory!”

All the grand cardinals fell on their knees again. “Only Truth lives forever!”

At the front of the grand cardinals was a golden-haired man in a white robe. His face was chiseled, and he was tall and handsome, except that his rising nose was a bit intimidating.

At this moment, he was more focused and devoted than any other grand cardinals on the spot.

Behind him, some of the grand cardinals further lowered their heads, preventing other people from seeing their faces.

...

“What? This place has been taken over by the Mother God of the Earth?” Fernando had pictured a new scenario where he might run into some powerful sorcerers, or someone had summoned a Devil Duke, or the primordial gold dragon attacked unexpectedly. Little did he expect that the place would become the territory of the Church of the Mother God of the Earth!

He did not need to investigate at all. After he snuck into the city, many priests of the Mother God of the Earth were delivering the fact to the believers.

“It was the Mother God of the Earth who killed the grand cardinal last time? That makes sense. Only the top legend who is best at spells of the earth class could’ve killed a grand cardinal who was under the protection of the cathedral so easily...” Fernando was greatly enlightened.

As a matter of fact, Douglas, Arnold, and he had all speculated that the heretic religion, which rose against the Magic Empire with the Saint Truth since the War of Dawn began, would eventually turn against them after the Saint Truth grew too powerful. The previous cases had proved that, like the Sun God who was killed by God’s Arrival. However, he did not expect the Mother God of the Earth to revolt so suddenly!

“The outcome might’ve been different if the Mother God of the Earth betrayed during the attack of Lance...” Fernando soon accepted the fact that the Mother God of the Earth had betrayed the Saint Truth, but he did feel sorry that it happened too late. He thought to himself, Maybe because of the suppression of the Saint Truth without the pope, the coalition army finally decided to make significant compromises to the Mother God of the Earth.

Standing outside of the church of the Mother God of the Earth that had just been established, Fernando hesitated for a moment but decided not to come in. After all, there were many sorcerers among the night watchers, and the priests of the Mother God of the Earth must be too sensitive right now to trust him. He might as well go to Aalto as soon as possible and look for friends he was familiar with.

“Antec always told me that his classmate Stanis had remarkable talents and was about to become a legendary sorcerer. Hehe. I’d better meet him in person.” Fernando tried to get out of the city when he remembered his correspondences with his friend.

When he passed by two priests, he suddenly heard one of them speaking to the other in a low voice.

“Griffith has succeeded as the pope. His holy name is Gregory.”

“The new pope has been born?” Fernando was briefly stunned.
“What does Ivan think?”

He had to go to Aalto immediately to find out!

Chapter 882: Mean Good Friends

Chapter 882 Mean Good Friends

It was the middle of the day. The ancient and magnificent Aalto City stood next to the Bellen River, looking down at the villages around it.

The wall of the city was not in black, which was what most sorcerers would have liked. It was in dark yellow because it was as old as the everlasting sky.

Although Fernando dared not to fly, he still reached the central city of the empire a couple of days later since he did not rest at night.

He cleaned his clothes and walked to the city gate, which was defended by a dozen sorcerers. Their leader revealed the unmistakable air that he was an archmage!

It was the scorching noon, but peasants, dealers, and citizens going in and out of the city were not reduced at all. One could not help but sense the liveliness and exuberance of Aalto.

“Stop!” A middle-rank sorcerer stopped Fernando in wariness. In such an eventful period, nobody wanted to be killed by the night watchers.

Because Fernando was wearing a red magic robe, all the sorcerers shifted their attention to him. All of them looked grave except the archmage, as if they would attack him relentlessly if anything went wrong.

Fernando said loudly, “I am from Holm. I’m here to look for my good friend Antec. He’s a student of the King of Nightmare.”

Antec was merely a senior-rank who just made it to the sixth circle. He couldn’t have been known by a lot of people. So, in case of an accident, Fernando simply brought up the name of his teacher, the legendary sorcerer “King of Nightmare”.

The destination of their class was exactly “King of Nightmare”, like Maskelyne who used to rule the city in the past. His “Book of Astrology and Elements” had only two legendary classes, “Prophet” and “Lord of Elements”.

To obtain more legendary classes, one would have to make enough contributions to the empire to enter the “Tower of Gods”, the library of the empire in Antiffler, to study them. In the heyday of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the sorcerers were so confident that they believed that legendary experts were mortal gods and that different classes were the gods of different realms. So, the library of the empire was named “Tower of Gods”. However, the rise of the Saint Truth made the “gods” fall into dust.

“The King of Nightmare?” Now that the name of a legendary sorcerer was mentioned, the archmage at the gate was much more serious and friendly.

Fernando nodded. “Yes, but I do not know him. I’m only familiar with his student Antec.”

He was too proud to fake connections with a legendary sorcerer.

An oddly honest fellow... The sorcerers could not understand Fernando’s pride and only presumed that he was silly because he had been too devoted to his research.

The archmage at the gate smiled. “I know Stanis, another student of the King of Nightmare. I heard the name Antec from him before. So, you may come in.”

Huh? Fernando was surprised at his privilege. He was let in so easily? They did not even ask his name!

The archmage mistook Fernando’s stun for not remembering Stanis or believing what he said. So, he said in a low voice, “Stanis is the King of Nightmare’s best student. Antec must’ve mentioned him before, right? His cognitive world has half-solidified since half a year ago, and he is considered a half legend. Hehe. Perhaps we’ll see two Kings of Nightmare in one city someday.”

“His cognitive world has half-solidified?” Fernando had thought that he, who almost reached the eighth circle, was the best of the “young” sorcerers in his generation. He did not know Stanis, who was not much older than him, had already reached such a level.

“Yes. He might try to make a breakthrough before long. He’s a real genius at illusions and dreams.” The archmage’s envy was obvious. The boundary between the ninth circle and legendary was slim, but the differences were too huge.

Instead of nodding, Fernando said eagerly, “I know a thing or two about illusions too.”

He was implying that he could communicate with Stanis and see if this “real genius” deserved his name. He would never praise, envy, or look up to anyone!

The archmage, however, thought that a sorcerer who was good at illusions had come to ask for the guidance of Stanis and the King of Nightmare. That was not rare, particularly when he was familiar with the King of Nightmare’s student.

“How should I call you?” After Fernando mentioned the King of Nightmare, he felt that it was necessary to make acquaintance with this senior-rank sorcerer. “I am Reece Brown. You can call me Reece.”

That’s the right protocol! Fernando thought. “I am Fernando Brastar. I prefer to be called Fernando.”

Reece paused and asked in hesitation, “Your last name suggests that you are from the Asso Empire, aren’t you?”

Fernando nodded. “Yes, but my teacher is a sorcerer of the empire.”

Reece did not further confirm his identity, as if he were certain about Fernando’s truthfulness. He said with a smile, “Fernando, come on in. Antec is already waiting for you. We should talk about magic knowledge sometimes.”

“What? Antec is waiting for me? I’m already allowed to go in? You don’t need to examine my identity? Are you not afraid that I have

surrendered to the Church and become a night watcher?" Fernando felt that he had more and more questions after he knew Douglas.

With a weird smile, Reece said, "Rest assured. There are no night watchers in Aalto. Look, isn't Antec over there?"

Following his finger, Fernando saw a young man in a monocle. He was slim and pale, with messy hair, rising cheekbones, and an untrimmed beard. The disgusting smell from him suggested that he hadn't been out of the meditation room or the laboratory for a long time.

"You look as terrible as before," Fernando mocked Antec straightforwardly. "And you don't know how to sort yourself out at all."

With a bitter expression, Antec said, "Whether or not I sort myself out, no beautiful sorceresses will ever like me. Only someone as handsome as you is worth sorting out."

There were hints of envy and jealousy in his tone.

"Have you considered modifying your face?" Fernando did not consider Antec's feelings at all.

Antec, however, thought about it carefully and said, "Few people in our magic tower are good at physical modification, and I don't trust other people, fearing that I will become even uglier."

"Hehe. You are still a coward who doesn't dare to try and trust! You shouldn't have studied after the King of Nightmare, and you should've gone to the Tower of Misfortunes!" Fernando was particularly mean today.

The Tower of Misfortunes was the demiplane of "Lord of Misfortunes", a legendary sorcerer who had already perished in Antiffler.

Antec was not so cowardly in front of his friend whom he had known for years. He said proudly, "My teacher said that I am very gifted at dreams, and I'm most suitable to hide in someplace safe and manipulate dreams."

“Yes. It’s indeed suitable for cowards,” Fernando said.

Antec suddenly smiled. “Fernando, let me tell you a story.”

“Huh? A story?” Fernando failed to follow Antec. He suddenly felt that his friend had something he could not understand since they last met ten years before.

Antec led Fernando through the gate into the crowded market area. The vampires under their parasols, the elves who embraced the sunlight, the dragons who stopped on the roofs, and the human beings who were coming and going made the place diverse and charming.

“The Lord of Abyss, my teacher’s good friend, is one of the best experts in bloodline melting and body modification. When he was young, he was often mocked by his good friend for being too hideous. However, he has plenty of mistresses right now,” Antec said in a calm tone.

Fernando was not envious at all. “He’s a legendary. Nobody can refuse him.”

In the Magic Empire, legendary sorcerers had great privileges. As long as they did not kill anyone too important, they would only be fined for murder.

Then, he chuckled. “So, that’s what you used to encourage yourself? How inspiring!”

“That’s not important. The important thing is that when the Lord of Abyss was only in the seventh circle and not as strong as his friend, he ambushed and killed his friend after having enough mockery, before turning his friend into a demon dog.” Antec suddenly sounded delighted.

Fernando was stunned for the first time during his interaction with Antec. He said with his face frozen, “Do you want me to thank you for not killing me?”

“Yes, but I dare not do so,” Antec replied with a smile. He was already satisfied to see the look on Fernando’s face.

Fernando was about to roar when he saw a vampire fighting an elf in the avenue up ahead. The blast of the senior-rank supernatural powers had demolished a lot of buildings.

“Nobody is going to stop them?” Was Aalto so unregulated? Then, perhaps the Church did not need to attack them at all; they would kill each other after a while!

Antec suddenly sounded extremely weird. He asked, both in amusement and confusion, “Fernando, have you pretended to be a girl?”

“How did you know?” Fernando was rather shocked. How could such a thing have been spread to Aalto?

Antec pointed at his side. “She’s right here.”

Shocked, Fernando looked at his right side, only to discover a petite red-eyed beauty was standing next to him shoulder to shoulder, except that she looked rather fuzzy.

He was lost at first, before he said in great enlightenment, “Is this Aalto City my dream?”

“No, it’s OUR dream,” Antec replied with a smile. He was much bolder when they talked about that.

“Our dream, as well as theirs?” Frowning, Fernando pointed at the human beings, elves, dragons, vampires, and dwarfs around them.

Antec nodded his head. “This place is based on the dreams of all the living creatures in the real Aalto. Now that you have come to this place, you’ve naturally joined the dream. It’s barely possible for traitors to hide in such dreams.”

“This is... too remarkable for your teacher to accomplish! Has he reached level three of legendary? It’s impossible for even the level-three legends!” Fernando had a profound understanding of illusions and read a lot of books on the battles of legends.

Antec chuckled. “Have you forgotten that Prince Dracula is in Aalto?”

Chapter 883: A Date

883 A Date “Him? No wonder...” Fernando said in a low voice.

Although “Real Dream” was a naturally-endowed spell of vampires, Prince Dracula, who was a top legendary vampire, was the only one who could connect the dreams of so many people without depriving them of their thinking abilities. Abel, who had perished, was stronger than Dracula in overall, but he was not as good as Dracula in terms of Real Dream.

It was said that other than connecting everyone’s dream, Dracula could also substantiate his dream with his talents. The creatures in it looked real and could think and communicate, but they did not know that they were fake and part of a dream.

Antec continued to explain for Fernando, “Dream Aalto covers the real Aalto in case of the Church’s sudden attacks. Also, there are a lot of contradictions among vampires, elves, dragons, dwarfs, and human beings. Greater conflicts may burst out if they are suppressed all the time. It’s better this way. Since it’s only a dream, they are free to unleash their hate however they want, and they’ll be resurrected after they are dead.”

Then, he smiled proudly. “Most of the power of Dream Aalto came from Prince Dracula, but my teacher, Stanis, my other classmates, and I are making our contributions. That’s why I sensed your entrance and came to pick you up so quickly.”

Fernando stared at his timid friend and discovered that he finally emanated his confidence. He sniffed and said, “I don’t think your contributions are greater than a fingernail.”

“That’s right. I haven’t advanced into the senior rank for long.” Antec was actually quite proud of that. To become a senior-rank sorcerer was his childhood dream. As for the higher ranks, he did not even dare to dream about it back then.

Fernando clicked his tongue and focused his attention on the battle. The more he watched, the more shocked he was. He could not tell

that the talents, abilities, and weapons of the vampire and the elf were fake at all. Even the aftermath of their battle was so real.

“This ‘Real Dream’ is not half as bad as I imagine,” he admitted unwillingly.

Antec knew his friend’s personality very well. He simply opened his mouth and chuckled.

Fernando was not angry about that. He suddenly remembered something else. “Dracula is in Aalto? Shouldn’t he be in Tria or somewhere near Lance right now?”

Had the coalition army’s counterattack been completely suppressed?

“A couple of days ago, Griffith became the new pope and was renamed Gregory. The same day, the five top legends, namely Prince Dracula, the primordial dragon of time, the elven queen, the Mother God of Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean, as well as the Sun King, the Stellar Mentor, the Lord of Elements, the Tower scholars, the Master of Summoning, the Master of Transformation, the King of Devils, the Demigod-lich, the primordial red dragon, and Prince Sate and more than ten level-three experts, attacked Lance again. They were the greatest forces in the main plane except for the ‘Mastermind’ in the Dark Mountain Range.” Antec was gloomy all of a sudden as he introduced the situation of the coalition army to his friend.

Same as the Sun King, the “Stellar Mentor” was no longer the legend who created the school of astrology.

“Was the Master of the Boundless Ocean involved too? And it still failed?” Fernando asked solemnly.

Antec nodded. “The master of the Boundless Ocean had to take part in the battle. If the Church won, the ocean would never be in peace. So, the nine sea generals as well as other sea forces attacked the Church’s coast cities at the same time, stalling the saints, grand cardinals, and legendary knights. As for himself, he came to Lance in secret for the battle.”

After a pause, he said rather sadly, “The Church was prepared for that. Also, Gregory showed the capabilities of a real demigod. Together with the help of the Angel King, Ivan, Rudolf, Felix, Hoffenberg, and Orvarit, they defeated us without any loss. If we had not retreated in time, many of us would’ve perished.”

“As strong as a demigod immediately after the succession... It seems that the new pope is a demigod whether or not the old pope died in advance because of God’s Arrival,” Fernando mumbled. It was certainly a harrowing fact. Then, he asked earnestly, “Did any top legend perish? Was ‘God’s Arrival’ used?”

Antec was in a better mood. “Well, the new pope did not perform God’s Arrival.”

“It seems that he has to get used to it before he can grasp God’s Arrival. Otherwise, he could’ve crushed the confidence of the coalition army by killing a top legend with God’s Arrival.” Fernando had always despised all the clerics, including the pope, believing that they could lose their strength as easily as they got it.

“Not necessarily,” Antec argued subconsciously. “If the pope kills another top legend with God’s Arrival, the rest of them will definitely be scared and work even harder to wipe out the threat. How many more times of God’s Arrival could the pope perform?”

“If they were all sorcerers of the empire, that’s a possibility, but Dracula, Danisos, the elven queen, the Mother God of the Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean had their own conflicts. Some of them were even mortal enemies. Who would’ve sacrificed themselves to take the pope’s second ‘God’s Arrival’ so that other people could kill the pope when he was weakened?” Fernando pointed out Antec’s illusion quickly.

Antec stuck to his opinion. “It’s not up to them who was to be sacrificed, but the pope. If they were to back off, they would only be killed by the pope one after another in the future. They could only take their chances.”

“Hehe. How naive. The pope is still a demigod without God’s Arrival,” Fernando mocked before he looked at the sky. “Unless the

Silver Moon recovers before the pope can use God's Arrival again."

"Yes. That's the best scenario," Antec said hopefully. "If there's no choice, we'll just..."

Then, he suddenly paused and looked ahead, as if he were attracted to the battle that was about to end.

"You'll just what?" Fernando pursued in confusion. He realized that the sorcerers must've had their own plans too.

Antec chuckled. "We will retreat into the Dark Mountain Range. The environment is complicated there, and we won't fear the Church anymore."

"Hehe. A lying coward," Fernando remarked briefly.

"Really. That's really what I think," Antec said sincerely.

Fernando revealed the fact mercilessly. "I don't think other people think the same as you do. However complicated the Dark Mountain Range is, the Church will leave no place for you to hide in after it presses forward bit by bit."

"Hehe. You will know it by then." Antec kept it confidential. "Alright, I'll lead you into the real Aalto, although it would be great to live in such dreams."

"Don't be addicted. The illusionists captivated by their own dreams will lose their minds sooner or later," Fernando reminded him.

Antec nodded and did not say anything. He put his hand on Fernando's shoulder as waves spread out of his body.

The scene before Fernando's eyes suddenly shivered and blurred before it fell apart.

Darkness faded away, and Fernando saw sunlight again. The ancient Aalto City was right before his eyes. As it turned out, he hadn't entered the gate yet.

Next to him, Antec surfaced, talking to him and leading him

through the heavily-guarded gate, which was meant to prevent the special night watchers who were immune to dreams from entering the real Aalto.

The real Aalto was empty, without a single soul or any noise. It looked like a pale land of ghosts.

“Most people are sleeping.” Antec pointed at his head. “The food they eat in their dreams is from Prince Dracula’s power. It can directly fill their energy.”

“I don’t think ordinary people can live in such dreams for long,” Fernando said solemnly.

Antec nodded his head. “Three years at most. They are woken up on a regular basis to help their recovery. Well, Fernando, I want to ask you a favor...”

He suddenly stammered and blushed, unable to say anything after a long time.

“A coward who cannot even ask for a favor.” Fernando looked at him in despise.

As if he had been stimulated by that, Antec suddenly spoke fast, “Your transformation belt seems to be very effective. I cannot notice anything wrong at all. I’m hoping that you can pretend to be my date at a dinner. Those guys always laugh at me for not bringing a date.”

He said without any pause, almost unable to catch his breath.

“Poor lad.” Fernando eyed him up and down and finally observed with mixed feelings.

Antec was much more at ease after he proposed his request. He said with what he learned just now, “Aren’t you trying to attract a bunch of talented sorcerers? It will be easier if you appear as a beautiful lady.”

“Do you think all the talented sorcerers are male? I think a lot of female sorcerers will be into my current look. Of course, what

matters more are our capabilities and our prospects,” Fernando said with contempt.

Antec pursed his lips. “However, the talented sorcerers in the dinner tonight are all males. Well, there are a dozen ladies with reasonable magic knowledge, but their leader likes girls. If you convince her, the other ladies will certainly follow you.”

“Fair enough.” Fernando nodded his head, feeling that he had been convinced. After all, he did not reject the transformation belt.

Seeing that Fernando was about to say yes, Antec suddenly became unconfident. “Would your transformation be seen through? Their eyes are all attached with certain magic effects.”

“It wouldn’t. I’ve modified this belt. After I use it, I will become a complete female in every body part. Even a legendary sorcerer could only tell that my body has been magically modified at most, but they can never tell what the transformation is from. However, there are still flaws. I cannot get pregnant...” Fernando introduced the belt and spoke of the matters related to it.

Antec was relieved. “That’s great.”

He had the common sense that taking off the transformation belt would not mean the loss of the magic effect. The way to use a magic item was through the pivot of spiritual power, not by putting it on, although it would accelerate the activation.

When he was proud that he finally had a date, Fernando suddenly said, “Wouldn’t it be very humiliating if your date flirts with other people right in your face?”

Antec was stunned. “Fair enough...”

Then, he hurried to say, “I think we’d better drop it.”

“No, I’m already interested in the party.” Fernando stared at the front.

Chapter 884: Be

884 Be The sun was glowing like fire in the west, making the real Aalto even more like a graveyard. Except for the sorcerers who were watching the walls of the city in different areas, few people could be found on the street.

On the empty road, a wagon rode fast without raising any noises of hooves or wheels, as if it were an envoy from the Silent Hell.

The wagon was so quiet because it did not have any wheels. The four horses running ahead were all as hazy as if they were made of pale mist. However, an intense fire was burning on each of their heads, and two red spots were bouncing in their eyes.

“Is this the famous ‘nightmare’?” Inside the carriage where the window was half open, a magnetic and enthralling female voice echoed.

Antec’s magic robe had turned into a formal suit with a collar that reached the back of his head. It was quite fashionable, but he was very unused to it. He kept pulling different parts of the clothes, as if he had trouble catching his breath. “Yes, these are special horses that my teacher created. They can directly enter dreams. They are made by melting the ghost horse and ‘Dream Controllers’, a type of demon with special abilities.”

There were so many kinds of demons that even the most knowledgeable legendary sorcerer could not declare confidently that they could recognize all. Also, knowledge sharing was not a trend in the Magic Empire. Nobody would give away their knowledge without getting something important in return. Therefore, even though some kinds of demons had been discovered, it was possible that only a few people knew them. For example, Fernando had never heard of “Dream Controllers” before.

“Since ‘nightmare’ is dragging our wagon, is the party in a dream?” Fernando, who appeared as a gorgeous girl, was greatly enlightened.

Antec smiled dryly. "Not exactly. I borrowed it on purpose. Now that I have a date, I'd better be serious."

"It seems that you are not entirely hopeless," Fernando praised him in a unique manner. The red and bright eyes on his delicate and pretty face were as attractive as the flashes of lightning in a dark night.

Antec held his head high for a moment, but his back was soon hunched again. He sighed in grief. "It will only be more miserable when I am mocked later. 'Look, the date that the idiot found through all the trouble and brought here with a nightmare has been stolen so easily. A loser is always a loser'."

The latter half of his sentence was so vivid that he was obviously mimicking a companion who always laughed at him.

"It's better than when you don't have anyone to be stolen." There was no telling whether Fernando was comforting him or mocking him.

Antec thought for a moment. "Fair enough... It's good to make progress every time. After all, I have never dreamed to find a real date. After I become an archmage, I will have as many dates as I want in my dream."

"Don't mistake illusions for reality," Fernando reminded his friend solemnly. After so many years, he realized that Antec seemed more and more addicted to dreams.

"Why can't illusions be the reality? Why can't dreams become a real world?" Antec was rather excited after suppressing himself for a long time. "It's the wish of all the sorcerers of the school of illusions."

"So, your highest achievement is to deceive yourself?" Fernando was much meaner than Antec.

Antec shook his head. "No, it's not deception, but dreams really become reality..."

Before he finished, the "nightmare" already stopped. It was a

gloomily-decorated villa ahead of him.

“We’re here. Hold that thought on illusions.” Antec pulled his collar again and walked out of the wagon. Then, he turned around, extended his hand, and helped “her” to get off according to the etiquette that Fernando taught him. Fernando was much more experienced than him in that aspect.

“There’s still hope in you.” Fernando nodded and took Antec’s hand with the professionalism of an actor. Since he was rather short, he was a good match for Antec who was slim and tall.

Antec immediately blushed, and his left hand moved unnaturally, as if he sensed certain firm and elastic parts below Fernando’s neck.

“Are... Are... Are they real?” he stammered. His body was so tightened it appeared as if he had been attacked by a serpent.

Fernando said proudly, “Don’t question my magic expertise. Even a legendary sorcerer couldn’t have actualized such a perfect effect without my belt.”

“But I still feel it is weird...” Antec led Fernando to the gate rigidly.

“Hehe. You don’t even get to enjoy ‘weird’ on other occasions. Seize the opportunity,” Fernando said with a brilliant smile.

Antec realized that Fernando’s meanness was something that he could only look up to. So, he could only shut his mouth and climb the stairs.

“Do you think the demigod capabilities that Pope Gregory showed in Lance were real, or did he count on the divine power facilities in Lance?” Fernando suddenly asked something else.

“Huh, what?” Antec was not on the same “frequency” with Fernando at first. He wasn’t back to himself until a while later. “I’m not clear, but according to my teacher, he was undoubtedly beyond the peak of legendary back then. However, he hasn’t left Lance since the battle.”

Fernando nodded his head before asking another question that

Antec could barely follow. “Will Stanis be at the party tonight?”

It was a small party. Most of the participants were students of legends.

“Huh, what?” Antec expressed his confusion in the same way. He then said, “He’s not in Aalto recently. He’s out searching for materials.”

Many sorcerers had been gathered in the cities like Aalto, but materials would not follow them without a reason. So, sorcerers had been taking turns to leave the cities for forests and the Dark Mountain Range to collect resources. Some of them even went further into the north where gems were more abundant.

That gave the night watchers and the clerics an opportunity. Assassinations and sieges happened many times. The sorcerers, unwilling to swallow it, also set up traps and killed the personnel of the Church instead. So, although the cities were in peace, the areas around them had already become hot spots.

Some of them were traps trying to attract the legends to attack, but neither party secured great achievements.

Therefore, Stanis’ journey might be really meant for material collection, or it might just be a trap.

Fernando had learned a lot about the situation. He nodded. “I’ll talk about illusions and dreams with him after he’s back.”

“Alright. You can spend a few more days in Aalto so that you can look for the sorcerers who are talented and willing to go to Holm,” Antec said delightedly as Fernando was one of the only three real friends in his life.

Fernando grimaced. “Then, my nickname will become ‘Antec’s Humiliation?’”

“On second thought, I think you should go back as soon as possible... You’ve known the general situation after all.” Antec looked at his right hand sadly.

“Hehe. I need to know more about the details and collect the files of grand cardinals and legendary knights for future battles. So, I’m afraid that you have to be humiliated for a while,” Fernando said unconcernedly.

At this moment, the villa door was opened automatically, and a shrieking male voice echoed, “Hey, Antec, where did you find a date? Did you hire her from the ‘Pink Mill’?”

Sorcerers, dark knights, dwarfs, and ordinary people all have biophysical needs, so there was still room for prostitutes to survive, and “Pink Mill” was one of the places in the trade. Of course, they mostly provided their service in dreams.

“This is my good friend that I met in Rentato, Nando,” Antec introduced anxiously, fearing that other people realized that Fernando was a male.

Fernando said with a brilliant smile, “So, Antec does not have a girlfriend in Aalto.”

He sounded so pleased that Antec was almost stunned.

“Hehe. First of all, somebody needs to appreciate him...” The shrieking voice went away.

Antec secretly raised his thumb at Fernando, complimenting his performance. “He’s Beto. He likes to mock me most. His teacher is the Lord of Elements.”

...

In the villa, dozens of sorcerers, holding strange beverages, roamed in the hall. They were vaguely around four men and a woman.

Before the four men and the woman, a water curtain was floating and displaying the scene before the gate.

“Hehe. Antec turns out to have a female friend that he knows since childhood.” The shrieking voice was made by a man who had a mustache. He seemed angry at being embarrassed.

“Well, isn’t she pretty?” The woman, who was holding a strange drink, clicked her tongue. “Red eyes and red dress, bright and passionate, how appealing!”

She was tall and looked like a proper lady, but her words were unbelievably rude. However, those around her seemed to have already been used to it.

Beto sniffed. “Furan, it’s just a cheesy woman from the countryside, rude and stupid.”

He tried to speak evil of Fernando.

For the sorcerers of Antiffler, Holm was exactly a barbaric, underdeveloped village.

“However, you cannot deny that the countryside girls who are not corrupted by the luxuries of Antiffler and Tria are innocent and shy.” Furan, the beautiful girl, chuckled.

A gloomy, golden-haired man next to her snorted. “Are you planning to embarrass Antec? He’s also a legend’s student, and he is close to Stanis.”

“It’s all about our feelings toward one another. Why is it an embarrassment? Hey, just because you like me doesn’t mean you get to interfere with my life.” Furan scorned. She was just saying it randomly just now, but now that she was stopped, she was tempted to try in her anger.

The gloomy man closed his mouth, hoping that he could forget the pervert as quickly as possible.

Sensing something, Beto intentionally said, “That countryside girl has known Antec since childhood. Their bond must be strong. Furan, you wouldn’t succeed even if you try.”

“Is that so?” Furan knew that Beto was deliberately provoking her, but after seeing Fernando’s face on the water curtain, she still said, “Should we have a bet?”

Chapter 885: Who's the Prey?

885 Who's the Prey? "What do you want to bet on?" Beto was very talented in magic and had always been his teacher's favorite. However, he was also snarky and competitive for the same reason, and his social skills were no better than those of Antec, who only liked to hide in dark corners and manipulate dreams. So, he asked Furan, showing no lack of confidence.

Furan touched the sapphire brooch on her chest, and her white dress was dyed in dreamy colors by the hazy brightness. "Don't you always like my 'Mermaid's Tear'? If I lose the bet, it will be yours."

It was a level-eight senior-rank item. Even though Beto was a legend's student, he couldn't help but swallow hard. "Really?"

His teacher, the Lord of Elements, was good at alchemy, but he certainly did not create items for the students often.

Beto indeed had several senior-rank items, but none of them could compare to the brooch, Mermaid's Tear. Not only did it boast powerful spells, but it could also significantly improve the effects of meditation and the performance of water element users. Beto had been yearning for the brooch for a long time!

However, Furan's teacher was the famous "Stellar Mentor". It was barely possible for him to steal it.

"Have I ever not fulfilled my words?" Furan was peaceful and beautiful, but she talked like a man.

"What if I lose?" Although he was delighted, as a sorcerer, Beto still asked cautiously.

Furan snorted. "You're like a chick. So petty."

"You!" Because of an accident in body modification, Beto's voice was high and did not sound like a regular male. There was no way to heal it for now. So, he hated it most when other people mocked him for not being a man.

Furan combed her hair. She couldn't have been more beautiful and charming when her ice fingers brushed on her soft black hair. She looked at the front and said, "If you lose, you will announce in the next meeting of our teachers that you love me."

The legendary sorcerers who were close to each other had been meeting often to discuss the situation and exchange magic knowledge. Sometimes, they also brought their favorite students, both to show off and to broaden the students' horizons.

Beto gasped hard. It would be very humiliating to announce that he loved Furan in front of so many legends. All of them were aware of Furan's sexual orientation, but they did not really care about it.

"Then, I will decline you brutally." Furan smiled brilliantly. "How about it? Do you want a bet? You should be better than the coward Antec, shouldn't you?"

Stimulated by Furan, Beto snorted. "My humiliation in exchange for a level-eight item. The bet seems in my favor. Furan, are you so confident in yourself?"

"It's just a countryside chick who hasn't seen anything. She's easy to be captured." Furan sipped the strange beverage. She was glowing now that she found a target.

Dewey, a student of the Lord of Abyss, who had a crush on Furan, turned around and talked to a pair of twins, turning a blind eye to his two self-willed companions.

At this moment, the gate was opened, and Fernando walked in holding Antec's arm.

Antec's face was red, and his back was straight, perhaps due to his excitement, or maybe because it had been rigidified. In Beto's eyes, he was just being cocky.

For the first time, Antec enjoyed the introduction part. "This is Beto, you've already met him. This is Furan. She's the Stellar Mentor's student, and she's good at divinity."

He was hinting Fernando to not cross the line in case Furan noticed

anything.

“This is Dewey, the Lord of Abyss’ student. His body has been completely modified into an amalgamation of demons. Johnny and Kavins are twins. They are both the Demigod-lich’s students.” Antec introduced the central persons in the group.

Johnny and Kavins looked very familiar. They seemed to be only teenagers. Black-haired and black-eyed, they couldn’t have looked more innocent.

Fernando secretly crossed the names that Antec just introduced in his heart. They were all legends’ students. It was unlikely that they would leave their teachers for Holm at such a moment. Therefore, he might as well pay attention to the sorcerers around who were talented but did not have a great background.

As the student of a legend, Antec only introduced the people who deserved his introduction. In the end, he pointed at Fernando and said, “This is Nando from Holm. She’s a senior-rank sorcerer good at elemental spells.”

“Is this your date or fiancée-to-be?” Furan suddenly interjected. Her voice was crisp and sweet, but her tone was not exactly expected of a lady.

Antec choked on his own saliva. Coughing for a moment, he said, “We grew up together...”

The indirect answer fitted his usual image very well, so nobody was suspicious. Johnny chuckled. “What a beautiful lady.”

He appeared to be a boy, but his voice was old and coarse. A rotten soul seemed to be residing inside the elven body.

“Thank you.” Fernando bowed with a brilliant smile intentionally, and as he expected, he caught Furan’s glittering eyes.

After some chit chat, Fernando brought up a new topic. “I’m told that your teachers were all involved in the two battles of legends. I wonder, how is ‘God’s Guard’ like exactly?”

As unworldly as I thought... Beto mocked in his heart and said, "God's Guard should be a space-time defensive spell. By twisting space and time, the target to be protected is placed in an intangible place. If the attacker does not understand the mystery of space and time, they cannot hit the target however powerful the attack is. At that time, my teacher..."

The intelligence of such an extent was not anything confidential in their circle. So, Beto, Johnny, and Furan added the things they learned from their respective teachers.

Fernando, on the other hand, listened so attentively that his red eyes glittered.

"Look, it's just a countryside chick. Innocent, naive, enthusiastic, and simple," Furan said to Beto in the telepathic bond with a smile.

Beto snorted. "However, it also means that she is conservative and not easy to seduce. Don't play tough."

"I always know how to deal with such inexperienced countryside chicks. All I need to do is to let her feel the strange happiness before she realizes it." Furan moved her fingers, as if she were in a great appetite.

"Don't lose your reputation," Beto said and thought that he could mock Antec even if he lost the bet.

Under Fernando's intentional direction, the details of the two legendary battles were extracted and saved in his head. Suddenly, Furan rose and stretched her arms gracefully and charmingly. "It's not fun to discuss those things at all. This is a party. We need to dance."

The moment she said that, the other female sorcerers who had been watching her immediately created warm melodies with magic.

She walked to Fernando with a smile, and with her eyes glittering, she said, "Nando, don't hang around those boring men. Let's go dance, shall we?"

Huh? Fernando did not expect Furan to be so active. He looked at

Antec next to him subconsciously, which further convinced Furan, Beto, and the rest of them that he was a countryside chick who had never experienced anything before.

"I would like to invite your date to dance. I'm sure you are okay with that, aren't you?" Furan looked at Antec with a faint smile.

Antec seemed scared of her. He nodded. "Of course."

"Then, beautiful lady, let's dance." Furan took Fernando's hand and ran to the center, bold and straightforwardly, not asking for Fernando's permission at all.

Then, she grabbed Fernando's waist, forcing him to dance right next to her.

"Are you not scared that Furan will steal your date?" Beto asked, grimacing.

Antec smiled in embarrassment. "Nando is not that kind of girl."

The song was hot, and the two bodies that were next to each other were even hotter. Fernando had never experienced a female body in such a way before. His clumsiness made Furan giggle nonstop. Then, her mouth stopped next to Fernando's ear, and she said in a low voice, "You are really beautiful!"

"So are you..." Fernando replied sincerely.

Then, he sensed a shivering ecstasy from his ear, as if he had been electrified. After that, his mouth was sealed by the pink lips.

Hehe. Very fresh, pure, and easy to provoke! Furan kissed and thought gloatingly.

Then, she sensed that Nando's hands were holding her tightly and responded passionately.

I won!

She thought delightedly at first, but her libido was immediately ignited by the passionate beauty in her arms. She tried very hard to

calm down and say, “Let’s go to my room.”

“Look at that!” Beto almost whistled. “Nando is not that kind of girl.”

He quoted Antec’s words to mock the guy.

Blushing, Antec was more than angry. “Furan is also a girl. What’s to be scared of?”

It remained to be seen who would suffer losses in this one!

“Haha.” Beto laughed and thought that Antec had found the most terrible excuse. When was Furan a girl in their eyes?

“You’d better stay in your dreams as you usually do. You can always find a date there!” Beto scorned blatantly.

...

In the room, the dresses were all over the ground, and a weird smell occupied every inch of space.

On the bed, two naked bodies were entangled. One session was just over.

Furan touched Fernando’s back and giggled. “I can sense your lack of experience. Is the euphoria unique and strange like you never had before?”

She was referring to Fernando’s pureness.

“Yes, I did not expect it to feel like this,” Fernando admitted honestly. That was what a girl’s body felt like! It was truly different from a guy’s!

Furan smiled in satisfaction. The ecstasy of victory filled her with desires again. “Nando, did you mention that you came to Aalto to look for talented sorcerers?”

“Yes.” Fernando’s hands began to move subconsciously too.

“Haha. It’s useless. If we fail here, Holm will not end well either. Why bother taking risks there?” Furan said ambiguously. “Let’s continue our happiness!”

.....

On their way back, Antec looked at Fernando angrily. “Didn’t you score a bit too easily?”

It was a great humiliation for him!

“The feeling was great and fresh. I couldn’t stop.” Fernando had no intention to apologize. “She’ll come again tomorrow. She said that she would introduce to me a few sorcerers whose lives here haven’t been very good.”

“Furan is only into girls. If she learns of your real identity...” Antec tried to scare him.

Before he finished his sentence, he suddenly raised his head, sensing that Furan was approaching quickly. “Are you serious?! I was only talking!”

Furan stopped by the window. There was no lust on her innocent face anymore. She looked at Fernando very solemnly. “Has the Liege of Death recovered his capabilities?”

“Huh?” Fernando did not understand what she meant at all.

Chapter 886: Progress

886 Progress Seeing Nando's reaction, Furan reviewed what she did and decided that she was being too hasty. She had come straight after learning the message from another sorcerer on the road. It did not occur to her that it was impossible for Nando, who should have been away from Holm for a while, to learn the intelligence earlier than she did.

"Has anything happened?" After a brief moment of being stunned, Fernando immediately realized that new intelligence had been delivered from Holm to Rentato, so out of concern, he asked in a low voice. It was much easier for the legends to communicate than it was for the common sorcerers. For example, the two Excellencies of Cabin of Palmeira talked almost on a daily basis.

Keeping her right hand on the misty window of the nightmare wagon, Furan thought for a moment and believed that she could get more details from Nando. So, she smiled and said, "A while earlier, the Liege of Death killed 'Graceful Angel' Francois in the Radiance Church and destroyed the transmission circle. Such a terrifying outcome made people wonder if he had regained his top legendary capabilities. So, none of the legendary knights of Holm dared to come out again, and the new pope had to send the Sword of Truth back with two saints."

After a brief pause, she said, "In such a way, the pressure we suffer has been greatly reduced. We'll be on the winning side if Gregory does not leave Lance."

"What? The Graceful Angel was killed in the Radiance Church?" Antec exclaimed in surprise before Fernando said anything. With the support of the divine power circles of the cathedral, Saint Francois could have resisted a top legend for a while. Had the Liege of Death approached the demigod level after his resurrection? Even if he didn't, he had to have returned to his peak in the past, hadn't he?

Fernando also found it hard to believe. He had only been away for

half a month, and why had the situation changed so fast? The organization was keeping a low profile after attacking Kritonia and Alfonsol, but how was the highest leader of the Church in Holm killed all of a sudden?

Suddenly, he realized that a secret agreement had to have been reached in the battle against Kritonia. The targets of the Liege of Death and the old fox included not just the Heart of Time but also the Graceful Angel. They intended to create chaos and cooperate with this side.

Looking at Fernando's changing expression, Furan thought of something. "Do you know what is going on?"

"I'm not sure. It's been half a month since I left Rentato. The Graceful Angel was still as alive as ever back then." Fernando did not propose his speculation.

Furan also did not think that a seventh-circle sorcerer who did not have a notable background could know that. So, she nodded, "Do you know anything else about the Liege of Death?"

"Earlier, our Union attacked the Heart of Time together with the Liege of Death." Fernando felt that it was necessary for him to raise some valuable intelligence in case he was underestimated.

Furan chuckled. "Wasn't it the Witch of Iceland and the Eye of Curse?"

Yours is just a wretched group without even a legend. Stop overselling yourself.

"I was there." Not in a good mood, Fernando said straightforwardly.

"What?" Antec was even more surprised than Furan.

Furan did not lose her calmness now that Antec shouted out his surprise. She smiled thoughtfully and asked, "Nando, can you tell me the details?"

Her eyes were wet and full of charm. Although the Lord of Frigidity would inform the legends of the coalition army of the major events,

he was not close to the Stellar Mentor and certainly would not tell him all the details.

Fernando did not intend to hide in the first place. He told the basic story and concluded, "... At that time, the Liege of Death behaved as a level-three legend; otherwise, Kritonia wouldn't have escaped."

As for whether or not the Liege of Death was pretending, he was not certain.

Furan listened quietly and asked about the details now and then. In the end, she nodded. "Your intelligence is very valuable."

Suddenly, her face was rigid, and she sounded old. "Little girl, we are interested in what you said. We hope that you can come to my demiplane."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Fernando was stunned before he suddenly realized who the person who had just controlled Furan's body was. In Aalto, only the Stellar Mentor could have done that without causing a conflict.

Furan shivered hard and looked around in confusion. Then, she rubbed her head and said, "Did my teacher invite you just now?"

"Yes." Fernando respected the legends for their strength, but he was not intimidated by them. He seemed rather calm.

Furan smiled like the peaceful moonlight at night, which was entirely different from her usual look. Not only was Antec, a rookie, lost in it, but even Fernando was also rather amazed.

"For our teacher and for us, the issue about the Liege of Death is one of the most important things." Furan smiled.

Damn! This chick has combined illusion, divinity, and her own vibe so perfectly? Fernando struggled to move his eyes away from Furan's face, speculating that she was using illusion. In the meantime, he smiled. "I know that Prince Dracula, the primordial dragon of time, the elven queen, the Mother God of the Earth, and the Master of the Boundless Ocean are not sorcerers."

Even though there were plenty of legends among them, the sorcerers were actually playing a supportive role in the war and could not decide their fate. At such a moment, the “Liege of Death” who had recovered his strength was like a gift from the Goddess of Fortune!

Furan was briefly stunned, not expecting Nando to be unaffected by herself. She smiled and thought that the countryside girl had a lot of potentials!

After only one moment, she had a new understanding and more interest in Nando than physical ones.

“You are very smart.” Furan touched Fernando’s face with her right hand. “Let’s go to my teacher’s demiplane now.”

It was not until the two of them were melted into the mist that Antec was back to himself. He sighed. “Furan is only into girls. Should I borrow the transformation belt from Fernando for my use? No, she knows that I am a man.”

He turned to the mist and said enviously, “Fernando was involved in such an important matter. It’s so much better than staying in Aalto and helping with the maintenance of the dreams...”

.....

In the demiplane of “Starry Ocean”, none of the legendary sorcerers revealed their real appearances, but only affected the space and showed unusual phenomena. For example, on Fernando’s left side was a scorching fireball that felt like the sun, and on his right was a weird pattern made of the four main elements.

In their eyes, Fernando, who was not even an archmage, was not qualified to meet them at all. They wouldn’t have bothered to talk to him had it not been for the Liege of Death. That was the pride of legends of the Magic Empire.

“That’s all I know.” Fernando described the event in greater detail and stressed the old fox’s role, but he did not mention Douglas’ whys and his current research.

Right before him, the brilliant stars swirled and constituted into a fateful nebula. From the nebula, an old but clear voice said, "It's much more valuable than I imagined."

The Stellar Mentor was much more polite than the other legends, but he did not mention what the specific value was.

"I know why you've come to Aalto. We won't stop you from taking sorcerers away with you. There are indeed too many people here." The Stellar Mentor showed their attitude on behalf of other people.

Fernando was secretly relieved. That was the purpose of his intentional leakage. Although it was not important for the legends that he was persuading the talented sorcerers to leave, it was still possible that some of them would turn him into an experimental material someday when they were in a foul mood. Now that he had the endorsement of the Stellar Mentor, there would be no problem. His divinity told him that the Stellar Mentor would have accepted his request, but he did not expect that the guy would mention it before he asked.

Although he was impatient and mean, Fernando was not a reckless man. He had thought of and perfected most of the details.

After Fernando left, the nebula asked the twisting darkness nearby, "Did you notice anything?"

The darkness was vaguely showing the scenery of the abyss.

"There are signs of body modification, and she lacks the unique feminine qualities." Natravos, the Lord of Abyss, was one of the best experts in body modification, only slightly secondary to Viken, the King of Calamities who once stood at the cutting edge of the field.

"Do you mean that she might not be a female?" the Stellar Mentor asked.

"It's a possibility." Natravos grinned hideously. "If you don't mind, I can give her a test. Such a violent girl fits my appetite very well."

"Forget it. We cannot afford any accidents right now. She's a Red Eye noble of the Asso Empire, and she may be related to the Liege

of Death.” The Stellar Mentor shook his head and thought of his student. However, he soon forgot about such trivia.

The Sun King said loudly, “Does she deserve any attention? Are you too idle? There are so many important things to do!”

Therefore, the Starry Ocean regained the everlasting peace, and the minds of the legends communicated and sparkled.

.....

In the days that followed, Fernando and Furan had a great time on the bed. Also, thanks to her introduction and Antec’s, he made friends with quite a lot of sorcerers who had potentials but could not improve in cities like Aalto due to the insufficiency of resources. The few female sorcerers that Furan introduced were particularly remarkable.

Those sorcerers were not very happy to leave at first. After all, many companions had been gathered here, and it was easy for them to exchange knowledge here as they were in Antiffler. However, after learning that the Liege of Death had “regained” his capabilities and did something great, they began to feel that the prospects of Holm were promising and changed their mind.

One day, Furan told Fernando that there was an elemental sorcerer in Holsava, a city to the north of Aalto, who hadn’t been doing very well. His name was Tuck. His talents were rather impressive, but he had been ostracized after pissing off Beto and was forced to live in Holsava City instead of Aalto.

Fernando immediately went there. Furan, however, was delayed by something else and was not with him for a couple of days.

Chapter 887: Track

887 Track “Are you saying that Tuck has moved away?” “Nando”, who now carried feminine charm, asked a middle-aged woman.

Because it was near the mines, the sky of Holsava City was covered by dust all year around, which made it dim and gray. He was now at the center of a dark valley, where the architectural style was more inclined to the mysteriousness and grimness that sorcerers preferred.

The middle-aged woman that Fernando asked was an ordinary person. She wavered and replied, “Yes, Mr. Sorcerer. Tuck moved away a month ago.”

The reverence and fear for sorcerers had been etched to the blood of the civilians of the Magic Empire.

Fernando looked around. The buildings here were mottled and heavy, with the traces of aging everywhere. Realizing that Tuck did not seem to have enjoyed his life in this place, he went on to ask, “Do you know where he moved to? Exactly how many years ago did he move out?”

The middle-aged woman thought in fear for a moment before replying, “Mr. Sorcerer, I remember clearly that it rained hard that day. It was exactly the middle of the last month.”

As a matter of fact, the sorcerers had a detailed and complicated regulation on years, months, and days, such as the Year of Winter, the Month of Bronze, and Day Thanos. However, it was impossible for ordinary people to remember those things. They mostly still referred to the months with their original names in the common tongue.

Fernando nodded. The magic he secretly performed told him that her words were trustworthy and without interference. The middle-aged woman was also not secretly a senior-rank sorcerer, which he had already confirmed.

The middle-aged woman was more or less relieved seeing the beautiful girl before him nodding her head. She was much more smooth when she said, “Mr. Tuck is a sorcerer who does not like talking. He mostly hid in his room for experiments every day. However, a few days before he moved out, when I ran into him in the lobby, I heard him talking about ‘Kufuray’, ‘my new life will begin there’, etc.”

She had been a civilian in the neighborhood until she was hired by Tuck as his servant.

“Kufuray...” Fernando repeated the name and soon found the corresponding place in the map in his memories. It was a city to the northwest of Aalto on the border between the territory of sorcerers and that of a dozen heretic churches that were against the Saint Truth. There weren’t abundant mines and unique resources in the city.

Why did Tuck go to that city? Fernando was puzzled.

Then, he performed divinity, and after making sure that there were no obvious dangers, he decided to go there and take a look. He could also observe the heretic churches by the way. He had always been curious about the gods’ forms of existence and the reason why the Church was preaching about faith. It was a pity that the Saint Truth was too powerful in Holm for him to observe and study. Now that he had come to Aalto, he might as well take a look at it by the way.

After his wish was fulfilled, he would return to Aalto and go back to Holm with the newly-recruited sorcerers.

Furan is one hot chick. It’s a shame that I can’t spend more time with her, Fernando thought regretfully before he chuckled to himself. However, she will definitely go crazy if she learns my real identity. It’s not bad to leave as soon as possible.

Now that the Liege of Death had raised the attention of the legends, their communication with Holm would definitely be more frequent. So, it would be a disaster if the old fox accidentally revealed that the envoy he sent was a guy named Fernando.

...

Kufuray City was a business city in the Magic Empire. It had a huge population and was significantly more prosperous than the mining city Holsava.

The sun was high. Fernando observed the city from the sky. Pedestrians walked like ants, and towers rose high intimidatingly. There was nothing wrong.

He descended and landed out of the city, not attempting to challenge the defense circles of the city. Then, with the credentials that Furan gave him, he passed the gate.

The moment he entered the city, Fernando felt that the bright sunlight was dimmed, as if he had come to a cold and obscure forest.

“The magic circles of this city have been kept running at such a level?” Fernando speculated.

On the street, the residents of Kufuray seemed familiar with each other. Fernando saw many people in groups of ten discussing something in a low voice.

“What’s happening?” Fernando thought warily. He cast a spell of distraction and approached them.

“Don’t forget to go to the priest tonight. He will pray for us.”

“I will. I have to repent.”

...

Similar words entered Fernando’s ears. There was nothing that deserved his attention.

Fernando sniffed. “It seems that the heretic churches have developed new followers here. Hehe. It’s better than believing in the Saint Truth.”

He listened to another few groups and found nothing strange. So, he

went to the Office of Sorcerers at the center of the city and asked about Tuck. According to the rules of the Magic Empire, only if the sorcerers were registered in the local office could they enjoy the privileges, including subsidies, of the sorcerers.

Very soon, he left the office in satisfaction. Tuck was indeed here.

And I was worried that he might've lost his mind and run loose.

Fernando thought to himself and walked to 24, Right Angle Street according to the file. It was the residence that Tuck was given.

The Right Angle Street was near the city wall. It was as lackluster as Holsava City in the dust. The buildings here were also grim and ragged, as if they hadn't been repaired for a long time. Sorcerers never bothered to waste their time on the houses other than their magic towers. According to them, the civilians they raised were exactly for such things!

"Tuck is ostracized in this place too? But he hasn't been here for long," Fernando murmured, suspecting that it was Beto's influence.

Of course, he didn't think that Beto did it directly, or Tuck would have gone missing. However, Beto's dislike would be spread out from his circle and his followers to other cities, and somebody would try to please him.

Dum, dum, dum.

Fernando stopped before a two-floored villa and knocked on the door.

The villa was so old that it did not even have a common magic doorbell.

After a few knocks, there was no response at all, not even a magic pet or an alchemical puppet.

"Tuck is not here?" Fernando mumbled. What bad luck.

He tried knocking again, with a greater force to create bigger noises.

Dum, dum. Squeak...

After Fernando's movement, the door of the room was slowly opened. It was not really closed at all.

Fernando vaguely sensed that something was not right, but then he realized that Tuck was only a sorcerer who just rose to the senior rank. So, he boldly released the Secret Eye and investigated every corner with it.

The desks and chairs in the house had a thin layer of dust. There was not a living soul both upstairs and downstairs. There wasn't a secret room either.

"Notes in the library, and materials in the laboratory... Did Tuck leave in a hurry when he was preparing for an experiment?"
Fernando speculated according to the feedback of the Secret Eye.
"It's also possible that he did not leave but went missing..."

Otherwise, a sorcerer wouldn't have left his notes in the library instead of carrying it with him.

It puzzled Fernando. The guy who made Tuck disappear didn't take away the notebook? Why? That was a sorcerer's most valuable treasure!

His confusion brewed. After confirming that there was no danger, Fernando entered the study and decided to find clues from Tuck's notes.

"Earth, fire, wind, and water. I'm so sick of the four elements and cannot understand the content behind at all.

"Maybe I should try studying the mysteries of gods! All the churches have so many experts and fake gods. It means that the secrets of power and immortality must be behind it..."

"The thing that I accidentally obtained seems related to the mysteries of gods. However, I cannot study it due to the lack of materials..."

"I'm told that some heretic churches are preaching in Kufuray City,

which still belongs to the sorcerers. This is truly a gift from the Goddess of Fortune.

“My new life will begin here!”

It was more like Tuck’s journal than a real magic notebook. Fernando was less puzzled. If the guy had left in a hurry, it was not entirely necessary to bring the notebook.

“Something is not right!”

Suddenly, a few words that were obviously written in a haste entered Fernando’s eyes. He could almost sense the fear in them.

“What did Tuck find?”

Fernando’s relief was gone. At this moment, he heard footsteps coming from the gate!

...

“Where are you hiding Nando? She’s supposed to be back the day before yesterday!” Furan came and questioned Antec.

Antec couldn’t be more innocent. “How would I know? I don’t even know where you sent her.”

“Hehe. If I know you’ve done anything bad because of jealousy, I’ll feed you to the nightmare in person!” Furan observed carefully and felt that Antec was not lying. In the end, she said, “That’s strange. It takes only half a day to travel between Holsava and this place. Why is she still not here?”

“What’s she doing in Holsava?” Antec asked curiously.

Thinking about other things, Furan answered casually, “I asked her to go and find Tuck. Although Tuck is not very likable, he’s still...”

Antec stood up all of a sudden. He was shocked. “Tuck? Wasn’t he allured to Kufuray by Beto with a trick?”

“What? Kufuray?” Furan was also shocked.

“This is bad. Nando hasn’t followed him there, has she?” Antec walked to Furan anxiously.

Chapter 888: Mysterious Kufuray City

888 Mysterious Kufuray City Fernando grabbed the notebook and cast “Advanced Stealth” on himself, disappearing from the study. He listened to the coming footsteps quietly.

One, two, three... More and more people were coming to the gate.

“Why are there so many people? Why are they so stealthy?” Fernando created spying eyes and dispersed them in order to monitor the whole house. Although the spell had a range limitation, everything in Tuck’s house was still under watch because it was old and small.

In a corner, a crystal ball suddenly glittered and displayed what was in the hall. Even Advanced Stealth could not cover such an effect.

In the hall, the men and women in plain clothes walked lightly like ghosts, as if they feared that they might wake up the owner of the house.

There were about a dozen of them. They dispersed around a creepy-looking man at the center.

The man had scarlet thin hair, a protruding forehead, broken eyebrow, half-missing nose, rolling lips, and eyes that only had whites left. He was so unnaturally hideous that he looked like a doll that a naughty kid stitched on their own, or a monster that would only appear in the illogical dreams.

He looked at the ceiling with his blinded eyes, and his ears, which seemed to have been bitten by dogs, slightly shivered. After the dozen strangers stopped at their respective positions, he suddenly opened his mouth and said, “God saves the people.”

His voice was not as ugly as he looked. It was distant and intimidating, as if it came from the infinite heights.

“God, please save us.” The men and women held their arms and slowly leaned forward in a weird posture.

Continuing the previous tone, the man said gravely, “Everybody suffers and pays for their sins after they are born. Everybody endures hunger, trauma, jealousy, and betrayal without one day of happiness. They can barely catch their breath under the infinite pressure. Also, nobody can escape death in the end. They can only walk toward their doom in fear.

“However, God tells us that death is eternal, peaceful, and devoid of miseries and pains. Faced with death, we must thank God for His grace so that we do not need to sink in this filthy and disgusting world anymore...”

As he went on, the hall was covered in a tranquilizing and alluring atmosphere. The dozen men and women listened attentively and seemed to have understood the truth of death.

“Is a heretic church that believes in the God of Death preaching here?” Fernando basically realized what was going on in the hall through the spying eye.

Since this city had been infiltrated by the heretic churches, such a condition should be perfectly normal.

The moment the idea popped up, he suddenly sensed that something was not right. “But why are they holding a ritual in Tuck’s house? Did they know that Tuck’s house was empty?”

With puzzles rising up, Fernando identified the people carefully and did not find Tuck who attempted to study faith. Furan had created an image of Tuck with her memories so that it would be easier for him to find.

“That’s odd. Are they related to Tuck’s ‘disappearance’?” Fernando observed those “believers” even more carefully.

“As long as we earn the grace of God, we will enjoy painless immortality in death...” The priest suddenly raised his voice and his right hand.

After he raised his right hand, the dozen men and women rose from the ground and danced a weird dance that Fernando had never seen

before. Their postures were so weird that they did not seem to worry about joint damages or pain at all.

“It’s not like a regular religious ritual...” Fernando knew a thing or two about that. “Are the believers of the God of Death so special?”

As the dance grew weirder and weirder, the atmosphere in the hall became chaotic. They all took off their clothes and crawled before the priest.

The priest put down his right hand, but there was now a sharp dagger that emitted cold brilliance in it.

Fernando thought that the priest would reap the lives of the believers to please the God of Death, but the priest rolled his right hand and stabbed the dagger into his own chest. Blood immediately spurted out.

“Huh?” Fernando was completely stunned. He knew a lot of sacrificial rituals, but none of them required the suicide of the host first!

Blood dripped on the filthy floor. A man on the ground, as if summoned by God, suddenly extended his tongue and licked the blood.

Then, with obscure noises from his throat, he lunged at the collapsing priest like a wolf and bit the priest’s neck brutally, tearing off a cluster of flesh and swallowing it in a hurry.

The rest of the followers also went crazy. They jumped at the priest, gnawed at his flesh, and chewed it in the most reverential way.

Fernando felt uncontrollably nauseated as he watched the blood, skin, and broken flesh on the believers’ mouths. He had studied necromancy before, but he had never seen such a disgusting scene before.

A lot of blood was wasted when they crazily competed for food. It was gathered below the corpse into a pool.

The blood in the pool was suddenly vaporized, creating a hazy mist

of blood everywhere.

In the mist of blood, a face was crawling out crazily.

The redness was fixed to the face tightly as if it were a veil. Only the rising parts, such as eyeballs, nose, and mouth, could be seen, which made the face unbelievably creepy.

The man shouted hoarsely, “Help me!”

Startled by the voice, Fernando shivered hard, and the drowsiness that came into being at some point left his body.

It was not until this moment that he realized that the priest was still reciting the prayer and the believers were still dancing in the crystal ball.

“What happened to me just now?” Fernando asked himself subconsciously. He soon realized that he was affected by illusions and entered a dream without him realizing it!

He looked around warily and thought to himself, It’s at least a senior-rank sorcerer, if not an archmage, who put me into a dream through the previous scene. What exactly does he want?

Then, he thought in shock, Was the archmage who created the dream the one who cried for help? He created the dream just to send a distress call?

Fernando did not rush out to investigate the dozen heretic believers. The caller asked for help in such a way was obviously to avoid certain surveillance. If he were to take action recklessly, something might happen to him.

“Is the man in trouble caged? No, if he is caged, his leaking strength couldn’t have affected me at all unless he is above legendary, in which case whoever cages him is too much for me to deal with. If he is not caged but hiding somewhere in the city, it must be at least a level-nine expert who has put an archmage into such difficulties. The guy may be around...

“Such a method is obviously sorcery. Then, why doesn’t he just ask

for help from the Office of Sorcerers, which can reach out to Aalto? Maybe the Office of Sorcerers is secretly monitored by the expert, or maybe the people in the Office of Sorcerers have betrayed or been replaced...

“So, will the expert in the dark allow people to leave Kufuray City and get help for the sorcerer?”

Fernando shook his head firmly. It couldn't happen. Maybe he would be captured and killed as long as he attempted to leave the city.

At this moment, the dancing and praying believers slowed down. The ritual tonight seemed to have come to an end.

Fernando looked at the scene; his eyes unfocused. One thought suddenly flashed in his mind. “Is ‘the guy in need’ doing this on purpose so that I’ll be too intimidated to leave Kufuray and can only disappear like Tuck?”

He was very smart and therefore came up with a lot of possibilities. Hesitating, he did not know which one he should believe.

However, since he remembered Tuck, he brought out the notebook and read the following records.

“The ritual here is too weird. It is very different from what I know...

“The more I study the church that secretly develops in this place, the more scared I am. What are they exactly?

“No. Why have I never seen anyone leave the city? Why do the people who bring water and food return at the gate and never enter the city?

“I need to get out of here!”

After the scribble was hopeless blankness.

“Does everybody know that it is impossible to leave the city?”
Fernando was even more perplexed.

Inside the crystal ball, the believers stopped praying and were ready to leave under the priest's instruction.

Having a eureka, Fernando blinked to the hall and shouted, "Who are you? Why are you trespassing on Tuck's house?"

Since he was here for Tuck, he had to behave like he was searching for Tuck. That was the best way for him to buy himself more time without raising attention and doubts!

The priest who was as hideous as a monster replied solemnly and honestly, "We have been invited by Tuck."

"Tuck invited you to come here?" Fernando was slightly stunned, not expecting such an answer.

.....

With the credentials that their teachers gave them, Furan and Antec flew toward Kufuray City quickly.

"Right, whose turn is it to watch over the place right now?" Antec did not pay much attention to it before.

Furan thought for a moment and said, "His Excellency the Original Fire."

Chapter 889: Tracing the Source

889 Tracing the Source The priest, which looked like a stitched monster, looked at Fernando with his hollow eyes that did not have pupils. “He has offered this house to the great God.”

“Where is he now?” Fernando asked solemnly, feeling that it was getting weirder and weirder. Wasn’t Tuck planning to escape this place? How did he become the believer of an evil god all of a sudden?

Had he been completely twisted by the evil god’s priest, or even the evil god himself, into a selfless “contributor”?

The priest sounded as calm as before as he said, “He’s in the temple.”

“I’m his friend. I’m here for him. I would like you to bring me to meet him in the temple.” Fernando had been unwilling to risk going to the nest of those believers whose behaviors were weird, but logically speaking, he was here for Tuck, and he could have asked for help from the Office of Sorcerers in case of any danger. If he did not go, it was very possible that the mysterious hunter would notice some anomaly.

Of course, Fernando knew very well in his heart that this city might not be under the control of sorcerers anymore. He inferred it based on the cry for help.

The priest slowly moved forward and circumvented Fernando as if he could see. “Follow me, paranoid sorcerer. You will sense the almightiness of God after you come to the temple. You will know that Tuck has chosen a better path with his heart.”

He’s not stopping me? Having no time to think, Fernando walked out of the villa with the priest.

It was already late at night. The silver moon was hazy, and darkness was everywhere in the city. Few lights could be seen.

Following the priest unhurriedly, Fernando analyzed the whole thing. “A sorcerer somehow became an evil god’s believer after leaving such notes, the whole city has been blocked, and someone delivers water and food regularly... Are the sorcerers secretly doing something based on this city, or have some believers of the evil god infiltrated Kufuray and controlled it bit by bit?”

It was not difficult to come up with the two possibilities because the place was in the territory of the sorcerers after all. It was next to the churches of the other gods but beyond the reach of the dark creatures, elves, dwarfs, or the Saint Truth. The first possibility could also mean the cooperation with the evil god.

He weighed the two possibilities, hoping to figure out the situation and find a way of survival. Based on the fact that it was a sorcerer who cried for help, the second possibility seemed more likely.

The priest in the lead walked to the market area and opened one of the stores.

Many goods were placed behind the door. There was nothing special. The blind priest passed the messy place agilely without bumping into anything.

At the center of the store, stone stairs led to the basement, where bright and yellow light was leaking out.

Kufuray has such underground chambers too. No wonder the archmage can hide and ask for help. Fernando thought to himself. Then, he frowned and sensed the contradictions. “As I inferred before, the mysterious hunter must be at least a level-nine expert, or he couldn’t have forced an archmage who is capable of putting me into a dream to stay here.

“Would such an expert secretly investigate after knowing that his enemy is hiding in the city, or would he simply erase the city with his strongest attack?”

Fernando believed that none of the experts in this age had the kindness to care about other people’s lives. They would certainly do whatever it took to accomplish the mission as soon as possible in

case the enemy's reinforcements came. So, how could the expert have decided to play hide-and-seek with the archmage in Kufuray? Was he not scared that a legend would pass by the place by accident?

It was obvious that the most effective approach was to destroy the city with thunderous attacks so that the archmage would be forced out or killed in his shelter. Whatever protection he was under, when an attack that was powerful enough to destroy the city arrived, the magic effects would definitely be triggered, and he would be discovered as a result.

There was another possibility, which was that the method of hiding involved the deep mysteries of time and space. However, an archmage was apparently incapable of that. If it was naturally formed, he could have stayed in the shelter peacefully without asking for help in a hurry.

More importantly, this place was not close to Aalto. Whatever happened, as long as the Office of Sorcerers was destroyed in the very beginning, nobody would notice anything wrong in ten minutes.

"Therefore, it's not that the mysterious hunter does not want to demolish the city, but his certain concerns prevent him from choosing such a radical approach. He is forced to play hide-and-seek with the archmage..."

Inferring the enemy's thoughts from their action, Fernando sensed more and more "truth". "Either the evil god in this place is beyond level nine and terrifies him, or it is this!"

Based on his previous speculation, Fernando believed that he had already seen through the mist!

"If the evil god has reached the level of legendary, the sorcerers would definitely be willing to cooperate with him in such a situation as long as he is willing to. He will be given a territory for his preaching. There's no need to be so stealthy at all..."

"Also, something has happened to many sorcerers in this place.

Even though the enemy can fake voices and mails, there are always irrecoverable loopholes, like the people who deliver food and water but do not enter the city, and the source of the food and water... In such an intense situation, it can hardly escape the attention of the sorcerers in Aalto...

“Therefore, this place can only be a secret laboratory of the legends of Aalto! Only they can separate a city within their territory from the outside world without causing any suspicion! Only they can mobilize a large batch of food without raising any attention!

“That’s why the mysterious hunter did not destroy the city immediately, which would’ve attracted the legends!”

The mist before him gradually dispersed, and the situation was manifested before Fernando’s eyes. However, he was even more stunned after he figured out the truth.

“We’re here.” The priest’s old and rigid voice echoed next to Fernando’s ears.

He trembled and woke up from his thoughts, only to discover that he had finished walking down the stairs without him knowing it. He was standing in the middle of a temple that was fully engraved with patterns of death.

In the temple, many people were praying on their knees. Their genders and ages varied.

“Tuck.” Before his God, the priest’s voice became low.

A man in an old black jacket moved backward to the priest and Fernando. He did not stand up and was purely moving on his knees.

It was not until he left the praying mass that he finally turned around and looked at Fernando. “Who are you?”

His eyes were lost and dirty.

Fernando identified that it was the real Tuck. He said solemnly, “I’m hiring a batch of talented sorcerers, and Furan recommended you.”

He specifically mentioned Furan and hid the information about Holm, hoping that whoever was behind it could be scared. Although it was highly unlikely, it was still worth trying.

“Hehe. Talented sorcerers...” Tuck stressed “sorcerers” before he said peacefully, “I’ve understood the real significance of my life. I will never study the boring magic anymore.”

“Is that so? I’m very sorry.” Fernando gave a polite and normal answer.

As a matter of fact, if anyone familiar with him were here, they would’ve noticed his strangeness immediately. How could the roarer not have spat on Tuck’s face and lambasted faith and god.

At this moment, tides were surging in Fernando’s heart, not because of Tuck, but because he had seen the truth of the whole thing!

“This issue can be divided into two parts. At first, the sorcerers were studying something with this cult. They blocked the city and forbade everyone from leaving for that purpose. Then, an archmage was hunted by someone and hid in a shelter in the city. He put me into a dream through a ritual and asked for my help.

“Then, the problem can’t be more obvious now. Both the archmage and his hunter are certainly aware of the specialties of this place. Otherwise, someone would’ve tried to destroy the city, and they would’ve been killed by the legends.

“Then, would a city that is under the control of sorcerers watch an archmage be hunted without doing anything? Even though the archmage felt that the sorcerers in this place had been controlled by the mysterious hunter, he could have caused trouble and attracted the legend who monitored this place. But he didn’t do that!

“Also, can a secret research base of sorcerers, which has blocked a city with great resources, be controlled so easily?

“It’s only possible if the legend who monitors this place is on the same side with the mysterious hunter. Or rather, the legend may be the mysterious hunter!

“That’s why the archmage, who sensed something wrong from a certain channel, did not ask for help. That’s why places like the Office of Sorcerers were easily controlled, because they had been under control in the first place.

“The legend hasn’t resorted to any powerful approaches probably because many other legends are still watching over this place. He doesn’t dare to cause too much noise!”

Although he did not understand the reason behind the situation, or whether he had been involved in an internal strife, Fernando had no time to think about that right now. He only felt that his blood was freezing. Did he have to challenge a legend now?

He did not wait for Antec and Furan to look for himself who had gone missing, because the legend would definitely kill him before they did. After all, it was the rule that many legends made up together—entering Kufuray was allowed, but exiting it was not!

Tuck nodded and returned to the praying team. Fernando thanked the priest mechanically and walked out.

“How can I save myself?” Fernando thought hard but could not come up with a way to escape a legend.

When he walked on the street under the chilling moonlight, Fernando felt refreshed and decided to consider the problem from the perspective of the caged archmage.

“Since the issue here has something to do with the legendary supervisor, it was a rather risky move that the archmage put me into a dream. Also, there wasn’t any clue in Tuck’s notes at all. It means that he asked for my help because he believed it was hopeful. It was not a random or desperate choice.

“Then, where does the hope lie exactly? Is it my wisdom, my magic abilities, or something else?”

Chapter 890: Risk

890 Risk

Under the moonlight, Fernando walked to Tuck's ragged house, trying to consider from the perspective of the trapped archmage.

"First of all, he has to choose his rescuer cautiously. If he asks for the help of a random sorcerer in the city, it's very likely that he will expose his traces. After all, not everybody can figure out the real situation as I can. One moment of carelessness, and he will be discovered by the mysterious hunter or the supervising legend."

It was something that Fernando confirmed at the beginning. For the trapped archmage, there were few opportunities for survival. He could not afford to waste any of them.

"Why did he choose me over Tuck or any other sorcerers? How am I different from them?"

Fernando believed that he certainly had advantages that could let the trapped archmage escape. That was why the archmage chose him and entered his dream to ask for help. He intended to find out the specific advances to decide his operation plan.

Fernando was both scared and excited when he realized that his opponent was a legend. His brain was much more active than usual.

"I am a seventh-circle senior-rank sorcerer, and Tuck is a sixth-circle one. The gap is not huge. I don't have obvious advantages. Besides, I never used any senior-rank spells in Kufuray City. It's certainly impossible for the trapped archmage to figure out my real capabilities, which means that my strength is not the reason why he chooses me. Well, faced with a legendary sorcerer, the strength of the senior rank matters little.

"My wisdom? I'm from Holm. Even if the trapped archmage knows me, he certainly does not know if I am a quick thinker."

To be honest, Fernando had basically guessed who the trapped

archmage was. Few ninth-circle archmages could put him into dreams after they were heavily wounded, and even fewer could hide right under the nose of a legendary sorcerer. There weren't many archmages who were so good at dreams either. Only one archmage met all the conditions, which was Stanis, Antec's classmate whose cognitive world had half-solidified. He happened to not be in Aalto. Both the timing and his strength checked.

"It's not strange that Stanis heard about me from Antec before. However, those tales are certainly not enough for Stanis to choose me because of my wisdom.

"This place is separated from the outside world. My connections with Antec and Furan are pointless too..."

Fernando was puzzled for a moment, unable to figure out why Stanis entrusted such an important matter to him.

"Huh. I am wearing the transformation belt under the name of Nando. He has never met me before and couldn't have recognized me..." Fernando suddenly remembered that he was now Ms. Nando.

However, he soon realized the reason. When he was in the Office of Sorcerers, he had registered himself in order to ask about Tuck's whereabouts. He stated that he was Nando from Holm, endorsed by Antec and Furan. Taking the information into consideration, Stanis could roughly guess that he was Fernando based on Antec's description in the past, except that he was now temporarily a female. After all, Antec had few friends, and barely any of them was from Holm.

"In such a case, he may be hiding somewhere in the Office of Sorcerers. The most dangerous place is the safest place... Well, eliminating strength and wisdom, what factors make me more suitable to help him get out of the trouble? Seduction?" Fernando ruled out the possibility without thinking. He could not even meet the legend or the level-nine expert. How could he seduce them? Besides, with their strength, they must have appreciated all the beauties in the world.

What can it be? What can it be? Fernando paced back and forth

before the ragged house, looking for the greatest difference between himself and other people, as well as the qualities that other people might describe and remember him by.

Suddenly, he stopped with his eyes widened. “If I were Antec, I would’ve described my friend Fernando as a weaselly, impatient, reckless, mean, and unapproachable man who roars like rumbling thunders when he throws a tantrum...”

The qualities that were of no use ebbed, and “impatience” popped up in Fernando’s mind. “Perhaps only an impatient and reckless sorcerer can create an opportunity for Stanis to escape, or at least he thinks so!

“What would an impatient and reckless sorcerer do? A cowardly and cautious man like Tuck would have decided to sneak quietly. His materials and his notebook are just distractions to eliminate doubts...

“An impatient and reckless sorcerer does not wait. He will break out unexpectedly... In such a case, he will attract the attention of the supervisor or trigger the defense magic circles, which will give Stanis a brief window... Well, since he has escaped here, the King of Nightmare must be one of the legends who are involved in the research. It is possible that Stanis can reach out to the King of Nightmare during the brief window...”

For a moment, Fernando felt that he was Stanis. It was almost like they knew what was on each other’s mind even though they had never met before!

“However, in such a case, it’s very possible that they will vent their fury on me. If there’s something wrong with the supervising legend, he can certainly kill Stanis and escape before the King of Nightmare arrives. Why is he confident to take the risk?”

Fernando couldn’t figure out the reason. He could only trust Stanis, who would know better than him.

“If I don’t take my chances, Antec and Furan will kill me to keep my mouth shut the moment they approach, and I won’t be able to take

my chances. Even if I die, I have to die while I'm trying to leave!" Fernando made up his mind. Then, he sniffed. "That's really the choice of an impatient and reckless sorcerer..."

He was as mean about himself as he was about other people.

"However, I need to observe tomorrow and see if it is forbidden to leave this city, in case I'm tricked." Fernando was not someone who believed everything other people said.

...

After spending the night in Tuck's house, Fernando pretended to go sightseeing after the failed recruitment. As he expected, nobody left the city at all! The wagons that delivered food and water would stop at the city gate!

After he confirmed it, Fernando took a deep breath. He decided to attack immediately when the supervisors and the cultists thought that he would go back and prepare himself!

Pa!

A silver bolt of lightning as thick as an arm glittered in the sky and struck the city gate, breaking the magic defense and splashing the mud.

In the meantime, the space before Fernando twisted, and countless runes gathered into a dazzling, queer gate.

It was Chaos Teleportation!

At this moment, the whole city suddenly glowed. The magic symbols and patterns appeared and piled into overlapping magic circles.

Right when the magic circles were triggered, clusters of mist rose from the Office of Sorcerers and were connected to the magic circles.

Immediately, stars were rising, and the whole city became blurry. Nobody could see beyond one meter.

Fernando felt so drowsy that he passed out before he was teleported.

...

Struggling to open his eyes, Fernando sensed his body again. Right when he was glad that he was still alive, a beautiful and friendly beauty appeared before him.

“Furan, you’re here?” Fernando greeted her subconsciously, but he realized that something was wrong the moment he opened his mouth. Why was it a male’s voice?

Furan was as gorgeous as a figure painting when she was quiet, and it was a major contrast when she talked. She laughed, and her eyes were cold as she said, “Why? Are you surprised that a chick has turned into a man? You are a pervert! You turned into a girl and tricked me. You even slept with me!” The more she talked, the angrier she became.

“That... That was a mistake...” Fernando suspected that Furan figured out the function of his belt and nullified it when he was sleeping.

Furan chuckled. “No, it was not a mistake.”

When Fernando looked at her curiously, she said with a faint smile, “I asked the Lord of Abyss to perform body modification for you. It will be permanent and irremovable. You will always be a girl. Rest assured. I will take good care of you.”

“Stop messing around!” Fernando only experienced it out of curiosity and never considered a permanent transition. He immediately roared, trying to stop Furan.

“Sleep now. You will always be a girl after you wake up!” Furan giggled.

Fernando tried to support his body, but the scene before his eyes suddenly broke. Darkness arrived and quickly disappeared.

“Antec?” Looking at his friend at a loss, he found himself in a

regular bedroom.

Antec chuckled. “You had a nightmare just now? Tell me. Let me analyze what it is about.”

“Have I been physically transformed by the Lord of Abyss?”
Fernando groped his body abruptly, only to discover that it was truly a girl’s!

“No,” Antec answered in confusion.

Seeing that the belt was still there, Fernando was immediately relieved. “Just now, I dreamed...”

Antec couldn’t stop laughing when he heard Fernando’s story. “That was the deeply-hidden fear in your subconscious! To be honest, I’m scared of her too. I stole you back as soon as possible because I feared that she might notice something. You’d better go back to Holm early.”

“What happened?” Fernando shifted the subject back to business.

Antec became solemn. “This is what happened. Stanis was ambushed by ‘Aurora Envoy’, who ranked the fifth among the night watchers, when he was out looking for materials. He paid a huge price to kill the enemy, but he sensed that he was followed by other enemies. So, not having the courage to return, he secretly hid in Kufuray City.

“However, when he was about to ask for help, he accidentally discovered that Archmage Prince, the Original Fire’s most trusted student, had secretly joined the Church and become ‘Bright Torch’, who ranked the sixth among the night watchers.

“Also, the Original Fire was engaged in an experiment and could not be distracted, and the whole city was watched by Prince. You know what happened later.

“After you passed out, the ‘Dream Transformation’ that my teacher secretly deployed was activated, allowing him to arrive in Kufuray and protect Stanis. The Original Fire, who came later, tried to capture Prince, but was one step late. The guy blew himself up, and

even his phylactery was shattered.”

Fernando frowned. “Do you mean that something was wrong with Prince instead of the Original Fire?”

That could explain why Stanis was willing to take the risk.

Chapter 891: Ten Years Later

891 Ten Years Later “That’s right.” After learning Fernando’s question, Antec made fun of him. “You were suspicious that a legend surrendered to the Church? What can they gain from that? The common archmages can receive safety and the materials provided by the Church. What can a legendary sorcerer get? After the external problems are eliminated, they will be the first guys to be thrown away.”

Such a smooth and convincing explanation did not sound like something that a guy as cowardly as Antec could have thought of so quickly.

He must have remembered it when the King of Nightmare and Stanis discussed it... Fernando mocked Antec in his heart and said solemnly, “What exactly are the legends researching in Kufuray City?”

“The mysteries of faith, the deification of gods,” Antec said frankly.

Fernando stared at him with his red eyes, until it was impossible for him to remain calm. He moved his shoulder back and asked, “What are you suspecting?”

“I don’t know, but I’m certain that it is definitely not the answer, at least not the most fundamental answer,” Fernando said solemnly.

Antec was obviously relieved. He looked at Fernando sincerely. “It is an answer nonetheless.”

“Got it. I won’t pursue it any further. Asking a coward to bear too much pressure will make him too scared to go to sleep.” Fernando heard Antec’s meaning between the lines. If he asked further, it was possible that his safety could not be guaranteed.

Antec was not angry after being mocked. He patted Fernando’s shoulder with a smile. “The more scared I am, the better I will sleep.”

The smooth feeling on his fingers made him move his hand back quickly. He blushed again because Fernando was still “Nando”!

Fernando sniffed. Feeling that his body had already recovered, he said, “I should get out of here as soon as possible. The rotten secrets buried below the ground disgust me. I have goosebumps all over my body.”

In short, he felt that the secrets were dangerous.

“I have brought over the sorcerers you hired. They’re out of the city.” Antec was very scared that Furan would see through Fernando’s identity, in which case he would definitely become collateral damage. So, he had been trying to persuade Fernando to leave as soon as possible.

Fernando looked at Antec in surprise. “It’s rare to see you so prepared.”

“Hehe.” Antec enjoyed Fernando’s “praise”.

Fernando talked with Antec for a while. After making deals about future reunions, he walked to the door and turned the knob.

At this moment, a man who appeared to be in his thirties walked in. He was so plain-looking that he would have been unrecognizable in any crowd.

He eyed Fernando up and down and said in a low voice, “Although you are a pervert, you have the vision and analysis abilities that are better than other people’s. That’s not bad.”

“Am I supposed to be happy for your ‘compliment’, you idiot who cannot distinguish between dream and reality?” Fernando was as mean as usual.

The man was Stanis, whom Antec had described and painted for Fernando before, and the future King of Nightmare.

“Words cannot bring you any benefits, but magic can,” Stanis said coldly. “According to Antec, you have some different opinions on illusions and dreams. I hope that they are not too shabby, or it will

be a waste of my time.”

Fernando chuckled. “I also hope that you won’t waste my time.”

The two of them communicated their opinions on illusions and dreams in the ward. Although it did not involve the detailed magic symbols and structures, they both benefited a lot from the brainstorming.

A while after Fernando left, Furan, who had been occupied in her teacher’s work, came. It was not exactly love between her and Fernando, but she couldn’t help but feel guilty when she thought that Fernando’s misfortunes were because of her wrong intelligence.

“What? She has returned to Holm?” Furan looked at Antec and could hear nothing else.

She did not say goodbye to her? Did the recent happiness not deserve a farewell at all?

Furan was rather sad that Fernando had left and ignored her charm.

Suddenly, Stanis opened his mouth and said nonchalantly, “You’re interested in a female body with a male soul? Antec is not bad. He has a soul that is even more cowardly than ladies. He’ll fit your requirement after some physical modification.”

“What do you mean?” Furan was stunned at first. Then, all the confusions when she was with Fernando surged up, and she glared at Antec. Fernando was not a professional actor at all. It was okay for a short while, but as they spent more time together, there were certain details that Furan found perplexing.

Antec stepped back in fear. “It... It was none of my business. Fernando was just a pervert who liked to be a girl.”

He did not have the courage to lie before Furan’s face.

Gloomily, Furan gritted her teeth hard and did not say anything for a long time. Right when Antec was frightened and trying to move closer to Stanis, she suddenly waved her arm. “I’ll turn him into a real female next time I meet him!”

.....

Ten years later, Rentato was warm and vigorous at the end of spring.

Fernando, still wearing his favorite red magic robe, ignored the knights and clerics in the city and soon reached the Roasted Fish Hotel.

“Old Green, you are still not dead!” he shouted the moment he entered the room.

Old Green narrowed his eyes and looked at him. “I’ll still be alive even after you are dead. Today’s letters.”

He threw a thick pile of letters to Fernando.

Ten years ago, after the Sword of Truth was sent back by the Church along with two saints, the situation was stabilized. However, as time went by, since the Church was caught in an impasse with the coalition army in Aalto and Tria, and the legends of the Church were distracted by the legendary sea monsters in the Boundless Ocean, the nobles in Holm began to have second thoughts and did not work as hard anymore.

The new situation reached an apex two years ago when the Liege of Death fully recovered and killed a grand cardinal in a head-on clash. Later on, the nobles would turn a blind eye to those in magic robes on the street as long as they were not with clerics. Also, more and more of them were secretly working with sorcerers, hoping that the Church could be struck out and a balance among the nobles, the sorcerers, and the Church could be forged.

An invisible hand appeared before Fernando before grabbing the letters and tearing them open. As per his expectation, he found Hathaway’s handwriting to be even more elegant now. On the letters were mathematical questions so complicated that even Fernando felt dazzled, having the illusion that he was not as good at mathematics as Hathaway.

Ten years might be too short to make a breakthrough in magic, but

it was enough for a mathematical master with enough talents to rise!

“This girl is not too bad at mathematics,” Fernando remarked with his symbolic tone.

Green scorned. “This is your 39th similar remark. Is it really so difficult to admit that her mathematical talents are better than yours?”

Fernando did not hear that, for he had already sat down and dwelt in the world of mathematics.

“She has such a profound understanding of fluxion, no, calculus... She made decisive contributions...” The more Fernando read, the more shocked he became.

He had been writing to Hathaway and offering mathematical guidance over the past ten years, but when it came to the most cutting-edge fluxion, she only asked the basic definitions. Fluxion had been renamed into calculus by Douglas. However, in one of today’s letters, the knowledge on calculus that Hathaway gave was beyond his abilities, and he had to learn it first!

“When did she pick up calculus?”

Fernando thought suspiciously. He soon remembered something Douglas said, “A young friend believes that calculus sounds better than fluxion, and she has made great contributions to the establishment of this system. So, let’s name it as she says.”

At that time, he thought that Douglas was referring to Erica who dropped by a lot. He realized now that it had to be Hathaway. She had been writing to him as well as Douglas about mathematical knowledge!

Since when was she mathematically capable of co-establishing calculus with Douglas? Fernando grimaced, feeling that he had been left behind.

“Old man, Hathaway is still writing to Douglas?” Fernando raised his head and asked.

Old Green wiped the cup as usual and said casually, "Of course, your mathematical abilities are nothing compared to Douglas'. She wouldn't have asked for your guidance if Douglas weren't in Allyn all the time."

He certainly did not mind striking Fernando.

"Nonetheless, calculus has been completed years sooner than I thought. This will be the most dazzling achievement in the history of magic!" Fernando did not feel bitter but talked in excitement.

Old Green was stunned by how open-minded he was. He asked, "The most dazzling achievement? Hehe. Who could've thought that one of the contributors is a little girl who is incapable of magic."

He cared for Hathaway as a senior. Even though ten years had passed, Hathaway was still a little girl in his eyes.

"It seems that I need to treat her as an equal during our communication." Fernando put the letters back, ready to study them further after he was back.

Old Green looked around. Seeing nobody here, he asked in a low voice, "Are we taking action tonight?"

Fernando nodded solemnly before he said in slight discomfort, "You... You'd better be careful."

Having recovered his strength, the Liege of Death believed that it was high time that they occupied a major city with necessary infrastructure so that the defense he had been secretly worked on for decades could be established as soon as possible to resist God's Arrival. It had been ten years. Nobody knew how strong the pope was and how long it would take before he could perform God's Arrival. They could only make preparations as early as possible.

"Are you confident?" Old Green asked in concern.

Fernando nodded his head. "Of course, because the nobles will be on our side!"

Chapter 892: Accidents

892 Accidents

In Cocus of the Duchy of Calais...

Since it was right next to the southern swamps, it was extremely hot even though it was the middle of the night. Now and then, creepy birds flew out of the darkness with bloodcurdling shrieks.

At the edge of the swamp, Arnold, who had been staring at Cocus City, was suddenly amused. "Nielson, you never thought you could return to this city someday, did you?"

He was talking about his return as a master.

This place, as the capital of the Asso Empire, had the most perfect infrastructure for the defense that the Liege of Death worked out. Naturally, it became the target for the operation.

With his bloated fat jiggling, Nielson said with unusual, mixed feelings. "I thought that I would never visit Cocus again in my life... I remember that I was praised right here by the Liege of Death when I became a ninth-circle archmage."

Priscilla covered her anxiety with a smile. "At first, I thought the target was Rentato instead of Cocus."

The operation was mostly to be carried out by legendary sorcerers under the secret cooperation of legendary knights. However, after the churches were destroyed and the cities were occupied, a lot of senior-rank sorcerers were needed to maintain the order and prepare for the construction of the defense. Therefore, Arnold was waiting for the signal at the edge of the swamp with Nielson, Priscilla, Amanata, Fernando, and the other sorcerers.

Arnold clicked his tongue. "The Sword of Truth does not want to lose his territory."

"Huh, why is Douglas not here?" Priscilla basically figured out the

reason. She looked around but did not see the archmage who left a deep impression on her ten years ago.

Arnold smiled. "Douglas said that his research had approached the most critical moment, and he was onto something. So, I said that he did not need to take part in the operation."

Then, he suddenly narrowed his eyes. "It has begun."

He received a message from the Liege of Death. The legendary sorcerers were about to take action.

.....

Below the thick mud, the ragged City in the Sky lay there just as usual.

Douglas sat in the square at the center of the city, faced with pieces of papers that had symbols and numbers all over them.

The law concluded from tremendous astrological records and the application of calculus allowed him to touch something marvelous, but there was still a gap for him to figure out what it was exactly.

The questions haunted him and kept him here for days, but despite that, he never found the perfect answer.

The secrets of planets, and the power source of the earth. The most essential secrets of the world seemed to be right before him, and all he needed to do was to push the gate and embrace them!

All he needed was one more moment!

In the square, several sorcerers, who were watching over the place, roamed with their kids. They were very curious about the contemplative archmage but dared not approach him.

The kids ran joyfully far away from each other, trying to win the fruits in their parents' hands.

.....

Aalto was set on fire. Buildings collapsed one after another. The defense circles did not seem to be of any use.

“What happened? Where’s our defense?” Beto, who was in the middle of a party, did not expect the Church to attack at such a moment, or that the defense of Aalto did not work at all!

Aalto was the western stronghold of the Magic Empire. It was first built to deal with the creatures in the Dark Mountain Range and only second to Antiffler in terms of sturdiness. After legendary sorcerers, vampires, dragons, elves, and other people were gathered here to resist the Church, the defense had been perfected and fortified without a care about the cost. The city was as strong as Antiffler after more than ten years. It was one of the trump cards that the coalition army hoped to offset “God’s Arrival” with.

However, the defense was not activated at the critical moment!

Furan was in a rather chilly mood as she panicked. “There’s only one reason why the defense is not activated. Something is wrong with the legend who is watching over the defense!”

“Who is it?” Beto, the twins, and Antec asked simultaneously.

Furan looked at them and snorted, “Are you idiots? The most important thing right now is to escape, not to find out which legend is wrong. Can you kill him? The grand cardinals and knights of the Church are right above Aalto, and you have the time to ask that question?”

She talked through the telepathic bond this time. While berating them, she ran to the basement of the villa. “Do not run out. We may be killed by the aftermath of the battle of legends. Do not go to our teachers either. They must’ve been stalled by the grand cardinals and legendary knights. Let’s get out of the city through secret channels and hide in the Dark Mountain Range first before we find out what happened!”

The proud students of legends were rather panicked. They did not know how to respond due to their lack of experience. Things would have been better if Stanis were here, but he had gone to the Dark

Mountain Range for materials again.

Thankfully, Furan kept the basic calmness at this moment and showed her leadership. She pointed out the best way to deal with the situation.

Antec trembled hard in fear. He never thought that he would confront such grave dangers. He preferred to hide in the dark and defeat the enemy by creating dreams and illusions. Right now, the enormous noises in the sky challenged his heart all the time.

Suddenly, the purest light descended from the sky and purged all the unholy things as if it were a ruling of the god.

The light was reflected by a mysterious mirror that appeared out of nowhere and split into multiple streaks. One of them hit the house where Furan and her companions were at precisely.

A holy light burst out. With a tiny crack that sounded like the falling gavel in the hands of a judge, the whole house disappeared.

Beto, Furan, Antec, and the rest of them were only one step away from the basement, but they were all consumed by the aftermath of the Light of Judgment.

Seeing his body and his soul about to turn into holy light quickly, Beto only had one vague thought in his mind. Am I going to die so easily?

In the age of chaos and darkness, Beto wasn't certain that he could live to the natural end of his life even though he was a legend's student. He had pictured possible ways that led to his death, and all of them were heroic. Some involved battles with legends, while some were his desperate counterattacks after he was ambushed.

However, he did not know until today that he would die such an easy and unknown death. The aftermath of the battle of two legends had wiped him out completely!

It was not a heroic death at all. He couldn't even put up a fight! He was now familiar with the ordinary people who died in the previous battles!

“So, I am not the hero...” Beto’s consciousness completely dispersed.

Antec also sensed the momentary vaporization of his body and his soul. His fear was finally gone, replaced by vague sorrow. “I haven’t created a real dream yet...”

“I don’t have many dates in my dream yet...”

“I will never live to meet Fernando again...”

“To be honest, the Nando he turned into was really pretty, although not as pretty as Furan...”

Stunned, Furan watched Beto, Antec, and her other companions swallowed by the holy light. The brightness of their life-preservation methods glittered, only to be drowned again. She knew very well that she would end just like them.

“I don’t want to die here!

“I am an empress who will become a legendary sorcerer in the future. How can I die like a common sorcerer so easily?

“There are many wishes that I have not fulfilled yet. I need to settle scores with Nando and transform him into a real girl...”

Ambitions, desires, and wishes broke out, but Furan’s struggles were useless. After a brief predicament, she was also dissolved by the holy light, leaving nothing but subtle regrets behind.

The whole time, the two legends fighting in the sky never looked at the house at all.

The house had nothing but incomplete walls that were ablaze. Nobody knew that the flames were telling the story of a bunch of legends’ students struggling against their fall, only to die in silence.

Whatever big wishes and ambitions they had, they could only be buried in such an age!

After a hot wind blew over, one couldn’t even find any ashes

anymore.

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The King of Nightmare, the Stellar Mentor, and the other legendary sorcerers fought a few grand cardinals and legendary knights hard, communicating with each other through the telepathic bond.

“They are unstoppable. Gregory is suppressing Dracula and the Master of the Boundless Ocean with the strength of a demigod.”

“Mecantron stopped Danisos. Ivan and Rudolf are fighting the Mother God of the Earth and the elven queen...”

“The Silver Moon hasn’t shown up?”

“No? What do we do?”

“We have to turn to the last resort! It’s time to put Kufuray to use!”

“Alright. We can only summon the Lord of Hell now!”

After the Silver Moon’s failed attack against the former pope, the legendary sorcerers decided to add another important leverage to the battle, even if it meant that they had to sell their souls to the devils!

Suddenly, the Stellar Mentor said with a stunned expression, “It’s useless! The blood sacrifice in Kufuray is useless!”

“It’s him! It’s Banham!” Somebody finally realized who the traitor was. It was Banham, the Original Fire!

It was not the Original Fire’s turn to watch over the city, so they did not suspect him at the beginning. From what they had seen, he must have assassinated the legendary sorcerer!

Now that their last trump card did not work, the Stellar Mentor, the King of Nightmare, and the rest of them were not willing to fight anymore. They began to look for opportunities to escape.

However, a middle-aged man suddenly appeared in the sky. His

face was plain and his skin was dark, but he was graceful in his sacred crown and his platinum staff.

“Gregory!”

“The pope!”

“Isn’t he stopped by Dracula and the Master of the Boundless Ocean?”

Pope Gregory smiled. “Since the Silver Moon didn’t come, Dracula could only evacuate in advance. After he left, Harex certainly did not want to waste his life here either.”

After a pause, he looked at the bunch of legendary sorcerers. “None of you are at the peak of legendary. I wonder if you can take one ‘Light of Judgment’ from me together.”

When level-three sorcerers were up against a demigod, they would be killed instantly if they did not escape through their unpredictable spells. Furthermore, in the current situation, they were still being haunted by plenty of grand cardinals and legendary knights.

“Why has he given up pursuing the top legends but focused his attention on dealing with the rest of us?” That was the final thought of the King of Nightmare and the rest of the sorcerers.

Chapter 893: Darkness and Dawn

893 Darkness and Dawn In the high sky, the Witch of Iceland, the Eye of Curse, and the Liege of Death stood in a triangle far away from each other. At their center was “Heart of Time” Kritonia who was not so confident anymore, as well as the mature man Hoffenberg who had a pair of cold silver eyes.

Neither of the legendary knights was holding their longsword. They simply floated there empty-handed.

“It’s about time. I’ll go down and ask them to cancel the defense.” Hoffenberg raised his eyes and looked at the clear stars.

Atlant, the Eye of Curse, said with a smile, “Thank you for your cooperation, Your Majesty.”

Different from Kritonia, Hoffenberg was not controlled by the Liege of Death’s death, and he was almost a top legend. So, he was more like a partner.

Hoffenberg turned around and flew downward in a streak of light as his voice rang in the sky.

“Take action!”

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when Kritonia’s body suddenly blurred into ripples. A silver sword burst out of his body and slashed at the Witch of Iceland!

He was actually holding Hoffenberg’s “Sword of Truth”!

Caught unprepared, the Witch of Iceland only had the time to activate the passive defense and blink effects. However, the light of the silver sword could not be thrown away like a parasite. It slashed the magic defense and nullified the space transportation effects, cutting the Witch of Iceland precisely.

The Sword of Truth cuts everything!

Kritonia cared about nothing else and did not defend himself at all, as if the Liege of Death and the Eye of Curse next to him did not exist.

At this moment, he could only see the Witch of Iceland in his eyes.

The Liege of Death simply watched it without doing anything because he seemed to have been transferred to a different world!

The silver sword passed through the Witch of Iceland's body, which seemed to be made of ice. It was torn apart by countless illusionary gaps into dancing pieces, resulting in a great snowfall.

Even on the verge of her death, the Witch of Iceland could not believe that the Heart of Time would attack her, because he had been implanted with a terrible curse by the Liege of Death earlier. The moment he harmed them, his blood would immediately boil and kill him.

The source of the curse was from the top legendary essence of the Liege of Death. So, even the demigods such as the Lord of Hell or the God of Silver Moon could barely lift it without catching the attention of the Liege of Death, unless a demigod-level sorcerer cracked it directly.

It was absolutely impossible!

Such a sorcerer hadn't been born yet!

The snowflakes dispersed, and the Witch of Iceland perished.

The silver streak of brightness that Hoffenberg turned into zigzagged halfway and flashed to the front of the Eye of Curse.

Atlant had realized what was going on when the Witch of Iceland was attacked. However, instead of providing aid, he simply cast a spell to escape. Therefore, when the brightness that Hoffenberg turned into hit him, only a scream came through the spaces in between, but nothing better was achieved.

"You are a fast runner..." Hoffenberg said coldly and did not chase after him. Instead, he looked at the Liege of Death and thought to

himself, Don't blame me. It's all because Aalto has failed, and you don't stand any chance anymore...

The intelligence half an hour ago decided his choice. Although the legendary sorcerers retained daily communication, they were incapable of establishing transmission magic circles everywhere and could only exchange messages through their demiplanes at fixed times. Since the legendary sorcerers of Aalto were in the middle of an intense battle, they certainly did not have the time to send intelligence to this place!

The Liege of Death seemed to have been abandoned by the world. He floated there. He was unable to speak, which made him realize that he had encountered a demigod.

In the sky of Cocus, a middle-aged man, who had a holy crown and a platinum staff, surfaced and said peacefully, "You should feel honored. The Lord has asked me to abort the pursuit of the dark creatures and come to execute you."

A top legendary sorcerer and a necromancer who had been a top legend for a thousand years were definitely most horrifying. Even Dracula and Danisos did not dare to say that they were stronger than the Liege of Death. In terms of the mysterious attacks, the survival abilities, and the resurrection methods, the Liege of Death was much more skilled than them.

Looking at Pope Gregory before him, the Liege of Death suddenly asked, "Who are you exactly?"

The curse on Kritonia had been somehow cracked, which made him realize that something was not right. He then sensed a vague feeling of familiarity from the pope; the familiarity that he had sensed from a certain legendary sorcerer many, many years ago.

Voices could not be spread out of the range of Gregory's power. He raised his head and said proudly, "You don't deserve to know."

The platinum staff was raised, and the projection of Mountain Paradise appeared. The praises of "You are one, and everyone" echoed in the sky.

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Old Fox Arnold felt anxious when he saw the dancing snowflakes. The terrible feeling came through the projection of the Host Star of Destiny.

“Run!” he roared desperately.

From every part of the swamp, gold knights and radiant knights came at them as elements and light. In Cocus, red robes arrived under the protection of the holy light. In the darkness, the night watchers reaped lives unpredictable.

Coming back to themselves, Congus, Nielson, Priscilla, Fernando, and the other sorcerers did not know what was going on, but they began to try their best to kill their enemies. In the meantime, they used life-preservation spells as soon as possible, hoping to escape even by means of suicide!

The battle was most intense.

Arnold searched for Priscilla and Fernando, hoping to give them a hand before he escaped.

At this moment, Kritonia saw him from the high sky. He narrowed his eyes and waved his right hand. The Sword of Truth immediately cut Arnold in a streak of brightness.

“You are too weak to be involved in this? Smartness without strength is nothing,” he mocked casually.

The magic effects on Arnold had been broken before they were activated. The sword passed through his body.

The cold and stinging feeling paralyzed Arnold’s soul and made him turn to Rentato subconsciously. He thought in confusion, Am I finally going to die?

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“Old fox!”

“Old fox!”

Struggling to the edge of the siege despite the wounds, Fernando saw the old fox hit by the silver sword just as he was about to cast Chaos Teleportation.

In his mind, the old fox was an extremely cunning old man. Whatever he said, there might be a scheme behind it. He was always at ease, and everything was under control.

Shouldn't he have more backup plans and more reinforcements? Was he dying just like this?

A dagger pierced out of the darkness into Fernando's back.

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Below the ground near Rentato...

Douglas sat at the center of the square in a daze, fully concentrated on the problem that was of paramount importance.

After working hard for a while, he raised his head in exhaustion and looked at the remaining sorcerers.

At this moment, a few little kids ran and played with each other. One of them accidentally threw away the apple in his hands.

In a parabola, the apple fell to the ground of the square.

The curve struck Douglas' head like a lightning and illuminated all the darkness. Everything he accumulated in the past was gathered into an answer.

“That's the case!

“That's the law of the motion of celestial bodies!”

As if he were crazy, Douglas picked up his quill and wrote on the paper next to him quickly.

All the fires in Allyn suddenly died out, and dull explosions came

from the earth.

The sorcerers who stayed in this place looked at each other in bewilderment, having no idea what had happened.

It was night, and Rentato was supposed to be covered in darkness. However, a scorching sun hung in the sky and released light and heat.

Behind it, a vast and boundless universe appeared, and the stars functioned in both apparent and mysterious patterns.

“What happened?” The guards of the city who hadn’t slept yet were astounded.

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Near his death, Arnold suddenly saw the rising sun in the direction of Rentato, which was a major contrast to the darkness on his side. He struggled to put on a smile.

“Am I having an illusion?

“Or has he truly succeeded?”

In vague consolation, he was ripped into shreds by the Sword of Truth.

Fernando also saw that. Trying to prevent himself from being affected by the stunning effect of the dagger, he disappeared through Chaos Teleportation.

“It’s daytime in Rentato? Douglas’ cognitive world has half solidified? A feedback from the real world?”

They were the last thoughts before he passed out.

In the meantime, “Ceaseless Wind”, the legendary knight of Cocus, joined the battlefield and blocked everybody else who was trying to escape.

The ivory ocean of holy light consumed the sky. The Liege of

Death's body turned transparent irreversibly.

Sensing the changes in Rentato, he smiled with complicated feelings. "The succession of magic never stops."

Pope Gregory seemed twenty years older all of a sudden, and his hair turned gray. He looked at the sun in Rentato and coughed. "It's only the half-solidification of the cognitive world. He's a new legend at most."

He needed quietness after God's Arrival and did not want to attack again, so he said to Hoffenberg, "You go and take care of it."

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The people he was familiar with collapsed, the old fox's blood spilled on his face, enemies were everywhere in the darkness, and it was impossible to escape... Fernando suddenly woke up from his nightmare, feeling pain all over his body.

"Huh." Somebody next to him sniffed.

Fernando looked in shock, only to discover that he was inside a spacious wagon, which was riding steadily without any bump. Inside the carriage, a most beautiful girl was staring at him expressionlessly.

She had a pair of clear and cold eyes.

"Hathaway?" Fernando recognized her although they hadn't met for ten years. He couldn't help but feel that the little girl had grown into a gorgeous woman.

Hathaway was wearing a common red court dress. She nodded her head as acknowledgment. Then, she thought for a long time, only to come up with nothing to comfort Fernando, so she simply said, "The obstacles to Douglas' legendary level are no more."

Fernando was back to reality all of a sudden. He roared in frustration and depression, "How is that going to help? The Liege of Death is dead, old fox is dead, Nielson is dead, everybody is dead!

“How is a new legend going to help anything?”

With her eyes glimmering, Hathaway stared at him for a while. Then, she picked up a thick, black-covered book nearby. “Douglas asked me to give it to you.”

“A book?” In his desperation, Fernando took over the book and looked at the cover, only to be briefly stunned.

It was “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy”!

Chapter 894: A Meeting of Three

894 A Meeting of Three

“Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy’... This is so Douglas...” Having known Douglas for years and communicated with him on magical knowledge often, he had a profound understanding of the guy’s naming style.

For some reason, Fernando’s anxiety and uneasiness were appeased when he saw the book. Just like when he studied magic every time, he forgot the dark reality, as well as the dark and hopeless environment, and completely devoted himself to the glamorous world.

It was a pity that there wasn’t a place where one could read magic books quietly, unless they ran far away. However, how far could they run if they only backed off?

Fernando’s mind was disturbed again, but he already opened the book subconsciously. The familiar handwriting entered his eyes.

The first part of the book was on the definitions of various symbols and scalar quantities. Fernando was involved in the discussion on the content before and soon understood them. Then, in the first article, Douglas pointed out three laws straightforwardly and established the mathematical preparations.

“The three laws of motion...” Fernando breathed hastily and could barely control his feelings. He read out the content aloud when he should have read it in his heart.

The three laws that Douglas concluded from nature were simple, straightforward, and apparently correct. One would feel that the laws went without saying the moment they read it. However, Fernando sensed more things from the three laws. The world he knew was dismembered into countless independent things that operated around the three laws!

The mysteries of the world were hidden in the phenomena that

people believed to be natural and in the truths that they thought apparent!

After reading the three laws, Fernando felt that the whole world looked different in his eyes!

He completely forgot the heavy failure previously and the frustration brought by the Church. He was completely focused on the book.

In the second article and the third article, Douglas discussed and proved the objects' motion status under ideal circumstances and when they were restrained through strict mathematical approaches. Calculus that Fernando was familiar with was used as a main tool.

Fernando did not have much trouble understanding it. He felt that his long-time accumulation of knowledge had finally been summarized.

The more he read, the more admiration he had. Douglas' three laws were perfect! It was definitely the most in-depth description of motion in the history of magic!

However, his admiration did not last long. His mind was soon occupied by the title of the third article—"On the Law of Celestial Body Movement and Cosmic System".

The first three articles were like water that had been stored. They surged out in this article and gathered into something called "gravity". It was truly astonishing!

Also, Douglas discussed the shape of their own planet, the motion of the moon, the trajectory of comets, and the tides of the oceans based on them. Then, he analyzed and established an enormous universal system that included stars, planets, comets, and all the other natural phenomena!

"For a moment, the whole world is before my eyes..." Fernando forgot everything else and summarized his feelings in the notes.

His eyes had lost focus. A storm was brewing, and countless bolts of lightning were appearing.

Hathaway did not seem to sense Fernando's change. She was still calculating something with her pen and paper. The content was almost the same as the third article on Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy.

After reading the book, Fernando wasn't back to himself until a long time later. He grabbed onto the book so hard as if he feared that it would be gone.

It was too precious!

For a sorcerer, it was too precious!

After a long time, he finally roared, "Gravity! Is it the mysterious force that attracts the stars to move?"

Earnestly, he took out paper and pen from his magic pouch and began to deduce on his own.

The result clearly matched the astrological observations. Fernando said to Hathaway in excitement and confusion, "Is this the mystery of our world?"

"Yes." Hathaway nodded. Her silver eyes were still indifferent, but they were covered in a hazy mist, as if she was also touched by the revelation of world mysteries even though she was a princess instead of a sorcerer.

Fernando clenched his fist and suddenly knocked his head. "It's not an illusion! It's not an illusion!"

Casting a spell to his eyes, he looked at the sky through the thin curtain.

Stars were glittering brilliantly in the middle of the night, but in Fernando's eyes, many bright lines that bound and powered them were added among them.

"There can't be a magic circle that is more magnificent than that..."
Fernando complimented sincerely without any sarcasm.

Hathaway stopped her pen and looked at Fernando coldly. "Not

desperate anymore?”

Fernando's face had a twisted expression, and his voice became low as he said, “After reading Douglas' Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy, I have a feeling that everything in the universe is under the control of sorcerers... Although the odds of success are low, I would like to shed the last drop of my blood for the pride and for the exploration of more mysteries.

“Also, given more time, when more sorcerers understand the laws of the universe and grasp calculus, there will be a population boom of senior-rank sorcerers, archmages, and even legendary sorcerers.

“For example, after reading the book, I am already confident to become an archmage in ten years although it hasn't been long since I reached the eighth circle.”

In his excitement, Fernando revealed his true thought.

Hathaway nodded. “You need time.”

It was her principle never to speak more words than necessary!

“Time... We are not necessarily running out of time...” Fernando thought hard and analyzed the current situation, looking for things that could be made use of.

At this moment, the wagon stopped.

“We're here.” Hathaway stood up, opened the door, and flew out.

She's flying out? Fernando's eyes were popping out. When did the little girl become a sorcerer? Also, she's at least in the fifth circle!

The one driving the wagon was Fernando's old acquaintance, “Blue Grace” Sharp. He sniffed and said, “You were a bad influence on Hathaway. She went to the royal library in secret and found the files about the Will of Elements.”

The Will of Elements, an organization of legends in the Magic Empire, was destroyed by the Sword of Truth, but the files and books were secretly collected by Hoffenberg.

Fernando's lips twitched. I only taught her mathematics, not magic! Don't blame it on me!

The wagon stopped at a corner of a quiet manor. Fernando sensed something the moment he got off the wagon and looked at the darkness on the left side.

Tall and strong, Douglas walked out of the darkness. He seemed even more mature than before, like a charming gentleman in his forties.

Looking at Fernando with a smile, he said straightforwardly, "There are four things. Firstly, I've become a legend. It's a brand-new class that I received from the feedback of the real world. I've named it 'Elect of Magic'.

"Secondly, a lot of archmages and senior-rank sorcerers survived. I've copied 'Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy' and offered it to them.

"Thirdly, not all of the legendary sorcerers were killed in the battle of Aalto. At least seven legends, including the Lord of Frigidity, the Lord of Abyss, the Umbral King, and the Owner of Souls, survived. Some hid in the Dark Mountain Range, some returned to the northland, and some went missing. I've asked someone to deliver 'Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy' to the Lord of Frigidity. The top legends like Prince Dracula, Danisos, and the Mother God of the Earth are not dead at all."

After a pause, he continued, "Fourthly, the empire has completely collapsed, and the Church has never been more powerful. However, it also means that the conflicts between the Church and the nobles will be more and more intense."

The current situation, the prospects in the future, and the individual efforts had been perfectly reflected in the four things. It was enough to show most desperate sorcerers the dawn of hope!

Even though Fernando had already made up his mind just now, he still felt that he saw the light in the darkness when he saw Douglas' confident smile.

However, he was still quite surprised. “You’ve copied ‘Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy’ and sent it to all the sorcerers?”

Although he kept saying that more sorcerers would make breakthroughs if they read “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy”, he knew very well that such a magic book that contained mysteries of the world was the great secret that every sorcerer cherished. It was their power source and the guarantee of their position and wealth. Nobody would share it easily unless the other person offered something equal or much more valuable in return.

For them, magic knowledge of such a level was almost their life!

However, Douglas had copied and offered “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy” to all the sorcerers?

It was completely against common sense and humanity!

Douglas nodded his head. “At a moment like this, we have to break the norm.”

He said solemnly, “Actually, I’ve never been fond of the ways that the sorcerers communicate in the empire. You should know that exchange of information helps us get more inspirations and figure out more things. Also, I have a feeling that, in the future, magic research will be more and more difficult when it presses into the nature of the world. All the sorcerers have to work hard together selflessly in order to move on.

“I believe that it is necessary to separate the magic knowledge that can be communicated and the magic knowledge that should be kept to oneself. Well, the former should be focused in the fields like mechanisms of magic and the essence of the world. Maybe we can give it a new name. Well, it’s about the mysteries of the world. Let’s call it ‘arcana’.”

“Arcana?” Fernando repeated it, feeling that something old and rotten was collapsed by a cool, refreshing breeze.

So be it! After all, there weren’t so many old guys around telling

them what to do now!

“Arcana.” Hathaway lowered her head and pondered the meaning of the term.

“Arcana...” Sharp said in a low voice in confusion, puzzled why Douglas tried to create a useless new term in such difficulties.

Arcana!

Chapter 895: Decisions in Hull

895 Decisions in Hull The Hull Manor was at the edge of a forest. It was a resort where the Hoffenberg family had their summer hunting. Since it was only the beginning of spring, there were few guests and servants. It was quiet and peaceful.

The study in the manor was the place where King Hoffenberg handled state affairs during his holiday. It was protected by powerful divine power circles. However, it was three sorcerers who were under the protection of the divine power circles now.

Douglas lived in the place secretly as a guest of the royal family. He had to change his magic robe into the most popular high-collared coat nowadays, which made him slightly uncomfortable.

“Did you arrange for Douglas to hide here?” After they entered the study, Fernando asked Hathaway casually, trying to figure out whether it was her intention or the Sword of Truth’s.

He had no time to pay attention to the sky during the battle, but since the Liege of Death and the Witch of Iceland perished while the Sword of Truth and the Heart of Time were as alive as ever, it was not hard for him to infer what happened. The two noble knights must have betrayed them!

The losses were heavier than what Fernando could bear. He found it even less possible to trust the nobles and the knights right now.

Hathaway nodded her head. “Yes.”

She was a noble, but she had become a sorcerer. Plus their years of friendship, Fernando actually trusted her more.

Sharp chuckled. “Do you think that His Majesty does not know what Hathaway did? He’s only pretending that he doesn’t. We only did what we had to do. There’s not a single noble who wants the Church to completely destroy the sorcerers. It’s like what Douglas said. Our conflicts with the Church will be more and more intense from now on.”

He was uncertain about the future.

Seated on the high chair at ease, Douglas said peacefully, “With the Mother God of the Earth, the heretical churches, Dracula, the Silver Moon, the Dark Mountain Range, and the Boundless Ocean, there’s still a long way to go before the Church abandons the nobles. However, now that the coalition army has been crushed, it’s barely possible for them to stall most forces of the Church. The Church’s control over its territory will reach its peak. You have to be prepared to endure it.”

His speed was neither too fast nor too slow, and his voices carried the unique magnetism of a middle-aged gentleman. Although he was describing an ominous situation, Fernando and Sharp were eased and less panicked.

Is it the vibe of a legend, or has Douglas grown into such a charismatic leader? Such a question suddenly popped up in Fernando’s heart.

“I fear that endurance won’t help.” After calming himself down, he confessed his concerns. They were also the concerns of the Sword of Truth, as well as most nobles, because there was no hope of winning at all.

Douglas drank a mouthful of water before he continued with his soothing tone, “From the previous cases, it is not hard to see that the pope has to recover after every usage of God’s Arrival. In the jargon of the sorcerers, the cooldown of this divine power is very long, and the former pope has shown us the outcome of using it too often. So, we don’t need to be so scared of God’s Arrival.

“‘Silver Moon’ Alterna escaped in heavy wounds after taking a blow of God’s Arrival, which means that it is possible to resist God’s Arrival. After she recovers, we can find a way to summon the Lord of Hell or the Will of Abyss. It is not entirely impossible to surround the pope.”

The analysis was obvious, but it was difficult for anyone to calm down and think when they were in a panic. Clever minds could not see beyond themselves when they were covered in fog.

Hearing Douglas' analysis, Sharp was calmer and calmer, finding confidence again.

"However, summoning the Lord of Hell or the Will of Abyss requires complicated rituals and enormous prices. It's likely that the Church will discover and sabotage it in advance. Also, the Will of Abyss is crazy and bloodthirsty. He may turn out to be an enemy after being summoned."

Sharp expressed his own thoughts.

"Hehe. What a coward." Fernando looked at Sharp in disdain. "Although the Will of Abyss is crazy, we can make preparations in advance to guide him in the direction we like."

As a sorcerer born in the Magic Empire, Fernando did not reject summoning demons and devils even though he never liked those stupid evil guys.

Douglas smiled. "Perhaps I need to go to hell and talk to the Lord of Hell. He's a demigod who is sensible and capable of analysis. Perhaps we can find a way to allow him to arrive more easily. To be honest, I'm never a fan of blood sacrifice."

After he became a legend, he was capable of traveling in alternate dimensions even without the help of oriented Portals to Alternate Realm.

"You can wait for a moment. Considering the value of 'Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy', you will probably make another breakthrough soon." Fernando felt that it would be better if Douglas waited until he was stronger, in case the Lord of Hell despised such a "weak" partner.

"Improving myself is not contradictory to going to hell." Douglas nodded. "By my estimation, I will probably reach level three in thirty years, with reasonable combat ability."

He looked at Sharp. "This path is dangerous and difficult, but it will be absolutely hopeless if we don't do anything. Only if we walk one step at a time can we leave a path of hope in darkness and

desperation.”

“Actually, the situation today is not too bad, that is, for the sorcerers. Ever since the fall of Aalto and the demise of the Liege of Death, the leaders of the Church have paid less attention to sorcerers but focused on the heretical churches and the dark creatures. It means that you will suffer less hunting in the future.” Sharp told them the important changes he sensed recently.

Douglas smiled in self-mockery. “There are merits to being weak.”

Fernando interjected in despise, “I thought that Ivan would burst into conflicts with Gregory after failing to become the pope, but he turns out to be as docile as a sheep.”

“The power of the clerics is from the God of Truth. Revolting against the pope chosen by the God of Truth equals to revolting against their god. No cleric has the courage to do that, which means that they will have no partners or supporters. Also, it’s said that the pope has a method known as ‘Excommunication’. It can block the connection between the clerics and the God of Truth so that their hearts of faith cannot be refilled. So, how can Ivan dare to challenge Gregory?” Douglas shook his head.

Hathaway suddenly said coldly, “There is Excommunication.”

“There really is...” Douglas nodded solemnly. “However, we need not be disappointed. Ivan probably won’t challenge Gregory directly, but it doesn’t mean that he’s unwilling to cause trouble or create enemies for Gregory. Perhaps his attitude toward sorcerers has changed. We can try to get in touch with him.”

The four of them discussed for a long time and settled many plans. Fernando felt the passion he had when he just joined the Union of Sorcerers again.

Douglas patted his clothes and stood up. “Fernando, your wounds are still not recovered. Take a rest now. We can talk about magic sometime later.”

“Alright. I’ll discuss ‘Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy’

with you later. It's definitely the most brilliant masterpiece in the history of magic." Fernando did not hold back his compliment.

Douglas smiled. "I'm glad that you think so highly of it, and I'm proud of my work too. However, the more I study, the more confused I am. Hehe. The unknowns are always so fascinating. What is gravity? What is the nature of gravity?"

Well... The depths of his questions stunned both Fernando and Hathaway, who did not know how to respond at all. Sharp, not knowing any arcana, shrugged and walked to the window, pulling the drapes.

The pure and warm sunlight sprayed in from outside the room, covering everything in gold. Before anyone knew it, it was already dawn!

"Fernando, I need your help to contact the other sorcerers. Let's try to establish another union."

"Don't call it a union. It reminds me of the old fox. Let's call it the Congress of Sorcerers."

"Fine by me."

"It does not sound good..." Hathaway remarked in a low voice.

...

Erica's heart was particularly heavy when she looked at the sorcerers around her who were desperate and helpless. The little organization she was in could barely deal with such a great tsunami.

She moved back to her room and sat on her bed while holding her knees. Thinking for a moment, she took out a black-covered book from the magic pouch. It was from Mr. Douglas from their last correspondence. Because of the escalation of the situation, she never had the time to read it.

Opening the book, Erica read it carefully, with subconscious admiration.

As she read on, her hands trembled so violently that she could barely hold the book steadily. Although she hadn't picked up calculus that Douglas mentioned in his letters, it did not stop her from getting a rough idea of what the third article said.

"Gravity...

"Is it the string on the piano of the Goddess of Magic?

"Is this the reality of this world?

"Magic is so much more marvelous than I thought!"

So astounded, she didn't even know that Atlant, the Eye of Curse, had come to reorganize her group.

...

After a squeak, a girl in a court dress opened the door of the room. The candle in her hand illuminated the dark room.

Where the light was gathered, a tall and slim young man looked back at her in fear, with a heart in his hands and a broken body in front of him.

Crack.

The candle fell onto the ground, and the beautiful girl covered her mouth, asking in disbelief, "You... are a sorcerer?"

"No, no..." His face livid, the young man shook his head in a panic, but he was unable to answer the question.

...

Blowing a melodic whistle, a black-haired and black-eyed young man trotted joyfully on the street. His handsome face and his unique scholarly vibe were particularly attractive for ladies.

"This play stinks. It's not even as good as the one in my head!" He clicked his tongue and criticized it. In the meantime, he couldn't help but remark, "Mrs. Audrey was too hot and passionate..."

Suddenly, a man, probably in his thirties, ran close from a corner and shouted in a panic, “Run! Run out of the city! The viscount knows that you slept with Mrs. Audrey!”

“What?” The young man’s face immediately turned pale. His easiness was gone. He took his luggage and ran off immediately.

By the time he got out of the city, it was already sunset.

“How beautiful!” He gradually recovered his calmness and chuckled. “This is a good opportunity for me to go to Rentato. I’ve always wanted to visit it anyway. I’m the man who is destined to become the greatest playwright!”

Against the sunset, the black-haired young man blew a cheerful whistle again.

Chapter 896: Still In Mundaneness

Chapter 896 Still In Mundaneness

In the study in the Hull Manor, the thick curtains were pulled to the two sides. Covered in gauze, the window let in the sunlight and created splendid golden light in the room.

Hathaway was calculating something behind the desk with the quill in her hand. Now and then, she raised her head and talked with Douglas and Fernando in simple words. If what she wanted to express was too complicated, she would choose an oral-and-written approach.

Douglas, standing before the window, looked solemn, as if he was deep in thought. He paced back and forth in the golden realm of sunlight. Occasionally, he came to a sudden stop and pointed out the critical immaturities in Fernando and Hathaway's thoughts. By the time they offered their rebuttals, he would start pacing again as a thinker.

The scene where they discussed arcana and magic was like a vivid painting. It was a pity that nobody was there to record the brilliant tableau in the history of magic.

Such discussions had lasted many days. All the confusion that Fernando and Hathaway had on gravity, the motion system of celestial bodies, and the three laws of motion had been perfectly answered, giving them copious returns.

"When I applied calculus to the ninth-circle spells, I realized that the difficulties of construction were significantly lowered..."
Fernando waved the paper in his hands.

On the paper that had been processed with magic, light and shadow coexisted, giving a strange cubic feeling to the magic model.

"Not just the ninth-circle spells, all the spells above the third circle have been mostly simplified. If the difficulty to construct and learn spells was 100 in the past, it's only 60 now," Douglas replied as he

paced.

Staring at the paper in his hands, Fernando suddenly said with mixed feelings, "If calculus were established twenty years sooner, we would have plenty more archmages and senior-rank sorcerers today. The combat abilities of the sorcerers of the same rank would be doubled too."

Douglas paused and turned around to look at Fernando. "How is your recovery? Have you grasped calculus and gravity?"

"There isn't a problem for now," Fernando said affirmatively.

Douglas nodded his head. "Then, please contact the other organizations and express our willingness for cooperation. Also, remind them that they must lie low even if they do not have any materials in the next couple of years. We cannot try anything until the conflicts between the Church and the nobles reach the crest."

"In any case, those cowards dare not do anything!" Fernando said in disdain. Then, he put his quill and his paper back, as if he were ready to leave.

Nobody could deny that Fernando was a man of action.

Douglas turned around and looked at Hathaway. "Hathaway, you should return to Rentato. The Church and the other nobles will suspect you if you stay here for long."

"Okay," Hathaway replied, but her quill did not stop at all.

Douglas took a deep breath. "The Lord of Frigidity and the Eye of Curse have concealed their demiplanes. So, I need to pay a visit to hell first."

After a brief union, the three of them embarked on different roads for the future of the sorcerers.

.....

Crack.

The candlestick fell to the ground into pieces, and the broken candle died out after flickering for a while. The whole room was caught in absolute darkness, with nothing but the beastly moans.

“Shirley, don’t be scared, listen to me!” When the noises were gone, the sound of an agitated young man echoed. He had the pupils of a cat.

The girl breathed heavily but did not respond.

“Shirley, calm down, I’m not a sorcerer. Trust me, I’m not a sorcerer!” The young man was also breathing heavily, like the bellows that were being pulled hard.

The girl named Shirley gradually suppressed her panting. Out of the young man’s expectation, she said calmly, “Vicente, you calm down too. Whether or not you are a sorcerer, I love you all the same.”

Her words were like a marvelous spell that drove away the depressing and suffocating air in the room.

Vicente’s eyes seemed unusual and allowed him to see things in the dark. So, he agilely lit the candle on the desk, which had been slapped off by him just now.

The room was filled with dim light again. Vicente had already put down the heart in his hands and wiped off the blood. He rushed to the girl and asked excitedly, “Really?”

Shirley bit her teeth and nodded solemnly. “I don’t care who you are. I’m only worried about losing you. The Church won’t let go of a sorcerer.”

Vicente laughed like an innocent child. He even spun for a few circles before he hugged Shirley and kissed her temple. “Rest assured. I’m really not a sorcerer, and for you, I will never become one.”

“But the body over there...” Shirley pointed at the broken body on the long table in fear.

Vicente held back his delight and cleared his throat. “I discovered

the possessions of some sorcerers at the edge of the swamps, including magic knowledge and mysteries about the human body.

“At first, I was indeed fascinated by the marvelous magic, but then I thought of you. We’ve known each other since childhood. You secretly taught me the common tongue and the Sylvanas language even though you were a noble. You declined so many distinguished nobles just to marry me, which made your father and your mother very angry. How can I abandon you and walk on the path that only means hiding?”

Vicente added sweet words to his explanation. Shirley’s lips curled, and she tried not to show her smile.

The nobles in this period still learned the language of the Magic Empire in private.

“So, I buried the books on magic at the edge of the swamps again and only brought back those about body mysteries.” Vicente pointed at a few books on the table.

Shirley asked in confusion, “Body mysteries?”

Vicente suddenly became solemn. He said with mixed feelings, “I’ve met too many helpless patients in the charity. They have no money to ask the reverends to treat them with divine power, and they can only count on the herbs and potions from the doctors like us.

“Other people may be unaware of it, but as a doctor of the charity, I know very well that the herbs and potions can only cure minor diseases. As for the patients who are in slightly more serious conditions, I can do nothing but watch them moan and scream as they approach the end of their lives. It pains me and makes me feel helpless. The doctors of the charity always become either cold or insane.”

Leaning into Vicente’s chest, Shirley touched his back. “I understand. You know that I often help out at the charity. I’ve seen a lot of deaths too. Many patients were only little kids, and they just died in front of me. At that time, I only hated that I was not pious enough to be a nun to have the divine power.”

“So, I’ve always wanted to find better recipes for drugs, but I realized that the human body is full of mysteries. I don’t know the structure of the heart or if there is anything else in our body. I don’t know how our body functions as a whole. Then, how can I find better recipes?” Vicente’s eyes were full of hope, which made him glow. “I want to understand the mysteries of the human body. I want to figure out what our body is made of!”

Shirley felt that Vicente today was more charming than ever. She nodded. “It’s a good thing, but you must not disturb the rest of the deceased in the cemeteries, which will be noticed by the Church.”

“I’ll look for bodies in the forest and the swamps. If I can’t, I’ll study animals first.” Vicente announced confidently, “After I become a famous doctor, I don’t think your mother and your father will prevent you from marrying me anymore.”

Shirley suddenly blushed. “As a matter of fact, I came here today because they... they already said yes.”

“Really?” Vicente almost jumped to his feet in excitement.

.....

The city gate of Rentato was unusually crowded and lively.

“How prosperous! As expected of Rentato!” The black-haired and black-eyed young man complimented, “I should thank the viscount for catching me. Without him, I wouldn’t have made up my mind to come to Rentato!”

Squeezing into the gate, he suddenly shouted, “Rentato, I’m here!”

“What a lunatic.” The citizens around all looked at him.

The black-haired young man, however, was not bothered. He encouraged himself, “Oliver, you are going to be a celebrity of this city!”

He looked around, searching for a fancy hotel. The fact that he was literate and could write plays suggested that his family conditions were not bad, except that his parents died too young and did not

discipline him much.

“Haha. This is the place...” While talking, he groped for his wallet, but his smile was frozen all of a sudden.

“My wallet! Where is my wallet!?” Oliver shouted and looked around in a panic, but his wallet was nowhere to be found.

As the cold breeze of spring blew by, young Oliver felt the cruelty of Rentato for the first time.

Chapter 897: Les Mis rables

897 Les Misérables

All the pedestrians were coming and going fast on the street, but Oliver stood at the center like a statue.

As a young man, although he was brilliant in plays and quite experienced in certain aspects, and it was not his first trip outdoors, such a situation was still too much for him to bear. That was his living expense for the next couple of months!

What should he do? What was he going to eat? Where was he going to sleep?

Countless questions flooded into his head with frustration and anger, making him feel that the sunny afternoon was dark and that the crowd around him was indifferent and distant as if they were in different worlds.

“Bloody thieves!”

After a long time, Oliver burst out a howl that almost tripped over the passersby.

When he howled, he grabbed his suitcase tightly, fearing that another thief would emerge and steal his last possessions.

Not bothering the other people who were eying him as if he were a psycho, Oliver unleashed his feelings. After a while, he finally calmed down and began to consider how to survive.

“Calm down, calm down. Oliver, you have the talents, the appearance, and the physical strength to live through the difficulties.” Oliver encouraged himself and thought quickly, trying to find a solution from his experience, but most of his experience came from plays.

“That’s right. At such a moment, all I need is someone who appreciates me. My new life will begin there.” Finding a solution

from his plays, he clenched his fists. “Oliver, your most precious belonging is not your lost wallet, but your mind and the scripts in your suitcase. As long as you show them to the gentlemen with good tastes, you will immediately get a decent reward.”

Having found a solution, Oliver regained the spirits of a young man. He took out a few thick piles of papers from his suitcase. Clutching them tightly, he asked the way while he fantasized what he would buy after he became rich; an extravagant house, several obedient and beautiful maids, delicate and delicious food, famous wines, hot lovers, and most importantly of all, a few goons to kill the bloody thief!

The Society of Plays, located in Alanmu Street, was not far away from the gate. Oliver saw the unique building that was supported by gray stone pillars very soon.

He paused when he saw the guards at the door. He remembered a commonly used cliché in plays, which was that the hero was refused by the proud guards because of his ragged clothes, and therefore had to achieve his purpose through other indirect approaches.

“I cannot make such a mistake.” Oliver felt that he was really smart to take that into consideration. So, he walked to a square nearby and combed his hair, which had turned messy during his earlier catharsis, in front of the pool that was as smooth as a mirror. He then took out a new black coat from his suitcase, replacing the dirty one on his body. In the end, he folded a handkerchief into a flower and put it in the pocket on his chest.

“An elegant gentleman.” Oliver nodded in satisfaction and walked to the gate of the Society of Plays again.

He did not bother to look at the guards when he approached the gate. He merely snorted condescendingly when they came to stop him.

The two guards, deceived by his easiness and his appearance, thought that he was a noble sir and moved back, daring not to stop him.

“Haha. Oliver, you are fantastic! You will make it!” Oliver complimented himself and walked faster.

“Hey! Hey! Let me tell you, I will be the greatest playwright in the future! You can’t be so impolite!”

Several minutes later, Oliver was picked up by two brawny men and thrown off the stairs.

“Get lost, fraud!”

“What an arrogant lunatic!”

They cursed and tossed Oliver’s suitcase and scripts out.

Crack.

The suitcase was opened when it hit the ground, and his clothes and scripts were blown away.

Watching his most cherished scripts fly before him and land in the dust, Oliver was at a loss for a moment before he roared in fury, “You will regret it!”

A young gifted playwright like me will definitely achieve something great!

Packing up his stuff in misery, Oliver wandered on the street aimlessly, not knowing what he could do or where he could go.

“I’ll find a shelter tonight and take a look in the city hall tomorrow to see if I can get a job.” Seeing that the dark clouds were rising, Oliver recovered from his frustration and gnashed his teeth. “I can create poems. I’m good at words. How will I be starved in Rentato?”

Gradually, he picked up his confidence. He found shelter under the eaves and hid below it.

Hualala.

A torrential rain poured, raising a mist on the ground.

Oliver was dazed by the scene before he suddenly turned happy. "My experiences today will inspire my future creations!"

Pa.

Oliver felt that his head was exploding. He struggled to turn around, only to discover that a homeless guy was glaring at him.

"This place is mine!" The guy pointed under the eaves.

The fury that Oliver had the entire day burst out. As a young man, he roared, "I occupied it first!", while he lunged forward and fought the homeless guy.

Suddenly, his face was frozen, and his eyes lost the focus, because another homeless guy came from behind him and knocked him hard in the head with a wooden stick.

Darkness, blood, pain, and coldness haunted Oliver, making it impossible for him to get away from the unimaginable misery.

After trying his best, Oliver suddenly sat up. The darkness before his eyes faded, revealing the dim candlelight before him.

"Where... Where am I?" he mumbled, looking at the shabby cottage. He felt that his head was in pain.

"My house."

A man's cold voice echoed. The door to the room inside was opened, and a stout, tough-looking baldy walked out. "You've been sold to me."

"What?" Oliver jumped off his bed in disbelief, only to be knocked to the ground by the man with one punch.

"Call me boss, do you understand?" The man showed his muscles. "Shut your mouth and listen to me."

His head felt dizzy after the punch. Oliver touched his swollen lips and looked at the baldy in fear.

The baldy chuckled. "As an outsider who does not have money or strength, you were bold enough to fight local homeless guys. Hehe. After they knocked you out, they stole your clothes and sold you to me. From today onward, you will be my subordinate. You will be freed when you have done enough labor to compensate for the money I paid for you."

This bad*ss does not seem too bad... Covering his lips, Oliver asked, "What do we do?"

"We bury," the baldy replied in disgust.

When it was only dawn, the baldy, who was named George, led Oliver to a morgue.

"The bodies that do not have relatives or money are stored here. It's our job to bury them in the new cemetery. We'll be paid by the Church and the city hall." The moment George opened the gate, the stench of decayed bodies spread out, making Oliver who never smelled such a thing before gag hard.

Many other burial men in ragged clothes were in the morgue. They were all George's subordinates.

"Hey, quite a few new babies are here today," George said in delight. Then, he strode to the newly-delivered bodies and searched them carefully for possessions that might be of any value. If their clothes were relatively intact, he would simply take them off.

Oliver sweated and shivered hard, feeling that he had come to hell.

After he was done looting, George laughed. "Boys, let's get to work!"

Oliver moved the bodies to a special wagon unwillingly. When he touched the cold skin, he almost jumped away. He felt that his hand was so dirty that he was almost stinking himself.

The burial men were together all the way from the morgue to the new cemetery. Oliver did not have any chance to escape. Baldy George also told him that he had connections in the Church and the city hall, and that if Oliver dared to escape, he would be buried in

the new cemetery directly.

The stench of rotting bodies was everywhere in the new cemetery, causing the slums nearby to smell the same permanently.

“Only poor people live here. The reverends of the Church never bother to clean it here,” George complained and asked Oliver to dig holes.

The new cemetery had been preprocessed by the reverends. So, chances were few that undead creatures would show up. They were rather confident.

Holding the shovel, Oliver dug pits mechanically and numbly. In the middle of his digging, several bones appeared out of nowhere, forcing him to step back in fright.

“Has this place been taken?” George touched his bald head. “It’s alright. Just bury on the top of them,” he said unconcernedly.

Bodies were thrown down, and mud was sprayed on the top of them. Very soon, the land was even again.

George found a wooden tombstone and put it at the center of the cemetery. There were no sigils or epitaphs, only a shabby cross.

“Is my life going to end like this?” In the stench, Oliver thought numbly and confusedly.

...

In a manor in the suburb, the hall was ablaze with lights, and delicious food could be smelled everywhere.

“What’s his name? Well, Vicente, would you like one? This is the best cigarette from the Kingdom of Brianne.” A fashionable young noble, black-haired and blue-eyed, grimaced at Vicente while holding a few yellowish cigarettes in his hands.

Both his countenance and his tone were full of condescension.

Blushing, Vicente shook his head. “I’m sorry. I don’t smoke.”

“Yo, what a mama’s boy. No wonder Shirley likes you,” the young noble said sarcastically.

Shirley, who was not far away from Vicente, moved forward and raised her head. “Yes. I hate men who drink, smoke, and do not have any manners.”

Then, she dragged Vicente to a dinner table not far away and said in a low voice, “Vicente, please don’t mind. This is all my fault. I shouldn’t have asked you to join this dinner.”

“It’s alright. We are going to be married soon. I will have to face this sooner or later.” Thinking of his dream, Vicente announced proudly, “I’m very open-minded. It’s true that I’m not a noble who has been enjoying those things since childhood, but I’ll try to be better than them and make sure that your future life won’t be any worse.”

Far away, Shirley’s parents looked at them with cold expressions.

Chapter 898: Dignity of Nobles

Chapter 898 Dignity of Nobles

Deep into the night, in the luxurious main bedroom of the manor...

Shirley's father paced back and forth gloomily and complained to her mother, "It's all your good idea! You said that by agreeing to his proposal and allowing the poor boy to get in touch with nobles, he will lose confidence and leave Shirley voluntarily, but what happens in the end? He clutches her even more tightly!"

"I didn't know he was so shameless!" Shirley's mother said grimly.

Shirley's father scorned, "You do not know humans at all. Such poor boys only want to become nobles through marriage. The more we show it to him, the more he would crave for it. How will he leave voluntarily?"

"Why did you agree with me and accept the proposal if you think you know everything?" Shirley's mother roared angrily. "Tell me, what solutions do you possibly have? It's like Shirley's mind has been controlled by magic. It's impossible to talk sense into her! She even threatens me with her life!"

Shirley's father turned cold. He chuckled. "Of course I have solutions."

Shirley's mother was briefly stunned. "You have solutions? What are they? Why didn't you say anything earlier?"

Her questions revealed her panic and anxiety.

"I sent someone to follow the boy. He's very interested in herbs and potions, and he often goes to the swamps to search for strange plants." Coldly, Shirley's father raised his right hand. "After a while, we'll ask a mercenary to follow him to the swamps. Then, crack..."

He made a throat-cutting gesture.

“What? Are you going to kill him? Are you not scared that Shirley will hate us for the rest of her life? She often threatens us with her life!” Shirley’s mother asked nervously.

Shirley’s father put on a cruel smile. “How can she possibly suspect us? We are good parents who have been softened by her. If we want to kill him, why would we agree to his proposal?”

“You...” Shirley’s mother suddenly realized it. “That’s why you agreed to his proposal?”

“Of course. Why else would I have given in?” Shirley’s father nodded. “During the dinner, the few young men who are into Shirley seemed quite dissatisfied with that boy. Shirley will definitely consider them as the main suspects. Jealousy is always one of the greatest motivations for crimes.”

“Very good. I do not want to see the boy ever again!” Shirley’s mother smiled in satisfaction. “Honey, you are so smart. When are you going to do it? I need to watch over Shirley.”

Shirley’s father shook his head. “Don’t be hasty. As I said, jealousy is always one of the greatest motivations for crimes. Those young men are all nobles. There’s nothing they dare not do to civilians. So, let’s observe for a while. Maybe they’ll do it for us. In that case, we wouldn’t need to risk looking for a mercenary. That’s the reason why I held this dinner party.”

“You’re always right.” Shirley’s mother nodded with a smile.

.....

In a guest room near the main house of the manor...

The three most provocative nobles in the dinner had been secretly gathered.

“Andrew, I cannot hold back my fury,” a noble who had naturally curly hair said angrily.

The young noble named Andrew said gloomily, “Me too! It’s true that I like Shirley, but I will not go crazy if I can’t have her. If she is

married to another noble, I will only be sad but won't do anything outrageous. However, she is going to be married to a civilian who has no hope of activating his blood power! This is an insult to me and the dignity of nobles. How am I going to face other people at parties? 'Hey, aren't you the Andrew who was bested by a civilian boy?'"

"That's right. I only hate that I cannot kill him right now!" Another young man, who had amber-colored eyes, waved his fists hard.

The noble who talked first nodded his head. "I feel the same. However, the boy is Shirley's fiancé right now. If we do anything, I'm afraid that the Brenzells will be infuriated. They are very influential in the neighborhood."

He appeared very frustrated. Brenzell was Shirley's last name.

The room was caught in awkward silence.

Suddenly, Andrew snorted. "In fact, we do not have to do anything in person."

"Huh?" His friends looked at him in confusion.

Andrew smiled. "I know a night watcher. All we need to do is to accuse the boy as a magic apprentice."

"He's a magic apprentice?" the amber-eyed noble asked in shock.

"Maybe, maybe not, but he will be one," Andrew said coldly.

Oh! The other two nobles, being no stranger to such tricks, immediately understood what Andrew meant.

The noble with the naturally curly hair asked another question, "But what if Baron Brenzell goes to save him?"

Andrew chuckled. "Since the Church occupied Aalto, those sorcerers have been hiding more stealthily. Many night watchers haven't killed any evils for a long time. It's said that the leaders of the Inquisition are not satisfied, fearing that the night watchers would lose their value. So, those night watchers definitely wouldn't

let go of leads on sorcerers. As long as we find ‘proof’ before Baron Brenzell rescues him and force the boy to confess, will the baron dare to resist the Inquisition and the Church?”

“If there isn’t any proof, we will let him ‘die’ due to excessive interrogation before the baron saves him. After all, he’s just a civilian. Nobody really cares about it.” The young noble with amber eyes complemented the plan.

The noble with the curly hair said in concern, “However, will the night watchers be used to ‘creating sorcerers’? Will we suffer from it in the future?”

“Idiot, we are nobles!” Andrew scorned. “Alright, let’s gather some Thales so that it would be easier to convince the night watcher I know.”

When the three of them were in the middle of the heated discussion, a maid was standing outside their door. She was holding a tray with her right hand, and her left hand was frozen before the door, as if she were about to knock it.

Her face pale, she heard everything they said inside.

She was a human being with special blood powers. Although she never activated this bloodline and became a knight, she had excellent hearing, and she was sent to cater to the guests in this room by the Brenzells for that reason.

Holding her breath, the maid slowly left the door and walked to the main bedroom in a hurry.

“Very good, you’ve done a great job. I’ll take care of it. Don’t tell anything to my daughter in case she worries,” Baron Brenzell said in “fury”.

Hehe. This is a great plan. After tomorrow, there’s nothing I can do to save Vicente Miranda. Shirley, don’t blame me. I wish I could do something... He rehearsed how he would comfort Shirley. Well, after Vicente is captured, this maid should be buried in the garden.

No flaws should be left behind.

The next day in the morning, the maid, who had nightmares all night, woke up early and delivered breakfast for the guests, only to discover that the young nobles, including Andrew, were gone.

They've taken action? the maid thought worriedly. Miss Shirley had been treating the servants kindly and never abused them. She would be very sad if her fiancé died. Would there be enough time for the baron to stop it?

Concerned, she reached Shirley's bedroom without her knowing it. She then heard a happy melody sung by a gentle female voice.

The miss is very happy...

She thought subconsciously and wondered if she should let Shirley inform Mr. Vicente to hide until the baron took care of everything.

In her impression, the Andrews were much more notable than her master, so she was worried that Baron Brenzell could not stop it in time.

She lingered before the door and couldn't make up her mind. On one side, it was the miss who had been treating her well, and on the other side, it was the baron's order.

Suddenly, the door was opened, and Shirley looked at her in confusion, not knowing why she was at her door.

After a brief hesitation, Shirley asked gently, "Neece, do you have any trouble? Is there anything I can do for you?" She thought that Neece had come to ask for her help.

Neece shivered and made up her mind. She looked around and said in a low voice, "Let's talk in the room."

After the door was shut, Shirley heard the whole story from Neece.

Her face immediately turned pale, and worries surged out of her heart. If it were an ungrounded indictment, she believed that everything would be alright as long as she begged her father. However, there were a few bodies in Vicente's basement that he had dissected!

If it was discovered by a night watcher, who would believe that he was not a sorcerer except for herself?

Her parents were not satisfied with Vicente in the first place. They might help him under normal circumstances, but they would certainly not vouch for Vicente under such circumstances.

No, I have to inform Vicente and ask him to destroy the bodies or throw them back into the swamps! Shirley paced anxiously and decided to go to Vicente's house.

She considered asking servants or guards who were faster to send the message, but she couldn't tell anyone about the bodies!

.....

In the new public cemetery...

Oliver and another burial man were left by Baldy George, because the tomb watcher had just been buried in the cemetery today, and no substitutes were found yet. George was asked to supervise it for a couple of days and set off fireworks when there were signs of undead creatures so that the night watchers could come in time.

George certainly wouldn't stay in the creepy cemetery himself, so he left Oliver here. Now that you are bold enough to seduce my daughter, I'll let you know that I am the master of your fate!

If he weren't concerned that Oliver might escape, he wouldn't have left another burial man with him at all.

Oliver suffered unprecedented sufferings and pain recently. The pride and confidence on his young face were replaced by numbness and endurance. His heart matured.

"Love is the only candle in this miserable world..." he remarked in a low voice. Although George's daughter was not pretty and not exactly his type, she warmed his desperate mind.

Looking at his companion who always seemed ready for a fight, Oliver decided to take a walk.

“If you dare to escape, I’ll capture you and bury you alive!” the other burial man threatened him.

Oliver was in a bad mood again. He had enjoyed quite some beating recently. After he left the cottage of the tomb watcher, he roamed in the cemetery. The intense stench had little influence on him right now.

“The moon is so beautiful, but I am so miserable...” Oliver raised his head and looked at the bright moon. He was immediately in the mood for poems, but when he was about to write a sonnet, he suddenly stepped onto nothingness and screamed, “Ahhh!”

Pa, crack, crack.

A huge part of the cemetery collapsed, and countless bones and rotten flesh were revealed. The slackness of the burial men had left the earth unsteady

Chapter 899: Even A Rabbit Bites if Pushed to the Corner

899 Even A Rabbit Bites if Pushed to the Corner Late at night, the air in the new public cemetery was rather cold. The loud noise created by the collapse was sent by the wind and was thus already heard by the burial man from a distance. The burial man rushed over.

The burial man yelled and woke Oliver up, who was now feeling rather dizzy from being thrown to the ground.

“You bloody idiot! Look at what you’ve done! If you don’t fill the pit tonight, I’ll throw you in it! Damn!”

His words were nasty, and the fact that Oliver was still at a loss made him even more furious. He spat on Oliver and then walked away back to the cabin.

The viscous mucus hit the center of Oliver’s forehead, and he then started fiercely throwing up. He was throwing up so badly that his entire stomach had been emptied, and then the bitter bile came up.

It was not only because of the mucus. It was also because he found himself covered in sticky dead body fluid and rotten flesh. His left hand was still grabbing the set of half-rotten guts, and in his right hand, there was a thick femur.

The scene was worse than any nightmares he had never had. It was beyond disgusting!

Oliver hurriedly threw the guts and bone away and held his breath. He felt that the horrible odor could kill him anytime.

At this time, some blue light blinked and flashed past, which caught his attention.

Oliver’s eyes were sharp. Following the direction, to his surprise, he saw that the femur had cracked, and from within, the blue light was

shining through the fine cracks.

The great curiosity and hope made him forget the killing odor and how dirty he was. His movement had become very gentle.

He carefully moved to the femur and picked it up with great caution.

There was indeed blue light coming out!

Oliver didn't check it immediately as he had learned his lesson. Instead, he climbed to the edge of the pit by grabbing a few bodies. After looking around and making sure there was no one else around, he cracked open the bone carefully.

He did it rather carefully, and the blue light was revealed bit by bit as the small pieces of bones on the outside were falling. Finally, Oliver got a light blue short stick in his hand, and the stick looked rather delicate and transparent.

Oliver was shocked, having no idea what it was.

Then he quickly hid the short stick in case George and the rest of the burial men would see.

Anything found from the bodies had to be submitted to George, who would make a selection and give the valuable ones to the city hall officials in charge of the cemetery and the priests. It had happened several times that George and his men immediately took Oliver's findings away when Oliver spotted something valuable. Not only that, George would not even pay him on time but just give him two bad meals a day.

Oliver wanted to bury the stick somewhere close and dig it out when he got a chance to leave this place. He would then get himself some money by selling the stick. However, at this time, he noticed the many small characters engraved on the beautiful stick, which was as blue as ocean water.

As a young man who loved opera, Oliver had spent lots of time studying characters and learning different cultures. Therefore, he immediately recognized the characters. It was Sylvanasian, one of

the three most common tongues in the ancient Magic Empire!

Ms. Audrey's material was a great help to Oliver for understanding the characters. Oliver had lots of thoughts in his mind. He figured out the correct reading order and found that it was a piece about meditation! In the end, the owner even wrote down where he buried his treasures on the short stick!

Earth, fire, wind, water... Is this a sorcerer's meditation method? Oliver had heard many stories from bards and some operas, and they were about how an evil sorcerer did bad things to nobles and ordinary people, but in the end, the sorcerer was defeated by the clerics and nobles together. He had some thoughts on where this came from. He believed that it was from a sorcerer who did this before he or she died. Maybe the sorcerer hoped that this could be left to someone, but the person never came...

Oliver was a romantic person, and thus, he naturally longed for the mysterious life of a sorcerer who was always under the Church's chasing. As a devout follower, his conscience had plagued him multiple times for this, so he never did anything evil or tried to be a sorcerer himself.

However, what he had experienced in Rentato had made his belief less solid.

Why his Lord never saved him when he was suffering so badly? Why would the priests allow George and his men to do whatever they wanted and even protected them? Why could those clerics, nobles, and wealthy people enjoy luxurious coffins and tombs after they died, while a poor man, no matter how devout he was, could only be thrown into such a pit?

Did the Lord call this justice?

If so, he should save himself using a sorcerer's method first.

No one would know. In the future, he would be rich, and he could still be the same devout follower of the lord.

The conflicting feelings and thoughts appeared within Oliver's

mind. Finally, he decided to bury the short stick first to save it for the future. After all, once becoming a sorcerer, he could possibly be spending his whole life living in fear and hiding. He did not want that.

Oliver buried the short stick beside a gravestone and left a secret sign for himself. He then hobbled back to the pit as he still had to fill it; otherwise, George and his men would definitely beat him up again.

Oliver knew that there would be no sleep for him tonight.

At this time, someone kicked him in his back and then punched him to the ground. Oliver felt pain all over his body, especially in his back.

“Damned lazybones! You did nothing! You wanna die?!”

It was Goldson, another burial man. He started beating Oliver up using all his strength.

Oliver could do nothing but to cover his head with his arms. Like a shrimp, he curled his body to protect his most vulnerable parts against the punches and kicks that were falling like raindrops.

After a while, Goldson started feeling a bit tired. “Get up and get the work done! Or I’ll throw you in it!”

Before Oliver responded, Goldson had turned around and walked back to the cabin. He did not know how Oliver was staring at a gravestone with a special sign behind him. There was blood in Oliver’s eyes.

Oliver knew that he would die sooner or later if he did nothing. But if he was going to die, they would die with him!

He slowly climbed up and walked to the gravestone. After digging out the short stick, he hid in the pit and carefully read it. After remembering the characters, he hid the short stick in front of his chest.

He then climbed out of the pit and picked up the iron spade left by

Goldson.

He shoveled dirt into the pit to fill it, and the work only lasted for half an hour. With the spade in his hand, Oliver walked to the cabin with his face slightly flushed. His movement was quiet, for he didn't want to wake Goldson up.

Entering the cabin, Oliver heard Goldson asking while half-dreaming, "All done?"

That was way too fast.

"This one is blunt. I am taking a new one," said Oliver, who sounded like a sheer coward.

"Bloody slug," cursed Goldson. "Sharpen both the spades after the work's done."

The iron spades were given by the city hall. They could not afford iron items.

"Ok," said Oliver.

At this time, Oliver had come to Goldson and was now standing behind his back. The silver moonlight went through the window and covered him in silver-white. Under the witness of the moonlight, Oliver's shadow on the opposite wall raised the spade high in the air!

And then it fiercely dropped.

"Ahh!!!"

Goldson's bitter crying only lasted for a second and was cut off by his last breath. He had never expected that the useless, young coward from a rich family who only knew how to please girls would have the guts to murder him!

Goldson was dazed. He was never on alert when facing such a coward!

Fear had frozen on Goldson's face, and his unfocused eyes opened

widely.

Blood dripped onto the floor from Oliver's spade. He spat on Goldson's head.

"You're good, uh? You've got something? You said you were gonna bury me, uh? Come! Come show me!" Oliver yelled at the body crazily.

After a few minutes, he slowly calmed down. After finding dozens of Fells from Goldson's pocket, Oliver put on Goldson's clothes.

After that, Oliver walked out of the cabin. The spade was still in his hand, and his left hand grabbed the short stick tight under his shirt. He then walked silently into the darkness.

The wind started roaring, and the night now looked even darker. There were now only dead bodies in the new public cemetery.

...

Shirley hurriedly came back to the village. Before she could walk to Vicente's place, she was stopped by a local peasant woman.

"Miss Shirley, don't go. Vicente, Vicente is a sorcerer!" said the woman in fear. "Fortunately, you two are not married!"

Shirley's head buzzed like she just got struck by a flash of lightning. She pulled the woman's arm and asked, "Vicente... How is it possible?!"

Were night watchers here already?

"Miss Shirley, you have no idea how terrible it was! They found lots of dead bodies in his basement! He's indeed a sorcerer! The clerics found it out..." the woman explained quite clearly to Shirley, but Shirley felt that she was going to faint anytime.

"Where is Vicente then? Did they catch him?" Shirley tried her best to stay calm.

The peasant woman looked very concerned. "No. They said he went

to the marsh in the early morning!”

Shirley released a sigh of relief. As long as Vicente was still alive, there was still a chance!

She believed that Vicente had gone to the marsh to find the special herb because of what happened last night. He got lucky!

Shirley thanked the woman and hurriedly went back to the manor. She hoped that she could find Vicente in the marsh herself and tell him to hide for a while until her father solved the problem. He was not a sorcerer, so he only had to take out the magic book. However, she knew it clearly that as a noble lady, there was no way that she could go across the marsh and find Vicente there. She would probably end up getting lost there.

Therefore, she was about to send her servants there before her servants found out that the clerics were chasing Vicente. She was going to tell the servants that Vicente was the target of a few nobles' revenge plan.

As soon as she walked into the garden in her family's manor, a figure jumped out.

“Shirley, you like flowers? I found them in the marsh!” Vicente looked rather excited while waiting for Shirley's praise. In his hand, there were a bunch of scarlet flowers.

Chapter 900: They Were Only Dogs

900 They Were Only Dogs

Shirley was startled and almost burst out screaming. She hurriedly looked around and then took a step forward. She grabbed Vicente's hand.

Her reaction confused Vicente.

Shirley tried to keep her voice low by overcoming her fear and nervousness. "Vicente, you have to run. The night watchers found the bodies in your basement."

"What?!" Vicente could not believe his ears even though it was Shirley who told him this, and Shirley was the person he loved and trusted the most in the world. "Impossible... This is impossible. How did they find it? How did they know?"

There was no way that night watchers could search every single house in an area for their number was too small for this.

Seeing that Vicente was panicking, Shirley told him what happened as briefly as she could. "Andrew felt humiliated, so they found the night watchers to kill you in the interrogation room. My servant heard them plotting."

"I see, I see... I am not a sorcerer. I never want to... Why are they pushing me..." Vicente felt both angry and nervous. He was at the edge of a nervous breakdown.

Shirley tried to make it short. "Don't worry. I'll ask my father to help you. You'll only have to accept an inspection and the Lord will know you're not a sorcerer. But you have to hide in the marsh for a few days so that my father can deal with it."

Her clear explanation and calm tone comforted Vicente.

"Okay. I'll listen to you, Shirley," said Vicente.

At this time, he had to count on Baron Brenzell. It happened before that a noble stood out to protect a sorcerer suspect. However, the suspect still went through the strict investigation and made the church believe it was a mistake.

“There’s not enough time for me to prepare clothes and food for you. Be careful in the next few days. If everything goes well on my father’s side, I’ll ask a guard to carve the trees along the edge of the marsh with the symbol we previously agreed on,” said Shirley.

At first, the baron did not agree on Shirley and Vicente being with each other and even cut off the letters between them. So the young lovers had previously decided on some simple symbols to inform each other how they were doing. Now, the symbols had become useful again.

At this time, Vicente suddenly looked very nervous. “I see people coming...”

He had a pair of eyes as sharp as that of cats, and he could see way better than common people. They were now hiding in the garden and being surrounded by lots of plants and bushes, so it was hard for people coming from outside to spot them.

“The night watchers are coming...” murmured Shirley. As Vicente’s fiancée, she had expected that the night watchers would come to investigate, but she didn’t know they would be this fast.

Vicente was very nervous. Once the night watchers walked in, the two of them would be seen!

He couldn’t hide in a room in this manor because the night watchers would for sure search the rooms one by one!

Maybe he should hide here and wait for a chance?

At this time, Shirley suddenly looked up. “Vicente, you stay here. I’ll distract them. Five minutes later, you go to the marsh through the side gate of the manor.”

“It’s dangerous!” said Vicente. In common people’s minds, those night watchers were as horrifying as sorcerers, demons, and evils.

Shirley shook her head decisively and said, "I'm a noble. They won't do anything to me. Go and hide, now!"

...

Outside of the manor, the leader of the night watchers whose codename was Crazy Hound said to the rest of the night watchers, "You go to different directions and guard all the exits. I'll go into the manor with Tamer."

Under this circumstance, the night watcher called Tamer was much more useful than the rest of them because of the many magic creatures he trained.

"Sir, they all say that Vicente has gone to the marsh, and we are here only for figuring out the areas in the marsh that Vicente visits most often. Do we have to make this so big?" A night watcher believed that they should go to the marsh as soon as possible instead of spending too much time in the manor.

Although called Crazy Hound, he was rather cautious. "No matter when, we block off a place and then enter. This is our principle. Can you say for sure that there's only Vicente in this manor? How do you know his fiancée hasn't been lured? How do you know whether the baron is secretly supporting sorcerers or not?"

The night watcher who asked the question kept apologizing.

No wonder their leader had taken out the entire team. Crazy Hound was worried that there were nobles involved in this.

"According to the previous investigation, Vicente and Miss Brenzell are very close. If we keep a close eye on her, we probably don't have to search into the marsh," Tamer added.

At this time, Crazy Hound sniffed something and suddenly commanded, "Hide!"

The team followed his order immediately and hid in the fields and trees.

Half a minute later, a lady showed up beside the manor gate. She

was dressed like a maid, but she wore a black gauze hat. The hanging veil covered her face.

She looked around and made sure no one was around. Then she hurriedly set off for the marsh.

“It’s Shirley. She can’t hide from my nose.” Crazy Hound grinned to Tamer.

Tamer also put on a creepy smile. “She must be informing Vicente. She can’t ask her maids or guards to do it.”

Very likely her maids and guards would sell her out if she decided to do so.

“You’re right. It seems that the task will be pretty easy.” Crazy Hound had the brutal smile on his face, for they would win the reward from the Inquisition as well as from Andrew. If they could make this even bigger and involve more people, they would earn even more!

When Shirley had walked some distance away, Crazy Hound whistled and gathered the team again.

“We follow her. Tamer, you stay here and watch the manor, just in case,” commanded Crazy Hound.

“Yes, leader,” said Tamer politely. He had many “pets”. Although he could not monitor the entire manor, guarding the main gate and watching the baron should not be a problem.

Crazy Hound decided to lead the entire team for fear that Vicente had got his helpers. They secretly followed Shirley through the green field, thin trees, and finally arrived at the marsh filled with miasma.

At this time, Crazy Hound’s eyes suddenly opened big, for he saw that Shirley had started walking back!

What did she do? How did she inform him?

No! They were fooled by her!

Crazy Hound was furious, but he knew that it would have been too late if he led the entire team back. So he and his team directly jumped out and closed in on Shirley.

“Who are you! What do you want!” Shirley shouted.

Crazy Hound said gloomily, “Miss Shirley, where’s Vicente?”

“I don’t know. How do I know? He hasn’t come back from the marsh yet,” said Shirley as calmly as she could.

“Then why are you here?” Crazy Hound was about to lose control.

Shirley responded coldly, “Come to find him. But when I see the marsh, I know there’s no way that I can find him in this place. I’m a noble lady! So I’ve decided to go back. He should just die in there.”

“If you don’t change your mind, I’d have to take you back to the inquisition.” Crazy Hound’s eyes started looking red.

“Dare you! I’m a noble!” said Shirley aloud.

Crazy Hound sneered, “So what? As long as a noble has anything to do with a sorcerer, he will also be put on the gallows.”

“Take her!” commanded Crazy Hound. “She’ll know what an interrogation is like in the inquisition!”

“You crazy dogs! My father will protest to the Church. You will be severely punished!” Shirley screamed for she could not believe her ears.

“Go ahead!” Crazy Hound was not going to change his mind.

...

“The night watchers took Shirley to the inquisition?!” asked Baron Brenzell in great shock and anger.

After confirming the information, he had gone outraged. “Those lunatics! They don’t even obey the laws! I’m going to see the viscount!”

He then rushed out furiously.

After half a day, the baron came back with an extremely shocked look on his face. Facing his wife, who kept asking what was going on, the baron finally said, "I don't know. I never expected this. The Church didn't care about nobles' opinions at all. They... They even threatened me. They said they'd take me in as well if they find anything against me."

"Are they out of their minds?! The nobles will protest together!" The baron's wife could not believe it.

Brenzell shook his head dispiritedly. "Protest? How? We can't defeat the Church."

...

In the interrogation chamber, the screams of a young lady lingered.

"She still hasn't said anything?" asked Crazy Hound.

The interrogator replied gloomily, "Not yet. She's more staunch than anyone I've seen. We've pretty much done the most severe damage to her body, but she still won't say a word."

"Use divine spells then," said Crazy Hound in despair.

The interrogator was shocked. "She'll die. She's a noble."

"It's okay. She's just a noble," said Crazy Hound. The attitude that the Church showed today had further supported Crazy Hound and made him even crazier. In his mind, a noble lady who was willing to marry a sorcerer was by no means innocent, and neither was her family. He believed that the Lord would also be on his side.

The interrogator finally put on an evil and cunning smile. "Alright. It's time for the nobles to understand who they are. They're only dogs raised by us."

He walked into the interrogation chamber in long strides. The screams slowly turned into bloodcurdling cries like a nightmare. Eventually, even the cries had disappeared.

“Dead. What a pity. She had a pretty beautiful face.” The interrogator walked out with the look of excitement still on his face. Obviously, he enjoyed the process.

It was all quiet now in the interrogation chamber, as if the girl named Shirley had never even been sent into this place.

Chapter 901: I ll Be Back One Day

901 I“ll Be Back One Day

Plants were strange and messy in the marsh. Some trees, besides their huge crowns on the top blocking the entire sky, had “legs” like human beings but wrapped with red vines going deep into the soil and mud. The plants made the marsh look rather creepy and dangerous.

Vicente was hiding behind a big rock, about half his height. While the ground under his feet was quite solid and dry, which was rare in the marsh, the horrible smell pouring in his nose made him feel dizzy.

At this time, Vicente was sitting on the ground, staring at something in front of him in fear. On the black mud, there was a python as thick as a bucket crawling to him. Its eyes were giving out the unusual green light just like two candles. And the terrifying air the python possessed had driven away all the other creatures in the marsh.

Vicente was not a coward. He dealt with dead bodies all the time, which forged his bravery. However, facing the python, he had lost his ability to move because of the overwhelming fear. He was neither a knight squire nor a magic apprentice. He could do nothing to protect himself.

His legs soft, his body trembling, his teeth chattering, Vicente tried to stand up but could use no strength. He could do nothing but watch the python slowly approaching him.

He had never spent this long in the depths of the marsh. In the past, he only followed the paths he was familiar with, and once he found the special plants he needed, he would go back immediately. But this time, he had spent five days here, and most of the fruits he picked on his way had already been consumed. Now, he had encountered one of the most dangerous creatures in the marsh.

The python took its time. It was not in any hurry to enjoy its lunch.

As it was becoming closer and closer to Vicente, Vicente could smell the stink from its mouth and see the strange scales forming weird patterns.

When Vicente had given up all his hope, the black python suddenly raised its upper body off the ground and stared at the muddy ground behind the rock with its big eyes. Sticking out, its dark-red, forked tongue was also covered in a layer of green light.

After a while, the black python suddenly turned around and left in a hurry!

Vicente had no idea what happened. He did nothing!

Finally, Vicente had a possible explanation for this. He buried the magic book and the pale palm behind the rock. Did they scare the monster away?

But they had been buried in the ground!

Gradually, he had a further guess. The black python probably sensed something that he could not. The black python probably sensed the air of death!

Maybe in the python's eyes, there was a hell in the rock!

After recovering a bit, Vicente forced himself to leave the magic book and the palm buried where they were and carefully set off for the edge of the marsh.

Half a day later, he approached the edge of the marsh in great caution. But he saw no signs or marks there.

Vicente was quite upset. He assumed that the trouble was pretty big and the baron was even having a difficult time dealing with it. After all, before he had some accomplishments, mistreating bodies was regarded as a very evil action. Even an ordinary man who did it would be put on the gallows.

He released a sigh and decided to wait for another five days. On his way back, he tried to gather more food.

.....

“Shirley’s dead?!” Baron Brenzell’s eyes opened wide. He felt that he was in an unreal nightmare.

This night watcher had two big eyes and wide forehead, as well as sharp teeth. When he did not talk, he looked quite honest; however, once he grinned or talked, his sharp teeth were revealed, which made him look rather terrifying. In the baron’s eyes, he looked identical to a demon.

Crazy Hound said, “Yes, to keep the secret of the evil sorcerer, she died under the divine power.”

“You’re out of your mind! All of you! How dare you torture her!” screamed the baron’s wife.

The Baron grasped the last clue of his reason and stared at the night watcher. “So, so you are saying... Shirley didn’t say anything! Before her death, she was still an innocent follower! You’ve got no evidence at all!”

The fire of anger and pain was roasting his guts in his chest. If necessary, he would collide his head against the gate of Cocus to death to tell the grand duke and the rest of the nobles that those night watchers had gone totally crazy, and they had to be removed!

Crazy Hound said, “The Lord told us that only the evil power could make her endure such severe punishment and confess nothing, and it was also the evil power that made her die before she almost confessed. Therefore, obviously, your daughter was lured by evil and had an affair with a sorcerer.”

“Insane... All of you... insane...” Hearing the ridiculous words, the baron felt that the entire world had become so unreal. He just kept murmuring.

Crazy Hound grinned. “So, based on this, it’s reasonable for us to suspect that your family also has something to do with the sorcerer because you two have agreed to marry your daughter to a vicious sorcerer. Please follow us back to the inquisition. This is the Lord’s

will, and command from the cardinals.”

The baron and his wife’s world had collapsed. Their only daughter had just died, and they were still struggling with digesting the pain. However, the crazy night watchers had put their claws on them.

The night watchers rushed up in a crowd and caught the baron and his wife.

“Let go of us! We’re nobles!”

“We’re nobles!”

.....

In a house in the city, Andrew and his two friends were totally shocked to hear the result.

“How is this possible? Shirley... She died?”

“They’ve caught the baron and his wife with no evidence?”

“They can treat us the same way in the future...”

Their faces now looked very pale, and they couldn’t stop shaking. Their false accusation had led out a monster even more horrifying than a devil, whose name was “night watcher”!

.....

“They are no way close to their daughter.” The interrogator walked out of the chamber with a cold smile on his face.

“Got anything?” asked Crazy Hound.

The interrogator nodded. “A few years ago, when the war in Aalto was locked in a stalemate, they once secretly contacted a sorcerer. They cut it off later though when His Holiness killed the Liege of Death.”

“Good. This has proved that our way surely works. They were hiding deep, but we still found them,” said Crazy Hound proudly.

He reckoned that, with their purest belief, night watchers could identify the corrupted people using their instinct even without direct evidence, which was also a better way for them to claim their accomplishment.

The interrogator grinned. "I never like those nobles who keep swaying back and forth."

"Put their daughter's body on the gallows for a week and see if Vicente will come out." The expression on Crazy Hound's face had turned savage as he said, "As for the noble couple, I believe the executioner has been waiting long enough..."

.....

Andrew walked back and forth anxiously in the hall, waiting for information to come back from Cocus. His two friends had collapsed in the coach. What happened was totally beyond their expectation.

"Young master, Cocus told the nobles to stay calm..." The butler walked in, gasping.

Andrew felt that all his strength had been pulled out instantly. "I knew it, I knew..."

To their great shock, even if all the nobles were willing to unite together, they were just an idle threat to the Church!

Someone was knocking on the door at this time.

"Who is it?" asked the butler nervously.

"I'm here for my reward," said Crazy Hound, who just walked in.

Andrew and his friends were so startled that they jumped up. "You?!"

"So you won't keep your words?" Crazy Hound had a nice smile on his face.

"No, no... This is the rest of the payment." Andrew took out a bag

full of Thales.

Crazy Hound weighed it and grinned. “Good. You’re a good partner.”

Then he said with a faint smile on his face, “Many thanks to you, Mr. Andrew. You’ve made us understand how powerful we are.”

Then Crazy Hound turned around and left. Andrew was standing where he was like a stone statue. The wind coming in through the gate made him feel cold from deep inside.

.....

A few days later, Vicente came to the edge of the marsh again but still found nothing.

He was very worried and decided to take the risk to go back secretly.

In the darkness, he sneaked back to his village. When he was about to “kidnap” a kid to get some information, he suddenly heard two peasant women talking.

“Poor Miss Shirley. I don’t believe she was corrupted and lured by devils...”

Under the Church’s propaganda, even a peasant woman knew how to use some big words.

“You’re right. Miss Shirley is such a nice young lady, like an angel. Goddamn Vicente! He lied to Miss Shirley! If it weren’t because of him, Miss Shirley wouldn’t die in the inquisition and even be put on the gallows!” The other woman agreed.

Shirley... died?

The women’s conversation was like a huge hammer that just gave Vicente’s brain a fierce strike. His vision suddenly turned blurry, and he almost lost his balance.

The two women kept talking, and he had understood what had

happened when he was hiding in the marsh.

His soul had been pulled away by the agony, and his mind had blanked out. He walked back to the marsh like a zombie.

Maybe he was blessed by the Goddess of Luck. On his way back, no one saw him, and he didn't encounter any monsters.

“NO!!!”

After a while, an extremely painful cry burst out somewhere from the marsh, and it was even bitter than a lonely wolf crying to the moon.

Vicente's face was covered in tears, and his eyes were ablaze with a ferocious flame of anger. He kneeled down on the ground, and his hands kept digging into the soil as if he felt no pain. His nails were completely broken from the digging, and his blood dyed the ground.

A few minutes later, two black books and a pale palm were dug out.

He picked them up, and hatred was the only thing left on his face.

.....

“He never came?” asked Crazy Hound, who was hiding around the corner and staring at the body on the gallows.

Tamer smiled. “It's too obvious. Those sorcerers know.”

“Poor girl. She died for him.” Crazy Hound shrugged.

Gallows were only for “purifying” living people, so they didn't burn her.

Quite a lot of people stopped and reproached the evil woman colluding with devils and sorcerers. Only very few people knew Shirley in person and knew it wasn't true, but they dared not to say anything.

Among the crowd, a dark-skinned man stared at Shirley's body but

remained silent. The way he looked at her was full of agony for he could not imagine the suffering that his lover once experienced, and he could not stop blaming himself for this. However, he eventually turned around and headed off for the city gate. He never looked back again.

Walking out of the gate, he suddenly took off the cross he was wearing. Gripping the cross in his hand, he made his vows. The tip of the cross pierced the skin of his palm, and his blood dyed it.

He put the cross in the wall beside the city gate silently and then slowly walked into the darkness.

“I will be back!

“I will be back to bring you back to life!

“I will be back, and I’ll bring destruction and death!”

Chapter 902: The Treasure

902 The Treasure On the wasteland overgrown with bushes, there were bones and skeletons everywhere.

A small group of traveling salesmen was going through this dangerous area under the protection of a dozen mercenaries. Their destination was the Kingdom of Brianne.

The wasteland was on the border between Holm and Brianne and was embraced by the big mountains where all sorts of magic creatures were living. Also, there had been rumors that this area was once the domain ruled by Viken, the King of Calamities and the governor-general of Great Holm. He was different from all the previous and following governors-general. Instead of only focusing on guarding Rentato, Viken had also conducted many experiments here close to the border. Therefore, on the wasteland, there were many strange creatures, and they were believed to be the shoddy products of Viken's experiments.

After Viken went missing, no one ever found the entrance of his demiplane, which was located here on this wasteland. No one knew why he went missing, and no one ever found the magic items Viken left behind.

Many sorcerers saw this as a great pity. A sorcerer close to top legendary level and the master of studying bloodlines must have lots of treasure and great knowledge in his demiplane, but they had all gotten lost in the long river of time.

"Similar stories are endless. Even now, some people are still trying to find Viken's treasure on this wasteland," said Hassan, the deputy leader of the mercenaries, with mixed feelings. "They should think using their butts. Even if they are blessed by the Goddess of Luck and find the entrance, are they able to get the treasures in the demiplane?"

"Viken was called King of Calamities, and he was a master of studying bloodlines and transforming bodies. I bet you a bag of

liquor, that in his demiplane and magic tower, there are transformed monsters close to the legendary level. Umm, maybe people already found his demiplane, but all of them became the food for the monsters,” Hassan continued.

One of his subordinates was a teenage boy who looked quiet and scholarly. Hearing the deputy leader’s words, the look on his face slightly changed. He then forced a smile on his face as he said, “They became blind because of their greed; the treasure devoured their wisdom.”

“Oliver, you are surely a bard. You always say something interesting.” Hassan patted the teenage boy’s shoulder.

Hassan had known this young man for three to four months. Except for the fact that Oliver liked fooling around with women, Hassan felt that he was quite a good subordinate for he knew how to talk properly and how to do things in the correct way.

All men who chose to be mercenaries loved fooling around with women, so this was not a big deal.

At this time, the leader, Grigra said coldly, “Don’t talk like this next to a business team anymore. Night watchers will probably hear you.”

“We’re just telling tales!” Hassan said unhappily. What did this have to do with those night watchers?!

Grigra snorted, “I heard it from the nobles in the team that those night watchers have been acting crazy recently. They have burned a few mercenaries for discussing these sorcerer legends. The night watchers believe they are evil.”

“Really?!” Hassan was quite shocked. And so was Oliver, who was just immersed in his own thoughts earlier. They knew that those night watchers were lunatics, but he never thought that they would go this far.

“You can try if you want,” said Grigra casually. He then took a meaningful glance at Oliver. He was still on full alert toward the

new member of the team. Grigra's instinct told him that this young man was hiding something from them. Maybe he was an escaped criminal. If it wasn't because he sensed no spiritual power waves at all on the young man, Grigra would have sent him to the inquisition already.

Oliver knew that the leader believed that he was suspicious. He lowered his head and had decided to leave the team before the journey ended.

Since he escaped from Rentato, his life had been in constant danger, and he was constantly nervous. Although he killed a man, he was not a sorcerer. Therefore, night watchers would not be chasing after him. But the mercenaries, adventurers, and sheriffs had still made his life full of risks, and he had to fight for himself.

Fortunately, he was very experienced, and he had learned some fighting skills. His smartness and the strange powder he carried had helped him come all the way to the border of the Kingdom of Holm, where he had decided to start all over again. The death of Goldson was not a really big deal, and thus, he would not be put on the wanted list all over the country. When he got to a remote area, he would be safe.

What he learned from his experience was that one could only wait for death if he got no power. Therefore, he started to meditate after abandoning his belief in the God of Truth!

However, up until today, he still had not entered the meditation environment.

Oliver was not disappointed. According to the blue, short staff, even a gifted person would need to spend six months to two years to master his spirit and then enter the blank state. He just started four months ago.

But why were earth, fire, wind, and water regarded as the four most basic elements? How did they form so many different things?

Oliver, a young man who was always interested in opera, could not control his imagination as he thought to himself.

After marching forward for a while, Grigra looked around and asked them to pitch the tents. Oliver was among those who were responsible for keeping watch tonight.

It was during mid-summer, but it was still cold on the wasteland.

Sitting beside the fire, Oliver looked pensive. He watched the stars in the sky and thought to himself that he was already very close to the treasure!

He had seen the strange, red rock, looking like a demon staying low on the ground.

He came all the way here for a reason!

What Hassan said earlier scared him, for he thought that the place he was looking was in fact the entrance to Viken's demiplane. But he knew the difference between legends and reality, and he believed that he was looking for the treasure left by another sorcerer, who probably settled down here to seek for Viken's demiplane.

It was getting late, and the wind had become even colder. The two mercenaries who went out earlier to patrol the area had come back.

"It's your turn now." They kicked Oliver.

They then reached their hands to the fire and started enjoying the warmth.

Oliver gripped the short sword in his hand and grinned to the man who was going to patrol with him. "I'll take this side, okay?"

"What's the difference..." murmured the man. He walked to the other side.

After walking to a remote corner, the smile on Oliver's face disappeared. Gripping the short sword in his hand, he left the camp and walked to the strange rock.

He got ten minutes to patrol this area. He had to find the place where the treasure was hidden within ten minutes. Oliver was on

full alert, and his mind was clearer than ever.

Three minutes later, he had safely approached the strange rock without catching anyone's attention and was now trying to find something in the gap between the rock and the ground.

A minute later, Oliver still didn't find anything. Another minute passed, and there was still nothing. There was fine sweat on Oliver's forehead, but he remained calm.

Suddenly, a surprised expression appeared on his face. He dug quicker and inserted the blue stick in.

With a crisp sound, the blue stick had gone into some metal gear. After that, a blue light lit up from the gap and dyed the grass nearby blue.

Silently, a cave was exposed in the ground of the wasteland behind the strange rock. The path going deep into the cave was paved with dark gray stone bricks.

Oliver took out the stick and then hurriedly walked in. He walked faster and faster, and in the end, he started running as fast as he could. According to the characters on the stick, there was a gear inside for shutting down the entrance. To be safe, he had to find it and close the entrance before the mercenaries found him.

The sound of his footsteps resounded in the corridor. Finally, Oliver saw the round hall in front of him.

The round hall was divided into a few stone chambers, and all the gates were wide open. What was in each of the chambers was very obvious—bookshelves and all sorts of dazzling gems.

Oliver was dazed for a second because of such great treasures!

Obviously, this place was a treasure vault. Oliver didn't even know where to look. Wave stone, Sun stone, the Ice Crystals...

Oliver had seen those gems on noble ladies. He understood how precious they were.

“Haha, I’m rich now!” A hoarse voice laughed behind Oliver.

Oliver was shocked. He turned around and saw his team leader, Grigra, who was walking to him looking rather greedy and excited.

There was a longsword in his hand.

Oliver didn’t know what to do.

Grigra laughed. “I knew you were hiding something. I wanted to kick you out once the mission is completed. But I didn’t know you were hiding something this awesome! Thank you for bringing so many gems to me!”

He crossed his sword in front of his chest and said, “Thank God for bringing you to me and leading me to the treasure. To express my gratitude, I’ll allow you to die here!”

Gripping the short sword and the magic stick, he was so scared that he took a few steps back. Facing the team leader, who had almost reached the level of knight, Oliver had no confidence in himself.

Grigra did not want to waste any time. Without hesitation, he jumped at Oliver and lifted his sword.

Chapter 903: Passed

Chapter 903 Passed

Oliver, as a “warrior” who had been through life-threatening dangers many times, was not too panicked to move at the critical moment. He backed off sideways subconsciously and waved his short sword, trying to find a way to escape.

However, he was far weaker than Captain Grigra, who took advantage of the length of his sword and slashed nonstop, making it impossible for Oliver to draw near. He could not make the best use of the short sword and could not resist the attacks by raising his sword.

Clang, clang, clang.

After a few crisp sounds, the short sword fell to the ground, and Oliver’s right hand was bleeding.

Grinning hideously, Grigra stepped forward and cut horizontally, further reducing Oliver’s range of activity.

After only a while, Oliver realized that he had been cornered. He would have to face the flashing longsword whichever direction he went to.

Am I going to die?

When the longsword reached him, Oliver’s head was dizzy, and something seemed to be bursting out from within his body, turning his eyes bloodshot. He subconsciously grabbed the only thing in his hands and raised it against the longsword.

Pa.

After a dull noise, Oliver stepped back again. He was stuck to the cold wall. More blood flowed out of his fingers, dying the blue staff red.

“Hehe!” Grigra was not concerned. Oliver could not defeat him when he had a short sword, and it was even unlikely now that he was merely holding an uncanny staff.

The only thing that made him waver was that the short staff seemed rather precious, and his heart would be pained if it was broken.

However, he thought of the room full of gems and possible magic items, and his vacillations were immediately gone. There were so many valuable items after all. He could afford the loss of the staff, as long as he killed Oliver in time and closed the entrance in case other people competed with him for the treasures!

Making up his mind, he slowed down his longsword, blew away the staff, and pierced at Oliver’s chest.

Looking at the glittering tip of the sword, Oliver felt that the whole world was slowed down and that the sword was reaching his chest like a snail. However, only his mind was this fast. His body was as “slow” as Grigra’s longsword. He could only watch the longsword penetrate him without being able to do anything.

Am I going to die?

I don’t want to die!

After only a short while, Oliver was caught in a strange hollow state. Then, a string seemed to have been broken in his head. He felt that something flooded out of his soul overwhelmingly into the blue staff in his hands.

Crack.

With a weird “crack” coming from the staff, Oliver felt that he had opened a gate, and his whole body was enshrouded in an ocean of tiny silver electric arcs.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The silver electric arcs that emerged from the staff hit Grigra’s critical parts without meeting any obstacle.

Grigra's face and chest were immediately blackened. His longsword hit Oliver's body, but it led to nothing more than a shallow wound.

How can I die... Shocked and confused, he looked at the short staff before him that was still sparkling before he collapsed without any strength.

He had long confirmed that Oliver was not a magic apprentice, so he could not use the short staff even if it was an extraordinary item!

How did it happen? Grigra died with his eyes wide open in regrets.

Holding the staff with both hands, Oliver breathed hard. His back was as hunched as a shrimp. He had such a headache that he almost bumped into the wall.

After a long time, he was finally back to himself. He slowly raised his head. There was vague blood in his eyes, his nostrils, and the corners of his mouth.

Did the blast of spiritual power when I became an apprentice activate the staff? He thought in confusion, But shouldn't the staff have a central mark? Has it been erased?

He shook his head and looked at Grigra, holding the staff tightly. The fearsome captain that always terrified him was lying there lifelessly; his face dark and his eyes wide open. He was obviously as dead as anyone could be.

Not entirely reassured, Oliver squatted and examined Grigra's body carefully. After the confirmation, he looked at the staff in both confusion and ecstasy.

"Is this the power of magic?"

He quickly calmed down. He shut the entrance and found another secret exit. Then, he put the books, the items, and the gems into the magic pouch left by sorcerers and retreated.

It was not because he did not want to stay here and improve his strength first, but because there was no food here. He would be starved in a couple of days. As for the animals in the wilderness,

90% of them were stronger than him, except that they preferred brutalizing each other.

...

Two days later, Fernando came to this place and searched for “Hysterical Dance”, an organization that had evacuated here. As far as he knew, although the Eye of Curse had been hiding recently, he hadn’t admitted failure yet but merged a lot of smaller organizations to make up for the losses in the previous incident.

If it weren’t for that, he wouldn’t have known where he should go at all.

Naturally, he was unaware of the specific location of “Hysterical Dance”. Only by reaching the area and passing the test of the sorcerers could he be allowed in.

“Huh, some magic traps are activated here.” Fernando moved carefully on the ground instead of flying in the sky due to the night watchers’ recent madness. With his spiritual power, he suddenly discovered an obvious trap with little disguise, suggesting that it was set up by a rookie.

“Is this the relic of a certain sorcerer?” Fernando was immediately in a better mood. It was not because he was greedy, but because the “Congress of Magic”, having just been established, lacked both materials and money. The Union of Sorcerers suffered the heaviest losses in the incident of Cocus. The two deputy presidents who were not killed carved up the property of the organization and escaped, leaving nothing but a City in the Sky that was still in debris to Douglas and Fernando. Had it not been for the sponsorship from Hathaway, Fernando’s visit to other organizations would have been very embarrassing.

So, he paused and cast spells to investigate the environment. After confirming his safety, he began to try to crack the magic trap.

About half an hour later, after a crack, the hill collapsed, and a gate was revealed.

After a thorough examination, Fernando flew in as enthusiastically as fire, only to discover that most gems, materials, and items were already gone.

“I’m one step late. If I ran into that rookie, I could’ve totally fooled... well, introduced him into the Congress,” Fernando remarked in obvious regrets.

Based on the magic books that had been taken away and the remaining battle traces, he concluded that it was the apprentice-level rookie who took away the treasure through divinity.

...

Grasses and woods proliferated in the valley that was covered in vague, erratic mist.

Holding the black-covered thick book, Erica read it in fascination and calculated now and then.

“So, we are on a planet...”

“Is gravity the essence of the power of earth?”

“Is Earth Element the source of gravity?”

“The planet operates in such a way...”

“No wonder we will land again after we jump...”

Whispers of remarks and discussions echoed around Erica. The sorcerers were talking about “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy” in excitement or contemplation.

The book disrupted their understanding of the world, making them feel that they had never really recognized it.

If it weren’t for the fact that the book was unprecedentedly creative, the cognitive worlds of many of them would’ve collapsed or consolidated, but even so, they still thought that their mindsets had been refreshed.

Is the world like this?

The world is like this!

Raising their heads and looking at the stars over the mist, they seemed to see the trajectories of the mysterious stars. Everything was now under control!

Erica read for a while before she put down the book and rubbed her head as if she had been exhausted. Reading the book was too painful, particularly when one did not have enough knowledge!

Douglas had once taught her calculus before, but it was only meant to lay a foundation, and a lot of details were still obscured to her. So, it was terribly difficult for her to learn the Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy. She meant to write to Douglas, only to find that he was out of reach.

Seeing that Erica was rubbing her head, the sorcerers around rushed to her like rabbits and begged her.

“Erica, it’s time to teach us calculus!”

“How do you think this question should be solved?”

“Should this magic model be processed with calculus?”

Their questions harassed Erica’s ears like dancing flies, making her even more upset.

However, when she looked at the earnestness on their faces, her heart was softened again. She could learn the book by herself with her basic knowledge of calculus, but they did not know anything about it and could only read the gravity-related content.

In the meantime, she couldn’t help but feel extremely proud. Many of them were senior-rank sorcerers who were much stronger than herself, but they had to ask for her guidance. Even Mr. Atlant asked her about calculus a while ago. Calculus was truly a paradigm-shifting breakthrough in mathematics!

Erica looked around and suddenly had an intense, uncontrollable

delight. After the fall of Aalto, her companions had been as numb and desperate as undead creatures, but “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy” was like a lighthouse in the night that drove the darkness and despair away, filling them with hope again. It was not because magic was not powerful, but because we hadn’t done enough! Our understanding of this world was too shabby!

When there was hope, the succession of magic would never stop.

Erica’s lips curled, and both happy and worried, she began to teach her companions calculus.

At this moment, a sorcerer flew in and asked an archmage who was in the crowd asking questions. “Mr. Deputy President, a senior-rank sorcerer named Fernando is requesting to meet you in the cabin. He has already passed the test. Do you want to let him in?”

Before the deputy president replied, Erica suddenly stood up. “Mr. Fernando? He’s very good at calculus!”

That was Mr. Douglas’ words!

Most sorcerers did not know that Douglas had already become a legend.

“What? He’s very good at calculus?” Hardly had she finished her sentence when the sorcerers of the valley rushed out and disappeared, leaving only the sorcerer who came to send the message and Erica staring at each other.

Chapter 904: I m Here to Pick You up

Chapter 904 I“m Here to Pick You up

A cabin, located in the depths of the mountains, was surrounded by strange trees, bizarre rocks, howling beasts, and chirping birds.

Fernando paced back and forth in the cabin gloomily, considering what he should say to the leaders of “Hysterical Dance”, and how he could prevent himself from mocking them. If possible, he should also visit the Eye of Curse. Although the guy was not in the leadership of the organization, everybody knew that he was the boss behind the curtain.

Suddenly, Fernando sensed that dozens of sorcerers were flying over with his spiritual power.

He was quite shocked. A transparent wall of force field immediately appeared next to him, and the spells to break space barriers were ready.

What are they doing? So many people are attacking me? But why are they doing it so obviously, so that I would have a chance to escape?

Questions popped up in Fernando’s heart. His concerns were not gone until he saw quite a few acquaintances in the crowd who were earnest but not hostile, but he was still quite puzzled.

“Fernando, I’m told that you are very good at calculus?”

“Can you tell me the solution to this problem?”

“What’s your opinion on gravity?”

The questions from the sorcerers gathered into noises that were even more unbelievable than the howling and chirping. Fernando’s ears were humming, and he couldn’t be more agitated.

“Enough!” A thunderous roar burst out, dwarfing all the noises.

Fernando was not nearly as kind and considerate as Erica. Roaring was his major specialty.

Everybody fell quiet. Fernando said gloomily, “How can I teach you calculus if you keep talking? And how can I know your progress right now?”

Not considering that he was in their territory, or that they had many senior-rank sorcerers and even archmages who were stronger than him, he behaved as a tough teacher.

For him, there was only the extent of knowledge in arcana. Identities and strength mattered little!

After silencing the sorcerers, Fernando said seriously, “I’m here to discuss certain things with the president of ‘Hysterical Dance’. After it’s over, I’ll stay here for a couple of days and teach the basics of calculus from the start if you want. As for gravity, you should wait until you understand the previous parts.”

As an experienced sorcerer, he knew how precious Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy was and what a major shock it would be for the sorcerers. Therefore, he had foreseen such a reaction.

However, what he did not expect was the degree of their shock!

It seemed that he was not bold enough in his prediction!

His words made the sorcerers of “Hysterical Dance” back to themselves. They couldn’t be more surprised. It was one thing that they were asking questions bravely, but it was a whole other thing that he was ready to teach them so frankly. Shouldn’t knowledge like calculus and gravity be their greatest secrets?

Are they going to teach us just like that without asking for anything in return?

Not entirely convinced, one of the sorcerers reminded Fernando, “His Excellency the Eye of Curse has reorganized ‘Hysterical Dance’ into ‘Family of Sorcerers’. It’s supposed to be a partnership of all organizations.”

“And the leader is...?” Fernando asked directly.

Another sorcerer flew over from far away. He shouted, “Mr. Fernando, the Eye of Curse invites you to meet him.”

After being briefly stunned, Fernando nodded. “Alright.”

That’s not bad. He would have to meet Atlant again even if he had to convince the president first.

Their meeting was not held in Atlant’s demiplane but in a garden that was overgrown with all kinds of flowers.

“To be honest, I was thinking to capture you and elicit complete knowledge on calculus and the detailed interpretation of gravity from you.” With his eyes closed, Atlant said comfortably.

Fernando sniffed, not nervous at all before a legend. “They do deserve your effort. However, the knowledge will be shared with all sorcerers.”

“All sorcerers?” Atlant asked with a smile, as if everything were under his control.

Fernando chuckled. “Yes, Douglas believes that more people and more communications are required to better recognize the world, grasp the natural laws, and analyze mechanisms behind things. So, he has defined this part of knowledge as arcana, which is to be shared with other sorcerers. As for the detailed, applied magic knowledge like magic models, they are personal secrets that one can keep to oneself.”

“Arcana?” For the first time, Atlant thought deeply without a smile. “It sounds like Douglas is trying to establish an organization that is purely about the communication of arcana? Is it his definition and categorization?”

“We haven’t settled the details yet, but it is indeed our wish. Also, we hope to establish a steady ‘magic building’ on the foundation of this organization. Together, they will be called ‘Congress of Magic’ so that we can resist the Church together.” Fernando did not hide his purpose or raise the issue with tricks. He mentioned everything

straightforwardly.

Atlant nodded. "I'm very interested in the organization that is purely about arcana communication. As for your 'magic building', let's wait and see."

With "Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy", one of the most important books in the history of magic, no sorcerers wouldn't be attracted by an organization with arcana communication. Of course, they would certainly decide which part of their knowledge they would share according to the actual circumstances.

"I'm not surprised by your answer. Really," Fernando said in slight mockery. One of the important reasons for the collapse of the Magic Empire was people's selfishness and irresponsibility. "My purpose is to pull 'Hysterical Dance', well, 'Family of Sorcerers', into the group. As for the future, I believe you will make the right choice."

Besides, as people became used to arcana communication, the academic organization would be more stable, and people would be willing to maintain it. It would be easier to unite them later. Atlant knew Douglas and Fernando's plan very well, and he could not resist it.

Atlant suddenly opened his eyes that were as deep as the cosmos. "I'll wait for you."

"Douglas must've already become a legend, right?"

"Yes, 'Elect of Magic'." Fernando tried to resist Atlant's eyes.

Their communication was simple and fast, and they reached an agreement very soon. When Fernando left the garden, he was suddenly at a loss. In the beginning, Old Fox went through all troubles just to talk legends into cooperation, but his persuasion was so easy. Besides the influence of Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy, it was also because he had a legendary sorcerer on his back, and Old Fox did not.

.....

A year later, having visited this side of the Storm Strait for a long

time, Fernando returned to the Hull Manor provided by Hathaway and saw Douglas again.

“What’s the attitude on the hell’s side?” Fernando asked his concerns without any small talk.

Perhaps because he was too exhausted, Douglas’ hair was partly gray. He said solemnly, “I spent half a year in Burning Metropolis before I was asked to leave hell. I did not meet Maltimus, the Lord of Hell. I didn’t even get to visit the dukes of hell.”

“Is Maltimus showing that he is unwilling to meddle in the main material world?” Fernando frowned. “Considering his scheme-loving personality, how could he let go of such a great change and leave the things of the main material world aside? Has he been taught a lesson by the pope? Or is he covering something?”

“If Maltimus is covering something, with his smartness, he would’ve given me a random promise to get rid of me, but he didn’t do anything, which makes people wonder if he’s covering something up. That’s certainly not his style. So, perhaps his attitude contains the information that he really wants to tell us. For example, through such an attitude, he’s telling me that he is planning a major scheme that must not be leaked or described, and that he is not far away from success. He’s asking us to be prepared and cooperate with him.”

After a brief consideration, Douglas told Fernando his analysis.

Thinking carefully, Fernando said, “This possibility matches Maltimus’ style best.”

“So, we must not be sluggish. In a decade, if it’s short, or a century, if it’s long, something big may happen,” Douglas reminded Fernando.

.....

Twenty years later, in year 398 of the Saint Calendar, inside the greatest swamp of the Duchy of Calais...

A man in a black magic robe was roaming on the mud. He did not

wear any hood, revealing his face that was nothing more than a bag of bones. He was so terribly slim and pale that it was impossible to tell his real age.

His left hand had lost all the colors of vitality. Pale and dim, it was covered in the vague of death. The moment it pressed a seven-headed swamp earthworm, the insect decayed with pus flowing out, turning into an undead creature.

Raising his head that was only slightly better than that of a skeleton, the man looked at the sky and said to himself coarsely, "Shirley, I'm here to pick you up."

"Sorry, I'm late."

As he spoke, he stepped forward. The deep black mud in the swamp suddenly bubbled as if it were boiled water.

Then, the mud was lifted and thrown to the sky, splashing everywhere, and monsters that had been rotten to the bones stood up!

Chapter 905: For Your Return

Chapter 905 For Your Return

Baron Brenzell's manor was much more deserted after the owner was changed several times. Wild grasses grew on the hills behind the manor. Under the morning sunlight, dew was rolling on them.

A dew dropped on a pile of coiled bones, leaving vague wet marks.

The bones of the serpent shivered, but it was back to peace again. Around the creature, there were a winged tiger with rotten furs and flesh and yellowish pus flowing everywhere, tremendous ghouls that spread out their hideousness and stench, and countless ghosts wandering in the sky that were in absolutely no fear of the sunlight... The hills seemed to have become the nether world that was full of undead creatures.

In the middle of the undead creatures, a man, who was nothing more than a skeleton, touched the rocks with his pale, dim left hand and looked at the city with his thoughtful eyes.

At the city gate, a middle-aged man in a bishop's robe was walking to the church solemnly.

"Good morning, Mr. Bishop." Everybody who passed him bowed and greeted him. He was Arroyo, a bishop of the cathedral of the city and a rigorous cleric.

Drawing a cross on his chest, Arroyo blessed habitually. "The Lord protects us all."

Just like that, he slowly reached the entrance of the church. Under the homage of a few knight squires, he stepped on the stairs and entered the gate.

Vague holy light surrounded the gate, making everything solemn and pure.

Arroyo stopped at the center of the hall and prayed devoutly, "Only

Truth lives forever!”

Then, he left from a side door, reporting to the red robe the status of faith in the towns, villages, and manors nearby.

After the report was done, he began to inspect the entire church to check if there was any negligence or disrespect. After the inspection, it would be the time of prayer, repentance, and learning.

It was his monotonous life in the past thirty years, except that he had grown from an intern reverent behind the bishop into the most notable bishop in this church of this city. He had witnessed the rise and decline of many families in the city.

“We must thank the Lord’s blessing.” He prayed sincerely in his heart.

Then, he realized that he reached the room where the transmission circles were deployed. So, he confirmed the intactness of the place with greater wariness, making sure that nobody except the designated personnel came in.

“Very good. Nothing is wrong.” His grim face put on a smile as he looked at the shimmering transmission circle.

Suddenly, he frowned, feeling that the transmission circle was so evil that it was like a gate to hell or abyss.

An idea automatically popped up in his head. Some cleric has betrayed, and the Lord of Hell is invading this place!

“No, it must be destroyed!” The moment he made up his mind, he suddenly had the understanding that he could not destroy the transmission circles quickly enough with his divine power. The only solution was to concentrate his power and detonate himself!

With a strong sense of sacrifice, he stepped forward and announced, “Only Truth lives forever!”

The few reverends who followed him were stunned at the holy light that was emanating from Arroyo. Then, the whole world was reduced into darkness after an explosion.

BOOM!

The transmission circles were blown apart, and the room simply collapsed.

The red robe who supervised the most important church sensed it in utmost shock. He could not believe that a bishop would betray the Lord and destroy the Lord's transmission circles voluntarily.

Then, two ninth-circle spells popped up in his head. Brain Scourge and Memory Meddling!

However, even a legendary sorcerer couldn't have played the two spells so marvelously that the victims would help him achieve his purpose voluntarily without any resistance!

Such sorcerers were most difficult to resist, and they were most dreadful!

BOOM!

In another place of the city, the core that controlled the divine power circles was drowned by the brilliance of self-detonation too.

BOOM! BOOM!

After hearing the two consecutive explosions, the slender man at the center of the hills outside of the city stood up. His eyes were both gentle and cruel.

Hooooooooo!

The undead creatures on the hills, in simultaneous howls of death, rose from the ground overwhelmingly.

The slender man floated toward the city. Behind and below him were the undead creatures who had returned from the abyss of revenge!

The guards at the city gate were checking the people who were entering the city when they suddenly sensed that the sky was dark. They raised their heads subconsciously, only to tremble in fear and

paleness.

In the sky, the monsters who had nothing but bones and rotten meat left obscured the sun and brought death. Amid them was an evil necromancer who did not wear a hood.

Their legs trembled, and they collapsed on the ground. The people in lines ran about in fright, only to fall too as the army of undead creatures drew near.

The undead creatures did not let out any noise or go on a rampage. Ignoring those people, they flooded to the gate, entering the city through the gate, over the wall, or from the sky.

“Enemy incoming!”

Clerics and knights stood up from different places of the city, confronting the necromancer in the sky.

The necromancer seemed to be in a trance. He mumbled to himself, “I am Vicente. I am back...”

“Kill him!” Holy light and long spears were tossed at Vicente.

With immense hatred on his dry face, Vicente raised his head and let out a devastating howl.

As the sound waves spread out, many fuzzy banshees were dancing. All the flying clerics and knights hit the ground like raindrops. Those who could not fly trembled in fear as they watched it.

Vicente’s face became cold. Looking at the red robe who was struggling to resist Banshee Wailing, he raised his left hand and pointed at the red robe.

Countless streaks of black hair immediately burst out of the red robe’s body. He became as withered as a corpse. Then, he fell from midair helplessly, splitting into multiple pieces, but there was not a drop of blood.

Vicente looked down at the city and suddenly descended, landing before a middle-aged knight who was holding a longsword.

“Don’t... Don’t... Don’t kill me...” The middle-aged knight waved his eyes in panic and moved backward. The knights around him were too frightened to help him.

Vicente said coarsely and earsplittingly, “Andrew.”

“You... You know me. You... You are Vicente!” Andrew’s eyes widened as he recognized the terrifying necromancer before him. The man looked exactly the same as twenty years ago except that his face did not have the slightest flesh anymore!

Vicente walked to Andrew slowly. “It was you who reported me and killed Shirley.”

“It... It was none of my business. ‘Crazy Hound’ did it. I never thought that Shirley would get killed.” Andrew was almost in tears.

“Crazy Hound? Where is he?” Vicente asked coldly, ready to invade his brain if he did not get an answer.

Andrew was willing to confess anything to save himself. “‘Crazy Hound’ is appreciated by the grand cardinal of the duchy for killing a lot of sorcerers and promoted to Cocus.”

“Cocus? I will find you...” Vicente looked toward the north. His eyes were full of coldness and irresolvable hate.

Then, he stared at Andrew again. “Who else was involved?”

“There... There’s also Lotell, Goon, the Tamer, and the Bone Digger. They are in the Inquisition here.” Andrew revealed the names of all the people who were involved in the case.

“Very good, to thank you for your honesty, I will not kill you in person.” Vicente put on a cruel smile. The army of the undead creatures behind him raged forward and drowned Andrew.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

Miserable and painful screams echoed nonstop while the undead creatures ripped and swallowed Andrew’s flesh until there was nothing but bones left.

Vicente looked at the nobles who were gathered in the place. After they pushed Lotell and Goon out, he waved his hands, rotting the two nobles and turning them into zombies.

“Vicente, we had nothing to do with what happened. We are very sorry about the death of the Brenzells too. We will not stop you from seeking your revenge, but please do not kill the innocents.” The knight in the lead tried to calm down and begged sincerely.

Vicente said coldly, “You could’ve saved her, but you didn’t do anything.”

Then, the army of the undead creatures surged forward, consuming all the nobles.

After several minutes, Vicente reached the gate of the Inquisition on piles of bones. Most of the night watchers here, including the Tamer, had been killed in the battle just now.

“The Lord will not spare you!” The remaining interrogators in the Inquisition glared at Vicente.

Without saying a word, Vicente simply let the army of the undead creatures devour them, leaving only screams and the Bone Digger whose hair had been grayed.

“I only regret that I did not find out your whereabouts!” The Bone Digger seemed zealous and devoted.

“You’ll have plenty of time for regrets,” Vicente said coarsely and softly, not intending to argue with him.

Pale fire emerged from the soul of the Bone Digger, burning him and making him cry in pain.

“The Lord will... Ahhh! ... will punish you!

“NOOOOOOOOO!

“Ahh! Damn it. Have mercy! Have mercy!

“Have mercy!”

Vicente walked to the cemetery without looking back, leaving the begging man behind. Gradually, the screams died down. Since the ordinary people were too scared to breathe, the whole city was as quiet as if it were dead.

In such silence, Vicente entered the cemetery and reached the tomb that he had seen too many times in his dreams.

The tomb opened without a sound, and the coffin rose straightly.

Vicente walked to one side of the coffin, fell on one of his knees, and opened the coffin gently.

“Shirley, I’m here to pick you up.” As the gap grew larger and larger, his cold eyes were more and more tender, filled with love and guilt.

Inside the coffin, a skeleton was lying quietly.

Vicente leaned down and kissed the mouth of the skeleton softly. As if he were in a dream, he said, “Shirley, it will be fine. Everything will be fine. We will be together forever.”

A tear dropped from his eye onto Shirley’s face.

Corrupt the soul and pursue death, not for an eternal life, but for your return!

Chapter 906: Undercurrents

Chapter 906 Undercurrents

The rotten mud was releasing a strong smell. A wild wolf, having barged into the place in panic, was deeply mired in it. Howling, it tried to pull its leg out, only to be trapped deeper and deeper, until the mud consumed its ears and nose and interrupted the screaming.

It was what Vicente saw when he returned to the swamps. The place where he was usually active was now occupied by a creepy man in black.

All the parts on the man that was exposed to the air had nothing but bones left. Red, needle-like fire was bouncing in his hollow eyes. His clothes were filled with unusual patterns sewed with glamorous gold lines.

Noticing Vicente's return, he asked with a voice as depressing as the dead, "Where have you been? An envoy from the Congress of Magic is coming."

Vicente replied casually, "I visited home and took care of some stuff."

By the way, I picked up Shirley.

"You visited home? You took care of some stuff? Did you destroy the church and the Inquisition in the city?" The black-robed lich exclaimed in shock and fury, "Do you have any idea what great trouble you are bringing us into? Do you want our organization to be destroyed?"

Now that the Church had absolute advantages, the massacre by a necromancer would definitely be regarded as the greatest provocation. It would lead to the hunting of legends!

"Congus, it's my business. If you are unsatisfied, I can withdraw from the organization." Vicente replied simply without any argument.

The lich was exactly Archmage Congus, the leader of “Supreme Soul”. In the incident of Cocus, he managed to survive with the many life-preserving skills of the school of necromancy. However, “Supreme Soul” suffered a destructive blow later, and only a few members escaped. He had to lie low for quite a while.

A few years later, when the situation was less intense, he left his shelter and tried to reorganize “Supreme Soul”. Then, he accidentally learned that the Liege of Death’s demiplane was never discovered by the Church and seemed to have automatically closed. Therefore, he returned to the swamps near Cocus to search for the possible leads on the Liege of Death’s demiplane. Out of his expectation, he discovered Vicente Miranda, a self-made necromancer, in the swamps.

With only a few commonly-seen magic books on necromancy and the incomplete materials in the swamps, the man became an official sorcerer after only a couple of years. Congus, who intended to reorganize “Supreme Soul”, appreciated him and brought Vicente into “Supreme Soul”, promising that he would offer guidance.

However, what happened in the following twenty years made Congus unable to believe his eyes. Perhaps due to his lack of formal magic education, this Vicente Miranda had many ideas that were the opposites of the principles in necromancy, but for the same reason, he had succeeded in rectifying and improving many principles of necromancy. He made quite a few major breakthroughs in body structure and circulation. Receiving the feedback from the real world many times, he reached the ninth circle at a speed that Congus could not imagine!

Twenty-eight years, growing from nothing to an archmage. He was definitely a genius among the geniuses. Even in the heyday of the Magic Empire, there were few people who could compare to the record in Congus’ knowledge. Even Thanos, the Sun King known as the strongest sorcerer, took a longer time than Vicente did due to the specialties of Untraceable Destiny.

Of course, Congus had also gained tremendous benefits from Vicente’s breakthroughs. Together with Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy and Basics of Calculus from the Congress of

Magic, his cognitive world was close to half solidification, and he was confident to break into the legendary level in fifty years.

So, Congus had complicated feelings about Vicente. He planned to treat and groom the man as a student, but the man had become as strong as himself so quickly that he, who had been busy re-establishing the organization, did not have the time to really bond with him.

However, Congus did not intend to suppress Vicente to ensure his power, because he knew that Vicente had perhaps sacrificed part of his flesh through a certain unique item. Otherwise, he couldn't have become an official sorcerer in such a poor environment with few materials. If he wanted to become a legend, he would need more theoretical breakthroughs and more time than Congus did. By then, Vicente would bow before him in respect without him doing anything.

Hearing Vicente's simple and cold reply, Congus held back his fury and said, "I trust that it will not happen again?"

"There's a 'Crazy Hound' in Cocus." Vicente did not hide it.

"Only one night watcher?" Congus was relieved. "I'll ask our branches and the other organizations to lie low for now."

Vicente nodded. "Who has come from the Congress of Magic?"

He was quite interested because he had read Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy and Basics of Calculus in Congus' place and was quite shocked by the ideas in them. He also applied them to his studies in body structure and circulation. Had he not picked up calculus, he couldn't have constructed magic models so easily or set a record of advancement however brilliant he was.

Therefore, even though he looked indifferent, he had been longing to meet Derrick Douglas, the author of the two books.

Congus floated before Vicente. "It's Fernando, one of the co-authors of Basics of Calculus."

He too had complicated feelings about the Congress of Magic. On

one hand, he resisted their intention to annex “Supreme Soul”, but on the other hand, he appreciated them for publicly sharing Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy and Basics of Calculus.

“I can meet him.” Vicente touched the magic pouch in his pocket.

.....

In the forest where the Supreme Soul was hidden...

It was the day of which a small fair was being held, where people could exchange magic materials and books, so the place was lively and noisy. Vicente and Congus bypassed it and stepped into an underground palace.

“The meeting will be held half an hour later.” Congus sat behind his desk.

Vicente did not say anything. He stopped before Congus’ bookshelf, took out a thick book, and read it carefully.

Half an hour passed before anyone realized it. At this moment, the sorcerer at the reception brought in a lady who was as bright as fire.

“Fernando?” Congus asked in uncertainty because the gorgeous lady was too different from Fernando.

Fernando nodded. “The night watchers got their eyes on me. I have to change a bit before I go out.”

He pulled his belt. His breasts immediately collapsed, and he became a stout handsome man.

Looking at the transformation, Vicente said in disgust, “Pervert.”

Born a normal person, he always respected gender boundaries. Even if he needed to change himself, he would only focus on height and appearance.

Fernando was immediately enraged. “It’s better than you who

makes everyone throw up the moment they see you!”

Vicente did not reply. He was too lazy to squabble with him.

Fernando lost momentum after his roars met no response, so he turned to look at Congus. “I would like to meet the author of ‘Theories of Body Structure and Circulation’.”

Recently, Congus had compiled Vicente’s research into books and traded them for the latest accomplishments of Douglas, Fernando, and one mysterious “Miss Silvery”.

Congus raised his skeleton hand and pointed at Vicente. “You just met him.”

“Huh?” Having become an archmage, Fernando finally noticed how young Vicente, who was also an archmage, was!

In the fair outside...

It was the first time that Oliver, who kept a mustache, had participated in such a lively magic fair with his friends. He searched for beautiful sorceresses while he looked at the magic books casually.

After twenty years, due to the lack of books and guidance, he was still at the fifth circle.

“Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy, Basics of Calculus... What are they exactly?” Having been hiding here and there, Oliver barely took part in any gatherings. Many things and many books were unknown to him.

The dealer looked at him as if he were a bumpkin. “Just take a look and you’ll see.”

“Huh. I can read them?” Oliver picked up the books.

After a while, he already forgot to pursue beautiful sorceresses or anything around him. He was completely devoted to the world in the books.

Such books!

Such theories!

.....

In the Bright Hall in Lance, the Holy City...

Aradeline, a level-nine red robe, walked into the sacred room in awe. He did not dare to raise his head before he paid respects to Pope Gregory.

At the beginning of this year, His Holiness killed the Mother God of the Earth with “God’s Arrival”, completely banishing sorcerers, dark creatures, and heretical churches into the Dark Mountain Range. It also marked the complete doom of the Sylvanas Magic Empire, the last of the three Magic Empires!

After paying respects to the pope, Aradeline realized that Ivan, the strongest saint, was also in the Bright Hall waiting for the pope’s instructions.

“You will organize the grand cardinals and the legendary knights to patrol along the edge of the Dark Mountain Range. Be prepared to conquer the place in fifteen years.” Pope Gregory calculated the time of his recovery and added some more time.

Ivan, who was handsome and masculine, lowered his head. “As you wish, Your Holiness.”

Watching Ivan leave, Gregory narrowed his eyes. Although he was not worried about the betrayal of saints with his trump cards like Excommunication, he still took precautions out of habit. For example, he kept Ivan busy in the Holy City or the Dark Mountain Range without allowing him to return to the north where he rose from. Also, he had dispatched the few grand cardinals close to him to different parishes.

After a brief silence, Gregory said to Aradeline kindly, “I appoint you as the bishop of the Snow Cathedral in the North Province of the Schachran Empire. I hope that you can work with Felix well.”

Sending his own men to the place was also one of the precautions.

“Of course, Your Holiness,” Aradeline answered anxiously.

Chapter 907: Gathering

907 Gathering “Hey, are you buying them or not? Don’t stand in the way of my exchange.” Seeing that Oliver read and studied “Mathematical Principles of Magical Philosophy” and “Basics of Calculus” before his stand in fascination, the dealer drove him away angrily.

“Huh?” Oliver shivered hard, coming back from the feeling as wonderful as Mountain Paradise. He waved the books hard. “Yes, I’ll buy them! Which organization are the authors from?”

He couldn’t wait to meet the sorcerers who had created such a marvelous mathematical system and astonishing theories and express his excitement.

Although he only skimmed through the books due to his lack of knowledge, he still sensed the pure beauty of mathematics and the shock of gravity that was beyond its age.

“Mr. Douglas of the Congress of Magic wrote them. The co-authors of ‘Basics of Calculus’ also include ‘Ms. Silvery’ and Mr. Fernando of the Congress of Magic,” the dealer said with obvious respect when he mentioned them.

In delight, Oliver took out a low-quality Wave Stone and packed up the books and the other materials he selected. He mumbled to himself, “The Congress of Magic! They’re all from the Congress of Magic! I’m going to join the Congress of Magic!”

The books of such a level were an unparalleled shock for a beginner!

After a few murmurs, he raised his head and stared at the dealer; his eyes glittering. The dealer stepped back in fear and said obscurely, “I... I never sold any unqualified goods.”

“Could you tell you where I can join the Congress of Magic?” Oliver asked in excitement.

Slightly relieved, the dealer said angrily, "If I knew it, I would've joined it myself!"

Then, he said seriously, "Over the past twenty years, the Church has been keeping the pressure on us. All the organizations can only develop in secret. How can you join them so easily?"

"I'm sure I can find the answer!" Oliver already made up his mind. Even though the Congress of Magic had few sorceresses, he would have to join them!

Therefore, he asked everyone in the fair and did not stop even though he was disappointed again and again. He paid a fortune for that.

However, his obvious action assured the sorcerers who watched over the fair that he was not a night watcher.

Finally, for the sake of "Soul Stone", one of the sorcerers gave him a tip. "Mr. Fernando of the Congress of Magic is visiting the place. You can go and wait there."

He pointed at a trail in the woods outside of the fair.

"Mr. Fernando?" Oliver was excited again and rushed to the trail to wait there.

The guards of the place spared someone to keep an eye on him, in case he leaked the intelligence.

After a dozen minutes, Oliver saw a stout man in a red robe, a lich, and a skinny man walking from the turn of the road.

"Although you are a horrible person, your 'Theories of Body Structure and Circulation' is worth a read," Fernando, who barely praised anyone, said.

Coldly, Vicente said, "Although you are a pervert, you know what you are doing when it comes to calculus."

He did not give in at all.

Fernando sniffed, holding his urge to roar with the desire for arcana communication. Within the Congress of Magic, Vicente's theories had been categorized as arcana.

He had a fairly good understanding of body structure too. His communication with Vicente and Congus went rather well.

Standing not far away behind and listening to them discussing theories that he could not follow at all, Oliver immediately felt that he had just entered the gate of magic, and a whole world was out there waiting to be explored by him.

"One day, I will join them in the discussions of the world and human bodies!" Oliver clenched his fists and set his goal.

At this moment, Oliver was almost certain that the short, red-robed sorcerer was Mr. Fernando, so he waited anxiously. When the three of them approached him, he stepped over and bowed in the standard etiquette of sorcerers. "Esteemed Mr. Fernando, I am a student who admires Mr. Douglas and you for your vast knowledge. I'm wondering if I could join the Congress of Magic and receive your guidance."

After that, he stood where he was uneasily, fearing that he would be declined and miss the opportunity.

After being stunned briefly, Fernando said seriously, "The Congress of Magic welcomes every sorcerer, but we have to make one thing clear first. Everybody who joins the Congress has to accept the atmosphere of open discussions and the stipulation that arcana is publicized to all the other sorcerers in the form of papers. Of course, the authors of such papers will be rewarded by the Congress of Magic and every reader."

"Arcana?" Oliver asked in confusion.

Fernando explained the definition of arcana, before he asked again, "Can you accept it?"

Oliver thought for a moment. Other than the magic models and some casting tricks, he did not have many arcana theories that

deserved to be kept a secret, so he solemnly nodded his head. “Yes, Mr. Fernando.”

Not expecting that joining the Congress of Magic was so easy, Oliver was so happy that he felt unreal.

Fernando nodded his head. “However, until then, you have to receive our vetting. After all, we cannot allow any night watcher to sneak in.”

“That’s not a problem.” Oliver’s sense of unreality was gone, and he was back to the ground.

Listening to the conversation between Fernando and Oliver, Vicente felt that he was not needed here, so he turned around and left.

.....

In the Snow Cathedral...

Looking at the files at hand, Aradeline looked at the level-seven red robe who was in charge of the Inquisition in obvious discontent. “Why haven’t you captured the nobles? They are guilty of conspiring with sorcerers!”

The red robe said respectfully but without fear, “Mr. Aradeline, they are only suspects. We do not have any proof. The Lord teaches us not to punish anyone easily.”

“Proof? We don’t have any proof?” Grimly, Aradeline threw a book to the red robe. “Have you never read ‘Maul of Sorcerers’?”

The red robe glanced at the cover and said calmly, “Having been promoted to be an inquisitor from a night watcher, Crazy Hound certainly has a lot of experience. His ideas and approaches are very suitable to the places where the sorcerers are blatantly active, but Mr. Aradeline, this is the north where we developed first at the beginning. We have the purest faith. The nobles are trustworthy. They cannot be compared to their counterparts in Holm.”

Aradeline stared at the red robe with fury in his eyes, almost accusing him of misprision and betraying the Lord. However, when

he remembered other similar things that he saw in the North Province, he held back his fury and nodded his head. “Whatever it is, we need to ask more if they are suspects.”

After the red robe left, he narrowed his eyes with a heavy heart. Something was not right with the North Province. He had to investigate in secret.

.....

Another twenty years passed, and it was the end of year 424 of the Saint Calendar.

Aradeline was as grim as before when he read the thick pile of documents before him. The problems of the North Province were graver than he thought. Many clerics conspired with nobles, accepted bribes, relished entertainments, and forgot that the sorcerers were not extinct yet and the war in the Dark Mountain Range was not won. Also, they seemed to have different opinions about the doctrines!

Everything was obviously led by someone in the upper level. All the leads pointed to the few level-nine red robes in this parish, who were all big shots who watched over the major churches like himself.

During the last twenty years, Aradeline eliminated obstacles and found clues bit by bit. Finally, he completed the preliminary investigation recently and decided to unveil the scheme.

According to the protocol, he had to report to Saint Felix, the grand cardinal of this parish, first.

He had never questioned the loyalty of Felix. As a matter of fact, no clerics had ever betrayed the Church so far. “Excommunication” and the existence of God prevented it from happening. So, he defined what happened here as addiction to entertainment and lack of devotion. A saint, who had got rid of the basic desires, would certainly not dwell in entertainments, nor would he be impious, or the Lord wouldn’t have granted him such great power.

Picking up the files, Aradeline reached the cathedral Felix was in through a transmission circle. He waited for ten minutes before Felix met him.

“The situation is very terrible.” Felix turned the materials and read carefully for a while before he reached the conclusion solemnly.

Aradeline agreed with him. “Yes, Saint Felix. We have to educate them soon.”

Looking at the closed door, Felix said to Aradeline, “You go and draft a plan first. Let’s discuss it.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” Aradeline bowed and turned around.

After only a few steps, he suddenly sensed the arrival of a horrifying holy light, and his mind was slowed to the minimum.

Before he sank into eternal darkness, he struggled to turn his head, only to discover that Saint Felix just dropped his right hand with a smile of mockery on his lips.

On Dec. 21, 424, Aradeline, bishop of the Snow Cathedral of the North Province of the Schachran Empire, was ambushed by sorcerers who conspired with devils and was unfortunately killed. The Holy City was shocked.

.....

In a place similar to a theater, the seats around the dais at the center had all been taken.

“Therefore, I don’t think that earth, fire, wind, and water are equal to elements. Rather, each of them should be regarded as a force...” Oliver waved his arm and spoke to the people below him confidently.

Chapter 908: Gradual Movemen

Chapter 908 Gradual Movemen

Inside the pope's library in the Holy City...

"Your Holiness, there's a piece of secret intelligence from the north." A red robe delivered the confidential file sent by the transmission circle in reverence.

Pope Gregory took over the letter and opened it, reading it carefully. The red robe, on the other hand, waited for his instruction, ready to dispatch His Holiness' order to all the parishes.

"Maltimus has secretly controlled a city in the Schachran Empire that is closed to the northwest of the Dark Mountain Range. He's planning to arrive through blood sacrifice." The pope appeared rather shocked. It was obvious that he did not expect that the Lord of Hell could have done so much right under his nose. It seemed that years of victories and the chaos at the edge of the Dark Mountain Range had blinded the clerics.

If Aradeline hadn't been murdered for accidentally discovering the conspiracy of hiding sorcerers and devils, which forced the dozen parishes in the north to investigate with full strength, he probably wouldn't have known anything until the Lord of Hell arrived.

Slightly riled, he picked up the platinum staff and rose abruptly before he announced, "Summon Ivan and Gwent to Godfrey City to the northwest of the Dark Mountain Range. I shall purge the polluted land myself."

He did not go there alone recklessly. After all, his enemy was a demigod. If he defeated Maltimus with a high price, it was possible that the stealthy Silver Moon would arrive from the sky. So, he summoned two saints to Godfrey City. One of them was a top legend, and the other was close to the peak of legendary. In such a way, there wouldn't be any problem.

"Understood, Your Holiness." The red robe began to draft the order.

Thinking for a moment, Gregory nodded. “In the meantime, compliment Felix for his remarkable investigation, which will offset his punishment for letting Aradeline be killed.”

“As you wish,” the red robe said respectfully.

After leaving his seal on the order, Gregory stepped into the transmission circle, planning to destroy the Lord of Hell’s hope before his arrival.

.....

An hour later, in the high sky of Godfrey City...

Gregory looked down below grimly without saying anything.

Ivan, who had golden hair, scratched his rising nose and said solemnly, “We’re still late.”

The city down below had been entirely enshrouded in blood. Painful and yet somewhat charming screams were bursting out. In the middle of the blood, corpses were floating up and down. It was most dreadful.

At the center of the city, a hideous gate, which was engraved with the skulls of countless devils and humans, was disappearing. The intense stink of sulfur was rising.

Gregory sniffed. “It’s not late. At least, Maltimus hasn’t got out of here yet.”

His greatest concern was that Maltimus would escape and instigate trouble everywhere instead of fighting him upon arrival. With the guy’s strength as a demigod and his cunningness, the “country of faith” under the God of Truth would be mired in continual trouble, and the sorcerers, dark creatures, and heretical churches that hadn’t been wiped out yet would have a chance to catch their breath.

If a demigod was determined to run whenever he sensed something wrong, it would be quite tricky even though the pope had God’s Arrival.

After saying that, he raised his right hand without any hesitation. Raising the platinum staff high, he said solemnly, “The Almighty God of Truth, you are one, and everyone.

“You are the moment, and forever.

“You are the creator, and master.”

Streaks of holy light burst out from his body and flowed on the surface, making him dazzlingly sacred.

In the meantime, the magnificent, solemn, divine, and transcendental vibe descended from unknown heights and completely covered the city.

Inside the city, a fuzzy shadow that had a pair of goat horns appeared. Releasing the horrible air of evil and corruption, it tried to get away from the locking of God’s Arrival.

Behind the creature, the nine-floored hell appeared in turns. The Bronze Castle, the Burning Metropolis, and the Silent Plain seemed real.

In all the cities nearby, the believers knelt and prayed, feeling touched. There were indescribable warmth and peace around them.

“You are one, and everyone.

“You are the moment, and forever.”

...

The prayer came to the sky of Godfrey City, hollow, vast, and shocking.

In the sky, the projection of Mountain Paradise showed up. The angels and the holy spirits all prayed, and hymns were echoing nonstop.

Gregory slightly narrowed his eyes and waved his platinum staff gravely.

From the seventh floor of Mountain Paradise, infinite light broke out and gathered into an ocean of holy light, drowning Godfrey City.

“NOOOOOOOO!”

Miserable screams came from inside the city. The enormous evil figure quickly collapsed.

Everything was soon over. The whole city disappeared from the surface of the planet.

Gregory’s face was pale, and his right hand was shivering beyond his control, but his voice was still rather steady. “Compliment Felix again. His intelligence is invaluable.”

It would’ve been a major disaster if he were slightly late.

“As you command, Your Holiness,” Ivan and Gwent said at the same time.

Gregory nodded his head. “Alright, return to the Holy City with me.”

From what he could see, the Silver Moon probably wouldn’t take any action.

At this moment, Ivan asked concernedly, “Your Holiness, should we postpone the Highest Conference of the Church next month until next year?”

“No, let’s stick to our schedule.” Gregory reviewed himself and felt that he was still in good shape. So, he was unwilling to show other people that he was weak. After all, he had rested for enough years, and he did not use God’s Arrival twice in a row.

“Alright, Your Holiness.” Ivan drew a cross on his chest and prayed in a low voice, “Only Truth lives forever.”

.....

“Oliver has redefined the four elements and included gravity in

them. Then, what are elements really? They require strict definitions. I believe that there is a myriad of elements in this world. For example, it's impossible that gold, silver, and sulfur are the same element. They do not have many experimental similarities." Hathaway was never afraid to reveal her poor verbal skills during arcana discussions. Her silver eyes were full of excitement.

Douglas nodded. "That's a great idea. I feel that I'm enlightened."

Before he finished his sentence, Fernando walked in gloomily and said, "The Lord of Hell has been blown back to hell by the pope."

"What happened?" Douglas asked, frowning.

Fernando described the intelligence he received in great detail. In the end, he concluded, "I thought that he had a great scheme. So, it was nothing more than a secret arrival, which hadn't really been kept a secret at all. He was discovered by the Church in advance and enjoyed a 'God's Arrival'. What an idiot."

"Do you really think the Lord of Hell is an idiot?" Douglas showed unusual excitement.

Fernando thought for a moment but had to admit it. "He's not an idiot, so..."

He paused, because he thought of something critical.

Other people might be unaware that the Lord of Hell had been planning a major scheme since decades ago, but Fernando knew it very well!

"Therefore, the fact that he is blown back to hell by God's Arrival means that the real big scheme is upcoming. Otherwise, he wouldn't have come in person to distract the pope's attention with his heavy wounds as a price. Our opportunity will come in half a year at most." Douglas stood up abruptly as his excitement was replaced by calmness.

Fernando nodded and agreed with Douglas' deduction. Hathaway also rose and said with mixed feelings, "I'll go inform my grandpa."

The Sword of Truth was almost four hundred years old, and he had suffered heavy wounds in the fierce battles in the past when he always led the charge valiantly. He was now teetering at the end of his life. Also, ten years ago, a legendary ritual did not really succeed, and his longevity was only extended by thirty years. So, if there was still not an opportunity, the Congress of Magic probably would lose the firm ally who had been disappointed by the Church.

As a king, Hoffenberg could not tolerate the restraints on nobles right now.

“This opportunity comes a bit early. None of you has become a legend yet. We are still relatively weak,” Douglas said with mixed feelings. After the Congress was established, Fernando and Hathaway revealed brilliant talents, and so did Oliver who joined later than them. They all showed the potentials of being a legend. In other organizations that were in partnership with them, thanks to the Congress of Magic’s dissemination of knowledge, Vicente, Erica, Owen, Thomas, Terrie, and many other people were also making remarkable progress. They were regarded as future legends, but the time was still too short for the new-generation legends to be born.

“Hu. In any case, now that the opportunity has come, we cannot evade it.” Even a man as carefree as Fernando sighed. If they failed again, it would be barely possible for them to rise again.

“Thankfully, both Congus and Amanata are legends now. Together with the Lord of Frigidity, the Eye of Curse, and me, we are at least as good as the nobles in Holm.” Douglas smiled and comforted them.

Fernando chuckled. “You are a monster who can unleash the power of the peak even though you are only on level three. It’s a pity that it will take some more time before you really reach the peak.”

“There are as many unknowns in this world as there are stars. For an arcanist, there is never a peak,” Douglas replied subtly.

Hathaway suddenly interjected, “I’ve reestablished the Will of Elements.”

“Huh?” Fernando looked at her in confusion, wondering why she reestablished the Will of Elements. Was she considering withdrawing from the Congress?

“In the future, when the Congress starts to merge other organizations instead of uniting with them, the Will of Elements will be an example.” Hathaway had considered it for a long time and therefore said rather fluently.

Fernando’s lips twitched. “It’s really visionary of you...”

However, it’s certainly not a bad thing to have great hopes.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves but be fully prepared and seize this opportunity!” Douglas took a breath and clenched his right hand subconsciously.

Chapter 909: Chasers of Ligh

Chapter 909 Chasers of Ligh

In the Holy City, the Bright Hall was in the highest place, and the Hall of Scriptures of the Saint Biso Seminary was only second to it.

This building looked like the arena in the Sank Kingdom. It was flat at the center with a magnificent podium. There was not a dome. The seats around rose in circles to dozens of meters high.

Whoever stood at the center would see nothing but the countless people from the auditorium that were staring at him, and the pressure could be enormous. The sun in the high sky shone with a golden brilliance, as if God were watching the place, adding to the sacredness in the environment.

At the sunset, the remaining radiance of the sun beamed into the hall and covered everything in brilliant gold.

In the dazzling gold, however, the whole hall kept a weird silence, as if something horrifying was brewing and was about to break out.

“You are the incarnation of the Lord of Hell and the greatest devil. You stole the Lord’s power in the world while He is asleep!”

His words were still echoing in the hall and everyone’s heart, so deafening that everybody felt like they were dreaming.

Ever since the establishment of the Church, has anyone questioned the pope in public?

Ever since the establishment of the Church, has anyone disrespect the pope?

Ever since the establishment of the Church, has anyone accused the pope of being the incarnation of devils?

Can devils perform “God’s Arrival” and lead us to defeat sorcerers, dark creatures, and the heretical churches?

Feeling absurd and ridiculous, all the clerics were stunned. They looked at the pope, who was grim on the podium, and Saint Ivan down below, who seemed to be covered in a golden coat!

What's going on?

Why is the strongest and most pious saint opposing the pope?

Is he not scared of "Excommunication"?

At this moment, some said aloud, "According to the Canon, the Lord teaches us not to admire or worship idols. So, we only establish crosses. However, you have publicly announced that you are the incarnation of the Lord and His spokesperson in the world. You ask us to admire and obey you. That's only something that devils do!"

Another... Another person is accusing His Holiness to be an incarnation of the Lord of Hell!

The clerics in the hall were stunned. They then discovered that Saint Felix was walking toward Saint Ivan from the back. Then, they saw that Aleksey and Uriel, another two saints, left the crowd, followed by seven saint cardinals!

So many saints and sirs support Saint Ivan?

Is... Is His Holiness really the greatest devil?

"This is absurd! His Holiness has just heavily wounded the Lord of Hell with God's Arrival and driven him back to hell!" Saint Gwent attacked the traitors angrily.

"How can he convince other people otherwise?" Ivan declared resolutely.

Pope Gregory pressed his left hand and stopped the other saints from arguing with Ivan. He raised his platinum staff and said solemnly, "Whoever betrays the Lord will be deprived of his glory and caged in hell forever!"

Words were useless. The grace of the Lord would prove everything.

The golden brilliance suddenly turned ivory, sacred, and holy. The holy light on Ivan, Felix, and the rest of them flew out and dispersed in the sky.

“Excommunication?”

“Excommunication!”

All the clerics shivered. That was the best proof of the pope’s identity. If he were not the Lord’s Executor on earth, why on earth could he deprive the other clerics of the Lord’s blessing?

Saint Ivan must’ve been deceived!

However, they sincerely hoped that the pope would only punish the leaders. After all, it would be a heavy loss for the Saint Truth if so many saints and saint cardinals were lost.

Suddenly, Ivan opened his arms, as if he were embracing the people and the world.

Countless tiny angels surfaced around him, singing and praising him in hallowed hymns.

A giant hole was torn apart in the void up above, and the projection of Mountain Paradise appeared. Spots of holy light flew out and gathered into a pair of sacred, inviolable, lustrous wings!

“Excommunication” was eliminated, and Ivan’s vibe rose, giving the clerics feelings that were to the pope’s vibe.

“Devil! Open your eyes. This is the blessing of the Lord!” Ivan announced. “Our divine powers came from the Lord, and nobody except the Lord can take it back. Only devils will try to pretend that they can deprive us of our abilities. That’s the evidence that he’s stealing the Lord’s power!”

Although it was highly illogical, the clerics couldn’t tell it now. Even the pope’s supporters were astounded. Excommunication did not work! Ivan was close to the demigod level!

Could it be...

They were unwilling and dared not to think further!

“Your power is from the devils. Only devils are immune to Excommunication!” Gregory said before he raised the platinum staff.

Everybody was alarmed. Was it God’s Arrival?

At this moment, the sun was disappearing, and a silver moon seemed to be rising in the sky!

After a brief hesitation, Gregory performed “Light of Judgment”.

Ivan did not intend to fight the pope in the middle of so many saints and saint cardinals. The wings made of godhood on his back flapped quickly and blocked “Light of Judgment”, and the rebels activated the one-time legendary items they prepared in advance, vanishing from the spot.

Only by a public barrage could the pope’s years of intimidation be broken so that they could better develop in the future. They had to take the risk!

Not expecting that they would flee immediately, Gregory was one step late. He ordered with an awful face, “Ivan, Felix... have been corrupted by the devils and betrayed the Lord. All the grand cardinals, except for those who are watching over local parishes, will follow me to purge them in the north!”

In the Cathedrals of Seraphs in Olenburg, capital of the Schachran Empire...

Expressionless knights broke into the church. Under the leadership of some clerics, they began to arrest the so-called “heretics”.

Ivan, Felix, and the rest of them, after reaching the cathedral through the transmission circle, immediately changed its structure in case the pope came directly.

“Did everything go well?” In the cathedral, a man wearing a crown asked solemnly. He was as brawny as a bear and had a funny nose.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” Felix answered on behalf of Ivan.

The man was Rostov II, a level-three legendary knight and the current emperor of the Schachran Empire.

Smiling, he bowed at Ivan respectfully. “Please be crowned as the pontiff, Saint Ivan!”

“Please be crowned as the pontiff, Saint Ivan!” Felix and the rest of them also paid respects.

His face unchanged, Ivan raised his right hand and said solemnly, “I shall eliminate the heretics and restore the glory of the Lord with the pious believers!”

In 425 of the Saint Calendar, during the Highest Conference of the Church, the grand cardinals including Ivan revolted, resulting in the schism of the Church.

.....

In the Dark Mountain Range, a night watcher checked the time. After confirming that the Highest Conference of the Church should be over, he strode to the headquarters of the Dark Congress that had just been established.

“I am an emissary from the New Saint Truth. I would like to meet Danisos and Dracula.”

.....

When the Highest Conference of the Church was held, Douglas, sensing something, invited “Family of Sorcerers”, “Supreme Soul”, “Cabin of Palmeira”, “Will of Elements”, “Shadow Singers”, and other forces for a meeting.

Outside of the magic tower, the sorcerers below the level of archmage talked and exchanged items. Inside the magic tower, the legendary sorcerers and the archmages discussed the situation.

At this moment, Douglas changed his face. His demiplane appeared behind his back and shivered.

“According to the intelligence from hell, Saint Ivan accused the pope to be an incarnation of devils during the Highest Conference of the Church and established a New Saint Truth in the Schachran Empire. He has the support of three saints, seven saint cardinals, all the grand cardinals in the north, and all the legendary knights in the northern kingdoms.” Douglas soon calmed down and told everybody the news.

“What?” The news was so astonishing that many sorcerers brought out their crystal balls to confirm it.

Since nobody was covering it, they reached a conclusion very successfully and looked at Douglas in excitement.

Douglas stood up. “Hathaway, you will talk to King Hoffenberg and ask him to fulfill his promise. On the other hand, we will stand up openly according to the deal to show them that they are not supporting rats who only dare to lurk in the dark.”

“Kalolla, you will be responsible for the north coastline. Just stick to our grounds. There is no need to destroy the cathedral in this place.” Douglas looked at the Lord of Frigidity.

“Alright.” The Lord of Frigidity was not dissatisfied with Douglas giving the command. The man’s capabilities, talents, and achievements in arcana had deeply convinced him.

“We will be responsible for Colette,” Congus said voluntarily.

The Eye of Curse did not stay behind. “I’m going to the Duchy of Calais with Erica.”

“I need to go to Cocus,” Vicente said indifferently.

Knowing his past, Douglas nodded. “Then, you can swap with Erica.”

Then, he looked at Amanata, the Master of Shadows. “Would you like to go to Brianne?”

Amanata nodded his head as acknowledgment.

“The Congress will take care of Holm.” Douglas tightened his collar. “Now, we have to mobilize everyone.”

Clang!

The ringing of the bell from the magic tower gathered all the sorcerers around. They saw that the legends walked out in the middle of the archmages.

Standing on the stairs, Douglas described the news first. The sorcerers down below were too excited to believe it.

“This is our opportunity, and we have to seize it. After the Church gets the situation under control, perhaps we will never have such a good chance,” Douglas said honestly. “However, even if we succeed this time, it doesn’t mean that we will immediately have safety.

“On the contrary, to win the support of the nobles, we have to stand out and fight the Church openly. So, our success this time will only be the first step to reforge the glory of sorcerers. Every new step in the future will come with even greater dangers. Many of you may not live to see our real renaissance.”

All the sorcerers on the spot were caught in silence.

Douglas went on. “However, if we don’t stand out, we will only be paralyzed by the temporary stability in the dark and gradually swallowed by it. Our children, our students, and all the future generations will never live in freedom and peace. They will never get to learn arcana and magic without external oppression.”

The sorcerers felt the same. Many of them had never experienced the splendor of the Magic Empires. Ever since they were born, they had been hiding like rats in a gutter. They did not want their offspring to live such a life again.

Taking a deep breath, Douglas waved his arms hard and said, “The path to brightness is destined to be one paved with our bones and blood, but we do not have a choice!

“Although we are struggling in the darkness, we must never forget to pursue the light!”

Chapter 910: The City in the Sky End of TMA

Chapter 910 The City in the Sky End of TMA

After Douglas' speech, all the sorcerers on the spot left for different places silently but steadily, ready to fulfill the tasks that they had been given. They were not excited, not zealous, not provoked, but were taking action with determination after rational consideration.

We know what we want, and we know what we are going to pay!

After the sorcerers left in order, and the legendary sorcerers who were returning to their own organizations through their demiplanes had reached their destination, Douglas heaved a soft sigh and said to Fernando, "It's time that we take action."

Fernando did not say anything but followed Douglas to the depths of the cave.

At dawn, the vigorous sun was rising, driving the darkness away and bringing the light.

At this moment, the plain near Rentato suddenly had an enormous earthquake. Noises were bursting out from the depths, shocking the animals and forcing them to flee.

BOOM!

The ground collapsed into dark holes. Countless cracks were spreading out.

Terrifying magic waves broke out in the pits. The dazzling light from them almost eclipsed the sun in the sky.

Valentine, the grand cardinal who was responsible for Rentato, certainly couldn't have neglected such noises. He activated the divine power circle of Rentato quickly and led the red robes as well as the giants of the Inquisition to the place.

As a saint, he could not hide in Rentato without investigating or doing anything. The sorcerers could not be allowed to go on a rampage!

When had such a thing ever happened in the territory of the Saint Truth?

Even though the enemy had more than three legendary sorcerers, he believed that he was definitely able to save himself as long as he did not run into any of the top legends.

As he flew toward the plain, he asked a red robe to order the noble knights to follow them and provide help.

Therefore, bishops and reverends were sent to the camps of the Sword of Truth's Knights, the Verdict Knights, and the Saint Cross Knights, urging them to set off.

"The nobles are less and less active over the years. They are not nearly as enthusiastic as the beginning. We have to change that!" Having similar ideas, the clerics reached the camps.

"You should go surround the plain right now!" a bishop commanded the Sword of Truth's Knights.

"Blue Grace" Sharp was not here, so "Argent Punishment" Cesc stood out and replied coldly, "As per His Majesty's order, no knights are allowed to leave the camp without his permission!"

"What's the meaning of this?" the bishop cried angrily.

Cesc said expressionlessly, "This is exactly our meaning."

"Are you betraying the Lord? You have been corrupted by the sorcerers!" The bishop was outraged. "You will be tried and burnt at the stake!"

Cesc waved his right hand, and silver bolts of lightning immediately created black ravines before the bishop.

Staring at the bishop in the eyes, he said, "One more word, you die; one more step forward, you die."

“You!” The bishop was stunned. He never thought that a noble knight could be so disrespectful toward a servant of the Lord.

He looked around, hoping to find a knight who could defend the dignity of the Lord.

Swords were drawn, reflecting cold brightness under the sunlight. All the knights in the camp looked at the bishop maliciously.

They already had enough of those jackasses!

The Church was already divided. Let’s see if they are still so arrogant!

The bishop stepped back in fear, unable to believe that it was the Kingdom of Holm that had always basked in the grace of God.

In the Nekso Palace, the Sword of Truth, ensconced on the throne, stared at the void before him thoughtfully. Illusionary cracks appeared and vaguely manifested what was happening on the plain.

Outside of the temple, dukes, earls, and other nobles, who had been gathered, watched the closed gate and waited for the king’s order in silence. At this moment, they fulfilled their vow and gave everything to their liege that they pledged loyalty to.

Of course, had it not been for the years of oppression from the Church, which made them scared day and night, they wouldn’t have been so united.

The lights in the pits on the plain were more and more dazzling. A magnificent, terrifying pressure was leaking out. It could be vaguely seen that an enormous city was rising from down below.

When Saint Valentine reached here with the red robes and the giants of the Inquisition, he happened to see the mountain-sized city surpassing the horizon under the lift of the light.

“A floating city? Another sorcerer is trying to create a floating city?” Valentine thought in surprise. Hadn’t the plan of a floating city been proved a failure again and again in the Magic Empire?

“The name of the city is Allyn. In the language of Sylvanas, it means ‘City in the Sky’.” With a solemn declaration, a sorcerer in a black robe appeared before the floating city that was enshrouded in brightness.

“Douglas, the president of the Congress of Magic.”

Alarmed, Valentine recognized the sorcerer.

Over the past decades, Douglas had taken actions several times, saving a lot of sorcerers and killing many clerics and night watchers. His name was put on the Cleansing List.

Douglas stared at them thoughtfully and gravely. Suddenly, a weirdly-shaped celestial globe appeared before him.

“Paradise of Stars!”

The environment immediately became dark and boundless, with stars flashing here and there. Valentine and his companions were trapped.

There was nobody except Hoffenberg in the temple in the Nekso Palace.

However, he opened his mouth and said nonchalantly, “Douglas is indeed extraordinary. He’s planning to kill Valentine even though they are on the same level.”

“Hehe.” Somebody sniffed in the void before him. It was Pope Gregory, who was fighting against the heretics in the northern frontline.

As the monarch of a major kingdom, he had ways to secretly reach out to the pope.

The clerics who returned from the camps of knights in frustration were shocked and scared. After discussing for a while, they decided to confront the king and see if he was bold enough to publicly acknowledge that he betrayed the Lord!

Right then, the holy light that covered the city was concealed, and

everything was back to normal.

“What’s going on?”

“How is this happening?”

The clerics looked at each other in shock. The terrifying waves were not gone yet, but why had the divine power circle vanished?

“It’s the Nekso Palace!”

“It’s Hoffenberg!”

They suddenly realized what it was about. The divine power circle had two control pivots, one located in the cathedral and the other in the Nekso Palace!

“Is he really supporting the sorcerers?” the clerics thought in fear and shock.

BOOM!

An enormous noise broke out in the district of nobles near the Nekso Palace. The clerics looked in fear, only to see a magic tower rising and taking shape quickly under magic effects!

It seemed to have been prepared for a long time, or the magic circles couldn’t be completed so quickly!

A magic tower is established in the district of nobles?

The clerics felt coldness to their bones.

BOOM!

A black, spiky magic tower was growing at a visible speed, but Zakley, the saint cardinal of the capital of the Duchy of Calais, could only watch it in shock and fright in the cathedral whose defense had been entirely activated because he saw “Ceaseless Wind” Raymond standing next to Atlant, the Eye of Curse!

BOOM!

In the capital of the Kingdom of Brianne, in Kasvig, the capital of the city alliances in the north coastline, and in the capital of the Kingdom of Colette, similar magic towers were rising one after another, announcing to the world the return of sorcerers!

As for the grand cardinals of those places (none of them was a legend because those places were not the Church's focus), some were killed, and some managed to keep themselves safe in the cathedrals thanks to the divine power circles. They asked for the help of the Church, but the Church, which was in the middle of a war with the North Church, could only deploy a few legends to them for now. They were outnumbered by the enemy.

The Inquisition of Cocus, on the other hand, had been strewn with bodies.

No, the bodies crawled and rose to their feet again, following Vicente.

Wandering in the Inquisition surrounded by the army of the undead, he saw the appalled "Crazy Hound" in the inquisitor's office.

"Vicente?" The previous massacre in the town made him know that Vicente was alive and back for his revenge.

Looking at "Crazy Hound", the man whose face had been worn out by time, Vicente said coldly, "You have the honor to be the first offering to revive Shirley."

As he spoke, "Crazy Hound" raised his hands and grabbed his own neck. He moaned painfully but could not utter a word.

Then, his body became rigid, and it was stored into a special coffin by Vicente.

...

Sorcerers entered Rentato one after another. Looking at the high magic tower, they had complicated feelings. The magic tower, as well as themselves, could finally show up in public!

On the plain, the vast, boundless cosmos disappeared. A lot of dead bodies were falling, but Douglas was still in the sky. The floating city behind him, on the other hand, began to ascend rapidly!

“He’s indeed a monster who has the combat ability of a top legend,” Hoffenberg remarked casually.

From the void, Gregory’s voice came out again. “What do you want?”

At this moment, he had to count on the power of nobles, so he asked straightforwardly.

“The Church’s introspection. The Church needs to know its boundaries,” Hoffenberg said so peacefully as if he were just talking about the weather.

“Introspection? Boundaries?” Gregory sounded angry.

“Yes.” Hoffenberg did not back off at all. He softly touched the Sword of Truth next to him with his right hand.

...

The floating city, which looked like an upside-down mountain, flew higher and higher. The buildings in them had all been repaired, and all the cracks were gone.

BOOM!

After it reached the planned location, light burst out, and the floating city shivered up and down softly.

The sorcerers near the plain and in Rentato all watched it with their hearts palpitating, fearing that it might fall.

The quake stopped, and the enormous city floated in midair steadily. The magic stripes and patterns glittered one after another, constructing an invisible rampart!

“It’s... It’s really flying...”

“That’s the floating city...”

The sorcerers covered their mouths in case they cried out aloud. The endeavor that the Magic Empires had never accomplished succeeded in the darkest age! The flying city was also a sign that their rat-like lives had come to an end!

The future might be even gorier, but there would be light!

The clerics, the nobles, and the ordinary people looked at it in astonishment. A city in the sky. Was it the Lord’s residence? Then why had it been stolen and occupied by the sorcerers?

Before the floating city, Douglas magnified his voice with magic and announced solemnly, “This is Allyn, the City in the Sky, and the headquarters of the Congress of Magic!”

His words were short and simple, but all the sorcerers who heard him wept.

**Content from Chapter 1: The Burning Gallows to Chapter 910:
The City in the Sky End of TMA**

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